

Suzuki Teaching and Training in Lithuania 2008

by Koen Rens

I was in Lithuania five times in 2008, for about 20 days in total. Counting back it feels strange that I spent the equivalent of a whole month of work over there. I feel sure that we have all made some very good progress. We have six violin teachers in training, some at level 1 and some at level 2. Those who started first are now providing a Suzuki environment for their new colleagues who just started level 1 in September.

The very successful Summer Workshop organised by the Lithuanian Suzuki Association was, of course, the high point of the year. It was also a big incentive for all the teachers and the organising parents, encouraging everybody to re-evaluate their involvement with this education. It was also a great inspiration to us all, teachers, trainers parents and children.

It also gave us, the teacher trainers, an opportunity to see the Lithuanian teachers in action, hear the results of their work, and see them work with my own students. Annette Costanzi, Ruth Miura, Riitta Kotinurmi and, of course, Christophe Bossuat and Yuriko Watanabe made up a dream team of experienced and inspired teachers. We are grateful to Professor Toyoda and Mrs Hiroko Suzuki for giving their permission for Ms Watanabe to join this course. Mauro Bianco Levrin brought a group of his guitar students from Italy, and the association now hopes to be able to offer training for Suzuki guitar to add to the existing programmes for piano, violin and cello.

Several teachers have helped with generous donations. Lien Ngo (Suzuki cello teacher) from Switzerland has donated a huge packet of (expensive) gut strings, that we might be able to sell to help the Lithuanian Suzuki Association. She also offered some small instruments, as did Katia Nys (Suzuki piano teacher) from Belgium. Kerstin Wartberg donated a set of step by step books for the LSA library and a book 1A for every trainee.

A new Lithuanian translation from Nurtured by Love has been made by Migle Lipaviciene (the spouse of Liutauras Lipavicius, the new vice president of LSA and organiser of the summer school). Everybody agrees that this is a beautiful translation and it is hoped that it will be given permission for publication in the near future.

Since a recent AGM, the size of the board has been enlarged, so that there are now representatives from the teachers and the parents who can all help to build on recent successes and ensure the future development of the organisation, including the funding of the teacher training programmes. There is no doubt that the Lithuanian Suzuki Association has the people and the potential to make this one of the inspiring 'places to be' in the ESA region.