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The Art of Listening  
as Applied to Talent Education

A SEMINAR PAPER  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem.-The main goal of educators in all fields of education is helping children learn. According to Hildebrandt, the average person spends approximately "9 percent of a working day writing, 16 percent reading, 30 percent speaking, and 45 percent of his day listening."<sup>1</sup> Listening is considered by many to be the orphan of education for it has become a forgotten art in the Twentieth Century.<sup>2</sup> Because it can be developed through training, educators should be made aware of the importance of the art of listening.

In past years, the educational system of this country has not succeeded in developing listening skills to a high degree. One reason is because many educators fail to differentiate between hearing and listening. Hearing is "the physical activity of assimilating sounds," while listening is "the intellectual activity applied to hearing."<sup>3</sup>

Listening is an art, which is a skill in performance

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<sup>1</sup>"We're Poor Listeners," Science Digest, February 1960, Inside Back Cover.

<sup>2</sup>J. R. Komaiko, "Fine Art of Listening," Parent's Magazine, August 1961, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph Domenic La Rosa, "A High School Curriculum for the Development of Musicianship in Individual Orchestral Players" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1966), pp. 171-172.

acquired by study, experience, or observation. The art of listening is not something that can be acquired through do-it-yourself techniques. The ability to perform this skill well involves more than just hearing or letting the sound waves enter passively into the ear. Listening is basically a mental skill, developed primarily through training and practice. This requires knowledge and effort from both the educator and the student, for good listening is "an alive process, demanding alert and active participation."<sup>1</sup>

Many fallacies have arisen, hindering the development of hearing and listening in children. Many people feel that a child is tone-deaf if he cannot sing in tune. However, this only proves that he cannot sing, not that he cannot hear. If he sings in tune, he has certainly shown that he hears well.<sup>2</sup>

In essence, listening should and must be taught. The Suzuki philosophy that talent is not inborn, but that every child can acquire skills through experience and repetition, helps teach excellent listening habits. "For the sake of our children, let us educate them from the cradle to have a noble mind, a high sense of values and splendid ability."<sup>3</sup>

Justification of the Problem.-Listening is one of the main elements through which learning takes place. Often, we

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<sup>1</sup>Dominic A. Barbara, The Art of Listening (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1958), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Elizabeth Mills and Sr. Therese Cecile Murphy, eds., The Suzuki Concept: An Introduction to a Successful Method For Early Music Education, with an Introduction by Masaaki Honda (Berkeley, California: Diablo Press, 1973), pp. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup>Shinichi Suzuki, Nurtured by Love, trans. Waltraud Suzuki (New York: Exposition Press, 1969), p. 27.

do not set a proper environment for the child until he is older. Suzuki states that listening "should be started at birth" by listening to one composition, preferably from the Baroque period, many times each day.<sup>1</sup>

Children, through imitation, will learn both good and bad listening habits from their parents. If a child's parents are good listeners, showing respect and interest for each other, the child will then "come to sense the rightness of having this give-and-take relationship."<sup>2</sup>

Another important aspect is the parent-child relationship. If the parents fail to listen to their child, he may seek another outlet for his emotions, or, worse, try to seal them inside.<sup>3</sup> One of the reasons children have trouble listening is a lack of patience on the part of the parent. Parents will often become bored listening to a record repeatedly, but this is how a child learns. "It is therefore a matter of patience and repetition. If this is done . . . we can well understand that ability breeds ability."<sup>4</sup>

If a parent is overprotective by demanding obedience and discipline, forcing the child into submission, this parent-child relationship is usually "explosive and tempestuous."<sup>5</sup> Parents who expect excellence and perfection in their children,

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<sup>1</sup>Mills and Murphy, Suzuki Concept, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup>Komaiko, "Fine Art of Listening," p. 78.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Suzuki, Nurtured by Love, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup>Barbara, Art of Listening, p. 103.

generally push them far beyond their abilities. The child rarely understands or appreciates what is being forced on him. In this environment, "a child's listening abilities may be greatly disturbed."<sup>1</sup> Research has determined that a relaxed atmosphere is more conducive to listening.<sup>2</sup>

The amount of help that each child needs will vary, therefore one must allow children to repeat as necessary. Do not rush them. "Repetition is natural to intuitive learning. The child instinctively repeats to reinforce the skill. He is taking great pleasure in learning."<sup>3</sup>

Significance of the Problem.-Of the four means of communication, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, listening is perhaps the most important, for it affects people of all ages. A child only one week old is startled by loud noises. At one month, he may perceive voices and music, while by four months he will turn his head toward the noise. By nine months, he will start to adjust to the spoken word. By the time he starts his formal education, the values of this skill are obvious.<sup>4</sup>

