

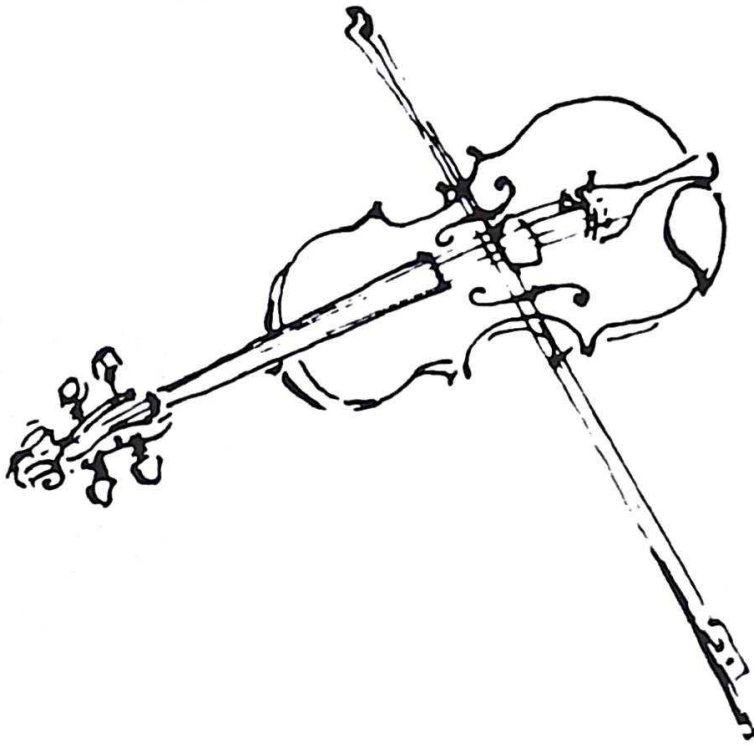
TALENT EDUCATION JOURNAL



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Masayoshi Kataoka

The knack of home practice lies in "inventiveness." In considering how to skillfully master the project given by the teacher, and how to make the most of his instruction in home practice, one needs to be inventive. I believe it is important to be critical of oneself in trying to discover a better method within daily practice sessions. Depending upon parental ingenuity, the child can develop almost beyond recognition. Writing on twin sisters in "Graduating Together from the Piano School," Dr. Suzuki says that "every child grows if nurtured." Parents should use their brains to help their children grow.

This fall the Ten Children will make the twenty-fourth performing tour to the U.S. From the reports on the 1987 tour, we introduce Masaaki Honda's and Yuko Hirose's.

Last December when Marta Istomin (Mrs. Casals) was invited to the Casals Hall, newly constructed in Tokyo exclusively for chamber music, she listened to a performance by talent education children. Akio Mizuno's "Welcome Concert for Marta Istomin" reports on the event.

Dr. Suzuki has devised a new balanced bow for small violins. It is an important discovery for guiding toward rich tone. The "Lectures on Music" in this issue concern instruction in bowhold and beautiful vibrato.

The last issue completed the translation of Dr. Suzuki's *Ability Is Not Inborn*. This issue starts in installments his collected essays *Ability Development in Music* in which he details his ideas on music education.

As usual we conclude the issue with a "Mother's Note," this time contributed by Mrs. Nishina of the Nagano Chapter.

GRADUATING TOGETHER FROM THE PIANO SCHOOL

Middle School Twins

Suzuki Shin'ichi

When I was listening to the graduation tapes of students of Hiroko Suzuki, a Piano Study Group lecturer, I encountered accomplished, musical performances of Beethoven's "Appas-sionata," the graduation piece for the third and final stage of the post-advanced level, by fourteen year old middle school twins. This was early January.

I was very happy that, thanks to Hiroko Suzuki's good instruction, both of them learned to play the big piece so well. Their names are Tazu and Chizu Doi.

Hiroko Suzuki attached a note to the tapes:

My eyes almost tear when I think that Tazu and Chizu, who were cute four year olds when they started, are now middle school students playing Beethoven's "Appas-sionata." I have been with them for ten years. The Dois have four girls. The older sisters, having also finished the third stage of the post-advanced level of the Piano School, entered a music college. The younger two, I think, have developed without obstacles, with ease and joy.

I certainly would not hesitate to call this a "Suzuki family." While listening to the tapes, I felt heartily grateful to the wonderful parents for fostering all four of their

children with the superior ability to complete the entire Piano School curriculum as well as to Hiroko Suzuki for her great instruction.

This example provides proof of the fact that "every child grows; everything depends upon how the child is raised."

I believe that it is the greatest happiness in these children's lives that all four of them were raised with outstanding ability through music by parents with profound love and knowledge of the Suzuki method's principle: "every child grows if nurtured."

I would like seriously to ask those who have children: please realize the facts that "every child grows depending on the parent" and that "every child grows depending on the teacher."

Hiroyuki Takahashi started violin at age three while attending a brain injured children's nursery school. Last year, at age eighteen, he beautifully played Tchaikovsky's violin concerto, one of the highest violin pieces in the world, demonstrating superior sensibility and skills. Let me ask you to believe in this fact.



Tazu



Chizu

"The child's fate is in the parent's hands." It is not too late to start today. Every child grows depending upon how he is raised. Let me ask fathers and mothers to resolve to foster your children as worthy human beings.

A WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT

The Twenty-Third Overseas Tour

Masaaki Honda

Lions Club Hosts Us

The 1987 overseas tour started in Vernal, Utah. It is a small city with a population of 10,000, located 200 kilometers east of Salt Lake City.

Since I was not familiar with the word "vernal," I consulted the dictionary and found that the word, literally "of the spring," meant "mild and warm, young and refreshing." Being in the highland, the winter climate of this area is severe. I think that the first settlers named this place Vernal with a yearning and hope for a balmy weather.

Our host was the Lions Club. This was the first time that the club hosted us. It is good that a service group like this acts as the center of the event because it helps the outward spread of the movement.

On October 1, the first play-in took place in the junior high school auditorium, which had good facilities and acoustics. To my surprise, over one hundred Suzuki children gathered, including some from Salt Lake City, Colorado, and Wyoming.

The first concert of the tour was held that evening in the high school auditorium. The main attraction in the program on this tour was the first number, the Tchaikovsky violin concerto played in unison by seven children. The audience seemed struck by the beautiful performance of this piece, regarded as among the most difficult of violin concertos. When Schubert's "Ave Maria" concluded the program, the entire audience stood in long ovation, and the curtain call was repeated. The following concerts were likewise warmly received all the way to Los Angeles, our final stop.

Innovative Music Education

At eight o'clock the following morning, we left for Idaho Falls, a 400 kilometer bus trip. We traced the Snake River up to Wyoming, which is 260,000 kilometers wide with only 500,000 people. Wyoming is known to us because of its colonial history and wild nature. Fort Laramie is particularly famous for the fierce fight between the whites and the Indians. Our bus wove through beautiful mountains. When we finally came upon a flat field where cows and horses grazed, there was a single house. I was deeply moved by this landscape which resembled a scene in "Shane," a movie I saw long ago.

The concert, seventy percent attended, was well reviewed in the newspaper the following morning:

Suzuki Tour Young, Brilliant

Post-war Japan has set a world standard for such products as cameras, automobiles and pianos. But Japan's most extraordinary world export is a revolutionary music education phenomenon that has been producing artists (particularly of string instruments) of extremely high technical levels at tender, young ages over the past 50 years. Products of the Suzuki method have for some years taken conspicuous places in professional positions around the world.

Saturday night the 1987 Suzuki Talent Education Tour of the United States and Canada gave one of the most incredible musical performances I remember hearing in the Civic Auditorium.

Playing to a fair-sized audience, this amazing group of young artists, ranging from 8 to 16, played such heavyweight virtuoso work as movements from violin concertos by Tchaikovsky, Sibelius, and Paganini, with other works (some for piano and cello) by Bach, Veracini, de Falla, Kreisler and Chopin for relief.

The difficulty of these works, plus the quality of these performances would have been a credit to any

mature performer. But the very young ages of these artists made this even even more spectacular. Traditionalists among string players are sure that there is something phony about Suzuki musical training. Let me tell you, any traditional approach that can boast performances of this degree of accomplishment, refinement, musicianship and artistry is free to cast the first verbal stone. The technical difficulty of these works lays to rest the old myth that Suzuki students learn only by rote.

Practice Is the Way to Accomplishment

We visited Dallas for the second time, following our first visit last year. With Mark Ruttle as new director, Dallas's Suzuki was renewed. Mr. Ruttle, a famous young pianist, has practical ability. With the cooperation of a pediatrician Dr. Carolyn Ashworth and others, the number of members has increased and the organization has become more secure. It is now developing as the area's social movement. A result is that they succeeded in having the city's cooperation in designating the day of our visit Suzuki Day.

