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Working In Theater Series:  
The Building Blocks of an Arts Organization  
Friday, October 23, 2020

>> LJ: Hello, everyone. Today I'm really excited because for the first time in the series, I'm really thinking that we will get some good perspectives and get some good information so before we get into it, really quickly, I want to remind everyone that we do have open captioning available. So if you are in need of closed caption experience, we have a link for that and the open is available in part of the National Arts and Disability Center at the University of California Los Angeles.

So, thank you to them for allowing that level of accessibility to be possible. And I also just like to acknowledge that Center Theatre Group and Maroon Arts and Culture Center are both based in Southern California which is the ancestral lands of the Tongva people and before we do a convening, I would like to call on an ancestor to give me help and strength and focus and today I'm calling on—who am I calling on today? Today, I'll call on Dr. Anne— no, today I call on my great grandmother, Kateshia and hopefully she can give me the strength today and feel free if you are joining us via Youtube to let us know what lands you are watching our program from and if there is an ancestor you would like to bring into the conversation, go ahead and shout them out in the chat as well, loved to hear who you are calling on for strength today. Today, we are joined by two amazing panelist, the first is the founder and the artistic director of Critical Mass Performance Group, her name is Nancy Keystone, give her a round of applause, I will assume that you are clapping and the second is David Mack with Invertigo Dance Company, did I say that right?

>> DAVID MACK: Theatre.

>> LJ: Invertigo Dance Theatre, not just dance, you guys are telling stories too, wonderful, both Nancy and David are people that have given me wonderful advice as I continue to grow Maroon Arts and Culture Center, those that have watched us over the past weeks, like many of you out there, I am working on building something so that I can have a long lasting career in the arts and so, as Maroon Arts and Culture Center has come together, these are both two people that I have turned to for some advice.

So we'll start with some introductions. Let's start with David, will you tell us a little bit about yourself and about the organization that you work for?

>> DAVID MACK: Sure. Thanks so much, L.J. and great to be in the same space with you, Nancy and thanks so much for doing this and yes, I am David Mack,

you can call me Dave Mack and I am the Executive Director of Invertigo Dance Theatre, and this is a contemporary dance theatre based in the city and we were in the middle of a national tour before COVID, and the show with Alan Turing, cracked the code in World War II and caught for being gay and there is strong LGBT justice themes. And the themes and most of the pieces we do in Invertigo supports the justice issues. And that went on in February and we shut down in March, but we are looking to tour in North Carolina in 2022 and the company also has a Dancing Through Parkinsons program that supports people with Parkinsons through dance class, and we had sites throughout the county including the Wallis Annenberg, those sites closed down but we turned those into virtual dance class we do weekly on Zoom. So that is Invertigo and on the other hat I am the CEO of my own project start up called Artist Magnet that supports artists through social networking and professional networks and Zoom conferences on a quarterly basis so that as me. Happy to be here.

>> LJ: Thank you so much for joining us and we will put the link for Artist Magnet in the comments too, so if you are an artist and working in the arts world, go ahead and open up the program, it's a networking opportunity for people to come together and get the work done. Nancy, can you tell us about yourself and your organization?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Yes, thank you. I am so honored to be have been asked to be here and great to be with David and I will soak up that information and use it. I am the Founding Artistic Director of Critical Mass Performance Group which is an ensemble— collaborative ensemble in Los Angeles, we began out of an independent project at UCLA in 1985 and we are—we work on a project by project basis and began doing adaptations of classic plays and then starting around the year 1998, we started to make our own devised work and a lot of what we do has to do with history and subverting what we know. There is a big social justice component in this and we do a lot of outreach to communities and we do—those are kind of our big productions but we do a lot of smaller things that are like interactive and salons, almost more kind of visual art oriented so we do a mixture of things and we work all over the city in different spaces and I think that's it for now. We'll talk more later.

>> LJ: I will unmute myself, wonderful, so the reason I wanted to ask both Nancy and David here today is because, you know, as we have been discussing over the past few weeks there are a lot of paths for creating a career for yourself in the arts if you are an individual artist and want to produce your own work or maybe you want to get with a group of friends and work with a project by project basis or if you want to get into arts administration as a long term career plan and working within that field in a couple of different areas.

So, here today's panel. We have kind of a representation of different size organizations and so today we'll talk about what it's like behind the screens in these different sized organizations so maybe you can all start to think about where you can get in where you fit in. With Maroon Arts and Culture Center, we are only a year and a half old. And so, we're still very new, I'm the only full time employee at the organization, and then the people who helped me out are contractors, they're freelancers, technically according to

the IRS but really mostly volunteer their time because they believe in me and they believe in the project.

And so, I think I'd like to hear from each of you about the size of your organization. In terms of number of actual employees and if you have any freelancers that you bring in and also budget, what is your annual budget? So for Maroon Arts and Culture Center I'm the only full time employee and I have 3 people on a 1099 basis, although I hardly pay them, they are mostly volunteer and the annual project last year for the year we are currently in now is like \$5,000 because everything is virtual and that happened before our season started.

But if I were to be able to do everything that I wanted to do in the 2021/2022 season, I would need about \$60,000 so I would claim that as my annual budget, Nancy, can you tell us a little bit about Critical Mass Performance Group? You have to unmute yourself, Nancy. I do that too.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Sorry, what is the international button to unmute? What is it like? Ha, ha, sorry. Yes. We work on a project by project basis and we work over long periods of time developing a single project so we could work, you know, the last project we did was like an 8-year project. A couple of, you know, every once in awhile, we will do something that is a few months but very rare, so that's kind of the structure of it. I am the only actual employee. And I am the Producer/Director/Company Manager/Toilet Cleaner, and then we have depending on the project, I would say between 5 and 25 freelancers who come on per project.

It just depends on the size of the cast that we're working with and the needs of the piece. And then our annual budget also ranges from if we're not producing, you know, it could be a few thousands dollars to about \$65,000. We also partner with different larger organizations like Center Theatre Group who has produced a couple of our pieces and so when we go there, then it's not our budget, but the budget of our piece is able to expand because we're able to work with people who can provide other resources, so we're extremely fortunate in that respect.

>> LJ: And Nancy, how long has Critical Mass Performance Group been in existence, when did you start?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: I put it at 1985, but I would say shortly thereafter, but we did a project and it came out of UCLA out of an independent project that we did and those people that I worked with sort of became the core of the company which I guess officially was founded in probably 88 or 89 under a different name, same group.

>> LJ: See, I wanted to ask because your structure is kind of like mine but you have been doing it this way more a very long time, it's not like have you to start here and grow into something else, you can keep it going at a smaller size for a long time. What about Invertigo Dance Theatre?

