

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH JANE CHU

SUBJECT: JANE CHU, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS, WILL OUTLINE HER PLANS FOR THE ARTS ENDOWMENT'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY ACTIVITIES

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**JOHN HUGHES:** (Sounds gavel.) Welcome to the National Press Club. My name is John Hughes. I am an editor for Bloomberg First Word, that's Bloomberg News's breaking news desk here in Washington. And I am the President of the National Press Club. Our speaker this morning is the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, Jane Chu. We invited Jane Chu to be with us on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NEA, which I understand the actual anniversary day is tomorrow.

First, I want to introduce our distinguished head table. This table includes members of the National Press Club and guests of our speaker. From the audience's right, Lisa Matthews, Vice-President at Hager Sharp and a member of the National Press Club Speakers Committee. Melissa Walker, creative arts therapist and healing arts program coordinator at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence at Walter Reed National Military Center. Amy Henderson, curator emeritae at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery and a member of the National Press Club Speakers Committee. Abel Lopez, Associate Producing Director of the Gala Hispanic Theater. Jerry Zremski, Washington Bureau Chief of the Buffalo News, a past President of the National Press Club, and Chairman of the Press Club Speakers Committee.

Skipping over our speaker for a moment, Nick Aposolitis, Deputy CEO of the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center and the member of the National Press Club Speakers Committee who organized today's event. Thank you, Nick. Fabian Barnes, Director of

the Dance Institute of Washington. Menachem Wecker, freelance reporter and blogger who covers the arts. [applause]

I also want to welcome our CSPAN and our Public Radio audiences. And I want to remind you that you can follow the action on Twitter. Use the hashtag NPCLive. That's NPCLive.

Jane Chu was born the daughter of Chinese immigrants in Shawnee, Oklahoma, and she was raised in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. She studied music growing up. She received a Bachelor's Degree in piano performance and music education from Oshita Baptist University. She received her Master's Degree in music and piano pedagogy from Southern Methodist University. And she still wasn't done with education. She holds a Master's Degree in business administration from Rockhurst University and a PhD in philanthropic studies from Indiana University.

Her career has included serving as President of the Kaufman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City and as Executive at the Kaufman Fund. She also has served as Vice-President of External Relations for Union Station, Kansas City. She was confirmed as the 11<sup>th</sup> Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts last year, after serving as the NEA's acting top executive since December, 2012.

As Chairman, Chu has said she wants to continue the conversation about the importance of the arts and arts education. Earlier this year, on a trip to Los Angeles, she said, "With the shifting demographics of America, this is a great opportunity for the arts to be at the center." She also said, "Arts is an equalizer." Please join me in giving a warm National Press Club welcome to Jane Chu, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

[applause]

**JANE CHU:** Thank you. Thank you, John. Thank you, John, and thank you to everybody joining us here and online to help us kick off the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts. I want to acknowledge a few special guests who are sitting at the table who have been called out and are helping here to celebrate our milestone. Abel Lopez, Associate Producing Director of the Gala Hispanic Theater. Grupo Artistas Latino Americanos Hispanic Theater is located here in Washington, D.C. And it's a longtime grantee of the National Endowment for the Arts. This was the first theatre in the nation's capital to offer Spanish language productions.

I also want to introduce Fabian Barnes, Director of Dance Institute of Washington, another longtime grantee of the National Endowment for the Arts. And, in addition to regular dance classes and professional performances, the Dance Institute offers an award-winning mentorship program called Positive Directions. And the Positive Directions Program prepares high school students for college or employment by offering dance classes, life skills development, and educational services.

And our third guest is Melissa Walker. Melissa is an art therapist at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, where she works with service members who have been affected by post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and other invisible conditions from war.

The National Endowment for the Arts formed a Healing Arts partnership with Walter Reed in 2011, which pairs Melissa with writer and veteran Ron Capps[?] and music therapist Rebecca Valdre[?]. And together, these three, visual arts, creative writing and music therapy, are creating new possibilities for members of our military through the arts. Thank you Abel and Fabian and Melissa for the work you do every day to empower and inspire people through the arts.

[applause]

In many ways, 1965 was a time of optimism and of hope and of reawakening. The Voting Rights Act had been signed just a month before the National Endowment for the Arts was established. And America completed its first successful space walk earlier that summer. And, after three attempts, marchers from Selma, Alabama successfully reached the Capital steps in Montgomery. And it was a turbulent time, to be sure. But it was also one where we could begin to dream of new freedoms and new frontiers.

And it was in this climate that new aspirations for the American people, that the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities were created on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1965. So the idea was to form an agency that would nurture and elevate the nation's culture for the advancement of American civilization. Unlike the previous New Deals, WPA, the Works Progress Administration Program, neither the National Endowment for the Arts nor the National Endowment for the Humanities were formed for economic reasons, they were always considered to be about something bigger.

