




Study Guide – Jazz belongs in Church DVD Debbie Hough and Mary Speedy

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About the Authors





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Mary Speedy is a Certified Educator now retired. She has worked at all levels of the church as DCE, Educational Consultant within the Synod of the Trinity and as Director of the POINT program in Louisville.

Both Debbie and Mary are Presbybop Quartet groupies. They have worked closely with Bill Carter to develop this study guide. They have also utilized quotes from his article “Singing a New Song: The Gospel and Jazz,” which can be accessed from www.presbybop.com




Welcome to the Study Guide

Welcome to the Study Guide to be used with the DVD, *Jazz belongs in Church*. Begin by considering this question: what is your relationship with jazz?





-  Did you first hear this music being played in a smoky bar with a piano, string bass and drums?
-  Or it was on a radio station that you discovered jazz and couldn't turn it off?
-  Perhaps you are a jazz musician who is looking to offer your music skills in a spiritual setting.
-  Maybe you have already experienced jazz music leading the people of God in a worship service or concert, and want to learn more.

Whatever your relationship to jazz, we would like to begin a conversation with you about the idea that jazz belongs in church -- and specifically that it belongs in worship.

This is not a typical study guide with sequential lesson plans; rather, this guide provides an on-going dialogue or conversation with parts of the *Jazz belongs in Church* DVD, allows other parts of the DVD to stand alone; and then provides opportunities for further conversations.

-  You might watch the DVD in its entirety first and then go back to explore the segments one at a time.
-  You might use this guide with its questions and notes to stop and start the video to allow time for reflection.
-  Further conversations might happen - with a worship committee, with church staff, with youth, any small group or with yourself - any place or time people of faith are thinking about worship issues or jazz.

Jazz in the church is a conversation –

-  between musicians and the music;
-  between the musicians themselves; and
-  between the music and the hearer.
-  God is always part of that conversation which may be challenging or comforting, but in the setting of faith and among the people of God, it will never be completed.

Jazz is a metaphor for discipleship – so, come, join the conversation!

Conversations with the DVD: Transcript (Introduction – Segment Three)

What follows is an actual transcript of the first three segments of the DVD with questions and other material inserted for you to think about and discuss with others.

Introduction

(Timing 00:00:00 – 00:04:09)

Hello – my name is Bill Carter. I am a Presbyterian minister and a jazz musician. That may sound like an odd combination, but that is who I am. I preach the Gospel and care for God’s people. I also have a deep love for creative music that is made on the spot. Some people think jazz and church belong on different planets. But I’m not so sure.

How would you introduce yourself when it comes to jazz?

Jazz is a musical tradition with strong roots in the church. In fact, jazz began to emerge in America about the same time that Pentecostalism broke out in the church. In both movements, there was an excitement, an enthusiasm, a Spirit-filled passion. Tradition was infused with the power of improvisation. God sent down fire from heaven, and people started to move.

Note on Jazz and Pentecostalism: Following the lead of theologian Harvey Cox, the biblical scholar Ched Myers has reflected on the interconnected history of swinging music in America and the Azusa Street revival that inaugurated the modern Pentecostal movement. Both are works of the Holy Spirit, he affirms, begun among marginalized and impoverished people. His intriguing paper, “Pentecost, Part 1: Cultural Insurgency and Gospel Liberation: Reflections on Jazz, Pentecostal Faith, and the Church,” is available online at www.ChedMyers.org.

It’s curious to me that churches of my acquaintance have often been nervous about a little too much creative energy. They want some of that energy – but not too much.

In my college days, I would play a jazz gig on Saturday night, and then sit in the church pew on Sunday morning. My Christian faith was alive on Saturday night, but Sunday morning was a little bit sleepy. What if we invited jazz to come to church? What if jazz brought the church alive? That’s what this DVD is all about.

Would you describe your church as alive? What difference might jazz make?

The Bible has some noisy scenes. One of them is in the book of 1st Samuel. Saul has been secretly anointed as the first king of Israel. The prophet Samuel foretells some odd strangers that Saul will encounter:

After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim, at the place where the Philistine garrison is; there, as you come to the town, you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the shrine with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre playing in front of them; they will be in a prophetic frenzy. Then the spirit of the LORD will possess you, and you will be in a prophetic frenzy along with them and be turned into a different person. Now when these signs meet you, do whatever you see fit to do, for God is with you. (1 Samuel 10:5-7, NRSV)

It's an amazing scene for me because musicians get out of hand. Not a timid organist in that bunch. Neither were they bearded guitarists playing soft rock and roll and calling it "contemporary." No, it is a band of itinerant prophets. They are consumed by the high-voltage power of their music. They refuse to tone it down or play it safe. Harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre: sounds like the first jazz quartet.

- 🎧 **Would you describe organists as timid? Or guitarists bearded? What is your image of a jazz musician?**
- 🎧 **What would an out-of-hand worship service look or feel like?**

As they make their music, God is in the thick of it. Samuel warns Saul, *When you hear it, the spirit of the Lord will possess you, and you will be turned into a different person.*

Music has that kind of power, unless we turn it down or turn it off. As for me, I want to hear music that turns me into a different person. I want the Spirit of the Lord to possess my soul and make my feet tap like a drum. How about you?

- 🎧 **How has God's spirit turned you into a different person? Has music ever been part of that experience?**

Segment One – The Seven Joys of Jazz


(Timing 00:04:09 – 00:14:53)

In this segment, Bill shares a list of seven characteristics of jazz that give him joy. While musical appreciation is highly subjective, there are at least “seven joys of jazz.” Here is his list:

- 1) **Jazz bounces to a contagious rhythm.** You get swept up in the liberating power of swing. It’s hard to define this, but you can always feel it. Even if the music is quiet, especially if the music is lively, there is a life-giving power to the rhythm.


 “Pass the Plate,” Bill Carter. Originally recorded on *Dancing Day*.

- 2) **Jazz harmonies are rich.** They curl your tongue and straighten your spine. They resonate in honest people. Through a judicious use of dissonance and resolution, jazz chords offer hospitable space for the Spirit’s work within us and among us. The right chord can sink you into reflection or nudge your heart to new insight.

 “Dawn Shall Break Again,” Bill Carter. Originally recorded on *Faith in a New Key*.

- 🎵 **Do we offer hospitable spaces for new experiences within ourselves? Does your church provide hospitable spaces for new people and/or new experiences of worship?**
- 🎵 **Where else does the Spirit find space to work within us and in our churches?**

- 3) **Jazz offers soul-full prayer.** Maybe the tune gives voice to our pain or maybe it releases us in joy. Whatever else it does, jazz brings all of us before all of God. No human hurt or passion needs to be hidden. All is offered up to heaven as honest prayer. Just as in ancient Israel, the musicians become our priests.

 “Interior Window,” Bill Carter. Originally recorded on *Interior Window*. This tune was composed as a prayer for a friend who was dying of ovarian cancer.

Note on Musicians as Priests: “As a worshiping community Israel was a singing people, and instrumental and choral music had an important place in their life. Both in the Chronicler’s Work and in the headings of the Psalms we hear of leaders of musical guilds – men like Heman, Asaph, and Ethan or Jeduthun – who had a special role in the worship service. And, according to the Chronicler, the main function of the Levites was to lead the worshiping congregation in praise and prayer.” Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, third edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Inc. 1976) p. 483. See, for instance, 2 Chronicles 5:1-14.

- 🎵 **Can you recall when an instrumental piece of music spoke to you? Spoke for you?**

- 🎵 **What word might you use other than priest for what church musicians do within the worship service?**
- 🎵 **What is the priestly act being referred to here?**

4) **Jazz calls us to the inevitability of praise.** When all is said and done, everything is going to turn out well. It's just like the book of Psalms. If you walk through the Psalms, you find a voice for all of human experience, but by the time you get to the very last page, everything ends up praising God. In the last Psalm, Psalm 150, thirteen times in six verses, there is the verb "hallel," as in "Hallelujah!" That is our end. That is our destination. You hear it in jazz.

🎵 "Down By the Riverside," a spiritual arranged by Bill Carter.

- 🎵 **Do you believe that everything will turn out well?**
- 🎵 **If it doesn't turn out well, can you still praise God?**
- 🎵 **Psalm 22 is a worthy text to consider. Quoted by Jesus from the cross, it begins with a cry of desolation: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Halfway through the Psalm, it turns from despair to praise. Is this true to your experience – or not yet?**

5) **Jazz is a communal art form.** The poet writes in isolation. The painter brushes alone. The sculptor shapes when no one else is around. But jazz is made in public. It forges a new community. It brings together companions who engage in dialogue. That's what a solo is: a continuing dialogue on a tune. The musicians listen carefully to one another. They blend their individual voices in community.

🎵 "Rumpelstiltskin," by Bill Carter. Originally recorded on *Interior Window*.


Note – Jazz as Community: In one of its classical forms of a saxophone, piano, bass, and drums, the jazz quartet holds great promise as a constructive model for Christian co-workers. This model is collaborative; is collegial without becoming entangled; connects tasks and process, efficiency and emotional fulfillment; creates results greater than a sum of individual efforts; is genuinely needful and appreciative of each member's gifts and abilities; encourages freedom and inter-related effort; has a clarity of purpose (e.g. to create and spontaneously compose music), and leads to a public performance which embodies its purpose; assumes that everyone in the group is capable of performing with a common level of competence.

That is a pretty good way of "doing church." The apostle Paul uses the image of the human body in discussing the baptized community and the gifts of its members. I prefer to think in terms of a jazz quartet. Within the group, each gifted musician has a role. The bass player provides a swinging foundation, stating the harmony and establishing the pulse. The drummer keeps the fire stoked, reinforcing the rhythm and provoking the others to a continuing dialogue. A piano player can play the melody, as others can; but

in a quartet like this, the pianist enriches the harmony with well-punctuated chords. The saxophonist states the melody, before members of the whole group begin to spin creative variations on the tune.

 **What is different between corporate worship and private/personal devotion time?**

- 6) **With jazz, the Holy Spirit becomes an event.** That's how the theologian Karl Barth describes the spiritual life. Something happens in us: some truth is confirmed, some brokenness is mended. The only way we can describe it is that the creativity of God starts doing something creative in us. We are healed, we are released. Somehow in the moment, in the passion and excitement of the moment, God is here. Right here.


 "Let Them Go, Set Them Free," by Bill Carter. Originally recorded on *Interior Window*.


A quote from theologian Karl Barth: "*Credo ecclesiam* (I believe in the church) means that I believe that here, at this place, in this visible assembly, the work of the Holy Spirit takes place. By that is not intended a deification of the creature; the Church is not the object of faith, we do not believe in the Church; but we do believe that in this congregation the work of the Holy Spirit becomes an event. The mystery of the Church is that for the Holy Spirit it is not too small a thing to have such forms." [*Dogmatics in Outline* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1959) p. 143]

 **Have you ever thought of the Holy Spirit's work in your congregation as an event?**

 **Where do you see or feel the presence of the Holy Spirit?**

- 7) **In jazz, there is the ever-present possibility of something new.** An old tune is played in a fresh way. A new melody is improvised over top of the existing memory. The music surges forward, leading us into a fresh future. It offers us possibilities where we only knew of dead-ends. Call this, if you will, the resurrection power. New life breaks forth from the imagination of God. Creative musicians offer this newness for the people who can groove with them.

