

LESSON 22

Date: _____

Tone Row

A tone row is used in a compositional procedure known as twelve-tone serialism. The tone row establishes a particular sequence of the twelve notes of the chromatic scale and is strictly adhered to as a basis for a composition. In this compositional style, all 12 chromatic notes are given more or less equal importance, and the music avoids being in a key.

PRACTICE

1. Select a specific order of all 12 chromatic notes. Chromatic pitches may be in any octave. Ensure that you can comfortably play this tone row on your instrument.

Tone Row

2. Compose a rhythmic structure for your tone row. Write a four bar rhythm, in the time signature(s) of your choice, that make(s) use of exactly 12 note heads.



3. Combine your tone row and your rhythm to form a four bar atonal melody.

Tone Row Composition

The methods used to compose music are limitless. In this lesson, you will explore the sonic results of predetermined methods of generating sound in time. The parameters that will be introduced are not limits to your creativity, but rather the very nature of a creative challenge.

Consider the following well-known sentence:

A quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

What are the parameters that were in place to generate this sentence?

Knowing the parameter challenges us to invent new sentences using the same parameters. The possibilities are endless.

*Nymphs blitz quick vex dwarf jog.
Amazingly few discotheques provide jukeboxes.
Monsieur Jack, vous dactylographiez bien mieux que votre ami Wolf.*

COMPOSITION TASK: PART 2

Create an “Interval Tone Row” composition.

1. Using the following melodic intervals: PU, -2, +2, -3, +3, P4, x4, P5, -6, +6, -7, +7, and P8, arrange the intervals in the order of your choice. Use each interval only once. Choose a starting note and then create your “Interval Tone Row” that is built by following the predetermined order of intervals you have established. Each successive note will form a different interval, ascending or descending, until you have used each interval once. Choose ascending or descending intervals based on range, theoretical practicality, and preference. Your finished tone row will have exactly 14 pitches.
2. Add a time signature and rhythm to your “Interval Tone Row” to create an atonal melody.
3. Your melody must be four bars in length.
4. You may be required to perform your composition on your instrument. Be sure to compose within the playable range of your instrument.
5. Use of expression markings (tempo, dynamics, and articulation) must all be incorporated in your composition.
6. Using appropriate musical notation software, submit a print copy of Part 1 and Part 2 of this assignment.

Creative Parameters

In addition to the instructions above, your composition must conform to the following parameters. Be prepared to edit/revise your work as you rise to the challenge that these parameters impose on your composition.

- The use of double/triple sharps and flats is not permitted. Avoid the use of single accidentals as much as possible.
- Do not use a key signature.
- Observe the natural beat structure of your chosen time signature. This will add musical continuity and flow to your composition.

