

# International Suzuki Journal

Volume 22, Number 2

March 2026



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.

## In this issue:

- A Message from Allen Lieb
- Chapter Two of *The Suzuki Method*
- Letter from Executive Director Rafael Videira
- A Farewell – And Hope for What Comes Next
- A Message from Christie Felsing
- The American Suzuki Foundation Celebrates Its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Taiwan Talent Education Events
- Bringing Music to Seniors in Singapore
- STEAS Fantasy Camp
- First Suzuki Guitar Teachers in Ukraine
- European Suzuki Flute Gathering 2025
- European Suzuki Piano Days 2025 in Latvia
- Letter from Angelica Cortez and Lynne Oliverius
- Shaping the SAA's New Strategic Plan
- Celebrating a Century of Printings: The *Nurtured by Love* Exhibition at TERI, Japan

Visit the ISA website at [InternationalSuzuki.org](http://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](#) page for postings, discussions, and questions from Suzuki teachers around the globe.



The International Suzuki Association (ISA) strives to encourage, promote, enlarge, and coordinate the [Suzuki Method](#)™ throughout the world.

# A Message from CEO Allen Lieb

New York City  
March 2026

Dear friends,

This issue of the ISA Journal marks the end of my tenure as CEO of the ISA. When I was asked by former CEO's Gilda Barston and Paul Landefeld to step into this position, I was both overwhelmed and thrilled. I viewed this opportunity as one of my last acts of gratitude to Dr. Suzuki and the Talent Education movement world-wide for the life I had been given as a Suzuki teacher. I also realized that the responsibility to ensure Dr. Suzuki's mission for the ISA, as he created it in 1983 - "The International Suzuki Association (ISA) strives to encourage, promote, enlarge, and coordinate the Suzuki Method™ throughout the world." - was a challenging and daunting task. But also, one of great possibilities. And it has been as full an experience as I anticipated, greatly exceeding the expectations I thought we might achieve.

I am indebted to all the past and current ISA Board members for their dedication to this organization, including the knowledge, experience and council they give to each other over a wide-ranging agenda of items that concern the Method and its dissemination across the globe. Thank you to all the contributors in revitalizing the ISA Journal documenting the work and joys of Suzuki Method teachers and families around the world: and in creation of the ISA Online Archive, providing valuable research and continuing preservation of our shared history. Thanks to the staff at Alfred Music over the years: Judi Bagnato, Bob and Pam Phillips and our present editor Danae Witter. They all have been champions and protectors of the authenticity for the continuing core publications of the Suzuki Method. Many thanks to Pasquale Razzano and the current staff at Venable LLC for their legal advice and assistance in maintaining the authenticity of the ISA though its mandate from Dr. Suzuki; to the Regional Association directors, notably Pam Brasch of SAA and Sue Wimpeney of ESA, for their guidance and support; to Aaron Van Heyningen, ISA Administrative Assistant, for his input, practical advice, and invaluable technical expertise; and lastly to my spouse of 40 year, Bart Feller, master flutist and teacher, for his constant support, his willingness to have this consume a good portion of our home life and conversation, his being the best sounding board, and his providing perspective in so many seemingly complicated situations.

This organization is in steady hands with the new Executive Director, Rafael Videira. He brings a fresh outlook, reflecting his generation, that will carry on and expand this precious legacy we all value in an ever-challenging world that seeks to divide and anger populations, set cultures against each other, deride the "other," and promote conflict as the path to supremacy. This is the antipathy of what we know to be true: that all human beings are born with unknowable potential to succeed for the growth and the benefit of others, not just for themselves at the expense of others.

Dr. Suzuki witnessed the worst that humanity can do, and the mass destruction of a society. His response was to seek a better path for all to follow; that each person deserves to find happiness through self-discovery and self-evaluation. He was determined to find this path and to show not just its possibilities, but what it actually looks like in the daily lives of families in the multitude of environments around the world. His was not just hope, it was action. And thus, we have our mandate.

How do we construct environments of goodness, empathy and peace in the face of evil, frustration and war? We act in our own small part of the world to effect change through understanding and acceptance. We nurture and protect the spirit and souls of those around us.

We democratize excellence. We communicate trust and cooperation through our studies together and show education as the great common denominator. "To study is to change." Dr. Suzuki said. "I change myself." In order to effect change in others, we must know how to do that for ourselves.

Dr. Suzuki, with clear emphasis in his voice, spoke to me in the middle of a lesson one day: "I know you know, please do." What do we do? Practically speaking, we practice and carry on! The US President John Kennedy stated, "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try." Dr. Suzuki did more than try.

Can we not do the same?

-Allen Lieb

## The Suzuki Method: The Life and Times of Dr. Shin'ichi Suzuki

by Fumiyo Kuramochi  
Translated by Lili Selden



The ISA is proud to present the second installment from this new biography of Dr. Suzuki by his former student and noted Suzuki pedagogue, Fumiyo Kuramochi. In her capacity as Vice-Chairperson of the Textbook Committee for TERI, she has undertaken this important and daunting task of chronicling not only Dr. Suzuki's work to establish the Talent Education movement, but also an in-depth look at his family and their roots in Japanese society that fostered Dr. Suzuki's reflections and motivated his pursuit of this idea that has affected so many lives around the world now for generations, and continues to greatly influence not only instrumental pedagogy, but educational philosophy in general.

The updated posting includes the complete Table of Contents for everyone to see what is coming in this publication. The ISA will continue to post further installments as they become available. We anticipate the next chapter to be online sometime during 2026.

