



AREA REPORTS
SEE PAGES 5-9



**INSPIRATION IN
BRAZIL, PART TWO**
SEE PAGES 13-15



CONFERENCE
SEE PAGES 16-18

SUZUKI ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

NEWSLETTER

Letter from the Chair

The 2016 SAO Conference, held November 4 to 6 in Ottawa, was an inspiring event. Thank you to Marie Kusters and Doug Murphy for your work in organising this event. Laura Nerenberg, Gretchen Paxson-Abberger, Sera Smolen, and Alice Kanak held an improvisation workshop that coincided with the SAO conference, and the addition of the improvisation classes and performances was very exciting.

The planning for next year's conference in Waterloo is well under way, with Liz Biswas, Anita Buttemer, and Geneveive Schirm-Joyce heading up the team. Ellen Berry, piano, and Kelly Williamson, flute have offered to help with the student day. Let's encourage our students to make the trip to Waterloo next November 4. In fact, consider marking November 4 and 5 on your calendar and make it a destination!

We are delighted to say that much of our current board is continuing this year. We had many new members last year, and their contributions have been so welcome. Thank you to our members that have served in various positions and have stepped down. At the AGM this year we voted to split the 905 East and North, with Wendy Seravalle-Smith agreeing to represent the North, while Laurie Mitchell continues to represent the East. We do have some vacancies at this time, please let me know if you, or someone you know, might be a good fit.

Personally I am humbled to take on the position of Chair of the SAO. I am grateful for the continuing guidance of Nena LaMarre, our Past-Chair, and I am very excited to have Lenni Jabour serving as Vice-Chair. Lenni brings with her an energy and fresh perspective that can only help the SAO to nourish our Suzuki community in Ontario. I hope you have a wonderful holiday with your family and friends.

◆Carmen Evans



**Thank you Nena! Nena
and Carmen at the
Ottawa Conference**



**Welcome Lenni
New Vice-Chair Lenni
Jabour with Carmen
Evans**

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SEE PAGE 3 FOR FULL TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Table of contents

SAO Board	2
Table of contents.....	3
Upcoming Teacher Development.....	4
Area Reports	5
Instrument Reports	10
Suzuki Early Childhood Education	10
Low End Update: News from the world of Suzuki Bass in Ontario	12
Violists Unite!	13
Cornerstones of Hope.....	13
SAO Conference 2016, Ottawa.....	16
Billets	16
Reflections on the SAO Annual Conference	17
SAO Conference 2017, Waterloo	19
The Value of the SAO.....	19
SOSI – Confidence and Support	20
Invitation to all Suzuki schools.....	21
Motivation.....	21



Have a Wonderful Winter Break!

Upcoming Teacher Development

Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto

- **ECC!**
January 8, 2017
Susan Gagnon
- **Cello Unit 1**
January 29 – April 9, 2017
Susan Gagnon

Great Lakes Suzuki Flute Institute

- **ECC!**
July 7, 2017
David Gerry
- **Flute Unit 1**
July 8 – 15, 2017
Kelly Williamson
- **Flute Unit 2**
July 11 – 15, 2017
Noelle Perrin
- **Flute Unit 3**
July 11 – 15, 2017
Meret Bitticks
- **Flute Unit 4**
July 11 – 15, 2017
TBA
- **Flute Unit 11**
July 11 – 15, 2017
David Gerry

Southwestern Ontario Suzuki Institute

- **ECC!**
August 12, 2017
Catherine Walker
- **Bass Unit 1**
August 13 – 20, 2017
Virginia Dixon
- **Cello Unit 1**
August 13 – 20, 2017
Catherine Walker
- **Cello Unit 2**
August 12 – 16, 2017
Susan Gagnon
- **Cello Unit 3**
August 16 – 20, 2017
Susan Gagnon
- **Piano Unit 1**
August 13 – 20, 2017
Nena LaMarre

- **Piano Unit 2**
August 12 – 16, 2017
Gail Lange
- **Piano Unit 3**
August 16 – 20, 2017
Gail Lange
- **Viola Technique and Pedagogy**
August 13 – 18, 2017
Julia Hardie
- **Violin Unit 1**
August 13 – 20, 2017
Joanne Melvin
- **Violin Unit 2**
August 13 – 18, 2017
Karen-Michele Kimmett
- **Violin Unit 3**
August 13 – 18, 2017
Margot Jewell
- **Violin Unit 5**
August 13 – 18, 2017
Paule Barsalou

For complete information about teacher development courses offered throughout Canada and the US this year, please go to:
<https://suzukiassociation.org/events/institutes/>



Area Reports

416 Area

All schools are thriving with enriching and engaging programs. Growth and inspiration are continuing to be sharpened through collaborations with local schools and artists. Community involvement is continuing to thrive through annual concerts.

This area continues to be a growing, supportive, inspiring and engaging community.

Below you will find brief reports from some of the programs in the area:

MNjcc

During winter/spring 2016 The Miles Nadal JCC Suzuki Program was visited by Spanish opera singer/conductor, Alvaro Lozano Gutierrez, Artist In Residence at the MNjcc. Alvaro visited the advanced chamber ensembles and coached them in preparation for their Spring concert, and the "Thanks to Dr. Suzuki" Gala Concert. He also collaborated with the teachers in their faculty concert, presenting an aria from Don Giovanni.

