



# NEWSLETTER

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



## MESSAGE FROM THE MTSA PRESIDENT

As I begin to imagine a future where it feels safe to assemble together again, sharing music and learning, I believe that the MTSA has never been more relevant or important to our Suzuki community as it has been while we have had lessons, practiced and taught from home. MTSA quarterly Board and monthly Officer meetings, via Zoom, have provided more chances to strategically plan and envision opportunities for our membership. The MTSA has provided students, parents and teachers numerous occasions to stay connected and renew their commitment to the Suzuki method. Numerous scholarships were awarded this past year, both to students and teachers. Congratulations to all winners. Our MTSA will be represented at several Suzuki Institutes from Washington D.C. to Canada to Washington State. We look forward to hearing about their upcoming experiences. A quarterly Newsletter premiered in January 2021 on our website, a far cry from the old printed Newsletters that had to be copied & hand delivered to teachers to distribute within their studios. We thank all who contribute to this project. Online events, such as a teacher enrichment seminar, "Teaching from the Balance Point" with Edward Kreitman, a "Fiddle Fest" for students, with our very own Crystal Plohman Wiegman, and a Masterclass with Brian Lewis, were held this year in lieu of the MTSA Fall Workshop, Honor's Recital and the Nashville Suzuki Institute cancellations. Even when these larger events re-emerge, the MTSA will continue to brainstorm new ideas to bring our Suzuki families together. Our redesigned website, launched in 2019, has been paramount in our ability to communicate with our membership. We now have the ability to send

### MTSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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announcements, alerts & reminders more effectively. Continue to check the MTSA website for information, applications and links for upcoming MTSA benefits and events. Feel free to email me at [president@middletnsuzuki.org](mailto:president@middletnsuzuki.org) with any questions, ideas or concerns and especially if you wish to become more involved within our organization.

Deidre Bacco, MTSA President  
[president@middletnsuzuki.org](mailto:president@middletnsuzuki.org)

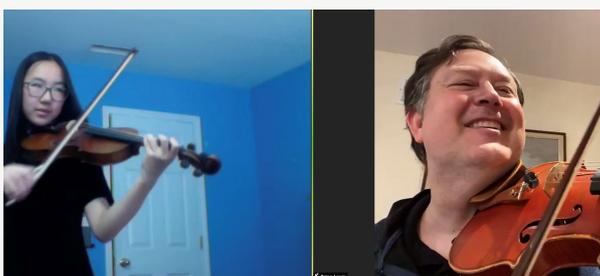
# MASTERCLASS WITH BRIAN LEWIS

ANNE LANDIS JETTON

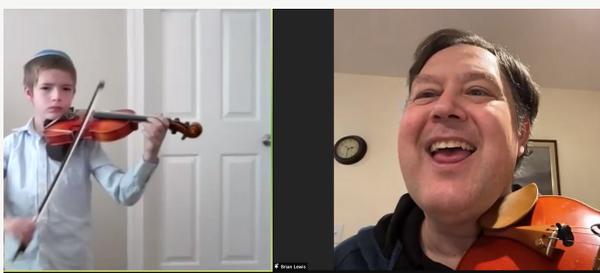
MTSA held its first online masterclass on Sunday, April 11, 2021. I, along with many other teachers, have been teaching online for more than a year now, and before Covid, I'd had little experience with it. The students played beautifully and throughout this session there were countless creative ways in which we've all adjusted to the platform.



Brian Lewis taught 6 masterclasses for repertoire in Book 3 and above. I liked the way Brian instructed changes to bow speed and weight, using earlier Suzuki repertoire to make his point. For the Bach Double, in the first class, he focused on bow speed and opening the arm faster from the elbow. The end result is more energy, as Brian demonstrated, and better articulation on the eighth notes. To demonstrate this point, Brian had the students play Twinkle with very short bow strokes, moving all the way from frog to tip between pitches. Thus, the down bow at the frog on open A - in tempo - dictated that the student would have to pick up the bow quickly and land at the tip in order to play the next open A. Opening up at the elbow and increasing bow speed is the only way to successfully complete this exercise, and it was immediately applicable to adding energy and a bow speed to the opening of the Bach Double.



