new zealand Suzuki Journal

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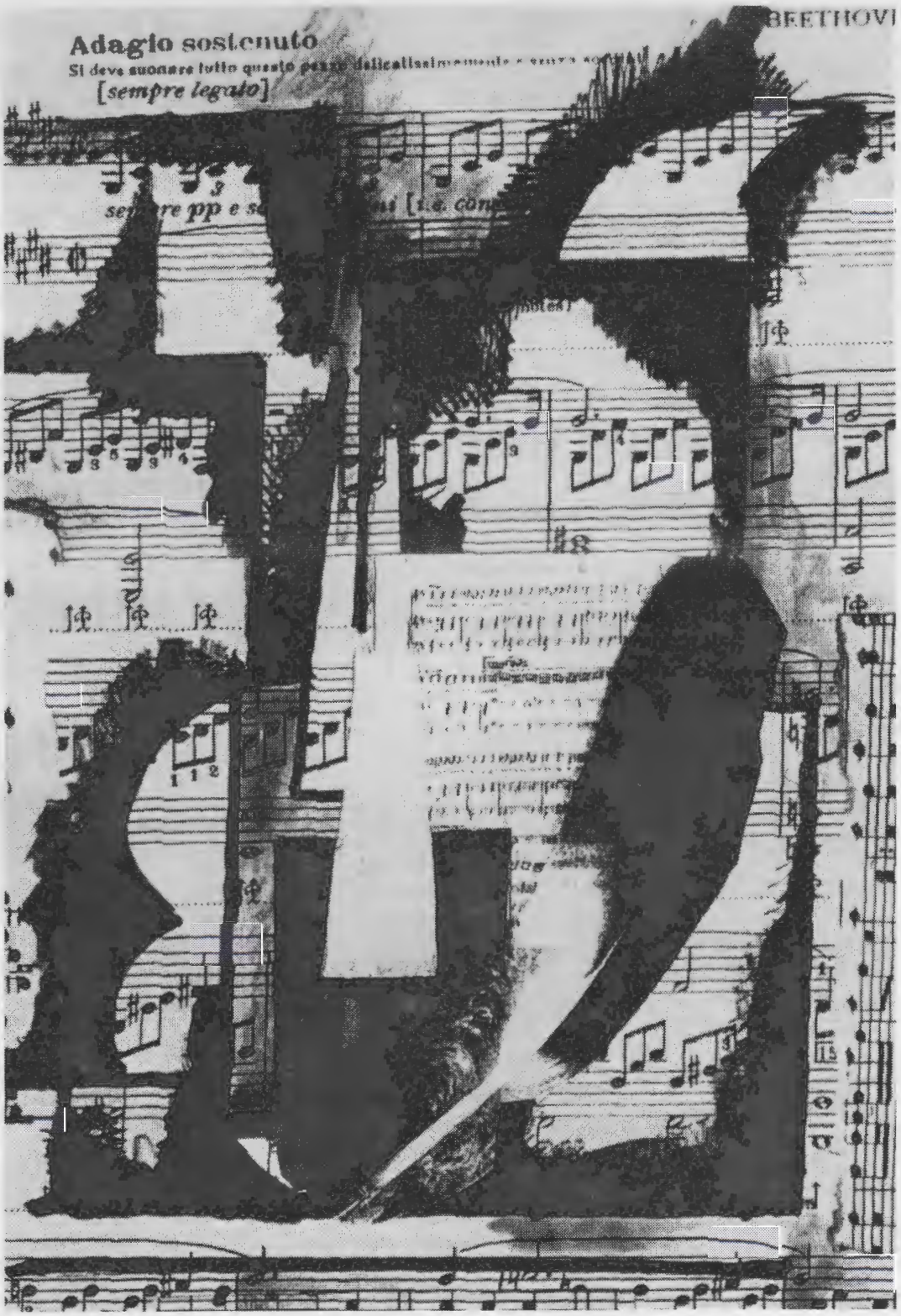
new Zealand
Suzuki Journal
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*Permission to use *Piano Practice* by Lauris Edmond kindly granted by Frances Edmond and Bridget Williams

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LINKS by Catharina van Bohemen
read, listen, view, do

Thinking about what to write for the editorial of this issue made me envious of Count Kaiserling, the privileged aristocrat who employed eighteen year old Goldberg, a gifted pupil of Bach's to play the harpsichord to him when he couldn't sleep. I've lain awake with only the insomniac cat for company, and wondered how I could link the articles in this issue, or even whether there were links.

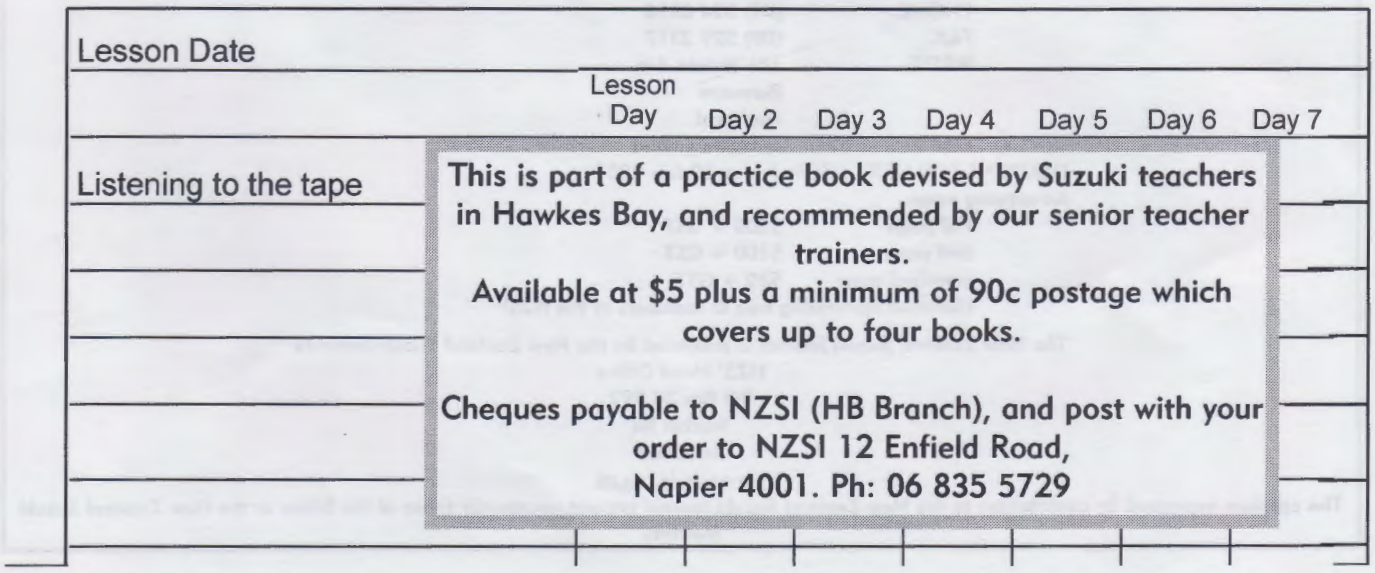
Graham McPhail, who is a committed teacher and musician, has written a warm essay about his response to the Suzuki Method. This essay alludes indirectly to some of the reasons why Chris Lewis, (in the first issue of 2001) is so gratified that his children learn according to the Suzuki Method: '...Watching our children develop their musical appreciation...by listening to incredibly patient and talented teachers...has greatly enriched our lives...'