>> DAVID MACK: Yes, so Invertigo was created in 2007, so it's 13 years old.

So we are now a teenager in the awkward teen phrase of organizational life. We have an office staff of 7 including me and our Founder and Artistic Director Laura Cardlin, and we have full time Operations Associate that supports our accounting, our operational systems, takes minutes of the meetings, and we have a full time 1, 2, 3, 4, yeah a full time Community Engagement Director, we call our Creative Engagement Director Kate Bradford that manages our community engagement programs and manages our Community Engagement Associates and then we have a Community Engagement Associate, Intern, and a part time Development Manager who is doing our grants. So that is the office team, we're all remote now. We have been out of the office since March as so many others and we do weekly Google meets and try to connect with each other as much as possible. And we have dancers [that] Laura casts per project and we have anywhere from 7 court dancers like the 'Formulae & Fairy Tales' show I described and up to our digital dance care packages that we make that you can send to your loved ones and you can do dance solos that can you send to your loved ones that have been a real hit during pandemic times and we have up to 15 dancers with that. And Los Angeles is unique in dancers, that all of our dancers are employees and we pay them as employees. That creates lots of additional costs that we can talk about later if anybody wants to do that, and it connects to the values of Laura had wanting to give the dancers as many benefits as possible for being employees. And we have contractors that come on board, stage managers, videographers, depending on the project of the year.

And our annual operating budget has grown over the years, it began at the same level, LJ where you are talking about. That is where it began, unless you are lucky to have a trust fund or angel investor, that is where you start and gradually it has grown up to half a million dollar annual operating revenues because Invertigo is a nonprofit 5013 C and we are considered mid-size in the spectrum of dance organizations in Los Angeles county. The highest being multi-million dollar budgets and in the national spectrum though, we are considered small, we're considered a small size dance company just to give you that range of perspective and I'll quickly mention with Artist Magnet I am the only employee for Artist Magnet that is a for-profit organization, we operate as an LLC limit liability company and we have a small board with that company and we have mostly volunteers like with yours and contractors.

And our budget's a couple of thousand dollars a year, but we recently got some support for our Zoom conversations with casting directors and other leaders in the field, specifically black women leaders in the arts field, to speak with merging Producers and artists in our community and for that, we did get 2 grants, \$15,000 grant and \$125,000 grant so we doubled our budget this year so that is exciting to give you a sense of those.

>> LJ: That is wonderful and I love that have you the experience and the perspective of having like a large organization on one hand and then your passion project on the on the other hand which is like sounds like two words and to me but more power to you, I can't imagine, I'm tired from doing the one, I can't imagine what it's like to is to do both so two things.

Before we started the live broadcast, I did ask both Nancy and David if they were comfortable sharing their annual budgets with the group and David reminded me that annual budgets are public information and if you want to know how much it costs for some of your favorite organizations to put on your their seasons, you can find that, I don't remember the website but everyone has to file a 590 and that is public information and you would be surprised how much it costs to do 3 or 4 shows a season and you could start thinking about what do you think is the most—the biggest cost is so we'll talk about with both of our guests here in a little bit.

>> DAVID MACK: And that is Guide Star.

>> LJ: Yes, Guide Star.

>> DAVID MACK: Guide Star is the number one resource that people use, now they are taken over Candid, so you do a Google research of Candid you can find any budget of any nonprofit organization and we have to report our numbers how we're spending it.

>> LJ: Yes, that is important because if you apply for a grant you can look and ask to see how much it costs, you can think of your organization and compare yourself to and look at their budget and that is what I do just to see how much money everyone else is spending so I can kind of anticipate what I would like for my budget to be going forward. So that is a really useful tool guide star.

I wanted—also before we came live, I told Dave that the biggest piece of advice I wish I would have taken was from him where he was specifically like, make sure that you have a really good Board of Directors because your Board of Directors is a greater resource than you might think. So you know, got down to crunch time, I don't know anybody too fancy so I was like my mom, my partner.

So I wanted to talk to you both about the role of Board of Directors, how many Board of Directors are on your various organizations and just in general, what is the role— what is the Board of Directors supposed to do for an organization? I'll open it up to either one of you, whoever wants to go first.

>> DAVID MACK: I'll jump for it, and Nancy you piggy back on what I miss, all right? Yes, well, to a certain extent it depends on the type of organization, which really starts with, what is your mission and what impact do you want to have on your community and what do you want to use your organization for? There are many many different types of models. I can tell you for us, I'll put on my Invertigo hat from Invertigo Dance Theatre, we currently have a board of 11 including Laura Cardlin who is the ex-official Board Member, so the generally non-voting board member and we have 10 other board members, including two members of the Cardlin family who have been on since the beginning and like you mentioned, it was the fam that came on the board and it's grown from there and that is not atypical, that is generally how nonprofits would start, people you know, or close to already, who love you personally and love your vision and mission of your organization, you will invite them to join your board, you're technically

inviting them to be your boss so that is something to know and be aware of because there are responsibilities in law and also in best practices that comes with being a Board Member of a nonprofit organization.

Because the whole nonprofit structure is created, it's essentially a tax lodge that is created by the government in order to give people a tax reduction for donating to the organization. So in return for getting that deduction, the organization had responsibilities to its community and the Board ensures that the organization is fulfilling those responsibilities. The primary one that a lot of people talk about is called fiduciary responsibility, which essentially means you have to make sure that the money is being spent the way that you say to your supporters it is going to be spent in an ethical fashion, and you also have to ensure that the organization had enough funds to fulfill its mission so that it doesn't have to close its doors. That is really a primary responsibility of a Board Member. In addition to that, Board Members will typically be the guiding advisory support for the Artistic Director and the Executive Director ensuring that everyone is staying on mission as they call it. So we created this company to do dance, then if we're staying oh, maybe we want to do something completely different other than dance, maybe we want to become an organization that supports the people that are unhoused or an organization that supports animals, okay, the board is there to say, okay, well, but remember, this is what your mission is, you want to change your mission? That what we talk about when talking about our mission, doing what we intended to do, but I think that Board Members are volunteers, they do not get paid.

So many times they have their own lives so often, it's really the relationship between the staff and Board is very very important. It's important for the staff to be the ones to provide the information on where the company is financially and where the company is programmatically and being able to be that corrector between the artist and the audience and present that to the Board so the Board can have a really good picture of organization and where it is and have any advances that they can address. And real quick, with Artist Magnet, I have a Board there and because it's a for-profit organization, the value of their increases of the Board Members, can sell their increases if we make money ever, which we're not but we hope to soon but similarly they have the same type of responsibility as ensuring that the organization is doing what it says it's going to do and that we are serving our community as intended. So, yeah.

