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GOVERNOR RUDY PERPICH

Address on the State of the Arts

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STATE OF MINNESOTA

To The 70th Session
Of The Minnesota State Legislature

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GOVERNOR RUDY PERPICH

ADDRESS ON THE STATE OF THE ARTS

It is a pleasure for me to be here in this beautiful St. Paul Arts and Science Center and to be introduced by the best mayor in our state, Mayor Latimer. St. Paul has become my home away from home, as State Senator, Lieutenant Governor, and now as Governor.

When I first became Governor, I said the quality of life in this state was second to none. The people of Minnesota know that it is true. We know that a richer, fuller life is possible here.

I believe that the arts in Minnesota are a very important part of our quality of life. One of the major reasons that this is such a good place to live is that we honor art and those who create it. The arts in Minnesota benefit each of us in many ways. Whether it's painting or music, theater or poetry, crafts or dance, we all have access to treasures from which we can draw beauty, satisfaction, peace of mind and strength. The arts help us to realize who we are, to celebrate our individuality. They are, in the best

way, an affirmation of ourselves.

The arts are as much a part of our quality of life as our lakes and our parks and our trees. They are one of the reasons that people and businesses move here from other parts of the country, and that families are reluctant to leave here, despite inducements from other places.

It seems that almost every important national publication in America has written glowing articles in the last few years about the quality of life in Minnesota. Time Magazine said that "if the American good life has anywhere survived...it may be in Minnesota." Fortune Magazine noted Minnesotans' "civic pride and caring about where they live." And virtually every one of these national stories has praised the arts community here in Minnesota. Our museums, orchestras, theaters, and other arts are admired nationally for their excellence.

The National Observer said that west of the Hudson, Minnesota is the cultural capital of the country; others have called our state "the Athens of America."

In an article on Minneapolis, the New York Times commented that "besides clean air, low crime, good planning,

and considerable civic decency, Minneapolis manages a cultural life of a strength and diversity surpassed only by three or four other American cities, all much larger." The Times called the Walker Art Center "one of the finest modern art museums in America" and our St. Paul based Minnesota Opera Company "possibly the most dramatic experimental opera company in the country."

We benefit from the arts in the enrichment of our spirit and our pride; but the arts also contribute to our state's economy. The arts form a multi-million dollar industry which generates many more millions of dollars to other sectors of the economy, through salaries and wages, purchases of supplies and materials, as well as expenditures by people attending arts programs when they patronize restaurants, shops and purchase other services.

But what are the arts? They are many things to many people, and each of us derives satisfaction from different kinds of art activities. For example, the arts are all around us: the architecture; the signs; the landscaping; the creativity which goes into the design of our clothes; the homemade quilts in our homes which are the products of so many of our talented and hardworking mothers and grandmothers. The arts are also our symphony orchestras, theaters and dance companies.

They are our potters and weavers, who put some of their own imagination and spirit into useful objects. In their hands they become inspiring and beautiful as well.

The arts are poets and Indian story-tellers, writers, composers, wood carvers and the painters of those beautiful Ukrainian Easter eggs. They are directors and lighting designers, actors, musicians and dancers. They are also the banjo and fiddle players who provide so much joy in beer halls and at picnics. The arts are museums and galleries, where the finest of the past and present are collected, preserved and shared with the people all over our state.

Sometimes we think of the arts as being only for a certain segment of our society. But think how many people are touched by one or more of the things I just mentioned. How many people are also involved in the arts as participants? In local choirs and theaters, as volunteers working for the benefit of arts organizations, doing their own writing, weaving, pottery, playing in community orchestras, attending galleries, doing their own paintings and dancing the polka.

And of course, consider the hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans who enjoy our leading professional arts organizations, and enrich their lives by attending performances,

hearing radio broadcasts, visiting museums, galleries, and the many community art centers which are springing up around our state.

For just one example of the way the arts touch so many people, we can look to the enormous talent resource which we have in our Minnesota poets and writers. We are recognized nationwide for the excellence of our poets-in-schools program. Minnesota poets work as artists in the schools around the state, with students and teachers at all levels, inspiring young people in the arts of reading and writing creatively. We have seen Minnesota poets touring small communities in a group called Poetry Outloud, performing and reading in public programs, for clubs and churches, senior citizen homes, and for anyone who's interested. During the Bicentennial year, Olivia, Minnesota adopted two poets, Joe and Nancy Paddock, who lived and worked there as artists-in-residence along with teachers, farmers and merchants. One of the results of their stay was a book of Olivia history which the poets wrote from tape-recorded conversations with older residents of the area. They were aided by an enthusiastic group of citizens who volunteered their efforts to the completion of the project. That book is in the Minnesota Time Capsule and is a permanent testament to a town and its people.

