
My Suzuki Voice Journey

BY AMELIA SEYSSSEL, JULY 2014

MY PERSONAL MUSICAL JOURNEY

"The longest journey is the journey inwards." (*from a Chinese fortune cookie*)

Sometimes life's truths come from the oddest of places. How many of us have read countless Chinese fortune cookies and have either chuckled or rolled our eyes at the contents? But this particular one seemed to speak a deep truth to me in spite of its source. A journey that lasts one's entire life is the richest journey of all. A journey that enriches and grows the inner spirit is the most fulfilling of all.

My earliest memories include an abiding love for music and a love for singing. My growing up was enriched by that truly typical American story: a multicultural and multiethnic background. I was surrounded from an early age by the music of Mexico – my father's contribution, music of the Anglo-American tradition – my mother's contribution, and music of the Japanese tradition by way of my eclectic grandfather's research and scholarly pursuits. Later on I also discovered a warm love for the French tradition that clung to my surname, Seyssel, imported though it was through the rich cultural tapestry that is Mexico.

In a family of relative short financial windfall, musical aspirations did not immediately lead to a musical career. It took time for me to achieve the financial resources to match my musical inclinations. Ultimately that cross-cultural environmental 'journey inwards' compelled me towards a career in music, later in life than for many, but nonetheless real and deeply passionate. By the time I found myself transplanted from my West Coast California roots to East Coast New York State in 1985, my commitment to a musical career was complete with a Master's degree in Vocal Performance & Literature, and included the combined career roles of teacher, performer and, not least of all, wife and, quickly ensuing, mother.

MY SUZUKI JOURNEY BEGINS

My own personal 'Suzuki' journey began sometime later in year 2000 with Suzuki Piano's terrific duo: Carole Bigler and Valery Lloyd-Watts. From these two wonderful teachers, one American and one Canadian, springs my passion for the Suzuki attitude toward living. From these two I also derived my abiding respect and passion for teaching excellence in all things. Teaching and expecting excellence is the ultimate expression of respect for the child. Teaching and modeling excellence in an environment of joy is the way in which we pass on to the child a love of learning and a love of beauty; and is one of the ways in which we nurture and grow a 'beautiful soul'.

Carole Bigler and Valery Lloyd-Watts also hosted my first experience of a broader 'Suzuki Community'. Their 'Suzuki Kingston MusicFest' summer festivals in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, were truly festivals of learning, both for the students attending and for the many teachers from around the world who came for their Suzuki Piano training and for their

wonderful 'Complete Piano Pedagogy' course, rooted as it was in Suzuki principles. Teachers attending their summer festivals were actively engaged in communicating and sharing with each other their individual experiences and their individual adventures in trying to apply Suzuki principles to their lives, their teaching and their music studios. Their summer festival community was a complete Suzuki triangle, invigorating parents, students and teachers alike.

Those early years of teaching Suzuki Piano were also my first experience in the contagious joy that the Suzuki Method is able to propagate. I had been asked by the Continuing Education Division of the local Community College to expand their already existing Suzuki String program by adding a Suzuki Piano program. This is what drew me to the 'Suzuki Kingston Musicfest' in the first place. It was assumed that since I was already teaching piano to as young as four years old as a Traditional teacher, I would be well-suited to adapt my teaching to the Suzuki approach. My additional background in Early Childhood Education via Musikgarten, Orff-Schulwerk and Dalcroze workshops could also have been a factor.

The first semester I was the only teacher. Seven years later, in 2007, I was coordinating a roster of seven teachers, nearly 90 students, and multiple 'end-of-semester' student recitals, as well as several outreach student recitals to local nursing homes. The joyful and enthusiastic atmosphere that was created by applying the basic principles of the Suzuki approach to family, student and teacher-colleague relationships was the primary reason for the highly successful outcome of that program. After seven years of involvement in that program I discovered the existence of Suzuki Voice. At that point, I decided to move forward in my teaching career and I left the College environment in order to pursue this new career choice on my own rather than under the auspices of a larger administration.

