

THE COMMITMENT OF GOVERNMENT TO CULTURE: Why do the State and Federal Governments Give So Little to the Arts?

Moderator:

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Panelists:

Jonathan Katz, president, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

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Norma P. Munn, chair, New York City Arts Coalition

Cherbo: We have been given the task today of discussing why the states and the federal governments give so little to the arts. Of course, there's an assumption in that, isn't there? One of the questions I've asked our panelists to deal with is, what standards can we use to assess what would be an appropriate amount [for government to give the arts]? We're all advocates in this room, I'm assuming, and yet we never really deal with some of the standards that may be guidelines.

The second thing I've asked the panelists to deal with is, what factors have aided or hindered giving from the states and the federal governments to the arts? If anyone is interested, I've asked them to discuss how good our present data is in assessing the extent of federal and state giving to the arts and culture.

Lynch: The way I'd like to start is simply to agree with the fact that there's absolutely not enough money: there has never been enough, at any level. However, that's within the context—and it's important to remember this—that there are more people participating in more art in this country than ever before in the history of our nation. And so you have some questions and

some challenges within a context of success, and I think that's really important. Forty years ago, this meeting, this room, would have had just a handful of people in it, and that's important to understand.

The success of the nonprofit arts over the last 40 years also plays into the problem that we're facing today. There's been at least 1,000 percent growth in the number of arts organizations in America during that time period, so there are a lot more mouths to feed. There's a lot more activity out there. There are more artists today. A conservative statistical estimate tells us that 1.7 million people get their primary income as artists. So there's more need, and there's more competition.

At the same time, there has been an increased resource base. There's more actual money. And if you look at that, you understand that even if there's more money, there's not enough. That's an important context as we argue whatever case we're going to argue—whether it's here in New York, or nationally—for more dollars.

Now, if you take a look at government during those 40 years—[government gave] almost nothing 40 years ago. Now, government—federal, state and local—puts about \$6 billion a year into the arts. If you look at that \$6 billion, you have the tiny piece, the \$115 million, from the National Endowment for the Arts. But if you add to that the other federal agencies—the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the Smithsonian, the Kennedy Center, etc.—that's \$1 billion. If you add to that what comes out of the Department of Education, the Department of Transportation, some of the other pieces that we don't necessarily see: that's another \$1 billion. You add to that the \$2 billion in tax revenue foregone by our federal government. Then you add to that the roughly \$2 billion from state

and local sources, and it's a \$6 billion pot.

I'm going to put up a chart that shows the patterns of the three sources of government income. The top pattern shows growth nationally of local government money for the arts. The second pattern shows the growth of state money nationally. And the bottom pattern shows what federal money, in the form of the National Endowment for the Arts (not all the other sources), has done.

It is important for our discussion here to understand why those patterns are different. The growth of local government in America—what Commissioner Levin was talking about earlier—has been connected to community-development issues, economic issues, social problem-solving issues. That's why that has grown so dramatically. State government often connects with economic issues, so it goes up and down and follows the economy. And the federal government has followed ideological and political issues. We have to understand what we're dealing with in order to be able to work those various patterns.

There are some answers here. One reason we don't have more money is that this industry does not spend as much time or money on advocacy approaches as other industries do. It's a pretty simple equation: More money, more time, more money up there on that chart.

The idea of community development varies at different times and different places. Indianapolis' growth is because of downtown-revitalization issues, Atlanta's growth is because of racial diversity issues. The growth in Columbus, Ohio is because of tourism and international-positioning issues. And so on.

So, if you take a look at those patterns, one of the things that you would want to look at, across the country, is the growth pattern of money for local government giving across the country.

This [new] chart shows how much money each of your other cities gets from local government. In New York, the per-capita is \$16.22. Compared to other cities in the country, purely looking at the per-capita income, it's pretty good. There are a few that are better—Miami at \$20 per capita, or Pittsburgh at \$26 per capita, or Sacramento at \$20 per capita, or San Jose at \$21 per capita. And then everyone else is under those.

The left-hand side of the chart shows creative ways, beyond the actual income from the tax base, that cities across the country have

come up with new sources for government money. Hotel/Motel tax. Percent for Art. Community development. Admissions taxes. Sales taxes. Video rental taxes. Lottery, gambling, property taxes. Income tax. Those are examples of cities across the country that have come up with creative ways of coming up with new dollars. Broward County, Fla. earned \$4.7 million from sales tax. The hotel/motel tax in San Jose raised \$11 million. St. Louis, the property tax, \$40 million. There are all kinds of interesting patterns and ways in which people have approached this.

