

The Write Note

Volume 1, Issue 3



May 1999

From the President's Desk...

"The inaudible and noiseless foot of Time." That's how Shakespeare described the silent passing of days, that goes wholly unnoticed, until something causes you to look backward and say, "I can't believe how the time has flown." That "something" is our upcoming Spring Concert, it is nearly upon us!

Some details to note as we head toward the year's finale. First, you should all have received a letter concerning Rehearsal Week. Please pay close attention to times and locations., Note especially that Wednesday night's rehearsal is being held at Kimball Middle School. **ALL** other rehearsals and the concert itself will be held at Larkin High School, in the new Performing Arts wing. Something that always seems to be an issue, though it really shouldn't be is what constitutes proper concert dress. A few areas that are perennial sticking points to mention here - no nail polish, black hair accessories only, black shoes and socks only, bow ties and cummerbunds are a MUST (don't forget yours, there aren't any extras to go around), iron your shirts if needed, and no jewelry. Please be attentive to these details. If you are unsure of something please ask. There are some of you who may not have your complete concert outfit yet, not to worry. Some people will not be getting their shirts, pants, bow ties, and/or cummerbunds until concert week. If you are uncertain as to whether or not your outfit is being constructed, please ask.

That said, I hope those who haven't purchased their tickets yet will do so right away. Suzuki Plus is handling the sale of these ourselves this year. Early sales of these tickets will lessen the burden on our volunteer box office people on the night of the concert. Also, we have nearly 150 tickets sold to people and groups outside ESTE. This is

something we are very excited about. We are immensely grateful to Janet Gray for her publicity efforts - nearly 1500 flyers were sent to the community and we're so glad to be extending our audience beyond ourselves. If you haven't already done so, invite your family, friends, neighbors and coworkers.

Something new and exciting for us this year will be the recording of a CD during the concert. Order forms for the CD, or a cassette if you prefer, have been placed in all the family files. Be sure to get yours so you can listen to the concert again and again. You must order these in advance; no orders can be taken after the concert. These CD's are being professionally recorded and produced and promise a quality recording of this special evening.

It being spring, many of us are looking forward to the delivery of our flowers from the annual flower sale. Thanks to all those who participated by ordering and letting family, friends and neighbors know about the sale A super thank you to the Mink family who solicited orders totaling more than eight hundred dollars. WOW! The sale had a net profit of nearly \$1400.00 this year, about \$500.00 more than last year, that is just fabulous! Thanks to Ursula Stevenson who has continued to broaden our offering and conduct this annual event for us.

If you would like to show your own "star" just how special you think they are, consider purchasing some roses or a cookie on a stick for an edible bouquet. Suzuki Plus is offering these. They will be delivered to you on concert night so that you may present them to your "star" following their performance.

Thanks in advance for all of your hard work and cooperation during concert week. It is a busy, hectic, exciting and rewarding time of the year.

Looking forward to concert night,
Kathy Vogel
(847) 683-4954

The 13th Suzuki Method World Convention

What We Remember

by Bob LaMothe

... we were ready to go to the 45th International Grand Concert being held at the Nippon Budokan in Tokyo. Everyone had to be there by 1 pm to be ready to perform at 2 pm.

This was the most impressive performance that I have ever witnessed. The local Japanese Suzuki teachers were responsible for setting up the hall, for positioning some 4,144 students in the proper area at the proper time. This was accomplished almost flawlessly.

When the Japanese say it will begin at 2 pm, set you watch because that was the exact time the Gala Concert began. The students were brought out to the concert hall according to their ability. The most advanced started first then the rest all the way down to the beginners. I think Bobbie played a total of 7 pieces. To see so many students from so many countries (34) following the lead of the Suzuki Method all playing at the same time was incredible. You had to be there to appreciate it. I cannot describe it beyond what I have said, you have to attend to share this wonderful experience.