This year the Methodist Church was used. At ten o'clock on the morning of October 5, there was a mini concert for 1,500 children. At seven in the evening, we gave a full concert. The *Dallas Morning News* carried a review the following day under the heading, "Japanese children proved that practice is the way to accomplishment." Mr. Ruttle's added comment said, "Suzuki became more famous in the States than in Japan. However, American children cannot perform as well as this due to lack of discipline."

A Concert at a Church (Florida)

In Florida, two performances were given, one at Clearwater on the Gulf of Mexico and another at Fort Lauderdale. Clearwater does not betray its name: it is a

beautiful place with limpid water and, on the beach, snow white sand. Professor and Mrs. Cook have been living here following his retirement. Since we were invited to the opening of the new Ruth Eckert Hall, we have been here every other year.

The Cooks always appeared at one place or another in the States to hear the children for the past several years. Since the children performed in their home area this year, they casually drove to the concert, but I felt concerned because they did not look in the best of their health.



Concert at Fort Lauderdale

We had already been invited several times to Fort Lauderdale to be included in the concert series of the Presbyterian Church, so we have become friends with the minister as well as with Ms. Wilson who handles the program. The beautiful chapel with high stained glass windows easily holds 3,000 seats counting the third floor, but it was nearly full with an audience of a sophisticated sense of music as might be expected of a church concert series.

This is a famous winter resort along with Miami, and is a big city with a population of almost one million. There are canals and bays all over the city, mooring countless yachts. Mr. Brown, my host, who runs a yacht selling company, told me that many people purchased luxurious yachts at high

cost despite the depression. I felt I saw the latent power of the American economy.

Our Old Virginia

Leaving Florida in a downpour on the early morning of the twentieth, at noon we arrived at Lynchburg in full sun. We were met at the airport by the Mayor and the president of the Chamber of Commerce, and welcomed by Suzuki children's performance under the leadership of Rudy Hazucha. Virginia not only has an old history as one can tell from Foster's songs but is rich in beautiful landscapes. Since we visited it ten years ago, this was our "old Virginia." Greeted by many people after the concert, I deeply felt the friendship that tied us through Suzuki.

Honorary Citizenship

We covered approximately 250 kilometers by bus from Lynchburg to Hickory. When we got off the the highway at Greensboro for lunch and wandered in the town, we spotted from afar a sign that said "Kyoto" so we went in. Everyone was delighted to have Japanese food after a long while. The manager was puzzled as to why we were there in a town which no sightseers visited.

We heard that business was booming in Hickory, famous as a producer of home furnishings. On visiting a factory of hand made furniture, I was surprised to learn that all the 3000 dollar arm chairs we saw had been sold. What with yachts in Florida and the sale of chairs here, I had to recognize the strength of the American economy.

After the performance the Mayor of Hickory awarded us the key to the city and honorary citizenship. This was proof of the city's deep interest in the Suzuki program. I was moved to see such enthusiasm toward education in this small town.

With the Toronto Symphony

This was our fourth visit to Toronto. On arriving at the airport at Charlottesville, North Carolina, we tried to check in and found that the departure of our flight was delayed by half an hour. When we finally finished the procedure and went to the gate, they told us that the flight was cancelled so would you please switch to another flight on a different airline. Since this new flight was due for departure in fifteen minutes, we ran in great haste along the long concourse, and to our relief barely made it. I was nervous all that while, because if we missed the flight, it would have led to all kinds of impediments.



Concert at Toronto

Toronto Talent Education is headquartered in Seneca College and is led by Jane Nagai. Nearly twenty teachers teach there in violin, cello, piano, and flute schools, forming a flourishing movement. The concert here is always at the Seneca College Hall. With the stage at the bottom of a bowl-shaped hall, there is a unique mood. The audience must find it good not to have to be aware of the heads of those seated in front. The three thousand seats were all sold one hour ahead of time, and a Suzuki group which drove from Rochester, New York, was finally able to get in after negotiation.

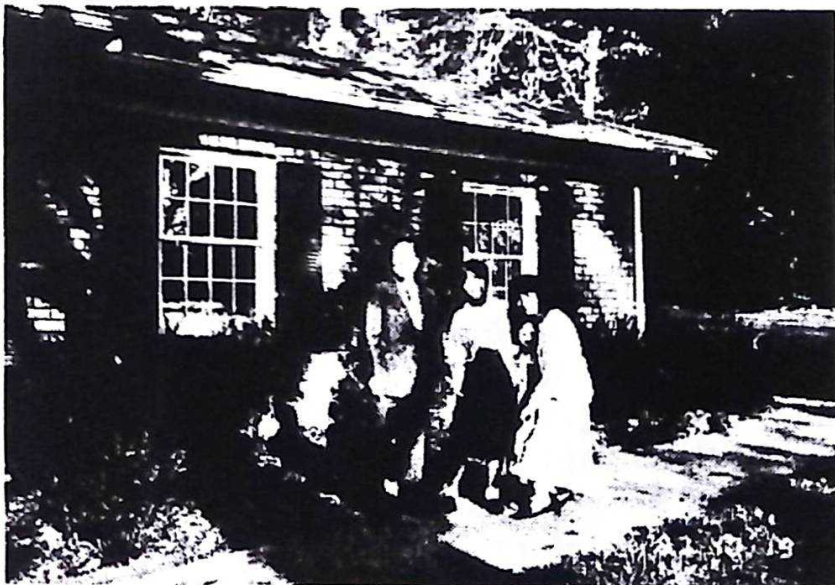
On the following day, there was a Japanese Canadian joint concert at Roy Thompson Hall with the accompaniment of the Toronto Symphony. The Japanese tour children lining up in the right half and Canadian Suzuki children in the left half of the back part of the stage, they played several pieces together. This was a beautiful scene of international friendship.

Universities Lead Talent Education

We visited the University of Tennessee at Knoxville once several years ago when Professor Starr was still there. Professor Goursby who moved there this spring invited us after a long time. This requires much courage.

Two performances were given, one mini concert for children and one full concert. Betty Pickle of the Knoxville News being a graduate of talent education, a detailed report on the Suzuki method was carried in the newspaper the following morning.

Every member of the tour was honored to receive the title of an honorary citizen.



At a host family's house in Knoxville

Memphis is located in the western edge of the same state, on the opposite side of Knoxville. The center of talent

education is in the State University at Memphis. Suzuki instructors are on the university payroll as faculty. Such academic leadership in talent education, a phenomenon unseen in Japan, is something to be envied. I wish a university somewhere in Japan would adopt talent education in its curriculum.

Several not so successful visits to Memphis had preceded this one. To our relief, the concert this time, hosted by a church in Lindenwood, was well attended by an audience which filled the hall.

At a High School Gym

Parsons is a small city with a population of about 8,000. Since there is no airport, we took a bus from Tulsa, Oklahoma, crossing the state border during the three hour ride.

We were invited to this home ground of Norma Jean Seaton, former president of the Suzuki Association of the Americas, thanks to her great effort. Kansas was not doing well due to the poor sale of agricultural products, and the abandoned houses along the federal highway, with boards on the windows, appeared desolate.

I gladly accepted Mrs. Seaton's invitation to talk to high school students. After the children played a few pieces at the gym, I talked for half an hour on how talent is fostered by the environment. I concluded: "Probably I will never come here again. Even if I did, you will have changed, and so will I. In Japan we talk about 'one moment, one encounter.' This means that the same encounter is never repeated in one's life. Therefore, it is important to live every day to our best." When I was on the way out after my talk, a blond boy approached me and said, "I was greatly inspired by your talk. I will never forget it throughout my life." I was pleased to know that at least one person in the audience understood me.



Performance at a high school in Parsons

Detroit for the Fifth Time

We gave a performance in Detroit for the fifth time, although the sponsors differed each time.

This year we were invited by the Detroit Conservatory, where, with Laura Larson who studied in Matsumoto on the faculty, proper instruction by talent education is given.

In the States, as I have already mentioned, universities and conservatories take the leadership in adopting talent education. Conservatories, however, do not necessarily seem easy to run. President Nelson of the Detroit Conservatory, apparently with a good administrative talent, holds an annual auction of international wines, the sale of which serves to raise the school funds. Aside from whether this is good or bad, I was impressed by the interesting idea.

The concert was given in a completely refurbished orchestra hall with fine acoustics as might be expected. The almost full house audience was deeply impressed.

The Mayor's Welcome Message (Cleveland)

The sponsor of our visit to Cleveland, which we had previously visited twice, was the Cleveland Institute of

Music headed by the famous violinist David Cerone. As soon as he was appointed president several years ago, the active concert player started to demonstrate a great business talent. Recently, the Cleveland Institute of Music has been strikingly noticeable, and rumor runs that it will eventually compare with such famous schools as Juilliard and Curtis.

