



BANDBIO

MaxMantis is more than just a jazz trio! Inspired by the untamed power of the insect world, MaxMantis has been weaving a dense web of heroic soundscapes and wild improvisation for ten years. The buzzing and rustling sounds are not those created by the mayfly, but instead that of unstoppable jazz played with relentless precision and vigour. The three musicians from Switzerland, Rafael Jerjen, Lukas Gernet, and Samuel Büttiker, transcend stylistic and musical boundaries – to infinity and beyond!

PRESS TEXT/ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

MaxMantis is more than just a jazz trio! For ten years, the band has toured the world with melodies inspired by the fascinating microcosm of the insect world. These underestimated arthropods not only inspired the band's name but also invigorate its compositions and gave the band a face, a story, and its own universe. Sounds crazy? It is!

The three Swiss musicians Rafael Jerjen (db), Lukas Gernet (p), and Samuel Büttiker (dr) form a legendary clan of sonic storytellers, transcending stylistic and musical boundaries. The speed with which a praying mantis catches its prey, the strength of the Australian bull ant that carries one hundred times its own weight, and the beautiful complexity of the golden-orb-weaver spider's web: These exaggerated superpowers link the tiniest creepy-crawlies to the MaxMantis clan. With an innate dose of Swiss precision, they perform the «Dance of the Moth Hunters», dive into the world of the «Lady Bug Thugs», cautiously adore the «Prey-ing Mantis» and explain in «Queen Bee» what the hype around the «flowers and the bees» is really all about!

With their new album «YELLOW» the three humanised super insects continue to weave their musical epic. Guaranteed are not only three of Switzerland's most eminent jazz musicians (who also look fantastic in their suits!) but also the most entertaining announcements – with a pinch of authentic Australian humour. The concerts of MaxMantis move, touch, fascinate, surprise, and transport audiences into a world full of energy, adrenaline, and musical adventures – to infinity and beyond!

MUSICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- 2025** Release of the third album «YELLOW»
- 2024** Recording of the third album «YELLOW»
- 2023** Australia Tour #3: 7 concerts across the country, incl. Perth International Jazz Festival
- 2022** Release of the second album «BLUE»
- 2021** Video productions in collaboration with SRF Kultur for «The Tear» and «Abwärts»
Production of video clips for «Valsa do Adeus» and «Pelzer»
- 2019** Participation in Suisse Diagonales Jazz: 8 concerts across Switzerland
Winner of the Audience Award at the ZKB Jazz Prize in Moods, Zurich
Recording of the second album «BLUE»
Participation in Circuito de Jazz Colombia: 5 concerts at jazz festivals throughout Colombia
- 2018** Recording and release of the first album «GREEN»
Europe Tour (DE, BE, FR, AU, PL, CH)
- 2017** Australia Tour #2 with concerts at the Melbourne International Jazz Festival and Perth International Jazz Festival
- 2016** Recording and release of the first live EP «PINK»
- 2015** Formation of the band and name selection
Australia Tour #1

RAFAEL JERJEN – BASS

He is a walking cosmos of musical creativity and buzzes with excitement, whilst pulling the strings – both on and off stage. His powerful playing and creative compositions make Rafael Jerjen a nationally and internationally recognized double bassist and composer whilst propelling the trio beyond stylistic boundaries. After earning his Bachelor's degree at the Australian National University, the Basel City native completed his Master's in Jazz Performance at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU). Since 2022, he is artistic professor for double bass at the same institution. Jerjen stood on the largest of stages and sat in the smallest of studios with various groups and renowned musicians, including Mike Moreno, Andy Sheppard, Jim Hart, Nelson Veras, Tineke Postma, Joao Barradas, Michael and Florian Arbenz, and Kristin Berardi.



LUKAS GERNET – PIANO

He skillfully interweaves jazz with his folk-roots on the piano, his compositions enhance the band's harmonic spectrum from infrared to ultraviolet. One moment his fingers glide over the keys like the legs of a millipede, the next with the brunt of a beeswarm. Lukas Gernet studied music at the Bern University of the Arts and the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, where nowadays he lectures piano and music theory. He tours Europe, Canada, South America, and Australia with jazz and folk music luminaries such as Roberto Bossard, Claudio Puntin, Dani Häusler and Carlo Brunner. Additionally, he has worked in the world of artistic theatre at the Zurich Schauspielhaus and co-produced the project «äinigermasse dehäi» with Lucerne yodler and singer Simone Felber.



SAMUEL BÜTTIKER – DRUMS

As a drummer, he provides the most exciting sonic eruptions on stage. His precise use of drumsticks makes for the best defense against pesky mosquitoes, his compositions are the most accurate sonic imagery of the insect world. Samuel Büttiker graduated from the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts and has since played with musicians such as Nils Wogram, Heiri Känzig, Joke Lanz, Nat Su, Gabe Schnider, Michael Arbenz, Ay Wing, and Cinzia Catania. In 2017 and 2024, he received a prize from the canton of Zug for «Free Artistic Creation». Alongside his musical activities, the Zug based native advocates for cultural diversity in his home region: In 2022, he received the Zuger Cultural Award in recognition of his work as project manager of the «KunstOff Festival».



