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.@KimmelCenter announces three new critically-acclaimed acts, @biglove1, @studiodan, @nobuntumusic, to its stellar lineup for the goosebump-inducing Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts #PIFA2018! More info. @kimmelcenter.org/pifa

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**KIMMEL CENTER ANNOUNCES THREE NEW CRITICALLY-ACCLAIMED ACTS
TO ITS STELLAR LINEUP FOR THE
2018 PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS**

**TOSHI REAGON, NOBUNTU, AND *INVENTIVE MOTHERS: A TRIBUTE TO FRANK
ZAPPA* WILL BE ADDED TO
MORE THAN 50 AWE-INSPIRING PERFORMANCES
MAY 31 – JUNE 10, 2018**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Philadelphia, PA, February 26, 2018) — The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts announces three more critically-acclaimed acts to its **2018 Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts (PIFA)**. They are **Toshi Reagon** -- a talented singer, composer, and producer with roots in folk, blues and rock; **Nobuntu** – an all-female a capella group from Zimbabwe; and ***Inventive Mothers: A Tribute to Frank Zappa*** performed by **Studio Dan** from Austria. Each will enhance the stellar lineup of artists already planned for PIFA 2018. The 11-day festival is packed with more than 50 performances ranging from music and dance to 360-degree immersive spectacle experiences, and will attract regional visitors to Philadelphia from **Thursday, May 31 through Sunday, June 10**.

“The Kimmel Center prides itself on gracing its stages with rich and diverse performances for all audiences,” said Anne Ewers, President & CEO of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. “These artists offer folk, world, blues, rock and gospel music. We can’t wait to see, hear and experience the talent they’ll bring to PIFA 2018.”

PIFA Gala

PIFA 2018 will kick off on May 31 with a gala event at the Kimmel Center benefitting our education and community outreach programs. The centerpiece of the **PIFA Gala** will be a performance in Verizon Hall featuring singer, songwriter, and guitarist **Toshi Reagon** and the cast of *‘Parable of the Sower,’* with special guest **Lisa Fischer**, and including strings from the **Philadelphia Youth Orchestra**.

Reagon and friends will perform highlights from her genre-defying work-in-progress based on Octavia Butler’s acclaimed novel, *‘Parable of the Sower.’* Set in the future, this gospel opera blends science fiction, African American spiritualism and deep insights on gender, race, and the future of human civilization. Special guests include 20 female string players, which include members of the **Philadelphia Youth Orchestra** and powerhouse vocalist **Lisa Fischer**.

The performance will take place under the light of U.K. artist **Luke Jerram’s *Museum of the Moon***, a giant scale replica of the Earth’s moon hung in Verizon Hall, created using digital imagery from NASA.

Luke Jerram's multidisciplinary arts practice involves the creation of sculptures, installations and live artworks. Living in the UK, but working internationally, Jerram creates art projects that excite and inspire people around the world. Measuring seven meters in diameter, the moon features 120dpi detailed NASA imagery of the lunar surface. At an approximate scale of 1:500,000, each centimeter of the internally lit spherical sculpture represents 5km of the moon’s surface

Toshi Reagon

Critics consider **Reagon** one of the most compelling performers on the modern-rock scene. She opened for Lenny Kravitz on his first world tour and graced the stage with performers including Ani DiFranco, Elvis Costello and Meshell Ndegeocello. Her band, BIGLovely, has been performing since September 1996.

She has been the recipient of a NYFA award for Music Composition, She co-composed music for two Peabody award winning films. She received The Black Lily Music and Film Festival Award for Outstanding Performance. She is also a National Women's History Month Honoree, and the 2010 recipient of OutMusic's Heritage Award.

Reagon’s parents were musical luminaries of the civil rights era. The late Cordell Hull Reagon founded the Freedom Singers, while Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon performed with that group as well as with another a cappella ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock.

