

*This article began as a Keynote address given to the SAA Teachers' Conference in Minneapolis on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2008. It was subsequently published in the American Suzuki Journal Volume 37#1.*

*It is published here with the kind permission of the Editor, Pam Brasch and the autho, for which we are most grateful*

## **The View from My Corner of the Suzuki Triangle**

*By Allen Lieb*

### **Introduction:**

A little bit about the format of our time together. Just as a heads up, I'd like to alert those of you for whom this is a serious issue, that nothing in this lecture involves the use of stickers. Although I would like to go on the record as saying that the advent of self-adhesive stickers has greatly contributed to the overall well-being, not to mention the health, of countless instructors. For that we are eternally grateful to manufacturers world-wide, but mostly in China I suspect. In that regard, one could wonder what's in the adhesive. That said... I think you all deserve a sticker for showing up at this hour. And extra stickers for those who stay awake.

First, this morning, I'd like to mention a few ideas and concerns that I have been thinking about lately in relation to what we are all involved in here, that being the Suzuki approach to education, and specifically, musical training.

Following that, if we have some time left, I'd like your comments and questions about any of the issues raised in this session.

Now some explanation about the title of our session: I should admit to the fact that I was somewhat confused initially as to whether a triangle actually had corners, per se, since, living in Manhattan, I think of corners as being on a square or rectangle. But then what would they be called if they weren't corners? Points, perhaps - like 5 points at an intersection of several streets, points of a star, points of each angle? Then I was pointedly reminded by a friend of the three-corner hat of revolutionary fame - called a tri-corner in fact - and so forth, and was assured by others, including not a few of my own students, that triangles indeed have corners.

Next I started to think about the nature of a triangle: it is two-dimensional and usually depicted vertically, with one of its corners (or points, as it were) as the apex. - unless, of course, you recall the infamous food pyramid from the Department of Agriculture. This vertical depiction actually has consequences for the teacher-parent-child system of relationships fundamental to the Suzuki approach.

It begs the question: “Who’s on top?”

1. Is the child at the apex, feeling supported by the pedagogical expertise of the teacher and the guidance and unconditional love of the parent? Or does the child sometimes feel this is an inverted pyramid with the weight and expectations to perform bearing down upon him/her of two adults in some diabolical collusion, like all those fruits, vegetables and grains?
2. Maybe the parent is at the apex, supported by the knowledge and gentle direction of the teacher, and the daily appreciation and enthusiasm of this enterprise from the child. Or does the parent feel, on many days, the crushing expectations and responsibilities imposed by an imperious instructor, and the demands, guilt, and willful behavior of the child in the daily practice sessions? Some parents may feel they are caught literally in the Suzuki Bermuda triangle - with apologies to our island friends.
3. Perhaps it is the teacher who is at the apex, raining down carefully molded and thoughtful revelations in all manner of life lessons through the study of “art”, supported by a grateful and devoted home teacher and a blossoming and appreciative protégé. Or, is the teacher suffering under the vortex of a parent who sees their child only as another Mozart who the rest of the world sees as the most recent incarnation of Damian, (think - “Omen 13: The Pre-Twinkler”), and a child who replicates a black hole of indifference? Or - the demanding parent who knows no parameters, and the child who co-ops that same sense of entitlement? After all, man is the son of his environment; and, by the way, how do you make that statement gender neutral?

Well, the variations on this model, as the way some beginning parents come to feel about the Twinkle Variations, were seemingly endless in their permutations. Obviously, this configuration wasn’t working.

So I began to wonder, if a triangle is equilateral, and we are also talking about people meeting on an equal plane, maybe it was simply the perspective that was at fault. Maybe the triangle should be viewed as horizontal rather than vertical. Wouldn’t that give all of us a better view, a better perspective?

I had a visceral understanding of this concept last summer when I had the good fortune to experience many sunsets atop the hill at Ft. Marcy Park in Santa Fe, New Mexico: the Sangre de Cristo Mountains behind me, the clearly defined peaks of the Sandia Mountains 70 miles to the south outside Albuquerque and the Jemez Mountains to the northwest, with this vast expanse of high desert before me; the seemingly limitless sky blazing in all hues of oranges, reds, fading to pinks, lavenders and then the grey of twilight; and the simultaneous weather systems occurring across this landscape, kind of like events in our daily lives.

Additionally, I had to consider from which perspective in my many Suzuki roles I was viewing these elements of the Suzuki approach and whether that view was long-range or immediate. Isn’t it important to see both? But how do you balance the two in any given situation? Am I viewing the given situation from experience, or am I simply projecting my own personal ambitions and expectations?

