

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

*“Music Will Save
the World.”*

By Haruko Kataoka

From the Matsumoto Suzuki Piano Newsletter
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Translated by Chisa Aoki
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**Piano Basics
Foundation News**

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The quote is by the renowned cellist Pablo Casals.

At the end of the day, wondering what has happened in our world, I turned on the television to watch the evening news. It was filled with news that I didn't want to see or hear.

In the midst of a myriad of disturbing events, there was one that so especially saddened me I could not let go of it. It was the Japanese Embassy hostage crisis in Peru that occurred at the end of 1996 and was finally resolved at the end of April 1997 with the Peruvian government violently forcing its way into the Embassy. For two to three days, I was not able to stop thinking about the crime. I was filled with gloom.

I am aware that the criminal explained and justified the crime. Still, people have parents and family who love them. You couldn't find a

single person in the whole world who would wish that their loved ones be victimized by violence.

In Japan, the Showa period (1925-1988) saw the military's gradual rise in power, and my country foolishly declared war against the rest of the world. Many people lost their beloved family members to war. They endured great suffering and sadness.

In 1945, after their defeat, Japan was disarmed, and a new constitution banned militarism. Happily, fortunately, we are able to now live in peace.

Yet all around the world warring, violent factions still exist, and innumerable people are involuntarily forced to die as the result of military actions. Why can't people the whole world over who have been blessed with life from heaven live out their natural life span? Isn't there any

way We can abandon actions based on violence?

There was one positive note in the news of the incident in Peru. During the press conference, I felt the warmth of the human heart in the testimony of witness Archbishop Luis Cipriani when he lamented tearfully, his voice quavering, "We endeavored to solve this peacefully, but ultimately 17 people lost their lives. That is what's so regrettable."

It is comforting to know that there are warm-hearted people all over the world who are concerned about others, yet at the same time, I fear that these warm-hearted people are outnumbered by those who prefer to use force as their *modus operandi*.

As Casals opined, will music be able to save the world? This is what I think. People who grow up deeply nurtured with music in their lives, in other words, art in their lives, will not become murderers. Let us work hard to nurture even one more person whose senses are more developed than their intellect. Then perhaps there won't be senseless, oppressive wars. Let's work hard to study music. Yes, studying music is for your own good, but within a larger, worldly context, it also means that you are contributing to world peace

Attention Members:

Please renew your membership now to retain your listing in our new Directory!

As you know, our renewal forms are included in your newsletters; we do not do separate mailings for renewals. And we do not send reminders to those of you who do not renew promptly. This saves a lot of postage.

So please renew now with the form enclosed. And THANK YOU for your continued support of the Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation!

A Teacher Tells the Truth

By Karen Hagberg

From Matsumoto News, Vol.2, no.5, December 1989

I always found it easy to be a popular teacher. As a teaching assistant in graduate school, I taught undergraduate courses in aesthetics and in music criticism. There are fascinating things to be found in the world of ideas, and I enjoyed passing on little gems to my students. I like sounding erudite and well-versed in my subjects. At the end of each semester, students were asked to evaluate their professors, and I always reveled in my superior ratings. I thought, "I must be a really good teacher."

After teaching these classes for a couple of years, however, the initial charm began to wear off. I began to feel like an entertainer. Also, I became aware of the awesome power I had as a teacher, and felt I was mis-using it. I could have told my students anything, and they would have believed it. On the one hand I enjoyed my students' adulation, but on the other hand I began to feel like a charlatan, interested only in whether or not they thought I was wonderful whether or not they liked me and would give me good evaluations at the end of each term.

My presentations became more important to me than the content of what I was supposedly teaching. I began to question the "content" of a college course. There was nothing I taught that the students could not have read in books. I questioned the entire process. I wondered if the students actually were learning anything of worth, or if, as it seemed, they were merely being amused by my cleverness. I began to resent their apparent faith in me because I knew it was misguided. In an academic context, I saw no way out of this.

When I first heard Kataoka Sensei say, however, that teachers must judge their teaching by their worst students...

