



MONTREUX JAZZ
ARTISTS FOUNDATION

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PRESS RELEASE



Meskerem Mees wins the Montreux Jazz Talent Award 2021

The Montreux Jazz Talent Award 2021 has been awarded to the Belgian singer and composer Meskerem Mees. The 21-year-old artist performed at the Montreux Jazz Festival alongside eight other emerging talents selected by the Montreux Jazz Artists Foundation. Meskerem Mees was elected unanimously by a jury that comprised both professional judges and members of the public, as well as an Artists Committee, including Yaron Herman, Anne Paceo, Shabaka Hutchings and Michael League.

The Montreux Jazz Artists Foundation (MJAF) invited eight artists to perform at the Montreux Jazz Talent Awards, between the 2nd and 17th of July 2021. Each candidate was carefully selected by the booking team for their diverse interpretations of jazz and soul-inspired music.

The eight artists performed during the 55th edition of the Montreux Jazz Festival in front of a jury of professional judges and members of the public. Four musicians, who work closely with the MJAF, also participated in the vote: **Yaron Herman, Anne Paceo, Shabaka Hutchings** (Sons of Kemet) and **Michael League** (Snarky Puppy).

The vote for meskerem mees was unanimous

Beautifully composed tunes, a magnetic presence and a distinct velvet voice: **Meskereem Mees** was a true revelation during the competition, impressing all three juries. The 21-year-old Flemish musician says she is inspired by artists such as Joni Mitchell, Nina Simone and Courtney Barnett. After releasing a handful of singles including the stunning “Joe”, Meskerem Mees is set to release her highly anticipated debut album, *Julius*, on November 12, 2021.

“I feel very honored to be the winner of a talent award competition hosted by a festival as renowned as the Montreux Jazz Festival. I’m looking forward to learn from some of the world’s best musicians at the Montreux Jazz Academy. Thank you all, once again, for this amazing opportunity.”

– Meskerem Mees

Prizes and professional support

Meskerem Mees has been awarded a one-week artistic residency at **La Becque** on the shores of Lake Geneva. She will also perform at the **Montreux Jazz Academy** under the musical direction of Shabaka Hutchings, Edward Wakili-Hick and Alexander Hawkins. The 7th edition of the Montreux Jazz Academy will take place at the **Autumn of Music** festival, organised by the Montreux Jazz Artists Foundation between the 27th and 30th of October 2021.

At a key point in their careers, they also get long-term professional support from the Montreux Jazz Artists Foundation (MJAF) and the Festival’s large network of contacts. The MJAF is regularly involved in the programming of concerts in Switzerland and abroad, for instance at the Swiss cultural centres in Paris and in Rome.

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