



May 2015

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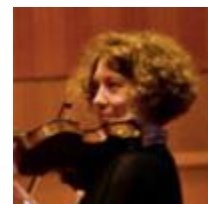
Inspiration from Dr. Suzuki

...AND MORE

From the Chairman

Dear Suzuki friends,

It is with sadness that we had to say goodbye to Maria Meyer as chairlady of SASA. Maria not only gave us a solid foundation when she registered us as an NPO, she made many events possible and they were big successes. She and her pupils will still participate in our upcoming events and we look forward to still seeing her on a regular basis.



Many thanks for all your care and hard work, Maria!

We started this year with an amazing opportunity to join the Buffalo Suzuki Strings from Buffalo New York in concerts in Pretoria and Cape Town. Many teachers, pupils and parents joined in to help make this one of the most outstanding events in our history. Parents helped with flowers, food, tea, tuck shop, putting rosin on the bows, organising students and moving chairs. I witnessed amazing chair moving techniques. It was up and down the stairs in a flash with Maria leading this exercise. I found it most inspiring.

It made me think that as we have so many movers, shakers and go-getters among us, it is time to be a little more adventurous. Perhaps we should consider traveling a bit ourselves. How about the students from Gauteng join the students in the Western Cape for a concert in the Western Cape? It is time to take our music and children to all the beautiful places in our lovely RSA...maybe even abroad!

I look forward to the coming time as chairman of SASA with eagerness. Together we can go places!

Warm regards,
Betsie Meyer



*“Music exists for the purpose of
growing an admirable heart.” Shinichi Suzuki*

Buffalo Suzuki Strings – Friendship Touring Ensemble Visited South Africa in April

Pretoria Joanna Swart

Bright smiles and flashing bows dazzled the audience at the Enoch Sontonga Hall at the Unisa Sunnyside Campus on 4 April. As the lights dimmed, some 20 young American violinists appeared on stage. Scarlet dresses, cummerbuns and bow ties fairly danced while the students opened the awesome evening with our own *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*. They continued to hold the audience spellbound over the next one and half hours with a variety of solos and group performances with repertoire ranging from Kabalevsky to Bartók to Saint-Saëns.

The concert was preceded by a dress rehearsal and a meet and greet between the American and South African students. The brief chat with an American student, a giggle or two and the small token of an American flag lapel pin will remain in the memories of the South African children for times to come. A joint djembe session with left us feeling exhilarated and deaf (imagine 100 African drums playing together in a hall!). After the bobotie supper, last minute preparations were made for the concert.

At the interval to the concert, the South African students joined the Americans in a traditional Suzuki play-down. We were happy to also have viola students of Hester Wohltz join us. What a privilege and experience it was for our students to share the stage with such young musicians. We are grateful to the BSS for bringing their loving heart and beautiful music to touch our lives. Thank you for inspiring us!



Cape Town Sonnika Maritz Venter

It is rather impossible to capture, in a few paragraphs, the magic that happens when children get together to make music...and even more so if Suzuki Children make music together!

It is something that one can only truly appreciate, truly understand and know, by being in the moment and to receive the gift of an exceptional performance. I'd like to believe that each person that came to enjoy the "World Harmony through Music" concert in Cape Town on 8 April 2015, walked away with an uplifted spirit, a heart full of fire and inspiration and a beautiful memory engraved in their hearts and minds forever.

The BSS Concert in Cape Town was a breathtakingly beautiful event of golden moments, strung together very delicately through the collaborative effort of some very beautiful and dedicated hearts. At the centre of it all Mary Cay Neal, David and the rest of the team as well as the South African teachers, brought so much love, warmth and positivity to the whole day. Not only did the audience enjoy violin, cello and piano performances, they were also delighted when the recorder players joined in the mass-play-together of the Twinkle Variations at the end of the concert.

Bishops Memorial Chapel in Rondebosch was the perfect venue for this special event. SASA in the Western Cape extended a hand of friendship to some other studios in Cape Town that has some special connection with the Suzuki Method, by inviting them to participate in the concert. To call it a success feels too mediocre... but nonetheless, it was a great success. As a result

we are looking forward to some new members that will be joining our Association soon and naturally furthering our relationships and growth in the Suzuki Method and Community.

