



# Renew your membership

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take pride in  
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Teachers: R500

Families: R300

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per student



The South African Suzuki Association

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# Calendar 2017



## **11** **March**

Teddy Bears Picnic  
(South Downs  
College, Centurion)

## **23-30** **April**

Suzuki Teacher  
Training and Exams  
(Cornwall Hill  
College, Irene)

## **20** **May**

Annual National Concert  
rehearsal: Wozani  
Block, Wits Education  
Department. (Former JCE)  
. Entrance: St Andrews  
Drive, Parktown

## **21** **May**

Annual National  
Concert: Linder  
Auditorium, Wits  
Education Campus,  
Johannesburg

## **16** **September**

Midrand Event TBC

## **2** **October**

DVDs for Graduation  
Concert on 28  
October submitted.

## **28** **October**

Graduation Concert  
Johannesburg (For All  
students) DVD's must  
be in by 2 October 2017

## **November**

Studio Concerts.  
Profits to go towards a  
charity of our choice.

# LETTER TO THE READERS



Dear Suzuki friends,

We had a very eventful, exciting 2016, and I want to thank all the Suzuki Parents, children and friends for all your support! At our last Teddy Bear Picnic I was again amazed by the joy and fun we can create together in making music.

What an uplifting, well-working music community we are. It made me wonder what ingredients are needed to create such a lovely event. Here are my thoughts:

Community comes to mind. In this context it gives a sense of belonging, identity and security for all the families. It suggests active participation, diversity and unconditional hospitality. It also creates a safe environment for optimal growth. Exactly what Dr. Suzuki proposed.

Then we had all the participants. The children, parents and teachers. The parents were watching - very important role! In 1998 scientists confirmed that photons are influenced by being "watched". The more intense the watching, the greater the influence on how the watcher's influence on how the particles behave. (Keep in mind that our bodies and the whole world are made of the same quantum stuff that changed the experiment).

By watching and enjoying every musical moment with us the parents had the ability to create every beautiful Tiekie Tiekie Tak Tak.

Further, if our focus of attention can change reality, it suggests that we live in an interactive universe, a participatory reality! We are creating our own experiences as well as experiencing what we created!

The question is then: if parents can [help] create beautiful music just by watching their children play, what is the role of the teacher? We have to incorporate a few other Suzuki principles. Ability is nurtured by listening (watching), repetition, revision. Most importantly: the practising and incorporating of small technical building blocks.

It brings us back to the Suzuki triangle: child, parent and teacher.

There you have all the ingredients for a successful Suzuki event!

And the role of the cupcakes?

The cherry on the cake!

 Betsie Meyer  
**Chairlady**  
*betsiemeyer1@gmail.com*

## SASA OFFICE BEARERS 2017

Chairlady: Joanna Swart / Deputy Chair: Engela Tomlinson / Secretary: Arja Kreuter

Treasurer: Natalie Bentley / ESA Country Director: Madeleine Wikner

Deputy Country Director: Andrea Vermeulen / Teachers Training: Lee Marais

Newsletter: Joanna Swart / Membership: Joanna Swart





**By Joanna Swart**  
**Suzuki violin teacher and Suzuki violin parent**

[joanna.swart@gmail.com](mailto:joanna.swart@gmail.com)

## From student to teacher to parent

My mother had planned from my babyhood that I would take piano lessons. But when I learned to talk I begged her, sometimes in tears, to play the violin. So as I approached my 4th birthday my mom took me to Carol Helseth, the only Suzuki violin teacher in our town of Great Falls, Montana, USA.

When I started my Suzuki violin lessons, my brother was already taking Suzuki piano lessons from a local teacher. I was highly disappointed that I didn't receive a real violin the first day and worked hard with my little box violin so that I could get a real violin as quickly as possible, about one month later.

I learned quickly. My mom was a dedicated Suzuki parent who provided a solid musical environment for my brother and me. We went to local music concerts, attended Suzuki institutes and workshops, listened to classical music, and, foremost, she was faithful to put on the

Suzuki cassette tapes. I remember being eager to play Allegro (Book 1), struggling to learn the pizzicato in Gossec Gavotte (end of book 1), enjoying playing Long, Long Ago in G major (book 2) and hating Martini Gavotte with all its returns to the theme (Book 3). I struggled to learn complicated rhythms. I remember clapping and singing the rhythms in The Two Grenadiers in Book 2 while in tears. But I loved violin.