Educators have presented two reasons for teaching children to listen more effectively. First, listening is used frequently in the information gathering process, and

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<sup>1</sup>Barbara, Art of Listening, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup>Sam Duker, ed., Listening: Readings (New York: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1966), p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>Mills and Murphy, Suzuki Concept, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup>Barbara, Art of Listening, p. 23.

second, listening ability influences learning in the other language arts.<sup>1</sup> Praise, motivation, directions, and explanations by the teacher are mainly vocal, requiring the class to listen. Children in the primary grades learn more by listening than by reading. As the amount of learning increases, the student in junior high school and senior high school finds a "necessity for careful, discriminating listening."<sup>2</sup> Although the amount of listening may decrease, the demand for a higher quality of listening increases.

This need for quality listening continues into adulthood, both in one's occupation and at home. Parents need to be more accountable for the development of their children by listening more efficiently, for investigations have shown that most people listen poorly, and cannot remember even one quarter of what was heard. It has been proven that listening skills can be taught and improved through training and practice.<sup>3</sup> Parents need to remember that "all that a child knows he learns, and learning begins at birth with the infant's first movement."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the development of listening skills must begin at birth.

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<sup>1</sup>Duker, Listening: Readings, p. 330

<sup>2</sup>Sam Duker, ed., Teaching Listening in the Elementary School (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1971), p. 46.

<sup>3</sup>Komaiko, "Fine Art of Listening," p. 41.

<sup>4</sup>Mills and Murphy, Suzuki Concept, p. 33.

Learning to listen can add tremendously to one's enjoyment of life, allowing one to experience "the symphonies of nature, the hum of industries, the cadence of speech and the glories of man-made music, drama, prose, and poetry."<sup>1</sup>

Purpose of the Investigation.-Any child is able to display highly superior abilities if the correct methods are used in training.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it is important, for both the educator and parent, to understand the physical and psychological aspects of this skill. The parents are responsible for training the children during the pre-school years, while the educators develop the skill to higher degree during the child's formal education.

In this investigation an attempt is made to explain the psychological faculty of hearing, better known as listening, so that, through a better understanding, the reader can apply it to his own field of interest. An example of its application to a specific area of learning will be included, showing how listening is developed through Talent Education, and how it leads to the evolution of a philosophy of music education. Information on the philosophy of Talent Education, the goals of the philosophy, and how it is applied to teaching listening will be included. Suggestions for teachers and parents, and motivational ideas for use in teaching listening, will aid in its application to the reader's specific field of interest.

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<sup>1</sup>Duker, Listening: Readings, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup>Suzuki, Nurtured by Love, p. 9

Method of Procedure.-In the past twenty years, a great increase in the study of listening, as a psychological faculty related to learning, has taken place. This information has given the writer the necessary background and insight into the psychological aspects of listening, and into the different methods of developing that skill.

Of great significance in this study were the observations and teaching experiences of the writer. The writer has taught both traditional and Suzuki concepts of music education to students ranging from pre-school through adult, in both public school and private teaching situations. The writer has also observed Shinichi Suzuki on two separate occasions, discussing and demonstrating the importance of the art of listening in Talent Education.

Through research, observations, and teaching experiences, it has become apparent to the writer that listening skills need to be taught as early as possible in the home, and must be further developed in the schools. Listening can be considered the stepping stone of education and learning.

## CHAPTER II

### SURVEY OF SELECTED LITERATURE

The Ear Before Birth.-The internal ears are man's most complex sense organs. Three main parts of the ear, the external, middle, and inner ear, function in the perception of sound.<sup>1</sup>

Although the development of the ear begins before the end of the first month of pregnancy, it is doubtful that it is functional before the sixth month. During the fourth week of embryonic life, a small round vesicle will develop on either side of the embryonic head, near the brain. A very complex sequence of changes will take place in this vesicle during the next five months, until it becomes functional. When it is functional, it will have two distinct parts, "a balancing organ, with three slender semicircular canals, and a hearing organ, called a cochlea, which is a coiled tube."<sup>2</sup>

In the ear, (originally an organ in animals for maintaining equilibrium) the semicircular canals, containing sensory cells, differentiate during the third month.<sup>3</sup> When the head of the fetus moves, causing movement of fluid in the

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<sup>1</sup>Margaret Gilbert, Biography of the Unborn (New York: Rapner Publishing Co., 1963), p. 104.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Arthur Ham, Histology (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1969), pp. 1003-1004.

