

Amherst Cultural Council
ACCEPTED Minutes
November 15, 2010
Garabants Room, Bangs Center

Present: Ann Woodbridge (Chair), Katya Ites (Treasurer), Sandra Mullin, Arnold Friedmann, Ruth Rootberg (Secretary). Laurie Nisonoff was absent, but gave Ann her proxy.

Ann noted that next year will be Laurie and Ann's LAST year. Ann would be happy to step down from the position of Chair in order to train someone while she is still part of the Council. She also reminded us that Katya's second term expires at the end of this fiscal year (June 30, 2011). We will need a minimum of one more member for next year, and it would be helpful for someone to start training during the spring to take over the duties of Treasurer. We can expand as we see fit; it would be good to have more than one person to come onto the Council this coming year to ease the transition for the year after.

Ann distributed the agenda.

Ruth distributed copies of the Draft minutes. Minutes were approved as corrected.

Ruth also distributed a review of all applications, grouped by status (PASS Grants, Bangs, tabled, accepted, denied).

Treasurer's Report

Katya distributed a chart showing the provisional amount grant awards for all applications # 1-67. With the extra 6 applications, the total request rose to \$65,569. We must reduce the awards by \$40,319 if we stay with the \$25,250 we have chosen to give.

Ann reported that grant applications #62-67 were all incomplete. She called each applicant, none of whom responded. Therefore, each of those applications will be denied: 13. Application incomplete.

At this point, if we fully fund everything we haven't yet decided upon, plus stay with what have tentatively decided upon, we would only need to cut \$18.

Old Business: Hampshire Shakespeare information from Katya: *Henry IV Part I*, and *Twelfth Night* were performed in 2009. Council discussed the problem of funding retroactively. Basically we are reimbursing for past actions, which is not what we are supposed to do. The problem is partially because the Hampshire Shakespeare Board meets to decide on the season after the ACC funding application deadline.

Arnold proposed Ann send a letter to Hampshire Shakespeare suggesting they ask for funding for the following summer, rather than asking retroactively so they stay within the guidelines of the "window of eligibility."

Window of eligibility: funding cycle for 2011 is for events that take place July 1, 2010 – December 31, 2011. The timing is tricky because Hampshire Shakespeare's performance season begins in June, and rehearsals are obviously before that.

Revision or confirmation of applications.

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#35 Hampshire Shakespeare – Tempest requests \$1,200
Approve \$800.

#36 Hampshire Shakespeare – Hamlet, requests \$1,200
Approve \$800.

#39 Emily Denison requests \$500
Approve \$200.

The question here is about community benefit, because it's a student thesis. At the moment, it's not part of the local guidelines. We can put this on the agenda when we next invite community input, which would be fall of 2011.

Applicants for the Bangs Senior Center

#28 Steven Henderson requests \$350 for Jerry Atric – The Older I get.
Approve \$100

#34 John Root requests \$400
Denied: 4. Dependency. & g. no confirmed venue.

#40 Richard Clark, "Atticus," requests \$350.
Approve \$100
Suggest that not enough people are benefitting; perhaps next year he can repeat it but also take it into the public schools.

#44 Roger Tincknell performance "Across the Americas: Folk Music" requests \$400.
Deny. #4 dependency and repetitive.

#45 Kate Carney performance "Paul Revere" history presentation requests \$390.
Approve \$100. (In italics because this is changed from earlier minutes).

#55 Moonlight and Morning Star requests \$275.
Approve \$200.

In the future, the Council would like to fund the Bangs Center for performance by having Nancy Pagano make a single application. Ann will talk to Nancy Pagano about bundling everything with all the details of the application prepared by Nancy. Arnold suggests she offer more specific evaluation of individual artists.

#33 Katya Ites, Kids' Bilingual Play requests \$700. (Katya answered our questions and then recused herself.)

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Approve \$400.

1 Crocker Farm School requests PASS Grant of \$672.

Approve \$672.

#2 Wildwood School requests PASS Grant of \$525 for 6th grade.

Approve \$525.