President Lyndon Johnson signed the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, which gave birth to the NEA and the NEH. And the purpose of this Act was to nurture American creativity, elevate the nation's culture, and sustain and preserve the country's artistic traditions throughout the nation, from dense neighborhoods of cities, large and small, to vast rural spaces, for all Americans to experience the arts.

It was written that the world leadership which has come to the United States cannot rest solely upon superior technology, power, wealth, but must be solidly founded upon worldwide respect and admiration for the nation's high qualities as a leader in the realms of ideas and of the spirit. Spirit and ideas, these are the things that energize us and that enrich us and that make our lives worth living.

America is what it is today because of its commitment to chasing wild dreams and pursuing innovation and finding the passion that ignites our spirits. The Congress of 1965 recognized that, in order to be an effective leader with might and strength, you also had to have heart and soul. For the past 50 years, that's exactly what the National Endowment for the Arts has been doing, from Steppenwolf Theatre to the American Film Institute and

from *Prairie Home Companion* and the Sundance Film Festival, PBS's *Live From Lincoln Center*, to more than 400 translations of literature from 86 other countries and 66 languages and grants to attract students and teachers and audience members who could not buy their own tickets, and initiatives to deliver programs to communities across the nation, from earlier arts programs at military installations, to featuring the masters of jazz and folk and traditional arts in schools and concert halls and on radio and TV. To the deaf initiative that brought arts to those with hearing challenges, from Maya Lin to Winton Marsalis, thousands of artists and arts organizations of all genres have received National Endowment for the Arts grants during their formative years.

And, over the past five decades, National Endowment for the Arts has made more than 147,000 grants, totaling \$5 billion dollars, and with a significant ability to leverage those dollars. So, for every dollar awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts, an additional seven to nine dollars from other funds were made to the same arts projects. A one-to-seven ratio is a very good return on our investment.

Our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is an opportunity to celebrate these once-emerging artists and arts organizations that are now world-renowned forces, and applaud their contributions to America's cultural landscape. But it's also an opportunity to celebrate the arts in our everyday lives as well. When it comes to the arts, there is no such thing as a marginalized population. We are committed to ensuring that every individual, from child to grandparent, and from 10<sup>th</sup> generation to newly arrived immigrant, has a chance to find their creative voice through the arts and live in a community where creativity can thrive.

Why is this important? Because the arts instill our lives with value and connection and creativity and innovation. They make our world a richer and more rewarding place to live. For instance, the Gala Hispanic Theater, it's a major cultural touchstone for Washington's Hispanic community. And through the power of performance, it gives people an opportunity to celebrate who they are and where they're from. And for others, Gala is a way to connect with the cultures, traditions, and art forms of their neighbors, and see how our differences are a cause for celebration rather than a means of division.

And, at the Positive Directions Mentoring Program at the Dance Institute of Washington, 100 percent of alumni have graduated from high school and attend college. And some have even gone on to perform with prestigious dance companies and on Broadway. And what explains this level of success? A few years ago, Fabian Barnes explained that in dance, you're taught to carry yourself in a way that lets people know you take pride in yourself. That is the power of the arts.

There is a similar sense of empowerment at Walter Reed. One service member explained how the process of arts therapy worked. He said, "We're trapped in our own heads and these dreams and these nightmares and these flashbacks. But once we get into the writing and music and art, that we can control, and we can do what we want to. We can change it and take it anywhere we want to, whenever we want to."

As we've prepared for our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, many people have reached out to us with stories about the power of the arts in their own lives. Sue Bell is joining us today from Miriam's Kitchen, a shelter here in Washington, D.C. for chronically homeless men and women who face physical or mental challenges. Sue, will you please stand? Sue told us the story of Marvin, who first arrived at Miriam's Kitchen six years ago. Marvin regularly ate meals at the shelter, but he was frequently uncommunicative. And staff members found it difficult to find a way to truly reach him.

But I want to read you what Sue wrote. Art therapy turned out to be Marvin's game-changer. And it became his way to express himself when he wasn't up for talking. He began with Mandalas, sacred circles, and he moved out to jewelry-making. And it became the foundation for our case managers to earn his trust and help him consider accepting permanent, supportive housing. And in May, 2014, after countless Miriam's Kitchen meals and case management services, Marvin slept in his own bed for the first time in six years. And together, we are helping Marvin maintain his home and thrive in his new life. Thank you, Sue, for sharing the story of Marvin's ability to express himself through the arts.

[applause]

Then there's the story from Wanda, from Conway, North Carolina, who let us know about her experience drawing with her grandchild. She wrote, "In that precious time, we got lost in our imaginations, talking about colors and shapes and shadows. It was absolute heaven. It was a time and feeling and joy that I doubt either of us will be likely to ever forget."

And Maria Mendoza from Dallas, Texas wrote to tell us her story. Here is what she said. "I had the privilege of attending and graduating from Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Dallas, Texas. And in that space, I learned to embrace my identity and discover my capabilities. There was a constant push to be anything but ordinary. Dance has inspired me to find different ways of tackling and handling issues."

