

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Welcome to Pumpkin Palooza, An East Liberty Halloween Adventure at Kelly Strayhorn Theater on Saturday, October 28, 2023**

**MEDIA CONTACT**

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**EAST LIBERTY, PA, September 27, 2023** — Kelly Strayhorn Theater cordially invites all local community members to one of our most beloved annual family programs, **Pumpkin Palooza!** This year, we are thrilled to offer candy, crafts, and performances from our fantastic community partners. From 1:00pm - 4:00pm, **The Alloy School, Assemble, Phase 4 Learning Center, Youth Enrichment Services, Pittsburgh Center for Creative Reuse, and Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation** offer family friendly activities in the KST lobby. From 2:00pm - 3:00pm, **DS Kinsel** hosts performances on the KST mainstage from **K-Theatre Dance Complex, Alumni Theater Company, The Obama Marching Band, and Afro-American Music Institute’s Jazz Lab.** Celebrate a fun, spooky, and costume-filled Halloween with KST on **Saturday, October 28, 2023 from 1:00pm - 4:00pm.** Join us in your **favorite costume**, or come as you are!

We have celebrated Halloween with our East Liberty community for over a decade. Compared to previous iterations, “this year, we’ve renamed KST’s annual Halloween event from ‘Halloween Mayhem’ to ‘Pumpkin Palooza’ to make sure folks know it’s fun for the whole family,” said Programming Manager Sarah Gilmer.

On the date of the event, our cause-driven community partners come together to provide an array of Halloween-themed activities for children and caretakers of all ages. These include candy distribution, pumpkin decorating, face painting, and even a DIY station for trick-or-treat bags.

Everyone can immerse themselves in the Halloween spirit by participating in the costume contest. Come and capture memorable moments in front of an interactive green screen, and vote for your favorite costumes. There are plenty of boo-tiful opportunities for children to create, interact, and discover.

During the performances, Afro-American Music Institute's Jazz Lab introduces a rising six-piece student bands while Alumni Theater Company captivates the audience with a blend of dance and original writings. K-Theatre Dance Complex creates a Ghostbusters-themed dance for this special occasion, transforming the stage into a mysterious alleyway. We are delighted to have The Obama Marching Band conclude the day with boisterous celebratory energy.

Our Development and Communications Director, Liz Rudnick, fondly recalled her memories from last year: "The lobby was full of tables with unique activities. The children moved in excited groups, hurrying from one table to another with high energy – Taking photos with friends and showing off their costumes, everyone had a great time!"

We can't wait to see little spidermen, unicorns, and pumpkins gather in the theater for a spooktacular trick-or-treat!

For full details on Kelly Strayhorn Theater's upcoming Fall 2023 programming, click [HERE](#).

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### **ABOUT THE PERFORMERS**

Founded by Dr. James Johnson and Mrs. Pamela Johnson in 1982, the **Afro-American Music Institute (AAMI)** provides music programs of excellence under the guidance and tutelage of its committed, professional staff and board members. Under the supervision of Howie Alexander III, the ensemble provides performance opportunities for youth who have studied instruction in composition, improvisation, basic theory, chart reading and ear training. With a foundation of jazz, the Jazz Lab explores Gospel, R&B and Pop and the way in which jazz traditions contribute to modern musicality. [afroamericanmusic.org](http://afroamericanmusic.org)

**Alumni Theater Company (ATC)** is a year-round program providing talented Black youth in grades 6-12 with high quality performing arts training and a platform to express their ideas. ATC is currently in its 15th season of creating bold theatrical work that gives fresh voice to the experience of young Black artists and highlights their rich contribution to our community. [alumnitheatercompany.org](http://alumnitheatercompany.org)

**DS Kinsel (Host)** is an award-winning creative entrepreneur and cultural agitator who expresses his creativity through various mediums, including painting, printmaking, curating, and public art. D.S. is a former AmeriCorps Public Ally member and Awardee of the Pittsburgh

Courier Feb 40. D.S. is also the co-founder of BOOM Concepts, a Pittsburgh-based creative hub dedicated to advancing black and brown artists. Since its establishment in 2014, BOOM Concepts has curated 50 on-site exhibitions, paid over \$150k in artist fees, and produced 200+ events across the country. BOOM Concepts is recognized as a Pittsburgh Cultural Treasure through The Heinz Endowments and The Ford Foundation. [boomuniverse.co](http://boomuniverse.co)

