

**Jack Kleinsinger**  
presents

# HIGHLIGHTS IN



**THURSDAY**  
**MAY 4th, 1989**  
**8:00 p.m.**

In cooperation with  
N.Y.U. Program Board

**BLUES  
'N'  
BOOGIE**

**JAY McSHANN**  
**PANAMA FRANCIS**  
**HAROLD ASHBY**  
**JACK LESBERG**  
**GENE BERTONCINI**  
**JOEY CAVASENO**



**JAY McSHANN**

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

566 LaGuardia Pl. at Washington Sq. So. • Tel. 998-4999

**Tickets: \$9.00**

**Students: \$6.50**

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**HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ**

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*This event is made possible with funds from the  
New York State Council on the Arts and National Endowment for the Arts.*



# Swinging taste of Kansas City

*McShann in town for a pair of one-nighters*

By LEE JESKE

**W**HEN Jay McShann sits at the piano, shuts his eyes, stomps his foot, points an ear at the keys and begins shaking a jowl in time to the music... well, there are few jazz experiences more rewarding. For McShann — at the age of 73 (according to him) or 80 (according to most reference books) — is a paradigm of rumbling, two-fisted, blues-drenched Southwestern swing piano playing. His style speaks of Kansas City, a jazz hotbed when McShann moved there from Oklahoma in the '30s.

"Kansas City was a melting pot," says McShann from his

home there. "Somebody'd say, 'Man, there's a new cat in town come in here from the East, let's go see what he's doing.' Well, he's going to play different from the cats from the West, and the cats from the South are going to play different from the cats from the North. To me it was all just music.

"I was never exposed to boogie-woogie until I got to Kansas City and heard Pete Johnson," says McShann, who'll be playing a "Highlights in Jazz" concert tonight at N.Y.U. and a Roundabout Theater concert Monday (with fellow Kansas City veteran Claude Williams). "And I wasn't much hip to the blues until I got to Kansas City and heard Joe Turner. And Joe Turner and Pete... oh, man! Joe would holler at Pete to roll 'em and Pete would roll 'em for about 20 minutes. And then Joe would sing for 20 minutes and he'd holler, 'Roll 'em,



**JAY McSHANN**  
*Two-fisted blues.*

Pete,' and Pete would roll 'em again for another 5 or 10 minutes. Joe would sing again for another 5 or 10 minutes — intermission. One number!"

Despite a distinguished career — he led one of the great Kansas City big bands, had an enormous hit with "Confessin' the Blues" (later covered by the Rolling Stones) and was the source for Alvin Ailey's recent "Opus McShann" — McShann is most often mentioned in one context: he hired Charlie Parker for his big band, where Parker made his first recordings.

"That was 50 years ago and even today it's, 'Jay McShann, the man that so-and-so Charlie Parker...' You get tired of that. The way I see it, people will do that, but at the time when Bird was struggling, when he was coming along, when he was really doing it, they didn't give what he was doing a thought."

Since World War II rang the death knell for big bands, McShann has been performing in a variety of contexts, from solo to the odd big band guest spot. But whatever the setting, McShann's music always radiates joy.

"I like to play," he says. "Not that I'm playing all that damn much, but I enjoy it. I guess that's why you play, because you enjoy it. Yeah."

"Blues and Boogie," with Jay McShann, Panama Francis, Harold Ashby and others, is a "Highlights in Jazz" concert at N.Y.U.'s Loeb Student Center, 866 LaGuardia Place, (212) 998-4999, at 8 tonight; all tickets \$9. McShann, Claude Williams, Scott Hamilton and others will be at the Roundabout Theater, 100 E. 17th St., (212) 420-1883, at 7:30 p.m. Monday; all tickets \$11.

NEWSDAY THURSDAY, MAY 4, 1989

## Sound Advice — STUART TROOP

Among the engagements this week are:

- Claiborne Cary, the singer/comedian whose polished delivery is replete with nuance, drama and beauty, this week and next, Tuesday through Saturday, at Chez Beauvais, 10th Avenue and 56th Street.
- Highlights in Jazz, presenting blues and boogie with Jay McShann, Panama Francis, Harold Ashby, Jack Lesberg and others, at 8 tonight in the NYU Loeb Student Center, 566 LaGuardia Pl. at Washington Square South. / II

VOICE MAY 2, 1989

Jack Kleinsinger presents **HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ**  
In Cooperation with NYU Program Board

