



THE KIMMEL CENTER
ACADEMY OF MUSIC
MERRIAM THEATER

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@KimmelCenter celebrates #BlackHistoryMonth with FREE performances, education activities showcasing Harlem Renaissance & jazz in #Philadelphia, famed singers like @GregoryPorter, and more – alongside Resident Companies @ThePhillyPOPS and @pcmsconcerts presenting @Ritzplayers!

Press Contact:

Lauren Woodard

215-790-5835

lwoodard@kimmelcenter.org

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH ON THE KIMMEL CENTER CULTURAL CAMPUS

**February programming includes renowned Broadway, Jazz, R&B,
and chamber musicians**

***Jazz4Freedom* education program teaches 4th graders about
Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights Movement, and modern-day social heroes**

PLUS, FREE events for all ages

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Philadelphia, PA, January 9, 2020) —The Kimmel Center Cultural Campus, along with Resident Company support from The Philly POPS and the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, celebrates Black History Month in February 2020 with an array of FREE and ticketed programming honoring African American artistic expression and culture.

“Our mission is to engage the Philadelphia region’s diverse communities with art through performance and education, and Black History Month is a particularly special time to highlight creative contributions of artists across genre and across the globe,” said Ed Cambron, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. “Alongside our esteemed Resident Companies, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive and inviting space to experience transformative art. The commitment of our donors and community partners to our 5-year Education Strategic Plan for Growth enables us to present multi-dimensional programs like *Jazz4Freedom*; partner support positively

impacts the development of new work, like former Resident M'Balía Singley's *Turn*. Our hope is that every guest feels welcome and valued on our Cultural Campus all year round, and particularly those students visiting for workshops this February appreciate the invaluable impact of past, present, and future Black artists."

This February, Kimmel Center Cultural Campus' jazz series continues with Grammy Award-winning **Gregory Porter** in Verizon Hall on Monday, February 10. Former Kimmel Center Theater Resident, frequent *PNC Grow Up Great* host, and Philadelphia-based actor M'Balía Singley stars in *Turn*, February 26 – 29. Using themes from Shakespeare's *Othello*, M'Balía Singley confronts her experience as a black woman in America with equal parts humor and honesty in this brand-new theatrical work. *Turn* weaves original songs, comedy, and engrossing stories into a performance that is both sweeping and intimate. From societal expectations to relatable family disfunction, Singley turns to the unlikely 16th century play and finds connections to our 21st century lives. *Turn* was commissioned and developed through the Kimmel Center's 2017-2018 Theater Residency.

FREE, monthly programming continues during Black History Month with various celebrations, including *PNC Grow Up Great* with ILL DOOTS on Saturday, February 8 and *Sittin' in: Live Sessions* on Wednesday, February 12, celebrating founder and curator Anthony Tidd with special guests to be announced at a later date.

Especially timely is the Kimmel Center's Education department's **Jazz4Freedom** program, developed for 4th grade students from the Philadelphia School District and Archdiocesan Schools, linking Jazz to Black History in Pennsylvania and beyond. Taught by experienced teaching artists through an in-school curriculum, 4th graders are first engaged with a preshow workshop about the Harlem Renaissance and growth of jazz in Philadelphia. The highlight of Jazz4Freedom is a field trip to see Kimmel Center's Jazz4Freedom performance featuring music, dance, and commentary on social change throughout history. Students are inspired by a post-show workshop which links the Civil Rights Movement to jazz and provides the opportunity for reflection on the continuation of social change.

Students participating in **Jazz4Freedom** will learn more about modern-day heroes for social change, particularly in the arena of climate change. This year, the programming will focus on advocates who are also adolescents, including: Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, 16; American Isra Hirsi, 16, co-founder of the United States Youth Climate Strike; Autumn Peltier, 15, a water-rights activist from Canada and part of the Wikwemikong First Nation; Bruno Rodriguez, 19, of Buenos Aires, who stated "political, economic and cultural crisis of our time" was climate change; and Ecuadorian Helena Gualinga, 17 who hails from the Amazon and fights against deforestation, among other issues.

The Kimmel Center is home to eight beloved Resident Companies – this Black History Month, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society presents the **Ritz Chamber Players** on Sunday, February 9. The United States' first chamber music ensemble composed solely of accomplished musicians spanning the African diaspora, these musicians will perform repertoire by African American composers. The Philly POPs pay tribute to The Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin, with **Aretha: Respect**; from February 14 – 16, the show features Broadway powerhouse Capathia Jenkins and Grammy-nominated R&B singer Ryan Shaw.

Below is a full list of Black History Month offerings in chronological order:

PNC GROW UP GREAT

FREE

Kimmel Center Cultural Campus' Commonwealth Plaza

Saturday, February 8, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.

