Press Release

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October 14, 2016

NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Christoph Eschenbach, Music Director

NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES
2016–2017 SEASON OF

DECLASSIFIED
FRIDAYS AT 9

Series Begins Friday, November 18, 2016, with
Music by Bryce Dessner

(WASHINGTON)—The National Symphony Orchestra, led by guest conductor Jacomo Bairos, launches its second season of DECLASSIFIED at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall on Friday, November 18, with composer/performer Bryce Dessner, the multifaceted guitarist of the indie rock band The National. This season builds on the momentum of last year’s inaugural season of DECLASSIFIED concerts, with integrated activities and aesthetics in the Kennedy Center Grand Foyer, pre- and post-concert. All tickets are $39.

This DECLASSIFIED performance showcases Dessner’s depth as an artist, presenting an evening of his orchestral compositions. The program will include the East Coast premiere of Quilting, his recent commission for the Los Angeles Philharmonic and BBC Symphony Orchestra, as well as his acclaimed St. Carolyn by the Sea for orchestra and two electric guitars, performed with Dessner and guest Gyan Riley. The program will also include his work for string orchestra, Lachrimae, the U.S. premiere of his piano quartet El Char; and a world premiere performance of “Imagining Buffalo,” a work from his score for Alejandro Gonzáles Iñárritu’s Oscar-winning film The Revenant.

Bryce Dessner is one of the most sought-after composers of his generation, with a rapidly expanding catalog of works commissioned by leading ensembles. Known to many as a guitarist with The National, he is also active as a curator—a vital force in the flourishing realm of new creative music. His orchestral, chamber, and vocal compositions have been commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Metropolitan Museum of Art (for the New York Philharmonic), Kronos Quartet, BAM Next Wave Festival, Barbican Centre, Edinburgh International Festival, Sydney Festival, eighth blackbird, Sō
Percussion, New York City Ballet, and many others. He has worked with some of the world’s most creative and respected musicians and visual artists, including Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Jonny Greenwood, Justin Peck, Hiroshi Sugimoto, and Matthew Ritchie, among others. His work Murder Ballads, featured on eighth blackbird’s album Filament— an album he also produced and performs on— won the 2016 Grammy Award® for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance. Highlights this season included the premiere of his chamber concerto, Wires, for Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris as part of a weekend celebration of his music at the Philharmonie de Paris. This past fall Dessner was tapped, along with Ryuichi Sakamoto and Alva Noto, to compose music for Oscar-winning director Alejandro González Iñárritu’s film, The Revenant, which received a 2016 Golden Globe nomination for Best Original Score.

The NSO collaborates with the Hirshhorn Museum for this project, which, on Wednesday, November 16, at 7 p.m., will feature Dessner, where he will preview a selection of his music with an ensemble from the NSO before sitting in conversation with the Hirshhorn’s Stéphane Aquin and the NSO’s Director of Artistic Planning, Nigel Boon, in the Ring Auditorium.

Icelandic performance artist Ragnar Kjartansson, whose first major U.S. survey of work opens at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden October 14, has collaborated with Dessner previously, inviting him and his band, The National, to play their three-minute song, “Sorrow,” repeatedly for six hours during a performance at MoMA PS1 in New York City. The resulting work, A Lot of Sorrow, lives on through a six-hour video installation that is being screened as part of this exhibit.

Other upcoming programs in the NSO’s DECLASSIFIED series in the 2016-2017 season include:

**Friday, February 12, 2017:** Rhymes and Rhythms Poetry Collective with the NSO
A unique evening of sound and spoken word featuring progressive Hip Hop artist Christylez Bacon and electric cellist Wytold.

**Friday, April 21, 2017:** Zakir Hussain with the NSO
Classical tabla virtuoso and international phenomenon Hussain performs his new concerto Peshkar with the NSO and is joined by santoor player Rahul Sharma for a unique world music duet.

**Friday, June 30, 2017:** Program to be announced

The NSO launched the DECLASSIFIED series in 2015–2016 with three genre-bending performances, which featured unique programs of classical repertoire performed by pop icon Ben Folds, Kennedy Center Composer-in-Residence Mason Bates, and songstress Storm Large, alongside new works

**PROGRAM DETAILS**

**Friday, November 18, 2106, at 9 p.m.**
National Symphony Orchestra
Jacomu Bairos, conductor
Bryce Dessner, Gyan Riley, electric guitars

DESSNER  “Imagining Buffalo” (from the movie The Revenant)
DESSNER  Quilting
DESSNER  Lachrimae
DESSNER  El Chan (for piano quartet)
DESSNER  St. Carolyn by the Sea

Tickets: $39.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The 2016–2017 season marks the NSO’s 86th, and its seventh and final led by Music Director Christoph Eschenbach, also the Music Director of the Kennedy Center. Founded in 1931, the Orchestra has, throughout its history, been committed to artistic excellence and music education. In 1986, the National Symphony became an artistic affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where it has performed a full season of subscription concerts since the Center opened in 1971. The National Symphony Orchestra regularly participates in events of national and international importance, including performances for state occasions, presidential inaugurations and official holiday celebrations. Its regularly televised holiday appearances for Capitol Concerts and local radio broadcasts on WETA make the NSO one of the most-heard orchestras in the country.

