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INTERNATIONAL SUZUKI JOURNAL

Volume 1, Number 2

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Dr. Suzuki's Message to All Suzuki Teachers

It seems there is still misunderstanding about teaching the Suzuki Method.

In the Suzuki Method, an individual private lesson means that all students and parents of that day are in the same room quietly observing one student being taught about half an hour at a time. Through this, students are motivated by their friends' progress and parents are also inspired by seeing how other children are encouraged and develop. This is entirely different from a group lesson in which all students enjoy playing together.

It is extremely important for all Suzuki teachers to realize the nature of true individual private lessons in order to foster your students successfully.

THE INTERNATIONAL SUZUKI JOURNAL

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The Journal of the International Suzuki Association
Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, President

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KNOW THE MARVELOUS EXISTENCE OF YOUR CHILD

Shinichi Suzuki



I would like you parents to know the marvellous existence of your children.

I would like you to understand the Law of Ability, by which every child can develop superior ability depending upon how he is raised. All babies are equally wonderful. Ability is something that is created by life itself.

Prenatal Heredity

What exists as "innate" is not ability but physiological features. Every baby is born with the inherited combination of its parents' physical and physiological features.

The Question of Ability (the Workings of Life)

Ability is a matter of the workings of life. The baby who received its body and life in the mother's womb develops his body through the workings of that life. The baby learns to move its limbs inside the mother's womb. This is ability that is developed by life. Through daily contact with the mother's life, the baby's life

continues to absorb her heart and personality until the day of birth.

I have repeated from long ago that "Man is a child of his environment." This points to the question of the workings of life. Every Stone Age baby 50,000 years ago was the same. They grew and became children, then adults, of Stone Age ability. If you have your baby fostered by people one thousand years from now in an environment of one thousand years from now, I promise that it will become a person of ability that belongs to the era one thousand years from now. It is just as I have been saying — Every child develops; everything depends upon the parent.

A problem child, a child of low ability, etc., is definitely the product of child-raising provided by the parent. Such a thing as innate quality of ability is not included in life itself. Ability develops where it is fostered.

This is the greatest task of your life. Let me ask you to raise your child as a fine human being.

The Height of Young Children's Potential

All five or six year olds develop the high ability to fluently speak the mother tongue. This is an age old fact that clearly indicates the potential of young children's ability.

I woke to this wonderful potential fifty odd years ago, and explored the principle on which ability is acquired. This led me to the knowledge of the fact that every child can acquire high ability, and also to the discovery of the Law of Ability (every ability is acquired through the workings of life).

The Suzuki Method is an approach to raising every child with outstanding ability.



Small children performing the Vivaldi a minor.

On February 25 this year, for the first time, we presented at Matsumoto Civic Hall a concert of three to six year olds in order to demonstrate young children's potential.

The unison violin playing of seventeen children shown in the photo above was a fine performance of the Vivaldi a minor concerto, first and third movements. They are preschool age children. Forty years ago, this piece was an entrance examination piece for music school in Japan.

In the fall when ten students toured for one month in the States, seven violinists played the Tchaikowsky concerto in unison as models of children's potential. The annual Ten Children concert "reports on the potential" of small children and youths. Even today music school graduates who have performed the concerto are regarded as top students.

The Suzuki Method fosters every child to a height depending upon how he is raised. I would like you to realize young children's high potential.

A New Approach in Violin

— Holding the Bow Upside Down —

I would like instructors to try this new approach on every student.

As an approach to making tone rich and beautiful, I have experimented on having students play with the bow held upside down.



Normal bow hold.



Reverse bow hold.

I had them play a piece this way, then had them play the same piece with the normal bow hold while attempting to produce the same rich tone. Every student's tone improved.

I would like this to be tried as the Suzuki approach even with young beginners. Let them play with rich tone a piece they can already play.



Group lesson, bows reversed.

In order to make this possible, teach students, including beginners, to play with fine

tone the Twinkle theme, or just open strings, both with the upside down and normal bows (let them try this on all strings), and by doing so teach them the proper way to hold the bow. Always instruct in using the tip of the thumb for proper bowing. Try to help them produce ever richer and more beautiful tone.

At present, I have students in my class play even the Tchaikowsky concerto holding the bow upside down. Sometimes I call the weekly Monday concert "the Reverse Bow Day" and ask everyone to play his or her piece with the bow reversed.

Try a reverse bow solo recital in your class also. Gradually every student's tone will improve. This is a new approach. At group lesson, too, try letting your students play the same piece with reverse and normal bows.

I would also like this to be tried by cello instructors. ◊

Talent Education, no. 92.

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THE SUZUKI TRADEMARK AND SERVICEMARK GO UNDER ISA'S CONTROL

Toshio Takahashi
Executive Secretary

Declaration

May 30th, 1990

I would like to declare that I have designated The International Suzuki Association as the sole authorized organization which can use, or grant rights to use my name, trademarks and service marks based on my name, for music products or organizations associated with me or the "Suzuki Method."

I am happy to report to the ISA members a prized news. I hear that the Japanese TV program "Komon, Lord of Mito" is now broadcast in the States and is gaining popularity. In that drama Lord Komon, until then incognito, reveals his identity at the crucial moment of crisis by taking out his cased seal with the Shogun's family crest. ISA has obtained the authority comparable to this seal.

Press Release

The International Suzuki Association

Dr. Shinichi Suzuki

Dr. Shinichi Suzuki has announced that he has designated The International Suzuki Association as the sole authorized organization which can use, or grant rights to use, his name, trademarks and service marks based on his name for music products or organizations associated with Dr. Suzuki or his famous "Suzuki Method."

Only uses of Dr. Suzuki's name which are authorized by The International Suzuki Association are legally authorized uses of the name approved by Dr. Suzuki. It is Dr. Suzuki's wish that by uniting all authorized Suzuki organizations under The International Suzuki Association his goals of benefiting children around the world and the philosophy and standards he has established in teaching children by his "Suzuki Method" will be maintained uniformly throughout the world and strengthened and expanded in the future.

Dr. Suzuki and the ISA have authorized Summy-Birchard, Inc., a subsidiary of Warner Bros. Publications Inc., to manufacture, market and sell pedagogical works as part of the "Suzuki Method" of musical education and training and they have authorized that company to use Dr. Suzuki's name in connection with such works. Requests for authorization to publish pedagogical works for the "Suzuki Method" should be directed to Summy-Birchard, Inc.

In the past in the States and Europe there were frequent attempts to publish Suzuki textbooks and other similar printed music under the name Suzuki. In order to monopolize such activities, specific American publishing houses have registered Suzuki trademarks. This meant that the publishing houses obtained the trademarks. In Japan this rarely happens, but in foreign countries where the pioneer spirit is rampant, all kinds of people have published books using Suzuki's name. As a result, both authentic and non-authentic works are sold indiscriminately, and people at large feel at a loss as to which ones to use. As a result of many years of negotiation, all the rights, copyrights, and interests concerning the trademarks, service marks, and registration and publication of trade and service marks have been transferred to Dr. Suzuki.

This is very significant. Without the owner's permission and payment of user fees, no one can now teach, publish books, or found a group under Suzuki's name.