Yet his fear of the nihilism of modern culture could not remain unchallenged, and so I asked a composer - Eve de Castro-Robinson, and an artist - Gretchen Albrecht, to respond to his charges. As someone who reads and writes a great deal, I wondered how many recent 'plotless novels about nothing in particular' I'd read. I love poetry - old and new - there is much to celebrate here in New Zealand: Lauris Edmond's poem *Piano Practice* captures the contrast and connection between the rocky wrestle with crotchets, and glorious escape to 'green-gold gorse.'

In the course of my moonlit musings, I thought often of the Goldberg Variations, and who better to talk about them than David Guerin who has been playing them for thirty years.

So, as well as matters that we as parents, teachers, and pupils still want to learn about: better ways of listening, the pain of a child quitting, the possibilities of closer musical relations with Australia, the lens of this issue has widened. I was encouraged by Goethe: 'To keep young, every day, read a poem, listen to a beautiful piece of music, view a fine painting, and if possible, do a good action.' I'm sure Doctor Suzuki would approve.

Erratum: In the last issue, the price of these useful practice books was wrongly printed as $25. They are in fact $5.



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT
by Val Thorburn

pan pacific possibilities

Last month saw the beginnings of a significant development in this part of the Suzuki world. At a forum in Melbourne I attended with Juliet Le Couteur, NZSI Administrator, discussions were held with four state presidents of Suzuki organisations in Australia, and the International Suzuki Association's representative for the Pan Pacific region, Harold Brissenden, and ISA Board member Yasuki Nakamura. The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain whether there was general agreement to establish a Pan Pacific Suzuki organisation, and if so, what form it would take, its purpose and functions. Given Mr Brissenden's pending retirement from the ISA, there was also a need to decide how the region would go about selecting his successor to enable NZ and Australian interests and views to be represented at ISA Board meetings. We attended the meeting intent on ensuring that any newly created organisation did not impinge on NZSI's authority, functions or autonomy, as provided by our constitution. We were also committed to the notion that we did not want to become part of an organisation, and all that it entailed in terms of costs and time, for which we could see no direct benefit for NZSI membership.

We found that the presidents of the Australian Suzuki organisations came to the meeting with the same set of concerns. However, there was a consensus that a regional organisation which would provide a forum for sharing ideas and resources would be of benefit. It was also agreed that some time should be taken by a steering committee, consisting of representatives made up from the region, to determine what form the new organisation would take in terms of structure and function. Furthermore, before beginning this process, a consultation period should be allowed for the presidents of the organisations represented at the meeting to confer with their member organisations to ascertain support for the general proposal of a regional Suzuki organisation, and the establishment of a committee to that end. Branch delegates to National Executive have been provided with the minutes of the forum meeting held in Melbourne with a view to discussing them at the next meeting. Thereafter, there will be a meeting of NZSI's National Executive to discuss the proposal and to hear the views of the branches.

From my own perspective, I welcome the opportunity which a regional organisation could provided for consultation, communication, and the sharing of ideas between Suzuki teachers and teacher trainers on both sides of the Tasman. Already this occurs with the regular invitation of Australian teachers to our workshops and summer camps. Also, some links have been established at the teacher-trainer level, including the appointment of Julia Breen of Melbourne as NZ's flute teacher-trainer. A Pan-Pacific organisation could expand on these relationships and allow for a greater exchange of ideas and resources among the constituent parts of the region, particularly at a professional level. There will inevitably be a financial cost to NZSI to belong to such an organisation, but on the basis of the Melbourne meeting, I am certain that the benefits and opportunities arising from belonging to a wider Suzuki community will outweigh these costs.

At this stage, NZSI's commitment to the Pan-Pacific proposal is limited to discussing it with National Executive, and then advising the other parties involved in the Melbourne meeting whether we support the establishment of a steering committee to come up with an appropriate legal entity for a Pan Pacific Suzuki organisation. In the absence of a majority support among the Suzuki organisations for the proposal, then it is unlikely that it will go ahead. At least two Australian states are known to have significant reservations.

I look forward to hearing the views of the membership on this issue. I hope you have the opportunity to debate it at your next branch meeting. If you would like copies of the Melbourne meeting, these can be mailed to you by the Administrator (nzsuz.admin@clear.net.nz). I expect to be able to report progress in the next Journal, so watch this space!

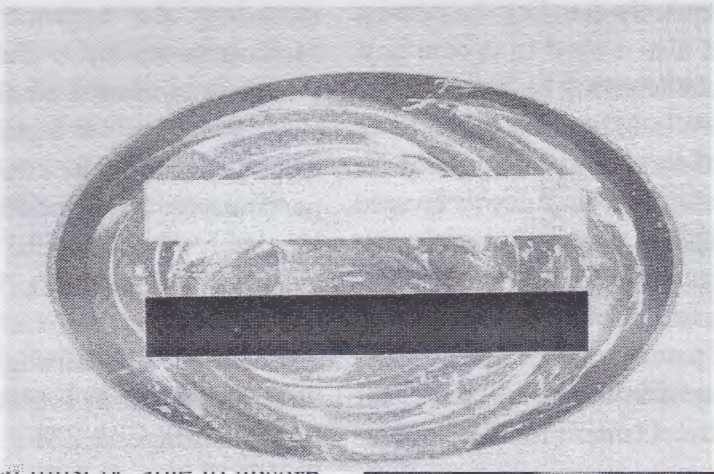
ARTISTS ANSWER
open eyes and ears...

Responses from Gretchen Albrecht and Eve de Castro-Robinson

Oh dear! is my first response to those two words - 'modern culture' - that head Chris Lewis's article.

They already signal to me, an artist, the noisy ring of someone's confused experience as he stands in front of 'framed blobs and smears', or 'a collage of cigarettes and sundry other garbage', and blames the artist or 'culture' for his inability to interpret what is going on in the artwork. The act of comprehension has to happen way up the food chain before any judgement - if that's the right word - of value or quality, can be made for or against the art in question.

