

INK NEWS

Volume 41 Issue 11, November 2020

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I welcome Cati Gallardo to the Ink People Board of Directors! She attended the October meeting, and we didn't scare her off. We are all looking forward to working with her.

The board wrapped up the Strategic Plan for the next little while. Since the world has turned upside down, we didn't assign any long term goals beyond 2022. By then, we will have a new Executive Director with their own vision.

Fundraising

The strategic challenge is to build on this new foundation and to recruit a strong base of financial supporters within the community over the next two years.

Financial Management

The strategic challenge is (1) to assess likely financial resources in 2020-2021 and beyond and (2) to recommend a course correction if projections suggest a likely operational deficit just beyond the horizon.

Facilities

The strategic challenge is (1) to assess the current and future space needs of the Ink People and DreamMaker programs, (2) to evaluate potential partners and (3) to find the right solution for the Ink People prior to the lease expiration in March of 2022.

Executive Director Transition

The strategic challenge is to recruit and hire a new executive director and then plan for the transition from old to new.

Board Development

The strategic challenge is to continue board recruitment/development and to identify a new treasurer.

Program Development

The strategic challenge is to improve the assessment of programs at the board level and to start looking for seeds worth planting.

Financial Reporting and Bookkeeping

The strategic challenge is to develop version 2.0 of the new reporting formats, to make the delivery of program-based information so simple that staff can use it for day-to-day management.

We are in the process of reviewing the Funds for Artists' Resilience proposals for Humboldt County. They are very exciting, and it will be difficult to decide on the few we have funds to support. Trinity and Del Norte Counties just closed their application window on 10/31, but at last peek they both had received some excellent proposals, as well. Watch for publicly engaging public art in our future.



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Mission Statement

The Ink People changes lives by connecting our communities with resources for cultural development. We encourage people to exercise their humanity, build civic discourse, and engage their creative potential.



“This building feels the loss of people”

Jackie Dandeneau of Arcata Playhouse on performance in the time of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed everyone's life, but it's imposed an especially oppressive regime over the performing arts. For dancers, actors, and musicians, live audiences aren't an optional component of the creative experience - they are its core. For many, the moment-to-moment lived rapport between performer and audience is the wellspring of creativity and the essence of their art.

Social distancing is especially hard in this context. Attending the theater or listening to live music can expand the mind in good times; during a plague, the comic release or

tragic catharsis these art forms provide can seem more like a matter of human necessity. And yet, coming together in groups is precisely what's not possible at this time.

Performers and performing arts organizations are using innovative approaches to deal with this state of affairs. “Our approach to programming has been shifting on a daily basis,” Jackie Dandeneau of Arcata Playhouse said. The Playhouse office and theater remain closed, but staff have been working to create programming that complies with public health directives while using digital technology to reunite perform-

ers with the audiences who love them. The Playhouse Wonder Wagon, a “mobile art service,” travels to elementary school parking lots and community centers in northern Humboldt to deliver art packets with information about music, dance, and crafts. And in late October, Playhouse staff assembled a synchronous ensemble of performers at outdoor sites including Moonstone Beach, downtown Arcata, and southern California to take part in Intersections, Where We Meet, a livestreamed online event designed “by theatremakers for theatremakers,” featuring more than 40 performers including dancers, musicians, storytellers, poets, artists, and a clown.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of coordinating the performances was addressing “the need for the performers to feel like they were interacting with each other, as well as with the online audience.” The unexpected upside: audiences responded with unbridled enthusiasm. Two hundred tickets for the live event quickly sold; if not for “being limited by the parameters of the Zoom, we could have had more.”

While Playhouse performers and staff were elated by the event’s success, Dandeneau said, the digital realm can’t replace the experience of live theater. She’s confident that a return to more regular performing will eventually take place; until that happens, many performers are fated to endure what she described as “a certain ennui. This building feels the loss of people.”

Social distance and performing arts: a community Q&A

What special challenges has the pandemic posed for performers in our area? Ink News contacted local figures in the performing arts to find out. Responses have been edited for clarity.



Julie Fulkerson

•What has the pandemic meant for performers in our area?

All events and rehearsals have been cancelled. When music (or theater) is your work, creative and spiritual outlet, it impacts most aspects of your life. While it has been hard for all performers, I think it might be most difficult for actors whom by the nature of the work means getting up close and personal. As a violinist, I do

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MONTEL VANDERHORCK III, BOGO SPIRIT



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not have to shout or worry about much vapor.

•What coping strategies are performers and musicians adopting?

