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## Biddle, Livy: Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (1977-1979): News Article 06

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# Biddle in New Role as Arts Council Meets

By Phillip M. Kadis

Washington Star Staff Writer

Livingston Biddle, confirmed only last week as the new chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, slipped into the post this weekend as though it were an old shoe, as he conducted a three-day meeting of the National Council on the Arts, the endowment's citizen advisory body.

Without fanfare, Biddle made it clear in a series of announcements that he expects the presidentially-appointed council of 26 members to take a more active role in shaping the course of the endowment.

"The council should be vibrant with criticism," said Biddle. "We need contention and controversy on the council to reach the best ideas."

**SOME WONDERED** whether that offer might return to haunt Biddle. For the council includes such members as concert pianist Van Cliburn, jazz musician Billy Taylor, novelist Eudora Welty, painter James Wyeth, opera singer Martina Arroyo, composer Gunther Schuller, choreographer Jerome Robbins, actor Clint Eastwood, producer Harold Prince and fashion leader Geraldine Stutz — all strong-minded individuals.

But Biddle was unconcerned. He recalled the early days of the endowment when he was deputy chairman, and the creative rows that erupted between violinist Isaac Stern and choreographer Agnes de Mille. "When they both flipped their eyeglasses atop their head, we knew the storm signals were up," he said. But

something always came out of those confrontations.

**AMONG CHANGES** announced at the meeting:

- The likelihood Biddle will appoint three deputy chairmen (for policy and planning, programs, and intergovernmental relations) instead of one to reflect growth of the agency.

- Formation of a standing budget committee of the council, to be followed by formation of other standing committees, so that much of the work of the council can be done in committee.

- A new emphasis on cooperation between the arts and humanities endowments, but no merger. Humanities chairman Joseph Duffey addressed the arts council, outlining some of the problems both endowments will face as they try to widen

access to and participation in the arts and learning.

Biddle also said he strongly opposed pending legislation that would place the arts endowment under a new Department of Education, a proposal favored by Biddle's former boss, Sen. Claiborne Pell.

**IN OTHER BUSINESS**, the council heard from a delegation of Hispanic artists and arts administrators, including actress Margo Albert (the wife of actor Eddie Albert), who made a plea for greater recognition of their needs.

"They say it is easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle, than it is for a Latino artist to pass through the portals of the National Endowment for the Arts," said Mrs. Albert.

The council approved formation of a task force to look into the Hispanic matter.

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