The MNjcc ran their seventh Suzuki Summer Music Camp this past July 4-8 2016, featuring guest teachers Clayton Scott, Cheryl Reid and Julia McFarlane, alongside the wonderful team of regular Tuesday program teachers who were available for that week.

This coming Winter, the advanced violin classes (books 5 - 10) will be collaborating with students from Etobicoke High School for the Performing Arts and members of Tafelmusik to present a special concert at Trinity St. Paul's Church Jeanne Lamon Hall on February 26 2017, featuring some of the repertoire that will be performed in a new multi media production "Visions and Voyages" being created by bassist, Alison McKay. The students will receive cashing sessions from Canadian fiddle specialist Anne Lederman, and baroque violin specialist Chris Verrette.

NYSS

During Winter/Spring 2016, NYSS students held a Winter workshop with guest drumming/ukulele specialist Cheryl Reid, and learned drumming rhythms from around the world.

Elena Spanu now has her SECE certificate, and has started a SECE program at our school. We look forward to this program growing over time.

This past October, the school held its eighth annual Deirdre Reynolds Memorial Scholarship concert at the Lawrence Park Community Church. This was a highly memorable concert given that Deirdre's son Jamie Reynolds was able to come to perform on this program. Many others who had collaborated at various summer camps and SOSI came from as far as Barrie to perform the pieces they had worked on together in August at SOSI. We are grateful to the families and students for all that they contributed to this event.

In February 2016, NYSS started a CAD (Creative Ability Development) and fiddling performance group, taught by Rebecca Sancton-Ashworth. Some of the students from this group performed at the SAO conference in Ottawa, having collaborated with students from Laura Nerenberg's studio, and students from the studios of Sera Smolen from Ithaca, and Alice Kanack from Rochester (creator of CAD).

A community wide summary: The 14th "Thanks to Dr. Suzuki Gala Concert" was held at the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto on April 17, 2016. Nine Toronto-area schools were involved in presenting works performed by their advanced ensembles, alongside of two tutti collaborations for a joyous hour-long celebration of the life and teachings of Dr. Suzuki. This coming April 23, 2017 we will look forward to holding this event in Etobicoke at the Plast Huculak Centre, located at 516 the Kingsway.

Toronto School for Strings

We are thrilled to offer our first Viola Ensemble!

RCM

We keep our wonderful, enthusiastic students/families extremely busy, continuing to run the following components of our Music Enrichment Plus program:

For parents: ECC!, taught by Susan Gagnon, in September, and various other parent workshops.

For students: private lessons, group classes, orchestra for those that read notation, solo recitals, musicianship/theory classes, chamber music ensembles, some students also sing in a choir.

Some students do Suzuki graduations, which is a big project involving recording a complete book of repertoire that is witnessed and critiqued by another teacher than the student's usual private teacher, then a solo performance of the last piece in the book plus one of their choice.

On February 26, 2017, a one-day Suzuki workshop is in early planning stages to include groups and masterclasses, taught by Zack Ebin and other teachers from Ontario and farther afield.

◆Elena Spanu, SAO 416 Representative

519 East

The months leading up to the holiday break are always a hectic and busy time. Many December concerts are in the works, as well as other holiday events.

In Guelph, Andrea Cook's adult cello students are continuing their tradition of having a December play-in and social. Last year some adult violin and viola students from the SSSG, led by Carmen Evans, joined in and fun was had by all. This year we welcome back some of the upper strings for our celebration.

Ellen Berry's Cambridge studio is looking forward to playing seasonal music in the local mall, along with students of other Cambridge teachers. This will be the event's fourth year and the children love being able to wear seasonal colours and playing in such a public venue. Students are grouped in half-hour blocks during the afternoon, playing solos and ensemble music. They use Google Docs to manage the scheduling -- no simple task with the large number of families involved during this busy time of year!

Tracey Clarke-Rankine has reported on news from The Guelph School of Music. They are pleased to have a new Facebook Page, where they post news about school activities, articles and podcasts of interest as well as videos of student performances. Teacher photos and performance announcements are also posted. They look forward to developing their FB page over the coming months to share news and attract new students to the school.

A group of teachers is managing the site co-cooperatively. The director being of the "boomer" generation thought the task to be overwhelming but the "millennials" on staff created the page in a flash! They invite you to visit the page and "Like" it on Facebook.

◆Andrea Cook, SAO 519 East Representative

519 West

This is my last contribution to the SAO Newsletter as the Area Rep for 519 West, as I move into the position of Vice Chair of the SAO. I'd like to thank all the members in the area for their contributions to our newsletter (especially to our "New Ideas" segments).

This year for the holidays, my "new idea" (although likely not new to everyone, I have never done it before!) was to create a food drive through my piano studio of young students, with all items going to the nearby neighbourhood food bank for the holidays.

I have a big basket with a festive red bow at the entrance of my studio and all students are asked to bring in at least one food item to put it in the basket for their December lessons. I have made a point of explaining the food drive with the students and not just the parents. As a result, I have noticed that it is the *students* who put the cans and boxes in the Food Bank basket, and that they seem very proud to do so.

