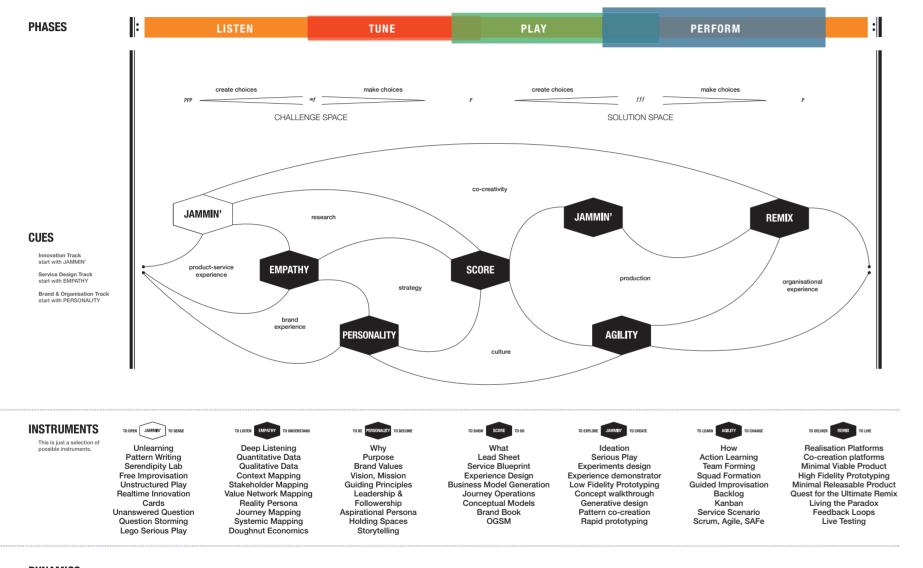


MUSIC THINKING FRAMEWORK

Download the PDF from musicthinking.com

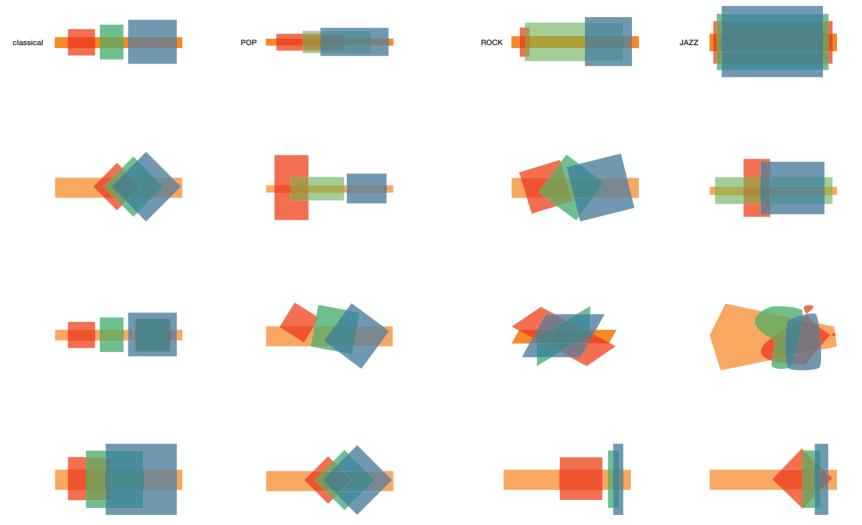


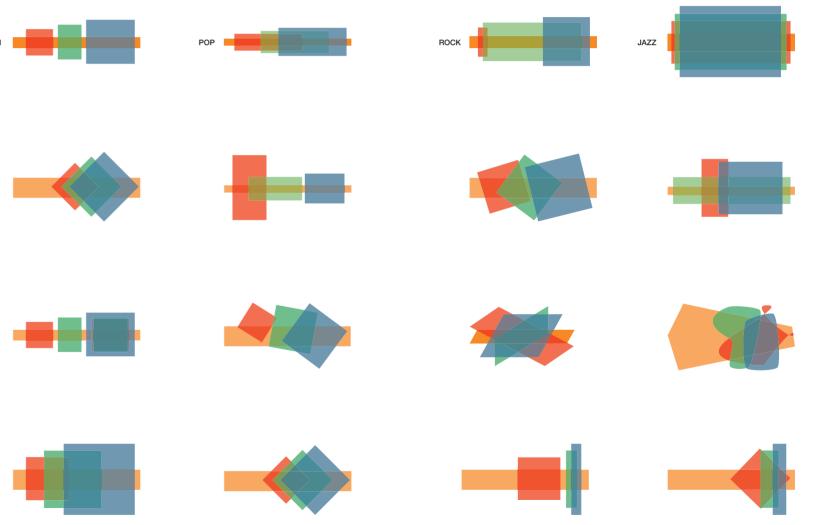


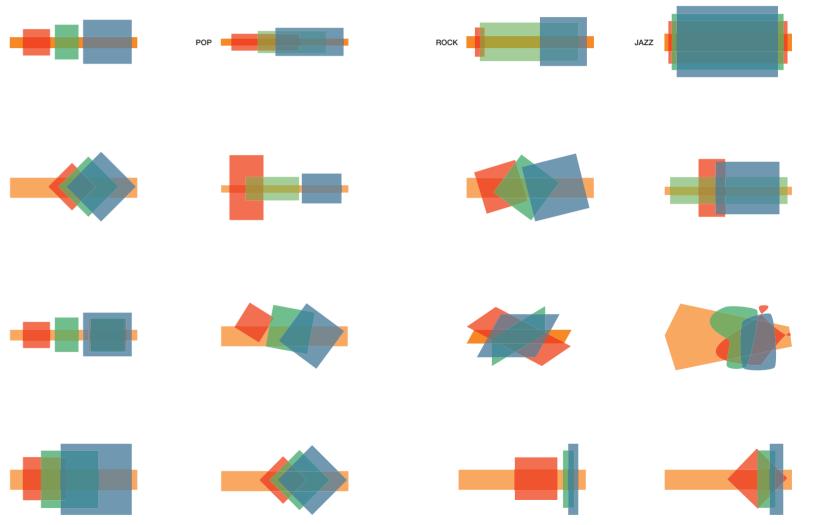
MUSIC THINKING DYNAMICS

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The way the cues connect to the instruments will affect the dynamics of the phases. That will depend on how long they last, on their volume, the amount of overlap, and the iteration speed. And because every leader, team, organisation, programme, project, or operation is different, we are likely to experience many different dynamics. Here are some variations of the endless







possibilities of overlapping phases. Because we don't have a name for the different dynamics in business, we draw an analogy with musical genre styles such as classical music, rock, pop, and jazz. Feel free to give any dynamic a genre style of your own listening.

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THE POWER OF MUSIC THINKING

LISTEN, TUNE, PLAY, AND PERFORM

HOW MUSICAL ANALOGIES HELP US TO CO-CREATE A SOUND BUSINESS

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TO MY GIRL GROUP

PROLOGUE

LIVING IN A SOUND BUSINESS

I grew up in an entrepreneurial household; my parents had a joinery with more than 50 employees. The workshop was just 100 meters from our family house, which was also the drawing office and showroom. Family and business affairs were always mixed, especially at the lunch table, where three generations would discuss the daily business of school, work, and what happened in the world.

