

An Evening with Sally Taylor & Friends

Come to Your Senses On Stage: Performances from musical greats including Carly Simon, Ben Taylor, and John Forte



Sally Taylor
Photo courtesy of the artist

NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS — Celebrate the opening of the Kidspace exhibition *Come to Your Senses* with an intimate one-night-only concert on **Saturday, June 23, at 7pm**, featuring acoustic performances from musical greats, including the legendary **Carly Simon** with her family **Ben Taylor** and **Sophie Hiller**; Consenses project curator **Sally Taylor**, also of the famed folk family; fellow next-generation R+B sensation **Kori Withers**, daughter of Bill Withers; blues guitarist **Eric Erdman**; and hip-hop artist and producer **John Forte**, formerly of The Fugees; with a dance

performance by **Alison Manning** and **Jesse Keller**. All ticket proceeds from the evening will benefit arts education at MASS MoCA.

Come to Your Senses: Art to See, Smell, Hear, Taste, and Touch — opening in MASS MoCA's Kidspace gallery and art-making studio — asks visual artists, poets, dancers, musicians, perfumers, and chefs to use one another's art as prompts to create their own work. "[It's] like a game of telephone that unfolds through all the senses," notes Taylor, "and inspires us to see the world through others' eyes." For the first time since the founding of her Consenses non-profit arts organization, young student artists from local elementary schools catalyze the interpretive chains with paintings reflecting on the topics of joy and fear. The resulting 55 works across all media — including the original student artworks-prompts — combine to create a multi-sensory experience in the gallery, where visitors can trace the transformation of joy and fear as it travels through multiple artists and mediums.

An Evening with Sally Taylor & Friends is a rare moment to witness these artistic "call and response chains" come to life on stage. Over the last half-decade, Consenses has grown into an extended family of artists and creators across the globe who have collaborated on over two dozen interpretive chains. A selected group of those all-star artists joins us throughout the evening, amplifying the voices of local children, encouraging our youth to speak up, be heard, and own the power and value of their perspectives.

Legendary singer-songwriter Carly Simon — who rose to prominence after winning the Grammy for Best New Artist in 1971 and releasing her #1 hit single "You're So Vain" the following year — was given North

Adams 5th grader (now 6th grader) Ozzie Weber's painting and asked to translate the essence of the painting into a song. Sunshine yellow with staccato pinks and blues, Weber says, "If love were a color it would be yellow. It would be light. It would be a bright sunny day. In response to the word, I made a monster that finally got a date." With no knowledge of the painting's background, it inspired Simon to write *Tender Touch*, a beautifully melancholic folk song about the possibilities of new love and remembrances of old. "Initially, the painting for me was about the sadness that comes from low self-esteem and hiding, but it became about trying to find the sun within." With only a guitar, her children, and her renowned voice, Simon takes to the stage to perform work which includes her *Come to Your Senses* original song.



Ozzie Weber, 2017
Come to Your Senses, 2017

Simon's daughter and *Consenses* director, Sally Taylor, also graces the stage. At one time touring 180 days out of the year, Taylor has since retired from the rock 'n' roll circuit, teaching at Boston's Berklee College of Music, before founding *Consenses* in 2012. Making the evening a true family affair, Taylor's longtime collaborator and brother, the folk-rock musician Ben Taylor—whose poem is included in *Come to Your Senses*—will perform along with his fiancé, British-born singer-songwriter Sophie Hiller. While Ben Taylor never sought to follow in the footsteps of his famous parents, Simon and the renowned James Taylor, he has continued the family tradition, releasing numerous studio albums throughout his two-decade long career. Taylor's most recent efforts include his collaborative EP with Hiller, titled *Christmas Is Family*.

