

# The Atlanta Area Suzuki Piano Association Journal

# Nurture

"To promote Suzuki education, service and communication  
among parents, students, teachers, and the community."

[www.atlantasuzukipiano.org](http://www.atlantasuzukipiano.org)

March 2005



## AASPA Congratulates January 2005 Graduates



Concert 1 Graduates



Concert 2 Graduates

## Workshop with Dr. Karen Hagberg



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## Letter from the President



### **Inspiration versus Coercion**

Dear friends,

About 5 years ago, I was a student in the Atlanta Area Apprenticeship Program and studying to become a Suzuki piano teacher. At the same time, my son started taking Suzuki piano lessons. During this period of time and for sometime afterwards, the thought of buying tickets to Spivey Hall for graduation and giving up a Sunday afternoon, was not at the top of my list. I can say now, I just didn't get it. I did not understand the impact and inspiration the concerts provided for students, parents, and teachers alike.

Over the past four years, my studio grew, and I became the president of AASPA. With the maturity of my studio, I started having students who graduated and performed at Spivey Hall. My two children, Lacey and Jamey, also started coming to each graduation every January and June. Sometimes they went because they were in the concert; sometimes because they wanted to see my students graduate; and sometimes they just went.

Recently, my son, Jamey, had to write a paper on role models. In his paper, he named a role model for tennis as Jamey wants to be a top tennis player. He also named Zak Beard as his role model for the piano. He greatly admired his determination and the level of piano performance he has achieved. The last sentence of his paper read, "I want to play like Zak Beard, no, I want to be better!"

Jamey's inspiration came from repeatedly attending those graduation concerts. As parents we must make every effort to provide situations that will inspire our children.

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the next graduation concerts on June 18, 2005. No excuses, less coercion, definitely more inspiration. See you there.

*Lauretta Russell*

## Parent's Perspective:

### My Experience with Suzuki Piano

Lakshmi Prabhakar

My daughter has been learning piano the Suzuki way for a little over three years. Now a level 2 graduate, she enjoys learning and playing the piano immensely. Her Suzuki education has given (and will continue to give) her the opportunity to learn, play and appreciate the music of some of the world's greatest composers. In addition, it is equipping her with many valuable life skills including the ability to focus on a task, to persevere till the desired result is achieved and most important of all, to realize that hard work leads to rich rewards. She enjoys the continued support of her teacher, and has also made many friends among the other children in the studio. On the whole, she is maturing into a confident and sociable child, and much of this is directly attributable to her piano education.

As I write this article, I ask myself how Suzuki Piano has benefited me as the parent? First, my relationship with my daughter is much closer, thanks to the enormous amount of time we have spent together during class and practice over the last three years. Second, due to the detailed study of every piece in the book, my own appreciation of music has grown. I listen to pieces with more awareness of phrasing, balance between the left and right hands, and rhythm - all things that Suzuki parents have to keep reminding their kids about, day in and day out! And most important, I have formed strong friendships with other parents in the studio, because we all share a basic philosophy that hard work leads to success.

In conclusion, the Suzuki method lays down specific goals for each stage and the students achieve those goals through patience, hard work and attention to detail. Along the way, the student, the parent and their relationship - all are enhanced as well. Furthermore, we in Atlanta have the added benefit of having excellent teachers, and the support of AASPA to organize recitals that serve to encourage and inspire our children. I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have my daughter be a part of the Suzuki method, and also the supportive environment here in Atlanta.

*Ramya Prabhakar, age 7, is a student of Laurretta Russell.*

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## My Graduation

Kelly Graham

In January I graduated from book one. I played The Happy Farmer, from book two. My mom and dad were there along with three of my friends, Renata, Colleen, and Madison, and Renata's dad. After the recital, we went out by the lake and took a picture in front of the lake. We then went back to my house and celebrated by having pizza and cookie cake. The girls also slept over at my house that night to celebrate my graduation.



*Kelly Graham, age 11, is a student of Robin Blankinship*

## More Listening Suggestions

Robin Blankenship

### **Alicia de Larrocha, piano/ Favorite Spanish Encores/ Decca #467587**

A wonderful variety of Spanish piano music to enjoy, performed by the world's leading interpreter of Spanish music. The music contains many exciting rhythms and sounds that are suggestive of guitar strums and flamenco dance. Some pieces, including Sacromonte by Turina and Sonata in D, by Mateo Albeniz are accessible to piano students in the upper levels.

### **Dinu Lipatti, piano/ Chopin: Waltzes Nos. 1-14/ Angel Records #66956**

This recording is one of my favorites. It's a wonderful study in rhythm to hear the many variations of the three-beat waltz rhythm. Listening to the Chopin waltzes introduces Suzuki students to the musical language of the waltz, another three beat dance rhythm like the book 2 Minuets, but with a totally different style. Dinu Lipatti's performance is both light and brilliant. The rhythmic pulse is always there, steady yet flexible. Other pieces included are a mazurka (another Polish dance in 3 / 4 with an emphasis on beat 2) and the F sharp Barcarolle and Nocturne op. 27 #2. The Barcarolle and Nocturne are both in 6 / 8 meter (two groups of 3). Some of the waltzes are accessible to students in books six and seven.

