

HOW TO TEACH SUZUKI PIANO

SHINICHI SUZUKI

— Introduction —

I deeply appreciate your participation in our efforts to educate children to a high level through researching human ability and music education. I encourage you and thank you for your continuous cooperation.

I'm writing this small brochure as a rough report of my research. I hope it will be of some service in your teaching.

— Ability Development —

First, I would like to explain my beliefs about human ability. It seems that most of us teach without an understanding of how human ability develops.

As you may have read in my book, every child can be educated. It has been proven many times that children raised in Osaka will automatically speak Osaka dialect. This is closely related to music education. Without exception, every child who is raised hearing beautiful pronunciation or music will learn to speak with just that inflection. This means that everyone can develop superior sensitivity and a true understanding of music if they are raised amidst high quality music.

It's very important to understand this and to educate parents concerning the importance of their children's listening to the teaching records. This is a test of your teaching ability. There are many people who may say that they understand this but never actually do anything. However, if these parents really understand what I am saying, they will play the records for their children. Those children who have been brought up in such a fine manner unconsciously have ability and become musically sensitive.

Next, I would like to discuss practice. Ability is developed through repeated practice. This means that ability is developed in direct proportion to the amount of practice. Also, children should practice willingly. It is most important to motivate them. This motivation depends on the teacher's skill in motivating the parents and children during lessons. Also at home, parents

9. The importance of mothers' cooperation

Lessons are taught once a week, or in the case of very small children perhaps twice a week. This means that each week actual teaching occurs for only 5 minutes to 20 or 30 minutes at the longest, and the student must study at home the other six days of the week. If a child listens to the record and practices one hour each day, the total study time is seven hours per week. Because it is only through listening to the records and practicing that a child's ability develops, we can understand the importance of home practice. It is crucial that mothers understand this point.

To make the most of home practice, mothers whose children take Suzuki Method piano lessons make a tape recording of their child's lesson to remember the teacher's instructions. This tape is then used to refer to during home practice sessions.

10. Piano technique

There are no inflexible rules concerning the technical aspects of the Suzuki Piano Method. However, it is important that teachers clearly understand the nature of the Suzuki Method itself. Dr. Suzuki often tells his students "Your real teacher is Kreisler and I am only his assistant." He has his students listen to Kreisler's records and helps them learn how to approach his tone and expression.

Dr. Suzuki's highest goal is that students should become better than their teacher. A teacher's task is to nurture his or her students to a high level, both musically and as human beings.