Jack Kleinsinger presents
Highlights In JAZZ
in association with NYU Program Board

Friday, May 17th, 1985 8:00 P.M.

Salute To
Mel Lewis

with
- Pepper Adams
- George Duvivier
- Jon Faddis
- Frank Foster
- Roger Kellaway
- John Mosca
- Dick Oatts
- Benny Powell
- Lew Soloff
- Kenny Washington

Guest of Honor:
Mel Lewis

at N.Y.U. Loeb Student Center
566 LaGuardia Pl. at Washington Sq. South Tel. 598-2027

Tickets: $7.50  students $6.00

Tickets At Box Office Or Mail Order To: Highlights In Jazz,
7 Peter Cooper Rd., New York, N.Y. 10010  Make Checks Payable To:
Highlights In Jazz  Enclose Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope –

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

Thursday April 18th – 8:00 P.M.

Hamp's Jazz Party

LIONEL HAMPTON

at N.Y.U. Loeb Student Center
566 LaGuardia Pl. at Washington Sq. South Tel. 598-2027
Tickets $7.50 Students $6.00

In Concert

DON COATES'S MAINSTREET — Featuring Noris Turney and Ethias Ressnick, Vineyard, 309 E. 5th St. 8:30.
HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ — A salute to Mal Lewis, featuring Pepper Adams, George Deupree, Jon Faddis, others. NYU Loeb Student Center, 566 LaGuardia Pl. Fri., 8.
MUSICHOUR AND ABLE — Jazztrack at Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St., Sat., 9 and 10:30.
JAZZ STARS COME OUT FOR AFRICA — Starring Tony Bennett, Gil Evans Orchestra, Hannibal Peterson Quintet, Tommy Flanagan Trio, Ruby Braff, others. Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. Thur., 7:30.
From time to time in his "Highlights in Jazz" concert series at New York University's Loeb Student Center, impresario Jack Kleinsinger gives due tribute to an outstanding musician. On Friday night at 8, the recipient will be drummer/handleader Mel Lewis. The players will include musicians who have performed with him as either members of the band he led with Thad Jones, as members of his own band or in other configurations.

The lineup will include saxophonists Pepper Adams, Frank Foster and Dick Oatts, bassist George Duvivier, trumpeters Jon Faddis and Lew Soloff, trombonists Benny Powell and John Mosca, pianist Roger Kellaway and drummer Kenny Washington. The Loeb Student Center is at 566 LaGuardia Pl., just south of Washington Square. Tickets are $7.50, $6 for students, at the box office.

MUSIC

Highlights in Jazz: A welcome salute to Mel Lewis, the superb big band drummer who's been playing Monday nights at the Vanguard for 19 years; he'll be reunited with such alumni as Pepper Adams, Jon Faddis, Frank Foster, Lew Soloff, Benny Powell, George Duvivier, and Roger Kellaway. May 17 at 8, Loeb Student Center, 566 LaGuardia Place, 598-2027. (Giddins)
To Janet
Very Smooch,
Mel Lewis
Jon Faddis, center, presents a plaque to drummer and bandleader Mel Lewis, right, during the final concert of Highlights in Jazz 12th season. Producer Jack Kleinsinger, left, always honors a living musician as part of the series. Among those joining Lewis for the concert were pianist Roland Hanna, trombonist Benny Powell, baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams, bassist Bob Cunningham, trumpeter Lew Soloff and saxophonist Dick Oatts.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, MAY 20, 1985

Jazz: Tribute to Mel Lewis

MORE than a dozen musicians who have played in the bands led by the drummer Mel Lewis, which is now in its 20th year of Monday night performances at the Village Vanguard, played in a tribute to Mr. Lewis at a "Highlights in Jazz" concert at the N.Y.U. Loeb audiorium on Friday evening.

With a rhythm section made up of the pianist Sir Roland Hanna, the bassist Bob Cunningham and the drummer Kenny Washington, who was replaced in the latter part of the concert when Mr. Lewis himself, the concert became largely a parade of soloists in which each of the musicians had time for only one shot at speaking his piece musically and, in several instances, verbally. It was a situation in which a soloist had to make a quick and forceful impression or be lost in the crowd.

Under the circumstances, the ones who came through most successfully were the baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams, whose ability to lunge at a tune and grapple with it in a huge bear hug got him off to an eruptive start although the initial power dribbled away in the course of his solo, and the harmonica virtuoso Toots Thielemans who calmly and thoughtfully and without flamboyance built a moving and original solo on the well-worn "Body and Soul."

Among the other musicians were the trumpeters Jon Faddis and Lew Soloff, who lipped through some very fast duet passages on "Night in Tunisia," and trombonists Benny Powell and John Mosca and the saxophonists Frank Foster, Dick Oatts and Paquito D'Rivera.

John S. Wilson
NYU, N.Y.C. — Highlights in Jazz. Jack Kleinsinger’s admirable series of mainstream jam sessions, takes time every year to pay tribute to a deserving jazz veteran. This year, drummer Mel Lewis was pegged for the slot of tributee — and, after Lewis’ 20 years at the helm of his own big band (which he used to co-lead with Thad Jones) and some 20 years before that as sparkplug for numerous jazz big bands (Lewis has earned wide respect as one of the finest of big band drummers), it was a salute whose time had come. A dozen players who were associated with Lewis at one point or other assembled for a rousing evening of small band jazz, but very little of it — musically, anyway — was in direct tribute to Mel Lewis: nobody bothered to play any tunes from Lewis’ own band, or tunes that Lewis played with Stian Kenton’s band, or tunes that had much, necessarily, to do with Lewis at all. Only in the second set — when the honoree gets to toll his own horn (spat his own skins?) — did this Salute to Mel Lewis salute Mel Lewis — by allowing him to show off his own scintillating, low-keyed drum technique.

Nonetheless, the evening abounded in good sounds. The first set began with pianist Roland Hanna, bassist Bob Cunningham, congaist Ray Barretto (Barretto is an excellent jazz percussionist — subtle and tasty), drummer Kenny Washington, trombonist Benny Powell and harmonicaist Toots Thielemans. Everyday players played well — Thielemans’s genial reading of “Body and Soul” (though the harmonica, even when played by a master, is still a harmonica) and Hanna’s jazz version of a Swedish folk song were high points. Powell’s aweing singing (why do jazz horn players always insist on singing?) was the nadir. The rhythm section then backed up tenor saxophonist Frank Foster and trumpeters Lew Soloff and Jon Faddis for a sharp “Night in Tunisia.” Soloff proving, as usual, that he’s a wonderful trumpet with his own mellow sound, Faddis proving, as usual, that he is still very much indebted, stylistically, to dizzy Gillespie. After fine features for Cunningham (“Secret Love”) and Foster (“Sentimental Mood”), the two trumpeters tore up “Anthropology” — Faddis’s explosive high notes perfectly complementing Soloff’s gentler excursions.

The second set had Lewis replacing Washington on drums and baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams, alto saxophonist Dick Oatts and trombonist John Mosca (the latter two the featured soloists in the current Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra) in the front line. The veteran Adams stole the set with his typically burly, roistering solos, but Oatts and Mosca stood their ground well on a version of “Star Eyes” that included a long, musical solo by the object of everybody’s affection. The evening ended with an almost-big band: everybody — including alto saxophonist Paquito D’Rivera, who had actually shown up at the concert, ticket in hand, as a spectator — on stage for a loose bebop jam session.

The jazz world too infrequently tips its hat to its own. Thankfully. Highlights in Jazz does it — in its own fashion — every year.

Lee Jeske