'Blobs' and 'smears' are wonderfully evocative words describing the actual physical process of putting paint on to a canvas, and as long ago as 1910, Kandinsky painted abstract paintings characterised by 'disordered, violent lines and vivid colours,' according to my



death, war, poverty, disease and violence as necessary aspects of life, but it is our job to guide their thoughts and emotional reactions to these concepts. It is shallow thinking to believe that a sanitisation of culture is beneficial. Many of the great works of art - Picasso's 'Guernica,' the war poetry of Wilfred Owen - have grown, and continue to grow, out of death, destruction and warfare. Think too of Britten's War Requiem, Penderecki's 'Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima,' Gorecki's 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs.' Expressing pain and sorrow in art is every bit as important as expressing joy and laughter.

I take exception to Lewis's argument which seems to dismiss over a century of sophisticated abstract art as 'framed blobs and smears', and contemporary music with reference to chain saws and breaking glass. These latter sounds would have been used in an infinitesimal fraction of music over the last fifty years. Artists and musicians will reflect culture, and a proportion of composers will experiment with technology in the same way as sports people experiment with new materials for equipment. The difference with valueless cultural artifacts.

Actually, I do sympathise with Chris Lewis's despair, for his frustration is very real. As a former art teacher I know it is not uncommon. But the key to unlocking the door to understanding visual art is information - which leads to knowledge. Just as he describes children discovering sport via 'newly learned skills, dedication, and determination to overcome new and difficult challenges,' so too are the same efforts needed to learn about art. Knowledge doesn't come out of the blue.

The comfort of the familiar may be confused with what constitutes a 'masterpiece.' But all new art is difficult and often awkward to our eyes at first glance. It takes time to understand. New 'non' art materials are often used - think of cubism and Picasso introducing, in 1901, cane seating, and rope, and segments form his

Eve de Castro-Robinson has composed music for a wide variety of performers including the NZSO, the Auckland Philharmonia, the NZ String Quartet, and the Nash Ensemble. Some of her music has been written to celebrate her son, Cyprian. Her work has been performed in many countries round the world. She lives in Auckland where she lectures in composition at the University.

I am interested in the comments made by Chris Lewis in his article 'Suzuki and Montessori versus today's modern culture.' It seems that as a sportsman, he cannot help but see things in terms of competitive value. The very title implies that two well-regarded educational systems are pitted against the very culture they draw from. I would have thought that any free-thinking educator understands that education exists within a culture, and to reject it is impossible.

As a parent, I agree with him that much of today's culture, in particular the product-driven Americanisation of much media which influences fashion, diet, leisure and language, is pernicious, but one does have to watch the old knee-jerk generalisations of the generation gap. I don't see that Dijimon and Dragonball Z are more violent or aggressive than any comparable children's entertainment back through the ages - think of the horrors of Red Riding Hood and Snow White. Surely it is up to parents to provide a rich and varied cultural environment through literature, music and the visual arts: to 'protect' their children from the 'ugliness and destruction that reflects the current culture.'

Incidentally, I don't agree with this sentiment of Chris Lewis's. I have found that it is by the very drawing of attention to these 'negative' aspects of life on our planet, that we can instil a sense of empathy and sensitivity. Children must be able to absorb death, war, poverty, disease and violence as necessary aspects of life, but it is our job to guide their thoughts and emotional reactions to these concepts. It is shallow thinking to believe that a sanitisation of culture is beneficial. Many of the great works of art - Picasso's 'Guernica,' the war poetry of Wilfred Owen - have grown, and continue to grow, out of death, destruction and warfare. Think too of Britten's War Requiem, Penderecki's 'Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima,' Gorecki's 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs.' Expressing pain and sorrow in art is every bit as important as expressing joy and laughter.

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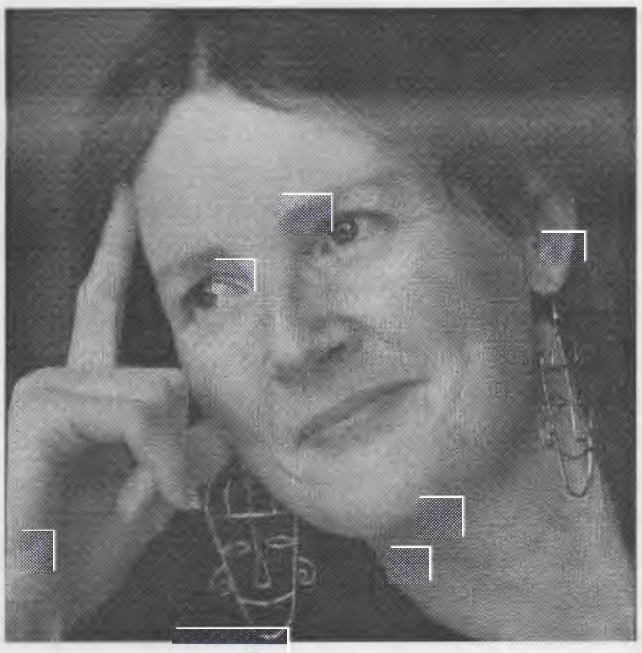
Creativity is not a rational act, but by its nature, competition is. I wonder about a method of music which sees small children put through their collective paces with no emphasis on individual expression. This is the opposite of how I view music education. In the same way that I encourage my postgraduate composition students at university to find their individual voice and value it, so too do I surround my nine year old son with different sorts of music. He has found his own way to 'Frère Jacques' at the piano, adding a few odd little quirks of his own. Music is magic, and you can't drill magic into anyone.

I wonder, incidentally, how many Suzuki-trained youngsters grow up to be creative composers rather than re-creative musicians?



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SUZUKI PHILOSOPHY
a personal view

By Graham McPhail

The twentieth century has seen many remarkable advancements towards the realisation of the potential of the individual. Cultural interchange has meant many ideas, once foreign to one's culture's thinking, have become available to another's I the new global village. I have had the privilege to have been exposed to what I believe to be two of the twentieth century's great educational 'discoveries': the Suzuki Method, and the Alexander Technique. Both focus on the how of learning, a holistic approach to learning, and a commitment to the process rather than a right and wrong outcome. Dr Suzuki's 'Mother tongue' notion is the fundamental 'discovery' on which his method is based. From that starting point, one can understand the other fundamental details: the learning triangle, the listening, the review and so on. Underpinning all of this is his love for children and the hope of ennobling the human race through music.

