

text:
ANTONIS PAPATHEODOULOU

illustrations:
HARITON BEKIARIS

SI SOU DO

or in a forgotten piano

a tuneful fable about diversity...

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The majority of young people in Greece condemn discriminatory treatment both morally and socially. Direct discrimination exists when a person by reason of race or ethnic descent, religion or other beliefs, handicap, age or sexual orientation suffers a less favourable treatment than the one that occurs, had occurred or would have occurred to another person in a similar situation. Indirect discrimination exists when an apparently neutral configuration, criterion or practice may put people of certain racial or ethnic descent in a disadvantageous position when those latter are compared to other people.

The Hellenic Youth Council condemns discrimination of any form and contributes with all its powers towards the repugnance of xenophobia and the acceptance of diversity of any form.

Efthimios Bakogiannis

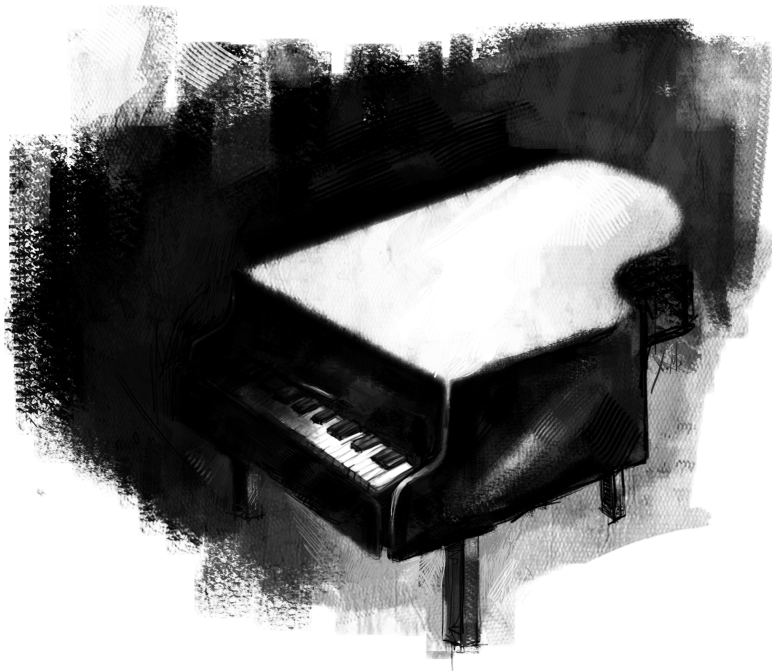
ESYN Vice President - International Relations

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SI SOU DO
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The old piano was forgotten for years in the back storehouse of the antique store. Its wood, which used to blaze from the polish and the burnishing, was now white from dust, and its legs with the rusty wheels were full of web and spiders.

No customer had shown any interest whatsoever for the piano or even the colourful puppets of porcelain, the Karagiozis paper-made puppets, the wooden old toys, the cranky cameras, the odds and ends that joined the piano in the back storehouse. A score half buried in a thick layer of dust was sitting on its cankered cover.

No music, no voices not even the car horns could reach that place. There was an absolute silence. Yet beneath the piano cover there was still some life. The days of

musical creation that those piano keys had experienced next to some great pianist could not be that easily erased.

Boredom together with the obsolescence made the keys even more silent. You could only hear a whisper every now and then beneath the old cover but even that was dying out

Recently the dullness and the scent of stuffiness had reached their limit and the discussions were getting up steam. If someone could only put away the dust and the scent of time, he would then probably smell an imperceptible dispute hovering in the small amount of air held inside the piano cover.

-I am so bored! I want to play sonatas, ballads and preludes again, said a white Re one night.

-Me too, agreed a black Mib. *I want to feel the intensity, the shake coming from the fingers of a virtuoso pianist again...*

-So much for the intensity, a white Si interrupted. *At least you don't play as often as we do.*

-So what? Asked the black Mib annoyed.

