

***FUNKI - Q.U.T* – EXPLORING CHROMATICISM THROUGH COMPOSITION**

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ABSTRACT

Composers have expressed and explored their musical territory by reusing and reshaping musical materials within a tonal context. This paper discusses music composition with interesting manipulations of the melody and harmony, as embodied in the “Chromatic scale” system. By using the chromatic scale system, the *FUNKI Q.U.T* composition is to be explored. The outcome of this exploratory composition gave a new perspective on the art of composing. The melodic construction is made simple to show how chromatic approaches is applied without creating too much dissonant with other melodic stream played by the other instruments. In conclusion, the potential of creating new musical work with chromaticism by present composers has not been delved into seriously in the past decades.

Keywords: Composer, tonal context, music composition, chromatic scale.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this research is to explore chromaticism through music composition and to achieve better creative results. In order to fully understand and achieve these creative needs, author have engaged in a wide literature reviews from different authors and composers on this particular subject. Composers have expressed and explore their musical territory by reusing and reshaping musical materials within a tonal context. This paper discusses music composition with interesting manipulations of the melody and harmony, as embodied in the ‘Chromatic scale’ system.

Author approached the *FUNKI Q.U.T* composition by exploring and using the chromatic scale system. This scale has limited transposition because it is constructed from repeating intervals or set of intervals that is equally divided throughout the

octave and it does not produce a system of modality, meaning the tonality does not change from one scale degree to another.



Figure 1 Chromatic scale

Chromatic scales are built on a set of intervals that are semi-tone apart (Figure 1). The approach to this composition is to maintain a set of chord progressions but create a melodic line that lie largely outside the associated chord scales. By creating a melody derived from a given chord scale, it is possible to establish a particular sound, and any one note that is out of the scale will sound dissonant. However, when playing a melody that lies mostly outside the scale, the same notes may fit in much more logically. This simply means, non-scale tones used melodically can often sound consonant. The *FUNKIQ.U.T* composition contains very angular melodic lines, meaning they consist of large or unusual intervals and change direction often rather than being primarily stepwise and scale like. This approach to making a composition often seems to establish a sound in which wrong notes sound perfectly natural. Melodic stream that contain a lot of half-steps often sound consonant even though they consist of many wrong notes. For example, a Gb Lydian scale is not normally an appropriate choice to play over a F Major7 chord because of the dissonance it creates but these same dissonances. However, if used melodically over the chord, creates a sound that is not all that dissonant and has a harmonic richness that is very modern sounding.

Introduction to Chromatic Elements

According to Dyson and Drabkin (2006) that “In melodic and harmonic analysis the term ‘chromatic’ is generally applied to notes marked with accidentals foreign to the scale of the key in which the passage is written.” Music theorists such as Pertitu (2007), Baker, J. (1993), Boatwright, H. (1994) and Forte, A. (1980) would use this as a point of departure for an extended discussion on the importance of chromaticism in relation to musical organization—including both vertical (harmonic) and horizontal (melodic) structure. However, this article would not look at these more extended ideas but take the *New Grove* definition at face value. In this study, a note will be operationally considered ‘chromatic’ if its pitch fails to conform to the prevailing key signature.

According to Mitchell (1962), there are two ways in which chromatic elements appear in diatonic textures, by Interpolation Figure 2 and by Replacement Figure 3. Interpolation refers to the moment when chromatic half step is introduced

in between diatonic notes. Replacement occurs when a chromatic variant is substitute with a diatonic element.