canals, the sensory cells are stimulated. Nerve fibers then convey this stimulation to the brain. By the sixth month, the fetus will attempt to move the head and body, stimulating the nerves. However, full development of balancing will depend on the complete development of the muscles and brain, as well as experiences after the child is born.<sup>1</sup> The auditory sense is probably only partially functional at birth. The special sensory cells and nerves that respond to sound waves develop slowly. There is little proof that the human fetus responds to sounds before the seventh month. There is evidence, however, that during the last two months, the fetus can be startled by sounds coming through the mother's abdomen and the walls of the uterus. If the fetus does hear during these last two months, it probably hears "the continuous rhythmic sound of its mother's heartbeat."<sup>2</sup>

Since the sensory cells and nerves of the inner ear are completely developed after six months, a child is fully equipped to begin learning auditory reactions immediately after birth. The actual discrimination of sounds that characterize man's sense of hearing "probably develop slowly during the first few months of independent life."<sup>3</sup>

The Anatomy of the Ear.-The ear consists of three main parts. The external ear in most mammals is equipped with a natural ear-trumpet, which is generally a hollow cone shape.

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<sup>1</sup>Gilbert, Biography of the Unborn, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

Turning the face to the direction of the sound will make weak sounds clearer. In man, this amplifier is poorly developed and has no real importance. Therefore, although man can distinguish a wide range of pitches, his ability to tell from which direction a sound is coming, is not highly developed. A short tube between the external ear and the middle ear leads to the eardrum, which is a boundary separating them. The hair and wax-secreting cells in this tube are only a protective device for the eardrum.<sup>1</sup>

The middle ear is a narrow chamber filled with air through which communication with the mouth takes place. This is accomplished by means of the eustachian tube, which is a duct between the two. This tube works like a one-way valve. When the pressure of the middle ear varies too much from the outside, the walls, which are usually pressed flat together, are pushed open to allow air to move one way or another, equalizing the pressure. This slightly full feeling, which usually occurs with a change in altitude, only signifies a change of pressure in the middle ear.<sup>2</sup>

The walls in the middle ear, with the exception of three areas, are strong and bony. The largest of these areas is the eardrum. The remaining areas are the fenestra ovalis (oval window) and the fenestra rotunda (round window). These delicate membranes separate the middle ear from the inner ear. The middle ear has three ossicles, or small bones. These bones,

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<sup>1</sup>Barbara, Art of Listening, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

forming a chain, are the malleus (hammer), incus (anvil), and the stapes (stirrup). The stapes has its base in flexible contact with the fluid of the inner ear. When motion of the stapes takes place, the fluid in the inner ear stimulates the nerve endings in the cochlea, the actual hearing organ. These nerves then send the message to the brain.<sup>1</sup>

The inner ear is a complex maze of passages embedded in bone and filled with a clear fluid. The only part of the inner ear that is involved with hearing is the cochlea, a narrow tapering tube, about an inch long, which is coiled into a dwindling spiral, similar to the shell of a snail.<sup>2</sup>

The cochlea is divided into three sections by a partition running along its entire length. The sensitive endings of the ear nerves are located on this partition. These sense cells, stiff hairlike projections, are surrounded by nerve fiber endings, which are placed anatomically on an elastic membrane and over hung by a rigid shelf. When the fluid around this vibrates, the membrane bounces up and down, causing the sense cells to collide with this rigid shelf. This impact stimulates the cells, causing them to send the impulse or message along the nerve fibers, to the brain.<sup>3</sup>

How the Ear Functions.-According to Ham, there are three main functions of the ear. These are hearing, the

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<sup>1</sup>Barbara, Art of Listening, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

orientation of the head in relation to gravitational forces, and overcoming inertia, which allows the body to balance itself.<sup>1</sup>

Before one hears a sound, the sound wave must travel a complex route through the ear. The process begins with the stimuli going through the air to the ear. The stimuli then enters the ear, causing the eardrum to vibrate. This, in turn, transmits the vibrations to the fenestra ovalis. The fenestra ovalis is partly protective, for the malleus is jointed to the incus in such a way that if a violent jar, such as a box on the ear occurs, the two become detached. This prevents the shock from passing into, and possibly damaging the more delicate parts of the ear.<sup>2</sup>

The inner ear is filled with a water fluid. This causes a problem, for the properties of sound waves moving in water are very different from those travelling in air. The human ear, through a series of ear bones, attempts to cope with the problem of transmitting sounds waves from air to water. The ear bones act as levers, reducing the amplitude of the vibrations. At the same time, this concentrates the energy of the vibrating eardrum into the fenestra ovalis, which is one-twentieth of the size of the eardrum. This causes the waves to become more vigorous. This then stimulates the nerve endings in the cochlea, which control pitch discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ham, Histology, p. 1003.