What a wonderful way, and in many ways, an obvious idea that children could learn the language of music just as they learn their own mother tongue. Of course the language of music involves not just the assimilation of the sound world, but also the complex physical and motor skills required to play. What a wonderful, and yet in many ways, an obvious idea not to try to learn everything at once! Play first, read later, just as we learn to speak first and read and write later. The student is then free to focus on recreating sounds and how to achieve this physically, without the added complication of learning to read at the same time. This not only frees up the mind for physical awareness, but also, in the long term, creates greatly developed skills of aural perception. The aural skills of a player who listens and is not distracted by the page can be remarkable. Patterns become internalised and readily available, and a sense of absolute pitch often develops as well. Just as babies hear the sounds of their mother tongue constantly around them, so too the Suzuki child must become very familiar to the sounds of the music to be learnt well in advance of the first attempt. How miraculous it can be, if the listening has been done. Teacher often report of the fingers almost finding their own way, seeking out the next note of the well known tune. The importance of listening cannot be over stressed, and many believe it to be the pivotal element in early success. However, every child has its own unique environment and manner of learning and will necessarily achieve and progress in a totally different way from any other. Alinta Thornton in her Parents' Guide, page 11, sums up the importance of listening: 'Listening to the record once a day aids the memory, the second listening aids perception of tone, the third aids the perception of musical playing.' Listening ahead in the repertoire can also be a prime motivating factor in achievement.

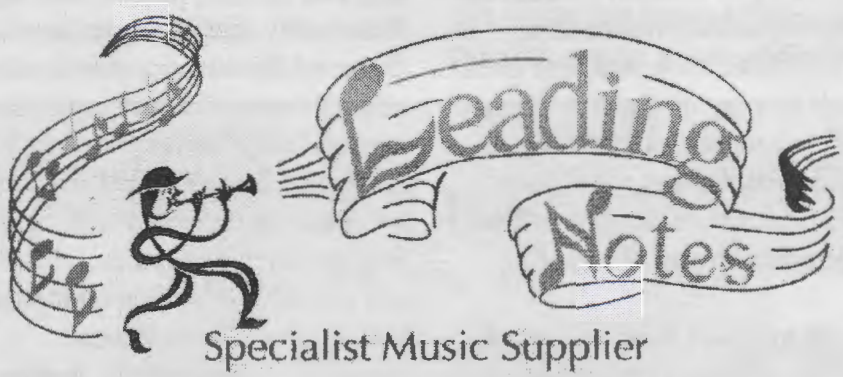
Dr Suzuki's aim was not necessarily to create world full of prodigy violinists, but rather to use music as a vehicle through which care and love for children could be expressed. This is achieved through the enhanced relationship created between parent and child who enter a special commitment to each other. The third partner in the learning triangle is of course the teacher, who must set the path to be followed, and instruct the parent to be the teacher at all other times. In this aspect, the Suzuki Method makes its greatest demands. The parent supervises all practice, is the home teacher and attends lessons. The regularity of practice is fundamental as well. As Suzuki himself suggested, 'You don't have to practise on the days you don't eat!' All this must be fully integrated into family life. In this way, Suzuki students develop not only commitment, but also skills of concentration, memory, and social interaction. Introduced, ideally, at a very early age, physical skills become second nature, and Suzuki students know little of the fear of not being able to achieve a desired result.

The principle of review is another fundamental pillar of the method, but one that can be too readily overlooked if, to borrow an Alexander term, 'end-gaming' takes over. It is the process that's important. The progress is a pleasing by-product - when it comes! A child does not master a word by

using it once, or even by using it, necessarily understand its meaning or be able to apply it in a new situation. Just as every child develops a different vocabulary, and ability to use language, so too every child will differ in its ability to respond to the challenges provided in its musical environment.

Dr Suzuki has also provided a well conceived sequence of playing repertoire covering all the fundamentals of violin playing. There are wonderful links from the early books to the latter, such as that very first Twinkle rhythm appearing in the opening of the Bach Double Violin concerto. The preparation for the concertos begins right here in Book I! These fundamental physical principles of playing covered in the first books must be returned to in constant review. An obvious place for this is the weekly group lesson where students can inspire and be inspired to review or look forward to the new challenges of new pieces. Old pieces can become the vehicle for the introduction of new skills such as position changing, transposition, varied bow strokes, vibrato etc. Once again, the focus is narrowed for new learning so success is more readily achieved. Small steps, one thing at a time, very often! Old pieces can be revisited to develop a new level of musicianship. The shared repertoire also allows for a wonderful social sharing within teachers' studios, or across the world. This is another strength of the Suzuki Method.

Indeed, the Method has many attributes that recommend it to teachers. On the one hand, it is a ready-made system if you like, with a sequential repertoire containing all the challenges required for musical and technical maturity. More than this, it presents proven methods and approaches that enable successful learning. In its ideal state, it also enhances relationships through the very special triangle of learning created with parent, child and teacher. Yet systems in themselves are no guarantee of success. The teacher must bring a wealth of ideas and insights gained from a wide musical background, and his own special personality to enhance and enrich Suzuki's original vision. 'where there is love, much can be accomplished.'



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Tip from Caroline Kwok

QUITTING - or changing...

By Michelanne Forster

The day my son Mathias, aged six, announced he wanted to play the violin was a hearts and flowers day. I've always loved music and regretted badgering my mother into letting me quit piano lessons. Here was an opportunity to do things differently. History did not need to repeat itself. I was determined my little son would enjoy music making in a way I never did.

We started off with a bang. His teacher was marvellous. The Suzuki method offered inspiration and practical support every inch of the way. We attended lessons, family concerts, end of year recitals and summer camps together. Daily practice became part of the rhythm of our life and there was noting nicer than hearing, over time, ragged notes become lyrical phrases and nursery tunes becoming waltzes and minuets. By age ten, Mathias was composing his own songs, conducting imaginary orchestras, reading music and listening to Concert FM. At age eleven he was leading the second violins in a Christchurch School of Music orchestra, and even won a classy backpack by playing Bach at a school talent contest. If he hit a bad patch or became bored or discouraged, it was always possible to ride the storm out. His teacher's skill, my enthusiasm, his own sense of commitment carried him through.

Then shoulder pain set in. I was blasé at first as kids often get mysterious ailments that appear suddenly and disappear in exactly the same way, but gradually came to realise I had a real problem on my hands. His teacher checked his posture, violin hold and bowing technique but nothing seemed to make any difference. The pain persisted, and my son and I began to battle about the dreaded subject of quitting. 'You've worked so hard at your music and you've done so well. Don't throw it all away,' I said. 'You'll regret it if you do.' In response my son would mutter that he hated the violin and wanted to ditch it, preferably on Mars where he'd never have to look at it or play it again.

