

AUDREY

From the Alfred Publishing Company collection, *Dave Brubeck—Nocturnes*. Please see John Salmon's Master Class feature on this piece on page 26.

BY DAVE BRUBECK

$\text{♩} = 100$

The first system of music for 'Audrey' is in 4/4 time with a tempo of quarter note = 100. The key signature has four flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat, D-flat). The right hand starts with a quarter rest followed by a half note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5). The left hand plays a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4). The second measure features a quarter note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5) in the right hand and a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4) in the left hand. The third measure has a quarter note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5) in the right hand and a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4) in the left hand. The fourth measure has a quarter note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5) in the right hand and a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4) in the left hand.

5

The second system of music starts at measure 5. The right hand plays a half note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5). The left hand plays a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4). The second measure features a quarter note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5) in the right hand and a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4) in the left hand. The third measure has a quarter note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5) in the right hand and a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4) in the left hand. The fourth measure has a quarter note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5) in the right hand and a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4) in the left hand.

9

The third system of music starts at measure 9. The right hand plays a half note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5). The left hand plays a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4). The second measure features a quarter note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5) in the right hand and a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4) in the left hand. The third measure has a quarter note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5) in the right hand and a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4) in the left hand. The fourth measure has a quarter note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5) in the right hand and a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4) in the left hand.

13

The fourth system of music starts at measure 13. The right hand plays a half note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5). The left hand plays a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4). The second measure features a quarter note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5) in the right hand and a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4) in the left hand. The third measure has a quarter note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5) in the right hand and a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4) in the left hand. The fourth measure has a quarter note chord (F4, A-flat4, C5, E-flat5) in the right hand and a half note chord (F3, A-flat3, C4, E-flat4) in the left hand.

Dave Brubeck's *Nocturnes*

BY JOHN SALMON

Dave Brubeck's *Nocturnes* are small, lyrical piano pieces filled with melancholy, tenderness, nostalgia, and regret. All arise from Brubeck's personal experience, and have poetically evocative titles. *Blue Lake Tahoe*, a wistful ballad, recalls Lake Tahoe, where a 20-year-old Brubeck spent a summer playing a gig with his jazz band, and then revisited two years later for his honeymoon. *Going to Sleep* is a gentle lullaby composed to calm his grandson. *Nostalgia de México* is a minor-mode evocation of *música ranchera*, a style he knew well, having grown up on a ranch in northern California. *Home Without Iola* depicts Brubeck's desolation when his wife Iola is out of town.

The other twenty pieces in the collection, published by Alfred Publishing Company, follow suit, capturing in musical terms Brubeck's memory of a meadowlark's call, a beautiful rainbow, or a Viennese park. Amazingly, they are easy to play, accessible to beginning piano students. They stand in stark contrast to Brubeck's thorny and occasionally abstract compositions, like the 30-minute *Chromatic Fantasy Sonata*, the 25-minute *Points on Jazz* (both multi-movement works with fugues), or the 12-minute, Ivesian *They All Sang Yankee Doodle*. Most of the *Nocturnes* last less than two minutes.

They were not originally conceived as a group, but reflect a roughly 50-year compositional span. The earliest piece is *Lullaby*, a four-part chorale, written in 1942 and dedicated to Iola, who was his sweetheart at the College of the Pacific. No doubt the piece helped to woo her, for they married that same year. The latest piece in the set is *Joshua Redman*, written for the tenor saxophonist and recorded by the two of them for a 1995 Telarc CD entitled *Young Lions & Old Tigers*. As a group,

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however, the *Nocturnes* are unified by their illustration of Brubeck's gift for tender lyricism (often under-recognized by music history books, which tend to emphasize his polytonal, polyrhythmic experiments) and his penchant for simple, sad tunes. Above all, Brubeck's *Nocturnes* come across as intensely personal, almost confessional statements, glimpses into Brubeck's soul.

My relationship with Dave Brubeck goes well beyond that of an admiring musician, though that was its genesis. I first encountered his music when I was five years old, around 1960. My older sister belonged to a jazz-record club, and she tells me I would play the *Time Out* LP on our family's stereo. I don't quite remember that, but I've always been able to play *Take Five* and *Blue Rondo a la Turk* on the piano, even before my mother bought me the music.

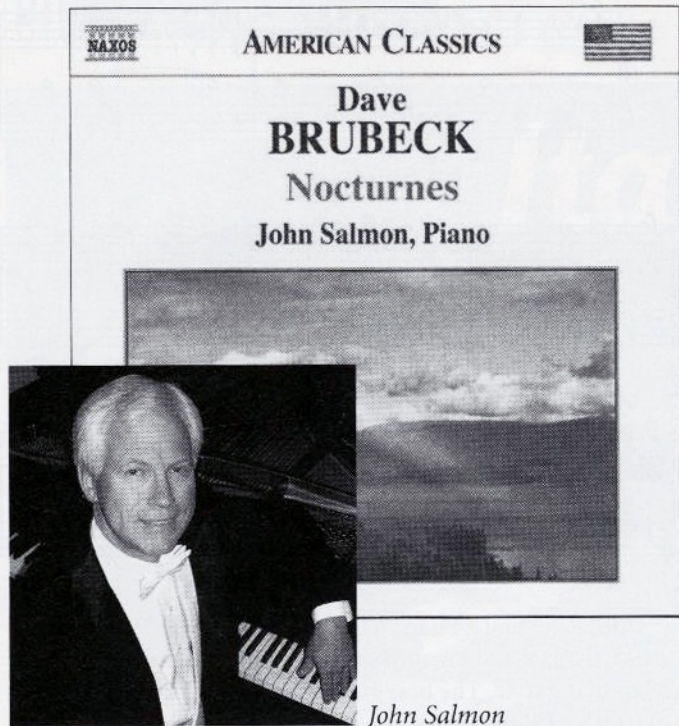
Meanwhile, I took piano lessons and played both classical music and jazz. In 1971, I wrote Brubeck a fan letter. To my utter astonishment, he responded. That was a kind of turning point in my life. His encouragement probably helped me decide to major in music in college. Over the next two decades, until the early nineties, our relationship was mainly that of fan/star. I would greet him fleetingly, backstage at various venues, and Iola would kindly and faithfully send me Christmas cards every year.

