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NEWSLETTER

Editor: Wouter Turkenburg
Coordinator: Marloes Kouwenberg
Layout : Anka Koziel
Text editor: Dominy Clements

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For information, please contact:
IASJ • J. van Stolberglaan 1
2595 CA The Hague • HOLLAND
Tel +31.70.315.14.84
Fax +31.70.315.15.18
Email info@iasj.com
http://www.iasj.com

From the Artistic Director

We are obviously going through a global situation vis-a-vis world economics and politics. Just today in downtown Manhattan, protesters who have been demonstrating on Wall Street for the past few weeks were dispersed by the police for the time being. This "protest" has grown beyond New York, and in a way reminds me of the anti-Vietnam days in the '60s. The present demonstrations seem to be more of a cry for attention than a petition for change at this point, but who knows where it will lead. Look at the Arab Spring.
Meanwhile jazz goes on its merry way, albeit with fewer gigs and less government support (particularly felt in Europe). At the Manhattan School of Music where I am Artist in Residence, the new class of graduate Master degree students is the largest ever. In fact, MSM seems to be turning into a predominantly graduate school. As many of you know, one year of school in the U.S. at that level cost about $40-50,000 depending upon one's living situation. My boss, Justin DiCioccio commented that older students who have been through undergraduate studies are more serious about getting a degree and ready to commit to the financial burden, because the widely held belief is that a Masters degree is a necessity. In fact, more and more graduate students looking towards securing a college teaching position after so many years of schooling perceive a Doctorate as mandatory at the very least.

Another observation on the present situation in our field is that a whole new generation has been brought up with the idea that one doesn't pay for music. When you think about it, the idea of paying for music is only a few hundred years old. Even more amazing is the concept of receiving royalties for something not done in the present, but rather based on a past accomplishment, like recording or writing a tune. Obviously a blanket statement like this has many exceptions, but the point is clear. YouTube and the Internet in general have both been very influential in spreading jazz (You can see Coltrane in your pajamas in your bedroom!!).
This instant and ubiquitous communication is one of the main reasons such high levels of expertise now exist worldwide, and little boy/girl wonders appear at younger and younger ages. MSM students are from many "new" countries such as Turkey, Indonesia, South Korea, etc., a reality in many schools these days. The down side of this phenomenon is that one can hear and see music from the past and the immediate present for free, since transmission technology is consistently improving as I write. Forget royalties my friend!! I just did my birthday celebration at Birdland with the first sets of two nights broadcast on livestream.com, available for one year on the site.... FOR FREE!!

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