## **I. The Perspective of the Suzuki Teacher with Students:**

What am I seeing from my perspective as a Suzuki teacher of both individual and group lessons ranging from the beginning level through pre-professional and everything in-between, in all manner of abilities? It doesn't occur to me now as I draw a foot-chart that Mendelssohn Concerto isn't within our capabilities. We just have to find the right path.

And I'm not necessarily looking toward professional status, but I see this process as an expression of that child's potential abilities as a human being. How do I see them at 4, 8, 12, 18 years of age?

What is my role in their development and how does that role evolve to their individual needs - to their best advantage? How much of it is about them and their welfare and their accomplishments; their joy of discovery about themselves and their abilities; their struggles, disappointments, bad choices, life mistakes? How much of it is about me and my expectations? How often does my belief in an idea or principle override their particular need at that moment as a human being? Am I teaching for them, with them or just at them? Am I really listening to the messages they are sending me through their questions or statements, or am I so fixated on the task at hand - studying the violin - that I just hear and see all the ancillary events as unwarranted distractions to the all-important and life-changing knowledge I am trying to impart? Or am I just waiting for them to finish so I can start talking again?

But our students do the same thing don't they? Do they really watch and listen when we demonstrate, or do they just start playing again in the middle of your musical sentence? Sort of the instrumental equivalent of, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, got it. Now what I was saying was...". Don't you find that REALLY annoying? Don't you hear yourself saying in your own brain, "Just stop and really listen to this for a minute!" Isn't that particular type of training, this imperative of listening and focus, an absolutely essential element in this approach to teaching? *More on that later.* Can I really allow students to progress at their own pace, or am I just trying to force my own preconceived agenda on them? After all, what about my professional reputation as a pedagogue? Look at that bow hold! What will people think?

At the SAA Conference in 2006, the Heritage Committee took on the task of videotaping interviews with about 50 American and Canadian Suzuki teachers who had studied in Japan or had long associations with Dr. Suzuki. During my interview with the videographers, I was asked this question, and I paraphrase: Since I live and teach in Manhattan, home to three major music conservatories, with high-powered pre-college programs, in a city with an overwhelming number of high-level professional musicians, how do I answer the lingering criticisms of the Suzuki Method among so-called "traditional" teachers? My first response was that, at the time, there remained about 30% of the public in the United States that still believed there were or had been weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Luckily they laughed. Well, I knew they couldn't use that response in their video, so I went on to say that given a statistic like that, perhaps you shouldn't make answering that kind of constituency your main concern. People's reluctance to acknowledge the reality in any given situation is often beyond anyone's control. I feel no trace of apology or qualification necessary for what I do. I do not teach for them. I teach the Suzuki Method to the best of my abilities. I teach for my students and their families.

I do, however, wonder sometimes about what this whole experience has been like for our students. Was it the life-affirming, or as much the meaningful adventure of self-discovery, as we profess it to be? Or was it just another activity of their childhood, no more significant than

soccer or pottery or ballet? Or maybe less. Or was it “what mom made me do” all those years because she felt everyone should have music as a part of their education, or that she never had all these advantages and by golly you’d better appreciate them, or I always wanted to play the violin, piano, flute, etc., etc., etc. *More on that later as well.*

Several years ago I started asking former students who were now adults what they remembered about their days as Suzuki students. One, who has had a tremendously successful career as a musician, started laughing as she said, “I still do that thing with my bowhold.” Meaning she still crawls up the bow. Luckily she didn’t remember peeing on her foot-chart. I also spoke with a colleague in New York who holds a titled chair in a major orchestra, and whose lessons I observed as a trainee when he was a child. He had a particularly pushy mom, and his comment to me was he couldn’t really speak favorably about a method that seemingly encouraged, and in fact facilitated, that kind of behavior. I suppose we all have a tendency to particularize.

So, what about those students for whom music becomes their burning vocation? Am I really capable of training the pre-professional? Especially in a city like the one I live in, where any number of opportunities are available for them at an exceedingly high level of training for a career in music, am I just hanging on to them for my own reputation or ego-enhancement, or is sending them off into the judge-mental world we’ve tried to breed out of them just preparing them for life in a cut-throat industry? Wasn’t one of our main goals in this movement and in our association to alter that playing field for everyone? Have we really had that much of an impact as professional pedagogues? Or do we still somehow think of and treat ourselves as second-tier players on that field, seeking validation of our process from the “real” teacher, from the grown-ups?

