

# International Suzuki Journal

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**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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As the ISA, in cooperation with the organizing committee for TERI, plans for the 3rd International Suzuki Teacher Trainers Convention, this issue features the fruits of those leaders' labors in the world-wide Suzuki community, plus teachers across the Association carrying out their mission to train beautiful hearts in their students, some in the face of continuing dire circumstances. The scope of Suzuki students' activities range from personal achievement in the world of international string competition, to gatherings across the globe celebrating the Suzuki spirit through their performances in venues large and small. We salute the work that helps create the reality of Talent Education for all to witness.

Allen Lieb Jr., CEO/ISA

Visit the ISA website at [InternationalSuzuki.org](https://www.internationalsuzuki.org) for up-to-date news from each Instrument Committee, important announcements and events from Regional Associations, and read past editions of the ISA Journal dating from 1983.

Visit and like the ISA Facebook page for important announcements about Suzuki events across our Association and the latest developments in all the instrument areas: <https://www.facebook.com/InternationalSuzukiAssociation>

Visit and join the ISA Facebook [SUZUKI™ Teachers](https://www.facebook.com/SuzukiMethod) page for postings, discussions, and questions from Suzuki teachers around the globe.



# Third International Teacher Trainer Convention in Matsumoto, Japan to be held October 2023

Dear Suzuki Teacher Trainers,

It is already 3 years since we had a fruitful meeting in Madrid. It is our great pleasure to welcome worldwide Suzuki teacher trainers on 13<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> October 2023 in Matsumoto.

Every time I visit Suzuki Method in each region, I always feel precious efforts and passion of Suzuki members which contributed not only to the worldwide spread but also to the penetration into the life and cultures of each region.



I sincerely hope that hosting our convention in Matsumoto, the birthplace of Suzuki Method, would be the best chance to share our development and once again to return to “the origin of SUZUKI.” I expect many worldwide teacher trainers will participate in this convention, and TERA members are very much looking forward to exciting time through the interaction with all of you.

You can find more information and register [here](#).

Having such a large community of teacher trainers gathered in one location is an occasion that must be taken advantage of. We are arranging the session in order to maximize open exchange of ideas and opinions and have designated the following issues to the primary themes of the convention:

- Establishment of International Credentials for Suzuki Teachers. We hope to make progress towards creating a system in which, regardless of location, teachers can unify the international Suzuki Community.
- Student graduation systems of Suzuki Method. We hope to work towards a feasible graduation system which can be implemented by group or individual, targeting the growth of both students and teachers.

Besides these themes we are planning to explore the following concepts:

- \* Training at early stage
- \* Establish the common Suzuki teaching method to be practiced worldwide.
- \* Mentoring of young teachers

Through the presentation by each region and group discussion we will aim to share the mutually agreed common declarations.

For the last day, we are planning group lessons and concerts by the TERA students, teachers, and overseas Teacher Trainers to interact with each other which is less common these days.

I strongly hope that this conference will be an opportunity to discuss the importance of passing down the essence of Suzuki to the next generation.

Akira Nakajima,  
Chairman of the Committee,  
3<sup>rd</sup> International Suzuki Teacher Trainers Convention

# The ISA Board Welcomes back Martin Rüttimann

## A Personal Statement from Martin Rüttimann:

It is with great pleasure to be back at the ISA board after 3 years of a break. Previously I have been at this board for 10 years representing the European Suzuki Association (ESA). The role as an at-large-member will be slightly different and I hope I can serve this board in the best possible way. It was good to have a distance to most of the Suzuki associations I have been involved for almost 20 years. This gave me time to reflect a lot how these associations are functioning and how they may change for the better in the next 5-10 years.

When it comes to the ISA my first question would be: is the ISA still a relevant organisation for promoting the Suzuki method internationally? Or are there other ways? The structure we have now with parents (local) associations, sometimes National Suzuki associations (or chapters), then regional associations and on top the umbrella organisation the ISA, has worked fine for many decades now. The primary task of the ISA has been to protect the SUZUKI name. Here the elephant in the room is whether the costs and the effort to protect the SUZUKI trademark are in balance with the outcome. Again, can we envisage a global Suzuki movement without these trademarks? What would be the consequences to release the SUZUKI name to the public domain? And are these consequences bearable?

One of the core tasks for the regional associations (SAA, ESA, PPSA, ARSA and TERI) was to establish a teacher training system. These systems are now all in place and have their similarities but also some rather profound differences, especially when it comes to some sort of “assessments” or “examinations”. The question for the ISA here has been for many years how to establish a reciprocity system. I have brought up this question in the time I was the chair of the ISA and proposed some solutions for this. I will be curious to see how this has developed and how far that process has come.

The Suzuki movement is truly unique in many ways. What has always been my personal motivation to be engaged in Suzuki associations, were my memories I had as a Suzuki child, especially during the European conventions where Dr. Suzuki visited each year a different country. The fact that I could play with so many children from so many different places coming myself from the suburbs of a small Swiss town, was breath taking – and as a teacher I am still amazed every single time when I see that Suzuki teachers with such strong (and sometimes very different opinions) are capable to work together for the benefit of our children and to make small and large concerts, local and National and International Suzuki conventions possible. I know that these truly are lifelong memories and that Suzuki teachers have an impact on every single student’s life – we are not yet to fully able to understand the consequences and its full potential.