IMPORTANT SONGS

<<THE CLAN>>

This piece is a homage to the MaxMantis Clan. A sonic tribute to all the battles of the past, present and future fought by the three superheroes, Jeff, Rex and Bob Mantis and their predecessors. MaxMantis as a clan swore an oath to protect their home planet known as the Mantisphere from all who wish to upheave the natural order of things, cause harm to those weaker than them, and especially against all those who don't respect the high artform of Jazz (#MakingJazzSexyAgain). This piece is nothing short of an epic Anthem.

<<PREY-ING MANTIS>>

With its bright green claws and elegant body, the «Prey-ing Mantis» is the undisputed queen of the seduction game. Her charming smile and irresistible flutter of her eyes lures males near for some rumpy pump. These gentlemen naively believe they've hit the jackpot. Why do you ask? Well, for a feast follows the happy ending, and this feast has male mantis on the menu. In the world of the «Prey-ing Mantis,» lovemaking is a dangerous endeavour, intertwining pleasure and suffering. One must pray in order to not end up as prey...

<<DANCE OF THE MOTH HUNTERS>>

In the dim light of the night, where shadows dance and strange voices whisper, the «Moth Hunters» rise from the darkness. Their wings sparkle like sharpened blades in the moonlight, their dances are a declaration of war, wild and ritualistic. Led by a mystical high priest, the «Moth Hunters» challenge the modernisation of the world around them. Their movements merge with the smoke of campfires, strangely hypnotic yet poised and ready to strike. The dance turns into a hunt, merciless and untamed. Those drawn to their light, step into a deadly trap: only the strongest survive to see the light of dawn.

<<LADY BUG THUGS>>

Where the grass glows and the air is filled with the sweet scent of blossoms, a feared gang known as the «Lady Bug Thugs» enforce their rebellious reign. They are the ruthless guardians of the meadow, and their cheerful appearance shamelessly hides a harsh reality. With their tough attitude and determined looks, these ladybugs are ready to clip the wings of any intruder threatening their territory. Those who dare enter their domain will quickly find that this gang knows no mercy.

<<QUEEN BEE>>

In the colourful world of bees, a secret truth is known only to the diligent worker bees: The «Queen Bee» may be in the spotlight, but the real leaders are the small, hardworking bees. Tirelessly, they search for the most succulent flowers the meadow has to offer. Once they've found them, they guide their sister bees to the place of good fortune, giving them directions in the form of an intricate dance. This interactive performance by the worker bees ensures the prosperity of the kingdom, for they know: In the world of flowers and bees, teamwork is the key to sweet success... And a decent rave in the hive, keeps motivation levels high!

<<SCARABAEUS>>

The light shimmers mystically through the leaves of the deep forest - home of the Scarabaeus, master of Sisyphean toil. With its powerful legs, it struggles through the thicket, laboriously pushing its burden uphill, over sticks and stones, constantly battling against gravity... (Some creatures still struggle to grasp this concept!) Each step is a testament to its unshakeable perseverance; every setback is a prompt to continue on stronger. «Scarabaeus» is an epic homage to the indomitable strength and endurance of insects as well as their ability to repeatedly make the same stupid mistake over and over again.

<<REDBACK BANDITS>>

In the rugged desert, where the scorching sun grants no relief from the relentless heat, and the wind tells tales of long forgotten worlds, the notorious «Redback Bandits» roam. With their cowboy hats, they ride on horseback through the prairie, unpredictable and wild, their shiny red backs sending out an unmistakable warning. These ruthless spiders do what they enjoy most: cause trouble. Particularly easy targets are unsuspecting pill bugs in their stage coaches - pulled by millipedes (yes, this is a thing!). In the world of the «Redback Bandits» the law of spiders rules, and no one dares to stop the untamed will of these feared marauders.

SOCIAL MEDIA



PRESS QUOTES UND REVIEWS

«Always surprising, engaging from start to finish – that's MaxMantis, a musical cabinet of curiosities of the highest quality, brought to life by three top-notch musicians.»

Roberto Bossard

«Anyone venturing into the field of jazz piano trio these days needs a hefty dose of chutzpah. MaxMantis approaches the task with carefree determination, exploring a broad range of styles from classical jazz to rock-free experiments. The trio clearly emphasizes joy in playing and a passion for experimentation, which makes it a great pleasure for me as a listener.»

SRF Jazz Expert Peter Bürli

«It doesn't hurt even a little bit that these three guys, while being extremely skilled musicians, are also some serious eye candy.»

Leigh Andrew Hill, Out in Perth

«Their music positively brimmed with life as they navigated even the most intricately plotted tales in their repertoire with playful nonchalance.»

Jessica Nicholas, The Age

«The musical message from Lucerne shows the clever balancing act this trio achieves: Complex, bold avant-garde jazz – always presented in such a way that a catchy line, a solid motif, or even a melody remains just within reach, something one might encounter even in the farthest reaches of Switzerland.»

Florian Bissig, NZZ

Here is a link to the [media coverage](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

25.10. Jazz in Witikon

07.01. Jazz in Chur

20.02. Album Release «YELLOW» at the «Werft», Luzern

05.03. «Jacques Pelzer Jazz Club», Liège BE

22.05. The Blue Lamp, Aberdeen UK

BAND PHOTOS

Band photos can be found under [this link](#).

Credits: Jessica Prinz

INTERVIEWS

We are very happy to give interviews and share more about our music and the creative processes behind it. Visiting one of our rehearsals, which is often associated with a high entertainment factor, offers an even better insight.

SPELLING

Please ensure that in all publications, the correct spelling of the band name is observed: MaxMantis with two capital «M»s in the word and as a single, continuous word!

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