

JACK KLEINSINGER

presents

in association with
NYU Program Board

HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ

**Salute to
Roy Eldridge**



Wick Katz
Thursday Dec. 20

8:00PM

Howard Johnson - Alto Sax
with

Clark Terry

~~~~~  
Milt Hinton

~~~~~  
Maxine Sullivan

~~~~~  
Panama Francis

and Guest of Honor:

**ROY  
ELDRIDGE**

and his  
Savoy Sultans

**N.Y.U. Loeb Student Center**

Tickets \$6, Students \$5  
Student Balcony \$4

566 LaGuardia Pl at Washington Square South  
Telephone: 598-3757

Tickets at box office or by mail order to  
Highlights in Jazz, 7 Peter Cooper Rd.  
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Coming Thursday, February 7 at 8PM **Highlights In Jazz' Gala 7th Anniversary Concert**  
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*John Smith, President of Led Richards*

# How To Not Stuff a Jazz Classic

## WEATHER BIRD

By Gary Giddins

The movement to recreate or recapture classic jazz was launched six years ago by the New York Jazz Repertory Company and the National Jazz Ensemble, but the jazz past continues to frustrate its most reverent interpreters. Sincerity is not authenticity, and the laborious exercises that so often pass for rendition are usually a kind of taxidermy. It requires a valorous internalization of the old styles, or at least the realization that interpretation is an act of the imagination, to knock the stuffing out of those varnished monuments. Jazz repertory is in its infancy, and its occasional successes notwithstanding, is not yet the respectable part of jazz discipline it will eventually become. Happily, there are veterans among us willing to provide cues and directions.

Panama Francis introduced his Savoy Sultans at one of the habitually under-attended NYJRC concerts in 1974; he invited members of the audience to dance on stage, and spurred them with a rhythmic swagger that reasserted his stature as a swing drummer with few living rivals—perhaps only Gus Johnson, Buddy Rich, and, when the stars are in proper conjunction, Jo Jones. The Sultans never took off here, but in Europe the response was immediate and enthusiastic. The band was the hit of the Nice festival, and its first album (on Black and Blue) won France's Grand Prix du Disque and came in third in England's *Jazz Journal* poll. Inner City, which owns American distribution rights to the Black and Blue label, has yet to make it available, but that may change as a result of Francis's performance at Highlights in Jazz a few weeks ago and his forthcoming engagement at the Rainbow Room starting January 29.



Panama Francis: the great swing drummer provides cues and directions

The Savoy Sultans may seem an odd resource for a contemporary repertory group. Under the leadership of Al Cooper, the original nine-piece unit was the house band at the Savoy Ballroom from 1937 until 1946. Several of its 28 recorded sides for Decca are excellent, but they are overwhelmed by the band's mythology: Dizzy Gillespie called it "the swingiest band that ever was," and some top orchestra leaders reportedly declined to follow the Sultans on the bandstand. It was chiefly a jump band (the Sultans coined the term), specializing in riff-laden tunes that impressed dancers and listeners alike. The Swing Era—when congregations of reeds and brass cajoled each other in impassioned hallelujahs to rock the jitterbugs—encouraged rhythmic competition, and the "home of happy feet" obviously demanded a house band that could traverse swing's cutting edge. Yet it also had some fine if little-known soloists—especially Rudy Williams, the swing altoist who completely adopted the bop idiom after hearing Charlie Parker, and Sam Massenberg, a trumpeter who isn't listed in any jazz reference work and apparently never recorded again. Younger musicians looked up to them—Dexter Gordon's "Long Tall Dexter," for example, is practically a bebopped version of the Sultans' "Little Sally Water."

The soloists were subordinated to the collective power of the small ensemble, with the paradoxical result that the terse improvisations, craftily springing from the arrangements, showed the players off to the best possible advantage. The same is true of Panama Francis's edition, where the solos alternately relieve and intensify the tension generated by the ensemble. The outstanding soloist is George Kelly, a driving, warm-blooded tenor saxophonist in the Coleman Hawkins tradition, who gave Francis his first job in 1934 (they were 19 and 16 respectively), joined the Sultans in the '40s, and recently returned to active playing at the West End Cafe after serving 10 years as the pianist and music director for the Canadian Ink Spots.