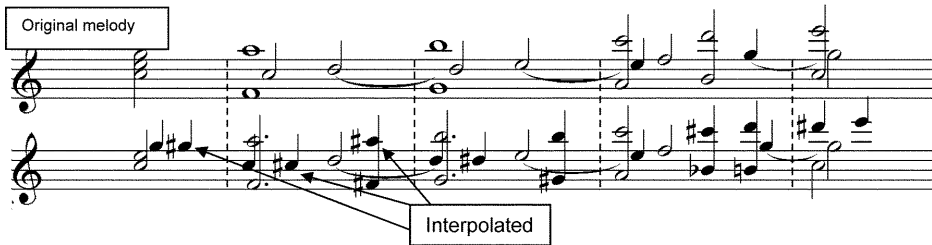


Figure 2 Interpolation (Mitchell, 1962)



Figure 3 Replacement (Mitchell, 1962)

The Four Functions of Chromaticism

Mitchel (1962) classified the implication of Interpolation and Replacement in four functions and those functions are Degree Identification, Degree Progression, Degree Inflection and Degree Transformation. He suggested that Degree Identification and Degree Progression are of diatonically origin and refer to factors of structural orientation that not only described the notes of the scale but as the characterized degrees bearing a determinable relationship to the Tonal centre, Tonal Degree.

Degree Inflection is a function of chromaticism which bestow same meaning on chromatic variant of a given pitch name; D[˘], D and D[©]. Degree Transformation is a function of chromaticism whereby a given pitch may express the meaning of more than one pitch name. Thus, a notated C^{©©} (C double sharp), D and E^{˘˘} (E double flat), can represent different aspect and capabilities of the same pitch. There is no ready road to mastery of musical composition using chromatic approach but only the creation of new ideas in musical composition. Chromaticism plays an important role in establishing frame of reference which might bring understanding to the constantly shifting nuances of chromatic relationship.

Method

FUNKI Q.U.T piece is composed using a simple rhythmic motif that is varied throughout the piece to give the musical composition a smoother flow and excitement (see Figure 4). The motif is made up of a group of rhythmic tones used as a unit to form a musical phrase and combined with other phrases to form an entire composition.

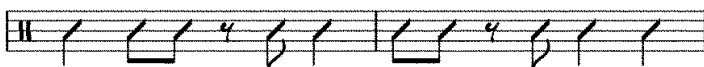


Figure 4 The main rhythmic motive

The piece begins with a melodic pattern played by the bass guitar starting at bar 1 till bar 42. This bass melodic pattern together with the drum rhythm pattern builds up the pulse and the musical feel that holds the piece together throughout the piece. The first chromatic element is introduced at bar 1 on the second beat of the bass pattern, which is the F \circ followed with the D \flat that resolve to the C note. In the second bar, the G \flat is used as a chromatic approach note to resolve to the F note. To maintain the sense of chordal progression but at the same time displaying melodic lines that lie largely *outside* the associated scales.



Figure 5 The bass pattern (pulse and groove) from bar 1 and 2

To illustrate how chromaticism can be applied in a music composition, various approaches are used to construct the rhythmic and melodic fragments. By exploring these approaches such as embellishment, diminution, expansion, intervals, passing tones, displacement of accents and rest, a more exciting composition can be achieved. This composition place more attention on the horizontal movement (melody) of the piece rather the vertical movement (harmony). It is the movement of the melodies through chromatic application that is emphasize in this piece. According to Tagg (2000), melodies are thought of as movement in two-dimensional space — forwards, backwards, upwards, downwards, etc.

Principal Musical Form

The composition takes a very different but recognizable musical form. The forms are not symmetrical as certain section contains different length. Section A for

example, has 12 bars while section B and C has 8 bars. This composition takes an ABACD form with section A containing 4 additional bars of variation of the main motif. Section B, is the development of the original musical idea that is expanded with melodic and rhythmic variation to form new musical sentences. It consists of 4 bars that make up this section. The melody is an expansion of the melodic motif introduced at section A.

Section C, repeats the main motif found at section A, but with more variation added to the melodic and rhythmic structure. This section has 8 bars of musical work. The next section, which is section D, sees the return of the melodic motif previously played by the trumpet and now played by the alto saxophone. Section E is designed to provide a resting or breathing space for the blowing instruments and also to provide a smoother transition point to the next section. Only two instruments are used here, the bass and the drum, playing a simple bass groove for four bars before section F. This section consists of short melodic stabs played by the guitar, violin and piano, to support the trumpet's improvisation. The music repeats once again through the repeat sign (*del segno*) at letter B before moving to the coda sign at letter D. The coda section is a variation of the introduction where the blowing instruments have a more percussive melodic stabs rather than a smooth legato melodic line (see Figure 6). Before completing the final cadence, author added one bar of drum fill to create that final rest, the F9 chord.

