



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2023

# The Music Academy

226 South Second Street Rockford, IL 61104  
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## WHAT THE SUZUKI METHOD REALLY TAUGHT

Excerpted from a New Yorker article of the same name by Adam Gopnik; the full article reviews a recent biography of Shinichi Suzuki entitled, *Suzuki: The Man and His Dream to Teach the Children of the World* by Eri Hotta. The Music Academy has several copies of the book that families may borrow. They are located at the front desk!

Dr. Shinichi Suzuki was convinced that children could learn music the way that children learn language, becoming fluent with maximal exposure and minimal overt instruction—an idea that vibrated with American dreams of instant, just-add-water accomplishment. “When adults guide their infant children toward language fluency, they bring to the task not just knowledge but also a spirit of love, patience, and self-reflection,” Hotta writes. “If that same spirit were brought to all education, Suzuki thought, then every child would know the delight of learning throughout their formative years and beyond.”

There was a built-in ambiguity in Suzuki’s approach, which persists to this day. On the one hand, he didn’t think that musical prodigies were a special class of children, with some special innate gift. On the other hand, he believed that kids learned music not by drill and repetition but by exposure and instinct. All you had to do to activate the music instinct was expose them early to the right input. This ambiguity proved fruitful as a public-relations tool—he could point to this or that wunderkind who had been trained by his method as proof that it worked. But he could also insist, in the face of all the kids who would never play at the concert-hall level, that the point was not to make wunderkinder but to make kids wonder, to allow the power of music to expand their emotional repertory. No bad result was possible.

Something significant happened to the idea of the musical prodigy, derived in no small part from Suzuki’s example. In 1998, the year of Suzuki’s death, at the age of ninety-nine, a teen-age Hilary Hahn—one of innumerable violinists exposed to the mother-tongue method—was taking the stage at the Kennedy Center, while a recording made by another Suzuki-abetted performer, Joshua Bell, received a Gramophone Award. We no longer treat such performers as freaks of nature but as examples of what kids are capable of, given the right encouragement and environment. That is largely Suzuki’s doing. Even today, Hotta reports, some four hundred thousand students are learning to play in the Suzuki way.

However, what matters most is not making music but finding meaning in music. The range with which we extend our experience of music horizontally may help explain its extraordinary vertical depth. The more connections we make to music, the more significance music has. What we do know is that early exposure to art and music gives kids a longer familiarity with art and music. The sooner you start, the more you sense. It’s a self-evident truth, but self-evident truths can be, for children, essential to independence. The parents and nonparents may worry loudly about what the kids sawing away up on the platform are doing and where it will get them, but the kids don’t hear them. They’re making music.”

### Faculty & Staff

Mary Ann Anderson\*- Violin  
Michael Beert\*- Cello  
Valerie Blair\*- Piano  
Lauren Canitia-Viel\*- Prelude/Violin/Viola  
Ella Caswell\*\*- Piano/Violin/Viola  
Debra Dew- piano  
Laura Eakman\*\* \*- Executive Director  
Shannon Englert\*\* \*- Violin/Partner Program  
Richard Evans- Cello  
Kerena Fox- Cello  
Lillian Gonzalez -Piano/Prelude  
Rachel Handlin\* - Violin/ String Program Director  
Lauren Hart\*- Music Lab/Prelude  
Rachel Hofmann- Violin  
Patricia Jeske\*- Piano  
Brandon Lamm\*\* \*- Violin/Viola  
Don Larson- Clarinet/Saxophone  
Candy Lovan\*- Piano  
Dave Nelson- Guitar  
David Newman- Piano  
Anne Olson\*- Piano Program Assistant  
Jacques Saint-Cyr- Flute  
Kathryn Siegel-violin/General Program Director  
Nicolette Theotikos -Business Director

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Kristin McClethon\*  
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\* Music Academy Parent  
\*\* Music Academy Alum



## WHY CHAMBER MUSIC?

Joining a small ensemble is the most collaborative form of music making around! Every player has their own, individual part to play; and, at the same time, the handful of players learn to work together to play as ONE. Each musician must contribute fully for the group to achieve success. Students gain musical and interpersonal technical skills. They learn to listen to and watch each other closely, sometimes leading and other times following. They develop a musical imagination and self confidence as they test out ideas together; and they learn to give and be open to constructive criticism. Also, playing chamber music is fun!!!

*Thank you YouthChamberConnection.org for this beautiful description of the value of chamber music.*

## AN EXCITING SUMMER AHEAD

*We are thrilled to offer two Chamber Music Camps in June, 2023*

**Music of Friends: Chamber Music Camp**  
featuring guest artists, Kalara String Quartet  
June 26-July1; 9am-4pm

*Supported by a Community Foundation of Northern Illinois Grant*, Music of Friends Chamber Music Outreach Camp gives students an opportunity to learn from a world-class string quartet while providing outreach concerts in our community. This experience will allow our students to grow musically and personally.

Students will spend 6 days learning chamber music with the Kalara String Quartet and Music Academy Faculty. Each student will be placed into an appropriate-level small group to learn a piece. The week will include daily coaching with the Kalara Quartet, elective classes, a conductor-less chamber orchestra, and off-campus outreach concerts for the community.



