Research on Performing Arts in Communities
Urban Institute, Mary Kopczynski Winkler

MR. KOJO NNAMDI: From WAMU, at American University in Washington, this is Public Interest. I'm Kojo Nnamdi. We may go to the opera, live theater, or the symphony, but we don't stop to really think about how much these performances can mean to our daily lives and to our communities. Those performing arts organizations have been concentrating on this issue for years. They have rarely had the resources or staff to conduct the necessary surveys to get that kind of information. And even if, say, an individual ballet company has detailed data about how its work is perceived by its audience members, it's unlikely that it knows what the general population thinks about its work, or how that information compares to other arts organizations in that city. Of course, private companies, and other sectors like health and education, do this kind of research all the time, it being crucial to their efforts to lobby legislators and generate public opinion on certain issues.

But most arts organizations are so understaffed and underfunded that they have never put aside money for this kind of research, and never before has a national effort been undertaken to get solid data on all the disciplines of performing arts. That is, until now.

Our continuing series with the Urban Institute continues with a look at how to quantify and qualify the contribution of performing arts. And joining us to talk about that is Mary Kopczynski, who is a research associate with the Public Management Program of the Urban Institute. Mary, good to see you again.

MS. KOPCZYNSKI: Thank you.

MR. NNAMDI: And Mark Scorca also joins us in our Washington studio. He is president and CEO of OPERA America. Hi, Mark.

MR. MARK SCORCA: Hi, thanks for having me.

MR. NNAMDI: Joining us from the studios of KUVO in Denver is Katherine Tyson, director of communications with the Denver Center Theatre Company. Katherine Tyson, welcome.

MS. KATHERINE TYSON: Thank you for having me.

MR. NNAMDI: Mark, allow me to start with you. How did this research effort come about?

MR. SCORCA: Well, it grows out of the maturing of the performing arts field, and a maturing of the performing arts service organizations. We have for 20 and 30 years been focusing on really practical services to our members, as they work really hard to put on this season's performances. But through the 1990s, I think as the field matured, as the field came through a controversial debate about the value of the arts in America, we realized that we needed to move beyond providing just practical service to thinking more broadly about creating an appreciation, or awareness, a real value for the performing arts as a part of community life.

MR. NNAMDI: What's unique about this project?

MR. SCORCA: Well, unique? I think it's unique in several ways. One is that it is really looking at cross-disciplinary research. We have, for many years, done some very basic research in the dance world, or the opera world, or the symphony world. This is the first time that the fields, five of them working together, are trying to do this kind of research across disciplines. It also represents a methodology, an intensity of research that we really haven't engaged in before. It looks to long-range impact, long-range planning in a way that is new to the arts, and I think will be important to our health.

MR. NNAMDI: You can join this conversation. Call us at 1-800-433-8850, that's 1-800-433-8850. Katherine
Tyson, most private sector companies have long since recognized the need for credible, compelling data to make public policy arguments. Why only now for the performing arts sector?

**MS. TYSON:** Well, I think as Mark said, one of the things, of course, in the performing arts and the nonprofit world, we're always short on money, or we're short on staff and we're short on the resources to fund qualitative or quantitative surveys and research to support our work. We were approached last summer; Denver was selected as one of the five participating cities. And the groups that I've all worked with here—there's 12 of us who are participating—we're all very excited about the opportunity to participate in this survey, this three-year program.

**MR. NNAMDI:** Well, let's talk a little bit about the sites and what's going on there. Mary Kopczynski, could you describe the data-collecting process that's unfolding in Cincinnati, Denver, Pittsburgh, Seattle, and the state of Alaska right now?

**MS. KOPCZYNSKI:** Sure. And just by way of background, before getting into the technical issues of the data collection, there is, as Katherine mentioned, a structure in each of these sites. It parallels the structure at the national level, but member organizations of each of the national service organizations are participating in a working group collaborative. Each of these members have agreed to undertake an audience survey, on several occasions, and also a subscriber survey of approximately 200 of their subscribers.

What's unique about this is that there has often been critique of audience surveys in the past, in their not being conducted in a uniform or rigorous fashion. We have worked really hard to really ensure that each person participating has an equal chance of being selected, and right now the returns are looking quite good.

In addition, in each community is a household survey, which we believe is a very critical component. This will help us learn more about people who are not as actively participating in the arts as subscribers may be, and will set a very good point of comparison for this study. And then, finally, at the national level there is this harmonization of administrative and operating data that is taking place. Again, not so much at the local level, but these are national surveys being undertaken of membership and will go beyond the five cities that are currently included in this effort.