At present Japanese members join the Talent Education Institute and pay dues in order to receive Suzuki instruction. The situation is totally different abroad. Without joining any association, a teacher who claims to be a Suzuki teacher and teach by the Suzuki textbooks can gather students. Unregistered teachers and students amount to perhaps 30 times more than

the number of those registered. Teaching or learning by the Suzuki Method means to benefit greatly by the method. On principle those who are related to it should bear the responsibility of paying a certain fee to help sustain and disseminate the method.

ISA has been given the exclusive control of all trade and service marks related to Suzuki from Dr. Suzuki, their legal owner. It is obligatory for the associations throughout the world to pay a designated user fee, and to see that each of their members pays dues.

In the past the Suzuki Method has often been unfairly evaluated abroad due to the fact that many unregistered teachers, without any training in the method, merely taught using the textbooks in their own way and created large numbers of inferior students. Those listening to such students' performances had no choice but to criticize the Suzuki Method. This was in fact bound to happen due to lack of supervision.

When ISA is fully organized in the near future as a federation of worldwide Suzuki Associations, in place of individual dues it will

only accept membership dues paid through national associations. Individual Suzuki members will pay 17 US dollars through the Suzuki Association of each country — as part of the membership dues to be paid to the national Suzuki Association. In the future, Suzuki Associations will be required to conclude a contract with ISA concerning the use of the name Suzuki.

Every group using the name Suzuki must enter into such a contract with ISA since ISA now formally supervises all Suzuki trade and service marks. This is legally binding. In this way, individuals are obligated to belong to a Suzuki Association in some country. The Suzuki Association of each country is obligated to belong to ISA. This can be called the important starting point for combining all the Suzuki Associations in the world in ISA. If this attempt succeeds, the Suzuki method will develop in all corners of the world in both quality and quantity, the prestige of the method will expand, and we hope to fulfill the dream of enhancing world peace and culture. ◊

TOWARD ESTABLISHING A SCIENTIFIC STRING PLAYING METHOD (2)

From "Bowling, December 1951
My Study of String Playing

Shinichi Suzuki

The Right Elbow and Wrist— the Concept of Playing with the Elbow

I have children say "Move on, pony hair / as my elbow moves," before having them play. This is in order to implant the idea that bowing is done with the elbow.

Playing with the elbow — of course one could also say playing with the entire body — is the principle of moving the bow. The proper right arm motion when bowing should be the elbow motion supported by only as much hand motion as needed.

I too had the idea of playing with the hand. This was an error. In today's Japan, most everybody seems to use this *concept of hand-playing*. In extreme cases, some claim that *wrist motions* are important and give strict instruction in moving the wrist. What a grave error. It is hard to save those who have formed the habit of bowing while craning the wrist as if gracefully with every up-and-down movement. This is the same as being deprived for life of the ability to play challenging pieces. If they practice, their left hand will play; however, their right hand will not do the job.

Whether in tennis, brush calligraphy, swimming, or planing in carpentry, experts in each area explain how useless and obstructive it is to work with the forearm, or with the elbow down. I think this is no different in violin.

Unless the bow is used with the concept of playing with the elbow (or with the entire body, if you like), one can neither produce rich tone, master detailed skills, nor make big motions.

In the first place, if one plays with the hand, the elbow immobile, that is like a leg of the compass which moves around a fixed point.

The bow will always draw a semicircular shape, unable to move in a straight line.

Naturally it is wrong to have a wrist that is too stiff to move. However, nothing gives a worse influence than thinking of relaxing the wrist and teaching to bow up and down while craning the wrist with each motion.

I only tell my students to hold the wrist naturally without applying force. I give them no special practice to move the wrist. By the time they are advanced enough to relax the wrist, they always learn crucial, natural motions without such special training.

Noticing the motions of the ankles, suppose someone thought it necessary to teach relaxed ankle movement before a little child walks on his feet, and gives daily training in bending and swinging the ankles. The child who has formed such a habit will curve his ankles unnecessarily when he begins to walk. What happens when the time comes that he needs to run fast? The child with this habit of unnecessarily swinging his ankles around will never be able to run as fast as other children. This is because his unnatural habit obstructs agile, natural ankle movement.

No parent starts with ankle training when a child is learning to walk.

Unless there are defects in the legs, ankles are meant to move as needed. Ankle training given before the walking stage only produces a child who walks unnaturally.

What is necessary before a child starts to walk is to develop leg strength to stand, and create physiological adaptability to balance on the legs. As long as he can accomplish these two things, walking and running will come naturally as ability develops.

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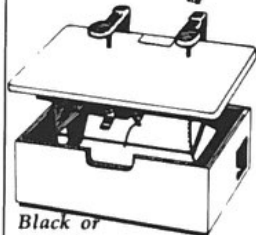


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The same applies to violin. It is a great error to give unnatural training in wrist movement. What is needed above everything else is fine, logical posture as well as ability to balance. Ability to balance is the ability to produce rich, not shaky, tone with good contact between the bow hair and the strings. Another crucial thing is the ability to walk on foot, i.e., to play with the elbow. I think we should develop posture, balance, and elbow motion.

Posture and tone — if these are developed, one's violin playing will improve.

The above is the reason behind my idea of only telling students to play without tensing the wrist, instead of giving detailed instructions about wrist motions. *Once the posture is correct, natural motions develop as a matter of fact.*

The wrist has to be free of tension, yet solid enough to maintain action and tone. When we walk, our ankles are free, mobile, and flexible, yet, without the slightest fuss, they support the weight of the head and torso.

Likewise, the wrist can move freely as needed if it is held naturally. Be natural!

If I overemphasize that the bow should be moved with the elbow, not with the hand, some may think this means that the hand can stay bent and immobile or the wrist tense and fixed. Such people may imagine playing the violin to be as unnatural as bowing with a crooked branch. So let me add the following.

When I talk about the concept of bowing with the elbow or carrying the bow with the elbow (actually the elbow only moves diagonally up and down), in fact the hand, wrist, and every portion of the arm must move naturally in order to support the elbow motions.

The hand should not independently carry the bow nor should the wrist move the bow up and down by itself, separately from elbow motions. This is what I am emphasizing.

Let's see this in terms of walking.

Wouldn't it be funny if people walk by moving just the lower legs from the knee joints down? It is not even possible to think of walking by moving just the feet.

If you want to walk, you must use your legs. The knee and ankle joints move freely as required by the leg motions.

Those who play the violin by moving just the forearm are, so to speak, walking with their mind on the lower legs, from the knee joints down.

This is what I mean by playing with the elbow. I hope you do not misunderstand me and play as if with a crooked branch.

In Japan so many play the violin with a concept of bowing that is limited to the forearm, from the elbow to the fingers. I think it a grave error. If a person walks by moving just the knee joints and lower legs, I am sure people would laugh.

Dynamics and Bow Contact

Those who think that dynamics are created by pressing or releasing the bow ought to learn to hear the disorder in their tone.

I myself used to have that sort of concept. However, studying how to utilize the bow has led me to think about the contact between the horse hair and the strings. Dynamics, I discovered, were created by changes in bow speed. Faster bow produced bigger tone, and gradually slower bow produced gradually smaller volume while retaining the bow contact and hidden tonal power.

Thus, action coincides with music.

I believe it is good to play with the idea that one should create the dynamics by changing the speed of action. Aside from this, naturally, bow contact itself too can vary from one to ten to twenty, adding varying amounts of pressure to the strings. However, the basic idea is that it is wrong to think of producing dynamic variety by pressing hard for forte and releasing pressure for piano. One must, as I discovered, create forte by speed, piano by slowing down and using a shorter bow space.

