

A black and white photograph of Dave Brubeck, an elderly man with glasses, wearing a dark suit and white shirt. He is shown in profile, looking down at a piano keyboard. The lighting is dramatic, with a bright light source in the upper left corner creating a strong highlight on his hair and the piano's surface. The background is dark and out of focus.

TIME OUT WITH

Dave Brubeck

In sync with his loving wife, lola, Pacific's own jazz legend keeps pushing musical boundaries

2nd page

BLUE RONDO

TOP LINE

OPTIONAL #1

HISTORIC PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BRUBECK COLLECTION, HOLT-ATHERTON SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC LIBRARY. COPYRIGHT DAVE BRUBECK.



1938

During his college days, Brubeck often played with local jazz and dance bands in the surrounding communities.

1941

Dave and Iola met at University of the Pacific and began a lifetime partnership.

1945

Drafted into the Army following graduation, Brubeck served in Europe and formed one of the armed forces first integrated bands, "The Wolf Pack."

BY MICHAEL G. MOONEY

There are significant moments in time when the paths of individuals converge.

Barack Obama was 10 years old when his father took him to see Dave Brubeck '42, who was performing with his sons in concert with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra. It was billed as a "father and son" concert. The year was 1971. Obama has written that it was the last time he ever saw his father.

Some 38 years later, the paths of Obama and Brubeck are about to cross again. On Dec. 6 — Brubeck's 89th birthday — President Obama will take time out at the Kennedy Center to honor the jazz legend and Pacific alumnus for his lifetime contribution to the arts.

Dave and his wife, Iola '45, have seen his innovative musical expressions lead jazz in a new direction. They have also watched his unique musical sensibilities help shape the soundtrack in the nation's decades-long struggle for peace, justice and equal opportunity.

There's more work to be done, of course. "We need help," Dave said. "We need great teachers who will educate us. I just hope that when people are being educated, they will be able to study jazz; so they can

see how important this voice of freedom has been to the world."

Like a sponge, as Dave will tell you, jazz has soaked up the best of human creativity. "Jazz has been a real force in the world," he said. "I have such great hope that things are going to get better and better as we exchange music and culture."

Earlier this year, as Dave and Iola were preparing to break camp in Florida and head back to their home in Connecticut, I spent some time with them at the "Take Five" bar and grill on Sanibel Island.

As we were walking from their home, Dave Brubeck was talking about Eubie Blake, the great pianist and composer whose lifetime encompassed everything from ragtime to be-bop and beyond. Brubeck still recalls what it felt like to shake the hand of the great man.

"'Memories of You' [written by Blake] was one of the first things I ever played," Brubeck said. "It was a thrill to meet him and some of the other guys, who went back almost to the beginning of jazz."

The Sanibel Inn resort, where Dave and Iola stay during winter's coldest days, seemingly is the ideal retreat — dolphins swim close to shore; flocks of pelicans

dive for a meal; and those soft and warm, moisture-filled Gulf breezes blow lazily.

"Retreat?" snorted Brubeck. "With all the work I have to get done?"

As usual, the forward-thinking Brubeck was struggling to find enough time in the day to complete his pending projects, so he could move on to the next batch.

First, there was his choral work; the sacred music.

On top of that, he and Iola needed to finish packing so they could get over to Vero Beach and a couple of concerts before heading to Connecticut. There, they would catch their breath before hopping on another plane, this one bound for California and the Brubeck Festival at University of the Pacific.

Boxes and piles of sheet music were stacked everywhere.

There was that autobiography that Dave and Iola have been trying to finish, a book 10 years in the making and counting.

Then there was the orchestral work, "Ansel Adams: America," a collaborative effort between Dave and son, Chris. It was debuted by the Stockton Symphony during the Brubeck Festival in April. Six other symphony orchestras around the country



1946

Out of the military, Brubeck returned to college, studying with Darius Milhaud (lower left) at Mills College in Oakland.



1958

The “classic” Dave Brubeck Quartet, made up of (l. to r.) Dave, Paul Desmond, Eugene Wright and Joe Morello, would make jazz history for the next 10 years.