Begin your reading of this in-depth biography with the Preface, to gain a personal insight from this author to her subject. Watch for future installments as they become available. Announcements will be made on the ISA Homepage and Facebook pages.

The global Suzuki family owes an immense debt of gratitude to Kuramochi-sensei for her diligence, determination and dedication to this project. We look forward to her bringing us more to read on the life and times of Dr. Suzuki, offering not just perspective of him as an historical figure, but insight into the complete person.

Visit the ISA website to read [Chapter Two](#) of  
*The Suzuki Method:*  
*The Life and Times of Dr. Shin'ichi Suzuki.*

# A Letter from Executive Director Rafael Videira

It is with gratitude and great excitement that I step into the role of Executive Director-Elect of the International Suzuki Association (ISA).

Having grown up in Brazil and built my career in the United States, I first encountered Dr. Suzuki's philosophy during my graduate studies. Since then, I have seen firsthand how the spirit of Talent Education transcends borders, language, and culture. As I shared at the time of my hiring, Dr. Suzuki's vision connects people through music, respect, and a shared commitment to lifelong learning. It nurtures not only skilled musicians, but also compassionate human beings.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Allen Lieb for his dedicated service to the ISA. I look forward to working closely with Allen, the Board, and our global community of teachers, students, and families as we continue to build on this remarkable foundation.



One of the most important opportunities before us is strengthening the philosophical core of our movement while fully embracing the richness and diversity of our international family. If we are striving to develop noble hearts through the principles of Talent Education, we must ask ourselves how the ISA can best promote and strengthen our shared commitment to the Suzuki philosophy, while remaining flexible enough to meet the needs of different instruments and the varied cultural contexts in which we work.

I believe the answer lies in fostering ongoing and open dialogue. We must emphasize unity by clearly articulating and upholding the foundational principles of Talent Education across all regions, while recognizing that thoughtful adaptation may be necessary for successful implementation. In a time when communication and travel across regions are more accessible than ever, we should create intentional spaces for geographic and instrumental communities to share best practices and resources tailored to their needs, while ensuring that their work is recognized and valued globally. Our goal is a more unified organization that draws strength from a shared philosophy to better serve students around the world.

As we move forward, it is essential that we remain connected to our history. I am committed to continuing efforts to improve access to the historical archives of the Suzuki movement. I want to acknowledge that the current leadership, including CEO Allen Lieb, with the invaluable assistance of Aaron Van Heyningen, has already made significant progress in this area. A wealth of archival materials, including journals, articles, videos, and foundational writings by Dr. Suzuki and early pioneers, is already available through the ISA website. My intention is to build on this strong foundation by further organizing and expanding these resources, ensuring that future generations of teachers, students, and researchers have access to high-quality materials that preserve the depth and integrity of the philosophy.

I am truly excited to begin this journey with all of you. Together, we can continue to strengthen the ISA as a vibrant, supportive, and accessible resource for everyone committed to the ideals of Talent Education.

-Dr. Rafael Videira

# A Farewell — and a Hope for What Comes Next

Carey Beth Hockett



After nine years on the Board of the International Suzuki Association, it is time for me to step back — with gratitude, affection, and a deep sense of responsibility for what lies ahead.

During these years I have had the privilege of working with extraordinary people across our global Suzuki community: board members, association leaders, teachers, administrators, and volunteers whose quiet dedication keeps this organization alive. I have seen how much of the ISA's work is carried by individuals who give far more time, thought, and care than anyone ever notices. To all of you: thank you.

I am also profoundly grateful for the opportunities the ISA gave me to travel and listen — to sit around tables in Madrid, Matsumoto, and Auckland, hearing stories that reminded me that the Suzuki Method is not one thing, but many things, shaped by culture, resources, geography, and history. Those experiences changed me. They widened my perspective, challenged my assumptions, and confirmed that there is no single model that can serve every teacher or every child.

As I leave the Board, I would like to share one conviction that has only grown stronger over time: the future strength of the ISA will not come from how well we regulate or protect, but from how generously we share, connect, and support.

We live in a world that now moves faster than our structures were designed to handle. Teachers are seeking ideas, resources, and professional community in real time — not only through formal training tracks, but through webinars, shared documents, online courses, and international collaborations. The ISA has a remarkable opportunity to become the global hub for that exchange of knowledge: a place that spreads information, highlights innovation, and actively serves its members wherever they are.

Of course, standards matter. History matters. Integrity matters. But when protection becomes our primary instinct, we risk narrowing the very ecosystem we are meant to nurture. I believe our task is not to build higher fences, but to create wider doors — doors that invite creativity, regional diversity, emerging instruments, new pedagogies, and voices that have not always found a place at our table.

I leave this role with enormous respect for the colleagues who continue the work, and with optimism that the ISA can evolve into an organization that is lighter on its feet, more responsive to its members, and unmistakably focused on service.

Thank you for the trust you placed in me over these nine years. It has been an honor.

