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Compositions Inspired by Shotokan Karate Katas

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Title: Compositions Inspired by Shotokan Karate Katas

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Abstract: This compositional thesis consists of six works inspired by the katas or forms of the Shotokan karate style. A kata is a fixed sequence of karate movements with an embedded natural rhythm. The Origins of Shotokan section reviews the history of martial arts in Japan and introduces some of the underlying inspirational elements such as techniques based on animal predatory movements and the katas unique names. The Kata Common Elements section expands on the meaning and structure of a kata. The traditional documentation of the natural rhythm ignores the move to move time into music. This thesis introduces the use of Western music notation to capture the timing relationship and to explain the katas natural rhythm. Four composition sections use a melodic line influenced by the physical movement of the karate technique. Picture examples are used to clarify the linkage to the melody. The later sections describe the history of the six inspirational katas. The compositional decisions associated with each is described with respect to their origin, katas name, natural rhythm, orchestration and melodic lines. A musical score accompanies the respective descriptions.

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Karate
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Katas

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