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IASJ Newsletter

EDITOR
Walter Turkenburg

COORDINATOR
Rick Heerink

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For information, please contact:

IASJ
J.van Stolberglaan 1
2595 CA The Hague
HOLLAND

tel ..31.70.381.4251
fax ..31.70.385.3941
E-mail iasj@euronet.nl
http://www.euronet.nl/~iasj

From the editor

In October, a group of thirty students and teachers from Arhus in Denmark visited the jazz department of my school, the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, Holland. Their school is not an IASJ member. Jazz education in Holland is not all that bad, they had heard, so it was time to check things out. Well aware of my PR responsibilities, I took the opportunity to tell them how excellent my jazz department is. My Danish listeners were very interested and some of them even asked questions. They liked the coffee, especially since the jamming went on quite late the night before, they admired the big building in which the Royal Conservatory is located and they loved their lunch, but they were not really impressed by all this. It was not until I started talking about the IASJ that they became interested. The 7th Annual IASJ Jazz Meeting, the Baltic Jazz Cruise, is a legend already, that's for sure. The fact that there are a number of schools of jazz connected through an organisation, that there is a magazine and a newsletter and a list of addresses, was hard for them to believe. They all knew that if you have $15,000 in your pocket you can study at any school in the world for half a year. What they did not know is that the IASJ Network offers an informal way of visiting jazz schools all over the world based upon personal contacts.

Their school had not only missed just one boat last summer, but also a few others in the past seven years. Very understandable if you listen to the stories of how the school got together, the merges with other schools that had to be made, the three buildings spread over the city to deal with and the cutbacks in the money; stories we all know.

When I saw the Danish bus leaving, I had positive feelings. I could have given them more information about my own school, but I am sure they will remember my place as this IASJ school in Holland. I am sure that the school in Arhus, Denmark, will overcome the difficulties it is facing now. They are ready for the international dimension the IASJ has to offer. This visit made it once and for all clear to me.Without the IASJ, a school of jazz is just a building where older jazz players are hired to teach younger jazz players. With the IASJ, a school of jazz becomes a living and exciting place where the next generation of jazz players is getting ready for the next chorus.

Walter Turkenburg, IASJ Chairman