

1966

A Critical Study of the Suzuki Approach to Violin Training as Compared to Other Selected String Methods

Nancy C. Umiker
Ouachita Baptist University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/grad_theses



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Music Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Umiker, Nancy C., "A Critical Study of the Suzuki Approach to Violin Training as Compared to Other Selected String Methods" (1966). *Graduate Theses*. 41.
http://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/grad_theses/41

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives and Special Collections at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE SUZUKI APPROACH
TO VIOLIN TEACHING AS COMPARED TO
OTHER SELECTED STRING METHODS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Division of Graduate Studies
Ouachita Baptist University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Music

by
Nancy C. Umiker

May, 1966

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE SUZUKI APPROACH
TO VIOLIN TEACHING AS COMPARED TO
OTHER SELECTED STRING METHODS

Approved:

Robert R. Bruner

W. Francis McBeth

Jay Holman

Carl E. Todd

Dean of Graduate Studies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM, DEFINITION OF TERMS, AND	
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
THE PROBLEM	1
Statement of the problem	1
Importance of the study	1
Delimitations	3
DEFINITION OF TERMS	3
Suzuki method	3
Talent Education	4
Rote method	4
Longitudinal program of experimentation	4
Recognized authorities	4
Other selected string methods	5
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	5
Sources and treatment of data	11
II. STRING METHODS AND MATERIALS	13
<u>String Builder</u> --Book I	13
<u>A Tune A Day</u> --Book I	18
<u>Müller-Rusch String Method</u> --Book I	22
<u>Fiddling by the Numbers</u>	26
<u>Listen and Play</u> --Book I	30
III. COMPARISON OF METHODS	36

CHAPTER	PAGE
IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	45
Summary	45
Conclusions	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY	55

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. THE CLOSE SECOND AND THIRD	
FINGER PATTERN	15
2. THE CLOSE FIRST AND SECOND	
FINGER PATTERN	17
3. THE USE OF THE RAISED OR LOWERED LINE	
TO INDICATE A STRING CROSSING	24
4. THE USE OF FINGER NUMBERS	
IN PLACE OF NOTES	28

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM, DEFINITION OF TERMS, AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The problem of the study was to present all known aspects of the Suzuki method of violin teaching in comparison to four other approved systems, thus contributing to the evaluation of the Suzuki method.

Importance of the study. Since the decline of string programs in the United States, the knowledge of all methods of teaching stringed instruments has become of particular importance to teachers who are making an effort to build better programs. Recent concern and interest has been aroused by the Talent Education program originated by Shinichi Suzuki in Japan. The success of this program is apparent in the thousands of Japanese children who have demonstrated ". . . technical control and musical sensitivity . . .¹ on the violin. In Mr. Suzuki's own words, "We must always be thinking of new and better methods in order to give a better

¹John Kendall, Talent Education and Suzuki (First in the Comparative Music Education Series, Washington, D. C.: Music Educators National Conference, 1966), p. 3.

and higher education to our children."² It is the teacher's responsibility to investigate each new method that appears so that its advantages may be used and its disadvantages avoided.

Although rote learning is not new to American teachers, learning entirely by rote over an extended period of time as proposed by Suzuki is an innovation, and its challenge to other teaching methods must be met with careful study and evaluation through comparison and experimentation. Robert Klotman, in an article called "The Impact of Shinichi Suzuki," states:

Since the Suzuki concepts conflict somewhat with current trends in music education, educators must reassess their programs if they are to produce musicians on a mass scale with comparable results.³

Clifford Cook, Associate Professor of String Instruments and Music Education at Oberlin, also emphasizes the importance of further investigation of the Suzuki method in the following statement:

As a string teacher with many years of experience and thought, having completed a sabbatical year of travel and observation in Europe, the United States, and Japan, I offer as my sincere opinion that Mr. Suzuki's Talent

² Shinichi Suzuki, Outline of Talent Education Method, A William Lewis and Son Educational Brochure (Chicago, Illinois: William Lewis and Son, 1960), p. 62.

³ Robert Klotman, "The Impact of Shinichi Suzuki," Orchestra News (Special Edition). This pamphlet, which was apparently an insert to a regular edition of Orchestra News, was found separate from any publication. It gave no indication of the edition from which it came.

Education program appears to be the most significant and promising development in string education today. Furthermore, I believe firmly that his method and ideas deserve investigation and study by teachers of all subjects!⁴

Delimitations. The advantages and disadvantages of the Suzuki program as a string teaching method will be reported only as expressed by the opinions and experiences of recognized authorities. The study will not attempt to prove which method is the best, for it must be realized that the final conclusion must come from a thorough longitudinal program of experimentation. Joachim Chassman, speaking of the Suzuki method, states:

I feel that the final answer . . . will not be known until we can see what an influence this "head start" will be when these children will be ready for formal and disciplined violin study a few years hence.⁵

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Suzuki method. In the words of John Kendall, the Suzuki method is ". . . a series of imaginative and experimental ideas, worked out by Mr. Shinichi Suzuki and used in

⁴Clifford Cook, "Genius by the Gross," Oberlin Alumni Magazine (May, 1964), p. 5.

⁵Joachim Chassman, "Pre-School Violin Virtuoso," American String Teacher, XV (Winter, 1965), p. 33.

teaching Japanese children over the past 15 years." He goes on to say:

It is called by Mr. Suzuki the "mother language" way, because it tries to follow the environmental factors which encourage a child to speak a language at a very early age. Hence, listening to exact tonal models (recordings), rote teaching, parental help, constant repetition--all of these are important. As in a language, speaking (playing the instrument) comes first, and later--reading.⁶

Talent Education. Talent Education is the name given to the program of teaching children to play the violin that was started by Mr. Suzuki in Japan.

Rote method. A rote method of teaching music is one in which no musical notation is used--memorization by hearing.

Longitudinal program of experimentation. A longitudinal program of experimentation is referred to here as one that is extended the length of time necessary to insure valid conclusions. The success of the Suzuki method of string teaching in America, for example, can not be determined until the student's complete development is observed.

Recognized authorities. The phrase "recognized authori-

⁶ John Kendall, "Listen and Play News Exchange" II (A bulletin of news items relating to experimental string teaching in various parts of the country, Southern Illinois University, March 1964), p. 2. (Mimeographed.)

ties" has been broadened in this case to include those people who have had direct contact with Suzuki and his teaching techniques, either in Japan or through workshops in America, and have applied them in programs of their own. Perhaps the foremost authority in America on the Suzuki method is John Kendall of Southern Illinois University, who has spent considerable time in Japan observing and working with Suzuki. Kendall is also responsible for the publication of method books based on the teachings of Suzuki called, Listen and Play.

Other selected string methods. In comparing the Suzuki approach to violin teaching to "other selected string methods," four method books were picked to give a general representation of the systems of string teaching accepted and used by string teachers. The method books are listed in the Bibliography.

III. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Shinichi Suzuki, who studied music at Berlin's Higher Institute of Music, founded the Talent Education movement shortly after World War II. Suzuki was distraught over the tragedies of war and was determined to correct the plight of the Japanese children by giving them some kind of creative

outlet--this outlet was music.⁷

The basis for the Talent Education movement was Mr. Suzuki's philosophy that "all human beings are born with great potentialities, and each individual has within himself, the capacity for developing to a very high level."⁸ Since education begins at birth, attention should be given to this period of infancy, so that the child is able to develop his original power. The child, who learns to speak his mother tongue, displays an amazing power to absorb knowledge by listening. Suzuki asks the question, "Is it not probable that this mother language method holds the key to human development?"⁹ Talent Education has applied this method to the teaching of music, and children who were accepted into the program without any previous aptitude or intelligence tests of any kind, have almost without exception made great progress.

