UNO Focus Group
Detailed Report

April 19, 2012
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Section A
Background, Objectives and Methodology
Background

On behalf of the UNO Graduate Program in Arts Administration and their cultural arts events partners, Qualitative and Quantitative Research was conducted by the New Orleans and San Diego based marketing research firm, Q2 Insights, Inc. This project was conducted in collaboration with UNO Arts Administration faculty and students.

With initial focus in the area of the live performing arts, it is anticipated that the research will be conducted annually with visual arts added in the future, and will provide essential trend data not currently available. The research will be undertaken with the support of Greater New Orleans’ professional performing arts institutions, and resulting data will be shared with all.
Graduate Program in Arts Administration

The *Graduate Program in Arts Administration* at the University of New Orleans prepares students for administrative careers within arts organizations, among them, galleries, museums, opera organizations, theaters, dance companies, music production, auction houses, film societies, festivals, municipal art programs, art education programs and community art centers. The curriculum offers elective courses in nonprofit organizations, business and the arts, plus required specialized arts administration courses. The program then culminates in a 480-hour internship providing students practical experience in the field.
Objectives

*UNO Graduate Program in Arts Administration* and their cultural arts events partners will use the findings of this study to increase attendance at ticketed performing arts events as well as to develop ways to cross fertilize ticket sales across performing arts entities.
Methodology

To meet the Research Objectives of this project, a two-phase study is planned.

**Phase One**
- Qualitative Research in the form of a Focus Group
  - Reported herein
- The Focus Group was conducted on Wednesday, March 7th from 5PM to 7PM at the University of New Orleans
- A senior researcher from Q2 Insights moderated the Focus Group
- A DVD of the group generated for reporting purposes

**Phase Two**
- Quantitative Research in the form of a Web Survey
  - Reported separately
Section B
Key Insights
Performing Arts Genres

- Theatre / Plays
- Concerts / Live Music
- Musicals
- Street Performances
- Comedy / Readings
- Dance
- Festivals
- Classical Performances (e.g. Opera, Orchestra)
Perceptions of Performing Arts Categories

- Culturally specific Performing Arts events (e.g. music N.O.)
- Traditional Performing Arts events

- Events held in “stand up” venues (standing and dancing)
- Events held in “sit down” venues
Perceptions of Performing Arts Categories

Popular music

Traditional classic

Traditional Performing Arts events broaden horizons / can be transformative

Traditional Performing arts events “make me feel sterile.”
Classic Versus Modern

**Classic**

- There is a strong belief that traditional / classical Performing Arts are not sought after
- Perceived reasons traditional Performing Arts events are not a preferred form of entertainment include:
  - Limited exposure,
  - Lack of communication
  - Little understanding
Classic Versus Modern

- The idea of modern performances is intriguing and new
  - The perception of “new” and “unique” is desirable
  - Attendees expect something different from classic plays, operas, and the philharmonic.
- Modern performances were associated with a more comfortable overall experience for the attendee
Consumer Needs

- Personal Relevance
- New Experience
- Social Aspect
- Enjoyment
- Education
Elements Contributing to Overall Positive Experience

- Atmosphere
- Party / Group
- Accessibility
- Ability to Understand
- Planned vs. Unplanned
- Unexpected Features
“The Experience”

- Many ticketed Performing Arts event attendees desire experiences, not just performances
  - Getting dressed up
  - Going out to dinner
  - Wine / drinks

- Part of the experience is participating in something out of the ordinary
  - Environment
  - Era (modern versions of older works)
  - Venue
Accessibility

*Appears to be the hierarchy

- Cost
- Advertising (Have to know about event)
- Amount of Exposure to the Art
- Understanding (e.g. storyline / meaning of performance)
- Level of Formality (e.g. casual, formal)
Advertising

ADVERTISING

Word of Mouth

Television / Radio

Social Media

Previous Exposure

Endorsement

Printed Media
Ticket Purchases

- Online Purchases
- Printing Tickets from Home
- In-Person / Ticket Pick-Up

Venue Websites
Convenience
Dislike Upcharges
Avoid Fees

Ticket Master
Section C
Definition of Performing Arts
Definition of Performing Arts

Unfamiliar to Term

• Preliminary definitions were very broad suggesting that the term / concept is unfamiliar to most
  o Music was not among the first listed
  o Included in the initial definition were items such as film festivals and monster truck events

• Confusion exists between perform-ing arts and perform-ance art.

