



Getting to the heart of New Orleans and swing drumming is what Jeff Hamilton is about. Jeff's unique feel and energy are in demand with all-star musicians, jazz bands, and fans around the world. Along with his solid time and swinging drum presence, Jeff demonstrates a remarkable talent for inspiring soloists. His own soloing is fascinating, showing both great spontaneity and true melodic composition. The exciting traditions of swing and early jazz are the perfect showcase for Jeff's artistry.

Jazz journalist Jim Leigh wrote about Jeff, "While still a teenager, Hamilton studied with the legendary "Cie" Frazier in the Crescent City [New Orleans] and would later absorb the examples of Sid Catlett and other swing giants. His contribution may be summed up in a few words: perfect time, taste, and irresistible swing." With many years as an accomplished pianist, trombonist, and east Indian drummer, Jeff brings his rich and varied musical experience to his performing.

Born in Newport Beach, CA in 1956, drum lessons started at age nine and classical piano studies at eleven. A move to New Orleans in 1974 offered Jeff the opportunity to study, learn, and work with many of the wonderful older New Orleans musicians.

The late 80s and 90s found Jeff living in New Orleans again, and working throughout the Crescent City on drums, piano and trombone. Jeff was in constant demand working a daily piano gig on the Steamboat Natchez, a regular at Preservation Hall, George Buck's Palm Court Cafe, the Can Can Cafe; and frequent work with Banu Gibson and her New Orleans Hot Jazz, in town and throughout the country.

In recent years, Jeff has been a popular allstar at jazz parties and festivals. He has toured with Dan Barrett's Blue Swing and International Swing Party, Banu Gibson, Butch Thompson, and wonderful festival circuit bands including the Grand Dominion Jazz Band and Doug Finke's Independence Hall Jazz Band.

Notable performances have included orchestral "Pops" concerts with Banu Gibson at the Hollywood Bowl, appearances with Oslo's Norwegian Radio Orchestra; and the Boston Pops Millennium 1999 New Years Eve concert, where conductor Keith Lockhart commented to Jeff, "It was a pleasure...and so easy working with you!"

International travels have taken Jeff to Japan, Singapore, India; and to many of Europe's festivals, including Oslo, Norway; Breda, Netherlands; and Ascona, Switzerland. Jeff loves jazz parties in the U.S. such as Mat Domber's March of Jazz, the Triangle Jazz Party, Summit Jazz, Atlanta Jazz Party, and Jazz at Chautauqua. Being a sailor, Jeff loves performing with the Grand Dominion on JazzSea cruises, going to exciting destinations like the Caribbean, Alaska, and Mexico!

Gratitude and privilege are Jeff's words for describing his performances with remarkable talents such as: Howard Alden, Harry Allen, Dan Barrett, John Bunch, Doc Cheatham, Kenny Davern, Dave Frishberg, Squire Girsback, Bob Haggart, Eddie Higgins, Jim Goodwin, Scott Hamilton, Milt Hinton, Dick Hyman, Art Hodes, Illinois Jaquet, Plas Johnson, Allen Vache, Warren Vache, Jon-Eric Kellso, Rebecca Kilgore, Ken Peplowski, Ray Sherman, Randy Sandke, and Bucky Pizzarelli. Strong influencers on Jeff's drumming are "Big Sid" Catlett, Jo Jones, Check Webb, "Cie" Frazier, Joe Watkins, Minor Hall, and Indian classical master Zakir Hussain. Art Hodes, Earl Hines, Jess Stacy, Thelonious Monk, and Dave Frishberg are key inspirations for Jeff's piano playing.

It is Dan Barrett who wrote, "Jeff really gets to the heart of New Orleans and swing drumming." In a cover story interview for the Mississippi Rag Barrett said about Hamilton, "Jeff studied with the great old New Orleans musicians when they were still around in the early '70s and got a lot from them as far as basic swinging, so he has a beautiful, beautiful, sense of time. Since he plays piano, he understands the structure of the tunes and is a very responsive drummer."

Don't miss Jeff's recordings under his own name:

\* "Swing that Music" (Jeff on drums with his allstar friends!)

\* "If Dreams Come True" (Jeff on piano, solos, duos, and trios with friends)