



# Arizona Suzuki Association

## Spring 2015

### Newsletter

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##### One Issue

###### Size

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## Learning Suzuki Guitar (or Cello, or Violin) as a Second Language by Mary Wilkening, Suzuki Cello Teacher and ASA Past President

I have been teaching Suzuki cello for many years. I currently have eight adult cello students along with many young students. I have also taken up classical guitar. After attempting to learn with a traditional guitar teacher, I was able to take lessons from a Suzuki guitar teacher. I have been wondering how my adult students feel about learning a second instrument using the tenants of the Suzuki Approach: **Memorization, Listening, and Review**. Unfortunately, my adult students don't get to experience the 4<sup>th</sup> pillar of Suzuki, the Group Lesson, as they can't schedule in Saturday morning Group classes. The adult students I polled were learning cello as a second instrument starting with the Twinkles. They were Penny Caughy, pianist, Vicki Merley, pianist and Suzuki piano teacher, David Wilson, clarinetist and conductor, and Heather Tsui, flutist.

#### Listening:

**Mary:** I love to listen to classical guitar. I find it very soothing. When I listen to the Suzuki recordings, I learn the phrasings, the tone, and the style that I am trying to imitate.

**Penny:** From my perspective learning to play the cello using the Suzuki approach has provided me with more "quickness" than I would have imagined. Listening first solidifies the song in my mind. The need (as with the traditional approach to music) to calculate the counting and timing of the song is almost not there. I already know the way to calculate the counting, but by listening to the CD it becomes a much speedier process. Of course, I love the beauty of all of the music selections in the Suzuki books.

**Vicki:** The single most stunning realization I have had in my journey in learning to play the cello is the value of listening to the music. As a piano teacher, I had no problem "reading" all the notes in the music. But, I was struggling to find where the notes were on the cello, this being my

first real attempt to master a string instrument. I thought if I could just read the music and slowly learn where to find the notes, I would make more rapid progress. But I struggled, and wondered "am I crazy to try this?" I was in despair at my slow progress, and my teacher (Mary) reminded me to listen to the recordings! It is so amazing to hear my own sound get more beautiful and to work to emulate what I heard on the recording! It is so much easier when I listen enough.

**Heather:** Dr. Suzuki reminds us "Don't rush, but don't rest; patience is an important faculty for achievement... That means to repeat and repeat an action until it becomes a part of ourselves." Adults have busy lives. There's always an excuse to not review or listen to the recording. But we can make a choice to use the time we *do* have productively or haphazardly.

#### Memorization:

**Mary:** I find with the guitar that the finger patterns are so different from cello patterns, that it is difficult to know in advance what the note will sound like when I pluck it. By memorizing the pieces, I can begin to anticipate what the note sounds like in advance. Additionally, on guitar I often need to play several notes across strings in chords and arpeggios. An incorrect note really sticks out. By memorizing the pieces my fingers begin to know scale and arpeggio fingerings that are the framework for all pieces.

**David:** For me, the Suzuki approach has been perfect. Making music from the first lesson and playing pieces rather than exercises allows me to memorize the lesson quickly and then concentrate on the skill being developed. The systematic approach of introducing techniques and skills week by week has enabled me to make progress much more rapidly than I had imagined.

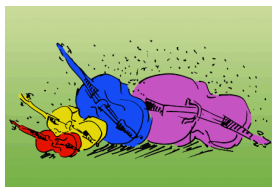
**Penny:** Memorization has sometimes scared me, because I will think that the memorization will be almost impossible, but I soon surprise myself by listening and continuing to play (review) and increasing my fluency, I soon see that I am beginning to get the song memo-

## Learning, Continued from Page 1

rized.

**Vicki:** Dr. Suzuki said that once the song is memorized, then the work begins! So, listening a lot, memorizing the music, practicing in short sections, using the Twinkles, all wonderful things Suzuki taught us that bring quick improvement and mastery. I love this Suzuki method because it works. It is always Ok to learn something new. You are never too old to twinkle!

