



fundling bodies

FIVE DECADES OF DANCE MAKING
AT THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Sarah Wilbur

FUNDING BODIES



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PREFACE

The body is never what we think it is (dancers pay attention to this difference). Illusive, always on the move, the body is at best like something but it never is that something, thus the metaphors, enunciated in speech or in movement, that allude to it are what give the body the most tangible substance it has.

SUSAN LEIGH FOSTER, "Choreographing History," 1995, p. 4

In the late twentieth century, a cluster of determined dance researchers asserted the critical potential of dance studies, building on dance's establishment as a topic of study in the US academy earlier that century.¹ Since that time, the field has witnessed remarkable expansion, branching off into innumerable directions that foreground the body—often, but not exclusively, the *dancing* body—as a site of power analysis. One of the first steps taken in this process of academic endowment was to credit dancers and *dancing* with a capacity for reflection, conscious choice-making, and intelligent design. This "critical" orientation to dance studies frequently hinged on invocations of the term *choreography*. Stretching the term's utility beyond its historic origins in dance notation in western Europe and toward more contemporary meaning to describe patterns of danced action, critical dance researchers seized the methodological promise of *choreography* as a concept that foregrounds the forces that motivate movement, including movement far beyond the realm of dance. Some dance scholars have, for example, pursued structural critiques of state power by invoking *choreography* to describe the embodied dimensions of institutional control (Lepecki 2013). Others have applied *choreography* to highlight agentic embodiment and to credit individuals and groups with intentional physical choice-making, particularly in the realm of identity formation and performance.² Here, *choreography* was used to highlight patterns of action that resisted or repurposed stultifying norms (Foster 1996). Through such interventions, critical dance scholars joined running

debates about bodies and power across areas of nonarts study in the critical humanities. These critical dance researchers, some of whom I am privileged to call my mentors, built traction for *choreography* as both a structural and cultural analytical tool and forged interdisciplinary connections with researchers who shared dance's investment in the body's capacity to produce a politics.³

Inspired by these past efforts, this book leverages the disciplinary force of *choreography* to invite readers to pay closer attention to how NEA dance funding policies (institutional narratives, eligibility criteria, and standards of grant evaluation) have incentivized specific dance aesthetic and organizational practices across a span of five decades. In it, I also credit the workplace *performances* of grantmakers in dance as power-filled gestures that exert a shaping influence on the US dance field. What results is a historical account of *philanthropic corporealities*, that takes up the question of how funding bodies have recruited and rewarded specific dance organizational patterns, and also asks how federal dance funders have variably performed their daily work. Though my scope is constrained to a lone institution across a fifty-year period (1965–2016), the NEA's patterns of recruitment and reward have migrated; one of my goals is to show how funder-imposed ideals have certainly been reproduced elsewhere. By linking economic flows to practical “norms” of dance production, this text contributes to longstanding debates on how to achieve more culturally equitable US arts policy and institutional reform. I write from a steadfast personal commitment to helping future generations of dance organizers understand issues that also engage researchers across arts administration, policy and management, behavioral economics, cultural sociology, and cultural labor studies. NEA history, as I interpret it here, is a history of struggle by people with differential power and competing investments in the practice and production of dance. The five decades of dance “making”—that I surface in these pages highlight the collective exercise of endowment, a term that I define here as the distribution of dance worth and dance worthiness. I connect the movement of philanthropic capital to specific patterns of dance practice and organization to begin to answer the fundamentally choreographic question of how money motivates movement in the arts.

Funding Bodies: Five Decades of Dance Making at the National Endowment for the Arts asks how federal dance funding incentives have motivated the artistic and organizational practices of generations of US dance artists. Following the agency's first fifty years of operation (1965–2016), the book accounts for how NEA grant

guidelines have instituted specific “norms” of dance production and organization across three roughly fifteen-year periods. It also demonstrates how fund decision-makers in dance managed to protect and subvert the philanthropic status quo inside of the Dance Program through practical, bureaucratic acts. A history of philanthropic tools and their embodied tooling by those in power, *Funding Bodies* highlights the institutional ascendancy of concert dance hierarchies as a structural byproduct of federal arts grantmaking. In so doing, the text situates arts grantmaking more squarely within current debates on how to achieve distributional equity in dance and across the arts.

Although this is obviously a book about dance, it is not really a book about dancing. *Funding Bodies* might more accurately be described as a history of funder-motivated movement that links dominant dance and arts workplace performances to economic incentives conditioned by the lone domestic arts philanthropic arm of the US federal government. My fixation with artists’ institutional assimilation is profoundly informed by my past history as a nonprofit dance arts organizer (1997–present). I identify today as what one artist-academic and fellow policy researcher has lovingly called an academic “second-lifer,” meaning that I returned to the academy to pursue advanced study in my mid-thirties, charged up but burnt out by the deep contradictions that accompanied life as a US nonprofit dance grantseeker. The US academy both introduced me to dance hierarchies early on and later afforded me time and space to confront the unquestioned superiority of Eurocentric aesthetic biases and sites of production (the proscenium) as a narrow understanding of how dance works. During my pursuit of a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Dance in my home town in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I pursued a culturally narrow concert dance curriculum that thrilled me and slowly nudged me out of the habituated attraction to Black social dance traditions that I cherished throughout my youth. This weekly digest of ballet and modern dance forms and norms steadily cultivated new dance tastes and reoriented my aspirations toward the culturally omnivorous ideologies abided by the predominantly white progenitors of American modern dance. Institutions motivate movement, as these experiences and this book’s Introduction both reveal.

The year was 1996 when I slid headlong out of this undergraduate dance program and landed head first inside of the nonprofit dance field. 1996 was, coincidentally, the same year that the NEA withstood its most massive budgetary

cuts and an agency-wide restructuring that did away with funding incentives that bolstered the careers of my modern dance college mentors. Alongside others of my generation who were privileged to attend and to finish college, I was plunged into an economic sea change in US arts philanthropy, with little knowledge of its history or how to circumnavigate it. So I did what so many dancers do in their twenties: I dog-paddled. Swimming for opportunities with my newly assimilated passion for dance on the concert stage, I barreled forward with eagerness and without question, taking on whichever gigs landed in my lap, however ill fitting. Over the course of ten years, I grew increasingly adept at aligning my artistic goals with priorities held by those who controlled wealth, opportunity, or resources. From 1997 to 2007, I served as the artistic director at a local nonprofit dance “hub” where I worked with artists from a dynamic range of cultural backgrounds and production contexts. My time at Danceworks, Inc. taught me the crucial lesson that dance “excellence” was both culturally and regionally specific in a place like Milwaukee. So, whereas my time inside of a BFA dance degree program quietly stereotyped Milwaukee as a “fly-over” state through frequent visits of “master” dance modernists from of New York, my field education at Danceworks was a vital trade-school education in the complex administrative, aesthetic, racial, and relational complexities of organizing dance across cultural communities and contexts. The cultural, regional, and classed contradictions between institutionally endowed dance models and local dance organizational practices are precisely what this history of the NEA Dance Program surfaces.⁴

To understand how this book emerged, its’ important to know that I moved to the West Coast at the dawn of the 2007 economic recession seeking to slow down and study the stubborn patterns of overrecognition and overresourcing in dance that my generation had inherited. I chose the NEA Dance Program as a site of inquiry because I wanted a better handle on the history of artists’ relative ease of fund access. I wanted to learn about the economic conditions and key institutional players that enabled NEA dance grants to overwhelmingly privilege artists who could locate economic cost share, who could organize dance via a board-governed nonprofit entity, and who could engage in dance touring and distribution to concert stages across the regional United States.

Instinctively, I knew that the professionalization of concert dance as an endowed art form in US culture had boomed for my mentors and their generation in the 1970s and 1980s. But my college history courses had not taught me about

how concert dance creation, education and performance was conditioned by private and public support when many of my college mentors cut their teeth as working artists. Having experienced the differential challenges that my peers and I confronted from the late 1990s onward, I wanted more information about concert dance as what dance scholars like Brenda Dixon Gottschild (2003) and Halifu Osumare (2007) have called a whitening project. I wanted to understand the so-called boom as a “boom” for *concert* dance that presented a narrow faction of artists with powerful opportunities that would endure for decades even once NEA grantmaking policies changed.

Thus, this critical investigation of the NEA’s ever-changing grant structure and workplace culture aligns with what Karen Ho (2009) has adroitly called the “pre-field” work of retroactively studying workworlds that an author herself has inhabited. Like Ho, I am a researcher who once played a more central role in the dance organizational infrastructures that I now take as my objects of study. To this end, it would be hypocritical of me to ignore the fact that I have personally choreographed and produced over forty concert dance works to date; I hold countless fond memories of those efforts. But it is out of the recognition of my own complicity in reproducing narrow norms of dance endowment that I study the waters in which dance-makers swim. I labor today to support a wider vision of dance work by contextualizing the political economic conditions that have privileged concert dance-makers at the expense of people dancing differently and elsewhere. This reflexive orientation enables me to challenge readers who also adore concert dance to try to see themselves in this narrative. People who care deeply but differently about dance in the United States carry deep wisdom that too often goes unrecognized due to narrow institutional optics. The fierce commitments of nonconcert dancemakers and the many people who support them have too often been hidden from the dance historical record. In pursuit of more widespread *endowment* in dance—again, a term that I define in this book as the governmental distribution of dance worth and dance worthiness—we cannot afford to take funding or bodies, for granted.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to acknowledge the extraordinary chorus of mentors, conspirators, interlocutors, colleagues, families, friends, and remote icons whose energies have steadied my steps during the building of this narrative. I will try to keep a lid on my enthusiasm as I name the many “makers” whose support made this book possible below. And I will fail.

When I first began requesting interviews with past and present NEA Dance Program staff and citizen advisors, I was rather stunned that everyone I approached instantly agreed to share their experiences and insights. Their commitment to discussing NEA institutional politics and culture and debating the role that funding bodies play in supporting career sustainability in dance was what inspired me to keep going. So, while I assume complete responsibility for the conclusions archived in these pages, I am fundamentally indebted to the interlocutors who agreed to give so generously of their energies and time to educate me about the NEA throughout this ten-year project.

The provisional work for this book began during my doctoral tenure at UCLA in the Department of World Arts and Cultures—Dance, a unit affectionately termed by insiders as “WACK” or “WACK-Dee,” respectively. Working alongside the steady guidance of Drs. Susan Leigh Foster, Anurima Banerji, David Gere, Janet O’Shea, and Shannon Jackson (University of California, Berkeley), I was encouraged to approach the US federal dance funding infrastructure as a *verb*, a collective *doing* by people who care deeply but differently (about dance) and whose contributions had yet to be studied as a facet of dance authorization. My chosen Los Angeles family weathered many caffeinated debates on this topic. I’m forever grateful to the mighty likes of Dan Froot and Vic Marks, Ajani Brannum, Jenna Delgado, S. Andrew Martinez, Alessandra Lebea Williams, Carl Schottmiller, Rita Martins Rufino Valente-Quinn, Pallavi Sriram, and Mana Hayakawa, who each kept my flame lit toward questions of institutional

endowment during the provisional research for this book. I love these folks and I've even lived with some of them. They helped me put periods on the ends of my sentences. Sometimes.

Institutionally speaking, this writing owes a great deal to the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship Program, an academic support mechanism the US government defunded in 2012 but that I was lucky to receive to support both my MFA and PhD work at UCLA. Additional resources also came my way through the Mellon Summer Dance Studies and the Humanities Initiative, where I was invited to attend summer seminars in 2014 and 2016 to rehearse my budding ideas and research findings. I am forever grateful to the Mellon's coinvestigators: Drs. Susan Manning, Janice Ross, and Rebecca Schneider, who each model unyielding commitment to dance through the rigor of their scholarly examples. My scholarly dance family today is largely comprised of the loving and rigorous artist-scholars I met in Mellon spaces; their energies animate this project. The Mellon Foundation also supported my subsequent appointment as Postdoctoral Fellow in Dance Studies and the Humanities at Brown University (2016–18), where I completed follow-up interviews and archival work in closer proximity to Washington, DC. During my time at Brown, critical revisions took shape in dialogue with spectacular bodyminds such as Kiri Miller, Patricia Ybarra, Sydney Skybetter, Sarah d'Angelo, Micah Salkind, Jori Ketten, Susan Simulyan, Leon Hilton, Jasmine E. Johnson, Nic Ramos, and Christine Mok. "Little Rhody" also gifted me time in closer proximity to Rebecca Schneider, whose caring energies and wicked smarts basically reengineered my whole life. This book's methodology has been honed through ongoing collaborations at professional scholarly convenings alongside my esteemed colleagues in dance, performance, and policy studies who include: K. Olive McKeon, Colleen Hooper, Jasmine Jamillah Mahmood, Patrick McKelvey, and my go-to conspirator Paul Bonin-Rodriguez. I thank these colleague-teachers for their audacity, candor, and unconditional support. To fellow first-book writers out there, let me just say: caucusing with courageous colleagues helps.

The ideas presented in *Funding Bodies* were refined through public presentations at professional conferences including: Dance Studies Association, Congress on Research in Dance, Society of Dance History Scholars, American Society for Theatre Research, American Theatre in Higher Education, Cultural Studies Association, American Studies Association, the Collegium for African

Diaspora Dance, the Columbia University Seminar “Studies in Dance,” and the Symposium on Arts Patronage in Modern America at Oxford University. Portions of chapters 1 and 3 have previously appeared in the *Oxford Handbook of Dance and Competition*, edited by Sherril Dodds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). An early draft of the book’s Afterword found its first print audience in *The Drama Review/TDR* (2017).

Entering into the final stages of manuscript preparation, I had the great fortune to secure an Assistant Professorship of the Practice in Dance in the Duke University Dance Program in Durham, North Carolina. I now work at Duke alongside brilliant colleagues Drs. Thomas F. DeFrantz, Purnima Shah, and Michael Klēin and Professors Keval Kaur Khalsa, Ava Vinessett, and Andrea E. Woods-Valdés. Duke has already proven to be a powerful institutional anchor that has enabled generative faculty and student collaborations on issues of labor, policy, and institutional power in the arts. Duke’s enigmatic Dean of the College Trinity Arts & Sciences Valerie Ashby endowed me with early faculty development support that was instrumental in reigning in my writing practice. When the Franklin Humanities Institute (FHI) awarded me a Faculty Book Workshop to further the development of the text in 2019, I was gifted additional editorial time with FHI Director Ranjana Khanna and invited respondents Thomas F. DeFrantz, Purnima Shah, Dan Ellison, Jodi McAuliffe, Shannon Jackson, and Paul Bonin-Rodriguez, whose comments made my project even more urgent. I was heartened to receive manuscript subvention funds from our Dean of the Arts and Humanities William Johnson, which helped me to enlist the careful production support of Doria Charlson and Ryan Rockmore in final revisions. Last, this project received a Duke Open Monograph Award, part of the TOME Initiative, which enabled me to license the book under a Creative Commons License, making it is freely accessible to the public. It is my strongest hope that this widespread access will maximize the kind of multigenerational debate about structures of dance support that I dreamed of when I first undertook this project.

I am not sure how to go about thanking my editor Suzanna Tamminen at Wesleyan University Press. Suzanna and I first came to know each other entirely remotely over two years when I was finishing my dissertation at UCLA and found myself assisting with a digital research project about arts infrastructure involving multiple campuses and campus entities, including the Press. By a twist of fate, I

then landed ninety minutes from Middletown to begin a postdoc in Providence, Rhode Island, at which time Suzanna extended a generous invitation to drive across the state line and deliver an update on my NEA book. Her gestures of support were all the motivation I needed to see this dissertation through to a first book. Suzanna's patience, good humor, and instincts have been a constant gift to me. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had the experience of working with her and her team at this wonderful university press. Thank you all for the deadlines, and for the editorial lifelines that you have so generously offered.

Someone once told me, euphemistically, that all research projects in the humanities are tacitly about the author's parents. I scoffed at this Freudian notion until it dawned on me that my mom's forty-year career as a florist and flower shop owner was spent making gorgeous aesthetic concoctions while ignoring the daily "schlepping" of buckets and handling of paperwork that nobody sees when they are handed a big bouquet of flowers at a special event. That I chose to write a book about the undervalued "schlepping" at play in US dance organization makes a certain kind of sense now. My mom Sandy's effort to impress upon me the value of creative labor was a lesson modeled through her example and through the loving care of my dad Mike Wilbur. My parents have each cheered me on in their unique ways since day one. I proudly share a bond with my twin brother Matt and my sister-in-law Nilsa and cherish my nephews Aiden and Lucas, who I credit for filling me with joy that totally resists language and keeps me going. Additional family cheerleaders in Milwaukee include Donna "Lolly" and Jim Shaw, Beth Shaw, Kristen Payne, Quinn Payne-Shaw, Jenny, Brian, Mason and Finn McDonald, Katie Shaw Groth, Gunnar, Ira, and Hildy Groth, Auntie "Chrissy" Christine Hero, Mike, Max, and Alex Hero, and Pete, Patty and Rebecca Wilbur. To my dear Midwest bio-fam: I love you and I am grateful for you.

Last, I want to dedicate this book to two spectacular humans, one who left my world around the same time that the other one entered it: Margie Wilbur and Todd Winkler. Although my cherished aunt and my truest love never met one other, their willingness to weather Wilburization (punctuation-less talking at relentless speed) saw me through many rough spots. May everyone reading this text be blessed with a loving nest. Their care has made all of the difference.

FUNDING BODIES

introduction



FIGURE 1 President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the National Endowment on the Arts and Humanities Act on September 29, 1965.
Photo: Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library.

INSTITUTIONS MOTIVATE MOVEMENT

ON SEPTEMBER 29, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, the piece of legislation that established the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as independent, citizen-run agencies of the executive branch of the US federal government. At the signing ceremony, held in the Rose Garden on the White House lawn (fig. 1), Johnson championed his administration's commitment to the direct dedication of taxpayer dollars to the advancement of the arts and humanities on US domestic turf. Gripping his pen, Johnson's autograph set the NEA in motion as a domestic artsfunding body, an institution that would be animated by differently empowered people with competing investments in recognizing and resourcing the arts. Although this was a visually and physically mundane action, Johnson's signature performed a powerful institutional speech act by setting a federal arts funding body in motion.¹ The NEA would evolve and change across the next five decades as both a consecrating entity and a local cultural workplace where insiders struggled with the challenge of distributing economically finite federal resources to deserving artists and arts intermediaries. Pressing pen to page, Johnson's paper work did political work by cementing the US federal government's commitment to domestic art and culture. A seemingly boring administrative enactment, Johnson's signature nonetheless authorized armies of future artists as citizen-subjects and consolidated decades of congressional debates—hard fought and hard won—into US public law.

So, you are an artist? And you want to apply for a federal arts grant to support your work? Touch this image with your eyes. Don't let my words distract you. Do you see yourself in this form? As you take in the image on the screen, can you calculate the practical labor that lies before you? Let

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE - Short Organizational	
* 1. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: [Redacted]	
2. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: [Redacted]	
CFDA TITLE: [Redacted]	
* 3. DATE RECEIVED: [Redacted]	SYSTEM USE ONLY
* 4. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: [Redacted]	
* TITLE: [Redacted]	
5. APPLICANT INFORMATION	
* a. Legal Name: [Redacted]	
b. Address:	
* Street1: [Redacted]	Street2: [Redacted]
* City: [Redacted]	County/Parish: [Redacted]
* State: [Redacted]	Province: [Redacted]
* Country: USA: UNITED STATES	* Zip/Postal Code: [Redacted]
c. Web Address: http:// [Redacted]	
* d. Type of Applicant: Select Applicant Type Code(s): Type of Applicant: [Redacted] Type of Applicant: [Redacted] * Other (specify): [Redacted]	* e. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN): [Redacted]
	* f. Organizational DUNS: [Redacted]
	* g. Congressional District of Applicant: [Redacted]
6. PROJECT INFORMATION	
* a. Project Title: [Redacted]	
* b. Project Description: [Redacted]	
c. Proposed Project: * Start Date: [Redacted] * End Date: [Redacted]	

FIGURE 2 Page one of SF-424, the application for Federal Domestic Assistance / Short Organizational Form, 2016. Photo by author.

your fingers find the track pad. Feel the computer keys and start tapping.
Try. Try to squeeze your aspirations into these boxes.

Figure 2 captures the top portion of the first page of the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form (SF-424), the first of many online documents that grant applicants would encounter in 2016 in pursuit of an NEA dance organizational grant.² We have now fast-forwarded ahead five decades into the agency's history to a moment when grantmakers and grantseekers were navigating a new digitally mediated online system put in place under the presidential administration of then-President Barack Obama (2008–16). In 2014, Obama's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) mandated mass digitization of government administration as a measure to improve transparency and cost efficiency. Staff in the NEA Dance Program (where the NEA's online system was first piloted) tested the new online grant portal, application, and review system (called NEAGO) and evaluated its efficacy at cutting costs. While virtual grant administration ultimately cut economic costs, the NEA's switch from paper to electronic mediation dampened the meaningful social exchanges that accompanied grant administration and governance during analog years. Virtual convening and digital signatures are two of countless examples of how philanthropic decision-making has changed since Johnson pressed his pen to that fateful page.

From 1965 to 2016, then, the process of endowing NEA dance support has undergone many structural changes and, with these, funders and fundseekers have experienced a range of practical, social, and material costs. Although consecrating institutions like the NEA inarguably provide opportunities for people who dance and support dance to achieve public recognition and resourcing, scant attention has been paid to the embodied impacts of US arts funding policies in dance, performance, and policy studies. The NEA Dance Program's patterns of institutional endowment have critical lessons to teach about the foundational role that arts funders play in dance "making"—a term invoked in my book's title and defined capaciously in this book as the governmental process of endowing political legibility to artists and to the armies of people who mobilize on dance's behalf.

Somewhere between the scratching pen of Lyndon B. Johnson and e-signature clicking of an anonymous dance grantseeker in 2016 lies a hidden history of dance

authorization. *Funding Bodies: Five Decades of Dance Making at the National Endowment for the Arts* is the first book-length history of the NEA to reckon with the assimilatory force of philanthropic incentives on the working identities and workplace performances of US dance organizers. It is also the first critical cultural study of a lone arts institution to analyze the mobilization of funding tools (specifically NEA narratives, eligibility guidelines, and evaluative standards) by grant decision-makers in dance.³ Its three-chapter scope spans three roughly fifteen-year periods of operation and considers these philanthropic corporealities from three distinct vantage points. Chapter 1 considers how early NEA dance funding guidelines embedded cultural, regional, and classed assumptions about dance organization from the perspective of aspiring dance *grantees*; chapter 2 turns the tables to examine how institutional pressures steered the situated participation of NEA dance *grantors*, employees, and citizen advisors; chapter 3 addresses the entanglement of the NEA in federal governmental regimes from the perspective of NEA *senior leadership*, the political appointees who answer principally to legislators who control the agency's budget and livelihood. Across these disparate registers, I use choreography as a framework to spotlight how institutional pressures and economic incentives discipline patterns of human comportment. This body-focused account of federal arts support holds a wider faction of dance-makers accountable for engineering and upholding dominant patterns of dance practice and production across the NEA's first five decades. A history of dance funding tools and their practical tooling by those in power, *Funding Bodies* ultimately theorizes the NEA's *choreographic* influence on the US nonprofit dance field. By asking how money motivates movement, the book begs further investigation of how dance wealth-holders recruit and reward artists through the promise of capital, including but not limited to the promise of economic gain.⁴

How the NEA Works

Before I discuss how previous NEA historians and arts researchers have wrestled with the policies, practices and politics of institutional endowment, I want to take a moment to clarify how the NEA works. As a citizen-run, independent agency nested in the executive branch of the US federal government, the NEA is the principal government body charged with allocating public subsidies to

US citizens, organizations, state, and local agencies. Economic support for the agency's annual budget comes from tax revenues appropriated annually by Congress. The agency distributes these subsidies through two key philanthropic mechanisms: arts fellowships and organizational grants.⁵

Inside of the NEA, there is minimal direct interaction between artists and elected officials. Fund governance and distribution are decentralized processes by design. Although the agency is led by presidential appointees (citizens who hold term limits), employees and panel reviewers are US citizens unbound by time-stamped terms of service. NEA funding decisions abide a three-tiered governmental process (citizen review panels, Council on the Arts review, and review by the NEA Chair). This tripartite chain of command inscribes what policy scholars often term an "arm's length" relationship between artists and elected officials and mirrors, to an extent, the tripartite organization of the US federal bureaucracy (characterized by three branches and strong redistributive jurisdiction to the states). Such institutional engineering reflects the enduring libertarian suspicion held by US colonial "founding fathers" of centralized state control.

To readers seeking to understand how the NEA's governmental infrastructure compares to other state funding models, the agency's closest comparative entities are the so-called cultural council models of state patronage within Anglophone countries such as Canada and Great Britain.⁶ Still, several specific aspects of the NEA's infrastructure are unique to American capitalist democracy and make mapping a direct comparison with other national models a challenge.

The first key distinction is that NEA economic support is only quasi-public. Since its 1965 inception, the agency's economic impact has hinged on leveraged nonfederal wealth and arts investment.⁷ All NEA grantees are mandated to secure nonfederal cost share to match the amount of federal support as a criterion of endowment. Since the agency's 1965 inception, public-private philanthropic *leveraging* has been required of grantees in nearly all NEA grant programs (the Individual Artists Fellowships are a notable exception, discussed in chapter 1).⁸ Such hardwired structural interdependence between nonfederal and private arts wealth-holders, in turn, informs the agency's grant guidelines and standards of evaluation.⁹ In contrast to more centralized state arts patronage models, NEA support is economically partial (federal funds can constitute no more than half of the budget for a proposed project), temporally contingent (designed to expire within a year of distribution), and indirect (between 20 percent and 40 percent

of annual allocations have been redistributed by state-level arts agencies across the period in question).

Another factor that distinguishes the NEA from other national funding bodies is its nominal size and stature compared to a cabinet-level cultural ministry. Taking the NEA's fiftieth anniversary year (2016) as an example, the agency's \$147.9 million budget constituted only 0.004 percent of total federal budget expenditures. The NEA's nominal size reflects the relative ambivalence around its historical establishment in the first place on the part of elected officials. US legislators were, comparatively speaking, quite late in establishing an institutional entity to govern support for culture on a domestic scale. For decades prior to the agency's 1965 inauguration, elected officials and presidents were lukewarm about broadcasting an overt stance on national art and culture, often citing free speech protections of the First Amendment as a barrier against state-funded forms of art.¹⁰ Such skepticism was also borne out by citizen artists who protested state funding for art and culture in the United States as paternalistic, propagandistic, or both. This history of inconsistent popular and governmental support was at least partly to blame for the NEA's relatively late arrival as a federal funding body and for its economically conservative allocations as a US government entity early on. And although its annual budgetary appropriations ballooned significantly between 1969 and 1979, direct appropriations to the NEA from Congress have been historically tiny in comparison to other national funding bodies. As policy scholars have noted, the US government's total support for cultural expression does rival economically powerful nations, but *not* because of the NEA. The largest single source of federal support for the arts in the United States is administered indirectly, in the form of tax relief for nonprofit arts entities and their patrons. Such indirect savings take two forms: relief from the payment of annual income tax by eligible nonprofit arts organizations, and relief for private citizens who donate surplus capital to nonprofit arts entities, who, by law, forgo the payment of federal and state taxes on this donated income. Such indirect economic relief under US federal tax law makes it a mistake to consider the NEA as the dominant engine of public arts support. Finally, and as this book outlines in detail, structural, cultural, regional, and economic constraints also diminish the NEA's political authority compared to a cabinet-level department or cultural ministry where state officials hold greater autonomy to channel arts resources as a point of national power and pride.

As mentioned above, NEA funding decisions are governed entirely by US citizens through a decentralized (three-tiered) grantmaking process. But the NEA's internal operations and grant decisions are subject to ongoing regulation by US presidents, legislators, members of the judiciary, and appointees who manage the executive branch, the arm of government where the agency resides.¹¹ Inside the NEA, macropolicy decisions are governed by two sets of presidential appointees, the NEA chair and the National Council on the Arts (NCA), the agency's de facto board of governors. Whereas NEA chairs generally serve fixed appointments that align with the term limits of their issuing Commander-in-Chief, members of the NCA serve six-year terms that are staggered to maintain a level of policy consistency as appointees phase in and out.¹² Inside of the NEA Dance Program, the division where the bulk of my analysis is situated, funding decisions are governed by invited citizen consultants who participate in the first layer of grant governance: peer panel review. Panel deliberation by citizen experts was an institutional technology adopted at the NEA's inauguration and has been hotly contested throughout its history as a governmental practice. As my discussion chapters will show, ongoing charges of elitism, regionalism, racism, and nepotism on NEA funding panels are as old as the agency itself. Still, it is crucial to note that governmental decisions made by dance panel members are not binding; panel recommendations are sent to the NCA and chair for rejection, amendment, or rubber stamp. This multitiered process of grant distribution and governance makes the question of who "endows" dance grantees with recognition and resourcing a bit difficult to track.¹³ What I do try to track, in the space of these pages, is how people who worked inside the NEA established, upheld, and sometimes subverted standards of arts endowment within a single disciplinary division, dance.

Whereas citizen panelists work on a contract basis, daily operations inside of the Dance Program are administered by citizen employees. NEA staff, importantly, are not bound to term limits. The lack of employment restrictions on staff has conditioned long periods of service and has seated significant control with divisional directors. Dance was first installed as a discrete NEA division by inaugural Chair Roger Stevens in fiscal year 1968 (hereafter FY 1968). Earlier grants to dance artists were allocated out of the NEA Theatre Division, then directed by Ruth Maleyas. The inaugural NEA Dance Program was led by June Batten Arey (1967–73), a South Carolinian with past experience in private pa-

tronage circles and as a public servant in the South.¹⁴ Although *Funding Bodies* does not undertake a strictly biographical account of Dance Program insiders, the narrative spans the directorships of Arey and her successors: Don Anderson (1972–74), Joseph Krakora (1975), Sue Weil (1976–78), Rhoda Grauer (1978–81), Nigel Redden (1982–85), Sali Ann Kriegsman (1986–95), and Douglas Sonntag (1997–2017). Across the agency’s first three decades of operation in particular, Dance Program directors held significant power to engineer dance funding programs, assemble peer review panels, and convene policy-related gatherings that fortified dance hierarchies and also subjected structural contingencies to the NEA’s official record. Chapters 2 and 3 will demonstrate the deleterious effects of massive budget cuts and internal restructuring in late 1995–96 on these hierarchies. Millennial policies and programs rerouted institutional power away from divisional directors and toward NEA senior leadership, who seized control over the agency’s national portfolio of grant programs literally from the top-down.

One final key area of NEA philanthropic jurisdiction that differs from other national funding bodies is its decidedly US domestic scope. With the exception of the NEA’s international indemnity programs (which provide insurance to international art imported to US museums), its literature translation grants, and redistributive funds for American artists’ participation in international festivals, the majority of NEA support is limited to the fifty US states and the District of Columbia.¹⁵ Despite its decidedly US domestic purview, the NEA is not the only federal governmental entity to subsidize art and cultural work. A wide range of nonarts federal government entities have historically steered large amounts of resourcing to art and culture domestically and around the world. It is an economic fact that arts-related spending by nonarts government entities in the United States overpowers NEA allocations, in certain respects.¹⁶ Yet, despite the agency’s economic marginality in the overall federal budget, this funding body—and the funders whose bodies animate it—remains the largest nationwide federal arts funding entity in the United States.

The NEA is a fascinating case study, to me, because of the historical struggle of dance grantmakers to fulfill the agency’s ostensibly democratic political charge: to resource and recognize the broad and diverse contributions of US dance artists. Grantmakers’ success in answering this charge has been limited, to an extent by the agency’s finite annual appropriations from Congress and also by what James C. Scott (1998) has called “the human factor”—the cultural biases that fund

decision-makers bring to bear on their work.¹⁷ *Funding Bodies* is a history of economic over- and under-endowment. It is also a history of how people inside of the dance division of a larger federal entity have shaped and constrained the US dance field. Understanding how the NEA works requires a closer look at who worked inside the agency and how the actions and decisions of these insiders molded hierarchical norms of dance production and professionalization.

Existing Histories of the National Endowment for the Arts

This book is hardly the first effort to explore the NEA's significance as a funding body, but it is the first to centralize grantmaking in dance across the agency's first five decades of operation. NEA historians who have meaningfully attended to the agency's institutional enmeshment in the political agendas of various US presidents have left the assimilatory politics of funding criteria largely untouched as a research topic.¹⁸ Important efforts by Edward Arian (1989) and Donna Binkiewicz (2004) have elucidated some of the exclusionary dimensions of NEA's institutional power during its first fifteen years of grantmaking. Binkiewicz, in particular, offers an insider perspective on the institutional culture of the Visual Art Program to show how conflict over distributional equity at the agency was hardly isolated to the decades of the 1980s and 1990s as popular media sources at that time were suggesting. In keeping with my approach here, Arian (1989) comparatively surveys NEA history from a series of regulatory affronts during its early period of economic growth and maturation (1965–80) to argue that federal funding norms had estranged certain artists and US legislators long before the highly public controversies of the 1990s. In step with these prior studies, *Funding Bodies* subjects NEA policies in dance to closer historical scrutiny and demonstrates the exclusionary dimensions of dance funding guidelines on specific factions of the US dance field.¹⁹

The period of NEA institutional history most frequently addressed in print is the “culture wars” period, one that some authors link to the onset of the Reagan administration (1980) while still others name 1989 as a historical flashpoint. My work here abides the 1980 launch point and, in so doing, follows historian Joseph Wesley Zeigler's (1994) suggestion that the hypervisible censorship “wars” that engulfed the NEA in media attention from 1989 to 1996 tend to divert historical attention away from less visible but longstanding demands for greater racially,

regionally, and economically equitable patterns of distribution. These predate the very public uproar among fundamentalist Christians and Republican members of Congress over controversial NEA-subsidized art. My approach, like Zeigler's traces a series of historically minor tussles that transpired behind closed doors in dance between historically well-endowed and historically under-endowed dance groups. Some details of the NEA's more public conflicts can be found within the memoirs of former NEA chairs (see Frohnmayer 1993 and Alexander 2000), the anti-artist sentiments and regulations surrounding the agency's public controversies have been well archived in monographs by agency insiders (Brenson 2001), and anthologies by artists whose support was threatened or rescinded (Ault and Wallis 1999).²⁰ In contrast to these efforts to stick with overt cultural struggles, my second chapter redirects attention to struggles for institutional legibility from 1980 to 1996 that submitted the agency's contingent policies with regard to race, region, and class to the NEA policy record. The most chronologically capacious account of the NEA's influence into the twenty-first century is the agency's 2008 history, penned by Mark Bauerlin and Ellen Grantham, who map a laudatory path of great achievements across four decades and pause just briefly to acknowledge the NEA's 39 percent budgetary cuts in late 1995 but otherwise stop short of weighing in on the effects of NEA policy reforms on generations of aspiring grantees.

Profiting from greater historical distance, *Funding Bodies* tracks how NEA Dance Program insiders engineered and variably upheld patterns of institutional endowment that disproportionately favored artists working in the aesthetic and organizational context of American concert dance. The institutional ascendancy of concert dance as an endowed arts subfield was, as I interpret it, a by-product of the NEA's early cultural and managerially liberal rationales for federal arts spending (see chapter 1, 1965–80). Despite the clear affordances for dance grantees nationwide that accompanied the NEA's inauguration, federal arts cost share structurally narrowed dance "excellence" to aesthetic and organizational logics that privileged the concert stage as an endowed site of dance work. After my first chapter investigates the structural contingencies that were embedded in Dance Program grant criteria, my subsequent chapters map the slow and steady erosion of these ideals as the by-product of federal regulations, fiscal austerity, and activist efforts at policy reform. This approach repairs gaps in the knowledge base by avowing that, to date, a narrow number of US dance

scholars have attended to the agency's role in institutionalizing concert dance as a legitimate American art, in print.

In 1992, dance education researcher Jan Van Dyke penned a pocket study of the NEA's impact on the field of modern dance. Van Dyke's text asks many of the same questions that fill the pages of this book. But despite my strong sense of kinship with Van Dyke's questions, my work abides an alternative approach from her study, which leaves the hierarchical endowment of concert dance artists largely unquestioned as a facet of the NEA's legacy.²¹ Sentences such as, "Before the advent of modern dance, the United States had no concept of dance as a native art form" (Van Dyke 1992: 2) frame the historical endowment of modern dance aesthetics and organizational logics as among the NEA's crowning achievements, leaving aside dancing contexts and communities that federal arts funding policies left behind during the agency's first three decades of dance grantmaking, in particular. In contrast, my work here pushes strongly against viewing the so-called dance boom as a universal one for all artists. I also resist situating the NEA's routine endowment of concert dance traditions as a politically neutral undertaking. I actively work here to connect the US government's liberal Cold War ideologies of US cultural exceptionalism and its promotion of managerially liberalist policies of Civil Rights era state and citizen surveillance to the NEA's emergence to highlight how these liberalisms gave rise to the concert dance-maker as an ideal working identity in dance. To hold state and private wealth-holders in dance accountable for endowing a narrow faction of the dance field as an elite cultural class, I argue that institutional "endowment" in the context of early NEA dance funding was less a matter of an artist's intrinsic merit or "excellence" and had as much to do with an aspiring grantee's ability to abide managerial and organizational norms. Newly available federal subsidies lured generations of US dance organizers to model their working identities and performances after these cultural and managerial mandates, rooted as they were in fantasies of individual freedom. So, while my overall line of inquiry parallels Van Dyke's effort to expand understanding of how funding bodies enable opportunities in dance, I reject the analytical tendency to leave the NEA's promotion of EuroAmerican aesthetics and trustee-governed dance organizational logics unquestioned. One of my main goals in this book is to expose the structural and cultural contingencies of dance funding criteria and to situate institutional policies as forces that permit and constrain enabling environments for dance.

Another dance researcher whose work strongly influences my approach to institutional policy and practice is the late Randy Martin. Martin references the NEA in his 1995 essay “Overreading the Promised Land: Towards a Narrative of Context in Dance,” one of the few attempts in dance discourse to directly address the agency’s disciplinary relationship to the US dance field. Zooming in on NEA’s censorship controversies in the mid-1990s, Martin holds dance polices and production together through an analytical approach he calls “overreading” (1995, 1998). An interpretive method of “encumbering” a dance text with the macropolitical context of its production, Martin’s “overreading” framework has been extended in dance studies to important ends.²² In an analysis of choreographer Bill T. Jones’s representational strategies in the piece *The Promised Land: Last Supper at Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Martin inundates the dancers’ onstage action with historical data about the dance’s macroeconomic conditions of possibility. As inspired as I initially was with Martin’s materialist criticism, I later located a logical flaw in his account of the NEA’s influence that significantly stalled the political force of his argument. Specifically, I saw Martin’s choice to read Jones’s choreography as a strictly representational protest against economic austerity measures as a method that obfuscated Jones’s actual material imbrication in dance philanthropic networks. Martin’s conclusion that Jones’s final onstage image of embodied surplus (a sea of naked bodies) offered a symbolic protest against NEA economic disinvestment inscribed what felt, to me, like a false distance between Jones and the funding bodies that have supported him. In short, I realized that Martin’s “overreading” framework missed a key opportunity to help readers understand how Jones—one of the most renowned contemporary dance artists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries—personally benefited from philanthropic programs at the NEA and elsewhere at this same historical moment.²³ Martin was hardly the only critical dance researcher to analytically hurdle the institutional and economic entanglements of the artists he studied. *Funding Bodies* offers readers a more direct route through the economic flows and embodied derivatives that artists constantly navigate in the field, conditions that Martin so nobly sought to elucidate for critical dance and performance research.

In this book, I follow Martin by querying how the unique occasion of a dance conditions social and material relations beyond itself. Also with him, I defend dance’s political function as a site of political mobilization—social movement

capable of upholding or upending the institutionalized status quo. To inspire greater debate about the contingent impacts of federal arts support on dance work, I trade dance for dance's myriad organizational and bureaucratic enactments as my axes of inquiry.²⁴ This focus on how institutional pressures shape organizational performances in the arts extends what performance scholar John McKenzie (2001) has usefully termed the "the pressure to perform" imposed by large bureaucratic systems to the realms of US dance funding and organization. Rather than hurdle over, duck around, or zoom past the constraints that arts funding bodies impose, I examine patterns of dance philanthropic practice and elucidate the political imbrication of artists and institutions as complex choreography in its own right. US dance history has, for too long, been silent about the political entanglement of artists and economic regimes. Leveraging momentum generated by the aforementioned scholars, I say: enough with hurdling artists' enmeshment in economic conditions. Enough reading over. The only way out of the checkered history of national dance endowment is through it.²⁵

My main argument in *Funding Bodies* is, economically speaking, a generalizable fact: NEA narratives, eligibility guidelines, and evaluative standards have rewarded certain dance works and foreclosed others by omission or contingent inclusion. Remembering that the agency's annual fiscal appropriations from Congress are finite, simply saying that dance funding instruments exclude is not saying very much.²⁶ Once we connect patterns of institutional valorization to hierarchical aesthetic and managerial dance norms, it becomes difficult to un-see the stubborn reproduction of these narrow norms within our home communities. Martin's work remains foundational to this entire line of inquiry, as is the work of scholars in my home disciplines (dance and performance studies) who have contended with arts policies and economic drivers in ways that bear down on this project.

Histories of US Arts Policy and Production

Funding Bodies joins a small cluster of dance and performance studies texts that have centralized the shaping influence of arts policies on cultural labor in a US context. Among the most notable of these is Paul Bonin-Rodriguez's 2015 book *Performing Policy: How Politics and Cultural Programs Redefined US Artists for the Twenty-first Century*, which undertakes a close analysis of artists' production

maneuvers in the aftermath of the NEA's budget cuts and radical institutional restructuring in 1996. *Funding Bodies* spans a fifty-year period including this historical flashpoint, but narrows its site of analysis to dance grantmaking and governance within the NEA Dance Program proper. Hillary Miller's *Drop Dead: Performance in Crisis, 1970s New York* (2016) is a theatre history text that informs my approach and one of the few arts labor narratives to take artists' entanglements in economic development and policy schemes squarely into account. But whereas Miller's text focuses on artists' confrontation with urban planning agendas in New York City, *Funding Bodies* bucks against the tendency to portray New York arts production as a synecdoche for national arts ecologies as a whole. Despite the material reality that dance artists from large cultural epicenters were disproportionately granted NEA funds over the years, demands for inclusion by regionally and racially marginalized dance-makers were leveled and answered by policy-makers in ways that are interesting to notice.²⁷ Rather than perpetuate the economic and cultural overdetermination of New York as dance's de facto cultural capital, this project situates New York-centrism and urbanism as ideological forces that stood in near constant tension with the NEA's democratic mandate to recognize the diversity of citizen cultural expression. Regionally specific histories of US dance production are quite rare, and historians of concert dance have also been particularly slow to turn attention away from coastal dance hubs.

Historians of American modern dance have been vigilant in their efforts to establish a running discourse on choreographers as vital agents of cultural production.²⁸ But those who have looked at artists' enmeshment in governmental arts patronage and institutional power structures have stopped short of connecting philanthropic flows to dance's aesthetic and organizational norms.²⁹ Clare Croft's *Dancers as Diplomats* (2015) is one text that meaningfully demonstrates how foreign policy subsidies secured the international deployment of concert dance artists and highlights the function of dance as a tool of soft power during and after the Cold War. Rebekah Kowal's (2010) *How to Do Things with Dance: Performing Change in Postwar America* likewise spotlights Cold War intersections between state patronage and American modern dance and considers state-funded production beyond the proscenium footlights. While both of these important texts address the shaping influence of policy on dance production, they also share two specific limitations that my work in *Funding Bodies* confronts. First, these authors overwhelmingly position artists, not grantmakers, as

their research subjects. Second, they both emphasize dance's representational politics over the many nondance practices that artists perform in the field. My approach, in contrast, attends to dance's "offstage" organizational management, administration, and governance and in so doing centralizes the critical moves of a chorus of dance intermediaries: state officials, dance presenters, critics, and arts managers whose actions and interactions have shaped dance endowment in different ways. One key Cold War era dance history of state arts policy that more closely resembles my approach here is Naima Prevots's (1998) text *Dance for Export: Cultural Diplomacy and the Cold War*. Prevots contends here directly with grant panel deliberation as a governmental exercise. My project, like hers, casts grantees and grantmakers as critical historical figures who have molded the US dance field. My project departs twenty years after Prevots's and diverges most significantly in that its focus is squared on the NEA Dance Program as an institutional locus where, I argue, dance endowment can best be understood as a sweaty human struggle over equitable distribution of economic capital and dance worthiness. By zooming in on the authorial exercise of a multitude of committed intermediaries inside of one funding body, our understanding of who qualifies as an endowed dance-maker expands to include a greater number of people than most people think.

Funding Bodies would not be a properly "US" history of philanthropic contingency if I failed to discuss how grant distribution in the NEA Dance Program has been specifically regionalized, classed, and racialized. Across the agency's first thirty years of dance grantmaking, my first two chapters track the NEA's historical over-recognition of white, regionally coastal, and classed ideals of concert dance amidst ongoing demands for distributional equity by racially and regionally Othered artists. My last chapter tracks the agency's neoliberal turn away from funding dance as a discrete "discipline" and analyzes funder-imposed policy reforms that put new pressures on millennial grantees to assimilate their working patterns to nonarts market deliverables and nonarts policy ideals. Rather than ask how dance has survived these policy changes, I demonstrate how specific artists were best positioned to thrive because they could easily assimilate to grant criteria and evaluative standards. This focus on racial, regional, and class contingencies follows prior dance historical research such as Anthea Kraut's (2015) efforts to contextualize the situated struggle of dance artists of color to establish legal authority over their artistic contributions against the state,

specifically US copyright courts. Other foundational scholars who have named pressures on African diasporic dance-makers to assimilate to white concert ideals include Brenda Dixon Gottschild (1996, 2003, 2012), Thomas F. DeFrantz (2004, 2005), and Jacqueline Shea Murphy (2007), each of whom trouble the patterned regularity of ethnocentric aesthetic and production logics in their accounts of African diasporic and Indigenous artists. This history of NEA dance endowment follows these precedents by discussing historical entanglements between race, money and entitlement and by laboring to show how regular, reliable NEA dance support endowed leagues of white concert dance organizers with much more than money. Funding bodies grant US dance-makers a reputational status akin to whiteness. Federal arts philanthropic power granted economic capital and reputational status to concert dance grantees, power through which an artist's personhood and identity as a legitimate artist could be asserted.³⁰ Despite policy reforms that took aim at greater distributional diversity inside of the Dance Program, I labor to show how the concert dance model took hold and refused to fold, even after the agency's budgets flatlined. This effort to highlight the overendowment of white concert dance organizational norms extends Cheryl Harris's productive definition of whiteness as status property (1993) toward processes of institutional endowment in dance, specifically the political engineering and restructuring of US federal domestic dance support.

Movement as a Method of Studying Institutional Policy and Participation

Funding Bodies: Five Decades of Dance Making at the National Endowment for the Arts theorizes dance "making" as the collective endowment of dance worth and worthiness. It advances the claim that dance authorization is the by-product of multiple agents and agencies. This decidedly materialist orientation takes its cue from Marxist feminists such as Janet Wolff (1987) who remind us that artists play a more limited role in the authorization of art works than the ideology of the autonomous artist has led us to believe.³¹ Lest researchers continue to narrowly cast artists as lone protagonists, or cast funding bodies as abstract entities, or look only to urban coastal cities to understand how dance works, this book unpacks the historical divisions upon which institutionalized dance norms and rankings rest.³² When I ask how money motivates movement, movement is not a

metaphor. I am a dancer invested in critical inquiry about arts funding, labor, and institutional power who pays surgical attention to how philanthropic patterns influence patterns of embodied comportment. This means that I study funding bodies the way that a dancer might. By intertwining human action with capital flows, I join Marxist cultural theorists, cultural labor scholars, and critical race scholars in seeking justice in arts resourcing on structural and micropractical grounds.³³ So, while federal dance funding is my topic of inquiry, dance and performance serve as analytical frameworks through which I seek to sharpen attention to how patterns of human behavior in the arts field and inside of consecrating entities have been economically incentivized. This approach may read to some as a behavioral economic take on NEA grantmaking, but this text does not do that work. What *Funding Bodies* does, instead, is theorize the NEA's power as *choreographic* power while simultaneously crediting the institutional workarounds of NEA insiders as agentic acts that tooled the dominant system and put it to alternative forms of use. As anyone who has labored inside of a large bureaucratic system can likely attest, institutional policies are powerful but not inflexible instruments of regulation. Put simply, a policy is not equivalent to its practical translation. The two kinds of philanthropic corporealities I am concerned with here, again, are funder-incentivized patterns of dance work and funder-enacted philanthropic workarounds inside of the lone arts philanthropic arm of the US federal government.

Sources

The first book-length study of the NEA Dance Program, *Funding Bodies* demonstrates how federal arts funders and the policies that they cocreated actively recruited and rewarded specific dance works, workers, and ways of working from the agency's 1965 inception to its fiftieth anniversary year (2016). My decision to center the Dance Program as a site of analysis imposes a false boundary of sorts, in that dance organizers regularly sought and secured support in other NEA divisions throughout the period in question. But rather than situate the Dance Program as a synecdoche for other NEA divisions or for the agency as a whole, I isolate a lone program to connect federal arts support to the nationwide promotion and protection of American concert dance as an endowed domain of dance production.³⁴

This story maps the NEA's institutional change over time and shows its evolution from a culturally liberal managerial to an economically neoliberal government entity.³⁵ A funding body initially dedicated and structurally engineered to support the culturally and managerially liberal advancement of exceptional American art, the agency's maturation involved steadily reckoning with legislative enactments of increasingly economically neoliberal policies that undercut the NEA's liberalist project. This ideological shift was a variation in form, not politics. What I am saying is that *Funding Bodies* rejects the temptation to feign nostalgia for early NEA funding policies as a politically neutral, merit-based system. This view, pervasive among many with whom I spoke, problematically fuels the illusion that early arts funders did not vote to support work that reinforced their cultural values, which of course they did. The NEA's transmogrification is, as I describe it, a history of ideological shifts from cultural and managerial liberalism to economic neoliberalism, with variable effects on generations of dance grantseekers.³⁶

In terms of my sources, this book draws together archival and economic data on NEA grant infrastructures and policy initiatives with interview testimony with past Dance Program insiders.³⁷ I couple archival data with the situated experiences of fifty human beings who worked at or alongside the Dance Program between 1965 and 2016 in order to throw policy's deep contradictions into historical relief.³⁸ Examining NEA Dance Program policies and institutional culture requires archival investigation and also speaking to those present so that the situated pressures that funders withstood come into sharper relief. Because the agency's official documents sometimes tell a different tale than the divergent experiences of my project interlocutors, I let these sources stand side by side. My goal is not to "take a side" on particular debates, but instead to depict Dance Program history as a history of human struggle by differently invested decision-makers to resource and recognize the breadth of the US dance field.

Where the structural details of NEA funding programs are concerned, the official archive is quite strong. NEA annual reports provide accessible evidence of philanthropic patterns. The agency's commissioned research studies, internal memoranda, and publications evidence the prevalence of specific dance production practices. Anyone with internet access can easily locate annual grant rosters at the NEA's website (www.arts.gov), via annual reports (1964–65 through 1997). Dance grants that were awarded after 1998 can be retrieved within the

agency's digital grant search engine and database, where awards are searchable by keywords. Because the agency's "official" publications are generally devoid of direct reference to crisis, I draw extensively on transcripts of Dance Program Policy Overview Panels (1982–94) made available to me by NEA staff via a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. I also combed written transcripts from NEA-sponsored field studies and field gatherings hosted outside of Washington, DC, by national dance service agents (Dance/USA and Jacob's Pillow) where federal dance policy constraints were debated by dance stakeholders and submitted on record. To help me to grasp the competing stakes in these crucial debates, I combed secondary policy research literature on highly contested policy decisions with particular attention to enduring issues of exclusionary policy engineering within the fields of arts policy, administration, and management studies.³⁹ Finally, my discussion of twenty-first-century policy reforms has been strongly shaped by more recent discourse on distributional equity in arts funding within platforms like Grantmakers in the Arts, Createquity, and the Center for Responsive Philanthropy. Critics across these secondary texts have helped me to see how NEA micropolitics into the twenty-first century failed to solve, and in some cases, compounded the agency's historically uneven patterns of dance and arts support.⁴⁰

To strengthen my understanding of NEA presidential appointees to the chairman's post, a great deal of discussion can be found in the popular press. But my concern with specific dance funders' politics of institutional participation ultimately required other investigative tactics. Rather than cast print journalists as experts on the NEA's inner workings, I chose, early on, to conduct interviews with fifty past and present staff and citizen advisors in dance about institutional culture, policies, and politics. While the situated experiences of this sample cohort sometimes stood at odds, interview testimony helped me repair archival gaps in understanding dance endowment as a collectively embodied exercise. I had learned, early on, that NEA dance panel transcripts are not accessible to researchers—they are considered internal working documents that the agency keeps confidential and are not subject to FOIA request. This loss led me to see that the only way into these convenings was in conversation with those present. The NEA's confidential documents are destroyed after three years as an agency-wide protocol, so much of the information I sought about grant deliberation remained an internally kept secret, held only in the hearts and minds of those

who were present. Interjecting de-identified interview testimony at various intervals, this text compels readers to imagine themselves as key players at the table, struggling with finite funds to oversee the democratic distribution of dance worth and dance worthiness.

All of my interviews for this book took place in person, on the phone, or via video conference. I generally scheduled one hour to talk, but many informants spoke to me for double that amount of time. I conducted follow-up interviews with current and former dance grantmakers during trips to Washington, DC. In all of these scenarios, I informed my interlocutors that the purpose of this book was to show the struggle of NEA insiders to perform their roles as endowed dance decision-makers, key players whose choices have shaped and constrained the US dance field. I shared my personal investment in studying funding with an eye for distributional equity, and I welcomed contradictory retellings of Dance Program convenings and achievements, vowing to let these sit together in the text. To insure a diverse sample cohort, I identified people who worked in the NEA Dance Program during different historical periods, who served at different ranks on the staff, for long and short stints, and in diverse roles as panel reviewers, site visitors, and consultants. It was critical that I speak with insiders who hailed from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds. And crucially, to secure a widely representative sample of voices, I explicitly reached out to former grantmakers who hailed from outside of New York City, whose views deepened my awareness of regional contingencies.

My list of interview questions centered on the Dance Program's changing policies and NEA workplace culture and daily operations. When I spoke to past and present employees, I asked them to describe their workday and to reflect on what they wished people understood about the daily work of arts-funding administration and governance during their time of employment. For those who held longer tenures inside of the agency, I asked them to share feelings about how the NEA's culture and significance had changed over time. With citizen panel reviewers, I asked them to walk me through their experience of receiving the invitation to serve on a NEA dance-funding panel and to describe the process of panel deliberation. Speaking with those who had also been on the receiving end of a NEA dance grant, I queried whether or how their experience applying for federal support informed their experience as a working artist. Across these roles and registers, I fielded many comments about the impact that participating

in federal dance endowment ultimately had on people's careers. I centered the above questions because I was eager to understand the micropractical details of fund engineering and implementation and the personal responsibility that NEA insiders felt as they performed their work. These invaluable conversations yielded access to archival materials from private collections: transcripts of key field convenings, task force assemblies, evaluative reports, and internal memoranda were donated to me and filled me in on key aspects of how grantmaking changed over time. Additional documentation that the agency was allowed to destroy was available to me via the public archives of Charles Reinhardt Management Inc. at the American Dance Festival Archives, housed in the Rubenstein Library at Duke University. Inside of this meticulous space, I encountered objects and transcripts that enabled me to piece together the puzzle of the Coordinated Dance Touring Program.

Across many field trips, archival trips, and conversations, I quickly learned that no two people experienced the Dance Program's limits and affordances in the same way.⁴¹ These varied materials and shared insights support my effort to depict the NEA Dance Program as a site of dance field building that has housed both conservative and coalitional advocates in the field of dance. All told, fifty past and present Dance Program directors, staff, citizen advisors, and grantees generously agreed to speak with me between September 2012 and November 2018. Their words evidence the often intense pressure grantmakers experienced in confrontation with legislative officials, NEA senior leadership, and the arts constituencies to whom they felt answerable.

The diverse and divergent experiences of my informants appear throughout the book *in italics*. With the exception of instances where I quote publicly available documentation that attributed knowledge to a named source, I have elected to preserve the anonymity of all of my project informants within the body of the text. This choice enabled people to speak frankly about the politics and contingencies of federal dance grantmaking. Any ghostly effects that this move may engender for readers should be seen as my intentional effort to resist the tendency to blame or "finger wag" single individuals for NEA philanthropic decisions. Institutions are, as I have come to understand them, fundamentally *human* infrastructures. Power is administered collectively and manifests quite differently depending on where one is standing, when, and with whom during the policy-making process. Early on in my interview process, one passionate

informant described the delusional incompleteness of lone accounts of NEA policy cooperation to me this way:

Sarah, nobody's telling you "the truth." Anybody that worked there [at the agency] at that time [the 1980s], whether you were on the staff or a director, you were the lead policymaker of dance in the country. The NEA was the reference point for funding for all of dance. That does things to your head. You believe the bubble is a reality.

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INTRODUCTION

De-identification is a measure to preserve privacy often used in human subject research to prevent someone's personal identity from being revealed and putting them at risk. As I said to my interlocutors, and to my readers, above, this move helps me to avoid seating NEA power with any one person or group. Rather than search for names of people to boast or to blame for funding decisions, I de-identify to encourage readers who care deeply but differently about dance to try to see themselves in this narrative. The distributionally uneven patterns of dance authorization I chronicle here span five decades, but also span far beyond this one funding body. Interested readers can find a general list of interviewees in Appendix B.

Chapter Outline

Funding Bodies opens with the NEA's inauguration in 1965 and concludes at the end of the agency's fiftieth anniversary year (2016). Each chapter canvases a time span of fifteen to twenty years and centers on a distinct group of NEA protagonists. Chapter 1 considers the assimilatory pressures that early dance funding policies placed on dance grantees during a period of budgetary growth known to many as the "dance boom" (1965–80). Chapter 2 examines federal arts policymaking from the bureaucratic maneuvering of dance grantors—staff and citizen advisors—during a period of heightened regulation and contestation often referred to as the "culture wars" (1981–96). Chapter 3 looks at the agency-wide restructuring and programmatic disinvestment in discipline-based grantmaking from the critical moves enacted by NEA senior leadership during and after the Millennial turn (1997–2016). To emphasize how institutional pressures and rewards have motivated the workplace performances of each of these three groups, I take a body-focused approach that reinforces the agency's

choreographic power as the power to direct grantee's patterns of comportment through economic incentives. I also credit the translational performances of grant decision-makers whose committed institutional acts upheld and subverted the dominant system through intentional patterns of use. Rather than biographize the above players, I focus instead on dominant patterns of workplace performance. Specifically, my chapter claims orbit around *leveraging*, *touring*, and *incorporating* as hegemonic "verbs" of dance authorization. I labor to show how the meanings of these seemingly commonplace acts change significantly depending on where we are standing, with whom, and when during the grant-making process.

Chapter 1, "Boom for Whom? Engineering Support for American Concert Dance," addresses what historians often generally call the "dance boom" from 1965 to 1980 as a time of widespread expansion for American concert dance.⁴² While patron-supported concert dance companies, tours, and stage repertoires were proliferating well before the NEA's 1965 inauguration, this chapter contextualizes the agency's role in escalating national support for concert dance as an endowed dance aesthetic and organizational ideal. While it is often taken for granted that the availability of federal dance support and the NEA's ever escalating annual budgets seeded an economic "boom" for nonprofit dance organizers in general, my approach contextualizes private and nonfederal philanthropic initiatives that disproportionately favored ballet and modern dance organizers as ideal grantees who assimilated most easily to the NEA's early programmatic criteria in dance (Carbado and Gulati 2013). Structurally, I analyze the inaugural engineering of the agency's matching grant programs, Coordinated Dance Touring Program, and Individual Artist Fellowships in Dance and link these funding instruments to three dance organizational practices that would emerge and become dominant: *leveraging*, defined as the acquisition of nonfederal economic cost share as a criterion of fund eligibility; *touring*, by which I refer to the regional distribution of dance repertoires to proscenium venues in secondary and tertiary US cities and towns; and *incorporating*, the process of structuring dance operations and governance through the legal framework of a trustee-governed 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizational charter. Through these strategically engineered dance funding tools, NEA grantmakers motivated generations of dance presenters, managers, and administrative intermediaries to reproduce these norms as professional gold standards in dance. Importantly, however, the

NEA's robust promotion of American concert dance aesthetics and production curricula was not universally accepted by US dance organizers. I close chapter I by entertaining a cluster of early demands for institutional reform leveled by folk, rural, and cultural organizers of color to NEA senior leadership. Although the structural addition of the NEA's Expansion Arts and Folk/Heritage Arts Programs was borne out of critiques by ethnically and regionally Othered dance and arts grantees, I maintain that the implementation of these separate and unequal divisions actually consolidated EuroAmerican aesthetic and discipline-based approaches to dance as a NEA policy priority. It was not until a full-blown congressional audit of the NEA's grantmaking process in 1979 that the agency's philanthropic policy of institutional expansion by racial and regional partition would come directly under fire. Closer attention to the disciplinary force of NEA funding guidelines across this period of economic surplus reveals *for whom* the so-called boom was a facile period of expansion.

Chapter 2, "Bureaucratic Angling, Institutional Activism: Dance's (C)overt 'Culture Wars,'" ventures inside of the agency during its harshest period of public battery to examine programmatic and practical workarounds of dance grantmakers themselves. Dominant historical accounts between 1981 and 1996 tend to emphasize efforts by Congress to defund the agency and highlight media-enflamed battles over controversial federal grants made to artists whose work engaged counterhegemonic themes.⁴³ These very public struggles, while important, do not square with enduring debates that transpired across this time span in the Dance Program with regard to the institutional overendowment of American concert dance. To delve beneath the smoke of the NEA's more overt conflicts, my account moves inside of the Dance Program to detail the advancement of publications, programs, and assemblies that sought to reroute resourcing to historically under-endowed and over-endowed dance groups. With the NEA's fiscal appropriations flatlining and tightened federal administrative oversight under then-President Ronald Reagan, I examine how Dance Program funders pivoted through various tactical and bureaucratic acts. By *leveraging* interdivisional resources, grantmakers in dance managed to locate new opportunities in the absence of additional budgetary appropriations from Congress; by taking to the road and *touring* to under-the-radar US dance communities, funders managed to expand the geographic and cultural reach of federal dance funds; at a historical moment where *incorporating* cultural difference was emerging across

the NEA as a policy priority, I detail three registers of institutional convening (panels, task force assemblies, and independent commissions) that harbored meaningful debates. Drawing heavily on interview testimony with Dance Program insiders, I position these bureaucratic enactments as a *covert* “cultural war,” a ground-level struggle over how to achieve parity of opportunity at the NEA in dance. These hidden but enduring conflicts among NEA dance grantmakers together highlight the translational practices of *leveraging*, *touring*, and *incorporating* as camouflaged forms of institutional activism, tactical workarounds that both subverted and upheld the concert dance status quo. This minor history of contestation over future inclusion or past entitlement, hidden largely behind closed doors, nonetheless reinforces the agency’s historical function as a harbor for democratic deliberations in dance. The NEA’s power to convene diverse dance advocates would be irreparably damaged in December 1995, when the agency withstood a 39 percent reduction in budget, which led to a subsequent 50 percent reduction in force and forced a massive structural overhaul at the hands of the 104th Congress.

The last chapter, “Disinvesting in Dance: The NEA’s Neoliberal Turn,” examines the period from 1997 to 2016 from the perspective of NEA senior leadership, politically appointed NEA chairs who sought agency preservation as a top policy priority into and beyond the twenty-first century turn. I look specifically at how increased external pressures to streamline costs across the US federal government informed the programmatic and policy maneuvers of these leaders. After examining how NEA chairs seized control over programmatic engineering in 1997 from the top-down, I track rebranding efforts through emergent NEA publications and a portfolio of national grant programs that steadily shifted the purpose of federal arts funding away from the NEA’s discipline-based approach and toward policy priorities of elected officials to whom federal funders were answerable. To answer more directly to those who controlled the NEA’s budget and livelihood, senior leadership took to *leveraging* executive branch incentives to share costs across the federal bureaucracy by building colocated funding programs; they began *touring* to remote congressional districts that had minimal federal arts support and began rewarding grantees for doing the same; emergent programs advanced by NEA chairs rewarded artists for *incorporating* expanded research and data collection and learning to speak nonarts policy dialects and to generate economic deliverables to gain a competitive edge. Such overhauls

shifted control over philanthropic engineering significantly out of the hands of divisional insiders in the Dance Program, where translating the NEA's turn toward economic instrumentalism proved to be a challenge for grantmakers and grantseekers, alike. To represent this structural recalibration of authority with greater accuracy, chapter III travels through NEA operations across the presidential administrations of George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama in sequence. I detail first how NEA chairs answered to specific regulations and demands from the executive branch. I then discuss how Dance Program grantmakers maneuvered within this dramatically changing system, often in ways that protected past patterns of concert dance support. Last, I consider the assimilatory pressures that the NEA's economically instrumental policies placed on aspiring dance grantees, who lost a philanthropic foothold as the creative entrepreneur replaced the concert dance-maker as an endowed cultural class.⁴⁴ By the NEA's fiftieth anniversary year, the ideal grantee was no longer dancing behind the proscenium footlights; she was an independent organizer capable of *leveraging* connections to nonarts professionals, *touring* local neighborhoods to participate in capital development schemes, and *incorporating* nonarts policy values to justify the value of her dance work. Together, these structural changes and micropractical translations reveal how a political institution that was initially engineered to behave like a private arts foundation came to comport itself like a federal investment firm across the span of five decades.

At the close of NEA's fiftieth anniversary year, no one could have anticipated how the agency's fate would fair after the 2016 election of President Donald J. Trump. Nor could anyone have foreseen how the entire US cultural economy would meet a screeching halt under physical distancing regulations during the global pandemic known as the novel COVID-19 virus, still surging across the United States at the time of this writing (December 2020). These exceptional circumstances have renewed citizen interest in the inner workings of the US federal government and have motivated me to conclude this book with a brief Afterword wherein I discuss future prospects for policy engineering with an eye for past patterns of cultural, racial, and regional contingency. Rather than to try to predict how dance or arts organizations might survive repeated efforts by Trump to eliminate the NEA outright, I reconsider the crisis-state of the NEA's current fate as a larger invitation to actively recognize and repair longstanding exclusions embedded in dominant systems of dance and arts support. Speculating about

how coalitionally minded dance “makers” might step toward distributional equity, I introduce three steps toward reparative endowment as alternative models of support that are already proliferating among twenty-first-century grantmakers. Resisting conclusion but requesting coalition as a necessity in dance, moving forward, I query how dance advocates with deep (but divergent) investments in the dance field might actively resist the stubborn reproduction of worn-out patterns of dance organization as rusty relics of a system in dire need of repair.

As the lone domestic arts-funding agency embedded within the US federal bureaucracy, NEA is ideologically bound to recognize the cultural expression of the broad and diverse US citizenry. But as anyone who has ever applied for an arts grant can surely attest, equitable distribution of capital is also constrained by the cultural blind spots of institutionally endowed decision-makers. *Funding Bodies* offers both a structural critique of policy exclusions and a practical, humanistic take on policy patterning and unpatterning. Dancers know a great deal about patterns of intentional human movement. By moving inside and alongside the first five decades of NEA Dance Program policy cooperation, this text credits a broader range of dance-makers and holds fund decision-makers more squarely accountable for inviting and foreclosing enabling environments for dance in the United States. Rewinding now to the moment when the prospect of federal domestic arts subsidy was first introduced on September 29, 1965, in the Rose Garden on the White House lawn, our institutional exercise begins.

one

1965-1980



FIGURE 3 Inaugural NEA Chair Roger Stevens watches President Lyndon B. Johnson break ground at the site of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Photo: Performing Arts Library, Library of Congress.

BOOM FOR WHOM? *Engineering Support for American Concert Dance*

PRELUDE TO CHAPTER ONE *This chapter considers the assimilatory impacts of early NEA dance funding mechanisms from the vantage of aspiring dance grantees. My programmatic analysis focuses first on some of the nonfederal philanthropic precedents that informed the design of three emergent and impactful federal dance funding tools: NEA matching grants, the Coordinated Dance Touring Program, and Individual Artists Fellowships. By building on the success of preexisting private and state funding blueprints and channeling newly available federal subsidies to concert dance artists and organizers, the NEA played a key role in institutionalizing concert dance as an endowed professional ideal. As the agency's appropriations grew, increased economic incentives recruited generations of grantseekers to move toward the project of regional proscenium dance production. An approach not without its critics, the NEA Dance Program's culturally liberal aesthetic and managerial norms were seen by many as instruments to promote and protect EuroAmerican guided aesthetic realms of ballet and modern dance. As importantly, other critics noted the classed dimensions of early standards, particularly the agency's active rewards for grantees capable of achieving nonfederal economic leveraging, of orchestrating regional dance touring to proscenium venues, and for legally incorporating a nonprofit dance entity to govern daily operations. A period that many refer to universally as a "dance boom," the years of 1965 to 1980 were predominantly a "boom" for two kinds of dance cohorts: concert dance artists and a growing army of intermediary presenters, managers, fund developers, and trustees who the NEA's earliest fund guidelines both hailed and disproportionately endowed.*

WHEN PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON SIGNED the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act in 1965, he mobilized a strategy for federal domestic arts support that arts advocates in the US legislature had spent the early part of that decade defending. Over a century's worth of prior attempts to steer federal funding to artists had made some headway, but efforts to install a dedicated domestic arts funding body within the US federal bureaucracy were consistently blocked by arts agnostics. Presidents as early as James Buchanan (1859), William Henry Harrison (1891), and Theodore Roosevelt (1901) had each labored to establish a National Arts Council and had had their proposals rejected as inappropriate areas of government oversight. Arts adversaries in the US legislature generally saw the governmental process of endowing certain US artists with resources (and not others) as being at ideological odds with the expressive freedoms that the First Amendment protected. Wary of developing a centralized and/or propagandistic national cultural policy, arts-savvy elected officials did gain significant traction for artists through the strategic attachment of arts policies to nonarts policy agendas; arts labor reforms during the Works Progress Administration remain notable as a robust US government effort to support artists and public artworks on a nationwide scale.¹ Despite arts policy breakthroughs in the 1940s, the formalization of a dedicated federal domestic arts policy arm remained stalled until President John F. Kennedy (1961–63) successfully appointed a Presidential Advisor on the Arts in 1961. Roger Stevens, a real estate investor and Broadway producer, would eventually become the NEA's inaugural chair (fig. 3). Stevens served the NEA while advocating for the construction of a National Center for the Performing Arts, which became the John F. Kennedy Center where Stevens served as the chairman of the board for an enduring tenure (1961–88).² Other legislative advocates who were huge proponents of American art and culture were Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI) and Representative Frank Thompson (D-NJ), who laid the important groundwork that led to the passage of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. §951). Together, these sponsors effectively secured bipartisan support to convince then-President Johnson to fold twin endowments for the arts and humanities into his Great Society Initiatives, an onslaught of social policy reforms that channeled governmental subsidies toward achieving peaceful citizen cooperation in American cities and towns.

