

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Dave and Iola Brubeck

A LONG PARTNERSHIP IN LIFE AND MUSIC

With introductions by
Caroline C. Crawford and J. B. Dyas

An Interview Conducted by
Caroline C. Crawford
in 1999 and 2001

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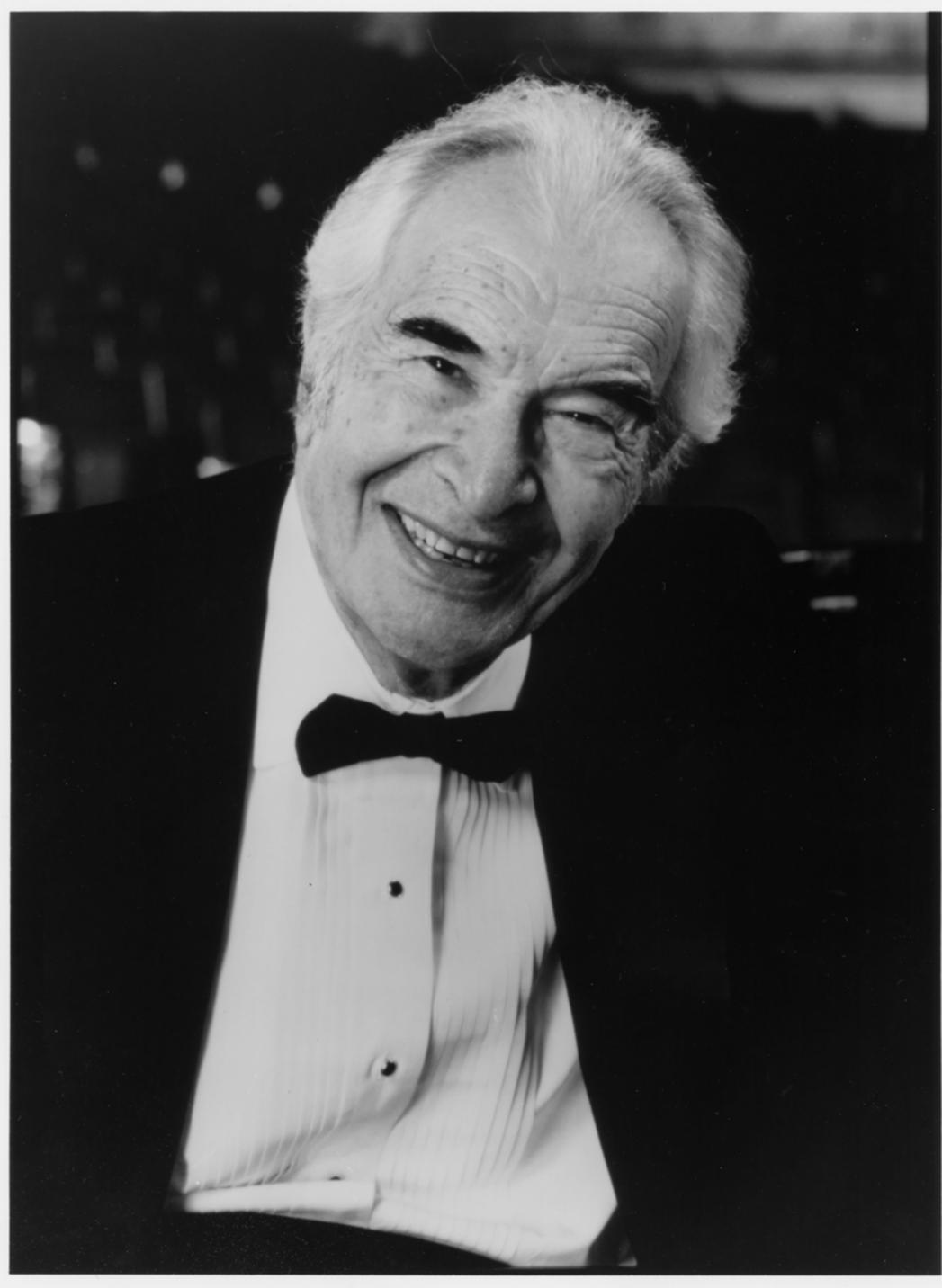
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Dave Brubeck, circa 2005. Photo courtesy Dave and Iola Brubeck.

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PREFACE

The American Composers series of oral histories, a project of the Regional Oral History Office, was initiated in 1998 to document the lives and careers of a number of contemporary composers with significant California connections, the composers chosen to represent a cross-section of musical philosophies, cultural backgrounds and education.

The twentieth century in this country produced an extraordinary disparity of musical styles and languages, and with those controversy and even alienation between composers and audiences, as composers sought to find a path between contemporary and traditional musical languages: serialism, minimalism, neoclassicism, and back to some extent to neoromanticism in the last decades. The battle of styles was perhaps inevitable, as well as the reverse pendulum swing that has followed, but as the New York Times stated in a recent article, “the polemics on both sides were dismaying.”

The composers were selected with the help of university of California faculty and musicians from the greater community and asked to discuss their musical philosophies, the development of their musical language, their processes of composing, ideas about the nineteenth-century European heritage, and experiences studying with such signal teachers as Nadia Boulanger, Roger Sessions, Arnold Schoenberg, Darius Milhaud, Luigi Dallapiccola and others, university associations (Andrew Imbrie) or orchestral ones (David Sheinfeld), and forays into fields as different as jazz (Dave Brubeck), electronic music (Pauline Oliveros), and blues (Jimmy McCracklin). Also interviewed as part of this series was David Harrington of Kronos Quartet, which has a remarkable record of commissioning new work over the last three decades. Various library collections served as research resources for the project, among them those of the UC Berkeley and UCLA Music Libraries, The Bancroft Library, and the Yale School of Music Library.

Oral history techniques have rarely been applied in the field of music, the study of music having focused until now largely on structural and historical developments in the field. It is hoped that these oral histories, besides being vivid cultural portraits, will promote understanding of the composer's work, the musical climate in the times we live in, the range of choices the composer has and the obstacles he or she faces, the avenues for writing and exposure.

Funding for the American Composers series of oral histories came in the form of a large grant from San Francisco art patroness Phyllis Wattis, to whom the Regional Oral History Office is greatly indebted. Mrs. Wattis has supported several other of the office's projects, including the histories of Kurt Herbert Adler and the San Francisco Opera and Milton Salkind and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

The Regional Oral History Office was established in 1954 to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons who have contributed significantly to California history. The office is headed by Richard Cándida Smith and is under the administrative supervision of The Bancroft Library.

Caroline C. Crawford
Music Historian
December 2005
Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
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INTRODUCTION by J. B. Dyas

When I was first offered the position of Executive Director of the newly established Brubeck Institute at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California, Dave Brubeck's alma mater, I realized that I really didn't know that much about Dave Brubeck the man. Having been in jazz education and a professional musician for nearly three decades, I certainly was very familiar with the Dave Brubeck Quartet, had a dozen or so DBQ CDs, and had played "Take Five," "The Duke," and "In Your Own Sweet Way" on club dates countless times like so many jazz musicians. And I knew Dave was one of the first to bring jazz on college campuses and had been on the cover of Time magazine. He is one of the jazz giants; indeed, every jazz musician, student, and aficionado knows of his enormous contribution to contemporary music through his use of eccentric and multiple rhythms, irregular time signatures, extended harmonic language, and fusion of musical cultures. But I still didn't know the man.

So before leaving a very good job in Los Angeles to accept the position at the Brubeck Institute, I wanted to spend some time with him to see what he was about and to get a better sense of his vision for the Institute. I called George Moore, Dave's very able and personable long-time assistant, to make arrangements to come visit Dave at his home in Wilton, Connecticut. As I was going for three days, I asked George to recommend a nearby hotel but he said that Dave insisted I stay at his home. I found this to be incredibly hospitable as Dave barely knew me, not to mention truly an honor.

When I arrived, I was amazed -- amazed at this beautiful, eclectic, and warm home with artifacts and furniture from all over the world and pictures of Dave with not only such jazz greats as Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, but with U.S. presidents and world leaders; and there were at least a half dozen pianos throughout the house. The man had been *everywhere* and had touched elbows with the greatest in modern history! Indeed, he is among them. Over the next three days, I observed and learned. We talked about everything -- the Institute, politics, music, love, religion, the environment, racism, the arts, life. What an extraordinary experience and opportunity to learn about the man behind the music.

Dave is exceedingly deep, well-read, hip, and knows of which he speaks, having given considerable contemplative thought to life and beyond. At the same time, he is light hearted, unpretentious, and very funny, completely unaffected by all his fame and accolades and honorary doctorates. Sincerely humble and down-to-earth, there's not even a hint of egocentricity as one might expect from someone in his position. Most of all, Dave is a genuinely kind, warm, and caring person. The more time I spent with him, the more I realized that I was in the company of so much more than a jazz giant, but a true humanitarian.

Dave is also a devoutly religious man, never missing a day of counting his blessings. At the top of this list is his wife, Iola. Theirs is the kind of relationship most of us wish for. For over 60 years, Iola has been his partner in every respect. She, too, is genuinely kind and extremely gifted. Not only love, it's obvious these two like each other. There's a wonderful flow about them and they share much in common, not the least of which is a clever and infectious sense of humor. And in the midst of a whirlwind universal career, they managed to have and raise six kids, four of which have become professional musicians who are talented and successful in their own right.

Upon leaving my remarkable three-day experience in Connecticut, I immediately accepted the position of director of Dave's institute, realizing full well that having the opportunity to get to know this very special man was of the once-in-a-lifetime variety. For the next six months I listened to everything that Dave had recorded that I could get my hands on, especially his classical music which I had not heard much of (the fact that Dave is not only a great jazz musician but also a prolific classical music composer is something too few people know about). The more I listened, the more I confirmed everything I learned in Wilton

those three days and since. The honesty, hipness, humor, humanity -- it was there all the time, in his music. All you have to do is listen...

J.B. Dyas
Executive Director
Brubeck Institute

For information about the Brubeck Institute, please visit its website at www.brubeckinstitute.org

INTERVIEW HISTORY by Caroline Crawford

Dave and Iola Brubeck were invited to be part of the Regional Oral History Office's music series in 1999. The idea was to focus on Brubeck as a composer and to interview Dave and Iola jointly, since she has not only been involved in every aspect of his life during their sixty-plus-year marriage, but has served as librettist for several of the large works Dave has composed since the 1960s. Brubeck is a living legend as a jazz musician, less known as a composer who spent several years studying with Darius Milhaud at Mills College in the 1940s. Milhaud was passionate about jazz and nurtured Brubeck's explorations in polytonality and polyrhythm, which have marked his piano style throughout his career.

The Brubecks wrote back that the idea of participating in an oral history interested them, particularly because they were currently writing their story for their family and because Dave would welcome a discussion of the large works and particularly the religious works that have occupied him in the last decades since he converted to Catholicism.

Dave Brubeck has been documented as much or more than any other jazz figure in history, including life histories by the BBC and NPR. He figured significantly in Ken Burns' nineteen-hour television presentation on PBS, and his reminiscences about seeing the scars on the back of one of the hands on his father's California ranch was perhaps the most moving moment in the documentary, the episode people took away as a symbol of African American suffering. "I asked him to cut that out," Brubeck says, and he replied, "I'd rather cut my throat."

Race is an issue Brubeck has felt keenly all his life. In the 1950s he refused to play at colleges where black musicians were discriminated against, and chose texts for his compositions that were potent statements against racial injustice. "The people that seem to like to continue with racist ideas are just buying old myths without really investigating how important so many of the early players were, no matter what color they might have been." Brubeck says. "In the old days, we were all pretty close friends and it only had to do if you were a good guy, if you could play, and that was about it."

The first focus of the oral history is the Brubecks' long association with California. Iola's family of Whitlocks and Smiths settled in the Sacramento Valley, where the families had to travel two days by wagon to shop for staples and Iola remembers riding horseback to a one-room schoolhouse. Dave's grandfather settled in Lassen County in 1875, built a hotel between Pyramid Lake and Honey Lake, and in 1900 purchased land in the neighborhood of what is today the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, where the oral history interviews were held. Dave spent his early years on cattle ranches and was exposed to music through his mother, a classical pianist who studied in Paris when the children were small. His father hoped that the three sons would follow him in ranching (all three became professional musicians). Brubeck values the ranch years and claims that his experimentation with polyphony was derived from the rhythms of horseback riding.

After the Brubecks met at the College of the Pacific and married, they decided to stay and raise their six children in California rather than moving to the East Coast because the environment seemed more open to Brubeck's kind of musical experimentation. Although the family moved in 1961 to Connecticut, two of the four sons who are musicians still live and work primarily in California.

The second focus of the oral history are the large-scale compositions--oratorios, cantatas and masses--that bear Brubeck's trademark jazz style, a high degree of improvisation, polytonality and unorthodox rhythms. He composes constantly at their Connecticut home, on planes and trains. He even wrote a piece in the hospital while awaiting heart surgery, setting Psalm 30 to music and dedicating it to his surgeon. Iola thinks these compositions reveal more about Dave than his other music, and of the works for which Iola

has produced the texts, *The Light in the Wilderness* and *Gates of Justice* are most often performed and closest to her heart. Dave agrees, saying of the latter: “The essential message is the brotherhood of man. Concentrating on the historic and spiritual parallels of the Jew and the American Negro, I hoped through the juxtaposition and amalgamation of a variety of musical styles to construct a bridge upon which the universal theme of brotherhood could be communicated.”

Several of the oral history interviews took place at the Claremont Hotel, where the Brubecks stay and often celebrate important anniversaries. Just as he did so often in quartet playing, Dave defers to Iola in answering direct questions, and they frequently complete each other’s thoughts. In the last interview, which took place just after 9/11, 2001, manager Russell Gloyd joined us, and Dave and Iola concluded our conversation by reflecting on the work we had discussed and the message it carries, so relevant in troubled times. The Brubecks reviewed the transcripts and made a few corrections and additions to the text.

If one thing has marked the Brubecks’ lives it is grace. As one of the sons says of Dave and Iola’s relationship—“they got it right the first time.” Everything in their lives seems to have happened right “the first time”: the decision to pursue music rather than ranching, the decision to have a large family and to stay in California. It must be that touch of grace that follows Dave and Iola, now in their eighties, from concert stage to concert stage and instills every performance with joy. Ask Dave Brubeck the secret of his career, his marriage, his first-place status with jazz fans of more than half a century and he answers: “Just lucky, I guess.”

Caroline Crawford, Music Editor
December 2005
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INTERVIEW WITH DAVE AND IOLA BRUBECK

I. GROWING UP IN CALIFORNIA

1920s and 1930s

History of the Whitlock and the Brubeck families, pastimes, traditions, celebrations
 Lewis Warren Brubeck, a hotel in Amedee and cattle ranches in Concord and Ione
 Bessie Ivey Brubeck and Howard "Pete" Brubeck, meeting, courtship and marriage
 Landmarks of childhood
 Developing interests in music and ranching
 Henry and Howard Brubeck
 Remembering ranch life

[Interview 1: February 15, 1999] ##¹

Crawford: We are sitting in the Brubeck's room at the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, a site of very special significance for Dave and Iola Brubeck. Let's start with your families, including the Brubecks, the Whitlocks, and the Smiths.

Brubeck: [laughs] Well, you'd better get over here,.

Crawford: It was interesting to talk to your uncle Leslie Brubeck.

Brubeck: What did he have to say? Did you ask him if I'm part Indian?

Crawford: I can't remember if I talked to him about that.

Brubeck: Because he always says, no, it's impossible. But my dad told his grandson, who also lives in Sacramento, to be proud of what you are. Peter said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "Well, you're part Indian." My mother came outside and said, "Husband, why do you tell your grandson such nonsense as that?" So we'll never know. [laughs]

Crawford: Your families both go way back into California history and ranching history, so I'd like to start by having you tell me about Brubecks, Whitlocks, and Smiths.

Brubeck: Well, Iola's family goes back further than mine.

1. The ## symbol indicates that a tape or tape side has begun. A guide to the tapes follows the table of contents.

I. Brubeck: Yes, and the only documentation that I know of, and I haven't seen it with my own eyes, was a birth certificate or something perhaps at the church having to do with when a child was christened in 1835.

That would be my mother's mother's side, I guess it would be. My mother was a Smith. Her father, I believe, was born in Iowa and came to California very early, and her mother was born in California and her mother's maiden name was Walker. That's about as much as I know about that side, except we used to laugh that in the Smith family there were the Smiths, and the Walkers and the Trotters, so we thought they all had to do with horses in some way. [laughter]

My father was the youngest in a family of Whitlocks. His father came to California when he was about eleven years old; he was orphaned and taken in by a family who started out with a wagon train coming to California from Ohio.

And the story goes that after he arrived in California with this family, his job was to look after the stock as they crossed the country, taking care of the horses and the cows and so forth that they had with them. When they got here, his job was done and he was on his own. And by this time he was around twelve, so on his own, he—I don't know how long he hung around San Francisco—but then he headed up Sacramento Valley, and he just worked on ranches and kind of made his way up and then finally he settled in the area in the foothills around Orland, west of Orland in those foothills. There are still Whitlocks in that area that are related in some way.

My father's mother's name was Oaks and I don't know whether she was a native Californian or not. I suspect that she may have been native Californian because I don't know anything about her family except they seem to have been established in that area for quite some time. And then my grandfather said that when he first went up the Sacramento Valley, that the wild grass was so high that it was up to a horse's level. You know, if you were riding through it, it would be up to the horse's body, it was so high. What a fertile valley it was when it was just wild, before it was cultivated. So I've always thought that was interesting.

Crawford: That's a good image. And you were born up in that area, weren't you? Corning?

I. Brubeck: That was Corning, yes. And my family at that time lived in Chrome. Ever heard of it? [laughter]

Crawford: Oh, I don't think so. Like chrome the metal?

I. Brubeck: Yes, I'm sure there must have been a mine there at one time. But it's just a little noplance—I don't know what's there now. At the time that they lived there, there was only I think a sort of general store, a gas pump at the store, a school house, and that's about it. Not even a church.

West of Orland and Corning and Willows and those towns that are in the middle of the valley there's another string of little minor towns that are just west of them that used to thrive when transportation wasn't so easy and the farmers and ranchers would go to these places for supplies. So west of Willows is Elk Creek, and west of Orland is Newville. Let's see, west of Corning is Paskenta.

Crawford: It's still there.

I. Brubeck: I know, we've driven through Paskenta within the last few years and actually it's grown a little bit. [laughs] Newville disappeared off the map.

Crawford: A lot of those towns disappeared with the railroads, didn't they?

I. Brubeck: Yes.

Brubeck: What was the name of the town you were going to show me?

I. Brubeck: That was Newville. And nothing was there, no store there anymore, no schoolhouse anymore, and that's where I went to first grade, was in Newville for a while. My mother was ill and I stayed with my aunt who was on a ranch near Newville and so with her kids I went to school. And nothing there! Nothing to show. [laughs]

Brubeck: Only one teacher for eight grades.

I. Brubeck: Yes. Actually, it went above eight grades because high school was so far away that they continued ninth and tenth grades—from little kids in first grade all through—one teacher. [laughter]

Brubeck: They went barefooted.

I. Brubeck: Yes. Barefooted to school. And—[door knocks]

Brubecks: Hi! Hello! [Nora Brubeck, son Danny's wife, enters]

I. Brubeck: Here, get yourself comfortable.

Nora: I'm fine. This is great.

I. Brubeck: Here's some pillows. Are you okay?

Nora: Yes, just right.

I. Brubeck: Okay. So we were talking about the one-room school, right? [laughter] And sometimes we rode horses to school, two on a back. I was with my cousins, so the older cousins actually rode the horse and I sat in front. And what else can I say? Oh, the horses were put up—there was a little barn or a lean-to where horses could be tied up. The farmers all went together, I guess, and provided this.

So really it was a schoolhouse situation that is something that you read about in Tom Sawyer or something, because it was one room, we had a pump with a big bucket and that was the water. And when you wanted a drink, there was a dipper and we all drank out of the same dipper. [laughter] And the schoolteacher who handled all of this did it extremely well because older students helped the younger ones. I can remember sitting in a reading circle when I was in first grade, and maybe there would be a fifth or sixth grader who would be listening to you read while the teacher was giving algebra to the others. It helped everyone, so it was a very pleasant atmosphere.

I was just there in my first grade, and then not the complete first year, either, because later my mother was better and I came back to my family in Willows. And I went to the Willows school then.

Brubeck: Tell her about your cousin getting the pair of shoes. I love that story.

I. Brubeck: [laughter] Oh, it snowed one of those rare times that it snows in the foothills, and so he had his shoes to wear to school, and my father saw him tromping along the road barefooted with his shoes hung around his neck, like that. He said, “Why aren’t you wearing your shoes?”

“Well, I don’t want to ruin my new good shoes.”

Crawford: [laughter] Saving the leather.

I. Brubeck: And he was tromping through the snow with bare feet.

Brubeck: And when did they move to Peanut and Hayfork?

I. Brubeck: That’s my mother’s family, and why my mother’s parents left Yolo—my mother was born actually in Madison, in Yolo County, just outside of Woodland, and why they left that area to go to Trinity County, I don’t know. I suspect there must have been an offer of land or something for homesteading, because that was really a wild part of the country at that time.

So they lived around Hayfork and Peanut, and Igo and Ono, and that’s where my mother was raised. And she has marvelous stories to tell because in this valley where they lived, they went to Red Bluff two times a year for supplies and that was it.

You sold your produce and you brought back the staples that you had to buy. They would go by wagon and they would get there the second day. There was always one place that they camped near a farm where they knew the people. They would camp on the creek and then they would go to this farmhouse in the evening. And my mother said it was always great fun because they’d sit around and tell stories and sing songs and just have a little reunion like a party. And the next day they’d get on the wagon and go all the way, then, to Red Bluff.

And at that time, ships came up the Sacramento River all the way to Red Bluff and so the produce would go to be loaded on these ships.

Crawford: So that was the real supply center for that whole region. Did you have a question, Nora?

Nora: Yes. She bought groceries six months at a time? Is that what you’re saying? [laughter]

I. Brubeck: Yes, and you wouldn’t exactly consider it groceries, but staples like flour, and I suppose—well, they would even have their own lard and everything because they were self-sufficient, you know. They raised animals and grew vegetables. Sugar, they wouldn’t have, so they would buy sugar. It is sort of mind-boggling, isn’t it, that you can think that far ahead and for a big family, you know.

Crawford: How big a family?

I. Brubeck: Let's see, my mother was the youngest girl and she had three sisters and three brothers.

Crawford: A big family. Well, Mr. Brubeck, you are a native Californian too—born in 1920. Let's talk a little bit then about how far your family goes back—your grandfather came to homestead in Lassen County after 1875, not quite as far back, it seems.

Brubeck: No, not like that. But my grandfather would have started out from Indiana around 1875. When his mother died, his father gave his three sons a saddle horse and \$100 and told them they were on their own, so my grandfather came to California. Another one went to Utah, or Colorado. Another one went to Kentucky or down that way. And my grandfather, then, went to Amedee. Is that right?

I. Brubeck: That's right. Well, he must have settled in Nevada first, don't you think?

Brubeck: I don't know, but he built a hotel by a hot spring between Pyramid Lake and Honey Lake, and that's where all their family was raised. And my Aunt Emma was their school teacher. They didn't have any school, but muleskinners came with twenty mules or twenty horses from Oregon to Amedee. Amedee had a narrow gauge railroad from Reno to Amedee and then they'd go by twenty-horse or twenty-mule teams on into Oregon. And the muleskinners could stay all night in the third floor of the hotel in a big dorm for 50¢ with three meals. You got three meals and the dorm for 50¢.

My grandfather was often in trouble because there'd be fights in the hotel or something like that, so he finally gave up and came down here in 1900. And if my Uncle Leslie said they owned land near the Claremont Hotel—did he say that?

Crawford: He did. I guess we're sitting on Lewis Warren Brubeck's land right now. [laughter]

I. Brubeck: It's hard for me to figure just how that could be, but he swears it is. When we had our fiftieth wedding anniversary party here in the Claremont Hotel, Dave said something about, "Well, I have been told this myth or whatever it was," and Uncle Leslie spoke up. Oh, you said, "I don't know how many acres it was," and what was it he said?

Brubeck: 1,700. Right here.

Crawford: That's a lot of acreage. [laughter]

Brubeck: That's why I don't believe it. We'd be billionaires.

I. Brubeck: We should be able to research titles or something. It just doesn't add up to me at all. But what Uncle Leslie says you can rely on usually.

Crawford: I read something about that in the Hall book, although there was no specifics.²

2. Hall, Fred M., *It's About Time: the Dave Brubeck Story*, with a foreword by Gene Lees, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1996.

I. Brubeck: That's it, it's hard to substantiate. What can be substantiated, if you wanted to read some hilarious court reporting, are the trials that were held up at—what town would it have been? Susanville?

Brubeck: Yes, it could have been Susanville or it could have been Amedee. You see, Honey Lake was 120 miles long. Now it's dry, but then they had steamboats and they were selling lots up there. They thought they'd found a great place—this desert where you could irrigate out of the Honey Lake. And the lake dried up. How they got steamboats up there—but there's a wonderful sagebrush—

I. Brubeck: *Sagebrush Sketches*, yes.

Brubeck: Have you seen that?

Crawford: I was not able to find it. In fact, I called Tim Purdy in Amedee about the history and he has a copy.

Brubeck: Oh, yes! Is he still alive?

Crawford: Yes, and he wanted to be remembered to you. And he said he had a copy. So I have to travel there and see it.

Brubeck: Didn't he write part of it? Didn't he, Iola?

Crawford: He knew about murder at the hotel—the trial papers, and he invited me to come up and see the papers.

I. Brubeck: It's hilarious, I tell you, because it just gives you an insight into what life must have been like, through the testimony of these people.

Crawford: Talk about that, would you?

Brubeck: Well, at the trial, they said that my grandfather was running an indecent establishment, and they'd have different people testify. And this one guy that testified said, well, it was always pretty well run. Once in a while, there'd be some chair play off the balcony. [laughter] Now, I guess that means they were throwing chairs off the balcony. And then my grandfather stood in the door and a guy was there with a gun, gonna shoot somebody inside. And he wouldn't move away from the door, so the guy fired the gun right through the screen door, I think it was, right past his head. Things like that.

My grandfather was huge for that time. He was six-four, and I remember that I thought he was God with a great white beard and this big giant of a guy. Of course he wouldn't be big today—

Crawford: That was Lewis?

Brubeck: Lewis, yes. Grandpa Louie.

Crawford: But they left that area because it was rough, or because the fortunes dwindled?

- Brubeck: I think maybe a combination of those. He just got tired of being in court and having a bad reputation when there's nothing you can do about it. And a waitress committed suicide over a love affair—in fact, I think it was the guy that was trying to shoot my grandfather that the love affair was with? Don't you think?
- I. Brubeck: I think they're connected in some way.
- Crawford: Is that documented in this *Sagebrush Sketches*?
- Brubeck: Yes, I think so.
- Crawford: Do you have a copy of that?
- I. Brubeck: Yes, we do have, some place we do.
- Crawford: Well, Mrs. Brubeck, did Charles and Myrtle Whitlock stay in the Corning area until you went to school?
- I. Brubeck: Yes, I went to school in Willows through my first year in high school, and then we moved to Redding. And we were in Redding during the time when the Shasta Dam was being built, so that's another bit of California history and it was a very exciting time because Redding was a sort of a nothing little town that suddenly became this boomtown that was just bursting out of its seams.
- It was almost impossible to find a place to live. I can remember people camping and living in little shacks or shanties, of whatever cardboards and stuff that they could find because these were Depression years and news that there were jobs at a dam just attracted all the out-of-work people from not only California but from Oklahoma and all the other depressed areas.
- When we were in Redding, my father worked for the forest service. He was a mechanic for the forest service and so he was in Redding until I graduated from high school. And then so that I could attend college, since I really couldn't afford to go away to school, he transferred to Stockton, where there was another U.S. Forest Service headquarters. And so he made that transfer and then I could live at home and go to college.
- Crawford: I see. And Mr. Brubeck, I want to ask you about your parents because I find them such a marvelous, colorful couple.
- Brubeck: Yes, as we said, my grandfather, my mother's father, drove the stagecoach that came right down this mountain to close by this hotel—Fish Ranch Road, from Concord into Oakland—and had a livery stable in Concord. And so I feel related when I stay in this hotel. My grandparents on both sides.
- Crawford: And that's how Howard "Pete" Brubeck and Elizabeth "Bessie" Ivey met, isn't it?
- Brubeck: Yes. Because my dad, when he came from Amedee, brought the stock, the horses, and the cattle in trains—cattle cars. And he needed some hands to help him bring the cattle to the ranch at the foot of Mount Diablo in Ygnacio Valley, and so he went to my grandfather Ivey's livery stable to see if he could hire hands to help him with the cattle.

And then my grandfather went home that night and said to my mother, “I met a real nice young man at the corrals today.” And then they invited my dad to come to dinner maybe the next night or so and that’s how my mother and dad met. And when they later were going to get married, my grandfather had to give permission to my mother, and he said, “If you marry him, Bessie, you’ll never want for a sack of flour.” [laughs]

Crawford: Oh, that’s a wonderful story. Well, I find it so interesting that when you were small children, I believe that you were in first grade, she went off and studied with Myra Hess, in 1926. Is that a fact?

Brubeck: Oh, for sure. And Tobias Matthay, who was probably even more famous at the time than Myra Hess as a teacher. So that was a big event in my life, to see her leave.

Crawford: Did she take Howard with her?

Brubeck: Henry. He was around seventeen or eighteen.

Crawford: Wouldn’t that have been unusual in that time?

Brubeck: Very. Everything she did was unusual. She helped get a high school built in her small town by going to all the ranches in a horse and buggy and getting farmers and different orchard men to sign a petition to build a high school—which is Mount Diablo High School in Concord. And she was in the first graduating class, so she had to create her own high school, practically.

Crawford: She did. How old was she when she graduated?

I. Brubeck: I don’t know, and I wonder where the students went to high school from Concord if there wasn’t a high school. Where did they go?

Brubeck: They didn’t go.

I. Brubeck: Maybe they didn’t go.

Brubeck: All her life she was pushing to be educated and studied at King’s Conservatory in San Jose. Have you ever heard of that?

Crawford: No, tell me about that.

Brubeck: I’d like to know more about it.

I. Brubeck: That’s where she studied. I wonder if it could have been a forerunner of the conservatory at University of Pacific, because Pacific was in San Jose before it was in Stockton.

Brubeck: Wouldn’t it be funny if it were?

I. Brubeck: I just wonder if there were some connection there.

Brubeck: All her life she was trying to get a degree of some kind. I don't know, but she used to come here on what we called the ONA train, which is now the same tracks as BART going out to Concord, a lot of it. And it was Northern Pacific—Oakland, Northern Pacific—I don't know what ONA stood for. But it was an electric train, and every summer she'd go to Berkeley and study.

Crawford: At the university?

I. Brubeck: Yes, and they also told me San Francisco State University.

Brubeck: That was when I was in high school. Just in high school, she'd go to San Francisco State. And then she went to Moscow, Idaho, and my eldest brother, Henry was getting his master's, and they were in the same class together.

