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KST & IRON CROSS COMMUNITY MINISTRIES PRESENT: 3rd Annual Gospel Xplosion featuring Reconcile, national gospel acts take the KST stage

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In partnership with Iron Cross Community Ministries, Kelly Strayhorn Theater presents **Gospel Xplosion**, a family-friendly gospel music concert at 2 p.m. on Saturday, August 2 at Kelly Strayhorn Theater in East Liberty. Admission is pay-what-you-can.

Gospel Xplosion celebrates the diversity in gospel genres with rap, dance, miming, poetry, singing, and drumming. The event, formerly called Rep The Cross Gospel Explosion, started in 2010 as a partnership between Larry Fielder of Iron Cross Community Ministries and Kelly Strayhorn Theater. Iron Cross' mission is to "Reach the Unreachable and Teach the Unteachable." With that message, Gospel Xplosion promotes positive music and energy in hopes to decrease violence in Pittsburgh neighborhoods, especially with local youth.

"We're happy to co-present Gospel Xplosion with Iron Cross," says Janera Solomon, executive director of KST. "The event has a positive message and, with all of our family programming, we aim to bring the community together for a good cause."

Fielder, the outreach director for Iron Cross, hopes the music and activities can make a positive, lasting impact on audiences. "As years pass, I hope to see more organizations—whether it be positive organizations, churches, or whoever—come aboard the vision to help with this movement," he says. "It's not about Iron Cross Ministries. It's about saving our people."

The event features a number of performances and activities both on and off the main stage. Kids and families will enjoy face painting, snow cones, an open mic session, and rap cypher, in addition to performances by samba band **Timbeleza**, gospel singer **LaLeita Small**, and headliner **Reconcile**. Comedian **Comma'Dee** (aka Deidre Lesesne) returns to emcee Gospel Xplosion once again. A Pittsburgh native, Ms. Lesesne has performed at the Pittsburgh Improv, Funny Bone, and Laugh Factory Comedy Clubs.

Timbeleza kicks off the main stage portion of Gospel Xplosion, energizing the crowd with drums and dance. LaLeita Small of The Life Church then takes the stage for a joyful gospel song performance. A native of Homestead, LaLeita Small recently debuted the single *Lay My Crown Down*, from her upcoming album *Chambers of a Worshipper*.

A rap cypher will follow featuring Jerry "Stay Humble" Jefferson, L.I.M.S., Azariah "Z" Jones, Donte "Patch" Martin, Josh "C'aso" Adams, and Melvin "S.I.R." Fallin with Timbeleza providing the beat.

National recording artist Reconcile returns as the featured performer. The Texas-based gospel rapper debuted his new album *Sacrifice* this past May. The album features other well-known Christian rap artists such as Json, Dre Murray, and Canon, among others.



Reconcile performing at KST in 2012
 - Photo by J. Altdorfer



During the event, Iron Cross Community Ministries will also hold their annual award ceremony, celebrating local community service leaders. The **Iron Cross Community Ministries Award** recognizes, rewards, and encourages people that have made a significant impact on meeting the needs of people within the Pittsburgh communities. Maelene Meyers, executive director of East Liberty Development Inc., Tracee Kirkland, chairman and CEO of Nahbi Christian Ministries, and Pennsylvania State Representative Ed Gainey will be honored for their outstanding public service.

East Liberty LIVE!

This event is part of KST's **East Liberty LIVE!** summer series, sponsored by **PNC** and **Yelp Pittsburgh**.

Kelly Strayhorn Theater presents East Liberty LIVE! — a vibrant series of affordable and accessible summer arts programming. With a variety of dance, music, and film events throughout the summer, East Liberty LIVE! provides creative activities and innovative arts experiences for those who work, play, and live in the East End.

About the Kelly Strayhorn Theater

As the last of nine theaters from the 1950s heyday of East Liberty, the Kelly Strayhorn Theater uses the arts as a catalyst for continuing community revitalization. The theater, in its 12th season, continues to play a key role in the transformation of Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood. An intimate, professionally equipped, 349-seat multiple-use performance venue, the theater demonstrates its commitment to Pittsburgh artists and audiences. The KST is a favorite venue of emerging local artists, regional artists and arts organizations who take risks and present new work. Noted Pittsburghers Gene Kelly and Billy Strayhorn, the namesakes, are among the 80 area artists honored on the theater's Gallery of Stars. The building, opening in 1914, is the former Regent Theatre, which served the East End as a movie house for eight decades.

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