On September 3, 1964, Johnson signed the National Arts and Cultural De-

velopment Act (Pub. L. No. 88-579), which established the National Council on the Arts, an advisory council comprised of twenty-four hand-picked members and one ex-officio, who were granted a federal appropriation of \$150,000 to cover planning and administrative costs. The council met in April and June of 1964 and developed a slate of recommendations, including the nomination of Stevens, which was approved by Congress on March 9, 1965.³ On September 29 of that same year, the 89th Congress passed Public Law 89-209, the piece of legislation that created four agencies dedicated to broadly conceived national policy of support for the arts and humanities: the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities, the Institute of Library and Museum Sciences, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Endowment for the Arts.⁴

Historian Donna Binkiewicz's (2004) productive account of the NEA's first fifteen-year period of grantmaking has emphasized the function of domestic arts support as an ideological effort to promote images of American cultural liberalism at home as had previously been done abroad during State Department cultural export tours during the Cold War.⁵ Yet while her account convincingly shows how the NEA played an indirect but crucial role in preserving modernist legacies of aesthetic form for US mass consumption in the Visual Art Program, her account leaves the agency's concomitant promotion of liberal managerial maneuvers untouched as an area of inquiry. This chapter unpacks how early NEA dance funding programs instituted a culturally and managerially liberalist plan to control artists' aesthetic and administrative comportment by multiplying the number of authorized dance intermediaries who had a hand in dance production.

Throughout this book, I maintain that the NEA's inaugural approach to dance grantmaking cannot be understood strictly in relationship to Cold War liberal cultural diplomacy, a so-called civilizing process rooted in the mass distribution of exceptional American art and artists to lure average Americans away from the crude cultural confines of Hollywood entertainment. The NEA's early policies were economic mechanisms that catapulted cultural elites into endowed authorial positions through tax incentives and managerial mandates that disciplined the comportment of socioculturally marginalized cultural workers after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.⁶ Throughout this chapter, I seek to show how the establishment of a dedicated federal agency motivated a mass movement of dance organizers toward *domestic* arts diplomacy grounded in mass dissemination of concert dance production curricula and a parallel managerial

curricula that certain artists found easier to adopt than did others.⁷ In dance, early NEA decision-makers built a fund distribution system that disproportionately favored a decidedly narrow fraction of white, moneyed, urban-sited arts grantees working principally but not exclusively within the aesthetic traditions of American ballet and modern dance.

In 1965, the NEA became the official federal entity charged with engineering programs to dedicate grants-in-aid to state arts agencies, nonprofit or tax-exempt organizations, and individuals. The Act stated that one of NEA's primary goals was to promote "*American creativity and the maintenance and encouragement of professional excellence.*" Distributing taxpayer grants to nonprofit arts organizations and institutions, the inaugural NCA could also name special fellowships for individual artists to "*release the artist for creative activity,*" and allocate federal funds to state and local arts councils to further redistribute arts support.⁸ Inaugural council members who penned NEA objectives in Dance championed endowment on the grounds that "The dissemination of great works, and instruction in their performance among the various dance groups throughout the United States can be a possible means of lifting the standard of choreography generally, and with it the caliber of the dance."⁹ Although the aesthetic and managerial forms the agency would promote developed incrementally over the first several years, statements like the above conjure images of American dance excellence in the art of choreography as an agreed-upon standard of eligibility for NEA support. As NEA decision-makers in dance slowly formalized a support system for granting economic and symbolic support on a national scale, the structure of early programs was modeled in large part after preexisting private and state-level patronage.

I open by rehearsing details from the collective engineering of the NEA's early system of fund distribution in dance, a governmental project modeled after private and state-level "fine arts" philanthropic policies that were well-trodden by 1965.¹⁰ After unpacking the structural influence of these blueprints, the rest of this chapter offers a programmatic analysis that demonstrates how NEA dance funding criteria privileged aspiring grantseekers whose work abided EuroAmerican aesthetic traditions (principally ballet and modern dance) and a cluster of specific, dance organizational capacities, as well. I argue that the concert dance-maker emerged as an ideal working identity in dance. Fortified by federal dance funds, the NEA's early grant criteria configured success along-

side the reproduction of modernist aesthetic norms and a grantee's capacity to *leverage* nonfederal cost share, *tour* dance to proscenium regional venues, and *incorporate* daily operations through the legal mechanism of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit legal charter and trustee model of organizational governance. While arguments were consistently made across this timespan that the NEA's grantors' decisions were guided by the ostensible merit of artists' onstage performances, the cultural and economic contingencies I flag here counterargue that artists' infrastructural performances were equally appealing to early federal arts funders. The "dance boom," in my view, can be more clearly understood as a series of "booms"—aesthetic and administrative—that conditioned new hierarchies and political interdependencies for US artists, not all of them desirable among dance grantseekers, themselves.

Formalizing Funding for Dancing Bodies

One of Roger Stevens's earliest maneuvers as the NEA's first chairperson was to hand-pick members for the National Council on the Arts (NCA), citizens who held professional esteem and expertise across arts disciplines. The inaugural national council was charged with identifying policy issues and advancing recommendations that this newly minted federal funding body was uniquely positioned to address. Council members included acclaimed actresses, classical and Broadway composers, union opera executives, broadcast news anchors, contemporary art curators, acclaimed novelists, playwrights, directors, university professors, conductors, architects, gallerists, cinematographers, modernist art critics, and a presidentially appointed secretary of the Smithsonian.¹¹ Dance-friendly members included choreographer Agnes de Mille and designer Oliver Smith, both of whom were affiliates of American Ballet Theatre in New York City. The majority of early NCA advisors hailed from large urban cultural epicenters and were critically acclaimed as progenitors of or economic investors in American art and culture.

In the hands of these early fund governors, the NEA's first round of grant-making was, literally, no contest. Inaugural subsidies were granted entirely on the basis of the NCA's recommendations. Advisors generally gathered together at the NEA's early offices in the Watergate Building, across from what became, in 1969, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (fig. 4), and infrequently



FIGURE 4 Watergate Building (*left*), the inaugural home of NEA/NEH Offices, across from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (*right*). Photo: public domain, Wikimedia Commons.

convened in Stevens's New York office. Their charge was to winnow down a roster of worthy recipients drawn from their existing networks. The first roster of NEA grantees featured artists whose work was well known and, importantly, well patronized.

In dance, NEA's first round of organizational grants went to the American Ballet Theatre (Smith's and de Mille's home company), the Martha Graham Dance Company, the Capitol Ballet Guild of Washington, DC, and to a group of organizers working to develop a Conference of American Dance Companies. Support also went to exceptional individual artists: Alvin Ailey, Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, José Limón, Alwin Nikolais, Anna Sokolow, Paul Taylor, and Antony Tudor.¹² Importantly, each of these grantees had been previously endowed with philanthropic support at the private, state, and federal level. A glance backward at these prior philanthropic precedents lends some structural clarity to the standards of eligibility that the NEA's early dance funders would ultimately adopt.

Philanthropic Blueprints: State Diplomacy Tours, NYSCA, and Ford's Matching Grants

The NEA's early philanthropic infrastructure did not emerge from scratch. By 1965, paths to concert dance recognition and resourcing were well-trodden in the public-private context of the nonprofit arts sector.¹³ Federal dance funders took their structural cues from a series of historical precedents: US State Department foreign diplomacy tours during the Cold War, funding programs at New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), and the Ford Foundation's ballet regionalization movement. A glance at each of these models of dance recognition and resourcing reveals the influence of nonfederal patrons in prefiguring the NEA's early support for concert dance aesthetics and accompanying organizational performances. By channeling newly available tax revenues through preexisting philanthropic pathways, NEA grants played a strong role in bolstering concert dance production logics as professional "norms" of the US dance field.

At the time of the NEA's inauguration, many US concert dance-makers had been contracted to engage in international touring, training, and engagement activities through state-sponsored international diplomacy tours. The majority of these dance artists hailed from the New York City. As Prevots (1999), Kowal (2010), and Croft (2015) have respectively shown, US State Department funds supported the international circulation of embodied images of American dance modernism during the two decades prior to the NEA's emergence as part of a global rebranding effort aimed, in part, at quelling the pejorative image of America abroad as a nation crudely fixated on commercial entertainment. Prior to the NEA's 1965 inauguration, the State Department enlisted American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA) in 1954 to administer international dance export grant programs and formed discipline-based peer review panels to evaluate and recommend worthy artists to stage public performances, lectures, teaching engagements, and cultural exchanges (Prevots 2007: 70). As Prevots has noted, ANTA Dance Panel members were highly regarded by legislators, and the "merit-based" standards of qualification that they instituted were respected as a viable method of fund arbitration. Federal dance advisors were keenly aware of the specific artists who had successfully mounted state-sponsored tours and, ultimately, doubled down on these investments to help put the NEA itself on the map.

The majority of US dance-makers who won early NEA support had served as US dance ambassadors during the Cold War. Choreographer Martha Graham's international appeal made her a particularly viable candidate for an early NEA subsidy. Considered by many to be the matriarch of American dance modernism, Graham's welcome reception abroad introduced her choreographic oeuvre to wealthy patrons and presenters within and outside of the United States starting in the 1940s. By 1965, Graham had been touring, offering performances, and teaching classes abroad for fifteen years straight, accruing a glowing international audience. To help catapult the NEA into prominence as a young arts funding body, early NEA dance advisors steered a pivotal and substantive award to Graham's company—a touring grant in the amount of \$124,250—to support a tour to thirty-two US domestic cities in 1966.¹⁴ Newspaper critics championed this award as a symbolic coup for the arts endowment and credited the agency for luring the mother of US modern dance back home after fifteen years overseas. In addition to this six-figure sum, Graham also walked away in 1966 with the largest of eight approved NEA fellowships to individual choreographers in the amount of \$40,000.¹⁵ Uncoincidentally, several of the dance advisors who drove these early recommendations also served on the ANTA review panels. Once the NEA began to formalize its competitive grant infrastructure in 1967, dance grantmakers adopted touring and engagement standards that largely followed the touring formations that ANTA had set in motion. A second public arts philanthropic engine whose formulas shaped federal dance grantmaking was Governor Nelson Rockefeller's New York State Council on the Arts (hereafter NYSCA).

At the time of the NEA's 1965 inauguration, thirty US states had instantiated state arts councils and were in the practice of allocating public funding to artists. NYSCA was installed in 1960 by then-Governor Nelson Rockefeller (1959–73), himself a well-known arts patron and investor.¹⁶ In policy, practice, and print, Rockefeller often promoted the cultural exceptionalism of innovative New York art as an instrument to acculturate the tastes of citizens of his home state, the nation, and the world.¹⁷ In NYSCA's 1965 annual report, Rockefeller proudly asserted the agency's function as an institutional progenitor for state arts councils elsewhere and for the newly inaugurated federal arts endowment as well. In his words:

As the New York State Council on the Arts enters its fifth year, it is gratifying to note that during this period more than 25 other states have enacted

or are currently considering similar legislation to provide some measure of government support for the arts. In September 1964, the federal government enacted Bill H.R. 9586 establishing a National Arts Council. That New York was the first state to provide comprehensive support ‘to encourage participation in and appreciation of the Arts,’ should be a source of continuing pride to us all.¹⁸

The bulk of NEA’s first round of grants in dance were made to artists who had previously benefited from NYSCA arts investments, principally those who worked in the aesthetic traditions of ballet and modern dance.¹⁹ The American Ballet Theatre (hereafter ABT) won the NEA’s very first dance grant in the amount of \$100,000 on December 20, 1965, a moment when the company was already actively touring throughout New York State on NYSCA dollars.²⁰ ABT would continue to garner multiple, often six-figure subsidies from the NEA across multiple program categories, as would other sizable New York institutions, such as the Joffrey Ballet and New York City Ballet.²¹ NYSCA dance funding categories included grants for Performing Arts Touring and Educational Programs, Funds for Technical Assistance (professional development in arts administration, fund-raising, marketing, and production), and, eventually, Research Studies, all of which NEA would adapt and/or adopt. The NEA Dance Program would also follow NYSCA initiatives by supporting professional training and development for inexperienced venue sponsors through its Pilot Program for Coordinated Dance Touring, which abided NYSCA’s urban-to-rural models of dance distribution on a national scale and privileged New York-based artists exporting work to off-center US cities and towns. NYSCA’s advancement of increased access to exceptional (read: New York-based) American concert dance was engendered, in part, by Rockefeller’s control of New York real estate. Since funding concert dance touring obviously required physical infrastructure in the way of proscenium stages, the historical influence of the Ford Foundation’s investment in regional civic performing arts centers and structural expansion of American ballet on inaugural NEA dance policies cannot be understated.

A decade prior to NEA’s emergence, private philanthropic investors began nothing short of a revolutionary movement to grow public-private sector investments in regional distribution of ballet training, production, and professionalization across the United States. The philanthropic turn toward ballet regionalization was spearheaded by grantors inside of the Ford Foundation’s art

and culture program, specifically Wilson McNeil “Mac” Lowry. The institutional architect of regional ballet expansion across the United States, Lowry joined the foundation in 1953 as director of its education program before being promoted to vice president of its division of the humanities and arts. His personal love of the arts and deep awareness of cultural economics helped to establish the Ford Foundation as the largest nongovernmental funder of the arts in the United States by the 1950s.²² Ford’s arts initiatives provided infrastructural “seeds” that NEA grants would sow across subsequent decades.

In 1957, Lowry developed a cluster of philanthropic programs that channeled an unprecedented \$29.8 million to ballet organizations, schools, and venues in New York and secondary US cities. In 1963, the Ford Foundation steered an additional \$10 million to budding regional ballet affiliates to bolster further steps toward professionalization. Ford funds were specifically earmarked toward building training-to-performance models in regional ballet organizations nationwide.²³ The primary beneficiary of early Ford support was New York City Ballet and George Balanchine’s School of American Ballet; Ford funds swiftly established a cluster of regional ballet troupes known to most as Balanchine pipelines.²⁴ Master teachers in these young institutions were generally retired lead dancers from established companies recruited to improve standards of instruction and restage masterful repertoires by coastal ballet innovators. Through this massive infusion of private support, the Ford Foundation was among the first philanthropic institution to acknowledge dance as an underfinanced art.²⁵ Lowry’s astute understanding of the economic contingencies of presenting ballet as a live art on concert stages siphoned private funds to install preprofessional and avocational dance training institutions adjacent to regional ballet companies. Such pipelines, when philanthropically tended, were favored by patrons as a method of cultivating aspiring professional ballet artists, building appreciative ballet audiences, and providing cost share for running concert productions through the mechanism of class fees, one of dance’s most reliable sources of earned income. The Ford Foundation scholarships first emerged in 1959 and were subsidized with regularity between 1963 and 1973 as a method of recruiting aspiring students of the form to move through the ranks, guaranteeing future generations of ballet supporters in those students, their families, and their parents. Ford’s competitive ballet scholarship programs targeted middle- and upper-income students and tempted their creative futures with the

promise of preprofessional involvement with endowed companies that were, by virtue of their artistic staff, New York-adjacent. As young ballet students vied for opportunities to apprentice and to learn American ballet repertoires across the country, these dancers were inculcated as ready-made ballet audiences.²⁶ The Ford Foundation's role in the preprofessional development of ballet with the hierarchical structure of dance training, labor, rank, and recognition formed a historically unprecedented overture, one that fueled a national dream among those with the economic means to rise through the ranks from student to apprentice to company dancer. Dance advisors and staff at the NEA were well aware of this prior philanthropic undertaking and did their best to leverage its achievements from 1965 onward.

The Ford's paired investments in ballet's aesthetic and organizational infrastructures nationwide enabled a large number of secondary ballet companies of considerable scale to break ground (regionally) and take flight.²⁷ Leveraging municipal funds and tax breaks, Ford funders simultaneously built well-appointed proscenium spaces and economic partnerships with state and local patrons that expanded the number of ballet companies, preprofessional training schools, audiences, and eager students nationwide. A decade later, the NEA Dance Program introduced its Grants to Large Dance Companies Program, an initiative that structurally consolidated the repertory model of regional ballet production that Ford had cultivated in earlier years.²⁸ While Grants to Large Dance Companies made no overt stipulation of ballet organizers as its target grantees, federal dance grantmakers took strategic advantage of the then-growing network of regional civic performing arts venues and civic ballet companies as sites to increase regional concert dance touring as a policy priority. Whereas regional ballet ensembles generally stayed put in their home cities, NEA support drew American modern dance artists to opportunities to tour these same venues with robust incentives and matching support. Soon enough, NEA philanthropic guidelines started steering aspiring dance grantees toward Ford-funded models of dance training, touring, production, and governance. The NEA's grant infrastructure in dance, which I analyze in the bulk of the rest of this chapter, was an economic undertaking that profited enormously from decades of strategic public and private patronage for American concert dance.

The above private, state, and federal philanthropic efforts together increased the number of US citizens who were already supporting American concert dance

at the moment of the NEA's 1965 inauguration. Although conflict of interest prevented "Mac" Lowry from serving on early NEA advisory boards, he was an invited attendee for the first and subsequent rounds of deliberations by the National Council on the Arts, where his opinions buttressed those of long-standing New York ballet organizers de Mille and Smith.²⁹ The presence of ballet and modern dance advocates from ANTA, NYSCA, and the Ford Foundation at early NEA convenings shaped early NEA grant rosters. Working principally out of New York City, where many advisors and grantees resided, federal dance grantmakers saw concert dance as a readymade investment due to its modernist symbolism onstage and the material fact that endowed concert dance-makers from New York were already well-versed in the "offstage" practice of managing themselves with regard to arts investors.

The Inaugural Dance Program: Engineering Support for American Concert Dance

After the first two cycles of fund distribution in dance were funneled through the NEA Theatre Division, Chair Stevens installed a dance-specific division within the NEA's internal infrastructure in 1967. Stevens invited staffer June Batten Arey (1967–73) to lead the Dance Program and a formal process of application and grantee selection began to take shape. A Southern community servant and balletomane, Arey headed the local League of Women Voters and the Symphony Society in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, before being tapped to work in Washington, DC.³⁰ Once a dedicated dance program was put in place, Arey's staff and citizen advisors began generating programmatic guidelines and reporting requirements for FY 1968. This section organizes inaugural NEA dance funding mechanisms and the aesthetic organizational practices that they set in motion. Through the steady allocation of federal and nonfederal funding seeds, three managerial verbs—leveraging, touring, and incorporating would be commanded by NEA grantmakers. Through steadily increased federal allocations to concert dance artists, presenters, and intermediaries nationwide, these managerial practices would become hegemonic, in the Gramscian (1971) sense that a grantee's faithful performance of these maneuvers demarcated their status as a member of an institutionally endowed cultural class. While philanthropic guidelines underwent many changes throughout this fifteen-year period, successful NEA dance grantees were those who willfully assimilated to funder-imposed

mandates: securing nonfederal economic cost share (*leveraging*), distributing concert repertoires to regional proscenium venues (*touring*), and organizing daily dance operations through the legal apparatus of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit charter (*incorporating*). I will address each of these hegemonic verbs in turn.

Leveraging: Counterbalancing NEA and Non-NEA Financial Support

Conventional understandings of leveraging often define the term's meaning to refer to the practice of gaining mechanical or economic advantage by tooling a specific resource. In the context of NEA dance grantmaking, the mandate to match NEA funds with equal or greater economic support from nonfederal sources was hardwired into grant guidelines in all programs except for one: the Individual Artist Fellowships (discussed at the end of this chapter). The mandate to forage for funds outside of the NEA installed contractual obligations to private, state, or local arts patrons in ways that significantly changed the social, practical, and emotional contours of NEA grantees' daily dance work. As an organizational prerequisite for federal dance endowment, leveraging privileged arts grantees who were previously plugged into arts patronage channels. When one considers what cultural sociologist Jennifer Lena (2019) reminds us were disproportionately white, urban, and coastal skew of arts patronage networks throughout the twentieth century, it becomes easy to see how the NEA's early promotion of artists who had access to moneyed publics was a reproduction of past patterns. Despite the agency's promotion of evaluative criteria rooted in the ostensible merit or "excellence" of an artist's creative contributions, NEA funding guidelines scaffolded a broader economic strategy to decrease artists' dependency on federal funds by binding grantees to moneyed populations by design.³¹

The adoption of leveraging mandates at the NEA took its cue from state and private funders at NYSCA and the Ford Foundation who had, since the early 1950s, expanded citizen appreciation of concert dance through the institutional tool of the matching arts grant.³² Matching grants were long favored by private patrons as a method of "seeding" versus "sowing" support for American artistic development. Leveraging partial funds from multiple, distributed investors appealed to funders because it minimized the fiscal obligations of any one funding body. Philanthropic cost-share was also favored by wealth-holders for the so-called multiplier effect it created. Depending on the policy, NEA matching

requirements doubled, tripled, and sometimes even quadrupled arts investments from non-NEA sources. By requiring federal dance grantees to secure nonfederal monies as a criterion of fund-worthiness, the NEA could take symbolic credit for supporting exceptional American dance while remaining distanced from total economic obligation to grantees. Although the agency's leveraging mechanisms did expand the fiscal bottom lines of many grantees in welcome ways, the economic counterbalances also installed paternalistic relations and obligations that were often unwanted.

NEA grants for dance organizations, since the agency's inception, have been structured as temporally and economically contingent forms of dance support. At the onset, NEA programmatic guidelines stipulated that federal subsidies could not comprise more than 50 percent of an applicant's proposed project budget. Given that the agency's annual fiscal allocations aligned with federal tax calendars and appropriations bills, all NEA distributed funds had to be exhausted within a single fiscal year, with rare exception. To dissuade artists from returning repeatedly for support for the same project (a practice referred to by arts-allergic legislators as "rent seeking"), grantseekers were forbidden from asking for support for a previously funded project without evidence of significant revision or expansion. Structural contingencies like these further protected the NEA from being the sole or repeat supporter of any one artist or project. Practically speaking, however, many NEA dance grantees found ways to work around these structural barriers and absorbed funds from multiple program categories with regularity throughout this period. To reinforce this claim requires a closer look at three early instruments of federal arts funding: the NEA Treasury Fund, Challenge Grants, and Advancement Grants.

When he signed the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, President Johnson authorized an inaugural NEA budget of \$5 million and an additional \$2.25 million to be put into a separate account within the US Treasury. Initially called the Unrestricted Gift Program, NEA Treasury Funds were specifically earmarked to recruit arts organizers who could maximize non-federal philanthropic leveraging by hailing a private donor to make a substantial overture to the Treasury signaling a personal investment in their work. Treasury grants, were, in short, subsidies awarded to grantees strictly on the basis of their ability to amass significant nonfederal patronage.

In comparison with the agency's discipline-based approach to grantmaking

in dance, the NEA Treasury Program was an exceptional philanthropic instrument in several regards.³³ First, Treasury Program funds were not organized contests. Federal resources were released only when an outside donor proposed a monetary gift for federal match on a specific organization's behalf.³⁴ In such a scenario, Treasury funds were then drawn to match the donor's gift on the condition that the named organization located additional cost share to equal this newly doubled amount, thus quadrupling the total amount of funds awarded. The uniquely unrestricted character of Treasury Fund transactions gave private donors the authority to steer public entitlements and protect their interests without the fussiness of formal grant competition. By removing intermediary steps, NEA Treasury Funds advanced a growth model of dance-making, one that rewarded artists not for the ostensible "merit" of their work but, again, for their proximity to philanthropic support.³⁵ Whereas discipline-based grant competitions ran on an annual calendar with fixed deadlines, Treasury Funds were distributed on a "first-come, first-served" basis. This provision further privileged organizers with dedicated development staff to steward relations with wealthy patrons.³⁶

A glance at early Treasury Fund recipients in dance reveals the overdetermined advantage held by companies with held connections to generous private patrons, including the Eliot Feld Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, the Joffrey Ballet, and the Martha Graham Dance Company. Each of these ensembles received significant Treasury funds in this category throughout the 1960s and 1970s while concurrently winning additional support from discipline-based programs.³⁷ But for most NEA dance grantees, the possibility of competing for quadrupled subsidies was nothing short of impossible. Three years into NEA grantmaking, senior leadership recognized the relative struggle of smaller organizations to compete with the challenge of courting patrons. It was Steven's successor and highly entrepreneurial NEA Chair Nancy Hanks (1969–77) who marshaled forth two additional funding mechanisms for the expressed purpose of drawing factions of less-moneyed arts organizers into the federal fold: NEA Challenge and Advancement Grants.

Reproducing the NEA's "multiplier-model" of leveraged dance endowment was no easy feat for aspiring grantees who lacked access to surplus capital or networked relationships to hereditary wealth. Understanding this hurdle as a threat to democratic arts recognition, Chair Hanks successfully lobbied for and

secured a \$12 million appropriations increase from Congress and introduced the Challenge Grant Program in 1975.³⁸ Unlike Treasury Funds, Challenge Grants were allocated via formal competition and a significant amount of paperwork. Such funder-mandated accounting practices alienated some artists and hijacked the cultural imagination of others.³⁹ In addition to challenging aspiring grantees to aggressively grow their fiscal base through the hardwired requirement of 3-to-1 cost share over the span of three years, Challenge criteria required grantees to partake in economic and organizational development training to hone their fund-raising skills as a condition of support. In Hanks's introduction to the NEA's 1976 annual report, she defined the evaluation criteria for this new program, then entitled "Cultural Challenge Grants," as follows: "Cultural Challenge Grants are intended as one-time grants that must be matched at a minimum of 3 to 1 and can be used for up to three years. They will be awarded on the basis of long-range integrated program, audience, and financial development plans submitted by the institutions."⁴⁰

That senior leadership chose, ultimately, to veto the term *cultural* within the title of the budding Challenge Grant Program is subtle, but significant. From their instantiation, NEA Challenge Grants endowed capital to candidates on decidedly administrative—not cultural—grounds. To qualify for support, dance organizers had to submit a detailed fund-raising plan that convinced funders of their ability to raise the threefold support required over a three-year time span. Challenge grantees also cosigned the additional labor of tracking fiscal goals and filing progress reports with the agency during the award period. Whereas Treasury Funds measured worthiness in terms of a dance organizer's proximity to wealthy patrons willing to dedicate an earmarked amount, Challenge Grants rewarded dance organizers for assimilating their managerial operations to what is commonly called today "capacity building," the fiscal and practical hustle to achieve economic solvency and the appearance of decreased economic dependence on any one patron, including the government.

In 1977, the first round of Challenge Grants in Dance saw six- and even seven-figure awards allocated to major New York ballet and modern dance companies, each of whom had been previously endowed by the Dance Program and Treasury Funds. New York City Ballet received \$1,000,000, Joffrey Ballet \$450,000, Martha Graham Centre for Contemporary Dance \$250,000, and the Cunningham Dance Foundation took away \$100,000, respectively. One smaller but instrumental Challenge Grant was awarded to modern dance "maker" Twyla

Tharp in the amount of \$50,000.⁴¹ The labor at stake in meeting the “Challenge” required nothing short of a managerial feat for smaller groups. One former Challenge grantee described the application process to me this way:

The application requirements were overwhelming, much more detailed than the general applications. To be successful, the applicants had to provide a compelling vision for the future of their company and convincingly demonstrate how their plan and budget could ensure the goals articulated in the narrative. To do this, applicants had to have a thorough knowledge of five-year planning and budget projection. They had to prove their artistic ability to grow and their funding raising skills to make the 3-to-1 match the grant required. The Challenge Grant Guidelines were demanding and often not clear. On top of that, the deadline was just weeks after the announcement of the program. Many of my colleagues and I conferred about the ‘challenge.’ A number of them simply gave up. I decided to plow on.

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BOOM FOR WHOM?

Despite hours of labor that NEA Challenge Grants imposed, US legislators were pleased to see that by their fourth round of competition the Challenge Grants Program had successfully multiplied nonfederal giving by nearly one-half billion dollars.⁴² Escalated interest on the part of dance organizers moved many more applicants to assimilate to the agency’s financial and managerial ideals. To further motivate applicants, NEA published an updated list of Challenge program objectives describing its intended goals as follows:

- A. Enabling cultural organizations and institutions to increase the levels of continuing support and increasing the range of contributions to the programs of such organizations or institutions;
- B. Providing administrative and management improvements for cultural organizations and institutions, particularly in the field of long-range financial planning;
- C. Enabling cultural organizations and institutions to increase audience participation, and appreciation of, programs sponsored by such organizations and institutions;
- D. Stimulating greater cooperation among cultural organizations and institutions especially designed to serve better the communities in which such organizations or institutions are located; and

E. Fostering greater citizen involvement in planning the cultural development of a community. (Gingold 1980: 1)

In the same above-mentioned publication, then-NEA Chair Livingston Biddle (1977–79) championed the managerial and corporate acumen that Challenge Grants set in motion by suggesting that this specific funding tool was explicitly aimed at helping arts organizations to behave “more like a business” (Gingold 1980: 1). Increasing fund-raising. Developing donor relations. Pursuing managerial efficiency. Engaging in long-range financial planning. Audience building. Cooperating with fellow cultural organizers to colocate funds. Scheming alongside fellow nonprofit organizers. NEA Challenge Grants recruited and rewarded grantees willing to dedicate increased energies to increased administrative labor and economic growth as dance organizational endgames. NEA multiplier programs like Treasury Funds and Challenge Grants fortified what Bill Ryan (1992: 2) has called the “corporate form” of cultural commodity production as a widespread norm in the nonprofit arts. As nascent federal philanthropic technologies, NEA matching grant mechanisms were masterfully multiplied by the NEA and sent leagues of arts grantees into tenuous economic and social counterbalances as a result.

Despite their evident economic impact, many NEA grantees found funder-motivated leveraging easier said than done in practice. Grantees frequently struggled to keep pace with the NEA’s mandate to build prospective budgets, increase marketing, and collect data proving their capacity to manage the required 3-to-1 quantum leap in economic contributions by the end of an award period. Many felt overwhelmed by the three-tiered annual review process that accompanied Challenge grant awards; many felt that the advice from federal development personnel promoted a model of economically efficient administrative dance infrastructure and long-range benefits that were unreachable and even culturally insensitive. The heavy amount of funder-imposed labor involved with leveraging both bolstered the bottom line but also promoted an economic “growth model” of arts organization that drew artists’ energies away from more indigenous ways of making dance work.

Two years into the Challenge Program, in 1980, the agency released a report that flagged concerns that grantees had been struggling to meet economic and managerial goals of the program by the close of each grant period. Rather than

address the structural feasibility of NEA guidelines or debate whether leveraging was a sustainable practice for some arts groups over the long term, senior leadership engineered another intermediary program aimed at improving fund management for those still struggling with economic and administrative assimilation. This last leveraging instrument emerged under discursive banner of “Advancement.”

To support aspiring grantees who were working at a smaller scale or within low- to moderate-income communities, NEA Advancement Grants targeted economic and managerial “underperformance” as a criterion of support. Grantees engaged in a two-phase funding cycle that sought, first, to tighten up organizers’ managerial acumen and, then, concentrated grantee energies on the underlying goal: growing nonfederal capital. Advancement grantees—endowed by the NEA as economic underperformers—were required to participate in long-range financial planning and documentation training before abiding strict protocols. All Advancement grantees emerged with a proper strategic development plan, a path to follow. Phase two of the funding period required grantees to roll out a fund-raising drive to generate the 3-to-1 match required of the Challenge Program as the barometer of “Advancement.”⁴³ Granted additional time to learn to behave “more like a business,” some Advancement grantees took to equalizing debt and labor burdens by enlisting “loaned executives”—volunteers with corporate sector connections and experience in fiscal management to help them achieve the desired level of managerial acumen.⁴⁴ While the prospect of increased funding appealed to all, the shadow labor required to meet NEA’s pay-to-play ethos remained unsustainable for artists working within low-to moderate-income communities after the funding period ended.

Together, the combined political economic force of NEA Treasury, Challenge, and Advancement Programs rewarded arts organizers on the basis of their ability to leverage economic capital and assimilate workplace performances toward standards of managerial “efficiency” drawn from the corporate sector. Despite the agency’s ongoing invocation of merit-based rationales as justifications for early federal dance funding, the economically driven structure of the above programs alternatively suggests that NEA was a young institution equally invested in rewarding “funds for fund’s sake.”⁴⁵

To close this section on NEA-mandated leveraging, I wish to briefly restate my intentions. In general, I remain uninterested in debating the aesthetic con-

tributions of artists who won Treasury, Challenge, or Advancement Grants, or other grants made by the NEA in dance. What interests me most is how, at its earliest moment of grantmaking, the NEA was already in the business of endowing support to a class of grantees with whom they shared intertwining cultural, regional, economic, and managerial interests. Disproportionate historical attention has been paid to ballet and modern dance masters' onstage performances. But by venturing into the offstage labor that makes dance work, a fuller picture emerges that affirms which networked dance-makers were best positioned to achieve federal endowment in these early years. Additional economic trends and managerial impositions undergirded the Dance Program's early promotion of regional touring, to which we now turn.

Touring: No More "One Night Stands"

Policy starts from a problem. Early on, when Chair Stevens invited clusters of NEA advisors in dance to guide early programming, he charged these citizen "experts" to collaborate with staff and jointly identify issues that the NEA as a young funding body was uniquely equipped to address. In 1966, dance decision-makers pursued this missive. The primary issue they identified in dance was that, despite the success of the US State Department's sponsorship of international touring for concert dance in recent decades, US citizens were suffering from a startling lack of in-depth engagement with American modern dance. An art form that advisors considered to be a fundamentally American engine of liberal individual expression, modern dance had been unfairly relegated to the status of a boutique cultural product due, in part, to weak distribution channels. Inconsistent attention on the part of venue sponsors and impresarios meant that the work of the country's greatest dance innovators had yet to achieve a critical mass. While some dance organizers from the New York modern dance scene had managed to achieve traction abroad, many others were failing to see their work mature through reliable production engagements at home. NEA advisors had witnessed international markets luring modern dance innovators like Graham increasingly out of the country. They saw an urgent need to address the insubstantial relationship of modern dance artists and domestic venue sponsors, whose tastes waxed and waned and whose eyes remained fixed on the bottom line. Pressured to accept performance opportunities in suboptimal spaces and inconsistent,

short-term gigs, modern dance organizers were, in the view of these endowed advisors, ideal beneficiaries for strategically guided federal support. They urged NEA senior leadership to support the coordination of regional domestic touring as a means of breaking this pattern of one-off gigging, an implicit modern dance production “policy” referred to in the pejorative by one staffer as the problem of “one-night stands.” The NEA programmatic developments that followed would define *touring* as its antidote. By actively channeling newly available federal subsidies toward companies, venue sponsors and state agents, the Dance Program enabled leagues of performing ensembles to travel and stay for prolonged periods in residence outside of their home city, staging dances and engaging community members in the meritorious tenets of American modern dance.

Those assembled in these early dance advisory meetings recommended to Chair Stevens that the NEA could play a unique role in putting American modern dance on the national cultural radar.⁴⁶ In response, Stevens charged Arey and the Dance Program with developing a year-long pilot program to test the feasibility of federal incentives to maximize access to modern dance within a targeted US state. The success of this pilot would determine whether the agency could be instrumental in expanding distribution of modern dance across farther reaches of the country. The resulting program, entitled the Pilot Touring Project for Dance, became the coveted Coordinated Dance Touring Program, the largest and most costly dance funding endeavor in NEA dance history. The political engineering and implementation of funding for dance touring reveals much about who benefited from early federal grant support and how.

The number of staff at the start of the NEA Dance Program was tiny. Staffers lacked both the experience and labor power to meet the challenge of scaling modern dance touring across a national expanse. To expedite Stevens’s charge, Arey sought outside consultation for the development of the Pilot Program from a respected and well-networked consultancy firm. In a letter dated late December 1966, Arey summoned Charles Reinhardt, an experienced modern dance company manager into the NEA fold. At that time, Reinhardt was running the only management and booking agency in New York City exclusively dedicated to modern dance. Reinhardt’s company, Charles Reinhart Management, Inc. (est. 1955, hereafter CRMI) had already been brokering national and international touring for modern dance-makers for a decade. Asked by Arey to engineer the statewide pilot program for coordinated modern dance touring,

Reinhardt and CRMI accepted and brought invaluable knowledge, relationships to venue sponsors, and contractual templates to the agency. It was, ultimately, CRMI's savvy awareness of the social and economic resources required to stage American modern dance that effectively enabled the Dance Program to center concert dance touring as a policy priority. Reinhardt was awarded an initial consultancy fee of \$5,000 in FY 1967 to secure his commitment. Ultimately, CRMI staff would manage the Touring Pilot and its next four iterations before the agency began to redistribute control over this growing project.

According to CRMI archival documentation of the period, the NEA's initial plan was to call the pilot the "Modern Dance Development Project." It was then renamed twice—first as the "Dance in Depth Pilot Project" and, finally, the "Pilot Touring Project for Dance." During the early planning phases, both Arey and Reinhardt journeyed to several state arts agencies to introduce the initiative and weigh the feasibility of a program launch.⁴⁷ Speaking to state agents, they outlined the process whereby a participating state arts agency would contribute economically as an investor in promoting modern dance touring through leveraged cost share. The state arts agency chosen as the site of the NEA pilot agreed to secure federal funds to cover one-third of the total cost for a coordinated tour. State arts agents would then work with CRMI consultants to identify a cluster of in-state presenters to schedule engagements. Selected venue sponsors consented to collectively absorb the remaining third of the total cost. State agencies assumed responsibility for project administration with significant CRMI oversight.⁴⁸

After meeting with state arts agents, there was some disagreement between Arey and Reinhardt on whittling down the best state contender. Reinhardt initially suggested California, which Arey saw as too easy a target with its high saturation of artists. They settled on the State of Illinois because it held smaller levels of artist density but the strategic advantage of an anchoring dance presenting series in the region: The Harper Theater Dance Festival. Arey held the then-Director of the Illinois State Arts Council (hereafter ISAC) S. Leonard Pas in high regard, and Reinhardt knew Judith and Bruce Sagan, two newspaper publishers and dance impresarios who ran the Harper Festival out of a theatre they managed on Chicago's South Side. CRMI had worked with the Sagans previously when Harper presented the Paul Taylor Dance Company for its 1965–66 season.⁴⁹ Such preexisting relationships cemented Illinois as the test site of the NEA's first effort to economically incentivize modern dance touring across an entire US state.⁵⁰

The Pilot Touring Project for Dance ran from September 1, 1967, through June 15, 1968. Four modern dance companies were selected to tour Illinois for a total of twelve weeks, chosen by venue sponsors from an internal list developed by CRMI and Arey. As promised, the NEA fronted one-third of the cost of start-up and the remaining two-thirds came from state arts agents and sponsors.⁵¹ Remembering that the program's overarching goal was to diminish the pervasiveness of "one-night-stands" in American modern dance, it was significant that the program guidelines required Illinois venue sponsors to enlist companies for a minimum of one-half week (two and one-half days) as a stipulation of receiving a NEA touring grant. To maximize citizen engagement, funding criteria also imposed a "two-company rule," which required funded presenters to contract a minimum of two companies per year from a NEA-endorsed roster also approved by state arts agents.⁵² CRMI staff and Reinhardt worked with ISAC to stitch together a touring calendar and gained significant traction in partnership with academic sponsors at Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, Southern Illinois University, and the Decatur Public School System. University-sited proscenium stages and the growing number of allied dance education programs in the 1960s and 1970s made college dance departments logical touring partners for NEA touring grants in a number of respects. By 1967, academic units had long been promoting modernist dance aesthetics and production ideals within their own credentialing and curricular programs. Then and now, US institutions of higher education have provided ready-made real estate, students, and audiences for the institutional promotion of American modern dance.⁵³

As indicated above, the modern dance companies that participated in the Illinois Touring Pilot were cherry-picked by NEA staff, dance advisors, and state agents. Priority was given to experienced groups whose past touring experience would, it was thought, expedite the pilot and raise its profile.⁵⁴ An internal list of ten modern ensembles was provided to ISAC, four of whom were managed by CRMI at the time. After some deliberation among venue sponsors, the following artists made the cut for the 1967–68 calendar.⁵⁵

Alwin Nikolais:

Chicago/Harper Theatre Festival, November 7–12

Normal/Illinois State University and Illinois Wesleyan, November 13–15

Carbondale/Southern Illinois University, November 17–19

Paul Taylor:

Chicago, October 3–8

Decatur/Decatur Public School System, October 23–27

Merce Cunningham:

Chicago, April 22–28

Normal, April 29–May 1

Peoria, May 3–5

Glen Tetley:

Carbondale, April 23–25

Quincy Society for Fine Arts and Culver Stockton [Missouri],
April 26–28

Chicago, April 30–May 5

NEA funds outsourced administration for the Pilot through CRMI staff, who saw all of the above engagements through, but not without hiccups. One issue, early on, was a gross underestimation of touring expenses. Company fees, travel, and lodging often surpassed available funds. One follow-up letter to CRMI from a sponsor in Carbondale flagged attention to issues with coordination and the pressure that his venue faced covering the surplus expenses:

upon their arrival here, they [Alwin Nikolais Company] had no idea of the various lectures, demonstrations, and master classes that had been agreed upon by Mr. Z and the committee. Also, the physical arrangements that one would ordinarily expect the manager to make, such as renting hotel rooms, automobiles, chartering airplanes, etc., were all handled by us and, incidentally, most of them at our expense.⁵⁶

After the Illinois pilot, NEA sponsorship of modern dance touring was off to a strong but administratively uneven start.⁵⁷ Sponsors and companies struggled throughout Illinois to comply with the terms of touring contracts.⁵⁸ In the case of the Pilot, economic padding was not sufficient to keep budgets for coordinated touring in the black. Despite the shared labor undertaken by the Illinois State Arts Council, where agents took charge of fund distribution and chosen sponsors created and printed promotional materials in consultation with CRMI and company managers, follow-up communication after the Illinois pilot signaled that the labor of scaling tour coordination to a national expanse was

quite challenging for all parties. Despite economic incentives, venue sponsors were still burdened to sell tickets and fill empty auditoriums to earn income. Dance Program insiders realized that the NEA needed to combine economic incentives with closer consultation on the practice of tour coordination, what Reinhardt called a “carrot-and-stick” approach. Combining these measures, the NEA Dance Program would generate enormous interest from eager dance ensembles and agnostic venue managers who were previously unwilling to take a chance on American modern dance.

The second round of grants for what became known as the NEA’s Coordinated Dance Touring Program (hereafter CDTP) supported eight dance companies touring twenty-one and one-half weeks to twenty US cities. The second round of touring grants went, once again, to Alwin Nikolais, Paul Taylor, Glen Tetley, Merce Cunningham, and also included added support for the New York-based modern dance companies of Lucas Hoving, Donald McKayle, José Limón, Anna Sokolow, and Erik Hawkins. Performances were contracted in venues in the Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ohio, Missouri), the Northeast (New Jersey, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire), and in the Southeast (four cities in North Carolina) during the 1969 fiscal year. In a letter to Arey from CRMI, Reinhardt warned that “In enlarging the project to cover three areas of the United States, it is physically impossible to carry the Illinois system toward the [NEA’s] three-year goal of engaging 19 states.”⁵⁹ Ultimately, CRMI would stay at the administrative helm but the NEA would steadily shift the labor of tour coordination to state agents, sponsors, and funded companies as the program matured and expanded its national reach.⁶⁰ Arey instituted an official application process in 1969 whereby aspiring grantees filled out a questionnaire in order to qualify and to be considered for inclusion. By 1970, CDTP had expanded to six regional circuits and twenty-two states. At this point, increased administrative pressures led the NEA to reroute administrative labor away from CRMI and toward state agencies by installing a dedicated Dance Residency Touring Coordinator within each participating state arts agency. CRMI continued to oversee the professional training and development of state touring coordinators and to guarantee that the NEA’s “carrot-and-stick” approach stuck.

When Arey left the NEA to run the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts in late 1971, Don Anderson (1972–75) took the helm as Dance Program director.

After just six years, CDTP had impressively ballooned to reach fifty-five states and US jurisdictions, but its lack of regional distribution remained a problem for some critics. In a *New York Times* piece entitled “National Endowment Puts Government into Role of Major Patron of the Arts,” Anderson suggested that achieving nationwide distribution was a minimal priority. In 1973, the agency, in his view, was principally consumed with endowing support for US dance “Excellence.” When Anderson remarked, in print, that “We’re not ready to sacrifice quality to achieve geographical distribution. You rarely get quality by supporting less than quality,” he hinted at the disproportionate over-endowment of artists from coastal cities and endorsed such choices as evidence of NEA “quality control” (Gussow 1973). The achievement of distributional equity within NEA dance grantmaking would continue to be a puzzle, and most dance companies that won federal support continued to hail from New York, despite the fact that NEA’s number of eligible dance companies from diverse communities and cultural backgrounds was on the rise. A growing number of dance artists were successfully motivated—through the promise of federal and state cost share—to model their aesthetic and organizational practices after early CDTP grantees, a federally endowed cohort.

Eventually, CRM1’s small staff were pushed beyond their capacity as a centralized management firm and, in 1975, Anderson shifted CDTP grant administration entirely to state arts agencies. Anderson’s team also began, at that same time, to restructure eligibility standards in response to complaints that the agency’s selection process obeyed a discernibly coastal skew.⁶¹ Of 101 grants allocated in dance the prior year (FY 1974), seventy-five (68 percent) went to New York-based companies. This figure was actually a conservative estimate given that NEA funds endowed to venue sponsors outside of New York often indirectly benefited New York City artists who journeyed to these stages. In other words, venue sponsors in off-center US cities who won CDTP support frequently engaged artists from New York, and a number of budding modern dance repertory ensembles sited in secondary cities also hired New York-based artists to create new works or stage existing repertoire with regional dance troupes. To achieve wider access and geographical distribution, Anderson’s staff implemented a new approach to company selection for tour eligibility. They developed what they called an “objective” questionnaire, a list of quantitative standards that, if met, would allow a dance company of any size to enter the NEA touring directory and

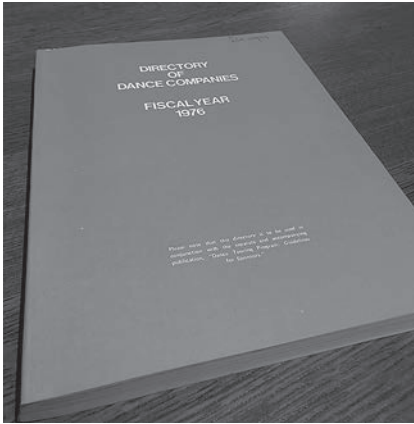


FIGURE 5 NEA
Directory of Dance Companies for fiscal year 1976. Photo by author. Source: Charles Reinhardt Management, Inc. Records, American Dance Festival Archives.

gain eligibility to participate in NEA touring support. Once the Dance Program installed this directory-based approach for regional proscenium dance (fig. 5), the flood gates truly opened and a wider vista of eligible dance-makers put their ambitions to tour in full view. As the number of CDTP applications boomed, funders witnessed an exponential growth in the size of the touring directory and its symbolic importance to artists grew to biblical proportions. Dance companies that appeared on “the Directory” achieved a national seal of approval that rendered them legible to a growing sea of investors in American modern dance. While such evident interest was lauded by Dance Program grantmakers as a sign of success, the rapid expansion of the CDTP and its roster of endowed dance artists was a “boom” that the agency had neither the human resources nor the fiscal appropriations, ultimately, to support.

Governing by Directory

The NEA *Dance Program Directory of Dance Companies* was a printed handbook initially assembled by CRMI and later upheld by Dance Program staff. It was designed to aid sponsors in company selection once they received word of their eligibility to receive two-thirds cost share from state and federal sources. The content of the directory contained profiles of eligible dance groups that met funding criteria. In addition to steering venue sponsors toward federally endowed concert dance artists, the directory doubled as a “how-to-tour” handbook-of-

sorts in that it outlined basic procedures for performance and engagement activities that NEA grantees could follow.

Compared with grant evaluation and governance in other NEA programs, the process of determining eligibility for dance touring grants was notably absent peer panel review. Eligibility for NEA Dance Touring Program (DTP) funds was granted through successful answers to the questionnaire.⁶² Taking FY 1974 as an example, the DTP's purpose was articulated, as follows:

The primary purpose of the Dance Touring Program is to provide professional dance residencies to the largest possible number of the American people. Through these residencies and imaginative planning on the part of the state arts agencies, sponsors, and companies, it is expected the following objectives will be achieved: To develop new audiences for dance, and to expand the public's awareness and appreciation of dance. To improve touring practices for both sponsors and companies.⁶³

The introduction to the 1976 questionnaire reinforced the view held by the majority of Dance Program insiders that the process of securing federal dance endowment for dance touring was politically neutral and objective in character when it explained that:

The information requested on the attached form serves two functions:

- (1) it provides the NEA with material which will enable it to determine if the company requesting inclusion in the Dance Touring Program "Directory of Dance Companies" meets the basic quantitative criteria stated on page ii, and
- (2) it provides the factual information which will be edited and included in this "Directory" for those companies meeting these quantitative criteria. The Directory will be available to all State Arts Agencies and to potential sponsors to aid them in selecting companies they wish to engage under the Dance Touring Program.

Those who had engineered the guidelines for the NEA touring directory questionnaire would later suggest, upon encountering criticism, that the Dance Program's establishment of quantitative criteria absolved funders from charges of regional, racial, or class-based exclusions.⁶⁴ The purportedly objective schema

that governed inclusion in the DTP directory deemphasized the economic pressures that aspiring grantees had to perform. If we consider a budget to function ideologically as a statement of institutional value, then it is important to unpack the embedded values and assumptions about artists' labor practices that the DTP questionnaire inscribed.

Using the directory from the year 1976 as an example, the first item listed in the questionnaire required applicants to give "adequate assurance" that professional wages for all enlisted parties met compensation standards established by the Secretary of Labor. It read:

The company must certify that, while on tour, it pays all professional performers, related or supporting staff, laborers and mechanics no less than the minimum compensation level as determined by the appropriate union in accordance with Part 505 of Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The Company must also meet the applicable requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The "Company Statement" enclosed is to be used for this purpose. Copies of the application regulations are enclosed.⁶⁵

For smaller dance companies, companies working in low- to moderate-income communities, or at a distance from patronage or hereditary wealth, the possibility of meeting minimum compensation terms linked to full-time industrial labor logics was no easy task.⁶⁶ This "objective" criterion rendered many worthy dance organizers instantly disqualified on strictly budgetary grounds.⁶⁷ Another quantitative constraint that crowded out smaller scale dance-makers was the NEA mandate that those listed in the directory meet a minimum of fifteen fee-earning production engagements in the forthcoming fiscal year as a criterion of entry. This contingency made it a challenge for economically underendowed artists and those who were working outside of large cultural epicenters to even begin to compete.⁶⁸ Put another way, NEA touring criteria foreclosed participation by companies that were politically committed to free, minimally, or noncompensated events as a part of their organizational missions. The Dance Program's choice to use the number fifteen as a minimum was not at all arbitrary; it aligned with state unemployment minimums in the city of New York, which was still, in FY 1976, the agency's regional locus of philanthropic investment.⁶⁹ The structural imposition of New York labor policy logics on aspiring dance grantees nationwide misrecognized and largely negated regionally variable arts

economies, labor patterns, and market trends. Federal dance endowment, by the above-listed logics, required widespread assimilation to New York–based economic logics of dance creation, production, and labor organization.

As was the case with philanthropic guidelines in other NEA leveraging programs, the DTP directory questionnaire required companies to include a well-organized business plan as a measure of their fiscal responsibility and organizational capacity. Managerial deviations on tour were strongly disallowed.⁷⁰ Funded companies were subject to intermittent federal audits as a measure to guarantee administrative efficiency, timeliness, and fiscal management. Those who were discovered to hold a history of canceled contracts, unfulfilled commitments, or who digressed from minimum fee requirements were removed and rendered ineligible to reapply for a directory listing for a probationary period.⁷¹ Additional managerial and fiscal missteps that forced some companies to forfeit their place in the directory included loss of IRS tax exemption, failure to meet budgetary and production prerequisites, and evidenced unprofessionalism on the part of dancers or staff.⁷² I belabor these rules to reinforce the nonneutrality of the DTP directory as a regulatory technology, an institutional tool by which the NEA disciplined dance grantees in liberal models of fiscal, legal, and organizational self-management. The directory was, I maintain, a pedagogical tool that schooled generations of aspiring dance-makers to equate “success” with wage and production minimums previously established by New York market demands. One grantee whose organization won a consistent spot on the directory during this time span acknowledged the disciplinary force of NEA managerial constraints as a positive thing:

Personally, I kind of welcomed the having to pay attention to that to creating budgets I created the budgets for my company . . . I didn't resent having to be disciplined about running my company in ways that was productive to putting us on the stage. The requirements became a means of evaluating what I was doing.

Certain grantees, like the above interlocutor, were structurally, culturally, and regionally positioned to abide the agency's “quantitative” criteria. The DTP economic and administrative contingencies fit some grantees' established values and organizational habits more than others. The key point being pressed here is that the DTP questionnaire was not a one-size-fits-all approach to federal dance endowment. On the contrary, the discourse surrounding the process of gaining

a listing disguised its political economic force as a tool that forced aspiring dance grantseekers to tell a data story about their organization that proved their capacity to assimilate to New York market and labor patterns that were often untenable to uphold in practice.

Over time, the Dance Program's criteria for inclusion in the DTP directory underwent tweaks in response to protests by those alienated or excluded from the process.⁷³ The agency's continual lack of geographic and cultural distribution remained steady problems. The Dance Program's "first-come, first-served" rationale governing fund administration was called to question; grantee rosters continued to evidence consistent support for New York-based modern dance companies, who won directory placement and DTP grants at a disproportionately high rate. In response to challengers and demands for structural reform, the Dance Program hosted field convenings to collect testimony from grantees about aspects of the touring program that were and were not working on an annual basis. These gatherings exposed distributional inequities which were documented but did not stop applications from flooding the NEA mailroom.

Throughout this infrastructural growth spurt for concert dance artists, sponsors and intermediaries, Dance Program staffers hustled. They hustled and sometimes failed to keep pace with the ballooning number of applicants who sought resourcing for concert dance touring. By 1977, staff and interns were complaining that the paper exercise of typesetting the directory had grown impossible to complete in time for fund distribution due to sheer demand. To the dissatisfaction of many DTP grantseekers, it became common practice for Dance Program staff to cut off questionnaires that arrived before deadline due to the practical incapacity of employees to keep pace with sheer demand. I mention these administrative failures because they reinforce, for me, the micropractical impacts of NEA funding seeds on grantseekers, and grantmakers alike.

In 1977, the CDTP's tenth anniversary year, the Dance Program published a retrospective report lauding the impact of federal funding for dance touring on the US nonprofit dance field. Despite praising the program's "absence of qualitative criteria" as evidence of its ostensible neutrality, data presented revealed clear gaps in aesthetic and cultural diversity, to say the least.⁷⁴ Of the agency's 176 funded groups, the genre distribution was as follows: "62 percent 'modern' (103); 25 percent 'ballet' (47); 9 percent 'ethnic' (15); 4 percent 'mime' (6); 1 percent 'jazz' (2)."

Remembering that the NEA's inaugural Illinois Pilot was designed to motivate

venue sponsors to take a chance explicitly on modern dance, the fact that 87 percent of federal dance grants went to artists working principally in modern dance a decade later proved the agency's incontrovertible success at widening citizen exposure to American modern dance. Of course, the trade-offs at play in this achievement included the structural exclusion of large swaths of the American dance field. While the NEA's institutional obligation to all US states and territories managed to reroute support for dance touring beyond New York venues during this time, the DTP struggled to distribute funds very far beyond the realm of New York-based dance artists. One former dance staffer who spoke to me about the program's distribution strategies used these words:

One thing that made the DTP a really helpful political asset was that the money did not go entirely to dance companies—that would have added much more to New York percentages and would have perpetuated the existing critique of New York-centrism. The genius of its engineering was that funds went to the actual sponsors, presenters of the dance, with whom the NEA developed the concept of coordinated residency early on.

Although federal funding for dance touring ultimately managed to achieve geographic distribution in terms of funded venues, DTP-funded dance companies disproportionately still hailed from New York State throughout the agency's first three decades of dance grantmaking.⁷⁵ Throughout its history, cultural and regional biases of this sort would continue to stall a more dynamic vision of NEA-supported American dance.

During the DTP's tenth year of philanthropic distribution, the Dance Program distributed \$3,000,000 in annual allocations, an amount that constituted over half of its entire annual budget. Such robust fiscal incentives motivated massive numbers of state and local funders, venue sponsors, and dance companies toward proscenium touring as an endowed production practice. As more and more dance grantseekers were drawn toward the imperial architecture of the proscenium as a consecrated venue, NEA funding seeds neglected to sow dance productions that were happening differently and elsewhere. Into the 1980s and 1990s, grantee demand for touring support would far exceed available federal funds. The next chapter discusses the slow and steady structural de-evolution of funder-incentivized concert dance touring at greater length. Chapter 3 also accounts for insider efforts to salvage some semblance of the DTP approach despite

the agency's macropolicy disinvestment in discipline-based arts grantmaking. To fully flesh out the complex practical and political economic trade-offs that accompanied early NEA dance grantseeking, I want to address one additional managerial mandate. The philanthropic practice of *incorporating*, collectively forming a not-for-profit charitable entity to organize dance operations, was a structural imposition that yielded complex interdependencies for those seeking endowment in dance across this time span.

Incorporating Nonprofit Dance Organizational Governance

Although the NEA's economic appropriations from Congress were "booming" well into the early 1970s under the entrepreneurial leadership of then-Chair Nancy Hanks, the practical and material challenges of meeting NEA grant criteria in dance bore down on many US dance grantseekers. Dance's so-called cost disease (Baumol and Bowen 1966) made it a risky investment for patrons, sponsors, and consumers. To reign in dance's unpredictable economic and organizational dynamics, early federal funding mechanisms hardwired managerial and governmental accountability into guidelines through mandatory nonprofit *incorporating*, which I will define here as the funder-imposed requirement for grantees to structure daily dance operations through the legal apparatus of the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable tax code and its concomitant trustee-led model of arts organization.

Since the NEA's inception, grant criteria have required arts organizers to incorporate as a stipulation of fund worthiness in all categories except one (the Individual Artists Fellowships, discussed at the end of this section). The act of incorporating a charitable entity bound dance organizers to contractual obligations with various wealth-holders, namely, US Federal and State Treasuries (to whom artists reported expenses and tax information), donors (to whom artists accounted for tax deductible gifts), and a volunteer Board of Trustees (to whom artists ceded significant control over certain operations, budgets, and decisions). In practice, these obligations generated additional administrative labor and paperwork for artists, rendering them politically answerable to a range of outside entities. The mandate to incorporate was seen by some artists as a sign of professional legitimacy and by others as a form of governmental surveillance. Many grantees who adopted this hegemonic model of dance organizing were

skeptical that the adoption of board-governance imposed organizational hierarchies that problematically deferred expertise on matters of art to members of moneyed groups. Labor, paternalism, and unwanted contracts notwithstanding, the NEA's rapid budgetary expansion from 1965 to 1980 inspired a great many dance artists to swiftly adopt the legal framework of the 501(c)(3) and to weather any unwanted psychological freight, social debts, or practical drawbacks. By unpacking the conflicting limits and affordances of nonprofit incorporating, we can more clearly see the appeal of NEA Individual Artists Fellowships as a philanthropic loophole that granted artists greater control over their creative undertakings. As a legal structure, nonprofit incorporation was revered as a means of holding arts organizers accountable for public monies the NEA granted. Historically speaking, the incentive to incorporate a charitable entity grew into prominence as a mechanism to protect wealth-holders through governmental safeguards and tax relief (DiMaggio 1986: 5).

To borrow arts sociologist Paul DiMaggio's words, the legal apparatus of the nonprofit organization in the United States has, since the mid-1800s offered a "base through which the ideal of high culture could be given institutional flesh."⁷⁶ Early private arts patrons and trustees, or "cultural capitalists," again to use DiMaggio's term, formed the nation's first not-for-profit voluntary associations as a way to protect their wealth, personal values, and worldviews.⁷⁷ When the Tax Revenue Act of 1913 was established and later ratified by the 16th Amendment, citizens from certain wealth brackets had to pay federal income tax. From then onward, an ever-greater number of wealthy families were driven to find creative ways to shelter their tax burdens and the organizational practice of incorporating increased exponentially.⁷⁸ As Jennifer C. Lena has noted, the number and size of nonprofit arts organizations rose incrementally throughout the last five decades of the twentieth century (2019: 76–80). By the 1960s, the number of charitable foundations that were invested in philanthropic giving across a range of policy areas had reached a rate of 1,200 new entities per year (INCITE! 2007: 6). Such growth necessitated the passage of the 1969 Tax Reform Act, which clamped down on wealth-holders by imposing additional regulations on philanthropically invested income, such as restricting direct engagement by donors in the business of their grantees and establishing set percentages of net income for charitable distribution trustees to maintain foundation status. Despite these tax overhauls,

the direction of philanthropic giving remained largely under the control of US citizens. Patrons of the arts, as a demographic group, were historically and overwhelmingly white, land-owning, US citizens whose directed wealth generally protected their aesthetic worldviews and class interests in distinguishing themselves as tastemakers.⁷⁹ Although a history of contestation surrounds the institutionalization of the not-for-profit charter as a legal conduit to regulate public philanthropic exchange from the Civil Rights era onward, I want to focus on how this NEA-mandated maneuver installed complex practical, ethical, and economic *answerabilities* that affected which kinds of dance artists could receive federal support and on what grounds.⁸⁰

At the time of the NEA's 1965 inauguration, the practical steps required to form a nonprofit dance organization incorporated under section 501(c)(3) of the US tax code required several conditions. A desiring group of dance-makers had to consent to formally declare their intention to assemble dance services for purposes attributable to the public good; this declaration required the completion of legal forms through which dance organizers also named the entity and confirmed the commitment of paid workers and a volunteer board of trustees. Legal forms held dance-makers liable for specific kinds of tax reporting to federal and state treasuries. Reports had to provide evidence of a finite period of active economic activity; generally three years of ticketed productions were a mandate of the 501(c)(3) in most states. The incorporating group had also to prove that they had conducted an inaugural meeting of a designated board of trustees who had committed to organizational service and governance through the production of nonprofit bylaws that were approved by a quorum. Incorporating, in other words, involved learning legal dialects and new forms of economic accounting.

To surmount these learning curves, some dance-makers who sought to incorporate a nonprofit entity enlisted pro bono or paid legal support. Others learned the legal rules themselves and honed new skills in organizational management and tax compliance. Once a group had legally incorporated, the entity was eligible to forgo paying taxes on profits. Not-for-profit dance entities were bound by law to return any and all funds back to the entity versus distributing profits among its stakeholders. Incorporated dance companies became eligible to solicit and receive individual and institutional charitable gifts. Any donations were to be archived in the entity's ledger, a record of tax exemption and deduction that

they ultimately filed annually with state and federal tax bureaus. IRS Forms 990 and 1023 certified artists' annual income and expenditures. Additional forms accounted for the group's annual production history, total paid engagements (receipts from concerts, class intakes), and total paid and unpaid laborers.⁸¹ For all of the potential rewards that aligned with the formal legal establishment of a dance company, incorporated dance-makers were hit with relentless amounts of paper-pushing that reinforced their obligation to wealth-holders, trustees, and the US government.

In addition to the above legal and administrative steps, the NEA's mandate to incorporate saddled dance-makers with significant economic costs. After paying initial fees to the US Treasury, nonprofit dance companies were required to pay annual fees to maintain their 501(c)(3) status and to purchase unemployment insurance for all individuals that it held under contract, full- and part-time. Nonprofit law also required payment of annual premiums to federal and state departments of labor, the amounts of which were based on the organization's history of prior claims, layoffs, and employee salaries. Nonprofit dance companies consented to cover insurance premiums, workers' compensation and disability provisions as a stipulation of US employment laws' protections, which shielded employees from garnished wages if they were rendered unable to perform work duties due to job-related injuries.⁸² Risking the possibility that nonprofit fund seeking was a gamble, generations of aspiring dance grantees flocked to this formal structure and the administrative, economic, and social obligations that it underwrote. As a set of patterns to guide one's cultural operations, incorporating significantly bureaucratized and transformed artists' perceptions of the process of making dance work.

Policy guidelines, however principled, remain irreducible to uniform translation, in practice. A fundamentally social practice, the legal establishment of a 501(c)(3) was translated with significant variability by NEA dance grantseekers. To give an example, incorporating required artists to assemble a dedicated board of volunteer trustees to govern expenditures and decisions. While certain artists boasted strong relationships with the volunteers who committed to serve their organizations in a board-member capacity, others artists resented the enforced interdependence between artists and wealth-holding volunteers that nonprofit board governance promoted for fueling stereotypical ideas that artists owned naïve understandings of how to steward organizational resources. When I spoke

with artists who had incorporated dance companies and allied boards in the 1960s and 1970s, many described their approach to board composition as a dynamic negotiation. One former NEA dance grantee from the West Coast described her interactions with prospective board members in the late 1960s to me this way:

When I asked people in [to join the board] I didn't have a policy that you have to give monetarily, but I did ask: "I would like to know what you can do." Then they racked their brains and they came up with their thing, and I'm fine with that because, frankly, we needed so much! I had a board member who was all about mailing lists—and so I gave them all to her . . . I have had lot of past accountants as part of the board, and they were really, really great. They understood the need for the arts, and they understood what it meant to not have support.

Although conventional understandings of board composition derived value from enlisted volunteers in terms of monetary donations and/or networked connections to moneyed patrons, this NEA dance grantee's testimony flagged attention to the value of contributed board labor as invaluable to the lifeline of her entity. In practice, some nonprofit board members assumed tighter organizational control over budgets and daily operations, while others, such as those described above, delivered physical and/or intellectual labor to create an enabling environment for dance. In still other instances, nonprofit boards of trustees were entrusted in name only, board transactionalism was often preferred in that it left artists and employees to handle major decisions. However transactional, paternalistic, or immersive connections were between trustees and employee dance-makers, those who expressed a sense of success in describing their assimilation to the NEA's trustee-model of dance organization, often invoked a key word: trust.

Although a historically unprecedented number of dance organizers adopted the 501(c)(3) legal charter and gained eligibility for federal dance grants between 1965 and 1980, the rationales for those who opted out by choice or force of circumstance are worth rehearsing, briefly. Dance organizers wary of letting moneyed volunteers control dance operations or anti-Statist artists tended to view the 501(c)(3) mechanism as a surveillance tool, a view that situated the NEA as a proverbial shadow state.⁸³ Artists engaged in civil rights battles were among

the harshest critics of nonprofit organization. Cultural workers from culturally, racially, and economically disenfranchised dance communities suspected what some called the “nonprofit industrial complex” and cited the historical ascension of philanthropic foundations as a by-product of settler colonial expansion, forced labor, Indigenous genocide and industrial capitalist extraction.⁸⁴ Still others stayed away from incorporating lest they refuse to reckon with the unofficial, centuries-long “culture wars” against Native American and African Diasporic dance-makers. Debating the structural violences and historical foreclosures wrought by US philanthropy writ large is quite another project. But what I am highlighting here are racialized, and classed contingencies that motivated groups to refuse to adopt to the 501(c)(3) and the trustee relation that its paternalistic framework imposed.⁸⁵

Back to the early adopters. Another former NEA dance grantee who received support between 1965 and 1980 explained his decision to incorporate a dance nonprofit as an attraction that lured him in this way: “*the initial attraction was monetary—but there was also something about a legitimacy, if you will, associated with having a company that was the mind-wash at the time. I decided to take a bath in that wash.*” For this former NEA dance grantee, the primary motivation to form a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization during the agency’s early years was economic. The NEA saw an 800 percent budgetary increase during this fifteen-year period; an influx of newly available resources led many to lean toward the nonprofit company model despite its foreseeable trade-offs. Also, and as my above informant mentioned, receiving an NEA grant also bestowed legitimacy, a seal of approval rendering grantees worthy of increased attention from other funders. Such expanded visibility, in turn, increased a dance company’s access to professional and philanthropic networks and critical circles. The promise of incorporating, thus, provided economic, institutional, and social capital, which appealed to artists who wanted the world to take their dance-making seriously. The formalization of a legal business—an entity—by dance artists bucked strongly against stereotypical social assumptions about dance as a frivolous, recreational, entertaining, leisure activity, or mindless escape.

This point was made to me by another former NEA dance grantee who established a nonprofit African American dance ensemble in 1969. She described her decision to incorporate a dance company as one rooted in a desire to formalize social commitments, to share organizational labor, and to begin behaving more like a business. In her words:

The sense to start a company came about when I realized, between 1969–72, I was married, I had just had my daughter, I was teaching part time [institution omitted] as an ad hoc faculty member, one class, new baby, new marriage, rehearsing, crazy, just trying to deal with it all, and I realized, I was totally buried. I was making all the costumes. And I realized, that, if I'm working this hard, this has got to turn into some kind of business. This is not no club. [laughter] It didn't feel like a club, it felt like something much more tangible, much deeper than that. I'm looking at the man-hours that it took to do things, and I'm suddenly realizing that one person can't do it.

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BOOM FOR WHOM?

Incorporating, for this and other NEA-funded dance artists, brought organizational coherence to the sometimes-blurry obligations at play in daily dance work. Rather than continue to absorb all of the “backstage” labor of dance administration, management, and production, the formal structure of an arts nonprofit brought relief to overburdened artists. Incorporating increased social, practical, and economic support and bolstered the stamina of dance do-it-yourself-ers. The 501(c)(3) recast peers as professional conspirators and redefined dance as a cultural service, process, and product for which a dedicated group of people assumed professional responsibility. Coupled with the magnetic force of economic incentives, nonprofit incorporating was an organizational act that simultaneously professionalized and bureaucratized the US dance field.

With national dance endowment economically on the rise, the question remained: who could afford *not* to incorporate between 1965 and 1980? And although NEA guidelines for eligibility during the early years did not explicitly discuss how to conduct or administer a 501(c)(3), the tenure and retirement of formidable NEA Chair Nancy Hanks converged with publications that increasingly steered prospective grantees toward ideal norms of board composition. In 1977, an NEA-commissioned study on the impacts of Challenge Grants described the ideal behaviors for nonprofit boards of trustees as follows:

The ideal board of trustees has enthusiastic, dedicated, wealthy members skilled in management, planning, fundraising, law, public relations, and media. It represents all segments of the population; includes prominent business and community leaders with social and political contacts on both local and national levels; and probably does not exist. In addition to serving as donors, policymakers, and fund-raisers, board members can use

their expertise to help organizations carry out (fund-raising) campaigns. (Gingold 1980: 12)

The above list of sought-after skills and identities, advanced by NEA senior leadership, was suspiciously absent of expert knowledge of art or culture. An overdetermined emphasis on wealth, above, highlighted the extent to which federal funders prioritized managerial and fiscal independence (from the government) as dominant measures of “success” throughout the agency’s first fifteen years of operation. The pressure put upon aspiring grantees to adopt these ideals made artists’ management and money a more central concern and positioned artists in deference to wealth-holders around issues of fund-raising, planning, and management.⁸⁶ Said slightly differently, the NEA’s mandate was to incorporate falsely positioned economic wealth above cultural wisdom as a criterion of federal dance endowment. This point was reinforced to me by one former Dance Program insider who worked at the agency in the mid-1970s and explained:

There’s not another industry in this country where there’s a very particular legal structure [that] is required to even apply [for NEA support]. You didn’t have to be 501(c)(3) to receive NEA money, but to even apply. So, a level of regulation came into play even before you got to the table. You could be “Fred’s Utility Company,” and a lot of them are, and you still have safety regulations to deal with, but no other industry required the breadth and depth of regulation in the fashioning of ideas. Which is to say: you will find people in the community to be your bosses and trustees, and this imposition of trustee oversight from a board is required if you want money, access, grants, and legibility. So then, if we look at the arts broadly speaking, the NEA put in motion a system where—and we’re all still dealing with it—the tension between a highly over-regulated system we’ve inherited and there’s less and less room for creativity.

