

Rafiq Bhatia

Son Lux guitarist brings new trio to MASS MoCA



NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS — **Rafiq Bhatia** is a guitarist and composer who balances meticulous sound art with searing improvisation, “transcending real sound in real time with the unexpected” (*The New York Times*). As a member of Son Lux he anchors the ensemble’s minimal arrangements — and he appears at MASS MoCA with his new trio on **Saturday, February 10, at 8pm.**

In 2014, Rafiq Bhatia and drummer Ian Chang joined Ryan Lott’s trip-hop project Son Lux, creating a three-piece dynamo. Bhatia epitomized the Son Lux approach to music, mixing electronic pop, unusual soul, and outright experimentation into a heady, genre-less production — an approach that prompted NPR to describe the group as “the world’s most lethal band.” Son Lux has since toured extensively and released an LP, *Bones*, to critical acclaim, described by NPR as

“phenomenal...blend[s] pulsating electronics and skittering start-stop beats with stark piano melodies, lavish string flourishes and flute trails, and Lott’s soulfully robotic voice.”

Born in Hickory, North Carolina, Bhatia first began playing the guitar in high school. His interest in music largely stemmed from the rap he heard on the radio and his grandfather’s *cappella* renditions of Ginans— or short hymns based on verses from the Quran. At Oberlin College, Bhatia continued to explore a disparate collection of genres while experimenting with his trademark electro-jazz sound. His early explorations, documented on two critically acclaimed recordings, *Strata* and *Yes It Will*, have been described by *The New York Times* as “transcending real sound in real time with the unexpected,” and by *The Washington Post* as “approximat[ing] life in the information age...profuse, immersive and immense.”

Painstaking yet unassuming, Bhatia’s own work merges methodically sculpted renderings with risk-imbued improvisation, heavily echoing the foundations of live jazz music. At its heart, however, his music carries an emotional intensity — a narrative — that’s not always present in jazz. As such, his sound can be compared to that of Kamasi Washington, Takuya Kuroda, Flying Lotus, and Thundercat. Bhatia’s sound can also be heard on recordings from musicians such as Lorde, Sufjan Stevens, Helado Negro, Wilco’s Glenn Kotche, and others, as well as the soundtracks of films *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby, Air*, and *Afflicted*.

On **Saturday, February 10, at 8pm**, **Rafiq Bhatia** takes to MASS MoCA's intimate Club B10 with his new trio, consisting of drummer **Ian Chang** (of Son Lux) and bass/synthesizer/electronics virtuoso **Jackson Hill**. Using an arrangement of analog and digital effects, expect chill, psychedelic beats to flood the room, which — complemented by smooth, fluid riffs —invite you to settle back and escape into a meditative state akin only to that of trip-hop.

Lickety Split, MASS MoCA's in-house café, provides the nosh before the show, serving 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 \$10 for students, \$14 in advance, \$20 day of, and \$26 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

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's 250,000 sq. ft. of gallery space includes partnerships with Laurie Anderson, the Louise Bourgeois Trust, Jenny Holzer, Anselm Kiefer with the Hall Art Foundation, Sol LeWitt, 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 May 2018. For additional information: 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.

Hours

MASS MoCA is open from 11am to 5pm, closed Tuesdays through June 22. From June 23 through September 3, MASS MoCA galleries are open seven days a week — from 10am to 6pm Sundays through Wednesdays and from 10am to 7pm Thursdays through Saturdays.