

KST PRESENTS

THEATER | PERFORMANCE BIG STORM OR FOREVER HOLD YOUR PEACE

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MAY 19 - 20*
WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY, MAY 24 - 27
8:00PM

*Post Performance Discussion

KST PRESENTS WINTER | SPRING 23 THE SOUL OF EAST LIBERTY





What you want.
Baby, I got
What you need.
Do you know I got it?
All I'm askin'
Is for a little respect when you come home.

- Aretha Franklin

The Winter/Spring 2023 KST Presents season continues to be a home for celebrating the **Soul of East Liberty**. Guided by our recently released strategic direction, "**Owning Our Future**. **Thriving Where We Live**." KST is welcoming the new year with bold programming and renewed vision. We are determined to own our future and remain a home where artists and Pittsburgh residents of all backgrounds can thrive.

This Winter/Spring season, KST mutual Aid resident **PearlArts** is looking forward to bringing *CIRCLES: going in*, a work debuted with KST at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center, Pittsburgh, on tour to The Dance Center at Columbia College Chicago on February 23. At home at KST's Alloy Studios, PearlArts brings a full class season, with **Open Company Dance Classes** on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. For experienced dancers, 20-weeks of **Adult Dance Clubs** will begin on January 18 and run through the end of May. PearlArts hosts two **Synchronized with Soy Sos** events, February 25 and April 28. **PearlWatch/charrette** is back on March 24, showcasing new and unseen dance-forcamera and live choreography in different stages of development. Finally, on May 12, PearlArts shares an evening of multi-disciplinary and collaborative explorations with **INTERIM: Props Prompts Play**.

KST begins the Winter/Spring Season with two staples of **Youth & Family Programming**: On January 16, *The Audacity to Believe*, **an MLK day Celebration** reflects joyfully on the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Then, **The Alloy School** Open House kicks off February 4 with a free survey of KST's weekly dance classes, followed by an eight week class session and celebratory Let's Move! Family Dance Party!

Our **Community Partnerships** include a workshop from writers **Dorothy R. Santos** & **Adrian Jones** with The **Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry**. Boundary-pushing new **Freshworks** performances will come to KST's Alloy Studios in April and May. Choreographer **Nick M. Daniels** presents the globally-inspired *Nonsensical search for truth and understanding*, while **B Kleymeyer** uplifts Pittsburgh's trans community and celebrates every part of transition with *i'm not done with this body (and i never will be)*.

Our Local & Global Performance offerings include contemporary works of music, dance, and theater—something for everyone! Dwayne Fulton returns to KST on February 11 with *R.E.S.P.E.C.T. An Aretha Franklin Tribute Concert*, featuring Anita Levels. Carrying on this musical momentum, on March 18 KST presents the annual Sunstar Festival: Women & Music, this year co-curated by the SCALE Fellowship Program.

From April 12-15, KST welcomes choreographer and 2020 Guggenheim fellow **Shamel Pitts** back to Pittsburgh with a Welcome Dinner and Artist Talk, Gaga Dance Workshop, and the Pittsburgh premiere of **BLACK HOLE: Trilogy And Triathlon**, an evening-length multi-media performance work that is a journey in movement through an evocative soundscape. Our Local & Global Performance program closes with **Or Forever Hold Your Peace**, a performance from Pittsburgh's **Big Storm** with big dance numbers and even bigger laughs.

Finally, throughout this season, visit the KST lobby for a new visual art exhibition for the BOOM Gallery: Neighbor to Neighbor, featuring Takara Canty, Sophia Fang, atiya jones, Maggie Negrete, Jameelah Platt, and Danielle Robinson, which will run from February 11 through May 27.

JOSEPH HALL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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 BIG STORM OR FORFVER HOLD YOUR PEACE

ABOUT THE SHOW

Every wedding has its fringe characters and secondary drama. The sister of the bride is about to snap and the only guest who believes in love is a wedding crasher. **Like a musical without singing**, Big Storm brings you big dance numbers, big laughs, and really bad dating advice.

ABOUT BIG STORM

Big Storm Performance Company is focused on **mental health**, **accessibility**, and **passing on The Groove**. The Groove is our name for the good feeling you get when you're jamming to music, that enlivening "under your skin" feeling of rhythm and movement, and we aim to spread it with everything we do. From our mindful rehearsal and performance processes to our **aim to create works that connect with as many people as possible**, regardless of their previous arts experience, Big Storm brings joy.