I know a Suzuki teacher who organizes a holiday concert each year for her students to play at a nursing home, and another who raises money for the Santa Claus Fund through her studio families. There are so many ways to help young students look beyond their own wish-lists in December, and encourage them to think of others while feeling excited about the holiday season themselves.

Philanthropy and music are inextricably tied; Pablo Casals said "music will save the world". Perhaps a few boxed food items are not going to save the world, but they might make a real difference in someone's celebratory meal, and lift spirits. And that to me is a very important lesson.

◆Lenni Jabour, SAO Vice-Chair

705 Area

The snow is falling in Barrie and area as I write this report. December is here, and with it, so many wonderful holiday traditions. One of the favourites in my piano studio is that of the Carol Party, where instead of an individual Group Lesson, all students gather together to enjoy the many and varied carols available for our enjoyment.

In the spirit of the 'new idea' report from our 519 West colleagues in the last newsletter, I thought I would share what we are up to this year, which is a little different from previous years. Usually every student has played a solo at this event, held in the home of one of the families. This year, the 'new idea' was to collaborate to play duets and trios. It has been great fun preparing for this, with pairings between various ages and stages. The students have enjoyed getting together to work on their selections. The party is at regular Group Lesson time, so there is no problem with scheduling.

For the big day, everyone gets into the spirit of things by wearing red or green clothing. Santa hats and reindeer headbands have been known to appear. Traditionally each student makes a craft of a candy cane reindeer and gives it to another student as a gift. Of course, the party culminates in pizza and lots of food to share.

Carols have been a wonderful teaching tool in my studio. I have collected about 25 books of various levels of piano ensemble and solo Christmas music. The students love using this familiar music for sight reading purposes, and many families have begun their own family traditions based on this wonderful music of the season.

◆Nena LaMarre



At the Carol Party

905 East

Now that 905 East is reporting separately from 905 North, I would like to re-introduce who we are: our 905 East piano teachers are Renate Pucinni (North Oshawa), Mary Burke (Enniskillen), Kathy Coltof (Oshawa); our violin teachers are Jane Plewman (Uxbridge/Port Perry), Deborah Henderson (Port Hope), Kathy Coltof (Oshawa) and myself, Laurie Mitchell (Bowmanville); our cello teachers are Svetlana Dybenko (Pickering), Kathy Coltof and Jane Plewman; our flute representative is Pandora Bryce. Each of us maintain independent studios but it is a pleasure and comfort to share our SAO connection.

Out of the eight of us, three attended the 2016 conference in Ottawa and I was fortunate to be one of the three. While it is always tough to take the time away from teaching, once you get there you realize the value of the experience. The sessions were highly worthwhile and well prepared. I learned a lot at sessions on teaching students on the Autism Spectrum and producing beautiful tone. I also enjoyed the feeling of recognizing more of the friendly faces from other parts of Ontario.

This is a busy time of year for all of us as we prepare for our Christmas/holiday concerts. In January, we hope to celebrate our successes together in a 905 East Graduation concert in which students who have had a Graduation during the fall months are invited to play one of their pieces.

From Kathy Coltof:

I was very happy to have had some of my students attend the SAO Conference in Ottawa. Five of my piano students had a master class with Valery Lloyd Watts and their parents were very impressed. The group concert at De La Salle school was amazing. The three orchestras, conducted by Domenick Fiore, were a lot of fun for my string students. There were 33 separate items on the program and it all ran smoothly - a million congratulations go to Marie Kusters and Doug Murphy.

On November 20, I had my Autumn Community concert at our local church. I included parents playing on the piano and violin with their child; this gave the child a feeling of security. Now the pressure is off, so we are just having fun at groups and preparing for the Pickering GTA Music Festival in the new year.

◆Laurie Mitchell, SAO 905 East representative

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905 West

On the suggestion of our new Vice–Chair, Lenni Jabour, at our November board meeting, I sent out an email request to other area 905 West teachers to send me their “new ideas” that they tried this year. I immediately received a lovely note from a new member to the SAO from Niagara Falls, Liam Calhoun, as follows:

My partner Lisa, who teaches piano, has always been great at coming up with different 'challenges' that are holiday or character-themed in order to mix things up and keep her students motivated. We decided to create a Halloween practice challenge together, with a grand prize at the end for whoever completed the most weekly challenges. These included creating new 'twinkle rhythms', turning pieces into scary versions, and even some atonal improvisation! This was greatly successful in both our studios, and it definitely exposed them to some new ideas in music.