And Minnesota is rich in such artists, in all the art forms. We are honored, for example, by having Pulitzer Prize winner, Dominic Argento, as one of our resident composers. The works and reputations of many other Minnesota artists are known far and wide.

An example of how the arts can bring together many interests in a community took place recently with the Mississippi River Show organized by the Walker Art Center. It involved the showing of paintings, drawings, photographs, beautifully drawn historical maps, models of river craft, as well as film, music and video art.

But it also involved the City Planning Department and others in cooperative efforts to take a new look at the aesthetic development of the river. A number of architects were commissioned to produce schemes and plans for the possible redevelopment of the river banks and of Nicollet Island. Their models, which were displayed as part of the show, were works of art in themselves. Teachers and students got involved in studying the river, both its past and its future, and they were able to discover how strong an influence the river has had on the creativity of the people living and working near it. This show was enjoyed not only by the people in the immediate Twin Cities area, but also by visitors from all over Minnesota and from around the country.

The Twin Cities can be expected to lead in the arts. But our smaller cities are also actively involved. Bovey, a small town of 858 citizens, has dedicated its resources towards the promotion of the arts in northern Minnesota by planning a living arts center which will cost over a half million dollars to construct.

Originally intended as a shrine to Eric Enstrom and his famous picture "Grace", the people of Bovey have expanded the conception of the center to include an outdoor sculpture court, an art gallery, work space for artists, and a summertime sawdust festival. This is imaginative art planning at its best.

In addition to the programs I've mentioned, we are all aware of our other leading arts organizations, which are nationally recognized. The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra is the country's only full-time professional chamber orchestra. It tours the country; it has been to the Soviet Union and eastern Europe under State Department sponsorship; it is scheduled to perform in Germany and in Japan. But it also plays, for example, in Bemidji and Northfield, St. Joseph and elsewhere in the state. It can be heard on public radio throughout the state, for those who don't get a chance to attend a concert. Our Guthrie Theater is recognized as the leading theater of

its kind in the country. The Minnesota Orchestra, in its magnificent new Orchestra Hall, is serving hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans through its concerts there, on tour, and through its statewide broadcasts. As a matter of fact, last night the orchestra carried our name and its music to Carnegie Hall in New York. On Saturday night Vice President and Mrs. Mondale will be hearing its performance in the Kennedy Center in Washington.

One of the leading museums in the country, also in a spectacular new building, is the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. And in the same complex is located the Children's Theater Company, regarded by many as the nation's outstanding theater for young people.

As a matter of fact, when the Today Show produced its Bicentennial feature on the Twin Cities, a full quarter-hour segment was devoted to this unique theater.

These major institutions provide leadership and inspiration, but they are also partners with many other arts organizations in our communities around the state. Consider the orchestras of New Ulm, Rochester, Duluth, the theaters of Albert Lea, St. Cloud, and Alexandria. Think of the galleries and museums which are found in more and more places, as people

use their creativity to restore older building spaces such as the old State School in Owatonna, the Red River Art Center in Moorhead, and the old County Courthouse in Park Rapids; or to build and expand new ones such as the Tweed Gallery at UM-D. All of our arts organizations, statewide and local, provide leadership and set standards.

We have access to the best in art and it encourages us to reach for the best in everything we do. It provides us with the inspiration for our individual ambitions and aspirations.

This enormously varied statewide network of arts resources has been created almost exclusively through private financial support. Consider that in the last ten years, over \$100 million has been contributed by private sources for the construction of arts facilities in our state. These facilities are now in daily use by our citizens and will be ours for future generations to enjoy. Our arts organizations earn much of their income from admissions and fees, but large amounts must be contributed. These funds come primarily from contributions made by individual citizens, businesses and foundations. Another invaluable source of support is the commitment of time and talent by literally tens of thousands of Minnesotans who volunteer their efforts in the operation and support of arts organi-

zations all over the state.

