



CREATiVE TRUST

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

FINAL REPORT
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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to share the results of Creative Trust's Audience Engagement Survey – a first-time, collaborative initiative by Toronto's creative performing arts companies to hear directly from their audiences on what motivates them to attend and what helps them connect more deeply with the work they see on stage.

It is an initiative that brought 20 cross disciplinary companies together to learn how to design and plan programs and activities – both individually and collectively – which intensify the impact of their audiences' experience and stimulate attendance. The survey, which was developed as part of Creative Trust's Audiences Project, also provides an in-depth picture of performing arts audiences in Toronto with a special focus on their engagement preferences.

The Audience Engagement Survey was undertaken by Lead Consultant Alan Brown of WolfBrown Consulting and Research Associate Kelly Hill of Hill Strategies Research. Their expertise and guidance turned a primary data collection process into one of inspiration and active learning, which is assisting a core group of companies to interact with their audiences in a deeper, more fulfilling way.

Survey Methodology

In the spring of 2010, 20 of Toronto's mid-size and small music, theatre, opera and dance companies emailed an online Audience Engagement Survey to approximately 30,000 of their audience members. These Creative Trust organizations had actively participated in compiling email lists of their recent attenders and personalizing the survey invitation; they subsequently crafted reminder messages and fielded questions from audience members who received the survey.

In addition to general demographic information, the survey protocol (developed by Alan Brown and Kelly Hill with input from Creative Trust) asked questions relating to attendance at participating companies' events; companions they attended events with; motivations for attending; and preferred activities before, at/during, and after performances. Answers were given in a variety of ways, including check boxes, drop-down boxes, radio buttons and blank comment fields, allowing the respondents to give diverse and accurate information.

We are grateful to Théâtre français de Toronto who helped Creative Trust translate the survey into French for Francophone audience members.

The survey had a total of 3,662 respondents, whose detailed and generous responses reinforced the fact that 57% of those who completed the survey indicated that attending live performances is "A vital activity for me."

The results and implications of this study, which gathered both company-specific and aggregated results, were discussed at a Summary Presentation by Alan Brown in June 2010. They are now being used by the participating companies to review, revise and create new programs to engage their audiences.

We believe that the survey's results will also be of value to any organization or individual interested in audience development. It is our hope that this study will serve to stimulate discussion and innovation, ultimately creating a more meaningful audience experience in our own city and elsewhere.

Background

Creative Trust has been working since 1998 to support and strengthen performing arts companies in Toronto. Our Working Capital for the Arts program has become a model for capacity building in the cultural sector. We have assisted over 50 mid-size and small companies to eliminate deficits, create working capital reserves and improve their governance, planning and management skills.

In 2008 Creative Trust began a comprehensive audience development program, which is helping to build committed and growing audiences for our members, who are of fundamental importance to the cultural infrastructure of Toronto and are at the heart of artistic creation in Canada. They represent the varied cultural make-up of our city and annually give over 2,000 performances to audiences of almost 600,000 people.

The Audiences Project's goal, like that of the Working Capital program, is to ensure that Toronto maintains a thriving and sustainable performing arts community.

Our work in this area is inspired by the belief that the arts should be a part of everyone's life at every life stage; that the arts can provide unique opportunities for learning, growing, understanding, connecting culture, peacefully co-existing and exchanging ideas; that the arts can play a positive, transformational role in people's lives; and that art can provide opportunities for healing and problem solving even as it provides beauty, joy and challenging ideas.

The Audiences Project

Creative Trust's multi-faceted Audiences Project is designed to raise the level of understanding and practice by Toronto's mid-size and small music, theatre, opera and dance companies of audience development, audience motivation and engagement; to strengthen the impact of their arts education activities; and to inspire companies to become more accessible to Deaf and hard-of-hearing and blind and low-vision audiences.

The Audiences Project includes over 50 Creative Trust companies in an in-depth, collaborative approach that draws on the most successful and best informed practices from our own city and around the world.

In the project's first year, we've assisted members to upgrade their database and box office systems; began working with Alan Brown on Engaging Audiences (including the Audience Engagement Survey); collaborated with Picasso PRO on training audio describers for blind and low-vision audiences; and offered a workshop series on using video and social media to market the performing arts.

In the project's second year we will complete the Engaging Audiences program by assisting companies to do individual Audience Interviews; train American Sign Language interpreters for Deaf and hard of hearing audiences, and involve up to six companies in a pilot program of signed or described accessible performances; complete a study of arts education activities by performing arts companies and disseminate the findings; work on Diversifying Audiences; offer workshops with a variety of partners on customer service and traditional and web-based marketing; and provide targeted assistance on the effective use of integrated database systems.

We are committed to monitoring the results and tracking the effectiveness of our efforts, and to sharing our findings and learning with others in arts and non-profit communities across Canada and internationally.

We strongly believe that audience development is not a competitive process but one of collaboration.

Next Steps

Creative Trust has just launched a new website and blog where we will share the results of the Audiences Project and its impact on our members and their audiences. We hope to have a vigorous and productive conversation with organizations and individuals interested and engaged in broadening and deepening audiences and their engagement with the arts.

Other Research and Studies

Creative Trust, in partnership with the Professional Arts Organizations Network for Education (PAONE), is also working on a comprehensive study of the state of arts education across multiple disciplines in Toronto. The upcoming report on the findings of the Performing Arts Education Survey will be completed by Spring 2011.

Like the Audience Engagement Survey Report, it will be available for download on the Creative Trust website (www.creativetrust.ca).

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS

Introduction and key survey information

This document examines the responses by discipline to the survey of attendees of 20 Creative Trust member organizations, conducted by WolfBrown and Hill Strategies Research for the Creative Trust.

The survey was available online between May 4th and 17th, 2010. The 20 Creative Trust member organizations supplied the email lists for the survey. The organizations' lists were de-duplicated by the researchers, and the organizations contacted their remaining list members to ask them to complete the survey. A reminder email was distributed halfway into the two-week survey period.

The survey was completed by 3,662 people, representing 11.1% of the 32,915 contacts on the de-duplicated email lists. The table below shows the participating organization.

#	Organization
1	Ballet Creole
2	Buddies in Bad Times Theatre
3	CanAsian Dance Festival
4	Dancemakers
5	Factory Theatre
6	Fujiwara Dance Inventions
7	inDANCE
8	Kaeja d'Dance
9	Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People
10	Nathaniel Dett Chorale
11	Nightwood Theatre
12	Princess Productions
13	Soundstreams
14	Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra
15	Tapestry New Opera
16	Tarragon Theatre
17	The Theatre Centre
18	Théâtre français de Toronto
19	Theatre Passe Muraille
20	Toronto Dance Theatre

Four slightly different surveys were available. The number and percentage of respondents who completed each version of the survey were:

- Dance: 436 respondents (12% of the total)
- Music: 1,008 respondents (28%)
- Opera: 142 respondents (4%)
- Theatre: 2,076 respondents (57%)

The theatre survey was available in French, largely for patrons of Théâtre français de Toronto. Other theatre survey respondents could also choose to respond in French rather than in English. In total, 284 respondents completed the French-language survey, or 8% of all respondents.

Note: Given the important variation in response rates between the organizations, the researchers decided to weight the responses according to the initial list size. As such, the weighted survey results reflect the organization-by-organization distribution of the original 33,000 contacts (plus the “unallocated” respondents). The remainder of this report presents the weighted survey results.

After weighting to reflect the initial list sizes of the organizations, the percentage of respondents completing each survey was: 18% for dance; 21% for music; 2% for opera; and 58% for theatre.

Demographic questions

The following questions are for statistical purposes only. Your answers will be kept confidential.

Do you earn a portion of your income from performing or creating art?

- Music audience members are the least likely to earn money from performing or creating art (22%), while dance (49%) and opera audiences (46%) are most likely to have artistic income.

	Dance	Music	Opera	Theatre	Total
Artistic income	49%	22%	46%	30%	32%

What is your gender?

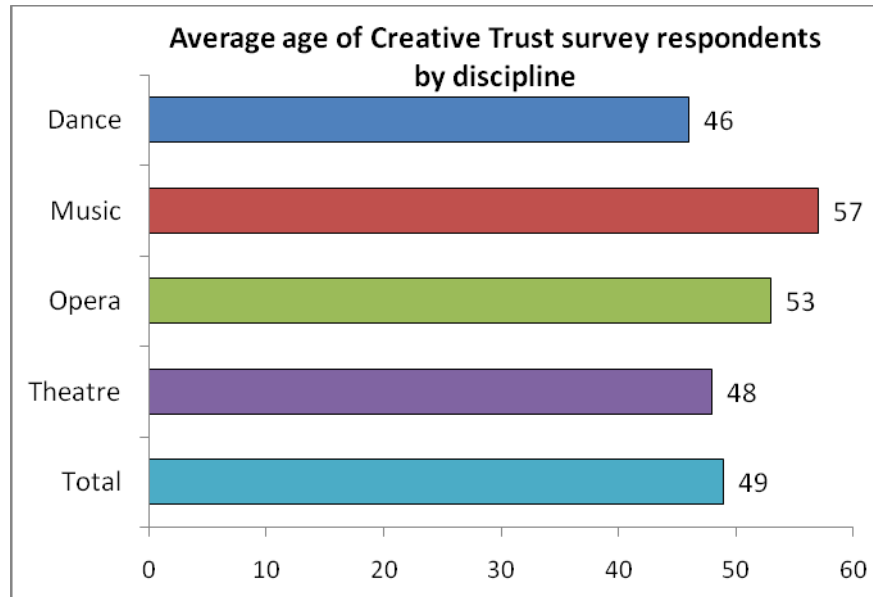
- Women are the majority in all four disciplines but comprise the lowest percentage of respondents to the music survey (63%).