Since we have yet to hear from other area teachers, here is my new/old idea:

I have more beginners this year than I have had in a while. In mid-October I realized that some of them were starting to balk at practice and that I had to help their parents get more creative and in fact be more interesting in the lessons as well. The “honey-moon” period was over but the work of building the basics still needed to get done. So I decided to pull out my deck of cards at the lesson. With the beginners I assigned a category of tasks to each suite. For example, I set spades as bow exercises away from the instrument, hearts as open string twinkle rhythm work, clubs as plucking (“I’m a little monkey”, Twinkle or Hot cross buns) and diamonds as an exercise involving singing (“Ants”, bow hold exercises or even more plucking). With some students I was able to add the role of my twenty sided dice to include repetitions (this could be as simple as how many times each note of a scale was plucked or how many taka, taka, stop, stops were done with good bow holds). Making the lessons more fun even helped when kids arrived in tears a few days after Halloween – over tired and over sugared. I found that this was adaptable and a good “pick me up” for many of my students in the early books, not just the beginners. With book one students the suites could be adapted to whatever postural issue that student has – keeping pinky on the frog, keeping tall L.H. fingers, sitting into the cello, keeping the bow in the middle lane etc. The numbers on the cards could be the piece number, depending on where the student is in the repertoire. Of course any practice “game” has a limited shelf life and then we have to come up with a new one, but by showing the parents how much more cooperative their kids are in the lesson when we have fun, the parents see the value in their getting more creative with the practices at home as well. They are a great source of practice ideas for their own kids once we get them going.

I hope to collect more “new ideas” from other of our area teachers for the next newsletter.


◆ Susan Gagnon SAO 905 West Representative

Instrument Reports

SUZUKI EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Where are all the SECE teachers in Ontario? We are lucky to have access to the founding seeds of this wonderful program in our own backyard and it is surprising how few SECE teachers, or at least, ones registered in the SAO, we actually seem to have in Ontario. This program not only introduces musical skills to babies and young children, but most importantly trains parents on how to be successful Suzuki parents and home teachers! Furthermore, there have been amazing research studies done to back up the incredible list of the benefits of this particular early childhood method, conducted by our own Kate Einarson. I have so enjoyed tending to my little SECE plant, which continues to grow at Etobicoke Suzuki Music. I would like to invite and encourage all teachers to consider planting an SECE seed in your schools or studios. It makes the transition into any Suzuki instrumental program smoother. I look forward to growing our SECE garden within the SAO.

◆Tova Rosenberg, SAO SECE Representative



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MAKING GREAT THINGS EVEN BETTER IN THE OAKVILLE SUZUKI ASSOCIATION

I was pleased to receive teacher development funding from the SAO to support my Suzuki Early Childhood Education (SECE) training in London, Ontario during June 2016. I returned to the Thames Valley Suzuki School in London this past summer to complete my SECE Stage 4 teacher training. I had a wonderful time, reconnecting with colleagues from around the world, and meeting new friends too! I have now been teaching the SECE curriculum for five years, and in that time the Oakville Suzuki Association has seen its early childhood music programs grow greatly. Last year, we had four teachers, including myself, running classes for the OSA on weekdays and weekends, and also several more classes offered through the Town of Oakville on weekday mornings. Each of our teachers uses a different curriculum and has different training, but in summer 2016 we decided to standardize our program for the first time.

We wanted to ensure that all our classes were preparing children and their parents for instrumental study as effectively as possible, but we also wanted to offer a program where children could really get to know the songs and games to experience the joy of mastering a challenging skill over time. We decided together to use SECE curriculum as our program's model and to focus on Suzuki principles. We all offered mixed-age classes already, and we shared many of our instruments and supplies, but felt we needed to make the classes more consistent and decide on common goals.

Starting in fall 2016, all the OSA's early childhood music classes have all incorporated 1) daily home listening, to develop good habits and learn our songs, rhymes, and games, as well as 2) a finite set of songs and rhymes used each week, so that children (and parents!) really grow to know and love the shared repertoire. So far, the feedback from families has been positive, and we're excited to be taking this step within our program. As teachers, we have also enjoyed the chance to sit down together and trade ideas and suggestions – always hard to coordinate, but a great source of inspiration!

I look forward to completing my Stage 5 training soon, and to seeing how the new OSA early childhood program unfolds over the 2016-2017 year. We are excited to be aligning our early childhood music offerings with the Suzuki (instrumental) method in such a thoughtful, deliberate way.

◆Kate Einerson

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LOW END UPDATE: NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF SUZUKI BASS IN ONTARIO

As 2017 draws near, plans for Canada's first Suzuki Bass institute program and teacher training course continue to move forward. Virginia Dixon has been confirmed to offer Bass Book 1 training at the 2017 Southwestern Ontario Suzuki Institute, and both myself and my good friend and colleague Doug Murphy will be there assisting with various programs, including the string orchestras, introductory bass group classes, master classes, and more. 2017 is shaping up to be a historic year for both SOSI and Suzuki Bass in Canada!

Any teachers, parents, or students wishing to inquire about bass classes or training at SOSI or throughout the year can contact me anytime at info@jessedietschi.com.

I also want to extend my sincerest thanks to outgoing SAO Chair Nena LeMarre, who was instrumental in getting me involved with the SAO organization and board. I also wish to offer congratulations to my good friend Carmen Evans, who took over as SAO Chair at the November conference, and welcome another good friend, Lenni Jabour, as the new Vice Chair. The SAO is in good hands for the next six years!

On a personal note...

This past month I had the honour and privilege of making my debut with the Esprit Orchestra, Canada's leading orchestra dedicated to contemporary music. In January I will also have the opportunity to make my debut with Canada's leading opera organization, the Canadian Opera Company, as I join their bass section for the thrilling conclusion to Wagner's epic Ring Cycle: *Götterdämmerung*.