But while Minnesota citizens, businesses and foundations have contributed their money and talents to the arts in amounts unparalleled elsewhere, state funds have been insignificant over the last ten years, by comparison with other states. For example, while we point to our arts with such pride, we appropriated in state monies only 13 cents per person last year. Colorado provides 90 cents; New York almost \$2 per capita; Utah does better than twice as well as Minnesota in state appropriations. If we are to maintain the arts as part of our quality of life, we must do much better than we have.

As we all know, the arts are mostly people. The arts can't be mechanized; they can't be put on a more efficient assembly line basis. Consequently, they are hit hard by inflation. Private contributions and earnings of the arts in Minnesota are continuing to grow.

But they cannot meet the entire need of this essential network of organizations, programs and artists. We must increase the involvement of the public sector, through funding our State Arts Board, to a level that would help maintain the health of our arts network. Even with a major increase in state funds, the private sector will remain by far the largest

source of support for the arts. And this is as it should be. We do not propose that the state support be substituted for existing private support.

What will happen if the state does not support the arts? I think that the answer is obvious. Obvious, and tragic. Without state help, the arts will not be accessible to the average person in this state. It is as simple as that. The rich will always have access to the arts.

If a seat at a concert costs \$50, there will be some who can afford that. If a great museum has to shut its doors two or three days a week, there are some who will be able to arrange their schedules accordingly. But the average family in this state does not have unlimited funds and does not have much flexibility in its work schedule.

That's why the state must help. This state money is not meant to create orchestras or museums from scratch. Those institutions are already there. What the state can do and must do is to make those institutions accessible to all. Without state money, that will not happen. With state money, it will.

Just imagine that private contributions had built every public school in this state...had built them, bought the

textbooks and hired the teachers. And then imagine that those schools were given to the state--free. And all we were asked to do in return was to pay for a small percentage of operating those schools. Would we, as public officials, accept such a proposition? We'd jump at it, and you know we would.

Well, that's exactly the situation we face with the arts. The major institutions are already there. They were built and they are being operated with private money. All we are being asked to do is to help keep their doors open--open longer and open to everyone. If we don't do that, then we aren't serving the people of this state. It's up to us to insure that every person in Minnesota enjoys equal access to the arts.

The Governor's Commission on the Arts, which was appointed by Governor Anderson over a year ago, has completed an extensive and excellent study of arts programs and needs in our state.

Financed entirely by private funds, it carried out a research program and issued a report that is the most comprehensive of its kind in any state. Among its findings were: first, it substantiated the fact that Minnesota, in comparison to virtually every other state, has more private financial in-

volvement in the arts, to the benefit of all its citizens, than anywhere else in the country. Second, it confirmed that we have some of the country's finest arts resources in its organizations and individual artists. And finally, it predicts that the financial needs of the arts network will require substantially larger contributions from both the private and the public sectors in years to come.

I believe that the time has come for the state to begin to assume its share of support for these tremendous state-wide arts activities.

My budget message has recommended a level of \$4 million for the State Arts Board. I have also recommended state funding of \$250,000 for public television; and with new revenue estimates, I am recommending that the Legislature appropriate \$250,000 for public radio.

Public radio and television are important art medias in their own right and a major instrument for the spreading of artistic activities to the widest public audience.

These are major increases from the current biennium. They will begin to bring the state's share of support for the arts to a fair level.

I am convinced that it will be well used. I have great confidence in the leadership which the State Arts Board will provide. And I have the greatest confidence in the potential of the art organizations and the artists in Minnesota to use these funds in ways which will enrich the lives of all of us. This budget recommendation has received approval by subcommittees in both Senate Finance and House Appropriations, and I urge the Legislature to adopt their recommendations.

There is still more that the state can do to encourage the development of the arts. One of the great proliferations of works of art throughout the nation occurred, amazingly enough, during the great depression.

This flowering of art took place because the federal government provided work relief funds to writers, musicians, actors, painters, and sculptors. We were rewarded by experiencing a golden age of American artistic creativity.

I believe that the state should embark on a similar kind of program to bring arts to our public buildings. For all future bonding proposals for construction of new state buildings or for major renovations, I will recommend that one percent of the total construction costs be allocated for the purchasing or commissioning of works of art for those build-

ings. These paintings and sculptures will make magnificent contributions to these buildings. They will enhance their physical beauty and help to humanize them. These works of art will, in most cases, be made by Minnesota artists. As such, the funds will encourage the development of local artists and provide an opportunity for them to display and become recognized for their works.

