

Keyboardist brings “dream team” to Queen’s Hall

Peter Johnstone is used to appearing on the Queen’s Hall stage but the concert he’s playing at the Clerk Street venue on Friday 20 October is a bit different from usual.

The award-winning keyboardist, who plays piano with the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, will be focusing on Hammond organ in a new “dream team” of world class jazz talents that features New York-based vibes virtuoso Joe Locke, saxophonist Tommy Smith and drummer Alyn Cosker.

The Queen’s Hall date is part of a tour that also calls into Aberdeen, Glasgow, Perth and Ambleside before heading to London where the quartet plays at the iconic Ronnie Scott’s jazz club on Tuesday 24 October.

A graduate of the jazz course at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Johnstone won the Young Scottish Jazz Musician of the Year title in 2012 and went on to win the prestigious Peter Whittingham Jazz Prize with the band Square One in 2015. He is also the recipient of a Yamaha Scholarship.

The musicians in his International Organ Quartet are all players Johnstone has enjoyed working with previously. He invited Locke, widely recognised as one of the world’s leading vibes players, to join the group after they shared stages during concerts with the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra.

“Joe’s always so positive,” says Johnstone. “When I started writing for a new quartet, I could hear organ and vibes working well together in my imagination. So I got in touch with Joe and he immediately agreed to come on board.”

Johnstone already works regularly with Tommy Smith, both in the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, which Smith directs, and in a saxophone-piano duo, and he and Alyn Cosker also work together in the SNJO and other groups.

“Joe, Tommy and Alyn bring a fantastic range of experience to the group,” says Johnstone. “Joe has played with everyone from the master jazz pianist Kenny Barron to the Beastie Boys. Tommy has an incredible CV. His international reputation attracts world leading jazz musicians to work with the SNJO, and Alyn is so versatile, he can play in any style of music, not just any style of jazz. I’m really looking forward to hearing what we sound like together.”



