Music Stage Four
Year 8
assessment notification

This is your official notification of your pending composition and performance assessment. Please prepare this assessment task in accordance with the instructions attached to this document.

DUE DATE: Monday 5th June 2014

TOPIC: Classical Music in the 20th Century

ASSESSMENT TASK: Serialism Composition

CLASS: YEAR 8

TEACHER: Mrs Richardson

SYLLABUS OUTCOMES: Composition & Performance

ASSIGNMENT WEIGHTING: 15%
Composition Task

PART ONE: Serial Music

Serial music is all about patterns and counting, and abolishing the idea that some notes are more important than others (tonality). Serial Music isn’t written based on what it sounds like, but it is the product of a series of mathematical equations.

Serial Composition Rules:
1. A note may not be played a second time, until all the notes of the ‘tone row’ have been played in the piece of music.
2. Playing your tone row may be started from any note in your row, as long as you finish playing the whole row before moving on to your next musical ‘idea.’
3. Your original (primary) tone row may be played backwards (retrograde).
4. Your original (primary) tone row may be played upside-down (inversion) – i.e., if the second note played is 2 semitones higher than the first, the inverted version is 2 semitones lower than the first.
5. Your original (primary) tone row may be played backwards and upside-down (retrograde inversion)!

For Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MY PRIMARY TONE ROW</th>
<th>C#</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D#</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>G#</th>
<th>F#</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RETROGRADE (backwards!)</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>G#</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>D#</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVERSION (Upside-down)</td>
<td>C#</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D#</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A#</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>G#</td>
<td>A#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETROGRADE INVERSION</td>
<td>A#</td>
<td>G#</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A#</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D#</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Serialist Composers then fill in what is called a ‘Twelve Tone Matrix’ that acts as a reference point for their composition, for when they’re wondering what should come next in their composition. You can have a play with writing up a 12-tone Matrix on the internet:
http://composertools.com/Tools/matrix/MatrixCalc.html
step 1.
Using all 12 notes of the scale, decide on an order for them to go, and then enter them into the grid below. This is called your ‘Tone Row’. Cross off these twelve note names as you enter them in the grid below:

✓ = C C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B

My tone row:

step 2.
To help you learning how to play your piece, draw an arrow from each of your notes in your tone row, to the notes on the piano, and even write the notes on the treble stave below to refresh your memory.

My tone row:

\[ \text{\image{piano.png}} \]
**Step 3.**
On the manuscript provided, using whatever note values you choose (as long as they fit within your time signature) arrange the notes of your tone row in order, for a minimum of eight bars. Depending on the length of notes you choose to fill your bars with, you may need to cycle through your tone row. You can either repeat the tone row as is, or you could even try a ‘retrograde’ (backwards) version of your tone row.

**Step 4.**
Learn to play your composition on the piano.

**PART TWO: Prepared Piano**

Your teacher will suggest options for your ‘prepared piano’ element of this composition and performance task. From these, you may select one or more variations to prepare your piano with for your performance. Make some notes below about how you plan to ‘prepare’ your piano for the performance of your Serialist composition.

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

**Performance Task**

Share your composition with a performance (on a ‘prepared piano’) with the class. Your traditionally notated composition must be handed in for marking when you perform your piece.