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KELLY STRAYHORN THEATER HOLDS 5TH ANNUAL BILLY STRAYHORN BIRTHDAY BASH

Sean Jones, Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra Lead Musical Salute

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Grammy Award-winning trumpeter, composer and bandleader Sean Jones will lead the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra (PJO) in a tribute to internationally-acclaimed musician Billy Strayhorn on Saturday, November 24 at 8 pm at the Kelly Strayhorn Theater. Suite Life: A Billy Strayhorn Birthday Bash features a 18-piece instrumental and vocal ensemble performing renditions of numerous Strayhorn compositions as well as jazz favorites by other composers.

This one-night only tribute celebrates the life of pianist, composer and arranger Billy Strayhorn, who began his musical studies as a youth in Pittsburgh. At age 22, he joined Duke Ellington’s band. Among their most famous collaborations are “Take the A Train” and “Lush Life.” DJ Nate Mitchell, Strayhorn’s nephew Dr. Greg Morris and musician Deryk Tines will participate in the program.

Jones is featured on the 2007 Grammy Award-winning Turned to Blue from Nancy Wilson. As a bandleader, Jones has released six albums under the Mack Avenue Records label. In addition to being a lead trumpeter for the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (which also features Wynton Marsalis), Jones performs nationally and internationally with his own groups. As a highly-sought featured musician, Jones often plays at such acclaimed festivals as the Monterey Jazz Festival, Detroit International Jazz Festival and Montreal International Jazz Festival. In 2004, he became a music professor at Duquesne University. In addition to performing with PJO, Jones is the Artistic Director.

The Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra, featuring some of the region’s top musicians. On trumpet are: Steven Hawk, James Moore and Kenneth Rittenhouse. Playing trombone are: Keith Jackson, Jeffrey Bush, Jay Ashby, and Glenn Wayland. The saxophone section includes Eric DeFade, Curtis Johnson, Kenny Powell, James Germann, and Mike Tomaro, who is also co-artistic director of PJO. The rhythm section comprises pianist

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Sean Jones and the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra
 by Martha Rial



Billy Strayhorn



Alton Merrill, bassist Paul Thompson, percussionist Tom Wendt and Marty Ashby on guitar. Carolyn Perteete is the vocalist. The ensemble will feature virtuosic solo work and intricate arrangements penned by Mr. Tomaro.

"Pittsburgh has long been on the map as a Mecca for jazz music. We are excited to have Sean Jones and the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra bring their immensely expressive style of entertainment to the Kelly Strayhorn Theater for this celebration," Janera Solomon, executive director of the Kelly Strayhorn said.

In 2000, the former Regent Theatre was renamed in honor of Gene Kelly and Billy Strayhorn, two famous Pittsburgh artists. The Kelly Strayhorn Theater honors each namesake annually on their birthdays.

The \$75 VIP ticket package to Suite Life includes: 2 tickets to the performance, admission to the exclusive pre-performance reception at 7 pm with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and VIP seats. JAZZSPACE, a KST partner organization dedicated to promoting Pittsburgh's next generation of jazz musicians, will entertain during the reception. Proceeds from the VIP reception will benefit the Strayhorn Legacy Fund, which supports arts education activities for youth.

Tickets to the performance only are: \$25 Advance | \$30 Door | \$20 Residents of 15206 | \$15 Student/Artist. For tickets, visit this web site: Kelly-strayhorn.org or call 412.363.3000. The Kelly Strayhorn Theater is located at 5149 Penn Avenue in East Liberty.

[About the Kelly Strayhorn Theater](#)

As the last of nine theaters from the 1950s heyday of East Liberty, the Kelly Strayhorn Theater uses the arts as a catalyst for continuing community revitalization. The theater, in its 12th season, continues to play a key role in the transformation of Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood. An intimate, professionally equipped, 349-seat multiple-use performance venue, the theater demonstrates its commitment to Pittsburgh artists and audiences. The KST is a favorite venue of emerging local artists, regional artists and arts organizations who take risks and present new work. Noted Pittsburghers Gene Kelly and Billy Strayhorn, the namesakes, are among the 80 area artists honored on the theater's Gallery of Stars. The building, opened in 1919, is the former Regent Theatre, which served the East End as a movie house for eight decades.

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