

# Happy Birthday, David Audretsch: And All That Jazz



**Monika Herzig**

**Abstract** Being honored to contribute to this special Festschrift and express gratitude to David, chapter author Monika Herzig refers to David as, “my brilliant, generous, funny, and inspirational colleague at Indiana University.” Herzig chose to write a personal salute to David and a celebration of community, as her expertise is the collaborative and improvisatory art form of jazz music.

## All That Jazz

The School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University fosters an interdisciplinary community and with David’s inspiration I was able to integrate the artistic practice of jazz as a model for the creative aspect of entrepreneurship. David Audretsch’s support and encouragement played a major role in combining the fields and building bridges amongst the disciplines. Being a facilitator and building bridges is the trademark of a great visionary like David – this is my example, the transformational story from the entrepreneurial artist to the artistic entrepreneur.

More than 30 years ago, I arrived in Tuscaloosa at the University of Alabama with a one-year scholarship on a one-way ticket from Germany. I was determined to create a career as a musician and composer and tour the world. I quickly realized that besides putting in many hours of practice I also needed to hone my business and entrepreneurial skills finding places to play, producing recordings, running a record label, running non-profit organizations, marketing and advertising, branding, creating business plans and itineraries and so much more. Most of these skills were acquired by trial and error and many detours. Hence, after finishing my Doctorate at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and teaching about any music class possible I decided to create a course that would help future generations of musicians and music professionals avoid the detours and move quickly towards their goals.

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The Music Industry courses that I designed eventually became popular ingredients of a new Arts Administration program, the vision of Chuck Bonser, former Dean of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) at Indiana University.

The breadth of fields and degree offerings in SPEA is quite broad, and I found myself working next to experts in governance, law, chemistry, biology, non-profit management, business, entrepreneurship and so much more – initially quite confusing and the cause of a bit of an identity crisis. In my quest of finding role models, I put a book together on legendary jazz educator and one of my biggest mentors David Baker and worked with him on an analysis of the unique dynamics of jazz jam sessions. As a result of our research, we were able to extract seven essential factors of jam sessions that facilitated creative group interaction.

Former Dean Bonser sensed my need to find my niche and like-minded individuals and one day walked me into David Audretsch's office to meet this brilliant individual and share about my work on group creativity. David showed a genuine interest in the model and we laughed and chatted for hours about jazz and Germany and entrepreneurship and so much more. He loved the idea and of course immediately had stories to exemplify the concepts. My favorite one is how he gets his students to realize that it's ok to come up with different solutions for the same problem. He will play Julie Andrews singing "My Favorite Things" for his students and then put on the famous jazz version by John Coltrane. Even though the recordings have very little in common in terms of style, performance, or concept, it's still the same song just different interpretations – both are different solutions to the same problem. Little did David know how important this message and his encouragement was for me in my academic identity crisis.

A few weeks later, a dynamic young man with a British/Russian accent knocked on my door and told me that David had sent him over to learn about my jam session model. Maksim Belitski is an Entrepreneurship expert from the Henley School of Business in Reading, UK. David thought we should collaborate and boy was he right. Maks helped me translate the model into his field, we published together and I even got to spend several weeks in Reading teaching his students and creating an Arts Entrepreneurship course. In the meantime, David invited me to write a chapter on group creativity for a book on Entrepreneurship, facilitated the publication of our article, and extended an invitation to a Berlin conference with his colleagues. Just by opening the doors to all of these opportunities he transformed me into the academic with the necessary credentials and confidence that integrated me into the SPEA community and solved my identity crisis. He believed in me to the extent of making me a co-author for one of his many book projects when others dismissed me as a homeless jazz musician among real academics. He built bridges by facilitating connections, providing encouragement, telling stories – and he always made me laugh.

Oh – and do ask me sometimes about the evening when the international gathering of Entrepreneurship professors decided to go to the Yorkschlößchen in Berlin, Kreuzberg to witness a live jazz jam session. Neither the professors nor the musicians were quite sure what to expect from each other. I joined the group of musicians on stage and soon had everyone cheering and snapping fingers, witnessing the

unique and immediate interaction during a jazz jam session. A picture is worth a thousand words, they say, and no scientific paper presentation and discussion could have clarified the principles of the jam session model as clearly as this evening's live demonstration. But it took someone to facilitate the conference and the communal evening activity in order to make the connection between the fields and experts, and that someone was sitting at the back table sipping a beer and observing the process with a big smile. Another Entrepreneurship mission accomplished –

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for believing in this jazz musician, helping me connect the dots, building my confidence and research skills, writing countless letters of recommendations, and guiding me towards finding the ideal balance of creativity and research. And of course, you have permission to single me out in every meeting and use me as the odd example to make everyone laugh. I'm hoping on many more years of fascinating collaborations, travels, jam sessions, dinners, and most of all laughter.