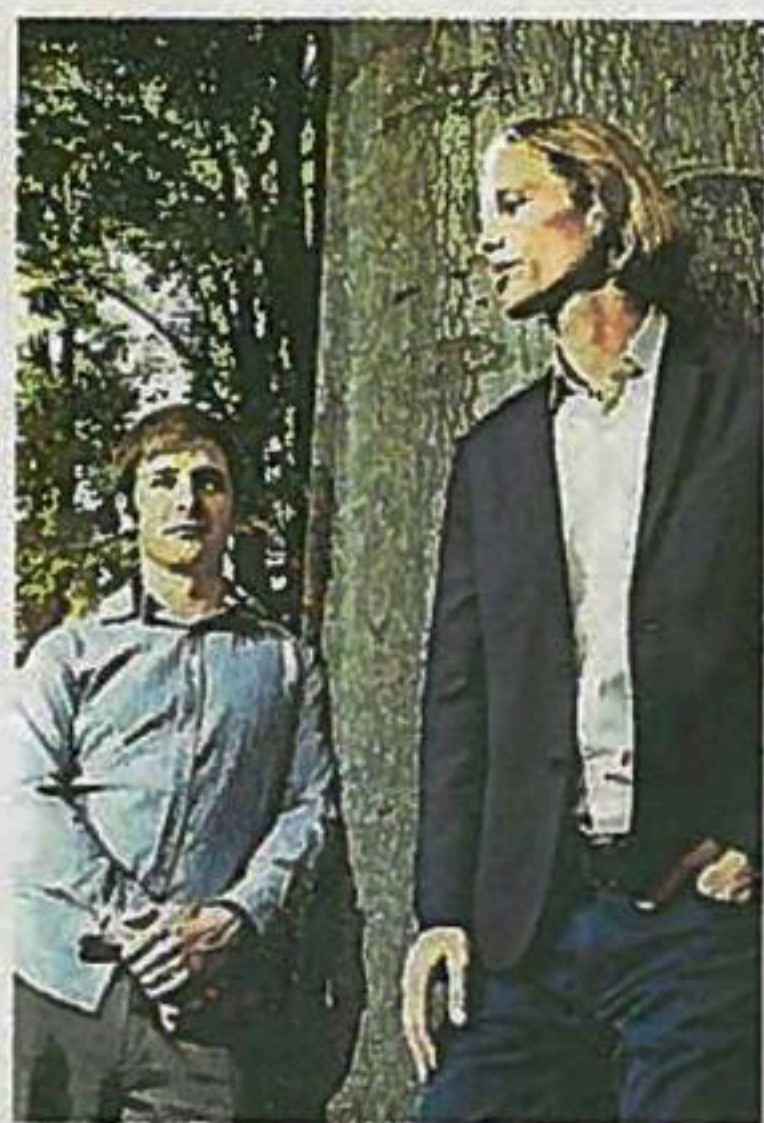


highlights



Phronesis

With a fierce reputation as one of the most formidable trios in the UK, Phronesis perform spellbinding, rollercoaster live performances which have won them numerous accolades, including two MOBO Award nominations for Best Jazz Act.

Phronesis have performed on concert stages across the world from Morocco to Brazil, in festivals including Montreal, North Sea, Copenhagen, Middelheim and Elb, and on tours throughout the UK, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, marking their rise to the forefront of the European club scene.

The event is presented jointly by Cambridge Modern Jazz Club and Cambridge International Jazz Festival.

Location:

Mumford Theatre, Cambridge, Sun Nov 20, 7.30pm-9.30pm, £18 / £15 / £12



Snowpoet

The band combine melody and poetry in an improvisational effort inspired by artists such as Bjork, Joni Mitchell, Tom Waits and Ólöf Arnalds, as well as poets Sylvia Plath, W.B. Yeats and Philip Larkin.

With a core composed of the paired songwriting skills of coveted bassist Chris Hyson and award-winning experimental vocalist Lauren Kinsella, the duo lead a malleable live set-up that includes Nick Costley-White on guitar, Matt Robinson on piano/keyboards, Dave Hamblett on drums and Josh Arcoleo on saxophone.

