

## **TO PARTICIPATING STUDENTS**

### **From David Liebman**

As Artistic Director and Founder of the International Association of Schools of Jazz (IASJ) I congratulate you on being chosen to represent your school and country at our Annual Jazz Meeting held this year at the New School in New York City. Attending the meeting along with you will be students, teachers, school representatives and guests from approximately twenty-five jazz schools and countries. Please read this letter carefully as it gives you an idea of both the atmosphere and activities which will take place during the week. (If you need help with English, please find someone to translate.) I can assure you that this week will remain in your memory for years to come.

### **THE IASJ: A SHORT HISTORY**

After doing a great deal of teaching in combination with my normal schedule of performances during the 1980s, it became apparent to me that there was a need for an organization where schools from different countries could be in communication with each other, mutually benefiting from that interaction. The universality of jazz was obvious....an inclusive, high level art form where sharing is a major component. This network represents both large state-supported conservatories as well as small privately run schools. After corresponding for several years with educators from institutions where I had done workshops, I proposed a meeting in Germany. To my surprise in April 1989 fifteen schools from twelve countries showed up. We held our first Annual Jazz Meeting the next year in the Hague (where our headquarters is presently located) and since then the meetings have been in Dublin-Ireland; Siena-Italy (three times); Graz-Austria (two times); Tel Aviv-Israel; New York-USA; a cruise ship around the Baltic countries; Koln-Germany; Santiago de Compostela- Spain;

Paris-France; Boston (two times)-USA; Helsinki-Finland; Friburg-Germany; Krakow-Poland; Louisville-Kentucky (USA); Riga-Latvia, Lucerne-Switzerland, the Hague-Netherlands, Sao Paulo-Brazil, Denmark, Capetown-South Africa, Lisbon-Portugal, Estonia, Munich, Zagreb. In these past decades over 2000 students, teachers and representatives have attended an IASJ Jazz Meeting making life-long contacts and friendships as well as leading to performance opportunities internationally. On this level alone, the IASJ serves the purpose of being a true jazz musician worldwide network.

The goal of the IASJ is to use the medium of jazz as a vehicle promoting positive cross-cultural communication among people from different countries and nationalities. During the week you will practice and perform together in small ensembles, meet in master classes and participate in jam sessions, all the time interacting with your peers and teachers. There is a lot to be gained personally, musically and spiritually at an IASJ Jazz Meeting.

### **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The guiding principle for the meeting is the same as what some of you have already encountered in the “real” musical world whether it takes place in school, gigs or recording sessions. That is meeting total strangers with the goal of making great music together. For this week to be successful everyone should maintain a positive and generous attitude towards each other, no matter that a fellow participant may be musically ahead or behind one’s own level, or possibly encountering language problems and/or cultural differences. In the final analysis the overriding goal is to create art at the highest level in a positive atmosphere.

Jazz in particular demands a balance between individualism and group cooperation to be successful. To achieve this, sometimes

one has to give up a bit of him or herself for the betterment of the group. I ask you to leave your ego at home and be sensitive, courteous and helpful to your mates.

For example, one obvious sign of respect for other participants is to be on time for activities, rehearsals and meetings no matter how you feel or whether it is personally important or not. I can tell you that at least in my professional life when individuals are late without a good reason, I take it personally as a sign of disrespect. As well, you represent your country and are a guest in a foreign land where customs and practices may differ, so you are expected to be on your best behavior.

The benefits (besides having a lot of fun) are the possibilities of forming lifelong relationships resulting in not only personal friendships but expanded performing possibilities in other parts of the world. You will leave the week with a list of everyone's address and contact information and most of all, new friends. The rest will be up to you.

## **DAILY ACTIVITIES**

### **ENSEMBLES-FINAL CONCERTS**

The major activity of each day is the ensemble where you will be rehearsing music to be performed at the final concerts taking place at the end of the week. The combos are formed after the attending teachers hear all of you play in an informal jam session the first day.