>> LJ: Nancy, what about Critical Mass?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Well, I am so glad that David said all of that because we do not have a Board, we do not have a 50123 destination, we have a fiscal sponsor which is another way to do these things if you want to allow people to donate money and get a tax write-off. You can have a fiscal sponsor and then your donors can write off the donations to the fiscal sponsors and the money goes to you and usually the fiscal sponsor takes a percentage of the money and then they are responsible for the funds that the funds are spent properly. So we have to make an annual report to our fiscal sponsor which is called Fracture Atlas, which is I'm not sure if they are international but it's all online and based in New York and they are, you know, their mission is to support

artists and allow artists to do their work and so they take on the fiduciary responsibilities and I thought for many many years or decades even that we would get our 5013 C status and as the years went by, I was not doing it and we seemed to be rolling okay without it and because we don't produce very frequently either, we don't have a season, we don't have a whole lot of programs, all of our programs so far is supposedly there is always a future but so far all of our programs are directly related to whatever project that we are doing.

So, it started to not make sense to me to have that kind of infrastructure and have to manage a board, we do have an Advisory Board and those are people that from various disciplines arts as well as law and finance and my mom who is also—you gotta have your mom or, you know, a close person, somebody who is just there for you all the time but my mother is also in the arts and she's been an Executive Director for many arts organizations and she has a wealth of advice but the Advisory Board are there for, you know, great support in many ways and I can call on them any time to ask questions and get their advice.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Mute.

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>> LJ: Thank you so much, that is important to point out because the conversation for today is the The Building Blocks of an Arts Organization and as David and Nancy have both now pointed out that doesn't necessarily mean it's a nonprofit organization, Arts Magnet for example is a for-profit organization, and again these are just tax destinations and doesn't really say anything about how much the people involved are making. Because you can look at a lot of these nonprofit arts organization and the Executive Directors and the people in charge are making a lot of money. And so, just know that these are tax destinations, this doesn't necessarily speak to the actual amount of money that is coming in, but there are options to be fo- profit, you could do nonprofit which means that you are LLC, but you have a 501 C 3 tax destination from the IRS that I tell everybody if you want to do it yourself, it costs like \$600 and if you want to get somebody else to do it, it costs even more. Or like Nancy, do fiscal sponsorship that is good for people who are interested in doing a project-based model. So if you are kind of working on project to project or like Nancy said you don't necessarily have a season that might be the better option for you.

She mentioned Fracture Atlas, I know that Community Pv artners is a fiscal sponsor and Instant Tier Arts does fiscal sponsorship if you want to look into that. And we have a comment, somebody wants to understand the tax implications of not being tax exempt, is there anybody that would like to address that?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: I can because we're not. I'm responsible for paying taxes on this so any money that does not go through Fractured Atlas is going to go through me but ultimately, I have to withdraw those funds from Fractured Atlas to use in your projects and so I am responsible for all of that, and so I file a scheduled C when we do our taxes and I write-off, you know, I have to write-off everything that we spent, all of our expenses and usually our expenses outweigh our income.

So, we don't usually have to pay taxes, it's basically, you know, it's like money comes in, money goes out and that's it. But, yes. You would be responsible, you personally, would be responsible for paying taxes on that money.

>> LJ: So when you had me driving around town with that blow-up doll in my car for that one show, did you write that off for your taxes?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: The doll?

>> LJ: Yes.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Yeah. [ Laughter ]

>> LJ: Awesome. Do you have anything to add to that, Dave?

>> DAVID MACK: No, Nancy's got it right on point, I'll only say for non-profits, it's important for people to understand and it's counterintuitive but it does say tax exempt, but does not mean we are not exempt from taxes. Non-profits pay many types of taxes. We still pay sales tax and we actually pay all the taxes except for asso...Nancy mentioned the federal income tax so if a nonprofit brings in more revenues than expenses in a given year normally that difference would be a tax on that but for us as a nonprofit there is not a tax on that. On the flip-side, though, for our expenses, if our expenses exceed our income in the year, we don't—you don't write that, you cannot write that off as a business expense in the same way you can for a for profit company and we do our taxes every year and we have to pay someone to do our taxes every year just like everyone else and that is what is funny about the nonprofit system but yep we pay taxes too.

>> LJ: Yes, and in my experience with Maroon Arts and Culture Center...I was actually talking to my mom a couple of weeks ago about the 501 C 3, if we are being honest, I hate how much money it costs to get, to me it seems counterintuitive that I have to pay hundreds and maybe even over a thousand dollars to start a nonprofit venture is like where am I supposed to get the profit to pay for that? So on a principle level, I just really hate the idea but also, I'm just kind of in a place where I'm figuring out is it even worth it? Especially with the way that our current environment is setup, you know, I could stand on a soap box all day in how I feel about individual donations if you don't have a lot of rich friends it may not be worth it the extra step to make sure their donations are tax deductible. If I get 5 donations at a time, I don't know if the value proposition is there, oh, it's tax deductible for the 5 bucks you sent me, I would almost rather—there is a really great book by Adrian Marie Brown called 'Emergent Strategy,' Patricia from Center Theatre Group recommended it to me, but you could rather get \$5,000 from a group of people than 1 person. Because if something happens to that 1 person, you have nothing. I'm going on and on now but these are things I think about when I try to decide if I should go ahead and get the 5013 C or maybe I'm a fiscal sponsorship or a commercial producing venture, but right now we are an LLC and as a nonprofit working toward 501 C status and hoping to get a fiscal sponsor so we can apply for some grants, that is the other thing if you want grants, you have to be, well that



is not necessarily true Nancy, is it? If have you a fiscal sponsor?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: It totally depends on the funding organization. If you are applying for government grants, you have to have a 501 C 3 and for instance, we are not eligible for any government grants, not local, not state, you know, not LA county, LA city, California Arts Council, any of those we cannot apply for, I think we could if we had a Local 501 C 3 but I looked into that as well because that was actually, I had thought about changing our fiscal sponsor to a local organization so that I could apply for local government grants and they said actually you can't. So I don't— you know, I didn't look into that, I don't know what those implications are. Everything else, we can apply for and you can apply, you know, in different ways, you could apply as an individual artist as an individual, you don't have to have fiscal sponsor or be a 501 C 3, if you apply as a company you often need a fiscal sponsor, Corner Stone Theatre Company was our fiscal sponsor for 10 years and that was a great relationship and they would send whatever was necessary for the paper work for that and so there are a number—there are many many grants—national grants, funding organizations that do require a fiscal sponsor.

But, you know, it—you don't have to have your own 501 C 3 and there are many grants that you don't like I say so there are lots of different ways of kind of approaching the fundraising and looking at where the money is coming from.