 "Be Thou My Vision," arr. Bill Carter. Originally recorded on *Faith in a New Key*. It is an example of how jazz musicians will take an existing tune, in this case a favorite hymn, and make something new out of it.

 **Where do you wish God would make something new? Could you imagine how God might create that situation out of nothing, or could use existing materials to re-create it?**

 **Could you imagine God using you in a new way?**

Segment Two – Ways to Welcome Jazz

(Timing 00:14:54 – 00:23:32)

Jazz brings the gifts of joy into human life. But what about bringing these gifts into church? Are there ways for us to respect the music and the people who make it (in church)? Let's consider ways to welcome jazz. Bill has been thinking about jazz in church for over twenty years. As a Christian and a church leader, he suggests regarding it in three different categories.

a) Jazz as Performance Art

As a form of art, jazz is an opportunity for human beings, made in God's creative image, to offer something creative in return. We do this, just like any of the creative arts. We dip into our imagination. We dig out of the compost heap some new insight, some new performing moment, and we offer it back to the world as a gift. And through offering it, we offer it back up to God.

 "Pass the Plate," Bill Carter. Originally recorded on *Dancing Day*.

- 🎵 **When you think of "performance art" what comes to your mind? Now give it a church context. What changes, if anything?**
- 🎵 **Are you an artist? What medium or media is your forte? Would you consider yourself a "performance artist?"**
- 🎵 **As one who is created in the image of our Creator, in what ways do you use your imagination as a gift or an offering to God?**

b) Jazz as a Spiritual Music


Another way to regard jazz is not only as performance art, but as a spiritual music, a religious music. It is music that originates in a person's faith. Creative musicians make something for the benefit of people around them, and for the beauty of God. This is a way to understand a lot of the music that has been made in jazz history. There are musicians like Mary Lou Williams, or Dave Brubeck, or Duke Ellington, who composed large numbers of works with religious intent as a way of honoring God and lifting the spirits of people.



- 🎵 **Have you ever heard the religious works of the above named jazz musicians/composers? See the Discography in the Coda section for a listing of titles.**
- 🎵 **Read Psalm 9. Imagine music playing as you read it. How would you describe the music?**

(See Conversation with the Bible – Psalm 9 – "The ABC Song")

The Presbybop Quartet has recorded a number of pieces that have to do with religious themes. One of their projects began in the Psalms, as Bill reflected on a number of these songs and prayers of Israel, and began to ask, "What kind of melody would go with this kind



of text?” Then the whole piece would be presented as something that would touch the nerve of religious people in the best possible way. It’s not enough to think of music as some secular enterprise when it is done for sacred purposes.

 “The Last Word” is a composition based on Psalm 9. An original tune by Bill Carter, it was written during a pastoral sabbatical when Bill was spending a lot of time with Psalms. He received word of a friend’s sudden death and the tortured, unjust circumstances that prompted it. As he notes, “Psalm 9 tells the truth: that only God has the last word on our lives.” This video clip is from the DVD, *Listening for Selah: Psalms Without Words Live*, available from Presbybop Music.

-  **How does Bill’s musical interpretation of Psalm 9 compare to your musical description?**
-  **Are there times when music gets in the way of the text for you? Share an example.**


c) Jazz as Liturgical Music

A third way to think about jazz, particularly in the life of faith, is as liturgical music, as worship music, as music that offered to enliven the spirits and raise the praises of an entire congregation. There are pioneers who have done this, people who have written jazz Masses, for instance. The first one that we know of was in 1965. A little-known California pianist by the name of Vince Guaraldi wrote a Mass for an Episcopal cathedral. Not long after that, you might know he got a job writing music for the Peanuts specials (The first was *A Charlie Brown Christmas!*), taking his music to a lot larger audience. But one of the things he did was to create a Mass with the different sequences of the liturgical music offered in a jazz idiom.

-  **How does a Mass compare to the worship services that you have experienced? See *The Seven Joys of Worship*.**
-  **Have you ever watched *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and focused on listening to the music?**

There are lots of us who are doing this kind of thing. It is a great enterprise, because it draws on both the historical tradition of this music, which is 120 years old or so, but it brings it forward to this people at this time, and enlivens them. Later in this video you will see what this looks like in an entire service of music as the Presbybop Sextet and vocalist Warren Cooper lead a congregation in a jazz worship service.

-  **Do you know any jazz musicians who might offer their music in a service of worship for your congregation?**

 “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee,” arranged by Bill Carter; “Litany of Confession” by Bill Carter; “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah,” arranged by Bill Carter. Sheet

music for all three pieces is included in this study guide. They are published in *Swing a New Song to the Lord: Resources for Jazz Worship*, a 173-page e-book in PDF format, available from www.presbybop.com.

For now, we simply ask the question “Why not jazz?”

- 🎵 This segment is titled, “Ways to Welcome Jazz.” Has Bill given you any clues on how you might welcome jazz given your situation? Is jazz already welcome in your congregation? What might you try first? *See the **More About Jazz** section for the Top Ten Tips for Planning a Jazz Worship Service and More Questions and Answers for other, practical ideas.*

Segment Three – Secular? Sacred? Yes!


(Timing 00:23:33 – 00:37:34)

Bill: My first attempt to put jazz in a worship service was in high school. It was right here, in a Presbyterian church in upstate New York. This is the church of my childhood. The pastor invited the youth group to dramatize a Bible story. The group chose the story of the Prodigal Son. Jesus tells about a kid who insults his father, takes his share of the family money, and then goes off to waste it in brothels and pubs. We were teenagers. We didn't really know what brothels and pubs were. But they knew what kind of music they wanted for that scene in the skit.

🎧 How does the sanctuary of Bill's home church compare to yours? Can you imagine a jazz group playing in your setting?

Narrator: It was ragtime, the earliest ancestor of jazz. It sounded like Prodigal Music. When ragtime and early jazz emerged on the popular scene, Protestant preachers thundered, "There is sin in syncopation!" The musical sounded too carnal. Too passionate. Too worldly. It made people tap their feet and shake their bodies, and that made the preachers nervous. Can't have any of that in church! So music like that was a natural fit for the Prodigal Son.

🎧 If you were staging the story of the Prodigal Son in worship, what music would you incorporate? (The story of the Prodigal Son can be found in Luke 15:11-32)

 "Maple Leaf Rag" by Scott Joplin. This was one of the musical pieces that caught Bill's attention as a teenager. A fledgling pianist, he decided to work at the piece until he had it under his fingers.

Note on "Sin and Syncopation": In August 1921, Anne Shaw Faulkner published an article in *Ladies' Home Journal*, titled, "Does Jazz Put the Sin in Syncopation?" She quickly answered her own question in the affirmative, presuming that European classical music constituted "good music," and noting curiously that "jazz originally was the accompaniment of the voodoo dancer, stimulating the half-crazed barbarian to the vilest deeds." Some of us believe the bigotry and ignorance of such prejudices are themselves an expression of deep sin.

🎧 Is there something about music that makes it "sinful"? Can instrumental music be considered sinful – or righteous? Or are these judgments brought to the music by the listener?

Bill: At the time of that skit, I had already been bitten by the jazz bug. My mother had an old collection of recordings from Fats Waller and Benny Goodman. Her mother - my grandmother - introduced me to the music of Dave Brubeck. It changed me. It brought me alive. Jazz got into my blood. But it just didn't seem to fit in the church. Church was to be cerebral and unemotional. The cultural expectation was to "think the faith," not

groove to it. The only expected bodily movement was to stand up and sit down. As a young white kid in my town, I didn't know there were any alternatives.

🎵 Who provided your first influential music memories?

As I developed an interest in playing jazz, I picked up a collection of piano music. It was shocking to discover some religious tunes by Duke Ellington. But like the sheet music, any attempt to make a connection went on the shelf. People would tell me, "You have to choose between jazz and Jesus." I gave up a possible career as a jazz musician to go to seminary and study to be a pastor. Again, in a moment of Providence, one of my supervisors pushed to create a jazz worship service at his church in New Jersey. It was an interesting experiment, and I wrote out a little music for it. I blew off the dust from my old book of sheet music and played those two Ellington pieces. But the idea went back on the shelf. It took me a while to see any serious connection between the music that stirred my soul and the Lord who saved it. Somehow the connection began. It grew like a quiet seed.

Then I landed here, in a mountain town of northeastern Pennsylvania. There was an openness to try new things.

🎵 What life choices have you had to make between your faith and the culture? Any regrets?

🎵 What makes it difficult for us to try new things?

Recollections by Chris Norton and Connie Weiss, church members, who recount how jazz came to First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit, PA.

Narrator: That was over twenty years ago. Jazz has grown to be part of what the congregation is about. In addition to the annual service, concerts were scheduled. Word began to spread, recordings were made, grants were received, tours were formed. Jazz even happens on Christmas Eve. Jazz can be one part of what happens regularly in a congregation. With its dancing syncopation and soulful harmonies, jazz has the power to bring people alive. In the church, jazz can bring people alive in Christ.

Once people have experienced jazz as an expression of faith, what do they have to say?

Deb McKinley – "what jazz does for me . . ."

Bill Hoyle – "what jazz does in church: allows a Spirit to move in our hearts . . ."

Connie Weiss – "when I started to hear it, it made perfect sense"

Susan Kelly – "it puts a different energy into the worship service"

Deb McKinley – "It's such a joy to hear jazz musicians"

Dianna Wright – "It's the same song . . . but jazz brought the words to life"

Cheryl Halver – "as musicians are a community, so is the congregation . . . we feed off of that."

Bill: We don't have to decide between jazz and Jesus. Our music belongs to God. Psalm 24 begins with the affirmation: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." That's a way of saying that God rightly owns whatever God creates. If there is a line between "sacred" and "secular," it is always a dotted line. Daily life is the only spiritual life that we have. The work of our hands, just like the work of our imaginations, is what we offer to God. Every human ability can be employed to praise God and pray. Music is one of God's most profound gifts to the human family. It doesn't need to be only jazz. Many kinds of music express our souls and move our feet. All of this can enrich our worship and express the life of faith. When it comes to offering up our complete lives to God, I don't know any other music that does this quite as completely as jazz.

David Liebman – "When you're playing, it's the greatest high"

Dianna Wright – "God loves music, all music"

Bill Hoyle – "We are fundamentally people of the heart"

Dave Brubeck – "An organist played for me, 'O Sacred Head Now Wounded,' and she knew the original words: 'I cried into my beer stein, my love has gone away.' She said it was one of the most bawdy tunes she had ever heard, but Bach chose it because the congregation all knew it. How can people ever put down jazz, or any music that comes into the church through the people?"

- 🎵 **As noted above, Anne Faulkner thought that European classical music was good music – jazz was sinful. Yet Brubeck tells us that J.S. Bach used a "bawdy" pub room type tune to create a classic hymn melody. How does this dichotomy happen? What makes music sacred?**

Deb McKinley – "What makes music sacred is God's Spirit being active is in the midst of it."