-The Si is right, said a white Do from the last octave. *We are the true notes. We play Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, Si. You may be useful for a Do# or a Solb, so stop saying that you miss the intensity of music too.*

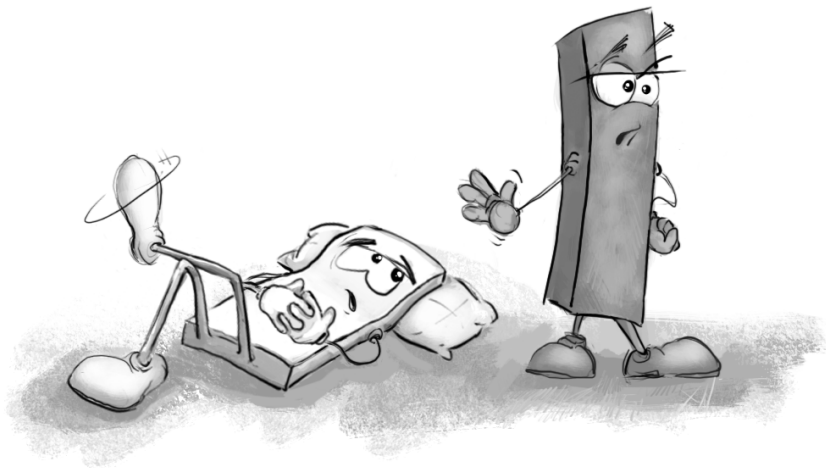


Although the Mib was black it began to turn red from anger. They had the nerve to tell him that he has never felt the intensity and the rhythm of music just because he plays a tone between two notes.

-Whatever, he said, I will not continue this fight, and the discussion ended there.

A bitterness remained in the black Mib and one of the following days he decided to share his thoughts with the rest of the black keys.

-Don't you think that the white keys are thinking highly of themselves lately? he asked.



-They have always been that arrogant, replied a Re#, they think that the beautiful melodies don't include many sharp and flat notes.

-They think that they are better just because they outnumber us, added a Mib from the last octave.

-They are wrong though! Without us all melodies would be dull.

-They won't get away with it shouted (in fortissimo) the Mib when seeing that all black keys were on his side. We will show them.

And all the keys started little by little to plan how to avenge the boasting of the white ones.

A white Do, having heard the commotion, asked a black Do# standing on top of him.

-What is going on up there, will you be quiet at last?

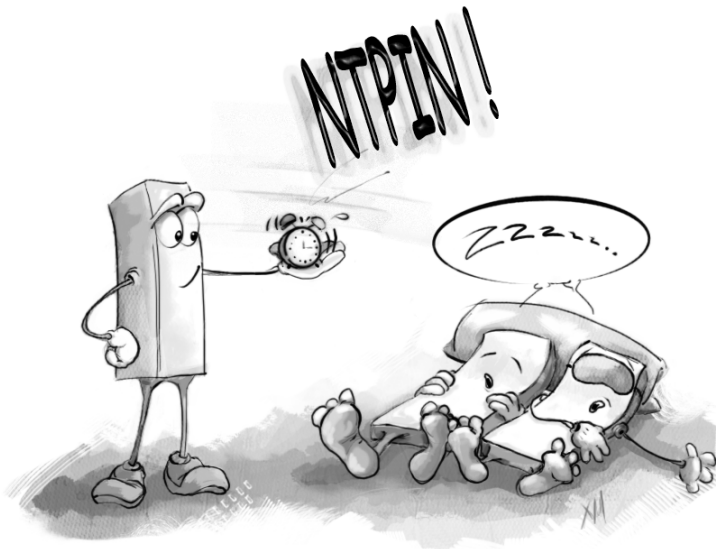
-I am not talking to you, replied the Do#, I am not talking to the white keys.

-And why is that? asked the Do.

He received no answer because the Do# had turned to the other side and kept whispering with the rest of the black keys.

The Do was extremely annoyed:

-Wake up, he shouted to the white keys.

