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MASTER'S THESIS

An investigation into the feasibility of using the Suzuki approach for piano education in the Norwegian Culture School.

En diskusjon om Suzukimetodens egnethet i forhold til pianoundervisning i kulturskolen

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I confirm that the work is self-prepared and that references/source references to all sources used in the work are provided, cf. Regulation relating to academic studies and examinations at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL), § 10.

Acknowledgements

This has been a journey. Sometimes I have moved swiftly, with a spring in my step, sometimes I have been dragging my feet. I have wandered off track multiple times, and luckily, I have been provided with guidance, people who have helped me back on track.

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Abstract

This study employs philosophical critique in order to determine whether a measure of adaption of the Suzuki Method may help alleviate some of the challenges to music teaching in the Norwegian School of Music and Performing Arts (in Norway called 'kulturskolen').

In order to effectively address this question, the following topics are examined: 1) Current challenges to music teaching in the Norwegian School of Music and Performing Arts (SMPA), with particular attention to those seen as potentially relevant to the Suzuki Method. 2) Detailed description of the Suzuki Method (its origins, emphases, limitations, underlying assumptions and problems in intercultural adaptation). 3) Description and critique of relevant arguments: (a) regarding goals and values within the Suzuki Method (b) in opposition to Suzuki Method, (c) that challenge the need for codified approaches to teaching, and (d) that suggest intercultural adaptation is too problematic. 4) A discussion about the feasibility of adaption and implementation of elements from the Suzuki Method in the School of Music and Performing Arts.

Based on this line of argumentation I conclude that piano pedagogy in the SMPA would benefit from: 1) stronger parental involvement, 2) integration of group teaching, 3) fruitful collegiality among teachers, and 4) a culture of teacher responsibility for child-development as seen in the Suzuki method. However, the method is oriented mostly towards the classical music tradition, other styles are not part of the standard repertoire, and neither is there a tradition of cultivating improvisation and composition.

The main challenges I see in the SMPA is a lack of common values, goals, missions, professional progress and interactions between teachers. I suggest that using the Suzuki Method as framework for pedagogical ideas, thoughts and discussion, would provide solutions to these challenges. The implementation of elements of the Suzuki method could imply an opening towards more discussion, a questioning of our practices, and the establishment of stronger and more suitable relations among student, teacher, management and parents. This, in turn, could enhance the quality of the learning environment for the student, and make outcomes more predictable.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

For the last fifteen years, I have worked as a piano teacher in Bergen kulturskole (Bergen School of Music and Performing Arts) initially called Bergen musikkskole (Bergen Music School). It started off many years ago as a collaboration between piano teachers locally, and soon obtained financial support from the local government. From 1998, the right for the public to attend SMPA was established by Norwegian lawmakers, and the funding was split between parents and the local government. SMPA no longer exclusively teaches music, in addition there are courses in visual arts, theatre and dance, and all municipalities are committed to offer this service to their inhabitants. Bergen kulturskole is the local SMPA and as Bergen is a quite large city it is one of the largest SMPAs in Norway, and it is the workplace where I have had most of my experience as a piano teacher. The main title uses the term Culture School, because a Norwegian reader will instantly know what institution is referred to.

Over the years, there has been opportunities and reason to reflect upon the kind of work I am doing. A standard lesson amounts to 20 minutes teaching time. Considering all elements instrumental teaching could imply, this makes time a limited resource. Among the wishes I have on behalf of my piano students are: to develop productive relationships between teacher, student, parents and leadership, to teach multiple styles and genres, to be able to meet my students on their own musical turf, and to be able to teach music they genuinely like. I also want the lessons to become a meaningful part of their life, and their environment, and I want to find a way to work with them and with music, where it remains something valuable and usable for their entire life.

As a teacher it is my wish to teach children how to practice music effectively and to become excited about their own musical achievements. Why do some students thrive at their practising, and why is it so hard for others? What can the teacher and the institution do to get more students to practice more, to practice in a competent manner and to enjoy their own musical development?

As part of my job at the SMPA I also accompany groups of Suzuki beginner violinists. What has attracted my curiosity is the environment these group lessons create, in terms of musicality, social relations, and the opportunity for children to perform and to play pieces

together. Not just pieces, but also educational games and the teaching of theory to the whole group, which is more fun for the children and less tedious for the teacher. As a piano teacher I have envied my violin-teaching colleagues for this opportunity to meet the children in groups, to see both the children and their parents building a sort of Suzuki family, and how these relational bonds strengthen the musical environment and makes it an important part of their lives. It seems that a community that is created as a result from working according to this method enables children to become part of a social structure where music has a natural and well-integrated part. Music becomes part of their life, instead of just being a hobby they pursue in their free time.

Amongst young students learning an instrument, piano students may be especially challenged: Piano teaching in the SMPA is mainly based on individual lessons, and most of the students have few opportunities to meet other piano students to share experiences or engage in ensemble play. In Bergen there are special resources available for students who display more interest, and these resources become available if they pass an audition. But this does not apply to the majority of the piano students, and a stimulating environment becomes the responsibility of the individual child and its parents.

Many Norwegian parents are reluctant to burden their offspring with additional pressure. School already requires a lot from children and becoming an accepted part of children groups and friends is already taxing for many children. They are supposed to succeed in many social settings, in the school, doing sports and games. The teaching in the SMPA is often perceived as a welcome break from pressure, and it is up to the child's own motivation to determine how much work they put into their practice sessions. Many parents also think that it is important that the child is encouraged to keep up and look after its own projects, and projects that are initiated and maintained by the child represent a special quality, and that such projects are important for the development of the child's autonomy. Numerous studies show nonetheless that parent involvement is an important factor influencing children's musical development (McPherson, 2009, p. 105; Upitis, Abrami, Brook, & King, 2017, pp. 84–85).

Many parents wait for the child to display an inner drive, and if this drive does not materialize, few parents feel that they could intervene in a manner that results in a positive outcome. From my own experience, I can testify that many parents are unsure how they can be of any help to their child. Many parents have unpleasant childhood memories, recall being pressured and forced to practice, and they do not want to take on such a role themselves.

In Norway 2018, we are witnessing a new trend where an increasing number of students entering tertiary music education are from abroad. This has been happening for some time with regard to master students. What is new is that this also happens in the Bachelor-level studies. This should of course not become the main reason for trying to improve piano teaching in the SMPA, but it represents one more urgent reason for trying to make piano teaching more effective, more enjoyable and to inspire students to invest more effort.

1.2 PURPOSE STATEMENT

This study is an effort to take a closer look at the Suzuki Method, examine critically the essential ideas, practices and assumptions that constitute important parts of the Suzuki Method, and investigate what they mean, and have meant, for music education. What kind of ideas does the method introduce? How does these ideas and practices compare to instrumental education in the contemporary Norwegian culture school system, and what is the reasoning behind these different approaches? I will discuss the effectiveness and rationale behind the Suzuki Method, examining which elements and what concepts contribute to its effectiveness by using philosophical tools and research from psychological and educational research. What would be the consequences of implementing these ideas, and what would be the outcome if one were to implement only a subset of the ideas contained in the Suzuki Method. Are there reasonable objections to the method, and what are the background for some of the claims?

These are the main questions that provide the background for this study, and which have led me to look into the ideas and the philosophy behind the Suzuki Method.

My own point of view as an instrumental teacher in the SMPA is important for this purpose statement, because my experience tells me that the instrumental teaching community could benefit from a deeper, more coherent discussion on how various responsibilities might best be shared between the child, the teacher and the parents. Just as crucial are the relationships between the different actors, and how the social environment could benefit from a restructuring that would enrich the child's learning environment. The ways in which these relationships form and develop in the SMPA vary considerably; there are lots of different perspectives on the roles of the child, the teacher and the parents. A thorough discussion on these topics may benefit the instrumental teaching community and encourage a much-needed clarification of facts, objectives and expectations.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I will compare the aspects and typical viewpoints that set the Suzuki Method apart from what can be seen as the typical approach towards instrumental teaching in the SMPA. I want to compare and contrast practices in the Suzuki Method, as represented in its core documents, with how music education is thought of in the Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts (NKR) publication: Curriculum Framework for Schools of Music and Performing Arts. I will also rely on my own experiences as a piano teacher in the SMPA, while not assuming that those represent the official viewpoint and ideas that are foundational for the SMPA.

My guiding research questions are the following: What are the distinctive characteristics of the Suzuki Method, and what is the rationale behind its emphases and strategies? Which qualities and values are promoted in the NKR Curriculum framework and how do they compare and contrast to those contained in the Suzuki Method? How can the Suzuki Method serve as a model for teaching musical instruments?

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

I will mainly concentrate on the age group that is most relevant to my occupation as a piano teacher in the SMPA, which means ages between 6-16 years. The Suzuki Method prominently features an early start, but because of the current limitations to how the SMPA in Bergen normally works, I will not discuss teaching children younger than 6 years.

Although Suzuki was mainly occupied with the violin, and the author is mainly occupied with teaching piano, the aim with this thesis is not the study of technicalities connected to teaching specific instruments. Suzuki was a violinist, but he made it very clear that the principles underlying his method were applicable to other instruments as well. In fact, the Suzuki Method is a very common approach for teaching piano world-wide. Suzuki himself considered his idea of the mother-tongue to be a universal educational principle, which in principle could be applied to any craft, his basic ideas originating from the idea of the mother-tongue, the importance of the environment, and the role of the parents.

To some degree I will include my own experiences as a teacher, not assuming they represent the SMPA. It is impossible to extract a representative SMPA model of teaching, because there is no such thing. SMPA covers a range of subjects within music, visual art, theatre and dance,

and these subjects are approached differently, and different sections includes teachers who all tackle their work differently, because of their unique training, experiences and beliefs. That means that there is no single SMPA approach. The SMPA approaches are so diverse that they even include a violin course based on the Suzuki method. Nearly all string teachers in SMPA's string section in Bergen have participated in Suzuki teachers training, and many of the string students attend group lessons and follow the Suzuki Method.

To represent the SMPA main ideas and fundamental values I use parts of a political document written especially for the SMPA. It is authored by the *Norwegian Council for the School of Music and Performing Art* and is the *Curriculum Framework for Schools of Music and Performing Arts: Diversity and Deeper Understanding*. While the SMPA is not legally bound by the documents, it is a document that local plan must use as a foundation. (More details about the document at page 15)

1.5 OVERVIEW OVER THIS THESIS

This part is the introduction to this study. The next part, chapter 2, offers a description of the methodical approach used. I have chosen to approach the questions put forward in this study philosophically. The most relevant field of philosophy regarding this thesis is a young subfield: Music Education Philosophy (MEP). I will give a brief summary of how MEP has affected music education for the last 100 years, and how they affect current educational thought. I proceed by describing some of the methods generally in use within philosophical inquiries and present the particular methods used in this study. The third chapter describes the School of Music and Performing Arts, its aims and aspiration expressed in a guideline document the 'Curriculum Framework for Schools of Music and Performing Arts', a document written by Norsk Kulturskoleråd. The fourth chapter contains a biographical sketch of Shinichi Suzuki's life and work, and the main principles of his violin method. In which way is it unique? What is its international relevance? What are the reasons for its popularity and how can the impact it has had on instrument teaching be explained? Chapter 5 tries to summarise and bring forward various critique. The critique directed at the method is diverse: Some comes from the classical music movement, some from music educators and music critics and some from music lovers. Some of it is rooted in a perception of the method being overly Asian and inspired by Eastern philosophy and spiritual ideas. Chapter 6 is a discussion of what elements could be implemented in the SMPA. It also suggests some final remarks and brings this study to a closure.

1.6 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON RELATED TOPICS

According to a bibliography last updated in 2016 by Nancy Mitchell, there are 75 research studies relating to the Suzuki Method in the years from 1966 to 2016. 13 of which are empirical. There are few studies on the SMPA and piano-pedagogy within the SMPA in general, so this is clearly a field that would benefit from more research. Some studies compare different aspects of the Suzuki Method to methods developed by other violin pedagogues. Marianne Perkins has carried out a comparative study and analysis of three important string pedagogues of the 20th century, namely Kato Havas, Paul Rolland and Shinichi Suzuki. This study captures some of the changes that has been introduced over the last centuries by pedagogues whose main impact is, perhaps, the ‘democratization’, that is, the availability of good instrument education for anyone, not just the upper classes or the especially talented. Although Marianne Perkins mostly discusses the teachings and methods of these pedagogues, she often relates to what may be considered traditional. All these pedagogues have important traits in common, and they also share some of the same teachers they have studied with.

The Suzuki Method lacks a detailed description from Suzuki’s own hand (Mehl, 2009, p. 2). Margaret Mehl describes his collected works as ‘sketchy and anecdotal’ and claims that Suzuki acknowledged his preference for working with teachers in person. Mehl regards the PhD thesis of Eric Madsen (1990) as one of the best sources to cover the origins of the Suzuki Method. Eric Madsen characterizes the writing style of Suzuki in much the same way as Mehl. Karen Eubanks, who has written a master thesis where she points to the near relationship between Western progressive education and the Suzuki Method (Eubanks, 2015), describes the literature in the field as comprised of different genres. The first type of publications offers explanations of the main ideas. These are often written with parents and aspiring teachers in mind and are much more explicit regarding the violin method than Suzuki in his own writings. For instance William Starr, a well-known string pedagogue, shared detailed descriptions of the violin method in *The Suzuki Violinist* (Starr, 1996).

The second type of publications focuses on the special relationship between Japanese educational thought and the violin method. Often the ‘Japaneseness’ of the method is stressed, and both supporters and critiques of the method emphasise this aspect. Some literature point to how certain aspects of East Asian cultural beliefs are inherent in the Suzuki Method. Other publications are written in an apparent fear of being outperformed by Japanese effectiveness,

management style, and collectivism. The Suzuki Method gained popularity at about the same time when Japanese products often surpassed Western alternatives with regard to quality and affordability.

Third, there are publications which are outlets for ideas that aim at improving the Suzuki Method. Suzuki himself was very open to change and encouraged sharing of discoveries and development of the method.

Mehl herself has written an article describing Suzuki's years of studying in Berlin, and how the Suzuki Method finally enters Germany. Her perspective is interesting because she manages to bring out the cultural translation between the countries that has worked both ways (Mehl, 2009, p. 1). She also encourages music educators to base their judgement of the method more on its merits, than its Japanese provenance. This makes Mehl a proponent for a level-headed approach compared to much of the critique directed at the Suzuki Method. Mehl has also written a book called *Not by Love alone: The Violin in Japan, 1850-2010* (Mehl, 2014) that describes how a feudal and culturally isolated Japan becomes an influential force in relation to teaching and playing the violin. Mehl investigates the earliest Japanese encounters with violin, and how its production and use spread throughout Japanese culture. She captures the educational aspects (including the Suzuki Method and its influence both in Japan and the West) and she describes the lives and careers of influential violinists and teachers, which helps readers to comprehend the background for the East-Asian relationship to Western Classical music.

The fourth and last category of publications are those related to research on Suzuki education. Considering the method's popularity and wide-spread use, there are several authors who note that there is surprisingly little research. Zachary Ebin (2015, p. 3) fact-checks five claims essential to the Suzuki Method, which concern the method's teaching philosophy. He basically investigates the scientific validity of the claims that Suzuki uses as a basis for his method. Ebin further observes that most of the other studies are dissertations rather than articles published in music education journals, which leads him to conclude that the method has not become a major topic in music education.

The violin, as we know it from Western music, was virtually unknown in Japan, but became one of the most popular instruments in the country in the 20th century. Suzuki Shinichi's father, Masakichi, pioneered mass-production of the violin, and Shinichi himself developed

the teaching method known as *Talent education in Japan* and the Western term *Suzuki Method*.

Much of the research concerning comparisons of educational research, psychology and tradition between schooling systems in the Western hemisphere and East Asian education, are based on research which has its origin in American institutions and research communities. This study will thus often refer to American research and findings, simply because that is where the bulk of research is available. It assumes that the cultural overlapping and common ground between the United States and Europa is enough to make findings and reflections relevant to other parts of what has traditionally been called the Western world. When using very broad terms like “Western hemisphere” and “East Asian schooling systems” it is important to keep in mind that there are educational issues and intense discussions on both sides, and that many of today’s educational challenges are global, and that the solutions are not necessarily very different from each other in the “East” and in the “West”. All East Asian countries are heavily influenced Western culture, trade and education. Not surprisingly, there is much common ground when it comes to e.g. education. Some Western educational theories and philosophies may even resonate better with Japanese culture than with their original environment. Surely, this also works the other way around: A case in point is the Suzuki Method, which has a far stronger position in the West than in Japan, where it is considered as a method amongst methods.

2 MUSIC EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Both Music and Education designate phenomena which are complex and multi-faceted, and by their nature make it hard to give a short description of what the terms imply (Elliott, 2012, p. 64). Despite the difficulties that arise when we try to analyse these concepts, they are important to us in our daily encounters, we do learn and educate ourselves to some degree all the time, we all have a history of some formal education, and it is a substantial part of the life of our children. Music is ubiquitous, and although school teachers struggle to meet their students interest in music on terms that are satisfying to both teachers and students, there is no doubt about the importance of music in our lives. Nearly all students listen to music, make music a part of their life, their identity, some use it to regulate their emotions, others build up a network of friends based on their musical preferences. What makes music so powerful?

Already in ancient Greece Aristotle and Plato wrote about music and education, and the latter provided a detailed analysis about what kind of music would do the most good in the education of young people in an ideal society. Although these ancient philosophers wrote dialogs and text that contained themes which resonates with topics within the field of Music Education Philosophy, it cannot be considered the start of MEP as such. MEP is a fairly new subfield of education philosophy, and although there is a fair amount of literature, there are many higher institutions of music education that lack teachers, courses and discussions that critically examine the rationale behind various teaching practices within the field of music, which is the main focus of MEP.

It is possible to argue with Alexandra Kertz-Welzel (2004, pp. 282–283) that the German didactic tradition covers some of the same topics and discussions as MEP. The German didactic tradition asks for the *why*, and while a philosophical tradition often refuses to provide very rigid answers, it encourages discussions and tensions between different points of view. Such questions open up the field, while the discussions and reflection that follow may result in a broader educational understanding, which gives a fertile ground that music teachers can draw inspiration from.

The term music is hard to define, but by studying auditory cultures in different parts of the world, we might see more clearly what a concept like music may imply. In an article dating from 1956 the historian W. Gallie described terms like education and music as essentially contested concepts, which for all practical purposes means that the concept of both education and music are concepts where the understanding and the underlying rationale must be

redefined continually. This because they are in constant flux, there are movements and developments which must be accounted for continually. Humans are very much embedded and developed not only as biological beings, but also as cultural beings, and the latter implies that human traits may develop in multiple directions. Both culture and nature are flexible, as Harari pointed out, the mouth was initially a biological necessity because we needed a way to nourish ourselves. But the species found other uses for the mouth: It could enhance breathing capacity, it could articulate speech and became central to verbal communication. (Harari, 2015, p. 147).

Why humans developed this peculiar capacity to exchange sound in what we call musical ways, is a good question. We may further ask whether it was a crucial competence in some periods of human history, or if it is a kind of stray competence, a by-product of other human adaptations, as Stephen Pinker argues (Pinker in Kirschner & Tomasello, 2010, p. 354). Anyhow, as this is a field where no final answers present themselves, and where the actual contemporary musical practice and ideas about music may have more weight than speculations about its biological and historical origins, it will nonetheless be important to ask how we want music to function, how and why we want to educate our children in music, and how music can have a most meaningful place in social settings. Music has many different functions across culture and across time, and to some extent, everybody has some influence on and can decide how and to what degree they want music to be part of their life.

Although music across cultures manifests itself in very different ways, there are some qualities that stand out, and that are common across cultures: Music is in some way connected to emotions, which it can evoke or remind one of. Music often brings communities together in social gatherings, and music is often part of rituals and ceremonies. Also, music often plays a part in synchronising emotions within a gathering of people. Asking questions that consider these topics and make them relevant to practitioners in the field of music education, constitutes a philosophical approach to music.

Whereas empirical projects gather information from reality, philosophical inquiry questions fundamentals of why we pursue a subject or why we delve into a field of research: What assumptions are implicit within a subject, which questions are relevant, and what makes them important? In the realm of music education fundamental questions include why we teach music, and what our community and individuals gain by providing music education.

Since the introduction of capitalism, we often measure our societal success in economic terms. The place of music and arts in public schools and public education and its funding cannot be based on its direct economic consequences, because those are hard to measure, and the main point with music and arts may not be of an economic nature. It might be measured on a scale where more holistic concepts like that of community building, a narrative sense of history, heritage, cultural integration and the experience of community and friendship with all mankind are more important aspects than the economic impact.

2.1 PHILOSOPHY'S UNIQUE ROLE IN RETHINKING MUSIC EDUCATION

Music education philosophy is mainly a tool for asking for the purposes, goals and values in music education. These have varied considerably over the last centuries. Music education has in some form been around in Norway since 1100 in the so-called cathedral schools, where the pupils were taught congregational song to fulfil what was called duty-singing. From a music education philosophical perspective this means fulfilling duty in service of the church; we would thus consider the motivation to be driven by a practical need.

In the first half of the eighteenth century the practical need for music education was no longer accepted as sufficient reason. Proponents of music education started drawing on thinkers like Pestalozzi (1746-1827), who argued that schools should develop students intellectually, physically and morally. Music was supposed to be able develop the moral aspects.

Pestalozzi's ideas were based on a long tradition of thought; as early as 380 BC Plato argued that music could mould the human character.

Music has also in more recent times been considered an aesthetic discipline. In modern times one prominent proponent for this opinion is Bennett Reimer, and this belief was the most commonly held in the seventies. A main idea was that the value of music was aesthetic, which again had to do with music's power to evoke a subjective experience of emotion. This thought was based on the early writing of philosopher and educator Susanne Langer, who saw works of art as representations of human expressions and feelings. Thus conceived, music was considered a self-contained entity, while intense study and contemplation was seen as touching upon the deepest levels of the human mind. According to the concept of absolute music, in the sense of Western arts education, which utilises a state of mind that is called disinterested contemplation, music is self-referential and has no extra-musical function. Music seen this way becomes disconnected with life outside its musical realm, and music's many faces and functions in society are ignored by this approach. This way of approaching music is

less applicable to music outside the Western tradition of art music. Music educators, who use both music from different parts of the world and popular music, tend to find the aesthetic approach towards music inadequate. Therefore, there has been several alternative approaches, the most notable being that of praxial music, a music education philosophy written by jazz educator David Elliott and Marissa Silverman.

