

## COVID Douses Light-Up

As speculated in previous issues of *Pittsburgh Applause*, this year's Light-Up Night celebrations have been cancelled by the **Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership** (PDP) because of the coronavirus.



For roughly sixty years, Light-Up Night has been the official start of Pittsburgh's holiday season. Until the 1990's, it was typically held on the first Monday of November. But that decade's "Sparkle Sea-son" program moved it to the Fri-

day before Thanksgiving. It is arguably the region's biggest single-day event luring tens of thousands of people to the city.

The cancellation is yet another major blow to the area's artists. Performers ranging from bands to clowns rely on Light-Up's collection of events for additional revenue.

Other major fall events have also been affected the outdoor festival Little Italy Days has been cancelled and the venerable Reel Q film festival has gone virtual.

## COVID Relief (Of Sorts) For Clubs & Restaurants

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf has proposed a financial package for bars and nightclubs -- whose stages are often the primary source of revenue for many performers.

But the \$20 million offered isn't being well received by the hospitality industry, reports Michael Rubinkam for the Associated Press. "If the restaurant industry is the backbone of Pennsylvania's economy," he quotes from a **Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association's** written statement, "then our governor needs to understand our backs are broken."

Nevertheless, at the governor's urging, the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board voted 2-1 on October 28 to waive license fees for businesses like nightclubs and

restaurants. The waiver affects 2021.

"I don't want to look a gift horse in the mouth but that fee for us is \$1,700 a year. And while it's welcome and I appreciate it, it really won't do anything," said Dave Regan, owner of the **Mullaney's Harp & Fiddle** told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Paul Guggenheimer. "It's a drop in the bucket compared to what we've lost. I'm down \$300,000 in sales since the pandemic. If they really want to help they can get rid of having to order food and no sitting in a bar. We're losing a lot of business from those two limitations."

Licensees will still have to file the relevant annual paperwork. [Read Guggenheimer's full article.](#)

## COVID Inspires Investment Group

Can a former music executive rescue small performance venues in cities like Pittsburgh? A recently *New York Times* article suggests that Marc Geiger may be the man to do it.

Ben Sisario reports that the former global music boss at the **WME** talent agency has amassed at least \$75 million to invest in dozens of clubs across the country. "The hope here is to create a network effect," Geiger tells Sisario. "To be a long-term backer, helper, grower of these businesses, and enjoy the wins." He plans to call the firm **SaveLive** and that "his venue deals would be partnerships, and that despite controlling a majority share he would not seek to flip assets."

It remains unclear at press time if any distressed Pittsburgh venue is under consideration, but it does seem very possible. Read Sisario's full article by clicking [here](#).

Mid-October's virtual fundraiser for the Save Our Stages effort raised just under \$2 million, reports Jem Aswad for *Variety*.

More than 30 artists participated, including Foo Fighters, Miley Cyrus and Dave Matthews. The funds will be used by the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) to help struggling independent venues.

## Dan+Shay Wins CMT

Pop music duo Dan+Shay --- which includes Pittsburgh native Dan Smyers --- won Duo Video of the Year at the 2020 CMT Music Awards.

What is now called the CMT Music Awards began in 1967 as an annual honor presented by the now-defunct magazine Music City News. It began evolving in 1988 to become the signature event of **ViacomCBS'** cable channel Country Music Television (CMT).

The full list of winners is [available online](#).

## WCT Launches Streaming Service For Arts Groups

To help local arts organization during the pandemic, the **Westmoreland Cultural Trust** (WCT) has announced a new livestreaming service.



According to an October 22 press release: "The virtual platform will allow regional cultural organizations and non-profits to showcase local arts and entertainment while providing the public with live performances viewed from the

comforts of their own home. This all-inclusive service includes ticketing, livestreaming and broadcasting capabilities, allowing shows and performances to be shown in real time or recorded and broadcast at a later date."

The release describes the set-up as "a self-contained, 4-channel, live production and streaming studio with integrated control of three robotic" cameras. For more information, call (724) 836-1123.





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## COVID Causes NBCU To Make Changes

The pandemic isn't just hurting small A&E entities and individual artists, but major corporations like **Comcast** as well. *The Hollywood*



Reporter's Georg Szala reports that the company's NBC Universal division is expected to endure a \$700 million hit thanks largely to the closure of theme parks, cinemas and production studios. Comcast CEO Brian Roberts de-

scribed the situation in an October 29 earnings conference call. The company plans to address this unsettled environment by restructuring its TV and streaming businesses. "In essence, we have done away with the concept of creating a piece of work for a specific network," Roberts explains.

