

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Kelly Strayhorn Theater Presents: Shamel Pitts | TRIBE,  
*BLACK HOLE: Trilogy And Triathlon***

**MEDIA CONTACT**

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**EAST LIBERTY, PA** — Kelly Strayhorn Theater is pleased to announce the return of 2020 Guggenheim Fellow in Choreography **Shamel Pitts**. Last seen at the **newMoves dance festival** in 2018, Pitts is back in the burgh with his arts collective **TRIBE** for a presentation of the artist's evening-length multidisciplinary performance work ***BLACK HOLE: Trilogy And Triathlon*** on Friday & Saturday, April 14 - 15 at Kelly Strayhorn Theater, 5941 Penn Ave. KST will host a week of special events leading up to the performance, including a **Welcome Dinner and Artist Talk** at KST's Alloy Studios on Tuesday, April 11 at 7:00pm, a GAGA movement session at KST's Alloy Studios co-presented by KST mutual-aid partner **PearlArts** Wednesday, April 12 at 9:00am, and a special post-performance conversation with artist **Alisha Wormsely** at Kelly Strayhorn Theater on Friday, April 14 (performance to start at 8:00pm).

In *BLACK HOLE*, a trio of Black performers (all of African heritage) share the stage in a narrative of **unity, vigor, and unrelenting advancement**. Their journey originates in the darkness of the titular Black Hole, understood not as a cosmic void but a metaphorical place of transformation and potential. **Engulfed in an evocative soundscape of original music, sound samples, and spoken word, the dancers embark on an hour-long, uninterrupted journey in movement** in which their tenacity and grace are emphasized by cinematic video projections and stark, monochromatic lights.

"*BLACK HOLE* (...) is a stylish Afrofuturist vision featuring three Black dancers, in monochromatic light and video projections, finding connection in a movement language derived from Ohad Naharin's Gaga."  
— Brian Seibert, *New Yorker*

*BLACK HOLE: Trilogy And Triathlon* concludes the Black Trilogy, a series of deeply personal live performance pieces conceived and choreographed by Pitts since 2015. The first work of this collection, a solo *BLACK BOX – Little Book of RED*, introduced the **recurring themes of this cycle: identity, search for the roots and community, and personal evolution of the artist, born “young, gifted and Black.”**

2019 saw the New York premiere of *BLACK VELVET – Architectures And Archetypes*, “a haunting duet” (*The New York Times*) with Brazilian-born **Mirelle Martins**. Collaboration with her and other Black Series artists subsequently spurred the inception of TRIBE, a multidisciplinary collective of international creatives, united by Afrofuturistic ideals and shared goals.

“I’ve come from dance companies. I’ve loved them. But I had no interest or passion to re-create that. TRIBE is a collective of outliers. **I think we relate more to a rock band, where each person has a different skill, a different instrument. We come together when we want to play and when we have ideas.** I’m the artistic director, so I’m in a leadership role, but none of my collaborators are followers. We’re all walking with one another.” — Shamel Pitts, TRIBE artistic director

*BLACK HOLE: Trilogy And Triathlon* was developed with the kind support of Trust for Mutual Understanding (TMU), American Dance Abroad, gloATL, PearlArts Studios, CrossAward (Italy), Dock 11 / Eden (Germany), Derida Dance Center (Bulgaria), Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant, New York Live Arts, and 92nd Street Y Harkness Dance Center.

Additional commissioning, development and core operating support for TRIBE is provided by the Mellon Foundation; The New England Foundation for the Arts’ National Dance Project with funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; The Howard Gilman Foundation; Dance/NYC’s Dance Advancement Fund, made possible by the Howard Gilman Foundation and Ford Foundation; National Performance Network (NPN) Creation, Development & Artist Engagement Fund Project supported by the Doris Duke

Charitable Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency); and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

KST's engagement of Shamel Pitts *BLACK HOLE: Trilogy And Triathlon* is made possible through the ArtsCONNECT program of Mid Atlantic Arts with support from the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support is provided by the National Performance Network (NPN) Artist Engagement Fund. More information: [www.npnweb.org](http://www.npnweb.org).

Join KST and Shamel Pitts | TRIBE for *BLACK HOLE: Trilogy And Triathlon* on Friday & Saturday, April 14 - 15 at 8:00pm at Kelly Strayhorn Theater, 5941 Penn Ave. Tickets are Pay What Moves You: \$15 - \$35. For full season details, KST COVID policy updates, and tickets, go to [kelly-strayhorn.org](http://kelly-strayhorn.org).