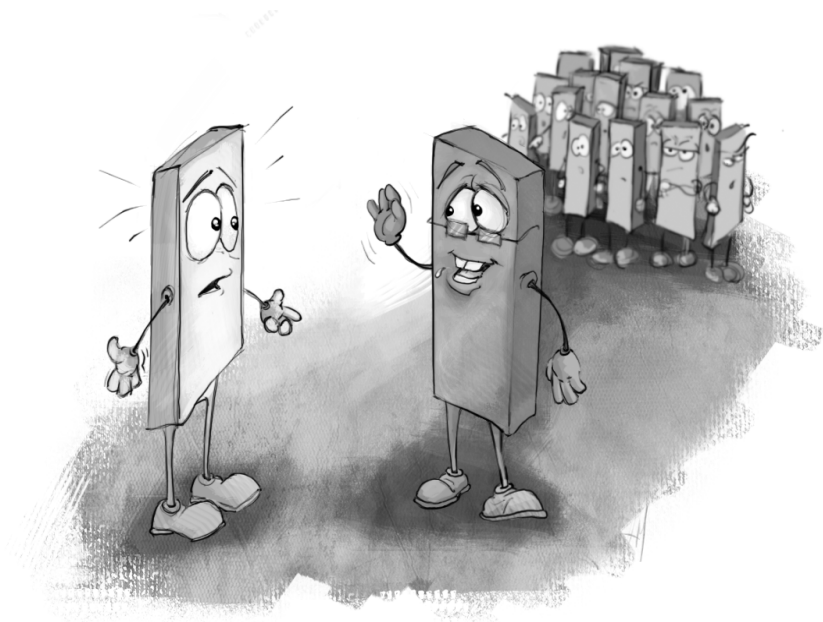


Various notes of the staff were being heard as the white keys were waking up in fear.

-Something is going on up there, said the Do in a hurry. We should give them a lesson before they start to raise their head up.

-You are right, said the Re next to him and the white keys started their own whispering meeting.

Imagine that very moment, a customer coming in the storehouse and opening the piano cover; the sight that he would face, would be rather funny. All the white keys were gathered on one side and all the black keys were on the other side whispering and throwing glances to each other.



But no one will remember the piano so let's get back to our story.

-We have an announcement to make, yelled suddenly a black key. The rest of the black keys were standing behind him with an air indicating that they agreed with what their representative would say, while the white keys were standing on the opposite side having an ironic and curious look at the same time.

-We have decided not to talk to you ever again and not to participate in the same melody with you. We came to this decision because you white keys are inferior to us black keys, and when looking at a piano that is more than obvious since it is the black keys that are on top of the white ones.

After those words the black key with his friends went back to their proper place.

The white keys were now more furious than before. They had to plan their revenge really soon.

Even though time had no true significance for a forgotten piano, no more than ten minutes of silence had passed when the discussion between the white keys went wild again.

-Let's wind their chords off, shouted a Mi.

-We should remove them from the piano, yelled an angry Fa.

-Let's play our notes repeatedly until we deafen them, suggested a Re.

-What did you say Re? asked a Do from the 2nd octave.

-I said why don't we play our notes out loud until we deafen them and they can no longer stand it, repeated the Re. *Then we'll see if the talk to us again or not.*

-This is the best idea, said the Do. *This is what we'll do.*

-And who are you to decide what we all should do, came a voice from the other side of the piano.

-Who spoke? said the pompous Do.

-I the Si, yelled the Si.

-And who are you? shouted the Do.

-I the Si.

-I the sea?

-I didn't say the sea, I said the Si.

