

# CSSA NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2011

[www.cssasuzuki.com](http://www.cssasuzuki.com)



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome everyone to another great year with CSSA! Last year was an exciting year of growth for us as we increased our cello membership and added guitars to the association. Two of Kim Aull's students, Colin Chan and Dexter Lyons played at our AGM in October, they were truly inspiring. Thank you Colin and Dexter, and thank you to your parents!

I was pondering what I would write, and as usual, my children gave me inspiration. Sometimes I think as Suzuki parents heavily involved with our child's music education as a co-partner in the teaching process, we sometimes don't see the forest for the trees. This morning as my eldest son started practising, I caught a glimpse of his playing and it truly sent shivers of pride for him. He is getting so tall and watching his body hold his violin and his bow caressing the violin strings, I could feel him feel the music. It is times like these that renew my commitment in my role as a parent on this journey that will not only make my son a better musician, but a better person all around. At times like these that I catch a glimpse of what Shinichi Suzuki was all about.

The string year started with another great play-in at Heritage Park. We played in the new Engineered Air Gazebo in front of the entrance gates. It was a wonderful venue and thank you to Murray Visscher for supplying the sound equipment so that we could showcase our wonderful guitar students.

We have great events for the upcoming year. Winter Workshop will be happening January 27-28, 2012. Advanced students will have the opportunity to work with Cenek Vrba and our younger students will be able to listen to their work. Mr. Vrba has just retired after many years as the concert master of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. It will be a truly inspiring opportunity for all our students. Our annual String Festival is booked for May 11/12, 2012 as well. We are looking forward to working with all the students at these events.

This year we have also expanded our board to include an events co-ordinator and fund-raising co-ordinator. Nicole Bullock, mother of two Suzuki violin daughters has taken on the role of events co-ordinator, she will also be continuing as our newsletter editor until we can find someone to take that role (hint, hint anyone out there). Nicole Lerner, mother of a Suzuki violin daughter, Suzuki guitar son and a Suzuki violin student herself, has also taken double duty as our fund-raising co-ordinator and secretary until again, we can find someone to take on the role of secretary (hint, hint some more). Both Nicole's bring a vast amount of experience in their respective roles and we as a board are excited to welcome them.

There are exciting things happening within the CSSA this year and we are excited to have you all a part of the CSSA family.

**"MUSIC IS WHAT FEELINGS SOUND LIKE"**

~AUTHOR UNKNOWN

## STUDIO NEWS

### Andrea L. Hudson Studio News:

Our studio performed our annual Old Folk's Home Visits last March. We played a nice program of Suzuki repertoire along with the Latin pieces which were prepared for the Winter Workshop. The senior students played while some of the junior students accompanied with various percussion instruments also learned at the Workshop. The little Twinklers and early Book 1 students are always an exciting part of the program for the "grandma's & grandpa's." The seniors enjoyed the visit--they expressed the joy that the students brought with their music and sharing of talents. As usual, they made us promise to come back next year!

Later in the spring we participated in the CSSA's Annual String Festival where we received some encouragement and praise for all our work through the adjudication of Mr. Philip Kashap. Many of us also enjoyed learning some interesting music history facts and playing in our group classes!

Near the end of June we enjoyed two studio recitals celebrating the growth and achievement for the 2010-11 violin year.

### Graduations:

Thomas Poon - Book 1  
Julia Bullock - Book 2  
Karina Leung - Book 2  
Elizabeth Melchin - Book 1  
Rosie Thorson - Book 2  
Aleena Stephen - Book 2  
Ainsley Daumler - Book 2

Congratulations Graduates!



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January 27 & 28, 2012

Winter Workshop  
5927 Tipton Road N.W.

### March 16 & 17, 2012

Trunk Show Fundraiser

### May 11-12, 2012

Non-Competitive String Festival

## CLASSIFIEDS

If you wish to post a musical instrument, music books or other musical resources in this section of future newsletters, please send an email to:

[tammy.poon@cssasuzuki.com](mailto:tammy.poon@cssasuzuki.com)

## FUNDRAISING VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Please contact Fundraising Coordinator Nicole Learner for more information:

[n.learner@telus.net](mailto:n.learner@telus.net)

If you would like to contribute to the next edition of the CSSA Newsletter, please send your submission to [tammy.poon@cssasuzuki.com](mailto:tammy.poon@cssasuzuki.com) by February 1, 2012, any information received after that date will be held in reserve until the next edition. Thank you for your contributions.



## VIVA! WHAT A BLAST

By Carmen Wise

Five years ago I found myself with a stable full of teenage boys. They were all Suzuki trained. Some started with the great Anne Lyon others I started myself. What to do with these rambunctious lads with energy to kill. I wrote out a simple arrangement of Phantom, got the boys together one evening, and we had at it. That is the moment that Viva, a teen performing group, was born.

We learned to play Latin music, and Beatles music, Broadway tunes and fun pieces like Russian Sailor's Dance and Dark Eyes. Our method was to read through a piece then rearrange it on the spot. Because they were Suzuki students and could play by ear, we could do this. Everyone had a hand in inputting ideas.

Little by little Viva! took on gigs. They performed at weddings, parties, and countless retirement centres. They recorded two CD's.

Alas nothing is permanent. One by one, each member graduated on to University. Jeff Komar is at Dalhousie, Luke in a college in Oklahoma, Kent to UBC, and Stewart and Thomas are off to University this September. Only Matthew is left. But there is a new generation coming up. Matthew will help coach the new guys.

