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by Kathryn Keller

Citartnews recently spoke with three new RISCA appointees and prominent members of the community; Daniel Lecht, RISCA’s new chairperson, Henry Kates, and George Bass. We were interested in learning more about their views of the Council and what they would like to see it accomplish. Their commitment to the arts and contributions they feel they have made to the arts in Rhode Island were also discussed.

Daniel Lecht

“I like all arts,” proclaims the newly elected Council Chairman Daniel Lecht, Lecht, President of the Rhode Island Lithograph Corp., in Pawtucket and a former member of the board of Artists International, hopes for a larger arts budget so that the Council can “work towards making sure everybody gets what they need and deserve.” He added that the Council “must look at those people the most beneficially” in appropriating funds, that individuals as well as groups should be supported in all areas of the arts.

Since March, Lecht has been a member of the advisory committee of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. He referred to discussions of that group regarding the various ways individual states can raise money for the arts. He cited the “lottery for the arts,” held in Massachusetts and Sydney, Australia, as one method of raising money, though not necessarily the most viable one for Rhode Island.

“What’s good for art is good for the community and for business.... Arts support is not a one way street.”

—Daniel Lecht

George Bass

Newly elected Council Vice Chairman George Bass, a playwright and artistic director of Rites and Reason, Brown University’s Afro-American theatre group, would like the Council to create a climate of improved resources for the arts which would reach “ordinary folk.” He describes his presence on the Council as that of “an artist, a black artist, and a person committed to the realization of substantive support for arts experiences for a broad-based sector of the community.” “The recognition of arts experiences as an essential part of the intelligent living” is the goal he is working towards.

“Although I am university trained and therefore influenced by the classical tradition, I would say that my work is directed towards community arts.” Bass added that for most adults, the influence of art upon their lives depends on their early exposure to it as children. He calls this exposure the “crayon and paper plate” variety. And “that’s not art.” Thus the “corporate mind” is often brought to bear in arts management. Says Bass, “It’s fine for merchandising but it may not be appropriate for defining and building a structure for the advancement of the artist.”

When queried about his position on Mayor Cianci’s “Art in City Life” commission, Bass continued on page 3...