After lunch we were invited to a welcoming ceremony sponsored by the city of Matsumoto on the grounds of the Matsumoto Castle. This is one of four castles in Japan that has been designated as a "National Treasure." Immediately after the ceremony we were brought to our respective hotels. Some were staying in traditional western hotels and others Japanese style hotels. Looking back we were fortunate to have a Japanese hotel so we could experience that atmosphere. The rooms were very comfortable and spacious compared to the western hotels we observed. Shoes were taken off at the door and replaced with slippers but they had to be taken off when entering the dining and sleeping area, then socks were okay. The floors were covered with bamboo mats as compared to our carpeting. The bath-shower were separated from the toilet basin but fortunately were western style. But to enter the toilet area one changed slippers again designated for that room only. Each hotel offered the traditional Japanese bath one for the women and another for the men. To get to the bath one would put on his/her Kimono and slippers and prance through the lobby to the bath. Prior to getting in the bath it is customary to shower and wash clean so as not to dirty the bath water, someone else will be using the bath after you.

That evening our family and Lamar enjoyed a meal in a local restaurant similar to our last evening meal in Tokyo for about 1/4 the price. We were the only Caucasians in the restaurant and not able to speak Japanese we managed to order by pointing to dishes the locals were eating. The food was very good. Two of the delicacies in Matsumoto are horse meat and crickets we avoided those as far as we know.

One evening we were invited by the Darlings for a special treat at their hotel, a special Japanese meal in our own eating room, sitting on the floor at our own table.

The Global Gourmet best describes the beauty of a Japanese meal. "A meal in Japan is not a meal unless it balances three facets: the artistic presentation of the food; the selection of the plate or serving piece; and the taste of the food itself". It is meant when dining one should appreciate all three.

The meal started with a sushi, then a heated dish, a salad, a fried something, steamed lobster, rice and soup. The Global Gourmet states that, "because of Buddhism, meals feature the five flavors and colors, of sweet, spicy, salty, bitter and sour; and yellow, black, white, green and red". We experienced all of this at this particular dinner. Another great ending of another great day in Japan.

Traveling overseas has always been enjoyable but returning home is the greatest. I always said I'm proud to be an American and appreciate what the good old USA has to offer. There is no place better. But we will always enjoy this wonderful family vacation which came about because of the Suzuki Method. I do not know where the next convention will be held in 2 years but as of right now we plan on being there. The opportunity for Bobbie to learn another culture and the opportunity to learn more about the Suzuki Method from both students and teachers from around the world is too good to pass up.

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To Quit Or Not To Quit - Is It A Question?

by Lamar Blum

"My child wants to quit lessons" is a statement heard in almost every studio at some time. Reasons vary from "I don't want to practice" to "I don't want to do this anymore". These reasons come filtered through the parent via a phone call or an out and out expose at a lesson. I welcome a chance to listen to both parent and child. However, I feel that the discussion shouldn't get as far as bringing it to a lesson. Parents should have a good idea of what they want for their child in this area. If the parents are in agreement and can support one another when the child gets discouraged, the discouragement can be short lived. When a parent states doubts to me about their child's situation, I often bring up the comparison of brushing teeth. When a child says he doesn't want to do that, there is usually little discussion or latitude as to whether or not the teeth will get brushed. When will you let him stop brushing his teeth? Most likely you will insist on this until he doesn't have to be reminded of it. In a parents eyes, the child will ALWAYS brush his teeth. I would guess that the parents are in agreement on this subject. No wonder that after a few challenges, it's not an issue. I also believe that parents make teeth brushing a pleasant experience by setting a pleasant example. My colleague, Jean Leudke discusses how to help your child enjoy an activity they don't know how to do. Her main point is to become interested in the activity yourself and then show how much you enjoy watching your child doing that activity. That's Suzuki education. This also could be called "preventive medicine". If you have a value system that says "I want my child to brush his teeth so that he can enjoy strong, healthy teeth for the rest of his life", then you don't have to stop every evening and reevaluate whether or not this is a good activity for your child. We all know what happens when we waiver on a decision - there is begging, bargaining, pleading, etc. which makes us more unsure as parents as to how good our decision is. We have all experienced this scenario, so I'm not going to continue the analogy any further.

