



# NEWSLETTER

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



## MESSAGE FROM THE MTSA PRESIDENT

The MTSA strives to discover new & inventive programming to preserve our Suzuki community's connection. Many individuals have mentioned they are eager to share music and learning again. Students have grown in so many ways over the last year and a half. We are thrilled to present several MTSA events on the horizon. Find information about events on our website <http://www.middletnsuzuki.org/Events>.

Join us outdoors for an MTSA Suzuki Play-Down, Sunday, Oct 3rd, at 2pm, on the west lawn of the St. Cecilia Academy campus, 4210 Harding Pike. All instruments are welcome. Bring lawn chairs &/or blankets and of course, instruments. Allow our students' music to serenade you under the trees, by the creek. It is a beautiful spot for sharing music together in the fresh air.

Register to attend the 2021 MTSA Annual Membership Meeting, Sunday, Oct 10th, at 2:00pm, via zoom. Once registered, members will receive a zoom link. Join us for officer and committee reports, describing what has happened over the past year and some future plans. Election results for the At-Large Board positions will also be announced at this meeting.

The MTSA is very proud to announce the 1st Annual Concerto Competition. Students, interested in auditioning, will perform a movement from a concerto for their instrument, from the Suzuki literature. All instruments are eligible: Violin, Viola, Cello, Piano, Flute or Trumpet. To apply, students, as well as their teachers, must be active MTSA members. Auditions will be December 12th, 2021, venue tba, and the winner(s) will perform, at the end of the Honors Recital program, February 6th, 2022. The Concerto Competition winner(s) will perform their concerto with a string orchestra, comprised of MTSA teachers, as well as interested area professional musicians and conducted by Caleb Harris, from the Blair School of Music. This special event will be held at the Trinity Presbyterian Church, 3201 Hillsboro Pike.

How about another Suzuki Musical Trivia Night? All who attended the last Trivia Night can attest to how much fun it was. Oh, did we mention the winner receives a prize? The next Suzuki Musical Trivia Night will be Saturday, Nov 20th, 7:00pm. We're sure Dr. Ebin has new queries & curious musical facts up his sleeves. This is a fun-filled learning experience to share with the entire family. Don't miss it.

Board news: At Large member, Sarah Mitchell, will be stepping off the MTSA Board. We wish to thank Sarah for her time serving on the Board, as well as the Honor's Recital committee. We appreciate all she has done for our organization and the energy she has so generously donated. She plans to maintain her Teacher membership and will continue to be an important part of our MTSA family. We wish her well and hope to see her at future MTSA events.

### MTSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Deidre Fominaya Bacco, *President*

Zachary Ebin, *Vice President /  
President Elect*

Anne Landis Jetton, *Secretary*

Andra Prewett, *Treasurer*

Members-At-Large  
Christia Chambers  
Toni Ferguson  
Sarah Mitchell

We are hopeful that the 2022 Workshop can be restored next Fall. I, personally, have missed this annual event, which is very close to my heart. We will keep everyone informed if planning happens early next year.

The MTSA is looking into providing a virtual Parent Talk soon, with an inspiring guest speaker. Stay tuned (pun intended!).

Know that your MTSA Board works tirelessly to present thoughtful and inspiring opportunities and events for our Suzuki students and their families. If you are interested in serving on an MTSA committee or joining the MTSA Board, please contact me, Deidre Bacco, [president@middletnsuzuki.org](mailto:president@middletnsuzuki.org).

# Zooming Through Music During A Pandemic

*PAUL KENT AND ELLA BRAMLETT*

In March of 2020, everything shut down because of Covid. Unfortunately, these circumstances included the music world as well. People started performing on Zoom, but obviously, it was just not the same as being able to play for an audience in person. We couldn't congregate in the big performance halls or interact with our listeners during post-recital receptions. On Zoom we could see other people, but we were looking at each other through a screen, so it was more difficult to convey to the audience the kind of emotions and dynamics that make the piece unique to our playing. We were able to get through the little things such as the lagging sounds or the slow connections, however; our desire to show people our passion for music in person still remained.

But because the season of Covid has taught us to look for the silver-lining, we choose to focus on the blessings that Zoom has offered to us as musicians. We have been given the opportunity to present our music to new audiences who wouldn't have been able to hear us if it wasn't for our online performances, and the joy of hearing their happily satisfied applause has made it so much better. Grandparents and family members from far away, who would not have been able to attend in person, have been able to view recitals from the comfort of their living rooms. Residents in assisted living facilities and nursing homes have been able to tune in and interact with performers, encouraging us and sharing their musical knowledge and expertise along the way. And perhaps the most unique and unusual quality of a Zoom concert is performing with a dog in the background. How else could a musician have the opportunity to present a Bruch piece or Mozart Concerto with a faithful family dog curled up in the rocking chair, snoozing to the sounds of a recital? Putting it into perspective, performing on Zoom is a lot better than not performing at all. It is a modern, creative way to bring people together, even when we have to keep our distance, so that we can all hear and see each other while being safe from Covid at the same time.

