

ThumbJam

Easy read app suggestion guide



Created as part of *The Bridge Project*.
A collaboration between **This New Ground**
and **Lifesize**.

**This
New
Ground**

Lifesize



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Contents

| | |
|----------|---|
| 3) | Apps to make music with |
| 4) | How to get ThumbJam |
| 5 - 6) | ThumbJam first steps - choosing an instrument |
| 7 - 8) | Setting the musical scale |
| 9) | Setting the key |
| 10) | The span control |
| 11) | The oct control |
| 12) | What is Figurenotes? |
| 13 - 14) | Adding Figurenotes to ThumbJam |
| 15 - 16) | Kelly's ThumbJam review |

Footnotes

| | |
|----------|--|
| 17) | Facilitator's notes: ThumbJam |
| 18) | Facilitator's notes: Figurenotes |
| 19) | Making music with tablets, smartphones and iPads |
| 20 - 21) | Apple's accessible features |
| 22 - 25) | Se Min Kjole Figurenotes Resources |
| 26) | The Bridge Project May 2020 - October 2020 |

A note from us...

Our easy read app suggestion guides have been compiled by This New Ground and Lifesize to share our experiences of facilitating music sessions. They are designed to give suggestions to creative individuals and facilitators in the community arts sector / care sector. Please note, this is not an official guide to using ThumbJam.

For more information about the app, please see the developer's website: <https://thumbjam.com>.

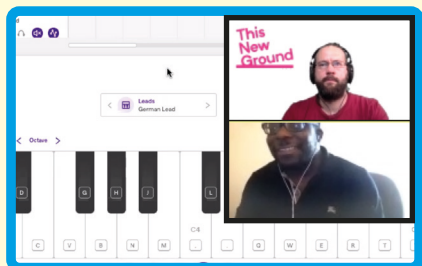
Apps to make music with



We are This New Ground Collective, a group of creative people with learning disabilities. We usually meet together in Hammersmith each week to make music and sing.



Because of coronavirus we've been meeting weekly online.



In our online sessions, we have been using apps on tablets and phones to help us make music.



Here are our easy read suggestion guides to help you use the apps too.

P.S. We'd love to see and hear any work you make!
@thisnewgrounduk
#TNGCreate2020

How to get ThumbJam

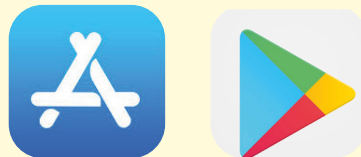
To use ThumbJam, you will need to download the app to your phone or tablet.



You can download it on iPhone, iPad, and any Android device.



Go to the app store on your phone or tablet.



Type: **ThumbJam** in the search box then tap search.



You will need to buy ThumbJam from the app store. It will cost about £8.99.

If you are unsure about buying online, make sure you ask someone who supports you to help.

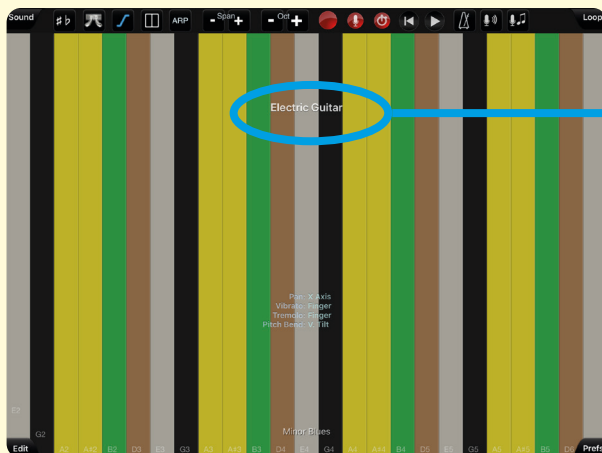
ThumbJam: first steps

Choosing an instrument

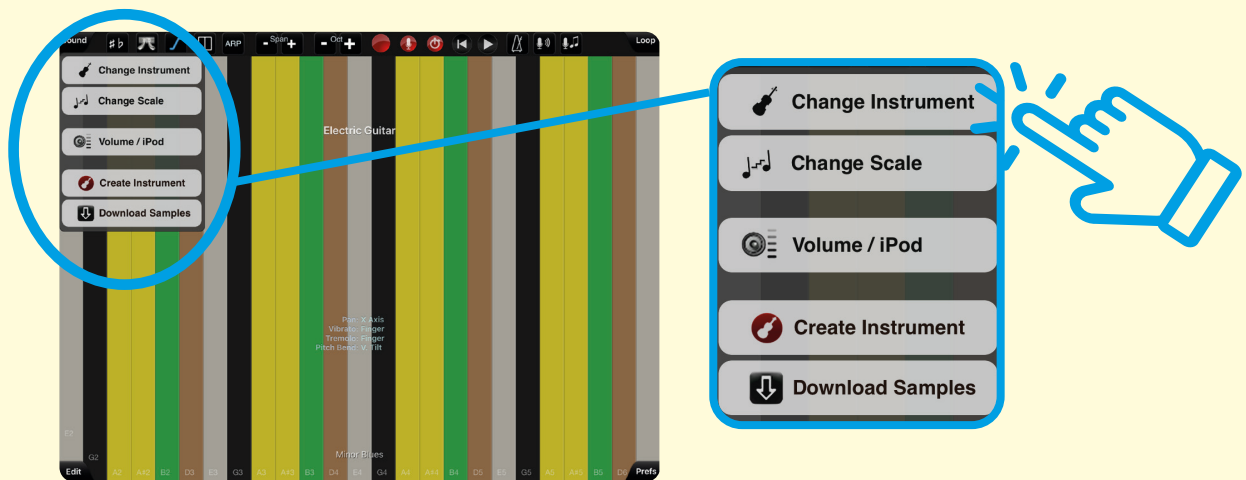
1) Tap on ThumbJam app to open.



2) Your screen will look like this. The current instrument will show on the screen.



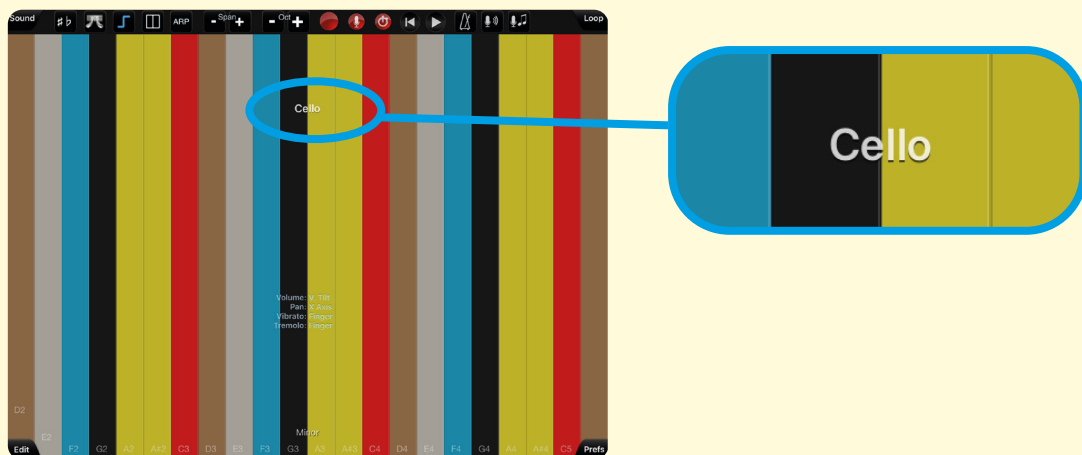
4) A menu will show. Tap on **Change Instrument**.



5) Tap to select the instrument you would like to use.