	Dance	Music	Opera	Theatre	Total
Female	71%	63%	66%	72%	69%
Male	29%	37%	34%	28%	31%

In what year were you born?

	Dance	Music	Opera	Theatre	Total
Year of birth (average)	1964	1953	1957	1962	1961

- On average, dance and theatre audiences are the youngest, while opera and music audiences are older than the average for all survey respondents (49).



What is your marital status?

- Married or partnered respondents are in the majority in all four disciplines but comprise the lowest percentage of respondents to the opera survey (54%).

	Dance	Music	Opera	Theatre	Total
Married or partnered	57%	65%	54%	61%	61%
Previously married or partnered	19%	18%	23%	14%	16%
Single, never married	25%	17%	23%	25%	23%

Are there any children under 18 years of age living in your household?

- Theatre audiences are most likely to have children at home (25% do so), while music and opera audiences are much less likely to have children at home (14% each).

	Dance	Music	Opera	Theatre	Total
Yes	20%	14%	14%	25%	22%

Please indicate your occupational status.

(Respondents could select more than one option, if applicable.)

- A majority of respondents in dance, opera and theatre are working full-time, while exactly one-half of music audiences work full-time.
- Among the four disciplines, a much higher percentage of music audiences are retired (29%) than the other three disciplines, especially theatre (17%) and dance (14%).

	Dance	Music	Opera	Theatre	Total
Working full-time	62%	50%	56%	57%	56%
Working part-time	21%	18%	20%	20%	20%
In school full-time or part-time	6%	5%	6%	7%	6%
Not working	2%	2%	4%	3%	3%
Full-time family caregiver	3%	2%	2%	4%	3%
Retired	14%	29%	21%	17%	19%

Do you wish to receive a copy of the report once it is released later in 2010?

- Yes: 64%
- No: 36%

Attendance

Please indicate if you have attended programs offered by any of the following organizations over the past two years. This is a list of all the organizations that are participating in this study.

Organization	Number (weighted)	% of respondents attending this organization
<i>Dance</i>		
Ballet Creole	2,913	8%
CanAsian Dance Festival	1,957	6%
Dancemakers	5,805	17%
Fujiwara Dance Inventions	1,862	5%
inDANCE	1,540	4%
Kaeja d'Dance	2,137	6%
Princess Productions	1,102	3%
Toronto Dance Theatre	7,935	23%
<i>Music and opera</i>		
Nathaniel Dett Chorale	3,029	9%
Soundstreams	3,923	11%
Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra	9,451	27%
Tapestry New Opera	2,933	8%
<i>Theatre</i>		
Buddies in Bad Times Theatre	10,145	29%
Factory Theatre	14,272	41%
Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People	6,861	20%
Nightwood Theatre	5,927	17%
Tarragon Theatre	17,446	50%
Théâtre français de Toronto	3,165	9%
Theatre Passe Muraille	12,919	37%
The Theatre Centre	5,524	16%

On average, respondents attended the programs of 3.5 different organizations in the past two years. Theatre is the most popular discipline (average of 2.2 organizations attended in the past two years). On average, survey respondents attended 0.7 dance organizations and 0.6 music and opera organizations.

The largest proportion of respondents (26%) attended the program(s) of only one organization. The second-largest proportion of respondents indicated that they attended the programs of two organizations (17%), followed by three organizations (13%) and four organizations (10%). The percentage of respondents continues to diminish as the number of organizations increases:

- 5 organizations: 9%
- 6 organizations: 7%
- 7 organizations: 6%
- 8 organizations: 3%
- 9 organizations: 2%
- 10 or more organizations: 3%

The most avid performing arts goers attended the programs of 15 of the 20 organizations in the past two years.

There were also a few respondents (4% of the total) who completed the survey but had not attended the programs of any of the 20 organizations during the past two years. These respondents were matched to the original email lists and were therefore kept in the survey database.

Number of organizations by discipline

Note: The breakdowns by discipline in this report are based on the version of the survey that respondents completed, not necessarily the organization(s) that they attended. In this report, those who completed, for example, the music survey will commonly be referred to as “music attendees” or “music audiences”.

- Dance and opera audience members attend, on average, the largest number of different organizations.
- Dance audiences attend as many theatre organizations as dance organizations.
- Music audiences attend nearly as many theatre organizations as music organizations.
- Opera audiences attend more theatre organizations than music or opera organizations.
- Theatre audiences predominantly attend theatre organizations.

	Dance	Music	Opera	Theatre	Total
Number of organizations attended	4.7	2.7	4.6	3.3	3.5
Number of dance organizations	2.2	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.7
Number of music or opera organizations	0.4	1.3	1.7	0.3	0.6
Number of theatre organizations	2.2	1.1	2.3	2.6	2.2

Participation activities

Next, please tell us all the different ways that you participate in dance / music / opera / theatre.

For this question, some similar response options in the four disciplines have been grouped together. These groupings are listed with their new heading (if applicable). The individual discipline-based wording is listed in brackets in the following order: Dance / Music / Opera / Theatre.

Live performances (“Attend live dance performances” / “Attend live concerts of classical or 'art music'” / “Attend live opera performances” / “Attend live performances of non-musical stage plays”)

- Not surprisingly, interest in attending performances is higher than any other activity. Almost (or over) one-half of respondents in all four disciplines consider attending performances to be a vital activity for them.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
Not interested	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Haven't, but would like to try	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Used to, but don't anymore	3%	3%	1%	2%	3%
Enjoy it occasionally	48%	31%	50%	39%	39%
A vital activity for me	48%	65%	46%	58%	57%

Attend live musical theatre performances (theatre only):

- Theatre audiences were also asked about their interest in attending live musical theatre performances. Many respondents enjoy musicals, but not as many theatre-goers rank musicals as highly as non-musical stage plays.

	Theatre % (musicals)	Theatre % (plays)
Not interested	6%	1%
Haven't, but would like to try	2%	1%
Used to, but don't anymore	5%	2%
Enjoy it occasionally	60%	39%
A vital activity for me	28%	58%

Do (“Dance socially at clubs or parties” / “Play a musical instrument” / “Play a musical instrument” / “Read plays for your own enjoyment”)

- Many respondents are quite interested in participating in artistic activities, with relatively large percentages occasionally doing artistic activities, especially dancing socially or reading plays.
- People who used to play a musical instrument, but don't anymore, are a significant component of music and opera audiences.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
Not interested	13%	16%	24%	25%	21%
Haven't, but would like to try	5%	14%	8%	7%	8%
Used to, but don't anymore	18%	32%	32%	19%	22%
Enjoy it occasionally	47%	17%	15%	35%	33%
A vital activity for me	16%	22%	21%	15%	16%

Lessons (“Take dance lessons or classes” / “Take music lessons or classes” / “Take music lessons or classes” / “Take acting lessons or classes”)

- People who used to take lessons comprise a significant proportion of performing arts audiences, especially in music and opera.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
Not interested	19%	24%	28%	52%	40%
Haven't, but would like to try	14%	16%	8%	12%	13%
Used to, but don't anymore	28%	41%	35%	20%	26%
Enjoy it occasionally	13%	8%	10%	7%	9%
A vital activity for me	26%	11%	19%	8%	12%

Create (“Choreograph dances, or make up your own dance steps” / “Compose or arrange music” / “Compose or arrange music” / “Write plays or scripts”)

- Dance audiences, who are also the most likely to receive artistic income (see demographic section), are most likely to create works themselves.
- A majority of respondents in all other disciplines are not interested in creating works.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
Not interested	39%	62%	71%	57%	55%
Haven't, but would like to try	14%	18%	8%	16%	16%
Used to, but don't anymore	14%	5%	7%	7%	8%
Enjoy it occasionally	10%	9%	8%	9%	10%
A vital activity for me	23%	5%	6%	10%	11%

Listen or watch on the Internet (“Watch dance programs or videos on the Internet” / “Listen to classical, opera or 'art music' via streaming audio from the Internet” / “Listen to classical, opera or 'art music' via streaming audio from the Internet” / “Watch theatre or drama videos on the Internet”)

- Theatre audiences are the least interested in viewing artistic presentations online, while dance audiences are the most interested (occasionally or more often).

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
Not interested	23%	25%	27%	49%	39%
Haven't, but would like to try	9%	18%	25%	20%	17%
Used to, but don't anymore	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Enjoy it occasionally	53%	37%	33%	24%	32%
A vital activity for me	14%	19%	13%	5%	10%

Blogs (“Read or contribute to online blogs or forums about dance” / “Read or contribute to online blogs or forums about music” / “Read or contribute to online blogs or forums about opera” / “Read or contribute to online blogs or forums about theatre”)

- Interest in blogs is still fairly limited among all four disciplines: between 21% and 30% enjoy blogs occasionally or more often.
- Dance audiences are the most active in blogs.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
Not interested	49%	63%	59%	61%	59%
Haven't, but would like to try	17%	13%	16%	16%	15%
Used to, but don't anymore	4%	1%	1%	3%	3%
Enjoy it occasionally	25%	19%	17%	17%	19%
A vital activity for me	5%	4%	7%	4%	4%

Video games (dance and music only), (“Play participatory dance video games (e.g., Dance Dance Revolution)” / “Play participatory music video games (e.g., Rock Band)”)

- Interest in participatory video games is fairly low among dance and music audiences.

	Dance %	Music %	Total %
Not interested	67%	85%	77%
Haven't, but would like to try	19%	7%	12%
Used to, but don't anymore	3%	1%	2%
Enjoy it occasionally	8%	8%	8%
A vital activity for me	2%	0%	1%

TV competitions (dance and music only), (“Watch dance competitions on television” / “Watching music or singing competitions on television”)

- Dance and music audiences are fairly evenly split with regards to those who are interested in TV competitions and those who are not interested.

