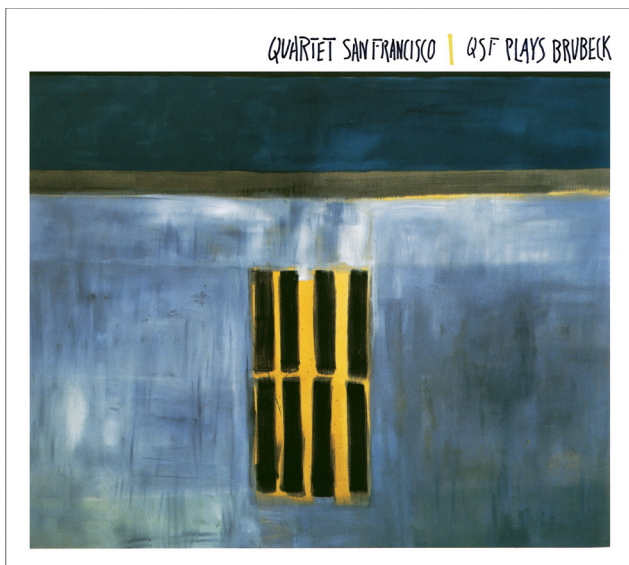


TRACK NOTES by Jeremy Cohen



QSF Plays Brubeck celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of *Time Out*. With it we hope to introduce to a new generation of music lovers and string players the great world of Dave Brubeck's music. Written some fifty years ago, the works that are here arranged for and performed entirely on four stringed instruments have lost none of their rhythmic zest and harmonic color.

The fact that little of Brubeck's early music has been visited upon by the world of chamber music in general and string players in particular has encouraged me to dive into this project with full energy and zeal. After all, in my home we were taught about the "Four B's"—Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and Brubeck. And, as we know, the other three are all well represented in chamber music.

1. Three To Get Ready: This track from the B side of *Time Out* (remember B sides?) finds its melody in 3/4 waltz time but with intermittent breaks for swinging responses. The dialogue of Waltz–Swing–Waltz–Swing gives this piece its unique character. I added some playful harmonic lines and some gospel chorale bits to the swing sections to give it a rich string character.

2. Strange Meadowlark: In 2001 I arranged *Strange Meadowlark* based solely on its slow outer sections and we recorded it that same year on our debut CD, *4tet San Francisco*. I expanded it for this recording to include the full swing section in the middle of the tune. This newer arrangement keeps the piece very close to Dave's original version by incorporating Brubeck's and Desmond's solos, and I'm happy to be bringing it into the realm of scored chamber music.

3. The Golden Horn: From the DBQ 1958 album *Jazz Impressions of Eurasia*, this piece has always been a favorite of mine. When electric bassist, trombonist, pianist, and composer Chris Brubeck (Dave's son) suggested I do an arrangement of this tune for QSF, I jumped on it. The Joe Morello percussion solo that sets the tone for this piece presented an interesting challenge for a string quartet with no drummer. So we took to our alternative styles cadre of techniques to give this piece its percussive opening. This arrangement is dedicated to Chris and Tish Brubeck.

4. The Duke: Cellist and composer Matt Brubeck contributed this terrific arrangement of his dad's classic. Solidly grounded in the family's composer/performer tradition, Matt's arrangement of his dad's nod to The Duke is peppered with some tasty Ellington quotes. It's Brubeck doing Brubeck. In fact it's QSF doing Brubeck . . . doing Brubeck. Listen closely for bits of the familiar songs *Don't Get Around Much Anymore*, *Concerto for Cootie*, *Cotton Tail* and *Things Ain't What They Used to Be*.

5. Take Five: Perhaps the ultimate definition of cool, this classic by Paul Desmond is the only track on this CD that was not composed by Dave Brubeck, yet it is one of the landmark pieces from *Time Out*. Desmond, the sax player in the DBQ and famous for his silky smooth tone and playing style, wrote this swinging melody in 5/4 time and it has become one of the most famous pieces in the Brubeck songbook. I decided to take it for a spin as a vehicle to showcase the improvisatory skills of the QSF violinists (Alisa solos first and my solo follows). My solo was inspired by my friend and violin/fiddle icon Sid Page who took a mind-blowing solo on *I Scare Myself* on the 1972 Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks album, *Striking it Rich*. You remain one of my all-time violin heroes!

