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Inter-Office Communication

Date: October 25, 2018

Subject: 2019 Performing Arts Residency Program

Jury Panel: Kate Nordstrum, Arts Advisory Committee Member, Executive Producer of Special Projects at The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra; Chelsea Allen, Manager of Community Engagement, San Diego Symphony; Jennifer Curry, Director, Astraeus Aerial Dance Theatre

Background: The Authority posted a call for submissions on the Arts Program website (arts.san.org) on August 27, 2018. Notice of the opportunity was publicized through the California Arts Council website (cac.ca.gov/opportunities), San Diego Visual Arts Network, LA County Arts Commission (LA Culture Net), a public informational session open to performing artists on September 24, 2018, email communication to more than 900 contacts on the Arts Program listserv, targeted outreach to over 70 performing arts organizations, institutions, and arts leaders, plus various social media outlets. A total of 12 submissions were received by September 30, 2018. The review panel completed an initial round of evaluation in order to identify 7 finalists.

Description of the Candidates:

1) **San Diego Dance Theatre** – San Diego Dance Theatre’s mission is to create and perform intelligent dances that breathe life into the people of our region and beyond. San Diego Dance Theater (SDDT) has for 45 years enriched the cultural life of San Diego through countless dance concerts and trainings. Jean Isaacs was appointed Artistic Director in 1997; under her direction, SDDT has earned its reputation as a company of fully professional dancers committed to unconventional and courageous programming. SDDT works closely with a diverse group of professional choreographers and dancers representing many nationalities, races, ages and physical abilities. Core programming is frequently done in partnership with other organizations and institutions and includes festivals such as Trolley Dances, staged concerts, commissioned works, and professional and community workshops. The panel was impressed with their experience creating high caliber site specific dance performances throughout the region. The panel appreciated their consideration of the passenger experience as well as incorporating the airport environment into their programming. The panel resolved that San Diego Dance Theatre was highly qualified and recommended them for the opportunity.

- 2) **Blindspot Collective** – Blindspot Collective’s mission is to produce radically inclusive programming at the intersection of advocacy, education, and entertainment that cultivates and celebrates new work, emerging artists, diverse audiences, and fresh ideas. They strive to create transformative theatre that amplifies marginalized voices, illuminates untold stories, bridges disparate experiences, and energizes vulnerable communities. Since its founding in 2016, Blindspot Collective has produced work in partnership with The Old Globe, Diversionary Theatre, the Department of Theatre and Dance at UC San Diego, San Diego Musical Theatre, Bocón Arts, and other community partners. Blindspot Collective proposed developing a set of short plays – each between 10-15 minutes – that would be created in response to the environment of the airport. Each play would have a small cast of two or three actors and each individual piece would be penned by a different playwright—ensuring the project highlights a diverse set of local voices and perspectives. The panel thought their proposal was well conceived and provided a unique experience for SAN passengers. The panel resolved that Blindspot Collective was highly qualified and recommended them for the opportunity.
- 3) **Intrepid Theatre Company** - Intrepid Theatre, an award-winning theatre and education company in San Diego, creates programs that provoke conversation, expand perspectives and elevate thinking within our city, our schools and the greater artistic community. To do this, they produce acclaimed professional theatre productions, house a robust theatre education program and cultivate partnerships to leverage the arts as a tool for education and deeper understanding in our community. The panel believed Intrepid was highly qualified but believed their proposal of reinterpreting Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* within the airport environment was not in the spirit of residency’s model of creating a new work during their residency.
- 4) **LITVAKdance** - LITVAKdance is committed to making accessible art that engages and challenges; both as an educational tool for students and an enlightening artistic experience for diverse audiences. They curate works full of punch, play, power intellect and above all beautiful dancing. LITVAKdance is a non-profit contemporary repertory-based dance company in North San Diego County. Celebrating diversity is a large part of their mission, and their dancers and dances reflect that. They showcase not only the work of their founding Artistic Director, Sadie Weinberg, but also emerging and established guest choreographers. The panel felt LITVAKdance presented a strong proposal but that their lack of experience executing large scale site specific works was an issue.
- 5) **San Diego Ballet** - The San Diego Ballet, a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization, was founded in 1991 in close association with Robin Sherertz Morgan’s San Diego School of Ballet and features a strong contemporary repertory created by resident choreographer, Javier Velasco. The San Diego Ballet has collaborated with the San Diego Symphony, San Diego Chamber Orchestra, and San Diego Camarada during their seasons as well as dance organizations such as Culture Shock and others. The panel felt that while the San Diego Ballet did incorporate the passenger experience into their proposal it was overall less compelling and less impactful than the other finalists.
- 6) **Zachary Paul** – Zachary Paul is a Los Angeles-based violinist and composer interested in perception, the transportive nature of long musical durations, and trance states. His work explores the contrast between stasis and movement and questions the possibility of depicting both synchronously. The panel

appreciated Paul's proposed conceptual framework, however they felt that it was not as good a fit as the other applicants for the 5 month residency. The panel suggested to Arts Program staff that he be brought back through the Ongoing Concert Series to conduct a performance in the Reflection Room.

- 7) Fern Street Circus – Fern Street Circus was founded in San Diego in 1994 by John Highkin and Cindy Zimmerman. The mission of the circus is to serve families and transform communities through performance and teaching of circus arts. Professional artists collaborate with learners and their families in neighborhood settings. Circus transcends barriers between people of varying cultures and languages, combines physical and theatrical skills, and merges the magnificent and the everyday. The panel felt that their proposal did not differ enough from the material presented during the 2016 Performing Arts Residency.

Recommendation:

Approve the Panel's recommendation for **San Diego Dance Theatre** and **Blindspot Collective** to receive awards for the 2019 Performing Arts Residency Program and a five month contract in amount of \$15,000. San Diego Dance Theatre will be in residence from January-May 2019 and Blindspot Collective will be in residence from July-November 2019.