

# Colin Steele Quintet: Edinburgh Festival Theatre Studio

Trumpeter Colin Steele is one of the leading names in Scottish jazz. An Edinburgh resident, he is a regular name at many of the city's jazz venues. His career encompasses a wide range of musical styles including jazz, funk, pop and Scottish folk music, but he is most widely known for a number of jazz recordings made over the last 15 years. Steele's music skilfully fuses jazz composition and improvisation with folk influences. His musical sound is unique and distinctively Scottish; crafted, melodic jazz which has aged in a highland whisky barrel until mature for tasting.



Colin Steele – image  
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Steele made three recordings with his quintet between 2000 and 2004, and released a later jazz-folk recording *Stramash* in 2008. The quintet has been in self-imposed exile over the last five years as Steele has followed other musical projects, including work with the **Edinburgh Festival Jazz Orchestra**, and collaborative showcases for the music of **Chet Baker**, **Miles Davis** and **Canonball Adderley**. Steele also suffered a major personal crisis during this period through misguided efforts to improve his technique; the experience left him unable to play a note and resulted in a traumatic four months away from music and his livelihood. Fortunately he received generous help from many friends, including the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra trumpeter **Mark O'Keefe**, who helped him with remedial music lessons and his recovery back to the stage.



## Stramash

This weekend the quintet returns with a short tour, supported by Jazz Scotland, to showcase Steele's new compositions before recording a long-awaited fourth album. Friday's concert at the Studio at the Festival Theatre was their first night. The line-up was a Colin Steele Quintet "dream team", featuring many well-known names in Scottish jazz, with long-time collaborator **Dave Milligan** on piano, **Michael Buckley** on tenor and soprano sax, **Calum Gourlay** on double bass, and **Stu Ritchie** on drums.

The highly talented group of musicians produced a storming showcase for the new set. The music almost exclusively featured recent Steele compositions, and two Milligan arrangements of compositions written five years ago by Steele and Milligan for the Edinburgh Festival Jazz Orchestra. The new numbers will reinforce Steele's reputation for warm, melodic and accessible jazz: Notable highlights included the swinging *Seven Cents a Boogie*, *Independence* (for Scotland), and *There Are Angels*, written by Colin Steele in gratitude for the support received from Mark O'Keefe and others during his rehabilitation. The musicians' long-standing empathy and understanding shone through even on the first night of the tour; sparkling solos and interplay between Steele's trumpet and Buckley's sax, Milligan's expressive solo piano, supported by a rock solid rhythm from Gourlay and Ritchie.

The set closed with the encore *Slipped Disc* from the first Colin Steele Quintet album *Twilight Dreams*. A delighted audience left looking forward to the new recording and the chance to hear the new set again. For those unable to wait, the quintet play in Falkirk, Glasgow and St. Andrews over the next three nights.