

MONAURAL—OL 5850



THE REAL AMBASSADORS

An Original Musical Production by Dave and Iola Brubeck



**LOUIS
ARMSTRONG
AND HIS
BAND**



**DAVE
BRUBECK**



LAMBERT,



HENDRICKS



**AND
ROSS**



**AND
CARMEN
McRAE**

© COLUMBIA RECORDS 1962

**GUARANTEED
HIGH FIDELITY**

THE REAL AMBASSADORS

An Original Musical
Production
by Dave and
Iola Brubeck

**LOUIS ARMSTRONG
& HIS BAND**
DAVE BRUBECK
**LAMBERT,
HENDRICKS & ROSS**
& CARMEN MCRAE

EVERYBODY'S COMIN'
CULTURAL EXCHANGE
GOOD REVIEWS
REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE
MY ONE BAD HABIT
SUMMER SONG
KING FOR A DAY
BLOW SATCHMO
THE REAL AMBASSADOR

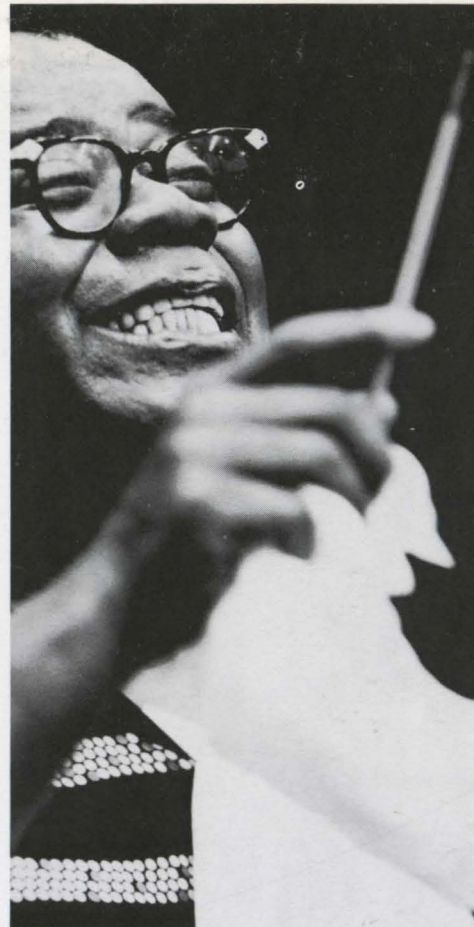
IN THE LURCH
ONE MOMENT WORTH YEARS
THEY SAY I LOOK LIKE GOD
SINCE LOVE HAD ITS WAY
I DIDN'T KNOW UNTIL
YOU TOLD ME
SWING BELLS
BLOW SATCHMO
FINALE
Produced by Teo Macero

One of the considerable, although admittedly collateral, esthetic pleasures to be derived from listening to this album, *The Real Ambassadors*, lies in the inescapable realization that it demonstrates so well the unifying possibilities inherent in a group of greatly talented, highly sophisticated performers whose individual styles and personal outlooks might ordinarily be thought to be irreconcilable. Indeed, this gathering—Louis Armstrong and his band; Dave Brubeck and his band; Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, and Carmen McCrae—had never before worked together as an ensemble. They had done nothing more than, in the vagrant fashion dictated by jazz festivals and concerts, straggle after each other on a succession of platforms, or possibly have a quick drink in the cocktail lounge of some airport while awaiting the planes that would take them (in a sense almost as symbolic as physical) in different directions.

Nevertheless, what the listener will find in this bringing together of talents seemingly so disparate is a phenomenon that is new, really, only in that it still occasions surprise whenever it happens—an underlying likeness of belief, both artistic and social. It is expressed in the subtle accommodation to each other of musicians who, having found something fundamental and valid to say, say it as one, in the most heartfelt manner of which they are capable and at the top of their bent. It is the identical accommodation arrived at between these musicians, separately, with audiences anywhere in the world (let alone native ones) who have had no previous experience of them or of their music, but in whom recognition is invariably instantaneous and no less heartfelt or unifying.

