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Reagan Administration: Funding Cuts News Articles (1981-1982): News Article 39

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Filling Humanities Post Is an Art

By GRACE GLUECK

When Dr. Ronald S. Berman had to leave as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities last January after five years, no one in Washington foresaw trouble in filling the post. Yet what started out as a low-key effort to replace him has mushroomed into an intensive talent search bringing more than 8 names into consideration.

The search has not, so far, produced a chairman-designate, although one is expected to be named fairly soon. But it has had broader results. In spotlighting an important but little-known cultural agency, it has stimulated the interest of President Carter and his reorganizing team in the whole area of the Federal Government's involvement with cultural affairs.

"It has led to a good deal of reflection on larger questions, such as the role of cultural institutions in relation to the Government, where they are and where they're going," says Barry Jagoda, a special assistant to President Carter and a White House spokesman on arts policies.

Re-examination Down the Line

"And somewhere down the line," he said, "we will examine the structure of the Federal culture establishment with an eye to possible changes, though in close consultation and harmony with the Congress."

Such a scrutiny, part of an overall effort under the President's reorganization plan, would study the multiplicity of Federal cultural institutions, their organizations, their budgets and their personnel, Mr. Jagoda said. As a "manager," Mr. Carter was "aware of duplications, and would have an initial inclination to make things more effective," he said.

"On the other hand," he added, "he also appreciates the need for diversity, and has a deep understanding of the relationship of the arts to a modern industrial society, and so he would tread lightly. He wants effectiveness, but realizes that cost effectiveness is not the only issue. And nothing would be done without particular reference to the point of view of Congress."

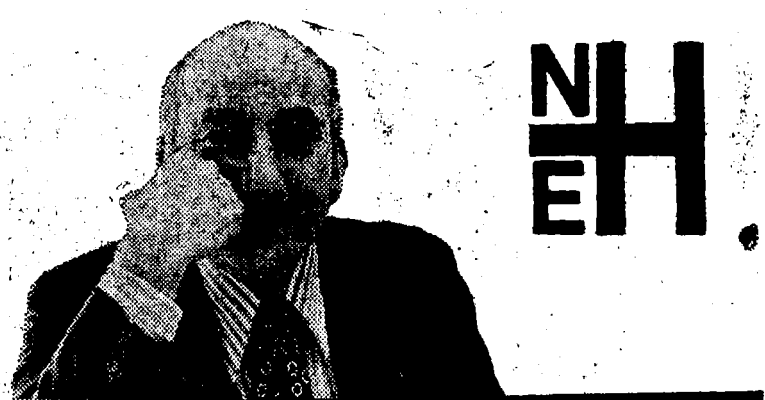
Nancy Hanks's Term Expiring

Meanwhile, the two cultural institutions demanding the most immediate Government attention are the twin grant agencies, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The term of Nancy Hanks, chairman of the arts endowment, does not expire until next October, and the Administration, according to Mr. Jagoda, has "not yet begun to focus on the question" of a replacement, if any.

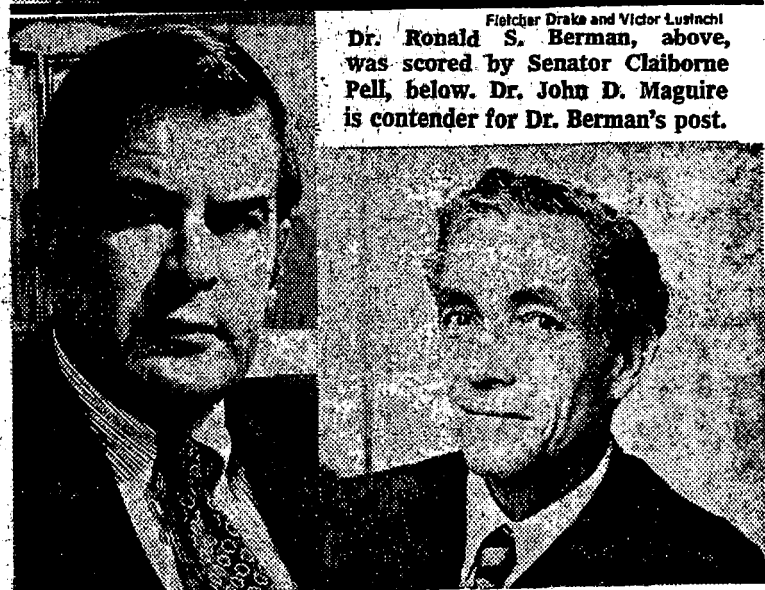
On the other hand, finding an occupant for the humanities job vacated by Mr. Berman has become a considerable challenge. Although it has a far less public recognition than its glamorous twin, the humanities endowment is financed at approximately the same level. For the 15 months that comprise its last fiscal year, ending in October 1976, its staff of 148 allocated nearly \$111 million in 2,045 grants in the fields of education and research throughout the 50 states.

