MEDIA LAW RESOURCE CENTER, INC.

Presentation of the
William J. Brennan, Jr.
Defense of Freedom Award
to
Václav Havel

Panel Discussion:
The Power of Creativity:
The Arts and Social Change
MS. SANDRA BARON: Welcome to the 2009 Media Law Resource Center Annual Dinner. Hi. I'm Sandy Baron, I'm Executive Director of the MLRC. And although thanks to these un-gelled white lights I can't see any of you, it is really a pleasure to have you all here. Welcome. Thank you for coming tonight. I think the fact that we have a record crowd is a testament to the vibrancy of this organization, and the Media Bar. I want to introduce the Chairman of our Board, Ken Richieri, Senior Vice President, General Counsel, and Secretary of the New York Times Company, and as I noted, the Chairman of our Board of Directors. I also want to thank AXIS PRO, which many of you may still know under its former name of Media/Professional Insurance, for underwriting the reception you just enjoyed. The Dinner would not be the same without that reception, and it wouldn't happen without the sponsorship of our friends and colleagues at Media/Prof, again, now AXIS PRO. And with that, I'm going to turn it over to Ken.

MR. KENNETH RICHIERI: Thank you, Sandy. Thank you all for coming to the Media Law Resource Center's Annual Dinner. It's always a
pleasure to see everyone here. Tonight we'll be presenting the William J. Brennan Defense of Freedom Award, which is not something we do every year. This award was established to honor those whose actions have advanced the cause of freedom of expression, and it is given in the name of its first recipient, the Honorable William J. Brennan, Jr. He was an impassioned voice for the principles of free speech, and the Brennan Award serves as an important symbol and reminder and celebration of the principles of the First Amendment. We are especially honored that Justice Brennan's daughter, Nancy, has joined us for tonight's presentation. Justice Brennan and his family have been tremendous supporters of MLRC over the years, and we are extremely grateful for that. Nancy, can I ask you to stand for a moment, so the audience can acknowledge your presence?

[Applause]

MR. RICHIERI: Tonight's recipient of the Brennan Award is President Václav Havel, an author and playwright who became the last President of Czechoslovakia, and the first President of the Czech Republic. President
Havel is one of the towering figures of the post-World War II era. Beginning in the 1960s, he used his plays to critique the Communist bureaucracy and government that thoroughly dominated the lives of his fellow citizens. Following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 that crushed the nascent reform movement, President Havel continued to produce plays, although his work was banned. And he joined with others to petition the government in an effort to hold it accountable for its actions. His open letter to then president Gustav Husák in 1979, copies of which were widely circulated illegally, became a rallying cry for opposition. In 1976, members of a Czech rock group, the Plastic People of the Universe, were arrested and put on trial for organized disturbance of the peace. President Havel wrote extensively about that trial, which galvanized opposition to the regime. In 1977, President Havel and 200 others signed a document called Charter 77, which petitioned the Czech government to respect the human rights set forth in the 1975 Helsinki Agreement, the Czech Constitution, and other documents. For that act
he was arrested and jailed. Over the next decade, President Havel was to be jailed on several occasions, yet he continued writing essays, he continued writing plays, and he continued to organize his fellow citizens in opposition to the Communist regime. In 1989, a petition to the government offered by President Havel and others called “Just a Few Sentences” was signed by more than 40,000 Czechs. By November of that year, massive protests were being held on a daily basis. With no public support, and with its authority ending by the day—eroding by the day, the Communist regime entered into negotiations with a coalition of opposition groups known as the Civic Forum to transfer the power of the state. In December of that year, 20 years ago, Vaclav Havel was installed as the President of Czechoslovakia. The Velvet Revolution, as it has come to be called, had succeeded. What we celebrate tonight is the power of words, and in particular the words of Václav Havel that quite literally shaped history. President Havel is, unfortunately, not able to be with us in person tonight. Accepting the award on his behalf is
Ambassador Martin Palouš. Ambassador Palouš is the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations, and in 1977 was himself one of the early signatories to Charter 77. Although he could not be here, President Havel recorded some remarks to this Dinner on the occasion of his receiving the Brennan Award. And as Ambassador Palouš makes his way up to the stage, I'd ask that you please turn your attention to the video screens.

