



Performing Arts Research Coalition  
Community Report 2002

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THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS



## Performing Arts Research Coalition Community Report 2002

First-Year Findings from the Seattle Household Survey

*Mary Kopczynski and Mark Hager of the Urban Institute*

A collaborative project of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, American Symphony Orchestra League, Dance/USA, OPERA America, and Theatre Communications Group, supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

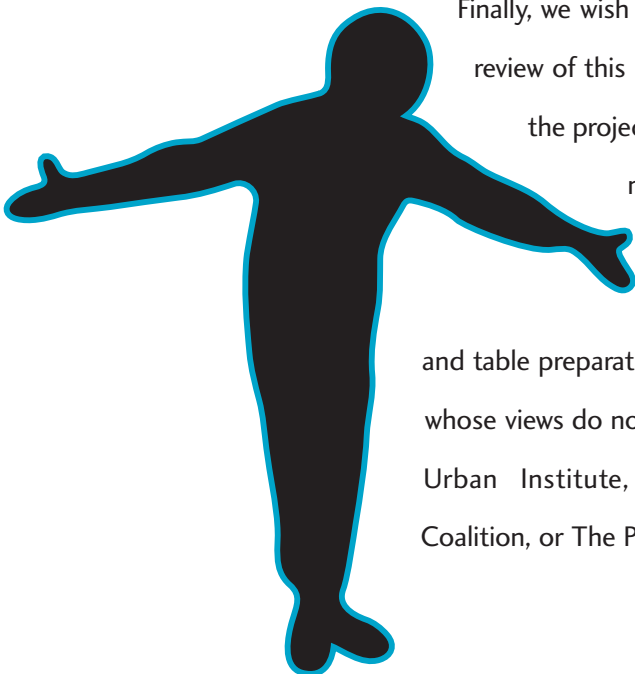
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# Acknowledgments

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We thank Marian Godfrey, Stephen Urice, and Shelley Feist of The Pew Charitable Trusts for their generous and enthusiastic support of this effort. We are also grateful for the leadership provided by the Performing Arts Research Coalition. In particular, we wish to applaud Marc Scorca, president and CEO of OPERA America and project coordinator for the Coalition, Andrea Snyder, Executive Director of Dance/USA, and John Munger, Director of Research and Information for Dance/USA, for their guidance of the Seattle effort.

Finally, we wish to thank Harry Hatry for his careful review of this report and his guidance throughout the project; Sarah Wilson for her assistance in managing key aspects of data collection; and Frank Wilkosz for his assistance with data analysis and table preparation. Errors are those of the authors, whose views do not necessarily represent those of the Urban Institute, the Performing Arts Research Coalition, or The Pew Charitable Trusts.



## ABOUT THE PARC PROJECT

The Performing Arts Research Coalition (PARC) brings together five major national service organizations (NSOs) in the performing arts—the American Symphony Orchestra League, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Dance/USA, OPERA America, and Theatre Communications Group—to improve and coordinate the way performing arts organizations gather information on their sector.

This unprecedented collaborative effort is coordinated by OPERA America and supported by a three-year, \$2.7 million grant to OPERA America from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Working with the Urban Institute, a leading nonprofit research organization in Washington, D.C., the project is collecting data in 10 pilot communities: Alaska, Cincinnati, Denver, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Austin, Boston, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Sarasota (FL), and Washington, D.C.

Information is being gathered on administrative expenditures and revenues of performing arts organizations, the value of the performing arts as experienced by both attenders and nonattenders of arts events, and audience and subscriber satisfaction with performances and related activities.

The findings from these various research activities are expected to help performing arts organizations across the country improve their management capacity, strengthen their cross-disciplinary collaboration, increase their responsiveness to their communities, and strengthen local and national advocacy efforts on behalf of American arts and culture.

Research findings will be available each year of the initiative, and a summary analysis will be released in 2004. The national service organizations are regularly sharing findings with their members, policymakers, and the press, indicating how this information could be used to increase participation in and support for the arts, locally and nationally.

For further information, please contact: OPERA America at (202) 293-4466.

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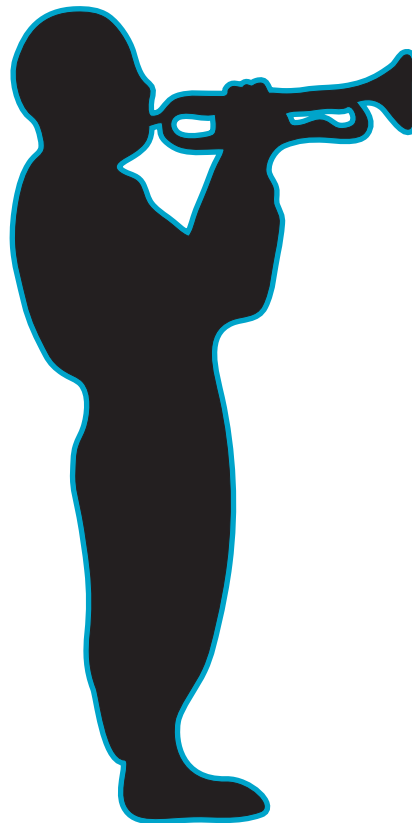
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# Foreword

This is the first Seattle survey conducted to determine perceptions about the performing arts. Past surveys focused on participation in the arts as a whole and were used to determine their economic impact on the region. While economic impact is one way to measure value, it is not the only measure. The results of this survey clearly show that the majority of Seattleites not only participate in the live performing arts, but they also highly value these events. They place the greatest value on the role of the performing arts in the education and development of children.

It is important to note that in Seattle, the performing arts are not just activities enjoyed by wealthy or older patrons. Indeed, people under the age of 35 are no less likely to be arts attenders than people over the age of 35.

From the perspective of the 13 performing arts groups involved in the Seattle effort, the following are the most significant findings:

1. There is a high rate of participation in the performing arts. Two in three Seattleites, or 67 percent, attended a live performing arts event last year. This is more than the 60 percent who attended a professional sporting event.
2. Seattleites place high value on the contribution of the performing arts to individuals and the community. Eighty-five percent find the performing arts to be personally enjoyable.
3. Income and age are weakly related to attitudes about the performing arts. However, as education levels increase, people are more likely to find the performing arts to be enjoyable.
4. Ninety-three percent of Seattleites agree that the performing arts contribute to the education and development of children.
5. Although it is widely believed that arts audiences are “graying,” the majority of survey respondents under age 35 attended between 1 and 11 performing arts events in a 12-month period, while another 11 to 15 percent attended 12 or more events during that time.
6. More frequent arts attenders also attend other events such as movies, professional sports events, and rock concerts more frequently. This suggests that Seattleites are not necessarily “arts lovers” but rather are “goers” or “doers.”

The local performing arts groups involved in this project believe further insight can be gained through additional cross-tabulation of the data. With this data, they hope to build the case for increased arts coverage by local media in order to continue to develop their audiences.

Margo Spellman, Pacific Northwest Ballet  
on behalf of the Seattle PARC Working Group

# Preface

The Performing Arts Research Coalition—PARC—provides a historic opportunity for five national service organizations to work together in an unprecedented three-year project to measure the level of participation in and support for the arts in 10 communities across the country.

The first findings from that project—the results of household surveys conducted in Alaska, Cincinnati, Denver, Pittsburgh, and Seattle—are now available. They enable us to draw for the first time a detailed picture of the value of the performing arts to individuals and their communities, and to garner a greater understanding of the perceived obstacles to greater attendance.

The findings are extremely encouraging. They reveal an arts audience far larger and more diverse than currently believed, comparable in size to audiences for movies and sports. Support for the performing arts also appears to be broad, with far-reaching cultural, social, and educational implications. Attendance at arts events, for example, was perceived by attenders and nonattenders alike to be of significant value to communities, and especially important to the development and education of children. Several attendance barriers cited were primarily perceptual; for example, potential audiences did not fully appreciate the ease of attending performances and the accessibility of the arts experience.

Such information should be useful to a variety of stakeholders, including policymakers evaluating the role of government in supporting the arts; funders needing hard data on which to base and increase their financial support of the arts; media seeking a wider consumer base; and managers of arts organizations tackling the twin challenges of increasing and diversifying their audiences.

The size and breadth of the performing arts audience also suggest an appetite for expanded arts coverage in newspapers, radio, and television, and that arts coverage should perhaps be considered in broader terms than performance reviews. Grantmakers may be interested in placing their arts support in the larger context of the range of civic benefits that derive from arts attendance.

Local initiatives that improve parking and reduce perceived and real obstacles to convenience and safety could have a significant impact on the size of the arts audience and the frequency of attendance, particularly if such efforts are combined with communication strategies that introduce more people to the arts experience.

We invite you to review on the following pages these common threads and to reflect on the vibrant picture they paint of the high levels of participation in and appreciation for the performing arts in these five communities. In closing, PARC wishes to convey how indebted the coalition is to the generous support of The Pew Charitable Trusts and to the outstanding service of the Urban Institute in designing and administering this project.

Marc A. Scorca  
OPERA America President and CEO  
PARC Project Coordinator

# Highlights from the Five Communities

Following are the key findings from the five household surveys for Alaska, Cincinnati, Denver, Pittsburgh, and Seattle. The findings cover participation rates, characteristics of attenders, perceived value of the performing arts to individuals and to communities, and barriers to greater attendance.

## PARTICIPATION RATES

The research indicates that attendance at live professional performing arts events, at least on an occasional basis, is an activity enjoyed by a significant majority of adults in the five communities studied. The notion that the performing arts only appeal to a narrow segment of the general public does not appear to be accurate.

