



Performing Arts Research Coalition  
Community Report

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## Performing Arts Research Coalition Community Report

Findings from a 2002 Household Survey in the Greater  
Boston Metropolitan Area

*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  
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Mary Kopczynski and Mark Hager  
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## 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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# Foreword

Boston has an international reputation as one of the most “livable cities in America”—it is the hub of a region known for its rich history, its academic and medical institutions, its active commercial and corporate entities, and its wealth of artists and arts organizations.

In this vibrant city, the arts are often cited as a source of pride and an important factor in its quality of life. However, prior to the Performing Arts Research Coalition there had never been an effort to quantify the perceived value of the performing arts to the residents of greater Boston. Previous studies had focused on the economic impact of, or funding and participation in cultural activities, but none focused specifically on *values and attitudes* or on the *performing* arts as an identifiable sector. And, when the research was conducted, many of Boston’s performing arts organizations were reeling from state legislation that severely reduced funding for the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

This report provides a wealth of information about participation, values, attitudes, and awareness, affirms the strong belief that the performing arts are a vital force in the Boston community, and provides statistics that help make the case for public support of the performing arts in our city and region:

- More than three-fourths of greater Bostonians went to a live performing arts event in 2002, and more than one in six attended *twelve or more* events.
- More Bostonians attend live performing arts events than professional sporting events.
- Respondents, regardless of how often they attend, strongly agree that the performing arts play a positive role in their lives.
- Bostonians strongly agree that the performing arts contribute to the education and development of children.
- Bostonians agree more strongly about the contributions of the performing arts to their community than about the value of performing arts to themselves.
- Bostonians who attend the performing arts are more likely to vote than nonattenders.

The findings demonstrate a need for Boston’s performing arts organizations to communicate to policymakers the value of the performing arts for Boston residents, and to educate legislators and voters alike about the impact of the performing arts industry on the local economy. The research also suggests that performing arts organizations need to provide information about arts offerings to younger audiences, particularly those under the age of 35.

In addition to yielding valuable information, the PARC project has paved the way for subsequent collaboration between Boston-area arts organizations across artistic disciplines. The process has helped us to build capacity within our individual organizations to gather information so that we can respond to our audiences’ needs, improve operations, and work to increase participation in the performing arts.

David Dalena, FleetBoston Celebrity Series on behalf of the Boston 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.

A second set of findings from this project—the results of household surveys conducted in the metropolitan areas of Austin, Boston, Minneapolis–St. Paul, Sarasota, and Washington, D.C.—are now available. They enable us to draw a detailed picture of the value of the performing arts to individuals and their communities, and to offer 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 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. Grant makers 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 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 Five Communities

Following are the key findings from the five household surveys conducted in the metropolitan areas of Austin, Boston, Minneapolis–St. Paul, Sarasota, and Washington, D.C. 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:** Approximately three-quarters of respondents reported attending a live professional performing arts event in the past 12 months. These numbers range from 78 percent (in the Boston metro area) to 71 percent (in Sarasota–Manatee). Frequent attenders, defined as those who attended at least 12 performances over the past year, range from 17 percent of respondents (in the Washington, D.C. metro area) to 11 percent (in the Minneapolis–St. Paul metro area).
- **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 organizations in their community.
- **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 communities. 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 show a trend toward lower incomes and frequent attenders show a trend toward higher incomes. The finding is stronger in some communities than in others, and is weakest in Austin where respondents from the lowest income households are as likely to be frequent attenders as respondents from 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 are attenders or frequent attenders.

### 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 80 percent of respondents strongly agree or agree that the arts are enjoyable.
- **Factors Related to Enjoyment:** As level of education increases, so does the percentage of respondents who strongly agree with the statement that attending live performances is enjoyable. Enjoyment is unrelated to household income level, except in Sarasota where higher household incomes are associated with greater levels of arts enjoyment.

- **Factors Unrelated to Enjoyment:** Age and the presence of children at home are largely unrelated to the degree to which respondents find live performing arts to be enjoyable.
- **Stimulates Critical Thinking:** In 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 70 percent (in the Minneapolis–St. Paul metro area) and 79 percent (in the Washington, D.C. metro area) 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:** More than 60 percent of respondents in each community strongly agree or agree that attending live performing arts encourages them to be more creative. Education level and household income (except in greater Austin) play little role in whether one feels strongly that attending live performing arts encourages higher levels of creativity. However, younger respondents are more inclined to agree than are older respondents that attending live performing arts encourages them to be more creative.

## 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, help preserve and share cultural heritage, provide opportunities to socialize, and contribute to lifelong learning in adults*. Above all, they believe that the arts *contribute to the education and development of children*. Especially noteworthy is the fact that many nonattenders also 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 the percentages of respondents who strongly agree and agree with each of these statements, more than three-quarters are in agreement, in every community, with every statement in the survey about community values.

- **Value to Children:** At least 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:** At least 9 out of 10 respondents in each of the five communities strongly agree or agree 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. Even nonattenders strongly agree or agree with this statement in relatively large numbers.
- **Strengthens Local Economy:** The percentage of respondents who strongly agree or agree that the performing arts contribute to the local economy is slightly lower than for other community values considered in this study. However, the percentage of respondents that strongly agree is considerably lower than for most of the other community values.

## 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 is not the leading barrier.

- **Key Barriers:** Of the 11 barriers suggested in the survey, only *prefer to spend leisure time in other ways* and *hard to make time to go out* are cited by a majority of respondents in all five communities as a big or moderate reason. *Cost of tickets* is cited by a majority in all communities except Sarasota, and *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events* is a big or moderate issue for a majority of respondents in Austin and Boston. *Cost of tickets* ranks second or third across the sites, never first.
- **Prefer Spending Time Elsewhere:** Between one-quarter and 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. The preference to spend leisure time in other ways is the factor that most 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 main 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 *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 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 6 and 12 percent of respondents in the five communities. This barrier clearly is 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.

An additional barrier is the *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events*, which varies in importance by community. This particular obstacle 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.



# Boston Household Survey Findings

From October to December of 2002, 810 residents of the greater Boston 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 Boston survey should interest participating members of the performing arts collaborative, local businesses, government officials, and residents of the greater Boston area. By using this information, arts organizations will be better positioned to enhance their leadership role in the Boston 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 Boston community. It is organized around four key topics:

- **Attendance at Performing Arts Events:** How often do the residents of Boston attend live performing arts events? Does frequency differ by income, age, education, the presence of children in the household, or voting behavior?
- **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.

