

COMPOSITION LESSONS

My teaching style:

I have strong opinions about music and about what I personally prefer to hear, and I will have several suggestions and topics to talk about for almost any composition. However, first and foremost, your music belongs to you, and my aim will never be to get you to write like me: my goal is to have you develop as large of a palette of compositional skills as possible so that you become the best person in the world at writing exactly what you want to hear.

Besides building the traditional fundamentals such as orchestration and form, I teach several elements of music that are not as frequently developed in composition lessons. We will learn how to shape a melodic line, we will talk about ways to create motivic material and set up its development, and we will do exercises to build creativity, imagination, and audiation skills.

Things to prepare for each composition lesson:

- Bring music that you are working on or have recently completed: (at least an hour in advance, send me either a Sibelius file or a PDF of the score and an audio file [preferably mp3/wav/aiff])
- Pay by purchasing a lesson via PayPal at www.michaelmikulka.com/compositionlessons.html
- Have a way to quickly write things down (alternatively, you can record our lessons)

Example of a typical lesson format:

- We will start by looking at and listening to a composition that you're currently working on or have recently completed: we will address any questions you have about it, and I will offer suggestions.
- We will listen to a piece (YouTube/possibly Spotify) or excerpt that addresses a relevant musical topic.
- I may do a short/moderate length lecture on a topic related to music/music theory.
- I may do an exercise developing audiation or aural skills.
- We will do a few creativity/imagination exercises.
- If you are interested, I will give you a listening assignment which targets a specific compositional skill.
- If you are interested, I will assign a homework assignment to build compositional creativity (example: take 8-16 measures from a piece by JS Bach and alter them to make it sound like it was written in the last 50 years).

You get a free 30 minute sample lesson – here are some things to prepare for it:

- Send me 1-5 of your compositions (at least a day in advance if possible)

Be ready to answer:

- What is your reason for writing music?
- What do you want to gain from these composition lessons?
- Who are your favorite composers and biggest influences?
- What are the areas of composition and musicianship that you would most like to improve in?