

W I N T E R 2 0 1 8



# Arizona Suzuki Association

Newsletter

## In This Issue

- Never Too Old to Learn, page 1-2
- Grand Canyon Suzuki Celebration Concert Flyer & Registration, page 3-4
- PPG Events, Summer Camps, and News from the State, page 5
- New Possibilities for Suzuki Cello, page 6-7
- Hurricane Relief Play A Thon Thank you, page 8



## Never Too Old to Learn!

By Vicki Merley, ASA Member and Piano Teacher

Why attend workshops? I already feel really good about my teaching and the progress my students are making, why spend money and time to go to another workshop, and hear the same things? Workshops can help us see things in a different way, help us get out of our comfortable ruts, help us make a change for the better, and re-dedicate ourselves to really getting it: to really keep trying to spread beautiful sound in the little world of each student and family in our sphere of influence, and then that sound spreads to our neighborhood, our community, our state, our country, our world.

Continued on page 2

## Save the Date!

Feb. 24-VSSA Spring Workshop

Sept. 29, Grand Canyon Suzuki Celebration Concert

## Never Too Old to Learn cont.



Matsumoto piano studios, at Talent Education complex

I have a friend coming from Reston, Virginia, to the Suzuki piano workshop in Phoenix in February. (Maybe the cold weather in Virginia makes attending a Phoenix workshop desirable!!) I went to Matsumoto, Japan twice, once alone, and once with a 13 year old student who played in the 10-piano concert there. It was about 3 weeks each time. Amazing trips! They did these simple little exercises on every piece, down-ups, twinkles, checking every chair setting, foot stool setting, pedal extenders if needed. But, the teachers demonstrated the sound they wanted the kids to get! And kept asking for THAT sound. Just amazing detail, and amazing results that made tears stream down my face to hear them.

It was like a very very long workshop, I will never forget the sound they produced on each piece! That is why I keep going to these workshops, and listen to them ask for the most basic thing: unforced beautiful sound!

The Japan Sensei are again making that long trip, for this five day workshop, (February 15-19, 2018) master classes for students and teachers, daily question and answer, and a Friendship Recital, which they meticulously make notes on to share the morning after the recital.

I am driving up from Tucson, and several of my students are driving up from Tucson to have lessons, and to be in the recital. Another teacher from Tucson, is also making the trip up there, and many of her students.

Why make these efforts? The Japan teachers believe in us, and keep encouraging us to keep trying. It takes time and money to travel so far, just for a few days. Both for them, and us, it takes a lot of effort. I just think that it is so much closer and easier for me to travel up to Phoenix, than to go to Japan again!

The Sensei seem to just focus on the same things, very simple, and very repetitive: Check every finger as it plays on the key, do down-ups, to get the best tone, use the body correctly. And above all, listen to your sound! Simple, but profound.

The best thing for me, is to hear them demonstrate the tone they think you should be able to produce. I love to hear them play, and to watch them play, they make it seem so easy! They get such big, beautiful sound! I want that! I still use my own creative ideas; each student and family is so different. But, I use these basics at every lesson, and every time I sit to learn a new piece, incorporate these ideas. What is the important tone, what do I need to bring out, are my fingers working correctly, or do I have tension somewhere in my back, or my hand, preventing me getting the best tone?

I remember hearing that Dr. Suzuki said it is really easy to be a Suzuki teacher, just say the same things over and over for ten years!!



From left Ann Taylor Kathy Husby, Ogiwara Sensei, Kawamura Sensei, Gloria Elliott. Far back, Vicki Merley, Angela Jacob, Karen Nalder-Kazarick.



## **Grand Canyon Suzuki Celebration Concert!**



**Saturday, September 29, 2018  
1:00-3:00pm**

**The Grand Canyon, Shrine of the Ages**

**A Play-In Concert to celebrate  
Dr. Suzuki's 120th birthday**

**All Suzuki students, families & friends are welcome!**

Space is limited, please register early! More info and registration forms and will be available starting in March at [azsuzuki.org](http://azsuzuki.org)

**Teacher Workshop**  
**With Thalia Greenhalgh (NY Suzuki violin teacher)**  
**Sponsored by Arizona Suzuki Association, hosted by Leslie Turner**

**Date:** February 25, 2018 (Sunday)

**Time:** 1:00-3:00 pm

**Location:** 5711 N Echo Canyon Circle. Phoenix Az 85018

**Course Description:** Thalia's class will discuss how she has built a sense of community within her own Suzuki studio through the many extra events she offers, including summer camp, pajama parties, special teen events, parents talks, practice-a-thons, etc. She also very passionate about having her students give back to the community. Her performance group, The MetroGnomes, performs frequently in hospitals, nursing homes, museums, and parks as well as at charitable events and has raised tens of thousands of dollars for local and international charities. Thalia believes all of these extra events and especially the community service has created a very bonded and motivated group of students, and is key to keeping students from leaving a Suzuki program as they enter their teens and become more advanced.

