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Transforming Arts Organizations Worldwide

## Audience Development: Young Adult Ticketing Schemes

# Project Overview

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An ABA member requested a custom project on how to build young adult ticketing schemes.

To identify best practices and lessons from within the cultural sector, ABA conducted **14 interviews across multiple genres**: performing halls, theatres, operas, museums, symphonies and festivals.

ABA sourced participants from North America and Europe:

- UK: 5 organizations
- US: 4 organizations
- Canada: 3 organizations
- Spain: 2 organizations

Our findings are structured in three sections:

- Program benchmarks
- Models for program design
- General lessons from participants



# Research Questions

## Principal Question:

“What are best practices and practical lessons from arts organisations that have established membership programs to attract and cultivate under-30 audiences?”

### Goals and Characteristics

- What prompted you to launch an explicit scheme for younger audiences?
- How long have you had a ‘youth’ membership/ticketing program?
- What drove the design decisions you’ve made?
- What are the elements of the program?
- How many participants do you have and what revenue/ ticket sales does the program usually generate per year?
- Do you have a system to engage with audiences as they age-out of your scheme?

### Marketing and Communications

- How frequently do you communicate with target audiences?
- What marketing platform(s) do you use?
- How customized is your outreach to the behavior of individuals?
- How do you build “buzz”?
- Have you taken steps to encourage word-of-mouth referrals or otherwise enable advocates to bring their peers into the scheme?

### Resources and Metrics

- What resources have you invested in to manage these programs including: Staffing? Marketing? Ticket subsidy? Delivery of experiences?
- How do you fund your discount program? From the operating budget? Philanthropic funders? Corporate sponsors?
- What metrics/outcomes do outside funders most care about?
- What CRM system do you use, and can you track audience engagement?

### Outcomes and Lessons

- What percentage of first timers continue past the first year?
- Of those who “age out, how many continue to buy?
- How have the metrics you use to measure success changed over time? What metrics are most useful?
- What would cause you to invest dramatically more or less in the scheme than you do now?

# Participating Organizations

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**barbican**

**CARNEGIE HALL**



# Overview of Interviewed Organizations

	<a href="#">Barbican Centre</a>	<a href="#">Carnegie Hall</a>	<a href="#">Denver Center for Performing Arts</a>	<a href="#">The Kennedy Center</a>	<a href="#">Lincoln Center Theater</a>	<a href="#">The Lowry</a>	<a href="#">National Arts Center</a>	<a href="#">Royal Opera House</a>	<a href="#">Southbank Center</a>	<a href="#">Stratford Festival</a>	<a href="#">Tate</a>	<a href="#">Teatro Real</a>	<a href="#">Teatro de la Zarzuela</a>	<a href="#">Toronto Symphony Orchestra</a>
<b>Operating budget</b>	\$38MM	\$96MM	\$72MM	\$208MM	\$46.6MM	£21MM	CAN \$100MM	£82MM	£55MM	\$65.MM	£123MM	€64.4M	€8.4M (production budget only)	\$28MM
<b>Annual Revenue</b>	\$35MM	\$43MM	\$72MM	\$208MM	\$49.1MM	£18MM	\$92MM	£84MM	£60MM	\$66MM	£112MM	€64.3M	€1.4M (Ticket income only)	\$30MM
<b>Annual audience/ attendance</b>	1 million+ visitors, 580,000 event attendees	160,000 in person visitors, 800,000 students	1.4 million (guests, tickets, students)	4 million+ (performances and education)	Approx. 400,000	17 million since opening in 2000	Approx. 900,000	1 million+ visits, 668K tickets sold (2018-2019)	1.3 million (484,000 tickets sold)	Approx. 1 million	3,068,125	229K approx	110K ticket buyers & 350K digital users	267,257 (2018-2019 season)
<b>Location/ city</b>	London, England	New York City, NY	Denver, Colorado	Washington D.C.	New York City, NY	Manchester, England	Ottawa, Ontario	London, England	London, England	Stratford, Ontario, CAN	Liverpool, London & St Ives, England	Madrid, Spain	Madrid, Spain	Toronto, Ontario
<b>Arts genre</b>	Mixed genre performing arts	Mixed genre performing arts	Theatre	Mixed genre performing arts	Mixed genre performing arts	Mixed genre performing arts	Mixed genre performing arts	Opera and ballet	Mixed genre performing arts	Mixed genre performing arts/ repertory theatre	Museum	Opera, ballet, flamenco, chamber music etc.	Zarzuela/ Dance	Symphony

\*Information received directly from interviewees, including 2022 budget reports. Other organizations we sourced information from annual reports and IRS99 forms available publicly online.

# Twelve Key Takeaways

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## 1. A Rebuilding Moment

Historically, organizations have allocated limited resources to young adult programs, and the pandemic prompted further cuts. For many, this is a rebuilding moment, an occasion to decide what they want their programs to be about.

## 2. The Three Purposes of Young Adult Programs

ABA identified three main goals for young adult programs:

1. Develop interest from new audiences who have not previously considered attending the genre and/or venue.
2. Lower attendance barriers for young audiences who are positively disposed to the genre and/or venue, but who currently choose not to attend frequently.
3. Fill the house in a way that does not hurt pricing power or the brand.

## 3. Required Resources Depend on Program Goals

The goals of the young adult program have significant implications for program design and resource requirements, especially ticket discounting and the creation of bespoke experiences for audiences. Developing relationships with audiences that have not previously considered attending is most expensive, requiring access to the most popular shows and bespoke experiences capable of convincing these groups that the venue is welcoming.

## 4. Starting Slow Is OK

Attracting young audiences who haven't previously considered the venue requires resources, deep customer understanding, and the willingness to experiment significantly the experience. It may be wise to start with young adult audiences already inclined to attend. Establishing a program around these audiences builds important capabilities, works out kinks in the customer experience, deepens understanding of what young people want and creates a younger house that may be more appealing to the next ring out of young adults.

## 5. Access To Programming Is the First Decision Organizations Must Make

To attract young audiences that haven't previously considered the venue, providing access to blockbuster shows is critical. These shows are most likely to be widely known "outside the genre." Ensuring access requires either subsidy through outside fundraising or effective negotiations with producers.

## 6. Raising Funds for Young Adult Schemes

Although one organization raised funds in the past explicitly to subsidize discounted tickets, few currently do, and, given other urgent needs, few plan to post-pandemic. That said, funders may be open to funding young adult programs based on one of two pitches: 1) building the pipeline for the next generation of arts attendees or 2) increasing diversity through younger audiences. Also, some corporate funders may find event sponsorship attractive, given the value of culturally-inclined young adult customers.

# Twelve Key Takeaways (continued)

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## 7. Negotiating Discounted Tickets with Producers

For performing arts centers and others who produce *and* present, negotiating with producers will likely be necessary in order to secure discounted tickets to shows that would likely sell out without discounts. Every profiled performing arts center negotiates with producers for discounted tickets. The most successful negotiators rely on their mission to attract diverse audiences.

Producers are increasingly open to supporting this goal.

## 8. Framing Discounted Tickets as “Acquisition Cost”

More than one organization indicated that they think of lost income from young adult tickets to popular shows (where tickets could have sold at full price) as acquisition costs for new customers. Marketing Departments typically know the cost of acquiring a new customer, and the lost income from discounted tickets is typically well under that amount. Furthermore, because the total number of young adult tickets purchased is low as a percentage of sales, the total loss of income from discounting is relatively minimal.

## 9. Experience Is as Important as Ticket Availability

While most organizations focus principally on discounted tickets, deciding what experience to create for young adults can be at least as important as pricing. The central question: are you trying to 1) increase exposure of young adult to the best of what you currently offer (not too hard), 2) create a welcoming chemistry for culturally inclined audiences who have not previously considered your venue (harder) or 3) something else?

## 10. Making the Most of Limited Staff Resources

Interviewed organizations typically devote less than 1.5 FTEs to their young adult schemes. As a result, they have devised clever ways to increase the impact of their staffs, including partnership with other internal groups (e.g., Education) and use of low-cost community ambassadors, and staffing booths at events and festivals.

## 11. Streamlining Program Requirements


In addition to leveraging staff, young adult teams have made decisions about what *not* to do. For example, many have chosen not to heavily police age, relying on the honor system. They have also chosen to streamline tracking requirements by stripping out as many restrictions on seating as possible. Finally, they acquire customer feedback only occasionally and in order to make specific decisions about the experience.

