THURS., JAN. 7
8:00PM
SAXOPHONE INSPIRATIONS

PEPPER ADAMS  SONNY FORTUNE  SCOTT HAMILTON  BOB WILBER

pay tribute to

Sidney Bechet, Harry Carney, Johnny Hodges,
Charlie Parker, Ben Webster and Lester Young

with

Tommy Flanagan, Connie Kay,
Phil Flanagan and special guest Pug Horton

at N.Y.U. Loeb Student Center

Tickets: $7, students $5.50
Enclose Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope

Flyers donated by VILLAGE CORNER
142 Bleecker St., corner LaGuardia Place
MUSIC

TRIBUTE TO THE SAX MASTERS 1986: WINTER 1986

Richard F. Shepard


GOING OUT

STARSAXOPHONES

The saxophones are the stars of tonight's program. Sonny Fortune (tenor), Scott Hamilton (tenor), and Bob Wilber (soprano) will do a piece together. The saxophone will be the focus of this performance. Sonny Fortune will lead the All-Star Quartet, featuring Bob Wilber and Scott Hamilton on tenor saxophones.

BOUNDINGS

Jazz Tributes on Jan. 7

Tributes to jazz saxophonists will be featured throughout the evening. The theme of "Highlights in Jazz" will be the focus of the event. Featuring some of the greatest saxophonists of all time, the performance will highlight the contributions of Sonny Fortune, Scott Hamilton, and Bob Wilber.

To my friend
Jack,
Thanks,
Scott Hamilton
Reed between the lines

How does Bob Wilber, Sonny Fortune, Pepper Adams and Scott Hamilton strike you for a saxophone section? Not bad, right? But sure, you've got a pair of swingers and a pair of boppers, but so what. The only thing you need now is a rhythm section to match. How about Tommy Flanagan, Connie Kay and those two young New Englanders, bassist Phil Flanagan and guitarist Chris Flore? Not bad.

Well, if I had this idea (and I didn't), Jack Kleinsinger, producer of 'Highlights In Jazz' did I would have kept the entire ensemble on for most of the evening to encourage some cross-pollination of styles and ideas. This wasn't the case, however. The idea was to have each man salute one or two of the important saxophonists in his past. Fortune chose Charlie Parker, Adams chose Harry Carney, Wilber chose Johnny Hodges and Sidney Bechet and Hamilton chose Ben Webster and Lester Young. There were a couple of jam numbers, but they were kept to an unfortunate minimum.

Things opened up rather nicely with the four horns barking through what I think was a Wilber arrangement of Honeysuckle Rose, the contrasts working very nicely together. Then it was off to the tributes, beginning with Wilber and rhythm (sans piano) doing Bechet's version of Summertime and his original Polka-Dot Stomp. It is needless to point out that Bob Wilber is one of those rare players who have a motor-driven swing mechanism. He is always lively and eloquent but never more so than when saluting his idol Bechet. It was a rarefied performance — Wilber, on the curved soprano, using less vibrato than his mentor but retaining a gutsy growl. For my money it was the high point of what was to be a long evening.

Hamilton followed with a salute to Pres that was slightly misguided. Scott can be boring at times and, on this occasion, was just that. He is not really that close to Pres, either in tone or conception, and rather than keying in to the brilliant fills and comping of Flanagan, he worked off his old bandmate Flore. It was a rather sleepy performance.

Tommy Flanagan followed with a trio performance of Chelsea Bridge before Sonny Fortune appeared to tear off some Bird. This is, of course, the pianist's métier as well, and Fortune and Flanagan left everyone in their dust. Sonny Fortune is really an underrated bopper — he isn't a showboater and doesn't try to triplet his way to the heavens; he has a rather lean, evenly-paced approach that is sparked by a tremendous fire and urgency. A short, but satisfying, appearance.

The second half fell flat except for two notable items — Pepper Adams' two numbers and an attempt to recreate a taste of Ellington's classic reed section. Adams, a friend and admirer of Carney's, blasted through two numbers with absolute aplomb. Pepper is a gruff, authoritative player who wields his bari like a man who doesn't take no for an answer. He also told the always amusing anecdote of Harry Carney circular-breathing his way through a highway breathalyzer exam.

The idea to recreate the Ellington reeds was a sound one. Wilber put on his Johnny Hodges hat, Adams stayed in his Carney chapeau and Hamilton worked somewhere between Webster and Paul Gonzalves. Fortune, who could have added a nice touch of clarinet, had long since left the proceedings to make another gig. The three men did a convincing Things Ain't... and this too would have made an interesting concert.

The big mistake during the second half was a long, long set led by vocalist Pug Horton — Mrs Bob Wilber of course, and a singer short of much visible vocal talent. She caused me to flee the hall, so if there were any fireworks in the finale, I missed them.