

# International Suzuki Journal

Volume 18, Number 1

June 2021



**Welcome to the latest edition of the ISA Journal. We're pleased to bring you articles and photos about Talent Education activities from around the globe.**

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Cover Photo: First Ukrainian Violin Teachers with Anna Podhajska in Gdansk, Poland 2017

Hello again to all our Suzuki friends across the globe.

Did you know there are currently recognized Suzuki teachers in 74 different countries? What an amazing accomplishment over the past 47 years since Dr. Suzuki and the 1st Japanese Children's Tour Group traveled to the United States to perform before astonished audiences. In this issue we greet one of the newest country members in the ISA - Ukraine - and feature the rapid growth of the Suzuki Method there.

We also bid a sad farewell to violinist, pedagogue and prolific author William Starr. Over the past half century, he became one of the great voices for Talent Education, and a founder of the SAA and as well as an original ISA Board member. His contributions and legacy in the Suzuki Method are boundless. We are pleased to include this beautiful tribute by his daughter, violinist and teacher Kathleen Starr.

As countries around the world continue to deal with the isolating effects of Covid-19, Suzuki teachers and families continue to find ways to connect for lessons, group classes, concerts, camps, institutes and even teacher-training. This issue contains admirable examples of these efforts in all the Regional Associations.

Certainly our guiding principles and belief in the Law of Ability gives everyone involved in the Suzuki Method the opportunity to show a path forward, regardless of the current circumstances. We wish everyone the best in adapting to this challenging environment.

Allen Lieb Jr.

CEO/ISA

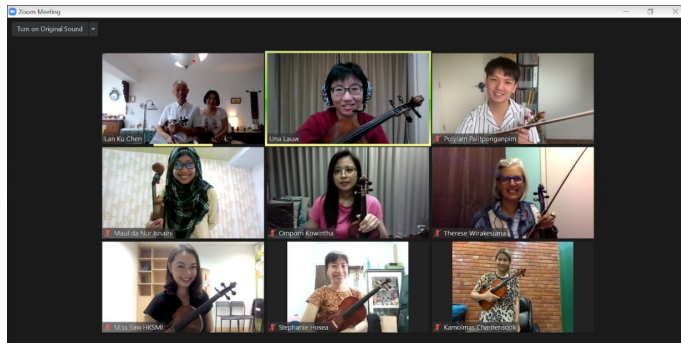
Visit the ISA website at [InternationalSuzuki.org](https://InternationalSuzuki.org) for up-to-date news from each Instrument Committee, important announcements



# Asia Region Suzuki Association Online Teacher Training

Therese Wirakesuma

In mid March 2020 all Suzuki teacher training in Asia came to a halt. The impact of the COVID19 pandemic was felt throughout the ARSA countries of Indonesia, Korea, Philippines, Taipei, Thailand and Singapore from lockdowns, closed schools to cancelled events. The ARSA board of directors met July 2020 for the first time ever on Zoom and country reps shared their experiences. We identified the problems posed by the pandemic and the challenge of continuing teacher training programs to support teacher growth. We all missed the human interaction of in person teaching, training and events but were also grateful to connect and communicate online.



The ARSA board of directors set up a task force to research other region's approach to teacher training. Some of the questions we asked. Could we do book 1 with new batches of teachers? Is it possible to do an entire book online? What part of training could be delivered online and what potentially could not? How many participants? How many hours over how many weeks? The team even asked what we could do better online than in person.

Finally after much discussion the ARSA Teacher training online courses were designed with the following considerations:

1. Delay Book 1 online until after trialing other levels
2. There would still be a number of hours for in person training for practical teaching demonstration and experience
3. Screen time should not exceed 3 hours in one day.
4. Training would be spread over a number of weeks - (8 weeks minimum)
5. The number of participants would be less than in person (maximum 8)
6. This is an opportunity to explore new ideas (Dr. Suzuki) and grow!

I was fortunate enough to be able to take the Book 6 Violin online teacher training starting March 2021 with Dr. Lan Ku Chen. I enjoyed the weekly lesson structure which started with participant questions or reflections on assignments, performance and feedback, presentation of new techniques and teaching points. I practiced diligently to meet the video homework deadline. Dr. Lan Ku sent each of us specific positive and constructive feedback on our video in preparation for the next class when we would perform for our classmates and receive more encouraging and useful comments. This feedback loop was very effective and I learned so much. On the downside I missed the camaraderie of being with classmates and found it unfortunate that the tone quality was not always good.

A few other classmates reflected on their experience. Says Una Lauw from Singapore:

*I really enjoyed the ARSA book 6's online training! Class size is smaller and materials are given more time for better digestion. Being able to work on homework and record them weekly means training will have more impact in terms of knowing the material better and playing standards. I do miss the in person training, personal connection and social contact but being able to do training online is still a very positive experience for me.*

Maulida from Medan Sumatra Indonesia:

*'I'm very happy to be able to participate in this online training. During these weeks I have gained a lot of knowledge from Laoshi. In the weeks we were together, little by little, day by day, week by week, I saw that all the participants also made rapid developments for new techniques.'*

ARSA violin teacher trainer Dr. Lan Ku Chen when interviewed about the advantages and challenges of online training responded:

*'The weekly assignments can provide trainees with more time to digest the content of the teacher training course. Also the performance of the trainees' video is a good indication for me to adjust the pace of my instruction or reinforce certain concepts at the next session. The sound quality through the internet connection is usually not satisfactory. It is hard for both trainers and trainees to hear the sound as it was actually produced in the in-person training.'*

Hopefully our experience in ARSA online teacher training is useful to others as our Suzuki communities do their best to continue teacher development during the pandemic.

# Making Connections through Zoom: Suzuki Programs in Indonesia, Philippines and Singapore

In the Asia Region Suzuki Association, out of necessity, members are connecting more than ever through the power of Zoom. Teachers have been teaching online as well as meeting in groups and special events to practice, share and hold recitals. Here are a few Highlights from Indonesia, Philippines and Singapore.