What I would like to address is whose decision is it to stop music lessons? Is this a tough question? I think that it depends on your own parenting style. And that depends on how you were parented. Oops, here comes that Suzuki philosophy again! In America, we seem to think that our children should become independent ASAP. In Japan, it is just the opposite. There is a word, "amae" that defines the relationship between mother and child. Professor

Hiroshi Azuma of the University of Tokyo defines "amae" as an attitude characterized by affection, feeling of dependency, and the expectation of an emotionally satisfying response and the fostering of good will. This union between mother and infant that combines love with a strong sense of reciprocal obligation and dependence later transfers into links between child and teacher, and even adult and employer." The mother knows that in order to be successful in her child rearing, she must build a relationship of trust brought about by gentle coaxing. This brings about a balance between the two called interdependence. The mother and child have an interdependent relationship far longer than in American families. This is what is expected. One result of interdependency is cooperation of the child with the parent because of the respect of each for the other.

What happens when children become independent too soon? They are often asked to make decisions that are too complicated or overwhelming for them. When I was growing up, there were two kinds of shoes to buy - saddle shoes and penny loafers. It was a joyous day when saddle shoes came in black and white instead of only brown and white! My choices were simple and limited. Since I had weak arches, my choices were even narrower - saddle shoes! Think of the choices for children now. Even when my girls were young, there were many shoes to choose from. If I didn't limit their choices either by color, style or price, we would have been at the store all day. There are also types of choices that parents need to make for their children for a long period of time. Whether or not a child goes to school each day is a parents choice. Whose house your child plays at can be your choice as well as who comes to your house. Etc., etc. and on and on. I know that as children get older, choices are harder for you and for them. By making choices for your child you are modeling how to make choices. That's how your child is going to learn to make choices - the way you do. There is no other school for learning this. That's one reason it is so important. There is another reason that it is important for you to model "choosing" for your child. We can teach children anything (which is sobering). Their cognitive skills can be taught at younger and younger ages. Again, thank you Dr. Suzuki for showing us this! However there is an area that cannot be hurried and that is judgement. A child doesn't have the skill to see "down the road" and know that if he quits music now, later in life he may regret it. It takes a parent to lovingly but firmly let the child know what the parents want - until he leaves home. That is a good (Continued on page 4 - To Quit)

To Quit

Continued from page 3

time to give the child the power to make that decision. As our daughters grew up they knew all along that ballet for Christy and violin for Becky were a part of their life until they left home. At that time, they could choose. Interestingly enough, neither girl threatened to leave home. As young adults, they talk to us about our choices for them and are glad that we made them. They say it made them feel that we really cared about them.

How many adults have said to me "I wish my parents hadn't let me quit piano". Listen to the words. People usually put the responsibility on the parent for "letting them quit". That's where the responsibility belongs.

Practice Tip Number 1

by Dale Mink

I call this the "Incentive Plan". I have found that sometimes to make practicing fun, my children have needed an incentive to make practicing more fun. The "incentive" at present is to be treated out for a meal, when they go on to a new piece. I let them pick the place. I have found this fun, in that, during their lesson time, when their teacher moves on to the next song, my children will glance at me, with a smile because they know what they have earned. I love those special moments when no words are spoken but we all know what is going on and they have such a glow in their eyes. This is one on one time with one child and me. Being a mother of three, I found it invaluable when I find special time alone with each of my children. One has to be creative to make this happen. We get time to share a meal out, with no phone calls or interruptions, where we can talk, listen and I can tell them how proud I am of their accomplishments.

