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IASJ Newsletter

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From the Editor

Dreams that come true

A few years ago I moved into a bigger office. From my new window I could see an ugly empty building across the street. Not long after I moved in demolition machines that you normally only see in computer games started eating up the building. Environmental laws in the Netherlands have turned the demolition industry from rough businesses into high-tech enterprises. With precision and delicacy three different machines were separating the woods from the metals and the stones. It was fascinating to see how nothing was spilled. When the work was almost done saxophone teacher John Ruocco came in. "I just talked to the guys over there during their lunch break. When they are done they will come across the street and eat up this building. They will start with your office!"

Driving home that night I started to daydream about one of the demolition machines really coming across the street. I imagined myself being the driver and with precision I would break down some of the walls here and there in our school. In the following days while in traffic jams I kept on dreaming how I could improve the building. As soon as I stepped into the building I knew that my dreams would never come true. My new office would always be at one end of the building, the main jazz studio at the extreme other end and all the classrooms in various places in the middle. My jazz department has become a logistical nightmare over the years and no daydream could ever change this. Until that one staff meeting. The director of the school explained that real estate developers wanted to build forty or more floors on top, in front and behind our four-floor building. In exchange for turning our school into a skyscraper we could reorganize the infrastructure to a certain extent. A committee had to be formed. The director had visited my house no so long ago and had spotted a few bags of cement there. He thought it was a good idea to have me in the renovation committee. Nowadays I carry around a kind of monopoly game board in my briefcase. It is plan of the building with vivid colors indicating what can stay the way it is now and what has to change. Dreaming has become reality. If I agree with the colors the demolition machines will come in and do their jobs. If in the end all is perfect remains to be seen. Logistically things will improve because it simply cannot get worse as it is now. Another dream of many others and me that has become reality is that the Berklee College of Music is the Host School for the upcoming Annual IASJ Jazz Meeting 2001. It was not all that obvious that the largest jazz school on earth would ever host the meeting. When the IASJ started in 1989 there was no Representative of Berklee present. At first the Founding Members did not expected Berklee to be involved in our initiatives. On the other hand, if they became interested maybe they would exert too strong an influence. At the 2nd IASJ Jazz Meeting in Dublin in 1991 however Representative Tom Riley, dressed in a genuine spy coat, told the amazed General Assembly that Berklee was willing to join the IASJ. Immediately some daydreaming started.

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