

ATTACHMENT 2

2020 PERFORMING ARTS GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY PEER REVIEW PANEL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION'S 2020 AD HOC CULVER CITY PERFORMING ARTS GRANT PROGRAM SUBCOMMITTEE

The following is an overview of the 18 applicants (ranked from highest to lowest scores) with summary comments:

Heidi Duckler Dance

Proposed Project: *Move Me* – Free dance performance and workshops

Performance Venue: Rooftop of Ince Parking Structure (TBC)
& Culver City High School

Proposed Dates: February 20, 2020

Total Score: 97.5

Grant Request: \$5,000

Recommended Award: \$5,000

Comments:

Heidi Duckler proposed a site-specific performance. featuring a 2002 yellow Mustang convertible car, focused on the issue of mobility. The project also includes interactive workshops with Culver City High School students. Panelists commented on how respected this dance company is, its history of Culver City performances and its practice of collaborative engagement. Panelists described the company as fresh and contemporary with a reputation for pushing artistic boundaries, and they appreciated the cultural relevance of mobility. Questions regarding the feasibility of the garage venue and the number of dancers were discussed. City departments are currently reviewing the request for the garage.

Vox Femina Los Angeles

Proposed Project: *Journey to Refuge: Finding Home* – Free choral concert

Performance Venue: Culver City Presbyterian Church

Proposed Date: March 15, 2020

Total Score: 97.4

Grant Request: \$6,500

Recommended Award: \$6,500

Comments:

The theme of this choral concert is “people seeking a better life” and it features several new commissions by composers who are women. The chorus marks its 23rd season in 2020 and the panel noted its history of cultural equity, its emphasis on diversity, and its strong partnerships with community organizations. Panelists

appreciated the thorough budget notes, the specificity of the planning and the excellence of the artistic sample. Artistic Director Dr. Iris S. Levine was praised for her choice of innovative performance materials and relevant themes.

The Actors' Gang

Proposed Project: Free Shakespeare-in-the-Park for families

Performance Venue: Media Park

Proposed Dates: August 1-30, 2020 (Saturdays and Sundays)

Total Score: 96.8

Grant Request: \$6,500

Recommended Award: \$6,500

Comments:

Families are welcomed each summer for this presentation of a new and topical adaptation of Shakespeare. Panelists noted the positive reputation of this free series in Media Park and the overall strength of the grant application. They praised the large and ever-growing audiences, the embodiment of “community-engaged” theatre, and the history of involvement with the Culver City School District. The company was praised for ongoing efforts towards equity and encouraged to strive for even higher standards.

Symphonic Jazz Orchestra

Proposed Project: *Family Jazz Hour* – Free concert

Performance Venue: Linwood Howe Elementary School

Proposed Dates: May 6, 2020

Total Score: 94.2

Grant Request: \$1,370

Recommended Award: \$1,370

Comments:

This free concert features a sextet of professional musicians, an interactive discussion about improvisation and the origins of jazz, as well as participatory singing, clapping and snapping. The event will take place at a local elementary school and will include an audience of students, their families and members of the community. Panelists admired this opportunity for younger students to learn music appreciation and commented on the excellence of the performers. Some panel members would prefer to see video samples that showcased prior Culver City events. Panelists recommended that SJO consider expanding the program to reach more students and to feature a larger ensemble of musicians.

Donna Sternberg & Dancers

Proposed Project: *Transformations* – Free site-specific dance performances

Performance Venue: Wende Museum

Proposed Date: Fall 2020

Total Score: 89.2

Grant Request: \$6,500

Recommended Award: \$6,500

Comments:

This site-specific contemporary dance performance will be a new work inspired by the exhibition at the Wende Museum of the Cold War. There will also be a series of short dance performances, in various public spaces yet to be determined, within Culver City. The panel praised the partnerships, the budget for artist payments, the video sample and the culturally equitable content of the work. Panelists noted that the biographies and artistic backgrounds of the dancers would also be relevant to the application and recommended that they be included in future applications.

Grand Performances

Proposed Project: *GP Amplified 2020* – Free community concerts

Performance Venue: Brasil Brasil Cultural Center & Stoneview Nature Center

Proposed Date: March and April 2020

Total Score: 86.2

Grant Request: \$6,500

Recommended Award: \$6,500

Comments:

Radio host Sergio Mielniczenko will lead a “Journey through Brazilian Music” featuring composer and poet Silvia Nicolato and other musicians from Brasil. These three free events will include an overview of Brazilian popular music and relevant performances. Panelists praised Grand Performances outreach plans and community impact. They noted that these events, and interaction with these artists, will be beneficial to Culver City audiences. Some panelists questioned the specifics of planned publicity materials as well the lack of technical expenses in the budget.