So with this as just an overview, let me just say a few things about why so little money has been given to the arts. First of all, I think we're facing, in the "so little" department, our Puritan roots. We don't have a natural, inherent giving instinct to the arts, and that has had to be built. There is the American work ethic, the entrepreneurial spirit, which is why I think earned income will continue to be a growth area. There is a historic reluctance of the arts community to work politically, and to work in the political coalitions within existing systems. Very often, the arts community will attack the existing system and want to have a different system, as opposed to working within the system, which is what a lot of those success models show.

What do I think needs to be done? I think the policy circle is the key. This is the first part of the policy circle—it's discussion of resources and research and data and facts. However, that has to be translated into the second piece of the policy cycle: positions that are clear and unified. And that has to be pushed into the third cycle, which is advocacy: not general advocacy, but rather, specific advocacy to specific decision-makers. That leads to a policy decision of some kind, and that needs to be monitored, with all the bells and whistles of thanks and analysis. And then the cycle starts over again.

Katz: I'd like to talk about state arts agency funding, which has sloped upward since 1993, and why it has sloped upward. That's what we want it to continue to do, at all levels. I'll devote my opening comments to why I think that happened, in addition to the fact that there's money there. Because as we know, the money being there doesn't result in its going to the arts. The case has to be made, and it has to be made competitively.

So what did the 56 state arts agencies—the 50 that are the states, and Guam, the Northern

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Marianas, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia—do that doubled their money? How did they go from \$211 million to \$446 million in that eight-year period?

I would identify four things. I'm not saying these are exactly the things that everybody needs to do, but they're a good point of departure for discussion and for consideration.

So, one thing: We learn to articulate the benefits of the arts in terms of public benefits. And those public benefits are primarily five—at least at the state level—and they're in the messages that the arts community has sent to state legislatures and governors. That is: the arts are good for economic development, the arts are essential to a basic education, the arts are effective in addressing youth-at-risk issues, the arts are important contributors to cultural tourism, and the arts are basic to strengthening community life, building amenity value and attracting knowledge workers. Those five things. States' arts agency budgets are basically built on those. In some cases they look like big line-items, and in some cases they're just the foundation for a discussion with the legislature.

If you combine them—for instance, if you combine economic development and education—you get the preparation of a competitive 21st century workforce. If you combined economic development and community strengthening, you get urban and rural revitalization. And this is the way legislators like to talk about arts funding. It doesn't mean that you abandon talking about quality and the arts, and the transforming experience of the arts. It *does* mean you must be in a position to articulate the public benefits that come from that transforming experience, and the institutions that provide it, and the individuals that provide it. That's the first thing.

The second thing is, the arts have been presented to top decision-makers, like governors and mayors and legislators, as a key vehicle for achieving their top agenda items. So that when a Governor [Christie] Whitman comes into New Jersey and says "I'm going to be about economic development, and I'm going to cut 30 percent of the state budget," the state arts agency doesn't get cut, because it successfully makes the case that it's an engine of economic development. When a Governor [George] Bush comes into Texas and says, "I'm making \$400 million available for literacy in Texas," then every state agency knows that to the extent that

it can explain how it contributes to literacy, \$400 million is available. Interestingly, that's what he did as president also: he identified himself as an education president. When a governor says, "I want a very spare state government, and I can only afford the things that give me tangible benefits," like a Governor [Jesse] Ventura does in Minnesota, then that's the case that you make for the arts, and that budget in Minnesota was higher in 2001 than it was in 2000. And sometimes, you get a governor like Governor [John] Rowland in Connecticut, who said, "How can I make my state the top per-capita supporter of the arts in the country?" And that was by going from \$11 to \$13 million dollars, and that's what he did. So that's one message.

A third point: The voice of the arts must be united, and many states took steps to consolidate that constituency. There's two realities that need to be addressed in government advocacy. One of them is geopolitics. A state like Arkansas has Little Rock, and the rest of the state. A state like Missouri has St. Louis and Kansas City, and the rest of the state. You know what you have in New York. Now, everybody has that. Everybody has a "rest of the state." Every state is rural. And usually, it's the rural constituency that controls the State Senate. That's why the states whose budget growth has accelerated in that period that we looked at are typically states that implemented decentralization plans during that time. You may recall that NYSCA's budget jumped from about \$16 million to more than \$30 million around 1974, when you implemented your decentralization plan, which is still in effect. Every constituency must see where the increased-dollars benefit is, and every constituent must advocate for the whole package, or it doesn't happen. You don't realize your potential by advocating for just your portion of the pie: you realize your potential by advocating for the whole pie, and that was an important message.

So there's that geopolitical reality, where the rurals must advocate for the cities and the cities must advocate for the rurals, and everybody advocates for the suburbs, which are now the most populous portion. We all have to be together on this. The other thing is, the arts community has to hang together. The individuals have to argue for the organizations. The organizations have to argue for the individuals. The small- and the middle- and the larger-sized organizations have to argue for everybody. Otherwise, you don't reach your potential. It's

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been my experience that it often takes somebody from the outside to catalyze that.

