

What's Old Is New: Confluence Comes Together

They finally have a name.

Even after finalizing their merger, the combined Pittsburgh Public Theater and Pittsburgh CLO had no idea what to call itself. The company has finally taken the name **Confluence Theater of Pittsburgh** (CTP).

Offices will be at the O'Reilly Theater which will also function as CTP's main stage even as it produces programming at other sites.



Those productions include a "prologue season" this fall at the O'Reilly, the Greer and the Byham. A new, year-round model will be introduced in January with a production of the 1963 musical comedy "[She Loves Me](#)" at the O'Reilly.

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"This season is our first opportunity to show Pittsburgh what a unified company can do," [On Stage Pittsburgh's Sharon Eberson](#) quotes CTP's Dr. Brett Ashley Crawford. "Season One keeps our stages active throughout the year." She also quotes the company's Kyle Haden as saying that they "programmed this season like a great dinner party, bringing together guests who might not normally share a table."

The other announced productions are the Tony Award winning play "[Purpose](#)" (making its Pittsburgh debut), "[Matt & Ben](#)," a satirical look at the bromance between actors and long-time friends [Matt Damon](#) and [Ben Affleck](#). There will also be new productions of the musicals "[Les Misérables](#)" and "[Cabaret](#)" as well as William Shakespeare's classic play "[The Comedy of Errors](#)."

The official first season begins February 2 with "[She Loves Me](#)."

A search for a permanent executive director is continuing. Until one is selected, Dr. Crawford is filling the post.

Theater Factory's New HQ

A new home has been found for **The Theatre Factory**, the company [has announced](#).

That home is the developing campus called Aluminum City Arts, located inside a former ALCOA building in New Kensington.

Little information is available regarding Aluminum City Arts, but the announcement describes it as "a vibrant arts hub designed to serve the entire region through live performances, exhibitions, outdoor events, markets, concerts and more."

The Theatre Factory will begin its new season with a production of "[Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat](#)" in December.



Sharon Eberson recently interviewed City Theatre's new artistic director for OnStage Pittsburgh. [Click the image to read it.](#)

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The Merger Moves Forward

A [court settlement](#) has removed the last major hurdle in the planned merger of **Paramount Skydance** with **Warner Bros. Discovery**.

Responses have been mixed, especially among the unions.



Matthew D. Loeb of **The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees** (IATSE) [declared](#) that the settlement achieves “protections for workers, enforceable safeguards and other important commitments.” However, the two writers’ guilds issued a [joint statement](#) that they “continue to believe the merger will cause damage to writers and the industry at large.”

What the merger will mean for Pittsburgh remains uncertain. Paramount (through CBS) owns two local television stations and Warner is a co-producer of “The Pitt” streaming series. The combined company will amass a substantial debt that includes billions of dollars in [recently announced](#) [liens](#).

An interesting twist is the person who has been named co-CEO with David Ellison --- Ynon Kreiz, who is most recently from toy maker **Mattel**. [The Wrap’s Lucas Manfredl](#) explains that while Kreiz helped Mattel to rank “number one globally in the Dolls, Vehicles, and Infant, Toddler & Preschool toy categories,” he was also “instrumental in driving Mattel’s move into Hollywood,” most notably with this hit 2023 film “Barbie.”

Locally, [Eric Heyl of Pittsburgh Patch](#) reports that long-time KDKA-TV reporter Ross Guidotti has retired.

“The Pitt” Wins More Emmys

Once again, the medical drama “The Pitt” --- set and partially filmed in Pittsburgh --- was named Best Drama at this year’s Emmy Awards. The behind-the-scenes special “Inside the Pitt” also gained a statuette.

You can access the full list of winners by clicking [here](#).



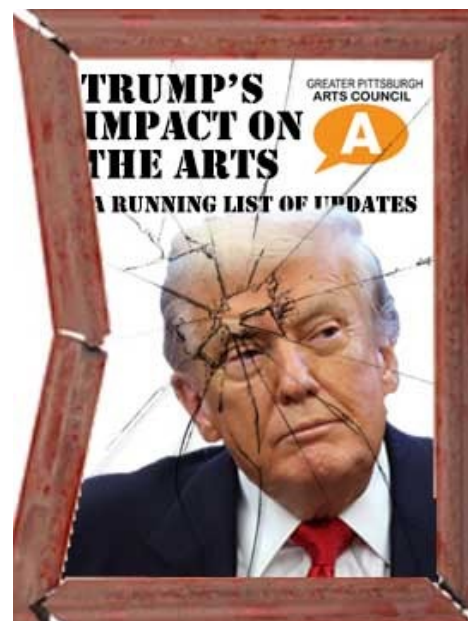
Bottlerocket Goes West

Pittsburgh’s popular and funky performance venue **Bottlerocket Social Hall** is adding a West Coast operation, [Eric Heyl reports for Pittsburgh Patch](#).