## 12. Measuring What Matters

Finally, it’s important to keep in mind that the behaviors by young adult will determine the program’s success, more than new-to-file members, ticket sales or revenue. What matters most is getting participants into a habit of attendance (repeat purchase) and, ultimately, continued attendance by participants after they age out. Even if they sacrifice other measures, program leaders should do everything they can to capture these metrics that are crucial to the economics of young adult -schemes.

# Report Outline

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Young adult  
program benchmarks



Three models of  
young adult programs



General lessons  
and advice



# Key Variables to Manage for Under-30 Programs

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- Performance/Dates:** To what degree do you intend to allow ticket access across the full range of your programming, including premium shows and dates?



- Seats:** To what degree will program participants be able to access the full range of seats in the house? Will program participants have access to all sections and all seats within each section? Will you cluster young attendees in order to increase their visibility to each other and/or to others?



- Extra benefits/experiences:** Will the scheme provide discounts to non-ticket elements of the experience (e.g., concessions, parking, non-program events)? Will you provide special events or other experiences to increase the sense of cohesion and belonging among participants?



- Guests:** Can your members/registrants bring guests as part of their experience and benefits? If yes, how many and what age limits do you want to place on guest attendance?



- Policing:** How important is it to monitor the use of these discounts and ensure the age of attendees? How will you balance adherence to age requirements versus the desire for a friction-free, high trust experience?



- Timing:** How ahead of time do you inform audiences of available tickets and events? Will you provide access at a consistent time each month, or at a consistent number of days before each performance? Will you provide access to tickets before the general public?



- Marketing/Comms:** How actively will you market the program? What channels will you use to recruit young people to the program? What content will you use to increase interest?

# Benchmarking Core Elements of Young-Person Schemes

	Barbican Centre	Carnegie Hall	Denver Center for Perf. Arts	Kennedy Center
<b>Age bracket</b>	14-25 years old	Under 40 years old	18-30 years old	18-30 years old
<b>Discount offer</b>	£5, £10 or £15	\$20 tickets	\$20 or 75% discount for as much inventory as possible	\$15-39 tickets
<b>Registration</b>	Free registration, no fees	\$20 annual registration fee	Seasonal membership \$20 opens access to discounted tickets	Free registration, no fees
<b>Proof of age</b>	ID required at box office	No formal policing	Proof of ID only for first purchase	Proof of ID only for first purchase
<b>Seats offered</b>	Subject to availability/ some caps	Selective, with zones and tickets for each event	Depends on show type/ try to avoid limitations	We have an allocation within a specific seating zone.
<b>Performances/ dates</b>	For as many events as possible	All “Carnegie Hall Presents” events	Broad access, but more limited for Broadway	Most programs –aside from the theater shows– have inventory available.
<b>Extra benefits/ experiences</b>	Special events (once a month), workshops, conferences and 10% discount at shop	Experiences available if you become a higher level paying member- starts at the \$500/year	None at the moment- considering future events	10% off food and non-alcoholic beverages, 10% off at the gift shops, used to have events pre-pandemic
<b>Marketing/comms</b>	Monthly email, social media / Young Barbican Instagram + word of mouth	Monthly email, word of mouth (10K budget for program was cut during covid)	Emails for event updates. No advertising.	Friday email that goes to all of MyTix members. MyTix page on Facebook and Twitter.
<b>CRM</b>	Spektrix	Tessitura	Audience View	Tessitura
<b>Figures/attendance</b>	71,800 registrants Around 45,000 tickets sold per year	Approximately 600 paying members	In their 22/23 season they had 824 active members who brought in a total of 2,168 tickets	40K people signed up for communications About 5,000 ticket buyers










# Benchmarking Core Elements of Young-Person Schemes

	Lincoln Center Theater	The Lowry	National Arts Center	Royal Opera House
<b>Age bracket</b>	21-35 year olds	Under 30 years	Under 30 years	16-25years
<b>Discount offer</b>	\$30, tickets on sale at same time as general public	£10 tickets	\$15 for most programs	£25 tickets for any seats and priority booking
<b>Registration</b>	Free registration	No sign-in required	No sign-in required	Free registration
<b>Proof of age</b>	ID required at box office	Not formal/ but do say that “checks can happen”	No proof required/ trust based	Based on age provided when account set up. Changes to age in account, spot checks in place.
<b>Seats offered</b>	Caps for each event	Based on negotiations with producers for each show run	Limitation for special events only	Best available
<b>Performances/ dates</b>	Limited seats available for every event, case by case basis – can release more	Based on event negotiations for dates/ try to make for all show runs	Exclusions: Rentals, community programming, Popular Music & Variety shows	Tickets are for Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday, Saturday matinees / Some excluded events
<b>Extra benefits/ experiences</b>	Just resuming their LincTix night party events	Want to organize evening events/ meet the cast, pre-show drinks	No additional benefits or events at this time	On select nights of the year, reserve either the amphitheater or the whole auditorium for Young ROH
<b>Marketing/comms</b>	No heavy marketing- program success without it / WOM is so strong+ age-gated targeting on social	Tag all the U30 ticket buyers/ monthly newsletter and social media promotions for upcoming events	Dedicated marketing campaign: paid social media advertising, social media influencer marketing, and on-campus activation.	Email newsletter, ads on social media, TikTok was also crucial for young people awareness
<b>CRM</b>	Telecharge	SRO for tickets, and dotdigital for comms.	Ticketmaster- transitioning to Tessitura	Tessitura
<b>Figures attendance</b>	60-80K members on LincTix	Approx 1000 people on email list, 6000 tickets sold	29,456 Tickets sold through May 2023	9.6K before covid (check numbers again) 19.5K last year

# Benchmarking Core Elements of Young-Person Schemes

	Stratford Festival	Tate	Teatro Real	Toronto Symphony Orchestra
<b>Age bracket</b>	16-29 years	16-25 years	18-25, 26-35 years old	15-35 years
<b>Discount offer</b>	\$19-\$ 49 based on seat ticket zone	£5 tickets for members and up to 3 friends	Two young prices for different age brackets €20 for under 26, €30 for 26-35 years old - Also includes last minute tickets for 35€ and Youth premières that are either free or € 14 and € 34	\$29 main floor, \$39 mezzanine, \$19 balcony
<b>Registration</b>	Free registration	Free registration	Free registration	Free to register for rush email list Subscription model: there is a cost
<b>Proof of age</b>	Proof of ID required/ but want to simplify	ID required at box office	Must provided an ID image during the online purchase, as well as a proof when accessing the theatre.	Proof of ID required at entrance
<b>Seats offered</b>	No discount ticket caps for any show/ seats across the entire venue	N/A	Dedicated branded area in house for young audiences called "Zona Joven" (Young Zone/area)	Any where there is inventory that needs to be sold
<b>Performances/ dates</b>	Only main-stage productions, but they are considering adding other events and activities.	All exhibitions	Pre-selected events and dates, with some additional dedicated preview events	Usually, films and "specials" are excluded Concert-by-concert basis for rush tickets
<b>Extra benefits/ experiences</b>	They don't do events because they are tourist destination (an hour from Toronto).	Special events, 20% in all cafés and 10% off in shop	Dedicated young seating area, promotions on courses and other ad-hoc special events	Used to do some parties, TSOUNDCHECK appreciation in the past (pre-covid)
<b>Marketing/com ms</b>	Primarily digital and social media efforts + comms at the start of each season with events	Social media, email comms and 'Out of Home' advertising	Regular email comms, with reminders dates and events and also contextual information about the operas . Also do campaigns and some collaborations with influencers.	Notified by email 1-week before event Lead generation campaign via paid dark posts Piggybacking on other communications
<b>CRM</b>	Tessitura	Tessitura (recent transition)	Salesforce	Tessitura
<b>Figures/attendance</b>	6400 members in our PlayOn program and depending on the season 39-49% are active.	2018: 2K members, now 2023 153K registered/ upsell to membership	3,943 attendees to Young People performance nights 2022 (excludes last minutes sales)	20,000 Rush ticket email database, 1,100 TSOUNDCHECK subscribers

# Overview of Staffing and Budgets

									
STAFFING	No dedicated staff; non-dedicated staff spend less than 5% of their time on under-30 program	No dedicated staff; representatives from multiple departments involved (e.g., marketing, comms, “friends of” manager, etc.)	One part-time marketing staff member runs the program	Pre-pandemic, program run part-time by marketing manager; planning to hire assistant manager for audience development	Full time program manager; close relationship with marketing	One marketing manager collaborates with box office and ticketing team	Pre-pandemic, program run by audience development manager pre-covid; currently looking for group-sales manager	One manager and part of two individuals in marketing	Marketing manager, marketing officer and 50% of a senior marketing manager.
BUDGET	After a surge to launch the program, focus now is on digital/social media at the start of the season, peak season and season close.	“The current budget is very small. Increasing the budget will require outside sponsorship for campaigns.”	Budget goes to staffing, ticketing, special events, and social media	Program budget is about \$20,000 for advertising, giveaways, young patron nights	\$10,000 budget goes to marketing essentially and staff time.	Budget goes to staffing and advertising	Mostly funded by city; new manager will make budget allocation decisions	\$10,000 budget allocation covers marketing expenses and occasional special event as well staffing.	Budget goes to recruitment campaigns, digital content, gift shop merchandise, etc.