🎵 "Be Thou My Vision," arranged by Bill Carter. Originally recorded on *Faith in a New Key*.]

- 🎵 **In light of your own experience of jazz and worship, and having previewed segment three of the DVD, would you agree with Dave Liebman, National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master: "As soon as you play music you are in the spheres of spirituality. Automatically! You don't even know it, and you are." (quote not included on the DVD)**

Segment Four – The Spirit of Jazz: A Conversation

(Timing 00:37:34 – 00:50:36)

This portion of the study guide does not provide a complete transcript of the conversation between two jazz musicians, Bill Carter and Warren Cooper. Let's listen as they talk about their passions: jazz and faith.

- 🎧 **Who is Warren Cooper?** Warren Cooper is a vocalist, composer, producer, choir master, music minister, recording artist, and radio broadcaster. The son of a Presbyterian minister, Warren is the founder and host of "Ovations," a weekly Gospel Music program that can be heard on WRTI-FM. Warren has served the Presbyterian Church (USA) at the local and national level. A graduate of Oberlin College with a philosophy major, he also studied Vocal Performance at the Oberlin Conservatory. He has traveled widely in presenting sacred concerts, leading worship seminars, and producing audio recordings. For more information on his music ministry, visit www.musicmediaministry.com.

Topics in the conversation:

Timing Topic

37:52 Can you think of a time when you felt the Spirit's presence in a jazz worship service?

38:18 The importance of having a song leader

- 🎧 **Would having a song leader or cantor help your congregation's singing? Have you ever tried one?**

38:45 Using jazzed-up versions of familiar material

41:12 These days, one musical style won't do

- 🎧 **What different musical styles or combination of styles does your congregation use currently? What's missing?**

41:56 Worship "by rote" – going through the worship bulletin as a checklist

- 🎧 **Is the worship bulletin and aid or a detriment to you?**

42:26 The kinesthetic factor – physically participating versus watching someone who leads worship

- 🎧 **Bill uses the word kinesthetic (having your body engaged in the action). We know that some people learn and respond best using their body with movement ranging from toe tapping to full dance. Where do you fit into this spectrum?**

Harvard Educator and Psychologist, Howard Gardener's theory of multiple intelligences helps us understand this. For more information on the variety of ways that these intelligences impact our experience of worship and jazz, see the article in the Coda.

43:10 Worship as call and response

43:34 Mystery at the heart of faith and worship

- 🎵 **Can you recall a time in a worship setting where you felt the mysterious presence of God? Can you describe the circumstances?**

44:52 Where can a church find jazz musicians?

45:47 Difference between "doing jazz in church" and "doing church with jazz"

- 🎵 **How would you explain the difference between doing jazz in church and doing church with jazz?**

46:48 The priestly role of musicians

- 🎵 **See Conversations with the Bible for more on the Levites as worship leaders.**

- 🎵 **How might the understanding of the priesthood of all believers affect this conversation?**

47:50 Very little that is safe, nailed down, and predictable in jazz. This is how God leads us.

- 🎵 **Is predictability boring to you? Or, is predictability a comfort to you?**

48:36 Music as performing worship

- 🎵 **How does your congregation handle the dichotomy of seeing music as performance and part of the liturgy leadership? For example, do you clap for the sermon?**

49:12 Becoming a jazz musician is analogous to becoming a disciple. Like learning to be disciples, it takes a while and you are never finished.

Note – Jazz and Discipleship: If you want to learn how to play jazz music, listen to some of the masters, who have learned how to interpret old melodies in a new way. If you want to learn faith, pay attention to the communion of saints who worked it out before you ever appeared on the scene. Put yourself in the pedagogical tradition of the apostle Paul, who instructed the people in his church by the words, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1). Like faith, there is something about jazz that simply cannot be written down. You

learn it by living the notes, under the influence of those who have done so before you.

- 🎷 **Most of us are not jazz musicians, so how can jazz impact our discipleship journey?**

Segment Five – Questions and Answers

(Timing 00:50:36 – 1:05:37)

Segment Five features Bill Carter and a number of others who have the opportunity to ask questions about jazz and jazz in worship. This portion of the study guide does not contain a complete transcript, but provides the questions being asked in the video.

Questions (and timing on the DVD):

- 51:15 What does this music offer in strengthening a congregation in worship?
 52:19 How do we get our music director to receive the gift of jazz?
 53:26 What can you do to prepare people for jazz in church?
 55:02 Are there simple techniques that I, as church musician, can use?
 56:56 Is there any part of the liturgy that resists this type of setting?
 57:54 Where can we find creative musicians who are willing to try new things?
 58:52 When you're writing down a tune, how do you write it so you are allowing for some improvisation?

(See end of study guide for sample lead sheets for jazz arrangements.)

- 1:00:09 How free are you to take the music to the ethereal?
 1:00:52 How do prayer and jazz work together?
 1:01:36 Merging the spiritual word with the music

- 🔊 **Instrumental jazz is an abstract art form. Does it help to know the inspiration behind the music/art? Is it essential for appreciating the piece?**

- 1:02:46 How would you respond to the person who says, "Jazz has no place in church"?
 1:03:56 What do you think the church is missing without jazz?

If Bill Carter did not answer all your questions on this topic, please check the "More Questions and Answers" in the section More about Jazz, where Bill provides additional information "About Welcoming Jazz in the Church," "About Jazz and Faith" and "About Playing Jazz Music."

Segment Six – Jazz Goes to Worship

(Timing 1:05:38 – 1:56:47)

We are pleased to offer a video recording of the 20th Jazz Communion Service at First Presbyterian Church, Clarks Summit, PA. Held since 1992, this annual syncopated celebration energizes the congregation at the end of summer – and draws a full sanctuary of church members, friends, and visitors. For the sake of time, the sermon was edited on the DVD. The full text of Bill Carter’s sermon is included in this study guide.

*Also we are pleased to include the lead sheets for three musical pieces from the service. They are “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee,” the “Litany of Confession”, and “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah.” These arrangements come from **Swing a New Song to the Lord: Jazz Resources for Worship**, a jazz hymnal companion available from www.presbybop.com. They are reprinted by permission of Presbybop Music.*

<u>Timing</u>	<u>DVD Chapter</u>
1:05:46	Welcoming: Doing Church with Jazz
1:08:41	Opening Hymn: “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”
1:12:45	Confession and Celebration
1:19:43	The Psalm (150) and Response: “Go Down Moses”
1:25:34	Proclaiming the Word: Isaiah 49:8-13 and Sermon (excerpt)
1:31:04	Response: “Amazing Grace”
1:35:34	Offering: “Pass the Plate”
1:41:10	Holy Communion: “Welcome Home”
1:47:35	Closing Hymn: “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”
1:51:17	Jazz Postlude: “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”

We suggest that you print out the worship bulletin of the jazz service for yourself and any others who may be in a group study with you. This is an actual worship service in a real congregation, with no attempt to “spruce it up” for the DVD. It will be easier to follow the liturgical responses, the prayers, and the general flow of the service if everyone has a copy of the bulletin. We also suggest that you read aloud the two scripture texts from the service: Psalm 150 and Isaiah 49:8-13.

You may also wish to read Warren Cooper’s opening meditation in the service:

“Doing Church . . . With Jazz”

They say you can’t do church with jazz
 As if God had no rhythm.
 But the Bible says praise should have pizzazz.
 Does the swing beat keep that hidden?

To all things there is a time and a season,
But the voice sings, Jesus gives it a reason.
So how come it gets to be crime and treason
When somebody mixes church with jazz?

They say the church and jazz don't mix.
After all, you don't smoke cigarettes in the sanctuary.
They say broken rhythms never find a fix,
Somewhat like the wings of the tooth fairy.

There are fences that stand in the way of the sight
Of the one who believes that to bebop at night
Is 'O.K.' and then says 'It just isn't right
To swing in the name of Jesus.'

Friends, in plenty of time
Our vision must find
That to praise with pizzazz is
Doing church with jazz.

© Warren Cooper



Worship Bulletin

Jazz Communion Service

*In reverence to God and respecting the musical prayers offered today,
please enter the sanctuary in silence and joy.*

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

Prelude Music	“I’ve Heard the News”	Bill Carter
Introit	“Doing Church with Jazz”	Warren Cooper
Call to Worship		from Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness! Come into God’s presence with singing.

For the Lord is good; God’s steadfast love endures forever.

God’s faithfulness continues through all generations.

- * Hymn “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”
The band will play a brief interlude after verses 1 and 2.

* Call to Confession

* Litany of Confession

Leader: Let us confess our sins before Almighty God.
(silent confession, to the music of the blues)

Leader: Let us confess our sins together.

People: ***We confess the hostility that turns nation against nation
and neighbor against neighbor.***

Cantor: Almighty God, forgive us; Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us.

People: ***We confess our hunger for things that do not belong to us.***

Cantor: Holy Spirit, forgive us;

People: ***We confess the greed that exploits human labor and plunders the earth.***

Cantor: Forgive your flock this day; and help us walk your Way;
and make us righteous; this, O God we pray.

People: ***We confess our slavery to habits and compulsions that degrade
the image of God within us.***

Cantor: Almighty God, forgive us; Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us.

People: ***We confess our indifference to all who have no place to call home.***

Cantor: Holy Spirit, forgive us.

People: ***We confess the arrogance of presuming we are always right,
and our tendency to trust ourselves rather than God.***

Cantor: Forgive your flock this day; and help us walk your Way;
and make us righteous; this, O God we pray.

- * Assurance of Pardon and Passing of the Peace
- * Musical Response "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah" arr. Cooper/Carter

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Illumination
First Lesson: Psalm 150

Special Music "Go Down, Moses" arr. Bill Carter

Second Lesson: Isaiah 49:8-13
Sermon: "As Mountains Break into Song" Rev. Carter
(The complete sermon text follows this worship bulletin.)

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

- * Hymn "Amazing Grace"
The band will play a brief interlude between the verses.

Offering and Prayer of Dedication
Offertory "Pass the Plate" Bill Carter

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
Invitation to the Lord's Table
Prayer of Thanksgiving and Lord's Prayer
The Words of Institution and Communion of the People
All are invited to eat the bread and drink the cup as they are served.

Communion Music "Welcome Home" Bill Carter

GO IN GOD'S NAME

- * Hymn "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"
The band will play a brief interlude between the verses.

