

The Magnetic Fields: 50 Song Memoir

World premiere of a life in 50 songs



NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS — Stephen Merritt, the master songsmith behind **The Magnetic Fields'** *69 Love Songs*, returns with the full band for a 2-week residency at MASS MoCA that culminates in the world premiere of a staged performance of their new Nonesuch Records album, *50 Song Memoir*, an album celebrating Merritt's first half-century on the planet. Merritt and band perform two distinct programs of new songs — one for every year of his life — with a seven- person band playing 50 instruments from his eclectic collection. This remarkable show recounts his five decades on planet Earth, from his conception by hippies on a houseboat in St. Thomas to his current position as one of America's greatest living songwriters. The world premiere performance takes place in the Hunter Center, during which the entire album will be played over two nights: Songs 1-25 on

Friday, November 18, and songs 26-50 on **Saturday, November 19**.

Although Merritt has several musical projects, including Future Bible Heroes and the 6ths, it is his orchestral synth-pop group The Magnetic Fields that has become a bona fide euphonic sensation over the past 25 years. Most noted for its iconic 1999 three-disc album *69 Love Songs*, the band has cultivated a vast repertoire of timeless masterpieces over ten albums. At MASS MoCA, The Magnetic Fields' two-day performance kicks off its 2016-2017 tour. These shows, which promise to touch on everything from bedbugs to Buddhism, feature the entirety of the upcoming album, *50 Song Memoir*, to be released next year. Following its residency and world premiere in North Adams, The Magnetic Fields will travel to the Brooklyn Academy of Music with *50 Song Memoir*.

Emphasizing pop hooks and eccentric, romantically reflective lyrics, The Magnetic Fields has captivated a loyal fan base with its wit and sarcasm, wrapped up in a slyly charming stage presence that *The Guardian* recalls is "as frumpy, geeky and dour as the Glee band hitting middle age — yet, aesthetics be damned, they provide one of the most sublime live experiences in music." Through its lengthy career, the band has experimented with sounds that range from densely layered, electro-burbling to elegant baritone ballads spouting sardonic wit — all with the air of "idly plucking melody after divine melody out of the air like low-hanging fruit from a tree" (*Pitchfork*).

Witness this monumental celebration of The Magnetic Fields in MASS MoCA's Hunter Center on **Friday, November 18**, and **Saturday, November 19**, at **8pm**. Dinner and snacks are available from Lickety Split before the show. A full bar serves Bright Ideas Brewing beers and Berkshire Mountain Distillery spirits. Tickets are \$35 in advance and for students, \$45 day of, \$55 preferred, \$60 advance for both nights, and \$100 preferred for both nights. Tickets for all events are available through the MASS MoCA

box office located on Marshall Street in North Adams, open 10am to 6pm every day, with extended evening hours to 7pm on Thursdays through Saturdays through September 5. Beginning September 7, the box office is open 11am to 5pm every day except Tuesdays. The museum is closed on Tuesday, September 6. Tickets can also be charged by phone by calling 413.662.2111 during box office hours or purchased online at massmoca.org.

Images

High-resolution images of MASS MoCA's fall 2016 events are available through this link: bit.ly/mmfall2016

Sponsorship

This event is sponsored by The Porches Inn at MASS MoCA.

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest) centers for making and enjoying today's most important art, music, dance, theater, film, and video.

Gallery admission is \$18 for adults, \$16 for veterans and seniors, \$12 for students, \$8 for children 6 to 16, and free for children 5 and under. Members are admitted free year-round. The Hall Art Foundation's Anselm Kiefer exhibition is open seasonally, spring – fall. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.

Hours

Summer (June 25–September 5)

Sundays–Wednesdays, 10am–6pm

Thursdays–Saturdays, 10am–7pm

Fall/Winter (beginning September 7)

11am to 5pm, six days a week (closed Tuesdays)