



Farmington Observer

# Suburban Life

Monday, November 6, 1978

(F) 1B

## Violinists who play Suzuki style come to show how its done

By LORRAINE McCLISH

Youngsters in the Mercy Center's ArtStart preschool took time out to listen to a half dozen variations of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" on the violin, plucked on the instrument's strings and fingered on the bow, during their introduction to Laura Sias last week.

Ms. Sias, a teacher of stringed instruments in the Royal Oak School System, and some of her students will be in concert in a specially devised program to introduce the Suzuki concept of music instruction to parents and children in the Farmington area. The concert is set for 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 16, in University Hills Center, 26711 Farmington Road.

Ms. Sias's students range in age from three to 18, and they play on instruments as small as 11 inches long in order to accommodate their varying arm lengths.

A member of the Suzuki Association of the Americas, Ms. Sias studied under the association's founder, Shinichi Suzuki, in Japan. Suzuki, whose father was a violin manufacturer, began teaching tots after World War II.

"THE METHOD he developed extends to respect for the teacher, respect for the audience and discipline that serves well in all other areas of life," Ms. Sias said. "It is not a stressful type of learning. All kids like this, and we're really not so much

interested at an early stage if it's pretty, but whether they enjoy it."

Ms. Sias will offer classes for young Suzuki players after ArtStart sessions, beginning after the introductory concert.

Whether it is violin, cello or piano, the Suzuki method of teaching relies strongly on the cooperative relationship of teacher, parent and student. The concept as a whole is a combination of philosophy, technique and a program of education.

The parent's role, in part, is helping to create not only a musical environment for the child, but also a total environment of affection, support, encouragement and understanding.

Ms. Sias stresses that parents need not be trained musicians in order to be a good home teacher. The parent is expected to attend classes with the child who receives intermittent, private or group sessions.

"WE'RE PROCESS oriented instead of product oriented," Ms. Sias said, "so we mature with love to make the world a better place through music. We help the little ones use their arms and bodies to make rhythms while they are developing their mind and muscle coordination."

"We put a sparkle in their eye and we correct sloppy bodies and sloppy minds," she added.

Nancy Bates, director of operations at ArtStart, believes that "Creative

kids are not discipline problems if they are given room to use that creativity."

"The Suzuki method has no exercise books," she continued, "no chords and scales to memorize. You are learning to appreciate music while you are making music."

## Night out for handicapped combines learning and fun

By LORRAINE McCLISH

Tuesday night is reserved for mentally, physically and emotionally handicapped children at the Salvation Army's community center in Royal Oak.

Betty Holbert, a resident of Farmington Hills, is one of the adult volunteers who spend every Tuesday in the center, with about ten others who come from the entire metropolitan area because of its unique format.

"The format is really no format," said Barry Hornbeck, the church's community service director, "the whole business is entirely unstructured which makes the interaction, the socialization the handicapped can

receive the biggest thing we can offer to them. So far as I know there is nothing in the immediate area in any way similar."

Mrs. Holbert was introduced to the Royal Oak Center by Southfield resident Helene Gottfried. Both have mentally impaired children. Both work in numerous capacities for children who have any kind of handicap. Both are adamant in their work that residency should not be a requirement for any kind of help that is available to the child who needs it.

Mrs. Gottfried is founder of a parents group called Southfield Special Education Association. Mrs. Holbert is active in Coffee House at Farmington Training Center.

ALL THREE FLOORS of the Royal Oak center, attached to the Salvation Army on Main, south of 13 Mile, are available to the handicapped on Tuesdays from 6:30-10 p.m. with one section reserved for a wheelchair basketball team.

"We say 10 p.m. but we're lucky to get them out by then," said Mrs. Holbert. "They'll be in the middle of a game, or ask to stay for one more game."

Visitors are free to try their hand at arts and crafts, play ping pong, pool, watch TV, or join in whatever is going on in the game room. Cars of five or six might come with a member of the staff from a local home for the handicapped. Some who can't walk might come to the center only to use the weights in the exercise room.

Hornbeck takes the word "drop-in" very literally.

"They can come and go as they choose and participate in what there is as they choose. There is no membership, no admission. There is generally enough adults who stay for the evening, along with the paid staff, to monitor the activities," he said.

HORNBECK became acquainted with the mentally impaired when he was a student at Central Michigan University, with a major in municipal parks and recreation and a minor in

psychology.

