

Summer Jazz Workshop:
An Organizational Study
Michael A. Tracy
University of Louisville

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the Summer Jazz Workshop, originally known as the National Stage Band Camp, from an organizational perspective. The workshop is an excellent example of the coalitional model. The organization has ambiguous goals, is informal, and loosely coupled. Leadership is charismatic with negotiation, good faith, and commitment playing important roles in the guidance of the workshop. Interdependence and boundary spanning strongly influence its structure and direction. Understanding how the Summer Jazz Workshop functions organizationally gives one insight for further improvement and adaptation.

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The Summer Jazz Workshop has been instrumental in shaping the direction of jazz education worldwide. As an organization, the Summer Jazz Workshop is an excellent illustration of the coalitional model (McPherson, Crowson, and Pitner, 1986). While the organization has gone through many changes, it has functioned within the parameters of the coalitional model from the beginning. Its goals are ambiguous while the informal relationship between the director, instructors, and clients is one of the strong elements of the organization. The evolution of the Summer Jazz Workshop followed a predictable course from one from man's idealistic vision to its current state being a "loosely coupled, organized anarchy" (Weick, 1982).

The National Stage Band Camp, the original name for the Summer Jazz Workshop, was one of the first organized ventures that offered music instruction in the jazz idiom. The camp was founded in 1959 by Ken Morris with the purpose of providing young musicians the opportunity to study jazz and improvised music with many of the leading performers of the time. The original staff included many pioneers in the development of jazz education such as Stan Kenton, Russ Garcia, Matt Benton, and John LaPorta (Carter, 1986).

The National Stage Band Camp was a self sustaining, non-profit organization. The camp was originally held during the summer session at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana (Carter, 1986). Eventually the camp was expanded and multiple sessions were conducted at various college and university campuses throughout the United States and Canada. The participating institutions were usually interested in developing a jazz program or in improving their educational offerings. The camp used their facilities at no cost. An additional financial boon was occasional support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Until 1970 the thrust of instruction was in the area of the "stage band" or large jazz ensemble. In 1970 the National Stage Band Camp split into two areas of interest. While instruction and development of the "stage band" continued, expansion occurred in the area of small groups with a greater emphasis on individual improvisation. Ken Morris continued to direct and coordinate the two elements of the National Stage Band Camps which were renamed Summer Jazz Clinics and included Big Band Camp and Combo/Improvisation Camp (J. Aebersold, personal communication, April 12, 1987).

Initially, due to the shortage of qualified instructors among other reasons, the Big Band and Combo/Improvisation

Camps were conducted simultaneously. This consolidation allowed for a transition period during which financial resources were conserved and a philosophy was established. During this period disunity among the faculty, which already lead to dividing the camp, became more pronounced. Differences concerning curriculum, instructional techniques, and direction became so evident that it was clear that the two camps would function better separately. By this time, approximately 1972, the camps started to be conducted at different times on the same campus or at entirely different locations.

Both sections of the Summer Jazz Clinics flourished during the 1970's and became important elements in the growing jazz education movement. However, by the late 1970's, the Combo/Improvisation Camp had become the larger and more influential of the two. In January of 1979, the Combo/Improvisation Camp became truly international by holding its first clinic abroad in Australia and its future seemed very promising. At the same time the Big Band Camp experienced a severe decline in enrollment and by 1982 ceased to exist.

Ken Morris, an amateur musician, continued as director of the National Stage Band Camp/Summer Jazz Clinics until he retired in 1985. Internationally respected jazz

educator and publisher Jamey Aebersold, who had been on the faculty since 1965 (J. Aebersold, personal communication, April 12, 1987), assumed leadership. Mr. Aebersold was instrumental in the development of the Combo/Improvisation element of the Summer Jazz Clinics. He had been its only director and, because of that, the Combo/Improvisation Camps had become strongly identified with him. In 1986, the name of the camps was changed to Jamey Aebersold's Summer Jazz Workshops and ceased to be a non-profit organization.

Mr. Morris encouraged and supported Mr. Aebersold's concepts and direction of the Summer Jazz Workshop. Mr. Morris' vision and dedication continued to have a profound effect on the workshop. The organizational evolution and development of National Stage Band Camps into the Summer Jazz Workshops was based on the dedication, interaction, and vision of these two individuals with the strong support of many leading educators in the jazz idiom. The period from 1970 until the present offers an interesting example of the growth and interrelationship of an unusual organization and the teachers involved.

