

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 593**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?

Hartford

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

Hartford

Will this activity occur after May 1, 2026 ?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

2025-11-03 22:32:36

Organization Name

HartBeat Ensemble Inc.

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

061633100

Principal Contact Name

Rhoda Cerritelli

Title

Managing Director

Emailrhoda.cerritelli@hartbeatensemble.org**Phone**

(646) 294-1475

Address

233 Pearl Street, #15
Hartford, Connecticut 06103
United States
[Map It](#)

Website<https://hart-ensemble.org>

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\$20,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

Founded in 2001, HartBeat Ensemble's mission is to create provocative theater that connects our community beyond traditional barriers of race, gender, class and geography.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

HartBeat Ensemble is one of the few arts institutions in Greater Hartford using theater and storytelling to build the Beloved Community. As an ensemble of Citizen Artists, we create and present innovative theatrical experiences based on critical civic issues that directly affect our constituents in their neighborhoods, their jobs, their schools and their institutions. HartBeat not only offers audiences the opportunity to witness world-class theater, but through storytelling and facilitation we engage them in telling their own stories in a variety of settings. At the same time, HartBeat is preparing the next generation of Citizen Artists and Civic Leaders through our Youth Play Institute.

In August 2019, the Board appointed Godfrey L. Simmons Jr as Artistic Director to lead and reimagine what it is to be an ensemble theater company in Hartford and to continue to build upon the Ensemble's long, celebrated history of creative, educational and community-inspired work. In 2025, HartBeat became the resident theater at the Austin Arts Center at Trinity College

Our program structure includes:

- HartBeat Repertory: a diverse program of contemporary, classic, and ensemble created political plays that represent the multiplicity of cultures at the heart of Hartford.
- HartBeat Presents: a curated performance series of contemporary and socially pertinent work by local, regional, national artists.
- HartBeat Forum: often in partnership with civic or social organizations, HartBeat uses theater, performance and facilitated dialogue to engage the community about a specific topic and/or geographical location.
- HartBeat LifeLong Learning: a series of paid internships for youth ages 16-21 in play creation; new program of anti-racism training for K-12 and higher education teachers and administrators.

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

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf will provide a chance to explore the themes of race, class, gender, and academia, and to hear the unique voices of both communities. Audiences will experience, respond, and contribute to the work and more deeply feel the power of this American classic. We expect that audiences for this play will mirror our existing audience: 16% Hispanic or Latinx, 23% Black or African American, 51% White and 7% Multi-racial/other. 39% are between 13-44 years old and 30% are men.

Describe your organization's governance.

Meetings take place bi-monthly, with an average attendance of 90%. Our board reviews agency financial reports quarterly such as profit & loss, cash-flow, account payable and receivable schedules and balance sheets.

Ethnicity/Race + %

50% white

Ethnicity/Race + %

50% black

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0

Ethnicity/Race + %

0

Ethnicity/Race + %

0

Ethnicity/Race + %

0

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

100%

Project Name

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

No

Project Description

HartBeat will produce Edward Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf as part of TheatreWeek 2026, October 2026. The production will feature a largely local cast (Greater Hartford residents and those with very strong Hartford ties) that will be at least 50 percent Black. There are several synergies in producing this play now during our residency at Trinity College. The play is about a late middle-aged couple who are denizens of academia: George, a complacent professor, and Martha, a professor's daughter cramped by the glass ceiling of 1960s academia. Martha invites a strapping young academic, Nick, and his wife Honey for a nightcap after a department party with the intention of seducing Nick. What unfolds is a savage dissection of the politics of academia, income disparity, class, gender, and in our production, race. We will produce this play as part of our 2025-2028 residency at Trinity College.

