

Sylvan Esso

“Endlessly ecstatic and three-dimensional” — *NPR*



NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS — Singer Amelia Meath of the legendary Bennington band Mountain Man, and producer Nick Sanborn of psychedelic folksters Megafaun, create effortless, wonderful electronic pop music that twists, turns, and constantly reinvents itself. Their 2014 self-titled debut thrust them into the national spotlight with ten songs that suggested sheer alchemy — both unlikely and undeniable. Recognized as “endlessly ecstatic” by *NPR*, and for its “urbane playfulness” by *Pitchfork*, come hear your new favorite band, **Sylvan Esso**, in its first MASS MoCA appearance on **Saturday, March 31**.

Amelia Meath started her musical career just up the road at Bennington College, forming the critically acclaimed Appalachian folk-trio Mountain Man with fellow Bennington alumnae Molly Erin Sarle and Alexandra Sauser-Monnig in 2009 and performing at MASS MoCA’s Solid Sound Festival just a year later. While on a tour stop in Milwaukee, Nick Sanborn’s instrumental hip-hop solo project Made of Oak opened for the trio. Described by Sanborn as “one of the most ill-fitting yet serendipitous concert bookings ever,” that night he was asked to remix the Meath-penned Mountain Man song “Play it Right” (*NPR*). Soon after hearing his particularly affecting version, emails and music files began to fly between the two, and Sylvan Esso started to take shape, officially forming in 2013 after Meath’s move to Durham, NC, where the duo is now based.

Combining Sanborn’s throbbing sugary dance beats and Meath’s indie-latticed warbling vocals, Sylvan Esso sprang into view fully formed in 2014 with the release of its eponymous debut album chock-full of near-perfect singles. The album cracked the top 40 on the *Billboard* 200 and reached No. 7 on the *Independent Albums* chart. The single, “Hey Mami,” was subsequently named the song of the year by *Paste Magazine* in 2014. The duo’s synth-laden hooks — which help make them electro-pop darlings — often come with an acidic edge and unaffected, raw lyrics rooted in Meath’s folk background. This balance came into full focus on the group’s sophomore album, *What Next*, released last April, which “offers a biting, withering take on pop music, full of crisp humor while still finding real moments of tenderness” (*Pitchfork*).

Sylvan Esso’s live shows are just as unexpected and intoxicating as its Technicolor electro-dance grooves. From Sanborn’s on-the-fly sampling to Meath’s signature five-inch-high platform sneakers and self-described “dorky dance moves,” the duo puts on a hook-laden, make-you-move show. Since

rocketing to the top, the group has brought its strobe-filled concert experience all over the world, making appearances at all the top festivals, from Coachella to South by Southwest and to the Eaux Claires festival in the fittingly sylvan Wisconsin where it all began.

This spring, **Sylvan Esso** heads up to our forest-filled mountains for a synth-splattered, high-energy, dance-heavy concert. Show off your own dorky dance moves during the duo's MASS MoCA debut on **Saturday, March 31**. 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 \$28 in advance and for students, \$35 day of, and \$42 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. All events are held rain or shine.

Sponsorship

This performance is sponsored by the Hans and Kate Morris Fund for New Music.

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 through November 26. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.

Hours

11am to 5pm, closed Tuesdays