**Who we are**

We are a growing group of local music-makers aged between 4 and 10+, led by a professional pianist.

Children have weekly musicianship classes (please read below on the content and purpose of musicianship classes) and most of the children have instrumental lessons.

We have regular recitals where we present rich and varied program: children play their instrumental pieces, they also form into piano duets, and pianists accompany their classmates who play violins or cellos. We also present our singing skills, using songs from the Musicianship classes that are either accompanied on piano or formed into canons and quadlibets.

**About myself and my philosophy**

I'm what one calls a Russian pianist, trained from the age of 7 in a highly selective specialist music school in Kazakhstan Almaty (former Soviet Union). I received an extensive, thorough, rigorous academic training. This consisted of weekly two piano lessons (first 6 years, then three 90-minutes lessons), solfege and harmonization (several hours weekly), music literature and analyses (very long hours), accompaniment (for various instruments, vocalists, choirs, duets and trios), folk songs studies and analyses, hours of choral singing. Technical excellence and a high degree of musical expression was an absolute requirement for progression towards the diploma.

From the very start I’ve shown a strong academic streak, considerable stamina and self-discipline that helped me see myself through the very many hours of study and practice, as well as an artistic flare for performance, which stemmed from genuine love for music and fascination with my emerging piano skills.

However my real fascination was inspired by my solfege teacher. Whilst she taught us ins and outs of music, she also taught us the ways in which to connect what we learned in other subjects, making everything come to life. Her approach to us her pupils was vastly different from the rest of the teachers. Years past and I never forgot her simple manner in which she related to us by allowing us to be children in a highly demanding environment, genuinely enjoying our presence, taking interest in us as individuals, ultimately creating for each and one of us the atmosphere of thriving.

When I only just started teaching I applied the same approach to my pupils, wherever it was possible. This wielded results far grater then those pupils have ever experienced before - contentment, enjoyment and satisfaction along with high grades.

This has left a very deep impression on me, sparking great interest in teaching and defining what I stand for as a teacher today. It has become my greatest ambition to take on what I’ve learned, learn some more, mould it and expand it into what I feel is most beneficial for my pupils.

To that end I’ve immersed myself into studying and experiencing all the leading “alternative” approaches that we have here in the UK, assimilating the repertoire, philosophy, strands of methodic approach into my own teaching. This resulted in my own take on teaching. All that I’ve learned and assimilated so far I use as tools. Whenever I feel this or that approach or material offers best explanation or enhances experiences of applying or reinforcing a topic, or has stronger capacity to introduce a new concept more efficiently, I use it. I switch between the approaches as I see fit, keeping in mind my pupil’s levels of experience, age, abilities, relevance of the materials to my pupil’s needs and overall enjoyment of learning for children first and foremost. I’ve invariably found it most functional, effective and rewarding experience for both my pupils and myself.

**Musicianship - the way I teach**

The purpose of the musicianship classes is to develop a wide range of skills and competence that are absolutely essential to learning an instrument. This is done in a way that is appropriate, enjoyable and understandable for children. The materials are derived from either folk songs or from art music, each strand of skills is rooted in actual music and is taught through games, songs, rhymes and dance. My main approach is to use materials that arerelevant to age, ability and level the children are at. All materials are interconnected and have logical progression.

The classes I offer are currently divided into three levels: Little, Middle, Advanced.

The Little’s are introduced the core materials and concepts, which they assimilate subconsciously through singing games.

The Middles are re-introduced the material from the Little’s, and are given a considerable amount of new music to assimilate. The aim is to move their perception of songs to half-conscious learning and subsequently to conscious. That is the songs and games acquire a visual representation and at a later stage are translated into sol-fa.

Advanced class are mostly instrumentalists, well-evolved singers, singing canons and harmonies, learning to notate what they sing and sing what they notate, analyze form and structure aurally, conduct, study theory concepts by learning to recognize them both aurally and in the scores.

**Musicianship – current fees**

£7 per lesson payable in advance per half-term, according to the number of lessons in the period.

The first lesson is a free trial.

**Piano - general info**

Piano lessons I offer are built on skills and knowledge acquired in the musicianship classes, where we practice the elements of songs that then become children’s first instrumental pieces. This puts the children at the ultimate advantage, as they are very well-prepared to transfer all that they have learned onto the keyboard successfully and with minimal efforts.

