

ELGIN AREA SUZUKI STRINGS
"THE WRITE NOTE"

Volume III

Dec. 1984

Number 2

Greetings From "The Write Note" !!

Many, many thanks to you students who provided Mr. Blum and myself with the Lincolnshire Marriott Getaway. It was a real treat to take a weekend in August and enjoy the luxury of the hotel, attend a play, and play golf. Thank you for your generosity!

-Lamar Blum-

Now is the time to begin thinking about the next Write Note issue - we need your contributions! Have you read a book that you felt was helpful? Do you have ideas that make practicing more exciting? Let us hear from you so that everyone can share the ideas and suggestions of the group!

Our Teachers

Teacher Sarah Nelson has moved with her husband, Rich, to Oklahoma for his FAA training. We wish them well and will miss her as a teacher and pianist for our group.

In her place is Nancy Smosna, a graduate from Northwestern University in Music Education, with a minor in Violin. She and Jean Von Berg grew up together as violinists in Betty Haag's Suzuki program. Nancy lives in Arlington Heights and teaches in Elgin on Wednesdays.

Since graduation last spring she has been teaching violin privately at Wheeling High School in Wheeling, IL. Nancy spends her other days teaching at McArthur and Holmes Junior High School in Prospect Heights. Nancy says she wants to do more teaching as a Suzuki teacher in the future and play in an orchestra.

We welcome Nancy to our staff and hope she will enjoy teaching Suzuki with our group!

DRILL

Drill - what a word! We are all familiar with it. We would like to drill certain values and skills into our children's heads. Things that we would like to stick with them and are at their command at any time. A skill that stays at that level must be practiced and reviewed or it will not stay usable.

What comes to my mind immediately when I hear the word drill is watching the ROTC

practicing their marching on a field in front of the music building at the U. of M. They seemed to be always there - always working on one or two skills. I began to think about what was going on: they isolated one skill; stepping in time and doing it over and over. There were some times when they practiced turning and I would see the group zig zag across the field, not realizing at the time their purpose. Then, the girls' group called the Angel Flight joined their routine flanking the sides of the group. Another day, the color guard came. Soon I was able to see the larger picture of the many small aspects of "drill" that added up to a whole colorful routine or program.

Take just a minute to apply the concept to our violin playing. Drill is used for a small segment of a piece - perhaps a measure or just a few notes. It must be done many times over with the child's brain in gear in order to receive benefit from the drill. Drill should be done everyday with the 'many times' broken up so that we avoid mindless playing. The more we practice a small passage of notes the more trained the finger muscles become. This enables your child to play with the technique that a piece calls for.

Practice is a more general term than drill. When we practice we do not always drill. To play through Minuet II is not to drill the technical problem in the very opening

FOCUS ON BOOKS:

The Write Note wants to offer parents the opportunity to share what they have learned from books they have found helpful or inspiring. We hope this column continues with your efforts! Thanks to Sue Everett for this issue's contribution.

Where Love Is Deep, by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki

Where Love Is Deep is worthwhile reading for any Suzuki parent. The book focuses on Dr. Suzuki's Talent Education. It brings to view the philosophy of life according to Suzuki, as well as some fundamental ideas regarding Talent Education.

After reading the first few pages of this book, I realized the important role parents play in the development of their children. The teachings of Suzuki could be far reaching and not only limited to violin. He stressed the importance of praising our children. He contends that all children have ability, and everything they do is wonderful. We as parents should realize the importance of praising our children's efforts, rather than criticizing without thinking of our children's feelings. One of his best suggestions is to "Inspire the Child to Learn". We should let our children enjoy playing what they can already play and only correct errors after praising them for their efforts. The best way to succeed, according to Suzuki, is not to encourage to advance in pieces, but to foster a fine tone and musical performance.

One of the criticisms Dr. Suzuki gives parents is pushing our children beyond their level. Suzuki states that these parents are in a "horse race" and there is no end. Simply because one child of the same age can play more pieces does not make that child more talented. Since all children have ability, there is no need to "race" with another child. The end result, according to Suzuki, is an unhappy child and an ultimate failure.

In Talent Education families, children should be listening to their tapes every day and repeatedly practicing the same piece. These families eventually unconsciously acquire the ability to appreciate music. We sometimes forget the importance

of listening. We hear our own sounds, but forget to listen. We have the ear to hear, but not the heart to critically listen.

Although many of the last chapters are geared at teachers and may be too technical for Suzuki parents, this book would be beneficial for any parent. Since children cannot grow by their lessons alone, parents must cooperate at home. Perhaps Dr. Suzuki sums up his philosophy best when he claims his purpose does not lie in a movement to create professional musicians, but to create persons of a beautiful mind and fine ability.

