

On September 9, 1993, University of Northern Colorado Cello Professor James Fitzz and pianist Rob Hallquist performed a faculty recital in memory of Yvonne Tait. The program, in celebration of her life, artistry and teaching, took place on the UNC campus in Greeley, Colorado. Professor Fitzz is a nephew of Yvonne Tait and brother of Rebecca Sandrok. The program, performed on Yvonne's cello, included music by Fauré, Debussy, von Webern, and Chopin.

Professor Fitzz, an early student of Suzuki cello, said, "I was at the root of the Suzuki evolution in Japan having grown up there and been a student of Yoshio Sato...who, with Shinichi Suzuki, adapted the Suzuki principles to the cello repertoire."



The voice of Yvonne's cello is a symbol of the wonderful vibrations she left us as she lived her days. It is so wonderful to experience music played by a truly human being. What a gift! What an awesome reality! Gift of the Muses - gift of God.

*Yvonne was God's gift to us. **Rhythm** in the sequence of her life came from her bright intelligence. She was truly interested in her world. Her analysis and participation were so worthwhile. **Melody** can tug at our emotions and make our spirits soar. Yvonne's deep feelings for all were real and strong. You sensed it in her playing; you saw it in her grin.*

*There was a **harmony** to Yvonne's life that is priceless. She could face discord and see through to where harmony could be glimpsed again. Being with loved ones, teaching, playing with groups or in solitary practicing - all spoke of the harmony that can be part of life for all of us.*

Excerpted from Memorial Tribute by long-time friend and former pastor, Paul David Sholin, D.D.

Yvonne Marguerite Tait

February 3, 1914 - July 22, 1993

Miss Yvonne M. Tait of Tucson, celebrated musician and teacher, died in Tucson, Arizona, on Thursday, July 22. She was 79.

Miss Tait was born in Toronto, Canada. Her family immigrated to the United States when she was five years old. She earned her bachelor's degree from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and her master's degree from Columbia University.

After teaching cello at Baylor University, Oklahoma State University, and Illinois Wesleyan University, Miss Tait became passionately interested in and devoted to the music education of young children. She moved to Tucson and was engaged by the Tucson Public Schools as an elementary school string teacher.

Miss Tait studied string pedagogy in Japan with Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, internationally acclaimed pioneer in talent education for the very young. She served as President of the Suzuki Association of the Americas and in 1982 was honored with a Distinguished Service Award. Miss Tait also served as chair of the committee to select and edit materials for the Suzuki Cello School repertoire. During the past two decades Miss Tait was in great demand worldwide as a master teacher in string pedagogy workshops.

Over the years, Miss Tait performed as principal cellist with several symphony orchestras including most recently the Tucson Symphony Orchestra.

Miss Tait is survived by lifetime friend, colleague and companion, Anna Mae Sharp of Tucson; two sisters, Lorelie Tait Carpenter of Santa Rosa, California, and Dorothy Tait Fitzz of Shelbyville, Tennessee; and foster brother, John Carran of Kansas City, Missouri; and many nieces and nephews. A memorial service was held at Saint Mark's Presbyterian Church in Tucson.

SONATA

CELLO



Yvonne with her sisters.



Corrente
Allegro con spirito

"Music begins with silence."

I met Yvonne Tait when she was fifteen years old, and we were close friends from that time on. After many years of teaching at the university level, she applied in Tucson for a position at the elementary level. The administrator told her she didn't know what she was talking about to think that she would be happy leaving college teaching for elementary teaching. She asked him to give her a year to try it out, adding that she would be the first to know if she should not continue. Thus Yvonne was given an opportunity to show that she was indeed endowed with a God-given talent for teaching children, as she spent the following twenty years teaching in the Tucson schools.

After hearing the Suzuki string students perform in Tucson on their first tour in the United States and after attending two concentrated workshops with Dr. Suzuki, she made a decision. Her supervisor ordered the small size violins she requested. The preschool-age group, accompanied by a parent, met early in the morning before school started. Yvonne introduced them to the Suzuki way of learning to play the violin at a very early age. The classes grew and flourished. Along with her teaching, she played cello in the Tucson Symphony and also in a string quartet.

