



TRG Arts and Purple Seven Study Highlights Uneven International Recovery for the Performing Arts in 2021

Study shows small shifts in booker demographics but no fundamental change in audiences compared to pre-pandemic

Colorado Springs, CO, March 16, 2022—Until the impact of Omicron in December 2021, the United Kingdom was leading the United States, Canada and Republic of Ireland in the revival of ticket sales and box office revenue of performing arts organizations, according to a new study released today by international arts management consultants [TRG Arts](#) and UK arts data specialists [Purple Seven](#). The study, “[Two Years On](#),” is based on data collected from the [COVID-19 Sector Benchmark](#), an initiative led by TRG Arts and Purple Seven, which has grown into the largest global arts and cultural consumer dataset in the industry.

Among the study highlights, in North America:

- The ticket sales revival in 2021 was stronger in the U.S. than Canada.
- There was significant variation in the pace of the revival in the U.S.
- Geographically, the Plains and Southeast performed substantially more strongly in 2021 than the East.
- Music venues in the sample performed substantially better than theatres in 2021.
- In the U.S. in 2021 there was a higher proportion of all ages of bookers under 50, but the average age of bookers was just 1.3 years lower in 2021 (55.2) compared to 2019 (56.5).
- In the U.S. Baby Boomers remain the largest generation, but the proportion of bookers has fallen by 3%. The greatest growth since 2019 has been in Generation Y.
- While there are small reductions in the proportion of all household income bands over \$75,000, the median income band remains \$75,000-\$99,999 in the U.S.
- Half of bookers in 2021 were making their first registered purchase at a venue. While this figure is high, it is no more than pre-pandemic levels.

“Before this latest twist in the story of the pandemic, it was clear that demand was very strong in the U.K. and some regions in the U.S., which is heartening news for the sector,” said [TRG Chief Executive Officer Jill Robinson](#). “Was this demand coming from new audiences? Yes, in the sense that the majority of bookers were booking for the first time. This is not new behavior in the post-COVID world: in 2019 and before, we would have expected new bookers to be the largest segment for most venues.”

“Our analysis shows that there has been some shift in the average demographics of bookers in 2021, but this has been minor. Most bookers on both sides of the Atlantic continue to be over 50 and comparatively wealthy,” commented Purple Seven Managing Director David



Brownlee. “As we see that consumer confidence appears to be returning in 2022, we can hope that we see the strong demand witnessed in the U.K. repeated in other territories. We will welcome a very high proportion of new bookers to our venues, as we have always done. What we cannot expect is a major shift in demographic to younger and more diverse audiences.”

The data from 385 organizations (128 in the U.S., 12 in Canada, 228 in the U.K. and 17 in the Republic of Ireland) represent a majority of theatres, but there is also a representation of arts centers and orchestras. The COVID-19 Sector Benchmark tracks sales on a daily basis from the box offices of both funded charities and commercial arts organizations.

The full study of “*Two Years On*” is available for free download at <https://trgarts.com/blog/insights-report-march-2022>.

TRG Arts and Purple Seven have published a number of studies on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the arts and culture sector:

- August 2021, “Festive Forecast” <https://trgarts.com/blog/insights-report-aug-2021>
- May 2021, “Green Shoots in April 2021?” https://go.trgarts.com/InsightReport_May21
- February 2021, “COVID-19 and Philanthropy – Giving in 2020” https://go.trgarts.com/BenchmarkInsights_Jan2021.
- November 2020, “Ticket Sales & Philanthropy” <https://trgarts.com/blog/benchmark-insights-nov-2020.html>
- October 2020, “Who is Giving?” https://go.trgarts.com/InsightReport_Oct20
- September 2020, “COVID-19 and the Performing Arts – Six Months After Closure” <https://trgarts.com/blog/insights-report-sep-2020.html>
- August 2020, “Who is booking now? Changes in ticket buyer demographics post COVID-19” https://go.trgarts.com/InsightReport_Aug20
- June 2020, “Individual Donations – Is New Philanthropic Income Replacing Lost Ticket Income?” https://go.trgarts.com/InsightReport_July20
- May 2020, “Tracking the Initial Impact of COVID-19 on the Performing Arts in the UK and North America” <https://go.trgarts.com/InsightReportMay2020>

TRG Arts offers a range of free resources for cultural and arts professionals throughout the US, Canada, the UK and the EU to ensure the field of arts and culture thrives now and after the COVID-19 crisis:

- **TRG 30**, a biweekly 30-minute webinar series of crisis counsel and best practices that attracts hundreds of executives globally each week: <https://go.trgarts.com/TRG30>.
- **TRG blog** for the latest on COVID-19 related topics: <https://go.trgarts.com/Blog>

About the COVID-19 Benchmark Dashboard



Purple Seven and TRG Arts continue to offer free access to the free COVID-19 Benchmark Dashboard to organizations in the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland. To register visit <https://go.trgarts.com/benchmark>.

Expansion of the COVID-19 Benchmark Dashboard is supported in part by a grant from the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) (NEA) to [SMU DataArts](#), a national centre for arts research and TRG Arts' long-time partner in advancing the arts and culture sector.

About TRG Arts

TRG Arts is an international change agency committed to building thriving arts and cultural organizations. Experts in the arts sector for over 25 years, TRG Arts has earned a reputation by successfully shaping for-profit and non-profit business models to focus on consumer relationships, financial stability, organizational frameworks, and people-centric teams. TRG Arts believes that a thriving organization leads to artistic innovation that helps create a vibrant community. Visit www.trgarts.com.

About Purple Seven

Purple Seven has been working in the UK Arts sector for 17 years, analyzing audience behavior across hundreds of organizations. Purple Seven's extensive knowledge and experience of audience trends allows them to offer an industry context to audience data that helps cultural organizations focus on the important, not just the interesting. In December 2021, Purple Seven joined the TRG Arts family of companies. Visit <https://purplesevenanalytics.com/>

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