# Report Outline

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Young adult  
program benchmarks

Three models of  
young adult program

General lessons  
and advice

# Under-30 Programs Can be Characterized by Three General Models

From our interviews we heard three distinct **core purposes** for young adult discount programs. These core purposes were the **crux for design decisions** in how programs were structured and deployed to audiences.

	 <b>Model 1: Welcoming Experience</b>	 <b>Model 2: Friction-Free Experience</b>	 <b>Model 3: Full-House Experience</b>
<b>Overview</b>	Premium and diverse experiences to change perception of non-core arts audiences	Easy purchase and reduced barriers for already inclined arts audiences	Optimize unsold inventory without hurting the brand
<b>Purpose</b>	To attract culturally inclined younger audiences who have not traditionally considered your genre or your programming to be for them.	To attract younger audiences who are inclined to attend your arts genre and who appreciate your programming, but who experience barriers typical of their generation and life stage.	To fill seats, especially specific gaps in the venue, in a way that enhances your organization’s brand and protects pricing power for general audiences.
<b>Design Principles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a sense of belonging</li> <li>• No compromise on the quality of the experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce barriers to attendance and full participation</li> <li>• Create a habit of attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the house feel full for audiences and artists</li> <li>• Create ongoing relationships with groups to ensure ticket recipients consistently show up</li> </ul>
<b>Desired Behaviors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trial</li> <li>• Active consideration of the genre and venue</li> <li>• Return visit(s)</li> <li>• Sense of community belonging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular repeat visits</li> <li>• Sharing the experience with friends/ companions to reinforce group culture of attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast agreement to use tickets</li> <li>• Actual usage of tickets (rather than no-shows)</li> </ul>

# Specific Insights From the Different Models



## Model 1: Welcoming Experience INSIGHTS

- More staff is generally required to manage the wider offer- including working with other departments like Education
- Institutional buy-in is essential as this model also requires more budget and management
- Focusing on the whole visitor experience and their welcome is critical. This implies providing premier tickets and seats across diverse events
- Providing additional benefits and discounts not only serves audiences but also creates a base for more audience data
- Creating opportunities to listen to young audiences helps boost program relevance



## Model 2: Friction-Free Experience INSIGHTS

- To make experience frictionless- websites must be clear and transparent about their policies
- To reduce purchase barriers many organizations make pricing as consistent and simple as possible
- To reduce barriers and staff lift these programs benefit from having the lowest policing practices (less focus on ID checks)
- Critical to negotiate with producers and promoters to provide program variety- while prioritizing low prices and access
- Regular cadence of communications helps build habit and frequency



## Model 3: Full-House Experience INSIGHTS

- This model is transactional in nature- more about filling the hall versus providing guaranteed premier experiences
- Model requires staff monitoring house on a case-by-case basis releasing inventory for last minute deals
- Frequent communications and reminders leverages last-minute buying trends with young audiences

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**Three models of  
young adult program**

**Model 1:  
Welcoming Experience**

**Model 2:  
Friction-free Experience**

**Model 3:  
Full house Experience**

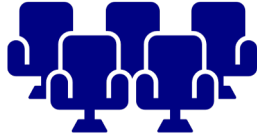
# Model 1: Welcoming Experience for Young Audiences

The primary aim of **Model 1** is to build future audiences by creating a **welcoming environment for young adults who are culturally inclined, but who may not have considered attending a specific genre or venue in the past**. The intent is to create programming and other experiences that encourage young people to begin including the venue in their consideration set.



**Content:**  
Access to the full range

Provide access to the full range of artistic programming, not just a subset of programs that are not selling. Negotiate with producers to include blockbuster events.



**Seats:**  
Access to premier seats

Include seats throughout the venue to ensure young audiences feel valued and not relegated to the worst seats. Seating is part of an overall welcoming experience.



**Experience:**  
A welcoming experience

Offer additional experiences (e.g., workshops, learning opportunities, social engagement) that connect young people to your organization and give them a sense of belonging.



**Inventory and guests:**  
Generous availability

Make inventory available for every show, or at least every performance run. If possible, include at least one additional guest ticket.



**Communication:**  
Consistent timing with lead time

Share updates on available events on a regular monthly cadence to build a sense of habit and demonstrate that availability is not dependent on what programming is not selling.



**Policing:**  
Police premium experiences

Consider ID checks to reinforce exclusivity and make sure attendees of special events and premium programming are truly in your the target segment.



# Is Model 1 for your Organization?

Because Model 1 involves persuasion of culturally inclined audiences who do not currently consider your institution when choosing cultural experiences, it is **more resource intensive**. For example in this Model, young adults should have access to premium seating; communications will need to reach individuals who are not seeking you out, and their experiences at your venue will need to disrupt their pre-conceptions.

## Checklist for organizations considering pursuit of model 1:

- Does development of non-historical audiences align with your organization's mission and current strategy?
- Do you have negotiating leverage with producers and/or a strong likelihood of accessing funding to subsidize an experience that feels "first class"?
- Will you be able to allocate resources to regular events curated to make non-historical audiences feel welcome?
- Does organizational leadership have the risk tolerance to try and fail a few times before gaining momentum?
- Does the organization have a test & learn capability to refine experiences?
- Does the organization have specific communities of young people with whom it would like to develop deeper relationships and with whom it is willing to develop long-term listening partnerships?
- Does the organization have the will to change significant aspects of the customer experience based on feedback from target communities?

# Case Example: Offering Full Access to Programming

Goal

Description

Results

The Stratford Festival has committed to providing young adult audiences with as much content access as possible, both in terms of types/genres of content and locations of tickets within the venue. The primary driver is the motivation to avoid making young audiences feel like their experience is second class. Furthermore, data shows that young audiences have interest in multiple genres.

To achieve this goal, the Stratford Festival has removed all ticket caps across all performances. Throughout the entire festival season, no limitations exist for young adults to purchase their allotted two tickets. To mitigate income loss, the festival has implemented a tiered discount system for seats based on zones.

The festival has experienced substantial growth in young ticket buyers across the past year, albeit off a small base. In 2022, young ticket buyers grew to 2% of audiences from 1.5% the previous year. The small numbers of young people give the festival confidence that continuing with the current approach will not be financially unsustainable even without funding or sponsorship. In order to grow the program, the Festival will need more resources, such as funding and/or sponsorship.

### Model 1 Pillars Achieved

- Full program experience
- Unlimited inventory
- Premier seat access

### HOW IT WORKS

Get Play On rates on any performance, any time!

- Bravo seats: \$24
- C seats: \$29
- B seats: \$33
- A seats: \$44
- A+ seats: \$54

### Young adult audience composition:

- 50% musicals
- 28% Shakespeare
- 22% other programs

# Case Example: Creating Inclusive Experiences



Goal	The Barbican Centre is making a concerted effort to <b>build awareness of the Barbican's diverse programming</b> through generous performance access as well as engagement opportunities for young adults through its Young Creatives and Learning Department programs.
Description	<p>Programs for engaging with young adults include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Young Changemakers:</b> Acts as a conduit for young person input into the Centre's Renewal Project</li> <li>• <b>Young Poets &amp; Young Visual Arts Groups:</b> Engineers interactions among likeminded artists to work together and inspire each other.</li> <li>• <b>Young Filmmakers:</b> Curates, markets and delivers film events.</li> <li>• <b>Creative Careers:</b> Develops workshops, resources, and networking opportunities for young professionals.</li> </ul>
Results	Since launching in 2015, the Centre has built a membership of <b>71,800 young people and generates over £500,000 in revenue annually</b> . Young people in the program return to the Barbican with <b>twice the frequency of typical audiences</b> .