These stories are testament to the power of the arts to change lives. And, while we're celebrating the work of the arts and the National Endowment for the Arts over the past 50 years, we also began to ask ourselves how we can best multiply these transformative arts experiences over the next 50 years. How can we better understand and expand the ways that the arts infuse our country? How is the arts infrastructure changing? And how can the National Endowment for the Arts and other creative entities change with it to better support the ideas and the initiatives and the dreams of American people?

So, to explore these questions, we're announcing the launch of a new initiative today called Creativity Connects. Creativity Connects will build those relationships between the arts and the general public, as well as between the arts and different industries outside of the arts. And we have three main objectives with this initiative. One objective is to show how the arts are central to the country's creativity ecosystem. And

two, it will investigate how support systems for the arts are changing. And three, it will explore how the arts connect with other industries that want and use creativity. We're already in the midst of planning ten roundtables across the country that will draw in people with backgrounds in the arts, science, business, engineering, you name it. And during these conversations, we'll discuss where they'll find creativity in their personal lives and their careers, what kinds of benefits the arts bring to the table. And we'll identify any gaps that can be strengthened to connect the arts to other fields that want creativity.

So using information from these roundtables and inputs from experts across different industries, we'll produce a summary report on the state of the arts today. And the report will give an overview of changing artistic practices and the key pieces that arts providers need in order to produce their very best work. And through this, we hope that new programs and partnerships will emerge that will fortify the spaces and the skills, capital, markets and networks that artists need in order to thrive. And this report will help inform the next phase of Creativity Connects, building a digital interactive systems map. This is a map that will help the public visualize what types of projects are happening in the area of the creativity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, who is supporting it, and what existing resources are available to strengthen the arts sector. So, no matter who you are, or where you live, our hope is that all Americans can use this map to locate their role within the creative ecosystem and realize how integral creativity and the arts are to their everyday lives.

We'll introduce these elements to this initiative over the next weeks and months in order to support innovative projects between nonprofit arts organizations and non-arts organizations that want the creativity that the arts can provide. And we're so excited about this, because we have an opportunity to build bridges between fields and expand the support base for the arts and demonstrate to other fields the benefits of working with the arts and culture sector.

So this Creativity Connects initiative ensures that we are not only nurturing the conditions that will allow creativity to thrive today, but for the next 50 years as well. This is a forward focus, and it provides the impetus for two other new initiatives, both of which will support the bright minds and emerging talent of tomorrow. So we're so excited to announce a partnership with Playbill and Disney Theatrical Group to pilot a songwriting program that will invite high school students to compose the lyrics and music of a song in any genre, and the songwriting challenge will officially launch in mid-2016, and will initially be limited to three cities in the pilot phase. But we're looking forward to providing more details on how the high school students can submit their own songs in the coming year.

And we're also encouraging the talent and the creativity of our young people by adding a new element to our annual Poetry Out Loud Competition, which is also for high school students, which is called Poetry Ourselves. In addition to reciting published poems, which are written by other poets, each of our state champions will also be given the opportunity to submit an original work of their own poetry. And this original poem

will be judged separately from their recitations in the national finals. And it'll function as a separate competition for poetry writing.

And later this fall, we'll also announce those who have been awarded grants for the Imagine Your Parks Program. Imagine Your Parks is a special anniversary program that celebrates the natural beauty and the diversity of our National Parks System grant projects, will support the arts that take place in or were inspired by our National Parks. And it'll expand the ways that we think about the arts in relation to our natural world.

So those are our plans for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary initiatives. But now let's talk about the celebratory events coming down the line. So tomorrow, September 29<sup>th</sup>, we'll host a moderated panel of NEA Chairs, including Frank Hodsoll, Jane Alexander, Bill Ivey, Rocco Landesman and me, and the panel will be moderated by PBS News Hour Co-Author and Managing Editor Judy Woodruff. And the festivities continue on October 14<sup>th</sup>, when a taping of In Performance at the White House will honor the joint 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. This celebration concert, which will be called "A Celebration of American Creativity," will feature performances by a number of American musicians. And it will be later broadcast nationally on PBS on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

And in December of this year, we'll be participating in an anniversary event in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Humanities at the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library in Austin, Texas, to honor the President whose signature brought our two agencies into existence.

And, in addition to my travels for the Creativity Connects roundtables, I will continue to visit communities throughout the country, meeting with local community leaders, arts organizations, artists, federal policymakers, to see how the arts are making a difference in the places they call home. This will be part of my effort to continue the national conversation about the importance of the arts in our lives.

And to close out our anniversary celebration, we'll host a national convening in conjunction with the Kennedy Center in October, 2016. Our focus will be on the future of the arts in America. And this convening will bring together artists, thinkers, policymakers, as we continue the dialogue about how we can strengthen the arts sector for the next 50 years and explore how the arts are a critical component to imagining and building and securing our future.

