



Issue No. 4  
December 2019

# F u n t a s t e a s

A Newsletter of Suzuki Talent Education Association Singapore

## From the President

Dear Teachers, Parents and Students,

Oh my... How time flies. It seems like yesterday that I wished you a fruitful 2019 and all too soon, it's come to an end... And suddenly, we're at our 4th STEAS newsletter (yay!).

The association has grown strength to strength. With more teachers supporting the graduation, the numbers of graduates have grown. We have guitar, piano and violin students graduating this year and are expecting even more graduates next year. A big shout-out to all teachers who volunteered their time with the association, and students (with their parents) who supported our events. Thank you so much!

As we get together and as we work together, we foster great friendships. We grow closer as a Suzuki community. Do continue to come forward and offer your help: that's greatly appreciated anytime. And talk about gratitude, I'd like to specially thank Teacher Anthony for taking on the role of the newsletter's editor since 2017. We could not do this without you!

In 2020, we look forward to the music marathon concert, Singapore's Suzuki national camp and our graduation concert. Please keep practising your instrument, even though it is the holidays! Once again, may your new year be fruitful!

Happy Holidays!

Best Wishes  
Una Lauw  
President  
Suzuki Talent Education Association Singapore  
(STEAS)



**steas**

Suzuki Talent Education  
Association Singapore

Inside this issue:



A Teacher's Account of her  
Overseas Piano Book 4 Training



A Suzuki Student's Experience at the  
Singapore Performing Arts Festival



A Guitar Teacher's Experience at his  
Book 1 Teacher Assessment



What's in Store in 2020  
and more!

'Music exists for the purpose  
of growing an  
admirable heart.'

- Dr Shinichi Suzuki



Suzuki Talent Education  
Association Singapore

Suzuki Talent Education Association Singapore

<https://www.singaporesuzuki.org/>

Email: [steasingapore@gmail.com](mailto:steasingapore@gmail.com)

# A Teacher's Account of her Piano Book 4 Training in Taipei

(1 - 5 October 2019)

Ang Chor Eng

Training got off with a rough start because of Tropical storm Mitag. Classes had to be rearranged as some trainees could not get to Taiwan on time, due to flight cancellation.

Our training by Ms Kasia was amazing, lessons were inspiring. She brought us through a well planned out schedule, where she first introduced the 10 pieces of Suzuki Piano book 4 by mini lessons. Each of us took turns to play, and were presented with one or two teaching points in every piece. The brief initial highlights were likened to an appetizer to the main training, alluring us to hunger for more knowledge.

The pieces in Book 4 consists of 2 major big repertoire pieces, Beethoven's Sonata in G Major Op 49, No 2 and J.S. Bach's Minuets I, II and Gigue from Partita in B flat Major BMV 825. Plus 6 smaller pieces like Arabesque, Musette, Bagatelle and other delightful works.

Ms Kasia took time to demonstrate the teaching points of each piece, with snippets of her colourful performance. Lessons were intense as her teaching was thorough. Points about the structure, harmony, hidden melodic lines, articulation and dynamics were discussed in great detail. Then step by step teaching points and what technique to apply to achieve these were illustrated. Ms Kasia discussed the finest details, down to each accent, slur and phrasing. She also demonstrated whether wrist

or finger staccato was more suitable for each passage, and showed us when to use arm and how to manipulate gentle dynamics. It was overwhelming, but with Ms Kasia's smiles and encouraging words, I felt motivated.



Teacher trainees observe a teaching demonstration by Ms Kasia



Teacher Chor Eng with her Trainer, Ms Kasia Borowiak

Training was immensely fun as stories of Composers were told. Pictures that co-relate to the to the pieces that we played were shown. Ms Kasia also suggested interesting ways to make the image stick to our mind so that we could emulate how each piece should be played.

We were also given time to relax and digest what we had learnt. Videos of Mdm Kataoka were shown during training. We also witnessed Masterclasses given by Ms Kasia to students. From these sessions, we picked up valuable tips on how to teach scales, sight reading, and pedaling. We also shared pointers on how to educate parents, how to improve review of pieces, and performance enhancement by duet playing, and orchestra accompaniment.

