



The Scope and History of International Jazz Conferences and Festivals within Collegiate Jazz Education in America: Possible Influences and Effects on Pedagogy Surrounding the Collapse of the *International Association for Jazz Education*

Lauren Fowler
Department of Music
Christopher Newport University
Newport News, VA 23606
lfowler@cnu.edu

From the 1970's through the 1980's the focus of jazz education in American colleges and universities focused on the professional training of performers. Four graduate programs remained among the top in the country, winning Downbeat awards for performances in many categories. These programs at the University of North Texas, the University of Northern Colorado, the University of Miami and the Berklee College of Music set the stage for what would become a mainstay in the training of jazz educators through pedagogy and process in the new millennium. As many American colleges and universities adopt Jazz Studies Programs in the wake of the success of these programs the focus has turned from performance to the application of performance in jazz education with a direct significance placed on the participation and attendance of students and professors at international jazz conferences and festivals.

With the partnership of the *International Association for Jazz Education* to the world stage in jazz performance the importance of international jazz conferences and festivals including the North Sea Jazz Festival, Montreaux Jazz Festival and the Monterey jazz festival have created many opportunities for collegiate students to expand their Jazz Studies curricula with study, travel and work overseas in the professional world of jazz. This influence can be seen in the collegiate, professional and international performers, who come together every year at the international IAJE conference to perform, listen to and learn about jazz education with a global influence.



At the 2007 conference of the International Association for Jazz Education in Montreal an entire focus session was devoted to: ***New Direction in Musical Expression, Advances in Education, Emergent Technologies, International Expansion, Digital Delivery, and Empowering the Fan Base, these are but some of the terms we hear and read about every day. Whether as an educator, student, artist or business person, in order to succeed, we need to know as much as we can about the present and future landscape for jazz. Join us as we articulate how, as an international association, IAJE's 2007 Conference will examine the landscape for jazz as it pertains to education, business and performance.*** Unfortunately, as of Friday, April 18, 2008 *The Seattle Times* reported that the 2009 IAJE conference that was scheduled for Seattle, Washington, was cancelled. The *Times* stated, “The most important American jazz gathering of the year. . . has been canceled because its presenter is declaring bankruptcy. . . In what is being described as a “perfect storm” of bad luck, unchecked growth, fundraising and management failures, the International Association of Jazz Education – an important link to Seattle’s successful school jazz-band scene – has collapsed.”¹ What caused the demise of this world-renowned organization and how will it affect jazz education in American colleges and universities in the future due to the extraordinary influence of the international jazz conference and festival scene? To understand the answer to this question and its effect on American jazz pedagogy one must trace the short history of jazz education in America.

Until World War II jazz education in America on college and university campuses consisted of dance bands organized by students similar to the glee club movement. In 1982 a *Music Educators Journal* article regarding “Jazz Education’s Struggle for Acceptance,” discussed the entire history of jazz education at the collegiate level in America. During the war years “no colleges or universities offered the [jazz] ensemble

¹ Paul de Barros, “American jazz gathering, planned for Seattle, is canceled,” *The Seattle Times*, (online version, 18 April 2008; accessed 15 May 2008), http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/2004357405_jazzeducators18.html.



for credit. . . Jazz had arrived in the schools, but without official recognition.”² The author of this article, Bryce Luty, goes on to state that “jazz education owed its formal beginnings to the United States Military services.”³ Had it not been for the service bands of the air force and navy, and the U.S. Navy Music Training School in Washington, D.C., jazz education may have never come to the forefront of curricula in schools. The popularity of the Glenn Miller band paved the way in providing training and courses such as arranging, jazz harmony, lab bands and improvisation for the service men who attended these schools.⁴ What began as an innocent outgrowth of popular culture gave way to some of the most formidable jazz education training programs in America as jazz education expanded.

