

**Dr. Lia Jensen-Abbott**  
**You Go Girl! New Variations On Diabelli's Waltz By Women From Around The World**  
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In approximately 1819, Anton Diabelli, a well-known Viennese pianist, composer, and music publisher, approached eighty-three of the most famous composers living and working in Vienna to write one variation on a theme (a waltz) that he composed. One of those composers was Beethoven, who reportedly tossed aside the Waltz and called it a “cobbler’s patch.” This project was ultimately, for Diabelli, a way to publish music, and therefore, a lucrative business enterprise for his publishing firm. But its unique compilation was also part of a philanthropic endeavor to help widows and orphans of the Napoleonic Wars. (See *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Eric Blom, Editor*). Fifty composers other than Beethoven responded to Diabelli’s request.

But it turned out to be a project of great historical significance—the Fifty Diabelli Variations (only four manuscripts survive in the world), serve as a nationalistic representation of Viennese and the larger Austrian musical culture. Many of the composers included in this collection are indeed unknown to pianists today while some of them are quite famous—Schubert, Franz Liszt (who was only 11 at the time of publication), and Carl Czerny. Absent from the collection is the most famous composer, Beethoven. There is another collection by Beethoven himself—the famous ‘Diabelli’ Variations, Op. 120, published in 1823 by Diabelli’s firm as Part 1, while Diabelli’s set appeared in 1824 as Part 2. Beethoven wrote his own fifty-minute cycle with thirty-three variations, concluding with a minuet. While my own dissertation deals extensively with the Beethoven set, and superficially with the Diabelli collection, it has become my great passion to embark upon a rather innovative new performance and research connection: The Albion College Diabelli Squared Project. The inception of my idea comes from the following observation:

As our society has undergone a great schism in terms of diversity and what it means to think and co-exist globally, I realized that variation form is EXACTLY the same kind of construct—the variations function at once to underscore the commonalities of the theme itself, but they also serve to explore, champion, and embrace, difference. Over the last several years I have commissioned variations from six out of seven continents, and with the newest seven variations, the same holds true. There are beautiful sub currents of ethnicity and culture at play here, as many of the composers identify across two geographical boundaries, and some self identify differently than one might expect. This has also been a compelling part of this musical project, as the musical variations are bringing together composers of all cultural backgrounds.

For now, I have twenty stellar variations in all that have challenged me as a pianist technically and musically in all regards. The music is rich in cultural associations and represents (for these composers) some of their heritage or inspirational elements from

their backgrounds. Before discussing each of these variations, as a parting thought, one would think that after over two hundred years, and fifty-three variations in part two including a coda, and thirty-three variations by Beethoven, that Diabelli's Waltz theme possibilities would have been exhausted. Not so. Not even close.

My latest addition to this project focused on the global voices of women composers exclusively. This allows me as the performing artist to champion the voices of women from around the world. In a sense, my project has created a new artwork consisting of a unified landscape of an all-female perspective of this theme.

These new composers have wrung out an infinite spectrum of new musical treatments of the thematic elements in Diabelli's Waltz. Each variation is completely unique and personal. Each variation is generically and musically diverse. They all owe their existence, though, to a single Waltz composed over two hundred years ago. It is astounding the musical ingenuity you will hear in this music. The imaginative solutions and expressive effects are completely astonishing. Keep in mind when listening to these remarkable pieces that there is a strong climate of temporal experimentation—some composers work in a hypermetric framework, displacing traditional metric patterns, or otherwise creating irregular physical accent patterns. Others explore complete expansions and contractions of the theme in a temporal field. However the aspects of time and meter are approached, the neuro-physiological response to each variation is strong on the part of performer and listener alike.

In a nod to Diabelli himself, I ordered the initial thirteen variations on the recording in alphabetical order just as in Part Two. When I play live concerts, I am of course free to order this music in any way I please, and if I do alter the order from the recording, it provides me and the audience with an entirely new work conceptually. Normally, I perform the variations in alphabetical order, and I have chosen to follow that ordering here for the eleven pieces by women composers.



