



New York, May 31st, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

Letter of Endorsement for *Embracing the Root* Collaboration Project 2023

In my capacity as Cultural Attaché of Denmark in New York, it is my pleasure to offer this letter of endorsement testifying to the Consulate's continued support of the *Embracing the Root* project, its artists and partner organizations, and their combined efforts to establish a collaboration to present the finalized artistic production to be premiered in Copenhagen and New York during the 2023-2024 season.

Embracing the Root is a new artistic work-in-progress created by Danish actress and singer Lotte Arnsbjerg together with US composer and musician Carman Moore. The collaboration combines multiple disciplines and methodologies: from contemporary opera and improvisational music, over dance and puppetry, to neurology and brain science.

Through its many impactful partnerships in Denmark and the United States, *Embracing the Root* aims to engage and inspire audiences on both sides of the Atlantic to take action – individually as well as collectively – in regards to the most pressing challenges of the 21st century, including the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis and the mental health crisis. The work helps create awareness about the urgency of reaching the global goals for CO2 reduction as set out in the Paris Agreement, and – by extension – to explore personal and political responses to the social aspects of our present-day challenges.



The Consulate General of Denmark in New York recognizes the unique potential of art to generate crucial knowledge and buy-in for the global climate agenda, as well as the importance of supporting the development of new, multi-disciplinary work such as the *Embracing the Root* project. Through our advising services, professional networks and co-promotional activities, the Consulate has supported *Embracing the Root* through non-monetary means to conduct a series of salons and workshops in New York during the spring of 2023. The purpose of these efforts has been to help the project team establish a strong partnership organization in the US, which includes notable New York cultural institutions such as Park West and Judson Memorial Church, as well as leading scientific institutions such as The Lieber Institute for Brain Development at Johns Hopkins University.

The Consulate looks forward to following *Embracing the Root* as the project continues to develop. I warmly recommend *Embracing the Root* to prospective partners, funders and audiences.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information.

Sincerely,

Maiken Tandgaard Derno
Cultural Attaché of Denmark in New York
maider@um.dk / +1 212-223-4545



EMBRACING THE ROOT

in collaboration with Bæredygtigt Kulturliv NU (Sustainable Cultural Life NOW)

“If theatre is to be part of the most vital conversation humanity faces, then it has to change”

About “Sustainable Cultural Life NOW” (SCL NOW)

SCL NOW is the leading non-for-profit organization in Denmark, who works specifically with theaters, concert venues, symphony orchestras, museums, other cultural institutions and the cultural sector at large with the green transition. In January 2020 they initiated the first green movement in the performing arts industry and engaged more than a hundred theaters/theater institutions in the first steps towards a future with sustainable theater and performing arts. They work on three levels:

1. specific guidance and consulting to create sustainable art/cultural productions
2. strategic, systemic and organizational change within a cultural institution
3. political lobbying, activism, Cultural Climate Salons

In February 2022 they launched the first Danish online platform with a CO₂-calculator designed for the performing arts industry. Here you can measure CO₂-emissions and share your climate initiatives with the rest of the cultural sector. The platform is called www.beregninghandling.nu (translates to www.calculateaction.now). More than 50 theaters and cultural institutions are using this platform to measure their baseline, use of resources, water, electricity, transport, food etc. - and to create climate reports for documentation.

In the first months of 2023 they launched the first Danish translation of Theatre Green Book, they launched a new platform for the whole cultural sector - a platform for knowledge sharing, cultural climate action and engagement (www.baeredygtigtkulturiliv.nu).

They are Eco Managers in the 3-year long ambitious Creative Europe project “Moving Identities” (<https://www.movingidentities.eu/>) and they are helping the municipality of Aarhus to create a so-called “Climate Manual for artists and the cultural sector”.



How we will integrate Theatre Green Book in the project

We're living in a climate crisis. The Green Book is an initiative by the whole of theatre – working with sustainability experts Buro Happold – to work more sustainably. In three volumes it sets standards for making productions sustainably, for making theatre buildings sustainable, and for improving operations like catering and front of house.

