

"This may be true, but there are certainly many, many other Washingtonians who do not sit home and gripe. One day recently, the writer tried to get tickets to four Washington events only to find all four sold out: the Boston Symphony, the National Theater's presentation of the Lunts in 'The Visit,' Chekhov's 'Cherry Orchard' at the Arena Stage, and Catholic University's production of 'Romeo and Juliet.' National Symphony attendance is at an alltime high. And Washington's music calendar for March is most impressive with an event of some kind every night except two, including concerts at the National Gallery and the Phillips Gallery, string quartets and chamber music at the Library, chamber music at American University, and much more. Even the Natural Museum of History came up with a musical program the other day—early baroque music played on early baroque keyboard instruments.

"There is then little evidence of native insouciance when the public contributions to the symphony total \$250,000, to the opera, \$50,000, and to the local ballet, \$25,000, all in addition to the sums given to sustain the private galleries and other cultural efforts.

"Indeed, Washingtonians retort, much of what is done here is often overlooked by others. For example, Glenn Gould, the Canadian pianist and one of the hottest properties today, gave his American debut at the National Gallery. Violinist Christian Ferras made his American debut in a small auditorium in nearby Silver Spring, Md. Yet, music critics here point out, when both these artists went to New York several days later, their performances were described as their 'American debuts' and New York, in effect, took credit for the achievement.

"What needs to be done? Washington's real hopes are resting on the elaborate plans for the National Cultural Center. The Government has provided some 10 acres of good waterfront property, but the more than \$70 million needed for construction must be raised from private sources. This may not prove to be an easy task.

"I feel ashamed about this sometimes,' one Member of Congress commented. 'Look at what we're building on Capitol Hill here. We're spending nearly \$200 million extending the east front and portico, building a new House Office Building and a new Senate Office Building. We should and can afford to do more to advance culture here by providing additional funds.'

"Is Congress really the answer to the enhancement of Washington's cultural life? Representative Frank Thompson, Jr., New Jersey Democrat, who has been in the forefront of congressional efforts to encourage the arts, thinks it may well be.

"It is up to Congress as the City Council of Washington, a city lacking home rule, to end these charges that the city is a hick town,' he says.

"But I sometimes get the feeling that jockeying for political position and party giving help substitute for culture here. And in Congress there often seems to be a massive apathy toward anything cultural. If it is not a pork barrel issue or a bread and butter issue, they seem to be against it. We've got a few guys up here who call ballerinas toe dancers, and that kind of thing. There simply are no votes in promoting culture in Washington.'

"If this is true, and from what hasn't been done in Congress all these years indicates that it is true, then looking to Congress to help elevate substantially the cultural life here may well be in vain. To some this would not necessarily be a disappointment.

"For there is among that group of residents who have the civic pride and the money to actively support cultural activities here some real division over whether Government support would be wise. Those who are for it say that without it Washington's status as a center of culture may never be achieved. But there are others fearful of possible political interference and control over programs and activities once the door is opened. To illustrate their argument they like to tell the reported story of the city controller who, because the city helped finance the symphony there, signed the paychecks along with a symphony representative. Some years ago the symphony played Beethoven's Ninth which called at one point for four very able soloists. When it came time to pay them the controller balked, saying: 'Those four only stepped out of the chorus and sang a little.'

"Those who favor Government financial help, however, hear few complaints stemming from agriculture, aviation, or shipping subsidies, or from the tax relief to business, or from the tax on fishing and hunting equipment that makes sure our sportsmen will have something to hunt and fish.