**Dr. Talia Amar** is an Israeli composer and pianist, and teaches at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. She has submitted a stunning variation entitled, **Melancholic Variation**. In this work she juxtaposes registral textures and layers, and she incorporates all of the basic aspects of the original theme: upbeat, grace notes, half steps, sequences, fourths, and repeated gestures and sequences. It is a picture in sound in the sense that the music really transforms the music into a new realm.

Dr. Amar's website is: [taliaamar.com](http://taliaamar.com)



**Marcela Fiorillo** was born in Argentina. She graduated from the National Conservatory of Music in Buenos Aires. She is a Licentiate of the National University of Arts, Buenos Aires, Argentina. She studied piano under Hadee Loustanau and Celia Bronstein, chamber music with Ljerko Spiller and Tomas Tichauer, and composition with Jacobo Ficher.

In the USA, she studied with Alfonso Montecino and Menahem Pressler at Bloomington University. She was also influenced by P. Sancan, R. Kerer, E.Wild and Carlo Bruno. She was awarded scholarships by Fundación Cultural Coliseum, Fundación Leonor Hirsch de Von Buch, Camerata Bariloche, and Mozarteum Argentino.

Ms. Fiorillo's extensive international career as a composer and pianist spans a vast amount of repertoire and concert engagements.

**Latin American Variations on an Anton Diabelli Theme.** Ms. Fiorillo identifies culturally as Australian and Argentinian, and her five variations present five Latin American dances: En Modo Pentatónico, Huaino, Cueca, Vidalita, and Coral del Nuevo Día. The first variation, as the title suggests, is in the pentatonic mode, and explores all elements of Diabelli's theme (fourths, grace notes, pick ups, repetition, sequence, and half steps, as well as the turn figure.). Additionally, Ms. Fiorillo captures a rhythmically vital tempo, interrupting the faster tempo for the sequence portion of the variation. She also plays with register in interesting ways.

The second variation, entitled Huaino, is described as, “**huayño**, also spelled **Huaiño**, **Huayno**, or **Wayno**, couple dance of the **Quechua** and Aymara Indians and of many mestizos (people of Spanish-Indian descent) of **Peru**, **Bolivia**, and **Ecuador**. It antedates the Spanish **conquest** and was possibly an Inca funeral dance; today it is purely festive. A circle of dancing couples surrounds the musicians, whose instruments may be flutes, drums, harps, and guitars. The music is in  $2/4$  time. The melodies are rhythmic and pentatonic, *i.e.*, built on a scale of five notes, as D–E–G–A–B–D. Couples perform various figures but do not touch; individuals may carry bright woven bands or, among mestizos, handkerchiefs, or a couple may each grasp ends of a handkerchief.” (taken from [brittanica.com](http://brittanica.com)).

The third variation, Cueca, is defined as follows: “The national dance of Chile is called the Cueca. This dance has rich historical roots in both African and **Native American cultures**. Even though Chileans have been dancing the Cueca for years, it wasn’t declared the official dance of Chile until September 1979. The Cueca is a parody of the courtship of a chicken and rooster. The dancers wave handkerchiefs above their heads during the dance. These handkerchiefs can symbolize the feathers of the bird or the rooster’s comb. The choreography (movements) of the **Cueca** consists of circles, moving in semicircles back and forth (known as half moons), and turning towards the partner and then away.” (taken from [myguidechile.com](http://myguidechile.com)).

Variation Four, Vidalita, is described as, “The Vidalita is a musical style from Argentina and Uruguay sung by the gauchos with their guitars, its lyrics are about love and passion. It seems that it comes from the sentence “mi vida” (my life). Sometimes it is confused with the vidala. The vidalita is slower than the vidala and its verses are cheerful even if the music is sad. In its verses appear the word “vidalita” a lot to show that the singing is aimed to be this variety.” (taken from [tablaocordobes.es](http://tablaocordobes.es)).

Variation Five is a Pentatonic Chorale, which reprises much of the opening material in a quasi-Mussorgy-esque Kiev fashion. The texture accumulates as the end of the piece nears, resulting in a registral, temporal, and sonic mass of texture and volume. In all five variations, Ms. Fiorillo remains at once close to the theme but in a unique way of infusing Latin American textures, rhythms, modes, harmonies, and melodic fragments woven into the Diabelli fabric.