Suzuki goes on to point out that cultural sensitivity is not inherited, but rather developed after birth. The

⁷Rachel Carr, "All Children Are Musical," Woman's Day, VI (March, 1963), p. 44.

⁸John Kendall, "Talent Education--The Violin Teaching Methods of Mr. Shinichi Suzuki" (Observations and report based on a trip to Japan, June 24-August 7, 1959), p. 6. (Mimeographed.)

⁹Ibid.

hereditary ability of the mind is measured only by the speed with which it adapts to certain circumstances. Therefore, it is wrong to assume that special talent for learning music, or any field, is primarily inherited. This does not guarantee that each individual will reach the same level of achievement, but rather that he will reach proficiency equivalent to that reached in language. In explaining the differences of achievement apparent in children Suzuki states:

I wish to define the meaning of the phrase "brain capacity" to mean the ability to catch one's surroundings and to realize it. In other words, to take in things outside of oneself and to work it into a sort of energy within one's self and bring it out by actions. In this sense, what I wish to call superior heredity will mean more speed and delicacy in catching things outside oneself. Brains that have no speed or are dull are what I consider inferior heredity. I wish to divide the classification of heredity by the above standard. That, I believe, is the reason why the result is not the same even when the children are educated under the same conditions.¹⁰

Suzuki began his program in Matsumoto, Japan, where a scarcity of instruments forced him to share one violin among his students. However, his new approach to the teaching of violin to very young children soon interested other teachers and parents. Suzuki's ideas were published and Talent Education was established. With the new demand for violins, instruments of all sizes soon became available.

¹⁰ Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

In 1965 there were one hundred twenty teachers, six thousand students, and approximately fifty different centers throughout Japan. Although there are school music programs in Japan, Talent Education is carried on outside of school.¹¹

In 1949 an annual four-day conference of teachers, parents, and students was started at Matsumoto for the purpose of learning new music, giving concerts, and exchanging ideas--much the same as our own music conferences. A National Festival at Tokyo, beginning in 1954, also became a part of Talent Education. Here students from all of Japan would gather and play together.¹² A cultural center at Matsumoto is now being built to house the activities of the Talent Education program and to carry on research. Experimentation and research in teaching the very young may also be expanded to areas other than music.¹³

Although Suzuki's ambition was not to mass-produce concert artists but just to "enrich their lives with music,"¹⁴ many of his students have become brilliant violinists.

¹¹ Kendall, *Talent Education and Suzuki*, pp. 212, p. 7.

¹² Kendall, "Talent Education--The Violin Teaching Methods of Mr. Shinichi Suzuki," pp. 212, p. 4.

¹³ Kendall, *Talent Education and Suzuki*, pp. 212, p. 8.

¹⁴ Carr, pp. 212, p. 99.

Among them are Toshiya Eto, who began study at the age of four, played at Carnegie Hall in 1951, was a faculty member at Curtis Institute, and is now on a world concert tour; Koji Toyoda, who won Geneva's Gongours International d'Execution Musicale in 1958, and is now concertmaster of the Cologne Chamber Orchestra;¹⁵ Kenji Kobayashi, who is a student at Curtis; and Yoie Arimatsu and Tomiko Shida, both of whom are students at Gruniaux.¹⁶

Probably eight thousand students have been a part of the Talent Education movement in Japan. This would seem to point out that Talent Education is not to train artists but to give all children the opportunity to develop the potential they exhibit in their ability to learn their mother tongue.

Talent Education and Suzuki were first introduced to America through a film that was shown during a regional meeting of the American String Teachers Association at Oberlin College in Ohio in the spring of 1958. The film showed seven hundred fifty Japanese children playing the Bach Concerto for Two Violins at the Sports Palace in Tokyo. It was decided that an American teacher should be

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Kendall, "Talent Education--The Violin Teaching Methods of Mr. Shinichi Suzuki," loc. cit.

sent to Japan and observe the methods and techniques used by Suzuki. In the summer of 1959 John Kendall went to Japan for six weeks of observation and study. He again returned to Japan for the months of March, April, and May of 1962.¹⁷ Suzuki came to the United States in 1964 upon invitation to demonstrate his teaching methods to American teachers. Suzuki will make a return visit to the United States during the summer of 1966 to give further lectures and demonstrations.

Suzuki's approach to string teaching has encouraged many questions and some speculation. How, for example, can Suzuki's ideas be transplanted from a country of different cultural values to our American public school system? This question and many others are in the process of being answered. Teachers must accept the responsibility of improving teaching methods by giving Talent Education the attention it demands. Kendall expresses this opinion in the following statement:

It is likely that teachers and parents who seek an easy way will be disappointed, but those who have the energy, the imagination, and the courage to experiment, to change, and to grow with the teaching process, will certainly find stimulation in the ideas of Suzuki. It is to be hoped that this complex of ideas--this combination of philosophy and technique--will not share the fate of some other "movements" in our fast-paced contemporary life: discovery, exploitation, and discard. A patient, persistent, intensive, and continuing effort ought to be our way, and

¹⁷Kendall, Talent Education and Suzuki, op. cit., p. 6.

not a sudden splash of interest followed by receding and disappearing ripples of activity.¹⁸

While Kendall expresses the need for teachers to grow with new processes of teaching, Gilbert Waller adds a note of caution:

During the next 15 years there will no doubt be some new approaches to string teaching, each acclaimed as the best. Let us examine each carefully and make use of any improvements that may have a genuine and lasting value. But let us be equally careful that we do not jump blindly to a totally new approach or method without a careful analysis of the technical principles and/or social conditions involved.¹⁹

This study should help to provide a clearer picture of the "technical principles" and "social conditions" involved in the introduction of the Suzuki method of string instruction into our American educational system.

Sources and treatment of data. Research material for the study was gathered from books and periodicals found in the Riley Library at Ouachita Baptist University, and two selected theses were acquired through the use of the inter-library loan: (1) Leo Allera, "An Evaluation of the Use of Rote Demonstration and Imitation in Violin Study"

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁹ Gilbert R. Waller, "Strings Over Thirty Years," *The Instrumentalist*, XV (September, 1960), 93.

(unpublished Master's thesis, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, 1956); and (2) John W. Haas, "A Rote Method of Instruction for Violin" (unpublished Master's thesis, Ohio State University, Columbus, 1954).

The newness of the Suzuki method necessitated a greater reliance upon periodicals and unpublished materials than upon other sources. Some information was also acquired through personal correspondence with Mrs. William Preusil, who has had experience in starting a string program using the Suzuki method (See Bibliography). References to related studies and literature will be made throughout the study.

The string method books used in the study were selected with attention given to differences of approach to string teaching, and yet, were limited to those most frequently used by string teachers. Through the selection of representative string methods, a general view of existing practices was formed.

are presented immediately after the student has completed the quarter-note exercises on all the strings. Whole-note rests and half-note rests are also introduced early in the method, while the quarter-note rest does not appear until later in the book. Many of the open string exercises can be used as an accompaniment to folk songs played on the piano, thus providing purpose and interest to the exercises. Some of the melodies used are: "Lightly Row," "Mary Had A Little Lamb," "Pierrot," "Baa! Baa! Black Sheep," and "Merrily We Roll Along."²

Placement of the left hand fingers on the strings is accomplished one finger at a time, starting with the first finger on the D string. The second finger is introduced in the high position, forming a close second and third finger pattern when all three fingers have been placed. Figure 1 on page 15 shows the position of the left hand when the fingers are in a close second and third finger pattern. In speaking of beginning with this finger pattern, Applebaum states, ". . . This has proven to be most practicable from the standpoint of tonality and left hand finger placement."³

After the close second and third finger pattern has

²Ibid., p. 6.