**MR. NNAMDI:** Mark.

**MR. SCORCA:** I wanted to underscore what Mary just said, the importance in this project of our reaching people who don't necessarily attend the arts. In terms of building the arts audience, it is, frankly, more important to survey those who don't attend to figure out what the barriers are, than it is to survey those who do attend. And from a public policy point of view, it really matters to us to know whether nonattenders place a high value on the presence of the arts in the community.

We believe, and anecdotal research has shown us, that even if people don't go to a symphony, ballet, or opera, they still are happy that those institutions are in their community, for a variety of reasons. Reaching the nonattender is particularly important from the policy point of view, from the management point of view, and I think is a unique aspect of this project.

**MR. NNAMDI:** You know, it just amazes me that whenever a city is being approached to either build a new stadium for the owner of a professional sports franchise, or to get a new professional sports franchise in their town, the assumption is made that even though the overwhelming majority of residents won't actually be going there, that it somehow will improve the quality of life for them also. It seems that this is the same kind of survey that the performing arts are now making.

**MR. SCORCA:** Absolutely. To ascertain the real value to the community at large in having these institutions, perhaps so they can be perceived as worthy of the kind of support that many of these sports franchises receive in public investment and infrastructure.

**MR. NNAMDI:** Tell us a little bit about what kinds of questions, therefore, are being asked in the survey.

**MS. KOPCZYNSKI:** Well, as no surprise, one of the core areas of interest is the extent to which people are participating in the arts.

**MR. NNAMDI:** Do you go? How often do you go?

**MS. KOPCZYNSKI:** Yes, absolutely. In addition, we ask about related issues. You know, do people go to museums, do people listen to the radio; do you play an instrument, you know, other activities that we really think are centrally related. Another core area is this question of barriers to attendance. Why do people not attend, or why do people not attend more frequently?

We look at building from one of the RAND frameworks, you know, perceptual barriers, practical barriers, and other motivations for participation. And then, finally, we look at the contribution that individuals perceive the arts make to themselves as individuals, and also to the community. For example, what is the contribution arts make to broadening diversity, deepening thought about critical issues in the community?

**MR. NNAMDI:** Katherine Tyson, could you tell us a little bit about the Denver Center Theatre Company?

**MS. TYSON:** This is the 23rd year of the Denver Center Theatre Company, and we perform in the Denver Center Performing Arts Complex, which is second only to Lincoln Center in the number of seats that it has, just over 10,000. We, at the Theatre Company, produce 11 shows over the course of the season. And, in fact, we are opening tonight with a world premiere, *Almost Heaven: Songs and Stories of John Denver*. So we're busy.
We go from October through the end of May, beginning of June, and as I said, this is our 23rd season. What I wanted to add on to what Mary said, we have been collecting—some of our subscriber surveys, now, have all come in, and also our audience surveys that we've done, and I brought in a few statistics today. One of the questions is, how valuable are the arts to you? And in our subscriber surveys, it was 80 percent extremely valuable; the audience survey was 78 percent extremely valuable.

How valuable are the arts to the children? Sixteen percent said somewhat. Interestingly, sixty-eight percent didn't know in the subscriber survey. And in the audience survey, 22 percent said it was extremely important, but 64 percent said they didn't know. And, then, how valuable is it in the greater Denver area? Seventy-four percent of subscribers said extremely, and 87 percent said extremely in the audience survey. So that was very encouraging news.

MR. NNAMDI: Now, each city, Katherine, was allowed to design specific questions for the survey. So, in Denver, you crafted specific questions about the scientific and cultural facilities district. Talk about that initiative and how the survey may help in your efforts to retain it.

MS. TYSON: That's right. The Scientific and Cultural Facilities District was founded in 1988, and it is up for a vote in 2004. So, one of the important questions to us was to find out how valuable the SCFD was to the metro area Denverites. And we did get some interesting results back on that as well.

MR. NNAMDI: I should point out that the SCFD gets state tax of one penny on every ten dollars, and that added up to some $38 million in tax dollars last year.

MS. TYSON: That's right. And there are three different tiers that they have. We're the theater, the symphony, the ballet. We are in a group, tier two, and we got $10.6 million of that pie. So that was a substantial funding for all of us here in Denver. It's a seven-district area, metro counties, that now the SCFD funds. In the survey itself, it said are you aware of the SCFD, and in our subscriber series 81 percent were aware; only 60 percent in our audience survey [were].

Was it a good use of our tax money? Subscribers said 99 percent yes; audience surveyed said 98 percent. And would you support reauthorization? Our subscribers said 89 percent, yes, and our audience survey said 77 percent. So, clearly, they are aware, at least in those two surveys. It will be interesting to see what happens for the household surveys that the Urban Institute is conducting.