• People seem to equate “ticketed Performance Art” to formality

• The perception of the definition of Performing Arts is different for consumers versus those working in the Performing Arts Industry

Group Self-Edited Definition of Performing Arts

• Comedy / Readings
• Dance
• Modern Music Concerts
• Opera / Philharmonic
• Theater / Plays
Performing Arts Categories

Comedy / Readings

- Both comedy and reading performances were secondary categories in Performing Arts
- While readings were considered to be somewhat culturally relevant, the majority found them to have very low personal relevance
- There was mixed opinion of how relevant comedy performance ranks in cultural and personal relevance
- Unclear about the definition of “comedy”--a funny drama or stand up?

Dance

- This type of art is believed to be of high cultural and personal relevance, however the dance performance genre was not top of mind
  - Ballet was the only major type of dance that was mentioned in discussion
Performing Arts Categories

Music

- New Orleans culture incorporates music
- Modern music performances / concerts garner high attendance
- Audiences prefer attending live music performances in casual, laid back environments
  - Festivals
  - Popular band concerts
  - Performances that occur in intimate settings such as dining out or other similar gatherings
- The Louisiana Philharmonic was considered to be a “Traditional” Performing Art
Performing Arts Categories

**Opera**

- Of all the Performing Arts, opera appears to be the least familiar and the most elusive
  - Few knew how to categorize opera
  - There was a general lack of familiarity with the New Orleans Opera
    - It was classified either as high culture and low personal relevance or low culture and low personal relevance
    - No one reported hearing or seeing advertisements for the opera
    - Most believe that the opera is very expensive
  - One respondent who had attended an opera for free indicated that she would return to a performance in the future but she had not done so

**Theater**

- Some were disparaging about traveling shows, but also liked having choices in attending national performances and a local variety
Performance Experience Types

- Seated Attendance
- Interactive Attendance
- Traditional / Classic
- Modern / Avant Garde
- Free Events
- Ticketed Events
Section D
Awareness and Usage
## Unprompted Venue Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ticketed Performing Arts Event Venues</th>
<th>Visited in past 6 to 12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• AA Museum</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• American Museum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anthony B. Theatre</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contemporary Arts Center</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Generations Hall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Harrah’s Casino</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hi-Ho</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• House of Blues</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Joy Theater</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• La Chat Noir</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lakefront Arena</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Le Petit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mahalia Jackson Theatre</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maple Leaf Bar</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marigny Theatre</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marigny Opera House</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• McAlister Auditorium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mckenna Museum</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mid City Theatre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New Orleans Arena</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New Orleans Museum of Art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Preservation’s Hall</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Republic’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Robert E. Nimms</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rock &amp; Bowl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Saenger Theatre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Snug Harbor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Southern Rep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Superdome</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tipitina’s</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✓ Visited in past 6 to 12 months
Events Attended

- Cirque du Soleil
- Black History Tribute
- Guitarist / Bands
- Holy Ghost
- French Fest
- West Side Story
- Opera
- Dance
- Skit (Simpson’s Director)
- August Wilson
Event Choice Factors

- Advertising
- Cost
- Entertainment Value
- Frequency of Performance
- Frequency of Performances in New Orleans
- Group / Friends’ Preference
- Interest in Event / Performance
- Personally Know Performers
- Personal Preference
- Preferred Artist
- Preferred Venue
- Pre-Viewed (e.g. Street Performance)
- Specifically Budgeted for
- Word of Mouth Reviews
- Company (e.g. Family, Friends or Co-Workers)
- Unique / Unusual Performances
Section E
Expectations of Performing Arts Events
Consumer Needs

