



**KST PRESENTS**

**THEATER | PERFORMANCE**

**ALYSSA VELAZQUEZ**

**IT IS FROM HER THESE SEEDS ARE SOWN**

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7 - 8**  
**8:00PM**

# KST PRESENTS FALL 2022 | THE SOUL OF EAST LIBERTY



*Let me tell ya what I've got / That nobody's gonna take away / I got my tongue, I got my chin / I got my heart, I got my soul / I got my back, I got my sex / Got life, I got my life.*

— Nina Simone, *Ain't Got No, I Got Life*

After the **High Priestess of Soul** belts a long list of what she ain't got in *Ain't Got No, I Got Life*, she ends with adamant ownership of what she does — her entire body and soul. Throughout her career, Nina Simone unapologetically wielded what she had through her music in order to shift and shape the future. Like the work of artists who reflect the times, **the spaces where we create, share experiences with, and care for one another hold the soul of our community.** They lift up what we value and express new possibilities for our collective futures.

The Fall '22 KST Presents season celebrates **The Soul of East Liberty** by exploring what communities need to thrive — control over our stories, our bodies, and our futures. We are overjoyed to support artists **who unapologetically claim their right to possess their stories and own their futures**, and look toward a future in which we're all thriving where we live.

This September marks the debut of **BOOM Gallery**, a new partnership through which BOOM! Concepts curates visual art for the gallery at Kelly Strayhorn Theater with work from **J. Thomas Agnew, DS Kinsel, and J.L. Mallis**. On Saturday, September 17 we present **Fully Expressed**, a concert of local emcees curated by and featuring **Adam "FRH" Golden**. The following week we welcome California and Brooklyn-based **7NMS | Marjani Forté-Saunders and Everett Saunders** back home to KST with **PROPHET: The Order of the Lyricist**, a new dance-theater work tracking the journey of the Emcee as a literary figure. **The Alloy School** is also back in September with an 8-week session of classes including **Hip Hop, West African, Jazz Ballet, Creative Play and DanceFit**. Learn more at the *Orientation for Participants and Caretakers* on September 17.

October kicks off with a Freshworks showing from **Alyssa Velazquez**. Join us at KST on Saturday, October 29 for our family-focused **Halloween Mayhem**, then get ready for a packed November featuring world premieres on November 11 – 12 from **Fail-Safe**. November's creative momentum peaks at Suite Life, KST's annual celebration of our namesakes Billy Strayhorn and Gene Kelly. Finally, in December we welcome Freshworks artist **Michelle Johnson** to close out the season.

It is more vital now than ever that Kelly Strayhorn Theater stoke creative experimentation, community dialogue, and collective action rooted in the liberation of Black and queer people. **This fall, join us in celebrating The Soul of East Liberty and owning what we've got.**

**JOSEPH HALL**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**TO SEE MORE OF THE FALL SEASON, VISIT**  
**[KELLY-STRAYHORN.ORG/THE-SOUL-OF-EAST-LIBERTY-FALL-2022/](https://kelly-strayhorn.org/the-soul-of-east-liberty-fall-2022/)**

# ABOUT KELLY STRAYHORN THEATER

**Kelly Strayhorn Theater** is a non-profit community performing arts center in East Liberty, with two venues running along historic Penn Avenue. KST's Alloy Studios is a cultural hub in the heart of East Liberty, and the historic Kelly Strayhorn Theater is located in the thriving business district. More than 20 years after its founding, KST is a home for creative experimentation, community dialogue, and collective action rooted in the liberation of Black and queer people.

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## THEATER | PERFORMANCE

# ALYSSA VELAZQUEZ

## IT IS FROM HER THESE SEEDS ARE SOWN

### CREDITS

Writer and Director: **Alyssa Velazquez**

Stage Manager: **Krista Forster**

Performers: **Audience Volunteers**

Lighting: **Karie Womack**

Sound Engineer: **Britt Pierce**

### FROM THE ARTIST

**Buenas noches.**

***It is from her these seeds are sown*** is a mango-infused play on generational Latinx family building, personal desires, and bodily autonomy. The mango, typically used in diaspora literature, becomes a stand-in for the wife's feelings of loss and disenfranchisement amidst her sister, abuela, titi, mother, cousin, mother-in-law, and husband. The violence of birth and the expectations of the wife's identity to be willingly and naturally consumed by motherhood, manifests in an insatiable consumption of mangos – a fruity byproduct of colonialism. Invasion without consent; **a body colonized by culture.**

As the wife's bodily hunger for mangos continues to grow, so too do the external tensions to mother, pushing her and her body to choose: what is I want to make? **What do I want to create?**

With the rise of laws prohibiting necessary, lifesaving, and identity affirming healthcare, sharing our own stories of choice and bodily autonomy has never been more urgent. **This is mine. Thank you for consuming it with me.**

If you have questions about what is going on in your own state, please look into the [19th Newsroom](#) tracker.

**For volunteering and fundraising opportunities, consider supporting any one of these amazing organizations:**

[Indigenous Women Rising](#)

[Protect Trans Health](#)

[Bans Off Our Bodies](#)

[Holler Health Justice](#)

Or join in advocating to your local [representatives](#) for health care privacy laws to protect patients' information, specifically in many states where law enforcement or employers could use the records in civil or criminal lawsuits.