Szala writes that the division "recently rejigged and streamlined key parts of its operations" to reduce costs and bring key elements up to date. The reporter goes [into detail with his article](#).

## CBS Cuts Episode Orders Due To COVID

Entertainment industry jobs continue to suffer with *Variety's* Will Thorne reporting that CBS is cutting back its orders on new episodes for the 2020-2021 season.



CBS is the flagship network of **ViacomCBS**, which owns two Pittsburgh TV stations and (through **Entercom**), four radio stations. Normally a broadcast network orders 22 new episodes of a prime time series (sometimes more). But this year, many will shoot a mere 16 episodes.

"The pandemic caused every network, not just CBS, to shift its schedule multiple times amid production chaos," writes Thorne. "With the later production start dates and premieres, CBS is hoping that these reduced series orders will carry them through May and the end of the traditional broadcast season. Other networks are likely being forced to make a similar decision regarding the length of their shows this season, due to a combination of scheduling issues and spiraling production costs as a result of the pandemic."

In other news, Bryon Rubin has been promoted to Chief operating Officer of the CBS Entertainment Group. Rubin will be responsible for all financial and business op-

## Bell No Longer Rings For KDKA-AM

Controversial personality Wendy Bell has been formally released from **Entercom's** KDKA-AM, reports Eric Heyl for Pittsburgh Patch.



Entercom is primarily owned by **ViacomCBS**, the corporate parent of KDKA-TV. Bell has a history of making disturbing comments. The most recent was suggesting that officials should shoot people who vandalize monuments.



erations for the group and its divisions. He has been with the company in various positions since 1999.

## COVID Adds Urgency To Union Effort

Employees of the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh** are taking the next step in forming a union by seeking a formal vote through the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).



The announcement was made on October 20 by Jess Kamm Broomell of the United Steel Workers, which is facilitating the process. It affects roughly 500 art

handlers, front staff, gift shop clerks, ushers, educators and even scientists.

"Our movement began with concerns about transparency and limited career opportunities, but it now has even greater urgency as its expanded to address furloughs, pay cuts, and safety issues resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic," the announcement quotes Katie Pirilla, an art handler at the Carnegie Museum of Art. "Workers continued organizing

throughout the pandemic and found renewed strength in our fight for a safe museum for employees and the public alike."

The group is operating under the name United Museum Workers which creating a collective bargaining unit involving all four of the Carnegie's museums.



# Harold Betters (1928-2020)





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## Peter Jackson Taps CMU Vet

Internationally acclaimed filmmaker Peter Jackson (of the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy) has hired Joe Marks to be the chief technology officer at his **Weta Digital** firm.

### Carnegie Mellon University

Marks is leaving his position as the executive director of **Carnegie Mellon University's** Center for Machine Learning & Health.

"The addition of Joe Marks allows us to go deeper and push further into the technical innovations that

will define the next generation of storytelling," four-time Oscar winner and Weta's senior VFX supervisor Joe Letteri tells *The Hollywood Reporter's* Carolyn Giardina. "His ability to unite artificial intelligence initiatives with real-time technology and increasingly procedural workflows will allow us to fully realize the promise of the virtual production workflows we pioneered for the first 'Avatar' [movie]."

Taking the position means that Marks will relocate to New Zealand.

## Pitt Receives Wilson Archive

The archive of Pulitzer Prize winning playwright August Wilson (1945-2005) has been acquired by the **University of Pittsburgh**.

Born and raised in Pittsburgh, the writer is best known his ten-part "Pittsburgh Cycle" plays that brilliantly exposes the evolution and challenge of life for African-Americans over a century.



"This acquisition is about more than bringing August Wilson back home to Pittsburgh," said Chancellor Patrick Gallagher in a statement. "This archive deftly puts the experiences of Black Americans beneath an intimate magnifying glass and unpacks themes of injustice and inequity that are just as relevant today as when Wilson's first play debuted."

The 450 boxes contain scripts and awards as well as unpublished works and personal writings. They will be stored and studied at the university's Hillman Library. Watch KDKA-TV's report by clicking the graphic below.



## Pioneer Star Named

**Point Park University** has chosen theatre arts student Pablito Uri as its new Pioneer Star, reports *Pittsburgh City Paper's* Jordan Snowden.



The Pioneer Star is a project of the university's label, Pioneer Records, to provide additional support to a promising student.

Snowden explains that each year's Pioneer Star "receives a 3-song EP, custom artwork created by the staff, free promotion, and future booking experiences." Read more of Snowden's article and ample some of Uri's music by clicking [here](#).