³Ibid., p. 1.

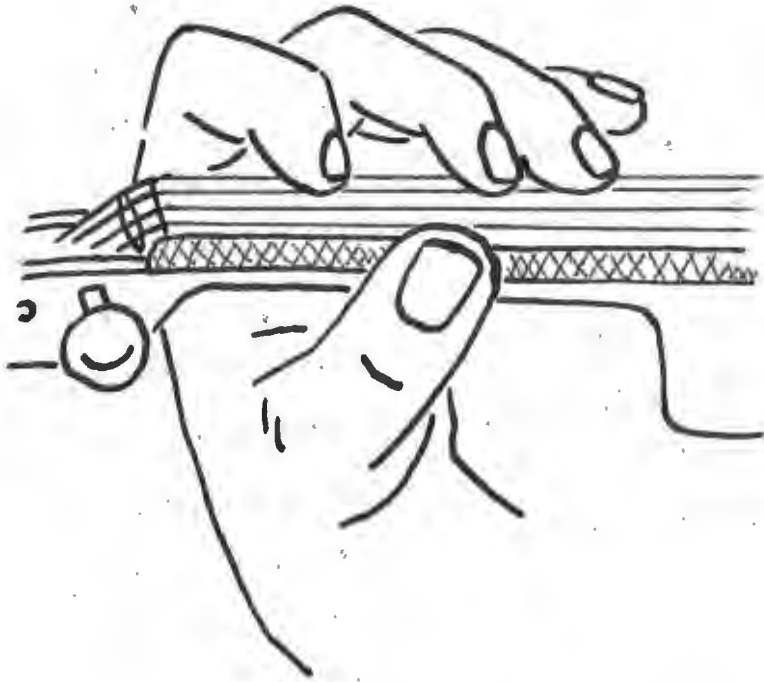


FIGURE 1
THE CLOSE SECOND AND THIRD
FINGER PATTERN

been adequately perfected on all the strings except the E, the low second finger pattern (Figure 2, page 17) is presented ". . . to develop intonation and to more readily prepare the pupil for the school orchestra."⁴ Later, the low first finger is also introduced but is used only on the E string. The fourth finger is introduced toward the end of the book; however, the teacher is provided an opportunity to present this earlier if the class is prepared for it.

Bowing rhythms on the open strings are continued throughout the book in the form of "rote projects."⁵ The first rote project suggests that quarter notes, eighths and triplets be sung and then played on the open strings, using the upper half of the bow. The rote projects are used for supplemental work on bowings and finger patterns. Scales are also introduced in this way. The D major and G major scales are played by rote, and the student does not see a major scale built on the staff until the C major scale is presented near the end of the book. The three scales just mentioned are the only ones practiced in Book I.

Bowing and rhythm problems--slurring, tied notes, and the dotted half note--are presented about midway

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 11.

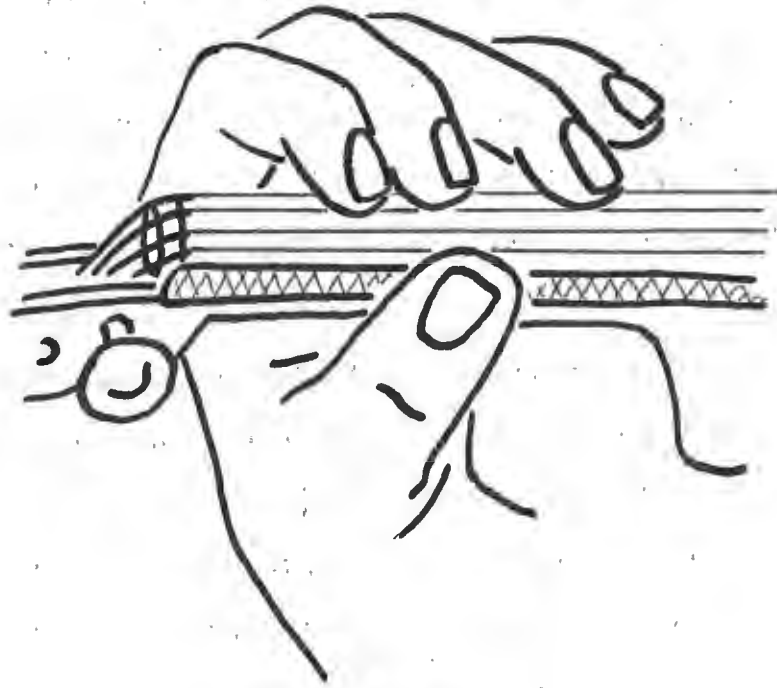


FIGURE 2

THE CLOSE FIRST AND SECOND
FINGER PATTERN

through the method. The dotted half note is the only dotted rhythm problem that confronts the student in Book I.

Variations on "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and "Lightly Row," which the students have already played earlier in the book, are used for the introduction of eighth notes in the last pages of the book.

A TIME A DAY--Book I. The main objective of this method, as stated by Paul Herfurth, is not to travel too quickly, but ". . . to concentrate on the acquisition of a thorough musical background and a solid foundation in good violin playing."⁶ Herfurth goes on to say that the teacher's insistence on the mastery of each point will not dull the student's interest. "Never allow pupils' mistakes to go unnoticed, since only in constant correction will they develop the habit of careful thinking and playing."⁷

A TIME A DAY can be used for class or individual lessons; however, ensemble playing is possible when a class is made up of all four members of the string family. Speaking of class teaching, Herfurth states that ". . . a combination of individual instruction and ensemble playing . . ."⁸

⁶ Paul C. Herfurth, **A TIME A DAY** (Boston, Massachusetts: The Boston Music Co., (n.d.), p. 111.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

is best. Herfurth appears to be in favor of group teaching, as he further states:

A decided advantage of group-teaching is that it provides experience in ensemble playing and gives every pupil the opportunity of listening to the others, of observing their mistakes, and of hearing the corrections.⁹

He goes on to say that class teaching should also include individual playing, since the detection of mistakes and their correction are made easier through individual playing. Herfurth ends his Foreword by saying that the success of the pupil ultimately rests with the student's practice habits at home, and that the teacher should try to keep in close contact with the parents.¹⁰

With the explanation that a thorough knowledge of the simpler rudiments of music should be attained before beginning the method, an introductory section presents the rudiments of music. Directions and illustrations on how to hold the violin and bow, and how to tune and care for the instrument are also included.

Optional materials for the first five lessons have been added by Herfurth to satisfy the needs of all string teachers. The original method begins with the introduction

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

of whole and half notes, while the optional lessons begin with the quarter-note approach. In consulting with a number of teachers, Herfurth found that the teachers favoring the whole-note approach and those favoring the quarter-note approach were about equally divided, and so the quarter-note material was added to make the method more valuable to all teachers.

The problem of holding the instrument is simplified in the first optional lesson by using pizzicato, thus eliminating the need for the bow. Note reading is also eliminated by the use of letters to signify the names of the open strings. At the end of the lesson an open string accompaniment to "Ten Little Indians" is played by the student, while the teacher plays the melody on the piano. Lessons 1-5 are devoted entirely to work on the open strings. The length of time spent on open strings, is explained by Herfurth when he states:

Without the correct position of the left hand, and the proper drawing of the bow, good violin playing is impossible. With this in mind, considerable material has been given for the open strings before attempting the use of the fingers.¹¹

At the end of Lesson 5 of the optional material, the original lessons of the method begin. In the original approach, the student is started with whole and half notes.

¹¹ibid.