MY SUZUKI VOICE JOURNEY

The discovery that there was a Suzuki program for my primary instrument (voice) was a decidedly exciting moment for me. Although competent in piano, as my secondary instrument my piano skills do not afford me the pleasure of being able to take students to the highest levels of technical competency. In Suzuki Voice I saw a wonderful opportunity to combine my Master's degree in Vocal Performance & Literature and my passion for vocal technique and pedagogy, with the joy and passion for teaching young children within the Suzuki framework that I had discovered while teaching Suzuki Piano. All my most passionate life joys came together in Suzuki Voice: technical mastery, performance mastery, and the nurturing of young children through the Suzuki Triangle.

My Suzuki Voice journey of discovery began in summer of 2008 with a trip to Stevens Point, Wisconsin, where Katrina Pezzimenti from Australia, Suzuki Voice Level 5 Teacher, PPSA & ESA Suzuki Voice Teacher Trainer and, at that time, also SAA Teacher Trainer, was teaching an extremely intensive Suzuki Voice Unit 1. That first experience was followed by another week-long stint in summer of 2009 at Stevens Point, Wisconsin, for Unit 2 with Mary Hofer, Suzuki Voice Level 4 Teacher and newly appointed SAA Teacher Trainer.

The vocal instrument is unique among the instruments, in that the physical components of the instrument itself are nearly all 'internal' muscles of the body and, therefore, not visible

nor understood by the casual onlooker. Singers themselves generally have only a rudimentary understanding of their complicated inner workings unless they have specifically pursued pedagogical studies or happened to have had a voice teacher that felt that more precise knowledge and understanding was important. The 'invisible' nature of the technical workings of the instrument has direct implications on the teaching of vocal technique; vocal technique taught poorly can cause later physical problems. Many important vocal technical inadequacies are not readily 'visible' to the observer and it is more possible than with other instruments to be ignorant of any developing physical issue. In light of this, I felt that I required even more in-depth Suzuki Voice training than the two summer sessions that I had experienced. Having exhausted what was then available in the USA, I decided to continue my training by 'going to the source'. I contacted Dr. Päivi Kukkamäki, Founder of Suzuki Voice by Dr. Suzuki's personal choice and invitation, and booked a flight to Finland.

That first summer in Finland deepened my perspective and evaluation of the Suzuki Voice program and expanded me greatly as a Suzuki Voice teacher. My vision of the potentialities of both Suzuki Voice and the Suzuki Method as a whole were expanded and enriched beyond my expectations. The environment in which I found myself was challenging but truly inspiring. I immediately found myself both observing and 'practice teaching' the very youngest age groups, infants and toddlers. I was exceptionally fortunate in that our week-long training was immediately followed by my first experience of an 'International Songs for Sharing Workshops' event. Coincidentally, that workshop was being held in Finland that particular year. This was my first experience of a truly international Suzuki Method Conference and my first interactions with fellow Suzuki Voice teachers from a wide array of countries: Analía Capponi-Savolainen (SAA-Argentina, and now ESA Teacher Trainer), Aldo Guerrero Moreno (SAA-Mexico), Julian Molinero (SAA-Argentina), Jaume Fargas Fernández (ESA-Spain), Suzanne Prytz (ESA-Sweden), Erica Shimada (ESA-England; TERI-Japan), Mervi Sipola-Saliniemi (ESA-Finland, and soon ESA Teacher Trainer), Mette Heikkinen (ESA-Finland, ESA Teacher Trainer), Katrina Pezzimenti (PPSA-Australia, ESA/PPSA Teacher Trainer).

