

Dave Brubeck and Ramsey Lewis: Jazz and Fame

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**Jazz at Lincoln Center Radio
Dave Brubeck and Ramsey Lewis: Jazz and Fame
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1) Vox: Dave Brubeck

“I’d like to correct something in the program – that makes me feel very young. I’m not 83 – I’m 87. (huge applause)”

2) Background music: Dave Brubeck, “Unsquare Dance”

3a) Pierce

WHILE DAVE BRUBECK MAY BE GETTING ALONG IN YEARS - HIS SOUL – AND HIS SOUND – REMAIN YOUNG. BRUBECK’S POPULAR HITS, HIS OFFBEAT IMAGINATION AND PROFESSORIAL CHARM HAVE MADE HIM FAMOUS -- EVEN AMONG AUDIENCES WHO KNOW LITTLE ABOUT JAZZ.

3b) Background music: Ramsey Lewis, “In In Crowd”

3c) Pierce:

RAMSEY LEWIS IS ANOTHER JAZZ MUSICIAN WHO HAS SOLD RECORDS LIKE A ROCK STAR. IN THE MID-NINETEEN SIXTIES, HIS FLAMBOYANT PIANO WAS THE PERFECT COMPLEMENT TO THE ROLLICKING BLEND THEY CALLED “SOUL JAZZ.”

BUT NEITHER BRUBECK NOR LEWIS ARE FROZEN IN TIME OR RESTING ON LAURELS EARNED YEARS AGO.

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JUST AHEAD, WE'LL HEAR NEW MUSIC -- AND OLD -- FROM THESE ICONIC PIANISTS. IT'S JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER. I'M WENDELL PIERCE.

4A) Background music: "The Song Is You," Brubeck/Desmond, from recording at U.Michigan, 1954

4B) Pierce:

MORE THAN 50 YEARS AGO, DAVE BRUBECK AND THE LEGENDARY SAXOPHONIST PAUL DESMOND BECAME FIXTURES ON THE COLLEGE CONCERT SCENE. THEY PLAYED NEW COMPOSITIONS AND IMAGINATIVE, EXTENDED TAKES ON THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK.

THIS IS BRUBECK'S OWN CONTRIBUTION TO THAT BOOK -- "IN YOUR OWN SWEET WAY."

4C) Music: "In Your Own Sweet Way" (7:04)

4D) Pierce:

DAVE BRUBECK'S "IN YOUR OWN SWEET WAY." WITH BOBBY MILITELLO ON ALTO SAX, MICHAEL MOORE - BASS, AND RANDY JONES ON DRUMS.

5) Background music: "Le Souk," Recorded live at Oberlin, March 1954

6) Pierce:

DAVE BRUBECK HAS MAINTAINED AN ENVIABLE BALANCE BETWEEN ARTISTIC FREEDOM AND POPULAR SUCCESS. HE ONCE GOT INTO A SHOUTING MATCH WITH THE LEGENDARY COMPOSER ARNOLD SCHOENBERG. THE EUROPEAN MASTER INSISTED THAT MERELY

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“SOUNDING GOOD” WAS INSUFFICIENT THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION WHEN COMPOSING – A STANCE THAT HIS THEN 22-YEAR-OLD STUDENT FOUND ABSURD.

BRUBECK’S STIFF SPINE – NOT TO MENTION HIS FLAIR FOR MELODY AND BLOCKY SOLO STYLE—MADE HIM A HIT WITH AUDIENCES THROUGHOUT THE 50S.

7) Background music: “Blue Rondo a La Turk”

8a) Pierce:

AND AT THE END OF THAT DECADE, HIS “TAKE FIVE” WOULD BECOME ONE OF THE BEST-SELLING – AND MOST RHYTHMICALLY-CREATIVE -- ALBUMS IN JAZZ HISTORY.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT TAPPED BRUBECK TO REPRESENT AMERICAN ARTISTIC FREEDOM BY GIVING CONCERTS BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN.

ON THE STAGE AT THE ROSE THEATER, BRUBECK RECALLS HOW DISSIDENTS INSPIRED HIS COMPOSITION “DZIEKUJE,” -- THAT’S POLISH FOR “THANK-YOU”.

8B) Vox: Brubeck

“ We went behind the Iron Curtain, for President Eisenhower. Then he sent us on to some other places. Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, East and West Pakistan, India, Solon. A fun tour! (laughter). Dziekuje – means “thank you” in Polish because we had such great experiences. The last night we were there, secretly we had an underground meeting, and they said ‘remember, we Poles love freedom as much as you.’”

9) Music: "Dziekuje" (3:00)

10) Pierce:

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“DZIEKUJE” – A THANK YOU TO THE POLISH PEOPLE. SOLO PIANO BY DAVE BRUBECK, JUST ABOUT A HALF CENTURY AFTER HE WROTE THAT TUNE.

11) Vox: Dave Brubeck

“Marian McPartland is 90 – so I feel like a kid! (laughter)

She asked me to be on her ‘Piano Jazz’ show – and I said ‘I’ve been on it a lot Marian, you ought to get some young people.’ And she said ‘this is different – this is going to be in Border’s Bookstore!’