Long ago I tried practicing drawing the letters of the Japanese alphabet every day. In other words, I trained myself in creating whatever shapes of sound I had in mind. For example, I thought about the finest brush stroke imaginable for the letter "no" (which is a single diagonal down stroke trailing out towards the lower left) with all its rich attack and beautiful tapering. Then I tried to reproduce the shape with my bow, translating the vision into a sound and aiming at a sound shape that was as tasteful as I wanted. This was calligraphy in tone.

The ability to know one's own sound shape, tone color, and intonation, I strongly felt, greatly helped in musical expression. Release the bow pressure for playing piano; tone will be ruined. When you lose bow contact, you lose tone.

"Good suction contact depends upon your skill" — I have added this to the principles of bowing for students to remember.

This is the most important point for producing rich, beautiful tone.

There is a big difference between contact and pressing. Contact is achieved as though by suction. In other words the bow hair is sucked toward the strings by some power in the air. Thus, contact (or suction) belongs to space, while pressing belongs to the earth.

When you press, your force reaches the bottom of the string and produces noise, torturing the string's movement. On the other hand, contact is achieved through suction; it is power created in the air above the string, and helps the string's movement. In this sense, we can say that contact (or suction) is light, and pressure is heavy.

The horse hair, which has tension and resilience, is placed on a string, equal power working both at the tip and frog of the bow. In that condition of a small amount of pressure, something extremely strong combining the tension and resilience of the bow sticks to the string, refusing to be detached. It works as if the bow is sucked by a magnet to the violin. I call this "contact by suction."

While listening to the tone of Thibaud, Kreisler, and Casals, for over ten years I continually studied this magnetic contact, and attempted to theorize it. We always admire the beautiful contact these maestros demonstrate. Beauty, tenderness, and power of their tone all stem from appropriate contact. Crispness is also a matter of contact.

In many cases, the bow is placed on the string with sufficient contact, but the moment it starts to play another force unfortunately tends to be added to the bow's own resiliency. This results in double pressure.

Some try to avoid this double pressure by playing softly. They fall into the trap of releasing the bow till it loses the contact that was there as it rested on the string. The horse hair floats, loses power, and makes a rasping sound due to lack of contact. "I won't let you float; I won't press you down" is a reminder of these dangers.

Even the softest pianissimo is no good if the magnetic bow contact is lost, for the tone quality changes completely.

Ideally, the bow may seem to rest on the string so gently that only the horse hair is placed there without the weight of the bow stick. However, in fact, the bow itself is securely holding itself with your power fixed at the tip. Thus the horse hair does not lose the sharpness of magnetic contact, with which it is sucked to the string. The horse hair, I think, must have a sense of contact that is as sharp as a razor blade, and an extremely high sensitivity to articulation.

Given these conditions, the quality of tone can be tender, the amount of tone can be rich,

powerful, and clear. On the other hand, if you are obsessed by the idea of playing with the bow stick and play with force that results in double pressure, your tone will be stiff. Moreover, you won't be able to control your tone color. When you press with your bow or let it float, you cannot add variation to the color or amount of tone. Therefore you cannot shape your sound beautifully.

Good contact depends upon your skill. Master good contact through study and training, refine your bow contact, and work daily toward producing tender, powerful, and expressive tone. I have pursued this question for over ten years by listening to Thibaud's, Kreisler's, and Casals' tone, and renewed my respect for their profound depths.

Staccato, spiccato, and other techniques of bow use are simply variations on this principle. I think there is one basic principle for bowing.

Play harmonics. If your tone is reduced to only a small volume, I think you have improper bowing.

There is an error in the bowing technique if harmonics cannot be produced with the same amount of tone as non harmonic notes. Testing your bowing by playing harmonics is a simple but effective way of correcting your playing technique.

On Resistance

The bow's resilience is after all a power to resist. The bow does not, however, have resilience because it resists you when you bend its stick. The bow's resilience is something we can grasp only when we observe the resistance that works on the horse hair.

We know the resisting power of a thin steel plate when it springs back as we bend and release it. For a sensitive thing like a string which can tremble and ring by a breeze, the resilience of a thick steel plate is not necessary. The spring born of an extremely thin steel plate is sufficient. A good bow is made that way. When we produce tone with good contact, that is because we draw the bow as though by magnet to the strings utilizing its power of resistance.

It is the same with pizzicato. When the finger has resistance like that of a thin steel plate, a fine, powerful tone is produced. However, when the finger tip is soft without resistance when plucking, the tone produced is miserably weak. So, we must think of our finger as a springy plate of thin steel. It is like guitar picking. If the pick is as soft as rubber, the guitar tone would be no good.

I often observe pizzicato produced by rubber-like soft fingers. Those who produce weak, miserable tone pluck with rubber picking motions.

The Right Hand Shape, the Back of the Right Hand

I think a steady shape of the back of the right hand is necessary for making the bow contact secure. Suppose the hand makes all kinds of motions as it carries the bow, now inclining to the right or to the left, now hanging down or twisting itself upward, etc. That makes it difficult for the horse hair to rest securely on the string, and this in turn causes the bow pressure and contact to vary. Such motions are careless ones which disrupt the security of the bow and tone. Of course one can somehow control the tone if a small amount of change in the bow hand is present. However, if one comes to understand about the steady right hand and corrects himself, I am certain that he will not only quickly notice that his tone improves but it will become easier to play.

For the training of the secure right hand posture and of the straight path that the bow should travel, I made a device to improve bowing. Since I found it quite effective myself, I have been using it with children in talent education classes.

Every action should be meant "for the sake of tone," i.e., it should single mindedly serve the bow and strings. It is wrong that the bow is disrupted by action. For the bow to be stable, the back of the bow hand must be stable. In this sense, we need to maneuver the entire right arm in such a way as to serve the back of the right hand so that its shape is not ruffled trying to stabilize the bow. This is for the sake of tone.

Let the Elbow Draw a Straight Line, Holding it Above the Bow

"Is it necessary to move the bow up and down in a straight line?"

"Of course it won't do to draw a semicircular line with the bow, or move it diagonally."

"Which part of the right hand can help the bow move up and down in a straight line?"

"Try it. Nothing but the elbow can draw a straight line."

I think it wrong for the elbow to hang down low.

As long as the elbow controls the path of the bow, or the movement of the bow that draws a straight line, I think that the elbow should stay above the bow's path and guide it to move straight.

Thus, the elbow's posture is to be formed in the location where it can control the bow movement. Therefore, an unnecessarily high elbow posture is not good, and the elbow hanging low is also irrational.

The elbow should take the lead. Therefore, the motions of the finger tips and the wrist should be considered with the elbow motions in mind. They should function as needed as the elbow functions. Particularly when you come to understand the question of the contact of the bow with the strings, I think you will realize the inseparable relationship between the elbow and bow contact. That is why I include the line in the principle of bowing, "Move with the elbow, pony hair."

Bow Hold and the Thumb's Function

Knowing how the bow performs and how to produce tone so as to be able to produce fine tone making use of the horse hair's magnetic contact with the strings — this is the basic question in string playing. Those who have mastered this single point can utilize the bow. And those who have mastered this single point can, while adhering to it, produce beautiful tone no matter what his bow hold is like.