Since being joined by Michelle Higa who had studied for two years in Matsumoto, the Suzuki division has been steadily developing. The Institute with a lot of approximately 60,000 square meters enjoys an ideal environment surrounded by cultural institutions including a museum, a library, and a hall. "The Talent Education Institute is planning to found a conservatory type junior college. We will be satisfied if we accomplish half of this," I said to President Cerone.

Cleveland was celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of Michaelson Morley, gathering first class artists in the area of sculpture, painting, and music. The Suzuki Children were one of the groups invited. The theme of the celebration, I learned, was light, space, time, and matter. Having heard the name of Michaelson Morley for the first time, I did not understand how this theme related to art. However, on checking later, I found that Michaelson was a Nobel Prize winner who discovered that the speed of light did not change regardless of the wind. I also learned that Einstein reached his idea of relativity through getting a hint from this.

The concert was held at the hall of the Cleveland Institute of Music at eight o'clock in the evening on October 27. In his opening address, President Cerone not only praised Mr. Suzuki's achievements but demonstrated an understanding of, and respect for, talent education.

After the intermission, I thanked for the invitation and added that "our hearts will have a mutual bondage through music." This was followed by a "Proclamation of Welcome to the Suzuki Children from Japan" read by Mayor George Voinovich. Let me quote from it:

It is with affection, esteem and admiration that I join with the citizens of Cleveland in welcoming the Suzuki

Children from Japan to our thrice-acclaimed All-America City.

The Cleveland Institute of Music will host the Suzuki Children, who are here on their 1987 Talent Education Tour of the United States. The youngsters will perform at The Institute on Tuesday, October 27, 1987, at 8 p.m.

We are honored to have the Suzuki Children in our midst and gratified with the opportunity to hear what I am confident will be a superb command performance. The tour group consists of 10 Japanese children, ages 8 to 16, who were chosen by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki from towns and cities across Japan, five teachers and Dr. Masaaki Honda, Tour Director and representative of Dr. Suzuki.

In welcoming the children, we also take great pleasure in extending this tribute of praise and gratitude to Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, who at 89, is still teaching and working in Matsumoto, Japan.

That Dr. Suzuki has trained, internationally, hundreds of teachers who have taught thousands of children to learn to play and love music all over the world is a matter of splendid record. For these, and all of his remarkable contributions to education, we applaud him.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, George V. Voinovich, Mayor of the City of Cleveland, do hereby extend these civic greetings to our esteemed and artistic guests — the Suzuki Children from Japan — wishing them every success in their visit to Cleveland. Welcome!

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I
have set my hand and caused the
Corporate Seal of the City of
Cleveland to be affixed on this
27th Day of October in the Year
1987.

George V. Voinovich, MAYOR

I felt honored by the welcome that was more than we deserved.

Conclusion

Since I had something to take care of, I left for home alone on the early morning of October 29. As I flew first from Cleveland to Los Angeles, then transferred to a direct flight to Narita, I thought much about this tour. What was the most pleasing was that everyone gave fine performances in good health. I was relieved to hear those who had seen the Suzuki children in the past unanimously comment that this time it was the best. I also realized that the overseas tour which has lasted for twenty-three years contributed to widely and deeply spreading the talent education movement throughout the world. Each year I talk about Mr. Suzuki's philosophy, and I am glad that by doing so I help people understand that the aim of this movement is not to produce musicians but to create the foundation for fine human beings.

I also thought about the theme of the Michaelson Morley festival in Cleveland: light, space, time, matter. Suddenly I realized that this was the same thing as the passage of life. Light is energy; it can be likened to an individual. Space is where the individual lives. Matter is the object of life. Everyone is equally given time.

We live on the same globe, study and work within the given twenty four hours. While we pursue different objects in our lives, what creates great differences in the results of our pursuits is how we use our space and time.

Perhaps talent education demonstrates this fact to the world — this was my deep felt thought.

THE WAY OF TONALIZATION Suzuki Children's American Tour

Yuko Hirose

I read this Spanish story in a newspaper on New Year's day. A famous guitarist looked so happy that a friend asked him "What happened?" Answering that something wonderful had happened that day, the guitarist ordered a bottle of champagne. It was learned that the guitar he ordered seventeen years earlier had just arrived. "It's supposed to take twenty-five years," the guitar maker said to the guitarist. "Because you are so impatient, it ended up taking eight years less." This was actually witnessed by the author Yoshie Hotta who has been living overseas for the past ten years.

The way of tonalization I have in mind is something like this guitar making process. "It's not like pushing the button on the tape recorder and producing sound instantly, is it," I thought, delighted by the story.

The Suzuki children's American tour has lasted twenty-three years or so. This duration of time with the Suzuki tone producing technique made it possible last year for seven girls between ages eight and sixteen to play in unison Tchaikovsky's violin concerto.

When I heard Mayuko tuning, I thought "I see, no wonder she can play." Clear articulation, I think, means being able to learn to perform. "Violin is easy; music is hard," Mr. Suzuki says. And in that sense, he has in fact made "Violin is easy" a reality. In Toronto, Canada, they had an opportunity to play the Bach Double with the Toronto Symphony. When I was listening to their rehearsal in a seat in the hall, I was struck by the clarity of the children's leaping, echoing sounds.

The performing tour of the children studying by Shin'ichi Suzuki's teaching method started at the request of

Americans. In the past twenty-three years, America has changed radically. I am moved, however, that Americans have continued to invite the children even when the country was going through hardships, and I find in this the American spirit.



At a host family's in Los Angeles
Far left is author.

Many performers picked up Gershwyn last year, which was the fiftieth anniversary of his death. He was a performer I had wished to play for some time, and his anniversary coincided with the moment when I felt confident about playing him. So I included "Rhapsody in Blue" and Preludes in my recital program late last year.

George Gershwyn for me is one of the people who represent "the best of America." In the era when cars and machines were not so highly developed and when human bodies themselves were operating, every inch of Gershwyn was operating in a rhythmic, bright, clear world. His was a melody which did not sink even when sad. Gershwyn is, I think, a composer who tells you frankly that he loves music, loves the piano. When I said in the States that I intended to play Gershwyn after returning to Japan, without exception American faces lit up in such a way that I felt envious. How passionate and beautiful it sounded when Professor Clifford Cook, while conducting, sang from "Rhapsody in Blue."

We travel in the States while staying with American families. They are indeed varied. In some families, every

member is seated at meal times and all eat after saying grace. In others, they eat and finish in shifts when they like. In some houses, utensils with a history are beautifully set, and all the food is also layed out on the table; then they eat in neat steps. In some, the wife keeps busy in the kitchen all the time, and the dishes come to the table as they are cooked. Sometimes dogs and cats are in the same dining room, or a parrot adds merriment with parroting. Given this variety, how can one say "I have to have it this way"? On such occasions, I think that "harmony" is a powerful word. Impressed by the parrot's incessant talk, when I started to operate my machine wanting to take this chance to record it in a video film, it was funny that the bird became totally silent. And how very talkative the six year old girl of the family was. According to her mother, they worried because she had no speech whatsoever until age four, but once she started to talk, she never stopped.

In a family of two very intelligent looking teenage daughters, three teenage Suzuki children stayed. These three were so quiet and reticent (how could I believe this?) that, the mother told me, the daughters were worried that the three girls did not like them. There were two cats in the house. One was a friendly cat which came by right away as if greeting with a smile, "Hi, welcome!" The other was shy, although not uninterested. At a little distance, it did some acts like lying on its back. This little incident was sufficient to make me think it scary to discuss things saying "Americans are . . ." or "Japanese are . . ." Don't we have enough examples of variety at home?

Although we hear that in the States people think you are ill if you don't talk, I have the experience of staying in a house where people were very quiet and finding it quite comfortable. It is not simple to determine just what is most important either to the host or the guest. In any case, I find something that has been nurtured in the history of American host families, not unlike the story of the guitarist, and recently I have started to realize that there is a way to receive hospitality in such a way that the guest can be his or her spontaneous self, that the host and guest can merge in a

world of concord as in music, when they harmonize with each other.

In Utah, the light of the stars and the moon reached us so sharply and clearly that I felt as though we had come to a land near heaven. The cat of the house where I stayed in Utah was not supposed to come into my room. It sat still by the window at night, however. I opened the window to invite the fresh air before going to the concert, and happened to leave without thinking of closing it. On returning late at night, what did I find but the cat snugly asleep by the side of my suitcase full of clothes.

When we enter a town by car and find the trees lively and luscious, we often hear that the town is booming. In the States, an entire town is like a living creature, representing the situation of the community. Suppose we enter a town where we receive an impression that there is no lawn, plants are dead, and houses are left to decay, we may hear that just recently a company with 500 employees went bankrupt.