By only presenting original works, we create and perform what we connect with and makes us feel The Groove through highly physical, movement based pieces. We love incorporating safe, responsible moments of interaction as well as pieces that pull from multiple stage combat, dance, and theater disciplines in our work to deepen the experience without treading into dark waters.

This desire to provide meaningful, positive experiences stems from our founding desire to create a company that **meets our performers and audience members where they are**. In an industry that often alienates and excludes, we have created a space where all are welcome and those who want to participate can. Along with our sustainable processes, Big Storm is a zero judgement, body positive zone that elevates the strengths of each of our performers and knows that movers come in all shapes, sizes, and with all kinds of needs. Rather than force our performers to fit into a mode and model, **we embrace the outside lives and struggles** of everyone who works with us and reward honest communication with change.

CREDITS

Taylor Couch, Director & Choreographer
José Pérez IV, Playwright & Choreographer
Lucy Jaffar, Dance Captain
Jess Milandro, Planner
Yang Zhen Lee, Staff
Charlie Left, Jim
Phil Fry, Mickey
Sarah Hoy, Ex
Olivia Devorah, Sister
Mathias Vitulo, Crasher
E. Forney, Stage Manager
Taylor Couch, José Pérez IV, Lucy Jaffar, Jade Young, Ariel /,

Dance Core

Kari Womack, Lighting Peyton Nearhoof, Sound Tina Delmonte, Deck

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Taylor W Couch (she/her) is an Early Childhood Teaching Artist, Pittsburgh native, and Co-Founding Director of Big Storm Performance Company. When not performing with Big Storm or teaching with organizations such as Pittsburgh Cultural Trust Education and The Alloy School, Taylor enjoys working as a stylist for her mental health and sustainability-focused company Style For Good PGH, snuggling



with her tiny dog, and enjoying the wonderful restaurants around Pittsburgh.

José Pérez IV (he/him) is the Resident Fight Director of Pittsburgh Public Theater and Artistic Director of Big Storm. Previously produced plays: Organs of State at Times Square Arts Center NYC (FIGHTER), Downtown Art NYC (ZOMBIES: A WORKSHOP), Saginaw Valley State University (VERY BERRY DEAD), Orlando Fringe Festival (THE RIDE-ALONG), among others. BFA in Drama from NYU Tisch



Experimental Theatre Wing, MFA in Performance Pedagogy from the University of Pittsburgh.

Lucy Jaffar (she/her) is a dancer and arts administrator from San Francisco. She graduated from Loyola University
Chicago with a BS in psychology and a BA in dance and has had the opportunity to dance and train with amazing organizations including San Francisco
Ballet, Ruth Asawa School of the Arts,
ODC, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, and
DancEsteem San Francisco. Lucy can



normally be found adventuring in nature, playing guitar, or spending quality time with her family, friends, and two boxer dogs. She would like to thank Dylon for being the best support system to her through everything.

Jess Malandro (she/her) currently works full-time at the University of Pittsburgh. In addition to the original production of "Or Forever Hold Your Peace," Jess has performed with Big Storm in productions such as "Say That To My Face" and "Portals on Penn". She would like to thank her fiancé, Phil Fry, for getting her to rehearsals on time and being a major support system over the past semester.



Lastly, she would like to thank José and Taylor for being so awesome throughout this process (and every other time, really).

Yang Zhen Lee (they/them) is a comics and tattoo artist who likes to dabble in many things. Zhen was in Teresa Martuccio's Pink Potatoes, and in some City of Play events such as "Emotional Landscapes," "Intimate Subjects," and "Fantastic Adventure: Greenfield Bridge." When not rehearsing, Zhen likes playing games, moving through the world in new ways, petting animals, and seeing



what art peeps have been making. Zhen says "Thank you to the fun and warmhearted folks of Big Storm for being absolute sweeties. Thank you Forrest for helping me go through lines many many times."

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Charlie Left (they/them) is a nonbinary screenwriter, competing slam poet, and performing artist in Pittsburgh, PA. Their work has appeared in Pretty Owl Poetry, Medium, and elsewhere. They're in the Pittsburgh Prison Book Project's leadership group, a volunteer non-profit organization based in Pittsburgh that sends reading and educational materials to prisoners across PA. They formerly



curated and emceed **The Bantha Readings** in Pittsburgh, a series dedicated to showcasing local writers. Their work, best described as creative nonfiction with a surrealist twist, focuses on **the role of gender and masculinity** in our everyday lives. Find them online @charlie_left or charlieleft074@gmail.com.