- * Charge and Benediction
- * Postlude Music "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" J. S. Bach, arr. Bill Carter

Worship Leaders

Jeff Stockham, trumpet Mike Carbone, saxophone Al Hamme, saxophone
Ron Vincent, drums Tony Marino, bass Warren Cooper, vocals
Tim Norton, cantor Rev. Bill Carter, piano Rev. Dr. Barbara Smith, liturgist

Sermon: "As Mountains Break into Song"

Isaiah 49:8-13

Jazz Communion

William G. Carter

Here are words from an ancient poem, from the prophet Isaiah:

- ⁸ Thus says the LORD:
 In a time of favor I have answered you, on a day of salvation I have helped you;
 I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land,
 to apportion the desolate heritages;
- ⁹ saying to the prisoners, "Come out," to those who are in darkness, "Show yourselves."
 They shall feed along the ways, on all the bare heights shall be their pasture;
- ¹⁰ they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them down,
 for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.
- ¹¹ And I will turn all my mountains into a road, and my highways shall be raised up.
- ¹² Lo, these shall come from far away, and lo, these from the north and from the west,
 and these from the land of Syene.
- ¹³ Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing!
 For the LORD has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his suffering ones.
 (NRSV)

This past Friday night, I took a carload of teenagers to hear Bela Fleck and the Flecktones. If you think our jazz is adventurous, you should hear the Flecktones. They are unbelievable, perhaps one of the greatest groups who improvise and make living music. It's like jazz and bluegrass and rock and folk, all bubbling in the same sauce.

The bass player plays multiple chords up and down his instrument with surreal velocity. The drummer comes dressed like a pirate and creates weird percussive sounds from electronic devices of his own making. Howard Levy is now part of the group, a fleet-fingered pianist who is also a virtuoso on five different harmonicas. Then there's the leader, Bela Fleck. He was named after Bela Bartok, and like Bartok, he creates folk melodies with angular rhythms and odd harmonies, crossing all kinds of musical boundaries. Bela Fleck does that on the banjo.

I think it was the fourth or fifth time that I've heard the band. It's interesting to look around a packed auditorium to see the effect that a 2 ½ hour concert has on the people present. It was a mixed house, young and old, a few in business suits and ties, others in tie-dyed t-shirts. The music cut across all boundaries. As they began to play, some tunes lasting seventeen or eighteen minutes, the hall became more and more animated. The air was energized.

It wasn't what everybody wanted. At halftime, about ten people in the row in front of us trickled out and did not return. They looked exhausted. Perhaps they preferred their music

slower, and they had already heard an evening's worth of notes. But for the vast majority of us who endured the marathon, we were enriched, empowered, by music.

Now, that's the kind of experience that I hope a jazz worship service can provide for you. Not merely a curiosity or even a special event, but a moment that makes our lives a little bit better. We can revisit an old hymn, but bring to it the highest level of creativity that the band can muster. Sure, the way the music first came to us is fine as it is. But perhaps, this time, we can bring it alive in some fresh way. Jazz people are like kids with a chemistry set, cooking up a bubbling stew of harmony and melody in a cauldron of rhythm. We can do something to make this worship service special. That's our hope, at least.

It's the kind of hope that animates the prophet Isaiah. In his ancient poem, he dreams of life-brought-alive. Prisoners in dark corners are carried into the light. Those held captive by the ways of the world are released into freedom. God comes in some unexpected way. Life is opened up somehow. It's something of a homecoming. These people who were prisoners are brought together and fed to satisfaction. Their thirst is quenched. Their travel is protected. And everybody is caught up in a song.

This is Isaiah's dream. Life is brought to life. Nobody expected it, and it happened.

Last Friday night, I looked around the auditorium at Binghamton University. At that moment, the rhythm was contagious and every foot tapped as one. Everybody there arrived with some kind of burden, but in the rush of that syncopated symphony, those burdens were laid down. To the right, the estranged husband was suddenly smiling. Over there, the woman whose hair was burned by chemotherapy was shaking her shoulders. Next to me were two high school saxophonists, their eyes dazzled, their mouths agape, overwhelmed by a fountain of jazzy notes that they did not think possible.

The effect of music, that kind of music, this kind of music, is the closest experience that I have had to the power of the Holy Spirit. No one can see the notes, but the wind is what changes you. And you feel alive, totally alive. God is wherever people are totally alive.

I have a friend named Janna. She's a United Methodist preacher, and a graduate of the school of sacred music at Yale University. She was researching the music of Duke Ellington, particularly the religious music that he wrote and performed in the last ten years of his life. Janna set up an interview with Loren Schoenberg, noted saxophonist and music critic. He also has a reputation for being outspoken. As she mentioned Ellington's sacred music, she mentioned the name of God.

Schoenberg responded, "God? Well, I don't know about God. But I believe in Louis Armstrong."

Then he said, "All I can say is that Louis Armstrong's music offers me the most immediate and fulfilling spiritual nourishment that I have ever found. There is something in the

sound of his trumpet, something in the sound of his voice, that reflects an optimism in the essence of life. It is tragic, it is comic, and it swings despite all the odds. It helps you to put your own problems in perspective.”¹

Surely this is the power to which Isaiah testifies. It’s the power that I saw unleashed on Friday night by the Flecktones. And it’s the power that I have discovered in the making of jazz for the church.

I remember the first time we did this. Our saintly organist could not find a substitute for Labor Day weekend. Maud Thomas had non-refundable airline tickets to a national Welsh hymn festival in Kansas City. She looked at me and said, “Would you play the hymns?” No problem, I replied. It’s a holiday weekend and nobody’s going to be here.

Then she said, “Are you going to jazz them up?” Truthfully, that had never occurred to me. But that was part of Maud’s persona. If you had some ability, she would not let you hide it under a basket. Would I jazz it up? Oh, why not! Last hurrah of the summer, a quiet Sunday on the schedule, no big deal – and then all of you showed up!

How many of you were at that first service twenty years ago? And you’re still here. Who knew?

Who knew that, within a few weeks of doing this for the first time, I would encounter again my college music professor, Al Hamme? Who knew he would introduce me to a stable of amazing musicians who have become like my brothers? Who knew it would lead to the formation of a band, a long list of concerts, and a stack of recordings that nobody buys but everybody enjoys? Who knew we would receive a grant to create jazz hymnal, that Dave Brubeck would become a good friend, or that drummer Marko Marcinko would show up to play here every Christmas Eve?

It continues to be an amazing journey. I may be the only Presbyterian minister who takes vacation time to go on tour with a jazz band. Who knew this band would travel all the way to Corvallis, Oregon to play for six people? Or that we would play the main stage at the Chautauqua Institution to four thousand? Or that Warren Cooper would blow out the speakers at a church in Richmond, Virginia – and afterwards the people of the congregation would come up to thank us? We have a lot of stories, many of them still in the making. Of all the many things that give me joy, I never enjoy life more than when people like these musicians make creative music for people like you – and the whole swinging mess is offered up to God.

We call it a joyful noise. That’s what all of us are created to create – a joyful noise. The jazz here is merely one expression of God’s great symphony. We can believe in God, and we can believe in Louis Armstrong, because we are alive. Thoroughly, completely, energetically alive. And God is wherever people are totally alive.

¹ Thanks to Janna Steed for the story.

Tony Campolo is a great preacher from Philadelphia, one of the most alive people that a lot of us have ever known. He tells about going to speak every year at the Creation Festival, something of a Christian Woodstock with pure air. The Creation Festival convenes each summer in central Pennsylvania. Tony preached on the last night of the festival, a Saturday, and then was scheduled to preach the very next morning at a nearby Lutheran church.

It was a safe bet that the people at the festival didn't go to that church, or that the people in that church would never dream of going to the festival. He even thought about preaching the same sermon. What never occurred to him is that the word spread at the festival that he was preaching the next day right down the road. The normal crowd of two hundred or so people swelled to about twelve hundred. They were crammed into every nook of that church, and due to the limited showering facilities at the festival, they were noticed by the regulars.

The Lutheran pastor apologized to Tony. "I don't know where these people came from," he said. Tony didn't tell him. He especially didn't tell him that most were of a charismatic bent, many from Assembly of God churches.

The service began. The organist played quietly. The pastor came out in his robes. The candles were lit with a hush. Then the pastor said, in a droning voice, "This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Let us come into his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise."

A young man in the balcony raised his arms and shouted at the top of his lungs, "All right!" And all the young people present began to clap and cheer.

The minister was amazed, Tony said. He was stunned. The last thing in the world he expected when he called upon the congregation to make a joyful noise to the Lord was that anybody would.²

But that's what we do. That's what we are expected to do. With whatever joyful noise we can muster, we announce to the world that we do not belong to the powers of destruction and death. We belong to the God of life, to the God who gives new life.

God is wherever people are completely alive.

You can tell it by the music they make.

Conversations with the Bible

² Tony Campolo, *Stories That Feed Your Soul* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2010) 66-67

In the course of the DVD, Bill Carter makes reference to a number of Bible passages from both the Old and New Testaments. Four passages or in some cases, entire books, have been chosen to take a closer look. And so, a conversation with the Bible ensued. You are encouraged to read these passages for yourself – preferably using two or three translations – and enter the conversation yourself.

The study guide writers highly recommend that you consider using the new Common English Version of the Bible.

1 Samuel 10

Levites as Priests – Chronicles

Psalm 9

Psalm 150

Conversation with the Bible: 1 Samuel 10

Where did you go? Out.

What did you do? Nothing.

Saul's words to his uncle upon his return home after his call to kingship are so anticlimactic. But understandable. Most of us have uttered similar words returning home after an afternoon of play with friends or a memorable experience walking in the woods or park, or a date, or, or.... Words just can't express what we have experienced – especially if we are still trying to figure it out ourselves.

Bill Carter often refers to the band of prophets that Saul meets – playing instruments which he likens to a jazz. But let's look at the whole story not just the few verses that talk about the prophetic frenzy.

Read I Samuel 9-10, preferably from the Common English Bible. The authors of this study have found that this new translation often startles us to listen and reread for new insights. Saul goes out looking for his father's donkeys. When he can't find them he goes to see Samuel, and then the fun begins. (Note: *In this story God appears to have a different mind about Israel's request for a King.*)

Samuel anoints Saul as king. Then he tells him three things that are to happen: first he will meet a man who will assure him that the lost donkeys have been found and that his father is now worrying about him, second he will meet three men who will have bread, wine and goats and offer him bread, third he will meet a band of prophets – AND God's Spirit will change him so that he becomes a new person (become a completely different person) and he will be caught

up in the prophetic frenzy. No surprise - everything happens as Samuel says it will. No wonder Saul has little to say when he returns home after all this.

And no wonder the people talk about what happened – “is this Kish’s son?” What must they have thought when they learned he was the king God has chosen for them? In this story, God is determined to save his people Israel through Saul. Unfortunately the story with Saul doesn’t end as well as we might have imagined with this kind of beginning. In spite of later events, in this part of the story we see Saul as one who allows the spirit to change him and to become God’s servant.

So what about the prophetic frenzy? The only references in scripture to prophetic frenzy are stories of Saul which causes us to wonder about the frenzy and his later behavior, since modern psychiatry diagnoses him as suffering from manic depression with paranoia. Yet there are others engaged in this act since he joins a band of prophets already in prophetic frenzy.

