
Title **0024** 01/29/2021
by **Nima Samimi** in **Live Arts Boston 2021 - Round One** id. 19036139
nimasamimi@gmail.com

Original submission 01/29/2021

Section 1: Applicant and Project Information n/a

Name of Primary Applicant: **Nima Samimi**

Website URL (artist, group, or organization): **<https://www.muhammadseven.com/>**

Applicant Type: Are you applying as a(n): **Group of Artists**

Career Level: **Mid-Career**

Artistic Discipline: **Music**

Please indicate your primary musical genre from the list below: **Rock/Pop**

Does your project incorporate multiple disciplines? **No**

Project Description--
Instructions:

In the field below, please describe in detail the project for which funding is requested. Address as many of these questions as will help reviewers gain the strongest sense of your project.

***What are your goals for the project and what specifically will you create/present/produce?**

***What is the inspiration for the project? What makes it new work?**

***How is the project stretching your creative muscle or presenting an opportunity for growth or learning? Are there elements of risk or experimentation in the work or the process? What makes it exciting or important?**

***Describe key aspects of your creative practice, process, and methods to develop and implement the work.**

***How does the creation of this work relate to your artistic and career/organizational goals?**

***Who are intended audiences for this work?**

Project Description:

My name is Nima Samimi and I am the frontman for the hard working five-piece Boston-based Iranian-Americana band “Muhammad Seven & the Spring.” I grew up listening to Tracy Chapman’s “Talkin’ bout a Revolution,” Public Enemy’s “911’s A Joke” and John Lennon’s “Imagine,” all playing on the radio, side by side with the pop hits of the day. Inspired by these visionary artists, I write contemporary protest music that is deeply personal, but also deals with broader themes of oppression and liberation.

After many years as a working singer-songwriter, I had a breakthrough in 2016 which resulted in the most prolific songwriting period of my life. This culminated in the creation of our band (also in 2016) and the release our self-titled debut in March of 2019. This Live Arts Boston grant would enable us to record our sophomore studio album, made up of the 10 or 11 best and most timely songs from our substantial new crop of work.

As an Iranian-American first-generation immigrant artist, activist and parent, and I am particularly drawn to the stories of immigrants of color. Our nation’s current military standoff between Iran and the United States highlights some of the major themes of my work, including war, nationalism and social movements. I have described our self-titled debut album (released March, 2019) as a “love letter to the immigrant working class.” These real-world influences behind my original make it uniquely situated to amplify the voices and stories of working-class immigrants, who otherwise are underrepresented on the radio and in live performances.

I have maintained a commitment to building a fan base of working people by playing shows in my Dorchester neighborhood, at free

local festivals, for my own union (SEIU 32BJ) and in Boston neighborhood venues. I have discovered that working people in Boston are hungry for artists who represent them, and people have come out in force to tell us so. It is my belief that this fanbase will continue to grow quickly and that financial success will be born out of our integrity as artists.

This year, during the pandemic and in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd, we partnered with the Boston City Singers touring company (a group of teens from Boston), to remotely record a song of protest against police violence and institutional racism titled "In The Name of Amadou Diallo", which we are very proud of and was written up in the Boston Globe.

Since the release of our debut we have begun to expand our live performances into nearby markets, such as Providence and Western Massachusetts. Our first official music video received more than four thousand of views on social media and rave reviews from Vanyaland, NPR, the Harvard Gazette, Music Connection Magazine, the Weekly Dig (and others) has introduced people in Boston and beyond to our music. Our song "Manifesto" is the theme song of the DC-based podcast "White Adjacent".

If selected as a grant recipient, we will use the funding for the following recording and live showcase projects:

Release of a full-length second album:

Our next album will further our goal of delivering original politically-minded music to the public, which will be made available free of charge through streaming services such as BandCamp and Spotify.

"Awakenings" Live Showcase:

This live showcase will feature primarily artists of color, including music by Muhammad Seven & the Spring and political comedy from Boston Magazine's best comic of 2019 Bethany Van Delft (a close friend of the band), sandwiched around an interview with an important local community member or activist or academic.

"Awakenings" will provide people with an opportunity to stomp their feet to our grooves, relieve the stress and tension of life with laughter with smart comedy and engage in important conversations about local issues such as women's reproductive rights, activism and art, challenges in the Boston Public Schools and more. These shows will conclude with an opportunity for the crowd to share their thoughts and speak their minds - real dialogue on key issues in our community.