**K-Theatre Dance Complex (KTDC)**, is a dance academy that provides quality dance instruction in several major areas of dance, which include Ballet, Contemporary, Modern and Hip Hop. Led by Artistic Director Kontara Morphis, and Arts Education Director Rickia Davenport, KTDC curriculum incorporates dance theory, terminology and dance theater. KTDC has largely impacted the physical, academic, creative, and personal development of its students. [facebook.com/ktheatredancecomplex](https://facebook.com/ktheatredancecomplex)

**The Obama Marching Band (OMB)** was first established in 2011. The band is comprised of interested music students in grades 7 through 12. Student musicians represent the high-achievement and excellence modeled by our school Pittsburgh Obama Academy. In 2023, OMB represented the City of Pittsburgh as ambassadors in the 2023 National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, DC. We collaborated with Pittsburgh Alderdice HS, Pittsburgh Brashear HS, and Pittsburgh Obama Academy to form Pittsburgh's "One Band One Sound" All-City Marching Band. The marching band performs at parades, pep rallies, football games, and other community-wide events. Visit our website to learn more: [pghobamaband.com](http://pghobamaband.com)

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## ABOUT THE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

**Youth Enrichment Services (YES)**, based in East Liberty, provides socially and economically at risk youth the opportunity to achieve success through participation in mentorship, education, and enrichment programs. Through mentoring partnerships, peer assisted tutoring programs, and — when needed — monitoring and mentoring programs for juvenile offenders, YES invests its talent, energy, time, and resources in empowering and enriching the lives of children and teens. YES provides responsive, innovative, and youth-designed programs that offer young people unique academic, enrichment, and employment experiences.

[Youthenrichmentservices.org](http://Youthenrichmentservices.org)

**Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation** raises health with LGBTQ+ and HIV communities in and around Western Pennsylvania. Our team offers a variety of resources and supports including youth and family services, school based programming, Hugh's Kitchen pantry program, civil legal aid, wellness programming and all ages special events, as well as training and

consultation for organizations to improve their skills and capacity to serve LGBTQ+ clients and staff. Some of our most popular programs for youth and families include our youth AFFIRM series, parent mentoring & support groups, Big Sibs mentoring, student LGBTQ+ groups, online QChats and Discord server, social activities, and so much more. [hughlane.org](http://hughlane.org)

**Assemble** envisions a world where learning and creating are transformative experiences and where all people are equipped with the tools to make a difference, together. At Assemble, we use learning as a tool to create a more equitable future for youth and learners in the Pittsburgh region and beyond. We build confidence through making; connect learners, makers, technologists, and artists; and nurture agency in learners. We offer free afterschool, Saturday programs, camps, and more for kids as well as adult programs. Visit us at Assemble 4824 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15224. [assemblepgh.org](http://assemblepgh.org)

**Pittsburgh Center for Creative Reuse** is a non-profit that inspires creativity, conservation, and community engagement through reuse: We operate a non-traditional art supply shop located at the intersection of Wilkinsburg, Homewood, and Point Breeze, where people can donate used art and craft supplies, as well as shop for these unique items all in the same location. We also facilitate hands-on creative programming that educates the public about the benefits of reuse for the environment, community, and self. We see reuse as a vehicle for boosting self-confidence, learning new skills, and creating opportunity for all. For more information, visit our website at [pccr.org](http://pccr.org).

**Phase 4 Learning Center** offers a safe and caring learning environment for historically underserved students in grades 6 – 12 to earn a high school diploma and gain work experience. Phase 4 focuses on four phases of development: academic, social, behavioral, and future employment. Although based in Pittsburgh, Phase 4 operates at six locations in Allegheny and Beaver County including The Best Buy Teen Tech Center (BBTTC) located at 5850 Centre Ave. The BBTTC is a member of The International Clubhouse Network and winner of the Presidential Award for Excellence in STEM Mentoring. To learn more about Phase 4 visit their website at [phase4learningcenter.org](http://phase4learningcenter.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 namesakes had for the arts. Today, KST carries their legacy 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.

KST 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 Friendship, and the historic **Kelly Strayhorn Theater** is located in the thriving business district of East Liberty. 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.

PC: Liz Rudnick