
Playing the Changes on the Jazz Metaphor

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Playing the Changes on the Jazz Metaphor: An Expanded Conceptualization of Music-, Management-, and Marketing-Related Themes

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Abstract

A metaphor based on the nature of jazz as a musical genre in general and on the sociopsychological process of jazz improvisation in particular has frequently surfaced in recent accounts of product innovation, brand positioning, team coordination, and organizational leadership from various areas of research on management and marketing strategy. As typically applied, this “jazz metaphor” appears unnecessarily limited in its scope. In this light, the author suggests a need for refining, extending, and enlarging the jazz metaphor to cover a broader range of music-, management-, and marketing-related themes. Toward this end, the author “plays the changes” on this perspective by developing a typology of jazz musicians based on different kinds of musical offerings and by elaborating this typology to propose a classification of management and marketing styles based on parallels with the jazz metaphor.

Author Biography

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Consumer Value: A Framework for Analysis and Research (edited, Routledge, 1999). Holbrook pursues such hobbies as playing the piano and vibraphone, attending jazz and classical concerts, going to movies and the theater, collecting musical recordings, taking stereographic photos, and being kind to animals, especially cats.



Dizzy Gillespie (Drawing by Morris B. Holbrook)

Epigraphs

Epigraph One

Jazz improvisation is not merely a process by which musicians create a record album or an evening's performance. It is a particular artistic way of going through life. . . . In fact, when musicians speak of jazz as a way of life, they refer primarily to the unrelenting artistic demands of a jazz career and to a particular orientation to the world of musical imagination characteristic of jazz community members. They refer to the total immersion in the music's language that its rigors demand if players are to attain fluency as improvisers and enjoy continuous artistic growth When performers speak of jazz as a way of life, they refer to the performer's constant preoccupation with musical ideas and notions of creativity (Berliner, 1994, p. 486).

Epigraph Two

You have to master a style, be able to speak the language as it's spoken, and then find your own voice in it (Andy Statman, clarinetist, quoted by Panken (2007, p. 24)).

Epigraph Three

Oh yeah. I'm an improviser at heart. Writing's a slightly different process . . . it's a slower process . . . the intellect gets involved with it more. When you're playing, it's going so fast, you're not thinking. Advanced improvisation goes beyond your thinking (David S. Ware, tenor saxophonist, quoted by Brady (2007, p. 16)).

Epigraph Four

Music is the universal language of mankind (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, quoted by Crook (1999, p. 91)).

Epigraph Five

Low overhead and a sense of improvisation make for a good life (Weiland, 2007, p. 13).

Epigraph Six

January 14, 2007. The second set in the Sunday Morning Brunch at Iridium on Broadway between 50th and 51st Streets has begun. A quartet led by Barry Levitt on piano with David Schnitter on tenor saxophone has just romped through an up-tempo original. Now Levitt leans into the microphone and announces that the time has come to introduce the first singer of the day — a woman named Evita Cobo from Southern Vermont. Ms Cobo — an imposingly tall figure who has driven down from New England that morning — mounts the stage and hands Levitt a lead sheet to a tune that turns out to be “Autumn Leaves.” These musicians have never met before — much less played together — but Levitt immediately swings into an 8-bar medium-tempo introduction. The bass and drums quickly join him in time for Cobo to enter flawlessly with the tune's opening lyrics. After a perfectly coordinated opening chorus, Levitt takes a 32-bar solo

on piano, followed by Schnitter on tenor, playing his most relaxed and coherent improvisation of the day — probably because this piece has acquired a singular level of ingrained familiarity through many years of countless repetitions in all manner of contrasting settings with every sort of musical group. Beyond finding out in what key the singer wants to perform this piece and maybe checking the tempo markings, he scarcely needs to look at the lead sheet. He knows the melody and chord progressions cold (probably in every key, but certainly in A minor, C minor, D minor, E minor, F minor, and G minor) — as do all the other members of the group, who have also performed this piece innumerable times in various contexts. Cobo reenters with a half-chorus of imaginative scat singing, buoyed by the strong harmonic support of the rhythm section behind her. Then, at the bridge, she returns to subtle variations of the melody before ending with the final phrase of the song repeated three times, the last of which is out of tempo according to an *ad lib* phrasing that she conveys to the quartet members by means of a few inconspicuous hand signals. This refreshingly spontaneous but flawlessly coordinated performance wins thunderous applause from the surprisingly large number of Sunday-morning disciples who have gathered for the Iridium brunch. Cobo shakes hands with the members of the quartet, while Levitt makes a gracious announcement that — though he has never met or played with her before — he hopes to enjoy the experience soon again. Meanwhile, what we have just witnessed serves as a pellucid demonstration of entrepreneurship, teamwork, and leadership in action — a perfect metaphor for management and marketing success.