MR. NNAMDI: That's certainly got to be a positive step in the effort to retain it. Mark Scorca.

MR. SCORCA: It is wonderful to hear about these kinds of findings from a particular city in the site. Congratulations, Katherine. I would say, though, that there's a lot of good research that does go on in various communities. It's never been linked before. If we find that there are these kinds of positive findings in Denver, and in Pittsburgh, and in Seattle, we begin to be able to stitch together a national picture that could speak to public policy on a national level, and even support the efforts in cities where they're not doing specific research.

That's the special part. And the support of the Pew Charitable Trusts in enabling us to bring this national coordination and leveraging to local research is one of the real assets of the project.

MR. NNAMDI: What aspects of opera, dance, and theater, and the symphony allow one to come up with cohesive data for the various disciplines?

MS. KOPCZYNSKI: Well, for one, going back to the participation data, we are asking, very explicitly, about, you know, the number of times which someone attends any one of those disciplines, events, and in individual communities, we ask about the specific member organizations representing those disciplines. In addition, however, when we go to the step of analyzing the data, we would also be able to sort and break out the information by theater goers or symphonies, and see if there are any interesting findings coming out about differences in values, perceptions, and the like.

MR. NNAMDI: Mary Kopczynski is a research associate with the Public Management Program at the Urban Institute. She joins us in our Washington studio, along with Mark Scorca, who is president and CEO of OPERA America. Joining us from Denver, Katherine Tyson, director of communications with the Denver Center Theatre Company. We're going to take a short break. We'll be right back.

(Break)

MR. NNAMDI: Welcome back to our conversation about the first national in scope survey being performed on the impact of the performing arts in specific communities around the country. Mary Kopczynski, what will be the next step after the surveys come in?

MS. KOPCZYNSKI: Excellent question, because that's what we're really excited about. One of the core features of this project, really—we've developed uniform implementation, uniform procedures for collecting data, standardized questionnaires, and hopefully, low-cost procedures. We are hopeful that these can be replicated over time. Once the data come to us, we are in the process of developing an analysis plan, and we will be taking the findings back to each community.

They will also have the findings, almost simultaneous with our ability to just generate quick reports, quick turnaround reports for them to look at the data themselves. We will come to them in a series of site visits, present our findings, compare notes, see what was observed locally and generate a community report. In addition, we're looking to, you know, cross-site findings and observations, as well as finally documenting the process for this unique collaboration.
MR. NNAMDI: What impact do you think the performing arts have on your community? You can call us to tell us that at 1-800-433-8850, or what impact their mere existence in your community, whether you attend or not, you feel it has on the quality of your life. Mark, one of the things that these surveys will be doing is trying to identify some of the barriers to attendance. Towards that end, what specific information will be compiled from this project?

MR. SCORCA: We may learn that there are many people who want to attend art activities, but for some reason have misperceptions about where to park, or where to go to dinner before or after, or how to buy tickets. There are other research projects, even some that OPERA America have done, where we have found that there’s a real curiosity about attending the arts, but many people have some very superficial inhibitors that keep them from making that step to trying out the arts experience.

We hope that we will find somewhere our local arts organizations can take immediate action to convey information about how to attend the arts, and things like where to park or how to buy tickets. We may find, though, that there are larger questions of messaging. How do the arts portray themselves? Is the language that is used to describe the arts experience, perhaps, too esoteric? Do we need to speak in different terms about the arts experience?

So I think there'll be practical lessons learned that can be addressed in the short term and some larger questions that will emerge that perhaps require our best thinking over the next couple of years.

MS. KOPCZYNSKI: I just want to underscore what Mark’s talking about, because what he’s talking about here is the use of the information, and that’s really at the heart of the matter. What we have tried to design here is a system that is useful, at the national level, for public discourse, advocacy, and other sorts of information dissemination. But at the local level, we really have built surveys that we feel will be meaningful and useful to improve the management of organizations, and how they conduct their operations.

MS. TYSON: Well, it will be very exciting once all the results are in and we have the analysis from the Urban Institute. We’re looking very closely, of course, at what’s coming in from our point of view, but once we’ve gotten all of the other 11 participants in Denver, and we’ve combined those, we’ll have greater information, against the cross-disciplines, how it works for various performing arts groups.

I mean, one of the things that we’ve found already, one of the barriers, or biggest complaints—44 percent of our surveys said that they had a problem with our parking. (Laughs.)

MR. NNAMDI: Why am I not surprised?

