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Acclaimed Folk Trio Mountain Man to Give Commencement Address at Bennington College

Bennington, VT: The three members of the acclaimed folk trio Mountain Man—Molly Erin Sarlé ’12, Amelia Meath ’10, and Alexandra Sauser-Monnig ’09—will address the class of 2019 at Bennington College’s 84th commencement dinner on Friday, May 31, at 7:00 pm on Commons Lawn. The event will be livestreamed.

“At the heart of the Bennington experience is collaboration—the creative discovery that occurs when our varied experiences and intellectual pursuits collide to create something entirely new,” said Bennington College President Mariko Silver. “Mountain Man was born on the Bennington campus in this very way, when three talented musicians saw the potential for their shared passions. We are honored to celebrate the class of 2019 with their return.”

“Bennington equipped each of us with the tools necessary to translate vision into reality,” said Alexandra Sauser-Monnig of Mountain Man. “When institutional guardrails are gone, the collaborative bonds you form with similarly interested people become the new touchstones of the creative work of living, and ideally support and inspire you in that iterative process. We’re looking forward to being present in sending off another class of Bennington students with a conversation on the nature of collaboration.”

Sarlé, Meath and Sauser-Monnig formed Mountain Man while attending Bennington College and released their debut album Made in the Harbor soon after. The group has toured with bands such as Feist and The Decemberists, been praised by The New York Times for their “bewitching” harmonies, and is lauded for their intimate take on traditional folk sounds.

After taking time to forge artistic paths on their own, Mountain Man reunited in 2018 to release their sophomore album Magic Ship. As Pitchfork describes the album, “Though Mountain Man’s radiant harmonies are as pretty as they come, there’s [...] considerable weight to the shiny package.”

Michelle Cirillo ’19 will be the senior class speaker. As a student of Ceramics and Philosophy, Cirillo sought new ways to strengthen communities and spark cultural change through her dedication to a critical study of ethics and rigorous attention to the practical demands of being a working-class artist. Cirillo’s academic path has been a model for fusing creative inquiry with social good. In both the classroom and the field, she has been lauded for her principled, empathic, and visionary leadership skills.

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BENNINGTON COLLEGE

Bennington College is a liberal arts college in southwestern Vermont that has distinguished itself as a vanguard institution within American higher education. It was the first to include the visual and performing arts in a liberal arts education. It is the only college to require that its students
spend a term—every year—at work in the world. Bennington students work intensively with faculty to forge individual educational paths around their driving questions and interests.

Rooted in an abiding faith in the talent, imagination, and responsibility of the individual, Bennington invites students to pursue and shape their own intellectual inquiries, and in doing so to discover the profound interconnection of things. Learn more at bennington.edu.