About the time Dave's brother Howard died, however (in 1993), my role gradually morphed from fan to collaborator. Howard, a gifted composer and musician in his own right who had been Darius Milhaud's assistant at Mills College, served as Dave's editor and musical confidant. It was Howard who helped prepare much of Dave's music for publication. I remember send-

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Young John Salmon

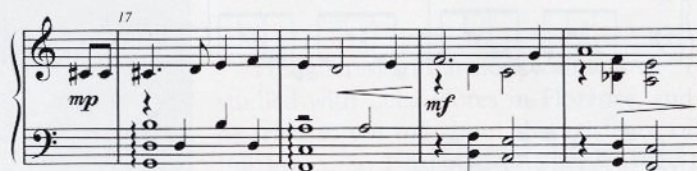


ing Dave a recording of a performance I had given at Interlochen Arts Academy, two months after Howard's death, of *Points on Jazz* (whose printed score had been prepared by Howard). I believe that was another turning point in my relationship with him. From that point on, I have edited Dave's music, written articles and forewords, and recorded three CDs of his "classically-oriented" music. While I could never see myself as "replacing" Dave's brother, it gave me and continues to give me an enormous satisfaction to continue some of the work Howard did.

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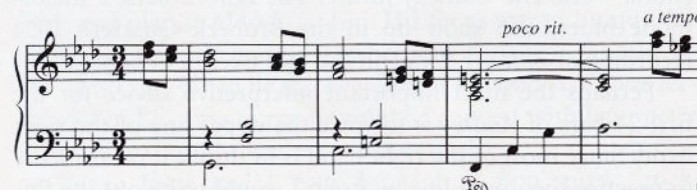
In a way, Dave has always been kind of like a father to me. He was born in 1920, the same year as my father, and grew up for the first twelve years of his life in Concord, California, a few miles up the road from Walnut Creek, where my father had grown up. Over the past few years, I have performed with two of Brubeck's sons, drummer Dan and trombonist/bassist Chris, who are roughly my contemporaries. Despite the infrequency with which we see each other, they feel like brothers to me.

The solo piano pieces that comprise the *Nocturnes* "cross over" to the classical realm, a distinguishing characteristic of Brubeck's oeuvre overall. That means classical pianists can play many of them without worrying about "swinging." Indeed, *Blue Lake Tahoe*, *Chorale*, *I See*, *Satie*, *Softly*, *William*, *Softly*, and others are intended to be played "straight," and such classical concerns as legato, tone quality, voicing, and judicious use of pedal are as important as in the performance of a Chopin nocturne. Sometimes I add a Brubeckian touch, as in the 21st measure of *The Desert and the Parched Land*, where I employ a *sforzando-piano* effect by playing the chord staccato but then catching the tail end of the sonority in the damper pedal:



Chord very staccato, then apply pedal split second later.

Occasionally I add a little coda, as in *Lost Waltz*, which I "tag" (to use the jazz term):



In *Chorale*, I repeat the bridge before going to the coda (not indicated in the score), with an altered, arpeggiated accompaniment:

Audrey (in this issue) is typical of the *Nocturnes*—subtle, slight, and slightly sad (at least the first 24 bars are). Composed in 1954, it is a perfect musical depiction of its namesake and one of the era’s most well known actresses: Audrey Hepburn, arguably the wispiest and most melancholic figure ever to grace the screen. For those interested in thematic migration, the minor section undergoes a dramatic transformation as the spiritual “Lord, Lord” in Brubeck’s 1969 choral work *The Gates of Justice*. The last 12 bars, a major-mode blues, also show up in the Brubeck Quartet’s 1954 recording of *Balcony Rock* (on the *Jazz Goes to College* LP).

Perhaps the most important interpretive advice for the first 24 bars of *Audrey* is to voice the upper line of the right hand. Since most of the right hand is in thirds, it makes sense to practice the upper line by itself; I would write out the finger-



John Salmon and Dave Brubeck

ing, and then make sure it is followed when practicing the upper line alone. Pedaling is another important consideration, not only to provide warmth, but also to facilitate legato. My pedal indications do the former (provide warmth) in bars 9–10, where the lush, rolled chord carries over to the next bar, and the latter (facilitate legato) in bar 7, where the last two chords of the right hand must lift for technical reasons.

Unlike the first 24 bars, to be played “straight” (even eighth notes), the last 12 bars of *Audrey* should be played in a gently lilting swing style. The best guide is to listen the Dave Brubeck Quartet’s 1954 recording, with alto saxophonist Paul Desmond swinging those 12 bars. Here is an approximation of that rhythmic feel, written out:

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See *Audrey* beginning on page 20.