Our workshop had three entries. On the left side was the entrance to the foreman's office – this was the door my father (entrepreneur, creative, innovative) often used when he took clients for a tour of the workplace. My mother (accounting, finance and people) entered the building through the right door to chat with the employees or bring them a fresh *Brezel* when they had to work overtime. The middle door was open most of the time; through here, materials were brought into the joinery, and you could hear the sound of joinery machines coming from the workplace.

There were high-pitched, short sounds from circular saw machines, and a fascinating deep drone from a big wood planer — a machine to bring the wood to the right thickness. The sounds of the woodworking machines mixed with birdsong and other sounds of labour. This was the soundscape that impacted me when I was a kid. Years later, when I started my working life there, I got to experience the joinery business from many different perspectives, and I always used the middle door.

Later, when I played in several bands and studied musicology, I found the same patterns: listening, seeing, and sensing from different perspectives at the same time. A holistic view always incorporates many perspectives. As a creative lead, service designer, and management consultant in many companies – from start-up and governmental organisation to multinational – I am always recognising patterns and different viewpoints and relating them to the whole.

So, in retrospect the three doors, the many perspectives of an organisation, and the diverse roles, personalities, business styles, and music genres I have come to know stood at the cradle of Music Thinking: connecting different views in meaningful collaboration for a sound business.