Throughout this coming year, we'll also be posting new multimedia content on our website that showcases the impact of the arts on the nation in partnership with our wonderful state arts agencies, our great regional arts organizations. This content will include more than 60 videos, highlighting the role that the arts play in every U.S. state, district, territory, and region. And we'll also produce a dozen milestone videos detailing the key grants in the history of the National Endowment for the Arts and how those grants have made an impact on American culture as a whole.

And through crowd sourcing, we'll continue to collect and post stories from the public on how the arts and the National Endowment for the Arts have influenced their lives. We've already received hundreds of stories. And we welcome your stories too. You can browse through a selection from our story bank by visiting our website at [arts.gov](http://arts.gov), where you can find stories like Sue's and Wanda's and Maria's. And we hope that, with each event that we host, and every initiative we launch, we're moving closer to having all of us understand and appreciate the many ways that the arts and the National Endowment for the Arts have touched their lives and their communities.

Since taking office last summer, I have met with—and I continue to meet with members of Congress here in Washington, D.C. and in their home states, advocating for why the arts matter. I've traveled to almost 30 states and 107 communities, building relationships with state and local leaders and seeing firsthand how our NEA grantees are changing their communities for the better. And as I've made the case for the “Why the arts matter,” I've been joined by the voices of arts advocates and patrons and leaders, musicians, playwrights, painters, art teachers, designers, mayors of communities large and small, national leaders, state governors. And eventually, I hope everybody watching today will join in this chorus too.

It's time to move away from the notion that the arts are a separate part of society and that some people can participate in the arts and others cannot. We are seeing, firsthand, that the opposite is true. When we see through hard evidence that the nonprofit arts sector alone—that's the sector that the National Endowment for the Arts supports—contributed \$12.1 billion dollars in one year to the nation's economy, and it employed 168,000 workers in one year who earned a total of \$7.8 billion dollars in compensation, all in a single year, this tells us that the nonprofit arts sector alone has a formidable presence.

And when we see that the ways people are participating in the arts have expanded, we can celebrate that Americans recognize the value and the meaning that the arts bring to our everyday lives. The arts are a sector that is robust and textured. And there's some type of art for everyone. And the cultural landscape can accommodate these different perspectives and attitudes and behaviors of America better than it ever has before, because America is recognized throughout the world as a place where the size of your dreams is limited only by your imagination, where creativity can inspire new things that, at some point in time, may have seemed impossible and where self-expression thrives without restriction. This is what has allowed our cultural landscape to flourish and become so blooming and vibrant.

The National Endowment for the Arts is here to nourish those dreams and that creativity and that expression. It has been a remarkable 50 years. And we are looking forward to an equally remarkable future. Thank you.

[applause]



**JOHN HUGHES:** Thank you so much. I have some great questions that people have written down for you. If the NEA wants to connect to the creativity of Americans across the country, how will you partner with the tech giants like Facebook, Google, Twitter, etc, that have the online audience and that ability to connect so many?

**JANE CHU:** The answer is, yes. That is a great question, because creativity, we've seen that are so many areas, including technology, as you've mentioned in this question, it's burgeoning. So we limit ourselves any time we think that creativity only happens in one place. We see creativity happening in the choreographer's studio, and in the artist's studio. But we also see creativity happening through the technology. And we see it happening in the in the back booth of the coffee shop.

And so our ideas of connecting with all of them, and seeing how all of this burgeoning, and ultimately connecting one to the other, is at the heart of what we're wanting to do with the Creativity Connects initiative. So to be continued on that. We won't be ignoring all the areas of creativity that's happening, including technology.

**JOHN HUGHES:** Questioner says, tell us more about the initiative you mentioned in your remarks regarding veterans and the arts.

**JANE CHU:** Oh, we would love to continue to expand our work with the military service members. And thank you, Melissa. I know she's echoing our sentiments, because we've seen so much of a transformation and an ability to support the military service members at Walter Reed, Fort Belvoir. And now we want to expand. And the idea is, can we get into all the communities, especially when our service members from Walter Reed, Fort Belvoir go back to their homes? There is something there that we can always continue. We know the power of the transformation of arts and what it can do for all of us. And we want our service members and veterans to be able to have that too.

**JOHN HUGHES:** In a more specific way on this issue, how can the arts be used in healing within healthcare? So how can the arts support people who have memory loss, with memory loss and chronic illnesses, other chronic illnesses? And how also can the arts support their caregivers?

**JANE CHU:** The arts are a wonderful tool to be able to support those in the aging process that would only just be me and not you. But we're all—I'm teasing, because we're all aging. But the arts are central to that. And we have our Center for Creative Aging, who is thriving in that area, too. We have seen the arts be an equalizer, when you talked about people who were having dementia challenges. We've seen arts be an equalizer, because it calls out the dimension in each of us and in those with dementia who can remember and express themselves through a different way than just the linear use of everyday words. And so the arts are critical into our human development, our health and wellbeing, and the more programs.

