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**Against All Odds**  
**The Life and Music of Michel Petrucciani**

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of

Master of Philosophy

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## Abstract

Michel Petrucciani, jazz pianist and composer, was a major figure in the history of French jazz who achieved much critical and popular success in his short life span. In 1999 when he died at the age of 36, he was enough of a hero in his own country to warrant inclusion alongside Duke Ellington and Miles Davis in a series of postage stamps celebrating great jazz artists. He was one of only a handful of European jazz musicians to achieve success in the U.S.

This thesis examines Petrucciani's life and music with particular emphasis placed on the evolution of his playing and composing styles through close analysis of selected piano solos and a range of compositions representing different periods of his career. An overview of his musical and personal life, as he battled with *osteogenesis imperfecta*, a rare bone disease that prevents growth to adult size, is also included, along with a study of the influence of pianist Bill Evans on Petrucciani's playing.

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## Appendices

Enclosed compact discs:

### **Music**

CD1 accompanies chapter 3 - influence of Bill Evans

CD2 accompanies Part 2 - compositions

CD3 accompanies Part 3 – solos

### **Text**

1. Interview with drummer Eliot Zigmund
2. Interview with drummer Aldo Romano
3. Interview with artist Edouard Detmer
4. Interview with Michel Petrucciani by Frederic Goaty. Published in Jazz Magazine 1997 (11 parts). Translated into English by Phil Broadhurst.

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