Training ended with the performance from all of us by memory. Then Ms Kasia delivered her comments for us to improve our playing. Her critique was straight forward and clear.

I felt privileged to have the opportunity to be trained in the Suzuki method under the tutelage of Ms Kasia.



Teacher trainees play together as an ensemble, led by Ms Kasia.

## A Suzuki Student's Experience at the Singapore Performing Arts Festival

Evan Fun

I am Evan Fun and I am 9 years old. I started learning the violin when I was 6 years old. After I attended the first observation class with Ms Una Lauw, I liked the sound of the violin very much and I was amazed by the beautiful music that 4 strings could make.

When Ms Lauw asked me if I would like to participate in the Singapore Performing Arts Festival (SPAF 2019), I was so excited. Ms Lauw recommended Gossec's Gavotte for the festival. I practiced this piece for the festival almost everyday, trying to improve on the dynamics to perfect it.

On the day of the festival, I was very nervous but as I recalled, Ms Lauw had prepared me well and we also had several performances before this competition. When it was my turn to play the piece, the sense of nervousness left me and I felt a surge of confidence.

When I heard my name being announced for the gold award, my heart jumped with joy. I felt that my hard work and my teacher's guidance had paid off! I am very inspired to do even better and aim to get the Gold Star Award in the next SPAF!



Evan Fun proudly displaying his Gold Award Certificate

"Musical ability is not an inborn talent but an ability which can be developed. Any child who is properly trained can develop musical ability just as all children develop the ability to speak their mother tongue. The potential of every child is unlimited."

— Shinichi Suzuki

## A Guitar Teacher Shares his Teacher Assessment Experience

Kim Pin

It's indeed a great honour to take part in the Suzuki Guitar Book 3 training and the Suzuki Guitar Book 1 Teacher Assessment year in Manila. I completed my Suzuki Guitar Book 1 training with my teacher trainer, Zeah Riordan back in 2017. That was a precious experience for me, having met all the Suzuki colleagues. We exchanged ideas, learnt from each other, and played the book repertoire together.

The preparation for the teacher assessment encouraged me to refine my teaching skills, review my teaching points and to reflect on Dr. Suzuki's philosophy. In the process of preparing for the teacher assessment, I recorded myself playing through all the pieces in Book 1 and also recorded 2 of my students playing through all the Book 1 pieces as well. These recordings helped me sharpen my observation more as I checked through the playing details and compared them with my teaching points.

I appreciate the association's encouragement and support and I'm glad to have completed and passed the Book 1 Teacher Assessment and I looking forward to preparing for the Book 2 Teacher Assessment.



Teacher Kim Pin during the Book 1 Teacher Assessment with his Trainer, Zeah Riordan

# Motivating Children to Develop Their Potential

(English Translation by Lili Iriye Selden)

Published in the Spring 1996 Issue of the 'International Suzuki Journal'



Dr Shinichi Suzuki

Deep consideration of the two questions, "How is superior ability cultivated?" and "How is ability stunted or neglected?" is, pedagogically speaking, of great importance. In answering these questions, we must first reflect on what inspires or generates ability.

It is my fervent desire that everyone who utilizes the violin to develop musical ability, that is, who is involved in the building of musical sensibility and performance ability in their children, will join me in pursuing the matters of how, on the one hand, potential is fostered, and, on the other, under what conditions it isn't. When these answers become clear, surely will a hopeful bliss pervade their daily lives and violin practice.

Many Talent Education parents are impressively hardworking and dedicated, but when we ask whether dedication invariably results in exemplary development it seems that it is not necessarily so. When their children grow less interested in practicing, some of these parents begin to apply pressure, only to find that this has no effect but to make things worse. In the end, a portion of these parents resign themselves and, regrettably, give up midway.

