

# ArtsWatch

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Posted by Peter Dobrin, music critic of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

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There's a change in the air surrounding the **Barnes Foundation's** proposed move to Center City. Some part of that feeling, admittedly subjective, is hard to pin down. Other aspects of a possible change are more tangible. For one thing, Judge Ott has told Barnes trustees that they have some explaining to do.

And in a classic Philadelphia way, though Inquirer art critic Edward Sozanski has written repeatedly that moving the Barnes from Merion is a mistake, now the New York Times has weighed in, calling the proposed move "a crime," which means Philadelphia's stealth cultural and philanthropic leadership will probably pause to think twice about subverting what appears to be a growing public will to keep the Barnes where it is.

I keep waiting for this sensible truce to emerge: Keep the Barnes where it is, build a Barnes interpretive center on the Parkway downtown with the compulsory gift shop and bookstore and a theater preparing visitors for the Barnes experience with a 20- or 30-minute documentary. Then bus visitors from the interpretive center out to Merion to see the Barnes.

Is \$150 million really raised toward this project? If so, take \$50 million to build the interpretive center, and put the other \$100 million in endowment to save the Barnes from its ongoing financial troubles.

There. Is everyone happy now?