Approximately the same material used in the original lessons is also found in the optional section. The method continues with Lesson 6 introducing the eighth note. The eighth note is used on the open strings, and the student is able to play an accompaniment to "Lightly Row" with the teacher playing the melody.

The use of the fingers is introduced with the first finger on the D string. Next, the second finger is introduced in high position. The student is now able to play melodies by himself, and supplementary materials are provided for this purpose. Many of the melodies included in the supplementary materials are already familiar to the student from the open string exercises. Ensemble material is also provided at this point in the form of a quartet.

Lessons 10-15 are devoted to introducing dotted rhythms, slurring, tied notes, and scales. The C major scale is used to illustrate how a scale is built. The student is unable to play this scale, since it involves the close first and second finger pattern which is not approached until Book II.

After the beginner learns to use his fourth finger on the D and A strings, all four fingers are introduced on the E and G strings, enabling him to play the A and G major scales. With this increased facility, the student is able to take part in the ensemble playing provided in

the last four lessons of the book.

Miller-Rusch String Method--Book I. The brief introduction of this method does not mention the philosophies or objectives of the authors. However, these things can be determined by the way the teaching of the violin is approached. In the Foreword, the attention of the student is brought to the importance of daily practice and careful work on ". . . details such as TONE, RHYTHM, READING and proper position of left and right hands."¹² A position in the orchestra is also mentioned as a goal for the student.

Lessons 1-6 are rote and the notation consists of notes on a single line, the letter names of the notes, or merely the finger numbers, whichever the case may be. Lesson 1 introduces all the open strings except the E, using rhythm patterns of quarter notes and half notes. The letter name of the open string that the student is expected to play is placed under the note, and the student is asked to count aloud while playing, substituting the word "rest" when a rest appears. The exercises may be either bowed or plucked; however, it can be assumed that Miller and Rusch prefer that the beginning rote exercises be plucked, since they do not

¹²J. Frederick Miller, and Harold W. Rusch, Miller-Rusch String Method (Park Ridge, Illinois: Neil A. Kjos Music Co., 1961), p. 1.

provide bowing instructions until after Lesson 6.

The first and second fingers are introduced on the D string with the second finger in the high position. Notes are placed on a single line as in Lesson 1, with a "1" or "2" placed under the note to signify the proper finger to be used. The student is instructed to sing each exercise before playing it by using syllables, the letter names of the notes, or finger numbers. Two familiar songs are provided for the student to play at the end of Lesson 2. They are: "Mary Had A Little Lamb," and "At Pierrot's Door." More songs and exercises are provided for the introduction of the third finger in Lesson 3.

Finger placement on the A string is presented in the same manner as on the D string, and a sign is now necessary to tell the student which string to play on. This is accomplished by a line drawn under the finger numbers. The line is raised when the student is required to cross over from the D string to the A string. Figure 3 on page 24 illustrates the use of the line to indicate a string crossing. A small line after a finger number indicates that the note is to be held longer.

The student begins note reading with Lesson 7. This lesson reviews work on the open strings, and the student, who also starts to use the bow at this point, is asked to go

...of playing... the fingers... in the same

TWINKLE, TWINKLE

4 A 0 0 1 1 0 -

4 D 0 0 3 3 2 2 1 1 0 -

A 0 0 0 0

 3 3 2 2 1 - 3 3 2 2 1 -

D 0 0 0 0 1 1 0 -

 3 3 2 2 1 1 0 -

The diagram shows musical notation for the piece 'TWINKLE, TWINKLE'. It consists of four staves. The first staff is for the A string, with notes 0, 0, 1, 1, 0. The second staff is for the D string, with notes 0, 0, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1, 1, 0. The third staff shows a sequence of notes 0, 0, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1. The fourth staff is for the D string, with notes 0, 0, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1, 1, 0. Raised lines above notes indicate string crossings, and lowered lines below notes indicate string crossings.

*This example may be found in Book I of the Muller-Rusch String Method, page 6.

FIGURE 3

THE USE OF THE RAISED OR LOWERED LINE TO INDICATE A STRING CROSSING

The student is... and the C... to play the... are provided...

back to the rote lessons and play them with the bow instead of pizzicato. The fingers are introduced in the same manner as they were in the rote lessons, except the student now reads the notes from the staff. Familiar material is used from the rote lessons to facilitate note reading, and the student is asked to continue counting and singing his lessons before playing them.

The D major scale is introduced to the student using the close second and third finger pattern on the D and A strings that he learned earlier. Slurs and tied notes are taught in Lessons 13 and 14, and an orchestral piece, prepared by Maller and Busch, is suggested as supplementary material.

All three fingers are introduced on the G string during Lesson 15, and the student is then able to play the G major scale. In the following two lessons the close first and second finger pattern is taught on the A and D strings. The fingers on the E string are presented next in a close first and second finger position, followed by the introduction of F natural, or the low first finger. The student is now able to play a two octave G major scale and the C major scale. At this time the student is ready to use his fourth finger, and left-hand pizzicato studies are provided to help strengthen it.

Ensemble work in the form of duets is provided in Lessons 26 and 27 through material already familiar to the student. Lesson 28 follows with a presentation of the eighth note and eighth rest. Repeated rhythm patterns using the eighth note are provided for further practice on the scales of D major, G major, and C major, and other familiar songs. More duets and rounds are provided in the last pages of the book for ensemble playing. A list of graded solos and training records is also provided on the back cover as possible supplementary material.

Fiddling by the Numbers. Samuel Barbakoff's Fiddling by the Numbers is a rote method for the violin. The need for a rote method is presented by Barbakoff in the following four statements: "You crawl before you walk . . . you talk before you read . . . you sing before you read notes . . . you can learn to play before you read notes."¹³

The first nine pages of the method contain illustrated instructions on how to select the proper size instrument, how to tune the violin, and how to place the left hand and fingers in their proper position. The fingers are placed in a close

¹³Samuel Barbakoff, Fiddling by the Numbers (New York City: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1951), p. 2.

second and third finger pattern, which is used throughout the book. Tape markers may sometimes be used on the fingerboard to show where the fingers are to be placed. However, Harbakoff warns that the markers should be discarded as soon as they are no longer needed.¹⁴

For the beginning lessons, the violin is held in "banjo position" and plucked with the right hand thumb. The first song to be learned in this fashion is "Mary Had A Little Lamb." The student is asked to first sing the melody with the words, then to substitute finger numbers for the words, and last, to pluck the melody on the violin. Each melody throughout the book is accompanied with an appropriate illustration including the words of the song.

Finger numbers are written out and letter names of the open strings placed above them where a string change is required. Figure 4 on page 28 illustrates the use of finger numbers. Rhythmic variations in the pieces are indicated rather simply. A straight line extended under a finger number indicates that the note is to be held longer, and a wavy line represents eighth notes, or "running notes," as they are referred to in the book.¹⁵ The mastery of the exact rhythm depends on how well the student learns the piece

¹⁴Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 21.

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB *

A

2 1 0 1 2 2 2

1 1 1 2 0 0

A

2 1 0 1 2 2 2 2

1 1 2 1 0

*This example is taken from Fiddling by the Numbers by Samuel Barbakoff, page 10.

FIGURE 4

THE USE OF FINGER NUMBERS
IN PLACE OF NOTES

before he attempts to play it on the violin. The signs only serve as a reminder.

When the student has learned to play "Mary Had A Little Lamb" on the A string, he is asked to also play it on the D and G strings. The finger pattern for "Mary Had A Little Lamb" is also used in the D major scale, and the student is asked to sing and play this scale before each lesson. The D major scale is not referred to as such, for the student is not concerned with how a scale is built. The D major scale is the only one that is used throughout the method.

