



TRG Arts' Analysis of Performing Arts Box Office Data At One-Year Anniversary of COVID-19 Shutdown Reveals Catastrophic Impact on Both Sides of the Atlantic

Despite Some Socially-distanced and Digital Performances, Year-over-year Ticket Sales Fell by Over 86% in the U.S., Canada, United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland

Colorado Springs, CO, April 1, 2021— New box office data from the 12 months since March 16, 2020 when performing arts organizations shut down show the catastrophic impact of the pandemic in the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland. In analysis released today, international arts management consultants **TRG Arts** and UK arts data specialists **Purple Seven** report that despite periods of live public performances during the year in some regions and a rapid growth in ticketed digital performances, in the U.S. year-over-year ticket sales were down 86.1% and box office revenue was down 88.8%. Across the international study group, year-over-year ticket sales fell 88.5% and box office revenue was down 89%.

Year-over-year Change in Ticket Sales and Box Office Revenue from March 16, 2020 - March 15, 2021

	Tickets Sold	Revenue
Canada	-90.3%	-88.3%
United States	-86.1%	-88.8%
Republic of Ireland	-94.5%	-97.2%
United Kingdom	-89.3%	-89.3%
England	-88.5%	-89.3%
Northern Ireland	-87.7%	-82.8%
Scotland	-93.3%	-90.6%
Wales	-93.7%	-89.7%

The data from 349 performing arts organizations (94 in the U.S., 12 in Canada, 226 in the U.K., and 17 from the Republic of Ireland) come 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. It captures near real-time data from box office feeds of all scales. The majority of the sample are theaters, but there is also a representation of arts centers and orchestras.

“Over the past 12 months performing arts organizations have reacted and adapted to unprecedented circumstances at incredible speed,” said [TRG Chief Executive Officer Jill Robinson](#). “This time has shown us that digital channels can play a role in our quest for patron engagement. However, to be sustained by a blend of live and digital channels in the



future, we must learn from the innovative organizations that have deepened patron relationships and developed meaningful revenue from their on-line audiences in the last year.”

The COVID-19 Sector Benchmark tracks sales on a daily basis from the box offices of arts organizations. These could be for live in-person performances, live streaming or access to on-demand content.

“Over the past year many tickets have been sold to performances that were then postponed or cancelled,” explained Purple Seven Managing Director David Brownlee. “This means that the true impact of COVID-19 has been even worse than the stark figures we are reporting today. One bright spot we noted in the data was a noticeable uplift in sales in the U.K. in November and December 2020. Sadly, many of these sales would have been for performances that were then postponed or cancelled due to local and then national lockdowns, but it does highlight that there is demand from the public to return to live performances.”

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

- 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 U.S., Canada, the U.K. and the E.U. to ensure the field of arts and culture thrives now and after the COVID-19 crisis:

- **TRG 30**, a bi-weekly 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 center for arts research and TRG Arts' long-time partner in advancing the arts and culture sector.

About TRG Arts

TRG Arts (The Results Group for the Arts) is an international, data-driven change agency consulting with arts and cultural executive leaders, marketers and fundraisers on a patron loyalty-based approach to increasing sustainable revenue. Experts in the arts sector for 25 years, TRG Arts has earned a reputation unsurpassed for achieving results and building successful business models for non-profit and commercial arts and cultural organizations. TRG Arts is an industry pioneer in areas including audience loyalty development, membership and the subscription model, and dynamic pricing. TRG Arts believes in the transformative power of arts and culture, and that positive, profound change in the business model of arts organizations can lead to artistic innovation and the ability to inspire entire communities. Visit www.trgarts.com.

About Purple Seven

Purple Seven has been working in the U.K. Arts sector for 16 years, analysing audience behaviour across hundreds of organisations. 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. Visit <https://purplesevenanalytics.com/>

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