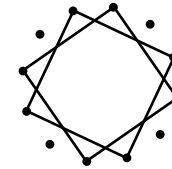
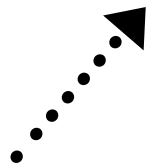


• BOOK OF SECRETS •



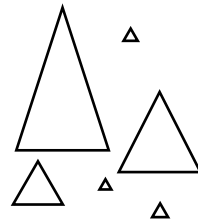
Alex T. Robilotta
2021

Actually just a book of improvisational templates, games,
exercises, rituals, networks, ceremonies, etudes,
environments, maps, or idea-generating
systems for the open minded
musical participant
to experiment
with

.

The secrets are inside yourself.

*To Marianne,
the only person I'd want to
survive a pandemic with.*



Additional thanks to these fine folks who contributed photos and other vital materials and information.

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Opening Thoughts

We become musicians the moment we begin to explore our physical, psychological and spiritual relationship to sound. This exploration is first experienced through improvisation. The first time you sing a note, clap your hands, or press a key on a piano you are improvising. The practice of improvisation cannot teach us what has been written in books about music theory. It cannot teach us that parallel 5ths are 'wrong.' It cannot teach us how to read music notation or help us sound like someone else. It can only teach us how we personally feel and respond to sound. Improvisation is where you find *your* truth in music; what really resonates for you and your ears.

Improvisation enjoys the curious distinction of being both the most widely practiced of all musical activities and the least acknowledged and understood. -Derek Bailey ¹

Elements of improvisation exist in all music. It is a testament to the personal nature of music creation that even in the most meticulously notated compositions there are always parameters that the performer can, and will, alter. At the other end of the spectrum, in musical systems that are thought of as highly improvised, Jazz or Hindustani classical music for example, the musician is still constrained by idiomatic expectations of style and form. This means the idiomatic improvising musician is constantly at risk of playing something incorrect or inappropriate, therefore the personal exploration is limited. Limitations are not always bad, they can be an excellent tool for discovering new possibilities that might not have been arrived at had the player been free to run amok. Idiomatic improvised musics are beautiful and important worlds of sound that have developed organically and continue to inspire and bring joy. But they must be understood for what they are; systems of limitation.

It seems to me, that as human beings march through time, stamping names and values on things, including all things music, purely improvised music is forced to take a back seat because, they tell us, "The exploration is over! We know what sounds good and what sounds bad and we know *why* we know!" Personal musical tastes have always existed, but the belief in a universal musical value system began to take hold in Europe with the invention of equal tempered keyboard instruments, the expanded use of music notation and the distribution of printed music. This slowly led to more detailed standardization of form and style, and the

¹ Bailey, 1992, pg. ix

coronation of musical royalty who continue to receive fealty today through our endless imitations. Systems of style and form exist in all musical traditions throughout the world but the effect of standardized instruments and printed music on a musical tradition is obvious when we examine the history of music in Europe.

In our modern world where technology allows for the replication and world-wide distribution of recorded music this effect is amplified. Even the most recent and freedom filled musical developments quickly become standardized and overburdened with rules. One man's personal musical journey quickly becomes a dogma.

...the music that is now coming from the universities—the assumption there being that the technical solutions and scientific dynamics of bebop are now understood, which I say is completely untrue—those people are fundamentally misusing the music, as far as I'm concerned. They're not really playing bebop, they're playing other peoples solutions and other people's versions of Charlie Parker. But Charlie Parker was participating with affinity insight dynamics, with respect to his own life, to what he set into motion, to what he was thinking about. There's a big difference between what Mr. Parker was playing and how his music is currently being used. -Anthony Braxton ²

It is important to appreciate what all of the world's historic musical lineages have created. The long gradual development of European art music is an example of the benefits of notation and tradition. The evolutionary process of creating rules and systems and then breaking them and creating new rules has led to music of staggering complexity and beauty. But we must remember what we've lost in this process. The way we cling to the past, stifle our inner creativity and aspire to replicate the musical ideals of other people, from other times, who lived other lives will not help us find ourselves. We've traded our unique and personal inner voices for the comfort of knowing which notes are 'right' and which are 'wrong'.

Alas, there is no use in being upset about the state of music in the world we live in. It has benefits and detriments. People will keep doing what they do. The personal solution is simple; keep exploring. Improvise.

The first semi-serious group of musicians that I was involved with began every rehearsal with free improvisation. We wouldn't talk about it. We didn't have any philosophical reasons for doing it. It was just fun. But whether we realized it or not, it cleared the air and helped us relax and warm up. It also taught us a lot about each other as musicians. We each have a palette of colors to paint the musical canvas and through improvised interaction with other musicians we learn what each person has on their

² Lock, 1988, pg. 66-67

palette and what situations provoke them to use specific colors. Through a regular practice of pure improvisation musicians can become deeply familiar with one another, so much so that they can predict what the others are likely to do before they do it. This allows for the expansion of authentic and satisfying communication in idiomatic improvised settings as well as pure improvisation.

This improvised experience that had taught me so much, very quickly disappeared when I entered the collegiate world of 'jazz education'. I noticed that many people immersed in this world seemed ashamed to *just play*, especially if we were in the music building and there was a chance of anyone listening in. "If this improvised music doesn't require a class, or a book, or years of training to learn, then what value does it have?" Freedom was thought of as 'too easy.' These serious music students felt they needed serious music. They didn't realize that playing pure improvised music can be the most serious of all musical endeavors.

Since graduating with a degree in jazz performance my musical world has been almost entirely involved in idiomatic improvisation. I always strive to put as much of myself as I can into what I'm playing, but the boundaries of style and form remain; bent, but rarely broken.

During this year of COVID I've had plenty of time to reevaluate what is important to me musically. I've spent most of this time practicing, composing and researching. Pure

improvisation seems like the piece that is most lacking in my musical world. Whether it serves as a rehearsal exercise or performance technique, pure improvisation will be something I work on with every group I play with from now on. The musical environments in this book will serve as a tool for working towards that goal with other musicians.

This book is an attempt at getting us back to our improvised roots. The exploration must continue.

When you are involved with a sound as a sound, as a limited yet infinite thought to borrow Einstein's phrase, new ideas suggest themselves, need defining, exploring, need a mind that knows it is entering a living world not a dead one. When you set out for a living world you don't know what to take with you because you don't know where you're going. You don't know whether the temperature will be warm or cold; you have to buy your clothes when you get there. Wasn't there a renowned anthropologist who insisted one must go into the field alone, unobtrusive, in order to enter the environment without disturbing it and discover its true essence? That's not quite the way the Princeton University Music Department embarks on its expeditions into the new sound world. There are such crowds of them, they take so much with them. All their equipment, all their machines. They come to hear, but all they hear is their own machines.

-Morton Feldman ³

³ Friedman, 2000, pg. 60

Book of Secrets is a collection of 40 improvisation templates (games, exercises, rituals, networks, ceremonies, etudes, environments, maps, idea generators.) Each template presents a starting point to explore a parameter of music in an improvised setting using a group of related ideas. But remember, these pages are just starting points. The templates make suggestions, because of these suggestions the music will not be purely improvised, but I hope the improvisations created from these templates will not conform to any specific idiomatic rules and can roam the musical landscape freely once they begin. The templates are divided into three sections according to the dimension of music that the material dictates; Tone, Time, or Space. There are no rules other than the ones the performers decide on. But I have provided my thoughts, suggestions, and background information on each template in *Appendix ii*.

The templates can function individually as learning tools to experiment with different aspects of music, or they can be combined into a dynamic improvised environment where players can begin on different pages and move to whatever pages they want independently or in sub-groups, following a plan or moving freely throughout the book. An entire performance can be based on the book, or elements of the book can be incorporate into other compositions being performed.

*What I write is to take you to the edge safely so that you can go on out there and find this other stuff. But really it is this other stuff that interests me and I think it forms the basic stuff of jazz. -Steve Lacy*⁴

Some pages may require practice and additional research to fully understand and take advantage of the possibilities inherent in the structure. Others will be instantly understood and comfortable. I would recommending spending more time on the difficult and uncomfortable aspect of this book. There is a lot to learn in this book other than how to improvise; complex polyrhythms, 12 tone matrix's, how to express the sound of a pentagon. But all these things should help expand the musical palette, giving you more colors to choose from. The page opposite each template has been left blank for your notes, additional research and problem solving.

I do not claim that Book of Secrets is an exhaustive exploration of the possibilities available to a musician participating in pure improvised music. There are infinite possibilities and aspects to explore within this style of music creation. For that reason I have provided some blank templates in *Appendix i*. Please feel free to make copies of them and create your own musical worlds. Using the blank templates is a great place to get your creative juices flowing, but starting from a blank page will allow for even more creative freedom, leading to original methods of presentation. This book just scratches the surface and I hope

⁴ Bailey, 1992, pg. 58

x.

it will inspire more research into this style of composition by other explorers.

My intention is to inspire the open minded and creative musician to think outside of their comfort zone and try things that they may have never thought of as useful or appropriate within the confines of their usual musical activities.

I think the main thing a musician would like to do is to give a picture to the listener of the many wonderful things he knows of and senses in the universe. That's what music is to me—it's just another way of saying this is a big, beautiful universe we live in, that's been given to us, and here's an example of just how magnificent and encompassing it is. That's what I would like to do. I think that's one of the greatest things you can do in life, and we all try to do it in some way. The musician's is through his music. -John Coltrane ⁵

Here we arrive at a final question to ponder; Is any music purely improvised? From our earliest days in this world we are exposed to music; lullabies, radio, tv, religious music, even Mozart amplified directly into the womb! Doesn't all of that influence what we try to do musically the first time we touch an instrument or sing a note? How can we truly separate our musical creativity from the living history of music that surrounds our human lives? Is it possible?

The first music on this planet had to be improvised because no 'music' existed before it. The first music sung by prehistoric men and women was a pure expression of the world around them, influenced only by the sounds of nature and the physical properties of the sound wave and the ear. The earliest humans could hear the consonance in the 1:2 vibrational ratio of an octave, and eventually we heard the resonance of other ratios. Over the millennia we discovered how to create these tones using strings and tubes. But even in the earliest instrumental expressions of music the performer was influenced by what came before.

How can we get back to the mindset of the first musician? Short of raising our children in complete isolation from music, I'm not sure it's possible. Not to mention, that idea seems unrealistic and inhumane. So, we can only work on this dilemma within ourselves. A first step is to get back to the fundamentals of music that were available to the ancients; exploring the natural ratios of tones and the rhythms and patterns inherent in the natural world without the boundaries that have been built throughout history. Many of the templates in Book of Secrets attempt to push us closer to this prehistoric musical aesthetic.

Another aspect that separates our modern music from the ancients is that it almost exclusively serves as entertainment. If we want to get back to a purely improvised music, free from historical implications, we must think of our music as a pure expression of ourselves, not just another thing to be

⁵ DeVito, 2010, pg. 153

marketed and sold. The famous Indian vocalist Kesarbai Kerkar, refused to sing in concerts where the public paid for tickets. She only performed in public at concerts that were sponsored by a patron, where tickets were given away by request. The whole idea of *buying* a concert ticket was a prostitution of a sacred art.⁶ We all have to eat, but for music to reach higher levels of authenticity and creativity the dollar cannot be allowed to make the creative decisions, at least not all the time!

The sacred, scientific, ritual, and communal roles music served within a society need to be recognized and valued. Music has always had purpose and was, at one time, considered by most to be a powerful and transformative tool; the creation of which was considered a calling, not a career choice. As creative musicians we should strive to get back to the deeper purposes of our craft. We must work tirelessly to demonstrate the vital role of music within our society. I hope these templates will act as modern day rituals. Just a small step in the right direction, pushing music a little closer to its ancient functions and helping all musicians in their search for authenticity and their true prehistoric voice.

Ultimately, musicians of the world must come to realize the potential of their calling. Like the shamans, we may serve as healers, metaphysicians, inciters, excitors, spiritual guides and sources of inspiration. If the musician is illumined from within, he becomes a lamp that lights other lamps. Then he is serving as a vehicle for the healing ocean of sound to wash over our planet and its people, healing what ails us.

-Kenny Werner⁷

I would love to discover a process such that if I wanted it to rain, it would start raining. If one of my friends were sick, I would play a certain tune and he would get better; if he were broke, I would play another tune and immediately he would receive all the money he needed. But what those pieces are, and what way do you have to go to arrive at knowing them, I don't know. The true powers of music are still unknown. To be able to control them should be, I think, the ambition of every musician.

-John Coltrane⁸

⁶ Ruckert, 2004, pg. 14

⁷ Werner, 1996, pg. 49

⁸ DeVito, 2010, pg. 182

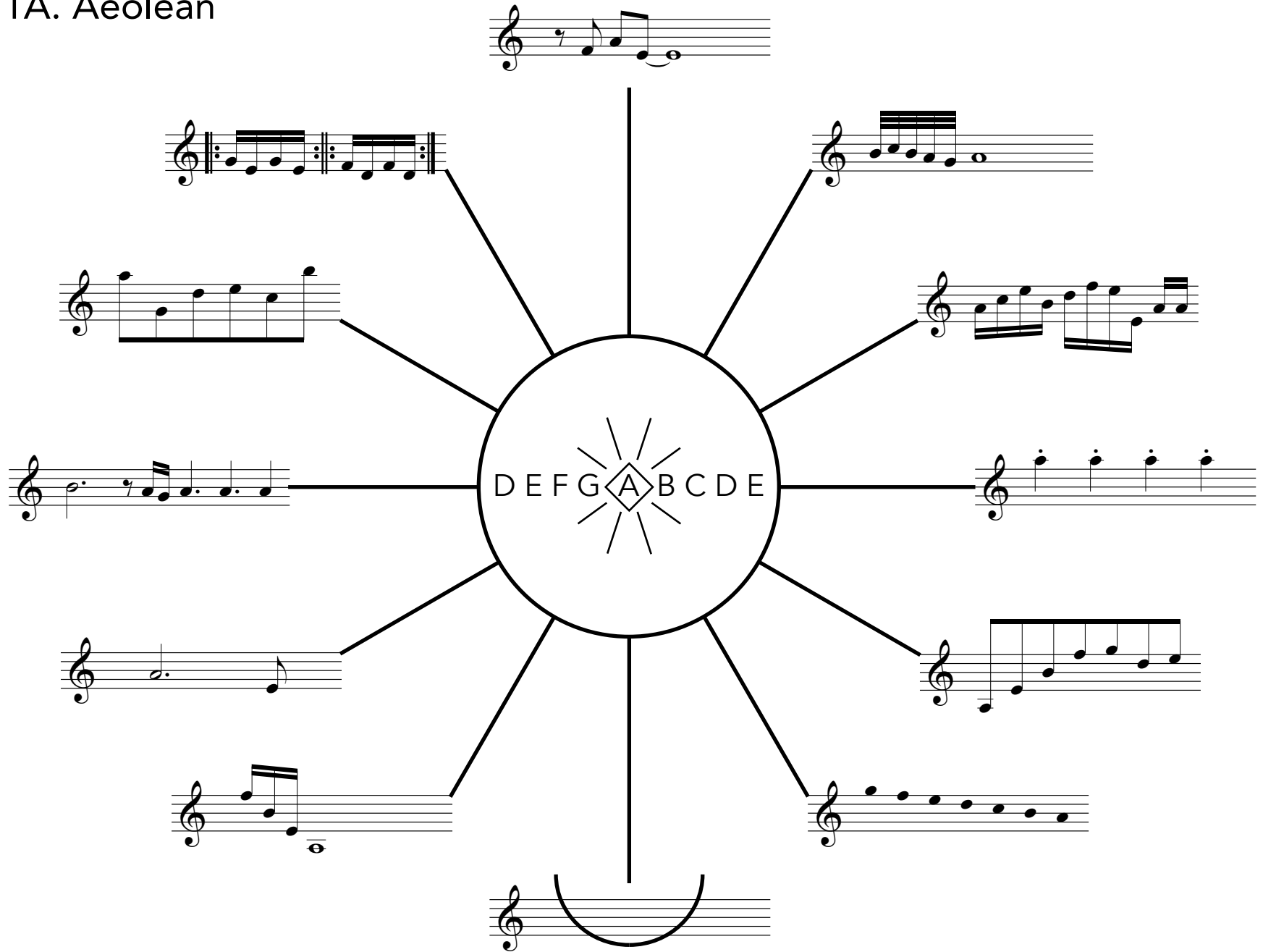
Part I.

Tone

"But isn't music made from the ground up?" Yes and no.
It's easier from the ground up, but it happens the other way too.
Music is made, rather, from the center out, more like the concentric
forces of an atom, or—to fairly include gravity into the metaphor—
like the limbs and roots of a tree.

