

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018 – SymphRONica

Canadian pianist Ron Davis has enlisted the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra's drummer, Alyn Cosker and award-winning singer, violinist and BBC Radio Scotland jazz presenter Seonaid Aitken for his band SymphRONica's latest visit to the Fringe.

Toronto-based Davis, who formed SymphRONica in 2003 using diverse line-ups including jazz trio and full symphony orchestra, has appeared on the Edinburgh Fringe with the current octet version of the band for the past two years and is particularly excited to be playing at the new Pianodrome venue in the Botanics.

"The Fringe is crazy, with so many shows all vying for the audience's attention, but at the same time, there's an energy about Edinburgh in August that makes you want to be part of this mad, fantastic festival," says Davis. "Just being around so much talent and creativity can inspire you to try and take your music onto a new level."



Ron Davis

Following a series of symphony orchestra concerts, Davis decided to create a band that would allow him to blend the classical music he trained in with the jazz that was, and is, his passion without requiring a massive budget.

“I chose an octet comprising a string quartet with an electro-acoustic jazz quartet – piano, guitar, bass and drums – because I wanted to give all the players an input, and this configuration allows that,” he says. “I also liked the idea that, as an octet, we could include different styles of music and switch from a jazz standard or something based on I Got Rhythm to a folk tune more naturally than with an orchestra and yet still have a certain richness of sound.”

Seonaid Aitken, who plays violin with the hot club styled Rose Room, winners of the Best Band title at this year’s Scottish Jazz Awards, will be playing viola with SymphRONica in a line-up that includes Davis’ long-time guitarist, and one of

Canada's finest, Kevin Barrett  
and violinist Aline Homzy.

"As well as playing in the string quartet, Seonaid will also be singing, which gives us an extra dimension," says Davis, who is enthusiastic about meeting up with both Aitken and Cosker, the latter having worked with SymphRONica on their two previous Edinburgh Fringe runs.

"Generally we travel with a core of Kevin, Aline and myself and pick up musicians locally, and we've been lucky to get players with the vision to make the music happen," says Davis. "But Alyn went beyond that. When we played the first number in rehearsal, Kevin and I looked at each other and mouthed 'Wow.' We didn't have to tell Alyn what we wanted because he just made it his own. We've developed some new music for the new album, UpFRONT, which is due in October, since we last worked together and we can't wait to hear how Alyn makes that sound."

***Ron Davis' plays with SymphRONica at Stockbridge Church, Edinburgh (3- 4 and 17 August); [Scottish Arts Club, Edinburgh](#) 8, 10, 16, 18 August); and Leith Depot, Edinburgh (13, 14, 15 August) and with Aline Homzy and Kevin Barrett at the Pianodrome on 15 August (lunchtime).***