Thursday, May 4th — 8:00 p.m.  
*Blues 'N' Boogie*

Jay McShann, Panama Francis,  
Harold Ashby, Jack Lesberg,  
Gene Bertoncini, Joey Cavaseno

N.Y.U. Loeb Center  
566 LaGuardia Pl. at Washington Sq. So.  
Tickets: \$9.00, Students: \$6.50 Tel. 998-4999





## NIGHTLIFE WITH THE NIGHTBIRD

BY ALISON STEELE

It's May! It's May! The lusty month of May! No, I didn't make that up, but it keeps running through my mind year after year when May comes around ever since I first saw "Camelot." Remember Guinivere singing it as she romped on the green in that wonderful show? Let's do a little romping around the Big Apple as we check the night life scene.

Comedy legend Mort Sahl, America's top political comedian for over 30 years, will be appearing at Club 1407 (1407



Comedian Mort Sahl will reprise his wildly successful stint at Club 1407.

Broadway, 575-1407) May 2nd-May 7th. Mort appeared at the club in January and was wildly successful, so he's back.

There's some great music this week at one of the city's best jazz venues, **Fortune Garden Pavilion** (209 E. 49th St., 753-0101). On May 1st you can enjoy the multi-talented Dick Hyman. He's a musician, composer, conductor and innovator, a joy to behold. Hilton Ruiz with Jimmy Rowser take over May 2nd-May 7th. A super lady, Daryl Sherman, appears every Friday and Saturday.

There are a couple of unusual events in town this week I think you might enjoy. Another in Jack Kleinsinger's "Highlights in Jazz" concert series will take place Thursday, May 4th with an all-star lineup—Jay McShann, Panama Francis, Harold Ashby, Jack Lesberg, Gene Bertoncini and Joey Cavaseno. The concert will be at **Loeb Student Center of N.Y.U.** (566 LaGuardia Place, at Washington Square South, 998-4999).

Put on your dancin' shoes 'cause there's a big dance floor and a great band awaiting you on Sunday, April 30th, from 8pm till midnight at the **Cat Club** (76 E. 13th St., 713-5148). The event is part of the spring series sponsored by the New York Swing Dance Society. The band is the Bob January Orchestra, with 17 pieces, and they are great.

Here's an idea for you if you're staying midtown and want to meet a friend for a drink and some good music. Drop into the **Stage Door Canteen** in the Milford Plaza Hotel (45th St. & Eighth Ave., 354-4414) and say hello to Mike Cossi who sings and plays Tuesday through Saturday nights. □

**APRIL** **10<sup>th</sup>** ANNIVERSARY JAZZ MONTH CELEBRATION

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NEWSDAY, MONDAY, MAY 1, 1989

44 CITY GUIDE

# NEW YORK AGENDA

## Just Along for the Stride

"Blues and Boogie," the last "Highlights in Jazz" presentation of the season, will feature pianist Jay McShann, drummer Panama Francis, saxman Harold Ashby, bassist Jack Lesberg, reedman Joey Cavaseno and guitarist Gene Bertoncini. It begins at 8 at the NYU Loeb Student Center (566 LaGuardia Pl.; 998-4999).

Sunday, April 30, 1989

DAILY NEWS

## A critics' calendar of sights & sounds

COMPILED BY **MARA NEVILLE**

★ Highly Recommended

### IN CONCERT

★ **ALICE TULLY HALL:** New Orleans jazz pianist & singer **Harry Connick Jr.** performs Sat. & May 8 at 8. Tix are \$22.50 at the box office (65th St. & B'way, 874-6770).

★ **CARNEGIE HALL:** **Maureen McGovern** sings "Gershwin Plus" Mon. at 8, a benefit for Northern Lights Alternative's Children with AIDS Care Program. Tix are \$10-\$40 at the box office (154 W. 57th St. at Seventh Ave., 247-7800).

★ **GERSHWIN THEATER:** **Barry Manilow's** performances this week are tonight at 7, Tue.-Sat. at 8, Wed. & Sat. at 3. Tix are \$30-\$50 at the box office (222 W. 51st St. & Ticketron, 246-0100).