The student is next instructed to hold the violin in its proper position, and exercises are suggested for strengthening the left arm. With the violin in position under the chin, the tunes are plucked with the first finger of the right hand. The student plays through seven new melodies in this fashion before the use of the bow is introduced. Illustrated instructions show the student how to hold the bow and exercises for the right arm are suggested. The student is expected to practice the bowing exercises for several weeks, for the actual placement of the bow on the strings is not introduced until four more pieces have been learned. Drawing the bow on the strings is presented with the violin held on the chest

instead of under the chin. Barbakoff does not give a reason why the chest position is used. This writer assumes that perhaps the student is able to watch the position of his bow more easily, or that a more relaxed position is provided for the left arm. Bowing is practiced on the open strings before the student finally starts to bow melodies.

The remainder of the Barbakoff book contains more tunes to build the repertoire of the student. When the student has finished this method, he should be ready to begin reading notes. Barbakoff states that the student should be able to play the pieces in the book as easily as he can sing them before starting to read.¹⁶

Listen and Play--Book I. The Listen and Play series by John Kendall consists of three books accompanied with recordings for each book. The recordings are a necessary part of the method, since auditory response is the key to any rote method. Since the Listen and Play method is based on the teachings of Shinichi Suzuki, his basic philosophy is quoted in the beginning of Book I:

All human beings are born with great potentialities, and each individual has within himself the capacity for developing to a very high level. . . . Education begins from the day of birth. We must recognize the amazing power of the infant who absorbs everything in his

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 74.

surroundings and adds to his knowledge. If attention is not given to early infancy, how can the child's original power be developed? . . . Cultural sensitivity is not inherited, but is developed after birth. The hereditary ability of the mind is measured by the speed with which it adapts to circumstances. It is wrong to assume that special talent for learning music, literature, or any other field, is primarily inherited. . . . Children everywhere in the world show their splendid capacities by speaking and understanding their mother language, thus displaying the original power of the human mind. Is it not probable that the "mother language method" holds the key to human development? Talent Education uses this method in the teaching of music. . . . This is not to say that everyone can reach the same level of achievement. However, each individual can certainly achieve the equivalent of his language proficiency in other fields.¹⁷

The Introduction states that the book is intended to help guide the teacher and the parent only, as the child is not concerned with the reading of notes or the contents of the book, except as it is relayed to him by his parents, teacher, or the recordings. This method is conceived for the very young child; therefore non-technical language is used as much as possible when explanations of techniques are needed. All the material in the book is to be constantly repeated, even after the child has finished the book. Kendall states, "The child should never be 'finished' with the pieces he has learned. Like words, they remain in his vocabulary."¹⁸

¹⁷ John Kendall, *Listen and Play* (Evanston, Illinois: Sunny-Birchard Co., 1961), p. 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

One aim of the method is to ". . . establish from the very beginning the fundamentals of good playing: careful listening, correct posture and efficient motion patterns."¹⁹ Such things as music stands, chairs, and printed music have been eliminated to make the beginning steps easier and to help the child concentrate on listening. Beginning problems are also simplified by the use of the three fingers in one pattern on only the A and E strings, while the emphasis is placed on bowing and tone production.

Kendall points out two important factors in the Introduction: the role of the teacher and the role of the parent. The teacher's responsibility is two-fold: (1) to teach and inspire the pupil, and (2) to advise the parent so that correct guidance is given at home. The role of the parent consists of ". . . encouraging the child and making him feel that it is important for him to learn. . . ."²⁰ Kendall suggests that the parent learn right along with the child.

After the Introduction, pages 3 and 4 are devoted to instructions in how to select the correct size of instrument for the child, and how to hold the violin. Steps are listed

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

and games suggested to help the child achieve the proper position. The violin is held by the shoulder of the instrument with the left hand while the student is practicing on the open strings. The left hand is later moved to its proper place on the neck of the violin. Holding the bow is approached next. The thumb is placed completely under the frog if the child lacks sufficient strength to place his thumb on the stick. The middle of the bow is placed on the strings so that the right arm is in "square-position," or with the elbow forming a right angle. The bowing exercises are first played with short strokes in the middle of the bow, moving only the right forearm. More games are listed to help the student maintain proper posture for playing the violin and to help the child feel comfortable with his instrument. Group games are included to add interest to the repetition of bowing and posture exercises.

After the child feels comfortable holding the violin, the open E and A strings are introduced with a rhythm pattern of four sixteenth notes and two eighth notes. Other rhythm patterns are introduced and the student is now able to cross from one string to another. There are markers between each rhythm pattern that tell the student to stop his bow and prepare for what is to come next. The motto of "Stop, Think, Play," is carried on throughout the book.

Exercises and games to help establish a good left hand position on the violin is presented next. All three fingers are placed on the string in a close second and third finger pattern, which is the only pattern used in the book. It is pointed out that the teacher may want to work with one finger at a time instead of placing all three on the string at once. The student is now able to play the A major scale, although it is not referred to as a scale, since the student is not concerned with practicing scales per se.

"Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" is the first piece the child plays. As soon as the child begins his lessons, he listens to the recording of "Twinkle, Twinkle" and its variations, so that he already knows the song thoroughly before he plays it. All of the rhythm patterns that he has learned on the open strings are also applied to the melody in the form of variations. The first rhythm variation (four sixteenth notes and two eighth notes) is also applied to everyday practice on the A major scale. As the student practices "Twinkle, Twinkle," he begins to listen to "Lightly Row," which will be his next piece. The remainder of the method consists of four familiar songs and finger exercises on the A and E strings.

In conclusion, Kendall states:

During these first twelve steps, the emphasis has been upon establishing and improving a few basic factors

in playing the violin. Only a few pieces of music have been used, but bowing variations and rhythms repeated over and over give security and confidence. . . . Most important of all is the consistent attitude of parent and teacher, pointing up with enthusiasm the importance and satisfaction of hard work and constant improvement. Avoid competition among pupils as a motivating device; instead, encourage each child to compare what he can do now with what he could do before.²¹

²¹ Ibid., p. 24.

CHAPTER III

COMPARISON OF METHODS

In comparing the five methods of string teaching evaluated in Chapter II, a basic difference becomes apparent. Two of the methods--Fiddling by the Numbers and Listen and Play--are based entirely on rote learning, while the String Builder and A Tune A Day use the note-reading approach. The Miller-Basch String Method must be placed in a category by itself; though it is basically a note-reading method and will be referred to as such in this study, it contains a considerable amount of rote work. It is interesting to note that all of the note-reading methods use rote learning to some degree. For example, the String Builder uses rote projects throughout the book to supplement exercises in bowing rhythms and finger patterns. In supporting his use of rote material, Samuel Applebaum states:

An effective way for children to develop the requisite skills which lead to a good technic is through rote projects--which children thoroughly enjoy.¹

Paul Herfurth goes one step further than Applebaum by actually providing beginning exercises on the open strings

¹Samuel Applebaum, "Developing Technical Skills by Rote," Orchestra News, IV (September, 1965), 8.

in his revised edition of A Tune A Day. No mention of rote playing occurs after the first lesson, however. The presence of rote material in all of the methods studied seems to indicate (1) an agreement on the value of rote learning as such, and (2) an increase in its acceptance and usage for beginning strings.

The most extensive use of rote material is found in John Kendall's Listen and Play series, which is based on the teachings of Shinichi Suzuki. In this method all aspects of violin playing are presented by rote, and this is continued for two or three years before the student is exposed to any musical notation.² The extended use of memory playing is one of the elements that differentiates the Suzuki method from other rote systems. While Fiddling by the Numbers is a rote method, Barbakoff states that the student may move on to note reading when he is able to play the melodies as well as he can sing them.³ This limits such playing to the early stages of the student's development.

