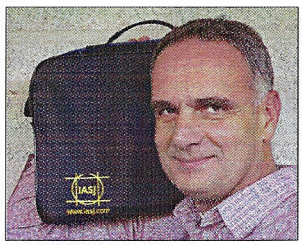
FROM THE EDITOR



The Turn of the Century

When Ornette Coleman recorded his now famous LP's in the late fifties he definitively was aware of what was going on at that time. He had no difficulty calling his records "Tomorrow is the Question", "Change of the Century" and "The Shape of Jazz to Come". No modesty here! If you listen to these records now you can still hear that Ornette Coleman really pushed the envelope by leaving tonality behind and moving into the a-tonality of Free Jazz. However, outside jazz, a-tonal music existed already for half a century. This step in the development in music had already been made! Ornette Coleman must have been aware of this. Applying the principles of a-tonality to jazz was new and of course it shocked a lot of people, even today. On the other hand, the irregular phrasing of the Bebop players was at least as shocking twenty years earlier but was not appreciated in the same terms as the shift from Hard Bop to Free Jazz. Why did Ornette Coleman give his records in the late fifties such titles? Ornette knew how to push the envelope of musical development and at the same time he was well aware of what he was doing. This combination of musical innovation and historical awareness does not always go hand in hand. It did in the case of Coleman although the validity of the titles of his records became evident much later, in the decades that followed.

I hesitate to use the same kind of terminology for the state of jazz of today as Ornette Coleman did for his music half a century ago. It is clear that the first decade of this new century is a decade of changes. In the past, changes in jazz went hand in hand with changes in the media. The pianola, the 78-player, the radio, the LP, the CD; whenever there was a paradigm shift in mass media, a new style in jazz came along. Nowadays MP3 and DVD are taking over from CD and the TV is loosing ground to the Internet. In jazz the traditional succession of styles has come to an end. There is no longer an avant-garde that is taking over from some old school. There are no true revolutionaries anymore nor will the next "Great Man" come along to step in the footsteps of for example a Miles Davis. Jazz is definitively not dead but reinventing and redefining itself.

Schools of jazz play a major role in this process. For a number of years students of jazz are shielded by their school so they can learn, experiment and start playing jazz the way they want to make it sound. Nowadays all former styles in jazz are equal to them and are also equally at their disposal. Jazz students know classical music, pop and world music as well and incorporate elements of all of these idioms in their compositions and improvisations. It is the task of the IASJ to support their efforts. The IASJ Jazz Meetings are the ideal playgrounds to test the shape of jazz to come. Tomorrow is the question indeed; the IASJ surely provides a large part of the answer.

Walter Turkenburg
Editor

In Memoriam Hans Gruber

It is with great sadness that I inform those of you who don't know that the publisher of Advance Music, Hans Gruber died in late January after a several years battle with cancer. Some of you may not know that Hans was one of the first to hold large clinics with Jamey Aebersold and myself in the early 1980s in Rottenburg, Germany, which eventually lead to him founding Advance Music aided by his wife Veronika. One of my books was among his first publications and since then the catalogue has branched out into chamber music, big band charts and of course the great instructional books. Hans was a good friend to many musicians. His products were first class, well presented, excellently edited and marketed with class and distinction. He set a standard that still remains the highest in jazz publications worldwide while the catalogue is known around the world. In relation to the IASJ, it was in the office of Advance Music in Rottenburg in April1989 that we held our first meeting to which I invited people from around the world to see if the idea was viable. Our longevity is proof of the success of that first meeting. Hans has made a major contribution to the jazz world and he will be sorely missed. In the name of the IASJ, we send our condolences to Veronika, Raphael and Claudia Gruber.

David Liebman
Artistic Director