

Curse of The Sandman

for Solo Microtonal Guitar
(fretted in 8-EDO)

+ Electronic Effects

Rich Perks

“I move from dreamer to dreamer, from dream to dream, hunting for what I need. Slipping and sliding and flickering through the dreams; and the dreamer will wake, and wonder why this dream seemed different, wonder how real their lives can truly be.”

— Neil Gaiman (The Sandman)

8-EDO Overview

8-EDO (Equal Divisions of the Octave) is the tuning system derived by dividing the octave into eight equal parts of exactly 150 cents each. A guitar fretted in 8-EDO adds a further dimension in that each string can produce a different set of eight notes depending on the choice of tuning/scordatura applied. This yields a specific overall 'note-pool', containing a complex array of quarter-tone pitches. Certain notes may appear only in certain registers; and some pitch classes common to 12-TET (i.e. where each string yields the same twelve notes) may be eliminated altogether. This method of note/pitch generation presents various expansions and limitations both sonically and physically on the guitar, affording novel performance possibilities.

Each string generates a pitch-set comprising two diminished seventh arpeggios, each displaced by 150 cents. Though these pitch-sets inherently yield much dissonance, they also provide excellent approximations of 11-limit Just ratios 12/11 (undecimal neutral second $\approx 150.6\text{¢}$) and 11/6 (undecimal neutral seventh $\approx 1049.4\text{¢}$), and a very good approximation of the 13-limit Just ratio 13/10 (tridecimal semisixth $\approx 454.2\text{¢}$), see Figure 1 below.

Curse of The Sandman is written for any microtonal guitar fretted in 8-EDO (or any microtonal guitar capable of producing the equivalent note-pool, e.g. adjustable microtonal guitars; guitars fretted in 16-/24-EDO etc.), and makes explicit use of any well-approximated Just intervals throughout.