Zoot Sims, New York City, 1978
(Photograph by Morris B. Holbrook)

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1

Introduction: Jazz and Organizational Strategy

1.1 Background

In recent years — encouraged and reinforced by a symposium at the Academy of Management's National Conference that gave birth to a special issue of *Organization Science* (Meyer et al., 1998) devoted to insights and inspirations related to jazz (Barrett, 1998a; Berniker, 1998; Crossan, 1998; Hatch, 1998; Mirvis, 1998; Pasmore, 1998; Weick, 1998) — writers concerned with the strategic aspects of management and marketing have relied increasingly on a metaphor drawn from the field of jazz as a musical genre in general and from the sociopsychological process of jazz improvisation as a form of creative activity in particular (Holbrook, 1984; Bastien and Hostager, 1988; Akin and Schultheiss, 1990; Neilson, 1992; Holbrook, 1995; Eisenhardt, 1997; Hatch, 1999; Kamoche and Cunha, 2001; Dennis and Macaulay, 2003; Holbrook, 2003; Pavlovich, 2003; Waltzer and Salcher, 2003; Jennings, 2004; Newton, 2004; Gilbert, 2005; Gold and Hirshfeld, 2005; Cornelissen, 2006; John et al., 2006; Dennis and Macaulay, 2007).

These applications and elaborations of the *jazz metaphor* have touched on a large and growing range of business and organizational

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issues. For example, some have suggested that the project of achieving a strategic match between a firm's strengths or weaknesses and the threats or opportunities arising from its environment resembles the challenge faced by a jazz soloist (Tirro, 1974; Mehegan, 1985; Longo, 1992) when flexibly designing melodic variations to fit the chord changes in a pre-established harmonic structure (Strunk, 1985; Bastien and Hostager, 1988; Neilson, 1992; Barrett, 1998a,b; Barrett and Peplowski, 1998; Berniker, 1998; Crossan, 1998; Hatch, 1998; Mirvis, 1998; Moorman and Miner, 1998a,b; Pasmore, 1998; Pressing, 1998; Weick, 1998; Cunha et al., 1999; Dennis and Macaulay, 2003; Holbrook, 2003). Thus, after discarding metaphors based on jigsaw puzzles and dancing pairs of figure skaters, one writer pursues the logic of customer orientation by characterizing strategic fit as comparable to a free-form jazz band that has shaped its repertoire in a direction that "people would appreciate" according to "what the audience wanted" (Neilson, 1992, p. 24). Similarly, developing the jazz analogy, recent thinkers have viewed organizational improvisation — that is, responding quickly, flexibly, and self-reflexively to the changing needs and wants of consumers and clients — as a key element in appealing to target customers (Jennings, 2004); as a model for building strong emotional bonds in one-on-one marketing (Gilbert, 2005); as a route toward the achievement of satisfyingly customized service experiences (John et al. 2006); as a way of empowering employees to respond flexibly in pursuing maximum customer service and satisfaction (Leybourne, 2006); and as the foundation for an effective market orientation (Dennis and Macaulay, 2007).

Beyond this obvious parallel between jazz and marketing strategy, various management gurus have linked the nature of jazz improvisation as an unfolding theme-with-variations to the essence of creativity (Holbrook, 1984; Weisberg, 1993; Holbrook, 1995; Kao, 1996; Holbrook, 1997, 2003; Weisberg et al., 2004). From this perspective, some authorities have compared the ordered-but-flexible aspects of jazz to the exigencies of business leadership (DePree, 1989, 1992; Newton, 2004). Others have drawn parallels between jazz and the phenomenon of emergence as studied by chaos or complexity theory (Weick, 1998; Crossan, 1998; Cunha et al., 1999; Papadopoulos and Wiggins, 1999;

Chelariu et al., 2002; Holbrook, 2003). Still others have viewed improvisation as a key aspect of teamwork aimed at achieving effective innovation (Waltzer and Salcher, 2003) by encouraging the fulfillment of multiple roles in response to audience suggestions or customer demands (Crossan, 1998); by organizing collaborative effort under unpredictable conditions (Gold and Hirshfeld, 2005); and by managing organizational change (Leybourne, 2006).

