

# Arizona Suzuki Association

Newsletter



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## Bach, Bowing, and Basketball

By Anita Barrios, Suzuki Parent

I'm snuggled up reading a good book and a few notes waft into the room. I listen, smiling, knowing just by the tone of the violin which child has succumbed to summer boredom and picked up an instrument to doodle with Bach irreverently, playfully, pluckingly. He turns it into a driving fiddle hoedown for several measures then gives it a jazzy beat the next, the way only a teenager can or will re-envision the work of a musical master like Bach.

I say nothing. It's not my place, not anymore. This isn't practice, this is his ever-evolving relationship with his instrument, with himself. It's not meant for me at all and that I get to hear it is something I treasure, a mark of trust between him and I. It was hard-won on his part and lovingly surrendered on mine.

At some point, we became a Suzuki violin family. I'm not sure when it happened and it sure wasn't planned. I had no idea eight years ago when we signed up our two children for lessons with our private teacher at the recommendation of a fiddle and public school teacher that we'd keep with it for so long. But something about the Suzuki triangle resonated with me, especially when my kiddos were little and I saw, first-hand, the benefits of consistent expectations for practice and progress. My kiddos thrived inside and outside her studio.

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**Bach, Bowing, and Basketball cont. from page 1**

But as they approached teenager-hood, right around 6<sup>th</sup> grade, that triangle lost a leg. Me. I went back to work for a scant two and a half years. My absence by necessity from their practices was enough to give them the independence they craved on their instruments. Like a lot of things we do as parents, I had no idea if I was doing the right thing. The “quality” of practices certainly tanked at first but then rebounded, like my son under the hoop, fighting for the ball. They took possession of their practices and looking back on it, I think I had to step back for my two kiddos to *want* to continue playing beyond middle school.

Playing the violin is not always fun. In fact, it doesn’t really become fun until well after their bodies and minds are done growing. Every time they grew another inch, or their feet got bigger, arms longer, hands bigger and fingers longer, they had to relearn how to bow, how to hold the instrument, where their fingers needed to land on a larger size. The insistence on practice and consistent lessons gave them tools to deal with those challenges, so much so that they both now apply what they’ve learned from violin to their personal pursuits – school, basketball, soccer, environmental science.

Which is, in the end, what I hoped Suzuki violin was doing all along – providing them with the life skills to be successful in whatever endeavor they choose, be it violin or basketball or soccer or mechanical engineering. With love. Independently. As adults.

## News from Around the State

### VSSA Workshop

Come one, come all to the Valley of the Sun Suzuki Association Spring Workshop, "Suzuki On Safari!" We'll have a swingin' time together on February 22, 2020 in Chandler. Registration is open now for Suzuki Violin, Cello and Voice students. Sign up soon to make sure you get a spot. Registration link, more info, and extra music are at [www.valleysuzuki.org/workshop-2020.html](http://www.valleysuzuki.org/workshop-2020.html)  
Contact Lani Hill with questions, 480-688-9285 and [krhlwh@gmail.com](mailto:krhlwh@gmail.com)



### Summer Institutes

Visit SAA’s website for a complete listing of Suzuki Summer Institutes around the country.

[suzukiassociation.org/events/institutes](http://suzukiassociation.org/events/institutes)

## In Loving Memory

Erin Elizabeth Burley, violinist and local enthusiastic Suzuki teacher passed away on June 24, 2019 at her home in Phoenix. She was a graduate of Chaparral where she was concert mistress of the school orchestra. She became an active performer playing with many of the touring shows, Phoenix Theater, AZ Broadway Theater, and with famous performers here and in Las Vegas. She was a successful private teacher and a full-time strings and general music teacher at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School where she was adored by her students, faculty, and community. Erin was a gifted teacher and it was a joy to watch her teach. Erin's enthusiasm and love for music and the performance of music was a positive example for all her students and those who knew and the many who loved her. She had obtained her BM degree in performance having studied with Dr. Katie McLin and Professor Danwen Jiang at ASU. She had previously been accepted to Manhattan School of Music where she benefited from being in an active and world class metropolitan area. She is greatly missed by her students, her faculty friends, the Arizona Suzuki community, many professional Phoenix musicians and, of course, by her parents Dr. John and Barbara Burley and her beloved brother, Chris.



## Fall Workshop Summary

The ASA hosted a Fall Workshop on October 18 and 19 in Phoenix. Guest teachers included Winifred Crock (violin and orchestra) and Mary Beth Tyndall (cello). Suzuki violin, viola, and cello students from around the state gathered to play music together. Taylor Morris taught fiddling classes and his group, The Gilbert Town Fiddlers, performed a lunch-time concert. All students performed in the workshop concert at the end of the day. Alexandra Jacques taught a Suzuki Early Childhood Education (SECE) class for students ages 0-5. Winifred Crock taught a Teacher Workshop, "Lift Offs and Landings: Teaching "Off-String" Bowing Techniques."



# Madrid, 2nd International Teacher Trainers Convention

By Alice Vierra, SAA Cello Teacher Trainer and ASA Board Member

I was pleased and honored to be able to attend the International Teacher Trainers Convention last October in Madrid. Just a few days ago I opened the SAA Journal for this quarter and read articles written by two of my cello colleagues about attending the Convention. I recommend you read them too.

I think all musicians are “travelers” in their own way. If we have the chance and resources we will travel to summer music camps, to lessons across town, Suzuki Institutes in another city, to a concert to hear a special orchestra or favorite musician, to rehearsals, on concert tours, to a Suzuki Conference, or, if we don’t have those resources, we travel in our music to a place of joy, or sadness, or serenity. So was the case for all the teacher trainers from around the world who made the decision to travel to Madrid for the 2nd International Teacher Trainer Convention.

