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Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

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

New Britain

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

New Britain

Will this activity occur after February 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

No

Organization Name

Connecticut Choral Artists (CONCORA)

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

222755473

Principal Contact Name

John Avignone

Title

Managing Director

Email

admin@concora.org

Phone

(860) 543-9478

Address

c/o South Church, 90 Main Street
New Britain, Connecticut 06051-4240
United States
Map It

Website

http://www.concora.org/

Amount requested this application

$10,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

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Acknowledging that music transforms and enriches people's lives, CONCORA perpetuates and performs with excellence choral music of the highest quality for the broadest possible audience.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

A professional chorus with 45 singers established in 1974, CONCORA presents 4-6 concerts each season in various Greater Hartford and New Britain venues. (Due the pandemic last season, we presented three virtual concerts.)

Our 2021/2022 mainstage concerts include the following:

WORDS & VOICES FROM THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

Saturday, January 22, 2022 at 4:00 PM (Snow Date—Sunday, January 23)

South Church, New Britain.

This concert will celebrate the collaborations and voices of composer Margaret Bonds and writer, poet and essayist Langston Hughes. As two of the most prolific and renowned African American artists of the 20th century, their accomplishments in music and literature contributed much to the Harlem Renaissance, a cultural celebration of black music, art, and literature in the 1920s through the mid-1930s.

J.S. BACH, MASS IN B MINOR, BWV232

Sunday, March 27, 4pm, Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Hartford

This epic masterwork features "Bach's genius at its finest" performed by choir, double choir, five soloists plus chamber orchestra with organ, continuo, harpsichord, strings, woodwinds, brass and timpani.

J.S. BACH, HEBREW PRAYER IN B MINOR, BWV232 (ed.)

Sunday, May 1, 2022 - Temple Beth El, West Hartford

This new work translates Bach's fundamentally Christian mass into Hebrew, not by simply translating the text, but by integrating precepts of Jewish and Christian theology. The Hebrew text of the Mass in B Minor is the creation of Dr. Eric Weitzner, a psychotherapist, devotee of Bach's music, and former student of Hebrew and Jewish theology.

4th annual concora Broadway Revue

June date TBA, Walnut Park, New Britain

Our versatile singers will return to perform solos and duets of popular Broadway songs including some composed by Stephen Sondheim.

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

The audience for our season has averaged 1000 to 1500 adults, predominantly aged white, aged 45-65, from greater Hartford area, also drawing from remote parts of the state and the northeast.

Based on the range of programs planned for this season, including a summer festival that will feature choral music by African American spirituals, we plan to survey our ticket buyers for a better understanding of our audience demographics.

Describe your organization's governance.

CONCORA's board of directors meets bi-monthly to review reports on finance, administration, programming, development, and audience development - all of which have board committees.

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Describe the diversity of your board.

Our board is comprised of 13 directors - 6 women and 7 men; one member is African American, the other 12 are white.

The board has discussed DEI on three occasions this year. We have watched and discussed workshops on cross-cultural collaborations, inclusive programming, and marketing presented by Chorus America. Malcolm J. Merriweather, African American conductor and Music Director of New York City's The Dessoff Choirs, talked with our board about DEI, programming, and authenticity.

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

100% of our board members contribute to our annual fund.

Project Name

Hebrew Prayer in B Minor

Project Description

CONCORA seeks $10,000 to present Hebrew Prayer in B Minor – an adaptation of Bach's Mass in B Minor - on Sunday, May 1, 2022 at 4 pm at Temple Beth El in West Hartford.

Bach's Mass in B Minor is widely recognized as a cornerstone of Western music. The score features music performed by choir, double choir, five soloists plus chamber orchestration of organ, continuo, harpsichord, strings, woodwinds, brass and timpani.

The mass's three sections each praise an element of the Holy Trinity. Though Bach's music is widely believed to be universal, his music is firmly based in the Christian tradition — specifically 18th-century German Lutheranism.

Hebrew Prayer is an adaptation of this epic work. It is the genius of Dr. Eric Weitzner, a New York City-based psychiatrist, a former student of Hebrew and Jewish theology, and a devotee of Bach's music. His work is not translation, but an adaptation with precepts of Jewish theology. An enclosed sample reflects this.

