May 28, 2013

The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
% Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure
(Successor to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency)
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge your approval of the current program agreement with the Yerba Buena Garden Festival led by the extremely experienced and capable Linda Lucero. Every second Saturday of December since 2004, we, in partnership with the Filipino American Development Foundation have successfully worked with the Ms. Lucero and her staff in the presentation of the Annual San Francisco Parol Lantern Parade & Festival held in the Yerba Buena Gardens and the Jessie Square. This family friendly festival attracts over 6,000 people every year, over 500 parol lantern-carrying marching participants. In addition, YBG festival has co-presented the Magui Moro Master Artists in 2005 as well as the 2009 world premiere of IBIG-Pulse of Desire, a dance, music, escrima fighting arts and poetry performance work about the tragic life of 1970’s Pilipino American poet luminary, Bayani Mariano’s.

Founded in 1985, KULARTS, a 501 c(3)a not for profit arts organization based in San Francisco California, is considered to be the premier presenter of contemporary and tribal Pilipino arts in the United States. Our mission is to inform and expand the understanding of American Pilipino culture through works that address contemporary issues in our community; to preserve the spirit and integrity of ancient Pilipino art forms through research, education and documentation; and to nurture the artistic development of Pilipino American artists. Kularts have presented performing and visual arts events and projects by Philippine master artists to local Pilipino American artists.

YBGF provides a much needed artistic activities and events for San Franciscans and visitors alike, free and accessible to all. Ms. Lucero’s curatorial choices mirror our beautiful city’s diverse population.
I urge your highest consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Alleluia Panis
Executive Artistic Director
May 31, 2013

The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
% Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Honorable Members of the Commission,

As the founding Executive Director of Yerba Buena Arts & Events, I am writing to express my support of YBAE/Yerba Buena Gardens Festival. I started the free programs in Yerba Buena Gardens in 1993, while still an employee of the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. In 2000 YBAE was established as an independent programming entity for the gardens.

Thanks to the foresight and wisdom of the SFRA and City of San Francisco, the gardens continue to thrive. They have created a special place in the hearts and minds of both residents and visitors from around the world. Much of this success is a result of the strong arts programming that has set an inclusive, welcoming, and culturally enriching tone for the Gardens.

After leaving my position at YBAE, I was appointed Director of Presenting at the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington DC. While assessing the field of urban programming, it was apparent the YBAE model was a forerunner of many current initiatives involving arts and civic engagement. As an arts organization working in conjunction with city agencies, the YBAE/YBG Festival is a national testament to the successful integration of arts into a dynamic urban setting. Indeed, the YBAE/YBG Festival has served as an example for other national outdoor art parks and programs, including Millennium Park in Chicago, Discovery Green in Houston, and the just completed Grand Park in LA.

Currently, I am President and CEO of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP). We are the nation’s largest trade/service and advocacy organization for art centers and presenters with over 1,400 members worldwide. In the Bay Area members include: YBAE, YBCA, Cal Performances, SF Jazz, SF Performances, Stanford Lively Arts and many more.

Through my work here at APAP, it continues to be important to recognize the work of programs such as YBAE/YBG Festival. Organizations such as this provide the maximum return on a modest investment and serve the largest cross section of both audiences and artists - all to the great benefit of the community.

I strongly urge you to support YBAE/Yerba Buena Gardens Festival as generously as possible.

Sincerely,

Mario Garcia Durham
President and CEO
May 31, 2013

The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
\% Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure
(Successor to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency)
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Ms. Bohee:

On behalf of the Yerba Buena Alliance, we send this letter of support for the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival and voice our support for the amendment to the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival’s programming agreement to the OCII Commission on June 4, 2013 for its approval to fund programming in the Gardens by extending the term of the programming agreement two years until June 30, 2015 and authorizing $150,000 in payments to Arts and Events for the extension period.

The Yerba Buena Gardens Festival remarkable cultural venue created in the Yerba Buena Gardens emulated by the National Endowment of the Arts as a model for the country to engage urban environments with artistic offerings and we urge you to continue its funding to see the Yerba Buena Gardens and the community thrive. The Yerba Buena Gardens Festival brings such vibrancy to the heart of downtown San Francisco and is one of the most special resources that we have. Bringing world class artists from all around the world, the festival provides the general public the opportunity to see high quality performances that they may not normally have the chance to see otherwise making the Yerba Buena an exciting and educational experience for all people. Through various representations of art, music and dance, the festival is celebrating the richness that exists in human diversity that is of benefit to all of the people who work, visit or live in the neighborhood.