Repetition was a prominent theme throughout the masterclasses and Brian used this in various ways for different students. Working with the next student to adjust elbow positioning in the Vivaldi G minor, Brian demonstrated 3 different elbow positions in this concerto. Next, he had the student focus on E to A string elbow positions, demonstrating the motion of forearm and elbow rising together. Matching the student's age to repetition, the assignment was to practice a Vivaldi passage with 3 elbow positions, 9 times. Alternatively, Brian instructed another student to practice vibrato exercises 10 minutes per day to increase flexibility. He said that repetition gives us ownership, and these are both measurable and achievable daily practice goals for students.



Voicing and tempo came into play as topics for the Bach Courante and the Bartok viola concerto. I thought the teaching technique he used with the Bach Courante translated really well for online; this was a demonstration of 2 voicings in the Courante. Brian and the student split the voicings, allowing the student to play each voice and demonstrating the 2 voicings within the musical phrase, back and forth between Brian and the student. For the Bartok concerto, he instructed the student to listen to favorite performers play the piece, and then determine the tempo of each performance. Writing a simple tempo chart with this information, the student learns the range of performance tempos (alongside the composer's tempo) and the performance tradition.

In closing, Brian reflected on his Suzuki background and the ways in which Suzuki helped prepare him for collegiate studies. Memorization, repertoire review, repetition, and listening were the first answers, and he shared so many great examples during the masterclass.

There was much more instruction and technique during the masterclass and it was a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon. I look forward to incorporating many of these ideas into my own teaching.

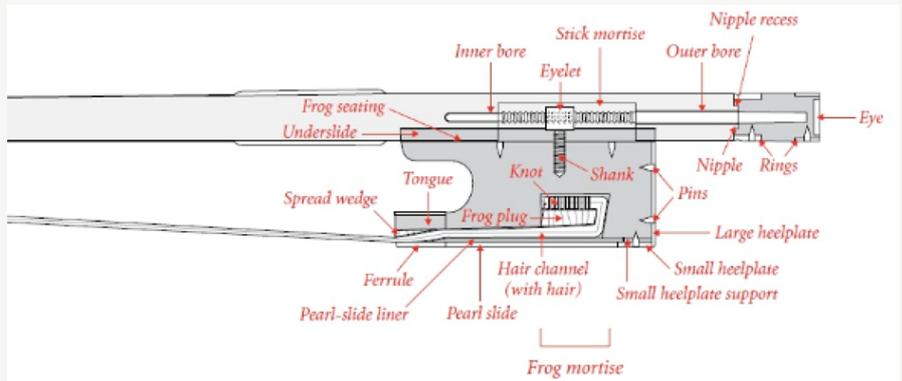
Join us next time!

