



Jazz-Concerto

for Piano and small Jazz orchestra
by Ludwig van Zele

Pianist and researcher Henk Mak van Dijk found a remarkable review in the *Indische Courant* of 18 January 1938, of a concert at the Concordia society of Malang, Indonesia, whereby pianist Lud (Ludwig) van Zele (1913-1976) played his own jazz composition: a three-part jazz concert for piano solo and small jazz orchestra. After some research, Henk Mak van Dijk was able to find the manuscript, complete with orchestral parts, in the attic of Van Zele's cousin Mark Boon in 2016.

Pianist/composer Ludwig [Lud] van Zele, originating from Java, was inspired by the jazz in the colony that had come from America and Europe in the early 1920s. As a classical pianist educated at the Conservatory of Nice, there were little opportunities for him when he returned to the town of Malang on East Java. This is why he chose the then respectable profession of cinema musician and began providing music for the latest Hollywood films from America.

It became his inspiration for the completely unique jazz concert that he started in 1932 and finished in 1937 to perform in Malang. Eighty years after the first and – up to then – only performance of Van Zele's Jazz Concerto in 1938 in Malang, the piece was performed by Henk Mak van Dijk with the Galloway Big Band at the 59th Tong Tong Fair in 2017. First played in the arrangement for two pianos, also written by the composer, by Henk Mak van Dijk and Gustavo Corrales Romero in 2018.

The first part of the manuscript shows many virtuoso passages, big chords and a swing bass; the slow part a sultry bluesy atmosphere in the style of a Hollywood movie song. The final part is a spicy ragtime, which seems to say: Don't worry, be happy! The concert seems to be written in the style of music of the American composer George Gershwin. In *Den Haag Centraal* the piece was referred to as 'the Indische Rhapsody in Blue'.

[Article by Henk Mak van Dijk about the Jazz Concerto](#) (in Dutch).

Images:

(Left) Ludwig van Zele, Soerabaja, approximately 1935, from the collection of Mark Boon
(Right) Scan of the cover page of the Jazz Concerto