Christof Zürn



I wrote this book for you, the leader who knows that followers can be leaders and leaders become followers.

and for:

the **entrepreneur** in need to connect and sync all the different approaches and activities in business;

the **service designer** who is making innovative design sprints but sees how the one benefiting the people most does not make it to implementation;

the **expert** looking for meaningful collaboration while working with various departments and several systems;

the **brand manager** who feels that the brand experience should be the same as the customer experience and the employee experience;

the **change agent** who is struggling with all the different signals trying to get the change message across;

the **music lover** who wants to solve wicked problems.

Have a look at the Music Thinking Framework on the inside of the front cover. This is the essence of the book in one picture. You can fold it out and use it while reading.

The Music Thinking Framework is a creative invitation to think from diverse perspectives simultaneously and get inspired to work in meaningful collaborations above silos. It helps you to integrate methods and mindsets like Agile, Design Thinking and Service Design with Branding and Organisational Change. It aids in rethinking your business, product, service, or organisation with the guidance of interconnected perspectives and dynamic phases inspired by the sheer endless possibilities of music in the broadest sense.

This book is in black and white. Please colour it with your personal experiences and thoughts.

This icon indicates an exercise

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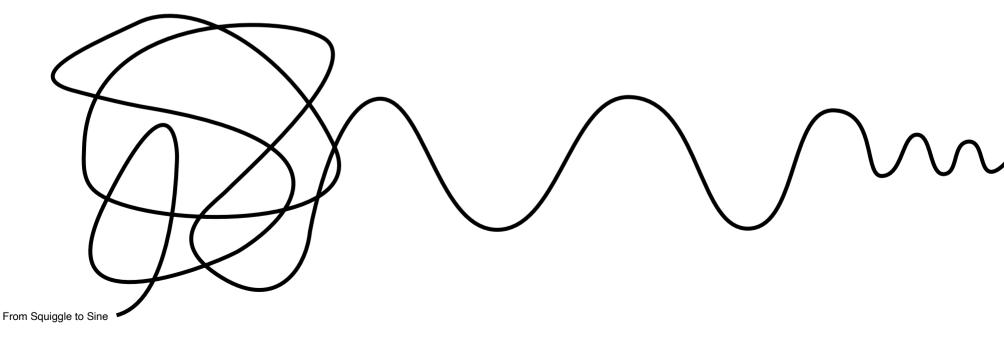
OVERTURE

FROM SQUIGGLE TO SINE

Let's rock this! Are we in sync? I noticed a pattern. Let's jam about this. Let's pull all the plugs. What is the tone of voice? We should orchestrate this. **Does this resonate with you?** Let's make a remix of all this. But what is the right cadence? We are in the Gig Economy now. We have to improvise a solution. Have you ever noticed that when people work together, they often use expressions like 'Let's rock this!' 'Are we in sync?' 'I've noticed a pattern.' 'Let's jam about this.' 'We need to improvise a solution.' 'What is the tone of voice?' 'We should orchestrate this.' 'We have to find the right rhythm.' 'Let's pull all the plugs.' 'Let's make a remix of all this.' 'I hope this will resonate with our customers.'

The pattern behind these expressions is that they all have a music context, whether the person using it is aware of it or not. What if we were to dig a little deeper into what is behind these concepts and the rich repository of meanings, ideas, and inspirations? Music – like business – can be international and local and it can affect you on an individual as well as on a group level. What possible analogies are there between what happens in music and what happens in business?

This book is about recognising a pattern in one system and realising it in another system to create meaningful collaborations. To do this, I have developed a flexible framework that incorporates all the ingredients that come into play when connecting the analogies between music and business.



At first, this might feel chaotic, but when you just start and listen deeply you will start to recognise structures, pulse, beat, rhythm, cadence, and patterns that inspire you to new perspectives of doing.

Finding a new direction from the chaos, like a sine wave emerging from the noise, is a musical and transformative way out of the disorder.

And because simplicity and complexity are best friends, I will first show you the complexity of the model and then take you by the hand to make your own start in waltzing with complexity and starting to find the right cue, rhythm, and instrument for your endeavour. In short, this is how you get from a **squiggle to sine**. The book consists of five acts and a backstage chapter with soundbites, playlists, and a kind of glossary.

Act I The Universal Power of Music states that music can be more than just a stimulant or the personal experience of a musical taste. We dive into the ingredients of music in the pattern repository, we look at how we listen to music and what analogies there are with business. We learn that every musician is doing four things at the same time. Listening, tuning, playing, and performing. In the Music Thinking Framework I call these the 'four phases'.

