



# Arizona Suzuki Association

## Winter 2016

### Newsletter

#### *Special Points of Interest*

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#### Confessions of a Slacker Suzuki Parent, by Kathryn Leonard

I have been asked by my son's fabulous and oh-so-patient cello teacher, Ms. Mary Wilkening, to write a piece on the value of listening for Suzuki students. This request was made to me after an offhand comment I made during one particularly good lesson, where Mary had noted that my son had been making notable progress after a bit of a stall-out during the summer. I observed that we had resumed listening to the Suzuki CD (Cello Book 3-4) on a more regular basis and that the last few pieces seemed to come easier for him. "Perfect!" she beamed. "You can write an article for me on the importance of listening." I had just quit my job and thought, Why Not? I can do this.

Well, that request was made over a month ago, and I am finally getting down to writing that piece-hence, the title "Confessions of a Slacker Suzuki Parent." I write this in the hopes of not only sharing the value of listening with all of you out there, but also my realization that listening- regularly listening- can actually streamline the process of learning new pieces, cut down on the drama of painful practicing, and make LESS WORK for us slacker parents.

First, let's establish my audience here: Are you a Slacker Suzuki parent? Do you know where your child's Suzuki CD even is (in the car? in that CD player that went to Goodwill last month? On the "other" iPod that your husband always has?) Do you track your

child's practice on random scraps of paper and not in a notebook? Do you maybe not track at all? Do you routinely forget to put rosin in your child's case? Forget his end pin anchor at home? Does practice frequently end after 10 minutes with shouting and tears? Do you sometimes need to pour yourself an extra-large glass of wine before practice sessions just to get yourself through? Do you smile and make small talk with the other Suzuki parents in your child's studio secretly thinking 'if only I could have my act together like her/him, my kid would be playing so much better?' If you can answer 'yes' to more than one of these questions, some of what I write here may resonate.

Time is the enemy of the slacker parent. There is never enough time. I now have two children studying two different instruments with two different teachers. Add that to other extracurricular activities like boy scouts, soccer, capoeira and aggressive homework schedules, some days 30 minutes of practice seems like a luxury and on some days, simply laughable. The last thing I want to be doing after a long day of work, school pick up, dinner, homework and sibling dramatics, is fight my child to force them to sit down with his or her instrument. But we know it needs to happen, and even us slackers know that sporadic practice or lack of review causes more trouble and more tears in the long run. When my son forgets a review piece, he

will tearfully turn to me and blame me that it is "my fault" for not keeping it in the practice rotation. Sigh.

So here is where the listening comes in. Listening is both review and preview. As our children advance and learn more pieces, the review by necessity needs to become more selective. Without vigilance (remember, we're slackers in this scenario,) certain pieces- particularly those pieces that our child found the most challenging- may drop out of rotation. Listening, while certainly not taking the place of playing, can keep those neural pathways open, thereby lessening the paralysis that comes when you ask your Book 4 child to play a piece from Book 2.

For those of you out there who do not slack, this is probably very old news. As is the news that the length of those "plateaus" your child occasionally hits can be shortened through bumping up your listening routine. Looking back over the years, almost every time we hit that plateau of non-progress or every time I wanted to throw my hands in the air and simply give up (the tears! the drama!), I would ask myself what is it that I could be doing better? What else, given my limited amount of time, could I do? And the answer always became- "Well, we could actually start listening again." Experienced Suzuki professionals and teachers and the Parents as Partners series all exhort the benefits of ACTIVELY listening to the recordings; the active listening concept always made me think of sitting there with

(Continued on Page 2)

with my child practicing air bowing or fingering or even just sitting still- which all seemed to take more time, and thus became one of the first places to cut corners. Teachers- don't hate me- but I have found that PASSIVELY listening to the recordings is actually pretty darn effective. And passive=no work. No work! It's like cheating! We can listen at supper. We can listen in the tub. We can listen on the way to school. We can listen while doing homework.

The results of this passive listening really do seem magical. Within a few weeks, those review pieces that caused fights and tears are not playing themselves, but are now approached with a "can-do" attitude. That piece you are polishing for the next recital is really sounding very nice, and that new piece that you were dreading is being conquered like a boss. Practice is easier, your child is more confident, and you feel pretty darn good about yourself. Like you could hang legitimately with the other Suzuki parents.

So how do you make this happen? As I mentioned earlier, when we stuck to the CD format, listening somehow always evaded us. Where's the CD? Oh, it's in the car? Oh, it's lost/scratched/etc? The simple solution seemed to be to get a digital version onto our iPod or iPad (we downloaded ours through iTunes.) However, we soon discovered that it was never on available (read=charged) device at our disposal. So now, Book 1-2 Violin and Book 3-4 cello live on all of our devices. We don't need a CD player, or a dock, or anything other than our phone to make the listening magic happen. Again, the key here- as it is for all things slacker- is to eliminate all excuses for why the necessary part of our routine can't happen.

I don't know why it took me so many years to figure this out. But it did. And to be honest, I'm still figuring it out. I'm sure we will lapse again, and I will need to remind myself that oh, yeah... time to get back to the listening. But first, let me pour that glass of wine.

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### Every Child Can! With Susan Baer, By Laura Tagawa, ASA President

ASA hosted the Every Child Can! (ECC) class on January 17, 2016 at the NAU North Valley Campus in Phoenix. ECC is SAA's introductory course to Dr. Suzuki's philosophy and its application to Suzuki education for parents, teachers, prospective teachers and others. Twenty participants came from around Arizona including the Phoenix area, Tucson, and Flagstaff as well as from out of state and even abroad including California, Oregon, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates. SAA Teacher Trainer Susan Baer from Washington led the class. With more than forty years of teaching experience as a Suzuki teacher, she offered valuable insight and inspiration to the participants. Highlights of the course included a thorough examination of the elements of the Suzuki Method, inspirational videos, including Suzuki teaching and student performances, and lively discussion among participants who offered a variety of different perspectives.



