

who will enlarge and enrich your life more than you could ever imagine.

Open your soul to being stretched and changed continually by the power of music.

Open your mind to gain and keep the Zen Beginner's Mind. An expert has few ideas and options—the beginner has many.

If you can keep your being so open and receptive to "new idea," if you can meet each day and each student with unconditional love and acceptance, you won't just be a Suzuki teacher—you'll be much, much more, and so will all of those whose lives you touch.

## APPENDIX "A"

### Questions and Answers

**Question:** How do we know if our child is musically talented?

**Answer:** Please think about the title of our program—Lexington Talent Education Association, and the title of the book by Dr. Suzuki, *Nurtured By Love*. It is Dr. Suzuki's belief that talent is educated rather than inherited. This is the perspective of a convinced environmentalist, and if you are somewhat more prone to think of heredity than environment, please consider Suzuki's statement, "There is little one can do about his heredity, but he can do something about his environment." There are several tenets basic to the Suzuki philosophy as we have heard it and experienced it. Suzuki believes that all children are born with the ability to conform to their environment at a very early age. From that point on, the environment controls his development. In thirty years with the program he calls "Talent Education," Dr. Suzuki has proven that talent is common, but an environment conducive to the development of that talent is not.

The proper environment must be two-fold: teaching environment and home environment. Both teacher and parent must believe in the potential of children. They must also accept the painful Suzuki tenet that "there are no bad children, but there are bad teachers and parents. If they fail, it is our fault. We must find another way to inspire them."

We endorse the belief of Dr. Suzuki's, that talent is not inborn,

and have adopted his practice of not pre-testing youngsters or "talent" prior to beginning musical studies. We sincerely hope that parents will read and study this concept and make it a part of their own approach to environment-building and total education.

*Question:* At what age do you recommend starting children and if there is a doubt in the parents' mind concerning readiness, how does one decide?

*Answer:* Generally speaking, in the violin program we suggest age three at the earliest for girls, and age four at the earliest for boys. We emphasize that this is a generalization, and that there could be exceptions in both directions. If there is serious doubt in the parents' mind as to readiness, even after observations of other children, it is suggested that parents be put in touch with one of the L.T.E.A. teachers, who will be glad to arrange a brief visit with the family, where they can see how the child responds to instruction. The piano program recommends four to five years of age, cello suggests age five, and flute recommends at least nine years old.

*Question:* It has been said that the Suzuki approach is initially geared to the pre-school child, and thus works most successfully when the child is started at an early age. Considering this, when do you consider a child "too old" to start the Suzuki way?

*Answer:* Although the above statement has been made, and there are certain definite benefits in starting the child in the early years, the L.T.E.A. staff feels that few elementary school children could be considered too old to benefit from the approach, if the proper adjustment to the philosophy and method, and the proper environment are provided at home. Individual adjustments are made in case of "older beginners" (age 8, 9, or older) or those who have begun in more traditional approaches. Certainly the early elementary years, the primary grades, are years in which children are very receptive to the totality of the Suzuki approach.

*Question:* If children can be successfully started during the early school years, due to muscular coordination, concentration span, physical endurance, etc., and tend to move more rapidly than the pre-schooler, what is the value of the investment of time, effort, and money at the younger age?

*Answer:* The earlier the environment is established and habits are developed, the more a part of a child's (and family's) life the

music program will become. There are now children in the L.T.E.A. program who at 10, 11, and 12 have no remembrance of a time in their lives when they did not play an instrument, and when certain disciplines and routines were not part of their lives. A firm foundation was established slowly and carefully, with positive reinforcement each step of the way. Thus, music becomes an integral, natural part of life, rather than something superimposed on an established life style. It is also beneficial to introduce music in the early years, before the child's life is so fragmented by extracurricular activities.

*Question:* What kind of attention span is expected of a pre-school child in the beginning stages?

*Answer:* Several minutes at a time. The expansion of this attention span will be very slow and very careful.

*Question:* Can you comment on the role of the parent?

*Answer:* There are certain basic steps in the Suzuki Talent Education Method. Number one is parental involvement—the springboard to imitation and repetition. Initial instruction is given the parent, while the children watch. At the same time, the listening program is instituted in the home, as children hear on record pieces from the repertoire. Soon the child wants to "do what mommy and daddy are doing"—and gradually the lessons are transferred from parent to child. By this time, however, the parent has learned enough to practice with the child at home, guiding the practice sessions. Next comes the period of games and body exercises designed to build security and confidence in handling the instrument, and introduce each phase of playing separately. Only after this detailed and careful orientation is actual playing begun.

For the youngest students, age three and four, progress will be slow for the first six months to a year. From the very beginning, however, even the youngest are expected to listen, learn fingerings, and practice at home, for good tone reproduction and musicianship are emphasized during lesson times. Material once learned is constantly reviewed, so that a child develops facility with and control of his instrument.

