



AMERICAN

SUZUKI

JOURNAL

VOLUME 7

OCTOBER 1979

NUMBER 5



"... Hmm ..."



"Eureka!!"

In this issue:

*New Ideas
On Practicing*



*Suzuki And
Montessori Parallels*



*A Memo To
Quartet Players*

SAA

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The views expressed in any article in this publication are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent an official position of the association.

American Suzuki Journal

Official publication of the Suzuki Association of the Americas.

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SUZUKI ASSOCIATION NEWS

Publication Policies

The following policies took effect on 14 August 1979 and remain in force through the date of the next annual Board Meeting.

Resolved that

(1) a clear differentiation be made between core materials (printed music and recorded music which are the *sight* and *sound* of the Suzuki approach) and other materials, such as biographies, pedagogical suggestions, and the like, which are vitally important but which nevertheless are to be considered peripheral.

(2) the *Journal* of the Suzuki Association of the Americas be used as a vehicle for the review of all printed materials other than core materials, with pro and con reviews presented simultaneously when such differences of opinion exist.

(3) the reviewers be selected from the Active Membership of SAA and be appointed by the President for a term mutually agreed upon: that is, either a one-year term or only for the review of specified material.

(4) the reviewers be presented with both a fact sheet explaining the legal implications of reviewing and a style sheet to guide their presentation of their findings.

In regard to core materials, *resolved further that*

(5) the Board of Directors of the SAA may sponsor efforts from within the organization to provide professional aids where needed, the procedure for this being as follows:

a. the Board's recognition of a need;

b. the Board's decision to try to meet the need;

c. the Board's appointment of a committee or task force with specific guidelines as to what to do, when to report, to whom to report; and as to who will review the final product or, in the case of recordings, as to who will officially choose the artist to make the recording;

d. the Board's budgeting of funds to compensate committee or task-force members for their time and effort, with a stipulation of the deadline after which the funds cannot be expended;

e. the Board's making available to the committee a legal-resource person if deemed necessary.

(6) an individual SAA member may approach the Board seeking sponsorship for the preparation of core materials, the procedure then being as outlined in paragraph 5.

(7) any materials prepared under the sponsorship of the SAA shall show contractual evidence that royalties are being shared with Dr. Suzuki, and shall carry the corporate seal of the SAA.

Summary of Teacher Training Guidelines

In 1978, over 500 people were enrolled in summer teacher training programs in Suzuki education in the United States. The extent of the demand for teacher training led SAA President Mark Bjork to charge a Teacher Training Task Force with developing a proposal that would serve the needs of teacher trainees, pedagogy teachers, and sponsoring agencies in planning and coordination of teacher training programs in violin, cello, and piano. The work of the task force resulted in a document titled *Guidelines for Teacher Training*, which was adopted by the Board of Directors at its August meeting.

The *Guidelines* provide for the organization of the course of study into instructional units with the focus on a particular segment of repertoire. Each unit is divided into three kinds of educational experiences: 1) repertoire study, 2) consultation, and 3) guided observations and general topics. An additional unit is offered for a practicum experience.

Since teacher-training courses are offered in many different locations, the SAA is preparing to maintain centralized records. Trainees who register with the Association will be able to request verification of the types of Suzuki training completed by contacting only one source.

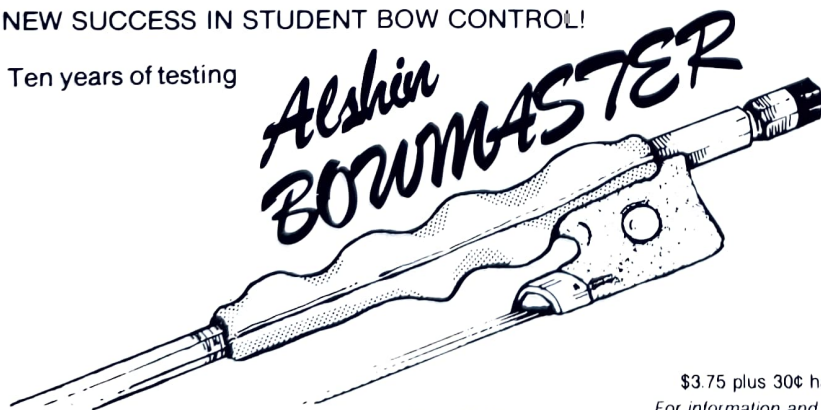
In addition to the course structure and record-keeping services described in the *Guidelines*, the Teacher Training Task Force recommended that the following be developed: a list of resource people for special-topic lectures, an annotated bibliography of printed materials pertaining to musical and non-musical concerns in Suzuki teaching, book reviews in the *American Suzuki Journal*, a list of teachers for pedagogy courses, and a list of teacher training programs.