<sup>2</sup>Barbara, Art of Listening, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

Pitch discrimination is controlled by the cochlea. The diameter of the cochlea decreases at a steady rate from one end to the other. Because the outside becomes smaller, the inside must decrease in the same proportion, which means the elastic membranes, which hold the sense cells, must also decrease. If the membranes are different sizes, the amount of vibration of each will vary, causing each to be tuned to a different pitch. (For example, if one strikes a tuning fork near a piano, with the damper pedal down, the note from the tuning fork will sound from the piano, as a result of sensitive reverberations).<sup>1</sup> These pitches are then sent to the brain via nerve impulses.<sup>2</sup>

The ear, therefore, is a very sensitive and complicated instrument. When one hears a Stradivarius violin played well, the sound waves are changed into an electrical impulse by the auditory nerve, and sent through the entire complex hearing apparatus. One then hears the beautiful mixture of sounds, much more exquisite than any man-made instrument can reproduce, for man's ear has an astonishing acoustical sensitivity.<sup>3</sup> Any slight disorder, such as wax in the ear canal, or a cold, which causes pressures, may impair hearing.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Barbara, Art of Listening, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

## CHAPTER III

### ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ON LISTENING

Definitions of Listening.-Webster defines listening as the "ability to pay attention" or "to hear with thoughtful attention."<sup>1</sup> Hearing, on the other hand, is "the special sense by which noises and tones are received as stimuli."<sup>2</sup>

What is thought of as the ability to listen in babies, is actually the ability to hear. When hearing is inadequate, "boredom, fatigue, and wandering attention or daydreaming are likely to replace good listening."<sup>3</sup>

Jones feels that listening is a selective process in which sounds are communicated and received, critically interpreted, and acted upon by a purposeful listener.<sup>4</sup> In order to critically interpret sounds, the listener must do more than be in the same room with the sounds, or listen partially while one's thoughts wander. To listen perceptively, one must focus one's whole attention on the sounds. One must observe the patterns that are formed, and must respond to the thoughts and

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<sup>1</sup>Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, (1967),  
s.v. "Listening."

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., s.v. "Hearing."

<sup>3</sup>Duker, Listening: Readings, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 326.

feelings from which they come.<sup>1</sup> The listener must focus his complete attention on the music to understand it. When a musician is asked to "listen," he must be actively involved in keen concentration and be aware of the sounds, for it is not enough to merely "hear" the music.<sup>2</sup>

The Role of the Listener.-People often refer to themselves or others as being a good listener. According to Stromer, a good listener is one who, in a "wide variety of dynamic social situations, makes use of every possible stimulus available to him," to "improve his own well-being and the integration of his relationships to others in his environment."<sup>3</sup>

Many writers on music have tried to classify listening experiences on either the sensual, emotional, or intellectual levels. These levels are of no real value, because one tends to listen differently to different kinds of music, and, on different occasions, one hears the same composition differently. The listener's goal should be, through training and experience, to unite all three of these levels, so that one can apprehend the sounds with all the joys of one's senses, the freshness of one's emotions, and the powers of one's understanding.<sup>4</sup>

When one can completely understand a great composition, one can grasp the moment of truth that gave it birth.

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Machlis, The Enjoyment of Music (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Charles R. Hoffer, The Understanding of Music (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1967), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Duker, Listening: Readings, p. 768.

<sup>4</sup>Machlis, Enjoyment of Music, pp. 3-4.

At this moment, one is equal to the master who wrote it, or at least equal to sit in his company. By understanding his message to us and his intention through perceptive listening, one learns how to enjoy music to the fullest extent.<sup>1</sup>

The listener, in learning how to listen effectively, will discover the importance of a good musical environment. This musical environment should let his personality become part of the total recreative process. This will help give meaning to the combined efforts of the composer and performer, plus give an added dimension through enjoyment of the music as he understands it. Listening at times will need to be intense and continual, with the listener submitting to the demands of the music. The listener's responsibilities to himself are to listen intelligently, in a conscious and responsive manner. Also, through reading and discussion, the listener should try to gain insight into the composer's thoughts, ideas, and techniques.<sup>2</sup>

In the end, the only way to understand the meaning of music is by listening to the sounds themselves.<sup>3</sup> Tolerance and open-mindedness will help one interpret music as the composer had intended. An attitude of tolerance will give one the chance to learn and to discover that it is better to be a student of music, than a judge.<sup>4</sup> After one has listened to a message or

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<sup>1</sup>Machlis, Enjoyment of Music, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>La Rosa, "High School Curriculum," p. 176.

