From the Artistic Director

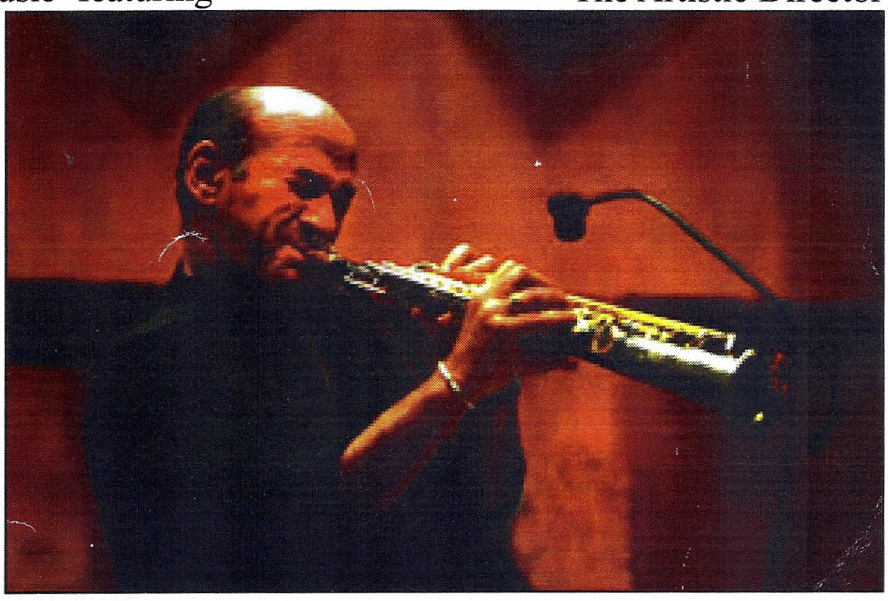
I am looking forward very much to our coming meeting in Helsinki hosted by the Sibelius Academy and the Helsinki Pop & Jazz Conservatory. Finland itself is a very special place both culturally and geographically. It has thousands of lakes and beautiful scenic areas. The people have a distinct look, language and unique vibration about them. I remember touring some more remote towns of Finland with their great national big band UMO and being amazed at how everywhere, no matter how small the town, there were the most beautiful halls and an incredible natural look of wood everywhere. I was once told that Finland boasts the most orchestras per capita in the world and it is well know that the country is famous for summer festivals of all sorts.

Of course the world is familiar with the composer Jean Sibelius but there are other notable Finnish composers active today. When I received an Honorary Doctorate from one of our hosts, the Sibelius Academy a few years ago, (the first given to a jazz musician), even the ceremony was unusual with electronic music featuring strange flutes and bells. On another visit I was introduced to some of their folk music and purchased one of the native instruments and some recordings that were very haunting and beautiful as the country is.

The musicians I've worked and recorded with from Finland are among the best in the world. Their training is complete and very disciplined. WORKSHOPS done in Finland are always at the highest level. The "Nordic sound" made famous by ECM records over the past decades includes Finland as one of its primary sources. There is something about the Scandinavian part of the world, which seems to lead to the darkly melancholic but beautifully lyrical sound we have become accustomed to.

As in the past, our Annual IASJ Jazz Meeting 2002 will feature jam sessions, master classes, ensembles lectures and final concerts as well as the chance for each ensemble to go into the studio for recording as we did in Berklee College of Music last year. There will also be a day in the country for some typical Finnish food and entertainment for us.

Please be sure to read my letter addressed to all student and teacher participants. Your school should have them by now. See you in the Land of the Midnight Sun - be ready for daylight for a good part of the 24 hours.

Peace,

DAVE LIEBMAN
The Artistic Director