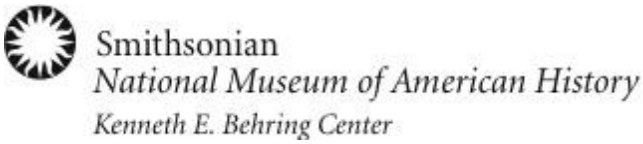

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DAVE BRUBECK
NEA Jazz Master (1999)

Interviewees:	Dave Brubeck (December 6, 1920 – December 5, 2012) with Russell Gloyd and (August only) Iola Brubeck
Interviewers:	Ted Gioia with recording engineer Ken Kimery
Date:	August 6-7, 2007
Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution
Description:	Transcript, 90 pp.

Track markers were accidentally embedded into the original recording in such a way as to lose a few words at the breaks. Square brackets and five spaces – [ ] – *indicate these small gaps in the transcription.*

Brubeck: There's two cats in this house, and I don't mean jazz musicians. But I haven't heard them or seen them, so they probably are hiding.

Gioia: They're checking us out.

Brubeck: This is a new house that – Chris had a house on the other side of town and got a pretty good deal and was able to have room for the first time in his life for a studio. He's been writing so much – always new things.

Gioia: It's important to have the right setting.

[microphone adjustment]

Kimery: When you're ready.

Gioia: This is Ted Gioia. We are at Chris Brubeck's house in Wilton, Connecticut, conducting an oral history with Dave Brubeck as part of the Smithsonian's program of conducting oral histories with NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] Jazz Masters.

Today is August 6, 2007. Our plan is to conduct the oral history over a two-day period, today and tomorrow, August 7.

Dave, I have a number of questions here, taking you through your life history, and would like to start by talking to you about your grandparents. First of all, I'd like to know about your paternal grandparents, Louis Warren Brubeck and Louisa Grass Brubeck. What can you tell me about them? What recollections do you have of them?

Brubeck: My grandparent Warren Brubeck – like my middle name – when his mother died in Indiana, his father gave the three sons $100, is one story. The other story is a saddle horse to each of them and told them they were on their own. Two came West, and one went down to Kentucky. My grandfather, Louis Warren, came to Reno, Nevada. One story is that he rode his horse. Another is he walked. So you don't know exactly. He decided to make his living. He would build a hotel at the end of a narrow-gauge railroad which was going to a place called Amadie. That's a high-desert area just over into California from Nevada, near Pyramid Lake and on Honey Lake. Honey Lake at that time was 120 miles long and today is dried up. It was bigger than Lake Tahoe. It's hard to imagine a lake that size disappearing, but it attracted farmers and people to that area, and I imagine they would have irrigated their farms out of the lake.

Then the narrow-gauge railroad stopped at Amadie, and my grandfather built a hotel there. In the hotel came the [ ] the drivers of the 20-mule teams that would go on to Oregon with produce from the rest of the United States now could cross, but they couldn't go all the way up into Oregon with the train. So there were two Oregon trails. These drovers – drivers – would stay all night in the hotel in the upper third floor, which was a series of cots and beds. They got three meals a day and could stay. That was 50 cents for the night and the meals. There was a restaurant downstairs and a few waitresses, which caused my grandfather some trouble. One of the waitresses was being approached by one of the cattlemen, or maybe the lumbermen, or drivers. She didn't want him around. He came to get her out of the restaurant. My grandfather stood by the door. This guy shot at him and just missed him, but there was a trial then. The record of that trial is available. It's some pretty wild reading. The judge said to one of the cattleman that was giving his idea of what happened that night, being questioned, "Did you see any roughhousing at the hotel?" He said, "No, just a little chair action off the balcony." This is all in the trial. My grandfather was accused of running – misproperly running a saloon and hotel and forced to leave there.

Then he went down to the Oakland area of California. He bought a ranch right at the foot of Mt. Diablo in Ignacio Valley. My father, Pete Brubeck – Howard Peter – was either 14 or 16 and left to bring the horses and cattle to Concord, California.

Gioia: About what year would this have been when your grandfather moved to California, roughly?

Brubeck: I've got to guess.

Gioia: Yeah, just a guess.

Brubeck: 1896, around in there. But there is a man that has written up all this who lives in Litchfield, which is a town nearby. Iola would have his name. He just loves to write down the history of this part of California. It's a pretty wild history.

So my dad came to Concord with a couple of carloads of animals, landed at the railroad station, and unloaded the two cars. He needed some cowboys to help him drive the cattle from Concord out to the new ranch. So he went to my other [ ] on my mother's side, who was Henry Ivy. Owned a livery stable in Concord. He thought that would be a good place to hire some men to help him. So he went there and said to him, "Give me some men." It all worked out. He got the cattle out, with their help, to the new ranch. If you've ever been to Mt. Diablo, that ranch was located right where you turn to go up the hill on the Walnut Creek - Ignacio Valley side. It was right where that turn out of the valley starts up a steep hill. When you get to the top of Mt. Diablo there, you can see clear up – at that time when there was no fog or smog – you could see up the valley to almost Oregon, and you could see to San Francisco, and you could see to Stockton, Sacramento. Diablo was the place you could really see most of Northern California from. My mother was born at the foot of Mt. Diablo. I was born at the foot of Mt. Diablo. When my grandfather on her side went home that night, he said to my mother, "I met a real young man at the livery stable today, and I'd like to invite him sometime to dinner." My mother was quite popular, quite beautiful, but my father didn't take to having any other suitors around and quickly dispensed with them. He proposed marriage, and Grandfather Ivy said, "Bessie, if you marry this young man, you'll never want for a sack of flour." That was his approval.

Gioia: Were your grandparents alive when you were a young boy? Did you have many recollections of them?

Brubeck: Hardly any. I did see Grandpa Louis once. I was not allowed to go to his funeral. I was probably five. I remember my cousin and I just sitting alone in our house. The funeral was next door in the Presbyterian church in Concord.

Gioia: You were seen as too young to go the funeral, because you were five years old. I can see that.

Brubeck: Yeah. The Grass family was in Santa Cruz. There are some there still, Grasses. I visit there. I can't remember. There's even a real-estate office with my cousin's son, who's a Brubeck, married to a Chinese woman that runs the real-estate office. I think it's Wong.

Gioia: Let me ask you about your father. He was one of eight children. Did you have much interaction with your uncles and aunts? Were any of them musicians?

Brubeck: I had a lot of action with the cattlemen. Leslie Brubeck lived to be 100 in Sacramento a few years ago. That was the youngest son. His daughter married a quite well-known attorney in Sacramento, called San. Most people know her.

Phil Brubeck took a turn in other directions. Became interested in show business and making pictures. He probably was the first person to photograph – make a movie of Indians – native Americans and cowboys.

Gioia: This is your uncle?

Brubeck: Phil, in Brown Valley, near Fort? – right up the coast – Fort?

[voice off mic]: Fort Bragg?

Brubeck: Fort Bragg. After he filmed the Indians and the cowboys, he wanted to show the picture to the Indians. They told them that they'd come to the barn where he'd set up a movie screen and a projector, he'd show them the film. He said no-one was coming, but pretty quick he saw a cloud of dust, and the whole tribe was on their way. When he turned on the light for the projector, he then discovered that the barn was full of bats diving at the screen. Finally, he turned on the projector. One of the first scenes, the chief was shown in life – large life – on the screen, screaming and hollering and ki-yi-ing and all the native Americans leaving, stampeding out of there, because the chief had died between the time they filmed it and the time he showed it. This just – they didn't buy this thing. So they didn't get to see anything. Practically destroyed the place. Then he ran theaters and hired many bands in Stockton, California, and other places.

Gioia: On your father's side of the family, were there any musicians? I know your mother was a skilled pianist, but on your father's side, was there much musical talent?

Brubeck: I think there had to be, because my dad was quite musical, just what he'd be singing and whistling. You had to have a certain ear. He whistled a lot of classical music, because that's all he got to hear.

Gioia: Let me ask you about your ancestry, which seems to be a mix of German, Polish, Russian, English, maybe native American as well. Were there any ethnic customs or food or anything like that in your early upbringing? Or did you have a very American childhood? Were there any old-country traditions or customs to your childhood?

Brubeck: When I lived in Concord, my dad was the head cattle buyer for one of the biggest meat companies, called Moffett Meat Company. Maybe you've heard of baby beef. That's in Manteca, California, where you force-feed the animals on unusually beets. The animals are never out of the corral, and [ ] the usual life. I think we used to ship our range cattle – some of them – to Manteca. My dad bought the cattle up and down the coast of California, sometimes into Nevada or Oregon. Every year he went to the Hearst Ranch in San Simeon. Bought their cattle. Into King City. Bought a lot of - he knew all the big cattle owners in California. Then, during the Depression, my father took a job in

Ione, California, on a 45,000 acre ranch, which was large enough to be in three counties: Sacramento, Amador, and San Joaquin. We moved from Concord up to that ranch, much to my mother's absolute – it was like the end of her life to go away to a cattle ranch, lose all of her friends, and near San Francisco, so she knew a lot of people. She could go – she studied with Cowell at San Francisco State.

Gioia: Henry Cowell?

Brubeck: Yeah. She also went to summer sessions at Berkeley. So she – and she'd go to the opera and symphony. All that seemed to be something that would be gone.

I remember driving in the car with my father and mother – a small coupe. I was in the middle. She was crying, leaving Concord. We went on the back roads through Clayton. There was a big cattle ranch there, where my dad worked. When my mother was in Europe, he would pick me up and take me there on the weekends. We drove on those back roads – Marsh Creek Road, through Clayton. You come out in Byron. Then you go across the islands, which they call the islands, because they are where all the produce of asparagus and things like that. Then we went through Stockton towards Lockeford and then Clements and then turned to Ione. She's crying all the way. My father said, "Dammit, Bessie. Look out the window. Why are you crying? You can still see Mt. Diablo." That was his reason for, don't think this is such a move.

Gioia: You were born December 6, 1920 . . .

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: . . . in Concord. Were you born at home? At a hospital?

Brubeck: I was born at home. My mother realized that she was going to have a baby and went as fast as she could to Dr. Neff on [ ] a half a block away, and knocked on the door. I guess it was about four in the morning. Dr. Neff came to the door and said, "Bessie, go home and get in bed, and I'll be right there." So she went home, got in bed. She remembers the doctor taking his scalpel and just ripping off her nightgown, and the baby was born.

Gioia: So he had got there in time, but just at the very last minute.

Brubeck: Yeah. My dad came home from the slaughterhouse. He had built a slaughterhouse. He had a butcher shop, again with this rancher in Clayton: Keller. My first middle name was Keller. David Keller. I changed it, because my birth certificate showed Warren. Keller was a big rancher that I liked. That's where I would go when I was a kid, on weekends. My mother was in Europe.

He came home, and my mother had time to be praying, "Father don't desert me now." He said, "Bessie, I'm right here." She said, "I don't mean you."

Gioia: Your middle names – you're saying your birth certificate is David Warren Brubeck.

Brubeck: Then when I got my first social security, it came as – I put down Keller. Then I had to change that back to Warren.

Gioia: Was that because you thought your middle name was Keller?

Brubeck: I just decided it was, because . . .

Gioia: You had such an affinity with . . .

Brubeck: Harry Keller, the cowboy.

Gioia: Tell me more about Harry Keller.

Brubeck: He owned this huge ranch, from Clayton, all along Marsh Creek, but above Marsh Creek, all through the mountains. I've heard that it was the largest cattle ranch in Contra Costa County. My dad was Harry's partner. They worked together.

Gioia: So Harry was like an uncle to you, although you weren't . . .

Brubeck: Yeah. Very close.

Gioia: So when you filled out your social security form, you put down your middle name as David Keller Brubeck.

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: The Warren – was that named after your grandfather?

Brubeck: Yeah. And also because that's what my folks had named me.

Gioia: And David – were you named after any – was there another David in the family? Or was that just a name they liked?

Brubeck: I don't know of any. There are now.

Gioia: There are now, sure. I'm sure there are many now. So as far as you know, you were the first Dave Brubeck in the family.

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: What was your home like in Concord? I know when you moved to Ione, you lived on a large ranch.

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: In Concord were you in a city? Or was that like a ranch too?

Brubeck: Part of our lot, at the back of the house, faced Main Street, behind the Presbyterian Church, where my mother was choir director 17 years. Then this house that I was born in was the Ivy House, from her father. She might have been born in the house, I've heard. She might have been born on a farm near the statue that's between Walnut Creek and Pacheco. [ ] a statue.

Gioia: So there was a house that was in town.

Brubeck: Absolutely.

Gioia: Was that ranch separate?

Brubeck: The ranch? Oh, that was in a different little town, Clayton.

Gioia: Okay.

Brubeck: If you know where the Concord Pavilion is, my dad used to run cattle on that very land. Then on up that hill was another ranch that I went to a lot when I was a kid.

Gioia: But you didn't live on the ranch. You lived in a home in town, and the ranch was out in Clayton.

Brubeck: Yeah. Right by the Pavilion. I often would think of that when I'd go to play a concert. This is the road I learn to drive – or almost learned to drive a car on. I ran through an orchard, my dad hollering, "Step on the other one!" I put my foot on the clutch instead of the brake. Went tearing through there.

Gioia: Your mother was a pianist. Were there other musicians in her family?

Brubeck: No. Not that I know of. That family you mentioned being Polish, trying to trace them, we've heard that they were in White Russia – her mother. Betsy. Her mother. Then into Poland, and from Poland to Germany, and from Germany she got a way to get to California as a nanny or a servant to the Gangerer – I don't know how to spell it. Capital G – Iola would know. Then she married Henry Ivy.

Gioia: When you were in first grade, I believe you were . . .

Brubeck: There were some organists on that side of the family.

Gioia: Church organs?

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: When you, I believe, were in first grade, your mother went to England to study music.

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: Can you tell me about that, what impact that had on your home.

Brubeck: Looking back on it, I would say it wasn't good. At the time I was quite unhappy, because we were put in a family to keep us – Howard and I. Henry went with my mother to England. My dad at the time was living on the ranch in Clayton, the Keller ranch.

Gioia: So you were put with a family in the town of Concord that looked after . . .

Brubeck: Yeah, the Humphrey family was their name.

Gioia: Your mother had hopes to use this to help her teach piano? Or did she want to perform more? What were her ambitions in music?

Brubeck: I think that her ambitions were to be a concert pianist. To understand my mother, she was absolutely driven all her life to raise up above her situation. She was in a town, Concord, that didn't have a high school. So she took one of the wagons and a horse from her father, and went to all the farms and orchards and said, "Would you pledge money to build a high school?" So she's the one that was driven to have an education, even if she had to go out and create a high school. She graduated from Concord High School.

Gioia: So she was responsible for establishing Concord High School.

Brubeck: Absolutely.

Gioia: And then she graduated from it.

Brubeck: She graduated in the first class. So when I say she's driven, you can't imagine how she wanted to rise from her situation and be educated, and she managed it.

Gioia: Was her personality different from your father's? Was she more ambitious and driven than your father? Or were they both . . . ?

Brubeck: In their own ways, they were both successful.

Gioia: Self-made people.

Brubeck: Yeah. Then King's Conservatory in San Jose is where she went from high school. We ran across a recommendation from the dean that she go on in music.

Eventually, after having three children and in the ’20s, for some reason she had a insurance policy with Goldman and Sachs. She cashed that in. With that money, which was her money, she was able to go to Europe and study. My father thought it was ridiculous to cash that in. Later on in life, she’d say, “If I hadn’t done that, we’d have lost it all, because Goldman and Sachs took a dive with everybody else. So I was able to do something with that money.” She studied with Dame Meyerhess. Dame Meyerhess saw my mother looking out the window in London at some kids playing. She said, “You’re so interested in them. Do you have children?” She said, “Yes. I have three sons.” She said, “If I were you, I’d go home to my sons. This is a lonely life, to be a concert pianist.”

Gioia: Was she your first piano teacher? Did you learn piano from your mother?

Brubeck: Absolutely. She couldn’t teach me, but she could. She taught me basic harmony. She tried to teach me to read music, which no-one could. Then she would write down things I played when I was very young.

Gioia: Would this have been before she went to England, she started you?

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: So a very early age.

Brubeck: Very early age.

Gioia: Were there other instruments at the house other than a piano? Were there other instruments that you tried to play, or other instruments at the home?

Brubeck: At nine I got my first cello – a half-size. I studied with a girl named Lucille Keller, from the same family, who was a good cellist. I guess a brother of hers [ ] in that family, they lived in town, in Concord.

Gioia: So you had a stint playing cello, but obviously that was not your passion, the cello.

Brubeck: Well, if I had been good, it would have been. I did study it again when I was in Ione. My mother insisted that I go to Sutter Creek. The judge up there played cello. Then, even when I was in high school, I drove down to the College of Pacific and studied with Mrs. Brown, who was the wife of Horace Brown, a teacher at the conservatory who was great to me and taught me counterpoint. So I should have been a lot better cellist, but I just wasn’t so good. My brother Henry was a jazz drummer and a legit violinist. Howard was a protege on piano and could go from Concord to contests in San Francisco and do very well.

Gioia: Was there a lot of music-making around the home with you and your siblings? Did you get together and play music together or sing together and things like that?

Brubeck: We had a string trio – cello, violin, piano – which was very uncomfortable for me, because both of them could read anything, and I couldn't.

Gioia: Who played piano then on that?

Brubeck: Howard.

Gioia: So you played cello on that.

Brubeck: And Henry, violin.

Gioia: Would that – what kind . . .

Brubeck: You couldn't play a radio, because she wouldn't allow a radio in the house.

Gioia: Why not?

Brubeck: If you want music, make your own.

Gioia: This string trio: what kind of music did you play? Classical music? Or did you play dance music.

Brubeck: Classical.

Gioia: Classical. So you must – you minimize your reading skills, but you had enough reading skills obviously to play some of this. You weren't doing this by ear, were you?

Brubeck: Yeah. Looking at the music, faking it, and then my brother hitting me with the violin bow when I hit the wrong note. I'd be playing like this and put up my arm, because I knew that bow was coming.

Gioia: Your family moved around the time you were 12 years old. That was in the middle of the Great Depression. Was it because of the Depression that this move took place?

Brubeck: If my dad figured that out, it was a brilliant move, because on the cattle ranch, right through the Depression, he got $250 a month, a house to live in, a car to drive. That's a slight exaggeration. He eventually bought his own car, but the companies supplied pickups and trucks and all that that you need to run a large cattle ranch. So, food – everything was free. This was through the Depression.

Gioia: So at a time when a lot of people were struggling, your father had taken a position that gave you quite a bit of economic security.

Brubeck: You bet.

Gioia: Did the Depression impact your life in any way? Could you see things in the community? Or were you pretty insulated from it where you grew up?

Brubeck: You were very aware of it. There were [ ] Concord. There would be – the slang word for hoboes or bums, come to your home and ask for food. My mother would tell them, "Chop a little wood out there, and I'll bring you some food." My father's rule was, you can do this, but never allow some stranger to come into the house. So you were always aware of that. You were aware of your neighbors losing their jobs. It was a daily thing. Across the street, when the man of the house would come home, his wife would be coming to the front door and saying, "Cedric, did you lose your job yet?" That happened every day, that she'd come out there and say that. That was the opening. It was on everybody's mind. Where were you going to buy food? Could you charge? My wife's family was very much more aware of the Depression and knowing the hardships of that.

Gioia: Dave, my thought is to go another 15 minutes and take a break. If at any point you want to take a break, let me know. Can we go a little bit more?

Brubeck: Sure.

Gioia: Okay. Let's go another 10, 15 minutes. Then we'll take a break.

You once told me that when you were a youngster, you knew Gil Evans. Could you tell me more about that?

