

Dr. Linley Hamilton (new album “For the Record”, and touring)

BY

[ROMES81](#)

ON 3 MARCH 2020 • ([LEAVE A COMMENT](#))

*The multi-talented Dr. Linley Hamilton combines his work as a touring and recording jazz artist, with being an educator and a BBC radio presenter (‘Jazz World with Linley Hamilton’ on BBC Radio Ulster). He describes being able to combine a love for jazz with his passion for communicating the message of music as “a marriage made in heaven”.
Feature by Martin Chilton.*



Linley Hamilton performing "From the Record"

The Northern Ireland trumpeter and flugelhorn player, who was born on 12 March 1965, is about to embark on a tour of Ireland that starts with the launch of his fifth solo album *For the Record* at The Black Box in Belfast, before moving on to gigs in Sligo, Carrick-on-Suir and Dublin.

Hamilton started playing at school, but his important training ground came in his early twenties when he studied with trombonist Bobby Lamb in an inaugural all-Irish jazz youth orchestra that was sponsored by the Bank of Ireland. "It was full-on, six hours a day, Saturday and Sunday 30 weeks a year. There were about 30 of us and it was an incredible opportunity for us to bond and learn to improvise together. That would be about 35 years ago now, and a lot of the guys who came through are the linchpins of jazz in Ireland. That demonstrates the importance of the whole youth jazz orchestra thing." He says he learned to listen to people he had never heard. "It's been a progression – my love for bop and post-bop, swing; it started by following players like Clifford Brown and Freddie Hubbard, and has moved on to more contemporary players like Roy Hargrove and Jeremy Pelt," says Hamilton. He still has a particular affinity for Hubbard, the trumpeter who died in 2008. "I am a huge fan of Hubbard, who has done such different things. For example, he played the trumpet solos on 'Zanzibar', the Billy Joel track on the 1978 album '52nd Street'. Hubbard has this whole crossover appeal. In 1982 he did an album called 'Ride Like the Wind', for which he composed the track 'Bridgitte'. I included that on my last album 'Making Other Arrangements', in 2018, in homage to him."



Linley Hamilton's "For the Record" Quintet

The band on his new album have a fine pedigree. The 69-year-old bass player **Mark Egan**, who was born in Brockton, Massachusetts, and American drummer **Adam Nussbaum** have played with Chet Baker, Stan Getz, Michael Brecker, Gil Evans and Pat Metheny. They play on 'For the Record' – which

was cut at Camden Recording Studios in Dublin – alongside Ireland’s **Cian Boylan** (piano and organ) and **Derek O’Connor** (tenor saxophone), who was on Hamilton’s first album back in 2001.

Hamilton says the chemistry in the band is perfect. “The two Americans bring very different personalities with them. Music is a language, and if you are playing, you are communicating, so there is a big importance to personality,” adds Hamilton. “The home members of the band – me, Derek and Cian – really live up to the Irish description: we are active, humorous, big back-slappers, big party-animal types. Mark is shy and quiet and happy to be on the periphery of the *craic*, while Adam has a ‘I am a New York drummer from the Bronx, check-it-out’ kind of feel. It makes for a great, interesting dynamic.” Hamilton came up with the title ‘For the Record’, and as part of his work as a lecturer at Ulster University Magee campus in Derry, he has to do research about the album. “I am a post-doctorate researcher, so for all the albums I have made since 2014, I have had to do analysis on the transcriptions and articulate a research question,” he says. “In terms of this album, it is basically how I managed to vertically use tension devices that were horizontally resolved. It sounds complicated, but it’s actually all about ways to resolve tension in the music.”

There are eight tracks on the album – some composed by Boylan, Nussbaum and Egan – including an instrumental version of Paul McCartney’s ‘And I Love Her’, from the Beatles’ 1964 album ‘A Hard Day’s Night’. “I thought it would be really good as a foil to all the original material on the album,” says Hamilton. “I love that you can put passion into a simple ballad, a modern standard, a tune that gives you the chance to try to maximise your expressive output. I fell in love with that tune.”

As well as his broadcast work – he presents ‘Jazz World with Linley Hamilton’ on BBC Radio Ulster – Hamilton’s playing has made him an in-demand session musician and he has performed and recorded with two of Ireland’s biggest stars: Paul Brady and Van Morrison. He says it was an honour to have worked with these two, saying he has “benefited greatly from their presence and spirituality”.

Morrison is a life-long jazz fan and Hamilton saw this at close hand. “Van has a passion for jazz and melody and his inside knowledge is incredible,” says Hamilton, who lectures in jazz musicology. “He has studied the jazz musicians and knows the importance of the time-frames of the players. For somebody who gigs so much and is still so active it is shocking to think that the spare down time he has had has been invested in listening to other players. That is

really incredible. He is an amazing font of knowledge.”

Hamilton says his own “connective portfolio” of jobs and interests is focused on the “performance-driven” side of music. It is the reason he is so excited by the tour promoting ‘For the Record’. “I can’t wait. It’s the *craic* and the stories my fellow musicians bring,” Hamilton says. “Music is a language, so if you see five grumpy old men, it’s not much fun. Whereas, if you see five musicians who are loving each other, wanting each other to do well and putting the music first, it’s infectious. The crowd becomes part of the gig.” (*pp*)

Dr. Linley Hamilton Quintet’s ‘For the Record’ is released on 20th March 2020 on Teddy D Records. For more information see www.linleyhamilton.com