

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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Next Deadline: April 1, 2012

*Please Never Give
Up!*

*Let's Continue to Repeat
the Same Things Over and Over*

By Haruko Kataoka

From the Matsumoto Suzuki Piano Newsletter

Vol. 10 No. 4, September 1, 2000

Translated by Chisa Aoki and

Teri Paradero

Edited by Karen Hagberg

After many years of continuous piano teaching, I am surprised to have learned so many things about how to conduct life from the very individuals, teachers and children alike, whom I have taught.

There is a teacher in the United States, an older woman with a bright and lively personality. Her heritage is Russian, and she is very proud to be from a very musical family where every member plays a musical instrument. She participated in the annual teacher workshops that I have taught for quite a number of years. She has even been to Matsumoto to study on more than one occasion. I can still vividly remember her first lesson nearly twenty years ago. She played the Twinkles with a very loud, harsh and noisy tone. Her tempo was all over the place. I wondered how in the world this could be fixed. I remember Dr. Suzuki saying that, as a teacher, it is never an option to tell someone they are so bad that they should quit. So I said "Let's start by fixing the tempo by using the metronome set at 72. Please play with the metronome."

She did not do this, however, for the next 10 years. Nevertheless, she would attend my workshop every year with enthusiasm. Every time I would say, "Let's start by fixing the tempo..." I thought to myself that it was impossible for her to change considering her age. I even thought that perhaps coming to the workshops was her only means of enjoying life.

However, in the past two or three years, she started practicing the first Twinkle Variation with the metronome. Every time we met she said, "I always practice with the metronome set at 72," and about two years ago, she was able to play calm and steady Twinkles.

This June, she came again to a workshop. She had aged quite a bit. Lingering effects from an automobile accident left her with limited mobility. She was still able to walk but was dependent on a wheelchair to be effectively mobile. For her lesson she played Bach's Minuet 2.

My belief is that when you learn the Basics, in other words, how to use the body, how to use the fingers, how to grasp the basic structure of a piece, it does not matter how easy or difficult the piece is, you can play an easy piece or a difficult piece equally well. It is the same whether there are a small number of notes or many notes. The most difficult thing to do is to play simple pieces musically.

She played her piece unimaginably well compared to the way she used to play in the past. When her Basics improved, the wonderful musicality with which she grew up amongst her musical family members had the chance to be expressed so richly in her music. She is proof of what I have always believed. I was truly moved.

I would like to share another story, this time from Japan. A teacher who has been studying with me for a very long time was organizing videotapes. A tape of her lesson from ten years prior surfaced. After she watched it, she commented apologetically, "My lessons with you now, Kataoka Sensei, are exactly the same as the taped lesson from ten years ago. You have been saying the same thing to me, and I am just starting to understand and be able to do it. Forgive me for taking so long!" She was one of the teachers that did worry me in the beginning, and I would wonder what she might possibly accomplish. However, today her accomplishments are awesome.

I am truly happy to be granted such experiences from all of you. Never give up! That goes for me too. Whether you are an adult or a child, we are all the same. We are all human. Don't resign yourself to being old! You must believe in not giving up, no matter what.

Time Is a Very Strange Phenomenon

By Haruko Kataoka

From the Matsumoto Suzuki Piano Newsletter
Vol. 10 No. 4, September 1, 2000
Translated by Chisa Aoki and
Teri Paradero
Edited by Karen Hagberg

It has been a while since I have encountered travel problems. My latest trip to the United States was full of them, both on the outgoing and return flights. The commute from Matsumoto to Narita is five hours by train. Then from Narita to San Francisco is nine hours. It was a peaceful flight. In San Francisco, I checked into a hotel where I was able to sleep about fifteen hours which made up for sleeplessness on the flight over. I was pleased, thinking all was going smoothly.