MS. TYSON: I know, too much money, not enough of it, et cetera. You know, 13 percent complained about the facility. It was uncomfortable, leg room, temperature. Sixteen percent wanted to create their own subscription packages. Twenty percent had an opinion on performance times. The fact that we do several world premieres a year, sometimes they don’t think they’re always worth the programming. And our acting and technical skills were excellent; the choice of the plays were not always up to what they liked.

So we do have some criticism here. And I think that's just [as] important as the praise that we’re getting right now, and it will be important for us to look at all of it in strategic planning.

MR. NNAMDI: Joining us now by telephone is Steve Libman, who is managing director of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. Steven, welcome.

MR. LIBMAN: Thank you, thank you very much. Good afternoon, everyone.

MR. NNAMDI: Performing arts organizations in Pittsburgh, Steven, have a history of working together. Tell us about some of your previous projects with other Pittsburgh organizations, and a little bit about the past research that your ballet company has carried out.

MR. LIBMAN: Sure, happy to. There’s a long history of the arts community working together here. In particular, there's a formal organization called Shared Services, and all of the major performing arts organizations in the downtown cultural district belong to this. And we participate in projects such as joint purchasing of health insurance, purchasing of liability insurance. We are collectively doing market research now, which is a little different from the Urban Institute study. And we also participate in programs as simple as buying office supplies together.

We are now moving ahead to work on programs to share our programming calendars, going forward for many years to put everything on the table so that we can see how we are either competing with each other, or, hopefully, how we can complement each other through the selection of our product, which, in the end, makes it easier for our audience members to reach us. As far as what Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre has done specifically, for the last 10 years, we have been doing some very sophisticated research on our audiences, and we conduct after each performance, using a random sample, what’s known as an Audience Satisfaction Survey, and this is done with a firm here in town called Prescott and Associates, and they’re national leaders in this.

And we ask our audience members to tell us what was the performance like for them. What did they enjoy? What didn’t they enjoy? Was parking a problem? But this survey is not designed to elicit demographic information, except it does help us understand where they look for advertising. But it helps us understand
what about our product, our art form they liked and didn't like. And we're actually trying to get at what are the core emotional responses that they are having to our performances, and then we turn that into very practical—we use it in a very practical manner, because it affects how we advertise our products, going forward, and it also affects the kinds of ballet that we choose.

And our artistic director here, you would think that some artistic directors would not be happy with that, but on the contrary, he is very, very happy to hear that these surveys reveal that our audience members love our dancers, they have a strong affiliation with the dancers, and they are very interested in the kinds of ballets that he is presenting. So that's the kind of very special, sophisticated work we're doing.

MR. NNAMDI: And Steven, I'm sure that the people at Prescott and Associates are very nice, but they probably don't work for free. How are you able to afford the additional resources for your previous research?

MR. LIBMAN: All part of it is handled through a donation, and other parts are handled—we have received grants in the past to cover some of the expenses. So it's a combination of the two.

MR. NNAMDI: And you mention the difference with the Urban Institute study. What is it about this study that you find exciting?

MR. LIBMAN: This study is groundbreaking because it continues what we've done here in Pittsburgh through shared services. It means that the arts community is working together to gather information, which will help us on a local level, and then on a national level understand—I think I heard earlier—the possible barriers to attending the arts. And hopefully, this will create—I think it's extremely important to create a local and national dialogue on the value of the arts to today's society. And this study is brilliant because it allows the arts community to have a, quote, "seat at the table," unquote, where issues of national importance are being discussed.

And for the first time, we're going to be able—we, collectively, the national arts community—will be able to have a tremendous impact on that national dialogue. And the end result, I hope, is that we can direct some major funding dollars toward the performing arts community.

MR. NNAMDI: Did you come up with any city-specific questions in Pittsburgh?

MR. LIBMAN: You know, I was talking to my marketing director about that, and we really did not. We looked at it for a while and basically, the questions that were developed in the working group and through the Urban Institute were brilliant, and so we did not. I think the only one that we're looking at right now is the possibility of how people are buying tickets, and how the use of technology—are people buying tickets through the Internet, for example? That's probably one question. Otherwise, not really.

MR. NNAMDI: Well, I've got one. How come no Pittsburgh Steelers have been compared to ballet dancers since the grace-like moves of Lynn Swan?

MR. LIBMAN: Well, that's a great question. Now, Lynn Swan is a former ballet board member, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre board member, and he's the—and your audience should know I wasn't even set up for that question. (Laughter) He also is the honorary chair of our golf tournament every year, the celebrity, I should say the guest celebrity of the golf tournament every year. And Lynn supports a very sizable contribution each year for the continued education of economically disadvantaged students.

