



Editorial Commentary

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Should There Be Public Funding For The Arts?

I'm for public funding for the arts - as long as it's for things the public can appreciate and for arts for all - not just a few.

Our country has gotten some wonderful things out of public funding for the arts, as well as some not so good things. Such is life, but I feel in the last several decades those who have been in charge of where that funding goes have been myopic - especially in SC - trying to make the arts in South Carolina something other than what it is naturally.

That's what has turned me away from supporting the SC Arts Commission. I'm all for public support of the arts, I just think we've been getting a raw deal here in SC. Too much funding is going to the less deserving, but well connected. It's not all going to the wrong people, but way too much is - over and over again.

If you're not producing what they approve of - you don't get funding. If you complain about the selection process - you don't get funding. If you don't support their existence - you don't get funding. So no one complains they just follow in lock step.

If you kiss their ass - you might get funding, but you better be a good kisser as there is less and less to go around each year.

We need a do-over in this state.

Robert Ivey Didn't Always Watch His Step

When you have a non-profit dance company in South Carolina, you have to be careful of every step you make. Robert Ivey didn't always step carefully or where he was told to step. He was his own man and he paid the price for that throughout the years.

I imagine as a dancer you have to be able to control your steps, in some cases every step is choreographed, but I also imagine that stepping out of the box at times is in your nature. How else can you create new dances?

Ivey was one for stepping out of the box - questioning the past and present.

Robert Ivey may be gone now, but his legacy in Charleston and South Carolina will go on for generations.

One of my top memories of him goes way back to when Linda and I used to do some photo processing for the Spoleto Festival press office. They gave us some press tickets to performances. We had two tickets to see one of the major dance companies that preformed at the Festival. For some reason Linda couldn't go.

As I entered the Gaillard Auditorium for the performance I saw Bob standing with a few folks - dancers in his company. I told him about my extra ticket - wondering if he knew someone who could use it. He took one look at them and gave his ticket to someone else and said - "I'm coming with you." I had press tickets that the Festival gave us - better seats than he had.

What a deal, I not only got to see a great performance but I had an expert commentator with me. And, I learned more about that company and the dances they did than most people sitting in that audience - stuff you won't find in any program.

Other memories will have to wait for the book.

Hey, we're all about the visual arts now, but that wasn't always the case. Our paths didn't cross that often in the last 10-15 years, but I knew Bob was the real deal - the best that the dance world in Charleston will see for some time.

We lost a good one folks.

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