The next morning I left the hotel at 7 a.m. and arrived at the airport at 7:30. This is where the trouble started. My flight was to go from San Francisco to Chicago, where I would connect to a flight to Rochester, New York. During check-in, the airline staff person announced that because of foul weather in Chicago the airport was closed and that my flight was cancelled. We were asked to book another flight, but there was no guarantee when anyone could leave. Apparently this problem was not just on that day. They had weather related problems from the day before. I was going through many possible scenarios in my head. I had to go to Chicago to make my connecting flight. Suppose I arrive in Chicago late, in which case I would probably miss my flight to Rochester. Due to a similar experience I had had in the past, my heart was heavy with anxiety. Chicago is located in the northern mid-region of the US. It is a very big airport where many flights land and take off. Even without any problems, the Chicago airport is teeming with people boarding and coming off flights. This is an

airport where air travel problems are bigger and more apparent. This is where huge delays can originate.

As I expected, after a three hour delay we finally left San Francisco at 11:30am and arrived in Chicago at 5:30 p.m. (with time difference of two hours ahead). The layover was four hours in Chicago, and I finally arrived in Rochester at 12:30 a.m. I was tired.

Strangely, the other passengers experiencing this with me did not seem fazed at all by the delay. They calmly commented amongst themselves, "Today is a long day, isn't it?" Even the children who were seated next to the gate or on the floor seemed happy playing cards and games. More strangely, the airline personnel did not apologize nearly enough in my eyes, but, if you think about it, it must have been because weather is a natural occurrence, and the delay cannot be blamed on the staff. If this happened in Japan, the airline staff would be apologizing profusely.

I feel that people who live in a large country compared to people from a small crowded island nation have an expansive and relaxed nature in both breadth and length - large in every way. Expecting a shorter flight I had packed all my reading and writing materials in my checked luggage. So I had nothing to do. All the books and newspapers available at the airport bookstores are in English.

Three to four hours spent just waiting seem long and arduous. Yet time flies at a blink of an eye during a normal routine day. It occurred to me then how strange our perception of time is.

What was to be a short flight took longer than the flight from Narita to San Francisco. It took over seventeen hours.

Spending what seemed like a waste of time made me realize that time is an important commodity which must be spent in fruitful ways with a feeling of gratitude. I have become aware that it is such a fortunate thing to have my busy life where I am not aware of the passage of time.

Planning to Bring a Student to Matsumoto? Important Information!

As in the past, teachers who have already traveled to Japan to observe rehearsals of the 10-Piano Concert may apply to have a student participate in next year's concert on April 28, 2013. Students going to Matsumoto should attend a workshop with the teachers from Japan here in the States before the concert.

Please be aware that the ONLY workshops before the concert are the ones in Rochester, New York and in Sacramento, California in August this year (see Upcoming Events for contact information). There will be no February workshops in 2013 due to an International Suzuki Conference in Japan at that time.

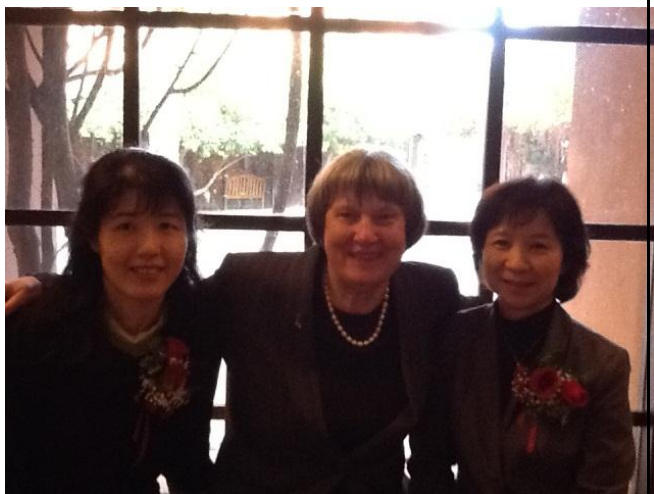
For complete guidelines and application forms for the Japan concert, contact Karen Hagberg kh@hagbergsuzuki.com. Student applications are due by August 10, 2012 and applications for teachers going without students are due by October 15, 2012.