I finally put some puzzle pieces together a few months ago when I realized I was spending very little money and that musicians had lost all their gigs. I hired jazz musicians to play for people in my garden for a few grateful masked listeners.

•What adaptations have you made to continue bringing art and culture to local audiences?

We had to cancel the Trinidad Bay Art and Music Festival. It was a sad loss for us, but exponentially more so for the performers. The Eureka Symphony season has been cancelled for now. Since then, I have been playing duets, trios and quartets five days a week in my garage. We can open doors and windows and a few people come and listen to us play for fun.

•What performances have inspired you during this pandemic?

Everything from the Broadway Sondheim special and MET Opera Gala to Lucy Fitz Gibbon and Ryan MacEvoy McCullough (recent performers with Eureka Symphony and Trinidad Bay Art and Music Festival) on PBS. Murals in



Daniel Nickerson

•What challenges has the pandemic posed for performers in our area?

The pandemic resulted in the complete cancellation of all scheduled performances for the year 2020. In my case this translated to the (almost complete) end of my income as a performance artist, which has been my primary employment for the last two years, and a significant part of my income for the last eight years (I'm 28).

•What coping strategies are performers and musicians adopting?

At the start of the pandemic, I became obsessed with the history of American dance music, and the ways that music cultures have intersected with the major consciousness-shifting movements in our country's history. Aided by the library of books, records and CDs that former KHSU radio host Brooks Otis donated to the Sanctuary in 2016, I have been reading, listening, and learning about the people and cultures that created jazz, blues, R&B, country, folk, and the mongrel offspring of all the above known as rock & roll. The voices of the artists who lived through slavery, repression, economic depression, cultural regression, political corruption, and social white-washing have much

“I have been playing duets, trios and quartets five days a week in my garage.”

Henderson Center, and a few art alley exhibits! In addition, I am bumping into a lot of people who want to donate to arts organizations. And I notice that arts and performing organizations are using this pause to re-design and make systems more efficient for the future. When we can, I am sure we will pack the halls and galleries and theaters! After the cultural famine - a feast. *Julie Fulkerson is a community leader, consultant and business owner, and violinist with the Eureka Symphony.*

to teach the artists of today. Acknowledging this history and trying to better understand these stories is essential for artists like myself, whose position in the world as a privileged white male means that I must never stop listening and learning if my work is to be engaged with the consciousness-shifting movement taking place in America right now - not to mention the movements still ahead.

•What adaptations have you made to continue bringing art and culture to local audiences?

At the Sanctuary Arcata, we started a livestream program called the J Street Regulars Radio Hour, where live music is broadcast Monday through Friday from 7 to 8 pm on the Sanctuary's Facebook and Instagram pages. While using screens and social media apps to connect people with live music is nothing like the real thing, it is currently the safest and most accessible way we have discovered to continue connecting with audiences.

“How long will it be before a musician in Northern California can earn a living through performance? No idea, but in the meantime I’ll be...boxing up kale for the Farmer’s Market.”

•What performances have inspired you during this pandemic?

KMUD has been a nonstop source of inspiration, relevant local news, and great tunes. Their news director, Lauren Schmitt, deserves a big box of awards for the relentless work she has put into covering the fires, as well as the rest of the thousand and one things going on.

•Is the pandemic likely to change the way performances take place?

The working class of American performance artists in the years ahead will face the same problems as before, only compounded by the effects of the pandemic restrictions and the recession it has triggered. How long will it be before a musician in Northern California can earn a living

through performance? I have no idea, but in the meantime I’ll be working down at Luna Farms in Redcrest, boxing up kale for the Farmer’s Market.

Daniel Nickerson is an artist living in Eureka. He moved to Humboldt five years ago to work at the Sanctuary in Arcata and has performed around the region with various music groups and performance art ensembles.



Zuzka Sabata

•What has the pandemic meant for performers in our area?

Theatres were the FIRST to close their doors to patrons when the pandemic reached US shores. In addition, existing in a rural area is particularly challenging for arts organizations due to the lack of significant foundational philanthropic support for the arts. The shutdown of all activities that bring revenue in for theatres in our area has been totally devastating financially. Switching to online platforms and video-based performance has associated costs and revenue from those activities doesn't make up for the losses already incurred.

•What coping strategies are performers adopting?

Many people are utilizing online platforms to communicate and perform with their audience

base. Others have used this time to indulge in deeper creative processes, to address much needed internal changes to their organizational models, or to put their energy into other types of work adjacent to the arts, like community organizing. Outdoor events have also been on people's radars, though we have been inhibited until now from holding officially sanctioned events due to the state's lack of guidelines for performance.