The basic faculty of fifteen to twenty individuals comes from various places throughout the United States. Approximately half of the faculty are directors of jazz

departments at universities or colleges. The remainder of the faculty are well-known freelance performers and educators. The majority have worked together at the camps for over ten years and only see each other at the camps or at other special music functions. Every faculty member is a leader in his own right and is very individualistic. Despite their independence, however, there is an extremely strong feeling of friendship, unity, and purpose. Each individual has at least one speciality and most can substitute in other areas of instruction. The continuity, flexibility, expertise, and overall good will of the faculty have become a trademark of the Summer Jazz Workshops.

Casual as it may be, there is an hierarchy in the leadership of the workshop. Four of the world's most respected jazz educators and authors (David Baker, Indiana University; Jerry Coker, University of Tennessee; Dan Haerle, North Texas State; and Jamey Aebersold) participate as instructors and performers on a regular, if not continual, basis. Their dedication and expertise set examples for the other faculty and students to follow. They create an informal atmosphere that fosters a constant exchange of ideas and avoids territorial defenses. Students and other faculty members are treated as equals in search of information and musical growth.

Mr. Aebersold is, as stated previously, the director and main force behind the Summer Jazz Workshop. With limited outside input, Mr. Aebersold designs and mails the brochure, decides when and where to hold the workshops, makes travel arrangements, hires the faculty, and takes care of any unexpected problems. He is in complete control of the financial side of the camps. His control is based on his personal charisma and financial investment.

Furthermore, Mr. Aebersold is trusted and admired even by his detractors. People know when he says something will get done that it will be taken care of in a professional manner. He is an excellent performer and an outstanding educator in the area of improvised music. His publishing company only prints and sells material of the highest quality and stands behind its product.

Mr. Aebersold expects quality and professionalism from the faculty and is a good leader. He does have a difficult time delegating authority and at times either does not make decisions or makes them hastily. This has become especially evident now that he is totally responsible for the workshops. With a faculty containing so many respected leaders in the field, there are times when decisions are questioned and argued. Many of the faculty feel left out of the decision-making process. They have offered to share

responsibility. Mr. Aebersold listens to and respects their viewpoints but prefers to maintain ultimate authority. Finally, Jamey Aebersold is basically a good, caring individual who is concerned about everyone with whom he comes in contact.

For years, music educators did not view the teaching of jazz as instructionally valid. Others believed that jazz could not be taught (Ricci, 1982). The goal of the Summer Jazz Workshop is to "help student musicians explore the creative process through improvisation and the application of jazz theory in an environment that provides them with an opportunity to study with some of the finest jazz educators/musicians in the world." (J. Aebersold, personal communication, April 20, 1987). Creativity can be manifest in so many different forms. The problem is: How does one teach another to be creative and individualistic? How much of the creative process is instinctive and how much can be influenced by specific instruction? The goal of the Summer Jazz Clinic is certainly difficult and very complex.

The Summer Jazz Workshop and its predecessor, the Summer Jazz Clinic, have been responsible for identifying and developing many innovative ways to teach jazz and improvised music. Under the leadership of Mr. Aebersold and the previously mentioned trio of outstanding jazz

educators, the workshops have experimented with and refined many of the approaches used in the field. New concepts and theories are constantly being discussed, implemented, and evaluated. The staff of the Summer Jazz Workshop continues to search for more effective, efficient, and creative ways to teach.

Because of their innovations, an instructor at the Summer Jazz Clinic has a choice of many different directions in the teaching of jazz or improvised music. Experience has shown that there are skills a musician can work on that will enable him to start the inner search for creativity. There are elements of the jazz idiom that can be taught through understanding and observing the creative process of other jazz musicians. The workshop tries to offer the students this experience under the guidance of excellent jazz musicians and educators. The intangibility of the goal and the various levels of student abilities make it impossible to determine if the goal of the workshop is ever attained.