MashUp Contemporary Dancer Company

Proposed Project: *Expansiveness: Changing Perspective* - Multimedia dance

Performance Venue: Smashbox Studios

Proposed Dates: August 21, 22, 23, 2020

Total Score: 86.2

Grant Request: \$6,500

Recommended Award: \$6,500

Comments:

This dance company is celebrating their 10th anniversary in 2020 and they are first-time applicants to this grant program. They propose an interactive, multimedia, contemporary dance performance featuring projections on revolving mirrored panels. The theme of the performance is a celebration of women's equality. Panelists praised the partnership with architects, the innovative choreography shown in the artistic sample and the strong technical elements. It was also noted that these performances would be held in the Hayden Tract and may engage those who live and work in that area. Panelists urged them to connect with Culver City Unified School District and suggested the inclusion of budget notes.

Brockus Project Dance Company

Proposed Project: *Home* – Full-length multimedia dance performance

Performance Venue: Ivy Substation

Proposed Dates: June 25 – 28, 2020

Total Score: 85.7

Grant Request: \$6,500

Recommended Award: \$6,500

Comments:

This premiere of *Home*, a contemporary multimedia dance performance, would explore ideas of home, community and culture. The panel admired the history of this company and quality of the artistic sample. They praised the outreach and engagement plan generally, but also encouraged the company to target Culver City audiences specifically. They appreciated the efforts to survey audience demographics and that the budget included payment for artists. Panelists recommended that they target student programs and youth involvement.

Jazz Bakery Performance Space

Proposed Project: Jazz concert

Performance Venue: Kirk Douglas Theatre

Proposed Date: July 18, 2020

Total Score: 82.2

Grant Request: \$5,000

Recommended Award: \$5,000

Comments:

The proposal is for a jazz performance featuring vocalist Carmen Lundy. A master class for Culver City High School Academy of Visual and Performing Arts students will take place in conjunction with the performance. The review panel appreciated seeing an artistic sample that included the proposed singer and admired that the plans are to showcase an award-winning jazz artist who is a woman. Panelists noted that it can be

difficult to engage with students during the summer and they recommended that the applicant begin contacting the schools as early as possible. Panelists commented that audience marketing and outreach could be strengthened by producing promotional materials earlier.

Kontrapunktus Neo-Baroque Orchestra

Proposed Project: Two baroque music concerts

Performance Venue: Culver City Seventh-day Adventist Church

Proposed Date: April 25, 2020 and November 21, 2020

Total Score: 79.5

Grant Request: \$5,000

Recommended Award: \$5,000

Comments:

The proposal is for two concerts titled *The Londoners* and *The Return of the Bachs*. Both concerts would also include new Baroque music from Mark Moya, Composer-in-Residence. Panelist described the artistic sample and the young musicians as “first-class” and noted that this is the only opportunity for Culver City audiences to experience Baroque music. Other panel members questioned the cultural merit of the work and the narrow audience potential. Kontrapunktus is encouraged to continue pursuing ways to engage with the neighborhood where they perform and to make the experience accessible and welcoming to new listeners. The proposed plans for school engagement were considered a good effort in the right direction.

Culver City Chamber Orchestra

Proposed Project: Orchestra concert

Performance Venue: Veterans Memorial Building Rotunda Room

Proposed Dates: February 9, 2020

Total Score: 79.0

Grant Request: \$5,000

Recommended Award: \$5,000

Comments:

The orchestra proposes a concert celebrating Beethoven’s 250th birthday and featuring a string quartet and sextet. Panel members praised the professionalism of the musicians and the accessibility of the proposed venue. However, panelists had many questions about specifics described in the proposal, the references to a conductor when chamber music usually does not need one, the format of the event and the feasibility of the audience estimates. Panelists suggested that the applicant describe specific partnership plans and articulate additional programming details as part of their applications. Added engagement with Culver City Unified School District was also recommended.

Culver City Symphony Orchestra

Proposed Project: Symphony concert featuring the works of Sally Beamish, Jean Sibelius and Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Performance Venue: Robert Frost Auditorium

Proposed Dates: February 16, 2020

Total Score: 79.0

Grant Request: \$6,500

Recommended Award: \$6,500

Comments:

The orchestra proposes a concert featuring principal guest conductor Andrew Shulman. The program will include violin soloist Audrey Park and the West Coast premiere of *The Day Dawn* by Sally Beamish. Panelists praised the choice of Robert Frost Auditorium as an appropriate location for this event and encouraged the company to increase direct interaction with CCUSD students. Some panelists praised the realistic budget while others recommended that the company increase the funding for outreach, focus on engagement with local community groups, and broaden efforts to attract new audiences. The panel provided a score of 74.0. The Subcommittee convened after the panel and commended the group for its history of concerts in Culver City, particularly the recent event at the Robert Frost Auditorium featuring work by Juan Pablo Contreras. Therefore, the Subcommittee recommended adding five points to the total score (two added points for the Outreach & Engagement criteria and three added points for the Cultural Equity and Inclusion criteria). The new total score is 79.0 for the application.

