

Student composing project B1: Pentatonic composition

Background

A pentatonic composition is only restricted by the pitches that may be used. Pentatonic scales can allow a composer greater freedom to experiment with shapes and textures as there is a certainty that notes will sound consonant.

Your task

Create a composition using a major or minor pentatonic scale. Use the Tracker to help you construct and record your composition, always being careful to name your files clearly. Make use of any material you created in Student learning pathway B and refer to any other information pages in Compass that might help you to develop your creative ideas.

Option I

- Using only the major or minor pentatonic scale of C, create a composition with an evolving melody.
- Add an ostinato accompaniment.
- Begin with a very thin texture that gradually evolves into a changing denser texture, from which you may move to a loud or quiet conclusion.
- Include at least one tuned percussion instrument and try to pass the ostinato accompaniment between instruments.
- Write notes about how the texture evolves.

Option II

- Create two separate themes. For the first, use the major or minor pentatonic scale of C. For the second, use the major or minor pentatonic scale based on any other note.
- Write at least two variants of each theme, with accompaniment, exploring the use of melodic contour.
- Attempt to retrograde and invert each theme.
- Now construct your composition by alternating between the themes, changing the accompanying texture as much as you can.
- Write a clear description of the structure you have created and indicate how each theme has been changed.

Extension

- Concentrate on your accompanying textures as much as your main themes, especially your use of dynamics and articulation.
- Apply an arch shape to each section of your composition.
- Make a clear visual diagram of the structure of your composition.