



## The Suzuki® Method for Piano

The internationally known Suzuki® Method is based on learning to play an instrument by ear, with mother or father participating and supporting during practice at home.

Dr. Suzuki found that all children learn their native language without much difficulty by repeatedly hearing the sounds of the language and being patiently praised or helped to improve by their parents as they learn, repeat and internalize the language.

The development of similarly remarkable skills is possible when learning an instrument. For example, learning to play the piano is accompanied by daily listening to a CD of children's songs.

In 1898, Dr. Suzuki was born into a Japanese violin making family with an old samurai tradition. His father founded a violin factory, which over the years established itself as the world's largest violin factory and held several patents thanks to its creative founder.

At the age of 22, Dr. Suzuki's path took him from Japan to Berlin, where he perfected his violin playing. As the only private student of Prof. Karl Klingler (Klingler Quartet), whom he greatly admired, he completed the artistic course of violin studies. With his German wife Waltraud, a singer, he went back to Japan in 1928. There he became active as a performer, playing on the radio and giving live concerts in Japan (amongst others with his three brothers in the Suzuki Quartet). At the same time, however, he also began teaching and publishing newspaper articles and books on artistic/educational topics.

The events of the Second World War, during which Dr. Suzuki was living in Japan, gave rise to his desire (and that of many other music educators) to enrich the lives of the young generation with music: an invitation to young instrumentalists offering them a method which would enable them to develop their own musical abilities and at the same time their sensitivity as human beings at a very early age.

From 1946, he implemented the idea of the „mother tongue method“ as music school director and violin teacher for very young children together with colleagues at the newly founded music school in Matsumoto (Japan).

There was great worldwide interest in learning the Suzuki® Method, and numerous musicians and music teachers visited him. In 1952, some students gave a Vivaldi-concert to the French pianist Alfred Cortot at the Matsumoto station. In 1961, the world-famous Spanish cellist Pablo Casals came to Tokyo, attended a concert of 400 children playing their instruments in unison, and was deeply touched.

Since 1951, the summer school with numerous courses and master classes has taken place annually in Matsumoto, Japan.

Via America (1964) the Suzuki® Method spread to England (London), Germany and many other countries. The Venezuelan music education movement „El Sistema“ (founded in 1975 by Dr. Jose Antonio Abreu/ Frank Di Polo) has also been significantly influenced by the Suzuki® Method. The violinist and violin teacher William Starr has made an outstanding contribution here.

### How does the Suzuki® Method for piano work?

Before the child starts piano lessons, it is recommended, especially in the case of younger children, that the supporting parent drops in once a week for some time to watch another child during his or her lesson. At the same time, the mother or father receives an introduction to the basics of piano playing (i.e. about six months of private lessons in advance, depending on the parent's ability). She/he becomes the teacher's assistant during the child's practice at home and has the opportunity to learn this wonderful hobby together with her/his child, spending valuable time together.

Another important pillar of the Suzuki® concept is getting to know, for example, the piano pieces by listening to the CD every day. Through repetitive listening and singing, the melody and rhythm of the pieces are internalized in a natural way.

After about a year, reading music complements the freedom of „playing by ear“.



In addition to the individual lessons, group lessons with 2 - 3 children take place about once a month. In the group lessons, the young pianists experience the great joy of making music together at an early age. The focus is on the development of a beautiful, homogeneous sound - similar to the instrument groups of an orchestra. Important values such as `listening to each other`, `making music together and thus bringing joy to others` are developed as if by themselves through `doing it`. So the students give their first small concerts in this context, and are prepared for workshops and chamber music courses (national/international) at the same time.

The early start with the musical support of a parent and in combination with the group lessons, the `Suzuki Piano Days` (artistic director Annelore Fauteck), and later with chamber music playing on the occasion of the `Piano Ensemble Days Langen` (artistic director Susanne Fauteck) has a significant influence on keeping the children's motivation going.

Making music and `listening to each other` leads to mindful interaction with each other and has the great potential to enrich the lives of the young pianists with music - in the sense of the founder of the international `Suzuki®-Method`, Dr. hon. Shinichi Suzuki (1898-1998).

Sources:

S. Suzuki: Education is love

Publication of the `International Suzuki Association`:

The Life of Dr. Shinichi Suzuki: A Chronology, 2021

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