



NEWSLETTER

Music is the language of the heart without words. - S. Suzuki



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Congratulations!

The MTSA is pleased to announce the winners of the 2024 Concerto Competition! Josie Packard and Mary & Frances Lyle-Murray were selected to perform with our teacher orchestra at the MTSA Honors Recital on Feb. 4th, 2024. Josie will perform the *Allegro Appassionato* by Saint-Saens, and Mary & Frances will perform the Bach Double.



Mary & Frances Lyle-Murray, students of Sara Cote



Josie Packard, student of Kirsten Cassel Greer

Our Trip to Newfoundland

ZACHARY EBIN

One of the beautiful aspects of being a Suzuki parents, student, and teacher is the global nature of our educational philosophy. Suzuki students can travel the world and connect with other Suzuki students. Due to our shared repertoire, we can play together with little or no rehearsal. What a powerful connecting force music can be.

Because of the global Suzuki community, the Ebin family has travelled to many interesting far off places. A highlight of our summer is our annual journey to St. John's Newfoundland for the Newfoundland and Labrador Suzuki Institute. Sadly, for the past few years we have had to make this journey virtually. But this past summer, thanks to improved world health, and a scholarship from the MTSA, we were able to make the journey in person once again.

It is not easy to get to the northeasternmost point in North America, but when we land in Newfoundland, we have to open our suitcases to get out our sweaters. Much relief after experiencing the Nashville June heat!

Our annual trip to the institute is wonderful, in so many ways. We reconnect with old friends, learn new repertoire and fiddle tunes, learn new approaches to our technique, and have fun connecting through music.

One of the many benefits of attending an institute, is milestone marking. When we work at our artistry every day, it can be hard to see the progress. But when you attend an annual event it helps reflect on how far you have come. Something as simple as last year you were in junior orchestra and this year you are in senior orchestra sends a strong message to parents and students that the daily grind is working. Similarly the institute provides a goal to move forward. This year at the institute our son was in book 6 at the institute, next year he is looking forward to being in book 7.

In addition to the many wonderful classes offered at the institute, there are wonderful special events as well. A favorite for our family is the campfire at Middle Cove Beach. We gather together with our friends from the institute and roast hot dogs and marshmallows on custom made roasters made by Newfoundland violin maker Rodney de Vries from discarded violin bows. The children spend hours on the beach running and searching for a curious Newfoundland fish called Capelin, a favorite snack of the whales that migrate to Newfoundland in the summer.

We are so grateful to the MTSA for helping our children attend the institute. If you have never been to an institute I highly recommend it! Maybe we will see you in Newfoundland in 2024!



A Day with MTSA

CYNTHIE BURBIDGE

Renowned Suzuki instructor Dr. Terry Durbin would say that a title like MTSA Workshop is “B-o-r-i-n-g!” It certainly doesn’t fully represent the incredible experience these young musicians experienced at the September all-day event this last month. “That was fun!” was heard by more than one parent by the end of the day.

MTSA puts on a workshop for violinists each September, held at St. Cecilia Academy here in Nashville. The day is packed full of learning for parents and students alike, as highly known teachers are brought in from all over TN and beyond to offer their unique “pro-tips” to students of all levels of playing. Each group rotates through classes with each teacher so everyone gets an opportunity to learn “from the best!”

Even more than learning new techniques and strategies for playing, students are enriched by the experience of playing in community with their peers. Participation in the Suzuki community in such an engaging way reinvigorates the students' motivation for their practice and learning.

Here are some unique take-aways from this years session:

- Dr. Terry Durbin cast an encouraging vision in the Parent Talk for protecting and promoting a positive relationship between the child and the violin. He also spoke of “varied and interleaving training” — being creative in the repetitions required of the student. His strongest contribution was simply modeling this approach as he engaged creatively with the students. The kids smiled and laughed the entire time they were under his tutelage.
- One focus from Kim Barrett was the value of posture and tone with her students. She offered the acronym WASP, representing the impact of the following on tone: Weight, Amount, Speed and Placement of the bow.
- Carol Dallinger promoted new methods for warm ups, such as *Finger Dances*. She also gave excellent opportunities during her classes for increasing listening skills.
- Students in Tim Barrett’s class experienced creative approaches to playing familiar pieces, with a focus on group engagement and musical dynamics.

The day ended with a spectacular play down — all the way from Book 7 pieces to Pre-Twinkles. Overall, the workshop inspired students in their playing and encouraged parents with renewed vision behind Suzuki learning. As Dr. Durbin expressed, music teaches so much more than skill. It nurtures empathy and the ability for us all to connect with just about anyone.

For more information on MTSA and their workshops and resources, please check out their website! <https://middletnsuzuki.org/>

MTSA Workshop 2023

LIZZY COOK

"Why do I play my violin every day?" featured workshop clinician & Suzuki Teacher Trainer, Dr. Timothy Durbin (a.k.a. Terry or Mr. Funny Man), asked a small semi circle of enthralled young violin beginners. "Because - it - makes - me - HAPPY!" he answered his own question, while flashing a goofy, bordering on ridiculous, grin. Indeed, Dr. Durbin's joy in his instrument was infectious to everyone as he demonstrated how the simple tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star could express the emotions of a variety of life events when played on the violin. The group howled with laughter, even at his sad tones expressing his mood, after stubbing his toe. As the young students shouted out answers and bantered with him, you could feel the excitement growing around this newfound instrument. Eyes lit up and broad grins covered their faces as they realized the emotive power of the tiny strings in their hands. Waving her bow to the tune of a little song, my daughter discovered why I am having her learn this foreign instrument: because one day she, too, could learn it makes her and all her listeners Happy!



