



THE KIMMEL CENTER  
ACADEMY OF MUSIC  
MERRIAM THEATER

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Witness the World Premiere of “Turn”, @MBaliaMusic’s timely & original production inspired by her experience as a Black woman in America and Shakespeare’s “Othello”! BYOB performances will be at the @KimmelCenter’s SEI Innovation Studio 2/26 – 29! More info at [KimmelCenter.org](http://KimmelCenter.org).

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**KIMMEL CENTER CULTURAL CAMPUS PRESENTS  
PREMIERE OF M’BALIA SINGLEY’S *TURN*,  
HER COMPELLING PROJECT DEVELOPED DURING  
KIMMEL CENTER’S 2017-2018 THEATER RESIDENCY,  
FEBRUARY 26 – 29, 2020**

**“M’Balía sings with assertive verve and distinction.”  
-ALL ABOUT JAZZ**

**“M’Balía blends old-school sensibilities with boldly contemporary sass.”  
- JAZZTIMES**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** (Philadelphia, PA, December 19, 2019) – The Kimmel Center Cultural Campus is thrilled to present the World Premiere of **M’Balía Singley’s** original piece, ***Turn***, at the SEI Innovation Studio at 8:00 p.m. from Wednesday, February 26, 2020 through Saturday February 29, 2020. 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.

“Both the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus’ Theater and Jazz Residency programs continue to build legacies of producing thought-provoking, timely & socially-relevant content from local Philadelphia artists, like M’Balía Singley,” said Anne Ewers, President and CEO of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. “Her work is compelling and her juxtaposition of Shakespeare’s famous work against her own experiences is the kind of originality we love to present to audiences for world premiere projects in the intimate SEI Innovation Studio space.”

“Our Residency programs have the power to launch artists’ careers into new directions while also supporting their journey towards developing their voice and vision. Some have gone on to tour the country and others have been produced in Off-Broadway venues, but they are all bravely showing us how jazz and theater can take on the pressing questions of our era” said Jay Wahl, Producing Artistic Director of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. “We’re deeply looking forward to how M’Balía Singley shares with the audience a bold and unflinchingly honest tale about her life in *Turn*, a captivating work she has created with inventiveness, humor, and joy.”

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.

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. Entering its seventh season in June 2020, these works include: Mary Tuonomen’s *Hello Sadness!*; Jamie Leonhart’s *Estuary*; Ethan Lipton’s *The Outer Space*, which then played at The Public Theater in New York City; Deb Margolin’s *8 Stops*; Dito Van Reigersberg’s Martha Graham Cracker production of *Lashed But Not Leashed*; Courtnee Roze’s *The Culture*; Martha Stuckey’s *Due to the Sensitive Nature*; Daniel Alexander Jones’ *BLACK LIGHT*; David Sweeny’s Johnny Showcase alter-ego in *The Johnny Shortcake Show*; Molly Pope’s *Polly Mope*; and

James' and Jerome's *The Conversationalists*. Upcoming Theater Residency performances on the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus this season include Martha Graham Cracker's *Lashed But Not Leashed* album release show, with the Kimmel Center proudly serving as album Executive Producer (December 12, 2019, Perelman Theater) and *TWO BLUES: Two Plays* (April 2 – 5, 2020, SEI Innovation Studio), a performance featuring two plays, *Turquoise* and *Just Give Me One Half Hour With My Mother*, both by Obie Award-winning playwright Deb Margolin. Former Theater Resident Ethan Lipton will return as part of the Jazz @ the Kimmel series with *Ethan Lipton & his Orchestra* (March 14, 2020, SEI Innovation Studio).

Other featured upcoming performances at the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus include: **Grey Rock** (February 6 – 9, 2020, SEI Innovation Studio), **Gregory Porter** (February 10, 2020, Verizon Hall), **Jazzmeia Horn** (March 14, 2020, Perelman Theater), and **National Geographic Live! When Women Ruled the World with Egyptologist Kara Cooney** (March 18, 2020, Merriam Theater).

## **TURN**

### **Kimmel Center Cultural Campus' SEI Innovation Studio**

*February 26, 2020, 8:00 p.m. (Preview)*

*February 27, 2020, 8:00 p.m. (World Premiere)*

*February 28, 2020, 8:00 p.m.*

*February 29, 2020, 8:00 p.m.*

## **Tickets**

Tickets are on sale now starting at \$25.00. Tickets can be purchased by calling 215-893-1999, online at [www.kimmelcenter.org](http://www.kimmelcenter.org), or at the Kimmel Center Box Office. Group sales are available for groups of 10 or more and can be purchased by calling 215-790-5883. See [www.kimmelcenter.org](http://www.kimmelcenter.org) for more information.

*This is a designated BYO performance. Acceptable forms of BYO are 6-pack of beer and/or 750ml bottles of wine only; no liquor or open containers are permitted. Limit of one (1) 750ml bottle of wine OR one (1) six-pack of beer per two guests. Corkscrews and rolling coolers are not permitted. Ice, cups and corking service available at venue at no cost. All BYO Night guests are subject to lawful ID checks and bag checks at the manager's discretion.*

## **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](http://www.kimmelcenter.org).

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For photography, please visit [www.kcpress.smugmug.com](http://www.kcpress.smugmug.com)