

Should the Arts Have a Social Agenda?

Not Just Yes. Hell Yes.

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To be selected for the James Madison Award by Princeton is not just an incredible honor, but the honor of a lifetime. It's also a bit overwhelming. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

What I have been part of in New Jersey—in Newark—was not a one-man show. If ever there were a team play, this was it. And many of those team members were Princetonians.

[Ask “NJ PAC Princeton graduates” to stand]

This is not an arts-for-arts sake lecture. But it is not the opposite either. I love the arts—I'm one of those people who would list music as among the five things that make life worth living. Possibly tonight at the graduate college dinner, particularly after the toasts, ask me and I might tell you what my other four are.

What I do want to talk about this morning is the power that I believe the arts have to make a real difference in the world, in our society, in our cities, in our children, and in the way we lead our lives. In other words, the *instrumental* value of the arts.

I'll start with two stories, one happy, one tragic.

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, when it was conceived by Governor Tom Kean in the late 1980's was called, among those who were polite, the “impossible dream.” Others called it a folly, a great white elephant . . . and worse.

Well, the white elephant finished its first season in June of 1998 and what a season it was! Between the September grand opening and June, more than a half a million people had attended 400 performances and events . . . at the Arts Center that no one would ever go to. There were no muggings, no cars were stolen. Perhaps it was first season hyperbole when it was said that New Jersey had created something that would someday stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Kennedy Center and Lincoln Center. But we didn't run away from that comparison.

By June, the staff was absolutely exhausted. Some of us had had experienced in designing and building performing arts complexes, but actually running one was another thing. To this day, I'm not sure exactly how, we came out all right. But let me tell you we were tired.

During July, our first breather, someone pointed out that we had never gotten the whole staff together to talk about the shared experience of a successful first season. So we gathered everyone in our small 500-seat Victoria Theater. On the stage was the usual parade of suits, including yours truly, lined up to address the staff: to talk about attendance, the budget, the incredible demographic mix of our audience, and so forth. Our approach was factual and analytical (and crushingly boring I'm afraid).

When the speeches droned to a close, someone had the good sense to ask whether anyone on the staff had anything additional to say. The floodgates were thrown open. One after another we heard stories—not statistics, but stories—emotional stories of how NJPAC had impacted the lives of the people, the ordinary people who were the ushers, the stagehands, the box office attendants, the security guards. Naima Nguvu said she had been a student at University High School in Newark when NJPAC was being planned and built and dreamed, one day, she would work there. Naima became a successful Program Coordinator in our Arts Education Department.

Others told their stories as well, touching stories. But the moment that no one in the Victoria Theater that day will ever forget came when Bernice Johnson, almost 80 years old, got up from her seat and said this:

“I spent my life working in the Newark school system and retired as a vice principal. Because of how far my City had fallen, I stopped telling people I was from Newark. I said I was from northern New Jersey. I stopped going downtown—I had no reason to go downtown. And then NJPAC opened. Now, for the first time in two decades, I go downtown to usher at NJPAC and I'm so proud to tell people where I'm from.”

There was not a dry eye in the house. Our collective exhaustion came pouring out as raw emotion. A face, an incredibly touching and human face, had been put on what we had all been through. A long-time Newarker who possibly had never attended a full performance of an event she ushered, had had her life transformed by the performing arts.

The second story is as tragic as the first is happy. As NJPAC was preparing to celebrate its tenth anniversary last year, Newark suffered a multiple murder, an execution of three young college students, so horrific that many truly began to question whether progress was being made in our City. In the playground of the Mt. Vernon School, in the leafy, suburban-looking Ivy Hill neighborhood, on the night of August 4th, four young people, kids, good kids, college kids, were systematically shot in the head. Three died instantly. One girl miraculously survived.

What do these unspeakable killings have to do with the social agenda of the arts? The Mt. Vernon School was set to reopen for the fall term on September 5th—only 32 days after the murders. Children, kindergarten through 8th grade, would be let off their busses to march through the very playground that had been a killing field—only weeks earlier. How would the children react? What could be done to help?

Counselors from the Newark school system's Division of Social Work were mobilized. So were other outside specialists. They were there awaiting the students when the fall term opened. Also, awaiting the students was a team of trained, highly trained, drama therapists. These experienced professionals provided a structured and constructive forum in which administrators, teachers and, above all, 400 kids could work through their feelings.

