

Suzuki
Piano
Basics
Foundation News

To facilitate, promote, and educate the public on the way of teaching and playing the piano taught at the Talent Education Research Institute in Matsumoto, Japan by Dr. Haruko Kataoka

**Piano Basics
Foundation News**

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*Sound of Piano
Sound of Music*

By Haruko Kataoka

Newsletter, Special Issue No. 7

November 10, 2008

Translated by Chisa Aoki and
Teri Paradero

Edited by Karen Hagberg

Everywhere on our earth, sound is made when two things collide: the harder the objects, the bigger, the nastier the sound of the collision. It is not a sound that one would consider musical. It is not a sound that people enjoy. In other words, it is a sound that does not affect people in a positive way. It is just noise. Why is it noise? When two hard objects crash, there is nothing to absorb the impact or shock. After such an impact there is only noise unless there are harmonic tones that are allowed to resonate.

Musical instruments are made using this principle of sound where sound is produced by striking one object to another. As I mentioned earlier, a noisy sound is an unpleasant sound. But there are ways to avoid making noise. The shock of two objects may be adeptly absorbed (by the performer) and this can produce a musical sound that resonates and gives delight to listeners.

Let's consider the percussion instruments. Drums, whether the Japanese taiko or a western version, consist of flexible, elastic material such as leather, stretched across the frame of the instrument and struck by a drumstick. The xylophone is played by the masterful technique of the performer, who, instead of gripping the mallets tightly, holds them gently so his or her body can efficiently absorb any shock from striking the rigid bars of the instrument.

String instruments have flexible strings and also a flexible bow, both of which absorb shock. Other instruments are constructed in such a way that shock may be absorbed in order to produce musical results.

How about the piano? What has to be done to absorb shock when playing the piano? When you press a piano key, it gently moves about 1.2 centimeters. The keys are constructed so shock may be absorbed by the way in which they are played. (The internal action of the piano has been made with precision to accomplish this.) Although the person who plays the piano must use the flexibility of whole body to absorb shock, the hands which come in direct contact with the piano keys have the most important job.

God designed our hands to be so useful. The hand is divided into two, the finger section and the palm. With the wrist included, there are 4 joints that make up the hand. Using these joints allows the fingers to move flexibly into keys that are made to move efficiently. With both the fingers and the keys working together effectively to dissipate any shock, a musical sound is produced, a sound that rings and reverberates.

The piano has eighty-eight keys. The soft fingers must move flexibly and efficiently on each and every key. The hand must not be used to hit, poke or crash into the keys. (The use of the hands and fingers are the same for chords where many keys are played at the same time.) Each and every note must be played with concentration, care, and moving fingers. The pianist must develop the ability to do this with routine work, with practice for the both the hands and the body. The ability to produce musical sound will be nurtured and developed only through repetition.

Let's approach this from another angle. Always listening carefully to your own sound and cultivating the ability to produce a good or musical sound will result in the best use of the body and hands. It is easy to observe this if you watch what an infant does when he sits in front of the piano. An infant will always use his body properly as I have been describing.

The absolute first Piano Basic is sound. How to make the best sound must be taught and developed into ability in childhood. If it is not, children will grow up making noise on the piano being totally unaware of the kind of sound they are making. Eventually, they start disliking playing the piano. However, learning to avoid making noisy sound by using soft, flexible fingers efficiently eventually results in the ability to produce musical sound. Because poor sound can be easily produced on the piano, even a slight inattention to this issue can easily mislead a child, resulting in a poor pianist who is unable to make a musical sound at all.

Students and parents: when lessons begin, please learn from your teacher how to make musical sound at every lesson (it's always the same lesson; don't worry!). If you do this, in ten years you will become a pianist who is able to make musical sound with your heart and soul. When you have this ability, you will be able to enjoy playing any kind of music easily and freely and make listeners happy.

Welcome, New Members! ~ Brooke Chumachenko, Susannah Forshey, Leanne Schmidt

Note Changes in the Directory: Karen Hagberg, Melissa Thieme

Students Need to Attend Good Concerts

By Keiko Ogiwara

Newsletter, Special Issue No. 7

November 10, 2008

Translated by Chisa Aoki and

Teri Paradero

Edited by Karen Hagberg

At the piano department at the Suzuki Method in Matsumoto, we believe that it is very important to bring young children to concerts. Our late teacher, Haruko Kataoka Sensei, believed in this concept.

