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THIS JUST IN: Performance details announced for return of the goosebump-inducing Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts #PIFA2018! World premieres, critically-acclaimed artists, FREE events, and more at [kimmelcenter.org/pifa](http://kimmelcenter.org/pifa)

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## **KIMMEL CENTER UNVEILS NEW CRITICALLY-ACCLAIMED LINEUP DETAILS FOR 2018 PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS**

**11 DAYS OF GASP-INDUCING GOOSEBUMPS  
MAY 31 – JUNE 10, 2018**

**PERFORMANCE & ARTIST DETAILS, WORLD PREMIERE DATES, AND MORE**

**“Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts starts with a spark and ends with a party.”  
– USA TODAY**

**“The lineup for the third PIFA was stellar. I can hardly wait for the next one.”  
– *The Huffington Post***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** (Philadelphia, PA, January 26, 2018, 11AM) — The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts’ management announced its **2018 Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts (PIFA)** lineup Friday afternoon during an event at the Kimmel Center’s Hamilton Garden. With over 50 performances ranging from music and dance to 360-degree immersive spectacle experiences, the 2018 festival raises the proverbial PIFA bar, showcasing critically-acclaimed work that has captivated critics and garnered awards nationally and internationally. Known for its engaging performances curated by The Kimmel Center from around the globe, the festival was first developed in 2011 drawing increasing

audiences locally and attracting regional visitors seeking out the ultimate Philly experience. The 2018 festival runs **Thursday, May 31 through Sunday, June 10.**

The newly announced performances included a list of live theater, dance, and interactive visual art installations that transform the city for the 11-day, multi-arts takeover of the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus, public spaces, parks, and outdoor spaces throughout the heart of Philadelphia, including: the Philadelphia premiere of ***Doggie Hamlet***, an outdoor theatrical event from award-winning choreographer Ann Carlson, featuring five performers, three dogs, and a flock of sheep; the U.S. premiere of ***Tape Riot***, a hybrid performance art tour from Berlin-based performance art collective Asphalt Piloten (boasting an international team that includes a choreographer from Switzerland and composer from Italy), that departs from Center City mystery locations; the Kimmel Center commissioned world premiere event direct from South Korea, ***My Organ My Seoul***, featuring former K-pop artist Boram Kim and Ambiguous Dance Company's witty exploration of individual rhythm and freedom of expression, accompanied by Curtis Institute-trained, critically-acclaimed organist Ahreum Han on the Kimmel Center's Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ.

"We are absolutely thrilled to unveil our lineup for PIFA 2018! This season is unparalleled in its artistic quality, drawing art from around of the world," said Anne Ewers, President & CEO of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, during the event. "These new art forms, new artistic communities, and international artists will be featured in this year's festival thanks, in part, to the Kimmel Center's involvement with the In Situ network. As the only North American presenting member, the Kimmel Center is able to support emerging artists that specialize in work outside conventional venues. PIFA is our gift to the region, bringing together communities to share and appreciate art in all of its forms."

Some key events of the 4th installment of the biennial festival have already been announced. Central to PIFA 2018 is the highly anticipated return of French performance troupe Transe Express with a new world premiere work commissioned by the Kimmel Center to debut in Philadelphia: ***Cristal Palace***. This spectacle of gravity-defying engineering will rise into the air, a musician-topped chandelier as the centerpiece to a 360-degree immersive dance party. Transe Express first garnered acclaim in Philadelphia for their work in PIFA 2011, when 200,000 witnessed a "jaw-dropping sensation" as performers dangled hundreds of feet above Broad Street in front of the Kimmel Center.

"We're proud to present so many world-class artists that open our eyes about how we form community, collectively tell our stories, shepherd our flocks, define our individuality, and defy gravity," said Jay Wahl, the Kimmel Center's Producing Artistic Director. "When I'm in the audience being awed by these shows, I realize that though the performers on stage may be of a different race, gender, or religion, I see how much we have in common as people celebrating together humanity's courage, prowess, beauty, and grace."

Local casting details are still developing for the Philadelphia premiere of the critically-acclaimed two-part performance piece, ***Taylor Mac's A 24-Decade History of Popular Music***. Stay tuned for who will join the cast of this bedazzled mash-up of performance art from MacArthur Genius Award Winner and Pulitzer Prize finalist Taylor Mac, in association with Pomegranate Arts. Unlike anything you've ever experienced, this epic 24-hour performance art concert exorcizes the social history of the United States—240 years in the making and 24 hours in the telling. It is a spectacular pop odyssey with over 24

musicians and more than 100 local artists, including burlesque performers, a choir, a marching band, and knitters.

