

# Proposal Form — Organization Project Grants

Name:

**Deadline: 5pm, February 26, 2001**

*Please print or type. Make a copy before filling out form.*

\$ 15,000

Grant Request

\$ 79,000

Total Project Budget

Organization Name San Francisco Mime Troupe

Organization Contact + Title Jerome Moskowitz, Development Director

Grant preparer + Telephone

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Check the art form(s) which best describes the work most produced/presented/etc. by your organization:

Dance Interdisciplinary Literary Arts Media/Multi-media Arts  
Music Theater Visual Arts Other: Check the art

form(s) which best describes this project:

Literary Arts Media/Multi-media Arts Music Theater Visual

Arts Other: Interdisciplinary Project, please describe: **Briefly summarize your proposed Project,**  
including its primary goals, location and target audience/ participants. (Hint: *Complete your full narrative description of the Project before doing this summary.*)

In 1999 San Francisco will witness a cultural milestone—the 40th anniversary of the Tony Award-winning San Francisco Mime Troupe. In celebration of this landmark birthday, the company will mount a special retrospective in early December, highlighting its achievements over the decades. The Troupe will invite back alumni from Los Angeles and New York to recreate characters they made famous locally. Talks are now going forward to reunite Peter Coyote, Luis Valdez, Peter Berg, Joe Bellan and the company's founder Ronnie Davis with other long-term and current members for an evening of scenes, songs and discussions focused on the history of the Mime Troupe and the Counter Culture. The retrospective will increase recognition of the Mime Troupe among newer audiences through a focused media campaign and will help to generate an overall organizational surplus for the year to strengthen the Mime Troupe's financial position.

Date project is to **start:** December 4, 1999

Date project is to **end:** December 6, 1999

Authorized Officer's Signature

Date

Printed Name and Title of Person Signing this Form

**1. State your organization's mission.**

The San Francisco Mime Troupe creates and produces socially relevant theater of the highest professional quality. The company performs plays that make sense out of the ever-changing headlines by identifying the forces that shape our lives. The Mime Troupe dramatizes the operation of these giant forces in close-up stories that make the audience feel the impact of political events on personal life by attacking the barrier that American culture has successfully erected between the public and private spheres. To make this work accessible to all, the shows are performed in local parks at a price everyone can afford: free

**2. Provide a brief organizational overview.** Describe the kind of programming the organization has done and does currently. What are its particular strengths and most significant weaknesses? *(Please double space.)*

The Tony Award-winning San Francisco Mime Troupe is a multi-racial, artist-governed collective of 12 members. The company was formed in 1959 as the R.G. Davis Mime Troupe before being renamed in 1961. Over the years, the Troupe has developed a unique style. The standard values of American Theater—subtle revelation of character, intense

psychological truth and deep probing of personal relationships—are practically absent. The company has other values: In 1999 San Francisco will witness a cultural milestone—the 40th anniversary of the Tony Award-winning San Francisco Mime Troupe. The company will focus on shows that connected the most powerfully with their times. Possible selections include the Troupe's first original script, *A MINSTREL SHOW: OR CIVIL RIGHTS IN A CRACKER BARREL*. An important goal is to combat racial fragmentation by doing work that crosses racial and national borders, that by its very existence sustains a vision of multi-cultural, multi-national community. *MILITAIRES* and *THE DRAGON LADY'S REVENGE*, two Obie-winning plays about the war in Vietnam; *HOTEL*

*PROGRESS* includes four decades of free shows in Bay Area parks. International tours, frequent national and international tours, and a politically and culturally unique environment and, although one wears a coat in July, it never rains in July. The Mime Troupe's work is in the Mime Troupe style, and for the fourth year, a highly successful Youth Theater in summer. This last fact alone may have allowed the Mime Troupe to survive doing free shows in the parks. The Project in collaboration with San Francisco State University, the San Francisco Unified School District and four battle to open the parks to public events in the early 60s was the opening of the company's long run. The San Francisco Rock and Roll culture grew in the same space driven by Mime Troupe Alumni Bill Graham. The era of brought together over the past four decades and new audiences. The Mime Troupe will videotape it with an eye taking it to the streets was fueled by Mime Troupe theatrics. Hundreds of actors, musicians, writers, directors, artists towards eventually creating a second PBS documentary as a successor to *TROUPE* (1985). (A segment from A major strength is the collective spirit that infuses all aspects of operations. Each member has an equal voice and all and activists have contributed their art and energy to this world famous company. This event is a testament to them *TROUPE* is offered as a work sample with this proposal.) opinions are weighed before decisions are made. A major weakness was the reliance on funding from the National and their legacy is the free shows that continue in the parks.