In Cleveland, already in late October, yellow leaves were whirling down in the wind. It looked like rainfall. Viewing this kind of falling-leaf scene for the first time, I found it beautiful. The beautiful music hall we observed there was built in America's good old days. The walls were gentle pink so that people's faces would look good. Care even went into seat numbers which were embroidered. Everyone feels comfortable when entering this place; yet why is it that such halls are built nowhere now? Maybe it takes twenty-five years to build such a hall. I hear that famous gardens were prepared through many generations before completion. Although it is said that the present age is rich, I have no idea in what aspect. On reading about guitar making on the New Year, I recalled Mr. Suzuki's tone, refined through months and years that supercede the guitar making time. The echo that reverberates in the depth of my heart each time I hear his tone demonstrates for me the richness of the world that is created over time.

Talent Education, no. 83

THE WELCOME CONCERT
for
MARTA ISTOMIN (Mrs. Pablo Casals)

Akio Mizuno
Director, Tokyo Office

A new building was completed in the old site of the Shufu-no-Tomo Publishing Company (across the street from Meiji University's front gate) in Surugadai in the center of Tokyo culture. In this building which beautifully combines old and new construction styles, the first Casals Hall in Japan was brought to birth. Meant exclusively for chamber music, this wonderfully elegant hall seats 500.

When this Casals Hall opened on October 15, 1987, Aoki Kenkoh, board director, and I attended the event, representing Talent Education. At the reception after the concert, Yasuhiko Ishikawa, vice president of Shufu-no-Tomo, indicated to Mr. Aoki that Marta Istomin was visiting Japan in December and that he wished to see both her and Mr. Suzuki then. Since both were extremely busy, however, we were unable to coordinate their schedules, and instead it was decided that children would play for her in Tokyo.

At five o'clock on Friday, December 18, Mrs. Istomin's party arrived half an hour earlier than expected at the Casals Hall on the ninth floor of the Shufu-no-Tomo Cultural Center at Surugadai, Kanda. The thirty cellists and thirty violinists who had rushed after school from various places in Tokyo were in the middle of a rehearsal. It was cut off in a flurry, and the first on the program, Saint Saëns' "Swan," quietly started in a somewhat tense atmosphere that enveloped over a hundred people present. This was followed by Beethoven's "Minuet" and three other cello pieces. After almost every piece, Marta Istomin shouted "Bravo" in an unexpectedly big voice that surprised me.

The violinists played Fiocco Allegro and the Bach Double. She seemed impressed by the clarity with which these pieces were performed. The half hour program concluded with the "Song of the Seashore" played jointly by cellos and violins. Marta Istomin briskly rose, and greeted in the following manner:

Thank you very much for the children's performances. I was moved by their wonderful playing. I strongly felt that these small children really enjoy making music.

I think it important to develop a music loving heart while children are small. Although not everyone becomes a professional musician, the music loving heart acquired now, I think, will continue to provide spiritual food later on, and will be the basis for future appreciation of music.

Children with music loving hearts will become fine adults, and through this, Japan will become a wonderful country.

I am sure all these are achieved thanks to mothers' patience and love of children. Something like this is now happening throughout the world. I hope it will repeat hereafter through many generations.

Suzuki classes are now found all over the world. Hearing today's concert, I felt that a model example was shown by the children and mothers from the Tokyo classes.

I was moved when I visited you twenty-six year ago. I am grateful that today again I was able to hear this beautiful performance. I hope to revisit before another span of twenty-six years passes.

Following the concert, we had dinner with Marta Istomin and her interpreter at the Yama-no-Ue Hotel nearby. Talent Education was represented by eleven people: Masaaki Honda, board member; Hachiro Hirose and Hitomi Kasuya, violin teachers; Shushi Arima (Adamira), Mitsuru Sato,

Yoshihiko Terada, Usui Yoji, Masataka Aikawa, cello teachers; Yasutaka Aikawa, board member and representative of the Kanto District branch directors, and myself. Mihoko Kurokawa who accompanied on the piano was absent as she was otherwise engaged.



Teachers and students with Marta Istomin
From left to right, Usui, Honda, Istomin, Hirose, Arima

This kind of dinner is usually hard to swing, but on this occasion lively conversations evolved, starting out with recollections of the Casals' first visit to Japan, and moving on to such topics as the Casals Museum in Prade which as many as five teachers present had visited, and Marta Istomin's work as the music director of the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Cancelling her next appointment, she stayed till well after seven.

Pablo Casals the cellist, who deserves the name of a true maestro in the international music world in the past and present died at ninety-four ten years ago. The Casalses came to Japan only once in the fall of 1971. We were able to enjoy the greatest contact with the couple at this one never to be repeated opportunity.

Twenty-seven years ago in November, three hundred Suzuki children played violin and cello for them at Bunkyo Public Hall in Tokyo. I remember that the program revolved around the Vivaldi a minor and the Bach Double. The Casalses were seated with the Suzukis on the first floor

around the twelfth row. The moment the performances were over, Casals rose, and, before we had a time to blink, he was on stage and his speech began. The content of the speech best reveals the greatness of his spirit. At Dr. Masaaki Honda's request, I would like to reproduce portions of it here:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I assist to one of the most moving scenes, that one can see. . . . I don't think that in any country in the world we could feel such spirit of fraternity or cordiality in its utmost. . . . And this is what has impressed me most in this country. The superlative desire of highest things in life and how wonderful it is to see that the grownup people think of the smallest like this as to teach them to begin with the noble feelings, with noble deeds. And one of these is music. To train them to music to make them understand that music is not only sound to have to dance or to have small pleasure, but such high thing in life that perhaps it is music that will save the world. Now, I not only congratulate you, the teachers, the grown-up people, but I want to say: my whole respect and my heartiest congratulations.*

I see in these beautiful words the image of Casals playing Bach's Unaccompanied Cello Suites.

I would like to thank Hachiro Hirose who rehearsed the violin students for this concert and Yoshihiko Terada who organized the cello students. Last, I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the late Jun Hattori (father of Misao Sumigana, violin instructor, Kanto District) who recorded Casals in 1971, when quality recording was still extremely difficult.

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*For the entire speech see Waltraud Suzuki, *My Life with Suzuki*, Ability Development, 1987, pp. 49-50.

THE BALANCED BOW I INVENTED FOR SMALL SIZE VIOLINS

An Innovation Toward Richer Tone

Shin'ichi Suzuki

For young students who play small size violins, I have invented an improved bow which changes their tone to a surprisingly richer tone. Let me call this the Suzuki Bow.

I am pleased that I discovered something good for children. I would like teachers to try this bow throughout the country as soon as possible so that everyone will be able to produce rich, big tone on a small violin.

Please see the photographs of a balanced bow. "Make a balanced bow in which the weight is equally divided between the tip and bottom," I asked Mr. Sugitoh, a bow maker in Nagoya. Before long, he came up with a very nice idea: he created such a bow by adding to the tip a beautifully shaped piece of lead weighing the same as the frog. As the photograph shows, this bow can be balanced at the center.

When I tried playing with the bow, it produced big tone just as I had thought. I had others try, too. They were delighted by the amount of sound.

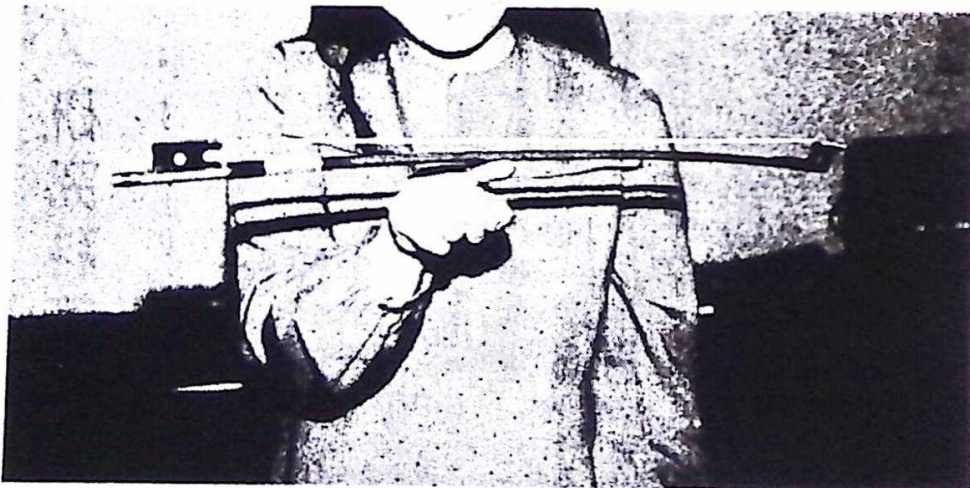
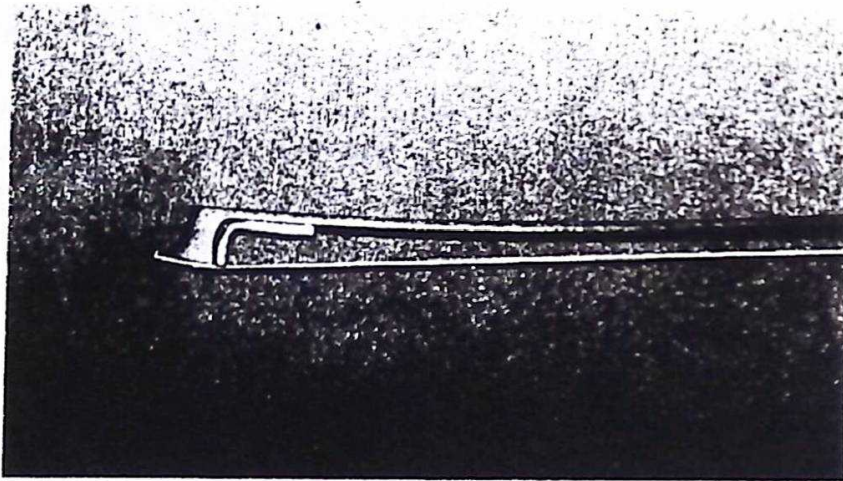
So I decided to ask Mr. Sugitoh to produce many such balanced bows for small violins.