<sup>3</sup>Machlis, Enjoyment of Music, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Hoffer, Understanding of Music, p. 17.

composition, he should have an understanding of it. The only way to determine whether or not he understands, is to test him on his knowledge of it through responses to the stimulus message. "If this response can be considered a behavior change, then learning has occurred."<sup>1</sup>

Psychological Aspects of Listening.—Only the deaf are able to experience complete silence. Sounds continually surround man, as he performs the wonder of listening almost unconsciously.

Ramsdell described three psychological levels of hearing. The first he calls the primitive level. At this level, one is aware of the sounds around him, especially the noises of the daily world. The second is the signal or warning level. This level utilizes certain types of auditory information, such as the ringing of a telephone, or a traffic policeman blowing his whistle. The third is the symbolic level. This is the level at which one understands language.<sup>3</sup>

The art of listening begins at birth, with communication between parent and child. This communication should be the main unifying force in the healthy development of the individual's personality. If emotional ties are solid at this age, the child will be better equipped to communicate with the outside world in later years.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Duker, Listening: Readings, p. 330.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>3</sup>Barbara, Art of Listening, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

As a child becomes older, his neurological handling of sounds will increase in proportion with the complexity of the sounds. The amount of physical effort needed to listen to a pure tone is less than that needed to listen to the tone of a musical instrument. Hence, it is much easier to listen to one instrument than an orchestra.<sup>1</sup>

When a pattern of sound is so complex that one fails to be able to understand it, the memory becomes clogged, and one tends to become confused. Man, however, has the capacity to select only certain sounds out of the many which are continually around him, giving specific attention to them. This selective process, which one learns and performs, is done rapidly and with little thought.<sup>2</sup>

A child, by blocking out certain sounds, can be disobedient and yet relieve himself of feeling guilty about his disobedience. In the most severe cases, called hysterical deafness, a child actually will deafen himself to all or certain specific sounds which have been associated, in his mind, with a former unpleasant experience.<sup>3</sup>

Disturbed listening is believed to lead to faulty personality development. Unless a child has an organic hearing defect, he possesses, at birth, the ability to listen effectively. Given a good environment, a child can develop normally and will fulfill his growth possibilities. His ability

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<sup>1</sup>Duker, Listening: Readings, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>Barbara, Art of Listening, p. 25.

to listen will grow proportionately with his emotional freedom and experiences. He needs to know what he is, where he is going, and the nature of his relationship to others.<sup>1</sup>

A child who lacks sympathetic listeners is driven to passive indulgences, such as movies, television, radio or comic books. As he gets older, he faces new problems that will need attention, clarification, and proper guidance. If, at this important time, an adolescent is denied the sympathetic and understanding listening of his parents, personality problems could result. If no one is there to listen to his problems, he may find less desirable outlets for his emotions. Basically, a child is the result of his home environment. If conversation is restricted or limited, or there are strained relationships in the home, he is "bound to suffer a traumatic effect as a consequence."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Barbara, Art of Listening, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

## CHAPTER IV

### APPLICATION TO TALENT EDUCATION

The Philosophy of Talent Education.-Shinichi Suzuki, the founder of Talent Education, believes that talent is not an accident of birth. Through proper training, one's abilities can be developed. Suzuki states that all children can acquire a high educational level if they are skillfully reared from the day they are born. His philosophy was initiated by the observation that all Japanese children speak Japanese. Because they speak easily and fluently, he felt "there must be a secret, and this must be in the training."<sup>1</sup>

The home environment forms the foundation of Talent Education. Whether the environment is good or bad, the newborn child will adapt to it in order to live.<sup>2</sup> It is important to place a child in the best environment from the cradle, train him with the proper method, and not forget that a "person who fails at five hundred times can succeed at five thousand times."<sup>3</sup> One's personality, ability, and ways of thinking and feeling are formed and molded by circumstances and environment.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Suzuki, Nurtured by Love, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

Suzuki believes you must first educate the mind before you teach a skill to a child. After the mind is educated, the skill is taught by means of repetition and imitation of the parents, just as the child learned his native language. He feels this is the right and natural method. If one starts children learning through the use of a game, the children will continue learning, on their own, letting the idea of enjoyment lead them in the proper direction. This is the way all children should be educated.<sup>1</sup>

The philosophy of Talent Education is centered around love for one's fellow man. Suzuki's goal of creating good citizens and teaching children to get a "beautiful heart," demonstrates his love for all people.<sup>2</sup>

Developing Listening Through Talent Education.-Parents often believe that their children have no talent if they display no great ability when they are young. Many parents have been misled by the statement "she is a born musician." What a person will become depends on his first stage of development. One's future fate and skill in later life will be determined by training received at this time of life.<sup>3</sup>

The main principle in the development of listening in Talent Education is that it should parallel the way the native language (mother tongue) was acquired. All children learn their mother tongue without formal schooling, text, or