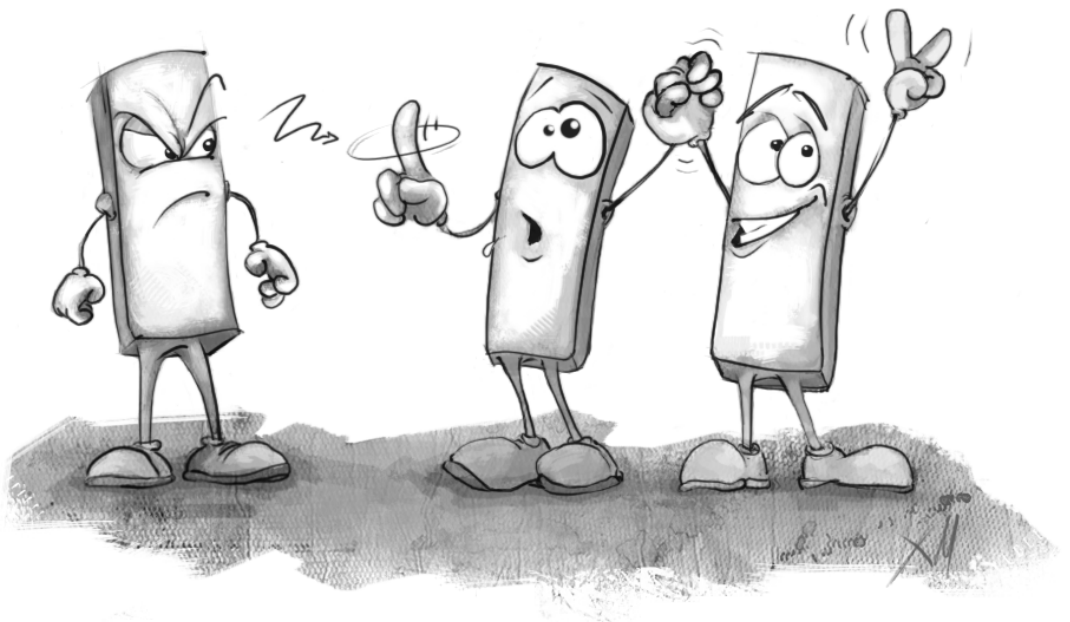
-And where did you see that written, a Si talking back to a Do, cried out the Do of the 2nd octave.

After a small pause the Do from the 4th octave run to reconcile the two notes.

-Dearest Si our colleague is quite right; after all we the Do notes are more intelligent and more organized.

Having heard all this, the Si was that furious that he would make a terrifying grimace with his eyebrows if only he had eyebrows. The Do kept on talking with the same pompous way in spite of the situation.

-After all we are the first notes and therefore the first keys in each octave.



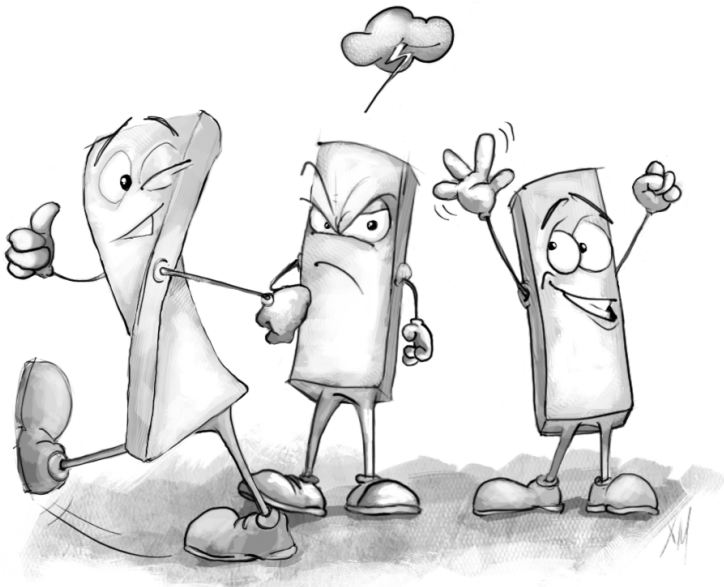
And by saying this he returned to his place considering that he was a very diplomatic key and that everything was taken care of. A minute later, the Si burst out:

-In that case we the Si notes will make our own decisions and you the Do notes can "Do" what you like!

-Si, shouted all the Si notes together in order to show that they agreed and they went away in a corner.

-We will do the same, said all the Re notes.