Ms. Fiorillo’s website is: <https://www.mfiorillopianist.net.au/>



**Yintong Liu** is a composer and teacher in the Composition Department of the Tianjin Conservatory of Music, China. She entered the Composition Department of the Central Conservatory of Music in 2007 to study composition with Prof. QIN Wenchen. After her graduation in 2012, she went to Germany and studied composition with Prof. Walter Zimmermann at Berlin University of the Arts, earning a Master of Arts with distinction. Since 2018, she has been pursuing a DMA degree with Prof. CHEN Yi, Prof. ZHOU Long, and Prof. Yotam Haber at the Composition Department, Conservatory of Music and Dance, University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Her compositions include chamber music, orchestral music, and others. In 2010, her chamber work *Full of Twists and Turns* was premiered in Hong Kong, which was commissioned by Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra. Her Duo of Cellos *Flowing Water* and the chamber piece *The Inspiration of Spirits* performed in Berlin in 2013. In the year of 2014, with cooperation of saxophonist Prof. Detlef Bensmann, LIU composed saxophone solo work *Crying Monkey Climbs the Tree*, which was performed in Berlin and Tianjin. Her chamber work *Static State* was premiered in Tianjin May Music Festival in 2015. Chinese orchestra work *Two Lions Playing Ball* was premiered by the Taipei Chinese Orchestra in Taiwan in 2016. She took part in 2016 Personnel Training Project for Promoting the Nationalization of the Art of Accordion held by the China National Arts Fund and composed an accordion work *Reflection*, which premiered in Tianjin May Music Festival in China, 2017. Her Duet of Violin and Piano *Memorial II* won first prize of the 2019 UMKC Chamber Music Composition Competition.

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/yintong>

**Yintong Liu's** variation entitled, **After Beethoven's Diabelli Variations** is a compilation of five intricate and demanding works each in their own right. In her introduction, Yintong writes, "In Beethoven's Diabelli Variations Op. 120, Beethoven did not regard the melody of the original theme as the main component of the variations. Instead, he accomplished his great masterpiece by extracting the tiny materials of the theme, such as sequences, bassline, melody fragments, repeated notes, grace notes, fourth or fifth leaps, etc., and reworking these details to compose a series of distinctive variations that are both unified and independent. Inspired by the coexistence of unification and individuality in Beethoven's piece, I intended to re-enact the Diabelli theme from the Oriental perspective. Therefore, I combined the above materials with Chinese folk melody or rhythm to create a

kind of Chinese artistic conception on the basis of the musical theme of the romantic period. In my mind, this variation is a bridge connecting not only the past and the present, but also Chinese and Western music.”

In Variation 1, Yintong does exactly what Beethoven did—instead of resorting to a traditional rhythmic diminution procedure, she switches time signatures from  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $\frac{6}{8}$ . In this first variation, which is perhaps the most closely aligned with the theme in terms of recognizability, she presents the upbeat, the fourth, the turn figure, the half step and whole step, as well as the sequence. A few metric shifts throughout disrupt the normal duple metric feel of  $\frac{6}{8}$ , and the fact that the phrases do not align in a symmetrical fashion makes this variation an intense rhythmic experience coupled with lovely singing lines. Bathed in two voice counterpoint much of the time, the variation sets the listener off on a wonderful journey of expectation and provocative images in sound.

Variation 2 is a slower variation, and like Beethoven, resumes triple meter. Again, Liu focuses at first on the half step, the upbeat, the turn figure, as well as references to the fourth. What is of course most striking is the harmonic palette full of chromaticism, rhythmic diversity, and a dense chorale-style texture for the A section. Intervallically, Yintong expands the intervals heard in the theme, to include dissonant sevenths, diminished intervals, and she also uses traditional planed harmonies to create an expressive genre of intense solemnity in the outer sections. The middle section, however, escapes that sonic world by breaking forth into a melody plus accompaniment texture, but now in rhythmic septuplets at times, and at times with thirty-second notes. The accompanying dyads are built on dissonant intervals like 7ths, tritones, and thirds. Planing of harmonies recalls the sequence notion from the theme itself, but it is so transformed here that it is nearly unrecognizable. The notion of repetition also comes to play here with the repeated rhythmic gestures, which are all based on exotic transformations of the turn figure, the fourth, the half and whole step, the grace note, and the sequence. The passagework runs the gamut of the keyboard finally cascading into a return of the A' section. In an almost Charles-Ives like texture, one hears chorales in four parts but with so much saturated harmonic and chromatic dissonance that the effect is a distorted calm, and yet somehow plaintive. This captivating variation gives rise to a fast middle variation.

