ABSTRACT

DISSE R TATION: An Analysis of Joan Tower’s Solo Keyboard Works

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The purpose of this paper was to analyze and discuss Joan Tower’s solo keyboard compositions through 2007. This includes five piano pieces—Circles, Fantasia, Red Garnet Waltz, No Longer Very Clear, Big Steps—and an organ piece, Ascent. Tower’s compositional style can be divided into two periods. In the first period, where serial music predominates, I discussed twelve-tone row forms and contemporary keyboard techniques as found in two works, Circles and Fantasia. In her second period, I discussed these characteristics: one movement structures, her organic approach to composition, and her use of motivic development. Further, I included a discussion of form, scales, harmony, rhythm, and some performance issues.