- **Attendance Levels:** Nearly two-thirds of respondents reported attending a live professional performing arts event in the past 12 months. These numbers range from 69 percent (in Alaska) to 61 percent (in Pittsburgh). Frequent attenders, defined as those who attended at least 12 performances over the past year, range from 18 percent of respondents (in Denver) to 12 percent (in Cincinnati).
- **Arts vs. Sporting Events:** In all five communities, more people have attended a live performing arts event at least once in the past year than have attended a professional sporting event. However, arts attenders are active citizens who participate in a wide range of activities and volunteer for a variety of community organizations.
- **Performing Arts and Leisure Activities:** The research confirms that frequent performing arts attenders are also the most frequent attenders of other leisure activities, including sporting events, movies, festivals, museums, and popular concerts. Attenders were generally more involved with these activities than nonattenders of performing arts events. Rather than an “arts” versus “other activities” distinction, the findings suggest that people generally are either involved in community activities (be it attendance at performing arts activities or otherwise) or they are not.



- **Performing Arts and Volunteering:** In all five communities, arts attenders and frequent arts attenders are considerably more likely to volunteer than are nonattenders—not just for arts organizations, but generally in their community. Although there is clear evidence to support this relationship, the data cannot be used to suggest that attendance at performing arts results in higher levels of volunteerism. Nonetheless, arts attenders display characteristics that are conducive to greater civic engagement and stronger communities.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF ATTENDERS

The arts audience is diverse. It includes people from all age groups and income levels, and is not *limited*, as is commonly believed, to older and affluent individuals.

- **Age and Attendance:** The most noteworthy finding from the surveys is the lack of a strong relationship between age and level of attendance.
- **Household Income and Attendance:** Nonattenders are more likely to have lower incomes and frequent attenders are more likely to have higher incomes. However, the percentage of attenders with moderate household incomes is not greatly different from those in the highest income households.
- **Education and Attendance:** There is a strong relationship between education level and category of attendance. That is, as education level increases, so also does the percentage of respondents who fall into attender or frequent attender categories of attendance.

## VALUE OF THE PERFORMING ARTS TO THE INDIVIDUAL

The research indicates clearly that arts attenders place a very high value on the role of the arts in their lives in terms of enjoyment, their understanding of themselves and other cultures, creativity, and connection to their communities. This holds true across age groups, income levels, and the presence or absence of children at home.

- **Offers Enjoyment:** A strong majority of respondents have strong opinions about the level of enjoyment derived from live performing arts. More than three-quarters of respondents strongly agree or agree that the arts are enjoyable.
- **Factors Unrelated to Enjoyment:** Household income, age, and the presence of children at home are largely unrelated to the degree to which respondents find live performing arts to be enjoyable.
- **Impact of Education on Enjoyment:** In four of the five communities, as levels of education increase, so does the percentage of respondents who strongly agree with the statement that attending live performances is enjoyable.

- **Stimulates Critical Thinking:** In almost all cities, more than three-quarters of respondents also strongly agree or agree that attending live performing arts is thought provoking.
- **Factors Related to Critical Thinking:** The strong belief that the performing arts are thought provoking does not differ substantially by household income level, age, or the presence of children in the home. However, consistent with expectations, this belief is held most commonly by frequent attenders and least commonly by nonattenders.
- **Increases Cultural Understanding:** Respondents in each of the five communities have similar views regarding the extent to which live performing arts help them better understand other cultures. Overall, between 68 percent (in Cincinnati) and 76 percent (in Alaska) of respondents strongly agree or agree with this statement. This strong level of agreement holds regardless of education, income, age, or whether or not there are children at home.
- **Encourages Creativity:** Between 58 percent (in Pittsburgh) and 65 percent (in Alaska) of respondents in each community strongly agree or agree that attending live performing arts performances encourages them to be more creative. Education level and household income play little role in whether one feels strongly that attending live performing arts encourages higher levels of creativity.

## VALUE OF PERFORMING ARTS TO COMMUNITIES

Attenders place an even greater value on the arts in their communities than they do in their own lives. They believe strongly that the arts *improve the quality of life* and are a *source of community pride, promote understanding of other people and different ways of life, and help preserve and share cultural heritage*. Above all, they believe that the arts *contribute to the education and development of children*. Especially noteworthy is the fact that a majority of nonattenders share similar views.

- **Individual vs. Community Value:** The percentage of respondents with positive opinions about the value of the arts to their community is even higher than that reported in the preceding section. This suggests that people place a higher value on the arts in their communities than they place on the value of the performing arts in their own lives. Combining both the percentages of respondents who strongly agree and agree with each of these statements, a clear and substantial majority are in agreement, in every community, with every statement in the survey about community values.
- **Value to Children:** More than 9 out of 10 respondents in each of the five communities either strongly agree or agree that the performing arts contribute to the education and development of children. These opinions about the contributions made by the performing arts to the education and development of children are held consistently regardless of education level, income, age, presence of children, or frequency of attendance.

- **Increased Quality of Life:** More than 8 out of 10 respondents strongly agree or agree that the performing arts improve the quality of life in their community.
- **Preserves Cultural Heritage:** A strong majority of respondents in each of the five communities strongly agrees or agrees with the statement that the arts help preserve and share cultural heritage. Among these respondents, the research finds no relationship between this belief and education level, income level, or the presence of children at home.
- **Strengthens Local Economy:** In contrast, respondents are less inclined to value the contribution of the performing arts to the local economy.

## BARRIERS TO ATTENDANCE

There are, of course, barriers to arts attendance among nonattenders and barriers to more frequent attendance among those who already attend arts performances. What is particularly interesting is that, despite what some might suspect, the cost of tickets ranks lowest among the three primary barriers.

- **Three Key Barriers:** Of the 11 barriers suggested in the survey, only three are cited by a majority of respondents in the five communities. *Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways* and *hard to make time to go out* are the two most-cited barriers. *Cost of tickets* consistently ranks third across the sites.
- **Prefer Spending Time Elsewhere:** About one-third of respondents in each community indicate that their preference to spend leisure time in other ways is a big reason why they do not attend more performing arts events. One of the most notable characteristics of the preference to spend leisure time in other ways is that it is one of several factors that clearly differentiates attenders from nonattenders in all five communities.
- **Difficulty Finding Time:** Interestingly, attenders and frequent attenders are almost as likely as nonattenders to say that *hard to make time to go out* is a substantial barrier. The one variable that makes this a big factor for more people is the presence or absence of children in the home.
- **Cost of Tickets:** The cost of tickets is the only “big” barrier that attenders cite more often than nonattenders or frequent attenders. Especially noteworthy is the fact that the cost of tickets as a barrier to performing arts attendance is substantially unrelated to education level, age, or whether there are children in the home.

The research makes it clear that attenders and frequent attenders share the same concerns about limited time and the cost of tickets with nonattenders. Yet the first two groups find attendance at the arts sufficiently rewarding to overcome these obstacles. Artists and arts organizations have the challenge of offering performances of sufficient quality, supported by strong customer service and community programs, to help potential attenders and frequent attenders overcome these barriers.

Other obstacles cited less often by attenders and nonattenders also offer arts organizations an opportunity to build audiences by overcoming barriers of perception.

- **Lack of Appeal:** The statement that the *performing arts do not appeal* is cited as a big barrier by between 10 and 14 percent of respondents in the five communities. This barrier is very clearly tied to education level and, as might be expected, clearly differentiates attenders from nonattenders. Performing arts organizations might consider increasing community programs and adult education activities that could help build an interest in the arts among nonattenders.
- **Feel Out of Place:** A number of nonattenders said they *feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events*, although fewer people cite this as a big barrier, and the relationship with education is much weaker in all communities. Performing arts organizations might wish to examine the way audiences are greeted and made to feel welcome upon entering the theater and before performances, during intermissions, and at the conclusion of the event.

Additional barriers, such as *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events*, are obstacles whose importance varies by community. This particular barrier could be addressed by arts organizations if they are in a position to make special parking arrangements for their audiences. Similarly, the belief that *performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations* could be mitigated by improved lighting, more visible security, and general awareness of the needs of the audience beyond the final applause.

# Seattle Household Survey Findings

During the spring of 2002, 804 residents of the greater Seattle area responded to a telephone household survey designed by the Urban Institute in collaboration with PARC to elicit information about the frequency and pattern of their attendance at live performing arts events. The survey also probed their attitudes toward the value of the performing arts to their personal lives and to their community. This report provides the key findings from that survey.

Findings from the Seattle survey should interest participating members of the performing arts collaborative, local businesses, government officials, and residents of the greater Seattle area. By using this information, arts organizations will be better positioned to enhance their leadership role in the Seattle community and nationally. They also may find the information helpful in efforts to improve their organizational management and identify opportunities for greater participation of individuals in performing arts activities.

## HOW THE REPORT IS ORGANIZED

The report provides a snapshot of the level of attendance at and appreciation for the performing arts in the greater Seattle community. It is organized around four key topics:

- **Attendance at Performing Arts Events:** How often do the residents of Seattle attend live performing arts events? Does frequency differ by income, age, education, or the presence of children in the household?
- **Perceived Value of the Performing Arts to Individuals:** What do the residents think about the value of the performing arts in their own lives? Do attitudes vary by such characteristics as age and income?

- **Perceived Value of the Performing Arts to the Community:** What are residents' attitudes about the value of the performing arts to the community as a whole? Do attitudes reflect income, education, or age characteristics?
- **Barriers to Participation:** What do residents think are the biggest obstacles to greater attendance at performing arts events?

The information from the survey, which provides answers to these and other similar questions, is presented in tabular form with accompanying explanatory text. The tables provide the basic information from which the reader can make any number of inferences, depending on the interests of the organization or individual reviewing the information. The text notes the most striking findings in each table and is designed to enable a reader to review the survey results quickly and easily. Some of these findings incorporate feedback provided by local working group participants during a site visit conducted in the summer of 2002.

A statistic called Somer's d is used in a number of tables to show the relationship between two variables. Somer's d values of less than  $-0.15$  or higher than  $+0.15$  are worth your attention, while values closer to zero indicate a weak or even nonexistent relationship between variables. For a full discussion of Somer's d values, please see page 55 in the section on methodology.