Yvonne enjoyed a brilliant career, touching many lives in a positive way. She felt indebted to Dr. Suzuki and always inspired by him. - Anna Mae Sharp, Tucson, Arizona

Yvonne Tait - a mentor to many. I appreciate the love she had for children and her profession, the precision and insight she had in her teaching, and the high character which she exemplified. She will be greatly missed, but her spirit and teaching live on in all with whom she came in contact."

- Jean Dexter, Cellist, Independence, Missouri

I remember when my sister and I first started violin lessons in Japan in 1959. We went to a neighborhood kindergarten where a violin teacher came and taught once a week. He obtained the Suzuki Violin Method, Volume I for us. Mother wrote to Aunt Yvonne, who was then teaching at Illinois State University, and asked if she had ever heard of such a method. Initially, Aunt Yvonne said "no." But within the year, she attended her first demonstration and was excited that we had stumbled onto something of great potential in teaching strings. Shinichi Suzuki's ideas were sparks that ignited in Aunt Yvonne a creativity in teaching beginners that has been an inspiration to many students and teachers. She never tired of building solid beginnings—and seeking new ways to communicate.

Aunt Yvonne paid for me to attend Brevard Music Camp before my Junior year of high school. Culture shock and blatant competition in music were in themselves BIG threats, but my first day there, the instructors wanted to test my knowledge of music theory. I complained to Aunt Yvonne that I would probably fail. She looked me directly in the eye as she was known to do, and sincerely said, "Your ear is so well-developed because of your Suzuki training, I'm sure you'll surprise yourself and do quite well." She was at every turn one who encouraged.

- Rebecca Sandrok, Yvonne's niece, Suzuki Violin Teacher, Glen Ellyn, Illinois

Brevard Music Company, New York City



Yvonne was born the youngest of three girls when a boy was hoped for by our Scotch-Canadian father and our British mother. She did not disappoint them! She was a child with a carefree, fun-loving, "I-love-the-world" disposition who only played with the boys. When she was four and one-half years old, our beloved brother was born, and she had a teammate within the family from then on.

Music lessons started when each of us was five years old. Mother played the piano; Father sang; Lorelie played the violin; Dorothy, piano; Yvonne, piano, and then cello; and Jack, the piano. The wonderful world of music was always there for us -Father with his singing and disciplined practice for us children every day. All went on in the spirit of joy!

At ages 9, 11, and 13, in Jacksonville, Florida, we sisters became the Tait piano trio, and Jack at age eight was the concert artist. All this continued uninterrupted until going to college broke up the trio. It was not surprising, then, that all four of us became professional musicians. Dr. Suzuki is absolutely right. Music is as natural a means of communication to be developed as is the spoken word. When I attended the Stevens Point workshop in August, 1988, with Yvonne and Rebecca, I came away understanding perfectly why they treasured their association with Dr. Suzuki.

- Lorelie Tait Carpenter, Yvonne's sister, Santa Rosa, California

Memories

In Yvonne Tait's name, scholarships have been set up by the Tucson Valley Suzuki Association and by the SAA. Contributions to these funds are most welcome.

Yvonne will be missed but her life's work will remain with us. The Suzuki world has much gratitude for Yvonne. She was its spirit and guide when we were so much in need. How tall we have all grown in her presence; she has given us strength to pursue our dreams. Thank you, Yvonne, for all that you gave to so many.

