

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 132

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

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

West Hartford

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

New Britain

Will this activity occur after August 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

Roberts2020

Organization Name

Ballet Theatre Company

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

061537525

Principal Contact Name

Brianna Dunlap

Title

Development Director

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Amount requested this application

\$10,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

The mission of Ballet Theatre Company (BTC) is to enrich the greater Hartford area by offering professional dance productions, dance education for ages three to adult, and dance-related workshops free of charge to children who otherwise would not have the opportunity through BTC's Community Youth Outreach Program (CYOP).

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

BTC was founded in West Hartford in 1999. Since its founding, BTC has continued to train aspiring professional dancers, stage live-action entertainment, and enrich the community through its youth outreach program. During its first three years, the Company presented an annual spring repertory performance at the Gilman Theater, Greater Hartford Jewish Community Center. In December 2002, BTC accepted the invitation of the University of Saint Joseph (formerly known as Saint Joseph College) to stage its first Nutcracker at the Hoffman Auditorium in the Carol Autorino Center for the Arts and Humanities at the College in West Hartford. This production has become an annual tradition for BTC, the Hoffman Auditorium, and the greater Hartford community.

BTC's annual Spring Repertory program, held at the Hoffman Auditorium since 2002, has become a showcase for new, exciting works by regional and guest choreographers and select repertoire of classical ballets. 2018 introduced BTC's first staging of a full-length ballet for the spring.

In 2021, BTC made organizational history by producing a full-length film version of *Snow White*. The live-action classical ballet performance of Snow White was digitally premiered and screened at Old New-Gate Prison. The beloved fairytale, adapted for film, was choreographed and directed by Artistic Director, Stephanie Dattellas. It featured the company's professional Season Dancers, local and regional guests artists, and students from The School of Ballet Theatre Company. Scenes are filmed in historic locations throughout the state of Connecticut including Topsmead State Forest, Old New-Gate Prison and Copper Mine, and the Wadsworth Mansion at Long Hill.

In the winter of 2021, BTC will begin using Welte Auditorium. Welte Auditorium seats over 1,800 and is used for Music Department concerts, university lectures, films, student organizations, and performances by visiting artists such as Ballet Theatre Company.

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

Public audience demographic estimates:

70% White, 20% Black, 10% East Asian, 10% Asian

School of Ballet Theatre Company (tuition):

90% White, 5% Asian, 3% East Asian 2% Black

Public, paid audience demographic estimates:

70% White, 20% Black, 10% East Asian, 10% Asian

School of Ballet Theatre Company (tuition payers):

90% White, 5% Asian, 3% East Asian 2% Black

Describe your organization's governance.

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The Board Directors historically met bi-monthly. The Board will continue to meet every other month in 2021 but will begin to meet quarterly in 2022, with committee meetings in between board meetings. BTC has room at the table for experienced professionals to fill our open Board Director positions. BTC is growing as an organization and we need to match that energy with Board growth.

In 2020, only one out of thirteen Board Directors did not donate. (92%) For 2021, we expect 100% board giving.

Describe the diversity of your board.

Currently, there are 9 Board members - 22% male, 78% female;

11% Black, 11% Hispanic, 77.8% White

We are deeply committed to cultivating and sustaining an equitable, fair, and inclusive organization in artistic expression and organizational behavior, policy, and practice. We at BTC embrace multicultural diversity both on and off stage and strive to be an organization where all communities feel a sense of belonging. We hold each other and ourselves accountable for these intentions.

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

92%

In 2020, only one out of thirteen Board Directors did not donate.

Project Name

Revived, Revamped, Renewed - The Nutcracker 2021

Project Description

Ballet Theatre Company's annual performance of the favorite holiday classic, *The Nutcracker*, will be returning to the main stage for Season 23. Not only is this holiday staple returning, but BTC is also moving our main stage production to CCSU's Welte Auditorium, a venue that quadruples BTC's audience and revenue potential.

In the wake of the pandemic, and with the new venue opportunity promising larger audiences, artistic leadership at BTC knows that the time is right to revive, revamp and renew *The Nutcracker's* production.

With your support, we build dynamic sets fit for Welte's size, rent larger backdrops, craft new costumes, and premiere new original choreography on a larger stage. For this reason, BTC is asking The Roberts Foundation for \$10,000 to fund required upgrades to *The Nutcracker* production and hire two guest dancers from the prestigious New York City Ballet to perform the starring roles of Sugar Plum and Cavalier in the Grande Pas de Deux scene.

Total estimated project budget

\$130,140.00

Project start/opening

10/01/2021

Project end/closing

12/18/2021

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Project venue

The Nutcracker performances will take place at Welte Auditorium at Central Connecticut State University

Project town

Rehearsals in the BTC Compton Studio, West Hartford. Rehearsals and performances at Welte Auditorium

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

Admission is \$35 for general admission, \$30 for seniors, \$25 for students, and \$20 for children. BTC provides about 30 complimentary tickets for press, major donors, sponsors, and funders.

Each show holds the potential of 1,800 instead of 366 seats per show at BTC's previous venue. We expect that matinee shows will be the most popular.