Location:

Unitarian Church, Cambridge, Sat Nov 26, 5.30-7pm, £12 / £10 / £8

Sax Mads: Jazz great Dane with musical roots in Africa

Cool, charming and charismatic, Mads Mathias is a Danish singer-songwriter and saxophonist.

Influenced by great jazz performers past and present, from Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra to Harry Connick Jr, he sings electrifying versions of jazz standards and writes catchy songs with the feel of timeless swing-era classics.

Mathias is an original talent with a unique and effortlessly charming vocal delivery and a skill for writing memorable, stylishly crafted tunes.

He grew up partly in his native town of Silkeborg, Denmark and partly in Tanzania, in a musical home with 34 instruments, which he explored from a young age.

"Growing up, my family lived in eastern Africa, and even though there was always music going on in the house and both my parents and brother played music, it was hard to buy records anywhere," the 35-year-old explained.

"All I had to listen to was my dad's old vinyls. I went through them all, especially fascinated by Benny Carter and his alto saxophone.

"And so I let my father know that I had 'chosen' the saxophone. He had one sent in from Denmark, and it took months, so when it finally arrived I spent every day playing it. I didn't have a teacher and learned everything by ear."

He continued: "Since the family band needed drums, I started on them, but when I was about eight I started piano lessons.

"Sax was about age 11, later a bit of trumpet, and right now I play around with the trombone. Hopefully one day the cello."

At the age of 17, he lost the index finger and half of two other fingers on his right hand in a car accident. Afraid that his days of playing the sax was over, he started singing and writing songs instead. Fortunately, thanks to rehabilitation, he was able to play the sax again.

"I have a soft spot for discovering the sounds of instruments. To me, sound and time are the most important elements in music. To me, the sound has a direct connection to the heart and the time has a direct connection to the body."

Mathias credits his father with influencing his musical career.

"He has given me the present of music in a way that was never forced but as a gift I could unwrap at my own tempo," he said.

"That way, music has always been something enjoyable and fun, even though there are times of course that are less fun than others and it's more of a tough job."

Mathias is already a star in his native Denmark, where his debut



Mads Mathias will perform at the Hidden Rooms on November 17 as part of the Cambridge International Jazz Festival

Picture: Karolina Zapolska

album, *Free Falling*, brought him the Best New Danish Jazz Artist of the Year award and was nominated for Danish Vocal Release of the Year.

The critically-acclaimed album is a set of entrancing songs, skilfully crafted into a seamless, coherent whole, with Mathias's vocals ranging from playful and humorous to the depth and vulnerability demonstrated on the final ballad, *Colourblind*.

"Music has always been a big part of my everyday life and so I feel lucky that I can invite people in on that. I don't have to love it on my own, I can love it with other people, dig it with musicians and share it with an audience. That's a blessing," he said.

Besides fronting his own orchestra and quartet, Mathias appears regularly with the Six City Stompers, the Tivoli Big Band and the prestigious Danish Radio Big Band.

He has performed in venues across the world,



from the DR Koncerthuset and Roskilde Festival in Denmark to the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing.

"I must admit I've never been good at practising efficiently for hours and hours every day. I actually never practised very much," he said.

"I think because I started out by learning everything by ear, I found I could easily and quickly learn things. I would rather spend time exploring new instruments and new music or composing my own songs."

Mathias has been described as Denmark's leading male jazz vocalist – a label he's pretty happy to have.

"I feel very comfortable with that actually," he joked. "I guess that's because there are not many male vocalists around unfortunately."

Mathias and his quartet perform at Hidden Rooms on Thursday, November 17 as part of Cambridge Jazz Festival. It will be his first visit to the city and he's looking forward to the trip.

"I've heard it is a beautiful city and a great festival. I always look forward to meeting the audience, feeling the vibe of the festival and playing some new music I brought along," he said.

"I hope they [the audience] can connect to my songs and find something they can relate to in their own lives, and, most important of all, just lean back and enjoy the music and have a great night with their friend, date or lover."

And what can audiences expect to hear from Mathias? "I guess that's mostly a question of perception, but if I were to describe it in a few of my own words, I would say something like classical jazz era mixed with an airy Nordic feel and lyrical melodic focus," he said.

Tickets cost £18 (concessions £15) from the box office on 07827 012875 or online at wegottickets.com/event/370696.