I would like to request teachers to start small children on a balanced Suzuki bow from now on when they begin lessons. It will change their tone. Following a violin bow

innovation in Japan, I would like to spread it internationally for Suzuki method children.

Naturally this is a bow for beginners. When a child moves to a bigger violin and a normal bow, instruction in bow manouvering technique will be needed. I would like you then to start teaching how to produce the same big and beautiful tone with a normal bow.

Make use of a normal size Christoph bow (balanced bow) at that time. It is important to guide the student toward richer tonality through practicing with a bow that helps produce big, fine sound.



INNOVATION: A NEW WAY TO TEACH BOWHOLD

Hold the Bow with a Rounded Little Finger

Lectures on Music (56)

Shin'ichi Suzuki

Here is a request for violin teachers everywhere. I will report here my discovery in teaching how to hold the bow. Please apply it in your instruction.

This bowhold is a new, important approach to teaching the technique of bowing. (Try it with a pencil.)

1. Lightly hold the bow with the little finger rounded. First let the student round his little finger before holding the bow; then help him put the tip of the little finger on the bow.

2. Round the ring finger, and place its tip on the bow. You are now holding the bow with two fingers.

3. Then add the tips of the middle and index fingers, also rounded.

4. Bend the thumb also, and hold the bow so that the thumb (the right edge) comes between the middle and ring fingers.

Carefully look at the photographs, and teach your students to hold the bow in this manner.

Help form the habit so that whenever they pick up the bow they are already holding the bow this way with the finger tips. Teach them that "this is how to hold the bow." Please properly teach how to shape the finger tips for the bowhold.

Hold the bow with the finger tips a little lower than the nails.

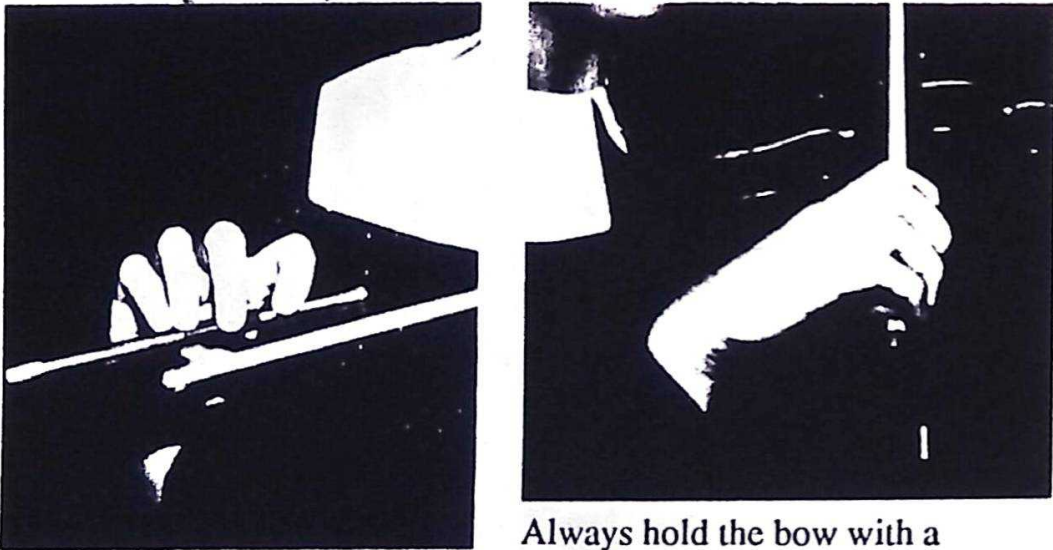
This is the bowhold which makes bowing possible.

This bowhold is the foundation of the crucial ability of bowing, because it allows the fingers to maneuver the bow freely. It becomes possible to move the bow up and down or in a semicircular motion.

Promptly try this approach for all of your students. I think their tone will become big and beautiful.

Keep the root of the index finger low as you play, i.e., somewhat lower than the wood part of the bow.

The tone will become bigger and more beautiful.



Always hold the bow with a rounded little finger.



This Year's Project in the Violin School **—Beautiful Vibrato—**

Every morning I have been enjoying listening to this year's graduation tapes. Finding the violin tone richer than last year, I am pleased by the improvement teachers have made in their instruction.

However, lack of skillful instruction is felt nationwide in vibrato: beautiful, accomplished vibrato is rare, and in many performances, vibrato is completely absent although the left fingers are moving. Vivaldi's g minor concerto for middle level graduation, especially, sounds as if almost no note is vibrating in many performances.

I would like all teachers to do their best in vibrato instruction which starts with Book 4, making it your responsibility this year to develop beautiful vibrato in every student. Let this be the year of the study of how to teach accomplished vibrato, and seriously study vibrato at your local teacher seminars as well.

Naturally it is important to study how to instruct in tone; however, even though beautiful tone is developed, fifty percent of the musical performance is missing if nothing but the fingers of the left hand move, and no vibrato is added. This is like a beginner student's performance.

Proper instruction in vibrato is one of the crucial responsibilities of us instructors. Please remember.

Next, let me write down a point or two that might be helpful in vibrato instruction.

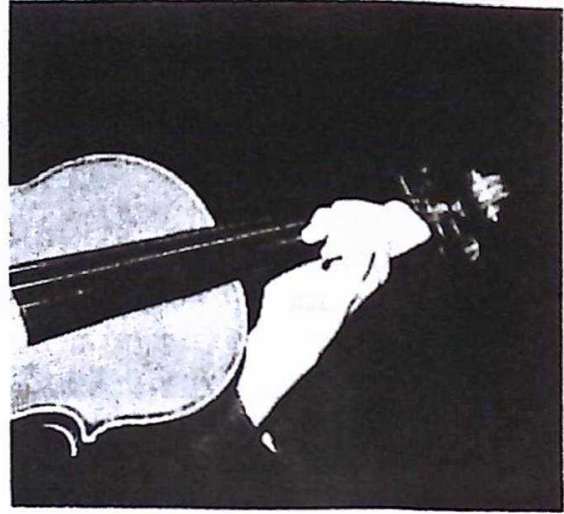
Instructional Points:

It is no good to shape the left hand so that the fingers press strings with the nails vertically straight. Instruct your students to shape the left hand and fingers as in the photograph. Have the student place a finger on a string, the fingers keeping the nails diagonal against the strings, and try to vibrate. This is how the left hand should be.

Have the student practice vibrating while listening to the two different tones: the basic tone of the note and a slightly lower tone.



Left hand finger tips. Place the part of the finger tip under the nail on the string like this.



This finger shape with vertical nails is not good.

Bring the Elbow (Arm) Forward

—Move the Bow with the Elbow (Arm) Back and Forth Parallel to the Bridge—

Move the bow in a straight line above the piano keys parallel to the bridge, producing sound with the horse hair.