Copies of the *Guidelines for Teacher Training* may be obtained by writing to the office of the Executive Secretary.

(SAA News continues on page 4)

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Jeanne S. Rubin
(Continued from Volume 7, Number 4)

Auto Education

Suzuki

"Listen — do you like that?" By demonstration or words, this was asked by numerous teachers — Japanese and American — who were setting the stage for auto-education, the child teaching himself. A more effective stimulant for motivation and concentration (with its resultant persistence) has yet to be found.

In order to do this effectively, the student must have a clear goal or concept of what he is trying to achieve. The tapes and records that Suzuki has provided do just that and any student who does not listen to the tapes sufficiently does not have a clear enough goal or concept to teach himself effectively. Several times at the convention, mention was made that many Japanese students do not listen once or twice a day but as many as twenty or thirty times — sometimes taping *thirty repetitions of the same piece on one tape*.

Reinforcing this, Mr. Hiroshi — who has conducted the Japanese Tour Group in this country — stated that if a child plays out of tune or incorrectly one should not say "too high" or "too low" etc. but instead ask the child to identify the problem himself.

Montessori

On page 71 of *Dr. Montessori's own Handbook*, Maria Montessori has this to say about auto-education:

The desire of the child to attain an end which he knows, leads him to correct himself. It is not the teacher who makes him notice his mistake and shows him how to correct it. . . . The aim is an inner one, namely, that the child train himself to observe; that he be led to make comparisons . . . to form judgments, to reason and decide; and it is in the indefinite [infinite] repetition of this exercise of attention and intelligence that a real development ensues.

Toward this end, her didactic materials were designed to be *self-correcting* and, in reference to an activity involving one of these materials, she has this to say on the preceding page: "The exercise arouses the intelligence of the child; he wants to repeat it right from the beginning and, having learned by experience, he makes another attempt."

Then she adds that "little children of three to three and a half years old have repeated the exercise up to *forty* times without losing their interest in it."

Relaxation

Suzuki

Reminders to relax and listen were given over and over again. These suggestions are more easily followed by children whose culture includes meditation and contemplation. Occidental children benefit from the necessity to follow these suggestions in order to play well. This necessity become obvious to anyone who attempts to play well without them.

In William Starr's session with parents, the successful use of simple meditation exercises was mentioned, along with other ideas largely stemming from the previously-mentioned book *Inner Tennis*. All of these are applicable to any human in any endeavor but certainly to the human being trying to play music.

Montessori

In Montessori's "Lesson of Silence" (sometimes referred to as "Game of Silence") she has provided occidental children with a meditative experience which has been successfully used for three quarters of a century all over the world.

Originally employed as a test for acuteness of hearing and an exercise for quickening the child's attention to sounds, its valuable by-products include self-discipline as well as the child's own mystical experience which she describes in *Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook* (pp. 119-120): ". . . the children . . . seem to give themselves up to a kind of spell; they might be said to be wrapped in meditation. . . . The world becomes full of imperceptible sounds which invade the deep silence without disturbing it. . . . It is almost the discovery of a new world where there is rest. . . . At such a time the spirit is set free."

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(continued from page 3)

Graduation Program Undergoes One-Year Moratorium

Among the actions taken by the SAA Board at its August meetings was a decision to call a one-year moratorium on the experimental "Graduation Program."

Kay Slone of Lexington, Chairman of the Graduation Committee, announced that the moratorium was to become effective in August 1979, and that the graduation certificates designed by Dr. Suzuki, previously available from the office of the Executive Secretary, would not be available for the year-long period. This does not mean that local programs cannot continue graduation ceremonies begun in the past.

During the moratorium, the Graduation Committee will complete a survey of all teachers that have used the experimental program and compile a new plan for possible implementation in the future.

Anyone with suggestions or ideas prior to the distribution of the survey may write to Mrs. Slone at 349 Melbourne Way, Lexington, KY 40502.

