From the Artistic Director

I hope that all of you are well and depending upon your situation coping with the new conditions some of us have to deal with personally and artistically since September 2001. The world that we were familiar with has changed in ways that seemingly may persist for some time. One of possible positive side effects of the situation may well be that people will be more drawn to seek out real and honest expressions of life which can only help those who pursue artistic ideals. For sure young people are feeling some of this change from what I see in my teaching at the Manhattan School of Music in New York.

Maybe it is due to my students being on the graduate level and therefore a bit older than the average, but in any case I sense a renewed awareness of some of the ideals that the pursuit of art entails, especially honesty to one's vision and a sense of an ethical code of conduct towards other human beings. On a pedagogical level, there is also the satisfaction in seeing how the second year students are absorbing the principles that I am teaching and have written about in my books. I am sharing the course load with the great pianist and teacher Phil Markowitz, whom I have played with for much of the last decade. What we are finding is that exposure is a crucial aspect of introducing concepts that are not commonly taught. By presenting musical examples in the area we are teaching and performing such music in that style for the students as well as assigning some simple exercises, we can see their ears changing. Without going into a full-blown philosophy of teaching it seems to me that among the most important aspects we are responsible for to inspire the students to further seek out the information. In order to accomplish this a teacher should instill a sense of the process of learning - how does one learn, reinforce and utilize new information. This will have far reaching consequences beyond a student's current situation and level.

The other obvious condition we are all subject to nowadays is the worldwide recession and specifically the loss of playing opportunities that will and have occurred. In times like these, one must shift focus inwardly to the self, immediate family and community. Using the time to study, nurture relationships and self reflection can be the positive results of less outside activity. I know that when I am less busy, after an initial period of getting used to slowing down, I can finally get involved with projects that have been laying around in wait for awhile. In any case we have no choice so we might as well use the time in as positive a manner as we can.

On older news, the CD of the combo's that played at the IASJ Meeting in Boston is send out by separate mail and will arrive to all soon. These things always take more time than expected and I urge you who receive the recordings to please make sure that the performers get a copy. Even if they have moved on since then I am sure you will be impressed by the results. The music is far ranging, excellently performed and in some cases strikingly original. As I have said in the past, we who have been at all twelve of the IASJ Jazz Meetings are always shaking our heads at the level herd year after year. It never ceases to amaze.

And speaking of all the meetings, as Walter Turkenburg has pointed out above, we were officially ten years old in November 2001. In a rough count years with this milestone being reached I want to express my personal appreciation to those who have been around the IASJ for any part of this time. After all an organization is as good as its membership. I approximate that some about hundred students, four hundred teachers and two hundred representatives have attended the IASJ Jazz Meetings during these years. We have done this on limited resources for the most part, though without the cooperation of the director of the Royal Conservatory, Frans de Ruiter it would have been very difficult. My sincerest congratulations especially to Walter Turkenburg, for without his hard work I am not sure the IASJ would be around to celebrate our next decade.

More on the next Annual IASJ Jazz Meeting 2002 in Helsinki in the next IASJ Newsletter and till then I wish you the best from family and myself.

DAVE LIEBMAN
The Artistic Director