

## 40 Years of the Suzuki Piano School in Brazil

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## 40 Years of the Suzuki Piano School in Brazil

**Abstract:** The purpose of this article is to discuss the arrival and expansion of the Suzuki Piano School (SPS) in Brazil. To this end, research was carried out on the topic, in which data were collected in semi-structured interviews, data provided by the Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA) and by course organizers in Brazil. It was found that 2022 marked 40 years of SPS's arrival in the country. The first experiences of applying SPS in Brazil began in 1982 through the work of piano teacher Maria Elena Withers Pessoa. The importance of the International Suzuki Festival in Peru for the training of Brazilian teachers was noted, especially when the provision of courses was rare in Brazil. The most recent stage of the SPS expansion has been taking place since 2016, as a result of the recurring visit to Brazil by Peruvian teacher trainer Flor Canelo. The data obtained in the research also indicates that the Suzuki Piano Community is growing in Brazil, but there is still room for expansion, as the majority of teachers are concentrated in the South and Southeast regions, having only completed the first stage of training. Finally, the data highlighted the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the modality and intensity of SPS course offerings in Brazil, which motivated the creation of other types of Suzuki events and helped integrate Suzuki teachers and students from different regions of the country.

**Keywords:** Suzuki Piano School in Brazil; Talent Education; Piano Pedagogy; Musical Education.

## 40 Anos do Método Suzuki de Piano no Brasil

**Resumo:** Este artigo discute a chegada e expansão do Suzuki Piano School (SPS) no Brasil. Para tal, foi realizada pesquisa sobre o tema, na qual foram coletados dados em entrevistas semiestruturadas, dados fornecidos pela Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA) e por organizadores de cursos no Brasil. Verificou-se que 2022 marca 40 anos da chegada do SPS ao Brasil. As primeiras experiências de aplicação do SPS no país começaram em 1982, através do trabalho da professora Maria Elena Withers Pessoa. Constatou-se a importância do Festival Internacional Suzuki do Peru para a formação de professores brasileiros, principalmente quando a oferta de cursos era rara no Brasil. A fase mais recente de expansão do SPS vem ocorrendo desde 2016, como resultado da visita recorrente ao Brasil da professora capacitadora peruana Flor Canelo. Os dados da pesquisa indicaram também que a Comunidade Brasileira de Piano Suzuki está crescendo e que, no entanto, ainda há espaço para sua expansão no Brasil, pois a maioria dos professores está concentrada nas regiões Sul e Sudeste, tendo concluído apenas a primeira etapa da capacitação. Por fim, os dados destacaram os impactos da pandemia de COVID-19 na modalidade e intensidade da oferta de cursos do SPS no Brasil, motivando a criação de outros tipos de eventos Suzuki e integrando professores e alunos Suzuki provenientes de diferentes regiões brasileiras.

**Palavras-chave:** Método Suzuki de Piano no Brasil; Educação do Talento; Pedagogia do Piano; Educação Musical.

## 40 Años del Método Suzuki de Piano em Brasil

**Resumen:** Este artículo analiza la llegada y expansión del Suzuki Piano School (SPS) en Brasil. Para ello, se realizó una investigación sobre el tema, en la que se recolectaron datos en entrevistas semiestructuradas, datos proporcionados por la Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA) y por organizadores de cursos en Brasil. Se constató que en 2022 se cumplen 40 años de la llegada del SPS a Brasil. Las primeras experiencias de aplicación de SPS en Brasil comenzaron en 1982, a través del trabajo de la profesora Maria Elena Withers Pessoa. Se destacó la importancia del Festival Internacional Suzuki en Perú para la formación de profesores brasileños, especialmente cuando la oferta de cursos era poco común en Brasil. La más reciente fase de ampliación del SPS se desarrolla desde 2016, a raíz de la recurrente visita a Brasil de la profesora peruana Flor Canelo. Los datos de la encuesta también indican que la Comunidad Brasileña de Piano Suzuki está creciendo, pero todavía hay espacio para la expansión del SPS en Brasil, ya que la mayoría de los profesores se concentran en las regiones Sur y Sudeste, habiendo completado solo la primera etapa de entrenamiento. Finalmente, los datos resaltaron los impactos de la pandemia de COVID-19 en la modalidad e intensidad de la oferta de cursos SPS en Brasil, motivando la creación de otros tipos de eventos Suzuki e integrando profesores y estudiantes Suzuki de diferentes regiones brasileñas.

**Palabras clave:** Método Suzuki de Piano en Brasil; Educación del Talento; Pedagogía del Piano; Educación musical.



## Introduction

The Suzuki Piano School (SPS) is part of a movement called Talent Education, which aims to provide piano students a global education through music. Led by the violinist and pedagogue Shin'ichi Suzuki (1898-1998), the Talent Education movement began in Japan in 1946, based on the following principles: (1) the belief in the potential of all children to learn; (2) the recognition of the environment's influence on learning; (3) the encouraging early musical initiation; (4) the recognition of children's influence on each other; (5) the inclusion of parents in the musical teaching-learning process; (6) the positive and affectionate conduct of teaching; (7) the gradual, intensive and cumulative teaching-learning; (8) the belief that successful development of a skill generates motivation and a foundation for the development of other skills; (9) the conducting of learning through listening, observation and imitation, introducing the musical reading after the acquisition of fluency in musical performance (Suzuki, 2012).

To better understand Talent Education, it is important to reflect on the meaning of the terms Education and Talent. Suzuki clarifies that, in the Japanese language, the term Education also encompasses the meaning of fostering:

Educators everywhere have become overly absorbed with the idea that they are teaching – they have forgotten the reality that a child's life develops of its own accord. Moreover, such teachers have failed to inquire deeply into the process by which ability develops. In other words, they have made the mistake of concentrating only on the kyō (教, teaching) part of kyōiku (教育, education), forgetting the iku (育, fostering) aspect, even though the latter is the very aim of education (Suzuki, 2012, p. 110).

Suzuki's use of the term Talent also needs some clarification. As the term is usually associated with an “innate ability” or a “natural aptitude for something”, the association between talent and something that can be developed through education initially seems to be a contradiction. However, in his works, Suzuki used the Japanese term *saino* (才能) which encompasses both the meaning of talent (才) and ability (能). Therefore, for him, they were synonymous. Furthermore, the term *saino* was also used by Suzuki to refer to the development of character traits (Bauman, 1994, p. 6). In this way, Suzuki considered that someone can develop the wisdom to become a musician and can also develop the wisdom to become a good person.

Based on the pedagogical approach idealized by Suzuki for the violin, in 1946, his sister-in-law, the pianist Shizuko Suzuki (1909-1999), began adapting this method to the piano with the inclusion of pieces selected by her to compose the two first volumes of the method. Starting in 1969, a group of piano teachers that included Haruko Kataoka, Ayako Aoki and Keiko Sato met with Suzuki in Matsumoto<sup>1</sup> to choose the repertoire for the remaining volumes of the SPS, the first edition of which was published in 1970 by Zen-On (Suzuki, 1994, p. 9). Currently, the SPS repertoire is organized into seven volumes, including pieces taken from popular songs from different countries, works from traditional piano literature and pieces composed by Suzuki. The selection and organization of this repertoire had as its main criterion the level of difficulty of the pieces, from beginner to advanced, providing the students with gradual and progressive technical-musical development. In addition to taking technical issues into consideration, the repertoire aims to offer children the pleasure of playing beautiful works, giving them the opportunity to achieve high artistic and musical quality (Suzuki, 1993, p. 6).

The seven volumes of the SPS can be considered repertoire books and not the method itself, since they do not contain detailed information on how the educational process should be developed. We believe that this lack of information is intentional, due to the impossibility of transmitting, through written language, all the philosophical, pedagogical and technical-musical content of the Method. These contents are transmitted mainly orally through specific training courses. Thus, it is important that teachers participate in these courses before applying the Method.

