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ACADEMY OF MUSIC  
MERRIAM THEATER

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@KimmelCenter Theater residency alumni James & Jerome return with avant-garde (and BYOB!) concert premiere production "The Conversationalists" in the SEI Innovation Studio from 11/7 – 11/9! More info @ KimmelCenter.org

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**KIMMEL CENTER CULTURAL CAMPUS PRESENTS  
THEATER RESIDENCY ALUMNI  
JAMES HARRISON MONACO AND JEROME ELLIS  
WITH NEW, INNOVATIVE, CONCERT PREMIERE OF  
*THE CONVERSATIONALISTS*  
NOVEMBER 7 – 9, 2019**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** (Philadelphia, PA, October 9, 2019) – The Kimmel Center Cultural Campus' Theater Residency alumni **James Harrison Monaco** and **Jerome Ellis** return for a concert premiere event, ***The Conversationalists***, in SEI Innovation Studio Thursday, November 7, 2019 through Saturday, November 9, 2019. *The Conversationalists* was developed through residencies with the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, the New York Theatre Workshop, and the 2019 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at MASS MoCA. James and Jerome were both Residents of the Kimmel Center's 2017-2018 Theater Residency program.

The Kimmel Center has proudly produced many full-length works born out of its Theater Residency, a 2-week annual intensive inviting artists to gather and create new works on the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus. The program will invite its seventh season of artists in June 2020.

"Every year, our Theater Residency artists dive into creating new works that are creative, intimate, and incredibly diverse," said Anne Ewers, President & CEO of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts.

"James & Jerome have crafted a production that is somehow wholly unique yet comfortingly familiar.

They have amalgamated the best elements of various art forms for a production that will inspire and entertain audiences in ways they have never experienced before.”

*The Conversationalists* is a movie James and Jerome have written together, but which the audience never sees. Rather, the film is passionately described for the audience, shot by shot, by the performers, while a chamber ensemble on stage plays the acoustic and electronic score live. In this way, the spectacle of the movie occurs in the minds of the audience members. That "movie" itself is an international melodrama about the triangular friendship (and sometimes enemyship) between a Colombian-born Mexican-raised pop-ranchera star, her teenage son, and a Palestinian-born Jordanian-raised owner of a chess shop in Greenwich Village. *The Conversationalists* is experienced at once as a theater piece, a concert, a sort of radio play, a night of storytelling, and a movie dreamed together.

James & Jerome (James Harrison Monaco and Jerome Ellis) are a music and storytelling duo based in New York, creating hyper-literary live-music narrative spectacles for theaters and other spaces. Their electronic music concert and art lecture *Ink*, which premiered in January 2019 as part of Under The Radar Festival, was the first ever co-presentation by The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Public Theater. In addition to The Met and Under The Radar, their works have been presented at venues such as Lincoln Center, La MaMa, MASS MoCA, the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus, and Ars Nova's ANT Fest (2013). They are also New Writers in Residence at Lincoln Center Theater.

Other featured upcoming performances at the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus include: ***An Evening with Samin Nosrat*** (November 6, 2019, Academy of Music), ***Between River and Rim: Hiking the Grand Canyon with Kevin Fedarko and Pete McBride*** (November 13, 2019, Merriam Theater), ***Béla Fleck & The Flecktones*** (December 3, 2019, Verizon Hall), ***Martha Graham Cracker in LASHED BUT NOT LEASHED*** – former Kimmel Center Theater Residency artist (December 12, 2019), ***Rachael & Vilray*** (December 13, 2019, Perelman Theater), and ***Turn by M’Balie Singley*** – former Kimmel Center Theater Residency artist (February 26 – 29, 2020).

### **THE CONVERSATIONALISTS**

Kimmel Center Cultural Campus’ SEI Innovation Studio  
November 7-9, 2019, 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 <https://kcpress.smugmug.com/>