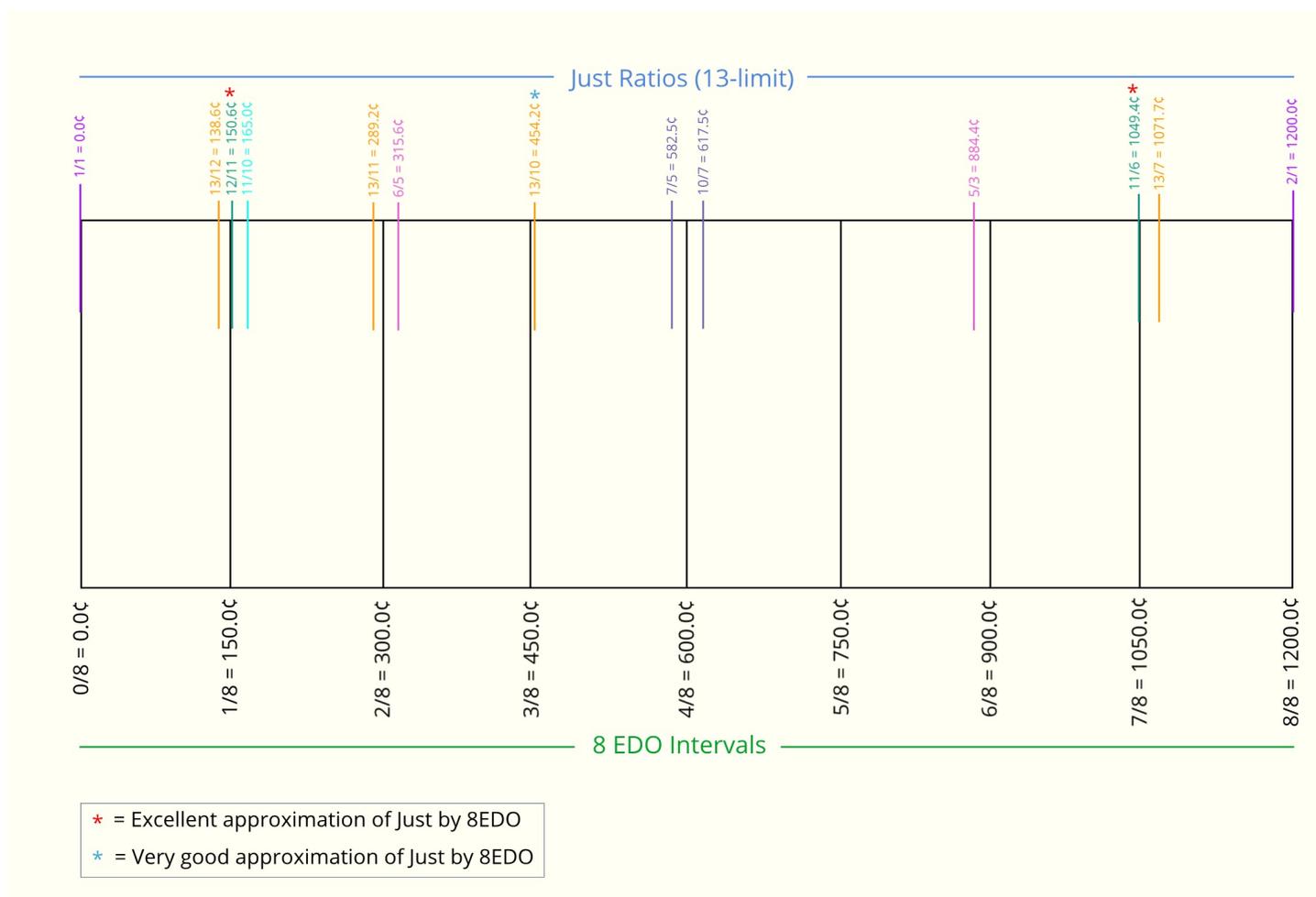


Fig 1. Just intervals approximated by 8-EDO

Note-pool/Fretboard Map (first octave)

6 5 4 3 2 1
D A D G B E

Open

I – Fret 1

II – Fret 2

III – Fret 3

IV – Fret 4

V – Fret 5

VI – Fret 6

VII – Fret 7

VIII – Fret 8

Enharmonics/Pitch Class Labelling System:

1. All quarter-tone pitches have been spelt in their simplest form (e.g. *C quarter-tone-sharp* is used instead of *D three-quarter-tones-flat* throughout, as this note is 'closer' to C than to D etc.).
2. Pitches along each string (by fret, from the open string) have been allocated a different 'letter-name', until the point at which a duplication of letter-name is needed to ensure simplest quarter-tone enharmonic spelling, in accordance with rule 1.
3. Any strings that yield the same pitch-set, have matching enharmonic spellings (to avoid confusion in score).
4. All semi-tone accidentals have been spelt consistently throughout, in accordance with rule 2.

Performance Notes

Curse of The Sandman is inspired by characters and events from the graphic novel *The Sandman vol. 1: Preludes & Nocturnes*, by Neil Gaiman (1989).

Duration: c. 5 minutes.

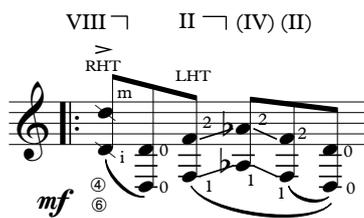
Scordatura:



⑥ ⑤ ④ ③ ② ①
D A D G B E

Special Techniques and Notations:

Tapping



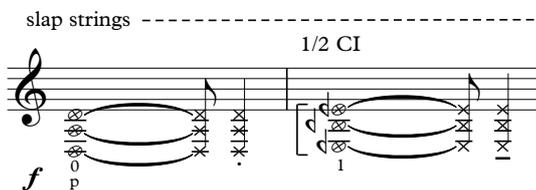
Right Hand Tapping (RHT)

Tap notes with right hand. Notated with *backslashed* noteheads and RHT direction above. Finger suggestions provided (i, m, a); Fret number/position indicated by Roman Numerals.

Left Hand Tapping (LHT)

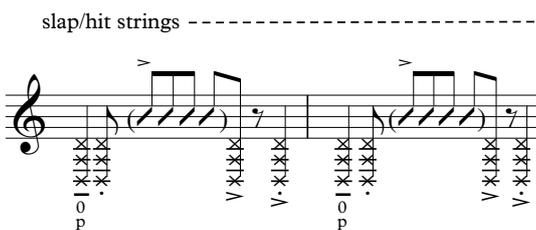
Tap notes with left hand. Notated with standard noteheads and LHT direction above. Finger suggestions provided (1, 2, 3, 4); Fret number/position indicated by Roman Numerals.

Percussive



Slap

Slap strings with right thumb (p) to create a forceful percussive sound (i.e. a more 'aggressive' form of *tambora*); notated with *cross-head* noteheads; performance direction above.



Hit

Hit strings (or guitar body) with either right or left hand; indeterminate pitch; notated with non-pitched *slash* noteheads in brackets; performance direction above.