He advocates the Tuesday night out for the handicapped because he has found "most of these people are so catered to in their own homes they have to have some place to learn self-discipline, etiquette, respect for others' rights and others' values. Our unstructured format just helps them get along with others and covers that whole blanket," he said. "The social aspect is a whole education for them in itself."

When Hornbeck was asked what the age range of the drop-ins were, he said "There is no age range. We have one at age 12 who drops in pretty regularly but there is no reason why those younger couldn't take advantage of what we have."

About 40-50 handicapped come to the center every Tuesday evening, but the facilities were able to accommodate up to 400 that turned out for one Christmas party.

Refreshments are served at each session, always contributed by the adult volunteers.

Mrs. Holbert would like to get more volunteers into the center, preferably teens, and she needs teen volunteers, also at the Coffee House, given the first and third Fridays of each month in Farmington Training Center.

She can be reached by calling 478-3791.

## 2nd Company lures the customers in

By LORRAINE McCLISH

2nd Company began as a public relations group of singers and dancers who traveled throughout Oakland County performing parts of Broadway show-stoppers to lure customers to the next show staged by Pontiac Theatre IV.

Now they take center stage as one-half of "Two Shows for the Price of One," to be performed in Pontiac Central High School Nov. 10-11 and 17-18.

Pontiac Theatre IV takes the second half of the bill with the production of "Black Comedy."

Farmington Hills resident Sandy Catherman described herself as something of a backup man for 2nd Company. She's not a regular member of the eight-part company, but acts as assistant musical director, knows all the parts and bits, and substitutes in an emergency.

As a member of Pontiac Theatre IV, she has been involved in its productions either on or off stage for four years, only interrupting her stint to have a son 12 months ago. She was enthusiastic about forming 2nd Company in an effort to better spread the word about live theatre in the community.

2nd COMPANY does promotional bits from the parent theater's upcoming production.

"We tried straight dramatic productions for a while," Mrs. Catherman said, "but gave up. They didn't go so we're back to musicals. We go out in costume with props and our own choreography. Sometimes we just change hats for different numbers."

The upshot of this was that 2nd Company had been slowly building its own repertoire. It's now ready to stage a full fledged musical variety show with tunes from "Pippin," "Shenandoah," "Chicago," and "Chorus Line" with added comedy bits.

Mrs. Catherman described "Black Comedy" as "one of the funniest plays ever written and something new for Pontiac Theatre IV to tackle because it's played entirely in the dark."

The characters include a young English sculptor and his flighty fiancée who seek to impress her father by borrowing fine antique furniture from a neighbor, an interior decorator.

The comedy proceeds with the entrance of a prim old maid who accidentally drinks gin instead of lemonade and an overly passionate ex-girlfriend.

Meanwhile, the couple lose the electric power in the house.

PONTIAC CENTRAL High School is located at 300 West Huron, with well-lit and ample parking facilities.

Curtain is at 8 p.m. on all four nights. Group rates are available.

Ticket information, reservations or group rates are available by calling 334-6430.



Sandy Catherman, who wears many hats for Pontiac Theatre IV and its offshoot troupe called 2nd Company, is now promoting "Two Shows for the Price of One," which will run for two weekends

beginning Nov. 10. Hats from the prop department are from a former show, "Hello Dolly." (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)



Megan Neuser tries her hand at making sounds by plucking the violin strings when Laura Sias visited children at ArtStart telling them of other tots, as young as three years of age, who are playing the violin.

Ms. Sias will bring a concert to the area, made up of children from age 3-18 who have learned their instrument with the Suzuki method. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## All day workshop teaches how to deal with stress

A workshop in practical ways to deal with stress in daily living will be given in Mercy Conference Center, Saturday, Nov. 11. The all-day session runs from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., led by the directors of Total Yoga; Betsy Bertalino, Kathleen Yvon Lund, Sandy Kraus and Sallee Rosen.

The directors emphasize that previous yoga experience is not necessary for participation in the workshop.

Jim Petty, whose expertise is in

meditation, will show how meditation techniques can help release stress.

Dr. Alan Adams, president of the Council on Nutrition, American Chiropractic Association, will speak on the relationship between diet and nerves.

Deep relaxation, concentration, and simple yoga postures will be demonstrated by the directors.

A buffet luncheon will be included in the cost of the workshop. Reservations will be taken by calling Ms. Rosen, 569-2841.

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