In that first summer in Finland Dr. Kukkamäki invited me to join the ESA, to complete requirements for ESA Level One, which specifies more training hours than the SAA Unit One, and to take their required Level One Examination before moving forward into a more in-depth Level/Unit Two experience. This was my first experience in a different approach to Teacher Training (whether Voice or Piano) than I had experienced in the SAA. The ESA approach, although different, had the same goals in mind: to adequately and properly prepare the aspiring teacher to integrate Suzuki principles into their teaching.

In all respects, the teacher training program devised for Suzuki Voice described in detail in the publicly available manual titled "*Suzuki Voice Program since 1986: Professional Development Teacher Training Curriculum*" (revised yearly), is an intensive high quality program. In addition to course work, lecture and observation, it offers the aspiring teacher a mentor driven training experience very much in the same spirit as the SAA 'Practicum' and 'Suzuki Principles in Action' (SPA) courses. In lieu of the SAA procedure requiring additional pre-qualifying auditions demonstrating ever more advanced technical competency as a teacher advances forward in training levels, the ESA approach relies on one initial audition only but both requires and provides opportunities for the teacher to be actively involved in improving their own technical capability and expertise in their specific instrument (voice). It also

requires an examination and recital proving competence before receiving credit for the course-work.

After that first summer in Finland I never looked back. I followed up my successful ESA Level One Examination with successful completion of their Level Two Examination the following January 2011. With no other higher level courses being available in the United States at the time, and having developed a high level of respect for Dr. Kukkamäki's training expertise, I resolved to continue my Suzuki Voice training via her specific guidelines. That path took me to Melbourne, Australia, in January 2012 for my Level Three (SAA Unit 3) Examination, to Matsumoto, Japan, in March 2013 for my Level Four (SAA Units 4-6) Examination, and again to Finland in June 2014 for my Level Five (SAA Units 7-10) Examination, the highest level of training one can achieve. At each one of these events I was able to both renew prior and begin new relationships with Suzuki Voice teachers at all levels of training from around the world, including Masayo Okano (TERI-Japan), Penny Adeney (PPSA-Australia), Ainslie Jäckel (PPSA-Australia), Outi Pekkarinen (ESA-Finland), and Elina Risku-Pellinen (ESA-Finland).

My own international experiences have also attracted the attention of USA Suzuki Voice teachers nearer to my geographical area – particularly Marthé Miller (SAA, New York City), Maura Donnelly O'Halloran (SAA, Connecticut), and Lisa Murray (SAA, Connecticut/No. Carolina) – resulting in occasional local USA activities in which both teachers and students have been able to join each other in the joy of singing.

The culmination of this 'melting pot' of cultural attitudes and perspectives has enriched both my life and my teaching. Several International Conference experiences have expanded my horizons as well as filled me with Dr. Suzuki's wider vision of world peace through the universal language of music. I have participated in two International Songs for Sharing events, in Finland (2010) and in Australia (2012). I attended the 16th Suzuki Method World Convention (2013) in Matsumoto, Japan, as a Suzuki Voice Teacher, assisting in student workshops and participating in specific events requiring singers. How better to celebrate the joy that is 'Suzuki' than to sing Handel's *Hallelujah* chorus with fellow Suzuki Method teachers and orchestra under the direction of Professor Koji Toyoda at an Easter morning Catholic Mass in Dr. Suzuki's honor!

Since that first immersion in Suzuki Voice in 2009 I have either trained with or observed all of the current Suzuki Voice Teacher Trainers in the world, including most intensively with both Dr. Päivi Kukkamäki, founder of Suzuki Voice and it's first appointed Teacher Trainer, and Mette Heikkinen, a Suzuki Voice associate from nearly the beginning of it's founding and it's second appointed Teacher Trainer. Additionally, working through the smaller community of Suzuki Voice, I have developed an expanded and enriched view of the larger Suzuki World Family. I have observed Suzuki Voice students of many different ages and nationalities, each 'instrument' unique to that individual; and I have had the opportunity to teach a few of them as well. I have experienced and observed training both in the SAA, the ESA and the PPSA 'styles', noting the organizational differences appropriate to their different cultural backgrounds and histories.

