Jack Kleinsinger presents **HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ**

**THURSDAY**

**DECEMBER 7TH, 1989**

**8:00 P.M.**

In cooperation with N.Y.U.

**BLUES AND OTHER DELIGHTS**

Jimmy Witherspoon
David 'Fathead' Newman
Harold Ashby
Arvell Shaw
Bross Townsend
Kenny Washington

**JIMMY WITHERSPOON**

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

566 LaGuardia Pl. at Washington Sq. So. • Tel. 998-4949

Tickets: $10.00
Students: $6.50

Tickets at Box Office or by Mail Order to:
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**COMING THURSDAY, JAN. 11TH • 8 P.M. • THE WORLD OF MILT HINTON**

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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.*
To Jack
The Best Always
of Many More Happy New Years
Your Man
Spoon
A History of the Blues, By Jimmy Witherspoon

By PETER WATROUS

Jack Kleinsinger’s Highlights in Jazz concerts are the last vestige of jazz as a variety show. The format, broken up into small and large features for everybody on stage, makes them entertaining, but it rarely allows the best parts of the performance to build up speed. Thursday night’s show, featuring the singer Jimmy Witherspoon, was no different.

The evening started with Duke Ellington’s theme song, “Take the A Train,” played by a full group — Harold Ashby and David (Fathead) Newman on tenor saxophones, Bill Wertz on guitar, Bross Townsend on piano, Arvell Shaw on bass and Kenny Washington on drums. Pairing Mr. Ashby and Mr. Newman is a smart, foolproof idea, and on “Take the A Train” they showed why. Mr. Newman, for long time the featured saxophonist in the Ray Charles Orchestra, soloed first, calmly explaining his case, using even, long bebop phrases. Mr. Ashby, who spent time working with the later versions of the Duke Ellington Orchestra, followed him in a radically different style, using a fast swing tone, fooling with erratic rhythms and biting on his reed to draw squalls and pops from the saxophone.

From there the show slowed down a bit with solo pieces for the band, and it was not until the full band came out to do a blues by Mr. Newman that the tension picked up. Again constraining their styles, but this time warmed up, the two saxophonists went at it, swapping four-bar improvisations that had Mr. Newman yelping blues phrases only to have Mr. Ashby follow along. Mr. Newman coarsened his tone, or moved into the lower register, and Mr. Ashby chased him, full of humor, mimicry and invention.

Mr. Witherspoon came out next and dispensed a history of the blues, singing tunes by Petie Wheatstraw and Walter Brown along with classic pieces like “Gee Baby, Ain’t I Good to You.” Mr. Witherspoon does not have much range left, but he more than makes up for it by pushing his notes carefully until they bleed emotion. He isn’t much of a blues shouter anymore either, and his best tunes were taken at a low volume, blues ballads that let his worn tone and his careful pitch control sound like an internal monologue sung to oneself.

Delightful Blues

“Blues and Other Delights” starring the legendary blues singer Jimmy Witherspoon. The concert will take place at the NYU Loeb Student Center in Manhattan, 566 Laguardia Place at 8 p.m., and will feature a special guest. Tickets are $10 and $6 for students, and can be purchased at the Loeb Student Center Box Office. For further information, call (212) 998-4949.
IMMY WITHERSPOON is perhaps the last of the great blues shouters, a breed characterized by commanding, extroverted passages and an often-stirring, sermon-like approach.

Witherspoon, or Spoon, as he's known, can also touch your heart with honey-coated nuances. What sets him apart is the heritage of Jimmy Rushing and Big Joe Turner — the ability to hammer home the emotional triggers of the blues.

Spoon, who has a lustrous history of associations with such jazz giants as Buck Clayton and Ben Webster, deserves a special setting for his work. And he'll have it at 8 p.m. tomorrow, in a "Highlights in Jazz" concert at the NYU Loeb Student Center, 566 LaGuardia Pl. at Washington Square South.

With him will be David (Fathead) Newman, Harold Ashby, Arvell Shaw, Brosn Townsend and Kenny Washington. Newman is a reed player who was weaned on Texas blues before he became a featured player with Ray Charles 35 years ago.

The sound of Ashby's tenor sax, clearly influenced by Webster, accompanied such blues singers as Walter Brown in his native Kansas City 20 years before Ashby joined Duke Ellington. Bassist Shaw served as backbone of the Louis Armstrong All-Stars for most of 25 instrumentalists. After performing with Jay McShann's band in the mid-1940s, he toured and recorded with the Count Basie Orchestra and with such players as Clayton, Webster, Gerry Mulligan, Harry "Sweets" Edison and Teddy Edwards.

Sound Advice

It has become a tradition for musicians to gather at 8 p.m. every Wednesday in Jamaica at Carmichael's Diner, at Guy Brewer and Foch Boulevards, for a jam session. "It's a happy little thing," noted alto saxophonist C.I. Williams. "The regulars are Hank Edmonds on piano, Ted Jones on bass, either Walter Perkins or Tootsie Bean on drums, and me. And various players come by to sit-in." The session, which lasts until 10:30 p.m., is a product of the Community Jazz Organization of Queens.

Pianist Butch Thompson, whose reputation was forged on radio with Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion," will focus on the legacy of Jelly Roll Morton when he performs at 4 p.m. Sunday in an International Art of Jazz concert at the Ethical Humanist Society, 38 Old Country Rd., Garden City, L.I. (tickets $10; students and seniors $8).