I have one more point to make: that accountability and performance measurement is now a fact of life in performing for the arts. Four out of five state agencies operate under performance-measurement strictures. The federal government does as well. That means that you will be asked by your government funders for more information than you have in the past. And you're doing the extra work to provide it, because you need to make the case. And I'll think we'll talk more about Joni's question, about what you have to say to justify more dollars. But it has to be things like, "a greater percentage of the school's population having these kinds of experiences." It has to be "a greater percentage of the under-18 population doing this or that," or "the over-65 population doing this or that," or "the qualitative experience going from here to there." Or "the percentage of budget support going from here to there." Or "the audience growing from here to there." And that requires information and data.

Marx: My main thing will be to echo something that Jonathan just said, which I thought was terrific. I'm going to address the three questions posed by Joni one by one, but do understand that what I'm presenting is the very personal, opinionated point of view of someone who has been in and out of state and federal arts funding since 1976. I feel like a real arts and government geezer these days.

The first question is: How good is our present information in assessing federal government giving to the arts? It's terrific. I think we're flooded with statistics and analyses. There's not a grant or a population base or an economic indicator that has not been examined by some academic researcher or arts service organization. Even though a really great fiscal manager once told me to always remember that numbers lie, all that research, I think, has been a real success on paper. But to what end, especially in New York state? Transforming that information into effective government policy and action to advance the arts, I think, has been a failure for decades.

Question two: By what standards can we claim that federal and state government has been giving too little to the arts, and what might be appropriate amounts? My answer here is really to return to the high-water mark. We saw the charts from 1980. Go back even further to

New York's own great precedent for government support for the arts. We should compare where we are now not to where we were last year or even ten years ago, and jump for joy because we haven't yet been eliminated entirely from the state budget, but instead compare current grants, in actual dollars, to those of the early '70s and the Rockefeller era, when the young New York State Council on the Arts was a real economic powerhouse for arts organizations large and small. It was an amazing organization in those days. I'm not going to bore you with a lot of numbers, I'm just going to throw out a couple of theater program grants—I was head of the theater program at that time. This is from 1975, '76, a long time ago. So we're talking about pre-OPEC dollars in many ways.

La MaMa: \$117,800. Roundabout—Roundabout was a little theater in the basement of a supermarket on West 25th Street.: \$85,000; Playwrights Horizons, also a storefront operation on West 42nd Street, this was before there was theater row: \$86,000. The Brooklyn Academy of Music, just from the theater program: \$250,000. BAM also got money from dance, from presenting. BAM could count on \$500,000, \$600,000 a year from NYSCA. And my favorite grant, because it was the most interesting historically, was the New York Shakespeare Festival, which for its operations at the Public Theater and the Delacorte got an annual grant from the New York State Council on the Arts of \$700,000. And later, I want to say what happened to that \$700,000 and what Joe Papp decided to do when that first wave of state budget cuts came in. Just as a point of comparison, the New York Shakespeare Festival grant from NYSCA today is \$60,000.

So that's quite a drop over 27 years. What would have happened today to all of us if NYSCA's budget had kept pace with time and inflation, not to mention a couple of increases along the way? I think that's what we should be comparing ourselves to. It's not the magnitude of last year's budget increase, or a token increase, or a small cut. Today's emerging arts organizations, across the whole community, should really somehow have the same government-funding benefits as those of the previous generation. Keep in mind that NYSCA was not alone. We had the NEA. There was CETA funding. Hundreds of arts organization used CETA funding to cover the salaries of entry-level employees. There really was a public-private partnership in those days. And I think that the

theater budget of NYSCA covered, on average, 11 percent of an organization's budget. Twenty-seven years later, it's now down to 2.5 percent.

Question three—and here's where I'm in total agreement with what Jonathan just said. What factors aid or hinder federal and state giving, and how can the arts community be more effective in increasing the assistance? I think there are a lot of intersecting reasons why government has withdrawn from the arts in New York. I'm going to focus here on just one: I think it's really a primary reason.

For 25 years, New York government support has gone backwards, and our own community has been complicit in the process. We have fought amongst ourselves when we should have worked together. And because the cuts could have been worse, we've played the political game by camouflaging our setbacks as "progress" or as "lessons in economic survival."

When I started out, it was unheard of for one arts organization to attack another. And these days, because everyone is fighting for money, it's routine. Whenever weakness shows, there's a financial feeding frenzy. It could be arts councils dealing with percentage funding allocations at the NEA, a process that pulled a lot of money out of New York state. Locally, we've had the CIGs against everybody else, and everybody else fighting for crumbs.