At the time of the NEA’s inauguration, the number of nonprofit professional dance organizations sat at thirty-seven. By 1975 this number would rise to 157 and would expand by 40 percent or more for the rest of the next decade (Munger 2001: 3). Many large ballet and modern dance institutions in patron-dense cities like New York that had previously embraced the 501(c)(3) legal charter saw tremendous budgetary expansion during this period.⁸⁷ Those living in artist-heavy,

patron-dense cities brimming with private foundations had a running start in the race.⁸⁸ For dance-makers in smaller cities or who operated at a distance from wealth-holders, the pathway to endowment in dance at the national level was rife with structural hurdles. I have mentioned a few such hurdles to further illuminate the classed dimensions of the mandate to adopt a model of organization that valorized surplus wealth and its management a criteria for dance worthiness.⁸⁹ Such contingencies together illuminate the widespread appeal of the Individual Artist Fellowship in Dance as the NEA's lone instrument of unincorporated and highly flexible philanthropic support.

An Institutional Loophole: The Individual Artist Fellowships in Dance

One of the National Council on the Arts members' earliest recommendations to Congress upon the NEA's inauguration was the agency's duty to support the "profound contribution of the creative artist to American Life and to the future goals of our society."⁹⁰ Then-Chair Stevens echoed the agency's investment in individual creators often throughout his tenure, in print. Stevens's words said as much in the agency's annual report for its first fiscal year, as follows:

The artist, in the works of his creation, is one of the few among men who achieves a partial triumph over the limitations of time, for his art gives permanence to the present as, has been stated, becomes the "crystallization of a moment, a link between past and future, a bridge between individual and universal experience" . . . We, as the artists' living audience, are both his witness and his beneficiary.⁹¹

The fund instrument designed for the benefit lone artistic innovators was the Individual Artist Fellowship, which was formally installed and awarded in dance starting in 1967. Conceived of while Stevens was chair, artist fellowships were initially invented to honor artistic work that was predicated on individual isolation, such as literature, painting, or jazz. Subsequent NEA Chairs Hanks and Biddle were also strong advocates for fellowships as research and development "seeds." In contrast to project-oriented grants to organizations, fellowship funds enabled US artists of exceptional merit to take sabbaticals from the pressures of production. The lone NEA funding instrument that was devoid of any pressure

on artists to leverage, tour, or incorporate, Individual Artist Fellowships left the “who” and “how” of dance organization blissfully open to interpretation.

Individual Artist Fellowships achieved this structural openness in three main respects. First, they named individuals—not third-party entities—as direct recipients of federal subsidy. Second, they earmarked funds specifically to support creative experimentation as an endgame; there was zero expectation of a completed product. Third, fellowship funds did not require legal incorporation or matching nonfederal cost share as a measure of eligibility. Whereas organizational grants installed contractual obligations between artists intermediary trustees and cosponsors and saddled them with economic accounting and managerial capacity plans, Individual Artist Fellows were evaluated by expert peer panel reviewers on the overall artistic promise of their body of work. Fellowship guidelines imposed minimal restrictions on artists’ expenditures; fellows could spend subsidies on paying personal rent and utilities, rehearsal space, or support for dancer pay. The absence of any hardwired contracts made the application process for Individual Artist Fellowships (described by one NEA insider) “brain numbingly straightforward” (Brenson 2001: 71). NEA staff were similarly unencumbered with their administration. When a fellowship was awarded, Dance Program staff contacted recipients by mail or phone to explain the minimal reporting process. Checks were sent to artists’ home addresses and cashed in personal bank accounts. And all that the agency requested at the end was a one-page statement highlighting sponsored activities in narrative prose (fig. 6 shows a sample NEA return envelope).⁹² From 1965 to 1980, fellowship applications were short, exactly two pages in length.

The ease and malleability of Individual Artist Fellowships attracted fund-seekers of all cultural and political stripes to the NEA during this fifteen-year period. Yet, as with philanthropic patterns in dance overall, the distribution of these unincorporated supports disproportionately privileged artists who were working within American ballet and modern dance. Incrementally and into the 1980s, certain cultural outliers who were working non-EuroAmerican aesthetic guided dance traditions, or with smaller audiences, or outside of the realm of the prevalent nonprofit company model found fellowship inroads at a smaller rate. Whereas the agency’s early call for applications to the fellowship program yielded just several dozen, the number ballooned to well over 800 per year as awareness of their flexibility grew, a strong indication of field demand. At the end of this fifteen year period, the bulk of NEA fellowship resources continued to fall



FIGURE 6 A return mailing envelope for fellows and grantees to correspond with NEA upon receipt of an award. Photo by author. Source: Charles Reinhardt Management, Inc. Records, American Dance Festival Archives.

to New York–based artists working in American modern dance.⁹³ When such economic over-endowment was exposed in annual reporting and called to question, Dance Program staff began advising panel reviewers to decenter New York as best they could.⁹⁴ Geographic redistribution grew only marginally as funds in this category expanded.⁹⁵ As late as 1976, New York’s regional top-heaviness remained a problem within a national funding body that remained ideologically obligated to answer to dance diversity and to taxpayers in every congressional district in the United States. The NEA’s *Annual Report* for FY 1976 list of dance fellowship data on state distribution speaks volumes.⁹⁶

New York	34	North Carolina	1	Illinois	1
California	11	Utah	1	Maine	1
Connecticut	2	Georgia	1	Ohio	1
Washington	2	Pennsylvania	1	Missouri	1

Despite the oversaturation of New York applicants and awardees, national knowledge of the fellowships was growing. The following year (1977–78) the Dance Program staff saw the number of fellowship applications jump significantly, from 350 to 520 submissions.⁹⁷ Yet philanthropic flows were disproportionately coastal and consolidated within artist-dense states. As NEA print publications sang the Dance Program’s praises for fueling such “booming” interest by applicants, staffers danced around problems of distributional equity, in print. At the close of the 1970s, then-Director of Dance Rhoda Grauer explained in her introduction to the annual report that:

Judging by some remarkable figures, the fastest growing performing art in America is dance. A little over a decade ago, people who attended live dance performances numbered about a million, and of those million only 32 percent saw dance performed outside the boundaries of New York City. By 1971 the total audience had grown to 6.4 million. Today it is estimated at about 12 million people, or 16 percent of the adult population. And while New York City remains the headquarters of professional dance, 80 percent of our dance-goers today attend performances elsewhere in the United States.⁹⁸

Grauer's suggestion that the philanthropic centrality of New York as a US dance epicenter had diminished by the late 1970s is misleading in one crucial regard. Although regional distribution in dance improved exponentially with the 1967 establishment of funds for Dance Touring and grants to venue sponsors nationwide, the NEA's formulation of the DTP and promotion of unincorporated fellowships overdetermined New York-based ballet and modern dance artists consistently as worthy grantees universally across this time span.⁹⁹ Any semblance of geographical parity—evidenced in the above assertion that “80 percent of our dance goers today attend performances elsewhere”—sidesteps the reality that dance venue sponsors were a geographically distributed group still principally focused on presenting New York modern dance. So while the NEA managed to achieve greater distributional equity in its sponsorship of dance venues from 1965 to 1979, New York-based ballet and modern dance artists continued to absorb the lion's share of federal arts support throughout this time span. Data like these render New York-based concert dance artists the most consistently well-endowed beneficiaries of the so-called dance boom.

Historians who have described the period from 1965 to 1980 as a “boom” for American dance often cite the surge of newly available philanthropic resourcing enabled by the NEA as an economic surge that was, to an extent, inarguable. But closer examination of grant guidelines and patterns of fund distribution expose structural, regional, and cultural contingencies that lend much-needed specificity to debates about equitable dance recognition and resourcing. Economic criteria for dance worthiness were, contrary to the agency's defense, not politically neutral. Policy guidelines embedded assumptions about aesthetic, organizational, and governmental ideals.

Thankfully, groups who felt stilted by the agency's lopsided patterns of rec-

ognition and resourcing throughout this timeframe refused to remain silent. Challengers to the NEA's early grant infrastructure issued ongoing complaints and made demands for structural reform that exposed many of the agency's embedded biases toward elite EuroAmerican art. To close my account of what I contextualize as the "concert dance boom," I want to examine these demands for inclusion and unpack how NEA senior leadership answered calls for greater distributional equity on the basis of an artist's region, cultural expression, race, ethnicity, or class. Interestingly and overwhelmingly, structural reforms that sought distributional equity from 1965 to 1980 recentered white, coastal, classed, discipline-based "fine art" as NEA policy priorities. And although some institutional traction was certainly achieved for regionally and racially marginalized arts organizers through the introduction of the NEA Divisions of Expansion Arts (1971) and Folk/Heritage Arts (1974), the institutional partitioning of these programs further Othered grant-seekers of color, those working in low- to moderate-income communities, and those in rural areas. As impassioned as these pleas for resource parity were, it would take a full-blown congressional audit to publicly call the NEA's philanthropic contingencies into question.

External Demands and Responses by NEA Senior Leadership

Prior to the 1965 NEA inauguration, congressional adversaries had long protested the NEA/NEH conjoining legislation as a part of a political capitulation to elite literati from coastal cities on the part of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.¹⁰⁰ Once the NEA began awarding funds, coalitional efforts by arts advocates and legislators from districts that were being ignored took aim at the agency's distribution patterns, which favored major cultural epicenters and followed a decidedly EuroAmerican, classed, and urbanist bent. Given the NEA's obligation was not to lone patrons, but to the entire tax-paying citizenry as its ostensible source of support, elected officials from remote corners of the country held legitimate complaints. One Dance Program citizen advisor and advocate for US folk dance traditions that were routinely being snubbed put his effort to make demands on the agency to dismantle cultural and geographical dance hierarchies to me in this context:

Our question was how to successfully challenge hierarchies of tradition that the dominant models upheld. I encouraged others to challenge the idea that we

[folk dancers] *were not fundable because we did not practice the proper genres of dance; that was a battle I carried out for most of my very long career.*

Inside of offices of NEA senior leadership and inside of grant panels in dance, marginalized cultural workers registered their dissent by questioning who benefited from federal tax subsidy and how.¹⁰¹ Advocates for folk and rural artists, cultural organizers of color, and artists working in low- to moderate-income communities went as far as to suggest avenues of structural reform. These challenges were met by NEA leadership through conditional adjustments that made some headway toward fund redistribution but also fanned the flames for factions who viewed the agency's racial and regional tokenism as an extension of the marginalization they experienced within their daily lives.¹⁰² I want to briefly entertain two such reformist strategies through which senior leadership sought resource expansion through the categorical partitioning of ethnic and economic Otherness apart from the agency's predominantly white, classed and discipline-based infrastructure. The annexation of the NEA's Expansion Arts (1971) and Folk Heritage Arts (1974) Programs by then-Chair Nancy Hanks—managed to better integrate nonwhite, nonmoneyed dance-makers through fund criteria that problematically hinged on an assumed cultural and/or economic lack.

NEA Chair Nancy Hanks's biographer (and then-assistant) Michael Straight has described her policy platform as one that predominantly targeted "fine art" constituencies where Hanks herself held a strong political foothold. A Rockefeller insider and member of the New York elite cultural classes, Hanks lacked networked connections to the burgeoning Black and Chicano Arts Movements in the late 1960s and to the communities from which many of the NEA's staunchest critics hailed (Straight 1988: 40). At the same historical moment that Dance Program staffers were busy scaling up the agency's Dance Touring Program to benefit principally white, patron-networked artists working in New York modern dance, cultural organizers of color and their legislative counterparts were challenging the agency's routine exclusion of Black, Latin American, Indigenous, and Asian Diasporic artists who disproportionately hailed from low- to moderate-income communities. In a series of closed-door meetings, these challengers tested Hanks's tenacity and catalyzed an institutional shift toward increased NEA recognition of historically under-endowed groups. Importantly, the structural contingencies that accompanied these shifts overwhelmingly reinforced the

NEA's "discipline-based" approach to funding dance and the arts. To specifically integrate and promote community cultural organizers across the United States into the NEA fold, Hanks installed the Expansion Arts Program in 1971. For the next twenty-five years, "Ex Arts," as it was called by insiders, generated cultural momentum despite the program's structural contingencies in comparison to the agency's discipline-specific programs.

The early success of Expansion Arts has been credited by many NEA insiders to the entrepreneurial ethos of its founding Director Vantile Whitfield (1971–77), an actor, director, and activist who founded several African American performing arts institutions in Los Angeles prior to his work in Washington. When deliberating with Hanks on how to best resource racially and economically marginalized arts organizers in the late 1960s, Whitfield expressed his concern that the categorical partitioning of artists of color would problematically reinscribe unwanted hierarchies that paralleled those of mainstream society at large. When Hanks initially suggested naming an entirely new funding Division dedicated to artists of color and calling this program "Emerging Arts" or "Developing Arts," Whitfield strongly rejected her suggestion. He counter-argued that those who had been categorically excluded from NEA support were neither "emerging" nor "developing," in terms of the depth and rigors of their arts practices. On the contrary, African, Latin, Asian, and Native American arts organizers had long been delivering cultural excellence through organizational logics that simply didn't fit the existing paradigm. Recognizing the glaring absence of philanthropic support for US cultural organizers of color as perhaps the most urgent issue at hand, Whitfield reinforced, that "They (artists of color) had been there, doing what they were doing for years. They just didn't have any way to get money" (Straight 1988: 210).

Whitfield's potent exposure of the NEA's race-based conflation of economic and cultural deficits signaled a structural contradiction that would continue to haunt NEA policy far beyond this example. In the early 1970s, Whitfield maintained that nonwhite, nonmoneied artists were not unwilling, but they were practically unable to assimilate their working practices to fit EuroAmerican and classed guidelines for federal arts support. Rightly worried that the formation of a new program outside of the agency's heralded infrastructure for funding art by way of "discipline," Whitfield saw the discourse of "emerging" as a power move to relegate nonwhite artists to the status of an underclass. Whereas arts grantees

were routinely being supported through the NEA's Disciplinary Divisions ostensibly on a "merit" basis, he asked why artists of color relegated to this separate Division were being held to an economic standard, specifically, to "Expand."

Economically speaking, however, as a newly formed division of federal dance and arts support, NEA Expansion Arts *did* expand recognition and resourcing to artists and cultural communities of color immediately upon its inauguration. Under Whitfield, the division was initially allocated \$1 million to support artists from communities and cultural traditions that had seen nominal support in prior fiscal years. Whitfield aggressively lobbied for allocations increases during the program's early years, which he generally won. NEA allocations to Expansion Arts crept up steadily in 1972 (\$1,137,000), 1973 (\$2,525,000), and jumped significantly in 1974 (\$7,442,000) (Straight 1988: 213). Ex Arts would, across the next three decades, channel federal support to an overwhelming percentage (80 percent or higher) of nonwhite artists and arts organizers. In contrast, grants to minority artists in the NEA's discipline-based divisions continued to crawl forward at a snail's pace, rendering distributional equity at the agency a policy issue terminally deferred.¹⁰³

Hanks's inability or unwillingness to hold divisional directors in discipline-based programs accountable for achieving greater racial, regional, and class parity was a key factor that left Expansion Arts grantees at a disadvantage. Whereas grantseekers in the NEA's disciplinary divisions were permitted to submit multiple applications per year and garner support from multiple funding programs, Expansion Arts grants offered minimal bridges or leverage. Expansion Arts allocations were also generally smaller than allocations from disciplinary divisions, ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000, with the bulk in the lower part of this scale. So, while the annexation of a special program for resourcing culturally, regionally, and economically underserved communities did channel some new federal resources to worthy and wonderful artists of color, Ex Arts grantees lacked the infrastructural capacity to "expand" beyond the confines of the program itself. The formation of an economically and culturally contingent category was one viewed by many to protect white, classed, and discipline-based arts ideals.

The complex circumstances surrounding the structural annexation of NEA Expansion Arts as an institutional response to charges of distributional inequity in and beyond dance align with what cultural critic George Yúdice has described as absorptive political strategies by wealth-holders to embrace "alternativity"

in ways that reconstitute and fortify white policy norms (2003: 245). By partitioning a niche division designed to contain the cultural contributions of nonwhite working artists, Hanks's introduction of Ex Arts both enabled new resource channels and also problematically reproduced racial, regional, and/or class-based contingencies. Then and now, policies that invite inclusion on the basis of Otherness too often reinscribe difference through discourses of deficit. Such power moves problematically serve to police populations whose presence poses a political threat to white cultural and organizational norms. In this way, the institutional mechanism of Expansion Arts imposed structural constraints and dealt down racialized labor impositions to NEA grantees of color that would remain unacknowledged by institutional decision-makers. While Whitfield and his successor Alfred Bennett "A. B." Spellman (who headed Expansion Arts from 1976 to 1985) should be rightly credited for mobilizing federal support for artists of color throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the cultural and economic contingencies that these advocates concurrently withstood also reveal the people and practices that NEA's discipline-based infrastructure would continue to crowd out.

Hanks's macropolicy integration of a distinct divisional unit for cultural organizers of color in 1971 did little to change patterns of panel participation and grant distribution in discipline-based units that continued to disproportionately favor white art and artists. Sam Gilmore's formative (1993) study of stubborn patterns of distributional inequity inside of NEA grantmaking in the latter part of the twentieth century would later convincingly demonstrate how the appendage of Expansion Arts did little to increase representation and recognition for minority artists within other NEA divisions (Table 1).¹⁰⁴ I will address NEA structural exclusions on the basis of race and economic class in this period squarely in chapter 2. What is important here is that Whitfield and Spellman and Ex Arts grantees rightly took note that the agency's discipline-based funding model was failing to serve an increasingly ethnically diverse nation (Gilmore 1993: 147).

By answering charges of cultural inequity with the formation of separate but economically unequal programs, NEA senior leadership stalled the ability of artists of color to compete alongside the NEA's white, class-connected counterparts.¹⁰⁵ Whitfield's point about the racist underpinnings of the agency's discipline-based approach was generally met with institutional silence. Seventeen years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling (1954), which held that

TABLE 1 *Multicultural Impact of NEA Grants/Grant Dollars by Disciplines, FY1987-1990*

GRANT CATEGORY	FY1990	FY1989	FY1988	FY1987
TOTAL GRANTS				
Disciplines	4,021	4,129	4,129	4,209
Partnership	235	257	203	195
Other	150	160	164	195
<i>Total</i>	<i>4,406</i>	<i>4,545</i>	<i>4,658</i>	<i>4,599</i>
MINORITY GRANTS				
Disciplines	922	880	865	794
Partnership	25	24	17	18
Other	17	18	19	24
<i>Total</i>	<i>964</i>	<i>922</i>	<i>901</i>	<i>836</i>
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL	21.9%	20.3%	19.3%	18.2%
TOTAL GRANT DOLLARS (in millions)				
Disciplines	99.5	96.4	96.0	92.8
Partnership	34.5	34.1	33.1	32.5
Other	23.6	17.4	26.7	23.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>157.6</i>	<i>147.9</i>	<i>155.8</i>	<i>149.0</i>
MINORITY GRANT DOLLARS (in millions)				
Disciplines	17.8	15.9	14.3	13.2
Partnership	3.0	2.7	2.2	2.4
Other	1.9	.7	1.4	2.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>22.8</i>	<i>19.1</i>	<i>17.9</i>	<i>17.6</i>
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL	14.4%	16.4%	14.9%	11.8%

Source: Samuel Gilmore (1993).

“separate but equal” policies governing access to public education did not yield a fully democratic society, the NEA’s invention of Expansion Arts proved that long-held customs of racial and economic partitioning were alive and well across institutions that distributed resourcing in the arts. Three years later, Hanks’s creation of the NEA Division of Folk and Heritage Arts as another ethnically and regionally contingent unit reproduced the agency’s policy pattern of cultural inclusion through categorical partition, with similar structural contingencies for rural and Indigenous artists.

At the moment of the NEA’s emergence, rural legislators had been protesting the underresourcing of their districts and joining cultural activists of color in demanding economic justice to repair the impacts of governmental policies on Indigenous communities and folk cultures, in particular. Albeit at a smaller scale, NEA grantmakers were also ensnared in a set of similar but less overtly polemical demands. Charges of philanthropic exclusion of rural, Indigenous, and folk artists, while immediate, went largely unanswered until 1974, when the Endowment’s own institutional turf was threatened. At this time, folklore scholar Archie Green and a growing number of folk constituencies had taken the routine nonresponse of federal arts agents to demands for economic inclusion well into their own hands. Folk and Indigenous activists lobbied 244 representatives and 63 senators and pressed for a congressional vote in favor of a bill to create an American Folklife Center, an entity that would be explicitly authorized to fund rural and Indigenous artists (Straight 1988: 274). Had Green’s bill passed, the proposed center would have functioned as a third endowment, governmentally on par with the NEA and NEH. The potential addition of a separate cultural institution distributing federal funds for American culture raised concerns among Hanks’s administration and catalyzed a countermove within the agency to honor rural, folk, and Indigenous cultural workers and groups. As Straight, again, suggests, the political heft of Green’s Folklife lobby and its potential threat to NEA appropriations led Hanks to promptly convene a NEA Folk Arts advisory group to advise her on making structural changes. This convening yielded a new funding division, entitled the NEA Folk Arts Program, which was dedicated in April 1974. With some additional political muscling, Hanks ultimately convinced Green to rescind the grantmaking power of the Folklife Center from his proposed bill, significantly altering the scope of its jurisdiction. Eventually, Green’s Folklife Center won congressional approval

on significantly restructured grounds. In late 1974, the center was established in the Library of Congress (Straight 1988: 278).

As with Expansion Arts, NEA Folk and Heritage Arts took a quasi-anthropological approach to philanthropic justification, one that celebrated folk and rural cultural traditions as stable entities in need of preservation for future generations. While expecting Indigenous artists to trust a US government agency and request its support was recognizably a difficult sell, the Folk Arts Program did manage to increase awareness of support and sources of support in significant ways to targeted populations. Federal arts funding among rural and Indigenous artists did grow from 1974 to 1980, and yet the structural possibility that folk and rural artists could seek routine or expanding sources of funding remained foreclosed. As with NEA Expansion Arts grantees, there were no philanthropic bridge programs to enable Folk Arts grantees to seek resources within the more economically robust discipline-based divisions. By narrowing the scope of grant-making in Folk Arts to single projects, NEA leadership reinscribed stereotypical understandings of Folk culture as historically immutable and not in need of recurring support. It would be well into the 1980s when cooperation between the Dance and Folk Arts programs increased (due, in part, to stalled NEA fiscal appropriations) that Dance Program insiders would begin to recognize the cultural dynamism of Indigenous and folk dance forms as a national resource.

Despite the structural imbalances described above, folk, rural, and Indigenous artists did gain significant political traction from 1977 onward under the astute leadership of Folk Arts Director Bess Lomax Hawes. A musician, anthropologist, and sister to folklorist Alan Lomax, Hawes enjoyed a long tenure as director of NEA Folk Arts (1977–92) and successfully lobbied for funding increases to the unit, which expanded allocations from \$100,000 to \$4 million across Hawes's tenure. But as was the case with Expansion Arts funds, Folk Arts awards were statistically smaller than grants in the agency's disciplinary divisions. Folk Arts grantees also lacked programmatic bridges to increase support over time. One dance grantee from folk communities described to me the disparity in the size of awards between "folk" and "disciplinary" dance-makers as a clear slight and relegation on the part of the NEA against the cultural rigors of folk forms. He said: "*You could get a \$5,000 grant [from Folk Arts], and what were you going to do with that? Folk Arts was established and then consistently underfunded, so I had*

absolutely nothing to do with Folk Arts for that very reason.” A self-identified folk artist, this interlocutor ultimately sought funding in the Dance Program where grants were larger and the potential to apply to multiple programs opened the possibility of achieving greater fiscal allocations.

Despite clear structural and economic asymmetries between discipline-based and folk funding policies, Hawes charged forward, introducing the NEA National Heritage Fellowship to further repair the nonparticipation of Indigenous, folk, and rural artists within the NEA’s Individual Artist Fellowship category.¹⁰⁶ One particular distinction between Individual Artist Fellowships and Heritage Fellowship grant structures here was also worth noting. Whereas NEA Individual Artist Fellows in disciplinary divisions (like Dance) could and often did apply for and receive multiple subsidies in this category, Heritage Fellowships were structured as “lifetime achievement” awards and designed to champion artists and artisans as national treasures on a one-time-only basis.¹⁰⁷ Such limited funding seeds politically lampooned more robust advancement of rural and Indigenous cultural workers that arts advocates had deemed worthy of greater recognition since the NEA’s inception. Structural constraints like the above rendered Indigenous, folk, and rural artists less capable of sustaining multiyear funds compared to their white, urban, “fine art” counterparts.

As institutional responses to calls for greater distributional equity, the introduction of NEA Expansion Arts and Folk/Heritage Arts Programs under Hanks were not political dead-ends for historically under-endowed dance and arts publics. But the politics of philanthropic assimilation at play in the engineering of these newly hatched funding tools left artists from African, Asian, Latino/a, and Indigenous communities at an obvious structural disadvantage.¹⁰⁸ Through structural contingencies like these, NEA senior leadership erected barriers for counterhegemonic cultural workers that were higher, routes to support that were fewer, and categorical exclusions that continued to Other nonwhite, nonurban, nonmoneyed grantees as a matter of policy. Across the agency’s first fifteen-year period of fund engineering and dissemination, arts advocates of color continually confronted senior leadership about the need to reimagine more equitable structures of federal arts support. But they were not the NEA’s only institutional critics. NEA policy exclusions reached a political tipping point in the late 1970s, when elected officials stepped in and made their own series of demands.

The 1979 Yates Investigation

Of all of the NEA's externally motivated calls for institutional transparency and policy reform during its formative years of arts grantmaking, a most corrosive public critique erupted in 1978 when Congressman Sidney Yates (D-IL) called for a full-scale investigation of the NEA's inner workings in his post as chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies, where the NEA and NEH reside.¹⁰⁹ Yates was a longtime arts supporter who had seen the agency calmly through sticky interactions with members of Congress during Hanks's tenure as chair.¹¹⁰ In this instance, Yates called for an eight-month institutional review to commence upon Hanks's departure and Livingston Biddle's entrance as her successor. In his memoir, Biddle asserts that the Yates investigation was ordered because arts-friendly legislators wanted to mitigate an observable increase in the number of elected officials who had been interrogating the agency's grantmaking policies during NEA appropriations hearings.¹¹¹ Charges of lopsided fund distribution and generally weak accounting inspired this external audit, championed by many as a measure to safeguard the agency from the prospect of future conflict. NEA insiders were now in the proverbial hot seat under legislative scrutiny, newly pressured to adopt the independent commission's suggested reforms or risk losing fiscal ground as the country slid into stagflation in the late 1970s under then-President James Earl "Jimmy" Carter (1977–81).

The Yates task force review began in July 1978 and included comprehensive probing by external investigators into sensitive and routine NEA documentation. Investigators observed NEA daily operations including grant panels and policy overview convenings and conducted extensive interviews with leadership and staff. The final result of these efforts was an eighty-one-page report issued in March 1979 that presented a rather scathing account of institutional culture. The narrative raised significant suspicions about the agency's approach to federal fund governance, in particular. In the report, investigators recommended that the Congressional Subcommittee on the Interior (run by Yates and charged with overseeing the NEA's annual appropriations) issue a moratorium on any further budgetary increases until adjustments could be made to guarantee more equitable fund distribution and operational accountability in arts grantmaking overall. In perhaps their strongest indictment, commissioners claimed that NEA

policymakers were unilaterally “failing to meet [their] legislative mandate to promote a national policy for the arts” (Biddle 1988: 399). The investigation exposed substandard archival documentation of agency procedures and inconsistent governance practices that commissioners viewed as a lack of institutional transparency. As an independent agency embedded within the federal bureaucracy, the Yates task force concluded that the NEA was failing to meet the administrative and evaluative standards by which all independent federal agencies were bound. A series of steps were recommended to improve the NEA’s ability to conduct itself as a state agency answerable to elected officials and citizen taxpayers as its ostensible patrons.

The 1979 independent commission recommendations targeted the NEA’s peer panel review process as an area of grantmaking that was most in need of reform. Their principal charge was that senior leadership and program directors had not prioritized democratic distribution on either cultural or geographic grounds. Investigators flagged insularity among panel advisors and unchecked panel member biases as conditions that compounded the problem. Citing the agency’s enabling legislation (P.L. 89-209), commissioners claimed that the proper role of peer panel review was to insulate the NEA from political interference, not to politicize philanthropy by funneling funds to panel members’ own insider networks. Enlisted citizen panel reviewers were only supposed to advise senior leadership and draw upon their roles as perceived “experts” and bring educated debate into the agency about the relative merit of applications. Practically speaking, the Yates report observed that many panelists routinely steered funds to benefit their personal constituencies. Another key issue recognized by task force members concerned the lopsided geographic composition of panels, which weighted expertise discernibly toward reviewers from the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions of the United States. Auditors also suggested that the lack of panel rotation and high percentage of repeat invitations to former reviewers by program directors was antithetical to the agency’s democratic scope and purview. The Yates Report indicted the NEA for narrow representation by minority ethnic and geographic constituencies on panels and criticized tokenistic representation of these factions on panels as a problem that put historically underresourced groups at a further disadvantage compared with that of their white arts counterparts.

I spoke with one former Dance Program grant panelist, who echoed his experience with panel tokenization during fund deliberation as follows.

One challenge of people who weren't working principally in ballet or modern dance was whether to accept an invitation to show up [as a NEA panelist] and have to represent an entire ecosystem of artistic activity that is no way standardizable. I wasn't not going to not show up, but I resented the tokenism that was going on at that time with regard to non-Euro American artists.

Although NEA regulations earlier that year mandated that NEA program directors retire one-third of panel memberships annually as a measure to quell conflict-of-interest, commissioners observed that nonwhite panelists experienced disproportionate pressure to defend their decisions during the panel deliberation process.¹¹² Here are the independent commission's exact words about ethnocentric aesthetic biases:

The problem in peer review faced by the Endowment is the selection of a panel of experts in a field who can offer quality judgments acceptable to the field because of recognized competence, and yet seek an ever-broadening geographical and social representation of the various art disciplines that have traditionally been compartmentalized, specialized and representative of white western European culture. (Arian 1989: 51)

The 1979 Yates task force findings called out the NEA's failure to administer federal arts support beyond a Eurocentric aesthetic worldview. Task force members flagged significant contradictions between the NEA's democratic mandate and its patterns of grantmaking and submitted them to the public record. Uneven grant distribution was, in the view of investigators, not exclusively attributable to agency's finite fiscal appropriations from Congress. The cultural biases of panel "experts" were also at play in reproducing racial, class, and regional "norms" of endowment, particularly inside of grant panel review. Lest such demands for redistribution continue to threaten NEA appropriations, members of the commission advised senior leadership to take a series of concrete steps to secure more equitable distribution and repair the agency's reputation in the eyes of elected officials. Their recommendations were ultimately adopted by NEA senior leadership, but not without some pushback.

Granted an opportunity by Yates to issue a rebuttal to the report issued by the task force, then-Chairman Biddle responded over two days at a special hearing. He defended the agency's mission, maintaining that investigators had

fundamentally misread the NEA's institutional mandate. As the legislative advisor who had himself coauthored the agency's enabling legislation in 1965, Biddle insisted that policymaking in the arts was not the NEA's institutional purpose in the first place. In contrast, the enabling legislation directed NEA to install "a broadly conceived national policy of support for the arts."¹¹³ He argued that the NEA's stratified governmental structure of grant panel review remained a key part of this broad support, that the federal arts grantmaking infrastructure was a significantly decentralized system designed precisely to ward off the possibility of cronyism. Denying evidence to the contrary, Biddle maintained that the architecture of panels was sound. His plea was ultimately unconvincing to members of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee. After the hearing, the independent commission's recommendations were upheld by legislators, and NEA insiders were required to tighten their administrative and practical oversight of peer panels per commission guidelines. I will examine the assimilatory pressures that these top-down regulations put on federal dance funders into the 1980s and 1990s in greater detail in the following chapter.

Conclusion: Boom for Whom?

We should not worry about the survival of culture, because culture has always survived. What we are really concerned about is *the sort of culture* that will survive. (Emphasis in original)

PAUL DIMAGGIO (1986: 68)

Sociologist of the arts Paul DiMaggio's enduring effort to clarify the historical impact of governmental policy on the nonprofit arts sector has cautioned us to consider how the question of "will art survive?" policy change is entirely beyond the point. The more historically useful question, and a key burden I accept in this book, is to show how particular dance works, workers, and ways of working were *most likely to thrive* within the NEA's ever-shifting arts philanthropic regimes. Following DiMaggio's class-based preoccupation with how funding instruments that have shaped institutional hierarchies and ideals in dance, this chapter has labored to connect the economic ascension of American concert dance to the NEA's early patterns of grantmaking. Heeding DiMaggio's preoccupation with the possibility of institutional reform, I have lingered on structural contingencies that forced unwanted labor on racially,

regionally, and/or economically marginalized communities in order to resist historical accounts of the agency's early decades that depict the so-called boom as a period of widespread opportunity in dance. Lest we falsely understand the period from 1965 and 1980 as one of unbridled dance prosperity, my alternative account of funder-imposed *leveraging*, *touring*, and *incorporating* and policy-level pushback against these funder-imposed verbs introduces context revealing how the "boom" was a "boom" for US concert dance and one that created significant political aftershocks for artists at the cultural, geographical, and socioeconomic margins in the United States.

By making it easier for certain people to have access over others, by providing for the accumulation of one kind of information and not another, or by following procedures that let some problems rise to the top of the government's agenda before others—in all these ways, certain organizational arrangements facilitate certain kinds of policy and other organizational arrangements facilitate other kinds of policy. (Hilsman 1967: 17)

For whom was the concert dance "boom" a welcome expansion? As the above quote from Roger Hilsman suggests, early federal policies create hierarchies of practice.¹¹⁴ In the context of early NEA grant engineering and interpretation, federal funds rewarded economic leveraging (Treasury Funds, Challenge, and Advancement Grants), Coordinated Dance touring, and nonprofit incorporating to dance organizers who could successfully assimilate their organizational arrangements on aesthetic and managerial grounds. As NEA annual budgetary appropriations from Congress grew, these instruments of federal dance support disciplined the organizational actions and interactions of dance grantseekers from diverse regions and cultural backgrounds. While institutional incentives to perform dance or arts work in specific ways would change in the NEA Dance Program over time, the agency's dominant patterns of dance grantmaking continued to privilege concert dance-makers as an endowed cultural and managerial class far beyond this fifteen-year period.

A crucial distinction that I hope to have clarified above is this: NEA policies not only promoted ballet and modern dance as exceptional American art forms but also actively recruited organizers who could faithfully reproduce specific kinds of organizational and administrative norms. The NEA's endowment of liberal aesthetic and managerial curricula was not an original invention; these

philanthropic routes had been previously paved by private patrons whose surplus wealth built physical infrastructures for regional concert distribution in the years just prior to the NEA's inauguration. Although the NEA did adopt one relatively open-ended mechanism to enable wider artist access (the Individual Artist Fellowships), uneven distribution patterns continued across dance and other divisions and deferred the achievement of parity of opportunity for artists at the regional, cultural and economic margins. Ultimately it would take more than legislative attention (the 1979 Yates audit) to prove that the dominant model of concert dance grantmaking was an uneasy fit for many members of the US dance field. As the NEA matured, so did a rising cohort of increasingly professionalized cultural and managerial intermediaries; endowed concert dance-makers saw regular and often robust federal dance support during the 1980s and early 1990s through multiple programs. The next chapter reroutes reader attention away from the assimilatory labor of dance grantees and toward the workplace enactments of dance grantmakers themselves. Approaching the "culture wars" period from within the Dance Program proper, I detail less visible but no less political debates between those who had been estranged by the dominant system and those who had garnered the lion's share of NEA dance support.

two

1981-1996



FIGURE 7 President Ronald Reagan with actor Charlton Heston, chair of the Presidential Task Force on the Arts and Humanities, June 5, 1981. Photo: National Archives.

BUREAUCRATIC ANGLING, INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVISM *Dance's (C)overt "Culture Wars"*

PRELUDE TO CHAPTER TWO *Lest we grow too comfortable seeing funding policies myopically from the perspective of grantseeking artists, chapter 2 focuses on the philanthropic workarounds of NEA dance grantmakers, themselves. I look specifically at a series of dance-focused publications, programs, and convenings and highlight practical efforts through which staff and citizen advisors in the Dance Program built significant policy momentum for dance amidst agency-wide budgetary shortfalls. While the period from 1981 to 1996 saw the agency enmeshed in a series of political controversies that won the bulk of NEA media attention, a series of less-spectacular tussles was simmering in dance between historically over-endowed and underendowed dance groups. Rather than dismiss the institutional performances of NEA Dance Program insiders as politically inert or mundane gestures, I labor instead to show how the bureaucratic angling of staff and advisors in dance constituted a quiet form of administrative activism. By strategically leveraging resources with nondance NEA divisions, touring to under-the-radar dance communities, and incorporating cultural difference through institutional assembly, fund decision-makers in dance both protected and also subverted the concert dance status quo.*

IN CHAPTER TWO, I am invested in animating the burdens of increased bureaucratic oversight and administrative accounting on NEA decision-makers in dance. Temporally, I isolate the period from 1981 to 1996 characterized by many critics as the “culture wars” due, in part, to the agency’s enmeshment in legislative conflict and heightened public scrutiny over a series of controversial arts grants. Rather than focus additional attention on highly mediated struggles that have garnered the lion’s share of the historical spotlight, I venture inside of the Dance Program to examine how staff and citizen advisors circumnavigated an escalating number of grant applications and answered competing demands for support from dance constituencies.

Dominant historical accounts of the NEA’s more visible and overt “culture wars” tend to begin from budgetary flatlines initiated under the administration of President Ronald Reagan (1981–88). Reagan’s tenure as Commander-in-Chief was followed by a string of public controversies over grants made (however indirectly) to artists whose work engaged counterhegemonic religious and sexual themes. The agency withstood ongoing attacks against its institutional credibility by conservative legislators, religious lobbyists, and polarized artists who viewed the NEA’s regulatory imposition of “decency clauses” as a congressionally directed form of censorship in violation of their First Amendment Rights.¹ Repeated attempts by disgruntled members of the US House and Senate to defund the NEA outright dominated public attention and forced staff into a state of policy triage. The crisis was brought to a head in late December 1995, when the 104th Congress entertained another crucial vote to shut the agency down but ultimately voted to save it, slashing its budget by 39 percent. Budgetary cuts then led to massive destaffing and sent senior leadership into an agency-wide reorganization that would dramatically alter the shape and direction of federal domestic arts support (discussed in the next chapter). As a wave of neoliberal streamlining swept across all areas of federal oversight, NEA staff and advisors withstood pressures to reengineer grant programs and evaluative protocols to appeal more directly to the President and members of Congress (Shockley and McNeely 2009). Squeezed from all sides, the agency’s institutional priorities steadily shifted away from arts constituencies and toward the elected officials who controlled its budget and livelihood.

Much historical ink has been spilled describing the political entanglements at play in the agency’s censorship battles. These particular tussles, while important,

do not square with quieter cultural battles that were concurrently taking place inside of the Dance Program between historically marginalized and historically overresourced dance groups. To reorient historical attention, this chapter moves under the media smoke of the NEA's most spectacular governmental performances to focus, instead, on quieter but no less critical countermaneuvers that flew largely under the radar in dance.² I interpret the period from 1981 to 1996 as one rife with "covert" controversies involving NEA staff and citizen advisors over who received funding and how.

Chapter 1 examined how early NEA philanthropic guidelines rewarded grantees for performing specific dance aesthetic and managerial acts, while this chapter focuses on the underexamined domain of grantors' tactical administrative enactments. Practically speaking, I spotlight how Dance Program decision-makers worked within the existing system to put philanthropic tools to all kinds of political use. In the face of stalled fiscal appropriations from Congress, savvy staffers managed to mount brand-new dance-focused research publications, develop new grant initiatives, and issue governmental changes to evaluative criteria that sometimes fortified but also destabilized the agency's enduring promotion of American concert dance. While some of these developments were short-lived, the bureaucratic angling of Dance Program insiders evidences historical struggles for resource parity and allocation that have gone largely unnoticed in dominant accounts of this period. At a historical moment when cacophonous arguments turned nationwide attention to debates on the floors of the US House and Senate, less visible struggles inside the agency reinforced the NEA's political function as a site of convening power, a harbor for democratic deliberation significantly derailed by the 1995 budgetary cuts.

Chapter 2 opens with an account of macropolitical pressures and increased regulations NEA grantmakers confronted under the presidential administration of Ronald Reagan (1981–89). I focus specifically on the governmental effects of Reagan's 1981 Presidential Task Force and heightened internal accountability measures implemented by Reagan's appointment of Frank Hodsoll to the position of NEA chair. As the NEA insider charged with streamlining the agency's inner workings, Hodsoll's bureaucratic maneuvering protected the agency from total annihilation while also reshaping its workplace culture and employee conduct in major ways. From here, I move next into the Dance Program to examine how certain staff and advisors who were dedicated to sus-

taining concert dance hierarchies labored to protect them while others moved to derail their relentless logics. Whereas chapter I defined *leveraging*, *touring*, and *incorporating* as funder-imposed norms of dance organization enacted by aspiring dance grantees, chapter 2 redefines these same three verbs as repertoires of bureaucratic activism performed by dance grantmakers themselves.³ I first look at leveraging efforts that yielded new dance-focused publications and programs by counterbalancing interagency resources from the Dance Program and allied programs in Design, Folk/Heritage Arts, Media, and Expansion Arts. I then look to a series of structural reforms to the coveted Dance Touring Program as a democratization effort that involved regional touring by grantmakers through the NEA Site Visit program to previously underendowed dance communities. I close by highlighting three scales of critical institutional assembly—grant panels, task forces, and independent commissions—where institutional insiders took to incorporating cultural, racial, class, and regional difference with an eye for policy-level reform. Whereas dominant accounts of the NEA at the end of the twentieth century often play up the agency’s battles with disgruntled artists, lobbyists, and members of Congress, the covert labor of dance funders begs us to see how mundane acts of paper-pushing can safeguard dance hierarchies and also force institutional change.

Presidential Maneuvering: Blueprints for Accountability

The 1980 election of President Ronald Reagan conditioned major and minor shifts in domestic arts governance and oversight. A Commander-in-Chief who inherited multiple economic recessions and partisan politicking in Congress, Reagan’s governmental strategies destabilized federal arts resourcing through budgetary contractions, tightened accountability measures, and redirected control over fiscal spending. Reagan’s introduction of the 1981 Presidential Task Force on the Arts and Humanities and his appointment of Washington insider Frank Hodsoll as NEA chair were twin maneuvers that subjected federal arts grantmaking to stricter external oversight. Across Reagan’s two terms, external pressures from his executive branch conditioned much of the workplace leveraging, touring, and incorporating I will spend the rest of this chapter defending.

Prior to Reagan’s election, NEA senior leadership had been extremely successful in lobbying Congress for appropriations increases. Chair Nancy Hanks

impressively oversaw the agency's budget jump from \$2.5 million to almost \$75 million over an eight-year period (1969–77).⁴ By the end of the 1970s, however, dips in the US economy under then-President Carter conditioned a crisis of cooperation between the NEA and the Hill. NEA support flatlined under Carter, paving the way for Reagan to further erode the agency's economic and authorial impact through a series of regulatory swipes.

Within the first two weeks of Reagan's first term as president, his Office of Management and Budget (OMB) took immediate measures to quell excess spending across the executive branch. The measures involved deep cuts to independent agencies, in particular. Reagan's Budget Director David Stockman attempted but ultimately failed to advance a 50 percent cut to the budget of both the Arts and Humanities Endowments. This package of cuts was vocally protested by lobbyists and members of the Cabinet but did yield a 10 percent slash that shrank the NEA's budget from \$158,795,000 to \$143,456,000 for FY 1982. While total agency defunding was never accomplished under Reagan, threats of congressional deauthorization began to percolate as his administration tightened spending and variably disempowered those inside the agency. Reagan's 1981 Presidential Task Force and subsequent formation of a Presidential Committee on the Arts and Humanities were instruments of destabilization that redistributed authority over federal arts recognition beyond the NEA. Task force recommendations maintained the symbolic appearance of sustained arts support while quietly shifting external oversight to nonfederal arts investors in notable ways.

Reagan's regulatory advance toward NEA reform began on May 6, 1981, when his White House Press Secretary issued an Executive Order naming a special task force, a governmental committee of private citizens charged with reengineering cost-heavy areas of federal spending in the arts. The letter began:

I am naming this Task Force because of my deep concern for the arts and humanities in America. Our cultural institutions are an essential national resource; they must be kept strong. While I believe firmly that the federal government *must* reduce its spending, I am nevertheless sympathetic to the very real needs of our cultural organizations and hope the Task Force will deliver to my desk by Labor Day a plan to make better use of existing federal resources and to increase the support for the arts and humanities by the private sector.⁵ (Emphasis in the original.)

Looking back at the widespread government rollbacks that characterized Reagan's reign as Commander-in-Chief, we can understand the imposition of this external assembly as a measure to curtail the *public* component of the public-private partnership model that undergirded governmental arts philanthropy. As George Yúdice (1999) has convincingly argued, Reagan's approach to NEA privatization was not a zero-sum game aimed at pulling the plug on government funding outright. On the contrary, intermediary policy mechanisms like task force assemblies enabled his administration to decenter NEA authority indirectly through citizen-led intervention. By constituting a separate governmental body and tasking them with increasing support for the arts and humanities in the private sector, Reagan's administration steadily redirected control to nonfederal agents. To better understand how citizen recommendations advanced Reagan's libertarian ideologies of lean government and private sector stimulus, it helps to consider who took the NEA "to task," and how.

The 1981 Presidential Task Force on the Arts and Humanities was chaired by actor and NRA advocate Charleton Heston (pictured with Reagan in fig. 7), who was joined by former NEA Chairs Roger Stevens and Nancy Hanks and a cluster of high-level art personalities, philanthropists, former staffers, and citizen arts experts.⁶ Beginning in June of this same year, the thirty-five-member group was given 117 days to investigate specific areas of NEA oversight. Task force members convened regularly in Washington, conducted a series of agency site visits, and prepared a final report detailing findings and making recommendations for the president to consider implementing through his executive powers.⁷ During their first two months, the task force requested copious amounts of data from the NEA to better account for funding policies, patterns, and procedures across each division. The granularity these data requests was unprecedented and sent NEA staff immediately into action-mode.

The NEA's then-Program Coordination Director Ana Steele issued an internal memo outlining the requested material. The tone of Steele's memo, retrieved from a personal archive of one of my project informants, flagged the urgency of the request:

We [senior deputies and leadership] are keenly aware of the existing pressures on all of you! And stand ready to help in *any* way. Your council book program reviews; your long-range plans; your OMB and Congressional

material, your testimony, all should be helpful and useable . . . don't be constrained. We can work together on length and style. If you want to do four pages in one section and a half-page in another, fine. We need to hear your voices clearly—and that comes first. The first two deadlines, sad but true, are not flexible. We really do need to prepare these materials as quickly as possible, and the May 21 and May 27 [due] dates are serious . . . We'll work with you on this. But we basically want to provide clear information on the *what* and *why* of what we do now.⁸

Steele's tone underscored the heightened level of bureaucratic regulation federal agents weathered under Reagan and subsequent administrations. Motivated to hustle by way of the task force's top-down requests, staff gathered evidence to defend the *what* and *why* of grant administration and governance. Coordinators like Steele handled these top-down pressures with care, counseling directors who had been tasked with documenting programmatic history—often retroactively—and articulating funding philosophies, operational procedures, problem areas, and notable achievements to date. Remembering Reagan's vested interest in increasing private support for the arts, it is significant that the task force also requested each program's past history of cooperation with private arts donors. Through Reagan's Presidential Task Force audit, staff grew increasingly attuned toward improving the agency's bureaucratic performance as a federal entity. Reagan's NEA appointee Frank Hodsoll would reinforce such improvements and motivate many staffers to behave less like they worked for a private arts foundation and more like employees answerable to the US federal government.

Responding to Steele's memo, those working in the Dance Program panicked. Stories shared with me depicted a flurry of rather unorthodox reactions in the face of task force demands. One particular staffer, for example, balked when asked to gather data showing the Dance Program's most costly or inefficient areas of grantmaking, performing an interesting institutional maneuver to avert accountability. She would hide. Such active noncompliance was described to me by one insider as follows:⁹

[Anonymous Dance Staff Member A] *often hid out with information we needed. We finally discovered that she wasn't leaving the building, but simply hiding out in the bottom of the supply closet.* [Anonymous Dance Staff Mem-

ber B] *was very good at telling us all to go away and gently getting [A] to come out, give the papers needed to us, and relax. [A] would come out smiling as though nothing had ever happened. I remember one day, she escaped under her desk. It took us about a half hour to find her and another half hour for [B] to urge her to emerge.*

This unconventional covering of NEA data, described above, temporarily assuaged one employee's statistical panic. But no amount of hiding would quell task force pressures on NEA employees to clean up the agency's questionable accounting practices. Under the spotlight of this particular audit, collected Dance Program data ultimately revealed an uncomfortable truth. The coveted Dance Touring Program (DTP) had been swallowing over half of the Dance Program's total annual budget and was costing more money and labor hours than any other program at the agency. The DTP was immediately flagged as a target for regulatory intervention and downsizing, discussed in greater detail below.¹⁰

Remembering Reagan's request for a new plan to drive the operations of both endowments, the task force's final report materialized a list of solutions in the summer of 1981. The president ultimately approved these recommendations, most of which aligned NEA management more squarely within presidential oversight.¹¹ To trim the agency's growing budget and labor demands, task force members recommended increasing the NEA's matching mandate from a 1-to-1 to a 3-to-1 match across all of its programs, basing the reasoning for this change on the success of NEA Challenge Grants. To further incentivize private cost share, task force members championed lobbying the US Treasury to create tax incentives for foundations, corporations, and individuals who supported federally funded art. To improve the agency's economic accountability, the task force also recommended that staff more actively pursue statistically reliable research, reporting, and data collection. A better-organized data infrastructure, task force members argued, would attract more private sector buy-in and enable NEA staff to respond more swiftly and confidently to requests by elected officials.¹² One last recommendation to further decentralize NEA control was the call for the institutional annexation of an external advisory board—the Presidential Committee on the Arts and Humanities—to be housed apart from the NEA and explicitly charged with growing private sector arts investment. This new committee's jurisdiction would include questions of tax revenue and reform,

stewarding relations with high-earning individuals and philanthropic foundations, and courting public-private partnerships with national corporations. Whereas the task force audit had taken some of the wind out of the NEA's sails, the formation of the President's Committee on the Arts dealt an even bigger blow that turned a short-term think tank into a permanent arts advisory committee in direct service of the president. With the exception of the abovementioned 3-to-1 universal matching requirement, senior leadership folded the bulk of task force recommendations into practice to keep the peace.

On June 15, 1982, Reagan issued Executive Order 12367, which transformed the temporary task force into a permanent Presidential Committee on the Arts and Humanities. Answering directly to Reagan, the newfangled committee made significant advancements throughout the next decade to further erode NEA control and bolster public-private arts partnership.¹³ The committee analyzed the giving patterns of private foundations, corporations, and individual citizens and lobbied for increased tax incentives for private charitable giving at the end of each tax year. One symbolic but influential change that the committee advanced glorified the role of private arts patrons even further. In 1984, the committee inaugurated the National Medal of Arts.¹⁴ An award that was issued directly by the committee (not the Arts Endowment), the National Medal honored three specific groups: artists, arts intermediaries, and private arts patrons for their contributions to the national cultural landscape. During and long after Reagan's two-term presidency, many private sector arts investors would be symbolically rewarded for absorbing financial responsibility for arts interventions, some of which were formerly funded by the federal government.

To help oversee these external regulations, Reagan appointed the first nonarts insider to the position of NEA chair. An appointee decidedly less conversant in matters of artistic creation, production, or organization than his predecessors, Frank Hodsoll was a federal servant and infallible diplomat. Crucially, he was also a master of bureaucratic leveraging.

A Master of Bureaucratic Counterbalance: Frank Hodsoll

A lawyer, career foreign service officer, and special assistant to Jim Baker (1975) with skills in administrative belt-tightening, Frank Hodsoll's entrance into the Arts Endowment caused some panic among agency insiders. Unlike former



FIGURE 8 National Endowment for the Arts Chair Frank Hodsoll (*right*) showing the agency's Oscar to President Ronald Reagan, May 1, 1985. Photo: National Endowment for the Arts.

Chairs Roger Stevens and Nancy Hanks, each of whom held strong connections to New York arts patrons and institutions, Hodsoll's lack of experience in the arts raised some eyebrows. But as a leader, other staff valued Hodsoll's embrace of arts learning and his efforts to build the NEA's symbolic profile as an agency invested in more market-motivated American art and culture (see the NEA's connection to the Oscars; fig. 8).¹⁵ Staff working under his watch with whom I spoke generally credited Hodsoll for knowing much about government operations and for also admitting all that he didn't know about the arts.¹⁶ His ability to assuage constituencies on opposing sides of an argument while modeling Reagan-era economic conservatism was a core policy strategy that proved central to fulfilling his leadership charge. In the words of Reagan-era historian Joseph Wesley Zeigler (1994: 52): "Frank Hodsoll was a master of balancing."

Those who worked in the Dance Program under Hodsoll explained to me how his workplace behavior set a new standard for how to deal with heightened legislative and citizen demands. While Hodsoll's status as lawyer intimidated certain staff, one Dance Program insider, herself attending law school at the time, suggested to me that his workplace performances actually inspired staff and grantees to transform their modes of dress and overall comportment.

Hodsoll was going to shut it [the NEA] down. He was a lawyer. I was in my first year of law school. Watching artists come in not able to translate [bureaucratic requests], the art world had to start justifying why the government

should fund them. Instead of [staff] coming in with hippy frumpy outfits, we had to become bilingual. Um, it took a while.

NEA workplace performances were incrementally professionalized under Hodsoll's watch. Staffers' abilities to "be bilingual" and behave like proper bureaucrats would prove central when the agency's reputation was challenged and its operations taken to task. Ultimately, however, total assimilation to federal accountability mandates at the NEA would require more than a costume-change. Not all of Hodsoll's requests for improved operational efficiency were received without pushback.

Remembering charges of inconsistent fund governance that the 1979 Yates Commission had identified years earlier, one of Hodsoll's first moves upon entering the NEA was to improve data collection across all areas of agency oversight. His deputies collected information that sought to clarify daily operations, eliminate any traces of administrative weakness, and pinpoint areas of excess spending. While some staff expressed significant frustration at the additional labor involved in answering Hodsoll's data drive, most of my informants agreed that such heightened accountability measures were ultimately instrumental in saving the agency from stronger cuts or reputational damage under Reagan's two terms.

Hodsoll's writing in the 1982 *NEA Annual Report* sang the agency's praises but also foreshadowed that fiscal streamlining measures were afoot. Using data to tell his story, Hodsoll persuaded readers to understand the probability of economic cuts at the NEA as a necessary response to demographic shifts and technological advancements across the United States.

The "arts boom" of the 60s and 70s brought joy to millions. Our challenge in the 1980s is to maintain momentum for the best. But it will be more difficult. Most economists agree the 80s will be a period of slower growth. We also face changes in demographics and a dizzying pace of technological change. Our population is aging; the population over 65 will increase from 26.2 million today to 31.8 million in 2000. The country's population center—for the first time in history—has moved west of the Mississippi. Our population is becoming better educated. Non-family and single parent households increased at a much greater rate than family households

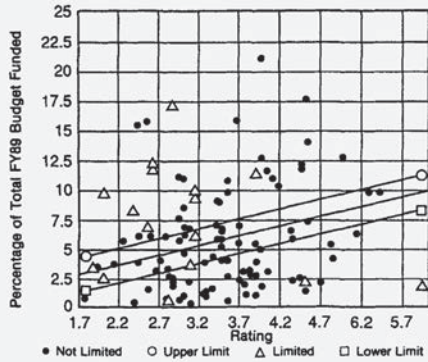
in the ten-year period from 1970 to 1980. The computer and telecommunications revolution is upon us. There will likely be consolidation, and the management of arts institutions will have to learn to deal in new ways with the new realities. We have already detected a trend in this direction and a decline in the willingness to take risk. (*Annual Report* FY 1982: 5)

Mindful of keeping arts constituencies who had come to depend on NEA subsidies calm, Hodsoll's rhetorical strategies conflated the agency's long-standing promotion of artistic "Excellence" with federal operational downsizing as one and the same project. Choosing the softer term "consolidation," Hodsoll's discursive strategy braided together "merit-based" rationales for federal arts subsidy and economic scarcity measures to avoid alienating arts allies across the agency's disciplinary divisions. Within this atmosphere of austerity, Hodsoll was generally successful in maintaining healthy rapport with staff, with one notable exception. Before I turn toward the bureaucratic angling of Dance Program insiders, I want to briefly highlight what J. Mark Davidson Schuster (1991) and several of my informants have called the "formula funding debacle," a managerial attempt at policy reform that failed but also exposed problematic fund deviations within the NEA's disciplinary divisions, including Dance.

The Failure Case of Formula Funding

In FY 1988, almost a decade after the Yates audit, Hodsoll's team undertook a top-down review of practical and economic inconsistencies within the NEA's panel review process. They did this, in part, to assure skeptical legislators that earlier concerns about panel deliberation had been quelled in policy and practice. The team immediately spotted some troubling inconsistencies in grant allocations and flagged these anomalies as an aspect of NEA governance in need of improvement. Utilizing the agency's brand-new computer system, Hodsoll's team aggregated grant allocations and saw unusually high and unusually low fiscal awards among grantees in the Dance Program in particular. These deviations occurred across all program areas. Hodsoll's computerized scattergrams (fig. 9) plotted grantees' merit ratings, overall panel ratings, annual budgets, and the amount of the recommended awards. The visibly scattered results revealed very little correlation between a grantee's ostensible "merit" (the quality of their

Figure 1. Relation Between Overall Merit Rating and Percentage of Budget Allocated for Dance Company Grants, FY1989



Mean percentage of budget granted = 5.80 Below band: 43% (40)
 Tolerance band = $\pm 1.45\%$ Above band: 30% (28)
 Within tolerance of band: 27% (25)
 Number of grants limited by maximum grant amount or minimum grant amount: 16
 Source: Office of the Deputy Chairman for Management, National Endowment for the Arts, "Special Analysis of Recommended Applications," undated.

FIGURE 9 Hodsoll's scattergrams. Early computational graphics tracking deviations in NEA Dance Company Grants, FY 1989. Photo: Mark Schuster, J. Davidson, 1991, courtesy of Wiley & Sons Books.

proposal), the level of subsidy recommended, and their overall budget. Such allocations suggested to senior leadership that the agency's underlying principle of funding artistic "Excellence" had been impossible to define with any kind of economic consensus.

For Hodsoll, these divergent grant amounts signaled a lack of a median organizing principle to account for the relationship between a grantee's merit and the recommended amount of their federal arts award. Worried that wide discrepancies would flag unwanted legislative attention, he insisted that panel advisors and staff work harder to achieve similar quality ratings and avoid making erratic recommendations to the NCA and chair. Hodsoll also proposed a solution: he suggested that all disciplinary divisions install an economic "formula" to tighten the appearance of fiscal consistency.¹⁷ To put to rest forever critiques of insider back scratching or repetitive rent seeking among certain applicants, Hodsoll's formula connected the amount of a recommended award proportionally to the size of that applicants' annual operating budget (Schuster 1991: 46). Such a top-down effort to use economic indicators to drive grant decision-making

was unprecedented and stripped control significantly out of the hands of panel reviewers and divisional staff. When asked to implement “formula funding” in practice, insiders protested, throwing Hodson’s policy and its underlying economic principles into crisis.

Hodson’s experiment with formula-based funding allocations first took hold in the Dance Program, where employees immediately bucked against what they saw as a problematic conflation of large organizational budgets with high artistic quality. Panel reviewers refuted this correlation on the grounds that it biased moneyed and more mainstream arts institutions. Many felt anxious that grantees who already owned huge economic advantages would soak up all of the available monies by way of this new calculation. Others felt that Hodson’s formula dismissed the expertise of panel members and viewed the regulation as a direct affront to the rigors of the peer review process. Advocates for groups that were operating at a smaller scale maintained that strictly economic rationales for arts funding also thwarted the NEA’s obligation to achieve fair geographic and cultural distribution of resources. Artists with lower incomes, they maintained, stood disproportionately to lose from a formula that falsely equated artistic excellence with economic wealth. One former Dance staffer explained her anxiety when forced to rank grantees on the basis of budget this way:

When you combine New York City Ballet’s high ranking and its budget, which was close to \$50 million, they would’ve taken the lion’s share of the funding, and organizations at the bottom end wouldn’t have gotten any money. It [available funds] would have been gone very quickly.

True to diplomatic form, Hodson handled internal protests with strong diplomatic acumen. First, he listened. Then he demanded concrete evidence of the perceived negative trade-offs. This process produced an avalanche of new information and was characterized by one Dance Specialist as follows:

We had to cut down several trees reassessing and presenting to Hodson data that showed him how deleterious it would have been had he instituted this formula, not just for dance but for other disciplines.

The process of collecting data to support their arguments against formula funding led many Dance Program staff to appreciate the power of quantitative evidence as an instrument to keep the dance field from further deforestation.

Hodsoll's experiment with formula-based funding catalyzed managerial countermaneuvers that taught staff how to manage the appearance of philanthropic consistency. And although "formula funding" was never fully implemented, these external pressures shook the panel process and cast a veil of caution over peer reviewers. The surveillance logics embedded in Hodsoll's scattergrams worked their way into the collective psyche of Dance grantmakers. Though his project failed, the "formula funding debacle" reminded those on the institutional inside of the chair's power to control the direction of federal arts support (Schuster 1991: 52).

At the end of the day, NEA staff and citizen advisors salvaged the prior model of peer panel governance but not without a fight. When multiple NEA divisions pushed back, Hodsoll's formula funding policy underwent review by a congressional subcommittee, where it was structurally dismantled. Through the efforts of none other than Representative Sydney Yates, who heard insider complaints about the dangers of using economic formulas as guideposts, an amendment was written into the NEA's 1989 budget bill. The amendment called for more exhaustive budgetary information from grant applicants as a measure to bolster internal record-keeping. At the same time, it also stipulated that panelists were not to directly take an applicant's economic expenditures into account as a matter of policy (Schuster 1991: 51). Striking a legislative balance that ultimately kept data coming in, this legislative enactment officially dissolved the forcible correlation of an organization's overall budget size with the amount of their NEA grant.

I have rehearsed the "formula funding debacle" here at length because it offers one quiet instance where staffers leveraged the power that they held to resist top-down changes and uphold the policy status quo (Zeigler 1994: 53). While this struggle heightened staff anxiety, the failed implementation of this top-down policy also taught insiders the importance of administrative accounting as a political tool that could be "tooled" in alternative directions. Here and into the future, NEA data-stories abounded, as did critical acts of administrative activism. In this instance, mundane staff maneuvers managed to turn economic mandates into political stalemates at the level of congressional subcommittee.

Tools, Elaine Scarry (1985) reminds us, gain power through their patterns of use. Be it Hodsoll's scattergrams, granular grantee budgets, tallied complaints over fund mainstreaming, or congressional deliberation and decision, these institutional tools exposed an inconvenient truth: that deviation in federal arts

grantmaking had, by the 1980s, become a standard operating procedure at the Arts Endowment. Despite staff efforts to fall in line with Hodsoll's tightened administrative orders, unexplainable patterns would continue to surface once Reagan left office. Top-down mandates from senior leadership continued. Staff and grantees were required to produce larger and larger paper trails to defend their decisions. Throughout this period of heightened economic accounting, Dance Program employees and advisors exercised caution and adapted to constantly shifting constraints. The remainder of this chapter will move more closely alongside Dance Program insiders to highlight tactical acts of bureaucratic leveraging, touring, and incorporating that managed to protect concert dance hierarchies and also, importantly, to upend them.

Leveraging Interdepartmental Connections: Publications and Programs

Policy advancements in the Dance Program were steered by three different directors during this tumultuous period. The staffer who crossed over from the Carter administration years to the early years of the Reagan administration was Rhoda Grauer (1978–82), who prior to her time at the Arts Endowment, served as the executive director for a foundation that managed the Spoleto Festival in Italy and gained a reputation as the managerial hero who unlocked the logics of the NEA's Challenge Grant Program during its first year by seizing a major grant for choreographer Twyla Tharp. Grauer was preceded by Dance Director Sue Weil (1976–78), who came to the NEA from the Walker Art Museum in Minneapolis where she ran a performing arts program largely focused on American concert dance's late modernists. Grauer was then succeeded by Nigel Redden (1982–86), who came to the NEA from Weil's post at the Walker Arts and who went on to run the American Spoleto Festival in South Carolina. The last nine years at the NEA in dance that I address in this chapter were overseen by long-standing Washingtonian Sali Ann Kriegsman (1986–95), a tap dance aficionado and eloquent wordsmith whose fidelity to vernacular dance reflected her prior experience curating live performance events in a basement venue at the Smithsonian Institution. In addition to these directors, former staff and citizen advisors were very generous in their retellings of the bureaucratic mobilization that is my primary focus here.

Between 1980 and 1990, the NEA's budget shrank \$2 million and staff weathered increased pressures to do more with less. Dance funding prospects remained less dire in comparison to confrontations that were shaking down in other programs. In the words of one insider:

I think some of the Dance Program escaped [legislative scrutiny] . . . because we found ways to protect people. We really did. And don't forget: the thing about dance that is both its albatross and the thing that saves it is that it doesn't last. Visual art lasts. Writing lasts. People can go see what the controversy is for themselves—what the Mapplethorpe is all about—instead of criticizing it without even seeing it . . . but most dance disappears. If there's a controversy about it, it is not going to be visible for very long.

At the moment that Christian conservatives and leftist artists were tussling over the validity of grants made and/or rescinded in visual and performance art, dance was an area of grantmaking that was generally absolved from negative public oversight.¹⁸ Still, the absence of visible controversies at the NEA in dance should not be mistaken for an absence of conflict altogether. Often without fanfare, the intentional enactments of Dance Program insiders functioned as a form of what Keller Easterling (2014) has aptly termed camouflaged activism, repertoires of seemingly trivial action that forcefully enact policy preservation or reform.

One particular institutional practice that enabled Dance Program insiders to reroute support to a range of constituencies across this fifteen-year period was leveraging, defined here as the apportioning of funds and labor through counterbalanced partnerships between Dance and other NEA divisions. Mobilizing amidst fiscal scarcity, Dance Program insiders shared resources with other programs and produced dance-focused publications and new programs that drew public attention to a wide range of issues in the US dance field. Approaching like-minded administrators outside of dance who were willing to collaborate on labor and/or costs, the initiatives outlined below redistributed resources in ways that have been overshadowed by the agency's more publicly spectacular fights. I will address tactically leveraged NEA dance publications and programs below, in turn.

Leveraging Data: Emergent Dance Publications

When the NEA first inaugurated its Research Division in 1975 under the directorship of Hal Horowitz, the majority of commissioned studies were restricted to program-specific evaluations and inductive interpretations of existing government datasets.¹⁹ Hemmed in by the mandate to mine data that had already been collected elsewhere, very few original studies came out of the NEA Research Division well into the 1980s. Once Reagan entered office, NEA senior leadership were increasingly called upon to account for the value and impact of grants and operations, and a series of theory-driven studies emerged out of the Research Division. These publications, in the aggregate, sought to nuance understanding of topics such as the composition of US arts audiences, patterns of US arts consumption, and US arts workforce demographics. NEA original reports were largely survey driven. Remembering Hodsoll's preoccupation with achieving consistency across all areas of NEA oversight, Dance staff took advantage of discretionary funds to produce dance-focused research that introduced field issues into the broader cultural policy landscape.²⁰ Crucially, they did this through interagency collaboration with staff who had successfully mounted similar studies within their respective programs.

Three new dance-focused research studies emerged during this period: *Space for Dance* (1984), *Images of American Dance* (1991), and *Dancemakers* (1993). Each of these texts was coproduced with experts from Dance, Architecture, Media, Folk/Heritage Arts, and Expansion Arts and support from the Research Division. Through a discursive analysis of each study, I highlight how Dance Program insiders leveled a case for the challenges and affordances of making, sustaining, and preserving dance in US culture. Pooling economic and infrastructural tools with staff in other NEA divisions, Dance insiders generated new knowledge about dance hierarchies and built political traction for under-the-radar dance art and artists.

Space for Dance (1984)

In 1981, Dance Director Grauer approached then-Director of the Design Program Michael J. Pittas to discuss his production of the well-received study *Design for the Arts*. This inaugural study sought to bolster the physical infrastructure for

visual art through data, case studies, and planning guidelines. Grauer wanted to create a dance-specific iteration to highlight issues of space access that were unique and specific to the concert dance field. Pittas consented to the collaboration, and he and Grauer enlisted an architect and theatre design consultant to lead what became *Space for Dance: An Architectural Design Guide* (1984, hereafter *Space for Dance*). A study that called for increased investment in the creation, renovation, and maintenance of dance-friendly environments nationwide, the narrative highlighted examples of well-made dance venues, called out subpar alternatives, and even included blueprints for future construction to better meet the needs of concert dance companies on tour. As a vehicle for expanded discourse on dance's physical infrastructure, *Space for Dance* unmasked issues that had previously escaped attention by funders and venue sponsors. One of its limitations, however, was the report's narrow emphasis on the imperialist architecture of the proscenium stage, which obfuscated the myriad other sites where Americans were dancing. Ultimately the report's disclosures advocated for theatrical improvements in ways that largely reproduced the NEA's policy prioritization of American concert dance.

Across 191 pages, nine chapters, three appendices, a glossary of key terms, and a bibliographic list of design and architectural resources, *Space for Dance* depicted the relationship between dancers and physical infrastructure as one rife with risk. The rapid de-industrialization of large cities during the last decades of the twentieth century had compounded this crisis, which affected the viability of dance companies and their capacity to deliver dance to local audiences. Authors architect Leslie Armstrong and theatrical design consultant Roger Morgan lamented dance's lack of ownership of physical real estate (in comparison to dance's default "live art" partner, theatre) as a problem stalling the safety of dance artists and the quality of dance productions, particularly on tour. To point arts investors and advocates toward brighter prospects, researchers cited a string of "noteworthy exceptions," sample dance spaces that were explicitly designed or renovated with concert dance in mind. The report championed the Joyce Theater (NYC), the Capitol Theatre (Utah), the Civic Center of Onondaga County (Syracuse, NY), State University of New York at Purchase's Theatre Center for the Arts, the State Theatre Playhouse Square (Cleveland, OH), the Grand Opera House (Wilmington, DE), and the Filene Center, Wolf Trap Farm Park (Vienna, VA) as ideal structural models for others to follow.²¹ Featuring large photos and

detailed floor plans to visually highlight architectural innovation, researchers also took care to identify the complex networks of nonfederal investors who fueled these developments. To illuminate the economic and policy pathways that future dance investors might follow, the authors noted ballet choreographer Eliot Feld's dependency on patron Lu Ester T. Mertz to anchor the Joyce Theater renovation; they celebrated economic leveraging between Delaware's Grand Opera House and the Wilmington city government; and they championed dance-makers from Wolf Trap Farm Park in Vienna, Virginia, where organizers worked to restore the space in 1982 with federal support after a major fire. In addition to offering practical examples of public/private cost share, *Space for Dance* provided venue blueprints as visual templates to guide venue managers on how to outfit spaces to be more dance friendly. These plans emphasized, for example, how to procure flooring with flexible "give," articulated minimum space requirements, and explained how to protect dancers from injury or the undue labor of unforeseen adjustment. A veritable "how-to guide" aimed at improving the physical infrastructure for American concert dance, *Space for Dance*, prized proscenium dance production as a professional gold standard.

