IASJ

International Association of Schools of Jazz

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From the Artistic Director

I wish you all the best as spring finally approaches. We had quite a tough winter in the northeast of America combined with such terrible economic news for so many people. Let's hope things will be brighter as the weather changes.

Though I don't like to use these columns as an advertisement for my activities, the events of a recent stay in Paris bring out a point which I will make below. Bear with me as I describe these very interesting days in March 2009 performing with the Ensemble Intercontemporain, the premier "new music" group founded by Pierre Boulez in the '70s dedicated to contemporary music. The group is made up of soloists who can read ANYTHING on paper, but of course are not improvisers. Thanks to good luck and timing I was invited by the assistant conductor, a tremendous musician, Susanna Malkki to be the first improviser to perform with the ensemble. She chose several of my solo tenor and soprano recorded tracks from over the years as a basis to invite arrangements from Finnish composer Timo Hietala, French jazz musicians Christophe Dal Sasso and one of the IASJ's most important and supportive members who is the head of the jazz department at the Paris Conservatory, Riccardo Del Fra. The music was truly a mixture of influences that resulted in a new and fresh combination with me improvising over the written music. Of course, Gunther Schuller's "Third Stream" movement of the early '60s as well as many performances of classical and jazz have been done before. But for the EIC to do it is another story.

The same week I taught both the classical and jazz saxophonists at the Paris Conservatory, all together for the entire day. By the way, Claude DeLangle who is the classical teacher is probably the greatest saxophone player I have ever heard-you should check him out. And finally, I took part in a musical meeting stemming from my visit to the Sahara desert a few years ago, specifically the country of Mauritania where I discovered the music of a living treasure from that area, singer Dimi Mint Abba who was in Paris to perform as well during these days.

Along with the award that our Chairman, Karlheinz 'Charlie' Miklin received from the Austrian cultural life for his contributions, the point is clear. We, as jazz folks know the value of our music, its contribution to world culture and importance for the past one hundred years of music history. It appears that as a direct result of the

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