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 54 in the section on methodology.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF BOSTON RESPONDENTS

The information in this report is based on a survey of the greater Boston Metropolitan area. Although we refer to Boston residents throughout this report, we mean these references to include residents of the greater metropolitan area. The area is defined as counties with zip codes beginning with the digits 017, 018, 019, 020, 021, 022, 023, and 024.

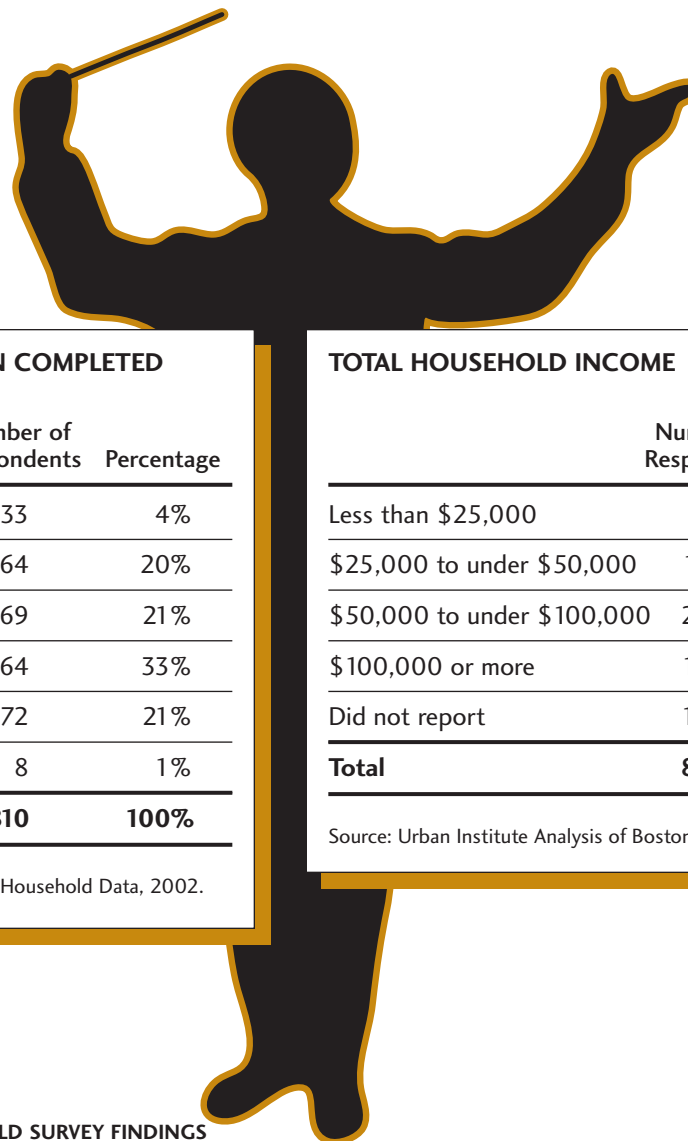
### PARC PARTNERS IN BOSTON

- American Repertory Theatre
- Boston Ballet
- Boston Classical Orchestra
- Boston Landmarks Orchestra
- Boston Lyric Opera
- Boston Modern Orchestra Project
- Boston Philharmonic Orchestra
- Boston Symphony Orchestra
- Brockton Symphony Orchestra
- FleetBoston Celebrity Series
- Huntington Theatre Company
- Lyric Stage Company of Boston
- New England Foundation for the Arts
- Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra
- Suga Theatre Company
- Wang Center for the Performing Arts

Boston 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 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, or who only vote “once in a while” or “about half the time” readers should be careful not to draw major conclusions about these groups of respondents.

The respondents are 54 percent white, 6 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 8 percent Hispanic/Latino, 27 percent black, 1 percent other or mixed race, and 1 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native. Three percent of respondents did not report their race/ethnicity.



**HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED**

|                                 | Number of Respondents | Percentage  |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Elementary school               | 33                    | 4%          |
| High School or GED              | 164                   | 20%         |
| Junior college or tech school   | 169                   | 21%         |
| Four-year college or university | 264                   | 33%         |
| Post-graduate degree            | 172                   | 21%         |
| Did not report                  | 8                     | 1%          |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>810</b>            | <b>100%</b> |

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

**TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

|                             | Number of Respondents | Percentage  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Less than \$25,000          | 94                    | 12%         |
| \$25,000 to under \$50,000  | 141                   | 17%         |
| \$50,000 to under \$100,000 | 241                   | 30%         |
| \$100,000 or more           | 171                   | 21%         |
| Did not report              | 163                   | 20%         |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>810</b>            | <b>100%</b> |

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



### AGE

|                | Number of Respondents | Percentage  |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Under 25       | 84                    | 10%         |
| 25-34          | 161                   | 20%         |
| 35-44          | 198                   | 24%         |
| 45-54          | 171                   | 21%         |
| 55-64          | 94                    | 12%         |
| 65 and over    | 87                    | 11%         |
| Did not report | 15                    | 2%          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>810</b>            | <b>100%</b> |

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

### HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU SAY YOU VOTE?

|                     | Number of Respondents | Percentage  |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Never               | 104                   | 13%         |
| Once in awhile      | 49                    | 6%          |
| About half the time | 35                    | 4%          |
| Most of the time    | 174                   | 22%         |
| Always              | 441                   | 55%         |
| Did not report      | 7                     | 1%          |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>810</b>            | <b>100%</b> |

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

### CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD

|                                | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| No children at home            | 488                   | 60%        |
| Children under 13 years of age | 238                   | 29%        |
| Children 13 years and older    | 129                   | 16%        |
| Did not report                 | 10                    | 1%         |

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

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Boston 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 media, 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 live, professional performing arts events in the past year. Respondents were instructed to exclude attendance at elementary, middle, or high school productions. For example, we asked people how many times they had attended a professional dance performance such as ballet, modern/contemporary or a culturally specific dance performance in the past 12 months. We asked similar questions about attendance at opera, theatre, and symphony performances.

We also included 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:** More than three-quarters of Bostonians went to a live, professional performing arts presentation last year. Of those, slightly more than one in six 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.

**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. They are also considerably more likely to vote than nonattenders. This suggests that attenders are better characterized as “generally involved” rather than “arts lovers.”