Another find is Irvin Stokes, a fluent trumpeter with a penchant for bop licks that contrasts nicely with Franc Williams's mainstream vocalizations. A somewhat analogous contrast exist between the two altoists, Norris Turney and Howard Johnson, with the older and less consistent Johnson essaying the riskier licks. Yet their solos wouldn't be tuned nearly so taut if the rhythm section—pianist Red Richard, guitarist John Smith, bassist Bill Pemberton, and Francis—wasn't a precision machine.

For Francis, the project is obviously an act of love, a chance to play the music of his heart—he apprenticed at the Savoy—after a lifetime in the studios. He's never sounded better, and never—insofar as records tell the story—swung with more dashing certitude. Although the Sultans provide him with a conceptual basis for his potent concert-dance band, the repertoire ranges with some diversity. "Gettin' in the Groove" and "Norfolk Ferry" bear the Sultans' imprimatur though the latter came from Erskine Hawkins, while "Shipyard Social Function" originated as a Tab Smith arrangement for Lucky Millinder; "Clap Hands Here Comes Charlie" (with a storming solo by Kelly, paced and jolted by Francis) comes from Chick Webb, "Moten's Swing" from Bennie Moten, and "Girl Talk," a relatively recent Neal Hefti piece, from Count Basie. Francis started the set on a doubly old-fashioned note: the tune was "Song of the Islands," and the procedure allowed one soloist at a time to attain the stage and play a chorus before the ensemble whacked the theme home. When a swing band is on course, there is no mistaking its momentum.

The Highlights in Jazz concert was a salute to Roy Eldridge, who, coincidentally, gave Francis his moniker and first

recording date. When Eldridge finally got to the stage, the Sultans had additional opportunity to display spontaneity in fashioning head arrangements for the trumpeter. The reunion was ripe with the kind of emotion that makes everyone play as though each note could reverse time and settle the participants back into the halcyon days when they ruled the world. Few musicians always give 100 percent; Eldridge always gives 150 percent. "I Can't Get Started" was superb jazz repertory—a great jazzman accompanied through familiar territory by his erstwhile drummer, and riffing section men who know how to breathe as one. On Eldridge's subsequent numbers, Dick Katz replaced Richards at the piano, but the hornmen stayed on stage to provide organ chords and obbligato when appropriate. They all soloed on "Kidney Stew," Franc Williams playing in the Eldridge style, after which Eldridge and Katz, reluctant to go home, played a 90-second duet of whimpered blasts and scattershot chords that sounded like Lester Bowie and Muhal Richard Abrams. At 68, Eldridge is still a terror.

**VARIETY**

Wednesday, December 12, 1979

## On The Upbeat

Clark Terry, Maxine Sullivan, Panama Francis & His Savoy Sultans and others again pay tribute to Roy Eldridge in Jack Kleinsinger's "Highlights in Jazz" series at Loeb Student Center, New York U., N.Y., Dec. 20.

VOICE DECEMBER 24, 1979

OUR MUSIC CRITICS GIVE US THE WORD

## VOICE CHOICES

### SALUTE TO ROY ELDRIDGE

Little Jazz has finally consented to make the trip downtown, something he may never do again if he has anything to say about it. Another reason not to miss this one is Panama Francis's Savoy Sultans. Not to mention Clark Terry and Maxine Sullivan. Dec. 20 at 8, 566 LaGuardia Pl. (Giddins)  
Loeb Student Center

598-3757

# Jazz: A Roy Eldridge Salute

By JOHN S. WILSON

The "Salute to Roy Eldridge" presented by Jack Kleinsinger's "Highlights in Jazz" at New York University's Loeb Auditorium on Thursday evening was an overstuffed Christmas stocking, flowing over with jazz goodies. In addition to Mr. Eldridge, those who took part in the tribute included Clark Terry, the flugelhornist and singer; Slam Stewart, the humming bassist; the singer Maxine Sullivan, and Panama Francis and his nine-piece band, the Savoy Sultans.

Mr. Eldridge, who has been playing at Jimmy Ryan's for the last 10 years, is rarely heard in New York outside that club. For anyone who might have feared that he has been absorbed in Ryan's Dixieland atmosphere, his performance at his "Salute" was reassuring. At 68 years of age, Little Jazz, as Mr. Eldridge is known, is still playing a trumpet that crackles with excitement, spitting out phrases made up of bright cullets of sound and getting a gorgeously dark, burry tone when he goes down in the lower register on a ballad such as "I Can't Get Started"

Backed by the pianist Dick Katz and members of the Savoy Sultans, Mr. Eldridge gave a succinct summation of the essence of his performing style both on trumpet and as a vocalist. He sang the blues with great gravel-voiced spirit (as time goes by, his singing becomes more and more like that of Louis Armstrong) and he made an amusing tour de force of "Let Me Off Uptown," singing both his lines and those that Anita O'Day sang when they did this song with Gene Krupa's band.

