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SUZUKI IN LOCKDOWN
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WELCOME!

Our thanks go to Helene Pohl, Lynley Culliford and Rupa Maitra for sharing their lockdown stories with us.

And to Sarah Cathcart, Ella George and Lorenz Weston-Salzer for sharing their Suzuki music journeys.

If you have stories and photos about your Suzuki music journey, including from lockdown, please send them to us to include in the next issue.

Sarah Newman, Editor | journal@suzuki.org.nz

Cover photo: Sarah Cathcart performing in the YOW Kaleidoscope Concert
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NZSI PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Simon Griffiths' report to the 2020 AGM of the NZSI on Sunday 27 September 2020

As I write this brief report I can't believe that it has been a year since the last AGM at the Teacher's Conference in Rotorua - and what a year it has been!! I would like to begin by acknowledging the incredible disruption and impact that the Covid19 pandemic has had on NZ and the rest of the world. As music teachers and students I feel that we have been very lucky to be able to continue with our lessons online but acknowledge that many in our community are suffering because of the hardships imposed by the pandemic and the restrictions around it. I would like to acknowledge those who have lost loved ones, been taken seriously ill or lost their jobs during this pandemic. I would also like to recognize that many Suzuki events have had to be cancelled and continue to be cancelled because of the pandemic. Our Suzuki community has lost much of its inspiration through the cancelling of the events and activities during this time which leaves a huge gap in all our lives. Hopefully it will encourage us to appreciate the workshops, conferences, concerts, camps etc. even more when they are able to happen again. Congratulations to the Wellington Branch for being able to get a workshop organised during this trying time and I hope it goes well.

NZSI continues to trundle along thanks mainly to the efforts of our Administrator, May Lee the Director of Teacher Training, Trudi Miles and the devoted volunteers on the Professional Advisory Group who have continued to meet online and toil away at various professional tasks including most recently the setting up of an online version of the Suzuki Philosophy course for teacher trainees beginning their training. Some Teacher Training has been happening online throughout the year and students' Graduation recordings have continued to be audited. Thanks to the NZSI Teacher Trainers for keeping things ticking over in these areas.

Unfortunately the Autumn Electronic Journal never quite made it to publication due to the cancellation of all the Suzuki events it was notifying and the chaos of Level 4 lock down. However thanks to Sarah Newman for getting out a Winter printed edition of the journal and for her ongoing work on the NZSI Journals.

Also unfortunately due to the pandemic the new NZSI Website is not quite up and running. We will renew our efforts at getting this to happen before the end of the year. Thanks again to Sarah Newman for her volunteer time on this project.

Margaret Cooke and I attended the PPSA Board's annual meeting in Brisbane on 26 January, 2020. The AGM for PPSA was held via Zoom Video call on 23 August, 2020. The January 2021 meeting will also be held electronically as overseas travel is fraught with difficulties and extra expenses due to the pandemic. It was due to be held in Melbourne which is currently under quite severe restrictions.

The ISA Board held its first ever electronic meeting via Zoom video call on 23 February 2020. It was a 2 hour meeting and went well.

The annual ISA Board meeting was to take place in Taiwan in early October, 2020 but due to the pandemic it will now be held via Zoom over a number of days. The organising of this is quite complicated due to the spread of time zones.

I would like to finish by thanking the volunteers on the Branch committees throughout NZ that do all the hard work on the ground. Thanks also to the volunteers who give up their time to be on the NZSI Executive and special thanks to Margaret and Lynette for their much needed support.

SIMON GRIFFITHS
NZSI PRESIDENT

SUZUKI CALENDAR

suzuki.org.nz/calendar

DECEMBER

20 Suzuki Virtual Concert

JANUARY

14 Hamilton Summer Camp

19 South Island Summer Camp

20 Wellington Summer Camp

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TANIA DYETT

A LIFE WELL LIVED

Nearly a year ago Tania became a life member of the NZSI. She was surprised, humbled but quietly delighted. Sadly, with a sudden deterioration in her health she passed away on March 31st, not long after her 95th birthday.

Tania was born from Russian parentage though lived much of her early life and war torn years in Indonesia. Not long after the war the family made their life in New Zealand. Tania was an iconic and colourful figure in Wellington's musical life. She taught privately and in schools, loved performing, especially in her Light Music String Quartet, gave regular school concerts and participated in radio and tv programmes dedicated to children.

In the early 80s, Tania made a trip to Japan where she met Dr Suzuki, observed his teaching and saw first hand his philosophy in action. After this encounter she was instrumental in bringing the Suzuki Method to families in Wellington. She brought an enthusiasm to her work and instilled in her students a passion for the music.

Tania was also a well sought-after yoga teacher. In her final year of her full life, Tania was still teaching yoga classes, had a couple of violin students and performed for the elderly in retirement villages.

It was wonderful that, given the global circumstances, family, friends, colleagues and past students were able to gather on August 1st to remember Tania. Many stories were told and music was a vital theme.

As a request from her son Kim, a small group of teachers (joined by her past students Donald Armstrong and Malavika Gopal) and some young Suzuki violinists, performed Dvorak's Humouresque for Tania. This was a small tribute from the Suzuki community to a woman who was enthusiastic, somewhat stubborn at times, but always had her heart in the music.

Our heartfelt condolences go to her family.
LYNLEY CULLIFORD

SUZUKI PHILOSOPHY

AUTHENTICITY

Merlin B Thompson looks at why the Suzuki Method considers music study to be a vehicle to character development

What seems evident in examining Suzuki's biography and life themes is that long before Suzuki considered the notion of music study as character development, his relationships with children, fascination with character, and connection to music brought him to grapple with the implications of being "true to one's self". Suzuki's grappling was not about turning into something new or something that was not there before; his transformation was in knowing himself, in being aware of himself, and recognizing his own personal development. This is not to suggest that Suzuki's approach to life was any more or less authentic than other music educators. Rather, it is an observation that is useful for this study because it underscores Suzuki's attention to authenticity as connected to the aspects of self-understanding, self-care, and self-acceptance.