Therefore great masters in the past held the bow in the way most convenient to them. People who have observed them from outside say there are different ways of holding the bow and name them the German, Russian, and French schools. Even if they may look different from outside, however, I believe that those masters reached the selfsame point in the basis of bow maneuvering for producing tone.

In fact in Casals, Thibaud, and Kreisler, I contend that the use of the bow was identical. Through listening to their tone, I have come to understand that. In tone color and sound shape, every maestro expresses what he likes and reflects his own personality. However, the scientific principle of the utilization of the bow remains the same.

As a result of studying why great performers always produce articulate, tender, beautiful, and powerful tone, I have come to realize that tone becomes much more delicate and clear in terms of both articulation and contact when I hold the bow thinking of *picking* it up with the fingers rather than *holding* it. The change from the

concept of *holding* to that of *picking up* was a great harvest for me.

I think it suffices to hold the bow in the natural shape as if to hold a pen with the fingers.

Think of the shape of the hand when you let your hand go down from a higher place and pick up a pen, and the relative positions of the wrist, the fingers and the pen. Thus, the fingers should be above the bow, not to the side of the bow.

The overall shape of the fingers should be round and soft (no straight fingers). The index finger and the middle finger touching the bow at the first joint, the ring finger should touch the bow at the center between the finger tip and the first joint, and the little finger should rest its tip on the bow. This is the way I hold the bow.

The thumb bends making an L shape, pointing to the center of the stick of the bow with its nail almost digging into it, and thus at an angle that contrasts against the other four fingers. The thumb that arches back is a bad shape, because it constricts movement. This shape is a result of holding the bow not with the tip of the thumb but with the fat part of it.

When we think carefully about "Fix your power at the tip; bow won't wobble," we should remember that the thumb plays the role of keeping it steady.

I make constant efforts in instruction so that students will acquire the important feel of the thumb's power and the bow's magnetic contact controlled by it.

When I asked Mischa Elman to point out the single most important thing in bowing, he silently put out his right thumb. "This is it," he showed. It was like an answer to a Zen riddle, but I understood him well. It was in total agreement with what I believed.

Why I Train Students to Stop the Bow

With a sword master, you can tell his skill by looking at the clean slice he has made. In violin, you can tell the player's skill by hearing how he has sliced the sound. Even with a seemingly unimportant note, its articulation indicates the player's bowing technique. This is like knowing the ability of a carpenter by seeing what comes out of his plane (a master carpenter makes beautiful, unruffled strips of shavings).

The clean, clear slices that Kreisler, Thibaud, and Casals make can be called a reflection of their bow's sharpness — the bow is to them what the sword is to a sword master.

Each note they produce has clarity as if sliced out with a razor. The bow rests on the string in such a way that the moment it moves a clear

articulation is heard. Moreover, with each bow stroke, the bow stops and prepares for the next note. When the bow can make a clear stop, it can make beautiful articulation. This is a sort of "secret art," to use another sword play term, that can only be attained after much training.

To stop the bow means to reduce disorder. Motion, I realized through experience, was a transitory form of stillness.

"To stop the bow means to prepare for articulating the next note."

That means that the bow remains resting on the string with magnetic contact. Do not release or press when you stop the bow. Simply prepare for the next motion while retaining the magnetic contact with which you have just produced beautiful tone.

With magnetic contact
the bow travels a single path —
that is skill.

This expresses the realm of attainment in which it is realized that "The amount of contact depends upon skill."

In the achievements of such masters as Kreisler and Thibaud, I find stillness. I find the need for preparatory training of articulating each note clearly. I try to impart the "master art" from the beginning so that children acquire this highest condition as a habit from the beginner stage.

Among those who trained with this bowing method are Koji Toyoda and Kenji Kobayashi. In them we see the results of training in sharp articulation.

Some laugh at the children in our violin classes as they practice stopping the bow to prepare for the next bow before playing the next note. Those people do not know the meaning of training in stillness which creates the sharpness of articulation. Since stopping the bow is my unique, new idea, it is natural that people find it strange and hard to understand. Therefore, perhaps they use their subjective view, or common sense, to criticize the approach to beginner children's clumsy and rough playing. However, that clumsiness does not remain forever.

The result of this training is Koji Toyoda and Kenji Kobayashi. Their performance developed out of this training in stillness. Their clear articulation, I believe, was born of this training. I would like the reader to note freshly that Kreisler, Thibaud, and others play with secure bowing with sharp articulation that reflects stillness that stops the bow.

Training in stopping is training in preparing to play the next note. It is a method for forming the habit of preparing for clear tone production.

At the same time, remember that motion should always be demonstrated in stillness. Form the habit of maintaining the first condition for stability, and train to avoid creating disorder. This is a question that is comparable to "secret art" in sword play.

In order to avoid creating disorder, the fingers and the bow must always be first prepared before action is taken. For this reason, too, I believe it necessary to form the habit of stopping the bow to prepare for the next motion.

When crossing strings, too, the finger and the bow must first move to the next string and achieve stillness. Then action should be taken. If these steps are not followed but the bow moves as it shifts to the next string, then the form of stillness is skipped. Naturally disorder occurs. Motion without stillness is disorder. I place importance on this point when I instruct students, and train them from the beginner stage in how to maneuver the bow when crossing strings.

Bow maneuvering in string crossing is a condition for producing well articulated tone. I help students slowly form the habit of good action by first having them prepare the finger and the bow (elbow) on the next string, then telling them to play.

Whether playing on the same string, or crossing strings, the principle I teach is "First, finger; second, bow; third, go." I teach from the beginner stage that it is extremely important to first press the string with the finger, get ready, then let the bow take action. If you move finger and bow simultaneously, you are bound to sacrifice your coordination when playing a fast piece.

Disorder always leads to failure. Since realizing that motion is a transitory form of stillness, I have come to know the nature of disorder.

From there comes my method of stopping the bow to prepare for the next note and moving to action while in inaction.

The bow that advances prepares for returning, and the bow that returns prepares for advancing. What is visible is nothing but an image of mobility; behind it the performer always maintains immobility in a single point.

One day some twenty years ago I went to see an acrobatic show with a friend. We happened to arrive when a tightrope performer was performing. While watching the dancer travelling on the rope while skillfully moving

his hands and body, something occurred to me: "His motions represent perfect stillness; those are temporary motions for maintaining the center of gravity. In fact he is not moving." Those motions took the appearance of mobility in order to maintain immobility of the single point called the center of gravity.

After perceiving this, I learned much by training myself so that my action constantly stayed in stillness.

In other words, I learned about disorder.

I found that no disorder occurs in performance if, like a tightrope dancer who maintains the single point of center of gravity, the bow's motions also have a sort of center of gravity — if, that is, the bow's *mobility* contains *immobility* within. Since this discovery, I have started to be able to sense, before it occurs, the disorder in those who do not carry the single point of stillness. That is because there is some failure the moment disorder is about to start.

When I began training in stopping the bow to prepare for the next sound, my intention came from this Oriental observation.

First, Keep the Right Arm and the Strings Parallel

Train beginners to keep the forearm parallel with the strings. The elbow should not rise higher than this. At that point, the bow should be placed on a string somewhat closer to the tip than at the center. This is in order to let beginners form the habit of stretching the right arm so that it will draw a straight line. Take care so that the elbow is free, yet not apt to move back and forth. Unless you teach this from the beginner stage, you will have the disaster of every student moving the elbow back and forth keeping it bent in an L shape (they tend to play near the frog of the bow).

