



Public Hearing February 11, 2020

Testimony of Elizabeth Fisher, Co-Director, International Festival of Arts & Ideas

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative DiMassa, Representative Horn, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am submitting this testimony to ask that you consider including Music Haven in the budget for fiscal year 2021. As you may be aware, thanks to an up swell of community support they were awarded and allocation of \$100,000 in FY20, however they were the only organization that received an allocation for only the first year of the biennium. I urge you allocate \$100,000 for Music Haven in FY21, as well.

As Co-Director of the International Festival of Arts & Ideas, which has received a generous allocation in FY2020 and FY2021, I know how powerful and critical state funding is for arts organizations in our community. This unrestricted funding allows organizations to build and maintain an infrastructure that allows long-term planning and sustainability.

As a resident of New Haven and as someone who has spent her life in the arts, I cannot overstate how critical inclusive arts education is for our community. To my knowledge, Music Haven is one of the only—if not *the* only—place in New Haven where young people from throughout the city can receive world-class lessons, 100% free-of-cost. I have had the pleasure of attending performances given by these students and they are truly marvelous. In a city where school-based arts programs are always at risk and poverty remains prevalent, the work Music Haven does is life-changing and life-saving. Through music, young people gain skills that serve them throughout their lives, their self-esteem grows, they gain access to new experiences and opportunities, and they become a part of the greater community.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the New Haven and statewide arts community, and thank you for considering a renewal of Music Haven's allocation in the FY21 budget.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Fisher
Co-Director