## PARC PARTNERS IN SEATTLE

- ACT Theatre
- Intiman Theatre
- Northwest Chamber Orchestra
- On the Boards
- Pacific Northwest Ballet
- Seattle Children's Theatre
- Seattle Opera
- Seattle Repertory Theatre
- Seattle Symphony
- Seattle Theatre Group
- Taproot Theatre Company
- The Empty Space Theatre
- UW World Series at Meany

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SEATTLE RESPONDENTS

Seattle residents who responded to the survey reflect the diverse education levels, household incomes, ages, and household compositions of the community. This diversity enables us to compare reported attitudes and behaviors of respondents by these characteristics. The result is a complex and nuanced picture of who attends live performing arts events, who does not, the value they place on such performances, and the barriers they perceive to greater attendance. The following four tables show how these major characteristics are distributed among survey respondents.

Two cautions: First, a substantial number of respondents chose not to report their household income level. In the tables where we look at breakdowns by income, we include only those respondents who reported their income. Second, because of the relatively small numbers of respondents in the sample who completed only elementary school, readers should be careful not to draw major conclusions about this group of respondents.

There were too few nonwhite respondents in the sample to permit meaningful analysis by race/ethnicity. The respondents are 81 percent white, 5 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 5 percent Hispanic/Latino, 3 percent black, 2 percent other or mixed race, and 1 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native. Two percent of respondents did not report their race/ethnicity.



### HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED

	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Elementary school	30	4%
High School or GED	170	21%
Junior college or tech school	261	33%
Four-year college or university	210	26%
Post-graduate degree	128	16%
Did not report	5	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

### AGE

	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Under 25	98	12%
25-34	155	19%
35-44	197	25%
45-54	153	19%
55-64	83	10%
65 and over	106	13%
Did not report	12	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

### TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Less than \$25,000	85	11%
\$25,000 to under \$50,000	200	25%
\$50,000 to under \$100,000	265	33%
\$100,000 or more	113	14%
Did not report	141	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

### CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD

	Number of Respondents	Percentage
No children at home	495	62%
Children under 13 years of age	225	28%
Children 13 years and older	137	17%
Did not report	11	1%

Total does not equal 100% because some families have children both under and over the age of 13.

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

Percentage totals in this report may not always add to 100 percent because of rounding.



# Attendance

Attendance is the most common measure of how much people value the performing arts. This section focuses on attendance, but also considers related behaviors such as listening to recorded music, watching performances on public television, and participating personally in performing arts activities.

To gauge respondents' attendance levels, we asked them about their attendance at a variety of performing arts events in the past year. For example, we asked people how many times they had attended ballet or modern/contemporary dance performances at or by the Pacific Northwest Ballet, Paramount/Moore Theatres, On the Boards, and the UW World Dance Series.

However, people also go to dance performances presented or performed by other performing arts organizations, whether in Seattle or elsewhere. So we also asked how many times the respondent had attended other dance performances at any other place (not counting elementary, middle, or high school productions). We used this same procedure to learn about attendance at opera, theatre, and symphony performances.

The measure of attendance for each discipline consists of the number of performances at both the named organizations and others. We also include a catchall "other discipline" category. The examples given to respondents for this category were chamber music, jazz, folk or traditional arts, and festivals. This category is meant to include the full range of performing arts activities that respondents could not group under dance, opera, theatre, or symphony.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Attendance Levels Vary:** Two in three Seattleites went to a live, professional performing arts presentation last year. Of those, one in four were frequent attenders, meaning they attended 12 or more performances.

**Education and Income Matter:** People with higher levels of education and those in higher income households are more likely to attend performing arts events.

**Age Is Not a Factor:** Attendance levels do not vary substantially by age category.

**Participation Takes Several Forms:** Frequent attenders are more likely to enjoy recorded presentations and to be personally involved in the performing arts by playing music, singing, or otherwise performing their own art. However, a substantial number of nonattenders also participate in these ways.

**Frequent Attenders Do More Than Just Attend Live Arts Events:** Frequent performing arts attenders are also more frequent attenders of such activities as the movies, sporting events, and pop/rock concerts. This suggests that attenders are better characterized as “generally involved” rather than “arts lovers.”



More respondents say they attended theatre than any other type of performing arts event.

TABLE 2.1

**ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, BY DISCIPLINE**

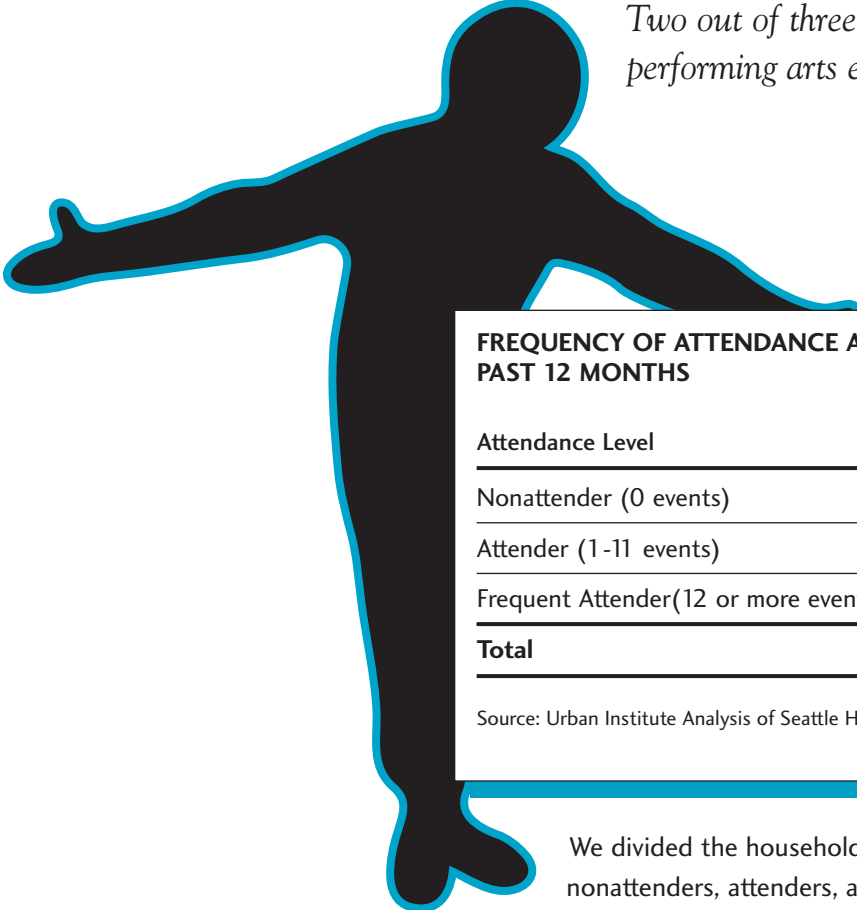
Discipline	Percent Attending At Least One Performance	Average Number of Performances (nonattenders included)	Average Number of Performances (discipline attenders only)
Dance	33%	1.4	4.1
Opera	10%	0.2	2.5
Theatre	46%	2.4	5.3
Symphony	19%	0.6	3.2
Other	35%	1.7	4.9
<b>Any Discipline</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>9.4</b>

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

More than two out of every five respondents said they had been to a live professional play or musical in the past 12 months. Opera is the discipline that captures the smallest percentage of the general population, with 10 percent of respondents attending in the past year.

Including the 54 percent of respondents who did not go to a play or musical in the past year, the average respondent went 2.4 times. In contrast, the average respondent attended less than one (0.2) opera performance last year. While comparatively few people in Seattle attend opera, those who do attend say that they saw on average between two and three operas last year.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents reported attending at least one performing arts event in the past 12 months. This leaves 33 percent of respondents that we refer to as “nonattenders.”



*Two out of three Seattleites attended a live performing arts event in the past year.*

TABLE 2.2

**FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS**

Attendance Level	Number	Percentage
Nonattender (0 events)	262	33%
Attender (1-11 events)	410	51%
Frequent Attender(12 or more events)	132	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>100%</b>

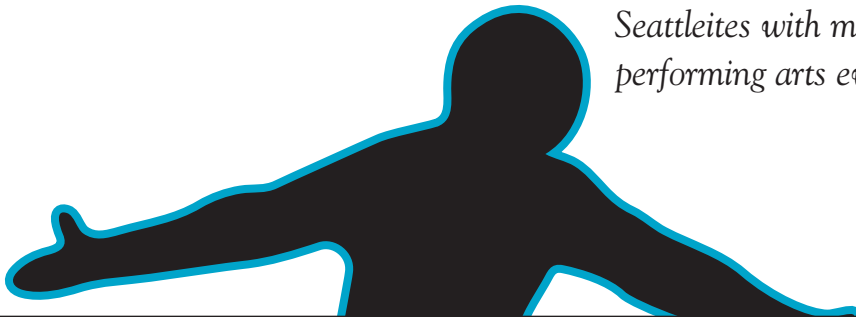
Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

We divided the household survey respondents into three groups: nonattenders, attenders, and frequent attenders. These distinctions are important, because we expect that the way people feel about the performing arts and about the factors that keep them from attending performances more often will be related to their frequency of attendance. Thus, in the remainder of this section and in the sections to come, we report differences among these three categories of performing arts attenders.

One in four Seattleites who attend performing arts events went to 12 or more events in the past year. About half of all respondents say they attend arts events, but less frequently than once a month. Our meetings with community working groups indicate that breaking out the middle (attender) category would provide useful distinctions for performing arts managers. Future research should take a closer look at differences between people who attend one to three times a year and those who attend more frequently.

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Several contemporary studies of arts attendance have discussed differences among nonattenders, infrequent or moderate attenders, and frequent attenders. However, these discussions are usually not faced with the difficulty of defining what number of performances differentiates one category of attender from another. In this study, we place the break between attenders and frequent attenders at 12 performances.



*Seattleites with more education attend live performing arts events more often.*

**TABLE 2.3**

**FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS, BY EDUCATION**

Attendance Level	All	Elementary School	High School or GED	Junior College or Tech School	Four-year College or University	Post-graduate
Nonattender	33%	57%	57%	33%	19%	16%
Attender	51%	37%	40%	51%	61%	52%
Frequent Attender	16%	7%	4%	15%	21%	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

Education level is positively related to attendance level. Among respondents whose highest level of completed education is high school or less, more than half did not attend a performing arts event in the past 12 months. The percentage of nonattenders decreases steadily as level of education increases. Among the most educated, only 16 percent are nonattenders. The opposite trend is evident for frequent attenders. Among the least educated, very few are frequent attenders. Conversely, about one in three (32 percent) of the most educated fall into the frequent attender category.