Other presentations announced include ***The Fever***, the newest interactive and experimental show from Obie Award-winning, New York-based 600 HIGHWAYMEN, a Philadelphia premiere in which the audience becomes part of the production; YouTube sensation dubbed “The Jon Stewart of the Arab World,” **Bassem Youssef**, in his first Philadelphia appearance with ***The Joke Is Mightier than the Sword***; the laws of physics are put to the test at ***SEA (Singular Extreme Actions)***, a Philadelphia premiere event from the mind of MacArthur Genius Award winner Elizabeth Streb, where through acrobatics and daredevil stunt work, every performer is an “action hero;” and the Philadelphia premiere kids show direct from Stockholm, ***Water on Mars*** transforms the Kimmel Center stage into a circus of dizzying tricks and gravity-defying stunts bursting with comedy, chocolate, and 400 roles of tape!”

The 11-day celebration of art will kick off on May 31 with a gala event at the Kimmel Center benefitting the Kimmel Center’s education and community outreach programs. From the Belmont Plateau, to the concourse of the Broad Street Line, the cityscape will pulse with cultural energy and urban spectacle, ending with a 6-block street party that transforms the Avenue of the Arts into an oasis of unforgettable artistic moments, food, vendors, and surprises.

PIFA Street Fair performances and additional festival events to be announced.

### **Tickets**

Tickets to individual performances are on sale now for Kimmel Center members and start at \$19. Public on sale takes place on Tuesday January 30 at 10 a.m. Please check [www.kimmelcenter.org/pifa](http://www.kimmelcenter.org/pifa) for the most up-to-date pricing for each show. Tickets can be purchased by visiting [www.kimmelcenter.org/pifa](http://www.kimmelcenter.org/pifa) or calling 215-893-1999.

For a full lineup of PIFA 2018 performances and events so far, see below:

## **PIFA 2018 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### **Cristal Palace (World Premiere)**

Transe Express

*TBD outdoor location on the banks of the Schuylkill River*

June 1 – 10, 2018, live performances at 8:00 p.m. nightly (excluding June 4)

More than 200,000 witnessed the “jaw-dropping sensation” during the 2011 PIFA, when aerial performers dangled hundreds of feet in the air above Broad Street and transfixed the crowd with an otherworldly spectacle. Transe Express, the celebrated French performance troupe, returns with the world premiere of *Cristal Palace*, a 360-degree immersive event featuring a musician-topped chandelier as the centerpiece for the best dance party Philly has ever seen.

This will be the World premiere of *Cristal Palace*, commissioned by the Kimmel Center.

## ***Taylor Mac: A 24-Decade History of Popular Music (Philadelphia Premiere)***

Taylor Mac

In association with Pomegranate Arts

*Merriam Theater*

June 2, 2018 – PART I (1776 – 1896), 12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.

June 9, 2018 – PART II (1896 – Present), 12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.

Unlike anything you've ever experienced, this epic 24-hour performance art concert exorcizes the social history of the United States—240 years in the making and 24 hours in the telling. It is a spectacular pop odyssey with over 24 musicians and more than 100 local performers, including burlesque performers, a choir, a marching band, and knitters. The audience itself is essential to the performance with deeply touching, oftentimes hilarious, and immersive moments that build to a delicious illustration of our nation's diverse and sometimes dysfunctional story, reinvigorating a distinctively American sense of possibility.

The only presentation of the complete *24-Decades* on the East Coast, this epic event (hailed as a Ring Cycle for the 21st Century), will be presented as two 12-hour parts, the longest presentation segments since Taylor's historic 24-hour marathon performance in Brooklyn last fall. Tickets can be purchased individually for the two 12-hour parts, or audience members can purchase the full 24 hours to see the pièce de résistance in its entirety— an experience that *The New York Times* called “one of the great experiences of my life.”

This will be the Philadelphia premiere of *Taylor Mac: A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*.

Major support for *Taylor Mac: A 24-Decade History of Popular Music* has been provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

## ***Water on Mars (Philadelphia Premiere)***

Plastic Boom

*Perelman Theater at the Kimmel Center*

June 1, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

June 2, 2018, 11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.

June 3, 2018, 11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.

A high-flying, not-your-average-feast for the eyes, *Water on Mars* combines jaw-dropping athleticism, eye-catching acrobatics and has been praised by *The Circus Diaries* as “a pure display of extraordinary skill.” This Philadelphia premiere kids show comes direct from Stockholm and turns the Kimmel Center stage into a circus of dizzying tricks and gravity-defying stunts bursting with comedy, chocolate, 400 roles of tape, and out-of-this-world airborne geometry!

This will be the Philadelphia premiere of *Water on Mars*.

### ***My Organ My Seoul (World Premiere)***

Ambiguous Dance Company & Ahreum Han

*Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center*

June 3, 2018, 3:00 p.m.