Performers who created songs for the 2014 *Consenses* exhibition on Martha's Vineyard will reunite. Joining the already star-studded bill is Grammy-nominated musician, producer, and activist John Forte, formerly of The Fugees. Forte, whose past work has featured Herbie Hancock, Trick Esthero, and Valerie June among others, brings his R+B and indie-folk infused hip-hop to MASS MoCA. R+B sensation Kori Withers will share her deft pop-soul compositions, conjuring memories of a young Roberta Flack, while blues guitarist Eric Erdman adds a touch of country to the line-up.

With each subsequent link, *Consenses* aims to enable communication through art rather than language while supporting viewers to recognize the limitations and unique value of their own perspective. To this end, the evening commences with a dance choreographed and performed to Simon's *Tender Touch* by Alison Manning and Jesse Keller — who both hail from the Martha's Vineyard-based contemporary dance company The Yard. "To capture the essence of the song," explains Manning, "we used both flowing and still, thoughtful, frozen shapes, danced inside and out...and chose outfits that felt fun, relaxed, beautiful, and free." Experience the complete Love *Consenses* Interpretive chain [here](#).

Join in the celebration as we witness these artistic chains come to life and watch musical greats amplify the voices of local children on **Saturday, June 23, at 7pm**, in support of arts education at MASS MoCA. Arrive early to explore *Come to Your Senses* in the Kidspace gallery. 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 \$35 for students, \$45 in advance, \$57 day of, and \$75 preferred. Admission to MASS MoCA's Kidspace is always free. Tickets for all events are available through the MASS MoCA box office located at the museum, 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.

About the Performers

Eric Erdman

Eric Erdman is a storyteller with a life that gives him stories to write songs about. His guitar takes him around the world; he can write four songs about one breakup. His lyrics are introspective and deep, often with a hook or punchline that provides the spark in a song or draws listeners in like old friends. His career began as the lead singer of the funk rock band The Ugli Stick, based in Mobile, Alabama, releasing four albums and performing in three USO tours. In 2012, Erdman recorded his first solo album, *My Brother's Keepers*, revealing his voice as a singer-songwriter. Winning multiple international songwriting awards, he regularly tours through Europe and Australia. He recorded his second solo album, *Color the Silence*, in Australia in 2013, and recorded his third solo album, *It's Not Like You Don't Know Me*, in 2014.

John Forte

Few understand second chances better than John E. Forte. On November 24, 2008, President George W. Bush granted the petition for commutation submitted by 33-year-old Forte, a classically trained violinist and Grammy-nominated singer, songwriter, and producer from Brooklyn, New York. Famous for his work with the multi-platinum group, The Fugees, Forte was the quintessential rising star before landing himself in a federal penitentiary. His was one of only eleven commutations granted by President Bush during his eight years in office – a testament to the dedication of those who tirelessly campaigned on his behalf, including iconic singer Carly Simon and noted conservative Senator Orrin Hatch (R) of Utah. A brilliant young prodigy and dedicated student, Forte was awarded a full scholarship to the prestigious Phillips Exeter Academy and attended New York University until his career took off in the music industry. While working as an A&R executive for Rawkus Entertainment, Forte met Lauryn Hill and began working closely with The Fugees. Forte co-wrote and produced two songs on the multi-platinum, Grammy Award-winning album, *The Score*. He went on to record two solo albums, *PolySci* (Columbia) and *I, John* (Transparent) which featured industry legends Herbie Hancock, Trick Esthero, and Carly Simon.

Sophie Hiller

British singer-songwriter Sophie Hiller has been passionate about music since a young age, growing up listening to classics such as Stevie Wonder and Aretha Franklin. At age thirteen, Hiller wrote her first song alongside her father, who she continues to collaborate with. Starting her music career on YouTube, Hiller gained recognition from Tom Jones' musical director and was asked to perform as a backup singer. Since then, Hiller has collaborated with several musicians, including Consenses artists Ben Taylor and Natasha Bedingfield. Inspired by jazz, Motown, and pop, Hiller released her debut solo album in 2014.