For the happiness of all Suzuki teachers and students worldwide,  
-Carey Beth Hockett

# A Message from Christie Felsing

It is a distinct privilege to join the ISA Board as an at-large director. I am committed to furthering the importance of Suzuki education across the world to provide a positive impact on children, families, teachers, and society as a whole. Through my dedication to teacher development and life-long learning, I see the value and impact of in-person and online training. As the ISA navigates transitions and enters its next stage, I aim to uphold the integrity of the Suzuki method and its core values. In my daily life, I often return to Dr. Suzuki’s statement, *“How fortunate it is that we have challenging lives in which we are walking together holding hands.”*



**Christie Felsing** is Director of Teaching and Learning at the University of Hartford’s Hartt Community Division where she teaches violin in the Hartt Suzuki Program and leads the Suzuki graduate pedagogy courses. She has been active in the Suzuki Association of the Americas as a registered teacher trainer for many years, served on the SAA Board of Directors from 2004 to 2009, coordinated the 2010 SAA conference, worked as a staff member from 2014 to 2016, and served as a consultant for teacher development. Christie was assistant director at the Preucil School of Music in Iowa for 17 years, and member of its violin faculty. In 2013, the Iowa String Teachers Association named her the Leopold LaFosse Studio Teacher of the Year. Christie received her Master of Music degree in Suzuki pedagogy with John Kendall at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, and her Bachelor of Music degree with Vartan Manoogian and Marvin Rabin at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In addition, she completed a nine-month Suzuki internship with Doris Preucil, and her arts administration training (AMICI) with the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts.

# The American Suzuki Foundation Celebrates Its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Pat D’Ercole

The American Suzuki Foundation of Stevens Point, WI (ASF) celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding with a gala on Nov. 15, 2025, at the Laird Room on the UW-Stevens Point campus.

It was an evening to celebrate the accomplishments of the past 50 years and to highlight the impact the Foundation has had in the history of the Aber Suzuki Center. The evening began with cocktails and appetizers with music provided by Aber Suzuki Center piano and guitar students. Following a delicious dinner, the American Suzuki Foundation presented a short video of alumni testimonials about how their Suzuki education impacted their lives. A concert was then presented by the students and faculty of the Aber Suzuki Center featuring ASC alumni who are now professional performers.

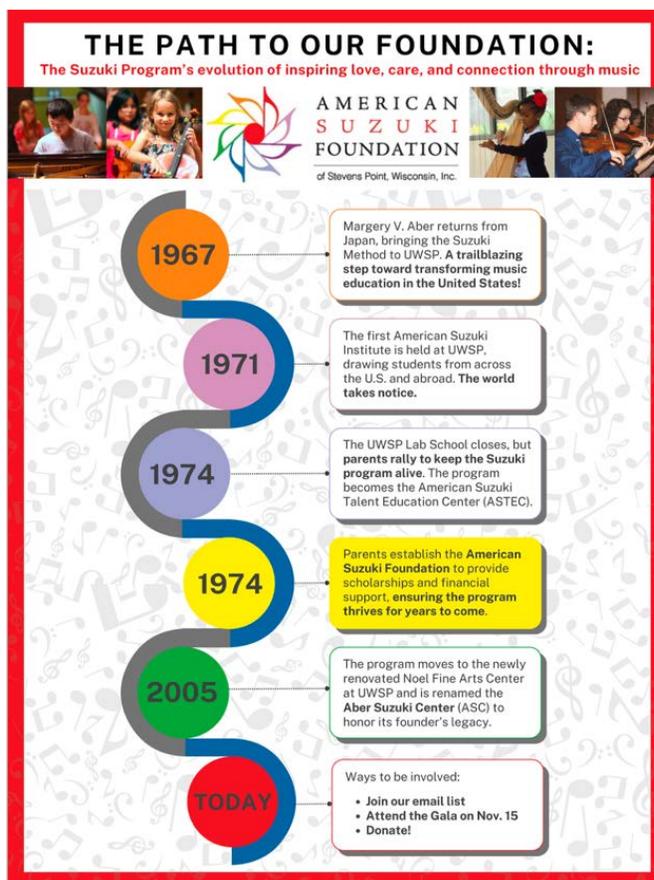
The American Suzuki Foundation exists to support the current and future operations of the Aber Suzuki Center, fund innovative ideas of the Center, and work to make the Center accessible to all. This extra funding is important because, though the Aber Suzuki Center is housed at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, it does not receive any funding from the State of Wisconsin or the University; all of its operating funds are generated by tuition.



The Suzuki method was introduced to Central Wisconsin when Margery Aber was hired as a violin professor at UWSP in 1967. She had just returned weeks before from the Japanese tour that the American String Teachers' Association sponsored. Part of her assignment was to begin a Suzuki program in the University Laboratory School. The lab school closed in 1974, but the Suzuki program was allowed to continue. It was its own unit, reporting directly to the dean of the College of Fine Arts. That same year, parents of the Suzuki students banded together to form the American Suzuki Foundation to supplement the needs of the program that the budget could not meet.

Over the years, the Foundation has provided scholarships for students, both need-based and merit based. Just this past semester, it instituted subsidized tuition rates. It established the *Shinichi Suzuki Scholars* program in 1998 in memory of Dr. Suzuki. These are scholarships given each summer to teachers who wish to do their Suzuki training at the American Suzuki Institute. Teachers at the year-round Aber Suzuki Center also receive funds from the Foundation to subsidize the expenses of continuing education or attending a conference. In addition, they can use the funds to augment their students' experiences by buying equipment, supplies, or providing experiences for their studios. Instruments and office equipment have been purchased on behalf of the Center and operating funds have also been provided through the years, most recently during COVID.

But the most powerful impact can't be measured in numbers. Why should donors care that that a Suzuki education continues to be available and affordable in Central Wisconsin? You can hear directly from the alumni in their own words by [watching this video](#). All of those speaking are students, now adults, who have attended the Aber Suzuki Center. Many appear with their parent and their young families to testify how their Suzuki education impacted their life. A few are professional or semiprofessional musicians, but most have chosen other career paths. Still, music has vital place in their hearts, in their families and has shaped their character, just as Dr. Suzuki envisioned. We must continue to expand his legacy.