**Heather:** Memorization has been incredibly difficult for me. Of course, an adult brain is not as pliable as a child's brain so there are perhaps neurophysiologic issues at play to some extent. However, I think memorizing has been hard for other reasons. First, I haven't been consistent about reviewing old pieces. This is such a critical step because in order for the skills learned in earlier pieces to carry forward they have to be continually practiced and improved upon. There is always something new to be learned from an old piece. Without reviewing previously learned techniques, I never give myself the chance to take them to another level. It creates a rocky foundation and affects the progress that is possible in future pieces. Secondly, I don't always practice slowly and carefully. Rushing through pieces and trying in vain to play something start to finish without having first done the important work of deliberate and deconstructed/non-linear practice is an act in futility! It is virtually impossible to memorize a piece that you haven't broken down into smaller units and worked through methodically and meticulously. You have to be patient and take the time to let the piece get into your fingers. Repetition is so important



for creating muscle memories, which in turn helps with the process of memorizing whole pieces.

**Review:**

**Mary:** Review gives me a foundation for learning new pieces. My muscles learn how to move and I become more fluent. When I really know a piece well, I can take time off from it and it will still be in my fingers when I return. I feel more confident playing pieces that I know. I don't get bored playing them because they are still a challenge to play well. I find that adults have a hard time remembering the names of pieces, just like kids do. The notes and the names seem to be stored in different parts of our brains.

**David:** Ending my practice session with a review of earlier lessons with piano accompaniment is a way of not only rewarding myself but realizing the progress I am making. I would greatly enjoy periodic group lessons if they can be arranged.

**Vicki:** Suzuki is so very innovative. It is thinking about music learning as very similar to learning a language and also a sport.

**Heather:** Memorization is an ongoing challenge. I have to constantly remind myself to slow down and practice carefully. But I no longer measure my success in the number of pieces I can play, but rather strive to play a few pieces well. If that means I spend months on a piece, then so be it. Learning a second instrument can be a deeply rewarding experience if we go about it with care, thoughtfulness, and intention.

**Mastering the Instrument:**

**Mary:** Mastering a new instrument is a humbling experience. I admire my adult students who are on this journey, and by struggling through it myself, I also appreciate the adventure my young students experience learning the new language of playing cello.

## ASA Fall Workshop on October 23 and 24, 2015.

The 2015 ASA Fall Workshop will take place on October 23-24 at Orangewood Church in Phoenix. The two-day workshop includes a Friday session for teachers with guest Suzuki violin teacher, Liz Arbus, Friday cello master classes with Suzuki cello teacher, Brittany Gardner, and a Saturday workshop for violin, viola and cello students.

**Schedule:**

**Friday Oct. 23, 4:00-7:00** - Teacher Workshop with Liz Arbus, followed by dinner. Session topic: **Bow Distribution: Building the Lineage of Our Technique (How all bow one bow distribution applies to all the books and beyond).** Be sure to bring your violins!

**Friday Oct. 23, 4:00 – 7:00** - Cello Master class with Brittany Gardner

**Saturday Oct. 24, 9:00-3:00** Student Workshop for Suzuki violin, viola, and cello students. The day will conclude with a workshop concert at 2:00pm.

## Fall Workshop Teachers, 2015



Liz Arbus is an SAA Sanctioned Teacher Trainer and director of Suzuki Talent Education in Pasadena (STEP).

Liz received her Bachelors Degree in Music Education at Illinois State University and her Masters Degree in Violin Performance at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville where she studied with the renowned Suzuki Teacher Trainer, John Kendall. Other influential teachers were Zoya Leybin, Helen Callus, Jacques Israelievitch and Sally Thomas, along with all the old and new friends and colleagues from the music world! Liz continues studying and learning new music, playing chamber music and growing in the musical community. Gathering new ideas from teacher workshops is a great resource for her continuing education. Baroque Violin is a passion which she is studying independently. Liz established S.T.E.P.: Suzuki Talent Education of Pasadena in 2004. Ms. Arbus taught with the Pasadena Suzuki Music Program 1985 - 2004. 1980-85 Liz taught Suzuki violin in Berkeley, Calif. for five years before moving to Pasadena. In 1977 Ms. Arbus taught orchestra K-12 in the Joliet, Illinois public schools. She teaches at Suzuki Institutes and workshops all over the United States, Central America and Sweden.



