Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 45

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

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

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 Stage

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

060790484

Principal Contact Name

Kati Liss-Hensel

Title

Manager of Major Gifts & Planned Giving

Email

Khensel@hartfordstage.org

Phone

(860) 520-7243

Address

50 Church Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103
United States
Map It

Website

https://www.hartfordstage.org/

Amount requested this application

$30,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 45

The mission of Hartford Stage is to enlighten, entertain, and educate by creating theatrical works of the highest caliber that have a transformative impact on our audience, our community, and our field.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Hartford Stage is one of Connecticut's premiere producing theatres. Founded in 1963 and located in the state's capital city, it is an award-winning regional attraction and an economic generator in the downtown area. It offers world-class productions of plays and musicals; education programs that serve more students than the state's other producing theatres combined; and an array of engagement activities that use the work on its stage to foster dialogue and build community. The theatre has earned the 1989 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre and the Margo Jones Award for Development of New Works.

In 2011, Darko Tresnjak became the fifth Artistic Director, garnering new national attention. *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, took home four Tony Awards & *Anastasia* recently concluded a 2-year run on Broadway.

Darko stepped down in June 2019. Melia Bensussen succeeded him as the organization's sixth Artistic Director, and the first woman to head the organization.

Describe the demographics of your audience/people served by your activities.

We reach more than 100,000 people annually. Patrons primarily come from Greater Hartford but our reach extends throughout CT & into surrounding states. Our grant-funded education programs serve students in low-income areas. Special rates for senior citizens & young professionals. Each MainStage show features 1 audio-described & 2 open-captioned performances for people visually & hearing impaired. A sensory-friendly show of *A Christmas Carol*, serves young people with autism & their families.

Describe your organization's governance.

The Hartford Stage Board of Directors meets four times per season (August to May) in addition to an Annual Meeting in June. The Executive Committee meets separately five times throughout the season. Meeting schedules for other committees range from monthly to quarterly. The Board is responsible for setting policy and overseeing the direction of the theatre and its many programs; communication and joint evaluation between the theatre's management and its Board is frequent and in-depth. Attendance of Governing Directors at Board meetings during FY20 has been 70%.

The full Board of Directors includes not only 37 Governing Directors but also Honorary Members, Emeritus Directors, Life Directors, and Past Presidents – former Governing Directors who contribute to the Governing Board's decision through their service on one or more board committees. Now in its third year, the Stage One program introduces emerging leaders aged 21-35 to board responsibilities as non-voting participants in board committee work. Currently, 10 Stage One members serve as volunteers.

The Managing Director and Artistic Director report jointly to the President of the Board and the Executive Committee, and are contracted by them at three- to five-year intervals. The Managing Director and President of the Board maintain a close working relationship through frequent meetings or conference calls.

100% of our Governing Directors make financial contributions to the organization.

What percentage of your board makes personal financial contributions to your organization?

Of our 36 Governing Directors, 24 board members identify as female (67%) and 12 identify as male (33%). There are 6 Governing Directors who identify as people of color (17%), 2 of whom are African American (6%), 3 of whom are LatinX (8%), and 1 individual of Lebanese descent. Racial and ethnic diversity remains a critical component to the recruitment of new board members to our organization.

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 45

Project Name

Angry, Raucous and Shamelessly Gorgeous

Project Description

Angry, Raucous and Shamelessly Gorgeous written by Pearl Cleage, directed by Susan Booth deals with issues of female representation on the stage, & shows how on-stage reality impacts one's role in society. Actor Anna Campbell, who in the 70's, with director Betty Samson, ignited a theatrical controversy w/a performance of scenes from August Wilson's *Fences* that came to be known as '*Naked Wilson*.' After 25 years in Amsterdam, the women receive an invitation to return to the US. The play takes us on a wild ride with both women as they grow from animosity to curiosity to genuine respect for their different approaches to the theatre, & to life. Drawing on a life of art & activism, playwright Cleage explores current political landscape & the generational diff. among African-American women. By doing so gives us a new lens thru which to see how women age in our culture & how women's voices are heard throughout their lives. Also a range of special events/programs are scheduled during the run.