In addition to prioritizing learning through listening and teaching through demonstration, the SPS pedagogical approach is characterized by the combination of the following elements: (1) a form of teaching that combines individual and group classes and public presentations; (2) the use of a common basic repertoire, which helps the student understand the learning stages and promotes musical socialization; (3) the encouragement to participate in group practices from the beginning, including the use of two pianos in classes, which allows for unison or chamber music performances, favoring the development of musical expressiveness and fluency; (4) calmness and concentration as prerequisites for the development

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<sup>1</sup> Matsumoto is a Japanese city located in Nagano Prefecture.



of the skills; (5) the development of good postural habits considered as a priority, involving, in the case of younger children, the use of bench and footrest with adjustable height; (6) technique and musicality being worked through the repertoire, using the Variations on the Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star as a “laboratory” through which the main skills are developed; (7) step-by-step teaching, with the size and order of the steps based on the needs of each student; (8) stop-prepare<sup>2</sup> teaching strategy to work on challenging elements; (9) selection of a single point to be worked on at a time; (10) frequent review of the repertoire, using the pieces that were already mastered as a starting point for developing new skills; (11) graduation recitals as goals and milestones for student development; (12) repetition and memorization being valued; (13) positive approach using playful strategies that facilitate communication between teacher and students and make classes more fun and motivating; (14) collaborative work between teachers, parents and students in favor of children's global education (Landers, 1987).

The issue of musical reading is one of the aspects that has generated “the most frequent and most vehement criticism” of the Suzuki Method (Gerling, 1989, p. 52). When discussing about this topic, Ilari (2012, p. 205) says that the Method “postpones” music reading, purposefully highlightening the term using quotation marks, which causes us to reflect: does the Suzuki Method “postpone” the teaching of music reading or are traditional methods “hasty” by requiring students to master musical reading before developing basic skills on the instrument? We believe that this question can have different answers depending on the teacher's educational philosophy and their work context. However, considering that the Suzuki Method was based on the Mother Tongue learning approach and was designed for the instrumental initiation of children from 3 years old on, teaching reading after developing basic skills on the instrument should not be considered a “postponement”, but rather the natural path to musical learning.

Furthermore, for Ilari (2012, p. 205), part of the criticism is originated in a prejudice against teaching by rote and playing “by ear”, which is sometimes

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<sup>2</sup> This strategy has two components: the physical action of stopping and the mental preparation for what comes next. Musical performance must occur on time, but fragmented into small musical excerpts. As soon as the student masters the execution of each fragment, the pause (preparation time) between each fragment is removed (Bigler; Lloyd-Watts, 1998, p. 19).



considered as a “kind of sin, a pleasurable pastime” (Kendall *apud* Ilari, 2012, p. 205), being incompatible with the “noble and intellectual character” of the classical musician conferred by reading scores (Sloboda *apud* Ilari, 2012, p. 206). Maria Elena Pessoa, one of the interviewees in this research, reported having experienced this prejudice in the 1980s, a period in which she began to adopt the SPS:

At the [school] where I used to teach, the war was bad. Then, they thought that suddenly, they considered me like that, a person... I had a school gold medal, there were only 4 who had a school gold medal. Then suddenly I became stupid. They got to the point of saying: “What is she doing? Teaching by ear? Teaching by ear!” Then I heard about horrible criticisms that teachers were making because of the way I was teaching piano: by ear<sup>3</sup> (Pessoa, 2021).

This type of criticism suffered by Suzuki teachers appears to be one of the reasons why the SPS had little penetration in traditional Brazilian piano training centers. To overcome this issue, a strategy adopted by Brazilian Suzuki teachers to work on music reading has been the insertion of introductory reading activities from the initiation phase, mixing pedagogical materials available on the market with others they were creating themselves. Therefore, currently in Brazil, Suzuki teachers have adopted diverse complementary repertoires, including popular and contemporary music, with the aim of offering their students a comprehensive, contextualized and updated musical education.

After 75 years of its creation, the SPS continues to improve and expand. Its practices and repertoire have been shared by students and teachers from all continents. The method's ability to adapt to different contexts drives its continuity and renewal, engaging teachers, parents and students in a constant teaching-learning process.

In Brazil, the Suzuki Method has its foundation in a history that began 50 years ago, built by the work of several agents. According to Carlos Alberto Souza<sup>4</sup>, “today we have the Suzuki Method spread throughout the world. And in Brazil [it is] growing in such a fluent and strong way, with a crop of great teachers, well-organized, well-structured schools, [...] because [in the] past was well done and built a foundation for the present” (Souza, 2020).

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<sup>3</sup> Semi-structured interview carried out in April 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Interview given to the Tio Zequinha Music School's team, broadcast live on YouTube in September 2020. Recording available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrTYxxcTXUA>

In order to better understand the past and present of SPS in Brazil, the research entitled *Perspectivas sobre o ensino-aprendizagem do piano pelo Método Suzuki no Brasil* (Alvim, 2022)<sup>5</sup> was conducted in the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Música da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais<sup>6</sup>. This article presents an excerpt from this research and discusses the introduction and expansion of Talent Education in Brazil, pointing out its current status. For that, we used the following data: (1) information from the Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA) and teachers organizing SPS courses in Brazil; (2) information provided by Brazilian researchers, such as Saito (1997), Penna (1998), Luz (2004), Campos (2009), Vieira (2010), Ilari (2012), Pontes (2017) and Yoshimoto (2021); (3) information presented in *lives*<sup>7</sup>, in which prominent personalities from the history of the Suzuki Method in Brazil participated; (4) excerpts from semi-structured interviews carried out remotely, in the months of April and May 2021, with four Brazilian teachers who were pioneers in the application of SPS in Brazil: Maria Elena Withers Pessoa, Maria Ignês Scavone Mello Teixeira, Clises Marie Carvajal Mulatti and Rosa Maria Nagao.

The structure of this article is as it follows: the arrival and diffusion of Talent Education in Brazil, the first experiences of teaching piano using the Suzuki Method in Brazil, and the expansion of the Suzuki Piano School throughout the country.

## Arrival and diffusion of Talent Education in Brazil

The Talent Education movement arrived in Brazil in the 1970s, spreading from the cities of Santa Maria<sup>8</sup>, Porto Alegre<sup>9</sup> and Curitiba<sup>10</sup>. Unaware of each other's work, the Brazilian teachers who began the first experiences of teaching violin using the Suzuki Method began to gather in 1980. The earliest experience took place in Santa Maria, through the work of Sister Maria Wilfried (Stefanie Luise Maria Gassenmayer, 1921-1996), a nun of the Schoenstatt Order. Born in Austria, she

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<sup>5</sup> Perspectives on teaching-learning piano by the Suzuki Method in Brazil (Alvim, 2022).

<sup>6</sup> Postgraduate Program in Music at the Federal University of Minas Gerais.

<sup>7</sup> Driven by the social isolation required during the COVID-19 pandemic, institutions promoted virtual meetings, called *lives*, through platforms such as YouTube and Instagram, in which participants shared their knowledge and life stories. For this research, the *lives* promoted by the Tio Zequinha Music School, in the years 2020 and 2021, were reviewed, due to the importance of the interviewees for the history and diffusion of the Suzuki Method in Brazil.

<sup>8</sup> Santa Maria is a municipality in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in the southern region of Brazil.

<sup>9</sup> Porto Alegre is the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in the southern region of Brazil.

<sup>10</sup> Curitiba is the capital of the state of Paraná, in the southern region of Brazil.

arrived in Brazil in 1948, settling in Londrina<sup>11</sup>. In 1953, she became director of the Conservatório Musical do Colégio Mãe de Deus<sup>12</sup>, working to transform it into the Faculty of Music in 1965 (Campos, 2009, p. 177).

In 1973, Sister Wilfried moved to Santa Maria, where she worked as a violin teacher at the Universidade Federal de Santa Maria<sup>13</sup> (UFSM). That year, when attending a lecture by Cecília Conde, Sister Wilfred learned about the Suzuki Violin School. In search of more information, she obtained a copy of John Kendal's<sup>14</sup> book *Listen and Play*, an adaptation of Volume 1 of the Suzuki Violin School. Based on it and with the support of Professor Toshio Takeda, Wilfried contacted the Talent Education Institute. It was through this correspondence that copies of the first volumes of the Suzuki Violin School, tapes with recordings of the repertoire and the book *Nurtured by Love*, by Shin'ichi Suzuki, arrived in Brazil (Saito, 1997, p. 47).