6. Kathy's Waltz: Dave Brubeck has really constructed a wonderful tune here using three-note motifs throughout the opening section. In this composition Brubeck's writing hints of Count Basie who was also a master of saying more with less. Its short melodic bursts give way to beautiful long lines that translate well on stringed instruments. This is a wonderfully elegant composition and a favorite of mine.

7. Blue Rondo A La Turk: This work was QSF's first venture into "Brubeckistan." I wrote this arrangement in 2000 and it is now the earliest archeological evidence of QSF's beginnings. It was the success of our early performances of *Blue Rondo* that helped me realize the importance of bringing familiar American music into the realm of the 300-year-old art form known as chamber music.

8. Bluette: This beautifully serene Brubeck ballad was done justice by my long-term friend (23 years to date) and pianist in my *Violinjazz* quartet, Larry Dunlap. Also a composer and arranger, Larry has been writing music in the San Francisco Bay Area and performing around the world with fine musicians for years. *Bluette* and the following two tracks were all on Brubeck's 1961 album *Time Further Out*. Video of QSF recording this arrangement by Larry can be seen on the Youtube.com by searching on "Quartet San Francisco Bluette."

9. Unsquare Dance: Alisa takes over on this track in 7/8 time, giving us her funky bluegrass "chopping" rhythm licks in the middle section of the piece. When I first heard the original recording of **Unsquare Dance** on *Time Further Out*, I repeated it hundreds of times, clapping along with it and counting to seven. It was fun as well as educational, and you can even try this at home safely! Listen for the very square *Turkey in the Straw* and *Shave and a Haircut (Two Bits!)* quotes at the end.

10. It's a Raggy Waltz: Raggy Waltz is a waltz in 3/4 time that plays games with our ears. The opening theme sounds as if it is in 2/4 time because of Dave's clever writing. He is the master of writing in polyrhythms while creating seamless melodies.

11. Forty Days: *Forty Days* first appeared on *Time In* (1965), the fifth and final album from the "Time" concept series. It later became part of Brubeck's religious oratorio, *Light In The Wilderness*, recorded by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in 1968. Although written in 5/4 time (like *Take Five*), *Forty Days* has an evocative melody set over a circular minor chord progression that gives it a reflective quality. The cello solo is based on a section of Brubeck's original piano solo, as is the quiet chordal sequence that recalls a Bach chorale. This arrangement was created for QSF by Bob Gilmore, author of the arrangement of Raymond Scott's *Boy Scout In Switzerland* on our last CD, *Whirled Chamber Music*. Bob and I have been pals and music collaborators since our days together at Sonoma State College in the 1970's when I played in his band *Air Castle*.

12. What Child is This: I was so moved and intrigued by Dave's solo piano performance of this piece on his 1996 Christmas album (*A Dave Brubeck Christmas*) that I arranged it for string quartet. Yes, perhaps it's a little out of context on this compilation of Brubeck's jazz hits from the 1950's–60's, but everyone in the quartet wanted to include it. So it is tucked in here at the end as our closing gift to Dave and his devoted fans.

A note about the violins: both of the violins on this recording were made by the French violinmaker Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume (1798–1875) just a few years apart from each other during the 1860s. My long-time pal and college roommate, Jeremy Constant, now Assistant Concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony, loaned us his Vuillaume (the "ex-McCallum," formerly owned by David McCallum, Sr., father of the actor David McCallum of "Man From U.N.C.L.E" fame). Mine is the very same violin used by the concertmaster of the MGM orchestra, Lou Raderman, from 1939–1969, and was the instrument on which Raderman played all of the solos on *The Wizard Of Oz*, *Singin' in The Rain*, and every other classic MGM movie soundtrack during those years. The legacies of these violins urge us to do our part to push forward American string playing.