## SUZUKI MUSIC ASSOCIATION OF INDONESIA

SMAI held its Institute through virtual workshop sessions joining teachers, students and children from all over the archipelago and beyond. We had many new participants in this low cost online format that didn't require plane tickets and hotel rooms. Friendships were renewed and new relationships formed. We believe that the shared experience of music and learning made everyone happier indeed!

SUZUKI INSTITUTE OF INDONESIA		DATE	TIME
2020 VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS		June 22 -26, 2020 (Registration opens June 1; closes June 10 or when the slots are full) (very limited space)	Zoom Meeting 09:00 - 12:00 noon
CLASSES		Musicianship Class Performance Class Repertoire Class Technique Class . Recital	CELLO HERRICK ORTIZ LESLIE TAN  GUITAR ZEAH RIORDAN  MUSICIANSHIP JASMINE WAN  PIANO CAROLYN CHENG  VIOLIN EDWARD VAN NESS FOO SAY MING KIAN CHONG PAM HILLYGUS TIMOTHY PETER
	 FACULTY		
Information and registration details <a href="mailto:camp.smai@gmail.com">camp.smai@gmail.com</a>			

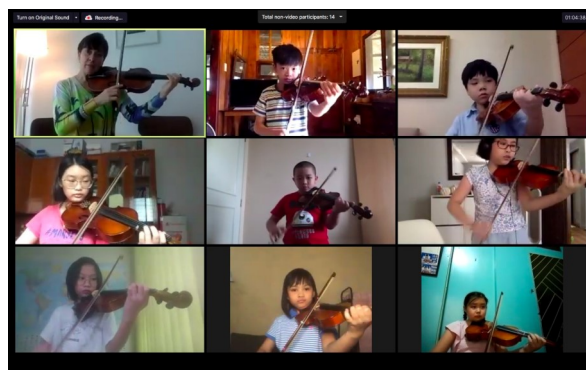
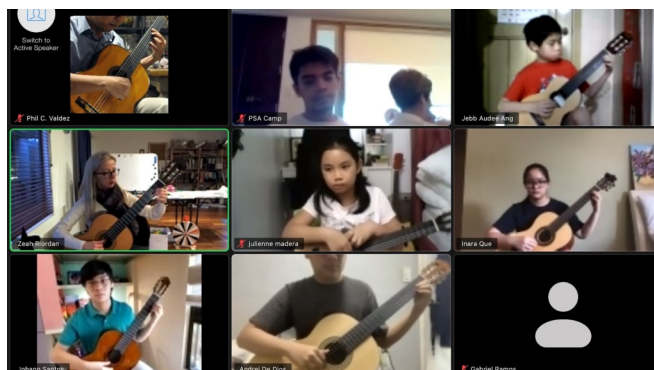
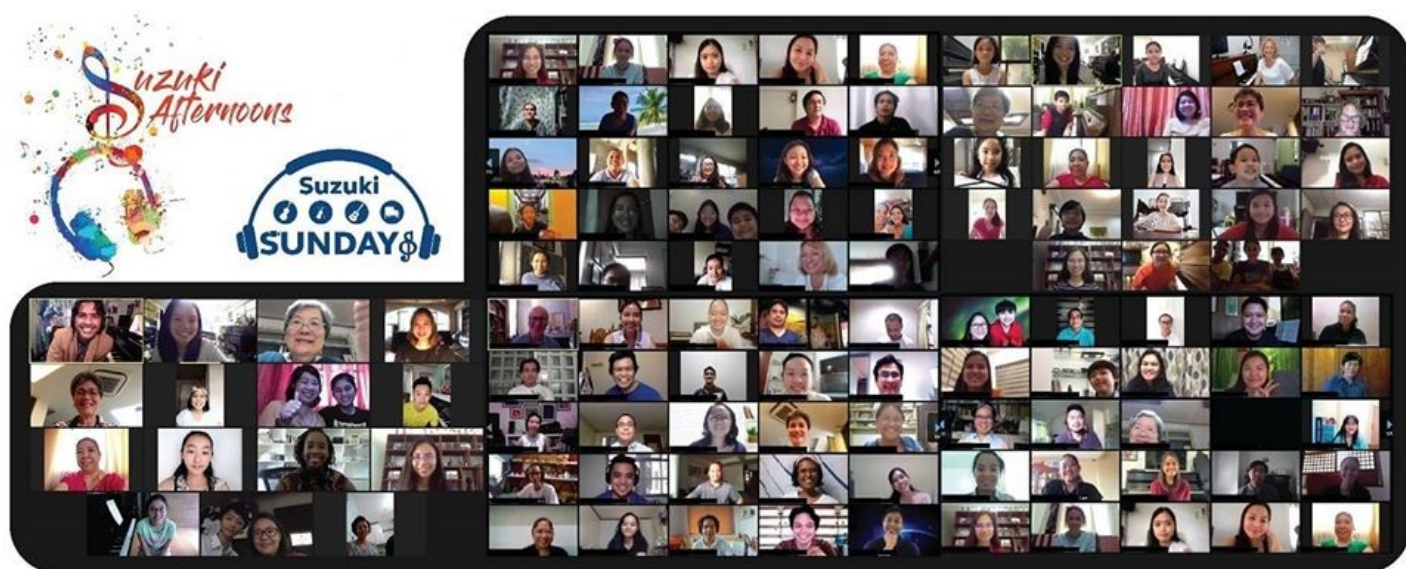
## PHILIPPINE SUZUKI ASSOCIATION

Rather than holding a one-time big-time institute, the PSA has been busy holding small weekly events in violin, cello, guitar and piano called “Suzuki Mondays” or “Suzuki Sundays” from May 2020 onwards and has taken the opportunity to invite a wide variety of teachers from different places.