In 1974, Sister Wilfried began experimenting the Method with six children between four and five years of age (Saito, 1997, p. 48), at the Jardim de Infância Girassol<sup>15</sup>, which was associated to the Order of Schoenstatt (Luz, 2004, p. 10-11). His project to teach violin using the Suzuki Method was part of the extension course at the Universidade Federal de Santa Maria and was later continued at the Centro Suzuki de Santa Maria<sup>16</sup>. According to Penna (1998, p. 36), this is considered the first effective experience of applying the Suzuki Method in Brazil.

In Curitiba, the first experience of applying the principles of Talent Education took place in 1976 thanks to Hildegard Soboll Martins, assistant conductor of the Youth Orchestra, which had been created in 1962. She recognized in the Suzuki Method a possibility of increasing the number of musicians in that orchestra, improving its musical performance level. His first contact with the Method occurred through the book *How to Teach Violin through the Suzuki Method*. In May 1976, she applied the Suzuki Violin School to a group of three children. The experience was

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<sup>11</sup> Londrina is a municipality located in the state of Paraná, in the Southern Region of Brazil.

<sup>12</sup> Musical Conservatory of the Mãe de Deus School.

<sup>13</sup> Federal University of Santa Maria.

<sup>14</sup> John D. Kendall (1917-2011), American violinist and teacher, recognized for his role in introducing the Suzuki Method in the United States in 1959. His work also contributed to the dissemination of the Method in other countries, including Brazil. Source: <https://suzukiassociation.org/news/suzuki-community-mourns-loss-leader-mentor-2/>

<sup>15</sup> Girassol Kindergarten.

<sup>16</sup> Santa Maria Suzuki Center.



successful and, in December of the same year, the group already had sixteen students. In early 1982, for two months, Hildegard participated in training with John Kendall in the United States. Among other materials, she brought to Brazil the first volumes of the Suzuki Piano School (SPS). Furthermore, through courses she promoted at the Universidade Federal do Paraná<sup>17</sup>, Hildegard helped to spread the Method in the southern region of the country (Saito, 1997, p. 50-52). According to Saito (1997, p. 54), “Hildegard Martins was responsible for raising teaching standards, promoting many training courses and adapting Brazilian folk songs to the Suzuki Method”.

At the end of the 1970s, without knowing the work being developed by Sister Wilfried and Hildegard Martins, two other violin teachers, José Carlos Lima and Carlos Alberto de Souza, began in Porto Alegre their first teaching experiences following the principles of Talent Education. Enchanted by what he had read in the book *Nurtured by Love* (Suzuki, 2012), José Carlos Lima translated some excerpts into Portuguese, sharing them with Carlos Alberto Souza. Together, they studied pieces from the Suzuki repertoire and decided to try it out with children at a nursery school. This experience culminated in the creation of the Escola de Música Tio Zequinha<sup>18</sup> in 1983, which became the first music school specialized in the Suzuki Method in Brazil<sup>19</sup>.

At the end of the 1970s, Sister Wilfried met Shinobu Saito, a violin teacher from Campinas<sup>20</sup> who had been a Suzuki student in Japan, working as a private traditional violin teacher. Wilfried convinced her to join the Talent Education Movement, teaching the Suzuki Method and participating in events held in southern Brazil (Pontes, 2017, p. 45). From that moment on, the Talent Education Movement gained an important ally who, a few years later, became the first Suzuki Method teacher trainer<sup>21</sup> in Brazil.

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<sup>17</sup> Federal University of Paraná.

<sup>18</sup> Tio Zequinha Music School.

<sup>19</sup> Source: interview given to the Tio Zequinha Music School’s team, broadcast live on YouTube in September 2020. Recording available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrTYxxcTXUA>

<sup>20</sup> Campinas is a municipality in the interior of São Paulo, Southeast Region of Brazil.

<sup>21</sup> Teacher trainer is one who has authorization from the Suzuki Association of the Americas to work in the training of Suzuki Method teachers, in any country in the Americas.

The 1980s were decisive for the establishment and expansion of Talent Education in Brazil, marked by the arrival of foreign Suzuki teachers, the organization of events that brought together hundreds of enthusiastic students and teachers of the Suzuki Violin School and the participation of Brazilian teachers in training courses and events in the United States and Japan. In July 1980, Sister Wilfried went to Matsumoto, home city of the Talent Education Institute in Japan, where she expanded her knowledge of the Method in classes taught by Suzuki and other teachers, having also participated in the Summer Festival. In December of that year, she invited John Kendall to teach the first Suzuki Method course in Santa Maria. Among the course participants were the teachers: Hildegard Sobol Martins and Edna Savytzki, from Curitiba; Regina Grossi Campos, from Londrina; Carlos Alberto Angioletti Vieira, from Florianópolis<sup>22</sup>; José Carlos Lima and Carlos Alberto Souza, from Porto Alegre; Marcos Antonio Penna, from Santa Maria; Lígia Froehner and Consuelo Froehner, from São Bento do Sul<sup>23</sup>; Leni Carlos Gomes and Shinobu Saito, from Campinas. The event also brought together around one hundred Brazilian students (Saito, 1997, p. 49; Vieira, 2010). Due to this course, the Suzuki Violin School was taken to other Brazilian cities.

In 1993, Sister Wilfried retired from UFSM, but her work continued with the arrival of Efraim Flores in Brazil, an American teacher born in Mexico, who was recognized as a Suzuki Method teacher trainer in Japan in 1981. Recommended by Waltraud Suzuki, Suzuki's wife, and with financial support from the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico<sup>24</sup> (CNPQ), Flores settled in Santa Maria between 1983 and 1985 (Saito, 1997, p. 57). Carlos Alberto Souza reports that Flores provided Brazilian teachers with access to Talent Education materials and practices:

The big important point in terms of training was when we found out that Sister Wilfried had managed with the International Suzuki Association to bring a teacher trainer called Efraim Flores to Santa Maria. [...] Every Tuesday, Zeca [José Carlos Lima] and me went to Santa Maria to have classes with him. [...] So we learned what it was like to teach Suzuki, because until that moment it was all inspiration, everything in the imagination, from the book we read by Suzuki and

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<sup>22</sup> Florianópolis is the capital of the state of Santa Catarina, Southern Brazil.

<sup>23</sup> São Bento do Sul is a Brazilian municipality located in the state of Santa Catarina.

<sup>24</sup> National Council for Scientific and Technological Development.

from the copy of volume 1 and the cassette tape we had (Souza, 2020).

In 1986, the V Encontro Nacional do Método Suzuki<sup>25</sup> was held in Porto Alegre, an event that had courses taught by six North American teachers: Alfred Garson (violin); Hiroko Primorose (violin); Jacqueline Corina (violin); Larry Corina (violin); Efrain Flores (violin) and Beverly Graham (piano). At this meeting, the first introductory course on the Suzuki Piano School in Brazil was given (Saito, 1997, p. 87). In 1988, during the II Encontro Nacional de Professores Suzuki<sup>26</sup> held in Curitiba, the Associação Brasileira de Professores Suzuki<sup>27</sup> (ABRAPS) was founded to support the work of Suzuki teachers. At that time, it already included representatives from different regions of Brazil (Saito, 1997, p. 73-74). ABRAPS played an important role in organizing the Talent Education Movement in Brazil, in the integration between Brazilian teachers, and in the communication with international Suzuki associations (Saito, 1997, p. 78). As president of ABRAPS, the teachers José Carlos Lima (1986-1988), Shinobu Saito (1988-1992), Simone Savytzki (1992-1996) and Alberto Feuerharmel (from 1996) served.