Variation 3 is a study in rhythmic temporal virtuosity, among other things. It is a *perpetuum mobile* etude-like work, which uses quartal harmonies, a vast range of the keyboard, rapidly changing meters leaving an unstable and non-symmetric imprint upon its sound concept. It also studies the idea of combinations of various intervallic patterns from the theme in a context that is repeated but never in the exact same way. A percussive variation, this high-energy piece functions in many ways like the Bartok sonata third movement. Planing is again utilized to create harmonic motion, sequences are employed, as is repetition. This vibrant variation is a brilliant style study in rhythmic colors. Not unlike the hocket texture of Beethoven's second variation or even variation 5 or 15, this variation is visceral and bold.

Variation 4, by contrast, is marked mysteriously. While this variation is in  $\frac{4}{4}$ , it is hard for the listener to perceive given the offbeat events, the enormous diversity of rhythmic values,

and the changing meters. Combined with a wash of pedal, the work becomes a pseudo-impressionistic dreamscape. Structurally, the work organically functions as a kind of through composed nocturne. It explores a huge registral space, and also explores numerous subdivisions of the beat. Low trills and tremolo figures also contribute to the murky and foggy quality of the music. Each gesture of uneven rhythmic diminutions is almost an essay on the grace note—an expository/developmental exercise in elongating figuration and expanding time. These passages are juxtaposed with a few interspersed measures of more standard rhythmic gestures, which serve to most likely orient the listener and performer. The entire variation functions in a Doppler kind of effect—a softer beginning with an accumulation of texture and intensity toward the middle, and then dying off at the end again. The work ends with half steps, whole steps, and a massive registral dispersion between the hands.

The fifth and final variation is labeled scherzando. This music uses the turn figure, grace note, the fourth, and the idea of repetition of rhythmic gestures to shape this final composition. A brutal virtuosic challenge, the rhythmic drama of this variation is astounding. Yet the offbeat accents, the syncopated rests, the extreme registral space, and the chromaticism make it more playful than the third variation. The planing technique is again utilized here, where the hands play with intervallic mixtures of 6ths and 7ths, as well as fifths, tritones, and fourths. A non-stop rhythmic etude, this variation verticalizes all the thematic elements in a way, and metamorphoses the process with a fast tempo and parallelism between the hands. Once this variation is heard, it is so far removed from the theme and yet so many elemental processes from the theme are found that it is a truly natural outgrowth of the first variation.



**Dr. Nahla Mattar** is an Egyptian composer, teacher, and musicologist, having served as the Director of the Umm Kulthum Museum, Ministry of Culture in Egypt (2011-2014), and currently, as an associate professor at Helwan University, Cairo, and founder of the Composer Music Atelier in Cairo. I earned my Doctorate of Musical Arts in Composition from Arizona State University in the Spring of 2005.

Among other achievements and awards, I won the second prize in the International Women Composers Competition, Unna Library, Germany for my violoncello, bass clarinet and piano piece entitled *Three*. I was commissioned by the Xenia Contemporary Ensemble to compose a piece celebrating the Nile River, and the resulting work, *A River Inside us Running* for string



quartet, premiered at the Egyptian Museum in Turin in November 2012. In November 2013, I enjoyed a five week residency in Berlin through the DAAD arts program.

In November 2017, I received a World Premiere of my 2nd string quartet, *Ode to Manial*, dedicated to the Manial Palace and Museum, a former Alawiyya dynasty era palace on Rhoda Island on the Nile.

My compositional style might seem shocking at first, but it is always authentic. I blend at least two major cultures in my work: Western & Eastern. I was brought up in Muscat, Oman, and currently live near Cairo, Egypt. My compositions are concerned with the self and the soul, and my music is concise and well constructed.