Looking at Suzuki from a perspective of self-understanding draws consideration of multiple influences. There was the emphasis of his school's motto on personal integrity as "Character first, ability second". There were the powerful writings of Tolstoy whose diaries embraced his own personal struggles. These were influences that Suzuki evidently did not ignore, influences that supported Suzuki in his desire to explore the "question of human meaning and how we might make sense of our lives in such a way that life can go on" (Smith, 1999, p. 41). Suzuki responded to such influences through his own personal process of self-understanding, of making sense of his own life and its future direction.

Looking at Suzuki from a perspective of self-care, there is the insistent calling of conscience that brings Suzuki to consider the "framework of standards and aims" (Frankfurt, 2004, p. 23) for his own life – a framework that was influenced by his relationships with children and music. Suzuki played with children because he "liked" them, but this relationship was significant in that Suzuki devoted time to children because of his desire to "learn from them" (Suzuki, 1969, p. 75). What Suzuki took away from his relationship with music was an understanding of art as something that was inside his "ordinary daily self" (Ibid, p. 94). It was a relationship that inspired him to take on a responsibility for refining and polishing his own self. Furthermore, the authentic perspective of self-care takes on a sense of personal morality and social significance in the aftermath of World War II – a time of Suzuki's life that compelled him to consider his concerns for his students, his wartime struggle with starvation, and the future of a country devastated by the horrors of warfare.

Finally, in terms of self-acceptance, this examination of Suzuki's life reveals that the acceptance of self prompted by youthful encounters with Tolstoy, children, and music would form the foundation of who he was as a person – an individual not defined by their imperfections, but completed by the individual's capacity for self-acceptance. Moreover, it would be the overlapping of understanding, care, and acceptance related to the notion of being "true to one's self" that would determine the comprehensive direction of the Suzuki Method as theory, methodology, and philosophy of Paideia (the Greek concept with the idea that "education is not mastery of subject matter but mastery of one's person.")

Development of the Suzuki Method was undoubtedly the result of Suzuki's single-minded, unwavering efforts. He was a solitary researcher whose interests led him to envision education through the lenses of life and music. However, Suzuki was more than an objective observer and researcher. He was a highly subjective teacher and philosopher whose work was rooted in an intense and personal philosophical commitment.

Being true to himself, Suzuki wanted to understand the educational process of violin teaching, but could not ignore the inner rumblings that pushed him to make sense of life, to make sense of music, to understand what it meant to teach children. His response was to synthesise his relationship with life and music—his own personal sense of being "true to one's self"—as the philosophical underpinning of the Suzuki Method and trust that his followers would naturally engage in authentic teaching processes. For Suzuki Method students, it means that the notion of authenticity becomes a priority. For teachers of the Suzuki Method, it means that Suzuki insists on dramatic changes to the institutionalised positions of knowledge-giver and enforcer. He considers teachers as models of both instructional excellence and personal development.

"Everything depends on the teacher... The teacher, if he is a teacher at all, must seriously study...develop himself, correct himself, and make efforts toward his self-growth. In other words, he must be a human presence that ever continues to advance." (Suzuki, 1982, p. 45)

Thus, "Develop noble hearts and minds in children" and "Create the better world through music" are not merely the idealistic expressions of Suzuki's hope. Rather, the philosophical underpinnings of the Suzuki Method represent the personal articulation and requisite enactment of Suzuki's commitment to being "true to one's self"—his authenticity.

Extracted from Authenticity, Teaching Relationships, and Suzuki, 2013 with permission of the author.

MERLIN B. THOMPSON is one of Canada's leading authorities on Suzuki Piano instruction. Be sure to check out his latest podcasts on his blog at MerlinThompson.com.

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SUZUKI PARENT

SUZUKI THROUGH THE TEENAGE YEARS

Tessa Grigg reflects on the contribution Suzuki music has made to her son Harry's interests and skills

Harry is 20 ¾ (the ¾ was very important when he was little), and I have been asked to reflect on the Suzuki teenage years. Being a Suzuki teenager is quite different from the early years, but the value is far-reaching. It is hard to believe that my intense Suzuki life finished 3 years ago, but I know that while you can take Suzuki commitments out of your life, Suzuki is with you for life. For 14 years our family calendar revolved around Summer Camp, Winter workshops and Family Concerts. As we established strong friendships, the music was important, but for Harry, much of his enthusiasm was based on the fun he would have with his friends. So much so that he named the Family Concert teenage programme as the 'After Match Function'.

Looking back at the teenage years, they seemed easier than the primary ones from a Suzuki perspective. Harry had developed enough skills so that he could see the benefits, and he could have fun. Before that, it was more something that we did, like brushing teeth. He liked it mostly, but he did not 'love it'. That grew as his horizons expanded and he realised the potential of his musical skills. He loved the Big Band he played in, he loved playing the double bass, he loves Jazz, and all of this grew from his Suzuki skills.

When Harry was five years old, we sat together at a Summer Camp evening concert listening to all the 'big kids' as they were affectionally called in our house. They all played beautifully as experienced Suzuki students do. Harry leaned to me during the concert and said, "I want to play like William!" I then realised the method behind some of the apparent madness. Children watching older children play familiar pieces was inspiring. There were times when Harry as a teenager thought he would not bother with a Family Concert, and I always reminded him that at that stage the concerts were not about him anymore. They were about all the 'little kids' who looked up to the 'big kids', and it was his turn to make them sound nice!! Remember the days when you could not play the Bach Double very well and the big ones made you sound nice..."O yes, that's right. Sure." I also think he liked the thought there was possibly someone in the group saying to their parent "I want to be like Harry".

My quite little dream for Harry was that he would keep playing his violin at least until he left school, not that you can really choose what your teenagers do. His wonderful teacher and I carefully adjusted things so that he could keep playing and he was having fun. She let him choose some pieces

Harry, at home age 5 with his 16th, and in Stockholm in 2018 playing at a Swedish rest home and playing bass with the Stockholm Youth Orchestra

he liked and she never got upset when the practice had been shelved to accommodate other school commitments. It was a delicate balancing act, but as a team, we managed. And we are very glad we did.

Harry is studying Sound Engineering at Massey and he is having a wonderful time. Yes, he is not playing as much music, but he is still playing some.

