



### **LETTER TO PARTICIPATING STUDENTS-LUCERNE-2009**

As Artistic Director and Founder of the International Association of Schools of Jazz I would like to congratulate you on being chosen to represent your school and country at our 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Jazz Meeting held this year in Lucerne, Switzerland. Attending the meeting along with you will be students, teachers, representatives and guests from approximately twenty five jazz schools representing over twenty countries worldwide. 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 the week will remain in your memory for years to come. Although it is a privilege and honor to be chosen as the student representative by your school, it also means that you have certain responsibilities. **The success of the week depends upon each participant having a positive and generous attitude towards one another.**

### **THE IASJ**

After doing a great deal of teaching in combination with my normal schedule of performances during the 1980s, it appeared obvious to me that there was a need for an organization whereby schools from different countries could be in communication with each other and mutually benefit from that interaction. This should include both large state supported conservatories as well as small privately run schools. After corresponding for several years with educators, I proposed a meeting in Germany, held in April, 1989 and was thrilled when 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, Siena, Graz, Tel Aviv, New York, on a boat in the Baltic Sea, Koln, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, Paris, Boston, Helsinki, Friburg (Germany), Cracow, Poland, Louisville, Kentucky, (USA) and last year in Riga (Latvia). In these past eighteen years nearly 1000 students, teachers and representatives have attended an IASJ Jazz Meetings making life-long contacts, friendships and creating performance opportunities for them internationally. On this level alone, the IASJ serves the purpose of a grand jazz musician worldwide network.

Ideally, the goal of the IASJ is to use the medium of jazz as a vehicle to promote positive cross-cultural communication between people from different countries. The process of practicing and performing together in a small ensemble, meeting in master classes and participating in jam sessions as well as all of the obvious social interaction is how the IASJ achieves this goal. We also have a newsletter for members and ongoing student/teacher exchanges between schools throughout the academic year. There is a lot to be gained personally, musically and spiritually through the IASJ.

### **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The guiding principle for the meeting is the same as some of you have already encountered in the "real" musical world whether it takes place in school, performances or recording sessions. That is meeting total strangers with the goal of making music together. For this to be successful, it demands a positive and generous attitude towards one another, notwithstanding that someone may be musically ahead or behind one's own level or even be difficult to communicate with verbally because of language barriers. Remember, the overriding goal is to play music at the highest possible level. Jazz in particular demands a balance between individualism and group cooperation to be successful. To achieve this goal, each musician has to give up a bit of him or herself for the betterment of the group. This week will be a lesson in doing just that.

**YOU MUST LEAVE YOUR EGO AT HOME!!** For example, one sign of respect for others is to be on time for activities and meetings, whether you feel it is personally important or not. Finally, you are also representing your country and visiting a foreign land where customs and practices may differ. You must be on your best behavior.

The benefits, besides having a lot of fun are the possibilities of forming lifelong relationships resulting in not only 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. The rest will be up to you.

## **DAILY ACTIVITIES**

### **ENSEMBLES**

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-IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR YOU TO 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 together. So you may not be in the same group as another student(s) 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 problems, but in general they should let you "do your thing." In other words, we trust you to work together with each other.

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. 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.

### **MASTER CLASS**

All students and teachers on each instrument 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. You might bring some exercises, transcriptions or whatever to share with each other.

### **LECTURES**

We will be hearing lectures from some of the educators who will present subjects that are not normally part of your usual academic subjects. I ask these speakers to discuss something that is of particular interest to them. These talks are always highlights of the week.

### **JAM SESSIONS AND CONCERTS**

An important part of any jazz experience is the loose atmosphere of a jam session. We will have several during the week open to the public where teachers and students can hang together. The teachers will also present an informal concert to familiarize you with who they are. As you will hear, there are some master musicians amongst the educators. Finally, your ensembles will present a more formal concert featuring the music you have been working on all week.

### **THIS MEETING**

Lucerne itself is a beautiful small town with a fantastic landscape surrounding it, which on one of the afternoons we will be able to take advantage of. The central meeting place, jam sessions and final concerts are all in the same building as are the classrooms. As well, there is a nice café which is part of the building. We will record each combo one day in Zurich and the final concerts themselves will be simultaneously broadcast on the internet.

Looking forward to meeting you and wishing all a safe journey.

Peace



David Liebman-Artistic Director and Founder of the IASJ

P.S. Please go to my web site and look at the entry marked IASJ for the background and history of the IASJ.

[www.davidliebman.com](http://www.davidliebman.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
- Rhythm changes (Oleo, Hackensack, etc)
- Softly As In A Morning Sunrise
- There Is No Greater Love
- On Green Dolphin Street
- Solar
- Autumn Leaves
- Blues of all sorts