In American schools the student usually receives instrumental instruction in the fourth or fifth grade,⁴

²John Kendall, "Violin Teaching for Three Year Olds" (Southern Illinois University), p. 3. (Mimeographed.)

³Samuel Barbakoff, Fiddling by the Numbers (New York City: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1951), p. 74.

⁴Kendall, op. cit., p. 1.

and most method books are written for that age level. While note-reading methods must be delayed until the student is ready to read music, rote methods are not bound by the reading readiness of the child. Suzuki has used this point and concentrated his attention on the very young child. Suzuki is believed to be the first person to explore the potential of three to six year old children, using violin as the medium of expression.⁵ In working with the young child Suzuki has made parent participation an integral part of his program, and clearly defines the parent's role as one of active guidance and encouragement.⁶ The parent accomplishes this by actually learning to play the violin with the child. While it can be assumed that parental cooperation would be desirable in any teaching situation, *A Tune A Day* is the only other method studied that mentions the need for close contact between parent and teacher.⁷

All of the methods studied can be used for either private or class instruction. The note-reading methods favor the heterogeneous class, since material is arranged so

⁵ John Kendall, "Talent Education--The Violin Teaching Methods of Mr. Shinichi Suzuki" (Observations and report based on a trip to Japan, June 24-August 7, 1959), p. 8. (Mimeographed.)

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Paul C. Herrfurth, *A Tune A Day* (Boston, Massachusetts: The Boston Music Co., (n.d.)), p. 111.

that ensemble work is possible in this situation. The rote methods make no mention of the teaching situation they favor; however, the Suzuki system is a combination of private and homogeneous group instruction. In Japan, the students of each teacher assemble once a month for unison and ensemble playing.⁸

The technical aspects of violin playing, such as bowing and finger placement, are introduced in approximately the same order in all of the methods. Work on the open strings appears first, with the exception of the Barbakoff rote method. In this method the beginner plucks "Mary Had A Little Lamb," using all three fingers on the A string, and repeats the melody on the D and G strings. Work on the E string is limited only by the melodic range of the song. In the String Builder the G and E strings are presented on the following page. Both the Müller-Busch String Method and A Tune A Day begin exercises on all the open strings by rote. Rote material in the Müller-Busch method is the most extensive of the two. The Listen and Play book differs markedly from the other methods by limiting its work to the A and E strings throughout Book I. The student begins bowing at the middle of the bow using short

⁸ Kendall, "Talent Education--The Violin Teaching Methods of Mr. Shinichi Suzuki," SM. Qtr., p. 9.

staccato strokes involving only forearm movement. In beginning with the short bow stroke on a repeated sixteenth and eighth note pattern, the Listen and Play (Suzuki method) also differs from the other methods, which start with the quarter-note approach. The use of staccato bowing, as explained by John Kendall, ". . . develops the kind of bow control which will allow the child to improve his legato tone later."⁹

The use of the close second and third finger pattern in introducing left hand technique is an approach shared by each of the methods studied. This indicates that this pattern is the most practical from the "standpoint of tonality," as well as the most natural position for the left hand.¹⁰ A difference is noted, however, in that both of the rote methods--Listen and Play and Fiddling by the Numbers--introduce only the close second and third finger pattern. Since the Listen and Play method emphasizes bowing, tone production and listening, the use of only one finger pattern simplifies these beginning problems.¹¹ A Tune A Day also uses a single finger pattern throughout Book I, but introduces the fingers

⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰ Samuel Applebaum, String Builder (Long Island, New York: Belwin, Inc., 1960), p. 1.

¹¹ John Kendall, Listen and Play (Evanston, Illinois: Sunny-Dirchard Co., 1961), p. 2.

one at a time. The Müller-Rusch String Method and the String Builder find similarity in presenting the close first and second finger pattern and the low first finger on the E string in addition to the close second and third finger pattern. Applebaum states that these additional patterns are necessary in improving intonation and preparing the student for ensemble playing.¹²

Melodic material, such as nursery rhymes and other songs familiar to young people, are used for study in all of the methods, and outnumber any isolated study materials that may appear. This would indicate agreement with a rule set down by Traugott Rehner in dealing with the instrumental beginner: "The younger the beginner, the more melodic the materials should be."¹³ Short exercises in the form of bowing studies, finger studies, and scales are found in the Müller-Rusch String Method, A Tune A Day, and the String Builder. The Listen and Play method approaches bowing and finger studies through rhythm patterns that are later applied to the melodies that the child plays, while Fiddling by the Numbers is unique in containing no exercise material other

¹²Applebaum, String Builder, loc. cit.

¹³Traugott Rehner and Samuel Y. Barbakoff, "The Instrumental Beginner," The Instrumentalist, XIV (September, 1959), 60.

than what may be confronted in the tunes provided. Both rote methods are similar in their lack of traditional scale studies. Scales are used during the practice of bowing rhythms or finger patterns but are not referred to as such. Although teaching the techniques of violin playing through the music studied and without the use of etudes or scales is not new, the Suzuki method in Japan has been the first to provide a systematic grouping of materials from ". . . the beginning to the Mozart and Bach concerti with none of the standard etudes and only a few scales."¹⁴

Emphasis on ensemble playing and a position in the school orchestra seem to be goals set up by the note-reading methods, as each one provides ensemble material and supplementary orchestral books that have been graded to correspond with the progress of the student. In a statement to the student, Samuel Applebaum strongly urges the use of these materials:

To get the most enjoyment from your string instrument activities and to assure a good mastery of musical fundamentals, what you learn in the Method Book should be applied to the playing of Solos, Ensembles, and String Orchestra pieces as your skill increases.¹⁵

The Miller-Busch String Method also mentions a position

¹⁴Kendall, "Talent Education--The Violin Teaching Methods of Mr. Shinichi Suzuki," GR. SIK., p. 8.

¹⁵Applebaum, String Builder, GR. SIK., p. 2.

in the school orchestra as a reward for the student's accomplishments.¹⁶ Group playing is also an essential part of the Listen and Play method; however, it is usually done in unison. The student does not perform in ensembles such as string quartets or orchestras. In the group performances, cooperation is stressed and takes the place of competition as motivation, with the more advanced students often helping the beginners. This is made possible through a standardized repertoire that each student learns to play and continues to perform even after he has advanced to other works.

Another aspect of violin teaching that is unique to the Listen and Play method is the use of recordings. Listening is the basic principle of any rote method and the student is expected to prepare for his lessons by listening to the recording that contains the material he is to play. While the student is learning to hold the violin and to bow on the open strings, he listens to the first variation of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" so that he is thoroughly familiar with it before he attempts to play it on the violin. The use of recordings not only provides a good model for the student, but also uses the skill he has developed since birth--imitation.¹⁷

¹⁶J. Frederick Miller and Harold W. Rusch, Miller-Rusch String Method (Park Ridge, Illinois: Neil A. Kjos Music Co., 1961), p. 1.

¹⁷John Kendall, Talent Education and Suzuki (First in the Comparative Music Education Series. Washington, D. C.: Music Educators National Conference, 1966), p. 4.