Lisa Fischer

Fischer has had a four decade, singing career that's legendary. Raised in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn, she emerged from New York's studio scene in the early-1980s and quickly became session singer royalty. Lisa's career revolved around supporting other artists, including her mentor Luther Vandross and a constellation of music legends including Aretha Franklin, Chaka Khan, Bobby McFerrin, Grover Washington, Patti LaBelle, and other major recording artists. Lisa joined the Rolling Stones on tour for the first time for their 1989 Steel Wheels tour; and has graced their stage for 26 years. She now has a new band called Grand Baton.

The breakout success of the Oscar-winning documentary *Twenty Feet from Stardom* (2013) altered the course of Lisa's musical career. Featuring clips of Lisa's 1991 Grammy-winning R&B hit "How Can I Ease The Pain" and her legendary duet with Mick Jagger on "Gimme Shelter," and glowing testimonials from famous colleagues like Sting, Patti Austin, and Chris Botti, the film showcased her virtuosity and vulnerability, earned her a second Grammy award. "Ms. Fischer has become the unexpected star of Mr. Neville's film," said the New York Times.

Nobuntu

This all-female, a capella quintet is from Zimbabwe. It has drawn international acclaim for its inventive performances that range from traditional Zimbabwean songs to Afro Jazz and Gospel. The ensemble's concerts are performed with pure voices, occasionally augmented by minimalistic percussion, traditional instruments such as the Mbira (thumb piano) and authentic dance movements.

The word ***Nobuntu*** is an African concept that values humbleness, love, unity, and family from a woman's perspective. The ensemble represents a new generation of young African women singers who celebrate and preserve their culture, beauty, and heritage through art.

The group will sing as an opening act before every performance of the world premiere of ***Cristal Palace*** on the banks of the Schuylkill River. The Kimmel Center commissioned the French performance troupe Transe Express to debut ***Cristal Palace*** in Philadelphia. 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.

Inventive Mothers: A Tribute to Frank Zappa

Also joining PIFA 2018 is the U.S. premiere of ***Inventive Mothers: A Tribute to Frank Zappa***, performed by the band **Studio Dan**. The artists are traveling from Austria to play in the Kimmel Center's SEI Innovation Studio, June 2 at 8:00 p.m. and June 3 at 2:00 p.m.

The name **Studio Dan** is a play on Frank Zappa's 1978 album, *Studio Tam*, which was released 40 years ago this year. The ensemble started as a big band, but has since morphed into a flexible new musical

ensemble to perform in various permutations, depending on the project. The group operates on the borders between diverse subgenres of contemporary music: improvisation, jazz, and (art) rock, to name only a few. **Studio Dan** is the only Austrian large ensemble belonging neither to the jazz big band mainstream nor to the strictly interpretive contemporary chamber music culture. Instead, the ensemble organically combines composition and improvisation, exploring beyond the bounds of simplistic categories.

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 for the most up-to-date pricing for each show. Tickets can be purchased by visiting 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 - blue highlighted items are new performances announced today, 2.26.18

A Special Concert featuring Toshi Reagon and the cast of Octavia Butler's Parable of the Sower with special guests Lisa Fischer and the strings of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra

PIFA GALA

May 31, 2018

Verizon Hall (Gala performance)

Exact Time TBD

Artists: Toshi Reagon, Lisa Fischer, Philadelphia Youth Orchestra string players, and Luke Jerram's *Museum of the Moon*

Tickets are by purchase to the PIFA Gala only

Singer, songwriter, and guitarist Toshi Reagon and friends perform highlights from her genre-defying work-in-progress based on Octavia Butler's acclaimed novel, '*Parable of the Sower.*'

Nobuntu

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)

The internationally acclaimed, all-female, a cappella quintet from Zimbabwe will perform as an opening act for *Cristal Palace* for 20-30 minutes each night. Your ticket to Cristal Palace gets you in to her *Nobuntu*. There will not be separate tickets for the performance.

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.

Inventive Mothers: A Tribute to Frank Zappa (American Premiere)

Artist: Studio Dan

June 2 @8:00p

June 3 @2:00p

SEI Innovation Studio

Studio Dan is an Austrian band that combines composition and improvisation, exploring beyond the bounds of simplistic categories. Its music embraces "a great orchestral layer with a very special sound."

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 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.

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For photography, please visit <http://pressroom.kimmelcenter.org/PIFA-2018/>