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Brubeck: She had this drive, which she had spent on Howard.

Crawford: She got her three musicians, didn't she?

Brubeck: Yes. [laughter]

Crawford: That in itself is quite a feat, because the ranching must have been—I know it was, for you, a very strong draw. How did she do it?

Brubeck: Oh, boy—the hard way. But I was going to tell you that I kind of was the rebel as far as getting influenced by my mother because when we moved with my father to the ranch, I wanted to be a cowboy.

But when I came home from college, and I think I was a senior, I showed her a list of books that we were studying in Professor Goleman's class, and I said, "You know, these books are so great." And I was talking to her about it and she just took me by the ear and she walked me towards my bedroom, and there was a bookshelf and she said, "You walked by most of these every night when you went to bed." [laughter] "And now you're telling me about them."

And finally I was discovering more about her through going to the College of Pacific and studying religion and literature. Her cousin was Ethel Cotton. Do you know that name? Well, she had seminars, would you call them?

I. Brubeck: She called it a "conversation salon."

Brubeck: And she wrote speeches for the—oh, I think for the governors of California, and the mayors. So she and my mother were always in big intellectual conversations, and my Dad would hate to see her coming to the ranch. Oh, boy. I'll tell you. There's some funny stories about how he tried to keep her away. [laughter]

Crawford: Your mother, I read somewhere, loved to speak French and wanted you all to speak French at the table, and your father would make comments in his amusing French. Do you remember that?

Brubeck: Oh, sure. Instead of *s'il vous plait*, he'd say "single play," like the baseball game. And "le beurre—pass le beurre single play," he'd say. [laughter]

Crawford: Your father became manager of a large cattle ranch near Ione when you were twelve. So the family moved. Well, they had a long, long union, didn't they?

Brubeck: Oh, yes. And then when she'd say that she wanted to go to the symphony in San Francisco or someplace, my dad would say, "Damn it, Bessie, you know I can't walk on cement! If I go down to San Francisco, I can't walk on those sidewalks." And she said, "You go to the baseball games in Sacramento, how come you can do that?" "Well, it's just oil macadam in the parking lot. I can walk on that okay." [laughter]

My brother conducted the symphony orchestra in San Francisco, the *California Suite* he wrote. He conducted it in the forties, and my Uncle Tom—my dad's cousin—told me about it. He says, "You know, we went to hear the 'sympathy' orchestra and that Mary Anderson, she can really sing." [laughter]

And when I'd be playing around here in Oakland, those guys would come in once in a while—thank God it wasn't too often—and they'd holler at me, "Play 'Comin' around the Mountain' or something like you used to, Dave. Play something we all know." That was two of his brothers and his cousins that came in to the Burma Lounge at Lake Merritt.

Crawford: Your dad's ranch was right where the Concord Pavilion is today, and it seems he was so devoted to ranching—did he mind that you all went into music?

Brubeck: Well, he was counting on me to save the situation and it was a bit of a disappointment that I didn't.

Crawford: You did start studying veterinary medicine in college, didn't you?

Brubeck: Yes. That was the way it was supposed to go, and then I switched over by request of Dr. Arnold, who the last I heard was professor emeritus and living in Santa Rosa.

Crawford: He was a real mentor to you?

Brubeck: Oh, well, he got me out of that—he said, "Brubeck, move over to the conservatory. Your mind is not here in zoology. Just go over there next year." He said, "You're always listening to what's going on across the lawn." [laughs]

Crawford: At the conservatory. Well, did you study your Czerny? Did your mother raise you in the classical way?

Brubeck: At first, yes. That's about as far as I got. [laughter]

Crawford: According to what I've read, you didn't read music until later. Did you not want to read or did you just have such a good ear?

Brubeck: I don't know what combination caused that. Bad eyes.

I. Brubeck: Bad eyes and good ears.

Brubeck: Maybe. Yes.

Crawford: Aren't you glad you did it that way? It would have been a different life otherwise.

Brubeck: Yes, it would have been a different life, yes.

Crawford: Would you say something about Howard and Henry here, because you all took different musical paths: Henry becoming a drummer with Del Courtney and Gil Evans and a school teacher, and Howard a composer and teacher at Palomar College?

Brubeck: Henry was the first influence I had in jazz, because he played jazz drums and classical violin, and he was in a band in Concord that later Del Courtney of Oakland took over.

Del used to come to Concord and rehearse the band in my mother's studio, and then Del and Henry were roommates at the College of Pacific and during the Depression they worked at the Oakland Hotel—Hotel Oakland or Oakland Hotel. It was a dance floor and supper club, I think, and then everything gradually went bust, you know, in the Depression. But I still see Del. He's eighty-seven, now.

I. Brubeck: Very close to that.

Brubeck: He was in Honolulu and he did the first broadcasts from Honolulu. Then he had the band for the Oakland Raiders for years and he had one of the first TV shows in San Francisco.

So anyway, then Henry played with Tom Cokely—another San Francisco band. And then he decided to get his degree at College of Pacific so he could teach and I remember he was told to come to an interview at Stanford University with the principal of Lompoc High School and the three brothers went in the car. We managed to stay all night down there and in the morning at breakfast time I was the only one who had a dime, so they were completely broke—I guess they'd spent all their money on the hotel room—so we ate pancakes and each one had one of the three in the stack. [laughter]

Crawford: What happened at Stanford?

Brubeck: He got the job, and then he went from Lompoc to become head of music in Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara High School, and then to San Marcus High School until he retired. And he had some of the first high school bands at the Rose Bowl.

Crawford: I must have heard him at the Rose Bowl because I grew up in Pasadena.

Brubeck: Well, if you heard Santa Barbara, that was him. That was his big thing every year. He was a very good band teacher because of his violin playing, and he was a very good percussionist, so—and he *loved* to teach. And the kids loved him. They're still talking about him. We just played in Santa Barbara and half the people in the audience said, "Your brother taught me music." They dedicated to festival to him, didn't they?

I. Brubeck: I think so, yes. Because the people running the festival were fairly new in Santa Barbara and didn't know the connection between Dave and Henry in Santa Barbara and when they found out about it and started asking the old-time residents, they said, oh, yes. The whole town knew.

Brubeck: Yes. And then when we moved out of Concord when I was twelve to Ione, I finished grammar school, the eighth grade in Ione. I had gone through Willow Pass Grammar School in Concord until the eighth grade. My brother Howard stayed in our house in Concord with the people that rented it, so he could continue studying piano with a San Francisco teacher, preparing for a concert career. After a year, he decided to enter San Francisco State. But he was a wonderful pianist and won all kinds of competitions and things when he was a kid. Very good classical musician.

Crawford: And you were as well, I gather?

Brubeck: No, oh, no. The worst. And then he studied, finished San Francisco State, and went to Mills for his master's degree. And that's where he studied, first with an Italian named—Brescia was his name.

Then Darius Milhaud came in, and Pete Rugolo and my brother were Darius Milhaud's students. They were at San Francisco State together and a two-piano team, and they came over to Mills together to get their master's. And they were the first male students of Darius Milhaud at Mills.

Crawford: San Francisco State was a big music campus, then, wasn't it?

Brubeck: Yes, my mother studied with Henry Cowell.

Crawford: I didn't know. Did you have an impression of Cowell?

Brubeck: I've read his book that my mother gave me, yes.

I. Brubeck: Some things we went through after her death were some scores that are signed by Cowell from that time.

Brubeck: Then Howard went on to, well, he taught at Mount Diablo High School. That was his first job. Then he taught at Mills and was assistant to Milhaud. When Milhaud would go to Europe, my brother would take his classes. And then he went from there to San Diego State and from there he went to Palomar Junior College, where he remained the rest of his life. He was head of the music department and then dean of humanities until he retired.

Crawford: Were you aware that he was composing? Was that something that he focused on as a young person?

Brubeck: Oh, yes. Well, he was just a great musician from the time that I can remember.

Crawford: He transcribed a lot of your work?

- Brubeck: Oh, yes, for years he did that, and then when he became dean, he said, “David, I think you’re going to have to do all of this on your own. I don’t have time any more.” But we did a lot of interesting things together. He studied with [Serge] Koussevitzky and Darius Milhaud at Tanglewood. And at that time [Leonard] Bernstein was in the class, and Lukas Foss, and on and on. And another fellow—a friend of mine—was in that class.
- I. Brubeck: Joe Harnell.
- Brubeck: Joe Harnell. And that’s where he met these guys. And then I think it was 1956 or ’54 that my brother wrote the piece *Four Dialogues for Jazz Combo and Symphony Orchestra*. Bernstein heard about it and because he knew Howard from class, he recorded it [in 1959]. We did it with the New York Philharmonic. Then Howard and I did a lot of other things together.
- Crawford: You had the jazz combo in the *Dialogues*—the piece with orchestra?
- Brubeck: Yes.
- I. Brubeck: Yes, that first performance was in San Diego with—that’s when Robert Shaw was there, right?
- Brubeck: Robert Shaw was the conductor. But I think Howard conducted that, didn’t he?
- I. Brubeck: I don’t remember, to tell you the truth, but I think he probably did.
- Crawford: What has the performance history been since the New York performances? It was recorded in New York?
- Brubeck: We play it a lot, still. With the London Symphony, we’ve done it twice. Not the whole thing, no. Just the second movement because it’s—
- I. Brubeck: It takes a lot of rehearsal. Yes, and that is the problem. Usually something like this they put into the pops category because it’s a jazz combo with soloing, and they don’t allow the same amount of rehearsal time as they would if someone was coming in playing a concerto, for example, which is totally unfair, really, because the soloist is playing the concerto with an orchestra that has the piece in their repertoire, usually.
- It could be a premiere, but most of the time whatever they’re playing the orchestra has played many times before for other soloists, so it’s a matter of working that out. But there’s never enough rehearsal time to do something as ambitious as the *Dialogues*, for example.
- Brubeck: We’ll play it with the London Symphony Orchestra again on my eightieth birthday. We played there with four of our sons on my seventieth birthday, and on my seventy-fifth they invited all the sons again, and then on my eightieth, we’ll be back again. We’ll probably do one movement because it’s so good and the brass section loves it.
- I. Brubeck: It has been performed with other groups improvising. Once in a while there will be a conductor who is ambitious enough to take it on.

- Crawford: I remember reading the story that Bernstein came to the rehearsal ten, fifteen minutes late, and said, “Gentlemen, you’ve had your free time.”
- Brubeck: That was the recording session. Yes, we were scared to death. It was costing a fortune, the New York Philharmonic sitting there, and no Bernstein. Everybody in place. He walks in the door and he hollers, “Gentlemen, this session started with a fifteen-minute break.” [laughter] He liked it.
- Crawford: How was it to work with him?
- Brubeck: Oh, he was great. Howard was amazed by how great a memory Bernstein had, because they were arguing about something, and they’d both gone to the back of Carnegie Hall to listen to the balance and Howard said to him, “Why are the brass so loud at this point?” and Bernstein said, “Why did you mark a double forte there?” And neither of them had the score. They were just listening, and Howard said, “It’s not double forte.” And Bernstein said, “Come and look at the score.” It was my brother’s piece and Bernstein—he had a photographic mind to remember everything—had seen a ff when Howard had meant to write pp! [laughter]
- Crawford: Well, before we move on to your meeting at what was then COP [College of the Pacific], I wanted to ask you about life on the ranch. I hear some Bach in your music. Was that a factor, and did that come from your exposure to your mother?
- Brubeck: Yes. Sure, because she practiced all the piano literature all the time. So although I couldn’t play it, or didn’t play it, I heard it all the time.
- Crawford: And you liked it.
- Brubeck: I didn’t even know. You know, it was just like living, to hear this constantly. It was just the flood of piano music daily. And into the night. She practiced after dinner, and after we were in bed she’d still be practicing.
- Crawford: Did she have five grand pianos?
- Brubeck: No, she had two grand pianos and two uprights in Concord, yes.
- Crawford: What were your ranch tasks? I know that you were working on the ranch and you were playing a great deal in the territory bands.
- Brubeck: Yes. Well, in the summer I had to haul all the drinking water—and that was a lot of water—from the well. Two five-gallon buckets and one in each hand, I’d have to go fill. And then I had to take care of the wood, because the wood stove went all day long, from six in the morning—and much earlier in the summer—and that was my job. And to milk the cow and to gather the eggs. That was it. Later, I began helping my father with the cattle—roping, branding, et cetera.
- Crawford: Everything cooked on the wood stove?
- Brubeck: Oh, yes, and hot as blazes in those days. No air conditioning. And sometimes there’d be—oh, in hay season I think there’d be as many as a hundred men—just in the summer.

And then in the winter it would be down to five or six cowboys when you were through with haying and the harvesting.

Howard and Henry worked up there, too. We got a dollar a day for working, usually six in the morning until six at night. And if you were a cowboy you started much earlier and you'd get a rest when it was too hot to work the cattle around noon. You'd just pull the saddle off your horse and the blankets and lie down and go to sleep in the shade of the tree for a couple of hours.

Crawford: Horses were obviously a big part of your life, do you ride still?

Brubeck: No. My son Michael does, but not me. I think I would under certain circumstances, but I can't imagine doing it in Connecticut. I don't know why.

Crawford: It wouldn't be that great big western saddle that we have in California! Well, one more thing before we go on. "There's Honey on the Moon Tonight"—was that one of your first purchases?

Brubeck: Right, that's one of them. Sacramento's Sherman and Clay, the store. I remember that. First one I bought. "Let's Be Fair and Square in Love," was on the other side.

Crawford: Was it easy to get recordings then?

Brubeck: Yes, if you had the money. Sure. I think a 78 was around 50¢.

Crawford: That is a lot. That's a half a day's wages.

Brubeck: Yes! A big deal.

I. Brubeck: Did Dave tell you we still have a page from one of the ledgers of Dave's father's where he has listed Dave as a *vaquero* for one dollar a day—working out their wages, of how much he was going to get a month—and it listed some of the other names, too. And what I couldn't quite work out was the difference between a *vaquero* and a *hand*, but there was a difference.

Brubeck: *Vaquero*, for sure, you were on horseback.

I. Brubeck: I thought that was interesting because it had a different pay scale. If you were a *vaquero*, it was one thing, if you were a *hand* it was another.

Crawford: And the hand got less?

I. Brubeck: Yes.

Brubeck: How could you get less than a dollar a day?

Crawford: [laughter] That's a good point. You must have been a *vaquero* then.

I. Brubeck: He was a *vaquero*.

Crawford: Do you have the document?

I. Brubeck: Yes, some place. It was very funny. And it was how much the cook was paid, you know. But this was on the payroll.

Crawford: California has been such a big part of your life. Let's just reflect on that before we move to College of the Pacific. I know you don't live here now, but you're still Californians.

Brubeck: Oh, is she ever.

I. Brubeck: It's like home to us. I guess any place where you have grown up, it just becomes part of your natural environment. But everything about it is much more familiar here in California from the plants and the flowers—everything about it. Okay, well, this is home—still lots of relatives here, whenever we come out. Of course we have close-by relatives.

And Howard's widow still lives in California, although in Southern California, and her two daughters are out here. June Brubeck lives in Santa Rosa, as do her two daughters, and Henry's children—Peter in Sacramento and Jannie in Santa Barbara. My own family is rapidly dwindling away, but I do have cousins out here. I have a cousin in Chico and I have another one in Alturas.

Brubeck: In Redding, where we visited?

I. Brubeck: Oh, that's Red Bluff.

Brubeck: Red Bluff, yes.

I. Brubeck: Our Whitlock cousin is in Red Bluff, and there are still a lot of Whitlocks around Red Bluff.

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Brubeck: You know, you left out some of the relatives. There was a mountain man—

I. Brubeck: [laughs] Right, that was on the Oaks side.

Brubeck: And he wore buckskin that he tanned—and moccasins.

I. Brubeck: Yes, he was a true mountain man. I have a vague memory of him from my childhood. He was always referred to as Old Jake Oaks, and Old Jake Oaks was a real—as Dave said, like a mountain man. He wore leather breeches and tanned his own deerskin hides, and he had a ranch in the foothills more around Newville—between Newville and Paskenta area.

I never have gotten all of who's related to whom too straight, but there was also a Nora Oaks, who I think was a niece of his. I don't think she ever married, but she was quite a character around the Paskenta area, too. People around there would probably still remember her. [laughter]

Brubeck: Is she the one that could see so well?

I. Brubeck: It's a family story—one of the stories about Nora Oaks I remember is finally someone talking her into going to something like a parent-teachers meeting at the school. Finally talked her into it because she was an Annie Oakley-type person, you know, who ran her own ranch and nothing very feminine about her. But she did have kids and they did to go to school, and so they talked her into going, and they asked her what she thought of the meeting afterwards and she said, "I'd have more fun at a funeral." [laughter]

II. EAST COAST VS. WEST COAST JAZZ

Studying and meeting at College of the Pacific
 Marriage, 1942, and serving in the U.S. Army, 1942-1944
 Thoughts about composing and impressions of Arnold Schoenberg and Darius Milhaud
 Heading a military band overseas in Patton's army, 1944-1946
 Iola's radio career, Kate and *The Red Ryder Show*

Crawford: I read in Ted Gioia's book¹ that he thought it was a good thing that you stayed in California because the East Coast wouldn't have been as open to that kind of creativity. Do you agree?

I. Brubeck: I think that there was something to be gained by being separated that much from all the activity in New York. Something to be gained, something lost.

Brubeck: But San Francisco was alive at that point.

I. Brubeck: But it was separate. It was a whole different scene from the New York scene. Looking back on it, what you've lost are a number of years of national recognition, because the prevailing attitude was, if it didn't come from New York, it wasn't worth listening to. What you gain is the period of working where you can pursue your own goals without the attention of the sort of New York people who are going to set the rules of what's acceptable and what's good and what's not good.

Crawford: You weren't tempted to go to New York in, say, the fifties?

Brubeck: Well—

I. Brubeck: I don't think he ever thought in those terms—did you?

Brubeck: No. I wanted to stay here. My big goal was to have a job making scale, you know, where I knew I would have enough. But you couldn't do that. It wasn't steady enough, not to keep a family in a house. You almost had to get out and travel and play one-nighters.

1. Gioia, Ted, *West Coast Jazz: Modern Jazz in California 1945-1960*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

That's the way all the bands were able to survive: Ellington, Basie, Benny Goodman, Louis Armstrong. You just were on the move.

Crawford: What about your college work?

Brubeck: It was good. But if I could have known I could work six nights a week, I would never have left San Francisco. At the Blackhawk, we usually had three months on and three months off and then three months on again, so what are you going to do in those three off months? And you weren't getting that much money.

Crawford: Would that have been different on the East Coast, say, if you had been in New York City?

Brubeck: No, not too much.

I. Brubeck: There's more clubs within the same city. That's about the only difference.

Brubeck: But there's more guys looking for work. It's tough. Nora and Danny—we'd love to see [son] Danny working six nights a week. They work two nights a week.

Crawford: And is he teaching as well?

Nora: No, he's touring on and off, so that it's probably the same formula of touring with the band and staying home when you can.

Brubeck: Our son Matthew is in Europe with Sheryl Crow now, and he plays with the Berkeley Symphony. But you have to get out there and move. And Danny's in Toronto tonight?

Nora: I think so, yes.

Brubeck: So it's tough, and that's why I couldn't stay here. There just wasn't enough work in San Francisco or Oakland. Now you see before the war I could work six nights a week while going to school.

But that's a different time. That's when all the bands were in every town up and down the valley. You could play in Modesto or Turlock or Stockton or Sacramento. They all had big bands and dance halls and a lot of the night clubs were functioning.

Crawford: But there wasn't so much money around after the war.

Brubeck: After the war there weren't nearly as many opportunities.

I. Brubeck: That does seem strange because before the war we were still in the Depression, but nevertheless the bands did exist. Dancing was the main form of entertainment—dancing and movies. That was just about it.

Crawford: Yes, I remember talking to Norma Teagarden about that.

Brubeck: Is Norma alive?

Crawford: She died three years ago.

Brubeck: Yes, that's what I heard.

Crawford: We were able to do her oral history.

Brubeck: Oh, that's great.

Crawford: Well, let's move on to your years at the College of the Pacific. Why did you choose to go there?

Brubeck: I had to. [laughter] In order to please my parents. I didn't want to go to college at all.

Crawford: You just wanted to work on the ranch?

Brubeck: Yes, that was what I wanted to do, but my mother insisted so that's how I ended up down there.

Crawford: When you went to the conservatory what was the curriculum like?

Brubeck: Well, I had some wonderful teachers. J. Russell Bodley was a teacher I liked very much. And Horace I. Brown.

Crawford: Who was it who stood up for you? I read they wanted to get rid of you at one point. [laughter] Was it Dr. Bodley who said, "Oh, he's a master at counterpoint."

Brubeck: Oh, that was Brown. I had to conduct the symphony orchestra and I thought I was doing okay because they were in four-four time and all of sudden there was a time change and I couldn't read, I didn't know where they were. I thought I was bluffing through all right, and the whole orchestra was waiting for me to fall on my face, which I did. And that's when Horace I. Brown came out and said, "Don't laugh at Brubeck. He's going to do more in music than anybody sitting here." He said that right in front of me. And I thought he'd gone crazy. [laughter]

Crawford: Did you start to read after that?

Brubeck: No! Not for years. And still I'm not a great reader.

Crawford: Did Milhaud want you to read or was he relaxed about that?

Brubeck: No, he knew I didn't. [laughs] It didn't bother him too much. He just wanted me to write, which I could do. It was a lot easier. It took me a long time to figure out how to write, but I could do it.

Crawford: But that didn't make reading easier for you?

Brubeck: Oh, it gradually made reading easier by writing. But it should have been the other way around.

Crawford: Well, you met at COP, and had what is described as a whirlwind romance. Was it? You were said to be the smartest girl, Iola.

I. Brubeck: [laughter] Supposedly.

Crawford: You managed the radio station?

I. Brubeck: No, I didn't manage it, but the radio station was campus-run and I had a lot to do with it because that was of course my job. I earned tuition working there. And I also was a radio and speech major. So I was in that campus radio station a lot, and at the time that we met, we had a show that was called Friday Frolics that was a variety show and Dave had been asked to supply the music for it. I guess the first time that we met I was directing it. I did different things. Sometimes I directed and sometimes I played parts in the comedy sketches and that sort of thing.

Crawford: Would that have been an unusual major?

I. Brubeck: Yes, I think Pacific at that time was the only school that offered—or at least in the West—that offered that type of major. Now it would be called a communications major, I guess, but at that time it was radio.

Crawford: I read that when you later went into radio in Los Angeles, that you were on *The Red Ryder Show*.

Brubeck: What was your name on Red Ryder?

I. Brubeck: Calamity Kate. Do you remember Calamity Kate?

Crawford: Oh, that's remarkable! I hope you still have the broadcasts. Nora, do you know about *The Red Ryder Show*?

Nora: No, I have heard people refer to Calamity Kate, though. That's great.

Crawford: The radio work was a bit later, I think, when you were already in the military. Were you married while in the service?

Brubeck: Yes.

Crawford: Would you talk about your meeting and the wedding and so on?

Brubeck: Oh! [laughs] The meeting was like you said, the smartest girl in the school. As long as I had to go out—my mother insisted that I go to one social function. In my senior year I hadn't been to one, and I told my roommate that if I had to go, I wanted to take the smartest girl in the school. And he was about the smartest guy, so I figured he'd know the smartest girl. [laughter] And he said, "Iola Whitlock." So I said, "All right, I'll see if she'll go," and we went to the dance.

I had on a zoot suit, [laughter] and I can just imagine what Iola's parents thought when I showed up. And we danced around—

Crawford: Did they like him?

I. Brubeck: Yes, I think they liked him. I don't know if they liked his dress. [laughter] I don't think they ever commented on it.

Brubeck: We danced about one turn around the floor at the fraternity, and decided we should get out of there. And we went out and parked on the levee at the other end of the school and talked for three hours and decided to get married.

Nora: How did you know?

I. Brubeck: [laughs] I guess that's what's called falling in love. I don't know.

Crawford: How old were you?

I. Brubeck: At that point I was eighteen. I turned nineteen in August.

Nora: Do you remember what you talked about?

I. Brubeck: Everything.

Brubeck: Philosophy, religion.

I. Brubeck: It covered a whole range of things. There are conversations that—I think it's true for both of us, that probably we'd never had that same kind of conversation with anyone else before.

Brubeck: I'd gone with a girl—and I was engaged to another girl, off and on for three and a half years, and I never had a conversation like that with her in three and a half years, so that told me plenty! At last I found somebody that I can talk with. When I came home, my roommate, we were living in the bomb shelter, which is a basement that had that nickname right off campus, and when I came home he said, "Well, how'd the date go with Iola?" I said, "Great, we're going to get married." And he flipped out because *he* wanted to go with her.

Crawford: Oh, he was the one who had told you she was the smartest girl in school.

Brubeck: Yes! You know, this would be a great girl to date. [laughs]

Crawford: You dated the summer after you graduated in 1942, and then joined the army and got married after that?

Brubeck: I could finish school if I promised the local draft board to go right into the army, so I graduated and went right in. And I went into a band that Ernie Farmer, a graduate of Pacific who was already in the band, had told me needed a piano player. It was at Camp Haan, Riverside, California, and I had to go to LA and audition for the band. I made the audition and went into it.

Crawford: Let's talk about the wedding.

I. Brubeck: Oh, our wedding. Well, there wasn't much to it. It was in Carson City, and Dave knew this family because their summer home on Lake Tahoe was next door to the Moffit summer home, and the connection with Moffit was that the Moffit family owned the ranch that Dave's father ran out at Ione—that big 45,000 acre ranch. And the other connection was that you knew them from the College of Pacific—somebody from that family.

Brubeck: Betty!

I. Brubeck: It was Betty you knew?

Brubeck: Yes.

I. Brubeck: And the father was a minister and it was the Methodist church, right?

Brubeck: Right.

I. Brubeck: And so we got the license and then Dave went to the minister of this church. And I guess you had met before.

Brubeck: Never.

I. Brubeck: Never—just knew the daughter?

Brubeck: Yes. And his wife was the witness.

I. Brubeck: His wife was the witness and so he performed the ceremony and we were married! [laughter] Just like that. And Dave was on a three-day pass, and so we spent the night at Tahoe and then came back down to Stockton and then Dave went back into Camp Haan and I went back to college.

Nora: What about the rings? Wasn't there something about the rings?

I. Brubeck: Oh, we had rings.

Brubeck: Seven dollars for two of them.

Crawford: Why do you remember that?

Brubeck: Because it was too much money.

I. Brubeck: I guess it was a jeweler in Riverside?

Brubeck: Yes, but the funny part I was telling you about was that Iola had told me to tell my mother and father that we were going to get married.

I. Brubeck: Well, after we had set the date, yes.

Brubeck: And Iola and her mother were in downtown Stockton buying stuff for the wedding. I guess clothes, right?

I. Brubeck: Yes. I bought a new suit.

Brubeck: And my mother happened to be shopping from the ranch in Stockton and she was in this furniture store—Breuner’s, I think it was, wasn’t it? And so they saw each other. Through the window? And Iola wanted to introduce her mother to my mother, so she went in—and you take it from there.

I. Brubeck: Well, I went in all full of enthusiasm and introduced them and started talking about how we were going to be getting married. And I could see she had no idea of what I was talking about. [laughs] Fortunately it was a furniture store so she could kind of collapse on a nearby sofa. You hadn’t said a word to your parents! I was furious.

Crawford: When were you going to tell them?

Brubeck: I don’t know. [laughter]

Crawford: Why not?

I. Brubeck: Yes, why not?

Crawford: This was after the initial—well, maybe initial and only, right—date?

I. Brubeck: Well, no, because the initial date was toward the end of the semester. I think it was May, probably. School was out, say, in June, and then we saw each other that summer. This was in September after Dave enlisted in the army in August, I think. So this was in September.

I. Brubeck: I think he was afraid to tell her, to tell you the truth. [laughter]

Brubeck: I don’t know why I didn’t tell—I forgot.

I. Brubeck: Yes, and then Dave’s father came to pick her up at the store and we decided the best way to resolve all this was for them to come out to my parents’ house and meet my father. You know, it all resolved kind of nicely, but I was still mad at him! [laughs]

Brubeck: And nothing worked out the way we had it planned. Iola came from Stockton to Riverside on a bus and I went with Ernie Farmer, my friend from college that had gotten me into the band, to the bus depot to meet Iola. And there’s hundreds and hundreds of guys in uniforms because there were three big camps right there in Riverside—March Field and Camp Haan and another one—DeAnza.

DeAnza, yes. And when Iola got off the bus, she was looking around for me and she couldn’t see me, but she saw Ernie because he’s about six-four or five and he always wore a crew cut. And I’m standing next to Ernie and she came over and says, “Where’s Dave?”

I. Brubeck: Because the Army barber had given him a real apache and I’d always known him with long hair—quite long.

Brubeck: So she came down—we were going to go to Mexico, and then all of a sudden, crazy kids, we decide why don't we go to Carson City, Nevada, that way we can see our parents. So we drove, must be 600 miles, one way.

And my folks were camping in the mountains so we stopped by and saw them. And it wasn't far to go to Carson City, then go back to Lake Tahoe. Then I dropped you off at Stockton and then drove all the way back down to Riverside. So that was a wild three days, most of it in the car.

Crawford: Had he proposed properly?

I. Brubeck: Spoken for my hand? Yes, I guess. And I don't know, my parents seemed to be—I guess I told my parents more than he told his. My parents seemed pretty well prepared for this, didn't they?

Brubeck: Yes, just mine.

Crawford: It's a wonderful story.

Was it at this time that you sought out Schoenberg?

Brubeck: After a while, yes. He was somebody I was interested in. I'd heard just a little of his music, and I don't know whether I liked it or not, but I was interested in what he would be like.

Crawford: What was he like?

Brubeck: Egomaniac. We didn't get along and he got mad at me. [laughter]

Crawford: On the basis of something you showed him, I suppose.

Brubeck: Yes. He said, "Why did you write that? Why'd you write this note? Why'd you write that note?" And I said, "Because it sounds good." And he said, "That's no reason. You've got to have a reason why you move from this note to that note."

And I said, "Well, isn't it because it sounds good? Isn't that a good enough reason?" He said, "No."

And I said, "Why? Explain why that isn't a reason." And he said, "The reason is because I know more about music than any man alive, and if I say it should move to that note, then that's where it should move."

So I looked at him, questioning somebody who would say something like that. I didn't doubt it. Then he said, "You come with me," and we went into the next room and under lock and key he had different scores. There were all the Beethoven scores, and he said, "You ask me any note of any of those scores, any page, and I can tell you the whole thing." And he says, "That's why I can tell you what note should follow which note and why I know more about music than anybody." That was our last meeting—I had one interview and one lesson.

Crawford: Was that at UCLA?

Brubeck: At his home.

Crawford: What had you hoped for?

Brubeck: Well, it was I think very immature for me to even go to him, knowing how little I knew about him and music in general. I don't know why I did that. I did the same thing with Milhaud.

I think it was a surprise to my brother that I even went to Milhaud. He said, "When you get out of the army, come back and study with me," and I kept that option open the whole war. And that's where I went right after the war.

Crawford: Milhaud's passion for jazz—where did that come from?