And although the world slowed, our music kept on, because music is a language that everyone can understand. Because we are able to keep playing, we improve our musicianship, all the while making people happy through joyous sounds... which hopefully sound better and better with each recital! Looking back at the past year, we realize just how powerful music can be. Music is something that can carry us from all the troubles of the world into a pleasant place. Music is one thing that can always make us happy. Music is one thing that will always keep going. Music is one thing that will always sustain, even when everything else pauses.

Not even a pandemic can stop music. We are blessed to live in a time when technology allows us to share music, even when we can't gather together in person. When Zoom concerts are a thing of the past, of course we'll be thankful to take the stage again and play in front of a live audience! But until then, we have been and remain grateful for the opportunities we've had to perform on Zoom concerts. We are even more appreciative of all the teachers, professors, conductors and directors, who have tirelessly put in countless hours and efforts to make Zoom work for everyone, and we hope we have blessed others in some small way through this unexpected journey that has changed the world.



# The Value of Taking Book 1 Again

**ANDRA PREWETT**

The first time I took Violin Book 1 teacher training was twelve years ago. I have taken many courses since then; 8 units to be exact, plus Violin Practicum, and several supplemental courses. But rather than completing units 9-10 this summer, I chose to take book 1 again.

I chose to do this because I knew my teaching needed a tune-up. I was interested in learning different approaches to parent education, setting up the left hand, and general ways I can improve to make it easier for my students to learn book 1. I decided to enroll in the Violin Unit 1 course with Ronda Cole at the Greater Washington Suzuki Institute. The course was offered online.

My first big takeaway was how to set up body posture. Miss Cole has a background in ballet, and she has come up with easy to follow instructions to help students achieve body balance. She walks them through using “soft knees,” bringing their “center forward,” (tucking the tailbone under the ribcage), elongating the spine through using an analogy of zipping up a jacket, and finally, placing the end button under the ear. I appreciated having these concrete instructions that I could give to my students, much like a pilot’s checklist before they take flight.

My second takeaway was how to set up the left hand. I learned a very concrete set of verbal instructions to use with my students. Miss Cole introduces the idea of “rotation” of the left hand to reach different string levels, and the idea of opening the hand downward to reach finger placement in a relaxed manner.

The biggest takeaway was the realization that I can use more rote instruction with my students. I had shied away from it in the past, as I was worried that the “Suzuki police” would fine me for not allowing students to figure out everything by ear. (There’s no such thing as Suzuki police!) Watching Miss Cole walk her students through their first “Twinkle” with concrete instructions: “Rock to E,” “rotate, open-down,” “thumb side D,” makes perfect sense. Why not help our students learn how to properly use their hand to find notes on the violin? Teaching violin is like small-muscle dance instruction, and if we don’t teach the choreography, our students will learn the wrong steps!

I can already see positive results from my training this summer. My youngest beginners are finding balanced posture sooner in their process. My teenage students are playing with more poise, and everyone’s left hands are becoming more relaxed and balanced. I feel a sense of renewed energy and passion for teaching. I am so grateful to have these new teaching tools. I highly recommend repeating unit courses for all teachers!

## Greater Washington Suzuki Institute Experience

***Elaine Krell***

Organizing an institute to teach and inspire tens of violin, viola, and cello students is a difficult task in itself. Then add the extra layer of being limited to Zoom and it only makes it more difficult, but the staff of the Greater Washington Suzuki Institute rose to the occasion and did a wonderful job of providing students with an enjoyable institute. I was given new ideas from my masterclass teacher, Ms. Wendy Tangen-Foster. My fellow students and I were able to participate in our rhythm class and hear each other tap out different rhythms. Our Improv class worked wonderfully over Zoom. Being muted allowed us to be free to experiment and mess up without the pressure of twenty other people listening to you! Also, getting the opportunity to listen to different performers like Katie Lansdale, Taylor Morris, and Yumi Kendall was something I enjoyed. The GWSI allowed me to listen to and hear from talented musicians during my summer, and I was glad to have been a part of the institute.

# Bass Unit 1 Teacher Training

*Ian Robinson*

This summer I was very fortunate to attend a Unit 1 Bass training at the Alberta Suzuki Summer Institute, funded by a generous scholarship from Dr. Kellye Rice and the MTSA. To my knowledge, there have not been any Suzuki bass teachers in Middle Tennessee, so I hope to use this new training to benefit our musical community and strengthen Suzuki in Middle Tennessee.