His Suzuki legacy is the amazing 'ear' he developed, and his lecturers have noticed. One of them was completely astounded when there was a problem was with an electric midi keyboard at school that was perfectly in tune, just a semitone lower. The teacher didn't know how to fix the problem. Harry explains " "Yo why is this one tuned lower" and she said "Are you sure" and I was like "Pretty sure" and then she went and checked it against the tuned upright piano in the room and was like "Woah do you have perfect pitch" and I said "Pretty close" and that was that." (Hartstone 2020). Thanks, Lorraine (Harry's teacher) for being so fussy about tuning!!

What I am loving at the moment is that I am dipping my toe back into recording some children's music. I decided that as I was paying the grocery bill for the seemingly permanently hungry sound engineer in the holidays, I may as well put him to work. We have recorded some jingles and a couple of songs and I love working with him. He has such sound, broad musical knowledge, can hear things I completely miss, knows exactly what it means when I say "Can you make that sound a bit nicer?", and is so creative when putting melodies together. We recorded 'Skunk...what a pong!' and I just love the melody, the chord progressions and the clever instrumentation. So, thank you to the Suzuki family for everything you gave our teenager. There are many treasured memories and we are very glad that all that fun was part of his life.

TESSA GRIGG is the mother of a Suzuki child. She is a sensory-motor specialist and has a background in the muisc industry. She is the 'Tessa' in Tessarose Productions (pre-school music) and teaches music classes for young children. She was President of the NZSI South Island Branch and helped organise the South Island summer camps and winter workshops.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Sarah Newman looks at some motivators for keeping music going through the teenage years, while **Ella George, Lorenz Weston-Salzer** and **Sarah Cathcart** share their musical paths and their advice for keeping playing

School study and exams, sports, friends and socialising, new interests. As a teenager's horizons expand and competition for time becomes more intense, music practice can seem like the hardest thing to fit in and the easiest thing to drop. And at the time teenagers are building their own identity and interests, they may not be particularly motivated by the Suzuki repertoire or see what role music plays in their future.

While long-term study of music brings a multitude of benefits to a student, such as learning self-discipline, developing fine motor skills, gaining confidence and social skills, and acquiring mastery, there are other benefits that can give a student reasons to persist with music through the teenage years, so it continues to be a signifcant part of their life.

SOCIAL

Our Suzuki community is built on the shared experiences of groups, camps and workshops. Camp in particular offers the opportunity to hang out with other Suzuki teenagers and build deeper connections. For more regular events, playing with other like-minded people in an orchestra, quartet, ensemble or band makes music-making a weekly social experience. Simply having fun with music can be enough to keep it relevant.

FINANCIAL

From an occasional boost in funds to regular income, making money from your music can be a huge motivator to keep playing and practising. Many students start with busking or playing at events, but you can also look at teaching new, young students for more predictable income. Teenagers can attend the Introduction to Suzuki Teacher Training for Teenagers course, run by NZSI registered Teacher Trainers, to gain confidence working with young beginners and their parents, and to get tools and skills to start teaching.

TRANSFER OF SKILLS

Performance and technical skills acquired from classical music training are building blocks that can be transferred to other genres of music, from jazz to fiddling, folk to rock. Tutors can help teenage students make a connection from their classical training to other music that excites them, by playing around or outside the Suzuki repertoire. Exploring pieces a student enjoys, analysing the chord structure or melody, and referencing that back to the skills development from the Suzuki pieces, helps to give students the specific skills to play music that motivates them without losing touch with Suzuki.

GOALS, CHALLENGE & MASTERY

Before looking ahead, first acknowledge the work, persistence and dedication that have already been made to acquire the skill to play a complex musical instrument. Technology is your friend here - looking back at audio and video recordings of earlier performances, of old and new pieces, helps you to appreciate your accomplishments.

Setting challenging goals that take a student out of familiar routines of practice and lessons can provide stronger motivation to continue and a greater sense of achievement.

There are many forms such goals might take, from competing in a local or national event, as a solo musician or as part of a ensemble or quartet, to composing and recording an original piece of music. They might challenge a student to use their music with others, such as teaching a regular class of younger students or learning to play the accompaniments for Suzuki concert performances by other students.

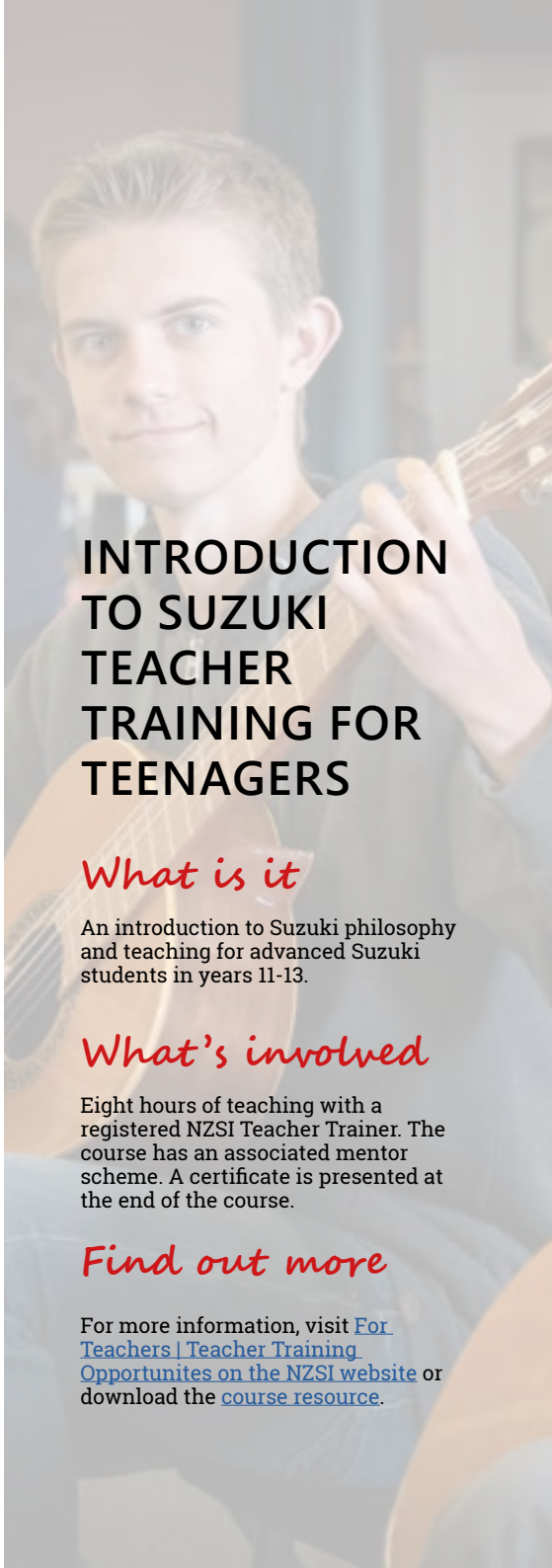
OTHER PATHS

On the following pages,we profile three members of the NZ Suzuki community: Ella George (22), Lorenz Weston-Salzer (28) and Sarah Cathcart (17), looking at their start in music, their teenage music experiences and where their journey has taken them so far.

