



BREAKING DOWN THE SILOS:
TALES FROM A JAZZ MUSICIAN
AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATOR



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***'When jazz broke down the silos: tales from a jazz musician
and management educator.'***

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In memory of Kel Dennis – 1948 – 2007

My musical hero, my best friend, the reason these public works exist, for without your influence introducing me to Miles Davis, Freddie Hubbard, Wynton Marsalis and being part of the band, none of these works would exist. You, Dad, played a major role (and continue to do so) in shaping my professional practice. This is for you... Thank you.

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Abstract

This thesis is a critical reflection on a number of my public works in the academic arena, from my musical background and in my role as a strategic leader in two business schools. Using a combination of evocative and analytical autoethnography, I critically reflect on my roles as jazz musician and management educator and discuss how two bodies of knowledge have informed each other over the course of my career.

At the core of my works as a management educator, is the application of the jazz metaphor – largely in the strategic marketing management discipline (see my published works in this space – Dennis and Macaulay (2003), Dennis and Macaulay (2007) and Dennis (2015). Over the course of my career, though, my application of the jazz metaphor has pervaded other aspects of leadership and management discourse, including entrepreneurship, general leadership and strategic management in the broadest sense. The expansion of my application of the jazz metaphor has, in part, been informed by the workshops I have delivered to organisations over the years and, of course, my students (particularly MBAs) who have brought their experience and thoughts and allowed me to broaden my thinking beyond strategic marketing discourse.

Throughout this piece, I will switch lenses from my experience on the band stand, to my work in the classroom, through to my work as a senior leader. Over the course of the last twelve months, I have learned a great deal about myself and, of course my professional practice, as both a jazz musician and management educator, thanks to this Professional Doctorate.

First, I have realised that I have always had a deep inherent dissonance about the nature of management education that stems back to my days as an undergraduate marketing student. It was at this point – particularly at the time

of researching for my dissertation, I began to see the limitations of marketing discourse when applied to the arts, specifically jazz music. Arguably, I started experimenting with the jazz and marketing theme as an undergraduate, albeit in a superficial manner.

Subsequently, then, as I developed my skills as an improviser under the guidance of jazz trumpeter - Gerard Presencer – and began playing some high-profile gigs, I began thinking about how jazz can inform (initially) marketing discourse, but as my career developed, I have broadened my outlook and indeed the application of jazz to the wider field of management. I no longer think of myself as a marketer, instead, I am a management educator – in part informed by six years in strategic leadership positions in two business schools.

Throughout this thesis, I will discuss how iconic trumpeter and thought-leader – *Miles Davis* – has and continues to be a major influence on my professional practice. This context statement examines how his musicianship and creativity has inspired a body of my public works – from metaphor, to leadership, to challenging the art vs. commerce debate. Additionally, I will critically reflect on my work to bring the ‘art’ back into marketing through the creation of *Art and the Market (formally Arts Marketing: An International Journal)*, which has assisted in bringing together a global community of practice for the arts marketing community. The creation of the journal is an important piece in my career to date, and although I feel I did this perhaps too early in my career, it has none the less been an important contribution to arts marketing discourse.

There are a number of conclusions that I have drawn from this reflective exercise. First, I have come to learn that I have only scratched the surface of the application of the jazz metaphor in a business context and I have identified directions for future academic research that will inform my pedagogical practice and my jazz workshops. Second, and largely from my work as Associate Dean, I have broken out of the marketing silo and I now see myself as a management educator. I discuss some of the criticisms and limitations of management education in this thesis and I also reflect on the challenges in my role as Associate Dean and how these have enhanced my practice – academically and

pedagogically. I better understand the interdisciplinary, the multidisciplinary and even the transdisciplinary nature of management education and I continue to champion this with my work in curriculum design – most recently developing a new MBA that is very much interdisciplinary in nature.

This deep critical reflection has also enhanced my understanding of improvisation and I feel I have a deeper understanding of how I play the trumpet and my approach to improvisation. My playing, I feel, has also positively benefitted as a result. The public works connected to this context statement are eclectic and a mixture of academic publications, musical performances/recordings, video footage of my jazz workshops, examples of curriculum design I have developed, with the occasional email to Miles Davis asking for his advice on matters connected to my professional practice. His inspirational reply is the perfect conclusion to the thesis.

*Prologue: When Worlds Collide: Jazz, Strategic Marketing,
Leadership and Management*

Dear Miles,

How the hell have I got to the point of writing an email to you in an attempt to make sense of a body of work I have been working on for the past fifteen years? I mean, really, this is quite a strange thing to do, given you are no longer physically present, yet, despite this, you appear to be the centre of my work as a jazz musician and management educator. In fact, you are the reason for the collision of two bodies of knowledge – jazz and strategic marketing management. Indeed, you have provided me with so much material to inform my thinking about improvisation in a strategic marketing context; you have provided ammunition for me to defend myself at conferences – particularly in relation to putting an end to the art vs. commerce debate; you are the reason for a successful record of publications; more recently, you have opened my mind to thinking about entrepreneurship and not forgetting, of course, your influence musically. How could I forget the musical influence, Miles??? That's where it all began, but I guess I'm in management education mode as I write this.

Miles, you might not like what I am saying, but, you sir, were (are) what I term a creative entrepreneur, both musically and in the commercial sense, and the York and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce were intrigued when I told them why you are my business hero earlier this year. By the end of my session, I think you were their business hero too. But Miles, rest assured, you successfully stood by your artistic values and took your music to new audiences, and you never sold out, or dumbed the music down like some of your critics in the later part of your career alluded to. You, Miles, are an inspiration to many disciplines beyond music, as my context statement will

illustrate and, you, Miles, are going to be a central character in my work. I couldn't get through this without you.

Miles, you have been a huge influence for me since my dad gave me a compilation album of your work spanning the dates of 1945-1954. I remember listening to this album at the age of thirteen and being in awe of the mellifluous sound you made, your choice of notes and the space you created. You were a major motivation for me to practise my trumpet and you were the gatekeeper to a wonderful and eclectic world of jazz – which you played a major role in creating! Yes, you created so much that musicians and jazz fans alike still celebrate today. I am still, for example, blown away when I listen to Kind of Blue. What was going through your mind, man? I guess we'll never get any further details beyond your writings about it and those of others, but what you created is an iconic artistic masterpiece.

Anyway, given you have been (and will continue to be) such an inspiration to me musically (indeed I paid tribute to you in a gig before I left the North East of England for my first Associate Dean role in Glasgow in 2012) and as a management educator, where I still love explaining to my students that your autobiography has more management lessons than a book by Philip Kotler, or Michael Porter. I feel you, Miles, as co-creator of my works, need to be involved with this piece of work and take some of the credit.

Miles, thank you for everything and, rest assured, I'll be writing to you again – albeit in cathartic mode – to help me make sense of what might appear a disparate set of public works. Let your spiritual wisdom guide me to forge a creative path and make sense of my body of work

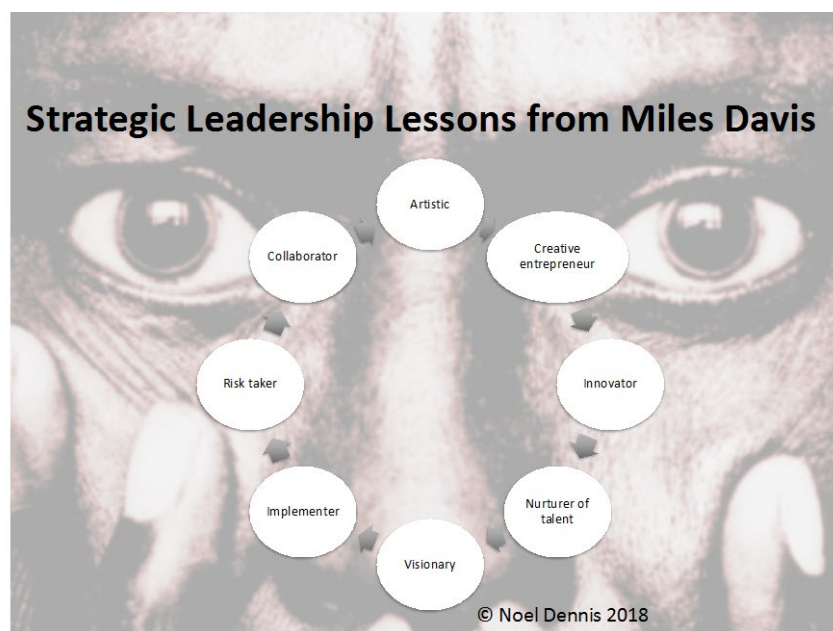
I'm obviously not expecting a reply, but...

All best wishes,

Noel

Miles Davis is going to feature heavily in this context statement. As my email to him above highlights, he continues to have a profound influence on my music and my role as a management educator and a researcher and has been central to the development of much of my work. Indeed, the diagram below provides an illustration of how Miles continues to inform my writings and teachings in the strategic leadership and management field. The simple diagram is something I have developed as have learned more about Miles Davis, through his autobiography and various biographies and documentaries. I have identified a number of leadership and entrepreneurial traits that Miles held that allowed him to push boundaries both musically and commercially – some of these are captured below.

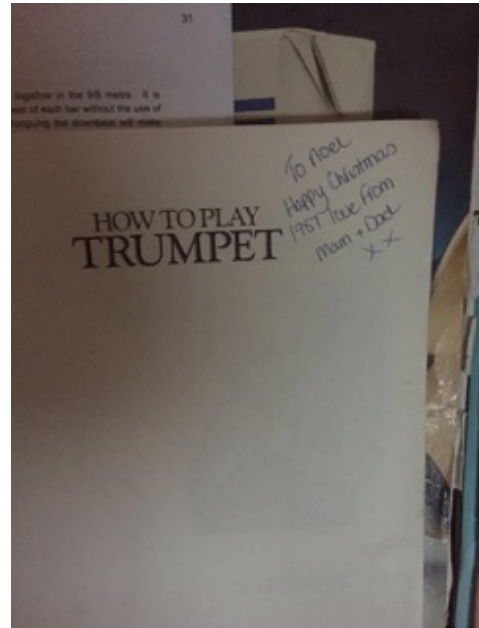
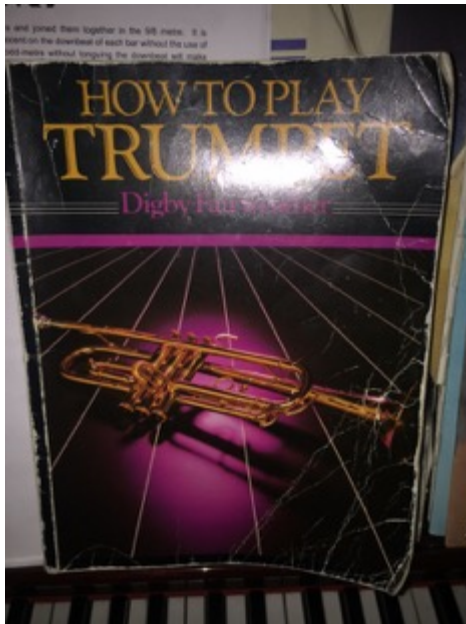
The Leadership and Management Lessons from Miles Davis



Throughout this context statement, I will revisit my email to Miles, as I critically reflect on my public works, their interconnectedness and their contribution and impact. As one will see in chapter three, my theoretical lens will be autoethnography, where I will be using a combination of evocative autoethnographical vignettes and analytic autoethnography to provide a rich critical examination of my works.

Before that, though, this chapter provides the reader with an insight into some of the historical factors that have influenced my development as a musician and management educator, setting the scene for the context of my public works.

Where it all began



The two pictures above are very significant to me and symbolise the beginning of something special that has taken me on the journey to where I am today. Without Digby's book and the love and support from my parents, I would most definitely not have created the public works that we will examine in this context statement.

At the age of 8, my dad gave me my first cornet and started teaching me the basics. I recall finding it quite a challenge to blow, but persevered and made rapid progress, passing my grade one after only playing for five months. Six months later for my Christmas present, I was bought a beautiful brand new shiny Boosey and Hawkes 400 trumpet, along with Digby's book! I was overjoyed and I have not looked back since that very significant moment in my life.

I was fortunate to be part of a musical family – my dad was a professional drummer and music educator and my granddad and auntie both were very accomplished saxophonists. Indeed, my auntie was alto player in the highly acclaimed Ivy Benson all girls big band and spent a great deal of her time in the 1960s touring across Europe. So, I guess, then, I had a head start with my music, having been surrounded with it since as far back as I can remember.

My mum is not musical, but is a successful business person, leading her own clothing retailing business. Starting out in 1978 with a market stall in South Bank, Middlesbrough selling wool, she developed the business to sell wool, designer babies and ladies clothes and, at one point, had a portfolio of five shops. Mum sold her shops some years ago and now operates on a mobile basis, serving a small loyal group of customers. As a result of my mum's work, I have always had a genuine interest in business, which was one of the reasons that I decided to study business at GCSE, A' level, undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Indeed, music and business have always been a harmonious partnership in my life and have been central to my professional practice.

A little about me

I have played the trumpet since the age of eight and have been fortunate to have some great teachers (namely my dad in the early days and later Gerard Presencer) and fantastic opportunities to perform with my dad's youth band, my own band and the Voice of the North Jazz Orchestra. I have been fortunate to work with an array of international jazz musicians who have had a major influence on the development of my practice, including: Bob Mintzer, Gerard Presencer, Jim Mullen, Dan Nimmer, Tim Garland, Alan Barnes and Dave O'Higgins to name just a few. In addition to live performance, I am also a composer and have composed and recorded in excess of 100 tracks for leading library company – Audio Network.

But music is not my main career, I am very fortunate to be able to combine my music career with my academic career as a management educator. With fifteen

years' experience of working in business schools, I have accrued a large amount of experience that has informed the development of my public works. Indeed, it is this the successful pairing of jazz and management (specifically strategic marketing and arts marketing) that is at the heart of my public works. Additionally, for the past six years, I have held Associate Dean positions at Glasgow Caledonian and York St John Universities, where I have successfully led change management projects in the areas of curriculum development, business engagement and marketing and recruitment. My experience as a senior leader in universities has had a profound impact on me, both professionally and personally, and my view of the world has changed during this period. I will reflect on these changes throughout this context statement, as I critically engage with my works and, importantly, look to the next chapter of my work.

Chapter 1

When Marketing and Management met Jazz – Starting at the End!

Dear Miles,

Happy New Year!

*I'm still plugging away with the thesis and am revisiting quite old ground. Specifically, I am reflecting on what inspired me to write my very first publications in the jazz metaphor space – *Jazz and Strategic Marketing Planning* (2003) and *Miles Ahead: using Jazz to Investigate Marketing Orientation* (2007). I happen to have come across a folder full of articles that examine the use of the jazz metaphor in the context of organisational studies. I remember reading a large number of these and being impressed by the sheer fact that jazz was getting coverage in a business context. Indeed, I had never seen the jazz metaphor applied to leadership and management up until this point – if only I had been introduced to these as a student!*

*Anyway, Miles, looking back on some of these articles, such as Karl Weick's (1998) essay – *Improvisation as a Mindset for Organisational Analysis* and Ken Komoche et al's (2003) paper – *Towards a Theory of Organizational Improvisation: Looking Beyond the Jazz Metaphor*, I can see why I took the approach I did with my work. These are just two examples I will cite here that got me thinking about how I might add to the debate.*

Weick's essay is thought-provoking on many levels and makes a great contribution to our understanding of organizational improvisation through the lens of jazz. However, Miles, I feel that the jazz aspect is too textbook-like in nature and I don't wish to be derogatory in anyway of this eminent scholar's

work, but it does overly rely on Paul Berliner's (1994) seminal book – *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of improvisation*. The book is great, Miles, and covers the whole spectrum of jazz and improvisation and I too have referred to it widely in some of my public works. BUT, I have used it **in conjunction** with my own knowledge and experience of being a jazz musician in order to provide a more authentic account to support my arguments. I guess I was questioning the authenticity and understanding of the jazz aspect of Weick's essay.

Kamoche et al. make some very valuable points in their paper, which I refer to above. You know, they state that we need to think beyond the jazz metaphor and look for other musical metaphors; they state that all music forms have some elements of, or originated from improvisation; they highlight the diverse range of jazz styles and the different degrees of improvisation that brings etc. I concur with those aforementioned points, Miles, but when I stumbled across the quote that follows I had concerns:

“Competition is found in ‘cutting sessions’ where musicians try to out-do each other, and engage in brinkmanship behaviour. Achieving a meaningful performance requires a balance between collaboration and competition.”
(Kamoche et al. 2003:2027)

You can imagine, Miles, why I would be concerned. Actively encouraging competition to achieve a meaningful performance?! That's certainly not my experience of how we do things in jazz, Miles, and I recall that it's not yours either. In fact, I was transported back to the time you cut ties with saxophonist Bill Evans for not being collaborative enough. In fact, I use your quote a great deal in my teaching of both music and strategic management – it makes me and my learners smile and think, of course:

“He's a kind of player who likes competition – he's more of an athlete than a musician, and you can't combine the two!” (Miles Davis in Carr, 1999:421)

I'm with you, Miles. It's through collaboration and a supportive approach that leads to a wonderful musical experience. After all, I'm sure your iconic

masterpiece – Kind of Blue - wouldn't have had the impact it's had, without the positivity and creativity of the team you assembled for that record.

So, before I sign off, I guess, Miles, upon initially reading the improvisation literature in my mind authenticity was missing. These eminent management scholars posited good arguments and were most certainly attempting be creative, but I feel that I had an opportunity to add a little more authenticity to the jazz side of things – purely from my experience and so my publication journey began. I hope I'm still doing that today through my writing and teaching – although there is still much scope to develop my practice in this space. I keep trying!

As ever,

Noel

As per the title of the chapter, I have decided to share my story from now and then subsequent chapters, I hope, will dissect my professional practice and illustrate my journey to this point.

So, starting with the above email, it articulates some of the initial concerns I had when I began researching into the application of the jazz metaphor in a strategic marketing management context. I was exposed to a large cross-section of literature – largely in the Organization Studies space that had used the jazz metaphor to illuminate the phenomenon of leadership and the way we understand organisations (Sorenson, 2013). I made reference in my email to Miles some of what Sorenson (2013) refers to as first-generation authors e.g. Weick, Hatch, Cunha et. Al and Hatch, just to name a few.

Mary Hatch has made some interesting contributions to the jazz metaphor literature and provides a nice justification for the use of metaphor more broadly in organizational research.

'For organization theorists, metaphors provide a way to recognise and understand the essence of a given phenomenon and to articulate ideas and concepts that may be difficult to put into words. Metaphor allows one thing to be understood in terms of another by foregrounding commonalities that might not otherwise be seen as compatible, such as the metaphor of life as a long and winding road.' (Hatch 1997:51)

I fully endorse Hatch's viewpoint here and have always been an advocate of the use of metaphor in marketing and management education. I have found that the jazz metaphor is particularly versatile – like the music itself – and I have managed to stretch this to other discourses beyond marketing, such as strategy more generally, leadership, entrepreneurship, education and even academic writing.

I would extend Hatch's thoughts on the use of jazz metaphor. I think for a rich and authentic understanding of the intricacies of improvisation then there is a need for learners to be able to hear and see this in action. I am incredibly fortunate to be able to go beyond simply writing about the jazz metaphor. Being able to perform and demonstrate musically to support my arguments adds much value to what I do and, arguably, has helped strengthen understanding of the core issues from those I have been fortunate to work with. Indeed, Sorenson (2013) has acknowledged this:

'In my opinion, the most illuminating insights into organisations and leadership are derived from Barrett, Newton and Dennis and Macaulay, who are able to bring to bear on non-musical contexts their insider knowledge and expertise in jazz improvisation.' (P.11)

The corporate workshops I facilitate with Pete Churchill are an excellent way to bring the jazz metaphor to life. They also engender a different approach to learning in that we involve participants in our processes of creating music. Essentially, the participants become part of the band, through interactive vocal activities, from taking the role of either trumpet, saxophone or trombone player in the big band to learning the lyrics and performing an old jazz standard. We

use active learning in our workshops to promote a deeper understanding of the concepts under discussion.

‘Active learning is generally defined as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process.’ (Prince, 2004:223)

Active learning is a major part of my own approach to learning and teaching in my work in the wider domain of management education and, in my view, it avoids students becoming passive recipients of knowledge.

More importantly for the jazz workshops, though, we are always mindful that we are largely presenting to a non-jazz audience, which is why we have designed the workshops to be interactive and to tell a myriad of stories along the way. We essentially dissect the jazz group and the activities we undertake and do so in such a way that the material is accessible and understandable for our audiences. Perhaps most importantly, though, we deliver a history lesson in the evolution of jazz and link it to aspects of leadership, management, marketing and entrepreneurship. In so doing, I feel we achieve a number of things – not least avoiding narrowly defining the notion of the jazz cannon (Stanbridge, 2008) Sorensen raises this in his article:

‘This articulates the dilemma of the jazz band, either as a metaphor or as an equivalent practice. In order for it to be thought to be applicable or generalizable, there needs to be a recourse to practitioners or jazz practice that can be readily understood by the lay person.’ (p.11)

I am confident that Pete and I have adopted the correct approach with our workshops – as evidenced by the positive feedback that we receive from participants. An example is included below:

*“This is a fascinating approach that challenges you to take a more critical and reflexive view of your role and relationship with your organization.”
(Abbi, Marketing Manager)*

Where I think we need to do more work going forward – and this will form some of my future public works – is tracking the progress of some of the organisations that have engaged with the workshops. We have some anecdotal evidence from participants that they have implemented some of the ideas taken from the workshops, but I would like to formalise this and investigate the impact on the organizations and the individuals within them.

I recognise that the bulk of my published work in the jazz metaphor space is largely focussed on the mainstream genre of jazz, where there is a pre-composed melody and improvisation takes place within a chord structure. I think it is important to note that jazz is a sprawling diverse genre of music from bebop through to free jazz. This poses a question, then, as to whether certain genres of the music have a better fit for application in a leadership and management context. Prouty (2013) makes a similar point:

“Jazz, and interpretations of it, are highly contested. Just as there is no single “jazz”, there may be no single “jazz metaphor.” (P18).