Partners and
Collaborators--
Instructions:

In the field below, please describe any team members, artistic, creative, or technical collaborators, and organizational or community partners.

***If you are applying on behalf of a group of artists or an organization, who are the core artistic members of the team for your project, and what will their roles be? NOTE: Here "core artistic members" are the co-owners of your project and provide creative input. Core members are not people hired to provide a service to the project, such as set-designers, camera operators, lighting designers, etc.**

***Who will be involved as collaborators and partners in the creation, presentation, and/or production of the work? What will their contributions be?**

Partners and
Collaborators:

Muhammad Seven & the Spring consists of:

Muhammad Seven (aka me, Nima Samimi) - lead vocals, rhythm guitar and songwriting

Valerie Sussman - harmony vocals and fiddle

Jose Downes - Bass

Patrick Mussari - lead guitar

Clark Goodpaster - Drums

Please provide between one and three work samples. We strongly prefer videos over audio.

PLEASE SEE ADVICE ON HOW TO CHOOSE A STRONG WORK SAMPLE IN THE LAB FAQs BEFORE SUBMITTING!

We offer three options to provide a work sample:

- **You may share one or more links.**
- **You may upload one or more files (links are preferred to uploads for video/audio files, where possible).**
- **If you are a playwright, you may upload up to ten pages of a manuscript as well as sharing link(s)/upload(s).**

Important notes:

****If your sample(s) is/are PASSWORD-PROTECTED, please provide the password(s) in the relevant description field(s) below.**

****The total COMBINED length for all audio and video files must be NO LONGER THAN SIX MINUTES per application. No one sample should be shorter than two minutes. You must provide a DESCRIPTION AND CUE TIME FOR EACH FILE so reviewers know what they are looking at and when to begin watching/listening.**

If you are sharing a longer video (over 6 minutes) but want the reviewers to watch a specific part, be sure to choose and clearly indicate the cue times (minutes and seconds) at which reviewers should start and stop watching.

Work Sample 1 - Link <https://youtu.be/HL9-FduweUo>
to Video:

Work Sample 1 -
Description and Cue
Times:

Cue times: 0:00-2:00

This is a video we made last year during the Pandemic with twenty teen members of the Boston City Singers (<https://bostoncitysingers.org/>), also featuring all 5 members of Muhammad Seven & the Spring: Me (Nima Samimi/Muhammad Seven) on lead vocals and rhythm guitar, Valerie Sussman on harmony vocals and violin, Jose Downes on bass, Pat Mussari on lead guitar and Clark Goodpaster on drums.

In the wake of the police killing of George Floyd I wanted to use the power of music to add our voices to the outcry against institutionalized racism and violence against black U.S.'ers. I reached out to BCS who were very excited to have an opportunity to lend their voices to my song, in spite of the fact that we were not able to do this in a live setting. I was very pleased with the video that resulted and it was widely viewed. The project was written up in this Boston Globe Article: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/06/30/arts/teens-boston-city-singers-offers-summer-courses-centered-social-justice-healing/>

The lyrics can be found under the video.

Work Sample 2 - Link
to Video:

<https://youtu.be/r5Yu9GAOIYk?t=18498>

Work Sample 2 -
Description and Cue
Times:

Cue times: 5:08:18 - 5:10:18

This is a live performance of the song "Blue Collar Math", performed solo by me, Muhammad Seven, at club Passim's Campfire Festival this year (again, due to covid I was unable to perform with the band.) I wrote this song during the pandemic / at the end of the Trump administration and it's about the ways the working class is taken advantage of by monied elites. Working people on all sides of the political spectrum feel cheated, lied to, threatened and misinformed in the current era - in spite of the fact that we can't agree on who is doing the lying, cheating, threatening, etc.

Work Sample 3 - Link
to Video:

<https://youtu.be/vfGpr2raj20>

Work Sample 3 -
Description and Cue
Times:

Cue times: 0:00-2:00

This is a live performance of our new song, "Bittersweet", at the Midway Cafe in Jamaica Plain on and it features all 5 members of Muhammad Seven & the Spring: Me (Nima Samimi/Muhammad Seven) on lead vocals and rhythm guitar, Valerie Sussman on harmony vocals and violin, Jose Downes on bass, Pat Mussari on lead guitar and Clark Goodpaster on drums.