Alison Manning and Jesse Keller

Alison Manning and Jesse Keller both hail from The Yard, a contemporary dance company based on Martha's Vineyard. Manning, who serves as the Executive Director and Co-Producer at The Yard, has comprehensive experience in the dance field; her knowledge of the Horton Technique has led her to teach at NYU's Steinhardt School of Education, Wesleyan University, and several dance studios. She

currently performs with Dance the Yard, The Bang Group and The Peggy Spina Tap Company. Keller is the Co-Producer and the Director of Island Programs at The Yard. She performs with The Stefanie Batten Bland, an international dance company, at venues such as Festival Onze Bouge, the Brooklyn Museum, and Jacob's Pillow's Inside/ Out. Together, the pair has collaborated to create choreographic work presented as part of the Yard's performance series.

Carly Simon

Singer-songwriter Carly Simon rose to popularity in the '70s. Grammy winner for Best New Artist in 1971, Simon created her top hit single, "You're So Vain," a year later. Since then, she has produced several albums, including her 1975 triple platinum record, *The Best of Carly Simon*, and her 1978 release, *Boys in the Trees*. Previously married to James Taylor, the couple had two children, musicians Ben Taylor and Sally Taylor, who is also the founder of Consenses. Beyond her musical career, Simon has authored two books: a children's book inspired by her experience of motherhood, *Amy the Dancing Bear* and her 2015 memoir, *Boys in the Trees*.

Ben Taylor

Musician and actor Ben Taylor spent his formative years surrounded by the music of his singer-songwriter parents, Carly Simon and James Taylor. His early musical work includes his 2003 debut album *Famous Among the Barns*, a collaborative effort with friends Adam MacDougall and Larry Ciancia of the Ben Taylor Band. Taylor's solo album, *Another Run Around the Sun*, released in 2005, recalled his family's acoustic background, featuring both Carly Simon and his sister, Sally Taylor. His acting career includes his role on NBC's *American Dreams*. Taylor's most recent efforts include his collaborative EP with Consenses artist Sophie Hiller, titled *Christmas Is Family*.

Sally Taylor

Artist and musician Sally Taylor is the founder and director of Consenses, a multidisciplinary project that asks artists working in varying mediums to interpret each other's artwork. Acting like a game of creative telephone, the project celebrates individual perception, but collectively fosters connection and common understanding. Beyond her work with Consenses, Taylor produced her own record label in 1998 yielding three albums: *Tomboy Bride*, *Apt #6S*, and *Shotgun*. Her musical career took her on a 180-day tour with a five-piece band. After retiring from touring, Taylor taught at The Berklee College of Music. Daughter of Carly Simon and James Taylor, she frequently collaborates with her family, including with her musically apt brother, Ben Taylor.

Kori Withers

Kori Withers has stepped out of the long musical shadow of her famous father, soul musician Bill Withers — "Lean on Me," "Ain't No Sunshine," and "Just the Two of Us" — and is carving out her own unique place in the music world. She released her solo album, *Book*, in 2008, and has collaborated with Booker T. Jones and Damon Rosario. Withers graduated from Columbia University with a degree in English. She earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Musical Theatre Writing from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. She currently lives in Los Angeles.

Images

High-resolution images are available through this link: bit.ly/SallyTaylor.

[Consenses Interpretive Chain: Love](#)

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 on May 26, 2018. For additional information: [413.662.2111 x1](tel:413.662.2111) 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's galleries are open seven days a week — from 10am to 6pm Sundays through Wednesdays and from 10am to 7pm Thursdays through Saturdays.

About ArtCountry

ArtCountry is nestled in the Berkshire hills of western Massachusetts at the foot of the Green Mountains of southern Vermont. Art and music all year round from four incredible museums — MASS MoCA, The Clark Art Institute, Williams College Museum of Art, and Bennington Museum — and the unparalleled Williamstown Theatre Festival, all less than three hours from New York and Boston.