1957

The quartet played at colleges across the nation in the 50s and 60s. Touring the South, Brubeck never succumbed to pressure to replace his black bass player Eugene Wright, even when concerts were canceled.

will perform the piece throughout the year, a celebration of America’s beauty captured so exquisitely by the great photographer.

Also performed at the Brubeck Festival was “Earth Is Our Mother,” a choral and orchestral work written by Dave and Iola.

And don’t forget the “P” word — practicing.

Practicing?

Dave had been “wood-shedding” the songs of the “Time Out” album, which his quartet performed at the Brubeck Festival.

Dave didn’t know at the time that a nasty flu-like bug would keep him from attending the festival to perform the ground-breaking recording. Dave’s son Darius took his place at the keyboard. This year’s festival marked the first time that all the pieces from “Time Out” had been played live since it was recorded in 1959.

“There are songs from that album we always play,” Brubeck said at the time, “like ‘Take Five’ and ‘Blue Rondo a la Turk.’ But there are other songs — ‘Pick Up Sticks’ and ‘Everybody’s Jumping’ —which we haven’t done in 50 years.”

“Boy, there are some tough things in that album,” he continued. “Sometimes, I wonder,

‘What crazy man wrote all this stuff!’”

Crazy man, indeed.

Trumpeter Deck Hogin still remembers the night in 1942 when Dave sat in on piano with the Tut Lombardo Big Band at the California Ballroom in Modesto. At the time, the 87-year-old Hogin was a fresh-faced 20-year-old sitting down the line in Tut’s trumpet section.

“Our regular piano player couldn’t make the gig,” Hogin recalled. “So Tut called up Dave and he came down and played. The stuff he played was so far out, none of us understood it. His chords weren’t just a little bit different; they were a lot-a-bit different. He was playing stuff like Duke Ellington did. It was really remarkable.”

Dave’s unusual approach practically stopped the band in its tracks that night.

Of course, that wasn’t the first time such a thing had happened.

Back in the late 1930s and early ’40s, before Newell Johnson became an educator, he played trumpet with Dave. They met for the first time in 1938.

“I remember those far-out chords,” said Johnson. “We sat in awe of him. We didn’t understand everything he was doing, of

course, but we were impressed. Dave played only a few jobs with the big bands. He preferred combos, where he could be more himself and do what he wanted to do.”

Brubeck, Newell and Hogin played a variety of clubs in and around Stockton and Modesto, long-forgotten places like Frenchie’s and PeeWee’s. By 1940, Johnson had enrolled as music major at Pacific. Brubeck had started his studies there a couple of years earlier.

Intending to work with his father on their ranch, Brubeck originally enrolled at Pacific to study veterinary science. His zoology professor finally told him, “Brubeck, your mind is not on cutting up frogs. Go across the lawn to the Conservatory because that’s where your mind is. It’s not in the lab.” He did, and it changed his life.

Brubeck was the one music student, Johnson said, that everybody wanted to sit next to them in class, especially music theory.

“If Dave didn’t show up for class,” Johnson said, “you were out of luck. And that wasn’t only me; the whole class felt that way. His ideas were always fresh.”

Dave had a unique approach to “stacking” chords, or would introduce two or three



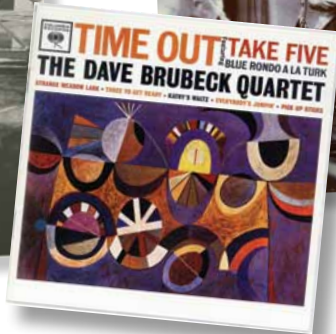
1958

The Dave Brubeck Quartet traveled to Poland, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ceylon, India, Iran, Iraq and Turkey on the first tour organized by the State Department to advance the interests and values of the U.S. through cultural diplomacy. The tour had a profound influence on Dave and his music.



1959

The experimental album "Time Out" included all original tunes that explored unusual time signatures. "Take Five" became the best-selling jazz single of all time. In 2005 the album was entered into the Library of Congress National Recording Registry and was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2009.