Below are the advised lesson lengths:

Very young starters 20 mins lessons

7+ starters 30 mins lessons

Those children who have started on 20 mins lessons ought to move on to 30 mins lessons in the 2nd year of study

Common time is 30 mins

From 4th year 40 mins is advisable due to scope of work and larger pieces

Auditions and exam preparations - minimum lesson time is 40 mins for a minimum period of a full academic year (strictly after an assessment)

**Piano - current fees**

Current fee is £30ph

20 mins lessons are at £10.00

30 mins lessons are at £15.00

40 mins lessons are at £20.00

Payable per half-term in advance

(please note I will assume the lessons upon the receipt of the payment)

**Piano - advice for buying**

I will start with the piano stool, which **must be adjustable**. The arm weight and the upper body weight play a huge role in piano playing. It is impossible to teach a child an extremely subtle concept of weight distribution if they haven’t been able to establish a proper posture at the instrument, which is only possible with the adjustable stool.

If the space and most importantly the neighbours allow, an acoustic piano is the best choice. There are several stores that offer a rent-to-buy option, which is a very good choice for a piano starter.

If space is an issue and/or neighbours need to be considered, a good digital piano has to be the alternative option. There is a very wide range of digital pianos on the market and the makes are constantly evolving. Below are the absolute requirements if the digital piano has to be the choice:

Fully-weighted 88 keys

Sensitive touch

Graded hammer action

Standard key size

Touch and feel of an acoustic piano

Minimum of 2 in-built pedals

**Exams and Auditions**

As mentioned before I do not follow in my teaching any of the graded syllabuses and I typically strongly advise my pianists against graded exams, unless absolutely necessary for an entry into a school (to my knowledge there are a couple of schools that still require grades, the rest relies upon an honest audition).

Saying this, I strongly encourage my pupils for any auditions, festivals, competitions and talent shows, anywhere they can show off their accomplishments, any opportunity for them to stand tall and proud and share their skills with confidence and grace.

The decision not to follow the grade-system came about by a very basic comparison with the quality of playing, knowledge and competence around the piano, musicality and rapid progression that I witnessed first-hand when I came across Colourstrings children who are “raised” according to Kodaly philosophy and do not follow the grades.

Here is the summary of my against reasons: stress associated with the exams; lengthy preparation time which in the end turns out to be not as constructive use of a lesson/practice time as it should and could be; misplaced purpose of scale-work; unrealistic progression of difficulty in pieces; more often than not a poor and limited repertoire to choose from. None of this in my view has the capacity to nurture a complex and elaborate set of skills to a level of joy, competence and confidence that I ultimately aim for with my pupils.

On average my pupils, who do not follow the grades learn about 12-15 pieces a year. The overwhelming numbers of children who are made to accumulate grades play 3 pieces per year. If this is the case the grade they have passed, even if they get a distinction for it, does not reflect their actual level and ability, which would be considerably lower.

And I could not even begin to describe the vast difference in content and quality of the lessons between a Grade-prep (blunt and tedious comes to mind) and my “normal” pianists - often they are running in and telling me with excitement and pride how good they can do this or that, eager to show what they have managed during their practice. The lessons have flow to them and a lively interaction, the children get easily absorbed into mastering this or that element and are curious about new music.

All the years of experience, learning and observation has taught me that instrumental teaching at its finest is an intuitive process; it is a sort of a momentum that when disrupted by something that is imposed or prescribed (curriculum or exams) is being damaged or lost entirely.

If there’s the need to take exams, it has to be every now and then, at a time that is right, so that the exam prep doesn’t break the momentum of development, but (hopefully) adds to it.

**Practice advice**

It is essential to create for young pianists positive associations with piano (or any other instrument for that matter) – lots of praise and parental admiration will go a long way! And so will a well-established, solid, but realistic practice routine. Little and often is a very healthy approach and is far more efficient than 1 hour before the lesson.

As a general rule 6 days a week is an ideal to aim for, and to that end it’s a good idea to discuss this with a child and set out practice plan, e.g. an early riser might enjoy morning practice and a child whose energy levels peak around dinner time would do best to practice before dinner. If a child has to deal with a lot of homework, best to start it with the practice, or use practice as a break from writing – children have a good chance to refresh their attention having done some piano playing. If piano practice is left to last, the likelihood of it not happening is almost a certainty!

The length of practice very much depends on the age and level of the child. For a very young child I would definitely recommend about 10 minutes, as their pieces are 20-30 seconds in playing length. From a second year the practice time needs an increase to a minimum of 15-20 minutes. For an ambitious pianist it’s longer periods of practice, but at any stage it is crucial to keep a fresh head – mindless repetition is as bad, if not worse, than no practice at all, it dulls musical presence, making for a bland, tense performance. As said before, little and often is very good in every way – it solidifies the skills and keeps them fresh.

**Classes**

Musicianship classes are held in Vibast Community centre on Mondays, please contact for availability.

4.00 - Little kids

4.30 - Middle kids join in

5.15 - 6.00 Advanced class

Piano lessons are held at my house, please contact for availability.