Act II A Framework Based on Musical Principles

explains all elements of the Music Thinking Framework you'll find on the inside of the front flap – step by step. Then I will introduce you to the Unanswered Question template that can be downloaded from musicthinking.com. Act II concludes with the suggestion to read this book with a certain perspective, either individually or from a team or organisational perspective.

Act III Take the Cue Train introduces the six cues: JAMMIN', EMPATHY, PERSONALITY, SCORE, AGILITY, and REMIX. These are central directions or focus points. We learn about the central questions that are connected to the cues and the fact that all cues have two sides: a leading and a following side. Following this, we'll dive deeper into every cue in seven chapters. Because everything is connected, I invite you to find your own way and flip from cue to cue in the way you find most appealing. All cues connect in a system and make sense when you understand all of them.

Act IV Let's Play Together uses the knowledge from the previous chapter. We'll see how the cues work together and how they can form triangles with names like co-creativity, strategy, research, production, and three perspectives on experience: service experience, brand experience, and organisational experience.

Because in the 21st century it is hard to differentiate between service and product, I use the word 'service' throughout the book with the idea that it is also a product.

Act V Every Business is Dynamic introduces the extra dimension of dynamics and how we experience the phases – listening, tuning, playing, and performing – differently. The way the cues and instruments work together depend on circumstances related to time and simultaneousness. This will affect the overall practical experience. These dynamics find their analogy between a musical genre style and styles of business.

The *Backstage* chapter dives deeper into transformative techniques in using analogies and finding patterns. We also find examples of the AND-musician, people who are experts in one field and also musicians who have the power to use this duet as an analogy – deliberately or unconsciously.

You are encouraged to make your own connections, analogies, and conclusions based on who you are and how you listen – to music, to yourself, your family, the society you live in, nature, your team, and your business.

While many books present a diverse array of examples and studies that might be interesting but not applicable for your purposes, I have taken the opposite approach. I focus on the essence and the analogy of what music – and therefore Music Thinking – can offer.

On certain pages you will find links to the Music Thinking website with cases, as well as more materials to explore and download.

ACT I

THE UNIVERSAL POWER OF MUSIC

What do Lady Gaga, David Guetta, Beyoncé, Drake, Farinelli, Ed Sheeran, Peter Brötzmann, Mozart, Dolly Parton, Djalu Gurruwiwi, Patti Smith, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Eminem, Ravi Shankar, Leonard Bernstein, The Beatles, Fairuz, Queen, Miles Davis, Liu Fang, Metallica, the New York Philharmonic, the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain, and Karlheinz Stockhausen have in common? They all move people with their music.

Although they are from different times, geographies, and musical genres and practices, all of them have their own special creativity, personality, performance, way of working, and audience. And there are many more examples – examples that might resonate with you.

The power of music lies in its ability to speak to all aspects of the human being – the animal, the emotional, the intellectual, and the spiritual. Music teaches us, in short, that everything is connected. Daniel Barenboim

Music can change your mood, give you personal relief, intellectual pleasure, give you a sensation of joy, a feeling of empowerment, a feeling of being safe, a sense of belonging, and much more. But music can be more than just the experience of a personal musical taste. There are many books that relate music to life. In his novel 'The Glass Bead Game', Hermann Hesse combines music with the ancient I Ching, meditation techniques, and western mathematics – all in a utopian 25th-century setting. At the start of the novel, Hesse describes an ancient Chinese story that draws the relation between music and the state of a country.

Therefore, the music of a well-ordered age is calm and cheerful, and so is its government. The music of a restive age is excited and fierce, and its government is perverted. The music of a decaying state is sentimental and sad, and its government is imperilled. Hermann Hesse

There are many research papers that have found interesting facts about how music affects us. For example, what listening to and playing music does in our brain, what our musical taste says about our personality, and how musicians work together in a follower-leader constellation.

To move people is the essence of organisations. Music in the broadest sense moves people. So, how might we learn from this big field of possibilities to make our business better? If you see a pattern in one system, it is easy to see it in another system. Music Thinking principle

What do we hear and how do we listen?