I am also acutely aware that I have followed the likes of Barret, Weick and Hatch to a certain extent and framed my publications and indeed the workshops around the jazz mainstream, heavily making reference to iconic figures such as Miles Davis, Count Basie, Louis Armstrong Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Wynton Marsalis etc. Miles Davis, is of course at the heart of all of my works. Prouty (2013) argues that this is a problematic aspect of the metaphor in that it does not represent the broad spectrum of jazz. But, given my public works and workshops in the jazz and strategic management space are largely aimed at a non-jazz audience, there is a need to think carefully about the accessibility of the material to ensure active engagement and understanding of the concepts and ideas.

I feel Prouty is hinting that mainstream is essentially ‘dumbing down’ jazz, but I would challenge him on that front and argue that all of the artists identified above were innovators in their own right, challenging mainstream. Take Miles Davis, he challenged bebop when it was mainstream and introduced the cool

period of jazz with Kind of Blue. He then subsequently challenged the cool period when that became mainstream and pioneered the jazz rock genre. In my view, Miles is far from mainstream and I stand firm that the lessons he can teach us about strategic management and leadership are extremely powerful indeed. To finalise this point, I would argue that I do talk about more contemporary musicians in my workshops, based on my experience. Take for example Gerard Presencer and Bob Mintzer, who has provided a wealth of material that pervades various classroom discussions, based on my experience of working with him. I do feel that my future works could take a broader view of the jazz cannon and stretch the metaphor a little more. Work on this has already begun.

In a forthcoming book chapter, I¹ revisit my original ¹Jazzers/Reader model and refine it somewhat. I argue that smaller entrepreneurial organisations might lean more towards what I call a pure jazzer, where there is less written down and more spontaneity – perhaps more akin to free improvisation. In contradistinction, I argue that the big band, for example, leans more to the reader end of the spectrum and I wholly concur with Wilson (1992) that the big band is, in some cases, perhaps a better metaphorical fit for larger organisations, where there is often more structure and less room to improvise – although there are certain individuals (the jazzers) within who can and do improvise when required.

My role in the Voice of the North Jazz Orchestra (and others I often play with) is to be the jazzer in the trumpet section. I occupy the trumpet 4 chair that tends to avoid all of the high and loud passages (those are for trumpet 1) and instead has the chord changes and a space for improvisation to take place.

I learned a great deal during my time in the Voice of the North, largely playing the music of Canadian born composer – John Warren. John's music is incredibly complex and challenging to play, yet such a wonderful and unique

¹ The Jazzers/Reader model is from my inaugural (2003) paper –Jazz and Strategic Marketing Planning. In simple terms, Jazzers have the ability to both read from a predetermined score, whilst being able to use their improvisational skills to deviate away from the written material. Readers play the notes on the score, with NO capacity for improvisation.

sound. At the age of 16 before I even met Gerard, I was attempting to play this music, in a trumpet section of mature professional players. I found it a challenge to keep up with the pace – sight reading incredibly challenging music, the physical side of playing and the stamina required to make yourself heard within the ensemble. I recall a gig in the early days with saxophonist Tommy Smith where we played the music of Duke Ellington. The guest trumpeter for the gig was the wonderful Bruce Adams... His opening line to me:

“Noel, you’re so young you smell of sweets!” (Bruce Adams, 1997)

Dealing with the challenges of being part of a trumpet section, with limited experience was a challenge. It was a relief when I got to play a solo (back then I thought this was my comfort zone), which in the early days, sounded pretty horrific. But I did it with intent and I guess I did not really know what the definition of good in a big band context was, as I’d largely focussed my listening on the smaller jazz combo.

Pete Churchill talks about intent.

‘Listening to great improvisers has always been, for me, at its most exciting when you are witnessing the risks taken, the failures overcome and opportunities created from apparent disasters. The intent of the solo is the quality that remains constant whether the improviser (or in this case the orchestra) manages to reach whatever it is they are striving for or not. An effortless performance is undeniably a thing of beauty and will always be so but there is also a considerable thrill to be had from a performance that is laced with INTENT. Mistakes (for want of a better word) become sustainable losses as we follow the performer through their struggle to play beyond their capacity. What we become involved in is the PROCESS - the part of the performance that so often remains hidden’. (Churchill, 1998:3)

Pete and I in exploring the jazz metaphor



Pete's words resonate with me on a number of levels, as both a player and an educator. Back in those early days in the Voice of the North and indeed the smaller jazz combos I played with, I was making many mistakes, playing wrong notes (largely because I had little knowledge of harmony and I had not fully mastered improvising in challenging keys e.g. B major, F sharp major and C sharp major). But, I was having a go and executing some things successfully.

As a management educator, I think Pete's quote is equally applicable. I often find my students (all levels, I may add) want to be the finished article from day one. From my experience, they (the students) often fear making mistakes – particularly when it comes to presentations and public speaking. My line to my students has (and always will be) that I provide a safe environment for them to make mistakes, learn from these from the feedback provided and develop accordingly. Often some of the most creative work I read, or listen to is when you can really feel the passion and enthusiasm from the students – even if the

detail is not 100% technically correct. When intent is there, I find I can fix the technical. Pete Churchill further argues for the merit of intent below:

'I think that we as teachers should not lose sight of the merits of this quality of INTENT. It is an essential part of the improviser's process and can imbue the solo of even the most inexperienced student with that elusive thing which has come to be called "the vibe" of a performance. Listen for it, encourage it, nurture it in all kinds of music making and allow the process, for once, to become part of the performance!' (Churchill, 1998:3)

Slight digression into the management education space, so back to the music. As time progressed and I developed my skills as an improviser under the guidance of both Gerard and John Warren, I became more comfortable playing in the big band and improvising over contemporary material by the likes of John Warren and John Surman. I refer you to two tracks of John Warren where I am featured solo on a Voice of the North album – Park Bench Story.

1. *Lost in the Works*
2. *Alliteration Addict*

The importance of ensemble playing

Reflecting on my experience playing in big bands, I feel we can apply the jazz metaphor beyond improvisation. Take for example the big band, which is normally made up of seventeen musicians that form the rhythm section, saxophones, trumpets and trombones. There is actually a high degree of structure within the big band, with a great deal of written material that forms the basis for ensemble playing. Individual soloists have the opportunity in various parts of a piece to improvise, with the ensemble playing a supportive role, playing backing figures for example.

I have extensive experience of playing in large ensembles. Indeed, I would argue my experience started at the age of nine when I joined my dad's youth band and the lessons I learned from that experience have had and continue to have a profound impact on my practice. For example, being part of any ensemble you have to work as a team, you have to listen intently and have self-

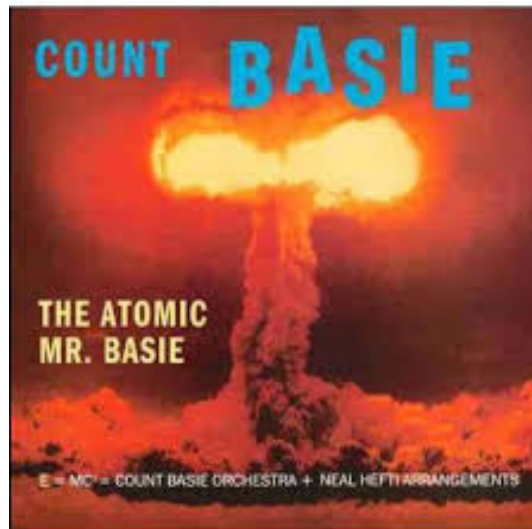
awareness e.g. am I too loud, am I in tune? You have to conform and be disciplined to read what is on the page and observe all of the intricacies of the piece and play accordingly. And, of course, you are led by a conductor and must obey the instructions provided. These lessons are transferrable to other disciplines and I regularly quote my experience of playing in larger ensembles when working with large organisations on developing and, in particular, implementing strategic plans. I often talk about the famous Count Basie band when discussing the aforementioned in my workshops and strategy classes:

Lil Darlin'

For me the Count Basie Orchestra playing Lil Darlin' is one of the best examples of ensemble playing one will ever hear and a perfect example of how an organisation should operate. Lil Darlin' looks simple to play on paper, but because all of the horns are in unison playing the beautiful melody, it becomes incredibly tricky and requires precision of timing from all musicians. I recall us playing it in the youth band and everyone having a tendency to rush it. My dad spent weeks getting us to feel the groove and play together until there was silence between the notes. In a corporate context, I use this particular example to illustrate how the entire band (organisation) knows the tune (strategy) and each section (department) and musician (individuals within the organisation) know their own part (and all the other parts) and so they can collectively produce a beautiful sound (successfully implement the strategy for organisations success). If you listen to Lil Darlin' in the ensemble passages there is no one dominating voice and the rhythm section just supports the horns like a competent board, or management team should do with every individual within their organisations.

The above vignette illustrates the importance of ensemble playing and stretches the jazz metaphor beyond simply thinking about improvisation. I would argue that there are lessons to be learned from the big band, such as effective leadership, collaboration, communication to name just a few. We talk about this in the workshops when we explain the evolution of jazz. Interestingly,

in the 1930s and 1940s, big bands were incubation units for some individuals to develop their improvisation skills and become the next generation of players to move jazz forward. They were indeed a breeding ground for bebop!



A real classic Count Basie recording: The Atomic Mr Basie

Wilson (1992) talks about the value of the big band as a metaphor:

'The success of the big band is dependent on the distinctive "sound" of the band, rather than the distinctive creativity of the soloists. Those big bands that survived through several eras were distinguished by a single leader (e.g. Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Woody Herman and Glenn Miller), who established an identifiable sound for the group and dominated the selection of players and the performance style of the arrangements perpetuating that sound...the decision-making process was removed from the collective level of the ensemble players to a specific individual, the leader.' (p.241)

There are a number of parallels with management that can immediately be drawn out from the above quote:

- *Distinctive "sound"* – a distinctive brand with a clearly differentiated set of values
- *Distinguished by a single leader* – authentic leadership, leading from the top

- *Identifiable sound* – strategic positioning, differentiation of the offer from the competition
- Decision-making process removed from the collective level – decision making, leadership, accountability, autocratic leadership.

The last point I would challenge in the big band context. I agree that there is a clear leader in a big band, but I would argue that decision-making is not completely removed from the collective ensemble players. Each section in a big band has a lead e.g. lead alto sax, lead trumpet, who effectively lead within the sections. In the early days of big bands before anything was written down, the riff masters in each section would play riffs and dictate how and when they were played. They had to collectively agree amongst each other during the performance how the riffs would be coordinated, harmonised etc. I think of the riff masters as operational directors, who ensure that the strategic imperatives are implemented.

The big band most certainly leans more towards the reader side of the Jazzer/Reader model, due to the volume of pre-written material. Unlike the classical symphony orchestra, though, the big band does offer opportunities for improvisation to take place, which means it allows for the unseen. From experience, when an individual improvises in a big band there are more opportunities for the wheels to fall off. The sheer number of players means that the powers of recovery when something goes wrong are more challenging than in smaller group. You very much rely on the conductor to recover the situation and that is where the big band can teach us valuable lessons in leadership and crisis management for example. I must give the big band more attention in my future work, as it has enormous potential to develop our understanding of a variety of leadership and management issues.

Leadership in action: The Voice of the North Jazz Orchestra with Bob Mintzer



This chapter has provided a bit of a sense check for me in relation to my work in the jazz metaphor space. Specifically, it has identified some gaps in my public works and certainly provided some food for thought about how I might develop my future work. I think there is scope to stretch the jazz metaphor beyond the mainstream and look at the applicability of more contemporary genres and what they can tell us about leadership and management issues. I must also make more of a virtue of my experience of playing in big bands and perhaps tease this theme out more in my future work – particularly the workshops. Finally, I need to join up my work in the jazz metaphor space with my other public works that focus on the marketing of jazz and audience development etc. and recognise that, through the workshops, I am helping to educate new audiences for the music and providing work opportunities for jazz musicians. Prouty (2013) comments on this:

‘At a time when jazz is in need of a greater degree of recognition in artistic and popular cultures, any effort to bring music to new audiences and to foster a greater appreciation for jazz are to be commended, and those of us who

perform, teach, and attempt to advance knowledge of jazz should applaud such efforts.' (p.54)

I would like to think my work in this space has and will continue to contribute to the development of practice in the leadership and management arena, whilst also driving the music forward. As I said at the beginning of this chapter, I have started this thesis at the end and so the chapters that follow will reflect on my journey to this point, taking into account my work as a musician, educator, marketer and (for a spell of time) senior leader in two business schools.

Chapter 2

Introducing the Public Works

The following chapter provides an insight into my public works across the spectrum of my professional practice. I have selected some key public works from that demonstrate how two bodies of knowledge – Marketing and Jazz have shaped my academic practice as a management educator and jazz musician.

The public works I have selected to support my case for this professional doctorate are:

1. **Jazz and Marketing planning** – this is my inaugural academic publication and is where my story in the jazz and marketing space began.
2. **Miles Ahead: Using Jazz to Investigate Improvisation and Market Orientation** – this is a follow up paper to Jazz and Marketing Planning publication, where I begin to explore the application of the jazz metaphor in depth. I present an alternative definition of marketing orientation, which places improvisation as a central tenant, based on the core competencies of the jazz group.
3. **The Ubiquitous Jazz Metaphor: Thoughts from a Jazz Musician and Management Educator** – my most recent contribution to the academic debate in the jazz metaphor space. This was an invited commentary in response to a paper by one of my academic heroes – Professor Morris Holbrook.
4. **The Jazz and Leadership Workshops** – I include my workshops as a public work. They translate the academic work into practice and allow me to give my students and clients an authentic and active learning experience, as I dissect my practice as an improviser and offer insights and parallels in a strategic leadership and management context.

5. **The Creation of Arts and the Market (formally Arts Marketing: an International Journal)** - I played a lead role in creating this journal for Emerald. I was Editor-in-Chief for three years, and the Co-Editor up until 2017. This is a key public work that has created a home for the cutting-edge research in the burgeoning field of arts marketing and management.
6. **Terraforming Arts Marketing** – is the inaugural editorial for volume 1, issue 1 of Arts Marketing: an International Journal. It received a great deal of attention and our publishers told me that it was one of the most downloaded articles in 2011.

The remainder of this chapter will provide more detailed context about my public works, with reference to my larger cannon of academic and musical outputs and their impact on the development of my professional practice.

Academic Publications: Jazz and Marketing

It is the partnership of jazz and marketing that is indeed the principal reason for stating the case for the DProf award. I have nine academic publications on the jazz and marketing theme and have developed a successful workshop package (Jazz: A Creative Approach to Business), which I deliver to a variety of organisations from the public and private sector. I have delivered keynotes at both academic and business conferences on the value of the jazz metaphor for businesses and as a vehicle for pedagogical enhancement for management education. My research on the value of the jazz metaphor and application of it has generated interest from the academic and business communities and has garnered significant media attention – including a TV appearance and feature in the Times Higher (see link on next page).

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/marketing-can-benefit-from-a-touch-of-all-that-jazz/416368.article>

My first publication Jazz and Strategic Marketing Planning (2003) was one of the first of its kind to introduce the jazz metaphor into the strategic marketing

literature. The paper was presented at the Academy of Marketing Conference and was well received by delegates, so much so, that it won best paper and was published in the Journal of Strategic Marketing. My first publication was an excellent platform for me to build upon and has been central to the development of my academic reputation. I have a firm reputation in the marketing academy as the 'jazz guy' and I am often asked to deliver masterclasses, workshops and seminars on the jazz and marketing theme at Universities across the UK. One of my proudest achievements was being invited by world-leading Professor of Marketing Research – Stephen Brown to deliver the keynote address with him at the 2009 Academy of Marketing Conference, the theme of which was advocating more creative approaches to marketing pedagogy.

My academic work extends beyond application of the jazz metaphor and brings together consumption of aesthetical products, using the work of my main musical influence – Miles Davis. This aspect of my work has generated multiple academic publications and has allowed me the opportunity for further public work through performances at both academic conferences and in the jazz club setting.

Additionally, selected publications (see appendix 1) utilize more creative methodological approaches – namely introspection/auto-ethnography.

Creation of an Academic Journal

I am former founding and Co-Editor of Arts and the Market (formerly Arts Marketing: An International Journal). My work in the marketing academy and my work as an arts practitioner prompted me to develop the journal (in conjunction with Emerald) to bring together a growing community of arts marketers from across the globe. The journal was launched in 2011 and the inaugural editorial – Terraforming Arts Marketing was the most downloaded Emerald article in 2011. Since then the journal has experienced growth in the number of submissions and attracted research from some of the world's leading arts marketing scholars. The Journal has been renamed (from January 2015)

Arts and the Market to broaden the scope of the journal to allow for phase two of its development and growth. I include this as a public work, as it has had a demonstrable impact on the arts marketing community.

Link to the journal: www.emeraldinsight.com/am

Jazz: A Creative Approach to Business (JCAB)

As previously mentioned, I have been fortunate enough to translate my academic research around the jazz metaphor into a practical workshop for the business community. I work alongside internationally renowned musician – Pete Churchill to facilitate bespoke workshops to a variety of organisations. Like the music itself, the application of the metaphor is incredibly versatile and we have applied it not only to business scenarios, but also to education and pedagogical issues. Below are some links to some recorded jazz workshops I have facilitated.

Jazz meets academic writing

<https://soundcloud.com/gcugraduateschool/jazz-improvisation-p1>

Measuring the impact of my work - JCAB used in a HE Context (Slide 11)

<http://slideplayer.com/slide/8122421/>

Podcast: Jazz and Strategic Marketing Planning. Featuring my quartet with guest soloist – Dave O’Higgins.

https://www.tees.ac.uk/podcasts/tbs/dennis_jazz.mp3

The Jazz Workshop Team



Pete Churchill (Piano), Ken Marley (Double Bass)

Active Learning – Leadership Lessons from jazz



In summary, this brief chapter has introduced my key public works to be considered for this Professional Doctorate. I feel it is essential, though, to draw the reader to my wider cannon of academic, leadership and musical outputs (see appendix 1), as they have played (and continue to do so) a key role in my professional practice. My inaugural publication – *Jazz and Marketing Planning* (Dennis and Macaulay, 2003), my workshops and teaching have all had a profound influence on my development as an improviser and trumpet player. All of the aforementioned were of course inspired by work as a jazz musician, yet they clearly promoted deep reflexivity on my part as a musician and I attribute that to the feedback from my peers, the participants of my workshops and my students. I have developed my voice as a jazz trumpet player – largely in part – via my work in the academic space. The remainder of this document delves deep into my critical relationship with these selected public works and their influence on my professional practice – past, present and future.

Chapter 3

The Power of Storytelling: My Theoretical Lens

Vignette: From the Bandstand: a gig with legendary jazz saxophonist and composer - Bob Mintzer

March 18, 2007 and I am on stage at the Sage Gateshead performing with internationally acclaimed jazz saxophonist and composer – Bob Mintzer. I recall feeling incredibly excited and anxious at the same time prior to going on stage, but was somewhat distracted backstage by being amongst some of the world’s most respected jazz musicians, including Branford Marsalis and Joey Calderazzo. I recall having conscious moments, asking myself how did I get here? I had only dreamed of one day playing an international jazz festival with stars such as Bob Mintzer, but thanks to Arts Council funding and the Voice of the North Jazz Orchestra (VOTN), my dream became a reality - albeit for only one day. I felt very welcome into a community of practice of international jazz stars. I was treated as an equal, with Bob and Branford showing as much interest and support for my playing, as I did for theirs. Their encouragement and support certainly fired me up for what I can only say was one of the most memorable gigs I have ever played – even to this day!

I was in position on the stage with adrenalin flowing at a rate of knots and a piece of advice running through my mind that the tenor sax player in VOTN–Lewis- used to say as we went on stage... *‘it’s too late to be nervous now, son.’* Bob counted the first tune in and we were off. Instantly all of the members of the band raised their game and a wall of energetic, passionate and mellifluous sound filled the auditorium. Everyone played with aplomb for the entire gig, with some amazing ensemble work and wonderful soloing. All of us were listening and being empathetic and supportive towards each other – just as any jazz group (and indeed organisation) should operate. Yes, for a split second I do recall consciously slipping into management education mode, thinking about how this monster of a big band was an exemplar for successful implementation of strategy. If only my MBA students could have been there to experience what I did, I am sure they would have learned many lessons.

I had several solos in the concert and recall at the time just really going for it, yet not trying too hard. I let my solos gradually build in intensity – something which I had been striving to achieve for many years. Where had I suddenly got the confidence to leave gaps and not try to play as many notes as I could in the first two bars? I was adhering to Miles Davis’ famous quote *‘I always listen to what I can leave out.’* (Davis, 1989). Indeed, when I heard the recording of the gig, I was shocked to hear such a change in my playing. It was much more mature in all respects and I felt my solos were much more structured and eloquent than they had previously been.

Reflecting on that performance has also made me realise that not only is Bob Mintzer and incredibly talented musician, but he is also a wonderful storyteller. He took the audience on a journey with him, explaining the inspiration for his compositions and sharing short autobiographical vignettes about the experiences he had had on the road as a jazz musician. His tales of being on the road with drummer Buddy Rich and his band were particularly inspiring and made me wish my dad (a wonderful drummer) would have been there to see this gig. Sadly, he was desperately ill in hospital, only to be told two days after the gig that his cancer was terminal and he had a maximum of six weeks to live – a devastating blow to receive that rocked my world. I was angry that this awful disease had debilitated my dad so rapidly and prevented him from going about his daily life, including preventing him coming to see me share the stage with one of his jazz heroes. To this day, I still feel sad about this, but I am pleased that he got to hear the recording of the gig and expressed how proud he was. In the weeks leading up to his death, I shared with him stories that Bob had told us about being in Buddy's band and we listened to lots of Bob Mintzer, Buddy and others. It was a comforting and sad experience at the same time, demonstrating the powerful force of music has in making difficult situations more bearable.

