

In *Rethinking Piano Performance: The Mindful Body*, author Cristine MacKie supplants the traditional mind/body dualistic approach to piano teaching and performing, asserting instead that, since the recent advances in the development of technological tools – by means of which neuroscientists have been able to uproot those conceptual dualities – the mind is the site of mental phenomena and is fully embodied. Since the ideas controlling piano pedagogy and performance – which nurtures the mind/ body dualism – have been largely allied to the structure of Western thought, the Introduction gives a brief account of some of the reasons for this, and shows that by the mid-twentieth century a transition in approach may be perceived in the works of the anthropologist Marcel Mauss and the philosopher Merleau-Ponty, amongst others, who both recognize the intentionality of the body. In Part 1, Chapters 1 and 2 of the book, provide an historical-literature survey of how pedagogues and performers perceive the role of the body – its structure, function (movement), and memorizing, which is, in part, a role of the body – in piano performance from 1650-1965. Part 2, focuses first, on the structural anatomy and the muscles of the shoulder complex and of the forearm/hand, and the torso – which, when combined – enable a little understood function described as the ‘reach to grasp’; and second, on the brain systems which control the ‘reach to grasp’ and memorizing. Part 3, addresses the role of the mind, and shows that the recent ‘rethink’ about the relationship between analysis and performance may enable a more informal approach to the analysis of music, one which engages the mind of the performer in more deliberate thought – in particular on issues such as ‘shape’ and memorizing, which are indisputably roles of the mind. In Part 4, are four innovative studies that explore ways by which the performer is able convey their somatic intention and their musical intelligence to the audience in an integrated way. The issues explored in the book will be of value to three categories of readers: first, performers and pedagogues at conservatoires, university music departments, and in the private piano-teaching fraternity, as well as enquiring piano students and passionate amateurs; second, those researching at the interface between science and skilled artistry, and third, clinicians and health practitioners. A wider audience too may be able to gain much benefit from this innovative work.