Though he’s too modest to admit it, Guillaume ‘Gee’ Metenier is fast becoming France’s answer to legendary soul, jazz, funk and reggae organists such as Jimmy McGriff, Booker T, Jimmy Smith, Jackie Mittoo and his mentor, Dr Lonnie Smith. Metenier has provided mesmerising keys-work for countless bands, producers and solo artists since the 1990s, but these days is best known for his fluid reggae-soul fusion collective, Soul Sugar, his solo work as Booker Gee, and the record label he founded, GEE Recordings.

Metenier started playing Hammond organ way back in the 1980s, performing and recording with Fafafa and Balaya & The Bafuga before becoming an in-demand session musician. During the 1990s he worked alongside Patrick Bylebyl in downtempo and deep house duo Seven Dub and featured on a string of albums by art rock outfit Tanger.

Towards the end of the decade Metenier met French trip-hip pioneer Jean-Yves Prieur AKA Kid Loco; since then, he’s been Prieur’s go-to keys player and featured on four of his albums and numerous remixes. Metenier continued to rack up sideman credits throughout the noughties – including a contribution to Johnny Halliday’s 2002 album *A La Vie, A La Mort* – before he decided to reach out to legendary jazz-funk organist Dr Lonnie Smith in 2006.

It was a decision that changed Metenier’s life. He flew to Florida to learn from the master, returning on numerous occasions to build on what he’d been taught. The two organists struck up a firm friendship and during the latter stages of the last decade Metenier toured extensively with Smith as his road manager.

It was a desire to put what he’d learned from Smith into action that inspired Metenier to form Soul Sugar, then an organ trio inspired by soul-jazz sounds of the 1960s and ’70s, in 2008. Debut album *Nothing But The Truth*, produced by Jean-Yves Prieur under his Kid Loco guise, followed on British label Freestyle Records in 2009.

Since then, Metenier has produced all of the Soul Sugar releases himself, sometimes in collaboration with regular studio buddies and guest producers, using the project to explore a wider variety of musical influences, most notably jazz-funk, deep funk, reggae and dub. Sophomore Soul Sugar album *Chase The Light* (2017) featured guest spots from vocalists Courtney John and Leonardo Carmichael, with follow-up singles – including a string of reggae style covers of soul classics – sporting guest spots from the likes of Dennis Bovell and guitarist Thomas Naim (previously of Tom & Joyce *and now a solo artist in his own right).*

The latest Soul Sugar album, *Excursions in Soul, Reggae, Funk and Dub* (2021) continues in this vein, with Metenier’s masterful Hammond B3 motifs featuring on a scintillating range of vocal and instrumental cuts created in collaboration with singer Leo Carmichael, Sly & Robbie, Blundetto, Roberto Sanchez AKA Lone Ark and Slikk Tim.

In parallel to his work as Soul Sugar, Metenier has also released numerous singles as Booker Gee, including fizzing funk cut ‘Popcorn’, dub-funk special ‘Out In The Rain’ (both with Slikk Tim AKA Gary Gritness) and the dub-wise Lone Ark hook-up *Rootikal Showcase*. He’s also established another all-star outfit for Mocambo Records, Pigalle Connection, a break-dance-friendly funk outfit whose rotating cast of musicians includes Shawn Lee, Dr Lonnie Smith and Bjorn Wagner of the Mighty Mocambos.

In the years ahead, Metenier will surely cement his reputation as one of Europe’s premier organists, while also continuing to develop his trademark blends of soul, funk, jazz-funk, dub and reggae.