

# SPOLETO FESTIVAL, USA

Date: February 6, 2023

Subject: SC FY 2023-2024 Budget Request

Earmark Sponsor: Rep. Leon Stavrinakis, District 119

Project/Event Name: Spoleto Festival USA

Amount: \$750,000

Recipient: Spoleto Festival USA (Non-profit, Federal Tax ID #: 57-0660848)

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## 1. Project Summary:

Spoleto Festival USA respectfully requests \$750,000 from the FY 2023-2024 budget of the State of South Carolina. If awarded financial support from the state, all funds will support FY24 general operating costs of the Festival. The state has a strong history of support for the Festival, and by continuing this support, the Festival will expand its already significant community support and need.

## 2. Public Purpose Served:

For seventeen days and nights each spring, Spoleto Festival USA mounts a distinctively unique program in downtown Charleston of more than 150 events, including artistically challenging works unlikely to be presented elsewhere in the southeast as well as most of the country. Programming is multidisciplinary and includes original operas produced by the Festival; 33 chamber music concerts; a contemporary music program; choral and orchestral concerts; ballet, modern, and most-modern dance; and a robust jazz series—all performed by emerging and established artists and companies from around the world.

## 3. Project Budget Breakdown:

The Festival's projected total operating expenses in FY24 are approximately \$11 million. Through a combination of ticket sales, fees, advertising, investments, co-production, and other contingent sources, the total projected earned revenue of the Festival is \$10.6 million. In FY24, state funds in the amount of \$750,000 will be allocated to core staff's personnel wages, taxes, and fringe (\$415,000); artistic director fees (\$100,000); research associated with programming the 2024 Festival (\$10,000); software subscriptions (\$25,000); utilities (\$30,000); accounting services (\$25,000); artist commissions (\$40,000); liability, property, auto, and workers insurance (\$95,000); and mortgage interest (\$10,000).

#### 4. Demonstrated Community Support and Need:

Spoletto Festival USA unites a diverse audience of South Carolina residents and out of state visitors through the performing arts for seventeen days and nights. The Festival is dedicated to offering a program that works to include the many communities that represent this state and nation.

##### **Community Engagement**

Spoletto Festival USA was founded with a mission to pair upcoming and established artists and provide fertile ground for experimentation, exploration, and artistic learning. This vision, however, extends far beyond concert stages and opera houses. The Festival's engagement arm, Spoletto ETC (Engaging the Community), aims to build audiences, spark connections, and leave an impression on the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts.

Community engagement programs encourage participation and work to remove barriers of elitism in the performing arts. This avenue includes discussion series before and during Festival seasons, performances designed for individuals on the Autism spectrum and their families, as well as Spoletto's Open Stage Door program that provides ~800 complimentary tickets to local community-based nonprofit organizations. This season, to promote further access to programming, the Festival will introduce a PWYW (Pay What You Will) program in which tickets to select performances starting at \$5 will be offered to the community. Piloted in 2022, selected Orchestra members will continue the Tell Your Story project in which they work with Charlestonian adults and youth over several weeks in the spring to listen and record their personal histories, memories, and reflections. The musicians and community members will collaborate to transform those recordings into sonic collages and short instrumental pieces that will be published on the Festival's website and performed at a performance during the Festival.

##### **Professional Development**

Programs for professional advancement aid in the development of young artists and arts administrators. This avenue includes the Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra, the Spoletto Festival Chorus, as well as Spoletto's apprentice program.

Each year the Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra, under the direction of Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy, takes on a dynamic new identity with the participation of both returning and new musicians. Through nationwide auditions, an extremely talented group of young professionals is selected to form the Festival's resident ensemble. The Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra is central to the international excellence of performances at Spoletto Festival USA and has over the years proven to be one of the finest opportunities for young musicians to gain extensive performance experience. Alumni of the Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra can be found in most professional orchestras in the United States and many abroad.

Each summer, Spoletto Festival USA selects singers through nationwide auditions to form the Spoletto

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Festival USA Chorus led by Director of Choral Activities, Joe Miller. Members perform major choral works; serve as the choir for Spoleto's mainstage operas, with select singers performing small roles; and take part in special projects, such as Music in Time and small ensemble concerts.

The Apprenticeship Program is a unique, short-term employment opportunity to develop skills under the guidance of professional arts administrators and technicians while assisting in producing an international arts festival. Apprentices work a minimum of 40 hours per week in a specific department. Many colleges and universities recognize the Apprenticeship Program as a paid internship for required credits. Past employees in this program have worked for major arts organizations and production companies worldwide.

## **Education**

Tailored education programs for students instill artistic curiosity and inspire audiences of the future. This avenue includes artists visiting schools, students visiting Festival venues, and partnerships with student-focused organizations. Most recently, the Festival partnered with two local elementary schools to carry-out artist led workshops with chamber musicians: Paul Wiancko, Ayane Kozasa, and Stephen Banks. Students who participated in the workshops were invited to a private chamber music concert where they were introduced to classical and new works and music composition. The Festival also partners with Charleston Jazz Academy to organize student workshops with Festival jazz artists during the season.

## **National Acclaim**

As the Festival mounted three operas during the 2022 season—*Omar*, *La Bohème*, and *Unholy Wars*— it has gained a tremendous amount of national acclaim including media coverage from The New York Times, the TODAY Show, and NPR, amongst others. The reputation of the Festival hinges on its ability to produce new works. These fresh and exciting productions are what draws thousands of residents and out-of-state visitors to the Festival each year. Renewed support from the state will allow the Festival to continue producing new and exciting works that platform underheard voices and demand the same level of attendance and attention.

## **Economic Impact**

Alongside the Festival's growing community engagement and national attention is its significant economic impact in the state. During the 2022 Festival, ticket sales topped \$2.7 million with more than 48,000 seats occupied and 19,304 out of state audience members who stayed an average of 6 nights; the economic impact of out of state ticket buyers alone was calculated at \$42.7 million over the duration of the Festival in our most recent data. In addition to visiting audience members, the Festival employs 600-700 staff annually who come from out of state for residency periods ranging from 5 days to 2 months. Over the past forty-six seasons, the Festival has produced a cumulative economic impact of over \$1 billion. If line-item funds are allocated, the Festival will only increase its economic impact on the state as artists, staff, and audiences return to fill Charleston for the 2024 Festival. In addition to the obvious benefits of increased local spending, larger productions will attract a highly skilled and creative workforce to the state. If more people are hired to assist with productions, the already existing creative industry will continue to grow. As South Carolina gains more recognition for its status as a cultural hub,

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more visitors—and, in turn, potential residents—will be attracted to the enhanced quality of life Spoleto Festival USA provides through its mission.

5. Details of any state funds previously appropriated for same/similar purpose:

The state recently appropriated \$500,000 from its FY22-2023 budget to the Festival for FY23 general operating expenses. The Festival operates on a fiscal calendar that ends August 31 and begins September 1. State funds being allocated during the 2023 season are essential to the Festival's success. Funds are being used to maintain cashflow and other general operating costs including full time staff and artistic staff's salaries; cost of insurance for full time staff, commissioned artists, and properties; travel costs associated with research for the 2023 Festival; and the utilities and mortgage interest for the Festival's office, located at 14 George Street.