CONFERENCE SIGHT SEARCH BEGINS

The Sight-Selection Committee for the 1981 International Suzuki Conference has been given the mandate of finding an appropriate location in the Northeast Region of the United States for a conference during the last week of July or the first week of August. The Committee, consisting of Mark Bjork, William Starr, and John Kendall, is in the process of finding a suitable place, and will be glad to accept invitations or suggestions. For specifications as to facilities and other matters, please write to John Kendall, Box 74 A, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, IL 62026.

(SAA News continues on page 7)
AMERICAN SUZUKI JOURNAL

THE VIOLIN CORNER

Trio of Tips for Teachers

Milton Goldberg

"Friction-Proof" Your Violin Section

Track coaches do their utmost to prevent their champions from making unnecessary motions which hinder speed while running. The violin student who rubs knuckles while playing makes rapid motion difficult. In the violin class, the instructor must caution pupils against rubbing knuckles together when placing fingers on the string. Knuckles should be apart for half steps as well as whole steps. This feeling, together with a relaxed left thumb, will eliminate tension and friction, and thus allow for more rapid fingering motion.

Friction-proof your classes with the slogan: "Knuckles apart!"

Will your group have a smooth crossing?

When we walk one foot is left on the ground while the other is lifted. When the latter is brought down both feet are on the ground for a moment and then the cycle is repeated. Although this may seem obvious to all, the same observation may be overlooked in violin playing. Pianists, of course, must lift a finger off in order to play another tone. In violin playing, however, strings can be crossed without bumps or accents if the following rule is adhered to: "Never take a finger off until you have placed the next one on the string."

Are you teaching your string classes from the right angle?

For most school teachers, the correct violin and viola position means keeping the left hand away from the body of the instrument and well under the violin. Most important to this position is the angle at which the fingers come into contact with the string. Nearly all the textbooks illustrate the fingers being placed on the string from the teacher's viewpoint. Practically none show the correct angle from the player's viewpoint.

(continued on page 11)

MEMO TO QUARTET PLAYERS

Abraham Loft

Walking out on the concert stage takes not only courage but conviction: the feeling that one has absorbed the music at hand, has discerned what the composer is driving at, and is prepared to recreate that intention in sound. The recreating calls not only for pre-meditation, but also for a sense of adventure and alertness. The excitement of performance lies in its constant newness. A phrase-ending inflected in one particular way, suggests the manner in which the next phrase should begin. The composition seems to grow, moving through time from first note to last, presenting in the performance that same logical sequence of events the composer built into the work.

If combined forethought and flexibility are demanded of the individual player (as in the solo sonata), it is all the more necessary when two or more players are involved. And never more so than in the playing of a string quartet. The sound of this medium is transparent, homogeneous. There are countless fine-grained details in the musical fabric; each detail is vitally important to the whole, and each detail can be *heard*. It is fatal to composition (and reputation!) to sit down to a performance without prior agreement between the four players, not only as to minute technical detail, but also — and most important — as to the general temper, mood, and expressive purpose of the music. Then, in the live performance, this general concept and awareness governs and colors the actual playing, relating the individual performance — never to be exactly duplicated — to all other interpretations of the same work by the particular ensemble. As they play, the musicians must listen to each other, respond musically to one another, so that the musical dialogue, the give-and-take, the dramatic interplay that is so much a part of quartet-writing is fully revealed.

All this is important to the established professional ensemble. It is equally so to the ensemble-in-training and to the amateur chamber music group. In the classroom, the concert hall, the livingroom, there is always a responsibility to the composer and to the listener (and this includes the player!) to make music, to create a musical experience. What does this

mean in practical detail? We can only sketch some of the vital points here.

1. Always try to hear what is happening in the work being played. Do not play "Mozart", "Beethoven", "Schubert". Do not play your own pre-conception of the man; do not play a "tradition". Play the *music*; play the facet of Mozart, or Beethoven, or Schubert revealed in this one specific composition. Composers are people, not recipes.

2. Experiment with the manner of playing the opening measures of the piece. For the composer worthy the name, every detail in a composition follows logically from the initial statement, leads inevitably to the statements that follow it in turn. Should the opening be played on the string? Legato or *detache*? Crisply or in sprightly fashion? What should be the balance, the relative loudness, the relative prominence of the inner voices as compared with first violin and cello? Are the inner voices, the lower voices playing something that will prove to be almost as important as the first violin melody when the composition unfolds? (Probably!)