And they're starting to really burgeon out there. The more programs that we can support in that area through poetry and writing and dancing and singing, they're all

attached to the creative aging process. We will soon find that that's one of the best avenues for expression for those, especially those challenged with dementia.

**JOHN HUGHES:** How do you see the arts engaging older Americans as the opportunities of this demographic shift toward longer, healthier lives? Is there any specific outreach for the elderly?

**JANE CHU:** Well, similar to the creative aging type, we are starting to see—and I just visited a place in California where there's a senior center, where arts are thriving there. And it's at the heart of all they do now to express themselves. So, as we all age, and as we all get older and find different ways to express ourselves, we can get even more immersed in the arts, free ourselves, and it calls out what we talked about before, and what is that spirit and that imagination that helps us thrive way beyond just the linear, everyday activities.

**JOHN HUGHES:** You mentioned in your talk this questioner notes about arts being a great equalizer. How can the nation's art museums be more accessible to all people and help further the NEA's mission?

**JANE CHU:** We've seen really great programs coming out of art museums that are answering and asking that same question. And what's so great about this is that those art producers, artists, arts administrators, programmers are starting to think about creative ways to make sure that they are reaching and becoming meaningful and relevant to the community. And I've seen some programs out there that are equalizers for those who have English as their second language or not as their first language, because there are other ways to express themselves. And it's such an equalizer, it puts everybody on an equal playing field. Museums are starting to really burgeon, also, in that area. So check around on what some of the great things that are happening there.

**JOHN HUGHES:** Do you face any negative perception issue with members of congress over the NEA's budget due to the culture wars of the 1990s? And could you also give us an update on how you're doing in your budget with congress and in your overall funding situation?

**JANE CHU:** Well we've met actively with members of congress, and I want to thank, also, for those arts advocates and patrons and all of you, who continue to communicate and educate what's out there. Because the main message we want to get out to congress and absolutely everybody is that the arts are not in a corner, and they're not a frill. They infuse our lives every day in so many different ways. And we want to make sure we have this mindset of both/and, as opposed to either/or. Either/or mindset would be, it's this way, so it cannot be that way. Or, if you win, that means I lose. When what we're trying to get across is the message of both/and. You can have different perspectives, and they come together. And the arts are great at that.

I'll tell one quick story, and then answer your question about members of congress. I was—My parents were from China, and they came over to the United States

separately. They met in the United States. I was born in Oklahoma, as mentioned before. I grew up in Arkansas. So I always have struggled and navigated through this Bok Choy/corn dog setup. [laughter]

And so have you—if you’ve ever been in that setup, where you have tried and figured out how to honor the different ways, the different perspectives of how people think because you cannot force-fit them to be exactly alike, that has been my whole life. And I’ve come to very much appreciate how to do that, how to appreciate the ambiguity of that, and be able to connect them again without forcing everybody to be exactly alike. The arts are one of the best ways to honor the different perspectives and the different ways people think, as long as we can continue to send out that message that the arts are everywhere, they’re not a frill.

So, when I meet with members of congress, and I very much appreciated getting to talk with many of them, they have actually been very receptive, and I very much appreciated our conversations to a person. And at this point, we are most appreciative that the NEA budget is holding steady, and it’s stabilized. And when many pots of allocations have shrunk the NEA budget, there have been no amendments to cut it.

So we believe that is a moving away from trends of yesteryear, as you mentioned before. And people really are starting to understand that the arts are tied to healthcare and human development and our service members. And they’re tied to arts education. And they’re tied to equalizing the playing field. And they’re tied to honoring the different perspectives that we all are born into, or come with, or meet every day. That’s one of the best ways to connect. And so we have been very appreciative in complex budget conditions that the arts have become stable, and the NEA has become stable.

**JOHN HUGHES:** How many organizations would disappear without funding help from the NEA? Any idea how many are entirely dependent on you?

**JANE CHU:** I would have to get you a—I couldn’t even hazard a guess to that. But we’re—We’re so appreciative because of the network that the National Endowment for the Arts has. We work in tandem with our state arts agencies, our regional arts organizations. We have local arts agencies. And we have a large network of service organizations as well. So, all together, if you look at this network that we built together, the arts are thriving. They’re not off by themselves, and they’re not solo players. We’re all honoring the different ways we work. But, on the other hand, we’re partners together.

So if you asked the question on how many would go away, it would be a really complex, because we have such a strong tapestry of a network in the field, it would really be hard to answer. We’re all in this together.

**JOHN HUGHES:** I have a couple questions about individual artists. And they’re related, so I’ll ask both of these questions. One is, will the NEA ever consider funding individual artists again? And the other one is, President Obama’s campaign included an arts platform. One of the proposals was to create a modern day WPA-type

program called Artist Corps. Isn't there a way for government to do more to support artists?