Brubeck: He probably came to New York in the 1920s. I'm not sure when he came to New York and heard jazz, but he heard it in Paris, and he's the first one, I think, to use the jazz idiom before Gershwin.

Crawford: If you looked at music of his—for example, the Saudades—[*Saudades do Brasil*—what would you say of them?

Brubeck: Brilliant. Just the rhythmic drive. It's a great piece of music. I later learned to really appreciate *The Creation of the World*, his first usage of jazz and classical. And that fugue he made was so great.

Crawford: He gave you rather a free hand, didn't he, as a student?

Brubeck: Oh, yes. Sure.

I. Brubeck: Yes, he used to love to have Dave play. Every time Dave came for a lesson, he'd have him play, preferably boogie-woogie—

Brubeck: The lesson had to start with boogie-woogie. He'd say "make boogie-woogie." He'd say, "I wish I could do that." And I'd say, "This is nothing. What you can do is so much more difficult." [laughter]

Crawford: I want to talk more about that relationship, but maybe you could say something more about your experiences in the service.

Brubeck: Well, there were four bands at Camp Haan, twenty-eight people in each band. When they felt like they were going to invade Europe, they broke up the bands and sent them into different parts of the army depending on where they needed somebody, and a lot of the guys were able to transfer into other bands because we had the top Hollywood musicians. We had Bronislaw Gimpel, who I think was concertmaster of the LA Philharmonic. And what's his brother's name, that great pianist?

I. Brubeck: I don't know.

Brubeck: Oh, his brother's a fantastic classical pianist. [Jakob Gimpel] And Joseph DiFiori was first violist, and the only cellist was—

I. Brubeck: Arthur Bowen.

Brubeck: Bowen—B-O-W-E-N—first cellist with Cincinnati Symphony. They had a string quartet right there in the tent! [laughter] It wasn't a real tent, but you'd call them tents. The second violinist was a student of Bronislaw, who joined the army so he could remain with his teacher and continue his violin studies. And Jay Rubinoff, who was a great opera coach—he became manager of Hollywood Bowl and the LA Symphony later. You had first chair guys from the studios, so it was a great group of musicians.

Camp Haan was only going to retain musicians, so everybody was scrambling. But for a pianist, it's very difficult because you don't have a specialty. To have a band, a legitimate band number, it's got to be something from the marching band. It can't be piano, so that's what made it very difficult for me.

Crawford: But you were head of the band.

Brubeck: Overseas. They gave me a rating called O2O—band leader. It's the equivalent of a warrant officer, which I didn't want to be.

Crawford: Would you talk about your experience overseas?

Brubeck: I went overseas in the infantry. Oh, I've told this story so many times, but when we were outside of Verdun, going to the front, we went into Patton's army. If we'd have turned left, we'd have gone to Omar Bradley's First Army; we turned right in Verdun and went right up to the front, and that was the Third Army—Patton's. What was the name of the book that accounts for this?

Crawford: Was that Studs Terkel's book?

Brubeck: Yes, did you read that? He interviewed the captain that was where we were. He's the guy who made this truck where the side would come down and become a stage, and there was a piano on the truck and two girls—I thought they were Red Cross girls, and we're talking about that for our own book—but anyway, there were two girls that asked if there was a piano player in the audience. We were all sitting there in this place called the Mud Hole and I was sitting on my helmet because there were no chairs or anything.

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Brubeck: So there was the colonel in charge, Colonel Brown, and some of the officers, and this fellow in Studs Terkel's book, he uses a different name in the book, but he was Captain [Leroy] Pearlman.

I. Brubeck: He uses the name Waxman in that book.

Brubeck: It's called *The Good War*.² Well, in the morning we were called out ready to go up to the front, and [I was] standing in a group that was about to leave, when they pulled out of

this group two of the guys that had come with me from the band in Riverside, California. They had come all the way across France with me.

I didn't expect them to pull me out of the lines too, and then they called my name, and I was told they wanted to form a band and this would be the nucleus—the three of us from the old band at Camp Haan.

The colonel had apparently said he didn't ever want me to go to the front, and he kept the band very much set on the front burner, because every day the soldiers didn't know when they were going to go the front—that was the next stop from where we were the whole war, just behind the front lines.

So I formed the band with the guys that had been wounded and were sent back to our base, or got them when they were being resent back up to the front, or being told that they'd been at the front too long, and they didn't have to go back for a while. We were a replacement depot, so soldiers were coming through to be sent to the front for replacement. If they'd say they were musicians, they'd send them over to me and then that's the way I formed the band.

Crawford: Was that the integrated unit that got you in some trouble?

Brubeck: That was later on. Just one guy actually joined the band: Jonathan Richard Flowers. And he would have been, as far as I know, the beginning of changing the rules, but it wasn't official-like from Washington; it was the colonel saying that he wanted us to be able to have Flowers if we wanted him.

Crawford: A black musician. Was there trouble about that?

Brubeck: Yes. But when the colonel was given a general's rating and had to leave the Seventeenth Replacement Depot where he was in charge, there was a big party for him and he came up on stage and his farewell speech was mostly about the band—how he wanted us to be kept back from the front. And he put his arms around Dick Flowers, [laughs] the Afro-American, as a way of saying, "Now don't touch this guy," without saying it.

Of course General Brown had to be very careful. He might not say something outright, but he could make a gesture that indicates Flowers is going to stay here. Then, because the general could speak fluent German, and he had been in World War I and stayed on to feed the German people, they needed him to start this again, because at this point we were taking over a lot of German cities. People were starving, every city was out of food, practically, so they needed somebody like him.

Crawford: Where were you at that point?

Brubeck: Nuremburg. We went across Germany, just following Patton's army. I'm trying to think where we were when Colonel Brown did that. It might have been Verdun, but Munich or Nuremburg's close enough.

2. Terkel, Studs, *The Good War: An Oral History of World War Two*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

But we went across the Rhine on a pontoon bridge because the old bridge was unsafe, and then to Frankfurt, and just following the Third Army on to Nuremburg and then Regensberg, finally.

Crawford: I read there were sixteen in the Wolf Pack. Pretty high quality musicianship?

Brubeck: Yes, a lot of the guys were very good.

Crawford: And during this time, Mrs. Brubeck, you were working in Los Angeles?

I Brubeck: Yes, that's right. I finished college when they first left to go overseas, and I went back to school because I needed some more units to graduate, and then I went to LA. And I got there by winning a contest.

I don't know what it was, but the NBC affiliates in San Francisco and in Los Angeles each did dramas and they alternated once a week, and they had new talent that auditioned for a spot on the shows. And then over a period of time, I've forgotten just how long it was, they chose the top two, one from San Francisco and one from LA, to be in a sort of a major production in Los Angeles in which they had some movie stars as leading roles and you did the supporting roles.

So I won that in San Francisco and then later I was the San Francisco representative to go to LA. And so the people who were involved with that encouraged me to go down there because they thought that I could have a career in radio and acting. So I did, but it wasn't a very flourishing career. [laughs] I must say that's a tough thing to do. I made enough to live, but that was just about it.

Crawford: You did. And you stayed there how long? I guess until the end of the war?

I. Brubeck: Yes, I came back when Dave came home the early part of January of '46, and then we came up to Oakland and Dave started at Mills.

III. MUSIC STUDIES AT MILLS COLLEGE WITH DARIUS MILHAUD

The jazz workshop, the octet and Dave Brubeck's first recital at Mills
 The trio and first "house band" at the Blackhawk Club in San Francisco
 Teaching together at the University of California, Berkeley
 First professional recordings and launching of Fantasy Records
 Thoughts about recording

Crawford: So that was always going to be the direction, to get an advanced degree in music, and still thinking very much about composing?

I. Brubeck: Oh, definitely thinking of composing when he came to Mills. Yes, definitely. I think that was always Dave's drive. But he also knew that he had so much to learn and so much to overcome to do it that he almost was afraid to articulate that this was what he wanted to do.

Crawford: So back home and finding Milhaud for the second time. You mentioned meeting him before the war when Howard was working with him and knowing he was the right teacher for you.

Brubeck: Yes, I did that as soon as I was able to get out of the army—I was in forty-six months. I got out in 1946, January 31, and as soon as I could, Iola and I came up to study at Mills. We were a little late to register, but they allowed us to—did you register at first?

I. Brubeck: I think I took one class. I'm not too sure about that, but I think I did.

Brubeck: And Milhaud took me on as a student on the GI Bill. Mills took us in on that, and that was what I had hoped would happen and it happened. We lived in a housing project near where the Oakland baseball team stadium is, up towards the airport, there.

I. Brubeck: When we first arrived, we stayed with Dave's brother, Howard, who lived just off of the campus. And then in later years we came back and stayed on the campus for two summers, but we never did, when we were in school, live on campus.

Crawford: I think you told me that at one point Madame Milhaud wanted to narrate a Stravinsky piece somewhere away, and that you stayed with him.

I. Brubeck: That's right. *Perséphone*, yes.

Crawford: So you must have been very close.

Brubeck: It was a wonderful relationship. I felt so close to him. I don't know how he felt to us, but I know he liked Iola. [laughter]

I. Brubeck: He was always very, very friendly, and as I say, he enjoyed Dave playing boogie-woogie. And when we were staying in his home, it was very relaxed, you know.

Crawford: What was their household like?

I. Brubeck: Very relaxed household. And most of his classes he held right at his home, right?

Brubeck: Yes.

I. Brubeck: Did he ever go down to the music building to teach?

Brubeck: Sure. We went—I forget the name of the room, but it was right in the music building, right on the end. The ensemble room. Was that what it was called?

I. Brubeck: I think so.

Brubeck: He taught orchestration in that room, and I remember so well one day in orchestration he said, "You know, sometimes you do something that's very effective that has never been done before, and it's all right to try new things." And there was one part in a piece where the percussionist was to count one, two, three, and then drop a percussive thing out of his hand onto the floor, and he said it worked perfectly. He said, "Now how are you going to teach something like that?" But you know, "Be inventive about what you want to do; do something that's different."

About that time John Cage was coming for a concert and my brother had to prepare the piano for him—put clothespins in and [laughter] all these things, so you know, there were some wild new ideas going on.

I remember going over to Sausalito and there was this huge percussion thing that was built up maybe twenty or thirty feet. And guys were on the framework of the structure playing the instruments. I remember how amazing that was to see all these things—guys climbing up there to play. I think it was Harry Partch.

Crawford: I spoke to Andrew Imbrie about Milhaud. He was studying with Sessions and of course he remembers you and he remembers Bill Smith, and he said he'd go over to Mills and they would be sitting on the lawns composing. He didn't know what to make of that, because Sessions was so strict about everything.

Brubeck: Oh! Yes, yes. Milhaud would once in a while talk about how strict it was when he visited other composers' classes. Hindemith at Yale he said was so strict that he felt sorry for the students. He was so tough with them—demanding.

Milhaud's idea was to let you be free and just go the way you wanted to go. He never drilled his ideas into you. He drove Bach into you, and counterpoint, and fugue, but when it came to composition you were absolutely free.

Crawford: What was your routine at school?

Brubeck: Well, I took a private lesson [from him] every week and then I had orchestration with a class, and more GIs came the next semester. There were only three male students I think when I was first there. Gordon Smith, who became the head of music at the American University in Washington. He was there. And then my friends started coming, like Dave Van Kriedt.

Crawford: Had he been at San Francisco State?

Brubeck: Yes, and Dick Collins, Bob Collins, Jack Weeks—son of Anson Weeks the band leader was there, and Paul Desmond and Cal Tjader were at San Francisco State and they'd come over when we started—well, Milhaud told us we could use our jazz instruments for orchestration and composition and counterpoint if we wanted to, and that's how the octet was born.

I. Brubeck: Yes and Bill Smith, of course, we met there. We didn't know him prior to that, but Dave Van Kriedt—Dave we had known before. And Paul Desmond Dave had met but didn't really know him yet.

Crawford: Let's talk about the octet, then, because that's when it all started. You were really focused on composing at that time?

Brubeck: Yes. Every week I'd bring in a little piano piece to the private lesson. And they're all published now in Schirmer's volume called *Reminiscences of the Cattle Country*, but it was written for Milhaud's class. And Schirmer's published how many of those?

I. Brubeck: I've forgotten just how many are in the book. Then there are four that were left over, that went into another book.

Brubeck: *Dave's Diary*, published by Warner Bros. Yes, those are the ones that are left over.

Crawford: So that was what you had in the way of assignments.

Brubeck: Well, he'd just tell me to write. At that time that's what I was interested in doing.

Crawford: How did you write those?

Brubeck: I usually wrote at the piano. And Milhaud said that was okay, that Stravinsky usually wrote at the piano, and he loved Stravinsky. And, "If that's the way you want to write, write that way, but," he did say, "if you're writing a string quartet, I recommend that you don't write it at the piano." And I wrote a string quartet not too long ago. A lot of it was written at the piano [laughter] and away from the piano, so it was a combination. But I tend to be a slave to the piano.

- Crawford: When you were talking about Schoenberg I was wondering if you ever sent him “The Duke”—because didn’t you use the twelve-tone row eventually?
- Brubeck: [laughter] Yes. I didn’t know it though. A teacher, when we played at some conservatory, said, “I like the way you used the twelve-tone row in the bass,” and I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “Well, you go through all twelve basic notes in the first eight bars.” I said, “Yes?” I didn’t know that. So I checked it out and sure enough it does. So “The Duke” could have been called “The Duke Meets Darius Milhaud and Stravinsky and Schoenberg.”
- Crawford: I’m sure he came across it.
- Brubeck: [laughs] Oh, I’ll bet you he didn’t.
- Crawford: What was your relationship to Bill Smith? I know you’ve had a long relationship with him. He went to the Juilliard School, didn’t he?
- I. Brubeck: He’d gone to Juilliard before he came to Mills.
- Brubeck: Then he studied with Sessions at Berkeley, and then he was interested in studying with Milhaud. But boy, what a musician he was, from the time he was a kid.
- Crawford: He was part of the octet, and when you started the octet, how did it actually happen? Was it like a school workshop?
- Brubeck: It was called the Jazz Workshop and it was just the five of Milhaud’s students. And then we added Paul Desmond, and Cal Tjader, and other people.
- Crawford: Cal Tjader and Paul Desmond had been at San Francisco State as well. I didn’t know the music program was so strong there.
- I. Brubeck: Yes, it must have been strong or Howard wouldn’t have gone there. Because he knew from the word go that he was interested in music, so it must have been strong. I don’t know who was there at that time.
- Crawford: I remember reading that Howard said that it was the very best place to learn about teaching music. In any case, they came over from SF State to Mills.
- Brubeck: And Milhaud said, “Why don’t you play a concert for the Mills girls’ assembly?” So that was the octet’s first concert, was right at Mills, and that went over quite well. And then we played up at College of Pacific and that went over well. We played in the same auditorium where Iola and I had been students. We played two concerts at Pacific and one at the University of California with the octet, and who reminded me of that was Phil Elwood because he was there, I think, at that concert.
- Crawford: What did he remember of it?
- Brubeck: He just mentioned it in passing that he heard us at the University of California.

Crawford: The octet was described as being almost purely classical—contemporary classical music and jazz.

Brubeck: And jazz. What made it different than other jazz groups was that we divided the concert into three sections. We started with compositions, I think, first. And there would be pieces like *Fugue on Bop Themes* by Dave Van Kriedt, which was a fugue written for Darius Milhaud's class on fugue and counterpoint. And Milhaud loved that fugue. He said, "You know, you've followed the classical form, and you've used the jazz idiom." He loved that.

Kriedt wrote a lot of fugues and chorales. Bill Smith wrote a lot of wild music that was great. "Schizophrenic Scherzo" was one of them. And Jack Weeks wrote a fantastic arrangement of the "Prisoner's Song" that was so out, [laughter] you could hardly recognize any note of the melody.

I wrote a piece called "Curtain Music" and "Playland at the Beach." Then we've lost some things. I can't find a ballet I wrote right at that time. It was performed at Mills. Howard conducted.

Crawford: Were there two recordings? So much of what you played was not ever recorded.

Brubeck: Right, and the arrangements are in Australia because Van Kriedt went there and took the book and would never return it. It's still there. He died and we've just written to his wife to try and get the book back.

Crawford: The book of collected compositions?

Brubeck: The whole octet.

I. Brubeck: The rearrangements and parts and everything. And it's such a loss. We've tried for years to get them back, to have them in some safe place. Gunther Schuller was interested in publishing them.

Brubeck: He wrote to Kriedt, too. For some reason Kriedt claimed the whole book.

Crawford: I read that Bill Smith said when he first heard you play, you played chords that just terrified him. [laughter] Were you more avant garde, would you say, than the rest of your group?

Brubeck: Maybe in improvisation. But all those guys were superior musicians and I felt that we were probably about equal.

Crawford: You were working with polytonality already, weren't you, while you were at Mills?

Brubeck: Yes. And I think Bill was too. If you go to a concert you think is going to be a jazz concert and you hear Bill Smith's setting of e.e. cummings with Dorothy Ohannesian with perfect pitch doing all this atonal singing instead of being Ella Fitzgerald or any of the jazz singers, you'd go away thinking what was that, you know? It wasn't exactly what you're used to in a jazz concert. And that's what we did.

Bill wrote these wild things and she could sing anything you put in front of her. Do you know about her?

Crawford: No, talk about her more.

Brubeck: Well, after she left Mills she went to New York and all the avant garde people hired her because she could just sing anything, just look at it and sing it. And now the last time we saw her she was head of the opera department at Fresno State.

I. Brubeck: Yes, and she's retired now, I think.

Brubeck: But if you wanted to know more about her, call Mills and say "Ohannesian." She's Armenian.

Crawford: Okay. What about the octet's performances?

Brubeck: We played at the Marine's Memorial Auditorium and the promoter would not hire the octet unless they used my name in advertising to promote the concert, so I told the guys we could have this job, and this was the only way.

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Brubeck: So that's sort of the beginning of the Jazz Workshop Ensemble becoming known as the Dave Brubeck Octet.

Crawford: Because you had played as the Three D's at Geary Cellar?

Brubeck: Yes, I was better known because I'd worked more at places like the Geary Cellar and other places in the Bay Area. I don't know why he thought I was better known, but he was renting the auditorium and putting up the money, so that was the decision.

Crawford: What kind of reception did the octet get?

Brubeck: Oh, we had a good audience. We played at Mills, and it would be a great audience. College of the Pacific would be a conservatory audience. Berkeley would be a great audience. We needed that kind of audience, and when we played later on, we used to play on Sunday afternoons at the Blackhawk, and it would be people who were really interested in composition and more daring jazz than what you usually heard. But they would come, so it would be a good audience.

But it had to be a situation where the audience was kind of—I would hate to use the word educated, but aware. An aware audience, where we would be appreciated.

Crawford: Were they largely university-connected people, do you think?

Brubeck: Yes, or they could be people who were interested in the newest things coming in jazz. Could be them, too, didn't have to be university.

Crawford: What do you think was the legacy of the octet? There couldn't have been anything else like it.

- Brubeck: I think the group was performing before Miles Davis and the *Birth of the Cool* recording and other things coming out of New York. It predated a lot of things, but people didn't realize we existed. People thought later on that we were influenced by Miles' group—with Gerry Mulligan and Lee Konitz—and it wasn't that way. We were just independent and doing our music here in the San Francisco area, and we didn't even know about what Miles was doing..
- Crawford: What was West Coast Jazz? How would you describe that sound?
- Brubeck: Well, there were a lot of guys on the West Coast that were interested in bringing contemporary classical music into jazz, and people like Shorty Rogers and quite a few groups around the Los Angeles area were doing experimental things.
- Crawford: Was that the most experimental time to date for you, when you were working with the octet?
- Brubeck: Yes.
- Crawford: Did you keep in touch with Milhaud? I know your first son is named Darius after Milhaud.
- I. Brubeck: Yes, over the years, and we still stay in touch with Madeleine Milhaud. We haven't seen her now for a period of about, what, three years, I guess. But when we've been in Paris, we've always gone to see her—same flat that they had before World War II they lived in. And it's an experience to visit that flat.
- [Added April 2001. We just visited Madeleine in Paris. She celebrated her one hundredth birthday March 22, 2001.]
- Crawford: What is it like? It's Boulevard Clichy, isn't it?
- Brubeck: Number ten.
- I. Brubeck: de Clichy, yes. And it's right on the edge of the Pigalle district. When you walk into the apartment, you see the whole early part of the twentieth-century art world if you just look around you. You know, there's a little something from Picasso and a little something from Satie or Stravinsky. It just sort of boggles the mind. [laughter] You don't want to be too curious and go snooping too much to see what's over the mantel, but it's just all there because they were so much a part of that early scene.
- I. Brubeck: Their son Daniel is a painter and there's a nice portrait of Milhaud by Daniel that's in that room, too.
- Brubeck: We usually visit or sometimes have something to eat. In fact, we had a wonderful meal there that Daniel helped cook. She's in her late nineties now.
- Crawford: I remember meeting her when the San Francisco Opera performed part of *Christopher Columbus* in the 1970s. It is surprising to me that his work wasn't done here more often. Did he ever remark about that?

- Brubeck: Oh, yes.
- I. Brubeck: Yes, well, it was a great disappointment to him that all of the string quartets weren't recorded, for example. That's one of the projects that Madeleine has seen through since his death. Isn't that true?
- Brubeck: Yes. Well, there's a lot of people playing Milhaud all the time. It might be just an odd combination of two instruments that no one would have thought of writing a duet for, but he is played more often than you think. But he isn't played by the big symphony orchestras where you'd hear about it, as much as you should.
- Crawford: He was here off and on for thirty years, wasn't he? So he must have liked it.
- Brubeck: Oh, yes, he liked Mills, and Pierre Monteux was a great friend of his.
- I. Brubeck: Yes, and Monteux, I think, maybe programmed more of Milhaud's work. But I don't know. Part of it, I think, is that the music after the war sort of moved on to the more atonal and more toward Schoenberg. And even Stravinsky moved over in that direction. I think that was just not the style that was in favor as much, probably, in the latter part of the twentieth century.
- Brubeck: A funny story came to my mind. Darius, our son, usually tries to see Madeleine when he's in Paris, and he had to cancel the last time they were going to get together. And he said but we'll be back in France at a certain time—he named the month—and she said "Oh, that's wonderful if I'm still here," and he said, "Oh, are you planning a trip at that time?" And she said, "My dear, when you're my age and you think that far ahead, you say 'If I'm still here.'" [laughter]
- Crawford: He's the son in South Africa.
- Brubeck: Yes, but he has a place in Provence, where Milhaud's from. He went to a concert in Carpentras, I think it was, which was near his home. And they did Milhaud's opera about Carpentras. [*Esther de Carpentras* (1925)] The three acts are staged in a church in Carpentras, and then a square, say, and then another place, so the whole orchestra and chorus and audience moved from original Milhaud settings about the town.
- I. Brubeck: Instead of a stage set, they just moved the audience to the actual places.
- Brubeck: And Darius was there and Madeleine was there, so they saw each other and had a great old time.
- I. Brubeck: I thought you were going to have one more Milhaud story to tell, which is one of my favorites, and that is Dave's first recital at Mills.
- Each of Milhaud's composition students were to perform certain pieces and it was judged. Alfred Frankenstein was there, and somebody from University of California—
- Brubeck: Sessions.
- I. Brubeck: Was it Sessions?

Crawford: Oh, tough critic.

Brubeck: Yes.

I. Brubeck: And there was a third person, too. And I've forgotten, but anyway, Dave was so nervous at the thought of having to play these pieces that he was just a nervous wreck, and so Milhaud said he had these little pills—homeopathic pills—that were supposed to calm the nerves. [laughter]

So he gave him this bottle of homeopathic pills and Dave kept popping those pills all day long and just getting more and more nervous. When Milhaud saw him before the concert and he was like this, you know [laughter]—and Milhaud always called him BooBoo—he says, “BooBoo—you weren't supposed to take the whole bottle!”

I. Brubeck: So when it came time to play—you tell the story now.

Brubeck: Well, I had two compositions. In fact, they're the first compositions in *Reminiscences of the Cattle Country*. I played about the first two bars of the first piece and my mind just totally evaporated as far as what's on the paper, so I thought, well, they expect about a three-minute piece, so I'll play for three minutes. So I'm up there playing away and trying to hope it develops the ideas of the first two bars.

I finished and there was applause and then I had to play the second one. Same thing happened. About two bars and I'm gone. I'm in another world. And so I got up, took my bow, and this woman hollered, “Encore,” which is the worst thing you could say to me because I didn't know what I'd played, you know. [laughter]

I. Brubeck: I remember her saying, “I'd like to hear it again.”

Brubeck: I think she was one of the judges. So I left the stage and got out of there. And as I went through the back at Mills, you know, that whole auditorium, there was a garbage can. I just tore up the music and threw it in there and kept going. And the other students are looking at me, “Oh, what's wrong with him?” But I didn't want to talk to anybody, I didn't want to see anybody, so a girl—Chris Knauer—picked up all those pieces of paper and taped them together. And those are the ones that are published now. I wouldn't have the music now because in those days you didn't have copiers, you know.

I. Brubeck: So one of my favorite lines from Milhaud is that Dave, when he next saw him and he had this big smile on his face, “Very nice, BooBoo, but not what you wrote.” [laughter]

Crawford: Was that your graduate recital?

Brubeck: No, that was one of my first concerts.

Crawford: One of your first—so you only went up from there.

Brubeck: Yes, and I wouldn't have told you that. It was Iola. [laughter]

Crawford: You didn't want me to know. Well, now you have to tell me what Mr. Frankenstein wrote.

I. Brubeck: That I don't know.

Brubeck: I was afraid to look. [laughter]

I. Brubeck: Did you ever see what he said?

Brubeck: No. God knows what Sessions made out of it.

I. Brubeck: It would have been interesting to see what his commentary was.

Crawford: Did you like his music?

Brubeck: Sessions? Don't know enough of it to really judge it. But Bill did.

Crawford: I know he studied with Sessions. Well, let's go on to the scene in San Francisco when the Blackhawk was such a famous club. Maybe you'd talk about that environment a little bit and playing there with the octet and the trio.

Brubeck: Well, actually the trio was the group that changed the policy of the Blackhawk to jazz. It was more of an entertainment club before, and we were coming in there playing as a jazz trio. But you see, one other thing that happened was when we played at the Marines Memorial, Jimmy Lyons, who had the jazz disc jockey show on NBC, had a wonderful pianist.

Both went to the program director of NBC, Paul Spiegel, one being from classical, one being from jazz, saying, "You ought to get this octet broadcasting. They're so different." He decided they couldn't afford the octet, but they could afford three people—a trio—so the trio started broadcasting from NBC once a week. And I think we were on thirteen weeks and you could hear us all over the Pacific and up and down the coast—up to Washington and Oregon.

Crawford: Was this after your time at Clear Lake when you had such a hard time?

Brubeck: Yes! It's after that.

Crawford: So Jimmy Lyons helped bring you eventually to the Blackhawk.

I. Brubeck: I reminded Dave—we were talking about this the other day—he sold his cello in order to buy a wire recorder. Do you remember such a thing as a wire recorder? [laughs]

Crawford: You mean a reel-to-reel recorder?

Brubeck: Yes, it was a spool.

I. Brubeck: It's a spool just like tape, only it was wire. And I used to tape the broadcast, or *wire* the broadcast or whatever you called it. I bet no one ever has a wire recorder anymore.

Crawford: Did you ever transfer them to sound tape? No. There's a project.

Brubeck: If they could find them.

- I. Brubeck: Who would have the machine to change it from wire to tape?
- Crawford: Probably Cal Berkeley does, because it's so old-fashioned. [laughter] Well, the trio really made you famous. You won major polls very quickly then, including being named best new group by *Down Beat* in 1950?
- Brubeck: Yes.
- Crawford: What was so special about the Blackhawk, which opened in 1949 at Turk and Hyde in San Francisco. Who owned it?
- Brubeck: Guido Cacianti and Johnny Noga and his wife Helen Noga owned it. And it was really a storefront kind of—it wasn't a very flashy nightclub. But you know, if you're going to have jazz, it doesn't make any difference too much where it is, it's how the place is run and who starts going there. It can be any place from the Top of the Mark or the Fairmont, if it's run right, or it could be a cellar, like the Geary Cellar. It's who you get in there to play. And you start a clientele and a following because they want to hear jazz.
- We were the first jazz group to go into the Blackhawk, and then we could play there six months of the year. And I got them to bring in Gerry Mulligan's quartet and pretty quick a lot of the groups were coming in there to play—even big bands. Basie was in there. Can you imagine that?
- I. Brubeck: Well, Basie's band was at the Blue Note, and I think the Blackhawk was as big as the Blue Note. About the same size, I think.
- Crawford: You were the focal point?
- Brubeck: Yes, I'm kind of the band that was going to be there about six months of the year, at first. Later we traveled so much we weren't there so often.
- I. Brubeck: Like a house band almost.
- Crawford: Everybody wanted to appear there, didn't they? I read how Ella and everyone would come and sing. And what's the Miles Davis story? I know you've told it before, but it's such a great story.
- Brubeck: Well, Miles was booked in while we were playing and he liked two of the tunes I was doing. One was "The Duke" and one was "In Your Own Sweet Way." And he asked me to write out "In Your Own Sweet Way" as a lead sheet for his group and then in the eighth bar, he, when he recorded it, he played an E-natural and I play an E-flat, so I said when I saw him again, I said, "How come you recorded that with an E-natural?" And he said, "Why the blank did you write an E-natural?"
- So to this day, there are over sixty different jazz musicians have recorded that and some—Bill Evans has made three different versions. And Stan Getz, two, and he was going to record it a third time just before he died. The list goes on and while I'm talking there will probably be somebody else turn up that I won't know about that for some reason, but half of them play the E-natural and the other half play the E-flat. [laughter] Marian McPartland and others—maybe George Shearing, didn't he record it?

- I. Brubeck: Yes, I think so.
- Brubeck: And they'll play the E-flat.
- Crawford: And that's not right.
- Brubeck: It's right! Well, both of them seem to be right because the guys that really follow Miles will always play E- natural. Thirty years later, you know, they're still playing that E-natural. And some play both. They'll play the E-natural and then they'll resolve down to the E-flat, so they cover both.
- Crawford: In the same phrase, do you mean, or in the reprise?
- Brubeck: The same note. The same note! They'll play both: they'll play the E-natural and then go to the E-flat, or they might play the E-flat and then go to the E-natural. [laughter]
- Crawford: That was during the early days at the Blackhawk, right? And I read that Miles Davis said something about your swinging—that your group didn't swing but you sure did.
- Brubeck: Oh, he had written something about my quartet, or said in an interview, that it didn't swing. [But] Ella came in after hours at the Blackhawk and asked me to play for her, that she wanted to sing, and Miles—the place was closed but Miles was sitting at the bar with a few of the more hip people that hung around Miles, and Ella and I did a few songs just piano and vocal, and when I got off the stage I went back to sit by Miles and he said, [using a crusty voice] “You swing, but your band don't swing.” [laughter] And who was standing there right next to us was a big jazz historian—
- I. Brubeck: Are you speaking of Grover Sales?
- Brubeck: Grover Sales was standing there next to Miles. So he remembers this story well, if you ever want to document it.
- Crawford: Oh, I'm sure that's in his book.
- Brubeck: Has Grover written a book?
- Crawford: I'll check.¹
- Brubeck: I wish he would—he taught at Stanford. But he just had a falling-out down there, or I shouldn't say that.
- I. Brubeck: Something happened. We read something about it in the San Francisco paper.
- Brubeck: And you know what was funny, in the Fred Hall book, there's a picture of me pushing Darius Milhaud in a wheelchair and standing right behind me is Grover Sales, which I didn't even happen to notice. But after he read the book he said, “You know, I have to thank you for having my picture.” And he was a young man then, you know.

