



THE KIMMEL CENTER
ACADEMY OF MUSIC
MERRIAM THEATER

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Kimmel Center celebrates #BlackHistoryMonth w/ robust offerings & ongoing initiatives like @AlvinAiley, capoeira lessons, & family programs!

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CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT THE KIMMEL CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

MONTH'S PROGRAMMING TO INCLUDE ALVIN AILEY'S LEGENDARY WORK *REVELATIONS*; AN AFRO-CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL CELEBRATION; PLUS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES CELEBRATING DANCE, JAZZ SCAT SINGING, AND THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Philadelphia, PA, January 19, 2017) —The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts celebrates the heritage, accomplishments, and culture of African-Americans with the best in theater, gospel, Jazz, soul, modern dance, percussion, and more! From Broadway sensation Motown the Musical, to legendary local ensembles like Philadanco and Jazz Orchestra of Philadelphia, our community enjoys a year-round celebration as we continuously honor the many valuable contributions these artists have gifted our society.

In February, we have an opportunity to shine a spotlight on some of these creative accomplishments through a variety of artistic expressions. From historical dance interpretations that illustrate the painstaking journey from slavery to freedom, to more jubilant celebrations like the Harlem Renaissance and Brazilian Carnival, Black History comes to life on The Kimmel Center Campus in February.

“Historically, African American artists have had a tremendous impact in our community both on and off the stage,” says Anne Ewers, President & CEO of The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. “The Kimmel Center is thrilled to celebrate cultural icons and their milestone accomplishments, achieved as they overcame obstacles and paved the way for future generations. We pay homage to this extraordinary history and celebrate not only in February but all year round!”

The world renowned **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** kicks things off with performances on February 3–4 featuring Hope Boykin’s *r-Evolution, Dream.*, inspired by the speeches and sermons of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as the three-part work *Untitled America* by MacArthur Genius Kyle Abraham about the impact of the prison system on African American families. Additionally, audiences will be treated to *Revelations*, Ailey’s master work now seen by more than 23 million people in 70 countries. Through provocative dance movements and soul stirring sounds of traditional African American spirituals, *Revelations* transports audiences through Ailey’s faith walk in the 1960’s growing up in the American South.

Brazil’s premiere folkloric dance company **Balé Folclórico da Bahía** is bringing Carnival to Philadelphia on February 17th. Audiences will be mesmerized by the incredibly ornate costumes of this 38-member troupe of dancers, singers, and musicians, who perform a spectacular repertoire based upon “Bahian” folkloric dances of African origin including samba, slave dances, and capoeira – a form of martial arts designed to look like dance that was once performed by enslaved Africans. There will also be two free community Carnival events:

- Tuesday February 7, 2017, 12:00 p.m. — There will be **FREE capoeira dance lessons** in Hamilton Garden led by Philadelphia based dance company Project Capoeira, a Philadelphia-based non-profit.
- Friday, February 17, 2017, 6:00 p.m. — The entire community is invited to **“Carnival at The Kimmel Center,”** a free dance party that will parade down Broad Street to The Merriam Theater in time for the 7:30 p.m. performance of Balé Folclórico da Bahía.

February also features free community events that celebrate black history such as **PNC Grow Up Great**, a FREE monthly interactive program for families with children from age 2-5. On February 18 at 11:00 a.m., former Kimmel Center Jazz Residency artist Kendrah Butler will teach young music lovers the history of the traditional negro spirituals, songs used to uplift and empower enslaved people. The songs also contained hidden messages that aided in escape along the Underground Railroad. (Free)

On Wednesday, February 15, **Sittin’ In: Live Sessions** celebrates its 5th anniversary with an old fashion jam session – an informal musical event where instrumentalists play improvised solos and vamp on tunes, songs, and chord progressions. In addition to live music and entertainment, attendees will learn about the history of the “jam session,” and the pivotal role it has played in the African American artistic experience. (Free)

There are additional opportunities to learn about African American History through programs in The Kimmel Center’s Education Department. On February 8 at 11:00 a.m., esteemed Kimmel Center Resident Company PHILADANCO will perform a **student matinee titled *The Great Mix, Jazz and Dance*** in which students will enjoy a fusion and explosion of modern and jazz dance. The Kimmel Center also offers **free performing arts classes on The Harlem Renaissance and Jazz Scat singing**, offering interactive learning opportunities for students in grades 5-12. Teachers can register their classes for these opportunities on the Kimmel Center’s website or by calling 215-790-5896

Black History Month at The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts offers opportunities for broad and diverse audiences to experience a wide range of artistic expressions that are representative of the African diaspora. For more information go to www.kimmelcenter.org

Below is a full list of Black History Month offerings:

