

THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL JAZZ ORCHESTRA

DIRECTED BY TOMMY SMITH



FEATURING SPECIAL GUEST

MAKOTO OZONE

**MOZART'S 9TH PIANO
CONCERTO &
RHAPSODY IN BLUE**

25 APR 2014 Inverness, Eden Court
26 APR 2014 Edinburgh, Queen's Hall
27 APR 2014 Glasgow, Royal Conservatoire



snjo.co.uk

Makoto Ozone is a superbly gifted pianist, composer and arranger. As accomplished in classical piano as he is in jazz, the **Scottish National Jazz Orchestra** has invited him to create a vivid re-imagining of Mozart's 9th piano concerto.

This newly commissioned work for the SNJO promises to be an exciting and enthralling addition to the jazz repertoire and the ideal complement to **Tommy Smith's** proven masterpiece, Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue.

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PROGRAMME NOTES

Mozart's 9th Piano Concerto & Gershwin's Rhapsody In Blue

There is always an air of great anticipation surrounding the premiere of a new commission, and there is good reason to be excited about **Makoto Ozone's** treatment of Mozart's 9th Piano Concerto. This universally popular work, known familiarly as "Jeunehomme", is now re-imagined by a daring arranger in Ozone, a supremely confident big band in the **Scottish National Jazz Orchestra** (SNJO) and a courageous leader in director **Tommy Smith**.

Mozart's devotion to melody and penchant for solo virtuosity speaks to us from a bygone age, but its challenges and charms are instantly recognizable to jazz musicians. The superbly gifted jazz and classical pianist Makoto Ozone and the SNJO are old friends and kindred spirits. They wish only to connect strongly with spirited music, and share the sole aim of enthralling listeners. That could quite easily describe Mozart's position on the purpose of his work.

Certainly, we can expect all of the breath-taking piano work inherent in a concerto that seems designed to impress, dazzle and delight. Our understanding Mozart's 9th Piano Concerto may also be clearer if we consider its colloquial title to be a misnomer. "Jeunehomme" was reportedly one *Victoire Jenamy*, a young woman of the composer's acquaintance in Vienna sometime around 1773. Whether Mozart was smitten or not, we will never know. Nevertheless, the excitable dialogue between piano and orchestra, and some precipitous cadenzas, suggest that the composer was in the mood for a little bit of showmanship. Makoto Ozone has

accepted this challenge wholeheartedly, and he brings an agile jazz intellect to his own sparkling arrangement.

George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue appeared in 1924 and it captured all the energy and excitement of the early twentieth century. Since then, it has grown in stature as a modern classic, and remains vibrantly youthful in appearance. Tommy Smith's special arrangement for Makoto Ozone places Rhapsody in Blue firmly in the present day while preserving, if not enhancing, many of its salient features. This Rhapsody swings, swoons, seduces and shimmers just as it did in the jazz age. Today, however, it comes with extra gloss and added sheen provided by a very modern orchestra and a virtuosic soloist.

The pairing of Rhapsody in Blue with Mozart's work is not at all incongruous, but cognisant of additional considerations. Both composers often departed from convention and valued improvisation in their respective works. Both endured scepticism and criticism in their lifetimes, only to be unequivocally vindicated after death. Although they are not necessarily considered iconoclastic, their liberated approach has informed musical creativity across time and down through the generations.

The natural home for independent minds is, of course, the house of jazz. All are welcome and invited to share in adventurous ideas that celebrate humanity with vivacity and an uncommon generosity of spirit. All of these things can be heard in the language of iconic classics spoken in fluent jazz by Makoto Ozone and Scotland's National Jazz Orchestra.

Michael S. Clark



MAKOTO OZONE

Makoto Ozone (b.1961 Kobe, Japan) is a leading pianist on the world stage, equally accomplished in the spheres of jazz and classical music. His career began at the tender age of four with a precocious interest in blues organ, but he later graduated to piano as he entered his teens. The twelve-year old Ozone then heard Oscar Peterson play, and it proved to be a life-changing experience. By the time he left high school to take his place at Berklee College of Music, Makoto Ozone had already performed in big bands and orchestras at major jazz festivals in Japan.