Lessons became a trial as his teacher and I tried to figure out wherther it was just the discomfort or some other more sinister cause that had caused this sudden turn around. Had some one teased him at school? Were his lessons too technique oriented? Was I putting too much pressure on him? Eleven year old boys feel strongly and deeply, but articulating those feelings doesn't come easily. Mathias said he wanted to stop playing the violin because he didn't like it any more, end of discussion. The more I tried to draw him out, the worse things became. In desperation I tried the Alexander Technique. This certainly made a big difference to his posture, and for a brief time it looked as if the crisis had passed, but towards the end of the school year, after yet another tearful practice session, things took another nose-dive. Mathias declared I could starve him or lock him up, but he was quitting the violin and nothing would make him change his mind.

Now what? All I could think of was that my darling was defying me and making a huge mistake. Reluctantly, I tried to peel myself away from the drama of the situation and concede that a boy who was almost twelve had to be allowed to start taking responsibility for his own life. I couldn't expect obedience just because I was his mother. I could set limits on his behaviour, certainly, but command him to play violin, when he clearly didn't want to any more? Without his own passion motivating him, it would be lost cause.

Gradually I came to see that the fear and loss I felt about Mathias quitting had a lot to do with my letting go of our time together as mother and baby. We were entering a new stage: mother and teenager. He had to find his independence, and I needed to let him. For me, the crunch point was violin lessons. For other parents it could be Sunday School, Scouts, dancing lessons, family outings. How I proceeded would say a lot about me and my values as a parent. I decided to step out of the picture and let Mathias handle the repercussions of his decision as much as possible. I could see he hated disappointing his violin teacher and found it difficult to tell her the news. She made it clear she didn't allow her students to quit in the middle of a term, and talked about how important it was to fin-

ish their time together on a positive note. Mathias agreed, reluctantly, to finish the year's work. In spite of the fact that I was dead set against his giving up, I had to admire the way he politely but firmly stood up for himself.

At this stage it was still very difficult to believe we were really at the end of the road. I asked him to attend one more summer camp before making his final decision, mostly in the hope that the additional time would cure whatever was ailing him. As usual we had a wonderful summer camp, marred only by the knowledge that there could be no more stalling on my part once the week was over. As I watched Mathias play in the chamber orchestra and attend master classes, I felt a terrible sense of loss. There he was, performing at a level I could only dream about. How could he know at his age that he was about to shut a door that might not be able to open again? After the last concert, Mathias turned to me and said the words I had been dreading : 'Mum, I've done everything you asked me to do. Now can I quit?'

I felt like crying but I didn't. 'If that's what you want,' I replied. Because I'd had time to accept the changes that had taken place, I felt resigned, even peaceful. It was his choice.

Amazingly, this story has a happy ending. While at camp, Mathias discovered Suzuki guitar. He liked the sound, he liked the way it felt: he wanted to give it a go. He asked if he could have some lessons. One thing led to another and four months after quitting the violin, the sound of a classical guitar now fills our house. Mathias practises every day, without a word from me, and often listens to tapes before he drifts off to sleep. The pleasure he gets from playing is evidenced by the big smile on his face whenever he shows off a new piece he has mastered. 'Listen to this waltz,' he said to me the other day. Can you hear the vibrato?'

I've decided there's no such thing as wasted time when learning an instrument. While no parent wants her child to quit an instrument, it can and does happen. The saga of my son's switch from violin to guitar taught me that at some point our children have to relegate us to the side-lines. We can still wave and cheer them on - but at a distance.

If our children decide not to continue lessons, we need to give them the space to find their own passion and follow it. They may turn to another kind of music making, or they may take up long distance running, surfing, or computer animation. What matters is that music, having once touched their lives, will never go away. Whatever level children achieve, there is still the unchangeable fact that music has entered their young lives and offered them its unique power and beauty.

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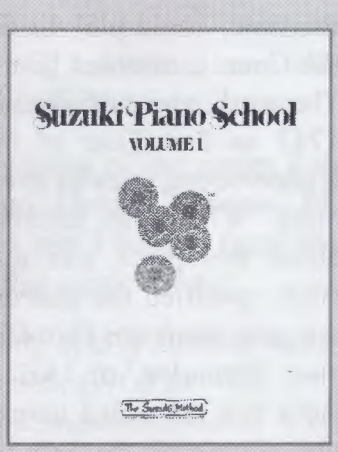

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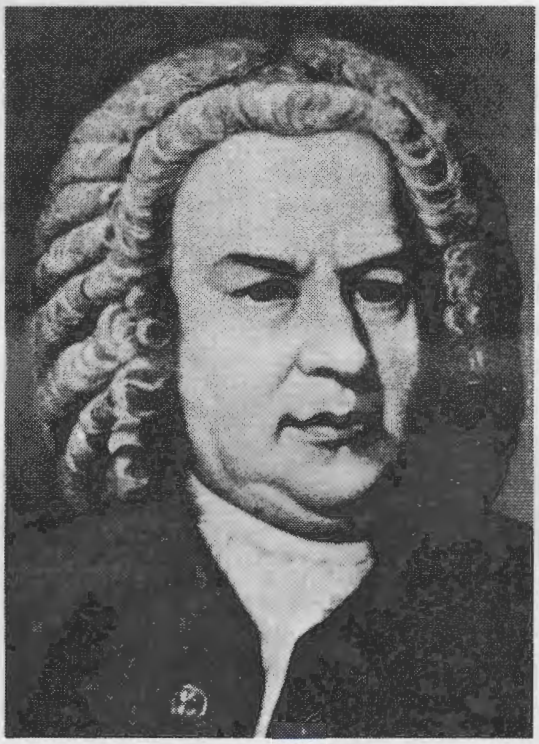
GOLDBERG

By Catharina van Bohemen

Guerin - musical mountaineering

What do you do when you wake in the middle of the night? Your mind is active, your feet are twitching, and your hands claw at your sheets. You long for sleep, or if not sleep, peace. Do you go outside and stare at the moon drifting through clouds, do you make a hot drink and read a worthy book, or do you simply lie in bed and listen to the possums scampering across the roof?

None of us are as privileged as a wakeful aristocrat named Count Kaiserling, a Russian Ambassador the Saxon Court, for whom neither tinctures of valerian nor balloons of brandy soothed his sleeplessness. He did, however, have in his employ a certain aptly named Johann Gottlieb Goldberg, a gifted pupil of Bach's.



The Count commissioned Bach to write a keyboard piece, which Goldberg, who was about eighteen at the time, could play to fill the Count's troubled hours. The work was published in 1742 as Part Four of the Klavierübung (clavier exercise). What was unusual about this piece was that Bach specified the instrument and its type: '*Aria mit verschiedenen Veränderungen für Cembalo mit zwei Manualen,*' or, 'Aria with different variations for a two manualed harpsichord.' There are thirty variations with the Aria repeated at the end, making thirty two pieces all together - the same number as there are bars in the Aria.. We don't know whether Goldberg played the work without interruptions, or in sections, with or wothout repeats, and whether he may have had favourite sections.