Speech Delivered at Friendship Concert on February 12, 2012, Phoenix Arizona

By Keiko Ogiwara

We knew that Phoenix would be warm, but it is warmer here than we imagined. It's very much like our early summer in Matsumoto. The fact that the flowers are in bloom where we are staying makes me cheerful. We are happy to see all the parents and the teachers again who have been working so diligently with the children.

Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, the founder of Suzuki Method, always said that practicing every day is the same thing as eating every day. In other words, as skipping a whole day of meals is not an option, you wouldn't skip a day of practicing.



After the Friendship Concert at the Phoenix, AZ workshop, February 2012. Left to Right: Keiko Kawamura, Karen Hagberg and Keiko Ogiwara. Photo by Linda Nakagawa

So how is piano practice in your home? I am sure your children don't willingly go to the piano to practice on their own. That is quite normal for children. Even so, please, without fail, say to your children, "Let's practice again today!"

We use our bodies to play the piano, and therefore we need a lot of repetition over a long period of time to be able physically to play the piano well.

As parents practicing with your children, haven't you thought to yourselves, "Why can't they do something that they were able to do just yesterday?" And teachers, haven't you thought, "I assigned this last week, why can't they do it?"

For the body to be able to do anything and therefore to become an ability, daily repetition is absolutely necessary. Do not think, "How many times do I have to say the same thing over and over." Instead, you must tenaciously ask the same things for as many times as it would take to develop them into abilities.

Please nurture your children with patience and with faith. This great effort on your part will be the strength your children will develop, the strength they will have for the rest of their lives.

Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation General Membership Meeting 2012

The meeting will be held during the Louisville Institute, June 18-22, 2012. Members are invited to submit agenda items to President Karen Hagberg whether or not they will be in attendance.

The slate of officers to be voted upon at that meeting are: President, Karen Hagberg; Vice President, Renee Eckis; Treasurer, Linda Nakagawa; and Secretary Hannah Hall. Additional nominations for all but the Presidency may be submitted to the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Ann Taylor by June 1: ann@anntaylorstudio.net.

Desire Becomes Reality

By Eloise Sanders, Greensboro, North Carolina

How can I expose Greensboro, North Carolina to Suzuki Piano Basics? This is a question I pondered for quite a long time. A golden opportunity presented itself this year.

The Greensboro Music Teachers Association requested from me a demonstration of Suzuki piano lessons as a presentation for one of the monthly meetings. Ten veteran traditional teachers came to my studio to observe. There

was time for only two lessons. The first demonstration was from Book 1 and included the Twinkles and several pieces played with the right hand. The second student is in Book 2. Both students had been participants in a master class conducted by Dr. Karen Hagberg in Cary, North Carolina. The teachers were amazed as they viewed two performances from a 10-Piano Concert to close the presentation. This was followed by a question & answer session.



Eloise Sanders in her studio in Greensboro, North Carolina demonstrating Suzuki Piano Basics to traditional teachers. Photo by Blake Varner.

Usually at the close of these meetings (and even before), there is a quick exit. However, the teachers remained seated for at least twenty minutes at the end of the presentation. There were comments such as, "This was fabulous!" "A raving success!" "A shouting success!" "I was really impressed!" Two teachers who employ traditional and "Suzuki Method" stated, "I wish I had stuck with Suzuki," and "I'm thinking about retiring and doing only Suzuki."

*Welcome,
New Members!*

Prof. Liza M. Freire Carrion
Grisel Medina Family
Rosemary Marquez Family
Aurora Rodriguez Family

*Address
Changes:*

Mona Liew
Jill Austin
Amy Williams
Fumi Kawasaki
Chris Tsai

Next Matsumoto 10-Piano Concert Scheduled

By Karen Hagberg

We are happy to report that the concert hall in Matsumoto has been repaired after the recent earthquake and that the next 10-Piano Concert in Japan has now been announced. It will be held on Sunday, April 28, 2013.