And actually, because of Lynn, we do have an entry into the Steelers. Every once in a while, one of the local television shows will ask one of our dancers to put some of the Pittsburgh Steelers through a workout. And Jerome Bettis was recently put through a workout.

MR. NNAMDI: Well, Steve Libman, I wasn't prepped for that question either; it just happened to pop into my head, and I thought I'd ask it. Thank you very much for joining us.

MR. LIBMAN: You're very welcome. Thank you.

MR. NNAMDI: Steven Libman is executive director of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. We're talking about the performing arts and a survey now being conducted in coordination, or in collaboration with, the Urban Institute, that would try to evaluate the effect of the performing arts in four cities and one state around the nation on the life of people living in those communities. Let's go to the telephones, starting with Chad in Phoenix, Arizona. Chad, you're on the air. Go ahead, please.

CALLER: Yes, good morning. I just wanted to comment on the importance of this survey and how it relates to my community. My city of Phoenix is the sixth largest in the U.S., yet we are losing our best and brightest from the Phoenix symphony because of salary cuts while we have allocated millions of dollars in public funds to build yet a third professional sporting stadium. And that's really my comment about that. And I had a question for your board, if they think that popular culture is partly responsible for the perceived barriers to the arts?

MR. SCORCA: I wouldn't say that popular culture is responsible for the perceived barriers, but there is no doubt that the performing arts compete in a marketplace that has all kinds of cultural, recreational, sports options for citizens in a community. So that our challenge is to convey that we are a viable option, an exciting option, an accessible option, as people select among a menu of opportunity for them in their community.

MR. NNAMDI: Chad, thank you very much for your call.

CALLER: Thank you.
MR. NNAMDI: As we continue our conversation with Mary Kopczynski, research associate with the Public Management Program at the Urban Institute; Mark Scorca, president and CEO of OPERA America; and Katherine Tyson, director of communications of the Denver Center Theatre Company, you can call us to join this conversation, 1-800-433-8850. This is Public Interest. I’m Kojo Nnamdi. Back to the telephones. Here now, Joey, in Charlotte, North Carolina. Hi, Joey.

CALLER: Hello.

MR. NNAMDI: You’re on the air. Go ahead.

CALLER: My main concern is, I live in Charlotte, and it’s a fairly culturally missing area. There’s not much going on here. There’s a lot of sports, and we just recently had a big thing about trying to get a new arena for the Charlotte Hornets. And tagged onto it, trying to get a few extra votes, was this arts and science thing, bring more arts to the city. And what it was basically trying to do was just lure in the few people that were into the arts.

But my main problem is the lack of advertising and gumption based behind the arts. Already this year, I’ve gone to D.C. and to New York four different times to see theater and the ballet, and all that kind of stuff, and here in Charlotte, there’s just a little to no advertising being done. You turn on the TV every single day, and it’s nothing but sports, sports, sports. And there’s so much just, you know, media publication and excitement about the sports, but there’s none about the theater or about art exhibits coming to town, or anything like that.

And it seems that as much as people want to go see these things, they need to be informed a little bit more about it. And also, if the media, and general popular culture, makes it such an exciting thing to do, people are going to go do it. You know, people go to all these sporting events because it’s the thing to do. You can talk about it at work the next day, because there’s—

MR. NNAMDI: Joey, you’re fading on us.

CALLER: Oh, I’m sorry. I’m on a cell phone. It’s just there’s so much going on. You can watch it later on TV. You can say, hey, I was a part of that.

MR. NNAMDI: You raise a particularly important question, where Charlotte is concerned, because basketball fans know that the Charlotte Hornets are not attracting very many people to their arena at all, which raises the question about this survey, Mary and Mark. It seems to me that one of the benefits of this survey could be to make the argument, in a place like Charlotte, that based on what we have seen in other cities, this is what people want to see, and this might be something you might want to think about expending your dollars for.

MS. KOPCZYNSKI: Absolutely. And that leads in, very nicely, to this question of sustainability, and where do we go after the initial three years of this grant. And one of our strong hopes is that after we develop an infrastructure that has credibility and a real backing, that it can be replicated in other communities. We feel that that will be a very strong outcome of success for this project, the extent to which other communities are willing to pick up this kind of research, which we hope will be reasonably low cost and replicable.

