

Parking an Octatonic Truck

An "octatonic" scale is a fancy name for any scale that has 8 different pitches. The more common major scale by contrast has only 7 different pitches (and for some reason is referred to as a diatonic scale).

The most common octatonic scales are created by systematically alternating intervals of semitones with whole tones. A number of composers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries incorporated the octatonic scale into their music. Two of the more notable composers to do this were Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) and Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992).

This piece uses the following octatonic scale by dividing it into two groups of 4 notes:

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

Once you have learned this pattern you will see that the piece is put together very simply.

One other feature of this piece is that there are always four other pitches on the piano that will be left out of any octatonic scale. These notes have been used to audibly convey the warning beeps of a truck after it shifts into reverse and begins to back up.

Carefully ($\text{♩} = 52$) John Burge

mp molto legato *mf*

mf (no dim.) *mp*

4

7

mf

mf *mp*

10

13

mf

mf *mp*

16

mf

19

mf *dim.* *p*

mp