Brubeck: Oh, I wasn't a youngster. My brother Henry, the drummer, played with Gil. Gil had a band out of Stockton. There were so many good musicians in the conservatory. You weren't allowed to play jazz, but you worked as a jazz musician. Many of the California towns, and the towns right across the country, had dance bands. Almost every town had one or two or three bands that worked, played dances. Gil had this band in Stockton that used Stockton musicians. He took that band on the road to Los Angeles. He hated to front the band, and he loved writing for the band and composing. Skinnay Ennis bought the band from him, fronted it, and allowed Gil to continue as the leader, rehearser, composer, and arranger. At that point, the reason that I met Gil was that Miles Davis recorded – he wanted Gil to write *The Duke* – an arrangement, which he did.

Gioia: For *Miles Ahead.*

Brubeck: Yeah. Teo Macero and Miles invited me to the session at Columbia where they'd be editing that day. I was told they'd be working on *The Duke.* When I came into the control room, I was introduced to Gil. He said, "Brubeck? Did you have a brother?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "He played drums with me. He was a great drummer." That's how I met Gil.

Then I [ ] after that. After he died, I was invited to his house by his wife, after I was here in Connecticut.

Gioia: The two of you grew up not too far from each other, and your brother played with him. Now I understand.

Brubeck: Yes. That's how it happened.

Gioia: Let's do one more question before we take a break. I'd like you to tell me about your education early on – the schools you went to up until college. Then we'll talk about that.

Brubeck: I started in kindergarten at Willow Grammar School in Concord. I guess it was called Willow Pass Grammar School. I can remember the kindergarten. The teacher there was Miss Burns. She and I were in love. Just great.

Gioia: How long were you there? Until what grade?

Brubeck: Until seventh.

Gioia: What kind of student were you? If I talked to your teachers, what would they have told me? That you were the class clown? Or you were quiet?

Brubeck: I didn't get in trouble.

Gioia: You were a good student. You were well behaved.

Brubeck: When I think of student, it's all very uncomfortable, because I was put in the slow group, away from my friends, maybe second grade. I always felt that in some ways I'm probably the smartest guy here, but this was a blow to me. I couldn't understand why I was put back – or put into the slow group. I wasn't being put back. Looking back on it, I had what might be called learning disability, but nobody knew that term in those days. I had to go through that on my own, partly when my mother was in England. I remember trouble in school. Not trouble. Just – because the music teacher knew that I was musical. I was good in math. My trouble was maybe in spelling.

Gioia: Maybe a little dyslexia. It might be related to the issues with reading music.

Brubeck: I think so, because I was born cross-eyed.

Gioia: So was I. We had talked about this once. I do know I have a tendency to dyslexia as well. So it might be something similar.

Brubeck: Yeah, but did you know it when you were a kid?

Gioia: No, I didn't.

Brubeck: That's what is puzzling. Because, like, in the Army, I had to take an IQ test. I wasn't anxious to do well in it, but I was high enough to become an officer with what

they considered a good enough score to go to officer's training. It must have been that I was high in some areas and low in others. Geography I was very good in.

Gioia: What about high school? Where did you go to high school?

Brubeck: I went to high school [ ] I finished eighth grade in Ione. I did well there. The high school for all four grades only totaled 84 students, so you know it was a small high school.

Gioia: Why don't we take a break right now? Excellent. This is going well.

[recording interrupted]

One day a man named Johnny Osterbar, who I believe picked up laundry at the ranch, invited you to play at a Saturday night engagement at Clements Dance Hall, which I think was in Lodi? What can you tell me about this event and about you becoming a professional performing musician?

Brubeck: I think I was around 14. Osterbar came from Lodi to pick up the laundry at the ranch and heard me practicing. I wasn't practicing. I was playing. Knocked on the door that led to our front room and said he liked what he was hearing. Would I like to play with his band. I said yeah. We worked at an outdoor dance floor – it wasn't a hall – with light bulbs just hanging from wires. It was the only decoration. It was the Mokelumne River, right outside of Clements, where you go to Ione. What I remember mostly about that job was a neighbor named . . .

Gioia: If you can't remember, just go on, and we'll fill that in later.

Brubeck: . . . Loren Beimert. If you look him up, you'll see he was president of the Cattlemen's Association out of Sacramento, for the state. He had a large – his father had a large sheep ranch that adjoined us outside of Clements, on the way to Ione. Thousands of head of sheep. He came to the dance and heard us play and asked John Osterbar, "Can I sing with your band?" John said, "I've never heard you sing, but give it a try." So he went out to his car and brought in a microphone and – what you would plug the microphone into. I should know that term.

Gioia: An amplifier of some sort?

Brubeck: Amplifier. He set up his equipment, and he sang quite well. That worked out. He used to then sing later with us, when I went to the Bill Lammi band. But he was a real character. I remember he bought an airplane and didn't take [ ]. Somebody showed him how it worked, and he was dive bombing his father on the ranch. Then his father got so mad. That's the kind of character he was. He was alone with his father. A wonderful place in the Sierras. A meadow that's now a snow – where you can come and rent cabins and ski. A ski resort.

Gioia: The music that you were making then. This was for dances. Would this have been a jazz-type music?

Brubeck: It would be – what most people played in those days were called stock arrangements. I played those with Bill Lammi later in Ione. Later with the bands in Stockton and Modesto. You usually had stock arrangements. Once in a while you'd have something – a special arrangement. Very, vary rare.

Gioia: You were – would you be making money? Were you paid for these? Do you remember – do you have any recollections of how much you might make at these gigs – these first gigs?

Brubeck: Yeah. The first gigs could have been as low as a few dollars. When I got to Stockton to go to school as a freshmen – I'm then 17 and a stranger to all the musicians. I didn't know anyone. I was a pre-med major. I used to try and hang out with guys who'd fluff me off. "Where are you from?" Ione. They'd just kind of turn their back and walk away.

The head of the Stockton musicians union heard me play at a sorority house, where the – my roommate when I was a freshman was going with a girl at this sorority house, so I'd often go there and play. I got to know those sorority girls. They invited this head of the union, who was a junior or senior in the conservatory. "Come over and hear this kid." So he came over. He liked what I was doing. He said, "I'm working at a nightclub, but I have a chance to go to a better job. Would you be interested in taking that job?" I thought, wow, that would be great, but I'm not in the union. He said, "I'm the president of the union. I'll just get you in." His name was Herman Shapiro, later known as Herman Saunders in Los Angeles. He changed his name. He did the music for a lot of big t.v. serials that ran every week. He recently passed away, but we followed each other for our careers. That's the way I got into the union, because I wasn't old enough to get into the union. Then I'm thrown into bands with some of these guys that are fluffing me off, and I scared them to death. "Where did you hear something like that?" So it quickly changed everything, being that [ ]

Gioia: What would you be paid then?

Brubeck: $42 a week. I was making . . .

Gioia: Was that union scale?

Brubeck: Yeah, that was scale. I was making as much a week as my future father-in-law. If you're playing a one-nighter, like in Modesto at the California Ballroom, you might get $15.

Gioia: Let me just ask a couple more questions before we talk about college. I just want to – you mentioned you went to high school in Ione. What was the name of the school?

Brubeck: Ione High School. But before you go there, know that I got a big break in Stockton. Cleo Brown was there at the hospital in Stockton, because of a condition she had, living a kind of wild life. She was one of the best-known pianists in jazz at that time. Marian McPartland was listening to her in England. That's in the '30s. They wanted me to play intermission for her and open for her and bring her to the job . . .

Gioia: This is in Stockton?

Brubeck: Yeah . . . from a little house that the authorities from the hospital had gotten for her, and to bring her home at night. So here I'm thrown in with one of the top jazz pianists in the country.

Gioia: About what age would you have been?

Brubeck: 19.

Gioia: 19. So you'd have just gone to college.

Brubeck: I'm still in college. Because I went at 17. 18, 19 – I would have been a junior.

Gioia: What were your parents reactions to you going away to college? Was this something they encouraged?

Brubeck: I didn't want to go. My father had given me four cows when I graduated from grammar school. He kept those cows in his herd, but kept books on how they reproduced and what I owned. I thought I was going to be a cattleman.

Gioia: So by then these four cows had multiplied into quite a herd of your own.

Brubeck: Yeah. My dad had a 1,200-acre ranch separate from the 45,000 acres.

Gioia: 1,200. This is – he owned outright.

Brubeck: He owned. It was near Sutter Creek, near Drytown. I used to go there. There was a cabin and no running water, no stove. Yes, there was a stove, but that's all. I thought, boy, this is the place I want to live. There was a spring where I could get water near the house and a stream that ran by down beyond about 50 yards where I could wash and wash my dishes.

Gioia: You wanted to be a cowboy.

Brubeck: Absolutely. I did not want to go to college. So my mother saw to it that a guy from San Rafael military academy would come and pick me up and take me to the academy. He did that. I went down there, and I hated it royally in about a half hour. Then he returned me home, and my dad said, "The academy – would you like to go there?" I said, "No." He said, "Your mother thinks you should go there. The discipline would be

good for you, the studying." I said, "Dad, if you send me, I'm going to break everything on campus until you can't afford to have me there and you'll bring me home." He said, "Dave, I don't think I'll send you." So I got out of that. Then I said – when it was time to go to college, I said I didn't want to go. I wanted to live on the Blakely Ranch. That was the name of the ranch.

Gioia: That was the ranch your father owned.

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: The Blakely Ranch.

Brubeck: "I want to live there." He said, "That could work out." My mother said, "You're going to college, like your brothers. There's no way you're just going to go live on the Blakely Ranch." My dad said, "If he's got to go to college, he should study to be a veterinarian and then come back to the ranch." That was how I got to [the College of the] Pacific, as a pre-med. Then I would have transferred to [the University of California at] Davis, which had a great agriculture and veterinary school.

Gioia: Still does. So your thought is, you wanted to get back to the ranch. You didn't want to be a city boy. You wanted to live out in the country.

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: So, going to college, you decided you'd study to be a veterinarian, because that would give you a career you could go back.

Brubeck: My mother said I had to study, I had to go to college. Brother Henry had gone to Pacific.

Gioia: Was he there when you showed up? Was he still a student there?

Brubeck: He was 11 1/2 years older. There's quite a distance.

Gioia: So he was gone.

Brubeck: He and Dell Courtney were roommates at Risonia. Then Henry decided that the jazz and dance band business had too many pitfalls in it. So he went back to Pacific and graduated when he was 28. I went with him to Stanford University, where he was going to be – I forget the word – scrutinized by a principal that wanted a teacher of music in Lompoc?, California. The three brothers went. When we got there, the principal said, "You have to come back tomorrow. I'm too busy to see you today." So we slept three of us in one bed. I don't know how we paid for it. In the morning, when it was time for breakfast, we were penniless, except I had a dime. So we got a stack of hotcakes. The three of us ate a hotcake each. But he did get the job. From Lompoc, where he was quite

successful, he went to Santa Barbara, where he became the chairman – I forget the term – of schools. Supervisor?

Gioia: Supervisor – superintendent?

Brubeck: No. Head of public school music. There were various high schools and junior highs. Very successful until he retired.

The question that I drifted away from – what was it?

Gioia: I was asking you about [ ]. Henry was still at the College of the Pacific when you were there.

Brubeck: Yeah. He wasn't. But he had been there.

Gioia: When you went to college, my understanding is that you still came home every weekend?

Brubeck: Whenever I could.

Gioia: How easy of a trip was that? Was that close by?

Brubeck: 38 miles. It was very close. Then I'd play with Bill Lammi's orchestra.

Gioia: You started playing with Bill when you were in high school?

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: Tell me about that band. Same thing? Was it a dance band playing stock arrangements?

Brubeck: Yeah. We played in Jackson, Sutter Creek, Mokelumne Hill, Angel's Camp – all those towns.

Gioia: So even after you went to college, you would occasionally come back to play with Bill's band?

Brubeck: My freshman year, because I didn't know – I wasn't in the union yet.

Gioia: How did you get back and forth? You take a bus? You drive a car?

Brubeck: I had a Durant automobile which I bought for $60. It was known on campus as the silver streak. In the summer, I worked for Dr. Saunders, the veterinarian in Stockton. He had a big practice. I would either work in the animal hospital doing jobs that I do not like. The worst, having to put the dogs under that weren't claimed, because the dog

pound was next door. They finally let me off that job, because I'd pet the dogs until they died. All the . . .

Gioia: What a sad job to do.

Brubeck: Oh yeah.

Gioia: Why don't we stop this right here then, and we'll continue on . . .

[recording interrupted; it resumes in mid-sentence]

Brubeck: [ ] fight. We aren't fighting each other. We're just raising, but I'm the victim, being – I was taking a bath. My roommate wanted a bath. So he came in and poured a bottle of iodine into the water. Then I locked the door and drained the tub and took another bath. When he couldn't get in, he backed up in the hall – he was 6-foot 4 – and came, and with his feet in front of him, jumped and hit that door. That door went onto the side of the bathtub. Water spilled out, went down into the dining room, and ruined her new ceiling and some of her tablecloths. Then she came upstairs, furious, as she should have been. I hadn't done anything. But she started chasing me, and I hollered "Mrs. Anderson, I'm naked." "I don't care." I went behind a bed – a pull-down bed, where you can get in behind it. She came in behind it after me, screaming and hollering, "You ruined my house." [ ] remembers all this.

Gioia: This is Darrell Bodley. Dean Bodley?

Brubeck: No, thank God. It was Dean Corson. His son is still teaching at the – when he met me, he started telling me, "Boy, you sure raised some – my father was always talking about you at home."

The punishment was we had to live a mile off campus. We moved to Tuxedo Circle.

Gioia: Let's save [ ]

[recording interrupted]

Dave, a couple things that Ken's pointed out to me that we didn't cover. Could you give me the full names of both your parents?

Brubeck: My father, Howard Peter Brubeck. My mother . . .

Gioia: Did he go by the name Pete?

Brubeck: Yeah. Absolutely.

Gioia: But Peter was his middle name.

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: And your mother.

Brubeck: Elizabeth Ivy Brubeck, and sometimes Elizabeth Johanna Ivy Brubeck.

Gioia: Another question about your mother: when she came back from England, what did she do in music after that? Was it primarily as a teacher?

Brubeck: Teacher, living in her original home in Concord, California. She had a studio built right into the home that was beautiful. You could have recitals there, which she always did. It was a very pleasant room.

Gioia: Did she have much chance to perform when she came back?

Brubeck: People – singers would ask her to accompany them. She did a good job. Then the choir she had every Thursday night rehearsal and Sunday in the church. That was her main way of playing outside of teaching.

Gioia: Let's go back now and talk about college. How did you go from planning on a career as a veterinarian to deciding you were going to study music and be a musician?

Brubeck: It's really up to my zoology teacher. Dr. Arnold said to me, "Brubeck, why don't you go across the lawn to the conservatory, because your mind is not here in the lab." I took his advice. Went across the lawn to the conservatory the next year.

Gioia: How did your parents react to your decision to become a musician?

Brubeck: My dad really disliked – the first time that we really talked about that is he had wanted me to come back to the ranch for the summer, and I said, "Dad, I have a chance to play in a nightclub this summer, and I'd rather do that." He said, "I can't understand how you'd want to be in a smoky place like that when you could be out here in the fresh air and the open country. I can't understand you wanting to do that." I said, "I really love to play." He had told my mother, when I had gone to college – and he told me – "I have three sons. You're the last one that could follow in my footsteps and be a cattleman. The other two older boys are now both mus [ ] I thought you and I were partners." I said, "That's true, but I just love to play, and I think I'd rather do that." He said, "I think it's going to be a hard life for you. If you ever get discouraged, remember, I've kept track of how many cows and calves you have, and I always want you to come back and be my partner." He said, "Don't forget. It can be rough on the road in this business. You're welcome to come back, and we'll be partners again." Many a time – I remember telling the owner of Birdland in New York after I'd played there and I was really getting fed up with what was going on, all the different scenes that were so far from what I thought was right, and even the murder of one of the brothers that owned – ran Birdland, and other things that were making it seem this isn't such a great thing – I told the owner – or the manager of Birdland. I said, "Maybe I won't come back. I can always go back to the

ranch." He started laughing. He said, "I've heard a lot of things since I've been in this business, but I've never heard anybody say, 'I can always go back to the ranch'." When he'd introduce me or talk about me, he'd say, "And he's the guy that said, 'I can always go back to the ranch'."

I was serious. What I had put my wife and the kids through, more than how much I disliked the atmosphere, was what I had to put them through in order to be a musician. We lived in places where – you'd have to call it slums.

Gioia: You had a tough stretch there, where it was hand to mouth. Absolutely.

Brubeck: What?

Gioia: You had a tough stretch there, especially the late 1940s, where it was difficult times.

Brubeck: Yeah – even – lots of long years where you practically didn't know where you're going to live, how you're going to live, how you're going to feed your family. That's the thing – I used to try to - to survive, I'd go to the farmer's market Saturday at closing time, because they didn't stay open on Sunday. They threw away what they hadn't sold Saturday. They got to know me, and they'd give me stuff almost for nothing. I'd fill the back of the trunk of my car. There were a lot of us living on 18th Street [ ] Castro District: Bill Smith and his kids, Dick Collins, and our friends Alice and Basil Johns. We all lived within a block or two of each other. I'd bring them produce. Then I'd go to the dented-can store. They also had canned goods that had been through a fire. I remember buying up a case of baby food that had been in a fire and thinking, boy, this will be great. My kids wouldn't eat it. When kids turn down something, and just push their hands away from the spoon, you aren't going to get them to eat. I had to eat all that baby food. It was terrible.

But one way or another – Iola cooked a lot of beans. Sometimes we'd feed other musicians that were hungry. My wife's nickname is Oley. Her name is Iola – Oley. She became famous with the nickname for the food, "Oley's frijoles."

Gioia: One of the highlights of your college time was meeting your future wife. Can you tell me how that happened?

Brubeck: Oh yeah, because I'll never forget it. The first time I met her, she was coming through a double door into the conservatory auditorium. She was going out. I was going in, so I held the door for her. We didn't speak. Just nodded. Years later, I was giving a lecture before the concert in that same auditorium to students, asking me questions mostly. One question was the one you just asked me: how did you meet your wife? I was on stage, the very stage that we use today. I pointed from the stage to that door. I said, "Coming through that door."

The next year we came back to play, and the dean of the conservatory, Dean Carl Nosse, came on stage and said, "We have a little surprise for Dave," and said, "Will you shine a light on that door and then just move it over to that curtain." Behind the curtain was a plaque that's there, saying, "Coming through these doors, Dave Brubeck and Iola Whitlock started their musical life together." Then the light. A student pulled a little string and the curtain was open, and there it was.

The next day we were going to the airport in San Francisco from Stockton. I said to Iola, my wife, and to Russell Gloyd . . .

[recording interrupted]

The next day, when we were going to the airport, I said to Russell and to Iola, I think our archives should go to this university. Where else do we have all these memories, for both of us. That's how the archives went to University of Pacific, through the dean. That dean also was the one who wanted us to start the Brubeck Institute.

But it was at this College of Pacific, now University of Pacific, that I finally did speak to Iola. It was on Friday afternoon from the radio station on campus that Iola was running the – producing the show that day called "Friday frolic." It's Friday afternoon when the school week is out. Then I was asked to have the band there. There'd be people come in and do little skits and plays and talk. Iola came out of the back where she was balancing a show and said, "Will you take everything out of your pockets and quit stamping your feet so hard?" I said, "Why?" She said, "That's all we can hear in here, is your pounding your foot and the change that – whatever's in your pocket is rattling." I said, "I've been kicked out of better places than this." That was our first conversation. I took off my shoes and poured all of my change, keys, and stuff, and quit beating my foot so loud.

Gioia: Your wife's parents, Charles and Myrtle Whitlock, lived in Stockton. What were your impressions of them? What were their impressions of you?

Brubeck: You mentioned the Depression earlier. The only way Iola could have gone to school was on scholarship. She was an "A" student in Reading High School and had the pick of quite a few schools that she knew she couldn't afford. Pacific would have been the least expensive. Junior college at Pacific was free. Then tuition on your junior and senior year was only $600, but they couldn't afford that either. Charles Whitlock worked for the forest service and for the part of the – it was basically the forest service, where he thought he could transfer to Stockton, and that way they wouldn't have to pay for Iola's room and board. That's the way they were able to go to Stockton.