My theoretical lens - Autoethnography

You may be wondering what the relevance of my short story about the Mintzer gig has to this context statement. First, **this** gig is a one of the highlights of my musical career to date and has played a key role in the development of my professional practice as an improviser and educator. As I discussed in chapter two, my experience of playing in the a big band has also refined my thinking about the application of the jazz metaphor in a strategic management context. works. Second, as I have reflected on this experience overtime, I have come to the conclusion that I, like Bob Mintzer and the jazz community more generally, am a storyteller. Each time I improvise, I create a new story and share it with my audiences and fellow musicians. As a management educator, I tell stories to my students, and, specific to this collection of public works, I share stories with them from the bandstand to make them think differently about the process of developing and implementing strategy. It seems fitting, then, that the theoretical lens for this context statement should have storytelling central to it and for that very reason, I will be adopting autoethnography as the lens to

critically explore my public works. Autoethnographic stories are stories of/about the self, told through the lens of culture. *Autoethnographic stories are artistic and analytic demonstrations of how we come to know, name, and interpret personal and cultural experience. With autoethnography, we use our experience to engage ourselves, others, culture (s), politics, and social research.* (Adams et al., 2015:1).

The above quote resonates with me on a number of levels, not least because of the nature of my practice, which is highly creative and artistic, both on a musical level and, indeed, from a management education perspective. The notion that autoethnographic stories are 'artistic' fits with my practice and will allow me to creatively express my relationship with my public works, reflecting on their evolution, their contribution to knowledge and their impact. Indeed, it would appear that the use of autoethnography as a method of inquiry is no stranger in professional doctorates, as Hayes and Fulton (2015) point out that it is an excellent way of linking theory to the practical situation and is a vehicle to guide the research process and provide structure to the process of reflexivity.

What is Autoethnography?

Autoethnography first appeared in the mid-1970s, emerging with the increase in identity politics. Since then, autoethnography has grown in popularity as a research method, despite its criticisms, which I will briefly touch on later in this chapter. There are a number of definitions of autoethnography. Ellis & Bochner (2000) define autoethnography as 'autobiographies that self-consciously explore the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language, history, and ethnographic explanation (P.742). Another useful definition by Adams et al., (2015) states that 'autoethnography is a qualitative method – it offers nuanced complex, and specific knowledge about particular lives, experiences and relationships rather than general info about large groups of people' (2015:21).

Both definitions are broadly similar, but I concur with Chang (2008) that the definition posited by Ellis and Bochner leans too far towards the autobiographical than the ethnographic end (P.2). Both definitions, though, share similarity in that they connect the personal to the cultural, which is a key facet of autoethnography (Chang, 2008:2). According to de Munk (2000) culture and people have a symbiotic relationship and therefore culture would cease to exist without the individuals who make it up.

Building on the words of de Munk, I have chosen autoethnography as my theoretical lens because it is a method of inquiry that will allow me to draw upon my personal and professional experience to explore my practice; it will allow me to critically reflect upon the relationships I have with people in the communities of practice I am active within (for example life as a musician and my work as a management educator) and, importantly, autoethnography requires deep and careful self-reflection (reflexivity), in order to interrogate the intersections between self and society (Adams et al., 2015:2). The latter point is an important one, in that this context statement is indeed a reflective account on my critical engagement with my public works. I am at the centre of my practice, embracing the roles of jazz musician and management educator, using my experience in these roles to contribute to two bodies of knowledge (e.g. jazz informing strategic marketing practice).

Indeed, storytelling is central to autoethnography as (Chang et al., 2013) point out, autoethnographers use personal stories as a window to the world, through which they interpret how their selves are connected to their sociocultural contexts and how their contexts give meaning to their perspectives (P:18). In autoethnography, proximity, not objectivity, becomes the epistemological point of departure and return (Adams et al., 2015) and it is that proximity with my practice that will be an essential ingredient as I develop a series of stories related to my public works. But the stories that I share have to go beyond a mere description of my practice and, instead, provide a critical commentary, borne out of a deep reflective analytical approach to this inquiry. The following section examines the importance of achieving a balance in autoethnography to ensure academic rigour and to avoid too much focus on the self at the expense

of those who have been central in the development of my thinking and attendant public works.

Evocative vs. analytical autoethnography

Anderson (2006) noted that autoethnography had become a popular form of qualitative research, with scholars such as Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner experimenting with the genre and encouraging students and other scholars to use it as a methodological approach. He also pointed out that the then current discourse almost exclusively referred to 'evocative autoethnography' that draws upon postmodern sensibilities and whose advocates distance themselves from realist and analytic ethnographic traditions Anderson (2006:373). Anderson's paper is critical of the descriptive literary approach of evocative autoethnography. As a consequence, he offers an alternative to evocative autoethnography – analytic autoethnography – in which the researcher is (1) a full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in published texts, and (3) committed to developing understandings of broader social phenomena (p.373).

Analytic autoethnography requires a deep reflexivity on the part of the researcher in order to interrogate the relationship between the self and others and through being reflexive, I will be taking seriously my location (s) in culture and scholarship (Adams et al, 2015). At a deeper level, reflexivity involves an awareness of reciprocal influence between ethnographers and their settings and informants. It entails self-conscious introspection guided by a desire to better understand both self and others through examining one's actions and perceptions in reference to and dialogue with those of others (Anderson, 2006:382). Due to the nature of my public works and the communities of practice to which I belong to and engage with, my autoethnographic account will bring in a number of voices (fellow musicians, academics and business professionals), theories and professional marketing practice and in so doing, will inform a reflexive narrative, with me remaining highly visible in the text. Through recounting my own experiences, I will also be sharing my beliefs and

values and, most importantly, articulating how these have altered over the course of my career so far, which as Anderson (2006) points out is a key feature of analytic autoethnography.

Whilst I can understand Anderson's criticisms of evocative autoethnography in that it typically avoids engagement with conventional sociological analysis (Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012), I do not intend to rehearse here the numerous debates that continue to pervade the literature about the academic rigour of this method of inquiry. I recognise that my context statement needs to be critical in its approach and that I must avoid simply telling a series of stories that leave the reader to decipher the intended messages – a key element of evocative autoethnography. I intend to adopt a combination of analytic and evocative autoethnography in my context statement, just as Learmonth and Humphreys did in their 2012 autoethnography and academic identity paper. I wish to retain elements of evocative autoethnography (largely because it fits my creative practice), but also to 'move ethnography away from the gaze' of the distanced and detached observer and toward the embrace of intimate involvement, engagement, and embodied participation' (Ellis and Bochner, 2006:433/434).

To achieve the balance of the evocative and analytic, I intend to utilise autoethnographic vignettes in my context statement to represent key aspects, events and performances that have have contributed to my professional practice. Humphreys (2005) argues that autoethnographic vignettes are an alternative approach to representation and reflexivity in qualitative research (p.840). He further argues that vignettes are a vehicle for readers to relive an experience through the writer's, or performer's eyes – indeed my vignettes will address both of the aforementioned points. My vignettes will be focused on critical instances in professional and personal life that I have identified to be central to the development of my professional practice. Based on Smith's (1999) criterion for narrative vignettes, my vignettes will be constructed from field notes that I have taken over the years, free writing, diary entries, deep internal introspection with regards to my musical and academic practices, and

interactive introspection with those actors I have interacted with in the various communities of practice to which I belong.

I am the instrument of my inquiry: and the inquiry is inseparable from who I am (Louis, 1991, cited in Humphrey's 2005). This is an important point to reiterate and one of the reasons that I have chosen autoethnography as my theoretical lens. I want readers of my context statement to get a true feel for who I am and have an insight into crucial periods of my musical and academic careers that have led me on a journey to where I am now. Like Humphrey's (2005), by using vignettes, I will be able to clearly articulate my feelings and emotions I was experiencing during each critical instance that allows the reader to engage with events in my professional and personal lives and show how my values and beliefs have changed over the course of time.

Ethical considerations

Like any methodological approach, autoethnography must be carried out in an ethical manner. Adams et al., (2015) point out that although autoethnography is largely writing about 'the self', it unquestionably will require one to write about others. Indeed, Sparkes (2013) argues that autoethnographic stories are not our own and in the process of writing about the self, we also write about others (p.207). Ellis (2007) refers to the aforementioned point as relational ethics, which requires researchers to act from our hearts and minds, acknowledge our interpersonal bonds to others, and take responsibility for actions and their consequences (P.3). As I discussed earlier in this piece, I am the centre of my inquiry, but I am reflecting on my public works and the connectedness with the communities of practice to which I belong

Relational ethics is prominent in this context statement, as I will be referring to groups of musicians, academics, practitioners and friends and family, who have had (and continue to have) an important role to play in my professional practice. I need to be cognisant of the attendant ethical issues this presents and be sure that I write honestly, accurately and demonstrate respect for the people who

become part of my narrative. I also need to identify and reflect upon the changing nature of relationships with people in my network and ensure that I sensitively deal with these (Ellis, 2007). For example, my trumpet teacher – Gerard Presencer – over a period of time became a good friend, which somewhat altered the dynamic of the relationship, for which I will explain more about later. In addition, many of my university lectures (who will be central characters in parts of this context statement) became my colleagues and I subsequently became their manager, which naturally completely changed the nature of those relationships.

Adams et al., (2015) posit that autoethnographers must develop strategies for protecting the privacy and identity of their participants. They further state that ‘although our insights may be grounded in our experiences, our recollections, accounts, and interpretations might embarrass, harm, or expose others (p.59). If any of my vignettes should present any controversial issues, I would take great care in keeping the identity of persons concerned anonymous. Whilst I do not foresee that any of my stories should harm any of the participants, I am acutely aware that some of my criticisms of management education subconsciously started haunting me as a student and became more apparent the moment I became an academic – hence the birth of my jazz-related approach to strategic marketing. I want to write about this in such a way that it does not feel as though I am criticising the many inspirational teachers that played a huge role in shaping me into the person I am today. Instead, I will ground my criticisms in the management education system and the perceptions by universities of the role of business schools – their pedagogy, their research and their (financial) contributions.

Finally, and related to the above, I have to demonstrate care for myself in this project and protect myself from harm.

‘Autoethnography is a way of caring for the self. We often write to work something out for ourselves, and when we do, we must take into account how we care for ourselves, as well as how we experience tension and conflict with others.’ Adams et al., (2015:62)

The above quote is poignant and has made me reflect carefully on what I will include in my vignettes and accompanying narrative. I want to ensure that my narrative is an honest and accurate account that fairly represents my relationships with others and, where necessary, protects their identities. I will not present material in a way that could jeopardise my relationships with key actors in the communities of practice to which I belong. I am confident, however, that most of the material I will include in this context statement should present no real controversial issues, with the exception, perhaps, as I reflect on my experience as an Associate Dean in two Universities. In this space, I will undoubtedly be making reference to some sensitive situations I have had to lead/contend with. Care will be taken to represent such situations fairly, with central characters fictionalised so as to protect identities.

Concluding remarks

Despite the criticisms that autoethnography continues to face viz. concerns for its academic rigour, I remain confident that this is the most appropriate lens to examine my public works. As I construct my narrative, I will be mindful of the potential pitfalls I could run into during the process of my research. Chang (2008) identifies five pitfalls that autoethnographers need to be vigilant about and avoid at all costs.

1. Excessive focus on self in isolation of others;
2. Overemphasis on narration rather than analysis and cultural interpretation;
3. Exclusive reliance on personal memory and recalling as a data source;
4. Negligence of ethical standards regarding others in self-narratives;
5. Inappropriate application of the label autoethnography.

(Chang 2008: p.15)

I want to finish this chapter on a very important note, though. Adams et al., (2015) present four reasons for why scholars should embrace autoethnography as a research instrument. I am not going to go through all four here, but reason number four on their list... 'to make research accessible to multiple audiences' (P.36) resonates with me, because that has always been my attitude and approach to my research. Unlike some business school scholars who 'play the game' and produce esoteric papers that are complex and read by a few, I have always tried to construct and translate my academic works in a way that they appeal to wider audiences – e.g. my students and the business community. Indeed, I feel that my public works included here epitomize this philosophical standpoint and, later in this context statement, I will explore this point in further detail, as it is something I value very highly.

Chapter 4

The Critical Instances Responsible for the Development of my Professional Practice

This chapter provides an insight into my dual roles as a jazz musician and management educator. I will specifically reflect on the direction of my academic career to date and my development as a musician. But first, an account about how it all began.

From jazz to marketing

I thoroughly enjoyed my time studying marketing at Teesside University and was privileged to be taught by some wonderful people that later became my colleagues and good friends. I recall, though, during my time as an undergraduate questioning some of the content of my degree and its relevance to me at the time. I could understand the theory that was being taught, however, I felt that there was something missing and now as a management educator I realise what that was – context and criticality.

Although I did not fully grasp it at the time, I was subconsciously questioning knowledge in marketing and management more generally. Reflecting on this now, it was certainly the beginning of my quest to introduce a different perspective to marketing and management thought – to offer multiple perspectives and go beyond the banal paradigm in order to embrace the ludic paradigm Holbrook (1995). Even then I would, where possible, contextualise my assessed work into the world of music. Indeed, my undergraduate dissertation was an investigation into enhancing the marketing practice of jazz in the UK – something which has since somewhat become a feature of my public works. My undergraduate dissertation introduced me to some influential figures in the jazz community – particularly at policy level (e.g. the Arts Council and Jazz Services) that has proved to be a major contributor

to both my professional and academic careers, and a major inspiration for and contribution to my public works.

Graduating with my MSc in 2000, I worked part time in a primary school in a deprived area of Teesside teaching music and continuing to gig with my band. I did this for a year and was then invited by one of my old marketing lectures at Teesside to teach a first-year undergraduate marketing module – Introduction to Marketing. I accepted the invitation commenced my academic career in February 2001. In May 2001, I was offered a full time lecturing post at Teesside, which I accepted and the rest as they say is history. The academic and jazz worlds quickly collided and my research career was born, with the first peer reviewed paper published in 2003.

Vignette: HOW marketing met jazz

A rare Saturday evening in December 2002 and I am without a gig. For the first time in a long while I have an opportunity to experience the luxurious treats available to me in my hometown of Middlesbrough... well, maybe a few pints and a kebab! I deserve a break, because I have been working hard recently on developing a PhD proposal and have quite frankly been struggling to identify a suitable topic that is original, combines my love of jazz with marketing and is engaging for me and the readers. I have explored quite a few ideas to date, including: investigating the limitations of marketing theory, tools and techniques for impactful marketing of jazz in the UK; investigating the economic contribution of jazz to the UK economy (that was soon dismissed, as I figured I could answer that question in a sentence); investigating the art vs. commerce debate in a jazz context etc. Up until now, I seem to have drawn blanks and I am starting to get frustrated and indeed worried that I can't seem to make any progress.

As I am preparing for my night on the tiles, my head was spinning with thoughts about this PhD. Earlier in the day, I had been reading some journal articles on the subject of strategic marketing planning. One article in particular, by Nigel Piercy of Warwick Business School, caught my attention. The article was focussed on models of strategic marketing planning and offered new insights into earlier models put forward by the likes of Gordon Foxall. I recall thinking at the time of reading that I felt there was something missing from Piercy's model and the others, but could not identify what it was. Later that evening, I suddenly realised what was missing – improvisation! That then set my mind racing about how I could fuse jazz into marketing and have the basis of a good solid PhD.

After a successful night out in Middlesbrough, with my mind still racing with ideas, the next day I went to the library at Teesside University and started a literature search to see if my idea had already been thought of. There was plenty of articles about the jazz metaphor in an organisational studies context, but to my surprise and delight, the jazz metaphor was absent from the strategic marketing planning literature. On the Monday

morning, I had a conversation with my very good friend (and soon to be co-author) Dr Michael Macaulay who also thought this was a great idea and would be an excellent PhD topic. That day, I started to write my PhD proposal and it flowed effortlessly, so much so that Michael suggested that we use some of the material for a competitive conference paper for the 2003 Academy of Marketing conference. In January 2003, following a very nice Christmas break, we both sat down one Saturday in our office and wrote the conference paper. We had little faith in our paper and felt that it would be 'laughed out' of the academy, but that was not the case. In fact, it was accepted for publication and won best paper in track, resulting in my first publication in the Journal of Strategic Marketing. This was indeed the beginning of my research career and the start of me augmenting marketing theory with another body of knowledge.

Playing the Changes – how I became an improviser

The following section will examine a critical instance that started a whole new chapter in my life and saw my ambition to be an airline pilot switch to becoming a professional jazz musician. The critical instance in question was a chance encounter at a jazz conference at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, with internationally acclaimed jazz trumpeter – Gerard Presencer. Following a masterclass with him, he became my teacher and good friend.

The moment I first heard Gerard play, I was literally 'blown away'. I recall him playing a Kenny Dorham composition – Blue Bossa - on flugelhorn. It was the flugelhorn that grabbed my attention that day and opened me up to a whole new way of thinking about how to play it. At that time, I was relatively new to playing the flugelhorn and tended to play it very softly and quietly to obtain a mellow sound, often putting very little air through the instrument. Gerard hooked me in with his skill on the flugelhorn that day, playing it like a trumpet, quite loudly and taking it right up the register – yet still producing a mellifluous sound. I had never seen or heard anything like it before. This chance encounter was a transformational event for me and is arguably the root of my professional and personal identity.

Transformational is a significant word in the last sentence. My meeting with Gerard is an example of transformative learning, which Mezirow (1991) defines as the process of effecting change in a frame of reference. Looking back on that 1995 event now, I can identify that I started a process of critical reflection

in relation to my approach to playing the trumpet & flugelhorn and, I guess to a certain extent, my career aspirations. Mezirow (1997) points out that self-reflection can lead to significant personal transformations, which indeed happened to me following this critical instance. I will illustrate how my frame of reference in relation to the trumpet and jazz changed in the remainder of this short reflective account.

My frame of reference had shifted significantly after meeting Gerard and hearing him play. A whole new world had opened to me that I had never encountered before. I did not realise or, indeed, appreciate the skill needed to play jazz trumpet and very quickly I became acutely aware of my limitations as both a trumpet player and an improviser. Although I did not realise it back then, my meeting with Gerard prompted me to begin reflecting-on-action – which occurs when we look back on an event or instance to review what happened and take away learning from it (Schon, 1983).

After hearing Gerard, I was inspired to the point that I wanted to sound like him and, eventually, have his skill and the respect and admiration he has from his students, peers and fans. I bought all of the CDs he had recorded and upped my daily practise routine significantly from twenty-five minutes to two hours or more. I was listening very closely to Gerard's recorded solos and attempting to play parts of them (most of them far too complex for me at that early stage) and replicate his sound and articulation. I did not know it at the time, but I was actually following rule number one of jazz trumpeter Clark Terry's guide to learning how to improvise – imitate. It was only after many more formal lessons with Gerard and a good few years later that I felt that I began to embrace Clark Terry's other two rules – assimilate and innovate (Terry, 2011).

In the period following the masterclass, I became rather obsessed with jazz and my trumpet to the point that I would take it on holiday with me so I did not miss a day's practise. I was spending my hard-earned money from my Sunday job at B&Q on CDs, music books, biographies of jazz musicians and musical instruments. Reflecting on that period I was (and most probably still am) what Holbrook (1987) terms a 'fanatic consumer' of jazz and everything related to it.

According to Holbrook (1987), a fanatic consumer displays intense enthusiasm and devotion to a particular consumption experience that can often be excessive and more out of proportion to that of temperate consumers of the same product category. The excessive spending on CDs, but in particular, a new trumpet and flugelhorn was one of the outcomes of meeting Gerard that day. I purchased a very expensive Vincent Bach trumpet and flugelhorn (both of which Gerard was playing) in the hope that they would help me to replicate his sound.

But it was not just the purchasing that gave me fanatic consumer status, it was my relationship and engagement with the music. Prior to meeting Gerard, I would have classified myself as a jazz novice and a passive listener that appreciated the music, but with limited depth of understanding of its origin, or even its sprawling diverse range of genres. That changed after meeting Gerard - simply on the back of the masterclass - where he introduced me to new names such as trumpeter Tom Harrell and some (then) unfamiliar material of Miles Davis (e.g. Bitches Brew and ESP). Through broadening my repertoire of artists, I started to hear new things in the music and began to develop a much stronger appreciation of both the technical and the artistic mastery of these wonderful musicians.

I listened to jazz as often as I could and, as a result, within a couple of months I felt my sound had improved; I had managed to increase my knowledge of the genre and my repertoire of tunes. I had gone from having a passive involvement with jazz to an active one and I was most certainly pursuing what Marton and Saljo (1976) refer to as a deep approach to learning. I was spending time on exercises to perfect them, and I was listening very closely to solos to work out what was happening harmonically. Previously when I practised, I would often simply practise scales in an attempt to commit them to memory and learn only the tunes I needed to know to get by in the youth band. I was indeed in the words of Marton and Saljo (1976) adopting a surface approach to learning – displaying very little interest in understanding, for example, the relationship of the scales I practised to chords and the shapes and patterns I could make out of them to craft a solo. My learning lacked depth and so did my playing!

From that very first encounter with Gerard, I realised that the only way to accomplish one's artistic goals was to practise and devote much energy and attention to my art. I remember Gerard speaking at length in the masterclass about one of his heroes – Miles Davis - and he recommended that we should all read his autobiography. Of course, I purchased the book almost straight away and read it from cover to cover very quickly, absorbing the fascinating detail about this genius I had paid very little attention to up until meeting Gerard. Miles' autobiography was inspiring for me musically at first, but in later years it would also be the inspiration for my thinking about marketing – with a body of my research examining Miles Davis and aspects of his seminal contributions e.g. *Kind of Blue* to argue that art and commerce can indeed co-exist (Dennis and Macaulay, 2010).

My decision back in 1995 to pursue my music seriously has provided the platform for my public works included as part of this professional doctorate. Additionally, though, is how much influence Gerard (via the first masterclass and subsequent lessons I had with him) had on the development of my educational philosophy and teaching style. His interactive approach and ability to challenge his students to embrace new complex contemporary material is something that I replicated in teaching the trumpet and improvisation techniques in both my dad's youth band (2000 onwards) and the Milestones jazz workshops I led in the mid-noughties. I will reflect more deeply on this in chapter 5.

Having read Brookfield's (2012) book on teaching critical thinking to students, I can identify with how Gerard taught me to challenge my assumptions about the trumpet and jazz – broadening my horizons and being aware of a much wider body of contemporary material. This is something that I now encourage my marketing and management students to do, through embracing as much contemporary material as possible (including my own research) in order for them to see things from different viewpoints (Brookfield, 2012). I will comment on this more deeply in a later piece when I reflect on the some of the limitations of management education I have observed as both a student and management

educator. Such limitations have prompted me in my role Associate Dean to lead major curriculum reform projects at both Glasgow Caledonian and York St John universities and to fuse jazz into the management curriculum.