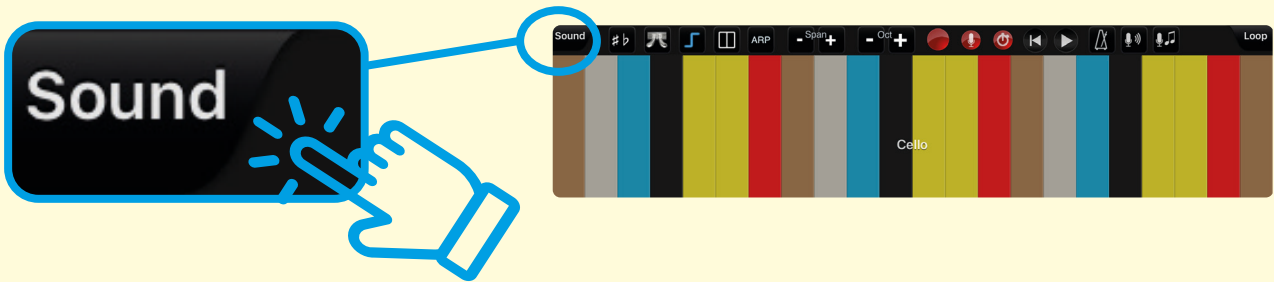
6) Your chosen instrument will show on screen.



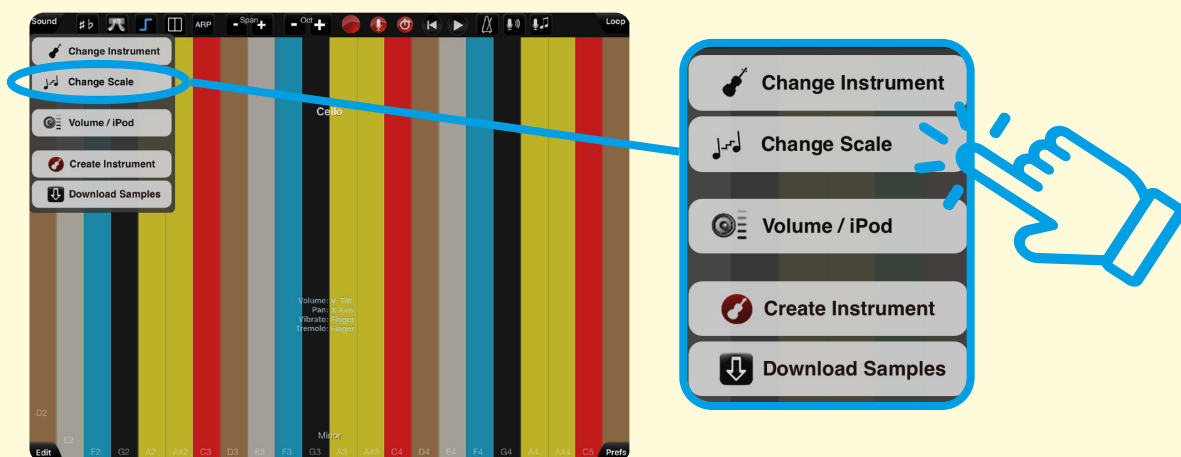
Setting the musical scale *

* A **scale** is a set of musical notes arranged in order.

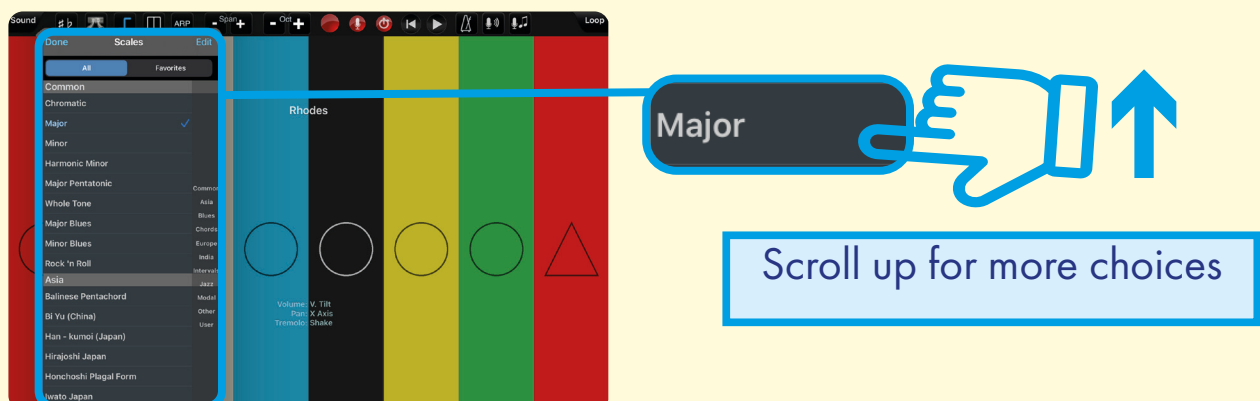
1) Tap on the **Sound** button, top left of the screen.



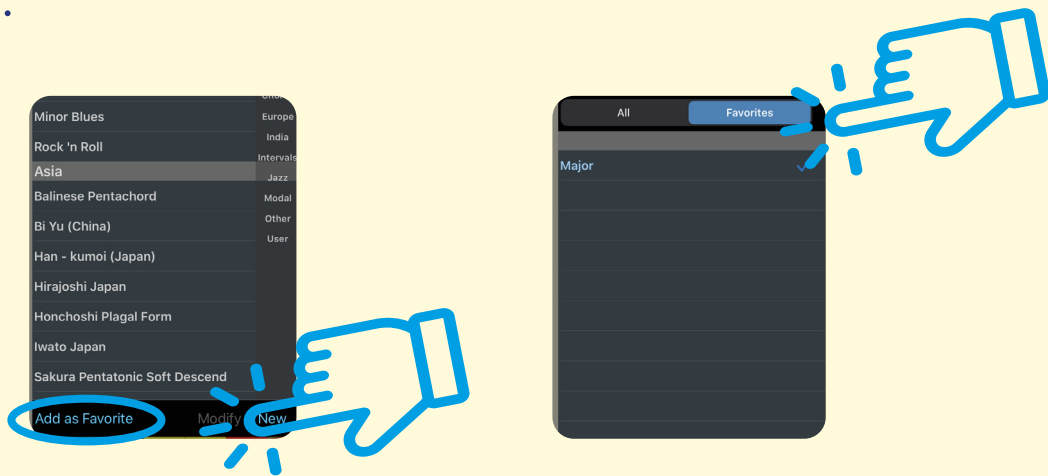
2) A menu will show. Tap on **Change Scale**.



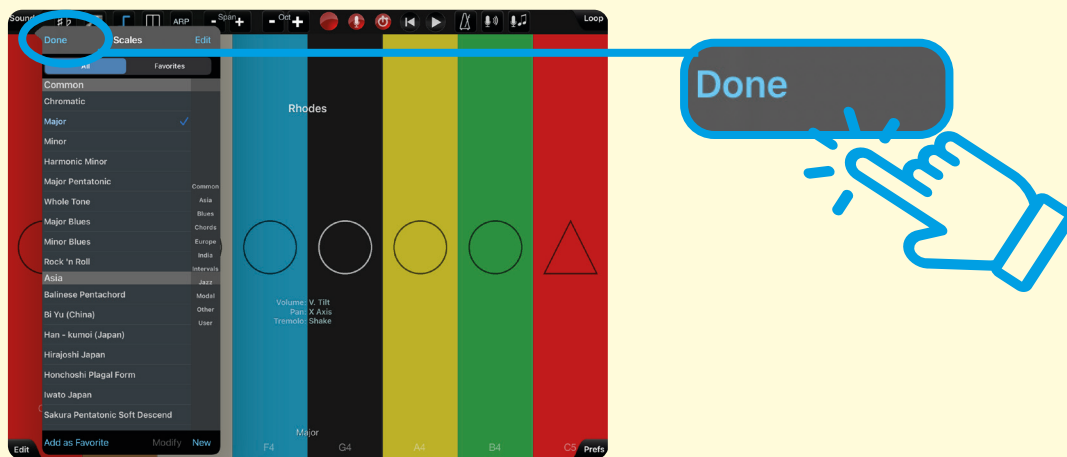
3) A scale menu will show. Scroll and tap your choice. To begin with, try starting with the **Major** scale.