Such thinkers have argued that “organizational members . . . can improve the effectiveness of their improvisational process through training that addresses the elements needed to improvise well . . . and the creation of a context that supports improvisation” (Vera and Crossan, 2005, p. 209): “In a world in which yesterday’s responses become inappropriate maps for today’s challenges, managers must improvise and would do well to pay attention to what jazz musicians are doing” (Barrett, 1998b, p. 286). Thus, workgroup facilitators have exploited the jazz metaphor to build a shared consciousness of how “listening to one another” builds team strengths in “collective improvisation” (Akin and Schultheiss, 1990, p. 15). Training consultants involved in executive education have drawn on improvisatory skills typical of a jazz ensemble to design corporate seminars based on team-oriented approaches like Michael Gold’s APRIL acronym: Autonomy, Passion, Risk, Innovation, and Listening (www.jazz-impact.com; Gold and Hirshfeld, 2005). And management trainers have developed exercises based on improvisatory theater to build the capacity for spontaneous role playing in the service of innovation (Crossan, 1998).

Meanwhile, management scholars and marketing academics have viewed effective organization aimed at achieving objectives such as innovation or entrepreneurship as a parallel to the dynamic skills needed to integrate the disparate forces at work in a jazz band (Bastien and Hostager, 1988; Eisenberg, 1990; Weick, 1998; Dennis and Macaulay, 2003). Thus, academic writers have taken jazz improvisation as a versatile analytic lens through which to view organizational or strategic aspects of management and marketing (Eisenhardt, 1997; Barrett, 1998a,b; Berniker, 1998; Crossan, 1998; Hatch, 1998, 1999; Mirvis, 1998; Moorman and Miner, 1998a; Weick, 1998; Cunha et al., 1999; Chelariu et al., 2002; Pavlovich, 2003; John et al., 2006;

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Dennis and Macaulay, 2007; Newton, 2004; see also the compilation by Kamoche et al., 2002). A favorite illustration arises in the case of new product development (Kamoche and Cunha, 2001; Moorman and Miner, 1998b). For example, Weick (1998) views jazz improvisation and organizational innovation as analogous dialectical processes in which “order and control are breached extemporaneously . . . and a new order created” (p. 543) to achieve “construction that sounds logical in an unexpected way” (p. 547) or, in short, “an emerging structure” (p. 547):

My bet is that improvising is close to the root process in organizing and that organizing itself consists largely of the embellishment of small structures. . . . Improvisation may be part of the infrastructure present in all organizing (p. 553).

In this spirit, Barrett (1998a) suggests that the jazz metaphor parallels those aspects that characterize the organization as “a complex adaptive system that is constantly evolving” (p. 619). Similarly, Holbrook (2003) emphasizes the connection between jazz and a view of the organization as a “Dynamic Open Complex Adaptive System.” Along comparable lines, Newton (2004) views improvisation as “a set of skills that allows the improviser to adjust to changing circumstances and contexts” so as to account for “the improviser’s and leader’s ability to adapt in the face of uncertainty” (p. 98). Similarly, Chelariu et al. (2002) emphasize that “improvisation holds hither-to-fore unexplored possibilities for managers trying to cope with uncertain, rapidly changing and/or complex environments [where] detailed planning may be . . . a waste of time and resources” (p. 146). In this light, improvisation emerges as a key to the management of organizational change (Leybourne, 2006).

Pursuing an important qualification, Pavlovich (2003) clarifies that such improvisation is only “seemingly unplanned” — in the sense that “the metaphor of jazz . . . demonstrates how . . . networks are organised through a process of improvisation” (p. 441): “The network, then, is the overall framework within which the components function; and . . . for the network to function cohesively, each component needs to collaboratively

interact with the other components for the larger structure to be productive” (p. 442). As explained by Hatch (1998) when describing the organization as a dynamic open complex adaptive system:

If you look at the list of characteristics that are associated with the 21st century organization, you find concepts like flexible, adaptable, responsive to the environment, loose boundaries, minimal hierarchy. When you look at the list for a second, if you’re interested in jazz, you recognize that all of those ideas could as easily be associated with a jazz band as a 21st century organization. And so the idea of comparing these two worlds seems like a sensible one (p. 557).

Thus, Hatch (1999) redescribes organizational structure — including such aspects as adaptability and flexibility — as a performative demonstration of the jazz metaphor.

