

The VANCOUVER SUN
Jan. 8, 1955

JAZZ IDIOM RAISED TO ARTISTIC LEVEL

Martha Robinson

The West Coast is the new home of jazz.

What started as a work-song among Negroes relaxing from their day's labor in the cotton fields of Louisiana, is evolving into a new art form.

No longer are the best jazz musicians unlettered improvisers playing from "stream of consciousness;" they are highly trained instrumentalists and arrangers. Europe, by its appreciation and acceptance has raised the jazz idiom to an artistic level.

Hollywood Centre

In the course of its little more than half-century history, the centre of jazz music has moved from its birthplace in New Orleans to Chicago in the decade following the First World War. For another 15 years New York was the home of jazz, but now the centre is Hollywood.

Today the development and shaping of the course of jazz is in the hands of a small group of West Coast musicians.

One of its all-time greats is Dave Brubeck, pupil of modern French composer Darius Milhaud. Brubeck with his quartet will be featured at Sunday's outstanding jazz concert in the Georgia Auditorium at 8:30pm, sponsored by Vancouver's New Jazz Society.

Vancouver is in the vanguard as the jazz form evolves to a new art medium.

Course at UBC

This is the only part of Canada where jazz is taught in the high schools after hours and at lunchtime concerts. The University of B.C. is the only university in Canada offering a course in jazz appreciation.

Spark plug of the New Jazz Society here is energetic Bob Smith. A social service worker and director of Vancouver Boys' clubs, he has found that teaching jazz to youth is one method of occupying their time meaningfully.

In the jargon of jazz enthusiasts, he's a "hipster," who explains the New Jazz Society's donation of \$1,000 to the Vancouver Symphony by saying, "Jazz musicians feel they owe a great debt to classical music. Jazz must be steeped in the emotion of the new music, but the form of the old has to be mastered as well. Many people who turn out for Jazz Society Concerts go regularly to symphony concerts. Today there is no sharp cultural dividing-line between the two audiences."