The sunshine and lusciously green lawns in front of the Memorial Chapel created the perfect setting for a picnic-dinner after the afternoon's rehearsals. It was evident that the children loved meeting the inspiring musicians in the BSS Tour-group and it was heart-warming in many ways that they did not only share the stage, but a little bit of time to get to know each other a little bit better....

I'd like to thank the teachers (Maria Botha, Nicola van Zyl Smit, Renee van der Westhuizen, Susan Kunju, Titia Blake, Imogen Buchanan and Kevin Cook) that were involved in this event. I feel that I need to single out Titia Blake not only for her relentless support in finding a suitable venue for our concert (it was a wonderful venue!), but for effortlessly holding the rehearsal and concert space together! I'd also like to single out another inspiring Suzuki Violin teacher, Susan Kunju for persevering in the organisation of bringing twenty of her students to Cape Town (all the way from Graham's Town).

It all culminated to a moment of deep gratitude for our family when our almost 5-year-old Pre-Twinkler Leon, dreamily said in the car on the way home: I *wish* we could play some more. Did you see I also did the fingering Mummy? I had to, because that's what everyone did. You just have to follow what the teacher does. (He started using his fingers on the fingerboard during the concert).

I feel that I need to add: this was his feedback after sitting through a two-hour rehearsal and concert all in one day, only to get up and play a short bit at the end of it all.

"Sitting" through it doesn't quite capture it....
He was doing more than that: He was growing.

His seed of ability (and self-confidence) had a growth-spurt!

Thank you to the BSS Tour Group and everyone else involved.



FROM OUR STUDENTS:

"The BSS were very inspiring! They are very nice.... Maybe we are going to be one of them one day." - Martinelle (11)

"I really appreciated being here tonight. They inspire people to work harder." Annabelle (10)

"It was fun. The Suzuki pieces were not too fast. I enjoyed the last piece the Buffaloes played most." Rumi-Anne (8)

"They were very inspiring for us." Owen (9)

"Tonight is really exciting and is really fantastic and amazing. I think I have been practicing hard...but not hard enough." Cherry (9)

[When asked what he thought of the performance] "Eish, ma'am [scratch head] I will perform better [now]." Kopano (11)

"It was really good." Renato (9)

"This concert was very different to the normal Suzuki concerts. It was an absolutely amazing experience to meet brand new fellow teenage Suzuki students (who play at a high standard!). It's too bad we only got an afternoon with them, but God bless those who decided to organise such a smashing collaboration between our Suzuki brothers from other mothers and sisters from other Misters!" Daniel (16)

Interview with Mary Cay Neal, Founder of Buffalo Suzuki Strings and Co-Leader of the Friendship Touring Ensemble

How did you decide to bring the group to South Africa? I have greatly admired the way in which your country came together in recent history. Dr. Suzuki's hope is that music will bring happiness to children and bring people together in peace. That has been the mission of our tours for the past 30 years. I thought South Africa would be a perfect place for Suzuki people to come together, meet each other from a world away and play music together. I have long hoped to bring our students to Africa so that they could understand that cultures may be different but people are the same all over the world. That has always been my goal in international tours. Africa was our last continent to visit. For us it was a VERY special and unique opportunity to visit South Africa!

What were the highlights of the trip for you and the students?

This question has been asked of our students often and their first answer is always "the people were so friendly and welcoming". The best parts were meeting the students, teachers and families and playing for them and with them. We teachers will never forget meeting our colleagues in South Africa. Now all teachers who participated have faces to go with their names for us. We hope to maintain the wonderful relationships that have begun and try to continue to assist the programs that need our help. We loved the joyful celebration of Easter at Regina Mundi. We also enjoyed your beautiful scenery. In Pilanesberg we actually saw lions, giraffes, elephants, zebra, rhinos, crocodile, springbok and many, many more animals. What an amazing experience for all of us! Cape Town was very beautiful! We were touched by the Apartheid Museum and Robben Island. Nelson Mandela is our hero too!



