

GENTLING

12 January 1995

Dear Ed and David,

Hearing that you are already having problems with your Hungarian sculptor does not surprise Scott and me. Although we do not know the artist, we now do know what it is to be an artist who has spent years perfecting his work and developing a personal artistic vision - only to have that vision subjected to the peculiar micro-management style that seems to be a part of this entire theater project. If he is an artist of integrity, he will naturally resist having his work forced to conform to another's vision. Expecting him to do otherwise is not to understand what it really is to be an artist.

Yesterday when Scott told you, David, that he and I were not going to have our personal artistic style lost in this project, you good-naturedly said, "We all must do our part for the greater good of the whole."

This in part is true in a collaborative process - but only within certain limits. It is not true if the style by which an artist has established his reputation, a style that is the signature of his own personal vision must be subordinated to the vision of others. The result will not be good art, as we have seen all too often in committee-created hotels, theaters and office buildings. If Scott and I are not allowed a significant measure of autonomy in this project, the result might be acceptable to a committee, but the art will be an anemic decorative ^{hybrid} that will serve none of us well. It certainly will not be for "the greater good of the whole."

It constantly amazes me when I see examples - and there are many of ~~them~~ - where experts are hired and not listened to, because those in authority believe that success in their own professions automatically makes them experts in other fields. It is the kind of hubris that blinds against good advice.

Last year at our very first meeting at the City Club where we introduced our design of the Sun Horses for the facade of the theater, you, David, promised us that if we let you have your way with the angels, the rest of the theater would be ours without interference. The reason why I suddenly quit on the angels even after Ed had ok'd in principle my second clay model was precisely because I thought you would leave us alone. It is now time to hold you to that promise. This in no way means that we do not welcome your valuable input and suggestions or the suggestions of others. What it does mean is that as artists of experience, integrity and skill we be trusted and allowed to pursue our own vision for the theater, even if that vision is not entirely in keeping with your sensibilities.

Meaning, spirit, and emotion expressed in a lyrical realism are the basis of our art. They are why I thought we were chosen for this project. We simply will not turn our backs on them for the sake of a decorative style imposed upon us by others.

You are the theater's founder and guiding genius, Ed.