3. Watch the movement unfold. Study the contrasts, the surprises, the extensions of prior ideas. Consider all these in relation to what has gone before since the beginning of the movement. If necessary, go back and adjust your way of playing the opening.

4. Consider the relationship between movements. How do they complement each other? Does the nature of the first movement, for example, influence the style of performance of the minuet? Test your concept of the work as a whole by playing through it, keeping tuning and other distractions between movements to a minimum.

5. Play every note, in every voice, as though it is vital to the meaning of the composition. There is no one "solo" voice in a quartet. Each successive measure, portion of a phrase, may suddenly call any one or more of the four parts to the musical spotlight. The other voices, though subordinate for the moment, still contribute essentially to the musical plot.

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PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT AND REWARDING MAKES PRACTICE

Nada Mangialetti

What would you think if I asked you to come and work for me for five days a week, eight hours a day — for no pay? You'd think I was out of my ever lovin' mind, that's what you'd think! No one does something for nothing. To even ask is unreasonable.

Yet, very often, that's exactly what we expect of our children. Take practicing, for example. What does a child get out of it? "It's good for him," you may say. "Making beautiful music uplifts the spirit. It disciplines the mind and gives him a sense of competence. Besides, it's fun!"

But that's what *you* say! Unless your *child* sees it that way, he will rebel against practicing, or he will find it difficult to maintain his concentration for very long.

What can you do about it? It's very simple, really: Make it worth his while. No adult voluntarily undertakes an activity unless he sees that it is worth his while. So why do we ask children to act any differently? If your child does not feel that music is its own reward, then you must offer him an extrinsic reward — some goody, prize, or toy that has nothing to do with music — in return for practicing.

I can already hear many parents gasp in horror, "I don't want to bribe my child into practicing."

Let's get one thing straight from the start: A bribe is when you reward someone for doing something immoral, unethical, or illegal. What I am suggesting is that you reward your child for doing something *good*. Good deeds and wholesome activities should, after all, be rewarded.

Still, many parents are uneasy with the notion of "paying" their child to do things which, they feel, should be done for their own sake and without reward. Yet no one — I repeat — *no one ever does anything voluntarily without being rewarded in some way*. The reward may not be as obvious and tangible as money. More often, rewards are internal, and therefore, neither obvious nor tangible. Ask yourself why you engage

in any particular activity. Maybe you do it because it makes you feel good about yourself. Maybe it's fun. Maybe you are interested in it. Maybe it gives you a sense of accomplishment. Maybe it will help you get a better job. Maybe you do it because it allows you to meet people and make friends. Maybe you do it because you feel it's the "right" thing to do. And maybe you do it because it pays the rent. Satisfaction, pleasure, status, popularity, and a clear conscience can all function as rewards just as much as money, in the sense that we engage in some activity in order to get them. Anything that increases the activity preceding it can be considered a reward.

Your child, like you, must feel that he is getting *something* out of practicing — or he will stop doing it. Face it, if your child is just learning to play the violin or piano, he is hardly in a position to get much reward from the music itself. How can he? He can't play anything yet. And even after he finally squeaks out his first "Mississippi hot dog" or "peanut butter sandwich" (or whatever magic words you use in your area for the first variation of "Twinkle"), he may feel that the music itself is simply not worth the huge effort it took to learn it. Especially when there are other competing activities which he would rather do, like play with his toys, draw with his crayons, or watch television. Try explaining to your five year old how music uplifts the spirit, disciplines the mind and gives a sense of competence — and see how far you get! Even the older, advanced student may flag when faced with the many lonely hours of practice required to master technique. The rewards — the joy of producing beautiful music, the satisfaction of achievement, the status and praise that go along with it — are so distant that they may not be enough to keep him going from day to day.

(continued on page 10)

SAA NEWS (continued)

Institute Sanctioning Program

Again this year, the SAA is offering institutes and workshops an opportunity to be sanctioned by the Association.

The March issue of the *Journal* will include dates and brief program descriptions of all sanctioned institutes. In addition, sanctioned programs may obtain pre-gummed address labels of the SAA membership for promotional use, organizational assistance from the Institute Committee and members of the SAA Executive Committee, free distribution of their brochures by the SAA office to persons requesting program information, and priority scheduling of SAA audio-visual library materials. All sanctioned programs will be given SAA logo repros for use on printed materials and advertising.