Social Experience

• Significant social component to attending ticketed Performing Arts
• Friends’ opinions carry a lot of weight in encouraging attendance to ticketed Performing Arts by
  o Recommending events
  o Expressing preferences
  o Motivating attendance
• Strong preference against attending events alone among Generation X and Generation Y

Education

• Consumers who have a general idea of the story or background of a performance increases understanding and willingness or desire to attend
Consumer Needs

New Experience

• Performing in new venues and settings gives the arts an interesting twist on experience
Accessibility

- Accessibility was discussed as a barrier to attending Performing Arts events, particularly in New Orleans.
  - Performing Arts are perceived as much more accessible in cities like New York and Los Angeles
- Notably, accessibility had several meanings for respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meanings of Accessibility</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Advertising, Knowledge of event occurring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Relevance</td>
<td>Will consumer see familiar faces, Friends / family interested in event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Access</td>
<td>Convenience for the consumer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Access</td>
<td>Ability to “fit in” to the atmosphere / crowd, Class status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Familiarity with language, storyline, music, dress code, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Use</td>
<td>Amount of energy required to prepare for event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Subconsciously able to justify spending money on event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview of Projective Technique

Technique to Determine Image of Performing Arts

• A projective technique was employed to understand the image of Performing Arts in New Orleans.

• Using their imagination, respondents were asked to select a picture from a deck of image cards that represents how they feel about ticketed live Performing Arts events in New Orleans.

• The images that emerged from the exercise included:
  o Experience
  o Exposure
  o Unexpected vs. Expected
  o Community / Audience
  o Comfort
  o Classic vs. Modern
New Orleans is “unexpected,” so the arts should reflect the creativity and uniqueness of the culture.
Exposure

Exposure to New Experiences

Limited exposure to certain types of Performing Arts gives a “key hole” perspective of the genre / style.
Community / Audience

Being a part of the audience heightens a sense of community as everyone reacts as a group.
Comfort: Dress Code

Comfort is very important when attending a Performing Arts Event. While some are seeking an experience by dressing up, others simply do not want to be as formal in their dress.
Comfort: Relaxation

When attending a Performing Arts Event, some want to enjoy the event without the pressure of feeling as though they must discuss and analyze it.
Modern Arts

Less rigid and sterile, Avant Garde styles transport audience to a different world.

Transport From Daily Life
Classic Versus Modern

Distinction Between Classic and Modern

Modern Arts were described as less formal and for the masses.
Traditional Performing Arts levied a lot of criticism because it generated an idea of elitism and inaccessibility. However, Traditional Arts was also defended and described as "classy" and "soaring."

Defending Traditional Arts

Classic Versus Modern
Section G
Opinion of New Orleans Culture and Performing Arts
Culture of New Orleans

- New Orleans is strongly perceived as being vastly different from other cities
  - Relaxing
  - Casual / informal atmospheres
  - Social get-togethers
  - Conversations
  - Diverse groups of people

- This comes with the expectation of differences in performance
  - Mardi Gras
  - Jazz

- Residents of New Orleans take part in numerous free events offered throughout the city
  - This decreases the willingness of attendees to pay more for events
  - There is also a fear of spending money on events that do not meet expectations
The New Orleans Factor

Perceptions of Performing Arts

• The culture of New Orleans is perceived to fit perfectly with Performing Arts entertainment
  o In the minds of some, the Performing Arts are tied to the economic sustenance of Greater New Orleans -- “it's our bread and butter.”