# Taiwan Talent Education Association Events

During the summer of 2025, TTEA string teachers guided their students in a collaborative performance and exchange with the youth of the Little Colacuo Theatre Troupe in the lobby of the CTS Television Building in Taipei, creating a meaningful community connection. Little Colacuo Theatre is Taiwan's first troupe composed of adolescents with cerebral palsy. Beyond its performances, the troupe provides significant therapeutic benefits for these children, nurturing both mind and body and helping them discover purpose and meaning in life.



This event marked the first musical exchange performance between TTEA students and the theatre troupe's youth, allowing the artistic spirit to deeply resonate with every teacher involved in drama and music education. It also helped the students integrate into the community and created a positive, rewarding impact. This charitable performance was an invaluable experience for both teachers and students.

For the second time, the Taiwan Talent Education Association Suzuki Flute Ensemble has been invited to participate in the Youth Music Festival, a musical gathering where young people from across the Chinese-speaking world build friendships through music. In 2024, the YMF event was held in Macao; in 2025 (August 27), it takes place at the Tsuen Wan Town Hall in Hong Kong, with the aim of deepening intercity interaction and, through travel and music, strengthening the next generation's sense of a connected global musical community. Young musicians from Beijing, Hong Kong, Inner Mongolia, Macao, and Taiwan present performances in a variety of instrumental ensemble formats. With strong support from the



government and educational institutions, this journey has been richly rewarding for every teacher, parent, and audience member involved. TTEA is also delighted to share the Talent Education philosophy with more teachers and families through musical exchange activities spanning across cities.

# Bringing Music to Seniors in Singapore

Christopher Lim Age 11

The highlight of my June holidays this year was the concert outreach which my violin teacher organised for me and my friends to perform at the Tampines Vanguard Senior Care Home. We were on a mission to entertain the senior residents of the Home who came in wheelchairs to hear us. We performed on our violins and the piano, and gave out goodie bags packed by our parents. It was a different experience from our usual concerts as we played pieces outside of our regular Suzuki repertoire.

For the concert, our teachers selected a wide range of songs well-known amongst the older generation, such as the classic Teresa Teng song *The Moon Represents My Heart*, Stevie Wonder's *I Just Called to Say I Love You*, the Theme song from "The Bund" the legendary 1980s Hong Kong crime drama TV series starring Chow Yun Fatt and also Bizet's famous Habanera from his opera, *Carmen*.

Some pieces were trickier to learn than usual, for example, my friends and I found the rhythms of one of the pop songs even harder to play than in the Bizet! And one of the Chinese songs required us to play very high notes. Nevertheless, everyone practiced enthusiastically and persevered, and we helped one another during rehearsal. I thought that the most memorable moment at the outreach was when we played Chan Mali Chan for the finale and everyone was on stage playing this familiar folk song together. The seniors also participated by clapping to the beats of the music and shouting "Hoi! Hoi!".

Throughout the concert, the seniors would clap or sing while we played. They would also chuckle every time they recognised a song. When the Emcee asked if they liked our performance, they all replied with a resounding "Yes". I learnt that we could connect our hearts to people who are not of our generation through music. It is meaningful to play my violin to bring joy to the elderly.



# STEAS Funtasy Camp 2025

This year's Funtasy camp was extra special - held over the August National Day weekend holidays with faculty from Belgium (Koen Rens, Violin), Australia (Masaki Nakamura, Violin, & Zohara Rotem, Piano), and Taiwan (Karen Hara, Cello) sharing their knowledge, experiences and expertise with teachers, students, and parents. We were also honoured to welcome attendees, our friends from Fujian Province Music Talent Education Association, PRC, FPMTEA to join in the fun learning weekend!

Kicking off the camp, violin teachers (and one cello teacher!) explored their tone with Koen Rens (Violin), while piano teachers joined Zohara Rotem (Piano) in a workshop to understand playing with the body in mind.



Both hands-on teachers' workshops were followed up with discussion sessions on listening, communication, managing expectations by both Koen Rens and Zohara Rotem. The sessions geared our teachers up for the camps' activities, with insights and readiness to apply the new ideas explored.

Amidst group lessons, masterclasses, and ensemble sessions, our students showcased a determination and love for music over the few days, presented on the last day at the finale concert!



# First Suzuki Guitar Teachers in Ukraine

**Nataliia Koptienkova**

Five Guitar teachers from Ukraine were welcomed onto the Finnish Suzuki Association Guitar Teacher Training Course 2024-2025.

Raimo Päiväläinen together with Teacher Trainers Nuria Cervantes, Spain and Harald Söderberg, Sweden arranged for this Hybrid course to accommodate the Ukraine teachers with in-person sessions and the exam held in Poland.

The course took place from 6 June 2024 to February 2025 with the exam in March 2025 for the trainees in Finland.

The trainees from Ukraine had in-person sessions in June 2025 with exams in September 2025 in Pruszków, Poland.

Ukraine celebrates their first SUZUKI™ Guitar teachers!



Ukrainian Guitar teachers who have started studying the SUZUKI METHOD™ already have some experience and have been working with children for many years.

Despite the difficult time of the war, they are developing and learning new methods and approaches in teaching.

We are sure that the SUZUKI METHOD™ is necessary for our children right now. There are now even more Ukrainian Suzuki teachers, and Ukrainian children have the opportunity to learn to play the Guitar using the SUZUKI METHOD™.