- Marilyn Kesler, Cellist, Okemos, Michigan



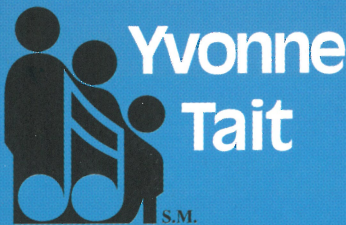
I first met Yvonne when I was in the ninth grade. She was in her first year at FSCW, and we both studied with Owen Sellers. I was warming up in his studio one day, awaiting his arrival, when I looked up and saw Yvonne standing in the door, looking at me very intently. "Go on!" she said, "don't stop playing!" I had no choice but to obey... We saw each other occasionally after that since I participated in ensembles and played in the college orchestra. In the spring of that academic year we appeared on the same recital, she playing the Boëllmann Symphonic Variations and I the Golterman Fourth Concerto.

Although I followed her career with great interest in the years that followed, our paths diverged widely, and we did not meet again until 1967, when I joined the University of Arizona faculty. She was living in Tucson, having discovered during a sabbatical in Arizona that her true metier was introducing young girls and boys to the joys of string playing. For several seasons we were partners in the Tucson Symphony. As a teacher in the public school system she was enormously productive and her expertise and dedication were destined to exert a worldwide influence. A number of my cello majors at the U. of A. had been taught first by Yvonne. Consequently everything in their preparation was "right."

Yvonne must have had an intuitive grasp of Suzuki principles long before she became identified with the organization. In my frequent opportunities for observing her work I was impressed most by her qualities of authority and unstinting love. The enterprise of making music was, for her, important, joyful, and serious. Her pupils were devoted to her and responded readily to that special combination of discipline and affection that is encountered all too rarely.

Her rich legacy lives on in her many pupils—and in their students.

- Gordon Epperson, Professor Emeritus of Cello, Arizona State University, Tucson, Arizona



Yvonne Tait had the true qualities of leadership; she had enthusiasm for ideas and dedication to their realization. She was stalwart and unswerving in the face of difficulties. She will be remembered as a friend to countless students, as a compatriot to her colleagues, and as a pioneer in the Suzuki movement. Her ready good humor will be missed by all who knew her.

- John and Kay Kendall, Edwardsville, Illinois

Yvonne, my good friend, was always a leader. At Interlochen National Music Camp, even without too much practicing, she maintained the principal chair of the cello section, that is until Leonard Rose came along. We high school students shared a cabin in which she instigated plenty of mischief, leading me into the throes of deviltry, which I had to follow since she was my elder by twelve days. We laughed heartily many times about some of our triumphs and how she usually got caught.

Yvonne was known for wagging her long index finger in admonishment at both students and colleagues. At one SAA meeting during the formative years, I presented our committee's recommendations on teacher certification. Yvonne disagreed, pointed that finger in my direction, and wagged it as she presented the opposition and won the support of the group.

On her trip around the country as president of SAA, she stopped to observe my work, offering helpful suggestions and affirmations. What a delight she was with her enthusiasm and love for Dr. Suzuki's philosophy. She recognized the freedom it gives us to be creative.

A strict disciplinarian, she also was a great lover of children. Parents of the American Suzuki Institute begged to have her as a teacher, for the children loved her so much. She inspired them to do their best as well as to love music and their instrument. It was she who developed the rhythmic chant:

I love my cello very much.
I practice every day.
I love to watch the spinning strings,
As my arms fly away.

Her loyalties were permanent and prominent; her love of music and children, exemplary. Her inspiration at the American Suzuki Institute, and wherever she went, gave children and parents everlasting desire to strive to be the best possible. She will always be a part of us, continuing to share her love, just as we will continue to love her, a wonderful, warm, fun-loving friend.

- Margery Aber, Stevens Point, Wisconsin

In Memoriam - an American Sensei

"Music begins with silence!" were the words from the sage. Immediately the cacophony of twenty excited and happy four-to-six year old violinists and cellists quieted and class began. Their noble guide started a familiar tune on the piano and, amazingly in unison and on pitch, the young voices joined in singing where to place their feet, how to sit straight and where to put a multitude of bows. They sang and moved in a disciplined routine with smiles and anticipation. The teacher/pianist continued to play, but the children knew exactly when to stop and listen and when to play rhythms they had heard.