More respondents say they attended theater 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                 | 40%  | 1.3  | 3.2   |
| Opera                 | 10%  | 0.2  | 2.2   |
| Theatre               | 62%  | 2.0  | 3.2   |
| Symphony              | 38%  | 1.1  | 2.8   |
| Other                 | 46%  | 2.0  | 4.3   |
| <b>Any Discipline</b> | <b>78%</b>                                 | <b>6.5</b>   | <b>8.3</b>  |

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

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

Including the 38 percent of respondents who did not go to a play or musical in the past year, the average respondent went 2.0 times. In contrast the average respondent attended less than one (0.2) opera performance last year. While comparatively few people in Boston attend opera, those who do attend say that they saw on average between two and three (2.2) operas last year.

Seventy-eight percent of respondents reported attending at least one performing arts event in the past 12 months. This leaves 22 percent of respondents that we refer to as “nonattenders.”

\* This column shows average attendance for respondents who say they *have* attended a particular type of performance (for example, dance), while the middle column shows averages that also include respondents who *have not* attended.

*More than three out of four Bostonians attended a live performing arts event in the past year.*

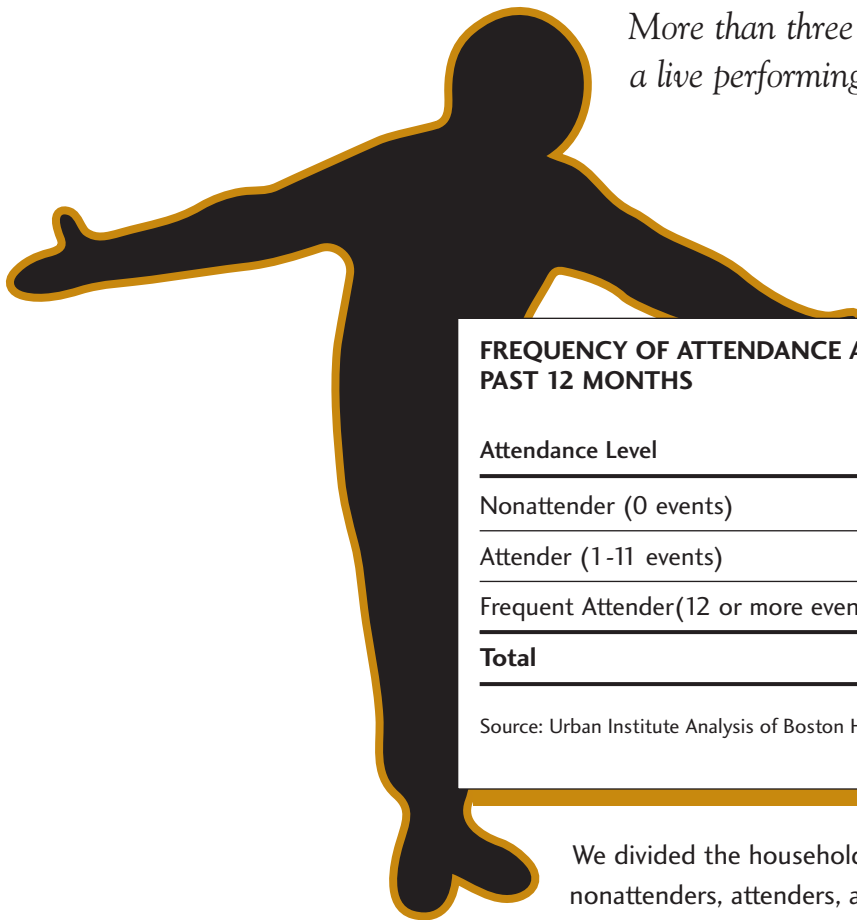


TABLE 2.2

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

| Attendance Level                     | Number     | Percentage  |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Nonattender (0 events)               | 179        | 22%         |
| Attender (1-11 events)               | 525        | 65%         |
| Frequent Attender(12 or more events) | 106        | 13%         |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>810</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Boston 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.

About one in six Bostonians who attend performing arts events went to 12 or more events in the past year. Around two-thirds of all respondents say they attend arts events, but less frequently than once a month. Our meetings with community working groups (during the first year of the project) 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.



*Bostonians 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       | 22%         | 64%               | 38%                | 26%                           | 14%                             | 9%            |
| Attender          | 65%         | 33%               | 53%                | 60%                           | 73%                             | 73%           |
| Frequent Attender | 13%         | 3%                | 9%                 | 14%                           | 13%                             | 18%           |
| <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 Boston Household Data, 2002.

Education level is positively related to attendance level. The percentage of nonattenders decreases steadily as level of education increases. Among the most educated, only nine percent are nonattenders. More than 8 out of 10 Bostonians with a college degree or more are arts attenders or frequent attenders.

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 +0.20. 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 (0.20) 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.



*Bostonians with household incomes less than \$50,000 are two to three times more likely to be nonattenders than those with incomes greater than \$50,000.*

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       | 22%         | 43%                | 31%                        | 16%                         | 14%               |
| Attender          | 65%         | 50%                | 61%                        | 64%                         | 73%               |
| Frequent Attender | 13%         | 7%                 | 8%                         | 20%                         | 13%               |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>100%</b>        | <b>100%</b>                | <b>100%</b>                 | <b>100%</b>       |

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

People in higher income households attend the performing arts more often than people from lower income households. Almost 9 in 10 respondents from the highest household income level attend, compared to less than 6 out of 10 of those from households with the lowest income level.

This claim of a positive relationship between income and attendance is substantiated by a Somer's d value of +0.16.



*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       | 22%         | 20%         | 22%         | 21%         | 20%         | 21%         | 32%         |
| Attender          | 65%         | 68%         | 66%         | 69%         | 67%         | 54%         | 58%         |
| Frequent Attender | 13%         | 12%         | 12%         | 10%         | 13%         | 25%         | 10%         |
| <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 Boston 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. We observe very little difference in attendance among the other four age categories. These findings call into question the commonly held assumption that there is a “graying” of the audience for the performing arts, at least in Boston.

A Somer’s d value of -0.00 supports the conclusion that there is little relationship between age and attendance level.



*Almost three-quarters of Bostonians 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       | 22%         | 20%                 | 27%                            | 23%                         |
| Attender          | 65%         | 65%                 | 65%                            | 66%                         |
| Frequent Attender | 13%         | 15%                 | 8%                             | 12%                         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>100%</b>         | <b>100%</b>                    | <b>100%</b>                 |

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

Respondents with teenagers at home are as likely as those without children to be performing arts attenders. Indeed, about 8 in 10 of these respondents are attenders or frequent attenders of the performing arts.