As described in the methodology section at the end of the report, a measure of association called Somer's d can give us an indication of the strength of the relationship between two variables. The value of Somer's d for education level and the three categories of attendance is +0.27. The positive sign tells us that there is an overall association between higher education level and higher level of attendance in the performing arts. The magnitude of the statistic (0.27) is worth paying attention to because it exceeds our guideline of 0.15 and above for noting the presence of a relationship between two variables. Thus, we conclude that education level is positively associated with attendance level.



*Seattleites from households with the lowest income are most likely to be nonattenders.*

TABLE 2.4

**FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

Attendance Level	All	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 to under \$50,000	\$50,000 to under \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Nonattender	33%	48%	35%	27%	22%
Attender	51%	44%	53%	54%	53%
Frequent Attender	16%	8%	13%	20%	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

Respondents from the poorest households constitute a very small proportion of frequent attenders (8 percent), while a quarter of respondents from the wealthiest households are frequent attenders. People in higher income households attend the performing arts more often than people from lower income households.

This claim of a positive relationship between income and attendance is substantiated by a Somer's d value of +0.15.



*Contrary to common notions, there is very little relationship between age and attendance level.*

**TABLE 2.5**

**FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS, BY AGE**

Attendance Level	All	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and Over
Nonattender	33%	32%	32%	36%	27%	35%	37%
Attender	51%	57%	52%	48%	57%	39%	46%
Frequent Attender	16%	11%	15%	16%	16%	27%	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

While the age category with the greatest percentage of frequent attenders is 55–64 years, respondents over the age of 65 have the highest proportion of nonattenders of any age cohort. Respondents under the age of 25, along with those aged 45–54, represent the highest percentages of those who have been to at least one performance in the past 12 months. These findings call into question the commonly held assumption that there is a “graying” of the audience for the performing arts, at least in Seattle.

A Somer’s d value of +0.02 supports the conclusion that there is little relationship between age and attendance level.



*Sixty percent of Seattleites with young children at home still manage to attend live performances.*

**TABLE 2.6**

**FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS, BY CHILDREN IN HOME**

Attendance Level	All	No Children at Home	Children Under 13 Years of Age	Children 13 Years and Older
Nonattender	33%	31%	40%	30%
Attender	51%	51%	48%	53%
Frequent Attender	16%	18%	12%	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

Interestingly, respondents with teenagers at home are no less likely than those without children to be performing arts attenders. About 7 in 10 of these respondents are attenders or frequent attenders of the performing arts.





*Seattleites also experience the performing arts by listening to recordings and engaging personally in artistic endeavors.*

**TABLE 2.7**

**PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN ARTS-RELATED ACTIVITIES, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS**

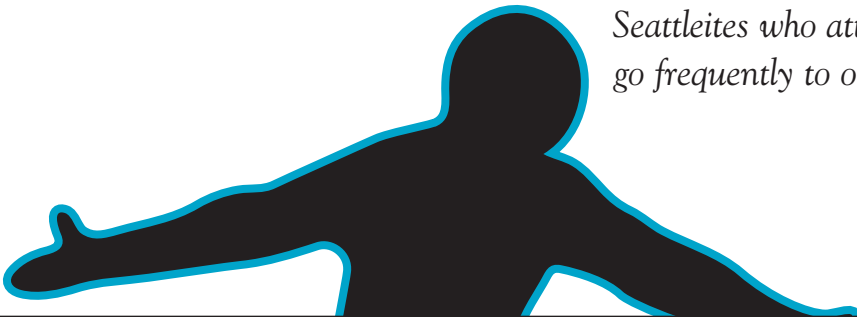
Activity	Percent Yes	Attendance Level		
		Nonattender	Attender	Frequent Attender
Listen to classical music on radio, CD	65%	46%	72%	83%
Watch performing arts on television	71%	52%	79%	84%
Play musical instrument	27%	15%	28%	46%
Sing in a choir or singing group	16%	8%	19%	24%
Perform or produce performing arts	21%	7%	24%	39%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

The majority of people in Seattle report listening to recordings of classical music at least a few times a year (65 percent) and watching the performing arts on television (71 percent). Not surprisingly, frequent performing arts attenders are more likely to extend their participation to these activities than are attenders. In turn, attenders are more likely to engage in such activities than are nonattenders. Even among nonattenders, recordings and television are substantial means by which Seattleites enjoy the performing arts. Nearly half of nonattenders listen to recorded classical music, and more than half have watched a performing arts event on television in the past year.

Personal involvement in the arts, through playing musical instruments, singing, or performing or producing an arts event, is much more rare than is listening to recordings or watching television. However, these activities are also related to attendance and point to alternate means by which nonattenders and attenders express their appreciation for the performing arts.

For each activity in this table, respondents were asked, “How many times, on average, do you [insert activity]?” Response options were every day, at least once a week, at least once a month, seldom, or never. Seldom was defined to mean a few times a year. Percent “Yes” reflects the percentage of respondents who reported that they participated in each activity either seldom, monthly, weekly, or daily.



*Seattleites who attend performing arts events also go frequently to other leisure events.*

**TABLE 2.8**

**PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN OTHER LEISURE ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS**

Activity	Percent Yes	Average Annual Attendance	Average Annual Attendance at Each Leisure Activity by Attendance Level		
			Nonattender	Attender	Frequent Attender
Go to movies	85%	9.0	5.8	10.2	11.9
Attend professional sporting event	60%	4.7	3.6	5.3	5.5
Attend amateur sporting event	36%	3.4	2.1	3.8	4.7
Attend live pop/rock concert	35%	1.4	0.5	1.6	2.8
Attend live comedy show	24%	0.5	0.2	0.5	1.0
Go to club to hear live music or dance	50%	4.2	3.1	4.3	6.3
Go to museum or art gallery	70%	2.7	1.0	2.9	5.3
Attend a community festival, parade, etc.	78%	2.5	1.6	2.8	3.4

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

With no exceptions, performing arts attenders go to nonperforming arts events more often than nonattenders, and frequent performing arts attenders go more often than attenders. These findings call into question the commonly held assumption that there is an arts/non-arts dichotomy, one that assumes a separation between those who attend the performing arts and those who attend sports, go to bars, or attend other social activities. The findings suggest that performing arts attenders are simply part of a more active segment of the Seattle community.

# Value to the Individual

This section reports survey answers to a series of questions designed to capture information about the respondents' perceptions of the value of the performing arts. These personal attitudes offer clues about what motivates people to attend performing arts activities, including how these motivations might differ depending on education, income, age, and frequency of attendance at performing arts events.



## HIGHLIGHTS

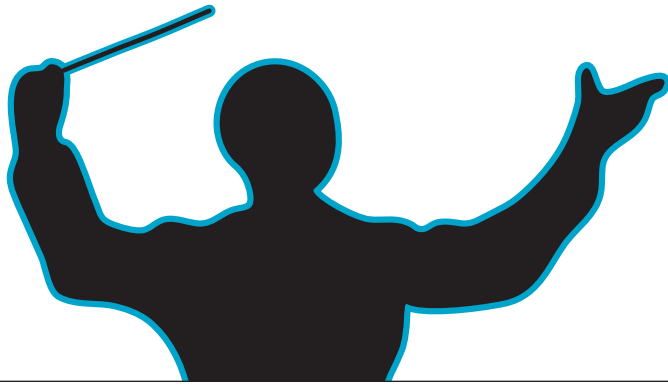
### **Positive Attitudes Toward the Arts Predominate:**

The majority of Seattleites agree with positive statements in the survey about the role that the performing arts play in their lives. The statement that generated the most agreement is that the performing arts are *personally enjoyable* (85 percent). Somewhat fewer (56 percent) agree that the performing arts make them *feel more connected to the community*.

### **Attitudes Are Strong Regardless of Demographics:**

On the whole, education, income, age, and the presence of children at home are largely unrelated to personal attitudes about the role of performing arts in respondents' lives. One exception is noted: as education level increases, respondents were more likely to agree that the performing arts are *enjoyable*.

**Attendance Is Linked to Positive Attitudes:** Overall, as attendance increases, so do positive attitudes toward the personal value of performing arts. Frequent attenders of the arts are most likely to strongly agree with all but one of the personal attitudes they were asked to consider.



Most Seattleites have positive attitudes about the value of performing arts in their lives.

TABLE 3.1

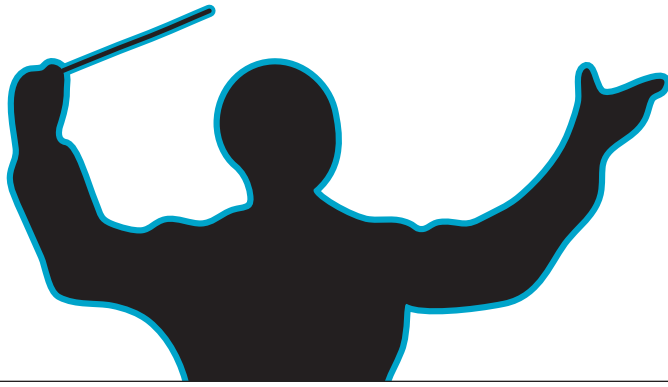
**ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PERSONAL VALUE OF THE PERFORMING ARTS**

Attending Live Performing Arts...	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
...is enjoyable to me	61%	24%	4%	5%	4%	2%	100%
...is thought provoking	44%	36%	8%	5%	4%	3%	100%
...helps me to understand other cultures better	38%	37%	11%	7%	5%	2%	100%
...is primarily a social occasion for me	36%	32%	10%	11%	8%	2%	100%
...encourages me to be more creative	32%	31%	15%	10%	9%	3%	100%
...makes me feel more connected to my community	24%	32%	15%	17%	10%	2%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

On all measures of personal value, a majority of respondents registered positive sentiments about the performing arts. However, the level of agreement with positive statements differs across the six items. Three-quarters or more of respondents strongly agree or somewhat agree that attending live performing arts is *enjoyable*, *thought provoking*, and helps them *to understand other cultures better*. Respondents were more ambivalent toward the role of the performing arts in making them *feel more connected to my community*.