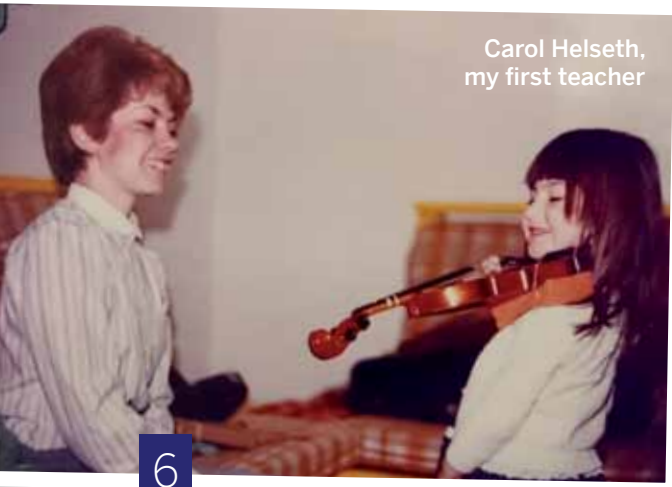
### New Opportunities

When I was six we moved across the country to Newport News, Virginia. This proved to be a beneficial move in many ways. For one, there were many more musical and cultural opportunities than in the rugged farming-type community of Montana. However, at that time the Suzuki community in South-eastern Virginia was still developing. My mom had to drive us to neighbouring cities for

Suzuki lessons over an hour away and often fought bad traffic on top of that.

Sometimes my parents struggled financially and they exchanged services with my violin teacher, Suzanne Schreck, to pay for lessons (my mom cooked her meals and made frameable quotes by Dr. Suzuki to hang in her studio and my dad remodelled her violin studio and did other carpentry projects for her).

When I was eight and my brother was twelve a unique opportunity opened to us. We began taking baroque violin and harpsichord lessons, respectively, at a restored 18th century town called Colonial Williamsburg. Dressed in period costumes we had lessons and performed while tourists watched. When I was ten I was asked to play violin for the youth dance ensemble and thus began my first paying job. Later I played for the adult dance ensemble for their evening performances and performed on contract in Colonial Williamsburg's upscale restaurants.



Carol Helseth,  
my first teacher

## Better Tone

As a pre-teen I still loved violin but grew weary of some of the mundane tasks of learning to play the instrument. Scales were boring, vibrato practice was an ‘unnecessary’ chore, note reading was difficult and shifting was frustrating. Still, I was determined to play violin and to play well. Even if I had wanted to quit, my mom wouldn’t have let me (as my brother discovered). My ears began to open further in this period and I began to realise that although I was playing advanced music for my age, my tone was lacking – I just didn’t like the sound I was making. This realisation is probably what spurred me on to develop a cleaner and clearer sound.

In my teen years I enjoyed taking part in a string quartet with other Suzuki students, going to a week-long Suzuki institute in North Carolina and participating in a music competition. It was through these experiences that my love for music deepened and it began enri-

ching my life in a more profound way. When I was sixteen, then under the tutelage of Suzuki teacher Karen Stowe, I completed the 10 Suzuki books.