When the "Sensation" controversy hit the Brooklyn Museum of Art, we had the display of Phillippe de Montebello's self-serving equivalent of an arts loyalty statement on the Op-Ed page of *The New York Times*. And at the same time, all 13 Lincoln Center constituent organizations refused to comment at all. Not a word from any of them. Out of fear. And it was really fear that the Giuliani organization would look less than favorably on Lincoln Center's negotiations for a \$240 million request for capital renovation funding. All those collegial examples can go on and on and on. We all know there are many.

The arts community has to become a community, and it has to grow up. We've been foolishly divided, absorbed in the needs of our individual institutions or arts constituencies at the expense of the arts at-large. And the result is that, at least locally, we've been politically eviscerated. Thirty-five years after the explosive Rockefeller decade of growth in New York's not-for-profit arts, we have, to a considerable degree, ourselves to blame for stagnation. We have to at last express ourselves cohesively and

coherently and aggressively as an indigenous New York industry. We've been crippled in our discourse and, I think, we're really off the table as far as executive-branch politics are concerned. Maybe Mike Bloomberg will come around, but in all these years, we've never really developed another Rockefeller, or another Sid Yates (the great politician from Illinois) for that matter: not one politician in all those years who honestly and publicly would make the arts an issue to be judged by, a part of his or her core political portfolio. And if we couldn't be effective for ourselves during the economic boom of the last decade, how are we to be forceful in the current recession?

All those statistics are very useful background. But nothing will get better until we truly engage our institutional diversity, large and small, and organize wisely on behalf of New York's arts industry as a whole. It's not Broadway, or off-Broadway, or Museum Mile, or cultural tourism. It's all of it together in five boroughs. And to steal a line from Sam Freedman, who's going to be speaking later, a basic rule of politics is that an organized minority trumps a disorganized majority. And I think for the arts in New York, we are the disorganized majority.

Munn: I think I've heard most of what's been said here in various and sundry ways over the last 15 or 16 years that I've been chairing the New York City Arts Coalition. Self-criticism doesn't get us anywhere. We need to look at solutions. I agree that we have plenty of data. Sometimes we use it well, sometimes we don't. I agree that we need to approach elected officials in a way that makes sense to them.

A friend of mine sitting in the audience calls it a "translation project." You cannot go talk to an elected official about the transforming experience of art unless you know them very, very well and know that they share that experience. And they may. Amazingly enough, they may. I suspect I'm the only person in the room who's had 25 meetings with elected officials in the last month. And I've found one or two who do. Thankfully we have some people in the new City Council who will be supportive.

But let me talk more about why we do and do not succeed. In New York City, we do have a limited united voice: the CIG's and the Program Groups do work together. It's taken a lot of years, and we've had a lot of private fights, but in the last two years, we jointly have signed

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statements to the council, to the mayor, and we're going to continue to do so, and we go together to Albany, and we have restored funding over the last eight years, from our low of \$27 million from the Council. Is it where it should be? Absolutely not.

I think that we are in some ways both our own worst enemy and our best spokesperson. No one else can talk about the arts with the care and the passion and the specificity that we can. And the specificity is important. I agree with Jonathan's remarks that we need to explain what we do that affects the community. That's why people are in public office; they are not there exclusively for us. Sometimes we're just too plainly nice: I agree with Rob about that. I've been restrained by some of my colleagues. I wanted us to stand on the steps of City Hall one year and give awards—for the best work of fiction, or the greatest fairy tale—to the city budget. But we didn't do it. We don't use our own creative talents enough in our advocacy.

But where I think we really fail, and this I take very seriously, is that we complain about not being at the table when the larger issues about our society, or our culture, or our city, are discussed. But when I go to a civic organization or a meeting of other constituent not-for-profits, as I do regularly, I don't see any other arts people there. Now, it's not that you have more time than I do, and I know that. So, I see my colleagues out here. But I don't find you in the Women's City Club, I don't find you in the City Club. A few of you are on local community boards, but with rare exceptions, we're not participating in the civic and political life of our own city in a way that makes what we have to say important enough. If government is confused about why it gives money to the arts—and frankly it is, there's no logic, no rhyme, no reason, no rational policy in New York City, and it was a relief to hear some clear expressions of concern about that—there's not much better logic at a state level. We've become a kind of obligatory thing at a state level. Everyone is for arts and culture. Everyone is for apple pie and motherhood also, mostly anyway.

I call those kinds of meetings with elected officials the "Tea and Sympathy" meetings. That's not what I have in Albany anymore, but boy, did we have them 15 years ago when I started. That's not what goes on now. I can't predict the new City Council. I can't predict the new Mayor.

We don't spend enough time and money on advocacy. Let me give you a very shocking fact:

The budget for the New York City Arts Coalition is \$85,000 a year. Now, does that tell you something about how much you are spending on advocacy? Not nearly enough. Clearly, the staff there is underpaid. Not just me, but everybody. You do not wish to take the time out of very troubled and very busy times to do the extra step, and I understand that. But if you want those charts to change, that hour a week, two or three hours a month, has to be committed from everybody. That's how you get a united voice. We do have to speak together.