Suzuki preferred the term Suzuki philosophy, because he did not think of his system as a recipe or a list of prescribed actions. He often expressed he himself, was only learning how to teach. But using standards of Western philosophy, the Suzuki method would not qualify as a coherent system of thought, Suzuki's writings are often anecdotal and sketchy, an argument I enter in more detail at page 33.

The Suzuki Method was mainly designed as a method for teaching Western Art music, and the repertoire is mainly derived from parts of the Western Art tradition. It was conceived in the 1930s and it focuses on performance, more than on composition and improvisation. The educational philosophy, the values expressed and the visions that Suzuki are challenging to the tradition that Western classical music is connected to, and that makes it an interesting object of inquire from a philosophical perspective. The value orientation of the SMPA as expressed in the RfK is based on the UNESCO convention of heritage (Norsk kulturskoleråd, 2016, p. 6), and is formulated as a subset of human rights. While these are the values expressed at face value, there are also values within the culture of the SMPA, and in the traditional teaching of instrumental music. These aspects are important parts of this inquiry.

2.2 PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

Most of the instrumental teachers I know, seldom sit down for a chat about philosophy. Usually teachers discuss whether their students practice enough, if they come to their lessons well prepared, if we teachers have enough time for them, to name just a few of the prevalent themes. The reason for engaging in philosophical inquiries is to get a deeper understanding of the purposes and methods used in education, and what impact they may have on morality, knowledge, a good life and a just society. Philosophical inquiry is a process of reflection, of fine-grained thinking, where the intention is to dig deeper, to promote an understanding that would not be attainable by a superficial reading. Philosophical inquiry is not one method, but rather a collection of ways to reveal underlying assumptions, latent contradictions, to follow thoughts until their logical end, in short, ways to reflect deeply on issues which would else be

hidden. Philosophical enquiry typically also deals with questions of moral character and with questions concerning the consequences, good or bad, that a particular praxis may have.

In the book chapter 'Philosophical Inquiry' by Nicholas Burbules and Bryan Warnick, the authors list ten ways to carry out a philosophical inquiry, how to expound and reflect on ideas, to analyse text and to get to a deeper understanding. Although they are listed as separate methods, they seldom operate in isolation; generally, they will be combined in some fashion when performing an analysis. The ten methods are as follow:

1. Analysing a term or concept, showing its multiple uses and meanings, for the primary purpose of clarification.
2. An ideological or a deconstructive critique of a term or concept, identifying internal contradictions or ambiguities in uses of the term and a disclosure of partisan effects the term has in popular discourses.
3. Exploring the hidden assumptions underlying a particular view or broader school of thought.
4. Sympathetically or critically reviewing a specific argument offered elsewhere.
5. Questioning a particular educational practice or policy.
6. Proposing the ends or purposes education should achieve, either in terms of benefits to the person, to the society, or both.
7. Speculating about alternative systems or practices of education, whether utopian or programmatic, that contrast with and challenge conventional educational understandings and practices.
8. A thought experiment, a method that takes an imaginary situation, analyzes it, then gradually modifies one or another element of the situation to determine which features are relevant to changing its pertinent character.
9. Exegetical work: A close reading of a philosophical or literary text with an eye more toward explication and understanding of its complex meanings than analysis or critique.
10. Synthesizing disparate research from philosophy itself or other fields (e.g., political theory, cognitive psychology, sociology, etc.) to find meanings and implications for educational theory and practice (Burbules & Warnick, 2003, p. 491).

This inquiry will try to consider the various aspects and description offered in the sources, and discuss what they mean, and what their different purposes are. One main exploration here will be the discussion of what elements could be useful to piano-teachers practice. Referring to the previous ten methods I will mainly make use of method 1 to 3, and 5 to 7.

There are some key issues that distinguish the Suzuki Method from a more traditional approach to instrumental issues which this thesis will consider. The themes that will be discussed are the degree of child centeredness, the starting age, the role of the parents, the child's motivation and the structuring of the environment. How does this resonate with the practices in the SMPA?

2.3 APPROACH USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY

The sources for this study consist mainly of texts that describe the Suzuki Method and its philosophy, material that cover particular aspects of the method and its different contexts, analyses of its consequences and outcomes, as well as critical assessments of the method. Some of the source materials are written by Suzuki and is often anecdotal in style. They provide insight into his philosophy, his approach towards teaching the violin and the underlying ethics and moral principles implied in Suzuki philosophy.

The second set of sources consists of guidelines for the School of Music and Performing Arts, the place and institution where I am employed as a piano teacher. I have further used my own experiences, as well as documents (e.g. the Curriculum framework authored by the SMPA council) that serve as guidelines for the SMPA in Norway. While this document's legal impact is no more than a framework (i.e. guidelines which are not enforced), it is nonetheless a description of the values that the school is based on.

This study seeks to discuss and inquire into the philosophy of the Suzuki Method, its approach towards children, and the impact it has had on music education. In the discussion I will use my professional background as a piano teacher coupled with the Curriculum Framework to contrast the Suzuki Method values to those of the SMPA. The goal of the work with the thesis is to provide a careful synthesis and reflection on this topic, and to generate knowledge that is valuable for instrumental teachers and leaders in the municipal art education institution, known as the School of Music and Performing Arts (SMPA).

3 ISSUES IN THE CONTEMPORARY NORWEGIAN CULTURE SCHOOL SYSTEM

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Music is something that has been a part of human history for a long time, the earliest sign of musical artefacts dating back to 40,000 (d'Errico et al., 2003, p. 39). How music has been embedded into the web of social practices is far more complicated. Music has meant very different things in different times, our current understanding, where the term music means a highly developed auditory art form, is quite recent. Music has historically often been one part of a larger set of art forms and religious and social practices, where the borders between the different elements are blurred, and where different art concepts are interwoven. These observations give reason to question the existence of an innermost essence of music, that dictates how to educate music (Bowman & Frega, 2012, p. 12). For music educators and for an institution like the SMPA this means that any fixed concept of music can and should always be challenged, and that the best way to educate students cannot be derived from music itself. The reasons for making music, teaching music and engaging in music, are not fixed. The perceptions of what music is and what it means have likewise always changed.

3.1.1 Educational frameworks in SMPA

Curriculum Framework for Schools of Music and Performing Arts: Diversity and Deeper Understanding is the framework document that all SMPAs must use as a basis for their own local curriculum plans. I will shorten the name to RfK, based on the Norwegian name (Rammeplan for kulturskolen). The document is written by The Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts (Norsk kulturskoleråd) and is based on its central strategy plan (Strategi 2020) and on its previous Framework plan (2003): *On the way to diversity*. It also implements elements from various other government plans like the *National Curriculum for Knowledge promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training*, the national culture promotion reform of 2005 and 2009, and a few more. The Framework plan latest iteration is subtitled 'Diversity and Deeper Understanding' and was published in 2016 (Norsk kulturskoleråd, 2016). There can be no direct comparison between the RfK and the Suzuki Method, as the purposes for the written texts are very different from each other. The Suzuki Method, however, is not just a concrete pedagogical method, it also promotes certain values and goals (Hendricks, 2011), and it discusses music in a way that convey viewpoints

on what constitutes the fundamental values of education and music. These aspects are comparable with viewpoints contained within the RfK.

The music curriculum part is quite comprehensive in the RfK, when considering all the different activities, competences and work methods that are listed. But although they are numerous, arguments and discussions to each of them are mostly absent. What is called ‘key competences’ are however described more thoroughly.

Teachers at the SMPA are highly qualified and teach different subjects like visual arts, music, theatre and dance. Sometimes the subject matters are firmly rooted in classical tradition, at other times the subjects are closer to contemporary styles, and there are also educational pathways that cover popular music.

3.1.2 Educare and educere in SMPA

Engaging in instrumental teaching means transferring a skill that enables students to use traditional methods for playing and engaging in music. Wayne Bowman (2012, p. 24) employs the two Latin roots of the term education, *educare* and *educere* to capture a main concern that relates to fundamental questions within music education. *Educare* means to train, while *educere* means to draw out, to lead out. Whereas the former implies preservation of a tradition, the upholding of skills and transference of knowledge and know-how to coming generations, the latter implies an ability to apply intelligent responses to new, upcoming challenges. The *educare* part of education as it is practised in the SMPA is obvious: we try to educate children in physical skills necessary to play an instrument. Much of what the Suzuki Method tries to do, is the same thing, it provides a pathway, where the necessary skills to play an instrument is trained, in a systematic way that appeals to children.

How is the *educere* part of the education taken care of in the SMPA or in the Suzuki Method? The training part is the easiest to deal with, there are lots of scientific material that covers nearly all sides of piano-playing, from physical analyses of efficient body movement, to its psychological aspects, how to efficiently use limited practice time, how to work on motivation at different ages, and the list could easily be expanded to cover even more aspects of the transfer of the skills needed. By contrast, the relational aspects between teachers and students, the climate that provides for a deep and engaging study of musical language and its ability play an important role in the student’s life, the challenges that stimulate what Dewey called growth, and the ability to develop the flexibility necessary to tackle situations that one cannot prepare for in advance, all these question, which are covered by the term *educere*, are

much harder to get a handle. They may arise and develop in the course of the educational path, but it may be hard to pinpoint exactly which elements that provide its essential stepping stones.

3.1.3 Practical guidelines and challenges

Looking at the piano department within the SMPA, there is lot of diversity and differences in style when considering how piano teachers teach. We are not supposed to follow a prescribed path, we choose our own method, and a few of us more or less make up our own methods. The piano teachers have since autumn 2016 set up some structures, guidelines and goals for all piano students. We have developed a grading system and worked on a list of recommended pieces for each of the grades. This was a response to political demands towards SMPA to devise a way to measure results. The leader at the piano section crafted some templates that could serve as a starting point for planning pieces and tasks for the students. Before this, however, all teachers were completely on their own, and no common guidelines or plans were set up for all piano students. The responsibility of each teacher is to facilitate a learning environment, establish routines, communicate and cooperate with children, provide guidance on each student's learning path. To do this successfully is a challenging task, and the collaboration and communication between piano teachers has been limited. Every teacher is responsible for setting up a learning pathway for their students. When teachers have collaborated, it has mostly been connected to the Depth programme (see page 33), and sometimes in discussion regarding whether this boy or girl could benefit from switching to another teacher.

Because of the way the SMPA is organised cooperation and communication between piano teachers has been limited: We teach in the evenings and late afternoons in rooms that are used as classrooms in elementary and secondary schooling during daytime. Typically, we often teach alone, and there are few opportunities for cooperation. This tendency is particularly prominent among the piano teachers, as we often teach one by one, and seldom involve in instructing ensembles. Generally, ensembles in the SMPA is one of the arenas where cooperation can happen. Teachers who besides their engagement in individual lessons also teach ensembles, seldom complain that they are not getting enough opportunities to meet colleagues, some of them even express the opposite point of view. They sometimes question

too much interaction and cooperation, as they no longer feel that they are in control of their own working environment¹.

The priorities in a list of “main pedagogical challenges” within the SMPA may differ considerably, depending on who one asks. My list below is in part based on my own experiences as a piano teacher, but I have tried to point at certain challenges broadly enough that they may be found to evoke some general interest among readers.

1. Both results from research on music education, and philosophical reflections on what it means to devote resources to a music and art education are featured in the RfK, but the level of overt interest among teachers at the SMPA is limited. As practitioners they mostly focused on teaching, the resources available, talent programmes and facilities. Some of the teachers engage in activities to promote the SMPA, but few engage in any fundamental philosophical discussion about the rationale for engaging in teaching music, about art and education in general, and few keep themselves up to date in scholarly research connected to music education.
2. Piano education has traditionally been taught one to one in Norway, this is a practice that is the most common also in the rest of Western Europe. It rests upon a dyadic teaching model, where the learning goals and motivation for the lessons are developed and divided mostly among teacher, student and the student’s parents. Several tensions felt in the SMPA may have their roots in an imagined past, an idolised reference to a master/apprentice model, where time constraint is of no concern. The ideal is the lesson with one teacher and one student. The main problem with this approach is the limited time resource available for each student.
3. As already mentioned, the resources available to each student are limited, and the allocation of resources is more a question of funding and political demands/expectations in return for the resources they put into the SMPA, rather than considerations based on a music educational perspective. The decision is a political one, the teachers, who represent the know-how and expertise are not the ones making the decisions. Teachers have been complaining about scarce resources for years, as each student in the Core programme is provided with 20 minutes individual lesson time. This means that a lot of subject matter has to be covered in a short amount of

¹ This observation is based on what colleagues outside the piano division express at meetings and seminars. Especially wind and brass players are tired of too much collaboration, because they often have ensembles where multiple teachers participate at the same time.

time as long as the resource is given as individual lessons. The short time span also means that it is difficult to influence the student's life, there is little time to build a relation, get to know each other and to make an impression on each other. The time the student devotes to lessons is therefore limited and hence also the relative importance of the lesson, compared to other parts of the student's life. As anyone knows who is familiar with the process of learning to play an instrument, the most critical success factor is the amount and the quality of practice. But having very short exposure to an instrument teacher makes it less likely that the student is going to devote the necessary practice time.

4. The availability of digital simulations of the piano and the existences of headphones means that there are new possibilities regarding piano teaching in our age. The possibility to organize groups of students and give group lessons would mean that each student would have the possibility to engage in lessons for an extended time. This time constraint should motivate institutions like the SMPA to discuss how the available resources are best put to practice. The tension between trying out new models and sticking to a well-trodden path is quite apparent and has remained strong for many years.
5. When the time constraint on the formal lessons is strict, more responsibility has to be laid on the child or by extension, its parents. The role of the parents, however, is not specifically described within the SMPA, like most other matters that may have impact on the educational outcome, very much is in the hands of the individual teacher.
6. There is a lack of agreement on how to teach piano technique. Take an example from violin teaching: Although there are differences in how different schools of violin playing approach certain technical issues, the approaches to teaching technique is mostly agreed on. In piano teaching, the situation is altogether different. There are studies that indicate that many teachers do not teach technique in any systematic fashion (Knerr, 2006, pp. 1–5). Many teachers report that they mainly figured out technical challenges by themselves, and that they have no clear vision of how to teach these capabilities to their students, and that they have few words to describe what they actually do when technical challenge arise.

3.1.4 An outlook from the piano bench

It is not possible to give any fair account of how piano teaching is conducted in the SMPA. Every municipality has its SMPA, and the teaching will depend on the individual teachers and

how they choose to interact with each other and the students. Within the piano section there is a lot of diversity in choice of teaching method and style, and the possibilities to gain insight about how other teachers conduct their teaching duties are scarce. The insight I have got is when teaching is discussed in meetings and seminars. What I can do is to sum up some of my own experiences briefly, but also drawing on teaching and learning experiences, some part of my own musical upbringing, which are not connected to the SMPA in particular, but which are nonetheless part of what we could loosely define as a traditional approach to instrument teaching, and which constitutes experiences that are common within the piano teacher profession, and that to some degree live on in how I conduct my own teaching.

Teachers in the piano division of the SMPA profit from being able to choose style of teaching and method. This is an asset. It provides the teacher with to choose a method and teaching style, drawing on experiences and ideas that may come from anywhere. It can be challenging, though, especially for the inexperienced teacher just starting out. Piano teaching lacks a standard curriculum, and the last couple decades it has become more common to teach styles which were previously excluded. These styles may challenge teachers, who are beyond their comfort zone when teaching music that is not part of the classical tradition. There are few common ways to teach technique, some teachers prescribe exercises and scales, some stress the importance of correct and consequent fingerings, some teach different touches, some find articulations important, some discuss interpretation in connection with movements, some teach movements, some find them unnecessary. Some do all of the aforementioned, some do not. There is a lack of commonality regarding piano teaching, which may be one of the reasons I found the Suzuki Method so attractive when I first encountered it.

A typical teaching lesson progresses: It involves a child playing some assigned piece from the week before, and the teacher comments on his playing. The teacher may suggest solutions to technical problems, comment on interpretation, dynamics, articulation, and assign some additional measures of the piece for next week. These measures are often reviewed at the lesson, which makes the assignment for the coming week clearer, and help the student start the assignment. Each part of this simple sequence contains dilemmas and difficulties. Should the teacher comment on every mistake or just some of them? Should the teacher give some praise, to avoid the child leaving feeling miserable. Does the teacher have the necessary competence to effectively address the technical problems that the students are encountering? When I went to the conservatory the analysis of technical problems were minimal, and each student were supposed to overcome the difficulties in that regard on their own. That may

work with especially gifted, dedicated and hard-working students with supportive, wise and dedicated parents, but what about all the others? Regarding interpretation, should the teacher discuss the musical value, or the expression of certain passages, or just focus on helping the student to acquire the technical means necessary to express herself. Dynamics and articulation would require the students to execute special movements and touches, and the question is how the teacher works with the student to help develop these abilities.

Besides this, which easily would occupy most of the time in a lesson, the student is supposed to learn to read music, acquire some basic music theory to how chords function, how a lead sheet can be rendered at the piano, understand Italian expressions in a music score, be somewhat comfortable with key and time signatures, and be able to play melodies they are humming, and improvise at compose.

Some students may be able to pick up some of this knowledge, and some of these skills while studying on pieces, but to become skilled it would require a separate program for most students. Some students become quite good at reading music, without a specialised and systematic program, but they are few, and a self-respecting teacher cannot be satisfied because some of her students actually learn to read music. The SMPA has to provide tuition that makes sure that most students learn to read music, and this will require planning and deliberate practice. The same goes for improvisation, chord playing, and a working understanding of theory. If they are not integrated in a long-term planning, most students will not pick it up. It is very easy to use all available time without reflecting too much on how the lesson is arranged, and what would be probable long-term outcomes. It is easy to let events at the lessons like the student's technical problems, reading mistakes, misunderstandings, and any of all possible incidents that may be part of the lesson become the one overshadowing factor, that affect all other considerations. If the teacher manages to make every lesson a part of a long-term educational path it would constitute an important counter-measure to this scenario. It would provide necessary guidance and structure, faced with the kind of chaos that may arise in a lesson.

Are the pieces assigned related to such a plan? How much time of the lesson is devoted to reviewing new material in the new piece. Reviewing new material will reduce time available for reading skills, theory and technique. It may also diminish the student's reliance on reading music, on the student's ability to cope with challenges, it may lead to diminished student activity, and the skills necessary to take on work independently will most likely be reduced in the long-term. The long-term consequences of such an approach is often that the student

becomes ever more reliant on the teacher. Reviewing new material is not wasted time, but maybe it should be restricted to specific bars, where experience has shown that challenges arise. Reviewing such material may prevent technical issues from causing problems, and it may lead to fewer mistakes, so that the student steers clear of practicing errors. Practicing errors must be compensated with much more correct practice to ‘overrule’ the faulty practice, and I sometimes choose to ignore poor fingerings, if I know that a change would mean unrealistic amounts of practice on behalf of the student.

Most piano methods books have little to offer regarding how to develop appropriate piano technique. Some students figure out technique more or less on their own, other students need thorough and systematic instruction, and many piano teachers do not know how to address technical difficulties. Many successful teachers have had few technical struggles, and beyond showing their students the correct movements, they may have difficulty to point out exactly what the student does wrong and provide working solutions. Julia Knerr observes that while there are many books covering piano technique, there is yet a standard curriculum to be established. (Knerr, 2006, p. 3)

The beginners are the most challenging, the most difficult and the most rewarding students in the sense that how they begin their piano lessons will mean a lot to their relationship to music, to music lessons, and to playing an instrument. The teacher has to make sure that they develop adequate skills concerning technique, musicality, listening skills, self-reliance, and that the foundation to further build their skills is suitable. Over the years, I know that I changed many of my approaches towards beginners, and often questioned if I have managed to set free the student’s potential, which is the central question. The piano teacher will make many mistakes throughout his career, but the hope is that it gradually becomes better at teaching. The piano-teacher must make his own experiences, and it will take time to develop long-term plans that are appropriate for every student.

Now we come to the part of the study where we look at the opening chapters in the RfK, followed by a comprehensive summary of sub-chapter 3.3: *Music curriculum*. The other parts of chapter three are curriculum for the other arts, such as dance, creative writing, visual arts and theatre.

There are five chapters in the document, the first describes the fundamental values of the SMPA, the second the principles and guidelines, the third outlines the curriculum for music, creative writing, theatre and the visual arts. The fourth chapter is very short and sums up how

quality standards are maintained, the fifth chapter is likewise very short and sums up the main concerns of the document, its addressees and authors.

3.2 RFK CHAPTER 1: FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

This chapter expresses some of the values upon which the educational goals are based. Questions concerning the essence of music and why it should be part of education have been discussed by philosophers for as long as there has been philosophy. Some of the oldest artefacts that have been excavated are musical instruments, which proves that the need to perform or pursue a musical interest must have had a strong attraction for a very long time. SMPA states that it bases its rationale for supporting children's education in music and the performing arts on some paragraphs from the UN Convention on the Rights of Children, and the UN Convention of Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The RfK uses five keywords that describe its intentions: perceive, participate, experience, emphasize and excel. RfK describes its values as *humanistic*, and state that the education in art and music is meant to further community, freedom of expression, human dignity and democracy.

It also supports the human's capacity for expression and sense of form, developed through education. As the chapter unfolds, the focus changes from these very broad values, to more specific goals and aims. SMPA wishes to provide high-quality education to learn, experience, create and communicate. It also wishes to provide a pathway for those who wish to become more deeply involved in the arts when reaching upper secondary school. SMPA may also become a part of Cultural Rucksack² productions. RfK stresses that SMPA's ability to mix children across age groups may enrich the learning environment and establish networks between students from different age-groups, which is mostly hard to facilitate in primary and secondary school. RfK wants to promote self-development through art, further *Bildung*, educate towards respect for cultural identities, promote the awareness of one's own identity, develop critical reflection and general life skills. It also offers itself as a resource for the local cultural life, and functions as a part of the cultural infrastructure. It wants to promote these values and goals by including and accommodating ethnic groups and represent cultural diversity through its activity.

