

## **Improvised musical performance as conversational language in jazz**

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**Abstract:** Musical interpretation, in the form of the act of spontaneous composition, defined jazz throughout its stylistic evolution. Unlike other serious music, jazz has crystallised mainly due to the creative act of musical interpretation and less to the process of written musical construction. Within this cerebral musical genre, the act of performing took over as the fundamental role in the artistic communication between jazz musicians and audience but it especially took the form of an interrelation in the collective musical interpretation. The act of musical improvisation, in terms of jazz, is controlled by certain stylistic parameters, associated with form, phrasing and timbre, constantly relating to the harmonic, rhythmic and melodic planes. The standardisation of these parameters transformed jazz into a conversational musical language, which allows constant and organised communication between musicians through the phenomenon of *interplay* (the interaction of performers during the collective interpretive act). The principles of *interplay* are also integrated in the solo interpretation, especially in the case of pianists, who always improvise referring to the context and the relationship created between the accompaniment and the melodic plane. At the same time, just like verbal communication, mastering the jazz language involves reaching the level of free speech, with a spontaneous and contextual expression. This freedom of artistic expression involves the assimilation of the jazz language, creating a personal vocabulary and its use as a means of constructing authentic (spontaneously created) and eloquent musical discourses. Jazz language cannot be assimilated only through individual study, as is possible in the serious music of European tradition. The study and improvement of jazz musicians constantly depends on artistic socialisation and musical conversation. Jazz is a musical genre in continuous transformation, due to the fact that it is definitely more of an act of interpretation than of a compositional one. Jazz imposed musical interpretation as having the same contribution of creation with the compositional act, in terms of stylistic definition and crystallisation of an elaborated musical current or genre.

**Keywords:** jazz, interplay, improvisation, performance.

### **1. Introduction**

Jazz is a form of musical art governed by improvisation. Therefore, the interpretive act has the main role in the stylistic definition and the constant evolution of the genre. As an act of spontaneous creation, jazz improvisation is

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however controlled and limited by certain stylistic parameters, found in the rhythmic, melodic and harmonic planes. This standardisation of improvisation, which defines a musical genre created by musicians for musicians or at least for an enthusiastic audience, involved the development of an atypical musical language for the first half of the twentieth century, which synthesised different musical cultures, especially the African American and European.

The phenomenon of interplay, an effect of collective improvisation and the relationship between musical notation and the hierarchy created between the solo and accompanying interpretive act, is a proof that jazz and also musical improvisation are based on musical interpretation as conversational language.

Drawing the analogy with verbal language, we find that jazz is a musical genre that cannot be assimilated only through the process of a performer's individual practice. Its assimilation depends on a systematised socialisation at the musical level. At the same time, jazz as a musical language was formed through the constant correlation between pre-established constraints and spontaneous creation, like European scholarly music. In this article I want to draw your attention to the interplay phenomenon as a metaphysical element present in the interactive interpretation between jazz musicians. Interplay is indispensable in the collective jazz interpretation, especially when the musicians within a certain formula become intuitive and recognise or anticipate the other performer's intention, while communicating effectively through musical discourse. In solo performances also (most often in the case of pianists), musicians use common principles of interplay in the overlapping of the planes made by both hands, the melodic plane and the accompaniment. This form of continuous interaction can also be influenced by the audience, especially due to the fact that other musicians are often part of it (as happens in jam-session concerts.) Looking at jazz as a music addressed to musicians and music lovers, it is known that the public is usually familiar with improvisation as a product of a conversational language. We can relate the assimilation of this musical language to the learning of a foreign language –because it involves the knowledge and use of several factors that underlie a spontaneous and eloquent musical discourse, as a message sent to musicians and the public alike.

