

MASS MoCA

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
March 2, 2015
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***Maciste in Hell* with Live Score by Sex Mob**

Jazz Giants offer Contemporary Twist on Silent Classic



North Adams, Massachusetts — The propulsive quartet Sex Mob, which combines mind-blowing jazz chops with a highly developed sense of wit and mischief, performs its brand new original score to this seminal work of the Italian silent era. The

great Bartolomeo Pagano stars as Maciste, a Herculean strongman whose physical prowess and matching virtue are tested when the Devil and his minions capture him and drag him to hell. Fellini cites the film as one that inspired him to lead a life in cinema.

Originally formed as a vehicle for Steven Bernstein (most notable for his work as the trumpeter for Levon Helm from 2004 to 2012) and his slide trumpet, Sex Mob quickly evolved to serve a much nobler purpose. Immediately after Bernstein assembled his band (Steven Bernstein, slide trumpet; Briggan Krauss, alto sax; Tony Scherr, bass; Kenny Wollesen, drums), Sex Mob began a residency at the Knitting Factory in Manhattan, largely playing Bernstein's original songs. During a special evening of film music, however, the audience went crazy for the James Bond theme. Bernstein and his band realized that audiences engage more with music they recognize, and Sex Mob's legacy would be forever changed.

Sex Mob immediately expanded its catalog to include familiar favorites whose melodies were strong enough to withstand extensive deconstruction: the Rolling Stones, Prince, the Grateful Dead, and even the "Macarena" easily secured spots in Sex Mob's repertoire. While Sex Mob refrains from the old, tired jazz standards of yore, its identity as a jazz band is unwavering: John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Lester Young, and plenty of other jazz greats all got famous by playing popular tunes the

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audience could identify with. As Bernstein said, “They played the songs that everyone knew, and because [the audience] could recognize the song, then that invited them into their style.”

Recently, Sex Mob’s efforts have focused on film: for their 2013 CD release, *Cinema, Circus & Spaghetti* (Sex Mob Plays Fellini: The Music of Nino Rota) Steven Bernstein chose to sample from five different soundtracks composed by Nino Rota for the films of Italian auteur Federico Fellini. After playing the arrangements on tour for a year, the quartet recorded the entire album in a single day.

Now Sex Mob comes to MASS MoCA along with *Maciste in Hell* (1925, directed by Guido Brignone), a standard of silent cinema that inspired Fellini to pursue filmmaking and Sex Mob to produce an original score. Over their two decades playing together, the quartet has become a Grammy-nominated jazz band whose mission is to “put the fun back in jazz music.” They have proven and will continue to prove their innate ability to deconstruct the old and rebuild anything with a Sex Mob twist—whether it is a popular chart-topper, a ubiquitous theme song, or even a film itself.

Maciste in Hell, along with a **live score by Sex Mob**, screens in our Club B-10 on **Saturday, April 4**, at **8pm**. Dinner and snacks are available from Lickety Split before and during the show. A full bar serves Berkshire Brewing Company beers and Berkshire Mountain Distillery spirits. Tickets are \$8 for students, \$12 in advance, \$18 day of, and \$24 preferred.

Tickets for all events are available through the MASS MoCA box office located on Marshall Street in North Adams, open 11am - 5pm Wednesdays through Mondays; closed Tuesdays through Spring 2015. Tickets can also be charged by phone by calling 413.662.2111 during box office hours or purchased on-line at massmoca.org. All events are held rain or shine.

Sponsorship

This performance is sponsored by the Porches Inn.

Images

High-resolution images of MASS MoCA's Spring 2015 events are available through this link: <http://bit.ly/1ByVwVx>.

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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. Hundreds of works of visual and performing art have been created on its 19th-century factory campus during fabrication and rehearsal residencies, making MASS MoCA among the most productive sites in the country for the creation and presentation of new art. More platform than box, MASS MoCA strives to bring to its audiences art experiences that are fresh, engaging, and transformative.

MASS MoCA's galleries are open 11am to 5pm every day except Tuesdays. The Hall Art Foundation's Anselm Kiefer exhibition is open seasonally, through November 2 or later. 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. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.

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