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## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

2020 Guggenheim Fellow **Shamel Pitts** is a performance artist, choreographer, conceptual artist, dancer, spoken word artist, and teacher. Born in Brooklyn, New York, Shamel began his dance training at LaGuardia High School for Music & Art and the Performing Arts and, simultaneously, at The Ailey School. He is 2003 YoungArts Finalist and a first prize winner of the YoungArts competition. Shamel then went on to receive his BFA in Dance from The Juilliard School and was awarded the Martha Hill Award for excellence in dance. He began his dance career in Mikhail Baryshnikov's Hell's Kitchen Dance and BJM\_Danse Montreal. Shamel danced with Batsheva Dance Company for 7 years, under the artistic direction of Ohad Naharin and is a certified teacher of Gaga movement language. He is an adjunct professor at The Juilliard School and has been an artist in residence at Harvard University. He is the recipient of a 2018 Princess Grace Award in Choreography, a 2019 NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship Award winner in Choreography, a 2020 Jacob's Pillow artist in residence and a 2021 New York Dance Award winner (The Bessies). Shamel is the Founding Artistic Director of TRIBE, a Brooklyn-based multidisciplinary arts collective. TRIBE is a 92Y Harkness Dance Center's Artist In Residence for the 2020-2021 season. Shamel Pitts | TRIBE is also a New York Live Arts Live Feed artist in residence.



**Tushrik Fredricks** (Performer) recipient of Princess Grace Award (Chris Helman dance honor), nominated by TRIBE in 2021 is originally from Johannesburg, South Africa. Growing up he found himself drawn towards the style 'KRUMP'. He graduated from the Peridance Certificate Program in NYC in June 2015 and has had the opportunity to work with Ate9 dANCEcOMPANY (Danielle Agami, Artistic Director), Sidra Bell Dance New York and UNA



Productions. Tushrik was an assistant lecturer to Sidra Bell at The University of the Arts Philadelphia for Sophomore students (2016-2018). In May 2021 Tushrik received 3rd prize for dance at the SoloTanz Festival in Stuttgart for his self choreographed solo '(territory) of the heart' and in November 2022 it will be presented at the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts. [instagram.com/tushrik](https://www.instagram.com/tushrik)

**Marcella Lewis** (Performer), recipient of the 2018 Princess Grace Award in Dance, hails from Los Angeles, CA, where she began her dance training at the Lula Washington Dance Theatre. She then continued her studies at the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts(LACHSA). She later received her BFA from the Purchase Conservatory of Dance in 2016, where she was awarded the Adopt-A-Dancer Scholarship. She joined Abraham.In.Motion in fall 2016, as a dancer, soloist, and company liaison. Marcella was featured with Abraham.In.Motion in Dance Magazine in August 2017 and was mentioned in the New York Times for the Abraham.In.Motion Joyce season in May 2018. Marcella is currently a performer with TRIBE multidisciplinary visual performances and is a freelance artist exploring choreography in Los Angeles and New York. [instagram.com/marcellalewis\\_](https://www.instagram.com/marcellalewis_)



**Lucca Del Carlo** (Video Lighting Designer) is a graphic designer and video artist from São Paulo, Brazil, currently based in LA/NYC. Lucca is a founding member of the Brooklyn/New York based multidisciplinary arts collective known as TRIBE. He has created the lighting and video mapping projections for numerous performance works and has toured and performed live with the collective in many countries all over the world. He specializes in transmedia, mixing cinema techniques, concepts of architecture, visual arts, light design, and technology, and integrating those into the direction and creation of scenography, immersive environments and visual live shows. In his view, all ways of visual communication have interlacing points, not only using technology but also using human cognition and its related sensorial illusions. Del Carlo's specialty is mixing it in new ways to inspire and break common patterns in visual expression. [luccadelcarlo.com](http://luccadelcarlo.com)



**Sivan Jacobovitz** (Composer) is a producer/musician living in NYC. Dance collaborations include: Kimberly Bartosik's "I Hunger For You" (BAM Next Wave) and "Through The Mirror of Their Eyes" (NYLA – Bessie Outstanding Production Honoree); Shamel Pitts' Black Hole (touring internationally), MENAGERIE (with Gibney Company) and Touch of RED (upcoming – Jacob'sPillow Lab); ASSEMBLY with GREYZONE. [instagram.com/sivan\\_daniel](https://www.instagram.com/sivan_daniel)



An Australian artist with a career continuing over 30 years, **Rus Snelling** (Artistic Production Manager & Lighting Designer) has worked as a production, stage, site and tour manager, lighting and set designer, consultant, technical director and fire sculptor with arts organizations, institutions & freelancing on events and installations around the world ranging from intimate theatrical works, shows on and off Broadway in NYC and on London's West End. His work includes large scale indoor and outdoor festivals, the Sydney Olympic Ceremonies, the



Melbourne Commonwealth Games Ceremonies & Cultural Festival, Melbourne International Arts Festival, Montreal Just for Laughs, Edinburgh Fringe, Melbourne International Comedy Festival, Vancouver Winter Olympics Cultural Festival, Centennial celebrations, river & street parades, tours & various music festivals. Some artists Rus has worked with are Merce Cunningham, Laurie Anderson, John Leguizamo, Philip Glass, Brian Eno, Tim Robbins & The Actors Gang, Taylor Mac, Patti Smith, Trisha Brown Dance Company, Bandaloop, Camille A Brown & Dancers, Abraham.In.Motion, Streb & Phantom Limb Company among many and on projects & tours in Australia, USA, Canada, Tunisia, Europe, Asia & South America. Rus worked at PS122 in NYC many moons ago and was the founding Production Manager & Resident Lighting Designer at Oz Arts Inc in Nashville TN for 6 years before moving to Miami to continue freelance work and is proudly working on the tour of And So We Walked featuring DeLanna Studi and is excited and honored to be part of the creation of Touch of Red with TRIBE.

