

Creative Music Making

Tim Gilvin and Louise Jordan

Instrumental Creative Work

Developing our own practice

Constraints and Freedom (Stravinsky)

Igor Stravinsky in *The Poetics of Music*:

“The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees one’s self of the chains that shackle the spirit.”

“The arbitrariness of the constraint serves only to obtain precision of execution.”



Project One Dot (a brief aside)

- A flexible scheme of work aimed at KS2
- Also uses constraints to enable creativity
- Search “Project One Dot”
- Download Project One Dot pdf from Friday Afternoons website

Values

- There is no right/wrong
- You are allowed to make sounds that sound bad, or silly.
- Judge your work only after you've finished making it, not before or in the middle.

Ideas from “Improv Comedy”

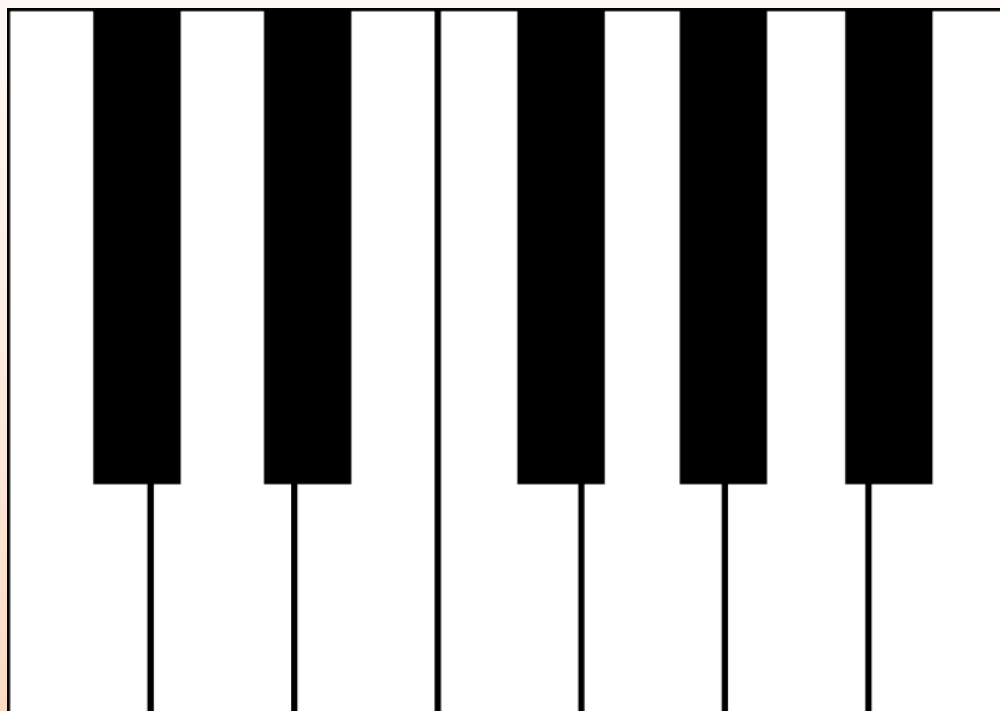
First of all, just give yourself permission to go to your “silly zone.” This is a place where you are OK to embarrass yourself, to be boring, to fail. In this zone, you set yourself free to try anything. That is your creative zone. Trust that anything that you feel like doing or saying is OK. Even if it doesn’t make sense right off the bat, it will lead to something wonderful. All the goodies are in that zone. You cannot judge them or the door closes. Just trust to open the door and go with your first thought or action.

(backstage.com)