This song looks at addiction - not just extreme addictions (i.e. hard drugs) but to the way that we choose comfort and numbness over facing hard feelings, or facing what's really happening in the world. Addiction is a recurring theme in our work and it's also the subject of our first official music video for the song "Gambler's Crutch" which is here: <https://youtu.be/g95Ayfo029o>

We had a reporter in the crowd the night of this "Bittersweet" video and it turned out to be a really fun show - you can read his live review here: <https://www.musicconnection.com/live-reviews-muhammad-seven-spring-midway-cafe-boston/>.

The lyrics can be found under the video.

Work Sample
Uploads - Description
and Cue Times:

n/a

Work Sample
Uploads:

n/a

Section 2:
Demographic
Information:

Please help us to understand how you (and other members of your team, if applicable) identify. The Boston Foundation strives to distribute its funds equitably, and the information requested here will help us ensure that we have the greatest possible diversity in our applicant and grantee pools. In making funding decisions, we strive for the grantee pool to reflect the demographics of Greater Boston.

How many members
are in your group?

5

Is your LAB project
team comprised of
more than 50% of
individuals who
identify as BIPOC,
immigrants or new
Americans?

No

Race: **Please enter the number of individuals in your group that correspond to each choice below. NOTE: The total of all the numbers you enter in the boxes below MUST equal the total number of people in your group as you shared it above. If you prefer not to answer these questions, enter "0" throughout. IMPORTANT: For individuals who identify as multi-racial/other, please complete that field ONLY for those members; please do not select multiple options for the same person or persons.**

How many of your group members identify as American Indian or Alaska Native? **0**

How many of your group members identify as Asian or Asian-American? **1**

How many of your group members identify as Black or African-American? **0**

How many of your group members identify as Hispanic, Latina/o/x, or Spanish? **0**

How many of your group members identify as Middle Eastern or North African? **1**

How many of your group members identify as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander? **0**

How many of your group members identify as white? **4**

How many of your group members identify as multi-racial in terms of race? **1**

How many of your group members identify as Other in terms of race? **0**

OPTIONAL: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the racial make-up of your group? n/a

Gender: **Please enter the number of individuals in your group that correspond to each choice below. NOTE: The total of all the numbers you enter in the boxes below MUST equal the total number of people in your group as you shared it above. If you prefer not to answer these questions, enter "0" throughout.**

***Cisgender individuals' sense of gender identity corresponds to their birth sex.**

***Transgender individuals' sense of gender identity does not correspond to their birth sex.**

***Genderqueer or Non-binary individuals may not define their identity in terms of binary gender norms.**

How many of your group members identify as cisgender men? **4**

How many of your group members identify as cisgender women? **1**

How many of your group members identify as genderqueer/non-binary? **0**

How many of your group members identify as transgender men? **0**

How many of your group members identify as transgender women? **0**

How many of your group members identify as other in terms of their gender?

0

If you have selected "other" in the above field, please tell us how they identify in terms of gender.

n/a

Are any of your group members immigrants or first-generation/new Americans?

Yes

How many of your group members are immigrants or first-generation/new Americans?

1

Do any of your group members identify as individuals with disabilities?

Yes

How many of your group members identify as individuals with disabilities?

1

Section 3: Further Applicant Information

n/a

Date of Birth: **11/21/1977**

Email Address: **muhammad7even@gmail.com**

Phone Number: **-16**

IMPORTANT-- PLEASE READ:

If you, as the primary applicant for your group, are not currently residing in TBF's catchment area due to a COVID-related move, you will need to confirm that you formerly resided in our catchment area, and plan to return to this area post-pandemic as soon as circumstances permit.

To see the areas we serve with our grantmaking, go to: <https://www.tbf.org/nonprofits/geographic-area-served>

To be eligible for LAB, one of the following options below must be true. Please pick which applies to you.

I live in the Boston Foundation's catchment area.

Street Address 1: **41 Codman Hill Ave.**

Street Address 2: *n/a*

City: **Dorchester**

State: **MA**

Zip Code: **2107**

Is someone submitting this application on your behalf? **No**

Section 4: Grant History and Outreach Information *n/a*

Is this the first time you are applying for a grant? **No**

Have you, your group, or your organization previously received funding from the Boston Foundation? **No**

How did you hear about LAB? **Word of mouth: friend or family**

May we share your information with our external arts partners, in order to provide you with additional information regarding opportunities and events? Your email will not be used for commercial purposes. **Yes**