Inside of the report's final chapter, entitled "Case Studies: Alternative Spaces," researchers stepped momentarily away from the proscenium theatre as dance's historically endowed architecture to focus on smaller, studio spaces cropping up in large cultural epicenters like San Francisco and New York. This narrative shift credited the industriousness of artists who seized control over real estate to better control their conditions of production. Perhaps inadvertently, these examples exposed and tacitly reinforced classed hierarchies that were internal to the US dance field. Detailing four entrepreneurial examples in New York and San Francisco, NEA researchers championed how artists with surplus capital purchased, renovated, and brokered loft buildings and old warehouses and transformed them into critical spaces for dance. Researchers lauded NEA Choreography Fellow Trisha Brown's purchase of a five-story old textile factory at 542 Broadway and subsequent subsale of units to fellow downtown choreographers as a particularly innovative way to maximize resources. Loft living, for wealth-holders in the downtown dance scene, afforded space for dance training, rehearsals, informal performances, and living quarters all under one roof. While researchers did not list the exact price paid by Brown for the acquisition of 541 Broadway, they did explain that choreographers David Gordon, Douglas

Dunn, and Lucinda Childs each made nearly six-figure investments to purchase live-and-work space from Brown.²² Another “alternative” to leasing dance space featured in the chapter was an economic collaboration between dancers Jeff Duncan, Art Bauman, and Jack Moore, who secured a lease agreement for two buildings on West 19th and West 20th Streets, which formerly had housed a tire factory. Their contract with real estate developers set in motion Dance Theatre Workshop (DTW), a hybrid production and rental facility run, early on, by enigmatic dance presenter and networker David R. White. White’s testimony in *Space for Dance* described the tire factory as a “found space” that the group felt would fill an urgent demand for dance classes, rehearsals, and performances by downtown experimental dance artists (Armstrong and Morgan 1984: 142). In the factory, DTW collaborators built a 100-seat black box performance venue and offices where staff provided a string of services to a member constituency of artists—some incorporated, some not—who numbered 500 at the time of this study.²³ The last two examples of space brokering and deal making by and for artists were Merce Cunningham’s purchase and costly conversion of a West Village loft atop the old Bell Telephone lab in Westbeth and a nearly half-million dollar acquisition of a former warehouse in San Francisco’s Mission District by members of the Oberlin Dance Collective and choreographer Margaret Jenkins.²⁴ In the text, these artists testified to the power of real estate ownership as a route enabling them to escape “the mercy of landlords or the shim of real estate developers” (Armstrong and Morgan 1984: 146). By purchasing and renovating dilapidated industrial buildings, wealth-holding coastal dance-makers constructed and controlled what White dubbed in the report as “culture boxes,” alternative venues that offered vital services for dance, an economically unstable arts field. The real estate interventions noted here depended on ingenuity, and also on the geographic proximity of artists to wealth and real estate developers in the cultural and coastal epicenters of New York and San Francisco.²⁵ By spotlighting geographically overendowed cities and by sticking to dance under the theatrical footlights, the *Space to Dance* study missed an opportunity to consider dance in nontheatrical contexts or the political entanglements of artists, real estate brokers, city and economic developers in other regions of the country.

As a narrative tool to steer public discourse on arts resourcing the NEA’s 1984 release of the *Space for Dance* study was a brokered collaboration between parties within the NEA Dance, Design, and Research Divisions. The report was

intended to guide the future construction and apportioning of viable places to stage dance works. What the publication set out to do, it did well, by illuminating less-than-optimal working conditions and detailing ideal physical infrastructures for concert productions. What it also did, however inadvertently, was highlight the degree to which class privilege ensnared some of the NEA's most well-endowed dance artists in urban development and gentrification schemes. Slightly less loudly, the study linked NEA grantees' career sustainability and field influence to their proximity to surplus capital. Among the first dance-focused studies to emerge from the NEA Research Division in the mid-1980s, *Space for Dance* was a byproduct of interagency leveraging that yielded a political leveraging tool to position dance within the larger policy struggle to secure enabling environments for the arts.

Images of American Dance: Preserving a Cultural Heritage (1991)

A subsequent effort by Dance Program leadership to advance dance-focused policy agendas through publication took on the issue of dance preservation and documentation. Cost and labor share for this narrative emerged when then-Dance Director Sali Ann Kriegsman attended a 1987 symposium on dance preservation in New York and was inspired to mobilize resources alongside allies at the NEA's Folk/Heritage Arts Program and the Mellon Foundation. What became a report entitled, *Images of American Dance: Preserving a Cultural Heritage* (1991, hereafter *Images*) offered a narrative account of the widespread lack of video preservation and archival infrastructure for dance as a threat to the sustainability of its myriad traditions and forms.²⁶ Essentially structured as a needs assessment to learn more about the current state of dance archivization, seven field researchers surveyed existing preservation efforts in six US cities (Los Angeles, Minneapolis/St. Paul, New York City, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, and Washington, DC).²⁷ These consultants undertook 160 interviews with venue sponsors, choreographers, dancers, photographers, filmmakers, company managers, librarians/institutional archivists, dance scholars, critics, collectors, academics, and production designers working in TV film and radio, whose experiences combined to produce the 1991 report (Keens, Kopp, and Levine 1991: 14). Building from a singular, shared agenda—the need to protect dance as cultural heritage—NEA Dance enlisted Leslie Kopp, a long-standing archivist who had long been promoting archival workshops and “how-to” guides and was practiced

at raising concern with artists by lamenting the scarce number of dance archivists in the field and showing images of deteriorating cellulose-diacetate negatives at workshop lecture presentations.²⁸ Dance preservation was a strategic and capacious topic that, funders felt, could encompass dominant dance traditions and those that had received nominal NEA support in the past. Unlike the *Space for Dance* study, which fortified concert dance hierarchies through its promotion of proscenium production, the *Images* study was an intentionally coalitional effort to generate and meaningfully expand philanthropic investments to culturally underendowed groups.

The *Images* study departed from the basic premise that dance's widespread lack of recorded history left dancers of all trades and traditions at risk of "being relegated to the margins of serious intellectual interchange in this country" (Armstrong and Morgan 1984: 2). Researchers argued that dance's paucity of archival records in comparison to other art forms (music's sanctimonious embrace of the "score" or theatre's "script") left artists without viable resources, skills, or time to properly document and pass on their work to current and future generations. In the report's introduction, Kriegsman lauded preservation as a pliable policy issue that would enable more diverse forms of dance transmission into the future.

Preservation and documentation are a neutral binder, actively tied to the doing of the dance, the teaching of the dance and traditions, and the public understanding of these traditions. Creation, perpetuation, invention within traditions, cross-cultural influences, teaching, appreciation, participation, all are enfoldable within the scope of preservation and documentation. (Keens, Kopp, and Levine 1991: 4)

By amassing a wide array of dance practices under "preservation" as its topical umbrella, the *Images* study built a policy platform to start mending the NEA's structural relegation of nonwhite, rural, and nonmoneyed populations who dance. Later in the narrative, the authors sounded a battle cry of sorts, noting an urgent need for more nuanced debate on preservation by diverse dance stakeholders, asserting that:

The need for increased discourse—both within the field and with the large cultural and intellectual community—is pressing. But the field cannot take up this challenge if its most priceless documents are stuffed in boxes in cho-

reographers' closets, daily prey to decay; if its major archival institutions have cataloging backlogs of two and three years; if irreplaceable material is daily discarded because the general public remains unaware of its historical and artistic significance; and if there are no organized channels by which to retrieve information. (Armstrong and Morgan 1984: 11)

In their effort to center dance preservation as a policy-level problem and advocate for increased philanthropic support to bring dance's fragile archives under control, the *Images* authors did not shy away from naming the cultural and classed hierarchies of the US dance field as a core condition compounding the problem. They maintained that, while economic starvation in dance seemed to affect everyone, economic underresourcing of racially and culturally marginalized dance groups thwarted documentation practices in cultural communities of color, in particular. Using plain language, researchers flagged enduring ethnocentrism that were governing dance recognition and resourcing as factors that contributed to widespread estrangement of some of dance's richest non-EuroAmerican traditions.

Great historical, geographic, cultural and artistic gaps exist in the current record of dance in the US. Ballet and modern dance have been favored over other forms; European-based traditions are more present in records than non-European; finished work tends to be documented more than the creative process; and most of the stories of people who have contributed to the making of dance history are missing altogether. (Armstrong and Morgan 1984: 3)

While the report's authors did not overtly blame arts funders for installing Eurocentric, regionalist, and classist criteria for philanthropic support, statements like the above made readers see race- and class-based hierarchies as de facto policies that had, for too long, crowded out African American, Latino/a, and Indigenous dance groups. Collected data added economic freight to the fact that an overarching lack of economic access to documentary technologies and copyright protections formed additional structural barriers to dance preservation for nonwhite artists that white dance-makers did not face.²⁹

Ethnocentric barriers and constraints around dance preservation practices were signaled in the report's introduction, penned by Kriegsmann, as a form of cultural endangerment:

On the one hand, we have the so-called professional dance field; the theatrical dancers, and on the other hand we have the folk and traditional and social dance fields, and there is very little intercourse between them. Both, I think, feel endangered and are concerned about the survival of their traditions into the next century. This [study] is fruitful ground to bring the two and more worlds of dance together in a new, and I think very productive way. (Keens, Kopp, and Levine 1991: 4–5)

The *Images* publication and its allied discourse of preservation, as I understand it, productively maneuvered to repair the disconnect between historically over-endowed and historically underendowed American dance groups. By partnering with NEA Folk/Heritage Arts collaborators, the study brought a level of much needed transparency concerning race and regional hierarchies into NEA policymaking that the agency had previously been slow to acknowledge. By leveraging fiscal resourcing and a shared topic of interest, Dance and Folk Arts employees illuminated structural hurdles for artists of color. The study offered a more complex view of American dance transmission by critiquing how the dominant system of dance creation, production and preservation worked and for whom, in 1991.

Postpublication, Dance Program insiders continued to work with allied grant-makers in Folk Arts to generate maximum advantage for the preservation of diverse dance forms, often in the absence of dedicated fiscal support. And they gained nominal traction despite the lack of funds. By 1994, Kriegsman cited the *Images* findings in an aggressive lobby to NEA senior leadership to create a dedicated program supporting Dance Heritage embedded within the Dance Program proper. This plea, ultimately unsuccessful, still enabled Kriegsman to steer some funds from the Dance Program's "Service to the Field" category toward support for technological initiatives at the Dance Notation Bureau, including a field survey on vernacular dance documentation by the National Council for Traditional Arts and a documentary on the life of Katherine Dunham by the Council for Positive Images.³⁰ While the collective effort to house a dedicated grant program for dance preservation squarely within the Dance Program never materialized, Dance leadership did cosponsor a parallel program by leveraging cost share with Pew Charitable Trust. These efforts conditioned the formation of the Dance Heritage Coalition, a nonprofit arts organization dedicated to

dance archival creation, organization, and acquisition at major libraries and dance institutions. By joining like-minded colleagues from Folk/Heritage Arts and doubling down on private monies, allied NEA insiders pushed for increased preservation funding and pushed the ethnocentric tenor of dance support into public discourse simultaneously. Using the study as a tool for policy advocacy, dance researchers and staff managed to shift popular perceptions about whose dancing mattered as a matter of preservation and why. Though not its principal purpose, the *Images* study submitted long-standing dance hierarchies to the NEA record and begged dance stakeholders to consider their complicity in estranging US dance-makers through a lack of archival attention. One of the only NEA-commissioned dance research publications to overtly flag racist, classist, and regionalist dance hierarchies as policy-level problems, the *Images* study widened the agency's vision of America, dancing.

Dancemakers (1993)

A final dance advocacy tool produced in 1993 that was a by-product of inter-departmental cooperation between NEA Dance and Research Divisions was Research Report #28, entitled *Dancemakers* (fig. 10). The 94-page study offered a “benchmark” survey, a baseline interpretation of the labor patterns of choreographers as a historically underrecognized faction of the US arts workforce. Siting their analysis in four US cities (New York, Washington, DC, Chicago, and San Francisco), researchers sought to jump-start debate about choreographers, cultural workers who, they defined as those who were “called to create dances as a matter of vocation or profession” (Netzer and Parker 1993:7). Whereas prior NEA workforce studies zoomed in on labor concerns within the realms of theatre and visual art, *Dancemakers* was the first dance labor study to address issues about choreographers’ education and earnings, income and expense ratios, and variable income, self-subsidy, moonlighting, and other determinants impacting the dance field (Netzer and Parker 1993: 15–19).

Inside of the *Dancemakers* narrative, researchers isolated two issues: dwindling dance philanthropic investment and economic recessions in the late 1980s as factors catalyzing an urgent need to closely contend with labor issues pertaining to dance. Between 1988 and 1991, private arts funding levels fell 60 percent (from \$50 to \$20 million); state arts agencies also saw their legislative appropriations



FIGURE 10 *Dancemakers* (1993), NEA Research Division Report #28. Photo: National Endowment for the Arts.

decrease 26 percent between 1990 and 1992.³¹ Through the production of a baseline dance workforce survey, NEA insiders felt that the agency could increase attention to career instabilities that choreographers confronted in the field. Then-Dance Director Kriegsman enlisted two researchers to coauthor the study: Alyce Dissette, a former company manager for choreographer David Gordon and the TV producer for the NEA-funded PBS program “Alive from Off Center,” and J. Richard Orend, an economist and coauthor of a prior NEA workforce study on the careers of visual artists.³² Rounding out the research team were Ellen Parker, a philanthropic researcher out of New York University who had penned a study on the role of university dance departments in professional training for American modern dancers, and Dick Netzer, a noted cultural economist whose (1978) theorization of economic dilemmas in the arts was instrumental in philanthropic lobbying that improved the working conditions of artists.³³ The survey questionnaire that the team generated asked self-identifying choreographers to respond to field challenges and share personal experiences about

the deleterious effects of dance's ever-rising costs at the end of the twentieth century. To identify potential respondents, researchers drew principally—and quite narrowly—from the NEA's annual rosters of dance grantees. Respondents were contacted by phone and mail in July 1990.³⁴ After a low initial response, the team shortened the survey by 25 percent and undertook a second mailing and telephone survey, which yielded roughly 700 replies (Netzer and Parker 1993: 31). Although responses were geographically restricted to four cities, the benchmark survey findings corroborated the team's suspicion that choreography was, economically speaking, an artistic vocation "at risk" (Netzer and Parker 1993: 15).

Principally an economic workforce study, *Dancemakers* illuminated a series of debts incurred by surveyed choreographers: lack of money, lack of rental space, lack of time, lack of technological resources to document and archive dances, and lack of revenue to pay dancers, managers, and collaborators. Wages among choreographers were a particularly glaring problem; the majority of respondents reported earning less than 30 percent of their living through artistic commissions and fees. Despite reporting higher levels of advanced education compared to the general US population, choreographers' reported total income from dance was substantially lower than education and wage comparisons among the general public.³⁵ Contributed testimony confirmed an absence of other kinds of entitlements, such as health insurance, as an additional threat to vocational sustainability. To balance these deficits, the majority of respondents reported taking on nonarts employment to stitch together their livelihoods. The narrative underscored the high degree of nonarts labor involved in "making" dance work in one particular passage, where they enumerated the myriad non-dance-related responsibilities that choreographers performed in the field. Rather than assume that artists were spending the bulk of their time in dance studios, artists reported spending inordinate time playing a range of roles, including: "A dance-maker, director, dancer, teacher, business manager, press agent, grant writer, fund-raiser, psychiatrist, secretary and a . . . quick study in anything else that has to get done!" (Netzer and Parker 1993: 77).

After identifying the complex affective, social, and managerial pressures that accompanied dance work, researchers delved more closely into labor pressures, reporting that 71 percent of surveyed respondents were failing to keep pace with the high levels of administrative labor that dance organization entailed. Citing lack of funds and lack of time to locate and compensate qualified management

personnel to handle daily administration, another 41 percent of respondents identified employee attrition as a factor stalling their ability to keep pace with workplace demands (Netzer and Parker 1993: 19). Rather than implicate consecrating institutions (funders, venue sponsors) for their role in erecting administrative and economic hurdles for artists to scale, researchers left the prospect that arts funders had mandated huge levels of administrative movement as a strictly rhetorical question. They asked but then declined to answer questions such as “What role do grants play in the creation and presentation of choreographers’ work? How many of them apply for grants? To which funders do they apply? How successful are they in their grant applications?” (Netzer and Parker 1993: 27).

A written by-product of NEA’s increasingly unstable economic conditions, the *Dancemakers* survey lobbied for greater economic commitment from private and public funders but left the agency’s philanthropic criteria untouched as a policy priority. A routinely underpaid faction of the arts workforce, US dance-makers were adapting with ingenuity; Authors insisted that this flexibility merited an increase in institutional endowment.

Rather than consider dance “making,” as I do in this book, as the authorial by-product of dance artists and a vast chorus of intermediary agents, the NEA *Dancemakers* study upheld the modernist fantasy that individual artists produce in a vacuum. To close this discursive account of its limits and affordances as an instrument of philanthropic leverage, I will note that demographic data on surveyed artists exposed narrow levels of field representation that would make generalizing findings an issue across a national expanse. That survey respondents identified racially as 84 percent white, 6 percent African American, and 4 percent Hispanic raised the question for whom the term “choreographer” was an available identifier in dance. Interestingly, researchers elected to include a write-in box enabling respondents to cite specific cultural influences, and here, categorical responses were culturally more omnivorous. When asked to name the cultural traditions that informed their work, choreographers who responded listed a total of 197 different dance forms. Such multiplicity stumped researchers, who concluded that “most of the artists [surveyed] fit the general category of modern dance—an area of dance in which the term ‘choreographer’ is understood to be a creative artist working in a way that is innovative and fresh, a departure from what has come before” (Netzer and Parker 1993: 9).

I point to the report’s inconclusive conclusions about race and culture to un-

derscore the limitations in studying artists who were largely already on the NEA's radar as a sample of a much broader cultural field. By narrowing surveyed artists to its own (concert) dance constituencies, the *Dancemakers* survey ultimately upheld luminary notions of the choreographer as a lone artistic genius and spoke to a narrow fraction of the US dance field. Economically speaking, none of the surveyed choreographers were materially nor institutionally independent.³⁶ But philanthropic conditions in dance were changing in the last decade of the twentieth century, and the level of competition for support extended far beyond key players in ballet and modern dance. Published at the height of NEA controversy, *Dancemakers* spotlighted the undercapitalization of the US dance workforce, but its findings stopped short of weighing the historic overendowment of dance on US concert stages as a cultural "boom" and condition of possibility that had, by 1993, gone "bust."³⁷

Lest NEA Dance policymakers settle on the simple conclusion that all dance-makers were struggling for money, these three dance research studies together effectively submitted the complex issues at play in dance practice, production, and preservation to the NEA policy record. By leveraging available resources with nondance divisions, Dance Program insiders seized control over the national dance policy narrative and brought data to dance's defense as a vital area of federal investment. Likeminded partners in Design, Folk & Heritage, and Research and Analysis supported this national exposure and, however tacitly, called for broader recognition of dance's own internal hierarchies of space, race, region, and class. Whereas *Space for Dance* and *Dancemakers* generally left concert dance-making intact as a NEA policy priority, *Images of American Dance* drew critical attention to the historical overrecognition of EuroAmerican aesthetic guided dance as a policy problem that wider support for preservation could uniquely address. In the absence of new appropriations from Congress, Dance Program staff used publications to keep issues particular to dance on the policy table and also managed to move interagency resources toward new programs targeting previously marginalized dance groups.

Programmatic Leveraging: Discretionary Funds and Special Projects Grants

Between 1981 and 1996 and in the absence of new budget increases, one method of rerouting dance resourcing mobilized by NEA Dance insiders was the annual policy overview panel, which informed each program's annual budget request. At the end of each fiscal year, the Dance Program Director convened a team of experienced citizen advisors to deliberate on the year's achievements and challenges and recommend a slate of policy updates, including suggested reforms in response to that year's grantmaking. In 1981, one such lobbying effort proved the instrumental value of NEA discretionary support. Namely, unrestricted funds dedicated at the command of the NEA Chair yielded an \$800,000 increase in support for a package of reforms to expand the regional landscape for dance touring. In response to policy overview requests, 1981 saw dance discretionary support for the Sponsors of Local Companies Pilot Program. This initiative ran for only one fiscal year (1981) but managed to channel \$110,550 (plus \$100,000 nonfederal treasury matching) to twelve regional sponsors to support artists and dance companies for productions sited within their home communities. Whereas the DTP awarded funds for dance company nomadism, the Local Companies Pilot celebrated dance groups that, geographically speaking, had elected to stay put.³⁸ The Sponsors of Local Companies Pilot took aim at a growing problem expressed by many local dance organizers: that the national success of the coordinated residency and touring model was downgrading local dance-makers by essentially paying presenters to in-source artists from elsewhere.³⁹ With an economic boost from discretionary funds, NEA Dance insiders created momentary traction for grassroots US dance-makers whose ambitions were to "tour" their own communities and neighborhoods. The Local Companies Pilot was sadly scotched when the Dance Program confronted larger fiscal crises the next year, as senior leadership began pressuring the program to restructure and cut costs associated with funding dance touring. I elected to open this discussion of discretionary leveraging to pinpoint another bureaucratic angle worked by staff to push against the agency's dominant patterns of dance support. Another programmatic container leveraged to great effect by savvy NEA grantmakers to help under-the-radar dance organizers was the institutional instrument of NEA Special Projects Grants.

Vital in their vagueness, Special Projects Grants were first introduced in 1983 and endured until 1995 as a categorical catchall for proposals that staff rendered ineligible under existing programmatic criteria.⁴⁰ Throughout this time, non-profit dance companies, presenters, and state and regional arts agencies received awards that were dynamic in size and scope in this category. A glance at the roster of recipients for grant cycle FY 1983 evidences this range. In the FY 1984 *Annual Report*, the Dance Program lists the following: one field-building award to national dance service organization DanceUSA (\$18,600) to create a national dance company survey, a smaller grant (\$10,000) to Dance Theatre of Harlem to replace stolen video equipment lost to a studio robbery, a large sum allocated to Martha Graham's company (\$250,000) to record and integrate voice-over commentary into a documentary film about Graham dance technique, and a seed grant (\$100,000) went to Dance Theatre Workshop to nurture the creation of the National Performance Network (NPN), a service organization targeting smaller scale dance artists and presenting venues across the United States.⁴¹ In addition to their structural, topical, and fiscal malleability, Special Projects grants also appealed because their process of evaluation was relaxed. Project proposals were not directly solicited; grantseekers simply made appointments to pitch their special request to members of the NEA Dance staff. Once an applicant's eligibility was cleared and the Director's interest piqued, staff assembled an adjunct review panel who would weigh the merit of the proposed project. The highly discretionary character of this process enabled dance insiders to steer funds toward the protection of concert dance hierarchies and, less frequently, to their destabilization. One remarkable Special Projects initiative that achieved the latter goal was the brainchild of insiders from the NEA's Dance, Folk, and Expansion Arts Divisions. I want to turn now to a leveraging act that produced the Vernacular Dance Preservation Initiative, a fund mechanism which shored up vital support for historically underrecognized dance groups.

In 1992, Director of Dance Kreisgman collaborated with then-Director of Folk & Traditional Arts Program Dan Sheehy to mobilize Special Projects funds to form a team of staff and citizen advisors to pilot a grant initiative targeting collectively authored dance traditions beyond the realm of concert dance. The Vernacular Dance Preservation Initiative, as they called it, was a project overseen by dance folklorist and historian Lee Ellen Friedland and a coalitional cast of characters including NEA staffers Doug Sonntag (Dance), Barry Bergey

(Folk & Traditional Arts), Norma Cantú (Folk & Traditional Arts), and citizen advisors Katrina Hazzard (cultural sociologist, Rutgers University) Linley Logan (community activist, Tonawanda Band of Senecas), Maria Isabel Miranda (Chicano/a studies, California State University-Northridge), Shalom Staub (director, Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission), Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman (ethnomusicologist, University of California, Santa Barbara), and Vicky Risner Wulff (dance specialist, Library of Congress). Staff from NEA Expansion Arts also joined the project at various intervals to help gather grant panel reviewers with expertise in collectively authored dance forms. Although the Vernacular Dance Preservation Initiative lasted just one round of grantmaking, its practical and collective implementation brought the embedded biases toward concert dance on the part of Dance grantmakers into sharp relief.

When the Dance Program first announced its call for applications for a grant initiative explicitly dedicated to American social dance, dance organizers met this call with tremendous energy and unanticipated demand. Then-staff member Doug Sonntag (who would assume the role of NEA Dance Director upon Kriegsman's departure) noted this enthusiasm in archival documentation of the Initiative.

We knew there was interest in this initiative. We thought we would receive twenty to thirty letters of interest and we received about 140 that covered a full range of projects. We had to ask a number of readers to help us cull down that larger number and help us set some priorities. From that number, we ended up with about twenty applications [for review]. They [the panel] had a very rough time; it recommended six projects even though we told them they could recommend only three. We tried valiantly to get funding for six, but we were able to ultimately fund only three projects.⁴²

The co-engineers from Dance and Folk/Heritage Arts had initially hoped that the call for applications for the Vernacular Dance Preservation Initiative would yield two dozen letters of interest, and they received seven times as many. In response, staff expanded the number of readers to conduct the preliminary review and narrow the pool of competitors. Evaluators, according to Sonntag, struggled with the challenge of evaluating groups with divergent dance and cultural values. It became ultimately impossible to stretch available resources

to support the sheer number of worthy applicants. Of the six projects that were recommended to NCA and the chair, panel reviewers ultimately won support to fund the top three. Although it is not my central goal in this project to linger on grant “winners” and “losers,” details about who won support through this one-off program aimed at decentering concert dance have lessons to teach about the conservative and coalitional forces that clashed throughout this period, a period that I redefine as the Dance Program’s “covert” culture wars.

Through the highly strategic leveraging of NEA Special Projects support, the first award granted in the Vernacular Dance Preservation Initiative was for \$40,000 to the Earth Circle Association in northern California to document five dances that were considered to be endangered and that were native to tribes near the Klamath River. The second grant of \$50,000 went to filmmaker Sally Sommer to support a documentary about social dance in New York City clubs. Finally, through a rather broad interpretation of the term “vernacular,” the third grant went to the George Balanchine Trust in the amount of \$50,000 to fund postproduction of a video documentary entitled “Balanchine Essays: Analysis and Aspects of the Balanchine Technique” for use as a teaching tool. Remembering Sonntag’s suggestion, above, that the agency’s decision to grant resources in social dance had sparked such widespread interest, the presence of the ostensible master of American ballet on the grantee roster for this program exposes a fundamental tension that, for me, lies at the core of these “covert” culture wars. Time and again, coalitional efforts to steer philanthropic resources with an eye for racial, regional, and class parity were met with countermoves that ultimately recentered white concert dance as the NEA’s default standard of “excellence.” This same fiscal year, Balanchine’s New York City Ballet also received a Dance Company grant in the amount of \$372,400. Balanchine’s troupe would receive a whopping total of \$325,000 in support in FY 1992, and nearly a half-million dollars in support for FY 1993, at a point when the NEA’s overall budget stood at a relative standstill. It might be easy to dismiss the nominal size of a grant to American ballet within a social dance program as an unremarkable circumstance, except when one remembers the program’s explicitly reparative design. Such conservative tactics by concert dance advocates reveal the economic consistency with which NEA dance panelists refused to see past white, classed New York concert dance ideals at the grantmaking table.

Before I close out my discussion of NEA institutional leveraging among dance

funders who sought to conserve or upend the agency's concert dance ideals, I want to linger a moment longer on Sonntag's earlier remark that panel reviewers "had a rough time" achieving consensus. Archival documentation from the November 1994 program evaluation meeting for the Vernacular Dance Preservation Initiative informs a final point I want to press about dance policy inertia during the NEA's overt and covert "culture wars." Transcripts from this post mortem reveal clear efforts by enlisted advisors to challenge what they saw as the culturally biased leanings of NEA fund deliberation in dance.

One critique of the evaluative process came from an enlisted folklorist and panel advisor who interrogated the NEA's invocation of the term "vernacular" as an imprecise categorical marker that warranted further reconsideration. Provoking his fellow grantmakers to reflect on cultural biases enmeshed in the NEA's own institutional language, he protested panelist and staff dismissiveness in general around social dance traditions as legitimate, professional fields. This advocate pressed those assembled to consider their choice of words and choice of actions when he asked:

What kinds of "language" do vernacular traditions employ? For one dancer to learn from a fellow dancer or master dancer from within that tradition, I think one of our assumptions is that because we as outsiders don't know that there's an internal method of speaking about and understanding that dance that we think that it's "underdocumented." And yet, I think we would need to challenge ourselves, ask ourselves what is the "language" used within the dance tradition, whatever it may be, and use that "language" to speak about it.⁴³

Implicating himself inside within a group of nationally enlisted fund decision-makers, this advocate challenged his fellow funders to pursue cultural specificity and culturally sensitive vocabulary as measures to more properly assess the merit of social dance traditions within specific contexts. A second panelist echoed different but related concerns. A reviewer and sociologist of African religion and dance, this NEA insider rallied strongly against the built-in assumptions of aesthetic fixity that certain panel reviewers brought to bear on their evaluation of African diasporic dance traditions in particular during panel deliberation. This advisor took aim at pejorative value judgments brought by white panelists who invoked the language of "tradition" as a default when speaking of African diasporic dance, a term that problematically rendered such forms

static, immutable, and less evolved than white elite dance forms. Cautioning grantmakers that the use of “tradition” as a trope was, itself, a trick of colonialism and a political move to keep racialized and marginalized dance subjects in their place, this activist continued:

So there are sort of these strange notions about culture being this static, linear, housed, unchanging, unevolving thing that just sort of stands there like a fire hydrant. And I would like to see us at least undermine or combat [that] attitude in some sort of way, because it's not. [Culture is] constantly evolving. "Oh, that's an authentic African dance." Yeah, but the tradition, the conditions under which people are producing culture, are constantly evolving, constantly changing. People are at war. They're making peace. They're signing treaties. They're inter-marrying. They're fighting. They're loving. They're migrating. They're changing jobs. There's stuff going on, and the American pot is still being stirred, and we're not finished yet. So I would like to see that sort of (recognition) be in there somehow, if only implied.⁴⁴

Addressing fellow panelists in the first-person plural, this advisor demanded that decision-makers enlist for their respective expertise in social dance labor to recognize and combat the pervasive racism thwarting more just evaluations of nonwhite, nonconcert dance organizers. This pair of examples of NEA institutional activism hailed funders' attention to the central problem. Despite efforts by Dance Program insiders to reroute federal support through the creation of an explicit program honoring American social dancers, panel reviewers either refused or were ill-equipped to recognize the rigors of Black vernacular forms and their vital contributions to American culture. Staring across the decision-making table, institutional activists like these advisors challenged their endowed peers to check their cultural assumptions and steer their privilege toward alternative definitions of dance worth and worthiness. So while this promising new program, born as it was out of tactical tooling of NEA Special Projects funds by savvy members of the Dance Program staff, aspired toward institutional change via resource redistribution, systemic repair remained stymied due to myopic judgment on the part of those with the power to say “yes.” Here, and so often at the level of institutional policy, silence and stillness by wealth-holders in the face of demands for reform function as performative nonactions that keep exclusionary systems in place.

Due to budgetary shortfalls, the Vernacular Dance Preservation Initiative lasted just one grant cycle and funded the three projects mentioned above. In a somewhat quizzical turn, the public account of the program in the FY 1992 *Annual Report* listed the awards under the slightly augmented name: the Dance Heritage Initiative. Whether this renaming was part of the Dance Program's broader push to establish heritage as a grant subcategory in dance, or whether this language was invoked to soften the glaring contradiction that seated George Balanchine in the middle of a roster celebrating quote-unquote authorless dance forms, remains unclear. What was abundantly clear from documentation of this one-off program funded by NEA Special Projects support was that the Dance Program, in the 1980s to mid-1990s, harbored dueling repertoires of institutional activism; struggles for recognition were consistently being wedged between historically marginalized and historically entitled dance groups. With these internal leveraging maneuvers foregrounded, I want to turn to the wildly controversial process by which Dance Programmers began to slowly dismantle the NEA's long-standing support for coordinated concert dance residency and touring. These reforms, interestingly and perhaps ironically, required NEA dance funders to start hitting the road, themselves.

Touring: Remapping Dance Support

Reagan's advance on fiscal belt-tightening during the 1980s kept NEA insiders in a state of constant planning for potential cuts to the agency's bottom line. Pressured to trim expenses, streamline operations, and achieve stronger geographic representation across all areas of oversight, Dance leadership dismantled the Program's directory-based approach governing eligibility for dance touring support. One pivotal adjustment to amend the panel review process aimed at increasing grantee representation was through the enlistment of site visitors, citizen advisors sponsored by the agency to travel to observe the work worlds of under-the-radar dance applicants. By dismantling the nonobjective directory and attending to regional dance sensitivity, these managerial maneuvers managed to decenter New York City as dance's default "hub."

As discussed, Frank Hodsoll's accountability measures and early data collection exposed the Dance Program's deviant patterns of fund distribution. Hodsoll-era accounting for the agency's economic inefficiencies also revealed that the most economically bloated area of support was the DTP. One former

program staffer working during the mid-1980s went as far as to suggest that the touring program stood out as a popular initiative that was, in her words, “implosioning under its own success.” With increased demand came increased levels of grant administration for grantees and grantors, alike. The challenge of keeping up with the mountains of questionnaires and the never-ending paper trail made managing dance touring a time-consuming burden that left staff overwhelmed. One staffer described the scenario of reaching a funding deadline for the DTP to me as a veritable “nightmare.”

I just remember sitting when the applications came in—we were just swimming in paper. [Staffer A] would go down to the mailroom and bring up armloads of these application folders several times a day. We constantly troubleshot and head-scratched the situation trying to tackle the matter of how to even do this.

An initially lackadaisical “first-come, first-served” approach to directory-based eligibility was more manageable when the program was relatively unheard-of. Grantee demand for inclusion in the directory had reached a tipping point by 1981. Dance Program administrators dedicated a good part of their workday to answering questions and fielding complaints about unfairness from a range of constituencies. Calls flooded in from those who had been denied entry and from veteran grantees who saw funds they had come to depend on being channeled elsewhere. One insider triangulated the complex process of navigating high demand and shrinking support to me this way:

As more groups became incumbent, the NEA’s budget was not growing. It was a finite pie being divided in smaller bits. Those who got there first got an enormous amount of help, proportionally. The upheaval came when there wasn’t enough money anymore. There was too much [interest in] touring.

A policy double-standard had emerged. It became increasingly clear to applicants that gaining entry into the coveted DTP directory could no longer guarantee that a company would be awarded support, as once was the case. Competition for funds was also clearly weighted in favor of regularly endowed companies who knew better how to work the directory system to their advantage and had perfected the multistep process of gaining support. This process first required an organization to submit an “intent to apply” card, which qualified

them for a directory entry. After securing this listing, the company then hustled to coordinate with presenters and state agents on an agreed-upon calendar naming specific sites and terms of engagement. Moving quickly was the key to absorbing as much money as possible, because the NEA would not award the one-third federal match without fully executed touring contracts signed by all parties. As NEA appropriations stalled, awareness and interest in the DTP boomed and the process of gaining a listing, coordinating tours, and petitioning for funds got clogged by staff overload. Some of the worst situations transpired in instances when a company had successfully completed steps one and two only to be denied funding in the end because other companies had done so first. And by 1981, available NEA money was running out very fast. The DTP's "first-come, first-served" ethos had, over the course of fifteen years, transmogrified into an entitlement policy that one staffer sarcastically described to me as, "*Those who got there first, got the most.*"

Although minor structural adjustments had been made to the DTP application process as early as FY 1978, a systemic overhaul was urgently needed to support the ever-broadening field of prospective applicants.⁴⁵ To address the main problem—more applicants and less money—Dance leadership took a major step in 1981 by replacing the "directory" with a formalized peer panel evaluation system better aligned with governmental processes across NEA divisions. Another change required grant applicants to fold all requests for support for touring and other programs into one annual request to ease administrative burdens on the Dance staff. This particular adjustment tempered a growing trend among well-established companies of absorbing large sums from multiple programs through ad hoc requests that would trickle into the agency throughout the fiscal year. Although prospective grantees were still allowed to seek and secure support from multiple programs in Dance, the decision to streamline applications shrunk the agency's administrative costs and quelled some fund hogging overall. Accompanying the shift to DTP panel review, Dance leadership mobilized the practice of regional site visits, which were already in use at the agency in other programs as a means of broadening the agency's vista. Where the project of redistributing funding for national dance grantmaking was concerned, NEA Dance insiders gained significant political momentum, somewhat ironically, the very moment that grantmakers themselves started to travel.

The Site Visit: NEA Sponsored Expeditions

The Dance Program's integration of site visits into the process of grant evaluation and governance improved geographic distribution at a historical moment when the agency withstood increased pressure from elected officials from underendowed congressional districts. Prior to Reagan's election, panel deliberation was limited to desk review of paper documentations and viewing of videotaped work samples as the primary forms of evaluation. An increasing number of complaints came to the NEA from the Hill from elected officials seeking fairer distribution (or in some cases any distribution at all) to benefit their constituencies. One Dance Specialist described the situation in these words:

The politicians started to lobby, saying, "I have to have a pro rata share coming to my district." [Elected officials from the] Midwest and West began pushing back against the NEA's deference to New York, Chicago, Boston, and San Francisco, and we then saw that we needed to justify more money in elected officials' districts. [In response to such requests] I was constantly saying, "It can't be that we're relying on someone from New York to tell us about what's happening in dance in Wamsiter, Wyoming." We then went looking for new names and installed the Site Visit system to guarantee more diverse applicants in the pool.

Too many US legislators did not see their constituencies directly benefiting from NEA support. This policy problem reinforced enduring charges of panel nepotism and poor handling of unknown applicants inside of panels by citizen experts. Staff who were present witnessed and described problematic instances inside of panel review where a chair would ask panelists for a show of hands as to who had seen a particular applicant's work. If no hands were raised, then the panel would pass on the unknown application in its entirety without further discussion. The integration of regional travel by grant reviewers was championed by staffers as a measure to protect against the antidemocratic tendency among panel members to reject unknown applicants sight unseen. But not all NEA dance insiders saw value in the process. Insiders with connections to regularly endowed dance communities saw the imposition of site visiting and site reporting as an unwanted regulatory step. But for those who took part in NEA-sponsored site

visits, this touring provided an invaluable field education in the nuances of local dance cultures and communities and brought some sought-after geographical equity to fund allocation in dance.

In terms of process, any prospective NEA dance applicants could request a site visit by making a formal request within their application materials. Dance Program staff took various factors into account when deciding which requests to honor, prioritizing grantseekers who hailed from underfunded geographical locations and dance traditions. Once a site visit was granted, Dance directors would contract citizens to go on tour. Site visitors were generally veteran dance panelists, a measure to guarantee familiarity with Dance Program guidelines and evaluative processes. Staff would accompany citizen site visitors and provide informational packets about the applicant, a schedule for the trip, and prepurchased tickets to specified events. The NEA covered all costs of travel, lodging, and meals over one or two days, at which time site visitors attended local performances to observe and document other activities in the applicant's community. Upon completion of a site tour, enlisted site advisors were required to submit written documentation of their field observations through a site visit report to be included in the applicant's materials during panel review. Site reports were relatively open-ended in terms of structure. The only areas of requested information included the company's size and information on its general organizational infrastructure. Such open-endedness left site visitors relatively free to express their views on the overarching merits or challenges of an applicant's proposed project. Site reports frequently provided vivid narrative accounts of the perceived value of a dance group to their local community and the dance field. To avoid conflict of interest, site visitors were not allowed to serve on panels for the artists they had visited.

A uniquely ethnographic approach to increasing parity of funding opportunities at the NEA in Dance, site visits provided regional and cultural dance sensitivity training for those who took part. While not all site reports successfully rerouted dance resourcing to new grantseekers, former site visitors with whom I spoke championed the process of physically touring the country and witnessing artists in situ as an experience that left long-lasting impressions and strengthened their sense of obligation to less well-known areas of the US dance field. One NEA insider described to me how the process grew his national network.

Through participating in these processes, I discovered artists that nobody was paying attention to . . . We had opportunities where we were sitting face to face across from new people. We learned how dance operates in cities far flung. Today, we don't have that information, or mechanisms to get that information, or exchange opportunities to get work out there in person.

By touring local dance communities that had been slow to show up on the NEA Dance Program radar, site visitors and site reports paved philanthropic pathways where none previously existed. Back in Washington, DC, the inclusion of site reports within the panel review process transformed fund deliberation from an abstract paper exercise to a more robust forum for dance advocacy and debate. Rather than let a paper document stand in for an applicant's work, site reports amplified the contributions of previously sidelined organizations, lending what one insider termed "strength of argument" to artists from secondary and tertiary cities and towns. *"No matter how many artists applied, they each deserved an argument on their behalf. Site visits intervened such that it (regional or cultural difference) would no longer be a penalty."*

Not all grantmakers or grantseekers were fans of the redistributive effects of these local tours. Panelists who had grown accustomed to evaluating dance merit as a universally applied process saw their situated positions as dance tastemakers in large cultural epicenters at risk through this emphasis on regional difference.⁴⁶ Site visits did not stop in-fighting between regional outsiders and what one West Coast informant called the "New York dance Mafia," the loud chorus of overrepresented coastal experts on NEA dance panels who balked at the suggestion that "great art" could come from any of the "fly-over" states. To reroute philanthropic returns to well-established New York constituencies, some staff and panelists went as far as to push for the decidedly antidemocratic practice of "retrievals." When a long-standing dance grantee fell off of the final roster, those present lobbied to "rescue" a level of economic support due to their legacy status as a longstanding NEA grantee. Whereas some panelists were content to allow a legacy artist to sit with a below-par score and see dance up-and-comers move in, others saw this scorched-earth attitude as reason enough to reassert a past grantee's political and artistic significance through a request for their "retrieval." The Dance Program's dissolution of the directory and im-

plementation of the site visit together inspired mixed reactions among dance stakeholders, indeed.

Metaphors notwithstanding, those who participated in site visits took away strong memories of these field exchanges that shaped their future work as dance advocates. Newly inspired to advocate for dance organizational underdogs, staff and advisors who toured the country gained expanded knowledge of gaps within the dance field and located evidence to better defend less-well-known groups against charges of weak or underdeveloped proposals. Dance insiders with particular investments in distributional equity found themselves supporting marginalized applicants by naming specific strategies that, in addition to the site visit, would enable them to more effectively compete. One staffer remembered:

I would first receive a process tag, and we would prepare the applicant to be able to be viewed by a panel in the best light possible. Someone would send in an application—it was what it was—and I had to get on the phone and explain that—“I’m missing the following items,” or “I see the following kinds of questions coming from panelists, do you have any answers?”

Armed with more nuanced local dance knowledge about barriers to NEA participation and support, NEA Dance Program staff frequently performed roles as advisors by quietly coaxing underrepresented grantseekers throughout this period of covert contestation. The field immersion that site tours provided unquestionably deepened understandings of how dance worked in secondary cities and managed to draw factions of the dance field out of relative obscurity.

At the same time, these itinerant maneuvers heightened anxiety among regularly funded concert dance grantees. Those who had mastered earlier DTP formulas saw the dismantling of the directory and the introduction of site visits as cautionary first steps toward the agency’s increased endowment for artists who were working differently and elsewhere. To close my account of bureaucratic overhauls of the DTP, I will now rehearse the three structural turns that Dance Programmers made during this fifteen-year period before the agency ultimately pulled the plug on direct-funding pipelines to concert dance as a national arts policy project.

Programmatic Overhauls: Restructuring Dance Touring

The structural de-evolution of concert dance touring was a steady process that commenced with the dissolution of the “directory” and hastened with a series of three incremental shifts that were the result of a budgetary ping-pong match with Congress. One insider provided a pocket history of the first of these three bureaucratic maneuvers.

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CHAPTER TWO

The quick story on why it [the Dance Touring Program] ended was that in that period of time, during the Reagan administration, the President would regularly send up a budget to Congress that was either eliminating the Arts Endowment or cutting its budget drastically, by 50 or 60 or 70 percent. So, as an agency in the executive branch of government, you submit your budgets based on the President's number, that is just how it works. And so the budget in 1983 had these very large cuts and we had to respond to the President's number. The then director [Nigel Redden, in Dance] had to respond. And so the choice was made to eliminate the Dance Touring Program and shift any other related funds to the Dance Company grants program. Well, in those days, President Reagan would send his budget to the Hill, the Hill would hold hearings, and incrementally increase [the budget] from the President's number. But the timing of all of that was that money was added to the budget too late to make the changes that we would have had to make. So—it was fine—we didn't lose any money because of that but what was lost was a program, we didn't lose any monies. The Dance Touring Program went away because of some very political reasons at play and how you have to respond to them as an agency of the executive branch of government.

In the 1981 Dance Program year-end overview report, staff and advisors signaled to the NCA and NEA chairs that the state of domestic dance touring had reached crisis proportions due to economic stalemates and increased grantee demand.⁴⁷ The problem was compounded by budgetary cuts proposed by the Reagan administration described above, all of which forced then-Dance Director Redden and staff to seek new ways to protect touring support while also streamlining costs. In November 1982, the Dance Program dissolved the DTP (in name) and replaced it with the clunkily titled Dance Inter-Arts State Programs Presenting and Touring Initiative (hereafter DIS). As the above interviewee

acknowledged, the program's budgetary allocations were basically the same as that of the old program. But while money was not reduced, prior philanthropic pathways for Dance Companies were bulldozed. This hyphenated and colocated new initiative conjoined Dance, Inter-Arts and State Agencies Programs; the involvement of state agencies was in many ways the most strategic.⁴⁸ While the DTP had previously named state agencies, presenters, and dance companies as joint partners, the DIS criteria cut dance companies out of the application process entirely. DIS guidelines invited applications exclusively from presenters and state and regional funders who could seek support in the categories of "Creativity," "Management," and "Performance."⁴⁹ This shift made dance companies even more politically beholden to presenters and intermediary agents and increased the number of dance middle-men with decision-making control at the policymaking table. While Dance staff heard complaints that the change took participation out of the hands of artists, the old criteria were never restored.⁵⁰

In print, Dance Program leadership defended the formation of the DIS with rhetorical emphasis on "flexibility." In the FY 1983 Dance Overview Report, then-Director Reddin insisted that the new program infrastructure continued to complement artists' need for more adaptable support structures. Making no mention of the fact that dance companies could no longer make direct appeals to the agency for touring support, Reddin championed dance-makers instead, calling them hyperadaptable creative agents able to constantly adjust their operations in the face of constraints. In his words, the DIS was designed:

to allow maximum flexibility to dance companies and choreographers to pursue independent solutions to their own specific problems. While touring is a generally acknowledged problem, the solutions are taking a variety of forms—from second homes to regional homes to longer home performances to additional work with schools and colleges . . . The Dance Program plans to continue to fund dance companies for a full range of activities and Presenters will continue to receive NEA support for dance company fees.⁵¹

By motivating companies to seek "independent solutions" to the rising costs of touring concert dance, Dance leadership glossed over, in print, the paternalistic power structure that the DTP to DIS shift had installed. From 1983 onward, state and regional funders controlled all contractual agreements and reporting, and

venue sponsors (demanding to be called “Presenters” around this time) held direct authority over the hiring of dance companies.⁵² As a programmatic shift to quell further fiscal streamlining, the DIS ultimately did achieve its twin goals of labor and cost savings. The Dance Program succeeded, in large part, by shifting administrative burdens from NEA staff to regional and state agents.

Not all newly empowered presenters felt invigorated by the change. On the one hand, some sponsors credited the DIS for galvanizing the practice of “block booking,” a process whereby regional and state agents stitch together multiple engagements by a single dance company as a step that saved costs. On the other, venue managers saw the increased labor demands and expense of the DIS as unwanted freight. Where fund allocation was concerned, the DIS’s programmatic emphasis on venues (not companies) also strengthened geographic distribution in ways that assuaged previously angered Congress members whose districts had not previously benefited from NEA support. But despite this improved regional distribution to venues in all fifty states, programmatic restructuring of the DTP did little to diminish the cultural predominance of New York dance-makers on annual dance touring rosters. Venue managers (a geographically diffuse group) continued to curatorially favor New York–based artists and ensembles at a disproportionately high rate well into the mid-1990s. This lack of redistribution held for the better part of this decade as did DIS criteria, which saw only minor adjustments between 1983 and 1990.⁵³

As the 1980s came to a close and William “Bill” Clinton took office as president, fiscal stalemates, rising costs, and continued demand for subsidy motivated Dance Program staff to house a series of field meetings to assess whether the colocated DIS Program was working or had worn out its welcome. Between October 1987 and March 1990, the Dance Program cosponsored over thirty planning retreats with allied national dance service providers at Dance/USA to bolster the concert touring infrastructure in the face of appropriations shortfalls (Yesselman 1993: 9). These gatherings produced a third, newly restructured version of DIS, entitled NEA Dance On Tour (hereafter DOT). Housed within the agency’s newly formed Presenting and Commissioning Division (formerly NEA Inter-Arts), DOT guidelines eliminated dance presenters as eligible applicants as had been the case under the DIS program. Whereas the shift from the DTP to the DIS cut companies out of the application process entirely, the shift from the DIS to the DOT handed control over regional touring and coordina-

tion entirely to state and regional arts agents. This move even more strongly encouraged the practice of block booking to maximize regional distribution for out-of-state dance companies. Program administration, funding, and reporting for DOT were thereafter handled by touring coordinators assigned to each state arts agency; these intermediaries worked in close collaboration with regional agents to identify venues and enlist companies.⁵⁴ While the NEA continued to orchestrate and oversee peer review panels for state applications, regional arts agents administered applications and review on the NEA's behalf, another move to lessen labor on the federal side. With each level of programmatic restructuring, artists lost ground as direct interlocutors within federal arts policy debates on dance creation, production, and distribution.

Documentation from this period signaled a large increase in block-booked regional residencies as a key part of DOT's success. Ultimately, DOT supported 230 presenters, over 400 domestic concert engagements, and twenty-five new work development projects in eighteen states from 1990 to 1993. Its programmatic emphasis on scalability and reproducible engagements overshadowed the quietly controversial fact that the DOT had taken concert dance touring coordination and implementation out of the hands of past NEA grantees.⁵⁵ As a funder-incentivized dance production practice, block booking benefited more mainstream groups with better ticket selling capacity and granted fewer opportunities for emerging dance companies.⁵⁶ Those estranged by the new program complained that the NEA's turn toward state and regional streamlining favored mainstream artists and chilled sponsors' motivation to take a chance on experimental dance. So, while the expressed goal of the DOT was to sustain national touring networks the absence of new funding injections, its politics of implementation cut presenters out of the decision-making fold and further sidelined many dance artists.

These structural overhauls reflect dedicated efforts by Dance Program staff to keep some semblance of concert dance touring at the center of grantmaking into the 1990s. As the walls of Congress boomed with threats of the NEA's execution and when the budgetary axe fell in late December 1995, one final feat of bureaucratic angling salvaged aspects of the inaugural DTP infrastructure, albeit at a radically shrunken scale. The birth of the National Dance Project (hereafter NDP) in early 1996 was the result of a philanthropic "hail Mary" pass whereby NEA Dance leadership hoisted a significant federal grant to regional

and state arts agents and charged them with salvaging some semblance of the agency's inaugural support system. Somewhat ironically, the NDP was born out of a momentary abundance of funds the year that the agency withstood its heaviest cuts from Congress.⁵⁷

At the close of FY 1996, staff were struggling to adapt to the agency's 39 percent slice in budget, internal reorganization, and radically reduced workforce (discussed in the next chapter). Newly appointed Dance Director Douglas Sonntag (1996–2016) and remaining staff suddenly realized that the Dance Program was sitting on a \$1 million surplus in its National Leadership Initiatives category. This money needed to be spent or it would be lost. An organizational scramble commenced, as federal funders hustled to locate nonfederal cost share for an initiative that would forklift control over nationwide concert dance touring from federal to regional oversight. In collaboration with Susie Farr (then-director of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters/APAP), Bonnie Brooks (then-director of Dance/USA), and Samuel A. Miller (then-director of New England Foundation for the Arts), Sonntag managed to match the NEA's \$1,000,000 in leadership funds with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Philip Morris, and the John S./James L. Knight Foundations.⁵⁸ These leveraged investments inaugurated the NDP, the grant infrastructure of which was a makeshift miniature of prior NEA supports. Economically speaking, the grant awarded in the Dance Program's Leadership category that inaugurated the NDP remains one of the NEA's largest awards in history.

Still national in scope, this new program provided matching subsidies for concert dance creation to companies and offered presenters public funding seeds to incentivize dance commissioning of contemporary stage works. Crucially, the NEA was totally relieved of oversight and no longer oversaw any aspect of funding explicitly earmarked for concert dance touring. The entire philanthropic apparatus of the NDP was administered by staff at the New England Foundation for the Arts. The NDP's mission was articulated as follows:

The overall goal of the National Dance Touring Project is to provide sustained support for the living, growing, and uniquely American discipline of contemporary dance. Recognizing that touring is central to the continuing health of the dance field, the program seeks to develop a core of dance

development and distribution around which presenters and regions can build strategies for dance preservation that serve and build their audiences more effectively. (Sheppard and Associates 2000: 4)

As a philanthropic monument to NEA's long-standing promotion of American concert dance, the NDP's aesthetic emphasis on the "uniquely American discipline of contemporary dance" upheld proscenium dance traditions and modernist aesthetics as arts funding priorities. The first two fiscal years of the NDP (FY 1998 and FY 1999) were economically fortified by the NEA support in the form of half-million-dollar awards to New England Foundation for the Arts in each of these years, respectively. While NDP grants were economically smaller than prior forms of NEA support, many prior DTP, DIS, and DOT grantees saw the NDP as a noble salvation effort that continued the NEA's commitment to fiscal incentivization to motivate the movement of regional and state funders, presenters, and audiences to take a chance on American concert dance.

Although some cultural policy critics have portrayed the NEA's economic sanctions by Congress in late 1995 as a "bust" signaling an end to previous "booms," the above-mentioned structural overhauls tell a more complex story about institutional hustling at the agency, in dance. NEA-sponsored efforts connected with under-the-radar artists by way of new publications, programs, and site visits, and Dance Program insiders did what they could to save concert dance touring from total annihilation. Though the process of restructuring dance touring did preserve a philanthropic shadow of the prior system, the programmatic reforms described here estranged dance companies, alienated presenters, and shifted institutional authority over concert dance touring increasingly to regional and state arts agents. To close my consideration of these struggles over institutional estrangement and past entitlement, I want to consider how NEA assemblies of various scales also enabled and constrained policy changes during this controversial period.

Incorporating Difference: NEA Assemblies

One could justifiably maintain that the NEA's cacophonous debates on the floors of Congress in the 1990s were the agency's most severe and overtly risky performances of institutional conflict. But as I have maintained throughout this

chapter, the tendency to overemphasize the NEA's publicly punishing "culture wars" in historical discourse risks painting a false image of NEA grantmaking as a governmental exercise that was previously free of conflict. On the contrary, internal contestation over the agency's dominant patterns of dance recognition and resourcing were long-standing. As the NEA matured as a funding body, nowhere was opposition to dance philanthropic norms more routinely challenged than within the human architecture of its local, live assemblies. By detailing below the bureaucratic angling at play in dance panel deliberations, a task force convening on diversity, and a full-blown congressional commission, I labor to show the NEA's political and historical function as a site of convening power, a harbor for meaningful democratic deliberation on how best to achieve a more robust and inclusive system of federal arts support. Across three scales of institutional encounter, insiders within and beyond Dance took to incorporating divergent views, including dissent. The following examples feature instances when the agency's policies and practices were called to question. Proposed policy correctives were borne out of these incorporative assemblies that recognized a wider vision of America dancing.

Inside the Panel Process

As an instrument of policy deliberation, peer panel review of federal arts grant applications was not an original NEA invention. At the time of the NEA's 1965 inauguration, citizen-led jurisdiction over federal applications was already an accepted practice at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and was embraced by elected officials as a means of stabilizing professional standards in areas that legislators felt underqualified or unwilling to assess.⁵⁹ In addition to the NSF and NEA, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regularly employed outside evaluators in service of government-sponsored programs. Competition for discretionary grants across federal agencies has historically been quite stiff. During the period discussed here, the NEA was in the practice of funding roughly 25 percent of its total number of annual applications per annum (McGarity 1994: 31).

NEA panel statutes stipulated that peer reviewers should be US citizens who the agency enlisted for their evidenced expertise in the arts. Field expertise in the arts was championed as a measure to insure that federal funds were awarded

to artists of significant talent whose work met agreed upon-standards of authenticity, merit, and, of course, management.⁶⁰ During the 1980s and early 1990s, panel assemblies were prolonged live affairs that lasted between several days and a full week depending on the number of applications under review. At the end of that time, reviewers generated a slate of recommended grantees and fiscal allocation amounts to send the NCA and NEA chair, at which time proposed rosters were rejected, amended, or rubber stamped. While this internal system of three-tiered regulation was designed to splinter funding oversight, the fact that the chair held the last word seated significant economic control with NEA political appointees.

Despite this tiered process of funding approval, Dance Program directors wielded tremendous political influence on panels through their capacity to invite citizens to serve as peer reviewers. Submitted lists were vetted by deputy or senior leadership but, with rare exception, lists of panel members were rubber stamped by higher-ups. An invitation to serve as a NEA panelist was described as a place of high distinction among my project interlocutors. Those invited were generally offered one- to three-year appointments to serve and invitations were made at the Dance director's discretion. New panelists would rotate in at annual intervals, and repeat appointments lasted no more than three consecutive years, per congressional mandate. One dance artist who was frequently called to serve on NEA Dance panels as a representative of non-EuroAmerican aesthetic traditions described her service as a contingent privilege, desirable labor that was not without stress.

During the early 1990s panel composition saw an onslaught of multicultural regulation; there were various discussions about representation and the challenge of people who weren't working principally in ballet or modern dance getting a leg up. I felt stuck at the invitation to show up, knowing that I would have to represent an entire ecosystem of artistic activity that is no way standardizable . . . I wasn't going to not show up, but I resented the tokenism that was going on at that time with regard to non-EuroAmerican artists.

Repeat appointments on NEA dance panels were common and defended by Dance directors as a means of achieving philanthropic consistency. Though charges of panel nepotism had simmered since the agency's inauguration and had

been addressed through stricter term limits, the Dance Program still struggled to secure racial, regional, cultural, and generational diversity overall. Stronger disciplinary action around conflict of interest was installed in 1990 to break perceived crony circles apart (a more thorough discussion of this regulation by the 1990 Independent Commission follows).⁶¹ Dance Program staff were not allowed to vote, but played a quietly regulatory role inside of deliberations. Staff were also to police conflict of interest by asking panelists to leave the room when an application was considered from a group with whom they had a previous relationship. Panel policing was generally maintained but, as many staff suggested, the problem of panel member lobbying spilled far beyond the formal meeting space, as reviewers tended to dine together and hang out throughout their visit to Washington. Funding reversals could, technically, be requested by groups that had been denied support by a panel. But appeals were generally uncommon except in instances where program criteria had been ignored, where undisclosed conflict of interest was clearly operative, or where denial had been justified on the grounds of inaccurate or incomplete information and an applicant had actually complied and submitted all required materials.⁶²

At the peak of grantmaking in the mid-1990s, the NEA hosted over ninety peer panels per year and enlisted over 800 citizens to govern the grant review process. The dissolution of the “directory” model of touring eligibility in the early 1980s, discussed earlier, increased the number of peer panels and staff labor burdens overall. As an administrative exercise, the process of panel governance commenced long before citizen panelists arrived in Washington, DC. The administrative hustle began the moment that an application hit the NEA mailroom and fell into the hands of Dance staffers. After applications had been tagged with a number and identified for the Dance Program, staff worked to confirm each applicant’s compliance with requested information. Once submitted information was vetted and approved, applicants that had requested site visits underwent additional review and director approval. A sea of logistical coordination accompanied site visits (discussed above). Once panelists were identified and approved by senior leadership, these consultants underwent background checks; once cleared, panelists were sent schedules and travel itineraries and told to watch for notoriously big, bulky black binders filled by NEA Dance staffers with dozens of paper applications that would arrive in their personal mailboxes for the panelists’ preevaluation. In advance of panel gatherings, staff organized

applicant work sample slides, and videotapes were prepared and tested. Remembering that this was still an analog process, the challenge of managing the high levels of paper-pushing bore down on staff as demand for NEA support escalated. Chaotic scenes inside of the Dance Program were common. One was described to me by one former staffer, as follows:

It was a nightmare . . . coming into this situation, no real sense of how do you conduct a qualitative review of, at that time, several hundreds of companies going to be applying to this program . . . we were really faced with the daunting task in Dance—no panel had reviewed that many applications IN HISTORY, it was unheard of.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the bulky black binders received by panel reviewers were filled with as many as 200 applications. In turn, panelists were asked to review and annotate these materials prior to attending the live assembly in Washington to expedite deliberation. Panel materials and panelist arrivals, though laborious to arrange, were always highly anticipated by those on the Dance Program inside.

During this period, panel deliberation was housed generally, but not exclusively, at the NEA's home offices in Washington, DC, over three to five full days (Mulachy 1991). Panel meetings were tape recorded and staff also took notes on the proceedings, which unfolded across several phases: presentation of applicants, viewing and discussion of applications, site reports, and video work sample materials, which culminated in the recording of initial panelist scores and ranking order (1 to 10 or 1 to 100). This was followed by additional deliberation on funding amounts (discussion on this concluded once all available funds were exhausted), secondary review and revoting, and final recommendations for the NCA and NEA Chair (McGarity 1994: 33). What appeared to some to be a straightforward review process was congested due to all sorts of human factors—disagreement, disruption, or dis-identification with the statutory criteria at hand. The severity of panel members' struggles varied greatly depending on where one was standing, with whom, and when during the evaluation process. Stepping further inside of panel deliberation, we can start to appreciate the nuanced ways that panelists and staff maneuvered to conserve or topple dance hierarchies at these critical, intimate assemblies.

Across my interviews with past NEA staff and peer panelists, one point was

made clear about panel assembly: the social act of gathering to discuss the US dance field was considered by all as a cherished space that produced passionate displays of dance advocacy. Although not everyone in the room held equal political pull in the dance field or had the loudest voices gathered, panel discourse often respectfully called narrow cultural assumptions to question and changed people's hearts and minds about dance values, contexts, and purposes. At its most enabling, panel deliberation offered reviewers a veritable field education in regional and cultural difference; reviewers learned critical lessons about incorporating alternative dance worldviews. The stamina and dedication that accompanied the responsibility felt by those present was described to me by one former Dance Program Specialist, as follows.

It [panel deliberation] was all done with enormous sense of deep passion for the field, watching working professionals coming in, and sitting down for days to struggle . . . It's so easy to be critical of the outcomes [of panel decisions], but the truth of the matter was, the integrity of the panel process reflects some of the NEA's finest work.

During my interviews, I asked former staff and panelists to walk me through the practical steps that the process entailed so I could describe a sample scenario here. Using a large (four- to five-day) assembly as an example, contracted panelists would arrive in Washington, DC, the evening prior to the first meeting and get acclimated to their hotel rooms. It was assumed that reviewers had spent time poring over applications in the black binders that had been sent to them in advance. Upon entering the assigned conference room, staff invited reviewers to take coffee or water and sit in swivel seats at a long wooden table that accommodated roughly two dozen bodies. A previously appointed panel chair (generally a veteran dance panelist) was stationed at the helm, and next to them, a Dance Program Specialist who helped to direct proceedings. The Dance Program director, staff, and interns sat at the room's periphery and generally remained silent except to perform panel maintenance. In practice, staff performances sometimes gently broke these protocols through subtle gestures: eye rolls, audible exhales, and even short comments to catch the attention of some of the panel members with whom I spoke.

After general introductions, the chair laid out the weeklong plan, describing

how the assembled group was to engage in discussion, view work samples, take to scoring, determine fund allocations, review scores and engage in rescoring, and determine final recommendations. Well into that first evening, the same conference table would be cluttered with half-full coffee cups, napkins, water glasses, notebooks, pens, and copious piles of paper filled with panelists' mental scratchings. Deliberations were depicted by some present as a complex game of verbal basketball centered on the veritable state of the US dance field. No two panel debates were exactly alike, but patterns emerged, as noted by one staffer: *"One regular debate encircled the practice of funding according to geography, versus quality, versus the promoting of new ideas."*

A sonic soundscape accompanied these verbal struggles, accented by the subtle swishing sound of thumbs rifling through pages of print material. Page-turns grew into a metronome-of-sorts clocking time spent entertaining the ethical charge placed on grantmakers to recognize and resource dance-makers who they deemed worthy of national funding. Humanity breaks were choreographed into the proceedings so that panelists could stretch their legs, make coffee refills or approach bowls of snacks that had been set at side tables by staff to keep blood sugar levels high. The physical exercise of viewing and reviewing materials required a barrage of physically mundane yet draining gerund verbs: sitting, shifting, stretching, listening, responding, blinking, hand-raising, sighing, laughing, interrupting, applauding and shuffling (papers). These intellectually draining governmental exercises left some decision-makers sore and others anxious. Panel members with more introverted personalities spoke to me about the vociferousness of others in the room as a distraction. Extroverts grew impatient and squirmed or stood abruptly, pacing the room at various intervals. Disagreement took both verbal and nonverbal forms. One former dance company manager who had previously applied to the NEA described her silent shock upon serving as a panelist and seeing insider practices that frequent grantees had been using to game the system. She explained one such revelation that left her stunned.

I assumed we [prospective applicants] were to choose the program most suited to us and apply once. When I got to the NEA I saw that some companies were applying to many or all [funding categories]. Companies who were not at the top of the lists were getting two and three times more money than top companies who "followed" the rules."

Panel assemblies exposed panelists to the NEA's inner workings of fund acquisition and award. Recognizing that the pressure to distribute finite resourcing to worthwhile applicants was both emotionally and practically draining, NEA Dance staff wove many breaks into the process. Regular breaks were taken, according to one former staffer, "to avoid mutiny." These intervals often took the form of walking tours to the main floor café, where this same interlocutor described a smell that "hovered somewhere between fried chicken and chocolate chip cookies." At the lunch hour, panelists often found a self-selected spot to recharge with a boxed lunch, and others clustered into groups and kept the conversation going. Physical dispersal made it harder for staff to prod everyone back upstairs when the time came. During shorter breaks panel members found more inventive ways to physically break with the stuffiness of federal bureaucratic culture. One particularly memorable bureaucratic workaround was recounted to me by a number of former staff and panelists on separate occasions. Dancing during panel breaks, grant decision-makers exercised a joyful refusal to assimilate to the practical formality of official government culture.

A staunch advocate for cultural difference as a vital dimension of the American dance field, the late "Baba" Chuck Davis, founder of the African American Dance Ensemble (Durham, North Carolina), was a panelist who actively broke with the stultifying daily choreography of fund governance by inviting those assembled to dance. A coalition builder with a deep allegiance to artists of the African diaspora, Davis's politics of participation on dance panels creatively challenged grantmakers to embrace African dance in active, celebratory ways. Rather than get verbally bogged down in debates as to whether (or not) African and African American dance companies were (or were not) fundable because they did not properly assimilate to NEA funding criteria, Davis took a dancing route to his advocacy. During panel breaks, Davis steered his fellow citizen "experts" dancing down the halls of the Nancy Hanks Center. He invited any and all observers within earshot to join them. Multiple staff and panel members expressed to me the depth of body-level impressions that dancing with Baba Chuck made on them.

I remember dancing, actually, with Chuck Davis. Dancing broke the stress of the situation. It was a fun way to reset.

When Chuck Davis sat on panels he would take us all out in the hallway for dance classes on panel breaks. We were all there stretching, shuffling, and dancing it out. It was incredible.

Davis's movement during breaks marked a deliberate effort to rearrange the practical performances of NEA panel bureaucrats. Integrating African drumming and dance breaks into panel breaks in the hallways of the Old Post Office, he disrupted the monorhythm of the institution and broke the affective seriousness of NEA culture. Framing his tactics as exercises fueled by Davis's oft-repeated mantra of "peace, love, and respect for every-body," the undulatory efforts of Davis's danced policymaking challenged NEA funders to body forth an embrace of dances of the African diaspora. Testimony that I received indicated overwhelmingly that Davis's dancing was delightful and highly deliberate. Other examples:

In fact—Chuck Davis made us dance! I remember this—he got us all out in the hall in the Nancy Hanks Center and we did a dance class in the hall. We were there literally on a break, dancing in the hall, which was so needed, so necessary.

Baba Chuck was so great, he didn't let the process get him down. During breaks, Chuck would usher panelists and staffers out into the corridor, we were going to dance together out in the corridor and he would lead African dance warm up exercises in his joyful, full of life way. I guess some panelists abstained, but I jumped right in, his energy was contagious.

Angling for dance, as these examples demonstrate, took a multitude of practical forms inside of panel governance. And while some commentators called Davis's African dance interruptions an affective "escape" from the stress of the situation, his efforts also strategically centered African diasporic dance aesthetics and worldviews, however momentarily.⁶³ Institutional noncompliance of the most joyous political order, Davis's performances interpolated grantmakers and subtly enacted institutional demands.⁶⁴

After the (dance) breaks, panelists were ushered back to their seats to return to work samples and commence scoring. Debate resumed, as did calculations to determine baseline suggestions for grant allocations. When panelists were released from their daily duties, debates spilled beyond the NEA's institutional

walls and into informal dinners and cocktails in hotel lobbies. Staff, in contrast, hunkered down and prepared for an evening of data gathering that often lasted late into the night. Inside of the Dance Program office, staffers tallied scores and typed up rosters of accepted and rejected applicants for the next day's deliberation. Adding machines and spreadsheets were splayed on the floor and employees crouched down, feverishly totaling numbers. The smell of printer ink wafted from Xeroxed score sheets. New calluses were born after copious hole-punching, tabbing, and snapping freshly printed documents into panelists' big black binders for the next day.⁶⁵ The late-night labor of archiving panel decisions, though mentally dizzying, was described by one former program specialist as a coalitional exercise among staff across all divisions of the agency.

Staff worked all night, sometimes overnight. Because many panels were hosted across Disciplinary Divisions at any given time, we would call each other and ask one another, "Are you still here? When are you leaving?" Sometimes we'd not get out until nine or ten p.m. and be really fried, but we'd decide to go ice skating or else eat dinner late. You were working almost 24-7. The only way to avoid work was to not be near a phone.

The following morning, when NEA insiders had (or hadn't) sufficient time to rest, everyone reassembled to review the updated list of prospective grantees, who were ranked from the highest to the lowest scoring applicants. Deliberation continued about how much money to allocate based on the available pool of support. Emotions often flared as panelists attempted to stretch the maximum number of awards across the maximum number of deserving artists. Rescoring was almost always tight. It was not uncommon for a single vote to determine who stayed on the list and who was dropped. During moments when the group fell into silence, the panel chair and staff would pose questions. Staff played unofficial roles as devil's advocates whenever panelists started to lose steam. One staffer insisted as much when he described the role of staff in panel governance as "*explicitly administrative and implicitly advisory*" in character. Staff often spoke up to offer expertise on institutional policy, NEA history, or to break some sort of stalemate. And while some staff called panel members' behaviors openly and verbally to question, others, like the interlocutor below described dismissals that were made through more passive, nonverbal maneuvers.

Often we would gesture in small ways to coax silent panelists to speak up when somebody had the floor too long with a simple eye roll . . . or sometimes we'd quietly go as far as to pass somebody a note when certain issues were being swept under the rug.