## ISA Hosts Media Archive on the ISA Website

The International Suzuki Association website hosts an ever-growing archive of historical videos and documents related to Dr. Suzuki, the history of the Suzuki Method, and the growth of the Suzuki Movement throughout the world. Visit the website to read and watch the wealth of archival material now online. And watch for updates and addition of new material the next two months!

<https://internationalsuzuki.org/journal/>

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# Website Updates from Alfred Music Publishing

The Suzuki Audio Downloads page has been updated to include all instruments. For those unable to access Suzuki recordings via Amazon and iTunes, the recordings are also now available via [media.alfred.com](https://media.alfred.com). To view the full list of downloads, please visit:

<https://www.alfred.com/suzuki-method/suzuki-audio-downloads/>

Coming in June – An updated AMPV List!

In Suzuki Teacher Training, it is important to have the most recent version of the books. In order to allow a teacher to know if they are purchasing the latest edition of a book, AMPV numbers are on the title page of newer or updated Suzuki method books. AMPV stands for Alfred Music Publishing Version and is followed by a number, such as 1.0. This applies to volumes printed, corrected, or revised since 2010 but not to earlier books. The number will change only when corrections are made to a volume. In some instances, the number has changed due to updated copyright information and front and back covers - NOT due to any corrections. This list is provided to allow teachers to know which books have AMPV numbers and to know the current number for a particular volume.

[Alfred.com/Suzuki](https://www.alfred.com/Suzuki)

The new 2023 Suzuki catalog. This all-encompassing catalog is a great resource for the Suzuki Community:

<https://www.alfred.com/catalogs/>



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## Sanchie Bobrow Interviews Hina Khuong-Huu

Sanchie Bobrow:

Hello Hina! I feel very fortunate to have been asked by Allen Lieb, President of the International Suzuki Association, to speak with you about your journey from being a Suzuki student to where you are now. Congratulations on your recent 1st Prize at the Elmar Oliveira International Violin Competition! We're so happy for you. Please tell us what you're doing now? I know that you're studying violin at Juilliard and are enrolled academically at Columbia University. Can you talk about what that is like?



Hina Khuong-Huu:

It's only my first year. I'd attended a very intense high school (Spence) so I'd always had to balance violin practice and schoolwork. When it came to college decisions, I wanted to pursue my education, because I'd done it so intensely for so long. But the violin is such an integral part of my life, there was no way that I was going to let that go. The only way that I could pursue that was through doing a dual degree program. I had my eyes set on Juilliard because my current teacher, Li Lin, is there and also, I wanted to study with Mr. Perlman, who is also at Juilliard. Columbia is such a difficult school to get into, but when it all worked out, I felt that I could have the best of both worlds. But doing that this year has obviously been difficult because I've missed a lot of school, especially in the spring semester when I had more concerts. But I was used to doing that when I was in high school, so it's the same pattern. I've been liking it a lot. I've met so many wonderful people, taking different classes. I'm an Economics major. I didn't expect to win the competition, so now lots of things are happening. When I was applying to college, I wasn't sure that I would be able to make in violin, so I wanted to keep that door open.

Sanchie B:

When you were a student at The School for Strings, there was a rumor going around that you and your sister, Fiona, practiced five hours a day. You were eight or nine years old at the time. Was that true?

Hina:

I think that there were days that I did do that, but not every day. That's crazy. I definitely did practice a lot when I was very young. I wanted to but I also felt the need to. But not five hours, no. If my mom was here, she would tell you that I didn't do that.

SB:

I remember you in our group class at the school. I would come into the room and the other kids would be chat, chat, chatting and you were standing in a corner practicing a challenging passage from the piece that you were working on, over and over again. You were self-driven. Your drive is carrying you to today, which is probably what's going to help you get through Columbia and Juilliard at the same time.

Hina:

I probably did have a lot of drive myself; I also had a lot of encouragement from Miss Gerson, my parents, and my sister. I was in that rewarding environment. I always felt that there was joy in playing.

SB:

Let's talk about environment. I remember your parents being extremely supportive. They were there for you. They were a strong part of what we call the Suzuki triangle, and then there was your teacher, Miss Gerson.



Hina:

I started at the Turtle Bay Music School, which sadly doesn't exist anymore, then I came to The School for Strings when I was six. Fiona was very young, so she essentially started at The School for Strings.

SB:

Can we talk about Katherine Gerson, who bought you up from a young age at School for Strings? What are your feelings about coming up through the Suzuki method and with such a nurturing and loving teacher? What are your earliest memories?

Hina:

Nurturing is the best way to describe her. She instilled in me that you should love music. It wasn't about playing every single note right. In a broader sense it was about appreciating the harmonic structure and the melodies of the piece. She created an environment and a mind set in which you want to play the music. That changes the way you approach everything else. When you're not working within the Suzuki repertoire anymore, that's when that approach really comes into play. She was so loving to all of her students. I'm eternally grateful for that.

SB:

How has your Suzuki training helped or influenced the work that you're doing today and whatever successes you are achieving?

Hina:

It was integral because it built the foundation for everything that is to come. It teaches you very early on how to approach a piece. The succession of the books, the steady and incremental growth that you have. By the time you reach Book 4, you're playing concertos! They're all bite size elements that aren't too difficult right away, but over time you realize how much you've learned. I've used what I learned from that time every time I start a new piece. It's what I build everything that I do off of. I probably didn't understand that when I was doing it, but looking back, I see that progression and how helpful and useful it was.