MR. SCORCA: And I would want to add two things. One is that I know that the caller would be welcome at a performance of Opera Carolina if he wanted to give them a call there in Charlotte. But beyond that, the arts don’t have the kind of money to advertise by media the way the sports industry does. And one of the, I think, beauties of the Pew’s investment in their program, optimizing America’s cultural resources, is creating a research foundation that allows us to communicate broadly to the media and to public agencies and private funders as well, that even though there isn’t money available in the system to promote the arts on television the way we would wish, there is this underlying value assigned to the arts by the general public.

MR. NNAMDI: Joey, thank you very much for your call. Why is it the performing arts as opposed to inclusion of museums, galleries, that kind of thing, for the survey, that is?

MR. SCORCA: That’s a great question, and a logical one. We have a very generous grant from the Pew Charitable Trust to do the research we’re doing. We could spend ten times as much money to include the visual arts, to include amateur arts activity, to include other aspects of the cultural life around us. But what we chose to do was to begin what we hope is a long research agenda with the performing arts, using the national service organizations that have a history of working together.

There’s a lot more that should be done. We just began what was manageable in this first phase.

MR. NNAMDI: Mary Kopczynski, when are we expecting this survey to be completed?

MS. KOPCZYNSKI: Actually, the returns are coming in much sooner than expected. We’re very pleased. We should have all of the data in house by the middle of May, for the first year, and we will repeat this process for a second and third year. Findings, preliminary findings we expect might be available later summer, in conjunction with our communications strategy.

MR. NNAMDI: We’re going to take a short break. When we come back, we carry on our conversation with Mary Kopczynski, Mark Scorca, and Katherine Tyson, and those of you who decide to join the conversation by calling us at 1-800-433-8850. And if you can’t get through, you can communicate with us by e-mail at pl@wamu.org. We’ll be right back.

(Break)
MR. NNAMDI: (Inaudible) survey is being conducted that would evaluate the importance of the performing arts in the lives of communities and, of course, in the lives of people who live in those communities across the country. For those of you already on the telephone, hang on for one second. We will certainly be getting with you before this hour is over. We are joined now by Congresswoman Betty McCollum of Minnesota, a Democrat, who is a member of the Congressional Arts Caucus and a member of the National Council on the Arts, which is the governing body of the NEA. Congresswoman McCollum, welcome.

REP. BETTY MCCOLLUM (D-MINN.): Good afternoon to you and the listeners.

MR. NNAMDI: Good afternoon to you. As a member of the Congressional Arts Caucus, and a new member of the National Council on the Arts, what does it mean to you that the performing arts are coming together to develop this nationwide system for collecting data about their services?

REP. MCCOLLUM: Well, I think it will help us move forward in a much more comprehensive way, and being supportive of the arts at a national level. Everybody is held accountable. I'm held accountable as a mom, I'm held accountable as a congresswoman; when I worked in the private sector, I was held accountable. So what we're trying to do is making sure that the dollars, the tax dollars, the federal dollars that are put in are used in a way that really are benefiting our communities and engaging our communities in having the arts reach each and every citizen in this country.

And so I think this will be very helpful, and the federal government being a better advocate for the arts when we can clearly demonstrate that cultural heritage and creativity are important to the well-being of our communities. And then if I can just take another second more, figure out how best to use the way we fund the arts. The arts are funded through the Department of Interior through thousands and hundreds of little, little organizations that spread from the federal government on down, and we need to make sure that when we're spending those dollars, we're targeting them wisely.

And I think that that's so exciting about this research project. It's going to let us know how to share information.

MR. NNAMDI: What kind of data from this research project do you feel will be most useful in terms of performing arts advocacy efforts and what you want to do?

REP. MCCOLLUM: Well, I think we're going to be able to really see all the partnerships that are out there together—state, local, public, nonprofit dollars. And the study will, I think, also share with the attitudes that people have towards the performing arts, how they affect our communities, how they affect our schools. And the other thing that, here in the Twin Cities, I represent St. Paul, but our twin sister, Minneapolis, is rich in theater and performing arts as well.

And in the Twin Cities, we know that not only does it impact our quality of life, but it also impacts our economy. Artists and theaters are small businesses in our community, so they not only contribute a rich vitality of good well-being, but also good economic being to our communities too. And I think the study's going to show how interlinked we really are.

MR. NNAMDI: Well, I guess you may have answered this, in part. It's an e-mail we got from Dick in Southfield, Ohio, but I'd just like to hear your response to it, Congresswoman McCollum. Dick says, or writes, "I attend the local symphony and other events, but for the life of me, I can't understand why public money should be dumped into these organizations. I guess I'm just too much of a capitalist," says Dick. "If it can't support itself, then it should go the way of the real world and die a silent death."

