

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 39

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

According to your 501(c)3 letter, in what town is your official office located?

West Hartford

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

Hartford

Will this activity occur after February 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Organization Name

Hartford Opera Theater Inc.

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

273287114

Principal Contact Name

Lisabeth Miller Kettledon

Title

Artistic Director

Email

Lisabeth_miller@hartfordoperatheater.org

Phone

(201) 306-0287

Address

P.O. Box 370442
West Hartford, Connecticut 06137
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[Map It](#)

Website

<http://www.hartfordoperatheater.com>

Amount requested this application

\$5,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

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Hartford Opera Theater is dedicated to offering quality, innovative, and affordable opera. Our organization commits itself to keeping the genre of opera culturally relevant, thought-provoking, and accessible. We foster a creative environment for emerging and established artists. HOT promotes arts education and appreciation by providing free outreach programs to members of our community. We believe that all people deserve to experience opera. Hartford Opera Theater - Opera for Everyone.

Describe the diversity of your board.

Our current board includes four directors, and two ex-officio members. Two members identify as male, Rico Reyes (current board president), and Bruce Rabbino. The other two directors, and both ex-officio members identify as female. They are Mary Lou Wadsworth, Rosemary Deming, Michelle Fiertek (HOT executive director), and Dana Kephart Queiros (HOT business manager). Our board president, Rico Reyes, is Filipino.

Detail any changes since your last application.

The only significant change to Hartford Opera Theater's organization is the departure from the board of Brennden Colbert. Mr. Colbert was offered the opportunity to serve on the board of AIDS CT which was a long held goal of his, and he felt he would be unable to serve on both boards. We were actively looking to replace him this spring in time for the annual meeting in June, but due to COVID 19, we will not be holding that meeting in person, and have decided to wait until the fall meeting to bring on a new board member.

Project Name

New in November 11

Project Description

Hartford Opera Theater is proud to be planning our eleventh annual New in November festival for Sunday, November 15, 2020. New in November, founded in 2010, is a yearly performance of newly composed, 10-20 minute long operas. Each year, we release an international call for scores, and 4-6 short opera vignettes are chosen through a competitive and rigorous selection process. For the festival weekend in November, we bring together a large cadre of talented local singers, conductors, pianists, and stage directors to bring the operas from "page to stage"; the weekend culminates in a performance showcase of the operas.

Project start/opening

11/06/2020

Project end/closing

11/15/2020

Project venue

Christ Church Cathedral

Project town

Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

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The two rehearsals for New in November 11 take place at the Hartt School and Center Church in Hartford, and the performance in the parish house at Christ Church Cathedral. General admission tickets are \$20, and the venue can accommodate 130 patrons. There will be one performance on Sunday, November 15 at 7:30 pm. We anticipate filling all 130 seats; for last year's NIN 10 performance we sold 86 tickets, and gave out 20 complimentary tickets, and believe we can sell more tickets this year.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

HOT will promote NIN 11 through an aggressive social media marketing campaign on our Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages. The posts will include features on the operas, composers and opera casts, as well as ticket giveaways, rehearsal video teasers, and live interviews with the artists. Last year HOT made use of paid social media advertising in the form of post boosts. We found that this greatly increased our reach, and we will definitely utilize this strategy again for NIN 11.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

The Roberts Foundation's support will be recognized in several different ways. The Roberts Foundation's name and logo will be listed in our printed program, and information about the foundation will be on HOT's website, and digital program. We will do a feature about the Roberts Foundation on our social media channels, mention the foundation live in the artistic director's curtain speech at the performance, and also have signage in the lobby near our step and repeat photo station.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

Hartford Opera Theater defines artistic excellence by choosing and producing operas that represent the core tenets of our mission. We choose projects that are culturally relevant, diverse, thought-provoking, and musically excellent. We strive to make our productions affordable, accessible, and locally cultivated whenever possible. We keep our ticket prices low, and work with the community to make sure that anyone who wants to come and experience opera in Hartford is able to. HOT is committed to diversity, both in the works that we choose, and in the artists we employ. Hartford Opera Theater strives in every production, and every decision to live into our motto: opera for everyone.

How does this project align with that definition, and how does it advance your mission?

New in November is HOT's flagship event, and we are excited to present new operas in Hartford for the eleventh year in a row. New in November embodies our mission statement in that it provides us an ideal vehicle to produce diverse operatic vignettes that are culturally relevant, thought-provoking, musically excellent, and locally cultivated. We don't use elaborate sets, or costumes, and use either only piano or small instrumental ensembles as accompaniment to the operas for NIN, and partner with community organizations for venues; in these ways we are able to keep our ticket price commensurate with that of a movie or club cover charges; and thus make it reasonable for people who might not otherwise consider, or be able to afford to attend an opera, to do so. New in November has become a yearly anticipated event in the new music community and as part of Hartford's musical landscape. All of these contribute to why NIN continues to epitomize excellence for HOT.

How will your audience and the community benefit from this project?

HOT is the only opera company in Hartford. In addition, we are the only opera company in Connecticut that focuses on operas written in English, and on contemporary music. New opera festivals, and performances that focus on short operas are very popular in the US right now, and NIN is CT's only event that provides the opportunity for audiences to see newly composed, short operas in English. It benefits the community to see works produced onstage that reflect the community itself. Hartford is a diverse city, and HOT prioritizes diversity in all aspects of NIN from the composers of the operas, to the singers,

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staging directors and musicians in the pit. The greater Hartford area is also home to several great collegiate music programs, namely the Hartt School, UConn, Trinity, and Yale, and it is incredibly valuable for the many talented, aspiring music students in our area to be able to experience productions of new music by the diverse, local, excellent artists of our community.

How will this project be evaluated?

We plan to evaluate NIN 11 by collecting data in a few different ways that we found to be successful during NIN 10. We will utilize data collection from the software built into social media platforms; a volunteer survey distributed with each online ticket sale; and finally an event-night survey placed on each seat. At last year's NIN performance, we had the highest survey return rate in our company history (74%) by putting a short survey on each seat. Artistic director, Lisabeth Miller, made a direct plea to the audience during her curtain speech for patrons to complete and return the surveys, and we provided each audience member with a branded Hartford Opera Theater pen, and a small bottle of hand sanitizer; one of our volunteers collected the surveys as audience members exited the venue.

Cover letter

- [RobertsExcellanceinArts2020CL.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [Annual-Budget-12.31.19-RobertsFoundation.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [HOTBalanceSheet042920.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [NIN11ProposedBudgetRobertsFoundation.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Other materials?

- [NIN-10-Program-Final.pdf](#)
- [NIN10Budget2019PDF.pdf](#)
- [HOT-Roberts-Final-Report-Narrative-NIN10.pdf](#)

Have you contacted the Executive Director by email or phone to discuss this proposal?

No

Is your cover letter signed by your senior executive? on your letterhead? with your official office address?

Yes