Makoto flourished at Berklee and majored in Jazz Composition and Arranging. He had already been playing the club circuit in Boston as a student, but his first major

public appearance was a solo recital at New York's Carnegie Hall in 1983. Perhaps more remarkably, Makoto Ozone was signed almost immediately upon graduation from Berklee by CBS with whom he recorded four albums. During this productive period he also guested on albums by Marc Johnson, Chuck Loeb, and Gary Burton, with whom he also toured.

Ozone returned to Japan in 1989 where he signed with JVC for three albums before switching to Verve in 1994, and subsequently moving to Universal Jazz in 2004. To date, Makoto Ozone has produced more than 34 recordings; many of them with his own jazz trio and often featuring eminent guests such as Ellis Marsalis, Branford Marsalis and Chick Corea. In

addition to his solo and trio work, he is a founder member of the No Name Horses big band, and composes for stage, film and television.

There are few styles in which Ozone is anything less than virtuosic and his appearances on the concert platform with The New York Philharmonic Orchestra, The Shanghai Symphony Orchestra and the NDR Hamburg Symphony Orchestra are testimony to his artistry. He often performs classical piano recitals exploring the works of Beethoven, Bernstein, Rachmaninoff, Chopin, and Shostakovich, each in his own inimitably adventurous style. A further career milestone was reached in 2003 when Makoto Ozone performed and conducted his own piano concerto Mogami with the Yamagata Symphony Orchestra.

In 1997, his landmark album with bassist Kiyoshi Kitagawa, drummer Clarence Penn, entitled simply *The Trio*, won the *Swing Journal* award for best jazz album from Japan. This group scooped the same award in 1998 for *Dear Oscar* a fitting tribute to Makoto Ozone's original inspiration, Oscar Peterson. His recordings for Universal Jazz have included the Grammy-nominated *Virtuosi* (2002); the benefit album *Live & Let Live - Love for Japan* (2010); *Road to Chopin* (2010); and a duo album with Gary Burton, *Time Thread* (2013)

Makoto Ozone currently holds a professorship at Kunitachi College of Music in Tokyo and is a popular jazz broadcaster with Japanese station J-Wave 81.3.FM.

Michael S. Clark

Q: WHY MOZART'S 9TH PIANO CONCERTO?

A: This is my favourite of Mozart's concertos. I personally feel this particular concerto is the most innovative from all the 27 concertos he wrote. Also the second movement is extremely emotional.

Q: HOW DID THIS IDEA COME ABOUT?

A: Last time I played with Tommy, we were travelling by train and discussing Rhapsody in Blue and he asked me if I could write an arrangement on another classical masterpiece. And I immediately mentioned "Mozart no.9"

Q: WERE THERE ANY PARTICULAR CHALLENGES IN COMPOSING THIS FOR JAZZ ORCHESTRA?

A: Yes quite a few. His music is already so complete and so natural. You could make his music very cheesy and shallow by even adding one single note to the original voicing. Last thing you want to do is to destroy the purity of his music. So I had to be so careful to make a transition.

Q: DO YOU THINK MOZART AND GERSHWIN SHARE ANY MUSICAL COMMON GROUND?

A: Yes and no. If you look at those two composer's styles as music, they both have an incredible sense to make the music flow. They know where the music wants to go, and are both very keen on the rhythm. However, they are speaking different languages, like English and German. And, of course, Gershwin's era offered the composers more vocabulary. In other words, more advanced harmony and rhythm than the era Mozart lived in.

Q: ANY OTHER THOUGHTS?

A: How I approach the piano between playing jazz and playing classical music is so different. I hope I'll be able to make the piano to sing differently depending upon which part of this arrangement I'm playing. That's probably the most important thing when you play both classical and jazz at the same time. Please wish me luck!

PROGRAMME

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart PIANO CONCERTO NO. 9

Jenamy (Jeunehomme)
in E-flat major, K. 271

Arranged Makoto Ozone

Mozart's 9th Piano Concerto was specially commissioned from Makoto Ozone by the SNJO in 2014, while Rhapsody in Blue, was originally commissioned from Tommy Smith in 2006. *We gratefully acknowledge the support of Creative Scotland for these commissions.* Smith has since revised Rhapsody in Blue in 2009, 2013 and again this year, especially for Makoto. *We gratefully acknowledge his support.*

There will be an interval of 20 minutes

George Gershwin RHAPSODY IN BLUE

Arranged Tommy Smith

Tommy Smith's version of Rhapsody in Blue takes George Gershwin's classic concerto on an unprecedented adventure.

