

**Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 275**

**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 August 1, 2023?**

Yes

**Are you a recent grantee?**

Yes

**Enter your Report Code**

211510-Roberts2020

**Organization Name**

Connecticut Guitar Society

**Organization's IRS Tax ID #**

222768662

**Principal Contact Name**

Dawn B Cwirka

**Title**

Vice President, Board of Directors

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United States  
[Map It](#)

**Website**

<http://www.ctguitar.org>

## **Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 275**

### **Amount requested this application**

\$6,200.00

### **What is the organization's mission/vision statement?**

The mission of the Connecticut Guitar Society is to foster the growth and appreciation of the guitar in our community, as well as the New England area at large and to serve the educational and cultural needs of professional, student and amateur guitarists. CGS is dedicated to showcasing extraordinary local and international talent through events of significance that include concerts, master classes, ensembles, outreach, media and special events, designed to reach new and varied constituencies.

### **Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.**

The Connecticut Guitar Society (CGS) was founded in 1985 to promote the performance and appreciation of the classical guitar. Established by two guitarists, founding president Judith Handler and founding executive director Penny Phillips, the Society was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1986 as a 501 (3)c non-profit corporation. Now in its 37th season, CGS embraces all styles of guitar music. The Society presents concerts, master classes, outreach programs, recording projects, referral services, and an internet website hosting guitar resource - a variety of programs offered by no other arts organization in the region. Members and affiliates are drawn from all over New England and beyond. Membership is open to all, including professional, student and amateur, as well as people who simply enjoy the guitar's music. Over the years, invited artists have represented the most esteemed classical, jazz and acoustic guitarists performing in their time. It is well known among guitar enthusiasts throughout the northeast region of the United States that CGS has proven its ability to adapt to the changing music scene and economic climate. This includes the COVID-19 pandemic that presented many challenges to arts-based organizations. A special thank you is extended to the Edward C and Ann T. Roberts Foundation for their ongoing support in helping CGS emerge, adjust and firmly reestablish its niche following the shutdown. The Connecticut Guitar Society is recognized by the guitar world as a model society. Our concerts, known for their quality and variety, bring virtuoso performances by acknowledged masters and rising stars playing every musical style and taste. They range from Bach to blues and from flamenco to jazz.

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

Please note that the following demographics for geography and age are based on estimates combining pre pandemic figures with the 2022 - 2023 season. CGS has also begun collecting demographics from 2023 audience questionnaires which are already showing the ethnic diversity of attendees, as well as our performers.

Audience by Geography

Connecticut Residents 82%

Out of State or International 18%

Audience by Age Group

Children 17 or younger 4%

Adults 18 to 64 69%

Adults 65 or older

### **Describe your organization's governance.**

The Board of Directors meets six times a year as a full board, and also meets bi-monthly in teams/committees to conduct governance of our organization. Attendance at board meetings averages 83 - 100%. Teams are made up of Board members, volunteers and staff; they include Executive, Planning, Development, Marketing, Media, and Funding. Chief Administrator and Artistic Director David Giardina is an award-winning guitarist and bandleader throughout New England and a founding member of CGS.

### **Describe the diversity of your board.**

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Gender: The Board of Directors for the Connecticut Guitar Society is comprised of 66 percent female members.

Race and Ethnicity: The board is made up of 17 percent Latino/Hispanic members.

Age: Board members range in age from the 30s to the 70s.

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

One hundred percent of the Board of Directors for the Connecticut Guitar Society make personal financial contributions to the organization. Board members are also active volunteers who give freely of their time and related professional skills.

**Project Name**

Blues and Jazz Guitar

**Is this project related to the Visual Arts?**

No

**Project Description**

We are thrilled by the talent, celebrity and diversity in our proposed project, Blues and Jazz Guitar! There will be a series of three concerts, featuring Kaki King, Toby Walker and Gianni Gardner, as well as a master class by Toby Walker.

Kaki King is known for her percussive and jazz-tinged melodies, energetic live shows and use of multiple-tunings. After she appeared on the Conan O'Brien show, Sony records offered her a deal and from there she began touring the world.

Toby Walker is considered to be one of the best acoustic blues players in the genre and is well known throughout the North American music scene. He is considered to be a superlative slide guitarist and finger picker and his performances include singing and storytelling.

Gianni Gardner is a New York based jazz guitarist originally from West Hartford. He recently performed at Lincoln Center, and is pursuing graduate study at the prestigious Manhattan School of Music. He will bring a trio to CGS.

**Total estimated project budget**

\$6,000.00

**Project start/opening**

09/01/2023

**Project end/closing**

05/01/2024

**Project venue**

Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Windsor Art Center

**Project town**

Hartford, Windsor

**Admission fees, attendance, and activity details**

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Each of the three concerts and the master class/workshop will be a one-time event. We are expecting a total attendance of 500 to 700 people. CGS updated pricing structure in September 2022. Memberships and student tickets increased by \$5 to reflect the current economy. Tickets for members now reflect a benefit of 20% off the general admission price. Concerts and the workshop will average: \$15 Student, \$24 Member, and \$30 General Admission with a higher rate of \$15, \$28, and \$35 for Kaki King.