-W. A. Mathieu, *Harmonic Experience*, pg. 61

1A. Aeolian



1B. Locrian

The diagram features a central circle with the text "EFGA B CDEF" and a diamond shape around the letter "B". Ten lines radiate from the circle to ten musical staves, each showing a different melodic pattern for the Locrian mode. The patterns include scales, arpeggios, and rhythmic exercises.

- Staff 1 (top): A scale of eighth notes: E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5.
- Staff 2 (top-right): A scale of quarter notes: E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5.
- Staff 3 (right): A scale of quarter notes: E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5.
- Staff 4 (bottom-right): A scale of quarter notes: E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5.
- Staff 5 (bottom): A scale of quarter notes: E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5.
- Staff 6 (bottom-left): A scale of quarter notes: E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5.
- Staff 7 (left): A scale of quarter notes: E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5.
- Staff 8 (top-left): A scale of quarter notes: E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5.
- Staff 9 (middle-left): A scale of quarter notes: E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5.
- Staff 10 (middle-right): A scale of quarter notes: E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5.

1C. Ionian

The diagram features a central circle with the text "FGABCDEFG" and a diamond shape in the center. Ten lines radiate from this central circle to ten musical staves, each showing a different melodic line for the Ionian mode. The staves are arranged in a circle around the center. The notes on the staves are: 1. Top: G4, A4, B4, C5. 2. Top-right: G4, A4, B4, C5. 3. Right: G4, A4, B4, C5. 4. Bottom-right: G4, A4, B4, C5. 5. Bottom: G4, A4, B4, C5. 6. Bottom-left: G4, A4, B4, C5. 7. Left: G4, A4, B4, C5. 8. Top-left: G4, A4, B4, C5. 9. Middle-left: G4, A4, B4, C5. 10. Middle-right: G4, A4, B4, C5.

1D. Dorian

A central circle contains the text "G A B C D E F G A" with a diamond shape around the letter "D". Ten lines radiate from this circle to ten musical staves, each illustrating a different exercise for the Dorian mode. The exercises include: a simple three-note scale (G-A-B); a sixteenth-note scale; a chromatic scale; a scale with a descending chromatic line; a scale with a descending chromatic line and a final note; a scale with a descending chromatic line and a final note; a scale with a descending chromatic line and a final note; a scale with a descending chromatic line and a final note; a scale with a descending chromatic line and a final note; and a scale with a descending chromatic line and a final note.

1E. Phrygian

A B C D E F G A B

The diagram features a central circle with the text "A B C D E F G A B" and a diamond shape around the letter "E". Ten lines radiate from the circle to ten different musical staves, each showing a unique melodic pattern in the Phrygian mode. The patterns include: a descending interval; a sequence of notes with a dotted quarter note; a wavy line with an arrow; a sequence of notes with a triplet; a sequence of notes with a 5:4 ratio; a sequence of notes with a triplet; a sequence of notes with a 5:4 ratio; a sequence of notes with a triplet; a sequence of notes with a 5:4 ratio; and a sequence of notes with a triplet.

1F. Lydian

BCDEFGABC

5:4 5:4 3

1G. Mixolydian

C D E F G A B C

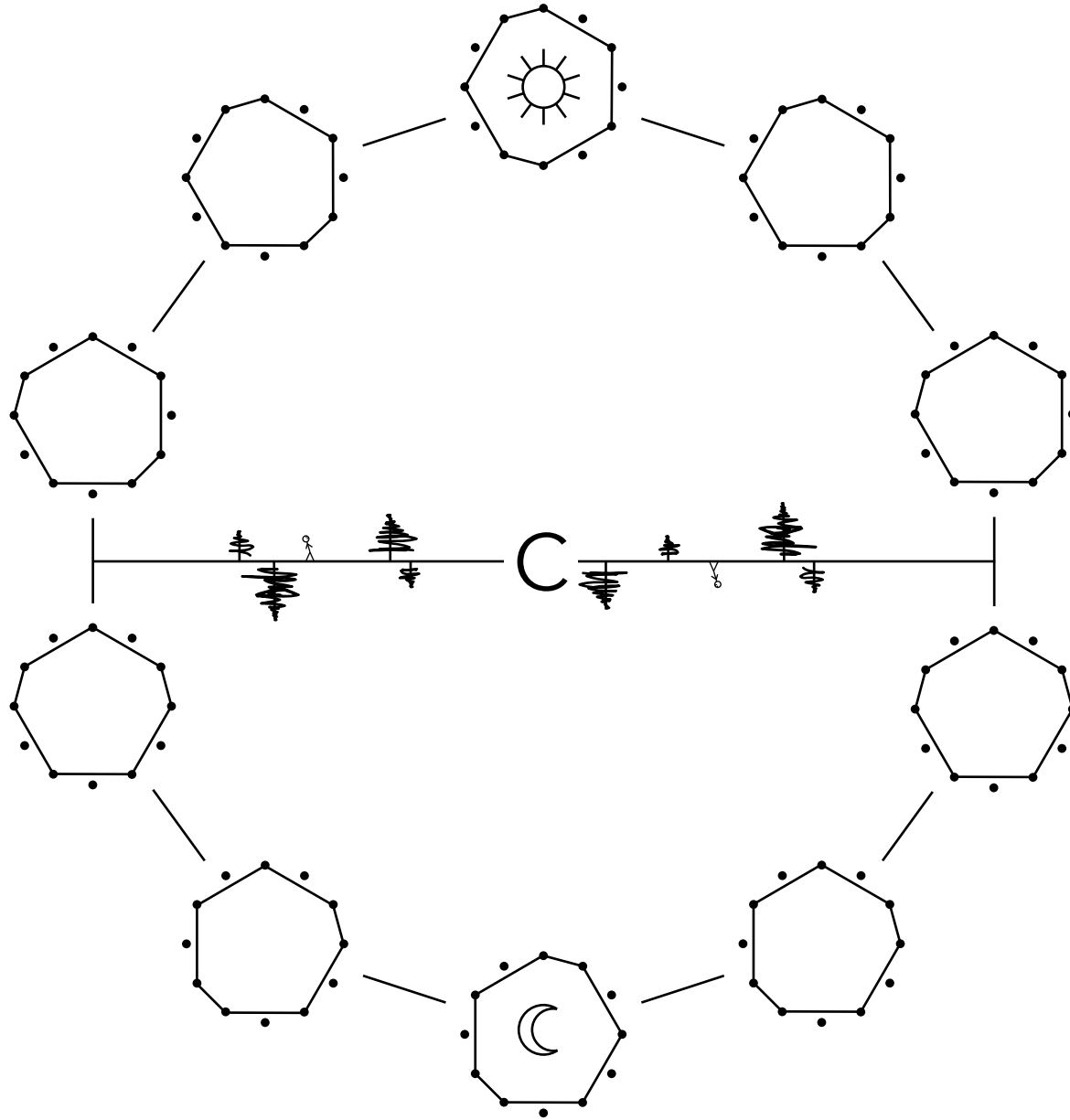
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1H. What Modes?

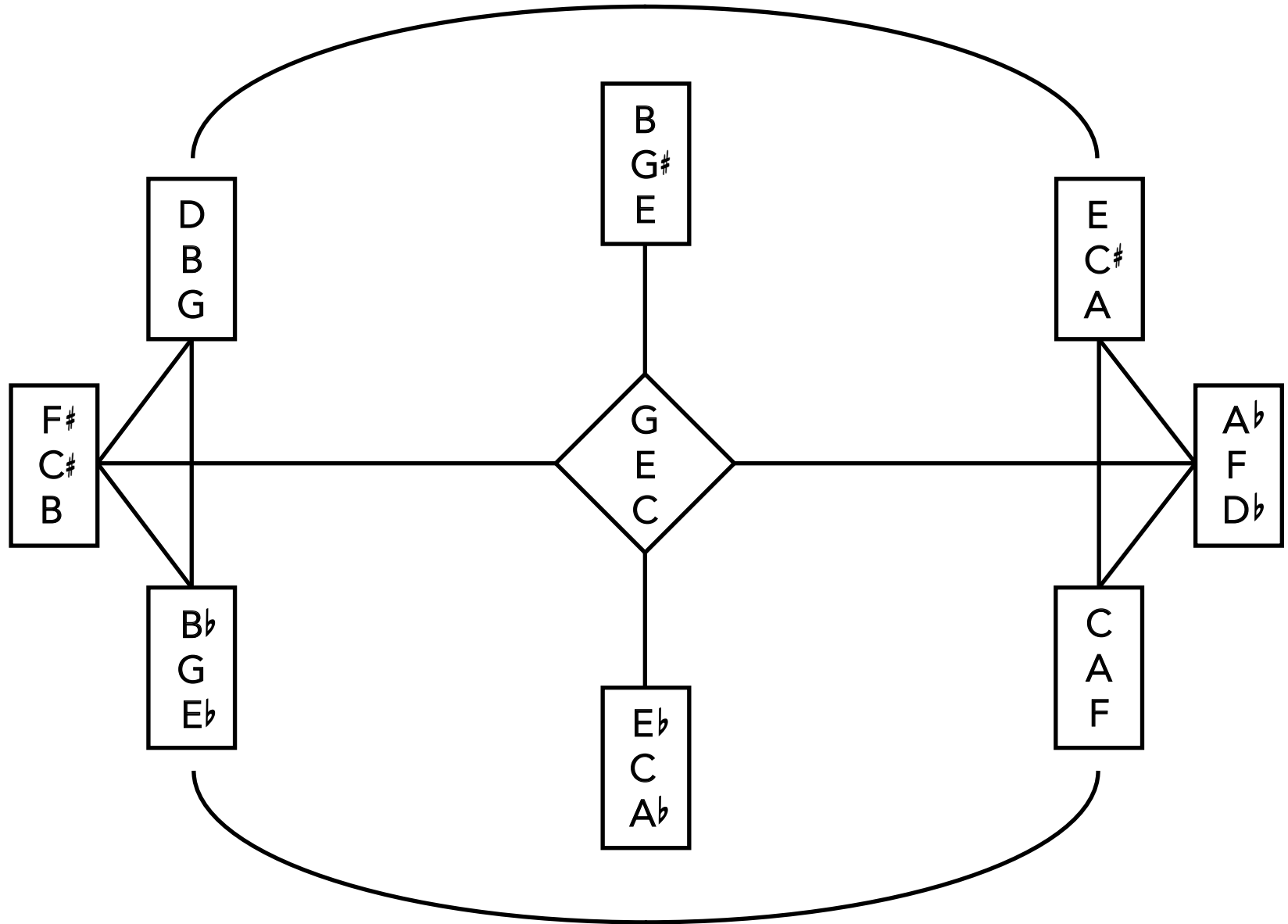
The diagram features a central circle with a question mark '?' in the middle. Radiating from this center are seven lines, each ending at a vertex of a larger circle. These vertices are labeled with the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. From each vertex, a line extends further out to a musical staff. There are 14 musical staves in total, arranged in a circle around the central diagram. Each staff contains a scale of notes, starting with a specific note that corresponds to the letter at the vertex it connects. The scales are as follows:

- Staff 1 (top): Bass clef, notes G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G.
- Staff 2 (top-right): Treble clef, notes A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A.
- Staff 3 (right): Bass clef, notes B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B.
- Staff 4 (right): Treble clef, notes C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C.
- Staff 5 (bottom-right): Bass clef, notes D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D.
- Staff 6 (bottom): Treble clef, notes E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E.
- Staff 7 (bottom-left): Bass clef, notes F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F.
- Staff 8 (left): Treble clef, notes G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G.
- Staff 9 (top-left): Bass clef, notes A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A.
- Staff 10 (top): Treble clef, notes B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B.
- Staff 11 (top): Bass clef, notes C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C.
- Staff 12 (top): Treble clef, notes D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D.
- Staff 13 (top): Bass clef, notes E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E.
- Staff 14 (top): Treble clef, notes F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F.

11. Sunrise, Sunset



1J. Triad Cheeseburger



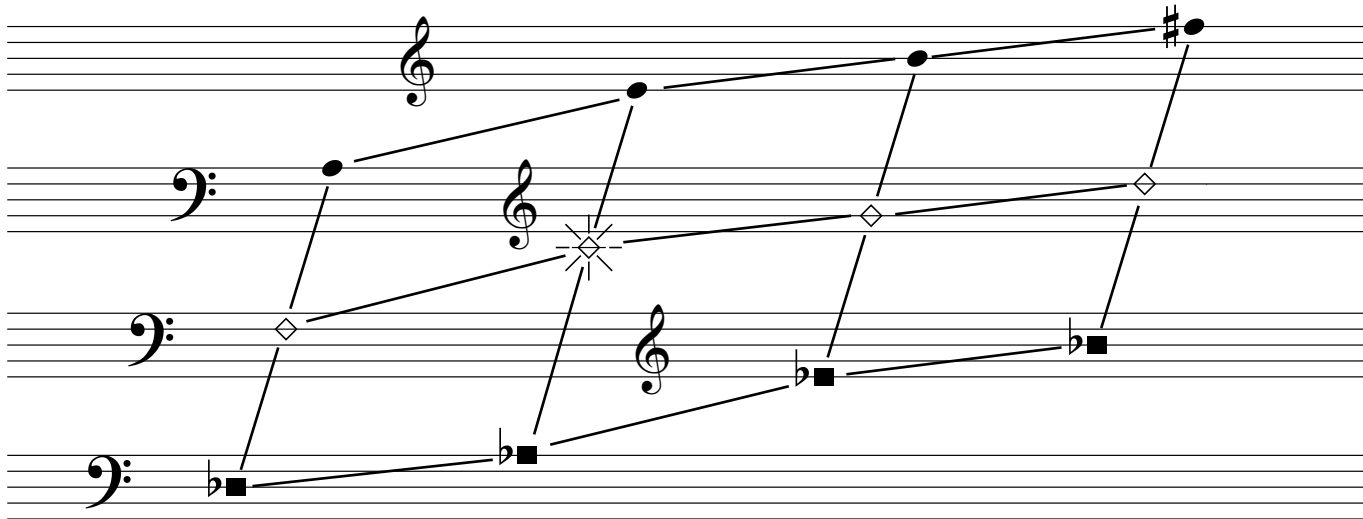
1K. Round & Round

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "1K. Round & Round". The score is centered around a complex geometric diagram consisting of a large circle with ten points on its circumference. These points are interconnected by a network of lines, forming a series of overlapping triangles and other polygons. The diagram is rendered in black lines on a white background.

Surrounding the diagram are ten musical staves, each containing a sequence of notes. The notes are arranged in a circular pattern, with five staves on the left and five on the right. The notes are connected to the vertices of the geometric diagram, suggesting a relationship between the musical structure and the geometry. The notes are written in a standard musical notation, including treble clefs, stems, and note heads. The key signature and time signature are not explicitly shown, but the notes are organized into a clear sequence.

At the top center, there is a single musical staff with three notes. At the bottom center, there is another single musical staff with a sequence of notes. The overall layout is symmetrical and visually striking, combining music and geometry.

