From David Liebman
Artistic Director of the IASJ

The purpose of this article is to give you an understanding of how and why the International Association of Schools of Jazz was formed.
On April 22nd 1989 an informal meeting was held in Rottenburg, Germany, to which representatives of thirteen schools from eleven different countries attended. Our purpose was to form an association of schools involved in the full time teaching of jazz music. The motivation for forming such a non-profit co-operative venture is in order to facilitate a high level of cross cultural communication between people from member countries. The general goal is to promote brotherhood and positive creative energy through the medium of the jazz art form.
As a creative field of art, jazz has truly become more and more universal, having extended its influences far beyond its Afro-American sources. More importantly, it represents a highly developed social form of communication, involving a selflessness and co-operative spirit unique in the performing arts. The very act of playing jazz necessitates the development of sensitive communication skills including listening and responding to one another within a group context, in addition to the disciplined and sophisticated technique necessary to improvise in this unique musical language. This sharing as a basic premise provides a wonderful and lively medium for people to relate positively to each other, no matter what their ethnic or cultural background may be. Through an organization comprised of institutions where this art from is taught, we hope to encourage good will among the peoples of the world, as well as enjoying the practical benefits resulting from unifying far flung voices under a common cause.
Although the IASJ is headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands and is composed of mostly European-based schools, it is our feeling that with the incredible changes occurring worldwide, membership will soon reflect the growing desire to learn and enjoy jazz.
One of the main activities will be the Annual IASJ Jazz Meeting at which students, teachers and representatives from member schools have the opportunity to come together in order to interact, communicate, and learn about music as well as each other. The emphasis at the Annual IASJ Jazz Meeting will be upon forming international ensembles to play and perform at local venues in the host city. Teachers will have the opportunity to meet their international collegues and exchanges ideas. The board of the IASJ will meet at the end of the Annual IASJ Jazz Meeting and will discuss business and future activities at the IASJ General Assembly.
I look upon the IASJ as an opportunity for schools to get in touch with each other on a very personal level, benefitting all who are involved. The overall effect can be to strengthen the cause of jazz by building rapport among enthusiasts, inevitably leading to more interest in jazz among the wider public. The corollary result is increased opportunities to perform and teach this art form.
Thank you for your interest and I hope that with the IASJ some connection has been made.

David Liebman
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