REP. MCCOLLUM: Well, we could certainly say that, and there are people who feel that way about transit, there are people who would share his view on that with you, know, many of the services that the government's involved in. Art is part of our culture, it's part of our heritage, it's part of our humanity; it's part of how we interrelate with one another, and not only at a community level, but a national level and an international level. It's part of what makes us human beings.

MR. NNAMDI: Indeed, I guess the results of this survey would be the most adequate response for Dick.

REP. MCCOLLUM: You know, I think that we're going to find out that we have a connectivity with arts in our community at a federal, state, and local level, nonprofit and for-profit, that is really interwoven. You know, it will be like an intricate quilt, and we're going to see that there's no part of our life that the arts doesn't play a role in.

MR. NNAMDI: Thank you very much, congresswoman. Betty McCollum represents Minnesota, she's a Democrat; she's a member of the Congressional Arts Caucus and a member of the National Council on the Arts, which is the governing body of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Congresswoman, thank you for joining us.

REP. MCCOLLUM: Thank you.

MR. NNAMDI: Now, on to the telephone, where Ed in Jacksonville, Florida, awaits us. Ed, you're on the air. Go ahead, please.

CALLER: Hi, Kojo. It's great to be included on your show; I always enjoy it. As an artist who makes his living, I would really like to see more money spent, instead of just supporting the arts, I'd like to see them taken out of the realm of being viewed as a charity and see them become self-sustaining—as I believe it was Dick that had the e-mail—by training artists early on, by offering ways for them to learn how to run businesses,
how to support themselves as artists.

I find it not a terribly difficult thing to do. Art is a product, and if you sell it and don't give it away, and don't look for charity to keep you afloat, you'll find a way to make a living at it. That's just, you know, one artist's opinion.

MR. NNNAMDI: Ed, I don't know if that aspect of art—and that is the individual artist marketing himself or herself, or their product—is a part of the survey. Is it, Mary?

MS. KOPCZYNSKI: Not explicitly, but there is an opportunity in this study, as we learn more about people's perceptions of the arts, and how the data are utilized. This is part of a larger vision here. The nonprofit sector is under the same demands now that the government sector—that the private sector—is to demonstrate results. And to the extent that this data infrastructure in the performing arts can begin to elicit important information, it can be used and taken to funders to support just this kind of suggestion being made by our caller.

MR. NNNAMDI: Ed, thank you very much for your call. We move on now to Brad in South Bend, Indiana. Brad, you're on the air. Go ahead, please.

CALLER: Well, thank you. And it's so nice to be on your show; I listen often.

MR. NNNAMDI: Thank you, Brad.

CALLER: I am the president-elect of my local Kiwanis Club, so my task is to help identify things that we want to do. And I wanted to, I guess, in part respond to the previous caller. One of the things that I'm concerned about, my Kiwanis Club represents the west side of South Bend, which is a lower socioeconomic community, where the children don't really have much opportunity to go and see the theater or participate with the civic theater, although they do have programs, summer camps and what have you.

And the idea off of the economic valuing to the qualitative, you know, that arts are transformative and life enhancing, and they also affect those core emotional responses early on for children and get them connected to it—we're looking for ways to develop scholarships for those kids to come in. And I was interested in how I can use this kind of data to help my club and our efforts to elicit funds, and what have you, to develop scholarships for children who otherwise would not have access, who would experience those barriers to the arts that were talked about, so that we have a fully urban connection.

MR. NNNAMDI: Mark, does Brad add another dimension to what this survey can be used for?

MR. SCORCA: I think that Brad hits it right on the head. And I loved his vocabulary of transformation and life enhancement, along with the congresswoman's belief in creativity as a core value, and agreeing also with Ed, when he called in, that indeed, we would hope that we would move the arts as being an object of charity to the arts as being an object of investment. I would hope that Brad could take the findings from these studies, first of all, and use them in his own community to advocate for more support for local businesses, for more support from individuals, as the research reveals that people believe so wholeheartedly in their own experience that the arts have helped them.

I would also wonder whether there might be some local funding to do this kind of research in your town, and use the model that has been developed by the Urban Institute, and has been tested in these cities, to find out for yourself how your citizens agree with the assertion that the arts are transformative and should be invested in.

CALLER: How do I get a copy of these results?

MR. SCORCA: You will be able to contact either the Urban Institute, or you could even contact me at OPERA America, and we'll make sure that you have copies of the results once they are finished in the fall.

MR. NNNAMDI: Brad, thank you for your call. Brad, are you there?

CALLER: Yes.

MR. NNNAMDI: Thank you for your call.

CALLER: Thank you very much.