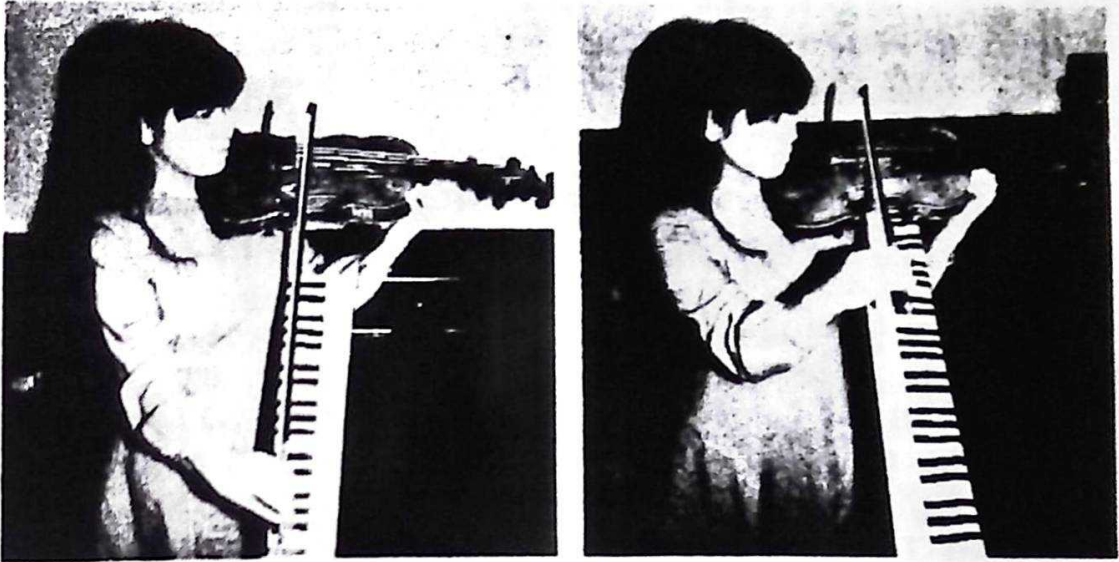
Look at the photos closely.

Observe the position of the right elbow and hand which carry the bow in a straight line parallel to the bridge over the piano keyboard.

Always move the elbow and fingers together. To perform means for the elbow (arm) to let the string ring with the bow (horse hair). It is the elbow that performs.

Apply no strength at all to the wrist of the bow hand, but always move it pliantly as it carries the bow.

This is an important teaching point (always keep the wrist supple; move the hand in a relaxed manner).



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Man is a child of the environment.

Sound breathes life —
Without form it lives.

Strings are mindless
They only sing forth the heart
Of those who let them ring.

— Shin'ichi Suzuki

HOW TO REFINE SENSIBILITY

Shin'ichi Suzuki

Ability Development in Music (1954-57), Part I
From *Development of the Suzuki Method*

Foster through the Ear

Akio Shiroyama and Yuriko Asama are both good children and hard workers. Their parents, who are dedicated to the children's education, help them practice violin carefully every day, faithfully carrying out the teacher's instructions. Both children gradually advanced to Vivaldi *g minor*.

One day I listened to these diligent students' performances. Yes, both played securely and solidly. Yet the difference between them was striking.

Revealing his musical sensitivity in tonality, Akio played with expression that was alive. In Yuriko's case, on the other hand, all that was there was Vivaldi's melody and intonation; musical sensitivity had not been fostered. Their fingers moved equally well. However, Yuriko's violin tone did not move people, her musical language (expression) being close to expressionlessness. I listened to Yuriko's violin with a sad heart.

Whoever hears them play will perceive that Akio demonstrates musicality, while Yuriko lacks that.

Why is this, when they have equally worked hard every day?

Traditional common sense would explain that Akio was born with innate musical talent, while Yuriko was born with little of it.

I imagine that even among members of Talent Education Institute there may be some who say that "after all we have to think that way." Regrettably, this deeply rooted common sense is probably unavoidable for the time being.

Therefore I must explain again and again the cause of these results, and try to help understand how to develop musical ability like Yuriko's in a proper manner.

Comparing Akio's and Yuriko's cases and searching into their situations, I discovered that Yuriko had not received good education in *musical ability*.

What is commonly recognized as musical ability includes outstanding musical sensibility and performing skills.

Using his father's phonograph, Akio constantly listened to the study record. In his daily violin practice, he was learning to express the music that was absorbed through the ear.

On the other hand, Yuriko had no player at home. Although both her father and mother thought they wanted to buy one for her, they were unable to make the expensive purchase.

Three years since starting violin, the difference between the musical ability developing in Yuriko and that in Akio was apparent. Yuriko's parents listened to my explanation with great regret.

"If we had known that it was so crucial, we would have somehow managed to get a record player," they regretted.

They already had a radio. With 10,000 yen, they could add a good player. Not realizing its importance, they always made it low priority, carried away by violin playing practice for no good reason. Undoubtedly her teacher tried hard to foster ability, and her mother assisted her music training. Thanks to their combined effort, Yuriko came to be able to play Vivaldi's *g minor* with good intonation and fluent technique. However, from the perspective of sensibility, the result was businesslike and mediocre.

Music is not a skill of transferring notes into sounds. It is crucial to attempt to express the beautiful, moving music created by beautiful, outstanding people, while also developing the same sensibility within oneself.

The best music education is through daily exposure to outstanding music and its sense of expression. This is my idea born of many years of experience.

"We cannot afford to buy a record player for our child"
 —— I often hear people say this.

However, regardless of family situation, ability grows only under conditions that allow it to grow. Of course, even if money is heaped up, or a wonderful record player is installed, no ability develops in those who make no proper effort in daily practice.

From the standpoint of music education I recommend saving some 10,000 yen toward a record player for the sake of children. Perhaps I need to clarify in passing that I am not writing this at the request of record shops, in case some people may misunderstand my great emphasis on "the development of musical sensibility through the ear."

If you are trying to foster musical ability at all, you should make it easy for it to develop.

I listen to many children at different local chapters. If I listen a little, I can already tell a child who only practices playing violin from another who always listens to records and advanced students' performances.

Yuriko is not a child who was born with no musical ability, but one who lacks expression because she has not been exposed through records to good expression and rhythm, because musical sensibility has been neglected in her development.

This may be compared to practicing the Osaka dialect in Tokyo. Let's say that a child living in Tokyo practices reading a textbook written in Osaka dialect, and has learned to speak it more or less fluently.

Now, suppose this child and an Osaka born stand side by side and speak the dialect. The same words will be spoken by both speakers, but the Tokyo child's speech will be totally different from the Osaka person's in intonation, speed, and accent.

The crucial element, *constant listening* to the model Osaka dialect, is lacking in this Tokyo child. This is the same with the absence of musicality in Yuriko. I think you understand that the Tokyo child's Osaka dialect is clumsy not because he was born without the ability to speak Osaka dialect.

If you understand this, I hope you will understand that it is a shallow, common sense way of looking at things to say, when listening to Akio's and Yuriko's performances, that Yuriko was born with no musical ability while Akio was born with the same.

Let us foster outstanding sensibility in children. Let us foster fine musical ability in them. In order to do so, we must let them listen to model performances of the literature they study.

I would like to emphasize again that music is learned through the ear.

Effective Use of the Records

Both Mineo and Hanako have listened to the records since the beginner Twinkle stage, as instructed by their teacher.

It was about three years since they started lessons. They have listened to their teacher at lesson and worked hard. Thanks to this, both of them have correct intonation and produce quite good tone. One day I heard them perform separately. Hanako was musically more refined with better expression.

I thought about the cause of this difference. First I asked Hanako's mother:

"You let your daughter listen to the record frequently, don't you? You had her listen to this piece before she started studying it, after she started studying it, and when she was refining it. I think sometimes you also had her play along with the record."

Hanako's mother replied:

"Yes, that is so. In order to see how hers differed from the performance on the record, I had her play portions of the piece comparing them to the record. Sometimes I had her play the entire piece with the record."

This is a very good approach.

I asked Mineo's mother.

"You bought the record about the time when your son was starting this piece and had him listen every day. But

you didn't have him listen much once he learned to play the piece, did you?"

Mineo's mother answered:

"That's right. Until he learned the piece, he was happy to listen. He became lazy once he memorized it, however, and he's been listening only to the next piece."

So I asked her:

"What do you think of Hanako's performance?"

"Hanako is not only very diligent," she said, "but she was, I suspect, born with good ability. Mineo also works hard, yet somehow he can't achieve the same."

I explained to Mineo's mother the way Hanako's mother utilizes the record. Then I added:

"The reason that Hanako's performance is somehow superior is that she compares herself with the record when practicing sections and moreover frequently plays with the record. Mineo is also very musical, with good tone and good intonation. His playing is no less accomplished than Hanako's. A fine sense of music is certainly developing in him. However, regretfully, he has not achieved as much as Hanako in accuracy of rhythm and expression of the piece, which she has absorbed unawares, thanks to the daily education received directly from the record. After all it is a matter of difference in approach.