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<sup>1</sup>Suzuki, Nurtured by Love, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>3</sup>William Starr, The Suzuki Violinist (Knoxville, Tennessee: Kingston Ellis Press, 1976), p. 10.

classroom. Yet, children intuitively recognize and later reproduce these "delicate nuances of spoken language."<sup>1</sup> Suzuki believes, and has shown through his teachings, that a young child can develop a highly discriminating musical ear in this same way.<sup>2</sup>

Repetition is necessary in music listening just as it is in the learning of one's native language.<sup>3</sup> A child should be exposed to music each day as a type of "musical bath."<sup>4</sup> If the music he hears is of high quality, and the same composition is used each day, he will begin to develop an ear for the music.<sup>5</sup> It can safely be predicted that his ear for music will "develop in direct proportion to the number of times that the piece is heard."<sup>6</sup> Even though a child is doing something else in the room at the same time, he will unconsciously absorb the music played, making it part of his personal ability.<sup>7</sup> Suzuki states that a young child's progress will be "directly dependent upon the amount of listening he does,"<sup>8</sup> for this listening will help motivate him to want to play the music that is heard.

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<sup>1</sup>Starr, Suzuki Violinist, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Mills and Murphy, Suzuki Concept, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>8</sup>Starr, Suzuki Violinist, p. 7.

The two most important factors in dealing with Talent Education are helping the child develop an ear for music, and thoroughly mastering every step from the very beginning.<sup>1</sup>

In Talent Education the mother is given lessons before the child is taught to play. She is taught one composition, so that she can be a better teacher at home. Initially, the child watches the parent play and listens to the record at home. Children are really educated in the home. Therefore, it is important for the parent to learn before the child, because the child learns by imitating the parent.<sup>2</sup>

If the child is going to learn how to play, he must first learn how to listen and hear each note accurately, allowing him to play by ear. The best place for this is in the home. If a parent shows interest, playing and listening to music, the child will also.<sup>3</sup> It must be remembered that playing by ear is not intended to be a final goal. It is only a beginning, forming the foundation needed for a musical education.<sup>4</sup>

A musical ear, therefore, can be acquired by listening. The earlier it is taught, the more useful and productive it will become. An ear for music is not innate. "It is a human aptitude that can only be developed through listening."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mills and Murphy, Suzuki Concept, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Suzuki, Nurtured by Love, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup>Mills and Murphy, Suzuki Concept, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

Teaching Ideas and Methods for Developing Listening in Talent Education.-In Talent Education, the parents and teachers are responsible for teaching listening, utilizing repetition and various motivational methods and ideas.

It is the teacher's responsibility to help the student become a good listener, making sure good habits are established. It is important for the teacher to know the background of his students, because of the importance of the home environment. He must also know the material being presented, and what the students will learn from these materials.<sup>1</sup>

Group lessons are very important for motivation of the students, and should be held bi-monthly or monthly. Listening to others in group lessons is important because they will not only hear the large sound of a group of violins, but will also see and hear performances of compositions they will learn to play in the future.<sup>2</sup> The teacher, through his actions and attitudes, should provide the students with an example of an interested listener.<sup>3</sup>

There are many physical factors which should be considered before one starts to teach. A teacher should make sure the children are seated in such a way that it will promote attention in listening. If the temperature of the room is too

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Evans Nye and Vernice Trousdale Nye, Music in the Elementary Schools (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 241.

<sup>2</sup>Starr, Suzuki Violinist, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup>Nye and Nye, Music in the Elementary School, p. 242.

hot or cold, or there is inadequate lighting, the ability to listen will decrease, because the student is influenced by other things. It will also be helpful to try to stop competing noises as much as possible, and to remove all interest-catching articles that are in the room. This will reduce the amount of distractions during the lesson.<sup>1</sup>

Another aspect of careful teacher planning is to keep the vocabulary at the level of the listener. New words, both descriptive and musical, should be written on a blackboard and/or discussed and explained when necessary. Many times, teaching a new word is a good motivational device.<sup>2</sup>

Another motivational technique is asking specific questions about the music. Also, the teacher may suggest that a student listen more carefully, or just listen more, in order to solve a certain problem.<sup>3</sup>

The parents and teacher have an equally important role in teaching children to listen. Because the parent was the first to play in lessons, he knows all the basic techniques before the child begins to play. If the parent hears the recording of the literature to be learned each day, along with his child, his role of assistant teacher will be much easier. He will know exactly how the piece should sound and can help his child when a note is played incorrectly.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Nye and Nye, Music in the Elementary School, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>4</sup>Starr, Suzuki Violinist, p. 8.