**BIO:**

Thalia Greenhalgh, violinist, pursued her music studies at Interlochen Arts Academy, University of Evansville, Indiana University, and Hunter College. She is a graduate of the two-year Suzuki teacher-training program at The School for Strings in New York City and was on faculty there for many years beginning in 1979. She has also founded and directed Suzuki programs in New Jersey and Long Island, NY, where she moved with her family in 1985. Her studio currently has about 60 students, each of whom she sees twice a week for individual and group lessons. Her student performance group, The MetroGnomes, regularly performs throughout the New York metropolitan area and has raised tens of thousands of dollars for a variety of charities through its performances and recordings. Thalia is a frequent guest speaker and teacher at Suzuki workshops and institutes throughout the United States and abroad. As a Suzuki parent to three now grown children, including a violinist, pianist, and cellist, Thalia brings much insight to her popular parent talks.

**Info:**

The fee is \$20. This class is open to all teachers (any instrument). Teachers must be current ASA members, or join ASA (\$10/year). The Teacher will take place at the home of Leslie Turner (ASA violin teacher). All teachers must register by Friday, Feb. 23.

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 (please cut and send bottom portion with payment)

**Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Instrument: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Fee: \$20 (Current ASA Member), \$30 (Non-member, includes ASA membership)

**Application Deadline:** Space limited to 25 teachers, please register by February 23.

**Online registration form and payment is available at [azsuzuki.org](http://azsuzuki.org)**

Please make checks to: **Arizona Suzuki Association**

Please send Application and Payment (Check, Money Order) to:

Laura Tagawa

4745 E. Waverly St.

Tucson, AZ 85712

**Phoenix Piano Group (PPG) Events:**

**February 15-19:** The International Piano Basics Winter Workshop at AZ Piano with concert on Sunday, February 18, at 7:00 P.M. at ASU Katzin Hall. There is no admission fee to the Friendship Concert on Sunday evening at ASU and it is open to the public.

**March 3 & 4:** Celebration Concerts at the Kroc Salvation Army Center, 1375 E. Broadway Road, Phoenix, AZ 85040. Saturday concert will be at 10:30 A.M. and Sunday concert at 4:30. Both are open to the public at no charge.

**April 7:** Graduation Concert Celebration will be at My First Piano in Mesa.

For more info about PPG events, please contact Gloria Elliott, [gelliott50@aol.com](mailto:gelliott50@aol.com)

## Summer Camps

**Curry Summer Music Camp at NAU (Flagstaff)**

Senior Session: June 17-June 30 (entering grade 9-13 in fall 2018)  
Junior Session - July 1-7 (entering grade 7-9 in fall 2018)  
More Info: [nau.edu/cal/music/curry](http://nau.edu/cal/music/curry)

**Tetra Summer Camp (Tempe and Scottsdale)**

June 21-30 in Tempe and July 12-21 in Scottsdale  
6th-12th grade, or younger upon private teacher recommendation  
[www.tetraquartet.org/workshop](http://www.tetraquartet.org/workshop)

**String Play Jr. with Taylor Morris (Glibert)**  
7th-8th grade  
May and June, 2018  
[www.stringplaycamp.com/stringplay-jr](http://www.stringplaycamp.com/stringplay-jr)

**West Valley Chamber Summer Camp (Goodyear)**  
June 18-22, 2018  
[www.wvyo.org](http://www.wvyo.org)

**Metropolitan Youth Symphony Summer Camps (Mesa)**  
Open to any age up to 9th grade

**Suzuki Violin Camp (Tucson)**  
Open to all Suzuki violin students (all ages and levels)  
June 4-8, 2018, 9am-12pm  
For more info please contact: Laura Tagawa at [lauratagawa@gmail.com](mailto:lauratagawa@gmail.com)

**Chaparral Suzuki Academy (Prescott)**  
The 2018 CSA has been POSTPONED to June 2019. It is our goal to offer the highest quality programs, and to build the Suzuki community in Arizona and Southwest region by continuing as an SAA sanctioned summer institute. It is our hope to be able to expand our program offerings in 2019 to include, violin, viola, cello, piano and possibly teacher training opportunities. **More Info:** [chaparralsuzuki.com](http://chaparralsuzuki.com)



## News from the State

### VSSA Groups

VSSA conducts group classes throughout the school year, hosts an annual Workshop for their members and for other Suzuki students, and is playing their final concert at Mi Casa nursing home on March 24.