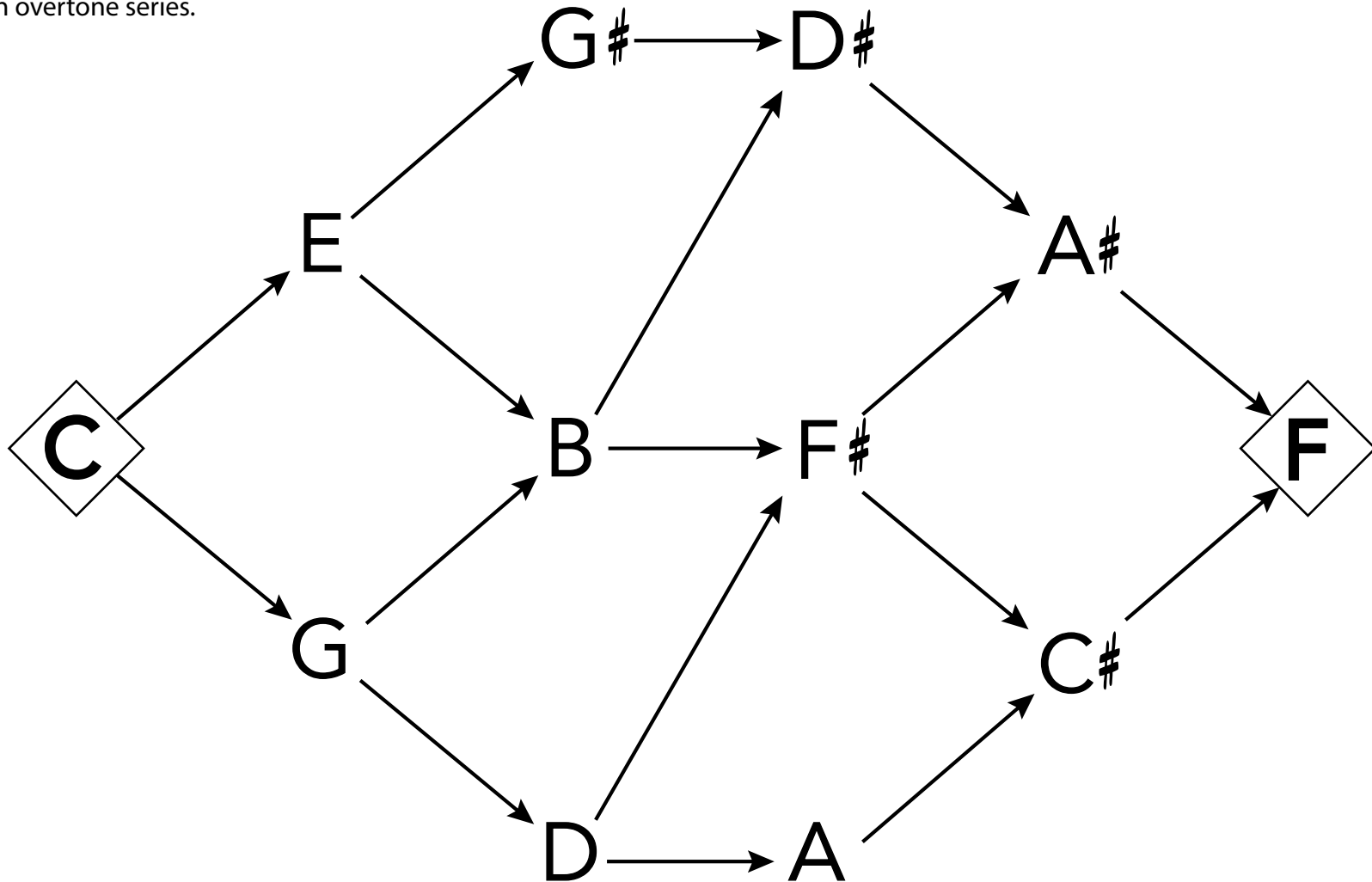
1L. Drone Zone



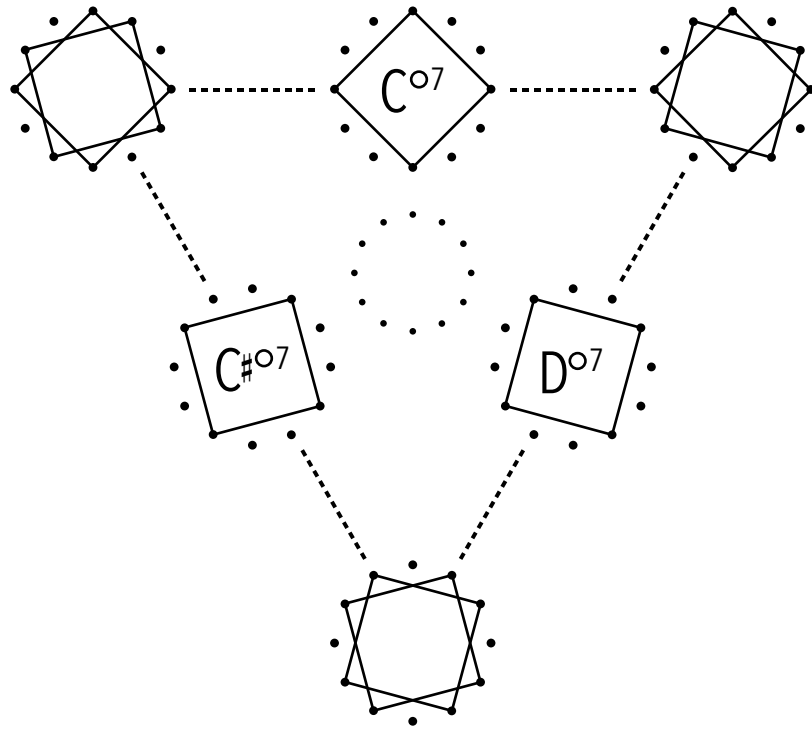
*The Five-Limit Lattice of Twelfth Tones, from *The Harmonic Experience*, W. A. Mathieu.

1M. Overtone Journey

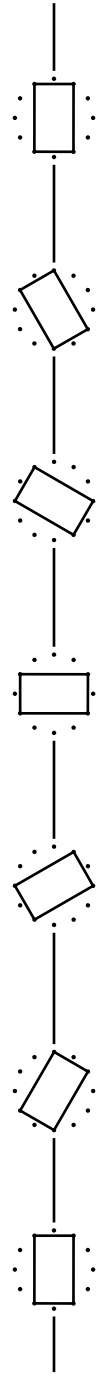
*Each note represents the 1st partial of an overtone series.



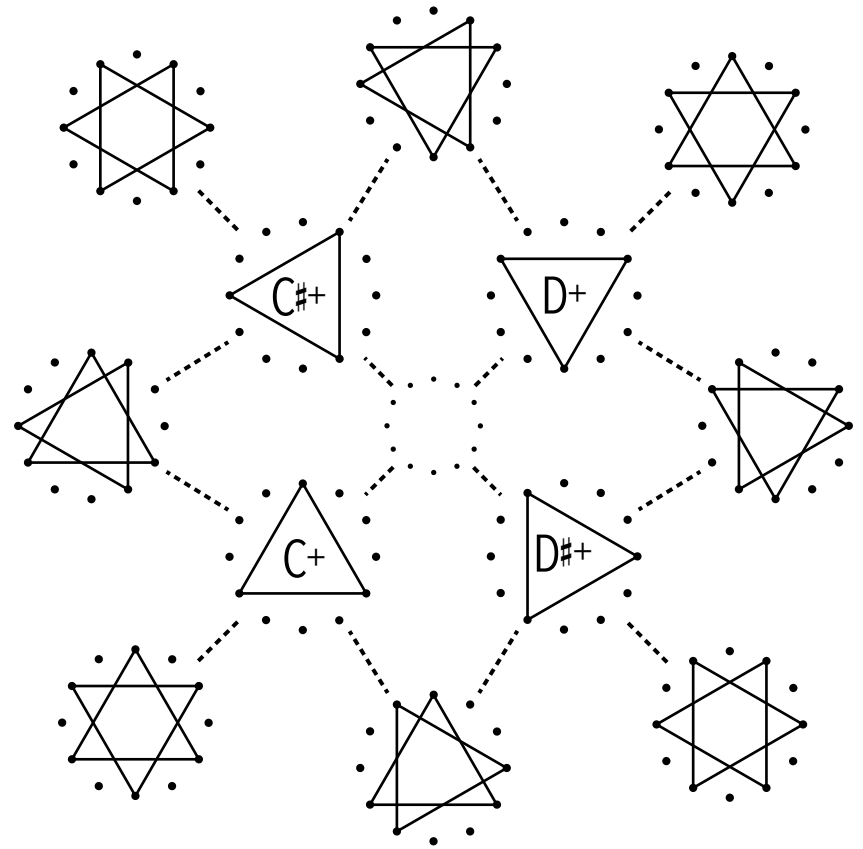
1N. Diminished World



Bridges



1O. Augmented World

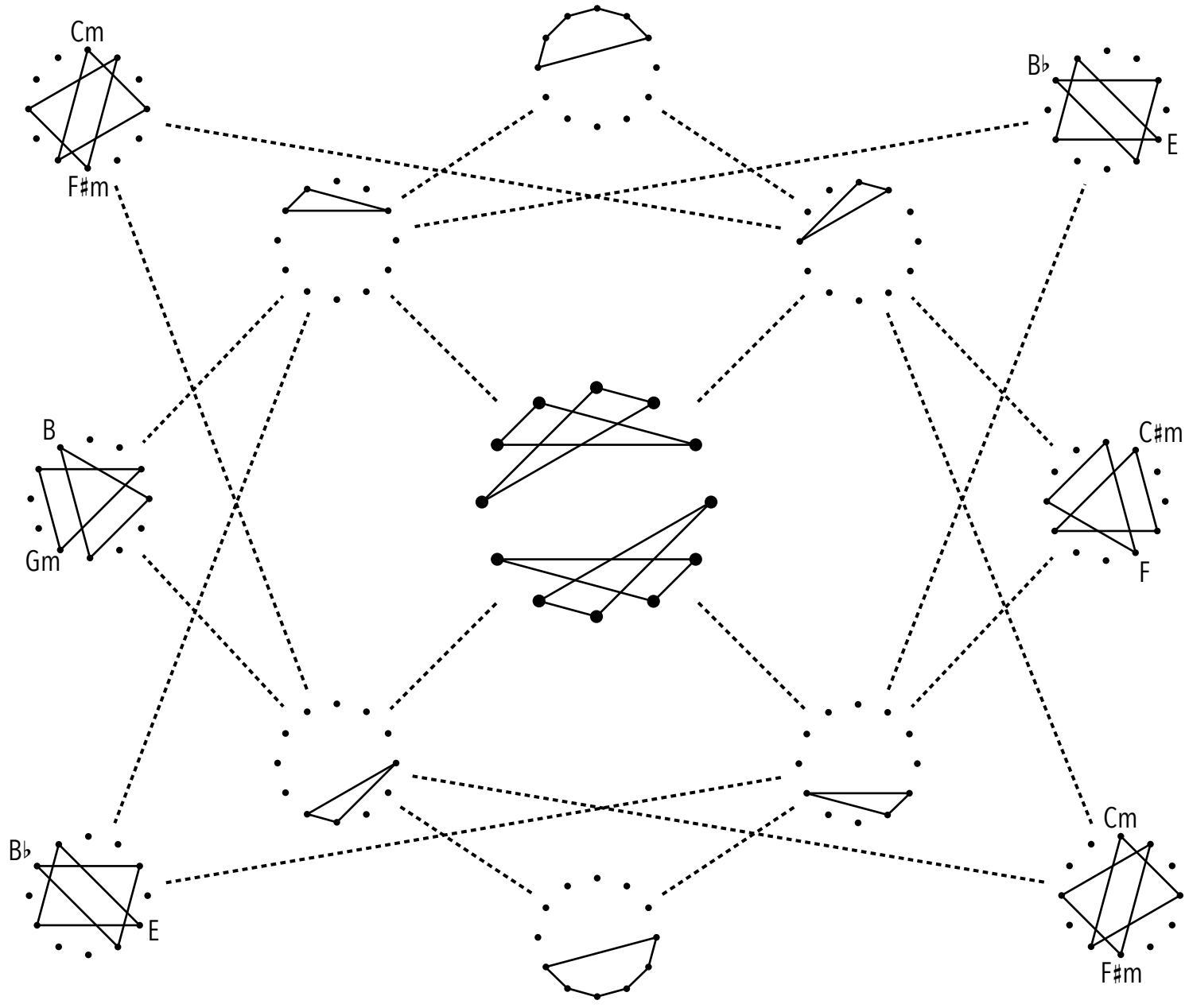


1P. Red Planet

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Red Planet". At the center is a chord chart with 12 columns and 6 rows of notes. Several notes are highlighted in yellow circles: B, D#, F, D, E, C#, G, C, A#, C#, G#, C#, F#, G#, C#, A, and A. Red lines connect these highlighted notes to specific musical staves around the chart. The staves include various musical notations such as triplets (marked with a '3'), a 5:4 time signature, and a ritardando (rit.) marking. The notes in the chart are arranged as follows:

B	D	E	C#	F#	G#	A	G	C	A#	F	D#
G#	B	C#	A#	D#	F	F#	E	A	G	D	C
F#	A	B	G#	C#	D#	E	D	G	F	C	A#
A	C	D	B	E	F#	G	F	A#	G#	D#	C#
E	G	A	F#	B	C#	D	C	F	D#	A#	G#
D	F	G	E	A	B	C	A#	D#	C#	G#	F#
C#	E	F#	D#	G#	A#	B	A	D	C	G	F
D#	F#	G#	F	A#	C	C#	B	E	D	A	G
A#	C#	D#	C	F	G	G#	F#	B	A	E	D
C	D#	F	D	G	A	A#	G#	C#	B	F#	E
F	G#	A#	G	C	D	D#	C#	F#	E	B	A
G	A#	C	A	D	E	F	D#	G#	F#	C#	B

1Q. Just Twelve Tones



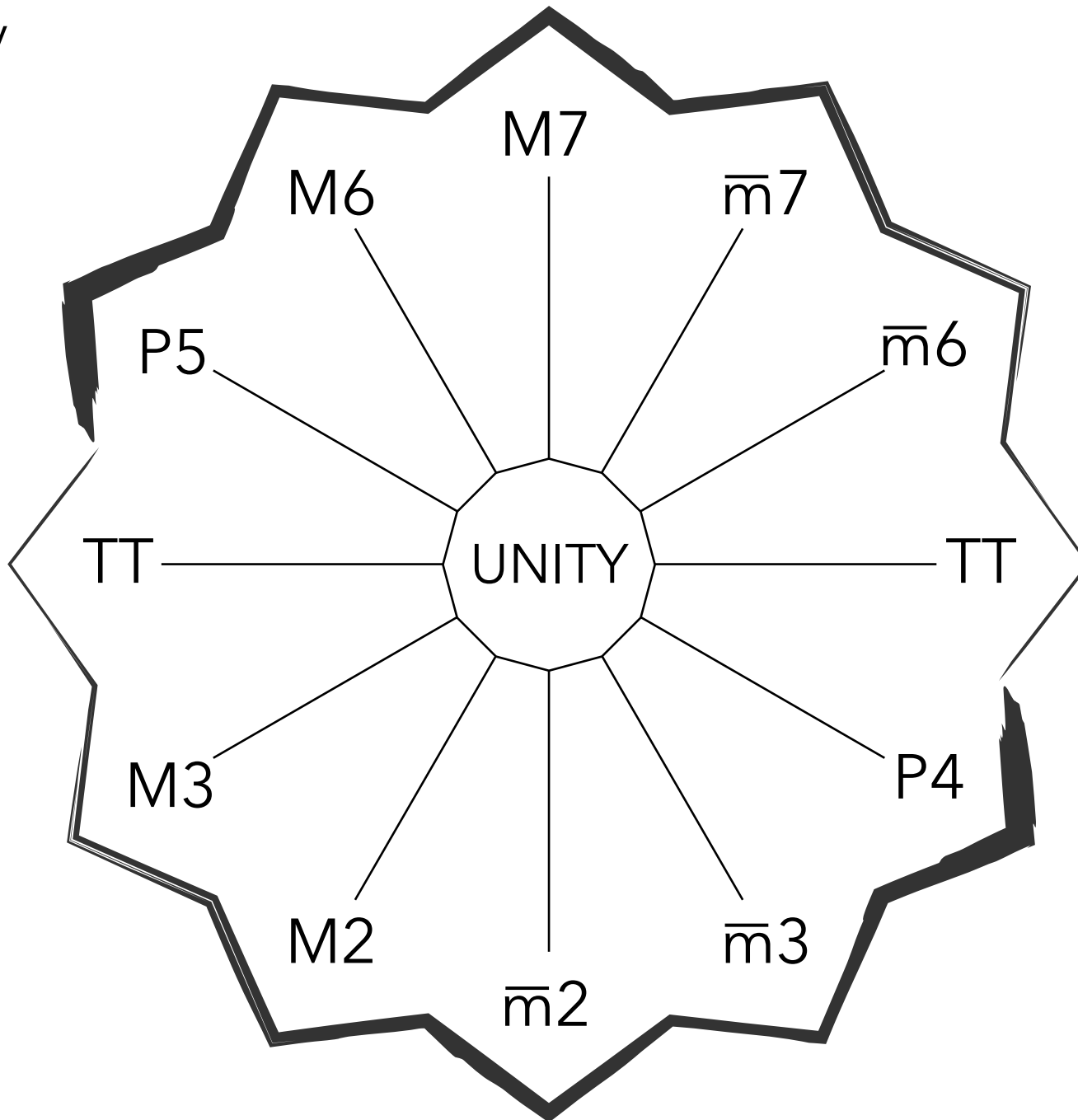
1R. Diamond

The diagram illustrates a musical structure for '1R. Diamond'. At the top is a diamond-shaped lattice of notes and ratios:

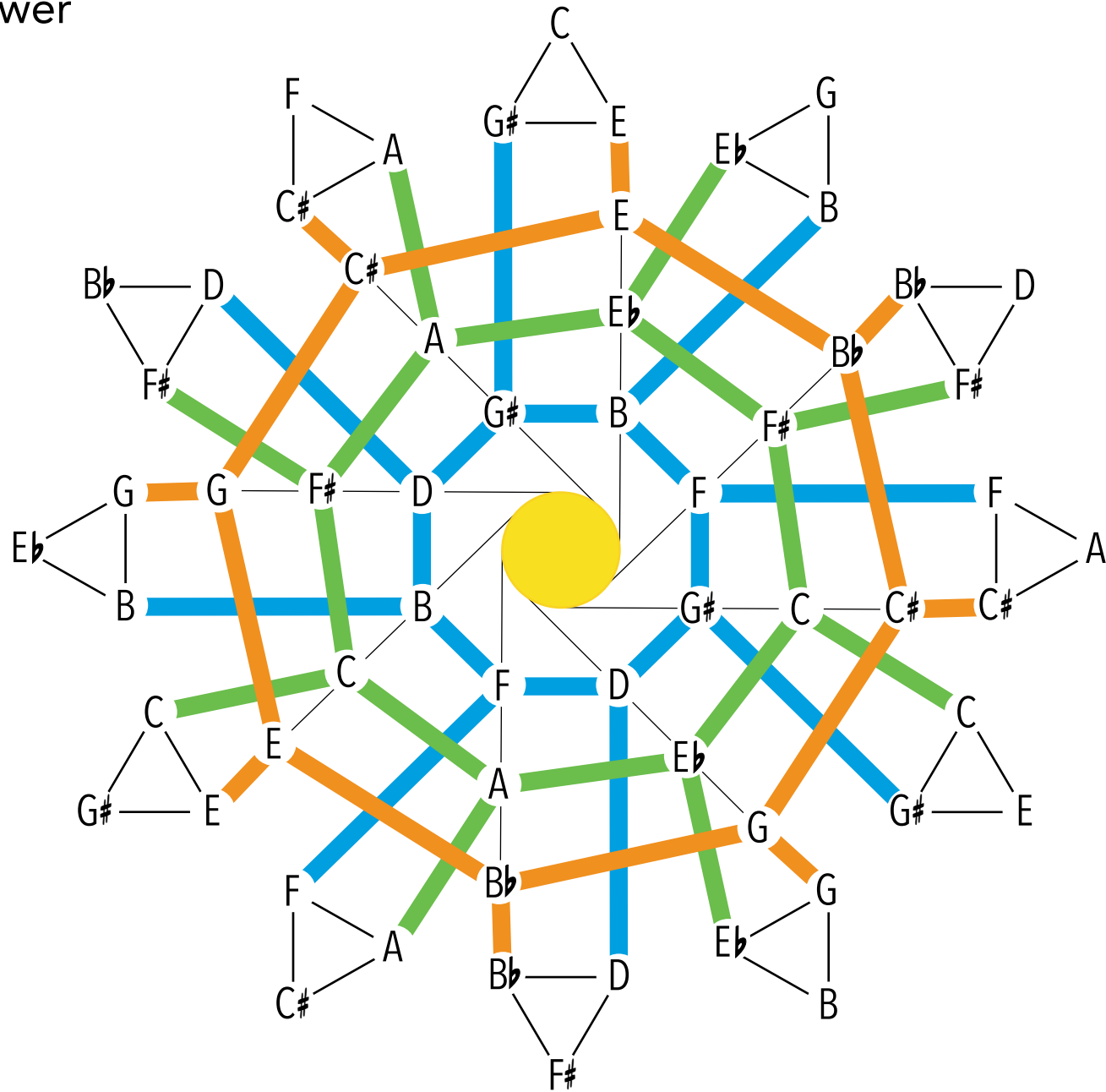
- Top vertex: **G** with ratio $\frac{3}{3}$
- Second level (left to right): **E** ($\frac{5}{3}$), **B \flat** ($\frac{6}{5}$)
- Third level (left to right): **C** ($\frac{4}{3}$), **G** ($\frac{5}{5}$), **D** ($\frac{3}{2}$)
- Fourth level (left to right): **E \flat** ($\frac{8}{5}$), **B** ($\frac{5}{4}$)
- Bottom vertex: **G** with ratio $\frac{1}{1}$

Below the lattice is a staff with notes: G_2 , E_2 , C_2 , G_2 , B_1 , D_2 , G_2 . Below this is a staff with chords, and at the bottom are two chord diagrams (fingerings) for the chords E_2 and B_1 .

1S. Unity



1T. Sun Flower



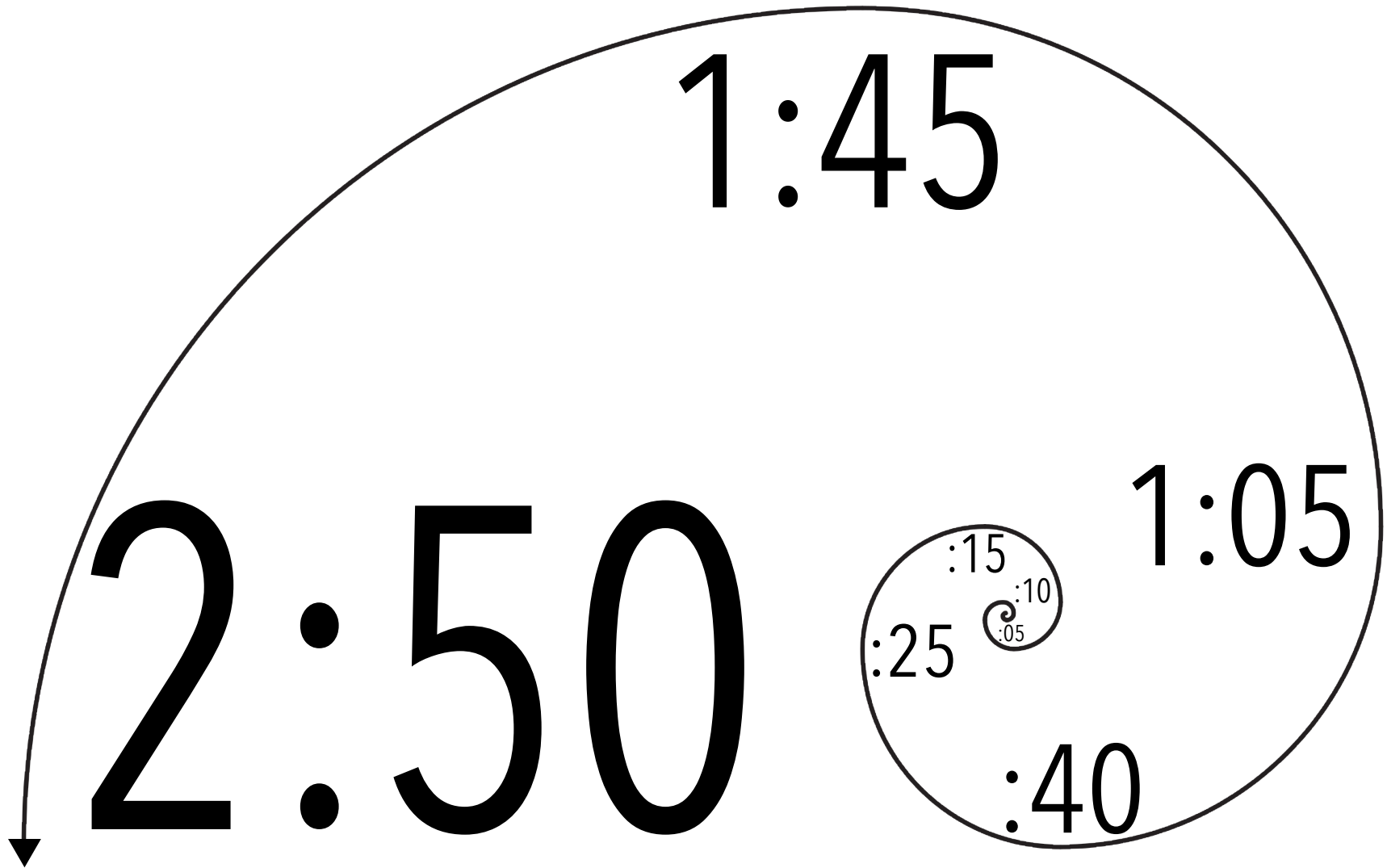
Part II.

Time

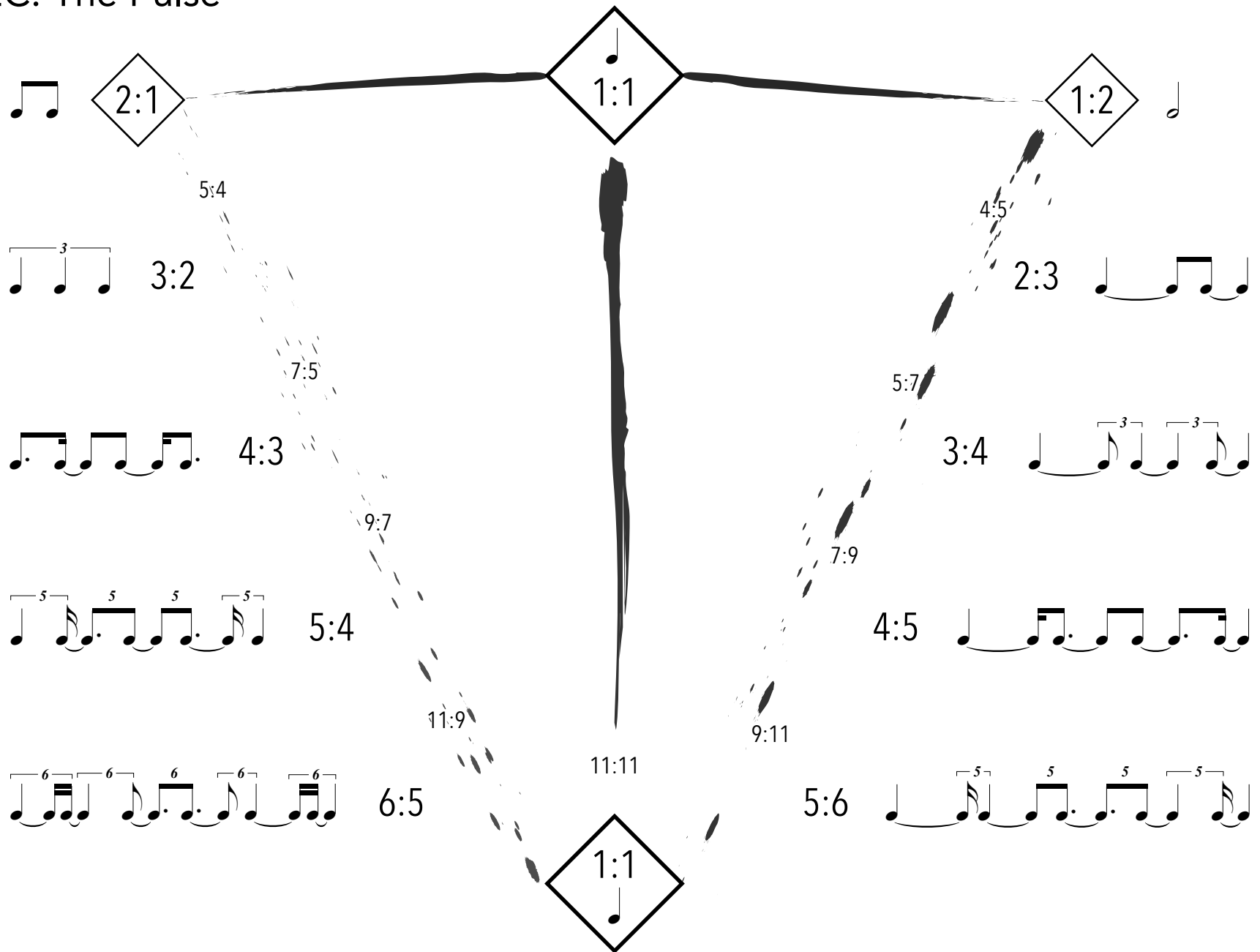
I play with a swing beat. But everything's got a beat,
you live by beats—the beat of your heart.
If your heart stops beating that's curtains.

-Thelonious Sphere Monk; Kelly, 2009, pg. 135

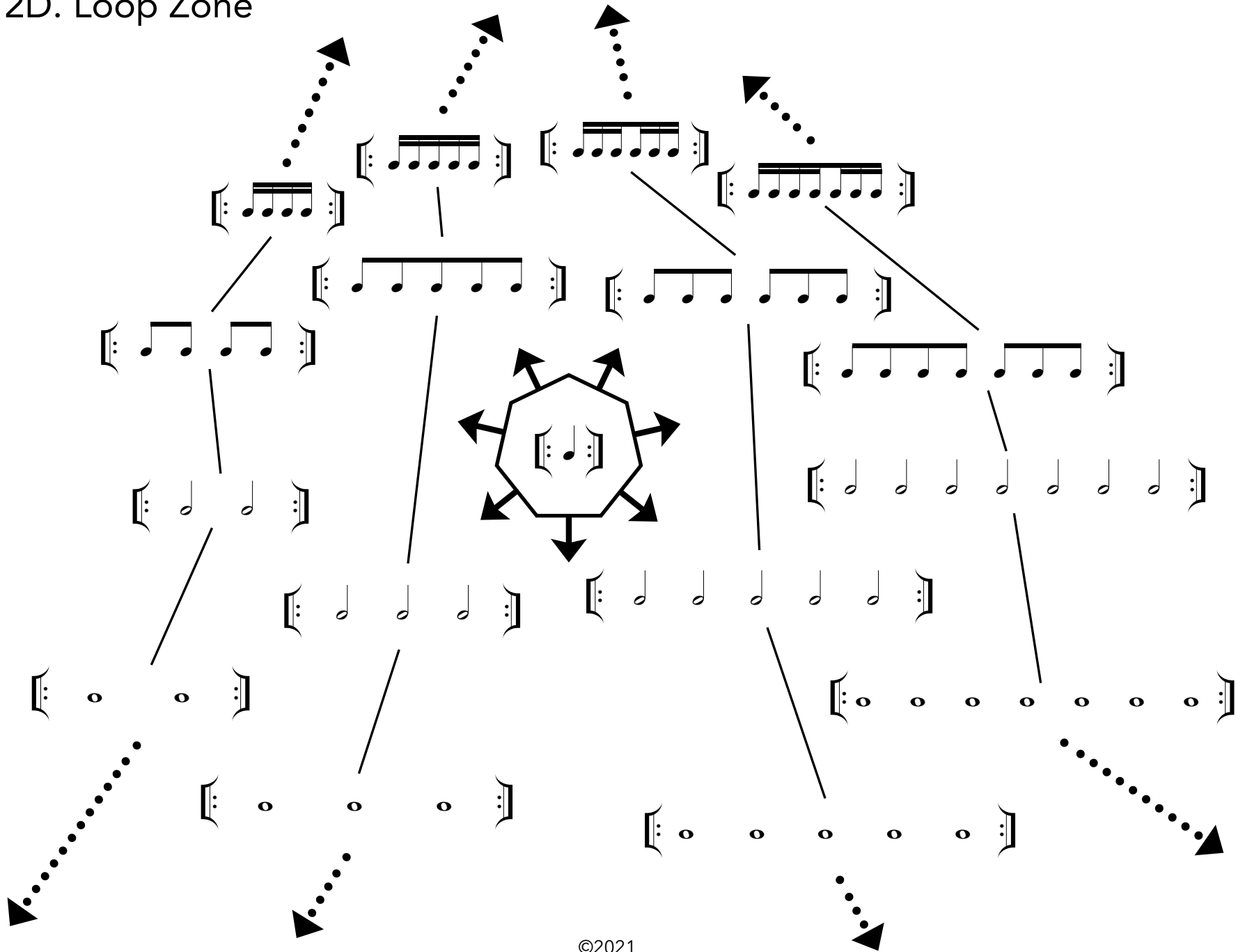
2A. Make a Sound For...



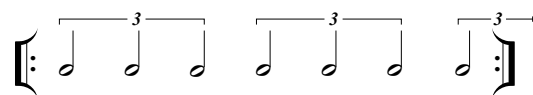
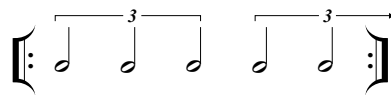
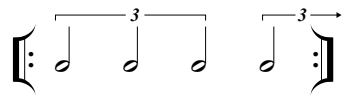
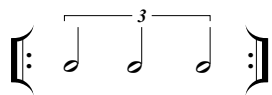
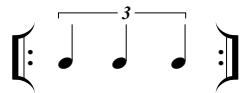
2C. The Pulse



2D. Loop Zone



2E. Expanded Loop Zone (Begin anywhere, together.)