## Jurors Named

The panel of jurors have been announced for **Silver Eye Center for Photography's** annual Fellowship competition.

Jurors include Elizabeth Chodos of **Carnegie Mellon University**; Karen Irvine of **Columbia College** and Drew Sawyer from the **Brooklyn Museum**.

Winning exhibitions will take place in the summer of 2021. Two prizes and four honorable men-



## DOP Goes Online

The nonprofit organization **Doors Open Pittsburgh** has announced a new livestreaming series.



Begun in 2016, Doors Open Pittsburgh ((DOP) celebrates Pittsburgh's unique architecture and heritage by providing visual storytelling and education inside iconic buildings and cool new spaces.

The series titled "DOP Stories: A Virtual Storytelling Experience" debuts on November 1. According to a press release: "This virtual platform offers a celebration of Pittsburgh --- notable buildings, industry titans, the famous and infamous, artists, music, cultures, neighborhoods, and general interest." It will run through March 2021.

Installments include "Behind the Stage Door" exploring the local music industry and "Pittsburgh Mansions" which looks inside some of the city's most remarkable homes.

For more information, click [here](#).

## Tech Company Sponsors Public Art

WESA-FM's Kiley Koscinski reports that local software firm **Duolingo** is launching a three-year program to fund public art initiatives.

The first is a mural called "To Be Human" by Detroit artist Ann Lewis. Inspired by students at the Barack Obama Academy of International Studies, the piece stretches across the South Beatty Street side of Duolingo's headquarters.

"It is my honor to dedicate this mural to the students of Obama Academy and the Pittsburgh artists and activists that have en-

gaged with me throughout this process," Lewis told Koscinski. "This wall has a complex history and I am very grateful that the mural helped reestablish a dialogue between Duolingo and the community."

Read the full article by clicking [here](#).



## Images



*The Pittsburgh Opera's annual piano sale fundraiser is going forward for its 13th year. However, the COVID pandemic means that if you want to see any of the 100 instruments, you'll have to make an appointment by calling (412) 454-5555.*





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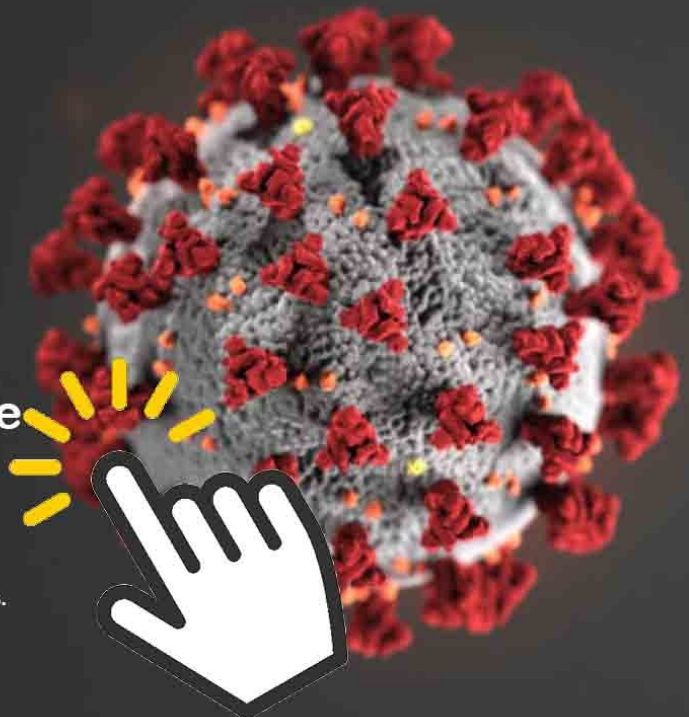
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November schedule](#)



## GPAC Responds to the COVID-19 Crises

Click here to read how the  
Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council  
is trying to help local artists and groups.



## Steeltown Offers Virtual College Fair

Aspiring professionals are welcome to attend a virtual college fair being staged by **Steeltown**.

The fair is geared for high school students "curious about pursuing a career in film-making, broadcasting and digital arts." Participating colleges range from hometown schools like **Carnegie Mellon University** to outside institutions such as the **Savannah College of Art and Design**.



Using the videotelephony software developed by **Zoom Video Communications**, students will use the first two hours to learn about the colleges and participate in group discussions. The third hour, according to an online post, "is reserved for Steeltown alumni and current college students to come together to chat with high schoolers in a peer-based Q&A session."

The fair is scheduled for November 16, 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. For more information, or to register, click [here](#).