Master classes and group classes have featured cellist Sandra Lozano of Hong Kong, guitar faculty Zeah Riordan of Australia and pianists Zohara Rotem from Australia, Marzena Jasińska-Siudzińska of Poland and Ross Salvosa of Seattle. Violin workshops were held by Amber Murillo, studying in Ithaca, Ruth Livioco Tumpalan of New York, Mark Mutter of Michigan, Antonella Aloigi from Singapore, Zak Grafilo of San Francisco, first violinist of the Alexander String Quartet and Allen Lieb of New York. A special treat were the workshops for teachers and students given by violin teacher trainer Christophe Bossuat from France.



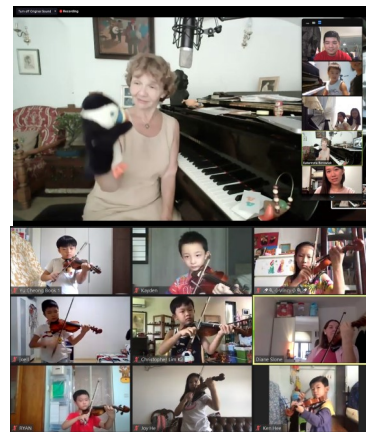
Piano students from SMAI and the PSA held a joint Zoom recital called “The Philippines and Indonesia Friendship Concert” on September 27: something only possible through technology! Finally, we held our National Graduation Concert on November 8 streamed live through Facebook and YouTube. A different but still joyous way to recognize the graduates and their achievements!



## SUZUKI TALENT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION SINGAPORE

Trying times like this may present unique opportunities. Suzuki Talent Education Association Singapore (STEAS) was presented with the rare opportunity to work with 2 acclaimed clinicians all the way from Hong Kong and London!

During our Online Camp held from 7 – 10 August this year, Teacher Diane Sloane and Teacher Trainer Kasia Borowiak led our violin and piano students in this fun-filled online camp. In the 3 days, students improved their performance skills and strengthened their understanding of playing the pieces in the Suzuki books. The clinicians also gave teacher sessions which gave encouragement and renewed their passion. Parent talks by the 2 clinicians also reinforced parents' important role in the Suzuki Triangle. The online camp concluded on a high where students participated in an online recital.



## European Suzuki Online Conference 2021

Michaela Zirnbauer

One of the most marvelous aspects of being a SUZUKI™ Teacher is meeting other people that are perfectly happy being crazy about doing what they do. Their enthusiasm is simply contagious and is subliminally attractive - even if it is in a Zoom Conference and not in person!

The ESA Team used the very limitations of the pandemic to create an exceptional event that shared a resilient and developing SUZUKI™ Community across many Borders, and not just European! On May 1.-2. 2021, the Conference named "Together Towards Tomorrow" took place, and lucky were we who attended!



Great thanks to the Technical Team, Carmelo Sena, Rosa María Lorenzo and Begoña Sors, all SUZUKI™ Teachers from Spain, who masterly managed the entire Conference including multiple simultaneous meetings and a huge breakout session.

We enjoyed five Plenary events:

Anke van der Bijl opened with her warm and smiling welcome message.

From the pioneers breaking new ground in the SUZUKI™ Method by furthering "other Instruments" with the SUZUKI™ philosophy The fascinating video presentation on SUZUKI™ Organ Method from Gunilla Rönnerberg. Gunilla's documentary on SUZUKI™ Organ can be found on YouTube - I recommend it! I believe I have found my calling for my next life!



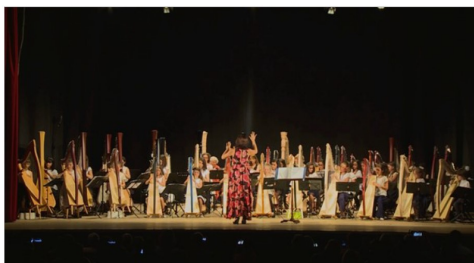
The exciting small Double Bass players in Italy that are students of Antonello Peretto, performing with lovely tone and intonation.



Ann-Marie Sundberg of Sweden presented advancements in Trumpet and Brass teaching.



The SUZUKI™ Harp School in Italy presented by the elegant and swinging Gabriella Bosio.

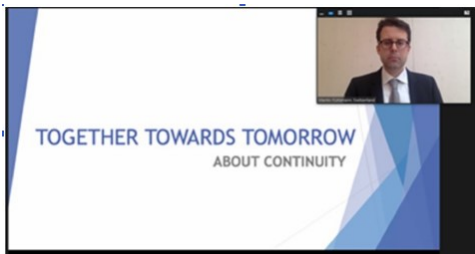


SUZUKI™ Voice School presented by Annelia Capponi-Savolainen of Finland rounded up this industrious and innovative Group.



The Discussion Groups and Panel took two sessions for the inclusive ESA development outreach, discussing how we can make this organization more effective.

Honorary ESA President Marin Rüttimann gave the talk "Together Towards Tomorrow - Continuity" which was full of information and animation.



It was very difficult to choose which of the 15 breakout sessions offered to attend! Here is a sampling -

In "Building your Suzuki Community from Scratch" Hannah Biss shared pragmatic structures in the format of group teaching - rituals that create safe and focused environment. Hannah also gave pragmatic advice to support parents such as dictate what parents should write down, use mobile phone to record and take videos of the lesson, teach parent how to praise, require half a term observation before lessons start, as well as concert structure set at beginning of school year.

Margaret Parkin and Michelle Post emphasized Parent Education (Zoom meetings!) and "Cake after the Recital" catalyst moments to build unity within a Studio. The idea is to create moments for Parents begin to bond with each other independent of interactions with the Teacher.

This feeling of being in it together with other families is crucial to building a supportive family base in a program.



