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Kelly Strayhorn Theater’s Sixth Annual Celebration of Pittsburgh Jazz Legend Billy Strayhorn

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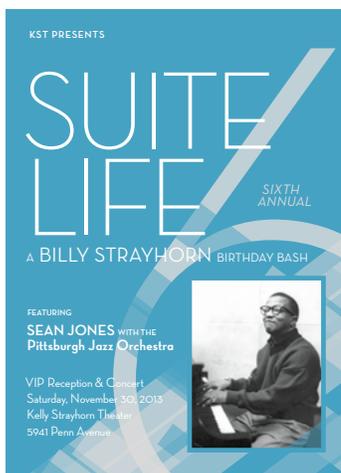
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Click for the 2013 Suite Life handbill

Grammy Award-winning trumpeter, composer and bandleader **Sean Jones** leads the **Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra** (PJO) in a tribute to internationally acclaimed musician Billy Strayhorn on Saturday, November 30 at 8 p.m. at Kelly Strayhorn Theater. **Suite Life: A Billy Strayhorn Birthday Bash** features an 18-piece instrumental and vocal ensemble performing renditions of Strayhorn compositions as well as jazz favorites by other composers.

This one-night-only tribute celebrates the life of pianist, composer, and arranger Billy Strayhorn, who began his musical studies as a youth in Pittsburgh. At age 22, he joined Duke Ellington’s band. Among their most famous collaborations are “Take the A Train” and “Lush Life.”

Jones is featured on the 2007 Grammy Award-winning “Turned to Blue” from Nancy Wilson. As a bandleader, Jones has released six albums under the Mack Avenue Records label. In addition to being a lead trumpeter for the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (which also features Wynton Marsalis), Jones performs nationally and internationally with his own groups. As a highly-sought featured musician, Jones often plays at such acclaimed festivals as the Monterey Jazz Festival, Detroit International Jazz Festival and Montreal International Jazz Festival. In 2004, he became a music professor at Duquesne University. In addition to performer, Jones is the Artistic Director of PJO.

The Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra features some of the region’s top musicians. On trumpet are Steven Hawk, James Moore and Kenneth Rittenhouse. On trombone are Keith Jackson, Jeffrey Bush, Jay Ashby, and Glenn Wayland. The saxophone section includes Eric DeFate, Curtis Johnson, Kenny Powell, James Germann, and Mike Tomaro, who is also co-artistic director of PJO. Pianist Alton Merrill, bassist Paul Thompson, percussionist Tom Wendt and Marty Ashby on guitar comprise the rhythm section. Carolyn Perteete is the vocalist.

Executive director of Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Janera Solomon said, “It’s Billy Strayhorn’s 98th birthday and we couldn’t be more excited to have Sean Jones and Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra with us to celebrate a tremendous Pittsburgh treasure. The Strayhorn Family, including Billy Strayhorn’s nephew Dr. Gregory Morris, will be in attendance. I can’t think of a better way to spend the festive holiday weekend than with family, friends, and fantastic music.”

In 2000, the former Regent Theatre was renamed in honor of Gene Kelly and Billy Strayhorn, two famous Pittsburgh artists. Kelly Strayhorn Theater honors each namesakes annually on their birthdays.



In addition, Kelly Strayhorn Theater will host yearlong celebrations of two special upcoming centennials: the 100th anniversary of its historic theater (2014) and the 100th birthday of Billy Strayhorn (2015).

The \$75 **VIP ticket** to Suite Life includes a ticket to the performance, admission to the exclusive pre-performance **“Count Off with Sean Jones”** reception at 6 p.m. with cocktails and hors d’oeuvres, and special performance by Sean Jones, DJ Herman “Soy Sos” Pearl, and Erik Lawrence on saxophone. Proceeds from the VIP reception benefit the Strayhorn Legacy Fund, which supports arts education activities for youth.

Tickets to the performance only are: \$25 General | \$20 Residents of 15206 | \$15 Student/Artist. For tickets, visit kelly-strayhorn.org or call 412.363.3000. Kelly Strayhorn Theater is located at 5941 Penn Avenue in East Liberty.

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, opened in 1914, is the former Regent Theatre, which served the East End as a movie house for eight decades.

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