According to Maria Ignês Scavonne Mello Teixeira<sup>28</sup>, during the II Encontro Nacional de Professores Suzuki, the organization of a trip to Matsumoto began, taking around 40 Brazilian teachers, parents and students to participate in the 9th World Conference of the Suzuki Method (July 1989). In this remarkable experience, the Brazilian participants had the opportunity to get to know Shin'ichi Suzuki and the global Talent Education movement. According to Carlos Alberto Souza, during the trip, they went through some financial difficulties and, upon learning about this, Suzuki showed what he had at his best: his human side, providing food that was sent to them which guaranteed their livelihood until the end of their stay in Matsumoto. In return, the Brazilians invited Suzuki and his wife for tea, a meeting that became a moment remembered fondly by the trip's participants. Figure 1

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<sup>25</sup> V National Meeting of the Suzuki Method.

<sup>26</sup> II National Meeting of Suzuki Teachers.

<sup>27</sup> Brazilian Association of Suzuki Teachers.

<sup>28</sup> Semi-structured interview carried out in May 2021.

records the moment when José Carlos Lima presents Suzuki with a gourd of chimarrão<sup>29</sup>.



**Figure 1** – Waltraud Suzuki, José Carlos Lima and Shin'ichi Suzuki in Matsumoto-Japan, 1989. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38aHyeaOZso>

Throughout the 1990s, Suzuki events were held annually in Brazil until 2003, the year in which ABRAPS lost strength and disbanded, generating a significant reduction in the number of courses and events held in the country. In 2007, Shinobu Saito was appointed by SAA as the first Brazilian Suzuki teacher trainer. A new phase of expansion of Talent Education in Brazil was then established, due to the unprecedented possibility of offering training courses in the country without depending on foreign teachers. Furthermore, this appointment provided better communication between Brazil and international associations (Pereira *apud* Yoshimoto, 2021, p. 29).

At the end of the first decade of 2000, the Retiro de Primavera Suzuki<sup>30</sup> was promoted periodically in the state of São Paulo, which culminated, in 2010, in the holding of the I Semana de Capacitação de Professores Suzuki<sup>31</sup> and the creation of the Associação Musical Suzuki de São Paulo<sup>32</sup> (AMS.SP). Initially composed of Shinobu Saito, Fábio dos Santos, Marcos Osaki and Renata Pereira, AMS.SP aimed to

<sup>29</sup> A very famous type of tea in southern Brazil.

<sup>30</sup> Suzuki Spring Retreat.

<sup>31</sup> 1st Suzuki Teacher Training Week.

<sup>32</sup> Suzuki Musical Association of São Paulo.

“supply the legal, administrative and logistical needs to support teachers and parents who seek knowledge about Suzuki Philosophy and Methodology”<sup>33</sup>.

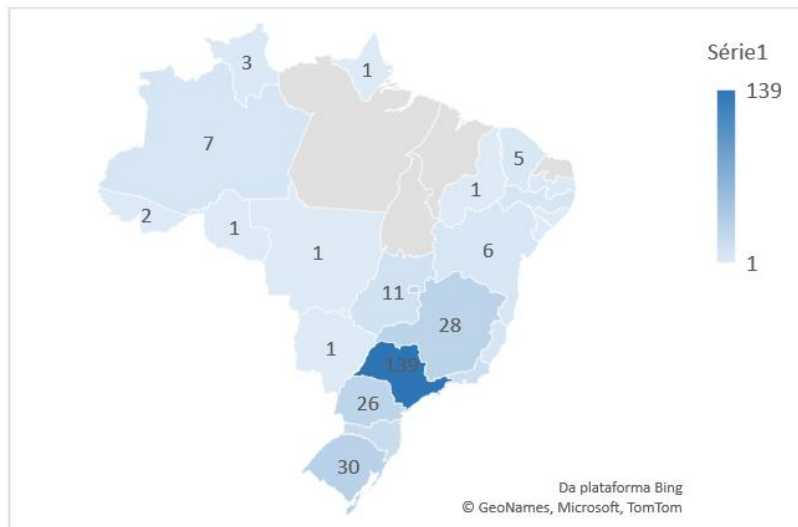
In 2014, Renata Pereira became the second teacher trainer in Brazil, which further boosted the realization of Suzuki courses and the diffusion of the Method in the country. In 2016, AMS.SP assumed national prominence and became the Associação Musical Suzuki do Brasil<sup>34</sup> (AMSBrasil), which currently represents Brazilians with the Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA). Nowadays, these two associations are responsible for regulating Suzuki training courses in Brazil. In 2019, Fábio dos Santos became the third Brazilian appointed by SAA as a Suzuki Method teacher trainer.

According to Ilari (2012, p. 192), today “it is practically impossible to calculate the exact number of [Suzuki] students and teachers spread across Brazil”, as not all teachers who work with the Suzuki Method in the country are associated with AMSBrasil or SAA. However, based on SAA data, it is currently possible to recognize the reach of the Suzuki Method in Brazil. In June 2021, Brazil had at least 343 teachers with training recognized by the SAA. Figure 2 shows the distribution of these teachers in Brazilian territory and indicates the occurrence of Suzuki teachers across all Brazilian regions. The highest incidence, observed in the Southeast and South regions, is a reflection of the way in which the Suzuki Method arrived in Brazil, since these regions used to concentrate the majority of teacher training courses carried out. In the specific case of piano teachers who work with the Suzuki Method in Brazil, the situation is similar. This is what we will see in the following section of this article.

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<sup>33</sup> Source: <https://www.associacaomusicalsuzuki.com.br/metodologia-suzuki/o-metodo-suzuki-no-brasil/>

<sup>34</sup> Suzuki Musical Association of Brazil.



**Figure 2** – Distribution of Suzuki teachers in Brazil. Source: prepared by the author in June 2021 based on data extracted from SAA's Membership Directory magazines for the years 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2020 and data available on the website <https://suzukiassociation.org/about/stats/>

## First experiences of teaching piano using the Suzuki Method in Brazil

The first experiences of teaching piano using the Suzuki Method in Brazil took place thanks to Maria Elena Withers Pessoa in Curitiba, in the early 1980s, after discovering the Suzuki Method in 1975. Her daughter started take violin lessons with teacher Edna Savytzky, assistant to Hildegard Soboll Martins, one of the pioneers of the Suzuki Method in the city. Maria Elena reported that her enchantment with the Method began at that moment: “and then I started attending classes, I always attended all the classes and I became enchanted with it” (Pessoa, 2021).

At that time, there were still no courses in Brazil that specifically addressed piano teaching using the Suzuki Method. Therefore, Maria Elena participated in violin courses taught by teachers John Kendall and Takeshi Kobayashi. She justifies her participation in these courses:

[...] John Kendall, who is from the United States, was the violin teacher, but I took the course to get an idea of how we worked, how it worked. And then Kobayashi, from Japan. He was also a violin teacher, that's all. Because we didn't have a piano teacher trainer (Pessoa, 2021).

In 1982, Maria Elena had access to the first volume of the SPS through teacher Hildegard Soboll Martins: “Hildegard went to the United States and brought back the first volume of the Suzuki Piano Method and asked me: do you want to try it?” (Pessoa, 2021). So, she did it with her students, adapting to the piano, for the first time, practices originally applied in teaching the violin. Because the experiment

was successful, attracting a large number of students, she opened a music school in Curitiba, which later became known as the Escola de Música Suzuki<sup>35</sup>. Maria Elena reports:

From then on, I couldn't handle it anymore because I had so many students, and it was at my house, and I had to get two more teachers that I taught to help me. [...] Then we rented a house and the school started to be a Suzuki music school (Pessoa, 2021).

From 1986 onwards, introductory courses on the SPS began to be offered in Brazil. The first of them was held during the V Encontro Nacional da Educação do Talento-Método Suzuki<sup>36</sup>, which took place in Porto Alegre in July 1986, with the North American teacher Beverly Graham. In October 1990, sponsored by the International Suzuki Association (ISA), Japanese professor Naomi Picotte came to Brazil, giving training courses during the Encontro Nacional do Método Suzuki<sup>37</sup>, in Santa Maria. In July 1993, at the invitation of the Associação Musical do Método Suzuki<sup>38</sup> (AMMS), Australian teacher Nehama Patkin taught a SPS course in Curitiba. In 1996, she returned to Brazil, teaching a course during the VII Encontro Nacional do Método Suzuki<sup>39</sup> in Florianópolis (Saito, 1997, p. 87-92).