In fact, *The Real Ambassadors* grew out of the desire of Brubeck and his wife Iola, a writer, to accomplish two things: in the first place, to crystallize in music, lyrics and book these ideas, and in the second, to offer the creation as a tribute to Armstrong as the principal exemplar of their sentiments. At the same time, they conceived the congenial idea of having him participate in the performance in the unselfconscious manner peculiar to him. Mrs. Brubeck was struck by Armstrong's reception wherever he went, particularly on one of his African tours. In Leopoldville men of the Baboto, Ekonda and Nkongo tribes painted themselves violet and ochre in Armstrong's honor and bore him aloft into the city's stadium on a throne improvised from a canvas and metal tubing chaise lounge. His acceptance there may safely be said to have exceeded that of any foreign diplomat before or since.

She also recalled some of his utterances which seemed to epitomize what she had in mind. Thus there was a cablegram sent by Armstrong to his personal manager when both of them had recovered from illnesses. "Like myself," it read in part, in Armstrong's singular syntax and spelling, "you and I just have no business dying. That's all. We are put here on earth for humanitarly purpose. (Hmp.) Did that come out of me? (Tee hee.) For the happiness of the people all over the world we must live longer than Methusalem..." He had also said, "My public, they ain't thinkin' about politics when they call me Ambassador. They thinkin' about that horn and them notes and that music and them riffs. Oh, yes, that what they thinkin'. They prob'ly want to rest up on Satchmo, you know, when they call me Ambassador Satch. Which is nice,



Louis and Carmen McCrae



Louis and Lambert, Hendricks and Ross



you know. 'Specially when the chicks, they say, 'Hellow there, Ambassador Satch,' and the cats, 'How you doin' there, old Ambassador Satchie-matchie!' Long as I'm playin', I don't want 'em to feel nothin' else. I'm not lookin' to be on no high pedestal. They get their soul lifted because they got the same soul I got the minute I hit a note.... I love my audience and they love me and we just have one good time whenever I get up on the stage—it's such a lovely pleasure."

The plot of Mrs. Brubeck's musical (as yet unproduced) places Armstrong and his band in an unspecified African country newly arrived at independence, and its essence is simply that the kind of diplomacy coming out of the bell of his horn is apt to prove more efficacious in winning the United States friends abroad than the official kind. The premise is a reasonable one, but there is nothing humorlessly messianic in the way in which it is carried forward. For example, two of the reforms proposed by Armstrong (who is made king for a day in a ceremony reminiscent of his accession to the Kingship of the Zulus years ago in New Orleans during Mardi Gras) are these: We would govern the United States from the Soviet Union and the Russians would run their country from here; also, all city squares would be eliminated by rounding off the corners and wherever an open space existed a pendulum would be set up to remind people that the world still swings.

From the opening strains of the overture, *Everybody's Comin'*, the music bears the authentic Brubeck stamp, yet is thoughtfully worked out to display generously the characteristics with which his fellow musicians have come to be identified by the public: Arm-

strong's horn and voice; the quick, sliding singing of Lambert, Hendricks and Ross; the dark richness of Carmen McCrae's delivery. The lyrics, written jointly by Mr. and Mrs. Brubeck, neglect neither satire nor sentiment. They are, further, highly topical—so much so that a change in administrations and newspaper headlines frequently necessitated alterations in lines.

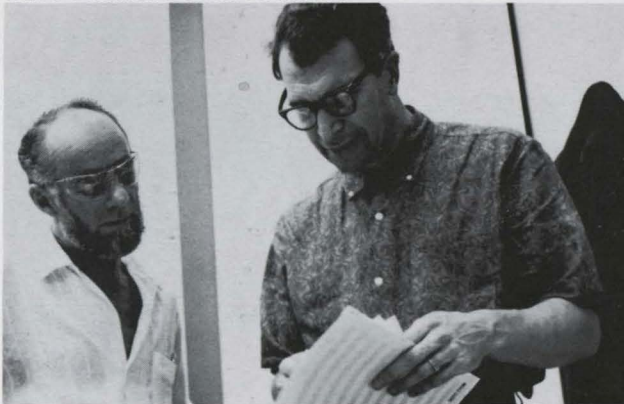
The theme of *The Real Ambassadors* is amply stated in *Cultural Exchange*. ("The State Department has discovered jazz./It reaches folks like nothin' ever has./Like when they feel that jazzy rhythm/They know we're really with 'em;/That's what we call cultural exchange.") Its verse features Lambert, Hendricks and Ross backed by the trio; its chorus gives Armstrong his first opportunity on the recording to break out with vocal and instrumental solos, in which he is supported by the combined Armstrong and Brubeck bands. The nature of *Cultural Exchange* is probably best indicated by its gently sardonic tag, actually an improvisation hit upon during a rehearsal by Armstrong and his fine trombonist, Trummy Young. "And if the world goes really wacky,/ Well get John to send out Jackie." At this point, Young interpolated, "You mean Jackie Robinson?" to which Armstrong responded, above the explosion of laughter that resulted (and that was retained for the recording), "No, man, I mean the First Lady./That's what we call Cultural Exchange!"