*Bostonians 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 | 66%         | 43%              | 69%      | 89%               |
| Watch performing arts on television    | 68%         | 43%              | 73%      | 84%               |
| Play musical instrument                | 20%         | 8%               | 20%      | 40%               |
| Sing in a choir or singing group       | 12%         | 9%               | 11%      | 23%               |
| Perform or produce performing arts     | 17%         | 6%               | 17%      | 37%               |

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

The majority of people in Boston report listening to recordings of classical music at least a few times a year (66 percent) and watching the performing arts on television (68 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 Bostonians 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 an alternate means by which nonattenders and attenders express their appreciation for the performing arts.

For each activity in this table, respondents were asked, “In general, over the last year, how often did you [insert activity]?” Response options were every day, at least once a week, at least once a month, occasionally, or never. Occasionally 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 occasionally, monthly, weekly, or daily.



*Bostonians 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                              | 84%         | 7.3                       | 3.9  | 7.7      | 10.9              |
| Attend professional sporting event        | 56%         | 2.8                       | 2.7  | 2.7      | 3.3               |
| Attend amateur sporting event             | 40%         | 3.5                       | 4.1  | 3.2      | 4.3               |
| Attend live pop/rock concert              | 44%         | 1.6                       | 0.5  | 1.5      | 4.0               |
| Attend live comedy show                   | 32%         | 0.7                       | 0.4  | 0.6      | 1.5               |
| Go to club to hear live music or dance    | 55%         | 4.8                       | 3.6  | 4.2      | 9.4               |
| Go to museum or art gallery               | 70%         | 3.0                       | 1.7  | 2.9      | 5.9               |
| Attend a community festival, parade, etc. | 81%         | 3.0                       | 2.3  | 2.9      | 4.8               |

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

Performing arts attenders go to nonperforming arts events more often than nonattenders (with the exception of sporting events), 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 Boston community.



*Arts attenders get to the polls more often than nonattenders.*

TABLE 2.9

**FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, BY VOTING BEHAVIOR**

| Attendance Level              | Vote half the time or less | Vote always or most of the time | Total       |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Nonattender                   | 39%                        | 61%                             | 100%        |
| Attender                      | 20%                        | 80%                             | 100%        |
| Frequent Attender             | 15%                        | 85%                             | 100%        |
| <b>All survey respondents</b> | <b>23%</b>                 | <b>77%</b>                      | <b>100%</b> |

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

The idea that performing arts attenders are part of a more active segment of the community extends to voting behavior. Eighty percent of attenders and 85 percent of frequent attenders vote regularly, compared with only 61 percent of nonattenders. This finding provides another piece of evidence that arts participation is part of a larger dimension of engagement with the 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 provide some 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.

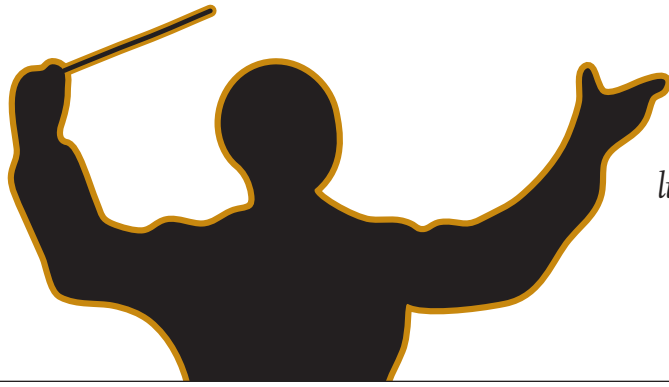


## HIGHLIGHTS

**Positive Attitudes Toward the Arts Predominate:** The majority of Bostonians 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* (90 percent). Somewhat fewer (60 percent) agree that the performing arts make them *feel more connected to the community*.

**Attitudes Are Strong Regardless of Demographics:** As education level increases, respondents are more likely to agree that the performing arts are *enjoyable*. Bostonians who vote regularly are also more likely to agree that the performing arts are *enjoyable*. Finally, younger respondents are more likely to feel that attending live performing arts *encourages them to be more creative*. However, beyond these three observations, 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.

**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 Bostonians have positive attitudes about the value of performing arts in their lives.

TABLE 3.1

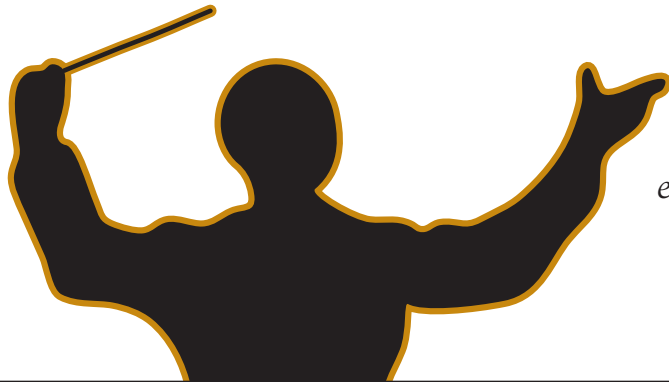
**ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PERSONAL VALUE OF THE PERFORMING ARTS**

| Attending Live Performing Arts...               | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Response | Total |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------|
| ...is enjoyable to me                           | 68%            | 22%            | 3%      | 2%                | 4%                | 1%          | 100%  |
| ...is thought provoking                         | 47%            | 34%            | 6%      | 6%                | 5%                | 2%          | 100%  |
| ...helps me to understand other cultures better | 41%            | 36%            | 10%     | 6%                | 6%                | 1%          | 100%  |
| ...is primarily a social occasion for me        | 41%            | 33%            | 8%      | 11%               | 6%                | 2%          | 100%  |
| ...encourages me to be more creative            | 37%            | 33%            | 13%     | 9%                | 7%                | 1%          | 100%  |
| ...makes me feel more connected to my community | 25%            | 35%            | 16%     | 14%               | 10%               | 1%          | 100%  |

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Boston 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 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 community*.

The table on this page shows the distribution of responses for all survey respondents. For ease of presentation, the remaining tables in this section present data based on the percentage of respondents who strongly agree with each personal attitude.



Bostonians with higher education levels are more likely to find the arts personally enjoyable.