#3 Wildwood School requests PASS Grant of \$1,477 for grades, 3, 5, 6.

Approve for 3rd grade only. Sandra will phone to find out exact number of students in the 3rd grade so we can finalize the amount by the next meeting.

#4 Wildwood School requests PASS Grant of \$1491 for 2, 4, 5th grade.

Approve \$1,491.

#5 Wildwood School requests PAA Grant of \$875 for Kindergarten and 1st grade.

Approve \$875.

#6 Fort River School Requests PASS Grant of \$455.

Approve \$455.

#7 Fort River School Requests PASS Grant of \$350 for 5th grade.

Approve \$350.

#8 Fort River School requests PASS Grant of \$525 for 3rd grade.

Approve \$525.

#14 jubilat/Jones Reading Series requests \$1,100.

Approve \$350.

#20 Talking Hands Theatre: "A surprising Helper: an educational show about disabilities" requests \$500.

Approve \$150. Ann will insert a note requesting they market to a wider community (those who do not have disabilities) and also more locally to Amherst, rather than just in Shutesbury.

#26 Tell your Sister Story requests \$1,750.

Deny. c. We chose to fund other proposals with a stronger community benefit component.

#9 Amherst Ballet for Hansel & Gretel requests \$4,500.

Approve: \$1,500. **Still to be revisited.**

#41 Old Deerfield Productions requests \$500

Approve \$500.

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#43 Arena Civic Theater presenting *Cabaret* requests \$600.
Approve \$600.

#46 Mohawk Trail Concerts requests \$1,000.
Approve \$750, and will award more if funds are available.

#50 Tim Eriksen Early American Shape-Note Singing requests \$960.
Approve \$500.

#53 Amherst Area Publications "Harvesting History" requests \$2,000.
Approve \$400 and **shave if needed, or increase if possible.**

#58 UMass Amherst Department of music & Dance New Music Festival requests \$1,500.
Approve \$500.

#22 Note on Ko Festival – Ann will research whether they are not for profit organization.

Katya confirmed Amherst Ballet's nomination for the Gold Star Award was submitted. A copy of the nomination is included as supplement to these minutes.

Ann gave Katya flowers in thanks for her service as Treasurer.

Next meeting is November 22 at 6pm, once more at the Jones Library; it is hoped we will finalize everything on this night.

Meeting Adjourned.

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Gold Star Award Nomination FY11

Nominating Member: Amherst Cultural Council (Ekaterina Ites, ACC treasurer)

Project Being Nominated: Amherst Ballet Theatre Company Repertoire Concert *Classical and More* Premiering *Krater, Ewer Amphora* and other works

Fiscal Year: 2010

Contact Name: Catherine Fair

Contract Address: 29 Strong Street

City: Amherst, Massachusetts

Contact Phone: (413) 549-1555

Contact Email: Catherine@amherstballet.org, info@amherstballet.org

Project Description:

Amherst Ballet gave (4) performances of *Classical and More* at the Bowker Auditorium on the campus of the University of Massachusetts on May 7,8 & 9, 2010. The evening performances included a lecture demonstration and mini-concert by the well-known Arabic Musical Ensemble, *Layali*. This was intended to educate audiences about the music: instruments, history, musical structure and cultural influences in Arabic music as well as increase awareness of Arabic arts and culture. Other pieces in a variety of dance idioms (classical ballet, Middle Eastern Dance, contemporary ballet and Jazz dance) were also featured. Amherst Ballet also presented excerpts from *Emily of Amherst*, an original ballet created by the Amherst Ballet and the Emily Dickinson Museum (both collaborators are located in Amherst, MA.) Key points about this ballet are as follows:

- The ballet draws on biographical information about the poet and her Amherst surroundings to tell the story of her life through dance and narrative drawn from her letters and poems.
- The ballet incorporates a lecture component given by the Director of the Emily Dickinson Museum, Jane Wald.
- The written program for the ballet includes educational information provided by the ED Museum together with copies of all poems and letters used in the ballet.
- All music composed for the ballet by Amherst Composer, Ted Trobaugh, was based upon the personal music library of Emily Dickinson and arranged for the ballet.
- The sets were designed to replicate the interior of the Homestead, Emily Dickinson's home in Amherst.
- The costumes, including a replica of Emily's famous white dress, are based upon historical research and are faithful to the period and customary clothing of Amherst natives during that time.