The image shows a musical score for the Coda section, starting at measure 42. It consists of nine staves: I (Trumpet), II (Alto Saxophone), III (Saxophone), IV (Bass), Gtr. (Guitar), Vln. (Violin), KEYS (Piano), SASS (Saxophone), and DR. (Drum). The score is written in 4/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *mf* and *f*. The section concludes with a final cadence and a drum fill leading to an F9 chord.

Figure 6 Coda section



Melodic Construction

Some of the melodies are created as a result of pure inspiration, and the rest are conceived in moments of clear vision, from fragmentary melodic snippets previously introduce. A big part of this composition was carefully shortened and reshape by chopping and changing the content until; at least, they fall into shapes of full significance.

i) Single Cell Construction

The composition begins with the simplest form of melodic construction from the melodic cell that involves three notes; the F, F[♯] and the G (Table 1). The moment a chromatic half step is introduce in between the diatonic notes, *interpolation* takes place. These changes can be observed in the opening introduction of the piece, where the guitar and the electric bass play the cell at bar 1, followed by the tenor and the trombone at bar 5. From this single cell the music is developed into a melodic motif. The melodic structure is further expanded with rhythmic variation and melodic embellishment.

Table 1 Melodic cell and variations

Melodic Cell	Variation
	

ii) Motive/Phrase

The motif is a very short musical idea, which becomes distinctive and important feature of the musical piece. The guitar introduces the melodic motif played in unison with the bass guitar at bar 1 to 4. This motif is repeated again at bar 5 to 8 by the tenor and trombone instrument.

The musical score for Figure 7 is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 132. It features eight staves: Trumpet I, Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Trombone, Guitar, Violin, Keyboard (N.C.), Bass Guitar, and Drums. A box labeled 'motif' is placed over the Trombone staff, with arrows pointing to the corresponding melodic lines in the Trumpet, Alto Sax, and Guitar staves.

Figure 7 The melodic motif

At section A, the trumpet and the alto sax play the main melody, which is a combination of these single cells. The guitar and the piano respond in the next phrase with a repetition of that same melodic line to make up a complete sentence at bar 16 (figure 9). In bar 17 to 20, a variation of the opening phrase is introduced to create a variety but maintaining the essence of original theme as it progresses to section B. The melodic stream consists of chromatic approaches to the chord tone of the F major chord which is the A and the F note. The A note is approach from two auxiliary notes, the upper B \flat note and lower note G \natural note in bar 9. At bar 10, the F is approach from the upper G \flat note but the same approach appears in the next bar 11 only this time the F note is approach with the upper G \natural (natural) and the natural E \sharp note from the lower auxiliary.

The musical score for Figure 8 shows the Trumpet and Alto parts. A section 'A' is marked with a box. Annotations include 'Upp. Aux.' (Upper Auxiliary) pointing to a B \flat note, 'Lower Aux.' (Lower Auxiliary) pointing to a G \natural note, and 'Chord tones' pointing to the A and F notes of the F major chord. The notes are marked with 'mf' (mezzo-forte).

Figure 8 Chromatic approach to chord tones



Figure 9 Repetition of the melodic motif played by the guitar and piano from bar 13-16

iii) Variation

Section B, is a direct modulation from the F to the B $\bar{\bar{}}$ minor chord. Since chromaticism does not produce a system of modality, it is difficult to determine whether the modulation is up a 4th or up a 6th as no regulation has been established regarding the change of one scale degree to another. However, in this section the original cell is expanded to create a continuous flow in the music.