- 🎵 What was it about the situation that drew Saul into joining the prophetic frenzy?
- 🎵 What starts the prophetic frenzy anyway?
- 🎵 What does it look like?
- 🎵 What happens to the prophets?
- 🎵 Are they the musicians or are the musicians a separate group?
- 🎵 Are those who hear the music drawn in by the wild notes, melodies and harmonies wrapping their bodies in the sound until they too have moved bodily with the music?
- 🎵 Are they singing or so caught up in responding physically that speech is impossible?
- 🎵 How wild do you imagine the dancing and movement to be?
- 🎵 Would you hold yourself aloof or follow fascinated and be so caught up in the music that you might have to join the band?
- 🎵 Reflecting on this story with some friends I heard something like this, “God realized he made a mistake with Saul and didn’t use this method of calling again.” Do you agree?
- 🎵 What other Biblical characters can you recall that responded to God in some unusual ways?
- 🎵 What about David dancing in front of the ark? Was this a frenzy and David just gets better press?
- 🎵 Does this sort of activity seem dangerous to us?
- 🎵 How does this relate to jazz?
- 🎵 If you are a musician does music pull you out of yourself?
- 🎵 Does jazz allow us to be a different person?
- 🎵 Can and does God speak to us through the act of making and listening to music?
- 🎵 God continues to call people – to fill them with spirit and change them in radical ways.

Will we let jazz be one of the mediums to speak to us?

Conversation with Chronicles (1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles) – “Pass It On”

Ask a trained musician or a singer, “How did you learn your art?” The answer will most likely include that the training came in the form of lessons with another trained musician or singer and practice, practice, practice. Most of us are not trained musicians or singers, so how do we learn to sing or play? Some of us have a God-given gift of music but most of us learn from parents, teachers and friends, it’s passed on so to speak.

In “Jazz belongs in Church” Bill Carter refers to the Levites as being musicians leading worship several times. We find references to the Levites in 1 and 2 Chronicles – books of the Bible we rarely hear from on Sundays, so perhaps a little review will be helpful.

What we know as 1 and 2 Chronicles actually began as one, long book. The content may be divided into four sections: 1 Chronicles 1-9 (genealogies and lists, the story from Adam to the period of restoration after the exile); 1 Chronicles 10-29 (the reign of David, prefaced by a presentation of Saul’s failure and culminating in Solomon’s commission to build the Temple); 2 Chronicles 1-9 (the reign of Solomon centered on the building of the Temple); and 2 Chronicles 10-36 (the monarchy of the Davidic line to its downfall in the exilic period).³

Chronicles is an alternate and much shorter version of the story that covers Genesis to Kings.⁴ The story focuses on David and David’s line with the emphasis on the Temple and Temple worship. In fact, the Chronicler insists that there was an unbroken continuity of service from the tent shrine David established to the temple that Solomon (David’s son) built. So, although Solomon built the temple, it was David who was the author of its liturgy.⁵

In 1 Chronicles 6 we learn about the clan or tribe of Levi, the ones responsible for worship. We find a listing of the priests and one other group of Levites, the musicians, because music is important to worship.⁶ The Levites are responsible for conducting the temple liturgy – a very crucial task then and now. The Chronicler describes the temple musicians’ ministry as “prophecy” indicating that God speaks through the musicians and their music. As Steven Tuell reflects, “Surely our own experience of worship has taught us of the capacity of music to strike deep chords within us, and bring us to a heightened awareness of the presence, power, love, and majesty of God.”⁷

Are there differences between musicians responsible for worship at the Temple and the musicians who lead our worship service today? One big difference is that the Temple musicians inherited their roles. Yes, these positions were passed down through families and not based on talents.

³ (*Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., 1985, p. 163)

⁴ *1 & 2 Chronicles for Everyone*, John Goldingay, WJK Press: Louisville, KY; pg. 3

⁵ *First and Second Chronicles, Interpretation series*, Steven S. Tuell, John Knox Press: Louisville, KY, 2001, pg. 36

⁶ Goldingay, pp. 16-17

⁷ Tuell, pg 102.

According to John Goldingay:

“With our system, music ministry can be exercised for the benefit of the musicians; there is less danger of that with Israel’s system. The Israelite system is possible because the emphasis in Old Testament music lies on rhythm more than on melody; the instruments the Old Testament mentions are mostly percussive ones. There was thus less danger that the musicians’ performance of music becomes an end in itself. There is more chance that the performance becomes an aid to the congregation’s participation rather than a substitute for it.”⁸

- 🎵 **Is Goldingay correct that in many of our worship services today the musicians and singers do the work for us and the performance of music takes center stage? If so, have we lost something critical to our worship?**

It is clear that the role of the Levitical singer and musician was crucial to the worship of God in the Temple setting. They were trained. They were skilled to lead the people. This training was passed on from generation to generation within the family. They were speaking for God.

One of us recalls growing up in a small, rural church that loved to sing. Several generations in this little congregation were trained to sing, to play instruments, and to share their music in the midst of worship. Goldingay’s description of the Levitical musicians, who passed the music on, resonates with our experience. Parents trained children to read music to sing and play doing it week in and week out. In our church, music was elevated to a high level. Congregational singing was paramount, we could pull off a hymn sing at the drop of a hat. Someone would call out a number and folks would just start singing – everybody knew which hymn went with the number. We were Levites without knowing it.

- 🎵 **What is your experience of congregational singing? What is the role of music in church?**

Whether singing or listening, the power of music can bring us closer to God. Knowing that God communicates through music, tells us something important, not only about music, but about *God*. The deepest truths about God and life are not rational ... and worship must speak on a deeper level than reason.⁹ Music has the power to reach high and deep. We need Levites!

- 🎵 **What kinds of music can you hear in your worship setting? What instruments are used? Are they more percussive or melodic?**

- 🎵 **In what ways does your congregation take the levitical job of passing on worship leadership roles to the children and youth in your congregation?**

- 🎵 **How is a jazz musician like or unlike the temple musicians?**

⁸ Goldingay, pg. 17.

⁹ Tuell, pg. 132

Conversation with Psalm 9 – “The ABC Song”

Did you learn your ABC’s by singing the alphabet song? Most of did and we may now even catch ourselves singing it as we alphabetize something. Music takes information to the brain and stores it in safer places than mere recitation could ever do. If you have ever had the experience of leading worship in a dementia unit, you find patients who can’t talk with you but come to life when you start singing a familiar hymn. They may not be able to carry on a conversation, but they often know all the verses to “The Old, Rugged Cross.”

Because music works as an aid to memory it is crucial that we teach the best theology by using the best hymnody. We will remember it for a long, long time. The Hebrews must have innately understood this, because they sang their faith using the Psalms. The book of Psalms contains 150 poems that were set to music and sung by God’s people on a regular basis even though we don’t know the tunes or rhythms.

Take a moment and read through Psalm 9.

Psalm 9 is an acrostic poem using 10 successive letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The alphabet acrostic continues into Psalm 10 and scholars believe this might have been one psalm originally and was divided at some point into two individual psalms. Unfortunately one can only see this acrostic in Hebrew, for our English translations lose this dynamic.

If you look at the sub-scripts under the title you will see that Psalm 9 is attributed to David with the instructions: *For the music leader. According to Muth-labben (or almuth labben)*. The Hebrew is uncertain, but this notation could be referring to a melody to use with this psalm during worship. At the end of verse 16, two possible musical directives are provided – *Higgayon and Selah*. If you are using a study Bible you may find more information in the footnotes.

This is not an easy psalm to read. It seems to be all over the map. Although it begins with thanksgiving and praise, the psalmist seems to be in dire circumstances. Still, the psalmist expresses supreme confidence in the Lord. The psalmist encourages the worship of God, but moves quickly into a lament ending with the plea for judgment and God’s intervention. A gamut of emotions is run through like a gauntlet.

Consider James L. Mays’ description of this psalm.

This poem is somewhat bewildering if one comes to it expecting one of the regular types of psalms. It appears to be a rather formless sequence of lines shifting topics and functions, perhaps determined in an arbitrary and external way by the requirements of the alphabet. Some have assessed it this way. But the composer had an overall plan of composition that carries out his purpose. He used the forms and language of the individual prayers of help and the song of thanksgiving, and less, prominently, the hymn of praise. (p. 71, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, Psalms, John Knox Press, 1994)

- 🎵 **Could this be a description for jazz?**
- 🎵 **Does this fit with what Bill Carter says in the Questions and Answers Segment, especially where he talks about writing down a tune and allowing for some improvisation?**
- 🎵 **Could the psalmist be a jazz musician, or a jazz musician a psalmist?**

While some of the Hebrew is uncertain these days, and the text seems bewildering, one thing is clear – the music (words and tune) was the conduit to a nuanced theology and helps to illustrate a variety of forms of prayer. Set to music, this psalm could move from swing to blues with everything in between. How human and how faithful.

- 🎵 **Do your conversations with God sometimes follow such a movement?**
- 🎵 **Do you ever find yourself singing or humming hymns? What songs come to you in times of wonder and awe? What hymns do you sing when in times of stress or conflict? Do they provide you with comfort? Do they help express emotions you can't find words for?**
- 🎵 **Old words – new tune or old tune - new words. These days we have many options for this. How do you react when that happens? Do you pay more attention to the words? To the music?**

Conversation with Psalm 150 – “How Can I Keep from Singing?”

How can I keep from singing . . . How can I keep from playing . . .

Ever attend a Jewish Sabbath service? Recently I was privileged to do so. When the time came for the Hallel (the Hallel is a compilation of Psalms 113-118 which is used for four big celebrations during the year and on the first Sabbath of the month in the Sabbath service), I became caught up in it – the singing, the movement, the joy was contagious. I didn’t know the tune, but my body seemed to recognize it as it moved to the music.

Then a couple of weeks later in a local Protestant church, Psalm 150 (an alternate for the Hallel in the Jewish tradition– both are Psalms of praise) was a liturgical reading. It was read well but not a smile crossed the face of the liturgist. No one in the congregation responded with movement or a Hallelujah. No one but me seemed to know that anything was missing and sadly perhaps that was only because of my earlier experience.

How can I keep from singing . . .

Read Psalm 150 – if not from the Common English version, use a different one from your usual choice of translations.

Psalm 150 is the fifth Hallelujah psalm that concludes the book of Psalms. Intended for worship, this Psalm in six short verses tells us who is to be praised, why God is to be praised, how God is to be praised and finally who is to do the praising.

How is the praising to be done? With music! A good jazz ensemble will do, one that plays God’s praises and leads us into movement/dance.

Who is to praise? Every living thing. Everything that breathes. Breath that gift of life from God is to be given back, through singing, playing instruments, to the giver of that gift.

How can I keep from singing . . .

How can I keep from playing . . .

How can I keep from dancing . . .

How can I keep from praising . . .

🎵 Which place of worship is your congregation more like?

🎵 Which reading of the Psalms would you prefer?

Consider Mary’s story in Luke, early in the story she responds to God’s call to bear a child with the Magnificat, surely a song of praise, at the end of the birth narrative we hear, “Mary committed these things to memory and considered (pondered) them carefully.” Different responses. Both appropriate.