Hanako was not born with better ability than Mineo. Mineo will become as refined as Hanako, if he *practices sections comparing himself with the record* paying attention to rhythm and life of the music. As for diligence, in my view both Mineo and Hanako study hard about the same amount of time every day. Their violin tone is enough to tell this.

If you merely buy the record and play it for no particular purpose other than to help your child learn his piece, you are not amply utilizing the record. If you pay attention, you can get an endless amount of important training from this, including correct beat, good rhythm, and dynamics. From now on I hope Mineo will practice utilizing the record as Hanako does."

Half a year passed. One day I had a chance to listen to these two children's performances again. What do you think happened? Mineo had improved almost unrecognizably, although of course Hanako, too, had improved.

A critic asked me:

"Mr. Suzuki, suppose we start children on Twinkle, and, ignoring their individuality, form them as you do into a type in terms of everything including the rhythm and expression of the piece. Some say that children's individuality will stop developing in the future. What do you say to this?"

This is a question often asked by educators. I answered in the following manner:

"If you are to respect something called children's individuality, why not avoid teaching stereotyped Japanese in language education? Why not show plum blossoms and tell them to create a name each of them likes, or put out a teacup and tell each of them to think of an appropriate name? Let each child use his individuality to create an expression, say, for 'good morning.'

However, in Japanese language education, we teach children the kind of Japanese that we older people use, stereotyped and free from errors, and, while correcting their errors, foster in them the ability to use that Japanese with absolute freedom. Children freely use that speech, and gradually develop individual will and inventiveness, thus beginning to live each with his own personality.

What is important is first to teach proper Japanese. It is so with music. I think it the naturally expected way of music education to help children develop as human beings who fluently comprehend and use "the language of music" in its most proper form and with its most outstanding sensibility.

Let a small child (whatever the actual age, a beginner is a small child in music) hold a violin and bring out his individuality by composing and thinking of expression as he likes. The result will be awful. Compare Toshiya Eto, Koji Toyoda, and Kenji Kobayashi who grew by my method. Don't they manifest three utterly different individualities?

There is no such thing as inborn individuality (about which I would like to discuss my view on a later occasion); hence, rather than emphasizing trite individuality, we should concentrate on educating children so as to develop outstanding, fine individuality. No human being develops individuality. A man's life span from birth to death comprises his presence as a human being; and his image belongs to none but himself. Many Japanese today "go along with the stream" without independent thought, but this lowly posture itself can be called a kind of individuality. Therefore, in order to help develop outstanding individuality, I always think that we first need to foster outstanding ability through education."

Reading Comes Later

The other day, a music teacher came and told me at length his view of the need for starting music education from musical notation. He said he was unable to agree with my approach: start from the ear, then teach musical notation after musical ability has been fostered (around Book 4 in the case of violin).

In my view, this teacher knows nothing beyond his own experience of having studied music from musical notation. Moreover, since today's society remains with the common sense idea of starting written music education, he was full of faith as he spoke to me. It is quite understandable, because we usually fail to understand what we have not experienced, and are slow in waking from our sleep on the lap of common sense. That teacher does not know.

As one who also had to start music from musical notation, I had a similar common sense idea long ago. However, from twenty years of thinking, educational experience with many children, and its results, I have come to know with clear and strong confidence how music education should be.

As more people wake to this fact, the day will come when flawed education of starting to teach music from notes will be spoken of as a joke.

I would like to quote from a letter from Seijiro Okumura of the Hakuraku Chapter of the Talent Education Institute (dated November 3, 1964), since he writes on the same subject I wish to discuss. It pleases me to see my idea correctly understood.

I am impressed by your notion of the concept of "talent." It is a really fine idea. You use music as a means of inspiring talent. Since you are a violinist yourself, the use of violin is natural, and that is how my son was able to enter the world of music through violin. It is crucial, as you often point out, to create an "environment." Your explanation of perfect Osaka dialect learned only in Osaka is similar to what is often pointed out regarding music education in Japan. Though my experience is limited, I have the basis for agreeing with those wise people's criticisms. As you know, foreign language education in Japan is quite ineffective despite years spent in studying, since it focuses on grammar and translation, say from English to Japanese.

In order really to master English, it is ideal to live in English speaking countries, where one can spontaneously pick up English, learn to think in English, and eventually reach a level where one can express one's ideas freely in English. Practical English training will thus be completed.

Music education in general relies on etudes, for example Homan in violin. This tends to force on students the same dry and uninteresting training we experienced as beginner English students. However, this is "believed" to be an orthodox, safe approach.

I once had a big argument on this with music school students. Since we did not argue to win or lose, I accepted their argument on the surface. However, I still think that I need not change my faith in your idea.

Perhaps we can say, "In the beginning there was sound." That sound is recorded in the written music, then reproduced by performers. Music is an art form to be appreciated through *sound*. To shift the focus to the *means*, i.e., musical notation, resembles today's educational idea that English education should start in the seventh grade. Educators are oblivious of the fact that this approach is inferior to native education of spoken English learned through the ear by unlettered infants.

Whether in music or language, it goes without saying that ear training is crucial. I think it is the same with bike riding,

which requires no knowledge of physics. It is more important to first learn the knack of bodily balance. The correct order is to learn the logic later; perhaps study should come later, too. Likewise, I am convinced in my own way that in music it is important to first nurture musicality. . . .

Seijiro Okumura's letter expresses well what I would like to say. The example of bike riding is right on target, where he says that first comes the experience of riding it, followed later by the logic as well as study.

Demonstration of high human ability, I think, is only possible when this natural course is traced. The practical ability that works within us, whether sensibility, intuition, or judgment, is of a sensory nature. It is all too clear that, without this basic ability, we cannot develop to a height.

Real Ability and Progress in the Curriculum

"Instructor A doesn't let her students advance to the next one when they have already learned to play a piece. Let's work on it until it becomes more polished, she says, and keeps assigning the same piece. I wonder if it isn't about time that mine went on to the next piece." Irritated, the parent only thinks of the next piece. However, advanced children in Instructor A's class play in an accomplished way. "They are all wonderful. But the teacher doesn't let my child go on at all."

Finally running out of patience, she asks someone and finds out that Instructor B advances students in pieces rapidly. Jiro's mother, who no longer can stand it, quits Instructor A's class and enrolls Jiro in Instructor B's class.

Since Instructor B lets Jiro move from piece to piece fast, his mother is quite satisfied, and reports with a smile that thanks to him Jiro has begun to be able to play gradually more difficult pieces recently.

A year passes. Jiro gradually stops practicing, he has poor tone, he cannot play any pieces satisfactorily, and he plays in a messy way. His progress becomes slower because he cannot play.

In the second year, Jiro's mother meets the mother of Hanako who started at the same time in Instructor A's class and who was also complaining that her child was not allowed to go on to more advanced pieces. Jiro's mother asks, "What piece is Hanako on? I would love to listen to her once." Hanako's mother replies, "She's as slow as ever. She has just finished the first movement of Vivaldi's g minor."

"Oh, Jiro's on g minor, too, though he doesn't play well at all," Jiro's mother says, feeling strange about the discovery that the two children are doing the same thing.

A few days later, she takes Jiro to visit Hanako's house, and asks to hear Hanako play the g minor.

Hanako plays the first movement of the g minor. She played it with fine tone and accomplished musicality, just like those advanced students who were good before. Jiro's mother was surprised.

"How accomplished Hanako is. Probably she has inborn ability," she says, her old habit returning. Jiro cannot be persuaded to play because he is messy.

Well, how did such a thing happen?

Talent education is a new educational method. It puts into practice the principle on which every child can become accomplished if it is faithfully followed. When a child does not grow well, that is because the principle is not faithfully followed.

I can say so because our method fosters children with a clearly grasped idea of child development. Therefore, if parents understand the principle well and follow the method with the teacher, every child should be able to learn to play in an accomplished way.

It is not that Hanako was born with ability; musical ability developed in her because her mother followed Instructor A's approach, even though somewhat reluctantly. If she had sufficient understanding of talent education approach from the beginning, I think she would have fostered Hanako better, not reluctantly but happily with hope.

The Talent Education Method for fostering ability is based on the following principle.

Suppose the child's ability is 5, we give him the material at the level of 4.5, which is lower than his actual ability. Since it feels easy, the child enjoys doing it, and experiences joy in being able to do it. Now, if a teacher with the ability of 800 or an advanced student with the ability of 200 plays the piece which requires the ability of 4.5, he can play it much better than the child who plays with with the strength of 5. So, after the child with the ability of 5 has learned to play the piece, we let him listen to a fine performance played at the level of 800 or 200, and compare. Can the child play better?

When the child is thoroughly trained, he rapidly approaches more skilled people. If we let him try with finer advanced students, he can improve endlessly. Then his practical ability rises to 10.

Actual, or practical, ability refers to six skills: ability to play with ease, fine tone, fine beat, clear and neat movement, beautiful and precise intonation, and expression.