1962

Dave and Iola's musical "The Real Ambassadors" addressed civil rights and other issues and premiered at the Monterey Jazz Festival with Louis Armstrong and Carmen McCrae.

melodies simultaneously in the same song or play in two different keys at the same time.

By the time Hogin graduated from Pacific after World War II ended, Brubeck was already making a name for himself in jazz.

"The guy was just so creative," said Hogin, who, like Brubeck, still plays professionally. "I'm still in awe. He's a great player, and a great guy, too."

Even the late Stan Kenton, considered a cutting-edge innovator himself, was impressed with Brubeck's composition skills — something that still confounds Dave.

"Where did you get those chord voicings?" Kenton once asked Brubeck. "I've never heard voicings like those."

Brubeck credits his patient professors at Pacific's Conservatory of Music for giving him a foundation in classical harmony and counterpoint and encouraging his unique approach to chord structure. Later, Brubeck studied with Darius Milhaud at Mills College in Oakland. Milhaud helped Brubeck build on the musical vocabulary he began at Pacific, enabling the pianist to open jazz to new forms of expression.

"I was a terrible student," Brubeck said. "I would get an 'A' in ideas and an 'F' in spelling."

Brubeck didn't let his poor spelling skills, however, stop his musical experimentation, which matured with the release of "Time Out," an album that was unorthodox in every way imaginable.

"We did that as an experimental album," Brubeck said. "The songs were all originals; no covers (re-arranged pop or jazz standards). We put a painting on the cover, which never had been done before. And it turned out to be Columbia's — or anybody's — biggest selling jazz record of all time."

Brubeck and his music have come a long way — outlasting the narrow-minded critics who attempted to keep jazz locked away in a 4/4 box; the same ones who dismissed Brubeck's sound, which came to be known as "West Coast Cool," as "white man's music"; who bristled at the notion that jazz could combine elements of classical music and blues and African and Caribbean and other ethnic and/or folk melodies and rhythms and still be called jazz.

Leading African-American scholars and musicians, however, understood Brubeck's

approach and applauded him for it.

"Duke Ellington was telling people to listen to me," Brubeck said. "Willis James, an African-American musicologist defended me (saying) 'Dave Brubeck is on the right track.'"

James was referring to Brubeck's use of 5/4 time on the "Take Five" recording and other unconventional forays in meter that broke with the conventional 4/4 and occasional 3/4 waltz tempos employed by most jazz composers of the day.

Now approaching 90, Brubeck is more than ready to meet the challenges ahead; in fact, he relishes them. He cannot wait to experience those challenges and make them his own in the fresh musical ideas he's compelled to express.

Time doesn't stand still and neither does Dave Brubeck.

So watch closely in December when President Obama awards the Kennedy Center honor to Pacific's most famous son. Because what you will see is yet another meaningful moment in time, in a life filled with them.



1968

Dave began to produce more classical and sacred works in the 60s and 70s, most developed jointly with Iola, an accomplished librettist. The Cincinnati Symphony premiered the Brubecks' "The Light in the Wilderness" in 1968.



1976

In the 70s Dave formed a group with his sons Darius, Dan and Chris. The group toured and recorded as "Two Generations of Brubeck," including this trip to South Africa.



1987

Dave's composition "Upon this Rock" was commissioned for Pope John Paul II's visit to San Francisco

BY MICHAEL G. MOONEY

DAVE AND IOLA,

a Love Story



The year was 1940 and the future Mrs. Dave Brubeck was a Pacific freshman. As Iola Whitlock '45 and a few of her friends watched a big band perform at a College of the Pacific assembly, the young woman from Corning, Calif., had no idea she one day would marry the band's pianist... or did she?

The way Iola Brubeck remembers that enchanting evening, the other girls were more enamored of the musicians than the music. One girl pointed to a trumpet player, declaring him the "cutest." No, said another girl, shaking her head as she pointed to a sax player, "He's the cutest."

They turned to Iola.

Quickly, and confidently, she settled the dispute: "The most interesting person up there," she declared, "is the pianist."