So I turned to private piano teaching. At first, it seemed so much better that I could relate to individual students, rather than to big classes, and therefore it was easier to address specific needs. Playing piano is a skill that cannot be learned by reading books, so I felt more useful as the teacher. I had a lot to learn about *how* to teach piano, but aside from that my biggest problem was the same old problem from graduate school. I found myself being overly concerned with whether or not my students liked me. I had a deep need to be popular, and as the size of my studio grew, and when I began to use the Suzuki Method, I found myself struggling to keep everyone happy with their lessons. I noticed, of course, that this need of mine was interfering with my students' potential achievement. I did not know how to motivate them.

My good students were self-motivated and the rest were not good.

I have also been struck with the incredible humility a teacher needs in order to do this.

When I first heard Kataoka Sensei say, however, that teachers must judge their teaching by their worst students, I knew instantly this was true. I also knew this meant I was a bad teacher.

Kataoka Sensei's ferocity as a teacher is legendary. She can be very hard on her students and their parents. She is clearly not out to win a popularity contest. Many people have asked me if I came to Japan to learn to be more strict, more ferocious, more demanding—less “nice.” It is not nearly as simple as this. Bad temper for its own sake is probably less effective than being too nice. There is something fundamental, at the basis of Sensei's teaching, that I have been trying to discover.

Recently, at a workshop in America, Kataoka Sensei defined what a teacher is. “A teacher is someone who tells the truth,” she said, “and everyone *needs* someone like this in their life.” She was discussing her role in the development of her most distinguished student, Seizo Azuma, who has now graduated from the Paris Conservatory and is presently competing in international piano competitions.

When he was a young child, Seizo progressed through the Suzuki repertoire at a phenomenal pace (to the end of Book 4 in ten months), and everyone around him noticed how well he played. “Everyone was telling him how wonderful he was,” Sensei said, “but it was my job to teach him how to get better. He didn't need me to tell him he was wonderful too.”

When I heard this it finally dawned on me why my best students always seemed to struggle with a crushing complacency. In the context of my studio, of my city, I always reaffirmed the fact that they were wonderful. I failed to do them the favor, as Sensei *never* fails to do with *all* of us, of comparing them with the great pianists, with Horowitz and de Larrocha and Gould. What is left to teach if a teacher chimes in with those whose ears are less trained and says a student is “wonderful?” Obviously, nothing. In addition, the student is being set up for disillusionment when encountering better players (and there are *always* better players).

Suzuki Sensei has written that good teachers are those whose students all play better than they do.

If we can set aside our own need for gratification from our students, and if we can, with humility, believe that we can teach students all to be better than ourselves, our teaching cannot help but improve.

I have also been struck with the incredible humility a teacher needs in order to do this. Suzuki Sensei has written that good teachers are those whose students all play better than they do. So often in my experience, teachers set themselves up as the “expert” players—the ones students should emulate. But the world of truly great performers gives us so much better a model. Of course, our students should play better than we do. Suzuki Sensei has pointed out that, if this were not the case, musical performance would deteriorate in just

a few generations. Truly good teaching has kept this from happening.

It is not always easy to tell the truth to students and their parents. Truth is sometimes difficult to face, difficult to hear. Teachers concerned with their own popularity cannot tell the truth at all.

If we can set aside our own need for gratification from our students, and if we can, with humility, believe that we can teach students all to be better than ourselves, our teaching cannot help but improve.



Matsumoto News Republication: From September 1988 through January 1992, Karen Hagberg lived and studied in Matsumoto with Dr. Haruko Kataoka, the co-Founder of the Suzuki Piano Method and the founder of the Suzuki Piano Basics Method. During thmat time she published a newsletter with nine issues annually that was distributed to Suzuki piano teachers in North America and Europe. In addition to news of upcoming

In my own case, this means employing tactics quite opposite from the ones I formerly used. Rather than complimenting the play well easily and to open doors of possibility to those who, for whatever reason, find their job difficult. Rather than setting myself up as a model, I need to increase my ability to understand the difference between truly great piano playing and all the rest. Obviously, if I do not know this myself, I cannot teach it.