MR. VÁCLAV HAVEL (via video): [Foreign language] Ladies and Gentlemen. Allow me send you most cordial greetings and truly heartfelt thanks for the William Brennan Prize, which it is my honor to receive from you today. I highly esteem the work of your organization, which systematically monitors the media, the framing of media laws and freedom of expression, because the media’s importance grows all the time in pace with the progress of modern technologies. In conditions of democracy the media become a kind of fourth pillar of power alongside parliamentary, executive and judicial power. On the one hand, politicians ought not subject themselves to the media, so that they scrutinize
their own actions and measures from the point of view of the media (usually of the worst variety), and surmise what reaction they might engender, therefore adjusting their opinions accordingly. However, all too often they do succumb to the media or meet them half-way by adopting a different vocabulary, on the grounds that a more complicated language might cause confusion and create controversy.

Alternatively, politicians can adopt a hostile attitude to the media. During my period in high office I discovered that among the topics that inevitably crop up periodically at informal friendly talks between prime ministers, presidents and top-level politicians were complaints against the media. The media were reviled and ridiculed, while they were also feared, which is not a healthy situation. So it is a matter of responsibility on all sides. Politicians must be responsible to their own consciences and their fellow citizens, while journalists should show responsibility towards their own principal task, which is the free dissemination of information. Their task is not to create scandals and cook up intrigues, either
deliberately in order to sell newspapers, or inadvertent by being chaotic, muddle-headed or ill-prepared. Responsibility is today’s major task, and it is the major task of your organization, and the fact that I am receiving this prize from that very organization is something I value very much, of course. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. RICHERI: We'll be sending out a transcript of that to all attendees after the meeting. Now it is my pleasure to present to Ambassador Palouš on behalf of Václav Havel, the William J. Brennan, Jr. Defense of Freedom Award.

[Applause]

MR. RICHERI: All yours.

MR. MARTIN PALOUŠ: Dear friends, ladies and gentlemen, first of all, obviously I would like to thank on behalf of Václav Havel, my friend and former president, for this distinction, and for your award. But let me now a little bit to comment on what we have experienced now, because I understand that most of you had a difficulty of understanding because maybe the subtitles
were too small, and not many people speak Czech here, I guess. [Laughter] I'm not going to translate it for you. I have the English version of the text here, so I think that I would like to ask your organization to make it available for those who would be interested to know what President Havel said.

[Applause]

MR. PALOUŠ: But I think that his message is quite consistent with his endeavors he has devoted himself for all his life. He is also author of theater plays, and absurdity is, I would say, his milieu. And being not understood well is maybe the point of departure of his political activities. Having said that, I would like to emphasize the value and importance of freedom of expression, and the difficult circumstances. Because if you are a dissident, as Václav Havel was, you need to get ready yourself for being misinterpreted—not understood, and have difficulties to send your message out. I remember 20 years ago when he came here for the first time as the President of the Czech Republic, of Czechoslovakia because he was here before in '68, he gave a speech in the
Joint Session of the United States Congress.
And he said there one interesting thing, I remember it very well. He basically said that now it's time, we will need to thank you for all the help, assistance, know-how, even material support you can offer us for our transition. And there is hardly anything we can offer you back as a compensation. But one thing, and it is maybe a situation of a man who lays on the ground with a big boulder on his chest, being pressed down by the gravity, and having his thoughts and dreams about freedom. And maybe in the wisdom or the message of this man is something that can even inspire, or say something positive to the free world as well. So I think that this is the message of Václav Havel today. This is the message of the 20th anniversary of the Charter, of the Velvet Revolution. I know that free expression is always limited. It's a basic value but there are restrictions imposed on it, and rights of others is certainly one of the most cherished and recognized legitimate aim. But to find the restrictions is the most difficult task, and I think your organization is exactly the one he's
trying to be guardian of that thin line between freedom and oppression. We were living in the years of oppression. We certainly cherish what free expression is. I'm going to go to Prague tomorrow. I will speak with Václav Havel, and I will give him this award on Friday or Saturday, and on Tuesday we will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. And I think that's--Velvet Revolution itself was a free expression. It was when the streets started to talk, when people, individual and together, finally rediscovered the language, rediscovered the way how they could articulate themselves. So I would like to thank you once more for Václav Havel. I would like to thank you for what you are doing for freedom of expression. And let me conclude by saying that if there is something what central Europeans and Americans can do together, is to defend and protect this precious common value freedom of expression for ourselves, for our posterity, and for the future. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. RICHERI: Thank you, Ambassador Palouš. The panel topic we've chosen tonight, "The Power
of Creativity: The Arts and Social Change" is an outgrowth of the defining event of President Havel's life: the emergence of a social and political movement in Czechoslovakia that led to the demise of a totalitarian regime. In the decades that led up to the Velvet Revolution, creative people and artists consistently played a central role in articulating and shaping the dissident movement, and in giving voices to the grievances against the regime. To explore further the role of arts in social change, we have a wonderful panel with us tonight. Our moderator is Ken Paulson, President and COO of the Freedom Forum, the Newseum, and the Diversity Institute. Previously, Mr. Paulson served as Editor and Senior Vice President/News of "USA Today," and USAToday.com, and was part of the team of journalists that founded the paper in 1982. Mr. Paulson is also the author of "Freedom Sings," a multimedia stage show celebrating the First Amendment that features music that has been banned or censored. Our first panelist is Oskar Eustis. Mr. Eustis has been the Artistic Director of the Public Theater since 2005, and for many years prior to that was
the Artistic Director of Trinity Rep in Providence, Rhode Island. Through his long career in the arts, Mr. Eustis has been dedicated to the development and staging of new plays. Joining him is Arthur Lehman, Director of the Brooklyn Museum since 1997. Dr. Lehman's made it a priority in his museum to increase its accessibility to the community through the presentation of such shows as Hip Hop Nation, Working in Brooklyn, and Infinite Island, Caribbean Contemporary Art. Our final panelist is Peter Yarrow, songwriter and singer both individually and as part of the folk trio Peter, Paul and Mary. Mr. Yarrow has a long history of advocating for civil rights, and on a variety of social issues. In 2000, he founded an organization called Operation Respect that provides a free classroom-based program called "Don't Laugh at Me," which aims to eliminate bullying through creative arts. You can read more about all of these panelists in our program. Thank you. Ken, it's off to you.