YOUR PATH

We would love to hear from you what path your music-making has taken. To share, send your stories to journal@suzuki.org.nz.

SARAH NEWMAN



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SARAH CATHCART

I have been playing since I was four. My mum's (Catherine Polglase) side of the family is very musical, so I am influenced by them. At the moment I am learning the four Romantic Pieces by Dvorak, Nigun by Bloch, Rondo by Schubert and Banjo and Fiddle for my ATCL exam.

I am the concertmaster for Youth Orchestra Waikato, which I really enjoy. Being a part of the Youth Orchestra is such an amazing experience, as it is a group effort and, when you perform, you know that everyone has put in so much hard work and you feel really proud of each other.

I found out about the Introduction to Suzuki Teacher Training for Teenagers course through my mum and my teacher Trudi Miles. I was hoping it would be a way to start teaching and learn more about the Suzuki method. I did the training with my friend Matilda, which was a cool experience because we do a lot of our musical activities together and we were able to have fun and learn at the same time.

It was challenging finding that the really simple things that we did not find too difficult when we were playing, such as holding your bow, are actually the hardest things for a student at the beginning. You have to put so much work and repetition into getting it right.

Teaching has been challenging but definitely worth it. I have learned a lot about my own playing through the training, and a lot of people skills. You learn to solve problems and overcome challenges and that every child is different and will learn differently.

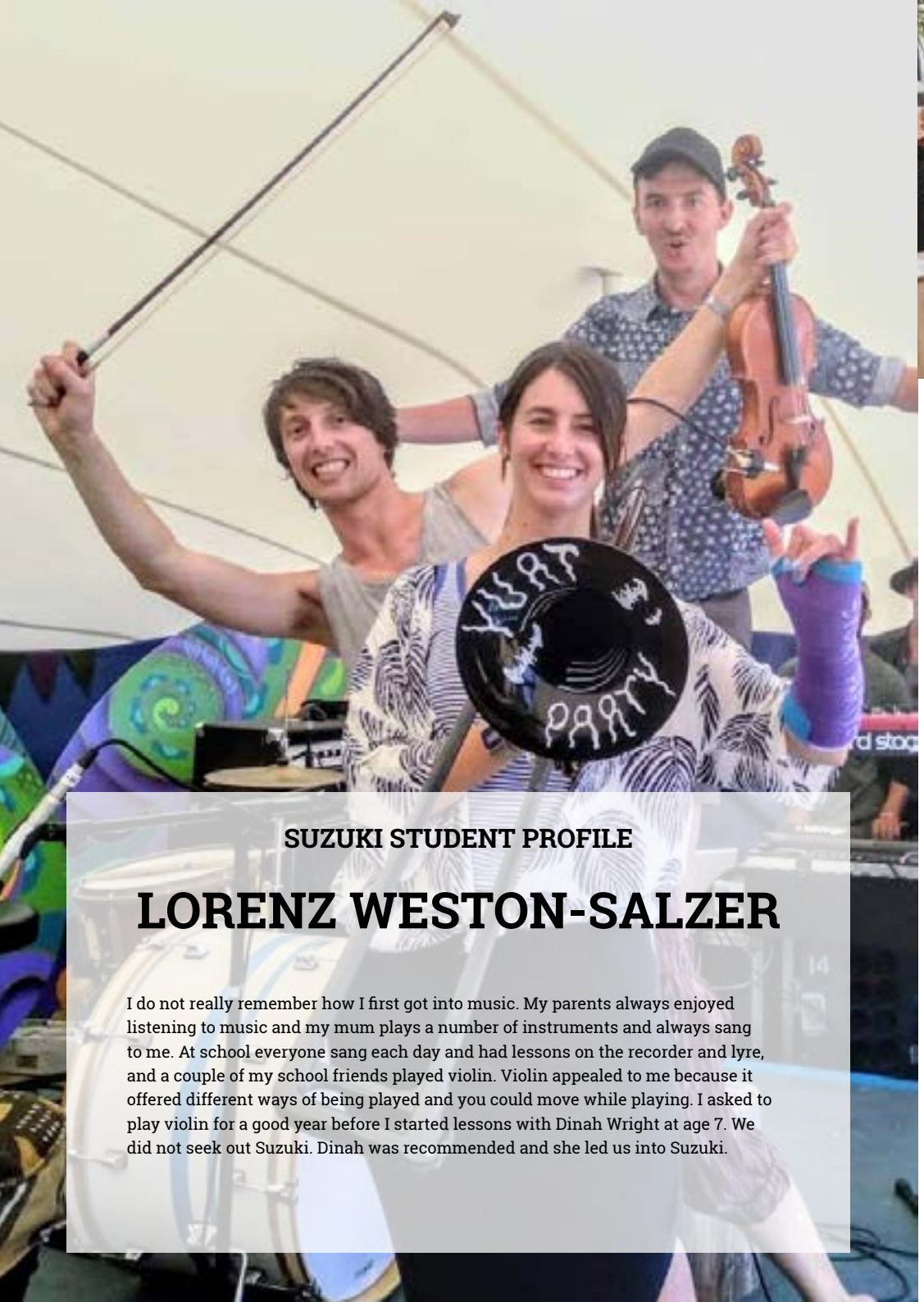
One thing specifically is looking at how much I practise and how much I expect my students to practise, so that I am helping them to develop those skills and learn their pieces.

Above, Sarah's violin and, on cover, playing in the Youth Orchestras Waikato Kaleidescope Concert in September 2020

I have learned to come up with creative ways to help them enjoy their practice and want to practise.

We learned how important it is to praise kids for what they are doing in their lesson and acknowledging achievements, no matter how small, because it's a step for them. They need that encouragement and to feel like they are making progress.

