

From Sting tour to Queen's Hall jazz gig

An American musician who has toured with Sting and who won a Grammy this year for his latest album joins the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra in concert at the Queen's Hall on Sunday 1 October.

Wisconsin-born pianist-composer Geoffrey Keezer will guide the Orchestra through his unique, new treatments of jazz classics by saxophonists Charlie Parker and John Coltrane as well as specially reimagined arrangements of his own award-winning compositions.

SNJO founder and artistic director, saxophonist Tommy Smith is excited to be working again with Keezer, who has contributed to over a dozen of the Orchestra's projects and recordings over the past twenty years.

"Geoffrey is one of the world's most gifted, most sought-after musicians and composers," says Smith. "He has worked with true jazz legends including the drummer and renowned talent scout Art Blakey, who led one of jazz's most revered bands, the Jazz Messengers, from the 1950s through to the 1980s. His talent has also been recognised in the pop arena through touring with Sting, who described him as a superb technician and improviser, a musician's musician."

A former child prodigy, Keezer began playing professionally in his teens and was just eighteen when he joined Blakey's Jazz

Messengers, a renowned 'jazz finishing school,' which produced major jazz stars including trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and the recently departed saxophonist Wayne Shorter, who co-founded legendary band Weather Report and collaborated with Joni Mitchell and Steely Dan.

On leaving the Jazz Messengers, Keezer went on to work with Ray Brown, who was the bassist for both Ella Fitzgerald and Oscar Peterson. He also played with trumpeter Art Farmer, singer-pianist Diana Krall, and saxophonists Benny Golson, Joshua Redman and David Sanborn. His own recordings, including his Grammy-winning album, Refuge, have embraced mainstream jazz, funk, blues and gospel music.

"Geoffrey's appreciation and understanding of music are huge," says Tommy Smith. "He has delivered superbly sensitive arrangements for us of pieces by composers and songwriters from Henry Mancini and Leonard Bernstein to Robert Burns. At first, I thought his strength lay in ballads but his reimagining of bass guitar revolutionary Jaco Pastorius' highly animated Teen Town was strikingly effervescent. We're looking forward immensely to welcoming him back to Scotland."



Geoffrey Keezer