The technology of the Summer Jazz Workshops is uncertain, complex, and interdependent (McPherson et al., 1986). The organization must be loosely coupled or it could not function. Students who attend the camp vary from early teens to retirees. The only criteria for attending

the workshop is the ability to play a musical instrument. At times individuals have attended who have just started playing an instrument. It is possible for the faculty to know the number of people who have pre-registered and the instruments they play before the camp begins. However, on the first day of camp other individuals may register unexpectedly. Following registration, auditions are used to determine an individual's level of performance. The audition is the first indication the faculty has of individual abilities or the instruments available to form ensembles. To add to the confusion, a shortage of specific instruments needed to complete the ensembles may be discovered or playing skills may be inadequate. Sometimes individuals must be recruited from the community who can play the needed instruments. Quite frequently the faculty is forced to teach and play at the same time. Having to play while teaching can be quite difficult and requires the creative adaptation of teaching techniques.

Since it is impossible and impractical to prepare for classes ahead of time, instructors must be able to adjust to young and old students from various backgrounds and from all parts of the country. One week an instructor might teach a very advanced group and the next have rank beginners. The four theory teachers are the only

instructors that have a certain curriculum and yet they also must adapt to ability levels. All an instructor is sure of is that he will teach two ensembles and a master class daily. He must be able to decide what type of material and the level of difficulty his ensemble can handle in a very short period of time. In essence, he must be able to improvise in his approach to teaching improvisation.

Enrollment can vary from forty-five students to over one hundred and eighty with the typical workshop numbering approximately eighty students. Every student is individually placed into a theory class, master class, and performing combo/ensemble. With so many students, placement is demanding and difficult. All of the placement is decided during one faculty meeting which is held immediately following auditions and before a faculty concert. Teacher and room assignments are also decided at this time. To add to the confusion, the faculty typically arrives at the campus from their home towns just hours before this process begins. It is a testament to cooperation, patience, and experience that so much is accomplished at this meeting. Organized anarchy definitely applies to the process of placing the instructors and students into the schedule. A typical daily schedule (Aebersold, 1986) consists of:

8:30am	Theory (4 classes)
10:00am	Listening/History (1 class)
11:00am	Combo (ensemble number of classes depends on enrollment)
12:00pm	Lunch
1:30pm	Instrumental Master Classes (10 to 18 classes)
3:00pm	Combo (ensemble same as 11:00am)
4:30pm	Practice Time
5:30pm	Dinner
7:30pm	Faculty Concert

Interdependence (McPherson et al., 1986) plays an important role in the success of Summer Jazz Workshop. Faculty and students share the teaching and housing facilities of the host institution (This is an example of pooled interdependence). Because of the living conditions, there is a great deal of interaction between the faculty and students outside of the classroom. At times it is hard to tell when instruction stops and individual time begins.

The distribution of equipment (amps, drum sets, music, records, and audio/visual) is always a top priority. It is necessary to coordinate the sharing of expensive, one-of-a-kind equipment. Approval and cooperation is required by all parties concerned. A misplaced amplifier or lost musical scores can cause disruption in more than one class, to say nothing of the expense to replace them.

With the freedom enjoyed by the faculty and students, it is extremely important that classes begin and end on schedule (Sequential interdependence is involved).

Major problems arise if an instructor is absent from or late to a class. There is no one to replace him. Every student has a function, too. He is unique and necessary to the advancement of his ensemble. If a student misses or is late to a class, the whole class suffers from his absence.

Reciprocal interdependence occurs throughout the week. Instructors are constantly evaluating the progress of individuals in their classes with other instructors. It is very common to move students to other classes in order to correct misplacement in a theory or master class. However, the movement of students from one ensemble to another can become very difficult and involved. When it is necessary to change a student's assigned schedule, at least four instructors participate in the decision: the student's original combo instructor, the instructor that auditioned him, the camp director, and the new combo instructor. A change will sometimes mean that another student must move as well, so that the new group will not have an excessive number of members. In either case, the instructors involved must adapt their instruction to fit the new ensemble.

In spite of the uncertainty, individual freedom, and looseness, the workshop is educationally successful. In fact, those elements are necessary for the workshop to function. Control over this very fluid organization is

achieved through negotiation, good faith, commitment, and self-motivation. There are no rules except that the student comes first. Problems, whether related to curriculum, travel, salary, or accommodations, are handled by negotiation. Contracts are not given and a salary schedule does not exist. Everything is done in good faith and trust. An individual's word is the standard by which business is handled.