Who knows, for example, whether the new State Office Building in Bemidji won't show the first works of the next world-famous Minnesota artists.

The additional state appropriations and this new one percent arts allocation program will provide a major increase in public support for the arts in Minnesota.

What will these additional funds accomplish?

Our State Arts Board has developed several new and exciting approaches to the distribution of public funds, in preparation to meet its new challenges. I'm particularly proud of its plan for regional development, which calls upon the involvement of many citizens in localities all over the state to participate in decision-making about their own arts programs.

In each of the 13 development regions of the state, the Arts Board has helped to organize regional arts task forces and arts councils. These groups plan and determine how public funds will be spent for their local arts activities. This means that a crafts show in Park Rapids, a community orchestra in Marshall, a theater production in Lake Benton, Kolo dances at the Interpretive Center in Chisholm, an Indian drum artist in Bemidji, a fiddle contest in Crookston, and many others like them, can be stimulated by grants appropriated by the state, but decided upon with the knowledge and experience of people who live and work in the communities where these programs originate. This concept was developed by the State Arts Board with the involvement of an advisory committee drawn from each of the regions, and this committee will continue to help and advise the Board in the administration and further development of the program.

We're also proud to see that our regional program has become a national model. State arts agencies from all over the country are asking the advice of our State Arts Board and for copies of our plan.

Another use for these state funds will be to make grants to promising artists. Why are these grants so important?

As an analogy let me suggest that you consider the library--we all use the library. The library circulates books. Who writes the books? Writers--they are artists. Without these artists there would be no books, and without books there would be no knowledge.

Consider museums without the works of painters and sculptors; orchestras without composers.

Do we sometimes take for granted photographs and paintings, or music we hear on the radio, at a wedding or even in the beer hall on Saturday night? Somebody created those things--the artist. I believe that we should make as strong a commitment to our individual creative artists as we do, for example, to our medical and scientific researchers. We trust in research long before we see its product because we know that it cannot take place without that trust and support. We must do the same with our developing artists--we must support them directly and give them the same trust that they will contribute to our expression and enrichment. This kind of commitment to our individual artists has been recommended in the Governor's Commission report and the State Arts Board is ready to carry out such a program. The point is to provide financial support to artists of recognized potential.

This support enables them to work full-time as artists and not be required to take a job unrelated to art which puts food on the table but leaves little time for creativity. Through my appropriation recommendation and one percent art allocation for public buildings, there would be a substantial increase in the support for this program.

And then, as I mentioned before, a meaningful state commitment to the arts means equal access and full opportunity for all our citizens to enjoy the artistic riches we have, and to share with others what they do themselves. The arts can brighten the lives of many senior citizens. They can enjoy the work of our artists and arts organizations and they can pass on their own arts to others. We can find ways for handicapped persons to express themselves through the arts and to have access to arts resources which have been unavailable to them for lack of money.

We can help illustrate to all of our citizens that the popular art forms which come out of our many ethnic heritages are rich resources to be strengthened and shared, not allowed to fade away as generations pass on and we turn to things more modern. The polka at a wedding feast, the Nutcracker ballet, the woodwind quintet, the Indian hide painter and the video artist are all part of the network I've been

talking about. With all of the other elements which are so closely related, our role is to strengthen, support and share it.

We must not be limited in our definition of art. We must know that art is all around us, that it has many sources and many expressions. We must know that folk songs can be art as well as concerts, that Ukrainian Easter eggs can be as noble an expression as a painting, that the ancient message of tom-toms is no less important than the existence of a string quartet.

And most important, we must know that art is not something past, it is something on-going. The capacity for art is all around us.

We will have succeeded in our mission only when each and every person in this state can assume as a basic right that his or her life will be enriched by art--art that is rich and plentiful and close at hand. Art is not somber and serious--it is a vital source of joy in life. It enriches, it renews, every single one of us. Our goal is for every Minnesotan to experience personally that joy and enrichment. There must be no town so small, no person so poor, that art can be denied. Song and beauty and drama, words and music

and design must be as much a part of our daily environment and our natural right as trees and sky and clean water.

Art is the vision of our society. It is the vision of beauty, of peace, of harmony with nature and with fellow human beings. We must assure that this vision and this uplifting of the human spirit is available to every Minnesotan. I ask for your help and your support for the arts. Through our efforts, Minnesota will continue to be known as one of the great artistic centers of America.