Mary Ann Wark reminisces below about her experience in the MacPhail Suzuki Program during the 1980s and 90s with her son, Barry.

I well remember coming to an introductory meeting that Mark Bjork led. My son, Barry was then about 2½, and it was 1982. I wondered whether I was just crazy to try music when Barry was that age because I had regretted taking him to swimming when he was 6 months old. I remember he looked at me as if I were a lunatic when I was told to duck both of us under the water. So I wasn’t too sure this wasn’t going to be another fiasco.

I decided to put his name on a list and soon got a call that he was to start lessons with Marla Olson (now Okner). When the powers that be realized he was only 2½ and not 3½, we were told it was up to the teacher whether he was too young. That first lesson with 4 children in the studio went well and my son, who was not overly effusive in his dealings, jumped into Marla’s lap the second lesson! So I knew right then that she was already important to him. How many lessons did he make an animal sound and Marla had to guess which animal was crawling under the chairs? She would ask if the goat/horse/dog/cat remembered how to do whatever…. And he was always curious about how the violin worked. So one “reward” was learning something at the end of each lesson about how the violin was made.

Marla established an amazingly deep relationship with Barry. After 6 or 7 years, she was followed by more teachers (Mark Bjork, Marilyn O’Boyle) and Barry continued in the program through senior year. He especially valued the quartet he was in and the chamber orchestra. He had a Book 10 recital his senior year in high school.

When he studied with Mark Bjork and was about 12, we had the idea of going to Japan and Mark helped set up a lesson with Dr. Suzuki, who was then 94. We planned the trip to visit the violin factory in Nagoya and study with Dr. Suzuki in Matsumoto. Dr. Suzuki was so playful. Barry brought him a ceramic cup he had made as a traditional Japanese gift. He asked Dr. Suzuki why he wrote “?” His answer, “I just did”.

As a parent, I was at lessons and group lessons. I had the job of putting a masking tape grid on the Northrop Auditorium stage for the annual Suzuki festival concert. We parents had fun just being there for our kids.

In college, Barry played in the Stanford Symphony with Nick Greenberg as his stand partner—the two had been friends for most of the years at MacPhail.

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Now, fast forward--- he is the Suzuki Dad to two Suzuki violinists (Jack, 9 and Anika 7). His other 9 year old, Bella, plays the piano but not Suzuki. He hopes the 2 year old will play the cello. His family is in the Boston area, and we both realize that MacPhail was an amazing and unique Suzuki program. It is hard to find teachers in the Boston area --- who are Suzuki trained and who stay more than a year.

As a parent, I learned so much about music and realized I had never in all the years I took piano learned to read music well. Thanks to Faith Farr----she was brilliant in the way she taught note reading, Barry learned how! When I was fired from going to lessons with my son, I started taking recorder lessons and have continued to this day-- with great joy. Thank you Mark for getting us into all this and to all the wonderful teachers Barry had both in private lessons and groups, quartet and orchestra!!! Three generations have benefitted!

Thank you to the following violinists for performing at the MacPhail Annual Dinner for Donors on Thursday, December 7, 2017: Katie Berges, Kyle Machalec, Caroline Heine, Emma Medeiros, Mary Jo Dunne, Jaden Ma, Ansel Erol, Evan Hsieh, led by Alison Fahy.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, December 15, 2017, **Suzuki Department All Instrument Recital, 6:00 pm**, Antonello Hall
Sunday, December 17, 2017, **Suzuki Program Holiday Buddy Party, 4:00-5:00 pm**, Room 125
Tuesday, December 19, 2017, **Beth Turco Suzuki Piano Student Recital, 5:30 pm**, Antonello Hall
Wednesday, January 3, 2018, **Kelly Lehr Suzuki Violin Studio Recital, 6:30 pm**, Antonello Hall
Friday, January 5, 2018, **Suzuki 50th Anniversary Current Student and Alumni Honors Recital, 6 pm**, Antonello Hall, Performers Include: Ravi Chepuri, Sophia and Emily Alexander, Jannine Libbus, Annabelle Larkin, Anthony Chen, Riley O'Neil, Sonia Driskill and Lukas Murdych, Bella Horton (Alumni), Claire Miller (Alumni) and Lauren Luna (Alumni)
Saturday, January 6, 2018, **Suzuki 50th Anniversary Gala Alumni Benefit Recital, 7 pm**, Antonello Hall
SUZUKI 50TH ANNIVERSARY GALA ALUMNI
BENEFIT RECITAL

Saturday, January 6, 2018, 7 p.m., Antonello Hall
$25 ADULTS, $15 YOUTH (AGES 6 THROUGH 18), $5 FOR CURRENT SUZUKI STUDENTS
(DONATION TO BJORK/PEDERSON SCHOLARSHIP)

Join us to celebrate 50 years of Suzuki at MacPhail!
The concert will feature Suzuki program alumni performers: Michael Sutton (violin), Katherine Bodor (composer), James Waldo (cello) and Alyona Aksyonova (piano), Kirsten Docter (viola), Xavier Jara (guitar), Henry Johnston (guitar), Brooke Knoll (harp), Karen (Bjork) Kubin (violin), and Travis Anderson (piano), and Heather MacLaughlin (accompanist). The program will also feature remarks by Suzuki alums and former directors of the program. **Pre-concert music will be provided by current Suzuki students beginning at 6:30.**

Tickets may be ordered by calling 612.767.5250 or by stopping by Student Services at MacPhail locations in Minneapolis, Chanhassen, Apple Valley or White Bear Lake. Advance purchase is recommended. All tickets are general admission. Seating is subject to availability. Reception of heavy hors d’oeuvres and wine to follow, hosted by the MSA.

Get your tickets now!
Pictured Left: Kathy Wood, Natasha LaRusso, Arianna Xu and Dominic LaRusso perform for the Abbot Lung Cancer Survivor Group Holiday Party
Pictured Center: Kai Ulrich Zhou completes 100 days of practice and listening! Congratulations Kai!
Pictured Right: Roshni Flannery completes 800 days or practice in a row! Congratulations Roshni!

Congratulations! To the recipients of the 2017 Royal Conservatory Certificate Program awards:
Alyssa Tsu: State Certificate of Excellence, Level 1 Violin and Center Certificate of Excellence, Level 1 Violin
Samuel Tsu: State Certificate of Excellence, Level 3 Violin and Center Certificate of Excellence, Level 3 Violin
William Zuo: State Certificate of Excellence, Level 2 Violin and Center Certificate of Excellence, Level 2 Violin

Where can I find handouts and news about our Suzuki Program?
http://www.macphail.org/for-youth/suzuki-talent-education/current-students/

2017-2018 Welcome Letter from Beth Turco, Director of Suzuki Program
2017-2018 Suzuki Department Calendar 2017-2018 Suzuki Group Class Schedules
MacPhail Suzuki Association Membership Form
Suzuki Buddy Program
The Gavotte: December 8, 2017 Edition
Suzuki Cello Observation Schedule
Suzuki Guitar Observation Schedule
Suzuki Harp Observation Schedule
Suzuki Violin/Viola Observation Schedule

We welcome you to send in Suzuki news and photos!
Send to SuzukiDept@Macphail.org