Until next time!

◆ Jesse Dietschi, SAO Bass Representative



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VIOLISTS UNITE!

It started as a crazy idea last summer; why not form a viola ensemble that would perform at the 2018 SAA conference in Minneapolis? Why such an endeavour? Because violas need to be heard. When was the last time you listened to a viola ensemble? Everyone clamours for violas in their ensembles, yet violists remains few and, literally, far between. When you ask the different Suzuki programs across Ontario how many viola students they have; the majority respond that they have only a handful of students, others say none at all. The numbers drop even more drastically if we are talking about advanced violists. Advanced violists are frequently the only ones in their program. They often feel isolated since few or no activities cater to them.

Creating an ensemble that would regroup those isolated advanced violists and give them a purpose to play together is what this idea is all about. Hearing the rich sound of violas can only inspire interest in the instrument. At first, I shared this idea with a few viola teachers, and they all thought it was not as crazy as it seems. I put forward the idea to my colleagues at the 2016 SAO Ottawa conference last November and many good ideas came out this meeting. The name of this ensemble would be "Viola L'Alto", a name reflecting the bilingual aspect of our country. No auditions or registration fees would be required to join. However, the student would have to have completed three of the four movements of the Telemann Viola Concerto in G major and be recommended by his teacher to be eligible. Because concerts and rehearsals would have to be organized locally, regionally and provincially, the student would have to be willing to travel. The video audition for performing at the 2018 SAA conference has to be submitted by the end of October 2017, which means that student recruitment would have to start soon. A special event could motivate those students to join and the "Thanks to Dr. Suzuki" concert in Toronto, planned for April, was put forward as a possible first performance venue.

One of the important ideas presented was to orient the purpose of this group into something larger and long lasting. The idea of performing at the SAA conference could be a drawing card but not the sole purpose. There is no guarantee that this ensemble will be chosen to perform. What would happen to the participants once this project is over? Why not create instead a community of violists that values each other's achievements and networks through exchanges, workshops, concerts, and social media? The idea is not new. A few years ago, there were Viola Days organized between viola programs around the Toronto area with the special participation of violists from Buffalo. These events gave great opportunities to violists to meet other violists, to participate in master classes and to play viola repertoire together. It's time to unite the violists once more.

◆ Pierre Gagnon

Cornerstones of Hope

RICHNESS OF SPIRIT IN BRAZIL: THE BACCARELLI INSTITUTE PART TWO

See Part One: Inspiration and Musical Excellence: The Bacaraelli Institute in our Fall Newsletter, Volume 27, No. 3.

My mandate was described to me. The top instrumental level of the Institute, the Heliópolis Symphony, performs at a professional level, and can do so because it culls players from all over Brazil. There is corporate sponsorship from large companies such as Volkswagen and Caterpillar who provide a stipend for these accomplished young musicians as they hone their orchestral skills. Thinking forward, the Baccarelli Institute wanted to find a way to develop their junior and intermediate students so more of their own from Heliópolis would have the opportunity to reach this level. While there exists much inspiration amongst the teachers, it is a huge challenge to take children from the favela and mould them into players with excellent skills.

continued on next page

RICHNESS...continued

The Baccarelli Cello Teacher Class. Marcio Galvão is standing 6th from the right.

Elgar, Saint-Saëns, Dvorak, Kabalevsky, Haydn, Tchaikovsky Rococo—and why not? In a city of 20+ million people there are many outstanding string players for dedicated students to work with. What is so very special is that these cellists will be training to teach, mentor and inspire younger students who come from the neediest of situations in their locale. Of the ten participants in the class, eight of them grew up as part of the Baccarelli system. Our work was to be focused on Pre-twinkle and Unit 1 with some general discussions on child development, sequencing skills for reading, and how to foster awareness of body balance.

As a trainer, there is nothing more telling than to work with the students, especially in group classes. Here we see the spirit of the class as well as an aggregate of skills. Because my previous my work with Latin American children was mostly with those of means, I was nervous about not knowing what to expect. It is hard not to dabble with pre-conceived notions about poverty.



A eureka moment.

The use of Suzuki-inspired training at The Baccarelli began several years ago with violinist José Marcio Galvão, who trained with SAA violin trainer Ed Kreitman. To make a long story short, Marcio's effectiveness as a teacher was quickly noticed, especially in the improvement in the Baccarelli's orchestras (there are five of them). The violinists played less advanced repertoire but demonstrated greatly improved tone, intonation and general skills. Now Suzuki Teacher Development is a fixture in the Baccarelli violin department. A next step was to address the levels of cellists and bassists by giving training to upcoming teachers.

The mixed strains of the cello concerto literature greeted me every day that I arrived in our room at the Institute—

continued on next page

RICHNESS...continued

The group classes were a complete delight. The children - smiling, energetic, respectful, incredibly responsive and highly spirited - were happy to try anything I threw at them. There were not quite enough cellos for all the students, but that was no problem. We did all the activities twice with the kids switching off. Review, review! I gave one young cellist a foam cello I had brought and he happily "PLAYED" the whole class without missing a beat. At no point was there a sense of lack, just excellent focus and joyous participation. I learned that there are many types of poverty, but spirit is not one of them with these children. It is my great hope that with the help of the teachers being trained, they will also have the means for a rich musical life as well.