### Model 1 Pillars Achieved



✓ Full program experience



✓ Multiple ways to engage and enjoy diverse benefits/ feel welcome (and listened to)

**A brand new Young Creative programme which puts future changemakers at the heart of decision-making processes at the Barbican.**

The Young Changemakers is a group of 8 young people, between the ages of 18 and 29, that have been formed to put young people at the heart of decision-making processes at the Barbican.




Over a 10 month period (November 2022 - August 2023) the group will meet with the CEO and Artistic Director to gain insight into the missions and values of the Centre as well as the future creative vision, and feed into the Barbican Renewal project. Towards the end of the programme the group will share their recommendations in each of these areas for how the Barbican can better engage and work with young people.







# Case Example: Making the Organization a Destination for Groups

Goal	Through the TATE Collective program, the museum seeks to change perceptions around museum attendance and welcome audiences with diverse tastes and motivations. This program is also designed as a pipeline towards full adult membership.	
Description	£5 tickets to all exhibitions	↔ Affordable prices for all core-artistic programming
	Discounts in shop and cafés	↔ Affordable and fun food destination-not just a typical museum experience
	Non traditional events	↔ TATE Lates nights make the museum a fun, exciting, and unexpected night out
	£5 offer with up to 3 guests	↔ Destination for groups of young people to hang out/socializing
Results	In Year 1, the scheme attracted 60,000 members (against a goal of 20,000). The scheme now has 153,000 members. In 2022, 693 members converted from youth membership to full adult scheme membership, yielding significant long-term return to the museum. The ability to convert young people to full membership has justified increased staffing of the scheme by the TATE.	

### Model 1 Pillars Achieved

- 
 ✓ Full program experience
- 
 ✓ Multiple ways to engage and enjoy diverse benefits
- 
 ✓ Up to 3 guests

### YOUR BENEFITS

 <p>Book £5 tickets online and bring up to three friends aged 16-25</p>	 <p>Special discounted events and great free things to do</p>	 <p>Pay less for food and drink in all of our cafés</p>	 <p>Get 10% off when you shop online or in the galleries</p>
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# Case Examples: Destination Events



To enhance the feeling of welcome and inclusivity, organizations like the Barbican Centre and the TATE have developed exciting evening events and programs that expand their appeal. **The TATE intentionally curates more immersive and participatory programs, while the Barbican programs more contemporary art and culture.** Their intent is to counter traditional associations of elitism to create spaces that promote new and unexpected experiences in cultural venues. **This all serves to boost the brand of the organization and change perception of what engaging with art has to mean and look like.**



**Tate Lates: monthly events that open the museum to more relaxed, fun and non-traditional experiences for all audiences**

- DJ sets
- Workshops
- Social spaces with beach chairs for example
- Film presentations
- Beers and cocktails
- Talks

**Young Barbican Nights: Into the Night**



**Young Barbican Nights: exclusive nights for young audiences to engage with core programming and let loose**

- DJ sets
- Bar
- Drag Bingo, and other activities
- Talks
- Exhibition tours
- Performances



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**Three models of  
young adult program**

**Model 1:  
Welcoming Experience**

**Model 2:  
Friction-free Experience**

**Model 3:  
Full house Experience**

# Model 2: Reducing Barriers For Existing Inclined Markets

The primary aim of Model 2 is to **reduce attendance barriers for young audiences who are already inclined to your venue**, but who are not attending. The intent is to provide frequent reminders in order to establish a habit of attendance and reduce barriers around the purchase decision and experience that could dissuade attendance. This model could be a precursor to, and onramp for, Model 1.



**Content:**  
Full range of programming

Show as much of full content as possible, negotiating with producers to push greater access when possible. Allows more compromise on programming inclusivity than Model 1, however.



**Seats:**  
Price over quality

Provide seats across the hall, but, when in doubt, focus on low prices over seat quality. Premier seating is a bonus in this model rather than a core pillar.



**Experience:**  
Core (not special) events

Access to the core experience, rather than creation of new, ancillary events is the focus of this model. This audience is likely to feel a sense of belonging to what you already provide.



**Inventory and guests:**  
Compromise on dates and times

Provide inventory for as many programs as possible, but not necessarily for every performance. Off peak access is acceptable, as long as it doesn't create an attendance barrier.



**Communication:**  
Consistent timing

Create a consistent communications cadence in order to create a habit of repeat attendance, remain top of mind and reduce the amount of digging required to find tickets.



**Policing:**  
Low policing to reduce friction

Limit policing of adherence to rules. The aim here is to make the purchase experience as smooth as possible in order to avoid turning potential attendees off and to encourage word of mouth.

# Is Model 2 for your Organization?

Model 2 is meant for young adults who are inclined to come to your venue, but who encounter barriers to attendance, including price and logistical friction. Model 2 is easier to execute than Model 1 because the target audience is already positively inclined to your venue and genre. Organizations with Model 1 aspirations but constrained resources may find Model 2 appealing, **as it allows the organization to build needed capabilities and creates a more youthful feel** that can make Model 1 easier to execute down the road.


## Checklist for organizations considering pursuit of model 2:


- Does a base of young adult audience-members exist that would make repeat visits if ticket prices were lower?
- Do you have sufficient unsold inventory for a significant portion of your programming?
- Do you have a social marketing team with the capacity to find and resonate with audiences inclined to attend your genre and venue?
- Are you willing to invest in customer listening with this pre-disposed customer group to understand their buying process, including disruptors to purchase?
- Is your ability to create different in-kind experiences for a single audience segment highly restricted?
- Does the organization have the will to simplify and standardize the purchase process (e.g., standard ticket price/tiers, limited “policing” of age requirements, ability to book contiguous blocks of young adult tickets to attend with friends, etc.)?
- Do you lack the funds to invest in different-in-kind (Model 1) experiences?


# Case Example: Reducing Purchase Barriers

<p>Goal</p>	<p>National Arts Centre (NAC) in Canada wants to build a brand/ creative concept with core young adult audiences, <b>focusing on building a habit of frequent attendance.</b> They build awareness with the target market through a small, but consistent paid media campaign. Additionally, to encourage return visits, they take every opportunity to reduce friction in the attendance experience. One important element is to limit policing, trusting young audiences to adhere to stated requirements.</p>	
<p>Description</p>	<p><b>Trust-based policy adherence</b></p> <p>“With our younger audiences, we are trying to remove as many barriers as possible.... It was initially controversial, but we have decided against “proof” of ID. They are going to be buying online. They don’t want to have to prove it to you. They are out if there’s any friction online.”</p>	<p><b>One-click purchase experience</b></p> <p>“With our transition to Tessitura we were able to reduce other purchase frictions. Now you can mix and match in your shopping basket. Our Under 30s buyer can also include full price tickets in their basket if they are buying for a group.”</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>NAC has calculated that the cost-of-acquisition for new-to-file attendees to its under-30 program is only about \$13.96 Cdn per person. <b>Given the long-term returns, the organization thinks of ticket discounts as a marketing cost, rather than lost revenue that must be covered with funding.</b></p>	

**Model 2 Pillars Achieved**

- 

✓ Full program access
- 

✓ No policing, avoiding all purchase friction
- 

✓ Flexible Seats and easy seat selection at time of purchase

**Choose the seats you want, when you want.**

**Under30** replaces our Live Rush program and student tickets, and gives you more choice at a better price. Events marked with **Under30** have \$15 tickets available **at any time**, so you don’t have to wait until the last minute. **Under30** tickets aren’t leftover seats, they are the main course. Bundle **Under30** tickets with regular tickets to sit next to your family and friends of any age.