Project Start Date: August 4, 2009

Project End Date: May 9, 2010

Grant Award Amount: \$1250

Is there a public performance/exhibit/activity/project? YES

1. Projects nominated for a Gold Star Award must also feature works in the arts, humanities, and/or sciences. Or highlight a unique characteristic of the community. Please describe how this project meets at least one of these criteria:

This project features works in the arts in both music (through the Arabic Music lecture/concert) and dance performance. Additionally, the humanities are featured in the following ways:

Arabic Music Lecture/Concert: highlights history and culture of this ancient form of music

Emily Dickinson Ballet: educates audiences about history, poetry, literature, and more. The exploration of the world as seen through Emily's Dickinson's eyes more carefully explores subjects that were prominent in her poetry including nature, death, and religion. Finally, the ballet focuses in on the unique history of the town of Amherst, directs audiences to further explore the local landmarks of the museum and grounds, and educates audiences on the unique history of the town and how it shaped one of America's most well-known poets.

The project meets both of the requirements. On the one hand, it presents an exemplary work of the art of ballet that features pieces from classical and modern repertoires, choreography styles, and musical forms. It employs the language of dance to convey topics of local history and pride (Emily Dickinson), as well as topics that originate from other cultures (of Europe and the Middle East) of the past and of the present. This allows the project's designers and its intergenerational group of performers to develop an exemplary work in humanities that builds symbolic bridges across spaces, times, and cultures to reveal the soul of a united humanity that explores, through arts, how to make our shared community a better place to live. Not limited to the art of dance, the project – via an accessible multimedia format of *lecture demonstration* – introduces the general public to the history of Amherst and clothing of the Emily Dickinson's time (that enriches the audience's experience of pieces from the *Emily of Amherst* ballet); and educates children and adults about the musical instruments, history, and structure of Arabic music to enhance their experiences of a Middle East Dance premier (*Krater, Ewer, Amphora*). On the other hand, the *Classical and More* concerts highlight and promote the unique quality of Amherst community, namely its spirit of multicultural collaboration and exploration embodied through community-based intergenerational art projects that honor and pay tribute to the local and national cultural heritage and resources, while raising awareness about cultures and arts of the new local communities that have heritage ties with other places of the globe.

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2. Projects nominated for a Gold Star award must also demonstrate community impact. Please explain how this project meets at least one of the three following community impact criterion:

- a. **Catalyzes collaboration with community based-businesses, organizations and/or residents:** *Emily of Amherst* was a unique collaboration between a local museum and the ballet. The writing of the libretto for the ballet took four years and was carried out by the museum's Director, Jane Wald, and the Director of the ballet, Catherine Fair. The two organizations worked together to promote the ballet and related events that served to heighten community awareness for both. The Arabic Music component involved hiring the band, Layali, which is composed of musicians from the Amherst area as well as the Boston area. Local businesses, including Dean's Bean's Organic Coffee, underwrote the cost of this lecture/concert. The band worked in collaboration with Amherst choreographer, Sueann Townsend, to demonstrate and highlight musical concepts as they related to the Middle Easter Dance piece (*Krater, Ewer, Amphora*) that was part of the repertoire.
- b. **Exposes under-served constituencies to the arts, humanities or sciences:** Amherst Ballet worked together with Layali to advertise to over 1000 persons on Layali's local mailing list. Many of these persons are of Arabic heritage. Layali has rarely been able to perform locally due to a variety of circumstances; it was an unusual opportunity for local Arabic persons to attend a local event highlighting their culture. Additionally, Amherst Ballet's scholarship programs allowed under-served, low-income students (2 Hispanic, 2 African American, 2Asian, and 7 Caucasian) to participate as performers by the gift of \$6600 in scholarships.
- c. **Builds community:**
The project reflects the uniqueness of the Amherst regional community that is in many ways sustained by the body of students and their families who have come to the five-college area from different parts of the state, the country, and the global community. The project fosters community pride in its rich cultural heritage and the present, it spotlights the former and the contemporary residents of the community (the famous poetess, young dancers, professional and novice choreographers, a local composer, musicians, a museum director) inspired by the town's glorious past and its expanding opportunities to engage new cultural resources (such as the Arabic Musical Ensemble, *Layali*) that become increasingly available due to intercultural collaboration afforded by the age of information technologies
- d. **Provides quality arts educational experience:** Amherst Ballet is well-known for the educational outreach that figures so prominently in their mission statement. Their performances in local schools and partnerships with local musicians, artists, choreographers, writers and artists are an important part of outreach. *Classical and More* allowed the use of high quality dance and music performance as a means of teaching about a variety of subjects with a focus in historical, cultural and literary elements.

