

Brubeck Quartet



Staff photos by Charles Hardy

...displays cool style in concert

by Dave Robinson
DTH Contributor

The hairstyles were longer but the music was little changed Wednesday as the Dave Brubeck Quartet displayed its poll-winning jazz style of 25 years ago. Memorial Hall's "Silver Anniversary Concert" — one of many on a long American tour — marked the long-awaited reunion of four musicians who helped usher in the "cool" sound of the '50s.

The price of admission was "silver" in itself, but Brubeck's inspired piano stylings and Paul Desmond's light, lyrical, airy alto proved it to be a well-spent \$5. Due to contract clauses, it was necessary to present two shows, neither of which filled the hall. One show would have been a sure sellout and would have eased the group's harried tour schedule somewhat.

The second show — which by all indications closely paralleled the first — began with a kind of Desmond sandwich on a "Two Generations of Brubeck" bun. Three trio numbers between Brubeck, drummer Danny and electric bassist Rick Kilburn found the piano underamplified, the drumwork too busy and distracting and the bass line too shy. Still, this was our first glimpse at the artistry of Brubeck senior; hunched over his keyboard, the left-hand comps as the right hand flies; the feet start stomping, the body begins to rock, the mouth opens and ten fingers crash into the ivories in anguish.

Brubeck, while not having lost the light, "cool" touch of years past, nevertheless plays in a distinctly modern vein with his sons, as evidenced in last year's sell-out "Two Generations" concert here featuring Brubeck with the Darius Brubeck ensemble. The final trio piece, a Latin number in 5/4 time, came very close to deserving the label "free form," and Brubeck senior cannot be accused of failing to keep up with the times. Back stage he named Chick Corea as his most admired contemporary keyboardist, and alluded to the influence of his progeny. "I'm influenced by both the good and the bad, but I like a lot of what's going on with the kids, and youth in general."

The "meat" of the first half strolled on stage in the form of Paul Desmond. Looking like the secluded businessman next door, Desmond wore his sax like an oversized tie

tab; but in his two duet numbers with Brubeck he displayed the light, lyrical, airy quality that gives him one of the purest alto tones in the business.

From the opening strains of "Blue Dove" it was obvious that these two musicians complement each other wonderfully. Desmond's subdued alto is the perfect inspiration for Brubeck's classical touch, and the result is very tasteful jazz. Desmond gently cut off his notes with a slight swing of

final number of the first half. The stage was full of contradictions as Desmond and Chris harmonized the melody; Desmond soloed beautifully. Brubeck soloed tastefully and the musicians tolerated each other.

The second half belonged entirely to the quartet (Desmond left at one point to allow a couple of trio numbers). Eugene Wright was back behind the upright bass, and a much changed Joe Morello sported a monogrammed drum set. The latter looked

The quartet's reunion grew out of public demand and was set up by the Lincoln Center — at which they have not yet played. Does he tire of his old tunes? "They're never the same," said Brubeck, an observation that can be said of jazz in general. Still, the group will split up again after the tour; "it's getting out of hand," he said with a smile.

Brubeck talked of the diversity of his audiences. "We've played concerts where one guy will be dressed in a tux and the girl next to him in blue jeans." The ages vary as well; he aims at an age group of "Oh, from about ten to 80."

Unknown to many, Brubeck is politically oriented. After the Kent State incident of years past, he wrote a song entitled "Truth Is Talking" as a protest, only to find it meet with initial public hostility. Oddly, the song was met favorably after Watergate. "A community doesn't listen to its artists," Brubeck laments. "They usually get mad at them. It takes something like Watergate to make them listen." Other protest pieces by Brubeck include "Gates of Justice." "As the country stays out of war, all good things will come back. I expect so many good things to happen this year."

"This is a good time in my life... for the love of doing it, that's why you do those things." Like a true artist, Brubeck keeps right on creating.

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— Dave Brubeck

the head; during his busier moments, his eyebrows carved Spock-like v's into his forehead. We would have gladly paid as much to hear Desmond play "Mickey Mouse"; while his improvisatory ear is well-trained harmonically, it is his tone that sends us.

Upon learning that electric keyboardist Darius had the flu, Brubeck sent out an "emergency" call to trombonist-son Chris to fill in at the concert. Chris hopped a plane, and appeared following Desmond in the first half.

He might have saved himself the trip. His number — a pseudo-free form piece backed by dad, Danny and Kilburn — found his trombone issuing overtones, frenzied slides and random wanderings. A brief glimpse of straight improvisation collapsed into more noise, culminating in an uninspired cadenza ending on a golly-gosh pedal tone. Desmond joined those on stage for the

for all the world like a beer-guzzling beach bum, with long hair, T-shirt, shades, boots and a dangling pendant.

But no beach bum ever played drums like this! In their opening number — an updated version of "Swanee River" — Brubeck and Morello traded fours, and it was Morello's show. Never cracking a smile, Morello played his set effortlessly, yet theatrically, making lightning quick decisions and spanking his drums into submission.

The next two numbers evidenced the old quartet's style of the fifties, including the then-experimental time changes that helped bring Brubeck to the attention of the jazz world.

Strains of "Take the A Train" closed out the evening. Brubeck's urgent chords led to a mostly-standing ovation and the inevitable encore demands. Politely, he refused, citing their heavy schedule and the hour as apologies.

March 1 entry deadline set for 'Cellar Door'

Cellar Door is again offering the Jesse Rehder Prize. An award of \$50 will be presented for one outstanding short story and one outstanding poem published in Cellar Door for the academic year 1975-76. Judging will be done by Fred Chappell, director of the master of fine arts program at UNC-G and a well-known literary figure in North Carolina. Deadline for submissions to the spring 1976 issue of

Cellar Door is Monday March 1. Submissions should be addressed to Box 22 Carolina Union or brought to the Cellar Door office in Suite A.

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Derek Prince was educated in Britain as a scholar of Greek and Latin at Eton and at King's College, Cambridge. From 1940 to 1949 he served as a Fellow in Ancient and Modern Philosophy at Cambridge University. He has also studied Hebrew and Aramaic, both at Cambridge University and at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.
Converted to Christianity while serving as a soldier in World War II, Derek Prince has since devoted his life to study and exposition of the Bible. He has served at various times as a minister, educator, and missionary in five continents: Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, and Australasia.
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