>> DAVID MACK: And I'll just add that things are beginning to change as a lot of what they call philanthropic institutions are hearing the long overdue calls of equity and racial justice in the arts ecosystem, specifically in addition to our broader society. They are beginning to prioritize making access to funding more inclusive. The nonprofit funding structure was setup in the mid-20th century by an exclusive elite group of people, very exclusive demographic to benefit them in a very particular way, it was not created for those of us here in this virtual room, it was not created for our communities in general and so we are in this exclusive system which is actually really designed to exclude people for most people so you can't get access to this funding which is part of the reason you have these requirements, you have to have a 501 C 3 and audit and have this and all of that and chicken and egg to your point, you have to have money to request money. And now, as Nancy has mentioned, they tried to open things up to make it more inclusive, and this year they tried to accelerate this rigid system to remove some of these obstacles, so the California Arts Council, for example, have made moves to allow fiscal receivers if it's based in California, because it's public funds they have to do it that way, as Nancy mentioned, but also to reduce the match requirement because with a lot of these grants as well, it was, you— if we are going to give you \$5,000, have another \$5,000 coming from somewhere else and that excludes a lot of our communities off the bat as well so this is something that is not just happening inevitably, people are fighting and pushing these foundations and government institutions to do this.

So if this is something and this area of advocacy interests anyone, I definitely encourage you to attend Board meetings of public arts funders because they have to be

public, many of them, and you can go and you can listen and see how they make decisions. And I have been going to California Arts Council board meetings and fascinating if you are into all of this behind the screens arts drama of how things get funded and you can make comments and you can make suggestions and the more we do that and push them to be more inclusive and support our communities that is how change will happen so we can get more access to these funds.

>> LJ: Thank you so much for that confirmation because for the past 3 weeks and Camille will tell you and every time I hop on with her, these are the barriers that I am experiencing this week. But yes, the way that the nonprofit world is structured, there are so many barriers to entry. And some of them seem very, you know, harmless, but it makes it really hard for someone like me who is just really starting out and doesn't have a trust fund and just has a lot of people—like not even that many people, but a core group of people, who believe in our mission and are supportive of it. And I don't have 600 bucks to give to the IRS, not yet, and so it is something that I have experienced and another barrier I have noticed is that a lot of these grants require 2 years of programming in order to get funded and the question is, well, how do you fund those first 2 years of programming if you can't get funding until year 3? And I do, I know that the California Arts Council had a town hall over the summer where they just opened it up to the public about any barriers people were experiencing on applying for grants and I tapped into that one and I made a little speech, it was like 2 minutes, you only get 2 minutes so I have to practice cramming everything I wanted to say in a 2-minute time but I did it but so yeah hopefully it will start moving in another direction. And then as Nancy mentioned, you can also apply as an individual artist so that is an option as well if you are more project-driven you can look for funding for the individual and it's more flexible I believe for individuals in terms of 501 C 3 and I want to talk to you about funding so your organizations of various sizes, what is your number one source of income as you per year, what is your number one source of income? And what other sources of income are there? If you wouldn't mind sharing.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Okay. Are you talking about income for the organization?

>> LJ: Yeah, for the organization is it grants or donation or is it?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: It used to be grants and it can be, but there was an organization called the Flint Ridge Foundation that gave, that had a one pot of money that they were giving to ensemble theatres. And they were the first supporters of ensemble theatre and a real advocate for that model and so we were funded pretty regularly by them for, I want to say 7 years, maybe? And then, they decided—yeah, until 2008, until the recession, and during the recession, and this happened with a lot of funding organizations, they reimagined and restructured and so they did away with their theatre program and I found that to be a trend that organizations that used to fund arts are no longer funding arts and especially theatre. And so, it is—it's pretty slim pickings right now so we have, you know, individual donors, very small amounts of money come in through individual donors and then I apply as an individual artist and I wanted to sort

of say, you know, not everybody is an artist so that is not an option for everybody to do but if you are working with artists that—those artists could apply for a grant for whatever project it is but that money is going to go to that artist, you can't go put that person out there and have them apply for the grant and use it to build a set. But you could use it to pay that artist. So, yeah. That's what I'll say.

>> LJ: David?

>> DAVID MACK: Yeah, I'll piggy back off of that and say that the California Arts Council also had for the first time this year, I think they opened up to provide grants for individual artists and that one is coming up in a couple of months. Before, it used to be you had to be an organization to apply so in other sense in which they're trying to be responsive to the community needs because one of the number one needs right now is that when the pandemic came down, a lot of artists as you know, a lot of artists, very few artists in our community in Los Angeles County are able to support themselves solely through their art so they have to have 2nd and 3rd jobs to support themselves especially if you are coming into this career. And a lot of times the 2nd and 3rd jobs is teaching and front-line service which was the first to go in this pandemic. And to be responsive to that, they are trying to be supportive but for us, there are so many different models, we have organizations that are completely funded by the document in the arts, 100 percent, there are other organizations on the other side of the spectrum supported by other revenue like selling stuff and selling products and shows and merch. For Invertigo Dance Theatre, our number one funding source comes from our Board of Directors, we are fortunate that we do have what they call a Giving Board, a fundraising Board, and a Board that has the capacity to give at a high level. And the Board Members give equitably so we have a give and get requirement to join our Board of Directors, and so you give a certain amount, and then you also fundraise through your friends and colleagues a certain amount on behalf of Invertigo. And beyond that minimum, if you have the means and additional resources, we encourage you to give more to whatever is a significant amount for you on an annual basis and so, between our entire Board that is almost 20 percent of our revenues and that is really the backbone of what supports our staff.

Our second biggest funding source is the government, still at this time, so California Arts Council, Los Angeles County, Department of Arts and Culture, LACDAC, as they are known now. And we do projects in West Hollywood and Culver City and we get support from those municipalities as well. And the third is the foundations, we are proud to be supported by the Dancing Through Parkinsons Foundation and some of the foundations, if you are on the Board of the [inaudible] you get a percent of money that you can spend on whatever you want, and if you get to be friends with someone like that, they can actually direct the foundation to give the funds to your organization. Even if funding may be under a normal circumstance, that foundation may not support you and that is one of the ways. There are some other tools we use, but we were able to get support from the Ralph's Foundation to support our annual far gallery that we do, for the first time last week, and I shared with you last conversation, this online format we use to streamline this really cool online formatting. And normally, we would not qualify for that grant and that is a fun info in how it works. And next is that we get commissions and

then we also, as Nancy mentioned we get love, if you give \$10 a month you become an Invertigo-Go Member and we love you and shout out and we get 1 to couple hundred dollars a month. And it is all of the above strategy. And I will quickly say, with Artist Magnet, since it is a for-profit different model, we have member subscriptions and so premium subscriptions that people pay per month and that is most of the way we get funding. And we also get funding from our stakeholders, our shareholders on our Board because we are a for-profit, we cannot get donations in the same way as a nonprofit because you don't get that tax deduction and you can't receive funds in that way unless you are doing a benefit, you know. You will see a lot of these types of bike to support cancer or some good social initiative, then with that you can use volunteers and also receive funds on behalf of the charity but other than that, it's about selling services so we have to compete in the marketplace and have a product to sell, we also do consulting services that we do fee per service and that is how we get money for the for profit side but yeah, that's us.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Can I add a couple of things? That was amazing, David, I was like—[ Laughter ] What is so great is that it was so well-organized.