The Crocodile [opened in 1991](#) as Seattle’s grunge movement began taking off. Kurt Cobain and Nirvana were among the acts to perform there. Despite its popularity and legacy, the club struggled financially in recent years with well over \$1 million in debt. In June it was sold to **Comedy Tent**, a firm with ties to Bottlerocket.

Bottlerocket is taking over the basement, which has been operating as two separate spaces. They will be merged into one. “The new venue is expected to open in March 2027,” reports Jake Johns for KING-TV, “and will host concerts, comedy shows, dance parties, movie screenings and community events.”



Tax Bill Introduced

The major entertainment unions are cheering the proposed [Motion Picture, Television & Entertainment Revitalization Act \(MPTEA\)](#).

If passed, MPTEA would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives to encourage domestic film and television production. It would provide a 20% base tax credit for qualifying productions.

“A stackable federal tax incentive is critical for ensuring that the United States remains a competitive marketplace for production,” Russell Hollander of the [Directors Guild of America](#) declared.

The [International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees \(IATSE\)](#) insists that its passage would “level the playing field and bring film and television jobs back to the United States.”

The proposed bill is a surprising piece of bipartisanship in this politically polarized era.

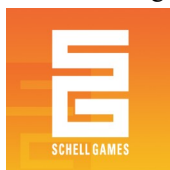
“We cannot stand by as more and more American film production moves overseas,” [Senator Tim Scott](#) told [TV Technology](#). “This legislation will create jobs in communities across America, support local economies, and help ensure that the next generation of iconic American films is made right here in America.” The Republican from South Carolina is one of four sponsors.



Schell Games Goes Meta

A new three-dimensional puzzle game developed by [Schell Games](#) was introduced at [Meta Connect 2026](#).

Meta Connect is a two-day livestream event sponsored by [Meta](#) (parent company of Facebook) to share ideas regarding artificial intelligence.



Schell Games describes “[Dragon Grove](#)” as a game that “leverages mixed reality technology to bring magical dragons and engaging plant-based puzzles directly into players' real-world spaces.” Key features include controller-free gameplay (just use your hands), a variety of dragon characters and over 200 levels of difficulty.

“[Dragon Grove](#)” fits with Meta’s new virtual reality glasses. However, while the game is free the glasses are another matter. “You might want to start putting some cash aside for them if you’re interested,” writes [Kris Holt](#) for [Engadget](#), “as they’ll cost \$1,300.”

In other news, Schell has announced a partnership with [Dunwoody College of Technology](#) to launch a new mixed reality learning game for high school students. [Details here](#).



WESA-FM’s Julia Maruca has published an interesting story about a local street being renamed in honor of a legendary Pittsburgh jazz artist. [Click the image to read it.](#)

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Dragga To Exit Pittsburgh Ballet

Nicholas Dragga is leaving the **Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre** (PBT) later this year. the company has announced.



Dragga has been leading the PBT since 2023. The Texas native will be assuming the executive director of the **Texas Ballet Theater** in Fort Worth starting in January.

"We are grateful for the tremendous contributions Nick has made to PBT," said PBT Board Chair James Crockard in a press release. "Under his exceptional leadership, we are on solid financial footing with a strong foundation for continued stability as we begin our search for Nick's replacement. We thank him for his stellar work and we wish him every success at Texas Ballet Theater, where Nick returns home from his adopted city in Pittsburgh."

Dragga is only the PBT's sixth executive director since the company was founded in 1969.



**ANNIE
DILLARD
(1945-2026)**



Quantum Names New Chief

Nationally known producer and director Katie Brook has been named the next artistic director of **Quantum Theatre**, reports WESA-FM's Bill O'Driscoll.

Brook is to succeed founding director Karla Boos, who is retiring.

"I perceive mysterious worlds in Katie as an artist that make me really excited to see what she brings us," O'Driscoll quotes Boos. "She's an amazing artist, as she would have to be to have bested great and gratifying competition for the job. And she really wants to run a theater of our size and character, where we've so consciously traded things commonly valued for innovation and freedom."

In early September, Sharon Eberson conducted a Zoom interview with Brook. "I know the local artist community as well as I can, having lived in Pittsburgh in these sort of short little periods," she told Eberson. "So, one of the things that I am most eager and curious about is going to see everybody's work, getting to know who the local folks are, and having an understanding of the appetite for different kinds of theater."

Brook grew up in Toronto but studied at Carnegie Mellon University. Her mother resides in the area. She is directing the upcoming Quantum production "Radio Island" and will assume her new post in January.

WAMO Radio Promotes Jones

KiKi B. Jones has been promoted to Brand Manager of local station WAMO-FM, owner **Audacy** has announced. Jones has been (and will continue) to host a weekday afternoon show.



Jones is now leading station's content strategy, talent, operations and branding.

