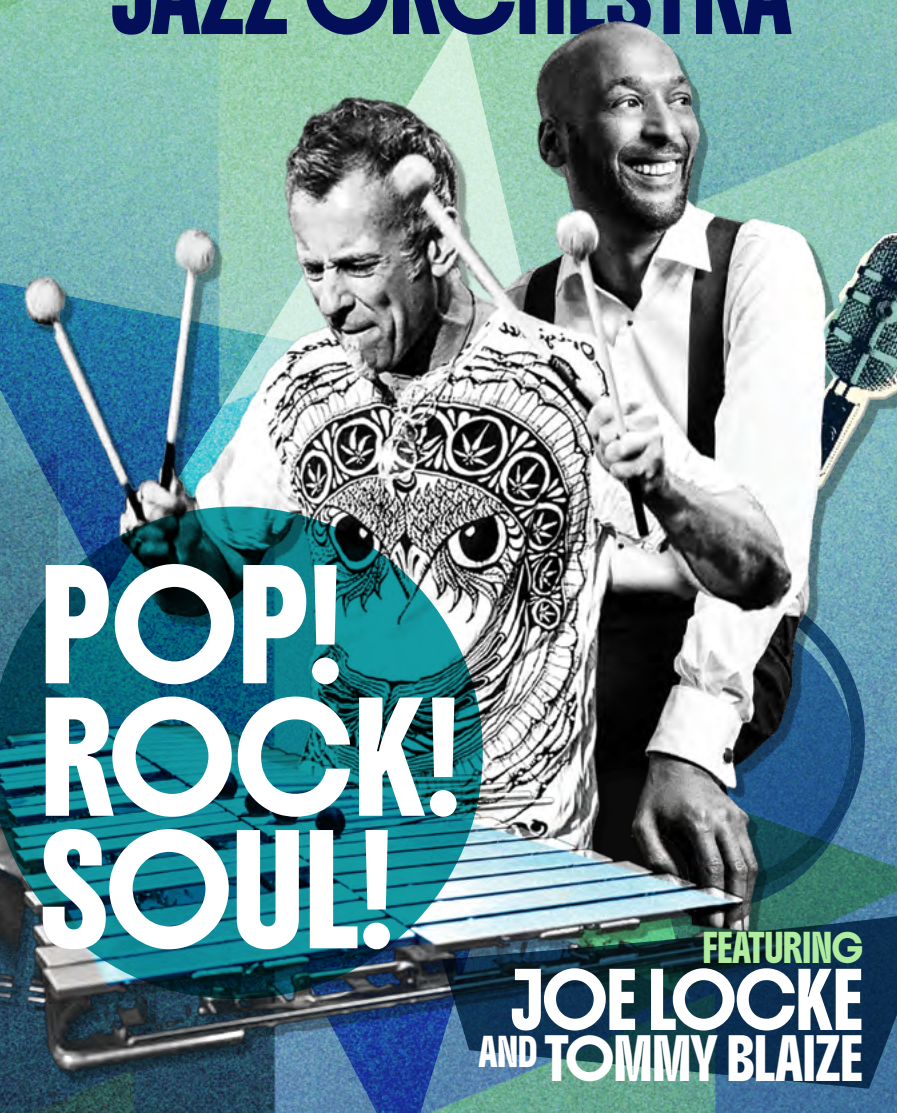


SCOTTISH NATIONAL JAZZ ORCHESTRA

A black and white photograph of two men, Joe Locke and Tommy Blaize, performing. Joe Locke, on the left, is wearing a t-shirt with a large owl graphic and is playing a xylophone with mallets. Tommy Blaize, on the right, is wearing a white shirt and suspenders, also playing a xylophone with mallets. A vintage microphone is visible on the right. The background is a collage of green and blue geometric shapes.

**POP!
ROCK!
SOUL!**

FEATURING
**JOE LOCKE
AND TOMMY BLAIZE**

CONCERT PROGRAMME
MARCH 2026

Patrons, friends and supporters of the SNJO/SNYJO

To Friends of the Orchestra and to all those who have chosen to donate anonymously – your help has been hugely appreciated, especially during this period of change for both orchestras. We thank you sincerely for your continued support both financially, and as audience members.

We are also deeply indebted to Creative Scotland and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland for their support, and to The Music Box, Edinburgh College, as our partner for rehearsal and workshop space.



The SNJO (including the SNYJO) is a Scottish charity (SC028653) regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

The Scottish National Jazz Orchestra presents

POP! ROCK! SOUL!