Virginia Suzuki Institute 2023

YANA ANCELL

We spent a wonderful week at the Virginia Suzuki Institute last month. This was the 3rd Suzuki Institute we have attended with both of our young violinists. It was so good to see Mr. James Hutchins again at the opening play-in. We met him at the Acadiana Suzuki Strings Institute in Louisiana a couple of years ago. He was one of our favorite violin teachers there. Neither of our sons got him as a teacher at this institute. However, we had a lot of great teachers.

Our sons, along with all the students at the VSI, started the day with an 8 a.m. orchestra class. Our reading orchestra class was taught by Ms. Betsy Hughes of Greenville, NC. She really made orchestra fun early in the morning. They learned a couple of new songs in their 50 minute class each day.

Their orchestra class was followed by their group class. There were only 7 students in our group class, which was great. Mr. Will Freeman of Hickory, NC, who has been attending the Virginia Suzuki Institute almost all of his life, taught their group class. His mom, Mrs. Nan Freeman, the director of the Virginia Suzuki Institute, has attended all 50 years of the Institute except for the very first one.

After the group class, our sons got an hour break before their Masterclass. They loved spending their break with their new friends. They loved scootering around the duck pond. They met other young violinists from Virginia, North Carolina, and the Washington DC area.

We loved their Masterclasses. There were so many teachers at this Institute that we only had 2 students for our Masterclass. It was almost like a private class. My younger violinist got Mr. Will Freeman, and my older violinist got Mr. Tim Barrett of Johnson City, TN.

Thankfully, my husband always comes with us to these Suzuki Institutes so that we were able to divide and conquer. There were days that we had to walk across the campus to switch places during Masterclasses so that I was able to attend both Master classes.

After the Masterclass, we got an hour for lunch. The Emory and Henry College has a cafeteria that allows us to conveniently eat on campus. Most days, though, we had a picnic so our boys can play and scooter around the duck pond with their new friends.

On most days, we had solo recitals at the McGlothlin Center for the Arts right after lunch. Both our sons performed their pieces at this beautiful auditorium. The recitals were followed by the play in class, where our sons learned a few harmony to their repertoire pieces. On our last play in, Ms. Hughes took the class to play on Henry and Emory college football field. Our boys have played on a baseball field before with MTSA at a Nashville Sounds game, where they played Star Spangled Banner. However, this was their first time playing violin on a football field.

After the play in, we went straight to have a 2 hour class of jazz. This was the first time our sons were playing jazz. Mr. Justin Craig of Blacksburg, VA taught jazz at the Institute.

The Virginia Suzuki Institute also offered a couple of parents' workshops in the afternoon. Ms. Libby Armour of Memphis, TN gave valuable insights and answered the questions that we had. She told us that Suzuki Institute is worth 3 months of lessons. We've been going to Suzuki Institute the past 3 years. And we are planning to go to one next Summer.

The Institute didn't not just end with classes at 5 pm. We also had special events in the evening. On Monday evening, we had the pleasure of listening to a concert by the Kontras Quartet, an internationally known Chicago-based ensemble. What's even greater is that the members of Kontras Quartet provide students of string instruments with an intensive week of chamber music instruction at the Virginia Suzuki Institute.

On Tuesday evening, it was Concerto Night where everyone played their instrument accompanied by an orchestra. This year was the 50th Anniversary of Virginia Suzuki Institute. Every musician wore their tie dyed Virginia Suzuki Institute shirts. It was a night of celebration followed by games on the lawn.

The following evening, we had talent show performances. The highlight of the evening was Mr. Hutchins catching the green grapes by mouth that Ms. Hughes threw while playing violin. It was definitely a talent to have.

On Thursday evening, we had the Virginia Suzuki Institute final concert. It was followed by a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Virginia Suzuki Institute with birthday cake.

We met a lot of families and made new friends during the Institute. It was nice to get to know other Suzuki families and to be able to share our ups and downs. A couple of families from Asheville, NC may join us for MTSA Fall Workshop this September. They were so impressed that MTSA had a newsletter. Thank you for everything you do, MTSA board members. We are blessed to have a Suzuki Association that gives us a lot of opportunities and events to connect with each other.



MTSA ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Scholarships Deadline — February 1

MTSA Summer Scholarship Applications are due February 1st, 2024.

[Visit the MTSA website for full information and to apply.](#)

2. The MTSA Honors Recital — February 4

The honors recital will take place on Sunday February 5, 2023 at 2pm at the St. Cecilia Academy. We hope to see you there!

[Full Details at the MTSA website.](#)

3. Learn Like a Genius with Gregg Goodhart — January 21

Join us for an exciting masterclass on Sunday January 21 at 5:00pm at the Blair School of Music.

[Full information and register to attend.](#)

4. Share something in this newsletter!

If you would like to submit an article, artwork, a composition, or anything else that can be printed in 2d to the newsletter please write: president@middletnsuzuki.org.