Juan Drown referenced several books as he explained in detail how the human physiognomy is wired to hear and experience Music – a specific cranial development only found in humans - and how music teachers serve their community by the way they teach music.



Carey Beth Hockett drew us into her Zoom group lesson world showing how to emphasize active listening in small chunks, teaching harmony in easy songs with hand signals, choosing nugget practice with individual playback and guessing games, demonstrating activities for groups of mixed levels, and encouraging pitch and rhythmic literacy with Bingo games.



Zohara Rotem inspired us to spend much energy to Nurture the Parent. All Parents need to see the VISION. The development of character in a young person is a synthesis of the bond between child and parent, the ability to listen, to be creative, to memorize, to concentrate, to empathize, and to have sensitivity as well as perseverance. Zohara reminds us that Dr. Suzuki said "If children are trained with concentration in a single area for 2 or 3 years, their abilities will startle their parents and others. If we first help them develop outstanding ability in one area, we ought to know children can use that ability to ab-

sorb other things easily." Drawing on a rich life of experiences on three continents, Zohara freely shares of her positive and negative experiences that have led her to this truth - if a parent feels nurtured, they will in turn see SUZUKI™ music education as it is - a medium that educates the child and the family in a most holistic way.



Carrie Reuning Hummel shared her studies and reflections on the factors that make powerful learning experiences. New ideas include liminal thinking (meaning the greyness at the limit, like twilight), attunement (empathy and responding with resonance), and designed thinking (envisioning what is not there and having it happen). All of these ideas delve in more detail to the iconic example that Dr. Suzuki left us all - the intrinsic deep respect for the person in front of us at the given moment.



Then, it was almost over and time for the crowning moment of every SUZUKI™ Conference - the Final Concert. This time it took the form of a joyful filmed portrait of SUZUKI™ Method in Norway. We saw a rich variety of local community instrument programs with musical impressions and heartfelt playing from trumpets, trombones, cellos, violins, pianos, guitars and violas! The film shared wonderful views of Norwegian landscapes, giving a feel for

large distances and sparse population and a wonderful sense of having been on a journey in these times of restricted travel. Moreover, Anne-Catherine Vonaesch-Tvinnereim and her Norwegian colleagues definitely inspired us with their open-hearted motto adopted from Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking: "I have never tried that before, so I definitely think I should be able to do that!" Thank you, lovely Norwegians, for infecting us with your "curiosity and joy, accepting new things and treating them as an opportunity", and for leading us in the direction of Together Towards Tomorrow!



## Honorary Member - Anne-Berit Halvorsen, Norway

Anne-Berit Halvorsen was educated as a pianist and a violinist and was first introduced to the SUZUKI™ Method by Dr Suzuki in 1988 in Sweden. The spirit of this way of teaching and the results obtained with even the youngest children so inspired Anne-Berit that she returned home determined to bring this way of teaching to her country Norway.

Anne-Berit then studied SUZUKI™ Teacher Training for Violin in Denmark with Shannon Hawes and Jan Matthiesen.. The results that Anne -Berit achieved through SUZUKI™ Teaching over the years caught the attention of the media in Norway and Norsk Suzukiforbund (NSF) was founded in 1999 with Anne-Berit being elected as President.

The European Suzuki Association (ESA) extended a warm welcome to NSF when they became a Country Member in 2001 with Anne-Berit being elected as Country Director for Norway on the ESA Board of Directors.

Anne-Berit served as President of NSF up until 2020 when she felt the time had come to introduce fresh blood into the organisation with new ideas and a new energy, although she will remain a part of the NSF being responsible for the Teacher Training program in Norway and assisting where help is needed. Amongst its members, NSF has teachers in Violin, Violoncello, Piano, Early Childhood Education, Viola, Guitar and now also Trumpet and Trombone.



Ann-Berit Halvorsen, Country Director Norway 2001 - 2021

Some years ago the Norwegian Brass Association developed a program for Trumpet, inspired by the SUZUKI™ Method for Violin. The program, called 'Right on to the Music' was arranged for Trumpet by two of Anne-Berit's Suzuki parents and, together, they customised the program for Norwegian Brass. Recognising the potential of this program as an innovative way of teaching Trumpet compared to the traditional methods, Anne-Berit took the concept to the ESA Board. It is now an official program for SUZUKI™ Brass, still being developed and led by Ann Marie Sundberg in Sweden. Over the course of the past 21 years the SUZUKI™ Method has grown steadily in Norway with a close knit community of SUZUKI™ Teachers where there is a great deal of respect, excellent communication and generosity of spirit.

During these years Anne-Berit reached out to colleagues abroad, inviting them to teach at NSF Summer Camps, Seminars and Teacher Training, appreciative of how important the sharing of knowledge, finding a kindred SUZUKI™ spirit and having contact with the outside world was for Norway.

Anne-Berit concludes 'In those years of leading the Summer Workshops I have been so lucky to have met colleagues, children and parents, to have felt the love for the Method and the music and, from this, been given the spirit to go on and continue the work. This has been my gift and inspiration.'

# New Country Member - Ukraine

Nataliia Koptienkova, President USN



Some five years ago, nobody knew anything about SUZUKI™ Method in Ukraine.

In 2017, Ukrainian Violin teacher Nataliia Koptienkova visited a SUZUKI™ Workshop in Germany for the first time. It was an event arranged by teachers from Belgium. To see how children were learning to play violin without any stress and with pleasure was an amazing experience!

At the end of 2017, the first five Ukrainian Violin teachers came over to the Suzuki Institute in Gdansk. It was Anna Podhajska, ESA Violin Teacher Trainer, who really inspired them to master this wonderful method.



First Ukrainian Violin Teachers with Anna Podhajska in Gdansk, Poland 2017

In 2018, eleven Ukrainian Violin teachers from different parts of the country began to learn the SUZUKI™ Method.



