

## The Suzuki Voice method – unforgettable experiences and a Suzuki family that grows beyond frontiers

by **Analia Capponi**

The Suzuki Voice history in Argentina began in the year 1999 when I first came into contact with the Suzuki philosophy in a course given by teacher **Caroline Frasser** in La Plata Conservatory, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

At that moment I realized that things were not so simple in the area of singing. The only teacher trainer was from Finland. Fortunately, the following year, the **Suzuki Association of Peru** would bring **Doctor Kukkamäki** to give a course in the 2000 **Suzuki Festival**. Of course, I was there, at the singing workshop in Lima.

I was astonished, the experience was so interesting and special that it marked the course of my professional life for the years to come. I had previous studies and experiences in Music education and opera singing, but in the Suzuki Method I found a very good way to combine all my previous knowledge in different areas and to build my identity as a Suzuki teacher. The Suzuki Voice Method changed my life and made me grow as a teacher and as a person.

*My passion to work with children grows every day. It is wonderful to see how Suzuki students learn; they enjoy the singing and the music, they are happy at concerts and recitals. Every student discovers the unique sound of their own voice. Their voices are healthy: free, natural and brilliant.*

## **The Suzuki Voice Training**

The first step was to be accepted as teacher in training by the **European Suzuki Association**. After that, in the year 2001 I travelled to Finland for the first time to do an intensive training with the ESA teacher trainers **Dr. Kukkamäki** and **Heikkinen**. In the same year I passed the level I Suzuki Voice examination.

Prof. **Mette Heikkinen** evaluated my singing technical skills, pronunciation of all the languages and the right interpretation of each lieder and aria. Singing lessons with Mette were very useful.

**Dr. Päivi Kukkamäki** taught me wonderful things; by the observation and the teaching in practice I learned thousands of things that I use in my classes. We worked a lot with the vocal pedagogy courses and thoroughly analysed every song. **Dr. Päivi Kukkamäki** taught me to live the Suzuki philosophy in my daily life. The experience was wonderful since the Suzuki Voice families from Finland and I shared the music and started up a friendship that would develop through the years.

I started teaching in Argentina in my Studio in La Plata city having the first experiences with Suzuki Voice Method as a teacher. The experiences and the results were very rewarding.

In the year 2002, I travelled to Finland for the second time to attend classes and I passed the Level II examination. Furthermore, in this opportunity I could take a part in the “**International Suzuki Voice Workshop**” and sing in the opera “**Hänsel and Gretel**”, by **Humberdinck**, along with the Finnish Suzuki Voice students. Teachers from Italy, Japan and Spain also participated in the opera; it was the 15<sup>th</sup> Suzuki Voice anniversary celebration.

During the years 2003 and 2004 I worked in my country strengthening the group of students and Suzuki families and developing the Suzuki Voice Method in Argentina. However, communication never ceased to exist between the international Suzuki community and the Suzuki teachers and I always shared videos, concert materials and pleasant experiences with each other.

I was interested in writing and researching about singing and the psychology of music and at that time I started to Study the postgraduate “Master in Psychology of Music” in La Plata National University and I become a member of the **Argentine Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music – SACCoM**.

At the beginning of the year 2005, with the aim of continuing my studies, I travelled again to Finland for training and I passed the Level III examination. This time the final concert was accompanied by a wonderful chamber music orchestra. Also I could sing with the Finnish Suzuki Voice students in the Ópera “**Puss in Boots**” (**Gato con Botas**), by **Xavier Montsalvatge**.

When I was back in Argentina I worked a lot with the students and in the end of the same year we performed the Ópera “**Gato con Botas**” by **Montsalvatge** in Buenos Aires and La Plata.. The premiere took place in the Opening Concert of the **Buenos Aires Suzuki Festival - COSAL**.

At the beginning of the year 2006 I had Level IV training in Finland and I worked helping Dr. Kukkamäki to plan concerts and other activities that we would share in the **14<sup>th</sup> Suzuki Method World Convention** in Turin.

In April 2006 my students and I attended the **Turin Convention** where we shared concerts with students and teachers from Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Italy, Spain and Australia. It was an enriching experience; the students and the teachers put on soloist and group performances. The Final Scene of the opera “**Hänsel and Gretel**” by **Humperdinck** were interpreted by the Suzuki voice students accompanied by the **Stefano Di Tempia Orchestra di Torino**. It was performed in the **Theatre of the Verdi Conservatory**.