Following this particular course of training has additionally reconnected me with the *bel canto* pedagogical approach which has, in turn, revitalized my own instrument and brought me to a fuller realization of it's richness as a teaching tool for the young instrument. In

working towards teacher training requirements of repertoire memorization and ESA examinations requirements, my own singing instrument rediscovered its basic technical underpinnings. In addition to improving my own performing this has had a direct impact on how I teach and what I teach. Technical expertise at an increasingly deeper level is critical to growth as a teacher. Daniel Goleman states it quite succinctly: "In order to simplify effectively you need to understand the complexity that you are reducing." (Goleman, 1983, p. 184) The more thoroughly one understands the technical requirements of their instrument, the more competently one can break down the component parts into teachable units tailored to the individual child.

Over the course of my Suzuki Voice teaching, I have developed an ever increasing respect for the three volumes of Suzuki Voice repertoire that have now been compiled and that patiently await publication. These first three volumes will remain as priceless pieces of Dr. Suzuki's legacy, occurring as they did at the end of his long life and career. Dr. Kukkamäki was personally chosen by Dr. Suzuki to pursue the development of Suzuki Voice and both he and Waltraud Suzuki maintained a 12-14 year personal relationship with her while these volumes were developed. Nearly all of the songs chosen for these three volumes had the personal sanction of both of the Suzuki's and were heavily influenced by Dr. and Mrs. Suzuki's opinions. Their pedagogical excellence bears witness to that fact as well as to the years of hard work from Dr. Kukkamäki and all the other Suzuki Voice teachers that tested the repertoire and contributed to the finished product over the course of years.

SHARING THE VISION WITH STUDENTS

Through these last five years of teaching Suzuki Voice, my own studio has slowly transformed itself from a primarily Suzuki Piano studio into a combined studio with a Suzuki Voice emphasis and my students have grown with me as I have worked on and developed my skills as a Suzuki teacher. I have grown immensely as a teacher just as my students have grown.

Because the Suzuki Voice teacher training program included a 'Practicum' element ('teaching in practice'), I was required during the first four levels of study to submit several videos of myself teaching my own students, in both private and group lesson settings. Accompanying each video was both my pre-devised lesson plan as well as a self-critique on the quality of the execution of that lesson plan. Upon submission, all of these elements were reviewed and commented on by Dr. Kukkamäki.

I can't emphasize enough how much this 'practicum/teaching-in-practice' experience helped me to develop as a teacher. It progressed the speed with which I absorbed and understood the implications of the teaching method, fixing problems and changing attitudes before they became ingrained. Further, it forced the 'lesson plan' way of thinking into my stubborn brain. Now ALL lessons are planned whether or not I have actually written a plan or not. My 'teaching brain' automatically thinks in terms of a plan and in terms of specified goals, technical or otherwise. Because of this, my teaching is much more focused and productive overall. I also developed a real appreciation for the numerous families that have sacrificed their privacy in order to be companions in my development. And in the course of soliciting their assistance, I have myself been a model for them of the very 'Suzuki' attitude of striving for excellence in all things.

My students and their families also assisted me in achieving another program requirement: that of graduating a student from the prior level in order to meet teacher training goals of the subsequent level. The required 'proof of completion' was simply a DVD of that student's graduation recital. In addition to being forced to recruit the goodwill of studio 'families', this requirement also created patterns of behavior in me that have built and strengthened both my teaching and my studio. Working with families in this broader sense enlarged my sense of the potentials of the Suzuki Triangle. Rather than just being how well one communicates in the lessons, the Suzuki Triangle becomes an outreach into the sense of community. It enlarges the hearts and minds of parents to more fully appreciate the unique successes of each child, a success that is determined by far more than a child's ability to perform technical wonders.