Worried that panelist silence might falsely read as willful compliance with a particular issue under discussion, Dance Program staff nudged and winked their way around the room, coaxing others to speak up to guarantee that oppositional voices got attention. Once the pressure to achieve consensus set in toward the final days, the tone of conversations shifted from cordial discussion to sometimes intense disagreement. Conflicts often arose during instances where a majority vote (eight of fifteen panelists in favor) left a coveted applicant below the line or smack dab in the middle of the pack. One former panelist described moments when reviewers emotionally broke down from the pressure.

People cried at the fellowship panels. They all cried. Not at the same time. But we all cried. We cried at having to cross off and not fund so many great proposals from artists around the country.

Some of the most emboldened pleas erupted in the eleventh hour, when a worthy applicant was seen to have been given short shrift. One informant described an anxiety-filled moment when he stood in his seat and pushed back against an attempted dismissal of one applicant by a notable New York avant-garde choreographer and fellow grantmaker.

[after a panel break] . . . *they had us sit down and [New York dance-maker A], I guess it was, stood up and defended his score for a group practicing Non-Western dance styles. He said: "We've done this our whole lives, we can tell the authentic from the inauthentic." Sitting there, I felt my heart pounding in my chest, I felt my hand slowly rise into the air and I got up the courage and I said, "At the risk of being very unpopular here, I'm going to tell you, that I cannot simply walk into a Kabuki performance, or performance of Chinese Opera and be able to evaluate how authentic it is. And I certainly don't bring the same level of expertise, that a Japanese connoisseur would bring to these proceedings. So, I think it's too simplistic to say that "because we're in dance"*

we can tell the authentic from the inauthentic because dance is not the international language of understanding. In fact, dance is specific in its capacity to serve as a language to local cultures. If we don't speak that language, then we are outsiders looking in at it. People were startled that I would say such a thing, but it was true.

Whereas some panel invitees felt queasy when asked to speak to the legitimacy of an unfamiliar dance tradition, others used their insider status to stake claim to universal values in dance that aligned squarely with their own. Panelists who were invested in increasing cultural and geographic representation in dance, like the above interlocutor, leveraged their institutional power despite being outnumbered. Recognizing the invitation to participate on a NEA grant panel as a clear source of privilege, dance advocates regularly confronted narrow assumptions of dance worthiness that stood at odds with their own. The collective exercise of debating, viewing, scoring, discussing, and rescoring produced nothing short of an affective tidal wave. Over the course of several days, a sense of dedication and exacerbation washed over the group as they moved from a state of mutual admiration to exasperation toward the seemingly impossible prospect of achieving group consensus.

To say that NEA dance panel reviewers took their responsibility seriously would be an understatement. Emotional outbursts, like those mentioned above, often flared when beloved dance organizers fell off of the roster. Whether such losses were “retrieved” or left to stand, panelists felt a sense of weighted responsibility vested in them by the NEA to endow a cohort of nationally recognized artists by the week’s end. The struggle to endow economic and institutional capital was one that absolutely no one took lightly. One panelist explained the impossibility of the task in these words:

We did arrive at a list that nobody was satisfied with that could absolutely be defended. I mean, it was the worst of all worlds in a sense, because it satisfied the changes that were demanded—it did satisfy geographic distribution, and other outcries from the field, but virtually no one was happy, especially none of the groups left off the program. None we admitted got what they wanted economically because when the numbers came back it was [grant allocations were] so lopsided among the highest ranking groups that the entire list had to be completely trashed, redistributed and rethought.

Calculating worthiness. Weathering disagreement. Recalculating economic allocations. Waiting. Worrying. The felt experience of incorporating a wide range of dance works, workers, and ways of working left deep impressions in the hearts and minds of those present. Panelists left Washington with new information and a heightened sense of obligation toward the US dance field. Staff described panel deliberation as a veritable “*trade school*” in dance literacy and advocacy. The privilege of convening and considering dance on a nationwide scale was a humbling experience that productively educated grantmakers in racial, cultural, and regional biases in the dance field that had previously gone unchecked.

Nothing replaces sitting down at a table over time, to listen to the views and stories that everyone has, and telling your own . . . you begin to absorb why people make decisions, what the outcomes of those decisions have been from year to year, what models emerge and which ones were wheels that didn't have to be invented again.

Part debate club, part endurance sport, NEA panel assemblies dedicated time and physical space for differentially invested dance advocates to make a case and shape national definitions of dance worth and worthiness. The pivotal, weeklong conversations harbored at NEA live panel gatherings were internally documented but closed to public access. In reinterpreting a sample scenario of panel deliberation here, I hope to have credited NEA staff as the backbone and listening chorus of fund governance. I also hope to have reflected the passion felt by panel advocates who stood up to the challenge of equitably steering dance funding inside of this wealth-holding entity, increasingly aware, as they were, of dance as an ever-broadening cultural field. At a historical moment when Senator Jesse Helms was publicly declaring that NEA had “abandoned its Congressionally mandated mission” on the floor of the Senate, panel assemblies offered a space to defend dance democracy (Helms 1994: 101). Inside of the NEA, incrementally larger assemblies harbored additional demands for policy reform and made headway naming and incorporating the agency’s philanthropic shortcomings.

The 1993 Diversity Task Force

I’ve worked here to establish the bureaucratic act of incorporating live assemblies as an institutional practice whereby NEA grantmakers both challenged

and defended dominant models of dance support. I turn next to a larger macroinstitutional example where staff from Dance and the agency's various divisions undertook the charge to better integrate cultural diversity into federal arts grantmaking. In early January 1993, then-Director of NEA Expansion Arts A. B. Spellman called upon all divisional directors to attend a series of convenings organized under the auspices of a task force on diversity and to submit on-record testimony about how to achieve stronger cultural, racial, and regional inclusion within their respective programs. While Spellman's oversight of Expansion Arts had produced statistical gains in federal endowment of marginalized cultural groups, Spellman's 1993 Diversity Task Force sought to undo power structures that continually excluded minority artists within the NEA's disciplinary divisions. The structure of a task force enlisted agency outsiders and insiders together in a collective forum to think coalitionally about potential biases that had been embedded within NEA standards of "Excellence." By coming together to undo these narrow notions, Spellman's aim was to make concrete recommendations to restructure NEA guidelines and practices with distributional equity at the forefront.

Building on the momentum of a research study published in 1992 sponsored by Expansion Arts that surveyed over 1,700 nonprofit arts organizations of color about their experiences of opportunity and exclusion, Spellman's call to gather the next year cited dire statistics that laid bare the amount of work still to be done to properly endow the cultural contributions of artists and communities of color at the federal level (Bowles 1992). Invited testimony from divisional directors sought to expose policy and practical inconsistencies and advise NEA senior leadership on how to rewrite narratives, restructure guidelines, and overhaul governmental procedures to better account for non-EuroAmerican approaches and worldviews. As a structurally partitioned division dedicated to the work of racial equity and inclusion, Expansion Arts had, for too long, been a unit alone in responding to the field needs of African, Asian, Latino/a, and Native American arts organizers. Spellman's invitation to Dance Director Sali Ann Kriegsman suggested that time had come for the NEA's predominantly white grantmakers and directors to labor more deliberately toward rerouting resourcing to nonwhite and multiethnic organizations. Incorporating cultural difference was, in Spellman's view, essential work required of all federal arts grantmakers to achieve philanthropic reforms that would tilt NEA priorities toward culturally sensitive approaches to federal arts endowment.

The Dance Program testimony that I excerpt below was delivered by Kriegsmann on January 22, 1993, and is drawn from an internal memorandum documenting the event. Her narrative called attention to philanthropic practices in Dance that had historically delimited access for nonwhite, nonmoneyed dance-makers and, just as importantly, offered strategies to move the NEA toward concrete institutional reform. Kriegsmann's suggested blueprints for philanthropic reparation, however well intended, would be left largely unrealized as funders hustled to triage some semblance of past patterns of support in the immediate aftermath of the agency's 1995 budgetary cuts.

After thanking Director Spellman, task force members, and staff, Kreisgman opened her comments by acknowledging the exceptional aesthetic diversity of the US dance field as an obvious asset. Her prepared comments went on to expose the Dance Program's relative failure to fully address this depth and dynamism through specific funding mechanisms and governmental practices. First among the issues that, in her view, had been stalling fuller recognition and resourcing of artists from ethnic minority backgrounds was the NEA's gross underrecognition of the horrendous impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on US artists. Bear in mind that the year was 1993, and the HIV/AIDS crisis had been wreaking havoc on racial minority members of the dance community with zero policy-level action by the NEA or the US Commander-in-Chief for over a decade.⁶⁶ Kriegsmann explained:

I have to mention AIDS right up there, and the endangerment of all dance traditions. I think that this is an issue that has not been discussed here—also in relation to demographics that have not been discussed. Particularly in relation to cultural diversity, many of the communities that are going to be hardest hit, and have been hardest hit in cultural communities that don't get discussed at all. The impact on the African American dance community and the Spanish [*sic*] dance community, and other communities—is profound. We've lost lots and lots of people and we will continue to do so.⁶⁷

Dance Program leadership had, prior to this assembly, articulated consistent demands for direct HIV/AIDS advocacy in year-end policy overview reports for 1991, 1992, and 1993. Dance staff had attended field discussions and fund-raisers, public education forums, and memorials in local dance communities to

commemorate the toll and impact of AIDS on dance-makers from diverse backgrounds.⁶⁸ Leveraging the occasion of this diversity assembly, Kriegsman reinforced a viewpoint she had stated the previous year: that the NEA's institutional silence around HIV/AIDS constituted complicity, at best, and arts workplace discrimination at its worst, given the large incidence of AIDS in the dance field.⁶⁹ She challenged those assembled to join her in protesting the NEA's long-standing policies of nonrecognition as factors escalating the deaths of some of dance's most acclaimed artists of color. She suggested that, at a policy level, a coalitional approach across art and nonart federal programs could be attempted to protect basic human entitlements and press harder for reforms that took stock of dancers' health and medical costs. At the time of this impassioned internal gathering, HIV/AIDS was one of a number of hot-button health policy issues that doubly threatened diversity and human rights in the arts in no uncertain terms.

Kriegsman's next comments championed Dance Program achievements that had effectively rerouted resourcing to dance organizers of color, particularly programs built from leveraged partnerships with NEA Folk/Heritage, Expansion, and Media Arts. She discussed the aforementioned research studies and also lauded public television dance broadcasts, many of which emerged under the previous directorship of Rhoda Grauer, as impactful ways that NEA support shifted public perception about dance's dynamism and cultural diversity. She took care to mention her personal efforts to foster widespread dance preservation and documentation as a capacious policy strategy that had helped to secure historically underendowed dance organizers with some much-needed support.

When asked to comment on the Dance Program's enduring promotion of concert dance, Kriegsman confessed that the process of decentering EuroAmerican aesthetics and architectures had gone relatively slowly, overall. When pressed to explain why, she noted that panel deliberation remained a large part of the problem. Unchecked cultural biases among panelists continued to exert influence on grant decisions despite efforts to enlist advisors from diverse backgrounds. Rather than shrug off past attempts, Kriegsman suggested that one way to improve cultural sensitivity on Dance funding panels might be to enlist experts from the NEA's sister institution, the National Endowment for the Humanities with expertise across cultural contexts to educate advisors and staff on non-Europeanist aesthetic worldviews. She remarked:

So I think the role of artists, teachers, critics, historians, writers, and presenters needs to be even larger in developing critical discourse on these and many other difficult and sensitive issues. And this has never been more important than now. We need to really be talking more, and listening more, and observing more in every community and across cultures.⁷⁰

Dance Program insiders had witnessed the challenge endured by cultural critics of color during grant panel evaluation during endeavors like the Vernacular Dance Preservation Initiative. By convening cross-cultural listening sessions, Kriegsman suggested that the NEA was uniquely positioned to close opportunity gaps and improve resourcing for Native American, Black, Latino/a, and Asian diasporic art and artists. Recognizing the limited leadership of dance advocates of color on NEA panels, Kriegsman suggested that the Dance Program could do a much more thorough job of moving outside of their existing networks to locate more non-concert dance-makers to serve panel roles, but the process of board diversification remained vexed. She explained:

And so that leads to finding qualified professionals to serve on panels, and to be consultants to us, expanding our knowledge of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds with specific and broad expertise. If you have ten people on a panel, and you have one expert in a very arcane part of the dance field, are they going to be able to speak to 99 percent of the applicants? And is there going to be an application in this group that they can feel that they are serving a purpose in being here for? They haven't just been asked because they happen to be Indonesian, or whatever.⁷¹

A policy of “whatever-ing” cultural difference in the process of NEA panel composition and evaluation had been called out by cultural communities of color since 1965; the 1993 Diversity Task Force was no exception. In a funding body now nearly three decades into institutional maturity, racial tokenism in grant panel review still ran rampant across disciplinary divisions. Kriegsman herself acknowledged a complaint she often heard from racially marginalized panelists who participated in these largely white assemblies as “being at a table that you did not set.”⁷² To build grantmakers’ cultural literacy, panel tokenism and the effective whitewashing of dance grantee rosters that resulted had to be spotlighted as an enduring policy issue for white and nonwhite grantmakers,

alike. Auditing the agency's recruitment of panel evaluators would enable fuller participation by ethnically marginalized dance organizers and might even mean asking veteran advisors on panels to sit out.

Lingering longer on issues of policy translation, Kreisgman took care to highlight structural foreclosures that accompanied the application process for non-English speakers seeking NEA dance grantseekers. She remarked:

There are all the forbidding forms to fill out . . . They are difficult for me and I speak English. But I can't imagine what it's like for someone for whom English is not a first language, to have to sift through the process of reading our guidelines and try to understand what it is exactly that we are looking for, here.⁷³

Kriegsman's remark here pointed to the racialized labor of translation as an additional burden that was producing insurmountable barriers for non-English speaking applicants. Channeling resources for recruitment of bilingual staff members, providing cultural sensitivity education, and paying for translation services could, in Kriegsman's view, eliminate structural impediments and broaden the NEA's dance vista.

Careful to not let economic pressures go without mention, Kriegsman's next comments took aim at the agency's structural preoccupation with economic growth and management as untenable barometers for success for artists of color working in socioeconomically disinvested communities, in particular. The funder-imposed mandate to constantly grow the size of one's board, increase annual donations, expand productions, and maximize budgets was, in her view, forcing many cultural organizers of color to prematurely adopt the 501(c)(3) model. In anticipation that assimilation would increase donations and grant income, she worried that notable dance organizations of color (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and Philadanco were her examples) were effectively managing to meet funder-imposed mandates to "scale up," but groups from economically marginalized communities often struggled to compete against the pressure to institutionalize over the long term.

Institutions get a very good rep around here. But in the dance field, they are under a lot of scrutiny right now. The question of whether [the pressure to form] an institution is helpful or harmful to the dance art is a question

that will probably always be with us, because dance is something that happens in the moment. And I think that many institutions, those that have developed into institutions, are facing crises when institutional needs rub up against artistic and cultural issues, with sometimes very poor results.⁷⁴

Artists from economically underendowed US communities were inordinately struggling to stay afloat in 1993 without easy access to private wealth. The NEA's shrinking provisions compounded the ability of dance-makers of color to build a stable organizational and economic center.⁷⁵ Threats to the NEA's bottom line brought proportionally greater risks to artists of color, who depended more regularly on public provisions than their white and moneyed dance counterparts. As the Reagan and Clinton administrations were actively siphoning funds from social policy areas, including education, health care, labor and housing, Kriegsman joined assembled federal arts funders in worrying about whether the promotion of "capacity building" as a funder-imposed priority was putting dance organizers from low- to moderate-income communities at a disproportionate disadvantage.

Animated by Spellman's charge to submit structural barriers at the NEA in Dance to the policy record, Kriegsman's closing statement tread a particularly volatile line by equating the agency's racist, regionalist, and classist procedures with the dirty word of the moment: "censorship." Comparing issues raised to the taboo topic of agency's very public battles for free expression in this same historical instance, Kriegsman bravely remarked:

We haven't mentioned the word "censorship" here. But I think that many communities have felt censored in this country—many forms of expression have felt censored out, or censored in—and that, I think, because we're in such a time of profound change, there's a lot of fear associated with it that manifests in different ways.⁷⁶

At a moment when artists who hailed from sexually marginalized communities were being denied funding and were engaged in an overt "culture war" against threats to their right to free expression, this federal dance funder aligned the NEA's long-standing patterns of race-based, class-based exclusion a form of censorship that grantmakers had kept silent about for far too long. Rather than allow the NEA's hypervisible "cultural wars" overwhelm public discourse

about who federal grantmakers had excluded and how, Kriegsman insisted that African, Asian, Latino/a, and Native American dance organizers knew inordinately well about what one allied activist during this period termed “the brand of censorship called racism” that haunted philanthropic distribution at the Arts Endowment (Camp 1995). Naming some structural foreclosures that were as old as the NEA itself, Kriegsman challenged those assembled to understand the agency’s current battles over “freedom” alongside the enduring “un-freedoms” upon which the dominant grantmaking system rested. Her assembly testimony made abundantly clear how the NEA was failing to account for institutional threats to “free expression” on the basis of race, region, and class. At this assembly, grantmakers were invited to actively confront official and unofficial policies that were keeping artists of color “censored out” or “censored in.” Those assembled exercised a coalitional call for structural and cultural change inside the agency as a group responsibility. Acknowledging the sensitivity and humility needed to perform impactful diversity work, Kriegsman concluded:

It’s all very well and good to talk about cultural diversity as something we want to see, but in the doing of it, in the accomplishing of it, there are many, many very sensitive and contradictory issues that will have to be dealt with. And they require thoughtfulness as well as speed.⁷⁷

Task force members knew that tackling issues of contingent cultural inclusion at the Arts Endowment would require more than verbal declarations. Those assembled saw on-record testimony from those with the power as a first form of needs assessment; moving next from these explicit issues and problems, the agency would be better poised to change application protocols, recruit leadership of color at all levels of decision-making, implement multilingual translation of policies and programs, and marshal forth culturally sensitive policies of panel composition and fund governance. Within the next fiscal year, Kriegsman would continually reinforce the unique role that the NEA could play in widening the national dance vista through its power to convene allies in the pursuit of diversity. Her narrative for the 1994 Policy Overview summary in *Dance* championed the NEA’s power to convene coalitions of the willing as among the agency’s strongest tools for policy reform.

The power to convene is one of the Endowment's most useful instruments, especially in areas in which we are not able to devote our grant dollars. The ability to draw the best and most knowledgeable individuals together to help identify key issues in arts disciplines, establish goals, determine means and policies, and measure impact is intrinsic to the Endowment's historical role in the arts.⁷⁸

As an assembly dedicated to driving racial equity into federal arts policy discourse, the 1993 Diversity Task Force gathered knowledgeable individuals to confront models, expose contingencies, and offer concrete steps toward institutional change. At the same historical moment when members of the US Congress were busy amassing opposition to NEA policymaking inside the hallowed halls of the House and Senate, Task Force leadership gathered and built traction around the prospect of reimagining the institution from the inside. The coalitional efforts of these committed insiders were stalled by the agency's 1995 budget cuts and top-down regulations, which sent leadership into a state of total institutional triage (discussed in the next chapter). But the value I see in revisiting past efforts here is to underline the agency's convening power as a tool for coalition building and to highlight grantmakers' specific articulation of concrete steps and blueprints for philanthropic change. To close this consideration of the bureaucratic angling of NEA insiders, I turn to an even larger, congressionally issued assembly that yielded policy blueprints that did manage to stick: the 1990 Independent Commission on the National Endowment for the Arts.

The 1990 Independent Commission on the National Endowment for the Arts

In 1990, with an election year on the horizon and zero NEA consensus among legislators anywhere in sight, arts adversaries in Congress began to put the brakes on public opposition. Wary of treading farther into hot-button issues around federal spending, elected officials took an action step to keep a watchdog eye on the agency by voting to mobilize an Independent Blue Ribbon Commission on the NEA. This third-party commission, led by citizens, was charged with conducting an institutional audit and generating policy recommendations that

would calm partisan disagreements about the agency's purpose and procedures (DeGrazia 1994). The recommendations of the 1990 Independent Commission on the National Endowment for the Arts (hereafter the IC) shaped future policy reforms by producing a congressionally sanctioned plan that senior leadership would follow as they moved to restructure the agency from the top-down in the aftermath of the 1995 cuts.⁷⁹

The IC functioned as a governmental proxy-of-sorts, an intermediary wedge to diffuse conflict and still regulate the agency at a moment when elected officials sought political distance from controversial art and artists.⁸⁰ Congress tasked commissioners with proving a specific hypothesis: legislators specifically wanted to know whether the NEA, as a federal institution, was behaving like a proper governmental agency, answerable to taxpayers, or whether grantmakers were comporting themselves more in line with the actions of a private philanthropic entity, deferent to private artists and arts investors. Commissioners were also asked to issue recommendations that would provide political cover for lawmakers and restore the appearance of bipartisan consensus during an election year when Republican gains in the House and Senate appeared imminent (Burgess 2002: 25). Though the decisions of the IC were not legally binding, senior leadership ultimately adopted their blueprint for institutional change and, in so doing, turned agency's governmental infrastructure inside out.

In terms of casting, the IC was populated by a bipartisan mix of arts policy specialists chosen by elected officials. Four of the twelve commissioners were appointed by the President, four by the Speaker of the House, and four by the President pro tempore of the Senate. Investigators made site visits to observe and document the agency in action. Information gathered was presented to a congressional subcommittee over six full-day public hearings convened between June and August 1990. At the hearings, IC members flagged three specific problem areas pertaining to faulty accounting. First, they expressed concern that, despite ongoing regulations, panel nepotism continued to limit opportunities for minority arts groups. To tighten evaluative oversight, the IC recommended that the NEA retire its categorically vague and often contested criterion of artistic "merit" as a barometer of fund worthiness and adopt economically instrumental criteria, an approach that held greater favor with elected officials.⁸¹ By better aligning federal arts grantmaking with protecting the so-called health of the US Gross Domestic Product, commissioners insisted that the NEA would build

a more reliable platform to lobby for and defend arts spending on terms that legislators used and understood. A second problem that IC members saw within grant panel governance was an observable lack of rotation in panel composition as a regular institutional practice. Here, the IC's recommendation prescribed stringent appointment time frames and tighter oversight by staff inside of grant panel meetings. Last, an audit of final reporting by NEA grantees revealed inconsistent levels of accountability by arts organizers for taxpayer dollars spent. Rather than allow lax accounting by grantors and grantees to further threaten the agency's legislative assurances, IC recommendations imposed more exhaustive midterm and final reporting requirements as a measure to ensure that grant contracts were being properly executed.

In the end, the IC answered congressional members' hypothesis in the affirmative. Yes, NEA staff, panel advisors, and grantees were a bit lapsed in their general accountability to the government. Yes, levels of insularity endured across all areas of grantmaking; such patterns followed the fold of a private funding body. Yes, senior leadership and staff demonstrated minimal deference to public taxpayers as the agency's ostensible patrons. Their recommendations implemented tighter bureaucratic performances that also handed NEA presidential appointees (the chair and NCA) greater control over funding guidelines, effectively disempowering the agency's disciplinary directors.

A list of concrete reforms developed by the IC sought to better align NEA operations with those of a proper federal agency. First, the IC suggestions installed a revolving door during the panel process by recommending the structural addition of a "knowledgeable layperson," an individual who did not earn their living as an artist or at a nonprofit arts organization, on all future grant panels. Next, the IC advised program directors to tighten term limits for grant evaluators to no more than three consecutive years and cautioned them to police rotation more consistently. Staff in the disciplinary divisions were also pressured to more closely monitor conflict of interest issues during the panel process by prescreening applications, recusing panelists who held connections to an applicant, and educating panel members on the conflict-of-interest policies to enable greater self-regulation. In addition to these panel reforms, the IC strongly encouraged senior leadership to tighten the agency's economic bottom line by channeling discretionary funds toward more regular and robust economic data collection to more convincingly defend NEA spending overall. Greater NEA investment

in research and analysis and more substantive midterm and final reporting on the part of grantees would, commissioners recommended, better safeguard the agency against future charges of excessive spending. Recommendations like these exerted increased pressure on funders and grantees to travel in closer lockstep with federal bureaucrats. At the same time, suggested IC reforms saddled grantors and grantees with increased labor and accounting to assuage legislators' requests for data at future appropriation hearings.⁸² An external assembly and agency-wide audit aimed at tightening grant management, the IC's slate of reforms guaranteed that the NEA's days of improvisational grantmaking and deviation were over.

The response of NEA leadership to the IC report was quietly favorable. Legislators appreciated the Commission's careful avoidance of hot-button issues and their focus on achieving "balance, independence, and a striving for consensus."⁸³ Upon release of the final IC report, then-NEA Chair John Frohnmayer adopted some suggested changes immediately. Other mandates were written into the 1990 NEA Reauthorization Act.⁸⁴ As a critical assembly that would remap agency operations, the IC set a historical precedent for incorporating third-party interventions by outside policymakers as a dimension of NEA oversight (Burgess 2002: 27). As with the earlier incorporative assemblies, the IC harbored critical debates about how the NEA could salvage its reputation with elected officials and secure institutional survival as the agency's top policy priority. Practically speaking, the implementation of these top-down reforms would prove particularly challenging in Dance. I will triangulate and analyze these pressures as a central topic of chapter 3.

The NEA's very public controversies in the 1980s and early 1990s exposed contradictions between the agency's policies and their micropractical translations and made these departures glaringly apparent to those on the institutional outside. The agency's enmeshment with legislative appointees and third-party auditors in the 1990s was a policy that would certainly continue into the twenty-first century. These less-overt cultural and structural tussles together evidence the NEA's historical function as harbor for political exchange by differentially invested stakeholders in dance and the arts. Existing histories of this period have rightfully lamented the economic losses that federal funders withstood at the hands of the 104th Congress as a gigantic blow during this period. But, through these examples, I maintain that the agency's loss of power to convene democratic discourse, both within and beyond dance, remains one of the most damaging casualties of the 1995 cuts.

Conclusion: The NEA Dance Program's (C)overt "Culture Wars"

Viewed from the institutional inside, these repertoires of bureaucratic leveraging, touring, and incorporating significantly altered the inner mechanics of arts policy and institutional culture. These unspectacular workarounds functioned as power-filled moves to protect long-standing dance hierarchies and also to move philanthropic needle toward more culturally and geographically accountable grantmaking. To skeptical readers who still envision policy as an institutional exercise rendered in the abstract, I hope to have humanized how specific people gained material advantage through interdivisional partnerships (leveraging), expanded fund distribution by traveling to previously estranged dance communities to witness artists at work (touring), and submitted diverse, often oppositional, positions at the arts policy table through live convening and social exchange (incorporating). The bureaucratic angling of NEA insiders answered to intensified supervision from the Hill and executive orders from the Commander-in-Chief while not losing sight of art and artists. Macropolicy pressures would only multiply as the agency moved toward a new century and senior leadership enacted a series of radical, agency-wide reforms to protect institutional survival.

My final chapter begins in immediate aftermath of the 1995 budget cuts and congressional overhauls and shifts attention away from Dance Program insiders and toward the political obligations of NEA senior leadership. In Dance, the fight to protect the agency's dwindling concert dance infrastructure continued, and wavered, amidst an ascendant philanthropic system that supported economic deliverables as the NEA's primary standard of arts endowment. The NEA's neo-liberal turn toward philanthropic economization introduced new norms of ideal grantee comportment, issued from the top down. These economically instrumental policies would prove particularly difficult to circumnavigate for grantors and grantees in dance. At the millennial turn, the ideal NEA grantee had been reimaged, but basically still remained beholden to three things: access to nonfederal capital, willful assimilation to arts organizational practices that funder guidelines demanded, and awareness of the specific people to whom grant decision-makers themselves were answerable.

three

1997-2016



FIGURE 11 The Nancy Hanks Center, former Old Post Office Pavilion, Washington, DC. National Endowment for the Arts headquarters, 1970-2013. Photo: imageBROKER / Alamy Stock Photo.

DISINVESTING IN DANCE

The NEA's Neoliberal Turn

PRELUDE TO CHAPTER THREE *The NEA's institutional power was significantly reorganized after the massive budgetary losses of late 1995 and agency-wide restructuring in 1996. To understand the dance-specific impacts of such blows to the agency's economic influence and internal workforce, chapter 3 examines policy and its practical translation through the leadership strategies of NEA chairs. Under pressure from the executive branch, I highlight how these political appointees actively rewrote institutional narratives, reengineered program criteria, and regulated fund governance in response to an increasingly neoliberalized US federal government bureaucracy. Heavy rebranding efforts took hold across this roughly twenty-year period as arts funders circumnavigated institutional survival in a system that rewarded federal agents for doing more with less. By structurally dissolving grant programs grounded in the so-called arts disciplines, NEA Chairs constructed in its stead a large portfolio of national pilot programs from the top-down. These new philanthropic tools advanced an alternative idea of arts endowment, one driven by the social and economic outcomes of federal investments in art. By leveraging resources with nonarts partners across the executive branch, touring the country to underendowed congressional districts, and incorporating economic data proving the instrumental utility of the NEA itself as a political institution, NEA chairs insured institutional salvation and all but left dance in the dust. Inside the Dance Program, grantmakers struggled to assimilate to new funder-imposed mandates and sought to preserve concert dance against the grain of these macropolicy shifts. In small ways, dance insiders succeeded, but failed to fully stall the neoliberal ascension of the "creative entrepreneur" as a newly endowed ideal cultural class.*

THIS FINAL CHAPTER departs from the sweeping impacts of economic and governmental regulations of 1996 and highlights how the NEA's institutional power changed hands into and beyond the turn of the twenty-first century. From 1996 onward, the NEA Chairs, NCA, and deputy chairs maintained top-down control over policy engineering, leaving Disciplinary Directors and staff to roll out their plans to arts groups. Abstract claims to artistic "excellence" were replaced with narrative rationales that defended federally funded art as a tool to produce nonarts values and economic deliverables in a measure to protect the NEA's own institutional livelihood. The extent to which entrepreneurial senior officials managed to reengineer grant mechanisms to replace cultural gains with market gains as a policy priority evidences the agency's increased deference to the elected officials who controlled the NEA's bottom line. Both during and after the millennial turn, NEA appointees and their leadership teams were particularly adept at leveraging connections to policymakers in more economically robust areas like education, health, housing, and defense. They prioritized the lure of the local by touring to remote neighborhoods to connect NEA funding to every state and congressional district, and they embraced the bureaucratic act of incorporating economic data to justify how federally funded creativity could produce economic returns. New funding criteria promoting cross-market, economically instrumental philanthropic ideals emerged and recruited applicants who could tool art to produce returns in disinvested, nonarts policy areas. In Dance, the NEA's neoliberal turn installed pressures that led grantmakers to bend the new rules to try to serve and protect the old concert dance guard.

Given how radically the agency-wide restructuring remodeled the philanthropic corporealities of grantmakers and grantseekers in dance, I have given this chapter a slightly different organizational structure. Rather than focus on a single group of grantees as I did in chapter 1 or grantors as I did in chapter 2, my work below tracks and triangulates the political answerabilities of three groups of constituencies: the President and his executive branch, NEA senior leadership, and Dance Program insiders (both grantors and grantees). I proceed chronologically across the presidential administrations of Bill Clinton (1993–2001), George W. Bush (2001–9), and Barack Obama (2009–17), examining executive branch policy maneuvers that informed the respective leadership strategies of NEA chairs Jane Alexander and William "Bill" Ivey (Clinton), Dana Gioia (Bush II), Rocco Landesman, and Jane Chu (Obama). I spotlight how each of these

institutional figureheads approached arts endowment with an eye for the leveraging, touring, and incorporating, tactics that they deployed in the face of top-down constraints. And I draw each of these chronological sections to a close by entertaining the impacts of macropolicy initiatives on Dance Program grantors and grantees, noticing how these constituencies worked with and around new policy incentives to salvage some semblance of the concert dance infrastructure that the agency's early influence created.

Throughout this account of two decades of arts policymaking leading up to the NEA's fiftieth anniversary year (2016), I maintain that tightened regulation by elected officials forced levels of structural and cultural assimilation by political appointees, grantmakers and grantseekers alike. These interdependent pressures and relations are key to understanding how a federal funding body that was initially engineered to endow exceptional American (dance) art and artists evolved into a funding body where insiders behave more like a federal investment firm. The struggle of aspiring dance grantees to find a reliable foothold inside of the agency's hyperinstrumental turn toward art as a tool to grow the Gross Domestic Product worried many with whom I spoke. At the twenty-first century turn, changes were afoot that signaled to many institutional insiders that current dance grantseekers could no longer lean on past privilege for future success. The NEA's macropolicy disinvestment in funding dance by way of the "disciplines" was throwing the concert dance field into nothing short of an infrastructural crisis.

Clinton's Responsibility Regime: Impacts on NEA Grantmaking

In 1992, then-Governor of Arkansas William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton wowed the TV-watching citizenry by showcasing his saxophone playing talents at a taping of the Arsenio Hall Show at Paramount Studios in Hollywood, California (fig. 12). One day earlier, Clinton had defeated former Governor Jerry Brown and clinched the Democratic Party's nomination for the presidency. Clinton won the election and would serve two terms as commander-in-chief (1993–2001). While Bill Clinton was not the only US President to self-represent as an artistic everyman in public appearances, his performances showcased an abundant personality artfully intertwined with governmental policy agendas that were fundamentally rooted in fiscal austerity. Clinton's song-and-dance symbolically masked the political conservatism that belied his Left-leaning progressivism

and distracted many from the massive uprooting of formerly federally funded programs that transpired during his time in office. What critics called Clinton's "Third Way" centrism offered a cloak and a cover for neoliberal social and economic policy reforms that swept across federal agencies under his watch. His administration often defended cuts to Johnson's Great Society programs under the guise of individual responsibility, moral accountability, and economic cost savings. The NEA was not immune to the effects of this "responsibilization," an apt term invoked by Wendy Brown (2015) to describe the instrumental strategy whereby the state devolves economic and administrative investment in social policy programs and redistributes control to nonfederal agents and agencies. Like a well-pitched saxophone solo, Clinton's liberal language sounded a democratic tune that drowned out the dangerous cuts he made to basic human entitlements upon which many US citizens had come to depend. Federally funded citizens, including artists, would, under Clinton, confront increased pressures to take responsibility for policy problems that the government once used to protect. The NEA's partial defunding, destaffing, and restructuring from 1995–96 onward must be seen, then, as part of a sweeping effort to diffuse the cost of federal government and to pressure nongovernmental bodies to pick up the slack.¹

"No More Something for Nothing." This well-known quote, drawn from Clinton's 1992 election campaign, underscored his intention to follow Reagan-era policies aimed at decreasing citizen dependency on government subsidies (O'Connor 2002: 401). Clinton's welfare and labor policy reforms were particularly contested aspects of his platform. The effects of this area of reengineering are worth considering to contextualize how federal disinvestment in labor programs impacted criteria for federal support for artists in the 1990s. Clinton's Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWOA), to give an example, drained fiscal entitlements and rewired requirements for labor subsidy to reward work as a virtuous end in itself. Rather than follow the Democratic Party's historic efforts to engineer an infrastructure for public welfare that readdressed income gaps through economic redistribution to both working and nonworking poor, Clinton introduced compulsory work requirements and job training programs to turn state-dependent citizens into morally "responsible" individuals and productive workers.² Incrementally, NEA grantees under Clinton would encounter new mandates requiring them to list economic deliverables evidencing their productivity as a stipulation of federal endowment.



FIGURE 12 Clinton's sax acts. Future President William "Bill" Jefferson Clinton plays the Elvis Presley hit "Heartbreak Hotel" in the musical opening of "The Arsenio Hall Show" in 1992. Photo: Reed Saxon, Associated Press.

Importantly, Clinton's approach to labor policy restructuring did not attempt to totally defund the welfare system or eliminate federal support outright. Labor reforms such as the PRWOA were softer, more subtle microadjustments to programs that disempowered economically "unproductive" citizens, step by step. Through shortened time limits on federal entitlements and mandatory accounting, Clinton's new policies put working families above nonworking people as worthy investments of the state.³ Steady maneuvers like these enabled Clinton's administration to maintain the symbolic appearance of support while shifting the burden of supporting socially disenfranchised groups to smaller agencies, including the nonprofit (arts) sector. NEA leadership would respond to Clinton's policy platform through policies that put NEA-funded artists to work toward the social good and the good of the market in new, entrepreneurial ways. NEA chairs came to adopt the outcome-oriented attitude that undergirded Clinton's "no-freeloader" approach, applying its tenets to grant governance in the arts.

A second way that Clinton's "Third Way" centrism disciplined the behaviors of federal arts grantors and grantees was through his incentivization of empirical,

measurable data as a barometer of effective federal spending. Clinton's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) mandated that all federal institutions abide a "results-oriented" approach to budgetary allocations to prove to citizens that tax dollars were being invested responsibly.⁴ The NEA inherited this orientation toward federal funding as an "investment" with the legislative enactment of Clinton's 1997 Government Performance Results Act (also known as The Results Act, or GPRA). The GPRA justified cutting spending to agencies in areas that were achieving little statistical improvement toward stated policy goals.⁵ Through increased data reporting requirements, Clinton and his successors calculated the failure or success of state-subsidized programs using financial justifications that often shrouded political motivations that conditioned cuts to services.

Practically speaking, Clinton's attention to the NEA during his tenure in office was minimal. His more notable arts policy interventions concerned commercial distribution of entertainment and international cultural export. Leaving oversight of domestic arts policy to the East Wing, Clinton focused his attention on rewiring governmental systems to increase private sector control over global cultural production.⁶ His administration loosed regulations for industry leaders (for example, internet service providers) to release them from liability for things like copyright infringement.⁷ With First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton serving as NEA liaison, Clinton took to issuing a barrage of free trade agreements and copyright protections that shifted US cultural distribution significantly out of governmental control and the public interest.⁸ An owner-approach to safeguarding cultural works, Clinton's copyright reforms conditioned the rapid ascendancy of media conglomerates (Clear Channel being a famous example) and collided cultural interests with corporate concerns. His reforms also siphoned funds from foreign diplomacy programs like Voice of America and defunded the long-standing State Department initiative United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1999. Systemic overhauls like these help to put the NEA's diminished scale and power in the 1990s into context. The NEA was no longer large enough or strong enough in reputation to channel influence as it had under previous commanders-in-chief. During his time in office, Clinton made two political appointments to the position of NEA chair—actress Jane Alexander and folklorist/ethnomusicologist William "Bill" Ivey. Each of these leaders was charged with drawing institutional policies and practices into closer alignment with other areas of federal policy oversight. How each leader did this, and how dance grantmakers and grantees responded, is fascinating to observe.

Clinton's NEA Appointees: Leveraging, Touring, Incorporating Art for the Public Good

When Chair Jane Alexander (1993–97) assumed the NEA helm, she inherited significant governmental missteps by former Chair John Frohnmayer (1989–92) that warranted immediate correction.⁹ Frohnmayer's failures of policy leadership had alienated arts and legislative allies, most notably his choice to rescind various NEA grants had been roundly critiqued as a violation of artists' First Amendment protections. Alexander's leadership team withstood residual legislative suspicion, regular confrontations with disgruntled arts groups, and the annual possibility that a majority vote against the NEA's authorization could terminate the agency outright, putting an end to federal arts funding.¹⁰ Arts grantmakers and grantees were terminally on edge. Funded artists who had been slapped with decency clauses felt censored. Arts-allergic political lobbyists and members of Congress were tarnishing public perception of the NEA by challenging the moral underpinnings of grant decision-making. Staff were weathering increased surveillance and felt pressured to move in closer lockstep with legislators to avoid further enmeshment in conflict. The most dire of the NEA's many execution attempts took place in late December 1995, when the Congressional Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies sat down to debate NEA's fate and budget appropriations, which then sat at \$162.5 million. In her memoir, Alexander described the chaotic state that surrounded the hearing as a circus-of-sorts:

The House subcommittee under Ralph Regula had given us a 40 percent reduction in appropriations. The hearing itself was comical. The 104th Congress was trying to pass so much legislation in such a short amount of time that everyone was running in and out of the hearing room, including Chairman Regula, because they had other meetings to attend simultaneously. When Gingrich had first become speaker he stated that congressmen would get more time to spend with their families. Hah! Instead everyone was flying by the seat of his pants. What a way to run the government. (Alexander 2000: 265)

When the votes came in, the cuts came down hard. The NEA saw a 39 percent reduction in its fiscal appropriation for FY 1996, its largest cut in its history, which shrunk the overall budget from \$162.4 million to \$99.5 million. Although the agency's stay in execution was crucial, such economic sanctions dealt

a fundamental blow to the NEA's power as a funding body. While legislators saved the agency from execution for two additional years, a slew of regulations followed that overhauled its inaugural system of discipline-based grant support. For NEA-funded artists, one of the most damaging of changes dealt by Congress was the structural elimination of the coveted Individual Artist Fellowships in all categories except literature and jazz. Seen by many as a move to further distance the agency (and the government) from direct collaboration with artists, these unrestricted funding mechanisms would never return at the federal level. For the incorporated grantseekers whose nonprofit entities still qualified for NEA support, additional congressional mandates forbade requests for basic operations. Rules like these incentivized product-oriented thinking and organizational maneuvering on the part of grantseekers into the foreseeable future. After the acts of the 104th Congress, structural criteria for arts endowment changed, as did the organization, creation, and distribution of federally funded art.

For those working on the NEA inside, the 1995 defunding led to massive destaffing and forced the agency to vacate floors of the Nancy Hanks Center, formerly the Old Post Office Building (see fig. 11). Alexander described the process of relocation as physically and emotionally exhausting for the agency's shrunken workforce. "The halls were piled high for months with furniture, books, and papers with nowhere to go, adding to the demoralization of the staff" (Alexander 2000: 265). Forced to downsize its operations, the 1995 cuts decimated morale within an already reduced workforce. Earlier that same year, federal agencies had withstood a hiring freeze and two rounds of early retirement buyouts that reduced the NEA's staff from 273 employees to 240. Fearing additional layoffs, some employees knowingly left of their own accord. Those who chose to stay and face potential shortfalls watched senior leadership whittle the agency workforce down to a fraction of its former size. After the axe fell in December, the NEA employee roster shrank by almost one-half, from a team of 240 to 150 agents, literally overnight. Faced with the unpopular task of firing eighty-nine employees, Alexander's team moved some workers from professional to clerical positions, frequently against their wishes. Administrators who maintained their prior posts assumed the daunting task of piecing together the operational and procedural integrity of the agency with double the workload in some cases.¹¹

Given the regularity of NEA execution attempts throughout Alexander's time as NEA chair, her leadership team was well-practiced at putting proposals for

agency reorganization in place. Many blueprints for institutional restructuring were constructed and never materialized, but the practice of planning remained necessary in the event of major economic shortfalls. The results of the December 1995 budget decision forced Alexander's team to put plans into action to stabilize institutional disequilibrium. Critical changes were made to all aspects of the NEA's operations including new rhetorical justifications for federal arts spending, new grant categories and eligibility guidelines, and new evaluative standards within grant panels. I will briefly address each of these areas in turn.

The introduction of new justifications for federal arts funding was a response, in part, to critiques by the 1990 Independent Commission that the agency's stated purpose was vague and its premises difficult to measure. Under Alexander, the NEA's mission was entirely rewritten. The new mission highlighted the following four areas of institutional responsibility:

1. Grantmaking. Funding art by granting and leveraging matching funds through state, local, private, and commercial enterprises.
2. Convening. Facilitating granting panels and field overview panels charged with articulating agency and field priorities.
3. Leadership. Establishing benchmark priorities surrounding artistic excellence, merit, access, and education and fashioning structural methodologies to oversee the resourcing of such priorities in the public and private sector.
4. Partnership. Forging connections with state and local governments, philanthropic organizations, corporations, and individuals invested in arts programming and support. (Kimbis 1997: 243)

While grantmaking and convening were long-standing NEA priorities, the agency's newfound obligation to produce "leadership benchmarks" (item number three) signaled heightened compliance with the corporatized logics of Clinton's federal bureaucracy. Clinton's executive branch had increasingly required all federal agencies to engage in the corporate practice of "benchmarking," the economic process of naming targeted goals for "success" and quantifying their achievement through measurable data. Viewed by legislators as a measure to build investor confidence, "benchmarking" became a new way that the NEA could demonstrate to legislators and the public that arts funders knew how tax dollars were being spent. The NEA's recourse to "partnership" (item number

four) was also an institutional appeal to Clinton-era coalition politics, which emphasized fiscal streamlining and decreased government dependency. While none of the above items stood directly at odds with earlier approaches to federal arts endowment, one change stood out to those who participated in NEA grantmaking in earlier periods: the NEA's new priorities were notably absent of any direct reference to art or artists.

Where changes to the NEA's grantmaking infrastructure was concerned, Alexander's team did not completely dissolve the agency's prior approach. The Dance Program and other divisions were kept intact with smaller staff in place to support the administration of grant programs, which senior leadership would largely reinvent. The power to compose peer review panels remained seated with Dance directors, but Alexander's team rescinded power previously held by peer panel advisors to recommend budgetary allocations and took direct control over the political engineering of NEA grant guidelines.¹²

Alexander's team exercised this newfound control by folding all grant applications into a single application process, guided by four themes. Reducing the process of grant application to a single-application per group per year was a cost-cutting measure that instantly reduced the number of applications (at that time over 18,000) by 80 percent. Crucially, the new one-application rule did away with the possibility of "double-dipping," the pattern of some groups securing grants across multiple programs in the past.¹³ The four, two-pronged themes that were instituted to guide national arts grantmaking after 1996 were:

1. Creation and Presentation
2. Education and Access
3. Heritage and Preservation
4. Planning and Stabilization

Administratively speaking, translating these themes and this newly streamlined system was a tough task for divisional staff. It was abundantly clear that the above four areas did not equitably divide the levels of interest among NEA applicants.¹⁴ In Dance, roughly half of all applications after this top-down restructuring landed in the first category of "Creation and Presentation," signaling the regularity with which dance organizers had assimilated to presenting concert repertoires regionally on tour. The shift to theme-based grantmaking also threw panel advisors off kilter and required significant reskilling by staff. Under pressure from staff and citizen advisors, Alexander installed an additional layer of pre-

view wherein a discipline-based panel culled applications down to a reasonable number in each category before applicant pools were merged together and comparatively assessed. This sudden shift from dance-focused fund governance to a comparative review process spanning dance, visual art, and music remained a costly challenge to implement, and was ultimately reversed.

When panels did gather and deliberate, the new rules stipulated that panelists achieve consensus on a grantee roster but would now only list a “high” and a “low” fiscal range as a general guide for senior leadership to approve. The removal of direct fiscal oversight from panel members reduced panel debate to an abstract ranking system and transferred economic control more directly to presidential appointees. In addition to moving money decisions out of the jurisdiction of Dance Program insiders, Alexander moved the NEA’s master narrative away from exceptional art and increasingly toward Clinton’s populist ideals.

Two specific interventions that occurred during Alexander’s tenure shifted public attention on the agency toward a more culturally mainstream philanthropic purpose. The “Art 21” convening and the *American Canvas* tour and print monograph were critical mechanisms through which Alexander’s administration situated federally funded art as a tool for community cultural development.

With the millennial turn on the horizon, Alexander steered chair’s discretionary funds to support a national forum for 1,000 attendees in Chicago aimed at promoting “lifelong learning and technological advances in the arts” and “new avenues for arts resourcing.” A gathering that offered a buoy and a boost when the NEA’s reputation had hit rock bottom, “Art 21: Art Reaches into the Twenty-first Century” was Alexander’s effort to invite diverse investors to weigh in on the future of American art and culture (Bauerlin and Grantham 2008: 115). One particular keynote speaker for this event was not an esteemed artist or arts expert, but former mayor of San Antonio and Clinton’s Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Henry Cisneros. Cisneros’s message to over 1,000 championed arts participation by the broad US citizenry as a central tenet of the HUD agenda in combating socioeconomic distress in local communities. Arguing for art as an instrument of human, social, and economic development, Cisneros insisted that cultural collaborations between artists and city planners, economic investors, and civic leaders could significantly repair neighborhood unrest and cultivate public goodwill. By casting a member of Clinton’s cabinet and a nonarts policy leader as an arts interlocutor, Alexander landed on a potent strategy to persuade the masses of the NEA’s utility to more economically robust

policy areas of greater importance to legislators and the broader public. Such instrumental justifications for the value of art attached to commerce, justice, health, education, housing, and defense would continue and gain momentum under subsequent chairs.

In addition to events like “Art 21,” Alexander’s team also sought popular appeal by hitting the road. Alexander’s team convened a series of community town hall meetings by way of a whistle-stop tour to six US cities in 1996 to bring Cisneros’s message to the masses. The *American Canvas* tour and narrative report were mobilized with economic support from the NEA, state arts agencies, and private funders like Coca-Cola.¹⁵ The project gathered arts and civic leaders to promote culture as a tool of social uplift, urban development, health and wellbeing, educational advancement, and economic growth. Mounted during the height of the Helms controversies, *American Canvas* sent senior leadership to Miami, Florida; Columbus, Ohio; Los Angeles, California; Salt Lake City, Utah; Rock Hill, South Carolina; Charlotte, North Carolina; and San Antonio, Texas, to gather testimony from local citizens about the value of arts engagement in their communities. The final 190-page report, penned by Gary O. Larson, touted the NEA’s ability to “canvass” the United States as a national funder and to ignite cultural expression across congressional districts, several of which had been historically underrecognized by federal grantmakers in the past. As with Cisneros’s oratory, Larson’s narrative made minimal mention of artists, focusing instead, on shifting the NEA’s agenda toward service-oriented arts grantmaking. Audience appeals focused less on arts organizers and more on economic developers, educators, social servants, and municipal servants, commanding these investors to see themselves not only as arts consumers but as collaborators in arts-based development.¹⁶ This rhetorical strategy was amplified in the first chapter of *American Canvas*, entitled, “Improving the Climate for Culture,” where researchers explained:

The closing years of the twentieth century present an opportunity for the reexamination of the structural underpinnings of the nonprofit arts and for speculation on the development of a new support system: *one based less on traditional charitable practices and more on the exchange of goods and services*. American artists and arts organizations can make valuable contributions—from addressing social issues to enhancing education to providing

“content” for the new information superhighway—to American Society.
(Larson 1997: 12; emphasis in the original)

The story told through Alexander’s *American Canvas* tour and allied publication highlighted how art functioned as a tool to increase policy results in areas that policymakers outside of the arts cared a lot about. Arts engagement, Alexander maintained, was instrumental in communities where there was a need to grow civic participation, strengthen community viability, increase student educational success, build local economies, and/or engender creativity in city and rural design (Larson 1997: 5). By emphasizing what economists call the “demand side” of arts production, these rhetorical strategies recruited artists *not* to deliver “art for art’s sake” but to deliver nonarts market returns.

In terms of its reception, *American Canvas* weathered significant pushback from arts advocates who favored the agency’s culturally instrumental rationales for funding the arts on the sheer basis of merit or “excellence.” The politically neutered tone of Larson’s populist rhetoric fell under swift attack by critics who saw the agency’s emphasis on social and economic capital as strategies of NEA institutional preservation and little else. Other challengers worried that the NEA’s intertwined investment in art and community-building was imposing new pressures on artists that arts training institutions were ill-equipped to address (Kester 1998: 16–17). Policy reformists with investments in racial and regional equity remained skeptical as to whether the NEA’s friendly reification of social service partnerships would find their way to Black and Brown communities. Those who questioned *American Canvas* worried that the NEA’s rhetorical invocation of “community” was perhaps too tidy a depiction of the complex power exchanges that transpired between artists and local neighborhood residents. In response to these policy initiatives, a series of roundtable debates were staged where arts organizers spoke back about their unwillingness to assimilate to the NEA’s socially instrumental ideals.¹⁷ Despite such mobilization, many saw Alexander’s maneuvers as the writing on the proverbial wall: NEA grantmaking gears had downshifted from the agency’s previous preoccupation with funding “fine art” and were turning toward serving underendowed communities as a policy priority.

By counterbalancing nonart policy platforms (leveraging), “canvassing” the country (touring) and celebrating cultural populism, and integrating nonarts

policy issues into the NEA public discourse (incorporating), Alexander's team signaled the agency's fidelity to Clinton's results-based platform. Alexander's successor, and Clinton's second NEA appointee, William "Bill" Ivey would reiterate and expand this agency-wide push toward the US cultural mainstream. An academic and staunch humanist, Ivey's take on NEA philanthropy was similarly suspicious of artists who had grown accustomed to dance and arts grantmaking patterns of the past. Ivey's penchant for popular and folk cultural traditions of the United States and his prioritization of art education would be particularly challenging to realize at the NEA in Dance.

Bill Ivey's Populism: Education, Access, and the Cultural Bill of Rights

As the Clinton appointee who inherited the daunting task of implementing an overhauled funding system amidst massive resource reduction, William "Bill" Ivey (1998–2001) brought a grassroots feel to NEA leadership. His background as a folklorist, ethnomusicologist, and lead administrator of the Country Music Hall of Fame buttressed the agency's emerging image as an institution serving American citizens of all cultural stars and stripes. An inspiring orator, Ivey's public speeches and writing placed discursive emphasis on creativity as a universal American birthright. His rhetorical moves celebrated the cultural richness of both rural and urban pockets of the country and cast NEA-funded artists as civically engaged protectors of local culture. In his "Chairman's Statement" in the NEA's FY 2000 annual report, Ivey proposed a "Cultural Bill of Rights" that championed widespread citizen cultural expression as a central part of the NEA's purpose. Ivey's "Bill of Rights" positioned the NEA as an institution in service to the entire populace and espoused the following values:

The NEA Cultural Bill of Rights (2000)¹⁸

Heritage. The right to fully explore America's artistic traditions that define us as families, communities, ethnicities, and regions.

A Creative Life. The right to learn the processes and traditions of art, and the right to create art.

Artists and Their Work. The right to engage the work and knowledge of a healthy community of creative artists.

Performances, Exhibitions, and Programs. The right to be able to choose among a broad range of experiences and services provided by a well-supported community of cultural organizations.

Art and Diplomacy. The right to have the rich diversity of our nation's creative life made available to those outside of the United States.

Understanding Quality. The right to engage and share in art that embodies overarching values and ideas that have lasted through the centuries.

Ultimately Ivey's "Cultural Bill of Rights" was a symbolic gesture, not a legislative act. The right of all US citizens to contribute creatively was a noble concept that would prove to be an economic challenge for Ivey's leadership team to put into philanthropic practice. Civic rationales for NEA had scarcely been invoked by his predecessors, which made Ivey's commitment to cultural democracy unique. His words upheld the value of "communities" but also lauded individual rights discourse in an appeal to legislators who sought public approval and simultaneously had their sights set on fiscal belt-tightening. During and after Ivey's short term as NEA chair, he celebrated popular culture and arts participation as projects worthy of federal arts support. His 2008 memoir went further than any testimony on record by Ivey at the NEA when he suggested that the nonproliferation of exceptional American art had alienated US citizens from western classical and modernist forms, to the forms own detriment. Not only was modernist "high culture" growing increasingly irrelevant to many Americans after the twenty-first century turn, but Ivey went as far as to suggest that the institutional overendowment of American "fine art" had outgrown its base of support. He insisted:

It's not that we don't have great painters and musicians; it's just that the contemporary equivalents of Leonard Bernstein, Jackson Pollock, Van Cliburn, and Alexander Calder can't get arrested in *People* magazine. We may not let the art of Native Americans of Islam in the choir, but our fine arts have been made so special that no one cares. (Ivey 2008: 172)

Cultural elitism was Ivey's target, a policy problem he sought to repair by targeting estranged US cultural publics with NEA supported programs. Upon

Ivey's inauguration as chair, he advanced a five-year strategic plan for the agency and met with over 200 members of Congress to discuss how the NEA could better support their constituencies. He toured the Hill and met with representatives from districts that the agency had not yet served, and the result of these conversations was a series of arts education-focused initiatives designed to maximize access to underendowed cities and towns. Ivey's efforts to create bridges to communities that were off of the NEA's radar were rewarded in FY 2001 with a \$7 million increase in NEA appropriations, the first budget gain for the agency since 1992.

Operating with a shrunken staff infrastructure and a modest amount of budgetary wiggle room, Ivey's new policies relied on interdepartmental leveraging with nonarts entities, including the US Department of Education. One key initiative that mobilized staff from the NEA Divisions of Education and Folk/Heritage Arts was ArtsREACH, a pilot project that sought to expand the geographic range of NEA funding to twenty states that had not received significant NEA allocations in the past. The ArtsREACH pilot would evolve into the NEA's Challenge America Program, which would widen the reach of federal arts grants to every zip code and congressional district in the country. Populist programs like these won favor with elected officials and put NEA grantors and grantees in service of maximizing who benefited from federal arts support.

ArtsREACH was introduced in 1998 as a three-year effort to expand access to NEA supported arts engagement activities, broadly defined. NEA-funded arts access to historically underserved areas grew by 350 percent across this time through 56 grants to over 1,000 nonprofits in Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming (NEA, *Annual Report* 1999: 25). Funds for the ArtsREACH Program were strategically redistributive. They took the form of federal matching support granted directly to state arts agencies, who absorbed the labor of assembling grant competitions and evaluation of nonprofit arts organizations whose participation in NEA grantmaking had been previously limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability. ArtsREACH was renamed the Challenge America Program in 2001 and endures unto the time of this writing (December 2020) as a testament to Ivey's success building a policy platform in the absence of major economic stimulus on the premise of geographic access.

Eligibility criteria for ArtsREACH/Challenge America support required grantees to engage in multiple forms of economic accounting. Grantees were mandated to gather data to evidence two things: increased arts participation by underendowed populations and increased arts access in historically underendowed zip codes. While some former grantees sourly referred to this requirement as funder-imposed “zip-coding” or “bean-counting,” these data proved useful when senior leadership were pressured to answer to Clinton’s goal-setting requirements for executive branch agencies. Under Clinton and his successors in the Oval Office, federal agents and federally funded citizens were required to provide economic proof of their capacity to produce measurable returns on federal economic investments. By evidencing successful expansion of NEA-funded activity in remote US districts, ArtsREACH/Challenge America did much to strengthen the NEA’s institutional standing. In his chairman’s message in the FY 2001 *Annual Report*, Ivey credited ArtsREACH/Challenge America with garnering wider citizen buy-in with the NEA and greater bipartisan approval in the US legislature. In a gesture seen by many as a critical legislative endorsement, the 106th Congress increased funding expressly for this program that same fiscal year.

Ivey’s promise of popular arts creation, participation, and consumption was rhetorically impactful at shifting public perceptions of the NEA’s purpose and policy. His programmatic advances were economically minor, due to several factors. First, despite some fiscal increases, the NEA was still working with a radically shrunken budget in 1998 when Ivey joined the agency. Second, that same year, Congress had raised the percentage of NEA annual appropriations that were redistributed to state arts agencies from 35 to 40 percent, a regulatory move that shrank some of the chair’s discretionary spending power. Also that same year, Congress issued a 15 percent allocation cap on the total dollar amount of grants to organizations that could consolidate in any one state to help recalibrate the lopsided allocation levels that had plagued the NEA in decades past. Last, legislators reengineered NCA and panel composition by appointing six members of Congress to join the National Council on the Arts (NCA) as *ex-officio* (non-voting) appointees and requiring a “knowledgeable layperson” to sit on all NEA grant panels; some NEA insiders saw these steps as a soft form of surveillance. At a historical moment when NEA policymaking tables were increasingly being populated by nonarts intermediaries invited by senior officials, it is important to notice who in dance these changes affected and how.

Clinton-era Dance Program Translations

The agency wide restructuring in 1996 significantly destabilized structures of dance support. Staff who remained employed in the Dance Program and across disciplinary divisions were charged with additional labor on a number of fronts. That labor included day-to-day translation of the agency's shifting policy agendas, mission, and guidelines. Sali Ann Kriegsman left the NEA Dance Program in 1996 to take the helm at the summer dance festival Jacob's Pillow, and Dance Program staff member Douglas Sonntag (1996–2016) stepped into the directorship role, which he held for the next twenty years. A Utah native and former manager of ballet and modern dance companies, Sonntag was, by 1996, an experienced bureaucrat who had weathered many changes at the agency prior to these particular cuts. At its all-time high (1992), the NEA's total budget was \$175.9 million, the Dance Program received \$7.6 million, and regular dance support was also granted in other divisions.¹⁹ Economically speaking, financial allocations to the Dance Program were halved after 1995. When the NEA's total budget was slashed to \$99.5 million, dance received \$2.5 million, and the average organizational grant shrank 35 percent (from \$53,280 to \$19,000) as a result (T. Smith 2003: 15). This economic nosedive sent shocks of recognition throughout the institution. These aftershocks were felt by dance organizers who had grown dependent on the regular promise of federal support.

Interviewing Dance Program insiders who withstood these changes during this tumultuous period, many expressed nostalgia about the pivotal role that the NEA had played during the agency's first three decades of operation and noted its role in paving a viable path for American concert dance. Federal funding had, after all, conditioned a massive jump in the number of incorporated nonprofit dance companies engaged in dance creation, residency, and touring. NEA grants had primed the pump and generated interest by venue sponsors who had previously taken nominal interest in booking dance-makers in their annual seasons. One former Dance staffer described the NEA's influence prior to 1996 as a veritable golden age for concert dance. He explained:

There was a time when choosing a career in dance was not a completely ridiculous choice—it's always been kind of a crazy choice—but it wasn't completely ridiculous. There was a way that an artist could see to make work and choose

that as a life. In terms of dance—now, this didn't happen overnight—but, after several decades, the NEA Dance Program was able to look at various parts of the field that needed funding and it created an infrastructure where there was a real track of how the creation of dance might happen. There was actually an infrastructure out there of touring networks, support for young choreographers, and support for the administrative structure of the company and touring through dance company grants. There was a path.

By 1996, federal dance funding incentives had motivated generations of eager dance-makers to pursue concert dance as a “life choice.” The lure of national dance endowment was not restricted to artists—arts administrators, managers, presenting agents, production personnel, critics, and nonfederal funders sought and secured support for this way of life. The loyalty and grantseeking regularity of concert dance-makers remains critical to understanding the impacts of the agency's new theme-based approach to grantmaking. Grantmakers' loss of control over program guidelines, administration, and allocation under Alexander and Ivey put the freeze on the NEA's historically reliable concert dance pipelines. Policy-level reorganization unsettled NEA grantmaking by discipline and divested in the company model of dance organization and choreography support through individual fellowships. The loss of the Individual Artist Fellowships, a coveted and strategically unincorporated source, produced a statistical panic across the Dance Program. Staff worried about the future of experimental, nonmainstream dance work. In the view of one dance insider:

There [has been] a huge amount of funding that has disappeared from public sector giving since the NEA's budget cuts and reorganization of 1996, and the restriction of funding to individuals, in particular. I would argue that the elimination of the individual artist grants cut a huge hole in that net. I think we've probably lost two to three generations of US dance-makers in the meantime. There are a few people who have made it through for a variety of reasons, but there are many, many more whose work—if they are still even working in dance—the work is small, and it doesn't get out of the small spaces in which it's created. It doesn't have a chance to really be refined, and it doesn't have a chance to build an audience. I think that there are some real problems for making dance in the United States.

The congressionally mandated elimination of direct funds to individual artists in 1996 shoved leagues of dance organizers off of the national dance radar. According to the above interlocutor and many others who spoke with me by way of this project, dance grantmakers and grantseekers were devastated by the loss of these structurally untethered sources of national dance and arts support. Many saw the NEA Fellowship system as a safety net for experimentation because it allowed both conventional and alternative forms of organization in dance to thrive. By the time that Bill Ivey took the helm at the Arts Endowment, the promise of restoring a direct lifeline between individual artists and this government agency had dwindled, leaving leagues of aspiring dance-makers in the dust. Rather than neatly adopt Ivey's new populist mission, Dance Program insiders maneuvered to safeguard the old model by putting funding tools to alternative use.

At the millennial turn, the hustle to preserve past pathways to concert dance funding by NEA dance grantmakers was on, and it ultimately yielded two instrumental policy developments: NEA Research Study #44, entitled *Raising the Barre* (2002), which accounted for the increasingly dire economic state of American nonprofit dance companies in the aftermath of the NEA cuts and policy reorganization, and the National College Choreography Initiative (hereafter NCCI), a program that met Ivey's call for increased citizen engagement with a focused response on concert dance by granting matching funds for dance residencies in geographically remote regions of the United States (Callahan 2002). I will address each of these leveraging efforts in turn.

Raising the Barre (2002)

With the NEA's renewed institutional mission grounded as it was in widening arts access under Alexander and Ivey, the question that confronted divisional directors read: "How do we ensure the transferal of a cultural legacy to the children of the next millennium?" (Larson 1997: 23). Program-specific responses to this question varied dramatically. In Dance, grantmakers responded to this call by demanding preservation of dance organizational forms that had been regularly endowed with NEA support. Leveraging discretionary funds earmarked for research and analysis, Sonntag and staff commissioned Research Report #44, *Raising the Barre: The Geographic, Financial, and Economic Trends of Nonprofit Dance Companies* (T. Smith 2003). In the hopes of catalyzing public interest

and philanthropic support to restore some semblance of the agency's inaugural infrastructure for concert dance, *Raising the Barre* cautioned readers that concert dance organization, a vital domain of American culture, was economically on route to become "a professional field at risk" (Larson 1997: 1). The report's narrative amplified two key issues that were compounding this risk: the escalating costs of concert touring and philanthropic disinvestment in the arts at both public and private levels. Invoking economic data on tax filings by US nonprofit dance organizations drawn from census takings from 1988 through 2000 and additional information from the NEA's grantee database, researchers sought to expose the widespread undercapitalization of concert dance ensembles at the turn of the twenty-first century as an urgent policy issue. Researchers, led by cultural economist Thomas Smith, assembled their data story, as follows.²⁰

After opening with a pocket history of the NEA's historical role in engineering and upholding a vital support system for American concert dance, the 44-page narrative of the *Raising the Barre* research study described concert dance as a field for which productivity had once swelled (in part, through NEA investment) but was now experiencing economic pressures that were diminishing production prospects. In the report's introduction, then-Dance Director Sonntag acknowledged what I have argued in this book is the choreographic force of philanthropic incentives when he described how regular concert dance grantees in the early years were trailblazing forces that led generations of dance grantseekers to assimilate to the 501(c)(3) model of dance leveraging, touring, and incorporating. In his words:

Despite the short term of its actual existence, the "dance boom" era companies created the ideal that almost all subsequent artists would aspire to emulate. This model was based on the assumption that dance would remain a staple of arts presenter programming, Fellowships would be available to fund the beginning explorations of emerging choreographers, and that significant funds, both public and private, would encourage the establishment of nonprofit dance companies able to support dancers, choreographers, administrators, and technical personnel.²¹

The main claim advanced in *Raising the Barre* was fundamentally economic: philanthropic resources for concert dance were significantly stalled at the turn of the twenty-first century. Future funding prospects no longer promised to prop

up the prior system of national dance endowment. As the NEA was becoming more institutionally attuned to supporting populist cultural expression and investment, the fate of concert dance “making” remained unclear. Accounting for inflating costs of dance production as a clear problem facing future dance companies, researchers remained skeptical that venue presenters would continue to take a chance on concert dance without the NEA’s “carrot-and-stick” incentives of the past. In the Foreword, Sonntag suggested that the nascent system of newly economized arts funding was unfairly saddling NEA dance grantees with new responsibilities:

These datasets document a period of change and upheaval for American concert dance. During the decade, [1990–2000] dance companies changed how they generated income, both earned and unearned. It was also a period of significant social transformation that had a profound impact on cultural organization and the role of the artist in society. In addition to using movement to express an aesthetic vision, choreographers and companies were expected to assume new responsibilities as performers, educators, community activists, cultural commentators, conservators and curators. (T. Smith 2003: 1)

Leaving the question of whether funder-imposed mandates remained within a grantee’s value system or skill set up for grabs, the NEA’s rhetorical emphasis on art and “social transformation” recast grantees in new, somewhat unfamiliar roles for concert dance-makers. The language of “upheaval,” above, nods to an implicit critique of the social instrumentalism that was highlighted in Alexander’s and Ivey’s institutional narratives and reports. As a document that angled to restore lost economic traction for American concert dance, *Raising the Barre* attempted to hold out a glimmer of hope that concert dance would adapt and bounce back amidst this philanthropic sea change. The report’s authors pinned this hope to sheer adaptability. Throughout the narrative, researchers championed the flexible strategies of previously endowed ballet and modern dance organizers who had managed to survive against economic odds.

In their depiction of this organizational flexibility, researchers noted that ballet companies with larger administrative structures that had access to non-public pockets of money were in a decidedly better position than their modern dance counterparts. Large ballet companies in general had a capacity to leverage

increased nonfederal cost share and could more easily adapt their missions to fit the restructured funding priorities and guidelines.²² In the face of unreliable public support, they argued that ballet organizations had been adopting a lateral fund-raising approach by increasing dependency on private patrons, corporations, and foundations to sustain economic equilibrium. Another advantage held by ballet companies was their widespread adoption of professional training centers—classes were a steady revenue stream that could be strategically rerouted toward operations expenses when grant cycles failed to deliver. Perhaps the most powerful form of leveraging that kept ballet companies intact during this decade of philanthropic austerity was ballet's real estate advantage. Researchers maintained that it was American ballet companies' lack of dependency on revenues from regional touring that was saving this faction of the field from further decimation. The fact that ballet patrons and companies had, early on, seized local real estate, built private patronage networks, and ingratiated themselves to local audiences formed a protective shield. Put another way, because ballet companies overwhelmingly elected to stay put in their home cities, they were not subject to the escalating expense of travel experienced by companies who were motivated to tour the United States. Ballet organizers, thus, also profited from stronger long-term community patronage, loyal attendance, and—quite crucially—control over their conditions of production. Touring dance organizers, in contrast, experienced more production contingencies including the variables associated with living in a temporary residence away from home and materially depending on venue brokers and intermediary agents. Modern dance-makers made up the bulk of this faction, who had much more to lose when federal funding for dance touring was being cut.

In contrast to large moneyed ballet institutions, modern dance-makers were framed by researchers as organizationally scrappy, adaptive, and more heavily reliant on public funding in the *Raising the Barre* narrative. Collected data revealed that modern dance grantees abided malleable attitudes toward production and had, thus, managed to downscale production under unstable economic conditions. At the millennial turn, many modern dance companies were already organizing on a project-to-project basis. Those newly impacted took additional steps to trim expenses by shortening residencies, increasing self-produced or coproduced performance bills, and downsizing the number of dancers that were awarded contracts. Most made a marked return to what early dance grant

advisors had (in 1966) pejoratively termed the “gig economy,” as both the length and reliability of residencies all but disappeared. Remembering that the goal of *Raising the Barre* was to increase fiscal support, its authors framed the creative workarounds of modern dance-makers as evidence of their entrepreneurial tenacity, creativity meriting increased investment. But without the promise of federal cost share to lure regional presenters, and minus artist-level connections to nonfederal patrons to buffer budget shortfalls, modern dance-makers who were dependent on touring were statistically less well equipped to control their future than were their property-holding ballet counterparts.

For all of the critical information researchers gathered on the deteriorating economic state of the concert dance field, *Raising the Barre* stopped short of considering how the dissolution of federal incentives at the regional and state levels had weakened the untidy state of American concert dance at the millennial turn. Although authors cited the demographically changing US cultural economy as a factor constraining opportunity, questions of cultural saliency—whether ballet and modern dance had, perhaps, outpaced demand across all congressional districts—also went unanswered.²³ As an instrument of philanthropic conservation, *Raising the Barre* pronounced the NEA’s loyalty to legacies of aesthetic and managerial practice that the agency had promoted but was now struggling to protect. With minimal authority to impact program guidelines under Alexander and Ivey, Dance Program insiders leveraged policy publications to try to recenter and recognize what came before. Both *Raising the Barre* and the National College Choreography Initiative, to which I now turn, protected past patterns of concert dance endowment. A programmatic translation of Ivey’s “access” agenda, the NCCI was strategically designed to double down on longstanding connections with partners in US academic dance.

