



December 15, 2020

Dear friends,

Dell'Arte is going through a rebirth, a transformation. For those of you who have experienced a birth (outside of your own), you know it can be exhilarating, scary, wonderfully messy, and, ultimately, life changing. That is ALL happening in Blue Lake right now. There is a new generation at the helm, new initiatives being born, and a fresh look at who we are and what we do.

My son, my first child, was born in Denmark 30 years ago (gasp!). It's a long story, but 5 minutes after he was born, after taking a wrong turn down a long hallway. I ended up outside the hospital in the cold. There I was at 3am wearing little white booties wandering in the dark looking for a way back in to be with this new little person, the new center of my world. Since the onset of Covid-19, we've all been a bit lost and in the dark, and yet we continue making our way towards what truly matters.

In this moment of crisis convergence—a pandemic, a movement for racial justice, and economic inequality—there is also great opportunity for meaningful transformation. I know the arts will play a critical role in that transformation. That is what Dell'Arte aspires to do. **Theatre nurtures the ability of people to listen deeply** in public space together. We gather students and audiences alike to look at our fellow human beings and our collective stories with curiosity, empathy, laughter, ferocity and generosity. God knows if we have ever needed this ability in human history, we need it now. And to *keep* doing this, we need your support more than ever, right now, in this moment of rebirth. You have stood with us in it all and we hope you stand with us again through these necessary transformations and transitions to what will come.

And I am choosing this moment to make my own transition out of Dell'Arte leadership. My deepest hope is to see Dell'Arte survive and thrive into the next 50 years of its life. I so deeply care and believe in the work and the people of this place. Now I am 66. I had a medical event in January that scared the crap out of me. I will be fine. But this is the moment in which a clear opening for a new generation of leadership rises and rebirth begins. For that to happen, as has always been the case, we need you.

Not surprisingly, the coronavirus has had considerable effect on artistic projects, community exchanges, school and student recruitment and resources. The generosity we have received in the last 9 months alone has been invaluable to us as we weather the recent economic blows and continue planning for the future, and there is still a lot of mountain left to climb as uncertainty around public performance and international travel continues. Even with a shortage of traditional revenue sources, there is no shortage of ideas and planning for the future. This work is real. It matters. It brings together that rare convergence of amazing art, a great community, and the real possibility to shape the future. **Carlo used to quote Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, "what's past is prologue" and I will add that with your support the next line is ours to write together.**

While our theatres remain temporarily closed to the public, we hope you'll join us for our **40th Annual Holiday Show (*Hansel and Gretel*)** as it continues in a new form. This year we are **partnering with KEET TV** to present the work throughout the region for free. School workshops and talk back with students will happen via live stream and new virtual workshops and presentations are being cooked up. We are also in the **beginning stages of equity and diversity-based advancements** to our professional theatre training courses as well as planning new and continued community partnerships with schools, local cultural leaders, community organizers, and more. Your generosity makes this and more possible. (OVER)

Haruki Murakami writes,

And once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about.

As we walk through this storm, staying connected to each other will bring us through. Your continued support allows us to move forward and rise together towards what matters. Thank you. We wish you and yours a great holiday season, and peace and health in the New Year.

All the best from all of us at Dell'Arte,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Fields', written on a light-colored background.

Michael Fields, Producing Artistic Director