

Dr Sasha Valeri Millwood, MA (Cantab.) MMus (GSMD) PhD (Glas.)



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Dr Sasha Valeri Millwood is a musicologist, music theorist, and composer-contrapuntist-pianist who takes an intellectual approach to his diverse array of musical endeavours, utilising his élite education (undergraduate degree from Girton College, Univ. of Cambridge, followed by Master's degree from GSMD) and research (academic researcher at Univ. of Glasgow), both academic and vocational, to elucidate his artistic practice. Tuition either in Brentwood town centre or online (Zoom or Skype). Lessons given on pay-as-you-go basis (requests for one-off lessons welcome). Approach to teaching Teaching is not about telling the pupil what to do: it should involve attuning him/her to perceive his/her own strengths and weaknesses, and to appreciate the demands of the music. In practice, this means that the teacher must resist the temptation to simply point out errors and immediately cite the "correct" solution; instead, the teacher must draw to the pupil's attention the erroneous matter at hand and guide him/her (with a few carefully chosen words and gestures) towards understanding for himself.

what he/she needs to do (and writing up the solutions in his/her own handwriting), and why. It is my belief that a pupil learns far more by spending two minutes scrutinising an issue that the teacher has brought to his/her attention, than by being told in two seconds, "X was wrong; it should be Y". I teach either from my home, in Brentwood town centre (a short walk from the High Street or from Brentwood railway station), or online, via Zoom or Skype. For current fees, please see: <http://sashamillwood.com/fees> (lessons given on pay-as-you-go basis) Pianoforte teaching Discipline and thorough planning are vital to making progress as a pianist. However, this should neither be taken to entail interminable scales, nor depriving performances of spontaneity. On the contrary, it is my belief that equipping a pupil with a robust technique is ultimately a means to an end: achieving a security and certitude that will enable him/her to give consistently confident and spirited performances (which may well be paratactic or even improvisatory in nature), unhampered by nerves. Another vital attribute I try to cultivate is restraint. This entails eschewing superfluous physical motions and habits which serve only to hasten fatigue and diminish the performer's control over the sound produced. Another facet of restraint pertains to the performer's taste in dynamics, tempi, and articulation. The overwhelming majority of pianists, myself included, will, at some point, manifest a propensity to play excessively loud and/or excessively fast; surmounting these temptations will always be an ongoing struggle, so they need to be addressed early. I expect my students to practise between lessons, on a decent instrument. Practice sessions need not be very long to be effective, but should be frequent (ideally, twice a day: in the morning and again in the evening). I recommend lessons of one hour (or, for very young pupils, forty-five minutes) — this is because my teaching method involves in-depth examination of issues, whereby the pupil is challenged to work out and understand solutions for himself/herself (and then mark up the printed music in his/her own handwriting), a process which is necessarily more time-consuming than simply barking instructions (which, a week later, will have been forgotten) at him/her.

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