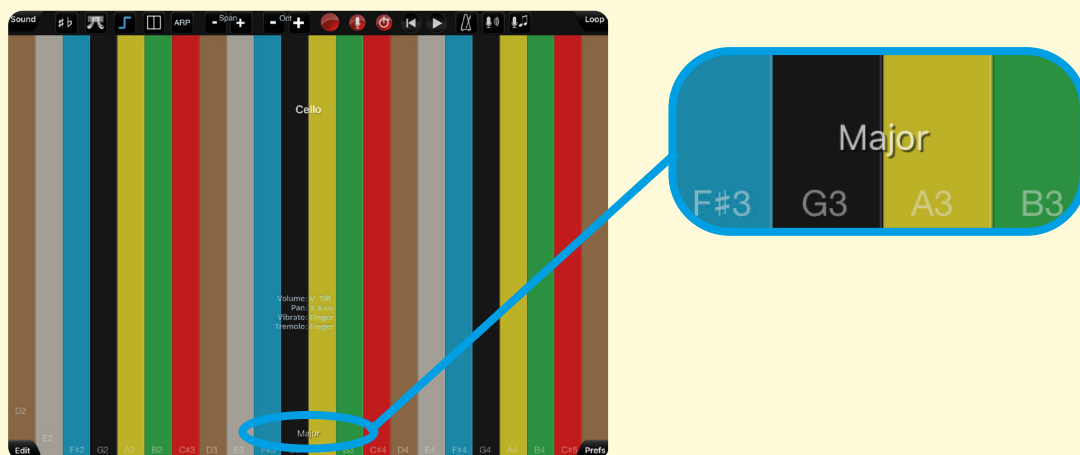
4) You can add a selected scale as a favourite by tapping **Add as Favourite**. It will show in the favourites menu.



5) Tap **Done** at the top left of the box.



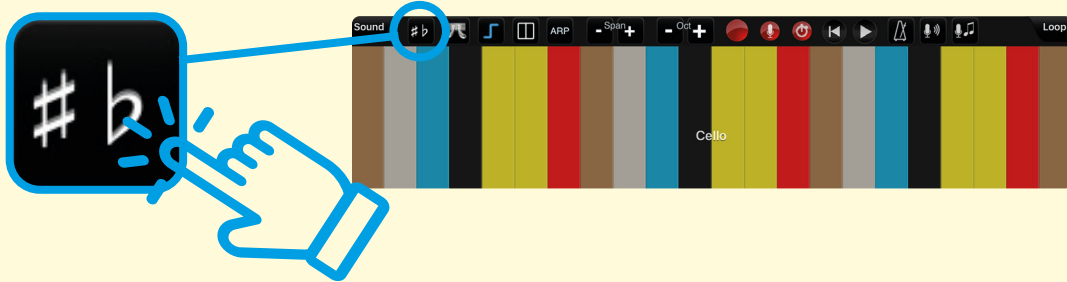
6) Your chosen scale will now show at the bottom of the screen.



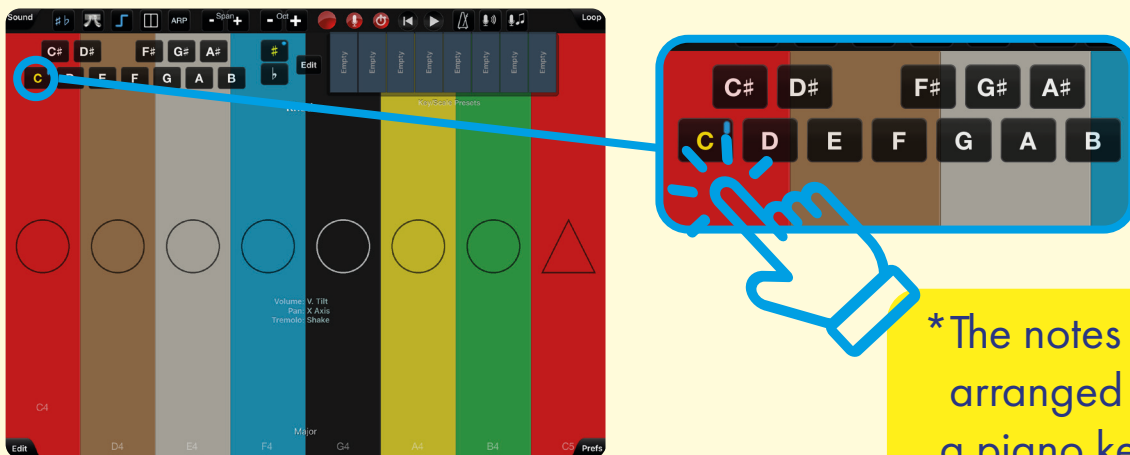
Setting the key*

1) Tap on the **# b** button, top left of the screen.

* **A key** is the major or minor scale around which a piece of music revolves.



2) A menu will show, with notes*. Tap on your choice. To begin with, try starting with **C**, as many songs for beginners are in this key.



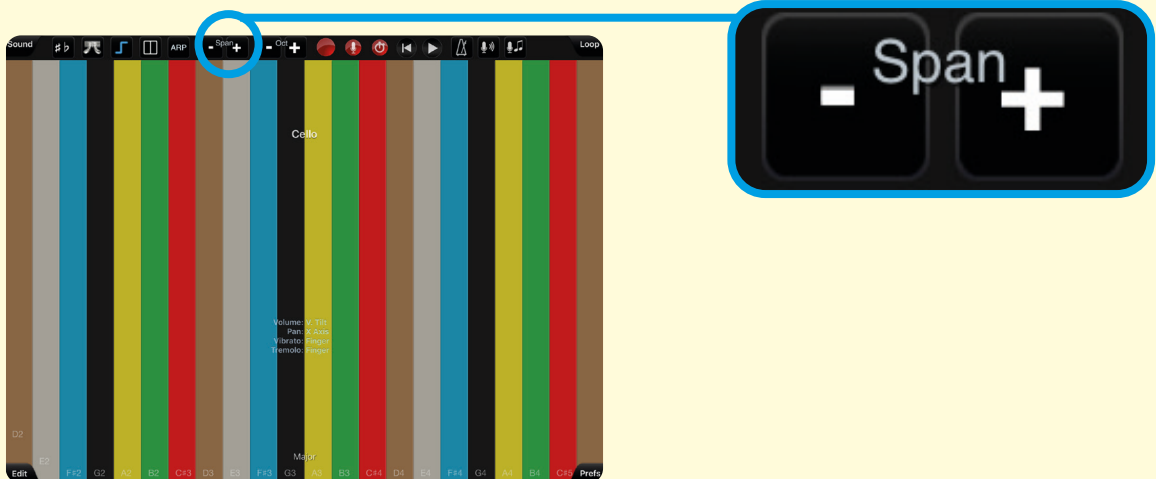
*The notes are arranged in a piano keys layout.

3) Tap the **# b** button again to close the menu. Your chosen key will now show near the bottom of your screen, on the first note.

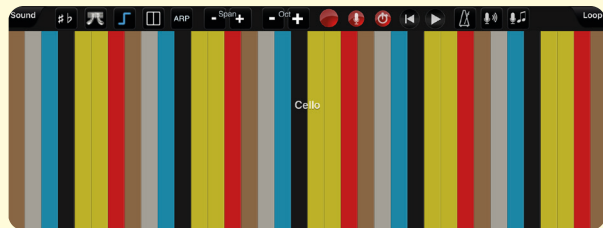
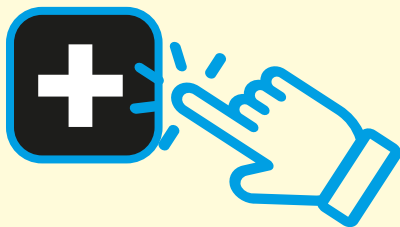


The span control

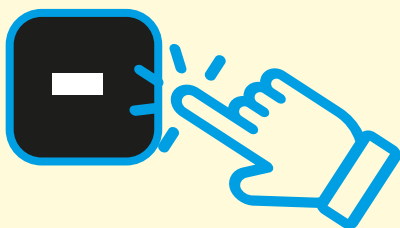
1) To change how many notes are on the screen, tap on the **Span +** or **-** buttons.



2) Tapping the **+** button will add notes to your screen.

