

**Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 96**

**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**

762168-Roberts2020

**Organization Name**

The Hartford Jazz Society Inc.

**Organization's IRS Tax ID #**

066102327

**Principal Contact Name**

Ronald Lyles

**Title**

President, Board of Directors

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[Map It](#)

**Website**

<http://www.hartfordjazzsociety.com>

## **Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 96**

### **Amount requested this application**

\$7,500.00

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

The mission of the Hartford Jazz Society is to cultivate an appreciation of the sound, culture and love of jazz by presenting a variety of live events and other activities.

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

The Hartford Jazz Society is the oldest continuously operating jazz society in the United States with a distinguished history of achievement in promoting, preserving and pioneering jazz performance for diverse audiences in the Greater Hartford, CT area. Founded in 1960 by local jazz aficionado, Art Fine, The Hartford Jazz Society has the additional distinctions of having been one of the first totally integrated social organizations in the Hartford, Connecticut area and of having operated for over 60 years as a volunteer-lead and driven non-profit organization.

With a mission of fostering interest, understanding and appreciation of jazz by presenting a variety of live events and by nurturing new generations of jazz performers and audiences, The Hartford Jazz Society has brought a steady parade of world-class talent to Hartford. As it continues into its seventh decade of promoting and hosting a wide variety of live jazz performances to existing and new audiences of all ages, races and economic statuses in the Greater Hartford area, the Hartford Jazz Society has established itself as a vital presence in the Hartford cultural scene.

The organization's annual programming includes:

- Paul Brown Monday Night Jazz series
- Jazz Cruise on The Connecticut River
- Scholarships = to local students
- Concert/Workshop Series
- Monday Night Jazz Jam at Black Eyed Sally's
- Jazz 101/201 lecture series
- Emerging Jazz Artists Showcase

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

The organization's audience/people served includes people of all ages, races and economic statuses in the Greater Hartford area and beyond.

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

The Hartford Jazz Society is governed by an eleven member volunteer Board of Directors, which performs all of the organization's administrative functions. Besides attending regular monthly Board Meetings, members of the Board of Directors also serve as chairpersons of ongoing committees. Attendance at monthly meetings is almost always 75% - 100%. 100% of board members make financial contributions to the organization either through donations or support of the organization's ticketed events.

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

Of the eleven member board of directors:

45% African-American

**Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 96**

18% Latino/Hispanic

27% Female

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

100% of board members make financial contributions to the organization either through donations or support of the organization's ticketed events.

**Project Name**

2021 Monday Night Jazz

**Project Description**

The 54th Paul Brown Monday Night Jazz Series in Bushnell Park (the "Series") will be held on six consecutive Monday evenings from July 12 to August 16, 2021. If COVID-19 public gathering limitations prevent an in-person event, the Series will be presented virtually streaming via Facebook live. The Series has been recognized as a New England Legacy and is referenced in the Library of Congress as the oldest free continuously run jazz festival in the United States. Each in-person concert will consist of an opening act featuring a local musician or ensemble followed by a headliner of regional, national or international prominence. Virtual concerts will only feature the headlining artists. Several nights will feature themes that have evolved in the twelve years the Hartford Jazz Society has presented the Series; including Latin jazz, women in jazz, and a special feature for an overlooked elder statesmen of the music.

**Total estimated project budget**

\$67,500.00

**Project start/opening**

07/12/2021

**Project end/closing**

08/16/2021

**Project venue**

Bushnell Park (in-person)/Library Studio at the Central (virtual)

**Project town**

Hartford (in-person)/Middletown (virtual)

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

All six weeks of the project are free and open to public. If able to present the series in-person, the organization anticipates audiences between 1500 to 2000 each week. The audience is expanded as additional listeners also can access live broadcasts by WWUH.

If the series is presented virtually, the total number of viewers will likely exceed the in-person numbers as the concerts remain available for viewing after the live stream.