•What adaptations have you made to continue bringing art and culture to local audiences?

Dell'Arte International has utilized online programming, activated their physical property with signs and lights, and kept in touch with audiences via email and website communications. Synapsis is in the process of rehabilitating a large community hall to welcome neighbors and patrons once it is safe to do so, and continuing to offer classes in aerial dance in accordance with safety guidelines. Personally, I have been hosting public bike rides and physically distanced outdoor dance parties on the lunar cycle (full moon; new moon) for friends and anyone else.

•What performances have inspired you during this pandemic?

I saw an advertisement for a German theatre collaboration staged in trains throughout the countryside: a spectacular set of surreal and humorous mini-plays and moving installations that passengers could see as they travelled. It was a free gift to everyone travelling on trains - gorgeous, inventive, and delightful. It was produced before the pandemic, but this model could well be adapted to our current restrictive context.

Zuzka Sabata is a theatre professional and community artist living in Humboldt County since 2005. She has worked at Dell'Arte International since 2010 and has been an active member of the Synapsis Performance Collective since 2017.

HC Black Music and Arts Association turns 1

November 19 marks the one-year anniversary of DreamMaker project HC Black Music and Arts Association, and founder Valetta Molofsky is marking the occasion with a socially distanced DJ dance party for teens ages 12-18. On November 20, the Black Panther Club will be opening its doors at Redwood Raks "to celebrate how far we've come." Prizes will be awarded in categories including: most ethnic glow hair style and best glow-in-the-dark outfit. Special events include a crumping group dance-off and a one-on-one dance battle.

The fun is part of the mission at HC Black Music and Arts, a youth-centric nonprofit organization that aims to empower youth by providing exposure to Black cultural knowledge, with an emphasis on cultural healing and community resilience. Its creation was inspired by the Harambee movement, based on longstanding African traditions of community organizing and self-reliance.

Molofsky, who closes her emails with the Swahili phrase "Asante Sana" ("Thanks a lot") is an enthusiastic advocate for the importance of reclaiming traditional cultural knowledge. "Through the Harambee movement (and the collaboration of People of Color)," she has written, "we gain resiliency, respect, self-love, and self-determination."

To learn more, contact hblackmusicnarts@inkpeople.org or visit Facebook: HC Black Music & Arts Association.



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Photo credits and captions in this issue: Cover: Shoshanna (left) and Jessica Vonada perform on Moonstone Beach in the livestreamed performance “Intersections, Where We Meet,” October 17, 2020. Photo credit: Mark Larson Photography. Page 3 from left: Shoshanna, Isadora Sharon and Jessica Vonada during a rehearsal for “Intersections.” Photo credit: Mark Larson Photography. Page 4: Terrie Baune is concertmaster of the Eureka Symphony, which has not been able to perform since the pandemic. Photo credit: Mark Shigenaga and Arcata Playhouse. Page 5: Photo credit Julie Fulkerson. Page 7: Photo credit Savannah Carpenter. Page 8: Photo credit Zuzka Sabata.

In Memory of Kathe Lyth

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Kathe Lyth. About three years ago, Kathe was diagnosed with liver cancer that had metastasized to her bones. After several courses of chemo and trial studies with devastating side effects, she chose quality of life. In her own words in a letter from April 3, 2017:

“For those of you who know me, I am a survivor. My daughters sent me books and books of healing oneself and all that goes with it. During ALL of this I have never once become depressed. That helps a lot.

“So here I am. The CPMC (California Pacific Medical Center) Oncologist research team wants to put me on another trial ‘experiment’- this time with a different type of immunotherapy versus a placebo. No one (even the team) will know what I would get. Well, with twice a month drives to SF in an old car and the fact that I am doing just fine, thank you – I have decided to take the holistic route which I completely believe in: love (lots of it), positive attitude, intuition, herbs and other supplements, exercise, fresh air, silence, meditation, fantastic diet, sense of humor, spirituality, and a reason for living fit who I am.

“I prefer (at this time) not discussing the western side of medicine and my so-called prognosis. I prefer positive people to be around, keep the negativity and dooms-day stuff away. I get up early, smiling and laughing, going for walks in the forest about 6:00 a.m. so as to join the music of the birds and the other wonderful living things that surround me. Life is a beautiful gift, not to be taken lightly.”

Her daughters have promised to continue her work and share her spirit. Kathe founded and conducted the Redwood Coast Children’s Chorus and the World Children’s Concert Fund (for Children Survivors of Natural Catastrophes). Her beautiful spirit and joyfulness will be remembered lovingly.

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