The National College Choreography Initiative (NCCI)

Raising the Barre sought to prove to American citizens that concert dance-makers were at risk of losing sustainability as an endowed dance subfield due to rising touring expenses and philanthropic disinvestment. This loss was compounded, in part, by the broader turn toward economic, social, and educationally instrumental funding policies at the NEA and elsewhere at the turn of the twenty-first century, a turn that was framed pejoratively in print by one NEA insider as the

agency's turn toward "social service art." Left with fewer discretionary funds to steer toward alternative programs, then-Chair Ivey located one source of fiscal counterbalance that gave divisional directors some wiggle room to propose projects of their own, within limits. With special funds from the White House Millennium Council, Ivey charged disciplinary divisions to introduce programs that would explicitly increase NEA support for American cultural heritage education in the year 1998. NEA Millennium Projects Funds ultimately supported library arts education projects and notable public television broadcasts, such as "Free to Dance: The African American Presence in Modern Dance." Coproduced by Charles Reinhardt, this broadcast celebrated important contributions by African American choreographers on concert stages worldwide. Another formative program enabled through \$520,000 in Millennium Project funds was the NCCI, which aimed at increasing exposure to exceptional US concert dance artists for next-generation dancers, particularly those living in US zip codes that had not been previously served by federal arts support.²⁴ One former Dance Program staffer discussed with me the challenge of arriving at the NCCI funding formula and meeting Ivey's mandate to canvas underrecognized communities and districts, as follows:

Post[1996]-restructuring Ivey's deputy asked [us] to suggest a millennial program, guided by two criteria: geographic democracy and broad public access. This had to be engineered and delivered to senior leadership overnight. Our first thought was to support New York City Ballet's 50th anniversary tour to 50 states; this was underway and had been announced with much fanfare, but ended up folding for unfeasibility . . . The NCCI was born out of this attitude of "well, what else [were we] to do, let a half million dollars sit on the table?"

In 1998, dance's most geographically disbursed and reliable sites of institutional support were in university dance programs. Charged with achieving mass popular distribution, the NCCI leveraged the national diffusion of US academic dance programs to disburse federal matching support in the amount of \$10,000 for extended residencies where dance students and public audiences gained exposure to concert creation and production. NCCI grants were allocated under two categories: masterworks of the twentieth century, which supported the restaging or reconstruction of acclaimed choreography, and dances by contem-

porary artists, new commissions by established choreographers whose work was deemed to be “on the rise.” Selected artists would tour to designated campuses, stage repertory, teach master classes and workshops, give lectures, host open rehearsals, and provide off-campus engagements in community centers and K-12 schools to reach additional new publics.

Because NCCI grants were economically smaller than grants made for touring during the NEA’s earlier decades, participating campuses committed to absorb additional economic, facility, and labor costs. To successfully achieve increased “access” to concert dance as a form of US cultural heritage, universities relied heavily on embedded dance faculty whose own training and professional experience in concert dance idioms and ideologies made them ready advocates with readymade student populations and loyal audiences. The NCCI’s success in disseminating concert dance through the institutional pipelines of the US academy reveals the extent to which many formerly endowed NEA grantees had migrated to dance in higher education in the early 2000s when regular production opportunities grew unstable. Closer historical attention to this field migration, while urgent, remains outside of the scope of my main concern here with the redistributive tactics of Dance Program staff.

Remembering the skeletal size of the NEA staff labor force under Ivey, it is important to note that the administration and evaluation of the NCCI fell to outside consultants who were once NEA insiders in the Dance Program. To run the NCCI, Sonntag tapped former staffer Andrea Snyder, then-director Dance/USA, to spearhead the project.²⁵ To handle project evaluation, Sonntag tapped former staffer turned independent consultant Suzanne Callahan to tally participation totals and zip codes and interpret and evaluate program results.²⁶ University partners who won NCCI support enlisted faculty or staff and charged them with contracting and scheduling artists’ services to round out the massively counterbalanced labor of this undertaking. What was initially envisioned as a one-year experiment was met with stronger university demand than expected. The NCCI ultimately lasted through three annual grant cycles before being folded into the *American Masterpieces: Dance* program during the presidential administration of George W. Bush and NEA Chair Dana Gioia (discussed in the next section).

While the NCCI delivered on Ivey’s call to engage citizens in underendowed areas in some form of American cultural heritage, the choice to pursue and promote US concert dance heritage stopped short of achieving Ivey’s penchant for

cultural pluralism. Federal subsidies in this area were routed conservatively, to benefit concert dance-makers, a class of artists whose past privilege was presently under siege. In the end, the program supported concert works by seventy-eight dance artists with a total of \$1,052,500 in NEA matching support and 212 residency projects impacted US communities in all fifty states, including a large number of universities that had not previously won federal funds. But a glance at which artists were granted NCCI support included a statistically high number of formerly funded grantees. Of the seventy-eight artists supported, thirty-seven (47 percent) were also based in New York. In terms of genre, modern dance was the dominant cultural tradition represented. Expanded geographical reach, in other words, did not square with expanded genres of dance in terms of culture or context.

Former staff with whom I spoke went as far as to suggest that the NCCI was a readymade success because its programmatic structure and collaborative relationships were not all that new in the first place. The NCCI simply formalized the already symbiotic relationship between the NEA, academia, and the concert dance-makers that dated back to the DTP. Implementation was relatively smooth due, in part, to the growing number of midcareer modern dance-makers who occupied faculty and/or presenter positions within the US academy at the turn of twenty-first century. Part commissioning program, part preservation initiative for well-endowed dance masters, the NCCI recentered the concert stage as a consecrated site of dance “making” and inspired new generations of dance artists to embrace concert production as a viable site of future dance work.²⁷

What kind of dance “access” did the NCCI and millennial dance funders provide, exactly? At a historical moment when leadership initiatives like Ivey’s Challenge America Grants were attuned to more equitable distribution of federal subsidy to a wider array of American cultural forms and formulations, the NCCI’s narrow patterns of cultural distribution made its alignment with NEA populism complicated, to say the least.²⁸ University partnerships were geographically disbursed but also deeply classed settings where committed partnerships with diverse neighborhood constituencies were uneven and often constrained. Leveraging past partnerships with the NEA and dance in the “ivory tower,” dance grantmakers managed to conserve existing networks for concert dance on a nationwide scale, somewhat against the odds.

Ivey’s idealistic promotion of a “Cultural Bill of Rights” for all Americans was translated in *Dance in print* and through programs that managed to touch

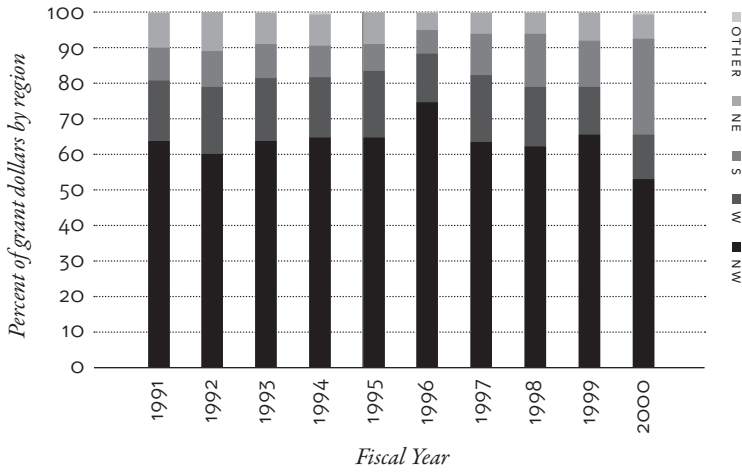


FIGURE 13 Percentages of NEA Dance grant dollars in various regions of the United States, 1991-2000. Source: Jennifer Sciantarelli (2009: 75).

every district in the United States with NEA support. The NCCI steered clear of historically overresourced routes and made concerted efforts to canvas a broader political geography. But a closer look at the institutional design of the *Raising the Barre* publication and the NCCI reveals philanthropic strategies that align with what policy critics have termed the “access-to-excellence” approach to fund redistribution. An approach that critics align with cultural imperialism, “access to excellence” programs characteristically steer funds toward already economically privileged arts groups to enable them to travel into remote areas where communities are deemed to suffer from some sort of cultural lack. Both *Raising the Barre* and the NCCI left questions of local dance across the United States in its myriad forms and formulations off the table in order to uphold the prior policy order. So while the above-mentioned maneuvers amplified the economic struggles of previously funded NEA concert dance-makers and exposed concert work to new audiences, the Dance Program’s promotion of dance on the concert stage retrace patterns of regional provincialization by overendowing artists from Boston to the DC Beltway (fig. 13). At their most damaging, and as policy scholar Jennifer Sciantarelli (2009) has shown, NEA dance grantmakers chose not to see local dance organizers as eligible for federal arts support even after policy changes required that they do so. No money does not mean no culture, as many committed sociologists and scholars of community cultural development have shown.²⁹

Under the Clinton administration, political appointees Alexander and Ivey slowly began to reengineer the NEA's institutional policies and purpose. Rhetorically and, to a lesser extent, programmatically, senior leadership managed to pave new philanthropic opportunities for cultural expression on broader geographical and cultural grounds. In the Dance Program, fund decision-makers achieved geographic expansion but failed to achieve parity of cultural participation by engineering support to benefit historically overendowed concert dance groups. Again, following Sciantarelli (2009), modern dance and ballet organizers continued to absorb the lion's share of NEA subsidies even after guidelines for eligibility were reengineered. These patterns of overrecognition and overresourcing are evidenced in tables 2, 3, and 4 (see page 192).

Hailed by NEA senior leadership to actively connect estranged US artists and local publics, Dance Program insiders kept a philanthropic eye on concert dance as a policy priority. New programs like the NCCI kept institutional gates around a class of dance-makers that the NEA's early influence helped to foment. Once Clinton departed the White House, the incoming administration of President George W. Bush (fig. 14) and Bush's appointment of Dana Gioia to the position of NEA chair produced new incentives for grantees to engage in nonarts market partnerships. As an economically underperforming art form within an increasingly neoliberalized system favoring grantees whose artmaking produced economic results, dance would continue to lose its philanthropic foothold as an instrument of NEA investment.

George W. Bush: The NEA as Soft Power Tool

Good beginnings are not the measure of success in Government or any other pursuit. What matters in the end is performance. Not just making promises, but making good on promises. This will be the standard for this Administration—from the farthest field office to the highest office in the land—as we begin the process of getting results from Government.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH (11), *Budget of the United States*, FY 2002³⁰

In August 2001, President Bush issued the President's Management Agenda (PMA), a plan that doubled down on Clintonian "efficiency" reforms across the executive branch. This declaration focused legislative and public attention on a series of chronic, what he called "core management problems" inside of

TABLE 2 *Percentages of NEA Total Grants in Dance by Genre, 1991–2000*

	BALLET	MODERN	FOLK/ ETHNIC	OTHER	MIXED	UNKNOWN
1991	12	34	8	7	38	<1
1992	13	36	8	6	36	1
1993	12	36	11	7	34	0
1994	17	44	11	8	21	0
1995	16	45	12	9	17	1
1996	28	37	13	3	20	0
1997	17	40	9	3	31	0
1998	20	37	13	5	25	0
1999	20	31	13	3	32	0
2000	21	33	10	7	30	0

Source: Jennifer Sciantarelli (2009):102.

TABLE 3 *Top Three States by Number of Dance Grants, 1991–2000*

RANK	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
1.	NY	NY	NY	NY	NY	NY	NY	NY	NY	NY
2.	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA
3.	OH/ PA	OH/ TX	PA	IL	TX	OH	OH/ MA	MA	MA	OH

Source: Jennifer Sciantarelli (2009): 79.

TABLE 4 *Top Three States by Dollar Amount in Dance, 1991–2000*

RANK	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
1.	NY	NY	NY	NY	NY	NY	NY	NY	NY	NY
2.	CA	CA	CA	CA	CA	MA	CA	MA	MA	DC
3.	MA	MA	MA	IL	IL	CA	MA	CA	PA	MA

Source: Jennifer Sciantarelli (2009): 79.



FIGURE 14 President George W. Bush painting portraits of wounded warriors in 2016. Photo credit: G. W. Bush, Facebook.

the federal government. Problems, in Bush's mind, that demanded measurable results. Like Clinton's "Results Act," Bush's PMA tightened the bureaucratic standards of federal agencies and departments and increased data collection to track obedience to established standards at the level of federal employee performance. The PMA took as its target five registers of workplace activity inside of federal units: (1) the mismanagement of human capital, (2) federal agents' failure to engage in "competitive sourcing"—public-private competition—to improve agency directives and lower costs, (3) weak financial performance or undue spending, (4) inefficient administration, and (5) weak integration of budgetary management and performance, in general (Breul and Kamensky 2008: 1019). Under Bush, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) gained significant political control as a policing entity tasked with surveilling the operations of agencies and grantees. One way that the OMB exercised control over Bush's sought-after "results" was by increasing appropriations points for agencies who improved upon noted deficiencies in the above-listed areas.³¹ Although Bush's direct handling of NEA operations was generally hands-off, NEA senior leadership, staff, and funded grantees each felt the effects of OMB efforts to achieve compliance with externally enforced budgetary and managerial ideals.

Throughout Bush's eight-year term, NEA staff dedicated increasingly large amounts of time and energy to meeting OMB standards and expectations. Whereas Clinton mandated the production of Five-Year Strategic Planning by all US government bodies, Bush increased this level of accounting by requiring agencies to file additional interim reports detailing their assimilation to PMA standards at ninety-day intervals. The results of these self-assessments either rewarded or penalized the NEA for its management of daily operations. Punishment for failure to comply to the PMA was not symbolic. Agencies that failed to pass OMB standards faced decreased appropriations points and were deemed ineligible for executive branch discretionary funds. Sanctions against low-performing agencies stayed in place until staff demonstrated measurable improvement. To further nudge federal employees to comply, the OMB developed a "traffic light" scoring system whereby federal institutions that showed strong or improved adherence would receive a positive "green" light, intermediate levels of assimilation or workplace slippage received a cautionary "yellow" light, and a punitive "red" light indicated a failure to achieve OMB-issued "results." At first, the scorecard was deployed internally, but was it eventually made public in 2002 when Bush rolled out the "www.results.gov" website. Some saw Bush's efforts to make the suboptimal workplace performances of federal institutions public as a form of castigation, but the OMB defended public exposure as an effective way to coax slower agencies into submission. Through heightened economic sanctions and gentle threats of public shaming, Bush's OMB erected a public bulletin board for legislators and citizens to see, scrutinize, and score the NEA's behavior as a federal funding body (Breul and Kamensky 2008:1018). Increasingly, federal domestic arts funders would acquiesce toward "results-based" planning, midplan monitoring, and economic evaluation, in ways that are detailed further, below.

Like Clinton, Bush held the NEA at arm's length throughout his two-term tenure due, in part, to foreign and domestic turmoil that confronted his administration. The Commander-in-Chief who weathered unprecedented domestic terrorist attacks on US soil on September 11, 2001, and subsequently launched multiple international military campaigns in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), Bush also endured sharp criticism for his handling of domestic policies on education (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002), reproductive health (Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, 2003), and natural disasters (Hurricane Katrina, 2005).³² Presidential missteps contributed to the loss of a Republican majority in Congress in 2006. This loss was compounded, in the view of some critics, by Bush's shaky handling

of the subprime loan crises in 2007, which conditioned a real estate meltdown that plunged the country into its second largest recession at that point in history. A president arguably more committed to theatres of military combat than to US theatrical production in the arts, Bush's administration did manage to boost federal funds for cultural diplomacy through US State Department tours and also granted the NEA its most generous appropriations increases in over a decade.³³ From 2001 through 2008, NEA appropriations saw a 27 percent increase, a high contrast to Clinton-era flatlines that would resume again under Bush's successor Barack Obama. But because Bush's struggle to institute a timetable for victory or withdrawal from the wars in the Middle East kept his attention elsewhere, NEA advocacy fell largely to First Lady Laura Bush (fig. 15), whose faith in the value of the arts catalyzed agency-wide energy, attention, and some long overdue fiscal gains.

In 2004, Laura Bush's advocacy coaxed along an \$18 million NEA appropriations increase. These funds were explicitly earmarked to expand the Save America's Treasures Program (hereafter SAT).³⁴ SAT had been previously established by former-First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton in 1998 through dedicated White House Millennium Council funds as an initiative aimed at to protect US cultural heritage objects and physical environments.³⁵ Whereas initial SAT subsidies prioritized brick-and-mortar buildings, parks, artworks, crafts, and artifacts, the additional funds granted by Congress expanded its scope toward "intangible treasures," including live performances.³⁶ This is when the NEA got more deeply involved. The NEA appointee who masterminded the mobilization of these new resources and inherited Bush-era pressures to achieve performance "results" was Dana Gioia (2003–9). A published poet and Stanford MBA, Gioia's creative and corporate-savvy way as NEA chair improved the agency's image measurably, although his broader policy agenda made a nominal purchase on dance.

Dana Gioia's Poetic License: Publications, Pilots, Proof in Numbers

Serving seven years at the NEA helm, Gioia undertook an aggressive rebranding strategy rooted in early liberal cultural manifestations of the agency's mission. His marketing maneuvers were marshaled forth through the slogan "A Great Nation Deserves Great Art." Structurally, this messaging did not mark a return to cultural instrumentalism in the grantmaking process. Remembering Gioia's status as a literary leader, NEA publications were one of his key tools of public

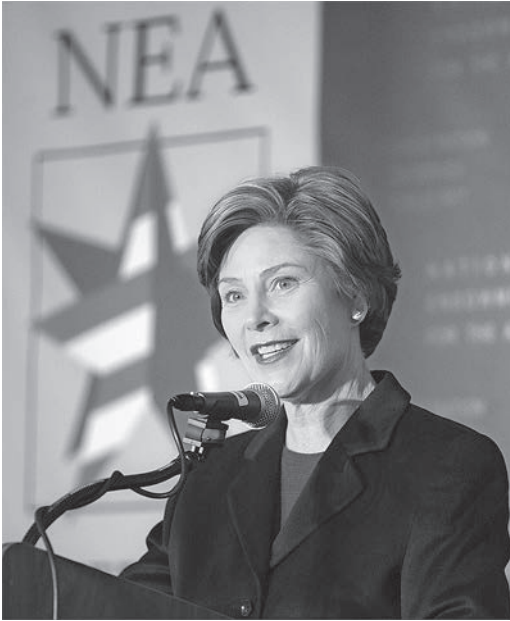


FIGURE 15 First Lady Laura Bush advocates for the Arts Endowment. Photo: J. Scott Applewhite, Associated Press.

persuasion. NEA annual reports grew increasingly lengthy and ornate during his long tenure, featuring brilliant photographs and anecdotal accounts of grantees' achievements. Gioia also introduced an e-magazine (*NEArts*) to bring colloquial accounts of NEA-funded activity to US citizens. Taking a decidedly reconciliatory tone, Gioia's narratives favored consensus over Ivey's focus on civic engagement and the abstract promotion of American cultural "rights." And, whereas Ivey's platform highlighted cultural difference as a vital tenet of US cultural democracy, Gioia traded civic-mindedness for citizen creativity while keeping a market-facing eye on the economic impacts of NEA support on nonarts policy areas that were of greater importance to elected officials. In an *LA Times* opinion editorial published after his retirement, Gioia described his approach in these words:

When I went off to the NEA, my friends said "go and fight the fight." Fighting was the wrong metaphor. The metaphor was reconciliation. This country was fighting over something that it didn't really need to fight about—the arts, an unnecessary and terribly destructive antagonism. I saw as my role to take people who thought they opposed this and con-

vince them that [supporting the arts] was the right thing to do. We created a bicameral, bipartisan national consensus to support the NEA, not simply the budget but also the authority of the agency.³⁷

Gioia's leadership team took a threefold approach toward reversing the "destructive antagonism" that had weighed down the NEA's reputation in the past. In addition to the above-mentioned marketing push, his leadership team further tweaked the agency's funding criteria to recruit and reward grantees with a track record of data-proven service delivery. Gioia set in motion a portfolio of grant initiatives that were cost-savvy, externally administered projects that could be scaled across a national expanse. With an almost militant sense of geographic expansion, Gioia's National Pilot Programs privileged mainstream, high-volume arts engagement and citizen education in and through the arts.³⁸ One final strategy to turn public opinion of the agency around was a proliferation of NEA-commissioned research studies that championed the social, educational, and economic utility of federally funded art. Strategically, these new studies spotlighted partnerships with nonarts policy institutions as prime avenues for future federal investment. I will briefly unpack Gioia's pivotal publication and programmatic maneuvers, in turn.

Millennial Publications

A wordsmith who was, himself, adept at several languages, Gioia strove to tell a different story about the NEA to the American public. Within his first three years at the NEA helm, the length of the agency's annual report grew threefold in size. Through the addition of humanistic touches—personal profiles of NEA literary fellows and state-by-state accounts of funded programs—his marketing strategy labored to bring the agency's influence down to earth.³⁹ Gioia's seasonal newsletter, *NEArts*, featured images and commentary that also vernacularized the agency's purpose.⁴⁰ After Gioia restored panel evaluation (minus fiscal control) to the NEA's discipline-specific divisions in late 2005, staff were invited to write opinion pieces championing the success of their respective programs. Importantly, the restoration of the old divisional order kept control over program engineering with senior leadership, not divisional directors. Overwhelmingly, and in terms of artistic media, Gioia's publicity push centered text and/

or language-based forms of cultural expression—poetry, reading, writing, and theatrical verse. Given Gioia’s background as a poet, the emphasis on written expression was perhaps unsurprising. NEA-commissioned research studies under his watch also touted literacy as a valuable by-product of arts engagement and complemented the national-scale grant programs he developed over this seven-year period. Gioia’s philanthropic programs, by and large, centered expressive texts—literature, poetry, screenwriting, and theatre—as routes to increased human productivity. Such productivity was bolstered by collected quantitative data that legislators were happy to see.⁴¹

In 2004, the NEA released a literacy study entitled *Reading at Risk*, a needs assessment that drew public attention to connections between reading levels and citizen productivity. Citing dire data sets gleaned from the US Census Bureau’s Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA), lead researchers Tom Bradshaw and Bonnie Nichols noted declines in reading for leisure and work and called for an advancement of literary focused funding initiatives in 2006.⁴² Leveraging the warm legislative reception of this line of inquiry, Gioia successfully commissioned two additional studies that built on its findings: *To Read or Not to Read* (2007) and later *Reading on the Rise* (2009), where collected data showcased increased academic achievement, economic stability, and job holdings among participants in NEA-sponsored literacy programs. The 2009 study, in particular, linked increased employment and income among US adults with increased reading rates of print or online materials for non-work-related purposes.⁴³ Remembering Bush’s OMB “traffic light” scorecard, Gioia’s literacy platform earned the agency a “green light” for producing notable returns on federal investments. Congress increased the agency’s appropriations approvingly and the NEA’s Office of Research & Analysis (ORA) emerged as a powerful institutional tool that proved useful during Gioia’s push to maximize managerial “results.”

In addition to building more robust data stories about the NEA’s political utility as an independent agency of the executive branch, Gioia also produced a menu of National Pilot Grant Programs that maximized options for citizen arts engagement, all of which emphasized scalability, efficiency and data-driven benchmarks. Fork-lifting the term “pilot” from corporate discourse, Gioia’s initiatives were designed as replicable models that could grow the economic impacts of NEA fund distribution with minimal costs to the agency itself. What some critics started to call the NEA’s “delivery system” approach to arts grantmaking

hinged on the dedicated labor of state and regional arts agents, who engaged in significant data-gathering and demanded such of grantees to keep these endeavors afloat.⁴⁴ Pilot programs included *Shakespeare in American Communities*, *American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius*, and *Operation Homecoming*. Each one sought to deliver rather mainstream, user-friendly arts experiences to diverse publics across the country. Dance's relative nonparticipation in these initiatives sent a troubling signal to staff and former grantees. Gioia's revved-up emphasis on popular participation, scalability, and economic outputs read to some as a subtle disinvestment in dance altogether.

The NEA's *Shakespeare in American Communities* program was created to address dwindling attendance across regional theatrical venues and soften the deleterious impacts of publicly defunded arts education in K-12 schools. Starting in 2003, Gioia secured White House Millennium Council funds and channeled these resources to seven professional theater companies to enable them to tour Shakespearean productions and educational activities to middle and high school students in previously underserved US communities. Although Shakespeare obviously was not an American artist, the canonical status of the Bard was viewed by many as a foolproof investment compared to economically riskier theatrical works. Combining culturally conservative programming and outsourced administration from regional arts agents at Arts Midwest, *Shakespeare in American Communities* was incrementally scaled up to schools, communities, and US military bases across all fifty states. Its success was due in part to the program's delivery of educational outcomes. One key outcome that was structurally hardwired into grant eligibility criteria was the mandate that grantees create and distribute accompanying educational tools for K-12 teaching enhancement as a stipulation of federal support.⁴⁵ Not only were venue presenters worried about graying and shrinking audiences appeased by federal cost share, but those fighting against the precarious state of K-12 arts education lauded *Shakespeare in American Communities* as a vital advocacy and access tool. The success of this program put a premium on portable words as art at the expense nonverbal domains of cultural expression, like dance.

Another influential pilot program of Gioia's that met tremendous citizen and legislative enthusiasm was *Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience*. A clear effort to capitulate to the policy agendas of Bush's Department of Defense, its programmatic scope supported the creation of written texts, images,

and films that humanized aspects of the US military service experience. Crucially, the programmatic strategy here was to put the creativity of everyday Americans at the forefront of NEA policy. *Operation Homecoming* cast US soldiers, military families, and veterans as creative storytellers using tools that NEA-funded artists put into their hands. A program cosponsored by the US Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and a sizable investment from the Boeing Corporation, (the world's largest aerospace company and manufacturer of commercial jetliners and defense, space, and security systems), *Operation Homecoming* was administered entirely by outside agents from the nonprofit organization The Writer's Center.⁴⁶ By rerouting the arduous labor of grantmaking and accounting, programs like this enabled the NEA and, by extension, the government to take symbolic credit for the local impacts of federal arts support without assuming economic or administrative responsibility for its sustainability in the long term.⁴⁷ Given the widespread citizen polarization surrounding the US advancement of military interventions within and beyond the Middle East at the time, *Operation Homecoming* marked a discursive step, in Gioia's words, to put "the NEA and the Department of Defense into the same sentence."⁴⁸ The agency would continue to support participatory arts programs for enlisted and retired US military service members well beyond its fiftieth anniversary year.⁴⁹ Subsequent NEA chairs and programs would further erode elite distinctions between "professional" vs. "avocational" art work that had lampooned legislative confidence in the NEA in earlier years. After Gioia, many NEA philanthropic initiatives would discursively swap out "art" for "creativity" as a domain of federal investment.

One final but less enduring program in Gioia's investment portfolio that departed measurably from his otherwise populist strategy was *American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Creative Genius*. Also regionally administered, *American Masterpieces* began its pilot phase in 2005 with eleven grants supporting museum exhibitions. Increased congressional allocations the next year fueled its programmatic expansion to include choral music, dance, musical theater, and a literature component entitled *The Big Read*. *American Masterpieces* was successfully scaled to all fifty states under the oversight of regional arts agency Arts Midwest. A programmatic return to discipline-based grantmaking, *American Masterpieces* assuaged complaints by former grantees who felt alienated by the agency's increased emphasis on participatory and/or populist art. Returning

NEA emphasis to liberalist ideals of American artistic mastery, *American Masterpieces: Dance* restored some semblance of concert dance support at a time when few other National Portfolio programs took a chance on dance. I examine its philanthropic engineering and implementation by Dance grantmakers in the section that follows.

Overall, Gioia's leadership strategies did much to convince agnostic legislators of the NEA's ability to fall into lockstep with legislative mandates. In FY 2007, the agency saw a \$20.1 million budget increase, its largest gain in twenty-nine years.⁵⁰ Through a penchant for establishment art, the written word, citizen arts engagement, and colocated support from nonarts investors, Gioia's policy platform stabilized the NEA's reputation in at least three respects: by leveraging (nonarts agendas), touring (to neighborhood and military sites), and incorporating (lay creativity and human productivity, bolstered by data points). His policy initiatives functioned pedagogically, in that grant guidelines taught aspiring grantees to maneuver with citizen and legislative constituencies in mind. Dance grantees struggled throughout the Bush administration to sustain a competitive foothold amidst agency-wide mandates motivating the mass movement of artists toward nonarts markets.

Bush-era Dance Program Translations

Although many Dance Program insiders were grateful that Gioia's rebranding effort had increased appropriations and restored some semblance of NEA institutional equilibrium, others spoke to me about the challenge of translating his newly overhauled criteria for national arts endowment. The chairman-poet's fixation with the sanctity of "the word" and the scarce mention of body-based cultural performance in Gioia's national pilot initiatives seemed to many to threaten dance's position as a NEA policy priority. Although larger allocations were still being granted through programs like Challenge America, awards in dance were discernibly smaller in comparison to prior decades.⁵¹ Concert dance grantmaking continued to lose momentum under Gioia, with one programmatic exception. The Dance-specific component of *American Masterpieces: Dance* leveraged existing production pathways and institutional partnerships and fortified concert dance networks to uphold the prior system despite macropolicy overhauls.

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The programmatic charge of *American Masterpieces* (hereafter *Masterpieces*) was to deliver “the nation’s greatest artistic works” to communities of all sizes across the United States.⁵² The Dance Program’s response was a scaled-up version of what the NCCI had previously offered. *Masterpieces* grantees were awarded federal subsidies to restage, tour, and document concert works that were deemed to be historically significant. Presenters were required to facilitate classes, workshops, lecture demonstrations to explicitly introduce these masterworks to previously uninitiated publics. Whereas dance scholar Ashley Smith (2014) has unpacked the NEA’s invocation of the term “mastery” in an analysis of the artistic works that *Masterpieces* funded, what concerns me here is the political function of the *Masterpieces* program as a political economic tool used by grantmakers to preserve, privilege, and protect American concert dance. As an instrument of dance endowment, *Masterpieces* provided a level of class protectionism by funneling support to a narrow faction of the dance field at a time when all other institutional engines were powered toward its dismantling.

There are several ways that the *Masterpieces* guidelines differed from NEA dance touring grants before 1996. For one, the merit of funded projects in this new program was measured qualitatively and quantitatively—specifically on a grantee’s capacity to increase access to NEA support in communities with previously limited federal arts support. As with the NCCI, *Masterpieces* grantees were required to collect data indicating the economic and demographic reach of NEA-funded work and had to build an education component into their proposed residencies as a stipulation of support. One former grantee sang the praises of *Masterpieces* to me, with measurable skepticism, when she said: “*It was the last big tour I had that was 12 cities. That time is over. It’s not like it’s never gonna happen again, but not the way that it used to happen.*”

Administratively, grant administration and touring coordination for *Masterpieces* was handled entirely by regional arts agents at New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA), the entity that had been managing the National Dance Project (NDP) since 1997. Importantly, the program guidelines named presenters—not artists—as eligible applicants. Grantseeking presenters nominated a “master” artist, named an educational institution with whom they would partner

on activities (often a university), and confirm a commitment from state and/or local funders with regard to coordination and cost share. Proposed concert dance residencies had to fit one of two explicit production models: (1) dance reconstructions by legacy dance masters or (2) newly commissioned works by critically acclaimed emerging dance artists. Support was also provided for video documentation of works by master choreographers that sought to aid training for future generations of dancers. This video preservation piece of the *Masterpieces* was mobilized by professional ballet organizations to great effect.⁵³

In terms of fund distribution, a high number of *Masterpieces* awards went to regional dance repertory ensembles to purchase reconstructed choreography by New York-based “master” choreographers and to perform these works in secondary and tertiary US cities and towns.⁵⁴ Perhaps unsurprisingly, the largest fiscal allocations granted in this category went to historically well-endowed choreographers and ensembles who held longstanding relationships to the Arts Endowment. Across the three-year span of the program, Merce Cunningham received the greatest number of *Masterpiece* awards (ten) to restage, document, and tour Cunningham works to US venues. The Martha Graham Dance Company received the largest single grant from this program in the amount of \$310,000.⁵⁵ At the end of its run, *American Masterpieces* allocated \$1.5 million in total support in 2009 and 2010, and \$2.33 million in awards in 2011, which evidenced increased demand. By doubling down on Chair Gioia’s investment in American artistic “mastery,” dance grantors and grantees sheltered concert dance against further federal disinvestment, however momentarily. Sustaining these fiscal incentives would prove trickier as the US economy tanked in 2007 and the agency’s priorities were once again reshuffled.

The 2008 election of President Barack Obama (fig. 16) put an even tighter fiscal squeeze on federal agents. Pressures to place nonarts policy issues before cultural ones inside the NEA yielded new philanthropic programs that continued to reward arts grantees for new and novel forms of cross-sector cooperation. National dance endowment was being redefined to increasingly incorporate entrepreneurial partnerships with nonarts professionals and to tour local neighborhoods. Obama-era NEA grantees regularly used art to produce outputs relevant to collaborators across the fields of urban planning, justice, education, health care, or defense.⁵⁶ With the agency’s appropriations from Congress once again stalled, senior leadership took a hyperinstrumental approach to funding Ameri-

can “creativity,” one that unapologetically tethered federally funded “creativity” to all kinds of market results.

Barack Obama’s Open Government and Interagency Incentivization

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On January 21, 2009, his first full day in office, President Barack Obama (2008–16) issued one memorandum on Transparency and Open Government and one on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Rather than perpetuate what critics called the “culture of secrecy” and strategies of nondisclosure that characterized the Bush II administration, Obama’s administration made government operations and documentation more fully accessible online. A president whose campaign momentum had skyrocketed through the use of social media forums, Obama’s push to digitally “open” public access to federal policy practices generated new labor contingencies for federal employees at the NEA and elsewhere.⁵⁷ The first sentence of Obama’s Open Government Memo released on the web by the White House Press office on January 29, 2009, read:

My Administration is committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness in Government. We will work together to ensure the public trust and establish a system of *transparency*, public *participation* and *collaboration*. Openness will strengthen our democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in Government.

The three words that I highlighted above strongly influenced NEA daily operations in the postrecession economy. To achieve transparency, Obama’s Open Government required all federal institutions to increase provision of publicly available information about programs, procedures, and decisions. From this moment onward, agencies including the NEA were required to make frequently requested datasets publicly accessible in digital format on a shared web platform. To increase policy literacy and participation on the part of citizens, Obama’s Open Government mandates also expanded online forums to solicit citizen feedback. The NEA, in response, started publicizing certain governmental assemblies—web-convenings and webinars—in order to make its inner workings clearer to the broader public.⁵⁸ To encourage greater collaboration by government and government supported units, Obama’s OMB awarded increased appropri-



FIGURE 16 President Barack Obama signs copies of the FY 2015 Budget as OMB Director Sylvia Mathews Burwell and staff look on. Oval Office, March 4, 2014. Photo: Pete Souza, courtesy Barack Obama Presidential Library.

ations points for interagency cooperation involving federal entities, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses. NEA senior leaders were particularly savvy in their efforts to leverage these extra appropriations points by boosting online marketing and fashioning a slate of new national grant programs with likeminded partners across the executive branch. Obama's NEA appointees to the chair position, Rocco Landesman (2009–12) and Jane Chu (2014–18), inherited strong leveraging mandates; each chair toured the Hill, and each sought innovative ways to incorporate policy values that were relevant to nonarts policymakers in their approach to NEA policy.⁵⁹

In addition to these increased NEA web-based developments, strategic planning significantly expanded from 2009 onward when Obama's OMB imposed the biannual production and publication of Open Government Plans.⁶⁰ These longer and more laborious processes required a cyclical approach to data collection—staff submitted copious amounts of documentation and data exchange aimed at improving the quality of information that the NEA disclosed to the public.⁶¹ In practice, Obama's Open Government and Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) directives inundated employees with what one informant termed

the tiresome cyclical administrative practice of “*planning-for-planning’s sake*.” Increased reporting intervals tugged NEA staff attention even further away from arts constituencies.⁶² A technologically integrated NEA digital network emerged across the executive branch under Obama, whose OMB motivated federal employees to move in more unified fashion through a newly streamlined data architecture. NEA grantees, in turn, were made to move toward arts production contexts and collaborations that sought similar forms of cross-sector collaboration. To productively cooperate with federal policy shifts within the 2008 postrecession economy, NEA agents were required to learn nonarts policy dialects and design projects to yield capital returns in nonarts policy areas.

I have opened this discussion with the “digital turn” conditioned by Obama’s OMB mandates to highlight external pressures to virtualize communication as part of the broader neoliberal effort to cut costs in government spending. The NEA’s digital turn and related cuts altered the social fabric of NEA institutional culture in palpable, some would say immobilizing, ways. Federal mandates favoring web-based publication and convening curtailed the NEA’s capacity to host live deliberations in particular. Remembering the sweaty, in-house deliberations that grant panelists valorized in the early decades, NEA live convenings functioned as crucial sites of cross-cultural education and advocacy. So, despite top-down justifications for digitization as a move toward wider access, we can also understand the NEA’s turn toward digital transparency to align with what Wendy Brown (2015) has termed governmental reorganization under neoliberalism that is “democratic in structure, not politics” (Brown 2015: 128). Structurally speaking, digital mediation may have successfully increased citizen access to the *Federal Register*. But practically, the virtualization of formerly live gatherings cut short meaningful exchanges that previously abounded at the NEA in dance.⁶³ Panel virtualization, a policy favored by elected officials as cost-effective and politically neutralizing, instantly reduced the social movement of NEA decision-making to a sea of talking heads.⁶⁴

When I asked former NEA staffers and panelists to reflect on the practice of digital grantmaking, some staff suggested that the agency’s shift to online applications and panel review did little to decrease the amount of work required in comparison to live coordination. Others championed of the economic benefits of hosting assemblies online. One insider with this view exclaimed that: *It’s just sooo much cheaper!* Those who participated in both analog and digital

panel deliberations noted the loss of live camaraderie as a decidedly negative trade-off. So while online conferencing clearly saved the agency money, it also stunted some of the stunning displays of advocacy and disagreement that live panels previously hosted. Anyone who has participated in video conferencing today can well understand the intermediary hiccups, interruptions, and miscommunications that NEA insiders associated with this process. During NEA web panels, dance staffers were frequently called upon to halt deliberations and fix lost audio, muddy visuals, frozen screens, and respond to the dreaded question, “Can you hear me now?” Beyond strictly technical interruptions, the agency’s new online system also required new practical coordination between panelists; speakers had to raise hands, take turns, and speak one at a time to be heard. Erratic rhythms and long silences stalled some of the intimacy that was previously rendered through real-time eye rolls and subtle gestures across conference tables in Washington. As an OMB mandated instrument of federal grant governance, “NEAGO” effectively put a “stop” to the coalitional power harbored within the agency’s analog live assemblies.

When I mentioned previously that OMB incentives under Obama awarded increased appropriations points to agencies that could share service delivery, it is important to note that such sharing at the NEA was not new.⁶⁵ Still, in the absence of fiscal increases for the NEA under this administration, savvy leveraging efforts by NEA Chairs Rocco Landsman (2009–12) and Jane Chu (2014–19) took strategic advantage of OMB prize policies to produce publications and programs in tandem with the US Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Defense, and Veterans Affairs.⁶⁶ Obama’s first appointee, Broadway producer and businessman Rocco Landesman brought a penchant for cooperation in real estate, urban planning, and economic development to the NEA fore.⁶⁷ Landesman’s leadership team made strides for agency assimilation to Obama collaboration policies by making a national philanthropic purchase on “creativity” and “place” as sites of federal investment.

Landesman’s Art Works and “Place-Based” Grantmaking

Upon receiving his Senate confirmation in August 2009 as Obama’s appointee and the NEA’s tenth chair, Rocco Landesman stated in a *New York Times* interview that he already had a new slogan for the agency, one that would put the

economic impacts of the arts squarely at the core of its operations. Rather than justify federal arts spending through an abstract criterion like “Greatness”—as Gioia had done before him—Landesman took a more muscular approach that touted art as an engine for US economic development. Less prone to the lengthy poetics of his predecessor, Landesman promoted a two-word, three-pronged justification for NEA operations, grantmaking, and research. Rather than defending what art is, Landesman wanted the nation to know, above all, how “Art Works.”

NEA publications after Landesman’s appointment featured his “Art Works” slogan, defining its three distinct meanings as follows:

Art Works first refers to the works of art themselves—the performances, objects and texts that artists create.

Art Works refers to the way that art works on audiences—the processes by which arts participation can transform individual and/or community aspirations and provide experiences that confront, challenge, or inspire US citizens.

Art Works also declares that arts jobs are real jobs that contribute to the US economy—arts workers make economic contributions by paying taxes, and art contributes to economic growth, neighborhood revitalization, and the livability of American towns and cities. (NEA, *Annual Report 2015*: 5)

Landesman’s rebranding strategy supported federally funded art as a vital American product, a formal vocation, and a market catalyst. Under his leadership, NEA-funded artists were recast as cultural workers, system innovators, and entrepreneurial change agents versus detached vagabonds living in voluntary poverty. Practically speaking, artists had long been working across markets and in nonarts contexts for decades under various motivations.⁶⁸ But under Landesman’s philanthropic agenda, NEA grantees would be explicitly charged with contributing meaningfully to the US Gross Domestic Product by deploying their creativity across industries and policy sectors. Touting statistics lauding over two million full-time arts-workers reporting income and paying taxes and nearly six million arts-related jobs in the domestic US, Landesman argued that the time had come to quit pervasive popular assumptions of artists as needy freeloaders. Under his watch, the NEA grantees were institutionally endowed as productive workers, tooling their energies toward the delivery of capital returns in policy areas that the government once used to more robustly protect.

Landesman rolled out his new slogan and financialized brand of federal arts investment rather swiftly. The success of his branding tactics was the by-product of extremely good timing, in that his appointment converged with Obama's OMB mandated digital overhaul of federal agency operations, mentioned above. Landesman's new slogan was loudly featured at the launch of the agency's brand-new website (www.arts.gov). The NEA's newly integrated digital network enabled mass distribution of his "Art Works" messaging to the public and across the executive branch, where federal digital content was streamlined through the web platform, Drupal. Streamlining communication across executive branch agencies and departments connected NEA operations to the White House and made interagency collaboration easier for all.⁶⁹ Mobilizing this enhanced digital communications system, Landesman's team produced "how-to" webinars that explained new programs, broadcast quarterly meetings of the NCA, and live-streamed grant panel deliberations for public witness. Aspiring grantees could now be (virtually) schooled in grantseeking protocols all hours of the creative workday. Alongside this aggressive rebranding effort, Landesman's team rolled out a flagship grant category called *Art Works*, which motivated grantseekers to organize their work to generate measurable social and economic gains.

NEA *Art Works*

As an instrument of federal arts funding, Landesman's *Art Works* program was a capacious mechanism that embraced a wide realm of what the agency website termed in 2013: "artistic creation, public engagement, lifelong learning, and community vitalization through the arts." Grant competitions were governed within the agency's disciplinary divisions, and awards were comparatively small, averaging \$10,000 at the time of their inception. The strategically wide creative purview of this funding tool masked its underlying economic goal: all dance grantees funded in this category were required to demonstrate improved access to art by uninitiated publics as a measure of fund worthiness. Such discursive emphasis on citizen consumption as an output combined Ivey's access-focused endeavors from earlier years with Gioia's emphasis on scalability. Endowed projects were conceived of as scalable pilots that adapted artists' existing endeavors to fit multiple markets or contexts. Although the categorical flexibility of *Arts Works* guidelines led many previously funded concert dance-makers to locate

some support in this category for concert residencies and touring, the absence of federal matching incentives for presenters coupled with the increased administrative labor involved in the online application process and chilled many past grantees from taking a shot.

A second programmatic development through which Landesman's leadership team tethered grantee energies to the values of nonarts policymakers was the invention of the NEA *Our Town* grant program and its attendant emphasis on "place-based" philanthropic support. Named after one of Landesman's favorite Thornton Wilder plays, the engineering of *Our Town* reflected the chairman's roots as a real estate developer and theater fan. A program considered by many to be the crowning achievement of the leadership team of Landesman and then-Senior-Deputy Joan Shigekawa, the 2010 inauguration of this program publicly coined the term "Creative Placemaking" and established a vital philanthropic platform that steered a historically unprecedented number of federal, municipal, nonprofit, and commercial investors in the instrumentalization of art toward a range of policy goals (Wilbur 2015).⁷⁰ A program designed to reward multisector leveraging of civic, nonprofit, state, federal, commercial, and private capital in service to local neighborhood vitalization, the political engineering of *Our Town* was a complex choreographic feat in its own right.

At the earliest stages of the development process, Landesman and Shigekawa sought cross-sector support from Obama's OMB, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), high-value stakeholders from private corporations, and the Mayors' Institute on City Design (MICD). The NEA had sponsored MICD since 1986 and had listened to mayors decry issues of population attrition and seek ways to keep residents and visitors attracted to their respective cities after the 2008 recession, in particular.⁷¹ Landesman leveraged his real estate networks and Shigekawa's history as an agent with the Rockefeller and Nathan Cummings Foundations to assemble a swift cadre of investors, and a series brainstorming sessions ensued. To build buy-in from these parties, senior leadership invoked research insights from a 2007 Rockefeller Foundation study that highlighted art-based economic development projects that had expanded social and economic capital in Philadelphia, St. Louis, and in Landesman's home town, New York City.⁷² The report's suggestion was that "place-based" arts philanthropy was not only instrumentally useful for bolstering local economies, but that the infusion of art into economic development schemes could

meaningfully generate noneconomic impacts in areas like education, health, and civic participation as well. Landesman and Shigekawa promoted the design of a grant program rewarding multisector partnerships to enable artists and “creative workers” to attract out-of-town visitors, as well as homeowners, renters, and consumers to US neighborhoods, cities, and towns. Through the philanthropic advancement of *Our Town* and “Creative Placemaking,” NEA leadership attracted cultural coinvestors from nonarts policy areas at a rapid and unprecedented rate. Whereas the NEA’s earlier carrot-and-stick approaches attracted venue sponsors to take a chance on concert dance for regional export, millennial philanthropic incentives reversed this itinerant logic by driving grantseekers to keep local residents and visitors in “place.”

In the absence of new congressional appropriations, inaugural *Our Town* grants were enabled by colocated cost share from President Obama’s HUD initiatives. Specifically, support was drawn from Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) and Promise Zones, programs that rewarded federal support to projects that developed skills, products, and services in economically blighted urban areas. To attract more nonfederal investors into the fold, NEA senior leadership launched the program alongside a commissioned research study evidencing the measurable impacts of place-based grantmaking. The 2010 report that coined the term “Creative Placemaking” utilized the same research framework as the 2007 Rockefeller study, which chronicled the contributions of over 100 cultural interventions across the country.⁷³ The authors of the study, Ann Markusen and Ann Gadwa Nicodemus, acknowledged that the “place-based” turn in community cultural development had long preceded the NEA’s investment but, ultimately, claimed that dedicated fiscal incentives in support of creative community cultural development stood to amplify meaningful economic, social, and civic impacts for large swaths of the population. Rather than fix a strict definition of what philanthropic investors meant in this turn toward “place,” the authors of the “Creative Placemaking” monograph defined the concept elastically, as one wherein:

partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative Placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes,

improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired. (Markusen and Gadwa 2010: 3)

As an emerging policy priority, the NEA's categorically murky concept of "place" was would remain difficult for arts policymakers to fully define. Early *Our Town* awards supported a wide range of interventions: arts residencies that emphasized a specific geographical locus (geographic site), beautification of material edifices (built environment), events in public parks (physical environment), and interventions targeting a designated population or identitarian group (the "place" of community). *Our Town* guidelines strategically collapsed the political agendas of community-based art, activist art, and public art uncomfortably under a single philanthropic umbrella. The program's overarching emphasis on "creativity" strategically dissolved the cultural particulars of artistic work, somewhat by design. Program guidelines made zero mention of specific cultural traditions but demanded economic commitments instead. Guidelines stipulated that prospective grantees secure contractual agreement from a minimum of one nonprofit cultural organization and one municipal entity to qualify for support. Grantees agreed to collect and aggregate data to evidence the tangible outputs of the intervention in terms that nonarts partners valued and understood.⁷⁴ Structural contingencies notwithstanding, the conceptual "fuzziness" of *Our Town* was part of its widespread appeal to grantseekers and economic investors.⁷⁵

Another attraction to the funder-motivated movement of securing multisector partnerships was the sheer size of funds that the *Our Town* program awarded. Grants ranged from \$75,000 to \$200,000 per project with an average grant size of \$75,000, making these matching funds among the largest NEA allocations inside of this decade. Remembering that earlier funds for concert dance touring required grantees to secure contracts between dance companies, presenters, and nonfederal funders, *Our Town* projects commanded agreements that united fifteen partners, on the average. Funded projects connected artists with working professionals from aging service organizations, botanical gardens, religious institutions, science institutions, local retailers, banks, farms, educational institutions, even land trusts (Gadwa 2013: 68). The systemic coordination of multidisciplinary, multisector projects required skilling and networked connections that many arts grantseekers lacked.

As a philanthropic regime that strategically incorporated the values and ideas of nonarts stakeholders, “Creative Placemaking” drew factions of ideologically opposed cultural workers to the NEA policy table. Arts organizers invested in social justice issues (such as economic redistribution in poor neighborhoods) competed against artists and economic investors whose projects were gentrifying those same kinds of neighborhoods. Skeptics worried that Landesman’s programmatic conflation of ideologically opposed strains of urban planning discourse problematically collapsed the “creative continuum” approach to community development (an approach honoring the indigenous cultural expression of specific communities) with the “creative industries/cities” approach to economic development (one that falsely equated economic deficits and cultural ones and rewarded artists willing to move into low-income areas to fill in perceived gaps).⁷⁶ Other *Our Town* agnostics feared that Landesman’s cross-market philanthropic criteria was a pale mask for neoliberal cooptation and that federally funded artists were consenting to produce superficial images of “community vitality” that obfuscated state disinvestment of these same communities.⁷⁷ These critics remained suspicious that corporate-connected city leaders were ethically answerable to artists or targeted publics and were invested, instead, in creating “quick-fix” image enhancements using cultural activism as an instrument of economic growth in economically underperforming neighborhoods. Community activists with long-standing commitments to economically fractured communities also pushed back against funding allocated for “fine art” organizers to travel to poor neighborhoods as a form of NEA-subsidized cultural colonialism, and nothing new. Adversaries with long-standing ties to US identitarian movements insisted that “placemakers” from Indigenous communities had long been producing cultural interventions in local “places” for decades without philanthropic or commercial recognition.⁷⁸ Among the strongest critiques of the agency’s “place-based” turn insisted that the philanthropic in-sourcing of cultural workers to low-income neighborhoods was artist-led gentrification that fostered neighborhood dissonance and negatively impacted legacy residents through increases in property values that eventually priced them out.⁷⁹ Opponents of this philanthropic approach saw the NEA’s invocation of “place” as a soft power move motivated by a neoliberal shadow state. For them the NEA was motivating a mass movement of artists into economically disinvested areas and tasking them with “clean[ing] up the mess that Capitalism made” (Solskolne 2015).

Robust criticism did not keep Landesman and *Our Town* from forging ahead with tremendous speed and momentum. The program won legislative favor and cemented new contractual obligations between artists and local mayors, urban planners, education, health, and commercial investors and justice activists across the United States. In 2012, senior leadership published an online database, entitled, “Exploring Our Town,” spotlighting successful collaborations by featuring cultural asset mapping, arts participation, collaborative design, arts district planning, repurposing of facilities, festivals and performances. This online marketing tool cast NEA-funded art and artists as productive workers and cast community culture as an “asset” in and of itself. Upon perusing the agency’s *Our Town* grantee rosters, dance-based grantees were notably absent. This problem endured after Landesman retired from the post of NEA chair in 2012 and Obama appointed Jane Chu (2014–18) as his replacement. Chu’s tenure was one year deep at the time of the agency’s fiftieth anniversary, where I draw this narrative to a close. Still, I want to look briefly at early efforts by her leadership team to maximize leverage gained under Landesman. With such a milestone anniversary of federal arts grantmaking on the horizon, Chu’s leadership team engineered one grant instrument that linked “creativity” directly and unapologetically with market gains, signaling the extent to which the market and market partners had replaced specific arts constituencies as NEA policy priorities.

Jane Chu: Connecting Creativity, Connecting the Dots

We have an opportunity to start a new dialogue on the ways in which the arts—and the ways the NEA supports the arts—are an essential component of our everyday lives . . . Although many may not realize it, the arts actively intersect with areas such as the economy, human development, and community vitality. The arts and artists who are funded and supported by the NEA are an integral part of the solution to the challenges we face in all parts of our society.

JANE CHU, NEA CHAIR’S MESSAGE (2/16/16)

Accomplished pianist and former executive fund developer for the Kaufman Performing Arts Center in Kansas City, Missouri, Jane Chu assumed the NEA helm in August 2014. Soon thereafter, Chu embarked on nationwide tour to off-center US cities and towns touting economic growth as the agency’s re-

vised federal arts policy endgame. A first-generation Chinese-American born in Oklahoma and raised in Arkansas, Chu's self-proclaimed "Bok Choy and Corn Dog" upbringing embraced cultural pluralism. Her later role as an arts fund developer honed an entrepreneurial eye on US industries as targets of federal arts investment. Early on, Chu's speeches and writing evidenced a deep understanding of business and the arts, a transdisciplinary dexterity bolstered by an impressive seven academic degrees in the areas of music, piano pedagogy, business administration, and philanthropic studies. Having entered her appointment a year and a half shy of the NEA's fiftieth birthday, Chu's earliest moves to expand nonarts buy-in for NEA-funded creativity kept "Creative Placemaking" as the agency's anchoring policy platform and continued Landesman's efforts to woo nonfederal arts support. Speaking to a group of financiers in 2014, Chu stated in no uncertain terms that the primary purpose of Landesman's *Our Town*, from its very inception, was economic:

The NEA created Our Town as a catalytic investment tool. It has served as the Obama Administration's signature place-based arts program . . . As part of President Obama's "Ladders of Opportunity" agenda, and in strategic partnership with sister federal agencies, the NEA makes *Our Town* grants as anchor investments. (Schupbach and Chu 2014: 65)

Chu's rhetorical strategies conflated public arts philanthropy with corporate finance practices like "anchor investing" to further amplify the agency-wide shift toward economizing US "creativity" across markets and the federal bureaucracy.⁸⁰ With the nation's economy not quite recovered from the subprime loan bust, Obama's spending caps had significantly stalled NEA appropriations. Following philanthropic inroads made by her predecessors, Chu's leadership team touted over twenty interagency and interdepartmental partnerships on the NEA website to further impress upon the public the many ways that art could be tooled to produce nonarts gains.

*Creativity Connects*TM

On September 29, 2015, the fiftieth anniversary of the NEA's inauguration, Chair Chu announced a three-pronged leadership initiative and grant program that positioned creativity as a crucial link between artists and American industries. Absent any direct reference to specific legacies of artistic practice, *Creativity*

Connects[™] (title used with permission from Crayola, LLC) recruited grantees to use creativity to specifically deliver tangible gains in nonarts sectors of the US economy. Here, we see the most explicit example of NEA incentives that cast ideal grantees as arts “workers” and as instruments of market growth.⁸¹ Chu’s *Creativity Connects*[™] initiative included three components, a grant program, an arts workforce report, and digital mapping tool to further assist citizens in visualizing connections between artists “and industries that want and use creativity,” according to the web portal in 2016. A program that would ultimately weather just two grant cycles, *Creativity Connects*[™] lifted the agency’s long-standing moratorium on multiple NEA applications per year to further motivate arts grantseekers to pursue funds from this and one additional category of their choice. Fiscally speaking, *Creativity Connects*[™] allocations were wide-ranging in terms of size, between \$20,000 and \$100,000 per project.

Chu’s integration of an overtly market-based tool into the NEA’s grantmaking toolkit infused economic support to move artists to put their creative ideas, services and products to work on economic issues.⁸² Of course, true to the apolitical tenor of NEA discourse postrestructuring, *Creativity Connects*[™] guidelines made nary a mention of the root causes of US socioeconomic disparities.⁸³ Rather than acknowledge the classed impacts of corporate downsizing, worker attrition, wage disparity, and vocational nomadism that confronted many US workers within the 2016 global economy, *Creativity Connects*[™] invited grantees to design and cosign a series of economic contracts and pursue the Floridian (2002) ideal of industry growth through creative workforce expansion.⁸⁴ The program’s politically neutered invocation of “creativity” as an industry connector was relatively abstract, but the concreteness of program outcomes, was not. Desirable grantee deliverables included:

1. The creation of art works through collaborations between arts and nonarts partners.
2. Projects that utilize the arts to support the creative needs of nonarts sectors.
3. Projects that explore the intersection of artistic creativity and creativity in nonarts sectors.
4. Projects that develop support systems for the arts to work with nonarts sectors.

5. Projects that use the arts and the creative process to address complex issues of broad concern.
6. Human capital development utilizing the arts such as workforce training that cultivates collaboration, problem solving, and creative thinking.⁸⁵

At the agency's fiftieth anniversary year, political appointees had done much rhetorical, programmatic, and evaluative work to reorient perceptions of the NEA as a funding body once principally dedicated to endowing exceptional American "fine artists" who hailed from major coastal cities. Millennial federal arts grantmakers grappled instead with how to mobilize federally subsidized artists to work toward economic betterment in every congressional district in the nation.⁸⁶ The NEA's evolution from a culturally to an economically instrumental philanthropic entity has many lessons to teach with regard to how local arts work and workarounds have evolved across this same fifty-year timespan.

Dance Director Douglas Sonntag was enlisted by Chu to oversee the first round of applications for *Creativity Connects*[™]. The first list of grantees was announced at the end of the agency's fiftieth anniversary year, at which time the agency published commissioned interactive digital graphic to draw future grantees and publics into awareness.⁸⁷ Those who clicked on this digital marketing tool were hailed to notice how NEA funded arts organizers worked hand in hand with professionals in business, housing, and transportation, in urban and rural areas, and alongside military service members returning in unprecedented numbers from repeat deployments abroad. As was the case with Landesman's launch of *Our Town*, dance-specific grantees remained thinly represented. I will draw this chapter to a close by entertaining how the NEA's turn toward hyperinstrumental creative industry partnerships was variably translated in Dance.

Obama-era Dance Program Translations

Weathering the unpredictable postrecession climate and the NEA's climactic institutional shift toward economically productive art works, Dance Program insiders had some heavy lifting to do to identify reliable opportunities for US dance grantseekers during the Obama administration. Throughout this eight-year period, the agency's policy preoccupation with funding by discipline had

all but dissolved. As a result, the majority of dance-focused requests came in through the NEA's capacious *Art Works* program because of the broad swath of outcomes that its guidelines supported. Grantees who were already familiar with NEA accounting protocols pitched projects organized toward maximizing citizen arts access, engagement, and consumption. Projects funded in dance during this period evidenced grantees' expressed intention to increase dance participation among un- and under-initiated demographic groups. Examining a single fiscal grant cycle reveals, in closer detail, the dexterity with which concert dance grantees managed to variably assimilate to the NEA's preoccupation with economic metrics.

Taking round two of the FY 2016 grantee roster in Dance in the category of *Art Works* as our example, a total of sixty-eight dance projects won support. Allocated funds supported nonprofit dance companies, service organizations, foundations, institutions engaged in preservation, and annual festivals that emphasized dance.⁸⁸ Under the artistic direction of Alonzo King, LINES Ballet, San Francisco won NEA matching support for the Guest Choreography Project (\$20,000) to enable summer training of dance students by guest artists during the organization's preprofessional program. A workforce mentorship award (\$30,000) went to Ballet Hispánico in New York for Coreográfico, a choreography institute supporting emerging and underrecognized Latinx concert dance choreographers.⁸⁹ Choreographer David Dorfman's company (Connecticut) steered \$10,000 in NEA matching support toward the production of *Aroundtown*, which took a scaled-down approach to community engagement by incorporating audience participation into the stage work itself.⁹⁰ Spaceworks NYC's *Dance Lit* program located "proactive partners" at the Williamsburg Library and repurposed this site as one capable of delivering performances, educational offerings, and discussions contributing to the "long-term stability and vibrancy of the neighborhood."⁹¹ CADRE, El Puente's network of mostly Latinx workers from North Brooklyn received funds to educate and transmit knowledge of social dance forms like Bomba to various publics. El Puente was one of the few grantees to name actual dance aesthetic traditions in its project description.⁹² Remembering that the amount of dedicated federal support provided for *Art Works* came nowhere close to covering the total cost of affairs, the above-listed projects exemplify the dutiful foregrounding of social and economic deliverables that emerged under Obama, Landesman, and Chu as emblems of national dance

endowment. Into the second decade of the twenty-first century, a grantseeker's eligibility for federal subsidy was inextricably linked to their ability to highlight dance's capacity to deliver various forms of social and economic capital.

Remembering the additional labor of accounting for grantee operational capacity, managerial literacy, and fiscal transparency was also NEA mandated, one need only to listen briefly to one Dance Program grantee describe her efforts to integrate operations into the NEA's new digital system to appreciate the underacknowledged labor that accompanied philanthropic assimilation within the agency's neoliberal, digital turn. In the words of this aspiring grantseeker:

There is this section when you log on to grants.gov—that's the initial place to go to start, that you get thrust into a vetting process. I guess so that they do away with all riff raff, but it is so unfriendly, really. The first time I applied. I failed. The time before I got that far into it. Finally this time I got through. But, you have to reset your password every three months or it will be a dead link. How many of us can do that all the time? For \$10,000. It forces you to have a full-time employee assigned to do it.

At the close of the NEA's fiftieth year of funding (dancing) bodies, *Art Works* grantseekers had to consent to a process of online-mediated labor that, by the agency's account, would absorb an average of twenty-seven hours. Such labor trade-offs were insurmountable for my above interlocutor and countless others, when one considers the economically paltry size of *Art Works* awards. In contrast, grantseekers could apply for six-figure sums awarded to multisector enterprises under the *Our Town* category and win favor by way of their networked connections to economic investors and owners of physical real estate. The relative nonparticipation of dance-focused grantees within the agency's "place-based" turn signaled the extent to which dance organizers had yet to control the means and materials of their own production in the past, and well into the NEA's fifth decade.

NEA *Our Town* and the No-"Place" of Dance

Our Town funding criteria, articulated above, created clear barriers to entry for dance seekers from the program's 2010 inception onward. Of the 252 grants awarded by this program in 2015, only three named dance as an explicit compo-

ment of the proposed intervention. In 2016, when 382 grants were awarded, less than twenty featured dance as a dedicated area of service. In terms of distribution, *Our Town* grants overwhelmingly supported the production of cultural objects (public art, visual art, spatial beautification) or the temporary animation of built environments (new housing, festivals, site-specific productions). *Our Town* panelists seemed to generally favor grantees whose proposed productions occurred outside of conventional “arts venues,” in schools, street corners, senior living facilities, hospitals, or public parks. Given that the philanthropic dependability of proscenium touring had all but disappeared as a public arts funding priority by 2009, it is interesting and politically informative to notice how hierarchies of dance practice and production continued to dominate NEA dance grantee rosters (Moran et al. 2015: 19).

Dance’s lack of control over physical real estate was one of many problems that estranged formerly funded grantees across this twenty-year period. This problem was reinforced for me during a conversation I shared with one of the few dance grantees to have been awarded funds from *Our Town* in dance, who worried aloud:

Dancers do not regularly participate in culture of ownership. They are faced with the problem of terminal rentals, always leasing, holding down temporary residencies and touring, sometimes even performing in insufficient spaces—these are all commonly understood as field norms. Pipelines exist, but flows of support are always temporary . . . so, yes, the idea of “Creative Placemaking” works, as a concept. But you better own it.⁹³

For this *Our Town* grantee, dance’s scarce presence on the NEA’s philanthropic radar was a structural after-effect of two policy-level problems. First, the structural overdetermination of EuroAmerican patrons, presenters, and artists in the early concert dance “boom” as standards of dance worthiness was a fiction that generations of US dance organizers had absorbed. And second, the NEA’s economic incentivization of dance touring was, at its structural core, a contract that guaranteed temporary residency arrangements for dance artists. However dance residency and touring had been heralded as sought-after professional dance accolades, the economic tenability of the NEA’s process-oriented approach cast dance artists as terminal guests in someone else’s house.⁹⁴ Dance was, as this informant suggested, a cultural field dotted with “rentals” and minimal propri-

etorship. Such issues had been falling off of the NEA radar into the agency's fifth decade of making dance and arts grants. Despite efforts by NEA Chairs to promote NEA-commissioned dance research that flagged public attention to issues of suboptimal dance space (*A Place to Dance*, 1989), job security (*Dancemakers*, 1993), and organizational undercapitalization (*Raising the Barre*, 2002), dance funding bodies (including but not limited to the NEA) had yet to reckon with their complicity in producing policy instabilities. By recruiting grantees who controlled dance's physical spaces and sites of production, the NEA's investment in "place-based" philanthropy left the "place" of the human body as a contingent priority, at best.

The absence of dance and performance-based projects in early NEA *Our Town* grantee rosters was an issue raised by many at an NEA-sponsored November 2014 convening in Washington, entitled "Beyond the Building." This in-person gathering steered performing artists, funders, administrators, civic leaders, and economic partners toward the question of how NEA *Our Town* funds might better accommodate how art and artists working in live performance were variably organizing their work. Channeling chair's discretionary funds from Chu, those gathered were tasked with identifying problems that had surfaced since the *Our Town* rollout and charged with prescribing concrete solutions at the day's end. The group's findings were both economic and ethical in character.

Some institutional insiders flatly suggested that *Our Town* funding patterns tilted overwhelmingly toward the production of cultural commodities, citing the preponderance of visual art objects (sculptures, design, architecture) on grantee rosters compared to performance-based arts experiences. Other critics saw program guidelines interpolating grantees to venture into economically disinvested communities outside of their own as a problem that raised ethical concerns over cultural imperialism—the colonial practice of venturing into communities and taking over cultural production in spaces where artists had no prior personal relations. Where performance-based cultural work was concerned, challengers maintained that the so-called "place-makers" who were best positioned to connect local publics were those with long-standing ties to local history. For the NEA's newly engineered instrumental system to work for more cultural publics and practices would, according to those assembled, require wealth-holders at the agency and elsewhere to more directly contend with embedded class, race, and regional biases. External pressures to conform to economic government

rationales for spending prevailed throughout this timespan. Dance's capacity to answer the institutional call to deliver policy level returns would slow to a snail's pace as the agency crept toward its fiftieth year of operations.

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CHAPTER THREE

Any internet user who encountered the digital info graphic stating the objectives of Chu's fiftieth anniversary initiative *Creativity Connects*[™] on the NEA's website was exposed to a digital landscape banner that featured the following marketing pitch: "Creativity connects art to the marketplace . . . across sectors . . . and across the states. Investing in creativity . . . valuing the arts . . . supporting communities through the arts . . . growing the cultural economy."⁹⁵ Web users invested in understanding the process of twenty-first century national dance endowment could then scroll down to successful grantees in this new funding category. *Creativity Connects*[™] grantees were searchable both by arts discipline and by the nonarts sector partners that they enlisted to prove worthy of federal support. Clicking on the "Dance" tab, online searchers witnessed seven dance organizations who the NEA rewarded for partnering with investors across the fields of Agriculture, Business, Community, Health, and Technology. Featured project descriptions exposed uniquely instrumental examples whereby new and long-established dance-makers tooled dance to produce a range of nondance and nonarts deliverables.

Clicking on the industrial sector marked "Agriculture," dance organizers from Ballet Vermont won federal matching support to enable the "Farm to Ballet Project," a full-length outdoor ballet production that staged a story of agricultural harvest in an unlikely setting—grassy pastures at local Vermont farms.⁹⁶ The agriculturalists and artists featured in promotional videos smiled brightly inside of this enterprise, doubly billed as both an arts-based celebration of Vermont's farming culture and an effort to expand audiences for classical ballet among rural community members. Another click on the "Business" sector tab revealed that NEA matching support was awarded to modern dance choreographer Michael Schert to act as the social-entrepreneur-in-residence at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business. The principal cultural activity supported here was Schert's effort to mentor business students on creative ways

to integrate “arts methods” into their business, health care, and/or government work. Another *Creativity Connects*™ dance grant listed under the “Business” sector category went to Keshet Dance Company dancers, who labored in two entrepreneurial directions: (1) to impart dance skills to inmates in state juvenile detention facilities and (2) to outfit their local dance studio with a business resource center for artists in their home state of New Mexico.⁹⁷ Projects funded under the “Health” tab supported Fort Wayne Dance Collective in facilitating creative care training for professionals working in the Texas health-care system and a home DVD series for the acclaimed Dance for Parkinson’s Disease program facilitated by Mark Morris Dance Group.⁹⁸ Turning lastly to the “Technology” tab featuring NEA funded projects in Dance, internet explorers encountered a \$45,000 matching award to LA-based Diavolo Dance Company to do two industry-oriented things. First, the company was to collaborate with Virginia Tech researchers on movement-based sensors and electronic textiles for use in live performances and second, they would aid in the construction of a smart-phone app to enable audience interaction with the artists during events. Another \$100,000 grant from the *Creativity Connects*™ category went to the Martha Graham Dance Company for affiliated artists to work with technologists from Google to create a digital exhibit of Graham’s choreography and dance technique for mass distribution through the Google Arts and Culture App.⁹⁹ While all of these grantees celebrated the entrepreneurial spirit of millennial dance grant-seekers, I want to draw this chapter and entire inquiry to a close by lingering a bit longer on the presence of the ostensible matron of American concert dance on this roster of entrepreneurial collaborations, some twenty five years after her passing. Graham’s status as a 2016 *Creativity Connects*™ grantee reinforces a key point about the politics of NEA philanthropic participation that this book has labored to emphasize.

Conclusion

One of my burdens in *Funding Bodies* has been to derail romantic notions of NEA Dance grantmaking as an apolitical institutional exercise enacted through universal, ostensibly “merit-based” grounds. The NEA’s historical influence in fashioning the US dance field, as I see it, has been strongly shaped by the aes-

thetic and organizational values held by those endowed with institutional wealth and the power to say “yes.” Such surgical historical focus on structural norms and economic flows enables us to more clearly see how, for example, Martha Graham’s organizational intermediaries still profit from six-figure federal taxpayer subsidies today despite widespread philanthropic disinvestment in concert dance as a general arts funding priority. Graham’s grantseekers leverage the artist’s long-standing legacy and networked connections with those operating the Google arts and culture empire to win philanthropic entitlements under an entirely reengineered system. And, to be clear, such recent endowments are *not* entirely the result of the ostensible “merit” of applications, but should be seen as leverage won by organizational intermediaries who knew how to work the ever-changing system to keep legacies intact.¹⁰⁰ Dance’s implicit hierarchies will continue to prevail so long as dance grantmakers refuse to quit the narrow structural confines of their worldviews. Hierarchical models of dance endowment will also endure because leagues of US dance grantseekers have taken it upon themselves to assimilate to standards of dance worth and worthiness. The question remains: with these stubborn patterns thus elucidated, where does the next generation of US dance-makers go from here?