Benita Bike's DanceArt

Proposed Project: *Explore Dance* - Free performance

Performance Venue: Culver City Senior Center

Proposed Dates: March 22, 2020

Total Score: 72.8

Grant Request \$2,000

Recommended Award: \$1,600

Comments:

These contemporary dance performances include interaction and conversation with the audience about the techniques of modern dance. The audience engagement and educational aspects of this proposal were praised, as was the ongoing collaboration with the Culver City Senior Center and other community spaces. However, the panelists expressed uncertainty regarding the repetition of prior dance pieces, and concern about how inclusive the proposed work would be in terms of dancers and audiences. The company was also encouraged to work with a sound engineer or designer in that venue.

Culver City Public Theatre

Proposed Project: Free outdoor family theatre

Performance Venue: Carlson Park

Proposed Dates: July 11 to August 2, 2020 (Saturdays and Sundays)

Total Score: 72.2

Grant Request: \$6,500

Recommended Award: \$5,200

Comments:

The proposal is for eight outdoor performances of the new play, *The Adventures of Grace O'Malley*, which is being written for the company by Scott Hillegas. The panel praised the Culver City Public Theatre's mission of providing free theatre experiences for children as well as their practice of cross-gender casting. They also admired the company's success in attracting neighborhood audiences. Some panel members expressed concern about how new work is chosen, how general the equity and inclusion responses were, and the lack of clarity and intention in the language throughout the application.

Los Angeles Choreographers and Dancers

Proposed Project: *Just Past 40* – Dance performances

Performance Venue: Ivy Substation

Proposed Dates: July 19, 2020

Total Score: 65.8

Grant Request: \$6,000

Recommended Award: \$4,800

Comments:

The dance company, which is currently celebrating its 40th anniversary, proposed *Just Past 40*, two performances celebrating the occasion. They were praised for ongoing communication with prior audiences and for establishing relationships within Culver City. Panelists noted however, that this application does not include a targeted marketing plan, is not persuasive regarding its outreach plans, and does not specify sufficient detail about the payments for artists. Some panelists suggested that the company focus on improving the description of their cultural equity and inclusion practices and that they include additional information about key artists and collaborators. Panelists also recommended updating the design of collateral materials to stay current with other companies.

Los Angeles Doctors Symphony Orchestra

Proposed Project: Three orchestra concerts featuring the work of Dvorak, Stravinsky, Brahms and others.

Performance Venue: Veterans Memorial Auditorium

Proposed Dates: April 26, 2020, June 7, 2020 and November 15, 2020

Total Score: 65.0

Grant Request \$6,500

Recommended Award: \$5,200

Comments:

Three orchestra concerts are proposed featuring works from Dvorak, Stravinsky, Brahms, and others. The quality of the musicians featured on the artistic samples was praised by panelists, as was the company's plans to present lesser-known compositions. However, some panelists felt that they did not demonstrate effective plans for outreach and engagement. Panel members questioned whether these events would be accessible to a diverse audience base. They encouraged the company to think creatively about attracting new audiences, to develop its cultural equity practices by expanding who sits at the leadership table, to increase interaction with CCUSD students, and to consider updating its branding.

Overtone Industries

Proposed Project: Workshop presentation of improvised music

Performance Venue: Veterans Memorial Building Rotunda Room

Proposed Dates: January 19, 2020

Total Score: 53.4

Grant Request: \$1,800

Recommended Award: \$0

Comments:

The company proposed a workshop of improvised vocal music featuring the Spontaneous Combustion Choir and led by Artistic Director O-Lan Jones. Panelists praised the innovative history of the company but determined that the artistic samples did not serve the application well. The video clip was not considered relevant to the proposal and did not represent the company positively. Panelists recommended that they include examples of audience interaction in future artistic samples and that they showcase the methods of collaboration. Some panelists appreciated the use of non-traditional venues and the organization's focus on accessibility. Other panelists noted that artist representation is not sufficient to achieve the stated goals of diversity. The panel did not recommend funding the group this year, but did encourage the company to apply again in the future.

Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival

Proposed Project: Diverse solo performers

Performance Venue: Ivy Substation

Proposed Dates: July 5, 2020

Total Score: 43.6

Grant Request: \$4,000

Recommended Award: \$0

Comments:

This proposal is for an evening of solo performances at the Ivy Substation and a related writing workshop. The panel expressed disappointment that the company was proposing to perform on a holiday weekend and they did not anticipate that they would be successful in attracting an audience. The application did not include a strong outreach plan generally and there was a lack of focus on Culver City specifically. The company's purpose, mission and vision were admired and commended. Panelists recommended that the company further describe its Cultural Equity and Inclusion practices in future applications. After viewing the artistic sample, the panelists had many questions about the methods for selecting performers and encouraged the company to seek innovative ideas, expand its vision, and welcome new artistic voices. The panel provided a score of 38.6. The Cultural Affairs Commission Subcommittee convened after the panel and discussed the mission, vision and history of this group. The Subcommittee recommended adding five points to the total score to recognize the organization for ongoing achievements in Cultural Equity and Inclusion. The new total score is 43.6 for the application. However, this score still falls below the threshold for funding. The company is encouraged to apply again in the future.