## **II. The Perspective of the Parent Trainer:**

What am I seeing from my perspective of training parents, not only in the skills of playing and teaching the instrument, but exploring with them how their child thinks and perceives the world? And what are the permutations as their child moves through childhood into the early stages of adulthood? What do I want to see from week to week in the parent’s role as the practice assistant? Do I see worshipful obedience, helplessness, condescension, understanding, enjoyment...? Does high standards mean over-achieving ambition, or is it an expression of the best we can discover within ourselves? How involved should you be in the personal dynamics of a family you see as a teaching professional perhaps twice a week over many, many years? How do we retain that professionalism with the combined perspective of a friend, yet mentor? This can be very complicated emotionally.

Things are quite different now that I am older than all the parents that come into class with their children, than when I was younger. In actuality, not that much about me has changed, except, as they say, the visible signs of aging. I still have no children of my own. It’s just I am perceived as having perspective, experience, and therefore wisdom. Well, it is true that I have seen students in most every kind of situation, from peeing on their foot charts, to having anxiety attacks about private school or college entrance requirements.

What do you say to a parent whose model child begins to withdraw, act out, rebel, seems apathetic, starts down the long road of smoking, drinking, drugs, self-abuse, running away, or

contemplating suicide? Perhaps the best thing I've learned over the years is that if that child keeps showing up for lessons, we will get through this. My job is to focus on their lesson and do my best to provide some sense of stability in the turbulent times; to be regarded as a non-judge-mental source, and sometimes as a refuge or even sounding board. My job is to ask the question and then just listen, really listen. Probably they don't want advice or a "solution"; maybe they just want someone to nod and say, "Hmm."

On the other hand, my remembrance "Hmm" is tempered with the experience of playing in lessons for Dr. Suzuki, and, after finishing whatever it was, his rising slowly from his chair and saying, "Hmm..", and me thinking, "Uh -oh!"

### **III. The Perspective of the Teacher-Trainer:**

What am I seeing from my perspective as a teacher-trainer? Am I truly capable of passing on a legacy I experienced first-hand? Can I reach that potential that I witnessed from Dr. Suzuki and all the Japanese and American pioneers of this method? Can I be the mentor to others that they were to me, not only on a technical level, but in a commitment to an idea, and a devotion and unbridled enthusiasm for continued discovery in their field?

As a teacher-trainee, as we were called in the last century, how fortunate I was to have so many gifted and dedicated mentors. Every day that I teach, I listen to their voices in my head as role models to strive for, just the way my students listen to their CDs for tone, intonation and musical expression. As these mentors come to no longer have a physical presence, how do I retain accurately all the information and skill they have imparted, and how do I pass on that legacy? Do I really see myself in this same capacity for others as time shifts these roles?

It has been more than 30 years since I first went to Japan as a kenkyusei. I still have all the cassette tapes from my lessons over those first two years. They are stored in my Uncle Benny's WW I army trunk in my bedroom. I have looked at them intermittently, reluctant to listen to them for the first time after so many years. Will the reality I hear be able to match the self-realized mythology of this experience built up after all this time?

There are quotes from the artist Georgia O'Keeffe stenciled on the walls of the museum in downtown Santa Fe dedicated to her art. The vision of genius always seems to follow a like path. This one quote struck me, especially in relationship to our work and Dr. Suzuki's own ideas: "Nothing is less real than realism," O'Keeffe said. "Details are confusing. It is only by selection, by elimination, by emphasis, that we get at the real meaning of things."

When I first arrive in Matsumoto to begin studying there, I distinctly remember sitting through Monday Concert for weeks on end listening to all the other kenkyusei and wondering, "Where did they get that sound?" What Bill Starr referred to as the "Saino Kyoku tone" was right in front of me every day. These people could really play. After a few months of this, I began to hear other things in people's playing. Wait, that's out of tune. Wait, there's not a lot of variety or difference in expression there. It took me quite a while to realize my aural consciousness had been raised. I spent four months playing open strings or a four note scale in my lessons until I changed my bow hold. Something about knuckles down? Talk about one-point, one-lesson! I thought I would lose my mind. But everyone there assured me they had all gone through this as well, and I would get it. I certainly learned something myself

about focusing; about letting go and just listening, watching, and feeling free to try and to the possibility; to understanding balance and the interconnectedness between the bow and the violin. “It” finally happened in February during a performance of “La Folia”. Finally I knew how it felt, to let the violin somehow have its own voice. It happened again later on Mozart G Major Concerto, 2nd movement. Really well. The next day at lesson, Dr. Suzuki said, “Nice tone, but no dynamics!” I thought I’d throttle him. “You ungrateful, old man!” I shouted in my brain. OK. So, next step...

