



Colin Steele Quintet

10th March 2018

Ardrishaig Public Hall was transformed by the Mid Argyll Arts Association into a lively jazz club on Saturday night (10th March), when Scottish trumpet maestro, Colin Steele was joined by four of Scotland's finest jazz musicians. The Colin Steele Jazz Quintet lit up the crowded hall with their virtuosic improvisations, delivering popular styles of jazz to a relaxed and enthusiastic audience.

Unusually, the Quintet played an acoustic set with pianist, Dave Milligan, coaxing fresh sounds and funky rhythms from the MAAA's wonderful grand piano, dreamy one minute, bouncing out of his seat when things hotted up. Drummer Stu Ritchie, all the way from Nice, France, had never played so quietly, they joked! With Calum Gourlay on double bass, the three musicians played as a trio at times, cooking up some brilliant percussive jazz.

Frontman, Colin Steele, performed some blistering trumpet solos, sometimes using a sink plunger as mute to recreate the sounds of the swing era and his hero, Louis Armstrong. His obvious pleasure in collaborating with the other musicians radiated to the audience. He also brought a personal quality to the evening by sharing the stories behind his compositions. Even in dark times, people supported him with his music and when least expected the music flowed. The excellent track Looking for Nessie came to him while on holiday with his family, when inspiration seemed to have dried up.

New to the band, but proving a great fit, was saxophonist, Martin Kershaw, who gave an impressive display of circular breathing during a mesmerising solo on soprano sax. This set the atmosphere for an ambitious three-part piece called Down to the Wire, which used elements of Scottish folk and finished with a rip-roaring Scottish blues. Notching it up further, they ended with the brilliantly funky Slipped Disc, which left the audience energised and uplifted following a very enjoyable evening.

Helen Maddox