But while Mr. Eldridge was, as expected, the star of his "Salute," the playing of Panama Francis and his



Don Kuusisto

Roy Eldridge

Savoy Sultans was a revelation. The original Sultans, a crisp, swinging riff band, was the house band at the Savoy Ballroom in the late 1930's and early 40's. Mr. Francis's group not only caught the flavor and spirit of the Sultans, but drew on the repertoires of other great Savoy bands, including Chick Webb, Lucky Millinder and the early Basie Band, playing with great knowledgeability and polish.



DAILY NEWS, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1979

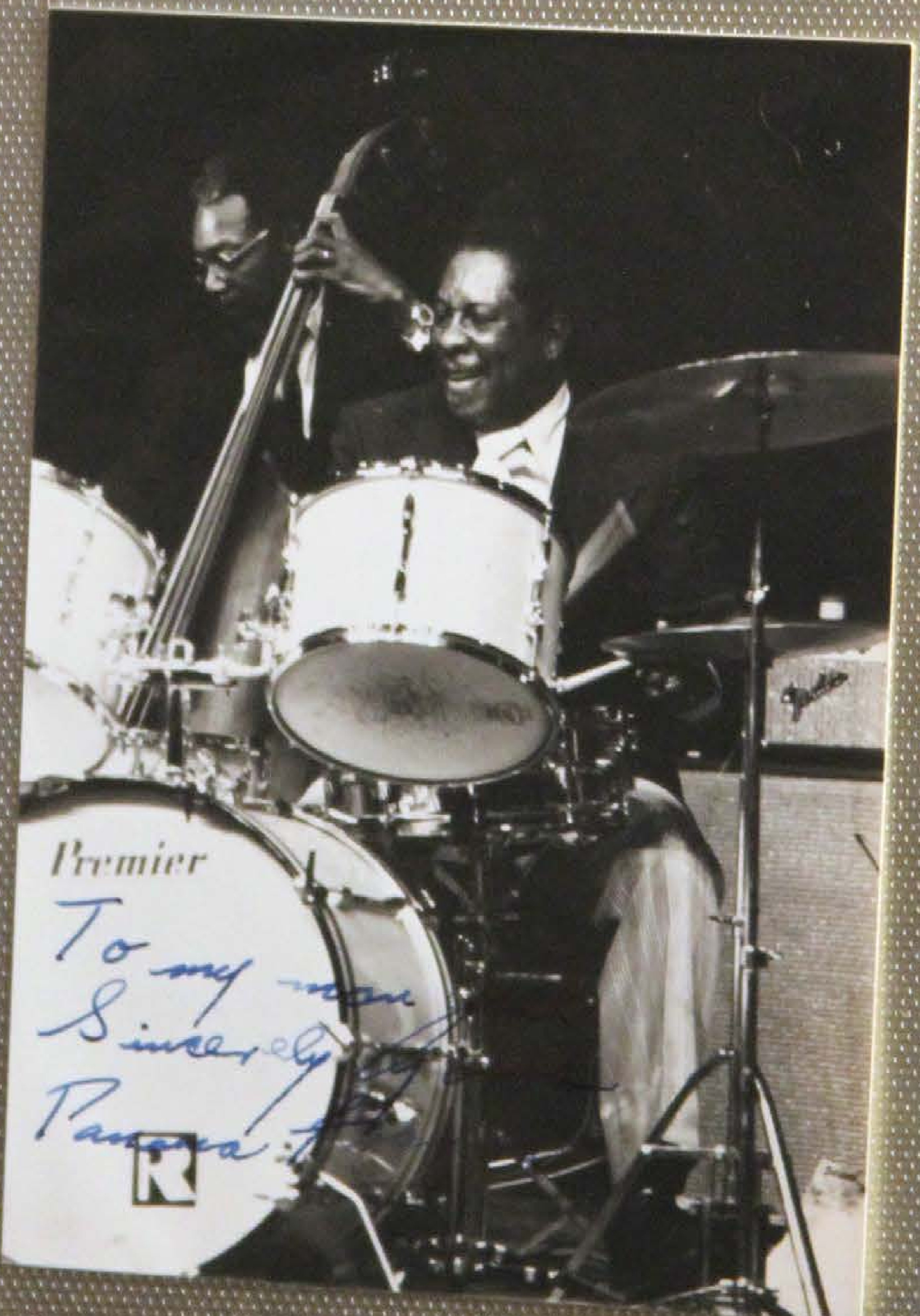
LOREN CRAFT

## PREVIEW

### POP MUSIC

**BUSY GUY:** Pianist, arranger, composer Bob James brings a quartet into the Bottom Line Tuesday and Wednesday, and on Friday he teams up with fellow pianists Richard Tee and JoAnne Bracken at Town Hall for a presentation of acoustic piano.

