WHAT IS THE SUZUKI METHOD?

Shinichi Suzuki (1898 – 1998) was a Japanese pedagogue, violinist, and humanitarian who believed that all children have the ability to learn if given the proper environment. His ideas about music education stemmed from his early observations that most all children around the world learn to speak their native language with fluency as a result of early cultural exposure. These ideas formed the basis of his “mother tongue approach” or Talent Education Method. He later formed the Early Development Association (EDA) in Japan and conducted research on the influence of environment on early child development.

Though Suzuki’s methods produced good results with his students, his goal was not the creation of prodigious or professional musicians. Later in life Suzuki explained his aim was simply “to make good citizens. If a child hears good music from the day of his birth, and learns to play it himself, he develops sensitivity, discipline, and endurance. He gets a beautiful heart.”

WHAT AGE IS BEST TO BEGIN SUZUKI INSTRUCTION?

The Suzuki Method allows children to begin lessons at a young age. Children may begin lessons as early as age five. No one is too old to improve or to begin.
WHAT CAN I DO IF MY THREE OR FOUR-YEAR-OLD REALLY WANTS TO PLAY THE VIOLIN?

Preparation for music lessons begins with fostering basic musical competence (singing, matching pitches, clapping rhythms). Families can begin listening to Suzuki Violin CD 1. Kindermusik classes can also help young students gain basic musical skills that will carry over to formal lessons. Suzuki lessons will foster these skills. However, students who begin violin already having these basics progress much faster and have more fun!

WHAT MATERIALS WILL I NEED FOR LESSONS?

- Suzuki Violin Book 1 & CD (or, mp3 download)
- Notebook and pen/pencil to take notes during lessons.
- Violin (Please consult the teacher before getting a violin. A violin is not needed at the first lesson).

WHAT TIME COMMITMENTS ARE REQUIRED?

In the early years, parents should attend weekly lessons with the student and create a positive and supportive learning environment. One of the best ways to do this is give your child opportunities to listen to the Suzuki songs they are learning every day.

Make it a priority to attend ALL Suzuki violin classes scheduled during the month. Classes and lessons are of equal importance for your Suzuki success!

Attend recitals (as desired – recitals are not required though most students doing all of the above look forward to the opportunity).

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUZUKI LESSONS AND TRADITIONAL LESSONS?

The primary differences are repertoire, parental involvement, an early start, and studying with a teacher trained in Suzuki’s educational philosophy. The Suzuki Method repertoire is carefully sequenced to gradually introduce the student to new challenges. Suzuki students around the world share a common repertoire. The Suzuki repertoire is so popular that many traditional teachers use the Suzuki books as part of their teaching. The Suzuki books offer wonderful music for both traditional and Suzuki students to study. Suzuki teachers complete training through the Suzuki Association of the Americas to learn how to teach the violin and the repertoire as Suzuki intended. Suzuki lessons emphasize a solid technical foundation and good tone from the start. Students first learn to play by ear so they can devote their full attention to their sound and the physical aspects of playing the violin. However, Suzuki students do learn how to read music and lessons introduce music theory concepts from an early stage.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT SUZUKI VIOLIN?

Read Suzuki’s book, Nurtured by Love: The Classic Approach to Talent Education. Free copies can be borrowed from the Blasco Library downtown branch. This book is required reading in Suzuki programs around the world. OR, ask your teacher: Maria Lyon, M.Ed. took her Suzuki Violin Teacher Training through Book 4 at the Ithaca College and Southwestern Ontario Suzuki Institutes.