While the goal initially was to have every single student go to concerts, there was a lot of resistance from the parents. Some said that they could not afford it. Some said that they do not go out at night. There were many excuses. Eventually Dr. Kataoka persuaded everyone, one by one. However, Sensei said that it took ten years. She believed that the experience of the finest music is legacy that is priceless and cannot be quantified by money. She was convinced that the education of the senses is very important for human beings to be able to survive.

Because she laid this foundation down for us, it is a matter of course for us to urge students and their caregivers to go to concerts. In the general population, many parents whose children are in grade school think they are too young to participate, but in Matsumoto, three- and four-year-olds are taken to concerts by their parents. This is unusual compared to the rest of our country.

A world-famous pianist who came to perform in Matsumoto commented after the concert that there were many children in the audience. She was astonished at how they listened quietly. She said she wanted to meet with them again. She has

come to perform in Matsumoto three times thus far. It is truly a joyous thing.

Of all the concerts I have attended, one really stands out in my memory. It was a concert performed by a very famous pianist. All of us research teachers distributed the concert tickets among our students so they could all go. And of course, my anticipation was very high. Finally the concert began and I started feeling ill. Certainly, this is a performer who is so famous but why was my neck so stiff and why was I suffering so? Why do I want to escape? I was wishing it would end soon...

Finally the concert was over. Despite the continuous, thunderous applause, I saw Kataoka Sensei move out into the center aisle and head straight for the door. Ahh...Sensei felt the same discomfort. I followed her and we made our way outside.

Sound can affect people enormously. It can soothe, comfort and allow people to feel happy. Conversely, it can make people feel sick.

I recall Sensei's sigh of relief at listening to a student performing in a children's concert. This student's mother is a professional vocalist and she would always sing quietly next her child while he practiced. His performance possesses natural breathing so the audience can breathe deeply too. Our primary aim is to produce beautiful sound so that the main goal of our performance is to provide joy to those who are listening.

Piano Basics Foundation – General Meeting

July 22, 2013

Suzuki Piano Institute, University of Louisville

Suzuki Piano Institute, University of Louisville

Attending:

Hannah Hall
Ellen Jaco
Malinda Rawls
Bruce Boiney
Barbara Brown
Brooke Chumachenko
Linda Nakagawa
Carol Novak
Karen Hagberg
Ann Taylor
Jacqueline Graham
Karen Griffen
Christine Albro
Eloise Sanders
Rae Kate Shen

Dr. Karen Hagberg called the meeting to order at 5:10 pm and the attendance sheet was passed. Dr. Hagberg asked for items that needed to be added the agenda, but there were no extra items to include. Hannah Hall read the minutes from the 2012 meeting, and Bruce Boiney made a motion to have the minutes approved. Carol Novak seconded the motion and the motion was passed. The 2012 Treasurer's Report published in the Jan/Feb 2013 issue of the Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation Newsletter was passed for review.

Nominations

The slate of officers for 2013 remains the same as that of 2012, as no new nominations have been received. The 2013 slate of officers includes:

Karen Hagberg -- President
Renee Eckis . Vice President
Linda Nakagawa . Treasurer
Hannah Hall . Secretary

Karen Hagberg asked the floor for any new nominations. None were given. Ann Taylor moved to accept the 2013 slate of officers, and Rae Kate Shen seconded the motion. The 2013 slate of officers was approved.

Old Business

Regarding the Online Kataoka Video Project headed by Ken Wilburn of Suzuki-Listserve, known better as Suzuki-L, Carol Novak commented that she had been unable to view any of the Kataoka videos that have been posted. Hannah Hall, Malinda Rawls, and Brooke Chumachenko also reported inability to open the links or view the videos. Discussion followed, regarding trouble accessing the videos online. As the video project is a relatively new venture, a few glitches are to be expected in the beginning stages. If anyone has a problem accessing the

online Kataoka videos, they should contact Ken Wilburn, moderator of Suzuki-List Serve, so that the problem can be reported and corrected.