# European Suzuki Flute Gathering 2025

Britta Roscher and Marco Messina

In mid-July, Limburg, in the heart of Germany, became the stage for an extraordinary musical experience. Twenty-five flute teachers, thirty-two young musicians, and their parents from across Europe gathered at the Limburg Youth Hostel for an inspiring Suzuki flute workshop: the First European Suzuki Flute Gathering (ESFG). For three days, they rehearsed, made music, laughed, and learned – across all languages and national boundaries.



The participants, the youngest just five years old, travelled from nine countries: the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Estonia, Iceland, England, France, Spain, and Switzerland. A truly international group, united by the flute.

A special highlight came on Friday evening when the mayor of Limburg personally welcomed the group. In return, the participants performed a short concert – a musical gift that clearly left a lasting impression.

On Saturday, Limburg's pedestrian zone was transformed into a lively open-air stage. Young musicians performed street music at various locations – an unforgettable experience for many. The cheerful, clear sounds of the flutes attracted numerous passers-by, lifting spirits and sparking curiosity. The performances also drew attention to the grand finale concert on Sunday afternoon in the Protestant church. The money raised was invested in a well-deserved round of ice cream for everyone!



The gathering was organised by Italian teacher trainer Marco Messina from Caserta and Suzuki teacher Britta Roscher from Wiesbaden, Germany. From the outset and throughout months of preparation, everything was designed to ensure that both teachers and students felt like true stars in a serene and collaborative atmosphere. Students took part in a wide range of activities, and each teacher had the opportunity to teach, share ideas, and collaborate with colleagues. Everyone enjoyed

themselves and made new friends.

It would go beyond the scope of this article to describe every activity, but the programme included group lessons, masterclasses, individual lessons, a parent talk, games and a big quiz, a children's music laboratory, sessions for siblings who do not play the flute, and much more.

On Sunday, the weekend culminated in an atmospheric concert, where the fruits of the intensive rehearsals were impressively showcased.

For the occasion, an Italian composer, Francesco Cerrato, who was a SUZUKI METHOD™ student, composed a piece for four flutes and piano inspired by Ludwig van Beethoven's, "Ode to Joy." Titled "Joy," it was performed for the first time by the entire group of students and teachers from the inaugural ESFG.

The weekend was marked by musical exchange, new friendships, and abundant inspiration.



Special thanks go to the parents who actively supported and accompanied the entire project, whether through supervision or logistical assistance. Without their commitment, Suzuki lessons would be unthinkable, and this special weekend would not have been possible.



Particularly touching was the feedback from an Italian father, who wrote after the workshop: *“Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you so much for this wonderful experience! Music, art and culture unite people – which is exactly the opposite of division and war. A warm hug to everyone. See you at the next event.”*

A successful workshop that will resonate for a long time to come, with participants and listeners alike.

We are delighted to share the success of this wonderful event through this article and are equally thrilled at the thought of meeting again for the Second European Suzuki Flute Gathering.

## European Suzuki Piano Days 2025 in Latvia

**Michelle Post**

The idea of creating a special weekend just for European Suzuki piano teachers—a time to connect, share, and recharge—has been quietly brewing in my mind for many years. Whenever I mentioned it to friends and colleagues, the reaction was always the same: *“What a brilliant idea—why hasn’t this been done before?”* For many pianists within the ESA, the journey has often been one of studying hard, achieving an exam level, and then returning to our studios—sometimes people are even left feeling a little isolated from the wider community. Over time, a sense of “level hierarchy” developed, and the encouragement to meet and learn from one another across countries and stages of experience was missing. What a loss that is—for our teaching, our creativity, and the friendships that could so easily flourish across borders.

Of course, every pianist knows the logistical challenge of gathering enough instruments and suitable rooms in one place. But with an amazing team and plenty of enthusiasm, we made it happen! And so, the First official European Suzuki Piano Days (ESPD) came to life in Riga this October.

We welcomed 45 teachers from 17 countries, all eager to share ideas and learn from one another. The atmosphere was open, generous, and full of joy. The programme was designed by teachers, for teachers: sessions were built around topics participants specifically wanted to explore, and presenters were chosen simply because they were perfect for the topic and ready to share their experience regardless of level or country. This absence of hierarchy created a wonderful sense of community; everyone was both teacher and learner.



Throughout the weekend, teachers took part in different group sessions featuring 10 pianos, 5 pianos, and 2 pianos—realistic teaching scenarios that encouraged hands on practical exploration. Every participant had the chance to play, openly ask questions and exchange ideas. Small discussion groups ensured that every voice was heard, with insights gathered and shared back to the whole group. Some of these ideas are already being kept in mind for future collaborations and development. The weekend was a true success—energising, inspiring, and full of connection. It reminded us that we the Suzuki piano teachers of Europe are part of a vibrant, international network of colleagues who share the same passion and purpose.

And the best part? This is only the beginning. The next ESPD will take place in October 2027—so mark your calendars! We can't wait to welcome even more like-minded teachers to join the music, the laughter, and the learning next time!