2F. Rhythm of The One

This image displays 20 distinct musical rhythm patterns, each enclosed in a double bar line with repeat dots. The patterns are arranged in a grid-like fashion. The central pattern, consisting of four quarter notes marked with 'x', is highlighted with a large black oval. The other patterns feature a variety of rhythmic values including eighth notes, quarter notes, and quarter rests, often with 'x' or 'Δ' symbols indicating specific accents or articulations.

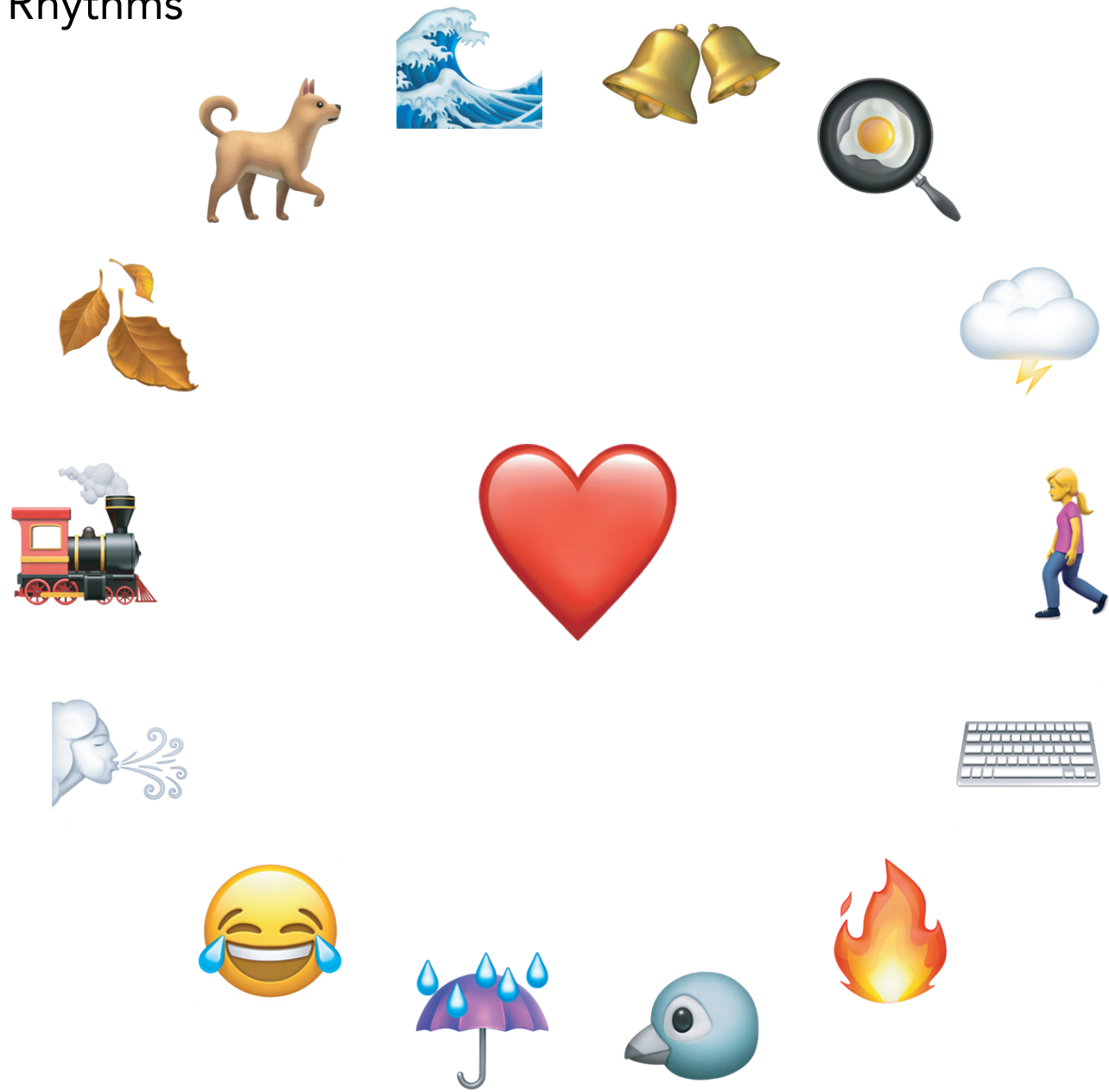
2G. The Keystone

The musical score for 'The Keystone' is presented within a large, semi-circular frame. It consists of two main parts, each with eight staves of rhythmic notation. The notation uses 'x' marks to represent notes, with stems and beams indicating their rhythmic values. The first part (left side) includes accents (>) over several notes. The second part (right side) features a more complex rhythmic pattern with multiple beams and accents. The score is enclosed in a large, thin black arc that spans the width of the page.

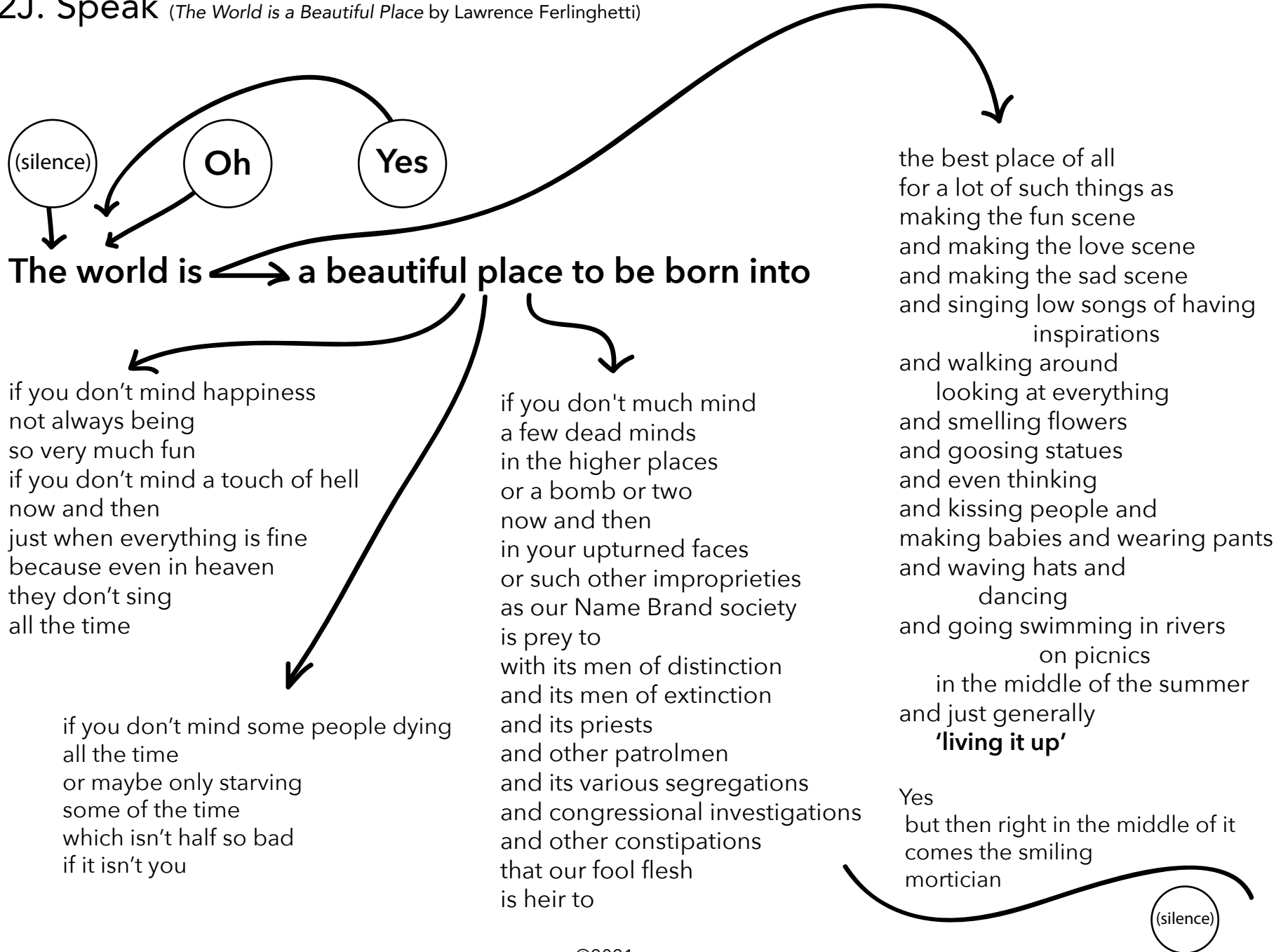
2H. Reflections



21. World of Rhythms



2J. Speak *(The World is a Beautiful Place by Lawrence Ferlinghetti)*



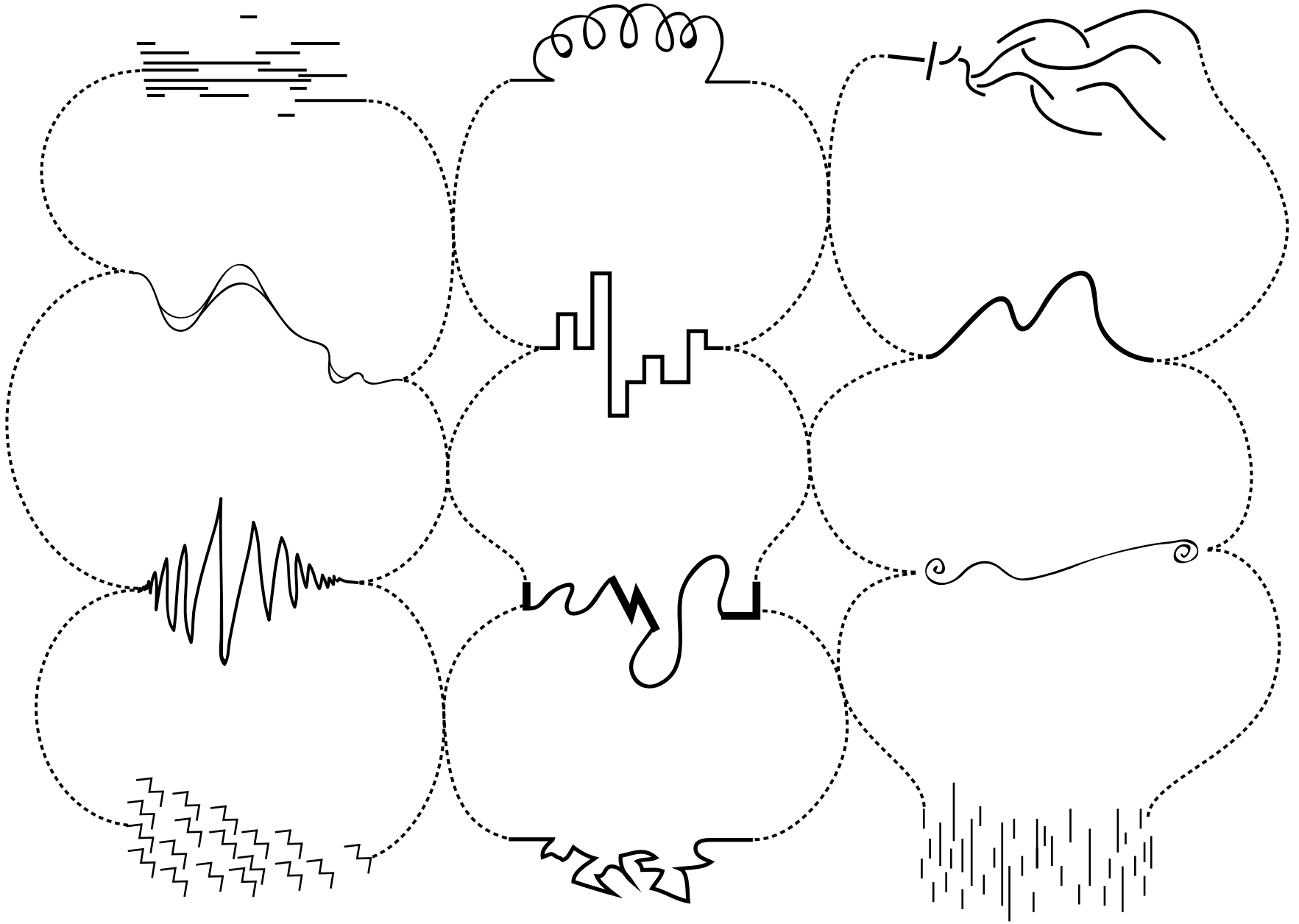
Part III.

Space

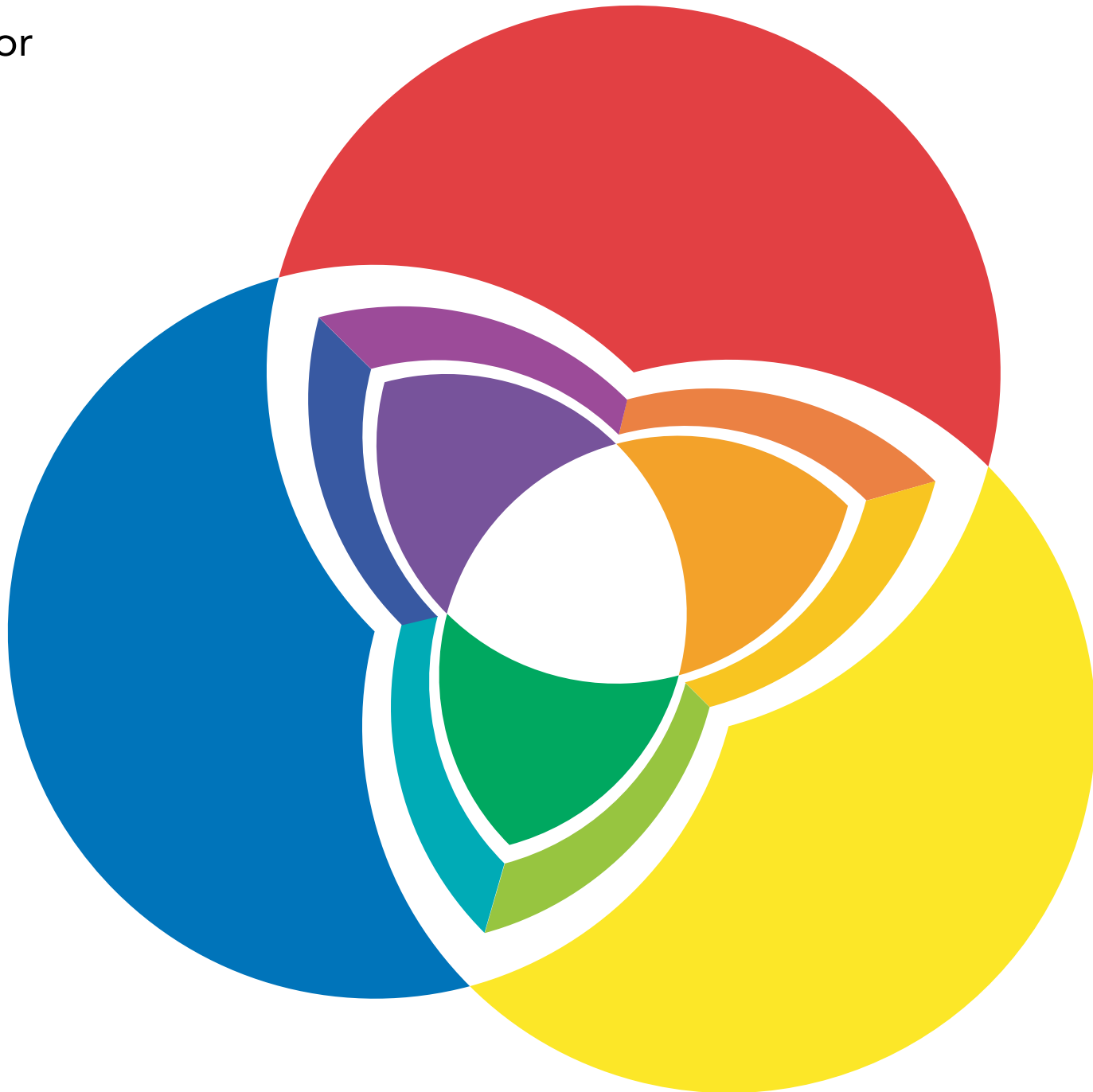
Everything that you think about, there is information for it.
For any level that you want to think on, for any thought that
you can think, there's information that can help you with
that thought.