	Dance %	Music %	Total %
Not interested	36%	44%	40%
Haven't, but would like to try	5%	4%	4%
Used to, but don't anymore	7%	5%	6%
Enjoy it occasionally	41%	40%	41%
A vital activity for me	11%	7%	9%

Sing (music and opera only):

- One-half of music attendees sing, and 40% of opera audiences sing.

	Music %	Opera %	Total %
Not interested	26%	34%	27%
Haven't, but would like to try	8%	12%	8%
Used to, but don't anymore	16%	13%	16%
Enjoy it occasionally	20%	13%	19%
A vital activity for me	31%	27%	30%

Attend broadcasts of operas in cinemas (music and opera only):

- A minority of music and opera audiences (but a substantial minority) attend opera broadcasts in cinemas. Most of those who have not yet done so would like to.

	Music %	Opera %	Total %
Not interested	23%	17%	22%
Haven't, but would like to try	37%	39%	38%
Used to, but don't anymore	2%	2%	2%
Enjoy it occasionally	25%	19%	24%
A vital activity for me	13%	23%	14%

CDs (music and opera only), ("Listen to classical or 'art music' CDs, records or tapes" / "Listen to opera CDs, records or tapes")

- An overwhelming majority of both music and opera audiences listen to classical, art music or opera CDs. Music on CDs is more popular among these groups than downloaded music (see below).

	Music %	Opera %	Total %
Not interested	1%	7%	2%
Haven't, but would like to try	1%	5%	1%
Used to, but don't anymore	1%	3%	1%
Enjoy it occasionally	28%	49%	30%
A vital activity for me	68%	36%	65%

Download music for your own enjoyment (music and opera only):

- A majority of both music and opera audiences download music for their own enjoyment, either occasionally or more often.

	Music %	Opera %	Total %
Not interested	26%	28%	26%
Haven't, but would like to try	12%	15%	13%
Used to, but don't anymore	3%	4%	3%
Enjoy it occasionally	38%	35%	38%
A vital activity for me	21%	18%	20%

Watch any 'high quality' drama on television (by your own definition) (theatre only):

- A large majority of theatre audiences watch high-quality drama on TV.

	Theatre %
Not interested	8%
Haven't, but would like to try	2%
Used to, but don't anymore	4%
Enjoy it occasionally	52%
A vital activity for me	33%

Watch stage plays or theatre performances on television (theatre only):

- A slight majority of theatre audiences watch stage plays or theatrical performances on TV.

	Theatre %
Not interested	24%
Haven't, but would like to try	10%
Used to, but don't anymore	7%
Enjoy it occasionally	48%
A vital activity for me	11%

Companions and motivations

With whom do you attend dance / music / opera / theatre performances most commonly?

- Friends are the most common attendance companions in all four disciplines, followed by spouses or partners.
- A substantial minority of audiences in all disciplines attend alone.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
Friends	76%	64%	69%	75%	73%
My spouse or partner	54%	63%	49%	61%	60%

Alone	43%	38%	35%	31%	35%
My children or grandchildren	16%	20%	12%	28%	24%
Co-workers	22%	9%	13%	16%	15%
Other family	9%	12%	11%	16%	14%
Parents	7%	9%	4%	16%	13%
Visitors	8%	8%	11%	9%	9%

People go to dance / music / opera / theatre performances for many reasons. From the list that follows, please choose the three most important reasons why you attend dance / music / opera / theatre.

- Being inspired or uplifted is a very popular motivation in all disciplines (but not *the most popular* in all).
- The three most commonly-chosen motivations differ between the disciplines.
- Dance: 1) being inspired or uplifted; 2) discovering new choreographers and companies; 3) engaging intellectually with the art.
- Music: 1) being inspired or uplifted; 2) hearing great works by the masters; 3) discovering new composers and pieces.
- Opera: 1) discovering new operas that you've never heard or seen before; 2) being inspired or uplifted; 3) hearing and seeing great works by the masters. (*Note: The opera results should be viewed with regard to the fact that the only opera company participating was Tapestry New Opera, which specializes in the creation, development and performance of new works.*)
- Theatre: 1) engaging intellectually with the art; 2) being inspired or uplifted; 3) discovering new plays and playwrights.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
To be inspired or uplifted	58%	60%	48%	47%	51%
To engage intellectually with the art	41%	29%	36%	53%	45%
To discover new plays and playwrights / choreographers and companies / composers and pieces / operas that you've never heard or seen before	42%	30%	50%	38%	37%
To hear and see great works by the masters	24%	54%	47%	23%	30%
To relax and have fun	16%	23%	19%	32%	27%
To have an intense emotional experience	24%	25%	32%	27%	26%
To spend quality time with family or friends	12%	14%	12%	27%	21%
To become a better appreciator of dance / music / opera / theatre	28%	23%	21%	13%	18%
To expose others to the arts	13%	4%	5%	14%	12%
To learn about cultures other than my own	17%	10%	4%	9%	11%
To celebrate or observe my own cultural heritage	9%	5%	2%	8%	7%
To feel calmed, at peace, serene	3%	16%	5%	2%	5%

Are there any other reasons why you attend dance / music / opera / theatre performances?

The researchers read and categorized respondents' comments in order to analyze commonalities and interesting thoughts. From our reading of the comments, it appears that the most commonly cited other reason for attending performances came from those who attend for professional development reasons and to support other artists and colleagues. This is not surprising given that nearly a third (32%) of respondents indicated that they earn at least a portion of their income from performing or creating art.

- "To support artists and the arts industry in Toronto. The economy around art in Toronto is strong and artists consume art, strengthening the industry. To cross-pollinate the arts industry that I work in."
- "To support and engage the creative impulse within myself and others."
- "A vital part of my job as a dancer – to see what is happening, what and who I like, and network with dancers and choreographers."
- "Professional interest – seeing what's out there, what the trends are, inspiring for my own artistic aspirations."

Another common answer was for the pure enjoyment or sheer beauty of the performance:

- "I think dance is the most beautiful art form and offers to its audience a truth that exists within the body."
- "Pure enjoyment. Laughter. Catharsis."
- "Because it's beautiful and gives deep pleasure, a category you seem to have omitted above. 'Fun' is a bit of a put-down, don't you think? Like calling the 'David' 'cute'?"
- "I lose myself – worries, pressures of daily life disappear when I become engaged in a good performance."

Many respondents indicated that attending a performance is intellectually stimulating: "it makes you think". Other similar comments include:

- "Expands my thinking capabilities."
- "To learn about myself."
- "I find it challenges my thinking about how other people experience their own lives, even if it is not necessarily from another culture, but simply another perspective."

A number of parents attend performances with their children in order to introduce them to the arts. Several parents pointed out the benefits to their children, especially those with special needs:

- "To expose my child to as much culture as possible and teach him an appreciation of the arts."
- "Our grandchildren are both autistic. We like to give them new experiences. They really enjoyed all the different performances they have seen over the last five or six years at LKTYP."
- "Educate my children about different ways of being, knowing and appreciating the world around them."

Many respondents noted that live performing arts are a unique experience that you cannot get anywhere else, via recordings, films, or television shows. Many people experience the performing arts as

an inspiring and essential part of life. This is not surprising, considering the number of respondents (57%) who indicated that attending live performances is “A vital activity for me.”

- “Essential part of life for me – it’s as if it’s ‘in the blood’ and needs to be experienced as often as possible – live performance is best, but also we listen in the car, home, office, etc.”
- “I would not call it relaxing but it fulfills me unlike any other entertainment experience.”
- “To be asked to see differently, to sit differently in my chair; to be challenged; to be made uncomfortable; to engage in the live and immediate negotiation of cultural values.”
- “Often plays raise issues that are important to me, or cause me to think about things from a different point of view. They can be spiritual inspiration or an intellectual one. I also love the fact that each performance is unique, and that you have to be in the moment – there is no recapturing the experience – so different from TV or movies or the internet. There is magic in that once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

While most responses were very positive, not all were entirely so. Some respondents indicated that they have had some poor-quality experiences or that they don’t see themselves reflected in Toronto performing arts activity:

- “One thing definitely worth mentioning is that I also go to find some form of cultural heritage which I can relate to... But as much as cultural heritage is expressed in the theatres mentioned, primarily it is that of the dominant and middle class culture. As I am not a member of either of those cultural groups, I find it difficult to engage – however I am actively seeking out new works.”
- “To affirm my sense of self and my belief in the power of the stage. Unfortunately, seeing ‘bad’ theatre has the opposite effect on me... it makes me question the point of theatre and my own work. Therefore, I must be careful to pick productions that I trust are using the language of the stage aesthetically.”

Preparation

How much preparation do you like to do, typically, before attending a dance performance / a concert / an opera / a stage play? (For example, some people like to seek out information about the artist or works to be performed, attend a rehearsal or lecture about the program, etc.)

- One-half (or nearly one-half) of respondents in all four disciplines prefer to do “just a bit” of preparation before attending a concert. Another substantial minority likes to do “a moderate amount” of preparation.
- Between one-in-five and one-in-seven respondents do no preparation whatsoever.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
None	15%	19%	14%	18%	18%
Just a bit	53%	47%	51%	53%	52%
A moderate amount	31%	30%	32%	26%	28%
A lot	2%	4%	3%	3%	3%

What is your level of interest in doing the following preparatory activities before a dance / music / opera / theatre performance?

Similar response options in the four disciplines have been grouped in the statistics that follow. The groupings are listed with their new heading, while the individual discipline-based wording is listed in brackets in the following order: Dance / Music / Opera / Theatre.