*Question:* How much time is required of a parent?

*Answer:* Time to attend a minimum of one private and one group lesson a week and to practice and listen with the child every day at home. The parent should also set aside time for observation

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of other lessons, and attendance at L.T.E.A. functions such as recitals, play-throughs, workshops, etc.

*Question:* Do we need to own an instrument?

*Answer:* Every child must have an instrument on which to study and practice. In the case of piano, one instrument in the home will suffice. In the case of the violin and cello, every child must have the properly sized instrument, as instructed by the teacher.

*Question:* How do we know how to find an instrument, and what can we anticipate the cost to be?

*Answer:* Your teacher will measure your child for an instrument and help you locate one for purchase (preferred) or rental. It is very important to his successful development and comfort that the child have an instrument which is suitable to his size. **DO NOT** attempt to purchase an instrument without the teacher's advice and counsel. In the case of the violin, the youngsters will begin their training on a "pre-violin," an improvised "violin" which will be used during the developmental games, and will not need the real violin for several months.

Beginning violins will be in the range of \$130 to \$150. A limited number of small cellos may be rented from the cello teacher.

*Question:* How often will the child need a new violin or cello?

*Answer:* Answering this question is somewhat like trying to assess how often a child will change skirt or sweater sizes. Generally speaking, however, a family is never out the full purchase price of an instrument after the initial investment, as there is always a younger student coming along to purchase the smaller size; always an older student who needs to sell a larger one. Your child may use an instrument for as long as two years, or he might have a sudden growth spurt after a year. Your teacher will watch carefully for his growth, and help you whenever an instrument change is imminent.

*Question:* Should two members of a family study the same instrument?

*Answer:* Although much depends on the relationship of the children, the age difference, special advantages or problems, it is very enjoyable to have children on different instruments, and lessens the feelings of competitiveness which might arise (even in this most non-competitive of methods). We do have many families where several children play the same instrument and do so quite happily.

We would suggest offering alternative instruments in the case of multiple children.

*Question:* I want my child involved in Suzuki-inspired teaching because I believe in the philosophy, but I don't know which instrument to choose, or if I have a right to choose for my child.

*Answer:* You not only have a right to make some choices for young children, you also have an obligation to do so. You should also realize that any training the child receives on an instrument is easily applied should he decide at a later date he prefers another instrument. So, let's do away with old misconceptions—violins are for sissy's. **FALSE**—She can't reach the piano pedals yet. **DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE**—Cellos don't come that small. **FALSE**. Now, you may follow their leading. If not, consider what instrument is most pleasing to you.

*Question:* Can we give this a few weeks try and see how it works for us?

*Answer:* You must commit yourself and your child to one full year of instruction and practice, unless there is an extended illness, or a move from the community. This is for the protection of your child. Children have infinite diligence in repetitive and slow, steady development; adults are more easily bored and impatient. Dr. Suzuki says, "The world is full of persons who were not given 3,000 chances" (and thus consider themselves to have failed—they might have succeeded on the 3,000 or 3,001 attempt!). Your year commitment to this program will insure your child of receiving every possible opportunity for success.

*Question:* I am tone deaf. Won't that be a liability to my child? I have never had any musical training.

*Answer:* You may find, as have many reputedly "tone deaf" parents, that when listening becomes standard procedure in your home, you will soon be humming and singing and recognizing tunes. All you may have lacked is environment and opportunity to learn and grow together. We have parents that could never memorize who can whistle five complete volumes of violin material in order!

*Question:* I am a trained/professional/amateur musician. How can I be the most effective as a Suzuki parent?

*Answer:* 1. Do not attempt to teach the teacher, or appear to the child to second-guess the teacher. 2. Make up your mind to

embrace the total philosophy and methodology, or do not even attempt it. 3. Act in a parent role, with the teacher taking the lead. 4. Do not put your child in competition with you, or expect too much of him. You are the one who has had previous trainings, not he. It is your attitude, and the environment you provide which will help him most, not your past or present experiences.

*Question:* The Japanese founder of the Talent Education Movement has used the best in western music for teaching materials and fitted the teaching to his culture. Can it work in our western society, and why are we attempting to adapt to their cultural mores rather than our own?

*Answer:* This is not an either/or question. We try to teach "pure Suzuki" both philosophically and pedagogically, allowing for the specific environment of our community, etc. However, we believe there is much we as individuals and as a society have to learn from the Eastern culture, as well as vice versa, and that many of the deeper beliefs behind the graces, mannerisms and practices of Talent Education speak to deeply felt needs in America lives today.

*Question:* What is the goal of L.T.E.A? Will it help my child become a professional musician?

