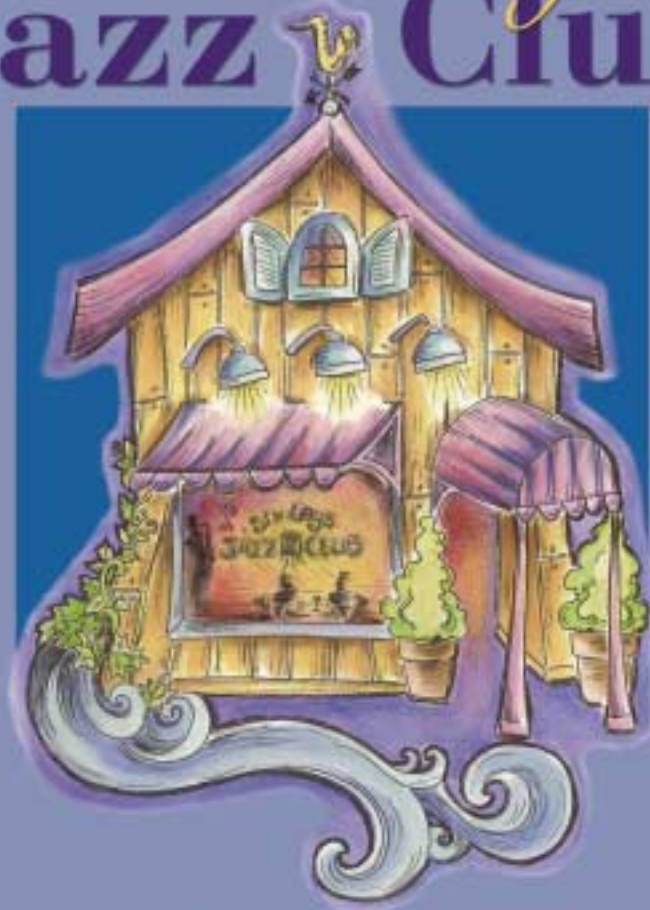


# *Six Legs* **Jazz Club**



*A Journey to Uncovering Your Best Life*  
Dick Cappon *and* John R. Christensen



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## **ACP International Book Review Series**

**Featuring: Six Legs Jazz Club, *A Journey to Uncovering Your Best Life***

By Dick Cappon and John R. Christensen

**Review by Christina Evans**

**ACP International South of England Chapter President**

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For someone who has read a lot of career planning and personal growth books over the years this book includes some very familiar questions. Questions like “Where have I been? Where am I at? Where am I going?” and “What have I accomplished?”

However as I skimmed through this book for the first time I didn't feel overwhelmed with the number of questions and activities that often face you with these types of books. Whilst I recognise that questions are an important part of the learning process, too many can leave you feeling paralysed. As Dick and John point out towards the end of their book we don't need to frighten ourselves with change but instead need to build up our ability to change gradually; in this way building up confidence in our ability to change.

What I particularly liked about Dick and John's book was its narrative style. As I read it I felt like they were having a conversation with me. I am sure that people who know Dick and John would be able to hear their voices in the written words.

Not being a musician, the significance of the Jazz metaphor wasn't too clear to me at first – but it certainly made sense in the end! The need to look for the gaps between the notes when playing a piece of jazz, made me sit up and pay attention. It struck home the importance of creating thinking spaces for my self, rather than rushing from one activity to the next without any time for reflection.

Although not made explicit, there was a theme in this book of needing to balance stimuli from the outer world with stimuli from our inner world. Equally there was a useful word of caution about not letting our rational self dominate our thought processes.

I really liked the nuggets contained in the Appendices, particularly the section on wise words on life, learning and change. The quote by Mohammad Ali “You are the product of your imagination. You are as mighty, as weak, or as capable as you think you are,” reminded me of things that I know, but had forgotten.

Unlike other self-help books this book was a conscience raiser for me – reminding me of the things I know but don't always fully appreciate, or follow. But it didn't make me feel guilty that I don't do all of these things all of the time. Its gentle narrative style, as with jazz music, draws you in gently. It sets the mind wandering.

As someone who writes myself I know how hard it is to say what you want to say in a fewer number of words, so I know Dick and John will have struggled to distil their thoughts into this slim book. But its smallness, in physical size, is one of its strengths. You can pack it in your hand luggage and take it on holiday with you, as I did – this is exactly the time when a book like this can have the most impact. But it is also a book that you will want to carry around with you so that you can dip into it to aid the reflection process as you “travel the road of life”.

**Review by Judy Orr, CHRP, ACPC**  
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**Looking to find or recapture the jazz in your life?** Dick Cappon and John R. Christensen provide a roadmap of “uncovery” in their first book.