The collaborating possibilities should be utilised between teachers, students and on administrative levels between primary and secondary schools and the SMPA. SMPA should

² Cultural Rucksack is an arts program designed for primary and secondary school. This arts program often implies collaboration between school and the artists.

also seek collaboration with local cultural organisations, which offer children and young people opportunities to become acquainted with local democratic organisations. Such meeting places may become positive forces and provide role-models in these children's lives.

When such meetings take place between local cultural organisations and the SMPA, the latter provides high-quality instructional assistance, whereas as the local ties keep up local tradition, while interdependency is strengthened and quality is heightened.

3.3 RfK CHAPTER 2 PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS (SMPA)

This chapter outlines in some detail the responsibilities of every municipality according to the Education Act, section 13-6. It addresses topics such as the recruitment of qualified teachers, the provision of facilities, implementation control procedures and the development of local curricula based on the framework provided by the RfK. The administrator of the SMPA is to work systematically to ensure high standards.

One responsibility of the SMPA stressed by the RfK is to engage with primary and secondary school, and with all kinds of musical groups like bands and choirs both professional and amateur. This strategy should establish a broad and holistic area that will provide fertile ground for the children's artistic development and accord them recognition of their skills and knowledge outside the SMPA. The RfK claims that this interaction with the local community may have a major impact on students' motivation.

Another topic of importance to the RfK is the collaborative effort that goes into the learning environment in which the student is immersed. The first cooperation mentioned is that with parents/guardians. An ongoing contact between SMPA and parents/guardians is critical for the student's success, and the student's development, well-being, attendance, classroom effort and home practice must be discussed. The teacher must articulate clear expectations and goals, and parents and teachers must work together to motivate students in developing their artistic expression outside the context of instruction. The personal, artistic growth and the craftsmanship of the students is considered the most important aspect of arts education. The teachers at SMPA must teach students to take responsibility for their own efforts and their practice routines between lessons.

Some SMPAs have a long tradition for teaching parents and children in the same classes. This is a way to stimulate to the work between lessons. The "Rett på musikken" (Instantly towards

music) didactic method inspired by Suzuki and briefly described on page 61 is an example of a method where children and parents start playing an instrument in the same class.

The primary arena for the students' learning is at home, at the student's practice sessions. However, the RfK also calls for learning experiences outside the home, as it is a goal to establish as many varied experiences of learning and performing as possible, because this will bolster development. The student's participation goes hand in hand with the student's motivation. It is important for teachers and parents alike to stimulate the students to make choices, seek to fulfil their artistic goals and to partake in their own learning and their outcomes, so that they gain influence over their learning processes.

The collaboration between primary and lower secondary school and the SMPA is once again brought into focus, and RfK stresses that this collaboration ensures that the highly qualified SMPA teachers can enhance the quality of the learning environment for the students.

Assessment for learning is mentioned briefly, and the importance of feedback, guidance and student-teacher conferences are stressed as important factors contributing to the student's development and growth.

A third of this chapter is devoted to the question of the teacher's roles, the teacher's qualifications and how to develop and maintain quality within the SMPA. The teacher is at the core of SMPA activity, as educators, leaders, organisers, but also as performers, sources of inspiration and culture bearers. There are many competences that the teachers are expected to have: Artistic, didactic, communicative, reflective, interpersonal and competence concerning leadership, lesson planning, assessment and work ethic. RfK stresses the importance of the teacher being able to combine teaching with performing, and that the teaching staff continuously work towards developing local curricula, by which also the profession will develop.

Teachers must have at least 120 ECTS credits in the arts to qualify, and the post assigned to administrative staff require the same qualifications as for teaching positions; in addition they need adequate management training or managerial experience.

RfK states that the teaching quality should be a theme that is continuously discussed at the SMPA. The factors listed as directly influence teaching and learning quality are: the student's effort, the relationship between teaching goals and implementation of various programmes, the learning environment, teaching skills and cooperation between colleagues, and

pedagogical development. External factors from outside that influence quality are: Admission procedures, the volume of teaching hours and organisation of teaching, equipment and facilities and the use of resources.

Being a relatively new institution, the RfK claims that a continuing effort is needed to develop the curriculum, and to generate knowledge that can enhance the quality of the institution. It further claims that it is vital for the staff at the SMPA to be given the opportunity to pursue a supplementary education in curriculum development.

3.4 RfK CHAPTER 3 CURRICULUM - INTRODUCTION

In addition to an introductory chapter, the Curriculum chapter is divided into five different sections, each covering one main subject: music, creative writing, theatre, dance and visual arts. They are constructed in the same manner, using a common template.

The introduction sketches out the various main programmes offered by the SMPA: The breadth, the core and the depth programme. In the Bergen SMPA the breadth programme consists of a project called the 'culture carousel', where a couple of teachers from the SMPA collaborate to create a programme for children who participate in after-school day care.

The core program represents the main activity of the SMPA. The student enrolls in a long-term educational activity, and the results come after the systematic training of skills that normally span over several years. This part of the SMPA is concerned with offering an educational path suited for children who are willing to engage in this educational activity without being especially dedicated. The programme should be a way to recruit those students who want to deepen their engagement and pursue the more challenging educational pathway provided by the 'depth programme'.

The depth program is designed for student who want to engage in more challenging tasks, spent more of their time, and attend more classes. This program also often implies a richer learning environment, as students who attend this program get to collaborate with other students and get to know more teachers with special competency. They are provided with more teaching resources and have more possibilities to perform in interesting and challenging settings.

The SMPA claims that society today makes it easy for young people to slip into the role of a passive consumers, and the SMPA wants to act as a counterweight, emphasise cognitive, emotional and motoric training through the arts, and develop awareness and self-expression. It

wants to heighten the student's awareness of the cultural heritage that surrounds him or her, and human experience lies at the heart of the education the SMPA can offer. When students leave the SMPA it is important to know the reasons and understand the goals and wishes of the student. A well-organised buddy system can provide a social network that strengthen the ties to other students and provide positive development for both parts.

The RfK compare the arts to a wide range of languages. These languages evoke thoughts, associations and ideas. We can play, sing, shape, write and dramatize, we can listen, interpret and imagine. The students learn by training their skills, but also through theory, explanations and through experience and reflection. 'The arts touch upon basic conditions for human existence, and therefore the arts are fundamental in raising children and young people' (Norsk kulturskoleråd, 2016, p. 27). Assessment is central to the learning/teaching process, and students need continuous feedback. But also teachers should be assessed, and the RfK recommends to develop routines for systematic peer guidance.

3.5 RfK CHAPTER 3 – MUSIC CURRICULUM

Chapter 3 contains the curriculums for music, dance, creative writing, theatre and visual arts, but here I will only outline the music section. It starts with an introduction that mostly reiterates arguments mentioned in earlier chapters. RfK wants the music programme to provide a 'long-term sensory-motor, technical and expressive training'. The music-classes in SMPA constitute a 'vital undercurrent for higher education in music, for local and regional music life, and professional music-making'. The classes are meant to help the student 'reach his or her potential', likewise to support students who might seek higher-level education. The student is seen as a human having potentials that must be developed through *performing, communication, listening, reflecting* and *creating*. These actions are key aspects of the RfK, and it is a new addition when comparing with previous published RfKs, where values and goals were stated less pointedly. These aforementioned actions are also visualised using a model, which is described as a planning and assessment tool. It is called *the subject learning wheel* (see page 30), which is inspired by *The Writing Wheel* from 'Skrivesenteret' (The Writing Centre, the Norwegian Centre for Writing Education and Research). The students must be encouraged to involve actively in their own learning processes. RfK points out that students must be prepared for a globalised world, and the SMPA prepares students to develop skills in becoming 'value-aware and responsible human beings and developing personal expression and empathy'. The preparation the SMPA can offer should teach students to 'cope

with attention to the individual, and with pressure resulting from high expectations and demands for “staging oneself” in a modern world.’ Playing in bands and ensembles encourages students to listen to each other, and in order to play well together they have to listen, but also make their own voice heard.

The linkage to local culture is once again stressed. The SMPA wishes to assist budding musicians in their path towards musicianship, but also stresses the overall importance of music-making as an intrinsic artistically value, and the personal benefits that are derived from involvement with music. These values are on a personal level: ‘mastery, self-expression, cognizance, wonder, discovery and interaction.’

Music in our day is comprised of influences from all over the world, and characterised by a ‘massive diversity of musical genres, ethnicities and artistic expressions. This makes music an opportunity to create new cultural meeting points for sharing artistic expression. It can span not just the diversity across different cultural realms, but also through different times, thus bridging the tension between the past and the future.

To RfK the ideal teacher understands and masters both the interpretative, classical music tradition, and ear-based traditions. RfK also stresses the need for teaching of instruments that are lacking recruitment.

‘Multicultural expressions’ and ‘multi-disciplinary combinations of music, visual expressions, text and expressions of movement’ can strengthen the cultural understanding of freedom of speech, according to RfK.

The most important aims for the SMPA teaching is that the student attains skill, experiences joy of mastery and positive self-development, becomes an independent music-maker with a life-long love for music and an active listener. Additionally, he or she should acquire skills in interacting and cooperating, gain opportunities to specialise in order to prepare for upper secondary and higher music-education, become a resource person and contribute to a vibrant local culture.

3.5.1 The subject learning wheel

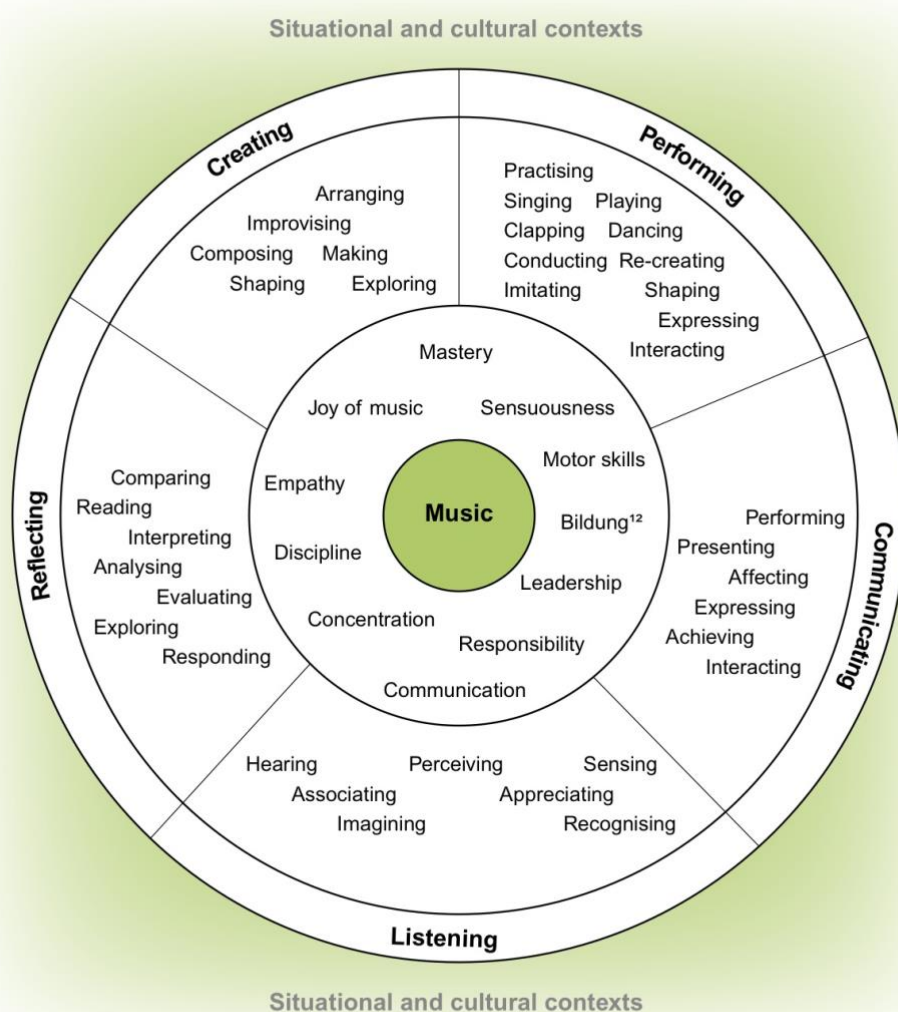
This model is inspired by *The Norwegian Centre for Writing Education and Research*, affiliated with NTNU in Trondheim, and directed by the *Directorate for Education and Training*.

The learning wheel is meant as an illustration of ‘the possibilities and potentials of music as a form of expression.’ The outer circles list the five possible actions: *performing, communicating, creating, listening and reflecting*. The next circle exemplifies different activities within each category of actions. The inner circles state the name of the discipline (music) surrounded by the values developed through musical activities. Such activities and outcomes are framed by context, indicated by a green area marked ‘Situational and cultural contexts’ and placed outside the subject learning wheel.

The subject learning wheel is intended as a reflection tool that may help us see the many different aspects that come together in music education. As a side note I would like to mention Grethe Rasmussen, pianist and head of the department for pedagogy (PPU – a programme that enables bachelor or master students to acquire teaching competence) at the *Barratt Due Music Institute*. She has developed a set of books for the beginning piano student, and she makes very consciously use of the wheel, because they provide a way to reflect upon music and to invite the student into becoming a part of an educational experience that is more diverse, more challenging, and more interesting than piano lessons have traditionally been.

The wheel illustrates many of the events that come together when one is part of a musical experience. Very often many of the actions happen simultaneously, e.g. one could be creating an improvisation that one listens intently to while performing it, noticing and reflecting upon the emotions that are evoked, using emphatic skills to assess how the next (planned) passage may affect listeners or other musicians.

In the public schools three of these actions are included, listening, performing and composing, which means that reflecting and communicating is not included. This may indicate that the SMPA makes deeper involvement with music possible, and that the Bildung aspect is more prominent figured in the curriculum plan.



After this introduction, there follow listings of skills and competencies arranged according to the different levels that make up the student's involvement with the SMPA.

3.5.2 The Breath programme

The learning goals of the breath-programme comprise expectations of the teacher and learning goals of the student. The teacher is expected to create a learning environment that facilitates interaction, experiences and activities, he or she is to emphasis both process and mastering while keeping focus on basic elements, train attention and presence and show willingness to partake in broad networks. The student is expected to learn basic music-making skills, participate actively, learn through play, exploration, experiment and reflection, become familiar with musical terms and concepts, gather experience, participate in local cultural life, and take part in the creation of a vibrant, cultural community.

3.5.3 The Core programme

The core program divides the learning process into four different stages, sometimes called phases in the document. These are: the beginner stage, the intermediate, the experienced and advanced stage. In all of them, the training ‘revolves around five key competences: practising, performing, listening, reading and creating’. Each of these competences has its own aims. The listed competencies comply closely with the actions of the subject learning wheel but communicating and reflecting have been swapped with practicing and reading. *Practice*: The student must learn to be his or her own teacher, plan and implement music practice, hone listening skills, and use it as feedback. ‘A substantial amount of time needs to be allocated to practising.’ *Performing*: Music-making is about self-expression and affecting other people’s feelings. Many skills, including communication, concentration, presentation, coping with stress, and concert production go into this. *Listening*: This skill involves hearing, analysing, interacting, imitating and improvising. The ability to transcribe music, to appreciate music and to listen critically to one’s own playing all presuppose good listening skills. *Reading*: Learning the musical sign language means perceiving, interpreting and understanding music, discovering meanings and structures contained in the music. This should be balanced with the ear-based music traditions. Sight-reading skills should be encouraged. *Creating*: The student is to explore creative possibilities within a span from intuitive improvisation, via song writing and composition, to exchanging musical ideas in ensembles. In addition, possible creative outlets make use of skills in music technology, sound design and concert production. Students should also be able to use notation to preserve and share musical ideas.

The expectation to the teacher, and the learning goals are in a column that spans two pages, basically a long list. Whereas as the expectations and learning goals of the breath programme took up half a page, in the core programme the section takes up four pages. Suffice to say, there are quite many proposals, for a single teacher to fulfil all expectations and facilitate all learning goals would require quite a few resources. I first list the elements that are relevant to the Suzuki Method, then I briefly sum up most of the remaining expectations and goals, to give an impression of what the RfK wishes to encourage.

3.5.4 Phase 1: Beginning phase

At the beginning level the teacher is to focus on music experience and interaction in ensembles. The beginner’s attention and observation skills are to be strengthened. The foundation for optimal instrument technique is to be laid, and the teacher must cooperate closely with parents. The beginner should learn to imitate and learn melodies and rhythm

patterns by ear. The beginner practices regularly and establishes good routines in cooperation with parents and the teacher. There are many more learning goals, some of them may a little improbable as e.g. ‘composes, conducts and notates melodies’.

3.5.5 Phase 2: The intermediate phase

The teacher focuses on positive energy and the joy of music. Ensemble experiences are facilitated and the development of basic technique is supported. Many other expectations are listed: promote body awareness, help connect ear training and music-theory with music-making, use central space for the student’s compositions and improvisations, strengthen music-reading skills, elementary music-theory, relevant background and history. Encourage open-mindedness towards different musical genres.

The student should actively listen to his or her own playing, sight-reads simple pieces and is able to demonstrate basic instrument technique, practices in various ways, with perseverance and solution-oriented. Concerts are performed on different arenas. In addition, the student improvises on the basis of chord progression and scales, utilises music-technology when composing, but also composes on her own instrument, plan concerts in collaboration with teacher and peer students. The student is able to connect music theory with music that is rehearsed, triads, scales and intervals are used as tools in the process.

3.5.6 Phase 3: The experienced stage

It is expected that the teacher facilitates further technical development, but that musical communication and expression are at the centre of the lesson. Participation in ensembles and concert productions should be facilitated. In addition, the teacher should focus on body awareness, ear training and theory should connect with the act of performing, space should be reserved for creative processes as improvising, composing and arranging, and the teacher should introduce ‘experiences of art that challenge the student’.

The student memorises and plays complex musical sequences, assesses his or her own music making, reads graphic notation and other forms of notation, plan concerts with the teacher, demonstrates functional instrument technique, plans practice sessions together with the teacher. In addition, she improvises on the basis of various techniques and traditions, listen and reflects to different types of music, reads body language, makes music videos, records music, develops musical material and composes, alone or in collaboration, understands basic anatomy and the dangers of repetitive strain and its relation to injuries, records practice sessions as practice method, performs and interprets an extensive repertoire, based on an

understanding of genre and style, cooperates to integrate different art disciplines, performs concerts with a wish to communicate and express him or herself.

3.5.7 Phase 4: Advanced level

The teacher is expected to emphasize high-level instrument technique, facilitate participation for artistic cooperation across instrument types and disciplines, prepare the student for auditions and entrance test, and encourages the student's self-leadership, supporting his or her effort to establish work and practice routines.

The student is able to imitate and transpose melodies using methods for ear-based analysis and mnemonic peg. The student is able to read and apply a wide range of information from the score, and is able to prepare long-term practice plan and work continuously on optimising practice methods. She or he instructs and rehearses with small ensembles and performs solo recitals. Furthermore, the student is now supposed to be in charge of planning, performing and presenting concerts.

3.5.8 The Depth programme

The Depth programme is built upon the phases in the Core programme but are overall considerably strengthened. The teacher is expected to facilitate high-level artistic development, extensive ensemble and concert experiences, support cooperation between parents/guardians, the student and the teacher. Furthermore, the teacher should encourage independence, discipline and structure, offer inspiration, introduce new impulses, support personal development and artistic awareness, assess processes and product with the student, and emphasises on a good and healthy bodily physiology.

The student is able to demonstrate high-level instrument technique and has a well-developed musical ear. The student has extensive concert experience, ensemble work and concert productions, and has established solid strategies for practicing and rehearsing, and reflect upon her musical development. The student is a good role model for other students and masters a wide and varied repertoire on her instrument. In addition she is able to use appropriate music terminology, master relevant compositional principles, applies various techniques for warm-up, relaxation and concentration, and is prepared for entrance test and higher level music education.

3.5.9 Content

The topics that constitute the subject content is ordered according to the key-competences mentioned earlier. Under the competence *practice*, the topics listed are: Body-awareness,

technique, rehearsal methods, mental training, practice strategies, self-leadership, ensemble and group leadership. Topics that relate to *performing* are: Communication, mastery, concert production, choice of repertoire, recording and music videos, cooperation and ensemble playing. The competence *hearing* has the following topics listed: Associative and reflective listening, ear-based analysis, imitation and transcription, playing by ear, improvising, transposing, ensemble playing, pitch placing and tuning. Under *reading*: Notation and music reading, melodic, harmonic and rhythmic, absolute and relative methods of reading, rehearsal techniques, analysis, music history, music theory, musical style and genre familiarity, knowledge of repertoire. *Creating* encompasses: Improvising, composing, arranging and ‘giving shape to’.

Besides ensemble play is promoted, the opportunity to perform in concerts is encouraged right from the beginning stages, to include historical and cultural heritage in projects and production is seen as important. The possibility of arranging special supplemental courses for students in the Core or Depth programme is highlighted, which could include composer’s workshop, song writing, theory classes, dance courses, classes in lighting and sound and specialisation in music listening skills.

The content must also provide opportunities for the students to reflect on historical and cultural context, the students are encouraged to think critically, ask questions, verbalise and recognise music importance for human beings.

When choosing repertoire one should have in mind that it should encourage the student’s emotional involvement, have artistic qualities, improve instrument technique, has clear structure and be appropriate to the development stages, it should develop awareness of timbre, key, form, harmony, melody or rhythm, and be suitable for ensemble playing.

3.5.10 Work methods and organisation

The teacher is expected to master a wide range of methods that relate to practice, technique, rhythm, timbre, expression, ear training, improvisation, musical understanding and memorising. The teacher would benefit from developing methods to connect theory with music making.

The student plans home practice, reflects on processes, does listening assignments answers theory assignments, prepares question, collects repertoire and more, which is documented in a *student’s workbook*. The workbook may be used in assessing the student’s efforts and development.

The following methods are applied in music education: teacher instruction, imitation, student's independent effort, ensemble playing, experimental methods, play-based methods, master classes, project work, and utilising digital tool. The methods used should be discussed among teaching.