Theater Green Book has been developed and supported by a number of prominent theaters, theater institutions and foundations in England and Scotland - in particular the National Theater in London. The TGB is the most thorough and specific handbook for sustainable theater production ever made. With this handbook we can actually create real change in the performing arts industry when producing art.

Sustainable Cultural Life NOW can be “Eco Managers” for the project “Embracing The Root” and contribute to creating the following:

- a sustainability strategy for the production
- a concrete climate action plan for the production
- eco mapping of the transport and traveling for the project (good for documentation and when you write the final report)

We must make concrete, conscious choices in relation to CO2 reduction on production, traveling and communicating, especially when it involves people from several countries.

Optional activities by Sustainable Cultural Life NOW

- Eco managers of the project “Embracing The Root”
- Create an Eco Travel Map of the mini-tour in the US (oct. 2023)
- Facilitating/hosting a “Cultural Climate Salon” in Denmark and in the US.
- Facilitating a workshop on Theatre Green Book in New York.



LIEBER INSTITUTE *for*
BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
MALTZ RESEARCH LABORATORIES

January 13, 2023

The Danish Art Council

To whom it may concern,

The Lieber Institute for Brain Development, located in Baltimore, MD, US, is pleased to be a supporter of Danish artist Lotte Arnsbjerg and American composer, Carmen Moore's, newest work, *Embracing the Root*. This artistic work has much promise and we are very excited for the continuing development of this work to happen in the coming months in the United States and Denmark. In February of 2022, Lieber Institute faculty and staff participated in a planning session for *Embracing the Root* in preparation for the premiere in the United States and Denmark.

To allow Ms. Arnsbjerg and Mr. Moore to continue with this important work they are seeking funding from The Danish Art Council to support the fall premiere performances of *Embracing the Root*. We are pleased to be a partner in this effort and to provide this letter of support for their funding application. In addition, it will also be my absolute pleasure to participate in the premiere in person in the fall of 2023.

The faculty here at the Lieber Institute are interested in *Embracing the Root* from a scientific perspective involving brain function and the exploration of the role of art in healing and mental health. Researchers here have provided in-kind support for the project by participating in *Embracing the Root* planning sessions and meetings and by offering advice on the content of *Embracing the Root*. In 2023, the Institute will provide in-kind support to help promote the premiere here in the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel R. Weinberger', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Daniel R. Weinberger, MD



Director and CEO, Lieber Institute for Brain Development

LIEBER INSTITUTE FOR

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Professor of Psychiatry, Neurology, Neuroscience and Genetic Medicine

MALTZ RESEARCH LABORATORIES

Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine



13/1 2023

Brønshøj Vandtårn

Brønshøjvej 29

2700 Brønshøj

Samarbejdserklæring

Brønshøj Vandtårn har indgået et samarbejde med skuespiller og kunstnerisk leder Lotte Arnsbjerg om opførslen af en musikdramatisk interaktiv forrestilling *Embracing the Root* i august og september 2023. Lån af vandtårnet repræsenterer en værdi af cirka 20.000 kr i den pågældende periode og vi kan desuden være behjælpelige med udlån af et prøvelokale i Kulturhuset Pilegården, hvilket udgør en værdi af cirka 6000kr.

Mvh. Jenny Marie Kruse, Kulturkoordinator



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Daniel R. Weinberger, MD



LIEBER INSTITUTE *for*
BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
MALTZ RESEARCH LABORATORIES

Director and CEO, Lieber Institute for Brain Development

Professor of Psychiatry, Neurology, Neuroscience and Genetic Medicine

Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine



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ARTIST RESIDENCY COMMITMENT LETTER

January 14, 2023

To whom it may concern:

This is to confirm that The Center at West Park (CWP), intends to engage Carmen Moore and Lotte Arnsbjerg to perform the New York premiere of their new opera EMBRACING THE ROOT at CWP in October 2023. The company will rehearse and perform this contemporary opera based on the connection between trees and human survival with live music, dance, and puppetry for four public performances at CWP's Sanctuary Space on October 5-7, 2023 as part of CWP's Performing Artist Residency Program.

