

## A Lost Decade?

Joe Ferullo | Dec. 7, 2009 NCR Today

I came of age in the 1970s, and always saw that as one of the worst decades of a not-so-upbeat century = Vietnam, Watergate, stagflation, KC and the Sunshine Band. The list goes on, and on.

But in today's Hollywood trade paper, [Variety](#) [1] editor Peter Bart makes a good case for another lost decade -- the one we are about to leave.

Bart -- a former *New York Times* reporter and Paramount Pictures executive -- looks back on the last ten years and finds a list of infamy to rival the '70s: two stock market crashes, Islamic jihad, Hurricane Katrina, two wars that can't be won, and the near-destruction of the American auto industry. Kind of gives disco a run for its money to the bottom of history's barrel.

Bart's musings come as he looks at last night's [Kennedy Center Honors program](#) [2], which presented lifetime achievement awards to artists as diverse as Bruce Springsteen, David Brubeck, Robert DeNiro and Mel Brooks.

To Bart and others in the art-and-culture world, this year marked a departure for the better from years past, when George W. Bush seemed outright uncomfortable around artists and musicians. Clearly, many did not vote for him (in fact some actively campaigned against him; see Steisand, Barbra). And he'd built a career distancing himself from the kinds of activities centered on the coasts of the continent.

The Obamas are more comfortable moving from one kind of setting to another: from inner city, to Kennedy Center.

For Bart, this is a sign that we are perhaps emerging from this Lost Decade into something different, perhaps even better.

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[1] <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118012255.html?categoryid=1&cs=1>

[2] [http://www.theinsider.com/news/3106417\\_Obama\\_salutes\\_jazz\\_great\\_Brubeck\\_at\\_Kennedy\\_Center](http://www.theinsider.com/news/3106417_Obama_salutes_jazz_great_Brubeck_at_Kennedy_Center)