Additional activities include *A Children's Ballet*, a free, fully dedicated outreach performance of *The Nutcracker* for social advocacy agency partners.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

Digital: BTC will dynamically market *The Nutcracker* on all digital platforms.

Printed: BTC will mail a paper newsletter this September. The mailing will reach an estimated 5,000 homes in the greater Hartford area & New Britain. BTC will also be mailing a Nutcracker promotional postcard the week before Thanksgiving.

Additional: Print posters and flyers, a banner on the West Hartford town green, & press releases to The Courant, We-ha.com, Hearst Media, CT Magazine, & other CT publications.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

\$5,000 of the Roberts Foundation grant will help fund the upgrades required to produce *The Nutcracker* at a larger venue. Specifically, to construct a new Mother Ginger set, rent larger backdrops, create a new Sugar Plum Fairy tutu and Cavalier tunic set, make a new Dewdrop Fairy tutu & new (12-16) waltz of the Snowflakes Corps de Ballet costumes.

Your funding will also allow BTC to hire two guest New York Ballet professionals to perform the starring roles of Sugar Plum and Cavalier (\$5,000).

How will Roberts support be recognized?

BTC will recognize the Roberts Foundation while promoting the production on the BTC website, social media platforms, newsletters and press release and include the Roberts Foundation logo on all mailings. During the production, BTC will feature the foundation in its digital and paper Playbill on a funder recognition page, in a half-page program ad and showcase its logo. The Roberts Foundation will be mentioned during the AD's and DD's curtain speeches prior to each performance.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

Historically, BTC defined artistic excellence as the integration of exceptional artistic skill and creativity in a professional setting. It is achieved when individual talent, dedication, and love for the arts are infused into collaborative classes and performances that awe audiences.

Starting in Season 23, after 22 years of providing high-quality arts experiences to the Greater Hartford community, BTC can now *add* to that definition of excellence by announcing the inauguration of a company of resident dancers.

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The creation of a professional dance company, referred to as BTC's Professional Dancers in Residence, signifies a new level of professionalism at Ballet Theatre Company. BTC's Artistic Director will hire and provide jobs for ten professional dancers at a competitive wage – a boon to the local ballet performance scene.

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

One-third of BTC's three-part mission is enriching the greater Hartford area by offering professional-caliber dance productions. *The Nutcracker* is the *quintessential* performance that provides arts and cultural experiences to the community. In order to provide such an experience, BTC will hire dancers and supporting artists.

The Nutcracker ballet will portray the talents of its training school students (ages 6-18), include a cast diverse in culture and gender, and feature guest artists who work alongside the BTC Company Dancers in Residence. Hiring professional dancers at a fair wage by offering a contract of 32-34 weeks with a biweekly stipend and shoe allowance is an act of equity. BTC is setting a new standard of excellence in a field where working for free is often expected. Additionally, the *Nutcracker* provides jobs for artists such as costume designers, set designers, production crew.

In sum, a stronger production benefits the audience, artists, and various communities.

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

BTC's performance of *The Nutcracker* is appealing to community members of all ages and walks of life. The *Nutcracker* is so appealing that for three years in a row (excluding 2020), our annual production was at 97.9% sell-out. This year, the community will benefit from the larger venue - more seats means more enjoyment.

The *Nutcracker* is offered at a reasonable price, making art accessible to all. BTC also offers free tickets to its outreach partners as part of our mission to expose underserved communities to the arts.

BTC will expand our A Children's Ballet outreach performance; free tickets increase from 366 tickets to 1800!

BTC will expand its abbreviated school performance in partnership with Hartford Performs, and invite other schools in Greater Hartford to attend.

BTC will offer discounted tickets to its retirement home partners to serve those who cannot travel.

BTC will perform excerpts at local libraries and museums leading up to the performance.

How will this project be evaluated?

BTC evaluates program performance through various platforms including but not limited to: audience and critic reviews, post-performance discussions and surveys from the audience and performers, letters from audience members and performers, and ticket sales. Post-performance surveys are sent out to audience members and performers immediately following performances seeking information including; demographic, age, gender, performance rating and quality, overall experience, etc. This data is used to understand audience trends from year to year and ensure BTC is utilizing optimal strategies for marketing and advertising. This information is collected to provide constructive feedback to the artistic and production staff so each year BTC provides the highest quality performance to their patrons. BTC carefully considers each survey response in a continued effort to deliver efficient, organized, and high-caliber productions.

Cover letter

- [BTC-Cover-Letter-The-Roberts-Foundation-Aug-2-2021-1.pdf](#)

Board list

- [BTC-Board-Directors-July-2021.pdf](#)

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IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [BTC-501C-3.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [BTC-2019-990.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [2020-BTC-Year-End-Budget-Actuals.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [BTC-2021-Budget-Doc.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [BalanceSheet-BTC-June-30-2021.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [BTC-2021-Nutcracker-Budget-PDF.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Grant Report

- [Ballet-Theatre-Company-Grantee-Reporting-Form-.pdf](#)

Other materials?

- [The-Nutcracker-Budget-Costume-Breakdown-2021-1.pdf](#)
- [BTCs-The-Nutcracker-New-Costumes-Roberts-Foundation-1.pdf](#)
- [BTCs-Professional-Dancers-in-Residence-Company-Overview-Aug-2021.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