The Center at West Park is a community performing arts center based in the historic West Park Presbyterian Church, a New York City landmark. CWP is a secular, 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. We present diverse, engaging, and boundary-pushing early-career and established artists through our artist residency programs, provide affordable rental space for artists to develop their work, and steward the restoration of our historic home's landmark exterior.

Carman Moore and Lotte Arnsbjerg are award-winning musicians and composers who are longstanding members of our local community. Their previous collaboration, Arnsbjerg's song cycle GIRL OF DIAMOND MOUNTAIN, was performed at CWP. Together, they have developed EMBRACING THE ROOT at CWP over several years and multiple residencies, beginning in February 2020 and most recently with a work-in-progress performance on August 26 & 27, 2022. We are delighted to welcome them back to present the completed work in 2023.

As part of their performance residency at CWP in 2023, the artists will receive a performance fee of \$2,500 plus 50% of the net box office proceeds after recoupment. They will also receive in-kind support valued as follows: \$7,000 for performance & rehearsal space (2 weeks in Sanctuary Space); \$250 for technical support; \$600 for videography; \$100 for promotional materials; and \$400 for front of house staff, for a total of \$8,350. The combined financial and in-kind support is valued at \$10,850 total.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Regards,

Zachary Tomlinson, Artistic Director



PETER YARROW
27 W. 67 ST.
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10023

Oct 3, 2022

Letter of enthusiastic support for ***Embracing the Root, the Opera***

Let me offer my congratulations to all those who helped to create and mount **Embracing the Root, the Opera**, at West Park, in New York City, Aug. 26 & 27, 2022.

I can say with open heart and greatest appreciation, that the efforts in which I joined with Lotte Arnsberg and Carman Moore, the writers and composers of **Embracing the Root**, created a dramatic and musical presentation that is not only unique in my experience, but also prophetic in that it shares, through the arts, the imperative of human beings adopting the ways of the roots and fungi who cooperate, nurture each other and form a community that is able to help one another, sustain and survive.

The extraordinary way in which this production was received by the audience was demonstrated by their rapt attention, their standing ovations and the prolonged, animated discussions following the performance. There was excitement and there were tears as they shared their feelings about how meaningful and powerful the work was.

Their consensus was that *Embracing the Root, the Opera* carries the message that all people of the world need to embrace, and for which we must advocate, if the human species, not to mention the roots and trees and fungi and all other living things on earth, are to survive.

This work, to me, the highest form of art in that it not only conveys beauty, skill and richness of creativity but also dedicates itself to helping the world become a better place – in this case, it advocates not just for a better world, but for the very survival of the planet.

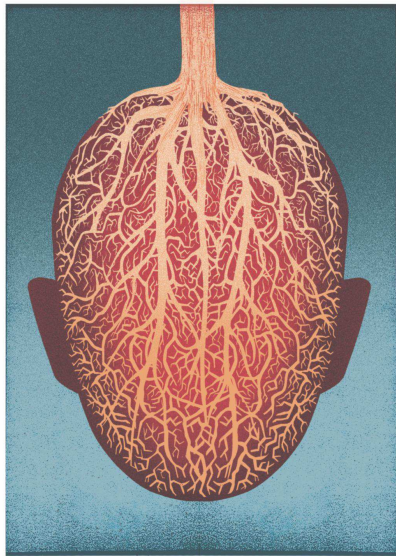
I can say, of all my efforts in current times, burdened as we are by the weight of war, strife, the ascent of tyrannical leadership in more and more countries, **Embracing the Root, the Opera**, is, I believe, the purest and most viscerally effective work I have encountered in recent times that communicates a crucial message, brilliantly, through music and drama.

I can offer no higher praise for a creative work, today, than to **Embracing the Root, the Opera**.

Sincerely and respectfully,

Peter Yarrow

Peter Yarrow is a performer, a member of the American folk group, Peter, Paul and Mary for 50 years, as well as a producer of records, films, TV shows and advocacy gatherings for peace and justice, Civil Rights and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement in venues as large as Madison Square Garden and Shea Stadium in NYC, as well the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC for 500,000 people for the Anti-Vietnam War Movement in Nov. 15 1969.



