From the Artistic Director

AS I WRITE to you in mid September right around John Coltrane's 75th birthday, September 23rd, we are in the middle of this terrorist tragedy here in America and by implication worldwide. Not knowing what the near future will bring is discomforting for all of us, especially for those like myself who travel for a living playing and teaching jazz. In fact, for myself, music seems rather insignificant in the face of such dramatic events and the death that touched many of us in the New York area personally. However, we must go on and as educators continue to hold the light up for young people to see and strive for. Artistic creation is a demonstration of what the positive side of our species is capable of, and we are among the custodians of that process for this period in history. Therefore we have a duty to persevere and inspire through the music we love and respect. Onward we go…

With students, teachers and representatives from 21 countries, the 12th Annual IASJ Jazz Meeting hosted by the Berklee School in Boston in June 2001 was a huge success. The atmosphere there is very serious with state of the art equipment, a media center and library, as well as a first class hall where the final concerts were performed, the Berklee Performance Center. An interesting note-the McDonalds next to the school must be the only one in the world where there are pictures of Miles, Bird and other jazz legends rather than Ronald McDonald!! I was very gratified to see first time participation by teachers and students from Greece, Hungary and Argentina as well as the usual attendees Israel, Japan, most of Europe and the U.S. Besides the normal activities which included jam sessions, performances by both teacher and student ensembles, pedagogical meetings and the like, we had some very interesting lectures by Gary Burton on improvisation, Steve Prosser on intervallic ear training approach, trumpeter Tiger Okoshi on Japanese music and several members of the technology department. After twelve years of these meetings held in different countries each year and participation by nearly 1000 people, it still amazes me at how the students interact and perform at such a high level. We had the opportunity to record all the groups for a CD and the final ensemble concerts are archived at the Berklee web site www.berklee.edu (listed under activities, IASJ Jazz Meeting). A CD of the combo recordings is forthcoming to all the attendees. Our organization, which is completely volunteer-based, provides a real service for both the jazz and world community and I am gratified that our vision goes on and on.

Next June, the 13th Annual Jazz Meeting will be in Helsinki, Finland, jointly hosted by the Sibelius Academy, the Pop and Jazz Conservatory and Helsinki Polytechnic Institute. I have done a lot of performing and teaching in Helsinki, so I know first hand what an interesting country Finland is. The people are like nowhere else in Europe, extremely disciplined, respectful of art, quiet by nature but deep in thought. Finland is reputed to have more concert halls and orchestras per capita than most other countries worldwide. The UMO Orchestra which is the state supported big band has been around for decades and plays at the highest level one can hear anywhere, having also hosted every notable player and writer in jazz. Their jazz club will be our venue for at least several performances. The city is beautiful, especially during the long sunlit days of summer when we will be there. We will take advantage of the fine weather to have an excursion into the country and outdoor concerts. There will be some musical sharing between the folk musicians of Finland and some of our staff as well as a performance by folk practitioners.

There is a strong possibility that we will once again be able to record the international combos.

I hope that all of you will attend. For now, my family, Caris and Lydia, and myself wish you the best during the school year, for the Christmas holidays and New Year.

DAVE LIEBMAN