The selection of students for musical study is another point that is not evident by comparing method books. While in America some means of selection is usually made through a testing program, the Suzuki method does not limit the participation of the student in any way, provided he is able to speak his mother tongue. The basic premise of Suzuki's philosophy is that a child can learn music in the same manner that he learns to speak a language--through listening and imitating.¹⁸

¹⁸ Albert W. Wassell, "A Visit with Shinichi Suzuki in Japan," American String Teacher, XIV (Summer, 1964), 9.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary. The comparison of Suzuki's method of violin teaching to four other string methods has established areas of agreement and disagreement in philosophies, objectives, and methods of teaching. The teaching of technical skills in violin playing vary somewhat even between similar method books; however, the order in which they are presented (e.g., work on open strings followed by the placing of the left hand fingers, and so forth) is similar in each of the methods. The fact that the Listen and Play method begins bowing with staccato strokes, or that all of the fingers of the left hand are introduced at one time, is of no particular interest, but the philosophy that supports these teaching techniques certainly is.

While string methods used in the American schools are generally constructed for the nine or ten year old child, Suzuki has focused his attention on the pre-schooler of three or four. Based on the premise that the young child displays an amazing capacity for learning the language of his parents, Suzuki has developed a systematic approach to the teaching of violin using these same elements of learning--listening and imitation--demonstrated by the child who speaks his

mother tongue. In working with the very young child, parental guidance and supervision are important, and the active participation of the parents is an integral part of the Listen and Play method. This factor, along with the continuation of rote playing for two or three years sets the Suzuki method apart from other rote systems. The rote approach simplifies the problems of manipulating the violin and bow and of making music by eliminating the need for printed music, music stands, chairs, and a rudimentary knowledge of music theory that would be necessary in a note-reading method.

The absence of standard etude and scale studies is another aspect that differentiates the Listen and Play method from other systems. In this method technical skills are studied and developed as they appear in the pieces the child plays. The note-reading methods are also characterized by the extensive use of melodic material, for while they contain isolated studies, these are kept at a minimum.

Two remaining areas where differences become apparent are ensemble playing and the use of recordings. In the note-reading methods, a definite emphasis is placed on ensemble playing as an important part of the student's training, while the nature of rote playing necessarily delays the student's ensemble experience until he learns to read music.

Group work is an important part of the Suzuki method, and unison playing, made possible through a common repertoire, provides training in listening and cooperation.

The use of records to supplement the music lesson is not new, especially where rote methods are concerned. In the Listen and Play method a record accompanies each book and contains the specific material covered by the method. Since the Suzuki system is based primarily on repeated listening and playing, the records play an important auditory role.

The success of the Suzuki method in Japan has received much attention from American string teachers; while the bulk of material reviewed by this writer indicated an enthusiastic outlook for the possibilities of using this method in America, many questions must still be answered. In speaking of the Talent Education program in Japan, John Kendall states:

The results have attracted widespread attention, and have generated much speculation about the nature of musical learning and the way in which every human being develops in the early formative years. It is not that any particular segment of Suzuki's ideas is new, but rather that the totality of his concepts, together with the results he has shown, throw a clear light on a question we all wish to explore--how do human beings become musical?¹

¹John Kendall, Talent Education and Suzuki (First in the Comparative Music Education Series. Washington, D. C.: Music Educators National Conference, 1966), p. 5.

Conclusions. To complete the study of the Suzuki method, attention must be given to some of the questions that have been raised. For example, the effect of prolonged rote playing on note and sight-reading has been the subject of much speculation. Since the teaching of note-reading from the beginning of instruction is an established tradition in America, there has been some hesitation in accepting the rote method.² John Kendall, in speaking of the student's transition to note-reading, supports rote playing by stating, ". . . when he is confronted with notes to music which he is already able to perform, the connections are logical and apparent, rather than abstract and theological."³ This view is also shared by Tibor Zelig, who writes in an article on pre-school violin teaching:

When one of these pre-school children will reach the age of six, their position, intonation, and rhythm will have been developed to a point where reading music will be a minor transition with no adverse effect on the musical sound they are producing.⁴

In correspondence from Mrs. William Preucil of Iowa, who has developed a string program using the Suzuki method, she stated that her fifth and sixth graders, who were working

² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³ John Kendall, "Violin Teaching for Three Year Olds" (Southern Illinois University), p. 3. (Miscographed.)

⁴ Tibor Zelig, "A Direct Approach to Pre-School Violin Teaching in California," American String Teacher, IV (Fall, 1965), 20.

in Book III of the Listen and Play series, read ". . . fluently enough to play in the All City Elementary Orchestra."⁵

While the majority of material that was reviewed supports the use of rote playing before note reading is attempted, the ability to read music is recognized as a necessity for the continued musical development of the child,⁶ and that experience in ensembles and orchestras is needed to develop sight-reading. In observing Japanese children aged ten to fifteen, Kendall states that while they could read fairly well, ". . . it was obvious that they would benefit from added experience in ensembles and orchestras."⁷ He also states that with the emphasis placed on orchestral development in America, the merit of unison playing, which provides a common repertoire and group playing without the competitiveness of orchestral playing, has been "under-emphasized."⁸

Two conclusions, based on documentation, may be reached: (1) note-reading is facilitated when preceded

⁵This information was received from personal correspondence with Mrs. William Preucil of Iowa City, Iowa. (December 2, 1965).

⁶John Kendall, "The Resurgent String Program in America," Music Educators Journal 1 (September-October, 1963), 47.

⁷Kendall, Talent Education and Suzuki, loc. cit.

⁸Kendall, "The Resurgent String Program in America," op. cit., 48.

by rote playing, and (2) although unison playing has value, ensemble work must be included to complete the development of the student.

Another aspect of the Suzuki method that has been the subject of speculation is the use of repeated listening to recordings. Galamian points out a danger that exists in the imitation of recordings by stating:

A recording may be played over and over again until the student finally becomes unable to think of the composition except in terms of the recording artist.⁹

In recognizing this danger, Kendall also adds a word of caution in using imitation as a device for learning:

As a tool, it must be used intelligently by every teacher and, of course, must be replaced with equal care and at the proper time, by developing each student's musical judgment and individuality.¹⁰

Kendall also points out that during the formative years, a student needs good models to imitate, and listening to recordings of the finest performers supplies these models.¹¹ The third conclusion then may be that imitation can be of

⁹Ivan Galamian, Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 8.

¹⁰Kendall, "The Resurgent String Program in America," op. cit., 51.

¹¹John Kendall, "Talent Education--The Violin Teaching Methods of Mr. Shinichi Suzuki" (Observations and report based on a trip to Japan, June 24-August 7, 1959), p. 15. (Mimeographed.)

value in a learning situation if it is used intelligently and with constant regard for the development of the student's individuality.

Perhaps the largest area of concern is raised by the question: Will the Suzuki method work in America? The answer to this question must come from experimentation; however, certain opinions have already been stated, and through the observations of people who have started programs in America, certain general conclusions may be reached.

The Talent Education program has its roots deep within Japanese culture, which has respect for beauty, veneration for the past, and, ". . . in its traditional music, a centuries-old dependence upon learning through the medium of imitation."¹² These factors, with the tradition of family responsibility and sharing in the education of the child, have been closely woven into Talent Education. In the opinion of Theodore F. Normann, Chairman of the Comparative Music Education Series: "We cannot readily transplant any system of education from the soil of its culture."¹³ He continues by saying that there are many elements of the Suzuki method that can be shaped to fit the patterns of

¹²Kendall, Talent Education and Suzuki, 2nd. ed., p. 4.

¹³Ibid.

American life.¹⁴ Discussions in this area have produced many conflicting views. For example, in answer to the question, "Do you teach the Suzuki system?" Tibor Zelig expresses the opinion that to teach the "Suzuki system" you must be a part of the Japanese culture:

In the American culture, the Suzuki approach would not work because we would not subject a child to systematic pre-conditioning, and because of our aversion to regimented learning.¹⁵

However, in starting pre-school violin training at the Saturday Conservatory of the San Fernando Valley State College at Northridge, California, Zelig devised a plan to make up for the lack of pre-conditioning of American children. The musical background of the child was determined through interviews and those that were not acceptable were enrolled in a eurythmics group for further training.