Teacher training programs will be given separate sanctioning in accordance with the *Guidelines for Teacher Training* adopted by the SAA Board in August. The teacher training registry service outlined in the *Guidelines* (see *Summary* in this issue) is now active. Teachers who complete unit credits at sanctioned institutes beginning in the summer of 1980 will have the benefit of this new, centralized record-keeping service. In addition, teacher training institutes will receive an official SAA notebook organizer and a copy of the "Tonalization" report by Dr. Suzuki for each active member enrolled in the course.

Institutes scheduled for May through August must submit an application for sanctioning no later than January 1, 1980. All other programs requesting sanctioning must submit application at least six months prior to the starting date.

Institutes that qualified for SAA sanction in 1979 will automatically receive application forms. Directors of new or previously non-sanctioned institutes should address requests for application forms to Glenn Pannell, Executive Secretary. For other information contact Ronda Cole, chairman, Institute Committee, 6137 Farver Rd., McLean, VA 22101.

(SAA News continues on page 11)



SUZUKI AND MONTESSORI (conclusion)

Because of its importance in aural development and its uniqueness in starting that development with an exercise in *silence* rather than sound, a representative presentation of the Montessorian "Lesson in Silence" follows. (Both Suzuki and Montessori encourage creativity in teaching so this presentation is only *one* of those suggested by her; on one occasion she used a sleeping infant as "teacher.") The following presentation is drawn from her *The Montessori Method* (pp. 209-212):

"Lesson of Silence"

The teacher assumes a comfortable, relaxed position and quietly challenges the children to match hers — and maintain it (brief comments when necessary should be quiet and followed by intervals of immobility and silence). Children become increasingly aware of degrees of silence which are "very different from that which we carelessly call by that name."

"It seems as if life gradually vanishes, and that the room becomes . . . empty. . . ." From outside they begin to hear sounds they had not heard before. At this point the child is invited to close his eyes. Soon the teacher whispers that "a soft voice is going to call your name" and she silently moves to another position far behind them and whispers, "lingering over the syllables as if . . . calling from the mountains. This voice, almost occult, seems to reach the heart and call to the soul of the child. Each one . . . opens his eyes . . . then rises" and silently follows the beckoning finger of the teacher.

(If properly conducted, children of three years of age have been known to await their names quietly while forty other children's names are called before theirs.)

Conclusion

Although we have thus far concerned ourselves mainly with Suzuki and Montessori parallels, parallels exist between other methods. As was mentioned before — aside from Suzuki's use of initial rote learning which accommodates early childhood education — there is no real break with traditional music training. The good Suzuki teacher nurtures the violinist (pianist, cellist, etc.) as much as the human being; the good traditional teacher nurtures the human being as well as the violinist, etc.; Suzuki *explicitly* involves the parent; traditional teaching *implicitly* involves the parent; and so forth. . . . The thought occurs that perhaps more is to be gained from the reinforcement which comes from seeking underlying similarities than by the estrangement which comes from delving into superficial differences.

In the meantime it might be safe to conclude that if a deficient product does ensue from Suzuki, Montessori, or traditional training, in all probability the fault lies not so much in the method itself as in the *use* of that method — not so much in the "what" as in the "how."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Society of American Musicians announces Young Artist Violin and Cello Competitions for 1980. Entrants must be between 19 and 29; 1st place cash prize of \$300 plus performance opportunities in the Chicago area. Contestant's teacher must join the Society of American Musicians by November 1, 1979. The deadline for contestant's applications is January 15, 1980. For applications and repertoire requirements, write Patricia M. Berkenstock, Director of Contests, 2423 Thayer St., Evanston, IL 60201.

Suzuki violin teacher needed immediately to take over a prospering program in Casper, Wyoming. For further information contact Peggy Rossmiller, 205 Daffodil, Casper, WY 82601. Phone (307) 266-3680.

Full-time violin instructor needed for program in Lemont, Pennsylvania. Interested persons should contact Leslie Beers, Program Director, State College Talent Education, Box 458, Lemont, PA 16851.

Violin and piano teachers needed in established Suzuki program. Non-profit organization active in community and teacher training. In first year sponsored tour and workshops with well-known Suzuki instructors. College town. Piano teacher needed now; violin teacher needed in Spring or Fall of 1980. Write Columbia Talent Education Association, Inc., Mary Marks, 509 DeFoe Dr., Columbia, MO 65201. Phone (314) 445-1919.

