

## ART

My son Lewis is an artist. My daughter Martha is an artist. My son-in-law Mark is an artist. My daughter Carol is a fine photographer. My son David has drawn cartoons from the time he was little; has sculpted for many years, and continues to draw. And I, like Carol, take photographs, and like David, sculpted. A family of artists.

Growing up in New York, I had the good fortune of being exposed to great art: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney, the Guggenheim, the 57<sup>th</sup> Street Galleries, the Brooklyn Museum. In classical music, I listened to the NBC Symphony and Metropolitan Opera On The Air. My mother took me to Central Park to hear the Goldman band. When I was at CCNY, I went to Lewisohn Stadium for the NY Philharmonic. (Until I was in my 20s, I never heard live classical music indoors.)

The New York public schools and CCNY provided me with art and music classes. When my children were small, we would take them to museums, and tried to make them aware of “great art.” I remember telling them that there are great artists, both in and out of museums, but to me, there are two who surpass all the others: as sculptor—Michelangelo; as painter—Rembrandt. I came to that conclusion in my late teens, and still think so.

We (my various wives, and I) encouraged our children’s involvement in art. Lewis in printmaking, Martha in pottery, Carol in modern dance, and David in sculpting. I had given all my kids cameras and explained the rudiments. We encouraged their exposure to music as well, with the help of the public schools. Carol played trombone, Lewis started with the violin and moved to the saxophone, Martha, the clarinet, and David, also the clarinet. There was classical music, folk music and jazz around the house. At the appropriate time, my children went their separate ways as far as popular music was concerned.

Which brings me to the phenomenon of the generation gap, and what is classical and traditional, and what is modern and unconventional. I guess it is age; what generation are you a part of? I always considered myself part of the current generation. I may have grown up with the old, the classic, the traditional, but I was always open to the new, the innovative, the experimental, in music and in art. But maybe not so much these days.

Certainly not in contemporary music. Not contemporary serious music, or contemporary popular music. At a concert of symphonic music, I would much rather hear Beethoven than Glass. At a jazz concert, I would much rather hear swing and bop than free and discordant. I want so much to be with it. To “dig” the musicians. To appreciate whatever it is they are playing. Not to feel that what they are producing is noise.

I used to tell my friends who rejected all modern music and modern art that the artists are speaking a language of their creation and it is our job to learn that language. These days, I feel that it is getting too hard for me to learn a new language. I want the artist to speak to me in the language I know. Am I becoming one of those who say: “I don’t know much about (fill in the blank), but I know what I like.

It is 2015, and I have no idea what kind of music my children like. Nor art. Fran insists that young people today are not interested in classical music, which therefore includes my four children. When we go to a concert at Symphony Hall or Jordan Hall, there are very few young people, other than music students.