**JANE CHU:** When, as you know, during what you were calling the culture wars, there were direct grants earlier from the National Endowment for the Arts to individual artists. And that was removed during the culture wars. But to clarify, individual artists, as well as the WPA, there are still connections between individual artists and jobs for arts. And in this way, first of all, the National Endowment for the Arts does still fund individual writers. So in the literature area, that still is fellowships, translation fellowships, writing, those—And we also provide and honor individuals in the jazz, the NEA Jazz Masters, as well as our folk and traditional arts medals.

But the way individual artists are supported through the National Endowment for the Arts, really is through the nonprofit organizations that have programs that bring in individual artists. And we can do chapter and verse on specific ones, but not directly. And then, in terms of the question about the WPA, when you start really looking at how many jobs in the nonprofit arts sector, which are supported in arts, and also the National Endowment for the Arts funding with the arts organizations, it's already formidable in its own way.

So it isn't just the WPA providing jobs, there are jobs out there through the National Endowment for the Arts support. So it's more diffuse, but it's still there, the concept is there.

**JOHN HUGHES:** How has the reduction of art and music programming in K-12 education affected the significance of the creative arts in American life? And what can NEA do to counter this trend?

**JANE CHU:** Well we are very concerned and very aware of the cuts in arts education in the schools, because we think that it's more than just a frill, as we've said before, we've seen firsthand, when I visited in California in a low income neighborhood with very few opportunities, here was an elementary school that had an arts program that not only had arts lessons and music lessons, but they had curriculum that infused science and the teaching of math. And the teacher said, the science teacher said—it was a third grade class—"When I used the arts curriculum for the science test, the kids, standardized test, not in the arts but in science, skyrocketed. And regrettably I tried to pull the arts curriculum away just for one lesson, and the standardized tests went down." That's simply an illustration of what we know the power of arts education can do, and not only in the arts themselves, but connected. It's like a mini Creativity Connects initiative. We know that the arts has an overlay on other subjects that we think can add a dimension to the quality of our lives, higher academic performance, strongly associated with just feeling like you've been able to express themselves.

So, when you come to arts education and it's been cut, we want to first get out the message, you're cutting almost the dimensions to so many other things that makes our lives richer, makes students' ability to perform academically and socially in other aspects

as well. But what the National Endowment for the Arts is doing is, while they've always, NEA has always supported programs for students and always supported programs that help teachers develop and will continue to do so, now we're supporting with far larger grants, upwards in the 100-150,000 dollar area, and can be multiple years renewed, for a collective impact that connects schools with community organizations that are out there doing great jobs as well.

So if we can start thinking in terms of the whole system, and have everybody connected together, just as we talked about the network before, that's what we're going in with, to see if we can start stabilizing that. We're very concerned.

**JOHN HUGHES:** We're going to have the Education Secretary in later this week.

**JANE CHU:** Great.

**JOHN HUGHES:** This questioner asks, what are the chances that NEA can work with the Department of Education? Questioner notes that the Department of Education seems focused on data-driven outcomes for students' success, such as employment, salaries, loan payback rates. What can NEA do to help the Department of Education redefine student success to include joy, creativity, the other things that the arts bring?

**JANE CHU:** Well, we've been very appreciative of our partnerships with other federal agencies, including the Department of Education, HUD and a number of others. In fact, we have some active partnerships with between 30 and 35 other federal agencies. So as a great illustration, look what the Dance Institute has done in terms of its ability to help students through dance, high school students graduate. Many of them attend college. Many of them get jobs. Actually, 100 percent of them graduate.

And so when you see examples like this in working in tandem with other federal agencies such as the Department of Education, we want to keep those—Actually, we want to deepen those conversations. So we're not off in silos, but we're working together. We have—I know we meet quarterly with HUD, and began to share stories about what we're all doing, because they do see the value of the arts. And there was so much connection. We were able to say, you know, we need to be doing some of this together.

**JOHN HUGHES:** This questioner notes that, as we are here at the National Press Club, what would you say about the state of arts coverage in this country? Is it pretty on target? Or is there room for significant improvement?

**JANE CHU:** There's room for improvement. There's room for communication. Because the one thing that I've seen as traveling, now that I've traveled for a year, that the arts are thriving. There are so many great things happening in nearly every community. It can be more robust, and things can be leveraged even more, but they are thriving. And, when you've seen one community—and this is the key to it—when you've seen one

community, you've only seen one community. And that is a key to how many different ways the arts can fuse our lives, but not everybody has to be exactly the same. There are nuances within every community that means something to one community that may mean something different in another. So the arts can customize and be transformed that way.

So the one place that I think we can deepen or broaden is our ability to communicate that this is happening. So yes, it can be significantly increased in terms of our ability to communicate, hey, the arts are thriving. They mean something to all of us. And they provide that value and the meaning. And they connect us. We need to get that message out even more.

**JOHN HUGHES:** A couple questions about Washington. How have you found running an arts organization different in Washington versus Kansas City, where you ran the Kaufman Center for the Performing Arts? And how has Washington impressed you as a cultural center?