The extra time spent in preparing a child for a Graduation Recital becomes a unique opportunity to discuss with the parent and the child their true accomplishments and to relate those accomplishments in terms of their whole self – in terms of what life changing attitudes and skills are being developed. In the process, and born out of a deeper appreciation for their own child, parents become cheerleaders for all children in the studio, not just their own. They begin to see more clearly each child's unique personal contribution to the whole. As parents become more appreciative of the contributions of others, they serve as attitude models for their own children, a self-enriching cycle of inner growth and development in the 'Suzuki' way.

Making sure that each child performs Graduation Recitals on their own individual path of success gives the larger studio a broader view, strengthening and reinforcing whatever work one has already done to enlarge and expand communication. As the child progresses to higher and higher levels, Graduation Recitals can also offer opportunities to reach out to one's local community. Volume Three Suzuki Voice repertoire challenges the developing vocalist to perform with chamber ensemble. This is an exciting event for the children involved and a wonderful outreach program to other student instrumentalists, Suzuki Method or not.

During the course of the training, the 'hands-on' teaching approach of Dr. Kukkamäki's program also required me to teach students of other teachers. I could not afford to bring my own students with me, so any 'teaching in practice' opportunities offered on site were, perforce, using other teacher's students. Dr. Suzuki's 'mother tongue' approach to teaching assumes an emphasis on modeling and imitation. Working with a student who may or may not speak English well or, as in the case of Australia, comes from a different cultural background, forces one to think in terms of exactly that specific Suzuki Method element. It forces one to think: '*how*' will I manage to get my point across by modeling? It forces one to seriously consider the model, both technical and behavioral, that one is portraying every second of every lesson. It requires that the teacher have an extremely clear idea of the teaching point in order to more precisely model that teaching point.

During the course of these last several years, the experience of teaching other teacher's students has also changed how I teach my own students here in the United States. Modeling has become a critical element of my teaching style that I am constantly checking and trying to improve. My experiences have taught me that so much more can be taught by modeling than by any other means. That teaching behavior has crept into my teaching of adults as well.

These several years of growth as a Suzuki Voice teacher have also included some major steps toward adapting my studio to include the costumed stage productions so necessary to the well-rounded development of a singer's performing skills. I have gradually expanded and upgraded my studio equipment as necessary to provide this basic need for my students, and the results have been extremely fulfilling. There is so much opportunity to teach a multitude of things when one produces a staged production. Children learn life skills and grow in empathy and understanding. They learn also the behavior skills that attach to that deepened empathy – *how* to express care for one another, not only that they must *feel* that care. What are the behavior sets required in order to not 'upstage' another? What are the behavior sets required 'backstage' that support the overall goal of the production? What are the behavior sets required in order to act as a team 'on stage'?

The child learns that you also give support to your companions simply by doing the best job that you possibly can. By striving for excellence you inspire others to strive for excellence. One respects excellence in others by giving excellence yourself. The production itself motivates children like no other and offers it's own inspiration to excel. The added demands of the production also make more demands on the parents involved and strengthens the Suzuki Triangle bonds that, in turn, strengthen and deepen the relationships within the studio.

I have produced by now three staged productions, each of increasing complexity. The first production, 12 minutes long, included only four students ranging in age from 7 to 10. Minimal props and costumes were borrowed locally. It used a Suzuki Voice Volume Three song text as its "center plot" and as a basis for the action. To that base, I tapped into a wider pool of songs in different languages, allowing each child a solo, but also providing joint 'conversational' acting opportunities.

The second production took a different approach and looked to motivate the children by other means. The inspiration was two Suzuki Voice songs with 'princess' themes and a studio roster of seven young girls. To the Suzuki Voice songs were added several Disney 'princess' songs, again combining joint acting opportunities with solo opportunities. This production was enhanced by 'props' and 'lights', motivating for the children and requiring additional staging skills. It was further enriched by inspired parents and children supplying their own variations of lovely 'princess' costumes. For this production I also tapped into the wider 'Suzuki Family'. An older brother contributed to the staging by agreeing to dress as 'the prince'.