Brittany Platt Gardner began her cello studies at the age of eight, after receiving a cello as a birthday present. A native of Salt Lake City, pursued musical studies at Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor's Degree in Cello Performance as a student of Richard Aaron. She continued her studies at the University of Michigan, where she received a Master's Degree in Cello Performance as a student of Anthony Elliott.

After completing her studies, Gardner returned home to Salt Lake City, where she has become deeply involved in the music community. She currently maintains a large and active private studio and also teaches at the Gifted Music School, where she serves at the Suzuki Program Coordinator and orchestra sectional coach. Her students have won top honors at ASTA, the Utah Symphony Youth Guild Competition, National Federation of Music Clubs, and Reflections.

Gardner also currently serves on the board of the Intermountain Suzuki String Institute and has been a coordinator at the international conference for the Suzuki Association of the Americas for 2012 and 2014.

Gardner is a much sought-after performer and collaborator, appearing with such groups as the Utah Symphony, The Orchestra at Temple Square, the Intermezzo Chamber Series, Pioneer Theater, and The Cathedral of the Madeleine, among others.

She and her husband live in Salt Lake City with their two adorable little girls.

## Teacher's Column

**Would you like to be listed on  
the Arizona Suzuki Association  
Website as a registered  
Suzuki Teacher?**

**Just register today at  
[www.azsuzuki.org](http://www.azsuzuki.org)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Instrument \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Or, fill out this form and send it to Mary Wilkening, 1157 E  
Acacia Circle, Litchfield Park, AZ 85340 with your \$10 annual  
dues.



## Phoenix Piano Group News

ASA—Phoenix Piano Group held its Final Recital on May 9 at My First Piano in Mesa. Anyone interested in more information on this group can contact Karen Nalder-Kazarick at 480-759-1225 or [karennalder@gmail.com](mailto:karennalder@gmail.com)

## Spotlight on Technology!

By Mary Wilkening

Have you heard about some of the apps that are now available for smart phones and tablets? These innovations are making the work of Suzuki teachers a lot easier by allowing families to practice better at home.

“Anytune” is a free app for Apple products that can slow down pieces on demand. Just download a Playlist of your Suzuki pieces in your device, then open it in Anytune and you can play them as fast or as slow as you like. It is easy to use and instantly rewarding. It is also available for \$14.95, but I find the free version sufficient for my needs.

Amazing Slow Downer is a version of this technology available for Android or Kindle. The price is \$14.95.

I have downloaded “Tunable”, a tuner that shows how close a tone is to the absolute pitch. I find it distracting because it is so sensitive and wavers on open strings. “StayInTune” for Apple is a better choice.

Ian Salmon suggests the following technology in his Parents as Partners talk from 3/9/2015:

“Cleartune” (Apple or Android, \$3.99) is a tuner that is appropriate for beginning students. “Tonalenergy” (Apple or Android, \$3.99) is another tuner and metronome appropriate for more advanced students. “Tempo” (Apple \$2.99) is a metronome that can be programmed for a set list of pieces with certain tempos.

“Better Ears” is an ear training app for Apple products that works on interval recognition to chord progressions in levels from beginner through advanced.

**Fred Fox School of Music from University of Arizona announces Weekend for  
Strings Honor Orchestra, September  
24—26, Tucson.**

This festival weekend creates a southwestern region orchestra for high school string musicians. The weekend also incorporates master classes given by the UA string faculty and two performances by the guest artist, Vijay Gupta, from the LA Philharmonic. Admission by audition. See [www.wfs.arizona.edu](http://www.wfs.arizona.edu) for more information.