The remaining tables in this section present data based on the percentage of respondents who strongly agree with each personal attitude.



Education level is largely unrelated to most personal attitudes about the performing arts.

TABLE 3.2

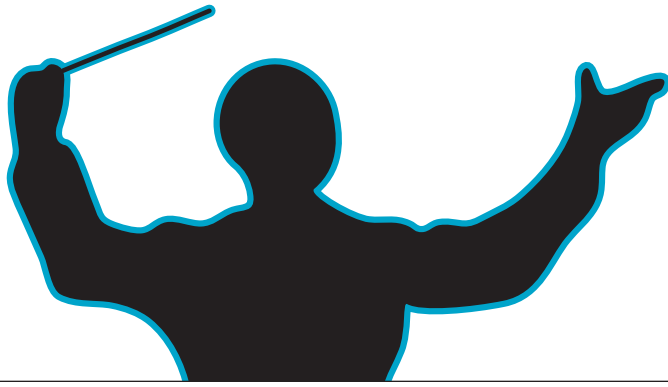
**PERSONAL ATTITUDES BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY EDUCATION**

Attending Live Performing Arts...	All	Elementary School	High School or GED	Junior College or Tech School	Four-year College or University	Post-graduate
...is enjoyable to me	61%	40%	44%	65%	66%	72%
...is thought provoking	44%	40%	30%	49%	50%	46%
...helps me to understand other cultures better	38%	43%	32%	39%	41%	39%
...is primarily a social occasion for me	36%	33%	30%	42%	36%	34%
...encourages me to be more creative	32%	33%	28%	34%	32%	31%
...makes me feel more connected to my community	24%	30%	21%	25%	21%	28%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

As education level increases, so does the percentage of respondents in each category who strongly agree with the statement that attending live performing arts events *is enjoyable*. For the other five statements, however, respondents do not differ substantially by education level. On several issues, respondents without a high school education are more likely to strongly agree than respondents in other categories. However, the small number of respondents in the elementary school category causes us to temper our claims about them.

The relationship between education level and attending live performing arts *is enjoyable to me* results in a Somer's d of +0.15.



Personal attitudes about the arts are not related to household income level.

TABLE 3.3

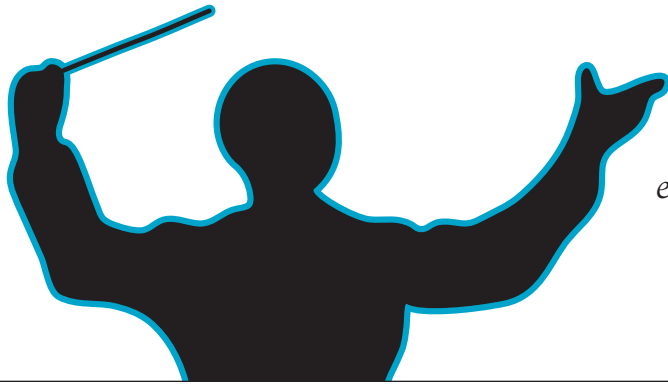
**PERSONAL ATTITUDES BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

Attending Live Performing Arts...	All	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 to under \$50,000	\$50,000 to under \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
...is enjoyable to me	61%	48%	66%	61%	65%
...is thought provoking	44%	38%	51%	48%	36%
...helps me to understand other cultures better	38%	40%	48%	36%	36%
...is primarily a social occasion for me	36%	38%	35%	39%	39%
...encourages me to be more creative	32%	34%	41%	32%	22%
...makes me feel more connected to my community	24%	21%	29%	21%	23%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

We observe no statistical relationship between income level and personal attitudes. Interestingly, Seattleites with annual household incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000 are most likely to strongly agree with all of the statements except that attending live performing arts is *primarily a social occasion*. Respondents with household income levels over \$100,000 are less likely to strongly agree that performing arts are *thought provoking* and *encourages me to be more creative*.

The Somer's d for the relationship between personal attitudes and income level is not greater than 0.15 in any of these questions.



Seattleites younger than 45 are more likely to feel that attending live performing arts encourages them to be more creative.

TABLE 3.4

PERSONAL ATTITUDES BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY AGE

Attending Live Performing Arts...	All	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and Over
...is enjoyable to me	61%	54%	64%	58%	65%	65%	57%
...is thought provoking	44%	42%	46%	46%	47%	42%	39%
...helps me to understand other cultures better	38%	38%	38%	35%	41%	40%	41%
...is primarily a social occasion for me	36%	20%	32%	36%	38%	47%	45%
...encourages me to be more creative	32%	36%	37%	36%	28%	24%	23%
...makes me feel more connected to my community	24%	22%	14%	23%	24%	30%	34%

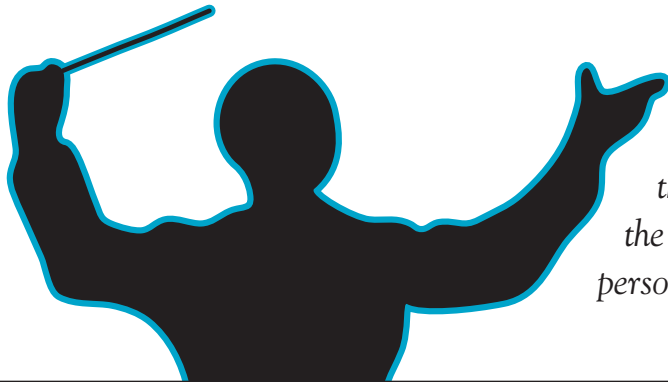
Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

Overall, few strong patterns emerge between personal attitudes and age. However, older Seattleites are somewhat more likely to strongly agree with the statement that attending live performing arts *is primarily a social occasion*. Younger respondents are a bit more likely to feel that attending live performing arts *encourages them to be more creative*.

A Somer's d of -0.14 for attending live performing arts *encourages me to be more creative* is the strongest relationship in this table.

We also considered these personal attitudes by whether or not there are children in the home. We detected no patterns related to this variable and have not included them in this report.





While arts attenders in Seattle have more positive attitudes than nonattenders, many of those who do not attend also strongly agree that the performing arts play a positive role in their personal lives.

TABLE 3.5

**PERSONAL ATTITUDES BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMANCES**

Attending Live Performing Arts...	All	Attendance Level		
		Nonattender	Attender	Frequent Attender
...is enjoyable to me	61%	37%	66%	91%
...is thought provoking	44%	27%	48%	67%
...helps me to understand other cultures better	38%	29%	38%	58%
...is primarily a social occasion for me	36%	26%	42%	39%
...encourages me to be more creative	32%	24%	32%	48%
...makes me feel more connected to my community	24%	18%	24%	36%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

As expected, agreement with each personal value statement increases with frequency of attendance. An exception is for the statement that attending live performing arts is *primarily a social occasion for me*, where a smaller percentage of frequent attenders (39 percent) agree than attenders (42 percent).

# Value to the Community

This section focuses on public perceptions of the value of the performing arts to the greater Seattle community. It considers relationships between perceptions about the value of performing arts to the community and various respondent characteristics. We also briefly look at the two activities of volunteering for community organizations and making financial contributions to arts organizations to see if these behaviors vary by frequency of arts attendance.



## HIGHLIGHTS

**Community Value Is More Important than Value to the Individual:** Seattleites register noticeably more positive opinions about the value of the performing arts to their community than they do about the contribution of the arts to their own lives.

**Arts Matter for Children:** About 7 in 10 Seattleites strongly agree that performing arts *contribute to the education and development of children*. This very high agreement is consistent regardless of education, age, income, or presence of children in the household.

**Community Engagement Patterns Vary:** Volunteer patterns differ among nonattenders and frequent attenders. Only about half of nonattenders volunteered at least once during the past year, compared with more than 8 in 10 attenders or frequent attenders.

**Giving Levels Are Low to Moderate:** Overall, only 27 percent of Seattleites made a financial contribution to a performing arts organization in 2001. However, more than half of frequent attenders (62 percent) made a financial contribution.



*Seattleites feel more strongly about the contributions of the performing arts to their community than about the value of performing arts to themselves.*

**TABLE 4.1**

**ATTITUDES TOWARD PERFORMING ARTS IN COMMUNITY**

Performing Arts...	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
...improve the quality of life in the greater Seattle area	58%	28%	8%	2%	1%	3%	100%
...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life	48%	38%	8%	2%	1%	3%	100%
...provide opportunities to socialize with other people	56%	36%	5%	1%	1%	2%	100%
...are a source of pride for those in the greater Seattle area	49%	37%	8%	2%	1%	3%	100%
...contribute to the education and development of children	69%	24%	4%	1%	2%	2%	100%
...contribute to lifelong learning for adults	54%	34%	5%	3%	2%	2%	100%
...help preserve and share cultural heritage	64%	29%	2%	2%	1%	2%	100%
...contribute to the economy of the greater Seattle area	37%	41%	9%	3%	2%	8%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

A very high percentage of respondents (between 78 and 93 percent) say they strongly agree or somewhat agree with each of the eight statements they were asked to evaluate.

As in the previous section, the following tables in this section present data based on the percentage of respondents who strongly agree with each statement.



As people acquire more education, they are more likely to believe that the performing arts improve the quality of life in Seattle.