Seventeen 40-minute sessions were conducted over two days. It was an overwhelming success. Teachers, students, and parents all agreed that the Mt. Vernon School had done a good job in diffusing the school community's anxieties and apprehensions. The drama therapy was judged the most useful of the options. I am very proud to say that this program was conceived,

funded, and implemented, with almost no lead time, by the Arts Education Department at NJPAC.

These two stories are very human, very personal. They both speak to transformation and how the arts were the vehicle for transformation.

There are other ways, many ways that the arts can transform.

This morning I am going to address three: how the performing arts can influence child development, social intercourse, and the evolution of our cities.

The Arts & Personal Transformation

Before addressing the arts and children and the arts and cities, I want to give you my view on how the arts can alter personal behavior, social intercourse—how we relate to each other and to our worlds. This is where I will argue that the arts, particularly the live performing arts, can attack, head on, what I will call “THE GREAT TUNE OUT”—the phenomenon of electronic relationships which, in my view, has increasingly devalued our social intercourse in this the early part of the 21st century.

How many of you out there have lap top computers? How many have blackberries? How many text message? How many check your blackberries at meetings? While you’re pretending to listen? At dinner? At concerts? At bedtime?

It would be absurd to argue that these huge technological innovations have not, in some ways, made life easier for us. But don’t you also think that these devices of instant communications can also be isolating, dehumanizing? That they represent the antithesis of living in the moment.

To me, email is often not real human communications. It is a veneer of information exchange posing as human communications. Just ask somebody who's met their date through the internet whether the electronic foreplay was an authentic representation of the actual person. Text messaging may be worse. Faux communications, like prehistoric grunts communicated through the Ethernet.

iPods. Someone listening to music through an iPod not only cuts him or herself off from the world and retreats to an inner, isolated sanctum, but the quality of what they're hearing is not even very good. Digital compression has seen to that. So what the home stereo does to diminish the live concert experience, the iPod does to the home stereo.

What is happening, in my view, is that convenience is defeating quality. We see it all over. Next time you're pleading "do you hear me now," and "you're breaking up," think of the good old AT&T phones of the 1950's and how clear everything sounded.

But worse than the compromise of quality, is the diminution of the communal experience. Imagine the fanciest, most expensive home entertainment center. Surround sound. Plasma screen. Big speakers. Remotes, which seem to reproduce like amoebas, all over the place. TiVo to program mainly what is comfortable, familiar. You sit alone, or with one or two others, and soak it all in.

Now think about the obverse of this experience, attendance at the live performing arts. The progression is important. You dress to suit the occasion. Rock concert, jeans. Classical music, maybe a tie, maybe slacks and a blazer, (it should *still* be jeans if you want, but that's a point I'll get to later). You arrive at the theater or concert hall. Now you're increasingly in a crowd, it's probably dark or getting dark, the marquee is lit, there's a buzz. The crowd thickens—you squeeze into the lobby. You see the line at the box office, you check out who else is there, you begin to feel a heightened expectation. An usher welcomes you. You pass from the congestion of the lobby through a series of sound and light locks and emerge into a vaulting, majestic, breathtaking space. A public space, a space for the public, a gathering space for a communal, civic activity. You take your seat. You look around, your voice lowers,

finally the lights go down, and now you may, for a moment, feel alone. Just you and what is beginning to happen on the stage.

But then that changes. There is laughter, applause, possibly tears, groans, audible gasps of excitement and surprise. There is, in short, a collective energy, a common shared public experience. It's as if the audience has agreed to rip off the ear buds of their iPods and assert that they are not disconnected, isolated individuals with hand-held electronic devices, but living breathing human beings, part of a polity, sharing their feelings, their emotions with their fellow audience members, with the performers on the stage, in what is one of the few remaining collective experiences in modern life—the town square of the performing arts.

What has happened, if the performance is good and the audience is right, what has happened is that we have allowed the performing arts to interrupt the rhythm of our pre-programmed days and weeks and to stimulate, as Aristotle said, emotions like joy and pity and fear and sympathy—emotions which lie just below the surface of routine lives, but which sometimes need a little nudge to get out in the open where these emotions can be let loose, to be aired and to be shared.

Why, if this is such a great and possibly cathartic experience, don't more people take advantage of it? Why do fewer than 10% of the American population regularly attend the professional performing arts?

