

MU 209 Assignment 3: Composing with scales

For our next class (which is Weds), you will write two short pieces. They can be quite short: even just 2-3 phrases, so long as there is a sense of beginning, middle, and end.

One piece will use the standard pentatonic scale. The other will use the octatonic scale.

The *mode* of each scale is up to you, as is the *transposition*. For each piece, stick to a single transposition: do not modulate.

The pitches of each piece should lie entirely within your chosen scale; don't use any decorative or "chromatic" notes outside the scale. The term for this is *diatonic*. This may seem confusing since "diatonic" also refers to a specific scale, but the meaning is usually clear in context.

One piece (either the pentatonic or the octatonic one, your choice) will be a monophonic piece for you to play on your own instrument in class. If you play a proper melody instrument (or sing), write for that. If your only fluency is on piano or guitar, then write a single-line piece for that instrument: you can use octave doublings, but no harmonization.

The other piece will be for piano. This piece can be as polyphonic as you like, but all notes (melody, counterpoint, harmony) will be within the chosen scale.

Both pieces should be fully notated in as much detail as you can manage: not just pitch and rhythm but tempo, dynamics, articulation, and any other expression you conceive of. Try not to be "notist"—think about gesture, line, expression. You may notate by hand or by computer, but in either case your notation must be clear and correct. If you use software notation, come to class with a **printed copy** of your scores. No exceptions!