## Parents as Partners, 2015 by Megyn Neff and Mary Wilkening

*Parents as Partners is a program of video presentations that has been presented four times since 2011 by Suzuki Association of the Americas. SAA puts videos by various Suzuki teachers and parents on a special feed that is available from January to June. ASA has been reviewing some of the ideas from the videos since they started. They are available on our website under [www.azsuzuki.org/events/Parents as Partners On-line](http://www.azsuzuki.org/events/Parents%20as%20Partners). Check them out! Some examples follow:*

### 3/30/15—Holly Blackwelder Carpenter - "Can Every Parent?"

Ms. Blackwelder Carpenter hits the nail on the head when she states that the main difference between Suzuki education presently and when it was first brought to America, is that our family dynamic as a society has changed dramatically. It is no longer the norm for one parent to stay at home all day. The more likely scenario is that parents and children are away from home, and each other, for 10-12 hours per day. After describing a typical packed family schedule, she states the effectiveness of a Suzuki education is not a question of desire or ability, but time. She then poses the question, "We know that every child can, but, can every parent?" Here are some of her tips for the 21<sup>st</sup> century Suzuki parent who aims for seven days of practice:

Try to schedule all music lessons on the same day (for multiple kids in lessons).

Find a way to practice on the go. Do bow holds in the car, have your child do their review during dinner.

Talk to your teacher about what, if anything, your child can practice independently. For example, independent review might be a possibility even for half the week.

Employ an older Suzuki student in the studio to be a "practice sitter" once a week (or more).

Set a timer for when to start practice. If you say you'll practice after the house is clean, then sometimes practice might not happen.

Work efficiently. Talk to your teacher about which families practice most efficiently, and ask those parents how they practice.

The most important question to ask yourself, as a parent trying to prioritize lessons amongst everything else that needs to get done, is: "Are music lessons optional in our family?" If the answer is yes, then you'll have a rough go at trying to make it work. If the answer is no, then the practices *will* happen. It's not a bad idea to ask yourself on a daily basis, "Why am I practicing with my child today?" That will help get priorities straight. Ms. Blackwelder Carpenter also asks to consider these points:

How long should the music education go on for? 1 year? 5

years? Until 8<sup>th</sup> grade? 12<sup>th</sup> grade? At some point, music lessons will no longer be an option for the student, so decide at what point it becomes their decision to continue, and not just your own.

Arguments during practices are not actually about the violin. Practicing is sometimes the only one-on-one time you'll get with your child. It is where the pushing of boundaries will be experimented. Be prepared for that, and heed this advice...

Think of your child as a teenager. Think about what kind of a person they will be as a teen, what they will have learned from these practices with you.

Focus on the positives.

See practice time as a blessing of being able to spend time with your child.

They will likely remember, as a teen or an adult, the good practices--not the bad ones.

### 1/15/15 **Brittany Gardner - "Advice and Encouragement for Suzuki Parents"** (Brittany Gardner is the cello clinician for ASA's Fall Workshop 2015)

Brittany Gardner was a Suzuki child, has been a teacher, and is now a parent. As a parent she sees all possibilities and limitation and knows the journey. This is her advice: 1. Believe in the capabilities of the child. 2. Work as partners with the teachers and follow through on activities. 3. All choices have consequences. If there are too many activities, your music experience will have a different outcome. 4. Peer groups are important for child and parents. Brittany's childhood quartet members are still friends as adults. 5. Best practice is consistent practice. There is no substitute for repetition. **Use 3 colors of cards for tasks to be done before school (green), after school (pink), and by the child alone (yellow).** 6. Let the child try and learn by making mistakes. 7. Practice is meant to produce growth. It will happen if consistent, patient, effort is made. 8. Adapt to the growth of the child and change the way practice is done at different stages.

You may also be interested in these talks:

### 2/2/15—**Mark Mutter — "Raising Independent Musicians"**—Mark Mutter was the violin clinician for ASA's Fall Workshop 2014.