[Applause]

MR. KEN PAULSON: Thank you. Good evening.
Well first of all, let me tell you how pleased I am to be able to moderate this, this incredible panel of folks. These are giants of the art, music, theater world, and it's an honor to be here with them. And I also want to tell you that when I was called and asked if I would moderate this, I jumped at it because of my tremendous respect for MLRC. The work this organization does is incredibly important, and as a former newspaper editor, and an occasional First Amendment attorney, I will tell you, you have my greatest admiration, and I'm just honored to be here with you tonight. A couple other quick things. One is I'm a little self-conscious about this because we are here to talk about social change in America spurred by the arts, and of course nothing says social change like four middle-aged men in suits, right? [Laughter] So all I can tell you is we had someone else lined up until yesterday who decided she had something better to do, and we respect that choice, but we're going to have to work very hard at developing diverse opinions and outlook. One more question I've got here. I'm currently the President of the Newseum, a
museum in Washington D.C. that has a 74 foot-
high First Amendment out front on Pennsylvania
Avenue. We think it's valuable for people
traveling from the White House to Capitol Hill
to see the line, "Congress shall make no law,"
as large as possible. Could I see a show of
hands how many of you have been there? Oh thank
you. Thank you. I have to tell you, you just
made my airfare tax deductible, so thank you
very much. We had an interesting conversation
before the panel discussion, and you've all been
to probably dozens if not hundreds of panel
discussions, but rarely does somebody show up
with a guitar. And we decided that tonight,
because someone brought--and you guys have a
harmonica, perhaps, Arnold, anything?

MALE VOICE: -- .

MR. PAULSON: No. We thought we probably
should have an anthem for this particular panel
discussion. And Peter actually came up with
one, a song written by a lawyer I understand.

MR. YARROW: That's correct. Her name is
Anne Feeney, she's a public-interest lawyer from
Pittsburgh, and she's a folk singer. And she
can, she can play both sides of the fence
marvelously. And this song is iconic at this point.

MR. PAULSON: Peter Yarrow.

MR. YARROW: Okay. Let me sing it for you.