Having now spent a decade studying the politics of NEA philanthropic engineering and practical translation of arts funding policies in dance, I remain convinced that the difference between grant “seekers” and grant “makers” is one of degrees and not kind. The hegemonic organizational practices that have held my chapters together: *leveraging*, *touring*, and *incorporating* will continue to shift in meaning and on the basis of context. What remains clear, at the end of the NEA’s fiftieth anniversary year, is that nationally endowed dance grantees at and after the agency’s millennial turn were those capable of aligning workplace performances with a slew of emergent dance organizational “norms”:

- » generating foot traffic for local farms (cue to imagine a male ballet dancer wearing red tights and a feathered bonnet atop a fake farmhouse holding a weathervane in rural Vermont);
- » bolstering tourism in local “places,” physical buildings (cue to imagine brilliantly colored murals serving as the backdrop for dancers performing on concrete inaugurating “arts districts” and creative cities, towns, and rural areas);

- » increasing citizen productivity (cue to imagine leotarded dancers sitting at conference tables collaboratively debating the cerebral “how” of creative workforce development to suited partners sipping lattes);
- » soothing the psychological costs of combat deployment on military service members and their families (cue to imagine a seated circle of Vietnam-era veterans, smiling, and dancing next to psychiatrists, social workers, and lanky white dance instructors wearing yoga pants);
- » offsetting health support costs for aging populations within the overburdened US healthcare system (cue to imagine a community dance event for adults with vestibular issues like Parkinson’s Disease and their familial or hired care partners);
- » mediating dance education and appreciation through advancements in the digital realm (cue to imagine a walking tour of a regional US city led by a dancer retelling its history of investment and neighborhood dispossession through an Augmented Reality application).

When we study the historical enmeshment of patterns of arts philanthropy and local dance workplace performances together, an alternative concept of dance “endowment” emerges. Into the twenty-first century, both artists and federal agents across the US executive branch sought economic stability amidst governmental pressures to consistently do more with less. The NEA’s structural ideals of dance and arts organization have evolved since 1965, and federal economic incentives have motivated many arts grantseekers to align their behaviors and aspirations accordingly. By the time that the agency turned fifty, this lone funding body and the people within it had distributed a substantial \$118,366,000 to US artists and arts organizations. Such fiscal endowments undoubtedly authorized generations of arts intermediaries whose choice making also shaped and constrained what is possible in the United States, through dance. Rendered through the analytical lenses of dance and performance, this history of NEA funding tools and their practical tooling repositions institutional policies as fundamentally embodied enactments, patterns of practice that can either conserve or upend conventional understandings about who makes a dance, where dance happens, and how dance works.

afterword



With past policy patterns now visible, where does the next generation of dance makers go from here? © man_kukuku | istockphoto.com.

DOES THE NEA NEED SAVING?

Endowment and Collective Repair

ON MARCH 16, 2017, US President Donald J. Trump's Office of Management and Budget released "America First: A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again," a document that outlined his administration's basic plan to reengineer the US federal bureaucracy through massive and historically unprecedented economic cuts to government departments, agencies, and programs.¹ As institutional tools, presidential budget blueprints are intentionally vague.² They chart general directions that future policies might take and sketch an administration's particular views on the role of federal government. More symbolic than substantive, blueprints serve as placeholders for a more comprehensive plan yet to come.

Contingencies aside, Trump's "America First" blueprint was different for the NEA and for the arts for one key reason: for the first time in US history, a standing president used this instrument to demand the NEA's outright elimination. Fast forward two months to May 24, 2017, when Trump unveiled "A New Foundation for American Greatness," a 62-page Comprehensive Budget Proposal for FY 2018. Buried on page 1191 of its 1288 pages of appendices, under the plan for the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies, readers could find President Trump's plan to fully defund the NEA over the next two fiscal years.³ Trump's plan called for a cut of 80 percent of existing appropriations for FY 2018, with \$28,949,000 million left to "conduct the orderly closeout" of NEA operations.⁴ The FY 2019 plan would then have taken the agency's budget to a zero balance, thus terminating the NEA's then fifty-four year history of granting federal subsidies to nonprofit artists and organizers.⁵

Ultimately, Congress passed Trump's budget with an amendment that saved the agency and increased its FY 2018 appropriation by \$5 million. A string of additional execution attempts followed in the president's budget proposals for FY 2019, FY 2020, and FY 2021, respectively. These attempts also failed, and



FIGURE 17 The Constitution Center, current site of the offices of the National Endowment for the Arts (2014–present). Photo: Radharc Images / Alamy Stock Photo.

the NEA's livelihood was protected each time through bipartisan support from Congress.⁶ At the time of this writing (December 2020), some insiders credit the entrepreneurial leadership of Landesman and Chu for effectively depoliticizing the agency and quelling future attempts at institutional dismantling. Other skeptics remain cautious against taking the actions of any sitting president and the NEA's institutional future for granted.

Future budgetary battles notwithstanding, the question remains: does the NEA *need* saving? What exactly is at stake in waiting for a life-or-death sentence for the National Endowment for the Arts at this historical moment? Rather than deny the severity of the situation, or try to predict what may lie ahead, I want to close by expanding our concept of dance endowment as something that includes the NEA (currently in residence at the Constitution Center; fig. 17) but that also spans far beyond it. Rather than marshal any more energy toward Donald J. Trump or toward institutional preservation as an endgame, I want to invite readers into a slightly different thought experiment.⁷

What happens when we understand endowment as a fundamentally human exercise? What happens if we notice how the distribution of dance worth and worthiness is practiced inside of institutions and within local dance communities? My impulse to write a book about arts funding policies was to encourage wider reflection on who dominant philanthropic patterns have affected and how. Focusing on the inner workings of the NEA as a bounded area of study has taught me a great deal about the infrastructure that conditioned my own participation in the US nonprofit dance field. Knowing how the NEA's philanthropic blueprints have changed over the past five decades informs my politics of participation in dance today. Studying how patterns of dance recognition and resourcing, in practice, have endured even when official policies have changed has enabled me to reflect on my own complicity in exclusionary organizational and aesthetic hierarchies. By paying historical attention to the relationship between economic flows and specific patterns of dance action and organization, we can see more clearly how dominant systems are continually propped up and failing to account for US dance-makers who are organizing dance differently.

Rather than dedicate our mental energies here to repairing past systems of dance endowment, I want to suggest that our definition of dance endowment is, itself, in need of repair. I type these words cautiously, keenly aware of how often prescriptive ideas about policy reform can land with an anachronistic thud upon publication. But if I've taken one lesson away from ten years of studying the nuances of NEA funding, it is this: people rarely get something that they don't ask for. So, to conclude this critical structural and cultural history of dance endowment, I am asking readers, and anyone with the power to allocate resources and opportunities in dance, to take fuller responsibility for the capital we each control. I am stepping quite deliberately into the narrative to channel my own energy toward the kind of systems-level change that historically underendowed dance artists have been demanding all along. Molding my feelings here into questions, I'm wondering: What might something like reparative endowment in dance feel like? How might it perform? How can a coalitional effort to reverse past patterns be advanced by dance's diverse wealth and wisdom holders? What concrete steps can wealth holders take to finally set up a system rooted in distributional equity? Rather than wait for the NEA to fulfill its ideological charge to distribute funds equitably, how can those of us who care deeply (but differently) about dance hold each other accountable?

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AFTERWORD

I want to seize the unpredictable state of US federal arts funding to demand that we adopt a much wider vista in relationship to dance infrastructural reform. What I am calling reparative endowment in dance here will require not only reengineered policies but also a shared willingness on the part of dance wealth-holders to acknowledge that dominant systems have rewarded some while excluding others. Inspired by philanthropist Edgar Villanueva and other culturally responsive philanthropists, I believe that comprehensive reparations can and should come from wide range of stakeholders, but particularly from people who control access to resources in the arts (2018: 160). Following these institutional activists, I wonder: What starter steps might it take to productively un-pattern past policies of dance endowment? How might a coalition of dance supporters locate a shared frequency and march together toward a bolder, broader embrace of dance work and dance worthiness? There is not enough space in this book to answer this question, but I will briefly highlight some promising first steps that have already begun.

Below, I suggest three policy-level interventions whereby dance wealth and wisdom holders can intentionally move together toward greater distributional equity and widespread endowment in dance. In policy and practice, such reparative endowment demands a far-flung, coalitional base of support. In other words, everyone who loves dance and supports dance in local contexts has a role to play. And in this regard, here is the great news: the three steps that I outline below are already happening at the philanthropic level and making strides toward greater parity of opportunity for US dance-makers (broadly defined). So while none of the trajectories I chart here are original ideas, these alternative patterns of participation offer provisional examples of how institutional insiders who are committed to cultural redistribution and equity are already steering support toward alternative models.

Step One: Let's decenter American concert dance production logics as ingrained institutional ideals. By hook or by crook, philanthropic disinvestment in American concert dance creation, production, and touring has been underway since the turn to the twenty-first century. To begin to override institutional biases toward EuroAmerican aesthetic values, architectures and paternalisms requires

more than Frank Hodson's economic audits of fund deviations (see chapter 2). Conducting institutional audits of cultural and regional biases can do much to show how policies protect those who have garnered the lion's share of support. Repairing philanthropic criteria in writing alone cannot suffice; dedicated energies must be spent challenging these biases when they are exercised. If the NEA's checkered history of policy and its practical translation teaches us anything, it is that policy reforms often fail to reroute resourcing because those with the power to say "yes" neglect to change their patterns of participation or to imagine dance otherwise.⁸

To un-pattern stubborn policy defaults requires those unwilling to see dance outside of hierarchical norms to step aside and embrace new learning and forms of leadership. Supporting dance beyond proscenium contexts requires authorizing those who intimately know how dance thrives on the screen, on the street, on the playground, on the reservation, and across commercial harbors. Decentering concert dance immediately widens understanding of the many cultural agents who broker opportunities in dancing communities. This step productively challenges received understandings of the term dance "presenter" with the endowed gatekeepers who manage proscenium venues. Once we commit to sidelining the tendency to default to concert aesthetic, organizational, and relational ideals, a more vibrant community of dance stewards emerges.

Thankfully, some dance grantmakers are already pushing dance funding past outworn proscenium pathways.⁹ The Dance/USA Fellowships to Artists platform is a national philanthropic initiative that provides unincorporated funding for dance-makers whose work has been embedded for seven years or more in local community contexts. Established in 2018, the program explicitly funds artists who work in what Brent Reidy terms "uncommon" spaces and who have not been endowed with major national support in the past.¹⁰ To date, a total of \$1,000,525 in unrestricted funds have been granted to thirty-one movement-based artists. Program guidelines ward strongly against philanthropic rent-seeking by explicitly hailing younger generations and underacknowledged elders to apply.¹¹ Dance/USA grantmakers have so far steered support to salsa practitioners, Indigenous mask and hoop dancers, dancers focused on hip hop forms including krump and footwork, disability dance activists, and even one dance artist working in Black vernacular dance who makes dances on ice.¹² Pathbreaking philanthropic projects like these proceed to quit the concert stage as a consecrated site of dance work

by embracing a notion of the “new” detached from modernist vanguards. Such economic and practical reversals lift into view a wider range of aesthetic contexts, specifically those that resonate with historically underendowed dance publics.

Step Two: Let’s renounce the funder-imposed pattern of rewarding assimilation to managerial norms of dance organization and recognize alternative models. This step is lofty, and it is not equivalent to sanctioning total operational free-balling by artists. Public and private patrons in the arts have, since the nineteenth century, enacted and upheld narrow standards of eligibility that have reinforced their values and protected their wealth. I am stepping here with the likes of nonprofit equity advocate Vu Le by summoning those who control the direction of arts philanthropic resources to identify more flexible methods of accounting for dance creation, production, and distribution.¹³ Endowing capital on the basis of an artists’ capacity to conform to managerial norms outside of dance too often stifles the values and worldviews of communities where local dance work is situated. To abandon bureaucratic norms of arts endowment will require greater commitment by institutional wealth holders to recognize artists as primary experts on the topics of arts labor, value, and support.

I am fortunate to be a participant in an allied research project, currently in process (December 2020) at Wesleyan University’s Institute for Curatorial Practice in Performance. This work is supported by a \$200,000 grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, funders with long-standing commitments to arts practice and production and who want to hear directly from artists about the culturally specific and divergent ways that they produce and sustain their work. Alongside a team of artist-researchers specializing in arts labor and policy, we are conducting oral history interviews with six midcareer artists aimed at raising awareness about the contingent ways that they experience institutionalized norms of production. These six narratives function more like *counternarratives*, in that artists’ situated histories are both unstable and un-standardize-able. But by committing the highly creative and organizational labor of local artists to writing, this research labors to lay bare the practical, economic, and managerial demands that artists constantly make on the institutions that they inhabit, including those that hold them down.

Policy research that actively credits artists’ knowledge and experiences can draw funder-imposed assimilation to arts managerial norms into high relief.¹⁴

When artists are invited into policy discourse to speak to structural (in)equities on practical grounds, the measure of dance's value shifts and productively reveals the many noneconomic motivators that dancing engenders (Goffe, Bonin-Rodriguez, and Wilbur 2021). Future collaboration between artists and critical humanists on issues of value, labor, and infrastructure in the arts can meaningfully expose standards that threaten to cut off dance's expressive fullness.¹⁵

Step Three: Let's trade hierarchy and paternalism for mutual stewardship as a relational approach between dance artists and intermediary agents. In this last step I want to consider how dance grantors and grantees might move together toward what I call "trust minus the Trustee relation." I want to be very clear that what I am encouraging here is not total withdrawal from patronage or philanthropy, but from the internalized distrust that can accompany the pursuit of philanthropic subsidy and the incorporative mandate of board-governance. Artists' material dependency upon funders, presenters, patrons, and trustees is structurally conditioned, as my first chapter sought to show, by funder-imposed pressures to assimilate their daily operations to the 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable model as a stipulation of fund worthiness. Contractual obligations between wealth holders and artists seeking support too often position artists on the deficit side of an asset/deficit binary. Trustees who are structurally entrusted with control by way of this model can and do abuse this power and regulate artists' creative and organizational choices in dangerous ways. To repair hardwired power imbalances and strained relations between those holding (economic) wealth and those holding (dance) wisdom, we can take our cue from funding bodies who are actively reengineering models of power sharing and stewarding artists, themselves, as vital resources.

Remembering that the NEA first inherited the institutional tool of the matching grant from grantmakers at the Ford Foundation, it is exciting to notice how Ford leadership is developing pathbreaking research, programs, and evaluative processes that challenge inequity and build cultures of mutual recognition and respect. In 2016, Ford announced its Building Institutions and Networks Initiative (BUILD) under the transformative leadership of President Darren Walker (2013–present). BUILD was invented to channel \$1 billion dollars over six years explicitly toward dismantling inequity across a vast array of policy areas.¹⁶ A crucial example whereby a one multi-billion-dollar funding body has committed

to challenging structural inequity across all of its philanthropic areas, BUILD strategically combines policy research, convenings, programmatic development, and advocacy to inspire a field-wide shift among fellow funders. This initiative offers a direct example where wealth-holders are actively leveraging their influence to hold each other accountable for initiating widespread policy reform within and beyond the arts.

One potent instrument through which Ford is attempting to reengineer patron relations and influence fellow funding bodies is through research. In 2019, Ford released a sixteen-page study entitled “What It Really Takes to Influence Funder Practice,” which highlighted concrete examples of philanthropic practices that sought to redistribute resourcing and share power with historically marginalized groups (Reich, Milway, and Cordona 2019). Among the strategies that succeeded or were deemed to “make headway” were new programmatic initiatives that explicitly named members of historically underendowed groups as ideal grantees, convenings where categorically excluded people of color and disabled groups were invited to share experiences and brainstorm reforms, and organizations that undertook the sticky social work of cultural reforms by attempting to reverse prevalent attitudes among grantmakers and grantseekers rooted in mutual distrust. Philanthropic strategies that failed or that “faced headwind” were those that upheld paternalistic, or hierarchical relations between grantors and grantees. Ford’s recognition of the psychological freight of the grantor/grantee relation offers particular details that I find exceptional, in that researchers suggest that stepping toward mutual stewardship requires grantmakers to unlearn feelings of economic superiority and requires grantees to unlearn feelings of lack. Repairing these internalized affects may well be the toughest policy reform of all. Ford researchers rightfully worry in their conclusion that the paternalistic contracts that have accompanied nonprofitization (in and beyond the arts) are stubborn patterns that will prove tough if not impossible to break (Reich, Milway, and Cordona 2019: 10).

But by holding together the material, structural, and psychological freight at play in achieving philanthropic reparations, Ford has nuanced the conversation about how economic wealth-holders might step with resource seekers toward taking alternative care of their relationship, itself, as a most vital resource.¹⁷ What moves me most about this institutional example is that fund

decision-makers are actively leveraging their status to regulate the philanthropic field. Ford's research agenda does not discuss policy in the abstract; research points to concrete examples and model behaviors where people in power are sharing power with people who need support through education and consensus-based policy assemblies. Critical blueprints, like BUILD, while hardly comprehensive, offer promising steps toward funder-driven models of mutual support in the arts.

I have lingered on Ford's example to broaden access to support (in the arts this work falls under Ford's banner of "Creativity and Free Expression") as an instance where funding bodies to distribute are actively committed to changing the system and are to holding each other accountable for past patterns of structural foreclosure.¹⁸ Stepping toward philanthropic transparency about the colonial and capitalist underpinnings of grantmaking, Ford's philanthropic ethos of mutual stewardship answers to longstanding demands by historically marginalized dance-makers whose flourishing in the arts has been institutionally deferred. These gestures toward what I am calling reparative endowment require naming patterns of over- and under-resourcing, naming patterns of learned entitlement and helplessness, and naming new forms of mutuality that draw the crucial knowledge held by artists out of the sidelines and into the forefront of arts infrastructural debate.¹⁹

Restated as a set of questions: Who among today's dance wealth-holders are up for the challenge of promoting power sharing and knowledge building in the arts? What other models of dance governance might replace hierarchical social contracts? How else might dance organizers and trustees share in the stewardship of dance's economic and noneconomic resources? Is it even possible to create dance worlds that people "make" but that nobody owns?²⁰

The patterns of over- and under-resourcing in dance that I've spotlighted in *Funding Bodies* have been historically hard to break. And, while policy inertia can often easily be linked to bureaucratic constraints, arts hierarchies also endure because specific people are unwilling to relinquish their desire for control over aesthetic judgment, organizational models, and dance architectural ideals. The privilege to endow or to "make" dance legible is the privilege to name and to claim what about dance is true, beautiful, and good. The fact that the vast majority of NEA staff in Dance have looked like me (white, cisgendered, college-educated,

women) is one clear pattern that merits some troubling. So here I am, causing trouble for fellow white women by leveraging my relative ease of access to expose how one political institution emerged, matured, and changed through the actions of insiders who shared ideological ground. My goal has been to motivate those who care deeply (but differently) about dance to notice how their daily practices reproduce patterns of endowment upon which canonical dance histories rest. Future reparative forms of endowment need all dance-makers on deck to reflect on their relative imbrication in systems that invite and foreclose. Once policy patterns become clearer in their cultural contingencies, it is incumbent upon those who control resources to start moving, listening, and choosing otherwise.

To this end, the NEA Dance Program offers a case study of sorts, a site where the struggle to render dance legible fostered many political movements on dance's behalf. To change the future contours of institutional endowment will undoubtedly require further examination of how policies motivate practices. Reparative endowment will need the labor of a wide range of key players: public and private funders, corporate donors, patrons, presenters, curators, critics, university faculty, and artists who broker dance opportunities, among them. As uncomfortable as it sounds, many key players will need to step out of the institutional spotlight and commit to the sweaty work needed in the wings to achieve distributional equity in dance. Starting but not stopping with the abovementioned steps, it is my hope that this text starts to do that work.

Returning to the Question: Does the NEA Need Saving?

When I first began to travel to the NEA for the provisional research that formed the foundation for this book, I immediately saw two risks in studying the Dance Program's historical significance through the agency's archive, alone. The first risk was cultural. Talking with a range of differentially empowered and invested NEA insiders, I was stunned that their experiences contradicted each other so strongly. But rather than engage in the futile exercise of "truthseeking," I elected to stage their competing claims as an untold history of institution building and belonging that could inform future inquiries about how policies promote and protect certain practices in the arts. The second risk I'll call "infra-structural," in that conversations also exposed the often taken-for-granted labor of staff and advisors as critical bureaucratic angling that, in many cases, made room at the

policy table for previously off-the-radar dance groups. Such administrative contingencies taught me to never take small, visually boring, paper-pushing gestures for granted. By reframing policy as an embodied doing, we can appreciate policy's practical translation as a political battleground ripe for future investigation in dance and performance discourse. Circling back now to the NEA's fate and the wobbly state of the US cultural economy, I want to make a few final points.

Without question, the 45th presidency and administration of Donald J. Trump has absorbed popular attention, enflamed racial tensions, and renewed citizen interest in the inner workings of the US federal government. Having pivoted away from this particular president's multiple NEA execution attempts, I realize that I have left the agency's fate hanging as an unreconciled question. So, to conclude, I'll state my position clearly: I am strongly in favor of "saving" the NEA and, with it, federal support for domestic art and culture in this country. As an artist and critical humanist, I believe that the government of a political democracy is obligated to protect and nurture the cultural expression of its citizens as an affirmation of their fullest humanity. Given the historic reality that government strategies have routinely stripped historically vulnerable populations of their right to express their worldviews, I also believe that the NEA is uniquely positioned to repair the effects of this stripping through national convening, research, and distribution of taxpayer support.²¹

But saying that the NEA should seize its civic responsibility to endow a broader faction of US dance-makers into the future is not the same thing as showing how. Throughout this narrative, I have labored to show how people inside of one funding body struggled and fell short of fashioning a democratic support system for dance. I, too, have struggled, inside the space of this Afterword, with finding a reliable foothold, an alternative set of pathways toward system-wide repair. So when I say, "Let's save the NEA," I say this not because of what I learned in the archive or from the interviews that animate this book. I say this because of the beautiful and unbounded fact that everybody's still dancing. Dancing happens in local places despite people's access to philanthropic resources. People value dancing on terms that are not at all monetary. People who dance are already expertly organizing themselves everywhere. Leagues of dance-makers keep moving and have kept moving for centuries without the promise of a "regular gig" at the "regular fees." Dance survives far outside of worlds where patrons stand holding the car and the keys. Dancing has taught me that intentional action and

embodied choice making can create meaningful change. Dance is where people are busy patterning and un-patterning their practices. This happens all the time. The possibility of change that bodies deliver is what inspires me to believe that people inside of powerful institutions are capable of meaningful un-patterning, as well. So, at the end of the day, I say: let's save the NEA. We can only change institutions that exist.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A *NEA Leadership Rosters*

NEA CHAIRS (1965–2016)

Roger Stevens (1965–69)

Nancy Hanks (1969–77)

Livingston Biddle (1977–81)

Frank Hodsoll (1981–89)

John Frohnmayer (1989–92)

Jane Alexander (1993–97)

William “Bill” Ivey (1998–2001)

Michael Hammond (2002)

Dana Gioia (2003–9)

Rocco Landesman (2009–12)

Jane Chu (2014–18)

*Mary Anne Carter was named Acting Chair of the NEA on June 5, 2018, was confirmed as the twelfth chair of the NEA on August 1, 2019, and remains in this post at the time of this writing (December 2020).

NEA DANCE PROGRAM DIRECTORS (1965–2016)

June Batten Arey (1967–73)

Don Anderson (1972–74)

Joseph Krakora (1975)

Rhoda Grauer (1978–81)

Nigel Redden (1982–85)

Sali Ann Kriegsman (1986–95)

Douglas Sonntag (1997–2017)

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APPENDIX A

*Sara Nash was named to the NEA dance directorship, succeeding Douglas Sonntag, in August of 2018 from a previous post as program director of dance at the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA). At NEFA, Nash ran the National Dance Project for seven years and remains in this post at the time of this writing (December 2020).

Over one hundred interviews (some multiple) were collected with past and current NEA leadership, staff, citizen advisors and grantees between September 2012 and April 2018 to inform the writing of this text. Solicited testimony from the following individuals sheds light on the structural mechanics of dance funding and the human dimensions of NEA institutional culture. I first began conducting interviews during my dissertation research at UCLA with approvals from an Institutional Review Board Protocol (2013–16). I then received an IRB exemption (2016–19) from Brown University during my time as a postdoctoral researcher to complete interviews for this project. In instances where access to NEA staff or advisors was not possible (due to lack of contact, disinterest, or death), I consulted decision-makers who worked in close proximity to pivotal NEA agents. All of my project interlocutors are de-identified in the body of the text to maintain confidentiality and reinforce their interdependence as a primary contribution of this study.

INTERVIEWS

Adams, Carolyn	Froot, Dan
Adams, Julie Strandberg	Gadwa, Anne
Alexander, Michael	Grauer, Rhoda
Anawalt, Sasha	Guy, Joyce
Baff, Ella	Harris, Lorenzo “Rennie”
Bennett, Jamie	Hope, Samuel
Brooks, Bonnie	Kriegsman, Sali Ann
Callahan, Suzanne	Iyengar, Sunil
Carlson, Ann	Jefferson, Charmaine
Caulker, Ferne	Johnson, Keith
Cohen, Ze’eva	Killacky, John
Crenca, Umberto “Bert”	Lerman, Liz
Daly, Lynn	Marks, Victoria
Dickey, Carolelinda	Mascelli, Juliana
Edmunds, Kristy	Miller, Sam
Forti, Simone	McDaniel, Nello

Nash, Sara
Ott Long, Janelle
Perlo, Carla
Pimsler, Stuart
Popkin, Lionel
Redden, Nigel
Reinhardt, Charles
Rios-Glaser, Melanie
Rodgers, Wendy
Rosenbaum, Randall
Rousséve, David
Rosenfield, Felicia
Sandoval, Gema

Shagan, Rena
Shay, Anthony
Simonet, Andrew
Smith, Amy
Snyder, Andrea
Sonntag, Douglas
Sygoda, Ivan
Trovillion, Nancy
Washington-Miller, Tamika
Washington, Lula
White, David R.
Yu, Cheng-Chieh
Zollar, Jawole Willa Jo

NOTES

Preface

1. The Preface is deeply indebted to Doran George and Alison D'Amato, with whom I brainstormed a love letter to dance as a method of nondance study across a period of several years while this book was still taking shape.

2. See, for example, Foster (1998, 2002, 2003), O'Shea (2007), Wong (2010), and Rossen (2014).

3. While dance scholars are not the only humanistic researchers to champion the body as a force shaping social relations, disciplinary configurations, and institutional power (see, for example, Bourdieu 1980, 1984, 1993; Foucault 1977, 1988, 2004; de Certeau 1984, 1998; and Scott 1998, 1990), dance theorists have meaningfully invoked choreography as a method of evidencing the discursive force of patterned actions and interactions beyond the practice of dance. *Funding Bodies* thus contributes a choreographic theory of philanthropic power in order to hold dance decision-makers inside of political institutions accountable for incentivizing dance production curricula through their power to distribute material and symbolic capital.

4. I spent the first ten years of my professional work in the nonprofit dance field serving as cofounder and artistic director at Danceworks, Inc., a multifaceted Milwaukee-based arts organization where I ran a contemporary dance collective, oversaw fund-raising and the material build-out of an 85-seat studio theatre, and produced year-round dance events by local, national, and international artists, while also teaching dance technique and dance-making classes and workshops to a wide range of populations. Interested readers can learn more about Danceworks at www.danceworksmke.org.

Introduction

1. Sara Ahmed (2004, 2006, 2012) has called institutional speech acts both performative acts—acts that have the power to “do” what they name, in the Austinian sense (1975), and nonperformative acts, that fail to bring into being that which they name. To evidence nonperformativity, Ahmed's examples from higher education invoke sayings issued by an institutional entity around diversity and inclusion as examples that interpolate witnesses to wonder whether those in power will make good on that which their declaration named.

2. Complete application instructions for the NEA Art Works organizational grant process in Dance are viewable at www.apps.nea.gov/grantsearch/.

3. Legal and critical race scholars Devon Carbado and Mitu Gulati inform my invocation throughout this book of “working identities.” In response to the institutional ascendancy of the so-called postracial climate of the post-Obama United States, Carbado and Gulati’s work offers resources as to how institutional incentives reward and punish certain workplace behaviors. Their “working identity” thesis, first coined in a legal brief (1999), then further developed in the (2013) book, *Acting White: Rethinking Race in Postracial America*, invokes the concept of “white working identity” to describe a racialized set of norms—spoken and unspoken—that center and protect a privileged working subject inside of workplace environments. While their inquiry centers on workplace cultures of law offices, corporations, and the twenty-first century academy, their deployment of practical movement description meaningfully highlights how institutions recruit and incentivize specific forms of embodied performance. Their example is influential for this project because it is *profoundly choreographic* to me. *Funding Bodies* extends their performance-based theorization of “working identity” into the realm of US nonprofit dance and arts labor and organization in order to hold NEA grantmakers and decision-makers accountable for installing juridical norms that shape patterns of workplace comportment.

4. Here I define capital in the expanded sense offered by Pierre Bourdieu (1986) in order to theorize endowment as a political process distributed through the allocation of economic, symbolic, social, institutional, and cultural forms of power.

5. Details on the complex sources of federal revenue are available at www.taxpolicy-center.org (accessed 11/14/20).

6. It is tempting to connect US models of cultural support to ideologies of cultural nationalism, or cultural diplomacy, but the NEA’s model has advanced cultural capitalism softly, under the institutional guise of not-for-profit art. For more on the tripartite theory of early twentieth-century nationalism, midcentury diplomacy, and late-century capitalism in state policy, see Paschalidis (2009). Also, following Ivey and Cleggett (2008), I submit here that US models of cultural exchange require closer attention to the enmeshment of US cultural workers in free market trading and commerce, where the national projection of American ideals is amplified through products that increase market shares.

7. Prior to NEA’s inauguration, arts patronage infrastructures were largely controlled by private wealthy industrialists whose philanthropic decisions would influence the NEA’s early approach to funding dance. Paul DiMaggio’s important work on the history of cultural organization and nonprofit voluntary associations (1982, 2000) has made important connections between the “charitable” steering of private wealth and state approaches to domestic grantmaking. Since the mid-1850s, wealthy patrons were increasingly underwriting specific artists to protect them from direct market dependency. In dance studies, historian Linda Tomko’s important (1999) text *Dancing Class* similarly undertakes a gender-sensitive account of how patronesses and wealthy

parlor women sponsored early American modern dancers and performed historical roles as “custodians of culture.” Both authors effectively show how wealthy industrialists in US coastal urban epicenters such as Boston, San Francisco, and New York were already well in the practice of class protectionism through arts patronage, formal and informal, and producing resource pathways for state agents to follow.

8. Readers interested in other “arms-length” national models to compare with the US approach may look to the Arts Council of Great Britain (now Arts Council England, hereafter ACE) as a quasi-autonomous nongovernmental organization established by famed economist John Maynard Keynes in 1946. Some existing similarities between the NEA and ACE include their decentralized governmental infrastructures. Both agencies allocate funds in a redistributive manner by dedicating some lump sums to regional and local agencies for regranteeing purposes. Both councils are run by political appointees and both abide peer review by citizen arts “experts” as a principal method of fund decision-making. Like the NEA’s evolution but earlier, ACE underwent institutional restructuring in the mid 1980s after an infamous report indicting the council for the economic overresourcing of urban versus rural artists versus. See Arts Council of Great Britain (1984). The UK Royal Charter governing the Arts Council in England is viewable at www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Consolidated_Royal_Charter_2013.pdf (accessed 11/26/20).

9. While comparing the Rockefellers and the Brahmins to the Medici family patronage models is far beyond the scope of this project, future analyses of philanthropic corporealities might account for how wealthy elites’ artistic commissions masked their capitalist motivations. A 2011 exhibit on the Medicis, the famed Italian family of patrons, offers a potential launch point: www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2011/aug/10/medicis-florence-renaissance-art (accessed 11/26/20).

10. The US government’s official statement on the state’s refusal to attend UNESCO’s 1969 Monaco Round Table on Cultural Policies is one famous example wherein elected officials invoked First Amendment protections to argue against the establishment of state-sponsored culture in the United States as antithetical to democracy. Such rationales clung to free speech guarantees to militate against state elevation of certain artists or artistic works. Both Michael Kammen (1996: 798, 795) and Toby Miller and George Yúdice (2000: 35) have invoked the spectacularly contradictory sentence that forms the first line of the UNESCO paper, which famously began, “The United States has no official cultural position, either public or private.”

11. NEA insiders answer to US presidents and executive branch administrators as well as members of Congress who control annual appropriations. The US judiciary also has publicly intervened in NEA grantmaking and governance in cases where legal claims were brought against the agency’s funding decisions. The most famous instance of judiciary intervention is the “NEA Four” scandal, wherein performance artists Karen Finley, John Fleck, Holly Hughes, and Tim Miller sued the agency over having received individual artists fellowships that were subsequently rescinded by then-NEA Chair John Frohnmayer for violating the agency’s “decency clause.” Finley sued the

NEA in 1998 on the grounds that funded performance art defied moral decency and violated these artists' First Amendment rights. Chapter 2 situates a string of concomitant, but less-public "culture wars" in dance that transpired without much public awareness or legislative intervention. Details of the NEA v. Finley ruling are viewable at www.oyez.org/cases/1997/97-371 (accessed 11/26/20).

12. A complete list of NEA Chairs can be found in Appendix A.

13. The NEA's political clout is also structurally diffused by the vast number of other federal institutions allocating resources and opportunities for art and artists. Future analyses of funding bodies would be right to consider support for dance granted indirectly by the NEH, Library of Congress, Kennedy Center, National Archives, as well as the US Departments of Education, Justice, Housing/Urban Development, Health, Defense, and Veterans Affairs.

14. Arey was a native of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, whose prior service included leading the League of Women Voters there as well as the Symphony Society. After fulfilling her NEA post, Arey went on to work for the Rockefeller Foundation, to pen a book on state arts agencies, and eventually to serve as director for the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. See www.legacy.com/obituaries/postgazette/obituary.aspx?n=june-batten-arey&pid=182835453&fhid=9816 (accessed 11/26/20).

15. Three programmatic exceptions to the NEA's domestic purview include the agency's administration of the International Indemnity Program, established by Congress in 1975 to lower costs of insuring international exhibitions at US museums. The NEA Indemnity Program was expanded in 2007 to include coverage for works of art owned by US entities while on exhibition in the United States. Guidelines are viewable at www.arts.gov/artistic-fields/museums/arts-and-artifacts-indemnity-program-international-indemnity (accessed 11/26/20). The NEA's Literary Translation Fellowship program, established in 1966, distributed fellowships to 363 translators for texts from seventy-seven countries at the time of the agency's fiftieth anniversary (see Hutter 2015). USArtists International was established in 2014 and administered through the regional arts organization MidAtlantic Arts and was engineered to support the participation of US artists at international festivals. Sample guidelines are viewable at www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/FY19-USArtists-International-Program-Solicitation-with-Instructions-Nov2018.pdf (accessed 11/26/20). In the twenty-first century under the Obama administration, arts councils and organizations from unincorporated territories of the United States (Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, US Virgin Islands, and American Samoa) increasingly solicited the NEA for nonprofit arts support.

16. One frequently cited example of strong but indirect governmental sponsorship of art and culture is the massive amount of annual spending by the US Department of Defense (DOD) on military bands. In 2016, for example, the DOD maintained 136 military bands and employed more than 6,500 full-time professional musicians at a cost of roughly \$500 million. The NEA's total budgetary appropriation that same year was \$148 million. A comparative analysis of the myriad "indefensible" ways that

the US government has mobilized art and culture outside of the NEA's auspices (see Matthews 2019), while fascinating, are beyond the scope of this project.

17. To date, the NEA publishes a semiannual report chronicling "How the US Funds the Arts," which denotes structural delineations and relevant changes to this infrastructure. See, for example, Woronkowitz et al. (2012).

18. Key historians who have cast US commanders-in-chief as authorial forces shaping arts opportunities and public perceptions of art and artists are Miller and Yúdice (2000), Binkiewicz (2004), and Heath (2017).

19. Michael Sy Uy's (2020) salient and allied research also charters new territory with regard to music policies and norms at the time that I completed my manuscript revision. Whereas Binkiewicz focused her study on the realm of visual art, Uy's work weighs the role played by public and private funding bodies in institutionalizing western classical music artists and models of production.

20. Specific anthologies and chapter publications dedicated to this "culture wars" period with attention to the NEA's public censorship battles include: Griest (2003), Ault and Wallis (1999), Nea (1993), and Wyszomirski (1995). Legal scholars at California State University, Long Beach, have built out a digital web database dedicated to the library of law journal articles and lay publications that have also taken up these overt, highly public controversies. See www.web.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/biblio_a.html (accessed 11/26/20).

21. The later chapters of Van Dyke's work convincingly consider the geographic exodus of many NEA-funded modern dancers from New York City to academic dance institutions and the role of consecrating bodies such as the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD) in creating curricula and accreditation policies that drew university dance education and concert dance professionalization more squarely in sync from the 1980s onward.

22. See, for example, Goldman 2010.

23. Jones's relatively regular participation in NEA fellowship programs and his company's receipt of dance touring support from the agency are chronicled in detail at www.arts.gov/article/learning-ones-body-talk-choreographer-bill-t-jones-washington-dc (accessed 10/11/19).

24. Importantly, Martin's later work (2011) on institutional belonging pays closer attention to the kinds of practical and administrative interdependencies that I discuss in this project. His later writing on the neoliberalization of the US academy makes a much stronger purchase on administrative and bureaucratic practices as critical moves capable of rerouting policies within the increasingly profit-driven domain of US higher education.

25. This revisionist attempt to analyze philanthropic practices, patterns, and performances takes inspiration from performance theorists who have invested in elucidating the politics of institutional culture and comportment, past and present. Of particular influence is Shannon Jackson's remarkable (2001) revisionist historical account of the immigrant and settler life worlds within the famous Chicago Hull House Settlement

during the Progressive Era. Using performance as her analytical framework, Jackson reorients historical attention to how settlement leaders and inhabitants animated the space of the institution and negotiated pressures to assimilate to cultural norms. Whereas Jackson's project is principally archival, my effort to theorize NEA "lines of activity" draws upon interview testimony collected between 2012 and 2018 with past and present staff, citizen advisors, and grantees to animate administrative and managerial acts that remain largely undocumented in the official record.

26. Here I echo infrastructural critic Keller Easterling (2014), whose work on digital infrastructure and the state emphasizes the subtle and discursive processes that prop up oppressive regimes.

27. Here I invoke the term "provincializing" after Dipesh Chakrabarty's influential ideas on "Provincializing Europe" (1992, 2008) and critique the colonial tendency on the part of historians to portray the mythical figure of Europe as the site of modernity, a challenge that paved the way for the field of subaltern studies. New York City, I argue, has remained an institutionalized locus for dance production and professionalization due to regional biases and the structural relegation of dance organizers who resided outside of coastal urban epicenters by NEA grantmakers.

28. Gottschild (1996, 2003), DeFrantz (2004, 2005, 2006, 2012, 2017), Kraut (2008, 2015) and Manning (2006) offer notable examples of critical efforts to entangle dance artists in racialized norms in dance practice, production, and reception. Garafola (1999, 2002) and Foster (2002, 2019) have also, and in different ways, pointed to classed contracts between dance-makers, patrons, and institutional bodies in their work.

29. Cold War era histories of concert dance touring sponsored by the US State Department by Rebekah Kowal (2010) and Clare Croft (2015) have detailed state-driven opportunities in dance that cast dance artists as their historical protagonists. In these works, the state is constructed as an abstract entity, a nameless, faceless power center monolithic with a strictly disciplinary agenda. My project tries to avoid institutional abstraction by humanizing NEA operations as an embodied struggle by specific people who own differential access to power and competing investments in dance.

30. Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," in *Harvard Law Review* 106: 1734, 1993.

31. "the named artist plays much less of a part in the production of the work than our commonsense view of the artist as genius, working with divine inspiration, leads us to believe. I will argue that many other people are involved in producing the work, that social and ideological factors determine or affect the writer, painter and her work in light of this decentering" (Wolff 1981: 25). Like Wolff, dance theorist Mark Franko (2007) is concerned with the ideological and material implications of canonization as a socially enacted practice. His 2007 essay "Period Plots, Canonical Stages, and Post-Metanarrative in American Modern Dance" takes up incessant reiterations of the modernist canon in dance as an institutionalizing lever, a "socio-critical compact that silently and effectively determines whose work can be seen and for how long" (177).

32. A lone dance studies special issue of the *Dance Chronicle* that critically explored the role of arts patronage and institutions as political technologies shaping the dance field grew out of a panel and subsequent special topics journal instantiated at the *Dancing at the Millennium* conference in Washington, DC, in 2000. The four essays featured together issue a critical call for dance research to join forces with critical institutional studies. See Banes (2002).

33. Chief among Marxist cultural theorists are Raymond Williams (1977), Terry Eagleton (1996), Fredric Jameson (1991), and Stuart Hall (1980, 1992). Notable cultural labor scholars include Angela McRobbie (2016) and Mark Banks (2017). Here I am also indebted to Carbadó and Gulati, whose work on “working identity” I addressed earlier (1999, 2013).

34. I am grateful to one of my anonymous readers for the nudge to stress here for readers that earlier institutional support favoring modern dance must be attributed to the women who had a hand in establishing modern dance as a legitimate course of study in women’s colleges and physical education programs in the 1920s and 1930s. The history I revise here tracks the economic fortification of these institutional pathways through funding initiatives such as the NEA’s Coordinated Dance Touring Program, which granted dance venue presenters (many sited in US universities) to take a chance on concert dance by providing one-third cost share from the federal government (see chapters 1 and 2). For more on these precedents, see Ross (2012), Hagood (2000), and Oliver (1992).

35. Following George Yúdice’s astute musings on the expediency of culture under globalization (2003), this book looks at the political performativity of dance funding criteria and highlights how guidelines for receiving NEA dance support value specific identitarian and practical norms in the dance field.

36. I owe a debt to Stuart Hall’s persuasive writing (1980) about sitting with structural and cultural tensions as part of what gave me the courage to work through the ideas presented in this book.

37. NEA grantee rosters remain publicly available to those with internet access. While the agency provides a digital search engine and database aggregating grantees from 1997 onward, grantees from 1965 to 1997 are highlighted under “Dance” in the body of annual reports, viewable here at www.arts.gov/about/annual-reports (accessed 11/26/20).

38. While I am not the kind of archival detective that Ann Laura Stoler is, Stoler’s 2009 text *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* informed my effort to resist reading the NEA’s official archives as the central knowledge base from which we might draw conclusions about the politics of philanthropic institution building and belonging. In addition to analyzing the rhetorical strategies of insiders, I also look to these reports for archival silences, places where demands for distributional equity spoken of by my project interlocutors went undocumented and officially unanswered.

39. Such secondary sources include a wide range of *Law Reviews* as well as *Non-*

profit Quarterly, *Cardozo Law Review*, and the *Journal of Arts Management, Law, & Society*.

40. For more about Grantmakers in the Arts, see www.giarts.org (accessed 11/26/20). More information for Createquity, a now-defunct cultural advocacy and policy blog, sunset in 2017, see www.createquity.com (accessed 11/26/20). Information concerning the National Center for Responsive Philanthropy is available at www.ncrp.org (accessed 11/26/20).

41. This fact is echoed in archival memoirs and biographies of past NEA chairmen, which also have informed my effort to practicalize NEA institutional culture. Accounts by former NEA political appointees Livingston Biddle (1988), John Frohn-mayer (1993), Jane Alexander (2000), William “Bill” Ivey (2008), and Nancy Hanks’s biographer Michael Straight (1988), each attest to the unique ways that the NEA’s bureaucratic operations were handled by political appointees.

42. Dance historical texts that reiterate this framing include Martin (1998), Munger (2001), and Sussman (1984). Sussman’s figures are central to my effort here to expand cultural, regional, and economic understanding of the programmatic mechanisms by which the NEA reinforced dance aesthetic and organizational norms. On the regional front, her specific observation that three-quarters of registered companies were located in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas and nearly all the rest were in the suburbs of such cities prefigures geography as a key determinant to NEA legibility (Sussman 1984: 27).

43. Examples of this treatment include Julie Ault’s and Brian Wallis’s *Art Matters: How the Culture Wars Changed America* (1999).

44. I invoke the phrase “depoliticization through economization” as a central tenet of neoliberal epistemes, following Yahya M. Madra and Fikret Adaman’s (2002, 2018) efforts to outline a genealogy of the “neoliberal turn” across a 100-year period.

ONE *Boom for Whom?*

1. Dance historians who have chronicled the history of US labor policy and promotion of American modernist dance aesthetic traditions and progenitors include Prickett (1990), Graff (1997), and Franko (2002). Weaving arts support into nonarts policy reforms would later prove to be an expeditious strategy under the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), developed after the NEA emerged in 1973 under President Richard Nixon and implemented under his successor President Jimmy Carter as a measure to provide US workers (including artists) with jobs in the public service. Important dance- and theatre-focused investigations on the role of CETA in arts labor and infrastructure have been articulated by Hooper (2017) and McKelvey (2019) respectively.

2. President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed bipartisan legislation in 1958 to establish a US National Cultural Institution, the materialization of which was subsequently authorized in 1964 as the John F. Kennedy Center by the 85th Congress. The con-

struction of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts was waylaid by Kennedy's assassination and ultimately commenced in 1966 with Johnson's symbolic groundbreaking (see fig. 3).

3. Prior bills had advanced in December 1963, dedicating the resources to cover council administration. Stevens was the logical choice to step forward to lead given his existing appointment in August 1964 as the presidential advisor in the arts (NEA, *Annual Report, 1964–65*).

4. The National Endowment on the Arts and Humanities Act was enacted September 29, 1965, P.L. No. 89-202, sec. 1, 79 Stat. 845; amended May 31, 1984, P.L. No. 98-306, sec. 2, 98 Stat. 223; amended December 20, 1985, P.L. No. 99-194, sec. 101, 99 Stat. 1332. Full text of the Act is at www.neh.gov/about/history/national-foundation-arts-and-humanities-act-1965-pl-89-209. Details of the purview of the National Endowment on the Arts and Humanities as well as significant public documents can be found at www.federalregister.gov/agencies/national-foundation-on-the-arts-and-the-humanities.

5. Binkiewicz's work (2004) demonstrates how the authors of the Act and early NEA funders sought to repair pejorative associations of Americans as unacculturated consumers using the political instrument of matching federal arts grants and by installing two federal domestic funding bodies and charging them with the promotion of American exceptionalism in the realm of arts and letters. Yet, of the twelve declarations made in the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, only one overtly linked the NEA's purpose to prior governmental efforts to advance US cultural excellence and leadership on a global scale. Declaration #8, read: "The world leadership which has come to the United States cannot rest solely upon superior power, wealth, and technology, but must be solidly founded upon worldwide respect and admiration for the Nation's high qualities as a leader in the realm of ideas and of the spirit." Here, NEA legislative advocates persuaded a majority in Congress to vote to fortify the US advancements in technology through the establishment of cultural advancements at a parallel pace with the country's western-European, First-World counterparts (Congress had established the National Science Foundation in 1950).

6. This emphasis on maintaining citizen civility was central to the Great Society agenda to quell the "civil war on civil rights" on US domestic soil. Crucially, an equal number of US legislators representing economically disinvested districts also sought private support for widespread racial enfranchisement, race-based violence, and racial insensitivity at the moment of the passage of the NEA's enabling legislation. Johnson's Great Society Initiatives stitched together programs and steered federal subsidies toward cultural advancement, in part, as an instrument to clear cross-class and cross-cultural disconnect. Although the federal judiciary had attempted to legally repair Black-white racial tensions over a decade earlier with the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954, which mandated educational integration on the basis of race, such legal maneuvers had done little by 1965 to soothe racial tensions and interactions in local US communities and towns.

7. Declaration #6 named diversity as a priority: “The arts and the humanities reflect the high place accorded by the American people to the nation’s rich cultural heritage and to the fostering of mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all persons and groups.” Laura Chapman (2000) has linked this failure to the incongruous way that the Arts and Humanities Endowments were themselves originally envisioned. Despite robust early investments by the Arts and Humanities Branch of the US Department of Education (DOE) from 1963 to 1968, the institutional partitioning of arts and humanities endowments as separate entities, in her words, problematically “relieved the NEA of any obligation to contextualize the arts—and its own policies—through perspectives offered by the humanities” (4).

8. At the time of this 1964 meeting, the number of State Arts Councils totaled twenty-five (NEA, *Annual Reports [1964–2017]*, 1964–65: 37).

9. NEA, *Annual Reports [1964–2017]*, 1964–65: 31.

10. Of course, the Act stopped short of naming *what kinds of culture* constituted “the nation’s rich cultural heritage.” Declaration #10 reproduced this language of inclusion: “It is vital to democracy to honor and preserve its multicultural artistic heritage as well as support new ideas, and therefore it is essential to provide financial assistance to its artists and the organizations that support their work.” Legislative rhetoric, here, did not recognize the power differentials endemic to US cultural patronage nor did legislators directly address how federal cultural agents were to support and promote cultural bilingualism, cultural expression by noncitizens, or funding guidelines that were responsive to demographic shifts.

11. The inaugural members of the National Council on the Arts were Elizabeth Ashley, Leonard Bernstein, Anthony Bliss, David Brinkley, Agnes de Mille, Rene d’Harnoncourt, Ralph Ellison, Paul Engle, R. Philip Hanes Jr., Rev. Gilbert Hartke, Herman Kenin, Eleanor Lambert, Warner Lawton, Gregory Peck, William Pereira, Richard Rodgers, Oliver Smith, Isaac Stern, George Stevens, James Sweeny, Otto Witman, Minoru Yamasaki, Stanley Young, and an ex-officio member S. Dillon Ripley (NEA, *Annual Reports [1964–2017]*, 1964–65: 5).

12. This inaugural round of NEA dance funds also supported a convening of 172 delegates from twenty-four states, the District of Columbia, and Canada to brainstorm the creation of a national dance service organization that would ultimately be called the Association of American Dance Companies and transmogrified into the national service organization, Dance/USA (NEA, *Annual Reports [1964–2017]*, 1966: 39–48).

13. This growth spurt in arts organization and classification is rehearsed more exhaustively in DiMaggio (2000) and expanded upon meaningfully by Lena (2019).

14. NEA, *Annual Reports [1964–2017]*, 1966: 47.

15. The full roster of recipients of individual artists grants, in the total amount of \$103,000, were: Alvin Ailey, Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, José Limón, Alwin Nikolais, Anna Sokolow, Paul Taylor, and Antony Tudor. See NEA, *Annual Reports [1964–2017]*, 1966: 42.

16. As the forty-ninth governor of the State of New York (1959–73), Rockefeller strongly resisted the notion that the arts were a frivolous area of federal spending. His gubernatorial tenure converged with periods of huge budgetary expansion inside of New York State. Historian Peter Siskind (2008) has shown how Rockefeller's hands-on policy agenda invoked enlightened discourse on art and distributed it statewide, in part, due to his capacity to also scoop up the lion's share of New York real estate. Rockefeller's passion for elite art and stronghandedness were passed down from his mother Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, who was instrumental in the establishment and trusteeship of the Museum of Modern Art in 1929.

17. New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), *Annual Reports, 1960–1964*, at www.arts.ny.gov/sites/default/files/1960%20-%201964.pdf, 1960: 3.

18. NYSCA, *Annual Reports, 1965–67*, 1965: 5, at www.arts.ny.gov/sites/default/files/1960%20-%201964.pdf.

19. That same year, NYSCA made a notable additional investment in modern dance by José Limón by funding a coalition-building project, the short-lived American Dance Theater. A thirty-four-dancer undertaking at the New York State Theatre, this sizable production of modern dance repertoires featured a full orchestra and choreographic works by Donald McKayle, Anna Sokolow, Limón, and the late Doris Humphrey. The scale of this undertaking was central, in that it rivaled the more heavily patronized establishment of New York Ballet and appealed to Rockefeller's overarching effort to expose the widest possible number of sponsors, artists, and audiences to innovative and elite cultural ambassadors from the budding New York dance scene.

20. In 1961, for example, ABT toured the western region of New York State, performing in Buffalo, the Finger Lakes region in Binghamton, and the eastern part of the state in Poughkeepsie, Middletown, and Albany. NYCB also toured the state's Adirondack area (Blens Falls, Plattsburgh, Massena), Rochester, and Syracuse with performances and lecture demonstrations. These two groups saw an uptick in state allocations every year from 1961 to 1965 to grow the reach of their fees, performances, communities, sponsors, and touring companies. See NYSCA, *Annual Reports, 1965–67*, 1966: 15, at www.arts.ny.gov/sites/default/files/1960%20-%201964.pdf.

21. In 1972, the Dance Program installed a "Large Dance Companies" category, economically segregating organizational grantees. This category offered one-to-one matching grants exclusively to organizations with budgets starting at \$1 million. Exactly four American ballet companies absorbed all of the funds in this category during this fifteen-year period (American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, and the Joffrey Ballet), which made for a lopsided "boom" at best.

22. The growth of the Ford Foundation's philanthropic coffers was conditioned by the death of the first two Ford patriarchs, Edsel Ford in 1943 and Henry Ford (I) in 1947, whose estates left the foundation nearly 90 percent of Ford Motor Company stock, upward of \$3 million in nonvoting shares, which were valued at \$135 each. Ford experienced its own economic "boom," which led to the foundation being the first billion-dollar philanthropic body in the United States under former President of New

York University Henry Heald. By 1965, Ford's total assets had surpassed those of the Rockefeller Foundation (Rosenfeld et al. 2015: 10).

23. From this latter grant, \$5.9 million went exclusively to the School of American Ballet, which was the training center for the New York City Ballet (NYCB). Members of the press heralded the Ford Foundation's monetary investment as a "bombshell" for New York concert dance—a direct effort to distribute Balanchinian aesthetics across a wide national expanse—and caused a stir among some balletomanes as a lopsided act of generosity. In addition to supporting NYCB's School of American Ballet, Ford steered smaller subsidies to the National Ballet in Washington, San Francisco Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, Utah Ballet (now Ballet West), Houston Ballet, and Boston Ballet. Lowry died in 1993. See www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1993-06-08-9306080114-story.html (accessed 11/27/20).

24. For more on the Ford Foundation's relationship with the Joffrey Ballet, see Anawalt (1997) and the relationship with NYCB, see Harris (2017).

25. Part of Lowry's genius was his recognition that the promotion of dance schools would offer economic buffers for ballet, an otherwise high-labor product with low-reproducibility. These ideas were later pressed in print via a pivotal research study published in 1966 by economists William Baumol and William Bowen in *The Performing Arts: An Economic Dilemma*. The text theorized what the authors termed the "cost disease" affecting live performance traditions like concert dance as a condition linked to the failure of technological advances to cut production expenses in the way that they had in the visual and musical arts. Baumol and Bowen's arguments mobilized arts advocates who promoted the NEA's inauguration and greater distribution of philanthropic funds to worthy arts organizations on the grounds that dedicated subsidies would offset market dependency for exceptional "live" artists in particular. Lowry and Ford's success, then, in regionalizing American ballet rested in their strategic channeling of economic support for real estate development (brick-and-mortar performing arts centers) and ballet scholarships to lure promising dancers to adjacent schools as ways to offset the labor-heavy exercise of producing ballet performances. See also Bowen (1997).

26. At the time of the NEA's inauguration, Ford funds of \$7.7 million had been distributed to eight ballet organizations: the New York City Ballet, its affiliated School of American Ballet, the National Ballet in Washington, the San Francisco Ballet, the Pennsylvania Ballet, the Utah Ballet (now Ballet West), the Houston Ballet, and the Boston Ballet, each of which had accompanying preprofessional training schools. See http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-06-08/news/9306080114_1_san-francisco-ballet-boston-ballet-pennsylvania-ballet (accessed 12/7/2015).

27. Regional Dance America tracks the evolution of regional ballet organizations from 1956 onward. See www.regionaldanceamerica.org/history/ (accessed 11/27/20).

28. As Garafola (1998) and others have shown, the engineering of mixed repertory production bills for dance ensembles on tour (events featuring three or four stage works shown in one evening) was an early twentieth-century invention led by

Serge Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo as well as by Anna Pavlova's company. My point here is that the Ford's investment in regional civic performing arts venues conditioned permanent venues for adjacent civic ballet institutions to produce their annual seasons and reliable rest stops for other kinds of touring productions. And the repertoire model also appealed as a smorgasbord approach to dance-allergic presenters who sought artistic variety and/or dance sponsors with strong appetites for new work. American audiences would, as a result, come to understand ballet beyond the form's fixation of evening-length "classics" and would embrace mixed menus as a dance production norm.

29. For a more thorough discussion of these historical connections, see Lowry (1978).

30. Arey went on to serve the arts at the Rockefeller Foundation and the Spring Hill Conference Center, where she authored a definitive book on state arts agencies and served as the executive director of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

31. While I am going to focus primarily here on grants to organizations and individuals capable of securing cost share, organization-level examples of NEA *leveraging* grants with artists who held hereditary connections to wealth and property also abound. In an example from as early as 1966, the NEA Dance Panel granted funds to support Ted Shawn's Jacob's Pillow; Shawn's family wealth conditioned the purchasing of land near Lee, Massachusetts, to form this haven for modern dance performance in 1933.

32. The inauguration of the NEA was itself an act of governmental *leveraging* that multiplied nonfederal support for the arts at private, state, municipal, and individual levels. Following the agency's inauguration, the number of state-level arts councils doubled (from twenty-four to fifty-five), and local arts councils grew from roughly 175 to beyond 1,000. See Cwi (1980: 39).

33. NEA, *Annual Reports (1964–2017)*, 1967: 17.

34. Although the NEA did collect non-named gifts to the Treasury Program and added these to a general pool, donor-designated gifts targeting specific dance companies were both welcomed and encouraged.

35. The structural flexibility of NEA Treasury Funds put private funders in the driver's seat by endowing them with authority to dictate grant amounts and flag organizations they deemed worthy of federal match. Treasury funds appealed to wealthy patrons because of their unrestricted character. Donors were released from accounting burdens at play in the agency's competitive grant programs. The first-come, first-served process of Treasury Funds allocations also enabled large, six-figure grants to spill out of this category with regularity well into the 1970s, when increased demands led the agency to put a time-stamped application calendar in place to curtail requests.

36. Between 1967 and 1971, Treasury Fund support was also secured by dance organizers with the American Ballet Theatre, the Eliot Feld Ballet, and Graham, who received an unrestricted Treasury grant of \$50,000, which was matched by the unrestricted gift fund to total \$100,000 in FY 1969. NEA, *Annual Reports (1964–2017)*, 1969: 16.

37. In year two of NEA grantmaking, the National Council on the Arts recommended a total sum of \$394,830 to be endowed to American Ballet Theatre: \$294,830 in general company support and an additional \$100,000 to cover company salaries. A portion of this funding was offset by a Treasury Fund donation of \$97,415 from a private patron, then matched by the NEA, and then double-matched by ABT administrators through outside sources. See NEA, *Annual Reports (1964–2017)*, 1970: 65.

38. Hanks spent a significant amount of time on “the Hill” conferring with elected officials and lobbying for increased appropriations from members of the Senate. As the result of her entrepreneurial approach, the agency enjoyed large budgetary increases throughout Hanks’s nine-year appointment, an economic “boom” that bolstered the Dance Program’s capacity to scale its program for coordinated dance touring regionally and nationally in relatively short order. See Straight (1988) and Wyszomirski (1987).

39. For analyses of bureaucratic culture that theorize administrative inundation of workers on the part of institutions as a so-called “dead zone” of the political imagination, see Graeber (2012, 2015).

40. NEA, *Annual Reports (1964–2017)*, 1976: 4.

41. Tangentially, but quite spectacularly, one of my interlocutors shared with me that Tharp had previously won a NEA Individual Artist Fellowship and responded to the agency’s request for a final report with a respectfully mailed-in, hand-drawn picture of stick figures dancing. Her “report” was promptly filed unremarked upon, and Tharp continued to appear on NEA grantee rosters with regularity long after the agency shifted to digital fund administration and governance.

42. From 1977 to 1980, the Endowment awarded 281 Challenge Grants to 335 institutions. Challenge grantees matched a total of \$83,385,500 from the NEA with nearly \$500,000 million in private contributions. NEA, *Annual Reports (1964–2017)*, 1980: 321.

43. More details on the political engineering of the Challenge Grant system are offered in Gingold (1980).

44. The organizational practice of enlisting “loaned executives” meant that corporate workers would be compensated by their employer “on loan” to support nonprofit arts organizers with variable kinds of networking, fund-raising, documentation, and record-keeping.

45. For a critical account of the failures of the NEA’s leveraging approach as a capitalist growth model and of who won and lost in this philanthropic configuration, see Kreidler (1996).

46. The language from this internal letter to Stevens would ultimately be integrated into the formal application process for NEA-coordinated dance touring. The formulation read: “The primary aim of the Coordinated Dance Touring Project is to increase audience awareness of dance in the US through frequent and varied exposure. Because the usual one-night stand tour, by its definition, permits no contact between artist and community except that of the actual performance, the Project is designed to

provide that ingredient desperately needed—time—to educate and develop audiences through supplementary and related performance activities such as lecture demonstrations and workshops” (CRMI archives form, Budget Bureau No. 128-R905).

47. By 1974, arts agencies were in place in all fifty states and eight jurisdictions, in large part due to the prospect of federally redistributed funds. This new support, in turn, fueled a growing cadre of local arts agencies (municipal or city government bodies) and regional arts organizations (RAOs). RAOs were organized as nonprofit institutions and funded through block grants from public sources but, importantly, did not answer directly to elected officials. Crucially, the role of regional arts organizations would evolve as the NEA matured and withstood greater legislative scrutiny and belt-tightening. Because RAOs were not burdened by direct obligations to state legislators, these funders held greater autonomy to collaborate with private foundations, businesses, and individuals. Closer consideration of the shifting political role of RAOs as NEA appropriations and political influence waned at the end of the twentieth century is a worthy question but one that is beyond the scope of this analysis. I remain grateful to the late Sam Miller (1952–2018), former head of the New England Foundation for the Arts and Lower Manhattan Arts Council, for this provocative insight.

48. Archival documentation from CRMI of the NEA’s pilot program indicated that the staff engaged in heavy consultation and oversight during this fragile phase of programmatic development. Ultimately, NEA enlisted state agents to take the helm in administering tour coordination given their knowledge of local cultural economies. By the third year of the program, state agents were required by the agency to hire a professional dance coordinator to establish contracts and oversee technical requirements as a criterion of eligibility. CRMI continued to oversee some operations and the NEA’s Artists in Schools (AIS) program, which came out of the Education Division and was an economic pipeline for generations of dance teaching artists.

49. Ultimately the festival was folded into the Sagans’ Harper Dance Foundation and relocated downtown, and then to University of Chicago’s Mandel Hall in response to audience demand (source: CRMI archives).

50. Taylor would appear twice in the Harper Festival during the first two NEA grant cycles and nearly every year thereafter.

51. To launch the pilot, Illinois State Arts Council received a \$25,000 NEA seed grant and state and local cost share in the amount of \$9,200 and \$28,800 (CRMI archives, “Outline of Touring Program Rationale,” 1969).

52. Early on, and in rare cases, a sponsor could apply for a waiver to eliminate funder imposed minimum and maximum engagement dates. Upon the formal transition of the Pilot to the Coordinated Dance Touring Program (CDTP) and in response to increased demand, the practice of waiving these criteria would be called to question by NEA senior leadership and eligibility criteria for waivers were tightened.

53. NEA and state agents found academic campuses to be good “neighborhoods” for modern dance given the proliferation of dance educators with modern dance training and awareness of artists from New York. Thomas Hagood’s (2000) study of

dance in US higher education further situates the so-called boom in modern dance via growing enrollment in dance programs in higher education at the mid-twentieth century as a largely white, middle-class “baby boom” generation flocked to college liberal arts programs.

54. CRMI documentation suggested that criteria for inclusion in the directory were based on cross-cutting factors, including recommendations, production feasibility, timing, and fees.

55. Total company fees for the Pilot came to \$58,000, with company fees totaling \$7,500/week for engagements outside of Chicago and \$7,000/week in the city. The average tour lasted roughly eight weeks for each company, at \$3,600/week.

56. Sponsor complaints like this one from Assistant Dean Phillip H. Olson, Illinois State University, Carbondale, to S. Leonard Pas, Illinois State Arts Council, did not deter CRMI or the NEA from booking Nikolais on subsequent tours (CRMI Letter from Olson to S. Leonard Pas, Illinois State Arts Council, dated 11/21/67).

57. ISAC took charge of fund distribution and chosen sponsors created and printed promotional materials in consultation with CRMI and company managers.

58. CRMI also collected some glowing testimonials to prove to the agency the value of motivating dance presenters to move toward modern dance production. One sponsor in Normal, Illinois, wrote: “the three day visit . . . was a glorious success. They were well received by all audiences, ecstatically by our dance students, and played to full and overflowing houses on four of the five scheduled events” (CRMI Letter from Miriam Gray, Professor and Coordinator Dance Curriculum Illinois State University, Normal, to S. Leonard Pas, Illinois State Arts Council, dated 11/28/67).

59. CRMI Archive. NEA Correspondence, 1977.

60. Fiscal Year 1969 also marked a momentous shift in NEA institutional governance with the exit of inaugural Chair Stevens in 1968 and the entrance of his successor, philanthropic insider Nancy Hanks, whose formalization of agency protocols engendered increased appropriations and bureaucratized all areas of NEA oversight.

61. NEA, *Annual Reports (1964–2017)*, 1974: 25–29.

62. Notably, the CDTP was splintered into two initiatives: the Coordinated Residency Touring Program and Large Company Touring Program in FY 1974. Hereafter in this chapter I refer to the program as DTP, as did staff, to refer to both.

63. NEA, *Dance Company Directory, FY 1976–77*. Source: CRMI archives.

64. NEA, *Dance Company Directory, FY 1976–77*. Source: CRMI archives.

65. NEA, *Dance Company Directory, FY 1976–77*. Source: CRMI archives.

66. Dance’s weak representation within arts labor unions in the 1970s compounded the problem. To locate arts-based standards, NEA staff followed guidelines put in place by the American Guild of Musical Artists, Inc. (AGMA), the union that protected large-scale ballet and modern dance institutions with packed production calendars. A history of AGMA is available at www.musicalartists.org/about-agma/history/ (accessed 11/27/20).

67. To guarantee inclusion in the Dance Touring Program directory, organizers were required to file legal assurances stipulating that all personnel were paid union minimums and that all employment was compliant with safety and health requirements and labor standards prior to fund distribution. Such filings were held by the NEA for three years as proof of agreement. Failure to fully comply with these requirements placed grantees in violation. Violating organizations were withheld from receiving any further touring grants for a period of three years of date of notification.

68. This standard was listed in the questionnaire as follows: “The company must have performed at least 15 public performances for which the dancers and staff were paid no less than the minimum compensation level as defined by the appropriate union during the (previous) season and must project at least 15 such performances for the (current) season. The company must have received compensation for these performances, either through box office receipts if self-produced or through contractual payment if not self-produced. Self-produced performances for a nonpaying audience or other performances for which the company receives no compensation will not be considered when determining if the 15-performance requirement has been met” (FY 1976–77 *Directory of Dance Companies*, CRMI archives).

69. New York State unemployment criteria had changed in 1971 to allow businesses with over \$1,000 worth of payroll expenses to take advantage of unemployment resources once periods of employment had ended only if evidence existed of contracts for future work. For a pocket history of decade-by-decade changes to New York State unemployment eligibility, benefits, and standards that influenced NEA dance labor criteria, see www.labor.ny.gov/stats/PDFs/History_UI_Legislation.pdf (accessed 11/27/20).

70. By 1976, NEA had compiled a large list of “default” sponsors with outstanding payables, inefficient facilities and tech personnel, and failed touring engagement efforts and instituted training sessions aimed at improving working practices through professional administration, management, and skill development. Sponsor sluggishness continued to endure despite this discretionary step. Compounding the problem was the notable tendency among NEA-funded artists to be too flexible and too willing to accept late payments and adapt to suboptimal conditions when on the road.

71. NEA *Touring Directory*, 1975–76, p ii–iii. Source: CRMI archives.

72. Rejection Letter Outline, 1973–74. Source: CRMI archives.

73. At a Forum for Dance Companies convening held by the NEA on November 8, 1976, at the American Dance Festival in Durham, North Carolina, dance companies that were participating in the CDTP complained to NEA staff and consultants about immediate problems with the program’s assumptions and constraints. Their reports included: culturally naïve sponsors (Ballet Repertory Theatre); lack of union support from venue sponsors—particularly university venues (Boston Ballet); suboptimal rehearsal space on the road on multiple occasions (Martha Graham’s manager); sponsor protests with regard to weekly wage minimums (Cunningham); troubles with calendar coordination by regional arts agents (Lar Lubovich and Ballet Ohio);

sponsor resistance when a company traveled without their primary choreographer/artistic director (Murray Louis); labor constraints on company managers (Arthur Hall); and general technical problems (Alwin Nikolais) (CDTP Complete Listing, p. 8, in CRMI archives).

74. The report stated, “Notwithstanding the absence of qualitative criteria for inclusion in the DTP *Directory of Dance Companies*, the mix of companies available as to size, type, and average weekly fee does indicate a remarkable diversity and range of choice for potential sponsors” (CDTP Retrospective Report, 1977; CRMI archives).

75. New York dance-makers absorbed over half of the agency’s total allotments (62 percent) that same year (NEA, *Annual Reports [1964–2017, FY 1976]*).

76. Cultural sociologist Paul DiMaggio’s (1982, 1983, 1986, 1992, 2000, 2006) foundational studies of US arts philanthropy unpack the classed politics that belied the formation and evolution of trustee-governed charitable organizations from the late nineteenth century to the present across a span of aesthetic forms and cultural contexts.

77. Prior to the NEA’s emergence, wealthy philanthropists who valued Eurocentric fine arts steered charitable dollars toward the establishment of cultural venues and associations to protect them. Private patronage, as early as the mid-1800s, was an economic instrument aimed at keeping certain works operating at a distance from mass, popular, or commercial entertainments. These very early trustees in major coastal US cities such as New York and Boston were generally wealthy businessmen who formed voluntary associations to build and govern nonprofit museums, symphony orchestras, and eventually arts credentialing programs in major urban epicenters. The charitable associational model that early patrons erected after the 16th Amendment afforded these wealth-holders key tax breaks and offered an attractive means of protecting wealth into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Members of wealthy social classes distributed surplus wealth to arts forms they deemed to be “superior” cultural traditions. Cities like New York, Boston, and San Francisco that boasted the largest for-profit corporations ultimately also harbored the largest nonprofit charitable foundations at the turn of the twentieth century. For more on these developments, see DiMaggio (1982).

78. The 1913 Tax Revenue Act put a one-percent tax on incomes above \$3,000 with a top tax rate of 6 percent on those earning more than \$500,000 per year, leaving approximately 3 percent of the population subject to the tax at the time. Corporations were also subject to a one-percent tax on net income. For more on this legislation, see Weisman (2002).

79. INCITE! (2007: 8). For more on the enduring problem of the arts philanthropic “one-percent,” into the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, see also Sidford et al. (2011, 2017).

80. I invoke the term *answerabilities* here to extend Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1990) essay on the answerability of artists to the conditions and liabilities of their lives toward specifically economic matters. I take Bakhtin seriously in his point that, “The individual must become answerable through and through: all of his constituent moments

must not only fit next to each other in the temporal sequence of his life, but must also interpenetrate each other in the unity of guilt and answerability” (1990: 2). Extending this concept of answerability (to self, other, conditions, history) toward the people and economic contracts that fund mechanisms that NEA imposed sheds light on how the imposition of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit charter installed economic, social, and psychic interdependencies (“answerabilities”) between artists and wealth-holders in particular. In so doing, I abide Soniya Munshi’s and Craig Willse’s (2007) assertion that strictly structural critiques of the nonprofit organizational model (which they term “the Nonprofit Industrial Complex”) fail to explain how dominant systems simultaneously afford and also oppress grantees through various disciplinary tools including unwanted contracts (Munshi and Willse 2007: xvii).