There is a nicely sardonic ring to *Remember Who You Are*, which the Brubecks wrote out of a memory of the briefing given them at an airport shortly before taking off on one of their State Department tours. "Remember who you are," sings Trummy Young, "And what you represent./Never face a problem;/



Dave Lambert with Brubeck

Carmen McRae, Dave Brubeck and Louis



DEMONSTRATION NOT FOR SALE

Dave and Iola Brubeck



Louis and Trummy Young



Always circumvent./Stay away from issues;/Be discreet./When controversy enters,/You retreat./Remember who you are and what you represent." Here, a superb Armstrong solo is supplemented by an equally inspired effort by Trummy Young on trombone.

In *King for a Day*, Armstrong and Young talk and sing of the things they would do in such a situation. Armstrong would call a "basement session." "Pops, you mean summit conference," Young informs him. "Man," replies Armstrong, "I don't mean a U.N. kind of session, I mean a *jam* session." He goes on to say he would "Form a swingin' band/With all the leaders from every land." Upon being told by Young, "Can't you hear that messed-up beat?/I'll tell you now you'll meet defeat," Louis answers, "Why they will/Fall right in a swingin' groove,/And all them isms gonna move./Relationships is bound to improve." To the objection, "Although my king is wise,/ Can't he realize/Rome wasn't built in a day?/ Won't a diplomat, just be apt to scat/In a hippy-critical way?" Armstrong says, "Not if they are playin' jazz./There'll be no such razzmatazz/'Cause it's a session where we jam the blues./Khrushchev poundin' both his shoes/Could not have the final say/If I'm king for a day."

Many more examples of the kind of insight that went into these songs could be adduced, but a few more will very well speak for all of them. In the selection from which the album takes its title, Louis answers his detractors, "I'm the real ambassador./It is evident I wasn't sent by government to take your place./All I do is play the blues and meet the people face to face./I'll explain and make it plain I represent the human race./And don't pretend no more." Elsewhere in the song, he says, "In my

humble way,/I'm the U.S.A./Though I represent the government, the government don't represent/Some policies I'm for./Oh, we learned to be concerned about the constitutionality;/In our nation, segregation isn't a legality./Soon our only differences will be in personality./That's what I stand for."

Among all the ballads, jump tunes and patter songs carefully woven in to advance the plot, many listeners may find the most impressive track on the recording a pure blues response sung by Louis, set against a Gregorian chant chorused by Lambert, Hendricks and Ross. It has about it the genuinely religious feeling produced by the traditional spiritual. In *They Say I Look Like God*, Louis sings pointedly, "They say I look like God./Could God be black? My God!/If all are made in the image of thee,/Could Thou perchance a zebra be?" and, "He's watched us from our birth/And if He cared if you're black or white,/He'd mixed one color/One just right," and finally, "Oh, Lord, please hear my plea!/Oh, give me eyes to see/That our creation was meant to be/An act of God to set man free."

By the very nature of its content, the musicians who perform on it, the manner of their performances and the integration—in many more ways than one—of the entire production, *The Real Ambassadors* is an outstanding recording.

—GILBERT MILLSTEIN

BEFORE AND AFTER THOUGHTS

Jazz versions of Broadway shows are numerous. Dave says *The Real Ambassadors* is a Broadway version of a jazz show.

