

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 429**Are you a 501(c)3 organization in good standing with the IRS?**

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 April 1, 2025?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

197285-Roberts2022

Organization Name

Capital Classics Inc.

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

061325146

Principal Contact Name

Geoffrey Sheehan

Title

Treasurer

Emailinfo@capitalclassics.org**Phone**

(860) 218-0300

Address

42 Ridgeway St.
Newington, Connecticut 06111
United States
[Map It](#)

Website<https://www.capitalclassics.org/>

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 429**Amount requested this application**

\$12,000.00

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 expression, 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 33 years of performances; hundreds of jobs for professional and student theatre artists; and thousands of audience members enjoying outdoor performances, including 9 seasons of Shakespeare in Bushnell Park; 23 years in residence at University of Saint Joseph; 9 years of Capital Classics Radio Theatre; 3 years of the Contemporary Classics Conversations program; and 11 years of the WH Library's Shakespeare Book Club. In 2024, our Greater Hartford Shakespeare Festival was expanded to include two full productions in repertory, with an increase from 12 to 20 performances overall. These additional opportunities for community engagement allowed over 4000 people to attend the GHSF.

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 2022 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.

Describe your organization's governance.

Capital Classics is a (501c.3) organization, governed by a Board of Directors numbering 16 with 100% making annual donations. New officers were elected for 2025 with all previous officers choosing to remain members of the board 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 meetings are maintained by the board secretary. The annual meeting is held in November.

Please describe the diversity of your board by gender and ethnicity/race. Use percentages.

As Capital Classics values diversity, equity, and inclusion in our organization as well as our artistic company, we have made efforts to create aboard reflective of our community. Capital Classics' Board consists of 16 members with 38% female, 7% African-American, and 7% Latino/Hispanic. Efforts to increase the cultural and age diversity of our board through active recruitment were rewarded with an increase in the number of women and younger members on the board.

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

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 429

100% of our board makes financial contributions to our organization. In addition, board members are highly invested and contribute a great amount of time to each program and event Capital Classics produces.

Project Name

Greater Hartford Shakespeare Festival

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

No

Project Description

GHSF 2025 will continue and strengthen the expansion of programming established in 2024 including:

-Two Shakespeare plays in repertory: King Lear; Twelfth Night

-20 performances over 4 weeks

-Contracting 1 or 2 AEA union professional actors

-The use of amplification of our performers to accommodate the growth of our audience

-Integration of our programming with academic activities at the University of Saint Joseph

-Pre-show performances of CT-based artists prior to all performances

Artistic direction will be provided by Sasha Bratt (King Lear) and Brian Jennings (Twelfth Night). Sasha is a Professor and Program Coordinator of Theatre at CT State Community College-Naugatuck Valley. He holds a BA from Trinity College; an MFA in Directing from Catholic University, and an Ed.D in Leadership Studies from Marshall University. Brian is an Asst. Professor of Theater and Coordinator of Actor Training at the Hartt School with degrees from Princeton and the National Theatre Conservatory.

Total estimated project budget

\$132,815.00

Project start/opening

05/31/2025

Project end/closing

08/03/2025

Project venue

The Hoffman Auditorium (indoor venue), USJ Garden Lawn (outdoor venue), University of Saint Joseph

Project town

West Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

GHSF 2025 will be performed 7/9–8/3, Wednesdays at 7:00 pm, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays at 7:30 pm; Sundays at 5:30 pm totaling 20 performances (10 each play). Estimated audience is 200-275 per performance (95% paid; 5% comps). Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$17 for seniors/students/active military/groups with discounts for attending both shows. Children 11 and under are free. Admission includes pre-show performances and the performance of the evening's play, either King Lear or Twelfth Night.

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 429

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

Promotion will be through the efforts of Capital Classics (in contract with BuzzEngine, a local marketing firm) and USJ. Plans are: listings in online, Hartford Courant, and community-based publication calendars; pursuit of articles in local papers; radio and TV interviews; online journalism; direct mail marketing; social media campaigns; a banner in West Hartford center; poster distribution throughout Greater Hartford; and advance activities through the WH Library.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Capital Classics will apply the grant funds toward production costs of the two Shakespeare plays. Given the expanded calendar and two production festival, artists' employment is expanding requiring increased compensation. In particular, the grant funds enable us to hire essential members of the production team: the production directors (2), the stage managers (2), and be applied to compensating members of the acting company. 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 20 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, 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 both 2025 productions will include the elements of "artful entertainment" that we infuse in all productions – live music, physical action, striking 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 and providing professional training to enhance their growth toward professional careers
- 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 33-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

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 429

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.

How will this project be evaluated?

The 2025 GHSF 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: 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, and the continued and/or expanded support of sponsors from the West Hartford business community.

Cover letter

- [Capital-Classics-Executive-Cover-Letter-2025-Roberts-Foundation.pdf](#)

Board list

- [Capital-Classics-Board-Directory-2025.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

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

Financial statement

- [Capital-Classics-Inc-2023-Form-990-Complete.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [Capital-Classics-2024-Organizational-and-GHSF-Budget-COMPLETE-12.31.2024.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [Capital-Classics-Inc-Organizational-Total-Budget-2025-.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [Capital-Classics-Balance-Sheet-1.15.25.pdf](#)

Project budget

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 429

- [Capital-Classics-GHSF-2025-Budget.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Yes

Strategic plan

- [Capital-Classics-Strategic-Plan-2024-2026.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