

ARTS

AT BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

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Bryn Mawr College Performing Arts Series Presents Performing Artist John Kelly in One Night Only Performance of *The Escape Artist* This January

Performing Arts Series embraces the natural world, sacred traditions and geniuses of the past

BRYN MAWR, PA – December 4, 2013 – The 2013-14 season of the **Bryn Mawr College Performing Arts Series** continues in the New Year with *The Escape Artist* from Bessie and Obie Award-winning performance artist, musician and actor **John Kelly**. *The New York Times* said of the piece: “You realize what you’re watching isn’t so much an artist inventing himself as inevitably discovering the true self within.” The performance takes place **Friday, January 28, 2014 at Goodhart Hall, Bryn Mawr College.**

In *The Escape Artist*, John Kelly is a stressed-out performer who has a catastrophic trapeze accident while rehearsing a theater piece based on the life of the Italian Baroque painter Caravaggio. Confined to a hospital gurney, he finds refuge in Caravaggio’s images of sinners and saints, prostitutes and gods. The work is Kelly’s most recent collection of original songs in collaboration with **Carol Lipnik** and depicts Kelly’s signature blend of wit and darkness. It is regarded as one of Kelly’s most impressive performances not only because he combines a diverse range of topics in his surreal yet humorous narrative, but he also manages to very energetically sing the entire piece lying flat on his back.

Bryn Mawr College Performing Arts Series Coordinator **Lisa Kraus** notes, “John Kelly is a performance artist with a cult following who appeals to a broader audience because his work is highly visual, deeply musical and altogether moving. He often takes inspiration from the genius of other artists and zooms in on Caravaggio with *The Escape Artist*. Kelly-meets-Caravaggio will be a rich feast.”

Bryn Mawr College is located at 101 N. Merion Avenue in Bryn Mawr, PA. Tickets to individual events in the Bryn Mawr Performing Arts Series are \$20, \$18 for seniors over 65, \$10 for students with ID and Dance Pass holders, and \$5 for children under 12. Tickets, subscriptions and more information are available online through [Brown Paper Tickets](http://BrownPaperTickets), at brynmawr.edu/arts/series.html or by calling 610-526-5210.

The Bryn Mawr College Performing Arts Series continues its season in February with a regional premier of **Liz Gerring Dance Company’s *glacier***, based on **Michael J. Schumacher’s** nature-inspired score. Closing the season in March is master cellist **Jennifer Koh’s** inspiring *Bach and Beyond* recital, featuring Bach’s six Sonatas and Partitas, as well as works by modern day composers.

ABOUT JOHN KELLY

John Kelly is a performance artist whose work ranges from mixed media dance-theatre works, to vocal concerts, to exhibitions. He has sung the music of John Cage at the San Francisco Symphony, and collaborated and recorded with Laurie Anderson, David Del Tredici, Natalie Merchant and Antony and the Johnsons. James Franco said, "[Kelly] crosses into so many worlds with quiet authority and excellence." Kelly played the lead role in Franco's film *The Clerk's Tale* (Spencer Reese) in 2010. Kelly has also collaborated with John Cage and Laurie Anderson among other notable musicians, actors and artists. Antony Hegarty, of Antony and the Johnsons, calls John Kelly "one of [his] heroes."

John Kelly trained as a dancer with American Ballet Theatre, the Harkness House for Ballet Arts, with modern dance pioneer Charles Weidman, and James Waring. As a visual artist he studied painting and drawing with Larry Rivers and Barbara Pearlman at Parsons School of Design, and painting at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts School. His performance studies include Decroux corporeal mime at the Theatre d'Ange Fou in Paris, trapeze and tight-wire with the Pickle Family Circus in San Francisco, and voice with Peter Elkus at the Academia Musicale Ottorino Respighi in Assisi, Italy. His personal works embrace autobiographical, cultural and political phenomenon such as the Berlin Wall, Troubadours, the AIDS epidemic and Expressionistic Film. He also created ambitious character studies based on historic figures such as Caravaggio, Antonin Artaud and Jean Cocteau. He is a relentless seeker and questioner.

Kelly is the recipient of numerous awards including two Bessie Awards, two Obie Awards, two NEA American Masterpiece Awards, an American Choreographer Award, a CalArts/ Alpert Award in Dance/Performance, a Visual AIDS Vanguard Award, and the 2010 Ethyl Eichelberger Award. His fellowships include the Rome Prize in Visual Art at The American Academy in Rome, The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, The Guggenheim Foundation, The Greenwall Foundation, The New York Foundation for the Arts, and Art Matters, Inc.

Kelly's writing includes "JOHN KELLY," a visual autobiography, published by the 2twice Arts Foundation in association with *Aperture*; essays for *Movement Research Journal*, *Inside Arts*, *Metro New York*, *The Italian Journal*, and *Performing Arts Journal*. He is currently working on a memoir.

ABOUT THE BRYN MAWR COLLEGE PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

Since 1984 the Bryn Mawr College Performing Arts Series has presented great artists and performances to audiences in the Philadelphia area, creating an environment in which the value of the arts is recognized and celebrated. Talks and workshops provided free to the public help develop arts awareness and literacy. The Series works to lower barriers to arts access through its partnership with Art-Reach, a nonprofit dedicated to improving arts accessibility for people of all ages and circumstances, and through its low ticket prices. Partnering in recent seasons with such organizations as the Baryshnikov Arts Center, the Bryn Mawr Film Institute and the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival, the Bryn Mawr College Performing Arts Series has presented performances and enriching events by such luminaries and visionaries as Meredith Monk, John Waters, Il Fondamento, the Khmer Arts Ensemble of Cambodia and Urban Bush Women.

The Bryn Mawr College Performing Arts Series gratefully acknowledges support from The Miriam Schultz Grunfeld '69 Fund, established by Carl Grunfeld, M.D., friends, and family members in memory of Miriam Schultz Grunfeld '69. Since 1996, the Grunfeld Fund has enriched student life by supporting art history, the arts and literature.

The Bryn Mawr College Performing Arts Series gratefully acknowledges support for its 2013-14 season from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

The Bryn Mawr College Performing Arts Series continues its 2013/14 season with:

Liz Gerring Dance Company – *glacier*

Friday, February 28 at 8:00 p.m.

McPherson Auditorium, Goodhart Hall

Grunfeld Lecturer: Jennifer Koh – *Bach and Beyond Part 3*

Saturday, March 29, 8:00 p.m.

Thomas Great Hall

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To request interviews, photos and more information, please contact:

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