**OTHER SOUNDS:** Max Morath does his one-man show, "Living a Ragtime Life," at the Brooklyn Academy of Music tomorrow. Warren Covington and the Pied Pipers open tomorrow at Marty's. Pianist Dick Wellstood at the Bemelmans Bar, Hotel Carlyle, tomorrow. Gotham begins a week at the Grand Finale on Tuesday night. Red Norvo and his quartet at the King Cole Room, St. Regis, opening Tuesday. Jazz luminaries Maxine Sullivan, Panama Francis and Clark Terry salute Roy (Little Jazz) Eldridge Thursday at NYU's Loeb Student Center.



# Salute to Roy Eldridge



by James McAfee Jr.

"... most of all I am honored to call you my friend and brother. ..." Slam Stewart said in paying his tribute to Roy Eldridge.

"... He helped me to be what I am today. I owe to him. ..." Panama Francis said in paying his tribute to Roy Eldridge.

Highlights In Jazz saluted Roy Eldridge by presenting him with a plaque.

"Salute To Roy Eldridge" was presented Thursday, December 20, 1979, at the Eisner and Lubin auditorium of the Loeb Student Center of New York University by Jack Kleinsinger's Highlights In Jazz. The supporting cast was composed of such blue chip performers as Clark Terry, Slam Stewart, Maxine Sullivan and Panama Francis and His Savoy Sultans.

Clark Terry, one of the most distinctive sounding trumpet players and singers in jazz, opened the program. Clark playing fluegelhorn was accompanied by the rhythm section of drummer Panama Francis, bassist Slam Stewart and pianist Red Richards. Slam Stewart had come down from Binghamton, New York, where he is a professor at the State University. Clark's first tune was a musical tribute to Roy, playing Roy's composition "Little Jazz." This was followed by two tunes associated with two great lady singers in jazz, a slow beautiful version of Billie Holiday's "God Bless The Child" and the up-tempoed "Lady Be Good" which was a takeoff on Ella Fitzgerald's version of the tune with a little bit of "Mumbles" thrown in during the vocals. Appearing at Sweet Basil's, Clark had to leave immediately at the conclusion of his portion of the program, so he and Roy did not get to play together.

Panama Francis and His Savoy Sultans was a stand out, playing some crisp swinging arrangements out of the swing era. The opening tunes "Norfolk Ferry"

and "Gettin' in the Groove" were out of the book of the original Savoy Sultans. "Girl Talk" which was dedicated to all the ladies was mainly a swinging vehicle for the reed section. "Clap Hands Here Comes Charlie" featured some hard swinging up-tempoed soloing by George Kelly. The Sultans were composed of Howard Johnson and Norris Turney, alto saxes, George Kelly, tenor sax, Franc Williams and Irwin Stokes trumpets, John Smith, guitar, Bill Pemberton, bass, and Red Richards, piano.

Maxine Sullivan accompanied by the Sultan's rhythm section was presented in 4 tunes. "There's Still A Little Starch Left In The Old Girl Yet" from the stage play "My Old Friends" was the highlight of her segment.

Dick Katz replaced Red Richards at the piano as Roy accompanied by the Sultans played a wonderful "I Can't Get Started" after which all the members of the band stood and the audience followed in giving Roy a standing ovation. Roy did an amusing job on "Let Me Off Uptown," singing both lines, his and those Anita O'Day sang when they were members of the Gene Krupa orchestra. Jazzmen play certain tunes over and over and one of Roy's is "Wineola," his enjoyment in performing it carried over to the audience.