Another Practice Tip

by Dale Mink

One particular week, Mrs. Blum asked my daughter, Lauren, to practice a certain section 50 times. Well, when we started to practice the next day, I had my notebook in hand, with my notes of the lesson from the day before. I told Lauren to play that section 50 times. She was sure I had the number of times wrong and thought I should call Mrs. Blum. I showed her my notes and said I was sure it was 50. To a seven year old, that number seemed hard to achieve. I did some creative thinking and got out my hole punch and a paper plate. I explained to Lauren that the plan would be to punch a hole for every time she practiced that section. Our goal was 50 times/day. Well, after 6 days, we had far exceeded the 50 times/day. Lauren sometimes practiced that section 150 times/day! She found the hole punching to be fun and made the 50 seem like 5. If we hadn't done the hole punching, we would have had a hard week practicing that section 50 times! One can never come up with enough creative ways to make practicing fun. What is your latest idea to make practicing fun? We need to share these with each other.

Practice Tip Number 3

From Robin and Joel Seigle

Joel and I made up our own game to add something new to our practice. We call it "Pick a Card, Get a Song". First we start with a deck of cards and our Cello Book 2, and since there are 12 songs in the book, when he picks card 1 he plays song 1, and so on. Since the King is an extra card, when he picks it the song is "his choice". If we do this for 5 or 6 songs it becomes more of a game and makes practicing fun for both of us. I really believe that attitude is 95% of making the whole musical experience a positive one, and this works for us!

Home Practice Tips

by Maxine Komlos

- Tell your child the things you hope to cover in the lesson, and add some words of encouragement.
- When working on a piece, allow your child to play through the piece as far as comfortably possible.
- Praise something about the playing.
- Do not neglect review. The whole Suzuki system relies on continual review.

¡Voila Viola!

Starting this summer, Rhonda Alexander will begin teaching Suzuki viola. ESTE will offer private lessons only during the summer. In the fall of 1999, there will be group class to accompany private lessons. So, spread the word! Present violin students may want to try viola during the summer. If you have completed violin Book 1 you may switch during the summer. However, when the fall semester comes, you must choose violin or viola. Viola students from the school programs are welcome. It is also a consideration for younger siblings. Remember, viola players can always eat. They are always in demand in an orchestra!

Step Right Up - Get Your Tickets Now!

Yo Yo Ma - THE Yo Yo Ma - famous cellist is coming to Elgin. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Ma will join the orchestra on September 17 as soloist for 2 numbers. Tickets are affordable at \$25-\$75 each. Sit in the first row and let him sweat on you for \$25 or sit back a bit for more money. Either way, it is a "must do" event for all students to hear this world-class artist. No excuses, get your tickets after August 1 by calling the ESO office at 847-888-0400.

Are You Ready To Travel?

The World Convention of the Suzuki Association is barely over but the announcement of the Pan-Pacific Conference to be held in Melbourne Australia sent an air of excitement through the air. It is to be held in Melbourne, Australia in January of the year 2001. Some students in our program are already committed to going.

Hats Off

To Margot Seigle for winning First Place in the 6th Grade Dundee Middle School writing contest. Her paper was in the expository category, and the topic was "The Titanic" way to go Margot!

To Eric Porter (cello) who was chosen as a semifinalist in the Kalamazoo College Bach Festival, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He intends to compete with other semifinalists on April 17 at the college. Finalists will perform in May at the festival. Prizes are awarded to finalists.

Oops

In the February newsletter there were a few errors. Here are the corrections.

First, The Santa's Beard Contest was won by Carl Porter. Second, Nathan Kappes was also chosen to play in the Elgin Area Youth Orchestra's Winter Concert on February 9. Nate also leads the percussion section of the Abbott Middle School Band and was selected for Jazz Band.

Top 8 Do's and Don'ts For The Upcoming Spring Concert

1. Do be on time for all rehearsals and the concert
2. Don't forget to be in proper concert dress
3. Do go to Kimball Middle School for the Wednesday rehearsal
4. Don't forget, all other rehearsals and the concert are at Larkin High School Performing Arts Wing
5. Do order your CD of the #1 group and their hit album, "The Stars Are Out Tonight"
6. Don't forget to order your tickets now
7. Do show your star that you think they are great, buy flowers or a cookie on a stick
8. Do HAVE FUN!!