**JANE CHU:** Well, I love Washington. And there are some wonderful Washington, D.C. arts providers. And there's something for everyone in this microcosm of a city. So it's been great. In some ways, running a performing arts center, the Kaufman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City has been similar to Washington, in that it's still that mindset of Bok Choy and corn dogs. It's still that mindset of, at the Kaufman Center for the Performing Arts, pulling people together who loved the arts for different reasons, but didn't always have the same perspective, drywallers, because I oversaw the construction of the Kaufman Center for the Performing Arts. I had hard hat hair for five years. And I had—we were talking with drywallers and oboe players, and they don't talk the same way. And now we're in Washington, and we have that opportunity, again, to honor the different ways, the perspectives. Sometimes they're opposing to each other without force-fitting everybody to be alike. So I see more similarities, actually, maybe a little more dense in population.

**JOHN HUGHES:** A couple questions related to your background. How has your training as a professional musician influenced your leadership style at the NEA? And put another way, how has being an artist affected how you lead the NEA?

**JANE CHU:** It's been absolutely central to my leadership style to have been involved in the arts, to be involved in the arts. My original training was in music, and I just lived for it. I attended every music camp I could, from third grade through high school. I majored in music in college. And one of the ways that it's affected my leadership style is that it's a big deal for me to think about emotional intelligence.

So what we do is important, but how we do it is equally as important. And so my training in the arts, and in particular music, has been at the central part of that, because if you are playing the piano, and you're playing Beethoven, and then you are playing Prokofiev, they don't sound the same. The composers weren't thinking the same way. But it is—I have—I would, as the performer, have to make sure I was playing representing the style of that composer.

When you are leading an organization, everybody you talk to isn't always Beethoven and/or Prokofiev. And you can't force-fit somebody to be Beethoven when they're Prokofiev. You have to understand where they're coming from, just as much as you do before you even lead, because you can't lead anything, remember, if you don't have any followers. And so being able to connect with them, and have them feel like they've been heard, is the first step. And paying attention to the different nuances and the styles came from my original training, especially in the music.

**JOHN HUGHES:** Speaking of Beethoven, is the aging of the audiences for classical music and opera a threat to those art forms' future viability?

**JANE CHU:** I don't think it is, because the ways that the National Endowment for the Arts is looking at how America participates in the arts are actually expanding. So it would be like looking at a whole garden of flowers, and if you only looked at one set of flowers, and said, "Oh, the peonies are okay, but they're not thriving. But look at the roses over there," and then you just said, "Look, they're not—the whole garden is not thriving," that's not how we look. So that's the analogy.

The ways people participate in the arts are expanding. And we're seeing that three-quarters of all Americans—that's about 167 million Americans—participate in the arts first through technology. They create videos. They might download and participate, view. So because we are seeing there is a transition in the ways people participate, we cannot say that people are not participating in the arts. We must broaden our view.

So in addition to the traditional ways we've measured, we want—and we are seeing, you know, orchestras find other ways to make sure that they are right on the edge of—and the cusp of being relevant, as well as honoring the traditional ways as well. So, as long as we can do this both/and as opposed to either this or it's that, they're going to continue to thrive.

**JOHN HUGHES:** What impact, if any, does the booming global art market have on NEA selections with regard to contemporary art?

**JANE CHU:** We have a really cool process. First of all, two thoughts. One is, you know, it used to be that the different types of art forms, whether even—or the different types of art styles, like you were mentioning contemporary art, it used to be that they were off in different categories. So music was over here, and videos were over there, and dancing was over there. But now we're seeing that because the world has become so global, that even the art forms are starting to do this giant mashup.

So there are pieces that used to be—and let's use an orchestra with a video. It used to be that maybe a video would accompany the wonderful music of an orchestra. But now we see that there are pieces created where the video and the orchestra together are the piece, and you can't really extract the two without losing the entire piece.

Art forms are becoming that way as well, in terms of the global mashup. But one of the things—So one of the things we want to make sure we're honoring is making sure that our grants were relevant and honoring the new forms that are coming online. So we have a three-step process when grants are reviewed. And the first people who ever read the proposals that come into the National Endowment for the Arts are the citizens. We bring in citizens, experts in the field, including lay persons, who review the proposals first. And that is a wonderful way to make sure that we are shaping the arts in America together, and are very cognizant of things like the different types of contemporary art, and also other styles. People are really with it when they're reviewing this proposal. And I think that's a wonderful way that America reviews the proposals.

**JOHN HUGHES:** This questioner says there are some who think that film as an art form is on the decline. What do you think about film in the arts and the state of it?

**JANE CHU:** We are, again, seeing that if you only look at one way of participating, even in film, that we've done a disservice to film, or we've done a disservice to any art form when the ways people participate in the arts are expanding. So let's broaden the way we're looking at it. I think film is actually—when you start looking at some of these film festivals, where hundreds of thousands of people are coming in for a week to a city that's not only burgeoning in tourism as a result, and hotel and lodging, but new films and the development of films are thriving because they have this massive audience for a week or a month or a summer or however, that's the new way people are participating.