# FROM THE ARTIST

**Barriers to reproductive healthcare and bodily autonomy negatively affect everyone**, especially marginalized communities. I highly recommend reading more on the sterilization laws passed in Puerto Rico by the U.S government through the [Eugenics archive](#).

**#SupportIntersectionalReproductiveJustice**  
**#BodilyAutonomyIsAHumanRight**  
**#ItIsFromUsTheseSeedsAreSown**

**We have work to do, but I am proud and I am thankful to:**

**Arlan Hess, City Books** shop owner and Writer-in-Residence program founder, who gave me a space to be when I needed it, and oh, how I needed it.

**Krista Forster**, my stage manager, and the cut glass angel that the Richland Fashion Mall gave to me. I am in awe of your radiance.

A toast to the bars, coffee shops, cars, offices, and Zoom rooms that provided places for my thoughts and ideas to be spoken out loud to friends, family, colleagues, collaborators, and my creative coven. That includes my first table readers: **Dr. Amanda Awanjo, Deanna Baringer, Brea Bianco, Charlene Foggie-Barnett, Krista Forster, Tom Fisher, Shaheen Qureshi, Sam Moeller, and Katie Pirilla.**

Before this was a play **it was a seed** (I had to) germinated (sorry not sorry) through my experiences in the 2021 **María Irene Fornés Playwriting Workshop** sponsored by the **Latinx Theatre Commons** with **Migdalia Cruz** and **Anne García-Romero**, and **Roundabout Theater Lab's Four Beginnings** seminar, with instructor **Nathan Alan Davis.**

I appreciate the audience members who elected to read with me in this participatory form of in-process theater that would not have been possible without **Kelly Strayhorn Theater** and its team showering this mango-crazed playwright with blessings. **I stand under your green branches in gratitude.** Special shout out to my residency coordinators, **Chanel Blanchett** and **J.R. Shaw**, and marketer extraordinaire, **Liz Rudnick.**

**Thank you to all those that came before me and those that will come after me. ¡Sí, se puede!**

— Alyssa Velazquez

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Alyssa Velazquez** (She/her) is a writer specializing in the material culture of gender, performance, and women's studies. Prior to living and working in Pittsburgh, she was the Curatorial Research Associate at Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina. She also assisted in the development of exhibitions at Bard Graduate Center Gallery, New York. Velazquez holds a MA in decorative arts, design history, and material culture from the Bard Graduate Center and a BA in history and anthropology from Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland. She organized *Locally Sourced*, highlighting new work by the Pittsburgh region's most talented present-day makers of functional goods and furnishings at Carnegie Museum of Art. Other projects include *Extraordinary Ordinary Things* and *Sharif Bey: Excavations*. She has published articles in AutoStraddle, GRLSQUASH, The Establishment, Women's History Magazine, The Fashion Studies Journal, and Votive Project. Velazquez was selected in 2021 to participate in María Irene Fornés Playwriting Workshop, sponsored by the Latinx Theatre Commons that included writers from India, Mexico, Argentina, Canada and Puerto Rico. In 2022 she was writer in residence at City Books, Pittsburgh's oldest bookstore. Learn more at [velazquezalysa.com](http://velazquezalysa.com)



**Krista Forster** (She/her) is incredibly grateful to be involved with this workshop performance of *It is from her these seeds are sown*. Krista first began her theatre journey at the University of Houston with her BFA in Theatre and continuing on to receive her MFA from University Of Delaware. While pursuing her MFA, she had the privilege of spending three weeks in Japan working on a coproduction of Oedipus Rex at the Shzuoka Performing Arts Center with Tadashi Suzuki. Krista has appeared in theatres and on camera all over the country. Highlights include the acclaimed production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* at the Alley Theatre, where she shared the stage with Academy Award winner Ellen Burstyn. She is also the proud recipient of the BackStage West Garland award for her lead performance in *Kindertransport* at Stages Repertory Theatre. During her time in Chicago, Krista was nominated for a Joseph Jefferson award for lead performance and ensemble for her part as Ruth in *Book of Days* at Steep Theatre. Last year, Krista returned home to Texas from South Carolina, where she was a member of Trustus Theatre Company. She is currently working in Texas for Drama Kids International, teaching developmental drama to children in 1st through 5th grades. Many thanks to Alyssa for her friendship and artistic inspiration!



## ABOUT FRESHWORKS

**Freshworks** is KST's creative residency for artists and collaborators based in the greater Pittsburgh region. The program supports playful exploration in performance through interdisciplinary work in contemporary dance, theater, music, and multimedia, and provides artists with planning support and guidance, studio space, production staff, and encouragement for creative risk taking. **Freshworks** artists are provided a \$1,000 honorarium and \$1,500 resource budget during the residency. Artists are invited to apply either as an individual or as a collaborative group. Learn more at [Kelly-Strayhorn.org](http://Kelly-Strayhorn.org)

# THANK YOU!

We thank the generous individual donors, corporate sponsors, foundations and agencies that provide vital support for our programs and allow us to thrive in our community. This list reflects donations and commitments made between September 1, 2021 and August 31, 2022.

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