

Pearl Arts

movement & sound
ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT



ABOUT

PearlArts Movement and Sound harnesses the power of contemporary dance, immersive soundscapes, and creative self-expression to engage audiences in genre-bending experiences that generate joy, creativity, and a sense of collective belonging.

Under the visionary leadership of choreographer Staycee Pearl and sound designer Herman “Soy Sos” Pearl, our work probes themes of personal expression, race, freedom, and gender to immerse audiences in unforgettable experiences.

We are rooted in Pittsburgh and travel globally. Our Braddock studio pulsates with activity, hosting experimental performances, interactive workshops, empowering residencies, and more. Our renowned dance company tours the world, captivating audiences of all backgrounds in unexpected venues, from experimental theaters and university halls to outdoor grottos and museum galleries.

HISTORY:

STAYCEE PEARL dance project & Soy Sos (SPdp&SS) began as an informal incubator for movement exploration in the Fall of 2009 and made its debut at Kelly Strayhorn Theater (KST). Led by choreographer Staycee Pearl and sound designer Herman “Soy Sos” Pearl, SPdp&SS honed the pair’s artistic voice through their unique combination of contemporary dance and immersive soundscapes.

SPdp&SS produced and performed several original evening-length works, including *...on being...*, *ABBEY: In The Red, sol.*, and *CIRCLES: going in*. The company has performed extensively in Pittsburgh and toured nationally and internationally over the past 15 years.

Following its fruitful Mutual Aid Residency at Kelly Strayhorn Theater, SPdp&SS established its own facility in Braddock, PA, and officially rebranded as **PearlArts Movement & Sound** in 2024.



BIOGRAPHIES

Choreographer and artistic director **Staycee Pearl** produces genre-bending experiences that draw together contemporary dance, immersive soundscapes, and visual artistry. The 2021 winner of The Pittsburgh Foundation's Carol R. Brown Creative Achievement Award for Established Artist, Staycee continues to generate unexpected works that explore themes of personal expression, race, freedom, and gender.



As the co-founder and co-artistic director of PearlArts with her husband Herman "Soy Sos" Pearl, Staycee maintains an iterative artistic process that pulls from a wide variety of sources. Staycee has honed a uniquely soulful artistic voice that builds on her diverse experiences, from her early dance training with the Dance Theatre of Harlem and Alvin Ailey American Dance Center to her leadership of Xpressions Contemporary Dance Company and 20+ years as an influential choreographer in Pittsburgh.

Staycee is especially passionate about creating space for Black femme artists to experiment. Inspired by her own experiences and challenges as a performer and choreographer, Staycee leads workshops and residencies to sustain a vibrant community for artists in her orbit.



Sound designer/engineer **Herman "Soy Sos" Pearl** is the co-founder and co-artistic director of PearlArts. With over 40 years of experience in music and sound, Herman is an inventive and detailed producer known for his genre-bending collaborations.

Herman views sound as a physical force, as tangible as a dancer's gesture on stage. His 20-year partnership with Staycee Pearl forms the core of PearlArts, which harnesses the power of contemporary dance and immersive soundscapes to produce unexpected works. Through his carefully crafted soundscapes, Herman develops the sonic environment within which Staycee's choreography takes form.

Beyond his work producing soundscapes for PearlArts performances, Herman is an active recording producer and mentor. He teaches emerging sound engineers through the Tuff Sound Apprenticeship Program at PearlArts. He has also collaborated widely, recording and producing work for a plethora of recording artists across genres and techniques. He has worked with numerous choreographers and visual artists, and his repertoire has featured in independent films and documentaries, video games, and advertising.

sum of y'all



photo by: Beth Barbis

[Click Here for Trailer](#)

PREMIERING FALL 2025

What do we add up to as a community? Staycee Pearl's newest creation invites audiences to reflect on the delicate impermanence of community. Tracing back to memories of historically Black spaces that have been erased over time, *sum of y'all* highlights the constant and inevitable state of expansion, change and transformation.

A compelling movement work, layered within a multimedia stage installation, *sum of y'all* draws parallels between gentrification and patterns found in the cellular structures of the human body. Set to an original score by jazz musicians James Johnson III, Erik Lawrence, Eli Namay, Mark Micchelli and co-composer Herman Pearl, the score unfolds as dancers flock, disperse and reassemble in blurred unison.

Creative Team:

Choreography: Staycee Pearl in collaboration with company dancers

Concept Collaborator: Marvin Touré

Music Director and Co-Composer: Herman Pearl

Collaborating Musicians: James Johnson III, Erik Lawrence, Eli Namay, Mark Micchelli

Touring Party: 3 dances, 1 stage manager, 1 sound engineer, 1 artistic director

Running Time: 60 minutes (no intermission)

CIRCLES: going in



photo by: Kitoko Chargois

[Click Here for Trailer](#)

Black Joy. Femme. Cycles of Life and Love.