We find a similar focus on blurred boundaries, the avoidance of premature closure, and the maintenance of flexibility in the best writing on jazz theory — especially in the way that, in describing contrapuntal *chord voicings*, Gillespie (2000) advocates the delayed gratification of postponed resolutions:

Contrapuntal movement...gives the progression a sense of anticipation and forward motion, and delays the final resolution.... Continuing the moving voices...also disguises the whole progression and keeps each chord from becoming too strong or too “closed”...an open, suspended or “blurred boundary” effect is created from one chord to the next.... Instead of simply playing and hearing vertical harmony, individual voices and melodies are heard horizontally and take on a life of their own (p. 73).

1.2 Note on Notation

Please note that, in this survey, the term *chord voicing* refers to “the position of notes contained within [a] chord from the lowest note to the

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highest note” (Amadie, 1980, p. vii). In each case, we shall “spell” the relevant chord voicing from the lowest to the highest note. For example, in a root-position closed voicing, $C7 = C-E - G-Bb$. In an open voicing, $C7 = \underline{C}-\underline{G} - E-Bb$. With one possible addition, extension, alteration, or embellishment (the augmented ninth), $C7\#9 = \underline{C}-\underline{G} - E-Bb-D\#'$. And so forth.

Typically, in the examples just given, the two lowest (remaining highest) notes of the chord would be played in the left (right) hand when performing on the piano. This division of labor between the two hands is indicated by a break before-and-after the relevant dash (e.g., between \underline{G} and E in the example of an open voicing just given — namely, $C7\#9 = \underline{C}-\underline{G} - E-Bb-D\#'$).

In this survey, middle C and the notes directly above middle C are indicated by upper-case letters with no other markings (C, D, E, F, G, A, B). Notes in the octave above that are indicated by a prime (C', D', E', F', G', A', B'). Where relevant, notes in the next octave above that are indicated by a double prime (C'', D'', E'', F'', G'', A'', B''). Meanwhile, notes in the octave below middle C are underlined (\underline{C} , \underline{D} , \underline{E} , \underline{F} , \underline{G} , \underline{A} , \underline{B}). Notes one or two octaves lower than that are underlined and marked by single or double primes (\underline{C}' , \underline{D}' , \underline{E}' , \underline{F}' , \underline{G}' , \underline{A}' , \underline{B}' or \underline{C}'' , \underline{D}'' , \underline{E}'' , \underline{F}'' , \underline{G}'' , \underline{A}'' , \underline{B}'').

Readers interested in hearing the various musical examples mentioned in this survey are invited to play them on a piano keyboard, following the notational system just described. Those who are unfamiliar with the notes on a piano might wish to label a keyboard with the relevant designations by using the sticky parts of Post-It Notes cut to the appropriate size, as shown in Photo 1.1 of the author’s digital piano thus labeled.

Warning: Please do *not* use anything stickier than Post-It Notes for this purpose. For example, do *not* use mailing labels because these may be difficult to remove at a later date (as the author has learned to his sorrow and to the enrichment of the Magic America Corporation, which manufactures Goo Gone). And, of course, do *not* write on the piano keys themselves for fear of permanently defacing the instrument.

1.3 Limitations of the Jazz Metaphor 7

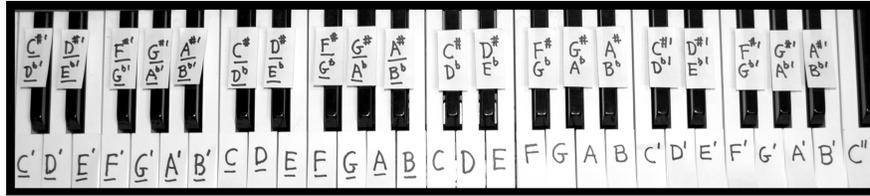


Photo 1.1 The Post-It Piano: A keyboard with notes appropriately labeled.