-Anthony Braxton; Lock, 1988, pg. 156

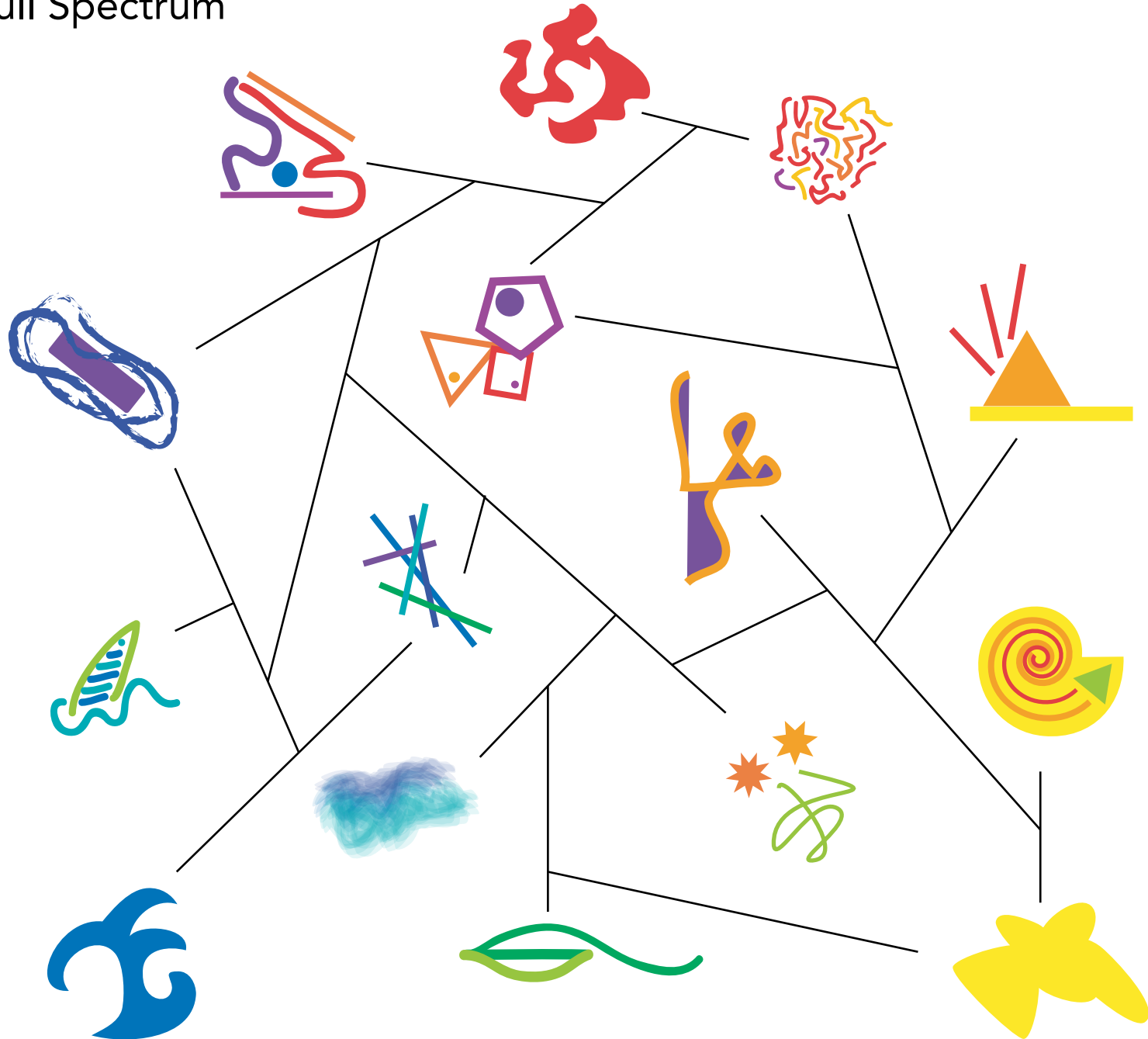
3A. Lines



3C. Color



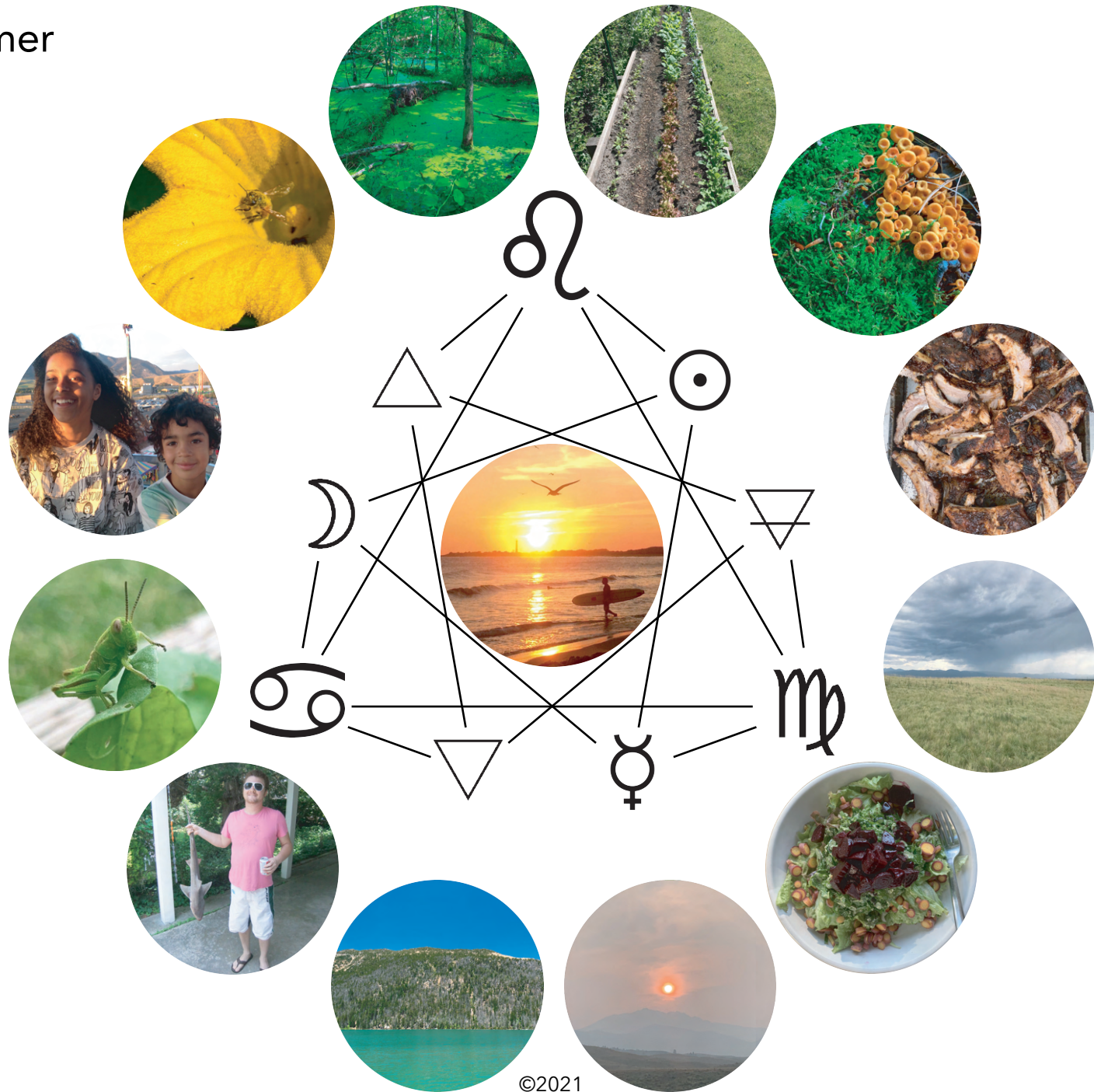
3D. Full Spectrum



3E. Spring



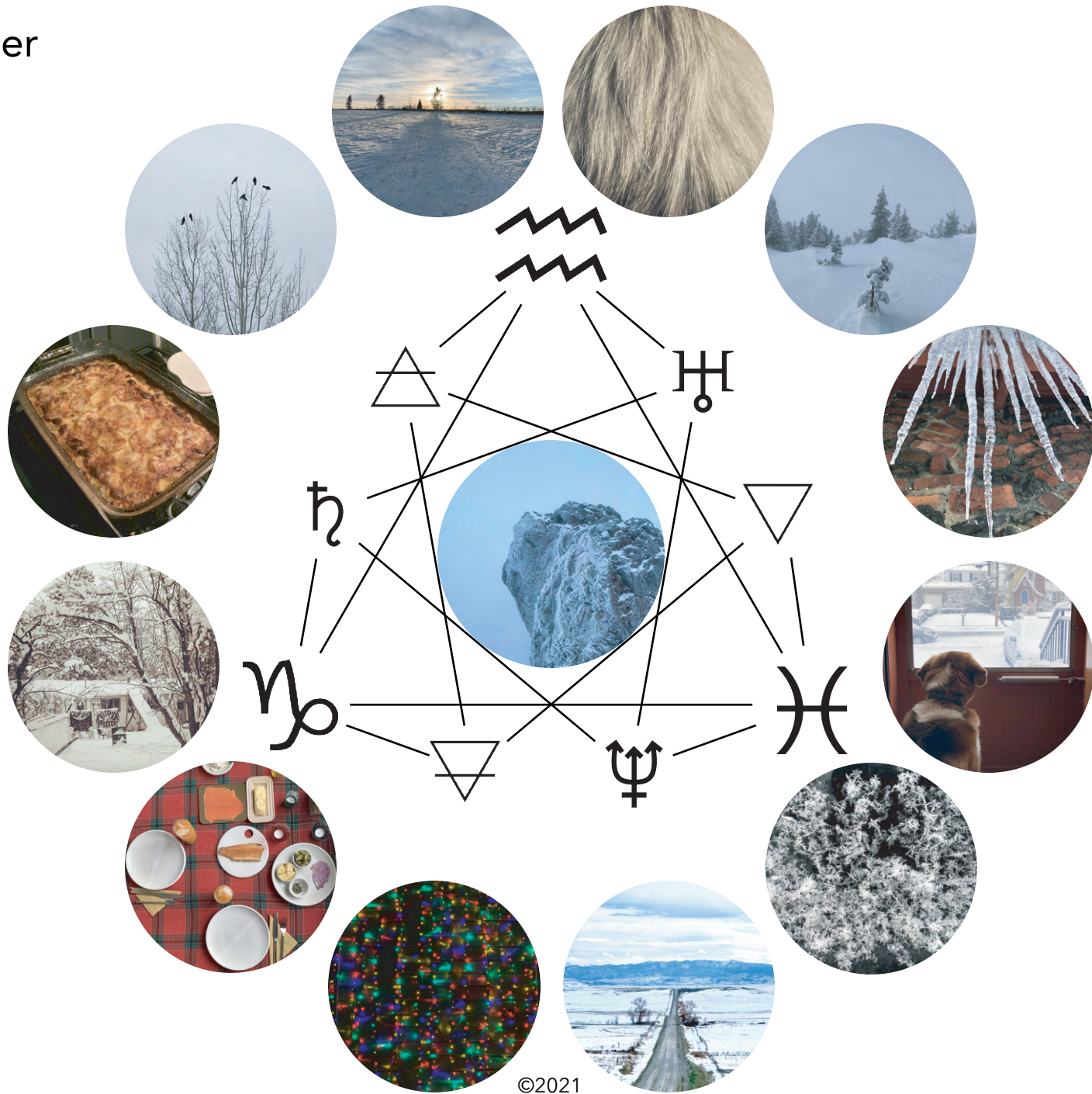
3F. Summer



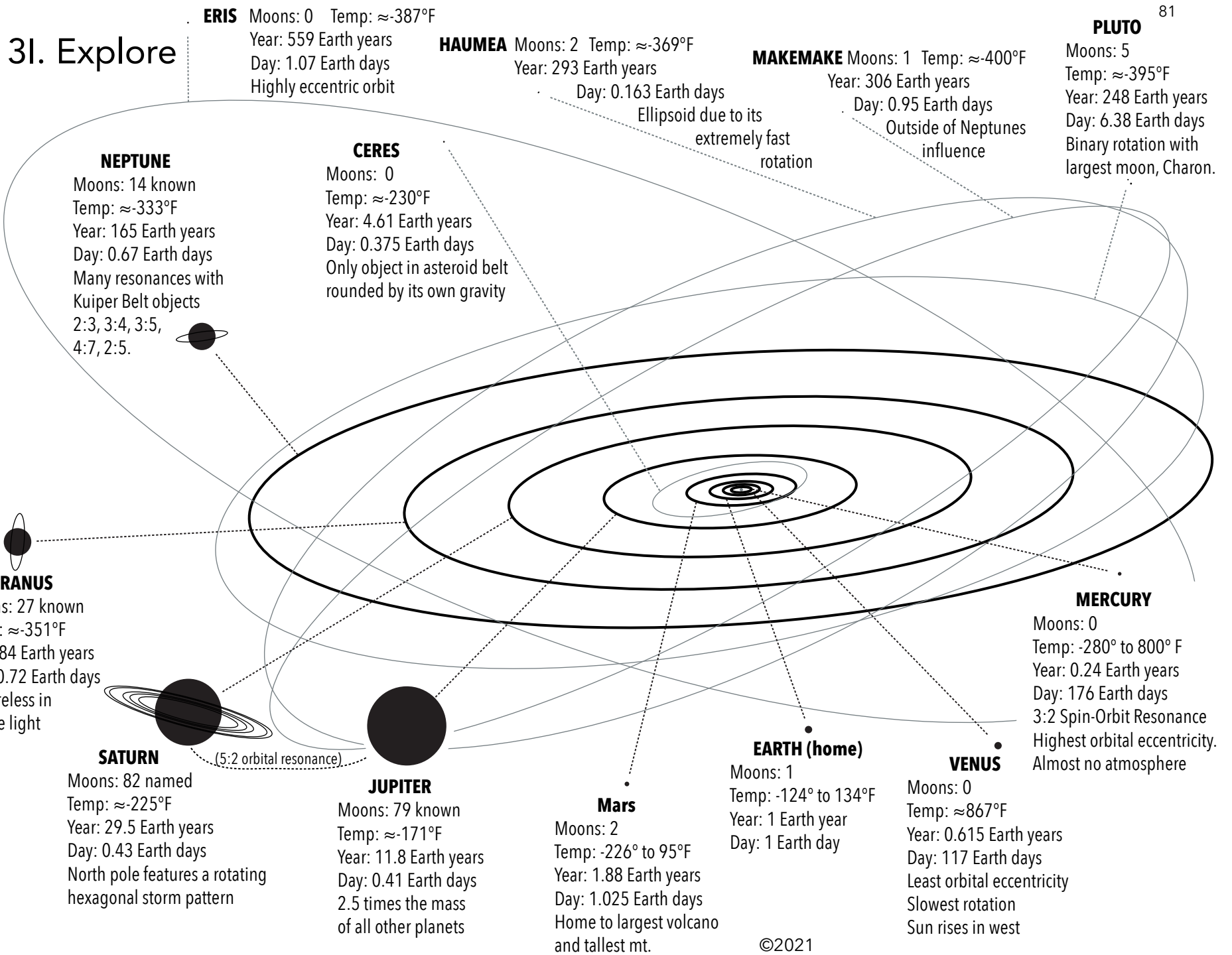
3G. Fall



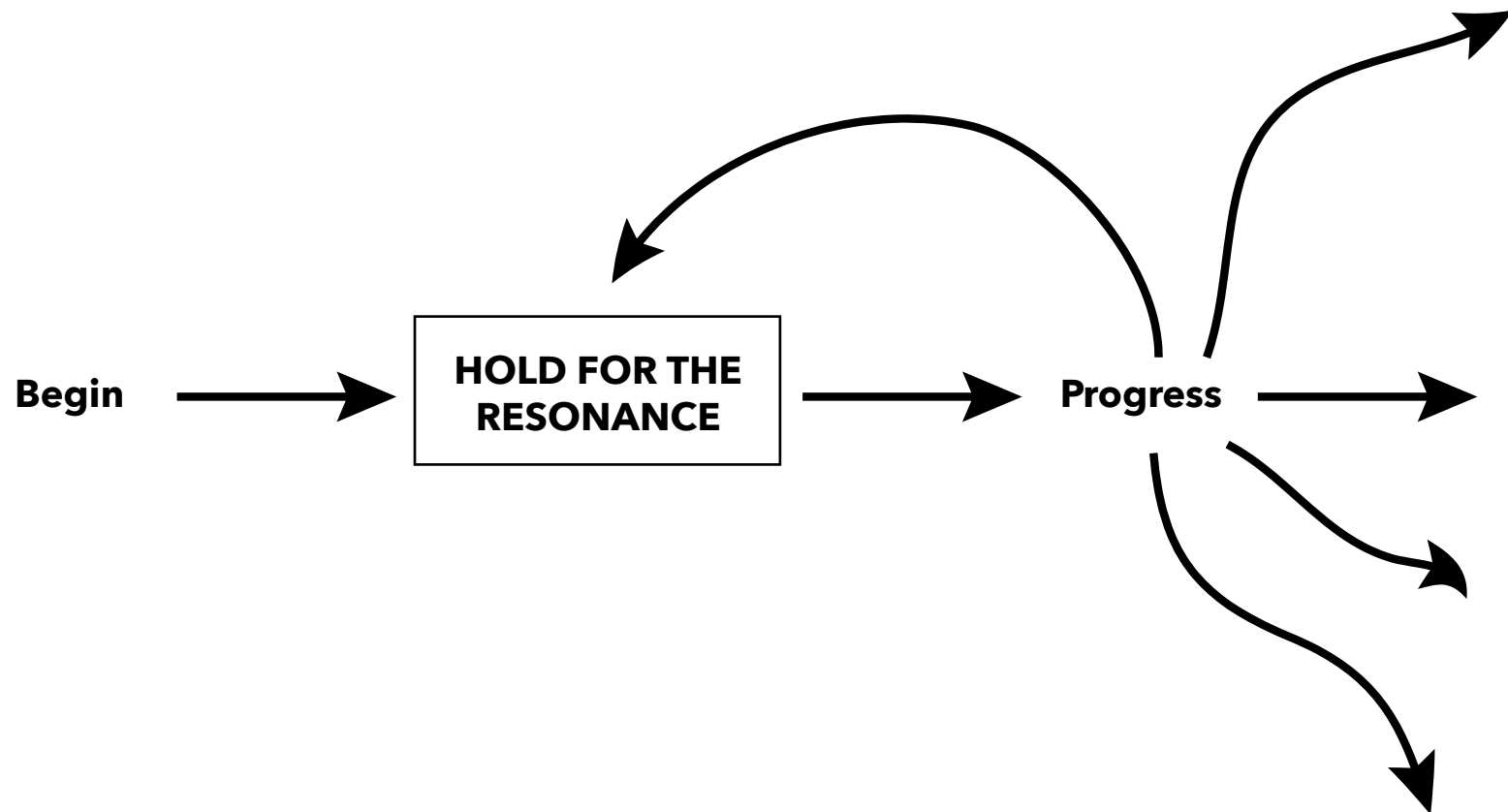
3H. Winter



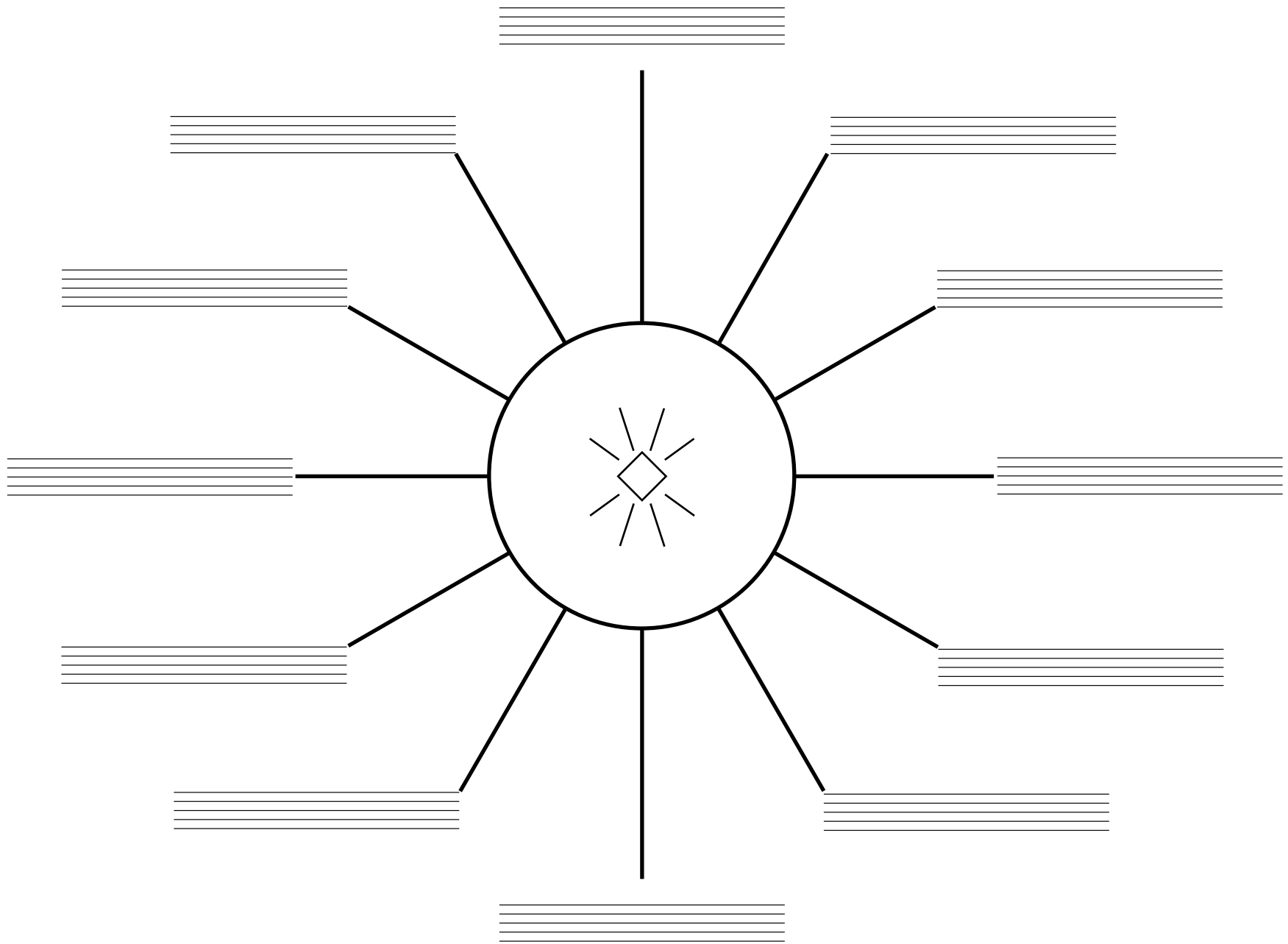
31. Explore

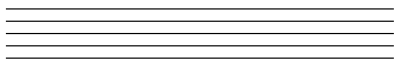
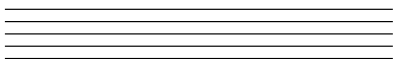
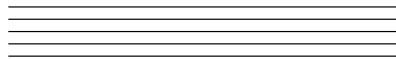
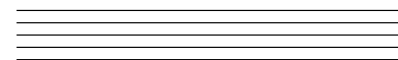
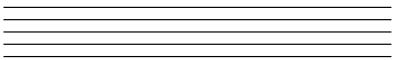
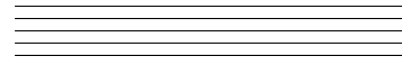
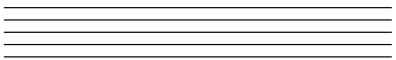
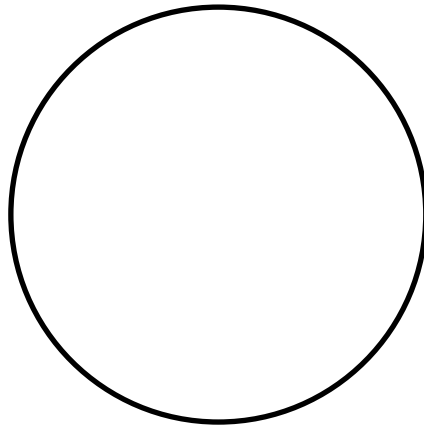
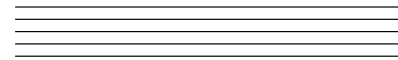
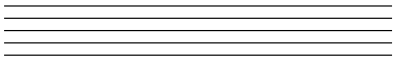
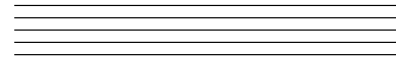