[Applause]

MR. YARROW (singing): Was it Cesar Chavez, or Rosa Parks that day? Some say Dr. King or Gandhi set them on their way. No matter who your mentors are, it's pretty plain to see, that if you been to jail for justice, you're in good company. Have you been to jail for justice? I want to shake your hand, 'cause sitting in and lying down are ways to take a stand. Have you sung a song for freedom or marched the picket line? Have you been to jail for justice? Then you're a friend of mine. Especially à propos for Václav Havel. You law-abiding citizens, come listen to this song, 'cause laws were made by people, and people can be wrong. Once unions were against the law, but slavery was fine, women were denied the vote, and children worked the mine. The more you study history, the less you can deny it, a rotten law stays on the books 'til folks with guts defy it. Have you-- [speaking]: have you been to jail for justice?
I know your memories are short, so I'll give you each line. [Singing]: Have you been to jail for justice, I want to shake your hand. I want to shake your hand. Even with that prompting. Do we have to sing Puff the Magic Dragon for you to respond?

[Applause]

MR. YARROW (singing): Have you been to jail for justice, I want to shake— I want to shake your hand. For sitting in and lying down—for sitting in and lying down are ways to take a stand. Have you sung a song for freedom— have you sung a song for freedom, or marched the picket line? Have you been to jail for justice— have you been to jail for justice? Then you're a friend of mine. Now the law is supposed to serve us, and so are the police, but when the system fails it's up to us to speak our peace.

We must be ever vigilant for justice to prevail, so get— this was Mary's line— so get courage from your convictions and let 'em haul you off to jail. Have you been to jail for justice, I want to shake— I want to shake your hand. For sitting in— For sitting in and lying down— are ways— are ways to take a stand. Have you sung—
have you sung a song for freedom or marched--
or marched the picket line? Have you been to jail for justice? Then you're the friend of-- last time. Have you been to jail for justice, then you're a friend of-- a little louder. Have you been to jail for justice? Then more-- now sing it like you mean it. Have you been to jail for justice, then you're a friend of mine!

[Applause]

MR. PAULSON: I need to make one thing clear, singing along is not grounds for disbarment. You should feel free to join in.

Peter, you've been on a lifelong quest that involves mission and music. And can you tell us where that began? At what moment in your life did you say, "This is what I'm going to do."

MR. YARROW: Well, it started in many ways. You know, my mother was a schoolteacher, but I didn't have a real sense of the conjunction of the arts and advocacy until 1955 when I went to a concert at Carnegie Hall, and saw The Weavers perform. And at that--

[Applause]

MR. YARROW: And I learned then and there, instantaneously, what my path might be. I
learned that people could come together in
their hearts, not just their intellects, in ways
that could establish a force that was so
powerful that it changed my life. That was the
moment.

MR. PAULSON: Was there a moment in the
show, a song that kind of ignited it for you?

MR. YARROW: Well, there were several. When
I saw Pete Seeger sing, "Thinga alayho, alayho,"
[phonetic] which was from, you know, the Spanish
Lincoln Brigade, Spanish Civil War, he, he
channeled those people. He, he became the role
model, and then of course there was that silly
song that he wrote that came to nothing. He
wrote it with Lee Hayes, called "If I Had a
Hammer." It's the hammer of justice, it's the
bell of freedom, (singing): it's a song about
the love between my brothers and my sisters, all
over this land. That's enough. That's enough.

[Laughter]

MR. PAULSON: So for Oskar and Arnold--

MALE VOICE: Aye.

MR. PAULSON: --did you have, "If I Had a
Hammer" moment in your lives where there was a
piece of art that was transformative for you?
DR. ARNOLD LEHMAN: I'd have to say that transformative moment was when I decided not to stay in law school, and go to art history graduate school.

MR. PAULSON: They thanked you for that.

DR. LEHMAN: Yeah.

MR. PAULSON: And was there a piece of art that influenced your thoughts about art?

DR. LEHMAN: Well, I'm so old that I still remember Guernica traveling throughout the United States, and I think the first time that I saw Guernica at the Museum of Modern Art here in New York, that was, that was pretty transformative for me.

MR. PAULSON: Oskar?