# CARING FOR YOUR BOW

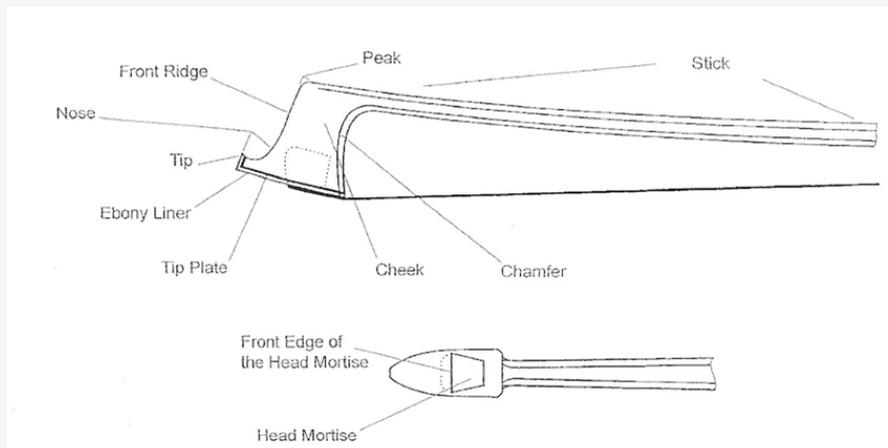
**SARAH BYSTROM**

The violin family is a large family. From violins to basses each instrument is carefully and artfully constructed to produce their unique sounds. These instruments call for such attention that we often overlook the other half of the instrument, the bow. The construction and selection of a bow is just as important as the instrument. A poorly constructed bow can make the best instrument sound mediocre, and a well-constructed bow can bring the best sound out of mediocre instrument. The perfect match of bow to instrument is one that will pull out the best sound and feel completely natural in hand. To keep this harmonious balance, it is critical that the bow be well maintained.

There are a few things you can look out for to keep your bow in good playing condition. The most common of which is the hair. Depending on the player it is normally recommended to get your bow rehaired every year, though some players will go through hair



much quicker. As the seasons change your bow experiences a lot of fluctuation with the changing humidity. The hair gets longer in the summer with high humidity and shorter in the winter with low humidity. It is common to need a rehair because the hair has either stretched too long and it can't be tightened any further or it has gotten too short, and it can't loosen any further. Another common hair issue is when bows get a buildup of rosin over time. The hair will feel stiff, and the bow will produce a harsh, raspy tone. At this point it is time for a rehair and a reassessment of the quantity, age and type of rosin in use.



Another piece of the bow that will wear over time is the grip and wrapping. As the bow is played the players thumb will wear down the thumb leather on the underside of the stick, creating a divot. If the thumb leather is not replaced it's very common to see the players thumb wear create a hole in the stick itself underneath where the lapping would be. This can cause

serious issues in the fit of the frog, cracking of the frogs' thumb projection over time, and overall damage to the constructional integrity of the bow. To avoid wearing down the stick, replacement of the grip is recommended when it's worn through. Like the thumb leather and the hair, the eyelet will wear over time as well. The eyelet is the brass piece that the screw goes through to move the frog back and forth, either tightening or loosening the hair. The eyelet is made out of this soft brass as a safety precaution so that if there is any unnecessary tension on the frog the brass will strip out before anything breaks. As a result, they do wear out with time, occasionally it can be a sign that there are other issues with the bow. With student bows that are produced in quantity it is common to see frogs that don't fit as well. These bows will need replacement eyelets more frequently than other more precisely constructed bows.

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*CARING FOR YOUR BOW continued*

There are a few little things you can do to take care of your bow each day. Remember that oils from your hands transfer very easily onto the horsehair, when this happens the slick parts of the bow won't catch the string and it can be very difficult to rosin over. Avoid touching the hair whenever possible. When you finish playing your bow remember to loosen the hair. If the stick is made out of the traditional Pernambuco or other kind of Brazil wood, it could warp if left tightened too long. Carbon fiber and fiber glass bows are less susceptible to warping but if left tightened repeated it can happen.

The bow connects the player to their instrument. It pulls the sound and is attentive to every little change the player makes. A well-maintained bow can give your playing so much power and dynamic, bringing out the best potential from your instrument. That is why their care and maintenance is so important. If you have any concerns about your bow or it isn't playing as well as it used to, seek out a shop or local bow maker and get your bow looked over.

TEST YOUR FAMILY'S MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE!

