

Suchitra Sairam

Arts Impact for Individuals Sample Grant Application

Individual's Purpose

Bharatanatyam is the most widely recognized classical dance form of India. My attraction to the intellect, emotion, spirituality and physicality of the form when I started over 35 years ago is unchanged. I once only drew inspiration from the traditional repertoire, but over time have freed myself from boundaries, self-imposed and implied by my teachers; all while honoring the framework, their teachings, and classical aesthetics.

I pursue my art as a performer, choreographer, teacher and presenter. I aim to imbibe as much as possible from my aging, legendary teachers. I teach over 50 students, striving to facilitate artistic and personal growth.

My artistic vision boils down to relevance, related to:

- Context - interpreting old stories to find modern day parallels
- Content - reinterpreting hereditary content and developing contemporary themes
- Teaching - connecting students in the US to an art form rooted in Indian traditions and spirituality
- Presentation - blending eastern and western aesthetics
- Audience - creating connections in ways atypical of an orally based, centuries old tradition

For nearly 20 years, I have produced programming such as

- in-person & online performances
- Classes, workshops, residential camps for long term study
- Education & outreach for those unfamiliar with the art
- Presenting acclaimed touring artists for the wider to community

I have significant experience in both self-production and collaborating with presenters.

Grant Number & Project Name

All22-1-124 Dance InforMance – Informal. Informational. Performance.

Project/Program Description

Funding for post-pandemic revival of my “Dance Informance” series, first presented in 2017, structured with demonstration, performance and audience participation and Q&A components.

Project or Program

I will present “Dance Informance” sessions, structured with a balance of demonstration, performance and audience participation components. Each Dance Informance will include the 3 major aspects of Bharatanatyam, nritya – abstract rhythmic dance, nritya – expressional dance, and natya – dramatic storytelling. Additionally, relevant history, movement vocabulary, and music will be elaborated upon. Each Dance Informance will include ample time for audience Q&A, unlike typical performance situations, and will be approximately 75 minutes long.

GOALS and ALIGNMENT

1. An important project component is the apprenticeship of my selected students to develop skills involved in event production and presentation to audiences. This will include apprenticeship in developing the artistic content, presentation script and materials for each Dance Informance. These additional skills, along with continuing to develop their art, will help them be more successful artists in the future.
2. An important goal of the Dance Informance series is to help audiences better understand Bharatanatyam, and to de-mystify and de-exotify the form for unfamiliar audiences. I firmly believe that there is something to enjoy for all, when the proper content and context is framed.

ACTIVITIES

I will present each Dance Informance along with 2-8 of my intermediate and advanced students. I aim to present two public sessions in person at intimate venues such as Dreamland Arts, Pangea World Theater, community centers and public libraries. This is to facilitate audience interaction and participation. Additionally, I aim to present at one public session in an online format, which will challenge me in developing appropriate content for that format. I aim to present a minimum of 2 and up to 4 school sessions, focusing on middle and high schools my participating students attend so they can share their artistic traditions with their schoolmates. The number of school Dance Informance sessions will be finalized upon selection of the participating students and commitments from their respective schools. Additional sessions for the public may be added depending on venue and funding availability.

Community

BENEFITS and CONNECTIONS

Several groups benefit from the project:

- Student Apprentices – with the participation and responsibility of helping develop artistic content, presentation script, and marketing materials for each Dance Informance, apprentices are invested in the success at every level and begin to understand that in addition to the quality of the art, the quality of presentation matters. They will additionally gain experience in audience development. These additional skills, along with continuing to develop their art, will help them be more successful artists in the future.
- Audiences – learn how to enjoy an art form that is usually associated with needing specific skill. It will open horizons to classical arts being more accessible to all.
- Audiences (school) – they will gain an understand of the art form and cultural practices. Additionally, they will have the opportunity to gain new insight into their classmates and schoolmates for whom this art form is significant in defining their identity.
- Parents of Student Apprentices – providing growth opportunities for their children in life and professional skills through a culturally relevant practice.

WHO IS WHO

- Suchitra Sairam – principal presenter, apprentice mentor and project manager
- Devi Vijayakumar and Thangamani Appugounder – event and survey management (volunteer)
- Dave Bellmont – videography and live streaming
- Bruce Silcox – photography
- Flavia Santos – graphic design

Proposal Budget

Project Budget Expenses

Project Expenses		
Artist Compensation	\$3,400	Suchitra - 2 sessions at \$500 each + 8 hr/mo * 15 mo * \$20/hr teaching fees for group
Other Project Personnel	\$250	graphic design
Space	\$750	Space rental for shows and event insurance
Materials and Supplies	\$500	Presentation supplies, costuming
Promotion and Marketing	\$100	
Other Expenses	\$2,000	Photography - \$750, Videography - \$1250
TOTAL\$7,000		

Total Project Cash Expenses

\$7,000.00

Amount Requested

\$5,000.00

Project Budget Income

Project Earned Income \$1,250 100 tickets at average of \$7.50 each (sliding scale \$5-10) + 2 school sessions at \$250 each

Applicant Cash or Other Income \$750 Applicant contribution through teaching classes, workshops or other secured cash sources

MRAC request \$5,000

TOTAL \$7000

Total Project Cash Income

\$7,000.00

***(Important!)* Additional Fields Required**

Please note that in the full application there are additional fields that will need to be completed and are not shown to panelists.