- 🎵 **Consider which is your normal response to God's acts? Your congregation's.**
- 🎵 **Is the "pondering" (the usual translation we hear) safer? Why? Why not?**
- 🎵 **Do you/we/they need include more than one kind of response to round out our/your spiritual life?**
- 🎵 **Does jazz help round out our conversations with God?**
- 🎵 **Are there times when we need to sing the blues as well as praise?**

About "How Can I Keep From Singing." - Apparently the first publication of the words was on August 7, 1868, in the *New York Observer*. Entitled "Always Rejoicing," and attributed to "Pauline T.," the text reads:

My life flows on in endless song;
 Above earth's lamentation,
 I hear the sweet, tho' far-off hymn
 That hails a new creation;
 Thro' all the tumult and the strife
 I hear the music ringing;
 It finds an echo in my soul--
 How can I keep from singing?

What tho' my joys and comforts die?
 The Lord my Saviour liveth;
 What tho' the darkness gather round?
 Songs in the night he giveth.
 No storm can shake my inmost calm
 While to that refuge clinging;
 Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
 How can I keep from singing?

(Source: Wikipedia. Lyric in the public domain)

The Seven Joys of Worship

These seven joys are adapted from Bill Carter's "Seven Joys of Jazz."

1. Worship bounces to a contagious rhythm.

Rhythm permeates the worship-life of the people of God. We have a weekly rhythm to when we worship, setting aside "the Lord's Day as the time for hearing the Word and celebrating the Sacraments in the expectation of encountering the risen Lord, and for responding in prayer and service." (*Directory for Worship*, PCUSA, W-1.3011). Christians also have a daily rhythm of prayer (W-1.3012; W-3.4000) and the seasonal rhythm of the church year (W-1.3013; W-3.2000).

Rhythm swirls around us in the basic structure of Reformed worship. We gather around the Word. We hear the Word proclaimed. We are given the opportunity to respond to the Word. We are sealed by the Word in the celebration of sacraments. And, finally, we bear and follow the Word into the world. Then, we repeat this rhythm each time we gather to worship.

The Book of Common Worship (BCW) offers this 4/4 rhythm – Gathering, The Word, The Eucharist, and Sending. How does Reformed worship compare to a Catholic Mass? The basic structure of the Mass also has four parts. It contains two main sections and two framing rites: Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word; Liturgy of the Eucharist; and Concluding Rites.

Within the musical composition of the Mass there are many sections: the Kyrie; the Gloria; the Credo; the Sanctus; the Benedictus; the Angus Dei; and, often, the Nunc Dimittis.

However many beats to the measure, the rhythm is God's.

2. Worship harmonies are rich.

In Jesus Christ, the Church is a royal priesthood in which worship is the work of everyone. The people of God are called to participate in the common ministry of worship. No one shall be excluded from the participation or leadership in public worship in the Lord's house on the grounds of race, color, class, age, sex, or handicapping condition. Some by gifts and training may be called to particular acts of leadership in worship. It is appropriate to encourage members and those in ordered ministry with such abilities to assist in leading worship. (W-1.4003)

- 🎵 The harmonies may also carry over in the planning of worship. Do the hymns chosen, the prayers to be prayed, the symbols displayed, the movements of the people, etc. support or compete with the Word and its proclamation? Is there a cohesive creativity to our worship as befits our God?

3. Worship offers soul-full prayer.

Prayer is at the heart of worship. In prayer, through the Holy Spirit, people seek after and are found by the one true God who has been revealed in Jesus Christ. They listen and wait upon God, call God by name, remember God's gracious acts, and offer themselves to God. Prayer may be spoken, sung, offered in silence, or enacted. Prayer grows out of the center of a person's life in response to the Spirit. Prayer is shaped by the Word of God in Scripture and by the life of the community of faith. Prayer issues in commitment to join God's work in the world. (W-2.1001)

In prayer we respond to God in many ways. In adoration we praise God for who God is. In thanksgiving we express gratitude for what God has done. In confession we acknowledge repentance for what we as individuals and as a people have done or left undone. In supplication we plead for others, on behalf of others, and for the whole world. In self-dedication we offer ourselves to the purpose and glory of God. (W-2.1002)

4. Worship calls us to the inevitability of praise.

Within many traditions, there are short call and responses to open the worship service. These have a basis in scripture.

(1) Leader: Praise the Lord.

People: The Lord's name be praised.

(2) Leader: O Lord, open my lips,

People: And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

And you may be familiar with this brief liturgy that begins a time of prayer:

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

According to *The Book of Common Worship*, "Adoration is the keynote of all true worship, of the creature before the Creator, of the Redeemed before the Redeemer" and "Praise is the joyful response to the incomparable gift of God in Jesus Christ, so is dominant in Christian worship"(BCW, P. 35). Praise and adoration is the beginning of our worship. It is inevitable.

5. Worship is a communal art form.

From the beginning God created women and men for community and called a people into covenant. Jesus called, commissioned, and promised to be present to a people gathered in his name. The Holy Spirit calls, gathers, orders, and empowers the new community of the

covenant. To each member, that Spirit gives gifts for building up the body of Christ and for equipping it for the work of ministry. A Christian's personal response to God is in community. (W-1.005)

6. With worship, the Holy Spirit becomes an event.

The Spirit of God quickens people to an awareness of God's grace and claim upon their lives. The Spirit moves them to respond by naming and calling upon God, by remembering and proclaiming God's acts of self-revelation in word and deed, and by committing their lives to God's reign in the world. (W-1.1002)

Worship is often mistaken for personal and private devotional time. It is more like a family reunion. It can be loud at times, messy sometimes, quiet at others. But worship is not as much about us and what we "get" out of it, as it is about God and what we "give or bring" to it. Liturgy is work.

Danish theologian Soren Kierkegaard described a theater of worship in his book, The Purity of the Heart Is to Will One Thing (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1956, pg.181). He said we have it backwards when we assume that the congregation is the audience, that those leading worship are the actors, and that God is the prompter. That may be true of theater, but in worship, the reality is God is the audience, the congregation is the actors, and the worship leaders serve as the prompters. Add the Holy Spirit to the mix, and worship becomes an event of cosmic and life-and-death proportions.

The movement of the Spirit on any given Sunday, may take us all (theologically, spiritually and emotionally) to places we never expected to find ourselves. We need to always be ready for that unexpected journey.

7. In worship, there is the ever-present possibility of something new.

"In ordering worship the church is to seek openness to the creativity of the Holy Spirit, who guides the church toward worship which is orderly yet spontaneous, consistent with God's Word and open to the newness of God's future. (W-3.1002)

Worship-planners, sermon-writers, and congregants should always enter the sanctuary or place of worship in fear and trembling. We are not in control of God's Holy Spirit and worship should be seen as an adventure where the destination is known, but the pathway may be convoluted.

The author Annie Dillard on worship, "Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? ... It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offense, or the waking god may draw us out to

where we can never return. ” (Teaching a Stone to Talk, HarperPerennial; New York, New York, 1992, pg. 58)

- Do we come to worship expecting something new?
 - Do we really believe God is present?
-

History of Jazz

Jazz has such a rich diversity of form that there is no one, complete history. If you want to read more about the history of jazz in all its depth, Bill Carter recommends the following sources:

- 🎵 Gioia, Ted, *History of Jazz ,The* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)
 - 🎵 Gridley, Mark, *Jazz Styles* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011)
 - 🎵 Gridley, Mark, *Concise Guide to Jazz* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006)
 - 🎵 Sutor Dirk, *Jazz for Dummies, 2nd Edition* (For Dummies, 2006)
 - 🎵 Ward, Geoffrey C. and Ken Burns, *Jazz: A History of America's Music* (New York: Knopf, 2002)
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Top Ten Tips for Planning a Jazz Worship Service

Bill Carter

Too many jazz services of our acquaintance have been planned by musicians, not liturgists. Many of these services consist of an opening prayer, a scripture reading, a forty-five minute jam session, and a benediction. Prelude and postlude are optional. This is an unsatisfying expression of corporate worship, looking more like a concert than a gathering of the faithful.

Imagine this: what if a Service for the Lord's Day was planned by both a jazz musician and a pastor, so that each could bring their crafts to the same liturgical event? What if the worship bulletin looked normal but the music would swing? That is what we hope to model through the final segment of our DVD.

Here are ten tips for creating a worship service in a jazz idiom:

1. **Take note of where there is music.** The place to begin is by taking a highlighter to the worship bulletin and marking the musical selections. These will include pre-service music, hymns, the anthem, the offertory, and short liturgical responses like the Doxology, the Gloria, and the Kyrie. Some pieces are primarily instrumental, and others include congregational singing. Both kinds of music provide opportunities for jazz to happen in the worship service.
2. **Invite the jazz musicians to do what they do.** Let the jazz musicians reflect on how to interpret these pieces in their own musical idiom. They may rearrange traditional church harmonies, undergirding hymns like "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" with new chords or they may rework the rhythms of familiar hymns. At their hands, "Amazing Grace" may become a slow blues in 4/4 time and the Welsh tune "Hyfrydol" could make for a lilting jazz waltz. The challenge for musicians is to spin variations on church melodies that are faithful to the jazz tradition and will invite worshipers to join in the music.
3. **It's all about the singing.** This reinterpretation of the music must be done in conversation with someone who understands congregational singing. If we take seriously the "work of the people" (*leitourgia*), then jazz players are responsible for directing the people of God as they worship with hearts and voices. Musicians in a worship service are always yoked with congregational participation, which involves both listening and singing. As the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Directory for Worship* points out, "To lead the congregation in the singing of prayer is a primary role of musicians."¹⁰
4. **Take seriously the power of instrumental music.** This directory also notes, "Instrumental music may be a form of prayer since words are not essential to prayer."¹¹ Like the lyrics of biblical psalms, jazz music suggests an astonishing range of human expression. A jazz

¹⁰ *Book of Order*, Presbyterian Church (USA), W-2.1004

¹¹ *Ibid.*

quartet can utter things in the presence of God that mere words cannot say. A saxophone can lament on behalf of the helpless. A piano may offer intercessions for the needy. A string bass can affirm the firm foundation of faith. Drums and cymbals may call pilgrims to break into praise. If the only musical selections heard in worship are baroque organ voluntaries or nineteenth-century revival hymns, we limit the breadth of "new songs" that God provides for the faithful to sing.

5. **Announce jazz worship.** A jazz service will not be everybody's cup of tea. You should provide extensive publicity beforehand, so that no church member is surprised by the event. Building on the existing appreciation of the music, the service should seek to expand a congregation's vocabulary for divine worship, so that no one will feel intimidated or threatened. Once the word gets out about a jazz service, a church may be surprised to discover how many people may come as visitors.

As mentioned before, our church holds a jazz service on the same Sunday every year. Country or classical music fans know the date, and they can freely worship somewhere else if they choose. Or better still, members can invite friends to join us!