Join the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus for an hour of interactive fun as children age 0-5 are introduced to the vibrant world of jazz and/or musical theater. Attendees will learn to sing, dance, and use their imaginations during a fun-filled, monthly adventure! And best of all, IT'S FREE! The Kimmel Center's *PNC Grow up Great* concerts were selected as Best Free Family Programming in the 2019 Philadelphia Family Magazine LOVE Awards.

Leading February's *PNC Grow Up Great*, ILL Doots is a Philly-based artist collective, known for being a band that not only makes quality music, but creates experiences that feed the audience's mind, body, and soul. Anthony Martinez-Briggs with Elle Morris, Andrew Nittoli and Jordan McRee from ILL Doots participated in the 2019 Kimmel Center Theater Residency, in partnership with Joe's Pub.

Attendees are invited to stay for a free performance from the Youth Troupe of The Philadelphia School of Circus Arts, beginning at 12PM! The Philadelphia School of Circus Arts has been based in Germantown since 2008. The teach adults and kids recreational classes in circus skills such as tumbling, aerials, tightwire, and unicycling. Of the 500 students per week who come through their doors, some of their most talented young people take part in the Youth Troupe. This year's Youth Troupe includes acrobats, equilibrists and jugglers ages 10-16.

RITZ CHAMBER PLAYERS

Philadelphia Chamber Music Society

Kimmel Center Cultural Campus' Perelman Theater

Sunday, February 9, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

As the nation's first chamber music ensemble composed solely of accomplished musicians spanning the African diaspora, the Ritz Chamber Players brings fresh perspective and energy to classical music. Founded in 2002 by artistic director and clarinetist Terrance Patterson, the Ritz Chamber Players seek to increase the visibility of African American classical composers and heighten public awareness of African American musicians' contributions within the classical music genre. Spotlighting repertoire by African American composers, their PCMS debut program promises novel sounds from "one of the most interesting and dynamic ensembles to emerge in recent years" (*Baltimore Sun*). Program highlights include Jeff Scott's "Poem For A Lost King"—which pays homage to the many African kings, elders and tribal chiefs abducted from their land during the 'Middle Passage' era—and Pulitzer Prize winner George Walker's "Music for Three."

Kelly Hall-Tompkins, *violin*

Orlando Wells, *viola*

Tahirah Whittington, *cello*

Judy Dines, *flute*

Terrance L. Patterson, *clarinet*

Stewart Goodyear, *piano*

Perkinson: String Trio

Scott: *Poem for a Lost King*

Walker: *Music for Three*

Holland: *Alchemy*

Lee, III: *Night Visions of Kippur*

Brahms: Piano Quartet in G Minor, Op. 25

GREGORY PORTER

Kimmel Center Cultural Campus' Verizon Hall

Monday, February 10, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

International best-selling artist Gregory Porter's music is at once timeless yet utterly of its time, solidifying his standing as his generation's most soulful jazz singer-songwriter. In his remarkable career, Porter has time and again demonstrated his innate ability to transcend genre and connect with audiences from all walks of life.

The two-time Grammy-winning vocalist's stunning fifth studio album *Nat "King" Cole & Me* is a heartfelt tribute to the legendary singer, pianist, and Capitol recording artist who influenced Porter's life and music. The album hit number 3 on the Official UK Album Chart, landing him his highest ever chart position and biggest-selling first week. *Nat "King" Cole & Me* is the follow-up to Porter's Grammy-winning albums *Liquid Spirit* (2013) and *Take Me to the Alley* (2016), which broke records by becoming the first jazz album to break into the top 5 for over a decade.

"Porter thrives using a unique style, an ever-changing vocal magnitude you simply have to hear to appreciate."

- *Pitchfork*

"He possesses a soulful, R&B-meets-jazz voice, yet there is an Everyman aura about him"

- *Times*

"The voice of the 21st Century"

- *Daily Star*

SITTIN' IN: LIVE SESSIONS

FREE

Kimmel Center Cultural Campus' SEI Innovation Studio

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

8 p.m.—Doors open

9 p.m.—Music begins

The February program celebrates *Sittin' In: Live Sessions'* founder and curator Anthony Tidd with a Birthday Bash featuring some of Philly's favorite artists. Lineup to be announced at a later date.

ARETHA: RESPECT

The Philly POPS

Kimmel Center Cultural Campus' Verizon Hall

Friday – Sunday, February 14 – 16, 2020 – Times Vary

With her towering vocal strength, unparalleled passion, and bittersweet nuance, The Queen of Soul's voice shaped the future of R&B—belting her way into the hearts of millions of fans. During her career, she recorded over 100 Billboard-charted singles, won 21 GRAMMY Awards, three American Music Awards, a Kennedy Center Honor, a Presidential Medal of Freedom, and more. For decades, Aretha

Franklin was the most-charted female artist in history. Rolling Stone appropriately ranked her number one in their list of “100 Greatest Singers of All Time.”

