

**KST PRESENTS**

**KST X NYC | DANCE**

**SLOWDANGER**

**SUPERCELL**

**Thursday, January 11, 2024  
6:00pm**

**Friday, January 12, 2024  
2:00pm**

\*Warning: This performance includes haze and flashing lights.



KST PRESENTS  
WINTER/SPRING 2024

# BRAVE ACTIONS BOLD VOICES

**The function of art is to do more than tell it like it is – it's to imagine what is possible.**  
— bell hooks

Pittsburgh's **Kelly Strayhorn Theater** is a **celebrated Black and queer-led organization rooted in Black and queer liberation**. Through our 2021 to 2025 Strategic Direction, **Owning Our Future, Thriving Where We Live**, supported by the **Ford Foundation** and **The Heinz Endowments America's Cultural Treasures** program, we carry out a special initiative **KST x NYC**, sharing our story and the artists in Pittsburgh with the world.

KST X NYC was first launched in 2023 as a special presentation of **Pittsburgh-based theater artist Adil Mansoor's** solo lecture performance, **Amm(i)gone**, at the **Performance Project at University Settlement**, to open the pathways for local talents to thrive on a national stage. See the contact information below for available dates in 2024/2025!

For 2024, we are delighted to present the **New York premieres** of **slowdanger's SUPERCELL** and **STAYCEE PEARL dance project & Soy Sos's CIRCLES: going in!** These two works were developed through the multi-year support of KST's **Local & Global Performance** program.

Both **SUPERCELL** and **CIRCLES: going in** are available for touring with support from NEFA's National Dance Project. All performances will be preceded and followed by light refreshments in **The Flea Theater's lobby**. **Join us on Friday, January 12 at 12:30pm for a small reception with the artists.**

Our goal is to **continue sharing narratives** of Pittsburgh with our local community and our **global colleagues**. We invite you to **join our collaboration** and **bring these stories** of contemporary Pittsburgh artists **to your community**.

**JOSEPH HALL**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**BEN PRYOR**  
PROGRAMMING DIRECTOR



Contact Information:

slowdanger: Joshua Bristow, [jeebristow@gmail.com](mailto:jeebristow@gmail.com)

STAYCEE PEARL dance project & Soy Sos: Sandy Garcia, [sandyg@pentacle.org](mailto:sandyg@pentacle.org)

Adil Mansoor: Kate Bussert & Bonnie Davis,

[kbussert@bretadamsltd.net](mailto:kbussert@bretadamsltd.net), [bdavis@bretadamsltd.net](mailto:bdavis@bretadamsltd.net)

# 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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KST X NYC | DANCE

# SLOWDANGER

## SUPERCELL

### ABOUT THE WORK

*SUPERCELL* is an evening-length multidisciplinary quintet performance responding to **climate consciousness**, **media sensationalism**, **desensitization**, and **environmental collapse**. The title refers to supercells, large storms of deep, persistent updrafts often resulting in many tornadoes. While supercells are terrifying, ominous, and harbingers of great damage, they are simultaneously breathtaking environmental events when witnessed from afar. The effect is similar to sensationalist media, instantly amplifying catastrophic events for an insatiable public consumption. The work begs the question, **how do we cultivate hope during continually uncertain times?**

### ARTIST NOTE

*SUPERCELL*: a vortex... a brooding hiss... a chorus of breath... a collective exhale... The impetus for this work came while touring the third work in its trilogy, *empathy machine*. While on a trip to Texas to visit Taylor's family, we witnessed a supercell storm from afar. It was hypnotizing; a towering cloud form with lightning illuminating large pockets of the mammoth storm. Beneath it multiple tornadoes were born in its wake. We sat in quiet, miles away, watching this breathtaking climate event, in awe of its beauty and detrimental power. We began to gestate the apocalyptic climate event that would lead to the fallout present in *empathy machine*'s sparse landscape. We questioned our own attraction to such an event and contribution to passive observance. *SUPERCELL* investigates the multitude of sensations of living in a body on a changing planet. We do not aim to solve, fix or repair the climate crisis, rather, to hold up a mirror to ourselves, to reflect, to share, to brew, to break, to fall.

### CREDITS

Direction by slowdanger

Performance Collaborators: AJ Libert, Christian A. Warner, kira shiina

Process Collaborator: Nile Harris, Jasmine Hearn

Scenic Design by ProjectileObjects

Lighting Design by Harbour Edney

Costumes by Mad Recital

Sound Design by slowdanger in collaboration with cast

Choreography/Direction by slowdanger in collaboration with cast  
Dramaturgical Support, Collaborating Media Design, and

Collaborating Sound Design by Jasmine Hearn

Advisory Committee: Nathan Darity, Jasmine Hearn, Heather Kelley, Michelle King, Jennifer Roberts

Project Manager: Joshua Bristow

Run Time: 56 minutes, no intermission

This presentation of *SUPERCELL* is supported by The New England Foundation for the Arts's National Dance Project additional support from the Ford Foundation and The Heinz Endowments America's Cultural Treasures initiative.

