

## Suzuki Stories from the Past: Mark Bjork (Part 2)



In the last issue of the *Gavotte*, we began our profile on Mark Bjork. Below is Part 2 of the story.

Mr. Bjork was able to hire collegiate level players at MacPhail and train them to teach with the Suzuki approach. In 1977, he asked Nancy Pederson, a parent of two Suzuki violin students in the program, to bring her renowned piano studio to MacPhail and to fill the role of Associate Director of the Suzuki Program. The two worked together to build and grow the Suzuki program for many years.

In the fall of 1973, Mr. Bjork travelled to Matsumoto to study with Shinichi Suzuki. For four months, he observed Suzuki

teach for seven days a week. He summarizes his experience in the podcast for the SAA (Full podcast available at [Suzukiassociation.org](http://Suzukiassociation.org)).

*"I think there are a couple of things that struck me very, very strongly. One of them was that he really bore out his philosophy as it's been presented, and the concept that every child can learn and can learn to a very high degree. And then watching him, you know, he would never give up with a student. Working in very, very small steps and building on each success was wonderful to watch.*

*The other thing was [a technique called] one-point teaching. And this was very, very interesting for me to watch because he literally would talk about only one thing in a lesson. The lessons all followed the same format: He always started with tone study, and then he would have them play a piece of repertoire, and then he would say one thing. He said, in his teaching in the past he had talked about many different things during the student's lesson [if] a number of things would be talked about during the lesson and then the student would come back the next time and possibly have made some progress on one or two of those points. But he said, "If you concentrated on one, then the student could really take care of this," so that when they would come back for the next lesson, that was taken care of. And they could move on to something else*

*But besides the very intense concentrated work like this, I think the thing that was so amazing was his diagnostic skills. He could analyze on the spot where [the student was] violinistically, musically, and come up with something invariably that was key to their development. He would make sure they understood what it was and what they were to do. Some of the lessons were very short, [it] would be unusual if it was more than fifteen minutes, because he would make his point during that time. He would talk about this one point and want it to be taken care of. But he also was understanding about sometimes giving them a very big point, and he seemed to know when they could take a small point and when they needed a bigger one.*

*The joy was always there! And the joy was a very wonderful, internal joy from knowing that the students had really done well, that they were developing. They were experiencing the beauty of music; the communication of the composers he so often spoke of."*

Mr. Bjork left the MacPhail Suzuki program when MacPhail separated from the University of Minnesota in 1992 and joined the University faculty. He started a Suzuki Violin Pedagogy Master's Degree curriculum and trained many teachers in the Suzuki method, several of whom are now teaching at MacPhail. Mr. Bjork's lifelong commitment to the Suzuki philosophy has inspired thousands of students and teachers over the years. He feels that the Suzuki approach has completely changed young musicians in the United States. We're so fortunate to have the legacy of a rich Suzuki program at MacPhail, initiated by Mark Bjork, one of the most influential Suzuki pedagogues of all time.

## CONGRATULATIONS!



Pictured from Left to Right:  
Matthias Murdych and Jack Betts after performing on a Suzuki Department Recital  
Elsa Artemiuk, celebrating 300 days of practice in a row!  
Vivian Nguyen, Gabriella Geer, Kathryne Krauel after performing on a Suzuki Department Recital

## UPCOMING RECITAL

**SHEILA WOK, soprano**  
**HEATHER MCLAUGHLIN, piano**  
**and ALAN JOHNSTON, guitar**

Performing music by  
Ernest Chausson, Hans Werner Henze, David Evan Thomas, Alban Berg

Monday, November 27, 2017, 7:00 pm  
MacPhail Center for Music, Antonello Hall

Free and Open to the Public

## 50 Years of MacPhail Suzuki: 1967-2017

### Come and celebrate the MacPhail Suzuki Program 50th Anniversary!



Mark Bjork founded the Suzuki program in 1967 with just a few violin students, after seeing the Suzuki Violin Tour Group from Japan during one of their first international tours to the United States. In 1974, Nancy Pederson began a Suzuki piano program at MacPhail and became the Suzuki Associate Director. The two worked together to build one of the most reputable Suzuki programs in the country. Today the program features lessons in 7 instruments (piano, harp, guitar, violin, viola, cello, and flute) and has more than 700 students.

We hope current and former Suzuki students, teachers, parents, family and friends can come together to celebrate the rich history of our program.

We'll gather the weekend of January 5 and 6, 2018 for some fun events. Mark your calendars now! Included will be:

**Friday, January 5**, 6:00 pm, Antonello Hall: Suzuki Department recital featuring current students

- o Come and listen to current Suzuki students of all instruments and levels perform solos
- o Reception to follow provided by the MSA
- o Free and open to the public (no reservations required)

**Saturday, January 6**, 10:00 -11:00 am, De LaSalle High School: String Play-Ins during group classes

- o Bring your instrument and join our group classes to play your Suzuki favorites!
- o Free and open to alumni string students and faculty
- o Email [SuzukiDept@macphail.org](mailto:SuzukiDept@macphail.org) to reserve your spot

**Saturday, January 6**, 7:00 pm, Antonello Hall: Suzuki 50th Anniversary Gala Alumni Benefit Recital  
Featuring performances by MacPhail Suzuki Alumni.

**Tickets:** \$25 adults, \$15 youth (ages 6 through 18), \$5 for current Suzuki students

Tickets may be ordered by calling 612.767.5250 or by stopping by Student Services. Advance purchase is recommended. All tickets are general admission. Seating is subject to availability. Any net proceeds from ticket sales will fund the **Bjork/Pederson Student Scholarship Fund**.

## Upcoming Events

Friday, November 17

**Suzuki Department Recital**, 6 pm, Antonello Hall. Two Advanced Violin Groups will perform on this recital!

Saturday, November 18

**Andrea French Suzuki Cello and Violin Studio Recital**, 2:00 pm, Antonello Hall

Sunday, November 19

**Cindy Malmin Suzuki Piano Recital**, Antonello Hall, 2:45 pm and 4:15 pm

**Kathy Wood Suzuki Violin Recital**, 1:30 pm, Kenwood Senior Living Center

Friday, December 1

**Suzuki Faculty Recital**, 6:00 pm, Antonello Hall

Performing our FAVORITE SUZUKI PIECES! Happy Farmer for 4 Pianists, Vivaldi Double Cello Concerto and Eccles Violin Sonata, movements 1 and 2, led by Mark Bjork! Nick Trygstad, professional cellist and former Suzuki Cello student, will be a featured soloist to celebrate our 50th Anniversary on this recital! Plan to join us for this recital!

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to the following Suzuki students and their teachers for having been selected to perform on the  
**MacPhail Fall Honors Recital**

**2nd Street Guitar Quartet: Lili Kareken, Silvia Miller, Lukas Murdych & Olivia Rapp,**

guitar quartet coached by Jean Seils

Hallelujah by Leonard Cohen, arr. Mychal Gendron & The Fading Shore by David Crittendon

**Sophia & Emily Alexander**, cello duet students of Andrea French

Concerto in G minor for Two Cellos, RV 531, Mvt. I: Allegro by Antonio Vivaldi

**Lillian Kareken**, guitar student of Jean Seils

Gavottes I & II by Johann Sebastian Bach & El Testament D'Amelia by Miquel Llobet

**Jaden Ma**, piano student of Richard Tostenson

Three Preludes, Op. 5: No. 19, No. 3 & No. 17 by Nikolai Kapustin

Plan to attend and support your friends!

**MacPhail Fall Honors Recital**

**Friday, December 15, 2017**

**7:30pm in Antonello Hall**