Hina:

I've got a story which I think is a little bit funny. When I was about eight or nine, we decided that I should apply to Juilliard Pre-College. So, we did the pre-screening, and I played the DeBeriot Concerto and, funny thing, I did not get in past the pre-screening! I was really sad about it and I said, "I'm going to get in one day and I'm going to put molded cheese on the stairs". When I was filing in the application, I had to specify the teacher who I wanted to study with. I had looked at the list and I recognized Itzhak Perlman because I'd seen him in the recordings. I told Miss Gerson that I wanted to study with him, and she laughed. Then I met my current teacher, Li Lin, and he taught at the Perlman Music Program in the summer. So, after a couple of years, when he felt that I was good enough, he sent me there. That's when I took my first lesson with Mr. Perlman and now, I'm in his studio. It had always been my dream, and he had been one of my favorite violinists growing up because of his sound and he's just amazing, I thought that trajectory was funny.

SB:

Thank you for sharing that story and I'm glad that you're with Itzhak Perlman and you've come full circle. Speaking of Mr. Perlman's sound, can we talk about an important tenet of the Suzuki Method? Tone. I remember you as a younger violinist and now hearing your Sibelius, you put your whole body into your playing. When you were younger, you always had an enormous sound. When you played Sibelius, nobody sounded like you. You were physically, the smallest contestant in the competition, but you had the biggest and most unique sound. Can you talk about your early memories of tone production.

Hina:

With Miss Gerson, she would always bring up recordings. When you hear something, it sticks with you. Getting it in your system and hearing something beautiful and trying to make that on your own is what she emphasized. She

would ask me if I liked how I sounded. When you're really young, it forces you to really listen. My new teacher is crazy about sound. My typical default way of playing, which could be due to my size, I naturally had a thin and clear sound. I lacked a warm and resonance around that sound, which is what I want. Having an ear for it is the first step. I've had a really long journey with the Sibelius. I'd started it two years ago, then put it aside and taken it back. For a piece like Sibelius, that is so enormous and full of emotion, it teaches you how to produce sound and get that meatiness that can survive with an orchestra. When there's a whole orchestra behind you and you're just one instrument, you need to be able to survive. That first step of listening and knowing what's good in listening to recordings and having a comparison for that lays the foundation for finding that yourself. It never stops. I still work on that all the time. That's the thing with music. It's always changing and developing.

SB:

One of my mentors, Louise Behrend, used to tell her students, before you start to play, know what you want to sound like. Hear it in your inner ear before you start to play.

Hina:

Miss Gerson would say that as well.

SB:

I followed you and the other violinists through the Elmar Oliveira International Competition. One thing that I noticed as I watched the competition is that you were one of the only violinists who turned your body toward your collaborative pianist and looked at him, you made eye contact with him. You used your body language to communicate not only with your pianist, but with the orchestra and the conductor of the orchestra when you played the Sibelius Concerto. Were you aware that you were doing that?

Hina:

I'll start with the orchestra. I'd never played a big concerto with an orchestra before. Maybe a piece that was ten minutes long. Sibelius is about 40 minutes long. That was my first time playing a piece of that length and grandeur with an orchestra. With the conductor, I felt that I needed to stick with him, and he was my anchor. It's a little bit lonely being up there by yourself so I wanted to engage with the orchestra and have them engage back. And with a Brahms sonata, you have to collaborate with the pianist. The parts are so intertwined. The music invites you to communicate with your partner. I had the same pianist in both rounds, so I had already established a relationship. I understood how he works and vice versa. Brahms is such a difficult piece for the piano. I was trying to anchor myself and communicate as much as I could. You get only one rehearsal!

SB:

It really does speak toward your musicianship. I felt like you really created a partnership with whoever you were playing with. We would never have known that you'd never played such a large concerto with an orchestra before. And I believe that you were the youngest person in the competition at the age of 18 at the time. Your confidence and your command were so strong. The fact that you did connect made an enormous difference in how your performance came together. The musicians of the orchestra were with you.

Hina:

I also felt that. It's so powerful when you have an orchestra of 70 or 80 people behind you who are all with you. It was very exciting. I was really nervous in the first movement. Once I got to the coda, I felt the weight of the orchestra behind me. From that moment on I felt fearless to finish the 2nd and 3rd movements. I had a really good time. I want to play with an orchestra all the time!

SB:

What is on the horizon for you? Will there be more orchestra performances?

Hina:

I think so. I did play Sibelius again in March. It gets easier each time and it was more fun. I'll be going back to Boca



where the competition was in the fall, and they have an orchestra. I'll be going to the North Shore Chamber Music Festival, which is run by Vadim Gluzman and his wife Angela, who is a pianist. I'll be doing some chamber music and playing a piece by Milhaud, which is very difficult. And, I'll have some concerts with Fiona.

SB:

So now, let's talk about growing up with and playing with your younger sister, Fiona. You're close in age, growing up learning with the Suzuki Method with the same loving teacher who nurtured you both. You're both taking your own solo paths, but you still play together. Can you talk about your experience as soloists while you still concertize together as a duo?