*SUPERCELL* is made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Mellon Foundation. *SUPERCELL* is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund Project co-commissioned by Kelly Strayhorn Theater, The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center and NPN. *SUPERCELL* is also supported by the Opportunity Fund, The Pittsburgh Foundation and The Heinz Endowments, with additional residency support from NCCAkrón, The Space Upstairs and New York University's Tisch School of the Arts Department of Dance.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**slowdancer, taylor knight (they/them) & anna thompson (they/them)** are co-founding artistic

directors of slowdancer, a multidisciplinary performance organism based in Pittsburgh, PA. slowdancer uses a systematic approach to movement, technology, found material, vocalization, and

physiological centering to produce their performance work.

Through the process of making each piece, slowdancer works with an ever deepening understanding of energy, synergy, action, gender, time, and storytelling. As a queer, non-binary led organization, slowdancer is committed to deconstructing the binaries of how performance and performers are viewed onstage.



**Harbour Edney | Lighting Designer (they/he)** is a freelance lighting designer and installation artist who is currently nested in the Philadelphia area. Recent designs include *Always the Hour* (Annie Wilson), *The Wild Party* (Eagle Theatre), *a hit dog will holler* (Azuka Theatre Company), *Chaat* (Usiloquy Dance Designs), *Papa* (The New Hazlett Theatre) and *Bruise & Thorn* (Pipeline Theatre Company). They have designed for other companies such as Obvious Agency, The Bearded Ladies Cabaret, The Pillow Projects, Kelly Strayhorn Theatre, Alumni Theater Company and INTAR NYC. Harbour has a special love for dance and is thrilled and grateful to be working on *SUPERCELL* with this team.

**Jasmine Hearn | Dramaturgical Support, Collaborating Media Design, and Collaborating Sound Design (they/them)**

is an internationally-touring interdisciplinary artist, director, performer, choreographer, organizer, doula, and teacher. They are committed to performance as an expansive practice that includes a spectrum of dance and somatic traditions and techniques, sound design, garment design, cooking, and the archiving of matrilineal memories. They give gratitude to Spirit, their mothers and aunties, and all the mothering Black people who have supported their moving, remembering body.

**AJ Libert | Performer (he/him)**, from Pittsburgh, PA, started his dance training at the age of three. He graduated from PBT's full time program, and then attended Point Park University where he received a BFA in Modern dance. AJ enjoys the complexities that movement exploration has to offer. Combining his love for the natural world with his love for movement drives AJ to continue to find deeper connections between the two, in hopes to merge both worlds seamlessly. AJ would like to thank his two beautiful mothers, without them he would not be where he is today.

**ProjectileObjects | Scenic Designer and Technical Director (he/him)** Cornelius Henke III is a multi-talented creative with a passion for video production and performance art. His work spans across various mediums, including music videos, motion graphics, live events, and interactive installations. Cornelius is an activist and partner at Merging Media, a boutique digital media production company based in Pittsburgh, PA. In 2021, ProjectileObjects formed an LLC that offers a range of services, including conceptual design, development, engineering, fabrication, and installations. With a wealth of experience and expertise, Cornelius continues to captivate audiences with his unique vision and exceptional talent.

**Mad Recital** is an avant-garde fashion label established in 2010. The designers involved in the label are Richard Ramirez (who started his own fashion label in 1997 prior) and Sean E. Ramirez-Matzus. Mad Recital focuses on deconstruction, repurposed garments, handmade techniques, alternative visions of beauty and unconventional designs. Drawing inspiration from nature, folk-lore, myths and legends, film and the arts as well as the history of avant-garde fashion, Mad Recital aims to create wearable art. The end goal, pieces that delight, unsettle, inspire and provoke. Their work has been sold at boutiques in Japan and France.

**kira shiina | Performer (they/she)** is a dance and sound artist based on the unceded Lenape land known as Philadelphia, PA. kira shiina attended Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts, going on to receive their BFA in Dance from the University of the Arts. In 2019, they presented their first solo work, DID YOU / FALL APART in collaboration with painter Jameelah Platt. They were a founding company member of Mark Caserta's Big Kid Dance and are currently a creative associate of choreographer Tommie-Waheed Evans, and has been a company member of waheedworks since 2019. kira shiina is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Dance at the UArts.

**Christian Warner | Performer (he/him)**  
Christian A. Warner is an interdisciplinary performing artist, choreographer, and director. Company credits include Boca Tuya, NVA & Guests, Sidra Bell Dance New York, TU Dance, Owen/Cox Dance Group, Ponybox Dance Theatre and Deeply Rooted. He has performed repertoire from creators Bryan Arias, Alvin Ailey, Aszure Barton, Darius Barnes, Rena Butler, Stefanie Batten-Bland, and Kayla Farrish. His choreography and direction has been commissioned by Owen/Cox, Trevor Jackson, McKoy Dance Project, James Madison University, Texas State University, Full Out Creative, Berit Ahlgren / Honeyworks, Ballet Co.Laboratory, and Demeatria Boccella.

# SPECIAL NOTES FROM THE ARTISTS

To view *SUPERCELL*'s bibliography, including writers like Octavia Butler and Ursula K LeGuin, [click here](#).

## 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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