Though the Matsumoto earthquake was minor compared with the huge earthquake that caused the devastating tsunami on the coast of Japan last year at this time, this unusual occurrence must have contributed greatly to the sense of loss, danger, and despair experienced by the Japanese people, especially to our friends in Matsumoto, in the aftermath. For a time there were smaller earthquakes all over the place, and one of my friends reported that people could not help but wonder when and where the next big one would occur. The homes of two of our teachers were severely damaged, taking a very long time to be repaired because of a general shortage of building materials and workers.

Added to an overall sense of physical danger was, and continues to be, the concern over the nuclear power plant that was badly damaged and that is still leaking radiation into the air, the ground, the fresh water, and the sea. Fresh produce, dairy products, meat and fish from the contaminated areas have had to be destroyed. There is ongoing concern about the safety of the food and water supply all over Japan.

When it was announced that Harmony Hall had been damaged, requiring a year and a half to be repaired so it could be used, causing the cancellation of this year's 10-Piano Concert, my first thought was about the children who could not help but be already affected by the anxiety all around them, but now their big concert was not going to happen. The concert for which they were already preparing.

And then I thought about the teachers. How easy it would have been to give up big projects in the future when things looked so bleak. It would have been easy to be overcome with fear and uncertainty, to be defeated by the accumulation of tragic events. Would they and their students come to the Sacramento 10-Piano

Concert last summer, I wondered? Would they come for the February workshops earlier this year? Or would they need to stay home to get their homes repaired and put their lives back in order?

Miraculously, they carried on and, as we know, graced us with their presence both in August and February, and will be here with students in August this year as well. And now they are going forward with the huge undertaking of their 10-Piano Concert. Not only have they scheduled the concert, but have yet again invited American teachers to observe the rehearsals and American students to perform. This means that many Matsumoto families are again willing, after their very recent hardships, to open their homes to us for over two weeks.

I, for one, am aware of the determination and the sacrifice required on the part of our teachers and their students' families to be planning the 10-Piano Concert at this time. They are the embodiment of Dr. Suzuki's principal stated goal after the devastation of World War II: to rebuild the spirit of the youth of Japan. Children cannot have hope unless the adults around them have hope, unless we actually provide hope. The teachers, Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura and their several colleagues, are the embodiment of Dr. Kataoka's sentiment in her article on page 1: Never Give Up! The experience of the 10-Piano Concert will restore the children's relationship to all that is beautiful and wonderful in this world after a year of tragedy and sadness (with so many people killed is there anyone in Japan, I have wondered, who wasn't somehow personally connected to the awful event). Yes, this concert will represent Phoenix rising from ashes for the children, their parents, us teachers, and all who attend.

I have a deep sense of gratitude to be acquainted with such dedicated teachers who can make big things happen, who continue their work with us here in the States year after year, who patiently and kindly help us to be better teachers and better human beings. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Piano Basics Foundation

Upcoming Workshops/Events

June 18-22, 2012

Louisville, Kentucky

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

www.suzukipiano.org NOTE: THIS IS A NEW WEB ADDRESS

August, 9-13, 2012

Sacramento, California

Suzuki Piano Basics Workshop
with Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura
Friendship Concert featuring students from Japan
Contact Linda Nakagawa 916-422-2952
g.nakagawa@comcast.net

July 13-16, 2012

Tacoma, Washington

Suzuki Piano Basics Festival with Leah Brammer
Contact: Jacki Block 253-759-7213
jblock@ups.edu

August, 2-6, 2012

Rochester, NY

Suzuki Piano Basics Workshop
with Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura
Friendship Concert featuring students from Japan
Contact Karen Hagberg 585-244-0490
kh@hagbergsuzuki.com

February 2013

NOTE: There will be no February workshops with teachers from Japan in the U.S. this month. Students going to the 10-Piano Concert in Japan in April should plan to have lessons at one of the August, 2012 workshops in Rochester, New York or Sacramento, California.

April 13-28 2013

Matsumoto, Japan

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



August 2014

Sacramento, California

International 10-Piano Concert
NOTE YEAR CHANGE

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>