**Info for Parents**

**Term dates:**

6th of June till 11th of July (6 lessons)

Back with the lessons on September the 5th

**Recitals - general info**

The recitals are an essential part of “raising” a musician. They provide children with stimulation to prepare their music to a performance standard, build their stamina, give opportunity to hear music played by fellow musicians, teach them handling their nerves.

I expect all of my pupils to take part in the recitals, whether our regular concerts or big events.

Please check the News section for the upcoming recitals.

**Teaching/Methodology** (you approach and methodology on teaching) *NOT USABLE as repeats*

*Replace with*

**Past Recitals**??

July 2015 Summer Concert

March 2016 Concert for Age Concern Charity

July 2016 Summer Concert

**Important Information** NOT USABLE as repeats the info, leave blank? Or replace with

**Terms, Conditions, Rules and Regulations -**

**All to Help Us Run Smoothly**

All fees are payable half-term in advance by the first lesson

of each half-term

*Musicianship classes, as they are in a hall and back to back:*

are by invitation only - please contact for a availability

I reserve the right to decide on which class is suitable for a child

Please allow me to make a swift switch between classes by not engaging in lengthy conversations

**Please refrain from talking during the lessons** if you happen to be in the hall during the lesson

Please take restless siblings out of the hall

If I find a child is particularly disruptive to the group and/or is difficult to manage I reserve the right to refuse the participation in the lesson

Shoes are kept on please!

If you object your child to be in the photos, please make sure to remove them from ALL GROUP PHOTOS.

*Piano lessons, as they are back to back:*

The lessons start and finish at the agreed times, not based on the time of the arrival

Please allow me to make a swift switch between lessons by not engaging in lengthy conversations

I reserve the right to refuse the lessons, to refuse the exam or audition prep

If the child has to take an exam I reserve an absolute right to decide on the level and the music for the exam or audition

I expect all my pupils to take part in recitals

If you object your child to be in the photos, please make sure to remove them from ALL GROUP FOTOS.

And please remember to take your shoes off at the door - I have over 50 people going in and out every week and it is my home where I eat and sleep!!

**Our successes**

Sebastian J. was offered a place at Temple choir upon the audition

All children who auditioned to LSO choir in 2015 were offered a place

**Testimonials**

'Ina's classes are terrific.  My daughter really enjoys herself every week, and her singing and musicianship has come on leaps and bounds.'

Tristan J.

Ina has taught our child piano and musicianship for several years. As well as being a patient and enthusiastic teacher Ina is also extremely careful to give the children regularly opportunities to perform in an nonthreatening supportive public environment. This has seen our son's confidence and enjoyment blossom. He is much more confident on stage and loves playing music so much he practices everyday.

Miles T.

Being taught by Ina (since age 5) was my daughter’s introduction to learning music. She has absolutely thrived and is now doing so well : singing in the LSO choir and also playing piano (again taught by Ina) and violin. I have no doubt that her progress is due to the musicianship skills taught by Ina. She has developed a wonderful “ear” and I am in awe that she can work out how to play a tune she has heard without knowing the music.

Lisa W.

Ina is an excellent music teacher. Her sessions are thoroughly fun, interesting and engaging. My daughter really enjoys her learning in musicianship and piano classes. We often spend our journey home singing and talking about it. With her inner peace, Ina has a unique way with children of all ages.

Homeira S.

I love Ina’s piano lessons. She chooses wonderful pieces for me to play and is very nice.

Martha D.

We can’t thank Ina enough for fostering the love for singing in Sebastian. We started to come to Ina’s musicianship classes when he was still in nursery and he has always looked forward to playing all the fantastic musical games while at the same time spending time with his friends. When we found him a cello teacher who teaches the same method and who had a book full of his favourite ‘Ina-songs’, he immediately bonded with the teacher and the instrument. He would try to play more difficult songs on the cello because he loved singing them at the weekly music group with Ina. He is ‘fluent’ in his sol-fa which gives him a great advantage of understanding intervals and how to play the music on his cello. But his favourite musical activity always remained singing. So much so that he wanted to audition for a boys choir. After 3 years of training with Ina he is such a confident singer, that he passed the audition for Temple Church Choir in his stride and is very proud to be a member of that choir. And on days he hasn’t got a choir rehearsal he is thrilled to go back and joins his friends for Ina’s musical games in her musicianship class.

Mirjam J.

Ina has made my daughter enjoy playing the piano. She is an amazing insightful teacher who encourages and supports learning and understanding at every step of the way. It is joyful watching my daughter in her progress. She says “Ina makes it easier to learn and her lessons are fun”.

Janette S.

**Gallery** of Children Play (audio only)

**News and Updates**

Upcoming events:

March 2017 British Kodaly Academy Concert to commemorate work of Zoltan Kodaly