Indeed, my use of the jazz metaphor is a vehicle to embed critical thinking in marketing and management education. It translates a variety of the lessons (which I will explore in detail in chapter five) from jazz performance into the business context. My papers and workshops are indeed encouraging readers and participants to reflect on their professional practice in terms of their relationship with the development and implementation of the organisation's marketing strategy. Importantly, my research and teaching in the jazz metaphor space is a vehicle to demonstrate and promote the importance of what Schon (1983) refers to as reflection-in-action.

My Academic Marketing Influencers

Vignette: The Influence of Professor Stephen Brown

Here I am, once again, at the 2006 Annual Academy of Marketing Conference, being held in Central London. This time I am presenting an empirical piece in the Arts Marketing track, where to my surprise, the internationally renowned Professor Stephen Brown will also be presenting in this track. I have long been an admirer of Professor Brown's work and am in awe of his presentation skills and the sheer creativity that he espouses. Stephen always attracts a very large crowd to his presentations and this session was no different – there were over 150 delegates in the audience.

I was up first to present my paper - *'Marketing and jazz- the views of leading jazz musicians'*. The paper was based on eight interviews with leading UK jazz musicians and their perceptions of marketing, how they use marketing and what they felt could be done to enhance this in the jazz space. The central argument of the paper was that jazz musicians need to embrace marketing in order to 'survive' and, in so doing, they should not be seen as 'selling out'. I felt very comfortable presenting this paper, as I was confident with the data and proud that I had interviewed such great jazz musicians. The richness of the data and some of the quotes that I shared with the audience prompted much discussion in the session and later outside of the session.

Stephen presented last and did his usual superb performance, examining the power of the novel in marketing. He used this session to launch his first ever novel - *'The Marketing Code'*, which would be the first of a trilogy that subsequently had a profound impact on my teaching of marketing.

At the end of the session I approached Stephen and told him how much I had enjoyed his presentation and how I have been a long-time admirer of his work. I was struck by how humble Stephen was and how he quickly shifted the focus away from his work on to mine. He told me that he'd read all of my work to date and found it to be very creative, which was a lovely complement to receive. We chatted for nearly half an hour and ended with Stephen offering to introduce me to Professor Morris Holbrook, who was a world-leading consumer researcher at Columbia University, NYC. This moment was life-changing for me and would see a shift in my research focus, my teaching and me gaining access to a wider network of internationally renowned marketing academics.

Meeting Stephen in person was a pinnacle moment in my academic career. I had long been an admirer of his work – largely because of the way it challenged (and continues to) challenge orthodoxy, because of its creativity and the sheer eloquence of Stephen's writing. Examples of Stephen's work which really stand out and have had a profound influence on my practice include (in no particular order):

1. Marketing: The Retro Revolution (Brown, 2001) – a fascinating book that continues Stephen's postmodern approach, where he argues that future of marketing lies in the past! The book is a wonderful read and it completely altered my pedagogical approach (circa 2004/5 pre-meeting Stephen). Suddenly, I was teaching retro-marketing in my modules at both UG and PG level and I have to say, that my students really responded positively and they seemed to engage more with the material and ideas, just like Stephen's students did:

'I've never had a problem when I present 'that stuff' (postmodern ideas) to students, be it post or undergraduate. On the contrary, I find that they get it right away, that they know where I'm coming from, that 'that stuff' makes a semblance of sense to them.' (Brown, 2001:204)

I concur with Stephen here, I have never had an issue with presenting marketing/management ideas in a different way (namely through jazz) – I actually find that the alternative lens better articulates the ideas under discussion and engenders a more active role from my students in the pedagogical process.

2. Stephen's Trilogy: *The Marketing Code* (2006), *Agents and Dealers* (2008), *The Lost Logo* (2009) – well, what can I say about this “management thriller trilogy” (Brown, 2009: 391)? The marketing/management lessons are in abundance and presented in such a creative way. Once again, they helped to transform my pedagogical practice and provide a new means of communicating marketing/management ideas to my students. Dare I say it, I think they actually promote (ed) a deeper approach to learning! Needless to say, these three books still remain on my reading lists, because they are (a) still relevant in terms of content and (b) they are a much more creative vehicle to deliver knowledge than a ‘standard textbook’. By their very nature they naturally promote critical thinking by those who read them.

I have selected two of Stephen's vast cannon of work here, but there is so much more that I could have incorporated. I feel that these works, though, had a major impact on shaping my professional practice in the classroom. Just like Gerard Presencer shaped me as a trumpet player, Stephen has most certainly played a major role in my development as a management educator, and for that, I am truly grateful!

Academy of Marketing Conference (2009)

One can imagine the immense pride I felt when my academic hero – Professor Stephen Brown asked me if I would like to be part of his keynote address at the 2009 Academy of Marketing Conference. The session was entitled ‘*We gotta get out of this place!*’ and its focus was on alternative ways to teach marketing. Below is a synopsis of the abstract:

In presentational and publication terms, we have painted ourselves into a corner. It is time to get out of this place. The special session thus considers alternative modes of marketing communication, specifically music, poetry and creative writing. The first "paper" is performed by Noel Dennis (Teesside University) and his hot band of cool jazzmen. The second paper is an epic marketing poem by Jim "dice man" Bell (University of Ulster). The third, by Stephen Brown (University of Ulster) goes by the self-explanatory title:

"Wrapping Messages in Thrilling Packages". (Brown, Dennis and Blyth, 2009)

I was honoured to deliver a synopsis of my workshop with my band and internationally acclaimed jazz saxophonist – Dave O'Higgins, alongside Professor Stephen Brown (who used literature as his lens) and the late great Professor Jim Blyth (who used poetry as his lens). What a treat for me and a boost to my career – in fact, my passport to securing the creation of Arts Marketing: An International Journal, for raising awareness of and demonstrating my work in the classroom and, last, for gaining my nick name in the marketing academy as 'The Jazz Guy'!

In action with a keynote address at the 2009 Academy of Marketing Conference – 'Putting Marketing in its Place.'



Finally, shortly after the conference I was one of three members of staff at Teesside University to be nominated for a National Teaching Fellow. Whilst I was not successful, the feedback on my submission that was all around my use of jazz to teach marketing and management was extremely positive. I feel that it is pertinent for me to share in this piece a piece of feedback I received from

Professor Stephen Brown, acknowledging the impact of my pedagogical practice

A letter from Professor Stephen Brown acknowledging my contribution in the jazz metaphor space

If Music Be the Food of Learning, Play On

According to the late great Louis Armstrong, “If you have to ask what jazz is, you’ll never know”. I don’t know much about jazz, but I do know that Noel Dennis’s use of jazz as a pedagogic instrument is Louis Armstrong-like in its brilliance. It transports his students to a wonderful world that other educators can only dream about, oh yeah. I have been fortunate enough to attend several of Noel teaching & learning recitals, if I can call them that, and the audience response is something to behold: a marvellous combination of delight, amazement, rapture and more besides. It is a wonderfully immersive learning experience that you don’t forget in a hurry, as I can personally attest. Indeed, I’ve actually shared the stage with Northumbria University’s Louis Armstrong – at a leading academic conference where Noel and I were co-keynote speakers –and to say that I was “blown off the stage” doesn’t begin to describe my humiliation. Music not only has charms to soothe a savage breast, but it enthuses and energises seen-it-all educators like you wouldn’t believe. Would it were otherwise!

There’s absolutely no doubt in my mind that Noel Dennis is a pioneer of pedagogy. He’s one of the foremost marketing educators in the country and richly deserves the recognition that a National Teaching Fellowship would bestow. To be perfectly frank, the only words that express my feelings for Noel’s astounding teaching & learning achievements are “Encore! Encore! Encore, maestro!” (Professor Stephen Brown)

I will return to Stephen’s influence in chapter five, where I will discuss the parallels with learning the language of bebop and marketing/management. Specifically, I will talk about developing a style from both a musical and academic stance and how have arguably followed the rules of learning to improvise in my development as an academic. To set the scene the rules of learning to improvise (according to trumpeter Clark Terry) are: imitation, assimilation, innovation.

In conclusion, this chapter has examined a number of critical instances that I strongly believe transformed my life and influenced my professional identity. From writing this, I have started to identify aspects of my professional practice that have been informed by the chance encounter of Gerard and, of course,

meeting Stephen Brown – not least my research and teaching. I will finish, though, with one final lesson I have taken from Gerard and incorporated it into my pedagogical philosophy. As educators, we learn as much from our students as they do from us. The quote from his latest book encapsulates this beautifully:

“Thank you to all of my students (my teachers) for your help, support and enthusiasm in realising this book” (Presencer, 2016:58).

Chapter 5

Learning to Improvise – a Continuous and Life Changing Journey


'To improvise means to invent your own way of intelligently using what you have in order to improve your environment.' (Wynton Marsalis)

Vignette: February 14, 2018: Jazz on a Valentine's Day at the Masham

I was in heaven. Not only was it the most romantic day of the year, but I was playing a lovely jazz gig with my favourite musicians (Zoe, Andy and Mark) in my favourite pub that just happens to be my local – The Masham.

It's always great to see and make music with Zoe, Andy and Mark. We have played together for a long time and it always just feels so natural when we work together, largely because we have all invested into the music, but we also musically know each other inside out, which allows us to experiment and innovate, but in a very safe environment.

Before the gig, I was chatting to Andy about various things and we got onto the subject of learning to be an improviser. For some reason, the conversation turned to me and I ended up expressing some thoughts re how I learned to improvise and become a jazz musician. I explained to Andy that I sometimes feel slightly inadequate amongst some of my musical peers and I put this largely down to the fact that I didn't formally study music, or jazz at a Conservatoire or any HEI for that matter... Andy looked at me, in a slightly perplexed manner and simply said... "We have all arrived at the same point and ended up sounding like we do, but via different journeys and processes."

Andy's words of wisdom continue to resonate with me and have prompted me think deeply about my journey into jazz. The following section will explore, in some detail, how I have developed as an improviser. I will look at the processes I have been through (and continue to do so) in my development as an improviser. I will reflect on some of the ideas posited by jazz pianist and educator Kenny Werner and I will connect to both the literature on improvisation,  listening and management pedagogy.

Common to all of my public works is improvisation. As stated earlier, my first encounter of improvising in public was way back in 1995 when I attended that very first masterclass with Gerard Presencer. I improvised over a simple twelve

bar blues in the key of F, which at the time, meant very little to me, for I had no formal knowledge of jazz theory or harmony at that time. What I did have, though, were ideas and knowledge of what the blues entailed, its history of development and to some extent, an idea of the sound I wanted to make on my trumpet. All of the above was a result of me submerging myself in jazz – listening intently to the likes of Miles Davis and Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, who my dear Dad had introduced me to several years previously. I recall trying to recreate the dark mellifluous sound that Freddie Hubbard (a wonderful trumpet player) made, with my dad often complementing me on having a lovely dark sound, which to this day, I strive to maintain.

Bless my wonderful dad; I knew how much he knew I loved Freddie's solo on *Skylark* on that particular album. We talked about it so much and I recall him being fascinated by Freddie's long yet articulate solo/lick (I say lick because it's an amazing stretched phrase, with no intake of air throughout). We also talked about Art Blakey's playing on that particular track and his subtle yet powerful input that ended *Skylark* would most often follow my cadenzas on a ballad if dad was on kit on one of my gigs. A simple phrase by Blakey, yet so powerful to signify the end of something... indeed, it was leadership in my mind – and my dad was a great leader and I don't think he realized it! My gosh, I miss my dad but I am so grateful for the introduction to the album below (and music more generally) and, of course, the wisdom and support he gave me. His inspiration did not just span music, but education too and I feel incredibly proud to be following a similar path to him – being a performer and an educator.



The album dad gave to me with Freddie Hubbard's famous solo on Skylark

So, skipping back to my very recent conversation with Andy on our last gig about how we have arrived at the same place but via different avenues, I feel it necessary to reflect on my development as an improviser. Defining improvisation is highly debated and there are a number of perspectives. Indeed, defining jazz is highly debated with no real consensus, as can be seen from my article – *Jazz a Philosophical Dilemma for Marketing (Macaulay and Dennis, 2006)*.

First, the word improvisation comes from the Latin word *improvisus*, which translates to 'unforeseen.' For me, I think of improvisation as the ability to compose and perform in the moment, reacting to internal and external cues. Essentially, when I play a gig I have a rough idea of the structure, but have no idea what I will play in my solos, for they are created in the moment. Paul Berliner examines definitions of improvisation in his seminal work that explored the infinite art of improvisation. He presents a couple of general definitions that I include below:

"To improvise is to compose, or simultaneously compose and perform, on the spur of the moment and without preparation." (Webster's Dictionary, 1998, Cited in Berliner, 1994:1)

Another alternative definition from a leading music dictionary:

“The art of performing music spontaneously without the aid of manuscript, sketches or memory.” (Apel, 1969, Cited in Berliner 1994:1)

More recently, following a literature search, I stumbled upon the work of Michele Biasutti, who presents a more complex definition of improvisation.

“Improvisation is a complex, multidimensional act that involves creative and performance behaviors in real-time in addition to processes such as sensory and perceptual encoding, motor control, performance monitoring, and memory storage and recall.” (Biasutti, 2017:1)

Whilst the definitions above are all broadly very similar in many respects, I am particularly taken by Biasutti’s thoughts. His definition has greater depth and hints at the cognitive processes jazz musicians (or improvisers of any genre for that matter) go through when improvising. Indeed, the definition has promoted me to reflect more deeply on my journey of learning to improvise – a never-ending journey I must add. Additionally, Biasutti’s thoughts have reminded me of Csikszentmihalyi’s work on the concept of flow, which provides an understanding of experience when individuals are fully involved in the present moment (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).

The above resonates deeply with me, for when I improvise I am completely absorbed with what I am doing, simply focusing on making good music, by unleashing my musical vocabulary and responding to the exogenous cues from my fellow musicians to aid the development of my solo. According to Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2014), it would appear that what I have referred to above is about ‘being in flow.’

‘Being in flow is the subjective experience of engaging just-manageable challenges by tackling a series of goals, continuously processing feedback about progress, and adjusting action based on this feedback. Under these

conditions, experience seamlessly unfolds from moment to moment, and one enters a subjective state.' (P.90)

I think the above sums up nicely what takes place when I am improvising – I am in state of flow and somehow lost in the moment. The next section of this piece is an attempt to make sense of the work I have/continue to do to enter that state of flow when I am improvising.

Figuring out the changes: an insight into how I developed as an improviser

First, I want to dispel some of the myths around the nature of jazz improvisation. Whilst it is spontaneous, there are preconceived ideas that have been passed down the generations of musicians and I shall explore this in more depth in the following section. As a trumpet player, I have incorporated musical ideas into my own approach from very early influences such as Bix Beiderbecke and, of course, dear old Pops himself – Louis Armstrong. Learning jazz is like learning a language and the spontaneous ideas that leave the bell of my horn have only been possible because of the amount of work I have invested in listening and imitating what has gone before. In so doing, I have developed a vocabulary that I draw upon when I improvise.

Thinking about the latter point has led me to think about the parallels of learning to improvise and learning a second language. A brief scan of the literature confirmed my thoughts that they are indeed similar:

'Stern presented an influential list of characteristics of successful language learning. They exhibit, among other characteristics, a personally relevant learning style, positive learning strategies, an active approach to learning, technical understanding of how to tackle a language, a sustained search for meaning, willingness to practice and to experiment, self-monitoring, and development of the language as a medium of thought.' (Oxford and Crookhall, 1989:405)

The above quote resonates with me in relation to my practice as an improviser – I take an active approach to learning new vocabulary and material; I am constantly practising and experiment with new ideas and material; I am my own best critic and am constantly reflecting both in action and on action (Schon, 1987) and, finally, music occupies my thought processes. I mentally practise, experimenting with sounds and phrases and I look to music, of course, to think about leadership and management issues (and wider life issues) on a daily basis.

Rubin and Thompson's (1982) advice on learning a language chimes with me too. They suggest that to become a proficient language learner, students should organize, be creative and learn to live with uncertainty. Creativity and learning to live with uncertainty are at the heart of learning to improvise. I will return to language acquisition later in this section – in the context of learning the language of bebop.

Earlier sections of this context statement point out some of the drivers that motivated me to explore learning to improvise and so I will not cover old ground here. Instead, I want to explain a little about the mechanics of learning to improvise. I, like many others of my generation, was fortunate to have a wealth of resources at my disposal to assist in developing as an improviser – Miles Davis and my other heroes didn't, for they were the creators of a special musical language. I can remember the first improvisation text I purchased - *'The Jazz Theory Book'* by Mark Levine (2011). I recall first opening it and being freaked out (I still am to be honest) by the complexity of jazz harmony, but the book was written in such a way that it was accessible and provided a wealth of examples. I still refer to the book to this day.

Another text that has been a heavily used resource was Hal Crook's "How to Improvise (1990)." I have always been struck by the opening quote of his book and as I reflect on my development, it makes more sense than ever.

"Learning to improvise, like learning anything that demands both technical and creative ability, depends mostly on you – the individual student. Teachers can

only show examples of how it's done, and, as I have endeavoured to do here, share ideas, materials and provide an organized approach to practicing which may bring you closer to achieving the goal, provided you do the necessary work.” (Crook, 1990:10)

I am reassured in many respects; nearly two-decades on that I have not been disadvantaged to the degree to which I have been thinking by not attending a conservatoire to formally study jazz. Indeed, Crook is entirely correct in what he articulates in the above quote... it's down to individuals to develop their skills as an improviser. Both Crook and Levine's book would have been completely alien to me if it wasn't for the knowledge and passion for jazz that I had developed simply by listening and being surrounded by my dad's musician friends – and from a very early age. Wynton Marsalis writes about a similar experience to mine:

'I thought there must be something to this improvised music. I needed to learn more about it. And hanging around jazz musicians was a great education for a nine – or ten year-old because they told great stories and they knew how to listen. That was their way, talking and listening, listening and talking.' (Marsalis, 2008:6)

For me, it was a combination of hanging round commercial musicians playing the Working Mens' Clubs (my dad played seven nights a week most weeks, in various bands providing live musical accompaniment for cabaret acts), as well as some fine jazz musicians. I guess I learned a lot about music, life and culture generally in my childhood – particularly from some of the characters I met along the way in the Working Mens' Clubs and I have no doubt that these early childhood experiences have contributed to my professional practice as both musician and educator. I learned very early on how to engage with people from diverse backgrounds, with a range of differing opinions. This, I feel helped shape my practice as a management educator in the fact I can appreciate and respond accordingly with a diverse range of learners e.g. from 1st year undergraduate students through to international students, through to senior leaders.

So, to recap, the books and other pedagogical improvisation resources were/are so useful to explain what you are listening – the chance to understand the harmony behind that inspirational Freddie Hubbard lick I referred to earlier, but I now know that being exposed to music from a very young age has been central to my development.

As I write this, Crook's quote resonates with me even further, but from a management education perspective. Teaching, for example, entrepreneurship, or executive students on an MBA course does not guarantee they will be hugely successful. Learning to improvise – learning to lead or be an entrepreneur is, arguably, very much similar and the responsibility of the individual. They must absorb the materials provided by business schools/conservatoires (and other training outlets) and utilize it alongside their natural skill, aptitude and creativity. Once again, the parallels from jazz that I have been drawing with marketing/management education AND teaching for the past sixteen years come to the fore.

Another interlude with Miles

Dear Miles,

I've just re-read the previous three paragraphs above and I think I have stumbled on a potential flaw in the application of the jazz metaphor. Through reflecting on my development as an improviser, I have clearly articulated that, like your good self, Wynton Marsalis etc., I have had the privilege of surrounding myself with more mature and experienced musicians, who have (and continue to do so) exercise their storytelling skills to bring context to the music, its historic and cultural make up and, I guess, generally teaching me how to be proficient improviser. I was lucky to have internationally acclaimed Gerard Presencer teaching me from the beginning, and playing with some amazing musicians when I was relatively early in my career.

My big question, Miles, is this... can the same be said for learning to be a strategic leader? How many aspiring senior leaders/managers get the opportunity to hang out with and absorb what great inspirational leaders do? The answer is most likely very few – most will observe from a distance and via autobiographies, media footage and key note speeches etc. don't get me wrong, Miles, I continue to do this and maybe I was just more fortunate than others to have access to and be accepted into superior networks of jazz musicians that allowed me to accelerate my development.

The point is, Miles, I need to give this some more thought from a management education perspective. My rather flippant statement below needs further thought:

“Learning to improvise – learning to lead or be an entrepreneur is, arguably, very much similar and the responsibility of the individual. They must absorb the materials provided by business schools/conservatoires (and other training outlets) and utilize it alongside their natural skill, aptitude and creativity.”

I don't actually think it's that simple, Miles, although I still think there are some parallels to a certain extent.

Time to revisit Brookfield's (2012) work and begin to further challenge the paradigmatic assumptions I have held over the course of my time applying the jazz metaphor in a leadership and management context, in an attempt refine my thinking.

Here's to a new chapter in my professional practice – further fusing the jazz metaphor into management education.

All best,

Noel

So how did I begin?

By listening. By hearing a dark trumpet sound. By being curious about how musicians could come together and make music, with minimal preparation. The more I listened and talked to my dad about the music I was hearing – Miles Davis initially and then Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Art Blakey etc. the greater my eagerness to learn more. As my curiosity for jazz developed and my technical proficiency on the trumpet advanced, I began to start transcribing passages of some of my favourite solos. I would attempt to imitate the style and the dark sound I was hearing from the likes of Miles Davis, Freddie Hubbard and Wynton Marsalis. Indeed, Wynton Marsalis was one of my key influences from a relatively early stage in my development, thanks once again, to my dad. Completing the reading for this chapter I stumbled on a quote from Wynton that goes a long way in reassuring me that I have indeed approached learning to be an improviser in largely the correct way.

