

# THE POWER OF MUSIC THINKING



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get your  
copy!*

**FOR LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS**

**CHRISTOF ZÜRN**

# **PROLOGUE**

**LIVING IN A SOUND BUSINESS**

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

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

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

to experience the joinery business from many different perspectives, and I always used the middle door.

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

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

Christof Zürn



**I wrote this book for you,**

the leader who knows that followers can be leaders and **leaders** become **followers**.

and for:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



This icon indicates an exercise

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# **OVERTURE**

**FROM SQUIGGLE TO SINE**



**Let's rock this!**

**Are we in sync?**

**I noticed a pattern.**

**Let's jam about this.**

**Let's pull all the plugs.**

**What is the tone of voice?**

**We should orchestrate this.**

**Does this resonate with you?**

**Let's make a remix of all this.**

**But what is the right cadence?**

**We are in the Gig Economy now.**

**We have to improvise a solution.**

# **ACT II**

**A FRAMEWORK BASED ON MUSIC PRINCIPLES**

**HOW DO YOU LISTEN?**





**TO YOURSELF?**  
**TO YOUR TEAM?**  
**TO YOUR BUSINESS?**  
**TO SOCIETY?**

# EMPATHY

Use this cue for any human-centered activity and service design project. Make this the cue to start and to end with.

**Knowledge speaks, wisdom listens.**

Jimi Hendrix

**The eye should learn to listen  
before it looks.**

Robert Frank



**to understand**

**to listen**

# LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

**FOLK** RITUAL  
cultivated WORLD

TEACHER

GURU

OBOE



HARP

VIOLIN

DIDGERIDOO

PLAY  
ACTIVELY

SITAR

UKULELE

VOICE

MOUTH HARP

TRUMPET



PERCUSSION

SAXOPHONE

INSTANT COMPOSER

BAROQUE

**JAZZ** BLUES  
improvised

ADOPT &  
INNOVATE

ADAPT &  
CONSERVATE

# CLASSICAL

interpreted

CELLO

CONCERT MASTER

BASSOON

**CONDUCTOR**

CLARINET

PIANO

BASS

**COMPOSER**

KEYBOARD

MAKE  
NO  
NOISE

SYNTHESIZER

GUITAR

**PRODUCER**

DRUMS

DJ

MIXER

RECORDING  
ENGINEER

A&R MANAGER

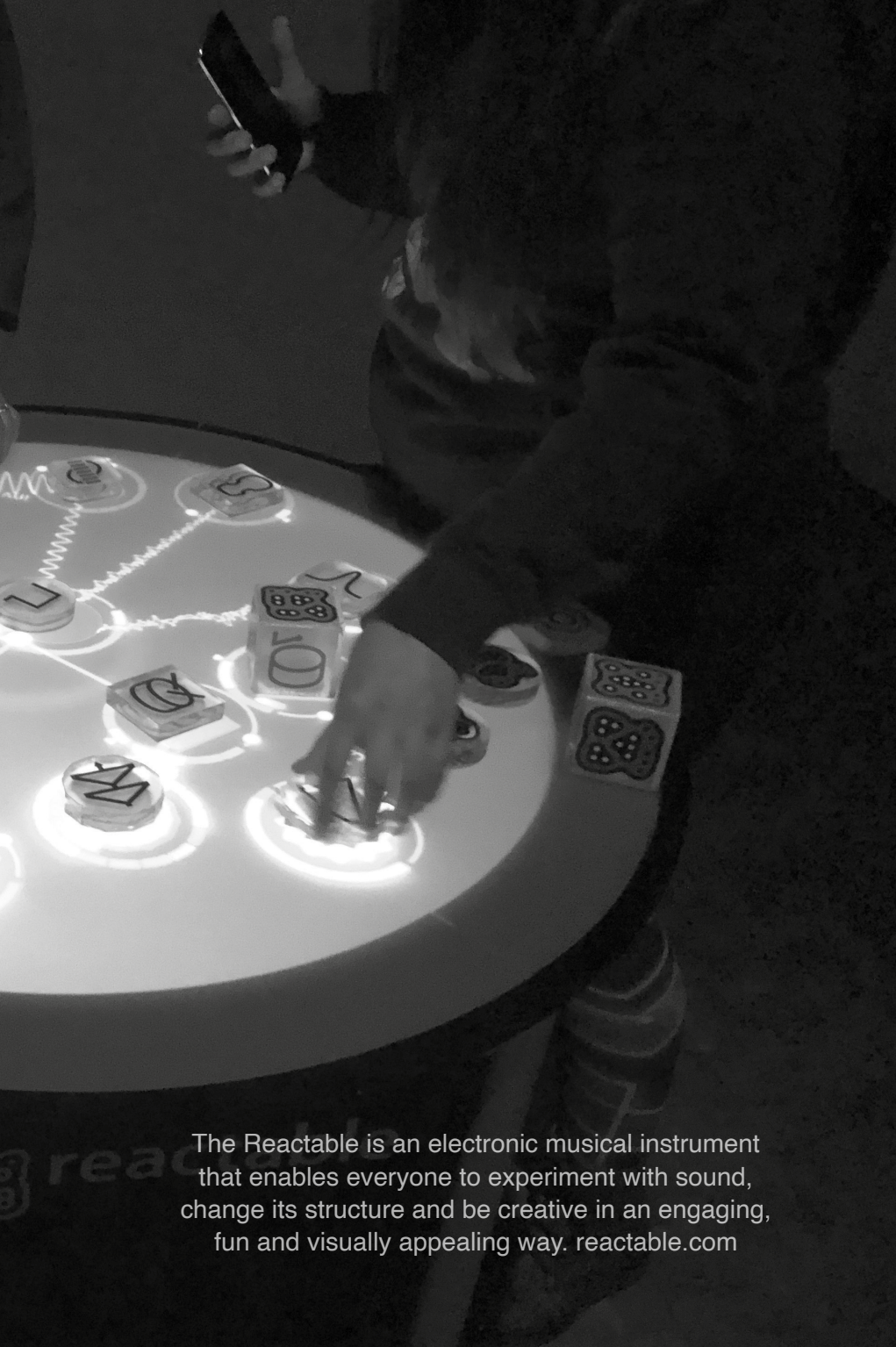
HIP HOP  
ROCK

EDM  
**POP**  
produced



**PLAY WITH ALL THE ELEMENTS**





The Reactable is an electronic musical instrument that enables everyone to experiment with sound, change its structure and be creative in an engaging, fun and visually appealing way. [reactable.com](http://reactable.com)

**Sound is to music  
as Music Thinking  
is to business and  
society.**

**Black is to white  
as off is to on.**

# WHAT ARE YOUR ANALOGIES?



\_\_\_\_\_ is to

\_\_\_\_\_

as

\_\_\_\_\_ is to

\_\_\_\_\_.