

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 226

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 August 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

Roberts2020

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

CONCORA, c/o South Church
New Britain, Connecticut 06051
United States
[Map It](#)

Website

<https://www.concora.org>

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Amount requested this application

\$10,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

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.

Connecticut Choral Artists – CONCORA – is a professional choir of 45 singers. Our choir was founded by Richard Coffey in 1974 when he served as Director of Music at South Church in New Britain . After leading CONCORA for 40 years, Maestro Coffey stepped down in 2014; Chris Shepard was named his successor. South Church continues to be the site of our rehearsals, mailing address, and music library.

Under the direction of Chris Shepard, CONCORA's versatility is displayed in its wide range of repertoire and in the crafting of ensembles to produce an extraordinary range of choral color and dynamic range for each performance. The choir performs the music of J.S. Bach, Mozart, and Brahms, as well as Broadway and more modern works. In 2018, the choir performed sold-out performances of the groundbreaking new choral work, *Considering Matthew Shepard* with the UCONN Chamber Choir.

CONCORA's season typically includes Handel's *Messiah*, at least one major work by J.S. Bach, a Broadway Revue, and concerts of traditional, contemporary or newly-commissioned music. Now in our 49th season, CONCORA continues to present main concerts through the region, and enjoys an extraordinary reputation for artistic excellence throughout New England.

With 10 performances this season, we are returning to venues in Hartford and New Britain while expanding our geographic reach with concerts in Farmington, Glastonbury, Stonington, New London, and Stamford.

The second half of our 2022/23 season features the following:

Feel the Spirit: The Legacy of Moses Hogan

Saturday, February 11, 2023 at 3:00 pm – South Church, New Britain

Passion for the Planet by Geoffrey Hudson

Earth Day: Saturday, April 22, 2023

Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Hartford

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

Our audience for our main concerts is fairly traditional: predominantly white, age 65+, from the suburbs.

CONCORA has had greater success in attracting families, students, people of color, and urban residents with contemporary works. We accomplished this as recently as January 2022 in presenting "Words & Voices and of the Harlem Renaissance" at South Church.

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Describe your organization's governance.

At the end of December 2021, new officers assumed the positions of President, Executive Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. (That's because the previous team stayed on during the pandemic.) The officers meet monthly.

Our current board is comprised of the four officers and eight directors. CONCORA's board of directors meets bi-monthly for reports on finance, programming, and operations. Minutes show that 2/3 to 3/4 of our board members have attended meetings in the last two years.

Describe the diversity of your board.

Our board is comprised of six women and six men, 10 white and two African Americans.

The managing director and two board members participated in a six-week workshop series on Diversity Equity Inclusion Justice Access (DEIJA) hosted by the Greater Hartford Arts Council. The series provided resources and language to address bias and barriers while inspiring discussion, attention, and action. A committee is being formed to create a statement, review practices, and make recommendations.

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

All of our board members are asked to make a financial contribution that is personally significant to them. All of our board members contribute to CONCORA's annual fund. Last fiscal year, our board members collectively contributed about \$7000 to CONCORA's annual fund.

Project Name

Winter/Spring 2023 Concerts

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

No

Project Description

Feel the Spirit: The Legacy of Moses Hogan

Saturday, February 11, 2023 at 3:00 pm

South Church, New Britain

A celebrated composer and conductor of choral music renowned worldwide for his arrangements of spirituals, Moses Hogan published more than 80 arrangements, including the familiar titles "Steal Away," "Wade in the Water," and "Great Day." CONCORA will collaborate with faculty and students from CCSU's Department of Choral Studies.

Passion for the Planet

Earth Day: Saturday, April 22, 2023

Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Hartford

Following an arc from glory to darkness to hope, this moving work by Geoffrey Hudson highlights Earth's beauty and the causes and effects of climate change before inspiring a collective call to protect and preserve our home planet. This concert will also involve local choirs. Proceeds will benefit local environmental protection and advocacy groups, including the CT Coalition for Environmental Justice in Hartford.

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Total estimated project budget

\$38,950.00

Project start/opening

02/11/2023

Project end/closing

04/22/2023

Project venue

South Church, New Britain & Asylum Hill Cong Church, Hartford

Project town

New Britain, Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

MOSES HOGAN CONCERT

\$35 x 75 reserved seats

\$22 x 75 general seating

\$15 x 25 students

\$20 x 50 livestream access

\$ 0 x 75 guest tix / outreach

\$5650 300 #

The April concert will benefit CT Coalition for Environmental Justice. Asylum Hill Church is covering some production expenses similar to *Considering Matthew Shepard* – attended by 600 people raising \$7500 for True Colors' LGBTQ programs.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

Promotional efforts will include the following:

- our web site
- emails to 1500 patrons and supporters
- press releases
- posts to Facebook page with 1000+ followers
- online music calendars
- 500 direct mail postcards
- partnerships with local non-profits, churches and choirs

AHCC will promote the Earth Day concert to families as it does with its annual Boar's Head Festival, reaching an annual audience of 4,000 people.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

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Funding from the Roberts Foundation will be applied toward the production costs of these concerts to include the singers, instrumentalists, technology, promotional costs, and proportionate operating expenses.

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 social media posts to 1000-1500 patrons, donors, and supporters; in press releases, on direct mail postcards, and in our concert program.

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 in 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 delighted to conduct our professional choir and guide the singers in 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. That is why most of our singers have performed with us for 10-20 years.

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

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 ChorusAmerica shows that close to one in six persons in almost every community participates in some way in an amateur, school, 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 local and accessible – a very different experience than listening to a radio or digitized performance. CONCORA makes an even greater impact when our concerts feature new works and engage community partners, their networks, and memberships in our performances and content.

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. Choral music elevates mood, spirit, and a 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, 2011.)

Choral music also plays a profound role in bringing together people of different backgrounds – race, socio-economic level, faith, gender orientation, etc – and connecting them in a share community experience through the universal beauty of voices in harmony.

How will this project be evaluated?

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This project will be evaluated based upon the following:

- levels of government, foundation, corporation and individual support;
- ticket purchases by new patrons
- attendance at the concerts;
- media coverage before and after the concert;
- feedback from audience members, board members and performers;
- feedback from music educators and professional musicians and vocalists attending our concerts.
- surveys circulated at and after the concert

Cover letter

- [1-Exec-ltr-signed-to-Roberts-Fdn-11-1-22.pdf](#)

Board list

- [2-Board-Roster-2022-2023-CONCORA.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [3-IRS-Ltr-1986-CONCORA.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [990-FY-ending-6-30-22-CONCORA.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [5-Finance-Stmt-ending-6-30-22-CCA.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [4-ORG-Budget-FY23-FY22-for-CONCORA.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [6-Aug-2022-Finance-Stmt-CCA-Final.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [Concora-7-Project-Budget-MH-rev-11-16-22.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

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Grant Report

- [Connecticut-Choral-Artists-Grantee-Reporting-Form.pdf](#)

Project funding:

APPROVED

William T. Sloper Trust for Andrew J. Sloper Musical Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee \$5,000

Charles Parker Trust for Public Music Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee \$3,000

\$8000

PENDING APPLICATIONS

American Savings Foundation \$5000 Vance Foundation, Robert C.
\$4,000

Hartford Creates / Greater Hartford Arts Council event grant \$7,500

To be submitted (below):

Roberts Foundation, Edward C. & Ann T. \$10,000

Richard P. Garmany Fund at the HFPG \$10,000

We are updating our mission statement and long range plan led by Exec VP Rob Hansen, a brand consultant.

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