

***12-Tone Rondo***  
**by Keith J. Robinson**

(The following description and a copy of *12-Tone Rondo* appeared in the Spring '08 issue of the ITEA (International Tuba Euphonium Association) Journal, as part of ITEA's ongoing *Gem Series*.)

***12-Tone Rondo* is, just as the clever title suggests, a piece built in rondo form, utilizing a twelve tone row. The order of the twelve tones is A, D#, B, D, F, G#, A#, F#, G, C#, E, C. The rondo form, A B A C A D A E A, provides aural structure to the non-tonal nature of the tone row. It may be noticed that the tone row never is varied throughout the piece. Which is to say it is always presented in the prime series, (P<sub>0</sub>) as spelled out above. Interest and variety are generated through rhythmic and dynamic manipulation. The A sections of the rondo form could be thought of as a A a A a, with the upper case A representing the primary theme sounding an octave lower. Also of interest, is the “visual modulation” of the final sounding of the A theme at measure 92, following the caesura.**

**In performance, great care should be taken to give each section its own character, its own personality. For instance, the B section seems to flow with intentional grace, whereas the E section crashes and tumbles with great strength into the caesura. Each time it occurs, the A section should dance, exploding from the bell with a depth of energy, whether in the initial octave or the lower octave, the exception being when the A section returns for the last time, starting softly and slowly. Here, a sense of expectation grows in both the listener and the performer as the tempo and dynamic level build and build, racing forward, culminating in an unexpected gentle pizzicato low C to finish the tone row and the piece.**