



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 6, 2017

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### **PDP TO LAUNCH NEW INITIATIVE TO CULTIVATE MORE LIVE MUSIC DOWNTOWN**

- **Initiative will Include Financial, Programming and Marketing Support for Venues**
  - **PDP Annual Meeting to Include Local Panel on City-wide Music Scene**
  - **Meeting to be Followed by Live Music Event Free and Open to the Public**

**DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH, PA** – The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership is building on its extensive music programming with a new initiative to encourage the expansion and cultivation of a more robust live music scene in Downtown Pittsburgh. At their annual meeting, this Wednesday, March 8, a panel will discuss the City-wide opportunities and challenges to increasing the amount and diversity of live music and support for local musicians. While a local music scene has both cultural and economic benefits in any neighborhood, it's of particular importance in Downtown where it is also a contributing factor for increasing tourism and conventions. VisitPITTSBURGH recently surveyed tourists and conference attendees regarding their experience in Pittsburgh and the data identified the music and nightlife scene as the most deficient category compared to very strong responses to every other aspect of their experience.

Last year PDP programming in Downtown engaged more than 1 million people, with greater than 260 days of events and activities that featured nearly 200 performances of live music. The newest music initiative will be built upon a previous program that PDP explored nearly 3 years ago, called "The Downtown Beat" which intended to encourage a critical mass of new and informal music venues supported by an umbrella marketing campaign. Through conversations with local restaurants, bars, foundations, and corporations, PDP determined the time was premature for the Downtown Beat initiative given other impending priorities. Since that time, PDP believes the ongoing development of the Downtown neighborhood and expansion of the Downtown restaurant and hotel community has created more conducive conditions.

According to Jeremy Waldrup, President and CEO of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, "We know that the economic impact of a vibrant nighttime economy can be transformational to a neighborhood. With the rapid development occurring in Downtown, particularly in hotels and residential, the time is ideal to again turn our attention towards cultivating a vibrant music scene that can be enjoyed by all."

PDP is one of several organizations that present music in the Downtown neighborhood and its music initiative is just one facet of what is expected to be an elevated focus on the local music scene across Pittsburgh. Last month, 20 Pittsburghers representing stakeholders from several Pittsburgh neighborhoods, cultural organizations and city government, traveled to Austin, TX to attend the Responsible Hospitality Institute's conference focused on "Creating a Music City." The conference included insight on best-practices from other cities with thriving music scenes and nighttime economies including Austin, San Francisco, Seattle, London, and Amsterdam. Upon returning to Pittsburgh, conference attendees have met to discuss their learnings and consider next steps. While plans are still developing, there is significant interest from conference attendees and others to determine ways in which we can create a strategy to support and enhance the music scene in Pittsburgh. Some of these strategies are expected to be touched upon by a panel during PDP's annual meeting this Wednesday, March 8.

The panel at the PDP's Annual Meeting will be moderated by WYEP General Manager, Abby Goldstein, who has considerable expertise in working with musicians and managing independent radio stations. She has worked at stations throughout Texas and New Hampshire before arriving at WYEP. Abby has also worked as an independent record promoter, booking agent, and festival producer.

Panel participants are:

- Allison Harnden, the Nighttime Economy Coordinator for the City of Pittsburgh, who came to Pittsburgh last year following almost two decades with the Responsible Hospitality Institute where she worked with dozens of cities on the sociability of urban environments and the management of their nighttime economies. She is responsible for enhancing, protecting and broadening revenue opportunities for businesses, while decreasing the potentially detrimental impact of nightlife on nearby residents.
- Janis Burley Wilson, the Vice President of Strategic Partnership and Community Engagement and Director of Jazz Programs at the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. She has worked to transform the local arts landscape with programs like Showcase Noir, The Gallery Crawls, and the Pittsburgh Jazz Live International Festival.
- Ed Traversari has worked in the live entertainment industry for nearly 40 years. He was a music promoter with DiCesare Engler and now provides his expertise to students as a professor in the Sports, Arts and Entertainment Management program at Point Park University
- Justin Strong is the General Manager of Spirit Night Club, located in Lawrenceville. Featuring two floors of live entertainment most nights of the week, the venue is known for its eclectic offerings including hip hop, electronic music, rock, as well as unique themed nights and events. Prior to Spirit, Justin owned the Shadow Lounge for 13 years, a live music venue and restaurant in East Liberty.
- Margaret Welsh is a music writer for the Pittsburgh City Paper, where she reviews live music shows and new releases and helps Pittsburghers to discover great new music.
- Russell Howard is the Vice President of Special Events and Development for the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership. In this role, he is responsible for developing and programming activities that encourage visitation and support the economic vitality of Downtown Pittsburgh. These events include many hundreds of hours of musical performances across a diverse range of high-traffic events including Light Up Night®, Peoples Gas Holiday Market™, Picklesburgh, Rooftop Shindigs, and Market Square Farmers Market.

Tickets are still available at [DowntownPittsburgh.com](http://DowntownPittsburgh.com) for PDP's annual meeting and can be purchased at [DowntownPittsburgh.com](http://DowntownPittsburgh.com). Tickets are not needed for the live music event that follows the meeting and is open to the general public at Revel + Roost, 242 Forbes Avenue, Downtown Pittsburgh.

The performance schedule is:

4:30 – 7:00 p.m. Two Tall Twins

4:30 – 6:00 p.m. DJ Soy Sos

6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Beauty Slap

### **About the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership**

*Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP) is a dynamic, nonprofit organization comprised of business and community leaders, property owners, civic organizations, foundations and residents who provide energy, vision and advocacy for Downtown Pittsburgh. Working collaboratively with its partners, the PDP strives to create a positive Downtown experience for residents, workers and visitors alike. The PDP's strategic initiatives include clean and safe services, transportation, and economic development and advocacy. For more information, visit [www.DowntownPittsburgh.com](http://www.DowntownPittsburgh.com), follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/downtownpitt> and "like" us on Facebook.*

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