## Award Donated To Heinz

A special object is being donated to the **Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center**: an Act of Valor Award.



The Act of Valor is a rare honor bestowed by the Pittsburgh Police Department. This particular award given to Pittsburgh Police Officer Tim Matson for his bravery in the line of duty during the attack at the Tree of Life synagogue on Oct. 27, 2018. Matson was among the initial responding city police officers at the scene that morning. He was wounded alongside fellow city officers Michael Smidga, Daniel Mead and Anthony Burke.

After receiving the award in 2019, Matson gifted it to nurse and hos-

pital chaplain Dan Leger, who also survived the attack. They became friends while recovering in the same hospital. Leger is donating the award to the center's Rauh Jewish Archives. The ceremony is closed to the general public but will be streamed on the center's web site live on Sunday, November 1 at 2:00 p.m.

In other news, the center is holding its annual "Treasures of the Attic" virtually this year.

Archivists will share rarely heard stories behind the collections under their care. This includes are material is obtained, cataloged and studied. The program is scheduled for November 11 at 7:00 p.m. Participation is free but you must click [here](#) to register.

## Art Institutes Scandal Continues

Twenty months after its demise, the defunct Arts Institutes is still raising legal and ethical questions over its operation and its closure. *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Daniel Moore reports that members of the U.S. House of Representatives have filed subpoenas "to compel three staffers at the U.S. Department of Education to testify before Congress as part of an investigation into the agency's role" in the company's collapse.



The move comes after an investigation by the House Education & Labor Committee resulted in a report alleging that "the school's owners knowingly deceived students about a loss of accreditation" --- and that the department, under Secretary Betsy DeVoss, failed to protect students.

The committee, dominated by Democrats, also charge the department of trying to obstruct their investigation. [Read Moore's full article](#).



# Keep Your Eyes On Us!



**As venues finalize their new  
schedules, we'll update  
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# Opportunities

Applications are being accepted by **Row House Cinema** for the Sweded Film Festival for Creative Re-Creations. The festival invites participants to recreate classic movies by replacing A-list stars and CGI with whatever is laying around their houses and a ton of creativity. Registration and further information is available by clicking [here](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the way many nonprofits must report their financials. To help, the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management (part of **Robert Morris University**) has scheduled a webinar on November 5 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Click [here](#) to register.

Eight local positions are currently available at Pittsburgh-based video production firm **NEP** in the company's broadcast services. See the full list by clicking [here](#).

A call for entries has been announced by the **Silver Eye Center for Photography's** annual Fellowship program. Winning entries will be exhibited in the summer of 2021 with two prizes and four honorable mentions. The deadline is November 16. Visit <http://www.silvereve.org/> for details.

The local chapter of **Women in Film & Media** (WIFM) wants a new logo and is looking for a graphic designer. The selected artist will be acknowledged on the WIFM web site with a link to your info/bio/portfolio and we'll announce your logo on our social media channels. You'll also receive a free year membership to WIFM Pittsburgh. Details are available by clicking [here](#).

KDKA Radio, part of **Entercom** (which is primarily owned by ViacomCBS), is seeking an [afternoon drive host](#) and an [anchor/reporter](#).



## iHeart Buys Voxnest

On October 23, **iHeartMedia** --- which owns six Pittsburgh radio stations --- announced an agreement to purchase the shares of podcast analytic firm **Voxnest** it doesn't currently own.



The press release explains: "With this acquisition, iHeartMedia, through Voxnest, will now be able to provide podcast advertisers with additional targetable inventory at scale by allowing the effective and efficient monetization across an entire range of podcast inventory on this one-of-kind programmatic platform."

## Dance Company Expanding

Despite the pandemic, work is moving forward on dance company **Bodiography's** new project, reports Amanda Waltz for *Pittsburgh City Paper*.

Voxnest provides advertisers with analysis, audience and content targeting as well as dynamic ad insertion.

"We're excited about the growth potential from this unique combination," said Francesco Baschieri, CEO of Voxnest, in the release. "The podcast marketplace has been fragmented, with supply and demand spread across multiple platforms -- creating scale challenges for marketers who want to buy podcasts.

That new project is located on the city's North Side along the Ohio River and will be called The Movement Factory. "I have been looking to expand in Squirrel Hill for about three years now, but I could not find ample space," company founder Maria Caruso told Waltz. "Thus, my movement into the North Shore."

Bodiography is leading a partnership in renovating a 10,000-square-foot former bedding factory into a 175-seat theater with three studios and associated facilities. Learn the details by reading the [full article](#).



