

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 529**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 May 1, 2026 ?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

GRF-T3-2025

Organization Name

Capital Classics, Inc.

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

061325146

Principal Contact Name

Geoffrey Sheehan

Title

Treasurer/Artistic Associate

Emailinfo@capitalclassics.org**Phone**

(860) 593-1355

Address

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

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

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 529**Amount requested this application**

\$15,000.00

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 34 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; 24 years in residence at University of Saint Joseph; 9 years of Capital Classics Radio Theatre; 3 years of the Contemporary Classics Conversations program; and 12 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. In 2025, the expansion was sustained with an increase in attendance to 4130, our largest yet.

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

GHSF audiences are diverse in age, gender, economic status. A 2024 survey revealed they are primarily of the Greater Hartford Region; attends theatre events regularly; has appreciation for our low cost tickets. Our 2025 online ticket report reveals 43% were purchased in the Senior/Student category, and 109 free tickets reserved for children 11 and under. Also served were the CT-based artists employed. In 2025, 44% of positions went to women; 25% to people of color and 50% to people under age 30.

Describe your organization's governance.

Capital Classics is a (501c.3) organization, governed by a Board of Directors numbering 14 with 100% making annual donations. Our officers slate remained the same for 2026 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.

Ethnicity/Race + %

Female : 29%

Ethnicity/Race + %

African-American: 14%

Ethnicity/Race + %

Hispanic: 8%

Ethnicity/Race + %

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 529

0

Ethnicity/Race + %

0

Ethnicity/Race + %

0

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 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 2026 will continue and strengthen the expanded programming including:

-Two Shakespeare plays in repertory: A Midsummer Night's Dream; Measure for Measure

-20 performances over 4 weeks

-Contracting 2 AEA union professional actors for the 2nd consecutive year

-Use of performer amplification to accommodate the size of our audience

-Integration of programming with academic activities at the USJ

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

Artistic direction will be provided by our returning 2025 directors, Sasha Bratt (Midsummer) and Brian Jennings (Measure).

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 Asst. Professor of Theater/Coordinator of Actor Training at the Hartt School with degrees from Princeton and the National Theatre Conservatory.

Total estimated project budget

\$111,350.00

Project start/opening

05/20/2026

Project end/closing

08/02/2026

Project venue

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

Project town

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 529

West Hartford, CT

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

GHSF 2026 will be performed 7/8–8/2, Wednesdays through 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 online purchases; \$30 at the door. Children 11 and under are free. Admission includes pre-show performances and the performance of the evening's play, either A Midsummer Night's Dream or Measure for Measure.

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?

The grant funds will be applied toward the production costs of the two Shakespeare plays. Given the two production, 20 performance calendar of the festival, artists' employment and work time has expanded requiring increased compensation. In particular, the grant funds will go toward the cost of hiring essential members of the production team: production directors (2), stage managers (2), and 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 and our website.

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 aligns with the company's definition of artistic excellence as both 2026 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

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 529

--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 34-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 GHSE, 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 2026 GHSE 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-2026_signed.pdf](#)

Board list

- [Capital-Classics-Board-Directory-2026.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

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

Financial statement

- [2024-990-EZ-complete.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [2025-Organizational-and-GHSE-Budget-YTD-12.31.25-COMplete.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 529

- [2026-Organizational-and-GHSF-Budget-YTD-1.5.26.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [Capital-Classics-Balance-Sheet-1.5.26.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [Capital-Classics-GHSF-Other-Funding-Sources-1.5.26.pdf](#)
- [2026-GHSF-Budget-YTD-1.5.26.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

Yes

Strategic plan

- [Capital-Classics-Theatre-Company-Strategic-Plan-2024-26.pdf](#)

Grant Report

- https://therobertsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/1-abf218a5fe6d603e8fb0dd22ddf573c5/2026/03/Capital-Classics-Inc.-Grantee-Reporting-Form--<-Print-Preview-Gravity-Forms.pdf

The continued and generous support of the Roberts Foundation has been integral to the growth and success of the Greater Hartford Shakespeare Festival and its increasing impact on our community of theater-goers and CT-based theatre artists. The expansion of the GHSF into two full productions in repertory has provided much improved employment opportunities for those artists, and the Roberts Foundation funding has helped us toward our goal of appropriate compensation. Due to our history of careful budgeting, even with the increased costs of the expanded GHSF and the rising costs in the American economy, Capital Classics has maintained its record of never ending a year in a deficit or with any debts.

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