Direct from South Korea, former K-pop artists Boram Kim and Kung-min Jang dazzle audiences with their witty exploration of individual rhythm and freedom of expression in this world premiere featuring the Kimmel Center's Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ. The afternoon includes a performance of "Rhythm of Human"; Curtis Institute-trained, critically-acclaimed organist Ahreum Han on the Kimmel Center's Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ; and a collaborative piece commissioned by the Kimmel Center.

This will be the World premiere of *My Organ My Seoul*.

### ***Doggie Hamlet (Philadelphia Premiere)***

Ann Carlson

*Belmont Plateau in Fairmount Park*

June 3, 2018, 10:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

June 4, 2018, 6:00 p.m.

What has five performers, three herding dogs, a flock of sheep, and hay bale seating? *Doggie Hamlet!* This outdoor performance spectacle weaves dance, music, visual, and theatrical elements with aspects of competitive sheep herding trials. A work that "defies categorization" (Center for the Art of Performance), this Philadelphia Premiere is based on *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, an Oprah book-club pick about a mute boy born into a family of dog breeders. The dreamlike display blends together equal parts mystery and movement.

This will be the Philadelphia premiere of *Doggie Hamlet*.

### ***SEA (Singular Extreme Actions) (Philadelphia Premiere)***

Streb Extreme Action

*Perelman Theater at the Kimmel Center*

June 5, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

June 6, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

June 7, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

Watch as the laws of physics are put to the test at *SEA (Singular Extreme Actions)*, a Philadelphia premiere event from the mind of MacArthur Genius Award winner Elizabeth Streb. Human bodies careen through, around, and above a physical and kinetic set, thrilling audiences with athleticism and a healthy dose of bravery. Equal parts daredevil stunt work and acrobatics, *SEA* is a kaleidoscope of movement where every performer is dubbed an "action hero".

This will be the Philadelphia premiere of *SEA (Singular Extreme Actions)*.

## ***Tape Riot (American Premiere)***

Asphalt Piloten

*Secret locations revealed to ticket holders*

June 5, 2018, 5:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

June 6, 2018, 5:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

June 7, 2018, 5:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

June 8, 2018, 5:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

See Philadelphia in a whole new way! Without the constraints of a theatrical performance structure, this hybrid dance art tour permits audience members freedom of movement throughout the city. Starting at a Center City, Philadelphia, mystery location – revealed only to ticketholders through a communication before the performance – audiences will be guided through a journey leaving artistic traces of gaffer tape as hints along the way and experiencing morsels of artistry from a quartet of artists which combine electronic soundscapes, and award-winning choreography, to create a dynamic performance that undulates through the City of Brotherly Love. A U.S. premiere, Asphalt Piloten's *Tape Riot* is a performance that pushes against traditional boundaries by infiltrating urban public spaces to create a totally unexpected and unique experience.

This will be the American premiere of *Tape Riot* and Asphalt Piloten's American debut. These performances are made possible through the Kimmel Center's exclusive membership in In Situ – a network of European presenters specializing in art in public spaces. The Kimmel Center is the only U.S. member, and the affiliation allows the Kimmel Center to bring unique European performances to Philadelphia.

*Tape Riot* is generously supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

## ***The Fever (Philadelphia Premiere)***

600 HIGHWAYMEN

*SEI Innovation Studio at the Kimmel Center*

June 6, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

June 7, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

June 8, 2018, 7:00 p.m. & 10:00 p.m.

June 9, 2018, 7:00 p.m. & 10:00 p.m.

June 10, 2018, 2:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.

At a time when we feel most divided as a nation, the Obie Award-winning creative team *The New Yorker* calls "New York's best nontraditional company" gifts audiences with a common purpose through acting together. The newest experiential show from 600 HIGHWAYMEN taps into the limits of human existence.

This will be the Philadelphia premiere of *The Fever*.

## ***Bassem Youssef: The Joke is Mightier Than The Sword (Philadelphia Debut)***

*Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center*

June 6, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

Dubbed the “Jon Stewart of the Arab World,” Bassem Youssef is the creator and former host of the wildly popular TV show *Al-Bernameg*—the first political satire show in the Middle East and the most watched program in the region with 30 million viewers every week. In his stage show, *The Joke Is Mightier than the Sword*, Bassem shares his personal story and thoughts on the political climate that led to the Arab Spring; its parallels to the current state of American politics; and how propaganda lays the foundation for dictatorial regimes.

This will be the Philadelphia debut of *Bassem Youssef: The Joke is Mightier than the Sword*.

## **PIFA STREET FAIR**

*Broad Street, Philadelphia*

June 9, 2018, 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.

PIFA concludes with the celebrated PIFA Street Fair on Broad Street: seven blocks of art, food, entertainment, and vendors that will take place all day Saturday, June 9, between Chestnut and South Streets.

The Street Fair is generously supported by Bimbo Bakeries, USA.

## **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 2017-2018 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 <http://pressroom.kimmelcenter.org/PIFA-2018/>