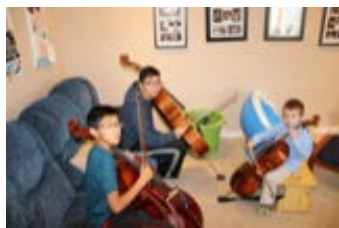
◆David Evenchick, SAO Cello Representative



Examining the parts of the thumb and how they feel in a balance bow hand

SAO Conference 2016, Ottawa

THE SAO AND CAD WORKSHOP IN OTTAWA NOVEMBER 4-6, 2016



Tony, Andrew and Owen



Five kids at Governor General's residence:
Back row: Tony, Andrew, Front: Claire, Brianna and Alma

BILLETS

About the billets: I liked when they first arrived at our house. They're both really nice. I liked when we saw them walking down the hall at the SAO Conference.

Group Class: I liked when there was just one cello in my class and the rest were violins.

Improvisation Class: Ohhh, I liked when we played the piano.

SAO Conference Concert: I was sitting down for a long time because the rest of the people played but I didn't. I liked when I played in the concert.

Saying good-bye to the billets: When we were saying good-bye I think I was sad.

◆Claire Lantz (Age 6)

On Friday November 4, we (the Ottawa Rideau Falls Violins students) went to Nil's house to meet children from Toronto, Ithaca and Rochester. They were all so kind. The teachers have been fundraising for things like this, for gatherings and stuff, so the Ithaca students provided us with burritos for supper. Well we only came here for one reason: to play music. That night we did lots of improvisation [part of the Creative Ability Development (CAD) workshop] and most of them were teens, so for the next half it was more advanced so I couldn't stay. I had to call my mom and when she got there we decided to stay because we needed to pick up the billets when they were done. Billets are people that live far away that come to stay with you for a certain amount of time. We got to bring home two teenagers, they were both boys, they were called Tony and

Andrew. Both boys play the cello and my brother Owen plays the cello too. Tony and Andrew both brought presents for us and we enjoyed them a lot. The next day we had a big breakfast but left very soon because there was a Suzuki Association of Ontario (SAO) conference to go to. We hardly saw Tony and Andrew for the whole day. I had a group class with Carmen Evans, an improvisation class with Laura Nerenberg, my teacher, and a practice for the Sunday concert for the CAD workshop. Right after that we stayed in the same room and they took our orders for pizza. We did the improvisation practice for the CAD concert on Sunday. There was a separate final concert for the SAO conference on Saturday afternoon. Later we met up with the billets at the entrance to the building and left. That night we went to Jordana's house and we had pizza. We had lots of time to play improvisation. We learned how to play the game called minnows. They told us that we had to start with the lights off and count in our heads for 30 seconds ("real seconds") and then someone can start a rhythm or a couple of notes that repeats itself and then later someone can start a new rhythm or follow someone else's rhythm. My favourite part was when we got to attach glow sticks to our bows! Laura our teacher made chocolate chip cookies too (smiles and laughter). The next day we met at the Governor General's estate for a tour. It was an hour long. The final day it was hard to say good-bye but we had one more concert to do for improvisation. We did a practice and then performed it in front of Suzuki teachers while they were eating lunch. We said goodbye to Andrew and Tony and we promised to keep in touch. On our way out we met Alice Kanack who makes up the improvisation books and CDs. That was a long weekend full of concerts and laughter. I liked it!

◆Brianna Lantz (Age 10)

REFLECTIONS ON THE SAO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

I attended the SAO Conference in Ottawa on November 5 and 6, 2016. The first day was the workshop for students from various Suzuki studios in Ontario. I was delighted and privileged to be one of the clinicians working with violin students for one hour in the morning. These students were so well-prepared, and were able to work on and accomplish everything I asked of them. Our hour together simply melted away.



Conference 2016 passes the key to Conference 2017 Left to Right: Doug Murphy, Marie Kusters, Liz Biswas, Anita Buttemer, Geneveive Schirm-Joyce

The organizers, Marie Kusters and Doug Murphy, were simply wonderful. Their organization skills were so evident throughout the weekend. They were able to overcome any and all difficulties, and the weekend resulted in a myriad of music-making including Junior and Senior Orchestra rehearsals led by Domenick Fiore, drumming led by Kathy Armstrong, Improvisation led by Sera Smolen and Laura Nerenberg, piano rep classes led by Valerie Lloyd Watts and Ellen Berry, ECC! with Elayne Ras, cello classes led by Margaret Maria Tobolowska and the SPA course led by Gail Lange.

The exciting concert in the afternoon was filled with such a variety of music making with instruments ranging from pianos, guitars, flutes, cellos, double basses, violas and violins. The concert concluded with our traditional Twinkle Theme to honour the memory and work of Dr. Suzuki.

Sunday dawned and our keynote speaker Domenick Fiore held us spell bound with his personal story of how his Suzuki journey began. He called it "My Path to Suzuki" and many heads were nodding in recognition of similarities in stories and anecdotes that caused much laughter amongst us all.