Another problem area exists in the need for parental supervision when working with the young child. Generally speaking, parents have not taken an active part in the education of their children; however, in working with the young child it becomes a necessity.¹⁶ With parental guidance

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Zelig, loc. cit.

¹⁶ Kendall, "Violin Teaching for Three Year Olds,"
op. cit., p. 5.

and participation ". . . the child's study of a string instrument . . . becomes a part of the stream of family activity."¹⁷ The question remains whether American parents will take the time to work with their children. It is the conclusion of Herbert Smith, of Southern Illinois University, that, "Because the American home exists on a rushed, crowded schedule, the Suzuki method is not acceptable in American homes in large numbers."¹⁸

In reviewing reports from string teachers who are working with the Suzuki method in America, this author found overwhelming evidence of success. Out of twenty-two reports, which were compiled by John Kendall in the "Listen and Play News Exchange," seven teachers mentioned parental involvement. Of these seven, one indicated a problem of maintaining contact with working parents, while another eliminated the need for parental supervision by neither requiring nor permitting home practice.¹⁹ It is suggested

¹⁷Yvonne M. Fait, "Class Teaching of Strings," Orchestra News, IV (March, 1965), 8.

¹⁸Herbert F. A. Smith, "Some Conclusions Concerning the Suzuki Method of Teaching Violin," American String Teacher, IV (Winter, 1965), 2.

¹⁹John Kendall, "Listen and Play News Exchange," II (A bulletin of news items relating to experimental string teaching in various parts of the country, Southern Illinois University, January, 1965), p. 5; I (March, 1964), p. 7.

by John Kendall that the answer to the problem of parental participation may lie in an adult education program and in the teacher's realization of the importance of this element in working with pre-school children.²⁰ An excellent source of information regarding the role of the parent in the education of the pre-school child can be found in the book, How to Bring Up Your Child to Enjoy Music, by Howard Taubman.

In view of the reports of programs already started in America, the conclusion is that the Suzuki method of teaching violin to young children is apparently successful; however, some modification of the Talent Education program is necessary in shaping it to the cultural pattern of the United States. The ultimate success of any program depends not on what is being taught, but upon a good teacher, who displays ". . . patience, constant encouragement, enthusiasm, psychological insight, technical and musical proficiency, use of good materials and methodology, and above all, imagination."²¹

²⁰ Kendall, "Violin Teaching for Three Year Olds," OR. Lit., p. 6.

²¹ Kendall, "Talent Education--The Violin Teaching Methods of Mr. Shinichi Suzuki," OR. Lit., p. 9.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

- Galanian, Ivan. Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching.
New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962.
- Taubman, Howard. How to Bring Up Your Child to Enjoy Music.
New York: Hanover House, 1958.

PERIODICALS

- Applebaum, Samuel. "Developing Technical Skills by Rote," Orchestra News, IV (September, 1965), 8-9.
- Carr, Rachel. "All Children Are Musical," Woman's Day, VI (March, 1963), 44-5, 99-100.
- Chasman, Joachim. "Pre-School Violin Virtuoso," American String Teacher, XV (Winter, 1965), 3, 8, 32-3.
- Falt, Yvonne M. "Class Teaching of Strings," Orchestra News, IV (March, 1965), 8.
- Kendall, John. "The Resurgent String Program in America," Music Educators Journal, L (September-October, 1963), 45-8, 51.
- Klotman, Robert. "The Impact of Shinichi Suzuki," Orchestra News, (Special Edition). This pamphlet, which was apparently an insert to a regular edition of Orchestra News, was found separate from any publication. It gave no indication of the edition from which it came.
- Rohner, Traugott, and Samuel Y. Earbakoff. "The Instrumental Beginner," The Instrumentalist, XIV (September, 1959), 58, 60-1.
- Smith, Herbert F. A. "Some Conclusions Concerning the Suzuki Method of Teaching Violin," American String Teacher, XV (Winter, 1965), 1-2.

- Waller, Gilbert R. "Strings Over Thirty Years," *The Instrumentalist*, XV (September, 1960), 90, 92-3.
- Wassell, Albert W. "A Visit with Shinichi Suzuki in Japan," *American String Teacher*, XIV (Summer, 1964), 9-10.
- Zelig, Tibor. "A Direct Approach to Pre-School Violin Teaching in California," *American String Teacher*, XV (Fall, 1965), 19-20.

UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

- Allera, Leo. "An Evaluation of the Use of Rote Demonstration and Imitation in Violin Study." Unpublished Master's thesis, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, 1956.
- Hans, John W. "A Rote Method of Instruction for Violin." Unpublished Master's thesis, Ohio State University, Columbus, 1954.
- Kendall, John. "Listen and Play News Exchange." Vol. I, Southern Illinois University, March, 1964. (Mimeographed.)
- _____ "Listen and Play News Exchange." Vol. II, Southern Illinois University, January, 1965. (Mimeographed.)
- _____ "Talent Education--The Violin Teaching Methods of Mr. Shinichi Suzuki." Observations and report based on a trip to Japan, June 24-August 7, 1959. (Mimeographed.)
- _____ "Violin Teaching for Three Year Olds." Southern Illinois University, n.d. (Mimeographed.)

PUBLICATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

- Cook, Clifford. "Genius by the Cross," *Oberlin Alumni Magazine*, Ohio: Oberlin College, May, 1964.
- Kendall, John. *Talent Education and Suzuki. First in the Comparative Music Education Series.* Washington, D. C., 1966.

Suzuki, Shinichi. Outline of Talent Education Method.
A William Lewis and Son Educational Brochure. Illinois:
William Lewis and Son, 1960.

METHOD BOOKS

Applebaum, Samuel. String Builder. Long Island, New York:
Belvin, Inc., 1960.

Barbakoff, Samuel. Fiddling by the Numbers. New York City:
Carl Fischer, Inc., 1951.

Herfurth, C. Paul. A Tune A Day. Boston, Massachusetts:
The Boston Music Co., (n.d.).

Kendall, John. Listen and Play. Evanston, Illinois: Sunny-
Birchard Co., 1961.

Müller, J. Frederick, and Harold W. Rusch. Müller-Rusch
String Method. Park Ridge, Illinois: Neil A. Kjos
Music Co., 1961.

PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE

Preucil, Doris. Iowa City, Iowa. December 2, 1965.

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

Uniker, Nancy Cotten, A Critical Study of the Suzuki Approach to Violin Teaching as Compared to Other Selected String Methods. Master of Arts (Music), May, 1966, 54 pp, Bibliography.

The purpose of the study was to present all known aspects of the Suzuki method of violin teaching in comparison to four other approved systems, thus contributing to the evaluation of the Suzuki method. John Kendall's Listen and Play series, which is based on the teachings of Shinichi Suzuki, were used in presenting the Suzuki method. A reference point for the comparison was provided by a discussion of the philosophies, objectives, and contents of each method with special attention brought to their similarities and differences.

Certain controversial factors of the Suzuki system, as the prolonged use of rote learning, parental involvement, repeated listening to recordings, and unison playing, were selected for further discussion. Evidence provided by this discussion enabled four conclusions to be drawn: (1) note-reading is facilitated when preceded by rote playing; (2) unison playing has value, but ensemble work must be included to complete the development of the student; (3) imitation can be of value in a learning situation if it is used intelligently; and (4) the Suzuki method of violin teaching

is apparently successful; however, some modification is necessary in shaping the method to the cultural pattern of the United States.