

Linley Hamilton Quintet: For the Record



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[Linley Hamilton](#)'s fifth album is a cross-Atlantic affair. Alongside regular collaborators [Cian Boylan](#) and [Derek 'Doc' O'Connor](#), the Irish trumpeter has enrolled the services of

New York heavyweights [Adam Nussbaum](#) and [Mark Egan](#)—fellow instructors at the annual Sligo Jazz Project where Hamilton has long been a fixture. The quintet rounded off a short Northern Irish tour in 2019 with a session in Dublin's Camden Recording Studio which realized the music herein. As on Hamilton's [Making Other Arrangements](#) (Teddy D Records, 2018), Boylan's presence is significant, both as a composer—contributing two tracks and sharing writing credits with Hamilton on two more—and as an arranger. The music echoes soulful, Blue Note-era hard bop, with bright solos buoyed by in-the-pocket grooves.

Boylan's elegant piano intro to "Right Angle" gives way to a punchy motif, with Hamilton and O'Connor in tight unison. Short solos introduce the quintet members one by one, with O'Connor raising some steam as he goes toe to toe with Nussbaum. When not playing with the likes of Chaka Khan, Wet Wet Wet, Paul Brady or The Boomtown Rats, O'Connor serves the occasional reminder up and down Ireland of just what a good jazz saxophonist he is, as his passionate playing throughout

these nine tracks attests.

Besides great chops, Egan and Nussbaum contribute a tune apiece. The bassist's "Sea Saw," from *Truth Be Told* (Wavetone Records, 2010), is workmanlike but never really achieves lift-off, despite some feisty stickwork from Nussbaum. The drummer's blues-drenched "Sure Would Baby," from his excellent tribute to Huddie William Ledbetter, *The Lead Belly Project* (Sunnyside Records, 2017), is altogether more satisfying, with lovely, tumbling piano and shimmering, Hammond-organ-esque textures underpinning a relay of fine solos. Arguably the album's standout track, however, is [Johnny Taylor's](#) "Origin," a slower number of great melodic charm. Hamilton shines here, with Nussbaum on brushes lending nuanced support.

A tender interpretation of Paul McCartney's "And I Love Her" highlights Hamilton's balladeering finesse, but it's the two tunes to which he puts his own name that are more revealing. There's a hint of [Vince Guaraldi's](#) *Peanuts* theme on the piano intro to Hamilton and Boylan's co-written "Split"—a handsome

tune lent some swagger by O'Connor's gutsy intervention. The other Hamilton/Boylan number, the buoyant "Holly's Moment," has a celebratory feel with sunny solos all round, the ensemble driven by Nussbaum's propulsive brushes. These two numbers suggest that Hamilton, renowned on his home turf as a virtuoso soloist and a fine interpreter, is more of a tunesmith than he has previously let on.

Given all the musicians' busy diaries it might prove a challenge for Hamilton to maintain the cross-Atlantic connection going forward. Either way, and perhaps of more significance, is the fact that with not a jazz standard in sight *For The Record* marks a new chapter for Hamilton. Where Hamilton's muse will lead him next remains to be seen, but the journey, as ever with the Northern Irish trumpeter, will be worth following.

Track Listing

Right Angle; Mo' Hip; And I Love Her; Split; Origin; Sure Would Baby; Sea Saw; Holly's Moment.

Personnel

[Linley Hamilton](#): trumpet; [Adam Nussbaum](#): drums; [Mark Egan](#): bass; [Cian Boylan](#): piano; [Derek O'Connor](#): saxophone.

Album Information

Title: [For The Record](#) | Year Released: 2020 |
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