During the summer of '56, while Dave

was touring the Eastern jazz circuit, I attended almost every musical event in New York. With the notable exception of "My Fair Lady" nothing on Broadway equalled the emotional impact of Joe Williams, standing in front of the Basie band in Central Park, telling his story through the blues. Why, I asked myself, can't we incorporate some of the true emotion and ironic wit of jazz into our Broadway shows? For years musical comedy has crossed over to the jazz side of the street when writers felt the need for a kind of excitement. Conversely, jazz musicians have borrowed from Broadway's repertoire and have even claimed some show tunes as their own "standards." What, I reasoned, could be more logical than to bring together on more intimate terms these two uniquely American musical forms?

About this time in 1956 (we erroneously dated it as '57 on the recording) Dizzy Gillespie had just returned from a State Department-sponsored tour and the entire jazz community was elated with the official recognition of jazz and its international implications. A story of a cultural exchange tour seemed to offer the possibilities Dave and I were seeking: a reason for the jazz musicians to be on stage to tell their stories through their instruments as well as to sing and act.

There was no question in our minds that the central figure of our play had to be Louis Armstrong. Louis embodies in magnificent proportions all the elements of jazz we wanted others to understand. His horn is his crown and scepter. The music that pours from it contains magic even the magician does not fully comprehend. Anyone who has been caught in Louis' spell can really believe that if he were to blast three times 'round, the walls of hate would

come tumbling down! (Louis actually hits concert F above high C in the finale.)

Carmen McRae was our immediate choice to play opposite Louis. Her modern sophistication and wit are but surface facets of an underlying tenderness and depth of feeling that matches Louis'. Obviously, no vocal group but Lambert-Hendricks-Ross could manage to sound like a crowd or a full chorus on demand.

Since *The Real Ambassadors* is a story about jazz and jazz musicians, it is told primarily through music. Consequently, this [Ⓟ] is crammed to capacity even though it contains only half the score of the show. After five years of writing, rewriting and waiting, suddenly in September 1961 we obtained Louis Armstrong's services for five recording sessions. These sessions had to produce what we were after or the entire project would have been lost.

We have unforgettable memories of those miraculous days... Louis Armstrong's magnificently appealing voice asking, "When will that great day come, when everyone is one; and there will be no mo' misery, when God tells man he's really free!"... the sweet irony of Annie Ross' first "Hallelujah"... the adaptability and quick comprehension of both bands... Trummy's boy-like enthusiasm... the shock of Davey, Jon and Annie's trip-hammer double-time rendition of *The Real Ambassador*... the gentle heads-together duets of "Pops" and Carmen.

The old master "Pops," the first to arrive at the studio and the last to leave, at our final session wrote on my copy of "Summer Song":

To Mrs. Brubeck
Am very happy.
Satchmo Louis Armstrong

So are we.

—Iola Brubeck

COLUMBIA



MASTERWORKS

MONAURAL—OL 5850



PHOTO: U.P.I.

THE SELECTIONS—PUBLISHED BY DERRY MUSIC CO. (BMI)—ARE FOLLOWED BY THEIR TIMINGS

SIDE I EVERYBODY'S COMIN'.....	1:46
CULTURAL EXCHANGE.....	4:38
GOOD REVIEWS.....	2:05
REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE.....	2:31
MY ONE BAD HABIT.....	2:37
SUMMER SONG.....	3:14
KING FOR A DAY.....	3:41
BLOW SATCHMO.....	:44
THE REAL AMBASSADOR.....	3:06
	25:00

SIDE II IN THE LURCH.....	2:28
ONE MOMENT WORTH YEARS.....	4:18
THEY SAY I LOOK LIKE GOD.....	5:26
SINCE LOVE HAD ITS WAY.....	2:31
I DIDN'T KNOW UNTIL YOU TOLD ME.....	2:58
SWING BELLS; BLOW SATCHMO; FINALE.....	6:06
	24:12

© COLUMBIA RECORDS 1962/ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

© "COLUMBIA" MASTERWORKS™ MARCAS REG PRINTED IN U.S.A.

This Columbia GUARANTEED HIGH FIDELITY recording is scientifically designed to play with the highest quality of reproduction on the phonograph of your choice, new or old. If you are the owner of a new stereophonic system, this record will play with even more brilliant true-to-life fidelity. In short, you can purchase this record with no fear of its becoming obsolete in the future.