The Orchestra itself numbers 96 musicians who perform approximately 150 concerts each year. These include classical subscription series, pops concerts, summer performances at Wolf Trap and on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol, chamber music performances in the Terrace Theater and on the Millennium Stage, and an extensive educational program, with performances designed for ages three years and up, and audience engagement activities, as well. Additionally, the NSO’s community engagement projects are nationally recognized, including NSO In Your Neighborhood which comprises of a week of approximately 50 performances in schools, churches, community centers, and other neighborhood venues) and NSO Sound Health, which has taken the NSO to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Children’s Inn at NIH, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Children’s National Medical Center, and Inova Health System. Career development opportunities include the NSO Youth Fellowship Program and its Summer Music Institute.

For more information, visit nationalsymphony.org.

ABOUT JACOMO BAIROS

Portuguese-American Jacomo Rafael Bairos enjoys an emerging international career which is diverse, creative and inclusive. As the Amarillo Symphony’s 17th Music Director and Conductor, and Co-founder and Artistic Director of Nu Deco Ensemble, Bairos’s imaginative and energetic leadership has fostered a collaborative spirit for presenting great art at the highest levels.

Through his fresh and inventive programming, introduction of the new Premium Pops Series, as well as his community-driven initiatives such as Class Act, Bairos has helped transform the Amarillo Symphony into a multifaceted vehicle for art and community cooperation. In 2014, Bairos and the Amarillo Symphony established the first-ever Composer-in-Residence with young American Chris Rogerson.

Along with composer Sam Hyken, Bairos is co-founder and Artistic Director of Nu Deco Ensemble, a virtuosic and eclectic chamber orchestra designed for the 21st Century. With residency at Miami’s The Light Box at Goldman Warehouse, Bairos and Hyken oversee the mission of executing adventurous and exciting classical based collaborative performances, while presenting various styles of music, art, and media in both traditional and alternative concert venues.

The wide range of Bairos’s artist collaborations include MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship recipient Jeremy Denk, famed American pianist Garrick Ohlsson, internationally acclaimed guitarist Pablo Saint Villagas, as well as eclectic cross-over group Project Trio, and electronic dance music duo AfroBeta. Bairos also has a long relationship with multi-platinum selling singer-song-writer, Ben Folds.

As an accomplished and award-winning tubist, Bairos has given master classes and performed with festivals and orchestras around the world. New York Magazine praised his solo performances in the Juilliard Focus Festival of 1998 as one of the “instrumental highs of the festival.” At the age 18, he was the first tubist in the history of the Aspen Music Festival to win the festival-wide concerto competition.
ABOUT BRYCE DESSNER
Bryce Dessner is one of the most sought-after composers of his generation, with a rapidly expanding catalog of works commissioned by leading ensembles. Known to many as a guitarist with The National, he is also active as a curator—a vital force in the flourishing realm of new creative music.

Dessner’s music—called “gorgeous, full-hearted” by NPR and “vibrant” by The New York Times—is marked by a keen sensitivity to instrumental color and texture. Propulsive rhythms often alternate with passages in which time is deftly suspended. His harmonies are expressively flexible, ranging from the dense block chords of Aheym to the spacious modality of Music for Wood and Strings.

As Dessner’s career has expanded, his activities as a curator have grown, as well, allowing him to bring diverse artists and communities together in an organic way. Recently, he was tapped to curate Mountains and Waves, a weekend-long celebration of his music at the Barbican in London, May 2015, with guests including Steve Reich, eighth blackbird, Sō Percussion, Caroline Shaw, and the Britten Sinfonia. In September of 2015, Dessner curated Sounds From a Safe Harbour, a weekend of performances at the Cork Opera House in Ireland.

MusicNOW, the Cincinnati-based contemporary music festival he founded in 2006, has featured Tinariwen, Justin Vernon, Joanna Newsom, David Lang, Grizzly Bear, Perfume Genius, and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, among many others. In 2015, MusicNOW celebrated its 10 year anniversary. To mark the occasion, an album titled MusicNOW: 10 Years, composed of the festival’s best live performances, was released. MusicNOW presented its 11th season March 18-20, 2016.

Other recent notable projects include Quilting, a 17-minute score co-commissioned with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, premiered in May 2015 by the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, and The Most Incredible Thing, a ballet created by Dessner, Justin Peck, and Marcel Dzama, premiered in February 2016 by the New York City Ballet.

TICKET INFORMATION
Tickets ($39) are available at the Kennedy Center Box Office, online at kennedy-center.org, and via phone through Instant Charge, (202) 467-4700; toll-free at (800) 444-1324.

FUNDING CREDITS
David and Alice Rubenstein are the Presenting Underwriters of the NSO.

For more information about the NSO, visit nationalsymphony.org.

For more information about the Kennedy Center, visit kennedy-center.org.

Patrons 30 and under and active-duty members of the military are invited to join the Kennedy Center’s MyTix program for special discount offers and chances to win free tickets. For more information, visit kennedy-center.org/mytix

MEDIA CONTACT:
Rachelle Roe
(202) 416-8443

TICKETS & INFORMATION:
(202) 467-4600; (800) 444-1324
www.kennedy-center.org

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rbroe@kennedy-center.org