

## CENTER HENRI POUSSEUR

Musique Electronique / Musique Mixte

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### Panayiotis Kokoras, from electroacoustic to live music

**Panayiotis Kokoras** (1974) is a Greek composer at ease with electroacoustic as well as live instrumental. He talks about this experience and his new piece premiered at Ars Musica Festival 2012.

**Stephane Ginsburgh** : As a composer, you are at ease with acousmatic music as well as with combination of live electronics and instruments. How do you elaborate your work in these two fields and what relations do you establish between them ?

**Panayiotis Kokoras** : My sound compositions include significant influences of the electroacoustic studio upon acoustic instrumental compositions and *viceversa*. Often the electroacoustic studio is the composition sketchbook, the lab for my instrumental compositions through analysis, performance and recording, before, during and after the piece is completed. This allows me to check the relationships and behaviours of my materials as they are perceived during the process of listening, and enable me to experience the excitement and the enthusiasm generated by direct contact with the work during its creation.

**S.G.** : The piece which will be premiered at Ars Musica uses an unusual combination of instruments around the piano, and electronics. Could you tell us a little about the techniques you used? How would you describe the electronic part (tape) and its contents in regards to the live music performed at the same time ?

**P.K.** : The piece gives a dualistic role to the performer, that of pianist and percussionist. However, my intention was to blur this distinction, by providing one performer playing percussive instruments. As a result, the piano is rather approached as a percussion instrument with passages played inside the harp using various sticks but also on the keyboard with virtuosic gestures that fuss well with the electronic part. In addition to piano the performer plays several percussion instruments and found objects in a way that extend, enhance and dialogue with piano and electronics. The instrumental part of *West Pole* is compiled out of 200 hundred sound samples that are previously recorded. The sounds have been analyzed and classified in order to create a sound scale. The electronics play throughout the piece and fusses with the instrumental part. It is an amalgam of concrete, synthesized sounds, instrumental and soundscape sounds which along with their references and their semiotics aim to create a rich sonic experience.

**S.G.** : The title of the piece, *West Pole*, is rather intriguing and sounds paradoxical. What does it refer to ?

**P.K.** : *West Pole* is inspired by the idea of climate change and the influences of human activities on it. There is a moment in the



innerness of human devices on the other hand, in the piece where one can hear the sound of morse code saying SOS. Besides I use several associations to natural phenomena. It is like a story within a story that everyone can hear it in his/her own words. In a way, West Pole is the result of an extreme axial tilt; it is a wonderland where the sounds have meaning.

**S.G. :** What are your projects in the near future ?

**P.K. :** I am just done with a work for symphony orchestra called *Kydemos* – the sound of the war in Greek Mythology. The piece is commissioned by State Orchestra of Athens and is going to be premiered on Friday 11 May at Megaron Athens Concert Hall by the State Orchestra of Athens and conducted by Russian conductor Mikhail Agrest.

I am currently working on a *New work* for amplified ensemble flute, clarinet, piano, percussion, violin, cello and electronics. This piece is commissioned by Frankfurt based *Ensemble Interface*. It is going to be premiered under the baton of Scott Voyles, on 6th of May in Thessaloniki and subsequently performed in Frankfurt on 15th of the same month.

**S.G. :** We hear a lot about the very difficult situation in Greece today. What about music world ? How does it survive and the people who work for it?

**P.K. :** Since the beginning of the Greek recession a couple of years ago, the music world has been changing every day. People who work for it continuously try to adjust the way they work to make it efficient. We have seen orchestras with long history cease from existence or cultural organizations disappear. We have also seen for first time an effort to organise and make transparent the way the state funding for culture is granted to the interested organizations. There is also an interesting tendency to a more international outlook of several ensembles, musicians and organizations. However, what is for sure, is that the music world in Greece struggles to survive and at the same time struggles to discover new forms for expression, dissemination and creativity.

[Panayiotis Kokoras Website](#)



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