After it becomes a habit to practice stretching the forearm downward, then the elbow is allowed to take the lead and move higher, moving the bow from center to frog. This is my method of teaching in two steps, first from center to tip, then from center to frog.

If this order is forgotten, it is hard to develop the right hand posture for carrying the bow in a straight line. This is an instructional order born out of my experience.

Posture, Tone, and Musical Expression

Let me add another reflection on posture before finishing this section. The quality of

instruction is determined by two points: what kind of posture is developed, and what kind of tone is developed. (These are followed by musical expression.)

"What are you playing now?"

"I'm playing Mozart's concerto no. 5"

"I see, let me hear you."

So I listen. Pitiful posture, uncertain tone, unclear intonation — how miserable the whole thing is.

What has the instructor taught, what has he fostered? This is like a beginner student's skill. The blame is not attached to the student, who is simply demonstrating the results of the failure of instruction.

Each time they heard a miserable performance like this, ordinary people wrongly believed in the past that the performer had no talent.

We of the Talent Education Institute search the nature of human talent with a new view of humanity. We believe that people do not give such wretched performances because they have no talent, but that they simply demonstrate the failure of instruction. In the case of talent education children, we reflect upon the failure of both instructors and parents.

Every child in the world develops properly if raised properly, and develops mistakenly if raised mistakenly. Those born in Tokyo grow up with fine Tokyo dialect, and those raised in Osaka learn Osaka dialect without exception. Not only that, they even absorb in a most delicate way even the Tokyo or Osaka temperament. If raised properly, they develop properly.

We should try not to err in what and how to help develop. I would also like parents to know what is vitally important. When parents begin to feel impatient about moving on from piece to piece, that damages their children's ability. If instructors ignore the importance of posture and

tone, neglect studying how to teach these two things, or have no ability to teach them, they produce wretched students.

Children's ability develops in proportion to their instructors' ability. We instructors must always reflect, study, and enhance ourselves.

Besides posture and tone, instruction in musical expression is also crucial.

Common sense has held that delicacy and musicality could not be taught, that children developed them through their innate sensibility, and that there were no special teaching principles. However, this has proved superstitious.

Considering that there was after all a law of beauty in outstanding musical motion and expression, as a result of study I developed my own method of musical expression.

I have discovered that there was indeed a law of movement which could be taught as a method of expression, and how effective it was.

According to this law, I teach rhythm, accent, sound shape, and movement. Musicality can be fostered in every child. The quality of instruction and learning within this law leads to divergence of student sensibilities.

When comparing musical and unmusical movement, you will see that musical movement contains natural law, while unmusical movement expresses disorder.

We have learned that sensibility is not innate, and demonstrated it sufficiently.

Have your children always listen to fine music. Moreover, use the same piece for a period of time — it is fine however famous or difficult. Let them listen repeatedly until they absorb it with their senses. They will definitely develop sensibility, and a certain superior quality will be part of them throughout their lives. ◊

THE NINTH EUROPEAN SUZUKI CONFERENCE
at St. Andrews, Scotland

Ronald Lees
Accompanist at the Conference

REPORTS FROM THE ASSOCIATIONS

REPORT FROM SUZUKI ASSOCIATION
OF THE AMERICAS

Dorothy Jones
Past president of the SAA
Board member ISA

The Suzuki Association of the Americas has existed now for 18 years. In that period of time the principal goal of the organization has been to encourage growth and understanding of the Suzuki method throughout the Americas, with responsibility to Dr. Suzuki and to our membership.

Our method of operation includes an elected Board of Directors, a committee structure, and a set of policies and procedures. Recently goal targets have been improved communication, a study of ways to encourage research, and an effort to integrate Suzuki's ideas about early education with those of mainstream early childhood educators.

The Fourth Suzuki Method Teachers' Conference which took place in San Francisco, in May 1990, featured sessions on Suzuki and early childhood education. Researchers, psychologists, early education professionals, and Suzuki specialists all worked together toward an education for our youngest children that would be both developmentally appropriate and of the highest quality.

Dr. Hanus Papusek, a pediatrician specializing in preverbal communication and language, opened the conference with a keynote address: "The beginnings of Human Musicality." Dr. Papusek's research has shown that musical elements in speech are very important at the beginning of post-partum life. Dr. Papusek has seen through his scientific studies the important connection Suzuki has shown us between the mother tongue and music.

In St. Andrews, Scotland, at the European Suzuki Conference, 1990, Dr. Mary Lou Sheil

from Australia, presented her research on co-ordination and motor-sensory skills, beautifully documented in a video called "The importance of Being Three". Her study supports many of the premises of the Suzuki method, such as "ear before eye", and "one thing mastered before going on to the next".

I was excited by both of these presentations and was reminded of Dr. Suzuki's speech in the Assembly Hall of the United Nations in New York, in 1968. At that time he appealed to those gathered there to consider the necessity of a world wide policy of proper child development, education and care. In the years since that time, great growth has taken place in the development of Suzuki method music education. However, Suzuki's philosophy of child development and education in all subject areas has had very little impact in educational institutions worldwide.

It perhaps is time for the International Suzuki Association to take an active leadership role in providing opportunities for similar exchanges between Suzuki teachers and the rest of the education world. I believe that the International Suzuki Association, even though it is a newer organization than some of the Suzuki country organizations, could form an international committee to co-ordinate and sponsor presentations to educational bodies around the world. What can we do as individuals? First we can support the ISA and promote membership in that organization in our own countries. Secondly, we need to work together to bring the teaching and the research to the attention of the education world. ◊

The ancient and historic setting of St. Andrews — home to the venerated and distinguished university of that name and also the birthplace of the game of golf — provided an inspiring backdrop to the Ninth European Suzuki Conference, hosted by the British Suzuki Institute.

The Conference programme offered a marvelously comprehensive range of lectures and workshop sessions in addition to the traditional lessons and classes in violin, viola, cello, flute, guitar, and piano, demonstrating how the Suzuki Initiative — the life force behind all Suzuki gatherings — has opened minds to new thoughts. Topics ranged from Suzuki Singing (Finland), The Importance of Sound (France), The Importance of Being Three (Australia) as well as directly instrumental teaching topics such as conducting for Suzuki teachers and the approaches to sight-reading.

Dr. Suzuki, ever full of 'new thoughts' himself, drew large and appreciative audiences to his group and individual sessions where on several occasions he called upon Yuriko Watanabe "my best student" to demonstrate; her impeccable and intense delivery of the last movement of the Khatchaturian Violin Concerto will long remain in the mind.

The formal public concerts (or should they really be entitled 'Recitals?') were at once a delight and a lesson: a delight often because of the sheer quality of performance, and a lesson in what it is possible to achieve. All the instruments being taught at the Conference were represented in both solo and ensemble items and played by children from all the participating countries.

The inclusion of an Advanced Course also provided the opportunity for a concert which opened with a performance by a Parents Choir and gave soloists the valuable experience of playing with the Concerto Orchestra. The proceeds from one concert, given in the presence of Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester, were appropriately devoted to the Save The Children Fund.

As well as concerts given by the children the Conference was enriched by several recitals given by distinguished performers from the

Teaching Faculty, who, through the Advanced Course, were also sharing their art with students in public master-classes.

