

Urbana Arts Grant 2016 Final Report - Claire Happel

"River Town Duo Presents Free Concerts in Urbana Featuring Old and New Works for Harp and Bass"

1. Accomplishments and how grant funds were utilized during the grant period.
During the grant period we were able to commission two composers, Whitney Ashe and Evan Premo, to write substantial works for us. We performed three free concerts in Urbana: at the Urbana Free Library (UFL), Brookdale Memory Care Center, and Clark-Lindsey Village, all featuring a composer talk by Whitney Ashe, local Urbana artist. The concerts were very successful, each in their own way. At the UFL, we had a full house of people ranging from music connoisseurs to listeners who had never encountered the bass and harp prior to the concert. At Brookdale, it became a very special event for the facility, and their delight after the concert was heartening. The audience at Clark-Lindsey was extremely inquisitive and gracious, leaving us feeling that it was very worthwhile to bring an array of music, along with the special experience of a composer talk, to a variety of enthusiastic audiences.
2. The impact that the grant funds had on your artistic or organizational development.
Commissioning these two pieces and having the opportunity to rehearse and perform them was a huge step forward for my duo. In addition to the three commissioned works we already had in our repertoire, the five pieces we now have written specifically for us will make it possible to record an album in May 2017.
3. The number of hours spent in completing the project, including planning, administration, promotion, production, and the final presentation.
A majority of the hours spent preparing for the performance were in rehearsals and compositional writing. I spent three hours putting together photos, posters, and promotional language to send to the performance venues and post on social media. We practiced individually for 20 hours each and rehearsed together for 10 hours, totaling 50 hours. The composers reported approximately 30 hours or more each for their work, totaling 60 hours. Thus, the total hours spent by everyone involved was 113 hours or more.
4. The number of participants in events or activities related to your grant project.
Four people performed or created music for the concert: myself, bassist Philip Alejo, composer Whitney Ashe, and composer Evan Premo. Attendance at concerts met or exceeded our expectations. The UFL concert was the most public of our events, and audience members filled two open rooms, for an estimate of 50 people. At Brookdale, the program director decided to pair our concert with a wine/cheese tasting reception afterwards (a nice chance to converse with them and answer questions), and we counted 25 residents attending the concert. At Clark-Lindsey, we had a healthy audience size of 40 people filling Huegy Lounge, with a couple of audience members from the community who could not attend our UFL Concert, totaling 115 people. Prior to the performances, we had expected a total of 120 people, so we achieved very close to our goal.
5. Description of experience working with collaborating partners.
All program directors - Carol Inskeep (UFL), Paula Martin (Clark-Lindsey), Tracy Place (Brookdale) - were extremely organized and helpful in scheduling the dates and promoting the concert to their residents and patrons. They also expressed gracious satisfaction in the turnout and audience response to the events.

Fiscal Report

Expenses:

Composer Fee (Whitney Ashe): \$500

Composer Fee (Evan Premo): \$500 (total of \$1000, but \$500 funded by Urbana Public Arts Grant)

Bassist Travel Expenses (Philip Alejo, Michigan-Illinois-Arizona): \$250



Celebrating Works for Harp and Bass

featuring Urbana Composer Whitney Ashe

Wednesday, August 17
7:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Lewis Auditorium
Ground Floor

*Supported in part by a 2016
City of Urbana Arts Grant.*

Rivertown Duo will present a concert of works for harp and bass including pieces by Vivaldi, 2014 Pulitzer Prize winner Caroline Shaw, bassist-composers David Anderson and Derick Evans, harpist-composer Hannah Lash, and Venezuelan composer Efraín Oscher. The featured work in the concert will be a world premiere by Urbana composer **Whitney Ashe**, who will discuss his creative process in writing for the duo.

Rivertown Duo: Claire Happel, harp and Philip Alejo, bass



The Urbana Free Library

210 West Green Street • Urbana, Illinois 61801 • 217-367-4057 • urbanafreelibrary.org