1. Sales, Grover, *Jazz: America's Classical Music*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984; New York: Da Capo Press, 1992.

I. Brubeck: Oh, yes. We all were! [laughter]

Crawford: You were by far the most experimental of the musicians performing. And you never compromised that—even though sometimes your audiences might not have the most positive reaction, but you just kept pushing and kept pushing. Were you aware of that? Was that something that you wanted to do?

Brubeck: I don't know. But Paul Desmond and guys like that said I was.

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Brubeck: And my only explanation was I was playing out the war through improvisation. And it was pretty wild at that time because I'd been through Europe and seen all the destruction there.

Crawford: In retrospect, is that what you think was happening?

Brubeck: I think so. At that time I wasn't too much aware of it. You heard all this, Iola, what would you say?

I. Brubeck: I didn't hear much.

Brubeck: Oh, yes, you had to stay home with the kids.

I. Brubeck: I think I was in the Blackhawk once, and then it was in the daytime with nothing happening—in order to pick up something he'd left. [laughter]

Crawford: Would you have liked to have been there?

I. Brubeck: Oh, I would have liked to, but I didn't. And Dave was very reluctant to have me—I don't know, it made him self-conscious or something.

Crawford: Was she your sternest critic?

Brubeck: I thought so. I just didn't want her around. And that went on for years. Even in New York, I remember I was disappointed when you came to Birdland.

I. Brubeck: I went once. I have very vague memories about it, really. Just one of those big dark places. It seemed big.

Brubeck: It was.

Crawford: Well, let's see, at this point we should talk about Paul Desmond. His history with you is well documented: his temperament, your role as "cleanup man," as the *New Yorker* put it, his quotation skills, but I remember reading that after he more or less raided the Three D's you decided not to see him again, but when he came to see you on Eighteenth Street in San Francisco. Mrs. Brubeck liked him and she let him in. True story?

I. Brubeck: Well, when he knocked at the door, in the first place, I was very surprised to see him because he had been on the road with Jack Fina's band and we hadn't seen him for months and months and months.

I really didn't expect to see him again and so when I saw him I was really startled and I said, "Well, I don't know whether to let you in or not because Dave has told me he does not want to see you again."

Well, he had a sort of long story to tell about you know, how sorry he was and he really did want to see Dave. And he talked and charmed his way in through the door and it seemed like it was just very difficult to say, no, you can't see him, so I led him through the house and out to the back porch where Dave says he remembers he was hanging out diapers on the pulley line. [laughter]

I don't know what you thought when you saw Paul, but it was really a kind of shock. And then Paul promised everything under the sun: "If you'll just let me play with you. I'll wash your car, I'll baby-sit, I'll do your laundry," you know. [laughter] And then Dave had to tell him that the trio was just getting established then, and there was just no way that that was going to work.

Crawford: In the late 40s, hard times, and I know that together you gave a course in jazz at the UC extension, right?

Brubeck: Madi Bacon hired us.

Crawford: How did that come about?

I. Brubeck: Well, we heard that that course was open. I don't know how we heard, but we heard that they did need someone for that course. And so Dave, I guess you spoke to Madi Bacon about it and they said to hand in an outline, right?

Brubeck: Right.

I. Brubeck: And so we worked on an outline for what would be covered in the course and presented it to her. And when we saw Madi Bacon last year, she was still laughing about it because our outline, she said, went on for about ten pages. It was a major essay. I guess we wanted the job so badly that we'd poured everything into it. And she'd expected, you know, a one-page precis or something. And so we got the job. We later found out that Bill Smith was furious because he wanted that job.

And what we'd do was we'd prepare the lectures and what the examples would be. And we stuck to our outline pretty well, but Dave was just speechless. It was so difficult for him to speak that I did the lecture part and Dave did the demonstration part, either at the piano or playing something on the phonograph. And he could talk specifically about listening to this particular thing or something, but to give the overall, for some reason or other he chickened out.

Brubeck: That's for sure. The second semester was here at Berkeley. First semester was at UC Extension in San Francisco.

- I. Brubeck: In San Francisco. And then the second year was both, the history and then we did a second term called Aesthetics of Jazz for the students who'd already had the jazz history course.
- Crawford: Some of the faculty didn't like the idea of having a jazz course?
- Brubeck: There was something written in the Berkeley paper about having a jazz course on campus. Do you remember that, Iola? A real put-down of how could we stoop this low, kind of thing.
- Crawford: Is their jazz collection what it should be?
- I. Brubeck: Well, it was very, very meager then, but they did have some good recordings more in the ethnomusicology field. They had some things we would never have recourse to, like field hollers from Alan Lomax's field recordings, and very old Creole songs, and different things that were not commercial-type recordings that somebody from ethnomusicology or anthropology or something had put into the record library that we could refer to. But most of our examples as we got later into jazz we provided ourselves because they didn't have very much.
- Do you remember some professor wrote something like, "I'd rather sleep with a dog than have jazz taught on this campus." Do you remember that?
- Nora: It was I'd rather something than have jazz taught; I don't know if it was a dog. I remember something about that.
- Brubeck: Herb Wong was one of our students and now he's Dr. Herb Wong.
- Crawford: I'm working on his oral story now.
- Brubeck: Good! You can ask him what we were like. I always said he knew more than we did.
- I. Brubeck: I always felt he was such an eager student. I can still see him with a smile on his face, you know, very eagerly, his whole body leaning forward, taking in everything. And he always sort of undid me because I thought he probably knows more than I and I'm up here mouthing some things that Dave has told me to say.
- Crawford: He called me not too long ago and he said that he was going to be able to interview you at the Monterey Jazz Festival.
- I. Brubeck: That was very nice, yes. It was a good interview and the place was packed. I'm sure he would provide you with that because it was very good, I thought.
- Crawford: We could stop here if you like.
- Brubeck: No, I'm just standing up so I won't get a muscle cramp.
- Crawford: Let's go to 1951, when you were in Hawaii with the trio. Were you actively composing then? There was a period I read when you weren't composing much.

- Brubeck: Yes, that's true.
- I. Brubeck: But you were composing at this time from about 1950, I would say.
- Brubeck: Yes. I had decided I had to get something going with the trio and be able to make a living and so I stopped writing so much and just concentrated on Fantasy Records and the recordings and tried to build a career that way.
- Crawford: We didn't talk very much about Fantasy and the whole recording situation, but what was it that Paul Desmond said, you would record for a hamburger and a bus token, or something like that, it was so easy?
- Brubeck: That was even with Columbia that that continued. We expected to get a recording every session. And a session is three hours. And now they can't even get the mikes set in three hours.
- Crawford: The trio's first recording was on the Coronet label, and won recognition from both *Down Beat* and *Metronome* critics—how did Fantasy grow from Coronet Records, and what was your role as one of the founders of the company?
- Brubeck: The way Fantasy started was that Jack Sheedy couldn't afford to pay union scale to the trio and in some way we worked out a deal. He'd give us back the masters and we started Fantasy Records that way.
- Crawford: You brought a lot of other talent to Fantasy Records, didn't you?
- Brubeck: Yes, the Red Norvo Trio with Tal Farlow and Charlie Mingus and then Gerry Mulligan with Chet Baker and [Bobby] Whitlock on bass, and Chico Hamilton must have been on drums. And then Mort Sahl, and then eventually Lenny Bruce.
- I. Brubeck: You were not responsible for bringing Lenny Bruce to the company, but Mort Sahl was.
- Crawford: Was it your son Darius who said that he was a normal person who had had Lenny Bruce as a babysitter—well, what were those connections?
- Brubeck: Just that Mort Sahl started coming in the club and he and Paul became close friends, and then the first time he ever did a concert instead of a nightclub appearance it was intermission at our concert at the Sunset Auditorium in Carmel. We asked him if he'd like to go on at intermission and he just knocked that audience out. Boy, they were laughing, I'll tell you. They loved it.
- Crawford: And then he started at the Purple Onion some time after that?
- Brubeck: I think it was before, but this would be the first time he's in an auditorium doing his thing.
- Crawford: You owned a part of Fantasy, didn't you?

- Brubeck: I thought I did—that’s about as close as I got. We thought we were partners, but they had a sentence in the contract which was that the name Fantasy Records would always remain with Sol and Max Weiss—or just Sol Weiss, wasn’t it?
- I. Brubeck: Yes.
- Brubeck: And it was just that we did all that work, but we didn’t actually own—they owned the name Fantasy—Sol did—so therefore, technically we owned nothing but my own masters.
- Crawford: What would you say about those early trio recordings you did?
- Brubeck: They’re good. Sol must have been a master at recording because those recordings still sound great when they come out on CDs. And probably done with one or two mikes instead of—I’ll record now where there’ll be five to seven mikes on the drums. You know?
- Crawford: Why has it gotten so complicated?
- Brubeck: I don’t know! Because you listen to these old recordings, sometimes you’ll have a whole symphony orchestra on one mike. Nowadays they’ll have a mike on every violinist, and maybe it’s not as good. They’ve gone so overboard.
- Crawford: How does that make you feel as a performer and composer?
- Brubeck: Well, personally the less mikes I see the better. I just don’t like to look up and know I’m recording. I prefer not to know.
- I. Brubeck: Well, that’s why you prefer recording live at a performance, too. I know you get much more nervous about recording in a studio.
- Brubeck: Yes, that’s for sure. And seeing the guys in the booth, you know, and talking after each take, and all that, pretty quick you’re very aware. And then somebody will want to do it again, and each time it loses spontaneity. I’d rather have a few glitches—whether it’s musicians or the engineers goofing up, or something—and have it spontaneous.
- Crawford: You’ve said that you aim for those two or three times a year when everything just falls into place and it’s completely spontaneous. Some of those have been captured on recordings, haven’t they? *Jazz Goes to College*, *Time Out* with “Take Five”—1963 at Carnegie Hall and others?
- Brubeck: Probably not the best things. I don’t think so. There’ve been times when you would die to have had it recorded. In fact, one was recently when we were playing in Berlin with a chamber ensemble.
- Russell Gloyd was conducting and told the guy to record. And it was a wonderful string ensemble and it just went perfectly and the audience loved it. You’re thinking to yourself it couldn’t be better. And the guy forgot to push the record button; he just pushed the play button. You know how you do two buttons? He does one. And we thought, boy, we’ve got the greatest thing we’ve ever done.

I. Brubeck: Because the improvising was wonderful, the string ensemble was just great—they're a chamber group that stood when they played, you know, so they had so much life into what they were playing.

Crawford: Like *The Real Ambassadors*.

I. Brubeck: Yes, a missed opportunity.

Crawford: I guess you toyed with the idea of recording that and didn't get around to it.

Brubeck: On television. Video cameras were right there and they wanted \$750 and I didn't have it, even in the bank where I could write a check or anything. I telephoned Joe Glaser for permission—and also the money—but he was against it.

Crawford: What a shame!

Brubeck: God, it would be part of history

Crawford: Yes! Well, let's talk a little bit about the formation of the quartet. Was it the accident precipitated your wanting to expand the trio?

Brubeck: The accident was the reason I had to leave the trio. Because at that point I lost my group, Cal [Tjader] and Jack [Weeks], and I was in the hospital—Tripler General Hospital in Honolulu. And Sol and Max started a new label called Galaxy, rather than wait for me to recover so I could play again. They got another piano player and recorded without me on my label that I had created! I wasn't happy about it, but technically they could do that by starting a new label.

And so I wrote to Paul Desmond from the hospital in Honolulu and said, "Now's the chance. We could start a quartet," which I knew he wanted to do desperately. And I told him to hire a bass and drums and that as soon as I could play again, we'd start the quartet. And it was quite a few months—

Crawford: How long was that recuperation?

Brubeck: Well, I was twenty-one days in the hospital and then I couldn't leave Honolulu for a while because I was in too bad a shape.

IV. FORMING THE DAVE BRUBECK QUARTET, 1951

Brubeck, Paul Desmond, Roger Nichols, Herb Barman
 Pioneering together in college tours
 Segregation in the jazz clubs
 At home in Connecticut
 Thoughts about composing
 “Unsquare Dance,” “Blue Rondo a la Turk,” “Song of the Thank Yous,” “Audrey”
 The Classic Quartet of Brubeck, Desmond, Eugene Wright, Joe Morello as a “beautiful marriage”
 Breakup of the quartet

[Interview 2: February 17, 1999] ##

Crawford: We left you at Tripler Hospital in Honolulu and you were just about ready to form the original Brubeck Quartet. [Paul Desmond, alto, Roger Nichols, bass, Herb Barman, drums]. In the time we have I want to focus mostly on your composing and your collaboration, but I wanted to ask about those first years up until 1954 when you had the *Time* cover. Was it the first for a jazz artist?

Brubeck: Second, after Louis. Maybe Benny Goodman, too? Well, from the breakup of the trio, which led to really a lot of rethinking about Fantasy Records, I eventually went to Columbia Records. George Avakian at Columbia Records came to the Blackhawk to hear my group and was very pleased with it and asked to sign me on at Columbia. And while he was there, one of the owners, Helen Noga, got him to listen to Johnny Mathis, who was a San Francisco State student—also one of their top high jumpers and just a kid that came into the club that we knew—and Johnny was also signed that weekend to Columbia Records. So it was a pretty good trip for George Avakian because he got one of his top singers—still there, now at Sony. And it’s been all these years since the early fifties ’til now that Johnny’s been there, selling year after year. And we went there, stayed ’til the early 1970s from I think about 1953.

Crawford: So the recordings were important, and then you were performing in the colleges in a major way during the six months off from the Blackhawk.

Brubeck: Yes.

Crawford: And that was a lot your doing, wasn't it, Mrs. Brubeck?

I. Brubeck: Initially it was, and then of course it was taken up by the booking agency once Dave was in the more professional world. But initially it was with the trio more than with the quartet. I contacted the colleges that were within driving distance in the Bay Area and the trio actually played a lot of school assemblies—even high school assemblies. Once in a while we run into someone who will say, “Oh, I was in high school and I heard the group.” It was Judge Marlo who said that, wasn't it?

Brubeck: Yes. [laughter]

I. Brubeck: So that was catching them very young. This was really the core of interest, I think—among the students. And I think if there was one thing that contributed to the huge success of the quartet, it was the fact that it became the student thing from fraternity to fraternity, from campus to campus. That became sort of the inside thing, to be someone who listened to the Dave Brubeck Quartet.

And how that happened, I really don't know. Those things just happened once it was set in motion and they heard it. But I think that gave a little edge to the other wonderful groups that were out there at the same time that Dave was. It's just like it is today, if it's something the young people latch onto as their music, then it becomes very successful commercially.

Crawford: The 1953 recording at Oberlin captures the spirit of those performances, I think, and even among the generation in college now, Brubeck is a legendary name. I can't think of another jazz figure that evokes that kind of response. Do you think that has to do with that first basic exposure?

Brubeck: Yes. All along we played so many colleges and universities. The first ones were Mills and Berkeley—Cal Berkeley—College of Pacific, and Oberlin. We were hitting good schools with good music departments, and that also helped spread the word and kind of gave an interest throughout schools with music departments.

Black schools, too, hired us, which people seem to forget—Howard University. But we were also playing places like the Howard Theater in Washington DC, which always hired all the big bands. And the Apollo Theater in Harlem, and black nightclubs through the South. We worked in three different nightclubs in Atlanta, so it wasn't just the universities that were trying to get us to come and play. It was a lot of nightclubs and black schools and universities.

Crawford: You saw the segregation in those clubs; you've talked about that. Did you see that disappear—the roped off areas and so on?

Brubeck: Some of the clubs were just black clubs—and whites could come there but they didn't usually. That would just be a huge place of black clientele, and my memory of a place that was roped off was called the Wallahage Hotel in Atlanta.

The owner would say, “Well, I've got this rope right down the middle of the club and if you people are stepping over the rope, that's not my fault. I've tried to keep you

separated and for some reason you won't stay separated on the other side of the rope." And then he'd start laughing, because he knew it was just a way of saving his own neck.

Crawford: Was that kind of segregation in the clubs widespread?

Brubeck: Oh, yes. It was widespread. In the South, yes. And in the concert halls and the universities—absolutely segregated. And we broke that down, I think, more than anybody else. Louis was strong in that way, too, but I think we played more universities and colleges where we insisted that they be integrated or else we wouldn't play. And then they'd hire us back.

But the point that's important is the students would be the ones that hired us. And then it was the teachers who were all for it, especially if there was a music department. Then you get up to the people that run the university and you start getting in trouble—the president of the college. And then you discover that he isn't prejudiced, he's just afraid to lose his state support.

The last time that happened, before we went overseas in 1958 for a State Department tour, the president of the college called the governor and asked him what to do and the governor told him he'd never allow the concert to go on. After they discussed Little Rock, Faubus, and all that negative publicity that happened there, just before that, he said, "We don't want another Little Rock. Let them go on."

And that's where at first they didn't want to let Eugene Wright, our Afro-American bass player, play and the compromise was to keep him in the back of the stage where he wouldn't be seen too well. That's the way we went on. And then I told Eugene his mike was broken and he should use the announcement mike that was in front of the band for the solo, and I called the solo early in the concert rather than its usual spot. And that university went crazy.

The students sensed what was going on, why the concert was delayed. They could see that our band bus was parked behind the auditorium and that we were there and we were set up, yet we weren't going on, so it just tore the place up. They had been stamping on the floor the whole time that the governor and the president of the school were talking. You could just hear the pounding of the feet demanding us. I think in a later tour we canceled twenty-three schools that objected to an integrated band, but eventually we went back and played them all.

Crawford: How did Eugene Wright feel about that?

Brubeck: He had to have the greatest attitude that I've ever seen, no matter where it was. But when things went wrong, he'd laugh it off. He made it a point not to be political or to side in with any of the organizations that would ask him to join their group and protest and all that. He said, "The way I can do a lot of good is doing just what I'm doing. And we're integrating a lot of places."

Crawford: I guess Louis Armstrong was the same. He wasn't embittered.

Brubeck: No.

Crawford: Focusing on composing now—what was the best climate for you, and when did it all start?

Brubeck: Well, during the war it started when I was writing for the band overseas. Just before I went overseas I started writing for jazz bands, and then I went into writing right after the war for the octet while I was at Mills.

And then when we really couldn't work enough to support ourselves with the octet I went into a period where I didn't write anything, just played well-known show tunes or standard jazz tunes. I stayed that way all through the trio and into the quartet until one night—I would say it was 1953—Paul Desmond said we should hire somebody to write some original music for the quartet. And I said, "You've got to be kidding, Paul, to say I'll hire somebody. I'll write two tunes in a half hour," and so I took the job. I did write "In Your Own Sweet Way," which is one of the most recorded jazz tunes.

Crawford: Covered by absolutely everybody!

Brubeck: Everybody—to this day. And the other one nobody touched was called "The Waltz." So I started with the success of "In Your Own Sweet Way." I continued writing and I still do that. My last album was eleven new tunes called *So What's New* and then I wrote eleven new tunes for the album we were to make in England—we just toured England. It's called the *UK Tour*—United Kingdom Tour. Telarc recorded three nights and they decided to divide standards with originals rather than all originals. The idea I had was to have eleven brand new originals and they're there, but they're split up between three concerts.

Crawford: I guess you always got some resistance to originals, didn't you?

Brubeck: Oh, yes, and it's so funny Columbia being so against *Time Out*, and it's one of their biggest sellers.

Crawford: "Take Five" is the all-time favorite of disk jockeys, I believe.

Brubeck: Yes.

Crawford: You're on the road so much and then I know you have a very special place to work at home in Connecticut, but can you work here just as well? Today we're in a beautiful hotel room and the keyboard is right here. You can work equally well in these conditions?

Brubeck: I don't think equally well. I have to force myself to jump into a project where you can't have your papers on the table. And just everything is inconvenient, but when I force myself when I get started then it's okay, but I would much rather be at home.

Crawford: When you get home do you find that you have what you want to write much in your head as they claim that Mozart did?

Brubeck: I wish. [laughter] I write on airplanes or trains or buses and sometimes those are good places to write. And Iola's seen me write the whole time we're on a train some place, but then sometimes you're trying to write and the train's overcrowded.

Like the last tour of Europe, there were people coming into your compartment and trying to take all the seats—then it gets uncomfortable, especially this last tour with that terrible train accident which was on our way to Hamburg.

It was the next day, when the tracks were all messed up. Then you've got a situation where people are sitting on the floor. Your reservations are no good because everybody's reservations are messed up because trains aren't running. They just pile in, so it's inconvenient a lot of times.

In the old days when you're in coach on a plane, you try to get out a score, and there's really not room for a full orchestral score. If you're sitting three across, somebody's always getting up and wishing you weren't writing. But since we've graduated to first class, then it's easy. Depends on the surroundings. If I can have a little quiet, and a little space, then I can write.

Crawford: Does he have a special look when he's not to be disturbed?

I. Brubeck: [laughter] Oh, I don't know about a special look, but I know that his mind can be set on whatever is going on in his head. You can talk to him and get no response, then I know his mind is on music rather than what somebody else is saying to him.

And I think it's the kind of writing you carry it around with you. If he's in a middle of a project, he's carrying it around with him all the time, and no matter what may be going on, what he may be doing, it's still there some place.

And as far as places to write, I think your favorite place to write, isn't it, is when you're down on the little island.

Brubeck: Yes, that's where I love to go. We've a pond, it's about an acre, and there's an island on it. There's a nine-by-nine cabana and it has electricity so I can have an electric piano down there. It'd be pretty hard to get a real piano down there. And I'm isolated.

The piece, *Earth is Our Mother*, which is about Chief Seattle, I wrote the whole thing down there. The geese would swim by, and the birds were landing on the railing near the little cabana, and frogs and fish and herons and eagles and swamp hawks—they'd be coming by, and it just fit in with the story. It was the perfect place to write that.

We even had something that was so rare in Connecticut that when I called Fish and Game and told them there were three otters in our pond, they wouldn't believe it. They said they only knew of three in the state parks in Connecticut, how could we have three.

Some of them have been born right under our little bridge outside our bedroom window. We don't know why—I often think that we're living in a area where there must have been a lot of Indian activity because there's two streams that come together and form this pond. One of them runs right by our bedroom window, and that's where the otters were born. And every time we look out there, Iola curses but loves the deer.

Crawford: They eat your roses.

I. Brubeck: Oh, they eat everything in sight, but they are magnificent to see. Almost anytime you look out the window you can see deer. I have a desk that faces right out onto the stream, and it's so marvelous. When I look up or I answer the telephone and I'm looking out the window, I constantly see deer, I see the otters go up the stream, or I see a heron fly in or something. It really makes life very nice. We feel like we're not completely caught up into an artificial world when we can look out and see that.

Crawford: How much time are you there in an average year?

I. Brubeck: I guess about, what, six months, would you say?

Brubeck: Yes.

I. Brubeck: Not all in one patch, but off and on.

Brubeck: There's a fox that lives up the hill, and the squirrels love to jump in the trees across the stream rather than have to get wet and so we see these acrobatics over and over all day long, and it's very high up where they jump and once in a while they miss.

I. Brubeck: And you have a very wet mad squirrel. [laughter]

Brubeck: So I love being home. And because of my back injury that sent me to the hospital in Honolulu, I have to have different ways that I can practice.

I have one upright piano on a platform about eighteen inches up and I have easel-type places where I stand up and write, or I can stand up and put the electric piano on the easel and then I have another one in the basement that's easel height. Then I go to my grand pianos and I have special chairs that I have, so at home I can get by without hurting all day long.

Crawford: But you are aware of it.

Brubeck: Oh, boy. You see this and other things I travel with, and special pillows. I'm absolutely aware of it all the time.

At home I can tolerate it by keeping moving and not staying at a certain piano—I move to another piano. There's about five pianos and I rotate. I even have one that, if I'm bad off, is over a bed on rollers that can roll right up on a single bed.

I wrote a whole piece there when I was sick. Oh, after bypass surgery, I couldn't sleep and so I wrote a whole piece about the surgery. It's called *Joy in the Morning*. Rather than take pain pills that just destroyed me, they were so powerful—you couldn't really think or anything—I just decided, well, if I'm awake, I might as well be writing. And I had started that writing in the hospital and finished it at home during the recovery, most of it. Wasn't it, Iola, done at—

I. Brubeck: I think so.

Crawford: Was he a good patient?

I. Brubeck: He was. He was very good about following the doctor's orders. He followed them so carefully that the first day he was home the doctor had said he should walk, how much?

Brubeck: Four to five minutes.

I. Brubeck: And he read it as forty-five minutes. [laughter] And so he struggled up and down the bedroom hallway saying, "I don't see how they expect someone to walk forty-five minutes!"

Brubeck: I was stunned, because—

I. Brubeck: I took a look at the little printout and I said, "It's four *or* five minutes." So that is an indication of what a good patient he is.

Crawford: And did I read that your cardiologist came to the premiere?

Brubeck: Oh, sure. It was dedicated to him—Doctor Larry Cohen—the first Psalm I wrote before my first angiogram is Psalm 30 and an important part of the composition.

He came into the hospital room at ten-thirty at night. And I didn't expect to see him because I was due to have the angiogram at seven in the morning, but he said, well, he was at the hospital and he just wanted to check on me. He said, "But I've never seen a patient that's going to have an operation in the morning with manuscript paper all over the bed."

Well, I didn't know him that well to explain what I was doing, but it was Psalm 30, which is all about—I can't quote it exactly—"What good am I if you put me down in the pit? Can the dust praise thee and tell thy greatness?" It's all about somebody explaining and bargaining with God, that, "If you bury me in the pit, who's going to praise you? You better let me live."

And *Joy in the Morning*, which I was hoping would happen, is all in that Psalm and so I was working on that—"weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning."

Crawford: You have set a lot of the Psalms?

Brubeck: I don't know, because I keep finding other ones that I forgot I set, like Psalm 23 I just set. But there's all kinds of—in that piece, there's three Psalms—120 and 121—"In my sorrow, oh Lord, I cry into thee." And then the next Psalm is, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills." And then the third one is Psalm 30, "Joy in the Morning," where you're cured at this point after you've bargained with God, the joy comes in the morning.

Crawford: There never seems to be a time when you're not at ease in composing, but I'm fascinated by some of the very best known of the pieces worked out just before a recording session and brought in just before the quartet was recording.

Brubeck: Oh, yes, that happens once in a while, and it still happens, and "Unsquare Dance" was one of them. When Iola had our sixth child, I knew I had to go by the hospital, say hello, see the baby, get right back in the car and drive to New York from Connecticut to a

recording studio. And all the way in the car I was singing, “Charles Matthew has been born today! Hallelujah!” and so when I got to the studio, I just started singing that. And the guys gathered around congratulating me and pretty quick we were recording that tune. It wasn’t written down.

The guys played it so well. And I didn’t know exactly how to get back to the original theme, so it keeps modulating. That’s the way it came out and it makes sense, but it keeps modulating from one key to the next.

##

Crawford: “Blue Rondo a la Turk” is supposed to be based on Turkish music you heard while working there.

Brubeck: Yes. I had walked to the Turkish radio studio where there was a big band of Turkish musicians that I was going to do something with. And while walking through the streets, I heard street musicians playing in this 9/8 rhythm: 1-2-1-2-1-2-1-2-3. I was fascinated. I stopped for a while and heard this thing just keep keep going, keep going.

When I got to the studio I asked a Turkish musician that spoke English very well, “What is this rhythm? It’s so fascinating.” And he said, “Well, what rhythm?” And I said, “1-2-1-2-1-2-1-2-3! 1-2-1-2-1-2-1-2-3,” and he just turned to the band and they all started playing it. With no talking or anything, they all just fell into it, so I could see, boy, this is a rhythm that really works. And it swings so differently, but boy does it swing.

So I put a melody to the rhythm and called it “Blue Rondo a la Turk” like a reference to the Mozart title. It has nothing to do with Mozart’s music that I know of, but it’s really a Turkish common rhythm. And I did say it’s like the blues in the United States; everybody knows it.

I. Brubeck: In a rondo form.

Crawford: Something similar was the song “Thank You.”

I. Brubeck: Oh, yes. Well, Dave can tell you that, too. Yes, that was an instance where he composed something, had no time to go over it with the men, and—did you go over it with them before the concert, just play it once?

Brubeck: One time: intermission I sang it.

I. Brubeck: But anyway, what was remarkable—I was there in the audience—what was remarkable about it is that Dave played it and it was caught up by Paul in the same mood, in the same development and everything, so that here’s a piece that Dave still has in his repertoire and still plays, also, that was just born on the spur of the moment.

This was for a Polish audience and it was after Dave had visited the Chopin museum. Chopin was very much on his mind and so he wrote this Chopinesque-type piece as a way of saying thank you to the Polish audience. This was the last concert of a tour that was about two weeks in Poland, wasn’t it?

It was very interesting because when they finished, there was an absolute silence that lasted quite some time. And Dave thought, my goodness, I've really done something awful, maybe, by using this Chopin approach and using it in jazz. And then the place burst open, you know, with just wild enthusiasm. But they were so stunned, I guess, that this combination could be, that I think that was it. Because they understood that it was a thank-you and an acknowledgement of their culture and traditions.

Crawford: Are there other Chopin quotations?

Brubeck: Well, Chopin is a great influence on jazz musicians. My favorite jazz pianist is Art Tatum and he's full of Chopin. And I would say people like Bill Evans, Billy Taylor, Teddy Wilson, whether or not they know it, they're influenced by Chopin. I can't think of anybody that I would say, "Well, he never was influenced by Chopin."

Crawford: What would be the influences, more specifically?

Brubeck: Well, technically, just a thing like double thirds that Chopin used all the time. You hear that a lot in Tatum, Teddy Wilson, and hundreds of jazz musicians that you just hear. You'll often hear a run that you could think came right out of Chopin, and they might have not purposefully studied Chopin, but they've heard other guys do this and it just becomes part of the vocabulary. He was a great influence.

And you see, at that time, I was taking the phrase thank you, *dzienkuye* in Polish. And "Brandenberg Gate" uses *danke schön* in German. And then I wrote a piece in Turkey called *çok teekur ederum*, which is thank you in Turkish [sings], using that rhythm because thank you is the first phrase usually learned when you're in a foreign country, and if you're onstage, this is usually the one thing you'll say to an audience.

Crawford: When you wrote descriptive pieces, such as "Audrey," were you thinking about her and how to describe her, or what was the process there?

Brubeck: I could have been with "Audrey," yes. Paul Desmond was in love with Audrey Hepburn, and he used to insist that we take our intermissions so he could walk across Broadway to where she would be just leaving the theater, and he could stand and watch her leave every night, six nights a week. And so he'd be watching his watch the whole time we were playing.

And then we did a short film where we did "Audrey," which we've just rediscovered, with John Mili that did *Jammin' the Blues*. His nephew brought us that film maybe six months ago. We hadn't seen it since 1953, I think. Maybe we never saw it.