Suzuki violin teacher needed. Excellent opportunity to develop private Suzuki violin program in beautiful northern California redwood coastal region. Active Kodaly program locally, Suzuki piano program, and stimulating musical scene on professional (academic) and amateur levels. Possible opportunities to hold workshops and teacher training at local Junior College, if qualified. Contact June Davis, Rt. 1, Box 370, Eureka, CA 95501.

MEMO TO QUARTET PLAYERS

(continued from page 5)

6. Each of the four players must be ready to act as leader when his voice is prominent. To lead means to signal the start and pacing of a phrase, whether at the beginning of the movement or in its course. And that signaling must be done in the temper of the passage: a violent, agitated upbeat cannot introduce a lyric melody. In giving a signal, try to breathe it. Pretend that you are going to sing through the violin.

7. The pace, the overall tempo of the movement must be consistently maintained, not metronomically rigid, but flexibly. Contrasts, shadings, phrase-shaping must have room to breathe, yet without stretching the tempo all out of shape.

8. Use of the bow must be uniform among all four players. Choose the portion of bow, the kind of stroke that best suits the phrase, then let all do the same. Only when the ribbon of hair touches the string and moves across it is sound to be coaxed from the instrument. Stroke, don't beat the violin. Glide onto the string, don't drop the bow like a bomb. Be careful not to rip final notes and chords.

9. Match vibrato: fast or slow, narrow or wide — all players in the group should use the same kind and amount at the same time. Otherwise, there will be unbalance, and clash both of intonation and tone color. Vibrato is a coloration of the sound: vary it to suit the musical need of the moment. Some moments will even require *no* vibrato; try it.

10. Choose the string and position that best serves the color needs of the musical situation. Though first position is not always the best choice, there are many times when its clear, open sound is better than that of a more constrained upper position.

Most important: *listen* to your playing — and be critical. Your audience does — and is. Copyright 1963, *A Loft*. All Rights Reserved.

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PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT (continued from page 7)

Hopefully, your child will eventually reach a point where he finds the learning experience, the sense of mastery and the resulting beauty of music rewarding in itself. At that point, extrinsic rewards become unnecessary. But until he reaches that point, he may need a little help.

How To Design An Effective Reward System

First, you must *decide what the reward shall be*. Remember, it must be something that your *child* likes, not something that *you* like! If you're not sure what he will agree to work for, ask him!

Snacking treats might work well for very young children. (Cherries, nuts or raisins are to be preferred over candies or junk food.) Older children may desire larger rewards such as toys, circus tickets or bikes. In such cases, you must use what is called a "token system." Get a large bag of marbles and a clear plastic jar. Place the jar near the music stand or on the piano. Whenever the child completes a small practice unit, reward him by placing a marble in the jar. The child can see his progress as the marbles mount up. When a certain number of marbles have been earned — the number should be decided on beforehand — the child may exchange them for the larger reward. If he doesn't want to wait that long, he may exchange a lesser number for a smaller reward.

Very often, the opportunity to engage in *another* learning activity may serve as a reward for practicing. A five-year old student of mine, for example, was so fond of my musical flash cards, that he was willing to practice diligently with me for a solid twenty minutes in order to be allowed to work with the flash cards afterwards!

Second, *the reward must be given frequently and in small amounts*. You might reward a very young child after only three consecutive repetitions of a phrase. Later, you may step up the requirement to five or even ten repetitions. A more advanced student might be asked to produce five consecutive *perfect* repetitions. (Repetitions containing an error of any sort would not "count".) The amount of work required for a given reward varies with

the child's age and level. Above all, it must be easy for him to earn many rewards during a practice session. If the reward is not within his reach, he will become discouraged and give up.

Third, *the reward must be given immediately after the desired behavior*. Not months later. Not days later. Not even hours later. Children, especially very young children, are not likely to see the connection between practicing and the reward if there is a time lag between the two.

Fourth, *the reward must not be available to the child apart from his practicing sessions*. If, for instance, you decide to use a small snacking treat as a reward, then that particular food must not ever be given out "for free". It must be saved for practicing only. The child must not have access to it in other situations. Otherwise, it will lose its effectiveness as a reward.

Fifth, *be consistent*. The reward must *always* be given on completion of the specified amount of practice. A reward system that is sometimes administered and sometimes forgotten only serves to confuse the child.

