

Exclusive interview: Jazz legend Scott Hamilton speaks to EU Today in Brussels

Jazz lovers in Brussels were treated to a truly special performance when legendary tenor sax player Scott Hamilton appeared for a one-off concert in Brussels.

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, September 18, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Jazz lovers in Brussels were treated to a truly special performance on Saturday when the legendary tenor sax player [Scott Hamilton](#) appeared for a one-off concert at [The Music Village](#), Brussels' premier Jazz venue. He was supported by Belgium's Johan Clement Trio, writes EU Today publisher Gary Cartwright.



Scott Hamilton live at the Music Village, Brussels.

Steeped in the finest of Jazz traditions, Hamilton has played and recorded with many of the great names of the genre: Benny Goodman and Tony Bennett to name just two.

“

He creates fresh, swinging solos from songs old and new, Jazz favourites and blues, never showing signs of running short of ideas.”

*British Jazz critic and author
Dave Gelly.*

His influences, his experience, and his unbridled passion for his art come together to bring a timeless quality to his performances - he doesn't just bring his music to the stage, he brings his history.

“He creates fresh, swinging solos from songs old and new, Jazz favourites and blues, never showing signs of running short of ideas,” wrote esteemed British Jazz critic and author Dave Gelly.

I was very lucky, as a keen Jazz fan myself, to get the chance to [speak with Scott Hamilton](#) during a break between two sets.

The Music Village, which only opened in Brussels in 2000 and recently had a refurb, has

something of a retro feel about it which makes it the perfect venue for Jazz lovers, but what did Scott Hamilton think of the venue? "I love it here, it reminds me of some of the places I played 50 years ago," he said, agreeing with me that nostalgia is in the DNA of all Jazz.

As a young man he played the harmonica - being in Brussels I had to mention the late harmonica player Toots Thielemans, Belgium's most famous Jazz musician, still much revered eight years after his passing: "There is no-one in the world I had more admiration for than Toots. When I first came to Europe in '79 we played together on the same bill at a festival in Holland and he let me come up at the end and play with him. He was very generous, and over the years we saw each other often on the road: we both worked a lot in Sweden and we were getting very popular, and so we got to know each other."

I asked about an interview he gave in the 90's when he suggested that the late 60's - early 70's had been a "bad time for Jazz." How did he feel about the present day, I wondered.

"We are far away from those years, and I find now that I am playing all the time, and I am playing to full houses," he said.

In the same line, I asked for his opinion on Belgium's Summer Jazz festivals - almost every city has one. With Jazz being such a diverse genre, I wondered why it is that the festivals are being watered down with pop music, and in one case this year, Punk Rock?

"Commercialism," he replied unhesitatingly. "The original promoters of Jazz were Jazz fans. Although they were interested in making money they were more interested in putting on a cultural event.



EU Today publisher Gary Cartwright with Scott Hamilton.



Scott Hamilton live at the Music Village, Brussels.

"These younger guys, they don't know any Jazz, and like most promoters these days their only interest is in where they can sell more than 3000 tickets... I think the name 'Jazz' is just a way of getting attention. They come in under the name of Jazz, but basically all they are interested in is whatever sells. That's is why I don't play big festivals now."

He is in great demand, as his performance schedule attests, and spends a great deal of time touring.

He currently lives in Italy, where he spent much of his childhood with his parents, both of whom were artists, and growing up "surrounded by Italian sculpture."

I asked him, given that he has performed, recorded, and produced with some of the true greats (he is the only person I have ever met who as a youngster saw Count Basie play live) if there any projects he still wants to explore, "well," he replied with a smile, "there are a lot of songs out there I haven't tried yet..."

Gary Cartwright

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