

Godspeed You! Black Emperor Ecstatic Collective



NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS — **Godspeed You! Black Emperor** began in Montreal in the early 1990s, and during five years it swelled from a bedroom trio to an earth-rattling, wall-of-sound experience with as many as 14 live musicians. The band’s first batch of records before a nine-year hiatus included 2000’s *Lift Your Skinny Fists Like Antennas to Heaven*, which is hailed as a modern post-rock classic. Their newest, *Luciferian Towers*, offers a melodic maturity that transcends even as it rumbles in the shadow of capitalism, climate

change, and political violence. The band comes to MASS MoCA’s Hunter Center on **Saturday, March 10**, at **8pm**, stronger than ever, complete with jolting, kaleidoscopic visuals.

Often described as instrumental post-rock, Godspeed You! Black Emperor fuses “Ennio Morricone, minimalism, found sound, and metal-inflected noise” (*Pitchfork*) to create tracks that vibrate with anxious calm before crashing into thundering storms or soaring crescendos. The nine-member collective includes founding trio Efrim Menuck (guitar), Mauro Pezzente (bass), and Mike Moya (guitar), joined by Sophie Trudeau (violin), Thierry Amar (bass/double bass), David Bryant (guitar), Aidan Girt (drums), Tim Herzog (drums), and Karl Lemieux (film projections). GYBE’s music is undergirded by its radical leftist politics and philosophies that guide a total reproach of the music industry. The back cover of the band’s third album, *Yanqui U.X.O* (2003), for example, displays an image illustrating the ties some major record labels have to the military-industrial complex. GYBE’s moratorium on group photos and usual refusal to do interviews means that it has continued to have a mystique once intrinsic to rock bands — almost impossible to cultivate and maintain in today’s internet and social media era.

While GYBE’s music speaks to the downtrodden masses targeting the capitalist hierarchy, there is hope rather than despair at the core, and the principle that the collective struggle is worth fighting for. The group “find[s] magnificence in destruction and build[s] an aesthetic out of decay and loss,” notes *Pitchfork*’s Mark Richardson. Its “thinking about the idea of transcendence, the raw grace of noise, and the tragedy of endings.” Fittingly, GYBE has been a live band first and foremost; its mesmerizing concerts are marked by orchestral dynamics and epic rock power, with clunky, beautiful analog film projections given notable import, placing the lyric-less songs into context.

In 2012, GYBE released its first album in 10 years, *Allelujah! Don't Bend! Ascend!*, to near-unanimous critical acclaim, including a 9.3 rating and Best New Music at *Pitchfork* and the appearance on countless year-end lists. The similarly praised *Asunder, Sweet and Other Distress* followed in March 2015. The group's most recent album, *Luciferian Towers*, was released in September 2017. Alluding to the precarious times we live in, *Luciferian Towers* is unpredictably described by *Pitchfork* as the group's most uplifting music to date, "melodic and powerfully positive...If you're looking for Lucifer, search elsewhere; a welcome tonic, to recharge the weary" (*Pitchfork*).

On **Saturday, March 10**, at **8pm**, engulf yourself in **Godspeed You! Black Emperor's** transcending, earth-shattering wall-of-sound; and if you happen to feel so inclined, join the collective roar of their grand demands, which informed *Luciferian Towers*: "An end to foreign invasions. An end to borders. The total dismantling of the prison-industrial complex. Healthcare, housing, food, and water acknowledged as an inalienable human right. The expert fuckers who broke this world never get to speak again."

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 \$26 for students and in advance, \$33 day of, and \$45 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 Tuesday. Tickets can also be charged by phone by calling 413.662.2111 x1 during box office hours or purchased online at massmoca.org. All events are held rain or shine.

Images

High-resolution images of MASS MoCA's spring 2018 events are available through this link: bit.ly/WinterSpring2018.

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