**denotes must be scheduled by educator*

**February 3-4, 2017 – Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
Merriam Theater**

Internationally-acclaimed dance company **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** returns to the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts February 3 and 4, 2017 at the Merriam Theater, for a weekend of inspirational performances including new works and long-standing favorites, launching a 19-city North American tour. (Tickets start at \$70.00)

**February 7, 2017 – FREE Community Capoeira Dance Lessons
Hamilton Garden, Kimmel Center**

The Kimmel Center welcomes the community to a FREE capoeira dance lessons in Hamilton Garden led by Philadelphia based dance company Project Capoeira, a Philadelphia-based non-profit. Participants will be invited to learn the rich history of this dance form that infused dance, music, gymnastics, self-defense, and the Portuguese language. Capoeira was born out of the struggle for freedom. Enslaved Africans brought it to Brazil in the 16th century and cleverly disguised this powerful form of self-defense as a harmless dance. To hide their fighting spirit from their masters, the earliest Capoeiristas combined playful, graceful dance and acrobatic movements with deadly kicks. (Free)

**February 8, 2017 – STUDENT EVENT – PHILADANCO: *The Great Mix, Jazz and Dance*
Merriam Theater**

Enjoy a fusion and explosion of modern and jazz dance as Philadanco takes flight in this exuberant performance that features a tribute to jazz icons, the Music of Prince, Earth Wind and Fire, and choreography by Tally Beatty. The matinee is open to all school groups, teachers and chaperones. A Q&A session will follow at the conclusion of the program. (*Must be booked by educator. For more information and to register, please email at maec@kimmelcenter.org or call 215-790-5896.)

**February 15 – Sittin' In: Live Sessions
Commonwealth Plaza, Kimmel Center**

The February program celebrates Sittin' In's 5th anniversary as well as the birthday of founder and artistic director Anthony Tidd who will perform in the big band jam session. There will be a discussion about the history of "the jam session" tradition within African American music, and also how Philadelphia ties into this. (Free)

**February 17, 2017 – Balé Folclórico da Bahía
Merriam Theater**

The 38-member troupe of dancers, musicians, and singers performs a repertory based on a "Bahian" folkloric dances of African origin and includes capoeira (a form of martial arts), samba, and those that celebrate Carnival. The company presents the Brazilian region of Bahia's most important cultural manifestations under a contemporary theatrical vision that reflects its popular origins. (Tickets start at \$59.00)

**February 18, 2017 – PNC Grow Up Great
Commonwealth Plaza, Kimmel Center**

Join us in the Kimmel Center's Commonwealth Plaza for an hour of interactive fun! At Grow Up Great, kids learn the basics of Jazz & Musical Theater. This month, prepare your kids for a fun musical

adventure involving learning music from the African American experience, including rhythms of the African diaspora, gospel traditions, and jazz!

Ongoing Education Programs:

Harlem Renaissance – Take a ride on the “A” train to Sugar Hill and discover the many colors, sights, and sounds of the Harlem Renaissance. Explore the social culture, music, dance, visual art, literary works, and the people who created them during this time of rich cultural rebirth in New York City’s Harlem neighborhood. Travel to a place and time where African-American artistic expression flourished, leaving its indelible impact on American culture and the world. Sing, scat, and dance the Lindy Hop and experience one of America’s most phenomenal and celebrated artistic treasures. (*Free Performing Arts Classes Grades 5 – 12, must be booked by educator. For more information and to register, please email at maec@kimmelcenter.org or call 215-790-5896.)

Jazz Scat Singing – From Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald to Mel Tormé and Take Six, the art of scat singing has thrilled audiences and jazz lovers for generations. Try your hand at creating cool jazz scat riffs with teaching artist Andrew Lawson, who will guide you on an amazing, interactive musical journey of scat singing replete with audible and visual examples. (*Free Performing Arts Classes Grades 5 – 12, must be booked by educator. For more information and to register, please email at maec@kimmelcenter.org or call 215-790-5896.)

The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts

Located in the heart of Center City, Philadelphia, the Kimmel Center’s mission is to operate a world-class performing arts center that engages and serves a broad audience through diverse programming, arts education, and community outreach. The Kimmel Center Campus is comprised of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts (Verizon Hall, Perelman Theater, SEI Innovation Studio, and the Merck Arts Education Center), the Academy of Music (owned by the Philadelphia Orchestra Association), and the Merriam Theater. The Kimmel Center is also home to eight Resident Companies: The Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Philadelphia, The 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, The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts is the region’s most impactful performing arts center, and the second largest in the country. TD Bank, America’s Most Convenient Bank, is the season sponsor of the Kimmel Center’s 2016-2017 Season. American Airlines is the official airline of Broadway Philadelphia. For additional information, visit kimmelcenter.org.

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For photography, please visit <https://kcpres.smugmug.com/>