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Jenny Mink - violin

100 Day Club

Q: What is the 100-200-365-500-1000+ Day Club?

A: It is an exclusive club consisting of the students of ESTE that have practiced each day consistently, without missing a day, 100 days; 200 days; etc. The rules to follow have been to play each day. If they miss a day, they must start over again in counting the days. If a child is sick, they still need to listen to their tapes and then they won't lose out. I've been asked about vacations and what to do. It is best to confer with your child's teacher, but sometimes it is not practical to take an instrument into the North Woods. If they continue to listen to their tapes daily, they are still in the club. They can also practice fingerings. You also may be able to practice, "What is this note?" on flash cards while in the car if your child is into notereading. Some of what is appropriate is dependent on age. If you have any questions, please call Dale Mink at (847) 426-3802 and I would be happy to assist you in answering them.

Q: What do you get for all your hard work?

A: For each level attained the student receives an item with an original, handpainted, glow-in-the-dark, Dale Mink design. The items are:

100 days	T-shirt
200 days	Hat
365 days	Leggings/Sweatpants
500 days	Tote Bag
700 days	Big Cookie
1000 + days	Sweatshirt

Congratulations

To each of the following students for their accomplishments. Great Work!! Keep It Up!!!

100 Day Club

Bradley Biasotti
Meghan Bonham
Kathleen Cohen
Karen Darling
Kyle Dawson
Amees Desai
Kevin Fernandez #
Esther Fiebig
Jacquelin Goodlove
Lindsey Gray #
Michael Haefliger
Steve Lorado
Trisha Kellenberger

100 Day Club (con't)

Eva Martinez
Lauren Mink
Chelsea Musson #
Lizzie Vicars
Hannah Vogel
Justine Yoder

200 Day Club

Jenna Barba
Mike Eschenbach
Sara Evanusich

200 Day Club (con't)

Jenny Fester
Alex Fiebig
Anna Goodlove
Abbey Galvin
Nathan Kappes
Christine Phillips #
Jon Richards
Scott Rougas
Abigail Stevenson
Lisa Tippy
Amy Tomkins
Kate Yoder #

365 Day Club

Bobbie Lamothe

500 Day Club

Richard Dean
Meaghan Fritz
Jennifer Mink

1000 Day Club

Brennan Biasotti
Carl Porter
Joel Seigle

2000+ Day Club

Margot Seigle

denotes new member

Chicago Meets Osaka

by Virginia Dixon

The Suzuki Method Talent Education Institute in Osaka, Japan joined the Chicago String Ensemble in a family concert at 2 p.m., Saturday afternoon September 12, 1998 at the concert hall of The International House Osaka. The program was one of several celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Chicago-Osaka Sister Cities relationship.

Ms. Yoshiko Nakajima, director of Suzuki Talent Education Institute, prepared 35 of her students, mainly from Osaka, but also from the surrounding cities of Yoshino, Kansai Airport, Kobe, and Kyoto. The students, from the ages of 3-17, were mostly under 10. They performed "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" and Vivaldi's "Concerto in a minor for Violin and Orchestra" to the accompaniment of the Chicago String Ensemble. Seventeen-year-old Hiroko Yoshida of Osaka performed magnificently as soloist on the concerto's slow middle movement.

As its part of the program, the Chicago String Ensemble, directed by Allan Lewis, performed the beloved "Serenade" by Tschaikowsky a serenade by Mozart, a string symphony by Mendelssohn, as well as "Intermezzo" by Chicago's own David Zabriskie, "Ave Maria" by Gounod, "Memory" from *Cats* and a beautiful arrangement of "Sakura", also written by Zabriskie especially for the tour. The ensemble opened its tour of Japan Thursday, September 10, 1998 at the Mielparque Hall, also in Osaka. Founded in 1977, the Chicago String Ensemble is Chicago's only professional string orchestra. Having been broadcast on Chicago's WFMT and WNIB as well as National Public Radio, the ensemble also provides subscription concerts and outreach to the region as well as touring concerts throughout the Midwest. This was the Ensemble's

first tour of Japan,

The Chicago String Ensemble's relationship with the Suzuki Method is an ongoing one. Many Suzuki teachers have occupied chairs in the ensemble, including several who participated in the Japanese tour. The orchestra has also featured Suzuki students of Betty Haag in past Chicago performances.