Sue Everett

The Write Note ran across the following excerpt from some of Dr. Suzuki's writings that helps explain 'ability':

"The Law of Ability"

Ability is the problem of the physiology of the brain. Please clearly understand that repeated practice of what one is capable of doing is the principle of fostering outstanding ability. I tell a student, after he has learned to play a piece, 'Now that your preparation is complete let's practice in order to build your ability. The lesson is just beginning.' Some mothers think that going to the next piece means becoming more advanced. But the key point of Suzuki education is to foster fine ability, and this is created with an old, familiar piece that the student can already play. If this method is carried out correctly, every child will grow splendidly.

- Dr. Shinichi Suzuki

Students Perform at NIU

In November, Jean Von Berg's students went to DeKalb and did a playing demonstration for a class on how to teach Suzuki Style. Those who went were: Kristoffer Bird, Noelle Novak, Mimi Hughes, Magen Hughes, Steven Weiss, Emily Hughes, and Lisa Arnone. The class asked many questions about the games we use to teach Suzuki, and the parents were asked questions about their participation in the teaching process. Everyone had a good time!

of the song. Another example would be in Song of the Wind. The figure in the middle of the piece that is repeated quietly. A last example would be the first piece your child plays that involves a shift should be drilled carefully to learn how to shift.

In calling your attention to drill during practice time, I would like you to think about how there always seems to be a 'hard part' in most pieces. By drilling these sections we don't have to deal with a 'hard part'. We can help the children to learn technically difficult sections so that they blend into a piece with ease and confidence.

Dear SUKI:

Dear SUKI,

You told us about endless tapes in the last issue. There was a company to order from to purchase tapes, but I've lost the address. Can you print it again?

Signed,
Listening Parent

Dear L.P.,

The company is called Ability Development, Box 4260, Athens, Ohio 45701-4260. However, another parent found endless cassettes at the local Radio Shack store. They are the kind used in telephone answering machines!

Signed,
SUKI

* * *

Dear SUKI,

Where can I buy Suzuki Method music books for my children?

Signed,
Listening Parent

Dear L.P.,

If the book you want is not available from Mrs. Blum, or if you want an accompaniment book, they are available at: Hahnfeld & Schellin Music, 10 N. Dryden, Arlington Heights, IL 60004, Phone 394-2410.

Signed,
SUKI

Summer Workshops

Some of our Suzuki children were fortunate enough to be able to attend summer workshops and meet Suzuki children from other parts of the country.

Stevens Point Violin Workshop - Magen and Emily Hughes went to Stevens Point this summer and returned with new roller skates and renewed enthusiasm for the violin. The main themes this summer were, first, to have a dropped or 'heavy' elbow, and second, to practice an exercise called the 'Panda' for proper bow hold and placement. As always, a beautiful tone was sought and sometimes even achieved!

Magen - "I liked playing the violin and walking with the violin and music to the different classes. I liked doing tonalizations."

Emily - "I liked seeing Dr. Suzuki and going to breakfast and lunch and dinner. I liked my private lesson best."

Mom - "I'm amazed! The results were great and are apparently lasting."

Eugene, Oregon Workshop - In August, Tony Bradburn attended a workshop in Eugene while his father, John, went to the Summer Meeting of the Mathematical Association of America at the University of Oregon.

Tony - "I went to a Suzuki workshop in Eugene, Oregon. I liked going from room to room. I went to four classes. I went to Theory, Repertoire, Orchestra, and Chamber. I liked going outside and eating lunch. After I was done, I liked going to our motel and swimming."

Mom - "I was one of the few Moms to attend classes. Tony had songs memorized. Many of the children note read."

Workshops are an interesting way to learn more about the Suzuki methods and improve our knowledge and skills. We will continue our efforts to keep everyone notified of any scheduled workshops. Please let the Write Note know about any that you discover, and we will try to include the schedules in our literature table.