So we were down in the basement, two 9-foot grands – and Marian always talks to her guests. And she said ‘Dave, have you written anything lately?’ And I said ‘yeah.’ And she said ‘when?’ And I said ‘on my way down here to play with you.’ (laughter). And she said, ‘what is it?’ And I said ‘it’s a new tune.’ And she said ‘well, can you play it?’ And I said, ‘I don’t know, I’ve never played it.’ (laughter) So she said ‘play it, play 2 or 3 courses and I’ll come in with you – but give me a cue as what it’s all about.’ And I said ‘Marian you’ll have no trouble – do you know your name?’ And she said ‘yeah.’ ‘Well this tune is your name.’ And she said ‘what do you mean?’ And I said it goes ‘(sings) Marian McPartland.’ that’s the theme.’

12) Music: "Marian McPartland" (5:19)**13) Pierce:**

WITH THE ALTO SOLO BY BOBBY MILITELLO, ANOTHER DAVE BRUBECK ORIGINAL - ENTITLED “MARIAN MCPARTLAND.” BRUBECK IS ALWAYS COMPOSING.

SOMETIMES IT CAN BE A CHALLENGE TO PRESENT NEW WORK WHEN THE AUDIENCE WANTS TO HEAR ITS FAVORITES.

ACTOR ALEC GUINNESS, WHO PLAYED “BEN KENOBI” IN STAR WARS, WAS SO APPALLED THAT A YOUNG FAN TOLD HIM HE HAD SEEN THE FILM “DOZENS OF TIMES” THAT HE ASKED THE KID NEVER TO WATCH THE MOVIE AGAIN.

BUT THIS MASTER OF THE KEYS STILL SEEMS TO DELIGHT IN THE DEBONAIR CONCOCTION THAT IS “TAKE FIVE,”

14) Music: Take Five (10:47)

15) Pierce:

THE PAUL DESMOND TUNE, *TAKE FIVE*. BOBBY MILITELLO ON ALTO, RANDY JONES PLAYING DRUMS, MICHAEL MOORE ON BASS AND DAVE BRUBECK AT THE PIANO.

16) Midbreak:

AND IF FIVE FOUR IS JUST YOUR CUP OF SWING, YOU CAN CHECK OUT THIS PERFORMANCE ANYTIME WITH A CLICK OVER TO [J-A-L-C DOT ORG](http://J-A-L-C.DOT.ORG).

YOU'LL FIND SHOWS IN EVERY TIME SIGNATURE, SCRIPTS AND PHOTOS, AND LINKS TO LOTS MORE. BRING HOME THE SWING, NOW STREAMING TO YOUR DESKTOP, LAPTOP, NOTEBOOK OR IPHONE – AT [J A L C \(DOT\) ORG](http://J.A.L.C.(DOT).ORG) - (SLASH) JAZZCAST.

SO BRING HOME THE SWING

I'M WENDELL PIERCE. IT'S JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER.

17) Midbreak: Cherokee, Dave Brubeck Quartet, from 1995

18) Background music: “A Hard Day’s Night” Ramsey Lewis Trio

19) Vox:

ATTEMPTS TO BLEND JAZZ AND ROCK HAVE HAD MIXED RESULTS. BUT ONE UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS CAME FROM CHICAGO'S AMERICAN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC; IN 1956, THE PIANIST RAMSEY LEWIS, BASSIST ELDEE YOUNG, AND THE DRUMMER ISAAC “RED” HOLT STARTED PLAYING MELODIC AND SOPHISTICATED JAZZ.

AS THE YEARS PASSED, THEY ADDED SOUL HITS AND BEATLES TUNES; THEIR NEW SOUND WASN'T QUITE LIKE ANYTHING ELSE IN JAZZ. IT COMBINED A DOWN HOME GOSPEL FEELING WITH A HEAVY BACKBEAT AND AN ELEGANT BEBOP TOUCH

20) Background music: "The In Crowd"

21) Pierce:

THE IN CROWD, THEIR 1965 LIVE RECORDING AT WASHINGTON DC'S STILL OPERATING BOHEMIAN CAVERNS, BECAME A HUGE HIT -- NUMBER 2 ON BILLBOARDS POP CHART.

THAT TITLE TRACK -- HAS BEEN AN AUDIENCE FAVORITE FOR LEWIS EVER SINCE. HERE IS HIS 21ST-CENTURY VERSION OF "THE IN CROWD."

22) Music: The In Crowd 4:56

23) Pierce:

BILLY PAGE'S COMPOSITION -- "THE IN CROWD" -- STILL DURABLE SOME 45 YEARS LATER, IN THE HANDS OF PIANIST RAMSEY LEWIS.

24) Music:

25) Pierce:

THE RAMSEY LEWIS TRIO'S SPECTACULAR POP SUCCESS HAD A DOWNSIDE -- CONSTANT TRAVEL, GRUELING SCHEDULES, AGENTS, THE RECORD BUSINESS. YOU GET THE PICTURE. LIKE SO MANY GROUPS WHO

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FIND THEMSELVES FAMOUS, THE TRIO BEGAN TO QUARREL JUST AS MONEY BEGAN ROLLING IN.