• The general perception is that since so much free entertainment exists in New Orleans, it’s harder to persuade the purchase of a ticket
  o Event must be truly special in some sense for some to purchase tickets

• Due to the belief that there is “always something going on in New Orleans” it appears that people in New Orleans are not necessarily accustomed to planning ahead
  o Attendance at traditional Performing Arts events requires advance planning
Most consumers found all types of Performing Arts events to be culturally relevant. Live music, dance, and festivals in particular were considered personally relevant.
Section H
Triggers and Barriers to Attending Performing Arts Events
Attending Performing Arts Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triggers</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Personal relevance / tie</td>
<td>• No one to attend event with interested person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowing a performer / artist</td>
<td>• Not personally relevant / boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Receiving a sense of community</td>
<td>• Stigma around performance type (traditional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emotional connection to the art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low frequency of performances</td>
<td>• High frequency of performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experience (whole package)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comfort</td>
<td>• Rigid / structured environment / atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Free “previews” / exposure</td>
<td>• Lack of understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Combine multiple types of performances</td>
<td>• No previous exposure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Convenience</td>
<td>• Too much planning required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Little planning required (spontaneity)</td>
<td>• Lack of transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Validated parking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multiple locations</td>
<td>• Poor regulation of venue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Venue (outside / inside, big / small)</td>
<td>• Too analytical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time of event</td>
<td>• No advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Affiliate advertisers</td>
<td>• Fear of spending money on un-enjoyable performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PR / publicity (awareness)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connection to non-Performing Arts sponsors</td>
<td>• Large theaters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Small intimate venue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cost

While cost was listed a reason to not attend certain events it is evident that cost is not necessarily the primary driver of ticket purchase/attendance:
- People are willing to spend money on something they find interesting e.g. spending $500 on Jazz Fest but finding $80 for the opera too expensive

There is a perception that the cost of an event drives the decision to attend
- Some are not interested in attending an event because it “probably” costs too much
Section I
Communication
Awareness of Performing Arts Events

Lack of Awareness of Traditional Performing Arts

• There was a significant lack of awareness of the traditional Performing Arts in New Orleans
  o Some were not aware of the New Orleans Opera or the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra
  o One person thought that the Southern Rep had closed (it has moved but not closed)
Current Sources of Communication

Means of Obtaining Performing Arts Info

- Gambit
- NOLA.com
- OffBeat
- Facebook

Notable Absence: Times Picayune
Elements Involved in Decision to Attend

- What should I wear?
- Will alcohol be served?
- Will food be served?
- What is the artists’ / directors’ reputation?
- What is the event about? Storyline?
- What is the atmosphere of the event?
- What is the venue’s reputation?
- Does the venue allow for late arrivals?
- Is the event / venue safe?
- How do I get to the event?
- Where do I park?
- Does the venue allow for late arrivals?
- Is the event / venue safe?

To Note:

- Knowing who produced the event is not a requirement to know before determining whether to attend.
Preferred Modes of Communication

Social Media
Preferred means of communication for upcoming Performing Arts events in New Orleans
- Older attendees were less inclined to utilize social media

Facebook
Widely used among attendees to talk with friends about performances and to plan attendance
- Friends enjoy sharing event information

Venue Pages
Often sought out to find information on upcoming events
- Side advertisements on Facebook were not favored

Other Modes of Preferred Communication:
- Twitter
- NOLA.com
- Gambit Weekly
- Word of Mouth
- Sponsorship
- Offbeat
- Lagniappe

To Note:
- People would like to see invitation to events that are more personal than a flyer
## Preferred Modes of Communication

### Secondary Modes of Communications
- Channel 12
- NPR in the morning
- Radio
- Billboards
- Would like local news to talk about local events

### Suggested Modes of Communication
- Bus stops
- NPR radio
- TV news
- Local news channels
- Benches

### Notable Absence:
- Times Picayune

### Desired Educational Exposure
- Respondents desire “sound bites” or free mini-performances of works/genres they are unfamiliar with before committing to buying tickets
- People want events to be an experience from the advertising/publicity to the event itself.
Encouraging Increased Attendance