What about Dr. Suzuki’s relentless commitment to always seeking a better way, an easier and more enjoyable path, yet always striving for excellence as an expression of what was best with-in each individual’s potential? Do I see that see that in myself? Do I see this understanding in my trainees’ teaching? Shouldn’t they become better teachers potentially, continually raising the standard? Dr. Suzuki was so fond of saying: “The student must be better than the teacher.” Doesn’t that apply equally to the training process as well? Are we accomplishing that as an association through our training process? Do we see the results in the raising of standards in the teaching as the years go by?

In later years I came to understand that his message to all of us was, that if you are to effect change in others, you must know how to effect change in yourself. He was relentless in his quest for change in himself, and expected no less from those who professed to follow his example. What I came to notice very quickly at the school, was how his single-mindedness of purpose permeated not just the teaching, but the entire Talent Education movement, including the office staff. Dr. Suzuki had created an environment that could allow this to happen. It was a construct that I sought to replicate when I came back to the States. But in a place like New York City, how is that possible? Do you focus on your small corner of the community, or do you seek by example to influence the entire culture of teaching? Haven’t we already had a major impact on pedagogical training in music in this country? Haven’t many of Dr. Suzuki’s ideas become mainstream? If they are now the mainstream, do we then lose our identity as a “Suzuki” teacher? Our claim to fame? Our mission? What happens if we do succeed in changing the world? Or at least the musical community? Do we hang a banner: “Mission Accomplished?”

#### **IV. The Perspective of Public School Teaching:**

What am I seeing from my perspective as the coordinator of a Suzuki program in the Newark public schools? Most of you will know Newark, NJ, as a prime model of what is deemed a troubled, inner city, urban, underserved community, in education-speak.

The Newark Early Strings Program - or NESP, as we call it - was founded nearly 10 years ago as a collaborative effort between the Newark Public Schools and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. The program began with 2nd through 4th grade students in four elementary schools and has expanded to include 13 schools serving approximately 500 students. Next year the Symphony has received grant money to expand the program to follow the students into two targeted middle schools. Luckily for us, several of the present elementary schools where the music teachers are involved go through sixth grade, and a few through eighth grade.

My role in all this was to coordinate amongst the public school music teachers, who were not primarily string players - in fact none of the original teachers selected to begin this program

were string players at all, but were excellent classroom music teachers - and the Symphony musicians, who had signed up to be coaches and were fine instrumentalists, but had never faced the challenge of teaching 25 bow holds all at the same time. I'm sure most people who have known me thought I would be that last person to involve myself in any public school program. But when I heard that the Newark schools had been given 250 1/2-size violins to start a Suzuki program, my NIMBY-like instincts went on overload - NIMBY meaning, not in my backyard. Or in this case, the fear of another instance of the Suzuki Method in name only: SMINO.

Through my affiliation with the New Jersey Symphony, I let it be known they were not going to call this a Suzuki program unless they actually followed some semblance of Dr. Suzuki's ideas and teaching. Well, not only were they anxious to use the approach, but had been drawn to it specifically through his educational philosophy. Pretty remarkable wouldn't you say? Luckily we did not need to re-invent the wheel for this program. We had a sound pedagogical process at our disposal. I kept thinking at the beginning: "This should work. But, will it really work?" And even within the vagaries of any public school system, much less one as dysfunctional as Newark can be, it has worked. Year after year, Columbia Teachers College provides us with astounding statistics of these children's academic progress as a result of their participating in this program - something we have all know for years. And the social matrix studies they have done have provided encouragement to the teachers and support for their administrators. Perhaps the true test of any great process is how well it can work under the most dysfunctional of circumstances. I'm sure we've all had that experience in various teaching situations.

How has this experience changed my perspective when I see the level of achievement and enthusiasm of discovery in the NESP children with scant resources and advantages, as opposed to the achievements of my private students, some of whom come from extreme privilege, loving, caring, involved parents, and superior learning environments? Is Newark more of an example of the validity of Suzuki's precepts? Is this a clearer statement that every child can be educated; or by saying that, do I expose my own prejudices, or use it as some expression of self-gratification, knowing I have my comfortable life waiting for me across the river, and the platitudes of colleagues such as: "What a wonderful difference you are making in the lives of these children!" But isn't that actually the point? Wasn't that Suzuki's goal? Suzuki said, "We can change the world." But which world? The world of unemployment, poverty, indifference, gangs, drugs and random shootings, or the world of "Gossip Girl"? Does either really care to be changed? How much of this discussion is simply hubris on our part?