Gioia: Where were they before?

Brubeck: Reading. You mentioned, where did I meet Iola? Iola didn't believe that I remembered her just from coming through that door. I said, "What if I told you what you were wearing?" She said, "That's impossible. You haven't got that good a memory." I described it. She said, "You're absolutely right." The reason that she remembered the

dress is there was a dressmaker in the apartment downstairs from where they moved that made clothes for the ladies, and that was ordered especially to be made and never picked up. The woman never came to pick up the clothes. They knew it would fit my future wife. She was a student, and they offered it to her. It was separate stripes in the skirt. That's what I remembered and could describe, and she was convinced that I wasn't just making up a story.

Gioia: During your college years, you studied music, but when you graduated, as I understand it, you were asked to promise that you would never teach music. Could you tell me how this came about?

Brubeck: It was worse than that. I avoided the conservatory, knowing I couldn't read, by – there were certain requirements that you had to do. You had to play other instruments: brass or windwind or string. Finally, you had to pass basic keyboard. I avoided that by taking clarinet. You were usually just learning the scales and simple pieces. I'd already taken cello from Dr. Brown's wife. So I was okay on strings, and I was passed on clarinet. Finally, I had to take keyboard. I decided, I'll take organ, and maybe they'll be just teaching me basics and they won't find out I can't read. The first day, I was supposed to practice at a certain time. It was an electric organ. The next day, I saw the organ teacher, and he was furious at me. He said, "You left the electric organ on all night. I'm flunking you, and I don't want to see you in this class." So I said, "Dr. Bacon, that's all right." I was relieved then. I wouldn't have to take organ. Then the last semester, when you're coming to graduation, I hadn't taken piano yet, so I was sent to the top piano teacher. After about five minutes, she just dismissed me. She went to the dean and said, "That boy can't read a note. He can't read." So the dean then called me in. That's when he said, "You're a disgrace to the conservatory, and I'm not [ ]." I said, "That's right." So it spread amongst the students and the teachers that I would not graduate with the class. Dr. Bodley, who taught harmony and some composition, who had studied with Nadia Boulanger, went to the dean and said, "You're making a mistake with Brubeck. He's harmonically one of the most talented students I've ever had." Then shortly after, the counterpoint teacher went to the dean and said, "You're making a mistake. He's the best counterpoint student I've ever had." Then the dean called me in and said, "I've heard some things about you from the teachers saying that you're a talented person and I should let you graduate. I'll let you graduate if you promise never to teach and disgrace this university." I said, "That's fine with me. I don't want to teach anyway. All I want to do is play jazz." He said, "I don't understand that, but I'll still let you graduate." That's how I got out. It was these other teachers going to my rescue.

Gioia: At time, while you were in college, what music were you listening to? What music was influencing your – what music did you admire at that time?

Brubeck: I grew up listening to Bach – from my mother – and Beethoven. All the classic literature for piano: Debussy, Ravel, and many other things, but those were the main things that she practiced all the time. So I had a knowledge of the good piano literature just by hearing it from her – hearing her teach it during the day, and then after dinner, she usually went into her studio, and when I was in bed, I'd be hearing her practicing. So I

had a lot of influence of great piano music. Then I loved Gershwin and Bartok, Stravinsky especially. Then there great jazz things. Ellington I loved, and Stan Kenton.

Gioia: When you were in college, did you have a record player? Radio?

Brubeck: Oh yeah.

Gioia: So you would . . .

Brubeck: Always keeping up with Ellington. I had a good collection of Ellington in the '30s, and my friends had good recordings – friends from the conservatory. So I was aware of the modern composers and of Debussy, Ravel.

Gioia: You celebrate your 21st birthday, and the next day, Pearl Harbor is attacked. What do you recall about what impact did that have on your life?

Brubeck: For my birthday I went to Concord to visit Howard, who was teaching at Mt. Diablo High School, where my mother had created that high school [ ] from there, and now he's teaching. He had graduated from San Francisco State Teacher's College. At this point he may have been taking some graduate classes at Mills. I was quite close to Howard, so I had gone to his house for my birthday – 21st birthday. We were at the service station, putting gas in my car, when the announcement came. The guy from the service station said, "They just bombed Pearl Harbor." That's the way I found out about it.

Gioia: After you graduated – you graduated a few months after that, and you were drafted. What would you have done differently if there hadn't been a war going on? What were your plans at that point of what you were going to do after college?

Brubeck: I was working at this point in my senior year. Many jobs were six nights a week in nightclubs. So I knew I could make – I was always getting union scale then, and you could live on that. So I wasn't worried. I had a fairly good reputation that I could work. So that's what I planned to do, was just continue playing in so-called "joints." Some of them were – some of my favorite places were not where the average citizen of the town would go, but the citizens that went there were the jazz fans, and usually African-Americans. I would be the only one supposedly that wasn't a Negro. I loved working there. I loved that atmosphere. If that's all I did the rest of my life, I would have been very happy. In fact, when I finally had to go on the road, if somebody would have told me, "You can always work for scale in a nightclub," I'd rather have done that than pursue what I had to pursue, which is a life that's not so great for a married man with children. Just let me work, and if looks like a joint, I'll be very happy, because that's where I'm happy.

Gioia: Is it true that you got married while on a three-day leave from the military?

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: When did that happen? How did that happen?

Brubeck: Iola was able to say, "If you can get away, I'll come down to the army camp, and we'll get married."

Gioia: Where were you stationed then?

Brubeck: Below Riverside, California, so it wouldn't have been too far, to go over the border. I decided, "If I can get a three-day pass, I'll go back home and go to Carson City, Nevada, get married and see your parents and see my parents." Nobody came to our wedding. [ ] To this day, when I think of the rigamarole my grandchildren go through and my kids about getting married – my family didn't even drive about 60 miles. They were camped at Silver Lake in the Sierras and it wouldn't have been too far to go.

Gioia: Was this at a city hall or a county office?

Brubeck: No, it was a church . . .

Gioia: Oh, it was a church . . .

Brubeck: . . . where I knew the daughter who used to visit in Ione from Carson City. She also went to College of Pacific. I knew her parents were in Carson City and her father was a minister. So her father married us, and her mother was a witness. Then we jumped in the car and three days we had to get back to bring her to Stockton and me go to Camp Haan below Riverside. We stopped the first night after Carson City at a motel owned by a family that had a daughter at Pacific. We stayed all night in that hotel and then continued to Stockton and then down to Riverside.

Gioia: A very fast honeymoon.

Brubeck: Oh man. It was mostly driving a car.

Gioia: Take a break.

[recording interrupted]

Dave, Russell has suggested a couple of questions, first about your first meeting with Duke Ellington. Can you tell us about that?

Brubeck: In the '30s and '40s the big bands were traveling to the West Coast to the point where you could sometimes hear two name big bands in Stockton on the same night. I think Ellington and maybe Basie just happened to be going through. Kenton would come through, and Woody Herman and Benny Goodman when he was about to break up his band, because the East Coast didn't value him. He got saved, I think, in Denver.

Gioia: That's right. That famous story.

Brubeck: Then Balboa Ballroom, maybe, where he really started getting an audience, which is a very strange thing, that he was almost – he was planning to break up, and a turnaround, because that audience in Denver really liked him, and then later on, in California.

But there were always bands coming through. It wasn't an isolated place, by no means. The way I heard, or met, Duke for the first time: he was playing in Stockton, and I went. Jimmy Branford [*sic*: Blanton] had passed away. He was on the West Coast, and he needed a bass player. He hired Junior Raglin, who was a bass player I knew in [ ]. I surprisingly saw Junior on the stand, and I went backstage and said to Junior, "I'm surprised that you're working with Ellington." He explained everything. I said, "That's wonderful." I told him how much I thought of Ellington, the records I had from the '30s, like *Warm Valley, Flaming Sword, Jack the Bear,* which has that wonderful bass solo on it. He said, "You're an Ellington fan. Would you like to meet Duke?" I said, "Oh yes." He said, "He's right in this dressing room over here. Let me bring you over." He knocked on the door and went in. I followed him. He introduced me. Duke looked up at me. I couldn't open my mouth. I couldn't say a word. I said to myself, this is ridiculous. I've got to get out of here. So I left. I didn't say a word to him.

Later on, he came into the club where I worked in San Francisco and said, "You belong – you should play in New York. You should come to New York." I said, "I don't have any jobs there." He said, "Let me see what I can do about it." So he got me a job at the Hickory House, and my agent got me a job at Birdland on the same week. My agent – you better not cross him – was Joe Glaser – or he'd drop you, or worse. So I took the job at Birdland, but I'll always remember that Duke had been so outgoing with me, being encouraging.

So the first time that I really talked with him – I was in awe of him and stayed my distance. We were on tour together. They put the sidemen in one big room and the leaders, Duke and I, in a separate room. That was the way they always handled the tour. I didn't know. I don't think I belong in the same room with Duke, but that's where I was assigned. So that's when I finally saw how the Duke lived, the great big trunks like you'd take on board a ship. They were like small closets. All his suits lined up and the neckties and shirts and shoes, and a dresser to dress him.

Gioia: So he didn't travel out of a suitcase.

Brubeck: No. I never equaled anything close to the way he traveled. It was unbelievable. But I got to see how the Duke lived. It was an experience.

We became pretty good friends all through the years. Even to the end of his life, he told Mercer, his son, that he wanted me to be an Ellington fellow at Yale. "Louie Bellson and Dave, I want to be fellows. I don't want people to think I only had black friends."

Gioia: Around this time did you also meet Stan Kenton?

Brubeck: Yes.

Gioia: Can you tell me about that?

Brubeck: I had written an arrangement for the jazz band at Camp Holland?. The musicians – only a few of them thought it was any good. The rest didn't like it. It was called *Prayer of the Conquered.* One of those that liked it very much was my old friend Ernie Farmer. He had copied it for me. He goes back to College of Pacific with me. Ernie said, "This is pretty advanced. Why don't you take to Stan Kenton? See if he'd like it." So I went to Kenton's house. When I came into the house, into the front room, there was no furniture, no rugs, nothing in the room but a grand piano. I said to myself, "Boy, this is the way to live." Pretty quick, Kenton came down from upstairs. He'd slept in a little late. He looked at the score, and he said, "Play this for me." So I started. I think I played something else, just to warm up. He said, "Where did you ever hear voicing's like this?" I said, "That's what I play." He said, "That's some very advanced voicing." Then he looked at the score, and he said, "I'll try this with my band. I'm playing the 'Bob Hope Show,' and we're rehearsing for it." I think it was the next day. "I'll meet you at the stage door," and he gave me a time "where I'll be on a break." He was there, right on the time we appointed. I took the parts into the band, and he ran it down. It sounded great to me. Then, after the rehearsal, he said, "Bring it back in ten years." I don't know what that means to this day.

Gioia: Perhaps you were ahead of your time. What year would that have been, roughly?

Brubeck: Let's see. I was in the Army, '42 to '46: '43.

Gioia: While you were in the Army, you were part of a group known as the Wolf Pack. This was a racially integrated jazz band.

Brubeck: Yeah. I integrated it.

Gioia: Had you worked with integrated bands before that?

Brubeck: Yeah. From the – even the octet in '46 had a saxophonist from San Francisco. I'm ashamed to say at the moment I can't remember his name. Iola would.

Gioia: We can fill that in. We're going to get the transcript, and we can add – we're going to be able to edit the transcript of these things.

Brubeck: Then I played with mixed groups [ ] '39.

Gioia: Where would that have been?

Brubeck: In the Wagon Wheel in Modesto. It was just two guitar players. They asked me to play with then.

Gioia: So there were three musicians playing.

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: Were both of them black?

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gloyd: [partially audible] Ted, before you get to Europe and this [ ] through, just the opposite, which is if Dave could tell the story about sitting in with a black band – Army band - on his way to Europe.

Brubeck: Oh yeah. I'll tell that story. After the band broke up at Camp Haan – there were three full-size 28-piece bands. We were told there would be one band left. That means two bands got to go. Some of us went in to the infantry. Some guys went to another camp as a band, but broken up from Camp Haan. Unfortunately, I went into the infantry. From the infantry, I had – I was in a group of – Oklahoma National Guard ran it and broke in the guys. They kept me on KP and latrine duty, so I didn't get basic training. But I was still shipped with the next bunch of guys that would be shipped out. We went across the country in a train, typical troop train. At different camps you'd stop overnight on the way to – the rumor is, we're going to Europe. We're not going to the Pacific, because we're headed towards the East Coast. You're never told where you're going, but you'd stop. I think it was a camp in Maryland.

Gloyd: Fort Mead.

Brubeck: Yeah. Fort Mead. A black Army band met the train and played as you got off and marched where you were going. When we stopped and you fell out of line, I said to the guys in the band, "That was great to hear a good band playing." They said, "We're playing tonight at the rec hall. Why don't you come and hear us." So I went. I was invited to sit in. They said, "Wow. This is pretty out there. Why don't you join our band?" I said, "Oh great. Wouldn't that be wonderful." So the next day I went there, and they said, "I'm sorry, but we can't have any white members. It's against the rules." So as bad as I wanted to get in there, bad as they wanted me – the next day we were in Washington, D.C., and we had a pass to go into Washington that night.

[recording interrupted]

I'm walking down the street, looking for some jazz someplace on my night on the town. I heard a saxophonist from about a block away. I said, "That's Bud Harr. I'm sure that's Bud" from my old jazz band at College of Pacific. I followed the sound. It was coming from a dance hall up a flight of stairs. I go up there, and it is my old saxophonist, Bud Harr, from – he didn't even say hello. He said, "Sit in, Dave." So I sat in with that band.

He seemed like the leader. The guys were saying, "Why don't you join our band?" I said, "Great." Bud said, "Yeah. That would be wonderful if you could get in the band." So I tried that, and they said, "Aren't you in the Army?" I said, "Yeah," and they said, "We're in the Navy. We're sorry, but we can't swing that."

So I'm back on the troop train, moving towards what I knew was the next step. It was outside of Boston, north of Boston, to get on a troop ship. I got on the largest troop ship that was going at that time, called the *George Washington.* We were to join a convoy of, I'm guessing, maybe 50 ships on the way to Europe. After a few days of this, the captain of the ship said, "I'm breaking out of the convoy. I don't like moving in a convoy. Too slow." So we broke out of that. He would zigzag, because the German submarines had to have so many seconds to send a torpedo, knowing where your next zig or zag – they don't know where it's going to be. We didn't get hit, although it was dangerous to be out of the convoy. We went on to England and never touched English soil. We landed in Liverpool, and we just got on a train that came out on the dock, so we were on from the boat to the train to get ready to go across the Channel, onto an English troop ship and then climb on down to a landing barge, where the front end drops open.

We were segregated after we got up on to the land and up the cliff and into what looked like cattle cars and across – we thought we were going to Paris, but all we did was see the lights of Paris. We kept going, to Verdun. We were in the mud hole at Verdun. [ ] Germans were in a mountain overlooking the area where we were. That's where the Red Cross sent two girls that were on a truck that later I found out a lieutenant with us had rigged that truck so that one side of the back of the truck would drop down and make a stage. There was a piano in there. We were sitting in the mud, on our helmets, and one of the girls said, "Can anybody play the piano?" My hand went up immediately. So I went up and played. The next morning we were replacements to go in. We'd go up that mountain, where a company had been wiped out the day before. We were supposed to go out there. While lined up to go, three of us were called out. There were two guys that had come across the country from Camp Haan, musicians. The guy – corporal in charge of entertainment, said that he had a piano player that had heard me and said I was better than him, and he wanted to go back and join his unit. I had the chance to hear him play, and he was great. I kept in touch with him, but he said, "I don't like it here. I miss my buddies. I'm in the Signal Corps. I'll be all right. You take this job. The colonel has said that you – that's in change of this replacement depot – that you should never go to the front." "I don't want that boy to go to the front" was circulated amongst the officers.

I formed a band, which he wanted, out of guys that had been wounded. One of them happened to be black: Jonathan Richard Flowers. How many years ago did we see him, Russell?

Gloyd: In Boston, right?

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gloyd: Maybe – I don't know. It's hard to say.

Brubeck: Can't tell me.

Gloyd: All those Boston – it all kind of runs together. But there's a follow through of the story of that pianist, which we heard three years ago in Daytona Beach.

Brubeck: That's his son.

Gloyd: Right.

Brubeck: The son of that pianist. I've got his name written down, because I always forgot. His father's name was a hard name for me to remember. He tuned my piano before a concert, the son, and he said . . .

Gloyd: We didn't know who he was. He was just the tuner that Paul [inaudible] used to tune the pianos.

Gioia: Small world.

Brubeck: Did he write to me or talk to me?

Gloyd: He talked to you. He came up to you.

Brubeck: He said, "I understand you knew my father. Do you remember much about him? Can you tell me how he played?" I said, "Oh, he was better than me," and the guy started crying.

Gioia: Leroy Pearlman has mentioned that the Wolf Pack once played on a show with Marlene Dietrich.

Brubeck: That's the guy that built the truck, Pearlman.

Gioia: He also said the band worked on the same bill as other well-known performers. Do you have any . . .?

Brubeck: Pearlman changed his name to Waxman. If you want to check up on him, Studs Terkel's book *The Good War* has an interview with him, and Waxman starts talking about me.

Gioia: I remember that.

Brubeck: You remember it?

Gioia: Yeah, I've seen the book. Yes. It's about the Battle of the Bulge.

Brubeck: And the Bulge has a good story with – that's how it was – who did we do that recording with, *Dave Remembers*? Walter Cronkite.

Gloyd: Private Brubeck.

Brubeck: *Private Brubeck Remembers.* Cronkite is talking about the Bulge, his memory of it, with me. You can get that from George Moore at my house, because they only allowed 10,000 copies with that CD to be released. They're all gone, but George has made a tape of it.

Gioia: After the war, you decide to go to Mills College. What determined that decision? Why did you decide to go to Mills?

Brubeck: My brother was studying with [Darius] Milhaud. He and Pete Rugolo went from San Francisco State [College] to Mills to get their masters degrees. They would be some of the first males to attend Mills. They allowed it on masters degree programs. It was through Howard that I heard about Milhaud. While I was still a student at Pacific, I hitch-hiked down to Mills to meet with Milhaud. He said – I knew I was going into the Army. It's often said I was drafted. I wasn't drafted. I enlisted by telling the draft office that I would go as soon as I graduated, because it was only one more semester. They said that's okay, as long as you go as soon as you graduate.

Gioia: So you actually enlisted rather than . . .

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: You didn't get a draft notice.

Brubeck: Yeah.

So Milhaud said, "After the war, you come study with me." That was great. I had something to always look forward to.

Gioia: How familiar were you with his music? Had you heard his music at that point?

Brubeck: *The Creation of the World*, I'd heard.

Gioia: When you began studying with him, how did he react to your music and to jazz?

Brubeck: [ ] class, the octet was born, when he said, "How many of you in this class play jazz?" Five of us raised our hands. We thought that was going to be the end of – like any other conservatory. He said, "I'd like you to write your counterpoint and your compositions for jazz instrumentation, if you want to." That's how the octet came in. Paul Desmond and Cal Tjader came over from San Francisco State any way their [?]. Have you ever heard the octet? I know you've heard it. So you know the members of it.

Gioia: Sure. Absolutely. Great recordings.

Let me ask you about other modern classical composers of that time. I want to start with Schoenberg, because you had an encounter with Schoenberg that I think was quite interesting. Can you relay that?

Brubeck: I'd heard so much about him. I was at Camp Haan in Riverside and made an appointment to be interviewed, or to meet him, at his home near UCLA, I think it was, and went to his house and talked with him. He told me to come back, I think, in a week and write something. So I wrote something, came back in a week, played it for him. He stopped me and said, "Why did you write that note?" I said, "Because it sounds good." He said, "That's no reason to write a note, 'because it sounds good.' There must be a reason. Do you have a reason?" I said, "No. That's it." I tried to defend, if it sounded good, should be the reason. He said, "Come with me." He went in to a different room, took out some keys from his pocket, opened a glass door. There were cabinets all around. He said, "I know every note of music on any page in all these scores. That's the reason. I can tell you, there must be a reason. And I know more about music than any man alive." That was our last meeting. I thought it was so different than Darius Milhaud.

