

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Kelly Strayhorn Theater Presents: *Justice in Action*

A Celebration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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MEDIA CONTACT

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EAST LIBERTY, PA — Kelly Strayhorn Theater (KST) celebrates Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by gathering performers and community partners who honor his legacy of empowerment, education, and justice in action. On January 15, celebrations at Kelly Strayhorn Theater begin with *Justice in Action* from 12:00pm - 3:00pm. KST is grateful to partner with community organizations **True T Pittsburgh, Repair the World, Young Black Motivated Kings & Queens (YBMKQ), Ksci-Art Initiative Partnership, City of Asylum, and Assemble, all of whom will offer family friendly activities in the KST lobby, and actively work to make Pittsburgh a more just and loving place to live and thrive.**

From 1:00pm - 2:00pm, *Justice in Action* centers performances that recognize the civil rights legacy of Dr. King and Pittsburgh activists past and present. Hosted by **Jacquea Mae**, an international vocalist, actress and creative artist, performance will be presented by **Hill Dance Academy Theatre, K-Theatre Dance Complex, Alumni Theater Company**, and Jacquea Mae and **Byron Nash**. Tickets for *Justice in Action* are Pay What Moves You: \$0 - \$25.

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable ... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”
—Rev. Dr. MLK Jr.

KST recognizes that MLK Day is not only a day for celebrating Dr. King, but a day for recognizing how he is a part of a larger collective movement towards Black liberation. From historical figures like Marsha P. Johnson and Audre Lorde to contemporary icons like Mari Copeny (Little Miss Flint) and Kylar W. Broadus, KST recognizes the “tireless exertions and passionate concern” of the very people who often have the most to lose in the fight for justice.

In the evening at 7:00pm the 17th annual **Let Freedom Sing** concert celebrates the social justice legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with **The Heritage Gospel Chorale** and **MLK Festival Choir**. The event is an intergenerational and all-gender inclusive vocal workshop focused on vocal performance, social justice, and mental & physical health, led by **Herbert Jones**, **Anqwenique Kinsel**, and **Nikki Porter**. Tickets for Let Freedom Sing are Pay What Moves You: \$2 - \$50.

All events will take place at Kelly Strayhorn Theater, 5941 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh PA 15206. For full season details, KST COVID policy updates, and tickets, go to kelly-strayhorn.org.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS FOR JUSTICE IN ACTION

Jacquea Mae is an international vocalist, actress & creative artist that has graced the mic at many venues, festivals, open mics & more, throughout the city of Pittsburgh, Switzerland, Ghana & beyond. Ms. Mae continues to rave reviews for her powerful and soulful performances. Jacquea’s talents, mixed with her passion for teaching and working with youth has blessed her to mentor, care and support youth throughout the neighborhoods of Pittsburgh for over fifteen years. Ms. Mae is a dedicated community activist, determined to create what she doesn’t see. Jacquea continues teaching youth, advocating for the people & asserting her creativity with a voice and spirit that soars!

[@fearlessmae1023_](https://www.instagram.com/fearlessmae1023_)



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 [@alumnitheatercompany](https://www.instagram.com/alumnitheatercompany)

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

Hill Dance Academy Theatre (HDAT), a Pittsburgh Cultural Treasure is a 501c3 non-profit organization located in the Historic Hill District of Pittsburgh, PA., founded in 2005 by Ayisha Morgan-Lee, Ed.D. to provide children, youth, and teens, ages 3 to 18, access and opportunity to dance. HDAT trains students ages 3 – 18 in various styles of concert dance, fitness and nutrition, and leadership skills. HDAT's mission is to provide professional level training in Black Dance traditions, history, culture, and aesthetics that engages and empowers students to pursue careers in Black dance. 5678hdat.org

ABOUT THE ARTISTS FOR LET FREEDOM SING

The Heritage Gospel Chorale of Pittsburgh is a multi-generational, multi-ethnic ensemble founded by Dr. Herbert V.R.P. Jones. The Chorale specializes in the performance and preservation of African-American Sacred Choral Music, Sacred Choral Music, Spirituals, Anthems, and Gospel Music. The Chorale has a seven- member Board of Directors and includes, in its Mission, collaborations with other choral and instrumental ensembles, organizations and musical entities.