MR. OSKAR EUSTIS: Well actually for me, the theater is something that's not entirely distinguishable from a demonstration. And the most, the moment that I remember was in 1967, I was nine years old, and my parents took me the Moratorium, and we tried to levitate the Pentagon in Washington. And at nine, I really thought that building might lift up. And now that's actually a moment that's talked about eight times a week over at the Hirschfeld in
"Hair," which we are producing, the Public Theater's producing on Broadway. And that idea which was stamped into my DNA at that moment, although it had been prepared for by endless hours of listening to Pete Seeger at home, I have to say, so the connection is there. Well, the idea that somehow collective action was what changed the world, and it was sealed for me when a group--most of you won't know them, but--called The Living Theater had come back from Europe in 1974, and as a 17-year old, I was following them around the country. And in Ann Arbor, Michigan, they did an event which was site-specific. They traveled around Ann Arbor protesting against the military industrial complex, and at a bank in downtown Ann Arbor, they burned paper money as a protest against the power of money. And I still remember myself, 16, actually I was at the time, taking all of the real money out of my pocket, and with tears streaming down my cheeks, burning it in front of the bank in Ann Arbor. And calling my lawyer father the next day to get fare home to Minneapolis. But it was that--for me, that was the real power; the sense that you bring people
together, and that by bringing people together, you can make something change collectively. That again is a demonstration, then it's a theater.

MR. PAULSON: In terms of the visual arts, Arnold, is there a way to start a movement or drive a movement with art?

DR. LEHMAN: I certainly think there's a way to comment on a movement. I'm not sure there's a way to begin a movement, but you certainly can become an active participant. I've seen that over and over again, both through the eyes of artist friends, and certainly in the museum community. I think the commentary is very important because it's what brings the work of art into some kind of relationship with the viewer, the visitor. I'm not sure, I'm not sure the something begins with the work of art. It may be in music. But commentary is very important.

MR. PAULSON: This may be the only hotel ballroom on the entire planet where if I mention the name John Peter Zenger, there will be widespread recognition. Many of you in the room know that in 1735 Zenger was arrested by the
Crown for publishing a newspaper that was offensive to the sensibilities of British leadership. What a lot of people don't know is that in addition to shutting down his newspaper, they shut down his song publishing operation. He published satirical songs, and made fun of the king, and they viewed this equally as dangerous as a free and liberated newspaper. Which brings me to Peter. Why is it, do you think, that so many important movements—abolitionists, suffragettes, suffrage movements, all kinds of movements.

MR. YARROW: Union.

MR. PAULSON: Union movements have been fueled by music. Why does music have that power?

MR. YARROW: I think that's a very central point that I'd like to comment on. I think that change—I think it's important to realize that change, in my experience having been part of the civil-rights movement, sung at the March on Washington with Mary Travers, and Noel "Paul" Stookey. The reality is that in order for change to take place, there has to be beyond policy change, there has to be something
embraced by the general populace. The civil rights movement did not come from legislators. It came from a growing consensus awareness in human beings, but that consensus was not just logical. That was a consensus of the heart. Well, if you were there in '63, and some of you were, you know that what struck people was not the urgency of the logic of what was being presented, but the humanity that was accumulated by the sense that people recognized that in each other we had made this extraordinary commitment to never stop. And it was fueled by, yes, the passion of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., but the music when people did sing "If I Had a Hammer," and they sang, (singing): The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind--do it with me, the answer is blowing in the wind. Sing it once again. The ans--my friend--

AUDIENCE: Is blowing in the wind--

MR. YARROW: The answer is blowing in the wind. Protest song. Is that a protest? It's an affirmation of a recognition of each other that we want something to happen, and for that to take place, and I think that Václav Havel would subscribe to this notion, people's hearts
need to be connected, and through the arts, that cannot only be a reflection of what is there potentially, but can spur and energize a movement.

MR. PAULSON: So much art that has an impact takes risks, and a great example is a work you produced, "Angels in America." Could you talk about where that came from, and how it came about?