>> DAVID MACK: Thank you, the ED mindset, the gear turn when you get into that ED mindset.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: I know, LJ, I don't want to jump your questions but you did say what is the most important roles that people you would hire and then the Executive Director is number one so and David... [ Laughter ].

Is for that exact reason. But I just wanted to say, yes, the foundation—the providing foundations, I did not understand this, we were given a grant from a family foundation because exactly what you are saying, they were able to, you know, people on the board are able to say, I want to give a grant to this organization or this person had no idea that that was going on and that was the David Lee Foundation and it was an incredible gift and the other thing is that the commissions, like CTG gave us a commissioning grant for our work in progress that we're doing right now and those relationships, I think, smaller organizations and individual artists who have relationships with larger organizations who, you know, have pots of money for various things.

And that has, we've been able to raise money that way and keep projects going that way as well as through universities. And so a lot of times what we will do is that we will—we'll fund a phase of development by doing a presentation or some sort of programming with another organization or university and that will pay for that phase. So we did University of Redlands or Claremont or McKenna and many different places and the Auburn Museum

>> DAVID MACK: I love those guys.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Yeah, museums, they have money for programming and so that is a way of, you know, for us, it's been a great way of kind of keeping a project alive over a long period of time is to setup different programming with other

organizations.

>> LJ: I think that is actually a piece of advice I have gotten from both of you independently, is the importance of partnerships and the strategic partnerships. And with Maroon, we are not grant funded at any level and grant access is out of my product, founder-funded and individual donations and we have a couple of contracts including this one with Center Theatre Group as a co-producer of this series. As Nancy mentioned, Center Theatre Group, they are a larger organization with a larger budget, and we can partner with them and the program budget becomes their budget and so that is another way for Maroon Arts and Culture Center to kind of stay afloat, especially in a time where we can't really do too many shows and because we're new, it's hard to get individual donations when you have not done a public-facing show yet. And there is that, and I want to point out to people that might be watching, neither of my guests or myself mentioned ticket sales as a source of income. Just to highlight the point that if you are wanting to start an organization under any type of legal, you know, tax bracket ticket sales may or may not be—let's just be real, ticket sales will not be your main source of income and you have to think about how you will bring in money. I took a fundraising workshop over the summer with a woman named Amber Wang, it was super informative, and she talked about sponsorships and naming right and individual donations and grant foundations and all of these things have to work together to form your organization because if something like a pandemic happens and you are only relying on grants and now all of the sudden all the grant money is being redirected to COVID efforts or if you only rely on individual donations and it's an economic recession and now nobody has money to donate then you will be in trouble so you really have to make sure that are you bringing in funding from various sources.

I do want to ask you all so one thing that I'm really really bad at is, which is why I wasn't able to take David's great advice about the Board, is making the ask. I'm not good at asking people for money, I'm not very good at asking people to volunteer for my organization and I was wondering if you had any advice on two things. One, how do you engage individual donors and two, do you have any advice for making the ask of people to help you and support you? Because I know I asked Nancy for stuff but I'm so awkward when I do it. Nancy, I'm sorry I have to ask but do you guys have any advice for that?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Stop being awkward. [ Laughter ].

I think people want to help. I want to help you, you know? You helped me, also. I mean even if you didn't, I would want to help you. I think people want to help if they see something that is worthwhile that resonates with them—a person, a mission, an idea, an energy. There's a great thing that I heard somebody say, you know, it's do it yourself with others. We can't do anything alone. So I think it's about finding your people, finding the people who want to do, people are looking for something to do. They're looking for a place to put their energy, and I'm with you, I'm terrible at asking but I totally, you know, I think it's so important to ask, you have to ask for what you want and the thing that I always feel and you know this is just like a gut answer, this isn't like anything you can really write down but, what's like the worst thing that can happen is that somebody just

says no, right? Like so what, I know we hate rejection but oh, well, I didn't have that help to begin with and I still don't have it and now there's another person and there was another thing that I just saw, somebody was talking about one of the greatest sources of unhappiness is our sense of things being limited or finite and I think we get into this mindset and I know I do all the time like oh my God, you know, Flint Ridge Foundation, what will I do? Well, that was like 12 years ago and so we've continued.

If you have a mindset of, you know, possibilities are finite, it creates a lot of stress but in fact, that is not the case. Possibilities are infinite but we have to be creative and think about how to access them and I think that's like right now so key is to generate the creative energy to access new resources. New sources of support for ourselves and, you know, like we were talking about this platform, this Streamyard platform and how we're all online right now, we have to as creative people figure out what that means for our work, not just fundraising. I don't know, so anyway.

>> DAVID MACK: 100 percent, Invertigo and more and more in my life practice, I'm trying to think of it in this way, we use the term abundance mentality versus scarcity mentality. And first, I'll say that the dirty little secret is that it's awkward for everyone to ask like there is no—I love asking people for money. Especially if they have money. If they don't, it's a little bit more awkward but even with that, there's always that moment of like oh, you don't because you don't know how they will react and you do have that fear of rejection but my advice on top of Nancy's is 100 percent, if you do find something that is difficult for you and you are not comfortable with, then go out and seek someone else for whom they like doing it and have them come with you. That is a lot of what I do as Executive Director, even though Laura is Founder and holds her own and created the company from scratch and that is no shortage of asks over the years to make her company happen.

But the way that we tag team together, at let's say, a meeting that we're having with a perspective Board Member or a perspective donor works really great because since I love being the one to ask them for money and Laura is very comfortable and is amazing at talking about her art because it's authentic and it's a passion that she is creating. That is how we do it. She talks about the art, and then I go and so you just heard this great art so now, \$5,000 is how much it is to make it happen, wouldn't you like—and it works out great. So yeah, if you don't want to do it yourself, get someone else to do it. It's all good.

