

Foo Foo Fest Grant Application

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Name of Organization

Pensacola Little Theatre

Organization Location

400 South Jefferson Street, Pensacola, FL 32502

Contact Name

Sid Williams-Heath

Contact Phone Number

(601) 562-8746

Contact Email

executive@pensacolalittletheatre.com

Name of Existing/Proposed Event

Singeasy at Pensacola Little Theatre

Date(s) of Existing/Proposed Event

11/8/2023

Additional Dates for Existing/Proposed Event (if needed)

Additional Event Date 1

Event Date

11/9/2023

Additional Event Date 2

Event Date

11/10/2023

Additional Event Date 3

Event Date

11/11/2023

Additional Event Date 4

Event Date

11/12/2023

Website (If any)

<https://www.pensacolalittletheatre.com>

Funding Amount Requested

\$28,000.00

Please provide an overview for your vision and marketing plan to promote your event

At Pensacola Little Theatre, we don't sing – we sing easy. Our speakeasy-inspired series keeps audiences staying and swaying to an eclectic variety of musical genres under the low-dim lights of The Center's redesigned black box locale. This fall, visitors fall into Foo and in love with the local talent, live musicians, and hand-crafted libations of Pensacola's only Singeasy.

Background

Shutdown with no certainty of reopening in sight, PLT began to plan and plot an opportunity to reintroduce audiences into The Clark Family Cultural Center safely and soundly – and with a unique twist to its normal operations. COVID-19 had taken large-scale audiences and casts from us, but the need to provide both actors and audiences with an outlet for self-expression remained. The talent wanted to sing. The patrons wanted fulfillment. The community wanted safety to be a priority. Humanity was holding its breath, waiting for a single glimpse of social interaction beyond the walls of isolation.

And thus was born the Singeasy.

The concept was simple – keep people safe and satisfied. Create a space that was captivating and sophisticated, while making it easy to unwind. Curate an experience that could lift the spirits of those willing to share a room and a remedy. Produce a performance that honed in on the simple pleasures of what art should be – tasteful, personal, and celebratory.

The concept was to be intoxicating.

What was intended to be a one-weekend pilot program became so widely demanded, the cabaret-style series extended over a two-month period, with audiences traveling from Mobile, New Orleans, Jacksonville, Atlanta, Chicago, and New York City to claim one of the forty coveted wrought iron table seats each night – safely distanced from one another. Pensacola had created its own 54 Below – presenting work that was vivid, immediate, enlightening, and entertaining through live performance, hospitality, and an intoxicating aesthetic.

Thankfully for PLT, the show did, in fact, go on and regular theatre programming resumed months later and have returned as the forefront of our programming. The requests, however – the calls, emails, social media tags – for the Singeasy to return continue consistently today.

Welcome to the Singeasy

Pensacola Little Theatre reprises the evening carousal for Foo Foo Festival, offering weeknight and weekend performances from November 8-12 – enticing visitors to extend their stay past the first weekend. If awarded Foo funding, the Singeasy returns with Pensacola's most vibrant singers, polished pianists, and lavish libations – this time doubled in scale and debauchery.

While the rest of Pensacola will begin turning in after a long day of Foo-ing, Pensacola Little Theatre comes alive to tune in the guests looking for an after-hours venture. While the experience may be enjoyed by any appropriately mature young person, the Singeasy is designed as a laid-back, luxe cabaret – equipped with a curated cocktail list, silhouette-styled Austrian curtain, low-lying filament bulbs, interactive performers, and surprise visits from the tapster right to your wrought iron table seating.

All festivals offer family-friendly entertainment. The Singeasy adds a mature, sophisticated component that is not found in other festivals, and the evening is curated to showcase a lineup to attract diverse audiences. From Nora Jones to Blackstreet; The Beatles to Adele; Billy Joel to Beyonce; In the Heights to Rocketman – a variety of genres accompanied by baby grand piano drive the Singeasy to provide a diverse experience for diverse audiences. The setlist seamlessly transitions from era to era, genre to genre, to reach different audiences. Though outside of PLT's usual repertoire of programming, we fuse all the elements of live performance into the Singeasy, and the high demand for the return of the unique experience only offered once before proves the event drives tourism to Escambia County.

Because of the impeccable location of The Center and considering the event's later timeframe, guests can effortlessly enjoy neighboring events, culinary experiences, and offerings by the Friends of Foo to build a best-of-Pensacola style itinerary to get the biggest bang for their artistic buck – prolonging their stay.

Target Audience, Appeal, and Marketing

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce from Cultural and Heritage Traveler Research, “Cultural tourism accounts for 81 percent of U.S. travelers -- some 130 million tourists -- who include arts and heritage in their trips each year. They stay longer and spend more money than other kinds of travelers do, contributing more than \$190 billion annually to the U.S. economy.”

Pensacola Little Theatre is prepared to entertain and enrich these tourists and residents with an inclusive, interactive experience like no other. When coupled with Pensacola’s proven affinity for the arts, this event has the potential to capture a broad audience of ages and interests - pairing a sophisticated performance, timeless hit songs, an abundance of cocktail, and a low-lit speakeasy setting in the newly renovated Courtroom of The Clark Family Cultural Center.