Endowment for the Arts, which provided funds for the creation of new work and touring. The right-wing attack on the As a self-producing collective, the Mime Troupe is very experienced in creating theater in many environments, from NEA during the 1990s and cheered a weakness in the Mime Troupe's funding base. But the Mime Troupe has turned a open-air stages in parks to high school auditoriums to high-tech facilities. The company designs, builds and loads in this or each of its last 20 years. In 1998, the company launched a comprehensive, coordinated, nationwide campaign to its own sets and Equity stage managers call the productions. Veteran Mime Troupe directors, including Dan Chumley identify new funding sources and an aggressive new strategy to sustain and increase income from the high ticket, and and Joe Bellan, will direct the individual scenes. the strategy to sustain and increase income from the high ticket, and

month. Five touring packages immigration and the politics of exclusion, buying elections, selling the future and the

The Mime Troupe is now working on securing necessary funding for the retrospective. Ticket sales will account for temporary nature of contemporary employment.

\$20,000 of the \$79,000 budget. The James Irvine Foundation has committed \$34,000. In addition to this proposal, the The Troupe will invite back alumni from Los Angeles and New York to recreate characters they made famous locally. Mime Troupe is soliciting long-time individual supporters, current foundation supporters and several new foundation. Talks are now going forward to reunite Peter Coyote, Luis Valdez, Peter Berg, Joe Bellan and the company's founder prospects.

Ronnie Davis with other long-term and current members for a day of discussion on December 5 and an evening of The \$15,000 grant requested from the Cultural Equity Grants Program is integral to these plans. While many leading scenes and songs on December 6 focused on the history of the Mime Troupe and the Counter Culture. The performance arts organizations can rely on corporate underwriting for this type of event, the Mime Troupe does not performance will take place at the 1,900-seat Palace of Fine Arts Theater and the day of discussion at the 435-seat attract corporate support because of its decidedly anti-corporate stance. The company's prospects for support thus are Cowell Theater. limited to progressive individuals and foundations and local government granting sources.

The past few years have been a challenge for the Mime Troupe. The demise of the National Endowment for the Arts—funded arts and lecture circuit and the discontinuation of the NEA ensemble program forced the Collective to re-think its entire operation, from the administrative structure to the way it tours to the scope of its work. The company has

3b. Describe the Project (*continued — last page*).

been sustained through these changing times by the belief that small theater has a higher purpose, and that when the company does the work that it believes in, that work will have passion and that passion will attract the support necessary to sustain the work.

The Mime Troupe asks Cultural Equity Grants to help it begin its fifth decade by looking back, while also marching determinedly into the future. In 2009, the Mime Troupe will celebrate half a century. It is possible that many of its audience members that season will have first heard about the company through the publicity surrounding this year's retrospective. In an era where art is measured increasingly by profit margin instead of content, the San Francisco Mime Troupe seeks to inspire audiences to take a stand, to be heard, and to make a difference.

4. **What are your organization's goals for this project.** What are you trying to accomplish? How will you measure the project's success?

The project will achieve several goals.

1. Create and present a comprehensive retrospective highlighting the Mime Troupe's work in the context of the social and political trends that shaped the vision.
2. Increase recognition of the Mime Troupe among newer audiences through a focused media campaign.
3. Help to generate an overall organizational surplus for the year to strengthen the Mime Troupe's financial position.

Measurement of goal #1 is subjective and involves an honest self-evaluation of the artistic effort, audience reaction and critical response. Measurement of goals #2 and #3 will be based on achieving a sufficient level of media interest and evaluating income against projections.