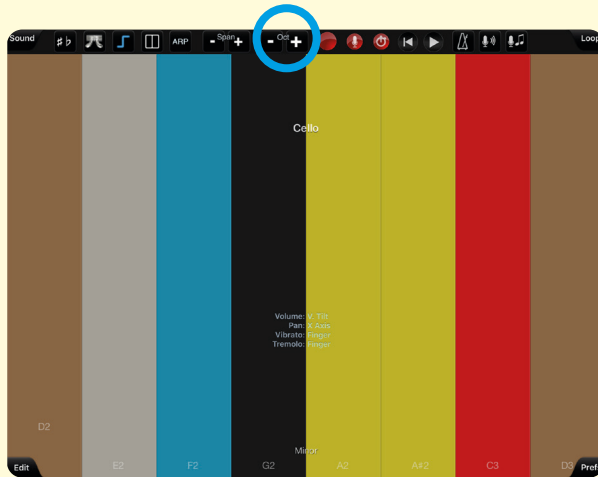


3) Tapping the **-** button will reduce notes on your screen.



The oct control

1) To change how high and low your notes are, tap the **Oct +** or **-** buttons.



2) Tapping the **+** button will make the notes higher in **pitch***.



3) Tapping the **-** button will make the notes lower in **pitch***.



* **Pitch** is how high or low a note sounds.

What is Figurenotes?

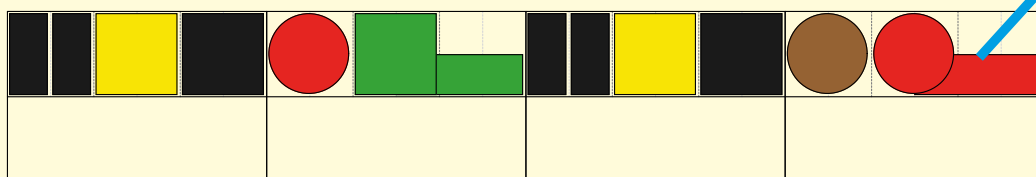
Figurenotes is a musical system designed to help people play instruments and read musical scores.

Each musical note is a different shape and colour. You can follow Figurenotes music by matching colours and shapes.

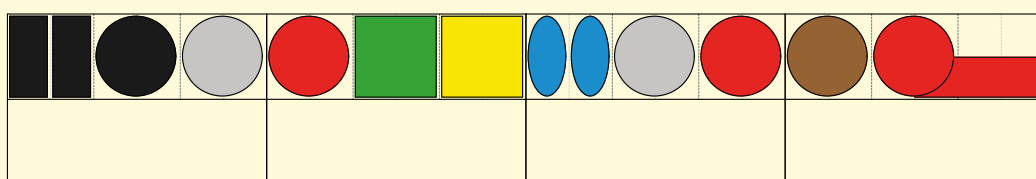
You can follow this guide to add Figurenotes symbols to your ThumbJam app.

When you have done this, try playing **Happy Birthday**, using the Figurenotes music below.

Piano



The tail on the end means the note lasts for longer - 2 beats.

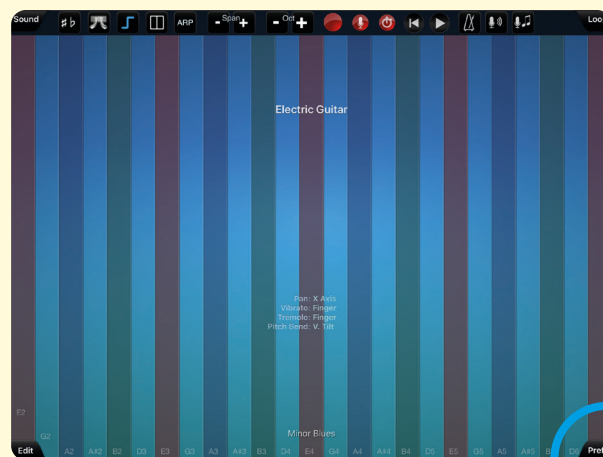


Adding Figurenotes to ThumbJam

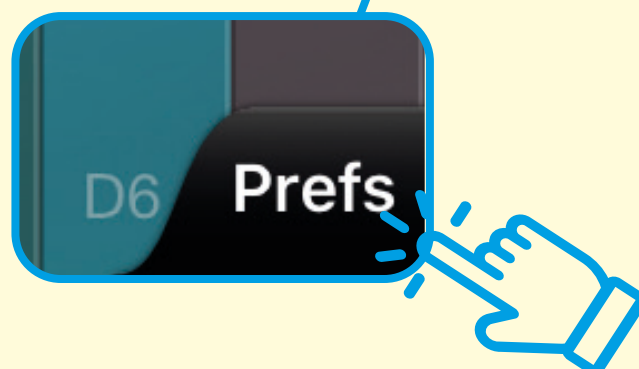
1) Tap on ThumbJam app to open.



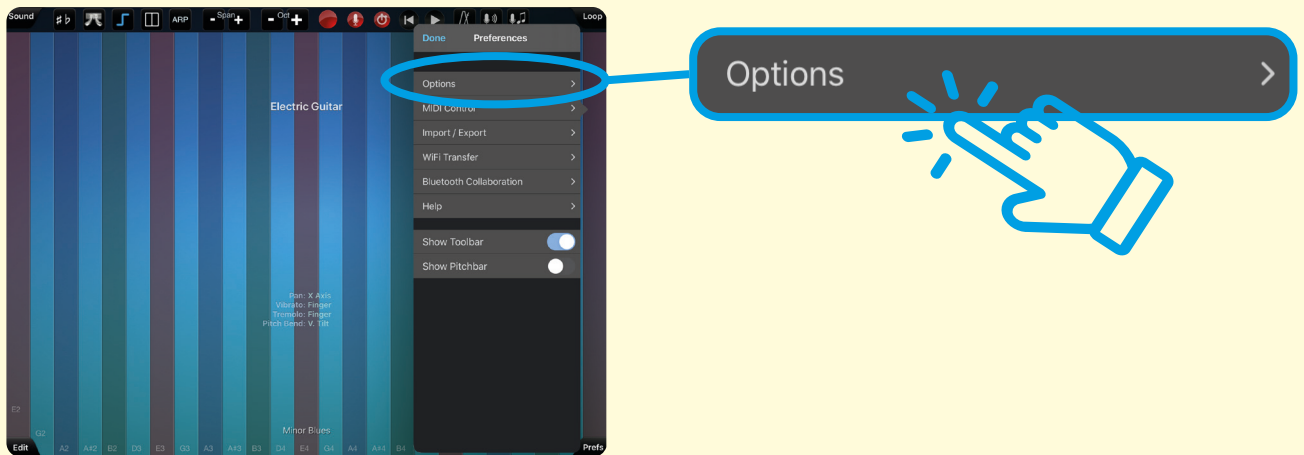
2) Your screen will look like this.



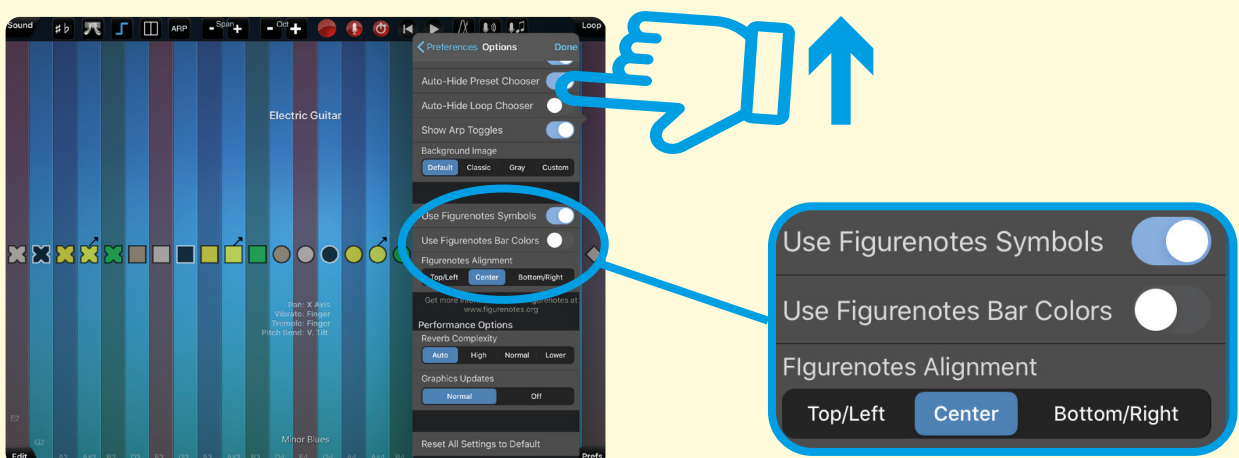
3) Tap on the **Prefs** tab.
(Bottom right of screen).



