

RATKO DELORKO (GERMANY)

Pianist - Composer - Educator - Writer

Composer of the Fantastic Realism

I, Ratko Delorko, discovered the piano as my favourite toy at the tender age of three. It took me another three years to discover the piano as a creative tool for writing my youthful compositions. My professional background—my formative years—were shaped by studying piano, composition and conducting in Cologne, Düsseldorf and Munich. I have had the privilege of performing in such varied venues as the Berlin Philharmonie, the Tonhalle in Düsseldorf, the Cologne Philharmonie, the Gasteig in Munich, the Philharmonie in Essen, Hamburg's Musikhalle, the Glocke in Bremen, London's St. Martin in the Fields, Paleau de la Musica in Valencia, Beijing's Concert Hall, Shanghai's Oriental Arts Center, Cairo Opera House, Mozartfest Oberösterreich, Mozartfest Istanbul and a very extreme experience: The Dachstein Ice Cave. Music for solo piano, piano duet, chamber music, electronic music, opera and ballet are fields in which my primary efforts are concentrated as a composer. Currently, I lecture at the Frankfurt University of Music. Former lecturer at the Mozarteum Salzburg (2019-2021). In the past, I have conducted master classes and served as guest professor in Austria, Malaysia, Russia, Italy, Croatia, the US, Vietnam and China, and I continue to do so to the present day. My book on the piano has been published by "Staccato-Verlag". The book release in 2023: The Nuts and Bolts of Online Piano Teaching. New release: „Ratko Delorko's Piano Police"—a 40 pages guide to better playing. , in 2025, my MIDI_Sonata for Piano and synthetic sounds has been awarded with the silver medallion of the Global Music Awards. I currently have about 30 albums on the market and over 170 releases dropped on streaming platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music.

Wet fingers - a slippery problem

Wet fingers are always a bit unpleasant. On piano keys they are a really slippery problem. If it is still ivory and ebony, the Schwimmfest is limited, because the materials have moisture-compensating properties to a certain extent. On acrylic and even ivory substitutes, on the other hand, you are pretty much out of luck. Now all it takes is a gentle breeze and the damp fingers tend to mutate into icicles. I raise my hand. I know the problem only too well. No amount of washing and wiping dry will help. Sweaty fingers are slippery fingers that quickly become cold and then stiff and remain moist. A source of wrong notes. Besides, no one likes to shake hands with you. Well, that doesn't really have to be the case in these times. In any case, the surface of the keys turns into a water slide. That's especially unpleasant when you have to share an event with several people and the previous one oozes onto the keys. Yuck... Or am I being too picky now?

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Sure, in high summer under the barbecue of the headlights it becomes a really humid affair and it has to be that way, because the body regulates the heat in this way and avoids a collapse. I remember scenes where rivulets ran out of my tuxedo sleeve onto the keys. Since then, I've taken off my beloved, thick theatrical tails for good and replaced them with a vest; it's fancy, too, and I look like a maitre d'. Stress is a definite trigger. The eccrine (merocrine) sweat glands are mainly located on the hands, forehead and feet. They serve to regulate thermom. They are triggered by the sympathetic nervous system, which is stimulated by stress and stage fright. Hyperhidrosis, as excessive sweating is called, is favored by hormonal conditions such as those that prevail during puberty and somewhat thereafter. During performances, stress reduces with increasing routine and gives way to joyful anticipation. The hormones get into calmer ways and then eventually give way - I can promise you that. In my case, it thus took care of itself, although not everyone is so lucky. You can see from the context that younger players tend to struggle with it. The stupid thing is, especially they want and have to shine with particularly good performances, productions, competitions and exams. With sweaty fingers, that's not so easy.... If the moist matter is not obviously pathological, you can actually save yourself the trip to the doctor, he should just shrug his shoulders and have some innocuous advice for you. You can also have an invasive procedure, but you don't want that and neither does your family doctor. So you are on your own and have to experiment a bit. Yes - and I have to name products again, please spare me bitter emails. There is the "Odorex Deo", which is specially created for hands. You can buy that on Amazon, too. Did I mention that I don't like this store? The deodorant takes a little time to work its magic, which may well be overnight. Then find out how it feels on the keys with it. One thing is for sure: the feel is no longer 100% the same. But I think it's always better than the Schwimmfest. The cold paws at the slightest breeze are also history with it. Is this applied chemistry? With certainty. Is it harmful in the long run? Well, you don't want to put it on your tongue, but I wouldn't want to use it permanently. In homeopathic doses it also does as little as possible fat baby powder. This then needs to be wiped dry and tried on the instrument. I do not get along well with it, because it feels dry, but still slippery for my tactile feeling. However, the unloved moisture is gone for now. "Sweat-Off" is also a special deodorant in gel form, which contains no alcohol and is designed for hands and feet. The bottle with 30 ml content comes one with 30 € expensive to stand. The liter is calculated at just under 1,000 €. A rogue, who thinks evil thereby. By the way, I don't like gel - but that's up to me. All deodorants can be used confidently before bedtime, as mentioned. The effect can unfold over the night and lasts even over the next day, without having to "top up" immediately. The residues that may be unpleasant during play are then also mostly gone. However, you should not suck your thumb at night. I assume that you wash your hands more often. If they're not sour, just water will do in between, because all that soap isn't always good for the skin. Waiting times before performances are always unpleasant. If you stand around there with gloves on, your fingers get sweaty and then cool down especially effectively during the first playing movement, because there is a slight breeze. Gloves actually only make sense in the winter months, when you have to change in the cold sacristy of a church and remain there until you are allowed to approach the instrument, because there is still talking to be done. As a general rule, hot spices, alcohol and even caffeine stimulate sweat production. So maybe you should limit yourself a bit... By the way: Well trained people sweat less than untrained people - maybe a little sport is worth considering. We dare to look sideways at the gymnastics guild. They can't afford to have sweaty hands on the ring, parallel bars and steel apparatus, because that can also be dangerous. People who like to free climb are also at risk. These groups use chalk, or better magnesium chloride. The kilo is between 6 and 12 € and is freely available in sports shops. Again, the gymnast dose is way too much for us.