TABLE 3.2

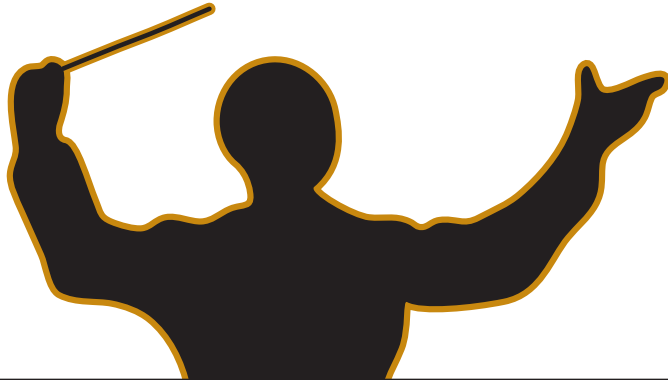
**PERSONAL ATTITUDES BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY EDUCATION**

| 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                           | 68% | 36%               | 57%                | 68%                           | 71%                             | 82%           |
| ...is thought provoking                         | 47% | 24%               | 41%                | 47%                           | 49%                             | 51%           |
| ...helps me to understand other cultures better | 41% | 42%               | 38%                | 46%                           | 39%                             | 41%           |
| ...is primarily a social occasion for me        | 41% | 36%               | 40%                | 45%                           | 43%                             | 36%           |
| ...encourages me to be more creative            | 37% | 36%               | 34%                | 38%                           | 40%                             | 35%           |
| ...makes me feel more connected to my community | 25% | 30%               | 24%                | 27%                           | 22%                             | 25%           |

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Boston 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. Substantially fewer respondents without a high school education are likely to strongly agree that the *performing arts are thought provoking* 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 +0.16.



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

TABLE 3.3

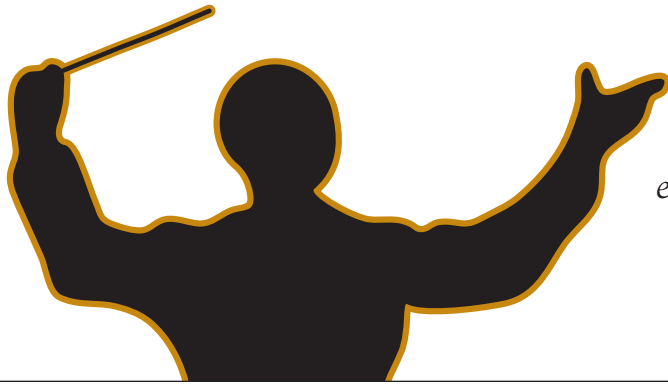
**PERSONAL ATTITUDES BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

| 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                           | 68% | 60%                | 67%                        | 71%                         | 76%               |
| ...is thought provoking                         | 47% | 43%                | 47%                        | 49%                         | 49%               |
| ...helps me to understand other cultures better | 41% | 44%                | 46%                        | 45%                         | 32%               |
| ...is primarily a social occasion for me        | 41% | 33%                | 47%                        | 43%                         | 39%               |
| ...encourages me to be more creative            | 37% | 37%                | 38%                        | 41%                         | 31%               |
| ...makes me feel more connected to my community | 25% | 29%                | 28%                        | 26%                         | 20%               |

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

We observe no statistical relationship between income level and personal attitudes. Respondents with household income levels over \$100,000 are somewhat less likely to strongly agree that performing arts *help them understand other cultures better, encourage them to be more creative, or make them feel more connected to their community.*

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



Younger Bostonians are more likely to feel that attending live performing arts encourages them to be more creative.

TABLE 3.4

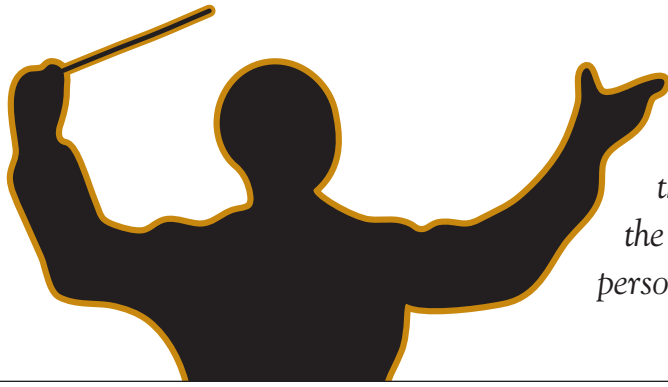
PERSONAL ATTITUDES BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY AGE

| Attending Live Performing Arts...               | All | Under 25 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 and Over |
|---|-----|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| ...is enjoyable to me                           | 68% | 63%      | 65%   | 66%   | 75%   | 76%   | 63%         |
| ...is thought provoking                         | 47% | 38%      | 52%   | 49%   | 47%   | 52%   | 37%         |
| ...helps me to understand other cultures better | 41% | 36%      | 46%   | 40%   | 36%   | 48%   | 40%         |
| ...is primarily a social occasion for me        | 41% | 17%      | 39%   | 42%   | 48%   | 42%   | 49%         |
| ...encourages me to be more creative            | 37% | 39%      | 52%   | 40%   | 36%   | 31%   | 15%         |
| ...makes me feel more connected to my community | 25% | 18%      | 28%   | 24%   | 22%   | 23%   | 36%         |

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

The older the respondent, the less likely he or she is to report that attendance fosters a sense of personal creativity. However, older Bostonians are somewhat more likely to strongly agree with the statement that attending live performing arts is *primarily a social occasion*. Younger respondents are more likely to feel that attending live performing arts *encourages them to be more creative*.

A Somer's d of -0.15 for *attending live performing arts encourages me to be more creative* is the strongest relationship in this table.



While arts attenders in Boston 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                           | 68% | 40%              | 73%      | 93%               |
| ...is thought provoking                         | 47% | 29%              | 48%      | 69%               |
| ...helps me to understand other cultures better | 41% | 34%              | 39%      | 60%               |
| ...is primarily a social occasion for me        | 41% | 35%              | 43%      | 42%               |
| ...encourages me to be more creative            | 37% | 25%              | 37%      | 59%               |
| ...makes me feel more connected to my community | 25% | 21%              | 23%      | 41%               |

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Boston 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 slightly smaller percentage of frequent attenders (42 percent) agree than attenders (43 percent).

# Value to the Community

This section focuses on public perceptions of the value of the performing arts to the greater Boston 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

**Value to the Community Is More Important than Value to the Individual:** Bostonians 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.

**People Believe Arts Matter for Children:** About 7 in 10 Bostonians 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 7 in 10 attenders or frequent attenders.

**Giving Levels Are Low to Moderate:** Overall, only 31 percent of Bostonians made a financial contribution to a performing arts organization in 2001. However, more than half of frequent attenders (62 percent) made a financial contribution.