The South African students, parents and teachers alike were so inspired by the high level of performance given by the BSS. Please share with us the key elements that have produced this level of playing. I was fortunate to learn from Dr. Suzuki for 30 years. He always emphasized excellence. That is our goal at BSS. First acquiring excellent technique while learning to play together in group classes from a very young age. Constantly focusing on strong tone from the beginning (must develop an excellent bow hold and bow arm to make that happen). BSS is committed to providing a comprehensive music education for all levels. We have 3 levels of orchestra and various enrichment classes besides the repertory group classes. Our Advanced orchestra (which is the one we brought to South Africa) is by audition at the end of Book 5. This group requires a high level of commitment. We rehearse every Friday afternoon during the school year for 2 1/2 hours. The students are allowed only 2 absences a year. The students work hard together but also form close friendships. Every fall for the past 35 years we have been invited to play in a professional chamber music concert. That gets the year off to a strong start with a motivating goal. Our individual teachers work on the tour music in lessons (as well as their solo pieces) emphasizing the details in the music that have been decided in the last rehearsal. Presenting a professional performance is our goal. Achieving that is quite gratifying to our students.

Practice, practice, practice EVERYDAY! Dr. Suzuki said "5 minutes with joy!" for beginners. The 5 minutes will turn into more if it is joyful. The most important part of practicing is focusing on violin hold and bow hold.

Do you have any words of encouragement for the parents of SASA? We admired the eagerness with which the students played and participated. Practice, practice, practice EVERYDAY! Dr. Suzuki said "5 minutes with joy!" for beginners. The 5 minutes will turn into more if it is joyful. The most important part of practicing is focusing on violin hold and bow hold. Good posture leads to good tone and facility. Have group classes as often as possible (ours are twice a month).

Do the students have anything they would like to say to all of us in SASA? Thank you for welcoming us so warmly and giving us warm memories of our visit to South Africa that will be with us all of our lives! Best wishes to our Suzuki Friends in South Africa!

Teacher Biography Lucia Seleka

My love for teaching young children must have stemmed from my own frustration of having to wait to be old enough to play an instrument. Even though I started piano at the age of six, I probably would have started when I was 3 if it was up to me. At the time, my mother and my two older brothers had piano lessons and I couldn't wait to start. Why did I have to wait until six years old? So before my first lesson, I was already "reading" my siblings' piano music: ping-pang, ping-pang...

When my mother inherited her father's violin, it was decided that I will also play the violin. Again I had to wait until I was big enough for the violin! After studying B. Mus (Hons) at the North West University, I wasn't sure if being a 'traditional' music teacher will be very exciting. My motto has always been that young children should enjoy music and movement. This led me to become a Kindermusik teacher for a couple of years.



Every single child is a genius.

When my own children wanted to start music lessons, we discovered a Suzuki teacher and both the 7 year old and the 3 year old were enrolled. When the next Seleka was old enough to hold an instrument at 2 years old, she also got hooked onto Suzuki and that is when I started attending the Suzuki teacher training.

One aspect that has drawn me to the Suzuki method is the way the young child learns to play. Every piece is broken down into bite size steps that with sufficient repetition is easy for a child to master. Each skill mastered, forms the foundation for something new; the concept of spiral learning that has already been introduced to me at university.

The Suzuki method certainly works for anyone from the youngest to oldest. What is more, learning is so much fun! The upshot: every single child is a genius.

Suzuki Violin School, Volume 7, Revised Edition Now Available

The revised edition of Suzuki Violin School, Volume 7 was recently released. The music was edited by the International Violin Committee and boasts new engravings with better formatting, changes to bowings and fingerings and newly edited piano accompaniment. The CD, like the other revised violin books, was recorded by William Preucil, who is the Concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra.