During these courses, due to the experience acquired in teaching piano through the Suzuki Method, Maria Elena was invited to act as a collaborating teacher. With the aforementioned teachers coming to Brazil, she found that their application of the Method in teaching piano was in line with what was taught in the courses. Maria Elena reported that a teacher who worked with her managed to participate in the courses and "got everything, everything that was happening"; then she would tell her enthusiastically: "everything we are doing, she is teaching! We are doing everything right!" (Pessoa, 2021)

In 2022, at the age of 80, Maria Elena continued to teach piano using the Suzuki Method, having even adapted to the remote teaching system during the social isolation required by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to being a pioneer in the application of the SPS in Brazil, she is today the teacher with the longest

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<sup>35</sup> Suzuki Music School.

<sup>36</sup> 5th National Talent Education- Suzuki Method Meeting.

<sup>37</sup> National Meeting of the Suzuki Method.

<sup>38</sup> Suzuki Method Musical Association.

<sup>39</sup> VII National Meeting of the Suzuki Method.

experience using the Method. Throughout her life, she has contributed to the spread of SPS in Brazil, sharing her knowledge and experience in courses taught to many teachers and training several students who pursued a musical career.

Maria Ignês Scavonne Mello Teixeira had access to the work of Maria Elena Withers Pessoa at the end of the 1980s, with whom she obtained copies of the book *Nurtured by Love* (Suzuki, 2012) and of the first volumes of SPS. Maria Ignês reported her initial enchantment with the Method:

I desperately sought out the Suzuki Method. Then, what happened, I came into contact with this book, [...] “Nurtured by Love” [...]. This book made me very amazed. I said, it really was something I was unconsciously looking for and I found it. [...] because I always really liked playing by ear and my teacher told my parents: “she plays by ear, don’t let her!” So, in addition to the whole meaning of the book, the philosophical part, the figure of Suzuki, you know, this thing about teaching through love, I was also enchanted by the issue of the ear, right? And that’s how I started (Teixeira, 2021)<sup>40</sup>.



**Figure 3** – Shin’ichi Suzuki and Maria Ignês Teixeira in Matsumoto/Japan, 1989. Source: personal collection of Maria Ignês Scavone Mello Teixeira.

Maria Ignês was one of the teachers in the group of Brazilians who, in 1989, visited Matsumoto and met Shin’ichi Suzuki (Figure 3) and reported the impact of this experience on her life and professional trajectory:

In 1989, I went to Japan. I think Suzuki was already 89 years old, right? Meeting Suzuki was a total turning point in my life, because it was so incredible. He welcomed us, served us chocolate, played with us. [...] And there I also met Doris Koppelman, who was a great piano teacher [and] Haruko Katoka. [...] So that was my beginning. At that time, it was K7 tape. And the teachers in Brazil who used the Suzuki Method still didn’t have it from the fifth volume onwards. So, I brought volumes 5, 6 and 7 of the Suzuki [Piano School] here (Teixeira, 2021).

<sup>40</sup> Semi-structured interview carried out in May 2021.





Soon after this trip, Maria Ignês applied the Suzuki Method to her piano students in Curitiba, continuing her training in courses with Jeanne Luedke in the United States in 1992, becoming the first Brazilian teacher to participate in SPS training courses abroad. During this period, she began to prepare the arrangements that would be part of her book *Estrelinhas Brasileiras*, volume 1 (Teixeira, 2016)<sup>41</sup>. After the launch of the book in 1998, she traveled to several Brazilian states teaching courses, in which she presented her book, sharing with other teachers her experience in teaching piano using the Suzuki Method. In 1999, she returned to Matsumoto, releasing her book and participating in the 19th World Suzuki Method Conference. Her professional work largely contributed to the spread of the Method in Brazil. Until 2022, Maria Ignês continued teaching piano using the Suzuki Method in Curitiba.

Clises Marie Carvajal Mulatti from São Paulo<sup>42</sup> was in the group of teachers who contributed to the dissemination of the SPS in Brazil, having discovered the Method in the 1990s, through her former teacher, Maria da Graça Cruz Dias e Pereira. She attended the introductory course on the Suzuki Recorder Method, taught by Kátia Silveira at the Conservatório do Brooklin Paulista<sup>43</sup>, in the mid-1990s. Clises Marie reported having been “in love” with the Method, as it offered a “very good” path to teaching music to children (Mulatti, 2021)<sup>44</sup>. Her role as a Suzuki teacher began in 1999, at Tom sobre Tom – Escola de Música e Núcleo Cultural<sup>45</sup>, an institution located in São Paulo, where she has been working as director and teacher since 1997.

To learn more about the Method, Clises Marie traveled to the south of Brazil, where the Talent Education Movement had arrived a few years before, and then to the United States, for three consecutive years, until completing the Certificate in

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<sup>41</sup> The book *Estrelinhas Brasileiras – Volume 1* “is an adaptation of the Suzuki Method for Piano for Brazilian Folk Songs, using whenever possible the same harmony and character found in the original Suzuki Method” (Teixeira, 2014, p. 13). In total, the book contains 19 pieces, each of which corresponds to one of the SPS pieces. In addition to the sheet music, the book presents the lyrics of the songs and a brief text about them.

<sup>42</sup> Capital of the state of São Paulo, located in the Southeast Region of the Brazil.

<sup>43</sup> Brooklin Paulista Conservatory.

<sup>44</sup> Semi-structured interview carried out in May 2021.

<sup>45</sup> Tom sobre Tom – School of Music and Cultural Center.

Piano Pedagogy with Suzuki Emphasis at *Holy Names College*. This training, regulated by the SAA, corresponds to training at all levels in the SPS.

During her travels to southern Brazil, Clises Marie met teacher Maria Ignês Scavone Mello Teixeira. Together, they promoted the I Encontro de Piano do Método Suzuki<sup>46</sup> in São Paulo, in 2000. This event was attended by teacher trainer Caroline Fraser (Scotland; USA) and 53 teachers from 13 cities in different Brazilian regions. In addition to piano teachers, there were violin, cello, viola, guitar as well as recorder teachers (Mulatti *apud* Fraser, 2001). At this meeting, Piano Foundation 1A, an introduction course to the Suzuki Method, was offered. The event marked the beginning of offering SPS training courses in Brazil in the format regulated by the Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA), boosting the training of other Brazilian teachers.

## The expansion of the Suzuki Piano School throughout the country

From the year 2000 on, Brazilian teachers started going to Peru<sup>47</sup> to train in the Suzuki Method. This was the case of Rosa Maria Nagao, who has been working as a teacher at the Escola de Música do Colégio Mãe de Deus since 1995, the school where Sister Wilfried had worked before moving to Santa Maria. However, until that moment, the Method was not applied there. In 2000, encouraged by the school coordinator, Rosa Maria and some teachers traveled to São Paulo to participate in the I Encontro de Piano do Método Suzuki, promoted by Clises Marie Carvajal Mulatti and Maria Ignês Scavone Mello Teixeira.

Rosa Maria reported her enchantment with the course offered by teacher Caroline Fraser, from which she decided to train in the Method: “wow, it was a really cool deal! [...] Then I said: ‘wow, I loved this! I want to do it!’ Then I went to Peru. I went to do [the Suzuki Piano course - Unit 1] (Nagao, 2021)”<sup>48</sup>. In addition to her, according to data<sup>49</sup> from the SAA, at least 11 other Brazilian teachers have

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<sup>46</sup> 1st Suzuki Method Piano Meeting.

