

MEETING: 21/03/2019

Ref: 15004

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital

Magpie Dance

Adv: Julia Mirkin

Amount requested: £100,000

Base: Bromley

Benefit: Bromley

Amount recommended: £100,000

The Applicant

Magpie Dance (MD) aims to empower people with learning disabilities through dance, helping them to reach their full potential. Participants gain life, social, communication and physical skills and also benefit from improved health and well-being and a broadened social network. Two features distinguish MD's offer: firstly, the artistic quality of its work and secondly, the continual nature of its training, designed to develop the dance skills of learning-disabled dancers through ongoing training. MD delivers a programme of Contemporary dance classes, holiday intensives and performance opportunities. It is based at the Churchill Theatre in Bromley and participants travel from across south east London to attend.

The Application

This request is for the costs of two existing elements of MD's dance programme: its adult and youth dance groups. Costs of developing a new class for MD's adult participants are also requested. The application is presented as part of a strategy to develop the organisation's whole dance programme.

The Recommendation

There are no other providers of regular dance training for learning disabled dancers in south east London. This organisation is well established, has a good reputation, and its participants achieve good social outcomes. Previous grants from the Trust have been well managed and evaluated to a high standard.

£100,000 over three years (£33,333; £33,333; £33,334) towards the costs of the Youth and Adult dance groups; a new regular class for adults and a contribution to core and administrative costs. The grant is conditional on confirmation that the organisation's accounting for grant income is SORP compliant from 2019 onwards.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
04/09/2013	£90,130 over 3 years (£17,670; 35,740; £36,720) towards the costs of a dance programme for learning disabled people aged 11-25.
05/11/2008	£53,000 over three years (£17,000; £17,500; £18,500) towards the salary costs of a full-time General Manager.

Background and detail of proposal

During 2017, MD's founding Artistic Director retired after a long career with the company. This marks the beginning of a period of significant change for MD: a new Executive Director has been appointed, who is supported by two part-time Artistic Directors. It is hoped that with this new leadership structure, MD will be able to develop artistically, operationally and improve the opportunities for its participants.

MD focuses on ability rather than disability and caters for all ages and a range of learning disabilities. There is scope for participants to progress to more technically or artistically challenging activities within MD's provision. However, MD is keen to

increase its engagement with the dance sector to forge progression routes for its participants further afield. New partnerships are being established with CandoCo; the National Youth Dance Company; Studio Wayne McGregor; BalletBoyz; Corali; the Centre for Advanced Training (CAT) at TrinityLaban; Greenwich Dance; the Royal Opera House and the English National Ballet. MD's programme is unique in that it offers opportunities for learning disabled dancers to progress in their dance practice through regular training. MD also seeks out performance opportunities for its performing groups, which promotes positive images of disabled people; challenges perceptions; allows experienced disabled dancers to develop their performing skills and creates an opportunity for MD to raise some earned income.

The organisation has an established framework for measuring the social, personal, physical and artistic development of its beneficiaries, which it uses to monitor the progress of individuals. Feedback highlights a growth in participants' confidence, self-esteem, improved social inclusion and mental well-being.

Financial Information

MD is based at the Churchill Theatre in Bromley, from which it receives in-kind rent, significantly limiting the organisation's operating costs. Remaining operating expenditure is apportioned to restricted grants. The reserves policy is to hold 'a minimum of three months reserves...' For the purpose of the table below, this is calculated as three months of total expenditure.

MD built up its reserves in preparation for a period of change and adjustment following the departure of its founding Director in 2017 and it drew on its reserves to cover the deficit incurred in 2018. MD also plans to draw on reserves to cover the deficit forecast for 2019, resulting in less than two months of running costs forecast to be in reserves at the 2019 yearend. The applicant has provided budgets for the next three years, showing small surpluses or breakeven positions each year. MD is focusing on its fundraising strategy as part of its overarching development, with the specific aim of raising more income from Individual and Corporate Giving.

Year end as at 31 MARCH	2017 Examined Accounts £	2018 Examined Accounts £	2019 Forecast £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	343,408	301,237	345,983
- % of Income confirmed as at 12/12/18	n/a	100%	98%
Expenditure	(341,471)	(331,552)	(371,058)
Total surplus/(deficit)	1,937	(30,315)	(25,075)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	1,937	(30,315)	(25,075)
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Cost of Raising Funds	32,579	30,120	32,000
- % of Income	9.5%	10.0%	9.2%
Total expenditure	341,471	331,552	371,058
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	110,115	79,800	54,725
No of months of total expenditure	3.9	2.9	1.8
Reserves policy target	85,368	82,888	92,765
No of months of total expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	24,747	(3,088)	(38,040)