There were three Breakout sessions:

I attended Liz Biswas' "Successful Integration of Students with Special Needs into the Suzuki Studio", which was filled with information and very helpful charts.

In Sera Smolen's, "The Mother Tongue Approach, Finding One's Own Unique Musical Voice," we all had a chance to work on our "musical voices" which was interesting and unique.

Margaret Tobolowska's Cello Session, "Teaching Through Emotions" again involved us all playing our instruments and attaching emotions like anger, love, sadness etc. to a particular piece of music. Very helpful and enlightening!

Wendy Seravalle-Smith presented a personal PowerPoint presentation, "Celebrating Our Suzuki Ontario Family: Past, Present and Future".

The day started with *Pachelbel Canon* performed by Marie, Doug and friends and ended with *Slava!* by Rimsky Korsakoff performed by an SAO Teacher Orchestra.

This was a special weekend just not to be missed. Very well done Marie and Doug.

◆Jane Plewman



Dominick Fiore with Dr. Suzuki

MORE REFLECTIONS ON THE CONFERENCE

Elizabeth Sherk, Essie Liu, and Margot Jewell enjoyed reflecting on the experience of the wonderful SAO annual conference as we drove home together. This conference was expertly organized by Marie Kusters and Doug Murphy and held this year in Ottawa. Attendees included fifty-seven teachers from across Ontario, with several colleagues from Quebec.

Seventeen teachers arrived early for two exciting pre-conference sessions. The ECC! and SPA courses were taught by Elayne Ras and Gail Lange. Students from the United States arrived on Friday evening for rehearsals with three Canadian schools to prepare for their improvisation performances, and get to know each other. 120 children and several teachers participated in the Saturday student events.

There were many valuable opportunities to observe teachers working with children from many different studios in piano, violin, viola and cello group classes as well as Suzuki Early Childhood Education. We also enjoyed observing enrichment classes; orchestra, African drumming and improvisation.

The theme of this conference was nurturing the family. This was reflected on Saturday in the insightful parent talk given by Kate Einarson and also in several of the workshops; Valerie Lloyd Watts invited each performer in her masterclass to bow with their “team”, which included their parents and their home teachers. Students, parents and teachers were all inspired by Valerie’s sharing of stories about composers and passionate discussion about the music the children played.

The Sunday “teacher’s day” featured two keynote speakers: Dominick Fiore and Wendy Seravalle-Smith. Both gave moving, heartfelt talks describing the inspiration Suzuki’s vision brings to their life’s work. The opportunity to make music together as teachers, both in Kathy Armstrong’s African drumming circle and the teachers’ string orchestra, made this conference special.

This conference also offered a wide range of topics presented at nine beautifully presented workshops. Liz Biswas shared from her experience of working with many children with special needs. She emphasized the positive mindset we need to create a level playing field so that every child can grow and learn. An improvisation workshop for teachers was presented by Sera Smolen and Laura Nerenberg. Dominick Fiore shared from his experience of leading students orchestras, and Jodi Compeau introduced teachers to a music education website in her session on utilizing technology in our teaching. Giles Comaeu from Ottawa University presented his research exploring “Natural Learning”, comparing it with the Mother Tongue Method. Special sessions for cellos and violins were presented by Elayne Ras and Margaret Tobolowska.

At the end of the day, Wendy Seravalle-Smith and Marie Kusters invited us to reflect on the many people who have nurtured and supported us in our Suzuki journeys. We left filled with gratitude and reignited with the vision of our valuable work with children and their families.

We encourage all SAO members to enjoy our wonderful Suzuki community and continue on your path of life long learning. Make the effort to attend next year’s conference next November in Waterloo!

◆Elizabeth Sherk, Essie Liu, Margot Jewell

SAO Conference 2017, Waterloo

Suzuki For All

November 4-5, 2017. Waterloo, Ontario

Conference Committee: Liz Biswas, Anita Buttemer, Geneveive Schirm-Joyce, Ellen Berry (student day) and Kelly Williamson (student day)

Student day: Saturday, November 4 with student group classes, enrichment classes and social opportunities

Teacher Conference Sunday, November 5 with keynote speaker: To Be Announced.

Breakouts, keynotes and more!

Email: SAOconference2017@gmail.com

Call for Breakout Sessions: Do you have a break-out session that you would like to share with our organization? Email our conference team

The Value of the SAO

I am grateful to be a member of the Suzuki Association of Ontario. I am a "charter member" and what a ride it has been!

The value of being a member of a professional organization has many tangible rewards.

In addition to receiving and forwarding referrals, the distinction of participating in this organization has helped me to create a unique profile for myself over time, to the point where I can do more than just teach. This has led to many opportunities such as adjudicating and leading workshops.

In a less concrete but much more meaningful way, the SAO has helped me make new friends and renew old friendship. This is priceless and it keeps up my spirit. Conferences are annual renewals. Even the trips to conferences make great escapes from the daily routine.

From a professional development standpoint, the various keynotes and sessions from SAO conferences over the years have been life-changing. I have been exposed to world-class thinking and practices, and I am a much better teacher than had I not been in the SAO. It has helped me to focus on my Suzuki mission.

The commitment to ongoing self-improvement gives me a positive outlook, and there is always a nudge to take my work up to the next level. That is something to get up for in the morning!