The grants went to universities, schools, libraries, museums, public



NH EH

Fletcher Drake and Victor Lustig
Dr. Ronald S. Berman, above, was scored by Senator Claiborne Pell, below. Dr. John D. Maguire is contender for Dr. Berman's post.



television organizations and fellowship programs, covering such diverse efforts as improving the quality of life in the cities and research for a dictionary on the Akkadian language of the Babylonian and Assyrian civilizations.

Acceptability and Commitment

To head the agency, Mr. Jagoda notes, the Administration is looking for "someone who is acceptable to the academic community and who also has a commitment to broaden public participation in the humanities."

Although Mr. Berman had been reappointed to a second term by President Ford, the Senate refused to confirm him, amid charges by Senator Claiborne Pell, Democrat of Rhode Island, that the agency had financed esoteric programs and had not reached a broad enough segment of the population.

Although President Carter, besieged by other priorities, did not pay close attention to the functions of the agency during his first few months in office, he has, by now, according to associates, become "sort of an expert" on it. Through aides and advisers all over the country, the President has been receiving names and advice; in March an informal committee was set up to suggest and screen possible candidates.

The ad hoc group comprises Roger Kennedy, the Ford Foundation's acting vice president for the arts; June Bingham, an author and the wife of Representative Jonathan B. Bingham, Democrat-Liberal of the Bronx; Elizabeth Sifton, an editor at the Viking Press and daughter of the late theologian Reinhold Niebuhr; William H.

Goetzmann, a faculty member at the University of Texas, and Hugh M. Sloster, president of Morehouse College in Atlanta.

It came up with, among other selections, Otis Singletary, president of the University of Kentucky. However, Mr. Singletary turned down the job, citing "personal" and other reasons.

Long Parade of Possibilities

The long parade of possible candidates has also included Dr. James H. Billington, director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington; Robert Lumiansky, president of the American Council of Learned Societies; Alfred L. Stern, associate director and head of special projects for the White House domestic policy staff; Charles Blitzer, assistant secretary for history and art at the Smithsonian Institution, and Jacquelyn Mattfeld, provost and dean of academic affairs at Brown University in Providence, R.I.

The leading contenders this week were thought to be Dr. John D. Maguire, president of the State University College at Old Westbury, L.I., and Joseph Duffey, Assistant Secretary of State for cultural affairs, an ordained minister and adviser on issues during the Carter campaign. His credentials also include stints as general secretary of the American Association of University Professors and national chairman of Americans for Democratic Action.

'Multiple Constituency'

"What this job takes," said an educator close to the committee who requested anonymity, "is a person who could run a foundation or a major university. The problem is, it's a tough job—there's no private life and there's a multiple constituency—a strong and willful Congress that knows what the job should be; the scholarly community; the Administration and all the interlocked bodies of Government that deal in the same turf."

He contrasted the job—which pays \$52,500 a year—with the chairmanship of the National Endowment on the Arts: "Nancy has made the N.E.A. post into one with national visibility. There's a much more glamorous constituency, and you spend your time with lively folk."

"By contrast, the N.E.H. job is a morass; it doesn't ennoble its occupant and it's not one many would go after. The kind of person who can carry it off is one who has plenty of chances to do useful things elsewhere for more money."

Presidential Meeting

Earlier this month, the President held a discussion on the humanities endowment with Senator Pell and Representative John Brademas, Democrat of Indiana, strong supporters in Congress of the arts. Senator Pell was a sponsor of the original legislation that set up the two agencies in 1965. They reviewed with Mr. Carter the backgrounds of the endowments and urged him to support them.