So let's make sure we've expanded our ways on how people participate in the arts, and we're making sure we're looking at that, too.

**JOHN HUGHES:** What kind of responsibility do you see the arts managers of tomorrow needing to be focused on? What would your advice be to future art managers?

**JANE CHU:** One of the things that I'm seeing is a trend nationally, is that it used to be that an arts leader or an arts manager was highlighted for their good ability to lead if they were very informed and a specialist in a certain area. Like they really know their stuff in X area. But nowadays, it seems like the leaders of tomorrow, and today too, are ones who know how to synthesize different pieces that come in all together, kind of like that giant mashup again, because the world is becoming more global, and those who can stand in the middle of the ambiguity and listen to Beethoven and Prokofiev and Hayden and—those who understand the nuances of different ways people are coming and not force-fitting, but really having that emotional intelligence level of combining all of it together, those who can synthesize, those are the skills of the future leaders. And those who can bring pieces together that don't seemingly fit or don't look like they are fitting, but can honor the different ways and bring them together, those are the future skills of the leaders of tomorrow.

**JOHN HUGHES:** In the past there have been calls for the President to create a Secretary for the Arts as a Cabinet level position. Are there any ideas such as this under



discussion? Or is there any restructuring of the arts in the federal government that should happen?

**JANE CHU:** Well that would be fun. [laughter] We haven't had any conversations about creating it at the Secretary position in the Cabinet at this point. We are very appreciative, in terms of the complexity right now of holding stable. But what I like about that—[laughter] What I like about that is that it elevates, it's a symbol that elevates the recognition about how important the arts are, and how much they infuse our everyday lives. And it's back to that same thing we want to get across, they're not in a corner, they're not a frill, they really touch all of our activities, even when we're aware of it, or whether we're not aware of it. So that is one demonstration of other people recognizing it, something that we want to get that message across, is the arts belong to everyone.

**JOHN HUGHES:** We are almost out of time. But before I get to the last question or two, I have some housekeeping. The National Press Club is the world's leading professional organization for journalists. And we fight for a free press, worldwide. To learn more about the National Press Club, go to our website, that's [press.org](http://press.org). And to donate to our nonprofit Journalism Institute, visit [press.org/institute](http://press.org/institute).

I'd like to remind you about some upcoming speakers. And they're all this week. It's a busy week at the National Press Club. On Wednesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, Education Secretary Arne Duncan will address the National Press Club Luncheon. On Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, the National Press Club welcomes Latvia President Raimonds Vējonis for a Luncheon address. And on Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, Utah Governor Gary Herbert will address a Luncheon.

I'd now like to present our guest with the most honorary heirloom and artifact at the National Press Club. [laughter] The National Press Club mug. [applause]

So in the time remaining, I wanted to ask you a couple questions about, I guess, the big picture. President Kennedy said that a nation will be judged not by its politics or wars, but by its contribution to the human spirit. How is the United States doing?

**JANE CHU:** I tend to think in terms of what we can be. And so it really is back to the United States thriving and winning when we can imagine and when we can dream with our own creativity on what we can be. And so I think when President Kennedy made those comments, that's back to the spirit that we don't ever want to lose. And we don't ever want to have anybody take it away from us, either. Let's continue to—continue to spark the spirit that's within us. It sounds like a commercial, but the arts are great at doing that. And let's give ourselves permission to make sure we can honor that, because that's when America really is at its finest.

**JOHN HUGHES:** And finally, on the eve of the National Endowment for the Arts 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, what do you see for the next 50 years? What would you like to see NEA celebrating at its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, or since your future successor will be

celebrating that 100<sup>th</sup> right here at the National Press Club, what would you anticipate that they'd be talking about in the organization 50 years from now?

**JANE CHU:** I'd anticipate that they'd be talking in 50 years from now, that we would not even be having a conversation about explaining that the arts are a frill or not a frill, that they're not off in a corner by themselves, because everybody would so get it. It would become like many of our tribal partners and our families of the Native Americans who do not have the word "arts" in their vocabulary, because they are so infused with the arts in all they do. It's just part of their life, and they don't know it any other way.

So in the next 50 years, the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts will be thanking and celebrating all the new types of activities that the arts are tied to in our everyday lives, things that we can't even think about, due to technology developments and things like that. And we will still be honoring all the ways we've traditionally. It'll be that both/and, and it'll just be burgeoning.

**JOHN HUGHES:** How about a round of applause for our speaker.

[applause]

**JOHN HUGHES:** I would also like to thank our National Press Club staff including its Journalism Institute and Broadcast Center for organizing today's event. If you would like a copy of today's program, or to learn more about the Press Club, go to that website, [press.org](http://press.org). Thank you. We are adjourned. (Gavel)

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