TABLE 4.2

**ATTITUDES TOWARD PERFORMING ARTS IN COMMUNITY BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY EDUCATION**

Performing Arts...	All	Elementary School	High School or GED	Junior College or Tech School	Four-year College or University	Post-graduate
...improve the quality of life in the greater Seattle area	58%	40%	40%	57%	65%	75%
...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life	48%	50%	37%	50%	51%	54%
...provide opportunities to socialize with other people	56%	50%	51%	64%	53%	52%
...are a source of pride for those in the greater Seattle area	49%	43%	41%	56%	51%	48%
...contribute to the education and development of children	69%	60%	57%	72%	70%	77%
...contribute to lifelong learning for adults	54%	40%	38%	59%	62%	58%
...help preserve and share cultural heritage	64%	57%	54%	68%	67%	64%
...contribute to the economy of the greater Seattle area	37%	27%	31%	41%	40%	35%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

The trends in the table suggest a relationship between several attitudes and education level. For example, Seattleites with higher levels of education are more likely to agree that performing arts *improve the quality of life* in Seattle. The trends in this table also suggest that high levels of education are associated with positive attitudes toward the contribution of the performing arts to *the education and development of children, lifelong learning for adults, and help preserve and share cultural heritage*.

The Somer's d relationship between education level and the belief that performing arts improve the quality of life is +0.17.



Household income level has little influence on the attitudes of Seattleites toward the role of the performing arts in their community.

TABLE 4.3

**ATTITUDES TOWARD PERFORMING ARTS IN COMMUNITY BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

Performing Arts...	All	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 to under \$50,000	\$50,000 to under \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
...improve the quality of life in the greater Seattle area	58%	48%	57%	60%	62%
...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life	48%	48%	55%	48%	45%
...provide opportunities to socialize with other people	56%	58%	62%	55%	55%
...are a source of pride for those in the greater Seattle area	49%	47%	54%	48%	42%
...contribute to the education and development of children	69%	69%	70%	70%	64%
...contribute to lifelong learning for adults	54%	54%	58%	53%	52%
...help preserve and share cultural heritage	64%	59%	66%	66%	62%
...contribute to the economy of the greater Seattle area	37%	34%	41%	37%	36%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

Household income level has little or no association with respondent perceptions of the value of the performing arts to community life in Seattle. The percentage trends in the table suggest that wealthier residents are more likely to strongly agree that performing arts *improve the quality of life* in Seattle. Seattleites with household incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000 are consistently more likely to strongly agree with most of these statements than those in other income categories.

However, the value of Somer's d for performing arts *improve the quality of life* reaches only +0.04.



Attitudes about the performing arts vary little by respondents' age. People of different ages have notably similar attitudes.

TABLE 4.4

**ATTITUDES TOWARD PERFORMING ARTS IN COMMUNITY BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY AGE**

Performing Arts...	All	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and Over
...improve the quality of life in the greater Seattle area	58%	42%	53%	61%	61%	57%	65%
...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life	48%	44%	51%	49%	46%	47%	49%
...provide opportunities to socialize with other people	56%	57%	63%	59%	55%	45%	47%
...are a source of pride for those in the greater Seattle area	49%	44%	47%	46%	52%	51%	57%
...contribute to the education and development of children	69%	64%	72%	70%	69%	66%	65%
...contribute to lifelong learning for adults	54%	42%	57%	55%	59%	54%	52%
...help preserve and share cultural heritage	64%	66%	69%	61%	65%	60%	58%
...contribute to the economy of the greater Seattle area	37%	30%	34%	38%	41%	40%	38%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

Although the overall relationships are weak, respondents under age 25 are considerably less likely to view the performing arts as *improving the quality of life in Seattle* or as *contributing to lifelong learning for adults*. On the whole, however, age does not explain variation in attitudes.



About 7 in 10 Seattleites strongly agree that the performing arts contribute to the education and development of children.

TABLE 4.5

**ATTITUDES TOWARD PERFORMING ARTS IN COMMUNITY BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY CHILDREN AT HOME**

Performing Arts...	All	No Children At Home	Children Under 13 Years of Age	Children 13 Years and Older
...improve the quality of life in the greater Seattle area	58%	59%	54%	56%
...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life	48%	46%	51%	54%
...provide opportunities to socialize with other people	56%	52%	64%	56%
...are a source of pride for those in the greater Seattle area	49%	49%	49%	50%
...contribute to the education and development of children	69%	68%	69%	68%
...contribute to lifelong learning for adults	54%	55%	53%	52%
...help preserve and share cultural heritage	64%	62%	68%	64%
...contribute to the economy of the greater Seattle area	37%	38%	38%	37%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

There is strong agreement about the contribution of performing arts to the *education and development of children*, regardless of education, income, age, or presence of children in the household. In general, very few differences are found among respondents from households with or without children. In most cases, respondents from households with young children feel equally strongly about these community values.





Between a quarter and one-half of Seattleites who do not attend performing arts events feel positively about the role of the arts in their community.

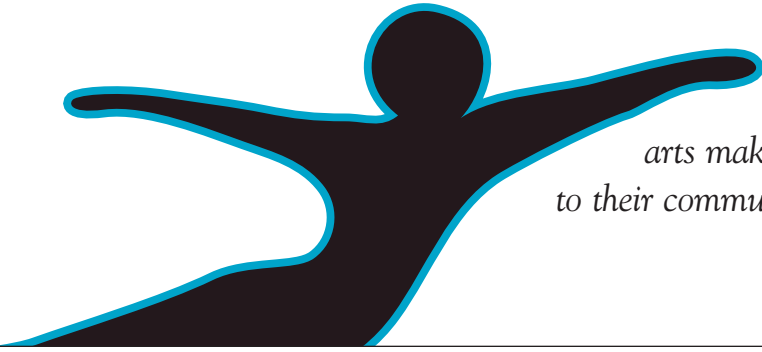
TABLE 4.6

**ATTITUDES TOWARD PERFORMING ARTS IN COMMUNITY BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE**

Performing Arts...	All	Attendance Level		
		Nonattender	Attender	Frequent Attender
...improve the quality of life in the greater Seattle area	58%	36%	62%	88%
...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life	48%	36%	49%	68%
...provide opportunities to socialize with other people	56%	49%	58%	61%
...are a source of pride for those in the greater Seattle area	49%	36%	51%	71%
...contribute to the education and development of children	69%	53%	73%	84%
...contribute to lifelong learning for adults	54%	38%	57%	77%
...help preserve and share cultural heritage	64%	51%	66%	81%
...contribute to the economy of the greater Seattle area	37%	28%	38%	55%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

As we found in Table 3.5, attenders have more favorable opinions about the performing arts than nonattenders, and frequent attenders have more favorable opinions than attenders. Though these relationships may be intuitive, the data offer strong evidence in support of these claims. The frequent attenders feel most strongly about the role of the performing arts in *improving the quality of life in Seattle* and about the contribution of the arts to the *education and development of children*.



*Volunteering is not associated with the belief that performing arts make Seattleites feel more connected to their community.*

**TABLE 4.7**

**“ATTENDING LIVE PERFORMING ARTS MAKES ME FEEL MORE CONNECTED TO MY COMMUNITY,” BY FREQUENCY OF VOLUNTEERING**

Attending Live Performing Arts Makes Me Feel More Connected to My Community	How Often Do You Volunteer?					All
	Never	Seldom	Once a Month	Weekly	Daily	
Strongly Disagree	18%	7%	9%	9%	12%	11%
Somewhat Disagree	18%	14%	19%	16%	24%	17%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16%	18%	14%	16%	8%	16%
Somewhat Agree	25%	36%	36%	34%	29%	32%
Strongly Agree	23%	25%	23%	26%	28%	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

Is the level of civic engagement of arts attendees similar to or different from that of nonattendees? To answer that question, the survey asked respondents how often they volunteer for charity, school, religious congregation, or community activities and whether they made a financial contribution to a performing arts organization.

From their answers, we observe no relationship between volunteerism and feelings about connections to the community. Those who *never* volunteer are equally likely to disagree or strongly disagree as those who volunteer daily (36 percent).



*Seattleites who volunteer in community organizations are more likely to attend performing arts events.*

**TABLE 4.8**

**RESPONDENTS WHO VOLUNTEER IN THEIR COMMUNITY, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS**

Attendance Level	Never Volunteer	Volunteer	Total
Nonattender	44%	56%	100%
Attender	16%	84%	100%
Frequent Attender	14%	86%	100%
<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

There is a strong relationship between frequency of attendance at live performing arts events and volunteering in community organizations. A little more than half of nonattenders reported that they volunteer at least once in a while. This contrasts with more than 8 in 10 attenders or frequent attenders. This finding is consistent with our earlier observation (Table 2.8) that people who attend performing arts events are also active in a range of other activities outside their homes.

We make no causal inferences as to whether an individual is inclined toward volunteerism because of his or her attendance at performing arts events or whether attendance at performing arts events inclines one toward higher levels of volunteerism.



*More than half of frequent attenders made a donation to an arts organization in 2001.*

TABLE 4.9

**RESPONDENTS WHO MADE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO AN ARTS ORGANIZATION IN 2001, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS**

Attendance Level	No Contribution in 2001	Contribution in 2001	Total
Nonattender	93%	7%	100%
Attender	72%	28%	100%
Frequent Attender	38%	62%	100%
<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

A quarter (27 percent) of Seattleites reported that they made a financial contribution to an arts organization in 2001. The likelihood that someone made a contribution is influenced by whether the individual is an attender or not. Frequent attenders are substantially more likely to make a donation than nonattenders. However, even two out of five frequent attenders chose not to contribute.

# Barriers to Attendance

This section focuses on factors that keep people from attending live performing arts events more frequently. For nonattenders, the questions can be taken to mean “Why don’t you attend?” For attenders, the questions can be taken to mean “What keeps you from attending even more?”

We consider a range of practical, personal, and perceptual obstacles to attendance. Some of these vary by respondent characteristics, such as education and income, and some help us understand the differences among nonattenders, attenders, and frequent attenders.

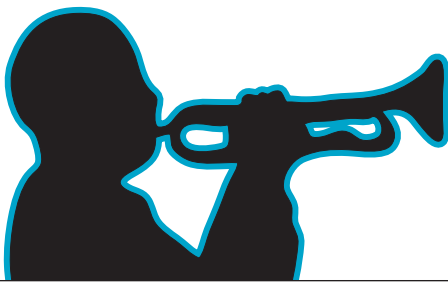


## HIGHLIGHTS

**Time, Preference, and Cost Are Key Obstacles:** The biggest barriers to more frequent attendance at performing arts events, cited by about one in three respondents as a “big problem,” are *difficulty making time to go out*, preference to *spend leisure time in other ways*, and *cost of tickets*.