The final concert held in the Caird Hall, Dundee — a mammoth affair by British standards, which no hall in St. Andrews could contain — featured the splendid massed playing so beloved by Suzuki and yet so often bemusing to external critics. And of course, Dr. Suzuki led the *ultimate* 'Twinkles' from the piano to conclude this very successful Conference.

The organization of this concert was a real tour-de-force with over a thousand children and even more adults being deftly positioned and seated without delay.

The organizing committee of the British Suzuki Institute deserve our warmest thanks and admiration for mounting, with very little professional help, a Conference spanning eleven days and attracting over two thousand participants from twenty two countries, The enormous number of segments covering the courses for teachers, children, and advanced performers, together with the concerts, lectures and supporting services were all very well managed in spite of one dramatic setback when the computer refused to divulge the Children's Violin Course timetable. Heroic all-night efforts were made to redress the situation, which must have been every Conference organizer's nightmare.

The committee expressed its deepest gratitude to numerous sponsors and benefactors who had given generous financial and other forms of help to the Conference. Mr. Ono, the General Manager of YAMAHA UK, through the provision of instruments and technical services, and Mr. Richard Branson, of VIRGIN AIRWAYS, who arranged complimentary flights for Dr. and Mrs. Suzuki from Japan, had made a major contribution to the Conference arrangements. The warm welcome to Dr. and Mrs. Suzuki, together with the teachers attending the Teachers Course, by the North East Five District Council at the Town Hall in St. Andrews, had been a lovely introduction to Scotland.

The other specifically Scottish welcome came from St. Andrews University itself in conferring upon Dr. Suzuki the honorary degree of Doctor of Music. This took place in a wonderfully colorful and moving ceremony, marked by a particularly eloquent address by Professor Struther Arnott, Principal, whose words make a fitting end to this report.

... Universities selfishly enjoy conferring honorary degrees because in large measure they are honoring themselves. Universities are in the business of cultivating unusually talented people. Usually these people are the university's own students. But not every talented person can be a St. Andrews' student and sometimes we have to adopt them later — sometimes, *much* later! ... We usually have the pleasure of seeing our honorary graduand's spouse but never before have we been able to have with us so many of their friends and disciples. This occasion is therefore quite unusual

— and quite unusually pleasurable.

And so was the Conference. ◊



Surrounded by Suzuki students after receiving an honorary doctorate degree from St. Andrews University at the Ninth European Suzuki Conference.

THE INTERNATIONAL SUZUKI ASSOCIATION (ISA)

The International Suzuki Association was founded in 1983 as a non-profit organization in Dallas, Texas in order to serve as a coalition of Suzuki Associations throughout the world. In June, 1988, the headquarters moved to Matsumoto. The ISA has been designated by Dr. Suzuki as the sole authorized organization which can grant rights to the use of his name, trademarks and service marks on his name for music products or organizations associated with Dr. Suzuki or his "Suzuki Method."

Under these circumstances, all Suzuki Associations are legally required to join the ISA with appropriate agreements concerning the use of the name Suzuki.

The ISA should be comprised of member associations pursuing goals and assuming obligations consistent with its organizational regulations. Consequently, every individual member of ISA must be a member of such an association and each association a member of the ISA. The ISA strives to encourage, promote, enlarge, and coordinate the Suzuki Method throughout the world. In order to achieve its goals, we plan to carry out the following activities.

1. Sponsor the Suzuki International Convention and local conferences.
2. Train Suzuki teachers in developing countries.

3. Help every country establish a national Suzuki Association.
4. Translate and publish the *International Suzuki Journal*, the ISA newsletter, a teacher directory, and Suzuki literature.
5. Evaluate and issue international Suzuki teacher certificates.
6. Examine and make final decisions concerning publication of all books and teaching materials related to the Suzuki Method.

In order for ISA to be able to carry out these activities, each member association is asked to pay per capita fees. Member benefits are as follows:

1. Participation in International Conferences and local conferences sponsored or endorsed by ISA.
2. Establishing national associations in their countries with the guidance and support of ISA.
3. Holding local conferences in their countries with endorsed and approved by ISA.
4. Receipt of member certificates, the bulletin, the *International Suzuki Journal*, etc., and, where experience is appropriate, the international Suzuki instructor accreditations.

Letter from Norway

The Suzuki Method has begun its activities in Norway. Founded in 1988, the association is aiming at enrichment and development of its organization. A letter reached ISA from Norway reporting on the movement. Other countries are encouraged to support the development of this new association. We look forward to other international reports for this section of the journal.

Editor

July 16, 1990

Dear Suzuki friends:

The purpose of this letter is to seek contact with Suzuki groups interested to share experiences and support us in our efforts to establish and extend the method in Norway.

We are two violin teachers, thirteen children and parents who, since August 1988, decided to take the challenge of establishing the Suzuki Method in a music school in Norway. Even though we are still in a sort of embryonic stage of the Suzuki Method, we can already perceive its positive effects on the development of our children's abilities, on our capacity to teach and learn and, most of all, on our understanding of the intricate association that exists between learning with joy and development of skills.

We feel very enthusiastic about the Suzuki Method, and would like it to become as popular in Norway as it is in other countries. Norway has a long tradition in violin playing, as well as other instruments, both in folklore and in classical music. This combination makes Norway a fertile ground for spreading the Suzuki Method. However, we are feeling a bit too lonely and would like to start exchanging ideas and experiences about the Suzuki Method,

its philosophical approach and pedagogical implications for an harmonic development of children.

What kind of support do we need? We have enough instruments, teachers and music schools spread all over Norway. What we need is to break through some established pedagogical beliefs which do not take into account, for example, that learning and fun can go hand in hand or that the mother tongue method can foster the development of musical talents. Therefore, we will be delighted if, in addition to the establishment of contacts, we shall receive information of publications and later developments of the Suzuki Method. Perhaps it is possible to acquire video cassettes with master classes. We will appreciate receiving any kind of information that will help us to strengthen the Suzuki Method in Norway.

Hoping to hear from you, I remain.

Cordially yours,

Anne-Berit Halvorsen
Music teacher

Address: Bærum Kommune Musikkolen,
Postboks 81, 1301 Sandvika, Norway

RICH, BEAUTIFUL STACCATO

Lectures on Music Instruction (65)

Shinichi Suzuki

Use the following lesson to instruct every student in rich, beautiful staccato tone.

First, start with an upbow around the center of the bow. See photos. The elbow should be below the bow. Produce tone with the elbow as it moves down. At the same time the nail of the thumb and the forefinger should contribute to producing staccato. The bow space should not be big. Use a space of about one thumb's width per note.

Use the beginning part of Gossec Gavotte.



Example A



At first repeat playing the first four notes (1) using upbows, trying to produce gradually bigger and clearer tone. Use somewhat slow tempo at first. Each note should be a perfect staccato.

Next, play the eight notes (2) producing clear staccato note by note. Gradually speed up to the Gossec Gavotte tempo. Instruct students in making each note a clear staccato. The elbow should go down and to the left with each note.

When the tone is rich, play the same melody twice (sixteen notes), using consecutive upbows and without running out of bow space. Produce beautiful staccato.

Then do the same using downbows.

What is crucial about downbow staccato is to instruct in the position of the elbow as it makes a semicircular motion downward and to the left. Refer to the photos and instruct carefully. The elbow is beneath the bow.

Downbow staccato should also be played at the middle of the bow.