In "Kidney Stew With A Little Lobster Sauce" Roy was in his element singing and playing; during George Kelly's solo he and the other two trumpets improvised riffs behind him. Roy urged the other two trumpet men to come up and solo, with Irwin Stokes playing fluegelhorn. Roy with some incredible high note playing swung to the very end and had the audience standing and applauding for more.

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## Salute to Roy Eldridge

Thursday Dec. 20  
8:00PM

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Best wishes  
for my friend

Jack  
Klenninger

Roy Eldridge

ROY ELDRIDGE





by Lee Jeske

#### Salute To Roy Eldridge

Jack Kleinsinger has been producing swinging jazz affairs for the past seven seasons. One of the annual concerts in his 'Highlights in Jazz' series is a tribute to a living musician. This year's tribute was to one deserving of all the accolades possible — Roy Eldridge. Besides the honoree, the performers included Clark Terry, Maxine Sullivan, Slam Stewart and the American debut of the band that cut it up at Nice, Panama Francis and the Savoy Sultans.

Clark opened the show on flugelhorn with a version of, what else, *Little Jazz*. Roy's theme was played at an easy four tempo with Red Richards' piano, Panama's drums and Slam Stewart's bass providing the rhythmic cushion. Clark's solo was relaxed and low-keyed — his kissy tone was pure Terry, there was no teeth-shaking screech, that was to be reserved for the honoured guest who wouldn't be on the stage till Clark was two hours gone. Slam Stewart, a welcome visitor from upstate New York, where he is professor of music at a state university, delighted the crowd as usual with his arco, hum-along solos. Clark's short set closed with a straight-ahead reading of *God Bless The Child*, which, for some reason, he saw fit to introduce as "a tune from the soundtrack of 'Lady Sings The Blues'", and a mumbly, up-tempo salute to Ella Fitzgerald on *Lady Be Good*.

Slam Stewart's solo feature, *Play, Fiddle, Play*, followed. One sometimes forgets, in the novelty of Slam's playing, what a wonderfully beautiful sound he produces. His voice is clear and soulful and his solos are puckish and bright. He threw a little bit of Mideastern music and a little bit of Scots into his feature and the audience was one big grin.

Panama Francis' band followed. After the unprecedented reception at Nice and the much-praised album on Black and Blue, I was quite anxious to hear this unit. For this concert the group consisted of Bill Pemberton on bass (rounding out the team of Richards and Francis), John Smith on acoustic guitar, Irving Stokes and Franc Williams on trumpets, Howard Johnson and Norris Turney on altos and, a member of the original Savoy Sultans, George Kelly on tenor sax.

After an old-fashioned introduce-the-

band-one-at-a-time-while-building-up-opening-number number, the nonet launched the *Norfolk Ferry*. Panama was clearly in control as he manned the wheel with the grace and pop that we have come to expect from him. The thin, clean-pated Stokes played a hard, clear solo, Howard Johnson squeezed out a solo as if his alto was a toothpaste tube, Turney was glistening and boppy and George Kelly was strong and two-fisted in the upper range of his tenor. His sound is steely and cold and his solos are built of marble. Kelly has for years been leading a small group called George Kelly's Jazz Sultan's at the West End Cafe uptown and his recognition is long, long overdue.

*Getting In The Groove*, the Sultan's theme followed and it was obvious to see why the original group was considered one of the top small groups in New York — they had a lot of feet to keep happy and the charts are lush and rhythmic. A pappy *Girl Talk* followed with a glissy, bubbly saxophone ensemble. This is the type of music that should be danced to and, not taking away from the soloists, it is not really a concert band. It's book is not the type of repertoire that one likes to hear with ones derriere in one's seat.

*Moten Swing* was up next, with Irving Stokes playing a solo that was all molten swing. Panama was kicking the band with a powerful umph. The corny, sweet *I'll Get By* followed before the two flag-waving closers, Lucky Millinder's feature, *Shipyard Social Function*, and Chick Webb's rafter-shaker, *Clap Hands Here Comes Charley*. Everybody soloed at their peak and the crowd ended up on its feet. Panama has a lot of his heart in this band and there are serious doubts as to whether, economically, they'll be able to keep at it. They represent the best of a very important jazz tradition and, let's hope, somebody with some sense steers them in a viable direction.

The second half of the show was on a much lower flame. Slam opened it with a wistful *Jingle Bells* and soon Maxine Sullivan was added to throw in a couple of light, no-calorie swing ditties like *World On A String*.