# Case Example : Encouraging Frequency

## Goal

Lincoln Center Theatre designs its program to encourage repeat engagement of LincTix young adult audiences rather than volume of participation. *They would rather have fewer, loyal members than more, infrequent or one-time audiences.*

## Description

Lincoln Center makes discounted LincTix tickets available for every production, including blockbuster programs, *to build loyalty and repeat engagement.*

- ✓ Ok with limited allocation as long as they have seats for every run
- ✓ Ok with non-peak nights, as young people have more flexible schedules
- ✓ Ok with seats in non-prime locations

LincTix sends frequent reminders to participants to ensure the scheme remains top-of-mind.

### Model 2 Pillars Achieved



✓ Full program access



✓ Continuous program reminders



✓ More limited, but consistent inventory




*“We are overall less concerned about 1000s of people coming in and out, and more about repeat visits and frequency. We want to see them in all three theatres, coming back and reducing the time for them to return”*




# Case Example: Setting Restrictions to Limit Revenue Loss

<p>Goal</p>	<p>The goal of the Young Royal Opera House program (Young ROH) is to build frequency and a habit of opera and ballet attendance among young audiences while limiting potential income loss from discounting. Within their program offer they manage expectations and set exclusions upfront.</p>		
<p>Description</p>	<p>To limit income loss, the young ROH manages expectations and sets certain exclusions upfront:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="305 699 866 1099"> <p><b>Restrictions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select dates: Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sat matinees</li> <li>Program exclusions: Nutcracker, new shows...</li> <li>No food and beverage discounts</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="866 699 1490 1099"> <p><b>Generous Aspects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seat available across sections</li> <li>Dedicated Young Nights</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>Restrictions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select dates: Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sat matinees</li> <li>Program exclusions: Nutcracker, new shows...</li> <li>No food and beverage discounts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Generous Aspects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seat available across sections</li> <li>Dedicated Young Nights</li> </ul>
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<p>Results</p>	<p>Young ROH members come more often than the general public with an average 4.7 seats/year for young ROH vs 4.2/year for general public in 2023.</p>		

**Model 2 Pillars Achieved**

-  ✓ Clear expectations of program access and exclusions
-  ✓ Generous seat allocation
-  ✓ Limited, but consistent inventory

*The young program is a way to build frequency and habit - cultivation of loyalty*



**AGED 16-25? SIGN UP FOR £25 TICKETS.**

Get access to £25 tickets for the best seats in the house or enjoy exclusive Young ROH nights with a friend\*

\*Guests must be aged 16-25.

[Sign up to Young ROH today](#)

# Clear, Straightforward Pricing Facilitates Repeat Purchases

Goal

For arts inclined younger audiences, price is often a significant barrier. Most of the interviewed organizations keep prices low, but also consistent to reduce complexity and build trust.

Description

**Programs with single prices:**

- Lowry: £10
- Royal Opera House: £25
- Carnegie Hall: \$20
- LincTix: \$30
- Tate Collective: £5
- National Arts Center: \$15

**Programs with consistent tiered prices:**

- Stratford Festival: \$24-\$54
- Kennedy Center: \$15-\$39
- Barbican Center: £5- £15
- Teatro Real: Starting at €20 up to €34
- TSO: \$19-\$39

- Privileging single price consistency over ticket volume and premier seats
- Very easy for users
- Often requires producer negotiations

- Privileging tiered price consistency to provide slightly better seats
- Reduces income loss
- Easy for users

**Model 2 Pillars Achieved**

- ✓ Clear, consistent prices set audience expectations
- ✓ Clear, consistent prices make purchase experience simpler
- ✓ Discounted price addresses biggest expressed barrier of young audiences

# Subscription Offers Can Instill a Habit That Offsets Lost Income

In addition to single ticket schemes for young adult audiences, some organizations offer discounted young adult subscription packages. These packages give young people access to in-demand programming that may not be available through the normal single ticket young adult program. Organizations offering these discounts consider the subscription habit worth the loss of income associated with this model.

## TSOUNDCHECK subscription

- Compose your own 4+ show packages
- Tickets available at steep discounted rates from \$31-\$55
- Regular prices are between \$124-\$261 and single ticket “rush” ticket prices are \$19-\$39

## Advantages to subscribers

- ✓ Guaranteed access to all programs, including those likely to sell out (and, therefore, not be part of the Rush program)
- ✓ Early access to seat selection
- ✓ Significant discount compared to regular subscription.

## Advantages to TSO

- ✓ Money upfront, before the start of the season
- ✓ Helps build subscription habit in young audiences
- ✓ Creates the feel of a more youthful audience in the hall

*“A subscriber is stickier than a single-ticket buyer. TSOUNDCHECK subscribers are more likely to become standard subscribers in the future once they age out.”*

### Current Sales of Under-30 Discounted Subscriptions:

- 400-500 purchasing subscribers on file
- 1100 subscription seats sold
- 4200 tickets sold through young-person subscriptions

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**Three models of  
young adult program**

**Model 1:  
Welcoming Experience**

**Model 2:  
Friction-free Experience**

**Model 3:  
Full house Experience**

# Model 3: Full-House Experience

The primary aim of **Model 3 is to fill seats without hurting the brand or pricing power.** The focus is to fill the hall, especially gaps in the hall, to improve the experience for the audience overall and artists. Filling the house in a way that also builds future audiences is a bonus.



**Content:**  
Case-by-case programming

No guaranteed content. Tickets offered on a case by case basis based on availability as performance date nears.



**Seats:**  
Case-by-case access

No pre-determined seats but premium seats may be included. Seat location dependent on gaps in the hall for specific performances.



**Experience:**  
Just performances

No ancillary events. Just rush ticket offers.



**Inventory and guests:**  
Case by case access

Inventory depends on sales for specific performances, not on the desired experience for purchasers. If available, rush tickets may be available for guests.



**Communications:**  
Last minute

Updates on performance availability are last minute with “rush” branding. No early access.



**Policing:**  
More limited need

Policing is unnecessary. The goal is to fill the house.

# Is Model 3 for your Organization?

Sparse attendance, including conspicuous “holes” in the audience in prime spots, can detract from the experience for audience members and artists alike. **Model 3 is for organizations that want to address “holes” in a way that does not undermine future pricing power or the organization’s brand.** Model 3 is for organizations that are not in a position to invest in more-elaborate young adult schemes, or who are in the early stages and want to design their program from a more test and learn approach to build over time.

## Checklist for organizations considering pursuit of Model 3:

- Does the organization have low attendance and “holes” in the house for a significant number of performances?
- Is the organization willing to build relationships with partner organizations that are willing to commit to filling seats (not just give tickets away to people who don’t attend)?
- Does the organization currently lack resources to invest in long term audience building efforts with audiences predisposed to attend (e.g., Model 2)?

# Case Example: Targeted Discounts

<p>Goal</p>	<p>Toronto Symphony Orchestra’s rush TSOUNDCHECK program encourages last minute sales of remaining inventory for specific seats in the house. These “rush” tickets are promoted specifically to their under 35s list. The small amount of revenue generated from the program is secondary to the house-filling benefits.</p>
<p>Description</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members of the list get <b>last minute rush deals usually 1-2 weeks before performances dates</b> with available inventory.</li> <li>Specific seats are targeted in order to reduce gaps in the hall.</li> <li>TSOUNDCHECK <b>may include premium seats</b>, depending on sales for particular performances.</li> <li>TSO markets the program to young people as “Do more, for less.”</li> <li>Tiered pricing: \$19 (balcony), \$29 (main), \$39 (mezzanine)</li> </ul>
<p>Results</p>	<p>TSO’s TSOUNDCHECK file includes about <b>21,000 members</b>. <b>Single-ticket sales help to fill the hall for most events</b>. TSO’s ambition is to create a pipeline from the TSOUNDCHECK program to their young adult subscription and then to regular subscriptions as they age out.</p>



**Model 3 Pillars Achieved**

- ✓ Targeted offering of steep discounts preserves the brand
- ✓ Availability of very good seats for a range of programming
- ✓ Almost no cost to the organization



# Report Outline

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Young adult  
program benchmarks

Three models of  
young adult program

General lessons  
and advice

# General Lessons and Advice

In addition to actions and behaviors that depend on program model, ABA identified a set of general lessons applicable to any organization seeking to build a robust young adult ticketing scheme. These lessons largely involve getting the most impact in an environment of constraint, which every interviewed organization is facing. We've identified 10 lessons, divided into those that largely deal with *internal* resourcing and *customer-facing* lessons. The next section describes these lessons, along with representative case examples from interviewed organizations.