*"Thanks to the whole organisation for this wonderful event and thank you especially for getting all of us together! This event really strengthens the feeling of our European Suzuki Piano Community. It was great that so many teachers shared their expertise, experiences and ideas and there were opportunities to discuss different topics in smaller groups."* Maarit Honkanen, Finland

*"When there is a sense of fun in the learning zone, we know how this changes outcomes & during this weekend all the active participation, laughter and play most certainly did that. Among many outcomes, details and rediscoveries, perhaps the most valuable of all for me was to rediscover my colleagues and to get to know others for the first time. We not only have to have beautiful hearts in our Suzuki encounters, but we have to be able to open our hearts sometimes - at European Suzuki Piano Days 2025 many hearts opened. Thank you all."* Graham Rix, UK

The ESPD Organising Team  
Michelle Post, Anna Sibley, Sylvain Pénard, Kristine Ravina



# Letter from SAA Executive Director Angelica Cortez and SAA Board Chair Lynne Oliverius

We could not be more excited to share the work that came from our strategic planning process over the last year. Through this work, our board and staff learned so much about members' hopes and dreams for the future of the SAA. There were several important questions we grappled with to come to our new mission, vision, and values. While there is still so much more work to do ahead, we could not be more excited for this chapter of the SAA. We also hope you'll enjoy Ingrid Tung's article, which offers additional context about the plan! We would love to see you in San Francisco, at our Biennial Conference, where we plan to share more about the plan and our process in-person. We'll look forward to working with you to realize this vision. We are endlessly grateful to all members who participated in the surveys, focus groups, and events that supported this work. Thank you to all who have contributed to this process, and to all who have been part of our organization's legacy. You can read the full strategic plan here: <https://suzukiassociation.org/2025/10/27/our-new-mission-vision-values-the-saas-strategic-plan/>

Sincerely,

Angelica Cortez  
Executive Director  
Suzuki Association of the Americas

Lynne Oliverius  
Board Chair  
Suzuki Association of the Americas

## Our Vision:

A better world, one learner at a time, nurtured through Suzuki music education.

## Our Mission:

To foster strong communities across the Americas through the advancement of Suzuki music education, driven by innovation, connection, and personal excellence.

## Our Values:

Nurturing Environment  
Pursuit of Mastery  
Inclusive Belonging  
Service & Stewardship  
Connection through Music

# Shaping the SAA's New Strategic Plan

Ingrid Tung

Suzuki teachers are natural strategic planners. They know that making music does not start with silence or just notes, it starts with intention. For, as Edmund Sprunger has explained, "If the first note is shaky, things can often be dicey from there."

It's the same with ongoing organizational development. And so it is that the Board of Directors set about to create a new Strategic Plan for the Suzuki Association of the Americas.

The intent of our new Strategic Plan is to produce the clear, confident first note of the next stage in our development. It defines where we are headed, aligns our shared values, and allows us to measure and evaluate the difference we are making, from the impact of our largest programs to the spirit of our smallest interpersonal interactions. A Strategic Plan also allows us to fundraise with purpose, make decisions with unity, and communicate what makes the Suzuki Association of the Americas truly unique: a belief that the world becomes a better place when children, teachers, families, and communities are nurtured by love through Suzuki education.

As with any meaningful performance, preparation mattered. The Board began by learning about organizational health and reflecting in board meetings on how we could strengthen trust, clarity, and communication across our organization as we embarked on the process of creating the SAA's first Strategic Plan since 1994.

With that background, we arrived at the 2025 Leadership Summit in Atlanta, Georgia, ready to get to work. With the guidance of consultant Glenda Hicks of Maryland Nonprofits, we reflected on the SAA's vision and mission statements.

For me, these conversations were profoundly moving. Having grown up as a Suzuki student, trained and taught as a Suzuki teacher, and raised my own children in Suzuki studios, I found myself returning to the community from a new perspective as a board member. Listening to my colleagues speak with such conviction about our mission and their commitment to making the world a better place through Suzuki education was inspiring. There was no cynicism in the room, only genuine love and great hope.

Also during the Summit, Glenda conducted interviews and focus groups with past presidents, long-standing members of the SAA, the Suzuki Training Committee, staff, and board members. Their perspectives were honest and wide-ranging: teachers spoke of the strength of our philosophy and the richness of our community, but also of challenges such as financial pressures, and the need to remain relevant in a changing world. Staff shared aspirations for stronger systems, improved communication, and support for chapters and institutes. The Board emphasized teacher and Teacher Trainer development, governance renewal, and financial sustainability.

After the Summit, the Board created four surveys that reached every corner of our community. The surveys were sent to all members, past board members, employees and contractors, and collaborative partners of the SAA. The responses to the surveys were collected and compiled by Glenda and presented to the Board.

The Board then came together with Glenda for two intensive strategic planning sessions. Over eight hours, we reviewed the trends and assessment data, reflected on external challenges such as the rising cost of living and changing family dynamics, and transformed that wealth of input into a clear, actionable framework. We chose our words thoughtfully and intentionally as I have seen great Suzuki teachers do and aimed to convey and protect Dr. Suzuki's enduring vision and address the realities that teachers, students, and families face today. We sought to leave space for generative discussion and flexibility, ensuring that our plan would guide not just what we do, but allow us to implement it with intention and creativity.

Many of the priorities voiced by members, staff, and partners were directly reflected in the new Strategic Plan. Members asked for stronger and more accessible teacher development pathways and events, more opportunities to build community, increased outreach, clear communication, financial stability, relevance, and support for innovation. These themes anchor our strategic priorities.

Our work is already underway. The Board unanimously approved the plan and has begun building the governing infrastructure to support and sustain the SAA's mission. Committees are aligning charters with strategic goals, the Board and SAA staff are coordinating and implementing strategies to reach our objectives, and systems are being developed to track and report progress annually.

As we move into this next chapter, we do so with deep gratitude for those who came before us including the past board members, teachers, Teacher Trainers, and parents, who built the Suzuki Association of the Americas into the thriving community it is today. Their dedication gave structure to Dr. Suzuki's dream and created a home for his philosophy across the Americas. We are the direct descendants of that vision, entrusted to sustain and renew it for the generations to come.