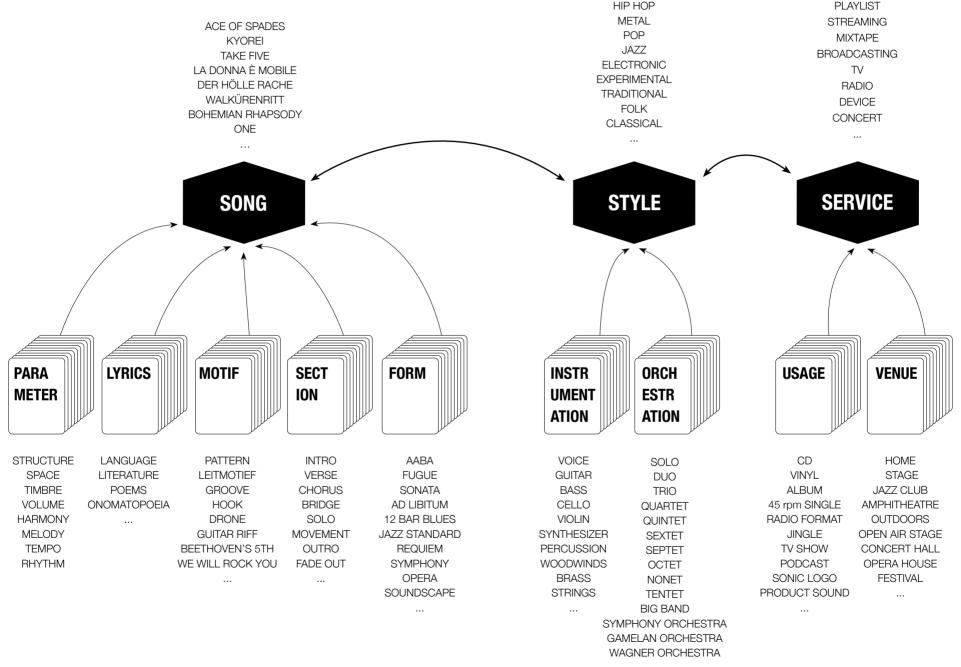
When hearing a song, some people get up and start dancing. Others are attracted to the melody and sing along. And some people lean back, put on their headphones, and enjoy the quality of the sound or try to understand the structure of the composition. So how we listen and what we take from the music depends on a variety of dimensions.

In its essence, music consists of sound characteristics. Think about motives and parameters like rhythm, tempo, melody, harmony, volume, texture, dynamics, form, sound, timbre, or spatial experiences.

When these characteristics are combined and repeated, we can recognise patterns. We hear them in songs with particular arrangements, orchestrations, and different styles.

But how we listen to music is also essential. There is a big difference between listening to a song on the car radio with your friends on a holiday trip or listening alone with headphones to a vinyl record. We experience the songs and styles in services like records, radio, playlists, smartphones, and concerts at festivals or clubs.

PATTERN REPOSITORY



Although these elements define the music, we don't hear them one by one; we listen to the whole mix of ingredients and connect them to our personal story and context – like the first time we heard a song, the identification with the lyrics, a sentiment, celebration, state of mind, or a memorable moment.

Those who wish to sing, always find a song. Swedish proverb



Let's try to find analogies between music and your business. Have a look at the Pattern Repository graphic and think about the following questions:

What are the parameters of your endeavour? What are the instruments you use? How can we hear them in your final product? What is your song, your style, your service? What is your story? What connects your business to your audience? What are your patterns of success?

Listen & tune & play & perform

As a musician, you listen, tune, play, and perform every day.

First, to get input you sense and listen deeply; then you tune in and make meaning out of the inputs you have gathered. You play while exploring possibilities to perform on stage. While you are on stage, you listen to your fellow musicians, and you tune in to what they play. You explore, learn, and sync instantly. You are not just playing; you are performing in front of an audience that is listening to you. And here we come full circle: you are listening and tuning, and the audience is doing the same.

These four phases overlap differently depending on the genre – be it hip hop, classical music, opera, jazz, rock, pop, or dance. Classical music seems more like a step-bystep process; it starts with writing the composition, then we have the rehearsal, and eventually the performance. In jazz, everything is happening simultaneously: listening, instant composing, tuning in to the new material and playing with it while performing live on stage. During these phases, musicians give each other signs to co-create inside the given timeframe. These small cues

are interconnected to an array of different instruments and together they build a living system.

But this living system does not only exist on stage during a concert. There are so many more people involved in a music experience; think about what happens before the performance and after, what has to be done to let everyone perform in time and how to keep the audience happy and safe?

Because music – like business – is highly involved with people, technology, and overlapping systems, there are many analogies we can draw inspiration from and apply to our daily life. The flexible and dynamic phases, the ongoing iterations with recurring moments of high performance have their parallel in the business world. It is worth looking at the universal patterns, principles, and relations in music and to see how we can recognise them in a business context.