Hina:

What makes us really special is that we're so different. You probably noticed this when we were much younger. Even more now, it really shows in our playing. I think that when you're playing music it's like holding up a mirror to who you are. It's kind of scary in that way. It really shows with the two of us. It is a testament to the teachers who we've had, Miss Gerson and Mr. Lin, who have pulled out our individual qualities. You may think that if we have the same teacher, we'll end up playing the same way, but it only shows how intelligent and talented our teachers have been in making sure to bring out our individual selves. When we play together, we complement each other in what we lack, what we don't have and what we do have. It's inspiring because we're so different. When we were younger, we would argue a lot, for example over which bow stroke to use in the Bach Double Concerto. Now we've mellowed out. We can agree to disagree more because we're not so young. Whenever I play a duo with someone else, I secretly wish that I were playing with Fifi. I think that her internal nature shows in her playing in the form of a lot of strength. That's something I admire in her.

Hina:

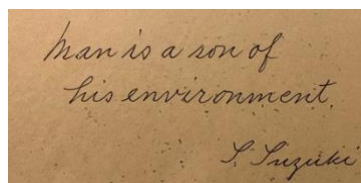
Before we say goodbye, there is something that I wanted to show you. I used to spend my summers in Japan to study with a teacher there. One summer he gave me an original shikishi signed by Dr. Suzuki. (She holds up the shikishi). The English translation of the Japanese calligraphy is "Man is a Son of His Environment".

SB:

Thank you so much for sharing that! Your shikishi is very special and a perfect bookend to our interview. I'm delighted to have had the opportunity to talk with you!

Hina:

Likewise!



**Sanchie Bobrow** received her Suzuki teacher training from Louise Behrend and has been a member of the violin faculty of the School for Strings in New York City since 1988. She is the director of the Mighty String Demons, an ensemble of young violinists, who perform at schools, senior homes, hospitals, museums, and charity events in their Staten Island community. Ms. Bobrow has written several articles on violin pedagogy for the Suzuki Association of the Americas Journal as well as the School for Strings' newsletter, The Tuning Fork. A composer as well as a violin instructor, Ms. Bobrow had her composition for string orchestra, Points of Light, premiered by the Camerata of the School for Strings at the school's 40th Anniversary Celebration Concert at Carnegie Hall in May of 2011.

## Spotlight on Calvin Alexander

Calvin Alexander, born in the small town of Shreveport, LA, was only 4 years old when his parents took him to see a Broadway musical in New York. He was mesmerized with what he saw and heard, prompting his mother to look for musical enrichment for her preschooler. She enrolled him in the Centenary Suzuki School (CSS) at Centenary College after determining that it was the best organization to provide lessons for a child that young.

Cal, with the help of his “Suzuki” parents doing their part, sped through the Suzuki books. They served a vital role of the Suzuki triangle, playing recordings, practicing with him, taking him to Shreveport Symphony concerts, and enrolling him in all the CSS Mardi Gras workshops, where a host of nationally known Suzuki clinicians came to work with our students. He came for private lessons as well as the Tuesday group classes, music theory and orchestra. He graduated from each Suzuki Book, receiving the corresponding trophy, and entered the STRAD class (Strings of the Advanced Division) after completing 8 Suzuki books before 6th grade. Amazingly he did this all while dancing at a local dance studio. His initial exposure to Broadway came full circle when he tried out for a role in a Broadway musical and won! For 1½ years in elementary school he toured the Americas (his mother Kat accompanying him, like a good “Suzuki” mother), acting in Broadway touring productions such as Billy Elliot, A Christmas Story and Matilda. He received violin lessons while home and some on the road that we had pre-arranged, and by the way, he was an exceptional tap dancer in addition to being a National finalist in the Scripps Spelling Bee! In 2018 he was chosen for the SAA Conference Master Class in Minneapolis. After returning from the Broadway Tour, he landed the lead role in a local production of “Oliver.”



Each major concerto learned was rewarded with a chance to play a movement at our twice-a-year graduation recitals. The additional lagniappe was receiving a trophy for each concerto, with the composer’s image emblazoned on the medallion of the trophy top: Mozart 3, 4, 5, Mendelssohn, Bruch, Lalo, Vieuxtemps, etc. until one day when Cal politely said he no longer needed the trophy! While looking for an appropriately advanced Suzuki Institute one summer, he remarked that his real dream was to get into the Perlman Music Program someday. I had also asked him to make a “wish” list of pieces. I still have his 12-year-old hand-written wish list with every difficult violin piece “known to man” listed under the heading “Good Violin Pieces!” This was my cue to ask his seriousness and take him to play for my friend Jan Sloman in Dallas (who passed away in Sept. 2022). Jan had coached my cellist son, John-Henry Crawford, in chamber music before John-Henry left for Curtis at age 15 and then Juilliard. After Cal agreed that he was willing to practice a minimum of 3 hours a day, he and his parents Calvin and Kat commuted to Dallas monthly to work with Jan while I continued to instruct him weekly. It was a happy day a few years later when Cal won one of 3 violin openings into the Perlman Music Program.

The unique thing about the 150-member Centenary Suzuki School is that once students finish the Suzuki repertoire, they continue coming on Tuesdays for orchestra and “STRAD” class which offers an array of violin ensemble music. Unlike some Suzuki schools, these students generally remain together through 12th grade and have been “buddies” since kindergarten. The value from a social aspect of having musical peers cannot be overestimated in maintaining interest and motivation. These advanced students continue to perform ensemble music in group concerts and form an orchestra to accompany our younger students on their Suzuki repertoire for the annual spring concert which also honors graduating seniors. Older students continue to perform on solo recitals and serve as role models, encouraging younger children to look up to them and dream of playing Mendelssohn, Saint-Saens, Ysaye, Chausson, Bach Partitas, etc. Likewise, CSS has afforded Cal and others like him a large supportive audience and performance opportunities in an acoustically outstanding hall with the highest

caliber Steinway piano in our area. Our 9 seniors this year have been together since they started and could not be more diverse; they are African American, Asian, Latino, Indian and Caucasian and are attending 9 different schools including Harvard, Columbia, NYU, and schools in Colorado, South Carolina,

Alabama, and Arkansas, receiving over 4 million in scholarships. The top three 2023 graduates of the Caddo Parish Magnet High School in Shreveport all started violin in our program between the ages of 4-6.

