



Changes for Jazz Educators

by: Paul Combs

This is the first of a regular column on Jazz Education that I will be writing and editing. I hope to establish this column as forum for the discussion of strategies and issues relevant to the teaching of jazz in both the bandroom and classroom. I would like to congratulate Allyssa Jones on her excellent article on jazz choirs in the last issue of MMN. If you did not get to it, I suggest you go back and read it. Allyssa touched on both the power of music making to transform the lives of young people, and the connections that can be made between jazz and topics beyond music.

IAJE Collapses

On March 25, IAJE members received an urgent e-mail from Chuck Owen, President of IAJE, requesting a donation to help the organization deal with a sudden financial shortfall. At the end of the day on Friday April 18, members were presented with another e-mail from Chuck Owen, this one announcing the demise of the national parent organization. I must confess that I was at first stunned, and then angry. The way these financial problems were handled raises many disturbing questions. These include: what happened to the scholarship money; why, if the organization was only short a million dollars, would no one would come to its aid; and how could such an intelligent group of people not have demanded more transparency from the executive director?

That being said, a few days later a message from Mary Jo Papich, President-Elect of the now defunct IAJE, was circulated among officers of the State Units; she was aiming to build a new national organization to replace IAJE. Of the disturbing questions, she said, "We can all point the finger of blame, but we should let the thorough analysis of the court appointed judicial trustee be the judge. A

thorough analysis of what went wrong is entirely appropriate and necessary to understanding. This information will be used to construct a better functioning organizational form, for the entity that will . . . replace the IAJE." By June 1, Mary Jo Papich and Lou Fischer had convened a meeting of thirty-three other jazz educators and formed the Jazz Education Network. A temporary board was formed and they are in the process of filing for non-profit status. By the time you read this there should be more news on this organization. There is a Web-site for JEN, www.jazzednet.org. At the time of this writing there is a test page up at that address.

MENC has also stepped up to try to fill the vacuum left by the demise of IAJE. On June 18 they announced, "the time is right for an MENC Society for Jazz Education to serve our jazz educator members and promote the jazz education profession. The Society for Jazz Education will join several long-standing music education groups under MENC's umbrella, including the Society for General Music, the Society for Music Teacher Education, and the Society for Research in Music Education. . . . More details about the Society for Jazz Education will be announced soon. For more information, visit www.menc.org/s/jazz."

Since the annual IAJE Conference that was supposed to have taken place in Seattle has been canceled, the magazine Jazz Improv is planning to take up some of the slack with its convention/festival planned for New York some time next January. Unfortunately, this will not provide any opportunities for showcasing individual school groups as the IAJE Conference did, but if you would like to follow their progress in organizing the event, their website is www.jazzimprov.com. Currently the

conference is only being discussed on their blog page.

Jazz Educators will have to wait to see what these efforts yield, but happily the Massachusetts State Unit will continue to function. IAJE-MA has its own by-laws and federal tax status and will continue to run festivals as it has in the past. For the most up-to-date information on IAJE-MA festivals, it is best to go to the Web site, <http://www.iajema.org/>.

Educational Opportunities

In June I attended the annual Jazz Summit in Rochester, a gathering of jazz radio and record promotion people, as well as artists who produce their own releases. One exciting development that was shared at this summit is Internet jazz radio. Not only do most of the radio stations across the nation that broadcast jazz provide streaming on the Web, but there are also some very good Internet-only stations. Some of these are easy to access through programs like Apple's iTunes, making it possible for student musicians to listen to a variety of jazz anytime they are working with their computers.

Finally, while on the subject of good teaching material on the Internet, there are a many good jazz videos featuring an amazing array of players available on-line. I showed one of my alto sax students a Cannonball Adderley video recently, and the young fellow was off to find as much of Adderley's work as he could. These can be found on Youtube.com, as well as www.warpvideos.com, and there are also videos of significant New England jazz musicians at jazzhistorydatabase.com/.

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