This was my first encounter with the Suzuki Method and the capable Miss Yvonne Tait. Miss Tait's dedication to Suzuki instruction was responsible for my decision to become a string teacher. Those watching her classes here and at workshops around the country developed new expectations, for these children were not prodigies but "regular kids." Some of the same children I observed have grown up to be professional musicians, but that was not the goal of the program. All, however, have grown to be adults who realize that sustained effort, good training, and loving encouragement produce remarkable results in any endeavor.

Miss Tait's influence has been far-reaching. A colleague in music, Nelson Wilt, commented that her life is truly like a stone that, once thrown, starts ripples on the water. Those of us whom she has reached go on, and start others on the path of ability training. In these ripples, her life and work continue.

- Gretchen Hall, Tucson, Arizona. From "Noteworthy News," publication of the Tucson Valley Suzuki Association. The TVSA has established a fund in Yvonne Tait's memory, the Yvonne Tait Memorial Student Scholarship Fund.

Yvonne's leadership as President of the Suzuki Association of the Americas influenced other Presidents, including me. Her sincerity and willingness to help will live on as a standard.

- Dorothy Jones, Pianist, London, Ontario

Yvonne Tait was the youngest elderly person I have ever known. She was always exploring new methods of teaching. She refreshed me with her humor, her love for people and music, especially the cello. Her zest for living was contagious. She was forever growing and learning from whomever she came into contact with, especially children. She had a profound respect for the wisdom of children.

- Libby Balch, Cellist, Mesa, Arizona

Yvonne will be remembered for many things, but we especially remember her sense of purpose, her love and respect for the children, and her stance on parent education. We will miss her.

- Alice Vierra, Cellist, Arlington, Virginia

Yvonne became a mentor for me in leadership, courage, and teaching. Through all these years she has listened and advised and freely shared her ideas. On the day Yvonne passed away, I was teaching a student who had difficulty integrating his vibrato with his internal music making. I suggested the idea that I saw Yvonne use the first time I saw her - vigorously shaking a fist while singing a note out loud. Just as it had done twenty years ago, the idea brought a smile to the face of the student and the desired result in sound. I know that Yvonne's work lives on through all those with whom she shared and with those she never met who now enjoy the benefit of her creativity. Thank you, Yvonne.

- Tanya Lesinsky Carey, Cellist, Macomb, Illinois

Yvonne felt very strongly about our professional responsibility to our SAA organization. She reminded us that WE are the organization and the representatives of Dr. Suzuki in our studios and in the musical community. She set high standards for herself and encouraged teachers, students and parents to work at their very best level. She did this firmly, but with much affection, which the students understood. I recall meeting a twenty-year old cellist who had a class with Yvonne at a summer institute. He told me he still carried two nickels in his cello case—nickels that Yvonne had placed under his feet when he was four or five years old to remind him to keep his feet on the floor! If we all could have our teaching impact a student as Yvonne's did, we could be very pleased with the accomplishment.

- Barbara Wampner,
Cellist, San Francisco, California

My memories of Yvonne Tait begin with observing her demonstration of class teaching at one of the first American Suzuki workshops in Godfrey, IL, in 1965. Her imagination, militaristic yet good-humored discipline, and sense of timing helped us teachers who were present to realize and develop the tremendous learning potential inherent in the group lesson.

Yvonne was a doer; she made things happen. As SAA President (1980-1982), she devoted much time and energy to the organization. She was an early riser; as her President-Elect, I was often awakened at 6:00 a.m. CST to discuss SAA issues, and in Arizona it was one hour earlier! She spearheaded the organization of the Teacher Development Program which, with on-going refinements, is in use today. She was instrumental in getting permission to publish the Suzuki Viola School, and in developing the Cello Volumes.

Yvonne was a true believer in the Suzuki philosophy and exemplified it in her life. She nurtured her students, friends, and colleagues with love and confidence in their God-given potential.