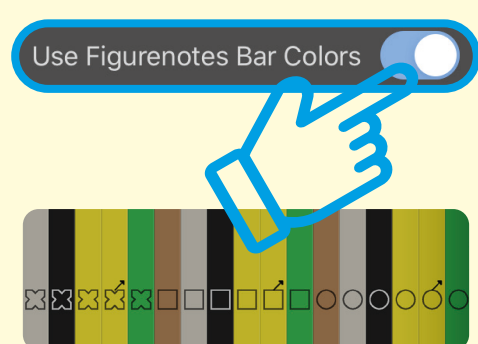
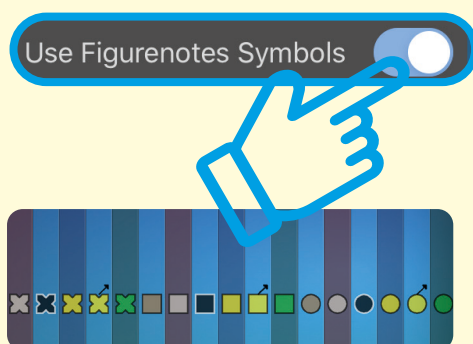
4) A menu bar will show. Tap on options.



5) Scroll down the menu (by swiping up) until you see: **Use Figurenotes Symbols** bar.

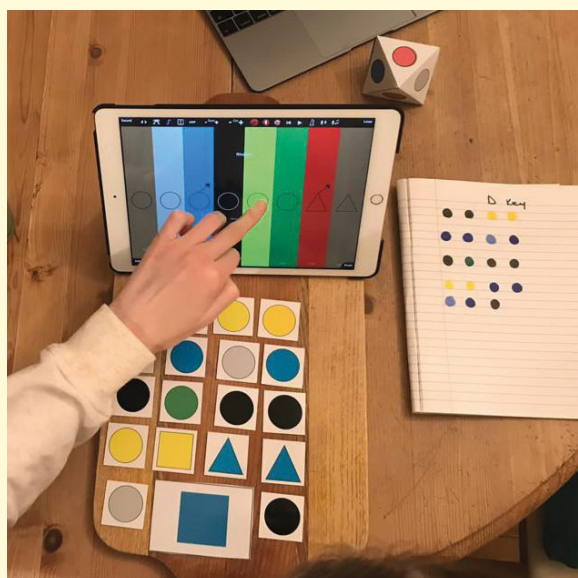


6) You can turn on symbols and bar colours here.



Kelly's ThumbJam review

When I opened up the app I saw lots of stripes and colours like yellow, brown, black, white and green and small shapes across the middle. I think these shapes are called Figurenote shapes because they look the same as the ones I used with Sam in my Zoom music sessions.



There's a lot to check out on this app. The first sound I could hear was the electric guitar. I liked touching all the stripes to hear the sounds they made and especially when I moved my fingers up and down and across all the different colours. I made waves with the music. I liked doing that because I like the sounds of all the different colours and I felt calm.

There is a lot going on and I felt a bit confused at the beginning. The easy read suggestions were very helpful because it explains how to use the app because there's a lot to look at and lots to think about. I followed the instructions and that's why I was able to know what to do like how to change the electric guitar sound to a cello sound for example.

Then I changed the instrument to Rhodes and this sounds like a keyboard. I really like using the Loop button. Casper helped me to record a bit of my favourite childhood song called '**Se Min Kjole**'.* That's Danish for 'See My Dress'. Then I was able to choose another instrument while my song played over and over again. I chose to play the Drum instrument next and it felt like I was in a band listening to both instruments playing together. Then I chose the cello instrument. I really like that sound. It feels warm.

I played around with it for a while but then I deleted the Loop recordings because I wanted to just concentrate on playing my song using just the Rhodes instrument. It felt too mixed up all of a sudden with all the other sounds too and I just wanted to play the keyboard sound.

I preferred to use the Figurenotes that I used on my Zoom music sessions instead because I like it better just seeing the colours and stripes on the iPad screen because I feel like there's a lot going on all at once.

I think there's too many things to choose from and I think it was a bit confusing sometimes. I needed a lot more help with this app compared to the other apps I've tried like Bloom: 10 Worlds for example. But I still liked using the app and I really liked recording my song on the Loop and I like being able to delete what I don't like too.

I think I need more time to get used to this app, like maybe a few months, or a year but I do like it.

***You can try playing '**Se Min Kjole**' like Kelly. The Figurenotes music resources are on page 22 - 25.**

Facilitator's notes: ThumbJam

A very well designed digital instrument. The playing area is arranged as a series of strips which can be made wide or narrow depending on the range of notes desired or the user's abilities. The instrument note range can be set to a wide variety of musical scales and keys, including less conventional ones. This provides enormous potential for enabling musicians to play together in relative harmony. We recommend starting with the key of C, as when used in conjunction with the Major scale setting it will make available the equivalent of the white notes of a piano. Many songs for beginners are arranged in this scale / key.

If you are using ThumbJam in a group music making setting and also using a conventional piano or keyboard, using the C Major Key/Scale settings will make playing together easier. Musical scales and keys are a very useful musical topic to understand. We recommend researching this further if you are using music in your project work.

The instrument's sound banks are made up of high quality audio samples. When connected to the internet you can browse descriptions and download new instrument sound banks. This app has motion detection to interpret movement of the device on an X and Y axis. This gives the user the ability to modulate sound as a conventional instrumentalist might, using effects such as vibrato or pitch bend. These features enable nuanced and truly life-like performances. ThumbJam also has a loop record function so the user can build up layers of musical parts.

What's great:

This app provides access to a wide range of high fidelity instrument sounds in a user friendly format. There are some very helpful inbuilt features such as the Figurenotes musical notation system. You can set the span (width of interactive strips) to suit the user's needs, from just a few to many notes. Being able to set the playing area to display only the desired notes from a musical scale / key is a useful feature that enables users with no prior experience of music theory to play in tune together or follow musical scores with ease.

Sam Dook, Music Facilitator

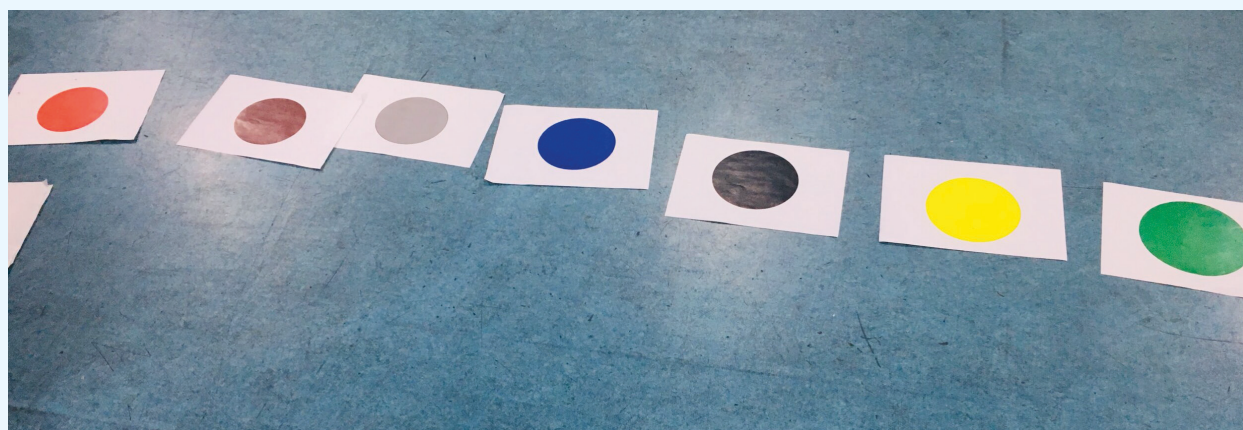
Useful Jargon

Musical key The group of musical notes that forms the basis of a composition. Notes and chords from the same musical key can create harmony when used together within a composition

Facilitator's notes: Figurenotes

Figurenotes notation utilises coloured symbols to convey information found in traditional music notation.