Featuring Joe Locke and Tommy Blaize

Award-winning master vibraphonist Joe Locke joins the SNJO once again to explore a vibrant selection of music drawn from the contemporary songbook. At the heart of this programme is a celebration of songwriting at its most enduring, where melody, harmony and storytelling combine to create songs that have become part of our shared cultural memory. This time, Joe is joined by renowned vocalist Tommy Blaize, lead singer of the BBC Strictly Come Dancing band, whose powerful yet nuanced voice adds real character and immediacy to the evening.

The repertoire reflects a golden era of songcraft shaped by artists who fused emotional honesty with musical sophistication. Singer-songwriters such as Stevie Wonder, Joni Mitchell, The Beatles, Bill Withers and Stevie Nicks brought heartfelt depth to their work, while artists and performers like The Isley Brothers, Led Zeppelin, Steely Dan

and Earth Wind & Fire enriched their recordings with jazz-inflected harmony, funk-driven grooves and rich orchestral colour.

These songs move fluidly between genres while retaining a strong popular appeal.

In the hands of Locke, Blaize and the SNJO, the repertoire is both honoured and reimagined.

FRI 6 MAR
RCS STEVENSON HALL
GLASGOW

SAT 7 MAR
USHER HALL
EDINBURGH

SUN 8 MAR
MUSIC HALL
ABERDEEN

Programme

Selection of tunes - set list subject to change, tunes will be announced from stage.

A Change Is Gonna Come by Sam Cooke

Josie by Walter Becker and Donald Fagen

Overjoyed by Stevie Wonder

Moby Dick by John Bonham, John Paul Jones and Jimmy Page

My Girl by The Temptations

For the Love of You by The Isley Brothers

Landslide by Stevie Nicks

Got to Get You into My Life by Lennon-McCartney (Earth, Wind & Fire version)

Blue by Joni Mitchell

Ain't No Sunshine by Bill Withers

Golden Slumbers / The End by Lennon-McCartney

All music arranged by Joe Locke and commissioned by the SNJO with support from Creative Scotland.

There will be an interval of 20 minutes

The Orchestra

Reeds

Martin Kershaw

Harben Kay

Paul Towndrow

Konrad Wiszniewski

Bill Fleming

Trumpets

Mike Lovatt

Sean Gibbs

Tom MacNiven

Lorne Cowieson

Trombones

Kieran McLeod

Phil O'Malley

Anoushka Nanguy

Michael Owers

Drums

Alyn Cosker

Electric Bass

Kevin Glasgow

Piano

Peter Johnstone

Electric Guitar

Kevin MacKenzie

Behind the Music

The 1960s, 1970s and 1980s marked a period in popular music that was golden in every sense of the word. These were lucrative years for a recording industry that saw both hit singles and albums turn into gold records within days of their release. Popular music became enormously diversified as record labels built massive rosters of talent that sent pop, rock, and soul music sales soaring.

Everyone has favourite songs from each of these decades, whether they were the tunes you grew up with or something you found in your grandparents' loft. It's true that subjective feelings informed some of the following selections. Others may have been chosen because they cried out to be orchestrated as jazz pieces. In many ways, they speak for themselves; but a little explanation might contribute to our understanding of their appeal.

A Change Is Gonna Come

Penned by Sam Cooke himself and considered by many to be his finest song, it seems incredible now that it first appeared as an album track, and then as the B-side to *Shake*, a posthumous hit single released after his premature death in 1964. *A Change Is Gonna Come* became strongly associated with the civil rights movement in America and has lost none of its gravitas with the passing of time.

Josie

Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, Steely Dan became firmly established as playlist favourites on FM stations across America. Primarily an 'albums band', they also released singles that sold well, but were more useful as teasers for their longplaying records. *Josie* is one of three shortform singles taken from their album *Aja*, which peaked at number 3 in the billboard charts. Perhaps, more interestingly, the quality of their music may be due largely to contributions

from stellar session players and some interesting names from the jazz world, including Wayne Shorter, Joe Sample, and Tom Scott.

Overjoyed

There is little doubt that Stevie Wonder is an original thinker and a musical phenomenon. His output over five decades can be fairly described as prodigious and innovative. Many artists have covered his songs, but his back catalogue provides especially rich pickings for jazz musicians. Melodies such as *Overjoyed* tend to flow freely and his idiosyncratic arrangements are challenging. It could even be said that an inspired improvisational jazz vocalist and a sophisticated Stevie Wonder song are, quite simply, made for each other.