Phillip Fry (he/him) graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 2017 with a BS in Mathematics and a Minor in Theater Performance. When not rehearsing, Phil enjoys playing video games, reading, discovering new breweries in the area, and visiting with my family. His previous works include, Stage: Portals on Penn, Say that to my Face (Big Storm PC); Film: Tributaries (Crazy Pants Productions);



Voice Over: **No Exit**, **Cave of the Green Light** (Play on Words Podcast). I would like to thank my fiancée, mom, dad, brother, and sister for pushing me to keep doing theater and to my cats that keep us company during the down time.

Sarah Hoy (she/they) is a current student at Point Park University studying Theatre Arts with a minor in musical theatre! They are very excited to be doing their first show with Big Storm Performance Company and have loved the process with this amazing group. Previous works include Coping with COPA (flash dancer), Men On Boats (swing/Mr. Asa), and the RLM One Act



Festival. She'd like to thank her friends and family and amazing coworkers for supporting her in all the work!

Olivia Devorah Tucker (they/them) is a transfemme Jewish demonologist, theatre collaborator, and challah sculptor. Professionally, Olivia serves as Program Coordinator for SVARA: A Traditionally Radical Yeshiva (founders of Queer Talmud Camp), where they study as a teacher-in-training. Olivia Devorah has variously performed, puppeteered, sang, danced, devised, and dramaturged with



the newly re-opened **Glitterbox Theater**, in **FOLKLAB's QUEER**, and **Ella-Gabriel Mason's Queer Jewish: Dancing In Diaspora**. "Thanks to friends and family, the public pool and blooming tree, sapphic sci-fi comic books and farmer's market weekend looks!"

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Mathias Vitulio (he/him) is thrilled to be reprising his role in yet another Big Storm production! Matt graduated from the University of Pittsburgh for theatre and has been performing in the city ever since. Previous roles include Benvolio in "Romeo & Juliet" (Pittsburgh Classic Players), a tea shop fighter in "Portals on Penn" (Big Storm), and a lovesick bard in "Quest" (Big Storm). When not



performing, Matt can be found playing Dungeons & Dragons, gaming, reading, writing, or spending time with friends (as safely as possible, of course). "Thank you to Big Storm, especially José and Taylor, for making so much cool art that I get to participate in, and to my incredible friends who always give me support and lend me an ear while I talk about this show endlessly.

E. Forney (she/they) works in higher education administration, organizes with leftists, and dabbles in many other things. When she is not at rehearsal, Forney is recording with her podcast co-hosts for One More Thing, coordinating events for Puzzled Pint, playing video games, or dabbling in some new hobby (right now it's rug tufting). Forney has worked as support or tech for multiple Big Storm



productions ("Quest", "Portals on Penn", "Say That to My Face", "Dance Show: A Dance Show") and looks forward to more! You can find them online at linktr.ee/efortmanteau.

Jade Young (they/she) is a trans/non-binary dancer, singer, actor and writer. They have been training in dance since the age of three years old. They are a dancer in the styles of jazz, tap, hip hop techniques, jazz funk and contemporary dance. They graduated in 2021 from Full Sail University with a certificate in Creative Writing. Most recently Jade has done stand-in/photo double work for



actress **Andra Day** in the Lee Daniels directed film "**The Deliverance**" and acted in City Theatre's 2022 Young Playwright's Festival. When Jade isn't dancing or performing she is studying piano and voice under the amazing **Cathie Crocker**, plays their Taylor acoustic guitar and enjoys spending time with their family and orange tabby cat Simba. "Thank you to the cast members and team of Big Storm. It's been an absolute joy working with all of you. Thank you to my Mom, my brother Mason and best friend Rebekah Davis for your love and support".

Ariel / (they/them) is an interdisciplinary performance artist dancing onto the scene from underground art spaces in Pittsburgh, New York, Shanghai, the Bay, and Hong Kong. With roots in butoh, martial arts, and street dance, they are thrilled to be performing with Big Storm for their funky and athletic choreography. Notable venues where they have performed and displayed works include



SPACE Gallery, The Space Upstairs, GPAC Center, Baryshnikov Dance Center, Alloy Studios, New Hazlett Theatre, and Associated Artists of Pittsburgh. They are concurrently making films as part of the Spring 23' cohort in the **Digital Documentary Filmmaking Fellowship** at the **Warhol Academy**.

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 July 1, 2022 and April 15, 2023

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