Although known today as the “North Texas Jazz Program” (one of the foremost in the world), North Texas State College was the first four-year institution to offer jazz studies for credit in the 1940’s. Soon thereafter Sam Houston State University and the University of Houston joined the jazz education movement. Most of these jazz courses were taught by former “dance band” leaders who had learned jazz in the aural traditional; they learned by doing. By the 1960’s “college music administrators throughout the country began to see the importance of jazz education as a teacher training tool rather than a vocationally oriented program training student to play in jazz bands.”⁵

In March of 1971, the *Music Educators Journal* published an article entitled, “Jazz Goes to College.” This watershed article by author Paul Tanner opened with the following quote on the state of collegiate jazz education at that time: “Although most colleges across the country are still in the process of building jazz into the curriculum [1971], there are pockets of considerable activity – more activity, in fact, than one might

² Bryce Luty, “Jazz Educator’s Struggle for Acceptance. Part I,” *Music Educators Journal*, 69:3, (November 1982), 39.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 53.



guess.”⁶ Tanner goes on to describe in detail the various reasons and curricula taught in colleges and universities around the country funded by the sponsorship of a grant by the Fine Arts and Humanities Division of the University of California at Los Angeles Extension. He visited over one hundred colleges, universities and conservatories “to determine attitudes, problems, and solutions regarding the teaching of jazz in higher education.”⁷ One aspect of his interviews in the publication of the article with administrators, faculty and students included problems inherent in their programs. Listed problems included a “poor jazz image” among classically trained faculty and students as well as an attitude that jazz was not practical. “One large mid-western university feels that the subject is not practical enough, yet it sends its music majors out to teach in schools that have jazz bands.”⁸ This is a far cry from the current National Association of Schools of Music accreditation process that requires its music curriculum to include improvisation in its programs.

From 1981-82 two published articles including, "The Rationale for and Development of Jazz Education Courses for the College Music Education Curriculum," and, "Jazz Education: Its Utilization Into the Existing College/University Music Programs," appeared in research journals. In the 1989 article on “New Styles, New Technologies, New Possibilities in Jazz,” author John Kuzmich, Jr. discusses an entirely different trend towards the movement of jazz education through jazz festivals and conferences.”⁹ He states that the new trend in jazz education is away from the “winner-take-all” festival and that recent non-competitive jazz festivals offering more opportunities for clinics began to dominate the jazz education field. Festivals at the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley and North Texas, along with the number of outstanding clinicians networking with music educators across the country, were the wave of the future of jazz education. “More and more, professional jazz musicians are offering clinics together with their performances in the public schools. These clinics are giving students “hands-

⁶ Paul Tanner, “Jazz Goes to College, Part I,” *Music Educators Journal*, 57:7, (March 1971), 57.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 111.

⁹ John Kuzmich, Jr., “New Styles, New Technologies, New Possibilities in Jazz,” *Music Educators Journal*, 76:3, (November 1989), 42.



on” experiences with some of the today’s best musicians.¹⁰ Kuzmich also discussed the trend to network with professional players and educators in jazz by attending the National Association of Jazz Education national conference. From this point on, jazz education began to escalate to world renowned prominence with the assistance of the IAJE, its *Jazz Education Journal* and nationally and internationally sponsored jazz festivals and clinics held around the world.

By 1998 the results of a study on global jazz influence was published in the *Jazz Education Journal* entitled, "Opinions, Attitudes, and Influences of Jazz Students Around the World in the 1990s: The Liebman Survey." And in 2002-03, " The Future of Jazz - Jazz Meets the World, " and, "World Music Institutes in the USA and Europe." By 2004 both individual articles and “International News” columns appeared in the journal. Articles included pedagogical and informational tools found in the countries of Japan, China, Australia and South Africa, solidifying the influence and prominence of global jazz, both in the journal and in the appearance and performances of many international collegiate ensembles at the annual IAJE conferences.

In perspective, what does the collapse of the International Association for Jazz Education change in the scope of the collegiate jazz curricula of so many universities and colleges in America and from around the globe? To answer this question, the brief history of jazz education provided in this article gives us a retrospective look into the effect of the global influence of this international powerhouse in the sculpting of jazz education both in America, and fairly recently, throughout the world. Although a new feature in the *Jazz Educators Journal*, a portion of each periodical since early in the twenty-first century was sub-headed under the title of “International News;” however, the IAJE was formerly named the NAJE (National Association of Jazz Educators) until the 1990’s. At that point the organization gained such a powerful lobby in acquiring both “industry” and “professional musician” tracks for members of the organization at their yearly conference, that American and international jazz festivals began to both advertise and contribute funds to the IAJE. International jazz festivals including *Montreaux, North*

¹⁰ Ibid., 44.