Problems certainly arise from this informal style of doing business. Some faculty are uncertain as to when and if they will be needed to teach. Salaries are not high and salary structure for the entire staff is difficult to interpret. Misunderstandings that need not occur happen frequently. Attitudes and beliefs are assumed to be held in common and as such go unspoken.

Despite those problems, there is a sense of individual commitment and self-motivation among the faculty without which it would be extremely difficult for Mr. Aebersold to hold the organization together. The faculty believes that the workshop is important. They have a very strong sense of purpose and pride. Being a member of the Summer Jazz Workshop is viewed as an honor and opportunity that few jazz educators get to experience. There is the satisfaction of working with an outstanding faculty and

being part of a very unique musical experience. Everyone on the staff undergoes a musical growth that otherwise would not be available to them. The opportunity to teach in many parts of the world is another important benefit.

The leadership and faculty are placed in boundary spanning roles (McPherson et al., 1986). Every individual involved in the workshop has a major role in an organization outside of the workshop itself. College teaching responsibilities, professional performance schedules, publishing concerns, and other external situations must be taken into consideration when committing to the workshop. Conflicts between individual concerns and workshop needs are dealt with daily. Open and frank communication between the staff is vital. Listening and being sensitive to the needs of all involved are the greatest demands asked of Mr. Aebersold and the faculty. Integrity is never a question, but outside ambitions have certainly effected the growth and development of the workshops. The key to keeping the organization running is negotiation. The majority of the time negotiation works extremely well. However, personal desires have become a more demanding factor in the growth and advancement of the organization, making the process difficult and tiresome.

Environmental factors (McPherson et al., 1986) have had a strong influence on the direction of the workshop. The workshop was originally conducted to fill a need for instruction in the jazz idiom. The success of the workshop was not the only factor, but it certainly helped the new jazz education movement develop and spread. The growth of jazz education in the junior and senior high school has been phenomenal. In 1960 approximately 5,000 high schools had jazz ensembles. By the late sixties, 10,000 jazz ensembles existed in over 8,500 schools. By 1980, well over one half million students from approximately 70% of the 30,000 middle and senior high schools in the United States were involved in jazz ensembles (Suber, 1979). Colleges and universities have experienced a similar increased interest in jazz music (Barr, 1983). This growth has had a profound effect on the Summer Jazz Workshop.

While there is still a need for the high quality education offered by the workshop, outside influences have had an impact. The competition for interested students has become a major concern. Similar workshops and clinics have been developed by other organizations, mainly colleges and universities. Extension and college prep classes during the school year have also filled a demand for jazz education. Teaching on the high school level has improved

and many students do not choose to attend summer programs even though their directors encourage participation. The high cost of tuition, housing, and transportation are other major reasons for decreased interest.

Internal factors have also affected the growth of the workshop. The curriculum, while proven and flexible, has not changed to meet student and faculty interests. Contemporary, fusion, and rock influenced musics are not emphasized as much as many believe is necessary for a well rounded experience. Some faculty feel that this lack of variety has been very instrumental in the workshop's inability to attract a greater number of students especially since other organizations emphasize these areas of study.

Mr. Aebersold's outside interests and inability to share responsibilities with other faculty members has contributed to the workshop's slowed growth. His answer to many of the problems facing the organization has been to offer fewer workshops and only conduct them in convenient, proven locations. The majority of the faculty would like to explore the possibility of offering additional workshops in new locations that show interest and promise. Without Mr. Aebersold's participation, however, expansion is virtually impossible.

If the Summer Jazz Workshop is to remain vital, a new approach to the management of the organization needs to be considered. A board of directors, with Mr. Aebersold as president, would be very helpful in establishing a direction for expansion and the updating of business techniques. Sponsorship of the workshops by foundations or corporations should be investigated. Necessary curriculum modifications could be developed through the increased participation by selected core faculty. Mr. Aebersold could lighten his load by delegating routine responsibilities and duties to other faculty members. He would have the support of the faculty to make these changes.

The Summer Jazz Workshop is an unique learning experience for all involved. It is exciting to be a participant in an atmosphere where the students and faculty can grow together in the search for creativity through improvised music. The workshop has had a history of great success. With thoughtful guidance and adaptation it could continue to be an important component in the area of music education.

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