Bruce Boiney suggested appointing a task force of various teachers, using different types of computers in diverse areas of the country, to determine video accessibility. Volunteers included Malinda Rawls, Brooke Chumachenko, Bruce Boiney, Carol Novak, Ann Taylor, Karen Griffin, Christine Albro, Eloise Sanders and Karen Hagberg. Each of the volunteers will record any success or trouble they might encounter when attempting to view the online Kataoka videos. These reports should be e-mailed to Malinda Rawls, malindarawls@hotmail.com, who will follow up with Ken Wilburn.

It was also noted that the Kataoka lessons are categorized online based on the lesson piece. Carol Wunderle has transcribed Kataoka's lectures and lesson points in many of the posted videos because the translator's voice is sometimes difficult to hear. Volunteers are needed to transcribe many of the remaining pieces.

Teachers should be advised that their video recordings of Kataoka lessons can be forever preserved digitally when sent to Ken Wilburn for online processing. VHS format videos, on the other hand, deteriorate when they are left in storage.

Updates/Announcements . Karen Hagberg:

1. The Piano Basics Foundation board has voted to assist workshops with the cost of airfare for the Japanese teachers. Each group hosting the workshop will only be required to pay up to \$1,800 for airfare costs. The Piano Basics Foundation will cover the rest of the airfare out of the general account.

Discussion followed about the variance in airfare depending on the season of the year. Although airfare to and from Japan normally doubles during the month of August, winter airfares are much less expensive. Thus, the amount to be paid by the PBF will be balanced throughout the year.

Malinda Rawls asked what the provisional time frame would be for this arrangement. Linda Nakagawa stated that the PBF can likely support the workshops in this way for approximately two years, although the budget will have to be consistently recalculated to adjust for changes in airfare expenses throughout the years.

Ellen Jaco asked whether or not Ogiwara Sensei and Kawamura Sensei are able to use their frequent flyer

miles when they come to workshops in the U.S., or if they are able to use frequent flyer miles to pay part of their airfare. Karen Hagberg stated that she was not sure of the process involved for utilizing frequent flyer miles on international travel, but it may be very complicated and the desired dates for travel may not be consistent with what frequent flyer mile rules allow. Details about the Japanese teachers' current frequent flyer miles usage is unknown, but Karen Hagberg will discuss it with them when she sees them at the August, 2013, workshop in Rochester. Karen Hagberg stated that although the Japanese teachers are paid in U.S. currency, airfare is paid in yen.

If any group is considering inviting Japanese teachers, whether next year or a few years from now, arrangements should be discussed with Karen Hagberg.

2. Karen Hagberg stated that because more families joined Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation, funds in the treasury have increased dramatically. With the new school year beginning this fall, teachers should consider

encouraging all students' families to become members. Karen Hagberg reported that she has started including the cost of a family membership in each student's tuition, thus requiring participation for all families, because it is very important for parents to be reading the newsletters.

Malinda Rawls asked if the Piano Basics Foundation would be able to issue a certificate to a teacher whose studio has 100% participation as members in the PBF. The teacher could frame the certificate and hang it in the studio, thus creating an even bigger sense of connection and belonging to the international Piano Basics community.

Malinda Rawls motioned to adjourn the meeting.
These minutes approved by:
Malinda Rawls
Christine Albro

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Hall
07/25/2013

To Our Members

All membership in Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation is for a calendar year. Therefore, now is the time for *all* of us to renew our membership.

Dues for the calendar year 2014 are due and payable between now and February 15, 2014. The fee for teacher members is \$40, and family membership is \$25. As usual, we do not routinely send out separate bills to individuals, trusting our members to renew in time to appear in our annual directory. Please use the form enclosed, make checks (we do not accept credit-card payments) payable to Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation, and send to Linda Nakagawa, Treasurer, 242 River Acres Drive, Sacramento, CA 95831.

Thank you for all your continued support!

Attention Family Members:

The Suzuki Piano Basics Directory will come out in March. It is routinely sent to teacher members of the Foundation, but you may receive one on request. Please direct your request to our Membership Chairperson, Linda Nakagawa: g.nakagawa@comcast.net, or call 916-422-2952. Thank you.