Two Groups of Violin teachers with Anna Podhajska and Barbara Plaza in Kyiv, Ukraine 2019

At the same time, four Piano teachers also started this process with Marzena Jasińska-Siudzińska, ESA Piano Teacher Trainer, in Poland.



Ukrainian Piano teachers with Marzena Jasińska-Siudzińska in Warsaw, Poland

Both the Centrum Edukacji Suzuki and Poland and the Lithuanian Suzuki Association as well as Belgium teachers constantly supported Ukraine in learning the SUZUKI™ Method.

Since 2018, Valdas Povilaitis, Jelena Gliadelienė, Oksana Tunevich, Sabina Kalibataite from Lithuania, Peter Nys from Belgium, Barbara Plaza, Anna Podhajska from Poland have all come to Ukraine to share their experience.



Oksana Tunevich in Lviv, Ukraine, 2019

They won the hearts of both Ukrainian children and their parents.



Peter Nys in Kyiv, Ukraine 2019

Today, there are 26 certified SUZUKI™ Teachers (22 violin teachers, 4 Piano Teachers) and 6 Teachers are Trainees (5 Piano Teachers and 1 Voice Teacher).

Hundreds of Ukrainian children are now enjoying learning music.



# The Camp Experience

May Lee

What an amazing time it is to be in New Zealand! We have thoroughly enjoyed the music camps again this year. We are very grateful to so many people and will always cherish the experience to make beautiful music together as a community.

Camp planning starts really early for most branches. So many hours are put into making sure everything is planned for, and even more planning now, in case of any cancellation. We are in awe of the dedication of the committee members (made up of parents and teachers alike) who give up countless hours so that they can contribute to making the Suzuki music community thrive—they do it every year!

Here's a snapshot of the work that happens before camp, done by committee members and parent volunteers:

- Getting in touch with the venue host
- Estimating registration numbers and costs and finances
- Inviting tutors, piano accompanists and setting up contracts
- Setting up registration forms and checking for payments
- Grouping students and getting music ready for each instrument group
- Setting up timetables for student classes and rehearsals
- Allocating teaching rooms
- Applying for grants
- Catering and tutor accommodation
- Onsite venue preparation and tidy-up
- Payments and de-briefing after camp
- Discussing next camp or workshop and preparation



There is probably more on the list that I've missed but it sure makes packing our bags and making sure we bring the kids and their instruments look like a simple task!

And there's also the folks working tirelessly at MIQ making sure that NZers are safe to enjoy their summer holidays—they are the true heroes.

At camp, we parents get to enjoy the fruit of our hard labour—making sure that the kids are prepared for their lessons and their recitals while we catch up with friends whom we last saw a year ago (or a few weeks ago). We commiserate with other parents about the occasional setbacks on regular practice at the parent talk, and we learn new tips on what we can apply next at home.

What I have seen at camp that is truly special is how the children (from pre-twinklers to post repertoire students) learn compassion, kindness and respect for the other players when they are all lined up to play their recital piece. I love watching a child perform their piece and then, as they get back to their seat, the child sitting next to them will say, "You did so well!" or "That was great!" or "Well done!". It's done so naturally and it's beautiful!

One remarkable moment this year was when a student had some initial trouble with a piece she was playing (but finished it gracefully) and was a little bit rattled when she sat back down. The older student next to her checked up on her and reassured her that her performance was wonderful. And only after the younger student was comforted, that the older student stepped up to the stage to perform her lovely recital.

I watched the interaction from afar and thought, "Wow, this is true empathy and she is an amazing role model. I want my children to grow up like her!"

The camp community is a supportive and nurturing environment where it is okay to make mistakes and carry on. We have all been there, and everyone wants each other to perform the best they can. We cheer every child on because we know these children and their families, we have watched them grow and every one of them is unique. Watching the senior students leave for higher learning is very emotional to. We are so happy for them and we can only hope that they do come back and play alongside us again sometime.

I often think after camps that maybe this is what Dr Suzuki wanted, to create a nurturing environment where children thrive and become good citizens—beautiful heart, beautiful tone.

Thank you, Dr Suzuki for your vision and thank you to everyone who has helped in making the camps so memorable.



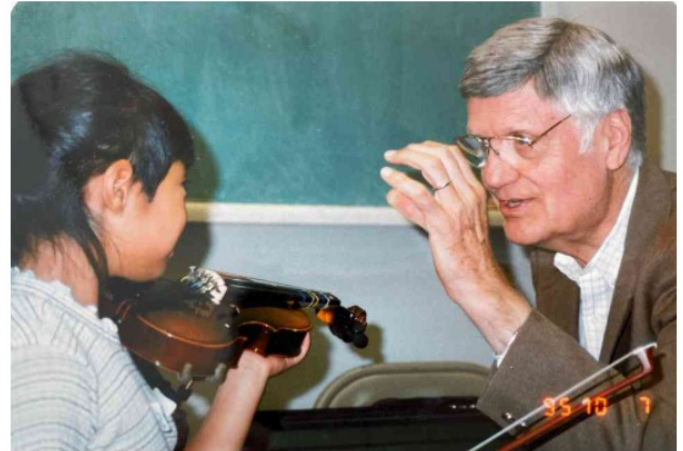
South Island Summer Camp fun concert and activities, with thanks to Hemon Dey, Irina Galanter, Lena Kong and Milly Rout

# In Memoriam: William J. Starr 1923-2020

Kathleen Starr

William J. Starr, violinist, educator, and author, died peacefully at his home in Boulder, Colorado on December 26, 2020, at the age of 97.

Born in Concordia, Kansas, on May 23, 1923, to Dr. Ellis and Kathryn Kelly Starr, Bill was the third of six children. His mother loved the violin and inspired Bill's interest in the instrument. He began lessons with his school's choral director, who encouraged him to attend concerts and listen to recordings of fine violinists. He later studied with a violinist from the Chicago Symphony who had moved to the area.