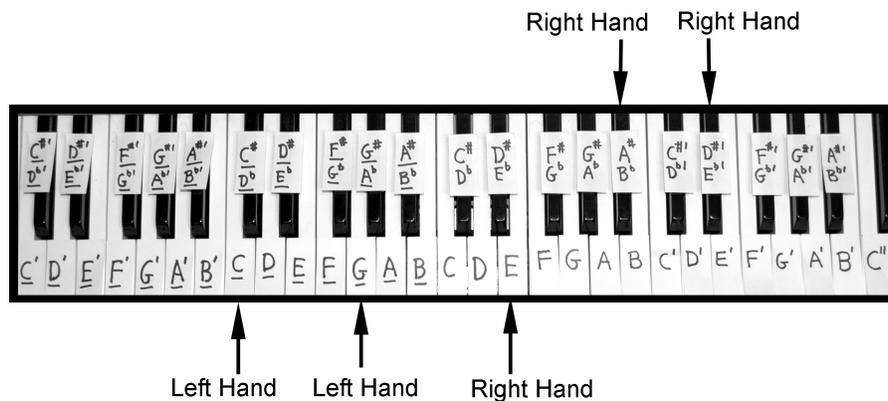


Photo 1.2 An open voicing for C7#9 on the Post-It Piano.

Notice that each of the black keys carries two names as both a sharp and a flat, depending on the context ($C\# = D\flat$, $D\# = E\flat$, $F\# = G\flat$, $G\# = A\flat$, $A\# = B\flat$). These are labeled accordingly in the example just pictured.

Using this method, the appropriate notes should be easy to identify with the help of what we shall call the *Post-It Piano*. The interested reader can thereby play each illustration so as to hear the relevant chord voicing or melody. For example, the voicing for an open C7#9 chord mentioned earlier would involve playing the keys indicated by arrows in Photo 1.2 ($C7\#9 = \underline{C}-\underline{G} - E-B\flat-D\#$).

1.3 Limitations of the Jazz Metaphor

All the aforementioned contributions to our thinking about management styles and marketing practices have poked, probed, and pushed

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the jazz metaphor in various ways useful in the development of valuable inspiration, ideas, and insights. But they have all suffered from limitations that have restricted their breadth of relevance to the world of business. Specifically, each writer who has pursued the jazz metaphor has tended to focus on just one type of jazz — for example, just one style of performance (such as a solo on a 12-bar blues within the context of a jazz quartet) or just one type of musical organization (such as a working band that plays together on a regular basis). This tendency toward emphasizing an inherently narrow range of illustrative concerns has given most applications of the jazz metaphor a rather parochial flavor and has confined their respective spheres of relevance in a manner comparable to that found in the old parable about the seven blind men investigating the nature of an elephant — where various observers think that the elephant resembles a long tube (the trunk), a snake (the tail), a creviced wall (the side), or a tree (one of the legs).

As one illustration based on the jazz metaphor, the influential piece by Bastien and Hostager (1988) presents their beautifully detailed case study of a group performance by four musicians committed to a style of playing that reached its zenith roughly 70 years ago and that represents only a tiny fraction of the overall jazz spectrum. More generally, the vast majority of those who have written about the jazz metaphor from the management- or marketing-related perspective have taken the viewpoint of a musical soloist playing a performance of a standard tune in a mainstream jazz group. Typically — according to common practice (Hodeir, 1962, pp. 82–83; Mehegan, 1965, p. 235; Tirro, 1967, p. 317; Berliner, 1994, p. 63; Owens, 1995, p. 18; Hatch, 1999; Pavlovich, 2003; Newton, 2004) — the tune follows a “head” arrangement based on a melody set to certain standard chord changes (“I Got Rhythm,” “What Is This Thing Called Love?,” “All the Things You Are,” a twelve-bar blues, or whatever). The performance begins with a short introduction (perhaps a “vamp” based on a repeated I-VI7-IIIm7-V7 chord pattern), followed by a statement of the main theme (maybe by two or more horns playing in unison, harmony, or simple counterpoint). This leads to a series of solos by each instrumentalist — say, trumpet, tenor, piano, bass, drums (in a typical jazz quintet). After this, the soloists might trade “eights” or “fours” or “twos” (8-, 4-, or 2-bar phrases within the

32- or 12-bar structure of the tune). Then, the ensemble recapitulates the head and ends with some sort of “coda” (analogous to the vamp with which the performance began). In such a context, the main task of each musical soloist involves the invention of new melodic patterns to play over the recurrent chord changes that underlie the main theme. Such a description accurately portrays the standard operating procedure (SOP) for about 95% of the mainstream jazz performed between 1910 and 2010.