I started life as a cellist, and the most interesting part of the training was to see the similarities and differences between bass and cello, both from a technical and pedagogical standpoint. Overall, I was surprised by the large amount of overlap between the two. I left with the impression that, although the instruments are a different size and tuning, they are fundamentally very similar.

Something that struck me about bass is how it is less standardized than the members of the violin family. Bassists have two different bow styles, German and French (violin-family bows are all in the French style). What's more, the body of the bass itself has more variations from one to the next than, for example, violas. I have seen basses with five strings, low extensions, extended fingerboards and more. Bass has not yet been as formalized as my home instrument, the cello.

Along with the physical variety in construction, bass technique is also varied. The main system outside Suzuki is called Progressive Repertoire for the Double Bass by George Vance, and it uses a different approach to fingerboard geography and positions, with the left hand using harmonics as the reference point. Also, the Vance books introduce thumb position much sooner than in Suzuki.

My instructor, Dr. Kate Jones, was wonderful, and skilled in the full range of bass knowledge. She instructed us in the use of both bow types, and was informed on the Vance system. Her instruction even incorporated early thumb position, but she accomplished it through Suzuki songs. Her clear instruction and refusal to call anything hard inspire me to aim higher with my own students.

Taking this course taught me a tremendous amount about the bass and its pedagogical roadmap, but it also inspired me, both as a cellist and a Suzuki teacher. Being surrounded by my fellow bass teachers reminded me how exciting it is to teach Suzuki, and how there is a worldwide network of musicians helping children grow into good and beautiful people. I am grateful to Dr. Rice and the MTSA for this wonderful learning experience!

TEST YOUR FAMILY'S MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE!

*Trivia Night*

Saturday Nov. 20th | 7:00pm

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)

# Suzuki in the Schools Unit 1 Training Experience

## *Andrew Bailey*

My name is Andrew Bailey, and I am a Suzuki teacher and music teacher in Clarksville, TN. I attended the Suzuki in the School Unit 1 teacher training with Winifred Crock. The Intermountain Suzuki String Institute put on the training. I have always seen this training popping up all over the place, and I decided to see what this program was all about. I am thankful to the MTSA for choosing me for their scholarship and Williams Fine Violins for sponsoring my scholarship.

As a string teacher in Middle Tennessee, I have seen a need for more string programs throughout the state and the nation. I wanted to find something out of the box that challenged the status quo and allowed us to combine Suzuki principles with the string education program template. Winifred Crock showed us how to take Suzuki Pedagogy, expand on the Suzuki Triangle, and then adapt it to a string orchestra program. These ideas have given me the tools to continue to give back to my community and build programs that benefit all children and people no matter what.

I loved learning from Winifred! She inspired everyone with her stories about her time in Japan, learning from Mr. Suzuki, and experiences she had gone through. My favorite part was all the stories of Dr. Suzuki. I felt that he came alive whenever Winifred told us stories about him. I wish I had gotten the chance to talk and meet with the man himself. She is an inspiration to all the teachers and students that she teaches. We were all able to be vulnerable with each other and learn together.

I was always energized to join our meetings every day to learn what we were learning and discuss the ideas presented with the other participants. I loved being able to share our thoughts, and because of that, it made it feel like a conversation with colleagues. We had people from all over participating, and I made some great connections. From my new friends, I have gained so much knowledge from them in addition to the course.

I learned more teaching strategies and pedagogy and have a deeper understanding of Suzuki and the principles we know as Suzuki teachers. I can use these new tools and knowledge with my private students along with my orchestra students. I will take her advice and what I learned from this course and help build a feeder program at one of the local middle schools as a start to expand strings in Clarksville.

I highly recommend taking this course! Thanks again to the MTSA, Williams Fine Violins, and Winifred Crock for all they do and continue to do for our community and the furtherment of our Suzuki Education.

## **MTSA Play-In**

**Sunday October 3, at 2:00pm**

Meet us by the beautiful creek on the St. Cecilia campus (west of the bridge) as we play selections from the Suzuki violin, viola & cello repertoire. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and your own refreshments.

To register for this free event, go to [www.middletnsuzuki.org/event-4438159](http://www.middletnsuzuki.org/event-4438159).

