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Kelly Strayhorn Theater Announces Fall 2015 Season Featuring Inspiring New Dance and Music Performances, Screenings, Conversations and More

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PITTSBURGH, PA (August 19, 2015) — Kelly Strayhorn Theater (KST) announces the Fall 2015 lineup of KST Presents, its eighth season of multidisciplinary events. On East Liberty's historic stage, KST Presents hosts inspiring artists from around the world and from right here in our neighborhood. With a diverse selection of dance, theater, music and interdisciplinary works, along with film screenings, conversations and participatory family-friendly events, KST Presents gathers together a world of perspectives and the spirit of our community for unforgettable shared experiences. Tickets go on sale August 25, details and information at kelly-strayhorn.org or call 412-363-3000.

The season launches on September 25 and 26 with the world premiere of choreographer **Olivier Tarpaga's *Declassified Memory Fragment***. Featuring a top-notch ensemble of dancers and musicians from Burkina Faso, the work brings the beauty and complexities of contemporary African society to East Liberty.

"Within East Liberty, KST fuses art and culture into a larger sense of shared community," says executive director Janera Solomon. "This fall, Olivier Tarpaga's world premiere fusion of live music and dance, followed by events with masterful artists like **Vieux Farka Touré** from Mali, add to a growing roster of projects from more than 20 countries that have been a part of our World Stage series—an annual celebration that brings international artists to one of Pittsburgh's most culturally rich neighborhoods."

This season, KST continues its investment in new works and new initiatives that foster creative visions in our community. With residency programs that allow artists to venture on new projects, and programs designed to bring an entrepreneurial force to new ideas, KST invites audiences to encounter the power of creativity in progress.

"We steadily support artists early in their process, and this year is no exception," notes Solomon. "Local interdisciplinary duo **slowdanger** will spend 80 hours in our studios and share a preview of their **memory 4**, scheduled to premiere in June. At the same time, Creative Community Artist-in-Residence **Bill Shannon** will lead workshops for adults with physical disabilities, with the goal of forming a new ensemble for his next work, **Stay Up**."

KST also launches brand new endeavors that amplify the creative energy of East Liberty. Catch **Speak Freely**, a monthly series of frank conversations with innovative leaders and entrepreneurs hosted by Kit Mueller and co-presented with Fygment Productions. Beyond the stage, **Penn Avenue Creative**, a pilot program for emerging local creative leaders, offers network development, mentorship, sessions with field experts, and asks, "How can we build better communities for all?"

For all events, KST encourages active audience engagement through activities including pre-show mixers, post-performance discussions, dance parties, workshops and artist lunches, in a season of lively events.



KST PRESENTS FALL 2015 EVENTS



Photo: Rebekah Edie

WORLD PREMIERE

Baker & Tarpaga Dance Project *Declassified Memory Fragment*

Fri–Sat / September 25–26
8p / Kelly Strayhorn Theater

Featuring a top-notch ensemble of dancers and musicians from Burkina Faso, Olivier Tarpaga's newest work of dance theater pulses with the beauty and complexities of contemporary African society. Caustic and clever, *Declassified* uses dance, text and live music in an open letter on African society—and addresses the unspoken realities that shape the continent's dynamic cultures, lifestyles and politics. His all-male cast takes to the stage with explosive and unpredictable force, exposing the emerging two-tier societies that simultaneously create and unravel friendships, even as brotherhood prevails.

Part of KST's World Stage Series, made possible with generous support from The Benter Foundation and individual contributors to KST's World Stage Fund.



Photo: Anna Bonnet

Vieux Farka Touré and Julia Easterlin *Touristes*

Wed / September 30
8p / Kelly Strayhorn Theater

When Malian master musician Vieux Farka Touré met indie vocalist Julia Easterlin for the first time, something divine happened: kindred spirits discovered moments of pure beauty, joy, melancholy and magic. In a white-hot burst of inspiration they crafted six original songs, three startling covers—including Bob Dylan, Fever Ray, and Appalachian folk—and one new song built upon a classic West African tune. *Touristes* is equal parts modern and ancient, haunting and playful, subtle and visceral, and their intimate concert maps the sounds of two people—speaking different languages and from two continents—finding common ground.

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Photo: Cassie Kay Photography

FRESH WORKS PREVIEW

slowdanger *memory 4*

Fri / October 9
8p / KST's Alloy Studios

Anna Thompson and Taylor Knight, the Pittsburgh duo of known as slowdanger, forge collaborative performances that merge sound and image, body and spirit. Throughout the fall, the team is in residence at KST's Alloy Studios to develop *memory 4*, an exploration of the way memories are relived and redefined in each passing moment, in a process of steady decay. Scheduled to premiere next summer, *memory 4* is the latest in a series of sense-soaked movement-fueled performances, including *memory 3: swimmoon*—seen at KST last spring.



Photo: Sally Cohn

WORLD STAGE RESIDENCY PREVIEW

Luke Murphy/Attic Projects *On Triumph and Trauma*

Fri / October 16
8p / KST's Alloy Studios

During a weeklong World Stage residency, Luke Murphy develops bold choreography and a constantly shifting visual environment for his newest work, *On Triumph and Trauma*, a poetic exploration of a turning point in Irish history and identity. In 1916, armed Irish republicans mounted a failed insurrection to end British rule known as the Easter Rising—events that reverberate across nearly 100 years of the nation's political life. Murphy's visceral work for four dancers draws on eyewitness accounts, political transcripts and the scholarship of some of Ireland's most accomplished writers to examine the nationalism, sacrifice, violence and memory that drive an endless waltz of tragedy and triumph.