As a celebration of Aretha’s incomparable contribution to American popular music, The Philly POPS pays its RESPECTs with the dynamic combination of Broadway powerhouse Capathia Jenkins and GRAMMY-nominated R&B singer Ryan Shaw. The program features Aretha’s signature renditions of “Chain of Fools,” “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” “Amazing Grace,” and “Respect.”

TURN

Kimmel Center Cultural Campus’ SEI Innovation Studio

Wednesday – Saturday, February 26 – 29, 2020 at 8:00 p.m.

Using themes from Shakespeare’s *Othello*, M’Balía Singley confronts her experience as a black woman in America with equal parts humor and honesty in this brand-new theatrical work. *Turn* weaves original songs, comedy, and engrossing stories into a performance that is both sweeping and intimate. From societal expectations to relatable family disfunction, Singley turns to the unlikely 16th century play and finds connections to our 21st century lives. *Turn* was commissioned and developed through the Kimmel Center’s 2017-2018 Theater Residency.

M’Balía Singley is a Philadelphia-based performing artist who has been exploring and excavating the human condition through story, song, and audience engagement for the last quarter century.

She has shared her musical talents in such legendary music halls as the Jazz Standard and Smalls in New York City, and the World Cafe Live and the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia. She can be heard on John Legend’s Grammy® nominated debut album, *Get Lifted*, Orrin Evan’s *#knowingishalfthebattle*, and her own self-produced albums, including her recent release, *Halfway There*.

As an actor, M’Balía has appeared in *First Lady Suite*, *Ain’t Misbehavin*, and *The Vagina Monologues*, and as an educator she has taught music to students of all ages. In 2017, M’Balía composed her first children’s musical, *Anansi, the Spider King* (Arthur Warner Theater, USC), and she was a 2017-2018 Jazz Resident with the Kimmel Center, composing with lead artist, Doug Hirlinger, for *Dear Philadelphia*.

In 2018, M’Balía was selected as a Theater Resident with the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus, where she began writing *Turn*, an examination of Shakespeare’s *Othello* through the lens of intersectionality in the life of an African American woman. She has participated as host of *PNC Grow Up Great*, the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus’ FREE, monthly event for young music lovers, ages 3-5 years old. Each month *PNC Grow Up Great* introduces children to the vibrant worlds of either jazz or musical theater. She has also participated as a Teaching Artist for the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus’ KinderJazz program, teaching preschool- and kindergarten-aged children about jazz in creative ways through music and movement.

M’Balía is a graduate of Yale University with a Bachelor of Arts in history.

Entering its seventh season in June 2020, the Kimmel Center has proudly produced various full-length works born out of its Theater Residency, a 2-week annual intensive in partnership with Joe’s Pub at the Public, inviting artists to gather and create new works on the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus.

GRAND ORGAN CELEBRATION

ORGANISTS WAYNE MARSHALL, OLIVIER LATRY, AND DAVID BRIGGS

Kimmel Center Cultural Campus' Verizon Hall

Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at 8:00 p.m.

The Kimmel Center Cultural Campus presents three world renowned organists, Wayne Marshall, Olivier Latry, and David Briggs, for the *Grand Organ Celebration* at Verizon Hall on Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at 8:00 p.m. These awe-inspiring musicians will perform the music of Bach, Widor, Liszt, Ravel, Saint-Saëns, and Gershwin on the Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ. The concert will culminate in a three-way improvisation by the organists, based on subjects suggested by the audience.

Wayne Marshall serves as the Chief Conductor of WDR Funkhausorchester Cologne and Organist in residence at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. Wayne makes guest appearances with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi and many other orchestras. Wayne has become known for his musical diversity. As pianist and organist, Wayne has been featured extensively on albums and has performed recitals at some of the world's most prestigious venues, as well as performing as soloist with numerous orchestras, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, and the London Symphony Orchestra.

French organist Olivier Latry is one of the most distinguished concert organists in the world today. One of three titular organists at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, he is also Professor of Organ at the Paris Conservatory of Music, Organist Emeritus with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in Canada, and Artist in Residence at the Dresdner Philharmonie for 2017 – 2019. He maintains a full schedule of concert performances, appearing regularly as a soloist at prestigious venues and festivals and with leading orchestras around the world.

David Briggs is an internationally-renowned organist whose performances are acclaimed for their musicality, virtuosity, and ability to excite and engage audiences of all ages. With an extensive repertoire spanning five centuries, he is known across the globe for his brilliant organ transcriptions of symphonic music by composers such as Mahler, Schubert, Tchaikovsky, Elgar, Bruckner, Ravel, and Bach. Fascinated by the art of improvisation since a child, David also frequently performs improvisations to silent films such as *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, *Nosferatu*, *Jeanne d'Arc*, *Metropolis*, as well as a variety of Charlie Chaplin films.