The Goldberg Variations have become one of the most important summits of the keyboard repertoire - over the years many harpsichordists and pianists have played them: Wanda Landowksa, Glenn Gould, Daniel Barenboim, Claudio Arrau, Gustav Leonhardt, to name but a few.

For David Guerin, who was two years younger than Goldberg when he was first introduced to them by his teacher in Wellington, Judith Clark, the experience of playing them (and he has been playing them for thirty years) is 'one of communing with Bach's thought: the reflections of western music's greatest mind and heart.'

'I was sixteen when I first played the Goldbergs with Judith, and the I studied them later with Janetta McStay in Auckland, and later again in Germany. But it wasn't until Michael Parmenter approached me to play them for his dance 'Weather from a Spark' - a dance without a story line, a dance in response to the music - that I really tackled the task of conquering their difficulties and devoting myself to gaining the understanding needed for public performance.'

David has been performing the Goldberg Variations throughout New Zealand for ten years now. He says there are many obstacles to playing them on the single-keyboard piano compared with the two manualed harpsichord. 'The hands are often crossed over, or have to play on top of each other,' he says. 'And there's the rather unique challenge of being on stage for ninety minutes without an interval: of being so focused for such a long time.'

I asked him whether he walked around thinking about them while he was in the garden or walking along the beach.

'By just thinking the word 'Goldberg,' a certain response is summoned up; of their enormity, of their meditative quality. The detailed work never stops: even now I can easily spend ninety minutes on a single variation concentrating on how every note is played and how it affects the whole.' I've tried to find out as much as possible about how an 'authentic approach' to Bach performance can be translated to the piano.

' In the same sense that I am playing a transcription from harpsichord to piano, I think about how the Variations could be transcribed for a violin or a cello. But not a modern violin or cello! Rather, I look to what we can learn from those who study authentic baroque performance practice, about playing such music on instruments with dynamic graduations. I think about rhythmic structures in the music; of the graduations within a bar - what is the important beat - of the relationship between 'good' bars and 'bad' bars, and about how a harpsichordist would show those structures through articulation and agogic accent. The question is always 'how can you convert it onto a modern piano?'

'Throughout my explorations, I've had the advice of my friend and wonderful harpsichordist Robert Petre whose knowledge of baroque music is Olympian.'

'Yet, this exploration doesn't give you definite answers to questions about how to play the music; rather, you gain an insight into how many ways there are to think about it, about how to do things, or indeed, how not to. Sometimes I might decide to play rather more like a late nineteenth century pianist than an eighteenth century harpsichordist just because at that point I just want to make a gorgeous radiant piano noise. Harpsichordists often hold down notes for much longer than written to create resonance; so I do that sometimes, and then extend it to using the pedal as well in quite a non-harpsichord manner. After all, I am playing the piano.

'But to come to the principle thing of the matter - why do I perform the Goldbergs? I do so because the music is so joyous, so alive - an overwhelming journey through human experience, beyond words. Listening is transforming - time stands still. If all is well, and the Muse has descended (she often arrives during the thirteenth Variation) - the listeners are with me, and I will sometimes even allow myself to close my eyes too, and listen anew.

In the Preface to his edition of the score, Ralph Kirkpatrick quotes from Thomas Browne, from 'Religio Medici' (1643), and I believe these vows suggest the essence of this music for me:

> *'there is something in it of Divinity more than the ear discovers: it is an Hieroglphical and shadowed lesson of the whole World, and creatures of God; such a melody to the ear, as the whole World, well understood, would afford the understand ing. In brief, it is a sensible fit of that har mony which intellectually sounds in the ears of God.'*

LISTEN use a tape recorder

By Grace Nicholson

In the last edition of the Suzuki Journal, Jackie Argyll wrote about the enormous benefits of learning to listen.

'Your ears are your best teacher,' she writes. I couldn't agree more.

Over the years I have realised increasingly the importance of training ourselves to become more discerning about the sounds we make on our instruments.

Here are a few thoughts about making use of a tape recorder. Sometimes it is difficult to really hear the music you are practising on a daily basis. You may not be aware of speeding up or slowing down in certain places; you may think your dynamics are okay, and some wrong notes that have slipped in now sound quite all right to your ears.

One way to discover how you sound is to tape yourself. It is not a good idea to do this until you have been working on a piece for a while and can play it at the correct tempo. Once you begin taping, don't stop for mistakes. You may be surprised that some note errors are not very noticeable. Missed notes usually sound worse when you play them, than they actually sound on tape. Remember this the next time you play in a recital. If you keep going, the audience will not notice small mistakes.

Don't expect a perfect tape. Even professionals in recording studios record each piece many times and splice together the best bits. Your goal is not to play perfectly; rather to discover where you need to do more work in certain areas.

After you finish, play back the recording. Listen to hear if you hesitate or slow down at the hard spots. Is the rhythm right? Is it legato or staccato where it should be? Do the phrases make sense? Are the dynamics clear? Are the long notes held for their full value? Play through the tape again, this time looking at the music. Use a pencil to circle each spot that doesn't sound quite right. Don't get discouraged if there are many things to fix. Remember that the tape is just a tool to help you improve. Once you have practised the problem spots for a few days, tape yourself again and hear how much better you have become.

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TEACHERS' MATTERS
and presidential extra

A week of training and an assessment day are planned for the September/October holidays, followed by the Annual General Meeting of NZSI. The venue is Southwell School, Peachgrove Road, Hamilton, and the following teacher training courses are offered for the last week of the holidays, beginning Monday 1 October 2001.

VIOLIN: Unit 5 will be taught by teacher trainer, Val Thorburn, and depending on the amount of interest, either Unit 2 or Unit 3 will also be offered. These courses commence on Monday 1 October, and conclde on Thursday 4 October. 8 hours of observation will be included. Course fees are $180. Please register your interest as early as possible with Val Thorburn: phone 07 579 2477.

PIANO: Level 1, or alternately, Level 4 is offered by teacher trainer, Margaret Crawshaw during the week commencing 1 October. If you want training at either of these levels, please contact Margaret as soon as possible: phone 07 855 4945.

ASSESSMENTS: Friday 5 October has been designated 'Assessment Day,' so if you are waiting for the opportunity to present yourself for assessment, this is the time to do so. An assessment application form (see training booklet) should be completed and sent to NZSI, PO Box 74 092, Market Road, Epsom, Auckland, together with the assessment fee of $112.50. Please lodge your application no later than Friday 31 August.

