

The whole tone scale

The whole tone scale emerged in 19th Century music, and its distinctive harmony can be found in works by Debussy (e.g. *Voiles*) and Schoenberg (*Chamber Symphony No. 1*). Employing the melodic signing technique that has proved most suitable for Harmony Signing (see [The full chromatic scale employed in Harmony Signing]), the whole tone scale can be represented as follows:

Doh – Re – Mi – Fi – Si – Ta – Doh^l

Exploring the melodic potential of this scale against a drone can provide a new aural experience compared to that of the Major and minor, and also provides a valuable challenge in tuning that requires setting aside ingrained habits of placing semitones in their conventional positions in a scale.

Another exercise that extends this is to introduce free polyphonic exploration: every individual voice determines its own pathway through the texture by moving up and down steps of the scale at different speeds, sometimes pausing and changing direction. In a large group, this gives rise to a memorably hazy texture that provides a clear impression of the distinct harmonic world that the whole tone scale can conjure.