

This article was first published in the Talent Education Research Institute's Newsletter and is reproduced here by kind permission of Mr Hoken Uchiyama, e CEO of TERI

## *International Cello Congress*

*In Kobe 2005*

The International Cello Congress in Kobe 2005 was held from May 16<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> at Kobe's Port Island. This global event included the "Ten Children's Concert", "The Cello Grand Concert" and the 3<sup>rd</sup> "1000 Cellists Concert" in which many of the participants were children who study through the Suzuki Method

## *International Cello Congress*

*In Kobe 2005*

In Association with the American Cello Council

1000 Cellists Concert

### **Celebration of the Century, Emotion Renewed**

There are always looks of wonder at the limitless ability of children. The same voices of amazement could be heard throughout the auditorium at the International Cello Congress, held for the first time in Asia. For the children who played together with the more than one thousand adults, it has surely become a wonderful memory. Here let us once again revisit those emotions. (

### **A Message from the Masters**

Bernard Greenhouse was born in New Jersey, USA in 1915. He made his debut after graduating from the Juilliard School. He then traveled to Europe, where he studied under Casals. Casals later wrote of him, "Not only is Greenhouse a great cellist, he is a pre-eminent artist." After performing as both a soloist and a chamber musician, in 1954 he formed the Beaux Arts Trio, with which he performed for 32 years. There are numerous recordings of his performances. After teaching at amongst others the Manhattan School of Music and New York State University, he is currently involved in the Masters classes throughout America, Canada and Europe.

**From Bernard Greenhouse, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005**

I was mesmerized by the wonderful performance of the young children of the Suzuki school. I was especially happy to be able to hear the amazing intonation and the overflow of understanding of the music in the children's performance. Regardless of whether they become musicians or not in the future, the true understanding of the cello that they have achieved in their early life will undoubtedly give them a life-long love and appreciation of music.

Rudolf Weinsheimer was born in Weisbaden, Germany in 1931, to parents who were both musicians. He began to play the cello at the age of eight. In 1956 he became a member of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. On a concert tour with the orchestra to Japan in 1966, he performed with a Cello quartet at Waseda University. In 1972 his performance of Klengel's "Praise", was the catalyst for the formation of the "Berlin Philharmonic 12 Cellists". He continued to perform with the Philharmonic until 1996. Weinsheimer is one of the originators of the "1000 Cellists Concert".

**From Rudolf Weinsheimer, Berlin, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005**

I was so happy to meet the children from Suzuki Method at Kobe. In Kobe in 1998 when the Charity Concert with more than 1000 Cellists was performed, not only was I amazed at the children from Suzuki who made a special appearance in the performance, but it also gave me great pleasure. I was so deeply moved that on my return I wrote an article about my experience for "Orchestra", the largest magazine in Europe for musicians, on the cover of which a photograph of the children was used.

This time I knew in advance about the concert and I was impatient to see the performance of the children who were included in this large and important Cello Congress. I attended all the concerts and was deeply moved by the unbelievable ability of the students, who ranged in age between four and fifteen. I keenly felt how much affection and passion the teachers must have to be able to keep children so small enthralled and motivated.

The concert of the 300 cello students moved me to the bottom of my soul and is something I will not forget. I can't begin to describe the happiness I felt at being able to hear the children play Vivaldi. I spoke to some parents and children and literally was able to feel for myself the delight and emotion that comes from playing as one.

It is a wonderful idea to be able to familiarize children with music and instruments from a young age. This unique form of education plays an important part in the development of the children's characters and will continue to influence them throughout their lives.

I continue to hope that even more children throughout the world will become familiar with the Suzuki Method and continue to pass on this truly wonderful idea.

These children will bring peace to the world and give living a meaning.

I thank my dear friend Koji Toyoda and pray for the continued success of your activities.

## *Mstislav Rostropovich*

The globally known Mr. Rostropovich came to Japan this summer to conduct the Saito Kinen Orchestra, which together with the Suzuki Summer School is part of the landscape of Matsumoto city during the summer. We were particularly thrilled that he made time for this special interview for our magazine. The International Cello Congress was the catalyst for a discussion on Cello education and interaction with children.

### **Firstly let me ask your impressions of Kobe.**

I feel the most important thing is results. People say many things but the most important is what kind of achievement you make. The result of what you have done.

There was the International Cello Congress in Kobe this year. It will probably make the Guinness Book of Records with 1069 cellists. That makes me the 1070<sup>th</sup> cellist.

The main characteristic of the conference was the participation of so many children. That is where Suzuki Method has played such a great part.

