

Bon Iver & TU Dance

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



NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS — Repeat Grammy Award-winner and endlessly influential balladeer Justin Vernon, aka **Bon Iver**, visits MASS MoCA to perform a work-in-progress score alongside dance company **TU Dance**. The company’s co-founder and “incredible polyrhythmic genius” (*Star Tribune*), Uri Sands, guides his troupe through movement that lilts and tumbles alongside Vernon’s expansive sound. The new work will officially premiere with The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra’s Liquid Music Series on April 19 in Saint Paul, MN, but

you can see it first in North Adams on **Saturday, March 24**, at **8pm**, and **Sunday, March 25**, at **2pm**.

Since Bon Iver’s debut album *For Emma, Forever Ago* was released in July 2007, Justin Vernon has captured the hearts of critics and fans alike. Isolating himself in northwestern Wisconsin during the writing and recording process, his aching folk tunes featured natural imagery and contemplative verses with a dynamic and experimental edge. Vernon wrote all the lyrics, played all the instruments, and recorded each track, heavily edited with a large number of overdubs in a style now associated with the band.

In 2012, the band received four Grammy nominations, winning for Best New Artist and Best Alternative Music Album for sophomore effort *Bon Iver, Bon Iver*, which was also named *Pitchfork*’s number one album of 2011. The album marked a shift from a solitary project into something that felt more like the work of a group. Freed from conventional verse/chorus/bridge/chorus structure, the songs became like tone poems, patient explorations of moods that proceeded deliberately but unpredictably (*Pitchfork*).

Five years later, the band’s third album, *22, A Million*, was released to critical acclaim. A more drastic turn towards the strange and experimental, *22, A Million* capitalizes on Vernon’s falsetto voice, which fills the album with soulful performances of swells and fades, distorted vocals, and filtered, fractured tones. A band that once was only seeped in loneliness and remoteness now sonically soars and reaches new heights, all the while maintaining the intimacy that first drew listeners into the music.

The Bon Iver live band is an evolving ensemble that includes Sean Carey (drums, vocals, piano), Michael Noyce (vocals, baritone guitar, guitar, violin), and Matthew McCaughan (bass, drums, vocals). Since the stylistic shift in 2012, the band’s live performances often involve a larger, fuller band with a sound that expands to fill every inch of every venue and features Rob Moose (violin, guitar), Mike Lewis (bass), a horn section that often includes Reginald Pace, Colin Stetson, and C.J. Camerieri, and vocalist sisters

Emily, Jessica, and Camilla Staveley-Taylor, also known as the folk vocal trio The Staves. At MASS MoCA, the band will feature percussionist JT Bates and multi-instrumental Mike Lewis, among others.

The band has collaborated with St. Vincent, James Blake, Gayngs, self-professed fan Kanye West, and contributed to Bryce and Aaron Dessner's *Dark Was the Night* compilation album benefitting the Red Hot Organization. Vernon also co-founded the Eaux Claires Music & Arts Festival with Aaron Dessner in 2015. The band has also had commercial success with its music featured on television shows including *Fargo*, *One Tree Hill*, *Chuck*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *House*, and *Skins*, and in the films *Rust and Bone*, *The Place Beyond the Pines*, *The Hangover Part II*, and *The Judge*.

Founded in 2004 by Toni Pierce-Sands and Uri Sands, TU Dance has since become a leading voice in contemporary dance, regularly selling out venues. Both Pierce-Sands and Sands rose to prominence as members of the Alvin Ailey Dance Company in the 1990s, and today their Saint Paul, MN-based company is known for a style that draws together modern dance, classical ballet, and African-based movement. *Twin Cities Pioneer Press* writes, "TU Dance has a style that could be described as eloquent. Its 10-member troupe places a premium on grace, fluidity, and a kind of urgent expressiveness." Celebrating diversity, relevancy, and accessibility the company's repertory includes work by choreographers Kyle Abraham, Camille A. Brown, Katrin Hall, and co-founder Uri Sands.



Located in a recovering urban neighborhood, TU Dance also provides accessible dance education through The School, which opened in 2011. The School shares space with the professional company, offering unparalleled opportunities to students of all ages, pre-professionals, and the general public. Working closely with local schools, Pierce-Sands and Sands seek to give opportunities to a larger, more diverse group of dance students. "The idea is that as performers, as artists, as students that we are representing our audience, our community," says Pierce-Sands.

This spring, Bon Iver & TU Dance team up for two work-in-progress performances on **Saturday, March 24, at 8pm**, and **Sunday, March 25, at 2pm**. 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. Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$35 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 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 program is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and The Porches Inn at MASS MoCA.

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 will reopen in spring 2018. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.

Hours

11am to 5pm, closed Tuesdays

Open Tuesday, December 26