## **V. The Perspective of an SAA Member:**

What am I seeing as a member of the SAA? I attended my first SAA membership meeting during the Stevens Point Institute in August 1974 while still a student at then Memphis State University. The SAA Board members arrayed on the stage of Michelson Hall represented the entire vanguard of the fledgling Suzuki movement on this continent at that time. These were people who already had successful and noted careers as traditional teachers and performers. But they had decided that there was something exciting, distinct and valuable in Dr. Suzuki's message for the world of music, and education as a whole. They recognized the implications of his teaching methods and set about to organize themselves to further these ideas. What

hath these gods wrought? Conferences, workshops, institutes, teacher-training, publications, merchandising...book revisions... But all to serve Suzuki's ultimate goal of teaching with love and respect, and his pursuit of the standard of excellence in everyone's abilities. These people sparked nothing less than a wholesale rethinking of pedagogy that quickly, and almost uncontrollably, swept through the entire music community and affected the very foundations of early childhood education in this and many other countries.

The SAA was conceived of and still functions as a service organization, not a governing body. This organization exists through the will of its members, no matter how messy that may be. Yes, the organization has been directed to "protect" the nature of the Suzuki Method. But it has not been directed to tell us what the Suzuki Method is. We do not need a creed, a statement of orthodoxy or a proof of party loyalty. The greatness of any idea, indeed its strength, is its applicability to a diverse and ecumenical world.

We must continually step back and examine who we are as an organization: an inclusive, diverse, multi-talented (to varying degrees), dedicated, honest and caring group of people. How can we espouse a philosophy, indeed entitle our introduction to the world "Every Child Can", unless we treat our colleagues, and those we hope will be our future colleagues, with the same respect and sense of potential as we claim to do for our students and families? Yes, there will always be people in any organization who are, or perceived of as, perpetually disagreeable. There will always be people involved in this movement who are marginal in their skills as instructors. But aren't we supposed to address these issues with encouragement, and try to find a more effective way to breach this chasm, rather than isolate ourselves, or them, or try to regulate these issues out of existence? That's a futile pursuit in any case, like trying to reassure someone they will always be protected and safe. Yes, it is much easier to criticize an idea with a label, like "Suzuki"; and yes, some people may abuse the use of that label. But that doesn't mean that we try to live our lives only to ensure that we remain untainted or unsullied by criticism or even controversy. If we have a valid idea to present to the world - and our organization owes its very existence to an idea - then shouldn't we trust that this idea is strong enough to withstand uninformed intellectual assaults and even sometimes faulty application by its proponents?

It is not an easy path to remain open and inclusive, but do we abandon one of the founding principles of what we call our special philosophy because we are reacting to some perceived adverse public reaction? There are many solutions to any problem, sometimes all equally valid. Shouldn't we help people explore these solutions rather than relegate them to the sidelines? Are we really interested in creating an overarching bureaucracy to protect ourselves from every perceived imperfection? Is that the nature of leadership? No.

The final decision on policy in any member-generated organization must come from its elected officials. That is a basic precept to our way of thinking in this hemisphere. Let's remember that active debate in an organization is a good thing. It means people care and want to be involved and feel as if they have a vital stake in the direction of the organization. If you begin to hear less and less from people, it may mean they have begun to care less and less, and that is a much worse fate. Do we really want to hear only those opinions that simply validate our own feelings? To paraphrase Suzuki, self-evaluation is our highest sense as a human being. This skill is what we try to teach daily in our lessons with the students and their families. It is the basis for our training of teachers in this method. How then can we run our organization on different precepts? Open and free discussion best determines what direction any organization needs to take. Yes, we have to make choices, and not everyone will be

comfortable with those choices. But we will have had the discussion. People want and need to be heard. They try to react the best way they know how. That's a good thing. Let's remember, it's not just about me, and it's not just about you in particular. It's about all of us, and an idea that's worth working through any situation to preserve and propagate.