'Hit' Artificial Harmonic

Strike strings with right index finger (i) directly above the fret indicated to create artificial harmonic(s); string numbers provided; sounding pitches notated with *diamond-head* noteheads; performance directions above.

Electronic Effects:

Electronic effects/pedals needed: reverb(s); delay(s); EQ boost; synth/bitcrusher; ring modulator [LFO]; and vinyl/phonograph emulator.

The use of electronic effects/pedals should be applied as directed by the score; specific settings however, may be decided by the performer. Effects may be added as part of a direct signal chain (i.e. if using an electric or electro-acoustic guitar) or via a microphone (i.e. if the guitar is acoustic). Effects instructions are indicated on the score in square brackets (underneath the staff), e.g. [add delay].

Curse of The Sandman – for Solo Microtonal Guitar (fretted in 8-EDO) + Electronic Effects

8-EDO fretted guitar used to compose, perform and record *Curse of The Sandman*:



Photo: Converted Yamaha CX40 (nylon-string electro-acoustic)

Curse of The Sandman

Duration: c. 5 mins.

Rich Perks

a tempo

♩ = 110

Scordatura



I.v. (wherever poss.)

I

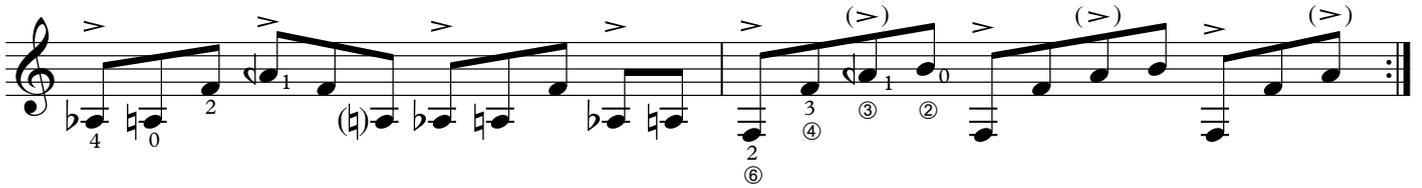
mf *hypnotic*

p *a* *p* *p*

sim.



Drift away...



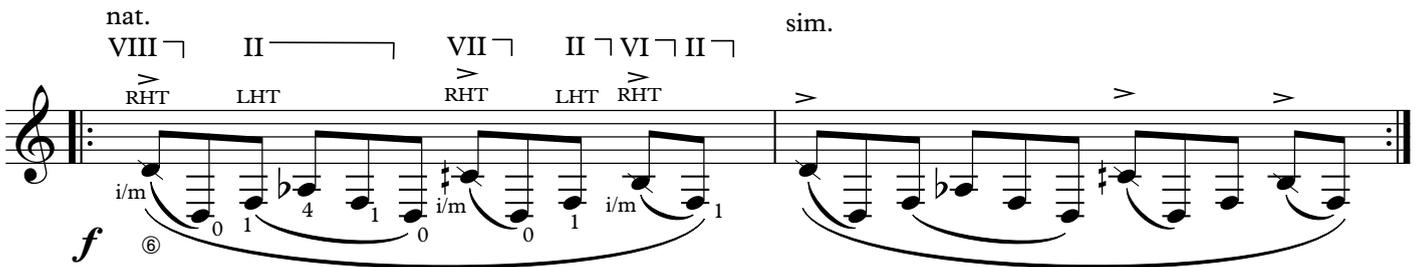
nat.

VIII \square II \square VII \square II \square VI \square II \square *sim.*

RHT LHT RHT LHT RHT

f

i/m

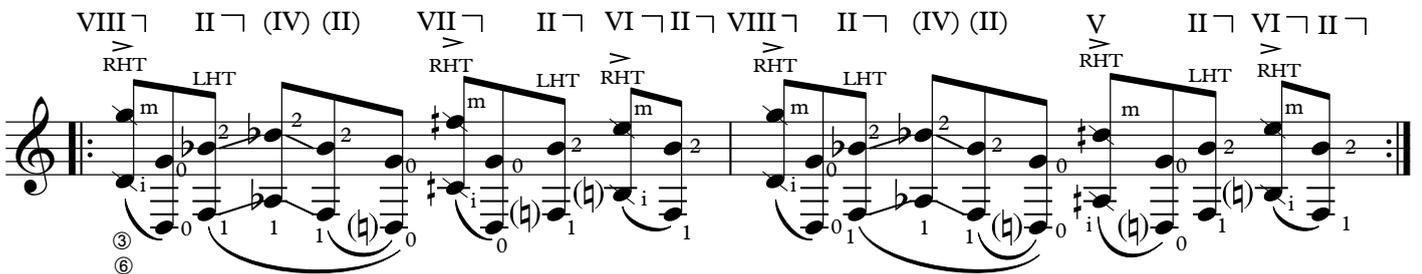


'The Sandman' appears...