Whether a guest enjoys the art of music, a live production, supporting local talent, vocal performance, the story of historic structure, or a unique avant-garde experience – our modern-day sophisticated affair captivates and stimulates the pulse of art lovers and culture-seekers alike - targeting a diverse population of ages and demographics. From an intimate date for two to a night out with the girls, this off-the-beaten-path spin on the classic speakeasy entertains everyone. The unique collaboration between live orchestra, musical theatre, soft pop singing, costuming, and set design engages diverse audiences, exposing them to what we boast most of the arts and culture scene in Pensacola – ample, high-quality opportunities to vacation artfully. This taste of artistic variety incentivizes visitors to enjoy Pensacola time and time again, driving cultural tourism beyond the festival dates.

The event will be marketed through traditional channels, such as direct mail, e-mail, social media campaigns, and tapping into our existing distribution lists and fundraising resources. Alongside our relationships with WEAR-TV, Ballinger Publishing, Pensacola News Journal, Cat Country Radio, Visit Pensacola, Scarlett Magazine, Emerald Coast Publishing, and other regional and visitation media outlets, PLT will utilize the distribution lists of our partners, giving us a combined reach of more than 130,000 diverse individuals.

Because this is a reprise of a one-time COVID-concept, the existing footage from previous performances will drive the marketing – through video snippets, an established branding, behind-the-scenes performer perspectives, still-shots of décor, and a series of black and white portrayals of local talent. The difference this year is that instead of COVID bringing the Singeasy to fruition, this event is sponsored loudly and proudly by Foo Foo Festival and ACE as the presenting sponsor. PLT’s marketing director, in tandem with Calliope Films, Giant Noise, and Hummingbird Ideas, will execute a cohesive digital campaign specifically for Foo using sophisticated monochrome elements to tell a luxe story of a unique evening-time experience available during both weekday and weekend. Foo Foo/ACE will be branded on all marketing materials.

The indoor experience is not weather-dependent, and ample spaces within The Center are available if needed to amend the layout. The event will be managed by PLT’s internal staff and artistic volunteers, and our admin team will comply with all financial reporting requirements and deadlines, as we have been grateful to execute each year involved with Foo.

Measure of Success

Who showed up and where did they come from – that measures the success of the Singeasy.

As a ticketed event to ensure accessibility for all audiences and comfort levels, PLT will monitor attendance levels and demographical information gathered from all attendees. Assessment of the number of participants and collected survey data will measure the event’s success. PLT will consider the ticketed portion of the experience for financial success. To track the effectiveness of the funds generated by out-of-town visitors, PLT will collect ZIP codes for the ticketed event and through general survey of the attendees in the post-private parlor. All attendees receive an automatic follow-up email that include the Foo Foo Festival survey, as well as survey cards distributed at the event itself.

Considering the location and timing of our events, PLT also deems the success of neighboring businesses impacted by our performances a valid return on investment, such as dinner, cocktails, or dessert at Jackson's Steakhouse or clothing purchased specifically for our productions from Don Alan's. The prudent use of public funds for this event positively impacts surrounding businesses beyond PLT, and that's the best result imaginable.

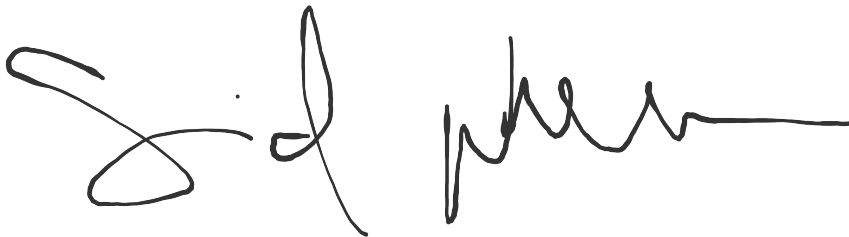
While outside of a normal theatre production, the Singeasy is still in the wheelhouse of live performance, and the event is budgeted through tried-and-true fiscal processes that the theatre uses for each and every production – using smoke and mirrors to create an atmosphere with minimal set design, intentional costuming, strategic lighting and quality sound, and letting the most prudent funds showcase the real draw for visitors – the talent. Other than unique props and scenic elements required to execute this experience, PLT will use a vast majority of existing staple pieces and staging to produce the event.

As anyone who has attended our beloved Foo throughout the years knows – when PLT shows up, we show out. And when we sing... we Singeasy. Thank you for considering what we know will be one of the most meaningful, memorable, and diverse Foo projects for years to come.

Budget Requirements - Grant may not cover more than 85% of program budget. Budget amendments must be approved in advance. Please upload your budget and ANY other supporting documents.

PLT_FooBudget.pdf

Certification: Sign your name - By signing my name here, I certify that I have read and agree that all statements contained herein, and in the application submission, are true and complete to the best of my knowledge, and I agree to the terms of this grant program as outlined in the guidelines. I also certify that submission of this funding proposal is authorized by the applicant organization's Board of Directors.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized first name followed by a last name, written in a cursive script.