### Suzuki Goes to the Olympics!

VSSA Spring Workshop: "Suzuki Goes to the Olympics" on February 24! Come one, come all to the day-long Spring Workshop sponsored by Valley of the Sun Suzuki Association. The Winter Olympics in South Korea will be cold and snowy, but we'll have fun in the sun in Chandler, Arizona for our own musical celebration. More information, the registration form and the "Suzuki Olympics Medley" music are available now at

## NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR SUZUKI CELLO

by Alice Vierra

ASA member, Suzuki Cello Teacher, and Suzuki Teacher  
TrainerAlice Vierra and cello teacher trainees at the Greater Washington Suzuki  
String Institute

In the summer of 2010 I wrote the following in a Suzuki Newsletter:

“I had the privilege of teaching Unit 1 to an amazing group of teachers at the Greater Washington Suzuki String Institute held in Arlington, VA from June 26th through July 3rd. As you can see from the above photo there were 12 teachers in the group. I am standing with them - the fourth person from the right. They came from as close by as Falls Church and as far away as Kuala Lumpur. There were two teachers who were public school strings teachers and were there to gain expertise specifically on cello technique to help them with the cellists at their school. Others were there with degrees from Bachelors’ to Doctorates’ to learn about the Suzuki method and working with young children. Seven of the teachers were local and are now ready for new students! At the end of the class the local teachers and I “brainstormed” about ways to encourage families to begin their children on the cello.”

*Continued on page 7*

*New Possibilities for Suzuki Cello cont.*

It is now the beginning of 2018 and I have found myself in Arizona. I have begun brainstorming once again about ways to encourage families to begin their children on the cello. Of course with Suzuki cello the following Suzuki Principles should be present; Every child can learn, Listen to the recordings, Practice every day, Create beautiful hearts, Move in small steps, Give attention to detail, Nurture the Suzuki Triangle, Develop a beautiful tone. Musical ability is not an inborn talent but one that can be developed. However the actual practical steps used to teach beginning students can be very fun as you will see below.

**When a child learns the cello they can expect to learn about:**

Heavy cello feet

Cellists are frog lovers

How to make a mellow cello sound

Amazing “ringing” sounds on this big instrument

Awesome spinning strings during the “Ants” song

**They will also learn about:**

Squishy balls for the left hand (cello hand side)

Pinkie pillows and thumb fuzziness for the right hand (bow side) and of course they will learn about “Boga”.

All of this is how we as cello teachers set up the beginning cellist. All of these principles as well as the Suzuki philosophy principles are then carried through the books as students progress and eventually are able to play a movement of a Solo Bach Cello Suite and more. At the beginning there are a couple of songs that can be used to help with establishing the correct techniques. One piece I use is “Get Ready to Play” (to the tune of French Folk Song)

What do we do to get ready to play?

Stand up on both feet and then start to sway.

Rock to the left foot and then to the right,

Back to the middle and sit down just right.

This is the way we get ready to play.

Another piece is “Set your soft thumb” (to the tune of May Song)

Set your soft thumb, floating your arm Make a C for cello. 2 can sit right down on the string (place 2nd finger on the D string) 2 can stay right down on the string (hold 2nd finger on the D string) Set your soft thumb, floating your arm. Make a C for cello.

Another really amazing part of Suzuki Cello is when the older students stay in the program and at the recitals say things like “Look at that little tiny cello” forgetting they themselves started on one just like that. The older students participate in group, playing an advanced piece together and then offering up a cello choir piece for the younger students like “Robin Hood Changes his Oil” or “The Cello Song” by the Piano Guys. The younger ones look up to the older students and when the beautiful arrangement of French Folk Song by Nordstrum begins, they are in awe of the sound. I would like to see those types of programs in Arizona! However, let’s go back to the fun stuff for awhile. If you choose Suzuki cello you need to remember that the following might happen:

Your hair could get caught in the pegs! People may inquire “why are you carrying a chair with you”? You may begin to have conversations about wolf tone eliminators. Your friends may ask you why you are obsessed with The Piano Guys,

2 Cellos, and Yo-Yo Ma.

Many families immediately think “violin” when they think of Suzuki lessons but the method also includes the learning of piano, cello, bass, guitar, recorder, flute, trumpet, and harp.



Alice Vierra with her advanced cello students.

GO CELLOS! WE HOPE THIS WILL BE A GOOD “CELLO” YEAR!

## Hurricane Relief Play-A-Thon Thank You!

This past Fall, ASA sponsored a Hurricane Relief Play-a-Thon to raise money to send to Suzuki families affected by the hurricanes in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico. ASA students gathered pledges, played songs, and collected money for donation. Families and businesses also made donations to the fund. ASA received a total of **\$1341 in donations which was sent to the Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA) hurricane relief fund.** We also received a full size violin which was donated and sent. Thank you to the students, parents, and teachers who donated and participated in this project. Special thanks to Cindy Baker (Suzuki violin teacher, Phoenix), for suggesting the idea to ASA. Shinichi Suzuki wrote, “Live by looking for things to do for other people”

### Arizona Suzuki Association

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