6. **Engage the best musicians you can find.** It is far better to get a good jazz musician whom you can teach about liturgy than to get a church person who knows a little jazz. It is important to promptly pay a fair day's wage for each musician. Be generous! Musicians should not suffer from a church's habit of getting discounted professional services. Search for jazz musicians in local clubs or colleges – or in your own pews.
7. **Provide the best instruments available for musicians.** Sadly, a tuned piano in good condition has become a rarity in most congregations.
8. **Find a local cantor/song leader who is familiar with jazz to lead the singing.** As someone once said, trying to sing hymns with a jazz group can be like jumping on a moving train. After a short rehearsal, the song leader will know when to cue the congregation as it joins in the hymns.
9. **Let it breathe and grow.** It is not uncommon for a jazz service to spill past one hour. Understand that fact ahead of time. Advise everyone that worship will be as long as it needs to be. Don't shut down the Spirit's creativity. Or in the words of the apostle Paul, "Do not quench the Spirit!" (1 Thessalonians 5:19)
10. **Collaborate on an integrated liturgy.** Insist that everybody who takes a leadership role in the service work together to create a seamless liturgy. A fragmented service where different people have their "slots" to fill never ensures a good worship experience. Ensure that the musicians and clergy talk together about the choices they are making and why.

The psalmist repeatedly invites us to sing new songs to the Lord. By collaborating with skilled jazz musicians, church leaders can take this invitation seriously. Jazz in worship can give us an opportunity to praise the God who makes all things new.

More Questions and Answers

What are some questions you have always wanted to ask a jazz musician? Here are some questions others have asked of Bill Carter, and he supplies some answers below.

If your question about jazz has not been asked or answered, contact Presbybop Music at office@presbybop.com.

About Welcoming Jazz in Church:

Any tips on putting together a worship service that introduces jazz for the first time?

- *If introducing jazz is a special occasion, make the event a special occasion and do it as well as you are able. Stick with hymns that everybody knows. Don't blend the musical forms, as an issue of integrity. Stay all jazz.*

How do you convince the old guard that jazz is worshipful?

- *Don't push it. Don't try to convince anybody of anything. Start modestly, perhaps with a concert or a jazz vespers. Be sure to utilize jazz musicians who understand Christian worship, and stay away from those musicians who are pushing CDs or treating the invitation as merely another gig. Before hiring them, inquire on what religious music they have made and created.*

How do you broaden ownership of jazz welcome among church leaders?

- *Broad ownership takes time, trust, and good relationships. There are no shortcuts to this. It takes steady encouragement without being pushy. Open communication. Clear motives. Generous support. Most of all, a willingness to try something fresh.*

Does jazz feel different in church?

- *The air is purer, for the most part. Other than that, there are as many sinners in the church as there are in the nightclubs. Maybe more. One difference: in the clubs, your music is often the soundtrack to a lot of other activity. In the church, a lot of people are trying to figure out why you are there.*

How can we help people get beyond their fears/discomfort?

- *People are afraid of the unknown. The more they experience something, the more experienced they are. Less fearful, too.*

How do you integrate jazz into worship on an ongoing basis, more than the occasional Jazz Sunday?

- *There needs to be an individual (or better yet, a team) to carry it forward. Even then, it must also be an indigenous practice that means something to the church. A form of music must belong to the people if it's going to live among them.*

How do you get others to listen the first time?

- *Play something with substance and soul. People who are spiritually attuned will sit up and take notice.*

What qualities does jazz have that make it a way to enrich worship?

- *Honesty. Creativity. Played well. Neither too “churchy” and canned, nor bawdily secular*

How can we encourage more diversity in music - not just hymns or praise, but jazz?

- *First, if a church has only a “praise band,” it is Biblically half-baked. In scripture, we have more complaints in the Psalms than praises. So let’s call it a Praise and Blues Band. That’s more Biblical.*

Second, explore the extent to which instrumental music is honored for its own gifts. Is it razzle-dazzle fireworks to show off the organist, at the expense of those far less practiced? Is it mood-music to set the scene for a somber moment? Is it a throw-away piece that can be shortened by an eager usher who flicks the switch to announce the offering is over? Or is it an offering of love and skill, to honor God’s beauty or Christ’s austere generosity?

How can this music be brought into worship by congregations that have low music budgets and not gifted with jazz musicians who are charitable or inexpensive?

- *Set aside the money if you think it is important. In the church, like anywhere else, funding follows priorities.*

How do you connect the traditional hymnody with the ever evolving jazz music?

- *Just do it, I guess. Keep it singable and just do it. If a musical piece doesn’t “work,” fix it or scrap it, but keep moving forward.*

How can a congregation learn to sing to jazz as opposed to the tune they know and have always sung with an organ?

- *We forget that organs were once new. It seems like they have always been around. The primary instrument in the church sanctuary is the human voice. The most important choir is the congregation. So what music leaders need to be about is the primary work of empowering the people of God to sing. If it is a new song, it must be taught – and it must be trusted. If it is an old song, it has to be brought alive. Our songs must be living songs, not dead songs.*

Let me suggest the importance of a good song leader. The Jewish synagogue has a cantor to lead the people in song. This is doubly important when you bring a jazz group into worship. The band starts moving and does not stop. The song leader can gesture “all aboard.”

Another practical tip for the musicians is there needs to be some breathing time for the congregation, especially between the verses. A lot of church hymns shove the syllables all the way to the end of the tune. A congregation has to breathe sometime. Musicians can add

a few measures at the end of the tune as an interlude. Maybe even contribute an improvised solo!

About Jazz and Faith:

How is jazz related to prayer? Is there a connection?

- *Prayer is our principal Christian work. It's what comes out of us, and what we offer to God. We hand up our concerns, our joys, our hopes and fears. We want to believe that God can do something with all of these things, and do something with us. If music is one of God's languages to us, it can also be a way that we express what is going on inside of us. The musician has a priestly duty. Musicians lift the prayers that others cannot yet lift. They speak on behalf of the people. They broker the conversation between God and God's people. They are sound architects for the church's faith. None of this must be done lightly. Remember the Levites, for whom music-making was their holy calling.*

What qualities separate a song of faith from a secular piece?

- *I suggest two governing questions: (a) Who it is intended for? (b) Who is worthy of the applause?*

How well do religious words go with jazz music?

- *If there are words, the music is always in service to the words. The music must support the words and should not overshadow them.*
- *If there are no words, let the music do the communicating. Sometimes words can be distracting. Consider how an instrumentalist might be offering music that is deeply spiritual, yet without words.*

How can we promote the idea of jazz to those who feel "it sounds like a bar room rock band"?

- *Make the case for musical training and skill as gifts that honor God. See 1 Chronicles 25:1-8, a listing of temple musicians in ancient Israel. They "were trained in singing to the Lord, all of whom were skillful" (1 Chronicles 25:7). Also, understand that musical genres are not neutral. Each comes with its own baggage, fair or not. Sometimes a Rock Band = Baal Worship. Other times jazz = self-indulgent narcissism, not God-directed.*

About Playing Jazz Music:

How does jazz "speak to you"? Why?

- *Do you remember what Paul says in the 8th chapter of Romans? He refers to the Spirit's work in facilitating our communication with God and describes "sighs too deep for words." That's the best way that I can describe it. Music slips into the crevasses of the human heart. This is*

where God works – in the cracks and fissures of the soul. Music is one of God’s languages, and often it is too deep for words.

Where can we find creative musicians who are willing to try new things, teach it with integrity, conviction and patience to a reluctant congregation?

- *I think we have to make them. Intentionally. We cannot expect them to wander in or fall out of the tree as ripe fruit.*

When playing, how do you know who will take lead?

- *Observation, eye-contact, intuition, trust. Sometimes there are directions written on the musical part. And the music – especially the sections for improvisation – usually has a form which we follow. If the form is 32 measures, we pay attention when it is coming to a conclusion.*

How do you keep things always sounding fresh?

- *We don’t. But we enter each musical situation with as much focus, concentration, imagination, attentiveness, facility, and freedom as we can muster. The great guitarist Pat Metheny gives this advice: “Play each gig as if it is your last”*

Isn’t a jazz solo an interruption in the congregation’s song?

- *It could be, but it doesn’t need to be. A jazz soloist adds one more voice in a different dialect. Jazz is a dialogue. The solo itself is a dialogue with the tune that happens here and now, in real time. It can be a creative contribution, a way of signaling how God’s Spirit is creating something right here and right now. That’s part of the thrill of jazz: the sense that God is real and present, and that God is making something new. Again, with every blessing comes a warning. When the primary business is praising God with a group of people, a soloist should contribute, not dominate. In a worship setting, the soloist is not tooting one’s own horn – but rather enriching the whole assembly.*

How can traditional musicians schooled in exactly reproducing the notes on the page, as written, discover the freedom to color outside the lines?

- *There is a lot that I can say about this, beginning with the observation that a lot of musical education robs the student of the joy of music-making. We fall in love with music by hearing it, but then many instructors teach a rigid fundamentalism to the written dots. There are plenty of pedagogical assumptions that hold up conformity as the highest musical standard. This propels the most potentially creative musicians to the sidelines and blesses the robots without imagination. But I digress.*
- *My response is simply this: those who want to color outside the lines have to decide to do so. They will meet with external disapproval and internal resistance. Yet they will make the decision to stay at it, to practice risk-taking, to try what has never been tried before. Somewhere they may discover that exploration is its own reward. If they chase after that adventure long enough, somebody else will say about them someday, “I wish I could pray that freely”*

What are you thinking about when you are sitting, waiting to play and the preacher is droning on?

- *Bill: Why is my sermon so long? I know I'm talking in their sleep; am I talking in my own?*
Others: Do you think he is going to say something important today? 😊

Do you blend jazz with an organ or a choir?

- *Sure, why not? We are limited only by our imagination and the extent of our courage. Check out the Dave Brubeck mass ("To Hope") or the music of John Surman (ECM records), or the late medieval polyphony of the Hilliard Ensemble with saxophonist Jan Garbarek ("Officium").*

Have you experienced that moment when a fulfilling and technically sound solo becomes more like a prayer than a performance?

- *Yes, I have. It's neither as regular nor irregular as you might think.*

When I ask you how a phrase or a chord progression works, why are you more likely to demonstrate it than to tell me in words?

- *Because we want you to hear it. Words don't always capture it.*

How do you decide on chord structures when many choices of chords or style could be used?

- *Trial and error, mostly. That's the best answer that I have.*

What are thinking of when you are playing?

- *As little as possible. When I play, I listen fervently. If something happens, I want to be part of it.*

Can you recommend a "dummy's guide" to jazz chords for those sticking a toe into the style from classical hymnody?

- *Please know there are no shortcuts for learning harmony, syncopation, or improvisation. These topics are best learned from a teacher. Plenty of resources can be found online at www.jazzbooks.com. Also be sure to check out the books and recordings of Chuck Marohnic (www.ChuckMarohnic.com). Chuck is a jazz educator with extensive experience of making music for the church. His book **Jazz Keyboard Study** (Advance Music) is one of the most helpful jazz resources that we know.*

Would you offer any simple techniques that may help current musicians feel comfortable with jazz?

- *Add a note to your chords – any note. Sit with the note and figure out where it belongs. Or add a hand drum to your choir anthem. Ask the drummer to set up a groove and play with that. Or look to see if you have an instrumental improviser on hand. Weave her notes into a solo, perhaps extending the form of the arrangement.*

Multiple Intelligences, Worship and Jazz

Howard Gardner is a professor of cognitive psychology at Harvard University. A number of years ago he proposed a learning theory named Multiple Intelligences and this theory has made changes in the educational systems of public schools as well as church school classes, through curriculum writers. But, one area of life it has had little impact on is how we worship.