Cal has travelled this year to New York to be in the studio of Catherin Cho at Juilliard while remaining in the Centenary Suzuki School and enriching us with his presence weekly; he has attended lessons, orchestra, and group classes and performed with the CSS for the local arts festival "Red River Revel" and other activities. Other teachers he has worked with are Li Lin and Itzhak Perlman. Cal was the Grand Prize Winner of the Dallas Symphony's Lynn Harrell Competition in 2021 and has now soloed with them three times. He was a top prize winner of the Cooper International Competition, the Tibor Junior International in Switzerland, and the Music Teachers National Association String Solo Competition. He is the only student in the country nominated for both the Presidential Scholars in the Arts and the academic Presidential Scholars programs. He has soloed with the Korean Chamber Orchestra, Sion Festival Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Louisiana Philharmonic, Canton Symphony, Shreveport Symphony, and Marshall Symphony.



Away from the violin, Cal enjoys reading, studying German, and discussing philosophy with his friends. In the fall Cal will attend Harvard College where he will concentrate on Social Sciences. He was also awarded a full scholarship to the New England Conservatory, studying with Don Weilerstein, in their 5-year dual degree program with Harvard. Truly Cal has embodied Dr. Suzuki's words in many ways. Not only has he excelled at his craft, but he shows integrity and good citizenship through his mentorship of others, his serving on the Louisiana Youth Advisory Council and his countless unpaid hours performing for local churches: "To make a resolution and act accordingly is to live with hope. Without stopping, without haste, carefully taking a step at a time forward will surely get you there. Teaching music is not my main purpose. I want to make good citizens."

"The Centenary Suzuki School has been one of the most welcoming experiences in my life. I am very grateful to have such a tight-knit community of friends and musicians, and this community always reminds me of the pure joy and generosity that music embodies. I will greatly miss the Tuesdays we spent together and the performances we shared, and I'm grateful that our music making will unite us in special ways for the rest of our lives."

-Cal Alexander

Written by **Laura Crawford**, Founder/Director of the Centenary Suzuki School at Centenary College of Louisiana. The Centenary Suzuki School was founded 46 years ago in 1977 by violinist/Director Laura Crawford after receiving her master's from U.T. Austin in Violin Performance and after teaching in its nationally known String Project. She observed Dr. Suzuki, Louis Behrend of the School for Strings in New York, and Kay Collier Slone in her early years, as well as numerous Suzuki pioneers such as Doris Preucil, Lorraine Fink, Joe Cleveland, and others.. The CSS is the largest Suzuki school in Louisiana and is the only one that is college affiliated. It employs 6 violin, viola, and cello teachers. Its graduates have attended music schools such as Curtis, Juilliard, New England Conservatory, Cincinnati Conservatory, Oberlin, Indiana University and Rice. CSS has graduated over 1000 students from its program with over 45 million in scholarship offerings.

# Linda Fiore Interviews Sirena Huang

Linda Fiore

What about the Suzuki philosophy brought you to who you are today as a person?

Sirena Huang

My parents, the joy in lessons and playing, the ideal of quality in all that I did, the Suzuki community and environment of the Hartt School and the constant return throughout my life to those ideals taught to me through the example of the wondrous 'family' surrounding me.

Linda F

What were your parents' roles throughout your growing into who you are? (I have many letters from your mom, thanking me and the Suzuki Philosophy for bringing your family together in 'strength of love.')

Sirena

My ever-supportive Mother started taking me to lessons at the age of 4. After a year, when life with 3 children got incredibly complicated with all the music lessons and soccer events, my dad became my constant and consistent partner in my musical journey. He had a fascination with how the instrument could produce depth of tone and nuance—not just the instrument, but also the player. I consider him a musician because he analyzed like one and we learned the instrument together in my lessons. On the return home, we would discuss the techniques and musical ideas we had learned in the lesson, questions I could ask at my next lesson, and how to practice new concepts together. It was a time of discovery with a partner. My Dad's role and our musical adventure was ever evolving. With his guidance and my family's support, I developed the independence to discover for myself what I was seeking in my playing. After college, we became more like friends, sharing the joy and love of the music I was performing and celebrating those accomplishments in my musicianship.

LF

What was the first memory that you ever had in lessons or playing the violin?

Sirena

I remember the day that I graduated from my cardboard violin to the real instrument! It was so exciting. I totally remember this. The correct posture and the positioning of the feet, the balance, 'the steps to ready', the movement of the bow arm—all learned on the pretend violin. I was ready! The day my real violin arrived, as I was approaching the house on the way back from school, my mother called to me that it was there. I threw down my backpack and ran to my room with that tiny case enclosing a real violin to hear THE sound. I could hardly wait to go to my 'Linda Lesson' to learn how to PLAY the violin.

LF

I bet a lot of your colleagues at Juilliard and in the performing world grew up in some form of Suzuki instruction. Do you talk about your young pasts?

