

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 214

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

Roberts2020

Organization Name

Connecticut Ballet

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

061039302

Principal Contact Name

Brett Raphael

Title

Artistic Director & CEO

Email

ctballet@ix.netcom.com

Phone

(860) 239-1039

Address

750 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103
United States
[Map It](#)

Website

<http://www.connecticutballet.org>

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 214**Amount requested this application**

\$15,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

The primary mission of Connecticut Ballet is to enrich the cultural life of the greater Connecticut community, by providing the art of dance to its audiences, dancers, and students. In pursuit of this mission, Connecticut Ballet will maintain the highest standards of professional ballet performance and training while continuing to stimulate an appreciation of the dance medium and respond to Connecticut's developing interest in dance.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Connecticut Ballet is a nationally recognized, professional dance company currently celebrating its 41st anniversary season. It debuted as Ballet Today at Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival in 1981 under the artistic direction of Brett Raphael. Connecticut Ballet is headquartered in Hartford and Stamford and performs at The Bushnell and The Palace/Stamford. In addition to full-scale classical ballet productions and commissioned one-act ballets, Connecticut Ballet's Center for Dance Education offers a comprehensive educational program which includes school assemblies, outreach classes at residential treatment facilities, schools and community centers, professional development workshops for classroom teachers, and a Trainee Program for pre-professional ballet dancers.

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

Our audience is very diverse, particularly for an American ballet company. We average 50% Caucasian, 20% African American, 15% Hispanic, and 10% Asian, including a healthy mix of young families with children (ages 25-40), seniors (ages 55-75), and single professionals amongst our audiences.

Describe your organization's governance.

Our process has been disrupted of late by the pandemic. We normally hold monthly board meetings and attendance is almost always 100%. Board members are required to make an annual gift of \$250+. They receive six tickets for our paid performance season with which to introduce new people or business contacts/prospective donors to the company.

Since we last applied, we've enjoyed the leadership of Board Chair Archie Elam (he is just now stepping down). A replacement is being sought.

Describe the diversity of your board.

Our board is currently small but diverse. Including Mr. Elam, we have two African-Americans, two Caucasians. Our Advisory Board includes former board members and/or distinguished individuals who provide counsel and development assistance (such as David E.O. Carson, former President of People's Bank, and Michael Uthoff, former Artistic Director of Hartford Ballet).

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

All except one individual who is currently devoting 100% of available resources to developing her corporate consulting business and has requested a temporary waiver of the \$250 minimum contribution policy.

Project Name

Connecticut Ballet presents THE NUTCRACKER at The Bushnell

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Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

No

Project Description

After 15 years of performing at The Bushnell, we are now bringing our production to The Bushnell, one piece of an enlarged 2022-2023 season schedule. This is a major project: re-configuring and physically resizing our production for The Bushnell, rehearsing a local children's cast, hiring a PR firm to handle marketing strategy for the inaugural NUTCRACKER season in Hartford, ad buys, social media, etc.

Called 'beguiling and a feast for the eyes' by the *Connecticut Post*, our NUTCRACKER has been presented in Fairfield County, throughout New England, and even at the New York Botanical Garden. A distinguishing component is the participation of world-class stars from American Ballet Theatre and New York City Ballet. We intend to replicate this in Hartford. The signature importance of a NUTCRACKER to the ballet company's bottom line speaks to the importance of this project. We request support to help insure financial success in year one as we build-back our pre-pandemic regional audience.

Total estimated project budget

\$250,000.00

Project start/opening

09/01/2022

Project end/closing

12/20/2022

Project venue

The Bushnell

Project town

Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

We will present four public performances and one subsidized 'Share the Magic' performance for Hartford public school children. Our pricing will range from \$45-\$95 plus ticket surcharges. We will offer a limited number of comps, primarily for use by our Ballet Ambassadors, individuals who volunteer to bring new audiences to the ballet and to cultivate their subscribership. We estimate (conservatively) 65% sold (2300 attendees) at an average price of \$65 for a potential gross of \$152,100.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

We will use all platforms available to us:

media ad buys, direct mail, FB, IG, Twitter campaigns, radio and television appearances, community outreach promo performances, leafletting & postering across the greater Hartford region, cross-marketing collaborations with other arts orgs, email blasts via Constant Contact and third-party vendors, and more.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

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Marketing will be critical to the success of year one for our NUTCRACKER at The Bushnell, to cultivate an awareness and interest amongst families with children, Girl Scout troops, seniors, and young professionals. Note: Out of the \$250,000 budget for the production, \$100,000 of that pertains to the Hartford presentation. Roberts funding will go solely toward the regional marketing campaign in Hartford.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

We will list all major sponsors directly under the NUTCRACKER header and logo in all program book materials and press announcements concerning the season. Finally, Roberts Foundation will be thanked during opening remarks for each performance by Artistic Director Brett Raphael.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

We define artistic excellence in terms of established national and international standards for the field. From the outset, our organization has striven to present the public with the highest level of artistic and technical achievement both in our choice of artists, guest and resident choreographers, production staff, and choice of repertoire within the confines of our modest budget. Over four decades, we have continued to improve the level of artistry and production for which we have received a strong audience response.

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

Bringing THE NUTCRACKER to The Bushnell aligns perfectly with the above-mentioned focus on artistic excellence, the crown jewels of which (at least in classical ballet) are the full-length classics by Marius Petipa such as 'The Sleeping Beauty,' 'The Nutcracker,' 'Swan Lake,' and others. By presenting those ballets according to the highest standards of performance and theatricality, we are advancing our mission of developing and sustaining an audience for classical and contemporary dance in greater Hartford.

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

Our community will benefit from the continued development of its cultural sector on a high-level, serving as the seat for the very best in professional dance, theatre, and music. By cultivating audiences who have previously been marginalized or who could not access classical dance (primarily due to the prohibitive cost) via our Ballet Ambassador program, we are contributing to greater equity in terms of access (and participation in) the fine arts.

How will this project be evaluated?

The evaluative process is ongoing with regard to our expanded 2022-23 season at The Bushnell, the lead component of which is THE NUTCRACKER. We will be in dialogue with a contracted consultant re. the success or failure of marketing assets, press events and special mini-performances building up to the presentation in December. Once the final tallies are in, we will discuss the results at the Board level and tap outside consultants (including The Bushnell, our presentational partner) for feedback. That evaluative process and reflection will carry weight when making programming and budgetary decisions into the following season.

Cover letter

- [BoardLtr.ConnecticutBalletapplication.8.1.22.pdf](#)

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Board list

- [BoardList.ConnecticutBallet2021-2022.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [IRS-Determination-Ltr-Hartford.2012.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [4831-CT-BALLET-INC-6.30.21.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [CTB-Consolidated-Budget-2021-2022v.Actual.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [CTB-Consolidated-Budget-2022-2023.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [ConnecticutBalletBalanceSheet.6.22.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [NutcrackerBudget.2022.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](#)

We tried to drop in a few marketing/graphic elements in preparation for this year's production but all the files exceeded 'the limit.'

Note that our 21-22 budget went thru major changes when we cancelled the Spring 2022 Bushnell/Palace season due to an injury to one of our principal dancers. We were able to move some of the repertoire to an expanded 'Ballet Under the Stars' summer season just now completed. The Shattered Venues grant was responsible for helping to keep us afloat during a major reduction in earned and contributed revenues over the past 24 months.

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Thank you for your consideration of our 2022 application!

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