**Demographic Characteristics Matter:** People with lower levels of education are more likely to say that the *performing arts do not appeal* to them. People from lower-income households are more likely to say that *cost of tickets* is the major barrier to attendance. Younger people are more likely to cite the problem of *not enough information about performances and times*.

**Nonattenders Prefer Doing Other Things:** Nonattenders are more likely than attenders to say that they *prefer to spend leisure time in other ways* or that the *performing arts do not appeal* to them. They also report that they have *no one to attend with*, that they *feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events*, and that they have concerns about the *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events*.



Seattleites say making time to go out is the biggest barrier to attendance.

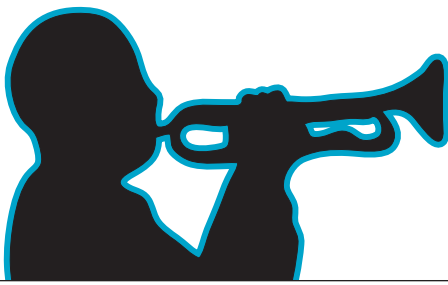
TABLE 5.1

BARRIERS TO MORE FREQUENT ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS						
Barrier	Big Reason	Moderate Reason	Small Reason	Not a Reason	No Response	Total
<b>PRACTICAL</b>						
Cost of tickets	31%	23%	13%	30%	3%	100%
Family obligations	19%	7%	5%	69%	1%	100%
Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events	29%	15%	11%	45%	1%	100%
Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations	7%	10%	9%	72%	3%	100%
Not enough publicity or information about performances and times	15%	19%	11%	54%	2%	100%
<b>PERSONAL</b>						
Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways	32%	30%	12%	24%	1%	100%
Hard to make time to go out	39%	20%	10%	30%	1%	100%
No one to attend with	8%	8%	8%	76%	1%	100%
<b>PERCEPTUAL</b>						
Performing arts do not appeal	10%	8%	9%	72%	1%	100%
Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events	3%	4%	7%	86%	1%	100%
Have not enjoyed past performances	3%	5%	8%	82%	2%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

For all but three items, most people said the various barriers are *not* a reason why they do not attend more. The three most frequently cited “big reasons” why people do not attend more performing arts events than they currently do are that it is *hard to make time to go out*, a preference to *spend leisure time in other ways*, and the *cost of tickets*. However, as we report throughout this section, different people are affected by different barriers.

Researchers at the RAND Corporation reported conceptual work on barriers to greater arts attendance in a book entitled *A New Framework for Building Participation in the Arts*. They suggest that there are four distinct types of barriers, which they label *practical barriers*, *personal circumstances*, *perceptual barriers*, and *prior experiences*. We used the RAND framework to help in the development of our survey, but we depart from it in two ways. First, we put our single question about prior experiences in with the perceptual barriers questions. Second, we add and subtract from the barriers developed in the RAND work.



Respondents with a high school education or less are more likely to find the performing arts unappealing.

TABLE 5.2

**RESPONDENTS REPORTING THAT AN ITEM IS A “BIG REASON” WHY THEY DO NOT ATTEND PERFORMING ARTS MORE, BY EDUCATION**

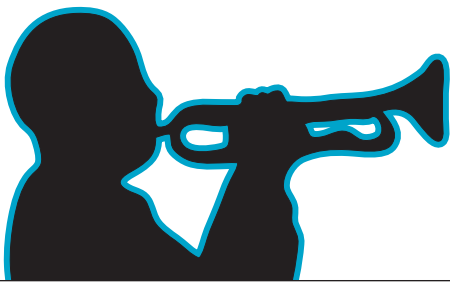
Barrier	All	Elementary School	High School or GED	Junior College or Tech School	Four-year College or University	Post-graduate
<b>PRACTICAL</b>						
Cost of tickets	31%	37%	27%	30%	37%	27%
Family obligations	19%	23%	23%	18%	21%	14%
Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events	29%	30%	32%	33%	23%	22%
Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations	7%	10%	9%	10%	2%	3%
Not enough publicity or information about performances and times	15%	27%	19%	18%	11%	6%
<b>PERSONAL</b>						
Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways	32%	40%	41%	31%	27%	28%
Hard to make time to go out	39%	37%	42%	38%	37%	39%
No one to attend with	8%	13%	14%	8%	4%	2%
<b>PERCEPTUAL</b>						
Performing arts do not appeal	10%	33%	18%	9%	6%	2%
Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events	3%	10%	5%	2%	2%	0%
Have not enjoyed past performances	3%	13%	5%	3%	1%	2%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

While the percentage trends are suggestive of important relationships, only one barrier features a Somer’s d value equal to or greater than 0.15. The value of Somer’s d for the relationship between education level and *performing arts do not appeal* is –0.15.

One-third of respondents who have not completed high school say that the performing arts *do not appeal to them*. This proportion decreases as education increases; only 2 percent of respondents with a postgraduate degree say that lack of appeal is a big reason why they do not attend more. Substantially higher percentages of respondents who have not completed a four-year college degree were more likely to cite *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events* or that *the performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations*. Reactions to most of the barriers, however, do not vary much by education level.





Cost is the main barrier to attendance for less wealthy Seattleites.

TABLE 5.3

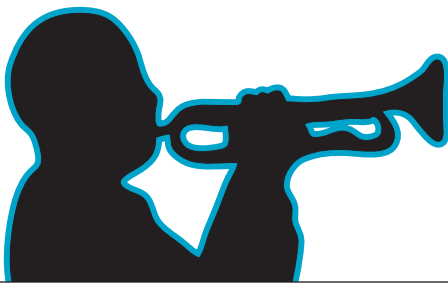
**RESPONDENTS REPORTING THAT AN ITEM IS A “BIG REASON” WHY THEY DO NOT ATTEND PERFORMING ARTS MORE, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

Barrier	All	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 to under \$50,000	\$50,000 to under \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
<b>PRACTICAL</b>					
Cost of tickets	31%	40%	38%	25%	21%
Family obligations	19%	17%	20%	21%	19%
Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events	29%	33%	33%	23%	20%
Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations	7%	11%	8%	4%	7%
Not enough publicity or information about performances and times	15%	21%	17%	14%	8%
<b>PERSONAL</b>					
Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways	32%	31%	27%	37%	35%
Hard to make time to go out	39%	32%	37%	43%	50%
No one to attend with	8%	19%	14%	3%	1%
<b>PERCEPTUAL</b>					
Performing arts do not appeal	10%	13%	10%	12%	11%
Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events	3%	2%	3%	3%	4%
Have not enjoyed past performances	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

While the percentage trends are suggestive of important relationships, only one barrier features a Somer's d value equal to or greater than 0.15. The value of Somer's d for the relationship between *cost of tickets* and household income is -0.15

As expected, *cost of tickets* is more of a barrier for the poorest households and less of a barrier for higher income households. Respondents from families with lower total incomes are also more likely to note the *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events*. The trends suggest that the safety and familiarity of location is a concern for these families as well. Finally, respondents from lower income households are more likely to report that having *no one to attend with* is a big reason why they do not go to more performing arts events. Thus, education and income categories both provide some clues as to which barriers are most influential for different subgroups.



Younger Seattleites say they need more information about performances.

TABLE 5.4

**RESPONDENTS REPORTING THAT ITEM IS A “BIG REASON” WHY THEY DO NOT ATTEND PERFORMING ARTS MORE, BY AGE**

Barrier	All	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and Over
<b>PRACTICAL</b>							
Cost of tickets	31%	32%	32%	28%	37%	27%	25%
Family obligations	19%	13%	30%	34%	10%	6%	7%
Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events	29%	15%	20%	26%	34%	33%	47%
Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations	7%	5%	2%	5%	8%	6%	18%
Not enough publicity or information about performances and times	15%	29%	18%	13%	11%	8%	11%
<b>PERSONAL</b>							
Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways	32%	35%	31%	33%	37%	30%	27%
Hard to make time to go out	39%	30%	41%	48%	39%	40%	25%
No one to attend with	8%	8%	3%	5%	9%	8%	16%
<b>PERCEPTUAL</b>							
Performing arts do not appeal	10%	16%	8%	9%	9%	11%	11%
Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%	1%	1%
Have not enjoyed past performances	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	8%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

The Somer's d value for the relationship between *not enough publicity or information about performances and times* and age is -0.19.

Younger respondents, particularly those under the age of 35, are considerably more likely to feel that there is *not enough publicity or information about performances and times*. Respondents aged 25 to 44 are somewhat more likely to cite *family obligations* as a barrier, while older people are a bit more likely to cite *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events*.



Having children at home keeps many Seattleites from getting out to performing arts events.

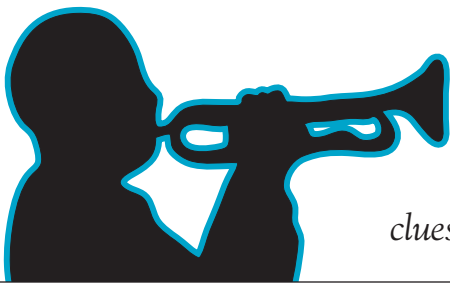
TABLE 5.5

**RESPONDENTS REPORTING THAT AN ITEM IS A “BIG REASON” WHY THEY DO NOT ATTEND PERFORMING ARTS MORE, BY CHILDREN AT HOME**

Barrier	All	No Children At Home	Children Under 13 Years of Age	Children 13 Years and Older
Family obligations	19%	5%	52%	30%
Hard to make time to go out	39%	34%	45%	42%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

This abbreviated table includes only the two items where we observe differences by presence of children in the household. People with children at home are more likely to cite *family obligations* and *hard to make time to go out* as important reasons why they do not attend performing arts events more often. Respondents with young children are most likely to say that *family obligations* are a substantial obstacle. Respondents with young children and those with teenage children are equally likely to say that it is *hard to make time to go out*.



Seattleites who do not attend the performing arts offer many reasons for not attending. Attenders give fewer clues for why they do not go more often.