Dr. Mattar's Variation is entitled Death **Waltzing: Variations on Diabelli's Theme**. In this fantastic variation, Dr. Mattar blends very traditional thematic segments of the theme with rhythmically, harmonically, and metrically vibrant interruptions in the first section. Her second section is even more intense as the interruptions involve playing inside the piano on the strings. Those ghostly fragments are unsettled and disrupted by faster tempo splices of them in various keys and modes, with shifting metric patterns. At this point in time the composition remains unfinished but the eerie effects make this variation absolutely fun to perform and hear.



**Elena Papari** hails from Athens where she studied guitar and composition. She is the Director of the Agia Paraskevi Municipal Conservatory. Her variation is based on an imitative almost invention-like texture and structure. Inside of this complicated voicing material, lies many of the variation's thematic and motivic elements, albeit exploited and expanded: the upbeat, seconds, turn figures, fourths and fifths, as well as registral contrasts and sequences. Beyond that, a singing line brings unity and lyricism to this complex variation.

**Elena Papari's website is: [elenapapari.com](http://elenapapari.com)**





**Norma Erazo Pineda** was born in Honduras and is a pianist, composer, and music educator. She attended the University of Montreal in Canada, and has performed around Central and South America, as well as North America. Her website is forthcoming.

Her variation contains several Latin American folk references, along with the intense exploration of the half step, grace note, metric shifting, fourths, turn figure, and repeated note ideas from Diabelli's original theme. Of course, the music is cast in a rhythmically vibrant framework, which explores numerous rhythmic divisions as well as harmonic dissonance. Set in  $\frac{3}{8}$  meter, the work is dance like and technically demanding.



**Peggy Polias** is a composer and music typesetter based in Sydney. Polias prepares scores, instrumental parts and other print music materials for some of Australia's leading composers. In 2010 she graduated with a Master of Music (Composition), supervised by Professor Anne Boyd at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Polias has had works performed and workshopped by Kammerklang, Ku-Ring-Gai Philharmonic Orchestra, Halcyon, Chronology Arts, and at the Australian Youth Orchestra National Music Camp and Canberra International Music Festival. She is an Associate Represented Artist with the Australian Music Centre.

In 2015 recordings of her works *Electro Fractal Gamelan* (2011) and *Phlggiston* (2014) were released on the digital album BETA by Kammerklang. 2015 has also seen the commencement of a collaboration with composer Lisa Cheney on the project Making Waves, an online listening project focusing on early-career Australian composers. Polias explores the influences of Javanese Gamelan, minimalism, feminism, fractals, and

handicrafts in her music, and takes a keen interest in the possibilities for music in the online space.

**Peggy Polias'** website is: [peggypolias.com](http://peggypolias.com)

**Peggy Polias'** variation entitled, *Fragmentation on a theme by Diabelli* certainly ascribes to her compositional interest in fractals. A fractal is a never-ending pattern. This notion of repetition of course has its origins with Diabelli's own theme. Set in a binary form like the theme, Polias remarkably subjects Diabelli's waltz to a literal fragmentation. The first three notes (D-C-B) come exactly as they do in the theme, but are displaced in different registers. This dissection of the theme continues, as the C major triad is displaced in the left hand and combined with the high C in the right. Marked *pianissimo*, in 5/8 meter (duple), Polias extracts the aura of the notes and re-particularizes them into a meditative, minimalistic soundscape. In almost a serialistic method, Polias slowly adds notes from Diabelli's theme into the atmosphere, gradually accumulating texture, register, dynamics, and rate of change (rhythm) to create a climactic point leading toward the end of the first part. Similar to a Doppler effect, one hears the music grow closer and then move away, like a sound wave. The second part has the same phenomenon, but marked *poco animato*, and with faster note values. The energy of this section is more intense, as are the clashes between the hand crossings, the 5:6 and 4:6 rhythmic ratios, and the increase in registral space. Again, all is done in a never ending pattern, with a minimalistic flavor. It should also be noted that the division of the meter switches at the halfway point: the opening is cast in a 2+3 while the second half reverses this and emphasizes 3+2. Nothing is left to chance in this music. The variation ends as it begins, but in the opposite registral space (low register as opposed to higher register). Polias' music is calming, reflective, and absolutely uniquely incredible to hear and perform.



