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Extended piano techniques : in theory, history and performance practice

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Extended piano techniques

Postulates

1. The *extended* piano and its performance techniques are all and everything that is *improper* to both the sound and the performance technique of the piano.
2. The extended piano's performance practice cannot be studied without studying its theory and history.
3. Historically the cluster came into being as a performance practical technique and that is the fundamental characteristic of the musical cluster.
4. The history of the extended piano is not a 20th century phenomenon as is often stated or suggested.
5. The glissando has not always been the cheap effect it has become known as. Haydn and Beethoven already let glissando integration influence the compositional and timbral structure of their works.
6. From the emergence of commercial music publication onwards, and up to present-day so-called critical editions, editors have unjustly exercised personal taste towards extended techniques.
7. Several of the most well known of John Cage's early pieces for prepared piano did not originally sound the way we have come to hear, perform and consider them.
8. That we only know Cage's pieces for prepared piano and dance as instrumental solo pieces generates a lack of generally artistic and specifically musical understanding of the original concepts.
9. The current habit of not programming combinations of short pieces for prepared piano because the individual sets of preparations are not compatible is unjust and unnecessary.
10. The influence of Henry Cowell's *New Musical Resources* on European post-WWII music is to be re-evaluated.
11. Some questions of veracity are in order when considering the chronology of Stockhausen's works from the 1950's.
12. The use of extended techniques to manipulate the piano's timbre in some of the key works for piano from the 1950's by Boulez and Stockhausen is more important for the historical assessment of the performer's input than the open form techniques for which these works are traditionally held in high regard.
13. Despite the soft caresses of the octave glissandos in Beethoven's opus 53, this study has been unable to confirm or deny the rumors of his homosexuality.
14. When it comes to extended techniques, historically informed performers with a specialty in 18th century repertoire show a remarkable lack of interest in treating the subject like they would any aspect of proper performance technique or piano sound.

15. The study of extended piano techniques can have consequences for the performance of pieces that contain no such techniques, as evidenced from the case of Liszt's *Au bord d'une source* and *Orage*.