SARAH CATHCART



Facing page, Lorenz performing with band Yurt Party. As a teenager, left, busking with fellow student Royden Smith (now a guitar tutor based in Wellington) outside Canterbury Museum and, right, performing with friend Tom Harris at Fava Café in Christchurch.

SUZUKI STUDENT PROFILE

LORENZ WESTON-SALZER

I do not really remember how I first got into music. My parents always enjoyed listening to music and my mum plays a number of instruments and always sang to me. At school everyone sang each day and had lessons on the recorder and lyre, and a couple of my school friends played violin. Violin appealed to me because it offered different ways of being played and you could move while playing. I asked to play violin for a good year before I started lessons with Dinah Wright at age 7. We did not seek out Suzuki. Dinah was recommended and she led us into Suzuki.

I kept up with my violin and regular practice through high school, from Book 5 through to finishing Book 9 and then doing Trinity and ATCL, with Lois McCallum, my teacher. I did the Introduction to Suzuki Teacher Training for Teenagers course too, but I would never have guessed that I would get into teaching, as at that point I was sure it was not for me. I stopped lessons and lost my direction for music. Lois suggested I could study violin at University, but I could not see myself working as an orchestral player or teaching violin.

My playing tapered off and I did not play much for a couple of years. I really got into outdoor education and studied that at polytechnic for a year. Then I travelled in Europe for six months. I really kept up my Suzuki review then, as I took my violin with me and busked as I travelled to pay for my trip. And it was fun! I have such good memories of busking around the canals in Venice. I always tried to play in the old parts of the cities - it felt so good busking there.

When I got back to NZ, I found full-time work and played violin now and then. I enjoyed biology and ecology at school so I started a science degree at Lincoln University and busked every weekend to earn my keep. By the end of that year, while I enjoyed learning about science, I found that I did not enjoy applying it. I was also getting tired of playing the same pieces over and over and was missing my music.

People would come up to me while I was busking and invite me to play at functions or in bands with them. So I decided that 2016 was the year when I would try serious busking and take any opportunity that came my way. Violin teacher Nikki Wells saw me busking and told me that she was reducing her studio and she thought I would be a great teacher. 2016 was all about taking opportunities and the extra cash would help, so I started teaching some of her students. Much to my surprise, I enjoyed it! That is when I started doing Suzuki Teacher Training.

Over lockdown I took part in two courses with an American and a Canadian teacher where I learnt how to facilitate improvisation and it has given me the confidence to incorporate it into my Suzuki group lessons, some individual lessons and eventually to start holiday courses.

During high school my friend asked me to join his rock band. I was in Book 6 or so and although I was a decent enough player and

Lorenze, left, using his sleeping brother Robin as a music stand and, right, now.

could copy the violin parts from a recording just fine, I simply didn't feel like I could join in with any songs that did not have an existing violin part. I would often need to kill time during practices so I would play quietly, away from the others, trying to find notes that might fit. It was a very disheartening process because I felt like a beginner all over again. Now improvising with friends and having the ability to make music spontaneously with anyone I meet and in different styles brings me a lot of joy.

Looking back on my violin playing journey, I am so grateful for my teachers and the Suzuki Method giving me such a solid classical foundation and that I can build on that with creative improvisation.

LORENZ WESTON-SALZER

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SUZUKI STUDENT PROFILE

ELLA GEORGE

Suzuki music has always been a part of my life. My mum (Kerry Langdon) was a full-time Suzuki teacher when I was born, so I did not start doing Suzuki music, I was born into it. As a toddler, I was upset that I did not have a violin when everyone else I saw had one. I got a 32nd violin (I still have it) so I could join in and started having lessons with Lynley Culliford when I was 2.

I did study NCEA music at school and I was able to do my exam early because of all my Suzuki music. While I was studying for my NCEAs, I was not doing daily practice unless it was leading up to a music exam.

Previous page, Ella as a teenager with mum Kerry Langdon. Above as a toddler with her first violin, which she still has, and right with students of her studio in Dunedin at the South Island Summer Camp.

Year 10 was my last year of serious music study and practice, because I was working towards my grade 7 violin exam. We were living out of town and my mum would drop me to school early on her way to work, so I would practice in the Music Room each morning before school started. Year 11 onwards I had no exams and so I was only playing in musicals. I started being paid to play in musicals in Hamilton and played in a couple of musicals each year. Being able to earn money kept my music going and playing in musicals is good fun.

I got frustrated with people expecting me to become a musician. It was all that I was known for, but I had so many other interests that that annoyed me. While I kept playing in musicals and chamber music at school, I stopped progressing through the Suzuki repertoire. But I wish now that I had kept going – I would be so much better now as a violinist if I had kept going.

A friend heading to university offered me his after-school violin class to teach. As Suzuki was all I knew, I started teaching Suzuki pieces. It does not take long to realise that you know nothing about teaching! I remember peppering my mum with questions about how to teach different pieces. She told me to do the Introduction to Suzuki Teacher Training for Teenagers course.

The teacher training was a gentle introduction. It is not about how to actually teach, but more about what it is to be a teacher and the basic Suzuki philosophy. It made me realise that I wanted to do the full teacher training.

I would like the full teacher training to be available earlier when students are ready rather than having a fixed minimum age of 18. Some teens would not be ready, and the teenage teacher training would be enough, but others, as I was at that age, are already teaching and would be ready and motivated much earlier.

I would like to encourage everyone who can to start teacher training, so we can have as many Suzuki teachers as possible – we really need more!

One of the best bits of advice I got from the teenage teacher training is to observe other teachers, borrow freely from them, try out their ideas and games to find the ones that work for you and then adapt them for your teaching. We learn from each other. It is hard to do that being the only Suzuki teacher in Dunedin. I did get to do observation during lockdown over Zoom. But Suzuki camps and workshops are my main opportunity.

When I went to university in Dunedin, Catherine Polglase asked me to teach one of her students who had moved to Dunedin and then my student's best friend wanted to learn too. I realised that I love teaching and am good at it. I did my Unit 1a Teacher Training and it has all snowballed from there. Now I teach fulltime and I have over 50 students. Although I was studying psychology and neuroscience and have finished my Bachelor of Science, this has become the fall-back plan to teaching music.