Director of The Heritage Gospel Chorale of Pittsburgh since its founding, **Dr. Herbert Jones** is one of the nation's foremost figures in choral conducting and pedagogy. Dr. Jones has cultivated multifaceted career as a choral conductor, educator, scholar, operatic bass, liturgical dancer, orator, pastor. He has taught middle school through university levels, performed across the United States and Europe and has received many accolades for his work and achievements. Dr. Jones holds degrees in Music, Psychology, Education, Dance & Drama, culminating with a doctorate in Choral Conducting & Music Education, and with additional study in Ethnomusicology.

A versatile vocalist and teaching artist specializing in opera, classical music, jazz, and soul, **Anqwenique Wingfield Kinsel** is heard all over the region, from Andy's at the Fairmount downtown, to the New Hazlett Theater, to residency performances at the Westmoreland County Museum of American Art. She grew up in Pittsburgh, steeped in jazz as her father was a musician. A frequent teaching artist, Anqwenique is on the faculty of CLAZZ International Music Festival in Italy. She was named one of Pittsburgh's 40 under 40 in 2017 and serves as director of programs for Arts Education Collaborative.

Singer, songwriter, teacher, choir director, actress and recording artist, **Rev. Nicol "Nikki" Porter** is Minister of Music at Eastminster Presbyterian Church, where she founded an after-school music program, The Judah Project, in 2005. She sings and teaches in the US and Europe. Nikki holds a bachelor's degree in business from Duquesne University where she also studied piano and voice (with Maureen Budway) and founded Duquesne's Gospel Choir. An activist, Rev. Porter has worked with various local and national groups. In 2019, Pittsburgh's YWCA awarded Rev. Porter with their Racial Justice Awards Common Ground Award for her work in racial reconciliation.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Young Black Motivated Kings & Queens (YBMKQ) is a community-based organization made up of dedicated young people in Pittsburgh. In the face of constant discouragement and scrutiny, a group of young men and women have chosen to stand apart and show the community that young black kings and queens are active, motivated, and empowered to be the change. Our primary mission is engaging middle

and high-school-aged youth in becoming the leaders of tomorrow while serving the community. In addition to providing enriching opportunities for youth, we plan events for community members to come and build strong connections with the youth, and network. ybmkg.org @ybmkg.412

The mission of **True T** is celebrating queer people of color through creative art, community health, and social activism. Mrs. Tracey Bryant leads **True T's** Unique Jewelry Workshop at KST's MLK Day! Join us for a hands-on journey, turning raw materials into one-of-a-kind craft jewelry under Mrs. Bryant's expert guidance. Participants will create stunning masterpieces onsite, ensuring a unique and personalized experience. Don't miss this chance to unleash your creativity and take home a bespoke work of art. Join us at KST for a day of craft, community, and celebration this MLK Day with True T's Unique Jewelry Workshop! truetpgh.com @truetpgh

Repair the World mobilizes Jews and their communities to take action to pursue a just world, igniting a lifelong commitment to service. Repair the World Pittsburgh has been connecting neighbors to show up for non-profit partners in Pittsburgh since 2013, strengthening communities and building connections across lines of difference: rpr.world/volunteerpgh

Ksci-Art Initiative Partnership with East Liberty Ministry Hub is an after school program dedicated to intentional time with teens in a variety of areas, including STEM, art, cooking, mentoring, sports, games, life skills and intentional conversation.

City of Asylum builds a just community by protecting and celebrating freedom of creative expression. We provide sanctuary to endangered writers and artists, so that they can continue to create and their voices are not silenced. We offer a broad range of free literary, arts, and humanities programs in a community setting to build social equity through cultural exchange. And by transforming dilapidated properties into homes for our programs, we anchor neighborhood economic development. Learn more at cityofasylum.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 or @assemblepgh on social media.

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.**