**Rockford Public Schools 205: Chamber Music Camp**  
June 19-23; 9am-1pm

100% funded through the RPS 205 Live Learn Play Initiative, all interested RPS students receive free tuition for this 5-day chamber music camp. The week will include daily small group rehearsals with Music Academy Faculty and a showcase concert.

This camp is supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$54,473.90, with 100 percent funded by ACF/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACF/HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website



## WEST SIDE STORY AT THE LYRIC OPERA

The Music Academy is traveling to see the Lyric Opera of Chicago's West Side Story on **June 11th, 2023!** This exciting and updated performance features phenomenal music and stunning choreography

Everyone is welcome on this trip - bring your friends and family!  
Adults (over 18).....\$85/person includes Show Tickets and Bus  
Children (under 18)...\$60/person includes Show Tickets and Bus

Look for a flyer in the mail or call to reserve a spot - seats are limited: 815-986-0037  
Reservation deadline is April 24th.



*Sponsored in part by Savant Wealth Management*



SPRING 2023

## PERFORMANCE WISDOM:

To: Music Academy Students, From: Music Academy Students

In preparation for our upcoming solo recitals on May 13th, Music Academy Students share their performance tips and encouragement with each other.

### Performance Tips:

- If you're nervous, think you're excited because your body reacts the same way to nerves as to excitement.  
- *Graham, violin student with Mary Ann Anderson, Age 14*
- Focus on playing - not the audience.  
- *Henrik, viola student with Laura Eakman, Age 12*
- Be confident and get a good night's sleep the night before. Show that you're proud.  
- *Angelina, violin Student with Mary Ann Anderson, Age 12*
- Practice before you go and just do your best. Just have fun.  
- *Bailee, violin student with Mary Ann Anderson, Age 11*
- If you get scared just don't look at the people.  
- *Zella, violin student with Kathryn Siegel, Age 12*
- Just breathe and be confident. Have faith in yourself.  
- *Zamarianna, violin student with Kathryn Siegel, Age 10*
- Warm up at home before the recital.  
- *Eliora, cello student with Karena Fox, Age 14*

### Preparing for a Performance:

- In practice, try and play the piece as many times as your age per day.  
- *Graham, violin student of Mary Ann Anderson, Age 14*
- Two weeks before, play the piece 3 times all the way through.  
One week before, play the piece 7 times a day - full run, (bows included)  
- *Sarah, violin student of Rachel Handlin, Piano with Deb Dew, Age 16*
- Practice everyday; listen to recordings; practice with family and friends as audience.  
- *Arjuna, violin student of Rachel Handlin, Age 5*
- I like to practice in my recital dress. Invite your friends and family to listen and make quiet noise so that you'll be used to noise while you play.  
- *Alex, violin student with Mary Ann Anderson, Age 8*
- Practice in small sections slowly. Roll the dice, go to that measure and practice it.  
- *Grace, piano student with Ella Caswell, Age 17*

### Encouragement for your First Performance:

- For your first performance, don't worry! You're going to do great! If other kids like me can do it, so can you.  
- *Anya, piano student with Tricia Jeske, Age 9*
- I heard this is your first performance...it's really fun to perform; everybody claps after. It's gonna be fun! Ok, you will like it!!!!  
- *Rowan, violin student with Mary Ann Anderson, Age 8*
- Good luck and just remember that everyone makes mistakes. Part of success is failing because it means you didn't give up and that's what counts.  
- *Addison, violin student with Lauren Viel, Age 11*
- Just remember that you got this! You are going to do as best as you can and even if you mess up no one will remember!  
- *Graham, violin student with Mary Ann Anderson, Age 14*





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## Remembering Gayle

We mourn the loss of a long-time foundation board member, Gayle Scheuer who died suddenly February 20, 2023. From the day she joined the Board she enthusiastically participated in all the activities, events and concerts. As chairman of the events committee she carefully planned many successful fundraising events. She chaired exciting fundraisers such as HeartStrings at the medical school and Burpee Museum. She was planning fundraisers for this season.

She and her husband attended Music Academy concerts.

We extend our sympathy to her husband, sons and grandchildren. -Liz Dickinson

## Music Academy Love

"Music is like oxygen in my life. Music has given me joy, challenges, accomplishments, pride and so much more. At my age of 79, I am thankful that The Music Academy has supported me in my music education for the past 14 years. The groups and teachers ARE my village!" - Sandra Welte, Age 79

## Join Us! Upcoming Events

### **Saturday, April 29, Twinkle Recital:**

**9:45am, First Lutheran Church Sanctuary**

Our youngest students perform in their first recital! Students and families celebrate their accomplishments in this joyful setting!

### **Saturday, May 6, Closing Activities Concert and Senior Recognition:**

**10:45am, First Lutheran Church Sanctuary**

All large ensembles will present a final concert. Graduating seniors will share their favorite Music Academy memories.

### **Mother's Day Card Fundraiser:**

Purchase a Mother's Day card through the Music Academy! The Music Academy will create personalized cards featuring your child and have them sent to your loved one in time for Mother's Day. **Order by April 10th. Call or check out our website for more information!**