ELLA'S ADVICE TO TEENAGERS

First, you have put so much work and time into your instrument and you have this amazing skill. You need to realise that what you can do is special and do not give up.

It is OK to have a break and it is not the end of the world to pause. In fact, I know people who stopped playing only to realise how much they missed it and to come back doubly motivated. When overwhelmed with loads of exam work to do, pausing is better than trying to push through to the point of hating it and becoming burned out.

Having fun with your music keeps it going. Find something to do with your music that you really enjoy, outside of practice. Find a group to play with, like the local youth orchestra, or meet up with your musician friends to play. Once you use your music for something other than your own practice, like playing in an orchestra or show or chamber music, it becomes so much more enjoyable. The more extra stuff you do, the slower you go through the repertoire, but any music playing, as long as it is good playing, contributes to your skills and can make you a better player.

I play in the Dunedin Youth Orchestra and some friends from past Suzuki summer camps have joined. There is a strong community feeling in Suzuki and I am still friends with people I only met once a year at camp. I am trying hard to get as many of my students as possible to go to workshop and summer camp. It is hard to get people to go the first time, and then after that there is no stopping them and they help to persuade all the others to go.

ELLA GEORGE

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SUZUKI IN LOCKDOWN

Happy Birthday virtual orchestra performance to celebrate Lynley Culliford's birthday

SUZUKI IN LOCKDOWN

LOCKDOWN MUSIC

Helene Pohl finds unexpected bonuses during the making of lockdown music

World premiere of Ross Harris' trio -
Peter, Rolf and Helene all dressed up on Zoom in the bedroom

From March 29 until June 28, Lynley Culliford and I were the hosts of 14 weekly concerts on Zoom.

Looking back, a serendipitous set of circumstances made it possible, right from the first weekend of NZ's first lockdown. Lynley had asked me to give a workshop on Bach's solo violin music to a group of her senior students, and we set the date to coincide with Bach's birthday March 21, with a concert to follow on the 29th. Covid-19 was already very much in the air, and in fact one of her Christchurch-based students decided not to come because her mum had recently returned from overseas and was feeling unwell. New Zealand was at Level 2, but with social distancing – a bow's length apart, we decided - we were able to go ahead.

Looking back from the current Level 2 in Wellington, there was a much greater sense of unease and impending potential disaster at that time.

No contact tracing systems were in place, masks were not being used, and we all felt the virus could be lurking around any corner. Victoria University, where I teach as a member of the New Zealand String Quartet, was discussing going all-online and had begun training staff about using Zoom. I told the students that if we were to be locked down, their book of solo Bach could potentially become their best friend for the enforced practice retreat. And, if we were to be locked down before the 29th, we would run our concert on Zoom!

A mere 2 days later our prime minister announced Level 4 to commence that week. Even after only 4 days of lockdown, it was a very moving experience to see all our Suzuki friends at the Zoom concert who we knew we couldn't see live for the foreseeable future. Other Suzuki families and some of my university students tuned in, having been tipped off by their friends. And at the end we all agreed it was an experience worth repeating! And repeating, and repeating.... So Lynley and I were kept busy giving pieces to our students that they could play alone or with family members, and by Friday each week we had a nice programme together. It became a tradition that everyone dressed up, which itself was something special in lockdown, when we all spent our days in sweatpants!

Friends and family overseas (Holland, UK, Germany, Vietnam, Malaysia, Australia) joined in to watch, and some even to play. Louis van der Mespel performed repertoire from his master's degree bass recital from his aunt's living room in England. Emma Ravens, stuck in a village in Germany where she was on exchange, played on a borrowed cello in her bedroom. Olivia Coustance, locked down since late January in Ho Chi Minh City, played Bach and Paganini. Claudia Tarrant-Matthews, back from London where her master's degree had gone all-online, contributed Ysaÿe.

And families created all sorts of wonderful chamber music. Parents and siblings accompanied violinists on piano (Tim Ng, Calvin Scott, Anne Faulkner, Claudia and Sofia Tarrant-Matthews, Jill Bebbington) or on violin (Jenny Champion, Shanita Sungsuwan). Donald Maurice and family ended up playing a string quartet every week, sharing a kaleidoscope of rock music arrangements. My husband Rolf, son Peter and I played various combinations of violin/viola/cello, revelling in the Wienawski opus 18 violin duos and in Bach organ sonatas that work terrifically as string trios. Ross Harris heard of the concerts and wrote us two trios which received their world premieres. Sibling duos ranged from Lucas and Grant Baker romping through the violin and viola repertoire to Hamish and Catherine Harrison playing violin and piano with props and costumes, to Lisa and Sarah Artmann on violin and cello.

Various of the NZSQ's university students performed from their lounges, bedrooms or stairwells. Other instruments that found their way onto the programmes were oboe, guitar, harp and gamba – and voice. Lots of heretofore unknown solo music was discovered, learned, and performed. And always, there was solo Bach.The word kept spreading until we had up to 72 computers worldwide tuned in, and we had to ask all audience members to turn off their video to increase the faltering audio quality.

Unexpected bonuses appeared in the virtual gathering of far-flung family members. In my case, it was the most regularly I had ever had visits with my German cousins – and an opportunity for them to "meet" many of our NZ friends! They invited Emma to visit them before she returned to NZ. Other performers were heard on the Zoom concerts and were invited to perform live as a result.

