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Jazz and the 'Art' of Medicine: Improvisation in the Medical Encounter

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Abstract

Improvisation is an important aspect of patient-physician communication. It is also a defining feature of jazz music performance. This essay uses examples from jazz to illustrate principles of improvisation that relate to an individual communication act (ie, building space into one's communication), a physician's communicative style (ie, developing one's voice), and the communicative process of the medical encounter (ie, achieving ensemble). At all 3 levels, the traditions of jazz improvisation can inform efforts to research and teach medical interviewing by fostering a contextualized view of patient-physician communication.

Key Words:

- [Physician-patient relations](#)
- [primary health care](#)
- [patient-centered care](#)
- [education, medical](#)

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Footnotes

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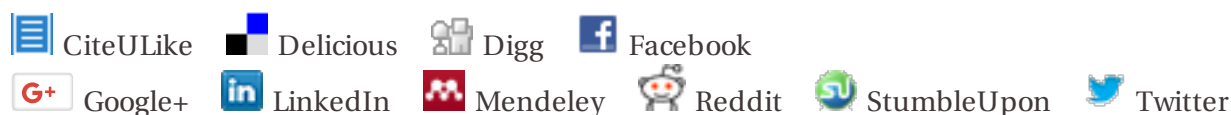
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