Gioia: What was your opinion then, and your opinion now, of Schoenberg's music and 12-tone row?

Brubeck: I had heard maybe *Pierrot Lunaire.* Nothing much more than that. It was his reputation. So many people I admired thought he was really the master of this age. After the war, you either chose to follow Schoenberg or Schillinger or somebody like Stravinsky or Milhaud. For sure I didn't want to follow Schoenberg.

Today I use the 12-tone row to write a melody. All the time I'm doing that. But never in the harmony. Just the melody. But *The Duke,* which I wrote in the early '50s [ ] or '52, I didn't realize had a 12-tone row in the bass, until a music professor told me, "That's interesting, the way you use a 12-tone row in the bass line." If you analyze it, I got through every key in eight bars. So I'm influenced, but didn't want to be. But lately, when I'm trying to do something, I'll start a melody and think, oh, that's my goal, into a 12-tone melody. I just wrote a new one called *So Lonely.* It's on the current album, *The Indian Summer*. The opening theme is 11 tones. Then when I repeat it, I added some way to make it 12-tone, just wanting it to be 12-tone. It's terrible that I would dislike – I still don't usually like when it's strict 12-tone.

Gioia: Serialism.

Brubeck: Yeah. I don't like it too much.

Gioia: Let me ask you about another composer. Doug Ramsey has suggested that one of the influences on the octet was Stravinsky's *Octet* that he composed in 1923. Was that a work that influenced you?

Brubeck: Not me. It could have been Bill Smith. Bill probably knew it.

Gioia: A few years after you began mixing jazz and classical music, a term came about called "Third Stream." People would talk about Third Stream, sort of a blending between jazz and classical. Did you feel like you were part of that movement? Or did you feel that was something very similar to what you were doing? Or that came after you? What was your reaction to the Third Stream?

Brubeck: Gunther [Schuller]'s such a brilliant musician that I respect him. If he uses the term "Third Stream," it's probably correct for what he wants to express. But I think that Jelly Roll Morton was listening to the music from the French opera house quite often, and that they're just discovering things of Jelly Roll that were never published or no-one else was too familiar with until recently. I'd like to hear what Jelly was doing. I would say that there's certain influences in jazz. Why wouldn't you call Art Tatum's *Elegy* or *Humoresque* . . .

Gioia: Or *Black, Brown, and Beige.*

Brubeck: . . . Third Stream?

Gioia: So your sense is, jazz has always borrowed something from classical music, and that that's actually part of the tradition of the music, going back to Jelly Roll.

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: Let's go back to the time at Mills College, how you learned and studied then. What was your practice regimen then? How did you practice the piano? What did you do during those years or before to develop? Did you play though scales and Hannon? Or did you just improvise? What would you do?

Brubeck: Nothing that [ ] classical good pianist. Today I do Hannon once in a while, but I never bothered when I should have, when I was young, to help get some fingers more quickly.

Gioia: Did you do any scales back then, Cherney, or any of these exercises?

Brubeck: No.

Gioia: What would you do when you were sitting at the piano by yourself after classes? You would just play songs? Would you compose? Would you improvise?

Brubeck: Improvise, and play songs, and alter them – take off.

Gioia: How did you develop your chord voicings? Did someone teach you those? Did you do them by ear?

Brubeck: Mostly by ear. Milhaud one time showed me a chart that he developed for polytonal chords. You can't remember something that somebody just said, "Look at this." So I wasn't – what I was aware of, that he'd probably tried every possible tonality. The chart was so big – pages.

Gioia: Did you study off that?

Brubeck: No, I wouldn't have brains enough to study off of it.

Gioia: So basically, you've got – your sense of harmony was really unique in jazz at the time you were doing these things. So really, you were doing these by ear.

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: You were working through combinations of notes at the keyboard, trying to hear what sounded right to you, and you would bring those to the gig.

Brubeck: Exactly.

Gioia: Tell me about the formation of the octet. How did that . . .?

Brubeck: Right there in Milhaud's class.

Gioia: In terms of performing, my understand is that between 1947 and 1949, the octet had only three paying gigs.

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: But did you also perform – did you get together informally to play and practice?

Brubeck: Yeah. And once in a while, somebody will say, "Oh, but I heard you at University of California, Berkeley." It's a gig I forgot. So maybe there were four or five. But there weren't many. At Mills College, Marines Memorial in San Francisco, College of Pacific in Stockton, University of California, Berkeley.

Gioia: I'm told that your father, after hearing a concert by the octet, once told a newspaper writer, "That was the damndest bunch of notes I ever heard." Is that true?

Brubeck: Noise.

Gioia: "Bunch of noise I ever heard."

Brubeck: Yeah. He said that, and he meant it. I told him he was the best critic who ever heard me.

Gioia: Did you have a sense at that time that the music you were doing had commercial potential? What were – did you have – here you are. You're doing very experimental music. A few years later you're famous. Did you anticipate that at all, or envision that happening?

Brubeck: Yeah, to the point where I would justify the hardship I was putting my family through. I would in complete confidence sometimes question my wife whether this was correct or not, knowing that even if she said no, I was going to still do it, but I wanted to know if she were ready to give up. I've seen too many times where a love affair would break up over the musician devoting too much time to what he was doing, or the husband and wife – I've seen many [ ] "If you don't give up your drive in music, I think we'll have to get a divorce." I've seen that close up, with guys that are working for me. "Either come home or divorce." With Paul Desmond, it was with the understanding that Paul would become the greatest saxophonist and his wife would become the greatest actress. They split up, and they were going to come back together. It can work that way. It's strange how you've got to have somebody that really understands and is willing to sacrifice almost everything – a roof over your head, even.

Gioia: In terms of timing – let me know Dave – my thought is that we can go another 15 minutes today. Is that all right?

Brubeck: Sure.

Gioia: March 1949 your octet performed at the Marines Memorial Auditorium. This is almost a very important historic event, I think, in the history of jazz and modern jazz and West Coast jazz. How did this come about? Were there other acts on the bill? How did you get this venue? What are your recollections of it?

Brubeck: Technically, the octet should have been called something like the workshop ensemble. It wasn't under my name, because we were all equals as far as talent goes. Again, Iola will know the man's name who wanted to produce us like the octet. We ran into him recently someplace. I should never forget him, but sometimes I forget people's names. I remember a lot about him. He came to my house and said he'd like to do a concert with the octet, but it had to have my name on it. So I told the guys in the group, we will have to use my name or we can't have the concert. What do you want to do? They said, take the concert. After the concert . . .

Gioia: Was that at the Marines Memorial Concert?

Brubeck: Yeah.

Gioia: Okay. That was that engagement.

Brubeck: But I want you to check this whole story with Iola. After the concert I think Jimmy Lyons went to the head of NBC. Maria Corbin – check these names – was the head of classical music at NBC. She went to the concert. They both went to the head of

NBC and said, you should do a program with this group. One's the head of jazz – Jimmy – and one's the head of classical music for NBC. So the guy's thinking it over, and said okay. Then he said, "But we can't afford an octet. Can you do it with a trio?" That's how the trio got born, from the octet.

Gioia: At this point in time, you are doing a type of modern jazz that sounds very different from what anyone else is doing. When I listen to those octet recordings, they just sound unique. They don't sound like anything else. At the same time [ ] mostly back East with Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, [Thelonious] Monk, Lennie Tristano – how aware were you of this? How much did you listen to it? Did it influence you? It seems like there's these two different styles of modern jazz.

Brubeck: I think you're influenced by everything you've heard, and you can't not hear Dizzy and Charlie Parker. After all, I toured with Charlie. When you play at Birdland, in those days, Dizzy's there, and Charlie.

Gioia: When did you first hear that music, though? Probably when you got out of – after the war?

Brubeck: Yeah. I sure didn't hear it during the war. I was very removed. Then when I started hearing it, I thought it was great, but I wanted to do what I did, and it was fine if they did what they did. There was no law against each of us, or every guy, doing what he wants to do musically.

Gioia: Let me ask just one more question, and then we'll wrap up today. At the time you began working with the octet and the trio, San Francisco was seen more as a dixieland type of town, Lu Watters and later Turk Murphy and all that. Were there other people doing really modern, adventurous jazz in San Francisco that influenced you, or were you really – how did you relate to the rest of the jazz scene there? Did you have many interactions with these dixieland people?

Brubeck: I liked – one time we were in the car, driving down to play in Los Angeles. The kids were up behind the seat in the coupe. Two of them could lie down up there, Iola and I in the front. As we drove down the road – I think it was near Stanford University that I said – excuse me. We were talking about Lu Watters and the . . .

Gioia: Lu Watters and the dixieland scene in San Francisco.

Brubeck: And who was the other?

Gioia: I mentioned Turk Murphy.

Brubeck: Turk Murphy. I said, "Turk Murphy. Look, there's a sign in front of that nightclub. Turk Murphy plays there." My little son, Darius, said, "Stop. We should hear Turk Murphy." I said, "What do you know about Turk Murphy?" He goes, [Brubeck

sings a melody popularized by Murphy]. I said, "How could you . . .?" He said, "You've got a Turk Murphy recording at home." Do you remember that song?

Gioia: Sure.

Brubeck: That's the way he was. From the time he was little, he remembered everything.

Gioia: Why don't we stop it here. We've covered all the way up to the start of the trio. That will give us tomorrow. We can – we made it up to 1950, more or less.

[recording interrupted]

Gioia: This is Ted Gioia. It's August 7th, 2007. This is the second day of the oral history with Dave Brubeck conducted by the Smithsonian Institution as part of their program to conduct oral histories with NEA Jazz Masters. We are at Chris Brubeck's house in Wilton, Connecticut. This will be the second and final day of our oral history.

Dave, yesterday we finished talking about the octet. I now want to talk to you about some smaller combos you had at the time. I'd like to start with a group called the Three D's, which I believe first played at a place called El Baracho and then at the Geary Cellar in San Francisco. Can you tell me how this group came about and what kind of music it played?

Brubeck: The Three D's was composed of Darrell Cutler, who was from Stockton, California, and at the University – College of Pacific at the same time I was. We worked in Stockton as undergraduates. He went on into the Marines and was a Marine aviator and squadron leader. Very sharp guy in every way. So he and I were friends before the war, and after the war we got together again. That's one D. Don Rattle, also from University – College of Pacific, from Stockton, is the second D. He's still alive, living in Santa Cruz. The third D is Dave Brubeck. That group grew out of the friends at Stockton.

Gioia: There was a vocalist that sometimes joined the group, Francis Lynne. Is that correct?

Brubeck: Francis Lynne.

Gioia: This is unusual, for you to be in a group with a singer. Did you play differently to back up a singer? Or would this be the same kind of experimental stuff you were doing with the octet or trio?

Brubeck: This would be all popular songs.

Gioia: You were playing standards.

Brubeck: That's it. Yeah. Francis just sent me her new recording, which is very good. She's married to Johnny Coppola, the trumpet player who is still working in the San

Francisco area, but he spent much of his life as either lead [trumpeter] or jazz [trumpet soloist] with Kenton or Woody Herman or – almost any group you can think of wanted him. He's a San Francisco musician.

Gioia: One night Paul Desmond comes to see the Three D's. He comes home that night. He tells his wife that he had heard a piano player who was a genius. So this was his first encounter with you. What is your first recollection of Paul? Can you tell me about your first meeting with him?

Brubeck: You really want to know the first?

Gioia: Yes I would.

Brubeck: I was on my way overseas in the infantry. Dave Van Kreidt, who had come to live in the bomb shelter at the College of Pacific – unannounced one day, I came back from school and there in the cellar was Dave Van Kreidt on one of the rusty old beds. He'd moved in without asking anybody. What he did was visit classes that he liked. He wouldn't register. But Dr. Bodley lived across the street, and he'd take private lessons. [ ] He was close friends with Paul Desmond. During the war, Kreidt would write to me and say, you should be in this band. He'd describe the band at the Presidio in San Francisco. Pete Rugolo was in another part of the Presidio, and my old drummer, Joe Dodge, was there.

Anyway, when I'm on leave, knowing I'm going overseas, Kreidt set up an audition for me to get into that band. So I came and played. I was to play with some of the musicians. Paul Desmond had been picked to be one of the people that would play with me. There were a few others – Dave Van Kreidt. They would pass judgment on me. The first tune we played I think was a blues in G, and I started it out in G in the left hand and B-flat in the right hand, and Paul said, "Wigsville. Those nutty changes." He called me – later on he called me Surly Sue and other words, and said I had a purple Army jacket on, which I don't believe, but he swore that I was one of the most radical guys he'd ever seen.

I didn't get into that band. It would have been wonderful not to go overseas, because I was classified as a rifleman, and not the happiest future ahead. That's my first encounter with Paul. He loved to elaborate on, "Who is this crazy man?"

Gioia: Let me ask you about another person that you met probably around this same time: Jimmy Lyons. He became a very important advocate for your music. How did that come about?

Brubeck: When I was – the first place that the Three D's played was right in Stockton . . .

Gioia: Is that so?

Brubeck: . . . in a nightclub. From there we moved to San Francisco, to El Baracho.

Gioia: And then the Geary Cellar.

Brubeck: Then the Geary Cellar.

Gioia: Okay. I didn't know that.

Brubeck: The Geary Cellar was under the Geary Theater. NBC was around the block, in the same block, their main studios, and Jimmy was broadcasting every night. I can't remember meeting at the Geary Cellar, but apparently he came in. Then when we played the Marines Memorial, he came to that concert. Ralph Gleason came to that concert and really gave us a bad review.

Gioia: Ralph Gleason gave you a bad review.

Brubeck: Oh yeah. He was good at that, at giving me bad reviews, because he was moldy fig at that point. A highly intelligent guy. A good writer. He gradually changed his tune, because he was up against too many people that were approving of what I was doing. But what really changed him was *The Real Ambassadors* at the Monterey Jazz Festival. Everybody that was at that concert that night thinks it was a hallmark concert for Monterey, and highly emotional [ ] Louis Armstrong in a whole different light.

But I got away from what you were asking me.

Gioia: About you meeting Jimmy Lyons. You said he came and heard you at the Geary Cellar and at the Marines Memorial.

Brubeck: There he decided to have us do a show, and eight people were too many for NBC, but they would do it as a trio. That's where I think Jimmy Lyons and I started getting more friendly and knowing each other. I'd appear a lot on his show. In fact if you've got the old octet record, Jimmy Lyons is narrating *How High the Moon.* So you know that he was involved. Then the classical – Maria Corbin was very impressed with the writing of the octet, considering it classical. So we right away were crossing between the jazz and the classical, which we were trying to do. When we played a concert, we'd divide it into three sections: one would be classical pieces that we're playing; two would be jazz pieces that we composed or arranged; and the third, a jazz session, which would be quite free. That's our format for concerts. We would have done that at Marines Memorial. So you could see, if we were doing something like Dave Van Kreidt's *Fugue on Bop Themes,* that crosses over between bop and classical, but it's a serious fugue that Milhaud would have looked at and said – I remember him saying, "This is a very good fugue," and that's in our fugue class. So it grew right out of Milhaud's class.

There's a whole great amount of music that was lost when Kreidt took the octet book to Australia, when he moved there. He had it in a garage that was flooded. I've tried and tried and tried – even if it's got ink all running, we could put it together – but they won't cooperate, the sons and relatives that could have done me a great favor and sent that back

after Kreidt died. So we lost so many classical compositions and jazz compositions. If we hadn't recorded, we'd have nothing.

Bill Russo's arranger-copyist – Bill wanted us to play in Chicago. We said we had no music. Russo talked with him. They said this man that works for Bill Russo will listen to the recording and write it all down.

Gloyd: This was for the Chicago Jazz Festival. Neil Tesser was the one. Do you know Neil? The writer.

Gioia: Jazz writer. Sure.

Gloyd: Neil called me up and said that the octet was the most quintessentially perfect group in jazz, it needed to be featured, and could we do it? I told him the story: we had no music, but we have a recording. He said, "But there's a recording." I said, "Yeah." He said, "I know the perfect guy to transcribe it, Jeff Levinson."

Brubeck: Didn't he work [ ]

Gloyd: So I contacted Jeff. We sent him a tape. The music started to come to me a week before the festival. This was in August of 2001. I looked at this, and the very first thing I saw was a Bill Smith arrangement of *What is This Thing Called Love?* in E-major. Bill is a very creative person, but he's also extremely practical and lazy when it comes to solos. He's not going to write a solo for himself that he's going to have to play in F-sharp. So I called him up. I said, "Bill, what did you write *This Thing Called Love?*? What key?" "E-flat." I looked at every other piece. Every piece was off by a half-step because of the tape speed, which Jeff never would have known. He's transcribing. I am frantically now trying to fix everything. This is early stages of the computer. It's taken us some a couple – there's still some wrong notes in Dave's arrangement of *Just the Way You Look Tonight,* which we just cannot find it.

The performance was over the Labor Day weekend in August [*sic*: September] of 2001. Dave was incredible, because he set this whole thing up with the audience in terms of World War II, coming back, everything that took place. Our world all changed – because he brought Pearl Harbor in on it, and our world changed 12 days later.

Brubeck: So that's the only music we have.

Gioia: It's a tragedy.

Brubeck: Why did I think Bill Russo?

Gloyd: It's confusing because of cross-references, but this was Neil Tesser. We did it – we've done it at Avery Fisher, and we got the greatest single review we ever got in the *New York Times.* Lew Soloff was the trumpet player. Just before we went on stage, Wynton [Marsalis] came back stage. He's looking around. He's going, like, "Lew.

You've got music in your hand. Have you been practicing?" Lew said, "Wynton, this is the hardest music I've ever played in here, in my life." He said, "I'm going along. It's all fine. It's all easy. I turn a page, and suddenly I'm doing a solo in 12-tone."

Gioia: I can believe that. I think to this day no-one has ever done music like the octet. I listen to something like *Playland at the Beach* or . . .

Gloyd: The other interesting thing on this composition is that – why is *Cannery Row* so incredibly effective? It's because Dave uses minimalist writing which all came from the octet. The hardest damn thing in working on the octet music is there's no place to hide. *Just the Way You* [inaudible], You've got this counterpoint between alto and trumpet.

Gioia: Every note is important.

Gloyd: Every note.

Brubeck: Can you imagine these New York guys saying, "Where'd you get these musicians?" Bill Smith came and played live in New York. Their mouths dropped open. I heard one guy say, "Where's he been all my life?" You remember that?

Gloyd: Yeah.

Brubeck: These were top guys – number one guys.

Gloyd: Lew Soloff says it all, right? *Rondo* is the piece that he was talking about, which is, it's very nice, it's Dave's piece, it's just – then you turn the page and the next thing, you've got a solo in 12-tone.

Brubeck: I think I got you off the subject.

Gioia: Yeah, but it's an interesting topic, because the octet music is very important, and I still don't think it's as widely heard as it should be, because it's unique. It really is. I don't think – people talk about what Miles was doing, but what you were doing is just worlds apart. I think it's got these classical elements and these twists and turns in it. Miles's music sounds very straightforward by comparison, I believe, not to detract from *The Birth of the Cool.*

Brubeck: One of the greatest books of writing was lost in that flood. It's just heartbreaking that I couldn't get Kreidt's family to [ ].

Gioia: I want to talk about some of the financial challenges you faced during this period. You had begun playing with Paul at the Band Box in Palo Alto, and that required you to take a cut in pay from the Geary Cellar. Soon you even lost that gig, when Paul took an engagement at Feather River. Around this time I understand you were struggling financially. You were trying to supplement your income by selling sandwiches in San

Francisco and doing other things to make money. Tell me about this period of your life and how you survived through it.