## INTERNAL LESSONS

- 1. Leverage staff through partnerships
- 2. Match pitch to funder motivations
- 3. Measure (only) what matters
- 4. Simplify tracking requirements
- 5. Capture the “right” customer voice

## CUSTOMER-FACING LESSONS

- 6. Develop routine around release of tickets
- 7. Engineer visibility of young people
- 8. Make hard trade-offs on ticket availability
- 9. Leverage low-cost opportunities for “buzz”
- 10. Provide a next step for “age-outs”

# Internal Lessons and Advice

The young-adult schemes at nearly every interviewed organization face significant resource constraints. The *internal* lessons in this section emphasize how to make the most of existing resources and/or where it's OK to do less.

## 1. Leverage staff through partnerships

While organizations generally devote very limited staff time to young adult programs, it's possible to leverage staff effort through:

- Partnering with other parts of the organization (e.g., education)
- Cultivating community ambassadors
- Sending emissaries to grassroots events

## 2. Match pitch to funder motivations

While raising funds to subsidize discounted tickets appears to be the exception rather than the rule, organizations are having some success:

- Negotiating with producers and funders based on the DE&I benefits of offering discounted young adult tickets, especially now
- Attracting event sponsorship from companies interested in targeting culturally engaged young adult customers

## 3. Measure (only) what matters

Because organizations generally have limited resources for measuring and tracking program success, it makes sense to measure no more than is absolutely necessary to make decisions. A minimal list of measures includes:

- Growth in number of ticket buyers
- Adoption of valued near-term behaviors, especially increasing frequency of attendance
- Adoption of behaviors that lead to long-term value (e.g., upgrading level or participation, continuing relationship after age-out)

## 4. Simplify data requirements

Organizations sometimes create more data complexity than is necessary (e.g., by identifying specific seats to be offered to young adults). It's possible to reduce complexity by:

- Stripping out as many restrictions as possible on seating
- Creating simple electronic mechanisms (e.g., QR codes) to track purchase behavior

## 5. Capture the “right” customer voice

Because resources to collect and analyze data from young adults are limited, focus collection of customer voice on data that:

- Current or potential funders need to justify investment (e.g., demographics, changing perception of the arts)
- Contributions to program improvements that could increase frequency of attendance

# Young Adult Programs Are Getting Leverage from Small Staffs

Most organizations devote very limited staff to managing young adult programs, in part due to Covid-related cuts for efforts that have a longer-term payoff. However, interviewed organizations expressed a desire to refocus and boost these offers with revisions on staffing and creating new positions.

## Committing to a larger team to manage operations

Of interviewed organizations, the Tate Collective dedicates the most staff to its under-30 program (50% of a senior marketing manager, one marketing manager and one marketing officer). The Tate added staff because they identified profitable behaviors (upselling from youth to full membership) with an attractive long-term ROI.

## Engaging staff from different departments

Most interviewed organizations are looking to get the most out of limited staff resources. For example, the Barbican's marketing staff leverages its effort by working with staff in the Learning department to connect with their Young Creatives opportunities.

## Creating positions across access programs

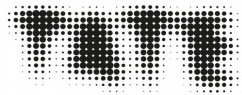
DCPA has hired an Audience Development Manager, who will live in their Group Sales department. This new hire will oversee the 30 & Under Radvantage program in addition to other access initiatives such as the DCPAAccess program.

## Getting access to data analytic

Teatro Real has a robust database of young people and is looking to hire additional analytic capacity in order to inform future campaigns across programs.

## Staffing takeaways

- In most organizations, most staff time is devoted to regular communications of ticket availability and discounts.
- Creating young-person-specific experiences and community requires dedicated staffing, which is not likely to be recouped from immediate income from the under-30 program.
- Collaborating with other departments can boost the ability to provide under-30 specific experiences without adding cost.
- Assuming very limited analytics capacity, focus on percentage of first time buyers who repurchase, continue purchase year over year, and aging-out audiences who continue to buy.



**barbican**



# Small Scale Marketing Still Yields Results

Interviewed organizations do not invest significantly in marketing campaigns or communications for young adult programs. However, they have found that creating good “buzz” and word-of-mouth through small scale marketing initiatives is possible. On this page, we highlight small initiatives that interviewed organizations regard as more successful.



## Organic Social Media Posts



ROH focuses on organic social media posts and reposting posts of young audience members. ROH uses Instagram and TikTok most often.

**barbican** The Barbican created its Young Barbican Instagram for organic social media postings with some target paid advertising to specific followers.



## In-Person Marketing



Lowry staff attend festivals, student events, youth-oriented hubs to recruit potential users and increase their database.



Pre-pandemic, TSO visited local university campuses during orientation week to promote its program and register people for the email list.



## Influencer Promotions



Teatro Real collaborated with influencers to create organic posts and videos. Using those videos, they develop campaigns for target audiences.



After a period of experimentation, National Arts Centre have narrowed their use of social influencers to those who feel most authentic in the communities they are trying to reach.

## Marketing takeaways

- Marketing that worked doesn't need to represent massive spending
- In many cases, staff for young adult programs collaborate with marketing to include promotions in general comms
- Word of mouth from peers is critical to gain engagement from this age group, hence the importance of targeting already inclined audiences first.

# Leveraging Community Ambassadors to Change Perceptions



As the Lowry rebuilds its under-30 audiences in the wake of the pandemic, it intends to work with ambassadors in target communities to change perception around the arts and raise more awareness of the arts as a fun destination for young adults.

## 1. Leveraging specific shows with relevant themes

Last year, the Lowry presented an opera production *Orpheus* that mixed artistic influences from both Western and South Asian canons, providing audiences a new operatic experience.

They intentionally promoted the production with South Asian communities, to introduce them to a new artistic venue and to share the story of opera.

## 2. Connecting with local ambassadors and leaders

To reach local South Asian communities they worked with an ambassador working directly with these community groups to promote the event. They organized a pre-show talk to contextualize the piece.

Also, one month before the show, they also invited around 50 community leaders to come to their venue to experience the space for themselves and get familiar with the area.

## 3. Applying same principles for U30 audiences

The Lowry is considering employing paid ambassadors for young adult audiences like they have done with specific cultural groups, to change perceptions for audiences that are new to the venue.

As finding effective young adult ambassadors may be harder that it is for more unified ethnic communities, the Lowry is considering starting with student groups to reach young adults.

# Lessons from Negotiations with Producers

Few of the organizations interviewed by ABA were able to secure specific funds from donors to subsidize the discounted tickets offered to under-30 audience members. As a result, the performing arts center we interviewed negotiate with producers to provide a limited set of discounted tickets, even for popular shows when they are not the sole-producer of said shows.



## Anchor negotiations in mission and diversity

*We ground negotiations about access in our mission to reflect national diversity. In the wake of social unrest following George Floyd's murder, the conversation of accessibility has become easier. Obviously, we can't offer an entire house at of discounted tickets, but generally we do pretty well."*



## Prioritize inventory over dates and seat quality

*When negotiating, we push for as many tickets as we can get for each performance. It's less important to young people where they sit, and they generally have more flexibility about which nights they attend. Flexibility about dates and seat quality limits the financial hit we're asking producers to take.*



# Making the Case for Sponsorship Support

Every performing arts center interviewed by ABA negotiates for discount tickets with producers. One organization (Teatro Real) has made the case for corporate sponsorship for more ad-hoc events around specific themes that were more relevant to the corporate partner.

## Attracting Corporate Sponsors for Young-Person Events



Teatro Real has found that corporate sponsors wishing to raise their brand visibility with its demographic of young people are willing to sponsor ad-hoc events, which may otherwise be difficult to afford with slim marketing budgets. Teatro Real secured ad-hoc sponsorships specifically for their Young Person preview performances.