Like verbal language, jazz improvisation is studied on several levels to be integrated with performers' musical vocabulary: through audition, technical study, analysis and conversation (interaction). By assimilating this language, performers will integrate a series of usual means of constructing a phrase, such as patterns, with their personal musical vocabulary. These patterns are similar to the common words in verbal communication, which performers incorporate in their improvisational speech in a complex context, which depends on technique, emotion, creativity and interplay.

Jazz is a musical genre that reflects the fact that the interpretive act is multidimensional. Jazzmen simultaneously become performers, composers and

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conductors during the act of improvisation. For example, in the swing period, these roles were better defined because improvisation had a secondary role, framed in a musical arrangement. Starting with the bebop era, jazz musicians acquired this accumulation of roles, and the musical interpretation, in itself, became a product of the freedom offered by minimal scores of the chosen style, of the solo improvisation and, last but not least, of the interplay, as a form of musical conversational language.

## **2. Musical performance in jazz**

Jazz has gone through its entire stylistic evolution in a relatively short period of several decades, due to improvisation as an act of spontaneous creation.

Jazz is a lively music, based, first of all, on spontaneity and communication. It developed through the interaction of performers, the influence of some on others, like a “a cross-pollination of thoughts and sounds”. (Gitler, 1985, p. 32)

In other words, jazz is a musical genre in continuous transformation, due to the malleability of the musical language that offers the opportunity for constant interaction and communication between performers. Like in any form of communication, freedom of expression becomes a goal, so musical improvisation, that transposes an extension of the performers’ personalities and their relationship to other musicians into sounds, becomes an extremely complex language, which must be both usual and personal. Even if freedom of expression or, rather, performers’ inspiration is not favoured in every musical context created, it is a common interest of jazz musicians in whatever group they play. Of course, the extent to which a jazz performer feels free or inspired by a group formula at some point is impossible to quantify. However, in order to create a musical discourse that reflects and transposes into sounds the intuition and affection of a performer always placed in a communicative context from a musical point of view, improvisation takes place on several levels: melodic, rhythmic, harmonic and timbral.

Practically, performers simultaneously use all the means at their disposal from a musical point of view, all the means assimilated and adopted in their personal musical vocabulary to convey a certain idea, to create a certain atmosphere, to influence or dialogue in a certain way with the other musicians. Always, to some extent, due to the interplay, these ideas are accentuated or receive answers and variations created by the other participating musicians. Of course, these situations are ideal or preferable in favour of an authentic, spontaneous, inspirational discourse and, at the same time, a well-defined collective musical message.

In the event of a lack of inspiration, an inexperienced jazz musician may resort to previously memorised or rehearsed phrases, played mechanically. This

unfortunate case is easily noticed by an informed public, by the participating musicians, and treated as such, because, in fact, jazz is a living music, which is perpetuated by the spontaneity and uniqueness of each interpretive act. The interpretation of a musical speech that he has memorised beforehand will seem sterile, without context, as long as he or she does not communicate to the other participating musicians.

Although a jazz performer uses a common vocabulary, respectively phrases and rhythmic-melodic motifs that he or she quotes or varies, their mastery and musical personality consist in the ways of constructing an authentic musical discourse through these assimilated means. Just as “musical interconnectedness makes an ensemble more than just a collection of individuals” (Rinzler, 2008, p. 28), the interpretation of a cumulation of musical ideas becomes a communicative musical process due to the interplay.

An experienced jazzman can rarely be uninspired, possibly due to less effective communication from the musicians participating in the creative act. That is why, many times, musical communication, the interplay between the musicians of a jazz formula, is also favoured by their familiarity and socialisation on a human level. But even in such unfavourable cases, the creative spirit of the jazz performer will give rise to new communicative musical ideas.

In this constant interaction between the performers of a jazz formula, most of the times the moment of the soloist will be distinguished in the foreground and in the background the accompaniment provided by the rhythm section. Jazz performers initiate and direct this process of interplay during the moment of solo improvisation but focusing especially on their own melodic discourse.

The accompanying plane provided by the rhythm section offers the soloist a realm for their own exploration, a foundation to elaborate their own ideas, to define their musical message.