'When you start playing, you've got to have objectives: what are you playing? Why are you playing it? How do you want to sound, and how do you achieve that sound? When you have those things clear in your mind, it's much easier to teach yourself, and ultimately, that's what you have to do. No one will teach you how to play.' (Marsalis, 2004:5)

The word imitate is important in that last passage. Essentially, I was reproducing (or at least attempting to) what I was hearing and this is actually a key part in the process of learning to improvise. Indeed, the wonderful trumpeter – Clark Terry developed a simple model for learning to improvise, which is still widely used in jazz pedagogy today. The model is as follows:

1. **Imitate** – learning to talk as a child requires imitation in the first instance. Learning to improvise requires command of a musical language, which is first developed by imitating what has gone before.
2. **Assimilate** – here we go beyond simple imitation and begin to analyze what is going on harmonically and rhythmically. I can recall a specific

example of me going through this stage, prior to meeting Gerard, when I spent a great deal of time trying to play some Wynton Marsalis solos from a book of transcriptions. Here, I began to develop my understanding of jazz harmony.

3. **Innovate** - this is the stage where you absorb the language and develop your own spin on it that leads to your unique voice. Whilst you have a bank of vocabulary (bebop licks and phrases) at your disposal, these are used in such a way that they complement your own musical ideas.

(Clark Terry, 1973)

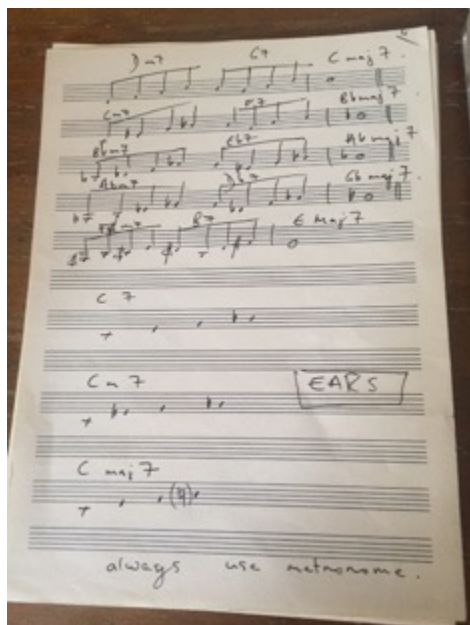
It is important to note here, though, that the imitation aspect of Terry's approach does not ever really cease in jazz musicians – I am constantly listening to jazz musicians past, but more so present, to soak up their innovation and creativity in order to further develop my playing. Thus in this context, I guess I am ambidextrous in my approach in that, on the one hand I am an experienced improviser and by now adhering to rule #3 of Clark's approach to improvisation, yet still often drawing on the old bank of licks, and absorbing new ones and styles of playing from the new generation – I simultaneously use the new to inform the old and the old to inform the new.

Learning the bebop language

As I mentioned earlier, to become a proficient improviser you **arguably** need to understand and develop bebop language. Bebop emerged in the 1940s and was radical departure from what had gone before. In the 1930s the some of the soloists in the big bands were becoming frustrated with the lack of space for them to creatively express themselves and as a result, in maverick and entrepreneurial like fashion, were busy in an after-hours club in Harlem, developing a new form of jazz what would become known as Bebop (Fordham, 2015). Bebop was markedly different from the jazz in the big bands, with more complex harmony, complicated melodies and fast tempos. This music was not for dancing to; it was an art form that attracted a smaller, refined audience. Jazz was now moving into esoteric territory.

Below is the first bebop lick that I learned on lesson number one with Gerard in 1996. Of course, I'd been imitating and playing similar licks prior to this, but this was the first time I'd seen a bebop lick written down and had the opportunity to start to work out what was happening theoretically e.g. the intervals, the position within the scale, introduction to the various modes of scales etc. On that first lesson, I was introduced to the II-V-1 progression, which is central to jazz and underpins a lot of the repertoire we play.

My first bebop lick



The above photograph is an example of some of the hand-written material that Gerard presented me in my first lesson. I remember thinking at the time that I was beginning the process of understanding what I had been listening to for the years before. This was a major shift for me and the point that I began to understand the complexity of learning to improvise and the sheer volume of work that would be involved in developing my language.

One will note on the photograph above that Gerard has placed pronounced emphasis on the word EARS. Of course, central to learning to improvise is the use of the ears to listen intently to what is going on musically, but to also be able to play a lick in all 12 keys. I had relied (and continue to do so) on my ears

to get by musically, and I guess I am fortunate that I can hear something and play it back. I must add that I do not have perfect pitch, but I can usually hear something and either sing it, or play it back – part of the aural tradition of music.

But simply having a command of the bebop vocabulary is not enough to sustain one's artistic endeavours. As pianist Kenny Werner notes:

'The goal of so many players is just to speak the language. Again, let's apply the issue to conversation. If you master the English language, does that make you a poet? Being able to speak in complete sentences is not an art, but a technical skill. Being a poet, a playwright or lyricist – that is art.' (Werner, 1996: 48).

Werner's quote is an interesting one, in that it highlights the importance of moving beyond imitation and assimilation. For jazz musicians to be true to themselves and to be creative, they have to use material that has gone before in a way that they create a unique style and push the music into new directions. Simply regurgitating licks bar after bar is not creative or original, but drawing on them from the subconscious for inspiration to inform an improvised solo is very much permitted and is something I do on a regular basis. Often, if I'm in trouble in the middle of a solo – perhaps there is a real tricky chord progression coming up (this happens quite a lot when I play more contemporary compositions by the likes of one of my favourite trumpet players – Tom Harrell) I will very often draw upon my bank of bebop vocabulary to rescue the situation. But I only know I do this when I listen back to recordings of a gig I've played – it doesn't compute with me in the moment of improvising.

My personal stance on bebop language has always been positive, for without studying it, I do not feel that my playing would be where it is now. Not only does learning the language develop knowledge of harmony and rhythm, but one also absorbs a piece of history and develops an appreciation of the sheer creativity and, dare I say it, entrepreneurialism, displayed by the likes of Charlie Parker, Lester Young and Dizzy Gillespie who were central to the development of a new genre of jazz. But I am acutely aware that there are differing views on this and I have been involved in many debates with my peers re learning bebop and playing standards. There are those that think that learning licks and playing

standards is un-original and perhaps a cop out, and those that think it is necessary to become an innovative and creative improviser. I am in the latter camp and all of the great musicians I have had the privilege of working with e.g. Bob Minzter, Pete Churchill, Gerard Presencer, Jim Mullen, Alan Barnes, Dave O'Higgins etc. all purport the same views – and I respect them so greatly.

I return to Kenny Werner's ideas on this theme. In fact, let me say just how inspiring I found his book (below) and not just from a musical perspective. The transferability of ideas in this book are boundless and, once again, reassure me that my public works utilising jazz in a management education space have a valuable place and do indeed contribute to our understanding of leadership and management issues. To evidence this, I invite you to refer to the vox pops captured from one of my recent workshops that demonstrate how participant respond when they are exposed to 'the jazz metaphor' and other creative methods.

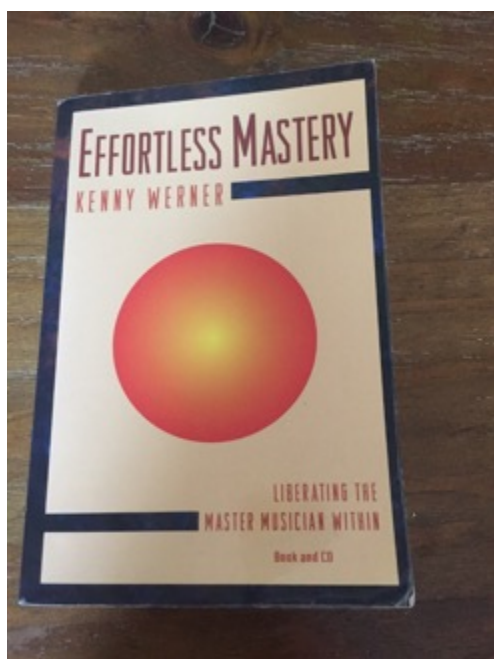
"I would have never thought of jazz as a tool to examine business issues. I have long been frustrated by the strangulation of creativity, entrepreneurial thought and individuality in organizations in their desperate attempt to achieve goals. What we have witnessed today in this session clearly demonstrated that the lessons from jazz give us alternative ways of achieving our goals in more collaborative and creative ways." (Ann, Brand Manager)

"This is a fascinating approach that challenges you to take a more critical and reflexive view of your role and relationship with your organization." (Matt, Creative Director)

Vox Pops from a recent Corporate

Workshop: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzUx8yGAVvk>

Kenny Werner's fascinating book



Let us return to the argument around learning the bebop language. Kenny Werner eloquently presents the two sides of the argument:

'One camp says, I don't want to absorb too much technique, too much language, because it will squelch my creativity.' (Werner, 1996:48)

My goodness, I can't tell you how much I've heard that quote, or variations of it/the idea, over my career as a musician. Indeed, up until 2000 I can genuinely say that I would have been wholly supportive of it. All I wanted to do from meeting Gerard in 1996 was to play and sound like him – and so I imitated him like hell to the point that a trumpet player friend of mine commented... *"you sound more like Gerard than Gerard!"* (Gerry Denning, trumpeter, circa 1998!).

My good ears, in part, helped me imitate him in terms of sound and ideas, but what they didn't do was build my understanding of what was going on musically – although they did help build my vocabulary. It was formally sitting down and complementing my ears with the jazz teaching methods (in addition to Gerard, of course) and Charlie Parker's *Omnibook* that really added depth to my playing – after all, Charlie and his colleagues had done the groundwork to develop a beautiful new language that, in my view, is a universal language that connects

jazz musicians across the globe. I have had the privilege of working with many jazz musicians and the one common thing that connects us all is an understanding of the repertoire, the historic culture of jazz and, of course, a shared musical vocabulary.

Learning vocabulary, though, is only part of the process of becoming an improviser. Although I have an ever-evolving library of bebop licks and patterns at my disposal, when I improvise I do not consciously think about which licks will go where. I have absorbed the language and developed my own approach and style.

What is the equivalent of bebop language in strategic marketing management?

Reflecting on my development as an improviser, learning the language of bebop, I began to think about the language of my first discipline – marketing and then, more broadly, the language of leadership and strategic management. In so doing, I began to think I had stumbled on a serious limitation of the jazz metaphor. After all, I have just argued that in order to become a proficient improviser, you must develop a vocabulary. I began to think about my application of the jazz metaphor in my publications and the workshops I have been facilitating for all of these years. I asked myself, how can I really advocate improvisation in an organisational setting, given the complexity and never-ending process of learning the language? A read of one of my papers, or being a participant in one of the workshops will not turn you into an improviser overnight. I began to panic and doubt my arguments and value of my work.

I worked through this problem by first thinking about the language equivalent in marketing and came to the conclusion that the obvious answer to the question was the famous marketing theories and models that pervade the discourse. I include an array of examples below (in no particular order) that I and a million other marketing students have/and continue to be subject to across the land.

- Marketing Myopia – (Levitt, 1960)
- The marketing mix (famous 4 Ps that became the 7 Ps) (Borden, 1969)
- The 32 Rs (Gonroos, 1994)
- Porter's Five Forces – (Porter, 1989)
- Porter's Generic Strategies – (Porter, 1985)
- Strategic Marketing Planning models – (McDonald, 2011; Brooksbank, 1993; Piercy and Morgan, 1994;
- Philosophy of marketing – Shelby Hunt (1991)
- Market orientation – Kholi and Jaworski (1993); Narver and Slater (1991)
- Etc, etc...

The list is endless and what I have included above is a mere amuse bouche of marketing discourse – a discourse, I might add, that I have always thought of a being a 'borrowed discipline'. Stephen Brown concurs:

'Marketing is myriad. Marketing is multifarious. Marketing, like Walt Whitman, is large and contains multiples. The marketing academy, akin to the legendary Biblical building, is a house of many mansions. Marketing scholars are nothing if not polymorphously perverse. Present company accepted, of course.'
(2005:1)

For me, marketing borrows from a range of other disciplines such as economics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, the arts (including jazz???), philosophy, neuroscience etc, etc... Indeed, I think the 'borrowed; nature of the discipline makes it complex and perhaps this has led to a something of an 'identity crisis' in both an academic and practical context. On the one hand, the academic community is striving to shape marketing discourse through broad and eclectic studies into a diverse range of aspects of marketing. Research methodologies are varied and, depending on the journal, range from pure positivism, right through to newer and more qualitative methods such as netnography (Brown, 2005). Contrastingly, the practitioner community is often left trying to fight for marketing to gain credibility within organisations – desperately trying to persuade senior leaders that it is not a soft discipline and

a constant cost. It's not about the content of the corporate brochure and the number of PR activities held each year; it is indeed strategic in nature and beyond a function. Marketing theorists have been writing about this for some time, including Christian Gronroos:

'Marketing and marketers are becoming marginalized in a growing number of companies. The interest in shareholder value and short-term gains on the stock market has reinforced the position of managers trained in finance as the most valued persons for the top positions.' (2003:171)

I have experienced, on a number of occasions, both leading my workshops and teaching MBA students, a dismissive attitude towards marketing, which, at times has been somewhat offensive! I recall delivering a 'marketing for non-marketers' workshop for a group of senior engineers from a global engineering company. My icebreaker was a simple... *'what do you understand by the word marketing?'* Three responses stand out:

"It's all fluffy stuff... It's PR, you know, being able to open a bottle of fizz without cracking your nail varnish (delivered with a huge laugh, scanning the room for approval/laughs – that fortunately were not forthcoming!)"

"Marketing, well... it's the corporate brochure and the freebies we give out".

"It's a big cost for us!"

Three responses that demonstrate no understanding about the strategic nature of marketing. Other less dismissive responses from that workshop and pretty much similar to responses I get working with brand new marketing students included: advertising, selling, market research etc. Whilst not incorrect, the aforementioned words/terms merely relate to the tactical, or what I term, the tools of marketing that largely assist with implementation of the corporate and marketing strategies.

Apologies for the digression, but I feel that the aforementioned points are important in my quest to identify the language of strategic marketing management. My conclusion is that there is indeed a parallel with bebop language (the licks and phrases we learn and absorb), I guess are similar to some of the marketing/management theories I mentioned earlier. How they are used in reality is questionable and it is worth pointing out that one does not need to have studied marketing at any level to be a marketing practitioner. I have heard Professor Malcolm McDonald speak on a number of occasions and he points out that to be a practicing accountant you must have Chartered status, to practice marketing you don't... I rest my case.

So, I have come to the conclusion that in the context of my jazz workshops where we encourage improvisation to take place within the strategic plan, the language element is the knowledge of the contents of the strategic document and a clear understanding of the vision and strategic direction of the organisation. Without that strategic knowledge (language) then improvisation becomes a challenge to accomplish, or perhaps worse still, improvisation takes place in different parts and at different times within the company – because of the lack of strategic knowledge. The result, a myriad of performances within the organisation and leading to what I term '*strategic organisational cacophony*'. I refer you to Dennis and Macaulay (2003) and the film of one of my workshops (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plwrI3ISwO0>) where we make it clear that the language is knowledge of the organisation's strategy and one's individual relationship and role in executing it effectively.

Back to the music

Reflecting on my practice as an improviser has made me realise that I have absorbed a great deal of knowledge about jazz and indeed trumpet playing. In terms of playing the trumpet much, I have command of the instrument – I know how to hold the trumpet; I know how to breath from my diaphragm; I know how to buzz my lips; I know the position of my embouchure, which is unorthodox in that it is not central; I know which valves to press to produce notes; I know my sound; I know how to empty condensation from my horn etc. I pick up my horn

and play and do all of the aforementioned without any real conscious thought. This is embodied knowledge... but improvising?

'Embodied knowledge is the type of knowledge in which the body knows how to act.' (Tanaka, 200:47)

Tanaka's paper provides an interesting overview of the notion of embodied knowledge and its range. Tanaka (200) argues that one of the important features of embodied knowledge is that the lived body is the knowing subject – so for example, I can make a sound on my horn without having to verbalise or represent in the mind all of the procedures required (P.48) and this, I do, unless I am teaching someone to play of course.

Merleau-Ponty (cited in Fuchs, 2012) uses the term “knowledge in our hands” to describe a type of knowledge that is not a reflex but rather comes through repeated bodily practice. When I read music, for example, the notes transfer from the page and my body – principally my lips, lungs, and fingers respond accordingly. I instinctively know how to pitch the note, manage the intonation, the volume and this is purely down to repeated practice that has led to what Merleau-Ponty refers to as ‘knowledge of familiarity.’ Is this the same for the improvisatory side of my practice – I'm not so sure.

Thinking about this, I have always personally found it easier to teach someone to play the trumpet, but not so easy to teach improvisation. In fact, arguably, my teaching career began as a VI Form student where I spent most Wednesday afternoons teaching trumpet in a local primary school. This teaching continued for many years after – particularly in my Dad's youth band. It is relatively easy to explain and demonstrate all of the physical things associated with playing the trumpet – or any brass instrument for that matter, and I have witnessed the beginner develop into a fine player, where the once difficult task of making a sound has shifted to an effortless process.

Does improvisation heavily rely on embodied knowledge?

Perusing the literature, I'm pretty sure the answer to this question is a resounding yes, but there are certain points of view which might challenge this viewpoint. I am particularly enthused by Bacon and Midgelow's (2014) work. Their seminal contribution to aiding an understanding of one's own dance practice, has clear parallels with jazz – indeed, it has put my subconscious as an improviser firmly into the conscious. They developed the Creative Articulations Process (CAP) models and a range of techniques for individuals to use to reflect on and develop their professional practice. Whilst the model has primarily been devised for dancers, I can see how I can use it to reflect on my practice as both a jazz musician and management educator.

I feel that I have delved fairly deeply into my practice as a jazz musician to inform my thinking about application of the jazz metaphor in various aspects of leadership and management. My 2003 and 2007 publications provide quite a significant insight into improvisation and the dynamics of the jazz group and qualities jazz musicians possess. I do appreciate that the musical side of things is somewhat toned down for the audiences I was writing for, but non-the least that particular body of my professional practice as a management educator required me to certainly follow the 'opening' 'situating' and 'delving' aspects of Bacon and Midgelow's CAP model. I wish to revisit some of my original ideas, but using the CAP model to deepen my reflection and to search for more answers re my practice as an improviser and as a management educator. Indeed, more on that theme in my future publications. But next, back to how I learned to improvise and educate.

Vignette: A Naïve Young Noel Gigs with Tim Garland, 2001: Experiential Learning in Abundance!

I formed the Noel Dennis Band in 1998 and established a weekly residency at The Purple Onion – a wonderful restaurant and bar in Middleborough. The gig was always well attended and this is where I arguably learned to improvise, working with more experienced musicians and learning the repertoire. As the residency progressed, we invited a guest player once a month, which at first, were predominately local/regional musicians. As time progressed, though, and the funding pot increased, we started to invite some of the UK's finest jazz musicians, beginning with Gerard and then the likes of Dave O'Higgins, Jim Mullen, Alan Barnes, Mark Nightingale etc.

A very memorable session for me was when saxophonist Tim Garland joined us for an evening. I had long been a fan of Tim's playing and writing and admired his passion and drive to innovate and take the music in new directions. A couple of months before this gig, I had the pleasure of seeing Tim's band live, playing tunes from his (then) new album – Made by Walking, which featured a host of musicians including the legendary pianist Chick Corea. Tim was a member of Chick Corea's band and so to have him working with us, was something very special indeed.

I spent the afternoon preparing for the gig, setting up the PA and making the room look good. I recall being very nervous about this gig to the point, I lost my voice for a couple of hours. I wasn't just nervous about the music, but I was anxious that there would be an audience of sufficient size. I collected Tim from the railway station and we drove to the venue and en route, Tim was telling me that he'd stepped off a plane only the day before, following a US tour with Chick Corea. As if I wasn't nervous enough, but this really did take things to another level. Tim's last gig was in New York with Chick Corea and now he was in Middlesbrough with me!

We agreed a set list and did a sound check and I was immediately blown away by Tim's musicianship. He really encouraged us all to take more risks and take our playing to another level. Everyone played amazingly that evening, with some magical musical moments that I'd never witnessed before. Why wasn't the room to capacity to hear this amazing musician in an intimate, rather than the usual concert hall gigs he plays? Whilst we had a nice audience of 50, the room had a capacity for 200 and so I was disappointed with numbers – particularly as I had promoted this gig heavily, with posters, flyers, word of mouth and a press release, which garnered two lines in the local Gazette! The press certainly wasn't for jazz in Middlesbrough.

So, there are a couple of themes that above vignette addresses. Principally, it illustrates my experiential approach to learning to improvise, and also the challenges in building and sustaining a jazz audience – another aspect that I have examined in my research – see Macaulay and Dennis (2006), Macaulay and Dennis (2007) and Dennis and Macaulay (2010), and through collaborations with Jazz Services Ltd.

Relatively soon after my initial meeting with Gerard in 1996, I began sitting in with various local jazz groups and 'having a blow'. At that point, I was still very much finding my voice and both my technical ability on the trumpet and my knowledge of harmony etc. was still very much embryonic. What I did find, though, is the more I did this, the more I started to improve as a player and the more confident I became. Indeed, I was receiving feedback on my playing from experienced musicians; I was learning the rules of being part of a jazz combo and I was learning lots about the music in terms of its historical context.

Interestingly, John Barron writes about experiential learning in the context of jazz education. He cites the words of the great pianist Hal Galper who stated "*school is on the bandstand*" (Barron 2007:18). As previously stated, I feel that the majority of my learning to improvise has taken place on the bandstand, working initially with extremely competent local and regional musicians (1996-1999) and then 2000 onwards having the honour to share the stage with some of my heroes such as: Tim Garland (see vignette above); Jim Mullen; Alan Barnes; Mark Nightingale, Tommy Smith; Dave O'Higgins; Gerard Presencer; Andy Sheppard; Bob Mintzer etc. I can't really begin to articulate in words just how much working with the aforementioned names developed my playing and raised my aspirations to reach that next level. Barron supports the notion of learning on the bandstand:

'Learning on the bandstand suggests that the developing musician is more likely to learn at an efficient pace and with the depth of understanding when interacting with more knowledgeable performers – older musicians and more experienced peers – and by participating in authentic musical experiences.'
(Barron, 2007:18)

I would wholly concur with Barron's ideas here. In fact, I have always preferred to be surrounded by musicians and indeed academics and business practitioners who have far more experience than I. For me, that's when authentic learning takes place and when you become truly inspired and take your playing to a much higher level. I must stress, though, that I am not denying

that I continue to practise alone, may be with the help of a Jamie Abersold (a jazz pianist and educator, responsible a large cannon of materials with backing tracks to facilitate practise in the home) for backing track to try out new ideas in a safe environment. But for me, the real learning takes place when you are on the stage and interacting with others – particularly the names I have had the pleasure of sharing the stage with, as Barron argues below.