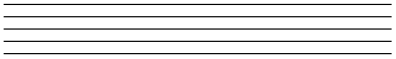
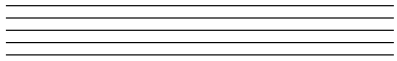


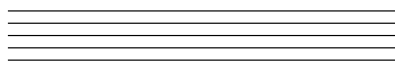
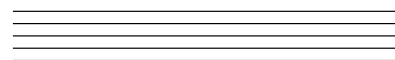
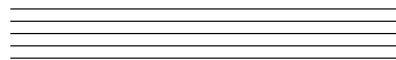
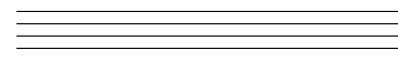
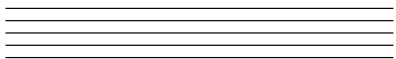
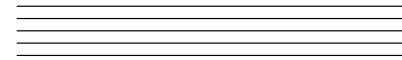
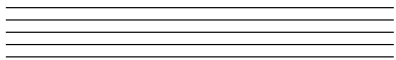
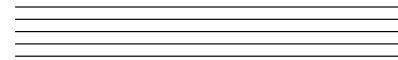
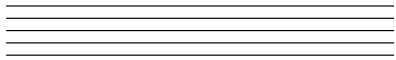
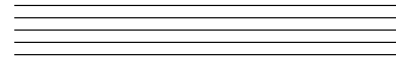
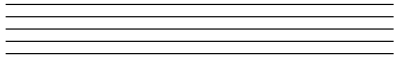
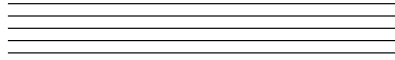
3J.

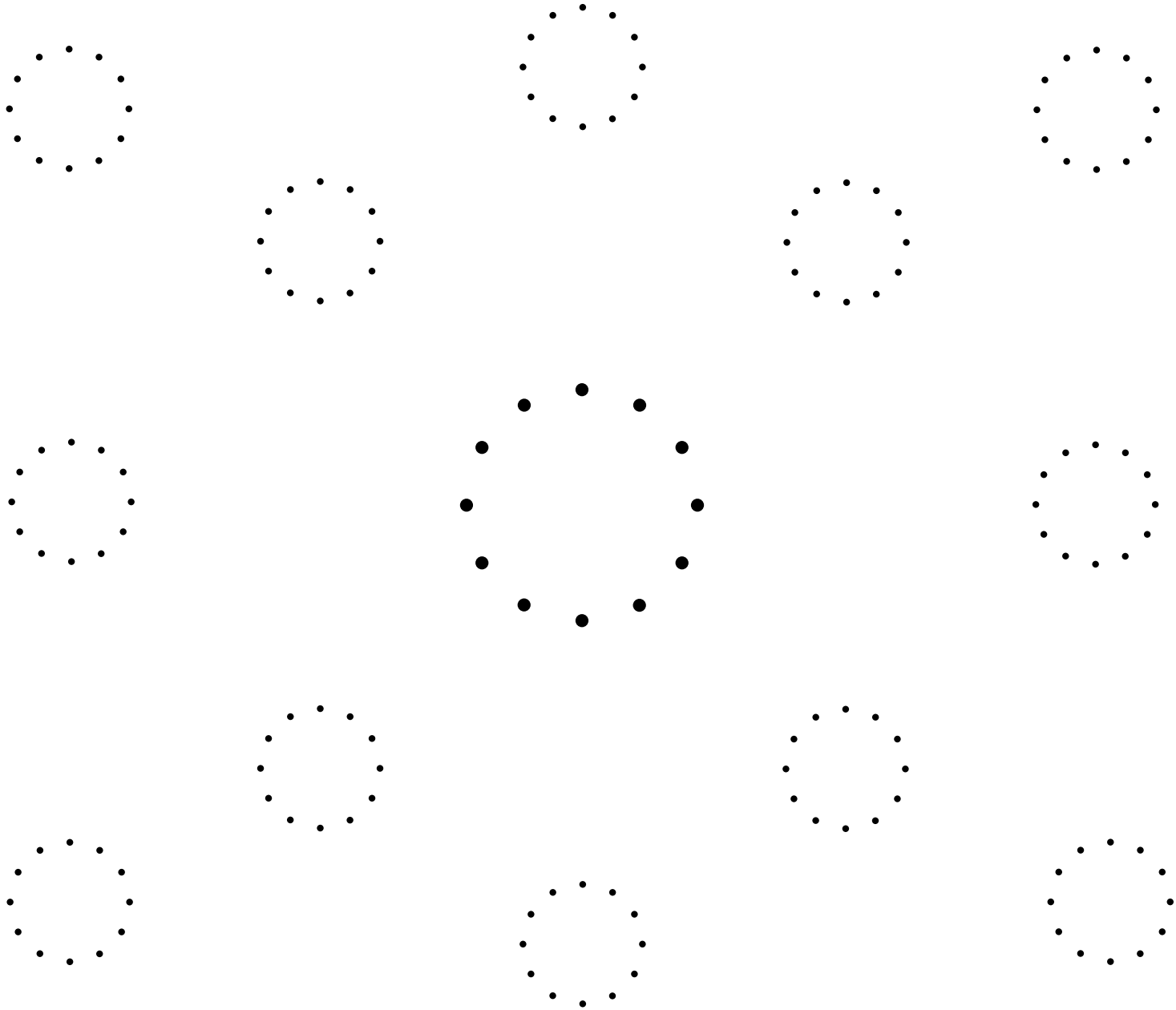


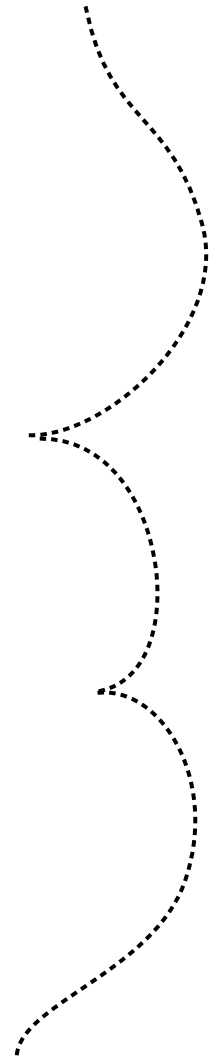
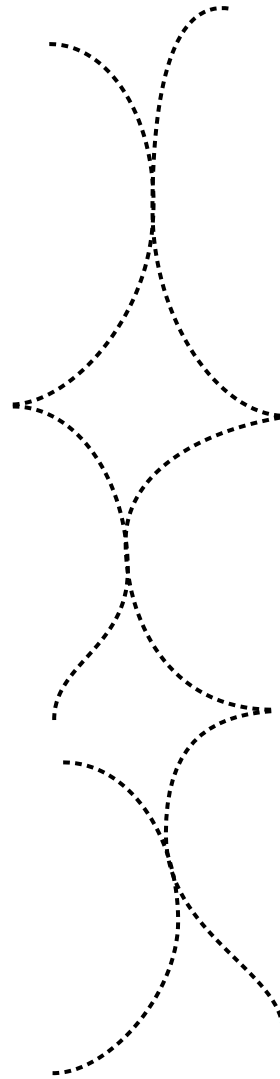
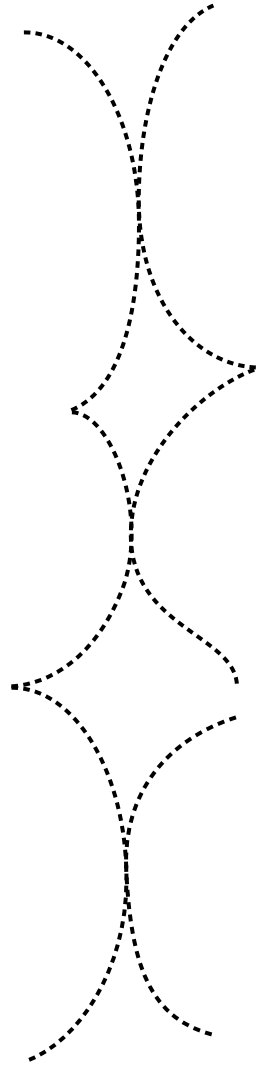
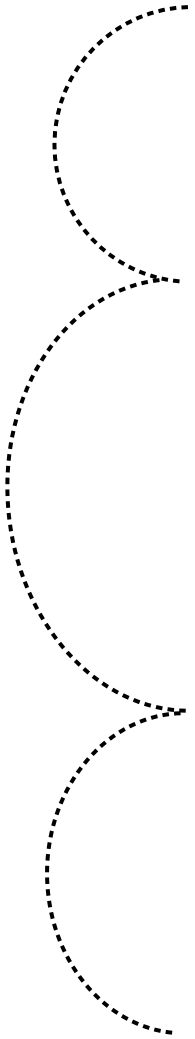
Appendix i, **Blank Templates**