## Time at University

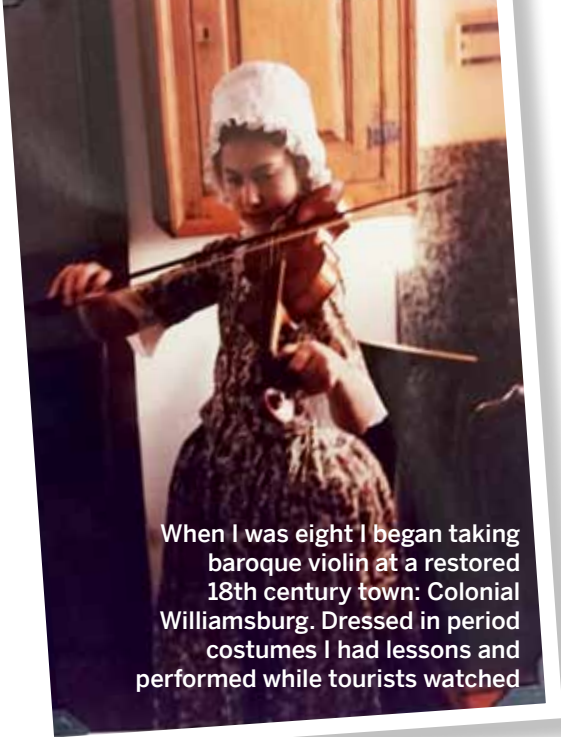
I attended the local university (Christopher Newport University) with the intention of studying horticulture – I enjoyed gardening and thought I wanted to do something with landscape design. A year into it and I realised I would be missing out if I didn’t study music. I changed my course of study to violin performance, later adding a second major of music history and literature.

I went through several violin teachers in university, but was thrilled when the university hired an excellent local professional violinist who had in her youth been a Suzuki student in Switzerland, Kirsty Barnett-Green. While in university I had the honour of acting as concertmistress of the university orchestra and performing as a soloist with them a couple of times.

My favourite musical activity, however, was being a part of a chamber music group, which periodically also performed for weddings and other events. My intention was to one day become of Suzuki violin teacher and mother to my own children.

## A Calling and a New Life

After university, I put violin aside while I attended a two-year Bible training in California. It was there that I was called to the far-off land of South Africa to help establish a Christian society at the University



When I was eight I began taking baroque violin at a restored 18th century town: Colonial Williamsburg. Dressed in period costumes I had lessons and performed while tourists watched

of Pretoria. I became well acquainted with my future husband soon after arriving in the country and we got married a year later.

When my oldest daughter was a baby I connected with the South African Suzuki Association and, shortly after my husband and I moved to Johannesburg in 2010, I began my Suzuki teachers training. Having taken an 8-year rest from violin, I was back in the musical world.

My plans for becoming a mom and Suzuki violin teacher have been fulfilled. Over the past seven years I have been privileged to work with many lovely children and a few dedicated parents. Teaching has granted me opportunities to meet many fascinating people, share the joy of what I have learned with others, provided an outlet for personal growth and many other things.

I am mother to three daughters, 8, 5 and 2, and violin teacher to the oldest two. Perhaps the youngest will take Suzuki cello lessons. I look forward to the years to come growing as a teacher and a parent. [S](#)



At sixteen, under the tutelage of Suzuki teacher Karen Stowe, I completed the 10 Suzuki books

By Leabiloe Molapo  
Parent of a Vol 2 student

Teacher: Lee Marais in Johannesburg

A photograph of a young boy with glasses, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, playing a violin. He is shown in profile, focused on his instrument. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a classroom or rehearsal space.

# *The Suzuki* METHOD

A parent's perspective

Bereng Molapo,  
son of Suzuki mom  
Leabiloe Molapo

My son started playing the violin with a traditional violin teacher when he was five years old. He was required to learn solfège and memorize his notes before he could even begin to play any notes on his instrument, and this soon took the joy for music out of him.

A year later he started following the Suzuki Method and within a matter of months he was comfortably playing some of the volume one pieces. Through the Suzuki Method, I saw his love for the instrument and enthusiasm for playing return. He was now less anxious about not being able

to read the music, and more excited about being able to play the violin. It has been wonderful to see his growth and maturity when it comes to how he relates to his playing. Learning the notes and the music now comes easier for him. New music pieces still intimidate him, but the method of listening, imitating and repeating helps tremendously when he's overcoming that initial anxiety over learning new pieces.

The group classes have helped reinforce what he learns in his private classes and although nerve-wracking for him, they have also improved his confidence when playing for audiences. The continuous repetition of the

songs across all levels ensure that he does not forget the basics taught in volume one, and he will hopefully carry this through as he proceeds to higher levels.