So, we distinguish two types of improvisation performed by jazz performers: solo improvisation and accompaniment improvisation. The interplay takes place most often between the soloist and the rhythm section in several forms, depending on the context created by the musician. This interaction defines the form, the harmonic progression and, obviously, the melodic plane of the collective interpretive act. For example, if the soloist defines the form imposingly through his improvised speech, “the rhythm section may follow the soloist’s lead and further reinforce the form by emphasizing the boundaries of formal units” (Hodson, 2007, p. 98) or to allow a somewhat more neutral structural phrasing in balance with the formal emphasis rendered by the soloist. If the soloist's improvisation does not impose by its phrasing the form of the whole collective discourse, the rhythm section can respond by emphasizing the form, thus giving the soloist a basis from which to

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start exploring his own melodic discourse, without focusing on the responsibility of conducting the other participating musicians.

Sometimes, the solo discourse is totally free from a rhythmic-melodic and formal point of view, other times it has a predetermined form or a conclusion with a cadential role, which the other instrumentalists can play together.

Another case encountered especially in free jazz - the soloist together with the rhythm section can overshadow the formal limits during the interpretive act, thus creating a more fluid discourse, without predictable phrases, such as square ones.

All these situations are also possible in the case of the solo pianist, because he uses interplay principles in relating the melodic plane with the accompanying one (the plane of the right hand and that of the left hand). At the same time, there are often improvised phrases of the dialogue type between two soloists, based on the alternation of symmetric phrases of four bars. Their communication takes place by creating the improvised discourse to which both contribute with question-and-answer type of phrases, one by one, influencing each other.

The spectrum of stylistic constraints is quite wide in jazz. If we were to define its limits, bebop would be the musical style with the most predetermined limits, and free jazz would be at the opposite pole. But no matter on which side of the stylistic spectrum the improvisational act is positioned, time remains the most important constraint – in the sense that a musical idea must be framed in a time interval, and once exposed, it cannot be corrected or eliminated, but only repeated, quoted or varied. Even if in free jazz performers do not have to take into account standardised constraints, these are still pre-established within the ensemble in order to give a certain structure to the interpretive experience and the musical message.

Jazz musicians have always had “a pendant for putting their greatest creative effort in the most unusual places” (Coker, 1980, p. 45) by varying and exploring harmony, rhythm, melody or timbre. This effort is followed and analysed by the musicians within the interpretive group and at the same time, by the public.

Like a conversation, a jazz musician who sings in a group formula has solo moments, in turn accompanies the soloists or plays predefined collective melodic passages. In other words, as in any conversational language, jazz musicians express themselves freely in a certain context and form ideas that they convey as answers, especially after listening, after receiving and analysing the musical message expressed by others.

Improvisation in jazz has several adjacent roles, including:

- variation;
- free speech;
- communication;

- conversation;

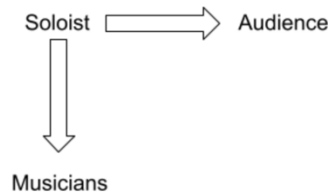


Fig. 1 The soloist communicates a musical message to the musicians and the audience



Fig. 2 The conversation takes place between the soloist and the other performers

- stylistic definition;
- connecting with various musical traditions;
- asserting a community through musical style.

As stated above, musical improvisation can play a role in the social assertion of a community. For example, with the period of the bebop style, improvised musical performance became a means by which African Americans re-established themselves in American musical culture. At the same time, through the improvised and personalised interpretation, the African-American musicians incorporated and highlighted elements of the African-American tradition in jazz stylistics. Bebop was a musical style that was born out of the desire of African-American musicians “not to write completely new songs, but just to be able to play in their own way independently of what white people were doing” (Starobinski, 2011, p. 12). In other words, with the bebop style, the interpretive act overcame the compositional act in importance, giving African Americans the opportunity to re-establish themselves stylistically in just a few years. The improvisational interpretation in bebop had, on the other hand, the role of rendering jazz elitist, of defining a complex language, difficult to be mimicked or integrated with other musical genres. Therefore, starting with the 1940s, jazz detached itself from American entertainment music, gaining the status of scholarly music.

