

CITY

Top Hats Swinging, Harlem Humming, a Joyful Noise for a Cat Named Lionel Hampton

By ALAN FEUER

They say that Psalm 100 was Lionel Hampton's favorite. The psalm begins: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord."

A joyful noise was made yesterday, though it was not made unto the Lord alone. It was made unto jazz men, holy rollers and Washington politicians. It was made unto an entire stretch of upper Broadway as a New Orleans band led Mr. Hampton's coffin from the Cotton Club in Harlem to a memorial service at the Riverside Church.

Mr. Hampton, who died at the age of 94 a week ago, was the swing era master who revolutionized the art of playing the vibraphone. He played with Louis Armstrong, Benny Carter and Benny Goodman in the 1920's and 30's. Later he campaigned for Republican presidents like Richard M. Nixon, Ronald Reagan and the elder George Bush.

The dirges had the stumbling rhythms of a drunk, but Mr. Hampton's coffin was carried in stately fashion by a horse-drawn carriage. The carriage was white, and it was driven by a horseman dressed in a morning suit with top hat. It progressed from West 125th Street, turned south beneath the elevated train, then wound its way up the hills of Morningside Heights to the vaulted doors of the church.

The Gully Low Jazz Band, trailed playing standards like "St. James Infirmary Blues." The nine-man band consisted of a clarinet, a drum, washboard and various horns. A crowd of the curious and mournful fell in behind it and formed a loping musical cortege. There were straw hats and seersucker suits, Kangols and Armanis. There were Frenchmen holding cellphones in the air so Hampton fans in Paris could listen.

David Oswald, the jazz band's leader, played on the same bill as Mr. Hampton at Queens College years ago. He said Mr. Hampton supported the younger generation of jazz musicians every chance he got.

"Hamp always had his arm around you — he was an all-around



Steve Berman/The New York Times

As Wynton Marsalis played "St. Louis Blues," a horse-drawn hearse arrived at Riverside Church yesterday for a service for Lionel Hampton.

beautiful cat," Mr. Oswald said. "Far as I'm concerned, he's transitioned to another place."

The sanctuary of Riverside Church is cavernous, and when Mr. Oswald led his band inside, the brassy dirges echoed off the marble walls. Mr. Hampton's coffin was laid near the altar, where it rested throughout the two-hour service. There was a lot of music at the service, which at times became so joyous that one could forget it was meant to memorialize the dead.

Lil Howell sang a spiritual called "Holding On" and brought the house down. Roy Hargrove, Jon Faddis and Wynton Marsalis traded off on trumpet riffs. There were old-time greats like Clark Terry and Cyrus Chestnut

and Hank Jones.

Illinois Jacquet, a saxophonist who used to play in Mr. Hampton's band, got a little carried away with stories of Mr. Hampton. The Rev. Dr. James

A. Forbes Jr., the church's minister, had to prod him gently to put his microphone away and pick up his famous horn.

There were plenty of speakers, too.

The Rev. Calvin O. Butts 3rd, pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, told the congregation that Mr. Hampton's spirit was finally flying home. (In 1942, Mr. Hampton

Eulogies delivered with trumpets and saxophones.

made one of the more influential recordings in the history of American music: "Flying Home.")

Representative Charles B. Rangel recalled sneaking into the Apollo Theater to see Mr. Hampton play. Mr. Rangel said that although the Hampton sound would be sorely missed, it could still be heard at certain divine engagements.

"There's a great party going on up in Heaven," he said. "They are jamming, I'm sure."

George H.W. Bush, the former president, showed up to eulogize Mr. Hampton with memories of the old days. Describing himself as a "laid-back Episcopalian," Mr. Bush said he loved Mr. Hampton's tunes.

Mr. Bush was director of central intelligence in 1976, and he told the story of an nasty afternoon when the agency took a beating during Congressional hearings. Somehow, Mr. Hampton heard that morale was low. He brought his band to Washington at once.

"They performed for a crowd in our little bubble at headquarters," Mr. Bush recalled. "They sure did enchant the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States of America."

LABOR DAY SALE!
EVERYTHING ON SALE!