### **How do you intend to promote/market this project?**

CGS will distribute press releases, posters and related materials. We will post on Face Book, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram. Artist information, videos, and quotations from past reviews will be displayed on our web site. We plan to arrange for radio interviews with local stations, such as WWUH, WFCR, and WHUS. Outreach will include networking by our artistic director, board members and volunteers, and ensemble players.

### **How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?**

We are requesting \$6000 in funding from the Ann T. and Edward C. Roberts Foundation. It will go directly towards paying for the expenses of this three-concert series and the workshop. This includes musician's fees, accessible hall rentals, security, insurance, marketing and operating expenses. Income will be generated through ticket sales, donations and new memberships. This exciting and fresh new blues and jazz guitar series will begin in the fall of 2023, as an integral part of the CGS season.

### **How will Roberts support be recognized?**

Support from the Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation will be announced from the stage at each concert. The logo for the Roberts Foundation will be featured in flyers sent out by email and all related promotional material for the concert series. The logo will also be displayed prominently on the CGS web site.

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

The Connecticut Guitar Society is committed to artistic excellence in all its endeavors, and we measure it in a number of ways. This includes the qualities of each artist, attendance by the public, press attention, feedback that includes social media comments and the over-all success of the program. At the convention for the Guitar Foundation of America, leading foreign artists seek us out to start their American tours. For example, this year CGS hosted a concert and masterclass by GFA Winner Bokyung Byun from Korea, and classical guitarist Cinzia Milani on from Italy. We are also very proud to be able to provide exposure to lesser-known talent and consider all styles of guitar music. To our knowledge, we are the only guitar society that has been awarded grants by the prestigious National Endowment for the Arts.

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

Blues and Jazz Guitar is thoughtfully aligned with our goal of serving the cultural and educational needs of professional, students, student and amateur guitarists. CGS is proud to be adding an educational component that showcases the expertise of Toby Walker's instruction. His master class will attract many acoustic guitar players. It fully supports our organizational purpose of helping the guitar to flourish. The genre of blues guitar is said to have come from the deep south in about 1860. It is considered to be the origin of many guitar styles that have grown over the past century such as, jazz, rock, soul, bluegrass, country, ragtime and fusion. Jazz guitar grew in popularity from the African American communities of New Orleans in the 1920s. However, its genre is said to express the freedom of discovery, and encompasses shaping rhythm, supporting melody, improvisation and much more. This project is designed for wide appeal to a diverse audience of guitarists and listeners.

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

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Blues and Jazz Guitar will attract audiences other than guitar fans and the selected performers will broaden the appeal to include a younger demographic. These skilled and talented artists are expert at performing in intimate settings where they and their music can be fully appreciated. Blues and jazz guitar are both genres that have been around for a long time and share roots in American and African and other origins. Each has influenced the other, yet they are very different styles of music.

Besides entertainment, music can teach, unite and motivate. It provides people with a means of expression reflecting their histories, experiences and unique culture. Many individuals are drawn to the beautiful sound of a guitar which can connect people and humanity through the universal appreciation and shared emotions of its music. The Connecticut Guitar is thrilled to be able to bring high quality blues and jazz to the greater Hartford area.

### **How will this project be evaluated?**

The Connecticut Guitar Society focuses their evaluation in two specific areas. The Board's Planning Committee, including the Artistic Director, review the quality of the performance and the impact it has on both the community and the organization. Did we maintain the high quality of our concerts? Did we increase access to cultural and artistic programs among the diverse communities of Connecticut? Did we receive feedback from the audience, musicians and the press? The Finance Committee reviews the overall financial success of the program, including ticket sales, marketing efforts and funding from sponsorships and grants. Did we bring back previous members, draw in new members, and make tickets affordable to students, seniors and music aficionados? We consider evaluation to be an ongoing, active process, so that we can continue to showcase excellent music in a variety of genres.

### **Cover letter**

- [RobertsLetter-230430-BluesJazzGuitar.pdf](#)

### **Board list**

- [CGSBoardMemberList.pdf](#)

### **IRS 501(c)3 determination letter**

- [IRS-Ltr-of-Determination.docx-1.pdf](#)

### **Financial statement**

- [990EZ2018.pdf](#)

### **Last year operational budget**

- [PreviousFY2022-1.pdf](#)

### **Current year operational budget**

- [CurrentCGS-2022-2023-Operating-Budget-1.pdf](#)

### **Balance sheet**

- [230405-BalSht.pdf](#)

## **Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 275**

### **Project budget**

- [ProjBudgetBluesJazz.pdf](#)

### **Does your organization produce an annual report?**

Yes

### **Annual report**

- [Financial-Report-FYE-220630.pdf](#)

### **Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?**

Yes

### **Strategic plan**

- [CGS-Strategic-Plan-2021.pdf](#)

### **Grant Report**

- [Connecticut-Guitar-Society-Grantee-Reporting-Form.pdf](#)

### **Other materials?**

- [Toby-WalkerBio.pdf](#)
- [Kaki-King.pdf](#)
- [Gianni-Dino-Gardner.pdf](#)

CGS was recently awarded \$5900 from CT Humanities and \$3800 from CT Cultural Fund; we will be receiving first installments soon.

### **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