Read program notes before curtain (same wording for all four disciplines):

- Reading program notes before curtain is the most popular preparatory activity, with nine-in-ten respondents having at least moderate interest in doing so before performances.
- Music and opera audiences have the highest interest in reading program notes.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	4%	1%	4%	3%	2%
Low interest	6%	4%	3%	8%	6%
Moderate interest	30%	24%	22%	32%	30%
High interest	60%	71%	71%	58%	61%

Synopsis (“Read a short synopsis of the program in advance” / “Read a short synopsis of the program in advance” / “Read a short synopsis of the opera in advance” / “Read a short synopsis of the play in advance”)

- Next to reading the program notes before curtain, reading a synopsis of the performance is the most popular preparatory activity, with eight-in-ten respondents having at least moderate interest in doing so before performances.
- Opera audiences have the highest interest in reading synopses.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	5%	4%	5%	9%	7%
Low interest	8%	12%	9%	15%	13%
Moderate interest	46%	42%	34%	41%	42%
High interest	41%	42%	53%	36%	38%

Preview or review by critic (“Read a preview or review by a professional critic” / “Read a preview or review of the concert by a professional critic” / “Read a preview or review of the production by a professional critic” / “Read a review of the production by a professional critic”)

- Counter to widespread belief in the declining impact of critics, a strong majority of respondents in all four disciplines have at least moderate interest in reading a preview or review by a professional critic.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	9%	9%	5%	8%	8%
Low interest	16%	18%	18%	19%	18%
Moderate interest	45%	44%	37%	40%	42%
High interest	29%	30%	40%	33%	32%

Audience comments (“Read comments about the artists or program by other audience members” / “Read comments about the concert by other audience members” / “Read comments about the production by other audience members” / “Read comments about the production by other audience members”)

- Dance audiences are the most interested in reading comments by other audience members.
- In the other three disciplines, a strong majority of respondents have little or no interest in doing so.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	20%	30%	40%	28%	27%
Low interest	28%	37%	32%	34%	33%
Moderate interest	38%	27%	18%	30%	31%
High interest	14%	6%	10%	8%	9%

Discuss with others (“Discuss an upcoming dance performance with others who are going” / “Discuss an upcoming concert with others who are going” / “Discuss an upcoming opera with others who are going” / “Discuss an upcoming play with friends who’ve already seen it”)

- A majority of respondents in all four disciplines have at least moderate interest in discussing the upcoming performance with others.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	11%	17%	14%	8%	11%
Low interest	26%	30%	26%	17%	22%
Moderate interest	42%	41%	39%	47%	45%
High interest	22%	12%	21%	27%	23%

Web info (“Seek out information on the web about the choreographer, company or pieces to be performed” / “Seek out information on the web about the artists or composer” / “Seek out information on the web about the cast, director, composer or plot” / “Seek out information on the web about the cast, director, playwright or plot”)

- A strong majority of respondents in all four disciplines are interested in seeking out information about the performers and performance on the web before attending.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	6%	10%	9%	13%	11%
Low interest	19%	24%	29%	24%	23%
Moderate interest	44%	42%	35%	42%	42%
High interest	31%	24%	28%	21%	24%

Pre-talk (“Attend a pre-performance talk or briefing about the artists or program” / “Attend a pre-performance talk or briefing about the program” / “Attend a pre-performance talk or briefing about the opera” / “Attend a pre-performance talk or briefing about the play”)

- Pre-performance talks are fairly popular in all four disciplines, especially music and opera.
- Theatre audiences are somewhat less interested in pre-performance talks.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	11%	12%	8%	28%	21%
Low interest	30%	22%	26%	31%	29%
Moderate interest	41%	40%	39%	28%	33%
High interest	18%	26%	27%	13%	17%

Attend a rehearsal (same wording for all four disciplines):

- Over one-half of opera audiences have at least moderate interest in the opportunity to attend a rehearsal, while exactly one-half of dance audiences have at least moderate interest.
- Theatre audiences have the least interest in attending a rehearsal.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	22%	23%	17%	42%	34%
Low interest	28%	31%	23%	26%	28%
Moderate interest	30%	31%	37%	22%	25%
High interest	20%	15%	23%	10%	13%

Advance peek (“Watch a video of the artists in advance of attending” / “Listen to musical excerpts in advance of attending” / “Listen to the opera in advance of attending” / “Read the play in advance of attending”)

- Theatre audiences are the least interested in having an advance peek at the upcoming performance (by reading the play in advance of attending).
- One-half (or nearly one-half) of respondents in the other three disciplines have at least moderate interest in having an advance peek at the upcoming performance (by watching a video of the dance artists, listening to musical excerpts, or listening to the opera).

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	15%	15%	25%	41%	31%
Low interest	30%	33%	28%	35%	34%
Moderate interest	40%	35%	33%	20%	27%
High interest	15%	17%	14%	4%	9%

Are there any other things you'd like to see dance / music / opera / theatre organizations do to help audiences prepare?

One of the most common responses was that audiences would like to get more of a glimpse at the "process" behind the performance, be it videos posted online or actually attending rehearsals or hearing interviews from the creative team, performers and crew:

- "As I am a lover of 'process', I would love to see short on-line videos of directors, writers, actors talking briefly about some of the work involved in a specific production in question, their approach, any revelations as they went through the arc of the work."
- "I am always interested in process oriented presentations. Performances that have opened windows onto the creative process to their audience."

A large number of respondents indicated a preference for more background and contextual material in the programs. Many of them also mentioned a desire to have the contents of the program and additional contextual material online available online:

- "Offering a downloadable audio file with notes, content, info would be of interest. Generally, I find programs nowadays have almost no content about the play or playwright. They tend to only feature the donors. I love going to the Shaw Festival because of the programs they hand out – filled with political, social and cultural context – and with great archival images. I realise most small theatres can't afford to print (or research) to the same degree – but a downloadable or PDF file would be a good start."
- "Perhaps give a little more information on the Net about the composers and performers of the upcoming music."
- "A variety of interesting program notes are always appreciated! I like to hear about the process of creation, from the designer(s), from the director, the origins of the play, etc., whatever may be relevant to the production."
- "Expand programmes – give history of composition, synopsis, sung texts translated (include English texts in the programmes as well). Provide short biography of composers (and even shorter ones for performers) and a short word about what happening in the world when the music was written (X invaded country Y, A discovered a cure for B, H was crowned King of R)."
- "I'd like better, clearer, large/darker font in the majority of playbills."

Another common response was the suggestion that arts organizations should make video 'trailers' similar to movie trailers to be shown online to get a glimpse at the upcoming production and also to provide any relevant background information and/or additional context:

- "Brief videos are great – I think the COC does a great job. The best is going to a working rehearsal. I would love it if opera companies made these opportunities more accessible."

- “Short YouTube interviews of director, designer, cast, crew etc posted online with links from the theatre’s page.”
- “Why not have previews like how movies do? Film a bit of a scene being rehearsed and put it on YouTube!”
- “Offer more access online about the play, show short snippets. Take a more film perspective on generating interest in a play. Post online interviews with cast and crew, show a ‘trailer’ to get people excited. Simply relying on critics and a poster is not enough to attract those outside of your subscription base.”

A substantial number of respondents indicated that they do not want any special preparations because “part of the pleasure is the surprise”:

- “I don’t think theatre organizations should ‘prepare’ audiences for the play. I do little to no preparation because the play itself should be the only means of conveying the entire play. If it doesn’t do that, then it has failed in its mission as a play.”
- “I enjoy being surprised, so don’t want too much info beforehand.”
- “I am unclear what you mean by preparing the audience. Dance, as in any performance I attend, should surprise, nudge, be new. Preparing seems like an exam, or test to me.”
- “Nope. Don’t understand why one would want to ‘prepare’.”
- “No, in general I like to be moved by the complete experience and not necessarily make it too formal – especially for new works, I like to experience it FIRST and then learn about how it evolved, etc.”

A number of parents indicated that they would like parent-oriented guides so they will be fully prepared as to the content of the performances and its suitability for children:

- “Because I go to the theatre with my kids, it would be nice to have a parent-oriented review of the performance – what is scary, what issues will arise, etc.”
- “Be honest. I took my young son to see Slava’s Snow Show and was mortified to see within the first few moments that the play was about an elderly hobo-like man attempting to commit suicide. I had queried the theatre, gone online, read reviews, done as much prep work as was available to me YET no one told me the truth about the theme of this experience.”

Several respondents indicated that organizations should do more with the lobby spaces to help audiences transition from the outside world to the performance space itself – including displaying program notes, background materials and other visual displays.

- “I am less interested in educational-style preparation, and more interested in material that helps me get into the world of the performance: viral videos, atmospheric lobby design, pre-performance activities at the venues like in Convergence/Passe Muraille’s Yichud, etc.”
- “Getting into the right frame of mind to focus and be engaged in the piece you’re watching can be quite difficult as one is still preoccupied with one’s own day and life when the house lights go down. It’s a little strange, but what about some sort of group meditation or activity that prepares the audience to wholly engage with the world they’re about to enter? Or even an innovative lobby design would help.”

- “I like when there is pre-show music in the lobby/theatre that ‘sets the mood’ – I also like when there is a visual arts display of work that also somehow ties in with the themes/ideas/moods of the show.”

Another suggestion that came up with some regularity was a request for discussion questions to be distributed before the show to stimulate post-show discussion and reflection:

- “To generate more group outings to theatre, it might be a good idea to have discussion questions and notes available for download online. The National Ballet does this for school groups and I think it’s a particularly handy tool, but one that doesn’t have to be limited to school outings. Much like book clubs, theatre companies can encourage groups of friends and/or likeminded people, to attend a show and then converse about it on a specific date. Having pre-determined questions provided may make this easier for people to organize.”
- “Invite all attendees to participate in an electronic discussion group concerning the plays of the past season and provide info about the upcoming season. Like an electronic book club.”

Activities during performances

What is your level of interest in doing the following activities at or during dance / music / opera / theatre performances?