When we compare two children who play the same piece that requires various important skills, we clearly see the difference in practical ability between them. Each skill develops well in hard workers, so that even if two people play the same piece, there will be a difference depending upon the amount of work: one may play with the practical ability of 50, while the other may demonstrate that of 20.

Now, let's say that a child with the practical ability of 5 rose to 10 through making efforts in playing material about the level of 4.5 in an accomplished way. So, we give him a piece around 7. Since this feels very easy, the child readily tries it. After he has learned to play this piece, if we instruct him so as to refine it while developing the above mentioned six skills, the child's ability grows fast. This is the talent education approach.

Please recognize this vital point, and make efforts to raise your child's real ability with the same understanding we instructors have.

Next, here is why Jiro dropped out after two years.

Suppose we give Jiro whose level is 5 a piece requiring the ability of 4.5, and when he can play it, we give him the next material (let's say its level is 5) when his practical ability is only 5.5, and when he can play it, advance right away to the next material (let's say 7) When we proceed like this, without taking time to raise his practical ability, he advances rapidly in pieces, but such important skills as the ability to play with ease, fine tone, fine beat, clear and neat movement, beautiful and precise intonation, and beautiful expression do not develop at all. Therefore his practical ability remains low.

Therefore, eventually Jiro will be playing a piece of 50 when his ability is 50, and a piece of 100 when his ability is 30. He will be worse and worse, producing ugly tone in messy intonation and beat — in the end he will be unable to play the piece because it is too difficult. Then, his mother will come up with an arbitrary excuse for quitting: "My child has no musical ability, so let's quit around here." So they quit. Adults are so arbitrary.

"Advance the child fast /in the teaching material, and the result:/ a dropout." This haiku epigram refers to that kind of situation.

Parents, please try to understand the talent education approach. I would also like teachers to do the same. Furthering our study with the understanding of this single point will heighten our teaching ability and influence children's development. Therefore we instructors always study.

However, it is not skillful to keep a child on a piece forever, carrying the idea too far. I think it best to foster children in big strides, cleverly grasping their hearts. Anyway, I would like parents and teachers to understand talent education method and cooperate with each other in raising the children.

If there is a mother who gets angry because her child cannot advance in pieces, have her read what I have written.

[To be continued.]

WHAT CAN BE GAINED FROM MUSIC

Mother's Note

Kesako Nishina
Denda Class, Nagano

Every Child Grows

On a cold day in February, 1980 when snow flakes threatened to scatter from the grey sky, we heard that "Mr. Suzuki's Lecture and Children's Performance" was going to be held in Nagano City. The four of us went together. The hall, already nearly packed, was noisy. When the curtain went up, and the performance of small children who lined up on stage started, the noise stopped, and my eyes and ears were fixed on the stage.

Although I had known about Mr. Suzuki's talent education, this was the first time I saw it before my eyes. Those small children's finger movement, their serious eyes, and the tone produced from their small violins — I could not believe any of these, and before I knew it, I no longer could see the children on the stage because of tears.

When I came back to reality, I became aware of my children sitting next to me: Ryoji who was turning six in two months, and three and a half year old Noriyasu who was sleeping with the performance as his lullaby. Both of them dug in the yard, made dirt mountains, rivers, and dams, and played with minicars. As long as they had a bucketful of water and a shovel, they were at it as long as half a day. Despite myself, I compared them with the children on stage, and wondered if those players were fostered in a special manner.

However, in the second half of the program when Mr. Suzuki lectured that "every child grows," I harbored hope thinking that perhaps it was not too late to regain the lost time which I spent without trying to work with the children. So we started to observe Mr. Denda's class.

Looking forward to Lessons

Our days of parent-child practice started in the same way as in other families studying by talent education. I would like to say one thing in parentheses. As must already be clear, I was totally ignorant of early education, and had no knowledge whatsoever of music which we were beginning to learn. Therefore, there is nothing to write in large letters about home practice.



From left to right: Ryoji, his younger brother Noriyasu, and author.

Ryoji, whose birthday is in April, had already turned six when his teacher handed him a one tenth size real violin, having passed the box violin stage. He was the oldest among the students who joined the class at the same time. I do not know whether he felt that he had to do well because he was "a big brother compared with the others," but he seemed very attentive in class unlike when practicing at home. He looked forward to playing the assigned piece for his teacher after practicing it for one week at home, and I, too, enjoyed walking fifteen minutes to class with the two children. Getting on stage to play at recitals that occurred several times a year generated excitement about practicing at fixed hours in the morning and evening, aiming at loved pieces that bigger children played. It was also helpful in

forming basic life patterns: getting up, breakfast, practice, going to kindergarten, play, practice, supper, going to bed.

Playing outdoors with friends must after all be, more fun than practice. The moment he came home, Ryoji threw his bag in the entrance, went out to play with friends who were waiting outside, and played as much as he liked until practice time. Later, someone in the family he visited once criticized: "Ryoji was very concerned about the time to go home. The way he greeted neatly and left when it was time was somehow unlike a child" However, I often hear about children who only watch television or who are hooked on computer games for hours. We had no such problems because we had neither a TV set nor a computer.



Ryoji plays in the Return Home Concert
after the American Tour (second from left)
Nagoya, December 1985

Watching from Behind

The period when we enjoyed going to the lesson and practicing at home did not last too long. Ryoji, or rather, I, gradually lost sight of the original question: "what to learn by talent education." In other words, I forgot the purpose of fostering my child while helping him absorb great musician's high sensibility through daily exposure to beautiful masterpieces, and advancing in pieces became my greatest concern. When it came to this, I was no longer able

as I should to praise and recognize his effort when he could do even a little well. More and more often I scolded or complained. Again and again I regretted after seeing him off with my face still angry, or when I watched the sleeping face of Ryoji who looked just as young as his age. I said to myself: "At this rate, it's far from development of sensitivity; doesn't it rather poison the parent-child relationship?"

Around that time, Mr. Denda, who perhaps sensed my feeling, said in passing when he was talking about something else: "Boys rebel when pressed. It may be important for the mother to develop a posture of watching from behind as her child grows up." I was struck by his words. Since fortunately he had taught Ryoji more or less to be able to read the music of the Suzuki literature, from about that time I think I tried to let my boy tackle his assignment by himself. However, he was still short of fully understanding Mr. Denda's instructions, so I often caught myself raising my voice, irritated.

Ryoji was able to continue violin in this daily situation without losing his motivation, I think, because the teacher was able to find something good in the end, after many corrections, at each lesson. If both intonation and rhythm were poor, he evaluated Ryoji's effortful practice or slightly better tone. I am sure Mr. Denda had a hard time finding this last word of praise. I realize with gratitude that this was the source of Ryoji's inspiration toward the next step.

Developing Oneself

After that, before I realized it, my role became limited to taking Ryoji to his weekly lesson on Saturdays, and to try to give some structure to our use of time so that the practice time would not become irregular amidst the rhythm of daily life. My involvement in home practice was now no more than listening to Ryoji as he practiced of his own accord. I was feeling gradually left behind, when in the fall of 1985 Ryoji was unexpectedly given a chance to go to the States as a member of the Twenty-First Overseas Tour. Needless to say, this experience was very precious to Ryoji. While corresponding with him, I was able to notice his growth

which I would not have noticed if I had been with him every day. He wrote to us about his gratitude to the accompanying teachers for their thoughtfulness, excitement of interacting with friends, joy at the warm hospitality of host families, thoughts on national differences and so on.

At the several rehearsals prior to their departure, I had a chance to meet the mothers of the tour members. What was most surprising to me, aside from the children's fine development, was the lively attitude of the mothers. They were wonderful in different ways, but I thought I found one thing common to all of them: they were strict with their children within their big, embracing love, and stricter with themselves. I had just heard a lecture by Ayako Sato, originally of Matsumoto, who stated that "as long as we are mothers, we can handle child raising to some extent, yet 'self raising' is difficult." The tour children's mothers who were strict with themselves, I thought, were working on 'self raising,' and this gave me an opportunity for self reflection as well as a future aim.

Ryoji wrote in his composition for the elementary school graduation anthology: "Sometimes it was so hard that I cried many times while I practiced, but I was able to experience many things as a result of my efforts, and I would like to continue my efforts in the future." Reading this, I felt afresh that I, too, would like to keep trying with an aim ahead of me.

Having become a junior high student, Ryoji's life has changed completely. As he silently listens to a record facing the music, or practices despite exhaustion from soccer club training, I find a reflection of what he has gained through talent education. I cannot help wishing that he will continue to use it in the days to come.

I would like to thank Mr. Suzuki, Mr. Denda, and other teachers who have given Ryoji many things which we parents cannot give him.

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