Jazz and Experimental Music Center

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When asked to create a Jazz and Experimental Music Center at one of three downtown Boston, MA sites, we chose to situate our Jazz Center within the downtown cultural district. Our Jazz Center’s close relation to other performance venues and the site’s surrounding nightlife offerings and heavy pedestrian traffic would attract more visitors, and help attract a new demographic of jazz music patrons.

Approaching this design challenge, we asked ourselves if this center could be designed as if it were a piece of jazz music, in and of itself. Focusing on jazz music’s strong use of ‘Improvisation’ and its ‘Call and Response’ traditions, we as a group embarked on a formal play with the Jazz Center’s design, pushing the limits of form versus function, letting the exterior shell and the programmatic requirements inform one another in a constant back and forth dialogue. From our discoveries and research into jazz music, we took it upon ourselves to redefine what a jazz performance space is and how it could function. Looking specifically to jazz’s casual, gritty, informal beginnings, we created a more casual and informal space in which to experience jazz music audibly, visually, and physically. To do this we opened the performance space to the lobby and concession space, creating diverse and changing opportunities to hear the music and witness its performance, creating a truly unprecedented experience.