I. Brubeck: I had never seen it.

Brubeck: And it's great. He's going to do a television show on PBS of what he discovered in his basement of John's films that had never been seen with people like Picasso. Iola, who else can you think of?

I. Brubeck: Pablo Casals, Dali—

Brubeck: Just to name a few! But to continue with “Audrey”—well, she was given a memorial service at the United Nations. Her husband asked us to come and play “Audrey” and this was a couple of years ago and my saxophonist had learned all of Paul’s solos when he was growing up—Bobby Militello—and so he remembered a lot of that, and then took off the solo note for note and played it at the UN.

After we finished and the program was over, the husband came over and said, “You know, Audrey sang that every night before she went to bed, or walking through her garden.” I thought, oh, if Paul Desmond could only have heard that!

Crawford: She never knew?

Brubeck: And he didn’t know, either. But— [laughs]

Crawford: She didn’t know that he had this tremendous crush on her.

Brubeck: No, isn’t it too bad?

Crawford: Oh, that’s such a nice story.

Brubeck: Yes.

Crawford: I wanted to ask you about quartet personnel and how that effected your improvising. You mentioned that when Joe Morello came in 1956 everything kind of relaxed, that he could keep so many different rhythms, and that you could really get into polyrhythms in a way that you hadn’t before.

Brubeck: True. He was the perfect drummer for what I wanted to do. And the funny thing is, when Paul heard him, he only played brushes all night with Marian McPartland. [laughter] Whenever she hears this story, she gets about half mad for me stealing him—although she had returned to England for a while and this was in that period where Joe was free, so I really didn’t steal him.

But Paul said, “This guy will be perfect for us. Never does anything but play brushes and never interrupts.” When I talked to Joe about joining the group he said, “Well, you keep your drummer in the background and I’ve been in the background, and I want to be featured.” And I said, “Well, I’d like to feature you.”

And so the first night we played in Chicago at the Blue Note, I gave Joe a drum solo, and he got a standing ovation. At intermission Paul said, “Either he goes or I go,” and I said, “Well, Paul, he’s not going.” And there was a few days or even longer of Paul being quite miffed that I wouldn’t let Joe go and I was featuring somebody else in the group besides just myself and Paul.

Gradually it worked out but it took a while. It got to be wonderful, but there was a lot of resentment at first because when we were in England there was a review that somebody brought us saying that Joe Morello was the greatest drummer that ever came from the United States to England.

They also went on to say how good the quartet was, but this was the outstanding musician. Of course Paul wouldn't like that. Me being leader, I was proud to have them like my drummer, so it didn't bother me.

But Joe was accepted worldwide wherever we played. Even in India, the papers said they never heard a western drummer—as they called him—that could come near what he could do.

Crawford: Were there other major personnel changes like that in other quartet incarnations that changed your composing approach or style?

Brubeck: Well, it changed slightly in the use of material when you get a new man. I've got a new man now and the group is changing. You can't put your finger on it, it's just somebody else. It's like a basketball team or doubles in tennis, you get a different person playing alongside of you, you all adjust. It's the same way with a quartet.

Crawford: But the quartet was remarkably steady, wasn't it, for so many years, with Joe Morello replacing Joe Dodge in 1956 and Eugene Wright taking over bass from Norman Bates in 1958?

Brubeck: Oh, yes, very few changes.

Crawford: And that's another question I wanted to ask—I know that Gene Wright called it “a beautiful marriage” and I've read histories of classical string quartets, and you'd *never* call that a beautiful marriage because they have so many frictions. [laughter]

Brubeck: Oh, yes. I gave everybody their head, their freedom. And I can't remember ever telling anybody how to play. Can you, Iola?

I. Brubeck: No.

Brubeck: I might have told you I wished they would—

I. Brubeck: Yes, I think there were times when you wished that something had gone a different direction in a piece, but we would have conversations about, well, we wished somebody would do a certain thing on a certain piece and I'd say, “Well, why don't you just tell him that this is what you want?” And Dave said, “Well, no, it'll be worse then, because it won't be him expressing himself. They will be just trying to please me or do something that he doesn't feel at this moment.”

And Dave has proved to be right, because over time, usually the very thing that we had discussed that we had hoped the other person would see within this piece, eventually they see it. Don't they, Dave?

Brubeck: Yes, and on the last record, or CD, there's an example of that, where I didn't say a word and I got what I wanted. It took a year. “The Time of Our Madness,” and I pulled it off—it was recorded on *So What's New*, but I didn't like the way it was being done, so we approached it differently.

I played the introduction just solo piano and then Bobby comes in and does a cadenza, and then he sets the tempo that I wanted him to do on the last recording. But I didn't tell him, he just did it, and it becomes like a tango, I think. And before when I'd hint at it at the piano, he'd always try and make it like a bebop tune. But now I've got exactly what I wanted and it's wonderful. I didn't have to open my mouth.

I. Brubeck: And usually, given time, those things evolve, as long as you have all people who are really trying their best to make something work. And this quartet has certainly had no one undermining anything. You know? This was working as a group effort.

Crawford: Yes. I remember Doug Ramsey writing about the "harmonic net," I think is what he said, that you provided, so that everybody would operate safely and securely and know they could do what they wanted to. That's a great tribute.

The classic quartet—Brubeck, Desmond, Morello, Wright—broke up in 1967. In retrospect was the break-up of the quartet a good thing?

Brubeck: The guys had a year's notice, and none of them believed it. When the year came to an end, which was January 1, I think, we played the last job in Pittsburgh. And it was covered by Huntley and Brinkley.

I. Brubeck: Yes, it was late December. I think it was like December 27, or something like that.

Brubeck: Yes, and then reality started to set in with the guys. You know, "Here's Huntley and Brinkley covering our last job. I guess it is coming to an end."

And I remember the next day riding to the airport, we're all in the car, and Joe Morello said, "Well, Bru, I know you'll be calling me in a few days," and I said, "Joe, I'm not going to be calling you. Not to worry." And just everybody felt that way.

Gene Wright was very, very disappointed. He loved the quartet so much. So did everybody, but they got to the point—not Gene—but Joe and Paul got to the point where they would push Iola and I like young kids push a mother and father to see how much you'll take.

There's a condition with a bandleader and the sidemen that's—like they called the Duke Ellington the iron fist in the velvet glove—where in the end you're going to have to get your way without any big scenes. I've seen things happen in the Ellington band where no one else would stand for it but Duke. But it would come around, like Iola and I are talking about, where it would solve itself.

Paul and I continued to work together after the quartet broke up, and I still use Eugene and occasionally Joe, so we've all remained friends.

V. A NEW FOCUS ON LITURGICAL AND LARGE-SCALE WORKS

Iola Brubecks's work as librettist, and choice of texts

Elementals, 1963

The Real Ambassadors with Louis Armstrong, 1962

Truth is Fallen, 1971, *To Hope!*, 1980, collaborating with the Murray Lewis Dance Company

Fiesta de la Posada, 1975

The Gates of Justice, 1969

The Light in the Wilderness, 1968

Writing for the Pope, 1987

Pange Lingua Variations, 1985

Hold Fast to Dreams

The Brubeck Institute at UOP

The Brubeck family and an eightieth birthday celebration with the London Symphony Orchestra

The Earth Is Our Mother, 1992

Awards and tributes, from the U.S. President to Willie "The Lion" Smith

- Brubeck: There were just many reasons I wanted to break up the quartet. One was to be with my family and the other—
- Crawford: Your children must have been teenagers—difficult, then.
- I. Brubeck: Difficult age then, yes.
- Brubeck: Difficult and so many things going on in the country—drugs and I just thought I had to be around more. But what's funny is it only lasted a month or so and I'm back with a new quartet.
- I. Brubeck: Well, not until recent times—that is, when you went back, you didn't go back into it just consistently day after day, week after week, on the road. With the new group, with Gerry Mulligan and Alan Dawson and Jack Six, it was more sporadic.

It was special events, and a lot of time off in between, so it wasn't quite the same as it was with the old quartet where it just went on continuously, and from the financial

standpoint, it had to maintain all the salaries and everything. It was more from event to event with the new quartet. Wouldn't you say that was true, Dave?

Brubeck: Much more. I had more time to write.

I. Brubeck: And Dave was concentrating on composing.

Brubeck: *The Light in the Wilderness*, which is a seventy-minute oratorio.

I. Brubeck: That was another reason for the end of the quartet with Joe and Paul and Eugene, was that Dave wanted to finish that oratorio and wanted to spend more time in composing. You had it pretty well along, but you had not completed it at the time the quartet broke up.

Brubeck: And I hadn't orchestrated it, yet.

Crawford: And those very large pieces must have taken a different climate to work in.

Brubeck: Oh, yes. Gradually I got into areas by accident almost, like *Elementals* is a piece that Ray Wright, who was music director at Radio City Music Hall, a great musician, asked me to write; a piece for jazz using larger forms than the usual jazz pieces.

I. Brubeck: This was for the Eastman Summer School.

Brubeck: Yes, where he went to teach after Radio City. I told him that I had never written a large-scale piece for full symphony. And I tried to talk my way out of it and he said, "Well, if you just wrote it for piano, and I orchestrated it, how does that suit you?"

And I said, "Well, maybe I could do that," so he said, "When you write it for piano, I want you to indicate what instruments you're hearing while you write."

So the first movement I wrote and indicated the instruments and then he wrote back, "Fine. All of this will work. I'll put it down on paper for you, but the next movement, I want you to write it for full orchestra and you write the instruments, and if it won't work, I'll change it." So this was my first time of really writing for full orchestra. My brother Howard used to write my stuff.

Crawford: How about *The Light in the Wilderness*?

Brubeck: *Elementals* [1963] was written before *The Light in the Wilderness* [1968]. *The Light in the Wilderness* was premiered with three percussion and organ at the University of North Carolina.

Brubeck: Chapel Hill. Hoggard was the conductor. If you look up the review of that in *Time* magazine, it's with Lara—L-A-R-A—Hoggard—H-O-G-G-A-R-D, conducting, and there's a good *Time* magazine review.

Then Erich Kunzel from Cincinnati Symphony had also seen *The Light in the Wilderness* on my piano when he came to get me to do the first pops concert. He's the

biggest pops conductor in the world right now, but it started in my house when he came to talk to me about his idea to do pops concerts with the Cincinnati Symphony.

He saw *The Light in the Wilderness* and said, "If you ever orchestrate this, I'll do it with the Cincinnati Symphony." They did it, and we toured Europe with Professor Brown's choir from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. So we took those kids—a hundred kids—to Europe with the Cincinnati Symphony. And then—we had recorded before we left?

I. Brubeck: I believe so.

Brubeck: Yes, and that recording is now on Musical Heritage. After it left Decca, Musical Heritage issued it as a CD. It's a big mail order company for classical music.

Crawford: It was performed a great deal, wasn't it?

Brubeck: Yes. Erich wants to do it for my eightieth birthday with the Cincinnati Symphony. I'm trying to talk him out of it [laughter]. It's so much work for him and for the chorus and rehearsals with orchestra. But he wants to do it because he thinks it was kind of a hallmark performance. It got wonderful reviews from the *Washington Post*.

##

Crawford: Let us talk about *The Real Ambassadors*. It was your idea, wasn't it, Mrs. Brubeck?

I. Brubeck: *The Real Ambassadors* really began quite some time before that, but it took that long to get it to a form that we thought was recordable. It started, I would say, probably about 1959, and came from two sources.

One was the 1958 State Department tour where I went with Dave for the first part of the tour and we saw how jazz was accepted by the European audiences. We went behind the Iron Curtain in Poland and we went to Turkey and then I wasn't with him when he went to all the other countries—India and Pakistan and all those countries. The whole idea of cultural exchange was very exciting and very much in the air at that time.

And then one summer I went back to New York with Dave and while we were there we went to some musical shows and we also went to Central Park, where there was a jazz show that included Joe Williams and you remember who else was there—I guess it was with the Basie Orchestra. And I thought to myself, "You know, Joe Williams' singing is reaching out to people and getting an immediate kind of reaction," greater than I saw in the theater with the great musical shows at that time. It sort of took the whole production of the show to reach people, but Joe Williams could just sing a song and tell a story through the song.

So the next step in our minds then was, well, if you linked the idea of cultural exchange and had onstage actual jazz groups and jazz singers and told the story in this way, it would be something that was unique and also would have a purpose behind it. Namely it would point out that we were making these tours and thereby trying to say what a great country this country was and how democratic it was and so forth, and we ran into

enough criticism when we were overseas, people asking what about your racial problems, and so we felt this was a way to bring the two together.

A lot of the songs that are in *The Real Ambassadors* Dave had already written the music for, just for the quartet, so then we started adding words to them to flesh out some kind of story. We both agreed on Louis Armstrong, because of the big impact that he had had overseas—he had gone on two state department tours, and the last one he refused [to go on] because of the Little Rock situation. He was the ideal person to symbolize first jazz, its emotional and spiritual impact on people, but he also had been involved in cultural exchange and everybody loved him, no matter how or what their political persuasion may be—people couldn't help but loving him. So that's how we settled on him. And Dave can tell you about trying to reach him. [laughter]

Brubeck: Louis' manager was Joe Glaser and he was also my manager and I told Joe that I wanted to talk to Louis about this idea, *The Real Ambassadors*, so he said, "Well, you're going to be in Chicago and Louis is in Chicago, just go see him."

And I went to the hotel where Louis was, and rather than being able to get him on the phone—it would always ring in his manager's room—they were instructed not to ring his room and the manager didn't want to give me the time of day. So some way I figured out what room Louis was staying in and I sat on the floor outside his room. I don't know to this day why I didn't knock on the door, but I'd been told that I wasn't to bother, so when he had room service, the door opened and Louis saw me sitting on the floor and said, "Dave! What are you doing out there?" I said, "I've been waiting for you to come out," and he said, "Well, come in. I just ordered a steak." So, he picked up the phone and he said, "Send up another steak," so I could eat with him.

And everyone said that Louis could not learn all this new material at his age. I think he was over sixty at this point, wasn't he? I told him about the show and he seemed much more interested than Joe Glaser, who didn't seem too thrilled about it. And then he said, "Won't you come downstairs and play with me tonight?" And how this goes in full cycle is that the first pianist I heard on a recording was with his trio downstairs—Billy Kyle—so here I was going to meet Billy Kyle, and even worse was to have him move off the piano bench and let me sit in, because Louis wanted me there. So that was the first meeting.

I. Brubeck: Yes, I think he would have been [over sixty]. Sure.

Brubeck: So his wife was very against it and said, "How do you expect him to learn all this music?" Because it was way over an hour long—oh, it was enough for a whole Broadway show; with intermission it would have been over two hours. So Louis said, "I want you to tape each song for me and then I'll learn it while I'm on the road, listening to the tapes." Because Louis didn't read really well. He could read, but not well. But what a memory! Oh, just unbelievable!

Crawford: How long did it take him to get through the material?

Brubeck: Well, he was ready at the recording session, enough so we kept the exact schedule that Iola and my brother Howard had scheduled. Two three-hour sessions a day? And you see, to have Carmen McCrae in New York, Dave Lambert, Jon Hendricks, and Annie

Ross in New York, and Louis' band and my band, was just a rare wonderful accident. To have everybody available—because all of us were playing all over the world. But this was the only time and so we had three days of recording and this strict schedule which we never deviated from—never.

Louis would be the first one there in the morning, last one to leave, always prepared. We put his music on large notations so he could see it and glance up from it when he was playing the trumpet into the mike, you know. He just did a perfect job. You can hear on the recording the average show that Columbia did and they did more shows than any other company—the show usually had been running on Broadway, so everybody's rehearsed. Here everybody's seeing things to play for the first time, and for it to come out that way, it's truly remarkable that it came out that well.

I. Brubeck: The only performance actually was in Monterey, at the Monterey Jazz Festival [1962], and that was one of the most exciting evenings, I think, ever, for us and in the history of Monterey, because they had the entire cast: Louis Armstrong and his band, Dave's band, and Carmen McCrae. Annie Ross had gone back to England and Yolanda Bavan had taken her place for the trio chorus, and so what we had to do was—I guess you would call it a recital version of the play.

I did a narrative that sort of strung the story together and the focus was on the music, actually. Louis came out with his top hat and a big broad smile. Dave had told him earlier just to dress it up a little bit so it had a semblance of a production behind it and not just the songs. No staging if he would wear the top hat.

Brubeck: And carry an attaché case.

I. Brubeck: And carry an attaché case. He didn't really want to do that—

Brubeck: As he came by me, onstage—and he had refused this, but he had the hat on, carrying the case—and he said, “Am I hamming it enough to suit you, Pops?” [laughter] I'm glad the audience didn't hear it.

I. Brubeck: And then Lambert, Hendricks and Bavan had cloaks with hoods, and so when they sang the sort of Gregorian chant, they had the hoods up so that it would look as if they were monks chanting. Then when they were just sort of generally responding to the chorus, they had the hoods down. Evidently it was enough for people to get the idea because they certainly responded to it.

Crawford: Why didn't it go on to Broadway? It would have been ideal for Broadway.

Brubeck: It would have been.

I. Brubeck: I know there were various people who seemed interested. Leland Hayward came to see us about it. And there were other people—Broadway producers. I just don't know why it didn't get off the ground.

Dave says he thinks that they felt it was making too much of a point about the racial issue and that they didn't feel perhaps that belonged in a musical at that time. That could be part of it.

They said that it should have somebody who really knew how to write for Broadway to rewrite the book, which we were perfectly willing for them to do; it was the music that we were interested in. But it just never got off the ground.

Crawford: Who would you put in Louis' role?

Brubeck: Jon Hendricks, because he loves the show. It was almost done at the Apollo and then they lost their funding.

Crawford: Louis made the audience cry, or ended up crying himself over a line that was meant to be comical.

I. Brubeck: Yes, Dave had written a Gregorian chant background, and in front of it Louis is singing the blues, saying, "They say I look like God," because the Gregorian chants were going, "In the image of God." And so he was saying, "They say I look like God. Could God be black? My God, if all were made in the image of thee, could thou perchance a zebra be?" [laughs] Which is so ludicrous.

But at the end of that, his voice broke when he was talking about the day "when man is really free." And he repeats "really free, really free," and this was when he had tears. So I feel that in *The Real Ambassadors* he had a chance to express *himself* a lot more than his own shows did, because he was the entertainer as well as the musician. I think that we gave him a vehicle where he could express his own thoughts a little bit more.

Brubeck: Oh, and he told Iola how much he loved "Summer Song." When he died they played that on the classical station in New York City—WQXR. That surprised me so much because there'd been so little recognition of this show, that I was surprised they'd even have it in their library. But people did know about it.

Crawford: He must have said he loved that song for them to play it.

I. Brubeck: Yes, he probably did, to Lucille and the people around him. And then there was a light little song "When Love Had Its Way"—is it?

Brubeck: Yes.

I. Brubeck: He said to Dave, "How could you know about that?" Because it had the same kind of rhythm and feel as a dance that used to be danced in New Orleans that Louis said, "That's just like we used to do." Slow drag or something like that.

Brubeck: Yes.

I. Brubeck: And, "How did you know that?" Dave said he didn't know how he knew that, but it just seemed to fit. [laughter] It fit Louis.

And I think that was a surprise, too, to everyone, that Dave could write for Louis' band as well as his own. The difference of the two styles in jazz really surprised a lot of people, that they could work together so well.

Crawford: You didn't record the performance for television; we know that story, that there was someone willing to do that in Monterey, but you would have had to sell your car to get the funds to have it done.

Brubeck: What a shame. Well, then they said to me, you're lecturing the audience and they're supposed to be entertained. Such dumb ideas—and not realizing what I think we'd worked so hard on was to make people aware of what can destroy this country—the racial thing more than anything else. And this would have helped a little, just like the piece we're going to do Friday night with Martin Luther King's words.

If there were more things on public television or television in general that really started getting each one of us making a statement that is constantly going out to the public in some way instead of so much that is not saying anything very deep—

Crawford: Yes, that's true. And music can say it the best way.

Brubeck: Yes.

Crawford: Well, let's talk about the other large-scale works now, and the message of peace, which seems to be similar to your postwar music, which was kind of a catharsis, you said. We talked about *Light in the Wilderness*, which was written in 1968 and calls for as many as five hundred voices?

Brubeck: Well, that's a strong statement, because it's the temptations and teachings of Christ. We constantly miss the whole message of Christ over and over, and that's what I find is so lacking in our Christian church, is really what Christ was talking about. And that's what we wanted to get over in *The Light in the Wilderness*.

A strange thing that happened that people aren't aware of is that there was control from Washington in the Nixon Administration. It was very subtle so you can never prove it, but I had written a ballet in 1971 about the Democratic Convention in Chicago and we were going to do that with the University of Cincinnati dance department, and everything was going along fine and then all of a sudden the funding was dropped. It was an exposé, almost, through ballet, of what happened in the park in Chicago.

Crawford: *Truth is Fallen*.

Brubeck: What I did with the ballet was this: All the cameramen had been run out of the park by the police, but one cameraman some way had rented a room, and he was shooting his camera into the park and he didn't have too much movement with the camera, so it was like shooting to a stage. And you actually see the police come in and beat the kids with clubs, and you see them disperse—run away from this center—and this you could do with ballet. One of the girls when they ran had been hit so hard with a club that she was unconscious and [I had] the lead dancer come back and pick her up. You could see this out the window on camera and I had incorporated that into the ballet just to depict what happened.

Crawford: How did you have access to the film?

- Brubeck: Just saw it on the news; wrote it for the Cincinnati University Ballet Company, wouldn't you say, Iola?
- I. Brubeck: Yes.
- Crawford: It was NEA-sponsored, and withdrawn? Could you appeal that?
- Brubeck: It was going to be, yes, but there was no appeal. So it's never been done, and I quit working on it. Recently I recorded one of the dances with my quartet, maybe in the last seven or eight years—that was "Dancin' in Rhythm" from that ballet. And a couple other things I've saved from the ballet, but there's so many things that you do that never go to completion.
- Now we're hoping for something to happen with what we just did in Russia [1998] which is, I think, so important for the United States, but there's no sponsor coming to put up the money.
- Crawford: Talk about that, would you?
- Brubeck: It's been broadcast—it's the Catholic Mass: *To Hope!*—performed in the Eastern European countries recently. Nobody has actually come through with the money to put it on PBS here. They've already got it done in Russia, with—would you call them a European company, or is it an American company? It's a combination, isn't it?
- I. Brubeck: Yes. A cable company. But for this country the entry station would be the one in South Carolina that you often see on PBS, a program that will mention their call letters. I've forgotten just what it is, but they initiate a number of programs, just like WETA in Washington and WGBH in Boston.
- They are trying to get sponsorship; they think it's a great show. It's two hours, and the first half is probably more popular stuff. It's the orchestra and the quartet improvising on a regular program that they do. It's a documentary that tells about the forces coming together and working with the Russian chorus and the Russian National Orchestra and so forth. It's a wonderful performance.
- Brubeck: And then I went to the students—
- I. Brubeck: Oh, yes, Dave visited the Moscow Conservatory and there are questions that the students asked and Dave's answers, and there's a wonderful moment when somebody asked Dave if he could improvise on a Russian folk song. Dave started to improvise and one of the students picked up his violin and started playing along with him.
- Brubeck: From the audience.
- I. Brubeck: From the audience. So Dave invited him to come up on the stage with him and they did a little thing together. Well, that's so spontaneous and so charming. It's entertaining. It seems to me very strange that no one seems to get the point about how dramatic it is that a Mass could be performed by Russian singers and a Russian orchestra this way within so few years from the time when it would be *impossible* for such a thing to happen.

Brubeck: So many in the chorus were wearing crucifixes around their necks—the women—they had had to hide them before, because it would have been their death if somebody found them in their house. That one little thing says so much. The audience was absolutely silent in following this Mass, which is a Catholic Mass, not an Orthodox Mass. The whole thing to me is important and yet, again, here in my own country no one is interested.

There were other things that should have been on television—we were *years* with a ballet troupe doing wonderful things. We did them in Europe and Japan and Canada and the United States and never a nibble from PBS where it was presented as a possibility—the Murray Louis Dance Company, and it was wonderful. They do so much ballet all the time, why not give us a little hour?

Crawford: Who works on that for you?

Brubeck: Maybe that's the problem. Nobody works on it.

Crawford: You have to go sit on the floor, I think, again. [laughter]

I. Brubeck: I think that's it. There's nobody lobbying, particularly, although the idea by the Murray Louis Dance Company was presented to them for the PBS Dance in America series. It is modern dance and improvised jazz.

##

I. Brubeck: And again, audience reaction was always so fantastic. There never was a time when there wasn't a standing ovation afterwards.

Crawford: The Europeans are so much better about stipends for that kind of thing, aren't they?

Brubeck: Yes.

I. Brubeck: They seem more open. I think they're more open to new ideas.

Brubeck: Then you get to the point where all this work will never be documented. And it's important for students of ballet.

It was such a great performance, and different because the quartet was onstage with the dancers. And right at the end of "Take Five," I think it was, the dancers were told they could do whatever they wanted to do in their solo, and every performance they would do something different, and the audience would just explode. I can't see why somebody didn't say, "Hey, you know, we should do this on television," because it never misfired; it always made it.

One time we did a show where we didn't know what the dancers were going to do and they didn't know what we were going to do and it had to be absolutely improvised, each reacting to the other. And this was for a big company.

I. Brubeck: This was AT&T.

- Brubeck: That's a big company. [laughter]
- I. Brubeck: An in-house show for them to show at meetings and that sort of thing.
- Brubeck: And what they wanted to do was to show their executives how to improvise; get their noses out of the books and come up with ideas, and just let them know that not a thing was worked out onstage beforehand. We'd just react to each other, and it seemed like it was choreographed. There is a video of it, if anybody would want to ever look at it. They played it all over for their executives. There's a similar thing that we did like that for another company about improvisation.
- Crawford: And your feeling is that you expend so much energy in these things and you want them to be heard and seen?
- I. Brubeck: You'd like to have some permanence to it. I mean, the concerts or the shows are wonderful to have and wonderful to have that reaction, but you would like to have something permanent so that another generation can see what it was. They'll never know, this way.
- Crawford: But that's not true of pieces like *Posada* [*La Fiesta de la Posada*] and *Gates of Justice* and some of those works that are performed a lot.
- I. Brubeck: Yes, they are performed.
- Brubeck: Yes, but *Posada* fell through three times, I think, to be televised.
- Crawford: Oh, yes? Well, but they're slow!
- Brubeck: Whoa. And what a different approach for Christmas we need, than every year seeing—I'm not going to say which one we saw every year for years—[laughter] but there should be one little shot of something different once in a while.
- Crawford: You mentioned to me before that you had done it so many different places. For example, Vienna at Christmastime.
- Brubeck: Oh, that was almost televised, but we lost that right at the last minute!
- I. Brubeck: Funding was supposed to come from some foundation here and they withdrew it at the last minute.
- Crawford: So disappointing. Well, which of these large works are you most fond of after *The Real Ambassadors*?
- I. Brubeck: Probably the ones that I had the most to do with. [laughter] *The Light in the Wilderness* and—
- Brubeck: *The Gates of Justice*.
- I. Brubeck: And the *Gates of Justice*. I'm very fond of *La Posada*, but I think those two mean the most to me.

Crawford: Would you talk about your choice of text?

I. Brubeck: First you have to understand the way that Dave usually works is that he just jumps in. And he can jump in in the middle rather than the beginning or the end, and *The Light in the Wilderness* began with his writing “Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled, If You Believe in God.” I don’t know whether this was written before Philip’s death—

Brubeck: After.

I. Brubeck: Or after. I know it was dedicated to Dave’s brother, after he lost his son when his son was about sixteen years old. So that is part of *A Light in the Wilderness*.

Dave had a number of little and some not so little pieces that were not quite connected and so that’s kind of when I jumped in then and said, “What we should do is decide on the overall form—where you’re headed for,” and I began to choose texts that I thought would help to begin and help decide where to go, where the climaxes would be and so forth.

And then I wrote some texts. I wrote the text for “Forty Days.” There’s nothing in the Bible that says very much about what happens in those forty days in the wilderness and so I wrote the text for that, and after that, I was mostly selecting from the Bible, but selecting what I thought bridges one point to the next.

Crawford: There were a hundred performances of the work in the first four years, which is really remarkable.

I. Brubeck: There were a lot. There haven’t been so many in recent years, but there were a lot right at first. It takes a lot of rehearsal because it’s a long piece.

Brubeck: Then it was on CBS on Easter Sunday television—which was wonderful—from the National Cathedral.

I. Brubeck: It was about the second year, I think. And *The Light in the Wilderness* was shown for about five years, I think, at Easter time on CBS.

Crawford: I heard a story that the rabbi came to you and said, “Now we want equal time.” And so *Gates of Justice* got started, in 1969.

I. Brubeck: Yes. [laughter]

Brubeck: Yes, because that rabbi helped fund *The Light in the Wilderness*. He wanted a piece for his temple, the Rockdale Temple. What was funny about that is that they were having their international convention in Florida of the UAHC—Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

I. Brubeck: Yes, this was a reform temple.

Brubeck: From all over the world, and they decided that they wanted to do *The Gates of Justice*. And as I mentioned they flew all the choir from Miami University down there and they flew the orchestra and the soloists and the quartet. What was going on there at this

convention was a lot of picketing between the younger Hebrew scholars and rabbis against the older concepts, and so we were a little worried about what's going to happen out in front of the auditorium where we're doing this piece.

It was the only part of the whole convention, which I think went on for a week, where they were all in agreement. Nobody picketed, nobody was hollering or passing out pamphlets, and the audience was so great, because everybody knew every line of the text.

They weren't staring into a program; they were just watching the performance onstage. I'll never forget that performance. It was so wonderful to do something for an audience that's so knowledgeable.

And the head of the whole thing gave a speech and he didn't know Iola's text, but it was almost word for word what she had picked as important out of the Union Hebrew—what was it called?

I. Brubeck: I don't know exactly what they do call it. I've forgotten now, but anyway, it would be like our King James Bible, you know.

Brubeck: What he picked to say Iola and I couldn't believe—this is the text for the *Gates of Justice*. It was just over and over it would be the same section that he had just said to the whole congress. It was a beautiful experience.

Crawford: That oratorio has had a lot of performances?

Brubeck: Yes. This Friday night we'll do it, and then in Chicago we go to present the Langston Hughes songs to choral directors that are having a convention. And from there we go to Baltimore and we're with the symphony and chorus there. Doing what?

I. Brubeck: *Pange Lingua Variations*.

Crawford: You adapted the text, Mrs. Brubeck, for that?

I. Brubeck: Yes. Of course it was all in Latin and I'm not a Latin scholar. Dave asked for various texts because the *Pange Lingua* has been set by many, many composer over hundreds of years, and a number of different pieces were given to us to look at and we could see none of them were the same. Yet they all came from this Latin text, so I decided, well, the only way out of this is to get someone to give me a literal translation from the Latin, without any attempts to rhyme things, or whatever, so that we could know what Thomas Aquinas meant—that was more important than what was said by all these other people in between down the years. And so it was the bishop, I think.

Brubeck: It was.