**Dr. Angela Slater** composed a Variation entitled, **Looking to the Sky**. In the introduction to her piece, she writes, "This piece takes the original theme from Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* as the basis for new material. Although resulting in a very different soundworld, similarities in approach can be seen with the material being reimagined, through allusions to motivic figures and sequences and the prominence of 4th and 5ths. Combined these create a harmonic language that is distinct from the original, while still recalling the essence of the ideas. The piece lives generally in a high tessitura as though reaching upwards to the sky. The fast cascading material in the first three sections creates a sense of fluid movement rising and falling but ultimately looking upwards. The final expansive section takes the last phrase from the original and augments the rhythmic material and swaps the left and right hand parts. The coda slowly rises, finally reaching the sky and its highest registral point.

Angela's website is: [angelaslatercomposer.co.uk](http://angelaslatercomposer.co.uk)



**Rita Ueda** is a composer, sound designer, and music teacher in Vancouver, Canada. Her recent works include *forty years of snowfall will not heal an ancient forest* for the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, *Escape from the Evil Alien Surfblasters* for 8 hand piano ensemble, and *Still Shaking from the Latte*, a piano solo for Misuzu Kitazumi-Burns, a member of the LA Piano Unit.

Her *as the snowflakes return to the sky* for string orchestra was awarded 2nd prize in the 2010/11 International Gustav Mahler Composition Competition, and it will be performed next season by the Vienna Radio Symphony and the Vienna Chamber Orchestra.

Rita was born in Hakodate, Japan, to a family of musicians, poets, dancers and engineers. She moved to Vancouver, Canada with her family in 1971. Rita studied composition and sound design at Simon Fraser University and the California Institute of the Arts. Her teachers include Rudolf Komoros, Rodney Sharman, Wadada Leo Smith, Morton Subotnick and Stephen L. Mosko.

Ms. Ueda's variation entitled, **The Dance Mother Hoped I Would Never Have to Learn: A Diabelli Variation for piano** presents the following program notes:

"My mom always said she wanted me to become a liberated modern woman. I was to be educated, capable, and fulfilled with both career and family. Life somehow did not work out as planned. Like many women today, I am extremely busy trying to meet the multiple expectations of 21st century life as a composer, piano teacher, daughter, housekeeper, chauffeur, cook, laundry lady, etc. The list is never ending. The dance of life is as jam-packed and exhausting as ever. We are still expected to function 24/7 at home and work with a beautiful smile, perfect makeup and hair, in a size 2 dress. I'm desperate for a vacation!"

There are basic, aleatoric events, which move seamlessly from one to the next—An Old Music Box Dancer in Mother's Drawer where the composer fragments out elements of the theme, which are played at random by the performer, then the next event is that the Dancer Escapes from the Box. There are more fragments, with dyads and octaves and chords. She Tries Really Hard . . . but . . . the fragments continue, until clusters at the bottom of the register of the piano

are played gradually faster and louder, followed by a cadenza (Dancing, juggling, Multitasking) of palm clusters and then the palm clusters become more agitated while the performer reads from their daily planner, and this all accelerates and crescendos until the theme intervenes for 8 bars in a soft register with the clusters still ringing.

This performance art piece captures the Diabelli theme in numerous ways, as well as the idea of varied repetition. It is an ingenious work that challenges the performer in numerous ways technically and musically.

**Ms. Ueda's website is: [soundofdragon.com](http://soundofdragon.com)**



**Dr. Karen Walwyn** joined the Howard faculty in 2004. A celebrated native of Queens, NY, she is an accomplished concert pianist, composer and recording artist for Albany Records. When invited by the Center for Black Music Research of Chicago to perform and record the premier recording of the Florence Price Concerto for Piano, noted music critic Bob McQuiston exclaimed that “Walwyn provides a magnificent account of the concerto displaying her considerable technical skills.”

