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## "A Musician's Greatest Fear is Math"

Sonata for Solo Piano, composition and score animation by Jonathan Cline, [jcline@ieee.org](mailto:jcline@ieee.org). Live piano performance by studio pianist, Jeremiah B.

Written as a 2-week assignment in Music Theory IV class.

The inspiration for this piece came from a music major classmate's comment, during a music theory class online chat, where he mentioned his required Algebra II class scared him due to the class's introduction of logarithms. The stages of fear of mathematics posed satirically in this composition allude to the "stages of grief" in psychology.

Dodecaphonic (12-tone, serialist) compositions follow strict rules for note selection and placement, based on a matrix of pitches notated in base-12 symbols (0..9, t, e, with the pitch C=0). Because of the formulaic rules for the use of pitches in a score, serialist compositions usually sound ugly and pseudo-random, kind of algorithmic in derivation. The matrix is used to generate four variations of pitch rows for arranging the score's melody, whether in standard order or retrograde order, or in normal intervals or inverted intervals.

### **Program Note, the Stages of Fear and Acceptance of Math**

1. Anger at an Unexpected Math Question
2. Disgusted by Math
3. Pondering Avoidance of All Math Problems Forever
4. Resentment Building, Repeat Once Again from Stage 1
5. Resolving to Hate Math Forever
6. Procrastination and Avoidance of Math
7. Disgust Turns to Anguish
8. Furious Attempt to Solve the Equation
9. Digging for Answers
10. Swearing at Confusing Math Examples
11. The Nightmare of Math is Inescapable
12. Futility of Solving the Math Problem
13. Resentment at Math
14. Acceptance of Permanent Failure

<https://youtu.be/8HxOwg4Q0IY>

"A Musicians Darkest Fear Is Math" Performance, Dodecaphonic Sonata for Piano

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