I. Brubeck: In the diocese in Sacramento who did give a literal translation of the Latin to me. And then I tried to take it and set it so that it would fit with Dave's music. And [I used] some poetic license, but basically it was the original thought of Thomas Aquinas.

Crawford: Do you normally set words to music?

I. Brubeck: Yes. Most of the time the music is there first. *Pange Lingua* has been done quite a bit. It's not recorded, but it is published. There was a beautiful performance at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., and it was done for Sacramento, for the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento.

Crawford: Has Grace Cathedral done any major works? Are they open to those kinds of programs?

Brubeck: No. Well, they did Duke Ellington and a friend of ours in San Francisco has approached them. My only break came with the Pope.

Crawford: That's right. You wrote *Upon This Rock* for John Paul II for his 1987 visit to San Francisco. I would like to know how that came to be.

Brubeck: Well, Ed Murray, who was then with the Oblates near St. Louis (Our Lady of the Snows), called me when I was on the road and he said they (Oblates) wanted me to set a sentence that was absolutely appropriate for the Pope from the Bible: "Upon this rock I will build my church and the jaws of hell can not prevail against it." And they wanted me to start on it right away.

So I told Russell [Gloyd], "I don't know how I'm going to do this." Nine minutes they wanted, while he's in the Pope-mobile coming into Candlestick Park. Then they were going to do parts of my Mass and parts of *Pange Lingua*, and the Pope was doing a full Mass from about second base in Candlestick Park. [laughter]

And so during the night—this is another weird thing that happens to me. I had told Russell to turn it down; "How am I going to do nine minutes on one sentence?" During the night, the idea and the music of how I was going to do it, I dreamt, and wrote down knowing I can take this commission. I've got enough of an idea to do a chorale and fugue—that's what Bach would do. I had dreamt the subject of the fugue and the countersubject and the answer was right there—musically, the answer. And so I told Russell the next day I can do this.

So I sent it to the choir director and the choir director showed the bishop and the bishop said, "This is just right. This is the only way it could be done with one sentence."

And I begged for a second sentence, so I'd have a few more words and they gave me the next sentence in the Bible: "What is bound on earth shall be bound in heaven, what is loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven," and so I had a few more words.

So I met the organist from St. Mary's in San Francisco at the airport as I was coming through San Francisco—he came out to the airport—to show him what I had done. And I said, "You know, it may be a fugue." And he looked at it and he said, "It may be a fugue? This *is* a fugue!" [laughter] So he took it to the bishop and the bishop is an organist and played it and said it was fine.

And meanwhile the paper in San Francisco, I don't know which one, is saying, how can they have a comedian and a jazz musician represent this community at a presentation for the Pope? Now the comedian was a guy that appears in nightclubs, but devoted his days to Catholic youth. I forget his name—great big guy, wonderful guy.

But that's the kind of criticism we were getting, so the bishop came to the performance at Candlestick and talked to me, he may have talked to me the day of the rehearsal, and he said, "Dave, don't improvise. Don't use your jazz group because this piece is such a good chorale and fugue in the tradition of classical music and the church, as soon as you put your jazz group with it, these guys that have been unkind to you in the paper will have something to write about—jazz for the Pope.

I. Brubeck: I think it was mostly people who were being very critical of the program that was being put together for the Pope at Candlestick Park, because they had the comedian—I didn't even know his name, but evidently he was known locally as sort of an emcee, and evidently a lot of people had been very critical of that choice.

Brubeck: If you go back to that period, I'd love to have anything you discover, because I didn't get to read it either. I was just told that things weren't going so well.

Crawford: And how did the Pope like it?

Brubeck: Oh, he loved it. I got a nice letter from his secretary, and he even said the Pope would pray for me every night, [laughter] so I'm going to be in there with billions of people! But he came over. After the Mass, he came to where we were and we walked up closer to him and I kissed his ring and he complimented us.

Crawford: Are you Catholics?

I. Brubeck: I'm not. He is.

Brubeck: I joined after I wrote the Mass. Yes. Well, it's a *good* chorale and fugue built on that one sentence—and boy, I'd love to have that recorded some day. Oh, it was recorded with students from the Northern Colorado University—from "go west young man" college—

I. Brubeck: Greeley. [laughter]

Brubeck: Greeley! Greeley, Colorado. And Russell didn't tell me this, but we moved into Denver after we'd done it on campus at Greeley, and at the end of the fugue, I bring in *Tu est Petri*: "You are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church." And I use the old, original—[sings] which is the original Gregorian, *Tu est Petri*, and that's the way this piece ends, with everything else going on.

But Russell didn't tell me he had twenty-seven trumpet players in the balcony to play [sings theme]. It just lifted you right out of your seat. I thought heaven had come through the auditorium through the ceiling. There were three trumpets onstage, and that's what I expected, but I didn't expect this blast!

Crawford: Do you want to say something about Russell Gloyd?

Brubeck: I'll tell you a funny story. When we were at Candlestick Park with the Pope, we were supposed to follow him when he comes in in the Popemobile and do certain cues of music when he gets to this red carpet that's going to take him up to the altar.

What we didn't know was the whole infield of the baseball diamond would be filled with chairs and people were going to stand up when the Pope came in. Therefore, we couldn't see; all we could see were the backs of these people standing up. So Russell, to get his cues, could see that the audience would stand as he went by, and then he'd know where the Pope was. He could not see the Pope, but could see the people in the stands.

So that's the way we kept the music at the right spot that we were told we had to be. But all of a sudden, we're in the middle of the Mass and I heard the audience just make a sigh or some kind of noise—72,000 people—maybe they just had a breath or something, but I could hear something, so I looked up and the Pope's looking from the top of the altar right over at the musicians.

When Russell finished the section we were playing, he came over and sat on the piano bench because there was no place for the conductor to sit, so I said to Russell, "What was going on that the Pope was looking at us? Did he bless us or something?" And he said, "Either that, or he's trying to learn to conduct in four-four."

And I went in—I'd been so nervous, and when he told me this my head went right under the piano because I was giggling, which was inappropriate, trying to keep from breaking up—I had to go under the keyboard. [laughter]

Crawford: When you're doing these orchestral pieces and you have your cadenza, how does he handle that?

Brubeck: He just knows. He's heard us night after night. And that's what scares me with other conductors, so I have cues that I will play for someone that hasn't worked with me a lot and I'll look up and play this cue and then they know when to come in. Some conductors are very nervous about that because it isn't something that's in the score.

Crawford: Oh, I'd think so. And you probably have a variety of conductors when Russell can't do it.

Brubeck: Oh, yes. Before Russell it would be a different one in every city.

Crawford: I talked to Cathy [Longenati] about the performances at Pacific Mozart Ensemble, and she said that as a singer, she found the mood in each performance was totally different and the music then changed a great deal, too. And she said she could watch your face and see where it was going. Which of those big pieces allows for the most improvisation?

Brubeck: *The Gates of Justice* allows for a lot. And *The Light in the Wilderness*, and the Mass and *Pange Lingua* has some. *Posada* has a lot.

Crawford: How do the different countries handle *Posada*? England, say, or Vienna?

Brubeck: The Viennese loved it. We had a long ovation at the end. It went on and on.

I. Brubeck: It's so different for them, absolutely different. And the children's chorus was most engaging, didn't you think? This was a choir school also, but it was mixed boys and girls.

Brubeck: Yes, wonderful. Viennese kids can sing. It wasn't the Vienna Boys Choir—another well-known Viennese choir.

Crawford: You've collaborated with at least one son—I think with Chris—on writing words?

I. Brubeck: Yes. Chris is very good with words. On *Truth is Fallen*, we worked together, and with his rock group he was mostly writing for that. And we have done other things since then.

##

I. Brubeck: I don't know whether you're familiar with the recording he did with Frederica von Stade? Some of those songs he would change a little bit. I don't think they're too much on that record changed, but some things are.

Crawford: How did that come to be?

I. Brubeck: Well, Chris performed with folk singer Bill Crofut, who just recently died. Bill Crofut is someone whose interest in music was very wide-ranging. He started out as a folk singer, à la Pete Seeger, but his interests were a lot in classical music. I think he was the one who approached Frederica Von Stade about the idea of doing a recording together. She saw some of the songs that Chris had written, both the lyrics and the music, and she was interested in some of Dave's music. She knew Dave of course and I think their recording is delightful, with a variety of songs.

And then after that, Dawn Upshaw heard the recording so she wanted a similar thing done. And so Chris and Bill performed with her at Carnegie Hall and then last May in London at the Barbican with a similar kind of approach.

And as I say, Chris is very good with words, he just has a different twist on them sometimes than I have. [laughter]

Crawford: So how do you resolve that when you're working on something together.

I. Brubeck: Well, if he's performing it, he does it his way, and if we're involved in the performance, we do it our way. [laughter]

Crawford: How about new projects for the two of you?

Brubeck: I'm working on the *Book of Psalms*. That will be my next project, and I'm hoping that Dawn Upshaw will sing some of them. It will be called *Sacred and Secular Songs*. Some of them will be sung in synagogue and some in Catholic churches, and some in Protestant churches, and some of them just sung as recital songs.

I. Brubeck: There's a beautiful soprano solo in the Langston Hughes suite called "Hold Fast to Dreams" that I would love to hear someone like Dawn Upshaw sing.

Brubeck: Oh, it's so difficult, that piece. It was sung very well at Princeton.

Crawford: How did you approach those poems? I heard you say yesterday that you started with one and you ended up with more than twenty.

Brubeck: Yes. I love those poems. And then Iola would—when she saw I was hooked—I was supposed to do one, which was called “Hold Fast to Dreams,” “for if dreams die, life is like a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.” Isn’t that a great image? So I did, I think, four different versions of that: one for the soprano soloist to sing, one for the baritone, one for the children, and one for the quartet. We play on it, too.

And I also did a chorale and fugue built on “I dream a world where man no other man will scorn.” That’s the subject of the fugue. And then there’s one that’s called “Boogie Woogie, One-hand,” and that’s just a real boogie woogie tune that the children insisted on singing before every rehearsal was over. They wouldn’t go home until they got to sing that tune.

And then there was another one called “Freedom.” Which is more or less what you would expect Langston Hughes to write about—freedom. Sue Ellen Page is very well known for her work in the children’s choir, and she’s written books about how to handle the children’s range in voices. It was her idea to get me down there to Princeton.

We’re going back to Princeton soon to do the *Gates of Justice*. But there are so many wonderful poems from Langston Hughes that really move me.

Crawford: Are there other poets that you would like to set, other than Mrs. Brubeck?

Brubeck: I’ve set a lot of poems that no one knows about. [laughter] Then recently I’ve just set two by a southern poet—

I. Brubeck: Wendell Berry.

Brubeck: Wendell Berry. And those should go into print. It’s been so hard to get things that are a little different than what the average high school wants to sing—or average university. But there’s plenty of universities and colleges that will sing these things when they’re in print. And we have a very good chance—we’re with Warner Brothers, and they have just bought a whole company that has wonderful choral pieces in their catalogue. It is called Lawson Gould.

Morton Gould’s brother ran this company, and they have a lot of Robert Shaw and some Gershwin, I think, some Charles Ives, some Copland, maybe—just loaded with good material. I’m going to have these things released with this company that Warner’s just bought, so things are really looking up. And they’ll also do the Langston Hughes. They’ve already started.

Crawford: They will publish?

Brubeck: They will publish all that. They’ll publish poems. You mentioned other poets—Robert Penn Warren, I did his poem called *Truth*. We did that for the veterans of—

I. Brubeck: The Veteran’s Theater, it was called.

- Brubeck: It's got kind of a war-type theme, that's why the Veterans Theater wanted to do it. And our neighbor in Connecticut.
- I. Brubeck: van Doren.
- Brubeck: Yes, I did a poem of his that hasn't been published. God, that was over twenty years ago. With this new company it may be published. They're interested in pieces that won't have tremendous sales, but eventually they make it back over the years. They'll look far down the road. And I'm loaded with stuff that hasn't been published.
- Crawford: You can keep them busy for years down the road without even writing another thing.
- I. Brubeck: I think so.
- Crawford: What about the new Brubeck Institute? Maybe you'd say something about that and where you hope that goes.
- Brubeck: Yes. Well, they've invited us back to College of the Pacific—Iola and I—putting all our archives there. That is starting today, as we speak, those boxes are arriving. They've been stuck in Lake Tahoe where there's too much snow for the truck to get through, and they were stuck in Salt Lake, but they're getting through today. And there are how many boxes?
- I. Brubeck: I really don't know, Dave.
- Brubeck: Over a hundred.
- Crawford: He said 280 linear feet. Something like that.
- I. Brubeck: That's a lot. It can't all go at one time because we're trying to first see, to know what we're sending. There was a lot of stuff that was just put in files and put in the back and we've forgotten what's there.
- Crawford: How have you gathered it?
- I. Brubeck: Well, the point is that our archives are not archives in the sense that they are very well catalogued or anything. They're mostly just old files that are stuck away.
- Our daughter-in-law, Chris' wife, is going through them and making a little book about what we are sending, so that we know what has gone out. And eventually all of Dave's music will get there. I don't think there's any music in this batch because he hasn't been there to really look at it, but they're interested, you know, in the sketches before it was finally in its final form, and all the handwritten manuscripts and that sort of thing.
- Brubeck: Well, they will think that I'm a pretty weird guy when they see those sketches because I write all over the world and send stuff home that I just don't want to get lost in the airplane where they lose your luggage or something. Like with me today, I've got three projects I'm working on. It's very hard to work on the road, to get everything out, but this way, they'll see scraps from all over the world where I've sent them home so at least there will be one copy of something.

- Crawford: Do you always note where you are?
- I. Brubeck: Most of the time he says where he is when something is written. And I'll bet you don't even know that it exists, but when I was going through some stuff, looking for something else of course, I found a whole notebook of arrangements for the trio.
- Brubeck: Oh, yes? I don't even know about it.
- I. Brubeck: Yes, I know. It's been so long ago, you haven't even thought about it.
- Crawford: Yale very much wanted your papers.
- Brubeck: Yes. Yale and University of Indiana and on and on and on and Colorado.
- Crawford: But UOP guaranteed a major live performance at least once a year. Did that make the difference?
- Brubeck: Well, yes. But don't you think I chose the right place?
- Crawford: Absolutely.
- Brubeck: Where else do you know that your music's going to be played? Boy, some of those places there's so much in the basement that you know nobody's been looking at the music. It'll be covered with dust, and unless you're really important, no one sees it. And Pacific's going to be connected to Berkeley.
- I. Brubeck: Where the resources of the University of California are, the resources of Pacific is going to get tied into that, so that a scholar from any school really can access information as to what the University of Pacific has. While scholars are going to want to come and actually see the manuscripts in front of them, students can get all the information they need if they're doing a paper or research or something just through the internet.
- Crawford: Good. Well, let's talk about the family, a remarkable bunch of musicians and all of them very productive.
- Brubeck: Yes.
- Crawford: In so many families where the parents are musical and literary, the children are not.
- I. Brubeck: Well, according to our sons who went into music, they feel that it was inevitable. [laughter] But usually their answer is, well, I saw my father having so much fun when there would be rehearsals at the house and that sort of thing, it just seemed like a logical thing to do. And our oldest son Darius said he was fairly old before he realized that everybody didn't play an instrument, you know, that any adult doesn't naturally—"Oh, well, what do you play?" [laughter] So that although he went through a rebellion period where he didn't think that he wanted to be a musician—when he was in college he studied ethnomusicology and world religions—he still played in little pickup bands like they have in college.
- Crawford: Keyboard player too, isn't he?

I. Brubeck: Yes, yes. Then as soon as he got out of school, playing the piano seemed to be what he wanted to do most, so that's what he started to do.

Crawford: Does he teach ethnomusicology?

Brubeck: Kind of, yes.

I. Brubeck: Yes, well, he's head of jazz studies at the University of Natal. But he also, because of his interest in ethnic music, I think, he's been able to bring in and to help the African students, to bring in some of their local music and incorporate it into jazz, because most of his students are either Zulu or from some African townships. And there are white students, too, but I would say the majority are black, aren't they?

Brubeck: Yes.

Crawford: Darius, Chris, Danny and Matthew have toured and recorded with you during the years, and sometimes critics were less than kind. Was that fair?

Brubeck: Yes, well, I always felt that they were better than I. Then critics would take potshots at them saying it's only because they're my sons that they're playing. And that would make me so angry because I just wish that they knew more about how wonderful a drummer Danny is, and oh, and how great Matthew is as improviser on cello. There's very few people that can improvise like he can, yet he can hold a chair in Berkeley Symphony. Right now he's on the road in Europe with some Crow—

I. Brubeck: Sheryl Crow.

Brubeck: And he can just do so many different types of music. He's a good pianist, too. And he just recorded with Tom Waits, and that's a different trip. And then his group called the Oranj Symphonette is about as crazy as you can get. Have you ever heard it? If you want a night of frivolity, go hear it. [laughs] It's very difficult music that's almost comedic. Wouldn't you call it, Iola?

I. Brubeck: Or satiric, perhaps. It's a comment, I guess. Whatever they do is sort of a comment on the music, and you never know what you're going to hear. But it takes superior musicians to perform it. It's hard to describe. You have to hear it for yourself. [laughter]

Brubeck: And Chris, you never know what he's going to do next. He just recorded his trombone concerto with the London Symphony. And is that going to be out?

I. Brubeck: Yes. I think with Koch International.

Brubeck: Yes. And Darius is recording his group from South Africa with B and W, which means Black and White, and that's a label in London. Danny is, well, you never know where he's going to show up—which label.

I. Brubeck: And he and Chris have just recorded last week with two other performers, a guitarist and a pianist. I don't know where. They've just recorded—I don't know what label will pick it up.

Crawford: For the eightieth birthday celebration you'll have a joint concert with the London Symphony Orchestra?

Brubeck: Yes, on my seventy-fifth birthday we broadcast on BBC and that's almost good enough for release on recording. I want to hear it again. For my eightieth birthday I'd like to do a new piece Chris and I just wrote for the Pittsburgh Symphony. At that time I had cataracts on both eyes. They asked me to write a piece and I told them I couldn't do it, that it was getting too hard to sit there for hours, looking and writing the score. And they said, "Well, have Chris write it for you."

I said, "How do you know about Chris?"

"Well, he was just here and played with us." [laughter] So I sketched it and indicated orchestration and Chris did the rest on his computer, and we finished it in time for the premiere in Pittsburgh. It's called *Theme and Explorations*.

It's just one theme and I wrote the first theme for full orchestra, then you take the same theme and just the woodwind section plays it. Then the same theme—which is a twelve-tone theme—the brass section plays it, and then the percussion. The tympanist has that whole twelve-tone theme on tympani. Then the percussion section plays about six minutes of it, I think. And then the strings play it. And before the strings finish, the whole symphony comes back in and it finishes with full orchestra. Now, I'd love to play that at my eightieth birthday.

Crawford: Is it your choice?

Brubeck: No.

I. Brubeck: No, it's not, unfortunately. They sort of decide what they want.

Brubeck: You see, it'll be near Christmas, because my birthday is December 6, and they always try to push Christmas music. And they might do that again, but they won't do *La Posada*, because then they've got to hire a chorus and rehearse a lot more. But our problem is to get enough budget for us to rehearse something like *La Posada*. You have to have a children's choir, an adult choir, and soloists and some people that can sound like a mariachi group. Well, they can do it all the time, but they don't seem to do it for me.

Crawford: Oh, they do. It is so often performed.

Brubeck: Yes, but it's not like the old days with Bernstein where you had three rehearsals and three performances.

Crawford: Right. Well, we haven't talked about *The Earth Is Our Mother*. I know that was special for both of you.

Brubeck: Yes, Iola, again, was in on the beginning of that. Do you remember how you got me to listen? To that man on television that was so wonderful.

I. Brubeck: Yes, and right now his name escapes me. You know who we're talking about. He had a series of lectures on PBS—the follow-your-bliss guy. What is his name? And he taught at Sarah Lawrence. Bill Moyers.

Anyway, in one of his lectures he quoted a big portion of *Earth Is Our Mother* from Chief Seattle's speech. I wrote in for a printed [transcript] of the program, and I showed it to Dave and said, "This is something you really should set," because I felt it was so close to how he felt and it has such a wonderful message in it. And so we thought about it for quite some time.

And then when the university in Michigan asked Dave to write a piece for their chorus, which was celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary and wanted to commission a piece, Dave asked if they'd be interested in Chief Seattle. And they said yes, because northern Michigan is Indian territory—so much of Indian lore and background and culture is there—they would be very interested. So that was the impetus then, to write it.

Crawford: Performed in Berkeley with Russell Means?

Brubeck: That was wonderful.

I. Brubeck: The role was originally sung, and then I suggested, because I think it's a difficult role to sing, that these words are so powerful, if it's just spoken, it will be enough.

So it was performed in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and we had as the narrator the spiritual leader of the Laguna Tribe. It was a benefit for the Acoma schools outside of Albuquerque on the Indian land—I don't think they call it reservations, because it's still their own land that they've always had.

He could sing, but he really couldn't sing all of it well, so we told him to try the narration, he did and I thought it was very, very effective. I think I like it better that way. I don't know whether you do.

Brubeck: Well, I set it for a soloist to be singing and so—but I'll tell you, with Russell Means, I know it was more powerful than singing. And I'm amazed that what I have going on in the small orchestra, which I wanted to keep small so it would sound more like a Native American orchestra—two flutes and bassoon, cello, string bass, and flutes did I say? And percussion. That's about it, and for some reason it works, although the solo part of Chief Seattle was probably the most important part that I worked on, yet without it, it still works—might even work better.

Crawford: How will you handle it from here on? As a narration?

Brubeck: Well, if I can get Russell Means! [laughter]

I. Brubeck: I think if there was a truly powerful singer who wasn't struggling with the notes—but we hadn't had that. Even good singers had difficulty.

##

Brubeck: In the Native American voice, the placement in the throat is quite different than the average American.

Crawford: How is it different?

Brubeck: Ask Iola.

I. Brubeck: Seems to be placed in the back of the throat more. And if you will notice, sometimes on television, if you don't see somebody and you just hear them speak, you sort of know where they're from, and I don't mean by accent, but just by where the voice is placed. I can tell a Native American every time. It goes through every tribe, it seems like. It's more in the back of the throat and the softness in the speech, that it's quite different.

Crawford: You knew Native Americans growing up on the ranch?

Brubeck: Oh, yes, and in high school.

Crawford: We've talked about your having Native American features. Does anyone else in your family have those features?

Brubeck: Danny looks like he came off the reservation. [laughter] And I think everybody says that about me, that I'm part Indian. And Iola's name is Indian. I think some of her relatives that came out here in 1835 might have gotten mixed up on the way. [laughter]

Crawford: Would that be Paiute from up around where you were from?

Brubeck: Yes, Paiutes and Modocs. Paiutes came up to Pyramid Lake area where my dad was born.

##

Crawford: Well, what has been the most frustrating part of this profession you're in?

Brubeck: When people get on the race thing, that is the most frustrating part of it. And that comes and goes. In the early days, with people like Louis and Duke and all the wonderful players I was around—Jack Teagarden—when Louis talked about playing, he said his favorite person to play with was Jack Teagarden. And he said, "He was my real brother." So you can see, going back to almost the beginning of jazz, it's how you played that mattered!

But why would Duke have Louis Bellson, a white guy, playing drums in his band? And Count Basie many times had a white drummer. And right now in the Basie band is my old drummer that came to me from Basie—Butch Miles. That's the most swinging jazz band that's ever been! So Basie must not have been against white guys, if you are going to get a white drummer.

In the old days, we were all pretty close friends and it only had to do if you were a good guy, if you can play, and that was about it. And then came in a period where the racial thing became more of a problem. And I think it was caused by critics in jazz magazines and guys that wanted to score points and create something to write about. And then it just seemed to grow. And I think we're in a period now where it will change back to having little to do with your color.

I think they're changing back to just everybody being accepted. The people that seem to like to continue with racist ideas are just buying old myths without really investigating more how important so many of the early players were, no matter what color they might have been. And even the groups seem to be starting to integrate more again. Don't you think so, Iola?

I. Brubeck: I think so. I see it in the younger players now, the real young players coming up seem to be more open again.

I think it's part of the myth of the jazz legend, that jazz is supposed to be a black people's music. Its roots are certainly in blues and spirituals and so forth, but that was emphasized so much especially by European writers at first in the twenties when they first started writing about jazz. The whole emphasis was on the black and the African rather than the European part of jazz. And it takes only a cursory listen to realize that the two elements are there.

Brubeck: And especially some critics in Paris—all they had to do was listen to Django Reinhardt right in Paris and Stephane Grappelli and the Hot Club of France and they could see these guys could really play! You listen to those old records, they're wonderful.

Crawford: But they were guilty of it, too, the Europeans.

Brubeck: Oh, yes.

I. Brubeck: They tended to—I think it was more apparent with European critics than Americans. If you weren't black, then you just positively couldn't play jazz. Now there are so many good European players that are wonderful.

Crawford: Was there a writer or several writers that seemed to understand you better than others?

Brubeck: Well, the first good reviews I got were from people like John Hammond, who was instrumental in getting jazz on Columbia records, discovering people like Count Basie's band. He gave me a wonderful review.

I. Brubeck: Barry Ulanov, from *Metronome* Magazine. And in England, Steve Race.

Brubeck: Yes.

I. Brubeck: He wrote for *Melody Maker* and he was on BBC.

Brubeck: He wrote the notes for *Time Out*. You can see his name—you can see what he thinks.

I. Brubeck: Yes, he made the turnaround from someone who did not like the quartet and the music that it was playing and wrote nothing good about it, and then, well, suddenly he loved it. [laughter] And in fact, in this newsletter he is quoted. [There's] a reprint in this current newsletter.

Brubeck: And you know there were a lot of reasons for people to start resenting our success. It happens every time. It happened to Louis—you know, he got blasted—and Duke, Stan Kenton, Art Tatum—who I think is genius beyond genius. Guys wrote bad things about him, too.

The better known you get, the more target you are. And the more that somebody wants to make their mark is to shoot at the target that's visible up high. That's the way you sell magazines, or get attention, is to shoot down somebody that's pretty well known, whether it's a movie actor or rap singer, folk singer—anybody who's better known.

And you could see why people would resent the quartet. There were the top ten records listed every week or so in the *Melody Maker* and at one time we were at six out of the top ten. Well, that would make you furious if you're out of work and playing maybe as good as we play. You'd just get mad. You know, I can understand why there was so much resentment.

I used to be worried about whenever we'd win some poll, that there's going to be negative reaction. It's going to be people write in, or here's fodder for your next article, to say something about, "Well, they don't do this, they don't do that."

Crawford: I know that you care a lot about your audiences. Their response affects you. Do you feel the audience knows when something is especially good?

Brubeck: Yes. Yes, they're very aware. Once in a while you'd get an audience that's not so aware, and you try to find a way to reach them. And some guys don't care and I respect that, too. They just put their heads down and play. [laughter]

Crawford: I don't think your group does that, though.

Brubeck: No, we don't, but I don't mind seeing somebody just say "Okay, if you're not ready for us, we're ready, we're playing."

I. Brubeck: We've covered a lot, but you mentioned once you wanted to say something about Russell, and I just wanted to say that he has been really a valuable asset. He came to us to work as manager, then discovered he had this ability to conduct—part by accident, and Dave can tell you the story of that accident—and he's grown as a conductor over the years. And now he's familiar with everything that Dave has written and so he has been so valuable to us for being able to conduct something like *The Gates of Justice*, which he's gone up to Portland now to rehearse.

He can go in advance of Dave and prepare the chorus and prepare everybody so that when Dave arrives, they're all set and ready to perform. So it's really taken a lot of wear and tear off of Dave. And he also is very good on the soundboard and in the production of the recordings and all of that sort of thing, so he's kind of like the clone of Dave, [laughs] to stand in for him when Dave can't be there, I guess.

Crawford: So you walk into a situation that's fully rehearsed and ready to go!

I. Brubeck: Well, this is what I say, that he has just saved—I think he's extended Dave's ability to continue to perform very much by taking care of these type of things that take so much out of you in preparation, so that Dave can reserve his time for the actual performance.

Brubeck: Once in a while I'll look over and he hasn't got the score even on the stand—

Crawford: Does that worry you?

Brubeck: The first time it happened, yes. I thought, what, has he lost it?

I. Brubeck: Many of the things he's now conducted many, many times. Of course he hasn't done the newer things, so he'll have to learn the *Theme and Explorations*, for example. He'll have to learn the Langston Hughes settings—the *Hold Fast To Dreams*—because he hasn't conducted that. Sue Ellen Page conducted the premiere.

Crawford: I want to spend some time now on tributes, and one of those would be your fiftieth anniversary celebration. Darius made the comment that you two “really got it right.” Do you want to comment on that in some way?

I. Brubeck: Yes, I think he said we got it right the first time. Referring to himself and a brother and now a third brother who have had divorces and married for the second time.

The anniversary that we had here at the Claremont Hotel was our fiftieth and an occasion that I'll never regret that we had, because it brought together for the first time in many years a lot of people from the old octet on through our years, and it was the last time we saw a lot of people. Many people have passed away since then, including Dave's brother.

Brubeck: And now many of the people who were here have either died or are too ill to attend something like that again, so we timed it right. And it was so wonderful to see friends that went back, you know, to our first years in San Francisco.

##

Crawford: Well, about other tributes and awards, then. You've gotten all of the awards in music that were possible to get. Is there one you would single out among those from Willie “The Lion” Smith to the President. [laughter] I don't know how you'd begin to choose, but it's kind of an inevitable question.

Brubeck: Yes, well that's a good one. The president gave me the National Medal.

I. Brubeck: What you just received—the Jazz Masters Award—is very meaningful, too. Because that's sort of chosen by your peers.

Brubeck: Right. And then there's all these *Downbeat* and *Metronome* and *Playboy* awards. Golly, we had those year after year.

Crawford: Where do you keep all those? Are they going off to the university?

I. Brubeck: They will, yes. Right now most of them are in a safe. Those are plaques mostly, and then awards that are—well, lately they’ve gone to glass. There are a lot of glass things that we have in a sort of a curio cabinet where we keep them all. And there are a lot of them.

Brubeck: I think the most important to me was at the end of Duke Ellington’s life when he was in the hospital dying of cancer. He told Mercer, his son, that he wanted me to be a Duke Ellington fellow at Yale. He said, “I don’t want people to think I had only black friends.” And that really touched me.

He also named Louis Bellson, who was drummer in his band and wrote *Skin Deep*. So Louis and I were told by Duke to be sure that we’re Ellington fellows at Yale University. Whether you can call that an award, but that was important to me.

Crawford: Did that happen?

Brubeck: Yes! They do a concert every year at Yale. And I’m going to do one next year for the hundredth anniversary. So that’s kind of a like a living archive, too, although a lot of his former men are gone. There’s just Clark Terry that’s left. And who else? There’s so few left.

I. Brubeck: The bass player now with Dave, Alec Dankworth, he plays with the Ellington orchestra that performs once a week, I think, at Birdland. We were asking him about who was left, and there are really few left of the original players. But they keep the book alive by playing those arrangements.

Crawford: Well, you’ve influenced so many pianists, and that’s a kind of a tribute. Bill Evans and Cecil Taylor among others.

