

Gabriel Kahane: Book of Travelers Freight Train, Freight Train



NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS — Brooklyn composer **Gabriel Kahane** visited MASS MoCA in 2013, on the eve of his major label debut *The Ambassador*. Now he returns on **Friday, October 20**, at **8pm**, to stage an intimate, work-in-progress song cycle, solo at the piano, based on his recent two-week Amtrak journey around the country.

Composer, musician, and vocalist Kahane has quietly become one of the leading voices in American music today. “A star of the new-music scene” (*The Los Angeles Times*), Kahane resists traditional definitions by composing from a seemingly endless reserve of strategies. Moving nimbly between hip Brooklyn venues and Carnegie Hall, *The New York Times* notes,

“[Kahane] fuses art-song and pop-ballad conventions into something new and entrancing, including rich, potent string-quartet writing.” Having first received recognition for his boundary-breaking concert piece *Craigslistlieder*, a quirky song cycle based on text from personal ads found on Craigslist.com, his 2014 release *The Ambassador* is a study of Los Angeles seen through the lens of ten street addresses. The album was hailed by *Rolling Stone* as “one of the year’s very best,” and the track “Empire Liquor Mart (9127 S. Figueroa St.)” made NPR Music’s Favorite Songs of 2014. Kahane’s highly anticipated follow-up, *Book of Travelers*, is set to premiere at BAM Next Wave Festival just weeks after its MASS MoCA preview.

Book of Travelers began to form the morning after the 2016 presidential election, when Kahane packed a suitcase and set out for a two-week train trip across the U.S. with no phone or internet, embracing 8,980 miles of a reclusive Amtrak existence. The result is a hymn to the analog intimacy of American rail culture as an antidote to the fragmentation and efficiency of modern life. Alone at the piano, accompanied only by video, Kahane draws from dining car conversations with dozens of strangers — cowboys, postmasters, religious Luddites, national park conservationists, drifters, and software engineers — to sing of his own upended assumptions about the body politic as revealed through his unplugged railroad exile. *Book of Travelers* is directed by Daniel Fish, with scenic and video design by Jim Findlay, video programming by Julia Frey, and lighting design by Mark Barton. Fish and Findlay both return to MASS MoCA following the preview of their 2014 play *The Source*, which subsequently premiered at BAM to critical acclaim.

Over his prodigious career Kahane has collaborated with a diverse array of artists, including Paul Simon, Sufjan Stevens, Andrew Bird, Blake Mills, and Chris Thile. As a composer, he has been commissioned by the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Carnegie Hall, A Far Cry, The Knights, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, among others.

On **Friday, October 20**, at **8pm**, after two weeks in residency at MASS MoCA, the engine pulls into the Hunter Center and Kahane steps off, bringing with him an entrancing American tale, both familiar and strange. Lickety Split, MASS MoCA's in-house café, serves up fresh salads, homemade soup, and lip-smacking pub fare. The MASS MoCA bar is always well-stocked with local beer from Bright Ideas Brewing and Berkshire Mountain Distillery spirits. Concert tickets are \$5 for members, \$10 for students, \$14 in advance, \$20 day of, and \$30 preferred. Tickets for all events are available through the MASS MoCA box office located on Marshall Street in North Adams, open 11am to 5pm every day except Tuesdays. Tickets can also be charged by phone by calling 413.662.2111 x1 during box office hours or purchased online at massmoca.org.

Images

High-resolution images of MASS MoCA's fall 2017 events are available through this link:

<http://bit.ly/mm2017fall>

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest) centers for making, displaying, and enjoying today's most important art, music, dance, theater, film, and video. MASS MoCA nearly doubled its gallery space in spring 2017, with artist partnerships that include Laurie Anderson, the Louise Bourgeois Trust, Jenny Holzer, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, and James Turrell.

Gallery admission is \$20 for adults, \$18 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 seasonal and currently on view. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.

Hours

11am to 5pm, closed Tuesdays