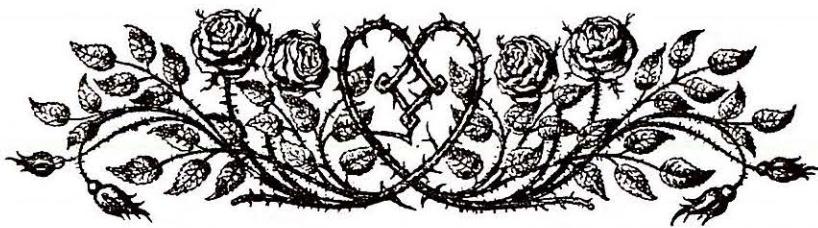
Most recently, in partnership with the Chicago Public Schools and the Betty Haag Academy, CSE has developed a highly successful in-school Suzuki program in the Little Village and Pilsen neighborhoods of Chicago taught by Shalisa Kline. "Viva La Musica Clasica!", as the program is called, serves 125 Hispanic students and requires full participation of parents.

The ensemble was struck not only by the sensitive artistry of Ms. Nakajima's students, but also by the welcome and hospitality that they showed. Before the ensemble's arrival Ms. Nakajima silently took care of many details, including finding a harpsichord and a harpsichordist. Members were warmly greeted by Ms. Nakajima as they arrived at their hotel and later at a reception hosted by the City of Osaka. On the concert day, between the morning rehearsal and afternoon concert, the Suzuki students and parents treated the orchestra to lunch. It was a time to talk, sign, and laugh, to witness together that we have so much in common, in spite of the barriers (mainly language) that only appear to separate us. As musicians boarded the bus to leave for Kansai Airport, Ms. Nakajima was there with smiles and parting words to wave the ensemble off.

This wonderful tour of friendship and collaboration has inspired the ensemble to search for new projects of a similar nature. It is presently looking to tie in the Viva La Musica Clasica! project with a tour of Mexico.

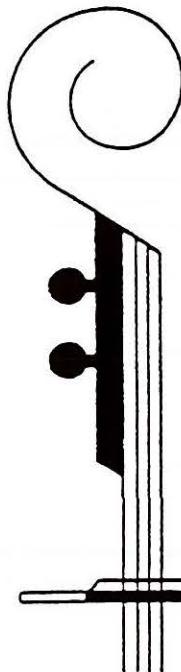
Biography

Virginia Dixon has been a bassist with the Chicago String Ensemble since her arrival in Chicago nine years ago. She teaches for Elgin Suzuki Talent Education, Elmhurst College and Wheaton College. She was recently named to the Suzuki Bass Committee. She is on the Board of Directors of the International Society of Bassists, and will direct the Young Bassists Program at their 1999 Convention in Iowa City. Presently enrolled in Japanese language courses at the College of DuPage, she plans to study abroad in Kyoto in 2000. She was one of three "cellists" to go unrecognized as bassists in a photograph of the Chicago Area Association Centennial Celebration in Orchestra Hall featured in the last issue of the American Suzuki Journal.



*Music
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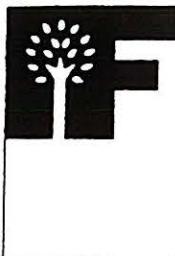
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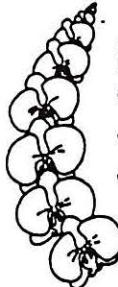
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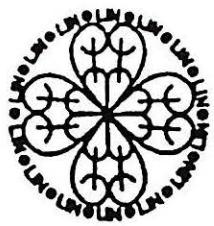
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