★★★★★ The Irish Times

★★★★★ The Independent

"Taking Gershwin full-bloodedly into the modern era"

The Herald

"Tommy Smith is not one to do things by half measures. To say arrangement, though, doesn't give the true measure of Smith's inspired re-working of this well-loved piece."

The Scotsman

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(b. 1756, Salzburg) was a prolific and versatile composer who wrote in every major format including, symphony, opera, solo concerto, chamber music and piano sonata. He popularized the classical piano concerto and wrote a great deal of religious music, notably large-scale masses such as his famous Requiem in D Minor. Mozart was born into a comfortable family and grew up in a musical environment. At the time of Mozart's birth, his father, who was a musician, composer and teacher, and had already been appointed deputy Kappelmeister of Salzburg Orchestra. Mozart is famous as a



George Gershwin

(b.1898, New York City) wrote primarily for the Broadway stage but he is famous now as an important figure in the history of modern orchestral music. He was among the first to successfully incorporate jazz and the nuances of popular music into classical settings, not least on his first serious work Lullaby, for string quartet. He began playing piano aged about eleven and his natural talent was self-evident from the start. His progress was rapid. At seventeen, he had a job recording piano rolls and had published his first song. Commercial success came shortly after with Swanee, a national hit for Al Jolson in 1919.

child prodigy who began composing small pieces at five and spent his early years touring with his father and sister in Europe. However, his reputation as a young composer of note grew when he became an established court musician at home in Salzburg. Mozart was especially productive as a composer-performer, and his many commissions provided him with the means to write for the opera. The legacy of this long-cherished ambition are works synonymous with the operatic form including, The Magic Flute, Don Giovanni and The Marriage of Figaro. Mozart died a pauper in 1791 after years of battling ill-health and financial insecurity.

On Broadway, Gershwin enjoyed his share of hit shows and disappointing flops. Nevertheless, the famous co-writing partnership with brother Ira yielded many hits such as I Got Rhythm and Embraceable You that are now standards. However, the sweeping grandeur of Rhapsody in Blue and the musical sophistication of Porgy and Bess have secured his reputation for all time. George Gershwin died in July 1937 and was widely mourned. On September 8, Otto Klemperer conducted the second of Gershwin's Three Piano Preludes at a memorial concert held at the Hollywood Bowl.

Tommy Smith

(b. Edinburgh 1967) is a leading light in European jazz, first and foremost as one of the finest saxophonists of his generation, and latterly as the founder and director of SNJO. These career-defining achievements are framed by his status as an international recording artist; a composer and arranger of extraordinary ambition; and not least, as a jazz educator. His prolific career began in earnest when, aged only sixteen, he recorded his first album Giant Strides. He was rewarded with a scholarship to Berklee College of Music, an experience that has shaped his affirmative approach to jazz. Since then, he has made twenty-six solo albums as a leader for Blue Note, Linn and Spartacus Records. Smith has also performed with

Gary Burton, Chick Corea, Jack DeJohnette, Kenny Barron, Arild Andersen, John Scofield and Trilok Gurtu. His tenure with the SNJO has seen critically acclaimed performances and recordings of programmed and commissioned works including hugely popular treatments of Ellington, Gershwin, Weather Report and Miles Davis. Smith is also founder/director of The Tommy Smith Youth Jazz Orchestra and is current Artistic Director of the first ever full-time jazz course at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He also holds three honorary doctorates from Heriot-Watt, Glasgow Caledonian & Edinburgh Universities and a Professorship from the RCS. His last solo album KARMA won him his seventh Scottish Jazz Award for album of the year in 2012.



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Bob Mintzer joined the band in 1991 and is a Grammy-winning composer and arranger whose works for big bands continue to forge an original path within the jazz tradition and is a featured soloist of consummate improvising talents.

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