I'm not in complete agreement that we can't have differences. There are different needs and there are different views, and no other constituency is expected to never have a difference. It is how we express them and when we express them that makes the difference. We cannot go to Albany, and we cannot go to City Hall, with internecine warfare. We can't have borough versus borough. We can't have CIG versus Program. But we *can* explain that certain disciplines have certain unusual needs this year because of X, Y and Z. We *can* explain that arts education right now is in meltdown in this city, and that it wasn't a year ago. That's not a difference. That's just an explanation that there needs to be extra attention. And in saying that, I'm not suggesting that the needs of theater or those left out of the funding system at DCA are not important. They are. But I feel an obligation to talk about a part of the community that's going through an unusually difficult time. That's not read as a difference.

I also think that it is important to understand the political arena, and we don't. Very few people actually understand how the city budget is put together: it's a little weird. And the state budget is also a little strange. But if you're going to be an advocate, you need to know how the process works.

Cherbo: One thing before we continue. No one has put up any charts yet that show the distinction between the gross numbers for city, state and local funding, and those numbers adjusted for inflation. I think if you do put up the adjusted-for-inflation number, the situation is much more dire, because whereas the gross numbers for state and local have gone up, they start to turn downward sometime in the 1990s when they are adjusted for inflation, and we know that the NEA has been, shall we say, terribly depressed.

I'd like everyone to comment on everyone's

comments. What I'm hearing here as an overarching theme is that we don't know how to ask for what we want and what we feel we need. I'd like to return to this, because I think this is where this meeting wants to go, and where the panel has spontaneously taken us.

But I'd like to ask you all whether you might see that there's a distinction in the way we advocate, depending upon the level of government that we'll be going to: what we can do on the federal level, what we can do on the state level, what we can do on the local level, and the policy issues that may pertain to each. The tactics, and the strategies, would vary, I'm assuming.

Munn: I don't entirely agree with you, but I want to back up to something. I think we do know how to present our case. What we fail on is choosing the particular part of the case at the right moment. Timing is very, very important. Kate Levin referred earlier to the Federal Emergency Management Agency changing its rules. She really meant to talk about the Small Business Administration.

SBA changed its rules on making loans for economic losses to the not-for-profit community, because the arts community went to [NYSCA chairman] Dick Schwartz on Sept. 17th and said, "This is a problem." We gave him what he needed to do something for everybody. That's an example of timing.

But the strategy issue is taking the timing of the political situation that you're in, and making your argument cohere with that time. Our needs don't change a lot from year to year, in some ways. We're just wrapping them up differently. That's really what we're doing. And it's very important to know how to wrap it, but to still come through as authentic. I don't do the same thing, and I don't tell people to do exactly the same thing, in City Hall as in Albany. The difference is the political structure.

Lynch: What I'd add to that, and I agree, is that when I first started talking about advocacy about 27 years ago, in arts settings, I would actually get thrown out of the room, because it was not something that the arts community wanted to talk about. But I started doing workshops with Morris Donahue, the old political leader and then-Senate president of Massachusetts. He would always start off these sessions saying, "The main thing to remember is that any elected official, at any level, spends 60 percent of every day thinking about getting reelected."

Now if you understand that—and it's not entirely true, maybe it's 50 percent—but if you understand that dynamic, then you understand what you need to do on any of these levels. There's a certain kind of help that they need; there's a certain kind of trustworthiness that they expect from you for information; there's involvement in their actually getting reelected. Campaigns. Giving. There's all of those factors at all three levels. And if we understand that as just one part of this, I think it can work.

The other thing that's important to understand is that your cause is not their issue. You have to make your cause relevant to their issue. And if you do that, and they understand that it's going to be more than your cause—it's also constituency-based, whether it's community, federal or state—you also win.

Marx: These are such complicated issues. I can remember a long conversation you and I had at least ten years ago about this. It becomes almost a moral issue. You want to do what's politically effective for the constituency you're working with. And then somewhere in the back of your mind you start thinking, "Wait a minute. Am I really participating in a form of legalized bribery?" And it's very hard to figure out—for a lot of arts people, and a lot of people in other fields as well, it's not specific to the arts—where advocacy ends and legalized bribery begins. It's a hard one to call.

Katz: I want to answer your question, Joni, in two ways. One is, you talked about different roles at different levels. I think if you're an arts advocate and you go in and talk to a public official, you have to be prepared to make an argument for the value of the arts. You have to be prepared to make an argument for the value of the public dollar in the arts, and to differentiate that from the private dollar and the individual dollar and the corporate dollar. And you have to be prepared to make an argument for the city dollar, or the state dollar, or the federal dollar.