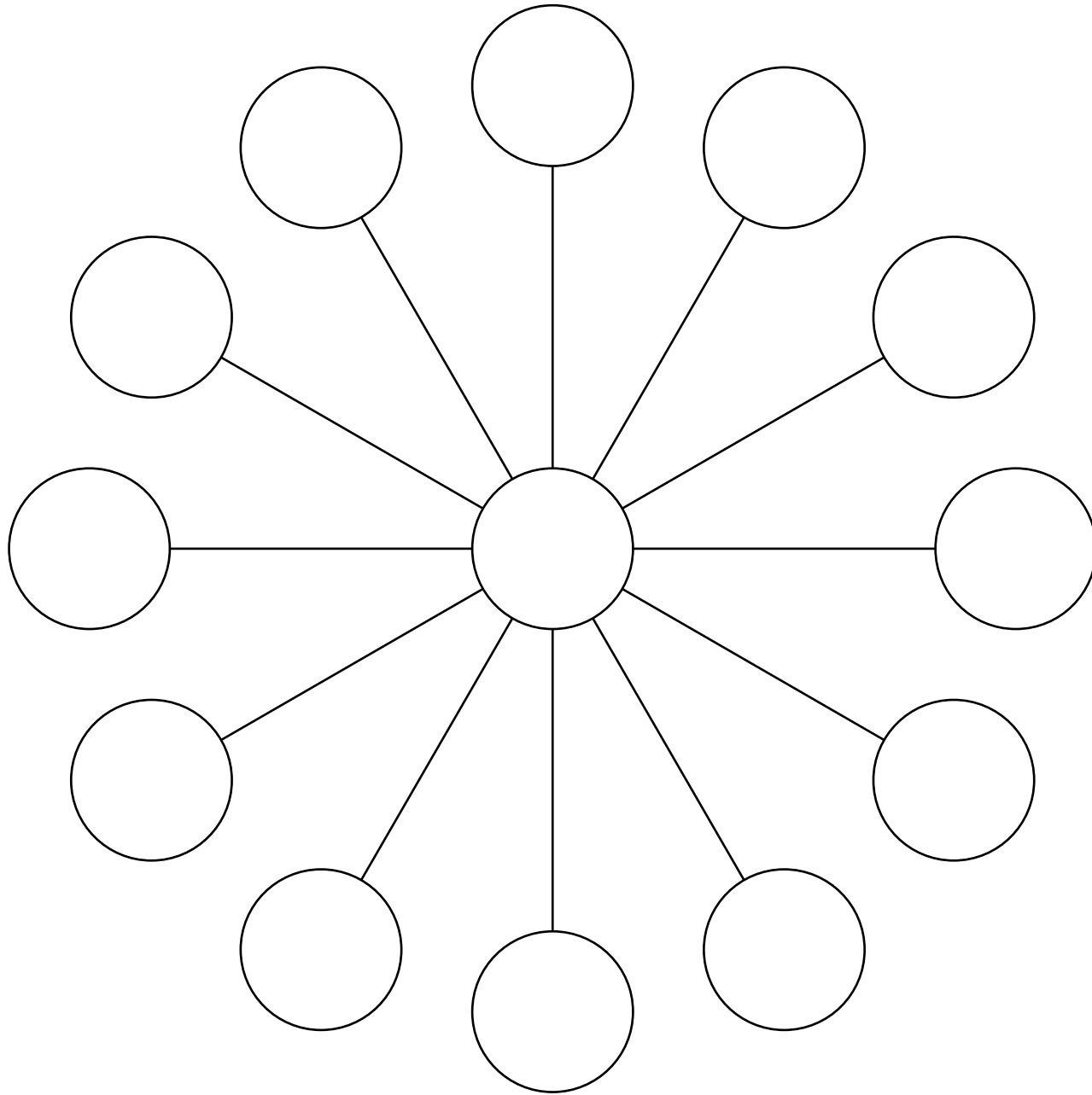












Appendix ii, Notes

The templates are categorized by the musical dimension used as thematic material; Tone, Time, or Space. Keep in mind that the written aspects of each template should be understood to only dictate decisions within its respective dimension. For example, any rhythms seen within Part I should be taken as approximations, or can be ignored entirely. The tones are suggested, you decide the rest.

Use your copy machine! I encourage playing these templates simultaneously, which is tricky if you have to flip pages. Combining pages from any part of this book is very encouraged.

Remember, the following notes are just *my* thoughts. Feel free to take the material for what it is and discover what you will with it.

Part I, Tone

All necessary Bb & Eb transpositions, as well as Bass Clef charts, are available at www.AlexRobilotta.com

1A-G. The Modes - The modes are foundational material for any improviser and provide an easily understood point of unity for a solo or ensemble performance. These pages can be easily combined because they all use the same 7 tones. They can also be altered using accidentals to cover the modes of Harmonic Minor, Melodic Minor, or Harmonic

Major. These were some of the first pages I wrote for this project (after 1T. Sun Flower) when I envisioned it as only 10 or 12 pages.

1H. What Modes? - Similar to 1A-G. But without a defined root, allowing for a more modulatory approach.

1I. Sunrise, Sunset - The modes are presented in order of their character, by brightness. Working around the circle will create a gradual transition from day to night and back. This transition could happen quickly or one performance of this page could last hours. Each mode is presented on a 'tone clock'. The twelve O'clock position representing the note C. This style of notation will return later in the book. For more information on the 'tone clock' concept I recommend researching the work of Peter Schat and Jenny McLeod, as well as the music and writing of guitarist Miles Okazaki.

1J. Triad Cheeseburger - This piece presents six triads to be moved through or combined. In solo experiments using a loop pedal I have enjoyed the interconnectivity of these triads. This page could also be changed to use minor as opposed to major triads.

1K. Round & Round - Here we have the circle of 5ths and various melodic ideas in bass and treble clef for each key. If subtlety and careful listening are employed players of this piece can maintain some level of continuity. But without care this could quickly turn into chaos, which is not necessarily a bad thing.

1L. Drone Zone - The 5-Limit lattice of 12 tones as presented in *Harmonic Experience*. The title 'Drone Zone' came from my vision of this piece as a tool for really hearing the relationships between the tones. Slowly growing from the starting point 1:1 C. The more horizontal lines represent perfect 5ths up or down and the more vertical lines represent major 3rds up or down. Ideally this idea should be presented in just-intonation. Drone Zone could serve as an interesting foundation for any template in Part III.

1M. Overtone Journey - This page also shows connections of perfect 5ths and major 3rds. Traveling from C to F to create a very long plagal cadence. Each pitch represents the first fundamental pitch of an overtone series but undertones could also be implemented to create minor tonalities.

1N-O. Augmented & Diminished Worlds - All the tonal possibilities presented by augmented triads and fully diminished 7th chords are shown using the tone clock. Shared tones between various shapes within the two worlds are shown as 'bridges'. I highly recommend working extensively in each world before attempting to use the bridges. This concept will take additional research. For a much more graceful presentation of this concept see the section on 'Symmetrical Shifting' in Miles Okazakis book, *Fundamental of Guitar*.

1P. Red Planet - This is the first of two serial templates. The tone row used is from the composition 'Red Planet'. The true composer of this piece is debated. It was first released by John Coltrane with the title 'Miles Mode' and later by Eric

Dolphy as 'Red Planet'. I'm of the opinion that it was composed by Dolphy. Either way, its an incredible piece of music. The performance of this template is somewhat self explanatory. Go for it.

1Q. Just 12 Tones - This template uses the tone row from Anton Webern's *Concerto for 9 Instruments*, op. 24. The row is derived from a 3 tone theme used in 4 mutations; prime, retrograde, inversion, and retrograde-inversion. Various interconnections are shown using Tone Clock notation. There's a lot to be said within that 3 tone theme.

1R. Diamond - Exploration of the Incipient Tonality Diamond, diagram 5 in *Genesis of A Music*, by Harry Partch. I found the tonal relationships within the scale and chords generated to be very interesting. The various connections are shown below the diamond.

1S. Unity - Intervals, that's all. Start together, unified, and branch out. A possibility to consider is that any tone can become a new point of unity. Through this page all things are possible. But it is important to be aware of whats going on, at least at first.

1T. Sun Flower - This was just a musical doodle that I did two or three years ago that planted an idea in the back of my head. That idea grew into this book. Not much to say about it. There are specific organizing principles and patterns contained within the shape for you to discover.

Part II, Time

I encourage participants to begin Part II by trying most of these templates using only percussion instruments, noise makers, and anything else non-tonal. (2D-E will probably not be useful this way) In some cases just clapped hands are all that's needed to get deep into these ideas. Once the ideas are understood add tone into the mix.

2A. Make a Sound For... - Think of time in bigger units. This is a prime example of how a lot of this book is just an idea that doesn't really require the 'music.' I present the longer time units using the Fibonacci Sequence starting with 5 seconds as a base (notice the arrow, encouraging the sequence to continue) but really this is about doing one thing for a long time, thinking about longer structures of form and gradual development. Having the Fibonacci Sequence as a unifying principle is nice because it will keep the performers on track, but really this is just about learning to be patient. Not immediately responding to what every musician does in the group. Keep doing what you're doing longer than you think you should. The use of a clock or stop watch might be helpful, but counting an internal beat of ≈ 60 bpm will also be fine. This template is easily combined with any other template in this book.

2B. Start with Silence - A reminder that silence is music too. Because we are now in 'Part II' the graphic notation surrounding the silence should be understood as descriptions of rhythm, not tone or space. But again, as

usual, do what you do. This book isn't really about me and my ideas.

2C. The Pulse - Pulse is a dynamic concept. Tunes are always started by establishing a pulse. This template encourages a deep look at orbiting pulses (polyrhythmic) around a central pulse (quarter note.) Any pulse can become any other pulse at anytime. This page can become very challenging and overwhelming very quickly. Take your time with it. Start with the familiar rhythms without changing the quarter note. Practice the more difficult polyrhythms on your own before trying to make them work in a group. 6:5 or 5:6 can take months of work to fully absorb, not to mention 11:9!

2D. Loop Zone - This idea is an adaptation of a technique that I've used in a few compositions. Some of which were lost when a hard drive broke years ago. The idea is to have tone loops going over each other with a unified pulse so that the various loops create new intervalic relationships as they phase. This can be done within a unifying tonal structure or freely. I do like the idea of combining this idea with any of the templates from Part I.

2E. Expanded Loop Zone - This page just takes the loop zone a little further. Now we incorporate triplets. This concept can be taken as far as you like. To get a taste of a very advanced loop zone apply this looping technique to 2C.

2F. Rhythm of The One - The rhythms presented here are taken from James Brown rhythm section parts. A lot of my early guitar playing was influenced by these rhythms and I

think they are excellent rhythmic material to explore. These rhythms can be used to create dynamic rhythmic structures between any instruments. The notation itself is up to the performer to interpret.

2G. The Keystone - I recently learned that 'clave' translates as key, code, clef, key code, or keystone. This definition is the inspiration for the visual presentation of this template. The material is made up of various afro-cuban percussion parts built around a 2/3 rhumba clave pattern. The material itself was provided by friend and percussionist, Doug Wales. Similar to 2F this template allows for a free exploration of these rhythms. I find the opportunity to use these rhythms without placing them on their intended instruments opens all kinds of possibilities.

2H. Reflections - Four rhythms related to or inspired by Brazilian music traditions presented in four forms; original, simplified, negative space, and negative space simplified. I considered including all these rhythms in retrograde as well, but decided against it. If that is something you'd like to explore, please do.

2I. World of Rhythm - This template encourages the players to free themselves from the pulse. Every where you go you can hear rhythms and these rhythms are never a constant unchanging pulse. Even the orbit of the Earth around the sun is not exactly the same every time. I chose emojis to describe the rhythmic sounds of the world because these days we are all familiar with them and they are generally thought of in broad terms. For example, the bird emoji does

not represent a particular species of bird or specific activities that birds participate in, just 'Bird'. This allows the participant to explore the rhythms they associate with a bird, in all of its contexts.

2J. Speak - The true rhythms of the spoken word are almost entirely overlooked in today's music. Even songs with lyrics are written with specific 'musical' rhythms to the words. These rhythms may be related to the way a person talks, but within a notated rhythmic context it is very difficult to accurately imitate the rhythms of human speech. I chose to use the poem *The World is a Beautiful Place* by Lawrence Ferlinghetti as material for this template. But really it doesn't matter at all what poem is chosen. Each musician could just choose one of their favorite poems and have a conversation through them; the piece would be just as effective. If this book is ever published (not likely) I will probably just include this description instructing the players to find their own material.

Part III, **SPACE**

Part III is entirely made up of inspirational material for music. There is no traditional musical notation. These templates define the mood, shape or space that the music occupies.

These materials are meant to help you figure out what things mean to you and how you can describe them with music. This is the real task of this book. This is where the real work takes place. Sure, learning how to play all the complexities of Parts I and II are important, but this is the deep work. The higher knowledge and information exists here.

3A. Lines - An interconnected network of linear structures. The connecting lines could be used to simply show how to get from one line to the next or they could be considered to be areas of sound creation themselves that you can play however you want. Each line can be used forward or backward and can take as long as you want.

3B. Shapes - Starting with fundamental building blocks in the center that interconnect and morph as the shapes move to the exterior. The first step for a participant is to figure out how to play a circle, triangle, square, and pentagon. After you have defined these basic parameters for yourself the rest of these images should be a simple matter of combining and mutating your original ideas. As an example let's look at the triangle. Here's a short list of things that I associate with the equilateral triangle and triangles in general. Augmented triad, 3/4 time, highly angular music, all triads, major 7th

chords, crescendos and diminuendo, arrows, pyramids, accents, short loud notes. This is just my list. You have to examine these ideas for yourself.

3C. Color - Music has been associated with color for a very long time. Here we see the spectrum and can experiment with blending musical colors. But again the first step is to figure out what the primary colors mean to you musically.

3D. Full Spectrum - This template attempts to merge the ideas presented in 3A-C. There is some thought given to the layout and the shapes, lines and colors presented. But I would encourage everyone who uses this book to experiment with creating their own version of 3D. Playing what I wrote is great, but writing your own will really get the creative juices flowing as you image how to describe different sounds with images and vice versa.

3E-H. The Seasons - The cycles of the natural world have been a source of inspiration for musicians since the beginning. The photos included in these templates were crowd sourced from many friends and fellow musicians. The graphic symbols in the center are the astrological signs associated with each season and the associated elements and planets. I recommend research into the motion of the earth, astrology, anthropology, and any other related topics to fully comprehend and perform these pages. Keep the Anthony Braxton quote at the beginning of part III in mind when preparing to play a season.

3I. Explore - The movement of the planets and the environments that exist on each planet have always interested me. They should interest all of us. In this template we can journey from object to object and stop for awhile wherever we choose to describe that place with music. Again, I recommend additional research into any planet you choose to spend any serious amount of time on. One thing to mention is that the planets are drawn to scale with each other and the orbits are drawn to scale with each other, but the relationship of the size of the planets to the orbits is not to scale. With the orbits at this scale even Jupiter would be far too small for the printer to print. It is important to try and understand the vastness of space between the planets. There is a great mini documentary on the National Geographic youtube page that helped me wrap my head around this, brilliantly titled: *Watch This Guy Build a Massive Solar System in The Desert*.

3J. Hold For The Resonance - This is the most important page in this book. The title is taken from instructions on how to practice singing perfect tonal ratios in tune, from the book *Harmonic Experience*, by W.A. Mathieu. While describing the technique for singing perfect ratios of tones in tune he uses the phrase, "hold out for the resonance." I've been working on hearing and singing these ratios a lot in COVID times and this phrase has stuck with me. The idea of this template is for everyone to just start and keep doing what they are doing. In this situation *Hold for The Resonance* doesn't mean you are going to consciously fine tune what you're doing to fit in with the other musicians; although this will happen subconsciously, it is more about waiting for your mind to find

the resonance between what you are doing and what the other musicians are doing. It's there, just wait for it. When everyone has signaled that they feel it, the group can progress freely possibly pausing your progress to find other resonances down the road. This idea has become a far reaching principle for me beyond music. Because of COVID I have yet to try it, or anything else in this book, in a musical context.

There is never an end. There are always new sounds to imagine, new feelings to get at. And always, there is the need to keep purifying these feelings and sounds so that we can really see what we've discovered in its pure state. So that we can see more and more clearly what we are. In that way, we can give to those who listen the essence, the best of what we are. But to do that at each stage, we have to keep on cleaning the mirror.

-John Coltrane; DeVito, 2010, pg. 264

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