Mr. Starr teaching violinist Steffani Kitayama

Bill's talent for the violin took him to the Eastman School of Music, where he earned a Master's Degree in Music with a Performer's Certificate in Violin. There, he met fellow student Constance Koebelin, a pianist who also studied viola with Samuel Belov, Bill's violin teacher. Belov encouraged Connie to accompany Bill on his senior recital, and thus began a violin-piano duo that was to continue for more than seventy years.

Bill's career was paused when he joined the U.S. Naval Reserve in 1943. He served as a lieutenant junior grade on active duty in the Pacific as a deck officer and later captain of the LCS36, a landing-craft support ship. He participated in the battles at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, Japan, where his ship was struck by a kamikaze. During his time in the service, Bill wrote many letters to his family about his experiences and later compiled them into a book, *My Letters Home from the Pacific War*.

After the war, Bill returned to Eastman to finish his master's degree. In 1947, he and Connie married and moved to Denver, Colorado, where he played in the Denver Symphony. They moved to Knoxville in 1949, where Bill joined the faculty of the Music Department at the University of Tennessee, becoming the department chair in 1977. During those years, he also served as concertmaster of the Knoxville Symphony and wrote several college texts, including *Scored for Listening*, *Music Scores Omnibus*, and *Perceiving Music*.

In 1964, Bill attended the Music Educators National Conference in Philadelphia and heard the first group of Shinichi Suzuki's students perform in the United States. He was intrigued by Suzuki's ideas and began teaching a group of young students using his principles the following fall. Over the next few years, he attended several workshops including one held by John Kendall at Southern Illinois University, where Bill first met Suzuki. He also joined a group of American teachers Kendall escorted to Suzuki's Summer School in Matsumoto in 1967.

Bill took a sabbatical in 1968 to take the family to Matsumoto, Japan, where he observed and recorded lessons taught by Suzuki and other Japanese teachers at the Suzuki Institute. He did many hours of video interviews with Suzuki, asking him to talk about and demonstrate his pedagogical ideas. At Suzuki's request, Bill also conducted the trainees' orchestra and taught classes in theory, sight-reading, and vibrato. During their year in Matsumoto, the family developed a close relationship with the Suzukis and in 1998, Waltraud asked Bill to speak at Suzuki's memorial service.

After his return home, Bill was instrumental in the development of the method in the United States and throughout the world. He was a founder and the first president of the Suzuki Association of the Americas and the first chairman of the board of the International Suzuki Association. He wrote *The Suzuki Violinist* based on his time with Suzuki, and it became a valuable resource for violin teachers. He published pedagogical books and music including duets, orchestral arrangements, and reading materials. He and Connie co-authored *To Learn with Love*, a book of inspiration and guidance for Suzuki families. They both taught and performed at Suzuki Institutes throughout the United States, as well as at conferences and workshops in Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Australia, England, Canada, Ireland, Venezuela, Germany, and Switzerland.

In 1982, Bill moved the family to Boulder, Colorado, where he was an adjunct professor of music at the University of Colorado until his retirement in 2002. He taught with the Boulder Suzuki Strings program from its inception until Connie's death in 2019. During his last year, he worked on a book of stories about his and Connie's musical experiences—their beginnings as performers and the effect that encountering Suzuki had on their lives. He describes events and milestones in their 72-year-long marriage as they raised eight children, wrote books, played concerts, and taught all over the world. There will be an announcement when the book is published.

Bill is survived by his children Kathleen, Teresa, Gregory, Timothy, Judith, William Jr., Michael, and David, as well as nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

In his keynote speech at the SAA's 2012 conference, Bill concluded with suggestions for celebrating Suzuki's life. Those touched by Bill throughout his long life can celebrate him in the same way: "by following his example in inspiring children, in believing in their exceptional abilities, in teaching with skill and compassion, and, most importantly, in endeavoring to be exemplary models of noble human beings."

Kathleen Starr played piano and cello as a child, going on to earn her bachelor's and master's degrees in cello performance from Indiana University and the University of Massachusetts. After her junior year at Indiana, Kathleen accompanied her family to Japan where she studied with Yoshio Sato, who had worked with Dr. Suzuki to develop the first cello materials. She also observed Dr. Suzuki and other teachers at the Talent Education Institute. Kathleen has played professionally in chamber groups and orchestras and taught at Suzuki programs in Massachusetts, Tennessee, and Colorado. She recently retired from Shining Mountain Waldorf School after teaching cello and orchestra there for almost twenty years. She continues to enjoy working with an amazing group of colleagues in Boulder Suzuki Strings, where she began teaching in 1999.

## A Year in Lockdown

### Teachers Reflect on Practice and Pedagogy from a Distance

Allie Reed

Suzuki teachers haven't let the pandemic stop them from delivering top-level music instruction. For some, COVID-19 has even improved their pedagogy. These Suzuki teachers shared reflections on their strategy after roughly a year of experimentation.

**Caroline Fraser**

**Suzuki Piano and Violin Teacher and Teacher Trainer, Lima, Peru**

When we first went into lockdown my immediate reaction was "I cannot continue teaching. It is impossible." My whole teaching approach was based on teaching through the senses; touching, demonstrating, hearing tone quality, feeling and transmitting enthusiasm mostly through eye contact, gestures, and non-verbal communication.

In the past few years, I have only been teaching by traveling to give teacher training courses, so I did not have to concern myself with how to run a virtual home studio. When summer seminars became a possibility, I decided to offer teaching strategy seminars. I was touched by participants' overwhelming desire to be together and share ideas and concerns. Inspired by other colleagues doing Zoom teaching, I decided to teach children's masterclasses. To my surprise, I found I could successfully transmit a great deal non verbally. In all cases, the children benefited from being asked to listen or watch, rather than being told.