In recent church writings, the influence of Gardner's theory has begun to be shown in thinking about worship. The June 2012 issue of *Reformed Worship* uses this theory (described as "creative languages") as one of four sub-themes. Editor Joyce Berger, in her article "Holy Offerings," says, "We are all wired differently, yet for so long worship has been planned with just a few of our creative languages in mind. What might worship look like if we tried to communicate in a greater variety of ways? We might not all be able to connect with each creative language every week, but communicating in different ways over a period of time might allow us to connect with a greater portion of our congregants, especially children and youth. The goal, of course, is not to entertain but to open up truths of Scripture and reflect the glory of God."

What exactly are these "creative languages" or "multiple intelligences?" Howard Gardner has identified eight so far. Simplistically described, they are:

- Linguistic Intelligence – The person who resonates with this intelligence loves the world of words – spoken, written, read.
- Logical-Mathematical Intelligence – These are the folks who gravitate towards numbers, Sudoku puzzles, logic problems, solving things through analysis.
- Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence – Moving body parts can quickly identify those who favor this intelligence. The bodies might evidence tapping feet, swaying to rhythm, hands knitting, or someone who loves hands-on woodworking, etc.
- Musical Intelligence – These are the ones who not only sing or play instruments, but listen appreciatively to others making music. We have experiences of this intelligence from our earliest years when lullabies are sung or hummed. Today we are surrounded by music in elevators, shopping malls, in our cars, etc. Musically intelligent people will be fully aware of this.
- Spatial Intelligence – These folks know where they are directionally and will argue with GPS systems. They are artists who paint, furniture arrangers and re-arrangers, jigsaw puzzlers. They have an affinity for the visual and are well aware of the spaces they inhabit.
- Naturalist Intelligence – You can most often find these people outside. They are planting, gardening, caring for animals, and serving as stewards of all God's creation and creatures.
- Interpersonal Intelligence – This intelligence manifests itself in communication with others. They are aware of what is going on with those around them and often prefer to work with others on a given task.
- Intrapersonal Intelligence – On the other end of personal spectrum are the people who are very self-aware. They know who they are and why they do what they do. These people

often prefer to work on tasks alone. (Above information adapted from Carol Wehrheim article “Beyond Talking – The Theory of Multiple Intelligences,” *Seasons of the Spirit Congregational Life* Pentecost 2, November 7-13, 2004.)

Reading through the eight defined intelligences you may have already decided which ones are your strengths. Be aware that everyone has all eight to some degree. But we do not all prefer each one to the same level. This is why educators and curriculum writers offer so many choices and varieties of activities. This is to tap into the varieties of gifts – creative languages – multiple intelligences that we all have. No one lesson plan fits all students.

How then might this theory be translated into a worship setting? As we look around at others in the sanctuary or worship setting, who is being included by the worship planners and who are we forgetting? One thing that educators are aware of when using this theory is lesson planners tend to plan to their strengths. Do worship planners do the same?

If we were to approach planning worship remembering all of the multiple intelligences are represented amongst the people we lead, we would know that we are definitely hitting the mark for the word people and the music people, but we should remember the body people and the logic people and the nature people, too. We need to remember that we have at least 52 opportunities during the course of the year to work in all the multiple intelligences or creative languages in our worship settings – we need to be intentional and creative in doing it.

How might involving jazz as a component in worship help? Here is a “for instance” using Bill Carter’s song, “Welcome Home.” (“Welcome Home” can be heard during the Communion Music portion of the Jazz Communion Worship Service.)

Imagine a setting outdoors – evening worship at a camp or retreat, or perhaps in a garden – even if an outdoor setting is not feasible perhaps flowers in arrays other than the usual “church bouquet.” Seasonal flowers from family gardens or yards could grace the sanctuary – roses or zinnias, tulips or lilacs, mums, fruit and other produce, fall leaves, evergreens. These gifts of God could stimulate the naturalistic intelligence of each person. A spatially intelligent person will have arranged these items very thoughtfully so they enhance our worship and not clutter the worship space.

As the words of institution are read or recited our linguistic intelligence is stimulated and even more so when the words of “Welcome Home” are combined with the music. Now the musical intelligence allows us to become aware that the melodic notes mesh with the phrases and draw us into contemplation of an awareness of who we are and whose we are. We see, hear and smell the wine/juice being poured and the bread broken which leads us into thankfulness for these gifts. Our intrapersonal intelligence guides this awareness.

We rise as the countdown to our row arrives (logical/mathematical intelligence) and move forward toward the table to receive Communion by intinction – our footsteps unconsciously moving our body to the music (bodily/kinesthetic intelligence) – we arrive and are greeted with

the words “Welcome home” by pastor and elder as the gifts of bread and wine are shared among friends. We clasp a neighbor’s hand and let them know we are glad they are there with us (interpersonal intelligence). Then naturally we move to our seat using a path that allows others to move to the table without interference from those returning to their seats (spatial intelligence).

In just a few minutes we have used bits of all eight of the intelligences. Done with an intentional awareness of the multiple intelligences or the creative languages of ourselves and those we worship with, we can bring many much closer to the God we love and serve.

Selected Discography

Bill Carter and the Presbybop Quartet

All titles are in CD format, except as noted, and available from www.presbybop.com.

Faith in a New Key
Dancing Day
Fragile Incarnation
Stand On Your Head
John According to Jazz
Welcome Home
Psalms Without Words
Interior Window
Listening for Selah: Psalms Without Words Live (DVD)

Also check out the jazz hymnal, ***Swing a New Song to the Lord: Resources for Jazz Worship***. Available as a PDF download from www.presbybop.com.

Jazz/Worship Works by Other Composers

These are other jazz musicians mentioned in the DVD or in sermons/articles by Bill Carter. The works of these musicians can be found in vinyl recordings, CDs or mp3 formats.

Dave Brubeck

Classical Brubeck
To Hope! A Celebration, a Jazz Mass
La Fiesta de la Posada
The Light in the Wilderness
The Gates of Justice
Brubeck in Moscow (DVD)

John Coltrane

A Love Supreme
Meditations

Duke Ellington

Black, Brown and Beige features "Come Sunday" and "The 23rd Psalm"
First Sacred Concert features "In the Beginning God"
Second Sacred Concert
Third Sacred Concert features "The Majesty of God"
A Concert of Sacred Music

Vince Guaraldi*Grace Cathedral Concert***Mary Lou Williams***Black Christ of the Andes**Mary Lou's Mass***Credits for Jazz belongs in Church DVD**

A film by Bill Carter and Jeff Kellam

Executive Producer: Bill Carter for Presbybop Music

Producer: Jeff Kellam

Narrator: Jeff Kellam

Writer: Bill Carter

Musicians on the DVD

Aisha Brooks-Lytle, vocals

Mike Carbone, saxophones

Bill Carter, piano

Warren Cooper, vocals

Al Hamme, saxophones

Marko Marcinko, drums

Tony Marino, bass

Jeff Stockham, trumpet

Ron Vincent, drums

Tom Whaley, drums

Locations on the DVD

Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, Black Mountain, NC

Clemmons Presbyterian Church, Clemmons, NC

Community Presbyterian Church, Pinehurst, NC

First Congregational Church UCC, Binghamton, NY

First Presbyterian Church, Clarks Summit, PA

216th General Assembly, PC(USA), Richmond, VA

Synod of the Trinity, PC(USA), State College, PA

First Presbyterian Church, Montrose, PA

First Presbyterian Union Church, Owego, NY

Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, McLean, VA

Marywood University, Scranton, PA

Scranton Jazz Festival, Scranton, PA

Music on the DVDIntroduction

How Good It Is

I've Heard the News

Segment One – The Seven Joys of Jazz

Pass the Plate
 Dawn Shall Break Again
 Interior Window
 Down By the Riverside (Public Domain)
 Rumpelstiltskin
 Let Them Go, Set Them Free
 Be Thou My Vision (Public Domain)

Segment Two – Ways to Welcome Jazz

I've Heard the News
 Pass the Plate
 The Last Word
 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee (Public Domain)
 Litany of Confession
 God of Grace, God of Glory (Public Domain)
 Glory, Glory, Hallelujah (Public Domain)

Segment Three – Secular? Sacred? Yes!

Maple Leaf Rag (Scott Joplin, Public Domain)

Segment Five: Questions and Answers: Conversation with Bill Carter and Friends

Pass the Plate
 Be Thou My Vision (Public Domain)

Segment Six – Jazz Goes to Worship

I've Heard the News
 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee (Public Domain)
 Blue Confession
 Litany of Confession
 Glory, Glory, Hallelujah (Public Domain)
 Go Down, Moses (Public Domain)
 Amazing Grace (Public Domain)
 Pass the Plate
 Welcome Home
 Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah (Public Domain)
 Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (J.S. Bach, Public Domain)

Closing Credits

Glory, Glory, Hallelujah (Public Domain)

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Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

arr. Bill Carter

Medium Swing

Chord progression for measures 1-4: G, B \flat m7 E \flat 7, Bm9 E7, Cm7 F7, Am7, D7. Measure 4 includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand.

Chord progression for measures 5-8: G, Dm7 G7, Cmaj7 F7, Bm7 Em7, A9, D7. Measure 5 includes a repeat sign.

Chord progression for measures 9-12: G, Cmaj7 F7, Em7 A7, D7, G7.

Chord progression for measures 13-16: Am7/D, D7, B7, Em7 A7, D7, G7. Measure 13 includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand.

17 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 B7 B^b13 A7 D7 G

21 G B^bm7 E^b7 Bm9 E7 Cm7 F7 Am7 D7

3 3 *Fine*

Prayer of Confession

Bill Carter

F m7 D \flat 7 G \flat maj7 B7 \sharp 11 D \flat /E \flat A \flat m7 D \flat 7

Al - migh - ty God, for - give us. Lord Je - sus Christ, for -

4 C7 \sharp 5 F7 B \flat 7 E \flat 7 A \flat 7 D \flat 7 Gm7 D \flat 7 C7

give us. Ho - - ly Spir - it,

7 Fm7 C7 Fm7 Dm7b5 D \flat 7 C7

for - give - us. For - give your flock this day, and
For - - - give!

10 B7 B \flat 7 Fm A \flat 7 B7 C7 Fm

help us walk your way, and make us right - eous, this O God, we pray.
Help us!

Cwm Rhondda

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

arr. Bill Carter

Shuffle/Swing
G7

Musical notation for the first system, measures 1-4. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music is written for piano in a Shuffle/Swing style. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a steady bass line of quarter notes.

G7

5 *Tune:*

Musical notation for the second system, measures 5-9. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music continues in a Shuffle/Swing style. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a steady bass line of quarter notes.

Am7 D7 Bm7 Em7

10

Musical notation for the third system, measures 10-14. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music continues in a Shuffle/Swing style. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a steady bass line of quarter notes.

Cm7 F7 Bb7 Am7 Bm7 C D7 G13

15

Musical notation for the fourth system, measures 15-18. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music continues in a Shuffle/Swing style. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and eighth notes, while the left hand plays a steady bass line of quarter notes. The system concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.