The Strategic Plan honors that legacy by giving us a framework that ensures the SAA continues to serve with excellence, transparency, and love. It builds on more than fifty years of devotion and invites us to imagine what the next fifty might bring.

In music and in leadership, our task remains the same: to listen deeply, to play with intention, and to nurture beauty and humanity in every note. This plan is the first step to our collective commitment to carry forward the spirit of Suzuki, so that every learner, teacher, and community across the Americas may be nurtured by love.

*Ingrid Tung is the Chair-Elect of the SAA Board of Directors.*

## Reports from Latin America

### **BRASIL**

On October 11 and 12, 2025, Brazil hosted the **First National Suzuki Student Festival of Rio de Janeiro**, a significant milestone for the Suzuki community in the country. Held at Colégio Cruzeiro and the “Escola de Música da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro” (UFRJ) (Music School of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), the event was supported by the Suzuki Musical Association of Brazil (AMSBrasil) and was coordinated by teachers Simone Dos Santos (violin) and Rebeca Da Coll (piano).

In addition to students from the State of Rio de Janeiro, the Festival gathered 80 students from various regions of Brazil. The participating faculty included: Isabela Pavan and Jonathan Moyer (piano); Araceli Hackbarth, Rafael Egidio, Keethy Vianna, Anderson Azevedo, Chiara Pinnola, and Luciana Arraes (violin); Max Riccio and Adonai Neves (guitar); Pedro Azevedo (trumpet); Rosana Garbin (recorder); Paula Penelo (early childhood education); and Jonas Hammar (choir and body percussion).



The program offered a rich variety of musical experiences, including masterclasses, group instrument lessons, orchestra rehearsal, early childhood music, choral singing, body percussion, music reading, and a lecture for parents. The closing recital took place in the “*Salão Leopoldo Miguez*” (Leopoldo Miguez Hall) at the UFRJ Music School, celebrating not only the artistic growth of the students but also the strengthening and expansion of the Suzuki community in Brazil.

**MEXICO**

Between October 29 and November 5, three very important student gatherings were held, involving communities with limited access to artistic culture, especially music for children and young people.

The Sixth Suzuki Family Gathering of Hidalgo began in the Mezquital Valley, in the beautiful city of Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo. Organized by the Juan Pablo II School and directed by teacher Araceli Lugo, the event brought together 250 students from the region, accompanied by their families, to celebrate the love of music and learning through the Suzuki Method.

During the gathering, recitals, concerts, masterclasses, group lessons, and much more were offered, led by renowned teachers from Mexico, such as Mildred Martínez, Elisa Nivón, Oscar Estrada, Ernesto García Velasco, Armando Hidalgo, and Diana Chagalj from Argentina. The students had the opportunity to demonstrate their skills on the guitar and violin, as well as in the choir and percussion. The joy and enthusiasm of the participants were contagious, creating an atmosphere of community and mutual support.

Testimonials: “I loved seeing the children so excited and proud to share their music” (parent of a student). “This event is a great opportunity for children to develop their musical skills and grow as individuals” (music teacher).

The Sixth Suzuki Family Gathering in Ixmiquilpan, Hidalgo, was an unforgettable event that will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on the community.



The second gathering took place in Southern Mexico, in Juchitán de Zaragoza, Oaxaca, at the MAR Classical Guitar Academy, directed by Francisco Santiago. More than forty students from various communities in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, including Juchitán, Tehuantepec, Xadani, and Ixtepec, participated in masterclasses, group lessons, and ensemble rehearsals. For many, it was their first experience working directly with an international instructor, Diana Chagalj, thus strengthening their technique, musicality, and sense of community. The event culminated in a concert at the emblematic “*Casa de la Cultura*” in Juchitán, which gathered over two hundred people and featured a Suzuki repertoire directed by Chagalj, followed by a performance of Mexican music prepared by the students as a way of thanking her for the visit. The performance was further enriched by the students’ use of traditional Isthmus of Tehuantepec attire, highlighting the region’s cultural identity and contextualizing the Suzuki philosophy within their local setting.

The “MAR Academia de Guitarra Classica” has established itself as a benchmark in Suzuki Method guitar teaching in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, promoting an education based on perseverance, community, and learning with love. This gathering left the students extremely motivated and proud of their progress, reaffirming their desire to continue advancing in the Suzuki Method.



The third gathering had a great impact in Huatulco: the community united to the rhythm of the classical guitar.

Santa María Huatulco, Oaxaca, experienced a day full of emotion, learning, and art with the “*Mi Casa de Música*” Masterclass and Concert, led by Maestro Diana Chagalj. The event took place on November 6th on the esplanade of the Municipal Palace, where children, teenagers, and families gathered to celebrate the transformative power of music.

The event was organized by the “*Mi Casa de Música*” Classical Guitar Orchestra, a community project led for the past eight years by teacher Marcela González Guerrero, with the constant support of parents and students. On this occasion, the Municipal Government of Santa María Huatulco (2025–2027) offered its invaluable support,

demonstrating that when culture is supported by institutions, talent flourishes and the community fabric is strengthened.

The Suzuki Method is an educational approach that unites families through music, fostering sensitivity, discipline, and the joy of learning. This approach also guides the teachers' work so that the classical guitar becomes a bridge between generations, cultivating not only musicians but also more conscious and compassionate human beings. The closing concert was the perfect finale: the guitars filled the square with their harmonious and hopeful sound. Every note served as a reminder that, in Huatulco, music is shared, felt, and built by everyone, like a living song of identity and community.