‘Although the developing jazz musician must inevitably devote the necessary time alone in the practice room, depth of understanding can be enhanced only through meaningful and repeated interactions with others. The very essence of jazz is interactive and communal.’ (Barron, 2007:20)

Incidentally, I am privileged to have been able to learn experientially and with some amazing musicians. I have always found those in, what I will term, the ‘Premier League’ have always been the most supportive and freely giving of their time.

Interestingly, though, it was not just the amazing playing of my heroes I identified above that inspired and developed me, but the stories they told me about being on the road. I felt I got a real insight into life as a jazz musician and indeed the amazing things that brought with it, but also some of the challenges – principally, making a decent living! The latter point is indeed and important one and led me to investigate why it is so difficult to make a living as a jazz musician if you are not, for example, a Herbie Hancock or Wynton Marsalis. This research theme we will call for now – *jazz needs marketing* – is covered in a number of my publications as outlined below:

- Jazz: A Philosophical Problem for Marketing (2006)
- ‘The parallax of art and commerce: UK jazz musicians on marketing’ (2008)
- ‘Musings from Miles: what Miles Davis can tell us about music and marketing’ (2010)

- *'Performing Jazz and the Jazz Constellation: movements, moments and connections'* (2017)

Deliberately Developmental Organisations – The case of the jazz group

Experiential learning has and continues to be a major part of my pedagogical philosophy, both as a management educator and a jazz musician. A recent example of this was me learning a wonderful solo by one of my favourite players – Tom Harrell. I stumbled upon this live recording of him playing an old tune called *Darn that Dream*. His solo is simply beautiful and I spent weeks replaying parts of it in my mind and working out what he was doing. Incidentally, his solo here is packed with a rich tapestry of bebop language that he has weaved into his own unique style. I experimented with Tom's ideas, moving from imitation through to assimilation (Terry, 1973).

But his solo did not just inspire me musically, it actually featured in one of my recent postgraduate strategic management classes, because the interaction and response of his fellow musicians (particularly the saxophone player) summed up to me just how organisations should behave. The video demonstrates a rich innovative dialogue between the musicians that leads to much creative interplay and it, importantly demonstrates trust and mutual respect – a central ingredient for jazz musicians within the jazz group and, indeed, any organisation. For me, it illustrates the importance of being what Keegan and Lahey (2016) refer to as a **Deliberately Development Organisation**, for which, the jazz group is the perfect example.

"When you are staring very hard at the normal organisation, it's hard to see anything but normal. Normal begins to look strange to us only after we have stared hard at organisations where no one is doing a second job. Different as the companies in this book are in their look and feel, they share a striking commonality: they are the most powerful settings in the world we have found for developing people's capabilities, precisely because they have created a safe enough and demanding enough culture that everyone comes out of hiding. This

is what we call the deliberately developmental organisation: the DDO.” (Keegan and Lahey, 2016:3)

The jazz group is a DDO for sure and the above quote encapsulates what I have been preaching to businesses for years via my publications and workshops. Keegan and Lahey, albeit indirectly, endorse the power of the jazz group to examine issues in leadership and management.

I refer back to Tom Harrell’s performance of *Darn that Dream* and his DDO in action. The YouTube video can be viewed here <https://youtu.be/PDshTFnBaAo>

My Experiential Approach to Teaching Improvisation: The Milestones Sessions

I continue to teach trumpet and improvisation, although, due to other commitments as a management educator I do not do this as frequently as I used to. I want to make brief reference, though, to a project I was involved with several years ago. Milestones was weekly jazz workshop and jam session that was aimed at musicians of all ages and abilities. My band would work with the aspiring improvisers and teach them simple jazz repertoire, the basic harmony knowledge to get by on the material, and, most importantly, provide them with a safe environment in which to learn and perform. I thoroughly enjoyed leading these workshops that spanned a five-year period and had a positive influence for so many and actually led to a number of participants taking their music further, such as Matt Anderson (now a leading UK saxophone player), Caroline Bagley (professional sax player and educator). The Milestones sessions did not just teach improvisation, they also raised confidence in individuals and developed transferrable skills such as teamwork, communication etc. A real privilege to have been involved and had the opportunity to shape peoples’ lives through music.

A group I coached ripping up So What? By Miles Davis



“Growing up as a young, jazz-obsessed saxophonist in the North East of England, in the North Yorkshire Moors near Whitby, there were not many opportunities to participate in jam sessions. Jamming is of course very important in the learning process, allowing younger musicians to play informally with older, more experienced ones, so it was very useful to my development as a jazz player to have the opportunity to play with the Dennises at their Milestones session in Stockton.

Those experiences taught me a lot about jam session etiquette and the kind of repertoire I needed to know, and the sessions were also just good fun and gave me a chance to try out what I'd been working on in front of an audience. More recently, I've tried to recreate some of those experiences for younger or amateur musicians in my own jazz education, for example arranging for jazz FE students at Leeds College of Music to attend jam sessions at the HEART centre in Headingley, and running these sessions monthly for adult amateur players.” (Matt Anderson, saxophone)

Fear: why am I so scared?

“Do not fear mistakes, for there are none.” (Miles Davis)

As I reflect on my journey of becoming an improviser, I feel the need to discuss fear. When I talk to people about my work as a both a musician and an educator, I often get comments such as “I don't know how you can stand in front of an audience and do what you do – I would be terrified.” Each to their own, I guess, but the very nature of being an improviser means dealing with the

unknown and creating in real time. I can see how this may induce fear for those who perhaps don't deal with, for example, change or uncertainty too easily. But for me, I thrive when I am on the bandstand improvising and crafting a solo, based on a shared dialogue and experience with my fellow musicians, for I am in a safe environment where mistakes are expected, tolerated and part of the process of playing jazz. Wynton Marsalis makes reference (speaking about Miles Davis) to this in his book – *Moving to Higher Ground – How Jazz can Change Your Life*:

'He (Miles Davis) would release recordings with mistakes, and they still sound good. The imperfections give the music even more flavour and personality. In this era of young people starving themselves to attain some Madison Avenue or TV version of thinness and perfection, the idea of "working with what you have" provides a more useful alternative.' (Marsalis, 2008:12)

But I am by no means immune to fear – musically, or in an academic sense. From a musical perspective, I have always been somewhat under-confident when it comes to sight reading new material. I can read music, but I am not the most confident of sight readers and it sometimes takes me a few times to get something perfect. As a member of the trumpet section in the Voice of the North Jazz Orchestra (VOTN), this would often be an issue for me, resulting in a somewhat lack of confidence when it came to playing exposed written passages. I recall an example of this at a VOTN rehearsal with the late British jazz musician – Michael Garrick. I was given the trumpet 4 part for an original composition, which was tricky to say the least. I improvised over a set of complex changes without too many challenges, but I could not play a crucial part of the written melody – which happened to be a solo. On take 3, it came to the part in the melody and I fluffed it again. Michael stopped the band and basically dressed me down in front of everyone. I felt horrific at the time, but I am grateful for that moment as it influenced my practice as an educator. From that moment, I vowed never to make anyone feel like that, no matter what the situation. And there have/continue to be many moments when I could 'pull the Garrick stunt' on my students, but I wouldn't, because it would not achieve the

desired results. For me, though, it did work and I am mighty grateful for Michael's actions that day.

Kenny Werner talks about fear:

'Many of us have formed an unhealthy linkage between who we are and how we play. We fear being inadequate and that leads to ineffective playing, practising and listening. Fear closes the door to the true self, that brilliant centre where ecstasy lies.' (Werner: 1996: 51)

I have become a much more confident reader over the past ten years and this I feel is, in part, down to my work as a management educator. In developing my public works in the metaphor space and jazz and marketing more generally, I have immersed myself in a variety of literature – particularly biographies of some of the great jazz musicians such as Miles, John Coltrane, Lee Konitz etc. and they have all in their own way endorsed mistakes as positives. Indeed, a positive result for me and my playing. I guess the question for me is why did I fear playing the written notes and not the changes? I had been embodying fear that had ultimately led to a lack of self confidence in relation to playing complex written passages (Griffin, 2015).

Interestingly, though, fear has, to a certain degree, followed me in my academic world too. The fact I am just completing my PhD sixteen years into my academic career is perhaps an indicator. Whilst I am confident performing in front of an audience of students at any level, the research side of my work is my scariest. I often fear what reaction I will get from my peers – particularly as the nature of my work is largely conceptual, with the empirical being largely 'unorthodox', such as this autoethnographic context statement – but Ellis and Bochner, (2006) and Holbrook (1995) reassure me that autoethnography is the correct theoretical lens for me. There's not a quadratic equation in any of my publications and I know I would struggle to gain any real credibility in some parts of the international marketing academy, but I realise that my work has had and continues to have a positive impact in other spaces. For example, as I write this, I am travelling home following a very successful workshop with

postgraduate students undertaking The Oxford Character Project – University of Oxford. Pete Churchill and I led a version of our workshop and really prompted deep thought and reflection amongst the participants - and all through the lens of jazz. The positive response of the participants and the ensuing debate has provided some reassurance that my work is valuable and has impact – and that it is still fairly unique in nature.

“I was so impressed by your professional performance as well as your inspiring idea of linking Leadership/ Management to Jazz Performance.” (Oxford Character Participant).

Delivering a Jazz and Management Recital to the Oxford Character Project Students



In summary, then, this chapter has, I hope, provided an insight into my journey to becoming an improviser – destination not yet reached, I must stress. This particular chapter has been enlightening for me to put together – indeed it has, at times, felt very much improvisational in nature, as I have played with ideas and extended them beyond one body of knowledge. It has demonstrated just how much ‘Noel Dennis’ as jazz musician is the centre and major influence of

my professional practice as a Management Educator and leader. Indeed, jazz is the lynchpin to everything that I do. And on that note, I leave you with testimonial from the leader of the Oxford Character Project.

Leadership and the Wisdom of Jazz

Dr Edward Brooks, Executive Director of the Oxford Character Project

Over the last three years, Noel Dennis and Pete Churchill's session on 'Leadership and the Wisdom of Jazz', has been a highlight of the [Oxford Global Leadership Initiative](#). The workshop, with Noel Dennis on trumpet and flugelhorn and Pete Churchill on keys, introduces students to the creative and collaborative impulse at the heart of jazz, telling the story of its development and introducing some prominent personalities. The spontaneity and improvisation of the workshop models the kind of leadership that jazz music holds up, drawing students into the music as engaged listeners and then as creative co-performers. Insights from Noel's academic work in the fields of management and marketing, such as the distinction between a 'reader' and a 'jazzier' organisation, which is employed to describe modes of relating to an organisation's strategic document, are delivered at opportune breaks. Such insights are communicated musically as well as intellectually, each reinforcing the other, with the session allowing space for reflection on the shared performance. Student comments and questions combine with content delivered by Noel and Pete, creating a shared learning experience that provides a wonderful introduction to the possibilities of leadership in the creative and improvisatory style of jazz.

Student feedback (delivered anonymously as part of an academic study) consistently rated the workshop as 'excellent', 82% of respondents placing it at the top of a 5-point scale. Comments from 2017 and 2018 include:

"LOVED this!!! Such an engaging and interesting way to think about leadership!" [2018]

A lot of fun and interesting angle to leadership that I had not thought about before. [2017]

My favourite session of the programme! [2017]

The jazz workshop was really interesting. I admired the way the two performers were able to bring together such an abstract concept as leadership in such a concrete thing as jazz. I also loved the history lesson that came along, as it really helped show the development of jazz through the lens of leadership. [2017]

Time for an Interlude: A Life Changing Experience and its Impact on my Practice

31 July, 2017

Hey Miles,

I really feel the need to write to you again. Today marks the end of an era for me. I'm leaving York St John University and taking a month off before heading for Teesside University to go back to my roots and my passion - teaching (and research!).

It's been an interesting six years of my career, Miles, and I have to say that I have witnessed and learned a great deal about higher education and, most notably, about myself. As you know, Miles you have always been a feature in my work as an academic and as a jazz musician and I have long admired the way you made things happen and were not afraid to take risks. Indeed, you were very much present in my decision to swap my very comfortable Principal Lectureship at Teesside University for an Associate Dean post at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU). Despite the professional (but particularly the personal) challenges this posed, I am so pleased I did this. My word, Miles, I have enough material for a good few publications and I know I have matured as a person, an academic and a musician.

I was so disappointed that my time at GCU was cut short because I was part of a very strong leadership team and we collectively had a strong vision to counteract some of the criticisms of management education that I will refer to later in this piece. But for the welfare of my young family and my lovely wife, we decided that Scotland was not for us and made the decision to head home to our roots in the North East of England. A sideways move for me to become Associate Dean of York St John Business School, a much smaller institution that I quickly learned was a little behind the times viz. curriculum amongst other things.

But Miles, there are so many challenges I've faced as Associate Dean at both institutions that we as jazz musicians are simply not used to. I don't think I have the time to go through them all and I certainly wouldn't want to bore you, but here are a few.

1. Challenging politics and competitive behaviour

This is an interesting one and was particularly prevalent in one of the institutions I served as Associate Dean. Miles, on my first day at this particular institution I met with a group of colleagues and one of them stayed back at the end and told me that anyone senior does not last long here - indeed he went on to tell me how 'they' took pride in the fact they had seen off ten Deans in ten years. Miles, I was shocked by this. I had never witnessed anything like this before in my (then) ten years in academia. This first encounter, Miles, would be the beginning of an 'interesting' chapter in my career that has certainly prompted me to think differently about how I view the world and my world of work. It has

made me realise that work relationships in a university context (disclaimer, I am referring to the past six years in a senior leadership position) are far from what we are used to on the stage. The collaboration, the mutual respect, the trust and the space for risk taking and the occasional mistake are, on the whole, absent. So, this has made me think hard and deeply and made me more determined to promote our work on the jazz metaphor in a strategic marketing and leadership context. Miles, we can learn so much from your good self and jazz...

2. A wall against creativity and innovation

Sorry to rant on, but I can't quite comprehend some of the challenges I had with certain individuals in these two institutions - particularly around curriculum reform. In both institutions, I have led curriculum 'refresh' projects that have been necessary because of negative metrics and a need to be distinctive. Miles, we do this all the time, don't we? You know, constantly striving to be better at our practice and driving the music to a new level? I was using my skills as an improviser to this in a business school context, but quickly realised that not everyone could improvise, or indeed, was willing to expend a micro gram of creativity and innovation.

I met with a programme team to brief them about the portfolio refresh exercise and why we drastically needed to take action e.g poor recruitment, NSS and employability stats. I was met with two comments (delivered in an unpleasant manner):

"This (business) programme has been the same for 26 years! Why change it now?"

The second...

"With all due respect, you don't understand higher education in the west of Scotland!"

Miles, I knew I was in trouble here, and I was for a period of that meeting, but do you know what won the majority of colleagues around? It was the fact I was a jazz musician and that resonated with a few people who were keen to hear about my admiration for you, my public works that you have such a profound influence on, and some of the musicians I have had the pleasure to work with. I entered that initial meeting feeling positive and ten minutes in was feeling kind of blue. It's ironic, then, that by the end of the meeting your album - Kind of Blue - would be my saviour, helping me to break down barriers and allow us to become jazz musicians, unleashing the inner creativity from within colleagues who perhaps remained silent at such meetings. Miles, this was the moment that I was putting into practice what I'd been writing about and preaching to my students and businesses... It worked!

I cling onto these little triumphs and thank you and my musical skills for helping me shape and navigate some challenging encounters. It certainly helped, but it didn't eradicate those interesting politics between people, but it has made me

think about our future work, Miles. We really need to think about the workshops and develop them in such a way that we have a toolkit that participants can use to drive cultural change in the organisation. It's all good and well people listening to Pete and I play some nice jazz and draw those creative parallels that people all nod at and agree with. We know we've had success with our workshops and positive change has been driven in some of the organisations we have worked with (take for example York Theatre Royals, Lazenby Brown, The Leadership Foundation for HE and the Higher Education Academy) but how do we teach our participants a crucial skill that they must teach people in their organisation? It's a skill us jazz musicians take for granted and it's listening.

Thanks for reading, I mean listening, Miles. It's been a funny day and my time as Associate Dean is over. I feel like I've failed, but on the other hand, I feel like I have gained invaluable experience and changed my values in a positive way. It's also made me realise that the world of leadership and management needs us jazz musicians, perhaps more than we need them. I think synergy, or harmony could be achievable, but we must make people listen and act differently to achieve organisational goals in an ethical and responsible manner. Let's rethink our workshops!

*As ever,
Noel*

Chapter 6

Breaking Down the Silos - I'm guilty as charged!

Vignette: Tuesday 1 August, 2017

I've spent the past day reading a very interesting publication from the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD). Now, this is a book that I have read before, and it indeed informed some of my strategic decisions re curriculum reform at York St John University (the earlier volume also informed my thinking at Glasgow Caledonian University) and is interesting on a number of levels. I will attempt to overview the ones that resonate with my professional practice and my personal values in this chapter. Since my first publication in 2003, I have championed the idea that marketing pedagogy needs to be more creative, as evidenced by my academic publications, my workshops, and perhaps, most notably, my partnership with Professor Stephen Brown at the 2009 Academy of Marketing Conference – yes, I had the privilege of being part of his keynote address. Now, I am acutely aware that the jazz metaphor is no stranger to management discourse, and I am all too familiar with the literature. BUT, despite the broad range of extant literature pertaining to the jazz metaphor and indeed other art forms being utilized as a lens to examine management issues, it is still indeed horrifying to read in publications such as those from AACSB and EFMD that academics, deans and university administrators highlighting that creativity is a deficit in current business and management curricula. I am cognisant that there are some exceptions, but, generally, I would concur with what I have read and pose the question ... WHY? Indeed, I fear I (particularly in my early career) was very much guilty of supporting – albeit subconsciously – a silo approach to management education. Why did it take a promotion to Associate Dean to see this inherent weakness? Prior to being Associate Dean and not being fully in tune with the reality of the wider issues facing management education, I have had to hop into jazz mode and learn quickly, employing improvisation at every twist and turn. It's been an interesting challenge to say the least, but a major source of material for my public works – particularly my most recent ones.

1. Breaking down the silos

As Associate Dean (Learning, Teaching & Quality) at Glasgow Caledonian University, I led a large change project that involved reviewing and revalidating the business school's portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. This was a significant task that I had to undertake – especially as I was very new to the Associate Dean role and, indeed, having to adapt to the Scottish HE landscape. As I began the curriculum reform project, I quickly

started to engage with a much wider body of knowledge, for now, I was no longer a marketer, I had to understand all of the management discipline and listen to the needs of each cognate area. I found this challenging at first and, as one can imagine, I came up against great resistance from a number of academics who could not see the need, or the point of reforming the curriculum.

But the metrics e.g. NSS scores, graduate employability, KIS data etc. showed in some areas that there was most definitely a need to make some significant changes. The metrics, I must add were all facing the wrong direction, for example, scores for assessment and feedback in the 30-40% zone, graduate employability stats on some courses as low as 20% - bad news indeed. Working closely with colleagues across the business school, I eventually got the majority to understand the need for change. That was, I guess, on hindsight, the easy part. What would become more of a challenge was the next piece of the jigsaw, which was the content of the curricula. My Dean had briefed me to be 'radical' and had opened my mind to a whole new way of thinking about management education. He told me that we had to break down the silos and look at the curricula in a more holistic way.

My Dean was keen to encourage both staff and students to think beyond management discourse and to develop the requisite skills to make sense of the world and their role within it (Colby et al. 2011). Indeed, Colby et al. (2011) wrote a fascinating book – Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education: Liberal Learning for the Profession, which became a big influence on my thinking about management education and was a key part of my armoury to influence change in the curriculum at both Glasgow Caledonian University and York St John University. The following quote from the book is poignant and one I used (and continue to do so in a range of contexts):

'To meet the days of today's increasingly complex context, undergraduate business programmes should help their students develop intellectual perspectives that enable them to understand the role of the field within the larger social world. In keeping with this aim, business programmes should uphold and cultivate among students a sense of professionalism grounded in

loyalty to the mission of business to enhance public prosperity and well-being. To accomplish this, business education must be integrated with liberal learning.'
(Colby et al., 2011:4)

The quote resonates on a number of levels and reflects my professional beliefs in practice. Indeed, the very nature of my public works is the looking at marketing/management discourses via an alternative theoretical lens (jazz). Liberal learning offers students the opportunity to engage with a variety of disciplines to develop knowledge, critical thinking skills and a wider view of the world. At GCU, we offered undergraduate business students the opportunity to study introductory modules to history, sociology, politics etc. A move that was contested by some staff and embraced by others – particularly social sciences colleagues!

In addition, Professor Wilson exposed me to a number of his international networks, such as European Foundation of Management Development (EFMD), Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the International Association for Management Development in Dynamic Societies (CEEMAN). It is these networks that have had a profound influence on my thinking about management education and have helped me to see how my work in the jazz metaphor space fits with the new approaches to thinking about and the delivery of effective management education. First, though, I want to briefly discuss some of the criticisms of management education, which have prompted management educators and networks such as AACSB and EFMD to call for new ways approaches to the curricula in order to secure the future of business schools.

2. Criticisms of Management Education

Since the financial crisis in 2008 there has been considerable interest in the role of business schools and the programmes that they deliver. Indeed, as Locke and Spender (2011) point out, business schools have been charged with having a role to play in the events leading up to the financial crisis, because of

their pronounced emphasis on financial engineering. Another criticism of business schools and management education more generally, is the failure of not emphasizing the need for an ethical and moral compass. Gregg and Stoner (2008) argue that the lack of emphasis on ethics in business school curricula was a likely contributor to some of the epic failures in large companies, for example, ENRON and WorldCom. But prior to the financial crisis business schools and management education more broadly was in the spotlight, as Bennis and O'Toole (2005) point out in their article:

'Business schools are facing intense criticism for failing to impart useful skills, failing to prepare leaders, failing to instill norms of ethical behavior--and even failing to lead graduates to good corporate jobs.' (p.96)

Thomas et al., (2013), argue that business schools are at a turning point in their evolution. The old model of business school that has a traditional and, arguably silo approach to the curriculum and its delivery will continue to come under critical attack if it does not change its outlook and embrace a more holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to the curriculum. Indeed, this appears to be a recurring theme in debates about the currency of business schools and their curricula and is heavily debated in Thomas et al. (2014) in their second instalment of examining management education.