*Trivia Night*

Sunday May 23 | 5:30pm

Open and free to all MTSA members

To receive ZOOM information  
Register at:  
[www.middletnsuzuki.org/Events](http://www.middletnsuzuki.org/Events)



## INSTRUMENT EXCHANGE

Violin made by Rodney de Vries  
2019 St. Johns, NL  
\$10,000 CAD (approximately  
\$8,000 USD)

To audition this instrument  
email:  
[Zachary.ebin@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Zachary.ebin@vanderbilt.edu)  
or call 615 635 9760

If you have an instrument you  
would like to list here please  
send the listing to:  
[vicepresident@middletnsuzuki.org](mailto:vicepresident@middletnsuzuki.org)

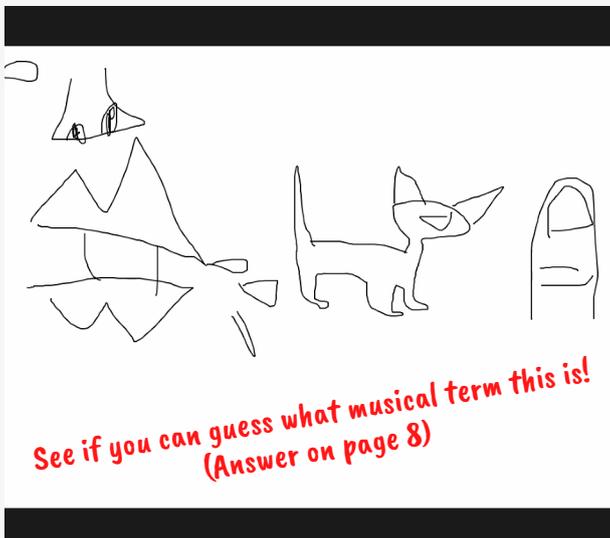
# MAKING VIRTUAL LEARNING MORE FUN

ZACHARY EBIN

One of the singular aspects of the Suzuki method is a recognition that learning happens best when children are having fun. Creating an environment that is enjoyable and cooperative motivates parents and students, and strengthens music education. There is no end to the varying games that have been passed down from Suzuki pedagogues to pupils over the last six decades. But for the last year or so, Suzuki teachers have found themselves no longer able to rely on many of the traditional games and strategies typically used in lessons. At a time when building a sense of community is more important than ever, implementing games and fun into lessons remains crucial. Virtual programming has the distinct advantage of allowing for collaboration with students and programs from across the world. These partnerships remind students, families, and teachers that we are all part of a very special, and global, community. Here are just a few ideas of virtual games that have proved successful in engaging students and connecting families.

## Draw and Guess the Musical Term

Inspired by Pictionary®, this game utilizes the whiteboard function in Zoom. Students divide into two teams. The teacher direct-chats a musical term from a pre-created list to a student. That student draws the musical term and his or her teammates have one minute to try and guess what it is. If students guess the term, their team wins a point. The team with the most points at the end of the game is the winner!

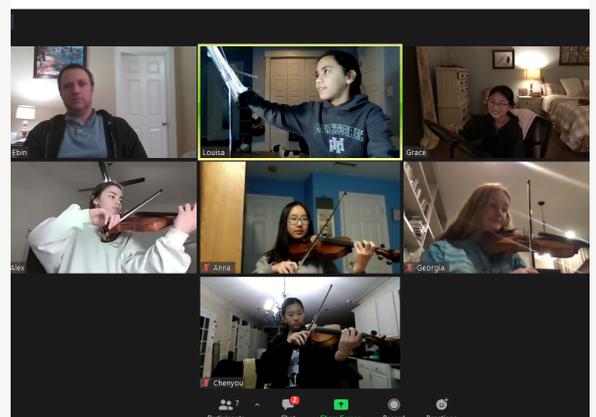


## The Interval Game

The teacher creates a scoreboard listing each participating student. The teacher then plays two notes forming an interval. The students guess what the interval is using the chat function on Zoom. The first student to guess the interval correctly gets two points. Each student that guesses correctly thereafter receives one point. Whoever receives the most points at the end of the game is the winner! This game can be played using direct chat to the teacher or with chatting everyone.

## Guess the Musical Term

Inspired by the game Taboo®, students divide into two teams. The teacher direct-chats musical terms from a pre-created list to a student. The student then describes the term to the other students on his or her team. When the team guesses the word the teacher chats the next word, until one-minute is up. For each term correctly guessed, the team is awarded one point. The team with the most points at the end of the game is the winner!