**The following message was released on October 10 by J. Kevin McMahon of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. We have edited it for space and to focus on the core subject.**

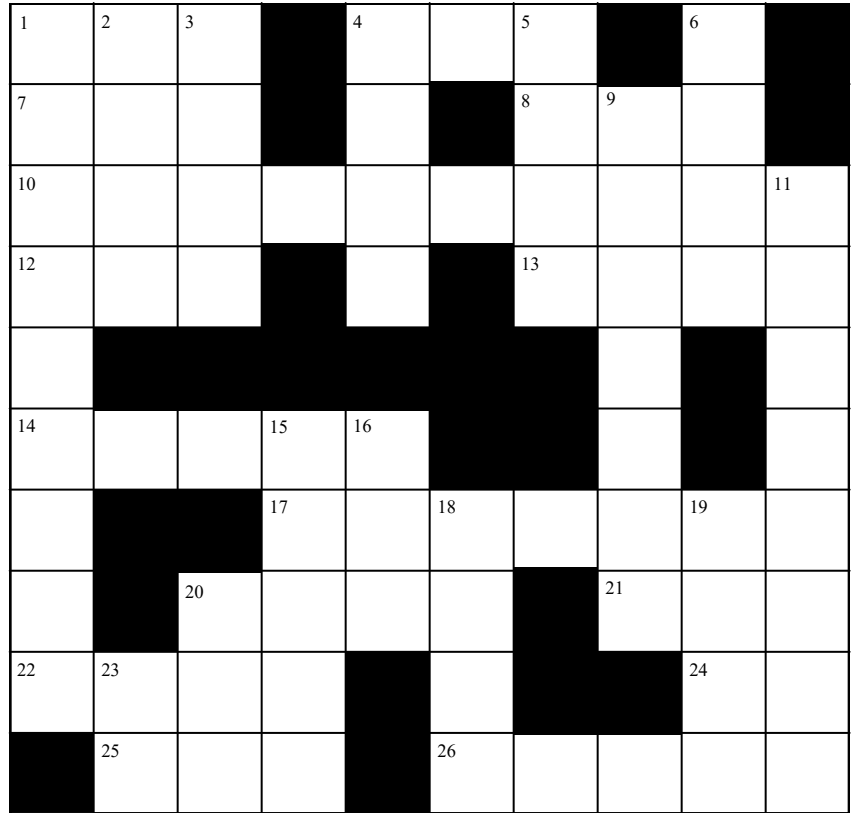
Six months ago, I never would have imagined I'd be writing to you about our continued closure. After I reached out this summer, we received so much support and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. You really came through for us as we launched our "Art Connects Us" critical relief fund in August and we continue to raise much-needed funds [the Trust is facing a \$3 million deficit - ed.]. We are making steady progress towards bridging the gap in our budget for 2020, planning for the day we can reopen our doors, and continuing to present quality online content.

As always, I hope that you continue to follow the guidance of our elected officials and health and safety experts. Please wear a mask and maintain social distance so that we can slow the spread of the virus. Every small step moves us closer to the day we can gather again. Our virtual programs and events will never replace the joy of experiencing art live and in-person in the Cultural District. I know I speak for everyone at the Cultural Trust when I say we are waiting patiently for the day we can raise the curtain and welcome you back into our theaters, galleries, and venues.

Stay safe, and be well.

## Across

1. New York governor who lost in the 1796 presidential election
4. Halloween word
7. Counterpart to the id
8. Massachusetts research vessel, initially
10. 26-Across' political party
12. Gov. safety grp.
13. Wound memento
14. Comedic actor Seth
17. The number of U.S. states in 1796
20. "Star Trek" actor Chris
21. Pirates pitcher of the 1920's
22. Former "SNL" cast member Dunn, to pals
24. Division of a record label, initially
25. "Get Smart" star, to pals
26. The winner of the 1796 presidential election



## Down

1. He came in second in the 1796 presidential election
2. Like fine wine
3. Puppet philosopher?
4. New York senator who lost in the 1796 presidential election
5. Night flyers
6. Homer's smart daughter
9. One of two South Carolina brothers, both of whom lost in the 1796 presidential election
11. Celebrities often have personal ones
15. Someone from China or Korea
16. Famous French writer Anais
18. TV's warrior princess
19. Hard cheese from the Netherlands
20. A non-amateur, briefly
23. Scary letters for a drug addict

### Last Month's Solution

P	R	I	D	E			M	S	
Y	E	T		O		S	O	L	O
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E	N	I	D		N	E	D		N
D	E	A	D	L	Y	S	I	N	S



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