◆Julian Fisher



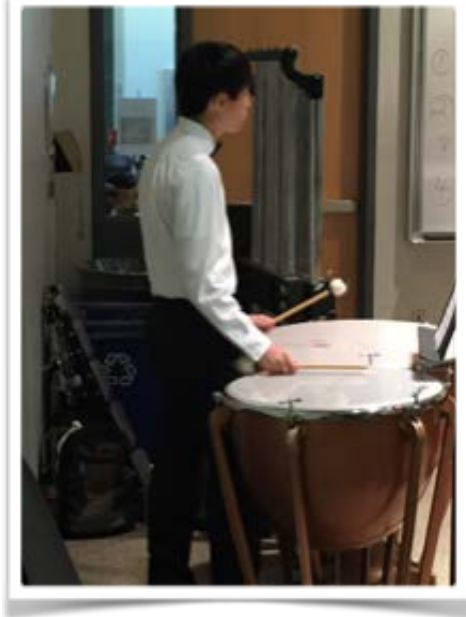
SOSI – Confidence and Support

I am James Wu, a 17-year-old high school student in Barrie, and a current piano student with Nena LaMarre. I attended the Southwest Ontario Suzuki Institute (SOSI) this summer, and found it the best experience I have ever had in piano study.

I came to Canada in 2014 from Beijing, China. I first started piano lessons when I was four-and-a-half years old. Through thirteen years of piano study, there were three years that I absolutely hated it. I started loving music at the beginning of 2016, and eventually decided to go into music in the future. This is how I found Mrs. LaMarre to study piano with. After three years of not touching piano at all, it was the hardest and the most depressing experience for me to re-start piano, but fortunately, I went to SOSI, and it gave me all the confidence and support I needed to finally come back to it.

My best experience at SOSI was the duo piano and violin concert I performed in the theatre auditorium. It was my first time playing in concert in front of hundreds. I was not expecting to be performing at the same place, on the same piano as the faculty concert that just took place the night before. After the concert, there were at least thirty parents who came up to me and told me that I played really well. Even the day after, I met a parent during lunch who told me I played very lyrically and with sensitivity on the piano. I have to thank all the parents that are being so supportive, not only for their own children, but for all of us, for me. I believe this kind of support is what makes me confident that what I have worked so hard on is something of value. It shows that the time and the effort and the love I have put into music is meaningful.

Since four-and-a-half years old up to this point, this is the first time I have ever had compliments on my piano playing, and should this have happened earlier, I would probably not have hated the piano for three years! SOSI gave me a great chance to let me know what I have worked so hard on is not pointless, and it gave me confidence to keep doing what I am doing.





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My love of music kept me going on the piano, but after a while I would start questioning myself, 'is what I am doing going to be meaningful or meaningless?'. I am so glad that parents, teachers and classmates at SOSI have been nothing but supportive and helpful, and they let me know the hours of practicing I have put into the piano every single day is something people would appreciate. It gives me the confidence and motivation to keep working on what I love.

◆James Wu

Invitation to all Suzuki schools

The Suzuki String School of Guelph (SSSG) has commissioned a work to composer David Jones to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary, to be performed in Spring 2017. SSSG would like to offer all Canadian Suzuki programs the opportunity to perform this work for the cost of \$100. David is a former Suzuki violin and piano student himself and is well acquainted with the range of ability of Suzuki students. He is a versatile and very creative composer who will undoubtedly rise to this challenge.

Commission length: 6 minutes

Instrumentation: violin, viola and cello with piano accompaniment. Will involve students from beginner to book 6-7 level.

Premise: Musical elements that emulate a patchwork of musical quotations or fragments involving different levels of students morphing into O Canada.

Music will be available in January 2017.

If your school is interested in using this commission or would like more information, please contact Paule Barsalou paule@artset.net

◆Paule Barsalou

Motivation

My name is Morgan and I am a grade 10 student. I learned a lot from a presentation given by Clayton Scott on motivation, but there are a few things that really stood out to me.

The first is that in order to learn something well and effectively, the student must have a desire to learn. The most powerful type of motivation is self-motivation. A student can have a lot of help and support and can be very skilled at what they are learning, but unless they really want to do well and take in what they are being taught, they will not learn as effectively. In order to keep the student interested in what they are learning, it is important to set small goals on the way to accomplishing their final, large goal. This way, the student will see clearly that they are improving and not get discouraged. Small rewards such as stickers can help the student stay interested in achieving their goal. Having a parent or someone else say things like, "I love hearing you play," can help the student see that what they are working towards is worth something.

In order to help someone become motivated, it is important to create a positive, fun environment. Doing simple things like talking excitedly and laughing can make the lesson fun. An important thing for motivation is making sure the student knows they are successful. Mentioning improvement in a student can help them see that all of their hard work is worth it. Creating a positive environment by showing students what they are doing well, rather than just what they must improve on, is really important.

The easy part is making the student become motivated. Once they are, you must ensure that the student stays that way and does not lose the path leading to their success.

◆Morgan Dauphanee

Morgan is a fifteen-year-old student in the Suzuki Piano Studio of Nena LaMarre.