Sea Jazz in Amsterdam and the *Monterey Jazz Festival* became funded and participating members of the IAJE, partnering to provide an international stage for high schools, colleges and universities from around the world, as well as funding world renowned jazz artists to collaborate and provide artist-in-residence workshops for young jazz musicians; a far cry from the early 1930's in America when popular culture epitomized jazz as "dance band music" for the masses.

Indeed, on the world wide web site www.allaboutjazz.com, "The IAJE Collapses" was posted on April 19, 2008, the day following *The Seattle Times* article. The posting stated, "It turns out that rumors of the imminent death of the IAJE were accurate. Following its financially disastrous 2008 conference in Toronto. . . the [IAJE] has canceled its 2009 conference and is about to file for bankruptcy."¹¹ The article continues, "The IAJE grew from a music educators' collective into a behemoth whose organizational weaknesses allowed it to topple of its own weight. For years, there have been grumblings among musicians, critics, bookers and producers that IAJE had gained too much power over careers and the business of jazz. Until Toronto, few knew of the fragility of the organization. . . [that] for all its faults, once a year brought together from around the world a substantial portion of the jazz community."¹² This past year, the international conference attendance was down 40 percent from the prior year. This is a significant number in light of the over 8000 participants that used to attend this international conference. What does this tell educators, particularly collegiate American jazz programs, and professional jazz musicians alike regarding the influence of the IAJE on the international world stage? Perhaps the powerful lobby of the IAJE and its "behemoth" [as quoted above] funding by the National Endowment of the Arts and the commercialism of jazz caused its collapse. But in time, only the powerful influence of the global study of jazz can help to bolster the state of jazz education in colleges and universities throughout the world whether supported by IAJE, or not.

¹¹ "The IAJE Collapses," *AllAboutJazz.com*, (online post, 19 April 2008; accessed 15 May 2008), <http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/news.php?id=17957>.

¹² Ibid.



As of June 1st, 2008, several former members of the IAJE began to coalesce into a group that is addressing the void created by this significant change in both the university and public school pedagogical landscape. This group has created a website and a semi-fluid organization entitled, *Jazz Education Network (JEN)*. The organization's mission states, "The Jazz Education Network is dedicated to building the jazz arts community by advancing education, promoting performance and developing new audiences."¹³ On the homepage, under the subtitle of "Why Join Jen?" two bullets directly address the void created by the absence of IAJE within the areas of international pedagogy and festivals. Under bullet number four of "Why Join Jen?" the following point is made: "A need to connect with one another---and we will provide our members with quality conferences, workshops and clinics at reasonable prices because we now know the value of the \$ [sic], and under bullet number five, Jazz Education must be accessible to all people and relative to all cultures...jazz is the universal cultural connector."¹⁴ Perhaps this re-organization of purpose, goal and intent will help to bring international study back into the forefront of American college and university programs in the same manner in which the IAJE found partners and businesses to fund these festivals and conferences but without the overextended funding that many former IAJE members believe to be the downfall of this former organization. In addition to the "Why Join Jen?" bullets this attitude is spoken, although in less strident tones, as the website states, "...you have our pledge to be honest, hard-working, committed, dedicated and real. . . . With your assistance, this website will be a resource for educators, students, performers and industry professionals. . . .It will be what you need it to be..."¹⁵ Probably most telling in its philosophy, the final statement on the website homepage says, *The Jazz Education Network is founded in the spirit of collaboration, creativity and commitment. This organization is supported by professionals in music education, business, industry, and journalism...all believing in creative collaborations. JEN has applied for a non-profit status as an educational service organization and all that relates*

¹³ *JazzEducationNetwork.org*, (online homepage, 25 July 2008; accessed 11 September 2008), <http://www.jazzednet.org/pages/home/php>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.



*to it.*¹⁶ In the study of the history of international influence on collegiate jazz pedagogy it is hoped that the same programs under the IAJE umbrella, learned through the value and importance of jazz festivals and conferences over many years' time, will be assumed in better format under the *Jazz Education Network*, to the benefit of all those that make up the jazz student body of the current, and future world order.

¹⁶ Ibid.