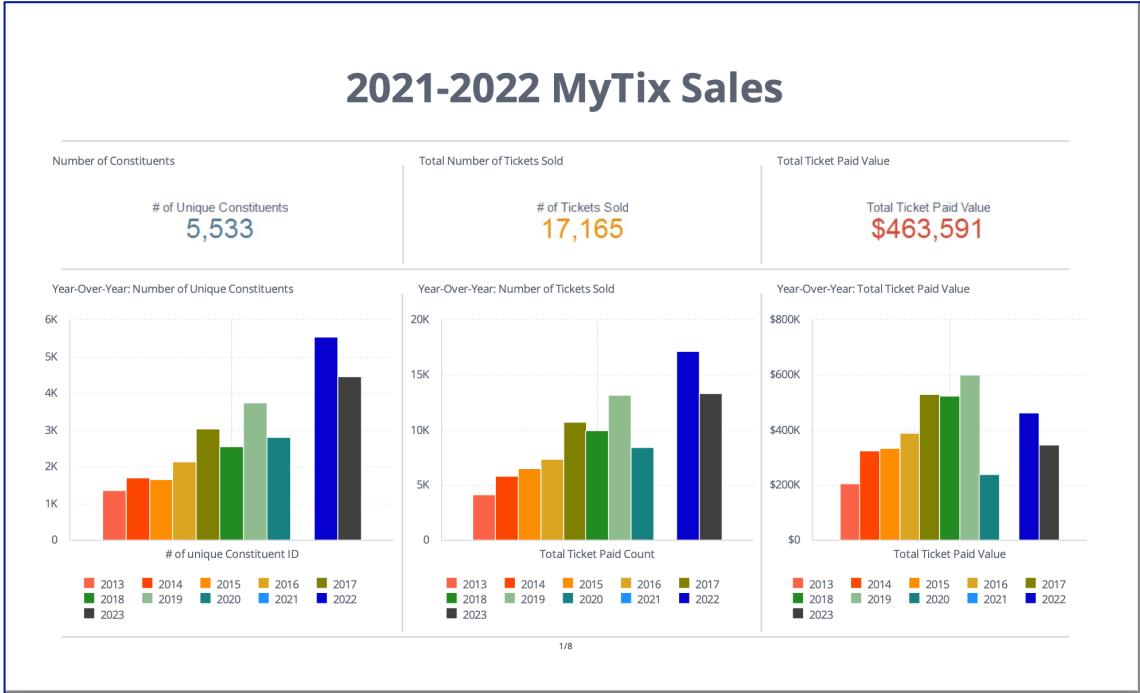
*For specific events, we were able to attract sponsors. For example, MAC Makeup provided makeup for the Aida after party. They had makeup designers help paint guests like opera characters.*



# Most Organizations Track Volume and Revenue Metrics

Most interviewed organizations track volume and revenue metrics. Below is an example of a standard report that the Kennedy Center uses to assess program health. While organizations have the aspiration to conduct deeper analytics, resources generally limit the amount of analysis that actually gets done.

## Kennedy Center Tessitura Dashboard



# Common and Uncommon Metrics to Assess Program Activity

In general, interviewed organizations don't have the resources to measure sophisticated metrics. We've organized an overview of common and advanced metrics below.

## Data/Metric Takeaways

- Most interviewed organizations track few program metrics
- It's possible to accomplish a lot without heavy measurements
- Outcome measures (e.g., growth of members/ticket buyers) are most common
- Repeat/frequency of purchase is the easiest-to-measure indicator of whether the under-30 experience is resonating with the target audience
- Most interviewees would like to track the percentage of those exiting the program that continue to engage more closely

## Frequently Used Metrics

- Number of people opting into communications/on the mailing lists
- Number of 'members'
- Number of tickets sold through scheme
- Revenue from ticket sales through the program
- Revenue from 'memberships'
- Year over year growth in mailing list, memberships, tickets sold, revenue, etc.
- Young adult ticket buyers as a percentage total ticket purchasers

## Advanced Metrics

- Percent of new to list program members
- Number/percentage of repeat ticket buyers
- Percent of program members aging out of the program
- Non-ticket purchases (e.g., food & beverage, shop, etc.)

## Uncommon Metrics

- Percent of first-time ticket buyers purchasing a second time
- Conversion from single-ticket purchase to membership
- Percentage purchasing non-performance events
- Genres/program types purchased
- Number of upgrades from youth to full memberships
- Full-price tickets purchased by program participants if discounts are not available

# Advice on Simplifying Data Management and Analysis

Most interviewed organizations indicate that they do not have significant resourcing for the program, especially for analytics, which are often stretched thin across the organization. Several interviewees advise simplifying data collection where possible. Two examples are described below:

## Reduce Complexity of Seat Allocation

One interviewed organization indicated that it originally assigned specific seats for allocation to young patrons.

During the pandemic, it discontinued the practice and as a result the management of Tessitura has become much simpler since making the change to zone management rather than seat management.

Loosening restrictions on seat allocation can have other benefits as well, including making it easier for friends to sit together, which could encourage repeat attendance.

Of course, in Model 3, where the point is to fill in gaps in the house, allocating specific seats remains worth the complexity costs.

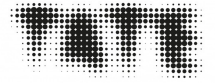
## Reduce Accounting Complexity

One interviewed organization indicated that it formerly raised funds in order to subsidize Under-30 tickets.

The subsidy required that, for each ticket sold, it maintain two lines in its CRM system for each ticket—one for the price paid by the user and a second for the ticket subsidy.

The organization no longer has these funds to subsidize tickets and says that the complexity associated with ticket sales in the program has declined significantly as a result.

For organizations that are able to raise funds to support ticket subsidies, should consider ways to avoid direct subsidy of individual tickets.



# Data Collection Can Justify Increased Program Investment

Since program inception in 2018, the Tate has made a concerted effort to collect and assess data from Tate Collective audiences to better understand their interests, use of benefits and perceptions. Tate takes a long term view of the value of maintaining relationships with young audiences (including conversion from youth membership to full membership in the museum), so invests significantly in tracking and reporting.



## Purchase Behavior

### Range of Benefits:

- £5 exhibition tickets
- Access to 4 tickets to bring 3 guests
- Special events
- 20% in all cafés
- 10% in all shops



### Tracked purchase behaviour:

- ✓ Number of exhibit tickets sold
- ✓ Café and restaurant spending
- ✓ Shop purchases
- ✓ Age of member
- ✓ Region/ postcode



## Quantitative and Qualitative Surveying

The Tate runs young audience surveys every year and conducts regular focus groups.

### Sample data collected:

- Age
- Demographics
- Program usage
- Program perceptions
- Competitors
- Concept testing
- Satisfaction level
- Engagement with benefits
- Awareness of benefits



## Sample Insight from Intensive Measurement

Based on analysis, the Tate discovered that hundreds of its young adult members were upgrading to full adult membership in order to take advantage of additional benefits, resulting in six figures of increased lifetime value. This behavior justified new investment in the Collective program.

# General Lessons and Advice

In addition to actions and behaviors that depend on program model, ABA identified a set of general lessons applicable to any organization seeking to build a robust young adult ticketing scheme. These lessons largely involve getting the most impact in an environment of constraint, which every interviewed organization is facing. We've identified 10 lessons, divided into those that largely deal with *internal* resourcing and *customer-facing* lessons. The next section describes these lessons, along with representative case examples from interviewed organizations.

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- 10. Provide a next step for “age-outs”

# Customer-Facing Lessons and Advice

In this section, we underscore lessons about how organizations leverage scarce resources to improve customer-facing aspects of their young adult programs. Key elements include access to tickets, creation of buzz, and transition out of the program for those who are aging out.

## 6. Develop routine around release of tickets

To encourage a habit of consideration, it's important to announce ticket availability on a predictable schedule.

- Organizations that offer access to all or most productions tend to announce ticket availability at the same time each month.
- Organizations that tie show availability to (low) sales tend to announce ticket availability based on the amount of time before opening

## 7. Engineer visibility of young people

Establishing a pattern of repeat attendance is the goal of young adult programs. Young people are less likely to return if they don't feel like the experience is for people like them. Interviewed organizations employ a variety of tactics to raise the profile of young people in the venue, including:

- Channeling young people to specific nights, so certain nights feel majority/ entirely under-30
- Channeling young people to visible sections within the venue

## 8. Make hard trade-offs on ticket availability

When negotiating on ticket availability with external producers, be willing to settle on dates and times for overall ability across a performance run.

Young people are generally more flexible about when they can attend. Generally, are flexible about day of the week and where they sit.