The audience can have an immeasurable contribution to the stylistic crystallisation, if we refer to the moment of the improvisational act or even to the shaping of a musical style in itself, because the interaction between jazz performers and the audience can become an immediate reflection of the present, no matter what we mean by this.

Jazz improvisation involves the performer's duty (and privilege) to listen and not just play. Thus, jazz musicians do not think about what they should play immediately but analyse the collective interpretive act or before their speech

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and decide what they can improve with their own contribution. During the interpretive act, in addition to communicating through musical language, jazz musicians communicate visually, usually when handing over the shift of solo improvisation, in the form – "you're next!".

Therefore, jazz musicians must combine a series of skills practiced through the experience of collective performance. The quality of the collective interpretation depends on the permanent interaction of the musicians within a formula, respectively on interplay. This phenomenon is an effect and at the same time a cause of the crystallisation of jazz improvisation as a conversational language.

### **3. Jazz musicians**

If we were to describe the main qualities that jazz performers must have, some of them would be exercise, experience, spontaneity and creativity, which are directly proportional and at the same time, interconnected.

Jazz improvisation means for musicians a freedom of expression within the limits of pre-established constraints or constraints imposed by the created context, which brings great satisfaction to the performer but at the same time a higher personal consumption than in the case of a performer who strictly respects the musical message elaborated by a composer. In practice, jazz musicians become, to a certain extent, instrumentalists, conductors (ensemble leaders) and composers during the performance act.

If from the 1940s jazz soloists were the ones who directed the course of spontaneous musical creation, until then, in a big band formula, for example, the rhythm section had the most freedom in terms of improvisation. In other words, the bassist, pianist and drummer constantly communicated, while the other instrumentalists followed the instructions of the conductor (who often also played the role of soloist), performing the predetermined musical passages. Of course, this approach is still practiced today in swing orchestras.

In general, solo improvisers constantly communicate with the rhythm section, because it offers the soloist the (rhythmic and harmonic) plane necessary to launch a contextual musical discourse. At the same time, the rhythm section improvises, in turn, always in accordance with the rhythmic-melodic line created by the soloist. This interaction is easy to notice when a soloist uses certain formulas, licks or patterns, which are then quoted or varied, in response to the other performers.

Especially with the bebop period, jazz performers simultaneously took on the roles of composer and leader of a musical ensemble (conductor). However, since the beginning of the twentieth century, the permanent collaboration of the three categories of musicians has favoured the crystallisation of this musical genre in such an effective way. In other words, "Its direction has been shaped by three distinct groups of people" (Shipton, 2002, p. 9):

- performers – who play musical ideas through their instrument;
- conductors / ensemble leaders – who establish a perimeter in which the instrumentalists develop their musical ideas;
- composers and arrangers – which ensure the starting point of these musical ideas through notation.

We allow ourselves a brief analogy with the art of cinema, given that the role of the jazz composer is similar to that of a director. “The jazz composer, to whom writing is merely a starting point, a framework that will enable the performers to express themselves freely and together” (Mouëllic, 2014, p. 15), is aware that his or her musical ideas will be continuously transformed through the process of improvised interpretation, respectively of interplay. So, jazz composers intend to offer performers a plan based on which they will create new lyrics, through permanent interaction.



Fig. 3 Jazz music creation, from composition to improvisation / interplay, addressed to the public

As for jazz performers, the process of defining one's own style and exploring new ways of musical expression involves personal consumption and at the same time constant development, a continuous transformation. Therefore, jazz musicians are usually considered exceptional if they manage to maintain their level of performance for a long time. “If a jazzman can simply maintain the level of his first maturity, he is exceptional”. (Williams, 1993, p. 150). The assimilation of jazz language is thus a marathon, a long process, which has become increasingly systematised since the 1940s.