Similar response options in the four disciplines have been grouped in the statistics that follow. The groupings are listed with their new heading, while the individual discipline-based wording is listed in brackets in the following order: Dance / Music / Opera / Theatre.

Stage introduction (“Hearing short introductions of each piece from the stage by the artistic director, choreographer or a company member” / “Hearing short introductions of pieces from the stage by the music director or a musician” / “Hearing a short greeting and introduction by the artistic director from the stage, just prior to curtain” / “Hearing a short greeting from the artistic director and explanation of the play you are about to see, just prior to curtain”):

- A majority of audiences in all four disciplines are at least moderately interested in hearing a short introduction or greeting from the stage.
- Theatre audiences have slightly less interest than audiences in the three other disciplines.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	15%	4%	19%	20%	16%
Low interest	20%	12%	18%	20%	18%
Moderate interest	37%	39%	33%	36%	37%
High interest	28%	44%	29%	23%	29%

Watching video magnification of the performers on screens hanging over the stage or in the auditorium (same wording for all four disciplines):

- A majority of audiences in opera and theatre have no interest in video magnification of performers.
- A majority of audiences in all four disciplines have low or no interest in video magnification.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	44%	37%	51%	62%	53%
Low interest	32%	32%	24%	24%	27%
Moderate interest	19%	25%	20%	12%	16%
High interest	5%	6%	5%	2%	4%

Taking pictures or videos with your cell phone camera during performances (assuming permission) (same wording for all four disciplines):

- Taking pictures or videos with a cell phone camera received very little interest from audiences in all four disciplines.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	70%	81%	86%	83%	80%
Low interest	18%	12%	7%	11%	12%
Moderate interest	9%	5%	6%	5%	6%
High interest	3%	3%	1%	2%	2%

Cell phone commentary (“Receiving real-time interpretive commentary on a cell phone or wireless device during the performance, either via Twitter or a Mobile App., with information about what you are watching” / “Receiving real-time interpretive commentary on a cell phone or wireless device during the concert, either via Twitter or a Mobile App., with information about what you are listening to” / “Receiving real-time interpretive commentary on a cell phone or wireless device during the performance, either via Twitter or a Mobile App., with information about the plot or characters” / “Receiving real-time interpretive commentary on a cell phone or wireless device during the performance, either via Twitter or a Mobile App., with information about the plot or characters”):

- Receiving cell phone commentary is the option that received the most unanimous lack of interest from all four disciplines.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	79%	87%	87%	88%	87%
Low interest	13%	9%	9%	8%	9%
Moderate interest	5%	3%	1%	3%	3%
High interest	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%

Seeing video or photographic images during concerts that add an artistic visual element to the program (music only):

- There was a distinct lack of consensus among music audiences regarding adding video or photographic elements to a concert. Just over one-half of respondents expressed little or no interest, while the other respondents expressed at least moderate interest.

	Music %
No interest	25%
Low interest	30%
Moderate interest	33%
High interest	11%

Reading surtitles (opera only):

- Surtitles achieved relative unanimity among opera-goers: 95% were either moderately or highly interested in reading surtitles during performances.

	Opera %
No interest	1%
Low interest	4%
Moderate interest	30%
High interest	66%

Options for different engagement strategies (music only):

Suppose that a classical or contemporary music group was performing the same program of music on three consecutive nights in three different formats. If all other aspects of the performance were identical, which program would you choose?

- The “moderate engagement” concert experience was most popular among music audiences.

Night #1: A traditional concert format with no talking from the stage: 17%

Night #2: A format that includes brief introductions of each piece by a conductor or musician: 64%

Night #3: An interpretation-rich format designed to provide musical insight, with fewer pieces but more explanation and examples that illuminate the music: 19%

How much do you agree with each of the following statements?

Audience members should not do anything but sit quietly and watch or listen attentively during performances

- Music and opera audiences are strongest in agreement that audiences should just sit quietly and watch or listen during performances.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
Strongly disagree	6%	4%	3%	6%	5%
Disagree	23%	14%	19%	20%	19%
No opinion	24%	12%	7%	16%	16%
Agree	28%	35%	40%	36%	34%
Strongly agree	19%	35%	31%	23%	25%

Audience members should be allowed to participate, react and interact during performances

- Dance and theatre audiences are strongest in agreement that audiences should be allowed participate, react and interact during performances.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
Strongly disagree	10%	26%	21%	13%	15%
Disagree	15%	30%	28%	21%	22%
No opinion	23%	16%	17%	20%	20%
Agree	42%	22%	24%	36%	34%
Strongly agree	11%	5%	9%	10%	9%

Activities after performances

Some people enjoy vigorously discussing the program immediately after the performance, while others prefer to reflect quietly on their own. Which do you prefer?

- The strongest preference in all disciplines is “both” reflecting privately and discussing vigorously.
- Theatre is the only discipline where the number of people preferring to discuss the program vigorously is as large as the number preferring to reflect privately.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
Reflect privately	16%	29%	20%	13%	17%
Discuss vigorously	11%	9%	13%	15%	13%
Both	66%	47%	58%	65%	61%
No preference	7%	15%	10%	7%	9%

What is your level of interest in doing the following activities after a dance / music / opera / theatre performance?

Similar response options in the four disciplines have been grouped in the statistics that follow. The groupings are listed with the individual discipline-based wording in the following order: Dance / Music / Opera / Theatre.

Discuss the performance / concert / opera / performance with friends or family members on the way home:

- Discussions with friends and family are very popular among audiences in all four disciplines.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	1%	3%	4%	1%	1%
Low interest	3%	7%	5%	2%	3%
Moderate interest	34%	37%	33%	26%	30%
High interest	63%	53%	58%	71%	65%

Stay afterwards for a facilitated Q&A session with the artistic director or dancers / with the musicians / with the music director or singers / with one or more actors or the artistic director:

- A facilitated Q&A session is quite popular in all four disciplines, with a majority of audiences expressing at least moderate interest.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	8%	16%	16%	12%	12%
Low interest	17%	30%	22%	21%	22%
Moderate interest	47%	37%	43%	39%	40%
High interest	28%	16%	20%	28%	25%

Stay afterwards to discuss the performance informally in small groups, with a knowledgeable dancer / musician / singer or musician / actor in each group:

- Audiences in all four disciplines are fairly evenly split with regards to those who are interested in informal discussions and those who are not.
- Music audiences showed the least interest, while dance audiences expressed the highest interest.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	14%	26%	18%	23%	22%
Low interest	29%	33%	26%	26%	28%
Moderate interest	38%	28%	40%	34%	34%
High interest	19%	13%	15%	16%	16%

Read a review of the performance / concert / opera / performance by a professional critic:

- Interest in reviews by professional critics is quite high among attendees in all four disciplines.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	8%	9%	7%	10%	10%
Low interest	17%	16%	14%	21%	19%
Moderate interest	42%	44%	42%	40%	41%
High interest	32%	30%	38%	29%	30%

Watch or listen again (“Watch a video recording of the dancers or one of the pieces on the Internet” / “Listen again to pieces on the program via recordings” / “Listen again to the opera via recordings” / “Watch a video recording of one of the scenes from the play on the Internet”):

- Music and opera audiences are quite interested in listening again to the program or opera via recordings.
- Theatre audiences have only limited interest in watching a video recording of a scene from the play on the Internet.

- Dance audiences are fairly evenly split between those with little or no interest and those with moderate or high interest in watching a video recording of the dancers or one of the pieces on the Internet.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	26%	5%	10%	50%	35%
Low interest	30%	15%	24%	28%	26%
Moderate interest	28%	49%	51%	17%	27%
High interest	16%	31%	14%	4%	12%

Express your opinions about the performance / concert / performance / performance in an online blog or forum:

- Interest in online blogs or forums is quite limited among all four disciplines, with 13% to 16% of audiences expressing moderate or high interest in expressing their opinions in this way.

	Dance %	Music %	Opera %	Theatre %	Total %
No interest	52%	61%	66%	57%	57%
Low interest	34%	25%	21%	27%	28%
Moderate interest	11%	12%	11%	13%	12%
High interest	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%

Are there any other things you'd like to see dance / music / opera / theatre organizations do to help audiences reflect on their experiences?

A comment from one survey respondent could serve as a summary of the range of responses received to this question: "The beauty of the arts is that everyone responds differently and has different needs to interact with them."

A large number of respondents showed an interest in post-show chats, with many of them preferring a casual social setting for this kind of engagement:

- "Create a casual social environment after the show for people to talk about the show and connect to each other, not necessarily with guidance or an actor there."
- "Format a post-show Q&A to be more comfortable, social and approachable – like a pub chat – and have relevant people staff it, not actors. The directors or designers would be of interest or their teams who could answer questions."
- "Yes, have light refreshments available after a concerts... and then audience members tend to stay and chat about the concert and meet and greet performers... fun, supportive and socializing, particularly to people who attend concerts alone."
- "A glass of wine, a lobby chat where you can mingle but also a moderator for the post theatre chat. We most often go nearby, sit, eat and talk. Some plays you can't go straight to bed... you need to process it."

Some respondents indicated that they would like to be led in post-show chats by performers, directors, choreographers, conductors, designers etc., in a more formal lecture-type experience:

- “I attend the concerts because I enjoy the music itself, but I also enjoy hearing comments from the musicians because they can bring knowledge to it that I lack. For the most part, I am not interested in what other members of the audience think about the music unless they are experts, and I don’t know why they should be interested in mine.”
- “I find after the show Q&A sometimes distracting as I don’t always agree with what other audience members think. I do like to hear from the performers and the director about what the show is about or the methods used to draw conclusions.”