Listening to Iola recount the familiar tale at their Florida home, the smile spreading across Dave Brubeck's face intensifies. Though the celebrated composer and pianist is not one to dwell on the past; clearly, this was a signature moment in time he never would tire of replaying.

In September, Dave and Iola celebrated their 67th wedding anniversary — a remarkable feat for any couple. But in the jazz world, the accomplishment borders on the miraculous.

So, what's the secret to the couple's longevity?

Iola ponders the question. "I used to say it was because he was on the road all the time," she deadpans. "(But) in recent years, we're together all the time..." There was no need to finish the sentence.



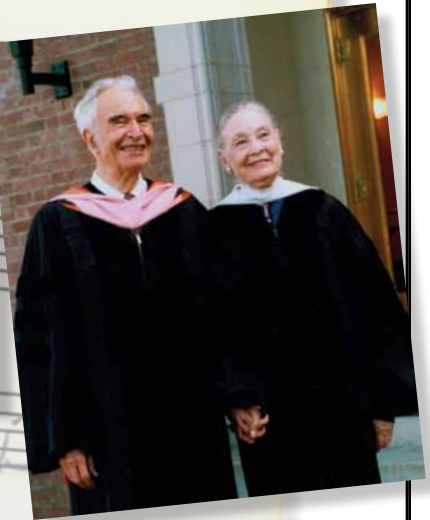
1988

The Brubeck Quartet toured the Soviet Union in 1987 and accompanied President Reagan in 1988 to perform at a summit with Mikhail Gorbachev.



1999

In 1999–2000, the Brubecks established the Brubeck Collection at Pacific, a unique accumulation of materials representing over 70 years in the creative life of Dave and Iola Brubeck. The University established the Brubeck Institute to build on the Brubecks' legacy.



2006

The University honored Dave with the President's Medal of Achievement in 2006. Both Dave and Iola have received honorary doctorates from the University.

"We have common interests," Iola says. "We love working together. When we first met, we would have these long, involved conversations about life. People go through life evolving. When you start young, you either grow together or grow apart."

Iola devoted herself to her family after the first of the couple's six children, Darius, was born in 1947. She also played an important role helping Dave further his musical career, serving as his manager, publicist, travel agent and bookkeeper.

Iola is also an accomplished librettist, her words embellishing some of Dave's most haunting melodies. One of the couple's celebrated collaborations was "The Real Ambassadors," a 1960s Broadway-style musical starring Louis Armstrong and Carmen McRae.

They find inspiration in each other.

In "Strange Meadowlark," Dave's music led Iola to create these lyrics:

*"...Was it love, meadowlark?
Were the songs you sang last
summer carefree, mad?
Think of all you had!
A quiet nest up in the clouds,
Where the soft winds blow.
Far from all the noisy crowds,
Where the earthbound go.*

*Your wings have brushed against a star.
Boundless were the skies.
You may have flown too high, too far.
Love is seldom wise..."*

In other songs, such as the recently released, "Autumn In Our Town," it was Dave who found the music after reading Iola's poetry:

*"...Go wind, seek where the embers lie.
Blow wind, love was not meant to die.
O falling leaf. O flaming tree.
Our lover's dreams are tumbling down.
Come back, my love. Come to me.
It's golden autumn in our town..."*

The intensity of the relationship was evident from the first date and has never waned. Iola admits they even discussed the possibility of marriage on that first date.

They got to know each other on the set of "Friday Frolics," a variety show aired on Pacific's campus radio station; Dave's band provided the music for the broadcast. Iola, in effect, was Dave's boss. By late May 1942, however, their relationship evolved to something far more permanent. Dave asked Iola to accompany him to a formal dance. "I was surprised," she says, "but said, 'OK.'"

Just four months later they were married.

If Iola's parents were upset with their daughter for marrying a jazz musician —

even one who had grown up on his family's cattle ranch — they never voiced those doubts to her. "My parents were very open to Dave," she says. "I don't know why, but they liked him. Maybe it was his ranching background."

Maybe. But whatever it was, it is clear that through 67 years of marriage, raising six children, and an amazing musical career that took them all over the world; if there ever was a story of true love, it is that of Dave and Iola Brubeck.