Figure 10 Modulation from the F to the B $\bar{\bar{}}$ minor chord

The tenor, guitar and the violin play in unison the main melody while the trumpet and the alto rest from bar 21 to 28. The main melody comprise of two

melodic statements; the statement and the counterstatement (Figure 11). The trombone supports the main melody by harmonizing in thirds with the guitar and violin for the first three beats followed with unison in bar 22 to 23 (Figure 12). The trombone plays a slight contraction of the original cell at bar 23 to give the main melody more clarity. The melodic statement at section B starts from bar 21 to bar 22, followed by a counterstatement from bar 23. At bar 27 and 28, the melody completes the musical phrase of section B (see Appendix A).

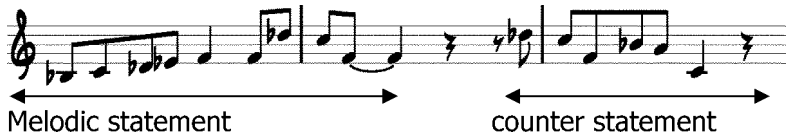


Figure 11 Melodic statement and counterstatement



Figure 12 trombone harmonizing the main melody in thirds and unison

In section C, the main melody (the original phrase) is repeated played by the alto and tenor saxophone with the trumpet resting from bar 29 to 32. The violin plays a contraction of the main melody to support the alto and tenor that is playing the main melody (Figure 13). At the end of every melodic phrase, chromatic approach is used.



Figure 13 Violin plays a contraction of the main melody

The image shows a musical score for six instruments: Trumpet, Alto, Tenor, Trombone, Guitar, and Violin. The score is in 4/4 time. The Trumpet part starts at bar 33 with a melodic line. An arrow points from a box labeled 'embellishment' to a specific note in the trumpet part at bar 33. The other instruments have rests or simple accompaniment.

Figure 14 Embellishment used on the original melody

At bar 33, the trombone plays another variation of the original cell by syncopating or accenting at different beat within the cell. The guitar also plays a variation of this same cell but in unison with the violin from bar 33 to bar 36 (Figure 14).

Section D, is a short interlude added to the arrangement to create a break or a resting point for the blowing instruments. This section consists of 8 bars of drum and bass repeating a rhythmic and melodic figure to establish a bridge to the next section. This space was designed to give the trumpet player time to prepare for the solo at section E (Figure 16).

The image shows a musical score for a 'Bass & Drum solo' section. It consists of two systems. The first system has a Double Bass part and a Drum Kit part. The Double Bass part has a melodic line with a '+' sign above the first note. The Drum Kit part has a rhythmic pattern. The second system has a Double Bass part and a Drum Kit part. The Double Bass part has a melodic line with a '3' above the first note. The Drum Kit part has a rhythmic pattern.

Figure 15 Rhythmic interlude played by the drum and bass

The trumpet solo comes in at section E, improvising over the chord changes of F major at bar 41, 42, 45, 46 and F minor at bar 43, 44 and 47 with the dominant C7 at bar 48. The improvisation is centred within the framework of the chromatic scale system. The bass plays the original melodic cell beginning at bar 41 to bar 48, with the guitar, piano and the violin playing a variation of the

cell to accompany the trumpet solo. By having a repetitive bass figure, the flow of the music can be maintained and enhanced, thus, creating a better rhythmic feel for the soloist.



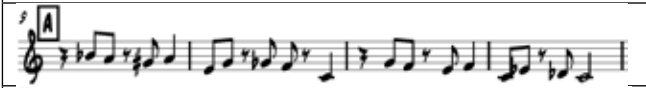
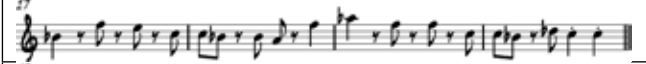

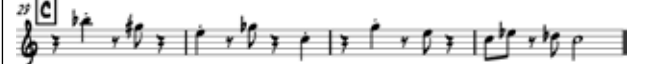
Figure 16 The bass plays the original melodic cell

The violin, guitar and the piano play a background melodic accompaniment in unison during the solo. The melody is a contraction of the motif first introduced in section A. The E section is repeated twice before returning to section B. The music continues from section B to C and goes to the Coda section. At the coda, another variation of the original motif is introduced to give the ending section a gradual build up before resting on the final chord, the F9.