The People of Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation

Here is a list of persons responsible for the various workings of our organization. Please feel free to contact any of us with your questions and concerns or to volunteer your help. We always welcome written input from any and all of our members to share in this newsletter. What is on your mind? Please don't put off writing that article!

Board of Directors:

Karen Hagberg, Chair kh@hagbergsuzuki.com
Gloria Elliott, Recording Secretary gelliott50@aol.com
Bruce Boiney boiney@suzukipiano.com
Linda Nakagawa g.nakagawa@comcast.net
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Linda Nakagawa, Printing and Mailing

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Linda Nakagawa, Directory Editor
Linda Nakagawa, Educational Materials Order Fulfillment Manager

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Ann Taylor, Chair anntaylorstudio.net

Suzuki Piano Basics Web Site:

Prof. Kenneth Wilburn, Web Master wilburnk@ecu.edu
Carol Wunderle, Content Editor carol@pianopathway.com

and **YOU**, our members. Thank you for your continued support!

Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation 2013 Annual Report

January 1, 2013 thru December 31, 2013

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Starting Balance: | \$14,765.79 |
| Income: | + \$8,758.00 |
| Expenses: | <u>-\$14,778.93</u> |
| Ending Balance: | \$8,745.36 |

| Expenses | | Compensations | |
|------------------|------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| | | | <u>\$3,900.00</u> |
| | | Total | \$14,778.93 |
| | | Income | |
| Legal/Accounting | \$597.00 | Dues | \$5,695.00 |
| Materials | \$2,134.46 | Donations | \$1,100.00 |
| Bank Fee | \$6.00 | Memorial Fund | \$350.00 |
| Supplies | \$205.69 | Materials | \$1,613.50 |
| Postage | \$1,731.82 | Misc. | <u>\$0.00</u> |
| Printing | \$1,846.26 | Total | \$8,758.50 |
| Taxes | \$107.00 | | |
| Phone/Fax | \$0.00 | | |
| Donations | \$0.00 | | |
| Misc. | \$75.00 | | |

Submitted by Treasurer Linda Nakagawa

Piano Basics Foundation

Upcoming Workshops/Events

January 30-February 3, 2014

Atlanta, Georgia

Suzuki Piano Basics Workshop
with Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura
Contact Pam Smith 770-457-5144
pamelaspianostudio@gmail.com

July 18-21, 2014

Tacoma, Washington

Suzuki Piano Basics Summer Festival
with Rae Kate Shen
Contact Jacki Block 253-759-7213
Jblock@ups.edu

February 6-10, 2014

Phoenix, Arizona

Suzuki Piano Basics Workshop
with Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura
Contact Gloria Elliott 623-466-7447
gelliott50@aol.com

July 21-25, 2014

Louisville, Kentucky

Louisville Suzuki Piano Basics Institute
University of Louisville
Contact Bruce Boiney 502-241-5921
boiney@suzukipiano.com
www.suzukipiano.org

February 28-March 3, 2014

(note change of dates)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Suzuki Piano Basics Workshop with Leah Brammer
Contact Carole Mayers 610-354-0637
mayerssuzukipiano@verizon.net

August 1-16, 2014

Sacramento, California

International 10-Piano Concert
Contact Linda Nakagawa 916-422-2952
g.nakagawa@comcast.net

July 7-11, 2014

Conway, Arkansas

Suzuki Piano Basics Five Piano
and Chamber Workshop
Contact Pam Werner 501-425-2862
info@suzukiprg.org, www.suzukiprg.org

April 2015

Matsumoto, Japan

International 10-Piano Concert
Contact Karen Hagberg 585-244-0490
kh@hagbergsuzuki.com

The events listed above are for the information of Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation members and others. Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation does not endorse, sanction, or sponsor events.

To add or change items on this list and on the Suzuki Piano Basics website, contact Karen Hagberg (kh@hagbergsuzuki.com, 585-244-0490).

Suzuki Piano Basics Web Site and discussion group:

<http://core.ecu.edu/hist/wilburnk/SuzukiPianoBasics>