This innovative program had a great impact on the community. It

provided rich, high-quality educational experiences for young dancers

and their families who actively volunteered for the project, and for the general public who attended the concerts or learned about the project and the performances from publications from the local media.

The diversity in content, styles, topics, means of delivery and cultural origin of the pieces included has allowed the project to provide enriching high-quality entertainment and educational experiences accessible to children and adults with varying experiences in arts, music and culture. This project appeals to the culturally diverse populations of the five-college area and the town of Amherst that has established a Multicultural Town Committee and adopted a multicultural education curriculum in the local public schools. It also has contributed to the strengthening of existing ties between the Amherst Ballet community, local public schools, UMass, and the regional community.

Other recent educational programs include:

- *Dances From the Earth*, 2006, 2007: featuring the original ballet, *The Arctic*, which educated audiences about the unique culture of the Gwichen people of Alaska and brought attention to their efforts to prevent oil drilling within their native lands. This ballet was in collaboration with Horizon Productions, a local educational group providing outreach to schools and parks.
- *Barefoot Books Ballet Stories*, 2005, which was based upon the book by local authors Jane Yolen and Heidi Stemple, featured narration by those authors together with sets and costumes based upon the art work of Amherst illustrator Rebecca Guay. All the collaborators participated in outreach (readings, lectures, book signings) to local schools.
- *Hansel and Gretel*, 2010, was commissioned by the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Amherst, and was based upon the artwork of Lisbeth Zwerger whose exhibition was featured at the museum. The ballet encouraged children to read the book and view the art by the illustrator as featured in a power point presentation prior to the performance of the ballet.
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3. Projects nominated for a Gold Star award must also satisfy three of the following project attributes. Describe at least three of the attributes below:

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- **Presents the arts, humanities or interpretive sciences in an innovative or unique way:** *Emily of Amherst* is the only ballet in existence which educates readers about the life of the poet. Audiences fell in love with Emily as she was portrayed in the ballet which depicted her during childhood, middle age and into death as well as exploring her impact on the world after her death. Additionally, the use of narrative as part of the ballet brought forth a unique experience and ability to internalize her words as experienced against the backdrop of choreography.
- **Documents and/or celebrates the historical or diverse character of a community:** *Emily of Amherst* clearly celebrates historical character of the community by studying Emily and other members of her family and community including her father, mother, sister, neighbors, sister-in-law, teacher, school-mates, Irish servants and other prominent members of her community through their portrayals as characters in the ballet as well as letters that reference them. Additionally, scenes from the ballet include a visit to the local cemetery
(currently a historical landmark which was situated just behind Emily's home during her life) where she communes with her departed friends. The gravestones for this scene were created as replicas of the original stones, the characters in the scene are mentioned in the letter written by Emily as part of this scene.
- **Provides a new experience in the arts, humanities or interpretive sciences to a particular audience:** the lecture/concert by Layali allowed local audiences to hear Arabic music, which is not often performed locally. Many audience members reported that they had never heard Arabic music and were unfamiliar with the musical forms and instruments prior to the lecture. Audiences participated by being given the opportunity to ask questions.