Project start/opening

01/07/2021

Project end/closing

01/31/2021

Project venue

John W. Huntington Theatre at Hartford Stage

Project town

Hartford, CT

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

This intimate-feeling thrust-stage auditorium seats 484 patrons in its standard configuration. We anticipate that nearly 7,000 people will see the production over 26 performances, including subscribers and single ticket buyers. To cultivate younger audiences (ages 21-35) through our StagePass and One Play programs we offer discounted tickets. Our Library Pass Program offers free tickets to residents with a Hartford Public Library Card.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

Mainstream marketing for the show will include posters in downtown Hartford and surrounding communities, postcards, print and digital advertisements, and regular e-mail blasts. *Angry, Raucous...* will be prominently featured on the front page of our website when in production. Social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube also will be employed. Our Marketing team will work with local African American and Women's groups to partner with around promotion, events and marketing.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

In recognition of this generous support, we will acknowledge the Roberts Foundation as a Production Sponsor with credit on all marketing materials including show posters, playbills, ticket mailers, recorded announcements, lobby screens, web pages, advertisements, and emails that promote the production.

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 45

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

Hartford Stage's definition of artistic excellence lies within our mission: creating theatrical works of the highest caliber that have a transformative impact on our audience, our community, and our field.

For this season, and for *Angry, Raucous and Shamelessly Gorgeous* in particular, Artistic Excellence means that a variety of perspectives and points of view are presented in an articulate and elegant vernacular.

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

Artistic Excellence advances our mission overall by producing a range of work that includes new plays that propel the art form forward, world classics that speak to contemporary issues, and 20th century masterworks. This project will do this through the excellence of the writing, and our commitment to the best production values. It will articulate a different point of view than one has commonly seen - it will highlight the female, and African-American female, perspective, giving it its due next to every other point of view during our season. Additionally, we are advancing our mission through artistic excellence by celebrating a leading African American woman author who has "paid her dues" and is of a "certain age"-thriving & inspiring generations of writers. By presenting her work in the most elegant and sophisticated fashion - this is our mission.

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

Hartford Stage is committed to extending its reach to include nontraditional and underserved audiences. Our grant-funded education programs serve students in low-income public school districts, many of whom would not otherwise have the advantage of formal arts education. To further engage with the low- and moderate-income population, we offer special subscription rates, networking events for area young professionals, and discounted tickets. This season, we again hosted a specially adapted, sensory-friendly performance of *A Christmas Carol*, geared primarily toward serving young people with autism and their families. Our Neighborhood Ambassador program and our Library Pass program ensure that folks from a variety of neighborhoods and income brackets attend our productions. For *Angry, Raucous* we will also be sure to target certain areas of our community, and do specific outreach towards women's groups.

How will this project be evaluated?

Hartford Stage evaluates the success of our MainStage productions based on audience attendance, box office revenue, and the reflection of our artistic team on the quality of the production. Additional indicators include: response from the press (reviews and feature stories), participation in audience engagement activities, and survey feedback from patrons after they have attended a performance. For *Angry, Raucous and Shamelessly Gorgeous*, we will also look at the number of first-time patrons and increasing the diversity of our audience members who attend the production as a measure of success.

Cover letter

- Attachment1.-Hartford-Stage-CoverLetter.pdf

Board list

- Attachment5.-Hartford-Stage-Board-List.pdf

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- Attachment6.-Hartford-Stage-IRS-Letter.pdf

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 45

Financial statement

- Attachment7.-Hartford-Stage-Fin-Statement19.pdf

Last year operational budget

- Hartford-Stage-FY19-Actuals.pdf

Current year operational budget

- Hartford-Stage-FY20-Budget-simplified.pdf

Balance sheet

- Attachment3.-Hartford-Stage-Balance-Sheet.pdf

Project budget

- Attachment4.-Hartford-Stage-ARSG-Proj-Budget.pdf

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Other materials?

- Hartford-Stage-Project-Budget-Quixote-Nuevo-for-Final-Report-1.pdf

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

Yes

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

Yes