MR. EUSTIS: Well, I think the most important thing to say about Angels is that of course it was the product of Tony Kushner's, a brilliant writer. But it was the only moment in the theater where I've had direct experience of what happens when a work of art interacts with a social movement, because the gay liberation movement in response to the AIDS crisis, the gay liberation movement had gotten a new urgency, a new necessity. And Angels captured, certainly response to the AIDS crisis, but it did something that is exactly what you said, Peter, that was in a way far deeper than simply response to the AIDS crisis. In response to that crisis, you had a work of art, and it was a huge, ambitious work of art that for the first
time really in mainstream culture posited that gay people were not simply human, were not simply just like you and me, but that gay humans had the chance to stand in for all of us. Had the chance to be every man. And in that claim, was making the fundamental claim that a work of art or a work of theater can make, which is that we all share the same core, ultimately. And to be in those audiences, and when I originally produced it in Los Angeles, it was an extraordinary experience because none of us had any idea of what kind of impact it would have. And I tell you, there's few things more thrilling than watching a work of art sort of just leap across the stage, and connect the synapses. And the audiences would roar back at us. But in a way even more profound was the experience when I moved to Rhode Island, and I produced the play again in Providence, Rhode Island. And I would watch. And Rhode Island is small enough so you know everybody in Rhode Island if you spend any time there. And I would watch from the back of the house, and I'd watch at the end, people would leap up applauding, and they were people I know--I knew. And I could
point to them, I'd say, "That's a homophobe. He's a homophobe. She's a homophobe." She's standing up at the end and cheering at the end of this play. How is that possible? It's not an ideological reaction, it's a human reaction. And forgive me for laying claim to "Uncle Tom's Cabin," but we all know that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had an enormous impact leading up to the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. What you may not know is that the biggest impact it had was in its adaptations to the stage. It was performed for 10 times as many people as a stage play as who read it as a novel. That somehow communicated directly to people's hearts some idea about a quality that's at the core of our democracy.

MR. PAULSON: If I could follow up though. Although I'm sure you could identify the homophobes, and they were on their feet, that's a very positive experience for everyone. There were other homophobes who were not so enchanted with your work. Were you surprised at the backlash?

MR. EUSTIS: Oh, God no. You know, and it's going on today. I mean, the fight for gay
equality is something that's nowhere near over, but really the civil rights movement isn't over either. There's a struggle about the notion of what America is, and about the--there's a penumbra--you guys are lawyers, you will understand words like penumbra a lot better than I ever will. But there's an idea about democracy, and there's an idea about inclusiveness that I believe, and I think many of us believe is at the heart of our Constitution that is not literal in the words, but is core to the idea of what America is. And the struggle that we're engaged in is a struggle between those who believe that what was written in the Constitution are words that have to be literally interpreted and ideas that are inherently expansive and changeable. And if there wasn't that struggle, that wouldn't be the dialectic.

MR. PAULSON: Arnold, you said that you wanted to make sure the Brooklyn Museum is not like other museums. What did you mean by that?

DR. LEHMAN: If you look at all my colleague museums throughout the United States, I think when you start examining the demographic, and
looking around this room, it's pretty much the demographic that is in this room although I don't know the gender composition of this room, because I can't see anyone. But people of color, particularly, were left out of that equation, and have always been left out of that equation. Young people are also often left out. People of minimal economic means are left out because there's a sense, and museums have been unfortunately very good about conveying the sense that there are a lot of people in this country who don't belong in museums. And that is something that we've worked against for a very long time. And at this point, we've changed our demographic to the point that 45% of our visitors are people of color, and the average age of our visitor is 35. And that change came in 10 years. We were approximately 17% made up of visitors of color, primarily because of what brokers sometimes call location, location, location. We're in Brooklyn. But to go from 17% to 45% in 10 years, and to take an age demographic from 57 to 60 down to 35, says there's something appealing about the programs, the exhibitions, and the way people are accepted
in the front door. And it's a lot of work, but it's what we're committed to doing.

MR. PAULSON: And of course with exhibits like the Hip-Hop exhibit you did, you have people coming in and seeing their lives, their values, their culture reflected on the walls of your museum. "Angels in America," there were people who felt they did not have a voice, who saw themselves, and had a voice. And so much of the music that's made a difference gave voice to people who were not being heard. Can you talk a little bit about that, Peter?

