

# AUTUMN FESTIVAL 2012

## QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

### WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Suzuki workshops are a time for the whole “Suzuki family” to come together: students of all ages and levels, parents and families new to Suzuki or with generations of experience, as well as teachers and teacher-trainers of all instruments.

Because the underlying philosophy of Suzuki Method is “Nurtured with Love” activities are planned to cater to the many and varied needs of this diverse group of people.

Teachers have a separate program of Professional Development to further deepen their own playing and teaching skills. Incidentally, this is one of the reasons your Suzuki-accredited teacher is so special: every year they must undertake hours of professional development to bring you a better and clearer experience of Learning With Love.

Volunteers keep every Suzuki event running smoothly, only teaching and Suzuki office staff are paid. Please be sensitive to the requests of any organisers and do your bit to help out wherever it seems necessary, for example changing seats to accommodate performers in a concert, or helping to re-set the classroom after the final class on the last day.

Autumn Festival is a tremendously motivating and enriching experience for all attendees. You will meet many other students and parents from a wide range of backgrounds, and your child will be taught by some of the finest teachers in the world. Go with an open mind and an open heart and you and your child will be reaping the rewards of beautiful tone, increased motivation, sensitivity, musicality and willingness to practice for months to come.

### WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

Classes for students begin at the very beginning so everyone can take part, even babies and toddlers have their own class. Students, from the littlest beginners right through to those studying post book repertoire will be challenged and inspired by leading teachers.

At the Autumn Festival you will find many Concerts programmed. Students are selected by audition to perform during the Festival, and there are a variety of opportunities to hear them.

The Opening Concert begins the Festival and contains fine performances from students of all instruments and levels. On two afternoons there are a number of Afternoon Concerts simultaneously where soloists and ensembles at all levels and instruments will perform. One evening there will be two very special Showcase Concerts where a selection of our most advanced students will inspire and delight with their skill and musicality.

Tickets to Showcase Concerts must be pre-purchased for a very small cost, however all other concerts are free to enrolled families. Please attend as many concerts as you can manage. Students, parents and teachers alike find them so inspiring; a concert can really ignite the imagination!

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS TOO TIRED?

To a child, their first big Suzuki Workshop such as Autumn Festival is a little like their first day at kindergarten or school: full of lots of new people, new things to do, new ideas and a different schedule of activities for the day.

Some children are excited by new things, others may feel unsure, tentative, or even overwhelmed. If this is the case please be assured that your child is behaving normally, they are not being “naughty”, and you have not signed them up to a workshop “too soon”. It just takes some children longer than others to feel comfortable in new situations.

In such a stimulating environment young children of all types can become tired sooner than usual, so as the days progress they may not be so keen to participate in class or may want to sit on your lap instead. *Please do not force your child to participate against their will.* Doing this can create resentment and a negative

feeling about the instrument or the workshop and may make future practice, lessons and workshops much harder than necessary.

Instead, allow your child to sit with you in class and observe from the sidelines. Don't take them out of the class unless they are disrupting the class by being obviously upset and need to calm down. Once they are calm bring them back inside and sit down quietly to watch and listen again.

One teacher has reported vivid memories of herself as a young child in class being fully involved, able to recall exactly what activities the class did, sing the songs and do the actions. Interestingly, her mother's memory of that same class was of the child sitting on mum's lap the whole time!

So for children, watching really is participating!

## **HOW COME MY CHILD SAT ON THE FLOOR FOR SO MUCH OF THE CLASS?**

Suzuki Workshops like Autumn Festival are very enriching experiences, with students at a wide range of levels, usually a much broader spectrum than in the home studio.

If your child is at the beginning of the repertoire range spanned by a particular class please don't worry if they spend a lot of time sitting on the floor listening and watching rather than playing their instrument. Usually this happens when the rest of the class is studying something the child is not yet up to. This is extremely normal across all instruments and levels, and is in fact a critical opportunity for the child to absorb what they are experiencing. What a valuable chance for that child to become excited about what lies ahead!

Children sitting on the floor paying quiet attention absorb a great deal, much more than we often think, since they are free to notice things without the added challenge of playing at the same time. Frequently these children are the ones who "catch" ideas, or even entire pieces, without having "learned" them, simply because they have been exposed to those ideas or pieces so much.

## **"CATCHING" WHAT IS TAUGHT**

All overseas teachers who are invited to teach at Autumn Festival are distinguished educators who have vast experience teaching Suzuki Method and are recognized leaders in Suzuki Method. These teachers may speak English as a second, third or even fourth language.

Please be aware that although some teachers may not speak English as their first language, children will be able to absorb information in many ways: for example, body language, facial expressions, examples through playing and lastly through a translator. Non-verbal cues are as significant in education as the verbal cues. Translators wish to give your child a direct experience with the tutor and try to translate as little as possible so as not to distract the children from their teacher.

Please take a few minutes to explain to your child that language may not be the principle means of delivering a message and that they can catch this message by staying alert and paying close attention to the teacher. As always their behaviour should reflect the courtesy and respect that our distinguished visiting tutors deserve.

Parents can rest assured that this is common practice in language immersion education around the world. Children will "catch" the message of the guest tutor by "reading" both verbal and non-verbal cues, and learn to "listen" with their ears and their eyes. The universal language of music needs no translation.

## **SHOULD I GO TO PARENT LECTURES?**

Yes! Parent Lectures are YOU-time, so first settle your child in class then make your way to the lecture and soak up some ideas, ask questions, make connections with other parents etc. Topics are quite varied and cater to new as well as experienced parents. An exhausted, drained parent who feels like they have nothing left to give is of limited benefit in the home practicing environment, and also probably a little unhappy feeling like that! So go along, even if it's only to one parent lecture, and nurture *yourself*.

The lectures always start 10 minutes after classes to enable you to settle your child in class, and they always finish 10 minutes before classes end so you can be back to meet your child at the end of their class.

## WHAT WILL THE STUDENTS DO?

Some of the activities students will be involved in are:

**Play-Ins:** An activity in instrument groups at start of festival before the Opening Concert. Teachers will assist students to tune instruments, and then all enrolled students will play through a variety of Suzuki Repertoire led by tutors. Younger students will perform some pieces and will benefit from watching and listening to older students playing more advanced pieces. Piano students will participate in a group activity at this time. Casual clothes can be worn for Play-Ins.

**Play-Outs:** This is a group performance at the end of festival to celebrate the end of the week and all the learning that has occurred. Students will perform Suzuki repertoire in groups led by tutors. Students all wear Suzuki concert dress for the Play-Outs (see page 4 for more details).

**Tutorial Classes:** One teacher leads a class with a number of students (depending on enrolments) who are at a similar level of repertoire. This class allocation is based on the child's most advanced piece at Registration time. More specific technique can be covered compared with Repertoire Classes.

**Repertoire Classes:** One teacher leads a large group of students through Repertoire pieces. Emphasis is more on group technique and tone. Less advanced students will spend some time listening and watching but will also actively participate during the sessions. For all instrument groups except violin and piano, repertoire classes bring together all the students enrolled on that instrument, regardless of level.

**Ensemble Classes:** Instrument specific music reading classes or, for advanced string students, string orchestras.

**Enrichment Classes:** Anything from bongos to alternative instruments, singing or music games. This class is an alternative to the formal instrumental emphasis of the rest of the program and is designed to be fun and light whilst new skills are learnt that can complement your instrument learning.