Moby Dick

This instrumental track from the album *Led Zeppelin 2* is essentially a number of improvisations created in the studio by drummer John Bonham. They were

captured on tape by guitarist Jimmy Page and arranged into a meaningful sequence, framed by a meaty guitar riff. It became central to Bonham's solo spot in live concerts and consolidated his growing reputation as an accomplished drummer. There are various permutations of the solo on live recordings that illustrate Bonham's commitment to creative improvisation.

My Girl

Released in 1964, *My Girl* became The Temptations' first number one hit and remains one of the defining recordings of the Motown era. Written and produced by Smokey Robinson and Ronald White, it is built around an instantly recognisable bass line and a lyric that captures devotion in the simplest, most direct terms. The song marked the emergence of David Ruffin as the group's lead voice and helped to establish The Temptations as major figures in American popular music. Effortlessly blending elegance, warmth and rhythmic poise, *My Girl* distils the optimism of 1960s soul into three perfectly judged minutes and has endured as a benchmark for vocal harmony and classic songwriting craft.

Tommy Blaize makes the song his own with his beautiful interpretation.

For the Love of You

The Isley Brothers' rather public departure from Tamla Motown records gave them new-found artistic freedom and financial independence. They took control of their own careers and flourished as leaders in the field of articulate, modern soul music. This song is lifted from the album *The Heat is On*, which showcased two contrasting sides to their music; soulful balladry and full-on funk. For many, the Isleys personified the assertive, disciplined soul music of the 1970s delivered with the polish and style they acquired as entertainers in the 1960s.

Landslide

This wonderful Stevie Nicks tune appears on the eponymous 1975 album by the most commercially successful incarnation of Fleetwood Mac. It was never released as a single but it always featured in live performances as a showcase for Nicks. The song remains totemic for Stevie Nicks but it has also been covered by several musically diverse artists. The Canadian singer Stacey Kent offered a suitably reflective jazz interpretation of *Landslide* that dwelt on the uncertainties and anxieties it contains. Joe Locke's contrasting instrumental reading of the tune allows the melody to articulate the internal conversation that's taking place in the song.

Got to Get You into My Life

In 1966, The Beatles' hit album *Revolver* featured this homage to the sounds created by the American Stax and Atlantic record labels. Big and brassy, this brand of black soul was something both envied and admired, but difficult to emulate. The original Beatles version was heavily critiqued, but the funk ensemble Earth, Wind, & Fire claimed it as their own in 1978 when they revitalised it as a fingerpopping, show-stopping tune.

Blue

The title song of Joni Mitchell's 1971 album stands as one of the most unguarded statements in the singer-songwriter canon. Written during a period of personal upheaval and restless travel, *Blue* strips away adornment in favour of emotional clarity, its melody unfolding with a confessional directness that feels almost conversational. Mitchell's writing balances poetic imagery with stark self-examination, giving the song an intimacy

that was unusual in mainstream popular music at the time. Though modest in scale, *Blue* carries remarkable emotional weight and has come to symbolise a new kind of artistic candour, influencing generations of writers drawn to its honesty and restraint.

Ain't No Sunshine

Bill Withers was a songwriter noted for lo-fi grooves and blues-based compositions that shimmered like a heat haze on hot tarmac. *Ain't No Sunshine* is a blues number at its most basic, but that just leaves it all the more open to interpretation. Originally a B-side to another lesser-known song, DJs quickly flipped it over and began playing it. It became a huge hit in the summer of 1971 for both Withers and Michael Jackson whose rather incongruous cover version further boosted Withers' profile. The original, however, is almost peerless, for it features the legendary Stax rhythm section of Booker T, Al Jackson and Donald Dunn alongside Stephen Stills on guitar.

Golden Slumbers / The End

This segue closed out the *Abbey Road* album by the Beatles, which was officially, finally and forever the 'Fabs' last studio album. It brought the curtain down on a musical drama that has since become the stuff of legend. There are more popular pieces on *Abbey Road*, but few linger quite as long as these two elements. *Golden Slumbers* is based loosely on the poem by the 19th-century dramatist Thomas Dekker and is set to a typically sweet melody by Paul McCartney. It morphs into a hardrocking jam featuring John Lennon and George Harrison trading licks on guitar and ends with McCartney's tender observation that, on balance, love can conquer all.