Each musical note in Figurenotes notation is represented by a coloured symbol. To play from a Figurenotes musical score you simply match the symbol in the score to the same symbol on your instrument. Figurenotes can be activated on Thumbjam via preferences/options. Figurenotes stickers are available for other instruments such as keyboard and stringed instruments



In western music the first seven letters of the alphabet (A-G) are used to describe musical notes. In figurenotes instead of letters, colours / shapes are used– all the Cs are red, all the Fs are blue, etc. The shape changes depending on the octave (a high C would be a different shape to a low C)

Using Figurenotes in ThumbJam means the app can be used for accessible music making. As well as reading from Figurenotes musical scores you can also use flashcards and other resources to support groups to play and write music together.

This intuitive way of playing music helps you to play almost instantly, increasing confidence and motivation. It is worth noting that this system may not be suitable or need adaptation for people who have difficulty distinguishing the difference between colours. If you are using figurenotes as a facilitator we recommend you establish if anyone you are working with has these extra support needs first.

You can also download free Figurenotes music resources from the BBC website. More information can be found at www.figurenotes.org.

Making music with tablets, smartphones and iPads

Many apps have been developed which utilise the interactive screen technology of these devices, enabling a variety of ways of creating music. Users can easily operate hand-held devices as 'instruments' with gestures such as touching the screen, tilting or shaking. In some apps inbuilt parts of the device such as the camera and microphone can be used to modulate sound.

Exciting possibilities

There are many ways of creating sound by using apps on hand-held devices, including physically connecting MIDI controllers such as keyboards or percussion triggering pads. With Bluetooth local networks, multiple devices can be tethered together wirelessly and connected to the same speaker.

For people with learning disabilities, people who experience challenges with fine motor skills, vision impairment and neurological challenges, these devices and appropriate apps can become accessible music-making instruments that open up new possibilities.

We have been trialling a number of apps in our session work that unlock the potential of aspiring musicians with limited understanding of music theory. The apps also enhance the creative potential of groups of musicians of differing abilities, enabling them to play together in harmony through the use of a set musical key.

Benefits for our artists

- Accessible for users with learning disabilities or for people who experience challenges with fine motor skills.
- Increases options for groups of mixed ability and knowledge.
- Unlocks potential for those without traditional music training.
- Expands opportunities to express creativity.

Useful Jargon

MIDI controller: Any software or hardware - including keyboards and drum pads – which can send MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) data to enabled devices for making electronic music.

Bluetooth: A radio communication technology that enables low-power, short distance wireless networking between phones, computers, and other network devices.

Pitch: The quality that makes it possible to judge sounds as "higher" and "lower".

Harmony: A pleasant musical sound made by different notes being played at the same time.

Chord: A set of musical notes played simultaneously.

Musical scales and keys: The group of musical notes that forms the basis of a composition. Notes and chords from the same musical key can create harmony when used together within a composition.

Apple's accessible features

Apple has a range of features which improve accessibility. These are built directly into the operating system of devices that can run apps (iPhones, iPads and the latest computer models). These features are beneficial for supporting vision, hearing, and motor skills as well as simplifying the user interface, improving ease of use for people who may find functions within an app too complex. Full details of all Apple accessible features and instructions can be found on their website: <https://www.apple.com>.

Guided Access

Who it's good for: People who are less familiar with technology, neurodiverse people, people living with neurological challenges, children and young adults.

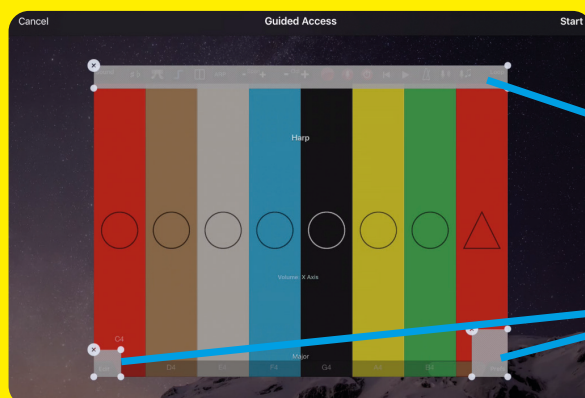
Guided Access is a feature that allows you to lock your device into a single app, and control which features are available within the app.

This is very useful when using your device as a creative workshop tool as it enables you to tailor how the app is interacted with.

Software buttons and menus can be deactivated so the user can only access chosen parts of the screen. This prevents accidentally changing settings or closing the app which can disrupt user experience in certain settings. For example this can be particularly useful when supporting people to explore creative apps that involve drawing or playing a musical instrument. These kinds of apps can be best enjoyed using a variety of unrestricted physical gestures.

Guided Access is a versatile feature as you can limit access to specific parts of the screen. You do this by drawing a marquee around these areas. Once enabled, Guided Access can only be switched off by entering a code on the device.

To find out how to set up Guided Access and other accessible features for your device see the Apple website: <https://support.apple.com>.



Access to specific parts of the screen can be restricted using the marquee tool function.

Voice Control

Who it's good for: People with vision impairment, people who experience challenges with fine motor skills.

You can set up your device to be controlled by voice using customisable phrases. You can navigate and interact with your device using your voice to tap, swipe, type and more.

Switch Control

Who it's good for: People with vision impairment, People who experience challenges with fine motor skills.

Switch Control allows you to control your device using a single switch or multiple switches.

You can use your device as a switch - for example the camera can be used as a two way switch, triggering one command when you move your head to the left and the other when you move your head to the right. You can also connect an external switch such as a Bluetooth or Made for iPhone switch.

Switch Control is customisable for both beginners and advanced users — you can simplify existing actions or create your own.

Screen Orientation Lock

Who it's good for: People less familiar with technology, neurodiverse people, people living with neurological challenges, children and young adults.

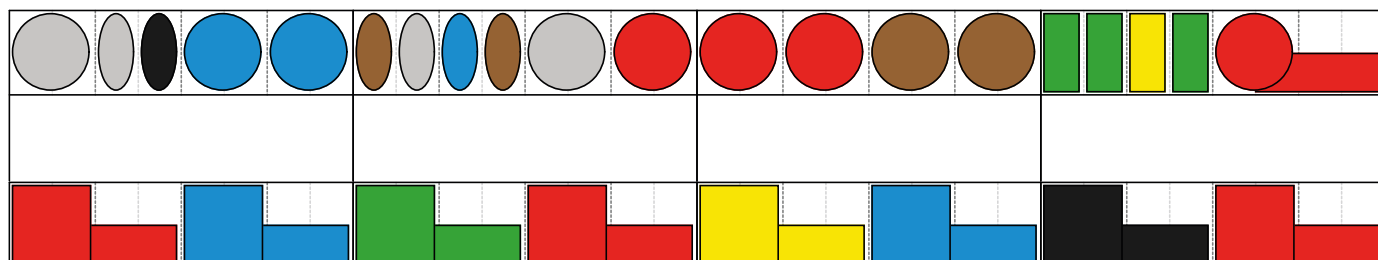
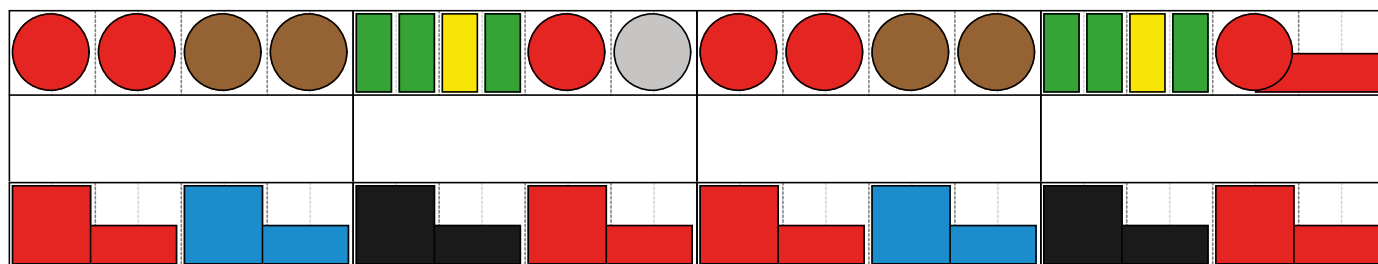
You can lock the screen orientation on your device to ensure that the screen doesn't auto rotate when moved. This ensures the user can focus on freely using the device, holding it at different angles without the distraction of the screen orientation changing.