"I'm excited to build on WAMO's legacy, develop our talent, strengthen our connection with our listeners" she is quoted, "and continue creating opportunities for our city to hear and see itself reflected through WAMO."

The native Pittsburgher has spent her career in radio, with stints in Baltimore, New York and Washington D.C.

Miller Position Made Permanent

Dr. Carey Scheide Miller has been named Director of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. The announcement was made by the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh** on September 15.



She has been Interim Director since January.

"Carey is a thoughtful, collaborative, and experienced leader who has amply proven her ability to take on new challenges in a series of complex institutions," said Carnegie Museums president and CEO Steven Knapp explained in the press release. "She firmly believes in the power of museums to educate and inspire and to transform communities."

Most recently, Dr. Miller has been leading the "All Together" fundraising campaign which is nearly 74% at its massive \$500 million goal.

PSO Adds Two Fellows

Two additional up-and-coming young musicians have been named by the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** (PSO) as Paul J. Ross Fellows.



The Paul J. Ross Fellowship Program is a two-year program named in honor of the first African American musician to receive a full-time contract from the PSO. The orchestra explains that fellows work closely with PSO musicians "to train and prepare for professional auditions and opportunities, with substantial financial and professional development support, and robust mentorship in a universally welcoming environment."

Selected are oboist Benjamin Goodly and trumpeter Raúl Orellana. These first-year fellows are joining second-year fellows trombonist Jacob Ogbu and bass Christian Harvey.

"Benjamin and Raúl bring outstanding artistry and passion to the Pittsburgh community," says the PSO's Melia Tourangeau in a press release, "and we are proud to support their musicianship and career."

Brief biographies of both are [available online](#).



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CMU Top School For Costume Design

The editors of *The Hollywood Reporter* have issued their annual list of the world's finest schools for costume design --- and they include **Carnegie Mellon University** (CMU).

Carnegie Mellon University

Editors "consulted designers, educators and industry leaders, evaluating curriculum, faculty, facilities, industry connections, alumni success and career preparation."

CMU was cited for teaching not only "clothing and construction but also philosophy, psychology, history and culture --- all the forces that help explain characters and their arcs." The full list can be read by clicking [here](#).

In other CMU news: the university's "Startup Week" took place from September 14 to 18. One panel discussed matters surrounding sports entertainment. A key topic was technology. "The future is not going to be segregating the fans of the video game version of a sport from fans of the live event," Derek Ham of CMU's Entertainment Technology Center said. "We have to look at this more broadly and ask what that means, and to see a future where we don't treat these markets differently."

The university posted a full article about this particular session [here](#).



August Wilson Center Lights Up The Night

A fascinating light sculpture was unveiled at the **August Wilson African American Cultural Center** (AWAACC) last month, writes Bill O'Driscoll for WESA-FM.



The installation is the latest project of **Rainbow Serpent**, a relatively new and not well-known arts group. **Rainbow Serpent** describes itself as "a visionary cultural institution creating new forms of artistic, intellectual and spiritual life through Black queer worldbuilding, African diasporic cosmologies, technological experimentation and transdisciplinary art."

A distinctive part of the AWAACC's façade is the wing-like portion of the building. "We started weaving together a lot of ideas and started thinking about how we could turn the building itself into a storyteller," Rainbow's Marques Redd told O'Driscoll.

The result is "Give Light to the Whole Circumference" and it can be seen each evening.



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IMAGES



A flamboyant new Pittsburgh Opera production of "Rigoletto" begins this month.



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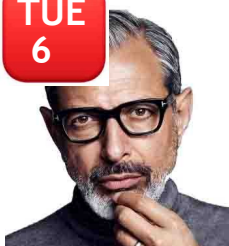


REEL Q
Pittsburgh LGBTQ
Film Festival

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WED
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GLORIA
A Play by
Branden Jacobs-Jenkins



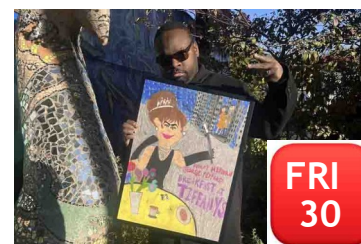
WED
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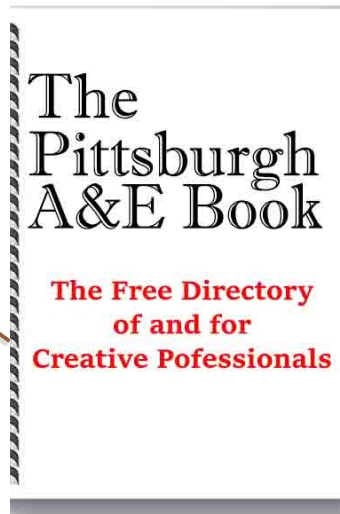


TUE
27



FRI
30

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