

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 162

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

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

Newington

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

217113-Roberts2020

Organization Name

Capital Classics Theatre Company

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

061325146

Principal Contact Name

Geoffrey Sheehan

Title

Artistic Associate/Treasurer

Email

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Phone

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Address

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[Map It](#)

Website

<https://www.capitalclassics.org>

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 162

Amount requested this application

\$9,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

Capital Classics, a professional theater company, delivers quality classical theatre that is affordable, accessible and engaging to a diverse audience. We offer local professional and student artists the opportunity to showcase their talents. Artistic excellence lives at the core of all our productions. Each production combines artistic truth, passion, accuracy with live music, dance, physical comedy, a colorful, fanciful set and costumes: theater that is meaningful, festive, accessible.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Formed in 1991, we are the longest running non-union professional theatre in the Hartford Region. We provide jobs for CT performers and technicians, training and mentorship to students, and high-quality theatre that is affordable and family friendly to the community. We serve as a cornerstone for the development and strengthening of the Hartford community of small, energetic, quality, professional theaters. We attract an audience that is diverse in age, gender, and economic status. We fill this need by offering affordable artful entertainment; theatre that is meant for the entire family. Past achievements include 30 years of performances; hundreds of jobs for professional and student theatre artists; and thousands of audience members enjoying outdoor performances, including 8 seasons of Shakespeare in Bushnell Park; 20 years in residence at University of Saint Joseph; 8 years of Capital Classics Radio Theatre at the Mark Twain House; 8 years of the WH Library's Shakespeare Book Club and currently presenting a second year of our Contemporary Classics Conversations program, using contemporary plays as a springboard for conversations regarding issues of great importance to our community.

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

Capital Classics and the GHSF offers theatre for the entire family, with audiences diverse in age, gender and economic status. A 2021 audience report showed an audience primarily from the Greater Hartford Region, spread out among the various towns, the immediate Hartford/West Hartford area being most prominent; attends theatre events regularly; has an appreciation for our ticket cost being on the lower range of prices for the region; and 13.2% of our 2021 audience were "Student/Child" tickets.

Describe your organization's governance.

Capital Classics is a non-profit organization (501c.3), governed by a Board of Directors currently numbering 12 with 100% making annual donations. The 2021 president, vice-president, and treasurer were all reelected for 2022 allowing us to maintain our stable and actively-involved leadership. The Board meets each month, averaging 80% attendance. The treasurer presents monthly financial reports. Minutes of all meetings are maintained by the board secretary. The annual meeting is held in November.

Describe the diversity of your board.

Capital Classics Board consists of 13 members with 31% female and 8% African-American. Also, 23% of our board members are American citizens who immigrated from the countries of Germany, Belarus, and England. Efforts are ongoing to increase the cultural and age diversity of our board through active recruitment and the development of an advisory board specifically to engage young people of color in the development and execution of Capital Classics' programs and vision.

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

100% of our board makes financial contributions to our organization. In addition, board members are highly invested and

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 162

contribute a great amount of time to each program and event Capital Classics produces.

Project Name

Greater Hartford Shakespeare Festival

Project Description

The 2022 GHSF includes Shakespeare's comedy, Much Ado About Nothing, and pre-show performances: Thursday night: Youth In Community Arts Performance Series; Friday night: performances by The Elizabethan Consort; the Saturday Concert Series featuring CT based performers, and the Sunday Professor Series, short lectures focusing on Shakespeare and/or Much Ado About Nothing. This year's show will be directed by Geoffrey Sheehan, Professor & Program Coordinator of Theatre at Housatonic Community College. Geoffrey holds a BFA in Drama from UCONN and an MALS in Theatre from Wesleyan University. He is a co-founder of Capital Classics and has directed several GHSF productions including Romeo & Juliet, The Winter's Tale, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Macbeth, The Merry Wives of Windsor and 2021's As You Like It. He has also performed in several GHSF productions. His experience as a teacher and director of productions with entertaining theatricality makes him an ideal candidate to lead this project.