*Bostonians agree 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 Boston area           | 64%            | 27%            | 3%      | 2%                | 1%                | 2%          | 100%  |
| ...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life | 50%            | 35%            | 7%      | 4%                | 2%                | 2%          | 100%  |
| ...provide opportunities to socialize with other people             | 56%            | 34%            | 5%      | 3%                | 1%                | 2%          | 100%  |
| ...are a source of pride for those in the greater Boston area       | 59%            | 30%            | 5%      | 2%                | 1%                | 3%          | 100%  |
| ...contribute to the education and development of children          | 73%            | 20%            | 2%      | 1%                | 1%                | 2%          | 100%  |
| ...contribute to lifelong learning for adults                       | 57%            | 32%            | 4%      | 3%                | 2%                | 2%          | 100%  |
| ...help preserve and share cultural heritage                        | 63%            | 29%            | 4%      | 2%                | 1%                | 2%          | 100%  |
| ...contribute to the economy of the greater Boston area             | 46%            | 38%            | 5%      | 3%                | 1%                | 6%          | 100%  |

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

A very high percentage of respondents (between 84 and 93 percent) say they strongly agree or somewhat agree with each of the eight statements they were asked to evaluate. In contrast, agreement on the personal value items in the preceding section ranged from 60 to 90 percent.

The table on this page shows the distribution of responses for all survey respondents. For ease of presentation, the remaining tables in this section present data based on the percentage of respondents who strongly agree with each attitude.



Education has little influence on Bostonians' attitudes about the role that the performing arts play in the community.

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 Boston area           | 64% | 49%               | 55%                | 59%                           | 66%                             | 79%           |
| ...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life | 50% | 30%               | 47%                | 50%                           | 50%                             | 55%           |
| ...provide opportunities to socialize with other people             | 56% | 61%               | 54%                | 56%                           | 59%                             | 49%           |
| ...are a source of pride for those in the greater Boston area       | 59% | 33%               | 56%                | 65%                           | 57%                             | 63%           |
| ...contribute to the education and development of children          | 73% | 64%               | 68%                | 70%                           | 76%                             | 80%           |
| ...contribute to lifelong learning for adults                       | 57% | 52%               | 48%                | 54%                           | 58%                             | 66%           |
| ...help preserve and share cultural heritage                        | 63% | 55%               | 59%                | 63%                           | 66%                             | 65%           |
| ...contribute to the economy of the greater Boston area             | 46% | 30%               | 46%                | 44%                           | 49%                             | 48%           |

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

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

The Somer's d relationship between education level and the belief that performing arts improve the quality of life is +0.13.



Household income level has little influence on the attitudes of Bostonians 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 Boston area           | 64% | 48%                | 63%                        | 66%                         | 71%               |
| ...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life | 50% | 42%                | 52%                        | 54%                         | 50%               |
| ...provide opportunities to socialize with other people             | 56% | 46%                | 53%                        | 62%                         | 56%               |
| ...are a source of pride for those in the greater Boston area       | 59% | 51%                | 60%                        | 64%                         | 58%               |
| ...contribute to the education and development of children          | 73% | 62%                | 76%                        | 78%                         | 74%               |
| ...contribute to lifelong learning for adults                       | 57% | 52%                | 55%                        | 61%                         | 59%               |
| ...help preserve and share cultural heritage                        | 63% | 48%                | 67%                        | 68%                         | 64%               |
| ...contribute to the economy of the greater Boston area             | 46% | 35%                | 50%                        | 51%                         | 46%               |

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Boston 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 Boston. 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 Boston. Bostonians with household incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000 are consistently most likely to strongly agree with most of these statements.

The value of Somer's d for *performing arts improve the quality of life* reaches only +0.10.



As age increases, so does the percentage of Bostonians who claim that the arts are a source of community pride.

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 Boston area           | 64% | 44%      | 63%   | 63%   | 71%   | 75%   | 67%         |
| ...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life | 50% | 36%      | 57%   | 46%   | 52%   | 60%   | 48%         |
| ...provide opportunities to socialize with other people             | 56% | 58%      | 62%   | 55%   | 55%   | 59%   | 44%         |
| ...are a source of pride for those in the greater Boston area       | 59% | 41%      | 48%   | 54%   | 69%   | 77%   | 68%         |
| ...contribute to the education and development of children          | 73% | 69%      | 77%   | 70%   | 77%   | 78%   | 67%         |
| ...contribute to lifelong learning for adults                       | 57% | 49%      | 62%   | 56%   | 56%   | 65%   | 51%         |
| ...help preserve and share cultural heritage                        | 63% | 56%      | 66%   | 64%   | 63%   | 71%   | 58%         |
| ...contribute to the economy of the greater Boston area             | 46% | 27%      | 44%   | 49%   | 51%   | 60%   | 44%         |

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

Although the overall relationships are weak, respondents under age 25 are considerably less likely to strongly agree with a number of these statements. However, attitudes about the performing arts generally vary little by respondents' age. People of different ages have notably similar attitudes.

The Somer's d value for the relationship between age and *source of pride* is +0.16.



About 7 in 10 Bostonians 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 Boston area           | 64% | 67%                 | 59%                            | 65%                         |
| ...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life | 50% | 53%                 | 43%                            | 44%                         |
| ...provide opportunities to socialize with other people             | 56% | 55%                 | 58%                            | 62%                         |
| ...are a source of pride for those in the greater Boston area       | 59% | 64%                 | 48%                            | 54%                         |
| ...contribute to the education and development of children          | 73% | 76%                 | 69%                            | 71%                         |
| ...contribute to lifelong learning for adults                       | 57% | 59%                 | 53%                            | 52%                         |
| ...help preserve and share cultural heritage                        | 63% | 64%                 | 62%                            | 62%                         |
| ...contribute to the economy of the greater Boston area             | 46% | 51%                 | 40%                            | 43%                         |

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Boston 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. Respondents from households without children at home are more likely to strongly agree with the statements *performing arts promote understanding of other people and different ways of life, are a source of pride for those in the greater Boston area, and contribute to the economy of the greater Boston area.*



A substantial percentage of Bostonians 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 Boston area           | 64% | 41%              | 68%      | 85%               |
| ...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life | 50% | 37%              | 50%      | 72%               |
| ...provide opportunities to socialize with other people             | 56% | 46%              | 56%      | 70%               |
| ...are a source of pride for those in the greater Boston area       | 59% | 43%              | 61%      | 75%               |
| ...contribute to the education and development of children          | 73% | 63%              | 74%      | 87%               |
| ...contribute to lifelong learning for adults                       | 57% | 38%              | 58%      | 80%               |
| ...help preserve and share cultural heritage                        | 63% | 51%              | 63%      | 82%               |
| ...contribute to the economy of the greater Boston area             | 46% | 35%              | 48%      | 55%               |

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Boston 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. Frequent attenders feel most strongly about the role of the performing arts in *improving the quality of life* in Boston and about the contribution of the arts to the *education and development of children*.