Tamara Sieviieva and her student during a

In teacher training, I have found many benefits to working online. I discovered that:

- I can have all the participants in view at their pianos, allowing us to share the repertoire phrase by phrase and section by section. The spotlight feature allows all participants to see more clearly than is sometimes possible in an in-person situation.
- Video lessons for observation can be viewed equally well by all, unlike in an actual classroom where details of lessons can sometimes be missed because of a crowded room.
- As I had control over the videos for observation, I could choose a variety of students' ages, levels, personalities, and home situations and I could include music reading, the introduction of new repertoire, and group lesson activities.
- I found it extremely beneficial to be able to space out the sessions, making them shorter and showing just one 60-minute lesson for observation each time. This gives more time for assimilating new concepts and for reflection. It also gives the participants time to practice and prepare.
- As participants can continue their home teaching schedule, they can immediately put into practice what they have learned and give us feedback at the following session.

After my initial skepticism, I now realize that some aspects make online courses superior to in-person ones. Technology now allows us to be more inclusive by reaching more remote communities, people who could not have afforded to travel, and young parents who are unable to leave their children.

Of course, I recognize that we all miss in-person camaraderie and interaction, the ability to play together, and most especially, the tone quality of live music. In-person training possibilities and physical get-togethers are vital, and must continue when it is safe to do so!

After almost a year strictly confined to my apartment, I feel truly connected with my participants and colleagues and deeply appreciate our friendship. In this socially distanced world, technology helps us strengthen our bonds and we become closer. It makes my thoughts turn to Dr. Suzuki and his research into the power of the environment and our ability to adapt. The ultimate goal is a better world for all.

## **Phala Tracy**

### **Suzuki Harp Teacher and Teacher Trainer, Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Online Suzuki harp lessons—it's a whole new world! In some ways, my teaching is surprisingly the same, but I have definitely adapted the methods I draw upon to get a point across. I now find myself relying most heavily on imagery to make an idea vivid. If virtual sound quality makes it harder to convey a phrasing idea by playing it on my instrument and a screen limits my ability to move my body and show the shape of the phrase, I turn to word painting and verbally lead a student to an image that they can bring to life in their mind's eye. They imagine the sky getting dark and the wind sweeping through the yard and the suspenseful feeling that comes with anticipating the rain. The visceral experience of pre-storm tension and suspense is now in the room where they are with their instrument and they can capture that and bring it into their playing without me physically being there with them.

It's been hard for me to teach without physical contact—it takes so much patience and creativity! If I can hold your arm and move your wrist and help you feel when you have fully released and surrendered any tension, I have led you to the physical understanding I want you to have. Nothing can replace that experience of guided physical motion in a lesson. Parental involvement, descriptive imagery, and trial and error are bridging the gap for now, but I so miss teaching through touch.

Suzuki teaching is about so much more than learning an instrument and the past year has brought that home to me. It's about having a positive adult in your life who you see every week regardless of what's going on in the world. It's about having a group of studio mates with whom you share the experience of learning to play beautiful music. It's less about perfection and more about trying creatively together and being gentle with ourselves in the process.

**Tamara Sieviieva**

**Suzuki Violin Teacher, Miami Beach, Florida**

As educators, the past year has challenged the way we communicate and interact with our students. But rather than letting the pandemic get to me, I challenged myself to become a better instructor because of it.

One of the largest issues I experienced was controlling virtual sound. With how advanced modern technology has become, it is still a struggle to hear the natural sound students' instruments can make. I've instructed my students to adjust their audio settings to keep the sound natural, rather than let the system auto-adjust their sound. This helps me make out a more normal tone from them.

It's also still difficult to find ways for me and my students to play together. The best solution I have found was to tell them to mute themselves so that they can play simultaneously with me and find the correct rhythm. After they have had the chance to play, we usually switch roles so that they are leading, and I can hear their progress.

With most classes being conducted virtually, education as a whole has evolved into something non-traditional. Teaching anything in a kinesthetic fashion is impossible, and we are reliant on visual aids and audio. As an instructor, I had to become more specific with their assignments and the tasks I would give students. I also had to demonstrate what I wanted them to learn more slowly and in a more detailed way since I could only do so virtually.

These discoveries were breakthrough moments for me and my teaching and made a huge difference with how accurately I can assess students' playing. I also felt a sense of achievement at how much stronger my teaching had become due to the pandemic.

**Seth Himmelhoch**

**Suzuki Guitar Teacher and Teacher Trainer, Teaneck, New Jersey**

I've been thinking a lot about one particular concept as I teach these days: narrowing your focus to deepen your impact. There is not much subtlety available to Zoom instructors. Soft vocal cues, small visual hints, gestures, and other channels of communication are just not an option. I've found that speaking and giving verbal guidance during the student's playing is not a good strategy, either. Lacking expensive gear on both ends, directly accompanying your student is also not possible, depriving the teacher of the usual procedure of influencing the students' playing directly within the mutual performance.

As a result of this dearth of communication methods, it is more important than ever to use a one-point learning methodology. In a typical lesson, I might have a student that needs the most help keeping their left thumb in the proper position behind the neck. They may also be slouching on the stool, and their rhythm may be faulty. In-person, I would verbally and overtly focus on the left thumb, introducing a game or activity that works on that point. I would instruct the parent to take notes on that point and give a practice assignment that I believe would help the student come back the following week with a better thumb on their left hand. But while I worked the activity with the child, I would play along with them, maintaining mutual focus and eye contact. As we played each repetition, I would use my facial expression and body movements to indicate nonverbally that I expected good posture. And my playing of the accompaniment at an appropriate tempo would bring about the correct rhythm, also nonverbally. These two channels of communication would be unobtrusive during the ostensible work on the left thumb.