To lock the screen orientation, access the control centre on your device (on an iPad you do this by swiping down from the top right corner of the screen). Tap the lock symbol, the screen orientation will now be locked and will show red. Tap again to unlock.

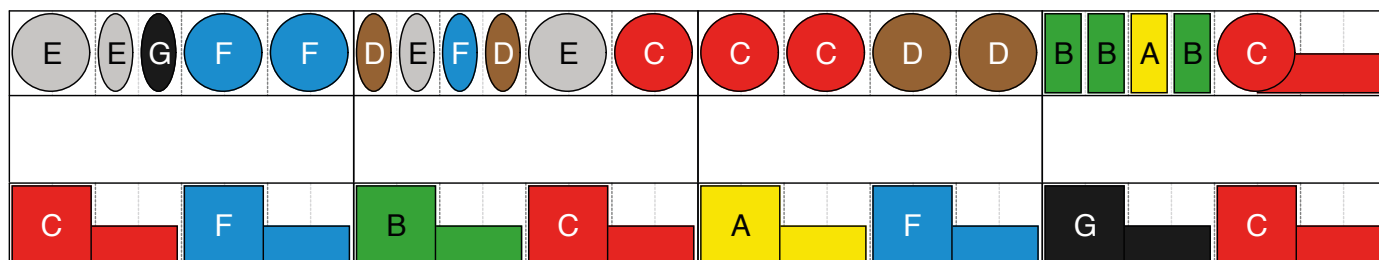
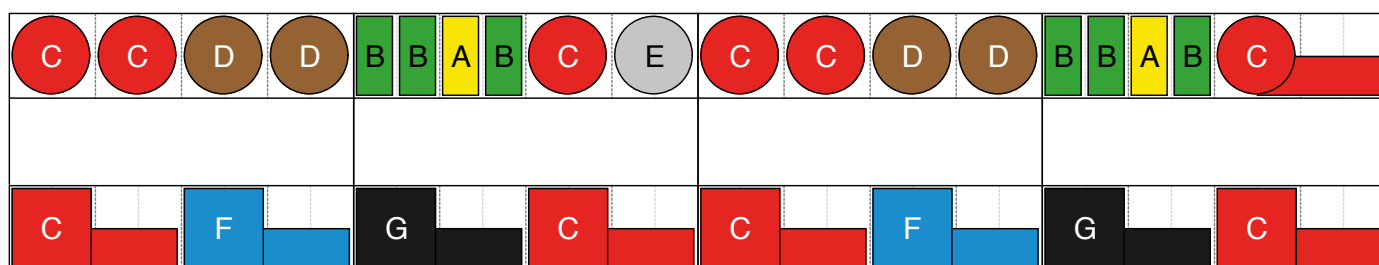


Se Min Kjole Figurenotes Resources

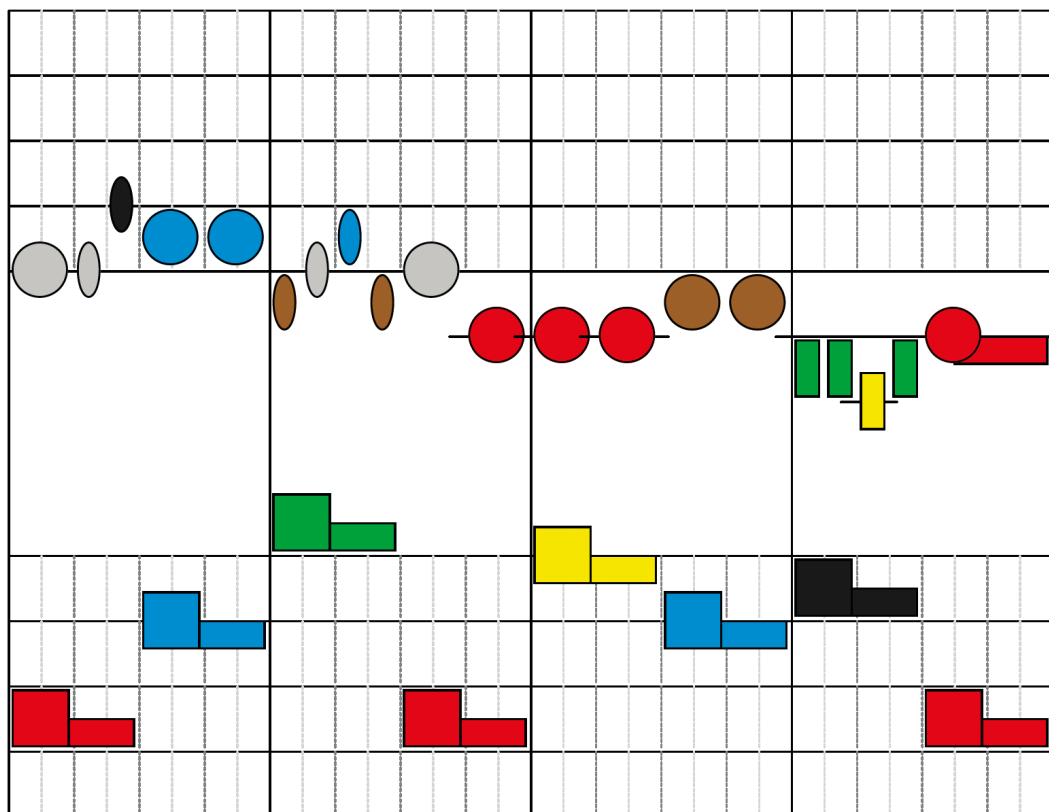
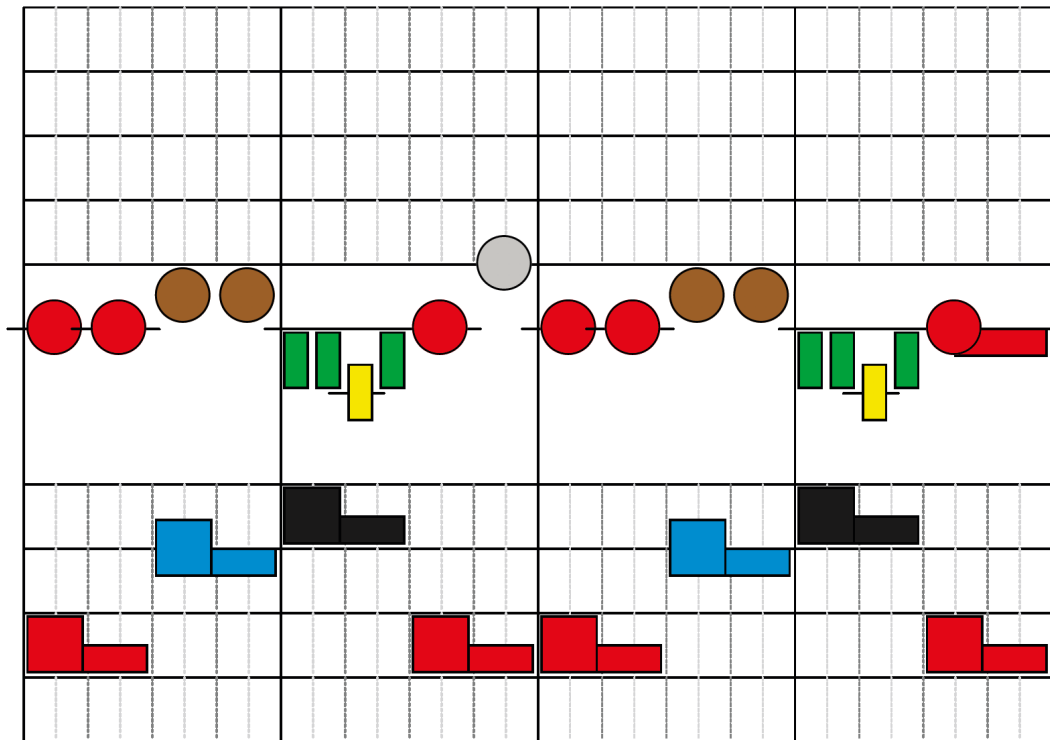
You can hear a version of **Se Min Kjole** on This New Ground's Soundcloud page.