The subject wheel, the five competences, and different models for organising education will provide a broad supply of learning activities.

Different styles music connects to different learning traditions. Classical music is based on music reading and the interpretation of a score, while most other music styles are based on oral, ear-based and imitative tradition. Students should try to get the most out of both traditions.

Collaborative teaching is promoted, the same goes for workshop, master classes, and the concept of overlapping lessons. Mixing of older and younger students is a promoted as a possibility, and that older students take on responsibility for the younger ones. Cooperation with other art disciplines are likewise encouraged.

3.5.11 Assessment for learning

Assessment is crucial for learning, and students need to receive feedback. *Learning goals:* Students need to understand what they are about to learn. *Learning-supportive feedback:* when they receive feedback on the quality of their performance and receive guidance on how to improve. *Discussions regarding quality:* As a means to getting the students involved in their own learning processes. *Peer and Group assessments* help students give and receive feedback in a safe environment. *Student and teacher conferences:* Are a natural part of the Core and Depth programme, and are an arena where development, practice routines, challenges, work effort, results, well-being and ambitions can be discussed. *Milestone validation:* These represent 'stations' on the learning path, reaching them can provide a opportunity for celebration. *Self-assessment* should be encouraged from day one, and it is seen as important that the student acquires the capacity to assess his or her own music-making. Realistic assessment of what is mastered and what represents challenges can structure the learning process. Checklists, practice diaries and log are tools for increasing students' awareness of their own development.

3.6 SOME COMMENTS TO THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

There is some distance between the RfK and the daily work at the SMPA, because the document only describes overall structures, goals, rights and aspirations. The document relies each school's competence to set appropriate goals, to provide a long term educational path for their students, and to be competent to use methods and techniques suitably. This is work that has to be done in the piano division of the local schools, and the individual teacher have to implement them in their teaching.

4 UNDERSTANDING THE SUZUKI METHOD

4.1 ORIGINS

4.1.1 Biography of Shinichi Suzuki

Shinichi Suzuki was born in 1898 in Nagoya, Japan and he died 1998. He was born as the third son of Masakichi Suzuki, the man who built the first violin factory in Japan. The time Masakichi lived in Japan was an age of rapid change in which Japanese culture and way of living was completely changed, years of isolation and feudalism were replaced with openness, trade, industrialisation, modernisation and imperialism. The Japanese had experienced the overwhelming power of Western civilisation, and how Western companies had forced China to open up its borders to make room for the opium trade. The Japanese government thought at the time that embracing Western values, policies and culture was as the only chance for Japan to withstand the power of Western countries, and to ensure that Japan managed to keep its independence. Shinichi's father was a man who took advantage of these rapid social transformations, and who saw opportunities everywhere.

Most accounts of Suzuki's life are based on his most well-known book: *Nurtured by love*. This book was never meant to be an auto-biography. He actually wrote an auto-biography, *Aruite kita michi*, but, as Margaret Mehl claims, it provides little new information about his early life (Mehl, 2009, p. 3).

Shinichi was thus born into a family who had embraced the process of Westernisation brought about by the Meiji revolution, which also promoted Western music and its musical instruments. But although there were violins laying all around (and the children used to hit each other with them when they were small), it was far from obvious that Shinichi should take an interest and educate himself as a musician and teacher. He did not receive instrumental lessons until he was an adult, and his acquaintance with the violin began because he was fascinated after hearing a recording, the violinist Micha Elman playing Ave Maria by Franz Schubert. Although he lived in a household where violins were everywhere, he had not really heard a great violinist play the instrument before his father one day came home with a primitive gramophone player, the type without electricity. This device changed Suzuki's perception of the violin, he took one home from the factory and started to practice, without any other goals than to be able to play a Minuet by Haydn. Suzuki recollects this as being before he graduated from Commercial School.

Suzuki's father initially did not approve of young Suzuki becoming a violin student, one reason being that this was not considered a worthwhile occupation for a man. After graduating from Commercial School, he started working in the export section of the family factory, in line with the future that his father had envisioned for him. But Suzuki never became a part of the violin factory.

In his *Nurtured by Love*, Suzuki describes a few key events, that in his own retrospect changed the course of his life. When attending Nagoya Commercial School, Suzuki becomes popular with the other students. He is chosen as the pitcher on the baseball team, and he is elected student representative for his class all four years he went to this school. One thing that makes a profound impression him, and which he describes in *Nurtured by Love*, is an inscription on the wall: "Character first, skills second." A framed calligraphy of this motto was on display in the auditorium. This principle is still deeply inscribed in my heart, as a torchlight that illuminates the path of my life". (Suzuki, Selden, & Selden, 2013, p. 84)

Suzuki first became a violin student in Tokyo, where he lived in a room in the Togugawa estate, and attended lessons by a violinist named Andō Kō for two years. She was a pioneering Japanese violinist, and she was one of the few Japanese violinists who started to play as a child at that time. Suzuki began as a young adult, which was a much more likely scenario in Japan around 1910–1920. Suzuki was 'discovered' by Andō Kō's sister Kōda Nobu by chance on a trip, and for this reason, Suzuki came to study with Andō Ko in Tokyo. Andō Kō and her sister Kōda Nobu were the first Japanese to be sent abroad by the Japanese government to learn to play violin. Andō Kō herself studied in Berlin, where she was a student of Joseph Joachim.

Suzuki is invited by a friend who supports his aspiration to become a musician to join him on a trip to Europa, and Suzuki starts taking violin lessons in Berlin for eight years. His teacher is Karl Klingler, a former student of Joseph Joachim. He also meets his future wife Waltraud Prange and marries her in 1928. She later became a very important part of the Suzuki organisation, as she handled the correspondence and translated the writings of her husband (*Nurtured by Love* was translated by her). Upon returning to Japan the same year he founds the Suzuki String Quartet, pursues a career as musician and works as a teacher at the Imperial School of Music in Tokyo.

The family business struggled in the years leading up to World War II, and Shinichi had no other choice than to provide support for his family by engaging in work outside the violin factory.

In 1931 Suzuki is approached by a father of a 4-year-old boy who asks Suzuki to teach violin to his son. Suzuki is a little reluctant, until then he has not worked with children, and never so young. He ponders how he should approach the task and while he rehearses with the Suzuki Quartet he has a revelation. Although nobody consciously teaches children their native language, they all speak it very well. How about teaching other topics and skills the same way children get the command of their language? Suzuki starts experimenting with these ideas and it is an interesting coincidence that the 4-year-old boy he has started to teach is Toshiya Eto, who later became Japan's first prominent concert violinist. Suzuki takes on other students, young children who are exposed to this new approach to violin teaching. The first student is not the only one to gain success, amongst these early pupils was also Koji Toyoda, who later became the concert master of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Suzuki clearly enjoyed working with small children and had considerable success as the merits of these early students indicate. While Suzuki was still teaching at the Imperial School of Music, his wife notices that their home often looked like a kindergarten. It is in the 1930s that Suzuki develops his concept of Talent education (Which is the name the Japanese term for the Suzuki Method), Suzuki prefers to call it *the mother tongue method*. It is not a school for the exceptionally talented, the idea is that every child has some talent that can be nurtured as long as one structures the child's environment in such a manner that makes development possible.

After the war, Suzuki gets an offer from Matsumoto where some of the residents wanted to establish a music conservatory in the town. A former acquaintance from the Tokyo music school wrote to Suzuki and asked if he could help establishing such a school. Suzuki answered that he would like to join, but he wanted to teach young children, and not to engage in what he called remedial education, as he felt that he had mostly done when teaching in Tokyo. His conditions were accepted and that was the start of the talent-education movement, centred around the Matsumoto Academy of Music.

After the atrocities of by the second world war, many Japanese wanted to give their children the prospect of a better life, and playing an instrument was something many people considered to have a deep and lasting value. The violin is small, affordable, it was produced and made available in many sizes by the world's first violin factory, Suzuki instruments. Up until the generation of Suzuki, the Japanese learnt to play violin when they were adolescents

or young adults, but the idea of starting early soon became popular, and was not unknown in other realms, which demanded rigorous training and discipline. There were several competing systems in Japan, besides the Talent Education. A school that was at least equally well-known was established in Tokyo at about the same time as Suzuki's – the Saito's Music school. This method shared several properties with the Suzuki Method such as an early start. In contrast to Talent Education, Saito's goal is to provide and promote a firm theoretical and technical basis for Japan's future musicians. Suzuki did not promote his method as being first and foremost about musicianship.

Suzuki's ideas were in accordance with the slogan he cited in *Nurtured by Love*, the sign at his old school which said *Character first, skills second*. Japan has a long-standing tradition to use the refinement of special skills to pave a way to becoming a better person and an enlightened human. These practices are manifested in skills as diverse as Japanese sword fight (kendō), traditional archery (kyūdō), the tea ceremony (chadō), and Zen Buddhism. The ending syllable 'ō' means 'path' or 'way of'. In English, a literal translation of the word chadō is 'The path of the tea' or 'the way of the tea'. The path means a spiritual path, where constant repetition is used as a means of knowing a skill so well that it can be performed effortlessly, and without the involvement of a conscious mind. Regarding music, Peak cites Gutzwiller who claims that the traditional learning of the shakuhachi (an old, end-blown bamboo flute, traditionally played by Zen monks) involves a 'similar linking' between the study of an instrument and a spiritual discipline (Gutzwiller, 1976, in Peak, 1999, p. 364).

The performance of the Norwegian chess player Magnus Carlsen is often reported as being intuitive, and that he often is at his best when playing rapid chess. This is because he intuitively knows which moves are strong, without anticipating moves ahead, which is the time-consuming part of chess. It is a skilfulness that flow theory tries to explain, when one becomes so good at something, that automation and know-how take over the task of deciding what to do next when involved in a highly specialised task. The Japanese might call this ability *kan*.

4.1.2 Development of the Suzuki organization

The last years of the second world war were very taxing on the Japanese society, and also on the Suzuki family. The factory goes bankrupt on Black Friday, and financial difficulties persevere to the end of war. But they manage to survive and in 1946 Suzuki starts teaching

violin to children in Matsumoto City. In 1948, the school is renamed the Talent Education Research Association. It becomes the main centre for Suzuki violin training in Japan, and Suzuki receives students and teachers throughout the rest of his life. The work he did at developing the method while teaching young children in the 30s, means that he has finished all ten Suzuki books, and by 1940, the method is complete. That being said, he is always open to new ideas and innovations, he wants the method to evolve, and to change and adapt to different times and cultural settings. In his later years, he engages more and more in teacher training.

Talent Education implies that every child has some ability that can be developed. This talent can be nurtured, educated and in time made visible, both to the child and its surroundings. Suzuki famously says that ability grows ability. The thought that everyone has some ability, and that it is mainly the effort which contributes to its blossoming, is a belief system thoroughly grounded in Japanese folklore and fairy tales. There are countless Japanese stories that stress the protagonist's persistence, and how an investment of effort and perseverance helps him winning the prize. This is very different from how fairy tales are constructed in Norway, where the often rather lazy hero may find a dead magpie and an old sole of a shoe, random items that are later being used in a creative way and helps the hero to win his/her prize.

To explain the success of Suzuki's method it is important to keep in mind that the years following the WWII were marked by increasing prosperity in the Japanese society, and Western instruments like the violin became easily available. The Japanese held Western culture and Western music in high esteem, and after the bleakness of the war years, many people wanted their children to take up music in their leisure time. This made for a fertile ground for teaching instrumental music, and Suzuki was not alone in exploiting this occupation.

In addition, the idea of starting an educational path from a very early age, when a subject was considered difficult, was already firmly established as part of ancient Japanese culture. These factors contributed to the popularity and spread of the method of Talent Education within Japan. The factors that contributed to the Suzuki Method's astounding popularity in the Western hemisphere will be discussed later.

4.2 EMPHASES AND UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

A fundamental idea of the Suzuki Method is to create a learning environment imitating the process of first language acquisition. Nobody forces children to repeat words, memorise grammatical rules or awkwardly pronounce unknown words. Quite the opposite, the learning takes place quite naturally, and the parents, without a shred of pedagogical training, are supporting and nurturing this learning process in an effective and encouraging manner. Whereas traditional teaching and schools are often unpopular with students, this initial learning is both joyful and effective, and both children and their parents can thrive in this learning environment.

Suzuki's thinking follows these lines: The process of learning a language is for everyone, and almost everyone has got sufficient talent so as to become expert users of their native tongue. This idea strikes Suzuki as foundational for what he later developed into his violin teaching and learning method. When he called the method *Talent Education*, it implies that every child has talent, some sort of ability, and that it is the teachers' and the parents' job to take on the responsibility for providing an environment where this development can take place. In one of his anecdotes Suzuki tells the story about a mother, who is afraid that her child is not talented enough to learn to play. Suzuki answers with a question: 'Does your child speak well?' When this is confirmed, Suzuki reassures the mother that the boy will be able to play well. In addition to that, Suzuki has several anecdotes about children who have a physical handicap like blindness, and others who have other kinds of problem or who are regarded as being retarded. Suzuki insists upon and claims that also these children can exhibit much progress when they are following the principles implied by the mother-tongue method.

Evelyn Hermann (Hermann, 1999, p. 137) sums up Suzuki's observations about first language acquisition:

1. Words are repeated extensively. No one tires by repetition. When we repeat something for the sake of learning it, we don't repeat the same word. Each repetition approximates the final pronunciation, so that every attempt constitutes a point on a path towards a final goal.
2. Listening starts when the child is born. Nobody would learn the language if they did not listen to it all the time. Nobody "chooses" their native language. It is just there, in the environment.

3. Much praise is given to the child. Everyone is happy for each word, for each new expression, it becomes a social event of much joy, every time something new is achieved, or when former words come more fluently.
4. The children need many opportunities to perform. When they perform, they receive praise.
5. Nothing is discarded. Old words are still necessary and meaningful despite learning new ones. The vocabulary grows.
6. The more the child learns, the easier learning becomes. The words get easier to pronounce, and they are also easier to remember. Suzuki also calls this “Ability breeds ability”.
7. We do not start learning the mother tongue by writing it. We wait until the child is ready.
8. Those who became adept at their language can become orators. But that is not for everyone. You don’t learn your native language for professional reasons

Suzuki translates several principles into the Suzuki Method of Violin teaching as follows:

1. Repetition. Suzuki chooses a curriculum that teaches the basics with the help of familiar melodies, representing what could be called meaningful entities of music, instead of technical etudes with little musical value.
2. The use of recordings. The child should listen to the music as early as possible. Suzuki lived in a time where the recording industry was developing, and this made it possible to disperse music into every home. In that manner the curriculum taught constituted an already familiar environment.
3. Praise the child at every opportunity. Never get angry at the child if it lacks technical or musical skills, but try instead to help the child overcome the difficulties.
4. Let the child perform the pieces. Performance builds confidence, the child starts performing at home for its parents, and later performs at other occasions.
5. Building repertoire. Pieces already learned are not discarded. These pieces that the child already knows and can play, provide the child with gaining complete confidence in their own playing and make it possible for them to execute expert performances.
6. Memorising. Memorising gets easier for each new piece. Expanding the ability to memorise is valued highly by Suzuki, and he trains memory by letting children memorise Haikus in Matsumoto. They soon also gain the ability to write their own Haikus.

7. Reading readiness. When the child has automated good performance habits, the child is ready for learning to read music. Suzuki is convinced that the reading task must be postponed until the playing apparatus is ready. The task of reading music distracts from listening to the sound and to body sensations while learning to play. Additionally, there are other benefits: When the ear is trained, the capacity to memorise is also trained.
8. The education provided by the Suzuki Method provides a good foundation for becoming a musician. But this is not the ultimate goal. Suzuki wants every child to have this experience of producing art, to immerse itself into the composer's mind by playing the composer's piece. This will give the child the chance to develop and become a noble human being, which is what Suzuki considers the only real goal a parent should have.

Another important concept is the idea that the learning process should imply no failures on behalf of the child. Suzuki is opposed to the idea that testing and exams yield other results than a measurement of how good or badly the adults surrounding the child have fulfilled their obligations towards the child. According to Suzuki, all participants in an exam should get the highest mark, and if they fail to do that, the teacher or the parents should be the ones who take on the responsibility. Suzuki acknowledges that some children learn quicker than other children, but every child will eventually reach its goals. Children who do badly at exams will risk losing motivation and the joy of learning, and this will be detrimental to their development.

Nobody coerces children to learn their native language. It is the environment that furthers and fosters the learning of the language, it becomes part of a natural learning process. Most parents do a very fine job learning their offspring how to speak their mother-tongue, but the principles that are guiding the children's first and most important learning process is lost when the child enters formal education. Suzuki insists that sticking to these initial principles will yield superior performance. If parents and teachers surround their children with a stimulating and encouraging environment that fosters and promotes learning and development, Suzuki claims that there is practically no limit to what can be achieved. Suzuki holds the belief that this learning principle may lay the foundations for mankind to achieve world peace.

4.2.1 Ability breeds ability

The child's development dictates the rate of progress. Some children may develop at a faster pace, others need more time, but the ability to develop is nevertheless present. Intelligence is not seen as an innate ability, due to genes and inherited talent. Intelligence is fostered and developed through careful education, and by structuring the environment. Suzuki believed that this insight carries enormous significance. When we grow up, we develop our ability, and not a single one of our talents are innate, they are all developed through our environment (Suzuki et al., 2013, p. 15) The same kind of thinking also explains why he find musical aptitude tests meaningless. According to Suzuki, the only thing that such a test would show, is whether if the child had already started her musical training.

Ability breeds ability. By learning one element thoroughly we lay the foundations for additional learning. Once the child has mastered some aspect of learning, further development is eased, and will thus develop. This process goes on, and results in accomplishment.

4.2.2 Motivation is in the environment

All this learning can be achieved while the child enjoys the learning process. The child does not learn its native language unwillingly. In the same manner, other skills can be taught and fostered, without children being unmotivated or negative. It is possible to teach and learn in a happy and fulfilling manner, where the child enjoys the happiness of achieving new goals.

Suzuki recommends starting the lessons when the child is two or three years old, and this anticipates common Japanese custom by a year or two (Peak, 1999, p. 347).

When a child is so young, the parents are the most important part of their environment. Especially the mother is crucial when the child is about to enter a stage where it will receive violin lessons. These lessons are mostly directed towards the mother, because she becomes the home teacher, taking responsibility for the progress and playing that the child will do during the week. But before the education of the child has reached this point, the child's motivation is attended to:

Lois Peak describes this process when writing about her experiences and research in Japan: When the child approaches three years the mother takes the child to visit Suzuki violin teaching, where all participating children are playing the violin. The mother talks to the child how fun it would be to join in. And she tells the child, that if she is a good child, maybe she will be allowed to join in and play the violin together with the other children.

Of course, a child influenced by this environment will develop a strong wish to become a part of this community. This is maybe the most crucial point concerning the violin method. The child is not coerced or asked to join lessons but introduced to an environment that supports and is centred around making music and playing instruments. The natural reaction is for the child to develop a wish to become a part of this community, especially when it is obvious that the children are enjoying what they are doing in the music class. But for several reasons the child cannot start playing the violin immediately. The child needs a home-teacher, and Suzuki wants the mother to take on the task of becoming one. The mother starts with violin lessons. This has two consequences: firstly, it introduces the mother to basic violin playing and enables her to understand the challenges and difficulties that arises when playing an instrument (Hermann, 1999, p. 43; Peak, 1999, p. 348). The other consequence is that it enhances the child's motivation towards playing the violin. The child continues to attend the lessons as an observer, while the mother is taught how to play the violin. The child is almost brought to the brink of despair, so far has its motivation to play the violin been stimulated. When the violin teacher is convinced that the child is yearning to play the violin, the child can enter the Suzuki group. This period of observation has its roots in Japanese culture: there is a tradition that apprenticeship starts with a period of observation, *mineraï kakan*. Japanese traditional beliefs are supportive of the thought that this level of motivation is necessary to endure and overcome the difficulties that will arise while learning how to play the violin.

4.2.3 The home-teacher

The role of the mother is crucial in Suzuki's thought, because she actually does the teaching of the young child. The teacher does not address the young child, but addresses the mother when pointing out what should be the tasks assigned for the week. When the teacher speaks to the child, it is mostly praise and encouragement. The mother takes care of the assignments, she praises and structures the practice sessions at home and makes sure that the child listens to the tapes, and does the amount of practicing that the teacher requires. She may also be able to help the child on technical issues if she has received sufficient instruction from the violin teacher. The mother's role diminishes in the course of the child's education, but she will still provide encouragement, take on responsibility that the child practices, and that the environment stimulates practicing and listening to music. The violin teacher's instructions will successively be addressed directly towards the child, and the child will gradually take charge of the playing and practicing regime.

The parents are really the ones who uphold and foster the motivation and the children's joy towards playing the violin throughout the week. It is also of importance that the child meets other children, with whom they can become friends and play. It is also important to Suzuki that the children meet students who have come farther, and who become models for the student. Students often learn from each other, and because they have played much of the same repertoire they have experienced the same difficulties.

The teacher is equally very central, because he or she has knowledge of how to organise the education in the most fruitful way. Another important part of the environment is the listening context. Classical music has traditionally been learned utilising sheet music. Suzuki claims that this is not natural, music is about listening and playing, and he introduces the concept of utilising recordings, so that the child's environment can be enriched musically. Suzuki sometimes refer to musicians who perform in recordings as to his other teachers. Suzuki would argue that although classical music has a strong connection to sheet music, music is first and foremost auditory when it comes to its physical manifestation. One of the reasons that children pick up language with such ease, is that it is always surrounded by people using language, utilising it everywhere constantly. The more we surround children with musical information, the more it will pick up and learn from it. Recording brings a unique opportunity to distribute beautiful musical performances, and to make these beautiful recordings part of the child's upbringing.

Abundancy of repetition. Suzuki very much embraces the concept of repetition. Repetition until fluency can be obtained, and a skill is thoroughly mastered. Only then is the Suzuki teacher willing to move on. But when new skills are introduced, the old ones are still worked on, because real mastery demands that the skills are internalised, and that is provided by extended practice over time. Suzuki also emphasise the importance of the repeated listening, and holds that children that struggle to learn a new piece, often have not listened enough. Listening should be how they are introduced to new material, when they learn the new tune, it should already be well known to them.

