

EXHIBIT 12

Trump Names Loyalist Interim Leader of Kennedy Center as He Strengthens His Grip

The president also purged 18 board members appointed by former President Joseph R. Biden Jr., who were scrubbed from an official roster on the center’s website, along with the chairman, David M. Rubenstein.

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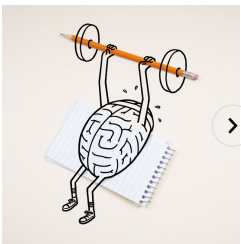
President Trump announced in a post on social media Monday that he was appointing Richard Grenell as the “interim executive director” of the Kennedy Center in Washington. Mr. Grenell, who was Mr. Trump’s ambassador to Germany during the first Trump administration, is one of his most fiercely loyal apparatchiks.

The president wrote that Mr. Grenell “shares my Vision for a GOLDEN AGE of American Arts and Culture” and would be overseeing “daily operations” to ensure there was no more “ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA.”

The appointment was just the latest in a series of moves designed to strengthen Mr. Trump’s grip on the performing arts center in Washington.

He kicked off a purge Friday night, when Mr. Trump announced his intent to gut the Kennedy Center’s board and install himself as chairman. He had denounced the center’s programming choices.

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On Monday, 18 board members and the board chairman were removed from an official roster on the center’s website. The excised members were appointees of Mr. Trump’s predecessor, Joseph R. Biden Jr. The board’s chairman, David M. Rubenstein, was also removed.

Mr. Rubenstein, a financier who was initially appointed to the board by former President George W. Bush, has given \$111 million to the center over the years, making him the biggest donor in its history.

It was not immediately clear what Mr. Grenell's placement meant for Deborah F. Rutter, the president of the Kennedy Center, who had announced last month that she planned to step down at the end of the year.

During Mr. Trump's first term he broke with precedent and declined to attend the Kennedy Center Honors after some honorees at the annual awards show criticized him. Mr. Trump is known to have had a friendly relationship with Mr. Rubenstein, and they have dined together in the past. Mr. Rubenstein declined to comment.

The Kennedy Center did not immediately respond to requests for comment about the changes. According to the center's website, the board currently has 17 members, all of them appointees of Mr. Trump. No chairman is listed.

Mr. Trump stunned the cultural world on Friday when he announced plans to bring the Kennedy Center more firmly under his control.

"At my direction, we are going to make the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., GREAT AGAIN," Mr. Trump wrote on Truth Social, his social media platform.

Speaking with reporters aboard Air Force One on Sunday, Mr. Trump defended his plan, saying of the center, "I want to make sure it runs properly."

"We don't need woke at the Kennedy Center," he added. "Some of the shows were terrible. They were a disgrace that they were even put on. So I'll be there until such time as it gets to be running right."

The center oversees the Washington National Opera and the National Symphony Orchestra and also presents comedy, hip-hop, ballet and theater, staging some 2,000 performances each year. The center's budget totaled \$268 million last year, including about \$43 million in federal aid. The federal money is not spent on programming but on operations, maintenance and capital repair, since the center is a living memorial to former President John F. Kennedy.

Mr. Trump said he had not seen any shows at the center recently. "There was nothing I wanted to see," he said.

Mr. Trump said in his post on social media that "just last year, the Kennedy Center featured Drag Shows specifically targeting our youth — THIS WILL STOP"

That appeared to be a reference to a drag-themed show the center hosted last year called "Dragtastic Dress-up," which was aimed at "LGBTQ+ youth under 18," according to marketing materials.

The members removed on Monday include some of Mr. Biden's closest aides — Karine Jean-Pierre, the former White House press secretary, and the political strategist Mike Donilon — as well as artists including the singer and songwriter Jon Batiste.

Hilda L. Solis, a Los Angeles County Supervisor who has been removed from the board, said in a statement that she looked forward to "continuing to champion the arts as a tool for equity, healing, and positive change, both locally and nationally."

On Monday, the Kennedy Center removed a statement from its website that it issued on Friday in the wake of Mr. Trump's comments.

"Per the center's governance established by Congress in 1958, the chair of the board of trustees is appointed by the center's board members," the statement had said. "There is nothing in the center's statute that would prevent a new administration from replacing board members; however, this would be the first time such action has been taken with the Kennedy Center's board."

The center has also in recent days scrubbed its site of references to diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. Mr. Trump has taken aim at such programs, issuing an executive order calling the initiatives "illegal and immoral."

In an interview shortly after Mr. Trump's inauguration last month, Mr. Rubenstein said he did not expect the Kennedy Center to be a priority for the new administration.

"I don't think they are focused on the Kennedy Center that much, but I hope they recognize how great it is," he said.

Mr. Rubenstein expressed optimism about working with Mr. Trump, saying the two had spoken since the election, but not about the center.

“I’ve talked to President Trump over the years about the Kennedy Center,” he added. “He knows its virtues.”

Mr. Rubenstein said at the time that he expected the center’s bipartisan tradition to continue.

“We just try to be as apolitical as possible,” he said. “And it’s worked out for 50 years, and I suspect it will continue.”

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