Brubeck: Quickly summing it up, I had a very good job at the Geary Cellar with the Three D's: scale plus and a steady job. Paul hired away Francis Lynne, the vocalist, and Norman Bates, the bassist. He would be the leader and take a group where he had a job at a place near Stanford University called the Band Box. I just remembered why it was called the Band Box, because I remembered the song that Paul had us sing: "The Band Box is the joint for you. Get high when you're happy and blind when you're blue. The whiskey is old, but the music is new at the Band Box. If the state you arrive in encourages jivin', relax on a sofa with a chick you can go fa'. That's why the proletariat make merry at the Band Box." That's the way we'd open the show every night.

Then he gets a job at Russian River, where he worked other summers, and he says he's going there. I said, "What happens here?" He said, "We just break up, and when I get back, maybe I'll get everybody together." The owner said, "Dave, why don't you keep this job and get another horn player?" I would have gotten Bill Smith, because Bill and I worked a lot together. Paul flipped out, saying "It's my job, and I won't have you playing here." So he goes to Feather River, and I'm trying to figure out, what's the big attraction to Feather River, which I can never figure, because he loved playing with this group that he's just destroying. He loved gambling more than he loved the group, and it was near Reno. He could drive over to Reno. He loved the slot machines. He was hooked. It's like a guy that's hooked on cigarettes, which he also was hooked on. That's why he did that.

So I had to take another job. This was at scale at a lake about 100 miles from San Francisco: Silver Log Tavern, it was called, on Clear Lake. You can see Clear Lake. The owner of that place had the same name as the owner of the Oakland Raiders.

Gloyd: Al Davis.

Brubeck: Al Davis. I never knew if it was a young Al Davis, the real McCoy, or not.

Gioia: We'll look into that.

Brubeck: We worked there. Lived in a corrugated iron tent – about the size of a big tent. No win[dows] It got very hot every day. We'd take the kids to the lake every day and let them just float in the water. They were too young to swim or anything, but that cooled them off.

I got a phone call from Jimmy Lyons saying, "Are you interested? I think I've got a trio job for you at the Burma Lounge in Oakland, right near Lake Merritt." I said, "I'm very interested." So we went there. Clint Eastwood came in there when he was 15. He recently told me he used to sneak in there, because he was tall, and it was dark at the entrance. They didn't see he had a young face.

Then Jimmy called me. He said, "I think I can have you play at the Blackhawk in San Francisco." So the trio moved to San Francisco. We opened the Blackhawk as a jazz club. It was a store turned into a place with chairs and a small stage, which had to hold the Count Basie band or Duke Ellington, with half of them on the floor. That worked. I worked three months of the year, then three months off, then back for three months. It didn't pay much more than scale, but it was steady. But I couldn't make it. So I started trying to go to L.A. That's where I met Gerry Mulligan with his quartet.

Gioia: So in the time you were off from the Blackhawk, during those three months, you would do engagements in Los Angeles.

Brubeck: If I could get them.

Gioia: Where would you play in Los Angeles?

Brubeck: Where Gerry was playing, one night a week.

Gioia: At the Haig.

Brubeck: At the Haig, yeah. They hired me six nights a week. Red Norvo was playing on the off nights, with Tal Farlow and Charlie Mingus and Red, which was one of my favorite groups. I had just started Fantasy Records, so I talked the Weiss brothers into recording Red Norvo's trio, which I think is some of the greatest small combo recordings ever made. I talked them into recording Gerry. Gerry said I gave him his first steady job by moving him into the Blackhawk. Then Red Norvo came up there. But I still had to work. That's when I started investigating going on the road more.

Gioia: Let me ask you about a couple of other things that happened around this time. Is it true that you taught an extension course on the history of jazz at U. C. Berkeley?

Brubeck: Absolutely.

Gioia: Tell me about that.

Brubeck: Remember I couldn't teach.

Gioia: That's right. You violated your promise there.

Brubeck: I knew we had no work at this time and that that would pay $15 a week. Maybe we could live on that. The way I figured out how to do that is Iola did the lecturing to the class, because she was a speech major in college, and acting. So it wasn't a problem for her. At this point I couldn't open my mouth in front of people, but I played. She'd ask me to play examples. In that class was a young Chinese student [ ] jazz than we could ever dream of knowing, so it was rather embarrassing when we were stuck with asking questions. Russell?

Gloyd: Herb Wong.

Gioia: That was Herb Wong! I think Herb started writing for *Down Beat* when he was 13 years old or something.

Brubeck: He was just a kid.

Gioia: Yeah I know. I don't think the editors there knew how young their San Francisco correspondent was.

Brubeck: So we got to know Herb really well, and of course we work with him all the time at Monterey now. We're old friends.

Then we moved over to San Francisco extension.

Gioia: For San Francisco State?

Brubeck: No. Where did we teach in San Francisco?

Gioia: I was asking about teaching jazz at U. C. extension.

Iola Brubeck: Yes, in Berkeley and in San Francisco.

Gioia: At San Francisco State?

Iola: No. They had an extension . . .

Gioia: Oh, it was a Berkeley extension course but took place in San Francisco.

Iola: In San Francisco.

Dave: Where are you going to sit? How you ever found this.

Iola: Actually, I knew that there was a file someplace that we'd thrown all this kind of stuff in, and George found it.

Dave: Can you bring Iola a chair, Russell? You'd rather have a straight chair, wouldn't you?

Iola: A straight chair is fine.

Dave: There you go. Will she be able to be heard?

Gioia: Should we get a microphone for her? Will the microphone pick her up?

Kimery: It should be able to pick her up.

Iola: I'll speak up.

Gioia: Okay. Listen on the headphones. If we need to stop . . .

If you look at the 1949 phone book for San Francisco and you look under Paul Desmond, you see that he's listed as a music teacher. So it's clear that Paul took students around this time. Did you do that as well? Did you take any piano students?

Dave: We all discovered that if we put down "jazz musician," we'd never get a phone.

Iola: That's true.

Dave: So we were months and months and months trying to call the company. They'd always make up some excuse. One of the Mills girls lived downstairs on 18th Street. Who was that?

Iola: That was Bert.

Dave: Bert Corvello, music major from Mills. Worked at the telephone company. She said, "They will never give a jazz musician, or even maybe a musician, a phone. You'll be last on the list, and the list is long. Put down 'teacher'."

Iola: This was shortly after World War II, and there really was a priority list about who got a telephone.

Gioia: And jazz musicians were at the bottom of the list.

Dave: At the bottom.

Iola: At the bottom of the list.

Gioia: After drug dealers and everything else, you had jazz.

Did you ever take piano students during this period? Did you ever teach piano?

Dave: Yeah.

Gioia: How did you approach that? Was that something that you found satisfying, or frustrating?

Dave: It was interesting. It's all right. I am still in touch with one of my students.

Do you think Earle would . . .?

Iola: Earle, are you talking about?

Dave: Do you think Earle would mind being . . .

Earle Weatherwax is his name. He went on to be an entertainer in nightclubs as singer and pianist. We see him quite frequently. Chris see him, and Danny sees him a lot.

Gioia: Where does he live? Do you know, Russell?

Iola: He lives in Arizona most of the time.

Gloyd: He's involved with a young lady named Georgia Frontiere, who owns the St. Louis Rams . . .

Gioia: I know who Georgia Frontiere, sure

Gloyd: . . . and they have 36 homes.

Gioia: Okay. [ ] from day to day.

Gloyd: Primarily they live in Sedona and St. Louis. She just bought a private rail car. They're going to be in Malibu in . . .

Dave: When we play at Pepperdine, we usually stay in their Malibu [home], if it's offered to us. I don't know if we should say she owns 36 homes.

Gloyd: It's probably down to 34.

Gioia: We will edit that out of the transcript. Things like this we will edit out. They don't need to go into the Smithsonian.

Gloyd: And that's not counting the new railroad car.

Dave: And you better not mention Georgie. But she's really interested in helping the Institute too. Don't you think?

Iola: Yeah.

Dave: And he is too. They have become very close friends, and yet I always feel you have to protect her, and him, because . . .

Gloyd: She's a remarkable woman.

Dave: She was an opera singer at one time.

Gloyd: Last time we were at dinner, she said to me, "Russell, life is so strange. I started off life singing in an opera chorus, and now I own an NFL team."

Gioia: 1947. Your first son is born. How did the responsibility of parenthood impact your life and career?

Dave: Oh . . .

Gioia: No impact at all, I'm sure.

Dave: It was a good surprise. But when I think of Darius's birth, there's a lot that goes into that. Staying up all night with my closest friend, Bob Skinner, the pianist in San Francisco, and I taking Iola to the Children's Hospital and nothing too much happening. For some reason we were dismissed, and you went to the birthing room, I think.

Iola: Yes.

Dave: So we drove out to the beach – Playland at the Beach – area and just sat in the car. I'd known him from the day he was born in the house that joined the back of our house in Concord. He was born at home like I was. He's six months later. We had to go back to the hospital, and Iola is not having the baby. It's going on and on and on in the evening. Now, it's getting close to time to go to the Geary Cellar and start playing with the trio. Still no baby, but finally she had the baby. I told her – now I knew I'm late for work – I told her "I've got to leave, but I don't want to leave until I know you're aware of what's going on and what's happening. Here's a little bell." It was shaped like a bell, a black bell. "If you need a nurse, because I'm leaving now, you just press this button." She nods. "Now put it down." She did. I went back and said, "What is that little black object there?" She said, "It's an umbrella." It kind of had an umbrella shape. So I thought, oh boy. Can I leave this woman? I finally just trusted that a nurse would come and she [ ]. So I got to the Geary Cellar and the owner, standing behind the bar, said, "Brubeck, you're fired." I said, "My wife just had a baby. That's why I'm late." He said, "Drinks on the house."

Iola: [inaudible] a wonderful message from Darius, that he just wrote a note, "Welcome to this beautiful world."

Dave: That's when I brought Darius home. I sat him on the grand piano – Howard's. We were living with Howard – grand piano, and played Milhaud for him, so that that would be the first music he heard, I had that note, "Welcome to this beautiful world," which it's so amazing for a guy that's in a wheelchair, in pain every day of his life, dependent on his wife to push into airplanes or into auditoriums. Nothing ever stopped them from seeing plays and movies and going to restaurants. And she's so small, and he was so big, but nothing stopped her. She's still alive, 104, and living in their old apartment in Pigalle.

Gioia: Tell me about how Fantasy Records came about and about your relationship and impressions of the Weiss brothers.

Dave: There was a teacher from Stanford University named – the trombonist from Stanford – had the first – recorded me.

Iola: Oh. You're talking about Scobey, right?

Dave: No.

Gioia: We can fix this later, once again, the transcript.

Iola: I'm not sure where you're heading, so I can't . . .

Dave: He said the first recording.

Gioia: These were the masters that were made, and then the Weiss brothers acquired those masters, because he couldn't pay the bills for the pressing.

Dave: Yeah.

Iola: That's right.

Dave: And who was that leader's name?

Gioia: I've got that in my own notes. I could go back. His name was Lloyd somebody? No? Maybe not.

Iola: It must have been that early dixieland trombonist around San Francisco.

Gioia: We don't need that.

Dave: He recorded me, and he did not pay for the record session: Cal Tjader, Ron Crotty, and myself. So when I asked him – I said, "My sidemen are complaining that they haven't been paid and the records are out." He said, "I can't pay you, because they're not selling at all." So I went to the Weiss brothers, who produced those records – Jack Sheedy was his name.

Iola: That's it.

Gioia: That's right. Jack Sheedy.

Dave: I said, "Jack said that they're not selling." The Weiss brothers said, "Your records are selling. His aren't, but he's keeping his company going by selling your records and keeping the money." They said, "Why don't you go to him and tell him that if he can't pay for the record sessions that [ ] like to buy the recordings back and own them." So I went to him. He was glad to sell them to me for cost. That would have been around three hundred dollars or four, maybe at the most.

Iola: I think it was less than that.

Dave: You do?

Iola: Um-hmm.

Dave: Then the Weiss brothers said, "We'll just take those, we'll keep manufacturing them, we'll call it Fantasy Records, and we'll be partners." The records started really taking off. Jimmy Lyons was playing them every night on his broadcasts, so you heard them up and down the West Coast and out past the Hawaiian islands to the sailors at sea who would come into San Francisco for their leave and look me up. We had a lot of sailors at places like the Blackhawk because of Jimmy's show.

So we just kept making trio records. Everything was going pretty well. Then I went to Honolulu, where I got in a swimming accident. The accident was bad enough that the ambulance drivers I could hear talking said, "We're bringing in a d.o.a." They brought me to the Army hospital, because Queens Hospital – I didn't have any insurance or any money – wouldn't take me. They said, "Were you in the service?" I said, "Yes." They said, "We'll call the Army hospital."

They put me in a holding cellar under the hospital on a gurney. They said, "If you move, you'll probably be paralyzed, or die." So I lay very still all through lunch hour. The doctors were up eating lunch in the hospital. Then they brought me up and started working me in various ways, with weights over my head. Finally they called Iola. You take it from here.

Iola: It was quite late at night before I heard from anybody. Then a doctor from the Tripler? Army Hospital phoned me and said, "There seemed to be some life in his limbs. He's going to survive, but now it's a question of how much he's going to have use of his limbs." But the recovery started quite remarkably fast, because he had – how many pounds?

Dave: 10 pounds.

Iola: 10-pound weights at the chin strap, and the weights would go over the back of the bed in the hospital. So he just had to lie flat with this thing stretching you. Dave's lower back was very much affected too, but what they were really working on was what was up here, because that was the crucial part.

Gioia: How long before you came back to California?

Dave: I was 21 days in traction. I'm trying to get out of the hospital. Finally the doctor said, "I've never talked to anybody that wanted to get out so bad. There's one thing that maybe would work. If I let you go, you have to promise me to go back to Waikiki Beach, where you got hurt, and float [ ] hours a day, because what we're doing here is pulling your neck off the nerve, and one other way that can help it is to float. Your body starts floating and the bones moving somewhat into the right place." Can you believe that? So I go right back where I got hurt, and more than a month of floating, right?

Iola: About a month, I think.

Dave: Then he said, "If you'll do this every day of your life." As soon as we finished yesterday, I went and floated. At home, I have a pool in the basement. I used to have the pulleys in the basement. I could work my neck that way. Some days I'd be better off than others. At the Blackhawk, I could not stand up when the set was over. By that time, nerves and bones had shifted into a different position, from sitting, but I could pull myself up by grabbing the top of the piano. Then there would be a blackout on the stand. I'd stand there until feeling came back in my limbs and arms, some nights better than others.

Gioia: Is it true that while you were recovering, the Weiss brothers pressured Cal Tjader and Ron Crotty to find another piano player?

Dave: Very true. I felt very betrayed in some ways.

Iola: Actually it was Cal and Jack Weeks rather than Ron Crotty.

Gioia: Okay. It was Jack Weeks. Thank you for clarifying that.

Dave: Jack, yeah. But maybe they didn't want to do it. They had to work, though. I think they got Vince Guaraldi. No. [John] Marabuto. What's strange is, we always were friends, even when I felt that the Weiss brothers and everything I had started, they should have waited until I recovered, because it was maybe three months or four months before I could play again. This arm and these hands weren't working up to snuff at all.

Gioia: We'll talk in a second about the formation of the quartet and about Paul Desmond joining the band at that point, but I just want you to speculate. If you had not had that swimming accident in Hawaii, do you think you would have kept with the trio? Is it possible your career could have gone off in some completely different direction if that hadn't happened?

Dave: Probably, but Paul was not going to take no for an answer. He wanted to come to Honolulu. I had to talk him out of that. Free. He would just come, so he could play. If you read his book . . .

Gioia: Doug Ramsey's book.

Dave: . . . , you'll see in the introduction, it was – a drive in his life, was to play with me.

Gioia: So the quartet might have formed anyway, inevitably, because Paul was very focused on this.

Iola: I think that it might also – Dave, I think, always had in the back of his mind wanting to revive the octet, because there were times when you were playing with a trio

that you would add Paul and Dick Collins when an opportunity arose. So I think in the back of his mind, you were thinking in terms of a quartet or quintet, but Paul was the one that was centered on it.

Dave: And you letting Paul in the house, when I said, "Never let him in the house."

Gioia: Tell me about this.

Dave: He had really destroyed my life when he went to do Feather River. That was a real betrayal. So I told Iola, "Never let [ ]. If he's coming around, I don't want to see him." So she let him in.

Iola: He came back from New York, knocking at the door and all enthusiastic, wanting to see Dave. It was pretty hard to say no.

Dave: I was hanging out diapers on the back porch on one of those old pulley wires. I turned around, and there's Paul, standing on the landing and saying, "I'll wash your dishes. I'll wash your car." What else was he going to do?

Iola: He'll baby-sit, do the grocery shopping. He would do anything.

Gloyd: Before you leave Hawaii, mention your bank account.

Dave: My bank account? Oh yeah. I was broke, and I didn't know how I was going to get home. The doctor told me, "You cannot fly." You see, to sit was murder. He said, "You cannot sit on an airplane." I just turned down an hour ago going to England to play with the LSO and the BBC, because the next day was in Humphrey's, in San Diego. I said to Russell, "I can't do it. I can't sit." When I have to sit, to this day, it is really hard. I have to do it, but I do it, but it's not fun.

Iola: Anyway, the bank account was . . .

Gioia: Shall we take a break? Are we running out of tape?

Kimery: Yeah. Just hold that thought.

Gioia: Let him change the tape here.

Iola: Yeah, I was thinking of that, because it was like a minor miracle.

[recording interrupted]

Gioia: We were talking about your bank account.

Dave: The bank account. How am I going to get home? I'd only worked two weeks in Honolulu before the accidents, and we had to pay rent and food for our family. So there

was nothing left in the bank. Zero. Maybe a few dollars. So I went to the bank to close the account. They came back with the statement that I had – five hundred, wasn't it?

Iola: I don't remember the figure.

Dave: It was a lot of money in those days – to my credit. I said, "You've made a mistake. I never deposited any money." They said, "It's here, it's yours, and you might as well take it." I said, "That's going to solve how I get home to San Francisco, but I still believe you're going to want this money from me someday." So I left my parents' address, because I didn't have an address. "Eventually I'll pay you if you write and tell me." They said, "All right." So that way we bought tickets on the Lurline, which was a Maxim ship from San Francisco to Honolulu and sometimes on to . . .

Iola: Hong Kong.

Dave: – Hong Kong was it? Or Sydney.

Iola: Mostly it was back and forth between the Hawaiian Islands and San Francisco.

Dave: So that's the way we got home. I asked my dad, "Did you put money in my account?" He said, "No." I asked Joe Glaser. Joe said no. I asked anybody – brothers. I never found out where the five hundred came from. But I'll tell you, without saying – I just thought of something. [ ] this woman in the world who used to . . .

Iola: That's the only person that I could think of.

Dave: . . . used to come into the club.

Iola: Doris Duke.

Gioia: Doris Duke. So it might have been her.

Dave: Yeah. She was very nice to me. I just thought of it now. Could it? Who would have money like that that I would know?

Iola: It's a possibility, because she came into the club, and people who came into the club were aware of the accident and what happened. So it could have been her.

Gioia: A miraculous story there of the money when you needed that money showing up.

Iola: Now there's a Doris Duke Foundation, and I hope it's helping jazz musicians still.

Dave: It is. It does help jazz musicians.

Gioia: Let me ask you about the early quartet recordings. Those are quite extraordinary recordings, because they sound very spontaneous, but they also very well planned and

conceived. I'm trying to understand, what kind of preparation or rehearsal? How planned were they? How did you get that kind of combination between the planned and the spontaneous?

Dave: Is this the quartet?

Gioia: How about the early quartet recordings.

Dave: When people talk about "cool," I recommend that they listen to an NBC broadcast from a club, live in Los Angeles, *This Can't Be Love* and *Look for the Silver Lining.* To this day, I think that's some of the most spontaneous, hard-swinging, far from West Coast "cool," so to speak. How can they call us "cool"? That is wild. Have you heard that?

Gioia: Absolutely.

Iola: Did that come from a head arrangement, and then just free after that? *Silver Lining* was a head arrangement, wasn't it?