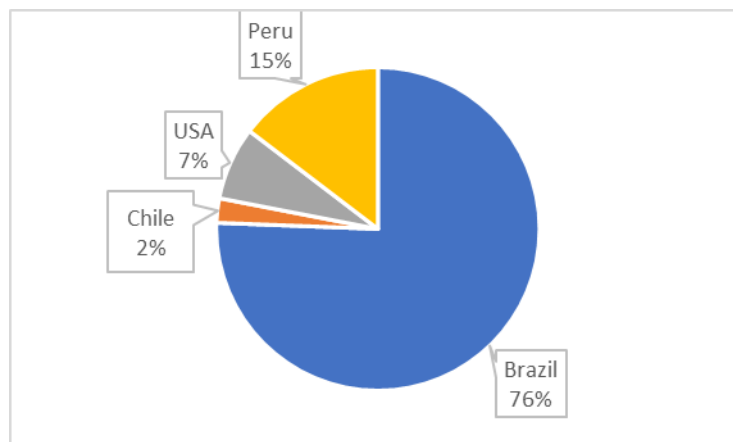
<sup>47</sup> The Suzuki International Music Festival of Peru has been held annually in Lima/Peru since 1985. It offers training courses for teachers, masterclasses, workshops for Suzuki students and recitals. From 1999 onwards, the festival began to receive foreign teachers and, since then, several Brazilians have participated in what is now the largest Suzuki festival in Latin America. Source: <https://www.asociacionsuzukidelperu.org/w/nosotros/historia/>

<sup>48</sup> Semi-structured interview carried out in May 2021.

<sup>49</sup> Data obtained by email on June 23, 2021.

participated in SPS training courses in Peru. According to the SAA, and according to course organizers in Brazil, in 2021 there were 110 Brazilian or foreign teachers residing in Brazil, who have completed at least the first stage of training in the SPS, that is, the Piano Unit 1 or the Piano Foundation IB<sup>50</sup> courses.

As there are still no Brazilian teacher trainers<sup>51</sup> from the SPS, they depend on foreign trainers, either through these teachers coming to Brazil or Brazilians going to other countries. Graph 1 shows the countries where teachers completed the first stage of training (Piano Unit 1 or Piano Foundation IB) by January 2020. It indicates that in Brazil, Peru, the United States and Chile, there were trained 82 Brazilian teachers who completed at least the first stage of SPS training before January 2020, when only face-to-face courses could be offered. Seventy-six percent of these teachers have done their training in Brazil thanks to the bigger offer of courses in the country as of 2013. This reality was very different 10 years ago, as the offer of courses in Brazil was rare.



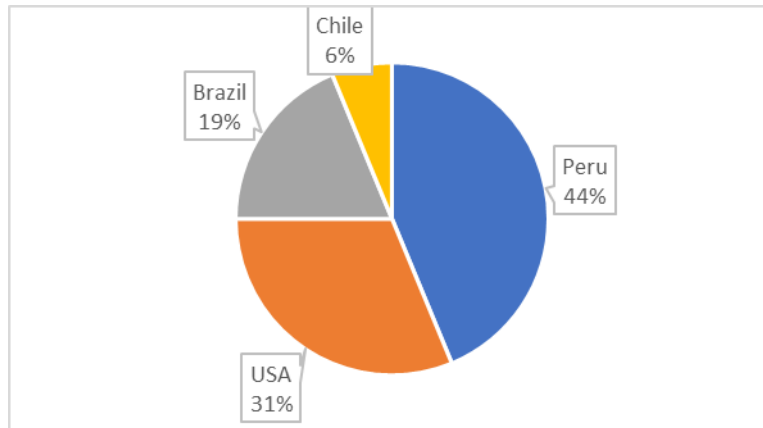
**Graph 1** – Countries where Brazilian teachers completed the first stage of training (Piano Unit 1 or Piano Foundation IB) by January 2020. Source: prepared by the author based on SAA data.

Graph 2 shows the countries where Brazilian and foreign teachers residing in Brazil completed the first stage of training (Piano Unit 1 or Piano Foundation IB)

<sup>50</sup> Until 2003, the training program for piano teachers established by SAA initially consisted of participation in the Piano Foundation IA and Piano Foundation IB courses. Subsequently, these courses were reformulated and the Piano Foundation IA course was replaced by Every Child Can! (offered in North America) or Suzuki Philosophy (offered in South America) courses, and the Piano Foundation IB course was renamed Piano Unit 1.

<sup>51</sup> As presented in the first section of this article, Brazil currently has a total of three teachers trainers licensed by SAA, two of them on violin (Shinobu Saito and Fábio Santos) and one on recorder (Renata Pereira). These teachers are qualified to teach the Suzuki Philosophy course and courses on their instruments in any countries associated to the SAA, but are not qualified to offer specific courses on the SPS.

before 2012. It also shows that, among the 16 Brazilian teachers who completed the first stage of training by 2011, 44% of them did so within the Suzuki International Music Festival of Peru. Therefore, the importance of this festival in training Brazilian Suzuki Piano teachers is confirmed.



**Graph 2** – Countries where Brazilian and foreign teachers residing in Brazil completed the first stage of training until 2011. Source: prepared by the author based on SAA data.

In 2002, at the 22<sup>o</sup> Festival de Música de Londrina<sup>52</sup>, the first SPS course, following the format regulated by the SAA, was taught in Brazil by North American teacher trainer Carol Cross. According to SAA data, no SPS training courses were held in Brazil between 2003 and 2012. This hiatus coincides with the period in which there was no Brazilian association that organized and promoted the Talent Education Movement.

Table 1 presents the list of Suzuki Piano teacher training courses promoted in Brazil until the end of 2021. In this table, only courses from the basic training route (Piano Unit 1 to 7) were included, excluding, therefore, enrichment courses<sup>53</sup>.

No.	Date	Course	Place	Trainer	Institution
1	July 8th to 12th, 2002	Unit 2	Londrina-PR	Carol Cross	22 <sup>o</sup> Festival de Música de Londrina
2	July 15th to 19th, 2002	Foundation IB	Londrina-PR	Carol Cross	22 <sup>o</sup> Festival de Música de Londrina
3	October 25th to 31st, 2013	Unit 1	Campinas-SP	Caroline Fraser	Centro Suzuki de Campinas
4	October 6th to	Unit 2	Campinas-SP	Caroline Fraser	Centro Suzuki de

<sup>52</sup> 22nd Londrina Music Festival.

<sup>53</sup> Enrichment courses includes any continuing education class/lecture of at least 10 hours, based on material relevant to or specifically designed for Suzuki teachers. Available at: <https://suzukiassociation.org/teachers/training/teacher-development-program-document/>

	10th, 2014				Campinas
5	October 10th to 17th, 2014	Unit 1	Campinas-SP	Caroline Fraser	Centro Suzuki de Campinas
6	July 12th to 17th, 2016	Unit 1	São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Flor Canelo	Klavier - Centro Suzuki de SBC
7	January 29th to February 3rd, 2017	Unit 1	São Paulo-SP	Flor Canelo	Projeto Cordas & Cia-SP
8	July 10th to 17th, 2017	Unit 1	São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Flor Canelo	Klavier - Centro Suzuki de SBC
9	July 10th to 17th, 2017	Unit 2	São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Flor Canelo	Klavier - Centro Suzuki de SBC
10	February 10th to 14th, 2018	Unit 2	São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Flor Canelo	Klavier - Centro Suzuki de SBC
11	February 10th to 14th, 2018	Unit 3	São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Flor Canelo	Klavier - Centro Suzuki de SBC
12	September 26th to October 1st, 2018	Unit 1	São José dos Campos-SP	Caroline Fraser	Centro Suzuki São José dos Campos
13	March 2nd to 7th, 2019	Unit 1	São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Flor Canelo	Klavier - Centro Suzuki de SBC
14	July 13th to 18th, 2019	Unit 2	São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Flor Canelo	Klavier - Centro Suzuki de SBC
15	July 13th to 18th, 2019	Unit 4	São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Flor Canelo	Klavier - Centro Suzuki de SBC
16	January 23th to 27th, 2020	Unit 3	São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Flor Canelo	Klavier - Centro Suzuki de SBC
17	January 4th to 10th, 2021	Unit 1	Online/Belo Horizonte-MG	Blancamaría Montecinos	Ecos Centro Musical
18	January 23th to 28th, 2021	Unit 2	Online/São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Flor Canelo	Klavier - Centro Suzuki de SBC
19	January 31th to February 5th, 2021	Unit 1	Online/Ivoti-RS	Flor Canelo	Associação Pró-Cultura e Arte Ivoti
20	October 1st to 17th, 2021	Unit 1	Online/São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Blancamaría Montecinos	Klavier - Centro Suzuki de SBC
21	November 5th to 14th, 2021	Unit 4	Online/São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Flor Canelo	Klavier - Centro Suzuki de SBC