SNJO

The Scottish National Jazz Orchestra (SNJO) is considered by many to be one of Europe's foremost contemporary big bands. The SNJO was established by Tommy Smith in 1995 as a not-for-profit organisation with a crystal-clear artistic vision and core values of versatility, discipline and expression. The SNJO is dedicated to promoting jazz as a pre-eminent art form through performances, original compositions, recordings, and educational outreach programmes. This commitment extends to the task of developing promising young jazz musicians through the

ranks of Scottish National Youth Jazz Orchestra. The SNJO repertoire has included re-imaginings of works by the great, the good and the gigantic, including Weather Report, Herman, Rich, Carter, Strayhorn, Goodman, Kenton, Basie, Gillespie, Mingus, Jaco, Corea, Monk, Metheny, Shorter, Miles and Coltrane. They have also recorded vivid interpretations of Mozart, Prokofiev, Piazzolla, Gershwin and Ellington to rave reviews. The SNJO has built a growing library of original compositions underpinned by a deep understanding and appreciation of improvisation.

snjo.co.uk

Joe Locke

Joe Locke is widely considered to be one of the major voices of his instrument. He has performed and recorded with a diverse range of notable musicians, including Grover Washington Jr, Raul Midón, Kenny Barron, Eddie Henderson, Cecil Taylor, Dianne Reeves, Eddie Palmieri, Paul Simon, Ron Carter, The Beastie Boys, the Münster Symphony Orchestra, the Spanish Harlem Orchestra, the Orchestra da Camera della Sardegna and the Lincoln, Nebraska Symphony.



Long known to be a soloist capable of stunning physical power and broad emotional range, it was not until the last decades that he emerged as the composer, bandleader and conceptualist that he is considered today. This is in no small part due to his solo projects since the beginning of the 2000s. *Four Walls of Freedom* (Sirocco), a 6 movement suite based on the writing of the monk Thomas Merton, which he composed as a vehicle for tenor saxophonist Bob Berg, garnered high praise from the critical community as a major work and won several international polls. *Live in Seattle* (Origin),

by The Joe Locke / Geoffrey Keezer Group, won the 2006 EarShot award for “Concert of the Year”. This group is well-loved and emulated by younger musicians looking for direction and inspiration.

The overwhelming success of his quartets, such as *Force of Four* (Origin), can be attributed to the talents of Locke’s exceptional collaborators and to the leader’s musical philosophy, which is to honor tradition while keeping both feet planted in the present and future. His 2011 album, the captivating, immersive *VIA*, is the result of a reunion of Storms/Nocturnes, the transatlantic trio with Geoffrey Keezer and Tim Garland.

The album *Subtle Disguise* (Origin Records, 2018) and his newest release, *Makram* (Circle 9 Records, 2023), find Locke with his current working group. “With Jim Ridl, Lorin Cohen and Samvel Sarkisyan, I feel I’m able to express the totality of who I am as a musician and human being.” *Makram* is a deeply emotive work and focuses largely on original music by Locke and the members of the quartet, with two classics by Cole Porter and Billy Strayhorn bookending the recording.

Locke is a six-time recipient of the Jazz Journalists Association’s “Mallet Instrumentalist of the Year” Award, has received two Earshot Golden Ear Awards for “Concert of the Year” and the 2013 Hot House NYC Jazz Awards for Best Vibes Player, and keeps topping critics and readers polls. In 2016 Joe was honoured with the induction into the Music Hall of Fame of his hometown Rochester, NY.

As an active clinician and educator in the United States and in Europe he has been the International Vibraphone Consultant at the Royal Academy Of Music, London, on a visiting basis since 2008, holding the title of Honorary Associate of the Royal Academy Of Music (Hon ARAM) since 2013.

joelocke.com

Tommy Blaize

Tommy Blaize is one of the world’s finest vocal talents, and is among the most popular singers on British television.

As lead singer of the BBC Strictly Come Dancing band for 20 years, Tommy’s powerful yet sensitive performances have helped create some of the most memorable TV moments of recent times, performing live to an audience of more than 12 million every week. Tommy began his singing career at the age of 9 with The Blaize Brothers alongside siblings Tony and Darrin, where he first learnt to sing in front of a live audience, playing in clubs across the North-West of England for 6 years in the 1970s.

In a career spanning a remarkable 50 years, Tommy has gone on to work with some of the world’s most legendary and renowned artists, from Diana Ross to Queen; The Beach Boys to Amy Winehouse; Joe Cocker to Stevie Wonder.