>> LJ: So that is super important too, if anybody is interested in development, yo, drop me a line because I need help. I am clear about the two areas where I need the most help but I did want to ask this since you both referenced it, if you had the budget to hire 3 people, what are the most 3 most critical roles that need to be filled? Like obviously, you don't have to have, you know, full time employees as Nancy has shown she's been the full time employee for awhile, but what do you think is the 3 key roles, I only have the money to hire 3 people, who am I hiring? What are your thoughts?

>> DAVID MACK: You want to go for this one, Nancy? Or do you want me to

start?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Well, I mean, I think, and it depends on who you are, right? So if you are the person who really loves raising money, but you don't, you are not an artist and you want to have an arts organization, you might want to partner with an artist but if you are an artist and you want to do your art somehow, I mean, I think an Executive Director, somebody who can manage. And David would certainly be able to speak much more clearly about what his roles are but you know, to raise the money and manage the structure of the company and do the paper work, all of that stuff is time consuming and requires a certain muscle and I think I'm just barely functioning in that role and if I, I think that would be the first person I would hire and then also for me, a Producer, like a real producer.

>> LJ: What about you, Dave, what do you think?

>> DAVID MACK: Nancy is 100 percent right, it really depends on your mission, what your community and values are and what type of art that you are creating as the artist. I'm just assuming from the perspective of the artist, you know? Where do I start? Because especially in the theatre world, as Nancy knows, there are models where the companies are collectively and managing the organization and you have the ED-Artistic Director model and the Executive Director model and I have seen multiple Artistic Director models, and they have multiple associates under them, but they are the driving force of the company, and the fundraising, and the creation, so I think the structure will change and the priorities will change depending on what you want to do but from the perspective of having an organization, right? And it doesn't matter whether it's for-profit or nonprofit in my opinion, if you want to create your own company and run your own company then the first, I believe the first position is really development and I know that will annoy some people.

>> LJ: True.

>> DAVID MACK: But this is the way that our society has been structured. From my vantage point, a company has to be able to sustain itself financially so that you can serve the community, so that you can create the art and people that are trying to create the art without the finances. It's not only very frustrating for them, but it's a block, it's just an inhibitor for them to actually fulfill their mission. If it's not prioritized so I know in many of our communities, there is a tense and mixed relationship with money and with acquiring money and with how money is used mostly, I think again because of the historically the way the system has been setup to exclude people and to make people— what I heard and a really great quote and I can't credit it, that money and wealth being is an antigen to a company and some communities were pitted against each other in a way that people were brought up to believe that if you invest money in this community it will be the worse investment ever and it's just actually going to be worse to give them money than if you didn't at all, so don't support this community. And we're living through the remnants of that system and that gives people a complicated relationship to it, but if you want an organization, that is the priority you want for the good so that you can do this great art that you want to do.

>> LJ: Yeah, I have some grant applications due in a couple of weeks and one of them allows for operating funds which just for the general knowledge of people watching, unrestricted grant funds are kind of like unicorns in the grant world, this idea that they will give you tens of thousands of dollars for whatever you need it for? And I was thinking, what would I do with that money? And the two areas where I need support is Development number one, because I am not a grant writer. Now Nancy is a great grant writer, Nancy, you are. Nancy writes grants and I am not that great at it, my only experience writing grants is from when I was teaching and getting funds for my kids to go on field trips and stuff like that but it's a whole ballpark game when it comes to grants, there is a lot of in-know details and I would definitely love support in Development. And another area where I feel like I'm struggling is Marketing, because I'm a person with a Producer mindset and I like to produce things and I'm also an artist and once the idea has been idea-ified, I'm like, how do I tell people about it? And so that is kind of one area where I also need help. So Development and Marketing are those two areas where, you know, you don't need somebody who has a theatre background for those two but if somebody with a theatre background were interested in fundraising or was like, if you are a person like David and you like asking people for money, and you also are passionate about theatre, consider a career in Development because you can still support art and make sure that good art gets made and also leaning into your strengths and doing what makes you feel confident and doing what you enjoy. And same thing with Marketing, you can be an artist and still want to work in a corporate environment or work for a large organization, or maybe you are a person all about business more so you are an actor or something like that. There are opportunities out there, opportunities for all personality types, and as I was sharing with the panelists before we came on, I am a theatre kid that does not like to act, I'm a theatre person that does not like to act and I didn't feel like until later on in life when I went through grad school and all of these things that I started to realize there are career options out there for people like me, and there are ways I can be involved in theatre and help with art and be at rehearsal and doing the things that we theatre people love to do without necessarily having to be on stage in front of people. So I definitely encourage everyone to think outside of the box. There is a place in the theatre world for everyone.

One thing that I wanted to ask both of you is about physical location, right? I mean the old school model of starting a theatre is you go out and get yourself a little blackbox or something like that. And so do either of you have a physical location and what are the pros and cons?

>> DAVID MACK: Sure. I'll go first with that. So we do have a physical location for our office in Culver City the last we checked, Laura Cardlin, my Artistic Director, we were on a Zoom together and she showed me the office and converted it into a dance studio, our office, and put down the flooring and got the curtains and I think now we have a dance studio but typically, no. We are called nomadic so we rent spaces throughout the city to have rehearsals for our dance and theatre productions. And then when I talked about commissions earlier, we were referring to being presented, so the reason that ticket sales is not a big part of our package is because we will pitch a company, a theatre to give us a contract and bring us in to do the show, the theatre



charges tickets to their patrons generally with an annual subscription season and there are all types of different models. And generally, the theatre gets to keep those ticket sales and that is from them and we don't see any of that money and we get that flat fee from the theatre and that is the typical way we do it. And again, I feel like I will be a broken record here, sorry but I think that it is—there is no right or wrong way, it should really start with what type of art you are creating and what your mission is what impact you want to be in the community and who your community is to dictate whether you should have the space or not, because I have seen very successful models with companies with spaces that don't and I have seen companies that fail that have spaces and don't. And we can talk about the pros and cons of having a space and paying the lease of government regulations and contracts that come with having a space but I think at the end of the day, it makes sense if the type of work you are creating and the type of impact you want to have on your community demands you that you need a space for that community to create that art. Then yes, that is the track for you and it's about how to make that happen, but if not, then you don't need a space. You shouldn't get a space because you are seeing other companies get a space. If your community is about affiliations from different places, if it's more about interactions like we're having and you are excited about creating art on these types of platforms, or if it's about exploring different places and different communities and different sites then that is the model for you. So, yeah.