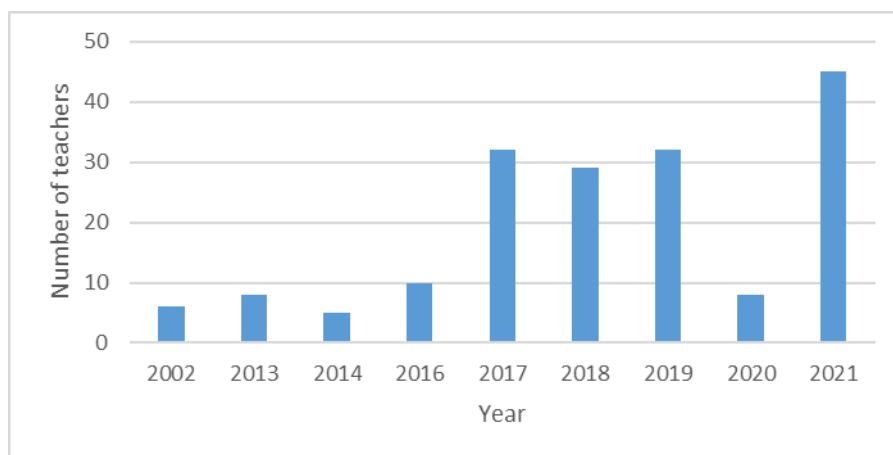
**Table 1** – SPS courses promoted in Brazil until December 2021. Source: prepared by the author.

Table 1 indicates that, in addition to Carol Cross (USA), Caroline Fraser (Scotland; USA); Flor Canelo (Peru) and Blancamaría Montecinos (Chile) also taught courses in Brazil. Peruvian teacher Flor Canelo stands out for having trained the largest number of Brazilian piano teachers, due to her recurring visit to Brazil since 2016. Most of the courses took place thanks to the initiative and organizational work



of teacher Helenice Villar Rosa, director of Klavier Educação Musical-Centro Suzuki de São Bernardo do Campo<sup>54</sup>. Flor Canelo and Brazilian teacher Helenice Villar are, therefore, mainly responsible for the great expansion of the SPS in Brazil from 2016 onwards.

The greater offer of SPS courses in Brazil, especially since 2016, has increased the number of Suzuki piano teachers in recent years. Graph 3 shows the number of teachers who participated in courses in Brazil from 2002 to 2021. It indicates that, in 2017, the number of teachers participating in training courses in Brazil tripled compared to the number in 2016. Furthermore, it notes there was a large drop in the number of teachers trained in 2020, compared to the previous three years. This is a reflection of the COVID-19 pandemic, which made it impossible to hold in-person courses and events in Brazil.



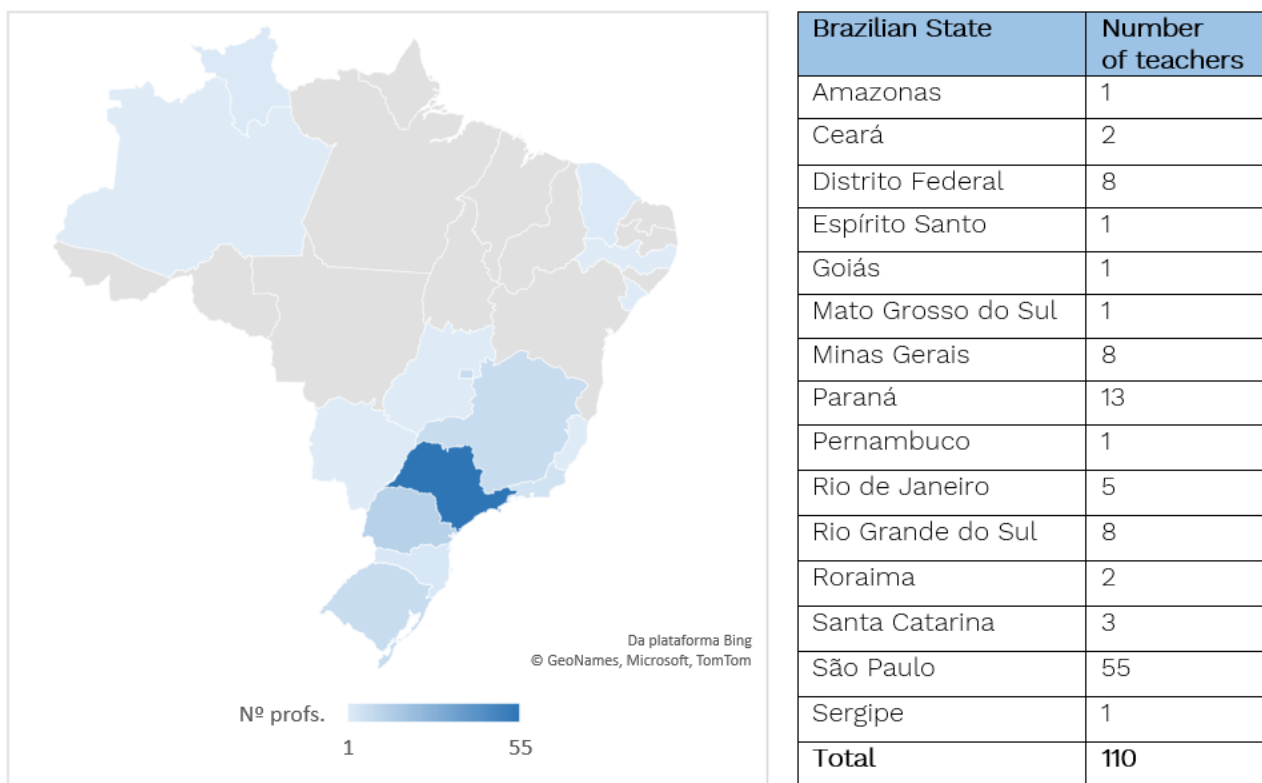
**Graph 3** – Number of teachers who participated in SPS courses in Brazil from 2002 to 2021. Source: prepared by the author.

The significant number of teachers who participated in training courses in 2021 was probably due to a bigger access to the courses due to remote format offerings and the postponement of face-to-face courses scheduled for 2020. Teachers from all Brazilian regions were able to train due to this new course format.

Figure 4 shows the current distribution of Suzuki piano teachers in Brazil, considering data collected until December 2021. From these data, we found that the majority of trained teachers are located in the Southeast and South regions of Brazil. São Paulo is the state with the highest number of trained teachers (50%),

<sup>54</sup> Klavier Musical Education-Suzuki Center of São Bernardo do Campo.

followed by Paraná (11.82%). As explained previously, this is a reflection of the course offerings concentrated in the state of São Paulo in recent years and the way in which the Suzuki Method arrived in Brazil, first in the South region. The North and Northeast regions are those with the lowest number of trained teachers, probably due to the difficulty of access that the distance brings. With the recent increasing offer of courses in remote format, it is believed that access difficulties for teachers from outside the South-Southeast axis will be alleviated.



**Figure 4** – Distribution of Suzuki piano teachers in Brazilian territory. Source: prepared by the author.

In addition to the impact on the modality (in-person or online) and the intensity of training course offerings, the pandemic boosted the creation of new types of SPS events in Brazil and greater remote interaction between teachers. The Encontro Nacional de Alunos Suzuki de Piano<sup>55</sup> had been taking place in person since 2017 and had its first online edition in 2021. Furthermore, during the pandemic, online recitals and the Desafio Brasileiro de Piano Suzuki: 21 dias de prática<sup>56</sup> were held. Table 2 presents information about these events.

<sup>55</sup> National Meeting of Suzuki Piano Students.

<sup>56</sup> Brazilian Suzuki Piano Challenge: 21 Days of Practice. Created by teacher Helenice Villar, the event was inspired by Practicatón, organized by the Mexican Association of the Suzuki Method, in 2020.