*Bostonians who volunteer for community organizations are more likely to attend performing arts events.*

TABLE 4.7

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

| Attendance Level       | Never Volunteer | Volunteer  | Total       |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|
| Nonattender            | 54%             | 46%        | 100%        |
| Attender               | 29%             | 72%        | 100%        |
| Frequent Attender      | 17%             | 83%        | 100%        |
| <b>All Respondents</b> | <b>33%</b>      | <b>67%</b> | <b>100%</b> |

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

Is the level of civic engagement of arts attenders similar to or different from that of nonattenders? 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.

There is a strong relationship between frequency of attendance at live performing arts events and volunteering in community organizations. A little less than half of nonattenders reported that they volunteer at least once in a while. This contrasts with more than 7 in 10 attenders or 8 in 10 frequent attenders. These findings are 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 volunteering inclines one to more frequent attendance at performing arts events.



*Three out of five frequent attenders made a donation to an arts organization in 2001.*

TABLE 4.8

**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            | 91%                     | 9%                   | 100%        |
| Attender               | 69%                     | 32%                  | 100%        |
| Frequent Attender      | 38%                     | 62%                  | 100%        |
| <b>All Respondents</b> | <b>69%</b>              | <b>31%</b>           | <b>100%</b> |

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

About one-third (31 percent) of Bostonians 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, Cost, Leisure Preference, and Parking Are Key Obstacles:** The biggest barriers to more frequent attendance at performing arts events, cited by a quarter or more of respondents as a “big problem,” are *difficulty making time to go out*, *cost of tickets*, *preference to spend leisure time in other ways*, and *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events*.

**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 *having no one to attend with* 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*, and that they *feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events*.



Bostonians 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   | 35%        | 30%             | 8%           | 25%          | 1%          | 100%  |
| Family obligations  | 22%        | 11%             | 6%           | 61%          | 0%          | 100%  |
| Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events               | 23%        | 20%             | 11%          | 46%          | 1%          | 100%  |
| Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations                  | 7%         | 10%             | 10%          | 72%          | 1%          | 100%  |
| Not enough publicity or information about performances and times    | 12%        | 19%             | 12%          | 55%          | 2%          | 100%  |
| <b>PERSONAL</b>   |            |                 |              |              |             |       |
| Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways                          | 23%        | 30%             | 16%          | 28%          | 2%          | 100%  |
| Hard to make time to go out   | 41%        | 24%             | 10%          | 24%          | 2%          | 100%  |
| No one to attend with   | 7%         | 10%             | 8%           | 75%          | 0%          | 100%  |
| <b>PERCEPTUAL</b>   |            |                 |              |              |             |       |
| Performing arts do not appeal                                       | 6%         | 8%              | 7%           | 77%          | 1%          | 100%  |
| Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events        | 3%         | 4%              | 5%           | 87%          | 1%          | 100%  |
| Have not enjoyed past performances                                  | 2%         | 4%              | 7%           | 86%          | 1%          | 100%  |

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

For all but four items, most people said the various barriers are not a reason why they do not attend more. The most frequently cited “big reasons” why people do not attend more performing arts events are that it is *hard to make time to go out*, *cost of tickets*, *preference to spend leisure time in other ways*, and *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events*. 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.



Bostonians with less education 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  | 35% | 27%               | 33%                | 41%                           | 32%                             | 38%           |
| Family obligations   | 22% | 24%               | 21%                | 21%                           | 22%                             | 22%           |
| Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events            | 23% | 36%               | 27%                | 34%                           | 16%                             | 15%           |
| Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations               | 7%  | 18%               | 13%                | 10%                           | 3%                              | 2%            |
| Not enough publicity or information about performances and times | 12% | 30%               | 15%                | 16%                           | 8%                              | 9%            |
| <b>PERSONAL</b>  |     |                   |                    |                               |                                 |               |
| Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways                       | 23% | 33%               | 29%                | 26%                           | 23%                             | 12%           |
| Hard to make time to go out                                      | 41% | 18%               | 42%                | 43%                           | 42%                             | 41%           |
| No one to attend with  | 7%  | 18%               | 11%                | 7%                            | 4%                              | 5%            |
| <b>PERCEPTUAL</b>  |     |                   |                    |                               |                                 |               |
| Performing arts do not appeal                                    | 6%  | 18%               | 10%                | 9%                            | 4%                              | 2%            |
| Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events     | 3%  | 15%               | 6%                 | 4%                            | 2%                              | 0%            |
| Have not enjoyed past performances                               | 2%  | 12%               | 3%                 | 1%                            | 2%                              | 1%            |

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

While the percentage trends are suggestive of important relationships, none of these barriers feature 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  $-0.14$ .

The proportion of respondents who say that the *performing arts do not appeal* to them decreases as education increases. In fact, only two percent of respondents with a postgraduate degree say that the 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*, that performances are in *unsafe or unfamiliar locations*, or that there is *not enough publicity or information about performances and times*.



Having no one to attend with is more of an issue for Bostonians with lower incomes.

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  | 35% | 42%                | 39%                        | 38%                         | 26%               |
| Family obligations   | 22% | 28%                | 18%                        | 21%                         | 23%               |
| Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events            | 23% | 33%                | 26%                        | 22%                         | 12%               |
| Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations               | 7%  | 21%                | 6%                         | 6%                          | 2%                |
| Not enough publicity or information about performances and times | 12% | 23%                | 14%                        | 11%                         | 8%                |
| <b>PERSONAL</b>  |     |                    |                            |                             |                   |
| Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways                       | 23% | 32%                | 28%                        | 21%                         | 22%               |
| Hard to make time to go out                                      | 41% | 44%                | 40%                        | 39%                         | 47%               |
| No one to attend with  | 7%  | 28%                | 8%                         | 6%                          | 2%                |
| <b>PERCEPTUAL</b>  |     |                    |                            |                             |                   |
| Performing arts do not appeal                                    | 6%  | 9%                 | 11%                        | 5%                          | 5%                |
| Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events     | 3%  | 9%                 | 6%                         | 1%                          | 0%                |
| Have not enjoyed past performances                               | 2%  | 7%                 | 4%                         | 0%                          | 1%                |

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

The value of Somer's d for the relationship between household income and *no one to attend with* is  $-0.15$ . For *cost of tickets* and income, Somer's d is  $-0.06$ .