*Answer:* The goal of L.T.E.A. is Dr. Suzuki's goal for all his "children" to develop loving, sensitive, well-rounded human beings, with "beautiful hearts." Many highly skilled performers have been developed as a *by-product* of this way of learning—and just as importantly, many music lovers and appreciators.

*Question:* Why the violin?

*Answer:* There are four areas in which the very young child can emulate the best of normal adults performances—violin, keyboard, math and languages. A fine concert violinist himself, it was natural that Dr. Suzuki would base his method upon this instrument. Also, small violins of high quality are easily obtained. The method has expanded to include the cello, piano and flute as better small instruments have become available and teachers are trained.

*Question:* Why the Rote method, and does it interfere with reading music?

*Answer:* The Rote method is nothing but the application of training in the native language. A child does not learn to read before he can talk. By the time the average child is ready for

school, he has a spoken vocabulary of between five and six thousand words. This stimulates rather than lessens his desire to read. The Suzuki method of teaching through listening and imitation is turning out students who can play. They can hear, because their ears are sensitively trained, and they remember their music well. Their eyes are freed, they can concentrate on tone and musicality. Note reading is introduced when the individual is technically ready, and handles his instrument well. Research on Suzuki-trained students shows that the vast majority do well above average in note reading, and excel in rhythmic reading. Because they learned how to listen, they play well in tune, and they are used to doing things one step at a time. Practice is not boring, because repetition for the sake of improvement, and playing together, has been an integral part from the outset. Nothing could be more natural, since "music making is done for the joy of listening."

*Question:* Why the set repertoire?

*Answer:* The repertoire is composed of only the finest in western string literature, which has been carefully researched as to appeal and technical suitability on each age level. It has also been so systematically developed both pedagogically and psychologically, that the child is developing an "add-on" series of skills, constantly reviewing and building on each skill to achieve a new technical and musical level, and motivated to play. Anyone who has ever seen the sheer enjoyment of the classes or total group playing together, the finesse and skill of the tour group from Japan, or the sense of the true universality of music when children of many races, creeds and countries come together for massed performances, can attest to the validity of this repertoire.

*Question:* What can I do to prepare (1) myself and my family, (2) our student for his prospective experience?

*Answer:* (1) Read available materials:

*Nurtured By Love*—Shinichi Suzuki (hardback)

*Suzuki Concept*—Elizabeth Mills (paperback)

*In The Suzuki Style*—Elizabeth Mills (paperback)

*Suzuki Changed My Life*—Dr. Masaki Honda (hardback)

*What The West Can Learn From The East*—Boye De Monte (paperback)

*The Suzuki Violinist*—William Starr (hardback)

## (2) Purchase and listen to:

- Suzuki Violin School Recordings—Volumes 1-10
- Suzuki Piano School Recordings—Volumes
- Sato Cello School Recordings—Volumes
- Takahashi Flute School Recordings—Volumes 1-5

Particularly Volume 1, also any good recordings of standard works for the above instruments. Observe classes and recitals whenever possible.

*Question:* Where are lessons and classes held?

*Answer:* L.T.E.A. is a private, non-profit corporation, and has no affiliation with the university or the school system. Thus, we are dependent upon our teachers, the families who make up the L.T.E.A. and community resources for facilities. Private lessons are generally held in teachers' homes; classes are usually held in a centrally located church or other community building.

*Question:* May I request a teacher?

*Answer:* We are confident of the ability and training of our teaching staff, and can recommend each one to you as a highly skilled person with many special attributes. We are unable to take requests for teachers, as our staff alternate years in which they start beginners, and since, for the child's well-being, each beginner must start with a class.

*Question:* When do the classes begin?

*Answer:* L.T.E.A. offers two, fifteen week semesters during the school year, generally beginning immediately after Labor Day and concluding in early May, with a week off at Thanksgiving, two weeks at Christmas and a week in the spring (the latter may vary from teacher-to-teacher, depending on their employment by university, college or public school system).

*Question:* Who is Suzuki and what is Suzuki Talent Education?

*Answer:* Shinichi Suzuki was a concert violinist and teacher in Japan some thirty years ago. After the war, he became deeply concerned with the children in his country, who, through no fault of their own, were most deeply affected by the devastation of the fighting and its aftermath. Most people would have considered the situation sad, but so monumental that the contributions of one man would scarcely help. Shinichi Suzuki decided to give the chil-

dren of Japan the one gift he could give them—the gift of music—in hopes that into those confused young lives might be brought a sense of beauty and individual fulfillment. Today, Dr. Suzuki is a living legend, not only in his own country, but around the world. He was catapulted to this status by his music, his children, and his philosophy; and those three items still remain of utmost importance to him.