Known for her recordings of two volumes of music by American composers entitled *Dark Fires*, Ms. Walwyn performed select works from her CDs at her New York debut, reprising her performance for on air recordings with National Public Radio, and WFMT Chicago just to mention a few. Making her compositional debut recently at the Kennedy Center, Ms. Walwyn received a tremendous standing ovation for her work for solo piano entitled *Reflections on 9/11*. Robert Schulslaper of *Fanfare Magazine* evoked thoughtful emotion when he reflected upon Ms. Walwyn's performance. “Imaginatively conceived and executed, it both disturbingly transposes the catastrophe into appropriately cataclysmic sound and artistically suggests the aftermath's lingering sense of numbing devastation.”

Dr. Walwyn was awarded a Mellon Faculty Fellowship for the 2011/2012 academic year from the John Hope Franklin Institute at Duke University, where she completed her debut

work (Choral/Solo Piano/African Percussion) entitled *Of Dance and Struggle: A Musical Tribute to the Life of Nelson Mandela*.

Ms. Walwyn remains busy with concerts of new works, works from the standard literature as well as her own works, master classes, and lecture recitals both domestically and internationally. Some recent concerts include appearances in Johannesburg, Barcelona, Tenerife (Canary Islands), Salzburg, London, and locally. Most recently, Dr. Walwyn has taken a position at the Berklee School of Music in Boston, Massachusetts.

Dr. Walwyn's website is: [www.karenwalwyn.com](http://www.karenwalwyn.com).

**Karen Walwyn's Variation on a Theme by Anton Diabelli Commissioned by Lia Jensen-Abbott** is nothing short of a tour de force technically and musically. At the heart of this variation, is a retention of Diabelli's 3/4 meter. But Dr. Walwyn dissects that quarter note pulse into nearly constant sextuplet sixteenth notes (a rhythmic repetitive figure). Walwyn also exploits the half step in the upbeat from Diabelli's theme exponentially, as well as the notion of registral space. Diabelli's theme spans at a certain point five octaves. Walwyn's variation traverses the space of the entire keyboard at a lightning rate of speed. Half steps abound in nearly every beat, but so does an imaginative intervallic palette that expands and contracts as the through-composed variation moves forward in time. The innocent minor second gets transformed into expansive leaps of several octaves, and the fourth also expands and contracts into fifths, tenths, etc. In fact, all intervals succumb to Walwyn's creative energy generating a perpetuum mobile that leaves the pianist (and audience) on the edge of their seats.



**Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph.** Born in Pretoria, South Africa, **Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph** was a young virtuoso pianist who studied with Goldie Zaidel, Philip Levy, Adolph Hallis, and later with John Lill at the Royal College of Music in London. Her B.Mus and M.Mus degrees were both awarded with distinction and in 1979, under Prof Stefans Grové, she became the first woman in South Africa to obtain a Doctorate in Music Composition (1979). She later received an honorary Doctorate in Education (2008). She has also been awarded the following Piano Performer's Licentiates, all with distinction: LTCL (1969); LRSM (1969); FTCL (1970); UPLM (1971).

In 1974 she studied composition under the legendary composer György Ligeti in Hamburg, Germany. On her return to South Africa in 1975, she was appointed as Lecturer at the Wits School of Music and held the position of Professor of Theory and Composition from 2001 till her retirement in 2014. She is presently Honorary Research Professor and Professor Emeritus in the Wits School of Arts. She achieved the highest evaluations for her lecturing in the Music Division at Wits.

She has frequently been invited to be guest composer and lecturer at festivals in Europe and the USA, specializing in presentations on women's music as well as indigenous African music and its influence on intercultural music by South African composers. In April 1995 she was Guest Composer at a festival in OHIO, USA where many of her works were performed to high acclaim, including *Suite Afrique* for viola and piano, with the composer at the piano.

Zaidel-Rudolph has also made a tremendous contribution to Jewish music in Johannesburg as pianist, musical director, composer and arranger for the hugely successful show *Celebration*, which was premiered in Johannesburg in (1994). Subsequently, since 2000, *Celebration* has been performed to great acclaim in the USA, Canada, London and Australia.