"We also pushed for greater dispersal of the money," Mr. Brademas said. "Quality vs. accessibility—we have to be concerned with both, not only for political reasons, but also for substantive reasons. There's nothing wrong with having in mind those twin points of tension with regard to both endowments."

His words were echoed by Mr. Jagoda, who said the President felt a commitment "to broaden the role of the humanities endowment so that it can be meaningful to a wider spectrum of our population." For one thing, he added, "There could be more support for regional social-cultural histories, oral family histories, a kind of 'Roots' approach with more or less scholarly purpose."

Leinsdorf Ends 'Rug' Concerts With Three Symphonic Staples

By PETER G. DAVIS

A well-attended concert conducted by Erich Leinsdorf brought the New York Philharmonic Rug series to a close in Fisher Hall Sunday night. Mr. Leinsdorf's program had neither a guest soloist nor a novelty to lure the audience, just three symphonic staples by Mozart, Beethoven and Stravinsky—enough wonderful music to keep everyone happy.

Among the three, Stravinsky's "Jeu de cartes" fared the least successfully. This confection is in the composer's most exposed Neo-Classical vein and even the slightest imperfections of rhythm, balances or intonation stand out glaringly. The orchestra sounded as if it were still in the final rehearsal stages, for much of the playing was smeared, minutely imprecise, tonally rough and generally inelegant.

The aural picture altered drastically for Mozart's Symphony No. 39 and Beethoven's Symphony No.

1. When it comes to the Viennese classics, Mr. Leinsdorf is as impeccable a stylist as any conductor active today, and his handling of these familiar works was characterized by an invigorating buoyant pulse and a smoothly polished surface sheen.

Even more remarkable was the subtle ways in which the conductor differentiated between the two scores, the mature Mozart at his most sophisticated and the young Beethoven already boisterously tugging at the accepted norms of symphonic form. Both are high-water marks of the classical era, but Mr. Leinsdorf was at pains to accent the suavely sensuous perfection of Mozart's musical argument in contrast to the more rugged, jabbing power that lurks behind Beethoven's works. Each performance in its different way was expressly to the point and superlatively executed.

Events Today

Theater

THREEPENNY OPERA by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, with a new translation by Ralph Manheim and John Willett; directed by Richard Foreman; cast headed by Phillip Bosco; presented by the New York Shakespeare Company, Joseph Papp, producer; at the Delacorte Theater, Central Park, West 84th Street, 8.

Music

EMANUEL KRASOVSKY, pianist, Carnegie Recital Hall, 8.
DIZZY GILLESPIE AND GROUP, Henry Street Settlement Playhouse, 466 Grand Street, 8:30.
BALALAIKA SYMPHONIC ORCHESTRA, Damaroch Park, Lincoln Center, 7:30.
NEW YORK CHORAL SOCIETY SUMMER SING, Carnegie Hall, 165 West 57th Street, Mendelssohn's "Elijah," 7:30.
EDDIE PRESTON JAZZ BAND, Grace Plaza, 432 Street and Avenue of the Americas, 12:15.
SEANAMHAIN'S INSTITUTE, see changes, South Street Seaport, Fulton Street and East River, 7:30.

MASTER OPERA, Lincoln Center Library-Museum, 4.
SMITH STREET SOCIETY, Bryant Park, 12:15.

Dance

STUTTGART BALLET, "Romeo and Juliet," Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center, 8.
NEW YORK CITY BALLET, "Jewels," New York State Theater, Lincoln Center, 8.
CHOREOGRAPHERS SHOWCASE, American Theater Lab, 219 West 19th Street, 8.
SAEKO ICHINOHE AND COMPANY, Open Eye, 316 East 71st Street, 8.

Cabaret

LONE STAR CAFE, Chenango Bend.
EDDIE CONDON'S, Carrie Smith, singer.
NICKELS, Danny Nye, singer-pianist.
GROUND FLOOR TERRACE CAFE, Village Gate, Jam Session, Daphne Hejlsman, Jazz and Baroque Trio.
BARBARAN Allen-Rich, singer.
CHATEAU MADRID, "Chateau Tropicale '77," Roger Blackton, musician and illusionist; Denise Harris, singer.