

Curriculum Vitae (last update: January 2016)

## Rainer Polak (Dr. phil.), music researcher

### Position

current            Post-Doctoral Researcher  
                      Department of Music  
                      Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics

### Contact

Email              polak@mail.de

### Research interests

- rhythm performance and perception; timing, meter, and entrainment
- West-African drumming and dance; drum-dance relationships
- music in/as culture, cross-cultural comparison

### Education

2002              Dr. phil., Bayreuth University  
                      (Social Anthropology and Comparative Musicology)

1996              M.A., Bayreuth University  
                      (Social Anthropology, African Languages, and African History)

### Research grants, fellowships, stipends, and awards

2016              research grant (1 year), German Research Council (DFG)

2011–15          research grant (3.5 years), DFG

2006–07          post-doc research fellowship (2 years), DFG

2004              best dissertation thesis award 2003/04, German African Studies  
                      Association (VAD); book publication stipend, DFG

1996–99          doctoral research fellowship (3 years) DFG

## **Research experience**

### **1991–2002 (undergraduate and doctoral research)**

- issues: performance of jembe drum ensemble music for vernacular dance events in Mali; emic conceptualization of instrumental music as work (not art); embeddedness and change in social processes of urbanization, professionalization, commodification, and globalization
- fieldwork: six periods in Mali, summing up to 20 months
- research methods: radically participant observation (music apprenticeship and performance); qualitative and quantitative social research; music analysis

### **2006–today (research as postdoc and principal investigator)**

- issues: rhythm performance and perception
- character: empirical, interdisciplinary, and increasingly collaborative
- methods: multi-track audio-visual field recordings; chronometric performance timing analysis; controlled experiments in fieldwork situations; participant observation
- fieldwork: five periods in Mali, summing up to 12 months

### **Free-lance professional work**

- jembe music teaching (performance, music theory, and social, cultural, and historical contexts) at all levels, yet with a focus on professional development classes for jembe-teachers in the German-speaking countries.
- concerts and workshops, with artists from Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinée, in Europe (organization and ensemble member): years 2000, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2013, and 2014.
- radio features for Bayern 4 Klassik (Bavarian State Broadcast)
- CD editions (conception, liner notes, recordings)

### **Membership in professional societies**

- International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM), life member
- Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM), life member
- Percussion Creativ (German division of Percussive Arts Society), regular member