MR. YARROW: Yeah. Let me, I'll speak on this. I think, I think that it's not only a fact that the demographic is changed for museums. I think that there has appeared recently a hunger for authenticity rather than simply it's--we're in a bifurcated time. There's a hunger for authenticity and content, and then there's a huge celebration of style. And that has its place, but when it dominates the music business, which has become all about money almost entirely, you know that there have to be other vehicles for people to feed and nurture their hearts and their spirits. This is
a wounded nation, a nation can--that has run
away like a hit-and-run driver from the terrible
things that we have done. We don't have a
national conversation on coming to terms with
what we've done. We've never had it about
Vietnam. Germany had it for decades. We've
had--and there, we went ahead and did it again
in, in, in Iraq, and we're thinking about doing
it again, inconceivably. We--where has been the
national dialog about torture? What--oh, a long
discussion, oh, the Germans knew. What did they
do? We Americans knew what did we do, and what
have we done now to say, "How horrible, we're
sorry?" A great human being is not a human
being who walks away from responsibility from
their acts when they make a mistake or they
perpetrate evil. We have to--we have to restore
the heart of America which has been broken. And
music and the arts can propel us into a place of
courage that not only has to be manifested by
the artist, but by those who are making the
laws, those who are practicing the law. I mean,
there is a conjunction, there is a partnership
here. If we need courage in our hearts, we need
courage in our representatives who are going to
fight that fight, and go to like Václav Havel, not in essence necessarily, specifically. So you ask about the effect of music. We need our partnerships back. We need a nation that heals itself. We are a nation that has been broken because we have not attended to forgiveness, for self-recognition, to apology. We need a Truth Commission, a Cultural Truth Commission, and that comes out not just of politics but the art forms that must be allowed, and be courageous enough to bring it to us.

[Applause]

MR. PAULSON: Oskar, you touched on this, but one of the things you've said in the past is that the theater is at its best when it is part of a movement. And yet you also have to pay the bills. It's not just about influence--influencing society and changing the path of progress, you've actually got to pay salaries and make a dollar now and then, and tippy toe into the commercial waters. How do you strike that balance? And where has that led you?

MR. EUSTIS: Well, I get to sit on stage and talk to all of you, so I guess it's led me to a pretty good place. The biggest thing I'd say
about that is that for me it's not a question of balance. It's a question of trying to take what is actually given to us, the circumstances that we are in, and make the best possible choices. I'll--let me try and explain it--what I mean by this. I was having a conversation with my board just before I came here. We run Shakespeare in the Park at the Delacort, which is--was the founding productions of the Public Theater. We've been doing it for 54 years, and the idea is really simple, which is, you take the greatest writer in the history of the English language, and you give him away for free to everybody. Well, it was a great and revolutionary idea, and 54 years ago, it was a radical idea. What I think we should be doing now is making all of our tickets free. We should make all of the tickets that we give away downtown free. We should be setting a model for the theater that's exactly the same as we do for the public library. The public library is dedicated to the idea that the intellectual wealth of our culture belongs to everybody, and should be available to everybody by walking in the door, and checking it out. And we should do
exactly the same thing with the theater. And what that means is as soon as you say that, it's an interesting idea, we don't have that much problem raising money for free Shakespeare in the Park, because you say I'm raising money for free Shakespeare in the Park, and nobody asks you, "Why can't you pay for yourselves?" Well, it's free. If we could establish the idea that for all of our culture, it's exactly the same as our intellectual wealth, it's not something that needs to be bought. It's not something that should have any barrier to it, it's something that should belong to everybody as a birthright. You're changing the equation from essentially a capitalist model to a completely different model. I don't know if that's going to be--I know it won't be easy to do, but I know that it's a fundamental thing that we can do that in this particular historical moment is actually an intervention. Let me--I'll get the microphone out of my hand, but let me just give you one example. When I first raised this idea to the Board of Directors of the Public Theater, the New York Shakespeare Festival, got a universal response, "We can't make our tickets free." Why
not? "Because if they're free, people won't value it." This was said to me by the leaders of the organization who for 54 years have been giving away 1,800 seats a night free in Central Park to the most impassioned, informed, enthusiastic audience that you will see in any theater on the planet. What that response said to me is that our ideology, our ideology of the market is so powerful right now that it actually trumps people's experience. They were willing to disbelieve and ignore their own experience in favor of the ideology that everything can have its price measured by dollars. That's how you can actually measure the values on these. So fighting against that is very, very difficult, and you have to be smart about it because you have to pay salaries while you're doing it, and it's not as if the alternatives to capitalism have worked out that well in my lifetime. But--and we're aware of that. We're not stupid. But still, what we profoundly believe is that you can't measure the value of something in dollars, and that if you accept that you can, you're doing a terrible disservice to the arts. So being smart and strategic about how we fight
that idea, is I'd say the best idea we have.

[Applause]

MR. PAULSON: I suspect a good number of the folks in this room lived in New York in 1999, and if you didn't, you probably were aware of a fire storm surrounding a particular exhibit called Sensation at the Brooklyn Museum. And this gentleman was at the heart of that. You're accused, Arnold, of trying to provoke people, and you know, being sensationalistic, and trying to drive people through the doors by--with shock value. How do you plead?