Sirena

Oh, yes. I think about 60 -70% have had some connection with Suzuki training. At a festival recently, I met a colleague and we bonded about how fortunate we were to grow up in that positive, supportive Suzuki community. It was so easy for us to fall in love with music. The layered lessons with you, the learning and playing together was just joyous! With all the listening, not just the Suzuki literature but advanced future literature, I was given a vision of all that is possible, even in the training pieces. Listening is incredibly important. The more you listen, the more in touch with your intuition and musical/sensory creative side.



LF

Do you remember Group classes, orchestras that you grew up with at The Hartt School? And was it difficult to continue on to Juilliard?

Sirena

There was such community and support at the Hartt School. I remember so many students who were dedicated to playing music well and the parents and teachers who were incredibly supportive of us all. Group classes were a culture of wanting to play as a team, play better, and it was truly contagious and motivating when I heard friends playing literature that was in my future. Transitioning to Juilliard was not difficult. I had my confidence settled because of my training in that positive environment, and my solid background in technique, layered musicianship, and the ability to analyze my playing. You made it so easy for me to fall in love with music and you inspired me to be a better person in every way. Mr. Stephen Clapp was a continuation of your positive and loving support, Linda. And, as I furthered my studies, my community of teachers were my strength.

LF

You talk of always giving back to the community.

Sirena

My concept is that in order to perform on stage, the amount of support that I have been given and how fortunate I have been to be surrounded by a strong, loving community and environment of exceptional people, that I want to send that back into the world. Each time I gain from a performance, either opportunity or fee, I want to give back for all the hours and support others have given me. Also, whenever I perform a



concert, I ask if I can do a community engagement, playing at a hospital, cancer centers. During Covid, I played many virtual concerts for shut-in patients. The Fund for Access: providing instruments and instruction to schools that don't have funding for instruments in the music program. I think it is incredibly important as a musician to be a thoughtful, giving humanitarian.

LF

What was your favorite, most exciting, or most meaningful performance?

Sirena

There were so many... There was one life changing one. As an 11-year-old, I was invited to play at the World Peace Conference in Jordan, attended by the King and Queen of Jordan and 30 Nobel Laureates. The performance was in Petra and as I played the Bach Ciaccone, we all heard gunshots in the distance. Somewhere in me, at 11 years old, the reality of the meaning of music and its impact settled in. Everyone could understand the music I was playing regardless of language or culture. At that moment, I realized that music has a powerful message and that it is inclusive and diverse. My mission as a musician is to encompass that concept.

LF

What was Indianapolis Competition like? When I heard you play, I felt as if the music was channeling through you and you were no longer 'making' the music. It took every ounce of energy and intensity because you had just come out of draining Covid.

Sirena

Competitions are always challenging because you have to prepare an insane amount of repertoire for these acclaimed 9 judges. It is scary in that they are there to 'judge' you, and that is the environment of competitions. Over the years, the experiences where I felt the proudest were when I forgot that judges were judging me, that they were human beings that I could share my music with and at that point I could just focus on the music. This



time going into Indianapolis, having played other competitions, my main focus was to play the way that I felt most proud and that to see the judges as audience just like in another concert. In those moments, I wanted to share music and the interpretation that was true to myself. I threw away the desire to pass this round or win this competition or to play the way these judges might want to hear and play the way that I felt most proud.

LF

Do you have any fun memories of your time as a young Suzuki violinist that you would want to share?

Sirena

It was my first group class concert, the first time on stage, playing “Twinkle” with the group and sitting for the pieces I didn’t know. (There were so many of those!) I was the first to walk on stage, and heard chuckles because I was so small. I remember that I was having so much fun. I loved that feeling. I’m sure that is why I love giving my music to others. And I ran off stage to my mother and said, “I want to do this again. Why is Twinkle so short?!”



**Linda Fiore** began violin lessons at age 5 with her mother Louise Wear, a Suzuki violin teacher. She earned a Bachelor of Music in violin performance at the Hartt College of Music in Hartford, CT and studied with violinist Raphael Bronstein in New York City. later, she studied with Dr. Suzuki at the Talent Education Institute in Matsumoto, Japan for 18 months. She performed her graduation recital and earned her Japanese teaching certificate. Upon returning to the United States, she became the first teacher to teach Suzuki Violin Method for brain-injured and well children at the Institute for the Achievement of Human Potential in Philadelphia. In 1983, she and her husband Domenick founded DaCore Talent Education in Glenmore, PA. In 1997 she accepted a teaching position at the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford. She was a Suzuki Teacher Trainer in the graduate degree program there and also taught college students as well as young students in the school’s Community Division. Having returned to PA, Linda and Domenick are currently continuing the development of DaCore Talent Education Academy and Fiore Performing strings in the Lehigh Valley area. They continue to co-direct the Ogontz Suzuki Institute. She trains teachers and students nationally and internationally and is the mother of two sons, Michael and Christopher.



# Korea Suzuki Association Hosts In-Person Events

In January of 2023, KSA hosted their second in-person music festival since Covid-19 pandemic.



In honor of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between Korea and Vietnam, KSA hosts a friendship concert with the Ho Chi Minh City Youth Orchestra



In February of 2023, Students from all over Korea attended Korea Suzuki Association the 28th National Grand/Graduation Concert for Violin and Cello.





## Taiwan Talent Education Association hosts SECE Concert

March 2023, this event is a celebration concert in honor of completion of SECE training.