Participants in the January 17, 2016 ECC! Class.



Louise Scott, Susan Baer, Laura Tagawa

## Summer Music Camps

### Summer Institutes:

Please check the Website [www.suzukiassociation.org](http://www.suzukiassociation.org) to find dates and locations of Suzuki Summer Institutes. This experience can't be beat for bonding a family in the joy of playing instruments



### Curry Summer Music Camp at NAU Summer 2016

**Senior Session: June 19 - July 2 (*entering grade 9 - 13 in Fall 2016*)**

**Junior Session: July 3 - 9 (*entering grade 7 - 9 in Fall 2016*)**

## *NEW IN THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC AT NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY*

**Undergraduate Certificate in Suzuki Pedagogy (Violin)**

**Revised Master of Music degree in Suzuki Pedagogy (Violin)**

### Chaparral Suzuki Academy June 8 - 11, 2016 Prescott, AZ

★ Violin & Viola Books 1 - 4

★ Piano Books 1-3

★ SAA Appoved Institute & Outstanding Faculty

★ Held at Yavapai College, Housing and Meal options available

**Info & Registration at [chaparralsuzuki.com](http://chaparralsuzuki.com)**

**Contact: Laura Tagawa,**

**Director [chaparralsuzuki@gmail.com](mailto:chaparralsuzuki@gmail.com)**

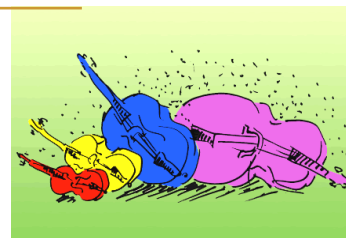
The **West Valley Youth Orchestra** is sponsoring **WVYO Chamber Music Summer Camp with Quartet Sabaku**. The dates will be June 6–10, 2016, in Goodyear Arizona. Please go to [www.wvyo.org](http://www.wvyo.org) for more information.

## News From Around the State

### Valley of the Sun Suzuki Workshop 2016!

**SAVE THE DAY: Saturday, February 20, 2016 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

**Theme: Suzuki Loves Star Wars!**



Plan on attending VSSA's annual winter workshop in Tempe, Arizona. Join us in welcoming our guest clinicians for a day of fun and learning. The winter workshop helps provide a little break from your everyday routine, and you get to spend the day with other Suzuki families. It's a great time for parents to network about practice tips and for the students to see others Suzuki students in action!

#### Guest clinicians

Violin: Leslie Turner, Laura Tagawa, Karin Hallberg, Carol Sue McKenzie

Cello: Pamela Richardson

Music and Movement: Cathy Shepherd

The day's schedule will include:

- a group class
- a masterclass for those playing Song of the Wind and beyond
- a music/movement class
- an ensemble performance class, to practice Star Wars music!
- a final concert

Students who play Twinkle through Song of the Wind will have the same schedule, but without a masterclass.

Included in tuition: classes listed above; lunch and snack; T-shirt.

Registration forms will be posted on the VSSA website <http://www.valleysuzuki.org/for-parents.html> by January 23, 2016. Postmark due date for registrations is Feb 10; late fee after that.

Any questions? Contact Lani Hill, [bluemesa@byu.net](mailto:bluemesa@byu.net) or 480-688-9285 (cell).



## PPG-ASA-Phoenix Piano Group, By Gloria Elliott

On October 31, 78 piano students from 4 studios participated in 3 formal concerts at Katzin Hall, ASU. Students ranged in age from 5 to 17. A string quartet provided accompaniments for many Book 2 pieces and for the Sonatinas and Sonata in Books 3 - 5. Receptions followed each concert. Student fees, the practice-a-thon student fundraiser and Celebration Concert Donations of over \$2000.00 enabled us to again use a facility that provides students with an opportunity for a wonderful performance.

On January 23 piano students will perform in 2 concerts at My First Piano with a pizza buffet lunch between concerts at Organ Stop Pizza.

From February 3 - 7 Ogiwara Sensei and Kawamura Sensei will arrive from Matsumoto, Japan, to present a winter workshop for teachers, students and a recital with evaluation. Teachers from Washington, Oregon, California, Nebraska, Virginia and Edmonton, Canada, will join with 7 Arizona teachers for research and study. On Saturday, February 6, at 5:00 P.M. there will be a formal



concert by 24 students from Arizona at the Kroc Center for Performing at the Salvation Army South Mountain facility. All ASA family members are welcome to attend the concert and student lessons free of charge. Lessons will be held at AZ Piano from 3:15 - 5:30 Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, from 10:00 to 12:30 on Saturday and from 2:00 to 5:00 on Sunday.

In March, Bruce Anderson, SAA teacher trainer from Florida, will come to Arizona for a week of student and teacher lessons in various studios in the Phoenix area and Tucson. Members are welcome to observe. If interested, contact Gloria Elliott.

Graduation auditions will be in April with a Graduation Concert and trophy ceremony at My First Piano in May.

## Scenes from 2015 ASA Fall Workshop...



Clockwise from upper left: Brittany Gardner and Cello Choir, Taylor Morris and Fiddling; Liz Arbus and violins at Final Performance; Peter Rolland and Cello Fiddling; Kari Weldon and Vocal Virtuosos.





ASA

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Membership Directory Inside!**