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## National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities (1965-1967): News Article 33

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# Federal Rental Fund For Albee Is Unlikely

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By DAVID F. DONNELLY JR.

The Albee Theater currently has no chance of getting federal rental funds for a school children's repertory project which local officials have indicated are necessary if the facility is to survive as a performing arts center.

Washington officials confirmed today that current plans for the repertory project call for the communities in which the theaters are established to provide the house. There is no provision whatsoever, they said, for federal funds to be used to rent the theater.

Seth K. Gifford, an attorney for B. A. Dario who purchased the Albee last November, said last week the theater's future depended to a large extent on funds for rental that would be received under the repertory project. Mr. Gifford's remarks on behalf of Mr. Dario, who is president and treasurer of Lincoln Downs, were made at a meeting of IMPACT R.I. Inc.

"It's a bridge we'll have to cross when we come to it," Mr. Gifford replied when told Washington officials had discounted the possibility of the Albee receiving rent funds. "As far as I'm concerned we haven't come to it," he added.

Mr. Gifford said he knows of no specific prohibition that would prevent federal funds to be used for rent. "I'd say it is still up to the federal government to make a decision on it," he added.

Efforts to reach Mr. Dario for comment on the theater's future were unsuccessful. Mr. Gifford said discussions of the Albee's prospects "were up to Mr. Dario."

Earlier this week Mr. Dario said the theater's future was closely linked to the repertory program. He disassociated himself from a statement made by the theater's artistic director, Renzo Raiss, that the Albee could survive without the repertory project.

A Health, Education and Welfare Department official in Washington, who asked not to be quoted by name, said plans for the repertory theater "have from the beginning" called for the community to provide the house for performances. This, the official said, could be done through rents paid by a community organization, city contributions or other means.

Providence has been virtually assured by Congressman John E. Fogarty of one of the three theaters to be established this fall. The congressman has said on several occasions that the city will get a repertory theater, designed to present free serious drama to school children, if a suitable facility is made available.

Albee officials, including Mr. Dario, have indicated they are willing to house the theater which would run for 32 to 36 weeks of the school year. The Albee, they said, needs the rental revenues from such a project to meet expenses.

Charles A. O'Connor Jr., Providence superintendent of schools, said it was his understanding also that the repertory theaters, which would be joint-

ly financed by the U.S. Office of Education and the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities' suborganization, the National Council on the Arts, would require local communities to provide the theater.

Mr. O'Connor said he knew of no plans at present for a community organization to finance rentals of the Albee. The situation, he added, is to be discussed by him with federal officials at a meeting scheduled April 20.

One way that a theater could recoup part of its rental costs would be from performances by the repertory group to admission-paying adults. Actors Equity, the superintendent said, has agreed to allow the repertory group eight performances weekly, three of which could be

scheduled on weekends or evenings for adults, he said.

Mr. O'Connor emphasized it was "not my province" to make arrangements for a theater to house the repertory troupe. His duties, he said, involve preparation of an application for the theater and making plans to use funds under the national Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Mr. O'Connor and Dr. Grace M. Glynn, associate state commissioner of education, said part of the state's share of funds under Titles I and III of this act could be used to transport children to the theater and purchase of collateral education materials such as texts of classical dramas that might be shown at the theater.