## We mourn the loss of Carmencita Guanzon Arambulo

The Asia Region Suzuki Association mourns the passing of Carmencita Guanzon Arambulo. Carmencita established the Suzuki Method in the Philippines in 1998 and devoted herself to her many talented piano students. 'Mrs. A' trained with Nada Brissenden, Lorraine Landefeld, was a frequent observer at Stevens Point, and had lessons with Dr. Kataoka in Japan. She was also extremely influential in founding the Asia Suzuki Association and subsequently in 2016 the current Asia Region Suzuki Association. She believed deeply in Dr. Suzuki's philosophy and strove to further his legacy of teaching with love, nurturing the hearts of children, and building a better world through music education.



Her work as a piano teacher trainer brought her into contact with hundreds of piano teachers throughout Asia. She was a guest faculty in countless workshops and conferences and was an inspiration to students, teachers, and parents alike. We will miss her presence that brought enthusiasm and positivity to every room- whether a lesson, meeting, a concert or a meal. Her voice will remain in our hearts and minds as we continue her work and legacy. Our deepest condolences to her family members. May she rest in peace.

# Three Days at Spring Suzuki Workshop Ukraine

**Nataliia Koptienkova**

The Spring SUZUKI™ Workshop was organised at the beginning of April in Kyiv for Ukrainian Suzuki teachers and their students by donor's financial support from over the world.



86 participants (including 65 children) took part in the Suzuki workshop despite the war in Ukraine.



Ukrainian students and teachers from Kyiv, Sumy, Ivano-Frankivsk, Odesa, and other Ukrainian regions had three happy days with group classes, orchestral rehearsals, lessons of art therapy.





Valdas Povilaitis (cello teacher) and Inge Talmantiene (art teacher) travelled a long way to Ukraine from Lithuania and visited this event for teaching Ukrainian students.



The Ukrainian National Suzuki Association would like to express our sincere gratitude to all donors for the opportunity to arrange this event which was free for all Ukrainian students and teachers.

We successfully covered all expenses including rent of conference halls, accommodation of participants from other regions, transfer and other.

Finally, all participants performed on the big stage. The audience enjoyed music by Ukrainian composers as well as SUZUKI™ repertoire. Not only a Final Concert, but also an exhibition of works by students of the art school was organized as a result of this workshop.

We thank everyone who supports our Suzuki community during this difficult time.



# British Suzuki Music Association Gala Concert, Royal Albert Hall, April 2023

Helen Brunner



The feedback from the BSMA Suzuki Gala in April 2023 at the Royal Albert Hall has been truly extraordinary.

From our Suzuki friends –

“Great contribution to the whole European movement, certainly setting a new standard.”

“That Mendelssohn will have a huge impact on the level of teaching all over Europe.”

“Participation in the Albert Hall event will remain in our hearts, - a moment in time when Grace entered our lives...it was magical.”

“The brilliance of the Suzuki Method!!- it’s a miracle. The Gala has made a very big contribution to the harmony of this unstable world.”

“The most amazing thing was the sound. This was the culmination of decades of work. The bar has been risen again.”

“So much joy and heart from all the children. These magical big events help the European Suzuki world to grow, musically, humanly, and pedagogically.”

**From John Shayler, Chair of the European String Teachers Association (ESTA) reporting in his music journal -**

“If I had not seen it and heard it with my own eyes and ears, I wouldn’t have believed it. Just over 1,300 young students playing together, entirely by memory, in tune and above all musically, in the Royal Albert Hall, it was hard to imagine that such a thing could be possible... To say the occasion was a triumph would be a colossal understatement. “



The Albert Hall had turned us down twice before our first Gala in 2016. They thought we couldn’t sell enough tickets (I told them Suzuki kids typically bring the whole family, which they did, and we sold out in 9 days) but the programme manager was also alarmed that all those children were playing the concert from memory. No music? No chairs? No stands? No grand conductor? Very little English, and only one day of rehearsal? We patiently explained how students are trained to memorise everything as they go, and how these thousands of children have learned about good concert behaviour right from the beginning.





Rarely have I witnessed such clear evidence of the power of music to break down the barriers of language, race, religion, disability, gender, or nationality. These children had only just met. Coming from 31 different countries, many of them did not understand English, but our trained Suzuki Teachers know how to teach without words, and the results were electrifying.



Sadly, there still remains systemic prejudice towards the Suzuki Method in the UK Conservatoires and Junior Colleges in 2023. We have many examples. Our students are welcomed at first, but then the institutions try to change them as soon as they can. Where is the specialist Music School or Junior Department brave enough to have parents in the lesson, to teach the music from memory, to understand the importance of review, and above all to welcome that the students will be listening to the music and internalising it before instruction begins?



Music is a performance art and our Conservatories need to respond to the needs of their 18-21 year olds who should be performing all the time.

Can you imagine if the Beatles had only been offered 3 concert opportunities a year like the Royal Welsh Conservatoire students are? Ask Maxim Vengerov how many concerts he fitted into his life at that age. Why do we think it is normal to practice your instrument alone in a room for hours a day with only occasional chances to be heard?

Come and listen to these Suzuki children, they just love to play. All children want to do that.



