

Scott Hamilton

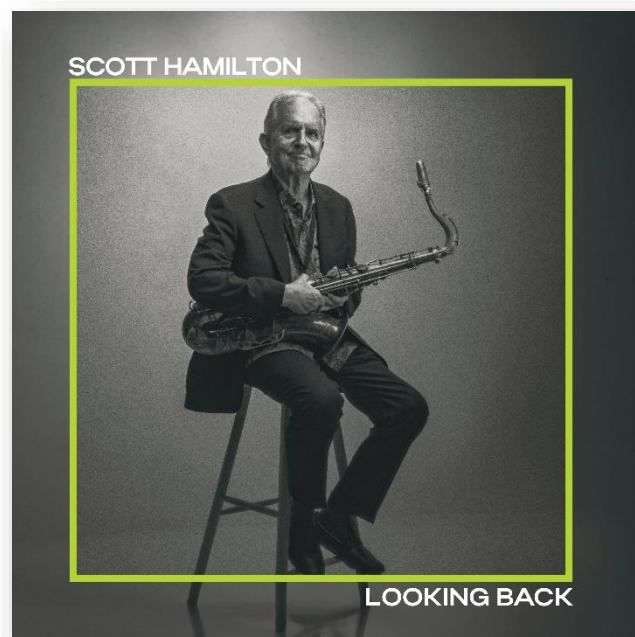
LOOKING BACK

- Vinyl, CD, digital

70-year-old American tenor saxophonist Scott Hamilton can reflect on a rich and rewarding career with pride and humility. In choosing the material for his new album, *LOOKING BACK*, he's drawn inspiration from several musicians he has collaborated with over the years—a 'who's who' of jazz.

If there was any more room for songs on the release, there would also be selections dedicated to Al Cohn, Gerry Wiggins, Benny Goodman, Flip Phillips, Ed Bickert, Arnett Cobb, Zoot Sims, Benny Carter, Hank Jones, Woody Herman, Jake Hanna, and many more. "I'm lucky to have known so many of my heroes," Hamilton shares. "So many, in fact, I might need to make another album or two!"

In the late '70s and early '80s, a younger Scott Hamilton faced some skepticism as he didn't follow in the footsteps of the so-called modernist masters of that time. Instead, he found inspiration in older jazz giants. Over the years, however, it became clear that he was special - an earnest musician who could build on the classic virtues of jazz with his unique musical voice and personality. While the jazz world was compulsively experimenting, Hamilton chose a different direction, drawing inspiration from greats like Ben Webster, Lester Young, and Coleman Hawkins, and quickly became recognized as an innovator in those traditions. His rich, warm tone and melodic playing harkens back to the golden age of swing, evoking a sense of nostal-



STULP 24071



STUCD 24072

gia and appreciation for the timeless quality of his music. Hamilton has remained true to his roots throughout his career, becoming one of the most prominent representatives of the swing and mainstream jazz legacies. With a mature perspective, he calmly exudes confidence through sophisticated phrasing, regularly breathing new life into even the most well-established musical material. And that's what listeners can look forward to on his latest album, *LOOKING BACK*.

Since his debut recording as a leader in 1977, Hamilton has released numerous albums on labels of all sizes while working with international and local performers of the highest esteem. He has formed an informal partnership with Danish label Stunt Records, for whom he has recorded five critically acclaimed releases. Of these, 2013's *SWEDISH BALLADS* and 2017's *DANISH BALLADS* feature Nordic repertoires and have attracted much-deserved attention.

On *LOOKING BACK*, as well as on three previous Stunt releases, he collaborated with the same top-shelf musicians who fill out his regular Scandinavian quartet on tours: Swedes Jan Lundgren on piano and Hans Backenroth on bass and Danish drummer Kristian Leth. Hamilton describes them as "indispensable,"



highlighting that “few musicians have the imagination and experience to transform unusual material and make it sound like jazz.” This continued collaboration adds a unique depth and richness to the album, making it a must-listen for jazz enthusiasts.

GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO HER FACE / THE MAIDS OF CADIZ / BEYOND THE BLUEBIRD / TUNE UP / ROCKIN' CHAIR / NOBLESSE / BIG TATE / HEY THERE / SHADOWLAND / ON A CLEAR DAY.

Scott Hamilton (tenor sax), Jan Lundgren (piano), Hans Backenroth (bass), Kristian Leth (drums).

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Scott Hamilton about the songs on the album:

I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face (dedicated to Ruby Braff): Ruby loved the whole world of Broadway and musical theater. His dream was to put together a show with real jazz musicians. He told me he saw a matinee of “My Fair Lady” when it opened in New York. He was still playing this song 20 years later when I first heard him.

The Maids of Cadiz (dedicated to Jimmie Rowles): I became friends with Jimmie back in the 70s at the China Song, a musicians' bar on Broadway. I would see him playing with Zoot Sims or on duo gigs in the piano rooms in the Village. He was passionate about unusual songs that most guys didn't play, and he coached a lot of us on how to play them.

Beyond the Bluebird (dedicated to Tommy Flanagan): I recorded with Tommy twice (once when I was very young and again in the '90s). I wanted to play this tune of his because I really didn't know how to play it the first time. The Bluebird was a club in Detroit.

Tune Up (dedicated to Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson): Cleanhead was a great singer and alto player, and this tune is his, but is traditionally credited to Miles Davis, who popularized it. I toured Europe “Cleanhead” in 1980, along with Junior Mance. I learned as much off the bandstand as on.

Rockin' Chair (dedicated to Roy Eldridge): Without Roy's help, I never would have dared to move to New York when I did. He didn't always

The album LOOKING BACK is a 10-track retrospective dedicated to a small selection of the many musicians who have played memorable roles in Hamilton's career.

approve of me, but the last time I spoke to him, he said he thought of me as his ‘product.’

Noblesse (for Gerry Mulligan): I never played gigs with Gerry, but it was a great experience to be on an album with him. He wrote most of the songs, and we rehearsed at his house for several days while I learned them. On the sheet for Noblesse, it said, ‘dedicated to Ray Noble.’

Big Tate (for Buddy Tate): Buddy and I worked together often in the 1970s and 80s before he teamed up with Al Grey. We had a good act and made a couple of albums. Big Tate was the name of an instant mashed potato back then.

Hey There (for Rosemary Clooney and Red Prysock): I was Rosemary's sax player for 20 years. She was great to work for and one of the best singers ever. This song was a big hit for Rose, and we used to play it every night, but I had been playing it for years before I met her. I love Red Prysock's recording of this song, which I had as a teenager in Providence.

Shadowland (for Dave McKenna and Peter Straub): Dave was not a composer, but he did write a few tunes. I think he really liked this one. The title came from our friend Peter Straub's book.

On a Clear Day (for Illinois Jacquet and Jo Jones): I used to see Illinois, Jo, and Milt Buckner at a club north of Boston in the early 1970s. When they felt like playing, they were the best jazz band I ever saw. This is their arrangement.



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