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Photo: J. Altdorfer

Halloween Mayhem

Sat / October 24
11a / Kelly Strayhorn Theater

Zombies, a costume parade, puppets, live performances, games and more fill Kelly Strayhorn Theater for the seventh annual Halloween Mayhem, a spooky day of activities designed to delight and entertain the whole family.



Photo: Mark Simpson

Balafon West African Dance Ensemble

Sat / October 31
8p / Kelly Strayhorn Theater

Led by revered dance artist Kadiatou Conte-Forte, Balafon West African Dance Ensemble has emerged as a Pittsburgh institution, one that combines intricate choreography and elaborate costumes with live music and song. This evening of dance celebrates Balafon's contemporary perspective on West African traditions and culture—and the unique vitality of its intergenerational ensemble of dancers and musicians—in a program to inspire all ages with energetically charged, athletic dancing and resounding live percussion.

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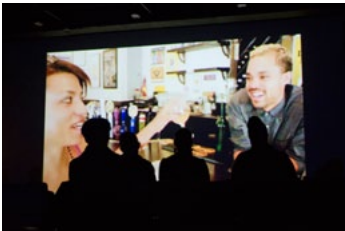


Photo: J. Altdorfer

My People A Film Series in Color

November / Dates TBA
KST's Alloy Studios

Now in its seventh season, My People explores the lives and experiences of LGBTQ people of color with award-winning films, performances and discussion. Inspired by Billy Strayhorn's life, My People connects the rich history and contributions made by generations of LGBTQ people of color.

Program details will be announced at kelly-strayhorn.org.

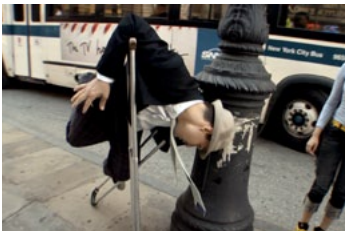


Photo: Courtesy Joey Garfield

CREATIVE COMMUNITY ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Bill Shannon Stay Up

Fri–Sat / November 13–14
8p / KST's Alloy Studios

Self-styled interdisciplinary artist Bill Shannon makes dance and media works that defy easy definition. In his first Pittsburgh-based project in years, Shannon works with adults with physical disabilities to build self-empowered physical vocabularies for crafting live art. *Stay Up* seeks to expand the spectrum of cultural and philosophical notions about movement, mobility and the definition of dance performance, all while slyly interrogating the layered politics of help and helplessness.

Part of Bill Shannon's extended Creative Community Residency, designed to explore ways to engage Pittsburgh's diverse communities in creative process.



Photo: Kevin Gift

Ursula Rucker My Father's Daughter

Fri–Sat / November 20–21
8p / Kelly Strayhorn Theater

Spoken word artist, poet and songstress Ursula Rucker delivers a live memoir, a story of both her life and her mother's, juxtaposed. Raw and soulful, Rucker's concisely wrought texts blend with projected video imagery to reflect upon two women's intertwined lives, and to powerfully illuminate a personal story of survival. Featuring live accompaniment by guitarist Tom Moetz, *My Father's Daughter* emerges as an epic poem, one that charts Rucker's life journey and the struggles that have shaped her into the woman she is today.





Photo: Mark Simpson

8th Annual Suite Life

Featuring Sean Jones and the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra

Sat / November 28
8p / Kelly Strayhorn Theater

The eighth annual celebration of the life and legacy of pianist, composer and KST namesake Billy Strayhorn also marks the 100th anniversary of his birth. For this special occasion, Grammy Award-winning trumpeter Sean Jones performs with the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra in an unforgettable evening of artistry. Expect to hear extraordinary renditions of classic Strayhorn compositions—such as *Take the 'A' Train*, *Chelsea Bridge* and *Lush Life*—among other works that reflect Strayhorn's profound influence. And to top it off, this benefit event always ends sweetly, with a birthday cake for all.



Photo: Mark Simpson

Let's Move!

Family Dance Party

Sat / December 19
11a / Kelly Strayhorn Theater

Dance your way into the holiday season with an exciting winter-themed dance party for the whole family. KST's Let's Move! Family Dance Party features a wintry mix of festive music, crafts, and seasonal treats for the young and young at heart.

PLUS

FREE MONTHLY CONVERSATION SERIES

Speak Freely

Co-Presented with Fygment Productions

The popular ongoing series hosted by Kit Mueller takes up residence at KST this Fall. Each month, Mueller invites an innovative leader from across the entrepreneurial spectrum to share stories about their professional ventures and personal journeys, along with strategies for building success. With a growing roster of the city's most influential creatives, including pioneering minds like Luis von Ahn, Raffi Krikorian and Kevin Sousa, Speak Freely's weeknight conversations are a lively platform for the exchanges of ideas.

Come early and catch the pre-show pitches to learn more about next-generation visionaries looking to get something started. Speakers to be announced at www.kelly-strayhorn.org.

About the Kelly Strayhorn Theater

Kelly Strayhorn Theater (KST) uses the arts as a catalyst for community revitalization, and plays a key role in the transformation of East Liberty and nearby neighborhoods. In its 14th year as an organization, and eighth season of original programming, KST continues to demonstrate its commitment to Pittsburgh artists and audiences, supporting the presentation of risk-taking new work by emerging artists and arts organizations. KST operates two professionally-equipped venues along the Penn Avenue arts corridor. The historic Kelly Strayhorn Theater (formerly the Regent Theatre, 1914) is a 350-seat multi-arts venue, and the last survivor of East Liberty's nine original theaters. Noted Pittsburghers and KST namesakes Gene Kelly and Billy Strayhorn are among the 80 area artists honored in the theater's Gallery of Stars. Just blocks away, KST's Alloy Studios play host to intimate performance events and provide creative space for artist residencies, Alloy School dance classes, and performance rehearsals, as well as community art and music programs.

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