This should not happen if they really understand Talent Education. This unfortunate result is produced when, instead of making a serious effort to learn about Talent Education, committed parents adhere to traditional educational attitudes and merely entertain hopes of training their children to play the violin well.

It is extremely difficult to change conventional attitudes in adults. Even the finest, self-reflective person finds herself unconsciously reverting to formerly held beliefs. I would like, however, for people truly to understand the new frontier of Talent Education. Once they convert to the new conventional wisdom, my hope is that they will dedicate themselves, for the sake of their children, to applying these unfamiliar new ideas with care and constant reflection.

It is certainly undeniable that intensive violin practice leads to superior abilities. The problem is, what if it's the parents' who are compassionate, while the children are completely indifferent?! Properly speaking, I must qualify the statement "Intensive violin practice leads to superior abilities" by amending it to "Intensive practice on the part of the individual playing the violin...." the real accomplishment of education ties in gradually nurturing the enthusiasm of that very individual who does the practicing. Talent Education's mission, from years ago has been in exploring this principle.

It is now time to discuss how to motivate the development of ability. I urge all of you to consider this matter along with me. Is not the generating impulse of ability invariably linked to kokoro, the heart-mind? I am always painfully conscious of the significance of nurturing this heart-mind, for "Kokoro is the life-force of human beings."

Of course, it is a relatively straightforward fact that even the simple action of raising an arm relies on the functioning of the heart. Beyond that, however, lies an even greater truth. If asked, "What is the most valuable central feature of education?" I would immediately answer, "Cultivating the heart mind."

I also believe that the loftiest-and most difficult-task with which parents are charged is that of fostering the heart-minds of their children. Are you all willing to take on this challenge?

Parents who succeed in developing finely honed heart-minds in their children can perhaps be said to have fulfilled their parental mission. Some of you may wonder what this has to do with ability. If you consider that the simplest motions of shifting your hands and feet start with the heart-mind, however, then it is reasonably easy to see that the nurturance of the heart mind itself stimulates ability.

*Just think, your children may be learning the violin, or perhaps it's painting, but.*

*'Practice is practice'*

*Whether they're doing it willy-nilly or joyfully,*

*Whether they're doing it carelessly or carefully*

*Whether they're doing it enthusiastically or they're aiming for the best*

*Whether they think they'll take a day off and practice tomorrow, or*

*Whether they resent practicing and rarely do so ...*

As you can see, there are a variety of ways to practice. The same hour of practice by people at differing levels of the heart-mind will result in widely divergent degrees of ability. I would therefore like to see everyone come to recognize that the motivating force behind all ability development lies in the heart-mind. Reflection upon this knowledge hopefully will contribute, one day, towards common understanding that "Talent Education" means "Oh, yes, that association of parents seriously committed to developing superior heart-minds in their children!"

I would like to emphasize that our research is not concerned solely with nurturing violinists' heart-minds. Children's heart-minds are shaped by every aspect of their daily lives, and it is useless to try to attune a heart-mind exclusively to the act of playing the violin.

November, 1957

# STEAS Activities & Performances in 2019

## Violin Funtasy (June 2019)



## Piano Funtasy (August 2019)

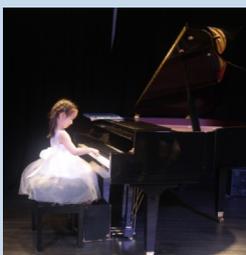


# STEAS Activities & Performances in 2018

## Perpetuo Musica (Mar 2019)



## National Graduation Concert (Nov 2019)



## STEAS Special Events in 2019

### Home School Curriculum Fair (Apr 2019)



### Outreach Performance at National University Hospital Medical Centre (Nov 2019)



## Upcoming Events in 2020



February  
Violin Book 2 Training  
and  
Violin Teachers Assessment

March  
Perpetuo Musica

August  
National Camp for  
Guitar, Piano and  
Violin

April  
Piano Book 1 Training ;  
Piano Book 3 Training and  
Piano Teachers Assessment

November  
Graduation  
Concert

July  
Submit videos  
for Graduation