MR. NNNAMDI: This is Public Interest. I'm Kojo Nnamdi. On now to Norman—I'm sorry, to Doug in Germantown, Maryland. Norman, we will get to you, but first, Doug, you are on the air. Go ahead, please.

CALLER: Good afternoon. I'd like to ask the applicability of this Urban Institute study to other genres of music, such as jazz and bluegrass, which are very strong in the D.C. area.

MS. KOPCZYNSKI: Well, some of that information is captured, as the Association for Performing Arts Presenters is one of the national service organizations participating. And to the extent that their members are involved in any of the communities, for example, the Kennedy Center. Washington, D.C. is not currently a city participating, but I'm just using [the] Kennedy Center as an example—where they do bring a wide variety of various musical groups and performances. This information would be captured as part of this study.

MR. NNNAMDI: Doug, thank you very much for your call. Now on to Norman in Vienna, Virginia. Norman, you're on the air. Go ahead, please.

CALLER: Thank you very much. I work with Adventure Theater in Maryland, and also (inaudible) Performing
Arts Camp in Fairfax. And I’m also a jock. And one of the things that irritates me so much is the sports versus
the arts problem. I mean, they are so similar. And one of the ways we approach younger kids is to try to
explain that to them. They get self-esteem, they get to learn about teamwork, they get physical fitness, they
discipline themselves. They do all the things they do in sports, with a lot less physical aggression.
And it’s just incredible what happens to them. Kids who are sort of odd in the real world, have maybe strange
voices they can perform, or interesting tricks, and they get in a play, and they suddenly become the star of
the show. And when they were, earlier, sort of outcasts, now they’re important members of the community.
We directed a production of the show *Grease* at a high school in Montgomery County. And we needed some
tough guys, so we found some kids who were fighting in the street parking lot. And we got them into the
show, and suddenly—

MR. NNAMDI: Now you can’t get rid of them, right? (Laughs.)

CALLER: Right, exactly. And they’re like stars of the show, and they’re channeling all that energy into
something great. And the kids take it seriously. The youngest ones, you hand them a script, you tell them
what their character is, and they are really serious. And it’s just amazing how much it can transform them,
and it’s every bit, if not more important than sports. It’s the same techniques, it’s just parents have to realize
early on that it’s difficult to get started, just like any other challenging event.

MR. NNAMDI: Norman, thank you very much for your call.

MR. SCORCA: I would agree completely with what Norman said—the values of discipline, self-confidence,
self-expression. I think sometimes the sports and the arts are placed into a competitive relationship because
they are so similar. They are, in fact, competing for the turf, if you’ll forgive the analogy, the turf of discipline,
and self-confidence, and self-expression. They are very similar and should be valued equally.

MR. NNAMDI: We got this e-mail from Kevin in Phoenix, who says, "I was hired by the Arizona Commission
on the Arts to do this exact research for all organizations and artists in Arizona. My position was created by a
grant from the Wallace Fund, who awarded 13 other states with Start Grants to look at arts participation.
We'll be working for five years to create a national picture of arts participation in all levels of arts
organizations, creators, audience, and sustain it."

"The RAND Corporation," says Kevin, "is also doing research on these issues, and has published an excellent
book, *A New Framework for Building Participation in the Arts*. It's an exciting time for arts organizations, and
also a critical time, as the reality of our slowing economy is seen in lowered funding and participation levels
this year." Were you guys familiar with that study?

MS. KOPCZYNSKI: Yes. In fact, we’ve read both of them. Well, there are two studies, and then Lila Wallace
as well. We actually looked at each of the RAND studies to help craft our surveys. The building participation in
the arts, in fact, asked organizations specifically about their perceptions of the barriers that individuals
perceive, whereas our study is actually going to the individuals, as I understand, and getting to the root
source of that information.

MR. NNAMDI: And this e-mail from Michael, who says, "Joe in Charlotte was a painful call to hear. As an
employee in one of Charlotte’s very active performing arts organizations, I can tell you that statistically,
Charlotte has an extremely active arts community. However, for Joe to say there is nothing here, points to
one of the problems your guests talks about: the need for publicity and the difficulty getting attention in the
media, when arts organizations cannot pay for big production TV ads."

Thank you very much for that e-mail, Michael. And thank you Mary Kopczynski, research associate with the
Public Management Program at the Urban Institute; Mark Scorca, president and CEO of OPERA America; and
Katherine Tyson, director of communications at the Denver Center Theatre Company. Thank you all for
joining us.

This has been Public Interest. I’m Kojo Nnamdi.

[END OF PROGRAM.]