## 9. Leverage low-cost opportunities for "buzz"

Interviewed organizations universally appreciate the importance of "buzz" around young adult ticketing schemes. Interviewees suggested some of the following low-cost ideas to generate word-of-mouth excitement:

- Ask actors to mingle in after-show events for young people
- Maintain social conversations with a tone that appeals to under-30s
- Conduct lotteries for the most popular shows (rather than allocating tickets to the first to refresh their screens

## 10. Provide a next step for "age-outs"

Under-30 programs are built on the hope that participants will transition to full participation in the organization's offerings after graduating from the scheme.

Several interviewed organizations have developed "bridge" programs to entice young adult program participants to continue their relationship with the organization without having to immediately commit to full-adult memberships/programs.



# Making Young-Adult Programs a Visible Brand

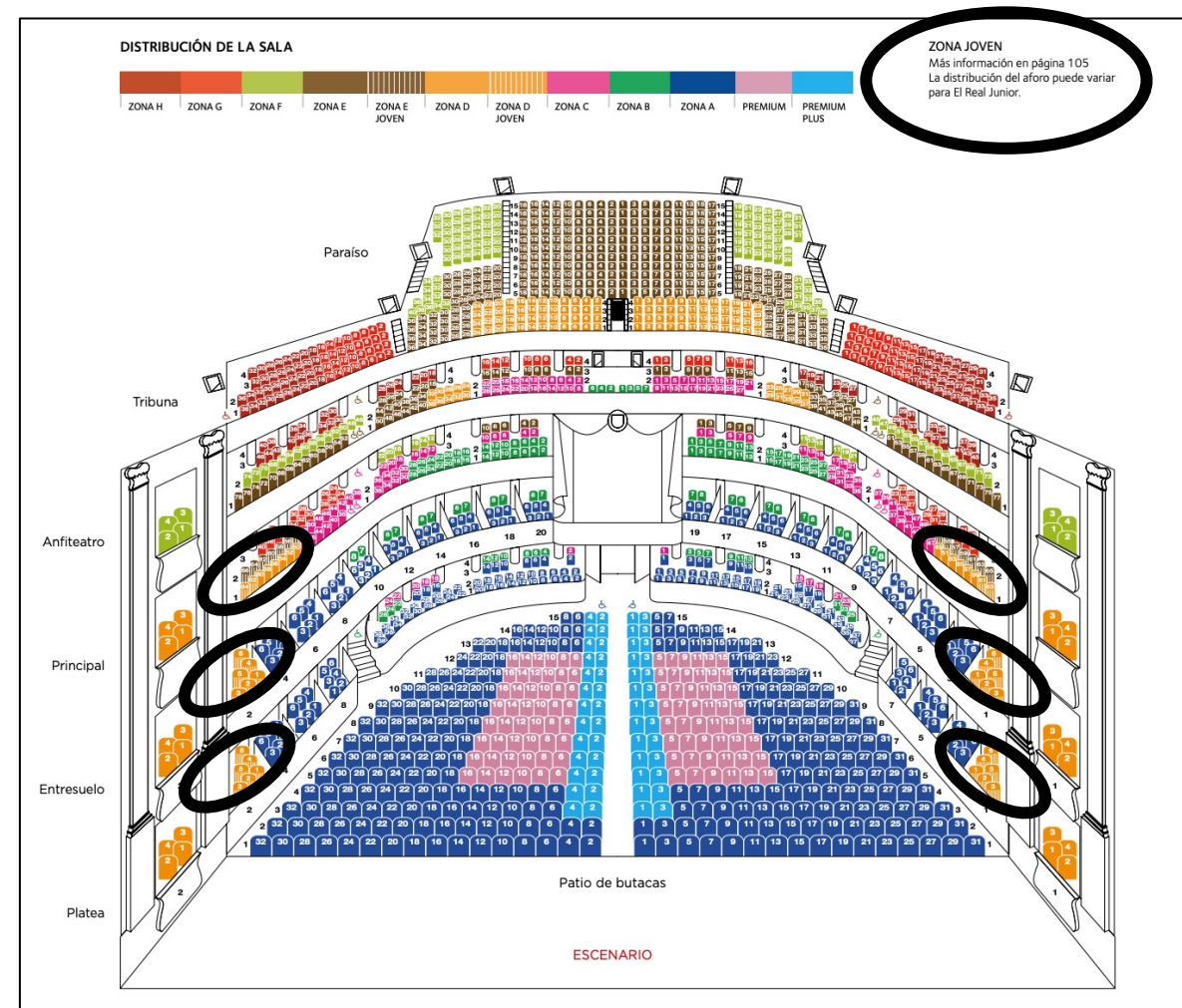


As organizations think about the different ways to signal to young adult audiences—especially new audiences to the venue—how much they are valued, one important means is the quality of seat selection in young-adult offerings.

Teatro Real is committed to developing their next generation of opera goers. As a result, they've made the decision to include premier seats as part of the program offer.

Teatro Real purposefully places young audiences in visible locations, signalling the value they place on them and ensuring that new young audiences see others like them in the theatre.

Young people up to 35 years of age have an **exclusive youth area** in the Main Auditorium distributed in the Platea, Entresuelo and Principal areas, giving them their own space to be able to live the opera experience. You can check the exact locations [here](#).



# Lessons from Negotiations with Producers

Few of the organizations interviewed by ABA were able to secure specific funds from donors to subsidize the discounted tickets offered to under-30 audience members. As a result, the performing arts center we interviewed negotiate with producers to provide a limited set of discounted tickets, even for popular shows when they are not the sole-producer of said shows.



## Anchor negotiations in mission and diversity

*We ground negotiations about access in our mission to reflect national diversity. In the wake of social unrest following George Floyd's murder, the conversation of accessibility has become easier. Obviously, we can't offer an entire house at of discounted tickets, but generally we do pretty well."*



## Prioritize inventory over dates and seat quality

*When negotiating, we push for as many tickets as we can get for each performance. It's less important to young people where they sit, and they generally have more flexibility about which nights they attend. Flexibility about dates and seat quality limits the financial hit we're asking producers to take.*

# Ticket Lottery Enables Fair Access to the Most-Popular Programs



## Inventory Distribution for Popular Shows

For most shows, the Kennedy Center promotes tickets through regular communications with MyTix members on a first-come-first-served basis.

For popular productions likely to sell out, the Kennedy Center is usually able to negotiate with producers for fewer discounted MyTix tickets. The tickets are \$39 and typically concentrated to the opening week of performances

For productions that are lighter in sales, additional offerings may be available past the opening week



## Inventory Distribution for Blockbuster Shows

For blockbuster shows that are likely to sell out within minutes of becoming available, the Kennedy Center instead uses a lottery system.

*“For the most desirable shows, we don’t want access to depend on who is able to refresh their screen fastest.”*

The lottery system is run by the actual production with help from the Kennedy Center’s Box Office to facilitate. The lottery system is open to the general public- including MyTix members.

# Managing the Transition for Aging-Out Audiences

The economics of young adult programs assumes that a significant percentage of members will continue to attend after they have “aged out” of the scheme. As a result, some organizations have engineered offers to retain young audiences as they age out. The most common approach is to offer discounted prices that are higher than under-30 prices but lower than full-retail prices.

## Current efforts



### Special discounts for annual membership

- Aging out audiences receive 50% discount on regular annual membership to Lincoln Center Theatre
- Offer is valid for a few months after their birthday right when they age out of under-35s scheme. LincTix communicates frequently with age-outs to remind audiences of this offer.

Lincoln Center Theatre Membership: Adult audiences can access discounted tickets for a \$50 per year membership fee. Young people aging-out of LincTix program, can access the same membership for \$25 per year.



### Special discount for choose-your-own voucher program

- Aging-out audiences receive a 25% discount to purchase DCPA Theatre Company’s most flexible subscriber voucher, The Power Pass program
- With the regular Power Pass, audiences get 6, 8 or 10 vouchers. Under-30 age-outs receive 10 vouchers for the price of 8, or 8 vouchers for the price of 6, for a limited time.

The Theatre Company’s Power Pass is DCPA’s most flexible offer. Audiences can use vouchers to mix and match on multiple shows or use them all at once. Power Pass offers program, seat and date flexibility.

## Discontinued program



### “Play-Encore” program

To ease individuals who “graduate” from the Play-On under-30 program into full memberships, the Stratford Festival developed an intermediary offer for 30-35s called the “Play encore” program. Play Encore lasted around 10 years (until 2016).

The Stratford Festival discontinued the program due to insufficient resources, especially marketing resources.