## **VI. Summary:**

Allen Shawn is a composer and writer living in Vermont. Last year he published a well-reviewed book titled "Wish I Could Be There: Notes from a Phobic Life". His book is part memoir, part scientific inquiry and part meditation on his crippling agoraphobia. In the chapter called "Contemplating the Brain", he explores the world of people who study brains and human behavior. He begins the chapter with a poem by Emily Dickinson, another famous agoraphobic:

*The brain - is wider than the Sky -  
For - put them side by side -  
The one the other will contain  
With ease - and You - beside*

Shawn quotes the scientist Oliver Sacks, who puts it, "Instead of seeing the brain as rigid, fixed in mode, programmed like a computer, there is now a much more biological and powerful notion of 'experiential selection', of experience literally shaping the connectivity and function of the brain (within genetic, anatomical, and physiological limits, of course)" Shawn continues in his own words, "It is therefore no mere figure of speech to say that what happens to us becomes a part of us. Just as our faces, our hands our skins, our hearts, and our lungs reflect our habits, so do our brains. In other words, what we do, feel, and live through is what we become."

Earlier in the same chapter he writes, "Normally, impressions need to be reinforced by a kind of repeated reference before they become part of one's long-term memory." (Something we all know from our teaching.) "But nature has arranged for intensity to leave a lasting imprint. The visceral impact of a moment of ecstasy or horror can be burned into the brain in a moment in a way that makes its later recollection unusually primitive."

Following the ferocity and overwhelming tragedy of the World Trade Center attacks - now reduced to the unconscionably and willfully exploited brand name: 9/11 - people from all over the country kept asking those of us in New York, "What can we do to help? What can we do?" The following Sunday, in our opening faculty meeting at The School for Strings, our founder and Director Louise Behrend put forth that, as Suzuki teachers, we were lucky because we were already doing something, and had been doing something for many years, to combat this tragedy of misguided hateful thinking: we were teaching children and their families every day how to become more caring and loving people in a world-wide society.

Ultimately, as Shawn posits, what we all are is the sum of our life experiences. Our environment shapes our thinking, our beliefs, our world view. Therefore every individual sees the world through some unique perspective and acts accordingly, and we all either benefit or suffer from the consequences of those actions.

This is what Dr. Suzuki saw and understood, and he decided to do something about it, to

effect change if he could with the means that he had. Suzuki understood that you could educate for failure or you could educate for success. You may say this is simplistic, glib, or even naively high-minded. But Suzuki saw it as a simple truth and set out to do just that - educate for success - not by some massive ideological mandate, or super-imposed political, social or religious strictures, but through the careful and attentive education of each individual's abilities. He saw the possibility in each individual to reach his/her potential, not only in their intellectual acuity, not only as highly-skilled, but in their life force as a human being. A student recently gave me a refrigerator magnet as an end-of-the-school-year present that's a quote from John F. Kennedy: "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try."

Dr. Suzuki's view was not just the awe-inspiring one of the vistas of New Mexico, or the skyline of Manhattan from the Empire State Building, but his view was as limitless as his mentor Einstein taught us about the universe.

Now, coming back to my own corner of Einstein's universe, it's a bit like Emily Dickinson at her small writing desk in Amherst, Massachusetts. From my own studio chair I can experience the cosmos of potential in every child and every parent. I get to be a part of that discovery in their lives each week. It's a view whose sight-line is limited only by my own capacities and sensibilities, or lack thereof, as a human being. That part, of course, is inevitable. But as views go, it's quite an exciting and fulfilling one to have. Thank you all for continuing to give me that opportunity.

**Allen Lieb** received his M.M. in Performance from SIU/Edwardsville, studying Suzuki pedagogy with John Kendall and holds a Teacher Training Certificate from the Talent Education Research Institute in Japan after several years' study with Dr. Shinichi Suzuki. A registered Teacher-Trainer with the Suzuki Association of the Americas, Allen has taught at institutes, workshops and conferences across the US, Canada, Europe, Asia and Australia. He is Chair of the SAA Violin Committee, the SAA representative to the ISA Violin Committee and a member of the SAA Heritage Committee. Currently residing in New York City, he is Head of the Violin Department and Instructor of the Teacher-Training Seminar at The School for Strings, violin instructor at The Diller-Quaile School of Music, and the Curriculum Coordinator for the Newark Early Strings Program, a Suzuki-based violin program jointly sponsored by the Newark Public Schools and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, serving over 500 students in 13 elementary schools, for which he was recognized with the 2008 Samuel Antek Award for Music Education. Allen is also the Suzuki consultant with Musicians4Harmony, a New York-based organization sponsoring activities to revitalize the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra and the Baghdad Conservatory of Music and Dance.