Catherine and Hamish Harrison after performing La Cinquantaine, setting a high bar for dress-ups and decor

In May, Lynley had a big birthday, and a massive conspiracy was launched to create a virtual Happy Birthday orchestra YouTube video, which was shown at the end of one of the concerts to her great surprise and everyone's delight. https://youtu.be/jK4PE2SU0ew

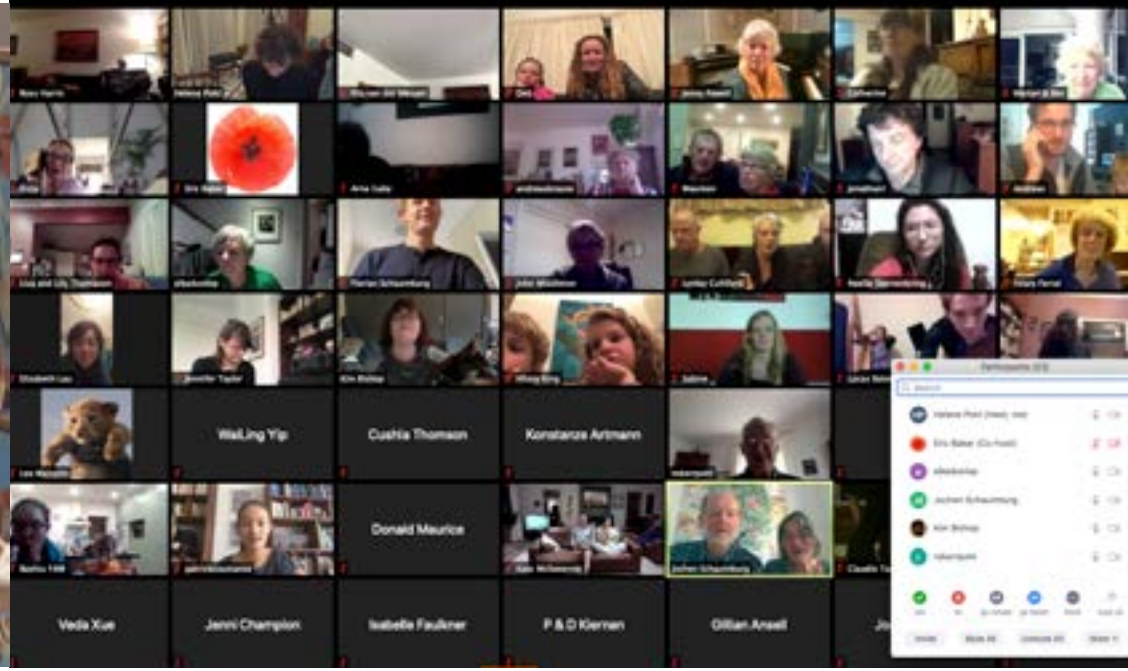
Once Level 3 was announced, the NZSQ was able to begin rehearsing, and friends began to get together to play chamber music, some of which found its way into the Zoom concerts.

When the NZSQ finally was allowed to run our Chamber Music Weekend for secondary student chamber groups at the university, we held the concert on Sunday evening June 21, and with the brilliant assistance of Suzuki dad Chris Harrison, we live streamed the concert both on Zoom and YouTube. https://youtu.be/DKM5FnVKikY

After that, with the school holidays looming and everyone raring to go on trips around NZ, we held one last concert June 28.

Playing live for live audiences has been particularly meaningful since the enforced hiatus. But the focus the weekly concerts gave those who played and those who taught them, and the pleasure their performances gave the listeners, was of real value during those extraordinary times.

HELENE POHL



63 computers tuned in from near and far

SUZUKI IN LOCKDOWN

14 ZOOM CONCERTS

A teacher's perspective from **Lynley Culliford**

Everything happened so quickly. I did not even know what Zoom was....and then within a short period of time, my colleague, friend and fellow Suzuki parent, Helene Pohl and I were forging ahead with weekly Sunday night concerts.

The challenge was to find repertoire. This ultimately became a real joy. When we consider solo violin repertoire we instantly go to Bach or maybe Paganini for the brave hearted. Look further afield and there are Telemann's 12 Fantasias, Prokofiev and Hindemith solo sonatas, Vieuxtemps Concert Etudes, Ysaÿe.

I was blown away and immensely proud of the way in which these young (and not so young) players prepared week after week. Families rallied to make music together and this regular Sunday night event became such an incentive for much practice. The performers and audience came from far and wide; by far a larger pool of people than usual to share their music with. All in all, 14 extraordinary Sunday concerts!

LYNLEY CULLIFORD

ROCKING LOCKDOWN

Rupa Maitra

Lockdown was a time for Donald and me to hang out with the girls, which meant discovering that all those years we thought Gemma was listening to Suzuki cello on her iPod, somewhere along the way she had moved on to rock music. After daily listening with Gemma, I became a convert, and we began to look for string quartet arrangements. We had been playing quartets to while away the time on lockdown, but the Zoom series made it more serious. We had a deadline to meet every week and we wanted to entertain.

Persuading the viola player to play rock was a doddle, however it was more difficult convincing the other first violinist, who was suspicious of anything other than Mozart and Haydn.

Astonishingly, we found that quartet in-fighting did not go away when we shifted from Mozart to Guns 'n Roses. It was a bit like driving, the way it brought out certain personality traits.

Bubbling near the surface of the Mozart was our inner 'rock star' persona. 80s hair dos, headbands, electric guitars and screaming lyrics.

One by one we became possessed by 'rock' fever until we began to believe we were actual rock stars. Nirvana, Guns 'n Roses, AC/DC, Aerosmith - the possibilities were endless. Sometimes we'd have to miss a few of the items in the Zoom concert before it was our turn to play so that by the time we burst onto the screen, we had our hair on and were ready to deliver.

Like any good string quartet, the second violinist accused the first violinist of stealing all the solos, the cellist was too 'cool' to comment and the viola player knew better than to argue with three females. Despite all the rifts, the quartet has managed to stay together. Just.

RUPA MAITRA

A photo of the concert-wear in the performance from our house that day

SUZUKI IN LOCKDOWN

PIECES IN PYJAMAS

Toni Robson on a concert she held for her students during the first Lockdown

Back when Lockdown was a singular event, instead of the first in a series, we in Melbourne began the experience at the time of school holidays. I offered lessons during the holidays, online, partly so that students could continue a routine they were comfortable with and could exercise control over in order to maintain a sense of perspective and positivity, but also so I didn't go crazy being cooped up at home and could feel somewhat useful. This short article was written early in Term 2 for our Suzuki Music Victoria Newsletter about an event I held for my students during this time. I called it the "Pieces in Pyjamas" Concert.

Spending the school holidays at home, it became apparent that pyjamas were much more than nightwear and could be worn for most, if not all, of the day. Then, beginning to teach again while everyone was still at home, I noticed that there were many more "at home" things in evidence. Long hair not tied up for school, hoodies and trackpants instead of collars and blazers, dogs in the background, cats in the foreground, nice garden views out the window to play a repetition to…

Not just people though, but music too had "at home" qualities. When a student offered to play me "Cold Twinkle" it struck me that many families have developed their own colloquial, in-house names for pieces based on their own experience of having that piece in their lives, ours included.