And finally, *don't use praise or love as a reward*. Surprised? I'll tell you why this is a bad practice. Children evaluate their own worth as human beings based on what parents, teachers and other authorities say about them. I have seen too many children anxiously look toward their mother or teacher after playing, with an expression that clearly asks, "Was I good?" Not, mind you, "Was my *playing* good?" But rather, "Was *I* good?"

Children should not be given the idea that their value as human beings, their loveableness and their self-worth depend on how well they play "Go Tell Aunt Rhody" or Vivaldi's Concerto in A Minor. As much as I believe in rewards, there is one "freebie" which no child should have to earn: love. Children must have the assurance that they are loved and that they are worthwhile — just because *they are*.

You may think that you are building up your child's confidence and making him feel good about himself if you shower him with praise, hugs

and kisses whenever he does well. But there are two sides to every coin, and you cannot have one without the other. If you reward your child with love when he does well, you are telling him, by implication, that you will *not* love him if he does poorly. Of course, you don't mean to say this, but that is often how the child sees it. Far from giving him confidence, rewards of love only promote anxiety. Instead of concentrating on the task at hand, the child will worry about playing poorly and thus losing your affection and approval. Even if he plays well and earns your affection and approval, there is always the worry that he may lose it in the future if he does not continue to play well.

On the other hand, it is important for a student to know when he has played well and when he has played poorly. Otherwise, he will not know whether to repeat what he has just done in exactly the same fashion, or change it in some way. Constant feedback should be given — but in a neutral tone of voice, devoid of either praise or censure. Both positive and negative criticism must be simple statements of fact, points of information. They must be given frequently. They must be specific, not generalized. And they must be aimed at the child's playing, *not* at the child himself! Statements such as, "The thrills were clearly executed," or, "This section was too fast," or, "The phrasing in that section was exactly right," or, "The soft parts were a bit out of tune," are much more helpful than generalized, personal statements such as, "You're wonderful!" or, "I'm proud of you!" or, "You're so smart!"

Does It Work?

The reward system has been shown to be an effective aid to learning by psychologists who specialize in the learning process. It has even been shown to work with extremely young children and with so-called "problem learners". In my own experience as a Suzuki piano teacher, I have suggested it to mothers who were having difficulty getting their children to practice. Time and time again, they have re-

(continued on page 11)

TRIO OF TIPS

(continued from page 5)

Fingers should be shaped so that the part of the fingertip nearest the thumb is placed on the strings. It is not necessary for the wrist to bend back but it is important that the second finger joints be higher than the first. This will enable the fingertips to come down at the proper angle. When working to correct finger placement, many of us still say "Fingers together for half steps." To the pupil this does not always imply *fingertips*. Many students feel that their fingers are close but the tips in contact with the string may be as much as a whole step apart. It is better to say "Fingertips together for half steps."

Improving the hand position enables your students to shift to third and fifth positions sooner than you might have expected and also prepares the hand for vibrato.

SAA NEWS

Tour Invitation Declined

An invitation has been extended to the Suzuki Association of the Americas from International Horizons for us to cooperate again in a series of "friendship concerts" in Washington, Atlanta, and New York. In April of 1978, one hundred Japanese and one hundred American Suzuki students performed in those three cities with all arrangements made by International Horizons.

In spite of the fact that a firm proposal had not yet been presented to SAA by International Horizons, the Board of Directors voted in their August meetings not to cooperate now, or in the future, with International Horizons on such a series of concerts. In view of the many problems experienced in the last tour, and the determination that an unqualified benefit to the children was lacking, it was felt that this was the best decision for the welfare of our children.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

(conclusion)

turned the following week to report, almost in disbelief, that their child's attitude, attention span, and willingness to practice all improved tremendously.

The use of unemotional feedback, rather than praise, may be new to the American mind. It is a long-accepted notion in certain Japanese disciplines such as Zen archery, aikido and flower arranging. A very clear and common-sense explanation of this approach may be found in a book called, *The Inner Game of Tennis* by Timothy Gallwey. (The book has very little to do with tennis. In fact, if you cross out the word, "tennis" and substitute "violin" or "piano", it reads beautifully!)

The reward system and the use of unemotional feedback should not give you the idea that practicing then becomes a dull, joyless or mechanical affair. On the contrary, it becomes an exciting and creative experience. Smiles, hugs and laughter abound in my studio. But they are not earned. They are "free."



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