>> LJ: Nancy, what are your thoughts on a physical location?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Yeah, you know, the dream was to always have a great old space, you know, that we convert from a warehouse somewhere and have a community space and a cafe and a performance space and, you know, books and art and—so that has always been the dream. And, again, I thought for many years, oh, we'll have a space and—actually not that many years—this was a pretty quick decision. I realized that for us, because we do not produce very frequently at all, like only really every few years, it did not make sense for us to have a space, that having a space would turn us into landlords. And you know, and I was just watching different organizations basically put all of their resources into the physical place and you know, how much money they had to raise from small theatres to big theatres to maintain the space just to keep the lights, to keep everything working and, you know, pay all the bills and then you have to start renting it out because you can't, you are not using it, you are not bringing in money, so you need to somehow pay the rent and pay the bills. So then you start having to rent it out and then you become—then that becomes your job which you know that is okay, maybe that is a good way to make money for your company, I don't know. But it didn't make sense for us and actually, we also travel, you know, Southern California and Los Angeles, the City and the County. And it's been such an enriching experience, you know, to be able to perform in all different parts of our community and meet so many different people and, you know, have many different kinds of spaces, gyms and libraries and, you know, museums and theatres and warehouse spaces and so that is all part of, you know, that is part of the art and part of the connecting to the community. And so that has felt really vital to us and it doesn't mean that it's easy because you are constantly having to look for space. And when I

started, one of the reasons I came back to Los Angeles was that it felt very open in terms of that, it was so much cheaper than so many places, especially New York, which is where many people want today go. And I thought, you know, actually, for what I wanted to do, I think Los Angeles makes more sense but it's become so expensive now. Space is so expensive and at such a premium that, you know, again, it's—there is a lot of resources, energy and money that goes into space, no matter what. Yeah, sorry, go ahead.

>> LJ: No, you go ahead.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: There were a lot of spaces that we used use that is no longer available. Is it is [inaudible] with funding, it's not as open.

>> LJ: I really liked what you said about not wanting to become a landlord. Are you right, if you are not producing and is in order to sustain a physical location, you do have to rent it out whenever it's not in use and then yeah, that is your job, is that you are a property manager. So, I would assume that if you had a physical location, that would probably with your number one expense but neither one of you have a physical location so I'm just wondering what is your biggest annual expense, where do you spend most of your money annually?

>> DAVID MACK: You want to go first, Nancy?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: It's artist fees, we spend the majority of the budget goes to people.

>> LJ: That's good. Same for you, David?

>> DAVID MACK: I mean, yeah, if we were to get a space, depending if we get a space, at Culver City which is as expensive as Nancy talked about, then yeah, it would probably be our largest. But it may not be our largest expense if we had a dance studio because by far our largest expense is our staff, as you might be able to imagine. All have you to think about is the math of our annual operating budgets and how many staff is full time and part time and you can see most of the expenses are our people, especially in addition as I mentioned before, making the choice to classify our dancers as employees and our actors and our artists as employees is not as simple as it sounds. There are taxes, there are taxes that they have. To pay their taxes that we have to pay then there is the thing called workers compensation that you have to get which generally companies that provide it and that is if you get injured on the job you get support, it's like an insurance for that, they will not take a company like ours. They will not take a theatre dance company because it's too risky. So essentially, we have been spent to the monopoly of the California's State government website and these people are not artists and they don't understand artists, and we try to classify what artists are doing and they try to classify us into ridiculous classifications and that is the most expensive. But what I see with organizations and the larger you grow, the larger you are, you spend a lot of your time not doing the art but spend a lot of your time keeping the organization going and the funding going. And if you have the space, you are the

property manager and the landlord but it is necessary to do that so you can create the art that you want to create. So in terms of like, most of us on the staff on our day-to-day basis, we are not participating in the creation of the art. And in a lot of meetings that we are talking about it and talking about around how to make it happen but we are not doing the thing. But if we are not there, Laura would not be able to do the thing so it comes to the cost of doing business and so yeah, that is why it's our largest expense by far.

>> LJ: So that means for both of our guests, people, right? Generally, people are the largest expense, whether it's artist fees or as David mentioned earlier, he has several quite a few full time staff members including his artists which is really great because typically artists are treated on a 1099-basis. We can talk about av 5 but I will come back to that if I have time although I wanted to ask both of you about unions. You all employ union artists, is that —do I remember that correctly? No?

>> DAVID MACK: Some of our artists are part of a union but we are a nonunion organization and dance is a little bit different. And Nancy can speak to theatre, and our projects are nonunion. And putting on my Artist Magnet hat on, I am a nonunion project, I don't do those and the artists on me are not on union contracts with my projects. Now they may be parts of unions like you have SAG-AFTRA, and the work I do is not in the union jurisdiction.

>> LJ: Nancy, what about you?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: We have union and nonunion and we follow nonunion rules and depending on where we are. The actors are able to get on better contracts, you know. If CTG produces one of our shows, then they're on a really great Actor's Equity contract and right there, there is a lot of, you know, there is a lot of confusion about what is happening in the digital realm which I'm just starting to catch up to so I'm not able to speak to that. But between the unions, who has jurisdiction of what will be happening on your screen.

>> LJ: I just know it's an added expense when you do bring on union artists and our organization, a lot of the actors and the actresses that we work with are currently non-union but are hoping to become union in the next few years. And so as a business owner, I have been thinking about like how that might effect, you know, my ability to pay them and to keep up with them. I was wondering, too, Camille brought this up, but how much time can, how much of your time, let's just say percentage wise when you are at work which we know is at your house do you spend on fundraising and grant writing is that a big part of what you do or is it—how much time do you spend on that?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: I haven't worked it out, I bet David has but it can be a lot. You know, depending on the grant, I spent a lot of time writing grants. I can spend, you know, 40 hours on a grant and I probably did it wrong if it is taking me that long, but it's extremely time consuming and some grants have phrases and you do initial letter of inquiry and then if you make it to the next cut, you know, that already takes some time and then you make it to the next cut and it's just exponential the amount of hoops you

jump there. I think that cultivating donors and searching for sources of money is ongoing and in terms of percentage and I feel like most of my time is spent on the art but probably in an objective universe but it feels like I'm a steadfast.

>> LJ: That feels like me too, I had a dream of making stuff.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Yeah.

>> LJ: What about you, Dave?

>> DAVID MACK: Yeah, I was joking with Nancy, I said I had it down by the percentage point down to the 10th decimal. No, no. I have no idea. I wouldn't be able to calculate because in addition to what Nancy is saying, grants, we jokingly called grants season which is now really all-year, but there used to be back in the day and in my day, in the 2000s that there was a season. So you would have the year and it would be chill and a grant or two here and then 5 grants would be due and then 10 grants would be due in the same month, and people would go crazy. So you probably have to average it out the whole year and it does come in waves. And I am now in the position of Invertigo Dance Theatre where we are very fortunate to have a part-time development manager who over—way over 50 percent. Almost all of her job is to write the grants, so we essentially have an in-house grant writer. She is also a very valued member of the collaborative team so she is involved in staff meetings and helping to brainstorm art and programming and she is part time, Chelsea, she is awesome. And she is part time with us, she has other lives with other companies she works with in LA and that is her primary job with us. And still, there is a lot of time because grant writing is a collaborative process with multiple team members and we need to know the process, and Laura gets involved, and we have a budget assessment, and we have PR, because a lot of grants ask for work sample and high-quality net and images, and between everyone it ends up being what Nancy mentioned, up to 40 hours depending on the grant of collective work.