Practical Exercise

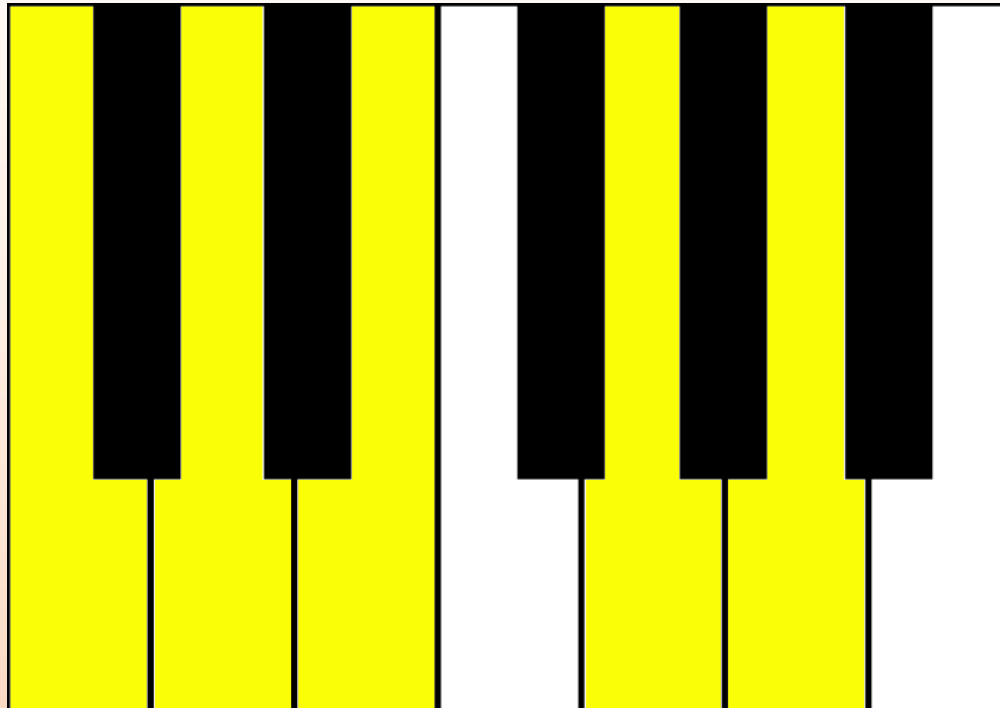
Practical Exercise

CONSTRAINT 1: Pitch



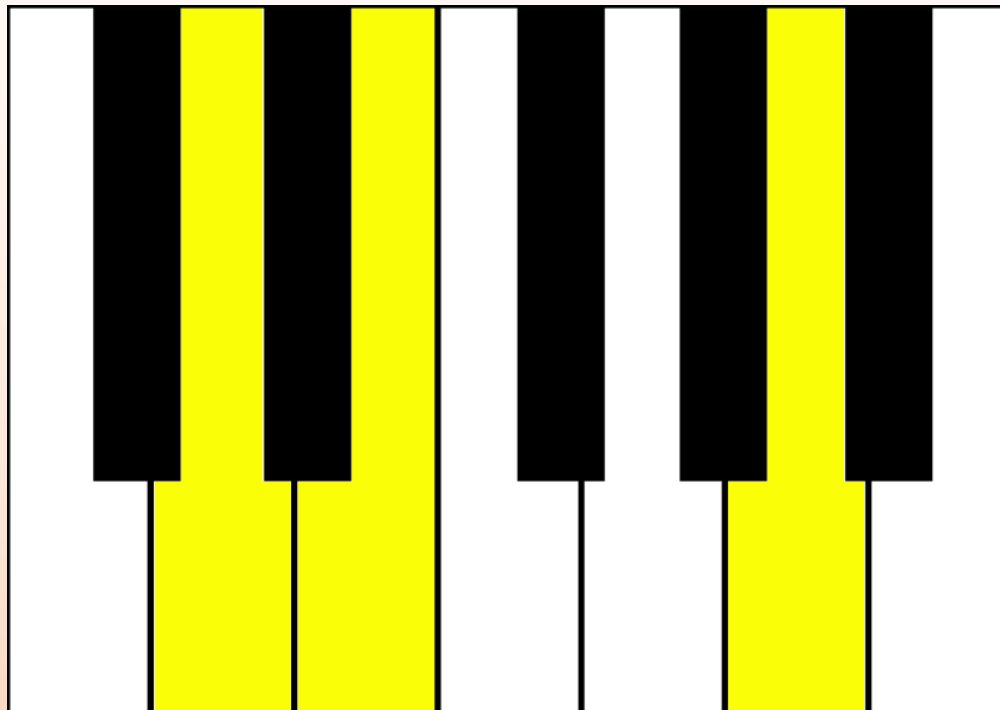
Practical Exercise

CONSTRAINT 1: Pitch



Practical Exercise

CONSTRAINT 1: Choose 3 notes from the pentatonic scale. (For example:)



Practical Exercise

- **CONSTRAINT 1:** 3 notes only
- **CONSTRAINT 2:** Use only minims and quavers

Practical Exercise

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- **CONSTRAINT 2:** Use only minims and quavers
- **CONSTRAINT 3:** Change dynamics once, suddenly
- **CONSTRAINT 4:** Add in two long rests
- **CONSTRAINT 5:** Play one of the phrases with an unusual timbre (eg. fluttertongue, scat syllables)

Practical Exercise - Summary

Constraints:

Pitch

Rhythm

Dynamics

Timbre

Speed

etc.

Same ideas can be applied to structure, harmony.

How can this be applied to our own creative work and in our work with students?