Name: ....

Serial Composition / Terminal Task

Schoenberg developed a new composition technique that used a type of scale (tone row) as the basis for the piece's form and structure. This scale should contain all twelve chromatic notes once only, but in whichever order the composer decides.

Devise your own "tone row" in the stave below. You may want to cross out the following notes as you use them, to ensure they are each used once only.

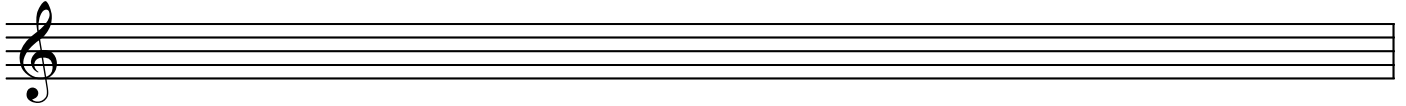C   C#   D   D#   E   F   F#   G   G#   A   A#   B
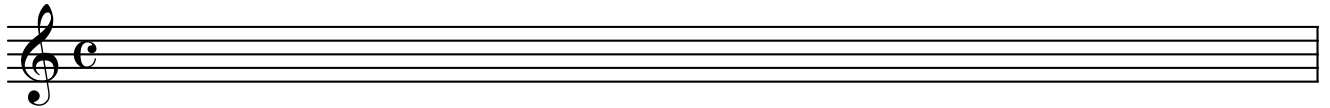
Now the difficult bit: work out the **inversion** for this tone row. If you went up x semitones in the original, you should come down x semitones in the inversion.
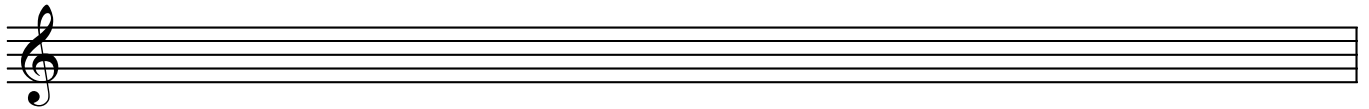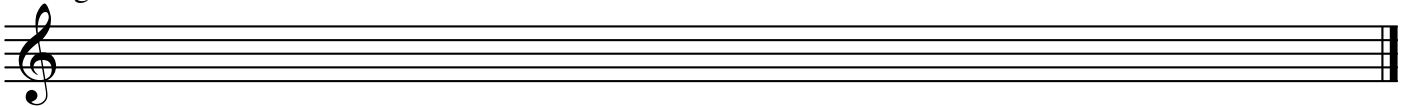

Now for two easy bits: create a **retrograde row** and a **retrograde inversion** row. "Retrograde" simply means "backwards."

Retrograde:

Retrograde inversion:

Now the creative bit!
Use any or all of the tone rows you have created to compose a melody for your instrument which you should work at, as per a terminal task assignment. When using a row, you should use the notes in the order you have worked out, although you can repeat individual notes. If you want to make things more challenging for yourself you can transpose any of your rows to any of the other twelve notes within the octave!

This should be a creative exercise, not a "number-crunching exercise" and so, using the Schoenberg piece as a model, try to create something that is expressive and musically shaped. Consider the following:

1) rhythm - notice how sophisticated Schoenberg's rhythms are
2) melodic shape and phrasing - the rows need not fall into four-bar phrases though!
3) dynamics - there is an enormous wealth of detail in Schoenberg's piece. Try to make something of this when you come to perform your serial piece.