



Creating Community through Celebration

2501 Harrison Street
Oakland, CA 94612
510-452-9334
www.californiarevels.org

Hello Revelers!

You might remember me from the 2014 Christmas Revels: “An American Journey” but my history goes back even further. In fact, I had the honor of originating The Fool character when California Revels first started, and I performed as The Fool for close to a decade! I was proud to call Lisby Mayer and Jack Langstaff friends, and watched as they masterfully guided Revels. It was a privilege to be a part of the Revels in the '80s and '90s.

I cherish the feeling of community and belonging, and the magic that occurs when people from diverse cultures and experiences come together to celebrate the holiest day of the year. I witness my own spiritual traditions spring to life on the stage. For me, it is a religious experience of sorts. In my experience, Revels is an awakening of ancient, profoundly powerful rituals that energize and unite both audience and performer.

Needless to say, I was hooked. I remember telling Lisby that any time she or Revels needed me for anything just call. I was true to my word and I never missed the call. This year the Revels called for me for a bigger role, the role of Artistic Director.

This is no small matter to me. Revels has a decades-long tradition of bringing not just entertainment but artistically inspired performances to generations of viewers. Following in the footsteps of David Parr, Lisby Mayer and Jack Langstaff, I know I have extremely big shoes to fill! They all had bold visions for Revels! Jack envisioned spreading the traditions from Cambridge, Massachusetts to cities all over the country in an effort to awaken the slumbering memory of humanity. Getting them to remember the ancient traditions was his goal! Lisby expanded California Revels into the community and created accessibility to a wider audience. She pulled in performers from around the globe to come and take part in the Revels experience. David Parr kept the traditions consistent throughout the ups and downs.

We are currently experiencing unsettling times of civil unrest: political division, racial inequality, and a worldwide pandemic. It's during times of struggle that humans shine the most. As the

world pulls further apart, our resolve to unite during Yuletide grows stronger. I believe we must remind others that we come to one Mother Earth, and through her we are forever bonded.

To this end, creating a culture of togetherness, magic, joy, and wonder is what I am envisioning! I also see a series of year-round educational classes from grade TK through 12 to bring up the next generations of Revelers. We must widen our network and explore traditions never before seen at Revels. Yuletide and the Solstice are celebrated by traditions all over the world. What an opportunity to bring those inspired celebratory traditions to our stages. Imagine what wonderful things we could learn!

The way of viewing entertainment is forever changed and I believe we must also make that transition in order to carry Revels Traditions further. The full use of media in all of its expressions will also be added. Viewing has now become multidimensional and it will serve to bring a wider audience.

I've been told by a teacher of witchcraft the following quote. "You can't curse the roots and bless the fruits of a tree." He meant to say that we must always remember and bless our ancestors. Give reverence to those that came before us. The past sustains the present and propels the future. In West Africa the Asanta people have symbols called Andrinkas. They represent statements or blessings that are sewn on their clothes or painted on their homes. One of those Andrinkas is called Sankofa. It's an image of a goose whose head is looking back. It reminds us to look back to the past as we go forward.

With Reveling,
Rene Collins

Artistic Director