I want to suggest an infrastructure. I don't think it exists anywhere, but I think this is the ideal infrastructure for advocacy that would float any agenda.

The first thing would be for every arts organization to have a point person for advocacy, preferably a board member. Every arts organization [should have] that person who links that organization to the advocacy community: information, timing, working together.

Secondly, “advocacy” should be in the job description of every board member. And I’m not talking about public-dollar advocacy. I’m saying every board member should be responsible for being able to say, “Here’s the contribution that my organization makes to the community.”

Thirdly, every event, publication and performance should be considered an opportunity for arts advocacy. This, I think, is the most important. Because the most important thing you can do is share the experience. It’s not the presentation where you describe the value of the arts, or you describe the instrumental value of the arts to the economy. It’s when you share that experience that you transform your representative. Because then they know that they’re really doing the right thing for the right reason. They’re really being a good representative. If you have a good event and you don’t have a representative there, you don’t have a donor there, or you don’t have a public official there, you should feel very bad about it. The artists should know it, the board members should know it, the staff should know it. And that person should be cultivated. You’re talking one person for each event, and just think of the difference that it would make in the aggregate.

Fourthly, you need the forum or the organizing entity for advocacy. You may already have that. At the national level, we had to make that happen. It’s called the Cultural Advocacy Group, and Bob provides the staff for it. But those of us with lobbyists all meet together. And if we’re going to disagree, we know it in-house. And we know how we’re going to do it. Typically it’s a forum that you need.

Finally, target your partners. We’ve been talking about differentiating the value of the arts dollar. You also have to go to public officials with the partners who say, “What a minute, that arts dollar is also an education dollar. That arts dollar is also a youth-at-risk dollar. It’s also an economic development dollar.” And you do that by systematically working as a community. Imagine if everybody in this room had a conversation with a banker, a health care provider, a social worker. This year. One conversation. What a difference it would make! Build those constituencies so the arts become everybody’s agenda.

That infrastructure, those five things, I think, would forward any agenda as an ideal.

Munn: Let me say, I think it’s an agenda that’s being followed somewhat here in New York,

and I think we’ve been fortunate to that extent. We do have relationships, but they are not built as broadly as they should be through other constituencies—through something called the City Project, which is an organization of all the human service, not-for-profit advocacy groups in the city, with which I’ve worked for over a decade. There were no other arts people that had ever been in that room before. And they aren’t there now.

Jonathan and Rob put their fingers on something, though, that’s very important: our attitude toward elected officials. They are not strange people, for the most part, anyway. They are very much like us. You’d be surprised how many of them have tidbits of background in the arts. And they are very much like individual artists in the following sense: They put themselves out there for us to vote on their work, just as an individual artist creates something and says, “Like it or not. Clap for me. Support me.” So they are unusual combinations with which we are all very familiar. We often get along extremely well with them as individual people. And they often enjoy knowing and hearing about the cultural arts community. But we do have to make it important in their community, in their home, and where they live and work. They are expected to take home the bacon. That’s why they’re in office, whether we like it or not.

Marx: Following up on what Norma just said, we had a great example of this kind of mismatch in the last two years, because Peter Vallone really extended himself to an extraordinary degree on behalf of the arts community during the “Sensation” incident at the Brooklyn Museum, and got nothing back for it. The arts community did not respond in kind at all. And I’m sure a lot of politicians noticed that—that we did not stand up to support the one guy who stuck his neck out for us.

Jonathan, when you mentioned the importance of weaving artists into all this: boy, I couldn’t agree with you more. And I think it’s important as we think of the totality of this tapestry, especially when we think of “who pays for the arts”—well, to a very considerable degree, *artists* do. A lot of the wage concessions, again going back to that Rockefeller era in the late ’60s, early ’70s, they’ve been grandfathered for years and years and years and years. And we talk about substandard wages and a community that’s been generous—you know exactly what I’m saying. But absolutely, a component of who

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pays for the arts, in this city and this state, is that artists do.

Munn: Rob, I have to correct one thing. Peter Vallone got a great deal of support from a significant number of individuals within the arts community. We also had a major reception for him, and a lot of other things, and it was noticed by elected officials who did not stand up because they weren't invited. And did he get enough? Did he get what he should have? I'm not sure about that. But nonprofits have a very complicated and difficult road in engaging in any kind of political activity, so all of that work went on privately, so I'm not surprised that it's not public.

Marx: I stand corrected.

