

Tig Notaro Headlines High Mud Comedy Fest Sean Patton, Ophira Eisenberg, Dave Hill, and local comedians perform March 11-12, with more acts to follow



NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS — From the mind of television comedy writer and executive producer of *The Bob Newhart Show* (and MASS MoCA Trustee) Jay Tarses comes the **High Mud Comedy Festival**, a two-day laugh fest featuring a pile of performers thick with national comedic treasures and local stand-up heroes on **March 11 and 12**. Provocative deadpan comedian **Tig Notaro** headlines the inaugural festival, hosted by *NPR*'s **Ophira Eisenberg** and featuring Brooklyn- and Hollywood-based live wire **Sean Patton**. More national and regional talent fills stages, including

the MASS MoCA return of absurdist Dave Hill and a Berkshire-based comedy slate organized by and including the hilarious Tom Lewis, North Adams-based humorist Seth Brown, and Adams-based Mark Jagiello.

The High Mud festival slings two nights of stand-up in MASS MoCA's Hunter Center and an afternoon of comedy films — but the laughs don't stop there. Post-mainstage, late-night gigs at local venues — including The Mohawk Tavern, Desperados, and the Freight Yard Pub — will feature more local talent.

"Tarses' idea seemed like a good one," says MASS MoCA director Joseph Thompson. "Along about mid-March, we could use a few laughs around here. Who knows — if anyone shows up, this might become an annual event. I'm curious to see if they know what 'high mud' means in New York and Boston."

Tarses declares, "High Mud is destined to be one of the most hysterical late-winter comedy festivals in the history of Western Massachusetts. Unless there's a blizzard."

Known for her warm demeanor and conversational stand-up style, **Tig Notaro** is a highly sought comedian whose career spans from headline gigs to college living room tours, from Netflix to the *Emmy Awards*. A television regular, she's done stints on *Transparent*, *The Sarah Silverman Program*, *The Office*, *Community*, and *Bob's Burgers*, and had her own half-hour special, *Comedy Central Presents Tig*. Notaro regularly contributes to *This American Life* and for many years co-hosted the *Professor Blastoff* podcast with fellow comedians Kyle Dunnigan and David Huntsberger. That show came to an end in July 2015 after 217 episodes.

2015 was a banner year for the comedian: *Knock Knock, It's Tig* Notaro premiered on Showtime in March, and both the Netflix documentary *Tig* and her first HBO special *Boyish Girl Interrupted* were released in August. Notaro stars in, writes, and is the executive producer of a pilot currently airing on Amazon, directed by Nicole Holofcener and co-written by Oscar-winning screenwriter Diablo Cody. *One Mississippi* is a dark, loosely autobiographical comedy based on a comedian who, after the death of her mother, returns to her childhood home in Mississippi with her girlfriend.

Notaro was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2015 for her sophomore release, *Live*, which sold over 100,000 units in just six weeks. The album is a 2012 stand-up set delivered just days after she was diagnosed with stage 2 bilateral breast cancer. Since her return to comedy following her diagnosis and treatment, Notaro's comedy has developed a depth and openness that fans have passionately responded to with newfound support and engagement. She has announced that her cancer is in remission.



The host of NPR's weekly game show *Ask Me Another*, **Ophira Eisenberg** is a skilled comedian and storyteller and one of *New York Magazine's* selections for the "Top 10 Comics that Funny People Find Funny." She tours as a host and storyteller with *The Moth*, and is featured on *The Moth Radio Hour* and podcast. Her wisecracking debut memoir, *Screw Everyone: Sleeping My Way to Monogamy* was published in 2013, and Zucker Productions recently optioned the rights to a feature film. Eisenberg hosts the High Mud Comedy Fest on Saturday.

Funnyman **Sean Patton** focuses his brand of high-energy comedy on biting personal anecdotes involving lively characters and circumstance. Raised in New Orleans, where his career began in 2001, the raucous and often foul-mouthed Patton has performed at Caroline's, The Comedy Cellar, Gotham, Upright Citizens Brigade New York and Los Angeles, and at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. He made his television debut in 2009 on Comedy Central's *Live at Gotham*, premiered his Comedy Central *The Half Hour* in 2013, and has appeared on *Inside Amy Schumer*, *Maron*, *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, and *Conan*.



New York Times critic Jason Zinoman states, "I've seen him perform more than a dozen sets, and he's killed every time. He's dynamite, even with ordinary material, turning standard Brooklyn hipster jokes into a stomping, roaring tour de force, and elevating a bit about sex-performance anxiety into high-stakes comedy... He's the rare comic who goes over as well in a comedy club as in a bar basement."

New York City-based **Dave Hill** is an absurdist comedian, writer, and musician from Cleveland, Ohio, whose talents run the comedic gamut. He hosts *The Dave Hill Explosion* at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre and appears as on-air talent for HBO and Cinemax. Hill has appeared on *Inside Amy Schumer*, contributes to *This American Life*, and every Monday night hosts his own radio show on WFMU, *The Goddamn Dave Hill Show*. As a writer, his work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *GQ*, *Salon*, *VICE*,



McSweeney's, and *The Huffington Post*. His first book, *Tasteful Nudes: ...and Other Misguided Attempts at Personal Growth and Validation*, a collection of anecdotal essays, was published in 2012, and Hill's second essay collection, *Dave Hill Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, will be published in 2016. Hill performed to a sold-out audience at MASS MoCA in 2010.

Pittsfield-based **Thomas Attila Lewis** regularly performs his comedy across New England and the country, with recent appearances at the New Orleans Comedy Arts Festival and Nashville's Wild West Comedy Festival. He is the producer and co-host of the award-winning comedy podcast, *My Dumb Friends*, and is the producer and co-creator of the *Bill Burr Tours* web series.

High Mud Comedy Fest delivers a thousand laughs a minute (or at the very least, good beer) in MASS MoCA's **Hunter Center** on **March 11-12**. Dinner will be available at Lickety Split before and during the show. A full bar serves Berkshire Brewing Company beers and Berkshire Mountain Distillery spirits. Two-day festival passes are \$32 for students, \$42 advance, \$55 day of, and \$75 preferred. High Mud might get dirty; best suited for audiences ages 16 and up. Friday and Saturday admission to MASS MoCA's galleries is included in the festival pass. A \$5 gallery admission discount is offered to ticket-holders on Sunday, March 13. 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 through spring 2016. 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

This performance is sponsored by WRSI and Berkshire Gas.

Images

High-resolution images of MASS MoCA's spring 2016 events are available through this link:

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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.

MASS MoCA's galleries are open from 11am to 5pm every day except Tuesdays through spring 2016. The Hall Art Foundation's Anselm Kiefer exhibition reopens April 30, 2016. Gallery admission is \$18 for adults, \$16 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. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.