



Friday, March 16, 2018, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

W. Kamau Bell

*A question-and-answer session with the audience will conclude the evening.
There will be no intermission.*

Cal Performances' 2017–18 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.



W. Kamau Bell is a sociopolitical comedian based here, in the People's Republic of Berkeley. Bell is the host of the Emmy Award-winning CNN docu-series *United Shades of America with W. Kamau Bell*, which will return to CNN for its third season later this year. Before *United Shades*, Bell was best known for his critically acclaimed—and criminally short-lived—FX comedy series, *Totally Biased with W. Kamau Bell*.

Bell is proud to be the ACLU's Ambassador of Racial Justice, although he is pretty upset that they didn't give him a badge along with the title. He also sits on the advisory board of Race Forward, a racial justice think tank, and Hollaback, a nonprofit movement to end street harassment.

The New York Times has called Bell "the most promising new talent in political comedy in many years," and Salon.com listed Bell on their "Sexiest Men of 2012" list, calling *Totally Biased* "surreptitiously revolutionary in its effortless diversity and humanism." In its brief time on television, *Totally Biased* was nominated for both an NAACP Image Award and a GLAAD Award. *Totally Biased* was executive-produced by Chris Rock, who became a fan after seeing Bell perform his one-man show, *The W. Kamau Bell Curve: Ending Racism in About an Hour*. Bell still performs *The W. Kamau Bell Curve* at colleges across the country.

Bell recently released his third comedy album, *Semi-Prominent Negro*, which is the audio from his *Showtime* comedy special of the same name. He has also released two other stand-up comedy albums: *One Night Only* and *Face Full of Flour*. Bell's first book, *The Awkward Thoughts of W. Kamau Bell: Tales of a 6' 4", African American, Heterosexual, Cisgender, Left-Leaning, Asthmatic, Black and Proud Blerd, Mama's Boy, Dad, and Stand-Up Comedian*, was published in 2017.

Bell has appeared on various programs on the Comedy Central network, as well as on *Real Time with Bill Maher*, *Chelsea*, *Conan*, *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, *WTF with Marc Maron*, *The Rachel Maddow Show*, *The*

View, *Fresh Air with Terry Gross*, *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*, *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.*, *Bullseye with Jesse Thorn*, *The Treatment with Elvis Mitchell*, *The Nerdist*, and *This American Life*, among others. And yes, he will do your podcast if you ask him nicely and if he has the time.

His writing has appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Hollywood Reporter*, as well as on VanityFair.com, Salon.com, MSNBC.com, and BuzzFeed.

These days Bell might be most excited about his budding podcast empire. He is the host of *Kamau Right Now!*, a public radio talk show that airs on KALW in San Francisco. *Kamau Right Now!* is a live—and lively—program that Bell has described as "a three-ring circle of relevance." Bell is also excited about his political podcast, *Politically Re-Active*, on which he and his co-host, friend, and fellow comedian Hari Kondabolu, try to make sense of the nonsense. Bell's labor of love is his podcast with his friend, comedian Kevin Avery, entitled *Denzel Washington is The Greatest Actor of All Time Period*. On the podcast, they are reviewing every Denzel Washington movie in (mostly) alphabetical order in hopes of proving... well, you read the name already. The podcast has featured interviews with guests including Spike Lee, Ava DuVernay, Ryan Coogler, and India Arie, and has been included on *Entertainment Weekly's* "Must List."

Praised by *Punchline Magazine* as "one of our nation's most adept racial commentators, with a blistering wit," Bell was voted San Francisco's best comedian by *SF Weekly*, the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, and *7x7* magazine. Robin Williams called Bell "ferociously funny," and *The New Yorker* said, "Bell's gimmick is intersectional progressivism: he treats racial, gay, and women's issues as inseparable." *SF Weekly* called Bell "smart, stylish, and very much in the mold of politically outspoken comedians like Dave Chappelle," though he was more excited that they called him "handsome."