26) Background music: “Wack Wack” or “Soulful Strut,” Young-Holt Unlimited

27) Pierce:

AT THE END OF 1965, AFTER 10 YEARS TOGETHER, YOUNG AND HOLT BROKE WITH LEWIS AND FORMED THE UNDERAPPRECIATED “YOUNG-HOLT UNLIMITED.”

LEWIS RE-ASSEMBLED HIS TRIO. HIS EAR WAS WELL TUNED FOR TALENT . // LIKE HIS NEW BASSIST CLEVELAND EATON. OR DRUMMER MAURICE WHITE, WHO WOULD GO ON TO FORM *EARTH, WIND AND FIRE*. BUT FIRST, IN 1966, THE GROUP’S ARRANGEMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL “WADE IN THE WATER” GAVE LEWIS ANOTHER TOP 40 HIT. THOUGH HE’S BEEN PLAYING IT FOR DECADES, LEWIS CONTINUES TO FIND INSPIRATION IN THE SPIRITUAL.

27b)Vox: Ramsey Lewis

“Usually, those songs from my gospel background we save for the end of the show. But I know don’t know it – you’re in New York, you walk on the stage, and the spirit hits you – and before you know it, you’re in church.”

28) Music: “Wade in the Water” (9:39)

29) Pierce:

THE RAMSEY LEWIS TRIO IN THE ROSE THEATER. – “WADE IN THE WATER.”

30) Background music:

31) Pierce:

AS POP MUSIC CHANGED IN THE NINETEEN SEVENTIES, RAMSEY LEWIS CHANGED WITH IT. HE EMBRACED ELECTRIC KEYBOARDS, AND THE RHYTHMS OF BRAZIL, OF FUNK, AND EVEN DISCO. AFTER LEWIS DETOURED INTO SMOOTH-TEXTURED POP IN THE 80S, HE SENT MANY JAZZ FANS RUNNING FOR THE EXITS.

LEWIS' DETOURS SENT MANY JAZZ FANS RUNNING FOR THE EXITS. BUT IN RECENT YEARS HE'S RETURNED TO A JAZZ VEIN, INCLUDING TWO ALBUMS WITH SINGER NANCY WILSON. AND HE'S ALSO BEEN WRITING.

32) Vox: Ramsey Lewis

"Well, we take you from the church, to the ballet,"

33) Pierce:

PIANIST RAMSEY LEWIS.

34) Vox: Ramsey Lewis

"Last summer, in Chicago, at the Ravinia Festival, we had the pleasure of sharing the stage with the Joffrey Ballet – performing a work I had the pleasure of composing – so we'd like to perform one of the pieces for you now."

35) Pierce:

FROM HIS SCORE FOR THE JOFFREY BALLET "TO KNOW HER...", RAMSEY LEWIS LEADS "THE WAY SHE SMILES."

36) Music: "The Way She Smiles" (5:24)

37) Pierce:

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WITH LEON JOYCE ON BASS AND LARRY GRAY ON DRUMS, PIANIST RAMSEY LEWIS PERFORMING HIS OWN “THE WAY SHE SMILES.”

38) Pierce:

LIKE MANY JAZZ MUSICIANS, LEWIS FINDS THAT THE MOST VITAL FORM OF PRACTICE IS PERFORMANCE.

39) Vox: Ramsey Lewis

We’d like to continue now with a song that we’re sort of experimenting with. You can practice all week, or all month, but until you play it in person, you don’t get a feel for what it’s really like. It’s a new piece, we’ve played it a couple times. It doesn’t have a name yet, in fact – so we refer to this as “The Ballad,” let’s play the “New Ballad.”

40) Music: “New Ballad”

41) Pierce:

“*THE NEW BALLAD*”, A WORK IN PROGRESS AND PERHAPS A SYMBOL OF HIS REMARKABLE, EVER-EVOLVING CAREER. PIANIST RAMSEY LEWIS IN THE TRIO, PU AFTER WITH LARRY GRAY ON PERCUSSION, AND LEON JOYCE ON BASS.

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER RADIO IS PRODUCED AT MURRAY STREET. THIS EDITION WAS WRITTEN BY ANDREW ROSENBLUM <Rosen-Blum).

OUR PRODUCERS ARE DAVID GOREN, STEPHEN RATHE AND ALEXA LIM.

THE RECORDINGS WERE BY ROB MACOMBER AND JEFF ROTHMAN AT XM PRODUCTIONS. ADDITIONAL RECORDING BY JENNI LAWSON AT WWNO IN THE CRESCENT CITY.

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THANKS TO MATTHEW LONG-MIDDLETON.

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER IS ADRIAN ELLIS. CAT HENRY SUPERVISES OUR RECORDINGS AND BROADCASTS AND THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR IS WYNTON MARSALIS.

I'M WENDELL PIERCE. THANKS FOR JOINING US.