Of course, departures have appeared — including the brave experiments of many performers who have courageously explored the boundaries of avant-garde or free jazz (Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, Cecil Taylor, Sun Ra, Eric Dolphy, John Coltrane, and so forth). But even the most ardent disciples of freedom have generally followed some sort of coherent pattern in shaping the typical jazz performance — the listener’s challenge being to discern the (often elusive) underlying structure, to anticipate appropriately, and to respond accordingly. Put differently, musical surprises and the musical meanings that result are impossible without the pre-existence of anticipatory musical expectations (Meyer, 1956, 1967). Indeed, the ubiquity of such predictable patterns — as the basis for well-defined expectations — has encouraged the telling and retelling of the following whimsical jazz-related joke (paraphrased from the version that appears at www.wesleydick.com/Jokes.html).

A jazz critic has decided to take a break from writing scathing reviews for his local newspaper and has embarked upon a safari in Africa. As his guide leads him deeper and deeper into the jungle, he begins to hear the tumultuous, furiously pounding sound of drums in the distance. The guide explains that these cacophonous noises emanate from the ritual celebrations of a local tribe, situated a few miles away. As the safari continues, the drums grow louder. Fifteen minutes elapse. The critic asks, “When will the drums stop?” The guide answers, “The drums must not stop because terrible things happen when the drums stop.” So the drums

continue — growing louder and louder as the safari advances. After another hour, the critic again asks, “When will the drums stop?” And the guide again replies, “The drums must not stop because terrible things happen when the drums stop.” So the critic endures for another two hours — growing increasingly impatient, restless, and enervated. He grows dizzy. His head begins to throb. Once more, he asks, “When will those incessantly pounding drums stop?” And, once more, the guide responds, “The drums must not stop because terrible things happen when the drums stop.” Three more hours pass. By now, the sound of the drums has escalated to ear-shattering proportions. The critic has grown numb with pain — almost deaf from the throbbing agony of his horrific headache. Able to endure no longer, he frantically inquires, “But *what* terrible things will happen if the drums stop?” The guide looks at him with an all-knowing glance; smiles scornfully; and says, “*Then* we will have the bass solo!”

(Note that this joke would be even funnier if it did in fact correspond to the typical order of events in a conventional jazz performance, in which the bass solo almost always *precedes* the incalculably louder drum solo.)

In sum, then, applications of the jazz metaphor to management or marketing strategy typically reflect various limitations due to their restriction to particular jazz styles that embody high degrees of predictability in their adherence to certain well-established canons of ordinary performance practice — for example, a standard tune based on familiar chord changes followed by performers who pursue the aforementioned intro-head-solos-fours-head-coda structure.

1.4 Moving Beyond the Jazz Metaphor

Responding to such limitations of vision and scope in music-based analyses of management and marketing, Kamoche et al. (2003) advocate moving “Beyond the Jazz Metaphor” to consider alternative models such as those drawn from Indian music, music therapy, and/or

music-relevant role theory: “It is important not to be mesmerized by the jazz metaphor to the point of ignoring the potential contributions of alternative metaphors and other avenues of theory-development in organizational improvisation” (p. 2024). In a similar spirit, Dennis and Macaulay (2007) suggest the need to transcend mere metaphor by exploring the more substantive aspects of jazz improvisation as actually practiced.

Along these lines, Zack (2000) complains about confining theories of organizational improvising to a model based only on the aforementioned mainstream genres of jazz and urges the importance of recognizing *different degrees of improvisation* (Moorman and Miner, 1998a,b) from *minimal* (classical music viewed as rigid interpretation) . . . to *constrained* (swing viewed as flexible embellishment) . . . to *extensive* (bebop viewed as organic variation) . . . to *maximal* (postbop and free, avant-garde, or action jazz viewed as chaotic improvisation).

As already noted by Hodeir (1956) in a similar spirit, *further gradations* exist so that “Between the extreme attitudes represented by the strict rendition of a given melody and its total disappearance, a number of compromises are possible” (p. 161). These gradations include what Hodeir calls the *exposition-paraphrase* (minor liberties with the tune’s melody); the *paraphrase-chorus* (amplifying the theme rather than stating it directly); and the *free variation* (complete departure from the original tune) (p. 167). This recognition of degrees anticipates distinctions among *levels of intensity* proposed by the great saxophonist Lee Konitz — namely, *interpretation* (“minor liberties” with the melody); *embellishment* (“rephras[ing]” the melody); *variation* (“transfiguring the melody more substantially”); and *full improvisation* (“transforming the melody into patterns bearing little resemblance to the original model”) (Berliner, 1994, pp. 67–71, 221–222; Crook, 1999, p. 87). Similarly, Martin (1996) describes a *continuum of liberties with the melody* — where (in increasing degrees of departure) *paraphrase improvisation* (simple embellishment of the head) < *thematic improvisation* (abstruse relationship to the head) < *harmonic improvisation* (no clear motivic relationship with the head) (pp. 38, 39). For example, Martin describes saxophonist Charlie Parker’s solo on “Embraceable You” as featuring “relational ingenuity of the highest order” via “thematic

improvisations, not paraphrases” in which “the original material ingeniously and subtly directs the overall shape of the solo, but does not restrict or limit its melodic content” (p. 82).