Of course, it looks impressive when they clap their white-dusted hands and a white cloud billows through the room. It looks especially good in slow motion close-up in videos. But the amount of magnesium chloride makes no sense to us. It is certainly worth a try in homeopathic dosage. The classic home remedy: Alcohol extracts water from the body. This is common knowledge. If you clean your fingers with alcohol from the pharmacy, the moisture is gone for the time being. You should not drink the stuff. Then rub your hands with rubbing alcohol - now you should be good for a while. However, this will not last forever. Tea tree oil can be helpful. One or two drops applied to the heel of the hand and rubbed in will do the trick. You have to like the smell... Anyway, the effect is disinfecting. Lavender oil is also effective. I do quite a bit with the essential oil. It can also repair small damaged areas on the nail bed. It has a calming effect on the side. But be careful - it can attack surfaces and plastics. Therefore, fillings in plastic bottles are conceivably unsuitable, as I was allowed to learn myself. The scent is very distinctive. Now is not the place to laugh: you put 15-20 drops in one hundred milliliters of cream and stir yourself a kind of bath additive with it. Either you end up adding the total amount to the warm bath and relax wonderfully, or you divide the lavender cream into smaller portions for a ten-finger bath at a time in warm water in a bowl. In my experience, sage is the best option for me: sage is a natural sweat killer. Two to three teas of dried sage leaves a day can work wonders. However, please let the brew cool down properly before drinking it, otherwise you will achieve the opposite and crank up sweat production and you don't want that. The drink should steep for about fifteen minutes anyway. I always use products from the health food store, because I feel more comfortable with them. As with all natural ingredients, it takes a while for an effect to develop, so please be patient, it won't happen overnight. Oh, you don't like the taste of sage? I see, there is another way: five heaped teaspoons of the dried sage to a liter of water make a splendid finger bath. Of course, wait until the boiling hot water cools down to a comfortable temperature and then splash your little fingers around in the sage bath for a quarter of an hour. This must be done regularly, i.e. daily, so that the pleasant finger bath can develop its effect. After just two weeks, you should notice a clear change in the direction of dryness, and after a good six weeks, the moist drama should come to an end. Did I mention that I'm a fan of organically grown products? For me, this also applies to the external application. I think you can also do the cure more often. What's wrong with the combinations of internally applied sage tea and the external finger bath? As long as it doesn't trigger some stupid allergy, the combination is certainly a good idea. You can't do any harm with it. Alternatively, you can scrub your hands with salt. This binds the moisture and does not create a weird feel like baby powder. Please try all the options and find out which solution works best for you. Financially, all investments stay within the range of a trip to the movies with your companion. Only if you find that all this has not brought any relief and you continue to struggle with the problem permanently, consult a specialist, because his repertoire ranges from Botox treatments to a fairly recent microwave therapy to suction (!) of the sweat glands. The microwaves are precisely controlled and permanently obliterate the sweat glands. The studies on the new procedure are currently still controversial. But come on, it's not really harmless: it requires in-depth consultation and the subsequent risk-benefit assessment. Let's not kid ourselves: It is and remains a (micro-) invasive intervention in your playing apparatus and you have to earn your living with it in the end. The costs are always several thousand Euros and the health insurances only play along in justified individual cases. So it is better to wait and drink sage tea. My tip.