Total estimated project budget

\$56,585.00

Project start/opening

05/31/2022

Project end/closing

07/31/2022

Project venue

The Carol Autorino Center for the Arts, University of Saint Joseph

Project town

West Hartford, CT

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

The 2022 GHSF will be performed 7/14 -7/31, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.; Sundays at 5:30 p.m. totaling 12 performances. Estimated audience is 175-200 per performance (95% paid; 5% comps). Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$14 for seniors/students/children. Admission includes pre-show Theatrical Fair activities of live music performances, our Youth in Community Arts Performance Series, and our Sunday Professor Series; the performance of Much Ado About Nothing; and the USJ Art Gallery.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

The program will be marketed through collaborative efforts of Capital Classics and USJ. Plans are: listings in online, Hartford Courant, and community-based publication calendars; pursuit of articles in local papers; radio interviews; online journalism; direct mail marketing to The Arts Center and Capital Classics' mailing lists; social media campaigns; a banner in West Hartford; poster distribution throughout Greater Hartford; and advance activities in Blue Back Square and the WH Library.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 162

Capital Classics will apply Roberts Foundation grant funds toward the costs of the full production of Shakespeare's play, *Much Ado About Nothing*. In particular, the grant will enable us to hire and compensate three essential members of the production team: the production director, the stage manager, and the technical director. The grant funds will also be applied toward hiring and compensating two student actors. All positions will be filled with CT-based professionals and students.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

The Roberts Foundation support will be recognized by your logo placement in all print promotions including postcards, posters, and the production playbills distributed to each audience member at all 12 performances; listing as a supporter in all press-releases, articles, and on the Supporter page inside the production playbills.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

Artistic excellence lives at the core of our productions by adherence to our Artistic Statement:

All productions are investigated beyond the written word in order to best communicate the universal and entertaining elements of the story. We focus on telling the story genuinely and passionately. Actor training is crucial in achieving this goal. Rehearsal time is devoted to textual analysis and extensive physical and vocal training, ensuring that the production is both active and audible.

Multicultural casting is a primary goal for all programs, as it brings greater truth and dimension to a production and accurately reflects the reality of our community.

The merging of art with entertainment is a crucial aspect of the company's artistic vision.

Each production combines artistic truth, passion, and accuracy with live music and dance, physical expression, and colorful and fanciful sets and costumes. This combination lends itself to theater that is meaningful, festive, and accessible.

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

The proposed project meets the company's definition of artistic excellence as the 2022 production of *Much Ado About Nothing* will include the elements of "artful entertainment" that we infuse in all productions – live music, physical comedy, fanciful costumes, a thematically enhancing set, and expressive, truthful performances focusing on the universality of Shakespeare's characters and his deep, accurate, examination of humanity – a combination that matches our artistic vision: "theater that is meaningful, festive, and accessible." The proposed project allows us to fulfill the following aspects of our mission:

Employing CT-based professional artists and technicians

Employing CT-based student performers and technicians; pairing them up with mentoring professionals and providing professional training

Delivering quality classical theatre to members of the greater Hartford community that is professional and accessible (both artistically and economically)

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

To the community, Capital Classics has developed an extensive reach throughout our 31-year history. No other arts group in the area consistently does what we do: offer affordable, accessible classical entertainment for all members of the community. We restore Shakespeare to its original intent: as a relevant form of entertainment that speaks to the masses about timeless issues. Without opportunities like the GHSF, many in our community would not experience the splendor of classical theatre and the engaging intimacy of our setting. We are particularly pleased that a large segment of our audience consists of young people, including families, who are choosing Shakespeare as a viable entertainment choice. The community also benefits by our ability to retain quality, trained, professional resident artists of Connecticut, rather than having to leave the state for summer employment. These artists contribute to their neighborhoods, the area's economy, and the cultural activities of our region.

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 162

How will this project be evaluated?

The 2022 GHFS will be evaluated qualitatively and quantitatively. We will conduct an audience response survey to gather information on audience demographics (age, gender, town of residence); marketing tactics; audience preferences and feedback. We define and monitor success according to: audience response; attendance figures and audience response; feedback from the artists who work with us; professional success of core ensemble members and the success of students who benefitted from working/training with us. Short term indicators include audience size, ability to hire and compensate artistic staff, meeting fundraising goals. Long-term indicators include expanded audience base (young people and atypical theater goers), successful careers of artists who have worked with us, expansion of off-season productions, and the continued and/or expanded support of sponsors from the West Hartford business community.

Cover letter

- [Capital-Classics-Executive-Cover-Letter-2022.pdf](#)

Board list

- [Capital-Classics-Board-List-2022.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [IRS-Determination-Letter-Capital-Classics-Inc.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [Financial-Statements-Capital-Classics-Form-990EZ-A-B-O-2020.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [Organizational-Budget-COMLETE-FY-2021-Capital-Classics-Inc.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [Organizational-Budget-FY-2022-Capital-Classics-Inc.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [Capital-Classics-Balance-Sheet-12.19.21.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [Project-Budget-and-Other-Funding-Status-2022-GHSF-Capital-Classics-Inc.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 162

Yes

Strategic plan

- [Capital-Classics-Business-Plan-update-2020.pdf](#)

Grant Report

- [Capital-Classics-Inc.-Grantee-Reporting-Form-.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