St. Cecilia Academy, 4210 Harding Pike

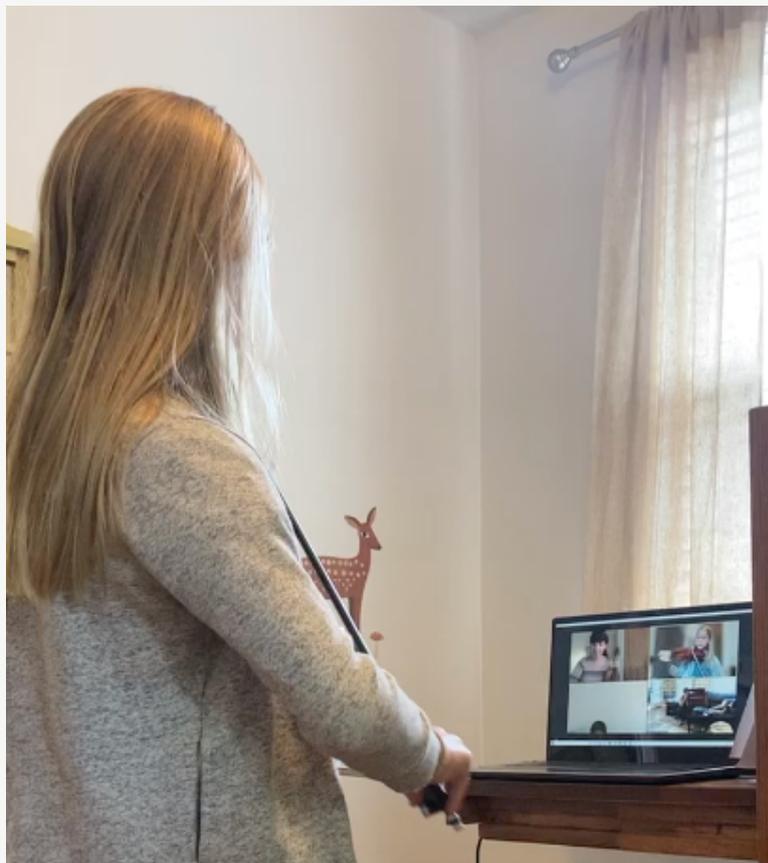
(We will cancel in case of rain)



# The Chicago Suzuki Institute

## *Cole Bacher*

I am so glad I got a scholarship to the Chicago Suzuki institute! My favorite part about the camp was learning more, making new friends, having nice teachers, getting to play more Violin and watching other people play. I also liked knowing that there are kids from all over the world! Thank you for the opportunity.



# Greater Washington Suzuki Institute

## Ella Goggans

I started playing the violin several years ago and very quickly came to love the instrument and find so much joy in playing. I have always been excited for new opportunities to learn and perform, whether at lessons, camps, or ensembles. This year, getting to attend my first Suzuki institute was an incredible experience. Despite the inevitable difficulties of playing music without physically being with others, I learned so much and got to interact with students from all over the country.

A highlight each day was participating in a masterclass to work one-on-one with a faculty member and also be able to observe another student's lesson. In addition to watching and learning from some incredible musicians, I greatly enjoyed seeing everyone's passion for music and excitement throughout the week. Everyone was eager to participate in both classes and extra events, and were enthusiastically encouraging towards all who performed. Whenever we had an opportunity to ask faculty members and guests questions about their lives in music, people were sincerely interested in their experience and advice. Seeing a community so dedicated and passionate about music was truly inspiring. I am very thankful for my experience at GWSI and all the people who made it possible!

## More From MTSA Kids!

I had a great experience at ISSI. One thing I loved about it was the teachers. They were really nice. The teachers helped me improve the most. Another thing I liked was the guest artists concerts. The musicians were incredible and their performances were inspiring. Attending ISSI is a great way to spend your summer.

Lordyn Huggins  
age 10

Going to the IssI camp was so much fun. I looked forward to going each day. At the camp, I learned so much about music. It changed the way I practice. The IssI camp changed the point of view I had on practicing and it gave me a new purpose for it. My experience at IssI gave me joy in playing my instrument and changed my every day practicing.

Livia Huggins  
age 11

I loved attending the ISSI this past summer and I had a great experience and learned and improved lots. It was enjoyable to play in groups after not playing with others for a time. I also got to do chamber music for the first time. I really feel like I improved a lot from my master class. It was amazing to hear famous musicians play, too. Overall I had a positive experience at the inst

-Adelyn Huggins  
age 13

## **Announcing the 1st Annual Middle Tennessee Suzuki Association Concerto Competition!**

**The competition is open to all instruments. Students, as well as their teachers, must be active MTSA members.**

**Audition Requirements: A movement from a concerto for their instrument, found in the Suzuki literature, played with accompanist.**

**Competition will take place on Dec. 12, 2020**

**Winner(s) will perform their concerto with string orchestra, comprised of MTSA teachers, as well as interested area professional musicians. The orchestra will be conducted by Dr. Caleb Harris at the end of the Honors Recital program, February 6th 2022.**

**For more information: [www.middletnsuzuki.org](http://www.middletnsuzuki.org)**