From my point of view, the formation and development of this wonderful teen performing group was a fortuitous confluence of several key factors. First to have such an advanced player as Jeff Komar who quickly assumed leadership. Then to have Steve as our accompanist. He could play Tico Tico and La Danza as if his fingers were on fire. Steve is always happy to learn new pieces and often spontaneously made up accompaniments without music. And not least, to have my studio to the point that my students were advanced enough to start up their little band.

Thank you Viva! for the good times. I know as time goes one you'll look on this time as your wonder years. You are all high achieving young men and what you did was unique by any standard.

Please visit my website at [www.Wisedogs.com/Carmen](http://www.Wisedogs.com/Carmen) and click on Viva! You'll hear some pretty good music.

## Teacher Training Symposium

By Eileen Kosasih



Recently I attended the Suzuki Group Class Teacher Training Symposium. It was hosted by the Mount Royal Conservatory in Calgary. I was there out of curiosity, as I am not a Suzuki teacher, and was skeptical of the method. However, I was surprised to gain many useful tips, from general teaching goals, to dealing with specific behavior issues, to a variety of useful games; teaching philosophies any teacher could abide by; as well as confidence and inspiration from speaker Michelle Higa George. I was nervous to be grouped with what I thought would be experienced Suzuki teachers. Actually, many attendees were not even violin teachers. Fears dissipated as Michelle

talked to us with her calm, warm, but professional and direct manner. She immediately led us in a mock-group class, getting us moving and interacting with her and each other. Getting chances to lead was a fun and humbling experience. We debriefed after each such activity. The warm setting was far from lecture-style, and I felt that we all maintained enthusiasm and involvement throughout. She covered many important topics including leading, motivation, numerous 'game' ideas (which I've incorporated into private lessons - anything can be made into a game), planning, teacher-student dynamics, a good attitude, and specific behavioral problems. There was time for questions during each block, which she fielded knowledgeably and always with a sense of humor.

The symposium was comprehensive, organized, engaging, and held a positive environment. During this weekend I was convinced that with a good teacher, group class/Suzuki Method can be a wonderful learning program. I learned most from observing Michelle's mannerisms while she taught the children's groups. She has such a natural professionalism balanced with warmth that I am learning to emulate as a teacher. I believe that any music teacher, group or private, Suzuki or not, can benefit greatly from these symposiums.

### PRACTICE TIPS PART TWO:

#### *PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT—OR DOES IT?*

Adapted from an article by Dr. Robin Kay Deverich (<http://www.violinonline.com/practicetips.htm>)

Structured practice sessions are the key to productive practicing. The following suggestions will help you progress, instead of regress, when you practice.

- 1. Warm-up**  
Each practice session should begin by limbering up and strengthening your fingers through scales, exercises, arpeggios, or trills.
- 2. Practice with Purpose**  
Have one or more focused goals each time you practice. At the beginning of practice sessions, ask yourself, "What do I want to accomplish today?"
- 3. Problem-solving**  
One of the most effective ways to make a piece sound better is to pinpoint the difficult passages in the piece and then work on one small section at a time. Don't reinforce mistakes by repeating them.
- 4. Problem spot tips**  
At times, it may be useful to record yourself (audio or video) to pinpoint problem spots. If you're having difficulty with a fast passage, it often helps to play a small section first very slowly, then experiment with rhythmic variations.
- 5. Musicality**  
Musicality, the ability to interpret a piece with feeling, is what distinguishes the performance of a fine musician from that of an automated, boring performer. Try following printed directions such as dynamics, style of playing, and the tempo or speed at which the music should be played.
- 6. Fun time**  
At the end of each practice session, it's always fun to sit back, relax, and enjoy playing straight through the piece.

## Guitar News

### "The Benefits of Group Classes from a Suzuki Guitar Teachers Perspective"

Suzuki classical guitar group classes utilize many important concepts that help nurture a student's playing and performance ability. Games and exercises are carried out with the purpose of improving things such as concentration, listening skills, finger dexterity, solo and ensemble skills. Work on these skills aids the development of tone production, technical aptitude and musicianship skills.

Suzuki groups provide an environment where a child feels safe to experiment with their playing. Positive and constructive feedback from peers, family and the teacher is a great way to build a student's confidence enabling them to have more consistent performances in recital situations.

The social aspect of group classes helps to create even more motivation and enthusiasm for classical guitar. Peer interaction allows growth in a way that teachers and parents cannot provide. The combination of discipline, community, variety, and a fun, purposeful environment allows students of the Suzuki method to work on all facets of their musical ability while achieving great results for the student, parents, and teacher involved.

Mary Legge  
Suzuki Classical Guitar Teacher  
Prelude Music Studio  
[www.preludemusicstudio.ca](http://www.preludemusicstudio.ca)

### Suzuki Parents Perspective

This March my kids had the opportunity to participate in the Suzuki Non-Competitive String Festival. Right from the start, the idea of a non-competitive guitar festival was very appealing to them. Heidi Behrenbruch truly went out of her way to support and observe every guitarist who participated and to welcome their families. The highlight was most definitely having Murray Visscher as the adjudicator. Murray provided each performer with technical tools to improve their playing as well as positive and encouraging feedback. His ensemble coaching was interactive and motivating. Murray brilliantly encouraged the kids to explore their own interpretation of the music. Each performer walked away with a gold medal and a meaningful certificate. Overall, it was a fun, inspiring and motivationally charged day complete with treats and new friends.

~Terilyn Lyons

The Suzuki String Festival was a wonderful opportunity to experience Calgary's Suzuki community beyond our own instrument. The friendship and social aspect of Suzuki is what my daughter (and myself) loves. In the festival's welcoming atmosphere, my daughter was in her element and performed with a smile on her face. It helped her to fully benefit from a wonderful adjudication she received.

Chigusa Gair