So much “teaching,” including what I used to do, is not really teaching at all, but rather an exercise in self-aggrandizement. Good teaching does, however, exist. It exists in a realm of truth. Students need the truth in order to learn something. Teachers need the courage to tell the truth.

workshops and multi-piano concerts, each issue contained an article intended to share what it was like as a foreigner to live in Japan and to study with Dr. Kataoka and Dr. Suzuki.

Nearly twenty years have elapsed since the first issue of Matsumoto News: an entire generation. By popular demand we are re-publishing the articles here. They have been edited from the original, but they remain under copyright and may not be reproduced without written permission from the author.



Piano Basics Foundation – General Meeting August 4, 2019

Sacramento, California

Attendance:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Karmalita Bawar | Janet Kaido |
| Jacki Block | Winnie Ling |
| Wakako Brewster | Linda Nakagawa |
| Rita Burns | Patricia Pritchard |
| Linda Carrier | Shirlee Rickman |
| Reneé Eckis | Rae Kate Shen |
| Karen Huffman | Connie Snyder |
| Mei Ihara | Naomi Wysong |

Officers

Reneé updated members that Ann Taylor was unavailable to contact current officers regarding their interest in continuing for the next year. However, Reneé was able to contact them and asked each if they are willing to continue in their current positions. All agreed to continue.

Nominations

Nominations were opened. None were added. Motion to keep current slate of officers for the next year was unanimously approved. Shirlee motioned, and Connie seconded.

Renee Eckis – President
Jacki Block – Vice President
Linda Nakagawa – Treasurer
Karmalita Bawar – Secretary

Bruce Boiney will continue with website and Hannah Hall will continue with scholarships.

Old Business

Scholarships: Hannah relayed through Reneé that there is nothing to report. Teachers with trainees are requested to definitely ask trainees to apply for a scholarship. There are flexible requirements, no deadlines, no specific amount restrictions. Please contact Hannah if interested.

Newsletter Articles: Members are encouraged to submit articles relating to your beginning as a Suzuki Piano Teacher.

New teachers need to hear from your experiences.

Website: No word from Bruce regarding this topic, so no news to report.

Recruitment and Exposure: Members discussed teacher opportunities to recruit new members and expose their students to external piano events. MTNA opportunities, pedagogy lectures at universities and other opportunities to educate the broader music community about Suzuki Piano. Exposing our students to external events allows other educators to see and hear our students. The best way to spread the word is through our students' performances.

Members are encouraged to become more active in your own communities and to share your recitals with other teachers or instruments.

New Business

Summer Workshop Next Year. There will be no workshop featuring Japanese master teachers in the US during summer 2020 due to the summer Olympics being hosted in Japan. There is a February 13-17, 2020 invitation to the Japanese master teachers from Orange County, CA teachers' association.

Treasurer's Report

Linda reported that the balance for 2018 was \$20,510.92. After travel expenses for the Japanese master teachers, 2019 balance is \$8,349.00. We were reminded that round trip airfare for the Japanese master teachers is higher in the summer months, over \$3k per teacher.

Discussion Regarding Funds: Discussion ensued. Linda stated that unless our income increases the foundation will not be able to completely underwrite any future workshop. SMAC Sierra Branch always holds fundraising events in order to host workshops and the 10 piano concert. Janet asked if fundraising from any studio could be sent to PBF. Linda said it is possible. Rita mentioned writing a fundraising article for the newsletter. Even though articles with this topic may have been written before, it doesn't hurt to keep them coming. "Repetition is good!" Linda C. Asked if we could/should solicit other nonprofit organizations for grant money. Members were encouraged to do so.

Adjournment: Connie motioned to adjourn. Rita seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted by Karmalita Bawar.

***Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation
Annual Treasurer's Report
For fiscal year 2019***

Respectfully submitted by Linda Nakagawa, Treasurer

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Starting Balance: | \$20,510.92 |
| Income: | +\$15,255.27 |
| Expenses: | <u>-\$22,917.76</u> |
| Ending Balance: | \$12,848.43 |

Expenses

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Legal/Accounting | \$695.00 |
| Materials | \$585.40 |
| Supplies | \$30.90 |
| Postage | \$1,294.02 |
| Printing | \$2,447.12 |
| Travel (Japanese Teachers) | \$9,466.32 |
| Taxes/License | \$99.00 |
| 10-Piano Japan | \$4,100.00 |
| Compensations | <u>\$4,200.00</u> |
| Total | \$22,917.76 |

Income

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Dues | \$8,575.00 |
| General Donations | \$4,292.50 |
| Materials sales | \$805.27 |
| 10-Piano Japan | \$650.00 |
| Kataoka Memorial Fund | \$557.50 |
| Bert Mayers Memorial | \$172.50 |
| General Scholarship Fund | <u>\$202.50</u> |
| Total | \$15,255.27 |

Current Fund Balances

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| General Fund: | \$2,835.38 |
| Donations: | \$5,000.50 |
| Kataoka Memorial Fund | \$2,787.55 |
| General Scholarship | \$1,437.50 |
| Bert Mayers Scholarship | <u>\$ 787.50</u> |
| Total: | \$12,848.43 |

With Gratitude

The members of the SPBF Board wish to express our deep thanks for the service of long-time member Hannah Hall, who has served on the Board for six years, and who is stepping down after her present term expires. She will continue in her position of Chair of the Scholarship Committee. Thank you, Hannah, and best wishes for you and your growing family.

Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation: The People

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? Don't put off writing that article!

Board of Directors (serving 3-year term beginning August):

Bruce Boiney, Chair (term ends 2020)
Patricia Pritchard, Recording Secretary
(term ends 2020)
Connie Snyder (term ends 2020)
Linda Nakagawa (term ends 2022)
Karen Hagberg (term ends 2021)
Keiko Ogiwara, Honorary Life Member

Officers:

Renee Eckis, President
Jacki Block, Vice President
Karmalita Bawar, Secretary
Linda Nakagawa, Treasurer

Nominations Committee:

Ann Taylor, Chair

Scholarship Committee:

Hannah Hall, Chair

Newsletter:

Karen Hagberg, Editor
Teri Paradero, Design & Layout
Teri Paradero & Chisa Aoki, Translation
Linda Nakagawa, Printing and Mailing

Membership Services:

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

Suzuki Piano Basics Web Site:

Prof. Kenneth Wilburn, Web Master
Carol Wunderle, Content Editor

New Web Site Development Chair:

Bruce Boiney, Chair

If you would like to assume responsibility for any part of the workings of the Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation, or if you know someone who would, please contact our Nominations Committee Chairperson, Ann Taylor, before June 15. Current contact information for all persons listed above may be found in our directory.

Piano Basics Foundation Upcoming Workshops/Events

February 13-17, 2020

Orange County, California

Suzuki Piano Basics Teacher Research Workshop
With Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura
Contact Rae Kate Shen, 909-794-9461
raekshen@ymail.com

July 20-24, 2021

St. Louis, MO

St. Lois Suzuki Piano Teachers' Association
Piano Basics Workshop
With Bruce Anderson and Rae Kate Shen
Contact Patty Eversole (314)496-3520
paeversole@yahoo.com
<http://stlsuzukipiano.tripod.com>

August 2020

NOTICE: There will be no August workshop in the U.S. this year with the Japanese teachers because of travel difficulties caused by the Tokyo Olympics. Plan on Orange County in February!

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 (khagberg1943@gmail.com, 585-978-0600).

Notice of General Membership Meeting

The Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation Board, in its meeting on January 26, 2020, has re-scheduled our next General Membership Meeting to take place at the February workshop in Orange County, California because there will be no August workshop this summer. Current officers will be presented to serve another one-year term at that time. Previous to the meeting, nominations to replace any current officers may be submitted to our Nominations Chairperson, Ann Taylor.