

MEETING 26/3/2020

Ref: 15503

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Positive Transitions**Graeae Theatre Company****Adv: Lily Brandhorst****Base: Hackney****Amount requested: £260,399****Benefit: London-wide****Amount recommended: £260,400****The Applicant**

Graeae (GTC) is a theatre company led by D/deaf and disabled actors. It works to revolutionise access in the performing arts by placing disabled artists centre stage in a range of innovative performances; offering training and learning opportunities for young D/deaf and disabled artists; and providing a platform to develop and showcase new writing. Based in East London in fully accessible studios, Graeae's reach is international, with performances and training programmes touring to multiple countries. A signature of GTC's work is the creative integration of sign language, captioning and audio description into productions from the very beginning. Graeae is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation and is widely recognised as a sector leader in accessibility and the arts.

The Application

GTC seeks funding towards its training and learning work, including the salary of its Training and Learning Co-ordinator. A grant from Trust will provide funding towards:

- The Rollettes, a theatre group for D/deaf and disabled children aged 5 – 11.
- The Young Company, a theatre group for D/deaf and disabled young people aged 12 – 18.
- The Ensemble Intensive, a bespoke training programme to help D/deaf and disabled young adults aged 17 - 30 progress their careers in the creative industries.

For all three age groups, training in theatre arts is combined with age-appropriate support in developing life skills, confidence and independence.

The Recommendation

Graeae's reputation precedes it as a centre of excellence in access to the arts. The charity has held two previous grants from City Bridge Trust, both of which were delivered to a high standard. Match funding is secured from Arts Council England and Awards for All for the first two years, with less than £20,000 to find for each of the final three years. A grant is recommended as follows:

£260,400 (£49,920; £50,968; £52,048; £53,159; £54,304) towards the 0.8FTE salary costs of the Training and Learning Co-ordinator and associated costs of the Rollettes, The Young Company and The Ensemble Intensive training programmes.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
28/01/2015	PROJECT DESCRIPTION £138,650 over three years (£43,300; £47,400; £47,950) towards 0.5FTE of the full-time salary costs of the Training and Learning Manager and associated programme costs of the Young Artistic Advisors programme.

10/09/2009	£90,000 over three years (3 x £30,000) towards a participative programme of street arts for disabled people.
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Background and detail of proposal

There is plentiful research showing that deaf and disabled people are denied opportunities to participate and work in activities including the arts, due to access, cost, transport or others' attitudinal barriers. GTC exists to support disabled young people's personal and creative development and to help those trying to develop a career in the arts.

All three programmes supported through this grant will feature activities that: address the barriers that deaf and disabled young people face in accessing activities and training; build skills and training through the arts; encourage young people to co-create and lead, developing their creativity and independence; and (according to participants' age) address wider barriers to independence, such as attitudes from non-disabled family members and practical issues such as money and housing. There is a strong sense of community and mutual support between participants in each group.

Rollettes and Young Company groups will each provide ten sessions to 15 children and young people a year, while the Ensemble intensive is a year-long programme working with 20 young adults per year. All groups benefit from Graeae's partnerships with local delivery partners working in the arts and disability. For Ensemble members this offers additional options for progression and accreditation.

Financial Information

Graeae was hit by a 180% rent increase in 2018 but this is being offset by restricted and designated funds set aside for this purpose. Free reserves appear high at the end of 2020 but this is in preparation for the planned deficit in 2021. It is a difficult funding environment for the arts at present and GTC expects a key funding source to significantly decrease in coming years. Your officer therefore deems it appropriate for the charity to hold this level of free reserves in the short-term, while planning for the future.

Year end as at 31st March	2019	2020	2021
	Signed Accounts £	Forecast £	Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	1,284,155	1,211,281	1,307,685
- % of Income confirmed as at 7/2/2020	N/A	87%	61%
Expenditure	(1,465,600)	(1,345,789)	(1,598,700)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(181,445)	(134,508)	(291,015)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(195,528)	(246,487)	(162,000)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	14,083	111,979	(129,015)
	(181,445)	(134,508)	(291,015)
Operating Expenditure (unrestricted)	670,260	749,443	794,400
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	536,001	647,980	518,965
No of months of operating expenditure	9.6	10.4	7.8
Reserves policy target	335,130	374,722	397,200
No of months of operating expenditure	6.0	6.0	6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	200,871	273,259	121,765