Many respondents were eager for a chance to offer feedback immediately following the performance:

- “An onsite comment book. Something with a few questions not too involved but useful for the theatre and viewer. I have older parents who are not hooked up to the internet but have opinions, insights they like to express.”
- “If theatres want feedback, they might consider a booth in the lobby for outgoing audiences, a little like CITY-TVs old video corner... if people wanted to sit down and give up two minutes’ worth of observation while the play was still fresh, it might prove interesting...”
- “Provide an opportunity (when exiting the theatre) to provide immediate response: whiteboard, sticky note, computer...”
- “Ask ticket-holders to judge the play as they exit... for the company’s edification... and potential marketing?”
- “Possibilité de déposer un commentaire (opinion, point de vue, position, etc.) écrit dans une boîte à la sortie d’une représentation. Une pile de bons de commentaires disponibles sur une boîte à suggestion ou boîte d’opinion, placée bien en vue.”

Other respondents indicated that they would like some time to reflect after a performance and would be open to providing feedback after some time has passed. Many of them mentioned they would like some kind of material to prompt discussion and reflection:

- “A ‘belated reflections’ response form sent out to people who come... because sometimes it is only after days that you really appreciate what got you!”
- “Offer an opportunity for feedback/discussion after a period of time has passed. Immediate reflections often differ from those that have been allowed to marinate.”
- “Provide book-club style discussion points that people can use for their own discussion on the streetcar home.”
- “Since I tend to go to the theatre with my kids, it would be helpful to get some ideas of follow up activities that could be done with them. Not sure what an example might be – maybe ideas like making puppets, or certain related books to read, etc.”

Many respondents requested a stronger web presence, be it podcasts, blogs or MP3s available for downloads after the show:

- “Perhaps allow performers to take part in the blog or forum to allow for more thorough responses than may be possible in a verbal post-performance Q&A session.”
- “Post an intelligent analysis or critical interpretation on the website.”

- “Support info about the play, cast, crew, designers, composers, themes, playwright on the theatre website perhaps.”
- “This doesn’t really ‘help me reflect’, but I admit I like it when someone from the theatre is on Twitter, and asks me what I thought of the show (I usually tweet that I will be seeing a show, and it’s kind of fun when they acknowledge that and ask for feedback).”
- “I sometimes look into works that inspired all or part of a particular play. Some playwrights put their inspirations in the playbill, but it would be interesting for playwrights and actors to put their inspirations on the play’s website (for example, a list of web links, references to books, etc.).”

A number of respondents felt that the type of reflection depended upon the type of performance they attended:

- “I think the questions you ask depend on the audience. Some less experienced folk might prefer an interactive experience, whilst others prefer to interact with music more traditionally. My response to a concert would depend on the concert. If I found the piece performed challenging and stimulating, I might wish to have a discussion in any format. If it were a piece that I love and just want to bask in it... that’s really what I want to do. The beauty of the arts is that everyone responds differently and has different needs to interact with them.”
- Re: staying after performance for various activities – TOTALLY depends on what the play ‘did’ to/for me. Generally I am happy to just quietly go home.”
- “It depends entirely on the dance piece being performed. Generally, I come to see the dancers dance, not the audience. There are VERY occasional exceptions, but not many.”

While the vast majority of the responses were positive, several respondents pointed out the shortcomings of post-show chats, lectures and other audience engagement measures:

- “Audiences don’t need help to reflect on their experiences. Don’t be so condescending.”
- “If I’ve seen four of five dozen ‘talkbacks’ in my day, only a few have been tolerable because the actors/production team on stage are normally as bland and self-interested as the audience members who ask their mundane questions. Focus on sprucing up and specifying talkbacks (without blatantly leading them with self-interested facilitators).”
- “I like the idea of a talkback sometimes, but I find it is often used as space for audience members to blather on about their own experiences, rather than asking valid questions. That’s why I’m almost always turned off by Q&As.”
- “Keep the digital world out of the theatre – no cell phones or instant messaging about the play. The value of theatre is that it doesn’t have that – the silences are profound. After the play you can have all that, but somehow for me the theatre is like a sacred place, and if you let that in, it’s ruined.”

ENGAGEMENT SURVEY SUMMARY PRESENTATION

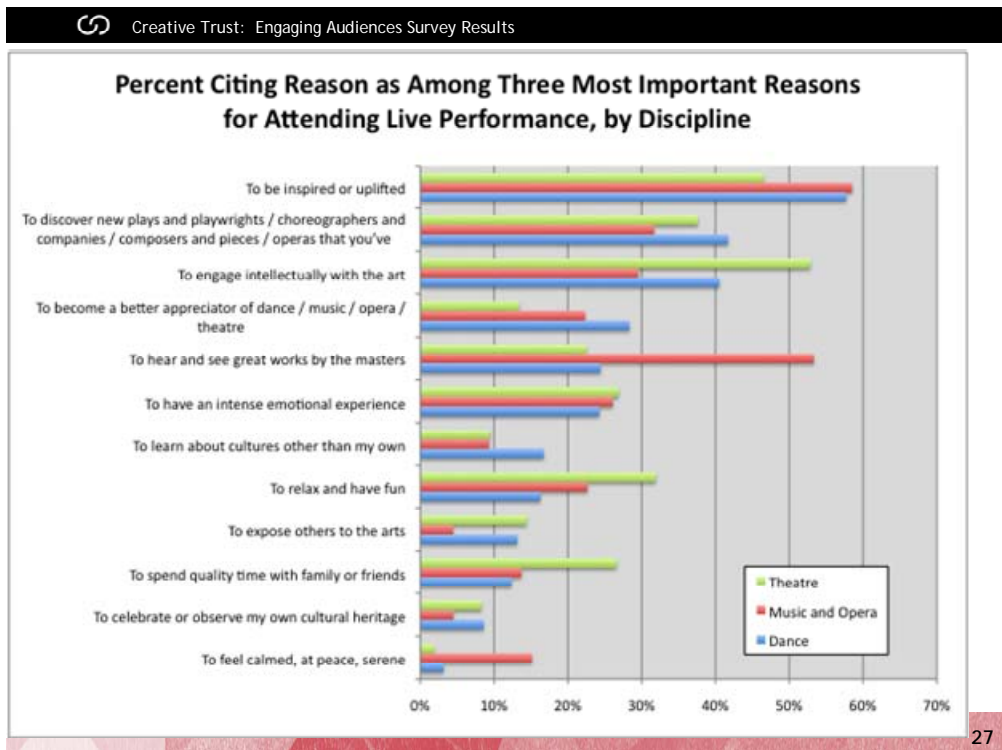
On June 24th, 2010, Alan Brown held a workshop with the Creative Trust organizations that had participated in the Audience Engagement Survey, as well as other members of the Toronto performing arts community, to discuss the survey’s findings. In that workshop Brown outlined a number of major findings:

- A majority consider going to live performances “a vital activity”
- Dance audiences are most likely to be active in the inventive mode of participation
- A large number of music patrons have active music participation in their past
- Three out of five music patrons can probably read music; nearly half of dance-goers can dance
- A majority of dance patrons are watching the dance competitions on TV
- There was a close correlation between age and involvement in participatory video games
- Television is a key medium of drama participation, among theatre-goers
- Concert-goers sustain their interest in music by listening to recordings
- Curatorial participation in music is highly correlated with age
- A lot of people are consuming music and dance on the Internet
- Blogging (reading or writing) is an occasional activity for about one in five patrons and blogging behavior is more prevalent amongst younger patrons

In addition to these results Brown also raised a number of points on all the major sections of the survey.

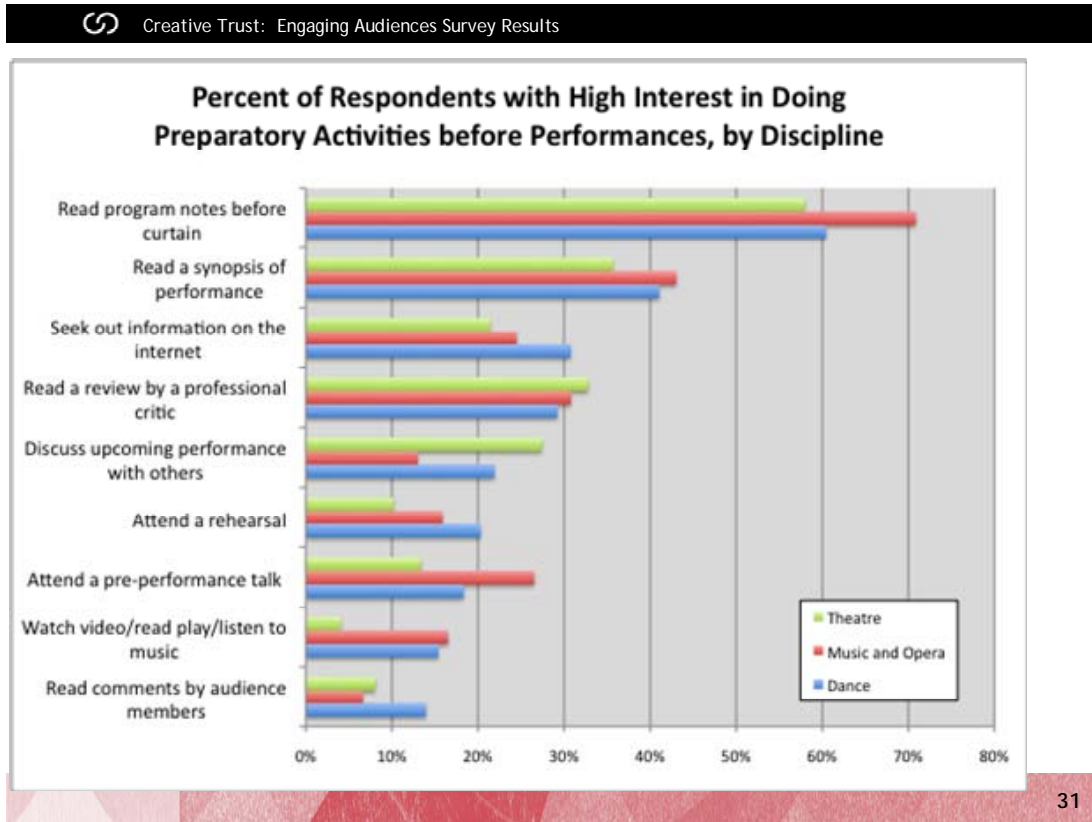
Social Context and Motivations:

The majority of responders to this survey identified friends and spouses as their most common accompaniment to performing arts events, regardless of discipline. Motivations for attending events varied slightly across the disciplines, with the motivation ‘to see and hear great works by the masters’ being popular among audiences of music and opera and ‘to be inspired or uplifted’ being popular across the board.