Talent Education is an approach to instrumental music education developed by Dr. Suzuki, a Japanese violinist and humanitarian philosopher. His teaching method is directly inspired from observing how language is acquired in early childhood. Some basic points are as follows:

- Develop musical sensitivity by listening to recordings and to performances of other children.
- Motivate children by involving an interested parent in the teaching process, and by having group lessons and recitals as well as good private instruction.
- Acquire good playing posture and technique by following a carefully designed sequence of learning steps aimed at avoiding remedial work.
- Give each child a positive, happy experience in music, and emphasize cooperation rather than competition, believing that any child can develop high ability.

Written for Lexington Talent Education  
By Kay Collier Stone

## APPENDIX B

...ice or lack of, listening or lack of, home life, family problems and secrets, etc.

10. Appear TO YOU to be the ONLY ONE out of step in the entire class.
11. Drop his violin on its bridge or other delicate part.
12. Have an attention span of 5 to 10 minutes and sometimes only 5-10 seconds—maximum 30!
13. Deliberately do things "backward" or "incorrectly."

It's funny—I can appreciate these actions and reactions in the other kids in the class. As a matter of fact, I think they're cute and funny, and well, just terrific to be making the progress they're making. It's exciting to watch learning happen. With my own, sometimes I want to sit on my hands, bite my tongue, hide my face, duck my head or maybe YELL! I am learning, over the years, that my kids sense it when I feel that way, and they become nervous and less confident. What they need most from me is:

1. My interest—I'm here, I care.
2. My faith. I believe he or she can learn to play the violin, cello, piano.
3. My enthusiasm. This is a neat thing to do. I dig it.
4. My respect.
  - (a) For him—his very real efforts, his concentration, his personhood.
  - (b) For his teacher—his ideas, advice, interest, ability, training.
5. My enjoyment—of every step along the way.
6. My acceptance—indicated by a pleasant expression on my face at lesson, class and practice.
7. My praise—of every small success.

This is the habit-building I'm still working on—every day. My expectations for my children are high, because I want so much for them, and because I want to protect them. It's also involved with my own image of myself, and whether the teacher or other parents will see me as a good, effective parent. I am trying to remember that our teacher sees my child working very hard and is appreciating his efforts—not criticizing him or me. Our teacher has seen many children, and she knows that although mine is the only one in this particular class insisting on taking his shoes off because the

Dear Beginning Parent,

I have sat in your chair several times, for I have twice been a beginning Suzuki parent. I'm still a Suzuki parent, and that's not much different—just a little more time put in at lessons and practice. Being a Suzuki parent has not changed my *initial* response to what my child is doing. It HAS caused major changes in my *expectations* and *what I do* with my reactions. (Usually!)

If your child is like every other child I've ever known, he or she will *definitely* learn to play the chosen instrument. Along the way, he will *most certainly*—at one time or another:

1. Lie down on the floor when everyone else is standing up.
2. Stand up when everyone else is lying down.
3. Interrupt a lesson with a rambling discourse—definitely NOT on music.
4. Seem more interested in the mechanics of the instrument than in playing.
5. Have times when he feels more sleepy, hungry, angry, lazy than he does musical.
6. Have times when he'll declare he hates the violin (or you!).
7. Resist and test your ideas about habit building, especially concerning practice.
8. Get to a lesson and do absolutely NOTHING he has worked on at home.
9. Make pronouncements to the teacher regarding your prac-

teacher did, she's seen this before, and is not bothered—so I'll try to restrain my motherly sigh and roll of the eyes.

My goal for this year is to relax—and try to enjoy my own child as much as I'll enjoy yours. I hope this will be your goal, too. Welcome!

LTEA Parent

Written for Lexington Talent Education Association  
By Kay Slone

## APPENDIX C

### *Hand-out #1—Pre-Twinkles*

Area one may take several weeks to complete, in terms of the child's sense of security and accomplishment. Many repetitions and much praise for small successes will be involved. Small additional steps will be added at private lessons, and reinforced at group lessons. Parents must be cautioned to work with the child only at the level at which he will have success—NEVER push beyond the level he is capable of accomplishing with ease. To demand a fine motor skill (output) when he is not developmentally ready, is to ask for rebellion, tension, frustration. Always put the information in (INPUT), physically helping, patterning, until the child is capable of "doing" that particular skill on his own.

Dr. Suzuki says that our word "patience" indicates controlled frustration—definitely NOT the attitude we must adopt. The children recognize immediately when we are disguising our true feelings and we should try never to deceive them—we will surely fail! Even in our busiest, most hurried and harried times, I would ask you to remember the words of our own L.T.E.A. teachers, Kazue Nohmi Baber, who taught with us only one year, before her death from cancer. "Even when I feel the worst," Kim said, "once I see the children and begin to teach, I feel better." If we can adopt Kim's attitude, and allow the children's beauty and natural enthusiasm for learning to seep into our adult minds and beings, remembering Dr. Suzuki's statement that "we must come down to their physical limitations, and up to their sense of wonder and awe," we