EMBRACING THE ROOT

For years the question of whether plants possess a nervous system has been debated. However, scientists now know that trees are capable of facilitating their communication, retaining memory and even learning through their own special nervous system. It is becoming more evident that trees process and transmit electrical signals, carrying a neurobiology that would prompt them to have a nervous system.

To highlight some connections that Embracing The Root recognizes with that of the neurobiology of trees , let's expand on three main points. All of these are focused on trees and their roots, stress and communication, and fungal relationships.

The first point will state that connection prompts growth. Connection is a collective effort, coming from interconnections with all subsystems of a working entity. However, connections may also refer to those

outside an entity. For instance, trees take part in an outreach process defined by mycorrhizal networks. Most recently, trees have been found to not only possess the ability of self regulation but also proven to take part in the regulation of other trees. Trees that live together help each other. This is because of the intrinsic communication system they have developed. Through the process of isotope tracing, scientists have determined that trees that live together are capable of sending the necessary resources, including nutrients, to other trees in need- via their roots. This intercommunication not only aids the trees in need, but have also shown to increase resiliency in all trees. Mycorrhizal networks, which are built amongst trees, are the ones facilitating tree resilience. To add into this relationship between trees, a technique called allelopathy explains how trees communicate amongst themselves to warn each other about invasive predators.

For our second point, we will establish that neuron connections and root connections are similar in structure and function. The vehicle of all neuron connections are recognized as dendrites. Dendrites are projections from a nerve cell, derived from the Greek word Dendron for “tree”. From such derivation, we can deduce that roots from a tree and nerves from the nervous system (neurons) are similar in structure and function. Similarly, they both take stimulation, are adaptive in their pathways, possess a memory and have the ability to learn. Because roots and neurons are affected by an environment of stimulation we will discuss stress in our third point.

We have stated that tree development is not static, since roots of a tree develop new pathways to form stronger connections, such as our own human brain. In the case of stimulation, we will pose the example of watering. If a tree is under watered, the tree will not flourish. Conversely, if a tree is overwatered, it will wilt. We can see a related

Science notes by Neuroscientist, Biochemist & ETR partner Sofia Hidalgo.

effect on the human condition. Place a human under an overstimulation of stress, and he/she will suffer and become unhealthy.

To conclude, it is important to note that in order for a tree and human to be healthy, there must be a symbiotic relationship with microbes such as fungi and bacteria. In trees, the mycelium or fungal threads in fungi help trees acquire vital minerals. The human microbiota also maintains homeostasis in the body. It is always necessary to refer back to the basis of human survival strategies. Human survival strategies go back to single organisms such as fungi, which have the ability to close their outer wall in the presence of harmful substances or non nutritional value. Trees, their roots, and the communication system they carry are all connected to stimulation and fungal relationships.

The human brain has developed to be a communication system that is connected to our own biological nature, but also a nature beyond the whole human entity.

About Sofia and her involvement in Embracing the Root project:

Embracing the Root involves a scientific understanding about the human brain and the biological systems of trees and fungi. To facilitate a scientific understanding for the audience, Sofia will engage the audience with questions and discussions about the interconnections of the project and science. Topics of discussion related to neuroscience will include but are not limited to: brain motor systems and coping mechanisms, stress responses of the human body, the amygdala and emotional wellbeing. For the biology of trees and fungi, topics of discussion will include tree communication, symbiotic organisms and processes, and nature's stress responses. Lastly, both fields will be brought together in discussion to relate them in their similarities as well as their symbiotic and beneficial relationship.

Education: Having received her **Bachelor's degree in Biochemistry** with a concentration in **STEM Education and Neuroscience in Research** from **The University of Texas at Dallas**, Sofia Hidalgo continues to aspire to further her education in the emerging field of Educational Neuroscience. Her main interest lies in the educational field and in incorporating research-based practices in the areas of learning, memory, and cognition. She has dedicated her work to **Adolescent Reasoning and Cognition** investigation with **The Center for Brain Health- Dallas**. She has also conducted **Neurolinguistic Research** for the **Callier Center for Communication Disorders**. Sofia's goal focuses around promoting brain health by gaining a better understanding of the human connectome network and developing research driven metacognitive practices.