DR. LEHMAN: Do I have an attorney here? Not guilty. The young British artists, for those who might remember the exhibition or traveled to Great Britain, were the first generation that wanted to break through the niceties of British modern art or British contemporary art. And they wanted to bring a humanity, and more of the human experience to their art. And whether you think Damien Hirst qualifies for that or not with sliced animals or you think Chris Ofili in terms of what he portrayed whether it's in the Holy Virgin Mary or in his ode to his great friends in the world
of jazz, they were all seeking a greater human experience not only for themselves as artists, but for the general public. When we learned of this exhibition, we felt that this was something that needed to be brought to New York, and we were not at all aware of what was going to happen. The exhibition was in London, there was one trigger in London that caused a concern, and that was a portrait of a, of a mass murderer of children. No one in the United States even knew her name or knew the artist's name. It then went to Berlin, and whether Berlin is more accepting of cultural differences or provocative art or not, nothing happened in Berlin. There were no protests, there were no concerns. The newspaper articles and TV and the rest of the media treated it like any other exhibition. When it got to New York, at a particular moment in our political history, and for those of you here tonight who were around in 1999, you may recall that there was a senate race that pitched our then Mayor against Hillary Clinton. The—I hate to suggest that politics and cynicism came together to create the firestorm that we had. In the 600 pages of media, and hundreds of tapes
of media, print media, and then electronic
media, there was not one mention of Chris Ofili.
Not one mention of the Holy Virgin Mary in all
of that. Indeed when we presented this to the,
to the city as a prelude to what our program was
going to be, we're a city-owned building. We
showed all of the works that we thought were
going to be provocative. The Damien Hirst
sliced cows and pigs, the Chapman Brothers,
images of young children with genitals coming
out of their ears and their mouths with, with
incredibly provocative art, none of that created
a stir. The one picture that created a problem
was the Holy Virgin Mary because of the use of
elephant dung, you may remember, that he placed
for the Virgin's breasts. If you know the
artist's work, you will have seen the same use
of elephant dung on portraits of his best
friends. He had been in Zimbabwe, and all over
Africa elephant dung was used as a symbol of
generosity, of nurturing, and that was indeed
the point that made the political process, and I
might say, the media created an event in the
history of museums that's never been duplicated.
And I hope, I hope won't be duplicated again.
The—but we would do that show again. And strangely enough, all of those institutions and many of our colleagues who spoke negatively about what was being done have all come around. They're showing the same work, they're honoring the same artists, but it's 10 years later.

MR. PAULSON: Which begs the question. A decade later, what has changed that we've not had a similar firestorm? Has America changed?

DR. LEHMAN: Certainly America's changed, but I think the attitude of American museums to let one or two institutions, one or two theaters, several great singer-poets take the heat, allows them to then jump in 10 years later.

MR. PAULSON: Well, so much of what we're talking about today historically, movements that have occurred, and songs that have fueled them, art that has fueled social movements, but Peter has a remarkable project called Operation Respect that I'll let him tell you a little bit more about it. But what I find so fascinating is it was literally born out of a song you heard. Can you talk about that, Peter?

MR. YARROW: Yeah. Again, and I can sing a
bit of it for you while I accommodate the new
technology. Okay. The--see, I think there are
two elements, you know, from being an organizer
for all these years, that have to come together.
That have to come together. One is you need the
space to be able to say what you have to say,
and if that closes down, and you can't ask
questions, and you can't criticize, and you're
labeled seditious, then you have a shutdown of
democracy. Democracy absolutely relies on the
ability to question, to ask questions, and to
have a dialog. Number two, you have to have an
ethos--and we were talking of this before--in
the county or in the society that allows for a
civil dialog. That doesn't mean that you can't
make powerful points with powerful statements in
plays, and say things in songs that are
considered outrageous. When Bobby Dylan wrote
them, and later people begin to--it means that
you have to respect and open your heart to other
points of view.

[Applause]

MR. YARROW: Thank you, for Bobby. So
realizing that yes, for a long time we did have
that capacity in our country to ask questions.
What we needed was civility, and now we see that our children, we see that our children are killing each other. And the first 9/11 occurred at the high school--Columbine High School.