For, I'll just quickly say for what I am spending my time on doing is very fascinating and I don't know if this is true for larger organizations like Center Theatre Group, I assume it might be more closer to their world but a lot of my time, I really have become a manager so, most of my day is supporting the staff so that they can do what they need to do for the organization. So I'm getting like a hundred e-mails a day, and a lot of it are Operation Associates that need some support, and Kay needs for and check in with Laura and making sure everybody is cool and everybody knows what is going on and everybody knows the task are. And if anybody needs help, I help them, and that is literally more than half of all of my day. So it's fascinating because when I started with my first job, it was just me. Like similar to Nancy, my first job was to watch the Village Theatre Company in South LA and it was a Managing Director and an Artistic Director and it was just us, and now I have this staff and now I'm like that guy from 'The Office,' the Manager. I do my share of a lot of the paper work but I feel primarily, I'm here to support the power of the team to do the best for the company.

>> LJ: That's awesome. I love that. So if anybody has questions, feel free to

share them in the chat before we wrap it up. I wanted to ask you both, so let's say you are an artist and you have an idea for a project, you feel very passionate about this project and you want to get it made, what is the first thing you should do? Do you think in your opinion? Do you get yourself an LLC? Do you find someone to help you make it? What is the first step in like if an artist wants to make a project happen?

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: I think it totally depends on what the project is. If the project is that I want to start an arts organization, that is way different from "I want to put up a show or make a dance piece," you know, 1 piece.

>> LJ: Give me both. My question is if you wanted to put up a show or something like that. But give me both and I'll see if I did it right, I'll see if I did the first thing I was supposed to do and my organization.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Oh, gosh, it totally depends on who you are in your organization and you know in that scope of the piece, if you are the instigator of the piece, the Director or the Producer, or I'm an actor and I want to be in this play and I have to find a Director and space and blah, blah, the first thing to do is to find what exactly is the vision for it. And then what is it going to take?

Like on a really nuts and bolts level, you know? And if you have a partner or somebody who is interested as well, it really helps to have somebody to brainstorm with and talk about division of labor and, you know, I think money is important. I guess I would say it's not important to incorporate, if you want to do a show, do a show. You don't need to incorporate. It's very easy, actually, I think producing, I don't think I'm great at it but it's like a check list of stuff, you know? And so, the harder thing is the actual creative work. Making sure that that has integrity and you know, you are able to accomplish your vision. And I think what David was saying is like in order to do that, you do need certain kinds of resources but I don't think you need like an official tax, you know, destination.

>> LJ: To start where you are kind of thing.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Exactly, start where you are. You will need money.

>> LJ: Oh, good that is my whole motto with this whole organization.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: You are, that is your motto for everything, you are always somewhere, some things have more zeros attached.

>> LJ: Anything to add, David? Any advice for people out there who either have an idea to start an organization or have a project that they're passionate about and want to get off the ground?

>> DAVID MACK: Just again off the top of my head, I don't know if this is a right or wrong answer. May make people happy or not happy, I apologize in advance, but what comes to the top of my head is, in addition what Nancy said, is that Nancy is 100 percent. So my first advice would be if you have an idea that are you really

passionate about, create a second one. If you don't have an idea, create another one and that will relate to what I'm about to say for your first idea and then you go back to your first idea and LJ, we were talking about how you and I met and I think what you did was not only very smart, but I think really in line with my understanding of your values and your mission, which is that you went around and talked to people about your concept and asked for feedback from a bunch of different people. And that would be my real advice, similar to what Nancy said about the creative process. I really believe when we talk about community and creating within community, some of the most successful projects that I have seen out there, the artist, Artistic Director, before they even decide to do the project, they surround themselves with people who they really care about who are from the community who they respect as mentors and they say, "here's what I wanted to do, should I do this? How should I do this?" And they invite, "will you do this with me? Will you make this happen with me?" And I really, I think that I really encouraged people to do that as opposed to just saying, "I in myself, I want to make this thing, so I will just make it because I know it's the best idea, I don't need to hear anybody else's opinion about it." You can do that, and I have seen success there too, but the real fulfilling projects I have seen is done in in tandem with the community and that leads to the second point.

I would say if what you hear back from your mentors in that circle is that this is not what you should be doing, then be prepared to let that go. Be in a place where you are able to let that go and have another project or if you really feel in your heart that this is needs to happen, do it anyway. But I believe going through that process first is really important because sometimes within that process, what you hear back from your community and support system reveals a better idea you haven't thought of from the first.

>> LJ: Yes, so start where you are and be open to feedback is kind of what I'm hearing, yeah. And make sure that you are not creating in a vacuum because we all know what happens when somebody writes all of their own scripts themselves for TV and it turns out not so great. That is a wonderful way, I think, for us to end the panel. Again, and I want to say thank you again to both of our guests, Nancy Keystone, and David Mack, we so appreciate you being with us and we really got some super valuable information. And I know that Camille and I have been geeking out in the chat because this is all so good and it's information that people don't really talk about enough so thank you both so much for being with us here today. And to those of you who are watching, thank you so much for tuning in. And I have a little assignment for our participants, I would encourage you all to identify organizations and artists whose work you admire and go to their websites and see who is on their Board of Directors and see what their organizational structure is and see who worked on their last event and maybe even go to Guide Star and see what their annual budget is. So as you start to build your own empires and things like that, you can model yourself after people who are already doing it. And I know when I was a teacher, the number one rule was to just steal from other teachers because that is how you get the good stuff. So I just encourage you all to take that energy with you as you start your organizations. So thank you again to everyone and next week, we will be talking to Patricia from Center Theatre Group and Leanna Keys, who are both producers. And it's the Producers Panel next week. We will talk

about what it takes to be a Producer and the producer's job and the many different roles they play and the hats they wear and maybe even find out if some of us are meant for the producer life and don't know about it. So tune in next week and we're also going to talk about now verses pre-COVID so it should be really interesting. I'll see you all next Friday. Thank you so much.

>> NANCY KEYSTONE: Thank you.

>> DAVID MACK: Thanks, bye, y'all.

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