Zaidel-Rudolph has served as an adjudicator for many composition competitions and piano festivals. She presently serves as a Director on the Boards of SAMRO (South African Music Rights Organisation) and The SAMRO Foundation. In 2012, she was awarded an NRF Research Grant in the Music Division at Wits University for 6 years for creative and conventional research. She acquired the title of Professor Emeritus at Wits University in 2014.

Jeanne is married to Prof Michael Rudolph and they have five daughters and fifteen grandchildren.

**Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph's** website is: [www.jeannezaidel-rudolph.com](http://www.jeannezaidel-rudolph.com)

In her provocative variation entitled, **Di-Afro-belli for Piano**, South African composer **Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph** cleverly infuses traditional African rhythmic patterns into a recognizable yet absolutely distinct variation of Diabelli's waltz. In an ABA' Coda form, Zaidel-Rudolph retains the descending fourth and grace note motives, but in a C# Phrygian harmonic setting. This idea of the Phrygian mode comes directly from the distinct half step presented in Diabelli's Waltz originally. The arpeggiated triplet accompaniment represents the repeated concept. Rapid shifts of meter between  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{4}{4}$ , and  $\frac{5}{4}$  in this opening section are another way that Zaidel-Rudolph elaborates and intensifies the original theme.

Perhaps the most interesting musical features of this remarkable music occur in the middle section. In  $\frac{12}{8}$  meter, Zaidel-Rudolph uses typical generic African rhythms (2+3+2+2+3) as a way of representing her national heritage. Furthermore, she captures some of

Diabelli's name as a cipher (DABE) in her melodic content. The descent from D down to A melodically is of course the opening fourth. And the use of D as a half step to the opening C# is also a composing out of this important motivic interval as well. Shifting meters (5/8, 9/8 etc.) also underscore this music with a vibrant and exciting rhythmic energy. At one point the meter moves to 13/8 (3+3+3+2+2) as the middle section moves back to the return of A'. When the theme returns in A', it is doubled in octaves. The coda juxtaposes D and Eb (a half step) in melody and accompaniment and also within chords as well. Zaidel-Rudolph has given us an extraordinary cultural experience with this variation, one that is technically and musically demanding for the pianist, but also one that celebrates diversity on multiple levels.

**Dr. Lia Jensen-Abbott** is Professor of Music and Director of the Prentiss M. Brown Honors Program at Albion College. Awarded the Arthur Andersen New Faculty of the Year award in 2016 from Albion College, Lia is well known for her interdisciplinary lecture recitals based on semiotic analysis, Fanny Hensel, Florence Price, Beethoven and Anton Diabelli, and the connections between athletics and music. Her solo and collaborative performances with Dr. Karen Kness have taken her around the United States, Europe, and Central America. In 2012 she performed at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in New York City.

As a clinician and adjudicator, Lia has been invited to judge the MTNA National Finals in San Antonio and Chicago, as well as a judge for the WPTA International Piano Competition, in addition to many regional, state, and local competitions. Her scholarly lecture recitals have been presented at MTNA National Conferences, a CMS International Conference, the International Affiliation of Women in Music 2022 Conference, and three WPTA Conferences. Recently, Lia has recorded a three-volume CD set entitled **The Albion College Diabelli Squared Project**, which presents Beethoven's Op. 120, the original Fifty Variations written for Anton Diabelli's philanthropic project, and thirteen newly commissioned variations on the same Waltz theme. Lia has recorded video teaching modules and live webinars for the Frances Clark Center. For the October/November 2022 issue of the American Music Teacher, Lia was invited to write a pedagogical submission about teaching advanced pedaling.

An active member of the Music Teachers National Association, Lia is a Past President of the Michigan MTA where she received the Distinguished Service Award in 2022. She is a member of the European Piano Teachers Association and the World Piano Teachers Association, and President of the WPTA Michigan Chapter. Lia earned degrees from The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (BM, DMA), Indiana University (Performer Diploma), and The Pennsylvania State University (MM, MA). Her teachers have included Timothy Shafer, Edmund Battersby, Jeremy Denk, and Mark Clinton.

She is a co-founder of the Albion College International Piano Festival and Competition and lives in Albion, Michigan with her husband, pianist Dr. David Abbott, their son Charlie, and two dogs. In her spare time, Lia competes in triathlons, plays golf, and reads.