Lynch: I'd just like to add, spinning off of something that Jonathan said, and maybe that all of us have said, the reaction from a lot of people would be "That's great, but I don't have any time. I don't have any time to do that." The idea of getting people within your organization to do that, I think, is a great idea. But we have an individual responsibility now in many ways to reassess our time, to re-look at how we, as individuals, use our time. I look around the room here, it's daunting because I owe half the people here an e-mail response or a phone call. The fact is, I have had the opportunity, and have taken the time to be in touch with every congressional leader of the appropriations committee in the last month. So prioritizing what you do is important individually as well. And when you re-carve the time, you've got to not get some things done that we enjoy getting done, and put the time into this.

Munn: One thing we should notice is that most of the lack of growth in New York City, or the lost income in New York City, is at a federal level. That directly relates to an earlier comment from Bob: ideology. While we have not seen growth at the state and city levels that is sufficient to our needs, the fact is that if the NEA had not been cut off at the kneecaps—which actually might reflect a lot of things, but it also might reflect our advocacy strategy at a national level—we would not see those charts. When you decide that this city cannot get more than 15 percent of the National Endowment for the Arts money, don't expect us to be particularly active in Washington. Our voice is not wel-

come down there. And this is, like it or not, the largest single center of arts in the country. If there are 1.7 million artists, over 100,000 of them are in New York City. We are a potent force that doesn't get used in Washington.

AUDIENCE QUESTIONS

Joan Firestone, special advisor to the chancellor for art education, New York City Board of Education: I would like to suggest that one of the things that we need to do, in addition to addressing the political constituency, is to address the business community. I started to work on a study with faculty from New School University on the development of boards of small organizations. It is very difficult to attract the kind of businesspeople who in fact *need* to adopt smaller organizations by working on their boards than it is to have the prestige of working in a large institution.

There is another way in which we're working, at the Board of Education, with the business community. There are 18 special arts high schools. In the past, they were recognized as "vocational high schools." The city, working with the state, is now calling them "career training in education." That is really effective on every level because, in fact, it is working with government. It is working with the business community, the trade unions and the educators to change the attitudes about alternatives in education. In fact that needs—and has—the support of the business community. So that's just another example.

Marx: As an adjunct to that, we also need to engage the arts labor unions in this. There's so much influence, so much that can be contributed, through Actors' Equity, the Society of Stage Designers & Choreographers, the list goes on and on. And they are organizations that can really help us in many, many ways. And they've rarely been engaged in this particular issue.

Munn: However, again, they *are* in this city, in ways that are not public. I met yesterday with a consortium of labor-union people who are going to have wage-subsidy money for jobs that are not necessarily unionized. Do you know how many e-mails I sent out within the next hour, about how "We need to get these people data about artists who don't have jobs and not-for-profits who have jobs they can't afford to fill?"

But I do feel a little lonely in these connec-

tions sometimes. These ideas that are being discussed need more of you working on them. I think of all the things we don't get done because we don't have enough resources, and I go back to Bob's earlier comment: It costs money. It costs time. And I don't think we see ourselves clearly enough as advocates in the political arena, legitimately so. We belong there, just as much as environmentalists, just as much as child-care supporters, just as much as any labor union. We are a part of the community, and we do wonderful things.

Joseph Zeigler, independent consultant: When I was executive director of Theatre Communications Group in the late 1960s, we worked with about two dozen theaters around the country. There are now 450 theaters involved in TCG. There are now 1600 orchestras in the United States. And even among consultants, it's changed. When I started as a consultant in 1969, there were six of us in the United States. Jonathan's organization some years ago published a directory of consultants in which there are thousands of arts consultants listed, including everybody who has lost a job.

But I want to take you back to that earlier statement by Bob Lynch about the 1,000 percent growth of arts organizations in the 30 years, because we as Americans have boasted about the cultural explosion and the expansion of the arts. Now, the number of organizations bidding for support is wildly different than it was in the days that Rob Marx described at NYSCA. How do we deal with that number, too, in this?

Lynch: Well, the budget of the NEA today, if it was at the same level that it was back then, would have to be \$500 million. However, the need that Joe and I have just been talking about is ten times that: it's probably a \$5 billion or a \$2.5 billion need, if you were simply giving out at the same level as you were then to this larger group. So it's a daunting figure, but not one that we should be afraid of. We should embrace, collectively, a larger vision, a huge vision, and go for it.

Marx: The other thing that we've lost in this is that it's not just a question of money, but also the freedom of these organizations, especially the smaller organizations, to make artistic choices that are outside the marketplace: in a certain way, to justify the fact that they are not

for-profit institutions. A not-for-profit institution should be able to do things, theoretically, that a for-profit institution can't do.