Dave: Yeah, sure. Nothing written out. Then, at the end, Paul plays *The Eyes and Ears of the World* [Brubeck sings that melody]. That's just crazy.

Gloyd: You were furious with him.

Dave: There's one cymbal crash that everybody thinks is cymbal, and it's me going "schewwwww," telling the drummer to start filling. Herb Barman and Bull Ruther. What a wild rhythm section that was. So I always think, boy . . .

Then we took that group to New York, didn't we? To Birdland.

Gioia: What would have been their first – would that have been the first time you performed in New York?

Dave: Yeah.

Gioia: Tell me about that, your reception there and how . . .? Did they know about you in New York? Because of the recordings, they must have.

Dave: I guess the word had gotten – we'd had a good review from John Hammond, a really good review. Then two other reviewers – the one married to the actress. A friend of Barbara's . . .

Iola: The trio had had some good reviews, and the quartet was newer on the scene, but in some of the magazines at that time, there were good reviews of the trio recordings. *Metronome.* Oh, Barry Ulanov. Is that who you mean?

Dave: Barry. Who is he married to?

Iola: Barbara Bel Geddes.

Dave: There you go.

Gioia: Let me ask you about your own musical development at this time. When you had the quartet during these early years, did you have a practice regimen? Did you have rehearsals? Or did you do most of your music on the stage?

Dave: Most of the time, it would be something they developed on the job [ ]. There were real rehearsals in our house. I can't remember too many other rehearsals. Can you?

Iola: Occasionally there would be rehearsals in preparation for a recording, if it was new material that you had not played in concert or in clubs. The [*Jazz Impressions of*] *Eurasia* album, I think there were a few rehearsals, because it was all new.

Gioia: So if you were going to record standards, it was very straightforward, but if you were going to do *Time Out* or something that was different, then there would be rehearsals.

Let me ask you about the transition from recording for a small label like Fantasy to moving to Columbia and how that was different for you. How did that change things, all of a sudden working for a major label?

Dave: When you consider that we were using Ampex maybe for the first time. Our first session for Fantasy was with the trio. We went – we had a three-hour session. At about two and a half hours, we had to realize that the Ampex [tape recorder] was not running at a steady – it would go flat or sharp. Weiss brothers said, "We've got to go to acetate," which was right there, "and do four tunes, and then we'll be all right." So we did four tunes. One tune, Russell says, we repeated. The others were just first take. Our first session was made in a half hour, four sides.

The Weiss brothers usually referred to my music as "garbage." Remember that? Which . . .?

Gioia: They made a lot of money off of it.

Dave: When you'd be in the studio, and somebody would say, "Okay. Let's go over this garbage," it's no way to feel good about what you were about to do. Your mood in studios – you want to have a certain dignity. The word "garbage" always stuck in my mind.

Gioia: I remember I met Max Weiss. I did a long interview with him. He told me, "I'm not a jazz guy. I've never been a jazz guy. My philosophy is, you can't fall in love with the product. It's just a product."

Dave: That's a good description. Sol Weiss must have been an excellent recording engineer, because those old trio things are so well done. Sometimes I think with maybe one microphone. Now it takes us seven mics on the drums, balance, and all that.

Iola: Were the first recordings that you made for Columbia in the studio without as many mics and so-on as they do now? I wasn't around for those.

Dave: No, but we had great, famous engineers. Columbia had the time guys: Clough. Fred?

Iola: Fred Clough.

Dave: Fred Clough often did our sessions. We had to do three albums a year. That was my contract, and I never missed, that I can remember, in 17 years at Columbia.

Gioia: I think you did more. I think if you – I look at the discography. I've done a count. You did at least three a year, sometimes more.

Dave: Then one for Fantasy [ ] we all decided. Many years – that would be four – then there'd be special products, where I had very little to do with it.

Gioia: I remember I once went through your discography, and I did a count. It seemed every 12 to 14 weeks there would be a new Dave Brubeck recording on the market.

Dave: And Paul Desmond's remark: "This group can make a recording for a streetcar token and a ham sandwich."

Gioia: Let's take a break now, because we've been going for a while. Keep every . . .

[recording interrupted]

Dave, we were talking about your recordings for Columbia. You made so many of them, many of them based on various themes. You did *West Side Story* or *Time Out* or *A Tribute to Cole Porter* or *Dave Does Disney.* How were those projects decided upon? Was that you sitting down with the quartet? Or was it George Avakian? Or was it, in the middle of the night you would get an idea? How did you determine the various themes for these projects?

Dave: That's a good question, because I remember somebody would say something like, you should start playing show tunes of some of the most well-known Broadway shows and just do a whole series of those. So we did Cole Porter and . . .

Gioia: Richard Rogers.

Dave: . . . Richard Rogers. Then my favorite is . . .

Iola: Matt Dennis.

Dave: . . . Matt Dennis.

Iola: Who suggested that? Did that come from George Avakian?

Dave: That came from me. My friend in the Army taught me all the Matt Dennis tunes. He was Festus in "Gunsmoke." Ken Curtis. He could sing with the big bands and often took the place of Frank Sinatra or somebody. He was that good.

Gioia: Let me talk about once again your relationship with Columbia. After *Take Five,* you have a huge hit single, unusual. It's unusual for any jazz musician to have a hit single, but for an instrumental and in 5/4, these are unique events. After that, was there pressure on you from Columbia to become more of a hit-maker and do more commercial music? Or did they give you freedom to define what you wanted?

Dave: They had to give me freedom. Once in a while I'd remind them that my contract allowed me freedom.

Gioia: Is that so?

Dave: I think so. Don't you?

Iola: Yes.

Dave: People find it hard to believe, because it's so hard to put that in. But I made my first contract. I didn't have an attorney. So I made a lot of mistakes. But artistic mistakes, I covered my territory very well, because that – I wasn't thinking about money and residuals and that. Columbia could take advantage of young artists, claim all their compositions, and put it in their own publishing. I didn't know about that. That's when you need a music attorney that is going to protect you. I finally got that with Jim Bancroft from San Francisco and Richard Juler now. They started protecting me in the ways of commercial recordings that you want to protect yourself, because when they saw that Columbia had told me they weren't going to put out *Time Out* unless I adjust the royalties for the rights.

Iola: Because they were all originals.

Dave: They said, when it's all originals. I think they gave me 12 cents for the whole album. When Jim Bancroft saw that, he got it up, because [ ]. Congress was approached by BMI and ASCAP and companies like that, so we got a protection of, if you did that, it had to be 36 cents, instead of 12. So that is how much I lost over the years, is two-thirds of – so getting a good attorney is very important.

Gioia: At Columbia – when I think of Columbia during that period, I know one of the influential people there is John Hammond. Hammond was an admirer of your music, but

I don't often hear his name in association with your time at Columbia. Did you have any dealings with John when you were at Columbia?

Dave: No, and I kept thinking I would have. But it was different artists represented the guys that – Cal Lampley. Do you remember that name? The first jazz that Teo [Macero] ever did was, I believe, with me. So, in a way, I broke him into the business. He's such a sharp guy. He caught on quite quickly.

Gioia: When I look at your various achievements, there's so many of them. But there's one I want to focus on that's not often talked about. It seems to me that you were very key in moving jazz from nightclubs and onto college campuses. The whole idea – today you look at – so much jazz takes place on college campuses, but as I look at it, you were almost the first. Tell me how that came about.

Dave: It was through Iola, and even before Iola would be Darius Milhaud, telling us to play for the Mills College assembly. Then we went up to College of Pacific with the octet. Then Iola . . .

Iola: Then U. C. Berkeley. The octet played there.

Dave: You started writing to . . .

Iola: Yeah. Just started out with a list of colleges within driving distance of San Francisco and offered. Sometimes worked out a deal with the student association, where if they guaranteed a certain low amount, that would cover the effort of getting there. Then you split the profits over so much. So the association made some money and had the incentive to try to bring people in, and the band got more money. This really worked, because – especially if there was a good music department and the students were really interested. Students couldn't really afford to come into nightclubs, and some of them weren't of age to go into a nightclub. So bringing the music to them seemed the logical step for new music and a new group.

Gioia: November 8th, 1954. Your picture's on the cover of *Time* magazine. How did that impact your career? Did this – for good or for bad. Did it change your life?

Dave: There's rumors that it's not all gravy.

Gioia: There was a backlash, I would imagine.

Dave: Yeah, a backlash for sure. There's stories abound that the bad luck that somebody had after being on the cover, or bad criticism. That did happen to a certain degree. But to balance it, the good that comes from it balances any – by far, the good is far better than then negative.

Gioia: Is it true that you were on the road in the same city as Duke Ellington the day that [ ] story?

Dave: Touring with the Duke Ellington band. I believe we were in Denver at the time. There was a knock on my door, seven in the morning. There's Duke Ellington with *Time* magazine, saying, "Dave, you're on the cover."

Gioia: What a remarkable way to find out.

Dave: I was hoping – because I knew they were doing a story on both of us – that Duke would come first, as he should. There it was. There was no way. But soon Ellington was on the cover.

Gioia: Tell me how *The Real Ambassadors* came about.

Dave: Through Iola, we would write about Louis Armstrong and cultural exchange and how we should do a show. I remember Iola and I were always busy driving the kids to lessons. When I was gone, she'd have to drive children to 20 lessons a week. We counted them up.

Iola: Yeah, we counted them.

Dave: Six kids: ballet, horseback, saxophone, trumpet, piano, cello. We'd always take writing pads along, because you've got to sit in front of the house or the school where somebody's in taking a lesson. We would have to take advantage of those times. We'd go right to work while they're in taking a lesson. I remember working on the *Ambassadors.*

Iola: A lot of it was written in the car.

Gioia: Was there ever a thought of taking that to Broadway?

Dave: I did. I went away thinking I'm going to be recognized as a Broadway show writer, because one of the top guys that I took this to was so thrilled with the music I'd written. I remember he called his wife into the room and said, "Listen to this." I played it for her and him again. That was Josh Logan. He sent one of his people in production up to Lenox School.

Iola: That was Leyland Hayward.

Dave: Oh. That was Leyland Hayward. So there's two top names that were very interested. Then finally when it came time to not just interest, but putting up the money – I remember this session with them. They said, "Dave, the Broadway audience is not ready for a show on integration. You've got to remember that you're lecturing to an audience that's there to be entertained." He made his point, that we were trying to – I wouldn't call it lecture, but make people aware of the unfairness of segregation. They came close to producing it, but said it wouldn't work. Soon there was *Raisin in the Sun,* on Broadway.

Iola: Actually *Raisin in the Sun* predated that.

Dave: [ ]. We went to a reading of it.

Iola: Yes, and also another play that did not get on, that she wrote – I can't think of her name at the moment – that Nemeroff was trying to produce.

Yeah, I think it was difficult. That was – *The Raisin in the Sun* was a drama, and I think people expect a little more . . .

Gioia: Social issues.

Iola: Yes. They're willing to accept that, but in a musical – at that time, they expected a musical to be entertaining and not much else. It wasn't until later that musicals started taking on a message, so to speak.

Dave: Then when we finally did - the only performance was Monterey Jazz Festival. Iola was on one stage, doing the narration. You couldn't do the entire show, but we could – on the other stage with Louis Armstrong, Carmen McRae, Lambert, Hendricks, and Bavan, Louis's band, and my band. She would read in between. Explain your part.

Iola: There was just a narration that tied the songs together into some kind of story – sequence could be followed. But it was primarily music, very few words, except what were in the lyrics. But the message got through. It was really an extraordinary night, because so many musicians came backstage afterwards that were so moved by it. Of course, with Louis Armstrong singing it, how could you miss?

Dave: Joe Glaser wasn't anxious for it to be a success, because he'd have his top moneymaker and me, who was doing well, tied up for six shows and a matinee a week. He could probably send Louis out and make that much money in one night. So he wasn't hot for this. But he did set it up, when I told him I wanted to do this show with Louis, that I could meet Louis in Chicago. His manager, Frenchie, when I went to the hotel, would not tell me Louis's room number and really kept me away from Louis. So from one of the hall porters, I found out Louis's room number and went up and sat on the floor in the hall between rooms until a waiter was bringing Louis's dinner. When he said, "Room service," Louis came to the door. When he opened the door, he saw me sitting on the floor. He said, "Dave, what are you doing?" I said, "I was waiting to see you." "Come in. Why didn't you come in?" I said, "I was told not to bother you, by Frenchie." "Oh, Frenchie." He said, "Don't listen to him. Have you eaten anything?" I said, "No, I haven't eaten yet." He said, "Bring that boy the same thing you just brought me." So I went in. We ate. He said, "Dave, I hope you'll sit in with me tonight." I said, "Oh, Louis, I don't think I want to do that." "It would be nice if you did." I said, "I did hope to come to your show." He spotted me in the show and brought me on. There's Billy Kyle at the piano. That's the first jazz pianist I heard when I was a kid, was the Billy Kyle Trio. I'm thinking, "My goodness, [ ] taking Billy Kyle's place!" But it all worked out. Real kind people, full of smiles. It was a wonderful experience. Even Ralph Gleason gave me a

great review at Monterey, and Leonard Feather gave it a rave review. Other reviewers came from all over the country. Some, I think, from Europe were there. So it was very successful, and very successful with the real aware jazz audience, so why wouldn't it have gone on Broadway, or even a musical film? It should have worked.

Iola: Also I think it's important to say that it meant a lot to Louis Armstrong. I read an interview he had with Leonard Feather. Louis was in Stockholm someplace. He was talking about *The Real Ambassadors* and saying that that was one of the most important things that he had done, because I think he felt this was his opportunity to make a statement.

Gioia: I look back at that period, Dave, and you yourself were something of a real ambassador. I think 1958 you go to Poland . . .

Dave: Turkey.

Gioia: . . . through the State Department. Then you go behind the Eastern curtain, and then down into the Middle East, Turkey, places like that. What kind of reception did you find? Were people aware of your music? Were they responsive to it?

Dave: Poland was very responsive. Turkey – we played in movie houses in Istanbul. Ankara, we played in a nightclub. Was it Isfahan?

Iola: Izmir.

Dave: Izmir. So Turkey was good. Very good musicians in Turkey. In those days in Europe – and consider that Turkey's almost part of Europe – there's always big bands at the radio stations. Sometimes more than one. Really great jazz players. So those kind of people were very aware of American jazz players. In England and Germany, to this day they still have radio bands, and they're great. They're on call every day. That's the kind of job that jazz musicians want to get. Get off the road. It pays well, and it's steady work. Some of my friends have been in a band in Germany maybe 15 or 20 years.

Iola: Yeah. I think Herb Geller just retired.

Dave: Herb and Paul Desmond were together in that band . . .

Iola: Jack Fina?

Dave: No. When Paul was in New York and came home.

Iola: I thought that was Jack Fina.

Dave: That guitar player. Jack?

Gioia: Eddie Duran.

Iola: Alvino Rey.

Dave: Alvino Rey.

Iola: On that Turkey date, I think it's important to mention a group, *Blue Rondo a la Turk.*

Dave: I was on my way to a radio station to be interviewed in Turkey. I was walking through the streets. There were street musicians playing in 9/8. [Brubeck sings a 9/8 rhythmic pattern.] Like that. So when I got to the radio station, there was a wonderful musician named June [ ], a friend of Gunther Schuller. I said to June, "What is this rhythm? di-ya di-ya di-ya ta-ta-ta di-ya di-ya." He turned and looked at the band and pointed, and the whole band started playing something in 9/8 with that rhythm. I thought to myself, boy, when I get home, I'm going to write a tune – or maybe tonight, I started using that rhythm. I'll put harmony to it, and my own melody. That's how I started *Blue Rondo a la Turk.*

It's too bad that I said "a la Turk." I was trying to be amusing by using Mozart's term. The reason that Columbia did not push it, they said *Blue Rondo a la Turk* is too long to be listed on a jukebox. *Take Five* is just perfect. I said, yeah, I did that to myself. I named Paul's tune *Take Five* and mine *Blue Rondo a la Turk.* But *Blue Rondo* was played as much before Columbia started pushing. They said they had to have an A side and a B side. They though *Take Five,* being that title, should be the A side. If they had left it alone, they'd have had two monster hits. To this day, *Blue Rondo* is played all over the road. *Take Five,* played more. But they were equal for a while.

Gioia: I can believe that.

Iola: They should have split it up . . .

Gioia: Two singles.

Iola: . . . so they could have two A sides. But that was the thinking in those days, that the B side just was along for the ride, and they pushed the one side.

Gioia: Tell me about Joe Morello coming into the quartet. How did that change things? And is it true that Paul Desmond was unhappy with that change in the band?

Dave: Paul Desmond asked me to go hear Joe Morello. He was playing at the Hickory House with Marian McPartland. We were at the Blue Note. So we went over there in our intermission. This marvelous drummer. He was playing brushes. Paul just loved somebody that played brushes and didn't interrupt with some hard licks with sticks and clashing cymbals. So he said, as long as Joe Dodge has to go home to San Francisco, maybe this is the guy. So I talked to Joe. Joe was going to be on a vacation, because Marian McPartland was going home to London. So he would be out of work until she

returned, which was quite a while. So he said, "I'm interested in your group, but your drummer's out to lunch. I want to be featured." I said, "That's interesting, Joe. What do you mean 'featured'?" He said, "Doing solos and experimenting and really doing some things I'd like to do." I said that would be fine with me.

Our next and first job was Chicago at the Blue Note. In the first set, at the end of the first set, I gave Joe a solo. He tore the place up and got a standing ovation. Joe always says, "a little standing ovation." How can you get a little standing ovation?

Then we went [ ] room, and Paul came in and said, "He goes or I go." I said, "Paul, he's not going to go. I like very much the direction we can go. Things I've wanted to do clear back to the octet: different time signatures and things with the trio." So he said he's leaving, and the bass player, Norman [Bates] was going to go with him.

The next day I had a session at Columbia in Chicago. Those guys stood out on the other side of the control booth and wouldn't come in. So Joe and I played for about three hours. I don't know what ever happened to it.

Then we went to the job that night, thinking, it's going to be a duet. Just when it was time to start, they came in, just on time, walking into the club. So I was able to save my group. I don't know what I would have done, but I would have gone without them, because I could see where Joe and I were going to go. You know, Joe could play a different tempo with each hand and each foot at the same time. I've never seen anybody that had that much control. Now, there might be guys in this world at that time that had that much dexterity, but I hadn't heard them. I knew this guy's a phenomenon.

So I was so happy, and Paul was so unhappy. That's a terrible situation, when you've got two star players and they're not getting along. It took years for them to come – like Joe said, he loved Paul. At the end of Paul's life, it was one of Joe's students that Joe asked to go live with Paul, when he was dying. They became so close to each other. Everybody in the group was close to each other. Eugene Wright was so wonderful all those years.

Gioia: The quartet disbands at the end of 1967. How'd that come about?

Dave: I wanted to be with my family. I gave the guys a year's notice, which no-one believed. It was documented by NBC with . . .

Iola: Chet Huntley

Dave: . . . Huntley and Brinkley Report. We were playing in Pittsburgh in a big hotel with a big ballroom. They announced – if Iola, you can remember – a national . . .

Iola: An American institution.

Dave: An American institution.

Iola: The end of an American institution.

Dave: So it was big news. That was the announcement on that news channel that almost everybody heard. Then going to the airport the next day in the car to go home, Joe said, "Dave, I know you'll be calling me next week." I said, "Joe, I don't think so. This is it." He said, "Aw, you'll call me." The guys could not accept [ ].

Paul, and at times Gene, did play with me. Right up to his death Paul was playing some concerts with me, even when he was so ill that he had to have transfusions all day long. He came to my concert at Lincoln Center so he could play his last concert. He played his first concert with me and his last concert with me. At the end he – we got an encore and Paul said, "I can't go back, even one more."

Gioia: Both of you are native Californians, but you've moved to Connecticut. How did that happen? When did that happen? Why?

Dave: We came for a year. I talked the wife, Iola, and the family into making a move, and we'd go back to our wonderful home in Montclair, outside of Oakland.

Gioia: What year would that have been that you moved out here?

Dave: 1960.

