April 8, 2020

Dear Brava Family,

It’s been four weeks of sheltering in place, with our staff and artists removed to their homes, tethered via cellular technology and video chat. And while we are thankful for the digital means that bring us together, there exists a deep void that the coming together of pixels cannot fill. It’s the coming together of people which turns a building like Brava Theater Center into a living, activated space of commune and shared experience: the laughing together at a Marga Gomez performance, the dancing with a crowd at a Bobi Céspedes concert.

We have come, we readily admit, to miss the cacophony of the scene at Brava, where on any given day artists load projects onto one of our 3 stages (or onto all 3 at once!); and where 120 local youth bound between classes in dance and music and theatre, then return later in the evening for forgotten backpacks and phones. We miss our neighbors out walking their dogs or themselves and stopping at our theater doors to check out what’s upcoming, then stopping in to say hello; it’s 5 Markets Grocery and our late-afternoon chocolate run, and St. Francis for anything on the menu, and L’s Caffe for bagels and coffee in the morning, and Pop’s for after-work drinks and special celebrations. It’s the energy of the artists who populate our rehearsal spaces and engage our time (and print extra scripts off our copier) - like Marga and Vanessa and Kevin and Edris; it’s Marcelo and Rodney from Bay Area Theatre Company coming in for their mail and staying to chat. And it’s that fax that comes in every Wednesday morning like it’s 1997 - From where? From whom? nobody knows.

And we miss you, our audience, who leave work early to make a 6pm performance, or brave the Bay Bridge on a Saturday evening – or maybe it’s a Thursday and it’s a packed BART with which you contend. It’s all of you who never miss Marga Gomez, or Black Artists Contemporary Cultural Experience, or Who’s Your Mami Comedy, or have attended every single Son Jarocho Festival over the last 8 years! And it’s you, the ones who don’t really know Brava but come anyway, then tell your friends to come here too.

As Brava’s small but nimble staff shelters-in-place, we are finding that “place” to be far short of what we all built together at Brava. We miss you and our artists, but we’re fortified by future plans and upcoming projects that will see fierce & badass artists back on our stages, and you sitting in the front row.

In Community,

Brava! for Women in the Arts