Total estimated project budget

$0.00

Project start/opening

02/15/2022

Project end/closing

05/15/2022

Project venue

Temple Beth El

Project town

West Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

$60 x 60 $3600 premium ticket

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$50 x 100 $5000 two-concert subscription package (Get two B Minors for a C Note)

$40 x 40 $1600 mid-range single ticket

$33 x 40 $1650 three-show subscription (Jan, March & May concerts)

$20 x 100 $2000 student

$0 x 25 comps/gifts

365 $13,850 TOTALS

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

This program will be promoted in the following ways:

- on our web site
- our bi-weekly email blasts to 1500 patrons and supporters
- press release to 100 media contacts in arts and music
- our Facebook page and posts
- arts and music print, electronic, and online media and calendars
- 2000 direct mail postcards
- media partnership with Connecticut Jewish Ledger
- community partnerships with area synagogues.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Funding from the Roberts Foundation will be applied toward the production costs of this concert to include the singers, the venue, and technology.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

As in past years, CONCORA will recognize the support of the Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation on our web site, in emails and e-newsletters to ticket buyers and donors, in pre-concert announcements, on direct mail postcards, and in our concert programs.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?*

CONCORA consistently sets and meets the highest standards of excellence in its programming, and in its musicality and professionalism. No matter the composition presented, our artistic director creates a unique vision or perspective for our singers to convey. Our singers apply a mastery of skills and techniques to performing. Together, the directors and singers combine their professional approaches to process and presentation.

CONCORA has never sounded better than under the musical guidance of Chris Shepard. He is thrilled to have a professional chamber choir to mold into his vision of the ideal choral sound. His direction elevates them to achieve the highest level of artistry. Even our singers frequently speak of the artistic fulfillment and personal joy they realize through CONCORA rehearsals and performances.

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

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We firmly believe that music performed live is a very important piece of the cultural fabric of our region. It offers the highest artistic and spiritual expression of ideals, both familiar and inspiring, to many members of our community. Research by Chorus America, Inc. shows that close to one in six persons in almost every community participates in some way in an amateur school or church or community choir. Choral music performed live by professionals from one's own community has an even higher value, because the conductor and singers are live, present and accessible – a very different experience than listening to a radio or digitized performance. CONCORA's work is seen as more relevant when presenting a new work and engage community partners, their networks and membership as we enhance the content of our programs and promote our performances.

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

CONCORA's performances provide an enriching experience for audiences. Music has the power to culturally, morally, and emotionally influence our society. Whether the audience is in-person or virtual, choral music elevates mood, spirit, and call to action through a shared community experience.

Listening to choral and classical music provides emotional and psychological benefits that cannot be underestimated. Given the current state of our world, there is an even greater need for CONCORA's performances. Studies have shown that listening to classical music can reduce stress and anxiety, promote relaxation, improve memory, and stabilize heart rate and overall health. (Harvard Health Publishing, July 2011.)

At a time when anti-Semitism and hate crimes are rising, the presentation of Hebrew Prayer in B Minor celebrates and elevates Jewish theology and draws together its community and supporters.

How will this project be evaluated?

This project will be evaluated based upon the following:

- levels of government, foundation, corporation and individual support;
- ticket purchases; rates of multiple-concert ticket purchasers versus single ticket purchasers for one season and for several seasons;
- attendance at pre-concert events as well as the concert;
- media coverage before and after the concert;
- reviews of the concerts in print and online;
- feedback from audience members, board members and performers;
- feedback from music educators and professional musicians and vocalists attending our concerts.

Cover letter

- 1-Exec-ltr-signed-by-CONCORA-to-Roberts-Fdn-11-1-21.pdf

Board list

- 2-Board-Roster-as-of-10-29-21.pdf

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- 3-IRS-Ltr-1986-CONCORA.pdf

Financial statement

- 4-Compilation-Rep-FY-2020-2021-CONCORA.pdf

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Last year operational budget

- 5-Budget-Actual-2020-21-CONCORA.pdf

Current year operational budget

- 6-Budget-FY-2022-Actual-2021-CONCORA.pdf

Balance sheet

- 7-CONCORA-8-31-2021-Budget-vs-Actual.pdf

Project budget

- 8-Concert-Budget-Funding-Sources.pdf

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Grant Report

- CT-Choral-Artists-Report-2021.pdf

Other materials?

- 9-Excerpt-from-Hebrew-Prayer-in-B-Minor.pdf

This submission was prepared by Daniel Matz.

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