The answers are many. The arts are expensive. They are, as I have argued, not convenient. There is a reduced amount of leisure time in our lives and an even more radical reduction in the **perception** of leisure time. It's been said that in 1973 the average American had 26 hours of leisure time per week. By 1997, that leisure shrunk to 17 hours. A Ringling Brothers marketing executive reported that in 2005, after subtracting time reported for spent sleeping, working, child care, chores, commuting, and exercising, only nine hours of weekly leisure time remain.

But there is also another reason for shrinking audiences and, in my view, it is the fault of the arts. The performing arts have sometimes, too often, placed themselves on a pedestal. Too often, the performing arts are something to be approached only in black tie. Too often, they are positioned to be consumed only by the elite. To be genuflected to.

This should not be. In music, the “arts for the elite” restriction was successfully challenged in the 18th century when Mozart took symphonies and operas from the palaces on the hill and put them in the music halls on the streets.

Somehow, we have reverted. When I worked at Carnegie Hall in the 1980’s, I learned that in the 20th Century an eleventh commandment was added to the tablets. Thou shall not applaud between movements. May lightning strike you.

Well let me tell you a story. During NJPAC’s first season, before the glowing acoustical review in *The New York Times* and before Alex Ross, the music critic of *The New Yorker*, pronounced our Prudential Hall one of the three best places to listen to music in the northeast (along with Carnegie Hall and Boston Symphony Hall)—before all that, a quartet comprised of Isaac Stern, Yo-Yo Ma, Emanuel Ax, and Jamie Laredo appeared on our stage for the first time.

I was nervous. I was beyond nervous. Here was Isaac Stern, my boss for almost a decade at Carnegie Hall, coming to play for the first time in an arts center that I had helped to design and build. Acoustics, let me tell you, is a field dominated by opinion leadership. And the opinion that mattered most was Isaac Stern’s. Isaac deeming a hall’s acoustics excellent was like Michelin awarding three stars. Who’s going to argue?

The lights were lowered, the music started. To me it sounded glorious. And then, this audience, this audience that was perhaps 50% new to classical music but wanted to see what this big new performing arts center in Newark was all about, broke into spontaneous and

heartfelt applause *after the first movement* of the first piece. I didn't know what to think. I didn't know what Isaac and Yo-Yo were thinking. I considered going home.

Instead, I screwed up my courage and rushed backstage at intermission. There, outside his dressing room, was Yo-Yo Ma, perhaps the nicest celebrity on the planet. I said, "Yo-Yo I hope it didn't upset you when the audience applauded after the first movement?" I shall never forget his words in return, "Larry," he said looking me dead in the eye, "what I'm about to tell you I really mean. The next time I play here, you can put in the program, in capital letters, that it's ok for people to applaud *during* movements." I wanted to hug him. Maybe I did hug him.

Incidentally, Isaac loved the Hall (particularly after I explained to him that the basic layout of the room was almost identical to his beloved Carnegie Hall). The rest has been acoustic history.

This notion of secular music being revered like holy prayer was not always the case. When Beethoven premiered his only Violin Concerto in 1806, the three movements weren't even played in succession. The violinist Franz Clement, for whom the concerto was written, inserted a violin sonata of his own composition between the first and second movements. That's not all. He played this piece on one string with the violin held upside down. While it wasn't documented, I'd bet my last stuffed shirt that there was applause, plenty of applause, between movements that night.

Arts Education

Let me now turn for a moment to how the arts can be transformative for children, and not just in crisis situations like the Mt. Vernon School. I would guess that in this audience of boomers and echo boomers—an audience that has been on both ends of the piano lesson melodrama—there would be pretty wide agreement that the arts can play a pivotal role in kids' lives.

Howard Gardner of Harvard has written extensively about multiple intelligences. What he means by this, I think, is simply that people, children, learn in different ways. Some learn in highly analytical and cognitive processes. Others learn empirically. Some learn through the arts. And it's not just learning. It's also the development of identity, discipline, self-esteem, and the capacity to enjoy the world.

Not every child is an A student who can go to graduate school at Princeton. Not every kid excels at soccer and gets recruited by college coaches. Some kids are good at dance or theater or can play jazz trumpet really well. This is how they connect, this is how they evolve.

Some children may have no talent for the arts, but still find that their worlds are rocked—and changed—by live performance.