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*MAKING VIRTUAL LEARNING MORE FUN continued***Guess the Muted-Piece**

A student is selected to play a piece while muted. Students try to guess what the piece is simply by watching. Whichever student guesses correctly, gets to go next!

**Family Trivia Night**

In this game, families team-up and compete in a Zoom trivia competition. While many apps are available to make trivia competitions work, our favorite is KAHOOT. The teacher can create a trivia game on topics such as music history, music theory, musical instruments, and Suzuki music. KAHOOT, and other apps like it, score the game based on both answering correctly and answering speed. While the games can be played using one device to access both Zoom and KAHOOT, it is helpful to use two separate devices for each application. The MTSA will be hosting a family trivia night on May 23rd at 5:30pm.

## DON'T DO SUZUKI, YOU WON'T HAVE THE TIME

*NICOLE SALLOUM*

This is the advice I heard from several parents and friends when I started researching music lessons for my oldest son, years ago. We heard about a great piano teacher from some friends and got on her waiting list when our oldest son was 2 years old. When a spot opened in her studio, we went to meet with her. She explained she taught, using the Suzuki method which neither myself nor my husband had heard of before. It's a way of learning by ear and sound, before learning to read music, she explained. She suggested the book *Nurtured by Love* by Dr. Suzuki for more information on the method. I was intrigued after meeting with her and immediately ordered the book. The concept to me was fascinating, that children can learn to play music the same way they learn to speak a language. First by hearing it, then by reading. The method also teaches that all children have the capability to play an instrument with consistent practice and listening. As I started asking around to gather more information, I kept getting the same advice not to do Suzuki because it is a huge time commitment. In the Suzuki method, the practice parent attends all lessons and takes notes to be able to help the child practice at home. For piano, there were additional weekly group classes for music theory. After weighing all the pros and cons, I

decided to proceed with the Suzuki teacher and method. While people told me all the reasons not to do Suzuki, no one told me all the reasons I should. I'm so thankful I went with my instinct and chose Suzuki. The advice I got was correct. Being a Suzuki parent is a choice and a time commitment; however, it is a time commitment that is well spent. So much so that when my youngest son decided he wanted to play violin, I knew we wanted to find a great Suzuki teacher for him. Suzuki violin brought us a different perspective with group classes with multiple students playing together. This is a special time I get to spend with my sons every week. I get to see them struggle with something new and difficult, then persevere and be so excited when they finally conquer it. I see them listen repeatedly to a recording of a piece and be able to translate it to their instrument and correct their mistakes by ear. I have seen them learn the value of hard work and dedication even when something doesn't come easy. We also have a lot of fun during practice, playing games and breaking things down into smaller steps so the children don't feel so overwhelmed. I am so thankful I found the Suzuki method and wonderful Suzuki teachers and community. This has been a time commitment well spent for my children and my family, and I think the Suzuki Method gives parents and children more than they can even imagine.

## MTSA Membership Benefits

Whether you're a teacher who enjoys connecting with colleagues, or a Suzuki parent, there are many benefits to being an MTSA member:

For Suzuki Families (\$25/year):

- Subscription to the MTSA newsletter
- Access to free & discounted MTSA events
- Scholarship opportunities for Suzuki Institutes
- Voting privileges

For Suzuki Teachers (\$35/year):

- Listing in our online Teacher Directory
- Subscription to the MTSA newsletter
- Access to free & discounted MTSA events
- Scholarships for Suzuki teacher training
- Connect with other Suzuki teachers
- Voting privileges

For Corporate Members  
(\$200/year):

- Listing in the directory
- Online advertising with link to your webpage
- Subscription to MTSA newsletter

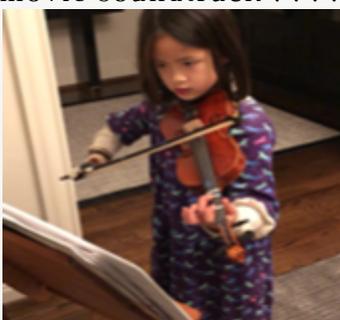
To join or renew your membership,  
please visit  
[www.middletnsuzuki.org/membership](http://www.middletnsuzuki.org/membership)

