

I Believe:
The Arts Need New Blood
By Rhett DeVelay

(c)2004-2009 Ardecy Music, R. DeVelay (Clements)

I believe the Arts (yes, with a capital 'A') are stale and stagnant only because it's the same people, over and over again, who are given a chance to have their works produced or exhibited. I understand how expensive it is to produce theater, symphonic works, books, painting/photography exhibits, dance recitals, or independent films but there is so much ignored talent in America, in particular. I don't just speak of myself (composer, writer and lyricist) but of several other people I know. There are no venues where new artists, from all artistic backgrounds, are encouraged to be heard, seen and experienced. For decades I've said that if I had a great deal of money I would establish a trust that for two years an artist in each field would be supported so they could produce a work or works without having to worry about making a living, and then give them a venue where they could present their finished works. I would also like to be able to create a marketing venue where they could have people adept at Marketing create and plan ways to get those artistic works out to the public.

For the past thirty-five years I've been composing music and have only completed two musicals, one ballet and thirty-two piano miniatures (pieces that range from two to seven minutes each in length). That's not a lot, considering I'm nearly 50 years old. But, consider that I've also been working full-time jobs in which to support myself since I was eighteen years old. I've worked in bakeries, gift shops, restaurants, retail, banking, real estate, and, presently, a TV production network.

Whenever I'm working on a project I either get up earlier than necessary or stay up later than I would like working on the project often grabbing twenty minutes here and there to work on a passage of music or a lyric. I've learned how to laser-focus quickly on what I'm doing and use every spare moment to it's fullest advantage. Needless to say, this is a difficult habit to perfect and many cannot do it. My oldest friend, whom I've known for over 37 years, is a writer and needs complete quiet and many hours of time in which to write a page-or-so of dialogue. However, he also works a full-time job and has turned out even less work than I have, over the years even though he's in his 70's.

America is loath to subsidize funding for their Artists. I'm not sure I disagree with this, yet I do sometimes get envious of our European neighbors involved in the arts who don't have to worry about where the next dime is coming from while trying to increase the repertoire of the Artistic community. In all honesty, they've turned out the majority of great Art. I have a motto: When you really want to do something you will do it.

Many people in this country think the Arts are not a necessity but a luxury. I couldn't disagree more. Most people have a favorite song, or movie, or book, or painting, or play, or musical, or photograph that means something to them. It enriches their lives and brings them pleasure. That's Art. A World without the freedom to 'create' is a World I don't want to live in. So, next time a son or daughter or friend tells you they want to do something in the Arts, don't be concerned about their not being able to make a living at it. If they're serious in this endeavor they'll get a full-time job to survive, and create on the side to thrive. Be happy for them. Please feel free to contact me at: Musical.Theatre@hotmail.com.