**PLEASE NOTE AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS LETTER IS A LIST OF SUGGESTED TUNES FOR THIS AND OTHER JAM SESSIONS WE WILL HAVE-CHECK THESE TUNES OUT-THEY ARE UNIVERSAL!!**

From past experience, I can tell you that the playing level is almost always uniformly high and quite equal. Therefore, combo participants are chosen for the most part based on geographical distribution attempting to mix countries and nationalities together. So you may not be in the same group as another student(s) or teacher who accompanied you from your school.

The role of the two teachers assigned to your combo is minimal and not like you are accustomed to during the school year. As I said, we try to make this a professional situation where you, the musicians, are responsible for putting music together. The teacher's role will be to help organize and smooth out any technical or personal questions, but in general they should and will let you "do your thing." In other words, we trust and expect you to work together.

I encourage you to bring original music arranged for a few horns and possibly a vocalist or miscellaneous instrument(s). In the past we have had violin, accordion, cello and vibes for example. We are not sure until the ensembles are actually formed. You will have to be flexible and possibly change or adjust arrangements as the week progresses if your music is chosen by the group to perform. The fact that you don't know the other musicians until the first day is part of the challenge of working together towards a common goal. In the past some students have brought music reflecting their heritage and culture set in a jazz style, something that brings an even more special atmosphere to the program. There are no stylistic boundaries mandated by anyone. High level and honest music is what we all want, no matter the idiom.

### **MASTER CLASS/LECTURES**

All students and teachers on each instrument will meet a few times during the week to exchange ideas and techniques. This is

conducted in an open atmosphere depending upon the participating teacher's initiative in combination with your suggestions. This is not like the lessons you probably have in your home school...the point here is to share info with each other. You might bring some exercises, transcriptions or whatever to hand out. There will be a few lectures during the week, usually concerning subjects not normally discussed in the regular academic setting. Teachers from the New School will be doing the teaching and oral presentations.

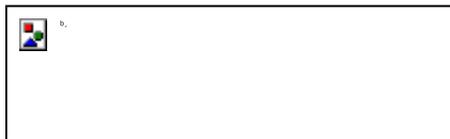
### **JAM SESSIONS/TEACHER'S CONCERT/EXCURSION**

An important part of any jazz experience is the loose atmosphere of a jam session. We will have several during the week in different locations open to the public where teachers and students can hang together as well as local musicians. So that you know who your teachers are musically there will be a Teacher's Concert early in the week.

There is ample free time for everyone to enjoy the atmosphere of New York where jazz clubs have been opening (and closing). Expect the weather to be quite summer-like.

I look forward to meeting you all and wishing a safe journey as we celebrate this great art form.

Peace



P.S. Please go to my web site([www.davidliebman.com](http://www.davidliebman.com)) and under the tab titled EDUCATION you will see the IASJ tab for more info, history and photos of past meetings. Our main web site has more info about the meeting: [www.iasj.com](http://www.iasj.com)

***Impressions from students after recent meetings:***

“The events of the past few days have already begun to affect my approach to music in a positive way. I am inspired by the enthusiasm and awesome musicality of most of the teachers and students at the meeting. My weak points in playing have been highlighted and my strong points reaffirmed. The schedule was necessarily exhausting and organization was good. I hope to keep in touch with my new associates. Thanks for a great week.”

Student at the Guildhall School of Music-London

“I learned a lot in this week starting of course with musical stuff of course but the personal experiences weren’t less than the musical ones. It made me believe that one’s attitude to the music and others is as important as the music itself.”

Student at the Swiss Jazz School-Bern, Switzerland

“I want to thank you for an amazing week I had in Finland. I learned a lot of things as a musician and as a person. It was a week that I will never forget. And the best thing is that I am practicing my ass off since I came back to Israel-again, thank you.”

Student at the Rimon School-Tel Aviv, Israel

**SUGGESTED TUNES TO KNOW FOR JAM SESSIONS  
AND AUDITION**

This list was compiled as a result of a survey of faculties from schools around the world as most commonly called in sessions in no particular order (thanks to saxophonist Randall Connors for compiling):

All Blues

Body and Soul

Stella by Starlight

All the Things You Are

Softly As In A Morning Sunrise

There Is No Greater Love

On Green Dolphin Street

Solar

Autumn Leaves

Blues and rhythm changes tunes