Photographer Bill Hiskett. [www.hiskett.net](http://www.hiskett.net)



# Suzuki Talent Education Association of Australia Hosts Sydney Suzuki Festival

Braxton Neate



The Sydney Suzuki Festival, and before that Summer School, has always been a highlight of the Suzuki Calendar. April 2023 saw the return of our first Sydney Suzuki Festival since 2019. What a joy it was to welcome teachers first for a day of live Professional Development, and then students and teachers for a three-day student program. The halls and corridors were once again filled with music, laughter, and a sense of excitement as many new students experienced their first large Suzuki gathering.

Over 350 students were treated to tutorials, repertoire classes, group play-ins and orchestra sessions. Our book one students enjoyed a variety of enrichment programs such as Baroque dancing, African Drumming, and Music & Rhythm sessions.

The sound of many Suzuki children playing all together is an unforgettable one, and the friendships made between families attending these large workshops can often last a lifetime. There is something very unique about this environment and as a teacher it still surprises me when a student comes to their first lesson after attending a workshop and I notice something has really changed in them. I am sure many parents have also noticed a difference in their child's practice or a subtle new ability that was not there before. We shouldn't be so surprised, after all as Dr Suzuki discovered "All children in Japan can speak Japanese" But, it is still amazing every time, and without this kind of event I don't think we can say Suzuki Method, or the mother tongue approach is complete.

When I was asked to be Convenor for this year's festival, I immediately thought I would like to have an underpinning theme. The theme I chose for this year's festival were from the words of Dr Suzuki "Tone has a living soul". These words seemed appropriate as it was the first chance we have really had to gather together as a whole community and the tone and atmosphere has a different energy or life force to it than when we play alone. This year's Professional Development for teachers also had a heavy focus on Tonalisation.

Together with our New South Wales teachers, we had a wonderful line up of guest teachers this year, all from the Pan Pacific region. **Trudi Miles** (NZ), **Sally-Anne Brown** (NZ), **Zeah Riordan** (VIC) and our very own **Laura McDonald**. Teachers were also treated to an intense online program with many international Suzuki trainers including **Seizo Azuma** (JPN), **Fumiyo Kuramochi** (JPN), **Brian Lewis** (US), **Koen Rens** (Belgium), **Martin Ruttimann** (Switzerland), **Zohara Rotem** (Au), **Kathleen Schoen** (Canada), **Wendy Stern** (US), **Elizabeth Stuen-Walker** (US), **Takao Mizushima** (AU) and **Andrea Yun** (US).

We had a record number of students applying to audition for the Gala and Afternoon Concerts. Feeling that everyone did their best to produce these auditions, we decided to hold five simultaneous afternoon concerts. From over one hundred audition applications, 12 performers were selected with the assistance of a panel to perform in the Gala Concert. The Gala concert was a wonderful treat for us all to share and look to the future of what every child can achieve.

A lot of hard work that goes into planning and running an event of this size is worth it when we see the smiling faces of children and their parents. We are very grateful to Suzuki Music NSW Staff, Volunteers, Parents, Teachers, and countless other people, that came together to make this a memorable event for everyone involved. Thank you everyone also for your support, cooperation, and quick action as we navigated some of the challenges.

It was great to be back, and we look forward to planning an even bigger and better festival next year!





## Check out the most recent episode of From the Top

We loved this episode of From the Top *Celebrating Musicians with Disabilities*, which features a Suzuki student! A huge congratulations to Bret Serrin whose student [Grace Novacheck](#) played beautifully on the show! You can [listen to the show at this link](#).

## Suzuki in Action: The Man and His Dream to Teach the Children of the World with Eri Hotta

Eri Hotta's book *Suzuki: The Man and His Dream to Teach the Children of the World* offers us new insight to the story of Dr. Shinichi Suzuki along with a beautiful reminder of his conviction that all children have a tremendous capacity to learn. Dr. Suzuki's story offers not only a fresh perspective on early childhood education but also a gateway to the fraught history of musical border-drawing and to the makings of a globally influential life in Japan's tumultuous twentieth century. Join Eri, along with Kristen Krauss, her daughter's own Suzuki teacher, in conversation about the book, its relevance, and how we can continue to build Dr. Suzuki's dream.

Watch the [video replay](#) of SAA's Suzuki in Action session with Eri Hotta.

## Suzuki Cello Pedagogue Rick Mooney Has Passed Away.

The Suzuki community mourns the loss of long-time and well-respected Suzuki cello pedagogue Rick Mooney. Not only was Rick a gifted instructor but he was highly influential in the advancement of Suzuki cello teaching around the world through his original publications and compositions. Additionally, Rick was the founder and director of the National Cello Institute held in Pomona, CA which came to be the most storied gathering of recognized cello instructors in the United States, attracting teachers and students from across the country. His work for many years on the SAA Cello Committee was invaluable, not only as a contributor to the on-going development of the books, but also as the unofficial editor in formatting the books for the Committee and for Alfred Music.

Rick grew up in a musical family where he began studying piano at age 5 and cello at age 8. His principle cello teachers were Victor Sazer and Eleanore Schoenfeld. He studied Suzuki teaching methods with Phyllis Glass at USC and traveled to Japan in the spring of 1976. As a specialist in the Suzuki method, Rick was a guest teacher at many institutes and workshops throughout the United States, Canada, Asia, England, Australia, and New Zealand. He was active with the Suzuki Association of the Americas, serving on the Board of Directors, on the Cello Committee and writing for the American Suzuki Journal.



The entire ISA community has lost one of its most valued members. We send our sympathies to his wife and extended family. Thank you for sharing Rick and his gifts with all of us these many years.