More generally, according to Martin (1996), “Parker’s thematic procedures seem consistent”: “Hence, whether Parker is playing the blues, jazz heads, or popular songs, thematic connection to the original melody will often unify the performances” (p. 109) so that “the outstanding, perhaps the defining, quality of Parker’s treatment of thematic relationships is his balance of melodic formulas, especially in uptempo playing, with larger-scale voice leading and control that artfully evoke the original material” (p. 111). In this view, “what keeps Parker’s formulas . . . from sounding mechanical or stale is his ability to integrate them into a coherent whole characterized by voice-leading fluency and subtle thematic interconnection, both internally and with the original melody” (p. 118). For a similar Schenkerian analysis that stresses the role of voice leading in the work of pianist Bill Evans, see Larson (1998).

Further — in an analysis reminiscent of Meyer (1956, 1967) — Hatch (1999) demonstrates that the aforementioned degrees of improvisation are more intelligibly viewed as successive stages in the evolution of implicit expectations-evoking structures:

To put this historical view in processual terms, as each use of structure is challenged by playing outside or between the anticipated notes, harmonies and beats of an existing form, new forms of jazz are created which redefine expectations and thus present new opportunities (new empty spaces) for thwarting them. Thus, the practices of jazz (e.g., soloing, comping, trading fours, listening and responding, finding the groove, playing the head, improvising) fill the empty spaces in the structure of jazz as it is currently constituted, and as this happens, the structure of jazz itself is transformed. Put another way, the improvisational practices of jazz constitute the conditions of its own structural transformation, even as the structures of jazz provide the starting

point for improvisation. In this way, playing what is not explicated by one structure permits the creation of another, not unrelated to the first, but rather displaying both continuity and discontinuity with it (p. 84).

As described by Mehegan (1962a), “Like any art form, jazz displays an inevitable dialectic toward more comprehensive modes of expression”: “The obvious extension and refinement of skills and techniques must be thought of as representative of a comparable progressive extension of feeling and thinking on the part of the successive generation[s] of people who listened to this music” (p. 15).

In the business-oriented literature, by their own admission, Kamoche et al. (2003) continue to employ a rather narrow concept of the jazz metaphor — one based on standard procedures in the trad, swing, bop, and postbop styles (p. 2047). In other words — like most authors — Kamoche et al. (2003) retain a rather circumscribed view of jazz as a fairly homogeneous genre; they then propose the need to look beyond that to other types of music and to other types of phenomena. An alternative approach — favored by the present author — might have broadened the conception of jazz itself in ways that would have covered an enlarged or elaborated perspective.

Similarly, even while also calling for a move beyond the jazz metaphor, Dennis and Macaulay (2007) retain a focus on the traditional procedures of a typical mainstream jazz group — in which, as already noted, an (optional) introductory vamp → the head arrangement → various solo choruses → (often) trading 8-, 4-, or 2-bar phrases → a recapitulation of the head arrangement → (perhaps) a coda (Mehegan, 1965, p. 235; Tirro, 1967, p. 317; Berliner, 1994, p. 63; Owens, 1995, p. 18). Indeed, Newton (2004) constructs his entire essay to reflect this inherently stereotypical structure, while Pavlovich (2003) echoes Hatch (1999) in following essentially the same implicit design. Notice how strongly this familiar scenario resembles that described by Hodeir (1962) almost 50 years ago:

There they are, four or five musicians in short-sleeves . . . let’s say there are drums, bass, piano, tenor sax and trumpet. . . . Before the first down-beat, there

must be a short conference to decide, first the theme on which to improvise, and then the key and tempo. . . . When all are agreed at last, they attack the first bar. The trumpet will begin by stating the theme . . . the saxophone may weave a countermelody. . . . Soon the thirty-two bar statement is over and it is time to get down to business. A brief exchange of glances has shown that the saxophonist is more willing — or anxious — to play than his partner, so the trumpet player gives him the go-ahead, reserving the right to play, later on, as many choruses as his partner is about to play now. . . . Later, after the trumpet solo, the pianist will have a few choruses to himself, the bass player may follow suit; then the “horns” will probably invite the drummer to share a chorus or two with them, in four bar sequences, before they return to a final statement of the theme (pp. 82, 83).

