

# Jazz: Don Elliott Leads A Jazz Trio at Citicorp

By JOHN S. WILSON

**D**ON ELLIOTT, the vibraphonist, mellophonist and singer (he started his career as "Hi" in the vocal group called "Hi Lo Jack and the Dame") who became prominent in jazz with the George Shearing Quintet in the early 50's, has been a behind-the-scenes performer for most of the last 20 years as a producer and performer on commercials. Recently, however, he has been returning to his jazz roots.

A couple of months ago he was one of three vibraphonists featured in a concert of the Duke Ellington Society and this week he is leading his trio in a series of free two-hour concerts in the Atrium of the Citicorp Building, 54th Street at Lexington Avenue, as part of a two-month "salute to jazz" there. The group's final performance is this evening from 6 to 8 P.M.

Mr. Elliott had intended to bring a quartet to the Atrium. But his drummer turned out to have a gig in Milwaukee this week, which may have been a blessing in disguise because it has brought the other members of the group — Mr. Elliott, alternating between mellophone and vibes, Frank Luther, bass, and Hod O'Brien, piano —

into a closer, more intimate and possibly more sensitive relationship than if they had the steady rhythmic support of a drummer.

Certainly it is a more exploratory situation for the three musicians as they try out various balances and juxtapositions. All three show a basic bebop sensitivity, mellowed over the years but pointed up by quotes that creep into their solos — a bit of "Now's the Time" from Luther, a bassist whose tone and agility are reminiscent of Oscar Pettiford; an echo of "Jumpin' With Symphony Sid" in a passage by Mr. Elliott — while Mr. O'Brien's rolling, single-note piano solos are strongly bebop influenced.

The trio creates a remarkable amount of variety for a small group — in duets by Mr. Elliott and Mr. Luther, a contrast of soulful mellophone and bright vibes, the occasional addition of a fourth line when Mr. Elliott whistles, plus the full trio. All of it is enlivening and colorful chamber jazz.

Sociological note: According to the producers of the Atrium concerts, which are now in their sixth month, the jazz audiences are quieter and more attentive than the audiences for any other type of music, including classical.