



The Saints Award Grants to Metro Chicago Performing Arts Groups for 2020-21

The Saints, Chicago's Volunteers for the Performing Arts, has awarded \$70,960 in grants to 19 performing arts organizations in the Chicago metropolitan area for the 2020-21 season. The grants, ranging in amounts from \$960 to \$4,400, recognize the amazing artistry of our performing arts community including theater, dance and music projects. Over the last twenty-eight years, the Saints have given over \$1,100,000 to many deserving performing arts groups.

The Saints celebrated our grant recipients on Tuesday, October 13 via Zoom.

The recipients of the 2020 Saints arts grants, in alphabetical order:

THE ACTORS GYMNASIUM — Reaching for the Stars!

Actors Gymnasium is busy offering in-person and online classes for children and adults, such as: Circus Learning Pods and Ground to Air Choreography. They will now be able to buy carpet to replace the unsafe squares they currently have under foot. To quote them, "During times of uncertainty, it helps to be a little more flexible than usual – physically and mentally!"

AERIAL DANCE CHICAGO — 20 Years in the Air

A stone's throw from the Irving Park Blue Line stop, this innovative dance company in flight incorporates a variety of apparatus, using hoops, swings, ropes and fabrics. They can now purchase video equipment and software allowing them to film new works, bringing airborne contemporary dance to the community, while social gathering limits prevent them from experiencing art in person.

BEVERLY ARTS CENTER — Shed New Light

Located on the far southwest side of Chicago, this 50+ year old multi-faceted performing arts organization offers live performances, art installations, classes, and more. A center that provides programs in dance, visual arts, music, film and theater will be able to complete much needed stage lighting improvements to their space.

BLACK ENSEMBLE THEATER — Give Them Their Props

This company will continue with their major project produced by Black Ensemble Theater's Black Playwrights Initiative but will present it all online. BPI provides training, technological resources and advancement opportunities to strengthen and expand Chicago's African American playwrighting community. We'll help dress things up with props and costumes!

BLAIR THOMAS & COMPANY— Puppet-in-Place

When they're not busy sending Pop-Up Puppet-Grams and teaching online classes, this company will be creating with their new puppet studio tools. Blair Thomas & Company's Chicago Puppet Studio is the design and manufacturing arm of The Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival organization crafting original puppetry elements for theaters and theater artists.

CHICAGO DANCE CRASH — Buckle Your Seatbelts!

This dance company, referred to as "a compelling mixture of ballet, breakdancing, hip hop, martial arts and dangerous acrobatics" will be able to commission and present new works in their unLocked program, to premiere online. They believe that "unLocked" will take on a whole new meaning when they can return to performances with audiences.

THE CHICAGO ENSEMBLE — Made In America

Musicians from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera Orchestra, Chicago Sinfonietta, and other area organizations come together in The Chicago Ensemble under the leadership of Artistic Director and Pianist, Gerald Rizzer. To continue a 43 year legacy of chamber music for new generations, this company devoted to the discovery and encouragement of American composers, will transform their "antiquated" website into an interactive place of engagement for community outreach. (1st Time Applicant)

CHICAGO HEIGHTS DRAMA GROUP — Broadway Melody of 2021?

Located in the far south suburbs, this nearly 90-year-old company is the longest running self-funded community theater still operating in the United States. With new wireless microphones to meet the changing FCC regulations, they will continue "bringing Broadway to the south suburbs since 1931!"

THE FACTORY THEATER — Factory Made

This Rogers Park theater, delivering “unexpected, unapologetic theatrical experiences through original works forged and assembled by our shameless ensemble”, will now be able to invest in upgraded equipment to provide guest designers with the tools they need to craft and present a sound design to match their vision.

THE GIFT THEATRE — Light of Hand

As one of the smallest union theaters in Chicago, the Gift Theatre devotes a large portion of their funds to actor salaries making it difficult to upgrade technical equipment. The only professional theatre company in Jefferson Park will now be able to purchase new lighting instead of renting it, which will be an immense help to their creative process.

HIGH CONCEPT LABS — Creative Ripples

This Pilsen-based arts service organization and artist incubator provides Chicago artists with flexible, affordable space in which to develop projects and new works. They will be able to purchase streaming-ready video/audio recording equipment to document Resident Artists’ creative process and events. Their new managing director will help them to “adapt to the changing landscape.” (1st Time Applicant)

NORTHLIGHT THEATRE — Brilliant Light

With over 45 years in the northern suburbs, this theatre continues by “exploring the depth of our humanity across a bold spectrum of theatrical experiences”. They will get new and innovative lighting equipment that will provide their lighting designers and technicians with versatile options to enhance its visual story-telling abilities.

OTHERWORLD THEATRE COMPANY — Is It Real Or...?

This Sci-Fi and Fantasy theatre already has the technical ability and know-how to live stream and digitally capture performances. Purchasing equipment instead of renting will help them to provide a digital studio at low cost for other theater's looking to safely produce content during the shutdown. It will add to their super powers!

PLAYMAKERS LABORATORY THEATRE — Chicago Imagining

This ensemble of teaching artists creates an experimental environment where students share personal voices through public performances of their work. Pivoting to creating theatre digitally, they are continuing in-school education opportunities. With new recording equipment, this company works to fulfill their vision of “a radically kind Chicago that champions students ideas.” And *That’s Weird Grandma: House Par-Tay* continues.

PRIDE ARTS — Can You Hear Me, Now?

Forging ahead with a new artistic director, this Buena Park center believes that "Our first line of duty is to rebrand, restructure and reignite this company." With their renewed mission to represent all aspects of the LGBTQIA+ community, they will be able to improve their sound quality using a new 8 channel sound system.

RIVENDELL THEATRE ENSEMBLE — Give Us a Sign

An Edgewater company celebrating its 25th anniversary, is dedicated to advancing the lives of women through theatre. We’ll help them fulfill plans to light up their external façade and install signage to help dedicated theatre goers to safely find their way. This will facilitate patron drop-off on busy Ridge Ave. for elderly or disabled audience members.

SEE CHICAGO DANCE — A Dance Buffet

This organization for professional dance in Chicago, serves a diverse range of dance organizations and artists through services and programs that build and engage audiences. With new video production and computer equipment they will be able to expand their coverage. You will find them always moving forward.

SYMPHONY OF OAK PARK & RIVER FOREST — The Art of Tidying Up

This company strives to “foster the appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of symphonic music” Having amassed a large collection of orchestral music over nearly 90 years, their funded project will allow them to organize the music collection, protect it in Music Filing envelopes, and compile a listing of their holdings that Marie Kondo would be proud of.

WINDY CITY WINDS — Pitching In

When they’re not celebrating Make Music Chicago Day on Navy Pier, this all volunteer community band/wind ensemble provides quality music to Chicago neighborhood audiences. They will improve their sound with the purchase of two brand new timpani to replace the worn instruments they borrow. They hope this will help to broaden public appreciation for wind music.

(1st Time Applicant)