- Doris Preucil, Violinist, Iowa City, Iowa

"Cellists sit down all the time. Sometimes they have to stand up and rest!" As I said those words to my Institute class two weeks ago and relished the amused chuckles from the parents in the back, I had to give a silent nod of recognition and thanks to Yvonne Tait who first said those words many years ago. In the ancient epic poems of Virgil and Homer, we discover that throughout history people have tried to gain some measure of immortality by performing mighty deeds which are remembered long after their own time. Yvonne truly performed some of these. She undertook the Herculean task of serving as SAA president. She was the chair of the cello committee and was personally responsible for getting the first edition of the Suzuki Cello School into print. Besides these large and visible deeds, it is through the countless things she did in her teaching and through her words which we still use today that Yvonne Tait continues to live with us all.

- Richard Mooney, La Verne, California,
written in tribute to Yvonne Tait for the final cello concert at the American Suzuki Institute, August 13, 1993. Faculty and Chamber Music Program cellists performed Bach's "Choral and Gute Nacht" (arr. Farrar) in her memory at the opening of that concert.

With a firm hand, a sparkle in her eye, and a wide smile, she was our shepherd. She led us down a path, sometimes winding and sometimes straight, but under her guidance we never doubted our safe arrival at our appointed destination. Where would the Suzuki movement in the Americas be had there never been an Yvonne Tait? We all will be forever indebted to her. Thank you, Yvonne.

- Paul A. Landefeld, Violinist, Dallas, Texas

I first encountered Yvonne in the mid 1960s at the first national Suzuki conclave organized by John Kendall at Southern Illinois University then at Alton, Illinois. At one point in the proceedings, Yvonne stood up to her full, considerable height and called for all members of the "C Major Club" (the cellists and violinists) to follow her to an adjoining room for an organizational session. My thought was, "Now that lady is a leader!"

When I first went to Tucson to pursue my doctoral studies, I was chiefly interested in introducing Suzuki's ideas to the public schools and was drawn to Yvonne because she was following the same path. Earlier this week (September, 1993), I found myself sharing one of her teaching mantras with my Suzuki Violin Teacher Training Class by intoning "tighten the bow when you are going to play, loosen the bow to put it away." My thought is, "Now that lady did indeed make an impression!"

Prior to going to the University of Arizona at Tucson on sabbatical leave from Mankato State University, I had started my number two son, Ted, Jr., on cello, this after he did not evince an overriding enthusiasm for the violin. Yvonne kindly consented to take him on as a private student, and I am convinced that had we stayed in Tucson, he might have become a professional cellist. My thought is, "Now that lady was a teacher!"

During my stay in Tucson, I endured a series of heart-breaking personal problems. Yvonne and Anna Mae were staunch towers of strength for me and helped immeasurably to navigate me through and beyond this particular patch of life's "rocks and shoals." My thought was, "This lady is a true friend."

It was no surprise to me when Yvonne became the first distaff President of the SAA. I reprised my very first thought of her many years before in Alton, "Now this lady is a leader!"

For many years Yvonne and Anna Mae vacationed in the La Jolla area. We looked forward to their visits and from time to time entertained them in our home. We would trade personal and professional news, teaching tips, etc. More than once I was able to have Yvonne teach at San Diego State University. I will always be grateful that she heard my former student, Frank Almond, perform as one of the four featured soloists at the 1992 SAA Conference. I feel that Frank shared some of what she bequeathed to so many. My thought is, "The lady was a giant among us." - Dr. Theodore R. Brunson, Professor of Music, Emeritus, San Diego State University, Adjunct Professor, Point Loma Nazarene College

Opposite page:
Yvonne during
her SAA Presi-
dency.

Top, left: Yvonne
with her sister
Dorothy Tait Fitz.
Top, right: Libby
Balch, Yvonne, &
Yvonne's sister
Lorelie Tait
Carpenter at
Stevens Point
Institute, August,
1988.

Middle, left:
Yvonne and Anna
Mae Sharp with
grandnephew Tyler
Fitz.

Middle, right:
Yvonne birding
with Anna Mae in
California.

Bottom: Yvonne in
her home with her
two Israeli students.