I see this almost every day at NJPAC. When I go into the Victoria Theater and watch 500 children at a live performance of Tom Chapin & Friends or the Paper Bag Players, when I see them on the edges of their seats, the expressions on their faces, the laughter, the cheers—when I compare this to watching kids, including my own, with that unmistakable lobotomous blank stare watching the DVD of *Legally Blond* for the fourth time—no emotion, no reaction, no anything—I know that the argument for the live performing arts and what it does to nourish the human soul is not an empty one.

Whether it's experiencing 80 musicians backed by a chorus of 100 doing a Beethoven 9th, seeing the Alvin Ailey Dance Company performing its signature piece, *Revelations*, or hearing Mick Jagger and the Stones in a 20,000-seat arena and feeling your heart thump to *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, live performance is surely like nothing else. Live performance shapes the human developmental experience of young people, in fact *all* people, in a way that is unique.

In fact, the Rolling Stones may be Exhibit A in how the arts shape society. The Stones who have sustained their popularity over 40 years. The Stones who define rock 'n roll for at least two generations. The Stones who personify agelessness, sexual permissiveness, and adolescent rebellion . . . even if you're 62. The Stones who can in three bars of Brown Sugar

turn this year's James Madison medalist into a dancing fool. It's an argument that almost makes itself.

The Arts and Urban Change

If part of the social agenda of the arts is personal transformation, another part works, I would argue, at a much larger scale: The capacity of the arts to accelerate the transformation of cities.

I don't think anybody here would deny that America's cities, particularly its older cities, need some help. We used to have something called urban policy in this country. That's what I studied here at Princeton. But it's a phrase that hasn't been heard for a long time, particularly over the last eight years.

It is an old but true argument that long after issues of commerce and politics are all but forgotten, the memory of the arts lives on. Certainly the institutions that house and nurture the arts help define the urban landscape. What has Symphony Hall, opened in 1900, been to Boston? The Academy of Music (1857) to Philadelphia? Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Broadway, and BAM to New York? The West End to London? The Opera House to Sydney?

The easy case to make is how the arts can *physically* transform an urban area. In New York, the West 50's, west of Sixth Avenue was, in the late 1970's, marginal territory—until Carnegie Hall decided, with great fanfare, to restore, renew, and expand itself. What followed this investment in cultural infrastructure was a paroxysm of private investment adding restaurants, shops, through block arcades, and millions of square feet of development to the area and altering west mid-town completely and permanently.

On an even larger scale, it is well known what Lincoln Center did to stimulate the dramatic change of the area of Manhattan between midtown and the upper West Side.

The commitment to renew the Apollo Theater on 125th Street has been the lynchpin of the revivification of that part of Harlem. Internationally, the reconstruction of the South Bank Centre in London brought alive the once dead area south of the River Thames with literally millions of annual visitors. And we all know what a museum did for Bilbao.

There are also many examples across the U.S. The Euclid Avenue area of Cleveland has been wholly metamorphized by the six theaters of Playhouse Square, Cleveland's non-profit performing arts center. A new hotel, refurbished office buildings, and retail expansion followed.

The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust has taken on planning and development responsibility for 14 blocks of central Pittsburgh and has not only created four theaters, but has also stimulated parks, plazas, galleries, and co-developed the first new downtown residential tower in Pittsburgh in decades. All in what was not too long ago a seedy red-light district.

In my own experience, right here in New Jersey, NJPAC has not only stimulated the construction or major renovation of dozens of restaurants, shops, office buildings, residential conversions, and more in downtown Newark, but it has helped to attract national attention and, with that, national developers, to look at a city that has been off their radar screens since before the riots of 1967. Virtually every new investor in Newark since NJPAC opened in 1997—including the investors behind the Rock, the new 20,000-seat state-of-the-art hockey, sports, and entertainment arena—has cited NJPAC and its success as the reason for going ahead. Do the arts have a stimulus effect? They are an urban steroid.

But more than that, many performing arts centers, including NJPAC, have *themselves* become urban planners and developers. In Newark, we have taken responsibility for the 12 acres NJPAC controls (to give you a sense of comparison, Lincoln Center is 13 acres) and we are currently working on a mixed-use development that will bring residential, retail, office, and other uses around our already completed Theater Square. The images we have in mind are the

Place des Vosges in Paris and the Piazza Navona in Rome. (We are attracted to big ideas in Newark.)