Black History Month Kimmel Center Education Programming includes:

***JAZZ4FREEDOM**

CREATIVE STAGES SIGNATURE PROGRAM

GRADE 4

Kimmel Center Cultural Campus' Perelman Theater

January 13, 15, 16, and February 4, 11, 13 & 14 – 10 a.m. class, 12 p.m. show

Jazz4Freedom is a program developed for 4th grade students linking Jazz to Black History in Pennsylvania and beyond. Taught by experienced teaching artists, 4th graders are first engaged with a preshow workshop about the Harlem Renaissance and growth of jazz in Philadelphia. The highlight of Jazz4Freedom is a field trip to see Kimmel Center's Jazz4Freedom performance featuring music, dance, and commentary on social change throughout history. Students are inspired by a post-show workshop

which links the Civil Rights Movement to jazz and provides the opportunity for reflection on the continuation of social change. Finally, classroom teachers are empowered to continue the discussion through study guides connecting Jazz4Freedom to academic standards in Social Studies and Language Arts.

In September 2019, the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus announced its 5-year Strategic Growth expansion, which will educate, engage, and inspire 100,000 students each year in the Philadelphia area by year 2023. FREE education programming on the Campus and within the community is 100% supported by contributions, enabling the Center to fulfill its vision to *transform lives daily through the arts* and move forward in its mission to engage the region's diverse communities with art through performance and education.

***KIMMEL CENTER JAZZ RESIDENCY STUDENT WORKSHOP
STUDENT WORKSHOPS – NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Tuesday, February 11, 2020, Time to be announced at a later date

Each 2019-20 Kimmel Center Jazz Residency teams create new, relevant, and engaging “Philly Made” works for the community. In the Kimmel Center Jazz Residency’s seventh consecutive year, all three of these original pieces will focus on the relationship of Philadelphia against a social issue, including the homelessness issue, the introspective examination of one’s cultural identity as a citizen, and a futuristic look at neighborhoods.

Richard Hill Jr. (Composer/Voice/Bass), alongside band members Jim Holton (Cello, Keyboard), Gusten Rudolph (Drums), Elliot Bild (Trumpet) Nasir Dickerson (Saxophone, EWI), Kwame Geez (Saxophone), Mollie Ducoste (Violin), Owen Valentine (Violin), Zoe Lynch (Violin), Lovett Hines (Educator), Sumi Tonooka (Piano), and Cheryl Hill-Herder (Spoken word artist) plans to write a futuristic look at the musical dance rhythms of Philadelphia neighborhoods. He will teach a special, private class for students. These are coordinated directly with the Kimmel Center’s Education Department.

“As Charlie Parker said, ‘Now is the Time’. [My project is] the dance of diversity. This suite will use rhythms of various micro communities in Philadelphia,” said Richard Hill Jr. “I want this piece to encourage children and adults to take a moment and embrace the diversity that Philadelphia offers.” Talking about risk: “I like to use meters that are not common. As an artist and composer, it is my duty to push the envelope.”

**denotes event that must be scheduled by educator*

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The Kimmel Center Cultural Campus

Located in the heart of Center City, Philadelphia, our mission is to engage the region’s diverse communities with art through performance and education. Our Cultural Campus serves more than 1 million guests per year and includes the **Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts**, the **Academy of Music**, and the **Merriam Theater**- representing more than 160 years of rich history for the performing arts along Philadelphia’s Avenue of the Arts. We are home to eight esteemed Resident Companies: **The Philadelphia Orchestra**, **Opera Philadelphia**, **Pennsylvania Ballet**, **The Philly POPS**, **PHILADANCO**, **The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia**, **The Philadelphia Chamber Music Society**, and **Curtis Institute of**

Music. With nearly 9,000 seats per night, we are the region's most impactful performing arts center, and the second largest in the country. Our Cultural Campus serves as a preeminent and inclusive place to enjoy exceptional experiences that reflect the spirit of our region by cultivating a creative and socially-responsible environment where our community shares experiences that are delivered with pride, integrity, and respect. As a 501 c 3 nonprofit organization, we collaborate on, present, and produce a broad range of relevant and meaningful events, we serve as an active gathering space for social and community events, we educate the region's young people through access to quality arts experiences, and we provide support to artists in the creation of new work. TD Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank, is our proud sponsor of the Kimmel Center's 2019-2020 Season. American Airlines is the official airline of Broadway Philadelphia. For additional information, visit www.kimmelcenter.org.

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