

Neil Billington

New Zealand Blues Harmonica Ace



Neil Billington is one of the leading exponents of the harmonica to come out of New Zealand, and combines a rare capacity for both the traditional blues harmonica and the less typical chromatic harmonica.

He is equally at home whether playing in the ‘Chicago-style’ of Little Walter on the blues harp or reflecting the more sophisticated jazz sensibilities of Belgian jazz great, Jean ‘Toots’ Thielemans, on chromatic harmonica.

Neil covers a range of genres, from old-time pre-war blues through to the great Chicago blues harp masters, to the ballads of the American song-book and the jazz standards of Charlie Parker and Miles Davis.

In 2016 Neil performed with Mike Garner at the **‘Live Magic’ blues festival in Tokyo**, where he was invited to play with the lead act, slide-guitar legend **Sonny Landreth**, described by Eric Clapton as ‘one of the most advanced guitar players in the world’, and Neil will be featuring on Landreth’s official video, ‘Live in Tokyo’.

Neil has recently returned from his fourth visit to Japan, where he played with some of their finest blues and jazz musicians, such as former Chicago-based guitarist Shun Kikuta, boogie pianist Rei "Ms Lee" Kanehira, and acoustic guitar virtuoso Yuji Hamaguchi. Neil has also been invited by the Hohner company, the world's leading harmonica manufacturer, to be a guest performer at the company's Tokyo festival next year, where he will display his skills on both the blues harp and the chromatic harmonica - a rare accolade.

<http://www.blues101.co.nz/neil-billington.html>