In an online lesson, I would instead spend time demonstrating the correct left-hand thumb position with as clear a camera angle as I could find. I would also get help from the home coach to verify that the student was able to do what was asked of them. My verbal instructions would be geared toward making sure both the home coach and the student had a clear understanding of the purpose of the activity and the correct way to follow up on it for the next week of practicing. The posture and rhythm issues would most likely remain unaddressed.

This example shows what a typical online lesson is like for me. You can plug in any set of competing priorities a music teacher might struggle with, and the overall dynamic would remain the same. I've found that this kind of clear, narrow focus leads to higher online achievement.

**Sara Stephens Kotrba**

**Suzuki Piano Teacher and Teacher Trainer, Eagan, Minnesota**

Since the lockdown began in Minnesota, my goal has been to keep things as normal as possible for my studio families and my own family. Instead of monthly group lessons, this meant Zoom events for parents and students. I held piano parties online, bringing students and parents together to see each other and share music. We also had a Zoom studio recital. My daughter and I drove to each student's house the day before to deliver cookies, a sticker she created, and a printed program. Dropping treats on the students' porches and seeing them peek out the door and wave set the tone for a wonderful recital the next day.

By summertime, Minnesota lowered some COVID-19 restrictions, so I was able to offer both online and in-person lessons. To follow Minnesota's public health mandates, I implemented social distancing, mask-wearing, hand washing, regular cleaning of my piano keys, and air purification. I'm so grateful that I have a large enough studio to be able to teach this way.

Between Zoom and in-person lessons, I'm proud to share that none of my students have missed any lessons since March. Because there was so little else they could do, my families signed up for a full session of lessons even during the summer.

As the public health situation improved, we also had "ice cream social distances." Families each brought lawn chairs and beach towels to set up little family pods in my backyard. The students played the piano through the open basement windows and I performed the "Coronavirus Etude" with the Clorox wipe between each family. Afterward, I put on gloves and distributed popsicles and other prepackaged ice-cream treats. About half of my studio attended, which kept us well below the outdoor limits.

I have continued a hybrid model through the fall and winter to accommodate each family's decisions. Families knew that we might have to adjust if the state guidelines changed. I trusted that they would Zoom into their lessons if any of them had exposure to COVID-19 or were experiencing any symptoms, and they did. The same rules applied to me and my family. I tried my best to give families the most normal experience I could while staying within my comfort zone and the state guidelines.

Hopefully, little by little we can give children more normalcy while we keep our most vulnerable loved ones safe. I will continue to give my students every possible option until every family is ready to return. I know that some teachers might not be comfortable with my decisions. My studio has operated based on my unique circumstances and limitations—there is no one, right way to teach right now. The most important thing for me has been to be a stabilizing and uplifting presence in the lives of my students, to try my best to smile across the Zoom screen or through the mask—to keep music alive and keep my students motivated to continue practicing and moving forward. Our mantra in my studio has been: piano is something that we can do.

## TERI: 2021 All Teachers' Conference held online

The annual TERI All-Teachers' Conference, attended by violin, cello, flute, and piano teachers, was held online from Monday, June 7 to Thursday, June 10. By using Zoom, YouTube, and Vimeo, and a combination of live streaming and pre-recorded videos, we were able to provide teachers at home with a number of content-rich programs. The conference was comparable to the usual assembly-style conference in Matsumoto, and the participating teachers were very satisfied with the program.

During the four days of the Conference, various programs were held, including an open master class and a lecture entitled "Give Happiness to Children" by TERI Honorary President Prof. Koji Toyoda, lectures on teaching points, open lessons, and discussions by the special professors from each instrumental department. There was also a lecture on "Baroque Works on the Harpsichord" by Masakuni Sato, a young harpsichordist from the TERI piano department, a keynote speech on "Protecting the Irreplaceable Beauty of the Japanese Language" by Hideo Tsuchiya, a well-known Japanese language teacher, and a special concert by TERI special professors Kyoko Takezawa (violin) and Seizo Azuma (piano).

Through this Conference, the teachers gained many treasures that will be very useful for future teaching in their own classrooms. During the free time between lectures, teachers enthusiastically exchanged opinions about the actual situation of lessons in their respective regions and the key points of online classes.

It would be best if we could actually meet and study each other in person, but there are some advantages of being online, which will be increasingly emphasized in the future.

This year's TERI All-Teachers' Conference was a great success, even though we had only a short preparation time after the decision was made to hold the entire Conference online due to the rapid rise of COVID-19 cases throughout Japan. Based on the experiences gained this year, we will make the next conference held in Matsumoto more advanced utilizing online as well.



Kyoko Takezawa & Seizo Azuma Special Concert;  
We enjoyed their emotional performance of Franck's Violin Sonata, etc



Discussion by TERI Violin Special Professors;  
Counterclockwise from top left: Kyoko Takezawa, Naoko Ogiwara, and Yuka Eguchi  
(Top right: Etsuko Suehiro, a TERI violin teacher and a board member)



TERI Cello Special Professor Sumiko Kurata's lecture;  
She told us various stories and gave many important points on how to nurture our students.



Prof. Koji Toyoda's talk;  
He shared with us his childhood memories and precious stories of his time in Europe.



## Alfred Product News. July 2021

Danae Witter, Suzuki Editor at Alfred Music

- The new Trumpet recordings by Caleb Hudson, in collaboration with pianist Michael Schneider, are now available for download at [alfred.com](https://www.alfred.com) and soon will be available for download on Amazon and the iTunes Store®.
- We are entering the final editing stage for Voice Volume 1.
- We continue to work on revisions to Guitar Volume 1 and Flute Volume 2.
- Cello Volume 1 revisions and Violin Volumes 9 & 10 have been received from the committee and are in process.
- COMING SOON - To learn more about the submission process for supplemental projects, please visit: <https://www.alfred.com/music-submissions/>
- Please keep in mind: ALL new Suzuki products will launch simultaneously in SmartMusic, a great educational tool for both educators and private teachers.