The only barrier to more frequent attendance that shows a strong association with income is *having no one to attend with*. This is particularly interesting because we expected a relationship between income and *cost of tickets*, which we found in most other communities. However the association between household income and concerns about ticket costs is weak. Respondents from families with lower total incomes are also more likely to cite *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events* and *safety and familiarity of location* as concerns.



Younger Bostonians want 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  | 35% | 27%      | 29%   | 33%   | 42%   | 38%   | 41%         |
| Family obligations   | 22% | 2%       | 30%   | 34%   | 18%   | 14%   | 9%          |
| Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events            | 23% | 13%      | 21%   | 19%   | 21%   | 31%   | 38%         |
| Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations               | 7%  | 4%       | 3%    | 7%    | 5%    | 9%    | 20%         |
| Not enough publicity or information about performances and times | 12% | 18%      | 17%   | 11%   | 9%    | 10%   | 12%         |
| <b>PERSONAL</b>  |     |          |       |       |       |       |             |
| Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways                       | 23% | 21%      | 27%   | 26%   | 21%   | 18%   | 20%         |
| Hard to make time to go out                                      | 41% | 35%      | 40%   | 50%   | 45%   | 38%   | 26%         |
| No one to attend with  | 7%  | 6%       | 6%    | 4%    | 6%    | 9%    | 18%         |
| <b>PERCEPTUAL</b>  |     |          |       |       |       |       |             |
| Performing arts do not appeal                                    | 6%  | 7%       | 6%    | 8%    | 6%    | 4%    | 7%          |
| Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events     | 3%  | 4%       | 4%    | 2%    | 2%    | 1%    | 7%          |
| Have not enjoyed past performances                               | 2%  | 4%       | 3%    | 2%    | 2%    | 3%    | 1%          |

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

The Somer's d value for the relationship between *not enough publicity or information about performances and times* and age is -0.16.

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* and *no one to attend with* as significant barriers.



Having children at home keeps Bostonians 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          | 22% | 7%                  | 53%                            | 23%                         |
| Hard to make time to go out | 41% | 32%                 | 58%                            | 47%                         |

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Boston 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* and *hard to make time to go out* are substantial obstacles.



Bostonians 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  | 35% | 30%              | 38%      | 30%               |
| Family obligations   | 22% | 26%              | 22%      | 12%               |
| Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events            | 23% | 26%              | 23%      | 23%               |
| Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations               | 7%  | 13%              | 6%       | 8%                |
| Not enough publicity or information about performances and times | 12% | 18%              | 10%      | 12%               |
| <b>PERSONAL</b>  |     |                  |          |                   |
| Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways                       | 23% | 44%              | 19%      | 5%                |
| Hard to make time to go out                                      | 41% | 42%              | 41%      | 38%               |
| No one to attend with  | 7%  | 14%              | 6%       | 2%                |
| <b>PERCEPTUAL</b>  |     |                  |          |                   |
| Performing arts do not appeal                                    | 6%  | 18%              | 3%       | 5%                |
| Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events     | 3%  | 10%              | 1%       | 0%                |
| Have not enjoyed past performances                               | 2%  | 7%               | 1%       | 0%                |

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Boston 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 41 percent of attenders say that it is *hard to make time to go out*, this factor does not differentiate them from respondents who do not attend or those who attend frequently. The one item that attenders rate notably higher as a barrier is *cost of tickets*. That is, *cost of tickets* appears to be a greater inhibitor to 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 greater Boston 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 International 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 Boston 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 GREATER BOSTON 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) were included for blocks with zip codes starting with 017 to 024. 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.

From October through December 2002, calls were made by Princeton Data Source, a subsidiary of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. 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 52 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 41 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 Boston metropolitan area.

To investigate the potential for such bias, we compared the characteristics of the 810 respondents with known characteristics of the population (see Table A-2). Population estimates are based on the 2000 Census of Population and Housing. The summaries in this table indicate that individuals aged 35-44 and 45-54 are overrepresented among the survey respondents, while blacks, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and persons under 25 and over 65 years of age 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 Boston 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.

## **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



TABLE A.1

**DISPOSITION OF CALLS, BOSTON HOUSEHOLD SURVEY**

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 3826  | dialed numbers  |
| -1318 | non-working numbers   |
| 2508  | working numbers   |
| -485  | “non-contact”—language/health barrier, incomplete callbacks |
| 2023  | <b>contacted numbers (80.7%)</b>                            |
| -951  | refusals  |
| 1072  | <b>cooperating (53.0%)</b>                                  |
| -216  | ineligible  |
| 856   | eligible  |
| -46   | interrupted, incomplete                                     |
| 810   | <b>completions (94.6%)</b>                                  |

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Response rate} &= \text{contacts} \times \text{cooperations} \times \text{completions} \\
 &= 80.7\% \times 53.0\% \times 94.6\% \\
 &= 40.5\%
 \end{aligned}$$

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.

Throughout this report, we assume respondent education level, household income level, and age to be independent variables that predispose respondents toward certain behaviors or values (dependent variables). For these relationships, we report an *asymmetric* Somer’s d value that assumes a causal relationship between variables. However, for voting behavior and volunteerism, we make no such causal references. For associations involving these variables, we report a *symmetric* Somer’s d value that makes no presumptions about which variable is independent and which is dependent.



TABLE A.2

| CHARACTERISTICS OF BOSTON HOUSEHOLD RESPONDENTS (N=810) |                     |                    |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|
|   | Population Estimate | Survey Respondents |
| <b>RACE</b>   |                     |                    |
| White   | 645                 | 661                |
| Black   | 48                  | 36                 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander                                  | 42                  | 22                 |
| Hispanic/Latino   | 54                  | 53                 |
| Other/Mixed   | 19                  | 6                  |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native                          | 1                   | 5                  |
| Missing (did not report)                                | 0                   | 27                 |
| <b>SEX</b>  |                     |                    |
| Men   | 382                 | 370                |
| Women   | 428                 | 440                |
| <b>AGE</b>  |                     |                    |
| 18-24   | 100                 | 84                 |
| 25-34   | 159                 | 161                |
| 35-44   | 173                 | 198                |
| 45-54   | 149                 | 171                |
| 55-64   | 96                  | 94                 |
| 65+   | 134                 | 87                 |
| Missing (did not report)                                | 0                   | 15                 |

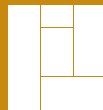
Somer's d runs from a value of 0.0 (no relationship) to 1.0 (perfect relationship), although it is usually quite low because of the conservative way in which it is calculated. A positive sign (+) in front of the number means that there is a *positive relationship* between the variables; that is, high 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.

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