NJPAC sees urban transformation as part of its mission, indeed as part of its destiny. In Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Brooklyn (where BAM is the catalyst for planning and development) and elsewhere, performing arts centers have embraced urban redevelopment for a lot of reasons. They want to protect and control their own physical surroundings as they evolve. They want to generate essential revenue for their operations by capturing their “externalities,” including the value they add to nearby land. But, perhaps most of all, the more entrepreneurial performing arts centers have stepped in *because nobody else has*. We have tried to fill a planning and development vacuum to shore up and revitalize the downtowns where we operate.

If we at NJPAC are able to pull off this first phase of our Master Plan, we shall have created the first new market-rate residential tower in Newark in 45 years.

The impact that the performing arts can have on cities is not measured only in urban planning and development terms. There is a less tangible, but no less real impact having to do with how people, including the residents of a city themselves, think about their place, their hometown. Indeed, I have come to believe that the first turn a city has to make on its way to a comeback is not physical but psychological.

What do I mean by this? For 40 years now, since 1967, the name Newark has been hardwired to the word “riot.” I arrived in Princeton to study urban policy at the Woodrow Wilson School in the summer of 1967, 15 days after the end of the July riots (or civil rebellion) in Newark. Twenty-three people had been killed, whole neighborhoods decimated, and, as my Princeton professors speculated as the smoke cleared, Newark had gained an epithet, Riot City, that it would take decades to live down. They were right.

Of course, Governor Kean was conscious of this when 22 years later he chose Newark as the city for his grand dream of a major performing arts center for New Jersey. A Republican Governor investing in Newark—it was a bit like Nixon opening China. Equally, Ray

Chambers and the corporate and philanthropic communities which so magnificently backed NJPAC, knew what they were doing. This was not just to be a stage for symphony, opera, dance, and theater. This bold initiative was meant to be the phoenix from the ashes—right downtown between Military Park and the Passaic River.

Those of us handed the mandate to translate the dream, the impossible dream, into bricks and mortar and glass and steel approached this challenge with a conviction—a conviction that the way to make a city great again, the way to assure a place of joy and laughter and beautiful music and, above all, physical security, was emphatically *not* to create yet another fortress, another bunker, another architectural submission to paranoia and racism. This defensiveness drove too much of what passed for urban planning and design in Newark and so many other cities in the middle of the 20th Century.

Rather, what we wanted was a master plan and a building design that signaled that NJPAC was not just “*IN NEWARK*,” but also “*OF NEWARK*.” And proud to be “*OF NEWARK*.”

This meant transparency—lots of glass so the building emitted a welcoming glow from the inside out, like a hearth. This meant scale—something that felt comfortable within the existing street scape. This meant contextuality—materials like brick, glass, and steel which related to the existing urban landscape. No marble monument. No limestone palace of culture. This was to be the people’s performing arts center . . . in the heart of Brick City.

The planning and design had to communicate itself eloquently and clearly to two opposing, almost laughably opposing, criticisms of Governor Kean’s idea of “Lincoln Center West.”

On one hand, the people of New Jersey at large, which of course in the most suburbanized state in the country, means suburbanites, were pretty much reacting by saying that it was a great idea for New Jersey to have Lincoln Center west, but why did it have to be in Newark, the place that many people had organized their lives to avoid. In Newark, on the other

hand, many residents were saying: what does this have to do with us? This is a huge public and private investment meant for suburbanites.

So, in our planning, in our design, in our staffing, in our construction force, in our imagery, in our public speaking, in our pre-opening arts education programs, in our management of the press, in virtually every single thing that we did in those early years, we had to be mindful of both criticisms. Nobody will go to Newark said the suburbanites. It's only for suburbanites, said the Newarkers.

And it was not raising the \$200 million to get to opening night or the construction of a very complex building that presented the biggest challenge. Rather, it was defeating this double-barreled cynicism.

Perhaps you can understand my reaction, more than a decade later, when NJPAC had opened and was highly successful, when people would say, "Oh, I get it, if you build it, they will come." My reaction was to want to punch the speaker in the nose. Because the truth was, if you build it and do a hundred other things right, maybe, if you're lucky, "they" will give it a try.

The success of NJPAC, and the Newark Museum, and the New Jersey Symphony, and dozens of other non-profits and universities in Newark, finally and ineluctably began to change the way people thought about Newark. From Riot City to Renaissance City.