Musical Gravity

All melodies, regardless of their particular style, move towards and away from points of relative tension and relative rest. Movement towards a point of tension gives purpose and duration to the time as well as the rest. For example in Table 2, bar 9–10, the melody played by the trumpet travel in a combination of small and wide skips before resolving to the ‘C’ note which is the chord tone of the F chord through chromatic approach. It is the same with the musical phrase found at bar 11–12. At section A, measure 17–20 this same approach is also applied to the melodic phrase played by the tenor and the guitar which resolves to the ‘C’ note at bar 20 after a series of wide leap.

Table 2 Musical gravity: Melody resolved to the chord tone through Chromatic approach

Musical Excerpt	Bar
	Bar 9–12 played by the trumpet
	Bar 17–20 played by the guitar
	Bar 17–20 played by the tenor
	Bar 29–32 played by the violin

RHYTHMIC MOTIVES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP

Rhythmic Approaches

Rhythm can be expressed as the articulation of time, or ‘the pattern of time’. This articulation of time can be accomplished using various approaches such as syncopation, displaced accent and ostinato rhythm. These devices have been used in the rhythms and melodic development of the *FUNKI Q.U.T* composition.

Syncopation

“Syncopation occurs when a temporary displacement of the regular metrical accent occurs, causing the emphasis to shift from a strong accent to a weak accent.”

(Taylor, 1990: X)

Syncopation is added to change and vary the melodic phrases and also to the harmonic accompaniment to create some musical tension to the composition. Beginning of bar 1, the piano plays a C syncopated octave on the third upbeat and a downbeat on beat four at bar 2. This is repeated again at bar 3 and 4 but at bar 5 the syncopation occurs on the first upbeat and the third upbeat on bar 6.



Figure 18 Syncopated rhythm played by the piano

In section A, the violin plays a syncopated melodic phrase to accompany the main melody played by the trumpet and alto saxophone at bar 9 to 12 (Figure 19). However, from bar 13 to 16 this role is reversed with the piano and the guitar playing the main melody while the violin, trombone and tenor saxophone plays the syncopated melodic fragments (Figure 20).



Figure 19 Syncopated melodic fragments played by the violin

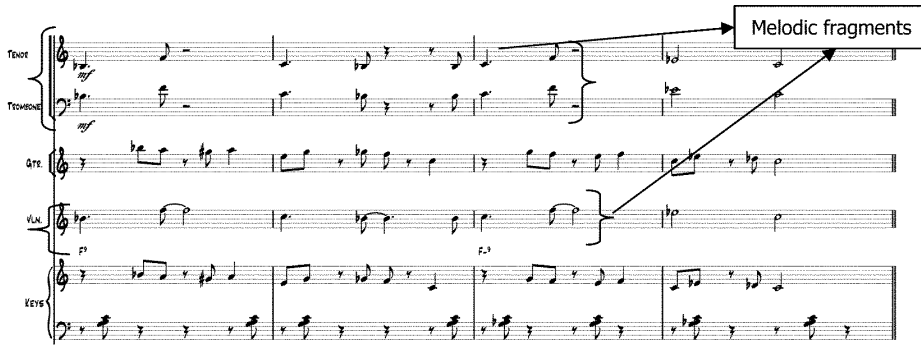


Figure 20 Syncopated melodic fragments played by the tenor saxophone, trombone and violin

In section A1, the trumpet and the alto saxophone plays a variation of the main melodic motif. The melody is embellish with chromatic approaches from upper auxiliary notes such as the B \flat to the B \natural note and the G \circ to the A note played by the trumpet and the alto at bar 17. At bar 18, the lower auxiliary note, the G \flat moves to the G \natural note and the lower G \flat note moves to the F note (Figure 20).