Progress is never forced; the child dictates the rate of progress. This is what Suzuki calls natural progress. Progress happens because the child is playing music every day, it is part of its natural surroundings, and part of its living enculturation to its environment. Progress grows naturally out of the environment provided for the child.

Enjoying mastering of each step. Each step and the mastery of it should be enjoyable not because of some long-term goal far out in the future, but because it is simply enjoyable in the here and now.

The parents praise and appreciate every step the child takes; they enjoy it and share their enjoyment. The parents provide an environment where the child's progress is always praised, and interest is shown towards the child's playing. It should be without pressure or too high expectations, but rather display interest and praise every step forward.

4.3 UNIQUENESS RELATIVE TO PREVIOUS METHODS

What is and was unique to the Suzuki Method when it first became known in the West and what caused the "Suzuki moment" that 'changed everything' was the powerful evidence of hundreds of children playing what violin teachers considered to be soloist repertoire. This is described by one of Suzuki's early adopters, the violinist professor John Kendall, as astounding, but also disturbing. The latter feeling was evoked because he questioned the training regime that the children attending these mass concerts must have endured to reach this level of ability. Still, Kendall became interested. He went to visit Matsumoto and was greeted by a few hundred children playing Vivaldi's G-minor Concerto. He later wrote that this event brought tears to his eyes and that he realised that nothing was going to be the same in the musical world after that experience(Thibeault, 2018, p. 2).

While earlier methods were structured in a way that would ensure the development of a proper technique and the necessary skills to play an instrument, they were not based on how children perceived the world. Thus, the child centeredness was new in the realm of violin playing. Also, the notion that anyone could learn to play the violin well was alien in a society which very much adhered to the romanticised notion of the genuine artist, the exclusiveness of classical music and that idea that the performance and artistry within the field was for the chosen few. While a previous new method book would, perhaps, alter the way the student would approach an instrument, the Suzuki approach implied much more far-reaching ambitions. The Suzuki Method would alter the whole environment of the child, it would engage teacher, student and parents in a relationship that was called the Suzuki triangle, and it would make sure that the children would hear and experience music every day of its life, as long as it was part of the Suzuki community. Not only would the child develop its fullest potential as a musician, but the point would not mainly be the child's musical abilities, the ultimate goal was the child's character development and the nurturing of a beautiful heart.

The way the Suzuki Method is presented in America is powerful and is something unique in itself. A violin method has never caused so much excitement. Suzuki's method never gained that kind of attention in Japan, neither could the European reception (when the method spread from the US to Europe), match how it was received in the US.

4.3.1 The Suzuki moment in the US

The US provided fertile ground for something new to happen within the community of string education, which had declined and deteriorated in the 1940s. The short film ignited a vogue of interest, and was at the time seen by many violin teachers as a way to overcome the shortage and poor quality of string education in the United States. (Yoshihara, 2008, p. 41). Some changes had already taken place to counter this tendency, for example, the founding of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA). When Suzuki came to visit the ASTA's annual convention in 1964, Paul Rolland, who was one of the most central individuals in ASTA and a well-known string pedagogue, wrote:

It was the playing of the Suzuki group which made this convention possibly a turning point in our string education.

We heard the enthusiastic reports of highly reliable witnesses of Suzuki's teaching: John Kendall of Southern Illinois and Clifford Cook of Oberlin, and even of the finest artists—Casals, Szigeti—yet we still had to hear this group to grasp the magnitude of excellence in the playing of these young children After this amazing demonstration, our string teaching fraternity, collectively red-faced, is invited to go into a period of soul-searching and self-appraisal (Ritsema, 1972, p. 44).

John Kendall, Clifford Cook and Paul Rolland were all central in ASTA, and their endorsement of the Suzuki Method contributed to the impact the introduction of the method had on the string education community.

4.3.2 Violin students nurtured by progressive education

Suzuki's attitude toward the craft of violin playing is not revolutionary if one focuses on the technical aspects. Though his entrance into violin pedagogy certainly has had an enormous impact on the teaching of violin playing, and many of his pedagogical ideas have inspired teachers outside the Suzuki teaching community.

What is truly new and unique to the method, however, are not the individual components, which virtually all have precedents. The unique part is the how they are combined and applied (Starr, Kendall, Wartberg, Wickes in Mehl, 2009, p. 4). Suzuki is aware that most of his ideas are not new, but they represent an eclectic bouquet of approaches and ideas who are

effective in stimulating musical growth while maintaining a positive learning environment. Suzuki's contribution is his powerful way of introducing these ideas into the tradition of violin education. Montessori is considered a compatible contemporary (Grilli in Mehl, 2009, p. 4) and although many of Suzuki's thoughts and ideas are not new in the context of educational philosophy and ideas, they are certainly unorthodox in the context of violin tutoring.

Suzuki's ideas also imply a shift in focus from the craft to the child. The method is child-centred as illustrated by its opening tune, the Twinkle, Twinkle Variations, which is a well-known musical theme played in various rhythmical variations, allowing the children to utilise the middle of the bow, using short bow strokes. This is easily accomplished by small children. Various traditional methods start with generic types of whole note playing on open strings, an approach that lacks musical attraction for a child, while also being difficult for the beginner, who has to use the full length of the bow.

4.3.3 Structuring of the environment

The careful structuring of the environment was ground-breaking, the fact that caretakers took on the responsibility for the children's motivation was not heard of in the realm of instrument tutoring. The normal thing in the West is to wait for the child showing signs of interest, not making the child motivated. The Suzuki Method is well thought through, and it approaches teaching as a holistic matter: It does not teach music or technique in an isolated manner, but takes on the whole child, its situation at home and with friends. The Suzuki teacher looks out for elements that the child finds enjoyable in the here and now. While encouraging much repetition and ample amounts of playing, it often disregards etudes and instead uses repertoire, games and teaching points and thus keeps the child motivated, as the child finds this learning process enjoyable. If there are problems, if children do not want to practice, the caretakers and the teacher do not look for faults with the child, but first and foremost look for solutions that the caretaker or the teacher can implement. No failure is the main thought, any child can get anywhere, some just need more time. The insistence to make use of children's natural inclinations, and to structure the child's environment so as to maximise the child's educational growth is the prime area where the Suzuki Method presents solutions that makes it effective. The method does this in many ways: It often teaches one 'main teaching point', it provides many opportunities to perform, it realises the importance of repetition, it helps with structuring the environment at home, it provides a community for the child and its parents, it uses encouragement rather than scolding, it promotes a very early start.

4.3.4 Recordings

Thibeault (2018, p. 6) argues that one of the most central aspects of the Suzuki Method is the implementation of recording technology. The recordings offered by the Suzuki Method takes precedence over sheet music, young students who have not established good posture and a rudimentary technique learn by rote. The recordings are part of the environment, which are essential to Suzuki's idea that the child will learn and pick up on things that are present in the environment.

We recall that Suzuki himself became motivated to pick up the violin after being introduced to an early gramophone-player that his father bought. Suzuki became fascinated by the violin, not because he lived with a father who built the first violin factory, but because he got to hear some violin recordings by Mischa Elman. Without any other guidance, without use of the notated score, Suzuki listened intensely to the record and learned to play a Haydn minuet by repeating the recording over and over and by imitating the artist playing on the record. By doing this instead of following a written score, and by repeating his attempts over and over again, Suzuki finally managed to play the minuet. The steps he went through – listening, imitating and repeating – later became the building blocks of the Suzuki Method. (Thibeault, 2018, p. 5).

When Shinichi Suzuki was young, the use of recordings constituted a cutting-edge technology. In his method Suzuki decides to give recordings priority over the written score. Seen in this light, the introduction of recording devices ultimately results in a unique approach toward instrumental teaching. This importance and focus on recordings have a different impact and consequences in the West than in Japan. Some of the criticism that mounts in the West is connected to differences in how countries approach the idea of imitation.

The message that reached the US in the 50s had, and still has, great impact, and by now 400,000 students in 38 countries follow the Suzuki instruction world-wide. As mentioned earlier, the method's popularity in the West is most pronounced in the U.S., where it seemed that many circumstances played together to make the message from Suzuki and his violin playing children very powerful. The method spread rapidly from the U.S. to other Western countries, but the method has also been criticized. Some countries have been more reluctant to embrace the method, most notably Germany, where the uptake has been slow.

4.3.5 Suzuki's philosophical approach

It is important to keep in mind that the origins of the Suzuki Method are mainly based on the thoughts of a practitioner. Although Suzuki was well educated, his main interest was not in educational philosophy, or art philosophy. He enjoyed working with young children, his teaching was successful, and the children were happy playing the violin, and that was not always the case when we think about how instrumental tuition was generally carried out. Still, Suzuki prefers to use the term philosophy rather than method. The use of the term philosophy signals that the method is thought of more as an approach, as a way of thinking, rather than a fixed recipe. Suzuki was always anxious to fixate methodical attitudes and tasks into writing, because he wanted them to be constantly evolving. The methodical aspects of the movement emerge as a kind of loosely fitted practices who themselves may be evolving, and may change depending on the children, the teacher or the social structure surrounding the child. A salient point is that the teachers are to be empowered, and that they leave their personal stamp on the work they do. Likewise, when they make discoveries, Suzuki wants his teachers to share them back into the community of teachers. Through this back and forth exchanges, he sees the whole method evolving for the benefit of the children. The method books (which mostly consist of repertoire) are also being revised, and the new editions are the responsibility of the Suzuki Association. While these books contain instructions on fingering and technique, these writings are not the method/philosophy. How the teacher interprets the Suzuki principles is the responsibility of the teacher and of those who work on the teacher training courses. This was also Suzuki's main occupation when the Suzuki Method became established, he trained teachers at Matsumoto.

And overall difference between methods that came before the Suzuki Method is that while previous methods would tell the student what to do, the Suzuki Method structures the environment in such a manner that everywhere in the environment the child perceives stimulus that urges the child to continue to work on mastering the instrument.

When parents and teachers decide to work according to the Suzuki training, the teacher training and the courses for the parents informs everyone involved which steps that are necessary, in order to increase the likelihood that the student will succeed in his or her efforts to learn to play an instrument. Parents and students who come to the SMPA to learn an instrument will traditionally meet much less detailed instructions towards what is expected from both teachers and students.

4.3.6 Motivational factors

Praise every child at every opportunity. I think that this is meant towards the small children, where Suzuki wants them to be surrounded by happy parents and teachers, and that they should lavish in abundant praise, because this would benefit the child's motivation to play. Research on motivation and its impact on school-related performance has brought up the theme of praise and feedback in later years, both attribution theory (Weiner, 1985, p. 557), mindset theory (Dweck & Master, 2008, p. 41) and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 71) bring up these issues. The main finding of this research is that praise and feedback can have very different effects depending on the motivational factors that are most affected by it: the student's ability or effort. In the former case, praise can be detrimental, because it may cause the student to develop a fear of losing ability. If the praise is directed towards the student's effort, or another factor where the student perceives a level of control, then it is more likely to stimulate to continued effort and perseverance.

Performing together with other children is an important part of the Suzuki Method, and it could be argued that music's embeddedness into a social context is part of music's power as such. For Suzuki, the group lessons and abundant unison playing prepare the children toward performing, while reinforcing music as a socially embedded mean of expression.

The idea to pile up repertoire, and to use the old tunes for all sorts of exercises, while keeping at them and thus perfecting them in performance, is also an important part of the method. This enables the Suzuki students to have lots of songs that they may perform at any given moment, which means that they actually possess pieces they are able to perform, contrary to many music students who forget their old tunes, whenever they start working on a new piece. As a consequence, the only song they usually are able to play alone, or before friends and family, is the last piece they are working on, and that piece is usually only half-finished. Among my own students there are many who keep on playing their favourite tunes, while others are inclined to never revisit old songs unless they are explicitly asked to do so.

4.3.7 Repetition and understanding

Repetition has always been a part of instrumental teaching, is so integral to teaching and learning that the word often translates to *rehearsal* as in Sweden and France. Counter to the concept of repetition is a fear that the child will get bored, so the need for repetition is often somewhat hidden away, the teacher does not always formulate the need clearly, and the child

is often content with playing their *homework* through one time when they practice. The RfK does not mention the concept of repetition at all, other than a literary device.

Education has since the progressive movement shifted its focus from memorisation to inquiry and understanding. The ubiquity of “information at your fingertips”, to lend a marketing slogan from a Microsoft campaign, represented by the dissemination of computers, tablets and smartphones, has reduced the need for utilising one’s memory capacity to the same degree as before the introduction of this technological crutches. In relation to a subject matter where the mastery of the instrument, the individual skill is the main focus, the availability of information “out there” has not had the same impact as on subject matters based on theoretical knowledge. In the education of music, the need for memory, drill and practice is still a cornerstone, and practice is a *sine qua none* of performing musicianship. The idea of drill has been a strong element in music education, as exemplified by publications by the likes of Hanon, Czerny, and countless other authors of technical exercises. Still, within music education, the need for repetition, and the need for committing movements and skills to memory by repeating them many times are poorly communicated by teachers. Howard offers a critique where he claims that the concept of repetition is poorly understood, and that the beauty, the joy of repetition usually downplayed. There is a tendency to equate repetition with mindless drill, whereas the effective use of repetition requires full concentration and a mindful, apprehensive approach. (Howard, 1991)

In the West the introduction of progressive thinking within education may have strengthened the perceived dichotomy between rote learning and learning by understanding. This dichotomy is not as pronounced in East-Cultures, where Confucian writings are committed to memory while children are still young, and unable to grasp the meaning of the texts, but these texts are used later in the children’s education when they have matured and the text’s meaning become more accessible.

4.3.8 Reading vs. listening

The Suzuki Method introduces a shift from reading to listening. Suzuki places the original musical expression at the performance, hence the use of recordings. The classical music tradition focuses on the *work*, as in the written score. The composer is the creative artist, while the performer is an interpreter of the composer and his work, and his mission is to render the composer’s intentions and make the composer’s ideas accessible to the audience. In the classical tradition there has always been a tension between role of the performer and the

role of the composer, some composers relying on the performers' knowhow, as in baroque music, where ornamentation, instrumentation and use of dynamics is placed in the hands of the performer. The performers were also worshipped by their audience, certain Castrati singer and virtuoso instrumentalists like Paganini, Liszt and Rachmaninov were treated like famous rock and popstars. On the other hand, there are composers like e.g. Stravinsky, who insisted that performers should just play what is written in the score and could not stand it if conductors would use expressions like 'my Beethoven 9th', as if their interpretation of the famous composers could match the importance of the work itself. It is an idea which also has generated anecdotes. Brahms is cited for preferring to stay at home reading the musical score, rather than to attend to a live performance. Or theatre buffs who claim that Shakespeare is at his best when sitting at home, reading him in an armchair.

By shifting the child's energy from the task of decoding visual signs to focus on aural and bodily awareness, the beginner is much more likely to actually lay a foundation to master the instrument in due time.

One of Suzuki's main points, we recall, is that his method/philosophy is not about creating successful musicians. This may be puzzling, because one of the main attractions with the method is that it devotes much energy into transforming the child's environment in a way that privileges music, and where music becomes an important factor in the child's social life. But though music is important, the importance it has is as a tool for furthering human kindness and humanity. When the child gains ability, it nurtures *kokoro* (the heart). While the main attraction of the Suzuki Method at least in Western countries has been its effectiveness as a method for teaching the violin, Suzuki's main goal is character development through ability. *This* idea has special affinity in East Asian cultures, where the study of something, it might be bow shooting, tea making, meditation, or playing the shakuhachi, is not a goal in itself, but a vehicle that drives humans along the path to enlightenment. This thought is influenced by Confucian philosophy, but as mentioned earlier, similar ideas have been a part of Western tradition, starting with the writings of Plato.

4.3.9 International popularity and perceived success of method

The Suzuki Method has spread to many countries and has shown to be successful across different cultural settings. There are several reasons for the Suzuki Method gaining popularity outside of Japan: Mehl writes: 'An important reason for the international dissemination of the Suzuki Method lies in the missionary zeal of some of Suzuki's supporters and – not least –

their English language skills. (Mehl, 2009, p. 14) Waltraud Suzuki, who handled most of the correspondence and practical issues of her husband, translated Suzuki's most important book, *Nurtured by Love*, into English. One early supporter, Honda Masaaki, had lived in America during his childhood, and organised Suzuki's visits to the US with some of his students, and continued to organise tours with Suzuki students from Japan until 1994.

Suzuki started his work with children in the 1930s, but his method only became known when Suzuki began to teach in Matsumoto. By then he had developed most of his ideas and assembled the pieces that made up the 10-volume violin school. Suzuki's talent for business was rather limited, and he was not in the lead when it came to promote the method internationally. But there were some coincidences and lucky circumstances, that contributed to his success abroad. His main message, that every child could learn to play the violin well, corroborated by recordings of hundreds of children playing advanced violin concertos astounded and inspired American violin teachers to educate themselves as Suzuki teachers. Many of them travelled to Matsumoto to seek guidance and education from Suzuki himself.

Visual media like film clips are powerful in themselves and got a new and fresh message across. Suzuki message is about naturalness and inclusiveness, the method welcomes anyone, everybody has some talent that can be nurtured and developed. Ability grows ability. The child reflects its environment, and by providing a nurturing environment for the child, the child's abilities can grow. Learning music is not exclusively for the chosen few, for prodigies from musical families. The Suzuki community can be your musical family, and provide the stimulating environment normally only found only in special families.

At this early stage, in this rush of enthusiasm, one became aware of the fact that there was no formal education of Suzuki teachers in America. Anybody could claim to be Suzuki teachers, though many of these teachers had very little experience and knowledge of the method. These circumstances hurt the movement, and it became important to organise some kind of certification system, which serious teachers eventually did. The Suzuki Association of America was founded (in 1972), and serious teachers organised themselves and established training programmes for aspiring Suzuki teachers, and also invited Suzuki himself to give workshops. (Mehl, 2009, p. 14)

The experience the US had with bad teachers, taught the Europeans to have a certification and training system in place from the very onset. The Suzuki Method spread from the U.S. to Europe, and although parents and teachers were inspired and engaged, there is no European

parallel to how the movement stirred up the violin teaching community in the US. Mehl explains this more measured response by the fact that Europe is near to the centre of the Classical music movement. Being so close to the well may explain Europe's scepticism – who are the Japanese or Americans to tell us how we should educate new generations of musicians?

The perception of what we consider mainstream music is constantly changing, according to time and culture. The Suzuki movement has elements that have become more mainstream also among teachers who do not identify as Suzuki teachers. Many of the practical advices of Suzuki have found their way into mainstream teaching practices.

According to the web pages managed by the Norwegian Suzuki Society (Norsk Sukukiforbund), the method was introduced in Norway in the 80s, as a violin teaching method. The Suzuki Method applied to piano teaching started in the 90s, according the same source ('Suzukimetoden', 2016 Suzukimetoden i Norge, para. 1). The question of its Norwegian? spreading becomes therefore two-fold.

Although all these things are important parts of Suzuki's philosophy, what ultimately brought him fame was the success of some of his early students from the 30s. His first student, we recall, was Toshiya Etō, who after being taught at the Tokyo school of music, studied further at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. He eventually went on to become a professor at the same institute, and later returned to Japan and became a very important soloist and professor in Tokyo. He taught very many students who later became musicians and soloists later on. There is some irony in the fact that it was the professional career of some of these early students that made Talent education famous in Japan, while the aims formulated by Suzuki point to the development of humans, to becoming better persons.

The hordes of happy children playing advanced violin repertoire, ignited and inspired violin teachers in America,. and the movements also inspired approaches who might not have been, if not for the Suzuki Method.

What struck the American teachers the most, was the children's young age. These children showed a promise and a talent that usually the typical Western-oriented music teacher would call child prodigies, and exceptional talent. When encountered one by one, this explanation could easily fit, but in this case the children were not specially selected using criteria like exceptionality or talent. These were normal children displaying high ability, and there were a lot of them.

4.3.10 Differences between the American and Japanese variants of the Suzuki Method

In Japan, many of the method's main points fit well with native assumptions and notions regarding the education of children: The importance of repetition, abundance of practice, the personal investment of effort, the early onset, the role of the environment, and the structuring of it. Many Japanese find Suzuki's idea, which emphasises how the study of music leads to self-improvement and the development of a noble heart, attractive. But maybe for other reasons than were Suzuki's intention: When the children have finished all ten books, many of them are entering high school, and many parents with ambitions on behalf of their offspring, quit the lessons and let the children concentrate on school work (Driver and Shields in Mehl, 2009, p. 13).

The role of the mother is different. Very few Americans or Europeans begin with the mother as the home-teacher when the child is three years old. The role of the mother is much more defined for the wives of white-collar Japanese workers, who were not supposed to work outside the home. This led to the emergence of the *Kyōiku mama*, the education mum. These ambitious women often pressured their offspring harder regarding education, and the mothers are in part responsible for the pressure within Japanese Education (Mehl, 2009, p. 13). The pressure exerted on the children was often far greater than Suzuki had envisioned, thereby creating a competitive environment, which Suzuki never encouraged.

The method has spread and grown in popularity at different rates and to different extents around the world. Suzuki realised that he had to make adaptations to the method, both considering time and cultural characteristics. In America, the concept of a mother who devoted herself to benefit of their children's education, to the extent that the Japanese mothers displayed, was not realistic. The American Suzuki parents are active and involved in their children playing and practicing, but adaptations to the method make the American and Japanese versions a little different. American children normally do not start as early as the Japanese, and the responsibility for the home teaching not always lies with the mother. The elaborate scheme to instil motivation that Peak (1999, p. 350) describes is not something most American parents would follow.

Kyōiku mama does not exist in the same way in the US, and maybe some of her dominant position will eventually fade in Japan as well.

Although America and Japan are very different countries, there are some similarities. The origin of what we name Classical is central Europe. Both Japan and the USA are at the periphery of its power centre, and had a tendency to rate European classical music higher than their own composers' output in the same style (Mehl, 2009, p. 21)

Suzuki's belief in individualism and democracy, his emphasis on the mother's role as defined in bourgeois domestic terms, and the choice of Western music as a tool for human development were also quite in accord with dominant American ideologies of the postwar decades, which enabled his method to take root in American soil. Considered by some to be uniquely Japanese, the Suzuki Method is indeed quite culturally hybrid, if not even American (Yoshihara, 2008, p. 40).