The third, most recent, production chose a multicultural Christmas focus and built on the skills and experiences I had accumulated in the prior two productions. At the specific request of one of my studio's parents, it celebrated Christmas carols from around the world and additionally offered an opportunity for children to learn songs from their own ethnic background. Three songs from the Suzuki Voice repertoire were also included in the final production. The props for this production were much more extensive, borrowing elements from prior productions and adding new. The list of participants included eight Suzuki Voice students ranging in age from 20 months old to 13 years old, my adult voice students as a backstage chorus, and an older sister (10 years old) who was enthusiastic in providing not only exceptional help as a stagehand (both backstage and on-stage), but also a flute solo and participation on stage as an additional angel.

One of the very wonderful things about putting on productions of this type is the enthusiastic response of entire families. Experiences of this kind are a wonderful boost to the make-up and energy of the Studio. The other wonderful challenge about these productions is the incorporation of all ages into one showcase performance. The very youngest participants add an endearing and warm quality to the overall production as well as give the older children opportunities to express their natural inclinations for care and nurture. It gives children of all ages a respect for the individual based on a realistic appreciation of developmental limitations and abilities.

SHARING THE VISION WITH COLLEAGUES

These several years of teacher training have also filled my life with enriched friendships and networking contacts throughout the Suzuki Voice worldwide community. Each training environment has expanded the pool of Suzuki Voice colleagues that I can draw on for both moral support and knowledgeable expertise as my local Suzuki Voice adventure moves forward. At my first 'Songs for Sharing' experience in Finland, I met professional colleagues from Finland, Argentina, Catalonia, Sweden, England, Australia and Mexico. I also received an insight into how deeply seated is the 'song tradition' in the Finnish culture and, therefore, how appropriate it was that Dr. Suzuki chose a Finn to originate, develop and promote Suzuki Voice. Additionally since then, I have on more than one occasion asked and received for technical linguistic assistance from my Suzuki Voice colleague in Catalonia, Jaume Fargas Fernández. Singers sing in many different languages, having support of this kind is invaluable.

My January 2012 Melbourne, Australia, experience was equally enlightening and inspiring. Colleagues from Mexico, Japan, Finland and Australia attended. It was exciting also to meet Suzuki Voice teachers who have training in and teach the Suzuki ECE (Early Childhood Education) program. These teachers have a solid understanding of the merits of both as well as an understanding of how they complement each other. Suzuki Voice is an extremely focused approach to learning a musical instrument and focuses on teaching vocal technique, while the ECE program is superbly tuned to a more general music approach – training the ear, establishing a fine basis of musicianship, and coaching families in applications of Suzuki principles.

My most recent international convention experience was in Matsumoto, Japan, during the 16th Suzuki Method World Convention in March 2013. I attended the conference as a Suzuki Voice teacher, observing and assisting the two Suzuki Voice Teacher Trainers who attended, Dr. Kukkamäki and Katrina Pezzimenti. The day before the Opening Ceremony I was privileged to perform my 30-minute ESA Level 4 Examination Recital in T.E.R.I. Hall along with Masayo Okano (Japan) performing her Level 2 Examination Recital and Erica Shimada (England/Japan) performing her Level 3 Examination Recital. I have come to highly value the professional networking and social bonding aspects of attending these events. They reinforce the fact that we are all 'partners' in the Suzuki adventure and they foster an atmosphere of mutual support and encouragement among teachers and families alike.

The families attending the conference were from Japan, Australia, and Finland and the children ranged in age from infants to teens. However I was not the only American in the Suzuki Voice group, since one of the Australian mothers was really an American married to

an Australian, an example of the profoundly inter-cultural and world-encompassing time in which we live. Cross-cultural understanding and empathy is becoming more and more an extremely essential skill for our children to acquire. It is simply not enough to have a purely 'national' vision; we must foster a 'world' vision.

