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# 10 Years of JAZZ

**Jazz Week's sweet blend of performance and education  
puts U of L on the charts**

By Marty Rosen — Page 15

**Ever wonder why some films only screen in the suburbs? — Page 7**  
**Ky. Dems have caused their own time of constant sorrow — Page 13**



Feature Story

# Ten years of 'crazy' music

U of L's Jazz Week offers rare mix of performance and education

by Marty Rosen

**“I** went crazy. You can quote me on that. And you won't get any arguments from anyone who knows me.”

**S**o says Mike Tracy, director of the University of Louisville's Jamey Aebersold Jazz Studies Program, when asked how U of L's Jazz Week, the school's annual February jazz festival, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, came to be.

But Tracy goes on to note that his mental state is only partly accountable for the inception of what has become a signature event for the Jazz Studies Program. The idea actually originated with Jack Roby, a development officer at U of L, who recognized that U of L's growing jazz program offered an unusual opportunity to raise the profile of the School of Music.

Brainstorming sessions between Roby and the jazz faculty culminated in the notion of a music festival — but a music festival with a different twist. Like most

jazz festivals, this one would celebrate the jazz tradition by presenting some of the top performers in the field. But it would also have a significant educational component that would give students from U of L and around the region the opportunity to interact directly with those performers.

As for the performers, Jazz Week has presented some of the seminal figures in jazz. Consider just this brief sample: swing trumpeter Clark Terry (1997), whose career included stints with Count Basie, Duke Ellington, the “Tonight Show” band and dozens of recordings as a leader; saxophonist Michael Brecker (1998) and trumpeter Randy Brecker (1994), multi-Grammy winning performers and composers whose styles fuse elements of swing, funk, bop and rock; drummer Elvin Jones (2002), legendary for his incompara-

ble sessions with John Coltrane, not to mention his work with folks like Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins.

Also, pianist McCoy Tyner (2001), another Coltrane associate whose influence on jazz since the 1960s has been incomparable; trumpeter Wynton Marsalis (1995), certainly the most well-known figure in contemporary jazz; bass player Ray Brown (1999), who played with folks like Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and Oscar Peterson, and who recorded hundreds of sessions as a sideman; pianist Marian McPartland (1997), who made a slew of albums in the '50s and '60s before becoming a household name (at least among NPR listeners) for hosting her “Piano Jazz” radio program.

Continued on page 16





Continued from page 15

It's a list that could go on for pages: Stanley Turrentine, Curtis Fuller, Billy Taylor, Phil Woods, Art Farmer, Gregory Hines ... You get the picture. For a full list, check out the Jazz Week Web site, [www.louisville.edu/music/jazz/jazzweek/03/2003.shtml](http://www.louisville.edu/music/jazz/jazzweek/03/2003.shtml).

For listeners, evening performances by these folks are the focus of Jazz Week, but they're just the most visible tip of a musical iceberg that includes daylong clinics and workshops that bring established artists together with college students and high school and middle school students from throughout the region.

David Baker, chair of the prominent Jazz Studies Department at Indiana University, said in a phone interview: "I've followed U of L's

Java Men



Jazz Week since it started. From modest beginnings, it's grown to have a national impact that really draws attention to this entire cultural region, Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio. Jamey Aebersold is probably the most visible jazz educator in the world, and he and Mike Tracy have been able to attract some of the biggest names in jazz.

"But what distinguishes the U of L festival from other festivals is that it has such a strong educational component. The performers are not only great players, they're also great teachers, and the festival is inextricably linked to educational aims."

That thought is echoed by David Nearpass, director of bands at Woodrow Wilson Middle School in Terre Haute, Ind., and director of the Jazz Ensemble at Indiana State University. Nearpass is one of many middle school and high school band directors who bring their students to Jazz Week each year.

"From Terre Haute to Louisville is a long way to bring a group of middle school students," Nearpass said. "But we've come down six times. It's great for our kids. Not only do they get feedback and criticism during the clinics, but they also

get the chance to play with people like Clark Terry and Curtis Fuller. It's a classy operation run by very special people."