Brubeck: There’s a lot of them. Most people don’t know about it, but I like the idea that a lot of the young people—people I really admire—will tell me or even write about it that they were influenced by me, and there’s some giant players that come as a surprise.

For instance, when we were behind the Iron Curtain, I influenced a lot of pianists that have since made it. This Adam Makowicz is a tremendous Polish pianist—isn’t he? And a lot of the young German avant-garde pianists that you would never think would admit that they were influenced by me come up to me and say, “You’re the first music I heard in jazz. You were an early influence.” And I can’t believe it.

And then one of the most advanced guys is Keith Jarrett. He said he started out playing my transcriptions and was influenced. So when that happens, it’s such a thrill to me. Then a lot of the young black players I’m just so thrilled about, like Donald Brown. A lot of his friends from Memphis listen to me, and guys from New Orleans now are playing my music.

Then this young kid here that’s such a genius from Palo Alto—Taylor Eigsti. When it’s getting down to thirteen years old, you really feel happy that you’re not going to be forgotten. [laughter]

In fact, we are probably going to invite him to Cannes on the Riviera because they want to celebrate the year 2000 by having somebody my age play and introduce the next generation. So I'm going to suggest him—I haven't told Taylor yet. [laughter]

I. Brubeck: It's part of the MIDEM conference. And I don't know what those letters stand for. M-I-D-E-M—Midem. Publishers and record company people, and I think television, too, I guess, have this big conference every year in Cannes. Dave played it, what, twenty years ago, maybe.

Brubeck: With B.B. King. I sat in with B. B. King that night. That was great.

I. Brubeck: So did Chris.

Brubeck: Yes, Chris! It came out on one or two tracks on some record, that concert.

Crawford: Well, maybe you would tell the Willie "The Lion" Smith story one more time, and we'll end there.

Brubeck: It was on a tour of Europe with Willie "The Lion" Smith, one of the greatest stride pianists that ever lived—Harlem stride pianist. He always had liked the way I played, and there was a blindfold test in *Down Beat* where Willie was supposed to guess who the piano players were and grade them in his own way of how he thought they played. And I swear it was a trap because most of the pianists were black pianists that were great.

I was thrown in with that and by somebody that would love to have had somebody in authority put me down, but when they got to me, Willie said, and I can't quote exactly, "That guy plays like where the blues was born! In Haverstraw, New Jersey." He never would admit that they were born in New Orleans. [laughter]

I. Brubeck: Yes, and something about that's the kind of music you would hear all night long.

Brubeck: And dance to. He said, "He got a little heavy hands, but he plays some nice chords." [laughter]

But anyway, when we were in Rotterdam, in Holland, and were doing our sound check, Willie was behind the stage doing a television show with a small audience. And when we finished our sound check I was supposed to go back and tell Willie to come out front now and start the concert and I'll take over the television show, so there would be that exchange.

As I walked back there, the emcee turned to me and I motioned to Willie to come, and the emcee on the mike said, "Willie, isn't it true that no white man can play jazz?" And Willie said, "I want you to meet my son." [laughter]

Crawford: Well, have we missed anything important?

Brubeck: No, you have covered my life!

Crawford: Precious hours. I'm very grateful to you both.

VI. ON THE ROAD WITH MANAGER RUSSELL GLOYD SINCE 1976

The Brubecks in Europe

La Fiesta de la Posada in Vienna's Konzerthaus, 1995

The Maria Callas Suite in Milan

The world premiere of *To Hope!*, Remembering performances in Munich, Berlin and London

Handling crises

The Brubeck sons join the quartet

Personnel changes and quartet chemistry

Iola's thoughts about the in-family quartet

Dealing with the media: *Time* and *New Yorker* magazines, Hedrick Smith and Ken Burns

Music and 9/11

[Interview 3: September 21, 2001] ##

Crawford: September 21, 2001. Today we are continuing the interview with Dave and Iola Brubeck, and Russell Gloyd, who manages the quartet, is joining us. We are all affected by what happened earlier this month, September 11th, and we will address September 11th later in our meeting. But on the lighter side, let us begin by talking about music, and the concert that is coming up in November. How do you explain that the concert tickets sold out immediately?

Brubeck: Oh, it's just lucky, I guess. [laughter]

Gloyd: We've seen this trend, really, for the past year, and I think we're coming up on the year anniversary of when I saw a switch, which was in Chicago this very weekend last year. We were performing at my church, the Fourth Presbyterian Church, which is right on Michigan Avenue in Chicago, and it was an evening performance, Sunday evening. It was the opening weekend of the symphony; it was the opening weekend of the opera—there are no two greater events in Chicago—and we sold out. The church literally could not believe how fast it sold out, and from then on I saw a trend that has continued as far as I can see. We're back in San Francisco in November, for the San Francisco Jazz Festival, and—

- I. Brubeck: Caroline couldn't get tickets for that!
- Gloyd: They sent out a mailing, and it was the largest single advance sale they'd ever had in the history of the festival, and it sold out through that one mailing, so they never put a ticket on sale. So then they immediately added the second performance, and that's basically sold out, too. So I think a lot of things have contributed to it. I think that what's happening now is a direct result in terms of the incredible response to Ken Burns.
- Crawford: That was going to be one of my questions.
- Gloyd: We're still on the charts for the Ken Burns CD that's devoted to Dave, and that's been for thirty-five weeks.
- Crawford: That's what I understand.
- Gloyd: Even though all of this action preceded the Ken Burns show, I think it's just a combination of events, and certainly the other very real factor is that there is no one of Dave's caliber that is touring to the extent that we do in concert halls. That makes a big difference, where people want to come out and have that concert hall experience. There are very few artists that are able to maintain that. But there's still a public that wants to have that, which has been pretty obvious from our experience this whole year.
- I. Brubeck: There are not too many of Dave's age and period when he came out in the fifties who are still performing. George Shearing is, and Marian McPartland. Clark Terry.
- Gloyd: But someone like Clark is doing very selective kind of performing.
- I. Brubeck: He's doing mostly master classes with the university and then doing something with the university band, or special tours with sort of a pickup group. To have an organized group that concertizes of Dave's vintage, if you want to put it that way, there are not that many.
- Brubeck: Billy Taylor.
- Gloyd: Oscar does very limited touring, Oscar Peterson. And also in Europe we see the same reaction. We did a three-day festival in Graz [Austria], which was one of the most marvelous experiences because it's sponsored by the city in conjunction with the newspaper, so it's free, and they devote three days to one artist all through the summer, and we opened the series. The previous high attendance was 10,000 over the three days. We did 20,000.
- Crawford: Well, Russell Gloyd, longtime manager and conductor. Why don't you tell us about the beginning of your association with the Brubecks.
- Gloyd: It's an anniversary coming up on October fourth, which marks twenty-five years. We met when I was with the Dallas Symphony. I knew that it was time to leave Dallas for other pastures, and it came at a time where Dave was needing support and he was expanding in many different areas, and so we decided to try and see if it would work. And we still haven't decided.

- Crawford: According to Mrs. Brubeck, you're kind of a Dave Brubeck clone. [laughter]
- Gloyd: It's proven to be a fascinating relationship because it covers so many different areas. In order to really appreciate the relationship, this is really not the setting. You have to be on a car ride with us, and you have to go through the checklist of what we talk about on any one given car trip.
- Crawford: Could you simulate that a little bit?
- Gloyd: It's almost impossible because we discuss what's coming up; we talk about, okay—we start with the immediate: what are we doing today, what are we doing tomorrow, then what are we doing next week, then what are we doing next month, then what are we doing in six months, then what are we doing a year from now? And that can all take place in the course of one car ride, where we'll decide repertory, we'll decide on what tours we want to do, we'll decide on what recording we want to do, we'll decide on what new projects we have to enter into or what projects we have to finish. Lord knows, that's an endless discussion.
- Crawford: Who's taking notes?
- Gloyd: Usually Iola does, in terms of writing things down. A good example is last week, when because of 9/11 we had to put together a new group out of necessity, since the members of the quartet could not fly. Through the technology of the cell phone, driving down I-5, Iola commented, "Here we go again, leaving Stockton for a one-nighter in Los Angeles"—something that they did rather frequently.
- Brubeck: Fifty years ago!
- Gloyd: And there they were, saying, "Okay, we're committing to these concerts. We now have a group. Well, what are they going to play? What tunes can we do?"
- I. Brubeck: It took a long time to make the decision to commit to the concerts because we didn't have a group, and what could we put together? But the trusty cell phone—Russell was calling everybody, and we had to make the decision that morning whether we were going to head for LA, or-
- Gloyd: Go to Carmel and just have a nice time or as nice a time as you can have. But the fact is, in that trip it really did represent what it is that we do when we travel. We're always working, we're always thinking, we're always trying to resolve areas of conflict within ourselves because the three of us are not exactly submissive, and each one of us has our own position that we take. I'll never forget really early in my tenure, when I was conducting, and I was taking a particular approach to a piece, and Dave said, "Why are you doing it that way? It's my piece." I said, "No, it's not. It's mine." I said, "You gave up all rights to it when you drew the double bar. So if you want to conduct it, fine. But if you want to play piano and watch me conduct it, then watch me conduct it."
- Crawford: He really said that?
- Brubeck: He says worse things. [laughter]

Crawford: I would never guess it.

Gloyd: But it's that kind of a relationship that builds to a common understanding because we're all after the same goal. That's the real end result, which is we're trying to do an event as well as we possibly can do it. There's another angle which works here, too, which is Dave and I will do something, and we'll think it through, and we'll present it, and we will absolutely have done our best, and then Iola comes in and saves it because we've absolutely screwed it up.

Crawford: Give me an example.

Gloyd: Oh, endless times, where we'll come through on something and then Iola will just very quietly say, "Have you thought about this?" And of course both of us respond, "Of course we haven't."

Crawford: When might that occur?

Brubeck: The *Easter Cantata*. I didn't know what to do. The minister had—

Gloyd: The text was written by a Lutheran minister, who was the poet laureate of the Lutheran church. He had come to a Dave Brubeck performance of *La Fiesta de la Posada*, which is the Christmas cantata—in Minneapolis—and was so taken by the use of text in one particular movement, which is "God's Love Made Visible"—again, Iola's text, and again by accident, because it was just something that she had said, again, to the all-too-prevalent double bar, which was Dave had finished the piece, and he said, "I'm done." And Iola said, "No, you're not."

I. Brubeck: [laughs]

Brubeck: I'm in the back of an old—

I. Brubeck: Volkswagen.

Brubeck: —Volkswagen, with a card table. And I'm writing, and I said, "I'm finished." And she said, "No, you're not." I said, "What have I left out? Because I've followed the outline pretty well." And she said, "God's Love Made Visible."

Gloyd: She said, "You've left out the entire essence of the Christmas story, which is God's love made visible. And Dave's comment was, "I've run out of Mexican rhythms. How am I going to work that?" And she said, "I don't care. You have to do it. It's gotta be there." As a result, Dave composed what is considered the finest single Christmas carol that you will ever hear in 5/4 time.

Brubeck: It's the only one.

Gloyd: It's the only one. [laughter] But it is one that people will go years without hearing but be able to whistle, because the piece is so great. Probably the most emotional time that we have in terms of just sheer joy is when we present the *Posada*. We're going to be doing it again in New York three times: once at Fifth Avenue Pres[byterian Church], once in

Long Island, and once in Connecticut. It really does represent the greatest single piece celebrating what Christmas is about.

Crawford: Apparently the Viennese love this piece.

Gloyd: Vienna went crazy over it. That was a very emotional moment, which was actually on Dave's seventy-fifth birthday, December 6th, 1995, when we performed in Vienna. It was a Wednesday evening. It had snowed that morning. I remember doing my walk in Stadtpark, which is right in front of the Hilton Hotel. That's where the Strauss statue is, and if anybody's seen Vienna, they know that park. And it had this mist to it of the fog of the snow against this new-laid snow and the cold, and it was just an incredible evening.

Talk about ticket sales: I get to Vienna a week and a half before the performance, for the first rehearsal with the chorus, and I come up to the person who was the assistant, and I say, "It's great to be here" and everything. "By the way, how are tickets for the performance?" Because this was a huge gamble. This had never happened before in Vienna, for anything like this. And she says, "Oh, very serious problem." And I said, "Okay. Well, if there's anything I can do to help, I'll do it while I'm here."

At the end of the rehearsal, the head of the organization came up, and I talked to him and I said, "Listen, I told your assistant I will do anything. I'll do radio interviews, I'll do television interviews, I'll do press interviews. And he looked at me. He says, "Why?" I said, "To help ticket sales." He said, "We have no tickets." [laughter] That was the problem. She just didn't explain that to me!

Crawford: Oh, that's a great story. It wasn't in a cathedral, was it?

Gloyd: No, it was in the Konzerthaus. Actually, it's interesting. We have been associated with our promoters there for twenty years, and we have continually tried to go into a church and do these works, and especially the *Posada*. The one gentleman—if he were ever to break into a smile—we've seen him smile a couple of times in twenty years, but it's a pretty rare phenomenon. He says [imitates low-pitch voice with Viennese accent]: "No, it's impossible in Wien." And I say, "Why?" "No heat." Which means the cathedrals aren't heated, so you can't really do something like that. There is no heat in churches.

Anyway, Konzerthaus was marvelous. The performance was incredible. It was very emotional. And the response was unlike anything that we've ever experienced. This last year we were back doing the Mass. Again, at great risk. It's so easy to do a quartet concert. It's a no-brainer. You walk in, you set up, you do a quartet concert, and everybody's happy. It's when we try these off-the-wall projects that we go through all of the angst, because you never know what an audience will accept in a concert hall situation. If you're doing the Mass in a church, they can pretty much figure out that it's not going to be an all-jazz performance. That's why they're in a church, or a cathedral. But this is a concert hall, where they're used to hearing Dave do jazz. We had to repeat two sections from the Mass at the end of the performance.

Crawford: This is December 2000?

Gloyd: Right.

- Crawford: Let's discuss that from beginning to end. There are so many interesting elements that happened since we last talked.
- Gloyd: The first concert was in Milan, and it was a jazz concert that took place in the Auditorio de Giuseppe Verdi, which was a new theater. The last time we were in Milan we were at the Teatro Manzoni, and there was a little bit of a problem with tickets. It was a Sunday morning concert at eleven o'clock, and they had oversold by a thousand.
- I. Brubeck: It was the most ridiculous thing, the people were milling around. [laughs]
- Crawford: They're tough audiences, too.
- Gloyd: And the reason was everybody wanted to buy a ticket so they didn't want to disappoint anybody.
- Crawford: That's so Italian.
- I. Brubeck: [laughter] That's right. We have tickets, but no seats.
- Crawford: What did you do?
- Gloyd: We tried to escape, is what we did. I mean, we had full police and riot gear. Finally the concert happened, but it was absolutely an amazing—
- I. Brubeck: The mayor came, and *he* couldn't get in.
- Crawford: Oh!
- Brubeck: You remember?
- Gloyd: Oh, they loved it. So anyway, we came back. This time they only oversold by 400, and it wasn't that we were less popular; it was just that it was a bigger hall. But then they forgot to pick Dave up at the hotel.
- I. Brubeck: A minor point.
- Gloyd: We were over there at the hall, and I saw the two drivers, and I'm in Dave's dressing room, and I ask "Where's Mr. Brubeck?" And the two drivers pointed to each other. At that point their faces fell because they realized that one of them should have been picking up Mr. Brubeck, not standing there, pointing to the other one. So I immediately got on my phone, called Dave at the hotel. He's there in the lobby, wondering what to do. I said, "Just get in a cab and charge it to the hotel." We're staying in one of, if not the greatest hotels in the world, which was the—
- Crawford: Grand Hotel.
- Gloyd: Grand Hotel de Milano.
- Brubeck: Yes.

- Gloyd: Which is where Verdi had his apartment. It's where the very first recording session ever took place, which featured Enrico Caruso. It's where they stayed in the Maria Callas suite.
- Crawford: Oh, my.
- I. Brubeck: Pictures of Maria everywhere.
- Gloyd: Everywhere, and it was her suite, and I thought, *God, can you imagine the tantrums that were thrown in this room?* [laughter]
- Crawford: What a spirit to keep you going!
- Gloyd: From there we went to Munich, and that was the first performance of the Mass. That was an incredible experience because we were dealing with this sensational choir of young people. They're in a school that is the transition from when they leave college to when they go out into the field. This is their concentrated program. And they're all going to be teachers, they're all going to be music directors of churches—that's the focus in that. It's not a conservatory, but it's on a different level. The chorus was brilliantly prepared. The rehearsals I had with them. I came back—
- Crawford: Talk about the rehearsals, would you? Just in terms of hours. Was it the Collegium?
- Gloyd: That was the Bach Collegium, which was the orchestra. Correct. Well, I had two chorus rehearsals, and I had gone to Munich ahead of the Brubecks. Actually, what happened was the morning after the Milan concert, they stayed in Milan for a couple of days. I had to go to London to prepare for the London Symphony concerts, so then I flew back to Munich and I had a rehearsal the Wednesday night in Munich, and I came back from the rehearsal, and they were having dinner in the restaurant, and I sat down, and I said, "Usually I keep you away from rehearsals. It's too painful for Dave to hear the rehearsal process."
- Ask any composer. Because a composer hears a work finished, complete. It's like a painter who looks at a painting in his mind and sees all the colors and sees how it's all going to work and then it comes on the canvas. So does a composer, so a composer is not necessarily the best person to have around in the process of rehearsal.
- Crawford: Would that be pretty taxing?
- Brubeck: You go out of your mind.
- Crawford: Yes?
- Brubeck: Oh, *God*, yes! And you're so nervous, especially the premiere of a piece. It's absolute torture.
- Crawford: What do you do with him, Mrs. Brubeck? Do you take him away somewhere?
- I. Brubeck: Russell's pretty good at keeping him away from the rehearsal until it's in pretty good shape.

- Gloyd: Or shape enough to where it's recognizable. And of course, this all depends on the level of the ensemble. If we're dealing with community churches, then I keep him away as long as possible because they're not really equipped to bring it up to the level of performance until they do a performance. If I'm working with a professional choir, it's a different story. So each situation has its own particular set of rules. I remember walking into dinner in this wonderful hotel, the Palace Hotel in Munich, and sitting at the table and saying, "I'm going to give you the treat of your life. You're going to come to rehearsal tomorrow." And they did.
- I. Brubeck: Oh, it was very moving, because they sang it so beautifully.
- Gloyd: And Dave sat there, and I'll never forget. He said, "I heard things I've never heard before in this piece."
- Crawford: How wonderful.
- I. Brubeck: Yes.
- Brubeck: Yes.
- Crawford: And did that carry through?
- Brubeck: Oh, yes.
- Gloyd: Oh, no. You can't even say "carry through." It had launched. It was like a firecracker.
- I. Brubeck: Because that same choir, you see, performed also in Berlin—
- Gloyd: And in Vienna.
- I. Brubeck: And Vienna. And so with each performance, their understanding of the piece became deeper.
- Gloyd: And their love of the piece, and their integration with the orchestra. So the Bach Collegium, when I had my rehearsal with the orchestra—my itinerary showed: Rehearsal: 2 PM (1400). And actually we'd worked with that orchestra before. Not in its fullest extent, because the Mass requires more instruments, but we did chamber concerts with them with Christopher Hogwood in 1999, in October, and we did performances in Munich, in Dusseldorf, and in Frankfurt.
- Crawford: How big an orchestra?
- Gloyd: Six firsts, six seconds, four viola, four celli, two bass. No, that was the size of the Mass.
- I. Brubeck: Smaller.
- Gloyd: It was smaller, because I only had two celli for *Chorale*, and they played—they really did a good job. [laughter] Yes, when we did the chamber in '99 it was a little smaller, in strings. But I also had horn, flute, and oboe because we did *Brandenburg Gate: Revisited* and then we did flute, oboe, and horn versions of "Blue Rondo" and "Take

Five” and “Three to Get Ready.” Anyway, they call rehearsals “probes,” p-r-o-b-e-s, which is a fascinating word when you think about it.

I. Brubeck: I had never heard that before. You’re familiar with it.

Crawford: From the opera. They call it the *Sitzprobe*.

Gloyd: Right, right. Probe—when you look at the word the way we look at it, which is you probe the piece, you develop an understanding of the piece, you work on it—

I. Brubeck: And try to fathom it.

Gloyd: Right. And so it’s a great word. So I look and I see *Probe, 1400*. My arm shuts down at an hour twenty. It’s just well trained, that that’s the time for a break. If I wanted to conduct an hour twenty-one, it wouldn’t do it because it just stops. It’s a union arm. We take a break, and I’m having my mineral water and everybody’s around the room, and they’re going out to smoke, and so I’m talking with the concertmaster, who’s just this phenomenal violinist, and I say, “By the way, I just have the starting time. What time do we finish? What time is on your schedule?” And he looked at me in absolute amazement and said, “*Maestro*, when you finish.”

Crawford: Really! That’s the German system. No union problems.

Gloyd: No. “When you finish.” Yes. “Our job is to play until you’re happy.”

Crawford: In terms of musician preparation, would there be a difference between performances here and there?

Gloyd: Yes. One of the reasons that you need that in Germany is that most European orchestras are not good readers. That’s the one thing that we’ve developed. And the reason why is that they’re not in an economic position to need to be good readers. In the United States, the limitations are so great within the union structure, and it’s brought on by abuse, by conductors—there’s no question about it. There’s a reason that you have a two-and-a-half-hour rehearsal. It takes two and a half hours to learn the music, rather than three hours to learn the music. Not the orchestra, the conductor.

In Germany, most of the orchestras are employed by the state in some way, so it’s kind of like—and not belittling it, and you shouldn’t take this the wrong way—it’s kind of like working for the post office, which is—that’s your job. You show up and instead of sorting mail, you’re sitting and you’re playing music. So there is not the economic necessity of controlling the length of a rehearsal. That’s their job. They’re paid to be there.

I take great pride in coming in and knowing the music before I conduct it, so I’m not there learning the tunes; I’m not there learning the music. I’m there teaching it to them. By doing that, you garner the respect of the orchestra in a way that just pays off dividends in a concert. But more importantly, it pays dividends two years and three years later, when you go back in, because now they trust you and they know you’re not going to waste their time. Instead, you’re working with them to get the greatest results.

What happened in July? Our other chamber orchestra, which is the Kammer Orchester Schloss Werneck—it had been two years or a year and a half since we had worked with them, and now we're doing two concerts in Wiesbaden and one in Ingolstadt and one in their home, which is the Schloss Werneck. The same situation, which is I walk into a seven o'clock rehearsal, where they have already been prerehearsing for an hour and a half before I get there. I do my two hours, two and a half. Thank you very much. I leave. What do I hear? Them rehearsing some more.

Crawford: So they have a house conductor? Something like that?

Gloyd: No. They just do it through their leader. They just do it through their leader, who's the concertmaster. See, the term concertmaster in the United States does not translate overseas. In London it's called the leader, and it really truly is the person who is responsible for the artistic integrity of the orchestra.

Crawford: Always first violin?

Gloyd: Always, right.

Brubeck: They stand up, too.

Gloyd: This particular orchestra stands when they perform.

Crawford: Even when it's larger than a chamber orchestra?

Gloyd: We haven't worked with any larger—no, this is this particular orchestra. This particular orchestra prefers standing.

I. Brubeck: It really adds to it, because when the quartet is involved with the orchestra, there is more of a feel of a play between the two. It isn't like, well, here are the soloists out here in front and everybody is sitting down in back.. They're all participating.

Gloyd: And it's physical. There's a very physical sense to it. It was quite unfortunate because I had dreamed of this concert for such a long time, and I'd seen pictures of their Schloss. It's this gorgeous Schloss near Würzburg. Fountains, a lake, countryside. Thunderstorm. [laughter]

So we had to move inside to a gymnasium. Aesthetically, it was dreadful, but it was one of the great concerts because we didn't care anymore. This was where it was. Accept it. Get over it. We're not in the lush fountains. We don't see the little birds flying around. We're in a gymnasium. Because the night before, that storm had gone through Strasbourg, and it killed twelve people, because lightning hit, and it was an outdoor festival, and twelve people were killed. So the town was taking no chances. As it turned out, we could have been outside, but they made the right decision at the time they had to do it. But it really was one of those things—

Crawford: I think Wagner was with you.

Brubeck: [laughter]

- Gloyd: One of those things where I just thought, *Okay, there's nothing we can do. They made the right decision. We'll go inside.* And the concert was marvelous.
- Crawford: Would all three of you agree about the performance quality of the three masses? I think there were three in different cities?
- Brubeck: I would say that each night it got better, and then when we were in Berlin on the old eastern side, in the classic auditorium—that was beyond anything that I've ever experienced.
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- Brubeck: Levitating might be the word, if that's the right word. It got beyond a usual concert. It just was like going up to heaven.
- Crawford: What made you feel that way?
- I. Brubeck: I use the word "transcendent" because it seems that that particular concert transcended people reading notes or singing words; it just seemed to all come together of its own accord.
- Gloyd: And through lots of interesting twists and turns. We had just flown in from Istanbul.
- Crawford: You went for three days, right?
- Gloyd: The exhaustion level was very high.
- Crawford: Was it booked that way, or was there some change of schedule?
- Gloyd: That was the way it was booked. We went from Vienna to Istanbul—well, basically Vienna to Istanbul to Berlin.
- Crawford: Did you just look at your calendar and get exhausted?
- Gloyd: No, you can't do that.
- Brubeck: Because Moscow was kind of thrown in there, which was—
- Gloyd: Oh, no, no. A different trip. That was in April.
- Brubeck: Oh.
- Gloyd: For example, there is still a great schism between East and West Germany, and the people in the west really do resent the people in the east. There were many, many problems in coordinating from the Munich side to the Berlin side because the Berlin people were really East Berliners, and the Munich people looked at them as backward. It's like someone in New York looking at a concert in West Virginia. I mean, that kind of mentality situation.

So there were lots of intrigues, lots of problems. Everything got cancelled more times than I care to think about. And then no printed programs, we find out. Well, a bigger one was that on every poster the concert was at eight o'clock in Berlin. It turns out it was six o'clock. So everyone we had told to be there at eight missed it.

Crawford: I'm surprised they could make a mistake like that.

Gloyd: It wasn't a mistake. You don't look at these things as mistakes; you look at them as intentional. It's just there. It's there. So anyway—

I. Brubeck: But the tickets said the right time.

Crawford: Wait. I'm interested in the idea of sabotage. Why? Who would do such a thing?

Gloyd: I just think there still is a great resentment over the incredible amounts of money that the German government has to give to support the east, and it's taking away from all of the programs that normally were slam-dunk funded in the west.

Brubeck: And the whole other thing is, I've often had to play in Berlin, where anything American was booed. Had nothing to do with music or anything. And then you've got almost like a paid clique that is sent in to boo anything American. It doesn't mean the Berlin audience is feeling this way, but twelve or fifteen people in the balcony trained to boo real loud can mess up a concert.

I. Brubeck: This was years and years and years ago.

Brubeck: We've been through a couple like that.

Crawford: Did you ever hear the story about when Toscanini first conducted in Germany? The musicians put the wrong score on the stand.

Gloyd: Well, it wouldn't have made a difference to him.

Crawford: And it didn't. He just conducted from memory.

Gloyd: Yes. But you know why every conductor has to pay dues of doing scores without music is because of Toscanini, and the reason is he was blind! It wouldn't have made any difference what was on the stand. He had to know everything anyway. Literally, he was blind. He could not read the score.

Crawford: Is that true?

Gloyd: And so we've all had to pay dues.

Crawford: Have you conducted a lot without a score?

Gloyd: It drives him nuts. It drives Dave nuts when I go up without a score.

- Brubeck: But the first time it bothered me was the score fell off the podium, and I thought, *Oh, God*. It was when he was new at conducting, and I thought, *Well, he'll stop, pick it up, and we'll start again* or something. And he just kept going.
- Crawford: You had told me, Mrs. Brubeck, that Russell started conducting for you by accident. It was kind of—
- I. Brubeck: Right. That's right.
- Brubeck: Accident.
- Gloyd: "Accident" was the right word. But anyhow, I want to finish with Berlin, just to show what went into it. All right, there are no printed programs, so there is no way for the audience to know what movements, what the text, the translations, bios—never showed up. Never showed up from Munich. No one knows. But what happened was every time we had been in the Eastern German areas, the leading authority on jazz is a gentleman named Karl-Heinz Drescher and he's always emceed the concerts, and he's always over-emceed the concert in terms of giving chapter and verse regarding what the audience is going to hear.
- Crawford: How do you spell his name, Drescher?
- Gloyd: D-r-e-s-c-h-e-r.
- I. Brubeck: I think that's right. Karl-Heinz.
- Gloyd: To give you an idea, he was even on the poster. His name was bigger than mine because he was the emcee of the concert, right? And I'm looking. You know, Karl-Heinz. *Leitung*, Russell Gloyd. It was like third billing down on the list. He saved that night because what he did is he came out and he knew the Mass from the recording. He had studied it, and he went and he gave the audience a complete briefing of each movement they were going to hear. So it was better than notes. It was better than text.
- I. Brubeck: Yes, he really prepared them.
- Gloyd: He prepared them for every single bit that was to come. So all of this was set up in the quartet's first half. As was mentioned in the review in Berlin, which was a rave, that Dave set this up so brilliantly because he played everything new. Didn't even play "Take Five." Everything done in the first half was new for Berlin, because we had just been in Berlin in April at Philharmonie and sold out. So we had done the quartet material. We had done "Take Five" and all the greatest hits back in April.
- Dave came in and he did the set with everything new. And that set up the second half, which as the review said set up the fact that what we were hearing was going to be new and different because it was unlike any other Dave Brubeck performance. You could devote an entire conversation to everything that happened that night in Berlin. The feeling that I had conducting it, which I don't think I've ever had anywhere else, because there's a real feeling as a conductor.

No matter how many times you do it, when is the piece yours and when does it transfer over to the chorus and the orchestra? When does it become their piece? When is it where they're comfortable, they're set with it, they no longer need that foundation, that support; and that means that you can then be more flexible with it. You can take little liberties. You don't have to work as hard presenting it.

That night, all I had to do was start, because literally they took it over. It was like riding on this air current that just was so completely smooth, so completely even, so completely exciting because you could feel the internal energy. It's a very small stage, so everyone could hear. Because it was packed. There wasn't a place to move.

I. Brubeck: And surrounded by the audience.

Gloyd: And surrounded by audience. I mean, they were everywhere. There were balconies behind us, in front of us—

Brubeck: Where the choir usually is, full of people.

Gloyd: Yes, because we had the choir on the stage level. Amongst the many incredible stories that took place and the emotions that took place, for me the most moving was afterwards, because the concertmaster came up to me and he said, "The greatest musical night of my life occurred on this stage with Lenny"—with Bernstein—when Lenny did the Beethoven Ninth with members of the orchestra from all of the occupying powers of Berlin, so it was members of the London Symphony, of the Leningrad Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, the French Radio Orchestra, and German musicians. So there were five components that made up that orchestra, and this was the concertmaster for Lenny, who was my concertmaster. And he said, "The greatest musical night of my life took place on this stage with Lenny." He said, "Tonight has replaced it."

Crawford: Not faint praise.

Brubeck: That's why I'm telling you it was something.

Crawford: And you could all feel that it was special.