I decided that, during lockdown, we would have a concert, at home of course, of pieces using their "at home" names bestowed by the family of the student who was playing the piece. As if the piece was wearing pyjamas just like many students may have been.

Can you recognise any of these pieces from their informal names?

"Rebecca Forgot", "Grandma Seitz", "Brown Sauce", "Why must I practice when I want to watch TV?",W "I don't like practice in the morning", "Arancini Gigue", "Robbie and Eddie", "Blue Grenadiers", "The Other One", "The Drunken Farmer".

Try to guess before you look at the last paragraph for the answers!

Some people actually wore their pyjamas to play as well. One of my favourite visions was a mother who is a professional pianist accompanying her son while wearing her customary black performance top with beaded necklace and colourful pyjama bottoms!

TONI ROBSON is a Suzuki Violin and Viola Teacher and Violin Teacher Trainer from Melbourne, and currently the President of Suzuki Music, Victoria.

Secret identities revealed:

"Cold Twinkle" is Twinkle in G major, because it's lower in pitch than A major, and Cold Cross Buns uses a "lower" note than Hot Cross Buns.

"Rebecca Forgot" is actually Becker Gavotte. There are lots of forgetful composers in Book 3.

"Grandma Seitz" is Concerto no.2 movt.3 because it's the oldest of the three Seitz Concerto movements we learn, meaning that it's learned first. The other relatives in chronological order are "Lady Seitz" and "Baby Seitz".

"Brown Sauce" is a mishearing by my mother of the title Brahms Waltz.

"Why must I practise when I want to watch TV?" Brian Lewis asked of his mother the teacher Alice Joy Lewis to the tune of Chorus from Judas Maccabeus.

"I don't like practice in the morning" claims Arthur to the tune of bars 19-20 of Blue Grenadiers. Sorry, The Two Grenadiers.

"Arancini Gigue" is a delicious cheesy version of Veracini Gigue.

"Robbie and Eddie" is sung to the rhythm of Twinkle Variation B.

"The Other One" seems to be a very common name for Allegretto, I even find myself using it. Or is that for Andantino…?

"The Drunken Farmer's" identity is easily guessed, but in this performance there were a lot of sliding pitches and shifts to strange positions as well. Hic!

BRANCH REPORTS

News and updates from our branches

WELLINGTON

SUMMER CAMP, 20-25 JAN 2021

For any inquiries relating to the Wellington summer camp, please email wellington@suzuki.org.nz

HAMILTON

SUMMER CAMP, 14-17 JAN 2021

CELLO, PIANO & VIOLIN, PLUS ECE

Please come and join us for four days of music making amongst the lovely setting of Totara Springs. Our programme will include fun activities such as the hydroslide, flying fox and burma trail.

Registration is now open.

SOUTH ISLAND

In September, we had to postpone part of our Family Concert due to lockdown constraints, but we were very pleased to be able to go ahead with our piano concert.

We had our largest attendance for some time. Many thanks to tutors Natalie Wilson, Jane Doig and Deborah Williams. People were clearly keen to get together and perform again after all the restrictions. Natalie led the concert with everyone participating in presenting every piece from Book 1. This was a great idea and a lot more senior students had to so some serious review! We then moved into Book 2 piece and we enjoyed some wonderful Minuets and several performances of the Bartok pieces. From our senior students, Amelia Head played a superb Beethoven Sonata in G, Griff Newman played the Beethoven Theme in Book 3, Skyler Morrison performed Beethoven's Für Elise (now all my students want to learn that!), and Tristan Dunlop played the 2nd movement of the Mozart Sonata in C exquisitely.

Our rescheduled Family Concert for cello, guitar and violin students now goes ahead from 5pm on 24 October at Elmwood School in Christchurch, followed by the teenage programme at 6.30pm.

SUMMER CAMP, 19-24 JAN 2021

CELLO, FLUTE, GUITAR, PIANO & VIOLIN

The Committee's attention is now firmly on our Summer Camp in Timaru from 19 - 24 January.

Registration opens on 26 October.

Our tutors will be: Margaret Cooke for cello, Mary Barber for piano, Vicky Willams for flute. For violin we have Kerry Langdon, Milly Rout and Lorenz Weston-Salzer, and more violin tutors to be announced.

Assuming the country remains at level one, then Summer Camp will proceed. If we go to any other level then families will receive a full refund.

JANE DOIG & SARAH NEWMAN

Hawkes Bay students performing at the Grand Annual Concert in July

HAWKES BAY

Our Hawkes Bay Committee met on 12th September for the first time since the start of Lockdown at our favourite Golflands venue, situated centrally between Havelock North, Hastings and Napier.

We have had two events to report. Both were held at St. Paul's Church when the venue was opened up to groups of 100, with physical distancing.

Our Grand Annual Concert, held on the 25th of July, is the highlight of our Suzuki year and the standard of performance was appreciated by our audience. The Annual General Meeting started the afternoon event. This format allows as many parents as possible to attend.

Our second event was held on Saturday 29th August and was a Solo Concert held in two halves. Our String players and Flautists shared the first ninety minutes, and our many pianists gave us some most interesting and polished performances for the second. We enjoy hearing the individual performances and despite the Lockdown there has been tremendous progress.

The violin students have had regular group lessons under the capable directon of Helena Kerr providing instruction and a social opportunity.

Many of our Suzuki students have taken part in the Hawkes Bay Registered Music Teachers Scholarship Contests. In the Junior we heard Ethan Xu, Zilin Zhao and Rebecca and Isobella Song. In the Intermediate Scholarship Meghan Wuisan and Carlos Keukelaar. In the Young Musician of the Year, Ivy Wu, Savannah Lomas and Quinn Le Lievre. They all acquitted themselves in an assured and most confident manner. Quite a few piano students entered the NZMEB Music Exams in August using items from the Suzuki Repertoire. They have all passed.

We look forward to our next big event of the year on 5th December – our Christmas Concert with Carols, group performances, greetings and gifts from the Man in the Red Suit and pizza to finish off the event. This is the same day on which five of our Suzuki piano students have been chosen to perform at the Examiner's Choice Concert.

Planning is under way for mini workshops in all instruments in April.

KRISTY BIGGS

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2020/2021

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