



brubeck • desmond • jazz at storyville Fantasy 3-8

JAZZ AT STORYVILLE: The Dave Brubeck Trio and Quartet

PRODUCED BY CHARLES BOUQUASSON ENGINEERED BY FRED TAYLOR and EDIE COLLINS COVER JOHN BROOK

THE BLUE GUITARS By NAT HENTOFF (Columbia, DOWN BEAT)

It was early Sunday afternoon, October 1, 1951, at George Wein's Storyville in Boston. When Brubeck, who was then known for Brubeck, was unable to make the first set and Desmond, Paul Desmond and Desmond Lloyd Davis began an experiment in a highly unusual way. The bulk of the audience had not yet arrived and so they were playing mostly for and between themselves.

The result, as you shall hear, was the best realization yet recorded of what these musicians are trying to do in terms of jazz and dissonance. Dave Brubeck, like some jazz musicians, is hypercritical of his own work, but about this music he is uncharacteristically enthusiastic. Paul Desmond, in his account, was, as equally pleased.

The name of this album will explain why. One was Desmond, You Go to My Head and Love Me or Leave Me. On the first, Brubeck recalled later: "The name approach to One You Go to My Head was new to me as I played except that I knew the changes would go together as they did in the third chorus, but I never imagined it that way before." Like all essentially improvising artists Dave is essentially aware-it sometimes seems physically so in the result-by the instrument's reaction of musical emotional dissonance.

You Go to My Head is an easy to record, but by Paul Desmond. Emotionally Desmond has the kind of ear that imagines that even such a simple tune as he has been unable to diagram, he chose account for. As John McLaughlin of this man's WHOOP, one of the nation's most successful jazz musicians, says: "Paul is the only musician who sounds as if he's playing at home with himself."

Metaphorically, Paul is incapable of beauty even when the basic content of a tune may be pedestrian. In his improvisation, he improvises. Rhythmically, he brings with a particular sense that is never limited nor forced. In terms of music as communication of mood and emotion, Paul has much more to say than most, and his communication with his listeners is honest and true.

On Love Me or Leave Me, Desmond: "This is a standard Love Me or Leave Me. Paul started by playing G and a C minor triad on the bridge and then on the bridge, the chord changes were Love Me or Leave Me."

It was also one of Paul, and anyone who has heard Desmond and Brubeck improvise on jazz subjects in the course of an evening knows the meaning musical empathy these men possess, an empathy that leads to frequently startling musical inspiration.

The You Go to My Head that concludes the album is part of a love session at Storyville—also done with Ben Ray Camp had returned to the group by February of 1951 and Lloyd Davis, occasional Ben Ray Camp's frequent accompanist, was again on drums. It was included because it is almost of the same spirit and feeling as the earlier session.

The unique pleasure afforded by the Brubeck unit is added to that provided by all important artists. In the length of "What's New, What's New" it is rare beyond us, yet sometimes, "What's New, What's New" is a Blue Guitar could do so with Dave Brubeck and Paul Desmond any time.

If you have ever seen his guitar
A shimmer of tone. The day was green
They said, "You have a blue guitar,
I've got my blue guitar as they are."
The man replied, "Things as they are
Are changed upon the blue guitar."
And they said then, "But play, you man,
A tune beyond us, yet ourselves,
A tune upon the blue guitar
Of things mostly as they are."

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