I was struck by a quote in the first chapter that was initially adapted from a news story that appeared in the New York Times in March 2009 and made reference to the decline of in the teaching of humanities. The article strongly argued that 'students exposed to the humanities (such as arts, culture, history, literature and philosophy) are better prepared to develop their capabilities in areas such as moral and ethical reasoning and critical thinking that are growing in importance in society' (Thomas et al., 2014:3). This quote resonates with me on a number of levels, not least the fact that the arts is mentioned here and, of course, for the past fifteen years I have been championing the need for more creative and artistic approaches to teaching (and I'm in silo mode now) strategic marketing. I realise now, following a challenging six years as Associate Dean and through the jazz and creativity workshops I have been conducting with businesses over the years, that there is scope for the arts – specifically jazz –

to permeate all aspects of the management curricula. The above quote has prompted me to reflect deeply on the current state of management education and I have cast my mind back to my time as an undergraduate student.

Vignette: Life as a Final Year Undergraduate Marketing Student

I loved Friday mornings in my final year because it was when my favourite module - Analysis, Decision and Strategy was timetabled. I loved the module largely because it was taught by one of my heroes (later he would be my mentor) Alan Smith. Alan had a natural ability to inspire his learners and actively encouraged us to challenge our assumptions and look beyond the myriad of models and matrices that strategic marketing seemed to be made up of. I recall that prior to my final year, I was inspired and excited about marketing, but I remember, on many occasions, asking myself what was the relevance of what I was learning. A specific example that springs to mind is a session I attended where the focus was on Michael Porter's Five Forces model. I remember questioning in my mind the relevance of this model and whether it had value in the 'real world' of business. I put the latter point to the test when I started talking about the Five Forces model with my manager at B&Q (this was my part-time job). He quickly shut down the conversation and politely, yet firmly, told me that he did not manage from a textbook and that, in his opinion, those models had no real relevance or value in a professional context. Quite shocked and put in my place, I think that was the moment that I really started to realise the limitations of my discipline – especially when some of my peers studying the likes of English and medicine seemed to be much more intellectually stretched than I was.

But Alan in his inspirational and supportive way, introduced me into a broader way of thinking about marketing – to challenge those assumptions and look to other disciplines for inspiration. Indeed, Alan was the person that suggested that I should fuse my passion for jazz and marketing together and make this the focus of my undergraduate dissertation. His words... “make a virtue of the fact you're a musician and bloody well use it to produce a meaningful piece of research.” On reflection now, that was the start of my work in the jazz and marketing space and was the moment I realised some of the limitations of marketing theory and thought in relation to the arts. I guess I can demonstrate now that my undergraduate degree provided a firm foundation for my career and the public works under consideration here.

It is clear to me now that I had internal dissonance regarding my undergraduate experience, yet I was unable to clearly articulate my concerns and, I guess, I had no real need to. After all, my real focus was playing the trumpet and gigging, with the marketing degree a safety blanket to get a 'proper' job if necessary. But as my account above articulates, I was clearly questioning the legitimacy of the discipline, its relevance to me and, ultimately, how it was going to help me in the future

On reflection now, I, in part, counteracted that internal dissonance by looking to music as my 'classical' subject -given the complexity of jazz and the cognitive and physical skills required to play the trumpet. When my peers were talking about their studies (i.e. a literature discussion around the works of Graeme Greene), I felt more comfortable talking about jazz than I did marketing. And jazz would be a comfort blanket in my final year as a marketing undergraduate when I got the chance to specialize and complete a dissertation on a marketing-related topic of my choice. My dissertation was titled '*An investigation into the marketing of jazz in the UK. Could jazz be promoted more effectively and become accessible to a wider audience?*' This was my first attempt to fuse jazz and marketing together, and looking back on it now, I can see that I was beginning to recognise some of limitations of marketing theory and its application in the arts (specifically jazz in this case). Six years later as a Marketing academic, I began to investigate these limitations in more depth in a publication titled: *Jazz: a philosophical dilemma for marketing* (Macaulay and Dennis, 2005) and then subsequently continued with addressing the gaps for marketing the arts by founding the journal – *Arts Marketing: An International Journal (now Arts and the Market)*. I will talk more about this later in this context statement.

I must return to Alan's encouragement to broaden my horizons and challenge assumptions. Alan helped to develop my critical thinking skills at that relatively early stage of my development. Critical thinking is something that I talk about on a regular basis with my students and more recently as Associate Dean with academic colleagues. Stephen Brookfield is a leading scholar in the field of critical thinking and his recent book – *Teaching for Critical Thinking: Tools and Techniques to Help Students Question their Assumptions* – has prompted me to reflect.

In the words of Brookfield (2012) critical thinking is about hunting assumptions and indeed, completing this context statement has prompted me to reflect deeply and think critically about my public works and their fit with my world.

'Assumptions are guides to the truth embedded in our mental outlook. They are the daily rules that frame how we make decisions and take actions.' (P.7)

We conduct our daily lives based on a set of assumptions from the simple (I have a shower in the morning to be hygienic and not project a foul odour to my office buddy), to the complex (if I study an MBA I'll get a promotion and huge pay rise). The latter statement is general in nature and may have once been the case, but as we shall see later in this piece, this is not necessarily still the case. In my strategic position as Associate Dean, involved with key international networks such as AACSB, EFMD, CEEMAN, I have read/heard endless debates about the future of the MBA, the nature of the MBA etc. and it would appear, is not the golden trophy and measure of esteem it once was, yet as I step into my new role, I have been given the 'prestigious' role of developing and leading a new MBA. More on this later, but definitely a moment for me to challenge what Brookfield (2012) refers to as my paradigmatic assumptions.

Reading Brookfield's work around paradigmatic assumptions interests me and has prompted deep a thought process.

'Paradigmatic assumptions are examined critically only after a great deal of resistance to doing this, and it takes a considerable amount of contrary evidence and discomforting experiences to change them. But when they are challenged and changed, the consequences for our lives are explosive.' (P.18)

There are a number of my paradigmatic assumptions that have been challenged that have led to the development of selected public works – academic and, I guess leadership decisions, in my role as Associate Dean. Here they are in no particular chronological order:

1. **As a student** - my vignette above about my experience as a student demonstrated how I was subconsciously attempting to challenge my assumptions, but did not quite have skills, or wider knowledge to take any real action. As Brookfield (2012) points out we often do not recognize paradigmatic assumptions as assumptions- even when they

have been pointed out to us, as my lecturer Alan attempted to do. But his encouragement at that stage of my development was not quite enough for me to take any real radical action to prompt a radical change in my views, although I could argue that I took a small leap in the fact I selected an original dissertation topic that started a thought process of the limitations of marketing theory in the context of the arts. This I guess was the starting point of a deep reflection on marketing theory that was to become the catalyst of me taking action to examine how one body of knowledge can inform another via my first publication – *Jazz and Marketing Planning (2003)*

2. **As a management educator** – my vignette at the top of this section demonstrates how I was guilty of actively supporting a silo approach to management education. Whilst I was acutely aware within that this was not the best approach, I was unwilling to challenge myself to change that paradigm, most likely because of what I perceived as a lack of understanding on the part of some of my colleagues who simply wanted to see where their twenty-credit module would sit. Becoming Associate Dean was when I really started to challenge myself to take action and break down the silo mentality. I would say I partially achieved this at both GCU and YSJ, but as we will see in the next section, I am now in a position where I can make radical changes to an MBA that addresses the criticisms of MBAs and Management Education more generally.

The following section focuses on my new position as Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management & Entrepreneurship – a step back career wise, but a real chance for me to use my creativity to influence the design of a new flagship MBA (and to do more jazz gigs!).

Vignette: Back to the ranks

So, I am back to where it all began, back to my roots as a Senior Lecturer at Teesside University. I've pined for Teesside over the past six years and it feels very good to be back, and to be back doing what I love doing and what I do best – being an academic. And I'm playing more gigs again, so my creativity levels are building up and that is having a very positive on my academic work and life more generally. My leadership journey of the last six years has certainly changed how I view the world and I actually feel much more comfortable in this role than I did previously – namely because I feel I can teach the discipline in a much more authentic way because I have been leading strategic projects and managing people. I feel much better about myself!

I have hit the ground running, though, and have been tasked with writing a new 'radically different' MBA programme that meets the needs of a diverse range of learners. Finally, I have the opportunity to put into practice my ideas that I have been trying to convince others to over the past six years. Will they be received?

Fortuitously, Teesside University has huge plans for investing in a new business school and has recently appointed a new Dean to lead the school to success. On my first day in post (1 September, 2017) I met with my Head of Department, who explained that the vision the new Dean had for the new MBA was far removed from what had gone before and that it was important I understood this and tried to get on the same page. I went away from that meeting and jotted down a few ideas – taking into account my strategic work as Associate Dean and my now very fresh and new outlook on management education and what an MBA should look like.

A few days later, I was invited to meet with the Dean to discuss her vision for the MBA. What transpired at that meeting was that we both had a shared vision and broadly shared the same outlook on management education more generally. I was delighted, motivated and felt very valued following that meeting. After all, I have been given a free reign to be creative, to draw on my experience as an Associate Dean to develop an MBA that addresses a market need and the criticisms of 'traditional' MBAs to date.

It feels liberating to meet someone who shares your vision and it has made me realise that I wasn't talking rubbish when it came to curricula reform at GCU and YSJ – just up against speed bumps and, sometimes, road blocks.

Criticisms of the MBA

The MBA has long been under critical attack by a number of commentators, notably by the likes of Mintzberg, who in his (2004) book, *'Managers not MBAs'* identifies a disconnect between management practice and what is happening in the classroom. He argues that a dominant design for an MBA programme established itself in the 1960s and continues to hold most of this education firmly in its grip (Mintzberg, 2004). Indeed, Mintzberg (cited in Thomas et al,

2014) identifies a number of criticisms of the MBA, which are largely still relevant today.

- MBA programmes train people in the wrong ways with wrong consequences ultimately leading to “corruption of management practice;”
- MBAs are trapped by a dominant design, demonstrating little innovation in pedagogy and not much differentiation in approach;
- MBAs tend to be taught in a silo approach, with little integration and less focus on a multi-disciplinary approach;
- Core belief that MBA graduates do not know how to think and act clearly;
- Creativity, imagination and innovation are rarely taught in MBAs.

(P.28)

Datar, Garvin and Cullen (2010) conducted extensive research into the MBA which identified numerous drivers for rethinking the MBA.

‘The core of our conclusion is that business schools need to do two things: reassess the facts, frameworks, and theories that they teach (the “knowing” component, while at the same time rebalancing their curricula so that more attention is paid to developing skills, capabilities, and techniques that lie at the heart of the practice of management (the “doing” component) and the values, attitudes, and beliefs that form managers’ world views and professional identities (the “being” component).’ (P.456).

So, the evidence would suggest that it is time to rethink our approach to the MBA in line with the changing nature of management education. The above quote highlights things and I wholly concur through my work as Associate Dean at GCU and YSJ. Initiatives such as the Principles for Responsible Management Education have certainly provided a new dimension to our thinking about business curricula and the attendant pedagogical philosophies. The importance of emphasising the role of business in society and the

importance of responsible leadership have led to many signatories of PRME refining their programmes to place pronounced emphasis on sustainability, ethics, CSR and the role business can play in shaping a better world. This, though, has been achieved by embracing a more multi-disciplinary approach and breaking down the traditional silo approach to the curriculum, with creativity and entrepreneurial thought and action at the heart of the pedagogical philosophy.

Chapter 7

Putting the 'Art' Back into Marketing

'The launch of Arts Marketing: An International Journal provides the opportunity to build on existing knowledge of arts marketing and move forward using a range of creative methodologies which mirror those found in arts marketing practice.' (Fillis, 2011:7)

Having recently re-read my esteemed colleague – Professor Ian Fillis' paper that was published in the inaugural issue of *Arts Marketing: An International Journal*, I was taken by the above quote. It suddenly dawned on me the impact that the creation of the journal has had on the marketing community. I do not wish to blow my 'metaphorical' trumpet too much – and I wholly declare that the creation of the journal was very much a **team effort**, but I have to confess that this is a very proud moment for me in my career to date. As I shall highlight later in this chapter, the journal has (and continues to since a rebrand to *Arts and the Market*) bring together an international community of practice of like-minded arts marketing/management scholars who are generating new insights into arts marketing and management discourse. The following vignette tells the story of how it all began.

Vignette: We can doooooo this!!!

Since my first publication in 2003, I subsequently got the bug for research and worked with Michael on a number of papers and projects. We continued to explore the jazz metaphor in strategic marketing – specifically marketing orientation, which resulted in a publication in the *European Journal of Marketing* in 2007. That particular paper took almost three years to write, as we were getting rejected from a number of leading American Marketing journals for not fitting the 'restrictive' editorial boundaries. Indeed, we first targeted the *Journal of Marketing Science* (on the advice of the Assistant Dean (Research)), who was very supportive of the work we were doing and keen we targeted good ranked journals for the then forthcoming Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). Once again, this was naïve on both mine and Michael's part. What were we thinking targeting a journal that published works that were the absolute opposite of what we were doing? There wasn't a multi-quadratic equation in sight in our paper and it simply didn't conform to the neo-positivistic paradigm that was (and

continues) to pervade marketing discourse. I will never forget one of the reviewer's handwritten comment about our script that simply stated... 'the postmodern jazz metaphor is dead!' I recall being angry by this and questioning the role of marketing academia. What was the point of me trying to be creative with my research and examining arts marketing issues, for them simply to be dismissed by conventional marketing journals? I regularly thought about the audience for these inaccessible, esoteric papers that, in my mind then, really didn't add any value in a practical marketing situation. I used to regularly think about what the value of such turgid and egotistical rants about marketing had to the professional marketing community and always drew the conclusion (at that point in my career) that there was no value. To a marketing professional, I felt that some of these papers were meaningless, lacked credibility and brought into question the purpose of marketing academia.

Skipping forward, then, to the 2007 Academy of Marketing conference, held at Royal Holloway University, London. I was presenting an autoethnographic paper about my dual roles as a jazz musician and marketing academic – charting the interconnection of the different communities of practice to which I belong. The paper was well received (by the very small audience of Arts Marketers that attended my presentation) and was shortlisted for best paper in track. Another positive conference!

That evening, a group of Arts Marketers broke away from the conference proceedings and headed to an Italian restaurant for dinner. We talked work most of the evening and ended up sharing our frustrations about the difficulties we had publishing our arts marketing work in mainstream marketing journals and that something needed to change to allow a growing community of arts marketers to have their voices heard and their creative work published. Four bottles of wine later, I declared to the group that we should set up our own journal, to which everyone said – “brilliant idea!” This prompted another bottle of red and much depth of discussion about what the journal's editorial scope could be, who we could approach to take our idea forward and the academics we could target to help us get things off the ground. It was such a memorable and positive moment for us all and was where we developed our strapline... “we can doooooo this!” I agreed to approach Emerald the next day and the rest, as they say, is history. Arts Marketing: An International Journal was officially launched four years after.

As I engage in this deep reflective exercise for this piece, I have made a number of connections that stem back as far my undergraduate studies. You will recall from the chapter that reflected on my role as Associate Dean, where I referred to my undergraduate dissertation. You will remember that it was at this point that I started to discover the limitations of marketing theory and its 'fit' with arts practice. You may recall me desperately trying to make one of marketing's famous models – The 4 Ps (product, price, place and promotion), amongst other areas of strategic marketing theory fit my area of research – *jazz in the UK*. Indeed today, this is an issue I continue to work on in order to generate new knowledge that has both academic and practitioner relevance for the arts,

and of course, management education more broadly. I do feel I am making some progress – not least with the creation of the journal and my attendant publications included as part of this thesis.

In the opening section of this chapter I made reference to one of the drivers for the creation of the journal was to bring together a growing global community of arts marketing academics (beyond marketing to a certain extent).

Art and the Market (formally Arts Marketing: An International Journal)

As the above vignette demonstrates, it took time to develop Arts Marketing: An International Journal, but time that was well invested in the end. The original editorial aim and scope of the journal was:

Arts and the Market (AAM) is dedicated to publishing high-quality and original contemporary research addressing issues related to the intersection of arts and the market and audience research. The journal embraces the growing number of talented scholars working in this increasingly inter-disciplinary and international area. It aims to develop and challenge established practices and orthodoxies in this rapidly emerging field and strongly encourages creativity in the development of theory and practice.

Arts and the Market (AAM) welcomes both theoretically and empirically grounded submissions from across the arts, humanities and social sciences, and is interested in both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research. The journal adopts a broad view of the arts, including all sectors of the arts and creative industries, including visual arts and crafts, museums, performing arts, festivals, music, film, cinema and literature. It aims to embrace the different disciplinary traditions and perspectives that can inform the field, not least Marketing, Psychology, Sociology, Statistics, Museology, Musicology, Audience Studies, Cultural Policy Studies, Business and Management. Thus, the journal facilitates an understanding of the various artistic, cultural, social, sociological, commercial and technological practices and discourses of production, performance, intermediation and consumption, which shape the arts sector and its related market(s)

(Source:<http://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/products/journals/journals.htm?id=aam>)

We were also very keen as an editorial team to actively encourage more creative methodological approaches – such as autoethnography to avoid falling into favouring positivism over other research paradigms. This, in part, was triggered by a conversation I had with a colleague at the 2007 Academy of Marketing conference, where I presented an autoethnographic piece. Whilst the paper was well received by colleagues who attended, I was told off the record

that the paper had been shortlisted for best paper in track, which would have resulted in publication in *The Journal of Marketing Management (JMM)*. Apparently, though, the paper was methodologically ‘controversial’ and deemed too much of a risk to publish in *JMM*. It was that comment that led to the birth of my journal.

Too much too soon?

Whilst I am incredibly proud of being central to the leadership of the journal from conception in 2007 right up until 2016, I often think that I perhaps did this too early in my career. For example, I had no editorial experience; I only had several publications in my armoury and I was arguably an early-career researcher. My feelings about my role in creating and managing the journal are similar to those about learning to improvise in via an unorthodox route. In fact, it mirrors my approach in one sense in the fact that I learned the editorial management process by doing, rather than a plethora of guest editorships and any formal training so to speak. I look back on the whole experience and to be honest, I feel a sense of great achievement and fear at the same time, but in the creation of the journal I actually followed Kenny Werner’s advice about fear that I referred to in chapter six. I did not let fear get in the way of me approaching Emerald that day in 2007; I gave no thought to my level of experience; I was not phased by the level of work that could be involved... I simply wanted to make a difference to arts marketing discourse and I think I did that – albeit entering into the exercise with minimal knowledge. I recall my Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research) at the time describing me as an ‘*Entrepreneurial Academic*’ and praising my efforts.

I feel I approached the creation of this journal in jazz musician mode. First, I responded to that initial idea articulated in the earlier vignette impulsively, largely because of the positive endorsement of my fellow arts marketing peers and had no idea or awareness of any of the attendant risks. I just went for it, just like I do when I improvise. Second, I feel I saw this as an opportunity to resolve an internal dissonance on my part (that began at the stage of my undergraduate studies) and in part provide a solution to – what I perceived –

as injustice that some highly creative research that was not given the opportunity to be showcased and third and – very importantly – to encourage more research into the arts that translated from academic to practice. The latter point is an important one, in that I insisted (with the blessing of colleagues involved) that the practitioner voice must have a place to ensure the journal furthered both academic knowledge and practice. My wish came true, may I add.

Putting my insecurities aside about my level of experience and expertise to lead the development of an academic journal, though, there is no doubt that the creation of the journal was the right thing to do for a number of reasons, not least formalising a disparate international community of practice.

In the inaugural issue (Vol 1 (1)) I think we firmly set out a future-looking landscape for arts marketing research and practice. Indeed, the editorial - Terraforming Arts Marketing, presented an agenda for arts marketing research and provided an open invitation for people to join an ever-increasing number of researchers in the field. The editorial even raised interest outside of marketing research and was actually one of the most downloaded papers in 2011 for Emerald - an achievement in itself and most likely down to word terraforming... yes, we deliberately introduced Sci Fi to Arts Marketing. Science and art are not immiscible!

The inaugural issue also provided a sense check on the state of arts marketing research and presented a review of the evolution and development of arts marketing research (see Fillis, 2011), to mapping the terrain of arts marketing, demonstrating that it is much broader than simply marketing an artistic product (see O'Reilly, 2011).

Both myself and the editorial team were never convinced from the beginning the the title of the journal was the right one. I felt that it narrowed the focus just to marketing and this led to a juxtaposition between the title and the editorial scope. Two years after launch, during a regular catch up with the team at Emerald, we convinced the publisher that a change in title would be key to the

future of the journal and so Arts Marketing: an International Journal became Arts and the Market. O'Reilly (2011) talked about the importance of the relationship between art and the market and introduced us to the broader view of the arts marketing as a discourse about the relationship between arts and the market.

Rebranding the journal, I feel, broke down a silo in an attempt to highlight the interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary nature of arts marketing discourse, whilst also inviting members of other management research communities of practice and outside of the discipline e.g. cultural economics, music, sociology, performance studies etc. to join ours.

The creation of the journal was a significant milestone for my professional practice and cements my identity as a marketing academic (now a reformed management educator, of course!). The journal would not have been possible, though, without the jazz training, nor without the support of my esteemed marketing colleagues ... they have all, in turn, informed (and continue to do so) all aspects of my professional practice. A very heartfelt thanks to them all.