Figure 21 Motif variation with syncopation

In section B, the melodic statement found at bar 21 to 23, is being played in unison by the tenor, guitar and the violin (Figure 22). The trombone plays the first three beats in thirds with the main melody and in unison to complete

the phrase of bar 21 to 23. The rhythm in the melodic stream is not interrupted with much syncopation except for the wide leaps in the phrase. Only the piano accompaniment provided much of the harmonic syncopation.

The musical score for Figure 22 shows a piano accompaniment for bars 21 to 23. The score includes staves for Trumpet, Alto, Tenor, Trombone, Guitar, Violin, and Keys. The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern with syncopation and harmonic changes. The keys part includes chord symbols such as $B^{\flat} - \frac{1}{2}$, E^{17} , and $B^{\flat} - \frac{1}{4}$.

Figure 22 Piano accompaniment using harmonic syncopation

An section C, another variation of the counter melody is played by the violin using diminution and syncopation at bar 29 – 32. The piano plays a different set of rhythmic accompaniment to create contrast with section B and to provide clarity to the main melody played by the alto and tenor saxophone.

The musical score for Figure 23 shows a piano accompaniment for bars 29 to 32. The score includes staves for Trumpet, Alto, Tenor, Trombone, Guitar, Violin, and Keys. The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern with syncopation and chromatic movement. The keys part includes chord symbols such as F^{\flat} and $F - \flat$.

Figure 23 Chromatic and rhythmic syncopation

Displaced Accent

Another approach that is constantly used throughout the piece is the displaced accent. By displacing the accent on the accompanying harmonic rhythm on the piano and guitar, we can create a new impression to the composition as shown in Figure 24. In section A, the harmonic stress is placed on the first beat and the upbeat of beat three in bar 9 and bar 11. The harmonic rhythm pattern is varied in bar 13 to 16 with syncopated rhythm on the first beat and the fourth beat.

Figure 24 Harmonic accent displacement

Ostinato Rhythm

To create the funk¹ type of groove, the bass and the drums is used as the main ‘back bone’ for the piece. By having a consistent melodic figuration with a strong rhythmic foundation from the drum it is easier to construct the melody and harmony for the composition.

The drums plays a consistent 4/4 feel throughout the piece except on a few occasions where a drum fill breaks the monotony and prepares the listeners for a new section. These drum fills are found in bar 16, 20, 28, 36, 58 and 59.

Harmony

FUNKI-Q.U.T composition is made up of polyphonic textures with interchangeable melodic counterpoints but it does not create much vertical harmony. The interchangeable melodies are a useful means for musical expansion and extension but it rarely meets vertically to form a harmonic progression. The only instruments that have any harmonic function are the piano and the guitar.

The choice of harmonic movement can be created from endless possibilities using the chromatic scale system as shown in Figure 25. The harmonic progression used in the FUNKI Q.U.T composition is selected to complement the melodic movement.



Figure 25 Harmonic Formation from Chromatic scale system

The harmony is constructed from the chromatic scale system as shown in Figure 25 and Figure 26. Variation of these harmonies are further explored as shown in Table 3 and selected for different section of the composition. A single major triad can be transformed into a minor, augmented, diminished or half-diminished harmonic structure through Degree Inflection. By changing the third of the harmony, a major or a minor triad is obtained and if the fifth of the triad is changed, a diminished or and augmented triad is achieved.



Figure 26 Changing the Triad quality through Degree Inflection

The chromatic scale system offers 23 major triads and each triad can be expanded to other harmonic possibilities as shown Table 3.