Iola: Did you ever see our house in Oakland, Heartwood Drive?

Gioia: No.

Iola: It's still there. It was very outstanding at the time that it was built. I guess people still drive by to look at it, because it was one of the first cantilevered houses.

Dave: It cost $27,000. I just closed in my sun porch, which cost $40,000.

Gioia: There's been a little bit of inflation.

So you came out here for a year, and you decided to stay.

Dave: We were here, and the kids liked the school system. Everything seemed to work out here. At that time, some of the school situation in Oakland wasn't going as well as it had been. Is that how to put it? It was better out here by far.

Iola: In high school, yeah. The lower grades were fine, because that was more neighborhood, but once you got to a central high school, it was getting pretty tough in Oakland. But the main reason was that there were not that many places on the West Coast to play. So Dave was spending most of his time on an airplane going back and forth to the East Coast.

Dave: And recording out here.

Gioia: So the proximity to New York made this a good location. There were good schools. It's a beautiful setting too.

Dave: My A&R man from New York . . .

Iola: Irving Townsend.

Dave: . . . Irving Townsend said, "I am going to be head of Columbia on the West Coast, so I am leaving my house. It would be a great place for you to live while you're out here for a year." It was a great place, right here in Wilton. We found our property where we are and decided to build here and to live here. I can't believe Iola, that's fourth generation California, and I'm second at least, maybe more, California – and I wanted all of our kids born in California. If we were on tour, I'd say to Iola, "Go home." So now - we had five children when we moved here, and then we had one more in Connecticut that isn't a Californian, Matthew. But the school [ ], they were fantastic in this area.

Gioia: Let me focus on 1971. Columbia starts going through turmoil. They're changing their roster. They're moving away from a lot of the jazz acts, and your contract is terminated at that point. How did that happen? What were your reactions? Why did that happen?

Dave: It's a strange thing. I didn't know that I had been terminated. No-one told me. I forget how I finally found out.

Iola: I know.

Gloyd: Jim Bancroft came to negotiate a new deal. He called up the business [?].

Dave: You tell them.

Iola: The attorneys came to negotiate, because it was time to renew the contract. Every year it had been renewed just sort of automatically. No-one even talked about it. It just renewed. So when they said that their business, the reason they had come, was to negotiate Dave's next contract, then they said, "Oh, there's nothing to negotiate. We've dropped him."

Gloyd: "We dropped him six months ago."

Iola: No notification, even.

Gloyd: There was another artist they dropped at the same time too, which proved a very funny story.

Iola: Tony . . .

Dave: I will sell that story. There was a world meeting of – Columbia representatives from every part of the world were meeting in New York. They request who they'd like to hear of their artists. It's usually someone that they've done business with for years and is doing well. That's who would entertain at their gathering. So Goddard Lieberson, then president of Columbia, called me and said, "Could you come in and play for the Columbia meeting." I said, "I'm no longer – I've been dropped from your company." See, he'd been kicked upstairs and Clive Davis, I think, was moved in to be president. Goddard was running the Yankees – the baseball team – a children's store . . .

Iola: A conglomerate of industries. But Clive Davis was the head of the record.

Dave: So I got to the meeting. Everybody's glad to see me, like they have been for years. I see Tony Bennett. I say hello. I said, "Tony, I don't belong here." He said, "Why?" I said, "They've dropped me, and yet Goddard has begged me to come and play." He said, "They've dropped me too, and Goddard asked me to come." So here are the guys that have dropped. I'll tell you, we had done a good job for Columbia over the years.

Gioia: And still do. Those recordings still sell in huge numbers.

Dave: I remember seeing Tony go through a low period, and then, because of his son or something, to get back to Columbia and just go sky-high in sales. He's still doing it. I could be doing it too, but there's problems [ ]. I'm still with the label, but no agreements or anything. They're mostly sending out my old records and repackaging them, instead of – they should be doing new things if they want to keep up to date with me. But I have three other companies now, Telarc, Concord, and old Fantasy, all under one big company. So I'm doing fine, but I'm not doing what I should be doing with SONY Legacy.

Gioia: Around this same time . . .

Let's go on. My thought is another 15 minutes, take a break . . .

Dave: All right.

Gioia: . . . but if at any time you want to . .

Around the same time, jazz musicians are starting to play synthesizers, wearing psychedelic clothes, trying to become rock stars. But it seems to me Dave – I look at your career and it seems like you never – I was talking to Ken about this last night. I can't think of a single project you did that seemed really overtly commercial, or something that you did for the money. But there must have been pressure on you to try to do commercial things.

Dave: Yeah.

Gioia: Can you talk about that?

Dave: Somebody told me recently that there's 160 CDs where I'm the leader. I don't know if there's that many . . .

Gioia: There could well be.

Dave: . . . but I can't think of one that was done strictly as a commercial thing, except maybe *Red, Hot, and Cool.* That was done so quickly, without me really knowing about it. But it's a good album.

Iola: I was going to say, Dave, the musical content had nothing to do with it. It was the promotional aspects of it . . .

Gioia: It was very commercial, I'll say, because the music is fine.

Iola: . . . that they connected, the lipstick and the cover and that sort of thing. But the musical content had nothing with it. You would put that out probably anyway, with a different cover, if they hadn't made this commercial tie-in.

Dave: So I guess I haven't done a real commercial idea on any of the recordings. If I have, it's few and far between.

Gioia: You played a little bit, I think, of Fender Rhodes electric piano. Never extensively, but dabbled with it. What was your reaction when these electric keyboards came into use?

Dave: It might have been early in this whole business. I had a Baldwin electric piano. I had written a piece that was recorded on Decca, where it needed a kind of organ sound for one sound. I brought along that one keyboard and pressed the "organ" button. Do you remember that?

Iola: Was that *Truth is Fallen*?

Gloyd: No, *Gates of Justice.*

Dave: [*The*] *Gates of Justice.*

Gloyd: It's on [inaudible].

Dave: So that's the only time. But my sons have used synthesizers and electric keyboards.

Gioia: Let's talk about Two Generations of Brubeck. Does it make it easier to be a bandleader, or does it make it harder? Like when you collaborated on *The Real*

Ambassadors. How does that change the dynamic? Or does it? Is it just like any other band?

Dave: Right now, my sons will tell me, "When are we going to play together again, Dad?" They want [ ]. So the important thing is at the end of your life, your sons really want to play with you. There were times when we were going out as a family group, where there would be disagreements from the wives of the sons. That puts the sons in a situation where they have a pull between, am I loyal to the old man or am I going to have divorce coming up? When that happened, fortunately I usually lost, because I didn't want to be the reason that their marriage went to pieces. Then the marriage always went to pieces after I bowed out. That happened with my own sidemen that I had for years. "Come home, or I'm getting a divorce." He goes home, and they get a divorce.

My sons have been really wonderful to me, and they've been wonderful to Iola. I went through period where their wives were accusing me of things that my sons now wouldn't dream. At the time they might go along, saying, "Oh, is that true?" to their wives. Saying, "Is that what he's doing, taking advantage of me?" When I told my attorney, Jim Bancroft, he was saying that the salaries were a little different when I hired my sons. They seemed more than when I hired just regular guys that weren't my sons. I said, "Yes, and my sons are all making more than me," but I was being accused by their wives of taking advantage of them. This is the kind of thing you don't want to have happen. As soon as those wives left, there was never a problem again.

Gioia: Your children have had musical careers . . .

Dave: Am I in dangerous territory?

Iola: What is it?

Dave: Am I in dangerous territory saying this?

Iola: No, no. It's all right. But the thrust of the question was the dynamics within the group itself. My observation was that off the stand, it was father-sons and on the stand it seemed to me like it was with any other group, where the musical standards were that you had to live up to a certain standard. It was – that was business. That was my observation.

Gioia: I give you credit, because I know in my own situation, trying to – when I've had opportunities to do things in a commercial setting with members of the family, I just shy away from it. I don't want to complicate the family relationship. But you seem to do it. Your children have really flourished as musicians. Was that encouraged from an early age? Did you know at a very early age that your children were going to be musicians? Or was it something that you nurtured, or really came from them?

Dave: I think it came from them. I'd be rehearsing, say, at home with Gerry Mulligan and Jack Six. The kids would come home from school and go right to the rehearsal and sit there quietly. My son Danny eventually studied with my drummer. He'd been brought

up watching Joe Morello. Joe even left his drum set for Danny [ ]. Michael loved – who's stopped playing – he and Paul Desmond were so close. He loved Paul's playing and loved to be with Uncle Paul. The kids all called him Uncle Paul. They thought he was my brother, for years. Very close. Eugene Wright – did Eugene leave a bass in our house? Where did that bass come from?

Iola: There was a small bass at our house, but I don't know whose it was. Maybe it was Eugene's.

Dave: Chris would come home from school when he was a little kid, and he'd go lie down under the piano where I was playing, where the bass was stored, so it wouldn't be kicked when you walked through the living room. You don't want to kick and knock the bass over. So if it's under the piano – he'd be under the piano with the bass and be fingering the bass at my rehearsals. One day, we were doing a recording at our house for a piece called *Don't Spindle, Mutilate* . . .

Gloyd: *Don't Fold, Spindle, or Mutilate.*

Dave: You remember that recording?

Iola: Yeah, for the Canadian Broadcasting Company.

Dave: There was a tough piece in a screwy time signature that whoever was on bass with my group at the time couldn't get into it. He said, "Why don't you have Chris play it?" You remember? So Chris came out, sight-read it on electric bass, and cut it perfectly. Danny was on cymbals. He was ten years old. So even hanging out at rehearsals, here's a record session where the kids did something constructive.

Iola: I remember one time when Gerry Mulligan was at our house. The kids came home from school. I guess – I don't know whether you invited them or what, but anyway, they – Chris and Dan started playing with you and Gerry. I remember when Gerry was packing up to go home, he said, "Boy, have you got it made. You have an in-house rhythm section."

Gioia: Let me ask you about Gerry Mulligan and then we will take a break. Tell me about that collaboration. How did you approach that? Would you approach playing with Gerry the same way you would with Paul? How did that come about? There was a lengthy period there where you often collaborated with Gerry.

Dave: Yeah, and Paul often played with Gerry.

Gioia: That's right as well, yes.

Dave: He was a musician that couldn't resist playing when he was around. He just had to sit in, and nobody would say, "Don't sit in" to him, because it always seemed to add something that just propelled whatever group he sat in with. I remember at the Newport

Jazz Festival George Wein saying, "That Gerry. He's all over the place, sitting in with everybody." Maybe some people didn't like it, but I liked it.

We first got to know each other in that period where I brought him to Fantasy. Then we often did concerts where his group would play and then my group, or my group and then his group, depending on the situation. [ ] in Europe with both groups. Russell, would you remember the years?

Gloyd: It was in the '90s.

Iola: Late '90s.

Dave: We toured together all over Europe. He had a very strong group.

Gloyd: Ted Rosenthal was his pianist.

Dave: Ted and – the drummer?

Gloyd: I can't think of his . . .

Iola: I don't remember.

Dave: They both married Mills [College] girls. You remember?

Iola: I had forgotten about that.

Jerry had substituted for Paul a few times when Paul was unable to play. There just always was an easy musical relationship. You can tell him the story about how George Wein induced you to go Mexico. That's really how it began.

Dave: George had a festival in Mexico.

Gloyd: 1968, for the Olympics.

Iola: The Olympic year.

Dave: I had just broken up the quartet. He called me, and he said, "Can you come and play?" I said, "I don't have a group, George. I just disbanded my quartet." "Just come and play." I said, "I can't do that." He said, "I've got a lot of groups down there." He named all the groups. A big festival. "There's all these different rhythm sections. You could play with them. And I've got Gerry Mulligan. Would you play with Gerry?" I said, "Yeah, but I'm not playing with an unknown group and an unknown rhythm section where I've been so big, in Mexico. I think it would be terrible to come down there and not have a real firm group instead of a pick-up group." So I told him I didn't want to do it. He said, "Look. You've got Gerry. You know Gerry. All you need is a bass and a drummer." I said, "I just used a wonderful bass," because I was doing *The Light in the Wilderness,* and the

symphony orchestra called a surprise concert, and I had hired their first-chair classical bassist. It's the day of the concert, and I get all this. So I said to the drummer, who I also – because I didn't have a group – was highly recommended to me – I said, "Who do you know that can sight-read this without rehearsal and can improvise too?" He said, "Jack Six." So I called Jack to mind. In my mind, I thought he'd be the guy I could take to Mexico, but I need a drummer. I didn't want to take a strange drummer. So I told George Wein, "I've got to find a drummer, but I just don't want a great drummer. I want a great man." He said, "They're out there. You'll find somebody." In a half hour [ ] his wife called and said, "Dave, I've got a great drummer that's a great man. His name is Alan Dawson. You get him. You'll have what you want." So I called him. "Come to Wilton and rehearse," and Jack Six to come to Wilton. I started playing one tune. They played it through. Jack put his bass down. Alan stood up. They came close to each other and embraced, without saying a word. I said, man, I've got the great drummers and the great bass players.

Glyod: You're also being a bit modest about why George Wein was so insistent.

Dave: I hate to tell you this, but it's true. George said, "If you don't come, all of your friends down here are going to lose their jobs, because the festival won't go on unless you're there." So that really put some pressure on me to get down there. For some reason we were very big in Mexico.

Gloyd: You had just gone there the year before, and that's where you did the *Bravo Brubeck.* You used Mexican musicians.

Dave: What'd he say?

Gioia: He says because *Bravo Brubeck* had come out.

Dave: Oh yeah.

Iola: Yes. He'd been there before. I think the spillover from California, too, that the relationship with Mexico – there's always been a big following.

Gioia: That's right. A lot of people come across that border into California for a year, go back.

Dave: We were playing in the big park. When you go to Mexico, you play in Bayes Artes, downtown, and it costs a lot. The next day, you're in the park. It's usually a Sunday afternoon, and it's almost free. I think we added it up that it was 52 cents for a ticket. Maybe six to ten thousand people. We played there. How did I get the Mexican musicians?

Gloyd: That was the year before.

Dave: Year before. We just played tunes I'd known from California. No rehearsal. I tried to have a rehearsal, but the Mexicans never came on the right day.

Gloyd: That tour, that recording, is probably Paul's greatest solo, which is [inaudible].

Gioia: That's a beautiful recording. Let's take a break here. We're making good progress. We're down to . . .

[recording interrupted]

Dave, I want to return to the theme of you being a real ambassador during your career. You were part of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit, and you contributed to creating some lasting goodwill on that occasion. Could you tell me what your recollections are?

Dave: With Gorbachev and Reagan. I had a few things come to mind: a room where Garbechev had just made life a lot easier for poets and musicians or political people that had been sent to Siberia. Sitting next to Iola was a general in the Russian Army. Here these people – I wish I could remember the scientist's name. Or the wife. He was such an important scientist, but he'd been ostracized.

Gioia: Sakharov?

Dave: Was that it Iola? Say that again.

Gioia: Andrei Sakharov.

Dave: [ ]. Wasn't he there?

Iola: She was there. I don't remember meeting him, but maybe he was. Someplace I have a guest list for this.

Dave: Anyway, there's starting to be a feeling of . . .

Iola: This was the glasnost period.

Dave: . . . glasnost, and yet the United States, I've heard, had a list of people that they would send, and I was on the top of the list. They had a list in Russia of people they would accept, and I was on the top of the list. So it was natural that I would go.

Iola: Part of that, Dave – excuse me – was also because you'd been there the year before on a cultural exchange. So the Russian people really knew who he was. Then Nancy Reagan was the one, I think, who made a decision that for the state dinner, they would invite you to go.

Dave: In this room where we were meeting, floor to ceiling thick curtains were on every window. There was no air in there to speak of, and how many hundred people?

Iola: There was a lot crowded into one room, and it was very hot, because it was in May and it was not an air-conditioned room. But obviously there were reasons for keeping that so curtained.

Gioia: Security.

Dave: It was surrounded by apartment houses and a lot of sentries and everybody watching everything, but you still felt that there could be sniper, maybe up, and that's why they had sealed this room off. So we're going to play in this room. You just feel a little nervous tension. When we started playing – you wouldn't think this is important, but I called a tune that had a lot of rhythm and a good strong beat. The unifying thing was the jazz beat. You could see enemies out there all going like this. This was the beginning of people responding.

I've had this happen a couple times in my life, where it was very important that the people were responding with their foot-tapping. You wouldn't think that's important. The first time was at an Army camp in Los Angeles where almost everyone in a certain ward was a catatonic. They had not responded in any way. Sometimes they'd sit, for sure all day, or maybe through the night. They never look at anybody. They never show any expression. We were asked to play, and pretty quick the feet started tapping, and the doctors came to me and said, "This is the first response I've ever seen." Pretty quick a guy jumped up and grabbed a trumpet from one of the musicians and started playing what you'd have to call free jazz, because he was not a trumpet player. But it was making some kind of sense. Those psychiatrics doctors just said, this is [ ].

We're going to play the same tape tomorrow. With us there that day – help, Iola.

Iola: Gerald Herd and Aldus Huxley.

Dave: Herd and Huxley. Huxley's wife. Some other very – who wrote, *I Am a Camera*?

Gioia: Christopher Isherwood.

Dave: Thank you. So you see, this is the group that's there. They said, tomorrow, we're going to play this same tape with these same catatonics. Not a response. Not a foot movement. Now isn't that strange?

The union had allowed these musicians to come and play. It was called Sawtell. That was the name of that place. No response. But the head of the union came and said, "This is so important, I'm going to ask for volunteers to come out and play one day a week and see if we can get a response from these people.

Then I went to a different department, and I played. It was outdoor in the courtyard. A guy jumped up on the stand and started playing piano like Teddy Wilson. I was amazed with this guy who was so unwell in so many ways could play complicated jazz. Then

again, you think, does he have a chance? Is there a piano where he can go and use it? There's so much can be done. There was some follow-up there. I don't know how many years it would have gone on, whether there was follow-up. But people realized that live music, not recorded music – that was enough. That's what they wanted to find out. It took live musicians to get this response, this one on one situation.

Iola: Then in Russia it was funny to see, around the room, because, as Dave said, it was very, very edgy. People were kind of like this. I'm sure the way the people were seated – like I was between two Russians who didn't speak English, and I didn't speak Russian, but the music did loosen everybody up.

Gioia: Universal language.

Iola: We had responded.

Dave: Then it came time for me play a duet with Eugene Wright, who wasn't in my group. I had just said, "Eugene, you have to go to Russia. All the things you've done for me, all the things you've been through in situations where it was not easy, I want you to go to Russia." He wasn't on the stage, but he had to come in through a door that was over the first table. Who's at the first table? Gorbechev. And Reagan is on the other side, at the first table. Gorbechev didn't know there's going to be a giant American with a bass over his head squeezing by him. As he looked up, he saw this bass and this huge man, African-American. His mouth dropped open. I wondered how many guards wondered, what is this? Gene went up, we played a duet, and Gorbechev loved it. Afterwards, through his interpreter, he said, "[ ] when you two played together." He said, "Would you sign . . ." – his interpreter. The guy with the high forehead, that you always see with Gorbechev – "Would you sign your autograph for me." I said, "Sure." He said, "Wouldn't this be the time I don't have anything for you to sign. Here, sign this." I looked at it. It was his pass to the Kremlin. I said, "You don't want me to sign that." "I don't need that pass anymore. Sign it please."

But this thing about the beat – I hate to tell you something that's so important to me – Russell. Come here a second. I need your help. And Chris, you could come.

[interview interrupted by phone call]

Who was in government that was important?

Iola: Shultz.

Dave: What's his first . . .? – George.

Iola: George Shultz.

Dave: Yeah. Well, I can tell you. Close the door.

Iola: The next day, we were going to the ballet.

Dave: Iola was in line to go to the ballet. I had to do interviews where there was just every – ABC, NBC, Fox – just lines of guys interviewing you from a balcony over Red Square. So I was stuck there. I said, "I won't be able to get into the ballet. Look at that line." "We'll get you in." So I'm the only guy that gets past the line. I'm in there in an empty lobby. Everybody else is outside. Pretty quick, a phalanx of guards come in. In this part of the phalanx is George Shultz. I'm shoved to the back end of that lobby. George went through the phalanx and came right over to me. He said, "Dave, you saved the meeting – the summit."