The psychological turn was taking hold. Small things, signs on the turnpike and the parkway which say Newark Downtown Arts District, reviews in *The New York Times* and *The Star-Ledger* of the great artists of the world performing on NJPAC stages, the world-class exhibits at the Newark Museum, the appointment of a world-class maestro at the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, an accretion of cultural achievements, has helped mightily to turn the tide.

To be sure, there are still suburbanites who won't venture forth. But many who swore they never would go to Newark now come early, park in a garage that pipes out Beethoven, eat dinner at a three-star restaurant, and attend glorious performances.

In November, I was attending a New Jersey Symphony Orchestra concert—close to a full house. During the slow movement of a Mozart piano concerto, my mind wandered a bit, but not far. I was thinking about the new arena—only a few blocks down Mulberry Street—where the Devils were playing the Maple Leafs. Between these two new facilities, almost 20,000 people were visiting Newark on a Friday night.

Perhaps the achievement of which I am most proud is that 26% of the audience of NJPAC, 26% of the 500,000 visitors a year, are non-Caucasian. There is not another arts center in the United States or, for that matter in the world, that is anywhere nearly so diverse. One of the few places in our complex society, perhaps universities are another rare example, where young and old, urban and suburban, Black, White, Latino, and Asian, affluent and middle income, can all come together to share a communal experience.

I've tried to use very few statistics in this talk, but here's one that I can't resist. After we opened NJPAC, we surveyed our audience. We asked lots of questions about performances, parking, the quality of food in the restaurants, and so forth. Here is the most interesting finding. Sixty-eight percent of suburbanites who attended NJPAC's opening season said they felt much better or somewhat better about Newark for having attended a performance. Not bad. Here's the shocker: 72% of Newarkers who attended NJPAC said they felt better or somewhat better *about their own city*. What it turned out Newark needed, perhaps more than anything else, was a success story. And that's what NJPAC delivered when it opened its doors 30 years and 98 days after the 1967 riots.

If this isn't the arts with a social agenda, I don't know what is.

Conclusion

As I conclude, please allow me to get a bit personal. I am, when all is said and done, a child of the 60's. Like many of you here, my sensibilities were formed by the Civil Rights movement, by the war in Vietnam and the student-led reaction to that war, by the sexual revolution, the feminist revolution, and of course, by rock and roll. (Did I mention the Stones?) A lot of that personal passage took place right here on this beautiful campus.

The public policy issues I most cared about here at Princeton and afterwards were first, the horrible legacy of racism in the United States and secondly, the deterioration of our great cities. It was on these issues that I wanted to spend my professional life.

The arts were not really in the picture.

But then, in one of those inexplicable accidents of fate, I went to work at Carnegie Hall in 1980 and began to see the intersection of urban redevelopment, social change, and the performing arts.

Returning to New Jersey, to Newark, in 1989 was the break of a lifetime. All the public policy issues about which I was most passionate were encompassed in this incredible pioneering opportunity to build a world-class performing arts center in a tired, deteriorated, much maligned city. I thought I had died and gone to Woodrow Wilson School heaven.

What resulted was even bigger and more important than I had imagined, even in my wildest dreams. To this day, to this moment, I am not really sure how NJPAC was accomplished.

Somehow, when we needed it, the support was there. The great corporations and philanthropic foundations stepped up. The individual philanthropists materialized, often in just the nick of time.

Somehow, when we needed it, just the right human resources, the skills, the talent were there.

So was the political support: six governors, two mayors, and an entire delegation of U.S. Congressional representatives and Senators threw their support, regardless of party, behind what Governor Tom Kean had conceived.

And before we knew it, before we barely could stop for a breather, something had happened that was bigger than what took place on the stages of NJPAC, bigger even than the 12-acre site and its possibilities.

What happened was that a new institution was born that allowed many people in the State and the City to think about New Jersey and Newark in a different way. Some perhaps, like Bernice Johnson, thought about *themselves* in a different way.

I hope that the iPod generation, the electronically-connected generation, the text messengers of the “tuned-out” generation, can somehow discover how the live performing arts can contribute to the restoration of our common humanity—our sense of community, our civil society.

I hope we can remember how the authenticity of the live arts trumps the ersatz quality of electronic entertainment. How the timelessness of the arts trumps the ephemera of life’s everyday events.

How the arts can lift us to our better selves and be a healing force in a divided world.

Thank you.