In the end of 2006 the Argentinian Suzuki Voice students performed the Ópera “**Hänsel and Gretel**” by **Humperdinck**, sung in German, it was premiered in the city of La Plata (November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006). More than forty students participated, the youngest being only two years old.

*It is important to highlight that all through these years I have counted on the economic collaboration of **Model Hangar – Department of Music Company and Seppo Savolainen** . Besides, in the year 2005 a subsidy from a **Finnish cultural foundation** was received.*

*This year 2007 a scholarship from the **Suzuki Association of the Americas** helped me to continue my training in Finland and to take my Level 4 examination.*

**Thanks to all them to make this possible!**

## The Argentine students of Suzuki Voice

At the moment, the Argentine Suzuki Voice group consists of students of 2 and 3 years of age (who are exposed to early musical vocal stimulation with their parents), and the group of children and junior students and their families who also actively participate in the musical activities.

The work with Suzuki voice is based on the acquisition of a correct and healthy vocal technique which “takes care of” the delicate voices of children and teenagers who are beginning to sing following this method, and which also allows them to develop technical abilities and expressive abilities in singing.

As regards the repertoire, to each carefully selected song, there corresponds a particular teaching point to be worked on. Besides, these songs are not only sung in Spanish, but also in other languages such as English, French, Italian, Japanese, German and Finnish.

The encouraged participation in recitals and concerts make the public performance be a natural artistic expression, and allows the student to enjoy the musical moment as much as the audience.

The Suzuki Voice concerts have been performed in formal and informal spaces and concert situations: radio, local television, formal concerts and musical meetings, sometimes sharing the stage with Suzuki students who play other instruments. The junior group has also performed Educational Concerts at kindergartens.

Concerts have been run in other important concert halls of the city of La Plata such as the “**Gilardo Gilardi**” Conservatory, “**Pasaje Dardo Rocha**” and the **Argentine Theatre of La Plata**. Moreover, the Suzuki Voice students have also sung in **COSAL**, at the **Law University** and in other halls of Buenos Aires capital.

Music Chamber concerts have also been performed in which the Suzuki instrument and singing students have agreed on their interpretations and played together.

The experiences gathered throughout these years have shown that children can develop considerable refined abilities if we provide them with the necessary means and motivation.

*The work of the Method founder, Dr. Päivi Kukkamäki, has contributed to revive the belief that working with music and singing from early ages, even before birth, contributes to create a sensitive human being, and to develop, the musical and vocal abilities and the cognitive and emotional behavior .*

Sharing these kinds of experiences among students, teachers, parents, complete families of different ages and cultures shows that human beings bring a set of previous musical experiences which form part of our culture and which deserve to be shared.

So many experiences and emotions that go beyond frontiers make us feel that the Suzuki family grows across distances, countries, languages and cultures, because it is the singing and the music which make us feel part of the same shared project.

Analia Capponi, January 2007, Finland.

## **What is it Suzuki Voice Program? By Päivi Kukkamäki**

- It has been specially designed to learn vocal technique and style in a progressive manner.
- By singing repertoire, the students and teachers are able to learn from one another's countries and to understand more about different cultures and languages.
- It enables a student to start listening to songs during pregnancy and continue singing until adulthood. ( The Program has been developed in Finland since 1986. The original voice students have followed the program already for 20 years).

**Official Suzuki Voice Teacher Trainer and exams ( five levels) have been conducted in ESA and PPSA. Suzuki Voice short term courses have been conducted in SAA since 2005.**

**There are trained teachers in 15 countries including America, Australia, Europe and New Zealand.**

### **Happy News!**

#### **Suzuki Voice Program 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2007**

**“ Songs for sharing”** -International Suzuki Voice Workshop will be held in Finland **June 25-29<sup>th</sup> 2007.**

New **Ópera; “Roope”** composed by Timo-Juhani Kyllönen for Suzuki Voice students, will be performed **18<sup>th</sup> November in Vantaa, Finland.**

Both celebrations are open to all the Suzuki Voice teachers and students around the world.

**Welcome to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Suzuki Voice Program celebrations!**