No.	Date	Event	Place	Number of participants
1	May 27th to 28th, 2017	1st National Meeting of Suzuki Piano Students	São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Students-13 Teachers-4
2	April 14th to 15th, 2018	2nd National Meeting of Suzuki Piano Students	São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Students-19 Teachers-7
3	May 18th to 19th, 2019	3rd National Meeting of Suzuki Piano Students	São Bernardo do Campo-SP	Students-25 Teachers-13
4	May 10th, 2020	1st National Recital of Suzuki Piano Students	online <sup>57</sup>	Students-124 Teachers-13
5	November 21th, 2020	1st National Recital of Suzuki Piano Teachers	online <sup>58</sup>	Teachers-21
6	May 5th, 2020	2nd National Recital of Suzuki Piano Students	online <sup>59</sup>	Students-73 Teachers-18
7	March 8th to April 25th, 2021	Brazilian Suzuki Piano Challenge – 21 days of practice	online <sup>60</sup>	Students-179 Teachers-29
8	September 4th to 6th, 2021	4th National Meeting of Suzuki Piano Students	online <sup>61</sup>	Students-44 Teachers-15

**Table 2** – Suzuki Piano School events promoted in Brazil until December 2021. Source: prepared by the author.

Since its conception, a striking feature of SPS which has been observed in Brazil is the collaborative work between teachers, especially since 2016. Another feature of the Method, which has been perpetuated in Brazil, is the encouragement of student participation in public presentations from the early stages of musical development, as a strategy for motivation and engagement in musical practice. As shown in Table 2, the events that took place between 2017 and 2021 brought together Suzuki teachers and students from all regions of Brazil. Considering the number of participants in each event, it appears that the Brazilian Suzuki Piano Community is growing.

Regarding the maximum level of training obtained by Brazilian teachers until 2021, only two teachers completed the entire SPS training program, from Volume 1 to Volume 7. Graph 4 shows the levels of training achieved by Brazilian Suzuki piano teachers. From this graph, we can see that 60% of teachers completed only the first stage of training (Piano Unit 1/Foundation IB).

“The challenge consisted of daily activities with the aim of motivating a piano practice routine”. Source: <https://suzukiassociation.org/news/news-from-latin-american-country-association/?lang=pt>

<sup>57</sup> Recording available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDwo\\_0ezCck](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDwo_0ezCck)

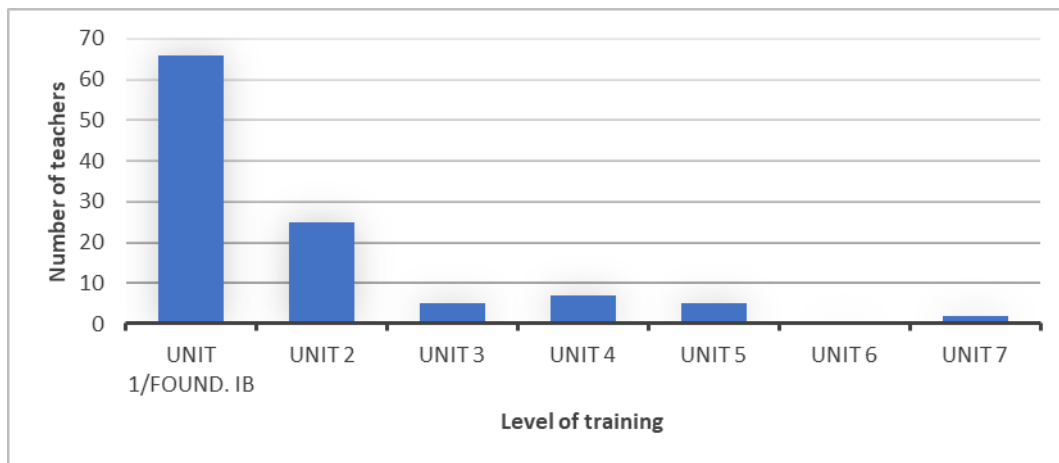
<sup>58</sup> Recording available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhjfhgrYxgg>

<sup>59</sup> Recording available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzMs25Sq5WE>

<sup>60</sup> Recording of the closing recital available at: <https://youtu.be/MG8LU20Zxrc>

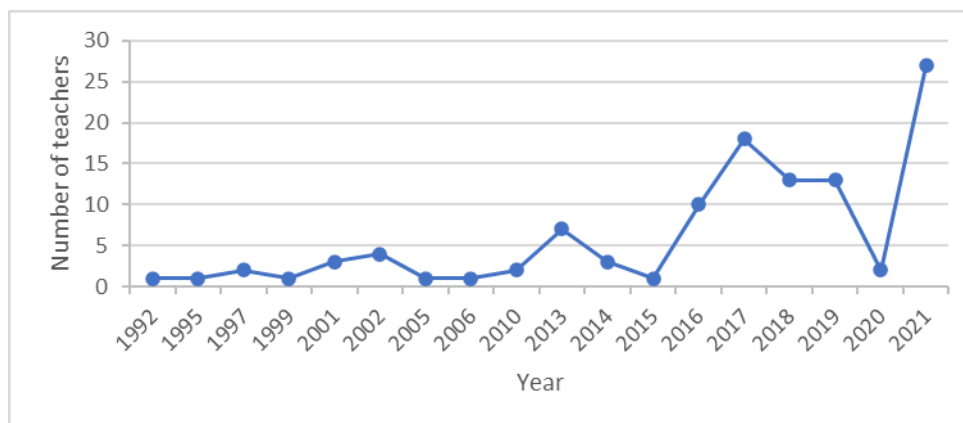
<sup>61</sup> Recording of the closing recital available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaOXdd1tecE>





**Graph 4** – Maximum level of training achieved by Brazilian Suzuki piano teachers by December 2021. Source: prepared by the authors.

Graph 5 shows that most of this training occurred after 2016, 2021 being the apex. This significant growth demonstrates that SPS has attracted, in recent years, an increasing number of Brazilian teachers.



**Graph 5** – Number of Brazilian teachers who participated in the Piano Unit 1 or Piano Foundation IB courses until 2021. Source: prepared by the authors.

## Conclusion

This article has presented an excerpt from the doctoral research entitled *Perspectivas sobre o ensino-aprendizagem do piano pelo Método Suzuki no Brasil* (Alvim, 2022), focusing on the introduction and expansion of the Suzuki Piano School in Brazil since the first experiences of teachers with the Method, offering an overview of the current distribution of qualified Brazilian Suzuki teachers.

Through the interviews and the literature review undertaken for the research, it was found that the Suzuki Piano School arrived in Brazil 40 years ago. The first experiences of applying SPS in Brazil began in 1982 through the work of teacher



Maria Elena Withers Pessoa. She, and teacher Maria Ignês Scavone Mello Teixeira, were mainly responsible for the first phase of expansion of SPS in Brazil. In a second phase of expansion, the importance of the Suzuki International Festival of Peru for training Brazilian teachers was verified, especially when the offer of courses was rare in the country. The third and most recent phase of expansion of SPS in Brazil has been occurring since 2016, as a result of the recurring arrival of Peruvian training teacher Flor Canelo to offer training courses organized by teacher Helenice Villar Rosa in São Bernardo do Campo-São Paulo.

The research data has indicated that the Brazilian Suzuki Piano Community is growing. However, there is still a lot of room for expansion of SPS in Brazil, as most Brazilian teachers that were trained in the Method are concentrated in the South and Southeast regions, having only completed the first stage of training. It was also observed that, in Brazil, peculiar characteristics of SPS are perpetuated, such as the collaborative work between teachers and the participation of students in public presentations since the beginning stages of musical development.

Finally, the research data highlighted the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the modality and intensity of SPS course offerings in Brazil. The pandemic motivated the creation of online events such as the Brazilian Suzuki Piano Challenge: 21 days of practice, the National Recital of Suzuki Piano Students and the National Recital of Suzuki Piano Teachers, integrating dozens of teachers and students from different Brazilians regions.

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