So in my field, in the theater, it means that they can do plays that you can't do in the commercial theater. And if you just look back at the repertoire, the kinds of works that came forward during those years, the economic security created by that money, allowed theaters to not have to struggle to find what we now call "enhancement money" from commercial producers. And Michael David, who is a very prominent commercial producer on Broadway, he's the head of the Dodger [Theatrical Group], said, "Well, you know, commercial producers are now skills for foundations and for the government arts agencies. We've all stepped in, and the not-for-profits have pursued people like us, to the kind of money that they used to get out of the Arts Council. And, of course, we come with strings, and the Arts Council didn't." But in many ways, I think the aesthetic issue of it, in terms of what a not-for-profit is really supposed to be doing in an ideal world, is just as important as the financial issue.

(unidentified audience member): At one point, it was mentioned that there were no public officials that are strong arts advocates. But we actually have had one in Roy Goodman, who has now moved on to a different job, and whose seat in the legislature has now been won by Liz Krueger, who, to my knowledge, really doesn't have an arts background at all. So this is a question for Norma and Rob, as experts on state politics: How do you predict this change in the state legislature will affect the NYSCA budget, and based on your answer to that question, what would you recommend that we all work toward or do in order to affect the balance of power in the legislature?

Munn: Well, obviously Roy's resignation and his replacement was a subject of great concern to many of us. I know that the appointment of a new chair of the arts committee in the Senate has been held off to see how that election came out. I happen to know Liz, as I know John Ravitz, the person who ran against her as a Republican. It doesn't bode well, but not just for the arts.

The problem in losing a liberal Republican from the Senate, to all my colleagues who are Democrats out there, is that there is now no liberal voice within the private discussions at a

state level about the needs of this city. If you think it's the arts, wait until you hear the rest of the conversations. We now have a state budget with no cuts proposed to the arts. But that budget has holes in it as big as a Mack truck. And the health-care package they passed before they passed the budget had a \$1.3 million assumption that they were going to get that money from the federal government. And I can fly too. It's not going to happen. So our problem is that we're facing a situation in which there's no reason for anyone in the Senate to do anything for the city, much less the arts. Now we've got a long-term set of relationships there. And frankly, Liz will support the arts. But that won't mean anything. We get state money from the Republicans, not from the Democrats. A little fact of life. And I think when you go to Albany, people need to know that. When you go home to vote, you need to know it. You want to vote your pocketbooks. No arts person in this city would vote for a Democrat anymore. Blunt reality. But that isn't how we vote. I know Joan Jeffri could tell us.

As for what it bodes, I'm scared to death. I don't know yet. I'm told a lot of people want to be chair of that committee. That doesn't sound healthy. Because there's no reason most Republicans outside the city of New York would want to be chair of the Arts committee, except to have their picture taken with celebrities on Arts Day, or to change the way NYSCA does business so that they have more control of it and the panel has less. And I don't look forward to that. We'll know in another month or two.

Marx: Peggy, you're certainly right about Roy Goodman, and let me add just one other element to this. Even if you go back to 1980, and the David Stockman budget crisis in Washington—where it was proposed in the first Reagan budget to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts—all the service organizations at probably every level of government have been incredibly agile in working the legislative branch to keep bad things from happening. But it's the executive branch that moves you forward. This is another lesson from the history of New York state. [We need] that executive patronage: a mayor, or a governor, or a president who is willing to make the arts part of his

or her political makeup, part of the portfolio. Well, Chicago had Sid Yates. In New York we had Rockefeller. Roy Goodman, I would certainly put that label on him. It's amazing, for all the decades of work, how very few politicians have ever come into this fold, and I think that really, nothing has happened in all these years: with the executive branch that creates the budget, that initiates the dollar amounts, we haven't had anyone who's been able to say the way that Rockefeller did, "It's my issue. Folks in the Legislature, hands off. That's under the protection of the governor's mansion."

Katz: I'd like to add one quick thing that's not about this at all. We've been talking about money supporting advocacy efforts, and I'd like to just point out that one of the very few foundations that have helped support the advocacy effort federally is the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation.

Peggy Ayers, executive director, Robert Sterling Clark Foundation: And *locally*.

Katz: I just wanted to offer that: that the arts can win this. You really can be more than competitive for the public dollar. The growth in [NYSCA's] budget, and in the state's advocacy agency budgets, has outstripped the growth of state government for the last eight years. This means that your rationales have been more than competitive with other rationales, and they have been delivered more effectively, here and elsewhere. Your per-capita [state contribution to the arts] is one of the highest in the nation, and it has been for 30 years. Every man, woman and child in New York state gives far more than average to government support for the arts at the state level and, I suspect, at the city level as well. The [State] Legislature has been responsive in comparison to other places in the country, so there's much to build upon for the future and much to be proud of as you go ahead.

Ayers: Jonathan is correct, and I would say that that speaks to a difference in strategy and a difference in ideology. We do not play the ideological game in Albany or in City Hall. But in Washington, the arts are caught in a different environment.

We're facing a situation in which there's no reason for anyone in the Senate to do anything for the city, much less the arts.

—Norma P. Munn