

Jazz trumpeter's man of many talents



YOU could hardly accuse jazz trumpeter Linley Hamilton (left) of lacking variety in his career. He leads his own highly-rated jazz band; he's a member of the sample and programmed beat-based Bellcrash; he's a director of an agency, The Entertainment Company, and a partner in the Making Music Workshop educational initiative and he freelances with musicians like Paul Brady, Van Morrison and Eleanor McEvoy. Hamilton enthuses about the stars with whom he has worked including Paul Brady, in whose band he was until recently a regular: "He has a strong desire to have the music played the way he wants it but there's quite a lot of section work where he wants the brass section to take off and quite a lot of solo work. "You aren't doing his thing all the time – you're doing your own sometimes and if you play something that excites him he'll be very encouraging." Hamilton's more occasional work with Van Morrison has also delighted him. "He was very good to me and it has always

been great fun. I mean, he's God, isn't he?" Recording with Eleanor McEvoy on her recent *Early Hours* album was another positive experience for Hamilton. "She's a dote!" he smiles. "One of the nicest people you could ever dream of working with. People like that don't get you to play like somebody else – they get you for who you are and they want you to do what you do. That makes it very easy." A more left-field recent move for Hamilton has been to join Bellcrash with whom he has recorded *Suzume Park*. "It's quite a diversion for me but a diversion I wanted to take. It involves djs, singers, brass, keyboard and percussion. Basically they're writing and programming music and adding live instrumentation. "It's everything that good music is – there's freedom to play and tight section work and it's creative in that you're playing lines and noises and effects that fill out the music so you're becoming part of the ensemble, part of the rhythm section, part of the soloist and part of the melody." Hamilton's main jazz outlet though is

leading his own quartet featuring pianist Neil Everett, ex-Van Morrison bassist Nicky Scott and ex-Taste drummer John Wilson. The band's repertoire is based on the sort of material released on the legendary Blue Note label, by artists such as Freddy Hubbard. Hamilton explains the appeal of such music: "I like the idea of space in the playing. There is a regular format; there are rules. But the more rules, the easier it is to play because there's less can go wrong which gives us freedom to improvise and to feed off the other players. With Neil Everett that really is exciting because he comes up with ideas every 10 seconds! "We're very good at working as a team – a bit of eye contact and we'll drop the drums out or the piano or whatever – there's a lot of experimentation like that and anything can happen. "The guys are very creative and it's a pleasure to play with them."

■ **The Linley Hamilton Quartet play The Kitchen Bar, Belfast every Monday.**