

Brubecks all, plus 3, fantastic

By PATRICIA BEACH SMITH

It was an historic event all the way around.

Some of the greatest and some of the youngest names in jazz played at Monday night's Groves Big Band-Jazz concert. Four of these jazz greats had the same name: They were Brubecks.

The other names were Morelo, Desmond and Wright. One Brubeck and the three others have been known for 25 years as the Dave Brubeck Quartet.

Commemorating their silver anniversary, they came together again to play in Birmingham for what appeared to be an adoring audience.

When they play together it's easy to see why the group is considered one of the finest jazz aggregations ever. After years of struggling, they are now relaxed. They have a lot of fun playing together as they must have always.

The appeal of the quartet is their sense of cooperation, something which must exist in all musical performance to make it special. They are so unlike the groups which seem to practice exhibiting detached egotism—the doing your own thing attitude, so the work as a whole loses its togetherness.

Instead, they relate constantly to each other. Joe Morelo beats out a rhythm pattern and the others pick it up like follow-

the leader. The father of it all, Dave Brubeck, returns the compliment with a new melodic motif which has player Eugene Wright easily thence out on the big base Paul Desmond, in his subtle way, outdoes them all with a combination of the rhythm and the melody line.

It is a rare experience to watch good musicians perform with this kind of elegance. The music the Quartet played was strictly classical jazz of the highest sort. Because of the nature of the band—and the cleverness of the performers even the classical took on a new meaning in their hands.

Brubeck is a pianist who is appreciated by jazz and classical pianists for his fantastic technique. He is also a great composer. The proof is the staying power of his 25-year-old quartet which sounds as wonderful today as it did when it was brand new.

Joe Morelo is an ace on drums. Eugene Wright is one of the greatest bass players ever to plunk the big string. Paul Desmond hopefully will be forever known as one of the greatest, mellowest sax players. He is the quietest of the Quartet. His performance style is much less outgoing than his fellows who make up for any straightness on his part. He is a highly intellectual player whose passion comes through his instrument, not his body or facial expressions.

The Quartet played six selections but typically, added about 20 more within the framework of their improvisations. The "Big Band Blues" got a "Picnic" addition from Desmond. "Let's Fall in Love" also got a "Shuffle off to Buffalo."

"Take Five" ended their set to a standing ovation which could only partially have been heard (the audience left at hearing this great group together again).

On the quieter side, Dave Brubeck and Desmond paired up to play duets—something they just discovered they like to do. It was a lovely mistake. Brubeck explained as he told how he and Desmond

had never played a duet in the 20 years they'd played together. I'm glad they made the mistake and so Dave Allen might say "This could be the start of something big."

The advent of another great concert, Two Generations of Brubeck, opened Monday's concert. Father Dave made away with his talented offspring, Darius on the keyboard, Dan on percussion and Chris on trombone. This quartet is dynamic as well.

Chris is one of the most fantastic young players this reviewer has ever had

the pleasure of hearing. His brother Dan is no slouch in the drum department either. Darius, the intellectual one in the group, Dan tends to be physical and Chris is the sensual one.

Old Dad accepts some of the unorthodox things on, because as he said last summer to a hostile audience: "You probably are the ones who didn't like what the Quartet was doing 20 years ago either."

Merrilee Trow and her committee will have a very hard time stopping Monday's concert with any other including with Stan Kenton's appearance on June 18.

Ballet troupe slated

Modern, lyrical and frequently erotic. The Polish Mime Ballet Theatre returns to the Detroit Institute of Arts Auditorium Friday, at 8:30 p.m. for the final event of the Founders Society Concert Series.

The Polish Mime Ballet Theatre will present "The Menagerie of the Empress Filippa," a production based on a scenario by the German expressionist playwright Frank Wedekind.

Newsweek has called the work the masterpiece of the company's reper-

toire, saying that the production is full of the cynical humor, the overt sexuality, the explosive violence, and the elegant theatrical energy, and the elegant muscular athleticism consistently associated with The Polish Mime Ballet Theatre.

It deals with the newly awakened sexual desires of a young girl and the search for dance/mime encounters she has with a variety of men. Through the course of the evening, the Empress meets Napoleon, a friend of the Mar-

quis de Sade, a circus strongman, and a magician, among others.

The Polish Mime Ballet Theatre offers a range of styles and influences in their productions as they liberally borrow from classical ballet, modern dance, traditional Eastern and Western mime and the Olympic stadium.

The visual emphasis on physical exertion and muscle control produces an effect described as an unparalleled display of endurance and sensuality.

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