The Suzuki Method sounds counter-intuitive, but as a parent I have seen how effective it is in teaching music. It is in understanding that, like any other language, the music language can be learnt in the same way through simply listening, imitating and repeating. It has been a wonderful journey to witness the benefits of this teaching style on my son's attitude towards learning music and playing the violin. **S**





## By Natalie Bentley

Natalie teaches Suzuki cello at Cornwall Hill College, Southdowns College, Midstream Ridge Primary and privately in her home studio in Elardus Park, Pretoria. She has 26 students. Currently taking teachers training for Suzuki level 3, Natalie also performs with the Pretoria Symphony Orchestra.

# Graduation CONCERT

May 2016




Graduates perform together with SASA Chairlady Betsie Meyer and cello teacher Natalie Bentley on stage. Pictured: Kai von Scha, Aletheia Swart, Carla Janse van Rensburg (front), Claire Gerber (behind), Colleen Maré, Lené Weyer, Betsie Meyer (behind), Fifi Matsukunyane, Natalie Bentley

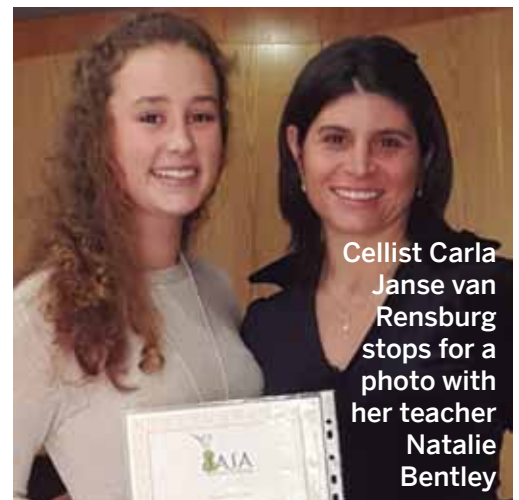
Each Graduation Concert is a wonderful opportunity for students to display their hard work and to share their love for music with others.

The first Pretoria and Johannesburg graduation concert for 2016 took place on 28 May 2016 at the Villa Taormina in Waterkloof, Pretoria. The children were all very well prepared and played their hearts out. Aletheia Swart graduated from violin book 1 and seven students graduating from Twinkles. On violin were Claire Ger, Ella Ferrer, Fifi Matsukuyane, Joelle Ludik, Kai von Scha and Lene Weyers. One cello student also graduated from Twinkles, Carla Janse van Rensburg. Carla also played the The French Folk Song, accompanied by the piano and her teacher who played the descant part. What a beautiful piece of music!

A highlight of the day was the items performed by Suzuki teachers, Madelein Wikner (violin) and Natalie Bentley (cello), along with our accompanist, Colleen Maré. The students and parents enjoyed sitting back and listening to the teachers display their talent for a change while inspiring the students.

Congratulations to all those who graduated! The certificate they received is a reminder of one of their Suzuki milestones, which they can treasure for a long time.

Thank you to each and every teacher and student for their hard work. On behalf of the Suzuki teachers, we would like to thank the parents who brought eats and helped with the setting up and tidying up afterwards. The teachers appreciate the help very much. 



Cellist Carla Janse van Rensburg stops for a photo with her teacher Natalie Bentley



Ella Ferrer receives her graduation certificate from MC Joanna Swart



**By Janine Du Toit**  
**Parent of a Pre-Twinkle student**

**Teacher: Andrea Vermeulen**



## Teddy Bears Picnic 2016

A Teddy Bears Picnic is a workshop for pre-Twinkle students to come together, violins and favourite soft toys in hand, to have a fun-filled experience with teachers and students from different studios.

On the 18th of June 2016, my daughter and I were invited to attend a Suzuki Teddy Bears Picnic in Midrand, Gauteng. A “teddy bears picnic” is an event held for Suzuki pre-twinkler violin players. The event was hosted by teachers Andrea Vermeulen and Joanna Swart. There were two sessions: a time where children came together for a short workshop/lesson, followed by a time where parents discussed various aspects of supporting their children with practicing their instruments. The children were asked to bring along their favourite soft toy. They were also asked to colour a picture for a fun colouring-in competition and the children with the best pictures received prizes.