-We will do the same too, said all the Fa notes and this went on and on until all the white keys were divided in separate notes talking.



All the white keys? Unfortunately the same situation stood for the black keys too. While the white keys were shouting to each other the black keys had already started to divide themselves in notes. For instance all the Do# notes were now sitting together.

-Silence, said the Do# of the 1st octave. I'm afraid that the rest of the black keys have gone so mad that we have to act alone against the white keys. Now listen up...

-You can't tell us what to do, said the last Do# so angrily that everyone thought it was a Re speaking and not a Do#.

-Don't raise your tone with me, answered the first Do# and they were that close to quarrel using their hands this time.

But since the keys have no hands, as you may have already known, they continued their quarrel using their mouth, saying bad things and insulting each other with words. Words no key ever imagined saying to his own friends. And it wasn't only the Do#. All the keys were using insulting language. There were no longer any teams or groups or similarities. Each key was on his own.

The worse words a key heard, the more insulting the answer he gave, until all you could hear was a noise like stones falling on the untuned keys, composing the most hideous music ever heard.

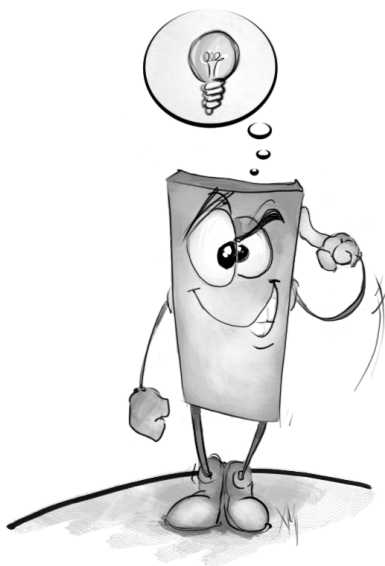
It seems that this situation had worn the keys out because once they heard a key shouting out loud

-Quiiiiiieet...



...they stopped all together at once. It made no difference whether the key was black or white or which note it stood for but these were its exact words:

-This situation is unbearable and it can't go on. So listen up to my idea. What caused all this trouble? The fact that we are different notes, we play different tunes, one plays Do, the other one plays Re, the next one Si... There's the solution. We will invent a note that doesn't exist, for example a note between the Si and the Do. And we will name it, let's say... Sou. It will be like Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Si Sou Do. It sounds nice. We will all agree to tune ourselves to the note Sou and when we do so we will have nothing standing between us.



All the keys were speechless. They all had to agree that it was a marvelous idea. They stood motionless for a few minutes until they realized what they had to do and then they all started to stretch and unstring themselves in order to tune themselves to the Sou note.

This is what happened. And all the Sou lived in peace without any fighting and quarreling.

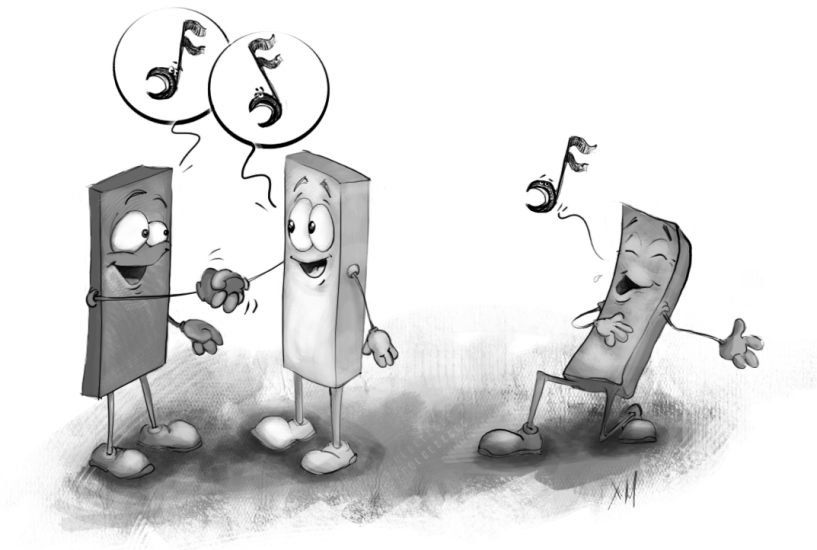
-Nice weather today, said one Sou.

