

# Learning complex piano music: Environmentalist applications

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## Abstract

The current paper started as a pianist's enthusiastic response to environmentalist ideas developed by Mark Rowlands in his book *The body in mind*. His description of the manipulation of appropriate information-bearing structures in the environment of organisms as a form of cognition can, in our opinion, suggest an alternative to dominant mind-centered concepts around the learning processes for highly complex piano music after 1950. Our presentation will initially employ environmentalist ideas as a powerful tool of reflection on established modern approaches to piano playing, through a brief comparison of treatises by the pianists and pedagogues Leimer-Gieseck and G. Sandor. The conclusions will be extended to the issue of developing appropriate learning strategies for complex postwar piano repertoire, in relation (and most often contrast) to current theorization in the field of complex music performance practice. The general theme, which eventually comes into focus, is the problematic ontological status of the performing body in the practices of notated music in the West. As a result, this paper will not only attempt to propose environmentalist applications to learning and performing complex piano repertoire, as opposed to established approaches based on an abstracted, disembodied musical thinking; it will also look at how environmentalism and the repertoire in question can suggest ways in which the corporeality of performance becomes a "[..]problem in the positive sense-not just as an 'obstacle', but as a vehicle for thought and action" (Osborne,1996:192).

## CV

Pavlos Antoniadis studied piano performance in Nakas Conservatory (Greece), Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag (Netherlands), privately in London with Ian Pace, and in the University of California, San Diego (MA in Contemporary Piano Performance) on Fulbright / UCSD scholarships. He holds a degree in Musicology by the National University of Athens and Advanced Theory certificates from the Athenaeum Conservatory. Since 2005 he has focused on post-1945 piano and ensemble repertoire, with performances and themed lecture-recitals in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, Austria and the USA. He has been coached by composers B. Furrer, W. Rihm and H. Lachenmann, and has recorded with S. Schick, J. Avery (Mode records), C. Curtis & A. Burr (Los Angeles River records).

He is currently residing in Berlin, where he is collaborating as a pianist with the contemporary music ensemble "work in progress". In May 2010 he was admitted in the Hochschule für Musik Carl Maria von Weber Dresden, for a PhD study in musicology under the title: *Die Entwicklung von aufführungsspezifischen Navigationsmitteln für komplexe Klaviermusik nach 1950* ( *The development of a performer-specific navigational tool for complex piano music after 1950*), under the supervision of Dr. J.P. Hiekel and Dr. W. Lessing.