Parents are in an excellent position to do remedial work at home, stopping poor habits before they become serious problems. Daily listening of the study record, plus any other good recordings will aid in the child's development. Recitals are also an excellent motivational device. The parent and child need to become a musical unit, working together.<sup>1</sup>

Parents need to establish a daily practice schedule, helping the development of discipline. A small child's interest and involvement depend on the parent. If parents are creative, making practice interesting and helpful, the child will learn much more easily.<sup>2</sup>

Parents can demonstrate the importance of listening by doing what they ask of their child. Also, it will help a parent if he gears the conversation to the level of the child. Do not mumble or exaggerate. Teach your child through the use of games, for learning through games makes education fun.<sup>3</sup>

Suzuki feels a child's musical education should start immediately after birth, with the child hearing repeated playings of a single selection. It is not enough to leave the classical FM station on, for repetition in listening is important.<sup>4</sup> Suzuki warns that a child does not get tired of a recording he hears many times, for a young child loves familiar

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<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth Mills, ed., In the Suzuki Style (Berkeley, California: Diablo Press, Inc., 1974), p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>3</sup>Komaiko, "Fine Art of Listening," p. 79.

<sup>4</sup>Starr, Suzuki Violinist, p. 7.

sounds. If a child hears a parent complain about the repetition, he may take this same attitude, and the musical training may be slowed down.<sup>1</sup>

Repetition in hearing also helps in the understanding of a composition. The more familiar one becomes with a work, the easier it is to remember patterns of melody, harmony, and rhythm. Thus, by musical memory, one will be able to predict new musical passages better. With repeated listening, one can reach a more satisfactory level of understanding.<sup>2</sup>

Suzuki believes a child's ear will be well trained by listening. Listening also motivates the child, creating the desire to play the music he hears. Also, through listening, the student can memorize music more easily, and can focus more attention on the problems of playing the instrument. Note reading, or trying to guess what the next note is, is distracting to students. Developing musical memory and performing without notes, which is developed through repeated listening, is important for the student.<sup>3</sup>

There are many keys to motivation within the Suzuki method itself. The standardized repertoire motivates students to work harder in order to get to a composition many pages ahead. Another important aspect is listening to other students' lessons. A student learns from another student, as he watches

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<sup>1</sup>Starr, Suzuki Violinist, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Hoffer, Understanding of Music, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Starr, Suzuki Violinist, p. 8.

the teacher working with someone else. In the ideal environment, whole families will plan to attend concerts together and share each other's interest in the development of their musical abilities.<sup>1</sup>

Teaching through the use of games is important in the Suzuki method. Suzuki teachers and parents throughout the world have created many useful games. Several games enjoyed by all students are clapping rhythms along with the piano, shaking left hands on all open strings when playing Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star, and playing the song that begins with the rhythm the teacher has tapped.<sup>2</sup>

When people observe Suzuki training for the first time, many assume there will be few intonation problems because of the heavy emphasis on listening in rote learning. Also, the use of tapes on the fingerboard should eliminate problems in intonation. Luckily, there is "some truth in this assumption."<sup>3</sup>

Tapes are an important visual aid in the learning of correct finger placement. However, if pitch is seldom mentioned during a lesson, the student may begin to rely on the tapes for finger placement, not listening to his own playing.<sup>4</sup>

The ear will tell the finger where it should be placed. Motor memory, also known as a kinesthetic sense, will tell the

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<sup>1</sup>Mills and Murphy, Suzuki Concept, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>Starr, Suzuki Violinist, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

finger where to go after many repetitions. Motor memory will be acquired naturally as the child learns. The teacher can help develop this motor skill through the use of games intended to teach children where the pitches on the fingerboard are located, without first hearing the pitch.<sup>1</sup>

Some children appear to have a direct line from their ear to their finger. In these children, finger adjustments are made immediately when they play a note that is not in tune. But if a child is unable to do this right away, it is incorrect to assume that his hearing is beyond help. Often the child will not hear what he is doing because he is absorbed with performing the composition.<sup>2</sup>

The first step in learning to play in tune, is knowing how the pitches should sound. Listening to the study record helps develop an aural image of the pitch, but teachers and parents also need to encourage and help the child in learning pitch perception. It is helpful if the teacher can make practice tapes so the student can play along at home, matching each pitch in a difficult passage at a slower tempo.<sup>3</sup>

Suzuki begins teaching intonation with octave matching. He uses the pitches that are an octave above the open strings because they are the most resonant tones.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Starr, Suzuki Violinist, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

Listening to the reference record is important throughout the training of the child. The record is not only an example for intonation, but also for style, tone, and techniques such as vibrato.<sup>1</sup> If one does not develop the habit of listening to his own sound, he will not develop a discriminating ear, and the exercises will not help him improve. This discrimination can also be developed through listening to great artists, noticing, for example, how they use vibrato for expression in the performance of different literature.<sup>2</sup>

Listening provides the foundation for all musical areas. To be a good listener, one must not only know how to listen, but one must actually do it.<sup>3</sup> In Talent Education, listening should be done in a spirit of love and enjoyment. If these two elements are not present, good listening probably will not occur.