The last act, of course, was Little Jazz himself, looking grey and content. The Sultans joined him for his opener, *I Can't Get Started* and Roy proved that those notes that most trumpet players need a cherry picker to reach are still within his easy 68-year-old grasp. A sweet and swinging *Sometimes I'm Happy* con mute was next, including one blast of trumpet fire that sent the first three rows of the audience a half foot backwards. But then, unfortunately, the clowning, audience-pleasing Eldridge took over and he sang both his and Anita O'Day's parts on *Let Me Off Uptown*, a long blues goulash (which included a mouth-watering blues trumpet solo), and his old standby *Kidney Stew*.

All in all a large bellyful of a show for a man deserving of libraries and subway stops and anything else named after him. He is an international treasure.





To Jack  
most sincerely  
from  
Slam Stewart



**SLAM STEWART**



The Soho Weekly News December 20, 1979

# MUSIC

Listings: Michael Shore



A tribute to Roy Eldridge at NYU Thurs.

VOICE DECEMBER 17, 1979

## Jack Kleinsinger presents **HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ**

**Thurs. December 20 8:00PM**  
**Salute To Roy Eldridge**  
 Clark Terry  
 Maxine Sullivan  
 Panama Francis & his Savoy Sultans  
 and guest of honor: **ROY ELDRIDGE**

NYU Loeb Student Center 566 LaGuardia Pl. at Washington Sq. So.  
 Tickets \$6.00, Students \$5.00, Student Balcony \$4.00; Tel: 598-3757

Wed. Dec. 26: Speedies, Hooks, 80s  
 Shows at 10:30 p.m., 12:30 a.m.

**MICHAEL'S PUB** (758-2272) 211 E. 55 St.  
 Wed. Dec. 19-26 (except Sun.-Mon.)  
 Dick Hyman plays Gershwin  
 Shows 9 P.M., adm. free, \$10 min.

**JACK MORRIS GALLERY** (524-5441)  
 465 Amsterdam Av.  
 Fri. Dec. 21: Marty Ehrlich (reeds) & John  
 Lindbergh (bass)  
 Show at 3, call for price

**MY FATHER'S PLACE** (516-621-8700)  
 19 Bayrd Av., Roslyn, L.I.  
 Wed. Dec. 19-30 Special  
 Th. Dec. 20: Sunny Brown, Roundful Blues  
 Fr. Dec. 21: John Mayall  
 Sat. Dec. 22: WRB

Sun. Dec. 23: Good Rats  
 Mon. Dec. 24: Fred Locks, Moryaka  
 Wed. Dec. 26: Larry Coryell  
 Call for times, prices

**MUDO CLUB** (227-7777) 77 White St.  
 Th. Dec. 20: Semiotexte/s "Autonoma"  
 w/ DJ Frank Zappa  
 Show at 10:30 p.m., adm. \$5

**NYU LOEB STUDENT CENTER** (598-3757)  
 566 LaGuardia Pl.  
 Th. Dec. 20: Salute to Roy Eldridge w/ Clark  
 Terry, Maxine Sullivan, Panama Francis &  
 the Savoy Sultans  
 Show at 8, adm. \$6

Wed. Dec. 19: Eddie Vermor  
 Th. Dec. 20: Sweeter Starke  
 Fri. Dec. 21: Bill Dornon  
 Sat. Dec. 22: Sleeter Starke

Sun. Dec. 23: Country Jam  
 Mon. Dec. 24: Rose  
 Tues. Dec. 25: Gyro Gearloose

**THE OTHER END** (673-7030) 147 Bleecker St.  
 Th. Dec. 20: Speed Limit  
 Fri.-Sun. Dec. 21-23: Gil Scott-Heron  
 Wed. Dec. 26: Persuasions, Chris Rush  
 Shows at 8:30, 11:30, 9, midnight winks  
 Adm. \$5, plus \$2.50 min.

**PUBLIC THEATER** (598-7150)  
 425 Lafayette St.  
 Fri.-Sat. Dec. 21-22: Joseph Jarman, Don  
 Pullen, Don Moye  
 Shows at 11, adm. \$6

**RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL** (977-9020)  
 49 St. & Sixth Av.  
 Wed.-Wed. Dec. 19-26 (except Mon.)  
 Christmas Spectacular  
 Shows at 2:30, 7:30, adm. \$7.50, \$10.50

**RENO SWEENEY** (801-2900) 126 W. 13 St.

