The Wisdom of Youth:
Geoff Keezer Trio

Sponsored by the Department of Music and the New Hampshire Library of Traditional Jazz

8 p.m. Monday, February 20, 2006
Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, Durham, NH
THE ARTISTS

The Geoff Keezer Trio

Speaking of course with complete objectivity, from time to time we are moved to note on this page the special qualities of that somehow disproportionately beautiful object of institutional furniture known as the concert grand piano, and the equally notable attributes of those who spend their lives exploring its marvels and mysteries as they refine their individual means of musical communication.

Despite the influence of cosmic developments in electronic technology, the “acoustig” piano with its own sophisticated technology from nearly two centuries ago still casts a hypnotic spell on its listeners and poses a series of challenges to its performers, given its prodigious capacity to express the simple and the complex, the subtle and the extravagant, with all of the shadings, colorations, and (quite literally) overtones in between. (Note: Geoff Keezer has indeed figured out all of this!)

Moreover, pianists are brought up on self-sufficiency. Early training tends to be solitary, remote from ensembles, and the model literature is that of the solo; it is rare that one attends a performance by a single artist other than a pianist. On the other hand, jazz pianism presents peculiar problems as the improvising player is confronted with the manipulation of melody, harmony, texture, and rhythm simultaneously with just two hands, not to mention the demands of intellect and imagination, and the absence of creative interaction with anyone else. This leads to pianists working in duos with bassists; even a person with the formidable technique of an Oscar Peterson made his first recordings in the USA (78 rps, yet!) with bassist Ray Brown. Obviously this changes the range of aesthetic possibilities, and when a drummer is added we are in yet another world of activity and collective expression.

Pedantic as the foregoing may seem, it does call our attention to the multiple identities that jazz pianists really have (and we didn’t even include their role as accompanists within a larger ensemble) which we may all too casually take for granted, since the great ones make it sound so natural. But even more importantly we should be reminded that one of jazz’s significant manifestations has been the expansion of the possibilities of a number of instruments, among them the bass and drums. Thus the performers thereon have become much more than adjuncts making the pianists life easier; in fact, each becomes a coequal participant in the sensitive musical interplay which gives each trio its particular character.

Geoff Keezer certainly has had a remarkably accomplished artistic life in his 35 years. A native of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, he was mentored during a brief stay at Berklee by our dear friend the late James Williams; (Geoff’s first visit to this building was with James at that time.) Soon, while still only 17 he became the last pianist with Art Blakey’s famous Jazz Messengers. He worked with Art Farmer in the ‘90s, and later replaced Benny Green in Ray Brown’s trio; he has participated in joint ventures with other pianists, including tributes to Phineas Newborn. He has a vast range of associations in the jazz community, being truly one of the outstanding artists of his generation.

Mike Pope consistently receives fulsome accolades for his virtuosic command of both the acoustic and electric bass, as well as for his creativity as both improviser and composer. An Ohioan who graduated from North Texas State University, he has been in the center of the New York scene for nearly a decade, his work ranging from the Gil Evans Orchestra through the Brecker Brothers to Chick Corea.

Terreon Gully hails from East St. Louis, studied at the University of Houston, and now works out of New York where his activity also includes writing, producing, and arranging. Among his more notable associates have been Christian McBride, Benny Green, and Diane Reeves.

These young artists are the respectful benefactors of many decades of earlier efforts by their predecessors, and their comprehensive knowledge of their art—intellectually, historically, and technically—is humbling, inspiring, and reassuring. (And be sure to check their websites!)
Traditional Jazz Series

Geoff Keezer, piano
Mike Pope, bass
Terreon Gully, drums

Tape recorders and cameras are not permitted due to contractual arrangements. Please turn off beepers and watch alarms. Your cooperation is requested.
The UNH Traditional Jazz Series began in 1979 through the imaginative vision and generous commitment of the late Dorothy C. Prescott. It promotes the enjoyment and understanding of the art through concerts featuring musicians of regional, national, and international prominence. The program represents a unique endeavor to expand interest and honor outstanding talent and achievement.

Musicians wishing to do so are encouraged to offer their recordings for sale or mail order during intermission; a brief announcement may be made. The sponsors have no financial interest in such sales beyond offering a courtesy service to the artists and the public.

Program Notes -- Paul Verrette
Production -- David Seiler

2005-2006 SCHEDULE

September 19: At Least One More Time: Ray Smith's Paramount Jazz Band
October 17: Generational Concurrence: Frank Wess and Terell Stafford
November 21: A Feast of Bones: George Masso and Jeff Galindo
January 30: Third Annual Tommy Gallant Scholarship Concert: The Hot Club of Portland: Django Reinhardt Almost in Person
February 20: The Wisdom of Youth: Geoff Keezer Trio
April 3: International Incident: George Robert and the Mulgrew Miller Trio

OTHER SPECIAL JAZZ PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

October 22: Family Weekend Concert, UNH JAZZ BAND and COMBOS, Dave Seiler and Erika Svane, directing. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.
December 14: Clark Terry 85th Birthday Bash. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.
January 17: Harry Jones Memorial Concert: Celebrating Paul Broadnax's 80th Birthday; Seacoast Big Band, Dave Seiler, directing. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.
January 20: Faculty Jazz Sextet: Jared Sims and David Seiler, woodwinds; Mark Shilansky, piano; David Newsam, guitar; John Hunter, bass; Les Harris, Jr., drums. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.
March 12: Gala Jazz Concert, DR. CLARK TERRY, trumpet and flugelhorn and the UNH JAZZ BAND. Dave Seiler, directing. Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center, UNH.

For tickets call (603)862-2290