And Mehl claims 'Even the elements commonly described as "Japanese", can with equal justification be classified as "Western"'. .

Among instrumental methods the Suzuki Method stands out in the West. It is established as the maybe the most important instrumental method in America, and it may come as a mild surprise that this is not the case in Japan.

When American string pedagogues went to Matsumoto to learn from Suzuki, certain elements where changed in the process. An American String teacher will normally not stress the same points to the same degree as a Japanese teacher would. When Suzuki asked students to repeat something 10 000 times, Americans usually perceived the instruction half-jokingly. Japanese would normally not recognise this as a joke.

Japan is the home of Karaoke and has a long-standing tradition of imitation. When one imitates, one does not only imitate an artist. What is happening is that one dips into the knowhow of generations that is originating from this artist. Although the concept of imitation has been and still is important in all instrument tuition, it has not had the same status as in Japan. In the West, we are more concerned with students developing their own creative take on interpretation, at least, we like to think so.

4.4 LIMITATIONS: WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN SUZUKI METHOD?

The Suzuki Method is a method that was developed to teach in the tradition of Classical music. Other musical styles are not covered by the method. The pieces that make up the repertoire books are somewhat influenced by repertoire that was popular when Shinichi Suzuki himself studied the violin. This has resulted in a lack of diversity in the core repertoire. On the other hand, the method has shown to be adaptable to many different

instruments, and also to different cultural environments, and in the practical field of education, the Suzuki teachers are more than willing to include repertoire besides what is contained in the books. In fact, a willingness to adapt to changing environments lies at the heart of the method, more than the individual pieces that make up the graded repertoire. Although this flexibility may be one of the core features of the Suzuki approach, the repertoire must be said to slant towards baroque music and early romantic pieces, while lacking in other areas.

Instructions in the method books are sparse, other Suzuki-related literature providing more specific introductions are mostly written in the US. The teachers training courses have been central to the method, Suzuki thought that one should keep the training in a medium that could change and could adapt to different people with different requirements and backgrounds. In the training organised by the Suzuki Association of the Americas (SAA), Suzuki teachers are required to study a mandatory course covering the Suzuki philosophy, before moving on to courses covering the Suzuki repertoire. Suzuki teachers are encouraged to bring their personal teaching style into their teaching, so that a Suzuki teacher is always supposed to be a “hybrid” between this personal style and the Suzuki teaching. Teachers are encouraged to share experiences and their discoveries at conventions, workshops and seminars so that everyone in the teaching community could benefit.

Some of the short-comings related to the Suzuki Method are interwoven and similar to short-comings connected to the field and tradition of classical music. The classical music tradition has fostered many great composers and performers, but incorporation of creative aspects like improvisation and composition has not been common part of children’s music lessons. The divisions between composer, performer and audience are quite pronounced compared to many other cultures. Music as a human act of practice usually involves everyone participating moving between these different aspects of music making, while in the classical tradition, those aspects are more separated. Of course, this ultimately boils down to questions about music’s normative value, its role in social and societal settings, and how we wish our musical culture to develop.

Any method evolves through a line of teachers that form an historical ancestry. Nearly all violinists point back to Corelli, a great teacher and composer for the violin. In turn, different ancestries point back to different teachers, who all have made important contributions to the art of violin playing. Suzuki stands in this tradition, and the prominent mark he has made has to with his idea of the mother tongue, and of structuring the environment and making children

thrive. The inclusive message coming from Suzuki represents a force that aspires to bring the art of performing music to anyone. This impulse represents a movement that democratises the learning of an instrument in the classical tradition, which can be said to contrast with a view of classical music being exclusive and mostly for the upper classes.

While making an active involvement with classical music more accessible, one important creative part suffers from a lack of attention: The creation of music through improvisation and composition is not a part of the Suzuki Method, and this has been criticised, especially in writings by the violinist/fiddler Mark O'Connor. (O'Connor, 2012, 2013)

The method has had a formidable success worldwide, and it has managed to combine old educational principles with some innovations, as well as with educational and psychological insights developed in other educational areas. It adheres to old principles like rote-learning, memory development, abundance of repetition, while at the same time combining this with principles from the progressive education movement, like the structuring of the environment, and the emotional well-being of the child.

The Suzuki Method deliberately leaves out many of the technical exercises that many former violin methods relied on, and focuses on music making, and on exploiting the child's interest and fascination for music. While many traditional methods relied heavily on developing the technical aspects of violin playing, Suzuki hides these technical and often boring exercises, and uses aspects and parts of known repertoire to make up for the lack of technical exercises.

4.4.1 Issues in intercultural adaptation of Suzuki Method

Japanese and American cultures are different from each other, and we have already discussed that the notion of a very strongly engaged mother is more apparent in Japan, than in the US. But these differences are not static, as gender roles are changing. Japanese females are more likely than earlier generations to partake in Japan's working population, and this means that the number of mothers who are able to spend much of their time helping their children with their education is declining. The Talent Education Institute in Japan will eventually have to adapt. Also, the birth-rates in Japan have been low for many years. This may open up possibilities to teach violin to seniors, and this may be one opportunity to adapt to changing demographics (Mehl, 2014, p. 287).

The El Sistema movement in Venezuela was inspired, and to a certain extent couched by Suzuki teachers. In Norway the Suzuki movements inspired a movement in regard to teaching brass instruments, "Rett på musikken" (literally: Instantly towards music"), described in a

book published by the Norwegian Band Association in 1993. All these adaptations have moved considerable from their source of inspiration, and are not part of the Suzuki movement. But they show how ideas and thoughts from the movement have spread to a wider community.

I have outlined many aspects of the Suzuki Method in this chapter. It is not one single thing, but rather many small aspects where the Suzuki Method represented something new, and it provided a framework, where all these aspects could work simultaneously. This represented a shift of focus, by making the child's growth dependent on the quality of the environment, and by taking away the burden of success from the child's shoulders and placing it on those responsible for structuring the learning environment.

5 DESCRIPTION AND CRITIQUE OF RELEVANT

ARGUMENTS:

Whereas it is easy to recognise how Western cultures have influenced the rest of the world through the penetration of Western style of trade, globalism, economic theory and pop culture, to mention just a few, we are less familiar with influence the other way around. Still, there is considerable influence originating in Japan, for example Japanese business management, Japanese quality management systems, the adoption of Zen Buddhism and Mindfulness (although this is not exclusively tied to Japan), as well as older influences like that of Japonism (Japanese art influence as in Art Nouveau, Van Gogh paintings, and other Western art expression).

There are some categories of common critique encountered when studying the Suzuki Method. Below I will shortly outline the main critique and common objections.

Practical criticism. This category addresses practical matters concerning violin teaching. The most common critique is that of Suzuki students not being able to read music.

Criticism connected to a lack of competent teachers. In the aftermath of the Suzuki breakthrough moment in America there was high demand for qualified Suzuki teachers, but very limited supply of these resources. That amounted to dubious teaching practices by teachers who might call themselves Suzuki teachers, but actually had very limited knowledge about the method.

Cultural criticism. Another common thread of discussion is the unsuitability of Japanese educational thought in a Western context. Very often this is connected to claims about Japanese servility, lack of individualism and lack of creativity. The rise of America's Suzuki community happened at a time where Japan became known for quality control, high factory standards, and the American auto industry was about to be ousted by its Japanese counterpart. The metaphor of automation and robots is commonly used in this line of argument. Zen is also part of this, used both by proponents and by writers critical to the movement.

Ad hominem attacks. From about 2014 the fiddler Marc O'Connor launched a series of attacks, whereby Suzuki was called a fraud, where he has been accused of having faked credentials, of not being able to play, and of representing a movement that conned its way into the American violin community.

Criticisms based on factual errors in Suzuki's writing. Ebin's PhD thesis analyses the claims that are put forward in Suzuki's main writings and evaluates their validity. While many of Suzuki's claims were common understanding at the time of writing, some of them are shown to be invalid or only partly true, while some of them are true.

Before moving on into greater details, it may be appropriate to sum up the values inherent in the method. For the most part, the Suzuki Method is constructed as a method for educating children in the skills necessary to play Western classical music. The method promises that anyone who has children with normal learning abilities can expect these children to learn to play as long as the parents let them start early on in life, engage in a collaboration with a qualified Suzuki teacher, and take responsibility for a stimulating environment at home and ensure diligent practicing routines. When following these requirements, the child's ability will develop, this goes for anyone, not just the select few, the rich, the prodigies.

These statements are important because they reveal the values behind the method. It seeks to make a kind of music that had been exclusive, accessible to anyone. Instead of classical music being exclusive and out of reach for normal human beings, the Suzuki Method promises to develop high ability that makes performing music accessible to anyone who is willing to invest sufficient work and diligence.

5.1.1 The Suzuki Method: a philosophy, an educational approach, a violin method or a method for self-development?

Suzuki's book *Nurtured by Love* is comprised of short chapters with insights into scenes from his life and episodes and stories from his teaching practice. It is interspersed with ideas and sources of inspiration. It is in no way a rigorous presentation of carefully laid-out points important to his philosophy. Madsen dissertation, (1990, p. 12), which Margaret Mehl claims is the most comprehensive study on the method (Mehl, 2009, p. 3), describes his writing style in the following way:

Like most Japanese writers, Suzuki resorts to a loose structure of argument rather than the careful logical reasoning that we are accustomed to, and suggestion or illustration rather than sharp, clear statements. He often expresses himself in pithy maxims, a common Japanese practice to which the use of characters is particularly well suited.

This makes it somewhat hard to enter a very detailed or rigorous philosophical inquiry based on the literature provided by the founder himself. The philosopher Estelle Jorgensen assesses the Suzuki Method to have a 'relatively articulated' philosophical foundation. (Jorgensen,

2006, p. 181) The teacher training provided by the Suzuki Association requires students to take a course in Talent Education philosophy.

Suzuki sometimes makes bold but dubious statements about events or phenomena that are shown to have no merit. For example, Suzuki uses a story about two children where the story claims that they were raised and cared for by a flock of wolves. Suzuki claimed that the story demonstrated how the environment created by a flock of wolves made children act like wolves; they moved, ate, slept and communicated like other members in the flock. The narrative was later shown to be a merely fictional, but the story still figures prominently in Suzuki's *Nurtured by Love*. To his defence one may bring forward that many scholars at the time believed in this story, as the man behind it was supposed to be trustworthy. While many of these claims made by Suzuki are not backed up by modern science, it does not seem to matter all that much for the Suzuki Method, or for the music education community.

Suzuki is seldom perceived as a scholar, but rather as an inspiring personality and as a very able practitioner in the field of music education. A case in point is the central Suzuki idea that every child has talent, and that a child will work and develop its abilities if the environment stimulates and reinforces certain behaviours. As shown in various motivation theories, someone with a mind-set that promotes an individual's belief in his/her own powers to bring about change, is much more likely to succeed in bringing about those changes than individuals without such an attitude. Suzuki may have been wrong in some his anecdotes that he uses to underpin his theories, but the success of his method is mainly based on the principles and ideas, and not the accuracy of the anecdotes. Mehl writes that it is largely based on sound pedagogical principles which recent research tends to support (Heitkämper in Mehl, 2009, p. 21).

Suzuki did not believe that Talent Education should aspire to reach a fixed and rigid form, because music, people and times would be subject to change, and anyone alive would benefit from adapting to a changing environment. Suzuki himself said: "When I am 90, then I will be a teacher but just now, I am learning how to teach!" (Bigler & Lloyd-Watts, 1993, p. 13) As a result, while the method has some clear foundational ideas, the way Suzuki teachers teach is not uniform. They share ideas and experiences at teacher training gatherings, summer schools, and the teaching of many particular techniques is their own responsibility.

Suzuki did experiment with the mother-tongue method by applying it to diverse fields, and he also tried it in other settings in cooperation with public schools in Japan. Suzuki wanted the

method to develop and to adapt to different times, and different cultural settings, and across different subjects. The Suzuki Method is adaptable also to different instruments because it is not primarily a method concerned with teaching violin technique. It is first and foremost an approach which might be fruitfully employed towards many subjects other than music. There is also an ongoing development in the Suzuki community whereby new techniques and approaches are being discussed. Suzuki students have been criticised for lack of sight-reading abilities, and teachers are encouraged to develop their own approaches, which means that teaching styles may vary considerably among teachers

In recent years the language used when describing children abilities has changed. It is more common now to use the term *high ability* instead of *talent* or *giftedness* (Jaap & Patrick, 2015, p. 262). The reason for this is that the former term does not imply that talent is something fixed, something that one possesses, but that it is possible to nurture ability, the latter thought being in line with Suzuki's thinking.

5.1.2 Efficiency or becoming fine humans with noble hearts?

The Suzuki Method does not promote itself as an effective method for producing highly skilled aspiring violinists. Producing musicians is not all important, compared to the overall effect that music has on the soul and on the development of the self. While this is something that Suzuki often repeats, anyone who has experienced Suzuki lessons and group lessons first-hand, would say that the most striking feature is the specificity of the methods. Details are well thought through, teacher training makes anyone who works with the children conscious of various teaching points connected to each piece, anyone of them being important and meaningful in the scope of the whole method. So, while many instrumental teachers outside the community of Suzuki teachers often struggle to make up an educational path for their students, Suzuki teachers are often very conscious of every step their students should master.

When observing from the outside, I am struck by the method's effectiveness. This striking element was also my main reason for embarking upon a study of the Suzuki Method. When I have read the sources, however, I see that the effectiveness of the method is seldom the focus. Music is said to be the language of the heart, while the main goal of the method is to create fine humans with noble hearts. In the realm of Suzuki teaching, there is no internal contradiction between these two. Although creating future professional musicians is not the main goal, Suzuki's ambition is to really study music in a thorough, serious manner, and thereby creating "the path of music": The nobleness and kindness of heart that is so important

for Suzuki, grows out of a serious and thorough involvement with music. The mere taste acquaintance with a musical instrument and some rudimentary skills would not suffice. The development of such high and specialised know-how is also connected to Japanese culture, the training and development of an ability to such an extent that intuitive knowledge can happen. When the fingers start finding their way across the fingerboard on the violin, without conscious thoughts being consulted, then this person has *kan* (see page 40).

The quest for purity of heart, and a kind and noble manner made Suzuki sometimes assign exercises apparently disconnected from a violin study: Suzuki could suddenly tell a student to ‘stop playing for a week’. The new assignment for the week should be to learn ‘the spirit of doing things for other people.’ That would mean to ‘pick up books when they have fallen on the floor, put your friend’s shoes neatly together if they lie upside down, if you are prepared to help, you will find many things to do.’ Suzuki explains his behaviour by referring to the fact that he could detect, by listening to a student’s playing, if the student was becoming e.g. too self-absorbed. In such cases Suzuki is engaged in the character development of the student. The episode with the student points to the element of serving. Serving implies a measure of selflessness, for the priority is on something beyond a self-serving action.

Although Suzuki was known to assign tasks like this, very few Suzuki teachers have followed Suzuki’s approach when it comes to analyse self-absorbed students by means of how they play the violin and remedy these imbalances by assigning selfless tasks for the student to execute. But the moral stance that Suzuki takes has a high standing among teachers and parents, and there are several examples that show that teachers and academics are moved by this motive. At the end of the day, however, although Suzuki establishes a very strong humanitarian goal for his violin teaching, what somewhat ironically helped the movement gain attraction were the star-pupils, like Toshiya Eto (see page 39).

Those two phenomena may not be excluding each other, it should be possible to keep focus on these dual goals, without one of them being overly dominating. Most parents want their children to be educated in an efficient way, the work that the student invests by practicing diligently should bear fruit. Likewise, most parents want their children to thrive, to be joyful and have a good time while learning. Their happiness is not just set aside for the benefit of some future goal, for most parents also find it important how they live in the here and now. This might be a point where attitudes among American and Japanese parents may differ.

5.1.3 The classical tradition

The Suzuki Method challenges some traditional aspects of classical music, especially the relationship between its music and the written manuscript, but also challenges classical music's relationship between the composer, the performer and the audience.

In the classical tradition, the most important person is the composer, for the composer is considered the creative force in the performance of classical music. The way the composer is represented, is through the score, and much diligent work goes into the task of providing the performer with the most accurate and painstakingly researched music manuscript. When they are as close to the composer's intention as one possible, it is named an *urtext* edition. It is the performer's task to try to get as close as possible to the composer's intention, and usually it is implied that this is the reason for why *urtexts* are so important.

While there is a focus within the education of classical music to adhere closely to the written score, there are many sources of performance practice that may be of greater importance for the final rendition, but which are not discussed as critically as the manuscript. Because of a lack of audio material, we usually cannot be sure about how Bach would have played Bach. Usually, people who are interested in historically informed performance (HIP) rely on old treatises, written in the historical period in question. Contrary to the older term *authentic performance*, HIP signals the limitations of what we can know about how music sounded in a particular period.

Of course, the way the pieces are rendered vary over time, which is also apparent if one listens to composers performing their own work. There are many composers who used technology to capture their own performance, sometimes on Edison rolls, sometime on paper, on piano rolls. We have recordings by Brahms, Mahler, Grieg, Rachmaninov and many more from the same period.

What is curious is that these recordings differ considerably from modern recordings. They often feel rushed, the tempo fluctuations are much more pronounced than nowadays, surprising accents and rubato are in common use, and would not have been taught to students by instrumental teachers on any level.

In the Romantic era, the artist was often thought of as some mystical genius, removed from everyday life, often able to communicate with higher spirits, and his role was to become a link between normal people and these higher spirits by composing music. In this cognitive framework the composer is all-important, whereas the quality of the performer is measured in

how true she or he is able to be towards the composer's intentions, and the audience is not part of the creative work at all. Performers are physically separated from the audience, and a member of the audience must never enter the stage. In classical concerts, audiences have to keep quiet, they are supposed not to applaud between movements in a concerto, and every time the music stops a choir of coughing and clearing of throats start up. Compared to other cultures the level of participation allowed from the members of the audience in a Western art music concert is rather limited.

Against this background, the impulse coming from the Suzuki movement represents a democratic and empowering force. Music performance is not considered to be something for the select few. Suzuki's impulse democratises the performance of music, or he makes parents, teachers and anyone who provides the environment responsible for the children's musical development and upbringing. The focus shifts from the composer to the performer, and this happens in a way that is perceived as very challenging by many members of the classical music community. In many ways, the Suzuki movement scoops up the audience, educates and empowers them by making them performers, and the all-important role of the composer is reduced in the process.

5.1.4 Rote learning

There has already been a fierce debate about whether to learn songs prior to learning to read music in the second half of the 19th century in the US. At that time it was the inspiration from Pestalozzi that prompted a rote approach, which also represented a more child-centred approach (Volk, 1993, p. 31).

The relationship to the written score is special in the classical tradition. There are performers who say that they avoid listening to other performers' interpretations of certain pieces they are about to perform themselves, because they fear their own performance will suffer if they listen to other performers. Such ideas have not been uncommon in the realm of classical music, and when considering the Suzuki Method's overt approval of recordings, this represented something new but also something that challenged established beliefs.

While going to concerts, and hearing many different pieces of classical music has always been promoted as part of a classical music education, the thought of providing one model recording for a piece, and telling the student to listen to this recording over and over, breaks with what can be regarded as an established path of music education. There were few music educators operating within the classical tradition who would recommend a single

interpretation as a model interpretation for any song. A very common stereotype concerning Asian musicians is that they have few technical challenges, but at the same time, they all sound somewhat alike (Yoshihara, 2008, p. 42). If every Asian violin student listens to the same recordings of every piece they have learned, there is no wonder that this stereotype catches on. Still, the accusation that those trained according to the Suzuki Method sound like automatons, or that the method is to music as parrot chatter is to speech, sounds more logical if students are provided with only a single recorded model for their interpretation.

Recordings do make it feasible to listen to models, in a manner reminiscent of how children growing up in musical families are provided with models. A musical family provides an environment that is helpful to children's musical development and recording technology may provide children with access to musical models, without being dependent on such models in their close relationships.

The use of recordings has been controversial within the American Suzuki movement. One of the movement's key figures, John Kendall, was sceptic towards their use, and felt that Suzuki's approach was too liberal. Suzuki had no problems using taped accompaniments at concerts also when playing repertoire from beyond the 4th Suzuki book. Kendall assessed that this practice would be harmful to the Suzuki Method, and he got Suzuki to restrict the use of accompaniments from a certain level.

The Suzuki movement demonstrated that high ability could be fostered in normal children without special talent, that a stimulating environment carefully structured by competent caretakers was enough. The rejection of the ability as something only being available to a few chosen ones would seem quite attractive to many people, but those who considered themselves to be among those chosen ones might have found the notion unappealing. Those who revered classical music as something sublime and exclusive might assess Suzuki's approach as something that undermines the status of classical music.

5.1.5 Shades of bias

Much of the critique of the Suzuki Method has some connection with perceived general differences between a Western and East-Asian (or more specifically a Japanese) mind-set. East Asia's history of appropriating Western classical music is astounding, and it is well worth reflecting what significance this has had. The argument often heard by those who reject the Suzuki Method, is that its Japanese nature, its East Asian mind-set is incompatible with a Western mind-set, and that it is impossible and not advisable for Westerners to adopt these

practices. Critics seldom take into account that the appropriation of Western music is an example of a country changing its preferences. It is astounding how Japan, in less than hundred years, more or less adopted Western music. As a consequence, its native musics slowly drifted into obscurity (Mehl, 2014, p. 27). That also means that Japan is no longer a foreign land to European classical music. Rather, it has become an important actor on the horizon of classical music, and composers and performers from Japan and East Asia are significant players and actors in the realm of classical music. Many of the successful orchestra members and soloists world-wide have their roots in Asian lands.

The orientalism, the perceived difference of the Japanese approach toward child-rearing and education, became important in the discussion that followed the introduction of the Suzuki-method in the US. There were several nuances to this line of critique, and some of it was rather stereotyping and grew out of a perception that it felt strange to adopt an education style from a culture that was perceived as being incompatible with Western values.