Upon our arrival, we were warmly greeted and the children were introduced to one another along with their “fluffy friends”. The kids all felt welcome and enjoyed meeting other fellow Suzuki students. The expressions of joy on their faces showed how much they enjoyed playing their violin pieces together whilst being taught by both Andrea and Joanna. Both of these experienced teachers presented the workshop for the children in a fun and creative manner.

The children had to answer questions about the parts of the violin, the A major arpeggio and the A major scale. All of this was presented in a fun way. Teacher Joanna lined up eight fluffy toys to represent the eight notes of the scale. The children enthusiastically answered questions and sung along to each note up and down the scale whilst Joanna touched each fluffy toy that represented each note of the scale. They also played various known violin pieces with one another and their teachers.



**“My daughter Gabriella loved learning from her peers and having the opportunity of playing in a group”**



### Cupcake time

During the break the kids had fun decorating and eating their own cupcakes. After this treat, they played games in the garden with teacher Andrea whilst teacher Joanna facilitated the discussion with the parents. We had a good discussions about how to help grow the talents of our children. We also exchanged ideas about how we may contribute to growing their passion and play an active role during their practice sessions. I enjoyed talking to fellow parents and gaining knowledge from one another on how to effectively support our children with their lessons, practice sessions and having a long-term plan to be supportive in their endeavours.

My daughter Gabriella had a great time. Apart from all the fun with fluffy toys, the delicious cupcake feast and witnessing the handing out of competition prizes for the best colouring-in competition picture, she loved the exposure of meeting other children who are learning the same violin Suzuki pieces. She loved learning from her peers and having the opportunity of playing in a group.

The highlight for me was to see my daughter learning from students who were in a similar age category. It was good for her to see where she is heading as she eagerly watched other children playing pieces that she was still going to learn in the near future.

Thank you to both of these dedicated teachers, Andrea and Joanna, for a lovely, productive time. We're looking forward to attending similar events like this one. ■



"During the break the kids had fun decorating and eating their own cupcakes"

**While students played with teachers Andrea Vermeulen, teacher Joanna Swart facilitated a discussion with the parents about how to effectively support our children with their lessons and practice sessions.**





By Daniel Seleka

Suzuki Graduate

## Impressions of a Teacher Training Course

Once again, Karen Kimmet, a former student of Dr. Suzuki herself and an experienced Suzuki teacher trainer, flew in from Canada to train Suzuki teachers in South Africa. Daniel Seleka, who began studying Suzuki violin in Johannesburg at the age of 7 and completed the Suzuki repertoire in 2016, participated in the course for the first time. He shares his impressions of the course.



As a part of the teachers' training observation fulfillment, teacher trainer Karen Kimmet gives Gabriella du Toit a lesson while her mom, teachers and fellow students look on.

I have had a fantastic experience as a first-time teacher trainee in the first module (26-30 June 2016) of the Suzuki violin teacher training. This training transpired in the home of the parents of Suzuki teacher Andrea Vermeulen (formerly Andrea Kreuiter) in Bryanston, Johannesburg. There were about 8 level 1 participants, one of which was doing it as a refresher. The rest of us were doing it for the first time. I have learned a substantial amount in a relatively short space of time, not merely from a teaching, but also

from a business perspective. It has been most beneficial to me, especially since I have had virtually no teaching experience.

The main thrust of our training was the principles of the Suzuki method and how to teach violin through their utilisation (the former is explained in-depth in the book *Nurtured by Love*, by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki). However, we also examined such topics as running a studio, managing finances, publicity and the like. For this module, we received our tuition from Canadian full-

time Suzuki teacher Karen Kimmet, who herself is former student of Dr. Suzuki. Her depth of experience in teaching and training, coupled with her intimate acquaintance with the Suzuki method, proved invaluable to all of us who partook in the course.