January Teachers' Training Nina Marais

The teachers' training resumed in January after taking a year's rest. Teacher trainers Karen-Michelle Kimmet (Canada) and Christophe Bossuat (France) joined our teachers from 4-8 January at Cornwall Hill College in Irene. Andrea Kreuter, Amminadab Jean, Axel Kasonga, Betsie Meyer, Lerato Sebelebele, Engela Tomlinson, Joy Meyer, Madeleine Wikner, Maria Meyer, Natalie Bentley, Nina Marias, Sue Kunju and Tino Chikoto were the teachers who took part.

Participating in the 2015 Suzuki Teachers Training Course with Christophe Bossuat has definitely been one of the highlights not only in my musical/teaching career, but also in my personal life.

Living the Suzuki philosophy, Christophe reminded us that each child has his/her own potential. As teachers, we need to be very patient and respond with loving care to each student, in order to unlock that potential. We need to create the safe and unconditional environment a student needs in order to grow.

Participating in the lectures with Christophe made me realise the responsibility that rests on us, as teachers, to become a better person ourselves, in order to help others.

It was amazing to see what can be done with the right approach in only 10 minutes.

"If love is deep, much can be accomplished" - S Suzuki



Participating in the lectures with Christophe made me realise the responsibility that rests on us, as teachers, to become a better person ourselves, in order to help others.

Zimbabwe, February 2015 Andrea Kreuter

British Suzuki Teacher Trainer, Helen Brunner, was invited by and paid for by a very generous Suzuki parent to run a conference in Zimbabwe in February. Helen taught masterclasses, youth orchestras, chamber groups and presented parent talks for five days.

My colleague Melissa Witbooi and I went simply to observe, but we ended up participating and leading in many group classes. My main goal was to form a relationship with Zimbabwe and start working together. We returned home very inspired, excited and we learnt so much from Helen. I was impressed with the standard of playing (I heard up to Grade 8 level and Suzuki Book 6 level), the schools we visited and the overall organisation of this workshop. They advertised well and many parents attended. There are three Suzuki teachers in the country and we also met with traditional teachers. They work also with ABRSM. I understand that their goals include starting an Association and beginning Teacher Training Courses.



From left to right: Ivy Decker-Jones, Tino Chikoto, Andrea Kreuter, Helen Brunner, Amy Macy, Catherine Sterling and Melissa Witbooi.

Thank you to the Zimbabwe teachers for hosting this workshop and we cannot wait to work (and PLAY!) with you in the future! What a fantastic experience! This is a big step closer to having an AFRICAN Suzuki Association!

ESA Board Meeting, March 2015

Andrea Kreuter

South Africa falls under the umbrella of the ESA (European Suzuki Association.) Every year a weekend-long board meeting is held in a different European country with a representative from each country. This year we had our first-ever Skype meeting instead. So from the comfort of my Jo'burg home I got to chat to teachers from all over Europe in a conference call. I am happy to announce that our beloved Martin Ruttimann has again been elected as Chairman of ESA.

Twilight Recital Concert in Aid of SASA

Alida Geissler

It was with great joy that I attended the "Twilight Recital Concert" on the 19th April in aid of the South African Suzuki Association.

As the sun was setting on a balmy Autumn evening in South Africa, friends and family were treated to beautiful music played by Anne Naylor on the violin, accompanied by Louise van der Walt on piano.

The evening was concluded by wonderful snacks and drinks and an opportunity to socialize. It was heartening to know that the entrance fee for the concert was going to a good cause and I wish SASA all the best for this year.

The concert raised R4000 for SASA. Thank you, Anne!



