From the Editor

On November 4th 2001 the IASJ had been existing for ten years. It was Odette Bruinzeel, the new IASJ Service Bureau Coordinator who reminded me of this. She was going through the Chamber of Commerce papers to register the new IASJ Board Members when on one of the papers she saw the date the IASJ officially came into existence: 4 November 1991. I will never forget that day. The two years prior to that day were stormy. Maybe after three or four IASJ Jazz Meetings the whole thing would fall apart. Some people saw the IASJ as just an anti-group of the IAJE. There was no clarity on the financial implications of starting the IASJ. But all these major problems were not important the day the IASJ was officially established. In the days before and after the 4th of November of 1991 a strong northwestern wind of force ten was testing the Dutch dikes. It did not help that I told Graham Collier, with whom I was supposed to sign the first official IASJ paper, the IASJ Charter, that the office of the notary was two meters below sea level. Graham had arrived the night before. Because of the storm his airplane arrived late and the hotel I had booked him in had given away his room. We needed more cash in order to pay a more expensive hotel, so Graham and I had to go to one of the 24-hour exchange offices in one of the main streets in Amsterdam. These offices have desks that are sticking out into the street. It is still a miracle to me how it happened but the passport of Graham got stolen. Now we did have money but the hotel insisted in having a passport before check in. We had to go to a police station to report the theft and to receive an official document reporting what happened. After all problems were solved it was well after midnight. The next day we went to the notary. In the crowded center of The Hague I found a parking place only half a block away from the office. The very moment we left the car the storm was at its strongest. Heavy rains and strong winds were rather announcing the end of times than the beginning of some new jazz organization. Graham, in an effort to save the door of the car from being blown away, tore the seam on his shoulder on his jacket. We both wore rain coats but in a storm like this you need diving suits in order not to get wet. When we entered the hallway of the palace that turned out to be the office of the notary we looked like two drowned cats. A cup of coffee was served while we were waiting in a room before the notary could see us. As it turned out later this notary worked for the Dutch government, normally dealing with state affairs. Most likely his secretary had told him that I was from the Royal Conservatory so he must have thought that something important for the Dutch monarchy was at stake. I will never forget the disbelief in his eyes when he first saw us. In front of him were the head of the jazz department of the Royal Academy of Music in London, soaked, his jacket torn apart and with no passport and the head of the jazz department of the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, also soaked and nervously trying to explain it all. These two men wanted to establish an International Association of Schools of Jazz. It was the sense of humor of the notary that saved the situation. He was willing to acknowledge the IASJ Charter and asked Graham to send him a photocopy of his new passport once he had one. He wished us good luck because he thought we needed it and he was right. Graham and I were happy. We had a good diner that night to celebrate our victory over bad luck. After this not much more could go wrong. As it turned out the Charter of the IASJ is still as valid as it was ten years ago. The visions we had than were right and they have stood the test of time so far. Going through the stormy times of the beginning years the IASJ has only become stronger and is ready for any ocean now.

At the next IASJ Jazz Meeting in Helsinki, Finland there will surely be a moment when we will toast to the first ten years. It is nice to look back every once and awhile but I am sure that once the toast has been proposed most of the IASJ jazz students, teachers and staff members will talk about the future more than about the past. And that is exactly why the IASJ is established for: the future.

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