However, movies that became widely known when the method was introduced in the United States, depicting hundreds of children playing in unison, ignited much enthusiasm and many teachers wanted to try the method. The ‘Suzuki teacher’ was not trademarked or a protected title to use, and lots of teachers used the name ‘Suzuki’, without being fully trained. Isaak Stern uttered after a horrible concert with so-called Suzuki students that “all Suzuki teachers are criminals”. In the early days, the movements comprised many different teachers who did not conform to teacher standards that we expect nowadays when we look for a Suzuki-teacher. Many teachers, although enthusiastic, had not fully grasped the inner workings of the method.

The same pictures that inspired violin teachers were also used by some critics. Regiments of children playing advanced violin concertos in unison left critics wondering what regime of discipline and blind obedience, which sacrifices concerning individuality and creativity were necessary to yield the results that were on display. In short, which values and skills that were dear to Western parents had to be sacrificed in order to get the results of the Suzuki Method, skills and values that they saw as contrary to Western values. The following clipping from the New York Times illustrates sentiments that were common amongst critics of the Suzuki Method, and that still are present in discussions.

However, while nobody expects profundity from pre-schoolers, the collective playing was automatic. More disturbingly, some solo performances by senior members of the ensemble—pianists and violinists old enough to know better—

were technically assured but absolutely devoid of germinal musical insight. All of which makes one suspect that the Suzuki Method is to music making as parrot chatter is to oratory. This listener, for one, would rather hear a fumbled, halting rendition of the Brahms lullaby or “To a Wild Rose” that a child has cherished, wrestled with and made his own than empty precocity on the stage of Carnegie Hall. (Page, 1984)

The crowds of children playing advanced violin concertos fitted well with a common critique against the method: that it erases individuality, that the method produces violinists along sterile production lines, without creativity, every student just copying a master or a recording, without learning the art of expressing and nurturing personality and ingenuity. This is a line of thinking associated with a stereotype linked to how East-Asian cultures are perceived in Western culture. The adherence and compliance to a group or family would seem to be more important than the individual’s own opinions, creations and thinking.

The critique that the Suzuki children play like robots, is seldom heard when the critique is targeted at American Suzuki students. The critique which presupposes an overly obedient group of students, is mostly targeted at Japanese children. Actually, young Japanese students are seldom schooled in an overly authoritarian manner. The pressure that Japanese children must endure usually sets in when the children enter middle school. While they are in elementary school, their school life is focused on social issues, building solid group relations, and children are allowed much freedom and playfulness. Suzuki himself did not encourage competition and excessive pressure, but Japanese society tends to be highly competitive, and many Suzuki classes may have been influenced by this tendency, although it was against Suzuki’s wishes. The competitiveness of Japan, and the perceived need to get children to go to the very best schools, means that when Japanese children are preparing for upcoming exams in middle school, many parents withdraw their children from violin lessons, but they have by then normally finished all 10 Suzuki books. Suzuki, who advocates that the main goal is to educate children to become noble human beings with a beautiful heart, cannot oppose this idea, since he cannot claim that it they should further develop their talent, or pursue a career within music performance. (Mehl, 2009, p. 13).

Another line of critique is that it is a method that is not suited for Westerners. The East Asian focus on groups and collectivism is not compatible with Western notions of individuality and creativity. Much of this criticism is superficial, e.g. it does not consider the fact that East-Asian education is heavily influenced by Western educational thought and has used Western schools as models. The use of stereotypes often conflates any Asian-related heritage into the same group of people, although the diversity that is present between e.g. Asian-Americans

and a citizen of China often ignore the differences in socio-economic and cultural structures. The common interest in Western art music is a remarkable fact when discussing the relationship between Western industrialised countries and East Asian Countries. The education policies of East Asian countries likewise owe many of its structures to the appropriation of Western education philosophies, and to the employment of German and Western experts in public education and educational policy-making.

Teaching music has more specifically been targeted towards children, and there has been a trend that as many children as possible should be able to receive music education. Some critiques are based on a perception that mass-tutoring is provocative, that it undermines a former notion where music and the process of learning an instrument was considered to be unique for each student.

5.1.6 East Asian countries and classical music

Another critique that is commonly heard, is whether East Asian countries have the right cultural background to really understand the depths and subtleties that are part of the Western tradition of classical music. It may seem inappropriate to even ask such a question, but the question is floated, often as part of a stereotype, where Asian musicians are considered technically adept, but that their interpretation of Western classical music is lacking in depth. The former clipping (page 71) from the New York times may also serve as an example of this notion.

One question that may be a part of this is whether 21-century listeners from Europe are any more qualified to hear what the ears contemporary to Haydn, Bach or Mozart, or Schubert were able to hear. The only thing that is very likely is that the experience of music a few hundred years ago was different from what it is nowadays, and it is not very likely that Europeans are significantly more qualified to hear the nuances buried in the contemporary consummation of the pieces, than a modern Asian listener.

5.1.7 Direct opposition to Suzuki Method (O'Conner, etc.)

Marc O'Connor is an eminent fiddler and has been a major musician in the US for many years. As a teenager he won several music competitions, not just playing the fiddle, but also playing guitar and mandolin. He is known as a great performer of bluegrass, folk music, jazz and has also as a classical performer. As a composer he has written fiddle tunes, string quartets and violin concertos, solo pieces, and much more. Marc O'Connor has since 2014 been very vocal about his opposition against the Suzuki Method, and many of the points he

makes encompasses the critique already mentioned. In addition, he has made some rather specific claims based on the work of what he calls “his researchers”, claims that are personal attacks against Suzuki. He questions several claims that Suzuki makes in *Nurtured by Love*. The claims questioned by O’Connor are whether Suzuki studied violin at all, whether the great cellist Pablo Casals really went to one of Suzuki’s concerts, whether he really was moved by the children’s playing, as Suzuki asserts, whether he ever met with Albert Einstein, and if the latter agreed to be his guardian.

O’Connor also distributes and promotes his own violin method, he has written 5 of 10 books in that method’s series. Moreover, for many years he has organised a summer camp where he is deeply involved both as an organiser and a teacher. His goal is to develop a new kind of American string method, a method that encompasses the classical tradition, but also incorporates Native American music, Bluegrass fiddling styles and African music. His mission is to revitalise and reform string teaching through his books, summer courses and his engagement in educational communities. He has also authored several articles in magazines and journals related to the string teaching community. O’Connor engages in writing in several forms and forums, and his articles on Facebook or at message boards are more provocative than articles appearing in print.

Discussions about violin methods seldom reach the main headlines in the regular news outlets but some of the outbursts have nevertheless been picked up. For instance, the tabloid newspaper “The Daily Telegraph” headlined that an expert claims that “Violin teacher Suzuki is the biggest fraud in music history” (Mendick, 2014) The article is based upon documents from Mark O’Connor’s blog, and his main allegations are that Suzuki did not have lessons with the great German violinist Karl Klingler in the 1920s, that he was instead essentially self-taught, that he had never been recorded or had any merit as a violin player, and that his association with Albert Einstein and Pablo Casals were inventions by himself.

An article in the New York Times states that ‘An examination by The New York Times of some of Mr. O’Connor’s key charges found that they were undercut by evidence.’ While the material and know-how Marc O’Connor brings into the debate about violin teaching may be of value, it is difficult to consider his attacks regarding Suzuki as something that brings the teaching community forward. It is likewise hard to consider the claims he questions as being essential to the Suzuki Method. While teaching practices must constantly be assessed, questions about whether Suzuki told untruths about his personal life are not central to the method itself. O’Connor defends his writings by claiming that he had personal experience

with his own method books being shut out from workshops and seminars dominated by Suzuki teachers, and that he is only reacting to what he find is unfair treatment from Suzuki teachers.

The ability to improvise on the violin is not something most violin teachers teach, and many of the existing violin methods are based on a musical landscape long gone, the repertoire is outdated, and it is not well suited to develop children's creativity. Mark O'Connor is convinced that the lack of improvisational skill, the lack of creating variations and incorporating fiddle traditions into the violin teaching repertoire is a serious shortcoming within much of the violin teaching (O'Connor, 2012). Furthermore, he argues that this lack of ability leaves musicians with 'a larger than life personality' like Nigel Kennedy, Eugene Fodor and Maxim Vengerov, bereaved of the ability to improvise. The Suzuki Method has for him become a symbol for the teaching that is based in the past, fails to include improvisational styles of music in their teaching materials, and by that work against musical creativity, and that has led O'Connor to attacked not only the method, but also the person in numerous forums posting.

Some of Mark O'Connor's critique towards the Suzuki Method is more nuanced than some of the headlines suggest. While the harshness of the *ad hominem* attacks undermines these other messages, many of the aggressive writings are attacks on a violin method practiced by many violin teachers in the United States. Many know the work of Mark O'Connor, and many report that they have used both method books, while some of them even report that they have exchanged some of the Suzuki pieces with pieces from O'Connor books. The Suzuki teaching community is big, and the attacks that O'Connor expresses are dubious, not relevant to teaching, and they may be pushing many teachers away from his method.

Amongst his negative characteristics of the Suzuki Method is that its teaching results in a "death sentence of violin creativity" and "It is not the musical semicircle which is artistic, like the symphony orchestra performs in, but it is rows of regimented student lines in synchronized quasi-socialist-realist formations" (O'Connor, 2013, para. 1). O'Connor uses the regiment and uniform metaphors to characterise the Suzuki movement, as part of his critique. This is a criticism that belongs to a group of stereotypical views, where Asians are portrayed as never acting individualistically, respecting authorities, doing everything in groups, being effective but not creative. Considering music, there is also an elitist view implying the assumption that anyone who has had an East-Asian upbringing, will always be outsiders who cannot grasp the nuance and content of classical music.

Margaret Mehl, who has authored several books and articles concerning cultural developments and interactions between Europe and Japan, traces the ‘regiment’ stereotype to a time around the 1960s where the Japanese had a growing economy that was perceived as a threat to European and American manufacturing. This is about the same time when the Suzuki Method starts to get widespread attention in the USA. There were published books with titles like *The Japanese Challenge* and *Japan: The Planned Aggression*. The books portrayed Japan as a severely polluted country populated by human ‘robots’, single-mindedly pursuing economic interests. This line of thinking has been especially persistent in Germany, maybe because German intellectual elite clings to a sense of musical superiority (Mehl, 2014, p. 279).

Another factual piece of information is that the relationship to Western classical music has been so integrated into Japanese music and cultural heritage, that it is meaningless to argue that Japanese are outsiders to the Western music tradition. For most Japanese music listeners, the sound of Koto and Shamisen is as exotic as for people living in Europe/USA.

The criticism coming from Mark O’Connor is not just limited to the factory metaphor. He is also afraid that the method reflects and promotes ‘Japanese values’, and that the Suzuki movement wants everyone to become ‘good citizens’ and develop a ‘good heart’. Mark O’Connor calls them “codes and ethics designed for Japanese Children and their beloved emperor” and lists as an alternative the values from ‘American music’ which includes ‘other and wiser’ principles like ‘self-discovery, individualism, creativity, free spirit, journey, diversity and a whole host of other philosophies born out of a multicultural experience’.

When looking into discussions forums, many Suzuki teachers are shocked over how their work is regarded by O’Connor. Some report that they have stopped using the method books after reading some of his articles. There are few signs in the violin community that this critique stimulates the teaching community in any way. What O’Connor writes mainly pushes violin teachers away, e.g. he writes ‘The militant Japanese worldview philosophy of their WWII era learning regime, was probably not the way to go for an American citizenry...’ or “Perhaps Suzuki teachers go rogue, and show a handful of fiddle tunes to their students as electives by rote, as Suzuki studios attempt to hold on to their student's interest”. Such statements are not relevant to the discussion of violin methods and they do not exactly bring the violin teaching community together. It is indisputable that classical music education lacks a strong tradition for teaching improvisation, and many teachers (including Suzuki teachers) try to address these shortcomings. Suzuki himself encouraged a culture of openness; he did

not see his method as a finished product, but wanted it to evolve, and that teachers shared their insights and ideas.

Efficiency is not a bad thing in itself, but if it constitutes the death of creativity it surely is, and that is also a complaint from O'Connor. One of the Suzuki principle is not to start with reading and writing. This is delayed, and instead the child is trained in listening, watching and imitating. The main point about O'Connor's claim about death of creativity seems to be the lack of training of skills connected with playing in a bluegrass band; listening to the other musicians, improvising a counter melody, and using dynamics appropriately adapted to the musical context.

Suzuki was clear that the pieces are not the method, but they represent difficulty levels and challenges that are ordered in a sensible way. The violin method books represent a finely graded material, and are also used by other teachers, without those teachers becoming Suzuki violin teachers. There are several reasons to use the books. Most Suzuki teachers follow the first four books, thereafter many of them make use of several other sources than the methods books (Barber, 1993, sec. Basic Principles...).

5.1.8 On codified approaches to music teaching

The ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) are maybe the earliest written testimony in the Western world of a child-centred approach to education. Many teachers who were inspired by Rousseau, often due to knowledge of Pestalozzi, became inspired by letting children learn by experiences, sensory perceptions, by letting them do more than to listen to the words coming from the teacher. When progressive and child-centred education became even more powerful through the work of John Dewey, who advocated inquiry-based education, thinking in schools, and toward children gradually changed.

In music teaching the same philosophical underpinnings gave birth to several movements, which may also explain why they have several of their ideas in common.

Suzuki Shinichi is not the only educator whose approach has inspired a movement, but he may have been the most successful of several educators. Another notable music educator who has developed codified approaches movements is Zoltan Kodály, who was appalled by the low standards in Hungarian music education. He was able to introduce a new curriculum and

introduce music lessons in primary school built on Hungarian folk music, and compositions of 'good quality'.

Just as the Suzuki Method, the Kodály movement is based on the classical tradition, and it works mostly towards different ways to enhance music literacy, especially among singers and non-musicians. The value of being able to quickly recognise and grasp musical structure, as if one followed the score, is for Kodály the mark of true musicianship.

To facilitate the development of this ability, the method employs solfeggio singing, a rhythm language and also the use of hand signs. The Kodály method is mostly realised through exploration of the human voice and choirs are the method's essential environment. Kodály regarded the human voice the most natural of instruments. He recognized that the leading tone and half-tone steps could be difficult for children, and that is why he recommended to work with pentatonic melodies with the youngest children. The musical foundation for the Kodály movement are the folksongs from Hungary, and he recommended that every country utilised their own folk music and tradition. Kodály argued that music was an innate ability among humans, and he thought it was an act of negligence not to provide children with the opportunity to develop this faculty according to each individual's potential. The Kodály movement has inspired many music teachers, and also in the SMPA some of his techniques are indaily use, but not as part of a broader Kodály-inspired implementation. The hand-signs, the rhythm language and the solfeggio singing are sometimes used in group lessons with string students (Shehan, 1986, p. 29).

While Orff-instruments still are to be found at many school, they are in the process of being replaced by other instruments, typically guitars. The Orff approach to music education was first enacted in a school for dance and gymnastics founded by Carl Orff himself and Dorothee Günther in 1926. Orff's pedagogical ideas were influenced by Dalcroze, and for him music, dance and speech have a common origin, reflected also in his educational approach. Orff employed percussion instruments and was fascinated by the idea of 'elemental music'. The work at the Günther school became a fertile workshop, where Orff's initial ideas were developed. This work also resulted in published materials for use in elementary school, but some of it did not reach its full potential, mostly because music teachers felt incompetent towards teaching and integrating improvisation and the more creative aspects of the material. The Günther school was closed down 1944, but the ideas were more fully developed in the 50s, when Orff and his former student Gunild Keetman from the Günther school, co-authored *Musik für Kinder*, a work containing of five volumes. The musical and educational ideas are

called the Orff Schulwerk³ and were also spread several years through radio transmissions. The main idea of the Orff Schulwerk is its inclusiveness, as it is focused on music making and combines spoken words, movements, pentatonic elements, the use of drones and ostinatos. It includes improvisation, which is notable, because other codified approaches based on classical music seldom manage to include improvisation and composition. Keetman taught at the Mozarteum, children and soon also adults, often from abroad, which meant that the movement spread to several countries. Today, there are many local Orff institutes and associations all over the world.

These methods all offer a codified approach regarding how to teach music, and all of them represent a wide outlook, a comprehensive and holistic approach towards music education. These educational approaches represent different views on what music is: Orff places music in a kind of holistic art frame, to Kodály, music has its foundation in the folk music of each country, Suzuki places moral education at the centre of music education, where music is the education of the heart, rather than a skill. Looking at the history of each of these methods, they seem to start with lots of enthusiasm and powerful ideas about how music may enrich the lives of children and adults. They all treat children in a way that we associate with a modern approach towards care and child-rearing. They are comprehensive, involve the whole environment around every child, and they all require varying levels of teacher training. All of them open up for the children's direct experiences, they all advocate for an educational approach in line with modern educational thinking in the tradition initially from Rousseau to progressive education.

Why are these approaches seen as providing answers and solutions to teaching? Because of the complexity of the subject music may be more difficult to teach than math or history. Music is not easy, because it is hard to define, and because music may be taught in many ways. Music lessons may be regarded meaningless if students do not approve of the music, and if the music fails to have some appeal. This poses challenges to the teacher, who has to take risks, make decisions and present the music in ways which are interesting to the students. Being able to play an instrument does not imply that one recognizes what steps students have to perform in order to reach a specific skill level. When working with children, this poses additional challenges. While adults often have some ability to regulate their own motivation and structure their environment in such a way that progress is likely to happen, children have

³ translated from German this would mean the Orff curriculum.

less control over their environment and must rely on the environment that they happen to be immersed in.

Compared to other music educational movements, the Suzuki approach is more specialised. Whereas Kodály, Orff and Dalcroze approach music from a classroom perspective, the Suzuki Method is geared towards the skilful treatment of an instrument, a more specialised approach, requiring a deeper commitment than singing, dancing or playing in a classroom context. The higher level of commitment is also characteristic of the degree of parent involvement in the learning process, as the parents' contribution is recognised as a crucial precondition for the child's success. The Suzuki Method presupposes a level of commitment that not only alters the child's music educational path, but which changes the environment the child is growing up in, and it makes music more important and more ubiquitous.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

6.1.1 How can the Suzuki Method be used in the SMPA?

The Suzuki Method is already in use in the SMPA in Bergen, as nearly all of the string teachers have taken Suzuki teacher training courses. Before adopting the Suzuki Method in the piano section of the SMPA, a thorough discussion and analysis would be necessary, and such an analysis should also include a discussion about the status quo. In this chapter I will try to enter such a discussion based on my findings in chapters 3-5. I will use my position as a piano teacher as my starting point: indeed, the fact that I am part of a piano section in a music education institution will give rise to different models for implementation and development, which would not be possible within a private teaching studio.

Though the RfK provide lists of clear expectations to both student and teachers, the number of expectations is so high, that, given the resources available, it may be hard to meet them all. Time constraints necessitates choices to be made, or as Regelski (Regelski, 2002, p. 112) observes: ‘There is always, (...), more that can be taught than there is time or resources to teach’. On the positive side one could say that there are probably few good things that are left out in the RfK and a great variety of choices and preferences seem to have found their way into the document. This means that the values, activities and ideas promoted by the Suzuki Method also figure in the RfK, although not very prominently.

The mention of the Bildung tradition in the RfK is compatible with Suzuki’s view of education. Both in Bildung and according to Suzuki’s views, education is not mainly about reaching vocational goals, but implies self-cultivation, furthers personal maturity and reflection and might even contribute to a better society. The majority of children that are being taught in the SMPA will never become professional musicians but keeping the Bildung tradition and Suzuki’s thoughts in mind, teaching music gives a rationale for what we do that goes far beyond the aspect of profession.

6.1.2 Method vs philosophy

Suzuki preferred the term philosophy, to method. As outlined earlier, his original term ‘talent education’, which meant that ability could be nurtured, reflects one of his central idea.

When reflecting upon my own relationship to both the Suzuki Method, the SMPA, the RfK and my own teaching, I have already mentioned the missing common structure to piano teaching; a common curriculum, superior goals and shared values. Without this every teacher

is supposed to make up his or her own teaching regime, making mistakes and reaching dead-ends along the way, while hoping the students in the end benefit from some educational end result, a goal which is often vague and unclear.

Could an adaption of the Suzuki Method into the SMPA make up for some of these challenges? I would assume that any movement that would initiate reflection amongst the piano teachers towards setting some common goals for our mission, would help. I believe that a passive adoption of a method that is supposed to help teachers get from A to B, will not fulfil such a mission. Rather, the Suzuki philosophy could provide a framework for pedagogical discussion and provide inspiration and know-how that would help in the process of laying out long-term plans. This, in turn, could remedy a situation where every teacher commits the same blunders that his or her colleagues. It could help making piano lessons less prone to chance, making outcomes more predictable while creating a platform that is truly engaged in the outcomes we produce, and in the values and goals we pursue.

The management has always treated its teacher's right to autonomy respectfully. On the one hand, this is a positive quality, but it may also lead to a lack of challenge or involvement on the part of the teachers in questions of teaching and teaching methods. As a result, some of the possibilities that an institutional context provides may not be fully utilized.

As piano teachers we have the possibility and the responsibility to act independently and to choose a preferred method and approach to teaching music. This has resulted in a high degree teacher's autonomy and the feeling of control, resulting in diverse approaches to teaching amongst teachers, we can organise our students into groups, or we can teach one-to-one. At the moment the piano sections meet 3-4 times a year, where we create plans, discuss matters, arrange workshops and concerts involving ourselves or the students or both. We also use the forum to discuss ideas, exchange sheet music, and this is the arena where the piano department can evolve and grow.

Regelski claims that most music teachers typically think that the experiences they have gained while teaching are more or less the same as those of other teachers. Regelski contends that this is wrong. Music teachers are by nature blissfully unaware of what other music teachers do, they do 'their own thing' with little interest and concern for what other teachers do (Regelski, 2002, p. 110). 'Teachers teach as they were taught' – is maybe the single most contributing factor to the lack of progress in the teaching profession. (Regelski, 2002, p. 112)

If adoption of the Suzuki Method means *methodolatry*, a term used by Regelski (2002, p. 111) and which denotes the blind adoption of a technical methods, factory-like instructions, without reflection, ethical considerations, attempts to come up with a bag of tricks, a bag of ‘what works’ – that would be antithetical to the spirit of what we should try to achieve in the SMPA. By contrast, a careful implementation of elements of the Suzuki method would require teachers who ask why they hold certain beliefs, why they stick to certain repertoire and methods, teachers who constantly question their practices.