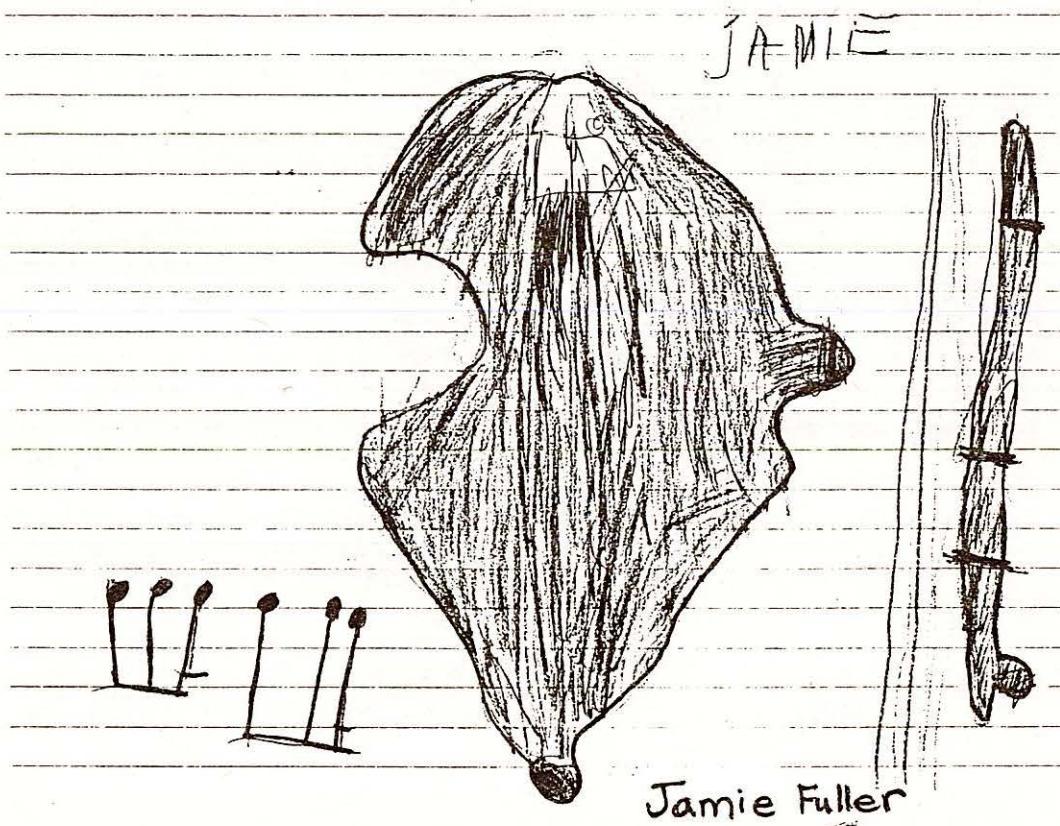
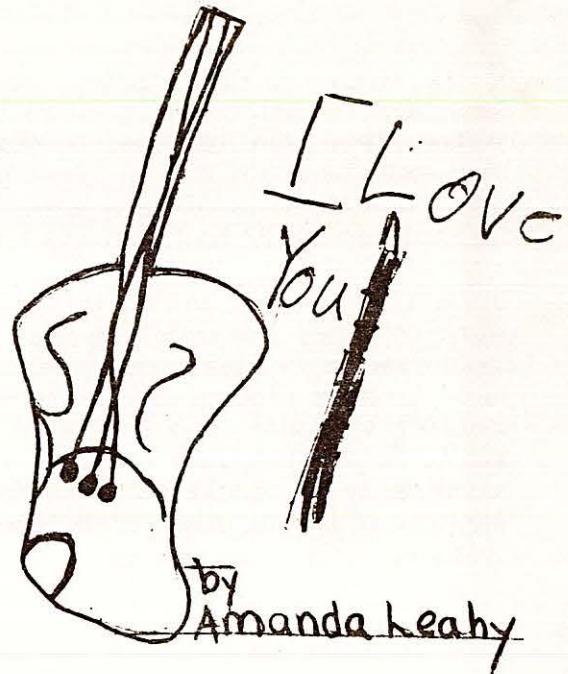
Suzuki Siblings

Esther Nelson, July 26 - to Sarah and Rick
Ashley Arnone, October 1 - Lisa's sister
Nathan Lindquist, May 30 - Sarah's brother
Adam Castillo, September 5 - Miguel's brother
Brett Johnson, October 5 - Lauren's brother

Congratulations

The high achievers this fall are those who have finished Book I and received their pin:

- Britt Hanson
- Mimi Hughes
- Courtney Kenworthy



Mississippi Hot Dog	Dr. Suzuki variation	Popsicle, Popsicle
Long Bows of Twinkle	Lightly Row	Song of the Wind
Aunt Rhody	O Come Little Children	May Song
Lie on the floor and play May Song	Play Long, Long Ago holding your bow at the point.	Walk around and play See Saw
Play only the Martele notes in Allegro	Long, Long Ago	Allegro
Perpetual Motion with bows 1½ inch long	Allegretto	Etude
Minuet 11 - start at the second part	Minuet 3 - play soft especially on E string	Minuet 2 - play the first measure with <u>flat</u> bow hair
Bow Happy Farmer in the air	Play the second part of Happy Farmer	Play only the cadences of Happy Farmer
Play your favorite song lying on the floor:	Play an easy song walking around the room.	Play Aunt Rhody pizzacato!

PARENTS: Have your child cut apart the above ideas and put them in a bowl. During practice time, select a few ideas each day and try them. Maybe your child will want to add to the list to work on skills that will benefit him or her in particular.