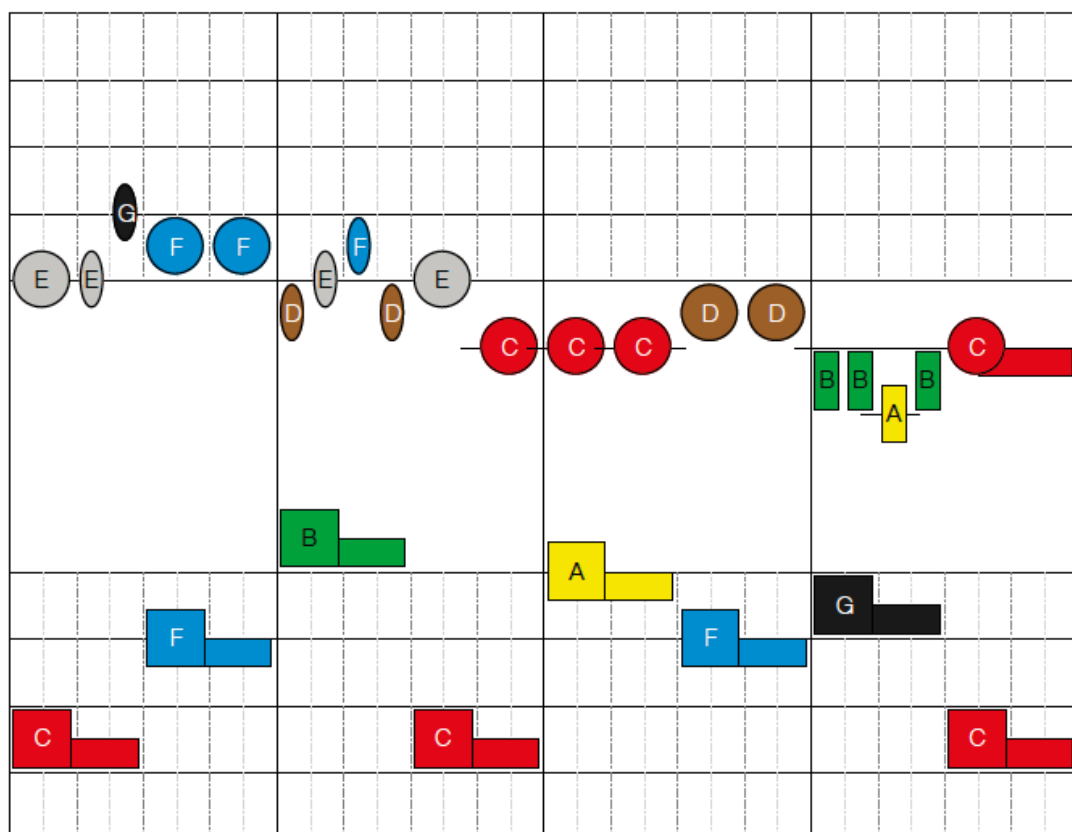
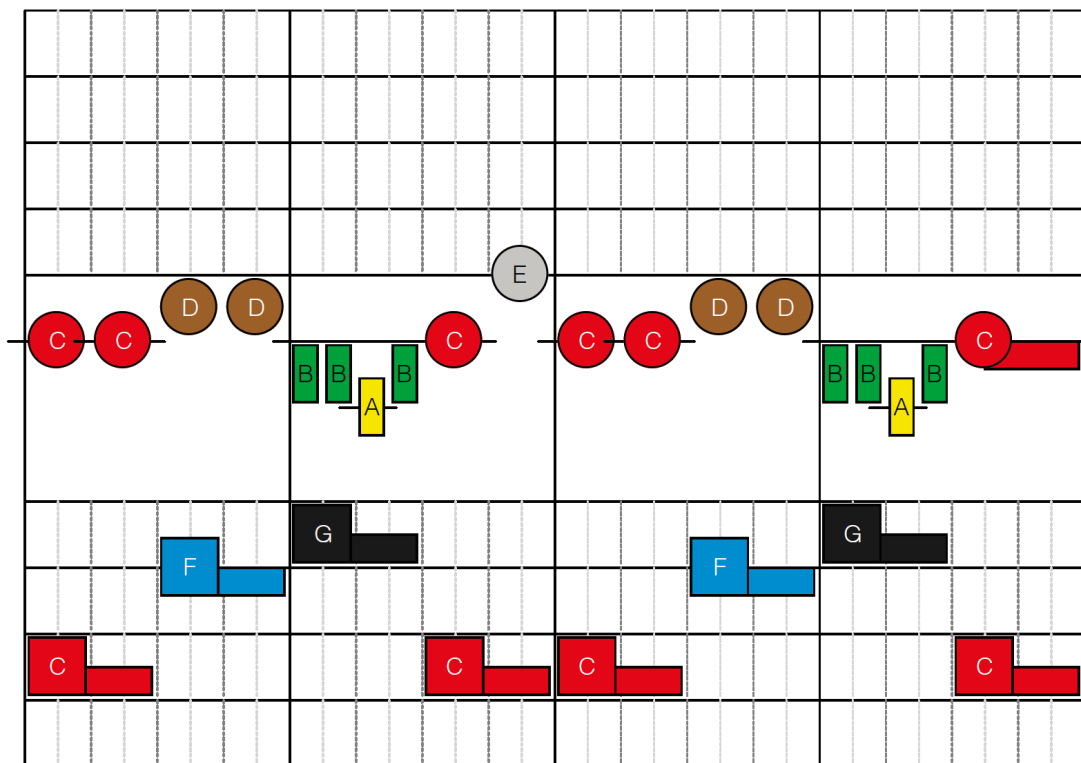
Se Min Kjole Figurenotes Resources



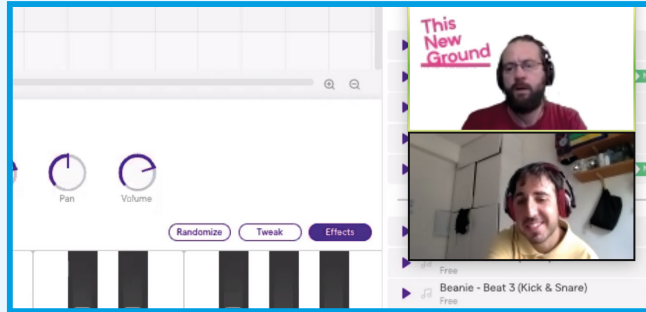
Se Min Kjole Figurenotes Resources



Se Min Kjole Figurenotes Resources



The Bridge Project May 2020 - October 2020



"I'm excited to make music, something new, I didn't think we could make music online, I thought it was impossible."

Richie, TNG Member

The Bridge Project was created in response to the social restrictions caused by the COVID -19 pandemic. Working with our community of learning disabled artists we have developed new, inclusive collaborative methods of digital music-making via online platforms.

Members of the TNG collective collaborated with community musician Sam Dook from Lifesize. Together, we explored and developed new digital tool-kits. We have shared new music created as part of this research and designed a selection of resources to serve as blueprints, supporting the digital and remote creative engagement of others.

Our research findings will determine the future design and delivery of TNG and Lifesize projects, acting as a catalyst for introducing new digital tools and models to our methodology.

This Project was supported by Arts Council England's COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund and The London Community Foundation.

www.thisnewground.com www.lifesize.org.uk