81. While the required length of operational history for eligible nonprofit status varied on the basis of each state, groups in this period were generally required to demonstrate a minimum of three years of professional receipts for services rendered in order to incorporate. For current requirements, see www.irs.gov/publications/p557/cho3.html (accessed 11/27/20).

82. While the amount of such premiums certainly varied, groups could arrive at the total percentage by calculating yearly payroll, the number of people that they employed, and the type of work their members performed.

83. I’m specifically thinking here of Dylan Rodriguez’s (2007) establishment and critique of the term Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC) as an institutional apparatus of neocolonialism engineered to instill fear and to professionalize anticolonial revolutionaries through granted/endowed opportunities monitored and regulated by government bureaucrats and their labyrinth mechanics. This sense of scarcity and precarity thwarts political movement across sectors toward social justice and institutional change.

84. Here I recall, with abolitionist thinkers such as Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Dylan Rodriguez, Andrea Smith, and others, the historic ascendancy of charitable philanthropy in the United States as a by-product of American industrialization, a project borne from settler colonial dispossession enslavement, and extraction of environmental resources and labor from nonwhite populations. For more on the vexed and violent history of nonprofit incorporation within and beyond an arts context, see INCITE! (2007); see also Flaherty (2016).

85. For a profound contemporary critique of US colonization and internalized oppression as part of the settler colonial legacy of private US charitable philanthropy and a reparative prescription for systemic reform in the twenty-first century, see Villanueva (2018).

86. Since its historical inception and, as journalist and NPO critic Jordan Flaherty reminds us, philanthropists, including but not limited to Rockefeller and Ford, found their fortunes by making profit through the extraction of labor from others (low-waged employees or even slaves) and from the extraction of environmental resources. See Flaherty (2016: 22).

87. Discussing the period from 1969 to 1974, when the NEA saw a 700 percent increase in its budgetary appropriations under the presidential administration of President Richard Nixon, cultural critics Toby Miller and George Yúdice (2000) suggest that state-imposed nonprofit organization was a governmental tactic grounded in managerial regulation that sought to squelch political mobilization led by Black and brown activists and antiwar protestors, many of whom were also politically engaged artists. In their words, “Where brute force fell short, incorporation into a bureaucratized cultural apparatus drained some activism away. By the late 1960s it was evident that the empowerment of the urban, racialized poor had been headed off by the very mechanisms that had made organization possible” (49).

88. Among the most prominent nonprofit dance organizations in the United States in 1965 were the New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, and San Francisco Ballet, and a handful of modern dance groups—notably, Martha Graham, Alvin Ailey, Merce Cunningham, José Limón, and Paul Taylor. Martha Graham’s 1966 NEA-funded domestic tour leveraged the artist’s continued support from Batsheva de Rothschild, an Israeli patroness whose material and nonmaterial support enabled Graham to avoid economic losses during costly international travels.

89. As a dance organization that had only recently begun its longstanding association with Lincoln Center, New York City Ballet had been profiting from regular grants from the Ford Foundation and Lincoln Kirstein for decades at the time of NEA inauguration. While the NEA’s first and largest single grant in 1965 was the \$100,000 ABT bailout, the company’s survival had, up to that point, been sustained through the generosity of patron/director Lucia Chase.

90. NEA, *Annual Reports (1964–2017)*, 1964–65: 9.

91. Chair Roger L. Stevens, NEA, *Annual Reports (1964–2017)*, FY 1967: 7–8.

92. By 1980, fellowship allocations had evolved into annual and multiyear awards in the amounts of \$3,000, \$5,000, \$8,000, and \$15,000 in unrestricted funds to individual artists.

93. In 1966, NEA dance advisors effectively lobbied for \$103,000 in fellowship support for eight individual choreographers: Alvin Ailey, Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, José Limón, Alwin Nikolais, Anna Sokolow, Paul Taylor, and Antony Tudor. This first round of awards reflected the NEA’s policy strategy to follow already endowed artists, as previously discussed. Hanks’s entrance as NEA chair (1969) coincided with \$132,760 in dance fellowships that repeated support for Cunningham, Limón, Nikolais, Sokolow, and Taylor, each of whom also received touring grants this same year. Additional fellowships went to Murray Louis, Don Redlich, Glen Tetley, Charles Weidman, Richard Englund, Eliot Feld, Anna Halprin, Lucas Hoving, Pauline Koner, and Richard Kuchin in 1969. By 1971, fellowship totals had grown to \$146,250 distributed to sixteen artists, including repeat performers: Cunningham, Feld, Kuchin, Louis, Nikolais, Sokolow, Taylor, and Tudor, and adding support for Kazuko Hirabayashi, Hanya Holm, Michael Lopuszanski, Meredith Monk, Carl Ratcliff, Rod Rogers, Twyla Tharp, and Martha B. Wittman. Notably just three of

these sixteen fellows resided outside of the city of New York (NEA, *Annual Reports [1964–2017]*, 1966–71).

94. Also in 1973, the Dance Program implemented second- and third-tier programmatic variations on the Fellowship Program by funding small (\$1,200) commissioning fellowships to eighty individual artists (some of whom received funds in other fellowship tiers and organizational grant programs). The amount allocated in 1973 to Fellows was \$150,348.00 that was distributed respectively to Trisha Brown, Cunningham, Jeff Duncan, Bill Evans, Louis Falco, Lotte Goslar, Eric Hawkins, Richard Kuch, Bella Lewitsky, Donald McKayle, Rudy Perez, Paul Sanasardo, Sokolow, Twyla Tharp, and Marilyn Wood. See NEA, *Annual Reports (1964–2017)*, FY 1973: 45.

95. The 1974 NEA budget saw Choreography Fellowships splintered into two categories, Category A/Choreography Fellowships (\$225,270 allocated) and Category B/Workshop Fellowships (\$24,000 allocated), with the latter category reserved for artists working on in-process commissions for regional (not based in New York) dance ensembles.

96. The data listed here, compiled by the author, notably includes two fellowship awards in FY 1976 endowed to choreographer Meredith Monk, one of which listed her residency status in New York and the other in Chicago, Illinois. See NEA, *Annual Reports (1964–2017)*, 1976: 42.

97. NEA, *Annual Reports (1964–2017)*, FY 1979: 12.

98. NEA, *Annual Reports (1964–2017)*, FY 1976: 21.

99. *Annual Reports* detailing ICF distribution from 1966 to 1980 are available at www.arts.gov/about/annual-reports.

100. Binkiewicz addresses this in detail (2004: 23).

101. In 1977, during Biddle's chairmanship, members of the Black Congressional Caucus (BCC), led by cofounder and Senator Shirley Chisholm (D-NY), called a meeting with NEA leadership to challenge the agency's hiring practices. Citing evidence from the Endowment's public record, the BCC demonstrated that of 325 staff positions, only five employees from minority ethnic groups worked in higher-echelon GS-15 level leadership posts. While a quick scan of the NEA employee roster could have corroborated this charge, Biddle stalled the agency's response to this call in true bureaucratic fashion by first calling for an internal review of the circumstances and then assigning an internal task force to weigh in on the issue from the agency's purview. Once this task force determined that Chisholm's claims were correct, the changes that Biddle instituted were slow and, according to Biddle's own memoir, the BCC was largely dissatisfied and stayed disconnected from the Arts Endowment during this period. It was not until the NEA instituted programmatic measures for artists from historically underrepresented ethnicities that infrastructural headway was made in diversifying the NEA's ranking leadership. Biddle (1988: 391).

102. This statistical panic on the part of US legislators about recognizing Indigenous cultural expression as a matter of international arts policy was expressed rather notoriously in 1969 when the United Nation Education Science and Culture Organi-

zation (UNESCO) lobbied aggressively for a global arts policy platform that the US federal government, famously, refused to join. The refusal was rooted in the premise that the First Amendment secures a historical policy of “no policy” or political action on the arts on the part of the US federal government. As early as the Declaration of Independence, a policy of American “freedom” was ironically underwritten through the violent expulsion of Indigenous and African diasporic forms of cultural expression among dispossessed and enslaved Indigenous and African peoples. Indigenous exclusion has functioned as perhaps the US government’s most enduring “cultural policy,” according to cultural critics Miller and Yúdice (2000).

103. A study by Samuel Gilmore (1993) provides the economic data to bolster my assertion that grants and dollars distributed to minority artists did not come from disciplinary divisions but remained largely concentrated in Expansion and Folk Arts (where only 10 percent of NEA allocations landed) during this period.

104. Taking the period from the introduction of Expansion Arts (1971) into the mid-1990s, Gilmore’s (1993) data meaningfully exposed the structural complexities at play in the redistribution of grants on the basis of parity of ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientation long after the establishment of Expansion Arts. Gilmore’s study highlighted the relative success with which senior leadership had moved the needle on racial diversification in terms of distribution, hiring, and panel constitution some fifteen years into Expansion Arts. But ultimately, the study concluded that uneven racial panel composition and low allocation totals in disciplinary programs (including dance) thwarted distributional equity on the basis of cultural identification well into the NEA’s third decades of operation (see Table 1).

105. Even more telling patterns would emerge a decade later when Expansion Arts and Folk Arts controlled 10.1 percent of total grants for the twelve NEA disciplinary programs but accounted for between 49.8 percent to 40 percent of the budget distributed to minority grantees between FY 1987 and FY 1990. In Gilmore’s analysis, the combined allocation of minority grants in the ten other disciplinary divisions shrunk to between 7.9 percent (FY 1987) and 11.9 percent (FY 1990) when Ex and Folk Arts were removed (Gilmore 1993: 147).

106. NEA Creative Writing Fellowships (established in 1967) also added Translation Fellowships to bring world literature to US audiences in 1981. The NEA added awards for Jazz Masters under Reagan’s NEA appointee Frank Hodsoll in the 1980s as well.

107. Of course this contingent turn toward cultural nationalism also misremembered the violent legacies of expropriation (labor, culture, and land) that built the United States as a nation.

108. The fact that the NEA did not even begin accounting for demographic distributions and impacts of grant decisions until 1987 signals the extent to which policymakers remained content to perpetuate the arts policy status quo. More on this archival absence in Gilmore (1993: 144).

109. The House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior and Related Agen-

cies is the legislative committee charged with overseeing and recommending NEA/NEH fiscal appropriations. Detailed information on subcommittee oversight is available at www.appropriations.house.gov/subcommittees/interior-environment-and-related-agencies-116th-congress (accessed 11/27/20).

110. Yates had been appointed Chair of the House Appropriations Committee on the Interior in 1974 and had specifically helped then-Chair Nancy Hanks diffuse several controversial grants, including one made to writer Erica Jong (in 1975) for her sexually provocative novel *Fear of Flying*, a text that conservative legislators protested against for its themes and for having been funded by an Individual Artist Fellowship in literature.

111. In his autobiography, Biddle suggested that Yates's decision to convene a task force pertained to the lack of previous oversight of the agency's grant review process in particular. Yates's concern was that the NEA was a then-twelve-year-old independent agency that had never been closely examined at the level of management policy and practices. Yates worried that the NEA would continue to weather legislative pushback as a result (Biddle 1988: 486).

112. A fuller discussion of the specific charges of the panel is chronicled in Arian (1989: 51).

113. For an in-depth chronology of the NEA's process of inauguration in the former NEA chair's own words, see Biddle (1988).

114. While this quote from the book *To Move A Nation* directly references US foreign policy, political scientist Edward Arian (1989) has invoked this epigraph in his effort to explicitly challenge the philanthropic patterns established at the agency during the early years.

TWO *Bureaucratic Angling, Institutional Activism*

1. Among the most notable artists who received indirect support and whose work came under fire with legislators were Andres Serrano, Robert Mapplethorpe, and a quartet of individual performance artists known as the "NEA Four": Holly Hughes, John Fleck, Karen Finley, and Tim Miller. The latter brought a lawsuit against the NEA for rescinding their artist fellowships.

2. I am indebted here to George Yúdice and his efforts to centralize culture as both a political resource and battleground (2003). In his work on cultural expediency and the government, Yúdice suggests that the NEA's "official" arts funding controversies were endemic of a "particularly US style of social relations," enflamed by the media, that pegged political leftists against conservatives and fabricated a political stalemate. And, in so doing, masked the discursive ways that these falsely "fixed" positions propped one another up (47). By studying mundane bureaucratic acts of politically conservative and progressive activism, I refuse, as Yúdice does, to define "radicalism" as strictly a right or left politic. I attend, instead, to how embodied performances inside of the Dance Program sought both to fortify and abolish the concert dance hegemony.

3. Here my use of the term “repertoire” diverges from the context of proscenium concert dance and references Diana Taylor’s (2003) important work to distinguish “official” (colonial) *archives* from enacted *repertoires* as differently empowered technologies of control and resistance. Throughout chapter 2, I submit institutional and administrative acts as repertoires of activist action to historical scrutiny.

4. For an insider account of the NEA’s growth spurt under Hanks, see Straight (1988).

5. From a letter signed by President Ronald Reagan, May 6, 1981. Internal copy of Press Release issued May 6, 1981, by the White House Office of the Press Secretary. Source: personal archive, anonymous.

6. The full membership of the 1981 Task Force included Dr. Hanna Gray (co-chair for humanities), Charleton Heston (co-chair for the arts), Daniel Terra (co-chair for government), Barnabas McHenry (vice chair), Margo Albert, Dr. Edward Banfield, Anne H. Bass, Dr. Daniel J. Boorstin, Dr. William G. Bowen, Joseph Coors, Armand Deutsch, Virginia Duncan, Robert F. Fryer, Henry Geldzahler, Gordon Hanes, Nancy Hanks, Dr. Paul R. Hanna, Ernest J. Jump, June Noble Larkin, Dr. Robert M. Luminasky, Angus MacDonald, Nancy Mehta, Arthur Mitchell, Dr. Franklin D. Murphy, David Packard, Edmund P. Pillsbury, Dr. George C. Roche III, Richard M. Scaife, Franklin J. Schaffner, Beverly Sills, Leonard Silverstein, Robert I. Smith, Roger Stevens, John Swearingen, Rawleigh Warner and Lucien Wulsen. McHenry (1985: 108).

7. The Task Force oversaw recommendations for both the NEA and NEH.

8. Ana Steele, NEA Deputy Director, Program Coordination, Internal Memorandum, National Endowment for the Arts, May 13, 1981, p. 2 (emphasis in the original).

9. I nod here to the work of Kathleen Woodward, whose (2009) text *Statistical Panic* highlights how cultural scripts for emotional behavior vary on the basis of gender, race, and age, in the era of digital mediation. While this particular anecdote from a de-identified NEA employee was not digitally mediated, the physical exercise of hiding reveals the unchecked emotional labor that often accompanied increased pressures on staffers to assimilate to executive branch mandates from the Reagan administration onward.

10. The Dance Program overview for the presidential task force highlighted the program’s impact first in terms of quantitative dollars and qualitative impacts. From FY 1966, when total NEA Dance grants amounted to \$595,000 (funding seven choreographers and two dance companies), the FY 1980 Dance budget now sat at \$8,037,500, fielding 1,122 applications in 1980 and granting 351 grants to dance artists and organizations. NEA Dance Program Overview, FY 1981, Attachment D, p. 1.

11. Many task force members were already significant arts contributors and collaborated regularly with corporate patrons, which informed their push to encourage private sector industries to utilize corporate tax deductions here. McHenry credits the task force with securing a 5–10 percent increase in pretax profits eligible for deduction into the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 (1985: 112).

12. Remembering the Yates Commission’s critiques of NEA nepotism, cronyism,

and biased judgment on citizen review panels, the 1979 task force recommendation for enhanced research expanded on the production of statistically salient reporting to generate a clearer picture of arts spending to legislators and the broader public.

13. One example of this ethos of expanded private partnership was Reagan's advancement of governmental "pairing and sharing" initiatives—programs that matched federal and state funds to support citizens. In dance, NEA "pairing and sharing" programs offered opportunities for ballet companies, in particular, to secure dual residency status in two US states and gain eligibility for funds in two places at once. The Joffrey Ballet's dual residency between Los Angeles and New York was a famous example of this, but smaller ballet organizations like the Milwaukee and Pennsylvania Ballets also got into the act, experimenting with cost share and labor share throughout the 1980s as a strategy to stay afloat fiscally.

14. An interesting push to include corporate patrons as key contributors to US cultural life commenced with the 1983 National Medal awards, the first of which were given to the Texaco Philanthropic Foundation, novelist/philanthropist James Michener, Philip Morris, the Cleveland Foundation, cultural heritage philanthropist Elma Lewis, and the Dayton Hudson Foundation.

15. The NEA's August 16, 2016, obituary for Hodsoll featured past NEA chairs singing his praises. A passage from former Chair Rocco Landesman stands out. "Frank was always my nominee for 'Lowest B.S. Quotient in Town,' but there was one subject on which he would fudge the truth. It is generally accepted that when Ronald Reagan was elected President, the NEA was marked for extinction by the Budget Director David Stockman. Frank, who was at the time James Baker's deputy, put his hand up for the job of NEA Chair, got the appointment, and proceeded to not only rescue the agency from the chopping block, but built its appropriation to a level above what it is today, and that's in nominal 1989 dollars, unadjusted for inflation. When, at a recent panel of NEA chairs for the NEA's 50th birthday celebration, I mentioned this, he did what he always does, and deflected all of the credit to President Reagan. According to Frank, he was just carrying out the President's wishes. OK." See Hutter (2016). The full text can be found at www.arts.gov/art-works/2016/remembering-frank-hodsoll.

16. Similar testimony appears in Hall (1981).

17. Whereas former NEA Chairs Stevens and Biddle tended to yield their authority to veto panel recommendations, Hodsoll was less inclined toward such policy rubber stamps. He was known to send recommendations back to panels for further justification when he felt that requests for funding were unsubstantiated or poorly justified. More on Hodsoll's scrutiny is included in Schuster (1991: 40).

18. A notable exception here is Bella Lewitsky's effort to sue the NEA for the agency's imposition of "decency" clauses in 1990, seeking an injunction after she turned down a \$72,000 grant in protest (<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1990-07-13-ca-320-story.html> [accessed 11/5/19]).

19. The US Census appendix is the key federal dataset grounding NEA demographic studies and for the NEA's Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA).

Introduced in 1982, the SPPA is published every four years and gathers additional insights on cultural participation.

20. Parallel advancements in nonfederal cultural policy research and debate emerged in a series of collected volumes seeking to promote cultural policy studies as a domain of academic research and resourcing. See Cherbo and Wyszomirski (2000) and Cherbo, Stewart, and Wyszomirski (2008). For an astute analysis of private sector endeavors to formalize arts policy issues in the United States as an area of research, see also Bonin-Rodriguez (2015).

21. Information on each of these venues, as follows, draws on Armstrong and Morgan (1984). Home to Eliot Feld Ballet, the Joyce was established in 1982 from a large donation by patron Lu Esther T. Mertz, whose purchase of an old two-story movie house on Eighth Avenue and 19th Street catalyzed the building plan and was bolstered in part through bank loans, private funders, and grants for NEA Dance and Design Art (1984: 107). The Capitol Theatre, once a vaudeville theatre, renovated and expanded to accommodate resident companies with adjoining spaces leased to commercial tenants. It was resident home to Ballet West, Utah Opera Company, Ririe Woodbury Dance Company, and Repertory Dance Theatre (1984: 107). The Civic Center of Onondaga County was a multiuse space with 2117 seat, 463 seat, and 200 seat performance spaces that functioned exclusively as a roadhouse for a full range of drama, dance, and music events (1984: 111). The Theatre Center for the Arts at State University of New York at Purchase is a 476-seat auditorium boasting sprung floors of double-layered pine designed exclusively for music and dance presenting (1984: 119). The State Theatre Playhouse Square in Cleveland, Ohio is a four-venue arts space painstakingly renovated to demolish the old vaudeville and film space that was its first function. The resulting venue accommodated Cleveland Ballet as a company in residence and housed mainstream theatrical productions and musicals all the while maintaining its preservation status as a state historic site (1984: 124). The Grand Opera House in Wilmington, Delaware, was a gas-lit opera house renovated by the city government in 1974 (1984: 129). The Filene Center at Wolf Trap Farm Park in Vienna, Virginia, was originally an open-air theatre that was restored after a fire in 1982 with support in the amount of a \$9 million grant from Congress to issue comprehensive fire protections, build 200 extra seats, and update acoustics to explode capacity to more than 6,000 patrons (3,500 in the covered building and 3,000 on the adjacent lawn) (1984: 134).

22. Gordon, for example, purchased his 3,000-square-foot unit in Brown's building for \$18,000 and spent an additional \$80,000 of his own on track lighting, an oak floor, plumbing, and renovation of office, living, and kitchen areas (Armstrong and Morgan 1984: 140).

23. The timeliness of DTW's space acquisition conditioned DTW's status as a sought-after hub for experimental dance in downtown New York. White floated his hope in the report to someday ultimately establish a national network of small dance hubs to coordinate touring possibilities for artists working at the margins or at a

smaller scale. Such a vision would come to pass with the NEA-supported institution-ization of the National Presenters' Network (NPN) in 1985, three years later. See Bonin-Rodriguez, *Groundwork* (forthcoming).

24. The Cunningham Studio boasted over 350 students and space renters in the early 1980s. For more on Cunningham's relationship to Westbeth Housing development, see Noland (2019).

25. Zooming in on page 101, researchers spoke to production conditions that dance companies confronted on regional and national tours as particularly "bleak" and critiqued artists' willful acceptance of poor conditions as an informal "policy" that was exacerbating the problem. In their words: "Most big American cities have at least one large proscenium theatre. In those theatres, for better or worse, usually on stages too shallow and floor too stiff, the nation's dance companies perform. Touring dance companies play poor theatres because architectural hand-me-downs are often the only stages around. And they tour secure in the knowledge that for every space even partly remodeled to suit the needs of dance—a stage floor made more springy, a proscenium widened, the wings expanded—there remain scores of unrepentant, unforgiving houses" (Armstrong and Morgan 1984: 101).

26. Kriegsman had been invited to present at the 1987 conference alongside Leslie Hansen Kopp, then-chair of the Society of American Archivists. The Dance Program ultimately tapped Kopp to lead the research study alongside staffers Mindy Levine and William Keens.

27. The seven researchers who contributed to the report were Sally Sommer (New York), Stephen Cobbett (San Francisco), Elizabeth Zimmer and Rene Olivas Gubernick (Los Angeles), Judith Mirus (Minneapolis/St. Paul), Karen Anne Webb (Salt Lake City), and John Perpener (Washington, DC). The report also profited from seven advisors from diverse ethnic and professional backgrounds: Art Beckofsky, then-Executive Director of the Cunningham Dance Foundation; Rhoda Grauer, ex-NEA Dance Director and then-Director of The Dance Project at TV station WNET; Charlotte Heth, then-UCLA Chair in Ethnomusicology; Sam Miller, then-Executive Director of Jacob's Pillow; Cora Mirikitani, then-Director of Performing Arts for the Japan Society; Madeline Nichols, then-Curator of the Dance Collection at New York Public Library; and Pepon Osorio, set designer. (Levine 1991: 52.)

28. In her report for the *New York Times* on the symposium, dance critic Jennifer Dunning noted that, while nearly all European dance companies had archival infrastructures—staff and preservation programs—in place, only Dance Theatre of Harlem and Merce Cunningham had archivists on their staff. See Shepard (2011: 152).

29. For more on the racialized entanglements of dance and copyright, see Picart (2013) and Kraut (2015), respectively.

30. NEA Dance Program, *Year End Overview 1993*, November 1993, p. A7.

31. See Netzer and Parker (1993: 20). Despite the 11 percent decline in the Dance Program's overall budget at that time, choreography fellowship amounts held strong and actually increased in some instances, due to programmatic workarounds ad-

dressed in the next section. Researchers in the report noted that NEA Individual Choreography Fellowship budgets moved from \$814,000 in FY 1989 and \$816,000 in FY 1990 to \$841,000/FY 1991 and \$885,000/FY 1992, respectively.

32. The report's first advisory convenings were attended by Trisha Brown, Bonnie Brooks, Randy Duncan, Kim Euell, Ian Horvath, Carol Keegan, Mike Malone, Amariya Payne, Carla Perlo, Wendy Rogers, Merian Soto, Clark Tippet, Jelon Viera, and David White (Netzer and Parker 1993: 11).

33. Netzer's larger work hinged on market failure rationales for increased arts philanthropy and his groundbreaking (1978) study *The Subsidized Muse* informed the *Dancemakers* charge to gather data to bolster NEA's justification for expanded philanthropic resourcing to offset the weak economy of the dance field. Netzer reinforced market failure arguments for dance and contributed to the agency's lobby for increased institutional support for choreographers.

34. Researchers ultimately elected to narrow the scope of survey participation to economic criteria by soliciting information from self-selecting artists who had "presented a dance work of his/her own creation before a solicited audience of 50 people or more during the previous three years" (Netzer and Parker 1993: 29).

35. See Netzer and Parker (1993: 55). Also of note, dance historian Susan Manning has meaningfully connected the professionalization of modern dance and ballet artists to the Bennington School where dance found one of its first homes in the academy during the Progressive Era. See Manning, Ross, and Schneider (2013: 8).

36. This modernist understanding of the choreographer as an artistic genius and lone creator was invoked in the report as a sacred calling: "The Choreographer is what we call someone who makes dances, a dance-maker. Just as a composer is what we call someone who makes music—'makes' in the sense of creates or calls into being" (Netzer and Parker 1993: 7).

37. Again, I steer readers to Randy Martin's (1998) study of dance and politics, in which he outlines his interpretation of this economic "bust" in detail.

38. Presenters funded through this program received between \$4,000 and \$12,750 in NEA matching support, which some used to install a local dance festival or local annual presenting series and others used to celebrate anniversaries of local dance groups.

39. Such funds for dance events featuring local artists went to Washington Performing Arts Society (DC), Queens Cultural Association (NY), Private Arts Foundation (DC), North Carolina Arts Council (NC), Community Services College (NY), University of California Regents (CA), Bureau of Cultural Affairs (GA), and Asia Society (NY). Brooklyn Academy of Music found a \$50,000 patron to match cost share and scooped up \$100,000 in total support for a presentation of five NYC companies (Lucinda Childs, Laura Dean, Dan Wagoner, Senta Driver, and Ballet Hispánico) along with three companies in the Dance Africa Program through the use of these funds. NEA *Annual Report* (1980: 28–29).

40. To give a snapshot of the breadth of Special Project support in FY 1985, dance specific funds were endowed for the production of documentary films, networking

initiatives for emerging dance artists, research studies, funds to replace stolen studio equipment, and funds to replenish dancers' salaries. NEA *Annual Report* (1986: 24).

41. Into the mid-1980s, as touring costs were escalating, Dance Program Special Projects Funds were allocated to support the inauguration of the National Performance Network (NPN), a service organization for curators and presenters of live performance invested in dance artists who were working at a smaller scale or in less mainstream aesthetic registers. These grantseekers were being structurally crowded out of the large-scale touring networks that the NEA had been supporting. The NPN was the brainchild of DTW Director and long-standing Dance Program grant advisor David R. White, who imagined an umbrella entity serving experimental downtown New York City dance and movement artists as a hub and a national pipeline directly benefiting dance artists whose creative outputs warranted more niche networks for distribution. One structural caveat in NPN eligibility guidelines is worth mentioning. Although the NPN was envisioned as a program to support artists who would or could not assimilate to dominant Dance Touring Program standards, NEA Dance funds to seed the NPN stipulated that NPN grantees for the first decade had to have previously received an NEA Individual Choreography Fellowship as a criterion of eligibility. In other words, the goal of NPN was expansion, but the NEA's stipulation of previously endowed artists restricted its scope to the agency's own inside network. Once the 104th Congress scotched the Independent Fellowships in dance in 1995, the programmatic scope of NPN opened up to a broader membership.

42. Excerpted notes from Vernacular Dance Preservation Initiative Advisory Committee Meeting, November 30, 1994, p. 5. Source: personal archive, anonymous.

43. Vernacular Dance Preservation Initiative, evaluation meeting, internal documentation, November 1994, p. 9.

44. Vernacular Dance Preservation Initiative, evaluation meeting, internal documentation, November 1994, p. 3.

45. Experiments with restructuring included moves to loosen criteria regarding technical support and to lower company performance fee minimums from 33 ⅓ percent to 30 percent to 20 percent of a proposed project during this period to try to create more flexibility.

46. Throughout *Funding Bodies*, I invoke the term "situated" in relationship to my research subjects in alignment with feminist epistemologies to abide the nonobjectivity ingrained in any and all ways of knowing. In the context of grantmakers, I amplify the situatedness of citizen advisors to reinforce that, despite the feigned objectivity embedded in touring criteria, funding decisions were driven by funder biases, values, and worldviews. For more on situated knowledges, see Haraway (2003).

47. Reagan-era budget stalemates had a staggering effect on allocations for concert dance touring. From 1981 to 1983, yearly allocations dipped from \$5 million to \$2.3 million as the NEA's bottom line was reduced from \$158,795,000 to \$143,456,000.

48. The NEA Inter-Arts Division encompassed a range of performing arts that intertwined dance, music, theatre, opera, and musical theatre.

49. Sample company grants, at the time, fell under the broader categories of “Creativity/Management” and “Performance.” See Dance Program Policy Overview Panel Report (November 1982: 58b).

50. Dance Program Policy Overview Panel Report, Review/Guidelines (November 1984).

51. Dance Program Policy Overview Panel Report, Review/Guidelines (November 1983: 8).

52. According to one interlocutor, a former manager of a well-endowed modern dance company: “*Before the 1980s, dance venue managers were called ‘sponsors’ because they were focused on connecting to companies in universities or communities and fixated on selling enough tickets to pay for performances. Eventually people lobbied and changed the name at the large national booking conference, to arts presenters, they even wore buttons that said: ‘call us PRESENTERS.’ They wanted the field to call them presenters, not sponsors. They argued that they deserved more respect.*”

53. Additional funds for touring were also allocated in Folk Arts, Music, and Theatre during this time frame.

54. The six regional arts agencies were Arts Midwest (member states: IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, ND, OH, SD, WI), Mid-America Arts Alliance (member states: AR, KS, MO, NE, OK, TX), Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation (member states: DC, DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA, VA, VI, WV), New England Foundation for the Arts (member states: CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT), South Arts (member states: AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN), and Western States Arts Federation (member states: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY). See www.arts.gov/partners/state-regional (accessed 11/28/20).

55. To reassure disillusioned dance organizers and the broader public that touring remained a Dance Program priority, Dance staff partnered with national service organization Dance/USA to initiate and publish a short study highlighting twelve DOT funded projects. The 1993 report, edited by Robert Yesselman and entitled *Moving Around: Partnerships at Work in Dance On Tour*, praised the NEA’s continued support for choreographic commissions and residencies on a national scale. It sang artists’ achievements but stopped short of mentioning that the DOT reduced the agency’s investment to just twenty dance companies that fiscal year.

56. Logistically speaking, one macropolicy change shook down in 1994 when the Inter-Arts program was renamed the Presenting and Commissioning Program and had folded dance touring and presenting under its auspices (Yesselman 1993: 11).

57. Annual convenings orchestrated by NPN and Dance/USA continued to centralize presenting and touring as a means of seeding debate around the sustainability of these production lifelines at this time.

58. Agents like Miller (head of NEFA in 1995–96) were particularly instrumental in salvaging past philanthropic pathways, due to their steady support of regional concert dance touring in the early 1980s and through the New England Dance Project. Miller was a regular NEA dance panelist and former director of Jacob’s Pillow—a ma-

for summer festival and presenting venue that has historically benefited from regular NEA touring support.

59. Prior to 1965, peer review was also a dominant practice in arts funding at Governor Nelson Rockefeller's New York State Council for the Arts, where panels included between eight and fifteen citizens deliberating over several days to evaluate the merit of art and artists.

60. Notable here is the economic reality that NEA grants have historically and overwhelmingly been granted to organizations versus individual artists. Taking FY 1989 as an example, the NEA received 17,879 applications and funded 4,458. Only 7.6 percent of these funds went to individual artists fellowships (McGarity 1994: 30).

61. This stipulation of three-year maximum term limits on panelists was initially installed by NEA Chair Livingston Biddle following recommendations brought forth by the 1979 Yates Commission. Despite this regulatory move, Dance directors continued to shuffle the same key players across grant categories, a practice that was then allowable under policy guidelines. The policy of rotating panel veterans was deemed a necessity by some staffers as a measure to preserve institutional memory and enable grantmakers to more swiftly arrive at consensus during the arduous process of peer review.

62. Reconsideration of Declined Applications, National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities, 48 Fed. Reg 13118 (1983) supra note 164, cited in McGarity (1994: 37, nn. 164–65).

63. George-Graves's 2017 essay "Identity Politics and Political Will: Jeni LeGon Living in a Great Big Way" provides a vibrant account of the creative negotiation of racist norms of film hiring, representation, and production enacted by Jeni LeGon, tap dance artist, actress, and entertainer and the first African American woman to sign a contract with a major Hollywood studio. George-Graves draws upon archives and interviews to evidence how, in the early to mid-twentieth century when female artists of color were overwhelmingly subjected to stultifying norms of representation and labor, LeGon built a formidable career in dance through "playful" acts of resistance. Rehearsing LeGon's dancing strategies alongside the "infrastructural" moves made in the face of tokenistic hiring, segregation, and suboptimal contracts compared to that of her white female counterparts, George-Graves concludes that LeGon's committed enactments "*Willed a world into being aesthetically and politically*" (515). I join George-Graves here in suggesting that Davis's dancing approached panel tokenism and fund governance with a level of political will as an act of commitment. Leveraging his relative power in the presence of white grantmakers, Davis's dancing, in my view, enacted an insurgent advocacy effort on behalf of Artists of the African Diaspora and from other racially marginalized backgrounds.

64. A parallel example shared with me by one interviewee involved modern dance choreographer Mark Morris who, when he grew tired of keeping up the bureaucratic façade, would issue a "yes" or "no" vote nonverbally, through dramatized gestures of his hands and arms.

65. In the mid-1980s, staff efforts were liberated to a significant extent by the presence of a new IBM computer in the Dance Program office. Before this acquisition, Dance Director Rhoda Grauer had enlisted a computer intern from the nearby Wharton School of Business to tap into the Wharton mainframe to systematize the Dance Program's voting process during panels. The Wharton School hacking, though short-lived, ultimately provided data bolstering Grauer's lobby to Hodsoll, who approved the internal computer in Dance within the course of the year. By mid-1980, all NEA divisions computerized their operations to aid accounting and efficiency.

66. While the AIDS epidemic, caused by Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), was identified in the United States during the 1960s, the discovery of Kaposi's sarcoma and pneumocystis pneumonia in northern California in 1981 is considered an AIDS historical flashpoint, one which raised awareness of the severity of the immune disorder. For more on how dancers protested Reagan's policies of nonaction and the devastating mortality rates that resulted in dance, see Gere (2004).

67. Sali Ann Kriegsman, Memorandum To Program and Division Directors, National Endowment for the Arts. Transcript for Cultural Diversity Task Force Presentations, January 22, 1993, pp. 181–218, quote from p. 181. This internal memorandum is among those listed in the References in the Archival Sources documents used for research for this book and is part of a private collection of papers. Cited hereafter in the notes as Kriegsman, 1993, "Cultural Diversity Task Force."

68. Examples of Sali Ann Kriegsman's HIV/AIDS activism abound in NEA Dance Program Policy Overview Reports from May 1991, p. 3; August 1991, pp. 5 and 8; and November 1993, p. A2. These internal policy overview reports are among those listed in the References in the Archival Sources documents used for research for this book and are part of a group of documents obtained via a FOIA request by the author. Cited hereafter in the notes as Kriegsman, appropriate month and year, "Program Policy Overview Report," with appropriate page numbers.

69. In an internal report, Kriegsman cited a *Dance/USA Journal* article from spring of that year entitled "Dance and AIDS" that suggested that dance artists were four times more likely to contract HIV than the general population (comment on p. 5). See Kriegsman, August 1992, "Program Policy Overview Report," pp. 1–11.

70. Kriegsman, 1993, "Cultural Diversity Task Force," p. 185.71. Kriegsman, 1993, "Cultural Diversity Task Force," p. 193.

72. Kriegsman, 1993, "Cultural Diversity Task Force," p. 194.

73. Kriegsman, 1993, "Cultural Diversity Task Force," p. 198.

74. Kriegsman, 1993, "Cultural Diversity Task Force," p. 183.

75. In 1993, Spellman's division commissioned a monograph detailing such struggles, entitled, *Community Cultural Centers of Color*, which drew from survey data compiled between 1990 and 1991 on the specific programs, goals, aspirations, and needs of culturally diverse, inner-city, rural, and tribal cultural communities. See Bowles (1993). A twenty-year corrective of this crucial study was commissioned by the NEA Office of Research and Analysis in 2013 (see Manjon and Vega 2014).

76. Kriegsman, 1993, "Cultural Diversity Task Force," p. 189.

77. Kriegsman, 1993, “Cultural Diversity Task Force,” pp. 183–84.

78. Kriegsman, November 1994, “Program Policy Overview Report,” p. A4.

79. Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101–121, § 304, 1989 U.S.C.C.A.N. (103 Stat.) stated the Independent Commission’s purpose as follows: “to determine whether there should be standards for grant making other than substantial artistic and cultural significance, giving emphasis to American creativity and cultural diversity and the maintenance and encouragement of professional excellence” (741). For more on the IC’s purview, see Nea (1993: 170).

80. Then-NEA Chair John Frohnmayer, who was charged with handling the Committee’s requests, discussed in his memoir the function of Blue Ribbon Commissions as a policy instrument to gather data to eliminate legislators’ direct involvement on issues that caused popular dissent. “Congress has long used independent commissions, which are charged with investigating/reporting as a means of diffusing/avoiding controversy. If a report is acceptable to a Congress member, the member can use the credibility of the commission to bolster an opinion, or if the view of the commission is contradictory, then the member can denounce the commission and its procedures” (Frohnmayer 1993: 90).

81. For a detailed account of the political pitfalls of the NEA’s historical rationales for federal arts subsidy over its first three decades and a compelling argument for the use of civic justifications, see Reid (2009).

82. Here, I nod to Jon McKenzie’s (2001) effort to parse the shift in organizational bureaucracy from scientific managerial norms of Taylorism to neoliberalized performance management. He characterizes this shift as one from work organized through rational scientific principles to a flexible management style that “empowers” workers through increased access to information and training and direct participation in decision-making. The IC recommendations to involve grantees in the accountability and documentation process, in my view, align with the latter.

83. These are the specific words of IC Chair John Brademas (Brademas and Garment 1990).

84. Perhaps the most controversial NEA chair across the agency’s fifty-year history, Frohnmayer was thought to have fed the “culture wars” controversies by exercising the seldom-invoked power of the NEA chair to veto several grants that had previously won approval from peer panels and the NCA. Despite critics of the “culture wars” controversies who depict Frohnmayer’s resignation as politically enforced by the executive branch, Frohnmayer’s memoir of the period downplays this possibility. See Frohnmayer (1993).

THREE *Disinvesting in Dance*

1. The governmental process of devolving decision-making and resources from governmental institutions to smaller and weaker units has been described by political theorist Wendy Brown (2015) as “responsibilization,” one way that neoliberal

instrumental reason and governmentality has “undone” the democratic promise of government policy and protection of basic human rights. Brown’s critique of moral rationales for redistributing control over social policy aptly describes NEA restructurings under the starvation cycles of the Clinton administration.

2. The demand for basic income and against the productivism and familialism of both US welfare policy and labor policy discourse was, as Kathy Weeks (2011: 144) and others have shown, central to political organization in the United Kingdom and United States as early as the year of the NEA’s inauguration. Critics of the “right to work” ethos underpinning Clinton’s welfare policy reforms sought both an embracing of undervalued and unpaid labor and a shift in labor policy discourse toward income and away from waged work as a criterion of eligibility.

3. Here I am paraphrasing Brendon O’Connor’s discussion with former Clinton advisor and welfare policy expert David Ellwood, who resigned in 1994 after the Republican Revolution fearing that his preferred plan would prove unsustainable within a GOP-controlled Congress. O’Connor’s research draws on testimony from former Clinton advisers Peter Edelman and Wendell Primus who were stringently against the PRWOA; both resigned in protest soon after Clinton passed the act into law. See O’Connor (2002: 409).

4. As the enforcement arm of presidential policy across the US federal government, the OMB manages federal performance in the organizational sense. For more about the OMB, see www.whitehouse.gov/omb/.

5. Former NEA Dance Specialist and frequent NEA Dance Program consultant Suzanne Callahan (2004) has outlined in detail the impact of the GPRA on what she terms “the evaluation craze” in public and private philanthropy.

6. Where the NEA was concerned, Clinton appeared to be a “hands-off” president, perhaps wary of treading too closely toward the agency in the immediate aftermath of the overt “culture wars.” Aside from annual public appearances and presiding over the National Medal of Arts, Clinton’s entanglements with the members of the 104th and 105th Congress estranged him from direct intervention in NEA politics during his two-term tenure as Commander-in-Chief. First Lady Hilary Rodham Clinton liaised with the Arts Endowment in his stead. Lending so-called East Wing oversight to the operations of lesser executive branch agencies was a practice not uncommon in policy areas deemed politically “softer” or less significant to an administration.

7. Then-Chair Bill Ivey has noted this at length in his memoir of the era (2008: 78–81).

8. Clinton’s passage of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (1998), for example, made it possible for copyright owners to pursue unprotected users with more legal heft and rapidly increased fines to industries who impinged on such legal protections.

9. For an in-depth analysis of John Frohnmayer’s many missteps as a failure case for future policy reform, see Heidelberg (2019).

10. From 1990 through 1998, Congress called for a hearing to reauthorize the NEA every year.

11. Policy scholar Thomas Peter Kimbis (1997) has outlined the staff response to the 1996 cuts in his work on the period in closer detail.

12. In Dance, program guidelines prior to 1996 hailed artists and nonprofit organizations to apply across four internally designated funding categories: Dance Company Grants and grants to support Services to the Field, Special Projects, and Choreographic Fellowships.

13. Double- and triple-dipping for NEA programmatic and economic support by grantseekers was allowable prior to 1996, a practice that was pejoratively referred to as “rent-seeking” by conservative members of Congress. Starting in 1996, one notable exception to the single-application rule was rendered to applicants who were organizing consortia or conducting Leadership and Field Building projects. For more detail on legislative allergies to grantee “rent seeking,” see Miller (2000).

14. Chair Dana Gioia restored the NEA’s discipline-based approach to grant governance in 2006. I address this in greater detail in the next section.

15. In addition to NEA support, the *American Canvas* tour and report were made possible by support from Binny & Smith, Coca-Cola Foundation, J. Paul Getty Trust, Sara Lee Foundation, George Gund Foundation, and many voluntary organizations in Columbus, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Rock Hill, Charlotte, and San Antonio (Larson 1997:191–93).

16. Alexander’s memoir only fleetingly acknowledges the report, underlining the felt tensions that her leadership team encountered through of state-arts controversies in two cities where state arts agents had instituted decency clauses in response to nude theatre productions (Charlotte) and where internal artists’ communities were shutting down performances favorable to Fidel Castro’s Cuban government (Miami). See Alexander (2000: 302–4).

17. Such an argument was leveled in Brenson et al. (1998).

18. William Ivey, “Chairman’s Statement” in NEA *Annual Report* (2000: 6).

19. State and Regional, Expansion Arts, Folk/Heritage Arts, remained committed to also funding dance throughout this period.

20. Additional authorial credit for *Raising the Barre* was given to Thomas Smith, NEA Dance Director Doug Sonntag, and staffers Don Ball and Janelle Ott.

21. Quoting Douglas Sonntag, “Introduction,” in T. Smith *Raising the Barre* (2003: 3).

22. Large dance companies were defined at this time by the NEA and national dance service organization Dance/USA as those with a budget of more than \$5 million, more than 30 dancers on contract, more than 25 staff, and an endowment.

23. The absence of more nuanced categories reflects the narrow fact that the NEA’s own Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) was not, as late as 2002, in the practice of accounting for public interest in any other dance traditions besides ballet and modern dance in the US Census. SPPA collected data only under the categories of “ballet,” “modern,” and “other” from 1982 to 2002. The first shift occurred in 2012 SPPA (see Novak-Leonard and Brown 2011).

24. In a 2000 comparative study of dance communities coauthored by Sally

Sommer and Suzanne Callahan for Pew Charitable Trusts, anonymous gatekeepers lamented millennial restructurings in arts funding and the assimilatory pressures that ensued, which seemed to fit certain socially engaged modern dance-makers (Dorothy Jungels, David Dorfman, and Liz Lerman are invoked) but stood drastically at odds with others. See Callahan and Sommer (2000: 68).

25. Dance/USA had grown, since its 1985 inauguration, into a major advocacy institution for nonprofit concert dance and was run in 1998 by former Dance Program staffer Andrea Snyder.

26. Publications that accompanied the NCCI included Callahan (2002, 2003) and Callahan and Belott (2005, 2007).

27. Live convenings on college campuses hosted by the NCCI invited concert dance artists at all stages of the career continuum to engage in local discussions about challenges in transitioning careers “from the campus to the real world.” A publication by the same name, penned by Callahan, emerged in 2005, documenting participants’ insights and repeated inferences to a growing need for more robust national discourse about how dance artists negotiate career prospects and economic instability.

28. In FY 2001, for example, the largest grant made at the NEA was a \$500,000 investment in a project called Creative Communities, which provided arts instruction to youth living in public housing. The NEA awarded a half-million dollars, HUD provided \$3 million in funds, and the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts handled programmatic implementation for a project that saw twenty funded three-year education programs and served 5,400 youth. See NEA, *Annual Reports 1964–2017* (2001:13).

29. This system of “access-to-excellence” was not exclusive to dance funding, but its predilection on EuroAmerican aesthetic guided arts traditions and contexts and its false conflation of economic and cultural deficits problematically negated what sociologists and anthropologists have since reclaimed as the rigorous practice of “informal” art, around this same historical moment. See Wali, Severson, and Longoni (2002) and Alvarez (2003), respectively.

30. Excerpt from the *Budget of the United States, Fiscal Year 2002* (Washington, DC: OMB), cited in Breul and Kamensky (2008: 1016).

31. Bush’s OMB Director Mitch Daniels was largely credited with reinforcing the agency as a managerial driver through this time by applying tenacious pressure on agents to develop plans, identify internal officials to be held responsible for their swift implementation, and achieving maximal goals with minimal application of resources within each agency. Agents answerable within the NEA to the OMB were required, under Bush, to report the status of their “management scorecard” on PMA deliverables every ninety days for reassessment. See Breul and Kamensky (2008:1017).

32. For a critical investigation of the role of the Bush II administration in international export and dance touring that aimed, in part, to smooth unsteady diplomatic relations abroad, see Croft (2015).

33. Rare exceptions where Bush II directly engaged with the art of the theatre,

specifically Shakespearian literature, during his tenure as president are fascinatingly analyzed in Barnes (2008).

34. More on SAT, here: www.arts.gov/initiatives/save-americas-treasures (accessed 11/28/20).

35. In 1998, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13072 in conjunction with the White House Millennium Council to establish SAT. Emblematic of Clinton-era programs, SAT was engineered as a public-private partnership housed between several federal institutions and a nonprofit organization; on the federal side, the US National Park Service. For more on NPS's involvement see www.nps.gov/preservation-grants/sat/ (accessed 11/28/20).

36. In dance, the George Balanchine Foundation won a SAT award to fund the New York City Ballet's Film Archives on the grounds that the ballet world was in danger of losing some of Balanchine's masterworks with the deterioration of video tape and the passing of some of his original dancers and company members. A Save America's Treasures grant ultimately supported the transfer of the footage to more stable media to preserve work by George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, and Peter Martins.

37. Cited in Pat Morrison, "Pat Morrison Asks: Well versed, Dana Gioia," *Los Angeles Times*, Op. Ed. 11/5/11. www.latimes.com/opinion/la-xpm-2011-nov-05-la-oe-morrison-dana-gioia-20111105-story.html (accessed 11/28/20).

38. For more on Gioia's militaristic advancement of Shakespeare through a three-phase rollout of programmatic advances, see Barnes (2008).

39. In 2001 under Ivey, the NEA *Annual Report* ran fifty-one pages, which Gioia ultimately grew to 97 pages in 2003 and 148 pages in 2004, respectively.

40. *NEArts* (now called *American Artscape Magazine*) was initially published five times per year and is now published quarterly by the agency to contextualize arts policy issues. These have grown increasingly prominent through NEA-commissioned research reports that took on newfound momentum during Gioia's momentous tenure as NEA chair. For today's iteration, see www.arts.gov/stories/magazine (accessed 11/28/20).

41. In keeping with his personal commitment to literature, reading, and poetry, Gioia expanded oversight and promotion of the NEA Literature Fellowships to endow literary translation of non-English speaking authors. Gioia's translational acumen set a precedent for agency recognition of cultural works that were underrepresented in English translation. By mobilizing a separate subcategory within the NEA Literature Fellowship Program, Gioia encouraged published translators to apply for individual grants for \$12,500 or \$25,000 to translate targeted works of prose, poetry, or drama from other languages into English. While these fellowships were not technically pilot programs, Gioia's effort to endow a more multivocal, multilingual faction of cultural workers evidences his attempt to promote the agency to an increasingly diverse citizen demographic.

42. In addition to the aforementioned *Shakespeare in American Communities*, Gioia developed two other projects: *Poetry Out Loud*, and *The Big Read*, grant

contests aimed at building national literacy and educational attainment. The pyramid structure of *Poetry Out Loud* began with classroom-level competitions that enabled schools a chance to move to regionals and then national finals, held in Washington, DC. By capitalizing on cultures of competition enmeshed in US high schools and augmenting poetry education into high school curricula, *Poetry Out Loud* leveraged the power of oration and reading to advance student achievement. By year three, *Poetry Out Loud* was effectively implemented in high schools in every state capital and student participation expanded from 50,000 students to a quarter of a million.

43. NEA, Office of Research and Analysis, *Reading on the Rise, a New Chapter in American Literacy*, 16 pages (2009a: 3).

44. Policy critic and activist Roberto Bedoya (2004) penned a scathing critique of the NEA's "delivery" based approach to funding artists post-1996 and the effects of philanthropic economism on artists of color in particular. The white paper was commissioned by National Presenters Network (NPN).

45. For more on *Shakespeare in American Communities*, see www.artsmidwest.org/programs/shakespeare (accessed 11/28/20).

46. For more information about *Operation Homecoming* see www.arts.gov/initiatives/creative-forces/operation-homecoming (accessed 11/28/20).

47. A participatory arts intervention, *Operation Homecoming* was met with a high level of enthusiasm and demand by service members; the program received over 10,000 pages of submissions in response to its first call for participation. Accepted authors' works were anthologized through the publication of a literary text that the NEA dedicated to troops and their families. The program ran for four annual grant cycles before being folded into a larger integrative mental health care initiative in 2011 co-conceived with the National Intrepid Center of Excellence and Walter Reed Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland. What today is called the NEA Creative Forces National Initiative boasts funding resources, podcasts, events, a photo gallery, and commissioned research. See www.arts.gov/initiatives/creative-forces/creative-forces-community-network (accessed 11/28/20).

48. Original source: "Unprecedented Partnership Between Department of Defense and National Endowment for the Arts Sends Shakespeare to American Military Bases," October 2, 2003. Cited in Barnes (2008: 7).

49. Whereas many NEA critics have criticized the agency's deployment of merit-based justifications as weak policy instruments throughout its time span, I have been pressing the point throughout this book that merit-based rationales were also instrumental in their persuasive capacity to promote cultural exceptionalism on US domestic turf.

50. Gioia's development of NEA *Poetry Out Loud* leveraged rather alarming research statistics on declining literacy rates as a means of lighting a fire under arts and education constituencies to take action against such dire data sets. *The Big Read* marked one of the agency's biggest literary endeavors with over 21,000 organizational partners in all fifty states by 2008 (Bradshaw and Nichols 2004: 164).

51. Before Gioia restored disciplinary divisions, the majority of dance-specific grants were allocated in the thematic category of “Creation and Presentation,” where awards were a tiny fraction of earlier supports (\$10,000 was the median award in 2003). The NEA stopped reporting on specific grants awarded inside of its annual report in 1998 when e-government mandates moved accounting to a publicly accessible online database.

52. Dana Gioia, “Introduction,” *American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius* (Washington, DC: NEA, 2007: 2).

53. City Ballet’s Ballet Moves second company *Masterpieces* grant (FY 2009) and ABT II grant (FY 2009) exemplified the value of these grants to sustain the operation of apprentice models of preprofessional training, repertory reconstruction, and production.

54. Examples here include longstanding Utah-based repertory company Ririe Woodbury, who soaked up significant *Masterpieces* support to promote Alwin Nikolais and Chicago-based modern-jazz repertory company Melissa Thodos who reconstructed chamber dances by Broadway choreographer Bob Fosse with support in 2009.

55. Web grant search, see www.apps.nea.gov/grantsearch/ (accessed 7/17/19).

56. For a discussion and pocket history of allergies and affordances around “the entrepreneur” as a figure applied to US artists, see Bonin-Rodriguez (2012).

57. Obama’s Open Government policies were modeled and disseminated swiftly on the president’s own website at www.change.gov to demonstrate their efficacy and reach. For example, Obama’s early push for government intervention in the 2008 financial crisis exemplified use of Open Government portals through an online introduction to the Economic Recovery Spending Plan at www.recovery.gov (now defunct). Built initially as separate web platforms during the change.gov transition, Obama’s digital portfolio transition has been completed and executive branch agencies share online space through the White House web portal at www.whitehouse.gov.

58. More on this in Sifry (2010).

59. One way that Obama’s Open Government policy changed accountability was that all federal institutions were specifically required to feature Open Government pages on their websites to improve public awareness of their activities. To fall into line with OMB mandated digitization, the NEA joined executive branch agencies by making three “high value data sets” available in open web formats. Open format means a digital format that is platform independent, machine readable, and publicly accessible without restrictions to impede reuse. See McDermott (2010: 402).

60. Part of the swiftness with which Obama and the OMB could implement Open Government strategies across the executive branch stemmed from the fact that such policies in US federal government were nothing new. Building off of the 1980 Paperwork Reduction Act, which granted the OMB authority to manage federal records in efficient and productive ways, the PRA was amended twice by Presidents Bush (I) in 1986 to emphasize the need to promote the economic utility of information collection

and dissemination—to reduce the burden of FOIA requests on those who respond in federal institutions—and in 1995 under Clinton, who mandated more timely response to FOIA requests, emphasized e-communications, and rendered the OMB more responsible for implementation (laying the statutory underpinnings for the OMB’s eventual implementation of data.gov under Obama). See McDermott (2010: 404).

61. Obama’s Memorandum on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) also took significant steps to move federal government communications beyond the relative obscurity that, many felt, epitomized the Bush (II) administration’s handling of global and domestic issues. McDermott presses the point that Open Government began with the advent of New Deal Agencies in the 1930s and the establishment of the federal register in 1935 to make public regulations available to citizens. FOIA was technically issued in 1966 and required all federal agencies to expand access to government files to the broader public, *not* as a separate Act but rather as an amendment to the 1946 Administrative Procedure Act, which set up processes for citizen requests, interrogations, and litigation of government regulations. See McDermott (2010: 402).

62. To date, Open Government Plans are updated every two years and posted on federal websites. For details on the engineering of these plans, see Goldman (2010: 40).

63. Such an argument has been made with regard to electronic civic engagement technologies such as electronic voting in Robertson (2002).

64. For a more in-depth sociological discussion of how the rise of the Internet both shifts and supplants social capital, see Quan-Haase and Wellman (2004).

65. As early as the early 1970s, cultural directories were published by the NEA and federal councils that chronicled the breadth of direct (NEA) and indirect (non-NEA) subsidies operating to support cultural production, expression, and participation across the US federal government. See, for example, Associated Councils of the Arts (1975).

66. An example of the Obama OMB’s use of prizes and citizen competition to garner citizen participation (and discounted labor) is the formal policy framework www.challenge.gov, introduced in September 2010 to hail “entrepreneurs and citizen solvers to find public sector prize competitions and challenges.” By March 2015, challenge.gov featured more than 396 competitions from over seventy-two federal agencies, departments, and bureaus, scaling the use of prize competitions and challenges to incentivize agencies to maximally leverage citizen investment in their work. Through these leveraged programmatic incentives, OMB granted broad authority to agencies to conduct prize competitions that spurred innovation, solved tough problems, and advanced their core missions.

67. Landesman headed Jujamcyn Theaters, a leading producer and landlord for Broadway shows, before Obama tapped him in 2009 to run the Arts Endowment.

68. Artists’ “crossover” vocational trajectories into the twenty-first centuries are chronicled in Markusen et al. (2006).

69. To bolster transparency, the new NEA website included an updated grants

search engine to improve public awareness and to slim down the often-onerous process of handling FOIA requests on the part of NEA staff via the National Endowment for the Arts Open Government Plan. That site today is viewable at www.apps.nea.gov/grantsearch/ (accessed 11/28/20).

70. Shigekawa served as deputy and then interim chair in 2014 until the nomination of subsequent Chair Jane Chu by President Barack Obama in August of that year.

71. In 1986, the NEA forged the Mayors' Institute on City Design in partnership with the American Architectural Foundation and the United States Conference of Mayors. Since that time, the Mayors' Institute has helped transform communities through design by preparing mayors to be the chief urban designers of their cities. For more context, see www.micd.org/ (accessed 11/28/20).

72. Jeremy Nowak led this germinal study and paper, which outlined how arts investments might build social and economic capital in local communities. See Nowak (2007).

73. An important institutional offshoot of the inaugural *Our Town* meetings was the 2012 formation of ArtPlace, a consortium of major foundation funders designed to extend *Our Town's* work into the private sphere. ArtPlace emerged two years into the *Our Town* initiative as a ten-year collaboration between a large number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions situating arts and culture as a core component of comprehensive community planning. Internal partnerships at ArtPlace, a project run by Landesman's former Chief of Staff Jamie Bennett, included private foundations such as Barr, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Ford, James Irvine, Knight, Kresge, McKnight, Mellon, Stavros Niarchos, Penn, Rasmuson, Rockefeller, and Surdna; federal partners (NEA, HUD, HHS, DOA, DOE, DOT, OMB and the White House Domestic Council); and financial institutions (Bank of America/Merrill Lynch, Citi, Chase, Deutsche Bank, Morgan Stanley, and MetLife). For more about ArtPlace, see www.artplaceamerica.org/ (accessed 11/28/20).

74. While it is beyond the scope of my purposes here to discuss the involvement of commercial and private philanthropic investors in this paradigm, it is safe to assume that the growing number of collaborations between these sectors signals a high level of cooperative learning at the NEA from venture capital and venture philanthropic practices at play in nonfederal institutions. The influence of venture-capital philanthrocapitalism on NEA has been debated heavily in the policy blogosphere. See, for example, Moss (2014).

75. For more on "fuzzy" distinctions, see Nicodemus (2013) and Markusen (2013).

76. Germinal publications on the "creative economies" side of the placemaking research spectrum include: Putnam (2000), Florida (2002); researchers on the "creative continuum" side include: Wali, Severson, and Longoni (2002), Jackson (2004), and Jackson, Kabwasa-Green, and Herranz (2006), Alvarez (2003), and Bedoya (2014).

77. Those protesting "Creative Placemaking" in the United States frequently inferred that the program evaporated the political asymmetries that underpinned multi-sector, institutional cooperation in the arts. See, for example, Bedoya (2014). Cultural

labor critic Angela McRobbie (2016) has also suggested that the very prospect of institutional critique by equity-minded arts organizers after the 2008 recessions in the United Kingdom was stymied by creative economic developers who absorbed such critiques as part of the corporate and/or municipal brand.

78. Arts activist/organizer Ruby Lerner decried the colonialist assumptions underpinning the discourse repeatedly at the NEA's Beyond the Building convening, wherein funders and arts representatives debated the role of live performance in this paradigm.

79. The artist-colonization process is defined and detailed in Moss (2012).

80. For David Rockefeller's development of grant finance programs that also encouraged investment mindsets as an accompanying push in private philanthropic practice, see www.drfund.org/programs/arts (accessed 11/28/20).

81. One facet of the NEA Office of Research & Analysis's involvement in this program was to produce an update to a key artist workforce survey and framework for studying arts infrastructure developed by Maria Rosario Jackson (2004) and a team of researchers at the Urban Institute.

82. Angela McRobbie's (2016) astute and invaluable cultural study of creative labor under neoliberal reforms in the postrecession United Kingdom strongly informs my effort to highlight how philanthropic economism couches exploitative practices too often under the guise of "creativity."

83. Such is the motivation behind the "creative continuum" approach to responsive philanthropy, another discursive scaffold for this report and line of grant finance. For more on this approach, see www.ncrp.org/ (accessed 11/28/20).

84. Such is the key claim made by proponents of the "creative class" theory of education and increased workforce productivity and civic engagement in Florida (2002).

85. Source: NEA web portal: <https://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/art-works/creativity-connects-projects#eligibility> [2.27.16].

86. Here and above, I borrow Ann Markusen's (2013) generative invocation of "second-tier" and "off-center" cities as priorities in the twenty-first century global economy.

87. Round one of proposals were due March 3, 2016, but the agency extended the deadline due to insufficient response.

88. A complete list of grantees in round two of *Art Works* allocations for 2016 is available here: www.apps.nea.gov/grantsearch/ (accessed 11/28/20).

89. For more on LINES Ballet, see www.linesballet.org/ (accessed 11/28/20).

90. For more on Dorfman's company, see www.daviddorfmandance.org/ (accessed 11/28/20).

91. NEA *ArtWorks* Grant List Final 2016, 40.

92. Bomba is a dynamic cultural tradition rooted in African-derived call and response performances from a lead dancer and drummer (see Power-Sotomayor and Rivera 2019).

93. In 2012, nonprofit hub Dance Place and its parent DC Wheel organization re-

ceived \$150,000 from the NEA to animate a public arts corridor around the burgeoning neighborhood of Brookland in Washington, DC, where the organization itself already resided. Perlo remains one of a narrow number of dance organizers to own a physical facility to house her parent nonprofit organization. Having publicized Perlo's thoughts elsewhere, I only briefly invoke her rightful concerns here. Cited in Wilbur (2020).

94. The suggestion, above, that the forced migration of dancers had, by 2015, ossified into a field norm also corroborates what cultural labor theorist Angela McRobbie (2017) has called the "pedagogical" role played by consecrating institutions in steering low-waged creative workers toward projects that glorify their creativity but make no enduring promise of proper wages or health entitlements, let alone proprietorship.

95. See www.arts.gov/stories/blog/2016/introducing-creativity-connects (accessed 11/28/20).

96. More on Farm to Ballet here: www.balletvermont.org/farm-to-ballet.html (accessed 11/28/20).

97. The Keshet Dance Company's KIIC program for arts entrepreneurs is viewable online at www.keshetarts.org/ideas-and-innovation/ (accessed 11/28/20).

98. For more on Dance for PD, see <https://danceforparkinsons.org> (accessed 11/28/20).

99. For more on Graham's NEA-funded exhibit, see www.artsandculture.google.com/partner/martha-graham-center-of-contemporary-dance. For subsequent Google partnership tech projects, see www.nytimes.com/2018/05/25/arts/dance/google-martha-graham-dance-company.html# (accessed 11/28/20).

100. Here I owe a debt to Danielle Goldman's (2010) definition of the rigors of dance improvisation and extend her Foucauldian idea to the realm of dance organization, administration, and philanthropic culture.

Afterword

1. To view Trump's FY 2018 Budget Blueprint in full, see www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/2018_blueprint.pdf (accessed 11/28/20).

2. Structurally, the President's Budget Blueprint is strategically vague in that it highlights discretionary spending (only 25 percent of all federal spending) and makes no mention of specific tax proposals or revenue plans.

3. Read Trump's Comprehensive Budget Proposal for FY 2018 at www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/budget.pdf (accessed 11/28/20).

4. Read the full FY 2018 Appendix for Department of the Interior at www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/int.pdf (accessed 11/28/20).

5. The accompanying narrative, penned by then-OMB Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, justified the NEA's demise alongside nearly twenty other institutions as a

“cost-savings” measure to offset proposed spending boosts in areas like defense and homeland security. When we remember that the agency’s annual appropriations have, since the NEA’s 1965 inception, constituted but a tiny drop in the total US national budget (\$3.9 trillion in 2017), what seemed more plausible to many Washington insiders here was that Trump’s effort to put an end to US federal domestic arts policy signaled a broader political agenda, one described by his then-chief presidential strategist Steven K. Bannon as the total “deconstruction of the administrative state.” Bannon detailed Trump’s deconstruction of the administrative state at the Conservative Political Action Conference/CPAC at www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPFpTergAGQ (accessed 11/28/20).

6. For details on Trump’s subsequent efforts to defund the NEA, see Peggy McGlone, “For the Third Year in a Row, Trump’s Budget Plan Eliminates, Arts, Public TV, and Library Funding,” in *The Washington Post*, March 18, 2019, www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/trumps-n-e-a-budget-cut-would-put-america-first-art-last (accessed 11/28/20).

7. Wendy Brown’s (2015) chapter on the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decisions provides a surgical description of how this ruling was detrimental not only for casting corporations as people but granting them civil human rights on individualized grounds, thus placing political speech squarely in service of the market. It is my hope that the body-based approach I have taken here resists the penetrating force of neoliberal rationales for corporate personhood—neoliberal political reason, coupled with juridical decisions, have dangerously conflated corporate and human rights and eviscerated the democratic prospects of granting marginalized people full humanization, including reparations within twenty-first century American politics. See pages 151–73, in particular.

8. Consider the example of US academic dance. As dance historians such as Thomas Hagood (2000), Wendy Oliver (1992), Katya Kolcio (2010), and Susan Manning (2013) have each shown, the aesthetic reproduction and ideological attitudes central to American modern dance formed the evaluative standards marking comprehension and performance mastery in the earliest dance curricula in US higher education and its concomitant professional associations. Fast forward a century, and the vast majority of US dance credentialing programs regularly partner with local venue managers to support concert dance commissions, production, and touring under the softer categorical substitute, contemporary dance. Holding tightly to these trends, dance “makers” invested in decentering concert dance must continue to hold consecrating venues accountable for defaulting to concert standards and mechanisms of control in their programming and curricular design. Universities, in US culture, exert immeasurable influence on public perceptions of dance among upcoming generations of dance artists and audiences in their surrounding communities. Despite macroinstitutional moves to embrace “diversity and inclusion” across campus and presenting venues, the economic underfunding of US dance programs and performing arts centers too often grants dance faculty and presenters a ready-made excuse as to why structural change has been slow to take hold.

9. Most recently (August 2020), founder of the Dance Union podcast J. Bouey and a group of next-generation dance-makers began producing digital content—memes, web-based town halls, and opinion editorials in *Dance Magazine* challenging decision-makers inside of dance degree programs to decenter ballet and modern dance as white supremacist relics of an exclusionary system versus an ostensibly “natural” prerequisite to professional acclaim. To remain true to my goal to look to past patterns for future reforms, I have elected to avoid chiming in on the uncertain state of dance infrastructure under the regulatory conditions of the global COVID-19 pandemic in the body of this text. Interested readers can find the Dance Union’s call to reengineer white supremacist dance degree requirements at www.dancemagazine.com/are-college-curriculums-too-white-2645575057.html (accessed 8/5/20).

10. My use here of the word “uncommon” follows Irvine Foundation’s Brent Reidy, whose (2014) monograph *Why Where? Because Who?* offers a rubric for readers to check their biases toward “common” or “conventional” arts places as divisive and exclusionary norms that foreclose artists working differently and elsewhere.

11. Full description of fellowship criteria can be found at www.danceusa.org/dance-usa-fellowships-to-artists (accessed 8/4/20).

12. A full roster of Dance/USA Artist Fellows is viewable at www.danceusa.org/dfa-fellows (accessed 8/4/20).

13. Vu Le’s ideas on the paradoxes of nonprofit organizing can be found at his website, in articles like the following: www.nonprofitaf.com/2020/08/9-crappy-paradoxes-that-shape-nonprofit-and-philanthropy/#more-6746 (accessed 8/4/20).

14. For more on Doris Duke Case studies and allied efforts, see www.newsletter.blogs.wesleyan.edu/2018/04/28/doris-duke-charitable-foundation-supports-icpps-performing-artist-case-studies/ and www.newsletter.blogs.wesleyan.edu/2018/07/28/doris-duke-foundation-supports-icpps-performing-artist-case-studies/ (accessed 11/28/20).

15. Alternative approaches to cultural cooperation and management such as those mentioned above refute what David Graeber (2012, 2015) and Randy Martin (2011) have separately described as the politically immobilizing “dead zone” of administration conditioned by the neoliberal financialization of all aspects of US life.

16. Since Darren Walker was named the president of the Ford Foundation and took the post in September 2013, Ford began to actively redirect its grantmaking priorities explicitly toward historically underendowed populations, listening to marginalized communities, and articulating at the level of policy research how funding bodies might steward resources and relationships minus the authoritarian cultural norms of the past. For an overview, see www.fordfoundation.org/work/challenging-inequality/creativity-and-free-expression/strategy/ (accessed 11/1/20).

17. Most recently, leveraging philanthropic cost share from the Mellon Foundation, Ford introduced its Disability Futures Fellows Program, an 18-month program endowing disabled artists and collectives with \$50,000 in unrestricted funds to increase the visibility and reach of disability aesthetics and cultural work. The only multidisciplinary arts granting program of its kind in the United States, Disability Futures

names and economically redresses the long-standing exclusion of disabled artists and disability-led art content at the arts philanthropic level. The inaugural round of Disability Futures Fellows funds were allocated to dance/movement artists Alice Shepard, Jerron Herman, and Niv Acosta. This long overdue program is administered on behalf of its originating foundations by United States Artists. For the full listing, see www.fordfoundation.org/the-latest/news/ford-foundation-and-the-andrew-w-mellon-foundation-announce-disability-futures-fellows/ (accessed 10/31/20).

18. Another urgent but national philanthropic gesture by the Ford Foundation and other grantmakers that is still unfolding at the time of this writing is the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recessions that are pummeling the nonprofit cultural sector. Though my focus in this section rests squarely with the question of how to repair long-standing economic and structural exclusions for artists of color and those who have largely remained unrecognized by funding bodies, it bears noting that Ford is among the many funding bodies that, to date, have significantly increased resources allocated to nonprofit organizers to salvage some semblance of the nonprofit cultural ecology. One example of this initiative is detailed at www.fordfoundation.org/the-latest/news/five-major-foundations-to-increase-support-with-over-17-billion-to-assist-nonprofit-organizations-in-wake-of-global-pandemic/ (accessed 10/31/20).

19. To repair what Jordan Flaherty (2016) has called the “collateral damage” of philanthropic paternalisms will require all those who volunteer to support dance with capital and/or unpaid labor to actively resist the default logic that sidelines the wisdom of dance artists themselves. At the core of that fiction, of course, is the US history of trustee government as a status exercise that safeguards dominant (white) values, practices, and ideals.

20. Although I intend this last question to be rhetorical, I remain inspired by Judith Hamera’s performance analyses of labor (2012, 2017) and ethnographic investigations (2007) into dancing communities and see her approach as a model for future ethnographies of local dance cooperation that might bring local dance labor practices more centrally into academic discourse.

21. In this rationale for a cultural policy issue, I am indebted to Maria Rosario Jackson, current NCA member, urban planner, and institutional insider whose research into cultural vibrancy in low- to moderate-income neighborhoods was instrumental in the engineering of the NEA’s *Our Town* grant program and has contributed to the rapid ascension of “place-based” philanthropy across the United States. For a body-level sense of Jackson’s potent call, see www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJKxvADyVlg (accessed 11/28/20).

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