Interspersed between these larger international events were several trips to Finland for additional training. During my January 2011 visit to Finland, I was able to participate and teach at the Finland Suzuki Association Workshop weekend. In November 2012, over Thanksgiving week, I visited Finland to attend and assist in the debut event of a small operetta composed specifically for Suzuki Voice students, 'Lumivalko ja Ruusunpuna' (the Grimm brother's fairy tale, 'Snow White & Rose Red'). This was attended also by a teacher from Japan (Masayo Okano) and a teacher from Catalonia (Jaume Fargas Fernández), so I was able to meet one and reconnect with the other. This was also an opportunity to reconnect with the many students and families that make up the studios of the several Suzuki Voice teachers now in Finland, as well as a chance to gain some experience in the production aspects of such a large staged undertaking.

Each training environment has offered a variety of different teaching and networking experiences. International workshops are a wonderful opportunity to see an incredibly diverse set of students – all ages and from all backgrounds. Also an opportunity to see how a successful workshop that includes children from multiple backgrounds, diverse cultures and ages, and different languages is conducted. Suzuki Voice students learn songs in multiple languages, enabling them to sing together as one during these workshops. They also learn to appreciate the hard work that is entailed in learning a foreign language and therefore appreciate it even more when a foreign child has taken the time to learn their language even for so small a thing as 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star'. One truly appreciates the importance of the commonality of Suzuki core repertoire: all children learning the same music means that they can make music together regardless of language and regardless of cultural background.

Important also to me is that during each of these trips cultural understanding has increased between myself and my colleagues. Those experiences in turn deepen my own ability to understand the parents and children that I teach here in the United States where there is such a diverse community of cultures. Those experiences also deepen my own life on a personal level, making me more compassionate and patient. Culturally-based misunderstandings can often be extremely subtle and totally unintended. One becomes patient with perceived slights and patient with the inadvertent misunderstandings that can result from communicating with another person through the colored glass of a different syntax and a different connotative sensibility. And one always sincerely hopes that the colleague on the other side will be equally as patient and kind.

THE JOURNEY FORWARD

Enriching also are the interactions with the many Suzuki families that one meets. Each workshop, each lesson, each teaching-in-practice becomes a mini-lesson in how to build an effective Suzuki Triangle. It becomes a mini-lesson in how to communicate at a level beyond words, both to the parent and to the child. I have always found that children see through all pretense. One must always be totally honest with children and that honesty must come from a deep sentiment within. One learns from multicultural interactions that courtesy is something

that must be deeper than the 'skin'; it must come from the heart or it simply does not cross the language barrier. But coming from the heart, all language inadequacies are ultimately overcome. Is this not, indeed, one of the basic lessons that Dr. Suzuki has tried to teach us all?

Throughout all of my experiences in Suzuki Voice, the core elements of the Suzuki Method are what continue to inspire me and lead me forward. Dr. Suzuki has told us that man's ultimate direction in life "...is to look for love, truth, virtue and beauty." (Suzuki, 1983, pg. x) He asks us to be dedicated to creating children with beautiful souls and high sensitivity as a lifelong inspirational dream. To be dedicated to infusing children with a dream of world peace through mutual cultural respect and understanding is a wonderfully inspiring way to lead one's life. To be able to do all this through music is just 'icing on the cake'. To be able to teach my passion in a Suzuki environment is joy for life. My passion for vocal pedagogy, for young children and for the Suzuki Method will keep me inspired for as many more decades as I am given to live.

Reference List:

Goleman, D. (2013). *Focus: The Hidden Driver of Excellence*. New York, NY, USA: Harper Collins. Epub file.

ISA Approved. (2014). *Suzuki Voice Program since 1986: Professional Development Teacher Training Curriculum*. PDF file.

Suzuki, S. (1983). *Nurtured by Love*. Smithtown, NY, USA: Exposition Press.