### **Lili Kraus, piano / Lili Kraus plays Mozart / Vox (Classical) #5510**

Prepare now for the June Graduation Concert by listening to this recording of the Concerto no. 20 in D minor, K. 466, which will be performed with orchestra at the next AASPA Graduation Concert at Spivey Hall. Unfortunately, it is an older recording with a scratchy sound. However, it is amazing to hear Lili Kraus's performance. See if you hear the "laughing" sound that Mozart writes for the orchestra at the end of the third movement. This disc also contains the beloved Level Seven graduation piece, "Turkish Rondo", which is the third movement of the Sonata in A major, K. 331.

### **Friedrich Gulda, piano / Mozart Piano Concertos no. 20, no. 21 / Universal Classics**

Another option, with better sound quality, for the Concerto no. 20 in d minor. Claudio Abbado conducts the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra on this budget-priced recording. The slow movement of this concerto was featured in the movie "Amadeus".

### **The Pianist, Music from the Motion Picture Soundtrack / Sony #87739**

A moving, and beautiful selection of music written by Frederic Chopin, from the movie "The Pianist" starring Adrian Brody. The Polish pianist, Janusz Olejniczak, has a natural understanding of Chopin's music. The Movie was based on the harrowing, true story of pianist, Wladislaw Szpilman during World War II. An interesting track is an original recording of Szpilman performing the Chopin Mazurka in A minor. Also included are Nocturnes, the Ballades in G minor and F minor, and several other selections.

All selections are available at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com)

## **WWW.DISCOGRAPHYONLINE.COM**

Now there is an easy-to-use web-site for ordering recordings of the Suzuki Piano Repertoire volumes 4-7.

The Suzuki Piano Basics Discography consists of recommended recordings listed by volume.

Recordings are shown with photos, descriptions and links to Amazon.com. Additional Suzuki Piano Basics materials are available for mail-order through the educational materials link. Included are 10-piano videos and DVDs, as well as books that are not available through Amazon.com

Discographyonline.com was created and is managed by Benjamin Smith, a Suzuki Piano teacher in Tacoma, Washington.

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# Workshop 2005 with Dr. Karen Hagberg

## March 17-20, 2005

### Parent Talk and Coffee

Saturday, March 19  
9:30-11:00am

Steinway Piano Galleries  
6650B Roswell Road  
(intersection of Roswell Rd. and Abernathy next to Staples and Blockbuster)  
Atlanta, Ga. 30328  
404-257-2070

### "Optimizing Your Child's Education in a Busy World: Suzuki Parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"

Dr. Hagberg's talk will give parents strategies to cope with the fast-paced life of technology and mass culture as it impacts on their day-to-day lives, and will answer questions all parents have concerning their role as the principal educators of their children.

**Dr. Karen Hagberg** is the President and co-founder of the Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to the support of Dr. Kataoka's work throughout the world. Dr. Hagberg has recently published the book, "Stage Presence from Head to Toe: a Manual for Musicians."

Dr. Hagberg has taught numerous workshops in Atlanta and has evaluated the Graduation Program video applications for the past 8 years.

A teacher of Suzuki Piano Basics, Dr. Karen Hagberg has taught workshops for teachers and students in Canada, Australia, England, Singapore, and throughout the United States. She is one

of only twelve Americans to have Graduated from the piano department of the Talent Education Institute in Matsumoto, Japan after studying there full time for nearly four years with Dr. Haruko Kataoka, the founder of Suzuki Piano Basics.

Karen Hagberg holds a B.A. from Syracuse University and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the Eastman School of Music. She directs a private piano program in Rochester, New York with over 50 students and teacher trainees. In addition to winning numerous prizes, her students have performed at international conferences and in the 10 Piano Concerts in Sacramento, California and Matsumoto, Japan.



## The Book Corner

by Laretta Russell

Looking for a good book to read that incorporates piano and music? Here are two interesting ones that do just that. I have read both of them and give them a very good recommendation

**“ Beethoven's Hair: An Extraordinary Historical Odyssey and a Scientific Mystery Solved”** By Russel Martin

Beethoven's Hair, sheltered for nearly two centuries inside a glass locket, was about to become the subject of rapt attention on a warm December morning in 1995. Thus, begins the story of a lock of Beethoven's hair and the people and places it has traveled to present day. With the advent of DNA testing, what can this lock of hair tell us about Beethoven?

**“The Piano Shop on the Left Bank: Discovering a Forgotten Passion in a Paris Atelier”** By Chad Cathart

In this engaging memoir, an American writer living in Paris recounts his experiences in a piano shop tucked into an out-of-the way street on the rive gauche. Cathart conveys his affection for Luc, the atelier and the piano with such enthusiasm that readers might be inspired to return to their own childhood instrument. At the very least, they will enjoy this warmhearted, intelligent insight into a private Paris.

