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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# The National Performs to Benefit Hawthorne Valley and MASS MoCA

**May 2, 2016, Ghent, NY + North Adams, MA** – What do art, music, education and agriculture have in common? Early this summer, the common denominator will be the band The National. The band will perform at MASS MoCA in North Adams on **Saturday, June 11**, for their only Northeast headline show of 2016. All proceeds from the concert benefit Hawthorne Valley Association in Ghent, NY, and MASS MoCA, in North Adams, Massachusetts.

If you ask Aaron Dessner, multi-instrumentalist and songwriter for The National, he'll tell you that art, music, education and agriculture – yes, agriculture – offer fertile ground for creativity and that the encouragement and support of these endeavors lays the groundwork for a healthy community. "It's pretty clear that our country and the world in general needs positive pro-social and environmentally responsible change – and people and communities transform through the creative process. So it stands to reason that if we encourage creativity, we can instigate these kinds of changes – maybe even change the world," says Dessner. He continues, "We saw this concert as an opportunity to support two organizations that are doing good, creative work in service of both their immediate communities, and the community at large. Each supports creativity and independent thinking which are vital to the development of innovative solutions. The work that MASS MoCA is doing to highlight visionary art and artists, and that Hawthorne

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Valley is engaged in – biodynamics, scientific research, and Waldorf education – positively impacts the health of their communities, and ultimately the well-being of our children and families, and the planet as a whole. It's work we feel the need to support in any way we can. ”

In addition to the headlining benefit concert at 7 p.m., *A Lot of Sorrow*, Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson's 6-hour documentary opus, filmed on tour with The National, screens in MASS MoCA's Hunter Center throughout the concert weekend. A live, silent auction of band memorabilia, including a signed, framed “Trouble Will Find Me” gold album, a “Trouble Will Find Me” boxed set, and Aaron’s signed Bigsby guitar, all donated by the band, takes place before the concert. An exclusive concert pre-party, “Drinks with The National” also for the benefit of Hawthorne Valley and MASS MoCA, is sold out. “Drinks with the National” features locally-sourced food and drink with the band, and tours of MASS MoCA’s Building 6 — the site of the museum’s 2017 expansion which will double the already-massive museum’s exhibition space.

"At once precise and meticulous in their craft, but also gloriously exultant and ambitious, The National is a truly great band, complex and expansive," notes MASS MoCA Director Joseph Thompson. "We are deeply honored that they are kicking off their summer season with a rare headline show at MASS MoCA, and not only at MASS MoCA, but for it, and for Hawthorne Valley Association, as a benefit concert."

“We are thrilled to be working with MASS MoCA, a truly innovative cultural initiative in the vanguard of the contemporary art world. And we are infinitely grateful to The National for their generosity of spirit and good will in offering their considerable talents in support of MASS MoCA and Hawthorne Valley,” says Martin Ping, Executive Director of Hawthorne Valley. “The National and MASS MoCA each represent how art, music, and the creative process can be foundational in building regenerative and resilient economies both locally and globally. As we come together in celebration of our inter-connectedness and interdependence, I enthusiastically look forward to the good work and to the collaborative road ahead.”

MASS MoCA’s Thompson continues, "I’m sure the band could turn the depth of our gratitude into a searing lyric, with an infectious and nearly impossible beat, but for now we’ll have to settle with this: we can’t wait to host them on June 11th, and feel so fortunate that they’ve smiled upon MASS MoCA and Hawthorne Valley in this way."

Throughout their career, The National has engaged in social activism as illustrated by their support for charitable organizations including the Yellow Bird Project which raised money for Safe Space NYC, an organization that provides safe refuge for under privileged children and families in Southeast Queens; Partners in Health. Their most notable effort this year is a 59-track Grateful Dead tribute album they curated and produced – all the proceeds of which will benefit the Red Hot Organization, an international organization dedicated to fighting HIV, AIDS, and related health issues. Additionally, The National has performed numerous benefit concerts for such organizations as MusiCares, Artists for Peace and Justice, the Robin Hood Foundation, and Cooperative for Education’s Thousand Girls Initiative, a program supporting the growth of educational opportunities for girls in Guatemala.

Says Dessner, “Individuals – even whole nations – can’t solve all problems by themselves. We need one another. We – and all species – are inextricably linked. The road to a better world, and a healthy future for our children, depends on forming alliances and cooperating with others. As more and more positive connections are made, maybe we can realize a collective positive force for change. If our band can give us a platform to contribute in some way to connecting people doing good work, like MASS MoCA and Hawthorne Valley, we’re all for it.”

The National perform on Joe’s Field at MASS MoCA, at 8 p.m., to benefit MASS MoCA and Hawthorne Valley Association. San Francisco-based, post-pop band YASSOU opens. The concert is co-presented by Higher Ground Presents, headquartered in Burlington, Vermont. General admission concert tickets are \$49 through late May, when tickets will increase to \$55. Tickets are available for purchase through the MASS MoCA Box Office located at 1040 MASS MoCA Way, in North Adams, Massachusetts, by phone at 413.664.4481 x1, or online: [massmoca.org/thenational](http://massmoca.org/thenational).

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### **About The National**

Formed in 1999, The National, which consists of vocalist Matt Berninger, plus two pairs of brothers: Aaron Dessner (guitar, bass, piano) and Bryce Dessner (guitar), and Scott Devendorf (bass, guitar) and Bryan Devendorf (drums), has landed on every “best of” list in print. The band’s half dozen albums receive critical praise surpassed only by the adoration of their devoted audience.

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Throughout their 16-year career, The National has grown into an incendiary live band that has headlined major festivals worldwide and appeared on many television shows including *Saturday Night Live*, *Jools Holland*, and *The Late Show starring Jimmy Fallon*. Their most recent album, *Trouble Will Find Me*, was nominated for a GRAMMY. *Day of the Dead*, a Grateful Dead tribute album produced by Bryce and Aaron Dessner to benefit The Red Hot Organization, will be release on May 20<sup>th</sup>. This landmark album contains 59 songs and over five hours of music with contributions from Bon Iver, Sharon Van Etten, The War on Drugs, Stephen Malkmus and The National.

### **About MASS MoCA**

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest) centers for making and enjoying today's most important art, music, dance, theater, film, and video. Hundreds of works of visual and performing art have been created on its 19th-century factory campus during fabrication and rehearsal residencies, making MASS MoCA among the most productive sites in the country for the creation and presentation of new art.

More platform than box, MASS MoCA strives to bring to its audiences art experiences that are fresh, engaging, and transformative. For more information, visit <http://massmoca.org>.

### **About Hawthorne Valley**

Hawthorne Valley Association is a diverse nonprofit in Ghent, NY, located in the scenic Hudson Valley's Columbia County. Hawthorne Valley is committed to social and cultural renewal through education, through agriculture, through the arts, and through research. Hawthorne Valley Association's integrated learning campus is embedded in a 500-acre Biodynamic farm and includes: a Waldorf school; on-farm education programs; a full-line organic/natural foods and grocery store; social, ecological, and cultural research groups; teacher education programs; arts initiatives and more. For additional information, please visit <http://www.hawthornevalleyassociation.org>.