I can say this from experience. There was a time when while Solzhenitsyn was living at my home, his 3 children were born. When the second child was born, someone said that it was good to play them music quietly when they were babies. So we bought a record of Baroque music and when the child was nursing, we played the Baroque music quietly in the background. It was very beautiful, flowing music. Not American Jazz. So the second child; his name is Ignat, who was brought up with music in that way is now the musical director of the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia and is a wonderful pianist.

So just as listening to music in such a way as a small child has produced that result, you can tell what result the Suzuki Method will produce.

### **Do you remember that after your recital concert on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1971 in Nagano city you played with the children of the Nagano chapter?**

Yes. This photograph brings back many memories. It was just at the time when I had recently lost my mother, as well as being under a ban from performing overseas, issued by the Russian authorities for having hidden Solzhenitsyn. My wife Galina Vishnevskaya and I had gone through such a lot to make the trip to Japan so that I could perform.

This photograph was taken directly after the recital. The children were playing Bach's Minuet, Twinkle Twinkle and Butterfly so wonderfully, I took out my cello and played the Minuet with them. I think that the way Suzuki Method teaches in stages is extremely good and important. I believe that teaching children of 5 and 6 to play difficult pieces has the effect of slowing both their psychological and intellectual development. I think the Suzuki Method of starting with simple pieces and gradually moving onto more difficult works is very good.

**You have said that an international cello school is necessary in Kobe. Could you be more specific about what kind of school you mean?**

In November this year, in Paris, the contest that has my name was held for the 8<sup>th</sup> time. There are usually about 250 people who apply to take part. It's not possible for the judges to listen to all the applicants so auditions are held. These are held in Paris, Washington and Moscow, and were held in Japan on August 30<sup>th</sup>. The contest and the international cello school are one and the same thing. To build a school like this and admit children with outstanding talent it is necessary to have an examination. The wealthy throughout the world can spend money to send their children to such a school, but on the other hand there may be a talented child who does not have the money to come. So as a step toward building such a school, it is necessary to have a system in place to select children for the school. Also it is necessary to build a group of teachers. And they should study not only cello, but piano as well. I believe that only when they receive that kind of education will wonderful cellists be born. In order to acquire the capabilities to be able to feel the various harmonies of the music I think that some education in piano is important. Performing chamber music is also necessary. When you think of all that, building a school is quite difficult but if you have such an institute it would provide a good opportunity to educate cellists.

**It is a wonderful concept. Would you mind giving us a message for the children who took part in the '1000 Cellists Concert'?**

My father was a cellist. I started to learn when I was eight and I think it was a little late. But at that time young children didn't learn to play the cello. It was only with the birth of the Suzuki Method that small children began to learn. If Suzuki hadn't been developed it is unlikely that such small children would be playing the cello now. So we are very grateful that Shinichi Suzuki developed the Suzuki Method and want to let the children who are learning in such an environment know that they are very lucky. The expansion of the cello on a world-wide scale is supported by what is coming out of Japan.

**The role of mothers is large. Do you have a message for them?**

God made many wonderful things and I think the most wonderful is women. There is

French saying which says "Go and find the woman". This means that whenever something happens in the home you should look for the woman. This is because raising the next generation can only be done through women. Depending on whether a woman is able to understand the subtleties of aesthetics or not this will be passed on to the child and will decide whether they become a great adult, a good musician.

In Kobe I saw children with small cellos, and their mothers were always with them and looked so proud that their children were studying the cello. Their eyes were so bright. I want to say "Congratulations" to those mothers. Please continue to be a good helping hand while your children continue to study the cello. Being a helping hand to make your children happy is so important.

**Thank you for your many encouraging words.**

Mstislav Rostropovich was born in Baku, Azerbaijan in 1927. He studied piano with his mother from the age of four and the cello with his father from eight. He held his first solo performance with an orchestra at thirteen. In 1947 and 1950 he won competitions in Prague and in 1949 the international competition in Budapest. He began his international performing career in 1960, but was condemned by the Russian authorities and both he and his wife Galina Vishnevskaya had their citizenship revoked for their defense of the dissident author Solzhenitsyn and later Sakharov. He left Russia in 1974 and in 1990, after 16 years returned to lead the Washington Symphony Orchestra in a triumphal performance. The pieces that have been specially presented to him have achieved the expansion of the standard repertoire for the cello. These works include wonderful compositions from Britten, Kachaturyan, Lutoslawski, Prokofiev and Shostakovich. He is a well-known Japanophile and his close friendship with conductor Seiji Ozawa is well known.