5. **Describe the audience or participants you intend to reach with this project.** How many people will you try to reach? Is this more or less than you normally reach? Are you trying to draw from a particular community of interest? How will you try to reach your audience (e.g., your publicity/promotional plans)? Are they already familiar with your organization's work, or will they represent a new audience for you?

The retrospective is designed to appeal to both long-time supporters and new audiences. Realistically, the majority of ticket buyers for the event itself will come from the Mime Troupe's traditional core audience, which is extremely diverse. They are not necessarily theatergoers. They come to vent anger in laughter, to see hateful leaders and ideas satirized, to be entertained, to hear music, to be in a crowd, to get a shot of hope.

Because the core audience is aging, the Mime Troupe has made a concerted effort over the past five years to build a younger audience and the average age at the free park shows is moving downward steadily. Publicity surrounding the event will seek to build on this future audience by highlighting the Mime Troupe's activist past to a new generation of patrons who may not have had an opportunity to discover its work.

The promotional plan is now underway. The plan is to highlight the entire season as a major anniversary of a significant part of San Francisco history. The Mime Troupe's publicist is positioning the company as the last real collective theater, which has maintained a strong, activist focus through shifting political climates over four decades. At present, the Mime Troupe is working on long-lead publications (such as in-flight magazines, Sunset, Condé Nast Traveler). During the summer and fall the pitch will go out to local print media (Chronicle Datebook, Examiner, Bay Guardian, East Bay Express, etc.). The company also plans to create PSAs for local TV and radio.

6. <b>Project Budget Summary</b> (type or print neatly)		Project Starts: 12/5/99	Ends: 12/6/99
PROJECT SUPPORT (Cash only. Detail in-kind support in the Budget Notes or a separate attachment.)			
Admissions and Sales	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Notes Index (a., b., etc.)</i>	
Admissions (describe in Notes how estimate is computed)	_____ 525,000	a	
Contracted Services	_____ 525,000		
Tuition/Workshops	_____ 525,000		
Product Sales	_____ 525,000		
Concession Sales	_____ 525,000		
Other:	_____ 525,000		
<b>Subtotal Admissions and Sales</b>	<b>_____ 525,000</b>		
Contributions and Grants	<i>Individuals</i>	525,000	
	<i>Businesses</i>	525,000	
Foundations	_____ 525,000	b	
Fundraising Events (net)	_____ 525,000		
Federal Government	_____ 525,000		
State Government	_____ 525,000		
City Government (other than OPG grant requested)	_____ 525,000	c	
Other:	_____ 525,000		
<b>OPG Grant Requested</b>	<b>_____ 525,000</b>		
<b>Subtotal Contributions and Grants</b>	<b>_____ 59,000</b>		
<b>Total Project Support</b> (not including in-kind)	<b>_____ 525,000</b>		
EXPENSES (Asterisk items that will be paid specifically from OPG grant. Do not include in-kind support here.)			
Personnel (indicate numbers of various personnel in Notes)			
Artistic	_____ 525,000	d	
Administrative	_____ 525,000	e	
Technical & Production	_____ 525,000	f	
Outside Artistic Services	_____ 525,000		
Other Outside Services (detail in Notes)	_____ 525,000	g	
<b>Subtotal Personnel Expenses</b>	<b>_____ 525,000</b>		
Space Rental	_____ 525,000	h	
Equipment (detail in Notes; indicate rent or purchase)	_____ 525,000	i	
Marketing/Promotion	_____ 525,000		
Materials and Supplies	_____ 525,000	j	
Travel & Transportation	_____ 525,000	k	
Insurance	_____ 525,000		
Other Project Expenses (specify in Notes)	_____ 525,000	l	
Administrative Overhead (state calculation in Notes)	_____ 525,000		
Contingency	_____ 525,000		
<b>Subtotal Non-personnel Expenses</b>	<b>_____ 525,000</b>		
<b>Total Project Expenses</b> (not including in-kind)	<b>_____ 525,000</b>		
Project Net (Total Support <i>minus</i> Total Expenses)	_____ 525,000		
Overall Organization Revenues for project year(s)	_____ 525,000		
Overall Organization Expenses for project year(s)	_____ 525,000		
Fiscal Year ends in the month of ...	_____ December		