Engagement Prior to the Performance:

While the very few respondents identified a desire for preparation before attending the performance, many respondents identified a desire for a moderate amount of context, mainly in the form of reading program notes or a synopsis of the show.



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Engagement During the Performance:

Preferred engagement during the performance varied slightly across the disciplines. Few respondents reported 'high interest' in engagement during performances, unless it came in the form of surtitles during an opera performance or short introductions by the director. There were also a small number of respondents (approximately 10%) who identified an interest in 'seeing video or photo images during concerts that add to the artistic element of the program'.

About a quarter of audiences are interested in trying video/audio enhancements. Most interest is in surtitles or short introductions, but there was also some interest in seeing photo or video images or watching video magnification of the performers. Four out of five concert goers showed a desire for at least some interpretive assistance during the performance, with the rest of the respondents split between an interest in no assistance and an interest in an 'interpretation-rich format' with fewer pieces but more interpretation.

Dance audiences are the most progressive in terms of their desired level of interaction. Approximately half dance respondents said 'audiences members should be allowed to participate, react and interact during performances', a stark contrast to the approximately 70% of music and opera respondents and approximately 60% of theatre respondents who said 'audience members should not do anything but sit quietly and watch or listen attentively during performances'.

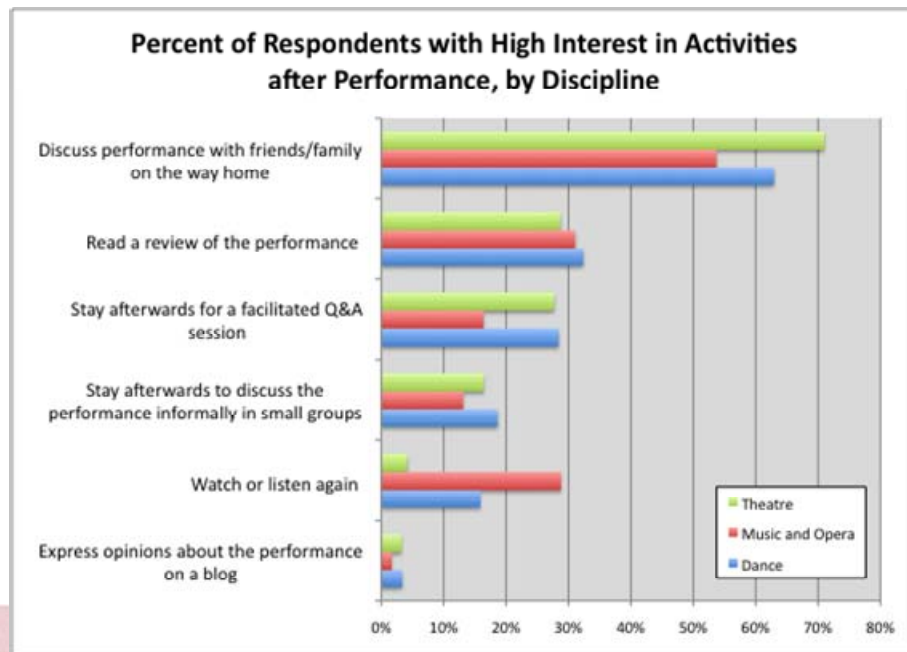
Engagement After the Performance:

Engagement preferences relating to activities after the performance were slightly varied across the disciplines but generally similar in terms of types of activities. The majority of respondents from each discipline indicated an interest in both reflecting privately and discussing their thoughts with others. Music audiences tend to process the experience more privately.

Informal discussion with friends and family is the most common means of post-processing, with over 60% of respondents indicating a 'high interest' level. Approximately 40% of respondents also specified an interest in reading reviews and staying after the performance for a Q&A session.

Most of the responses about post-performance activities were common across the disciplines except for the act of re-listening or re-watching the performance; approximately 30% of concert-goers showed an interest in this activity, a marked larger amount than in the other disciplines.

About 30% of concert-goers enjoy “re-listening”



General Observations:

After presenting major findings, Alan Brown concluded the session by offering some general thoughts. He re-emphasized the finding that audiences are diverse in regard to the different disciplines, and encouraged the representatives to think holistically about their particular art form, and engage their audiences in a similar holistic fashion. Brown encouraged the attendees to think of ways to engage with, or 'tap into' the experience their audiences are having with their particular art form, and suggested that engagement in this way would pay 'social dividends' which are likely to be popular. Brown also emphasized one of the major over-arching findings of this study: that most people want to be engaged, but don't want to prepare for the experience and don't have a desire to be engaged in a large or intrusive way. Brown called this group of people 'the big middle' and encouraged attendees to brainstorm ways in which to engage and entice this group.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Project Team

Creative Trust:

Creative Trust's multi-faceted Audiences Project aims to raise the level of understanding and practice by performing arts companies in Toronto of audience development and diversification, audience motivation and engagement, arts education, and access.

The Project's objectives are to: help companies develop the best and most appropriate systems, including data management and online resources, to maintain connections and communicate effectively with their audiences; help companies share, understand and embrace the best practices in audience outreach, development and retention; explore the role and impact of arts education activities on current and future audiences, and on contributing to the development of youth and society; provide access to the performing arts by Deaf/hard of hearing and Blind/low vision audience members.

Our intent is to focus on changing internal behaviours and ways of working, and provide a program of broad and measurable impact. We are monitoring the results and tracking the effectiveness of the Project, and will document and share our findings widely.

WolfBrown: Principal, Alan Brown. Alan Brown is an internationally acknowledged authority on audience development and a leading researcher and management consultant in the nonprofit arts industry. He has studied audiences, visitors and patterns of cultural participation in almost every major market in the U.S. His work focuses on understanding consumer demand for cultural experiences and on helping cultural institutions, foundations and agencies to see new opportunities, make informed decisions and respond to changing conditions. He has authored numerous articles and reports on audience behaviours, trends in cultural participation, engagement practices and stakeholder value. Recently, Alan has been writing and speaking about the value system surrounding arts experiences. His essay *An Architecture of Value* appeared in the spring 2006 edition of Grantmakers in the Arts Reader, and serves as the basis for keynote addresses at conferences. WolfBrown's program was chosen for its proven, research-based outcomes and relevance to our members' needs.

Hill Strategies Research: Kelly Hill, President. Hill Strategies Research is a company that provides insightful evidence about the arts with a focus on Canadian statistical research. Hill Strategies Research publishes the Arts Research Monitor and Statistical Insights on the Arts series and also conducts commissioned research projects. Kelly holds a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Western Ontario and a Bachelor's degree in Economics from Université Laval in Quebec City. As our Research Associate Kelly Hill brings his renowned Canadian experience and knowledge to the collection, monitoring, aggregation and analysis of data collected during the Engaging Audiences program.

Appendix B – Companies participating in the Audience Engagement Survey

- Ballet Creole
- Buddies in Bad Times Theatre
- CanAsian Dance Festival
- Dancemakers
- Factory Theatre
- Fujiwara Dance Inventions
- inDANCE
- Kaeja d'Dance
- Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People
- Nathaniel Dett Chorale
- Nightwood Theatre
- Princess Productions
- Soundstreams
- Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra
- Tapestry New Opera
- Tarragon Theatre
- The Theatre Centre
- Théâtre français de Toronto
- Theatre Passe Muraille
- Toronto Dance Theatre

Appendix C – Summary Presentation Workshop Participants (June 24, 2010) Centre for Social Innovation, Toronto, Ontario, Presenter Alan Brown

- Alexandra Asher (Nathaniell Dett Chorale)
- Belinda Bale (Soulpepper)
- Brainerd Blyden-Taylor (Nathaniell Dett Chorale)
- Taylor Birt(Theatre Passe Muraille)
- Ella Cooper(Creative Trust Board)
- Nicole Cornish (Toronto Dance Theatre)
- Chloé Coves (Theatre Francais de Toronto)
- Anna Di Costanzo (Ballet Creole)
- Monica Esteves (Nightwood Theatre)
- Joe Goulart (Theatre Centre)
- Marilyn Hamilton (Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People)
- Brendan Healy (Buddies in Bad Times Theatre)
- Camilla Holland (Tarragon Theatre)
- Jeanne Holmes (Dancemakers)
- Christopher House (Toronto Dance Theatre)
- Olena Jatsyshyn (Elmer Iseler Singer)
- Laura Kappel (Princess Productions)
- Bradley Kulay (Dancemakers)
- AhYoung Lee (Theatre Passe Muraille)
- Jane Marsland (Creative Trust)
- Anna Matthew (Tapestry New Opera)
- Shawn McCarthy (Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People)
- Allison McColl (Soundstreams)
- Hugh Neilson (Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People)
- Kevin Ormsby (Ballet Creole)
- Peter Smurlick (Tafelmusik)
- Rebecca Pierson (Nightwood Theatre)
- Ruth Waters (Theatre Centre)
- Karen Scovell (Nathaniell Dett Chorale)
- Lauren Scovell (Tapestry New Opera)
- Kaija Siirala (CanAsian/Fujiwara)
- Alex Siirala (Tafelmusik)
- Margaret Smith (Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People)
- Kirk Thompson (Tarragon Theatre)
- Andrea Vagnianos (Toronto Dance Theatre)
- Venda Murtha (Tafelmusik)
- Michelle Yeung (Factory Theatre)
- Sam Zimmerman (Tapestry New Opera)
- Grace Thrasher (Canada Council for the Arts)
- Anne Valois (Canada Council for the Arts)

Appendix D – Survey Instrument

Welcome/Survey Landing Page

Thank you for participating in the Toronto Audience Study. Your responses are confidential and anonymous. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, you may elect to receive a free electronic copy of the survey report when it is released later in 2010.

