

Reflection on Suzuki Way During Pandemic

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🌀 Endings and beginnings of years always invite us to **reflect**.

Dr Shinichi Suzuki referred to the word 'reflect' often.

“Adults must self-reflect. Reflection is necessary in the routine, the behaviour and the conversation of adults”

2020 – what a year it has been! A year you'll always remember as a sign post in your personal history and the history of the world.

It was a year that called us to go far beyond our comfort zones. It held multiple challenges for all of us: parents, teachers and students. From a personal level to a global level, we experienced things far greater than what we had encountered before.

🌀 At the outbreak of World War II, Shinichi Suzuki was separated from his wife, Waltrud, as she was classed as a foreigner. With food scarcity and extremely difficult conditions, Suzuki became very ill. It took months for him to recover. From this experience grew his determination to influence the lives of children in the best way possible.

During pandemic, I couldn't help but reflect on that period in Suzuki's life. It has become a source of inspiration to find ways to keep going.

🌀 As covid-19 hit, many teachers did not know if or how they could continue teaching.

Many parents could not imagine how they'd go through lock-down with children staying at home AND continue with their music lessons.

As a consequence, the Suzuki triangle was shaken with everything around us changing.

We had to find new ways to keep the music and learning going.

At times, it meant “playing “with the triangle, turning it around, redefining its roles or changing focal points.

Flexibility was needed.

Flexibility is a requirement for survival.

-Roger Von Oech

Keeping the bigger picture in mind, we embarked on a new project, enlisting many resources. **Community** was one of them.

We, members of the Suzuki movement world-wide have always had a Suzuki community.

At the beginning of pandemic, I called for online circles for teacher trainers, teachers, parents, and elders.

I was very moved by the response.

People from all over the world gathered online. (For some it was in the middle of the night).

With parents, teachers and association keeping the Suzuki spirit alive we could maintain stability.

“Flexibility is the key to stability”

-John Wooden.

 **And yes, it was far from ideal.**

- We missed the in-person experience.
- We had to sacrifice sound quality, replacing the acoustic sound with digital one.
- We couldn't play together at the same time.
- We found ourselves spending long hours in front of screens (the same ones we tried to minimize before pandemic).
- Teachers couldn't offer their studios as a sanctuary for parents and children

 **But to our surprise we could count some blessings**

- We learnt new technology
- Parents didn't have to drive to lessons (time saver)
- Parents didn't have to find someone to mind young siblings.
- Our audience has become **international**, with grandparents, friends and relatives coming to recitals and lessons online.

- Students could **observe** many other lessons by entering zoom rooms.
- Students learnt to take more **ownership** on homework and self-evaluation, and develop more awareness on tone production and **listening**.
- We stopped hearing “but I could play it much better at home...”
- Many parents pointed out that weekly lessons have been the only constant in their lives.
- Parents & students participated in online workshops, concerts and masterclasses, organised by our dedicated Suzuki Association staff.

Everyone demonstrated perseverance, resilience and love.

And as we know “With love- much can be accomplished” -Suzuki

🎻 Now, as we enter the second year of pandemic, we have a bigger view, wider perspective and more tools to work with.

Dr Suzuki would frequently say, *“I have a new idea!”*

We now have many hours of practising many new ideas. (10, 000 repetitions?)

🎻 The only way to predict the future is to have power to shape the future. - Eric Hoffer

The Suzuki philosophy is pointing towards developing a **beautiful heart** while nurturing the **unlimited** potential of **every** child.

In pandemic time, we have learnt of our **unlimited potential** in ways we’ve never knew before.

We kept the music going; we practiced **Perseverance**.

We experienced the growing necessity in having a **community**.

We demonstrated our **resilience** and **values**.

In big scheme of things, pandemic and what is happening in the world today, is a reflection on our role as parents and teachers.

I trust that all of us will continue to keep the Suzuki vision and action as we enter 2021.

Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the
world.

-Nelson Mandela

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