- Unite with related non-Performing Arts events in order to use different venues
- Use social media to reach Generation X and Y
- Offer free / mini “lower priced” events e.g. previews at parks
- Utilize local luminaries to influence attendance
- Increase “buzz” about events
- Local endorsements
- Local appreciation / discounts for New Orleans I.D.
- Utilize theater and art critics
- Bring traditional Performing Arts somewhere outside of the customary theater seating
- Enticing advertisements
Section J
Cross Fertilization
Cross Experiences

• Attendees of live Performing Arts events are not necessarily looking for cross marketing, but cross experiences
  o However, there needs to be a good, relevant match

• Participants believe that diluting the traditional / classical performances with the arts that are more familiar may ease the perception of discomfort
Section K
Respondent Profile
Respondent Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two: Males</td>
<td>Eleven Respondents from New Orleans</td>
<td>Ten: Caucasian</td>
<td>Six: 21 to 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine: Females</td>
<td></td>
<td>One: Other</td>
<td>Two: 35 to 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>One: 47 to 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Two: 57 to 65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Number of People in Household</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Attendance to Performing Arts Events in Last 12 Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nine: Less than $50,000 One: $50,000 to $74,999 One: $75,000 to $99,999</td>
<td>Three: One Person Households Five: Two Person Households Three: Five or More Person Households</td>
<td>Two: Attended College Four: Graduated Four-Year College Five: Graduate Degree</td>
<td>Two: None Four: One or Two Times Three: Three to Five Times One: Six to Ten Times One: Ten or More Times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three: Married with No Children One: Married with Children One: Single Living as Married Six: Single Living Alone</td>
<td>Four: Professional / Technical One: Sales / Service One: Clerical / White Collar One: Craftsman / Blue Collar One: Stay at Home Two: Other One: Self Employed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section L
Conclusions and Recommendations
Definition of Performing Arts

• Multiple definitions of Performing Arts events lead to disconnects in the following areas:
  o Modern versus traditional
  o New Orleans culture versus traditional
  o Stand up versus sit down
  o Moving performances versus non-affecting performances
  o Free versus ticketed

• Educating attendees and strategic marketing can help eliminate confusion
Traditional Performances

• There is currently an opportunity to increase attendance at traditional Performing Arts events

• Concentration should be placed on redefining traditional Performing Arts
New Orleans Culture

- The culture of New Orleans is perceived to go hand-in-hand with ticketed Performing Arts events

- Capitalizing on New Orleans culture increases personal relevance
  - This may also increase attendance of tourists

- Residents of the city particularly enjoy attending Performing Arts events that include:
  - Personal relevance
  - New Orleans themes
  - Laid back atmosphere
  - Live music / bands
Marketing Experiential Events

• Program design and marketing should be based on consumer needs and desires
  o Focusing on the overall experience

• Consumers are looking to make an all-encompassing day / evening of entertainment and experience

• Cross-fertilization of the types of Performing Arts increases exposure to events otherwise not attended

• Understanding and attendance at events are directly related to the consumers’ opinion of accessibility
  o Level of formality
  o Amount of exposure
  o Cost
  o Advertising
  o Understanding
Preferred Means of Communication

• There is a notable absence of mention of Times Picayune being a preferred form of communication for ticketed Performing Arts events

• Social media is regarded as an excellent source of information
  o Friends’ opinions
  o Recommendations
  o Venue pages
  o Event pages

• Information required in order to make a decision regarding attendance can be provided in advertising

• Utilizing local luminaries, endorsements and local appreciation days were suggested as ways to increase awareness and attendance
Ticket Purchasing

• Attendees prefer low cost options for purchasing tickets to Performing Arts events
  o Many will go out of their way to avoid fees / up-charges

• While cost was a resounding reasons not to attend an event, it is directly tied to:
  o Personal relevance
  o Friends’ desire to attend
  o Time
  o Location
  o Perceived value