Spontaneous improvisation involves constant innovations in each act of interpretation. As we know, one interpretive act will not be the same as another, even if it belongs to the same interpreter. In jazz, moreover, with each interpretive act, the musician can bring innovations and form new stylistic directions, both collectively and personally.

- Jazz performers study and acquire a certain repertoire, like classical performers. The process of assimilating improvisational language is



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possible through individual study and the experience of collective interpretation.

- At the same time, in order to adopt the improvisational language, it is necessary to assume the risk that spontaneous creation implies.
- All elements of this musical language must become part of performers' subconscious in order for them to focus on variation, improvisation, the authenticity and uniqueness of their speech.
- Jazz musicians must meet certain qualities in order to be able to use this conversational musical language fluently, in order to be able to create intelligible and contextual musical ideas.
- These include: attention, working memory, technical virtuosity, constant analysis, spontaneous creation, exploration within predetermined constraints, the ability to anticipate sonic events and the ability to provide feedback.

Since the 1960s, especially due to jazz, musical improvisation as an act of spontaneous creation has been recognised as a competence in music education (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994).

Due to this fact, the stages of assimilation and development of the individual improvisational language could be observed, together with the systematisation of the study of improvisation in order to facilitate this complex interpretive process.

According to John Kratus' view, there are several stages in the process of developing the improvisational abilities of a musician:

- Exploration – characterised by audition, tone color exploration, stylistic exploration.
- Improvisation focused on the process itself – rudimentary interpretation, practice of listened and studied techniques.
- Improvisation focused on effect - improvisation based on a certain structure, in contact with other musicians.
- Fluid improvisation – based mainly on automatism and assimilated techniques.
- Structural improvisation – pursuing a strategy, occasionally avoiding tonal principles, still prioritises technique and not performers' authenticity.
- Stylistic improvisation – which reflects the mastery of improvisational art, easily imitating already outlined styles.
- Personal improvisation – attributed to a master, who is comfortable in breaking rules and at the same time respecting the stylistic constraints, having the ability to define his own style. (Kratus, 1995, p. 26)

Improvisation as an act of spontaneous composition involves preparation through individual study, followed by communication experience and taking the

risk of intuition. In this sense, jazz is a language based on the balance between known, assimilated information and the intuition of the performer.

#### **4. Learning a complex musical language**

In a non-formal context, outside of individual study, jazz performers learn to develop their improvisational language by analysing and imitating others. At the same time, the possibility of assimilating jazz language in this way is favoured by audio recordings. "For Jazz, the more modern technology of recording served a function parallel to that of notation" (Deveaux, 1997, p. 40)

With the stylistic evolution of the genre, the assimilation of the jazz language has become more and more systematic. Nowadays it usually takes place in educational centers, high schools and universities - using means such as standard scores, listening to standard recordings, studying the instrument and the experience of the musical ensemble.

The whole process of adopting this means of musical expression follows certain steps that any jazz musician goes through in their evolution.

We used verbal communication as an analogy of the spontaneous creative musical act because both involve the use of common vocabulary and personal vocabulary in a process of interaction. The purpose of this parallel is to be able to understand the resources of conversational musical discourses.

The usual vocabulary of jazz musicians is reflected in standardised elements, such as patterns and licks, typical rhythmic-melodic formulas, predetermined harmonic progressions and typical tonal-modal scales.

At the same time, the personal vocabulary is reflected in jazz through personal ideas, spontaneous, created and not played. But even when playing an idea that is taken over, by being assimilated and reinterpreted it acquires a unique, personal form, in a certain performer's typical manner. All this is possible due to the fact that jazz stylistics allow a freedom of interpretive expression on all levels related to sonic quality. However, a combination of sentences and words, a combination of phrases and musical ideas are not enough to build a qualitative, eloquent and contextual discourse. The improvisational interpretation is reflected in everything that transforms the sonic elements into ideas with a certain meaning, with a certain purpose, capable of provoking emotions and reactions.

