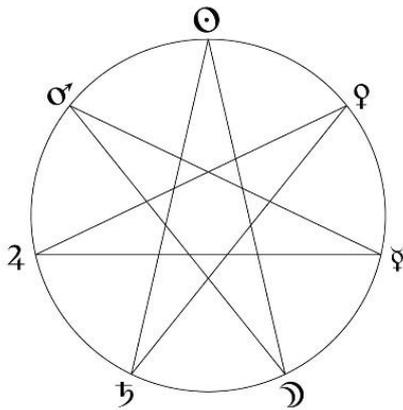


SEPTIMANA



Septimana is a suite of musical sketches contemplating the seven planetary weekdays, expressing the characteristics of numbers and divine eponyms using seven keys, rhythms, scales, melodies, sound collages and improvisations. Live performance on wind instruments engages with sampled sounds. It is inspired by my post-graduate research on 'Star Music' in the 'Myth, Cosmology and the Sacred' programme at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK.

Septimana is Late Latin for 'week'. In the world of late antiquity, there was a general sense that the stars were connected to the gods. The seven day cycle of the week is a Sumerian-Babylonian invention and the present assignment of the planetary gods to the days of the week dates from the Greek-Hellenistic era. Seven is the number of celestial objects visible to the naked eye. Their sequence in the week is probably derived from the Chaldean order: furthest (Saturn) to nearest (Moon) to Earth, jumping two planets as in a heptagram. Joscelyn Godwin has argued that the order of the days of the week derive from the Greek Dorian mode applied to the Chaldean order, proceeding by descending fifths (Godwin 1992, 265). I have taken over his scheme as keys for my music to the week days (A-D-G-C-F-B-E) and connect them with the church modes.

When the Roman emperor Constantine officially adopted the seven-day week in AD 321, it had been in use informally since the first century BC. Because Constantine was a Christian convert, he moved the first day of the week from Saturday to Sunday. The seven-day sequence was adopted by the Germanic peoples before their conversion to Christianity, substituting the Germanic gods (except Saturn) with what Jeff Kripal has called 'a polytheistic comparative practice based on the god's function' (Kripal 2014, 13). Within a few centuries the seven-day week spread from the Mediterranean over much of the world. I follow the contemporary order by starting from Monday, giving each day's music a progressive meter: 1 - 2/4 - 3/4 - 4/4 - 5/4 - 6/8 - 7/4. As the week has a circular pattern, the music should be played 'in repeat', forever.

Eduard Heyning

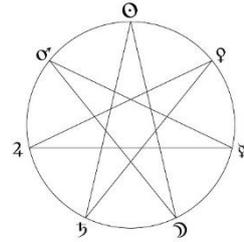
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References:

Godwin, J. (1992) 'Speculative Music: the Numbers behind the Notes' in: *Companion to contemporary musical thought*. Vol. 1, p. 246-261. John Paynter (ed.). London: Routledge.

Kripal, J. J. (2014) *Comparing Religions: Coming to Terms*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

SEPTIMANA



Monday: 1. Luna

The first day of the week is set in the dream world of Luna, the Moon goddess. Against the backdrop of a Mediterranean beach, a harp is playing Aeolian scales to a soprano clarinet, centring on A, suggesting eternal recurrence, Oneness.

Tuesday: 2. Mars

Forward movement on two legs characterises the second day, ruled by Mars (or Tiw) and his marching soldiers. On solid ground, timpani give the beat to a brass section, suggesting Roman military instruments. A soprano saxophone adds battle cries in a Dorian mode on D.

Wednesday: 3. Mercurius

Mercury (or Wodan) rules the third day, in which the pleasures of eloquence, learning and poetry bring dawn to winged creatures. A triple rhythm invites graceful movement to the sound of a string quintet; a volatile Myxolydian melody on D is added by an alto saxophone.

Thursday: 4. Jupiter

On the fourth day of the week the charged atmosphere creates lightning and controlled desire, ruled by Thor or joyful Jupiter, gods of thunder. A Tango in C Ionian offers a fourfold beat to the roar of a tenor saxophone.

Friday: 5. Venus

On the fifth day there is time for celebration, ruled by the goddess of love, Frige or Venus. Nature rejoices in the fertile maturity of spring. Exotic percussion instruments play a Lydian blues in F to a fivefold rhythm, to which an alto saxophone adds a sparkle.

Saturday: 6. Saturnus

The long-lost golden age of Saturn is the theme of the sixth, rainy day of the week. Saturn has a melancholy disposition, expressed by a melody with a recurring Locrian triad on B in six eight time by a romantic ensemble, answered by a soprano saxophone.

Sunday: 7. Sol

The day of the Lord or Sol Invictus is announced by church bells. The Cross of Christ or the Tree of Life is invoked by the sound of a bass clarinet over a slow seven-note Phrygian *cantus firmus* on E. The week has been fulfilled and the soul is drawn into regeneration on a final A minor chord, leading to Monday.