★ **HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ** "Blues 'n Boogie" show Thur. at 8 at N.Y.U.'s **Loeb Student Center** features pianist **Jay McShann**, drummer **Panama Francis**, saxophonist **Harold Ashby**, bassist **Jack Lesberg**, guitarist **Gene Bertoncini** & reeds player **Joey Cavaseno**. Tix are \$9 (\$6.50 for N.Y.U. students). 566 LaGuardia Place, 998-4949.

★ **JOYCE THEATER:** The National Theater of the Deaf stages **King of Hearts** Mon. at 7:30, a special benefit performance hosted by **Lillian Gish** to celebrate the Company's 22d anniversary. Benefit tix are \$75 & include a post-performance champagne reception at Moran's — call (203) 526-4971 (voice) or (203) 526-4974 (TDD).





To Jack  
Sincerely  
Jay McShann

**JAY McSHANN**





To Jack  
Best Wishes  
Howard Ashby





May 26, 1989

Jack;

Thanks for the opportunity  
to participate in the program.

Do call me again.

Sincerely

Jay M<sup>c</sup>Shann



# JAZZTIMES PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 1989.

## ARTS AND LEISURE GUIDE

### Jazz

#### In Concert

**HARRY CONNICK JR.** — Pianist/singer. Alice Tully Hall. Sat., 8.

**HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ** — "Blues 'n' Boogie," with Jay McShann, piano; Panama Francis, drummer; Harold Ashby, saxophone; Jack Lesberg, bass; Gene Bertoncini, guitar; Joey Cavaseno, reeds. N.Y.U., Loeb Center, 566 LaGuardia Pl. Thur., 8.

**MOOD INDIGO** — Tribute to Duke Ellington and Paul Robeson. Harlem School of the Arts, St. Nicholas Ave. at 141st St. Sun., 2.

**ST. PETER'S CHURCH** — Sun.: Duke Ellington Tributes. At 5: Jazz Vespers with Paulsson-Huff Duo; at 7: The Duke's Men. Wed., 12:30: Gene Bertoncini, guitar. Lex. Ave. at 54th St.

### MUSIC

**'Highlights in Jazz':** The program is called "Blues 'n' Boogie," and the guests include the last great Savoy swing trumpeter, Panama Francis; the mightiest soloist to join Ellington in the last years, Harold Ashby; and Jay McShann, who as pianist and singer has become a genre unto himself. May 4, Loeb Center, 566 LaGuardia Place, 998-4999. (Giddins)

## Jay McShann, Harold Ashby and Co. at Highlights in Jazz, NYC

New York's longest-running concert series, Jack Kleinsinger's "Highlights in Jazz," offered rewards aplenty — and some frustrations — with "Blues 'n' Boogie" (May 4th at N.Y.U.) featuring pianist Jay McShann, tenor saxist Harold Ashby, drummer Panama Francis, bassist Jack Lesberg, guitarist Gene Bertoncini, trumpeter Spanky Davis, and alto saxist Joey Cavaseno.

McShann is an authoritative player who can convey such a strong blues feeling in just his opening notes as to set the tone for the entire group. And it's a rare pleasure to hear McShann in a septet setting. The economics of the recording industry are such that when he does get to make a record, it is either by himself or perhaps in a trio setting. And clubs cannot afford a septet of this caliber, either.

Bringing together McShann, Ashby, and Francis was inspired. McShann may be nine years older than Ashby, but they both emerged from the Kansas City jazz scene, and they fit together beautifully. Standing to one side, while McShann played *Georgia on My Mind*, Ashby could offer the briefest wisps of interjections, but with such a forelorn feeling — his sound touches you — as to really add something to McShann's work. Francis' playing is as satisfyingly solid as McShann's, and it swings. (Someone ought to make a record of McShann using those two sidemen.) The other musicians all fell into the groove — even 21-year-old Cavaseno, who in the night's first two numbers played too progressively for the group, but then seemed to get caught up in the prevailing currents, his zesty solos taking up right where Ashby left off. Among the numbers played by the band were *Jumping the Blues*, *Kansas City*, and an unusually laid-back *Take the A Train*.



Jay McShann

What was frustrating was that we had to wait nearly an hour before McShann came onstage. One can understand a producer making his audience wait a bit for the star attraction, but this was too long, and the band didn't completely gel until McShann joined it. Then, after, the full band played a couple of numbers, it broke into smaller units, so that each player got his own featured spots. It seemed a shame to use precious time to showcase players whom we could hear individually in so many other venues, when the chance to hear them together comes so rarely.

■ CHIP DEFFAA