The SMPA in Bergen has its roots in a loosely knitted network amongst piano teachers, who saw an advantage in sharing the administrative function. In the yearly workforce survey by Bergen commune (City of Bergen) teachers report that they feel alone (they often are alone) and miss opportunities for co-operation. The teachers have to take most daily decisions on their own, they have to rely on their own judgements, and are not immersed in a dynamic group of co-workers. Answering the yearly workforce survey about how one gets along with colleagues, the best answer would be: ‘I don’t know. I have not tried.’

Adapting part of the Suzuki method to some degree, would imply changes on several levels. I think it would affect communication amongst teachers because they would have several shared topics to discuss. Ideas coming from one teacher would be understood more easily when teachers share some background, and use a common set of terms and have some of the same understanding. Would a orientation towards the pedagogic ideas of the Suzuki Method mean loss of diversity? It does not seem likely, since being a Suzuki teacher does not, as I have shown above, mean adopting a special style of teaching.

The SMPA’s main concern should be the students and their parents, as the students’ progress and development are the reason for organising education in the first place. The leadership at the SMPA shares the teachers’ concern for the best possible teaching in order to satisfy students and parents and try their best to make good use of the limited resources. An ongoing project, which is special to the piano section of the SMPA, called *oppspill*,⁴ is an example of an effort from the piano section, where the leaders of the piano section make decisions that affect the teaching practice of the individual piano teachers. The work on oppspill also represents an effort where teachers become more involved, as it generated much

⁴ *Oppspill* is a level division system used in the piano section of the SMPA. All students may qualify for one of 6 levels by playing a piece that is graded according to the levels, and in addition pass the associated theory test. For more information about Oppspill see Holgersen (2017).

communication between leadership and the teachers, and it is an example of efficient use of the possibilities that exists within an institution.

If the piano section of the SMPA would adapt to elements of it, I believe it would happen as a result of a discussion within a group of interested teachers, drawing on support from the leadership. Such an initiative has already been taken once, but was, however, terminated because practical matters made it difficult. The case in point was a proposal to offer some of the Suzuki teacher training courses, and many teachers at the SMPA showed interest. I was among the teachers who showed interest, and I think what motivated us was the continuing effort to enhance our teaching. There is an available pool of interest in the piano section, a motivation to seek better teaching practices, and higher quality.

As mentioned earlier there are many ways to let the Suzuki Method inform some of what we do as music educators without having to embrace the whole method, and I am fairly convinced that some innovations in traditional music teaching are already informed by experiences and ideas from the Suzuki Method. We could also make this a step on the path towards becoming Suzuki teachers. Attending courses would require some resources, but it would mean engaging teachers in the development of their profession.

6.1.3 The Suzuki Method's fundamental values

Suzuki was passionate about his method's goal, which was not to produce able musicians, but rather to help develop the children to become fine characters and to have noble hearts. These notions may seem questionable at first, one is left to wonder how they could inform a discussion about music education. What does Suzuki mean, what are the underlying goals and is there any chance that such aspirations would be compatible with the work at the SMPA at all.

In the SMPA it would be impossible to just have the goal of creating musicians or professional artists. Those who become specialised musicians are a select few, and it would not be enough to defend the existence of an institution like the SMPA if the only goal is to sort out the few individuals that would later depend on music or the arts to provide for their income. Nonetheless, SMPA is also meant to provide a pathway for them, but that is only one among several other goals. The majority of our students will never become professional musicians, so their involvement with music has to be founded on something other than just providing budding musicians a pathway to becoming a professional musician. It is wrong to think that only the students with high musical ability will pursue a musical career. There are

students with high abilities who enter other career paths, and there are less able students who will try to get involved in music or music education and some, with what may be perceived as minimal technical skill, may still attain great success in the field of popular music.

Among the students we encounter, there are those who get results easily – they have a knack for finding good movements, they pick easily up on visual cues, they quickly adapt to coordinated and elegant movements. Those are the ones who have high ability, and they are easy to teach. The problem they may pose is that things come very easily, and they may not always be in a good position to endure resistance, the other problem they face is that they often exhibit high ability in sports or academic, so they may have to choose which activity to pursue seriously. Such students are uncommon, they basically teach themselves, at the same time they might be used by the teacher to promote his or her teaching skills.

Other students have a hard time getting their body in balance, they struggle to find good posture and hand positions, their fingers are weak and uncoordinated. The problems these students face may be quite persistent and difficult to overcome. Students may face problems that the teacher herself has never encountered and finding solutions may be challenging, and require dedicated interest from the teacher, encouragement and perseverance. These students and their challenges could benefit from a methodological approach that has analysed and found the best way to build ability, one skill at a time, one teaching point at a time, learning the correct and rational movements, doing lots of repetition, and move forward and progress, and without wasting time. Trial and error may be a good strategy if applied to oneself, but applied under circumstances that involves the use of a student's time and energy appear unnecessary, if a solution could be provided by choosing an appropriate method. The Suzuki Method may provide such an approach. Of course, there are many other methods which might be helpful, but the Suzuki movement has, I believe, some advantages. The movement is quite large, many people know of its existence, it has amassed an ever-growing a pool of experience and knowledge which it encourages the teachers to share, it offers teacher training courses, it has pedagogical approaches which are sound and reasonable, it eliminates stories about unwilling children and hopeless parents, and rather try to find solutions in cooperation with parents and their children.

In the SMPA the reasons for anyone's involvement is founded on a right for every human to express themselves and to be educated. The education provides the student with means to express themselves and to acquire knowledge about their heritage and the culture they are born into. Student's with high ability have other challenges to cope with, than children how

have to expend more effort to tackle technical or musical challenges. Student with a high ability often solves his or her own technical challenges, whereas other students will need much training, much observation, a teacher who corrects the student hundred of times, and insists and perseveres without damaging the students self-confidence.

6.1.4 What learning an instrument means

Learning to play an instrument means that the student must dedicate many years of his or her life and develop the uniquely valuable skill of focused discipline. They seldom fully know it, for the decision is only partly their own, the decision is ultimately one that their parents must also take. Decisions that influence what our skills are will in some manner have an impact on who we become. When we decide which educational path to follow we also meet people, teachers, fellow students, that may alter the course of our life. When some children and their parents ask my advice when children no longer want to practice and are about to leave their instrument lessons, I sometimes ask them what it will mean to them to work on this skill every week, opposed to what it will mean to no longer engage in playing the piano. Skills become part of what we are, and the ability to produce something beautiful with the skills that we have acquired, not only has an impact on how we feel about ourselves, but how we make sense of life and the world around us. Practicing our skill provides us with a meditative room where we can work on our ability, develop our musicality, listen deeply to the sound we produce and honing our technique in order to enhance the sound we are making. The sound may improve slightly with each repetition, but we may never reach our sound ideal that resides in our imagination. Ultimately the SMPA provides the student with an accomplice who could enter the student's practice room and provide guidance and assistance.

An institution can of course never make sure that anybody becomes a noble character with a good heart, but as instrument teachers we can give students the opportunity to practice focused discipline, while listening to their own playing, making enhancements in their performances, learn the basic movements and direction within the instrument's tradition and providing the foundation needed to make progress on the instrument.

6.1.5 Method related to piano technique

Although this study mainly focuses on the Suzuki philosophy, more than the methodical aspects, I realised during writing it, that I am starved in relation to methods. Being able to play an instrument, and retracing the steps required to learn the skill are two completely different things. Although there has been much research into the field of piano technique and

piano playing, Julia Knerr claims in her doctoral thesis that it is common among piano teachers never to assign exercises or technical challenges for their students, because they have no long-term strategy for developing these skills. Many teachers acknowledge the need for a program, but the field is hampered by a lack of consensus, which makes it hard for the teacher. Different piano schools approach the question of technique in very different ways, and many of them are inspired by theories which are outdated. A faculty of piano teachers at the SMPA would be ideally suited to explore different methodological approaches and discuss them. The question of piano technique is one of the more important ones to debate, as there are few method books which deal with this aspect in a systematic manner. (Knerr, 2006, p. 5) A method would take some work off the shoulders of a busy piano teacher with limited time for each student.

6.1.6 Educare and educere in piano lessons

Efficiency naturally enters discussions of music teaching, because it is crucial that the teacher is efficient, since twenty minutes a week is limited, and the children are expected to learn about performance, practicing, learning to read music, learning to play chords, following lead sheets, have a working knowledge of basic chord theory, know about rudimentary technique, have established fingering patterns, to mention just a few of the subjects that need to be explored. There is lots of ground to cover, and an efficient use of teacher's time is of essence. Still we would only have covered the essentials required to train, or as mentioned earlier, the *educare* side of education. How do we prepare the student for the innovative unknown, for challenges that are yet to arise, for musical expressions and impressions never heard of, the *educere* part? We will as teachers not be able to anticipate what is to come, but we can encourage students to listen to the sound they make and to develop awareness for the social impact music has, and reflect upon how they engage in music, and what role or place they find themselves in.

Music is technique. One can only be free if the essential technique of one's art has been completely mastered, says Nadia Boulanger (Gerig, 2007, p. 1). Free here means having the ability to fully utilise the instrument to produce the sound nuance imaginable. I do think, that the technique acquired has its own sound: Gracious movements, control and flexibility in the finger, arms, the whole body, choreographed and controlled movements all have their own sound signature. In the same manner, lack of grace and control is heard immediately in the playing of an instrument.

As a teacher I think it is wise to work on craftsmanship, and to have high expectations to the students in that regard. This means never to stop believing in what the students can manage to do and to believe that beautiful coordination and technique results in musical sound.

6.1.7 Repetition

Repetition is fundamental to learning an instrument. Repetition is fundamental not only in that context, but in learning anything that requires automation, which occurs when something has been repeated so many times that the action becomes intuitive and effortless. The way a pianist finds his way around a keyboard, the chess-player's familiarity of chessboard pieces and the ability to see strong and weak positions and moves intuitively and countless other contexts where the performer has engaged in repetitious habit-forming activity for a long time, and where acting in this context becomes second nature, and 'easy'.

Abundance of repetition is one of the fundamental aspects of the Suzuki Method, and though it has been a fundamental principle within education for centuries, it has sometimes been regarded as something negative, and for specific reasons. It took me some years before I dared to ask students to repeat a certain musical passage 20 times every time they practiced. Or telling students that I thought the piece would sound fine if they played through the piece a hundred times. Vernon Howard claims in his article *And Practice drives me Mad; Or; The Drudgery of the Drill* that drill is 'anything but mindless repetition'. To practice something to the extent that it becomes second nature is a cognitive achievement. Without concentration, effort and imagination repetition is not going to accomplish anything worthwhile.

The notion of repetition and drill as a learning device is so widespread that it has been summed up in an acronym: TIPS which stands for Talent + Instruction + Practice = Success. Here the elements of talent and instruction are added as well. While there is truth to this formula, there are also aspects which are not covered by it. When discussing *talent*, it often evokes an image of something fixed, something given by nature and stable. Howard argues that whatever is 'fixed by nature is highly volatile, and changeable with time, training and opportunity' (Howard, 1991, p. 85). Repetition is powerful, but non-discriminating: Faulty behaviours and motions, are learnt as effectively by repetition as their correct equivalents. For practice to be effective the student must learn to concentrate, develop listening skills, have a clear picture of what to achieve, and be able to improve performance for each repetition. These are skills that the beginner simply does not have, and which it takes years to acquire. When performing the act of deliberate practice, these are the necessary skills.

While the use of repetition should sound quite basic, the idea of reinforcing and giving it a high priority is reasonable. There is research that shows 90% of beginners consider that instrument homework is done, once they have played through the piece once. This strategy is quite persistent, as the same strategy is quite stable even across three years (McPherson & Renwick, 2001, p. 174). The study by Renwick and McPherson also shows that the practice regime is mostly not affected by the teachers asking beginning students to practice in a standard manner, which is for 15-20 minutes five days a week, and repeating challenging section several times. The students still mostly play the piece one or two times, without correcting errors. The consequence of these observations must be that teachers generally make repetition part of their lessons, that they teach students to listen for improvement. Cooperation with parents also seems also reasonable, parents should not accept the proforma practice by beginners.

6.1.8 Strengthening the triangle

Some of the elements in the Suzuki Method necessitates extended resources compared with what is common in traditional teaching. The Suzuki teacher relies on parent participation, that implicates more work for the parents, and the parents must be educated. Usually a full-blown Suzuki approach includes a group lesson, which means the SMPA charges a higher fee, and children (and usually their parents) must show up twice a week. If the SMPA wanted to implement these features it would require parents who were willing in both participating as Suzuki parents, and they would have to pay more. Piano-teachers would have to attend teacher training courses, to become qualified Suzuki teachers.

Independently of parents' assistance and of extended resources, I believe that such an education would constitute an asset for the SMPA. The teachers would be better equipped to help students to overcome technical difficulties, would be more aware of the importance of parents' participation and the environment, and would have a clearer vision of how to improve on their own teaching. Regardless of our opinion on the Suzuki method, it is very hard to imagine a situation where the child does not need a stimulating environment to keep up practicing, which after all is hard work. Parents' involvement is, I believe, the most important resource, and it may actually save the SMPA resources, as parents involvement may make up for restricted teacher resources.

At the SMPA the semester starts every autumn in the following way: All parents and students meet with the teacher, on the day and at the place where the instrument lessons are held. At

these meeting the timetable is set, and there is an exchange of information, questions, election of representatives, both for the students and for the parents. At this meeting the teacher may inform the parents and students of his or her expectations, for instance, on parents' involvement. From autumn 2017 the piano section has printed an assignment book for the students, where they can log their own practising for each day. In the foreword we also encourage parents to participate in the lessons the first year, dependent on the teacher's advice, and the age of the child. Older beginners are not expected to meet at the lesson accompanied by their parents.

The degree of parents' involvement has been a point of discussion within the piano division as long as I have worked at the SMPA. Some teachers think parents should not involve themselves in their children's music lessons and advise against their participation, some are eager to get the parents to participate and communicate a lot with parents. In my experience parents' involvement is mostly positive, although issues may arise. If children are heavily coached by their parents, and there is a lack of communication between parents and the teacher, this may be negative. Especially if there is disagreement about how issues that arise during lessons and practicing sessions are solved. Suzuki teachers provide education for the parents, they are shown how to manage simple instrumental playing, and they get advice on how to manage the practice sessions at home. But the teacher has the last word when considering what should be practiced, how technical problems are solved, what constitutes enough practice, and when a piece is finished. If parents are not willing to adapt to such a regime, the Suzuki triangle is weakened, and it becomes confusing for the child, whom it should listen to. When the parents' involvement clashes with the teacher's wishes, the best thing to do would be ironing out differences of opinion with the teacher, and ultimately changing teacher if an agreement cannot be reached.

In order to fully take advantage of the parents' capacity it would be advisable to organise and formalise some sort of parent education. Here, the focus should be on ways to support the child, to try to establish a friendly and encouraging atmosphere towards practice, to provide a good instrument, and to show interest towards problems that may arise when the child practices. The parent should leave decisions about musical and technical priorities to the teacher, allowing for the teacher to have the last say, in order to prevent the child from getting confused and maybe not reach his musical potential.

6.1.9 The use of recordings

Although the use of recordings is spreading, it was not something that the average piano teacher would have recommended twenty years ago. It was quite common to argue that hearing some other musician perform and interpret a musical score might mess up the budding piano student's own interpretation of the performance. An important part of learning from recording is the shift of focus it represents: the classical tradition of music is heavily based on the use of sheet music, which means that the eyesight becomes the most privileged amongst the senses when studying new pieces.

The use of recordings may also stimulate students to listen deliberately to music. When learning a piece of music where they can listen to a performance, they have to listen for other musical elements than they normally do. They have to try to hear what the left hand does, how a particular rhythm is carried out, and how dynamics are performed. I do think such active listening is helpful for their musical development.

Many students learn favourite songs from YouTube. While there are many examples of inferior technique and clumsy performances, this practice provides a chance to pick up favourite songs, listen critically, ask questions and learn. Even a teacher might pick up a thing or two.

6.1.10 Building a repertoire of pieces to perform

Some children collect favourite songs and play them over and over, they do this all by themselves, and do not need to be encouraged. But sometimes children do not play old songs, instead they stick to their new homework, which they cannot play very well yet. When they slowly become better at playing the piece, they are assigned a new piece, and the old song is soon forgotten. Over time this process takes its toll on self-esteem, but it also implies that the students very seldom use their body to produce music, they hardly ever dive into the act of music-making. The Suzuki idea to never discard pieces taps into the energy that children often display when they master pieces they like. They quite naturally play them, it might be the first thing they play when they start playing. They would not do it with every piece though, many pieces are discarded, especially pieces that were considered too difficult, or melodies and songs they did not quite like. At the piano section of the SMPA in Bergen we have discussed the use of a favourite list containing a few songs, and we ask the students to edit the list whenever they learn a song they like and keep practicing it once in a while. This also helps when they perform at concerts, if they are able to choose among a few songs that

they are able to play well, stage-fright and nervousness is reduced, and performing can be much more fun. The drawback with the favourites list is that there seldom is time during lessons to play some of the old songs. A possibility is to ask a student to play a certain piece at a date a month or two in the future, after the piece has matured for a while.

Another suggestion that is related to that of a favourite repertoire list is to use these pieces to practice technique. By using well-known repertoire when acquiring new skills, the young student has the chance to exploit the music he or she has already mastered, and by that to infuse energy and resources into the learning process. It is also possible to construct variations based on the favourites, that may illustrate practice strategies, which the young student often needs to learn.

6.1.11 Exploring group lessons

Group lessons are an important part of the Suzuki Method, and the Japanese and American Suzuki style accomplish the group teaching lessons by different means. In Japan it is common to let the instrument lessons overlap, students watch each other having individual lessons, and then often do some group exercises or play songs in unison, or they may engage in musical games. In the Western variant, group lessons are setup separately. In the SMPA in Bergen that is the established practice for violin students, and the parents pay for the additional lesson. The RfK mentions overlapping lessons as a possible way to organise lessons, providing a chance for the students to interact, share learning experiences and to play in ensembles. If two students with the standard 20-minutes model would share five minutes from each, this would comprise a ten-minute group segment. The total time for each student would reach 25 minutes, which certainly is preferable to 20. This is a solution that might work in cases where the students involved are relatively close to each other in age and development and would most likely be welcomed by students and their parents.

6.1.12 Concluding summary

In this study I have taken a closer look at the Suzuki Method, examined its essential ideas, practices and assumptions, discussed what it has meant to the teaching of instruments, but also more generally to music education. Important consequences of the Suzuki Method may be summed up in its role as one of the democratising forces in music education, its movement towards a child-centered approach, the insight that children learn better when the environment supports their efforts, and that problem-solving mostly is dependent on the collaboration between student, parent and the teacher. A direct comparison of the SMPA with the Suzuki

Method is impossible since they function differently, and are meant to fulfil different expectations. The SMPA is funded by the government, and that means that the forces influencing the SMPA are different from those of an independent Suzuki teaching Studio. But some of the goals, and many of the values, are related to each other, the most important being the wish to provide a service to each child, independently of economy and talent.

In my guiding research questions, I asked what the distinctive characteristics of the Suzuki Method were, and what was the rationale behind its emphases and strategies. In chapter four I looked at the origins of the method, what initiated its development and the guiding ideas and practices that Suzuki established. While the Suzuki Method has grown into many diverse educational endeavours, it has clearly demonstrated longevity and vitality. While some of the research that Suzuki relied on has shown to have limited credibility, he had the intuition to fit sound pedagogical principles together in a holistic manner, resulting in the current 400,000 students world-wide. I also think that its success has to do with the nature of the method. Ideally it has a flexibility and an openness toward education, which provides the possibility for reflection and questioning of pedagogic practices, which is important if the teaching profession is to progress.

In the third chapter I identified the qualities and values that are promoted in the *Curriculum framework for the School of Music and Performing Arts* and analysed how they compared and contrasted to those contained in the Suzuki Method. Although the Suzuki Method focuses on select parts of the many possibilities that the RfK puts forward, the orientation towards every student, as opposed to the few 'talented', is in accordance with the fundamental values that forms the foundation of the SMPA. In the last part of the study I entered into a discussion of how the SMPA could benefit from an orientation towards Suzuki pedagogy. This discussion relates to the last guiding question asking if the Suzuki Method could serve as a model for instrument teaching. My take on that is that I do not think any method can achieve anything worth-while within the field of education if methods mean blindly following instructions and prescriptions. What the Suzuki Method does is that instead of focusing on the instrument, it places the student at the centre of the educational efforts, and helps structure an environment that provides fertile ground for development, self-improvement and self-discovery.

While there have been many critical voices, there are reasons to keep in mind that the Suzuki movement represented a major change in the education of instruments. String education was in a crisis when the Suzuki Method was introduced, which may provide some of the explanation for how its message became so powerful in the US. The idea that every child with

normal learning abilities could reach a level of high ability challenged preconceived notions about classical music being for the select few, and the concept of child prodigies. The positive message from the movement is that everyone can do a meaningful effort and that it is possible to educate oneself and reach high ability, while not being a child prodigy, and while not coming from an environment that is highly conducive to the development of musical ability. The Suzuki movement provides an equivalent to a musical family in the way it helps to structure the environment that furthers the child's abilities.

The introduction of the Suzuki Method meant that the focus shifted from the craftsmanship to how music teaching would affect children's life. It has shown what is possible when the child, the teacher and the parent are able to coordinate their efforts. The Suzuki Method provides a clear model for how such a collaboration can be realised.

The Suzuki triangle is a vehicle for altering the environment, which is becoming the new agent of growth. It is not the teacher's sole responsibility to inspire, and it is no longer the child's sole responsibility to practice enough and it is not the parent alone who has to carry the responsibility for the child's progress. The possibility for growth is taken care of, not by a sole actor, but by a collective embedded in a social bond, and this arrangement is more likely to yield lasting results than what can be expected by any sole agent.

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