Throughout this course, there was an emphasis on practicality and participation, not only as a principle for us to practice in our teaching but also in our own learning throughout the course itself. Karen would tell us something and then demonstrate it to us, often using one of us as a “young student” (i.e. a guinea pig). Oftentimes she would have us practice on each other: we would group into pairs, one as the teacher and the other as the student, and do the exercise once or twice before alternating roles and doing it again. In addition, we were encouraged to share our thoughts and experiences with the whole group, which inherently helped us (or, shall we say forced us) to organise our thoughts and impressions into some sort of meaningful hierarchy in our minds. This form of education by experience and interaction is what made





Kneeling from left to right: Engela Tomlinson, Andrea Vermeulen, Beccy Stones, Carol Solomon, Kate Moore. Standing from left to right: Axel Karonga, Melissa Witbooi, Betsie Meyer, Sue Kunju, Nina Marais-Eitner, Elbie Nel, Lerato Sebelebele, Daniel Seleka, Christiane van Heerden, Louise Howell, Lee Marais, Karen Kimmert.

this course so profound and unforgettable; it buttressed her verbal instruction, engraining within us the lessons we were taught.

### Teaching a group class

Another thing that struck me was my observations while Karen was working with children every afternoon of the course. Children of Suzuki teachers would come to participate in group classes, after which there would be short individual lessons. I was simply stunned by what I saw. As a former Suzuki student myself, I was often a participant in these group classes experiencing these same things (often with Karen herself as the teacher). But now I saw everything in a new light because I was now beholding it from a perspective heretofore foreign to me, namely that of a tea-

*“Education by  
experience and  
interaction is what  
made this course  
so profound and  
unforgettable”*

cher. All those games and exercises which I used to consider rather trivial, little more than mere fun and amusement, I now saw to be of no arbitrary choice or arrangement. Every activity was birthed with a specific purpose in mind. This is one of the new gems of knowledge, and indeed wisdom, that I gleaned

from my participation in the course.

Once again, I must say that overall, the course was a tremendous learning experience for me. It is extremely advantageous for aspiring and novice teachers to do this course, for by it is inculcated in them aptitude, ability and confidence, both as teachers and at least as business managers, if not entrepreneurs (as most violin teachers are).

Its benefit also extends to those who are already well-established as teachers, but would like to “re-sharpen their tools”, expand their “teaching arsenal” and renew and refresh their mental faculties. No matter how accomplished one already is, one will always discover and take home from the course some gleaming jewel of a new thing learnt. ■



# Review of 2016



Teacher Natalie Bentley in the middle. Behind her are Cara van der Berg, Claudette Vianello and Jason Tharratt. On her left, Nina Harms and on her Right, Crystal Nelson.




## Suzuki Cello Graduation

By Natalie Bentley

On the 22 October 2016 Natalie Bentley's cello pupils made history, as they had the first, cello-only Suzuki graduation concert ever in South Africa. This is not due to the cellos not wanting violins at their graduation, but purely because there was a clash of dates and there were no violins who could make that graduation date. The concert was held at Glen Methodist Church in Pretoria.

One of our veteran Suzuki violin teachers, Madelein Wikner, joined the cellos as the accompanist. She was a star, playing flawlessly with the students.

The Twinkle graduates were Joa Kritzinger, Crystal Nelson, Nina Harms, Claudette Vianello, Jason Tharratt and Marike Coffee. Claudette, Jason and Marike are three adults who can be very proud of themselves for reaching the 1st Suzuki milestone, working hard to reach their 1st goal. Learning an instrument as an adult is a rather big challenge, as the muscles are not as supple as young children, but these three adults did very well and are improving all the time. The Graduation Concert was very nerve-racking for them. For a child to stand up and play a piece or 2 in front of other people is rather easy, but for adults the experience is very different, as it puts them in a very vulnerable position, and one needs lots of guts to push through. But they did and it made them grow with confidence. We are all very proud of you! Cara van den Berg graduated from the Twinkles as well as Book 1. She played Minuet No. 2 by J.S. Bach with ease and grace, inspiring the Twinkle graduates. Well done, Cara. Thank you to the families who came to support the students. It meant a lot to them. 

## Annual National Concert 2016

By Andrea Vermuelen

Our 2016 Annual National Concert was held 30 July at Kyalami Preparatory School. Students from all over Gauteng and KZN joined us for a fun-filled day of playing the much-loved Suzuki repertoire. We also jazzed it up a little this year with pieces from the Jazzin' About Suite, by Pamela Wedgwood.

Our cello section has grown since last year. They really make such a difference!