-Yes it is nice, replied another Sou.

-What time is it? asked one Sou.

-Time to go to sleep, replied another Sou.

-I am bored, said a Sou one day.

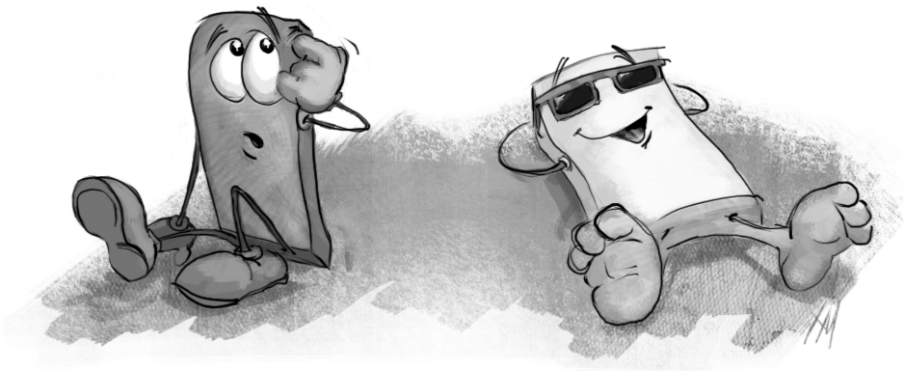


-Me too, they all said in one voice.

-What should we do? asked a Sou.

-Shhhhhhh...hush, yelled a Sou, I hear something.

There was something going on over the cover of the old piano. It was something that hasn't happened for years, maybe even for centuries.





-Hmmm Nick, take a look at this Karagiozis, this puppet is made of leather like they used to make them many years ago.

The seller of the antique store was showing the Karagiozis puppets one by one to the customer and his grandson.

-Grandpa, look, a piano.

Nick ran towards the piano, placed the score on the music stand and was ready to open the piano cover.

-Nick, we've said that we are not to touch...

-Please let the boy play, said the seller...

Nick opened the cover. Even though he wasn't yet a well know pianist but a young student of a conservatory, he put his hands in position and with the characteristic click clack the musicians' fingers do right before a recital, he looked at the score and touched the keys.

He started playing and the piano made a horrible sound going like this:

Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou
Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou
Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou
Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou
Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou
Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou
Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou
Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou
Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou
Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou Sou
Sou Sou Sou....

Nick stopped and examined the piano curiously.

-This piano is broken, he said, it can no longer play a thing.



The keys woke up from the long lethargy. Who could not play a thing? How dare a young inexperienced musician insult such a honoured piano, a piano that welcomed the fingers of the greatest pianists?

Where was this disrespecting young man when its keys were shining, reflecting the big scene lights, receiving applauses in filled rooms?

Without exchanging a single word between them they began to tune themselves to their own notes until in ten seconds the piano was well-tuned again.

-Let me try once again, Nick said placing his fingers back on the piano.

An enchanting music filled the old storehouse. Nick had a hard time playing fast, but the keys were so thrilled that they started playing on their own.

-The piano is playing by itself, Nick said terrified, and he ran in his grandfather's arms, who was standing near the door of the storehouse with a smile on his face, humming the melody.

-It is playing by itself, Nick repeated, *it is haunted*.

-It's not haunted, grandpa answered..., *it's magic*.

The piano was truly magic and its music enchanting. It was playing by itself; each note was playing on her own.

All the notes together were giving out this wonderful music. The Do, the Mi, the Fa#, the Sol, so many different notes were mixed up in one mesmerising melody.

Each note was discovering herself in the music.

-Being yourself in a unique, different way, this is magic, was the thought of every note and that way they all felt even closer to each other.