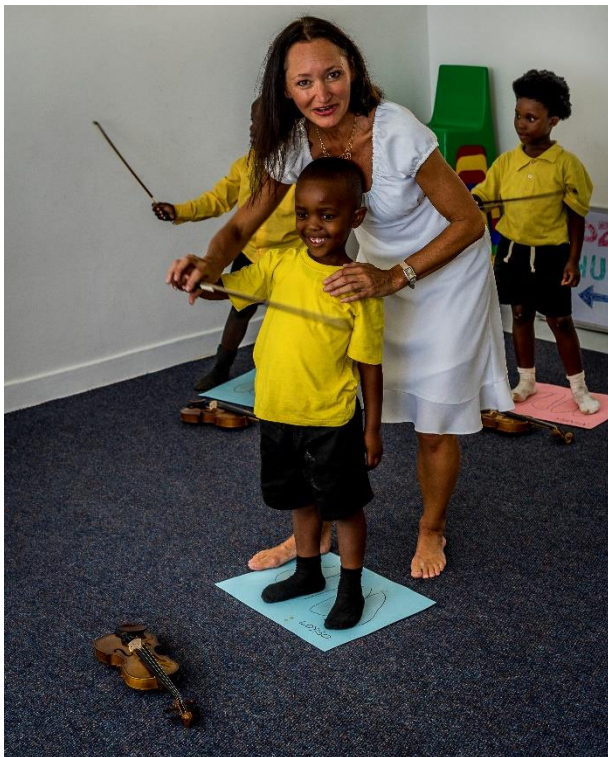
Teacher Biography Maria Botha

Music has been my passion, my dream, my life ever since I can remember. I was introduced to the violin before I could even read or write. Hence, during my childhood years my personal relationship with the violin was forged by my excellent teachers Alan Solomon and Denise Sutton who convinced me that we play who we are, and the more we experience life, the more music can resonate from within.

Music is not only knowledge, it empowers to make dreams come True

As a young adult, my dream to be a full-time violinist made me look at opportunities beyond the borders of South Africa. As a result, I decided to explore exciting musical horizons in Europe and chose France as my new home country. After being based in Paris for a number of years, I felt the need to invent something different with my violin if I wanted to be a full-time player. I started travelling and shared my music with as many diverse audiences as possible, playing all over Europe in a variety of venues, from beautiful old city courtyards to historical churches and chateaux in medieval hilltop villages. Performing music in these wonderful surroundings introduced many first-time listeners to a whole new world where violin music contributed to their personal and social life experiences.

Eventually, I performed by invitation only and my dream of becoming a full-time violinist became a reality. Through this I discovered the power that music has to unlock emotional well-being for the listener and player alike, and the incredible key that musicians have to be transported in a magical journey with their listeners, while connecting with unique people and special places.



I settled in Dijon years later with a new dream to become a teacher in order to share my musical experience and motivate young musicians to become passionate players. Fortunately, it was at this time that I was introduced to the Suzuki method, a very unique way of teaching which resonated with everything that I could identify with. I immediately started tuition under the guidance of master teacher Christophe Bossuat at the Suzuki Institute in Lyon.

I was impatient to experience the effect this teaching method had on young violin players and soon was teaching in several music institutes. I was more and more fascinated by the effect of this teaching method on children. The spontaneous playing that resulted from it that even young toddlers are able to play classical pieces from memory and with so much fun. I became convinced that this was the way for children to grow up with music as a part of everyday life and to equip them to become the creators in their own right.

Back in South Africa after 23 years in France, I was highly thrilled when the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra offered me the opportunity to use this method of teaching in township schools as part of their education project, Masidlale. From 2007 to 2013 I've watched and experienced children from disadvantaged communities develop self-discipline, improve in school subjects and, most of all, gain self-confidence as their

love for playing violin grows within them. After my experience in the townships of Cape Town as leader of the Masidlale project, I have decided to create new possibilities for children from disadvantaged communities. MUZUKIDZ was created, a non-profit association, which allows for children from disadvantaged communities, located in schools in town, to also benefit from violin tuition.

The Cape Town Violin Academy's principal aim is to continue the development of the Suzuki violin teaching method in all communities of the Western Cape.

Up-Coming Events

6 June - Annual National Concert

28 June – 2 July – Teachers Training

25-26 July – Workshop

19 September – Graduation Concert

3 October – Concerto Festival

Oops! We made a mistake!

In the previous issue of the SASA Newsletter we mistakenly gave Jenna, one of the winners of the drawing competition last year, the surname 'Walker'. It should rather be Jenna Levin. Our apologies, Jenna!



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