TABLE 5.6

**RESPONDENTS REPORTING THAT AN ITEM IS A “BIG REASON” WHY THEY DO NOT ATTEND PERFORMING ARTS MORE, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS**

Barrier	All	Attendance Level		
		Nonattender	Attender	Frequent Attender
<b>PRACTICAL</b>				
Cost of tickets	31%	29%	32%	31%
Family obligations	19%	23%	19%	13%
Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events	29%	34%	24%	31%
Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations	7%	10%	5%	4%
Not enough publicity or information about performances and times	15%	15%	15%	12%
<b>PERSONAL</b>				
Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways	32%	49%	28%	10%
Hard to make time to go out	39%	37%	42%	31%
No one to attend with	8%	13%	6%	1%
<b>PERCEPTUAL</b>				
Performing arts do not appeal	10%	22%	5%	1%
Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events	3%	5%	1%	1%
Have not enjoyed past performances	3%	6%	2%	2%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Seattle Household Data, 2002.

**NONATTENDERS:** Nonattenders and attenders alike point to *lack of time* as a barrier to attendance. However, several barriers were cited as a big reason by a disproportionate number of nonattenders. Not surprisingly, nonattenders are more likely to say that they *prefer to spend leisure time in other ways* and that the *performing arts do not appeal* to them. In addition, more nonattenders are more likely to say that they have *no one to attend with* or that they *feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events*.

**ATTENDERS:** While a quarter or more of attenders say that they *prefer to spend leisure time in other ways*, this factor does not differentiate them from respondents in other attender categories. The one item that attenders rate notably higher as a barrier is *hard to make time to go out*. That is, *hard to make time to go out* appears to be a greater inhibitor for periodic attenders of the arts than it is for those who do not attend at all.

**FREQUENT ATTENDERS:** People who frequently go to arts performances are less likely to label various potential barriers as a big reason why they do not get out more. Consistent with conventional wisdom, the two biggest barriers are time and money—two factors that are not unique to frequent attenders.

# Methodology

## COMMUNITY SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

The Seattle survey is one in a series of 10 telephone surveys that each focus on a single community. The communities were carefully selected, looking for the following characteristics that were deemed important to the success of the project:

- Representation of three or more of the five disciplines encompassed by the participating national service organizations.
- Financially and managerially strong local arts organizations.
- Established and strong working relationships between local arts organizations and their national service organizations.
- Willingness and ability of local arts organizations to be part of a working group.
- Established capacity for collecting data on the part of local arts organizations.
- Willingness on the part of local arts organizations to administer the surveys developed by the Performing Arts Research Coalition.
- Presence of supplemental funding sources in the community to help sustain this research in the future.
- Geographic diversity and a variety of community sizes.

## LOCAL WORKING GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES

The working group of performing arts organizations in each of the communities chosen had six primary project responsibilities: (1) To participate in the design of survey instruments; (2) To collect data from its audiences and subscribers; (3) To use the audience, subscriber, and household data to design concrete strategies for improving the management of its organizations; (4) To use the audience, subscriber, and household data to make an impact on the role the arts play in the community; (5) To provide feedback on or write sections of project reports; (6) To consider ways to maintain local data collection efforts after the completion of the PARC project.

## PROJECT DATA SOURCES

The PARC research framework relies on four data sources to contribute information toward a more comprehensive understanding of the performing arts. Following is a description of the four sources and the type of information they provide.

**Administrative Surveys:** Each of the participating national service organizations conducted annual surveys of its members, collecting extensive administrative data. Most provided information on the number and types of performances, attendance, and a range of financial information, including on sources of revenue and types of expenses. Selected items (or their definitions) from the existing surveys have been reviewed and some new items have been added so that key data elements can be captured consistently across all the disciplines.

**Audience Surveys:** Audience surveys provided information on audience demographics, feedback on customer satisfaction and perceived performance quality, and some feedback on audience perceptions of the value of the performing arts. Audience surveys were administered by each of the participating arts organizations in each of the study sites. Two-page surveys were placed on seats in performance venues or handed to audience members in conjunction with performances according to specific procedures established by the Urban Institute.

**Subscriber Surveys:** As with the audience surveys, the subscriber surveys provided information on demographics and feedback on customer satisfaction and perceived performance quality. The subscriber survey contained expanded questions about the perceptions of the value of the performing arts to respondents, their families, and their communities. Participating arts organizations in each study site mailed the six-page survey to a randomly selected group of subscribers according to procedures established by the Urban Institute.

**Household Telephone Surveys:** Household telephone surveys collected information to help understand the attitudes of people who attend or do not attend the performing arts regularly, and to further understand why and how individuals can be motivated to become participants. The surveys of random households in each participating community were conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates according to procedures developed by the Urban Institute.

### A Note about This Report

This report is based on an analysis of the responses from the Seattle community/household telephone survey only. Findings from the administrative surveys will be issued in a separate report. Data from the audience and subscriber surveys have been provided to the participating local arts organizations. Further analysis of these data is in the hands of local arts organizations and/or working groups.

## HOW THE SEATTLE HOUSEHOLD TELEPHONE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED

Survey respondents were selected using random digit dialing. Every active block of telephone numbers (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) was included for King, Snohomish, Pierce and Kitsap counties. After random selection of a number within a block, two more digits were randomly added to complete the number. Numbers that matched listings in business directories were purged from the list. This method guaranteed coverage of every assigned phone number and did not require a preexisting list of active numbers.

During February and March 2002, calls were made by Princeton Data Source, a subsidiary of Princeton Survey Research Associates. Calls lasted approximately 20 minutes each. They were staggered over times of the day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents. Over a quarter of the interviews were completed on the first call, but one took as many as 78 calls to secure an interview. Table A-1 documents the numbers of individuals who were contacted, cooperated, and completed the interview.

While a response rate of 36 percent is not inconsistent with other studies of this type, it raises questions of nonresponse bias. That is, one might suspect that people who could not be contacted, would not cooperate with the interview, or did not complete it might have responded differently, on average, from people who completed the interview. If so, and if the differences are relevant to issues under investigation in the study, then one cannot make reliable inferences from the study sample to the population of the Seattle metropolitan area.

To investigate the potential for such bias, we compared the characteristics of the 804 respondents with known characteristics of the population (see Table A-2). Population estimates are based on the 1990 Decennial Census, with adjustments by information collected in the Current Population Survey in fall of 2001. The summaries in this table indicate that women are overrepresented among the survey respondents, while men and Asian/Pacific Islanders are underrepresented. Overall, however, there is considerable similarity between survey respondents and the population estimate on race, sex, and age characteristics. This similarity supports an assertion that the survey respondents are not substantially different from the nonrespondents. Nonetheless, the results reflect the attitudes of people who were willing to complete the survey.

A disproportional sample design and systematic nonresponse result in a measurable “design effect.” The design effect for the Seattle household telephone survey results in a margin of error of  $\pm 4.0$  percent. This means that in 95 of every 100 samples using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 4.0 percentage points away from their true values in the population. However, design effects are only one source of error. For example, those people who chose to answer the survey questions may be different in some ways from people who chose not to respond, resulting in an unknown quantity of response bias on various survey questions.



TABLE A.1

**DISPOSITION OF CALLS, SEATTLE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY**

4103	dialed numbers
-1689	non-working numbers
2414	working numbers
-584	“non-contact”—language/health barrier, incomplete callbacks
1830	<b>contacted numbers (75.8%)</b>
-920	refusals
910	<b>cooperating (49.7%)</b>
-56	ineligible
854	eligible
-50	interrupted, incomplete
804	<b>completions (94.1%)</b>

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Response rate} &= \text{contacts} \times \text{cooperations} \times \text{completions} \\
 &= 75.8\% \times 49.7\% \times 94.1\% \\
 &= 35.5\%
 \end{aligned}$$

**SOMER’S D: LOOKING AT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUESTIONS**

In reviewing the survey results, we are frequently interested in knowing whether people who answer a particular way on one question also tend to answer a particular way on a different question. For example, past research has shown that people who have acquired more education are more likely to attend arts events than people with less education. This finding comes from looking at the relationship between two different variables—*education level* and *frequency of attendance*.

Somer’s *d* is a statistic that shows the strength of the relationship between two variables with a small number of ordered categories. By “ordered,” we mean that the question has categories that run in a meaningful way from low to high. Somer’s *d* indicates the extent to which respondents who report high or low values on one variable also report high or low levels on another variable. For example, if we observe that tall people are very talkative and short people say very little at all, we would expect a high value of Somer’s *d* for the variables *height* and *verbosity*. On the other hand, if tall and short people have roughly the same number of talkative and nontalkative types, we would get a low Somer’s *d*, and we would conclude that there is no relationship between the two variables.





TABLE A.2

**CHARACTERISTICS OF SEATTLE HOUSEHOLD RESPONDENTS (N=804)**

	Population Estimate	Survey Respondents
<b>RACE</b>		
White	633	648
Black	35	27
Asian/Pacific Islander	70	37
Hispanic/Latino	36	43
Other/Mixed	22	19
American Indian/Alaskan Native	8	10
Missing (did not report)	0	20
<b>SEX</b>		
Men	397	357
Women	407	447
<b>AGE</b>		
18-29	178	162
30-39	183	188
40-49	177	185
50-65	158	151
65+	108	106
Missing (did not report)	0	12

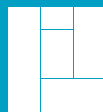
Somer's *d* runs from a value of 0.0 (no relationship) to 1.0 (perfect relationship), although it is usually quite low because of the conservative way in which it is calculated. A positive sign (+) in front of the number means that there is a *positive relationship* between the variables; that is, high values on one variable are associated with high values on the other. A negative sign (-) indicates a *negative relationship*; that is, high values on one variable go with lower values on the other variable, and vice versa.

A Somer's *d* value of less than -0.15 or more than +0.15 is worth paying attention to. For values closer to 0.0, the relationship is probably best thought of as weak or nonexistent. In footnotes throughout the report, we note relationships that meet or exceed this 0.15 threshold.

# PERFORMING ARTS RESEARCH COALITION

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