For the most part, the present analysis will retain the common focus on jazz that adheres to an harmonic structure represented by a standard set of chord changes — as typified by a 12-bar blues; by the traditional 32-bar tune from the Great American Songbook (consisting of show tunes and popular songs from days of yore); or by an original composition (often of unique or unconventional harmonic structure but still with recognizable chord changes) written by one or another jazz master (Tirro, 1974). However — as anticipated by Hodeir (1962) in his distinctions between “the improviser . . . the tune writer . . . the arranger . . . and the composer” (p. 90) — the present author believes that it is time to abandon the excessively monolithic view of jazz as an undifferentiated commodity and to recognize the subtle complexities of differences among various kinds of jazz artists, what they have accomplished, and how these differences suggest complications in our perspectives on management practice and marketing strategy. In short, let us pursue an expanded view — *not* of jazz per se — but *rather* of those who perform this music and of the ways in which they enact these performances.

In this connection, Kamoche et al. (2003) characterize the “orthodox view” of the jazz metaphor as implying that “jazz . . . improvisation is something best done by highly skilled and self-directed individuals who have absolute discretion over task, materials and tools” (pp. 2037, 2038). This quote accurately summarizes the typical focus on jazz as a soloistic art form practiced by gifted improvisational artists. However, it neglects the important complicating qualifications

- (1) that some jazz musicians perform primarily as supporting members of well-integrated groups or even as leaders of big bands;
- (2) that some jazz musicians display advanced skills not so much as improvisers but rather as gifted composers, arrangers, or orchestrators (Coker, 1975, p. 73); and, indeed,
- (3) that some jazz musicians — not gifted in the art of improvisation — rely on leadership skills or possibly on no special mastery of any kind.

Put differently, in moving “Beyond the Jazz Metaphor,” Kamoche et al. (2003) call attention to the fact that — beyond conventional mainstream jazz — other kinds of improvisation deserve consideration. These “other kinds” would include music from different cultures (Asian, African, Indian, Latino) as well as unstructured aspects of free-form or avant-garde jazz. Such expansions of our past preoccupations will doubtless make a valuable contribution. By contrast, however, we must also recognize that — within mainstream jazz — hitherto neglected differences, subtleties, and nuances also demand recognition. The latter phenomena shape the central concerns of the present analysis.

1.5 Preview

This survey addresses the concerns just raised by proposing an expanded view of the jazz metaphor — namely, a broadened perspective that embraces a wide range of possibilities in the relevant organization-, business-, management-, or marketing-related analogy at work. In this, the author will attempt to achieve the sort of extension or elaboration that Cornelissen (2006) — elucidating the work by Weick (1989) on

“disciplined imagination” — recommends as a way of exploiting the theory-enriching meanings of metaphor where “(metaphorical) imagination leads to simulated images which . . . can . . . be elaborated on to form more full-scale representations of a subject or problem” (p. 1582):

According to Weick, conceptual advances come about when instead of scouting out old ground for neglected gems, we cover new ground by examining empirical contexts previously overlooked but potentially illuminating of large-scale organizations . . . and by conceptually associating ideas that were not previously related, let alone associated with one another (p. 1583).

Thus, the present author will propose a new *Typology of Jazz Musicians* based on different kinds of artistic offerings. This typology will combine three key distinctions or dimensions to construct a twelve-fold classification that — when extended to the sphere of organizational behavior and business strategy as a *Typology of Management and Marketing Styles* — will shed light on different ways in which the jazz metaphor relates to organizational design, business practice, management skills, and marketing opportunities. Before describing these typologies, however, we must first consider some important aspects of a *first-level jazz metaphor* as it relates to *organizational issues* involved in shaping the *jazz improvisation* into a form of *collective collaboration*, followed by attention to a *second-level linguistic metaphor* based on viewing jazz as a kind of *language* at the foundation for a *collaborative conversation*.



Marlene VerPlanck in Concert, 2002
(Photograph by Morris B. Holbrook)

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