Tommy released his debut solo album *Life & Soul* in 2017, topping both the Amazon and iTunes pre-order chart and spending two weeks in the UK top 40 in the lead-up to Christmas.

Now a regular on the London soul and blues scene, Tommy performs with his band at venues such as Cadogan Hall, the Jazz Café, Pizza Express Live and 606 Club, and as a regular guest artist at special events at Royal Albert Hall, The Southbank Centre, Cheltenham Jazz Festival, and International Eisteddfod among many others.

In 2024, 50 years after his live debut, Tommy stepped out on his first ever solo tour, performing 55 dates across the UK over two years.



In early 2025, Tommy joined the Young Voices tour – the world’s largest school choir – for its 29th season, singing with over 225,000 children across more than 30 arena shows.

tommyblaize.com

Future dates for your diary

Scottish National Jazz Orchestra

April/May 2026

Two Gils and a Bill: Gil Goldstein celebrates the music of Gil Evans and Bill Evans

30 Apr	7:30pm	Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall, New Auditorium
1 May	7:30pm	Edinburgh	Queen's Hall
2 May	7:30pm	Dundee	Rep Theatre

Scottish National Youth Jazz Orchestra

28 Mar	Dollar	Dollar Academy, Gibson Hall
29 Mar	Giffnock	Eastwood Park Theatre
16 May	Greenock	Beacon Arts Centre
17 May	Pitlochry	Pitlochry Theatre

Info and tickets:
snjo.co.uk/concerts

Be a friend of our orchestras

If you have enjoyed tonight's concert, why not consider becoming a friend? You can join at snjo.co.uk/friends or by scanning the QR Code.

We look forward to welcoming you.



snjo.co.uk/friends

SNJO audience survey

We would love to understand our audience better and to hear your feedback about tonight's concert and beyond. To take part in our short survey, visit snjo.co.uk/survey or scan the QR code.

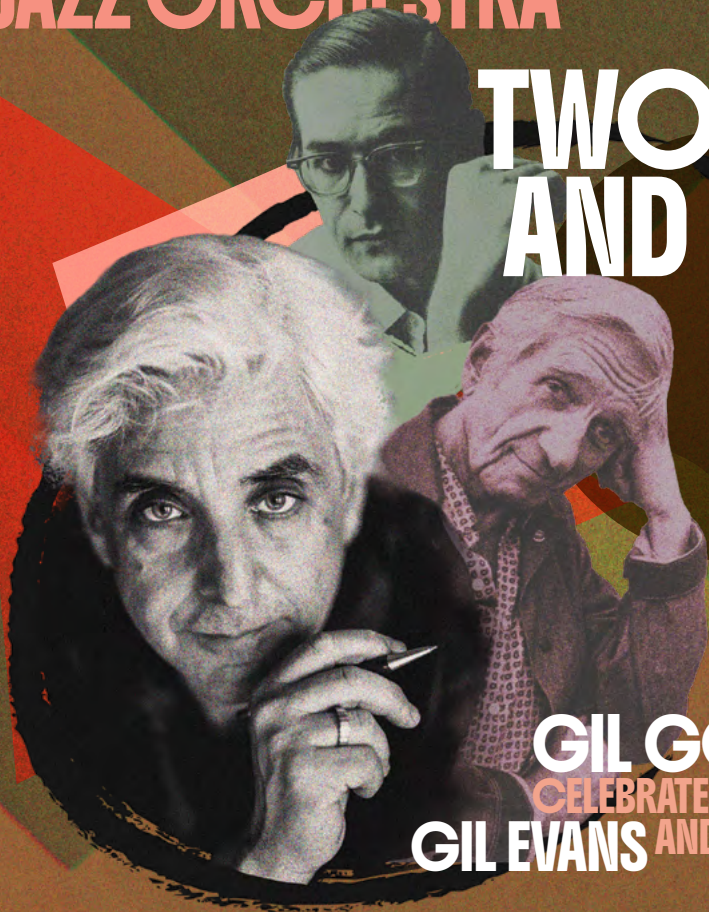
It only takes 5 minutes.



snjo.co.uk/survey

SCOTTISH NATIONAL JAZZ ORCHESTRA

TWO GILS AND A BILL



GIL GOLDSTEIN
CELEBRATES THE MUSIC OF
GIL EVANS AND BILL EVANS

30 APRIL GLASGOW
ROYAL CONCERT HALL, NEW AUDITORIUM

1 MAY EDINBURGH
THE QUEEN'S HALL

2 MAY DUNDEE
DUNDEE REP



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