### 3/2/15—**Susan Baer—"The Sound of Optimism"** - Susan Baer was the violin clinician for ASA's Fall Workshop in 2013.

### 3/23/15—**Melissa Fees—"Never Stop, Never Hurry"** - Melissa Fees is a member of ASA and VSSA, is a Child Psychologist, and mother of 5 Suzuki kids in the Phoenix area.

Other subjects covered by the talks include review ideas, listening ideas, motivation and practice tips, games, institutes, perfectionism, useful technology etc. These are available at [www.azsuzuki.org/events/parents as partners](http://www.azsuzuki.org/events/parents%20as%20partners).



## News from NAU School of Music

**2015 Curry Summer Music Camp at NAU - Dates: Senior Session: June 21- July 4 (*entering grade 9 - 13 in fall 2015*) Junior Session: July 5 - 11(*entering grade 7 - 9 in fall 2015*)**

### Learn

- Work with NAU School of Music faculty and renowned musicians from across the country
- Full ensemble rehearsals with outstanding clinicians each day
- Attend master classes, sectionals, and other courses that expand knowledge and appreciation of different facets of music
- Private lesson and chamber coaching opportunities

### Perform

- Finale ensemble concerts in Ardrey Memorial Auditorium at the end of each week
- Audition to perform for peers in the annual Student Honor Recital, Student Chamber Recital, and Variety Show
- Pianists perform in recital on the stage of Ardrey Memorial Auditorium at the conclusion of each session

### Enjoy

- Established in 1950 by Dr. Jack Swartz
- Surrounded by the San Francisco Peaks on the Northern Arizona University campus in Flagstaff, Arizona
- Attend concerts, recitals, and other fun activities such as the talent show, dances, movie nights, camp games, and more!
- Go to [www.nau.edu/music camp](http://www.nau.edu/music%20camp). for more information.



## Hisami Iijima's Studio Presents a Spring Concert



The students from Hisami Iijima's violin studio played at a Spring Recital on April 18, 2015 at Central United Methodist Church in Phoenix. They pose together with their teacher after the recital on the lawn of the church.





## **ASA Board of Directors 2015-2016**

### **The ASA Board for 2015-2016**

Laura Tagawa, President, Violin

Chris Mahar, Treasurer, Parent

Bonnie Roesch, Secretary, Violin

Mary Wilkening, Newsletter, Webmaster, Cello

Eunice Elie, Violin

Christi Elie, Violin, Viola

Hisami Iijima, Violin

Karen Kazarick-Nalder, Piano

Megyn Neff, Violin

Louise Scott, Violin

**If you would like to vote on this slate of ASA Officers, please go to our website [www.azsuzuki.org](http://www.azsuzuki.org). Follow the voting link on the home page.**

## **How About a Music Camp This Summer?**

Here are some suggestions:

1. Curry Summer Music Camp at NAU. Junior Camp is July 5—11. Senior Camp is June 21—July 4. For more information go to [www.cal.nau.edu/camp](http://www.cal.nau.edu/camp).
2. Prescott's Chaparral Musicfest Suzuki Piano and Violin Academy (For Suzuki Piano Students in Books 1—3 and Suzuki Violin Students in Books 1—4; Ages 6—12); The dates are June 10—13. For more information go to [www.chaparralmusicfest.org](http://www.chaparralmusicfest.org).
3. West Valley Youth Orchestra Chamber Music Summer Camp with Quartet Sabaku for students in Suzuki Book 3 or above or comparable traditional students. This camp is held in Goodyear June 15—19. For more information go to [www.wvyo.org](http://www.wvyo.org).

**See [www.suzukiassociation.org](http://www.suzukiassociation.org) for more Suzuki Camps**



ASA  
1157 E. Acacia Circle  
Litchfield Park 85340



**ASA Fall Workshop with Liz Arbus and Brittany Gardner,  
October 23 and 24, 2015**