NOTES ON THE MUSIC
By Dave Brubeck

POINTS ON JAZZ is a ballet suite which was composed for two pianos as a set of rhythmic variations on a theme. Some of the variations are based on jazz concepts, others are derived from the classics.

The history of POINTS ON JAZZ began on a cold day in March, 1958. Travelling through Poland between the cities of Lodz and Poznan, I jotted down a romantic, melancholy theme that seemed to express the feeling of those who sat with me on the train, staring out at the barren winter landscape. My Quartet was on a State Department sponsored tour behind the Iron Curtain and our final concert in Poland was scheduled for the following evening in Poznan. That night at concert intermission I played the theme for the members of my group and suggested to our announcer-interpreter friend, Roman Waschko that as a dedication to the people of Poland we would play the piece as an encore. To express in some measure our gratitude for the warmth with which we had been received in their country, I called the piece “Dziękuję,” the Polish word for “thank you.”

The audience responded with a stunned hush, followed by applause mingled with tears. When I returned to the United States in the spring, I sent copies of the piece back to Poland, and the printed music appeared as the cover of the Polish jazz magazine. Soon the piece was being performed by Polish jazz musicians. "Dziękuję" was often played by my Quartet on our concert tours of the United States and Europe, and finally was recorded in the Quartet album "Jazz Impressions of Eurasia." (CL 1251).

When Dania Krupaska, an American choreographer of Polish descent, heard "Dziękuję" on the album, she immediately wired to ask if I would use the theme to write music for a jazz ballet she was preparing. At our first meeting she told me the story of the ballet and the variations in rhythms she had outlined for the dancers. As the story unfolded, I improvised variations on the theme "Dziękuję." These impromptu variations later became the basis for the composition commissioned by the American Ballet Theater.

"The Boy is the Theme. He is all alone on the stage—detached. Gradually movement begins. The Girls make their entrances. He tries to reach out and make contact with them, but cannot. Dania's description produced the first variation, PRELUDE.

"The Girl enters. She is fresh, gay, bubbling with life." GIRL is the SCHERZO with bright arpeggios and a pounding, rhythmic pulse.

"Here comes The Tempest." She is a slow BLUES. She entices The Boy, then leaves him to summon other men to gather around her. They fight for her in a primitive dance and she is tossed wildly from one man to another. The BLUES tempo quickens. "Then The Tempest snags her fingers and walks out on the men." End of BLUES variation.

The FUGUE was designed as a choreographed "chase" with entrances of the dancers corresponding to the musical entrances.

"Now The Girls and The Boys are happily together again. They are wacky, happy Couples." THE RAG.

"Their happiness makes The Boy feel ever more alone." The Boy's theme in a CHORALE variation.

"The Girl reaches out for The Boy. She wants to comfort him." Introduction to WALTZ variation. "He recognizes her as The Girl of the SCHERZO. They dance a romantic pas de deux." The SCHERZO theme in 2/4 and The Boy's theme in 3/4 meet in the WALTZ variation.

"The Girl is overjoyed. She must call everyone to share her happiness." A LA TURK variation and FINALE. "In the confusion of their celebration, The Boy and The Girl are separated. After a climactic search they find each other, embrace and walk away arm in arm."
The Original Two-Piano Score of:

POINTS ON JAZZ

A Ballet by Dave Brubeck
(commissioned by the American Ballet Theatre)

I—Prelude  II—Scherzo  III—Blues  IV—Fugue  V—Reg  VI—Chorale  VII—Waltz  VIII—A La Turk

I. PRELUDE

transcribed by Howard Brubeck

Quiet, Calm

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Slightly faster $J \cdot \text{very fast}$
Tempo Primo

calm

rit. and softer to end
Slightly slower $\text{\textit{rit.}}$ $J \approx 80$
Slightly faster $j = 128$

poco a poco accel. to next tempo
IV. FUGUE

Moderately fast in a swinging style \( \frac{4}{4} \) 80
* On repeat play 2 octaves higher through 2nd ending (left hand as is)
Slightly faster $d \cdot 66$