Iola: "You saved the summit." He said, "There was so much tension, but after last night, everything is so much more relaxed."

Dave: I hate not to tell you this, and I'd hate to see it in print and people think, what an ego. But this is what I'm talking about.

Gioia: Sure, no. It's an important story.

Dave: It is.

Gioia: Let me ask about other political situations you've been involved in. You've been involved playing at the White House or presidential events I think going back to the Kennedy administration.

Dave: Yeah.

Gioia: Is that correct?

Dave: That's right.

Gioia: How do you approach that? How do you play at the White House? Do you play a song? Do you play a set? How do you adapt to that?

Dave: A little background to that: Pierre Salinger, whether you know it or not, could have had a career as a classical pianist. He used to come into the Geary Cellar in San Francisco when he was a writer for the [*San Francisco*] *Chronicle.* Didn't he go with one of the girls downstairs?

Iola: Yeah. Denise McCluggage.

Dave: Do you know who Denise McClugagge is?

Gioia: No.

Dave: She's the first top great woman race driver. She's a Mills graduate. She was living [ ] little house downstairs on 18th Street. Pierre would know me. He was Kennedy's press secretary. Kennedy – every Thursday afternoon he had invited college students and special students that were interested in Washington government to come and live for the summer.

We're finished.

Gloyd: What was this?

Dave: George Shultz.

Gloyd: Oh, at the Bolshoi.

Dave: Tell them what he said.

Gloyd: This was the day after the summit. After the night of the summit we went from [?] to the Rossiya Hotel, because all the networks had set up. The balcony of the Rossiya overlooks Red Square and St. Basel's. So it's "the shot," to do a live CNN. As Dave came through the corridor on the second floor, every single news organization in the world was set up there. They all came up and applauded Dave, because they'd all seen it.

Who was the black anchor for CNN? Bernard . . . [Shaw].

Dave: Bernard . . . wonderful guy.

Gloyd: He was the CNN anchor man. Bernard . . .

Anyway, does the interview with Dave, finishes it up. He turns to Dave and he says, "Dave, I have to tell you something. Listening to you play *Take the 'A' Train* made me proud to be an American." He said, "We all were just so emotional at what was taking place."

The next day, the Bolshoi. It was an all-star gala thing. We were ready to go in, and Shultz comes up. He's all through the security. He sees Dave. He goes to Dave, through the security line, embraces him, and says, "Dave, you made the summit. Nothing was happening until last night, when everybody looked around and saw that they appreciated the same music." So that was a pretty emotional evening.

Dave: Cultural exchange works.

Gioia: You were taking about Pierre Salinger.

Dave: Thursday afternoon these – pages were a lot of them – . . .

Iola: Interns.

Dave: . . . interns were invited to the White House. They would not know why they were coming, except it was Kennedy's afternoon to entertain them. Word got out that I was going to be the entertainment. The lawn at the White House was flooded, and they could not keep that date there, so they moved us to the Washington monument. I don't remember whether Jack Kennedy came or not.

Iola: I don't think he did.

Dave: Bobby was supposed to have been there.

Iola: I think there was talk. If he came, he came and went without our knowing it.

Dave: Security and all that was changed now. They said, "Would you play a song for Tony Bennett to sing?" I said, "Sure. What's he want to sing?" Tony, without rehearsals - was it *Night and Day*?

Iola: *That Old Black Magic.*

Dave: *That Old Black Magic.* It came off just great. It's on one of my records with different artists. It sounds like we knew what each other was doing.

There were thousands and thousands at that, out in the open air. Then the next year – who'd we go for?

Iola: Johnson.

Dave: Johnson. Oh yeah.

Iola: King Hussein.

Dave: King Hussein had requested this.

Iola: I guess King Hussein was a real jazz fan. So that was the first [ ] group that performed at a state dinner function. They had performed for dances and that sort of thing, but as the entertainer for a state function, it was the first time. From what we understand, it was King Hussein who requested it.

Gioia: I see. What's the protocol for that? Do you play a whole set? Do you play just one or two numbers?

Dave: You play maybe three or four. The Ellington night, there's so many jazz musicians that you just go up and play one tune.

When I think of the Ellington night, I think of the night that I really liked Dick Nixon, who I hadn't been a fan of. But he said – we're at the dinner in a separate room. He gets

up to make a speech of welcome. He said, “In this room there’s been welcome and entertainment for kings and queens and leaders of the world, but tonight we entertain our first Duke.” Then he said, “It’s come full circle. Duke’s father was the head” – did he call him . . .

Iola: Butler.

Dave: “. . . butler in this room. Tonight we’re entertaining and honoring his son.” Isn’t that great? It was so wonderful. Iola was sitting with Mercer [Ellington] in a room full of musicians and great statesmen. I don’t know why I got on that, but I was thinking of how great that was, Duke being raised in Washington.

Gioia: That’s right. His father catered meals at the White House.

Dave: What’d you say?

Gioia: His father catered meals at the White House.

Dave: Yeah, and wasn’t it wonderful of Nixon to bring that . . .

Gioia: For his birthday.

Dave: . . . full circle.

Then [Gerald] Ford. He had a train going across the country. We went to the station.

Iola: This was ’76, the Freedom Train.

Dave: Who else?

Gioia: There was a [Jimmy] Carter event. Were you at the Carter jazz . . .?

Iola: Yeah, in the Rose Garden, Carter.

Dave: That’s the night I played with Lionel [Hampton], wasn’t it? Lionel had told us what he’s going to play. He didn’t play one thing that he told us. That great bass player . . .

Iola: Ron Carter.

Dave: Ron said, “What the heck’s he playing? I don’t know this song.”

Iola: That’s right. He played a tune that neither of you had ever played.

Dave: Neither of us knew.

Gioia: If you and Ron don't know it, it's got to be a pretty obscure song.

Dave: We got through it.

Gioia: Let me ask about another world figure: Pope John Paul II. You performed *Upon this Rock* for his visit to San Francisco. You've also written a number of other widely performed liturgical works. Can you talk about that aspect of your career?

Dave: So many times, like today, I'll get a phone call for something very important to do. Many times I can't do it or wouldn't think it's appropriate.

I can tell you a story about Johnson, President Johnson. I'm in my tomato garden at home, and I am called to come to the phone, saying, "It's the White House." I go to the phone. They say, "Dave, we need you to come to . . ."

Iola: Thailand.

Dave: ". . . Thailand. Can you get on the next plane and come?"

Gioia: The King of Thailand is a big jazz fan.

Dave: He had requested us. I said, "Why? Why do I have to come?" "We're in big trouble. The President, when he's seated, is taller than the King is standing. This is causing such tremendous problems. On top of it, the President has crossed his legs and pointed his shoe at the President" [*sic*: the King].

Iola: The bottom of his shoe.

Dave: The bottom of – "We are in big trouble, but we think because the King likes you so much, that if you came and played, it might save the situation." So I said, "I can't go. I have other concerts that I have to do during this period." "Can you think of somebody else that the King would like?" I said, "How about Stan Getz?" "Oh, he'd like that." I guess I'm talking to his social person.

Iola: Social secretary.

Dave: So, great. Send Stan. Stan goes all the way there. Didn't like something that somebody said. Turns around and comes back. Then is talked into going back, and gets on the next plane and goes back. He finally saved the situation.

Now we have a friend that's in Thailand for the King, to teach his kids.

Iola: Life is funny, the circles, because one of the Mills girls . . .

Dave: That lived downstairs.

Iola: . . . that lived on 18th Street in San Francisco ended up being the music teacher for the King of Thailand's children.

Dave: She goes back every year. She might be there now.

Iola: Isn't that crazy?

Dave: It's like *The King and I.*

Gioia: That's funny. I've been considering trying to get an interview with the King of Thailand, because I hear he's a great jazz fan. So I've sent these e-mails to the consulate and the ambassador. I tell my wife, "If someone calls and says they're the King of Thailand on the phone, don't hang up. It's not a practical joke." He hasn't phoned me back. I'm still hopeful to get an interview at some point.

Dave: I kind of got off the track.

Gioia: That is an interesting story. By all means. We're moving on. We're doing world figures now. We're going to do Pope John Paul II and you writing a work for his visit to San Francisco.

Dave: I get a call when I'm in Los Angeles. They call Russell. Russell comes in my room, and said, "The Pope is coming to San Francisco – the diocese in San Francisco. He needs you to write nine minutes for his entrance into Candlestick Park. He will in the Popemobile coming in and circle the park. We don't have any music ready for that. Could you write something?" I said, "Russell, what do they want me to write?" He said, "They've given me one sentence: 'upon this rock, I will build my church, and the jaws of Hell cannot [ ]'." I said, "Nine minutes on that? Turn it down." So he calls back. "Mr. Brubeck thinks he cannot write nine minutes of music for the Pope on that one sentence." So I go to bed – and this often happens to me. I will dream an answer, because I'm so pent up about this assignment. Bach would write a fugue and could use the words over and over again. I said, "Ask them if they could give me one more sentence? That would help give me more to work with." So he called back. Everything was going fine. They'll give me "what is loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven," which is . . .

Gioia: It's part of the same gospel.

Dave: It's the next sentence. "Which is bound on earth will be bound in heaven." So I got that sentence, and I started that chorale. I would meet the organist that was the choir director for that – is it called Glass Cathedral, that new cathedral in San Francisco? Not Glass. But it's beautiful.

Gioia: The Grace Cathedral.

Dave: Not the Grace. It's a new one.

Iola: Because Grace is Episcopal.

Dave: It's a Catholic.

Gioia: You're right. It's not.

Dave: So we're on the way to Japan or Australia, and I said, "If I show the director of the choir, and he's the person that's going to be working with this – have him come to the airport in San Francisco and meet us. We'll go to some room, and I'll show him the music that I've started." So he meets us there, and I said, "I think I've found the solution. I think I've written a fugue." He said, "Let me see it." He looks at it and sings perfectly the subject, then the counter-subject, then the stretto. "What do you mean, you think you've written a fugue? This is a fugue!", which was good news to hear.

So while we're gone, the bishop, Quinn, is also an organist. He showed the bishop what I'd written. He said, "This is good music, but we've had two articles against using Dave, a jazz musician, to perform for the Pope," very negative articles in both papers. But he said, "I can defend this music. I'm a musician." So we get to the part – now I've got the quartet. Russell has had one rehearsal with the choir and the musicians. I wrote it for 21 brass and percussion, because outdoors, in a baseball diamond – the altar is on second base, put up like a jigsaw puzzle, just perfectly, very expensive, because they've got to put it up and take it down, because there's a ball game there that night. Can you imagine? It cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. I forget exactly. So [ ]

The bishop said, "Dave, don't use the quartet. The press will kill you. They'll call it a jazz mass. You've written" – he said, "I love your quartet, but I know these guys. Just do the chorale and fugue." So I brought the group. They were there. They didn't play a note. You know, he was right, because it's the narrowness of people that write about things like this to not know that this is America's music, as Billy – Dr. Billy . . .

Gioia: Taylor.

Dave: Taylor has said, "This is America's classical music." This we got to realize, that it's the basic music of every Broadway show you go to, of rock, of movies – especially in a chase scene. It's always jazz. Our classical composers that are world-wide known – and this is what Darius Milhaud told me – if you want to express, you have to use the jazz idiom, just as Bartok used the Hungarian folk music, and I've used French music, and Bach – Bach used drinking songs. *O Sacred Head Now Wounded* is a drinking song. Why don't people realize that almost from the beginning of classical music, they were using folk music and comedy songs. Beethoven, I think, used dance songs that were popular at the time as a point of departure. Over and over. That's why America has to realize that jazz is the basis of our music, and what's going to live in our music – like Bernstein, Copland, Gershwin, and Charles Ives have used the jazz idiom. That's what America should realize. That's what our teachers, our government, should be thankful that we have such a great music that says in so many words "freedom" to the whole world. This is the expression of freedom, which is the expression of the United States.

Gioia: Dave, I think I interviewed you back in 1988. At that time I had found an interview you had given in the 1950s in which you had told an interviewer that you would like to spend more time doing classical composition. I mentioned that to you in this 1988 interview, and you said, "I still feel the same way today. I wish I was spending more time doing classical composition." It seems to me, though, that you have – in the last 20 years, you've devoted increasing amounts of time to these compositions. Is there a lot of your music, of compositions that have not been recorded? What is there out there?

Dave: The piece that I wrote for the Pope hasn't been recorded – *Upon this Rock* – hasn't been recorded, and I love that piece. It's a good fugue. It is well-written, as far as I'm concerned. It should have been recorded. But it looks like it will. It's going to be sung at the Catholic . . .

Iola: Notre Dame.

Dave: Notre Dame. Maybe someone will record it there. But I know who will record it, will be the Pacific Mozart Chorale, but they'll record it probably without orchestra – do it a cappella. It would be great if they could record it with orchestra, but that costs a lot of money.

Gioia: How many works of yours are there that haven't been recorded? A small number? A large number? What is there in your archives that we haven't heard?

Dave: Have we recorded *Chief Seattle*?

Iola: Not a commercial recording.

Dave: Wonderful piece. Chief Seattle spoke to the President of the United States, to the Great Father in Washington. "How can you buy or sell the sky?" Because Washington wanted his land, all of Chief Seattle's land. There was no way he could stop that from happening. But the speech is one of the greatest speeches on ecology. "Will you teach your children what we have taught our children if I sell you our land? Will you respect the trees, the water, the air, the animals, the fish?" Washington agreed to all of this. Put him on an island off of Seattle, where he could never return to Seattle, where he died.

I've been to his grave there, with Iola. It was a little frightening to play for the Suquamish tribe Chief Seattle's speech, because they do not like people to take their music or their texts. So at the first performance, a young chief came and read – what did he read? Part of Chief Seattle? He spoke himself.

Iola: He gave the prayer to the four winds, and there was a blessing of the concert.

Dave: Then he said, "I have to be gone tomorrow," because there was a performance the next day, "But I'll be back." So he disappeared the next day and came back with an eagle

feather that you could smell the smoke where it had been blessed. He gave that to me and said I must wave it when I go to the next world. [ ]

Iola: A great-great-great granddaughter of Chief Seattle came to the concert. They were thrilled with it.

Dave: It was just the opposite. I was afraid to play my music, do this thing that Iola and I had written. Then we did it live with . . .

Iola: Russell Means.

Dave: . . . Russell Means, who's this magnificent man. He was in something you would think of as an American Indian costume, but it wasn't. He just had the feathers.

Iola: His hair was braided.

Dave: Braided. He read this with such passion. Do you know much about him?

Gioia: Just a little.

Dave: Because he's such a powerful force.

Iola: He was the head of the AIM, the American Indian Movement. Remember that? They were pretty radical there for a while. Then I think he has done some acting in Hollywood. He is a man of great presence and a very intense, fierce [inaudible].

Dave: These are the kind of things that aren't recorded. The *Praise of Mary Canticles* haven't been recorded. These are 35-, 40 minute . . .

Gioia: These are major compositions of yours that most people haven't had a chance to hear.

Dave: Then this bunch of new things will be recorded.

Gioia: The *Cannery Row* work that you performed at Monterey – has that been recorded?

Dave: No.

Gioia: That's another one that I've read reviews of, but haven't had a chance to hear the music. A lot of people would like to hear this.

Dave: It could be . . .

Iola: The live performance was recorded, and actually, it's well enough recorded . . .

Gioia: It could be commercially released.

Dave: I'd love to see that. Clint Eastwood had cameras there. He's doing a documentary on me.

Gioia: My next question was going to be to ask you about that.

Dave: I keep saying, "Are you going to use *Cannery Row*?" – through the people in his staff – "Are you going to use *Cannery Row* in the documentary?" They said, "We'll use it as bookends." I said, "It's such a good first and only performance, that I would very much like you to do the whole thing."

Gioia: That could be an extra feature on the DVD. Now that they have DVDs, they have an extra feature. They could just have the whole performance there.

Dave: You just said the answer.

Gioia: Oh, Is that so? Great minds think alike.

Dave: That's how they answered me. What'd they call it? A bonus.

Gioia: A bonus feature. That would be great.

Dave: "We'll put it on the end." They said, "If it's so important to you, we'd like you to know that we've thought of a way. We'll put it as a complete piece as a bonus." I don't know how that works. Maybe you do.

Gioia: That'll be great. That will get great visibility. A lot of people will see it.

Dave: It will? I'm so anxious to see that.

Gioia: Just a couple more questions. I'd like to ask you about your marriage. You've had – I think you're going to celebrate your 65th anniversary this year. Is that correct? Is that right?

Iola: 65.

Dave: Isn't it more?

Iola: It may seem like it.

Dave: I think it's 66 coming up.

Gioia: I just think that's wonderful. In so many celebrities and musicians, they're unable to have successful marriages. To see you with such a long, successful marriage and your kids to turn out well. How [ ]? What's the secret to that success? That's a great success in its own right, over and above the music.

Dave: The secret to everything is one word – love. If you haven't got that, you're in trouble. If you have it, you have a chance to be happy. There's always unhappiness and suffering in this life, but this is what will help you through it all. We've had that as the saving of our situation.

Ask my wife.

Gioia: Iola, do you have any comments on that?

Iola: Within the family, it has its ups and downs. There's strains and everything. But Dave is right, is that underneath there is something that binds you all together. You think of the other person, whether it's a child or your husband or – but it is as important to you as your own life. If you have those priorities all straight, I think that things work themselves out, if you're patient and have time and really want them to be resolved. I often quote Dave, because he says, "In music there is no mistake, as long as you can make the resolution." So that's kind of the way with life, right? It isn't a mistake if there is a resolution to whatever the problem is.

Gioia: I give both of you tremendous credit. I tell you, it's very inspirational to see. Most people with the kind of fame and career that you've had, and to have a stable marriage and the kids turn out the way they have – I give you tremendous credit for that.

Dave: Thank you.

Gioia: I've got one last question. The NEA has asked us to do this. They want the people that have been named NEA Masters to give some comments on what it means to them to have been part of the NEA Master program. So any thoughts or observations you have on that would be greatly appreciated.

Dave: Joining a group of people that you really respect and honor, then it's an honor if you're included in that. That's the way I feel, that we've been very fortunate to be included.

Iola: And I think that it has brought to the general public an awareness of the value of the jazz legends, like they did in Washington, D.C., last spring – this spring, wasn't it? – that, just as in Japan, they have national treasures, that these are our national treasures, that this is our native music. I think that bringing that to the general public – I think the average person now, when they use the term "jazz," have no idea what they're talking about, because when you find out, "Oh, you love jazz? Who are some of your favorite players?", and they all name people that you wouldn't dream of putting under the classification of jazz. So, I think that's helped.

Then, another area that it's helped – it has helped people who are trying to start or have a jazz series in a city. I know that it has worked in Arizona. They brought you and the sons in to open a jazz series. They're selling subscriptions. That brought enough people in that

it sustained the subscription. How they did this was calling upon the National Endowment for this backup that is being offered. I'm sure that that's happened over and over again, where people who want to sponsor [ ] provide seed money that helps them get started and bring people in, so that they can afford to bring a headliner, and then some of the others they can afford to have on the series.

So I think what your brother has done at the National Endowment is giving jazz more recognition than jazz has ever had from any official source.

Gioia: The Pulitzer Prize in music, for many years they would never give it to a jazz musician, which is a shame when you think of all the great jazz music, and every year they give a Pulitzer Prize in composition. For so many years no jazz musician ever got that. I know Dana wants to use the NEA Jazz Masters to have that kind of – something equivalent to what a Pulitzer Prize in jazz would be.

Dave and Iola, I want to thank you. We ran long both days. We told you it would be three hours a day. We did more than four yesterday. We've been doing about four today, too. So, thank you very much.

Dave: It's been very pleasant, and I thank you.

(transcribed and edited by Barry Kernfeld)