MICRO 3

**SYMBOLS for MICROTONAL (19-, 21-, 24-, 36-, 72-NOTE) MUSIC**

MICRO 3 is a OTF font designed for the 1/12th-tone notation system developed by Ezra Sims for his own music and now taught in the microtone classes of New England Conservatory. It was created using Altsys Fontographer (now Fontlab), and is available for Mac and Windows platforms. In addition, the font set contains other commonly used microtonal diacritical marks (backwards flat, Tartini sharps), including a set of symbols used by the composer Mathew Rosenblum in his hybrid 19-note scale. I have also included two alternate sets of 1/12-tones symbols with varying degrees of sleekness, which might work better in densely voiced music.

MICRO is very much a specialty font, although some downloaders have been graphic artists intrigued by the runic quality of the symbols. The notation of microtonal music seems to be a very personal matter, and the harvest of MICRO adopters from the larger (but still microscopic) collection of microtonalists is meagre.

Since I am now charging ($25US) for the use of this font, my recommendation is to work with the notation system using a pencil first. Once you are sold on the system, the font is spectacular.

ABOUT THE 1/12-TONE SYSTEM:

The 1/12th-tone notation system contained in MICRO is convenient and transparent, with sufficient redundancy to reduce misreading and provide spelling options. Its great advantage over almost all other microtone systems is that it requires the user to learn only 3 new signs, and their inversions. These are (in fractions of a tone):
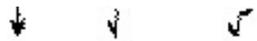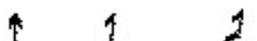
or in combination with the standard sharps and flats:
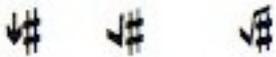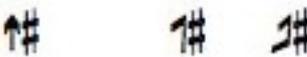
and are, with the natural sign, sufficient to describe any note of a 72-note division of the octave. Single notes and digraphs with the sharp or flat are all accessed by single keystrokes. Digraphs using the double sharp or flat can be easily produced with two strokes, as can any other combination not provided as a single stroke character.

Speaking from the point of view of a compensated dyslexic, I can vouch for the readability of this system.

A 72-note octave is ideal for notation of the higher harmonics through no. 64. If used to describe Equal Temperament, it can perspicuously express all 64 with no error greater than 6+cents, less than the error with which traditional notation describes many of the Diatonic intervals. If used to describe an Extended Just Intonation, it can easily describe all the first 64 (and many even higher) harmonics of whatever fundamental has been made the basis of the current tuning.

By adding only three symbols and using them alone or in combination with the traditional ones, these 1/12 -tone symbols contained in MICRO cause the least possible disruption of the players' perceptual habits. The ease with which they can be learned and applied has been thoroughly tested in over 20 years of performances by ensembles and soloists in the US, Europe and Japan.

In addition, I have included Micro3txt.otf, which includes baseline and size adjustments to use with word processors or text layout programs for all text applications of Micro3.

KEY ASSIGNMENTS: MICRO 3 Principal & Alternate Accidentals & Digraphs

Modifier	1	2	3	4	5	6
key	↓♭	↓♭	√♭	↡♭	↓♭	√♭
key + shift	↑♭	↑♭	♪♭	↟♭	↑♭	♪♭

Modifier	7	8	9
key	↓♭	↓♭	√♭
key + shift	↑♭	↑♭	♪♭

Modifier	a	s	d	f	g
key	↓	↓	√	↓	√
key + shift	↓♯	↓♯	√♯	↓♯	↓♯
key + shift + option		↓♭	√♭	↡♭	

Modifier	h	j	k	l
key	✓	↓	✓	✓
key + shift	✓#	↓#	✓#	✓#
key + option	√♭	↓♭	↓♭	√♭
key + shift + option		↓♭		√♭

Modifier	q	w	e	r	t	y
key	↑	♩	♪	↑	♪	♪♪
key + shift	↑#	♩#	♪#	↑#	♪#	♪#
key + shift + option		♩♭	♪♭	↑♭	♪♭	↑♭♭

Modifier	u	i	o
key	↑	𝄋	𝄋
key + shift	↑♯	𝄋♯	𝄋♯
key + shift + option		𝄋♭	𝄋♭

Modifier	z	x	c	v	b
key	𝄿	𝄀	↑	↓	♭
key + shift	♯	𝄪	♮		♭♭

Modifier	n	m	,	.	/
key	♮	♯	♭	𝄿	𝅝

KEY ASSIGNMENTS: Micro3txt, basic accidentals & Pitch Letters, in San Serif Caps

character	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	
key + shift	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
character	a	s	d	f	j	k	l	;
key	♭	↓	√	√	♯	↑	↑	↲

ABOUT THE FONT:

Now that computer notation programs have become sophisticated and flexible enough to accommodate micro-tonal music, it seemed time for a font to provide decent looking symbols. MICRO3 can be used as a text-based graphic expression in any music notation software that supports additional fonts. For those intrepid souls willing to wade deeply into the dialog box nightmare of Finale, MICRO can theoretically be wrestled into a custom key signature set and actually be accessed by the "Speedy Note Entry's" accidental toggle. For those folks who care to explore, there are a few other optional symbols (different sized flats, double flats, a cute little double sharp) buried in the key assignments, but not integral to the system.

The transcription of Harry Partch's Seventeen Lyrics of Li Po was the impetus for the creation of this font, since Partch's ratios are difficult to read, and Ezra Sims' 1/12-tone system of microtonal diacriticals is the only one I know that accurately and intuitively resolves Partch's 43-tone Just system into musician-readable notation. Just for fun I included a set of Tartini sharps and a backwards flat for 1/4-tone music. These, in combination with Sims' arrows, comprise the system used by Dean Drummond, to notate his 31-note Utonality -- although without the actual ratios, they are

inaccurate and therefore virtually meaningless, whereas the 1/12-tone symbols can describe it precisely. A new font, RATIO,under development, will contain the full set of ratios used by Harry Partch in his 43-note scale.

Recently the composer Mathew Rosenblum asked if I might add a couple of symbols that would accommodate his hybrid system, and they are found in the font set as well.

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