For example, listening can consist of all data you collect as a company, like information about your stakeholders, their (latent) needs, context, and behaviour. Tuning makes sense of the data relating to the company's purpose and then decides what to do. Playing is exploring, learning, and creating new possibilities, and performing is getting it to the point in the given time at the right moment.



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SOUND BITES

TO TAKE HOME

As a summary for every chapter, here are some sound bites to use in conversations, as an email signature or as a guiding principle. All quotes are from the author unless otherwise noted.

Prologue

Followers can be leaders, and leaders become followers.

The universal power of music If you see a pattern in one system, it is easy to see it in another system.

A Framework Based on Music Principles

The Listen phase is active in all other phases. That is because our ears are 'always on'; they continuously receive information – like a business is getting quantitative and qualitative data all the time.

The Unanswered Question gives a company more space to explore what exactly is going on. It also helps to connect short-term and long-term thinking about whether an iteration, innovation, or transformation is needed. Take the Cue-train **Music Thinking = JASPER JAMMIN', AGILITY, SCORE, PERSONALITY, EMPATHY, and REMIX.**

Each of the six cues has two interwoven elements. A leading and a following side. One incorporates the other.

The more open you are, the more likely you are to have more ideas when you hear an idea. Openness is a prerequisite for creativity and intelligence – connecting new things with other new things and known things.

It is hard to change when your purpose is single minded and focussed only on money. For change you need to know who you are and who you want to be.

It is not fake it until you make it, but make it until you be it.

The score is not the music, and the strategy is not the service. Score can be two things: a pilot's dashboard and a musical score with enough detail to give direction and synchronise all the different perspectives.

All the choices that we make in scoring our business will have a direct influence on the dynamic of interactions and flow.

The best advice for any organisation is to make scoring a habit.

In an organisation, everybody needs the training to be an instant composer and to quickly share the level of understanding when there is no score or when the score is less detailed.

Don't just play the SCORE. Explore first how you can bring to life what is intended in the SCORE.

Co-creation must be inclusive. Everybody has the same influence on the outcome, whether playing actively or listening profoundly while holding the space for the others.

If what is written in the score does not fit the capability of the players and the current system, then it needs a learning organisation to change it and a leadership that is helping to learn instead of trying to teach.

In music from approximately nine musicians, you need a conductor to synchronise and give the cues. With less than nine, one or more players will collectively sync and give cues.

Scale-up means seeing the whole field like a festival. Imagine a festival site with all its different stages and the backstage area with all the necessary means to make the festival a success.

Great duo partners don't just play together: They listen, tune, play, and perform while initiating new perspectives and amplify each other's possibilities.

When you listen deeply to your audience while they are listening to your remix, you will get fundamental input for the next version or iteration.

In Music Thinking, there are different positions a leader can take to facilitate the right outcome. Composer, Master, Conductor, Improviser, Producer, and Soloist. The best thing to do to understand dynamics is to zoom out and see the whole field of operations. Then zoom in again and try to find the connecting cue and listen to what instruments are in play.

Backstage

Good musicians recognise patterns. Great musicians recognise patterns between patterns.

Good music thinkers recognise analogies. Great music thinkers act on analogies between analogies.

JAMMIN' before SCORE

The Unanswered Question Charles Ives Lear

PLAYLISTS

Pauline Oliveros & others Exercises in Free Improvisation

Vladimir Horowitz

Ascension

John Coltrane

Dark Star

Grateful Dead

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EMPATHY

Feeling Good Nina Simone We Are The World U.S.A. for Africa Mai Nozipo Kronos Quartet, Dumisani Maraire Nocturnes, Op9, No2 Frédéric Chopin Little Wing Jimi Hendrix



PERSONALITY Move Miles Davis

So What

Miles Davis Milestones

Miles Davis

In Silent Way

Miles Davis

Pharaoh's Dance

Miles Davis

SCORE

In C

Terry Riley **The King of Denmark** Morton Feldman **Treatise** Cornelius Cardew **Helikopter Streichquartett** Karlheinz Stockhausen **4'33"**

John Cage

S

JAMMIN' after SCORE

Pre-Performance Remark Leonard Bernstein Variations ... Monteverdi Art Ensemble of Chicago Goldberg Variations (1955) Glenn Gould, Bach Goldberg Variations (1981) Glenn Gould, Bach Tenor Madness Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane

REMIX

AGILITY

Circle Song Bobby McFerrin Seven Nation Army The White Stripes Serenade Sir Roland Hanna Trio Come Together The Beatles Paint It Black The Rolling Stones





PODCAST EPISODES

Rules of engagement with Jim Kalbach

A Sound Facilitation Business with Gerry Scullion

The Jazz Process to innovation with Adrian Cho

Multi-sensory storytelling with Jasper Udink ten Cate

The Thrills of Business with Padraic McMahon

Cross-pollination in leadership with Ilkka Mäkitalo

Music and the Brain with Artur Jaschke

Deep listening with Sharon Stewart

Innovation patterns and improvisation in organisations with Wolfgang Stark

Music as a Catalyst for Change with Nifemi Aluko

Blend sound science with sound art to make sound decisions with Steve Keller A mindset for entrepreneurship, leadership and design with Michael Hendrix and Panos Panay

Blockchain Philosophy and Collaborative Transformation for Change with Roy Scheerder



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THE SOUND OF Everything

Spotify has nearly 6000 different genre styles they are tracking.

One song from every genre Spotify is currently tracking.

It is a playlist with approximately 400 hours!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christof Zürn is the founder of Creative Companion B.V. and musicthinking. com. He is the author of the Jam Cards (Bis Publishers, 2018) and the host of The Power of Music Thinking podcast.

Christof is a member of the Medinge Group think tank that advocates Brands with a Conscience, and he is a facilitator and coach at the Design Thinkers Academy.

Christof was Chief Design Officer at the Design Thinking Center in Amsterdam. Before that, he worked as Interactive Creative Director at Studio Dumbar and Clockwork.

He is a joiner by trade and has an MA in Musicology, Philosophy and History of Arts at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology.

In the late 1990s, he pioneered music interaction on the internet. As Editor-in-Chief of the music platforms Klassikopen and Jazzopen he interviewed B.B. King, Charlie Mariano, Isaac Hayes, King Sunny Adé, Nils Landgren, Juan de Marcos González, Daniel Barenboim, Zubin Mehta, Anne-Sofie von Otter, Jon Williams, members of the Berlin Philharmonic, and others.

Christof has been a member of the free improvisation collective Raum-Musik für Saxophone since 1987.



creative-companion.com musicthinking.com "... a dense book with a unique visual language. Read it on your next flight or train journey and arrive with fresh ideas and powerful insights to supercharge your work, no matter the field."

PANOS PANAY

CO-PRESIDENT AT RECORDING ACADEMY (grammy.com) AND CO-AUTHOR OF 'TWO BEATS AHEAD'

"... solving problems from diverse perspectives is possible through direct and powerful analogies with music. Clear, structured, engaging – this book does not disappoint from the first page to the last."

JIM KALBACH

CHIEF EVANGELIST AT MURAL AND AUTHOR OF MAPPING EXPERIENCES AND THE JOBS TO BE DONE PLAYBOOK

"Combining music genres and business dynamics is brilliant and practical. It inspires us to rethink different fields simultaneously ... a practical, inspirational guide to a sound business."

MARC STICKDORN

CEO OF SMAPLY AND CO-AUTHOR OF 'THIS IS SERVICE DESIGN THINKING' AND 'THIS IS SERVICE DESIGN DOING' "... extensive knowledge of music, creativity and management, his book, Music Thinking provides an inspirational guide for leaders and followers, to think and act differently."

NICHOLAS IND PROFESSOR AT KRISTIANIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AND THE AUTHOR OF 'LIVING THE BRAND' AND 15 MORE BOOKS

"Using a fresh vocabulary of music thinking, business leaders can quickly apply Christof's frameworks and exercises to their innovation initiatives ..."

R. MICHAEL HENDRIX

PARTNER AND GLOBAL DESIGN DIRECTOR AT IDEO, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT BERKLEE AND CO-AUTHOR OF 'TWO BEATS AHEAD'

"... not only as an art form or metaphor but as a real transformative set of tools, skills and language. This is one of those moments I caught myself thinking, 'damn, I wish I thought of that'."

ARNE VAN OOSTEROM

FOUNDER OF DESIGN THINKERS GROUP AND DESIGN THINKERS ACADEMY AND HOST OF THE CREATIVE LEADERSHIP PODCAST "... Music is so instinctive and irresistibly human, music thinking breathes new life into old models. Business will never sound the same."

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