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February 2026

Youth Orchestra: Perspectives from all sides of the Suzuki Triangle

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My Experience in Orchestra, By Hendrik J. Anderson

I play the violin, and my Suzuki teacher is Dr. Lois Geertz. I have been playing in the Houston Youth Chamber Orchestra for the last three seasons.

Orchestra taught me to listen to others, and to be able to line up with what they are playing. It has taught me how to play different terms that are included in the orchestra pieces, but not in the Suzuki method songs and pieces that I have worked on so far. While Dr. Geertz teaches helpful bow techniques and exercises, orchestra has taught me how to get into the fine details of the pieces while playing alongside others.

It has also taught me that playing in a group can be better than playing on my own. I used to think that playing individually is better because you can't be off beat with yourself as you are the only one playing. Now I know that playing with others can be fun even if it is challenging to stay on the same beat with others. Orchestra has taught me so much and is an awesome experience.

The Parent Perspective, By Kate Anderson

I encouraged my son Hendrik to join the HYCO despite some initial apprehension on his part. I thought that playing with others in an ensemble would be an important part of his music development. Music simply sounds different when played together with multiple sounds all coming together to form a more complete, fuller sound. It's what music is supposed to sound like! It also brings a social element to music; playing with others involves

challenge for him after playing for years just practicing alone and preparing pieces to be played alone. His experience has exceeded my expectations. He has grown so much in the past few years playing in an orchestra setting like this. He has grown in his instrument. He has improved his technique watching and learning from other musicians around him. He also improved in his musicality and timing by having to play with others. Aside from the music itself, it has taught him discipline as well. He has to attend practices every week and come prepared to each of those practices. If he hasn't adequately learned his part, the whole will suffer as a result. For me, these lessons and development make it all worth it.

The Teacher Perspective, By [Dr. Lois Geertz](#)

I have really enjoyed watching Hendrik on his orchestra journey. It has become a real motivation for him, given him a lot of confidence in music reading, and provided role models for him to emulate. The group also helped motivate him in bigger goals – for example, he was frustrated with some of the other players not learning their music (struggling through rehearsals while the conductor had to teach them their part) so he was determined to audition into the next more advanced group at the earliest opportunity. The requirement was to be in book 4 so he worked extremely hard to finish book 3.

Playing in a youth orchestra is a time commitment, in addition to his standard violin practice, he rehearses most Sunday afternoons. Sometimes these groups can be frustrating in the sense of being in the right group, depending on competition and numbers of students who audition. For example, some instruments are much more competitive than others (more people audition on violin than viola, cello, and bass) and that might result in not being in the group the student wanted.

Overall, most of my students have found participation in a youth orchestra or other group to be educational at worst and extremely rewarding and motivating at best!

I'm interested! How can I join a group?

[The Houston Youth Symphony](#) accepts musicians who are age 7-19. Auditions are usually held in April for the following Fall semester. There are 5 different orchestra levels and Chamber Music is also available!

<https://houstonyouthsymphony.org/>

[The Houston Youth Chamber Orchestra](#) accepts musicians who are age 5-19. Applications are now available. They intentionally accept 15-40 student musicians per orchestra (there are 3 levels) to allow for more personal growth in individual performance and enjoyment.

<https://hycomusic.org/>

[Virtuosi of Houston](#) is a chamber orchestra of 50-60 players. Auditions are held in the Fall for the Fall semester

[Opus 1 Chamber Music School](#) includes a youth program which currently serves students ages 9-18 studying string instruments and piano. They operate on a trimester system and hold auditions just before each trimester begins.
<https://www.opus1cms.com/>

This special newsletter is just for our paid STXSA Family Members and Teacher Members — we are so grateful for our Suzuki community!
 Feel free to invite a friend to join us. They can [join STXSA here](#) and stay connected with all the exciting events and opportunities coming up.



SPRING FLING

Classes:
 Suzuki Baby Music Class Age 0 to 4
 Pre-Twinkle Class for Violin and Cello
 Twinkle Class Violin and Cello
 Book 1 Violin and Cello

2pm Community Concert:
 Open to all Suzuki Book Levels!
 Sign up today!

Scan to register

21 February 2026
 9:30 am - 3 pm

Emmanuel Episcopal Church 3785 Barker Cypress Rd, Houston, TX 77084

Clinicians



Teresa Hakel, Violin
Parker Elementary School

Tatum Hodgson, Cello
Paganini School of Music

Priscila Cardenas, SECE
Dolce Music Academy

Schedule

1. Suzuki Early Childhood Class 9:30am to 10:30am
2. Pre-Twinkle Violin Class 10:30am to 11:30am
2. Pre-Twinkle Cello Class 10:30am to 11:30am
- * Lunch 11:30am to 12pm
3. Twinkle Violin Class 12pm to 1 pm
3. Twinkle Cello Class 12pm to 1pm
4. Book 1 Violin 1pm to 2pm
4. Book 1 Cello 1pm to 2pm
- * Community Concert 2pm to 3pm

Class Description

Suzuki Early Childhood Class (SECE) contains a variety of nursery rhymes, children's song, playing on simple instruments, listening to music and other musical and artistic activities. The SECE class activities work specifically on musical, motor, cognitive, and social skills.

Pre-twinkle: it is the foundation stage for very young beginners (between 3- 5 years old) learning an instrument, focusing on essential skills before learning the famous Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star Variations.

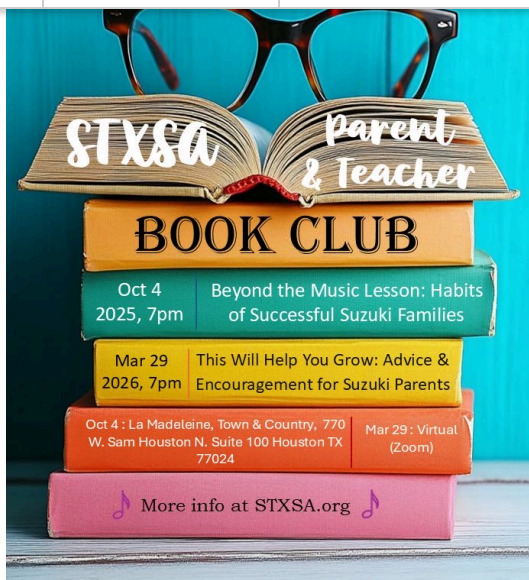


Suzuki Graduation 2026! Apply now!

Recording deadline: March 23.

www.stxsa.org/graduation

*Watch your email - STXSA Spring Fling
information and registration link coming to your inbox soon!*



Have you purchased the book yet? It's time to start reading...

[This Will Help You Grow: Advice & Encouragement for Suzuki Parents](#)

by [Brittany P. Gardner](#)

[Books available here](#)

See you on March 29, 2026!

Resources

[STXSA Parent Corner Newsletter Archives](#)

[Southeast Texas Suzuki Association](#)

[Suzuki Association of the Americas](#)

[International Suzuki Association](#)

Questions? Suggestions? [CLICK HERE](#)



February 21 - Spring String Fling

March 23 - Graduation Recording Deadline

March 29 - Parent & Teacher Book Club

April 11 - Ribbon Festival

April 16 - Parent Night Online #2

May 2 - Graduation Concert

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