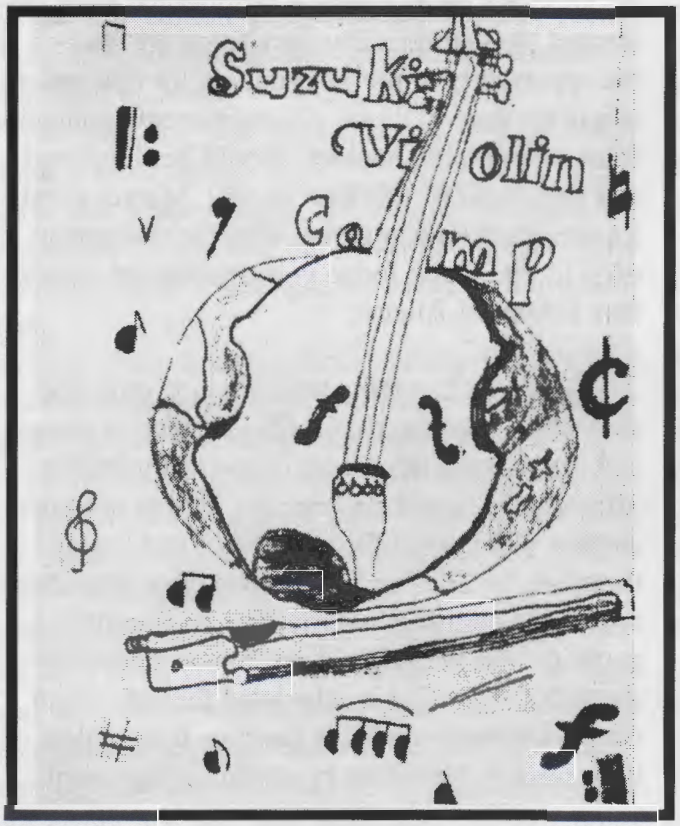
It is intended that the advance notice provided above will give teachers sufficient time to prepare and plan to take advantage of the opportunities offered. It is hoped also that the presnet cut-price airfares will prevail for some time, and it will, therefore, be feasible for teachers from around the country to contemplate travelling to Hamilton to participate in the week of professional development. NZSI's AGM is scheduled for Saturday 6 October, thereby enabling teachers to complete their week in Hamilton by attending this event.

I have a copy of a CDROM called
Violin Music Made Easy

Look at the website www.twofold.com.au
This CD has been made by two well known and experienced Suzuki teacers, namely, Frances Gall and Robert Wakely.

I highly recommend it to teachers and parents as a wonderful teaching tool, especially for beginners.
Volume 2 is to be released fairly soon.
I have a few pamphlets about this CDROM if you are interested.
Just send me an email, and I shall send you one. My email address is
thorburn@bopis.co.nz
I wish every student good practising over the next few weeks. I am sure it will be easier to find time to come inside and avoid the wintry weather by PRACTISING!

BRANCH NEWS
auckland



Congratulations to David Evans whose drawing will feature on the cover of the Auckland Branch Summer Camp 2002.

AUCKLAND BRANCH SUMMER CAMP

VENUE Willow Park Christian Camp and Convention Centre, Eastern Beach, Auckland.
DATE Sunday 6th Jan - Friday 11th Jan.

PLEASE NOTE - THESE ARE NEW DATES

Sunday Afternoon: Registration and Play-In.
Friday Afternoon: Play-Out and finish at 5pm.
This camp will be:

- The First in the North Island to offer four instruments - Violin, Cello, Flute and Piano
- The first in New Zealand to offer a programme specifically for teenagers.
- The place to do your Unit 1A Teacher Training.

Highlights will include:

- Masterclasses with great teacher including Zohara Rotem
- Ensembles
- Recitals
- Group Classes
- Parents' Talk
- Tutors' Concert
- Some free afternoons for fun activities.

Accommodation at Willow Park will be dormitory or camping. The facilities include tennis courts, gymnasium, large playing fields and easy access to safe beach.

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Auckland Branch
Annual Workshop
Saturday July 7 - Sunday July 8 2001.
Master Classes Group Lessons for
Cello, Flute, Violin, Piano
For more information, contact Caroline Kwok:
tel: (09) 630 6167, email: chippo@xtra.co.nz

BRANCH NEWS
hamilton

Everyone listened intently as Trudi Miles related her Easter Egg story during the Play-In. The hidden Easter Egg had not been found in the garden, and the warm afternoon sun had melted the chocolate and marshmellow. Trudi retrieved it and delighted in poking her fingers into the gooey sticky egg, and tasting it! Every child related to Trudi's story. She wanted the sixty five children at the Bay of Plenty String Workshop to remember that gooey feeling when they played - that feeling of bows sticking to strings, producing long, smooth, firm sounds.

At later lessons, parents of Pre-Twinklers were in awe of Trudi's ability to turn their little darlings into cooperative, concentrating violinists. She provided the parents with many uselful ideas and games to keep the families progressing. 'Song of the Wind', here we come!

Meanwhile, Elroy Hall gave the Book I boys 'Man to Man' Masterclasses which had their mothers sighing quietly with pleased relief. Elroy clearly remembers what it felt like to be a ten year old. The scooter riding tutor from Auckland was a big hit with the Tauranga team.

Robyn Denize gave fun-filled group lessons for the Books I and II children, while Victoria Brown challenged the rest with Jodi Harmon's Improvisation CD. Based on the G Major scale, the children were given the opportunity to listen and respond to soothing passages of music.

Victoria quickly gained the children's confidence, and most came away with a great sense of achievement. She is keen to keep developing this freedom and relaxed confidence in the children's playing, and intends organising further activitieS

Therèse Ahlers also enjoyed taking the cellists through the Improvisation CD. The rhythms and patterns varied greatly, with each student playing more firmly and confidently each time it was their turn. Rachel Kreymborg commented enthusiastically that this was the third time she'd had the opportunity to play with this CD, and how much she enjoyed it. It was great to see such pleasure, which is also inspiring for younger players.

Throwing tennis balls to each other was Martin Griffiths's party trick with the newer cellists. Playing 'Song of the Wind' with a tennis ball, minus the cello, was a new experience for the children. They just hoped Martin's dad wasn't too upset to find balls missing from his supply.

Elvis impersonations - swivelling hips - may not be James Ensing Trussell's forte, but the points he made about transferring body weight over two well-placed feet, gave the Book III masterclass children the revision they needed. The Violin Studio resources were well supported, with many parents buying much needed books and CDs.

The Fourth Finger Doctor was on hand with Lynley Culliford's expert advice. Having experienced her perceptive gentle persuasion first hand, I wasn't surprised when a Book IV mother rushed up to me praising Lynley's tutoring skills. She has a way of convincing the children to start exercising their poor little fourth fingers immediately - the one that we mothers keep saying is always neglected. Thank you Lynley!

