



**JEANNE ZAIDEL-RUDOLPH:  
THREE PIANO WORKS – ANALYSED AND EDITED**

by

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*The formative principle is the coalescence of  
all the musical elements into a higher unifying complex*

(György Ligeti as quoted by Webern, 1963:12)

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## ABSTRACT

Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph (1948-) is South Africa's most prominent female art music composer. Her compositional output includes most of the music genres. An expert pianist herself, the instrument has remained central to her educational and creative career.

The purpose of this thesis is to elucidate the musical structure of three of Zaidel-Rudolph's piano compositions. They are the *Sonata no.1* (1969), the *Three Dimensions* (1974) and the *Virtuoso I* (1987). The research investigates a possible synthesis of technical and aesthetic elements. Comprehension of the music's architecture allows the performer to convey its true character.

The thesis is presented in nine chapters. The first two constitute the motivation for the research as well as the composer's biography.

The following three chapters form the greater part of the thesis, comprising in-depth analyses of the three works respectively. The research method moves from the broader to the finer musical details to ascertain the formal organisational shaping of Zaidel-Rudolph's compositional language.

The three-movement *Sonata no.1* shows the neoclassical approach of Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) in its well-proportioned and balanced sectional moulding. Motivic and rhythmic transformations as well as contrapuntal treatments suggest Béla Bartók's (1881-1945) influence. Tonal centres are implied, never fully expressed.

The *Three Dimensions* bears witness to György Ligeti's (1923- ) inspiration. The avant-garde style experiments with novel sonic effects e.g. the plucking of the piano's strings. Indigenous African rhythms are juxtaposed with Eastern scalar sonorities. Vertical struc-

turing constitutes the superimposition of dissonant intervals. Horizontal structuring features the repeated use of specific intervals to lend motivic unity.

The *Virtuoso I* also represents an eclectic approach. Western, African and spiritual elements are integrated into a mature style. A traditional Hebrew melody provides the germinal motives for thematic construction. Instances of bitonality and triadic harmony are present; the tonal system however remains free. Perpetual rhythm predominates with *ostinato* figurations and jazzy accentuation.

The following three chapters comprise re-edited versions of the complete manuscripts of the three respective compositions. Printing errors are brought to the attention; extensive suggestions regarding performance practice are added.

The thesis concludes with a chapter listing all Zaidel-Rudolph's compositions, a bibliography and a discography.