Total estimated project budget

\$95,325.00

Project start/opening

09/15/2026

Project end/closing

10/26/2026

Project venue

Austin Arts Center at Trinity College

Project town

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Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

Venue: Austin Arts Center, Trinity College, Hartford, CT

Performance Dates: October 2026 (9 performances total) during Theater Week

Rehearsal Period: Four weeks in Hartford prior to the performance dates

Admission Fees and Attendance Goals: General Admission: \$30; Trinity Staff, Faculty and students free; No one turned away for lack of funds" policy to ensure accessibility

Target Audience Size: Approximately 900 people, primarily Hartford residents

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

We intend to target audiences that see the great American plays at larger operations like Hartford Stage. We intend to couple the production with conversations about the themes of the play. We intend to connect deeply with Black sorority and fraternity groups, as well as academics across the Connecticut River Valley. We plan on using the fact that we're doing a version with Black actors as a compelling reason to come see this revival of this American classic.

How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

\$20,000 from the Roberts Foundation (which is more than we usually receive) will help us add another week for rehearsals and a week for our run of the show. Usually we are financially limited to 3 weeks of rehearsal and a 2-week run. We believe this monumental play deserves 4 weeks to rehearse and 3 weeks of performance given the work that will go into mounting this production. Finally, the extra funds will help offset the cost of creating the set of a college professor's house in the 1960s.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

The Roberts Foundation logo and listing will be prominently credited in all of HartBeat's marketing materials including: HartBeat's website, email blasts for performances, house performance programs, and all printed materials. It will be displayed in all materials related to the performances. Furthermore, when appropriate, support from the Roberts Foundation will be included in all curtain speeches and other programs related to the performances.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

HartBeat's work is in, with, and through the community. Essential to this work is our shared sense of wonder with our participants. Wonder brings us together ready to engage. Through that curiosity, truths emerge that are specific to our community. The uncovering of truths prompts an increase in activism throughout our community with the goal of yielding more and more justice. Through our work, we recognize that a community uplifted by the power of justice finds itself open to more wonder, yielding more truth and again more justice in a virtuous circle until justice achieves its goal: liberation. The spirit of this cycle, the simple beauty and raw disruption of it, is at the heart of HartBeat.

Funds will go toward making this production another hallmark in our series of artistically excellent productions, alongside Possessing Harriet and Jimmy and Lorraine, both of which Roberts also funded. We were able to create pieces brimming with passion, precision, and contemporary relevance.

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

We believe all the great plays ask evergreen questions about how we care for each other while staying true to ourselves and our communities, and how we handle it when we get it wrong. The people in Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf are all trying to get to the next day unscathed with their dignity intact. They don't, but seeing them thrash it out with themselves and each other

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like crabs in an American oak barrel in a college town may illuminate ways for our communities to empathize, listen, and see each other in a new light.

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

Three-time Pulitzer winner Edward Albee entered Trinity College as an undergraduate in the fall of 1946, exactly 80 years before our production. Trinity's Watkinson Library has a sizable archive of Albee's papers. The Trinity community of students, faculty, and staff will be able to connect deeply with a classic play that is very much influenced by Albee's experience at Trinity. A good portion of Hartford and the surrounding areas will see themselves onstage in one of the great plays of the post-war 20th century. These characters are strivers who use language and tactics to get what they want. Our audiences will be able to examine issues like "Black and Brown and Academic," a look at the challenges of being a body of culture at an institution of learning in the U.S., which we will partner on with UConn's Dodd Human Rights Impact program. We are excited to make inroads to communities in Windsor and Bloomfield to bring them to our shows.

How will this project be evaluated?

HartBeat evaluates project outcomes by collecting information through surveys at each performance. These anonymous surveys ask basic demographic questions such as household income, zip code, and ethnicity. The second half of the questionnaire asks the audience member to evaluate the performance. HartBeat encourages participants to fill out the surveys, and we explain the importance of collecting this information to our mission and work. The demographic data helps us evaluate the success of our audience outreach efforts to non-traditional audience members, and the program feedback helps us examine the artistic merits of each presentation.

Cover letter

- [HartBeat-FInal-Letter.pdf](#)

Board list

- [HartBeat-Ensemble Board-of-Directors-2.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [IRS-Definitive-Ruling-Letter.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [Hartbeat-Ensemble-Inc Form990 25.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [HartBeat-FY25-FINAL-YRED-1.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [HartBeat-FY26-Organizational-Budget.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

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- [StatementofFinancialPosition-6.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [HartBeat-Project-Budget-Woolf.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Grant Report

- [HartBeat-Ensemble-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