VIII \square II \square (IV) (II) VII \square II \square VI \square II \square VIII \square II \square (IV) (II) V \square II \square VI \square II \square

RHT LHT RHT LHT RHT RHT LHT RHT

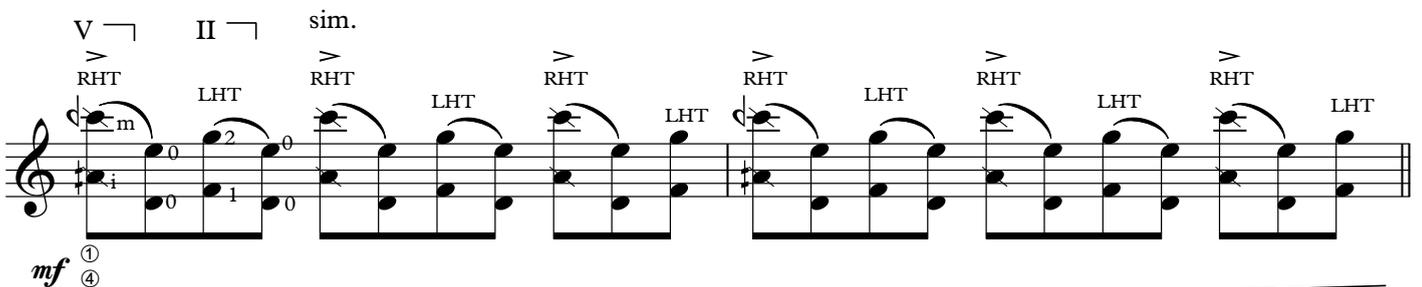
m



V \square II \square *sim.*

RHT LHT RHT LHT RHT LHT RHT LHT RHT LHT

mf



[add < 200Hz EQ boost]

(build tension across repeats)

[add ring modulator]

(build tension across repeats)

free time - molto rubato

l.v. (sempre)

poco sul tasto

II

[effects off]

[clean, with additional reverb(s) & delay(s)]

Lost to 'the Dreaming'...

poco sul pont.

VI

sul tasto

V

poco sul tasto

IV

molto sul pont.

1/2 CIV

molto sul tasto

I

poco sul pont.

IV

[effects off]

a tempo

♩. = 110

slap strings

1/2 CI

confused & deranged

Partially emerge...

slap/hit strings

Hold chord from fret I

Hold chord from fret I

[with delay]

[effects off]

Seek help of 'Desire'...

[with delay]

improvise percussive fill

fff

VIII \neg II \neg VII \neg II \neg VI \neg II \neg sim.

RHT LHT RHT LHT RHT

mf *i/m*

[effects off]

Attempt to escape...

(gradually build across repeat)

VIII \neg II \neg (IV) (II) VII \neg II \neg VI \neg II \neg sim.

RHT LHT RHT LHT RHT

f *m*

[with synth/bitcrusher & < 200Hz EQ boost]

(2nd time)

VIII \neg II \neg (IV) (II) VII \neg II \neg VI \neg II \neg VIII \neg II \neg (IV) (II) V \neg II \neg VI \neg II \neg

RHT LHT RHT LHT RHT RHT LHT RHT

fff *m*

[add 'agressive' ring modulator]

Increasing panic & mania...

V \neg II \neg sim.

RHT LHT RHT LHT RHT LHT RHT LHT RHT LHT

①
④

[add delay(s)]

(build intensity)

VIII \neg IV \neg VIII \neg IV \neg

RHT RHT RHT RHT RHT RHT RHT

fff *m*

...awake!

rubato

VIII

(allow effects to decay naturally)

mp

nostalgic & tormented

[with vinyl emulator & 'bell-like' ring modulator]

[effects off]

Coda: eternally trapped in a wakeful lullaby...

l.v. (to highlight microtonal beats)

rall.

II

VII

al niente

[fade effects out]