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## Graduation News

Students and teachers are busy preparing for our 17th Suzuki Piano Graduation Concerts, June 18, at Spivey Hall.

Mark your calendars NOW for this exciting concert, which will feature two Level Ten graduates. Zak Beard and Bria Long, students of Leah Brammer plan to perform the Concerto no. 20 in d minor by Mozart. The orchestra part will be played by members of the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Marilyn Seelman.

Students can benefit from listening to the Concerto on disc. (See article on More Listening Suggestions)

AASPA would like to thank Betty King for her dedicated work as the graduation director for the last two years. She has contributed much to the program and has helped the concerts to run smoothly.

## News From Japan

Mayumi Yunus

For my Piano playing, I have been working on not lifting my fingers from the keys when I play. There have been a lot of extra movements in my playing. I have been playing everything very slowly (hands separately). In that way, I can actually check with my eyes and feel the touch better. Especially, as I have problem with the index fingers. Nozawa Sensei told me that the index fingers are one of the most difficult fingers to control. Of course thumbs and pinkies are difficult, too, but it is easy to forget about the other fingers.

I have also worked on my left hand for a couple months. When I play the accompaniment of the twinkles, I could not take the low C with my pinky properly. At first I could not take at all, then I did too much like my left hand completely opened when I played the low C. Now I can take the low C on the key with out lifting my pinky from the keys. In the beginning, I felt the sound was weak. However, I realized that it was actually a better sound. I have practiced playing the C then stopping there and transferring my hand to the C chord on the middle C. I practiced stop and transfer many times.

It works! I could not feel the stop at first. When we play the low C, we actually take and relax there, so there should be some sort of stop (finished) motion or feeling. I did not know that. That was one of the great findings for me.

I am excited that I will be able to study in.

Matsumoto, next year as well. If you have any questions about the piano playing or teaching that you would like to ask to Matsumoto teachers, I will be happy to pass the message to them.

You can contact me through my e-mail [Mayumiyunus@yahoo.com](mailto:Mayumiyunus@yahoo.com).

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## Dear Sensei

*Dear Sensei,*

*How important is focus and concentration with my 6 year old child during our practice at home? I feel like it is hard to get him to get still and stop wiggling constantly when he is not playing the piano. Is duct-taping the child to the bench illegal?*

*Signed, a troubled parent*

It sounds like your child has a lot of time to wiggle around. while you are giving him instructions! Let him run around before and after practice. During practice don't talk too much and your child will not wiggle too much.

Work on "Ready position". This means the child is in the correct position to begin playing, but is still over the keys waiting for "go". It is good to count to 50 or 100 while your child holds this position. This one assignment if done everyday for one or two months will develop focus and concentration. Children like this challenge. so don't be afraid of it. Also, keep doing it even after they can do it easily. This is what develops the ability to be ready. (Not wiggling around).

In playing pieces, ask your child to "get ready". After the child is in ready position, give only one short instruction such as "Please move your fingers this time". Your child needs to wait *for* "go" EVERYTIME before playing. This will develop good position, concentration and success. After finishing the piece, ONE comment such as "you waited for go" or "I saw you move your fingers" is enough!

So, don't talk too much! Work on ready position.

Have your child wait for go EVERYTIME. throw away the duct-tape. Give your child a hug.

## Children's Corner

Use the Phone Code below to help you find the correct keys to play.

1 = A	6 = F
2 = B	7 = G
3 = C	8 = A
4 = D	9 = B
5 = E	0 = C

Write your telephone number below

\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

Write the letters that stand for each number by using the Phone Code.

\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

Play your "phone number" on the piano. Can you add the area code?

### ***Frequently Asked Questions***

How can I find out how to order a footstool???

Where can I find the latest pictures and video clips from the last graduation???

Where can I get the application and other information for the next graduation???

When is the upcoming workshop with Dr. Karen Hagberg?

Where can I find out which Suzuki piano teachers are taking new students???

One answer: our new updated Website!

[www.Atlantasuzukipiano.org](http://www.Atlantasuzukipiano.org)



## Spring Calendar 2005

March 1, 2005	Graduation Concert Studio Applications Due
March 17 - 20	Dr. Hagberg Workshop Steinway Piano Galleries (Thurs. Fri. Sat.)
March 20	Southern Keyboards (Sunday)
March 19, 2005	Parent Talk by Dr. Hagberg Steinway Piano Galleries, 9:30 am – 11:00am
April 15, 2005	Graduation Videos due at teacher meeting Southern Keyboards, 10:00 – 11:30 am
April 22, 2005	AASPA Board Meeting 10:00 am – location TBA
June 5 – 10, 2005	Suzuki Camp in Louisville, KY
June 17, 2005	Graduation Concerts, Rehearsal Spivey Hall
June 18, 2005	Graduation Concerts Spivey Hall