Naturally, improvisational musical language follows many principles adopted from verbal language. One difference between the two would be that verbal language has a greater narrative capacity, while musical language expresses intentions, reactions, emotions, which would often be trivialised by the limits of spoken language. Of course, this is the case of the singers. Vocal soloists have the option to improvise through words, using the default text of the song and focusing on the rhythmic-melodic variation, respectively on phrasing, or to improvise through the scat technique. Through scat

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improvisation, vocalists adopt the same principles of improvisation as those of instrumentalists. It is worth mentioning that the scat technique was developed most during the bebop period, being a style of technical virtuosity and cerebral improvisation. Jazz performers cannot assimilate these principles, with all their substrates, only through individual theoretical and technical study. Unlike classical musicians, jazz musicians' performance depends most on their ability to interact with other musicians during the performance. In other words, jazz performers' freedom of artistic expression occurs when concepts become experience, with the goal of "feeling what it's like to mess around with these progressions, these notes, these styles." (Harnum, 2010, p. 3)

Jazz music performance can be a form of communication that excels at using standard language but it is difficult to define to what extent. An extremely elaborate speech will be partially received by an unsuspecting listener and, at the same time, a weaker musical speech may "mimic" a productive momentary inspiration but the first thing that could betray it is the lack of interplay, interaction. "Knowledge requires but does not necessarily imply communication and communication also requires but does not necessarily imply knowledge by the interlocutors."<sup>1</sup> (Nemescu, 1983, p. 17) We cannot say that "musical meaning is itself defined in one and only one way" (Cook, 1999, p. 218), especially because it depends on the interlocutors' perception. Basically, due to this fact, the interplay phenomenon exponentially increases the possibilities of spontaneous creation of unique, unrepeatable musical discourses, even if we refer to repeated interactions between the same musicians. Thus, it is a constant process for the new musical language to become intelligible, accepted, assimilated and further adopted, while the dogmas of the past become more of a landmark, perceived as accepted norms and not mandatory.

Jazz musicians are aware that through their interpretive act they constantly communicate with other musicians. Of course, this type of communication cannot be analysed in the same way that we can analyse a verbal conversation.

Although we know that music works like a verbal language, because it always conveys a message, "few agree on how or what music communicates, thereby according to it non-linguistic properties." (Cook, 1999, p. 25)

Therefore, the substrates of this language, which was crystallised primarily due to the interpretive act, are received and provoke reactions especially to those familiar with the genre itself.

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<sup>1</sup> „Cunoașterea necesită, dar nu implică neapărat, și o comunicare, iar comunicarea necesită, dar nu implică, de asemenea, neapărat, o cunoaștere de către interlocutori.” (Nemescu, 1983, p. 17) Traducător Elisabeta Firtescu Campău.

We can say that jazz is basically based on interplay - on this constant interaction between performers, because interplay automatically means spontaneous creation. The interaction takes place as a way of communication, of dialogue between musicians, addressed to the public.

In this idea the jazz performance process is a multidimensional one, which cannot be reduced to a linearly transmitted musical message, a message written and performed as such.

Due to the fact that the improvised interpretive act governs this musical genre, jazz scores have become minimal (since the bebop period) and are only a starting point for performers or, in the case of jazz orchestras, it is an arrangement for alternating pre-arranged collective moments and those of improvisation.

Typical jazz scores usually note the melodic line of the musical theme, accompanied by the notation of chord progression and possibly an indication of style / tempo. In addition to the two pre-arranged plans, the score provides performers with the formal limits of the musical theme.

Of course, as I mentioned earlier, these constraints, pre-established by composers and transposed by musical notation, are only landmarks and are not treated as dogmas by performers. In other words, the written musical message is continuously transformed, depending on the personality of each performer and on their interaction with other musicians, which basically results in the creation of a collective musical message.