Example B

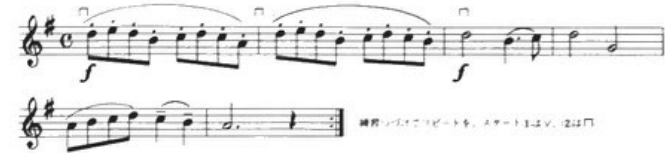


Play clear staccato with rich tone. Then instruct in the following exercise. Try this staccato exercise with every student.

Example C (Play twice without a break)



Example D (Play twice without a break. Start upbow the first time, downbow the second time round.)



How to Articulate a Legato Tone

When the above instruction succeeds in creating clear and big staccato tone, it means that the student has learned how to start every legato note. I always teach every student how to clearly articulate a legato note.

Use Example D for this instruction. I have repeatedly instructed in rich, clear legato and staccato and had good results. I would like you to try, too, using this new method.

The New Suzuki Approach — Instruction in Two-Tone Vibrato —

Two-tone vibrato is a difficult point of instruction. Students move their fingers to vibrate, but in most cases they only achieve one-tone vibrato.

I have freshly made a study of how to produce the lower of the two tones, and started to use the following instructional approach.

First teach the proper left hand shape when bringing the second finger placed on the A string for the A Major scale down a half step as in the following photo. Produce no tone when initially putting down the finger for A Major. Then lowering the finger a half step, play this lower note correctly. Have your student play this note clearly with large legato bows.

The next step is to play this half step lower note downbow, followed by the initial second finger note upbow. Play a down, then an up, and repeat slowly in beat toward proper two-tone vibrato. When you have successfully instructed in producing the lower note correctly and clearly, let the student play the two notes legato — first slowly, then gradually faster until it approaches good two-tone vibrato. Constantly

instruct in this. This takes a fair amount of time.

At group lessons, too, my students play together while listening carefully to the lower of the two tones. I am trying my best to instruct in beautiful two tone vibrato. Instructors have the responsibility in this important instruction. ♪



Talent Education, no. 92.

REPORTS FROM JAPAN

TCHAIKOWSKY AND TWINKLE — the 36th National Concert —

Hachiro Hirose



Grand unison performance of the violin school.

The national concert, held annually to demonstrate the educational method by which every child grows, occurred with great pomp and circumstance on March 27th, with the appearances of Prince Takamodo and dignitaries of various nations.

Fortunate in favorable weather and flowering cherry blossoms, the gathered people were blissful. The inventiveness of the executive committee staff led to building a stage in the center of the arena this year, and the cellists and flutists were for the most part able to perform upon it. The sound carried very well, which is naturally of paramount importance.

Tchaikowsky Appeals

At the national concert 35 years ago, 500 children performed the Bach Double. This was videotaped and sent to the States. It was thought that something unbelievable had happened in Japan, and Professors Cook and Kendall first arrived on our shores. This was the start of the worldwide spread of the Talent Education Method.

The Tchaikowsky Violin Concerto appeared on the program of the national concert for the third time this year. The performance was magnificent. One of our guests, synthesizer expert Isao Tomita, told us: "I was really

surprised by your Tchaikowsky." I, too, having assisted in the rehearsal of the piece, can only express astonishment at Mr. Suzuki's feats. Who could have imagined that this Tchaikowsky, called by many "a difficult piece," would be performed by so many students? I believe the people of the world would have shared my astonishment. The Suzuki Method and its tonalization have accomplished this miracle.

Tchaikowsky and Twinkle Are the Same

It was seven years ago that the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto was first placed on the program,

and then, too, I heard Dr. Suzuki's words and could only respond with wonder ("What will happen now?") and follow him. Perhaps some among you recall that on that occasion, musicians of other nations who were in attendance bravoed.

I remember the words Mr. Suzuki once spoke to me thirty years ago: "To Isaac Stern or Toshiya Eto, the Tchaikowsky Concerto is just like Twinkle." Listening this year to children playing Tchaikowsky with ease, I feel a newly reawakened emotion. The children have made great strides since last year. I call to mind Mr. Suzuki's words from long ago: "Sleep not in common sense."



Approximately eighty students play in unison Tchaikowsky's violin concerto, 1st movement.
Hachiro Hirose, conductor; Yuko Hirose, piano.

The First National Concert

The first National Concert was held in the Tokyo Athletic Hall at Sendagaya, and our current emperor, then the Crown Prince and single, honored us with his presence. The previous year, I had come to the city from Matsumoto, having completed my studies there. After the dinner party on the eve of the National Concert, I returned to the Hall to complete such tasks as hanging signs, and, having missed the last train, was compelled to spend the night in a midnight coffee house. I recall the stiffness of my legs on that occasion.

All of us instructors listened with a faster heartbeat, unable to predict how the children would perform in an arena of that size. At their performance, we wept with emotion. As the acoustics were primitive in those days, some of the pieces were uneven, but the new perspective of distance was interesting to us. One hears stories told that due to the vastness of space, some teachers had fun communicating with one another on bicycles while preparing for the concert.

In those days, orchestras composed of instructors would perform pieces for theatrical effect. Those were gracefully relaxed days. Their

performances were good enough to astonish fellow teachers from foreign parts. Those who profited directly by Dr. Suzuki's instruction on the string playing method produced ringing tone.

As the number of students expanded year by year, instructors could no longer enjoy such leisure. The number of people involved in preparation was never enough. Not to mention how to fit performing students perfectly on the floor, other problems such as calculating the expenses later came to require several months of work.

Under the leadership of Mr. Suzuki, the performance skill of the children has increased with secure steps. Yet there are some who say that they are nevertheless moved less and less by the performances of recent years. Despite rapid improvement in tone and skills, we are reminded that other conditions are involved in a moving performance.

THE SURPRISING ABILITY OF ECHILDREN This Year's Piano Graduations

Kenkoh Aoki

After the founding of the piano branch of the Suzuki Method, there have been twenty years of graduation ceremonies. This seems long, but on the other hand it seems as if the time has passed quickly.

The number of piano teachers has been increasing, and forty-three districts have already reported graduations. Including the unreported ones, there have probably been at least fifty. This alone indicates how well the graduation system has spread among teachers and students.

There are only four formal graduation ceremonies in all of Japan, so the students chosen to play at them are very few, and those who receive certificates directly from Dr. Suzuki are almost all graduates of the most advanced level. This makes the local graduations of importance, too, since they give numerous other students the chance to perform.

This year I went to the one in Kyushu, and just made it in time for the Tokyo graduation concert held on April 3. At Tokyo I heard many students perform, and watched the conferring of certificates. Each student whose name was called went up on stage, where their teachers were seated in a row, received a certificate, and joined

To revert to an old story, the welcoming performance of the Bach Double when Pablo Casals visited Japan in 1961 was scarcely flawless, and I listened to it with clenched fists. Yet, on listening to its recording now, I am struck by its strength and sincerity. I also find myself moved each year by the Twinkle Variations accompanied by Mr. Suzuki in person.

Each day anew — such is the philosophy of Mr. Suzuki, and those who study his method must pursue this ideal.

Once again this year we were able to win countless hearts as we carried through without accident the National Concert. I am grateful in particular to the executive committee and the Kanto District chapter heads, and wish to share my joy with all of you. ◊

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the rows of graduates behind the teachers. It was a pleasant, friendly sight.

This year, 7,546 students sent graduation tapes. This is about the same number as last year, but the student level has gone up every year. As Dr. Suzuki observes, their progress this year was particularly striking.