Over the last decade, the combination of great performances and workshops has paid dividends for the Aebersold Jazz Studies Program. "It gets people talking about the program," Tracy said. "Students see that they'll have an opportunity to study with some of the best players in jazz and it gets them excited about coming to Louisville." In recent years, those students have come from Turkey, Germany, Brazil, Austria and the Czech Republic, as well as from across North America. And enrollment in the jazz program has quadrupled.

As for Jazz Week, it continues to attract top performers. In addition to headliner Dave Brubeck, this year's lineup includes a fine mix of local and national artists. There's Bobby Watson, composer and saxophonist. High points of his 25-year career include a stretch as musical director for Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, playing on the first recordings by Wynton Marsalis and working with the free jazz innovator Sam Rivers. He also has a long string of recordings as leader.

Trumpeter Marcus Printup is a veteran of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and has recorded as a leader for Blue Note and other jazz labels. In addition, there are performances by vocalist Gail Wynters, Louisville favorites The Java Men and rare jazz films from the collection of Hal Miller.

Each year, Tracy said, members of the U of L jazz faculty get together and try to identify prospective performers. "Then it's a matter of trying to find who's available, who might be in the area and who we can afford," he said. "We've tried to pay tribute to the tradition by bringing in well-established artists, but we've also covered a lot of stylistic ground with groups like (jazz vocal ensemble) New York

Gail Wynters



Voices and DIVA (an all-woman band).

"We've been fortunate to bring in some people who are no longer around, like Stanley Turrentine, Art Farmer and Ray Brown. There are fewer and fewer opportunities to hear people from that generation."

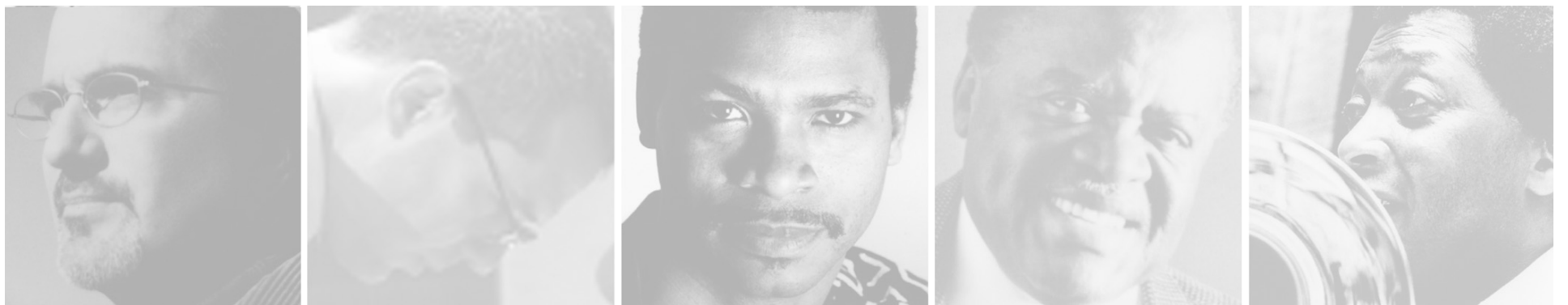
Asked about other artists he'd like to bring in, Tracy reels off names such as free jazz pioneer Ornette Coleman, the Count Basie Band, jazz guitarist John Scofield and the groovy Medeski, Martin & Wood.

Here's hoping!

Jazz Week runs Sunday to Sunday (Feb. 23-March 1). For tickets and schedule information, call 852-6907 or visit [www.louisville.edu/music/jazz](http://www.louisville.edu/music/jazz).

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Marcus Printup



# The long and winding road of Dave Brubeck

by Marty Rosen

Over the course of a career that spans more than 50 years, Dave Brubeck has gigged on every inhabited continent. He's played for presidents and royalty. He's played clubs and auditoriums of every stripe. At the height of the Cold War, he toured behind the Iron Curtain as a goodwill ambassador of jazz.