Table 3 Harmony Formation from Chromatic Scale

Chords	Possibilities	
C triad	C major	Cmj7, C6, Cmaj(9), Cmaj7(9, i 11)
	C minor or C-	C-7, C-6, C-maj7, etc
	C augmented or C+	C+maj7, C+6, C+7(i 9), C+7(i 9)
	C diminished or C°	C°7
	C half-diminished	CØ

The piano and the guitar support the main melody by providing harmonic accompaniment, changing its sound quality between the major and minor sounding chords. The harmonies are formed using notes that are available from the chromatic scale. The F chord is varied by placing a flat (°) accidental on the third note, the A, to form an F minor chord. The added tension 9 in the chord is to supplement the sound quality of the chord.



Figure 27 Major and Minor Harmony

Chromatic movement can also change the chord quality to a dominant sounding chord as illustrated in Figure 28. At bar 23, the C note in the B°-9 chord moves to C° note creating a °7 for the E° chord. This aspect of enharmonic relationship is called Degree Transformation and it is a function of chromaticism where the D° can be expressed in another pitch name, the C°.



Figure 28 Adding tension with chromatic movement

In section B, there is very little chord movement as the focus is to develop the melodic structure in the section. The harmonic progression played by the piano are only meant as a guide and rhythmic support for the main melody. Even if there is any chord progression established it does not harmonize with the bass pattern. The tenor, guitar and the violin plays the same melody in unison with the trombone supporting the melody in thirds or unison. The bass plays an independent melodic pattern composed of chromatic approach that does not interfere with the main melody.

Music composition with chromaticism approaches open a range of possibilities for composers to explore. The *FUNKI-Q.U.T* composition is just scratching the surface of what other possibilities can be done. The melodic construction is made simple to show how chromatic approaches is applied without creating too much

dissonant with other melodic stream played by the other instruments. Even the chords is limited to four different chords that does not function as harmonic progression such as those found in a pop or jazz progression structure of I – ii – V7 – I. The outcome of this exploratory composition gave a new perspective on the art of composing. The potential of creating new musical work with chromaticism by present composers has not been delved into seriously in the past decades.

NOTA

¹ **Funk** is a music genre that originated in the mid- to late 1960's when African American musicians created a rhythmic, danceable new form of music through a mixture of soul music, jazz and rhythm and blues (R&B). Funk deemphasizes melody and harmony and brings a strong rhythmic groove of electric bass and drums to the foreground (Accessed on: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_genre)

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APPENDIX A

2 FUNKIGUT IN SIXTES

♩ = 152

I (TRUMPET)
II (ALTO SAX)
III (TENOR SAX)
IV (TROMBONE)
GUITAR
VIOLIN
KEYBOARD
BASS GUITAR
DRUMS

♩ = 152

A

TRUMPET
ALTO
TENOR
TROMBONE
GTR
VLN
KEYS
BASS
DR.

Musical score for measures 15-21. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Clarinet), Bassoon (Bassoon), Trumpet (Trp.), Violin (Viol.), Viola (Viola), Keyboard (Keyboard), Saxophone (Sax.), and Drums (Dr.). Measure 15 is marked with a box containing the number 41. Measure 21 is marked with a box containing the number 2. The score features various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Musical score for measures 22-28. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Clarinet), Bassoon (Bassoon), Trumpet (Trp.), Violin (Viol.), Viola (Viola), Keyboard (Keyboard), Saxophone (Sax.), and Drums (Dr.). Measure 22 is marked with a box containing the number 22. The score features various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

27 **C**

I
II
III
IV
GTR
VLN
KEYS
SASS
DR

36 To COON **C** REPEAT UNTIL CUE **E** TRUMPET SOLO 7

I
II
III
IV
GTR
VLN
KEYS
SASS
DR

8

44

I.

2.

D.S. AL CODA

CODA

I.

II.

III.

IV.

GTR.

VLA.

KEYS.

BASS.

DR.

57

I.

II.

III.

IV.

GTR.

VLA.

KEYS.

BASS.

DR.

10

The musical score is arranged in ten staves, labeled I through DR. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *p* (piano). The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots. The instruments are: I (Flute), II (Flute), III (Flute), IV (Flute), Gtr. (Guitar), Vln. (Violin), KEYS (Piano), SASS (Saxophone), and DR. (Drum).