The Gardens Festival with its caring and professional staff offering free programming for the benefit of all adds to the allure of visiting downtown San Francisco and experiencing something unique not found in any other part of the City or the State. The Yerba Buena Gardens Festival is a smart investment for San Francisco and on behalf of the Yerba Buena Alliance and its members; we hope that we can count on your vote to approve the continued funding and to extend the programming agreement. Thank you for ensuring that the Gardens Festival remains relevant and firmly established fixture of this community that benefits tens of thousands of people every year.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Alliance with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Virginia Grandi
Program Director
Yerba Buena Alliance
The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure
% Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure
(Successor to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency)
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

24 May 2013

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing in support of the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival (YBGF) and their superb community programming. I strongly encourage that you extend your current Programming Agreement with YBGF for the longest term possible.

YBGF offers unique, free programming to a diverse audience including San Francisco families and the Yerba Buena Cultural District. Throughout their season, there is always a wide variety of offerings to appeal to all age groups. Because the programming is free, it allows for people not only to experience the music and performers that they are familiar with, but to explore new sounds and styles that they would not necessarily discover if there were a cost associated with the programming. YBGF programming allows for a tangible sense of community in the Yerba Buena Cultural District among visitors, residents and employees in the area.

Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) has partnered with YBGF on multiple programs over many years, nearly as long as MoAD has been in existence in the neighborhood. We have worked together to provide free family programming sponsored by Target for the past five years. Over 10,000 people of all ages from throughout the Bay Area come to the Yerba Buena Cultural District to participate in neighborhood-wide free programming. For the past three years, we have partnered to present a day commemorating and honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on his National Day of Service. This day draws a significant audience from the South Bay as the Freedom Trains from San Jose bring people to the terminus of the Caltrain station who then reenact a civil rights march as they make their way to Yerba Buena Gardens and the MLK fountain for an interfaith service. This free programming day, in partnership with YBGF, has been our highest attendance day each year. In addition to the free programming, we have partnered with YBGF to present a multi-week lecture series with 5-time Grammy nominated musician and musicologist John Santos for the past 5 years.

The programming presented by YBGF in the Yerba Buena Cultural District provides a vibrancy and connectivity that is extremely valuable to the neighborhood and beyond.

In short, I strongly recommend continuing your current Programming Agreement with YBGF.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Gessel
Program Manager
Museum of the African Diaspora
The Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure  
% Tiffany Bohee, Executive Director  
Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure  
(Successor to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency)  
One South Van Ness Avenue, Fifth Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  

Dear Ms. Bohee,  

I am an instructor with City College of San Francisco, Disabled Students Programs and Services. I have had the wonderful opportunity of bringing students of mine from the Arc of San Francisco and Lighthouse for the Blind to concerts at Yerba Buena Gardens.  

It is so great to expose my students to world class music from around the world in a friendly, accessible environment. My students also enjoy “mixing” with the eclectic mix of young and old, persons with and without disabilities, tourists, convention attendees and office workers.  

Yerba Buena Gardens is an excellent venue for numerous reasons. It is close to public transportation, it is wheelchair accessible, there are clean public restrooms, seating is provided and there is a mix of sun and shade. The little details like easy to find recycle bins, a station to refill water bottles, proximity to the Metreon Food Court, etc. make a visit to YBG comfortable and convenient. There are other free music offerings in San Francisco, but none are as accessible and user friendly as Yerba Buena.  

Providing free music is important, not just to persons with disabilities, but also for seniors, children, multi-generational families, people on fixed incomes and anybody else who can’t afford tickets and/or can’t wait until nighttime for the music to start!
I truly hope that the permit for the Festival is renewed for the longest possible duration to allow for continuity and growth. The Festival is already well known as a Treasure for San Francisco.

I hope to make it to the hearing on June 4th but am having some schedule problems (I have a class scheduled to start at 1:00 pm out at the Janet Pomeroy Center near Lake Merced).

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am sure you know that the Commission on Community Investment and Infrastructure is a partner in truly unique and wonderful program at Yerba Buena Gardens.

Robert Fitch
CCSF/DSPS
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(415) 981-7249