## WHO SAYS YOU NEED TWO HANDS TO PLAY THE VIOLIN?

*JOHN AND ELIZABETH MCGUIRE*

Lucy (age 8) was born in the Hunan Province of China without a right hand. There's nothing this determined little girl can't do, even when it comes to playing the violin. Back in August, when her big brother came home from their school with a cello she wanted to start playing too. At Linden Waldorf School, all children in the 3rd grade must choose to play violin, viola or cello. There are required to stick with that instrument until they graduate in the 8th grade. Liam (age 9) chose the cello and has been practicing and taking lessons from Deidre Emerson since then. After watching several videos of other people with physical differences playing stringed instruments, Lucy decided it was going to be the violin because it was short and sweet, just like her. Linden Waldorf's strings teacher, Jocelyn Sprouse, then put us in touch with Fred Carpenter at The Violin Shop who was instrumental in designing and building Lucy's "bow aid". And the evening following Lucy's first visit with Fred, he sent a video of himself playing a tiny violin using what would become the simple device for holding her bow. Lucy's face immediately lit-up. She couldn't stop talking about playing a violin until we walked back into Fred's shop a few days later. Ms. Jocelyn also connected Lucy with Toni Ferguson for her weekly lessons. Ms. Toni has not only risen to the challenge of teaching Lucy a slightly different bowing technique, but most of all has incorporated her own innovative approaches for translating the Suzuki Method in a fun and playful way. For her upcoming group recital in May, Ms. Toni has Lucy memorizing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, Lightly Row, Song of

the Wind and Go Tell Aunt Rhody. Lucy always looks forward to her lesson with Ms. Toni, especially since there's always the chance she might get to play another song from her favorite movie soundtrack . . . It's Frozen of course, duh.



# 2021 SCHOLARSHIPS ANNOUNCED

*ANDRA PREWETT & CHERI DRUMMOND, SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS*

The MTSA awarded a record high number of scholarships this year! A total of \$6,980 was granted to 13 students and 3 teachers, who won awards for tuition assistance at Suzuki summer institutes. The MTSA hired an adjudicator from outside the organization to determine the winners.

Teacher scholarships were awarded based on an essay and involvement in the MTSA community.

## • TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS:

- Andrew Bailey, Williams Fine Violins Scholarship Award recipient, will attend Intermountain Suzuki Institute for Suzuki in the Schools Level 1 training.
- Ian Robinson, Kellye N. Rice, DMD Scholarship Award recipient, will attend the Alberta Suzuki String Institute for Bass Unit 1 training
- Andra Prewett will attend Greater Washington Suzuki Institute for Violin Unit 1 training

Student scholarship recipients were chosen based on their playing level, teacher recommendation, and community involvement with the MTSA.

- ## • STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS:
- Cole Bacher, Samantha Coplan, Ezra Ebin, Zev Ebin, Ella Goggins, Adelyn Huggins, Livia Huggins, Londyn Huggins, Elaine Krell, Megan Loh, Frances Lyle-Murray, Mary Lyle-Murray, Mary Wilson

Interested in earning a scholarship for Suzuki institutes in 2022? Here are some tips:

- Stay current on your MTSA dues!
- Participate in as many MTSA events as possible.
- Volunteer to help the MTSA with events, host an event, contribute newsletter articles, etc.
- Practice daily
- Students: Exceed the expectations of your studio teacher. Attend all studio classes, events and recitals. Create extra performance opportunities (front porch concerts, anyone?)
- Teachers: Decide on which training you'd like to take, and stay on top of any audition requirements or class prerequisites.
- Check the MTSA website regularly.

Plan ahead! For a listing of Suzuki Summer Institutes, visit: <https://suzukiassociation.org/events/institutes/>