I have also noticed that the teachers seem to have started getting the knack of the Suzuki Method. The majority of the graduation tapes sent reflected Dr. Suzuki's instruction concerning "the importance of listening to, and playing with, records of great musicians." The students, I think, are playing these days a little more like Helvich, Giesecking, or Dinu Lipatti, etc.

The students also seem to be getting younger. The pre-elementary level students who sent tapes were almost all ages 4 and 5, the elementary level students were mostly 5 to 7. The pre-intermediary graduates were mostly 7 and 8. The fourth level students who sent tapes of Mozart Sonata K. 545 were 7 through 9. The twenty-five minute intermediate level piece, the famous Mozart Sonata K. 331, was mainly recorded by 8 to 10 year olds. 10 and 11 year olds

recorded the Italian Concerto. Up to here are elementary school students. Dr. Suzuki once said, "Try to have the children come at least this far." Today children pass this stage before they enter seventh grade.



Saori Iwamatsu (13) performs Mozart's Coronation, 1st movement with the Suzuki Chamber Orchestra, Toshio Takahashi conducting.

The next level is Mozart's Coronation. This is a big 32 minute piece with orchestral accompaniment. A few tapes arrived from 8 and 9 year-olds, but most of them were from children ages 11 to 13, half of whom were in elementary, half in middle school.

One third of the Bach Partita no.1 tapes were recorded by elementary school students. The rest were by junior high school students. Lipatti is the main recording listened to by them.

The highest level is Beethoven's "Appassionata." From both the technical and the musical point of view, this is, in a manner of speaking, a piece adults study. Three grade-schoolers challenged this piece, and the rest were middle and high school students.

Looking at the above statistics, the progress of the very young students is remarkable. Indeed children can develop endlessly depending upon the teachers and parents.

In this year's tapes, there was one sent by a boy which contained three graduation pieces including the Italian Concerto. When they heard this tape at a meeting of instructors and teachers from different districts, these veterans said, "This is a six-year-old child? How can you teach something like this? I'll have to re-think my teaching, too" I think that it's all as Dr. Suzuki has been saying: Children have endless potential.

The one last thing I wanted to mention is that there were 126 tapes of the Appassionata Sonata. This number will probably increase in the years ahead. ◊

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MUSIC: A MESSAGE FROM GOD A Mother's Note

Kazue Shimamori



At home on the first day of school for second son Ryoji. From left, Author, Emi, Taishi, and Ryoji.

Ohayo City where we live is the entrance to the Amakusa Islands off Kumamoto, Kyushu. Ours is an island of mild climate with a population of twenty thousand. My husband raises shrimp, and we live on the shore with few houses near us.

In April of 1987, I walked thirty minutes to the Noboridachi bus station with my oldest son (age 5), my second son (3), and my daughter (1). From there to the Sankaku bus stop, 15 minutes. To the Kumamoto Station by the Sankaku Line, 15 minutes. Then another 20 minutes by bus. At length we reached the studio of Mr. Otoyama Inomoto. "You can come every week?" he asked in surprise, but after a half-hour's talk, he conceded, "Well, your child seems to have the energy. Why don't we begin lessons next week," and my oldest child began the violin.

As the road was long, I always packed brown rice and snacks in backpacks. When I gave the children whole cucumbers to eat on the train, a mother with her child who sat beside us asked, "You let the children eat them whole?" Again, when I gave them unpeeled persimmons, I was asked, "They eat even the skins?" We met many people on our way to lessons. We got to know a woman who sold seaweed (the Sankaku Line runs through the Ariake Shoreline, the number-one seaweed producing center in Japan), who shared seaweed with us. Once we met an English tourist who said, "My daughter is macrobiotic, too. No sugar, no meat," and gave us some of the presents he'd gotten for his daughter.

On April 1st of the following year, my third son, Yudai, was born. Our house became even livelier. Even when he was wet or hungry, when my oldest began to play his violin, Yudai would stop crying. However, on the 16th of May, only 45 days after his birth, heaven reclaimed him. I cried every day, and I could say nothing to ease the children's shock. My oldest son, especially, was stunned, and he didn't have the spirit even to play the violin, which Yudai had loved. That year, I had also lost my father in January, and I was forced to confront the reality of death as I never had before.

At this time, what restored my strength and spirit was my encounter with the Bible (at the Christ Bible Class). "All who have burdens, come to me, and I will let you rest." I was drawn to this verse and could not forget it.

"Do not fear. Many help you."

"In heaven there is Christ, and with him is the child you love. Heaven and earth will become one to the blessing of your family. Look up to heaven always and pray. Serve your children, husband, and many others with a smile, like an angel." Clasp onto these words, written on the back of my Bible, I managed to get myself together even through my continuing sorrow.

Two years after my eldest began the violin, my daughter, just turned three, began lessons. Half a year later, this time my second son said, "I want to play violin, too," and in the end, all the children were playing violin. Not to speak of the tuition costs, even the travelling expenses were high, but we managed.

While the two younger children vied with each other in their practice, they reached "Two Grenadiers" in book 2. Their teacher told me, "This is a very important piece, so have them bring it to me again next week." Two weeks, three weeks, a month passed, and as I listened to them playing it tens and hundreds of times, I felt as if I were being drawn upward into a strange and unknown world. It was the world of music I was coming to know for the first time. It seemed like a message from God.

"It's three times the enjoyment, isn't it," said Mr. Inomoto. "No, three times the suffering," I replied. Really, with my lack of training the daily practice of the three children was hard for me. Still, along with the joy of the children, who learn piece after piece of music, I feel the almost unbearable allure of the strange and unknown world of music.

One time at dinner, my children were talking, and my eldest parablized, "I sweat and work to plow the wasteland, Ryoji levels it to get it ready to plant, and Emi plants the seeds." His brother said promptly, "That means you have to work the hardest."

This is actually very true. The younger children learn quickly what the eldest struggled to learn. Book 2, which took my first son nine months to learn, was learnt by the younger ones in three months.

One day when we got to Sankaku Station after their lesson, we were met by an unexpected surprise: my husband was waiting for us with

the boat. It takes only five minutes to our house by boat, and we took off with our older son at the wheel. The western sky was stained with the sunset, and in the eastern sky was the moon. I remember reaching home, full of thoughts about the day we had spent with such an abundance of happiness. I grew up in Nagano Prefecture without a seashore, and such scenes move me as if I were a child.

Finding early spring wild fuchsia, I thought of the haiku, "Twinkling like the stars are the wild fuchsia." Seeing rhubarb plants, I thought of Issa's haiku, "Leaping onto a rhubarb leaf slips a frog and tumbles." With the fragrance of cherry or plum blossoms, the thirty-one syllabled poem from the ninth century came to my mind: "With the coming of the west wind, waft to us your fragrance, o plum blossom, do not forget the spring just because the master of the house is not here," and another that starts "If someone asks what the heart of the people of the Spreading Island is."

Appreciating the roadside flowers, the children and I walk slowly through the days. I think of how the children educate me as I do them. I don't think that I will get a driver's license in the future. The blessings of nature are discovered through walking. We feel it fully in our bodies, and are grateful for each new encounter — and we have just begun our walks on our way to lessons.

The children have barely begun to learn, but through the violin, I hope that they will journey through music and humanity with an abundance of joy and feeling. Some day I hope to see them flower, each in a different way. ♪

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