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<sup>1</sup>Starr, Suzuki Violinist, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>3</sup>Duker, Listening: Readings, p. 210.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND RECOMENDATIONS

Good listening should be a goal of both the individual and society, in all areas of education. Everyone's ability to listen needs to be developed to its fullest potential. Listening is not an inborn talent, but is something one needs to be taught. Therefore, it is important to distinguish listening from hearing.

Listening is controlled by our environment, training, and use. Since one is able to hear before birth, it is important that the education be started during the pre-school years. Listening must be done on a daily basis, in an environment conducive to learning.

An understanding of the process of hearing is needed before one can fully comprehend the listening possibilities of all individuals. As a parent or teacher, this will aid in understanding the needs of children, and help one to be more sensitive to their needs. People often teach children to tune out sounds they do not want to hear. It becomes necessary at times, for the sake of mental stability, to ignore sounds, such as a loud radio, and to tune out unwanted noise.<sup>1</sup> Parents will often call for their children three or four times, then complain that the child does not listen to them.

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<sup>1</sup>Hoffer, Understanding of Music, p. 22.

They are teaching them poor listening habits by unnecessarily repeating a message over and over. The child, knowing it will be repeated, will ignore the message at first, and will listen later.

A warm personal relationship between the parent, teacher, and child, along with enthusiasm, are needed to motivate students to become better listeners. The attitude of an adult will directly influence a child. If an adult complains or becomes bored with what he is teaching, the child will learn the same attitude.

A good method of instruction is essential to teaching the skills of listening. Talent Education has proven successful in teaching listening through instruction in violin, viola, cello, bass, flute, and piano. In Japan and Canada, the method is being used in many other areas of education, such as math and foreign language. The skills that are being taught are only as good as the teacher's ability to teach them. A student's success or failure will depend on the teacher's ability to teach the skill, within the given environment.

The need for developing better listening skills in all children is something which parents, teachers, and administrators should be made aware. There is a need for teaching better listening to both adults and children in schools, community, and the home. By listening better, one can help educate one's children in all areas of education.

In essence, listening is the foundation for a better education for all people, both child and adult. The listening potential for all individuals can be developed through training, to benefit both the individual and all of mankind.

## APPENDIX

The following games and motivational ideas have been used successfully, by many teachers, to aid in the teaching of better listening:

1. The children stand in place and clap rhythms along with the piano.
2. The children stand in place, moving arms up and down in "Twinkle" rhythms, as they are played on the piano.
3. The children march in place to the rhythm of the piano, allowing the arms to swing freely.
4. The children face off in pairs, playing one of the variations of "Twinkle," and shake left hands on all of the open-string notes.
5. Play the Suzuki record and have the students guess the name of the piece, or the finger it starts on.
6. Have the children pretend to play along with the record. One can then concentrate on bowing, arm position, bow angle, or finger shapes.
7. Have a student clap a rhythm and another clap it back, maintaining the tempo.
8. After the song to be played is decided upon, divide the class into two sections. Then on the clap of a hand, have the melody change from one side to another.
9. The teacher starts playing a piece without naming it. The students join in as soon as they recognize the piece.
10. The teacher starts in the middle of a piece, with the students joining in as quickly as possible.
11. The children close their eyes while the teacher plays a "Twinkle" rhythm. A child then plays it back, using the same rhythm and pitch.
12. The teacher plays a short pattern of unfamiliar notes. The students play it back. The teacher adds one new note to the pattern each time it is repeated.

13. The teacher assigns a note to each student. The class plays a piece, with each student playing only his note.
14. Have the students keep a diary of sounds heard during a trip, or during a week, to determine how well they listen.
15. Have the children practice hearing and remembering verbal orders. The teacher can call out numbers, such as 573, 2974, 99110.
16. Have the children act out verbal orders, such as "raise your left foot," or "touch your nose." This can be done with "Suzuki says" or "Simon says."
17. The teacher claps a rhythm and the students, upon recognition of the piece, play it.
18. The teacher plays a deliberate out-of-tune note in a song, and the children call out each time it is played.
19. Tape a concert at home and send it to a grandparent.
20. Play "Follow the Leader" while playing.

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