Chapter 8

Back to the Head

Hey, Noel, Man,

*I've been reading your emails with great interest and reflecting some of the stuff you are talking about. First, let me congratulate you on doing something a bit different in the marketing and management education space – using your musical knowledge to provide a new lens to look at strategic marketing management issues. Those cats Gerhardi and Nicolini (2002) seem to write a bit about using alternative discourses as lenses to provide a greater depth of understanding of a particular issue. This is what you have successfully done with your workshops and your earlier publications. I really enjoyed reading **Jazz and Strategic Marketing Planning** (Dennis and Macaulay, 2003) and **Miles Ahead** (Dennis and Macaulay, 2007). I think you experimented a bit with the jazz metaphor and made a good attempt at stretching our understanding of it in a business context. You brought some authenticity to it, using your experience from the bandstand to get your audiences (academic, practitioners and your students) to challenge their assumptions. Man, that dude Stephen Brookfield talks about challenging assumptions in his (2012) book on teaching critical thinking. I know you engaged with that and I can see how your assumptions have been challenged and changed over the course of this DProf. Man, I don't see you as a marketer no more... you have a much wider armoury now and you are a 'reformed' management educator, with a much stronger understanding of jazz.*

You are probably wondering what I mean by a 'reformed' management educator. Well, I think you have, through deep reflection, unpicked a number of aspects of marketing discourse that led to that internal dissonance you have referred to that has been lingering around you since you were a boy studying your undergraduate marketing programme. You couldn't see the relevance of those models back then – I'm specifically thinking about the likes of Philip Kotler... Michael Porter's stuff... you know the Five Forces and the Diamond etc. But, your head was into your music... You were playing your ass off (pretty

badly at times I must add), but the intent was there. Explore intent, man, in more depth... Pete Churchill (1998) wrote an eloquent article about it circa twenty years ago, based on an experience he had in Finland. The lessons in his paper can be transferred into the leadership and management arena. You were just trying to run before you could walk! A familiar story in leadership? I mean did you become an Associate Dean too early in your career? I think in so doing you have reformed yourself and have a much broader understanding of leadership and management. You have better ideas, you have experience from leading to enrich your teaching. You are much more authentic in that sense. You can now make sense of those models by the likes of Porter and see, more than ever, their pros and cons.

But back to my thoughts on you as a marketer and that internal dissonance. I think you were acutely aware (without consciously knowing it!) of the limitations of marketing discourse and I guess we have jazz to thank for that. I can really feel your frustration about marketing theory and its applicability to jazz and the arts more broadly. I've read some of those marketing textbooks and a lot of those god damn awful journal articles that have more numbers in them than Donald Trump's monthly business expense claims! What does this add to our understanding? I ain't read nothin' that inspires me or sharpens my understanding of marketing - particularly in an arts context. Kotler and Levy (1969) dabbled with marketing in the non-profit/arts, but to be honest, it's all a bit too strategic and business like for my liking. People like Kotler and Porter have made and continue to make a significant contribution to strategic marketing and management discourse, but I don't see no real creativity there. You bring the creativity to the table through your work, to play with their ideas. I can tell that you respect these scholars and appreciate the value of their work, but you are cognisant – through your musical experience I guess - and your time growing up in a family business that these theories and models don't necessarily fit easily in the 'real world'. I see how your pedagogical practice has developed over the years and how you have incorporated more experiential methods of learning through live projects that allow your students to challenge and apply some of these theories and models that pervade management discourse. You don't simply lecture and focus on the theories and models and

do case studies that are 10-15 years out of date. You appreciate and actively promote the interdisciplinary and even the multi-disciplinary nature of management education. Good on you!

Now, you kindly hold me up as some kind of marketing guru, and more recently you have labelled me a creative entrepreneur (Dennis and Macaulay, forthcoming). Thanks, but man, I ain't neither of those. I was (will always be) a musician first, but I guess I spotted opportunities and wanted to make a real difference – does that make me an entrepreneur? I mean, I couldn't see me taking a concept like kind of Blue onto one of those god damn awful shows like Dragon's Den. Man, I created and let the market decide whether they (a) liked it and (b) consumed it. I broke every rule of marketing... You know, those guys like Narver and Slater (1990), Kholi and Jaworski (1991 and 1993) who were writing about the importance of marketing orientation, putting the customer first etc. That didn't cross my mind... You know I was renowned for turning my back on audiences and often treating them with somewhat disdain (they still wanted more!). Now, I ain't proud of that stuff, but I reiterate my point that, some of this theoretical 'marketing' stuff does not apply in an arts context like it might in the world or retail or petrochemicals. You identified this early on and thank god you set about doing something about it with some of your works – specifically – Dennis and Macaulay (2008 and 2010), Macaulay and Dennis (2006), Oakes, Dennis and Oakes (2013) and, of course, the creation of the journal. In all of those publications, you challenge marketing discourse and its fit with aesthetic products such as jazz, and you also challenge the arts to embrace marketing and commerce. I love how you think of art and commerce as a parallax. You assisted your heroes (those guys, Holbrook, Brown) put the 'art' back into marketing, with the inspiration and help of your esteemed friends! Yea, you know who I'm talkin' about – those cats – Professor Ian Fillis, Professor Michael Macaulay, Professor Stephen Brown, Professor Morris Holbrook (I love his playing, man), Dr Gretchen Larsen, Dr Finola Kerrigan and the Sultan... Dr Daragh O'Reilly. You created that journal, man, which was damn great idea and gave you all a platform to challenge orthodoxy in the marketing 'academic' 'publishing' game. Man, they were as much (if not more) of an influence on your professional development than I ever was/will be.

Early in your academic career, you quickly identified the deficit in artistic and creative aspects of marketing discourse. That first Academy of Marketing Conference back in 2002, where you delivered your first ever conference paper titled – ‘Jazz’ was an eye opener for you. I think you were overwhelmed by some of the sessions you attended and the papers you read. Practically all were positivistic in their approach and, at that time, appeared to be largely focussed on relationship marketing. Your conceptual paper highlighting some marketing trends in the UK seemed ‘wishy washy’ in comparison. Indeed, man, the attendance at your session was low and to be fair, your paper was pretty pants! But, it was the introduction to the academic game and you learned so much from that experience that gave you a clear focus on what to do next. You also quickly identified the players who were striving for a similar path in their work – you know those cats I mentioned above and, of course, your great friend and colleague Dr Michael Macaulay. His influence and support of your development as an academic has led you to where you are today. You are a true partnership and I need to be reading more of your stuff going forward.

So, what I’ve absorbed observing you as a marketing academic is that you have boarded the ‘post-modern’ plane – well you and MJ (I like the Mickey’s code name). I think you were in the departure lounge back in the early days when you were rejecting a somewhat one-dimensional discourse being presented to you, but you quickly gravitated towards some internationally acclaimed marketing scholars, who shared (and to be fair) influenced your ‘creative’ beliefs about marketing discourse. You made reference to Professor Holbrook earlier, and I know how much he has had a profound impact on you – a genius and wonderful musician. His work in the jazz space is excellent – that fanatic consumption paper, Holbrook (1987); his essays on consumption (Holbrook 1995); his contribution to the art vs. commerce debate (Holbrook and Bradshaw, 2005) and, more recently, his monograph on the jazz metaphor, Holbrook (2008). I’m so glad you both connected and I hope you can both hook up in NYC to do something to inform your future works.

The application of the jazz metaphor is 'embryonic' in my view and you need to (with others) tease it out, stretch and test it! Start with the Big Band and go from there. You seem to linger on my work post the big band era and I fear you are missing a part of jazz history that would add weight to your current work. Your jazz/reader model still has credibility, but you need to develop it more in the context of the various genres of jazz and draw parallels with leadership and management issues. Why don't you map out the genres and analyse the musical elements and then assess applicability to leadership and management?

*And another thing, man, you gotta try and refine those workshops a bit more... you know, in terms of follow up with the people who attend them and, of course, your students! It's all good and well you and that monster of a musician (Pete Churchill) playing killin' jazz and talking about the parallels of business and jazz, but, man, you need to engineer a way to make sure that your ideas around improvisation in a strategic context are translated and implemented. You talk about the importance of individual and organisational agility, man, in your works and more recently in your new MBA. Me/you are lucky that we are agile by nature, given our jazz background, but some of those motherf***ers in leadership positions in businesses across the land are not so fortunate. I know you have had experience of this in your role as Associate Dean and it, at times, brought out the worst in you. You lost your creativity for a time and that was sad to witness – but jazz got you through. It ain't easy, man, but as a 'reformed' management educator you gotta try and influence change in this space and make sure the theory is put into practice –if indeed it can be. The philosophy of your new MBA is a start (along with your papers and workshops, of course) where you expose students to Entrepreneurial Leadership, you focus on leading yourself before you can lead others, you essentially take an individual and get them to dissect their professional practice. The management theory and models are there, but the focus is on putting knowledge into action. You've got more chance of making a difference with this approach and so have your students who, all being well, can hone their skills and develop those they lead to be agile in their approach, just like us! You are developing the future generation, man. Just like I developed the likes of Herbie Hancock, Tony*

Williams, Bill Evans, Wayne Shorter etc. I shared my vision and nurtured their talent and they flew the nest and did their thing, innovating in jazz and developing and nurturing new talent. This stuff ain't rocket science, but some of your colleagues in management education sure turn common sense into it rocket science (well, they try to!!!) Keep reading Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey's work. I know how inspired you are by one of their latest books that talks about Deliberately Developmental Organisations (Kegan and Lahey, 2016). I wonder why? Yea, because jazz groups are DDOs by their very nature! I'll be watching your work in this space with interest, man, so no pressure!

Just before I conclude, I want to say a couple of things about your role as Associate Dean and Acting Dean. Man, I know how challenging you found that role at times – particularly trying to drive change at both Glasgow and York. You were against some tough people and a union system (particularly at Glasgow) that put up defence barriers at every opportunity. You persisted, though, and drew upon your skills as a jazz musician to be as democratic and fair as you could be (as much as I find Wynton Marsalis annoying, I do agree with his stance that the art of 'swinging/improvisation' is a democratic process (Marsalis and Ward, 2008)). You didn't dictate, you empowered people to make changes to their programmes, by listening to their ideas and concerns.

Man, I always remember that encounter with the historians at GCU and their resistance to employability modules in the curricula. I recall you turning the conversation to jazz and how you feel your employability skills come largely from your musical training – you know you talked about the transferable skills. A light bulb moment for the historians... they did the same exercise with their discipline and in the moment. Had it not been for your music in that particular situation, you would have not had the buy in and the change wouldn't have happened. That group like so many of the people you have led had a degree of what Kegan and Laskow (2009) refer to as immunity to change. Man, you got a lot of individual beliefs that come together as a corporate mindset that makes the task of leading change in any organisation almost impossible. Take the historians, the immunity to the change came from one individual (let's refer to them as Victoria) who had strong influence on the rest of the group. They had

a real negative perception of management education, the nature of it and the research. To them, you were just another manager from the management discipline trying to effect change in a classical subject you know nothing about. But Victoria's behaviour positively changed when you talked about your role as a jazz musician... that cat's respect for you grew in 30 seconds and so did the rest of the group's – man - Henry thought it was his birthday when she embraced your idea (he was a big fan of me, of course!). Poor Victoria admitted she was worried about the word employability and teaching it, as she knew nothing about business. You unpicked it, flipped it on its head, and highlighted how aspects of history could inform employability in the business curricula. Funny how she became your close ally in the portfolio review exercise as you pushed for a more liberal arts approach and was a key champion for employability across the School – business included! Nice work you crazy fish... Haaaaaah!

So, in conclusion, you have just used me as an example for the past fifteen years to shed light on common strategic marketing/general leadership and management issues – as Gherardi and Nicolini (2002) would say, I was your alternative lens to show how one body of knowledge can inform another. You are using me and jazz more broadly to encourage your students, workshop participants, your peers etc. to develop their critical thinking skills, by challenging their paradigmatic assumptions (Brookfield, 2012). I end this with a piece of advice, man. Look beyond me and my work and broaden your examples to add more depth to your work. We've already mentioned the big band era, with the likes of Duke Ellington and Count Basie offering wonderful insights into leadership and management. You ain't talked much about John Coltrane – an innovator and one off who could offer some amazing insights into teaching innovation and creativity. And what about the more free-spirited people like Eric Dolphy who contributed to the free jazz movement? There's lessons in innovation and entrepreneurial thinking there, man. You could even explore the east coast vs. the west coast movement in jazz. You know, Chet Baker, Gerry Mulligan, Stan Getz, Dave Brubeck etc. in the west developing a particular approach and sound and me, Charlie Parker, Coltrane to name a few doing our stuff in the east. Man, we were in competition to a certain extent,

driven, in part, by the challenging cultural practices in the US. But the lessons for business are in abundance there – competition, culture, innovation, branding etc. etc...

I hope this helps with your queries, man. Keep working on getting your work together, musically and academically. Remember, my old saying... “It's not about standing still and becoming safe. If anybody wants to keep creating they have to be about change.” Keep changin' man, musically and academically, and keep changing those you come into contact with!

Now don't write to me again!

Miles Davis

August 2018

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Totality of my Public Works

Date	Title	Publication Title
2015	Dennis, N. <i>The Ubiquitous Jazz Metaphor: Thoughts from a Jazz Musician and Management Educator</i>	Marketing intelligence and Planning, Vo.33, (7), pp. 966-971
2014	Oakes, Steve , Brownlie, Douglas and Dennis, Noel . <i>Ubiquitous Music: A Summary and Future Research Agenda.</i> (2014)	Marketing Theory, 14 (2). pp. 141-145.
2013	Oakes, S, Dennis, N and Oakes, H (2013), 'Web-Based Forums and Metaphysical Branding',	<i>Journal of Marketing Management</i> , Vol. 29., 5/6, p. 607-624
2011	Brownlie, D, Dennis, N and Oakes, S, (2011), 'Aesthetics' Live at RHUL! On the Work of Aesthetics	Producing the Listening Community, <i>European Advances in Consumer Research</i> , Vol 9.
2011	Dennis, N, Larsen, G and Macaulay, M, (2011), 'Terraforming Arts Marketing'	<i>Arts Marketing an International Journal</i> , Vol. 1, n. 1
2011	Kerrigan, F and Dennis, F (2011), 'The Secret Jazz Fan: A Tale of Sublimation Featuring Film and Music'	<i>Arts Marketing an International Journal</i> , Vol. 1, no.1

2010	Dennis, N and Macaulay, M, (2010), 'Musings from Miles: what Miles Davis can tell us about music and marketing'	<i>Arts Marketing: a Fresh Approach</i> , London, Routledge
2008	Macaulay, M and Dennis, N, (2008) 'The parallax of art and commerce: UK jazz musicians on marketing'	Jazz Research Journal, Vol.1 n.2, pp 225-238
2007	Dennis, N and Macaulay, M, (2007) 'Miles Ahead – using jazz to investigate improvisation and market orientation	<i>European Journal of Marketing</i> , Vol. 41, No.5/6, pp 608-623
2006	Macaulay, M and Dennis, N (2006) 'Jazz – a philosophical problem for marketing?'	<i>The Marketing Review</i> , Vol. 6, n.2, pp137-149
2003	Dennis, N and Macaulay, M, (2003), 'Jazz and marketing planning'	<i>Journal of Strategic Marketing</i> , vol. 11, n. 3, pp177-185
2002	Dennis, N and Smith, A, (2002), 'Here's a bit of marketing for you son' (Case Study)	Brassington & Pettitt (2002), <i>Principles of Marketing</i> , (Prentice Hall, London)

Table 2: Conference Papers

Date	Title	Conference	Comments
2012	2012 - 'Web-Based Forums and Metaphysical Branding'	Academy of Marketing Conference. University of Southampton.	Standard conference paper and presentation

2012	2012 - "I Got Rhythm: Celebrating the Life and Work of George Gershwin.	Academy of Marketing Conference. University of Southampton.	This was a performance-based session https://www.academyofmarketing.org/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=598&alias=29-special-sessions-programme-v4&category_slug=conference&lang=en&view=download
2011	2011 – 'Miles Davis and Kind of Blue: A Marketing and Musical Icon'	Academy of Marketing Conference. University of Liverpool.	Working paper, plus performance-based element
2010	2010 – 'Miles Davis: Artist, Marketer, Consumer Researcher'?	European Association of Consumer Research Conference, Royal Holloway University. London	Short paper, delivered via a performance
2009	2009 – 'We Gotta get Out of this Place'.	Academy of Marketing Conference, with Professor Stephen Brown. Leeds Metropolitan University. <i>Keynote address</i>	Keynote address with internationally acclaimed Professor of Marketing – Stephen Brown
2009	2009 - 'The arts/market couplet: constructing jazz as art and commodity'	Academy of Marketing Conference. Leeds Metropolitan University.	Standard conference paper
2009	2009 - 'Film as the Scaffold for Jazz'	AIMAC conference. Dallas.	Standard conference paper
2007	2007-'Milestones: 'an auto-ethnographic account of jazz community constellations'	Academy of Marketing Conference. Royal Holloway University	Standard conference paper that used an auto-ethnographic approach

2006	2006 - 'Marketing and jazz- the views of leading jazz musicians'	Academy of Marketing Conference, Middlesex University	Standard conference paper
2005	2005 - 'Jazz, a philosophical dilemma for marketing?'	Academy of Marketing conference, Dublin Institute of Technology	Standard conference paper
2003	Jazz and Strategic Marketing Planning	Academy of Marketing conference, University of Aston (Awarded prize for best paper in track)	Competitive paper
2002	2002 - 'Jazz'	Academy of Marketing Conference, University of Nottingham	First ever conference paper – working version

Table 3: Selected Musical Performances / Recordings

Date	Output	Details	Link
	Noel Dennis Trio		
April 2016		Recital at Lit and Phil, Newcastle upon Tyne	http://lance-bebospokenhere.blogspot.co.uk/2016/04/noel-dennis-trio-lit-phil-april-22.html
	Noel Dennis Quintet		
January 2012	Live performance	Play the music and tell the story of Miles Davis	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIKMIBGrMnI https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZJ1ki0t2_Y https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQMWbnEJzCc
September 2014	Live performance	Play the music and tell the story of Tom Harrell	http://lance-bebospokenhere.blogspot.co.uk/2014/09/noel-dennis-plays-music-of-tom-harrell.html

July 2007	Live performance	Performance for jazz trumpet player Wynton Marsallis's after show party. Images included show members of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra accompanying Noel Dennis	See Appendix 2 for some sample images and the USB – Noel DProf Pictures (Wynton Marsalis, 2007)
	Voice of the North Jazz Orchestra		
April 2007	Live performance	Features soloist playing the music of Bob Mintzer (directed by Bob Mintzer)	See appendix 2 for some sample images and the USB - Noel DProf Pictures (VoTN Bob Mintzer)
November 2005	Recording	VoTN Play the music of John Warren (featured solo on two tracks)	USB DProf Music Tracks and Albums (Voice of the North 2005 album)
	Zoe Gilby		
August 2015	Live performance	Guest soloist	http://lance-bebospokenhere.blogspot.co.uk/2015/08/zoe-gilby-trio-with-noel-dennis-jazz_15.html
August 2013	Recording	Twelve stories – featured soloist on four tracks	http://lance-bebospokenhere.blogspot.co.uk/2013/11/cd-review-zoe-gilby-twelve-stories.html www.soundcloud.com/zoe-gilby

August 2010	Recording	<i>Looking Glass</i> - featured soloist on four tracks	http://lance-bebopspokenhere.blogspot.co.uk/2010/08/cd-review-looking-glass-zoe-gilby.html
March 2011	live performance	Sample video of one of the tracks from the live performance at Gateshead International Jazz festival	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-pjjFr3-WM
			https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQMWbnEJzCc
	Noel Dennis Guest Soloist		
March 2016	Pocket Orchestra	Guest performance with local jazz group	USB - DProf Music Tracks and Albums (Pocket Orchestra)
November 2015	Pocket Orchestra	Guest performance with local jazz group	USB - DProf Music Tracks and Albums (Pocket Orchestra)

Compositions

For the past 14 years I have been working alongside leading composer and music producer – Bob Bradley. During this time, I have co-composed and performed on excess of 60 tracks that have been produced for library music companies such as Audio Network and Universal Music (for examples visit http://www.audionetwork.com/production-music/composer/noel-dennis_274.aspx). These public works are linked to my research on improvisation, but crucially my approach to composing and improvisation is informed by my knowledge of marketing – principally the role of music in advertising, its impact on the brain and how it influences consumer behaviour. Notably, one of my tracks titled Bop was used for the 2010 Panasonic Lumix TV advertising campaign.

Selected Compositions

‘Magazine’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDITR1R88KI>

‘Cool Wallpaper’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8aiKcTYczc>

‘Northern Soul’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcGFQoEBy70>

‘Architecture’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVqLEK4ZxWk>

Music in the Community

- *Band of '78*

Since my VI Form College days, I have been involved with music in the community – mainly being a mentor in a youth band (Band of '78) and in the very early years – mentoring in primary schools. The Band of '78 (formerly the Eston Concert Band) was led by my late father up until his passing in 2007. I was a member of the band from 1989 when I was invited to play 3rd trumpet. I progressed through the ranks and in my early teens I was lead trumpet player

and soloist. Through University and up until 2008, I took a leadership role and co-led the band with my father – mentoring the young musicians, performing various concerts – including ten performances in Disney Land Paris. Links to press coverage around my father’s work and the final concert that I directed are included below.

<http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/local-news/band-78-perform-final-concert-3729867>

<http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/local-news/inspirational-kel-loses-bravefight-3745784>

I make reference to my work with the band, as it demonstrates my versatility as a musician and educator. There is no doubt in my mind that the band played a central role on my development as a musician, but it also helped shape my practice as a teacher.

- *Mass Choir Project with Pete Churchill*

My father’s work as a music educator was inspirational in so many ways. In his role as Music Coordinator for the Eston Education Action Zone, he made music inclusive to all, through mass samba groups to a mass choir project involving internationally renowned musician – Pete Churchill. I had involvement in the latter project and have included it as a public work. Included is the final performance of the singing project, where 300 primary school students performed Pete Churchill’s oratorio – Babel. I was privileged to be featured soloist on this most memorable and emotional concert. Press coverage can be accessed via the link below.

<http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/local-news/teesside-schools-unite-for-musical-3730175>

- *Milestones Community Jazz Project*

From 2005 up until 2011, I was involved in a community jazz project. My quintet led a series of weekly jazz workshops where aspiring jazz musicians of all abilities and ages would effectively jam with us. We would work with a core group of the musicians each year, teaching them aspects of musical harmony, the mechanics of improvisation, the dynamics of the jazz group and repertoire that spanned the various genres of jazz. The sessions were incredibly rewarding for my band and I and – most importantly the participants. A number of the participants over the years have become professional musicians and music educators.

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