

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 98

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

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

Manchester

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

West Hartford

Will this activity occur after August 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

183548-Roberts2020

Organization Name

Connecticut Summerfest, Inc.

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

475031850

Principal Contact Name

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Title

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[Map It](#)

Website

<https://www.ctsummerfest.org/>

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Amount requested this application

\$5,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

Connecticut Summerfest brings together talented emerging composers with some of the country's most inventive chamber music ensembles for a week-long festival of artistic exchange culminating in nine world premieres. The festival provides the Greater Hartford community with contemporary music concerts of the highest caliber through a nightly concert series featuring three ensembles-in-residence and brand-new pieces written by festival composition students. [See our full mission statement here.](#)

Describe the diversity of your board.

Our board is made of three people, all of whom identify as white. One member (33%) identifies as female, and one member (33%) identifies as LGBTQ+.

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

One member (33%) of the board makes personal financial contributions to Connecticut Summerfest.

Detail any changes since your last application.

Connecticut Summerfest has had no major changes in board, leadership, organizational structure, strategic direction, or financial condition. While diversity has always been a core value to our organization, this year we added it as an explicit component of our mission . Below is our mission statement in full, with the update bolded:

Connecticut Summerfest brings together talented emerging composers with some of the country's most inventive chamber music ensembles for a week-long festival of artistic exchange culminating in nine world premieres. The festival provides the Greater Hartford community with contemporary music concerts of the highest caliber through a nightly concert series featuring three ensembles-in-residence and brand-new pieces written by festival composition students. **Connecticut Summerfest is proud to elevate voices of composers from historically underrepresented groups, specifically gender diverse composers and composers of color, through our Composition Program and concert programming.**

Project Name

Kinsmen Sound Studio at Connecticut Summerfest 2021

Project Description

Connecticut Summerfest is an annual contemporary music festival that brings together talented emerging composers with innovative chamber music ensembles. Our 2021 festival will take place virtually from June 10–15, with our final concert on June 18.

The festival features virtual rehearsals, recording sessions, composition lessons, [and more](#) for the festival composers, as well as a [concert series](#) that is free and interactive for the public. This year, we are thrilled to be featuring three incredible ensembles: [Front Porch](#), [ZOFO](#), and [Hub New Music](#). Our composition faculty members are [Carlos Simon](#), [Chen Yi](#), [Ken Steen](#), and [Nina C. Young](#). Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and shift to a virtual festival, we have hired [Kinsmen Sound Studio](#) to provide recording, editing, and livestream production support for our concert series.

A grant in support of Connecticut Summerfest would enable us to continue to bring high-quality performances to our audiences. Thank you for your consideration.

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Project start/opening

06/10/2021

Project end/closing

06/18/2021

Project venue

Virtual event on YouTube and Facebook

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

Our 2021 festival will take place virtually from June 10–15, 2021. The first three concerts, which will occur at 8PM on June 11 and 12 and 4PM on June 13, showcase each of our ensembles-in-residence. The final concert on June 18 is an Evening of Premieres, during which the new works by festival composers are brought to life. All four concerts are not ticketed and are free to attend. We anticipate approximately 425 views total during our concert series.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

Social media is our primary marketing vehicle, as we see the most impact through these profiles. We use targeted social media ads, regular posts to keep our audiences engaged, and e-mail newsletters that go out to donors, festival alumni, and university professors.

For the concert series, our marketing campaign includes photos and videos from the previous season, as well as materials highlighting the upcoming resident artists and composers, who can share these posts with their own circles.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

A grant from the Roberts Foundation would support [Kinsmen Sound Studio](#). Founded by alumni from The Hartt School at the University of Hartford, Kinsmen Sound Studio will record, edit, and produce the majority of our concert series with a high-quality remote live-stream solution they created in response to COVID-19. Their expertise will ensure that festival composers receive polished recordings that bolster their portfolios, and that audiences get to enjoy high-quality concerts streamed online.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

Support from the Roberts Foundation will be recognized in our [concert program booklet](#), on [our website](#), and on our social media platforms as appropriate.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

At Connecticut Summerfest, we seek out performers and composers who are interested in a collaborative, in-depth, educational, and exploratory experience. We value relationships; we are interested in participants looking to form lasting, meaningful artistic relationships, who are respectful of all musical styles and backgrounds.

Our nine festival composers are selected through a blind adjudication process. Personal information is removed from the scores and recordings submitted in order to help our expert adjudicators evaluate applicants based solely on the quality of their music, rather than any unconscious biases. In choosing our ensembles-in-residence, we seek out actively-touring, collaboration-driven ensembles with a passion for new music. At Connecticut Summerfest, artistic excellence is found through collaboration.

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

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The success of Connecticut Summerfest 2021 relies heavily on artistic collaboration, especially due to the virtual nature! We carefully select ensembles that not only are excellent performers, but also enthusiastic about collaborating with festival composers on new works. As composers themselves, the recording technicians at Kinsmen Sound Studio are also intimately familiar with the intense collaboration required to record and present a piece of music that truly showcases both the writing and the performance. It is only through the hard work, flexibility, and creativity of our resident artists, festival composers, and partners at Kinsmen Sound Studio, that we will be able to present our annual concert series and deliver on our mission of new music performances of the highest caliber.

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

Connecticut Summerfest was founded to serve two communities: our concert audiences in the Greater Hartford area and our talented festival composers.

The festival is a way for audience members to experience contemporary music free of charge. Our concerts make new music accessible to audiences of the Greater Hartford area, surrounding underserved towns, and online viewers around the world. In order to deepen the experience for our audiences this year, when we can't meet in person, there will be interactive Q&As, live chats, and Zoom lobbies following our concerts. These will allow audience members to “mingle” with festival composers and performers, and have a direct, personal connection with the artists.

We also hope to benefit the new music community on a broader scale, by providing opportunities for emerging composers to bolster their portfolios with high-quality recordings and professional connections.

How will this project be evaluated?

There are three areas we use to determine the success of our festival: audience attendance, participant experience, and future collaborations.

Audience attendance: For our virtual festival, we will track views on Youtube and Facebook, as well as attendance to post-concert Zoom lobbies, with a goal of 425 views throughout the concert series.

Participant experience: We send out a survey with both ranked and open-ended questions, seeking feedback on each participant's experience, from their collaboration with ensembles to how they enjoyed each lesson and guest lecture, as well as overall opinions on their time at Connecticut Summerfest.

Future collaborations: We keep in contact with composers and ensembles-in-residence, and ask that they update us on new performances of their works. We have also made our own enduring connections with ensembles—one of this year's ensembles, Hub New Music, was an ensemble during our 2019 festival!

Cover letter

- [CTSF-Cover-Letter.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [CTSF-Budget-Sheet.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [CTSF-Balance-Sheet.pdf](#)

Project budget

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- [CTSF-Budget-Sheet-with-Secured-Funding.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Grant Report

- [Connecticut-Summerfest-Inc.-Grantee-Reporting-Form-2021.pdf](#)

Other materials?

- [CTSF-Artistic-Personnel.pdf](#)
- [CTSF-Testimonials.pdf](#)

Please note that as Connecticut Summerfest's only project is our festival in June, our organizational and project budgets are the same. In addition, our balance sheet is from November 15, and does not reflect money raised during our annual year-end fundraiser.

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