CIRCLES: going in, is a full-length dance work celebrating #BlackGirlMagic. Layering dance, visual arts, and original club music, the work presents snapshots of popular culture through choreographer Staycee Pearl's lens as a Black woman. With an ensemble of five dancers, **CIRCLES: going in** is a colorful, unapologetic, and daring path to self-reclamation.

Central to the work is a sound score of hip-hop, techno and ballroom music mixed live throughout the performance by Herman "Soy Sos" Pearl. Pulsing beats, bass lines and sample vocals bring the joy, spontaneity and uncensored freedom of self-expression from the club to the stage. Rebellious and confident, the music is a celebration and affirmation of the deep influence from queer, BIPOC and femme artists in music and pop culture.

CIRCLES: going in



photo by: Heather Mull

NDP Funding Available

Creative Team:

Staycee R. Pearl / Lead Artist, Choreographer

Herman B. Pearl / Sound Designer/Engineer

Touring Cast: 5 Dancers, 1 DJ/Sound Engineer

Administrative/Tech: 1 Artistic Director, 1 Stage Manager

Running Time: 60 Minutes (no intermission)

***CIRCLES: going in** premiered October 28-30, 2021 at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center in Pittsburgh, PA. The work is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by Kelly Strayhorn Theater, The Joyce Theater, and NPN. More information: www.npnweb.org. **CIRCLES** was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Co-commissioning Partners are Kelly Strayhorn Theater, August Wilson African American Cultural Center, and The Joyce Theater. The development of **CIRCLES: going in** is made possible in part by the National Center for Choreography at The University of Akron (NCCAkron). **CIRCLES: going in** is supported in part by The Pittsburgh Foundation's Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh Fund, Heinz Endowments, and The Opportunity Fund.*

ABOUT THE MUSIC



Music collaborators from left to right: **DJ Haram, DOTGOV, Geña, Ixa, Kha'DJ, Kilamanzego, Madame Dolores, Meejah, Queen Jo, Yah Lioness**

The sound score for ***CIRCLES: going in*** was created in collaboration with Herman “Soy Sos” Pearl and revered music artists from the experimental and underground club scene including: Queen Jo (Philadelphia), DJ Haram (Philadelphia), Ixa (Berlin/Philadelphia), Yah Lioness (Pittsburgh), Madam Dolores (Pittsburgh), DOTGOV (Pittsburgh), Kilamanzego (Philadelphia), Kha'DJ (Pittsburgh/NYC), Geña (Puerto Rico/Pittsburgh) and Meejah (Copenhagen/South Korea).

Over the course of many months, the collaborators engaged in an exchange of vocal and musical elements, including freestyle and vocal sessions. Contributions were based on the collaborators' response to the dancers' movement on stage. The result was the accumulation of an audio library of beats, rhymes, chants, bass lines, percussion, sample chops and synthesizer textures that are mixed live in the performance space by Soy Sos, presenting a unique, propulsive club-like sound scape for every show.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



PearlArts Movement & Sound offer aesthetic training workshops and engagement activities specifically developed for: Youth Grades 1 - 12, University Dance Departments, Non-Dancers & Local Communities and Adults. Offerings include:

- Lecture/Demonstrations
- Contemporary Technique Classes for: Beginning / Intermediate/ Advanced Dancers
- Sound Design for Dance
- *CIRCLES* Workshop
- School time Performances. *Study Guide Available*
- Pre- & Post Performance Discussion

[Click HERE for descriptions of in-person and virtual offerings.](#)

PRESS QUOTES

[Black-centered dance performance highlights social, racial issues - The Columbia Chronicle](#)

[Emerging Dance #4: STAYCEE PEARL dance project + Soy Sos - Dance Currents](#)

[Pittsburg Dance Troupes Get Virtual National Stage Courtesy of Kennedy Center- 90.5 WESA](#)

[Wife-Husband team continue big year by producing weeklong dance festival - Pittsburgh City Paper](#)

[Dance Review: On Being by Staycee Pearl dance project - Coal Hill Review](#)



"Pearl's choices usually bring a mix of past and present. Within a phrase of her movement, one may see a big, technical leap reminiscent of her time at the Alvin Ailey school. And in the next second, her dancers may sink to the floor with the release styles more prevalent today."

-Adrienne Totino, *Coal Hill Review*

CONTACT

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[Staycee Pearl](https://vimeo.com/StayceePearl)