

Yomiuri News Paper Article

It is 50 years since the Suzuki Method, well known for its violin instruction, began the first Ten Children Concert Tour to America. To commemorate the event, “The 50th Anniversary Concert of the Suzuki Method’s “Ten Children”” was held at the Suntory Hall in Tokyo on March 31. Dr. Shinichi Suzuki (1898~1998) who fostered outstanding violinists, such as Toshiya Eto, established the Suzuki Method movement after World War II.

In 1964, ten children selected from various parts of Japan went abroad as the first “Ten Children Concert” Tour group. They brought the Suzuki Method to the world planting the seeds which spread and enhanced the Suzuki Method throughout the world. On the day of this 50th year celebration, 500 primary school children and junior high school students gathered from all over Japan to play at the concert along with Ms. Yasuko Otani, violin soloist and one of the members of the first “Ten Children” tour group. They performed pieces that they have studied in their classes with their respective teachers, and the concert was brought to a brilliant close as all of the members played together “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”, arranged by Dr. Suzuki.

Ms. Otani said that for her the “Ten Children Concert” at the United Nations in New York was the most memorable. She also said that since she was a small child through practicing using the method of constant repetition of the pieces she was already able to play, working to master each piece she studied, as well as, playing with friends at group lessons, she was able to play with ease just like speaking her mother tongue fluently. Her violin practice also helped her to acquire the spirit to co-operate with others.

The Suzuki Method is often misconceived as being a specific musical education for gifted children, but it is actually an education to foster all children to become human beings with a noble character through music. “Playing instruments is a means for education and it is not the aim of the Suzuki Method,” said Ms. Otani.

Suzuki alumni are not all professional musicians. Among the Suzuki alumni who came up on stage and performed were doctors, various entrepreneurs, and a Noh actor, making an impression on the audience as to the wide variety of fields where Suzuki alumni play active parts.

Though the “Ten Children” Concert Tours ended in 1994, the Suzuki movement is very active. Presently there are 400,000 students study using the Suzuki Method throughout the world. In America, there are about 300,000 students studying various instruments through the Suzuki Method. The purpose of the Suzuki Method is not for all to enter the professional music field, but there are many fabulous musicians as well. And, some have become outstanding world-famous musicians, such as violinist Hilary Hahn.

It is 68 years since Dr. Shinichi Suzuki established the Suzuki Method movement. And with the great results the Suzuki Method has had on education in general, it should be gathering more attention.