But perhaps the most memorable gig of his career happened in a place called the Mudhole, outside Verdun, just behind the Allied front during World War II a few months after D-Day.

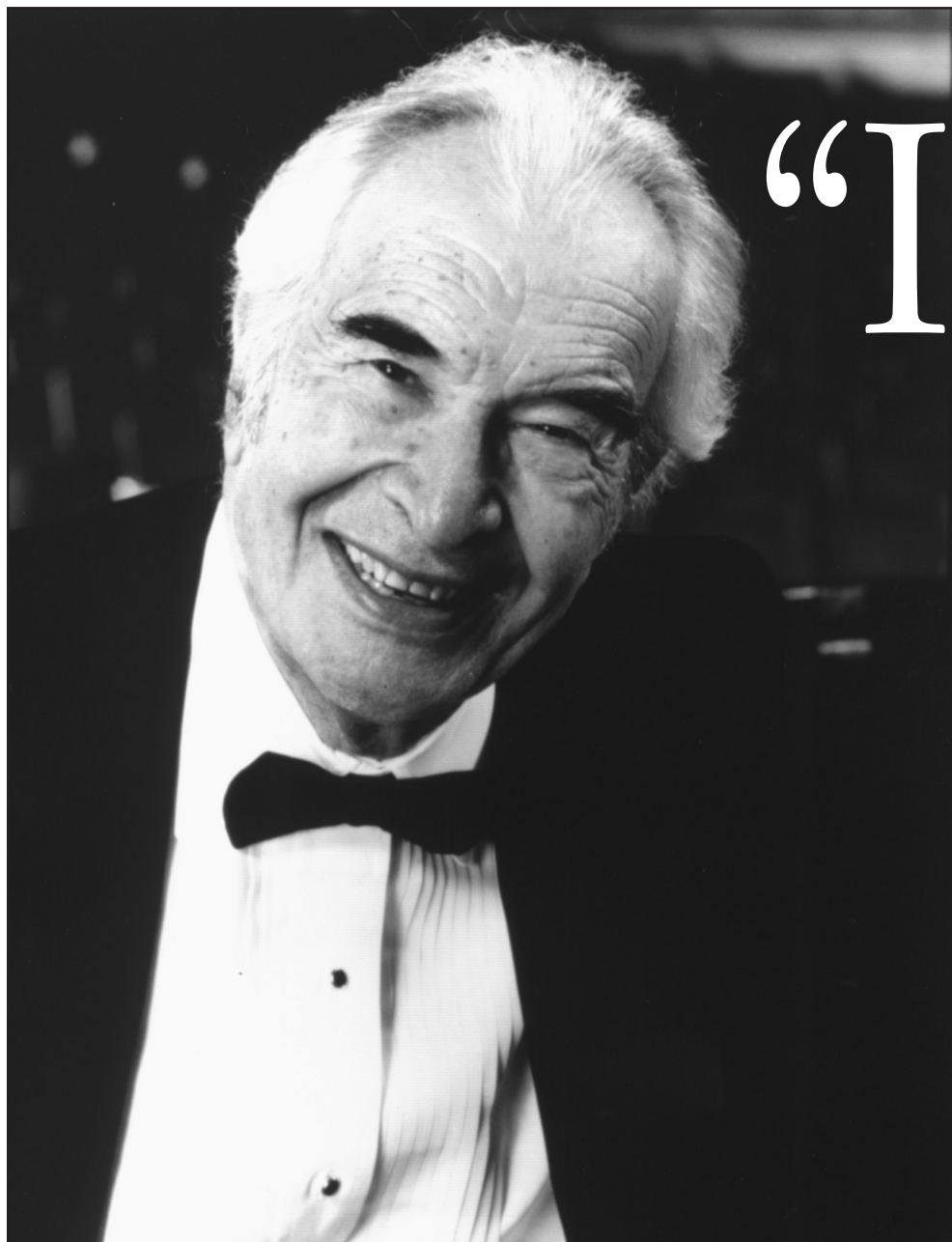
"I was a rifleman in the infantry," Brubeck recalled during a phone interview. "I was slated to go up to the front, but the day before I was supposed to leave they brought up some Red Cross girls to entertain us. They had a piano on the back of a truck, but they didn't have a piano player. They asked if someone would volunteer to play, and I raised my hand. A Col. Brown, who later went on to become a general, and was one of the administrators responsible for feeding the German people after the war, heard me play, and he told his officers, 'Don't ever let Brubeck go to the front. I want to keep him here and form a band.'"