The Gymnasium was Emile van der Mespel's domain for Alexander Technique classes. Bizarre body movements instead of first names, posture practice, and learning which parts of our body weighed the most, formed the basis of the sessions. Everyone had a wonderfully rewarding day and the tutors commented that they would like to be invited back to future workshops.

The day ended with a public concert to show Tauranga how quickly the children develop thanks to their excellent teacher and tuition.

Special thanks to Victoria and Martin for leading the concert items, and to Adrienne McCarthy for piano accompaniment. As a parent and organiser of the workshop days, I believe that our children are extremely lucky to have such vibrant, positive teachers. The children look forward to the workshops where they renew these special friendships. We need a workshop day once a month. Take a bow New Zealand Suzuki teachers everywhere.

Erin Hall

BRANCH NEWS
hawkes bay & christchurch

HAWKES BAY

There was no sleep-in for fifty Hawkes Bay Suzuki violin and Piano pupils on Saturday 7th April, the first day of the school holidays. By 8 45 am they and their parents were pouring into the Taradale High School Hall for three days of music, movement, rhythm and mindgames organised by a small committee of local teachers and parents.

The first two days were divided into four classes for most, with an additional session for the more advanced players.

Monday morning was spent rehearsing for the concert, held after lunch that day. Val Thorburn, Penni Taylor, Tiffany Anderson, and Helena Kerr were the violin tutors, with Gillian Bibby and Jan Beck taking the piano pupils.

Other sessions included Mind Games with Helena Kerr and Win Bickerstaff, voice and percussion with Mikal Nielsen, movement with Vicki Miller, and Alexander Technique with Geoffrey Heath. Many children and parents enjoyed relaxing and stretching in Judy Stichbury's yoga sessions. Gillian Bibby gave two helpful and informative talks to parents and while the parents listened, the children watched Fantasia, played mind games or made pois.

The workshop culminated in a formal concert held in the High School Hall. The pianists began the performance followed by the younger violinists, and finally the Twinkle variations concluded what was a happy and stimulating weekend for our young Hawkes Bay players and their families.

Ani Tylee

CHRISTCHURCH

The July Workshop is to be held at Westburn School from 8 - 11 July.
Registration forms will be sent to members in early May.
Violin Tutors: Yasuki Nakamura, Harua Goto, Victoria Brown. Lynley Culliford, Ann Goodbehere.
Fiddling, Marion Burns, Dalcroze, Mark la Roche.
Cello: Sally Anne Brown,
Flute, Julia Breen,
Piano: Hazel Roggen, Daphne Stevens.

Teacher Training for Level 1A will be available for flute and piano, as well as on going teacher training for cello.

A NEW SCHOOL
the corelli school

New Zealand's first primary school specialising in music opened in January this year with the official opening by the Hon Judith Tizard taking place in February.

The Principal, David Selfe, a graduate of the Purcell School and the Royal Academy of Music in London, realised there was a need for a school based on the same principals as the Purcell School in New Zealand. Supported by his wife Kirsten, his dream to offer a musical education to New Zealand children has come to fruition.

David says children with talent need to be nurtured before they reach tertiary level, and it is hoped that the school will provide a pool of talent for our national orchestras in the future.
The Corelli School teaches children from the age of eight the basic school curriculum as well as musical studies based on international standards.

Students learn two instruments, of which piano is compulsory. They practise during the day in supervised suites, and there are opportunities to gain performance experience at lunch time.

Enrolments can be made at any time during the year, and a scholarship to the value of $8000 towards one year's tuition fees is awarded annually. Selection is by the Board of Patrons, and is based on musical ability and financial hardship. The Corelli School places importance on academic achievement in all curriculum areas including English, Written Language, Visual Language, Mathematics, Music, Science, Social Studies, Technology/Design, Information Technology, the Arts and Physical Education/Health. The School has fourteen practice rooms, eight classrooms, a concert hall with eating for two hundred, an astroturf area. It is situated at 50 Anzac Rd, Brown's Bay. See our advertisement below.

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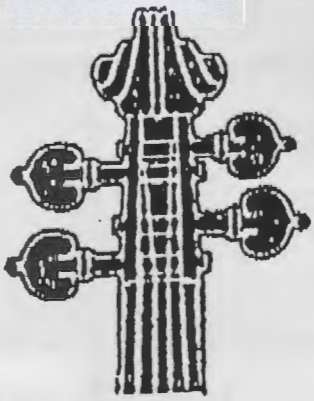
PIANO PRACTICE

Child, creature, little anxious girl,
your whole body frowns,
your clambering hands
grapple mountains. The rocky crotchets mass
above you, and suspense hangs on quavering slopes
past the next hard turning.
Your tense legs work, shoulders lean
towards higher ground - not much further -
when you can reach the last
black ominous chord, *sforzando*,
octaves on the left like boulders rolling,
at last - you're there!

Summit achieved, you butterfly about,
the sunny day breaks out and everything
is sharp and singing.
released, you run down the hill
to where the green-gold gorse waits
to force its stinging kisses
on your hard shins.

Lauris Edmond



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LISTEN by Jackie Argyll

refine not review

What's in a word? '..Review, playing polished pieces from earlier lessons...'Writing this in an article recently, I felt there was some inadequacy in the definition [of review], but could not articulate what it was. It eventually came to me '...Review, refining polished pieces from earlier lesson...'

By using the word 'refine' a whole new dimension opens up. 'What can we do to refine the Beethoven Sonata? Shall we look at refining posture? Refining tone? Refining rhythmic precision? While review suggests going back over the old, which is, of course, the essential starting point, 'refine' suggests potential to be explored - new ideas, thoughts, techniques that might release finer levels of performance and pleasure.

Even if your child is too young to understand the word, as a parent, this can add energy and creativity: a sense of forward movement to the review process.

Was it a bird, was it the soul, not yet made perfect, of the little phrase, was it a fairy, invisibly somewhere lamenting, whose plaint the piano heard and tenderly repeated? Its cries were so sudden that the violinist must snatch up his bow and race to catch them as they came.

Marcel Proust 1871 1922.

A la Recherche du Temps Perdu

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new Zealand Suzuki Institute

branch membership form 2001

This is a membership form for teachers and students of the Suzuki method. It is time to join or renew your membership for this year. Complete this form and send it with your membership fees to your local branch of the New Zealand Suzuki Institute. Addresses for branches appear at the end of the form. Alternatively, please see NZSI's website: www.suzuki.org.nz for a copy of this form. Cheques should be made payable to the branch, e.g. 'NZSI - Wellington Branch' or 'NZSI - South Island Branch'.

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☐ TEACHER/TRAINEE

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