From the Artistic Director

It has been a long time between this IASJ Newsletter and the last one. Much time and energy has been spend to strengthen the IASJ organization. Continued progress is being made in the IASJ Service Bureau to smooth out administrational business. We have to always remember that the IASJ is a volunteer organization and besides membership fees, we have no source of income. This is quite problematic obviously, but the IASJ Board is attempting to work these things out.

I am sending a personal letter to the Regional Coordinators which will detail their responsibilities and duties. We need input from everyone to keep the IASJ vibrant and alive.

The 4th. Annual IASJ Jazz Meeting in Graz, Austria, was a huge success, in a large part due to the outstanding organizational capabilities of Charlie Miklin and his aide Sigi Feigl as well as the wonderful facilities in the Music Academy which has such a long history of jazz education in Europe. Of course, it was a great help to have funding from the city of Graz, especially as it was used to commission original big band pieces by five composers from different IASJ member schools. The pieces were extremely challenging and were played very professionally by the Graz Music Academy Big Band. This band, conducted by Stejepko Gut, really worked hard rehearsing. During the Final Concert four of the arrangers conducted their own pieces. Along with the combo performances which as usual featured many original compositions, the presentation of student pieces is an important function of the IASJ Jazz Meetings and of the IASJ in general: the promotion and encouragement of original, creative works of art.

I was also very proud of how we impressed the President of the IAJE (International Association of Jazz Educators) Dennis Tini and his wife, April, who visited the IASJ Jazz Meeting in Graz for a few days. A recent issue of the IAJE Journal had a long article about our meeting. It's positive for us to be in good communication with their organization, the IAJE, and of course to pursue our own independent course. Our intimate, one on one contact is what distinguishes us from IAJE and it truly makes the IASJ special.