I live in a Toronto neighbourhood famous for hosting a world class Jazz Festival each summer. Every July, thousands of music lovers flock into the street to enjoy the unique sounds of jazz. As I stood in the crowd this year, listening to five musical veterans entertain us with how real jazz is meant to sound, I thought of a line in Dick Cappon and John Christensen's new book, **Six Legs Jazz Club**:

*“The musical harmony in jazz comes from a hidden construction and discipline that forces you to listen to the silence between the notes.”*

This is the core message of their book. Only by creating the time and space for silent reflection, can we listen for who we really are at this stage in our lives, tap into our authentic selves and create plans to build personal and professional futures that will bring us fulfillment.

Cappon and Christensen convey their message by taking us on a solo wilderness journey with Tara, a senior Executive experiencing the symptoms of severe burn-out. She makes the choice to take a “time out” to get in greater touch with herself. We share in her experience of “uncovery” by also completing the simple reflective exercises at the end of the chapters. These exercises provide a simple framework and easy to follow roadmap to look into the rear view mirror to where you've been, take stock of where you're currently at and pave the way to awareness of what you need to create a satisfying future.

By examining **What's Your B.A.G.** (*Where have I **Been?**, Where am I **At?** and Where am I **Going?***)

and then **Getting You're A.C.T. Together**, (*What have I **Accomplished?**, How did I **Create?** and What are my personal **Triumphs?***),

you will uncover the clues to a future congruent with whom you really are. The answers to each of these six questions represent the legs of a stool that is the foundation of a more “authentic you”. Whether a career change is in order or simply an adjustment in

your current circumstances, this process will help you discover the solutions that are right for you.

This book's impact is in its simplicity. It is short and simple to read. But only by creating the time for solo reflection and doing the exercises will a reader derive its full benefit.

Are you feeling that you are at a crossroads? Are you feeling like you are on overload? Do you find yourself asking if you are the master of your life or is it managing you? Then give yourself the gift of time to "*listen to the silence between **your** notes*" and experience the words and exercises in **Six Legs Jazz Club**. Your reward may just be that you put the jazz back into your life and live more harmoniously with who you really are.

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**Review by James Voska**  
**ACP International – Kansas City Chapter President**  
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After a great ACP International conference in Venice I had the chance to read *Six Legs Jazz Club, A Journey to Uncovering Your Best Life* by Dick Cappon and John Christensen on the long flight home. I found it to be a quick read with a lot of "thought" homework – and that's a good thing.

As stated in the preface, the book is designed to "provide you with the tools and processes to uncover composition of experiences, skills and passion that make you who you are – and the inspiration, confidence and eagerness to go after who you want to be." Throughout the book, Tara's journey is the example the authors' use to guide the reader through their process.

**The first three legs** the authors discuss **What's your B.A.G. ?** - where you have **Been**, where you're **At** and where are you **Going**. Using references from other authors and life scripts from individuals throughout this section set the reader up for the "homework." The first leg is to chronicle your life. You also create your bio lifeline to help clarify and become aware of the "influencers" in your life. What are your values and what pieces of your future are preserved in your past.

The next leg is *Where are you at?* The first leg "bin of data" from the past was the clarifying process. Now is the time to further define who we are as we travel through life. We can now pick the touchstones from our life and define who we are. This also the time to ask if this is where you're AT, how comfortable are you with your AT position? The AT position can be the most uncomfortable stance. It sits between where have you been, the past and where are you going, the future. It represents the undulating present. The authors' thought work exercises are not easy questions to answer, but they are design to help you decide where you are going.

Where you are going? This section of the six legs is aimed at identifying that every person is a unique package of experience and potential. More exercises to help you

realize and reflect on the number of inner beings, the Multiple Me's. Embrace change...it never ends. If you don't deal with change, you will retreat to comfort of an unsatisfying AT position.

One you have completed the B.A.G. legs of your journey, **the next three legs are getting your A.C.T. together.** The first leg of this journey is *What have I Accomplished?* How have you expanded your universe? It defines you in terms of strengths, skills, talents, challenges and values. *How did you Create what you did?* This part highlights the extent of your creativity and level of risk taking. An opportunity for you to look below the surface of your life's accomplishments. The final leg is *What were your personal Triumphs?* These triumphs play to your passions and interest. They translate into living a bigger reality where feelings behind what we do as important as the facts. Triumphs impact your satisfaction and joy, probing your skills and interest, and they relate to your spirit. Your triumphs are a celebration of yourself. Again there are exercises for the reader to engage.

There is an appendix with 10 *Change Actions for Success.* After reading and taking the time to do the exercises, these action steps help focus on specific actions one needs to execute on a regular basis if one wants to live up to ones potential.

At the beginning of this review, I indicated that *Six Legs Jazz Club* was a quick read. The thought and work required of the exercises is life long, as it should be. If you do not want to even think about making changes into your life, then I would recommend that you do not read and use this book. But, if you or someone you know is looking for their potential, then this is a great place to begin. The data bin that you uncover about yourself and your life journey is well worth your time and your effort. After all, it's your life.