## **Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 96**

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

Because of its reputation, the project largely sells itself and a substantial amount of marketing is not necessary. The organization will send press releases to the relevant media outlets and produce post cards and posters for distribution for an in-person series. The organization will also promote the event heavily through social media and its own website. Finally, the organization will add the event to available calendars of organizations such as GHAC and [allaboutjazz.com](http://allaboutjazz.com).

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

If the series is presented in-person and the organization receives the full amount of funding requested, \$7,350 of Roberts funding will be used for artist fees, and the balance will go toward the cost of the sound professionals.

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

The Roberts Foundation and all supporters will be recognized in the press release, all printed marketing material, the event stage banner, stage announcements and on the organization's website and Facebook page.

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

When selecting jazz musicians for any of its programs, The Hartford Jazz Society seeks artists whose work is characterized by such qualities as vitality, originality, relevance, creativity, innovation, experimentation, and technical expertise. When applying its criteria for artistic excellence, the Hartford Jazz Society believes it is important to expose audiences to a variety of artists, give emerging artists performance opportunities and to occasionally challenge the audience's preconceived assumptions with high caliber artists that may be pushing at the boundaries of the music. Concerts sponsored by the Society have been reviewed by music critics on a consistent basis as having fulfilled these criteria of artistic excellence.

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

The 2021 edition of Paul Brown Monday Night Jazz aligns perfectly with the definition. Each of the artists selected embodies the definition of excellence. The overall excellence of the projected headliners this year arguably surpasses recent years. Each headliner has received wide critical acclaim and/or prestigious awards for their music. In addition, each has attained an authentic personal voice, which all jazz musicians strive for. Several have long tenures educating subsequent generations of jazz performers and are widely adored for their contributions to jazz education, which are extensions of their artistic excellence. The project will significantly advance the organization's mission to cultivate an appreciation of the music during the six nights of concerts. Each artist is known for their ability to connect with audiences from novices to aficionados.

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

The project enhances and enriches the Hartford area arts scene, it contributes to the growth of the jazz audience and it nurtures the viability of the music as an art form. There are a limited number of venues and organizations in the entire state of Connecticut that present jazz programming and even fewer since the impact of COVID-19. Opportunities to expose the art form to potential audience has been significantly reduced. The lack of exposure to jazz limits the growth of the audience for the music. On any given Monday night, the series presents the music to thousands of audience members, many of whom are not necessarily jazz enthusiasts, but whose appreciation for the music will grow with each exposure. In addition to the increased exposure to the audience, the project also provides a potential economic benefit to the Hartford area due to the presence of thousands of people in downtown Hartford who would not otherwise be there.

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

## **Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 96**

The Hartford Jazz Society will evaluate the success of the Series by reviewing: (1) whether the concerts met anticipated attendance numbers; (2) feedback from the audiences and musicians; and (3) how administrative functions and marketing efforts achieved programming goals.

### **Cover letter**

- [Hartford-Jazz-Society-Cover-Letter.pdf](#)

### **Board list**

- [Hartford-Jazz-Society-Board-List.pdf](#)

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

- [Hartford-jazz-Society-501c3-Determination-Letter.pdf](#)

### **Financial statement**

- [Hartford-Jazz-Society-Financial-Statement.pdf](#)

### **Last year operational budget**

- [Hartford-Jazz-Society-Previous-Year-Operational-Budget.pdf](#)

### **Current year operational budget**

- [Hartford-Jazz-Society-Current-Year-Operational-Budget.pdf](#)

### **Balance sheet**

- [Hartford-Jazz-Society-Balance-Sheet.pdf](#)

### **Project budget**

- [Hartford-Jazz-Society-Project-Budget.pdf](#)

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

No

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

No

### **Grant Report**

- [The-Hartford-Jazz-Society-Inc.-Grantee-Reporting-Form-2021.pdf](#)

**Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 96**

**Other materials?**

- [Hartford-Jazz-Society-Artist-Biographies.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