Let's get started...

Protocol

To begin, please indicate if you have attended programs offered by any of the following organizations over the past two years. This is a list of all the organizations that are participating in this study.

(select all that apply)

[List of all 20 groups participating in the study]

Next, please tell us all the different ways that you participate in [music/dance/theatre/opera]. (select all that apply)

Response Options:

A vital activity for me

Enjoy it occasionally

Used to, but don't anymore

Haven't, but would like to try

Not interested

List of Items for Music

Compose or arrange music

Play a musical instrument

Sing in a chorus or perform in operas or musicals

Take music lessons or classes

Download music for your own enjoyment

Listen to classical or contemporary music CDs, records or tapes

Listen to classical or contemporary music via streaming audio from the Internet

Read or contribute to online blogs or forums about music

Attend live concerts of classical or contemporary music

List of Items for Opera

Compose or arrange music

Play a musical instrument

Sing in a chorus or perform in operas or musicals

Take music lessons or classes

Download music for your own enjoyment

Listen to opera CDs, records or tapes

Listen to classical or contemporary music via streaming audio from the Internet

Read or contribute to online blogs or forums about opera

Attend broadcasts of operas in cinemas

Attend live opera performances

List of Items for Dance

Choreograph dances, or make up your own dance steps
Take dance lessons or classes
Dance socially at clubs or parties
Watch dance competitions on television
Watch dance programs or videos on the Internet
Read or contribute to online blogs or forums about dance
Attend live dance performances

List of Items for Theatre

Write plays or scripts
Read plays for your own enjoyment
Take acting lessons or classes
Watch drama on television
Watch theatre or drama videos on the Internet
Read or contribute to online blogs or forums about theatre
Attend live performances of stage plays
Attend live musical theater performances

With whom do you typically attend [music/dance/theatre/opera] performances? (select all that apply)

My spouse or partner
My children or grandchildren
My parents
Other family
Friends
Visitors
Co-workers
Alone

People go to [music/dance/theatre/opera] performances for many reasons. From the list that follows, please choose the three most important reasons why you attend [music/dance/theatre/opera]. (choose three only)

To relax and have fun
To discover new [plays and playwrights/choreographers and companies/composers and pieces/operas] that you've never heard or seen before
To hear and see great works by the masters
To spend quality time with family or friends
To feel calmed, at peace, serene
To expose others to the arts
To have an intense emotional experience
To be inspired or uplifted
To engage intellectually with the art
To celebrate or observe my own cultural heritage
To learn about cultures other than my own
To become a better appreciator of [music/dance/theatre/opera]

Are there any other reasons why you attend [music/dance/theatre/opera] performances?
[Comments box]

When it comes to learning about an artist or company or the works they will perform, how much preparation do you like to do, typically, before attending [a concert/a stage play/a dance performance/an opera]?

Scale: 1=None, 7=A Lot

What is your level of interest in doing the following preparatory activities before a [music/dance/theatre/opera] performance?

Scale: 1=No Interest, 7=High Interest

List of Items for Music

Listen to musical excerpts in advance of attending
Read a short synopsis of the program mailed or emailed to you in advance
Read a preview or review of the concert by a professional critic
Read comments about the concert by other audience members
Seek out information on the web about the artist or composer
Attend a rehearsal
Attend a pre-performance talk or briefing about the program
Read program notes before curtain

List of Items for Opera

Listen to the opera in advance of attending
Read a short synopsis of the opera mailed or emailed to you in advance
Read a preview or review of the production by a professional critic
Read comments about the production by other audience members
Seek out information on the web about the cast, director, composer or plot
Attend a rehearsal
Attend a pre-performance talk or briefing about the opera
Read program notes before curtain

List of Items for Dance

Read a short synopsis of the program mailed or emailed to you in advance
Read a preview or review by a professional critic
Read comments about the artist or program by other audience members
Seek out information on the web about the choreographer, company or pieces to be performed
Attend a rehearsal
Attend a pre-performance talk or briefing about the artist or program
Read program notes before curtain

List of Items for Theatre

Read the play in advance of attending
Read a short synopsis of the play that is mailed or emailed to you in advance
Read a review of the production by a professional critic
Read comments about the production by other audience members
Discuss an upcoming play with friends who've already seen it
Seek out information on the web about the cast, director, playwright or plot
Attend a rehearsal
Attend a pre-performance talk or briefing about the play

Read program notes before curtain

Are there any other things you'd like to see [music/dance/theatre/opera] organizations do to help audiences prepare?

[Comments box]

What is your level of interest in doing the following activities at or during [music/dance/theatre/opera] performances?

Scale: 1=No Interest, 7=High Interest

List of Items for Music

Hearing short introductions of pieces from the stage by the conductor or a musician

Watching video magnification of the performers on screens hanging over the stage

Seeing video or photographic images during concerts that add an artistic visual element to the program

Receiving real-time interpretive commentary on a cell phone or wireless device during the concert, either via Twitter or a Mobile App., with information about what you are listening to

Taking pictures or videos with your cell phone camera during performances (assuming permission)

List of Items for Opera

Watching video magnification of the performers on screens hanging over the stage

Reading supertitles

Receiving real-time interpretive commentary on a cell phone or wireless device during the performance, either via Twitter or a Mobile App., with information about the plot or characters

Taking pictures or videos with your cell phone camera during performances (assuming permission)

List of Items for Dance

Hearing short introductions of each piece from the stage by a company member

Watching video magnification of the performers on screens hanging over the stage

Receiving real-time interpretive commentary on a cell phone or wireless device during the performance, either via Twitter or a Mobile App., with information about what you are watching

Taking pictures or videos with your cell phone camera during performances (assuming permission)

List of Items for Theatre

Hearing a short greeting from the artistic director and explanation of the play you are about to see, just prior to curtain

Watching video magnification of the performers on screens hanging over the stage

Receiving real-time interpretive commentary on a cell phone or wireless device during the performance, either via Twitter or a Mobile App., with information about the plot or characters

Taking pictures or videos with your cell phone camera during performances (assuming permission)

[For Music Protocol Only] **Suppose that a classical or contemporary music group was performing the same program of music on three consecutive nights in three different formats. All else being equal, which program would you choose? (select one)**

Night #1: A traditional concert format with no talking from the stage

Night #2: A format that includes brief introductions of each piece by a conductor or musician

Night #3: An interpretation-rich format designed to provide musical insight, with fewer pieces but more explanation and examples that illuminate the music

Philosophically, where are you along this continuum? (select a number)

1 = Audience members should not do anything but watch or listen attentively during performances

7 = Audience members should be allowed to interact and interpret during performances

Some people enjoy vigorously discussing the program immediately after the performance, while others prefer to reflect quietly on their own. All else being equal, where are you along this continuum? (select a number)

Scale: 1 = Reflect Privately, 4 = No Preference; 7 = Discuss Vigorously

What is your level of interest in doing the following activities after a [music/dance/theatre/opera] performance?

Scale: 1=No Interest, 7=High Interest

List of Items for Music

Stay afterwards for a facilitated Q&A session with the conductor, soloist or musicians

Stay afterwards to discuss the concert informally in small groups, with a knowledgeable musician in each group

Discuss the concert with friends or family members on the way home

Read a review of the concert by a professional critic

Express your opinions about the concert in an online blog or forum

Listen again to pieces on the program via recordings

List of Items for Opera

Stay afterwards for a facilitated Q&A session with the conductor, director or singers

Stay afterwards to discuss the opera informally in small groups, with a knowledgeable singer in each group

Discuss the opera with friends or family members on the way home

Read a review of the opera by a professional critic

Express your opinions about the performance in an online blog or forum

Listen again to the opera via recordings

List of Items for Dance

Stay afterwards for a facilitated Q&A session with dancers or a dance critic

Stay afterwards to discuss the performance informally in small groups, with a knowledgeable dancer in each group

Discuss the performance with friends or family members on the way home

Read a review of the performance by a professional critic

Express your opinions about the performance in an online blog or forum

Watch a video recording of one of the pieces on the Internet

List of Items for Theatre

Stay afterwards for a facilitated Q&A session with one or more actors, the director, or a theatre critic

Stay afterwards to discuss the performance informally in small groups, with a knowledgeable actor in each group

Discuss the performance with friends or family members on the way home

Read a review of the performance by a professional critic

Express your opinions about the performance in an online blog or forum

Watch a video recording of one of the scenes from the play on the Internet

Are there any other things you'd like to see [music/dance/theatre/opera] organizations do to help audiences reflect on their experiences?

[Comments box]

The following questions are for statistical purposes only. Your answers are confidential.

Do you earn a portion of your income from performing or creating art?

Yes / No

Your gender?

Female

Male

In what year were you born?

[Drop-down list of birth years from 1900 to 1999]

Your marital status?

Married or partnered

Previously married or partnered

Single, never married

Are there any children under 18 years of age living in your household?

Yes / No

Please indicate your occupational status:

Working full-time

Working part-time

In school full-time

Not working

Full-time Family Caregiver

Retired



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