Our guest artist was 17-year-old Daniel Seleka who beautifully performed the first movement of the Violin Concerto No. 9 in A minor, Op. 104, by De Beriot. Daniel has been a Suzuki student for the past 10 years and we were all most inspired by his playing. Thank you, Daniel!

This year's Annual National Concert will be 21 May at the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg. See you there!



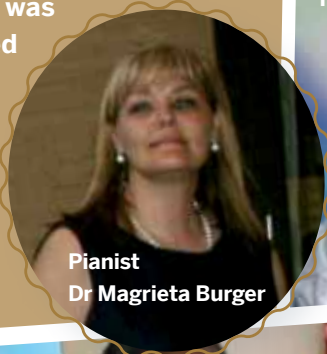




# OCTOBER GRADUATION CONCERT

By Engela Tomlinson

At 14:00 on Saturday 29 October 2016 we held our now semi-annual graduation concert. This time all those participating were students of Engela Tomlinson. We held the concert in the beautiful home of one of the families right next to the golf course in Eagle Canyon Golf Estate, Honeydew. The parent, Dr. Magrieta Burger, was our pianist and did all the catering at her own expense. We felt as if we were amongst close family. The students excelled at playing their repertoire –for many the first time in front of ‘strangers’-. Alexa Burger graduated from Book 1 and the Twinkle graduates were as follows: Joshua Schröeter, Lala Tlhabane, Prebz Lyavoo, Savannah Maeresera, Quama Majikela, Zarar Fahim and Zoe Maota. Anita Maoata was our special guest and although she was not ready for Twinkle yet, she entertained the audience with her enthusiasm to perform and shared what she can do on the violin. Everyone enjoyed the concert very much and we are looking forward to the next graduation event. The presence of Betsie Meyer, our Chairlady was much appreciated. [S](#)



Pianist  
Dr Magrieta Burger



Alexa  
Burger



Qhama  
Majikela



Zara  
Fahim



Zoe Maota,  
Twinkler



Lala  
Tlhabane



Joshua  
Schroeter



Anita  
Moata



Prebz  
Lyavoo



Savannah  
Maerasera





# Give a Child a Teacher Fundraising Event

**Where:** Kingdom Life Children's Centre, Centurion.

**When:** 12 March 2016.

**Who:** Kingdom Life violin students with Axel Karonga, Betsie Meyer, Madeleine Wikner, Natalie Bentley and students of these teachers.

**Why:** To support the Give a Child a Teacher organised by the European Suzuki Association (ESA) to raise funds to give more children the opportunity of a Suzuki education in Europe, Middle East and Africa. The camp is run by the ESA every year from 1 to 31 December.

**How:** Parents sponsored each piece that was played or just gave donations. A total of R3000 was earned. While there Suzuki teacher Madeleine Wikner presented a CD player as a gift to the Children's Centre. [S](#)



Anita Moata



# Updates 2017



## SASA continues to grow


We are happy to say that Suzuki teaching is now available in Pretoria, Midrand, Johannesburg, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Porth Elizabeth and Cape Town and we are still expanding.

Due to this growth, we have decided to change our administrative concept of Suzuki in RSA. In addition to the National Committee which will meet regularly, we will now be working in various branches, based primarily upon geography.

The branches will be Pretoria, Midrand, Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, and Porth Elizabeth. Every Suzuki teacher can join any branch and participate in any event.

The purpose of the branches will be:

- To hold local events, which make participation of teachers and students easier and will encourage the local families to get to know each other better while still allowing other teachers and students to participate at will.
- To make events more flexible.
- To raise funds for the branch's own local purpose (e.g. to sponsor a local teacher to do teacher training).
- To take turns to organise big events (e.g. the Annual National Concert, workshops, etc).

The branch system has taken effect this year after the Annual General Meeting on 25 March 2017. 

Responsibilities of each branch:

- To invite/notify all SASA members of their events and activities.
- To select a person (or persons) who will take responsibility for the administration and communication of the branch with the Management Committee.
- To put their membership fees and any moneys that they make from their events into the central SASA account, after the accounts have been reconciled.
- To do its own budget and submit a financial report to the National Committee at the end of each year.
- To write a yearly report (optionally short) and submit it each year with the financial report to the National Committee.



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**today**

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