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Groove Aesthetic returns to KST's Alloy Studios for *Winds of the Sahel*, explores West African music

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Kelly Strayhorn Theater is proud to present **Groove Aesthetic: *Winds of the Sahel*** at 8 p.m. on Friday, October 24 at The Alloy Studios. Jazz vocalist **Anqwenique Wingfield** joins composer **Joe Sheehan** for an evening of dance, instrumental, hip-hop, classical, and African folk music, as part of the ongoing Groove Aesthetic series.

A Pittsburgh native, Anqwenique Wingfield studied classical music and opera at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She premiered Groove Aesthetic, a local artist collective showcasing various disciplines and genres, in March 2013 at the now-closed Fe Gallery in Lawrenceville. *Winds of the Sahel* is Groove Aesthetic's third show at KST's Alloy Studios.

Although she originally wanted to sing opera, Wingfield's father — a jazz musician — strongly encouraged her to take gigs at jazz shows and attend jam sessions in the city. Through the connections she made and her father's support, Wingfield immersed herself in Pittsburgh's jazz scene.

"I found that there were not a lot of places where I am able to bring together opera and jazz, and in certain spaces it's not always received well," she says. "So I wanted to create a space where I could mix the genres together and do an aria and jazz. It evolved into this multidisciplinary thing where we included visual art, video, dance, and musicians from various ends of the spectrum. Now, all of our shows incorporate those elements. It's about the different artists from different disciplines collaborating and creating something new."

Wingfield met Joe Sheehan in 2011 at a rehearsal through mutual friends. They both applied for and received a jazz grant and happened to be rehearsing for a gig that same day. Knowing Sheehan had a classical music background, Wingfield recruited him for Groove Aesthetic. They've been performing together within the collective and other shows since that time.

Sheehan, a Pittsburgh native, currently teaches music as an assistant professor at Duquesne University. In addition, he composes and performs classical, jazz, pop, hip-hop, R&B, and West African music. He studied traditional song, dance, and drumming in Ghana for an independent study in 2008–2009. "I just really fell in love with the music there so I always wanted to go back," says Sheehan. He returned to Ghana in the summer of 2014 with a grant from Duquesne to create music based on his transcriptions from traditional West African songs.

Winds of the Sahel, showcasing original songs and compositions from Joe's trip, highlights music inspired by West Africa and its diaspora. A multidisciplinary performance, the evening's music celebrates



Anqwenique Wingfield by Mark Simpson



song and dance from the roots of many musical cultures throughout the world. *Winds of the Sahel* also features performances by Kinetic, Trio+, and Texture Contemporary Ballet.

“We are happy to welcome back Groove Aesthetic to KST and The Alloy Studios,” says Janera Solomon, executive director of KST. “Anqwenique and Joe are amazing artists. They bring a wonderful sound and experience that reflects the diversity of our neighborhood.”

Join us for a pre-show mixer before the performance at 7 p.m.

Groove Aesthetic: *Winds of the Sahel* with Joe Sheehan
Friday, October 24 :: 8 PM, Pre-show Mixer 7 PM
The Alloy Studios, 5530 Penn Ave, Pgh Pa. 15206

Tickets: \$15 Gen. Admission, \$10 Artist/Student/15206 Resident

Please be advised: No late seating for this event

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, 350-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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