Originally from Brazil, **Mirelle Martins** (Costume Designer, Creative Director) received her Bachelor Degree in Social Communications (UnB 2002-06). She has worked as an artist, independent curator and art producer since 2010. In 2013, Mirelle started to research her own artistic expression in performance art with the intensive summer course of Gaga.people.dancers in NYC. Since 2015, she has been producing Gaga courses yearly in Brazil, so far reaching over 1200 students. In 2016, as a 32-year old, Mirelle made her dancing debut in "BLACK VELVET", a duet by Shamel Pitts, with light designer Lucca Del Carlo. The show toured in the US and internationally from 2017 to 2020, and has received the Audience Choice Award in Stockholm Fringe Festival (Sweden, 2017), and Best out of Town Production by ArtsATL (Atlanta, 2018). The partnership with Pitts continued with "BLACK HOLE" (2018), where Mirelle has collaborated as performer and costume designer. Since 2019, Mirelle is one of the founding artists of TRIBE, Brooklyn-based arts collective led by Pitts, where she also acts as Creative Director. [mirellemartins.com](http://mirellemartins.com)



**Naomi Maaravi** (Black Tarp Designer) is a Dutch-born, Israel-based EcoFashion Designer with over 30 years of experience creating upcycled re-designed fashion pieces. Naomi made her first piece for her daughter out of worn out jeans. Her garments are fashioned from either her own collection of high end materials, or out of materials supplied by her clients. Her brand line has since evolved into a



high-end recycled – albeit high fashion – line worn by Israeli artists and celebrities. “Memories, events, joy, happiness, sadness are all parts of the materials I use, blended to create a unique garment with a story on its own,” Maaravi says. [www.naomimaaravi.com](http://www.naomimaaravi.com)

**Itai Zwecker** (Photographer, Cinematographer) is an Israeli-born director of cinematography, photographer, and video editor, collaborating with Shamel Pitts and later TRIBE since 2018. His photography has been featured in The New York Times, The Brooklyn Rail, and other outlets. Zwecker is based in Brooklyn and Tel Aviv, where he works shooting film, dance, music, documentary and commercial projects. [vimeo.com/zwecker](https://vimeo.com/zwecker)



**PALETTE**, Founded by **The Adeboye Brothers** (Photographer & Cinematographer) in 2017, is a creative agency focused on producing films, animations, and live experiences for campaign activations both online and offline. Their background is rooted in thoughtful storytelling, art, and pushing the boundaries within the film space. They're currently focused on building out their Production house internationally. Their production house develops, produces and writes branded and original documentaries, narrative-based shorts, and animations. This organization stands with creatives, the humans connected to culture, the community-movers, the society shapers. <https://www.thepalettegroup.com>



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## ABOUT TRIBE

TRIBE – Multidisciplinary Visual Performances is a Brooklyn-based Afrofuturistic arts collective dedicated to creating, producing and sharing original multidisciplinary global art projects founded in December 2019 by choreographer and performer Shamel Pitts. Understanding that performance art and live art are practices of human connection, TRIBE acts nationally and internationally by developing art exchanges in collaboration with institutions and artists, with a focus on the African diaspora.

TRIBE's mission is to seize space and create a platform for artists – most specifically artists of color – with huge inspiration from the Afrofuturism movement. This movement states that we have a responsibility through our work to tell new stories and create a brighter future that is different, and shines more luminously, from its past. Ultimately, TRIBE aims to bring its audience and community into experiences that humanize Black and Brown bodies and share the colorfulness within Blackness that allows us to be multiplicitous. [Itsatribe.org](http://Itsatribe.org)

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## **ABOUT KELLY STRAYHORN THEATER**

Named after 20th century entertainment legends **Gene Kelly** and **Billy Strayhorn**, both natives of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, **Kelly Strayhorn Theater** (KST) is reflective of the passion that its founders had for the arts. Today, Kelly Strayhorn Theater carries on the legacy of its founders by fostering bold and innovative artistry with a global perspective. **KST celebrates diversity in voice, thought, and expression**, and upholds a firm commitment to inclusion. Furthermore, KST provides a safe and welcome space for dialogue and artistic expression for all who enter.

Kelly Strayhorn Theater has a dynamic footprint in Pittsburgh, with two venues running along 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 the founding of the theater, **KST continues to use its broad reach to impact the contemporary arts and the community.**