Among the means of constructing an improvised discourse are patterns and licks. These are either quoted or varied.

Patterns (rhythmic-melodic cells) are used as words in a sentence, which take on new meanings depending on the context created by the interaction of the performers.

Licks (rhythmic-melodic motifs) are groups of patterns, or common phrases, like common expressions in verbal language.

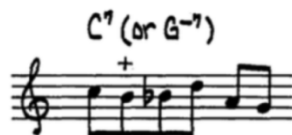


Fig. 4 Common rhythmic-melodic pattern (lick) in bebop, on C7 or Gm7  
(Coker, 1991, p. 40)

These usual expressions are variants, integrated as connecting elements in melodic passages created spontaneously by performers. Jerry Coker, in his book *Elements of the Jazz Language*, offers many examples of such common phrases in famous solo discourses.



Fig. 5 Variation of the rhythmic-melodic motif (lick) exposed in example 4, on the D7, found in Charlie Parker's solo, the song *Au Private* (Coker, 1991, p. 40).



Fig. 6 Variation of the rhythmic-melodic motif (lick) set out in Example 4, on the D7, found in Cannonball Adderley's solo, *Green Dolphin Street* (Coker, 1991, p. 40).



Fig. 7 Variation of the rhythmic-melodic motif (lick) set out in Example 4, on the Fm7 and Bb7, found in Cannonball Adderley's solo, *Straight, No Chaser* (Coker, 1991, p. 40).

Jazz musicians' creativity is expressed through melodic "ways to integrate the lick into linear substance" (Coker, 1991, p. 43), giving these usual ideas new meanings. In addition to using these means of constructing improvised discourse, each jazz performer uses ornamentation techniques, such as approach notes (chromatic notes that prepare the actual notes of the chord).

Jazz, due to the supremacy of the interpretive act, if we can call it this way, reflects and expresses the present personal, musical and socio-political context.

Assimilating consolidated language as a function in creating new musical expressions is not a simple process. Improvised interpretation in jazz presupposes a balance between the learned language and the freedom of expression of the self, of one's own musical personality. The constant stylistic reinvention and the adoption of new elements of musical language imply the involvement not only of the musicians, but also of the public, being necessary to "explore the musical art utilizing this new musical language". (Morangelli, 1999, 24). In this sense, jazz has somehow placed innovation above tradition, and interpretation above notation. "Jazz defies attempts to fix uses, parameters, qualities and meanings." (Preston, 2004, p. 196) This genre is an organic musical language, which is constantly evolving in response to the circumstances created by its deep improvisational character.

Of course, any music is organic – the music itself exists because of the interpretive act. But as an elaborate musical genre, unlike European scholarly music, jazz offered the act of musical creation to performers.

## 5. Conclusions

Unlike other cultural musical genres, jazz is governed by improvisation. Due to the act of spontaneous creation, musical interpretation has the ability to stylistically define musical currents, musical personalities, respectively to explore new means of expression and to constantly impose innovations, like the compositional act.

In jazz, musical interpretation becomes a process of elaborating the musical message and not just of transmitting it, of reproducing it.

As a result, jazz performers have a balance between the musical language they have assimilated and the innovation based on their own intuition. Its qualities depend on their individual study and the experience of the musical ensemble, on jazz performers' ability to use the musical language in a conversational way.

The jazz language crystallised due to the improvisational interpretive act and is based on the interplay phenomenon – based on the constant interaction between performers within an ensemble.

We can liken verbal interaction to this interaction between performers, due to the use of a common vocabulary in the transmission of the musical message, the expression of personal ideas in a certain context and the dialogue through question-and-answer phrases but also by constantly adjusting one's discourse to outline the collective musical message.

Through improvised musical performance, jazz has become one of the most innovative musical genres of the twentieth century.

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