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The Arts

Lawmakers have added a few new provisions to a bill to extend the arts and humanities endowments as the bill wends its way on Capitol Hill.

When it emerged this week from the Senate's special arts and humanities committee, the bill was released by Sen. Claiborne Pell, D-R.I. It contained an "arts in education" program with recommended funding of $10 million to develop innovative techniques for teaching the arts in the nation's schools.

There were also new provisions that were passed last month by the House, but differed in significant ways from those of the Senate.

The museum services program, designed to aid science, technology and history museums, as well as art museums, in financing their operating expenses, was approved by the House. The Senate, with a foundation of the Arts and Humanities, the entity charged with developing and promoting a broad national policy of support for the arts and humanities, the House bill places a new Museum Services Institute under the Department of Health, Education and Welfare although HEW officials have said the institute would be too expensive.

Two Bicentennial proposals were also incorporated in the Senate bill in subcommittee.

A proposal that originated with John D. Rockefeller III to focus on the nation's goals and priorities in the next 200 years was turned over to the Humanities Endowment on a challenge grant basis. That means the endowment would be able to draw on $1 in U.S. funds for every $3 it drums up in private contributions.

The extended Bicentennial project is to continue for the next 13 years, to the 200th anniversary of the ratification of the Constitution.

Sen. Walter Mondale's proposal for a Bicentennial photographic and film portrait of America was also included in the Senate bill by the arts and humanities committee.

The extended Bicentennial project is to focus on the arts and humanities committees more along the lines of the House version, as well.

The thorny issue of structuring state humanities committees more along the lines of the state arts councils was resolved differently from the House version, as well.

Under the subcommittee bill, each state would be empowered to create its own state humanities council, recognizing an existing dual arts and humanities council or accept the current self-perpetuating state humanities councils. If the third option is chosen, a majority of the committee's members must be appointed by the governor of the state within three years. Under the House bill, only two additional members of the existing state committees must be appointed by the appropriate state agency. The issue has been a sore point between Humanities chairman Ronald Berman and Sen. Pell.

A markup session on the Senate bill in the full Labor and Public Welfare committee is scheduled for Wednesday, May 12.

Meanwhile, President Ford's budget request of $87 million for each endowment was trimmed $2.5 million to $84.5 million for each by House Appropriations.

George Mason University in Fairfax has been granted $110,500 by the National Endowment for the Humanities to index and preserve a vast collection of plays produced under the Works Progress Administration's arts program during the Great Depression.

The collection, by far the largest single assemblage of federal theater project materials from the 1930s, includes more than 7,000 scripts for stage and radio shows, documentaries and adaptations of classical and European works.

It was all discovered in a Baltimore warehouse in 1972 under the direction of George Mason faculty members. The materials had belonged to the Library of Congress, which did not have the resources to make them available to the public and they had lain untouched for more than 20 years.

Included in the amazing assortment of memorabilia are unpublished early works by Arthur Miller and by southern writer Betty Smith, as well as previously unknown or lost plays by black writers. Also retrieved for research were motion picture books, set and costume designs, posters and musical scores, to say nothing of photographs and musical records. A field of clover for the arts historian.

A benefit showing of "Pippi in the South Seas" will be held at the Capitol Plaza Theater in Landover on Saturday, May 15 at 10 a.m., with proceeds contributed to the mentally retarded residents of the Great Oak Center in Silver Spring. The donation is $1 and tickets may be purchased at the theater or by calling Laura Schwartz at 228-4035.

Northern Virginia Community College at Loudoun is presenting a History Through Film series beginning at 3 p.m. May 14 with "Stireseman," a study of the man who served as Germany's foreign minister from 1933-29. Subsequent films in the lineup are: Leni Riefenstahl's propaganda classic, "Triumph of the Will" (May 15), "Victory at Sea," an abridgment of the splendid 1950s TV documentary series on World War II (May 21), D.W. Griffith's epic potboiler about the Reconstruction era, "Birth of a Nation" (June 4), and Lawrence Olivier's "Henry V." For further information call 223-4337.

The National Archives has inherited more than a million feet of historic silent newsreel footage spanning the decade 1919-29 from Movietone news, a subsidiary of 20th Century Fox. As part of the deal, the government will finance the conversion of the film from its original and highly flammable nitrate stock to new safety film, a costly procedure necessary to the preservation of old film. Movietone distributed two newscasts per week to theaters all over the world from 1919 until 1939, when TV news made them virtually obsolete.

The Walt Disney Studio is preparing to begin work next month on "Peter's Dragon," a combination live-action-animation opus said to be Disney's costliest musical since "Mary Poppins." Helen Reddy will star as Nora, a lighthouse keeper's daughter who befriends a small runaway boy and his imaginary pet dragon. The movie sports 14 new songs by Academy Award winning composers Al Kasha and Joel Hirschhorn.

Warner Brothers is gearing up for a June start on "The Heretic: Exorcist II" with announcements that Richard Burton and Louise Fletcher, the Oscar-winning Nurse Ratched of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," and Linda Blair in the further adventures of Old Scratch. Max von Sydow will also return in the role of the aged exorcist Father Perrin, who, it will be recalled, died in the original film. In Hollywood, anything is possible.

Attention all Billy Jack rejets and anybody else who still wants to be in pictures: the Price-Howard Production Company is holding auditions for actors and actresses aged 13-55, to appear in a feature-length movie to be filmed in Washington during June and July. Hopewell who fail in these categories should report to the Biograph Theater in Georgetown between 8 a.m. and noon on Saturday or Sunday, May 15-16. The project is the first commercial feature undertaken by Price-Howard, a local outfit specializing in educational and TV fare. The working title is "The Underground Machine" and it's described as a "fast-paced comedy with science fiction overtones." For further information call 881-2224.

Music

News from a Tallahassee, Fla. newspaper: Damnning rock music for its "appeal to the flesh," a Baptist church has begun a campaign to put the tunes of records to Elton John, the Rolling Stones and other rock stars. Some $2,200 worth of records were tossed in a bonfire last week after church officials labeled the music immoral.

The Rev. Charles Boykin, associate pastor and youth director of the Lakewood Baptist Church, said he had seen statistics which showed that 70 percent of people who became pregnant out of wedlock, 986 committed fornication while rock music was being played.