The band would become known as The Wolf Pack. Its members were mostly battle-hardened, patched-up veterans. "When wounded soldiers came back from the front, they'd ask them what they did back home. If they were musicians, they'd send them over to join the band. Nearly all our members had Purple Hearts. We traveled back and forth, just behind the lines, playing for soldiers who were going up. I think we were better accepted by the men because most of us had been in combat and knew what it was like."

And as Brubeck told Ken Burns during the filming of the documentary "Jazz," the Wolf Pack was also notable for being one of the first racially integrated units in the U.S. Army during World War II.

Brubeck's beginnings hardly suggested that he would become one of the most beloved and best-known jazz performers of the century. He grew up in Concord, Calif. The son of a rodeo performer and cattleman who managed a 45,000-acre ranch, Brubeck spent much of his youth riding fence lines. It was during those years, he said, that he began to experiment with polyrhythms, singing rhythms that ran counter to the pulse of the horse trotting beneath him.

After the war, Brubeck studied with French composer Darius Milhaud, who then was teaching at Mills College. Under Milhaud's tutelage, Brubeck began to employ jazz idioms in traditional compositional structures and began to experiment with polytonality, the simultaneous juxtaposition of multiple key signatures. He



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formed a cutting edge progressive jazz trio with drummer/vibraphonist Cal Tjader and bass player Ron Crotty, recording for the Fantasy label and staking out a strong position on the West Coast.

In 1951, saxophonist Paul Desmond joined up, and the Dave Brubeck Quartet became one of the most popular forces in the music. The group's novel blend of up-front intellectualism and hard-driving swing earned legions of fans among college-aged youth. In 1954, the Brubeck Quartet signed with Columbia Records, and its importance as an exponent of cool, West Coast jazz was recognized when Brubeck made the cover of *Time* magazine.

In 1959, Brubeck crossed another threshold when his album, *Time Out*, became the first jazz album to sell more than a million copies — on the strength of Paul Desmond's witty, addictive little

essay in 5/4 meter, "Take Five."

Over the years, Brubeck has recorded perhaps 150 albums. His children have become a kind of extended musical dynasty, playing and teaching jazz in nearly every imaginable context. One son, Darius, is the director of the Centre for Jazz and Popular Music and professor of Jazz Studies at the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa. Another, Matthew, is a cellist who records with people like Tom Waits, Sheryl Crow and Tracy Chapman. Dan is a drummer. Chris is a multi-instrumentalist who has recorded with people like Larry Coryell.

And Dave Brubeck himself may be the hardest-working octogenarian in the music business. "I play about 180 one-nighters a year," he said. He spends a large part of each day composing and arranging. And in 2000, he established the

Brubeck Institute at the University of the Pacific. The Institute offers full scholarship assistance to a small group of young jazz musicians who receive an intensive year of jazz instruction, as well as performing opportunities and recording experience. (For information about the program and the audition process, see <http://brubeckinstitute.org>)

Dave Brubeck performs at Jazz Week on Sunday, Feb. 23, at 2 p.m. at U of L's Comstock Concert Hall (\$20). He also performs Monday, Feb. 24, at 8 p.m., at the Brown Theatre (\$50/\$30/\$35, students \$15). He'll be accompanied by Bobby Militello (sax and flute), Michael Moore (bass) and Randy Jones (drums). For more information, call 852-6907 or visit [www.louisville.edu/music/jazz](http://www.louisville.edu/music/jazz).

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