I had been traveling in Spain with my husband for eleven days before the conference. We walked into the conference hotel and I immediately recognized many fellow Suzuki colleagues from America and other places. Those I knew I greeted with hugs - each of us realizing how far we had travelled, looking forward to meeting others, and learning about Suzuki in other parts of the world. Lunch was not provided that day so I walked with 7 or 8 other teachers to a local place to grab a bite to eat before the opening session of the convention. I was glad to have begun the study of Spanish nine months earlier so that I could order some food once we arrived at the restaurant with my colleagues. We would dine together and make new friends as well in the next few days. The Silken Puerta Hotel offered breakfast, lunch, and dinner in one dining room for all of us attending the Madrid Convention. It was a congenial group.

The opening session of the Convention was led by the ESA Chairman Martin Ruttiman. He and his team had built a convention framework for sessions and sharing. He humorously described our task as a willingness to share our ideas and a willingness to ‘agree to disagree’. We then heard from a representative of each association about the history of their programs. We also heard how they were set up with the number of hours of training required, pre-requisites, observations, etc. Although each association had similarities and differences, it was wonderful to hear the goal of each was to educate teachers about the Suzuki Method and follow Suzuki’s dream. I recall one of the ESA representatives, Christophe Bossuat from France, talking about the method at its beginnings in France. In France there was a strong tradition of training classical violinists and the first Suzuki method teachers did not want to appear to be in competition but rather just to share a new method of teaching. So at the beginning they agreed to only accept younger students. They were invited after one year to perform at a conference. Ten children ages 2 - 6 were selected and they played Twinkles, Lightly Row, and Rhody.

Tanya Carey, representative of SAA, talked about the beginnings of teaching Suzuki Method in the United States. She said there were sixteen Suzuki Cello teachers including her when she wrote her Doctoral Thesis. These teachers formed the basis of her Doctoral Thesis which was on teaching Suzuki Cello. In 1980 teacher training was introduced by the SAA. The first SAA Teacher Trainer Conference was held in Denver in 1985.

The convention was sponsored by the ISA (International Suzuki Association) which I learned is not in charge of one region/area of the world but rather coordinates all the regions around the world. The SAA, which you may have heard of, is the Suzuki Association of the Americas (North, Central, and South America). The other associations are: ESA - European Suzuki Association, TERI - Talent Education Research Institute (Japan), ARSA - Asia Region Suzuki Association (Asia region, except Japan), and PPSA - Pan Pacific Suzuki Association (which includes Australia).

Throughout the Convention in Madrid there were lectures on: Embracing the Philosophy, Suzuki Early Childhood Education, The History and Philosophy of Tone, and more. There were discussion groups on: Goals for Book 1, Suzuki TT in Universities, Mentoring Future Teacher Trainers. One of the last sessions was on Teacher Training and Technology with an eye to the future and how improved video techniques and faster reaction time on Skype may change teacher training and Suzuki teaching. This quote by Linda Fiore violin (SAA) sums up the Madrid Convention: “The puzzle pieces that we gathered at the International Teacher Trainers Convention helped make the bigger picture take shape. I think we ‘caught’ the essence of Dr. Suzuki’s dream of coming together and sharing, renewing, and looking to the future of teaching and nurturing children through our work with all teachers. Here’s to continuing along the pathway of awareness”.

Let’s keep working in Arizona to make Suzuki available for all children. When we act locally it will become global.





# Suzuki Concert Tour in Poland Summer 2019

By Kari Weldon, Suzuki Voice Teacher and ASA Board Member

Arizona Suzuki students and teachers from Talent Education Studios of Chandler had the opportunity to join Suzuki Voice and Strings students in Poland for an exciting concert tour in Poland. We performed in 3 different cities and combined with 4 different Suzuki studios in Poland. Suzuki families from Arizona were immersed in Polish culture through staying with Polish families in their homes, spending a day in a Polish school teaching English, and touring various sites with our Polish Suzuki Teacher guides. The beauty of Suzuki method was so evident in seeing the students from different countries that do not speak the same language, singing and playing together as one. Not only was it a great opportunity to learn and experience other cultures, it strengthened the unity of our studio families that attended.

Shimin Luo, Suzuki parent, wrote "My eyes teared up the moment Hannah and I arrived at Frankfurt airport thus officially left Poland. We visited several countries in Europe last summer.



I knew nothing about Poland and decided to join Hannah's singing group out of pure curiosity. Now I am totally in love. Maybe, it is the resilience Poles exhibited throughout their country's battered history; The barbecue and tug-of-war we enjoyed with the local Cello students on Poland's garden-like land in Olsztyn; Our charming host family in Warsaw whose hospitality and thoughtfulness made Hannah and I feel exceptionally fortunate and a little undeserving; Midnight balcony parties that jogged nostalgic memories of the before-kids era; The fact our team remained spirited and supportive of each other even though the busy concert schedule led all of us to complete exhaustion at the end of each day. It is probably all of the above and more. All I know is I went to Poland with no partiality but now will hold it dear to my heart forever."

Hannah Luo, Suzuki student, wrote "I got to connect with a country and people that I did not know through music. I learned a lot about music, Poland, and surprisingly, about myself during this trip. I had a wonderful time and I am very grateful that I went to Poland with Miss Kari and the rest of our group."



**See the Arizona Suzuki Association Membership Directory Inside!**

**Visit our NEW website: [azsuzuki.org](http://azsuzuki.org)**

## Arizona Suzuki Association

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