All three gatherings featured the special presence of Argentine teacher trainer Diana Chagalj, who warmly shared music, learning, experiences, and her talent with the families.



# Celebrating a Century of Printings: The *Nurtured by Love* Exhibition at Suzuki Memorial Museum

Contributed by the Talent Education Research Institute (TERI), Japan

In 2025, Dr. Shinichi Suzuki's beloved book, *Nurtured by Love*, reached an extraordinary milestone in Japan: its **100th printing**. To commemorate this historic occasion, the Talent Education Research Institute (TERI) presented a special exhibition titled *Nurtured by Love (Ai ni Ikiru)* at the Shinichi Suzuki Memorial Museum in Matsumoto City.

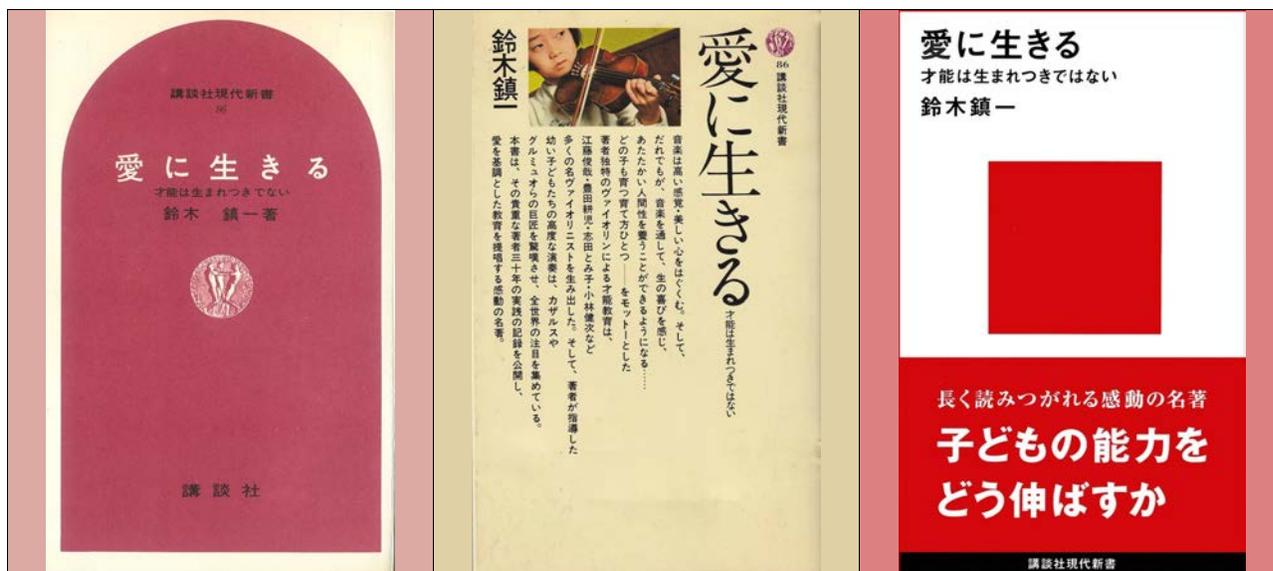


The special exhibition display at TERI Headquarters in Matsumoto, featuring a portrait of Dr. Suzuki and a selection of early editions of *Nurtured by Love (Ai ni Ikiru)*.

The exhibition traced the book's profound journey from its first publication in 1966 to the present day. A key highlight was the public display of Dr. Suzuki's **original handwritten manuscript** of the book, which had been carefully preserved in the TERI archives. Etsuko Suehiro (Violin Teacher Trainer, Tokai Region) of the TERI Archive Committee shared the motivation behind the public release of this precious material:

"Rather than simply storing Dr. Suzuki's original writings, we felt it was important to create an opportunity for everyone to see the 'real thing.' Our hope was that by viewing the manuscript of *Nurtured by Love*, people would gain a deeper understanding of Dr. Suzuki's character and the foundational philosophy of the Suzuki Method. We are also planning future exhibitions of his original sheet music, potentially accompanied by a concert."

Now translated into more than twenty languages, *Nurtured by Love* has allowed Dr. Suzuki's philosophy to reach families and teachers across the globe. The exhibition also specifically recognized the translators and publishers who helped convey his message beyond Japan, underscoring their crucial role in building our global community.



The evolution of *Nurtured by Love* in Japan. Displayed are the covers of the original Japanese publication from 1966 (left), an early edition from 1971 (center), and a modern edition from 2004 (right), illustrating the book's decades-long history.

Visitors were particularly moved by displays highlighting the book's enduring inspiration for teachers, parents, and students across generations. A digital archive and video interviews captured voices from Suzuki teachers around the world, powerfully reminding us that Dr. Suzuki's call to "educate with love" remains as essential today as ever. The background story of how this classic came to be is also revealed in a statement from Ms. Suehiro:

"*Nurtured by Love* went on to become an exceptional bestseller with 100 printings, but it was originally written at the request of the Kodansha Gendai Shinsho editorial department to create a book aimed at young readers in their teens and twenties. I was a high school student at the time, and Dr. Suzuki would let me read the new manuscript pages during my lessons and ask for my opinion. That is a fond memory."

TERI plans to share selected exhibition materials online in the coming year, allowing the international Suzuki community to revisit this remarkable story and celebrate the century of printings that have nurtured hearts across the globe.

Website (in Japanese): <https://www.suzukimethod.or.jp/monthly/jikihitsu.html>