I. Brubeck: Oh, yes.

Crawford: It's kind of hard to go on from there, isn't it?

I. Brubeck: It really is.

Gloyd: We went to London, and I hated going to London. I hated the whole idea.

Crawford: The birthday concert?

Gloyd: If I could have said, "Right now we've done it"—you know, it's kind of like in a golf match, when they do match play, which is instead of doing stroke play, where you have to finish all eighteen holes, in match play you go hole by hole, so when it becomes obvious that you have a winner, you stop. And so you stop at the fifteenth hole,

sixteenth hole, fourteenth hole. Wherever it becomes the point where the other opponent can no longer win, is when the match stops.

I felt like that. I felt like “We’ve won! We’ve won! Let’s not go to London. Let’s just fly home.” Because it literally was untoppable. And London was great, but it wasn’t Berlin, because it couldn’t be. It couldn’t possibly be. London was great on its own level, but it wasn’t Berlin. It didn’t have what Berlin had to offer.

Crawford: It wasn’t as close to your heart, possibly because in London you weren’t doing the Mass?

Gloyd: It’s because you had this incredible connection—I mean, if we had done nothing but London, if it was like what we did in 1990 when we flew over and that basically was the only—we did a jazz tour of Europe, and then we came back and we did the London Symphony. If that’s all we did, it would have been fantastic.

Crawford: I know what you’re saying.

Gloyd: It would have been great. But we were coming from this incredible peak of having a work—because the other thing in London is basically you had to put together a greatest hits program, so it was piecemeal.

Crawford: You chose the repertory?

Gloyd: Yes.

Crawford: Is that always the case?

Gloyd: I go through it with Dave and I say, “Any problems?” And then we talk about it, and then we go back and forth because what we had to do—we had to put great care in the fact that we were recording, we were being broadcast, we were being televised. We had all of the family, we had two members of the quartet, so it couldn’t be everybody at once, and so the three of us spent many car rides going back and forth—

I. Brubeck: We worked on that repertory a lot.

Gloyd: —and deciding what pieces worked, what pieces wouldn’t work. There’s an incredible arrangement, which is mine, which I’m very proud of, “Koto Song,” which is on the Montreal album. Wouldn’t work. Didn’t want to do it. I was the one that took that off the show, because it wouldn’t fit within the context of the program that we needed to do. And so each piece we thought through in saying, “Okay, who’s going to be featured, where is it going to be put in the program, how is this going to flow?” That took a lot of car rides.

Crawford: What did that represent to you, that eightieth birthday performance?

Brubeck: Well, you know, you go in with all these different pressures, and you kind of get numb. You think, *God, help me get through this one*. I think that I go from crisis to crisis. Like, all this week, the weeks before. Sometimes I get sick of them. [laughter]

Crawford: Really? You have crises?

Gloyd: We've just been nonstop. Now, the word "crisis" is a little different. What it really represents is events that require more than our normal concert performances. As I said, piece of cake going into Vienna with the quartet. It's a no-brainer. It would have been a piece of cake going into Chicago with the quartet, for the jazz festival. It was a no-brainer until some fool came up with the idea of recreating the octet from 1947.

Brubeck: Now I'm in trouble.

Crawford: How much time did you have to work that out?

Gloyd: None. There we are, being broadcast nationally with Chicago musicians, recreating the octet along with Bill Smith and the quartet. The week before, Dave was doing a TV show with Marian McPartland. The week before that, we were doing a TV show in Newport, televising live with the Newport Jazz Festival. So it's like you go and you hit these events where it would be so easy if it were—well, like last night: We didn't know how that was going to work last night until we showed up and we [David Benoit and Taylor Eigsti, pianists] made it up backstage, just before the concert started.

Brubeck: Three pianos on the stage at Redwood City.

Crawford: I know. You had an acre of nine-foot grand pianos.

I. Brubeck: An acre of grand pianos!

Brubeck: I thought there were going to be two pianos.

Crawford: Really?

Brubeck: Yes. And there were three.

Crawford: But I think that quality makes it very exciting for the audience. It probably wears you down, but—

Brubeck: It does wear you down because if it isn't good, it's me that the audience has come to see, and if the concert doesn't make it, I feel all the burden's on me.

Crawford: Tell me about a concert that doesn't make it.

Brubeck: Somehow we get through it. It's not good for my heart.

Gloyd: But it makes it. There's a strain, there's a stress, you're having to deal with—well, I'll tell you, before we went to Milan we did two performances of Dave's Mass in Milwaukee at the cathedral, Friday night and Saturday night. Friday night during the performance, I knew I was going to lose the tenor because I could hear it in his voice. I could hear that something was really, truly wrong. He got through it, and then Saturday—and I was driving back and forth from my house because I live maybe an hour and forty-five minutes from Milwaukee in the Chicago area, so I just went on

home. And there was so much work for me to do at home, getting ready for Europe, that I needed to be home.

So I'm there at the kitchen table Saturday morning, working on scores, trying to get music ready, and the phone rings, and it's the music director from the cathedral in Milwaukee. "We've lost our tenor. Who do you know? Who can we get?" At our church in Chicago we had just hired a new tenor soloist who sings in the choir. I had never heard him. I asked my wife, "Who can we get?"

He was available. I went into Chicago and picked him up. I brought him the score. We had a CD player in the car. And he learned it all the way up en route to Milwaukee. It was snowing. So here I've got the light on because it's dark. It's 4:30 in the afternoon. It's snowing like crazy. I'm driving north, and I'm trying to teach him the score.

We get in. He has a rough go. The first pieces are just absolutely—you're reaching for straws. You're feeling for this guy because it's just not there. And then slowly he starts to pick it up, and slowly he recovers, and then at the end he was secure, he was confident, everybody loved it—but Dave's a wreck.

Crawford: Oh, you weren't in the car?

Gloyd: No, no. He's on stage, suffering with this guy. He's on stage, suffering for his piece. The cathedral is packed. Well, then, the next day, on Sunday, we're recording in Cleveland to finish up the quartet album *The Crossing*. So there's no time to recover from one emotional event that you put everything into, and the next thing you know, you're on a plane going to Cleveland, and at six o'clock we started recording the second half of the new CD, because that was the only time it could be done.

Crawford: Would you like a lighter travel schedule?

Gloyd: That *is* a lighter schedule. [laughter] You should hear when it's busy. You fit to the circumstances. It was the only time that we were available. It was the only time our record company was available, and so that's what [you have to do].

I. Brubeck: We have tried to make it easier, tried to plan it easier. I have to say, looking back over the itineraries that the quartet had in earlier years, our travel *is* light because when I look back, I can't believe it. For example, just recently I was looking at the itinerary for a tour in England when it was a matter of ten days, and there was not one day off in those ten days, and there were two concerts a day.

Crawford: All for the quartet—not the big works at that point.

Gloyd: All quartets. The last tour we did in July. We programmed in a three-day rest stop in Stuttgart, and it was exactly that. It was right in the middle, because one of the problems that you have on an extended tour is that you start out fresh, but the more that you go, the more that you wear down, so at the end of the tour you're like the walking wounded. And we've learned to put in a mid-stop, where you can just relax. You're not under the pressure of touring. And we have the luxury of doing that. Most young groups don't have the luxury of doing that. We do. We can program that in and say—because all of our guys are—when I say "all of our guys," how many are we talking about? We're

talking about three. And they're very content with doing that. They don't have to have that pressure.

I. Brubeck: They're seasoned pros.

Gloyd: Yes, of playing. And they recognize it, too. They recognize that in order for them to be at their peak at the end of a tour, they need to have this little break in the middle, where it's just a chance to go, "Whew."

Crawford: So you look for that. To what extent does Russell make it possible for you to keep up that pace?

I. Brubeck: Very much, because Russell takes a lot of the burdens away from us, so that Dave does have more of an opportunity to rest. It used to be Dave had to solve all the problems, that there was suddenly a change in flight schedule or itinerary or just dealing with promoters, agents, all of that.

Crawford: Fans. What do you do about fans? They must all want to say hello.

Gloyd: Nineteen ninety-eight taught me everything I needed to know about fans, which was we were doing the fortieth anniversary tour of the UK. This was with a booking office that we had been associated with since 1977, and they wanted to put together the fortieth anniversary tour. So I came over to London. We were on tour in Europe, and I came over and I had a meeting with them. I said, "You know, I've just gotten back from"—I forget where it was, but somebody had brought back an embossed folder with a program from the fifties, and they had kept it, and it was sealed, and they took it out for Dave to sign.

And I said, "Why don't we try this: Why don't we offer for anyone that has any tour memorabilia from 1958—from the very first tour—let's offer them two tickets to the concert, offer them a chance to meet Dave backstage, and we'll give them the new CD." And immediately they seized on the opportunity because this way they could introduce to the local press basically a contest in each city. "Did you know Dave in '58?" And they looked at it only as a way of getting the local press involved in each of these local concerts. And they expected maybe in London they would do ten tickets; maybe in each of the other cities they'd do two or four tickets. Birmingham was our first stop. We had sixty. Six-zero. And it went like that for the rest of the tour.

Crawford: I'm not surprised.

Gloyd: They were surprised, and they admitted it. What happened was that Dave—it didn't matter how late, what the circumstances were—Dave met with everyone after the concert, and he didn't meet with them as a group. They came in in pairs, husband and wife, or singles. But there was one group in Birmingham that refused. They said no. Because when they were eighteen years old, they came as a group to hear Dave, and they had now married each other [laughter], and they came back in 1998 as the same group, and they said, "No, we came as a group in 1958, we're gonna go as a group in '98." [laughter]

Crawford: Must have been a thrill for you.

Brubeck: Yes.

I. Brubeck: That was wonderful.

Gloyd: And so every night—and let me tell you the most hair-raising schedule from that trip. We were in Glasgow. We had played in Glasgow on Sunday night. Monday we were playing in Liverpool, and then we were scheduled to drive back to London that night, so we were on a bus from Glasgow and we got as far as Gretna on the Green. It was snowing. The bus conked out. Stopped. Doesn't work. So we pulled into one of those ubiquitous UK M-route rest stops, the kind that have sandwiches that you can't figure out, like cheese and onion. [laughter]

Crawford: British cuisine.

Gloyd: Right. And we were there for a couple of hours before the replacement bus came. So now we're making our way into Liverpool. The traffic twenty miles outside of Liverpool comes to a dead halt. Doesn't move. And we're looking, and it's tick, tick, tick, tick. Concert time is 7:30, I think. No, eight o'clock. We show up to the hall at four minutes to eight. Now, fortunately, because of technology, everybody knows where we are because of cell phones. In the old days, you'd have a promoter who at this point—

I. Brubeck: Tearing his hair out.

Gloyd: —would just be beside himself. But everybody knew. So the concert started, eight o'clock. We show up about five minutes to eight. We have our same sound crew, so everything is set on stage. The quartet goes onstage ten minutes after eight. Does a full concert, two and a half hours. So now it's approaching quarter to eleven. Everybody would understand if the meet and greet didn't happen. There were forty people that had brought program books from Liverpool. And so Dave met with every one of them. We had dinner then in the hall. We get on the bus at 1:30 AM and head to London, and we get to London about four o'clock in the morning, four or five in the morning.

I. Brubeck: One thing that I wanted to add—because you had asked about the London Symphony birthday thing. Part of the stress there, too, is the fact that your own sons are performing, and you want *them* to do well. Darius had written a piece that we had never heard before, and Russell had to conduct a brand-new piece. So there is extra excitement and extra strain to put all that together with very little rehearsal time. There was a meeting that I didn't attend, where the brothers just got together, right?

Brubeck: The day before.

Crawford: Because Darius wrote a piece and they hadn't seen it?

I. Brubeck: That's right.

Brubeck: It's called "Fourscore in Seven."

Crawford: Referring both to your birthday and the tempo?

Brubeck: Yes. And very difficult. [laughter]

Crawford: How do you feel when you see them up on stage? I was thinking about that last night: *How does Mrs. Brubeck feel?*

I. Brubeck: I think that I have seen it enough now that I think I see it just like any other member of the audience, probably a little more tuned in to what's happening. Originally, when they were all much younger, there was a great deal of anxiety: *I hope they do well* and that sort of thing, and really feeling an attachment to it. But I think—I don't know, maybe these people will contradict me, but I think that I am fairly detached in the audience, like another audience member.

Gloyd: And each combination has a different effect. I mean, it's different when it's only the family group versus when we have Chris Brubeck playing trombone. Anytime that we're doing local concerts around the Connecticut area, I always love it when Chris can join us on trombone because it adds an extra voice, an extra sound. It makes it really a great experience. Or if Danny is just playing drums. This was one of the first times that Danny has ever played drums with Dave, when it hasn't been Chris playing bass. I can't remember another time when Danny played—maybe with Jack Six.

Brubeck: Mm-hm.

I. Brubeck: You did, with Jack a few times.

Gloyd: Right. But those were when we were doing the *Posada*. That was in Hawaii. I remember that, and a couple of other different places. But it was one of the very few times that Danny has played with another bass player other than his brother, along with Dave, so that was an interesting dynamic to watch. There is a difference of Dave's playing when it's with the sons. We know that. We absolutely recognize that. But what it creates is—when you have the regular quartet or members who are not of the last name of Brubeck, the focus is on Dave. From the audience standpoint—

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Gloyd: Dave has a much more up-front responsibility. Now when you have the sons, it becomes a whole Brubeck effort and you have the acceptance of the audience of what's taking place within the family dynamic.

Crawford: That's interesting. Well, you have some new bass players. Is that a difficult balance? Do they have to kind of settle into the groove?

Brubeck: Yes, it makes it a lot harder for me.

Crawford: It makes it a lot harder for you because you're carrying it all again.

Brubeck: Yes.

Gloyd: Imagine the very worst job you've ever had in your life. Imagine a job that you break out in cold sweats over. Imagine a job where you can't even talk to your wife. Now imagine playing bass for Dave. The central key for Dave is the bass player because that is what provides Dave his foundation for all of *his* improvisations. You can do a concert with bass and piano.

Crawford: Sure.

Gloyd: If we just had a bass player to do Los Angeles, we could have done it. But the role of that bass player is so critical because it inspires Dave to go in whatever direction that Dave wants to go. The difference between Alec Dankworth, who has been our bass player for three years, who left in April, and Michael Moore, who replaced Alec, was this incredible driving force of energy.

Crawford: He's British?

I. Brubeck: Yes.

Gloyd: And the son of Cleo Lane and John Dankworth. Alec is this incredible dynamo of energy, incredible force. We had the most swingiest swing band on the road, with only four people, because it literally brought collectively all of the big band feel that everybody grew up with. Randy Jones was Maynard Ferguson's drummer. Bobby Millitello was Maynard Ferguson's saxophonist. Bobby is a big band person. That's the way he started in the business. Same thing with Randy. Same thing with Dave. And so that really was a driving, swinging, hard-kicking group.

Michael is not that way. Michael is harmonic. His whole influence on bass is of harmony. His rhythm is perfect, and it's almost like hearing a guitar rather than a bass.

Crawford: You said, Iola, that he fit like a hand in a glove.

I. Brubeck: That's right. It was amazing how fast he fit because we came from Stockton to Buffalo, and Bobby and Randy had met the day before to rehearse with Michael and to let him know that these are some of the tunes we do and this is sort of how we do it. Dave didn't have an opportunity to rehearse with him. By the time we got to Buffalo, Michael Moore had to step out onstage and play. It was just amazing to me.

Crawford: And you felt that way, too.

Brubeck: Oh, yes.

Crawford: Do you dread personnel changes like that in the quartet?

Brubeck: Yes.

I. Brubeck: A person has to learn a whole new bunch of things, which makes it difficult for Dave to plan a concert because does this person know this tune, does this person know—you know, to get a group—

Brubeck: The thing I miss the most is—most concerts we have a set list, and we give it to the guys just before the concert, and when I am out there playing, I know that a certain tune out of three hundred tunes I've got, say, would be perfect now. It's not on the set list. How many of these guys know that tune? When you have a change in personnel, one guy, you can't work that way. You got to stick with the list.

I. Brubeck: Once a group has been together for a while, then Dave may call anything from the list.

- Brubeck: One of our last recordings had first performances of tunes we had never played together, and they came off great. It was just lucky. One was “Shanty in Old Shantytown.” Now, who’s gonna know that? And on the bus I’d written out the chord changes, but there was no rehearsal.
- Crawford: You just handed out the chord changes?
- Brubeck: Handed it to the bass player, yes. And another one was “Over the Rainbow.” If you picked a standard like that, everybody’s got it in their head, whether they’ve played it before or not, whether you’ve played in a group.
- I. Brubeck: And “Deep Purple,” which is one of my favorites.
- Brubeck: Oh, yes, “Deep Purple.” Those are all on a recent recording. Before the concert started, during what they call the sound check, I was out there alone, and I played two tunes that I usually don’t play, and the recording guys were testing their equipment, and they’re on the album.
- Crawford: They kept them. They just put them in.
- Gloyd: *Just You, Just Me*, came about because we were recording with the sons in Purchase, New York, and during a break Dave, to relieve the tension of a recording session, when everybody is trying to do their best, started playing. And it was like, “Roll tape! Roll tape! Roll tape!” And he went through two tunes, and that became the starting point for the album that eventually became titled, *Just You, Just Me*. But it came from Dave literally using the release of solo piano to reduce the stresses of what takes place in a recording session.
- Then the second album began with Dave warming up onstage, and one tune was “Squeeze Me,” and the other one was—was it “Things”? Yes, it was “Things Ain’t What They Used to Be,” because you went polytonal.
- Brubeck: Yes. Was that solo piano?
- Gloyd: Yes, that’s on *One Alone*. So that started work on the other unplanned solo piano album. Then the Christmas CD, we allowed, I think, four recording sessions because we wanted to do this in a way that didn’t put stress on Dave, that we could go back and redo things and see what happened. That whole CD was done in two and a half hours.
- Brubeck: One session.
- Crawford: Are you happy with the balance of the large works, the cantatas and so on and the quartet? Certainly it’s been a wonderful year for the Mass and *Gates of Justice*. What else?
- Brubeck: This year what I’m happy about is that Richard Westenberg is doing a concert at Carnegie Hall, which I think is about two-thirds of my music. Then we’ve got concerts with Gregg Smith Singers coming up.

- Gloyd: In December, for the *Posada*. We are looking at going back and doing another two concerts with the London Symphony, and then doing substantial recording with the London Symphony in the studio, to get some of these choral works and the orchestral things done.
- Crawford: Which ones?
- Gloyd: Again, we've had lots of car rides on this one. I was going to go in one direction, and we have switched over because of the influence of others. *Pange Lingua* I want to record with the London Symphony because everyone considers that possibly Dave's greatest piece in terms of compositionally. We're talking about a piece that's based on six verses of a Gregorian chant, and to have produced this incredible reflection on the meaning of each verse.
- And so what he has done is he has taken each verse, which Iola has provided a translation for, and represented the character of each verse. In the third movement, which is the march movement, you have the tenors and basses basically in this march rhythm, as the Roman legionnaires would have done in Palestine at the time.
- So you have this incredible feeling because it was a marching song. It was a Hebrew chant. The Romans took it over. It became a Roman marching song, and that's how it got back to Europe. The fourth movement, "The Word Made Flesh," which is all of this transcendental string music—literally you hear the shimmering of the strings under the chorus. Then *Upon This Rock*, which is conceivably the most powerful composition that Dave's ever written in terms of just sheer volume, and we're going to be doing that at Georgetown University in October. So those are what we're looking at and seeing how it's all going to fit together.
- Crawford: How about television? Is that more forthcoming than when we talked before?
- Brubeck: Oho. God.
- Gloyd: December 16th the Hedrick Smith production biography of Dave will be shown on PBS.
- Brubeck: That's been a year in the making.
- I. Brubeck: They came to that concert in the church.
- Gloyd: That's right. Yes, yes. We met him a year ago. That's been a very involved process with them digging through the archives and coming and filming concerts and doing interviews and basically doing what Hedrick Smith does better than anybody, which is just digs and digs and digs and digs, and wears you down until you just submit. You say, "Mercy. Okay. I quit. I quit. I'll answer. I'll answer. I'LL TALK! I'LL TALK!"
[laughter]
- Brubeck: That's a tough thing I've had to go through. It's like the *Time* cover story. There were different people from *Time* magazine that were on the road with you. You know, you feel like you're under a magnifying glass. Or *The New Yorker* sending out—what was—White?

- I. Brubeck: I think it's Robert Rice.
- Brubeck: Robert? Where they're watching everything, for days, weeks.
- I. Brubeck: You're under observation.
- Brubeck: Those things.
- Gloyd: I remember we've done a couple of "CBS Sunday Mornings," where they literally just send out crews to everything. And since these are television documentary crews, they're news crews, they have no sensitivity towards your own personal life. That camera literally is like this, in your face all the time.
- Crawford: The *Time* piece, you were one of the firsts in jazz, weren't you?
- Brubeck: Louis Armstrong was first. But those are the things that just leave me a wreck. I can't show I'm a wreck.
- I. Brubeck: We don't know. We haven't seen the one he's done.
- Crawford: But you'll see it before it's finished.
- I. Brubeck: No, no, I'm not so sure we will.
- Brubeck: Ken Burns—you know, there was three hours to get about three minutes.
- Crawford: Three hours of interviews?
- Brubeck: Yes, sure, easily. And then sometimes a crew will show up at my house—I know they're coming—from BBC and do a whole show. They just did one.
- Crawford: Are you generally happy with what they do? I don't suppose you see those for editing, do you? They probably interview you straight and in it goes.
- Brubeck: For instance, with Ken Burns—did you see that show?
- Crawford: Yes.
- Brubeck: Where I started to weep?
- Crawford: Yes.
- Brubeck: I asked him to cut that out, and he said, "I'd rather cut my throat."
- Crawford: But so many people remarked about that. I think it was the most memorable part of the entire program.
- I. Brubeck: I think it was just so pure and real. It wasn't someone acting or someone making an observation, but it was so real.

- Brubeck: So this kind of probing things that you go through—with Hedrick Smith—boy, you know—like with the *Time* magazine story. They said they hadn't really—I think they used the term “cracked me” yet, to—
- Gloyd: Get through the shell. You know, you have that shell around you where everything is a platitude answer rather than getting through to where you break through.
- Crawford: Oh, they said that? That was their conclusion?
- Brubeck: Yes. But what one of the guys did was take me to a restaurant where you were served in a mock jail cell with little iron bars on the door where they hand the food in. I mean, you're isolated.
- Crawford: Where was that?
- Brubeck: It was in Chicago. He said, “I haven't been able to get to you. I'm taking you to this special restaurant tonight.”
- Crawford: “And you're not getting out.”
- Brubeck: [laughter] Yes. He wanted to get deep, you know? They wanted to know what makes you tick.
- I. Brubeck: That's what Hedrick kept saying: “I want to know what makes Dave Brubeck tick.” I don't know whether he got that answer or not.
- Crawford: What would *you* say?
- Brubeck: I don't know—
- Crawford: He may not have asked the right person. [laughter] So what would *you* say?
- I. Brubeck: Oh, I don't know that I can answer that because I would say that Dave is a very complex person on one level and very simple and direct on another, so it's a little hard to explain what makes Dave tick.
- Crawford: How complex?
- I. Brubeck: How complex? Well, I think that Dave's reactions to things—they go very deep, and sometimes it takes a long time for it to come out and be expressed. It takes a lot of mulling over or churning over inside, and that's why I think that the composed pieces show more of that side of him. I've heard the jazz side in performance as being described as sophisticated and urbane and that sort of thing, and perhaps that's true on one level, but on another level I think it's very direct emotionally and very simple and straightforward. It may be expressed in a complex way musically, but the emotion that is expressed I think is very straight and open.
- Brubeck: You know, if I'm pushed far enough, there is one place I go. I know that whoever interviewing me or whoever is going to read this—they'll think I'm crazy, but if I get pushed far enough, I'll go there. For years they talked about *Sacred Music*, the piece

that we wrote on the life of Christ—and I found this article in an English newspaper when I was flying back from England.

The *Manchester Guardian* was doing a whole story on Christ. At that time we were doing *The Light in the Wilderness*, and the original title for that was *The Temptations and Teachings of Christ*. In searching, Iola and I, about the life of Christ, I knew that this article was really getting close to where we were thinking, but it stopped, and it was going to be continued the next week. So I went to the Chicago airport and got a stewardess to go into an English airline plane on Sunday—because that's when it would be coming out—and got the second edition. Now, in this the writer talked page after page about what Christ stood for. The most important thing that Christ ever said was, "Love your enemies. Do good to those that hate you."

Now, if you've listened to *The Light in the Wilderness*, I have the orchestra doing anything they want. Every instrument is free to do anything, to represent chaos and what it's like, a world out of control. And then out of this comes the character of Christ, singing, "Love your enemies. Do good to those that hate you." Russell brought this up in church last week, when the minister was handing a microphone around for people to say what they thought, and he quoted that, and he said there wasn't a friendly look at him from then on. I often said in these interviews if you said this in Washington and you were a politician, you'd be run out of town. And we're supposed to be a Christian country, with our basic philosophy to be the philosophy and teachings of Christ.

And then I've stressed developing cultural exchange and, even more important than that, if we spent a fraction of our money to get the religious leaders of the world to really research their own religions and spend money to get to the world what they're supposed to be standing for—what is the United States supposed to be standing for? It's the only way out of the mess we're in, is to love our enemies, and we've been told that, and we've ignored it, and we never tried it. And we're going to spend all our money going the opposite direction. We're going to lose hundreds of thousands of our citizens, young soldiers, and we consider ourselves Christian. Here's the core of Christianity, and we totally ignored it, and you'd be condemned if you really said this is what you should do.

Gloyd: This was in Orange County. I called up thirty churches on Friday, when I knew that there was the National Day of Prayer, and I felt that I wanted to be some place because we have a very significant church in Chicago. I went through the phone book, and there was this one Lutheran church.

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Gloyd: It was immediately after this [September 11] happened, and I kept thinking, How many people are looking through the Lutheran Book of Worship under "Burnings, Witches"? Do Lutherans really burn witches? I would have qualified.

Crawford: After September 11, what might come of this for music, for your music?

Gloyd: I can tell you right now, which is I got a call this morning from my wife in Chicago that they've changed the anthem tomorrow at our church to Dave's music, from the Mass, "All My Hope," because our senior pastor is very involved in many, many different

issues but because his sermon is based on the word “hope,” the music director immediately changed so they would do Dave’s music, which is entitled, “All My Hope.” And the benediction is going to be Dave’s benediction, “From the Voice of the Holy Spirit.”

I know what’s going to happen in Georgetown when we do *Pange Lingua* and *Upon This Rock*. And I’ve also added “All My Hope” for an encore, which will be that words have stopped. Words no longer function in our life, and now music has to take over. It has to provide that solace. It has to provide that understanding. It has to provide that very nature of getting us through this and figuring out where the other end is going to come, because all the other alternatives are absolute total disasters, just a disaster.

One of our other ministers on Sunday, my wife said, said in his prayer, “God, we want to bomb somebody. We just want to bomb someone, but we can’t,” and then he started dissecting every argument of Christ that says how this will never work. It’s retribution. Retribution doesn’t work.. It’s the same thing with the death penalty.

Crawford: It *is* the death penalty.

Gloyd: It is the death penalty, which is revenge, and revenge is never—there’s more—and the only time in the Bible that Christ had anything to say on the death penalty is when he *stopped* an execution.

Brubeck: To carry that point along further, I’ll say Christ said that, but Buddha said it 600 years before Christ: “The crowning enlightenment is to love your enemy.” So you’ve got this consensus of great religions telling you the only answer, to keep from destroying the earth, this is your answer. And it’s totally ignored.

Crawford: Why don’t our leaders reflect our identity as a Christian nation?

Brubeck: Ah. My son just told me that Newt Gingrich, of all people, was saying we should give—I think he said \$50,000 to every Arab—

I. Brubeck: He was using that figure because they had figured in Vietnam, for every person of the Vietcong that was killed, that it cost at least \$50,000 from American troops and ammunition—you know, the general cost of the war, and what did we gain by it. And he said he was surprised that it would come from Newt Gingrich, that he would be saying, “Give these people food, education”—all the various things that they need so that they’re *not* such desperate people. Well, Danny said he couldn’t believe it. I said, “I haven’t even heard anything about him for so long now.” And Danny said, “He doesn’t have a constituency to answer to any more, so maybe he *can* say that.”

Brubeck: You see, this is probably the only hope for civilization. Hatred is such a strong force, and there’s only one force stronger, and that’s love. But a lot of terrible things happen while hatred is the force. Our only way out is total love. I have said this before, for years and years..

I. Brubeck: That’s hard to come by.

Brubeck: It just makes me look foolish. I’ll say to myself, *Why don’t I shut up on this subject?*

Crawford: Mort Sahl said, “When they sent out Secretary of State [John Foster] Dulles all over the world, then they had to send Dave Brubeck after him to do damage control. [laughter] This is what we need now. We need the Brubecks for damage control. Make music, not war.

Gloyd: And, you know, through the Mass and through the music, it’s exactly what’s taking place. The problem is the misuse of the word “love.” We have this image of Haight-Ashbury love, giving everybody these little daisies and you’re my brother, you’re my sister, welcome. And what it really, to me, means is understanding—again, we had this discussion in the car, which is terrorism is a one-way mirror because it’s not a direct enemy.

Menachem Begin was considered a terrorist by the British. In Israel he’s considered a hero. Why? Because he blew up the King David Hotel. Lots of people died. Lots of people died. So which side? Which line does he come on? He was a terrorist. He was somebody who was accused by the British and sat in prison because he blew up a hotel. Now tell me who is right.

Brubeck: But hopefully we’re in such a mess right now and it’s terror for everybody, from the highest people in government and worldwide, that the only way out may be to really examine all the religions, spending as much money as we would on a small war, because wars cost fortunes, to get people to see there’s no other way out. If we’re going to get out, the only way out is with love. That’s the only thing left.

I. Brubeck: Understanding and compassion, putting yourself in the place of the other person and seeing what makes this person feel this way. It’s very hard, I think, for the American people to even think of what it must be like, specially if you are in Afghanistan. Just think of what has happened to them in the last twenty years.

Crawford: You’ve been in Afghanistan.

Brubeck: Yes, right. And Iraq and east and west Pakistan and India and Ceylon. Over my wife’s desk is Corinthians 13: “Without love I am nothing.” You would like to see these things performed every Sunday in church. There’s hundreds and thousands of churches that don’t care that I wrote about that. [laughter]

Crawford: Maybe now they will. Maybe people will *have* to reflect on it.

Brubeck: Yes. We spent so much time in our lives trying to guide our own thinking, which will guide our children, which may guide some of their friends. But so far it’s just starting to happen. Some people are paying attention. You mentioned “God’s love made visible.” Richard Dirksen was thumbing through a new hymnal, and he said, “Oh, this looks interesting—5:4.” And he reads through it, all the way through it, and then he says, “I wonder who did it.” He looks up: Dave Brubeck. He said, “I should have known.” [laughter] He was the organist at the National Cathedral and retired. But eventually I might get some hymns in a hymn book, you know?

Crawford: I think that’s probably a good place to stop.

Brubeck: Okay.

Crawford: Thank you so much.

[End of Interview]

Caroline Cooley Crawford

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