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TOURING EXPERIMENT

Qualitative Research: '07 and '08

April 2008

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1. INTRODUCTION



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1.1.1. Research Objectives

Primarily

To ascertain and evaluate audience attitudes and behaviour towards consuming arts and culture in their local arts centre

To establish the response to professional touring productions and their impact upon audience attendance



Thereby, to provide direction for audience development in relation to professional touring productions

1.1.2. Research Objectives

More specifically, to establish:

- Audience attitudes towards professional productions in general
- Response to programming and, in particular, to professional touring productions
- Attitudes towards the local arts centre
- Key motivations and inhibitions towards attendance, especially in relation to touring professional productions
- Key opportunities for greater attendance, especially in relation to touring professional productions
- Directions as to how best arts centres can communicate with their audiences

1.2. Methodology

Focus group discussions

- **14 focus groups:**
 - 8 groups in '07*: 2 in each of 4 locations
 - 6 groups in '08: 2 in each of 3 locations
- **4 locations representing 4 local arts centres:**

• Letterkenny:	An Grianán	'07 and '08
• Skibbereen:	West Cork Arts Centre (WCAC)	'07 only
• Tralee:	Siamsa Tire Theatre & Arts Centre	'07 and '08
• Virginia:	The Ramor	'07 and '08
- **Standard focus group method:**
 - Each discussion lasted 90 minutes
 - Held in an objective venue: a local hotel
 - On average, eight respondents attended each group

* '07 results are presented in a separate report.
This report combines those results with the results from '08 where relevant.

1.3.1. Sample

Two group types in each location

- **Regular professional:**
 - Regular attendees of professional performances/exhibitions in the local arts centre: attended at least 3 in past year
 - More likely to attend professional productions rather than amateur
 - Had to attend named professional productions in '08
- **Occasional professional:**
 - Occasional attendees of professional performances/exhibitions in the local arts centre: attended no more than two in past year
 - More likely to attend amateur productions rather than professional
 - Had to attend named professional productions in '08

1.3.2. Sample

Recruitment details

- **Database:**
 - Primarily recruited from databases provided by local arts centres
- **Art forms:**
 - The range of art forms recruited reflected programme offering
 - Theatre was most popular, followed by music
 - Limited experience of dance, opera, visual arts
- **Demographics:**
 - Male and female
 - Spread of ages
 - Spread of social class groups
 - Living in the town or within 20 mile radius of it
 - Living in the area for three or more years
- **Timing:**
 - '07 groups were convened from 29th April to 23rd May 2007
 - '08 groups were convened from 8th to 17th April 2008

1.4. Discussion Outline

Discussion outline used in each group

- **This involved a topic list:**
 - To ensure all pertinent information was covered in each group discussion
- **Main sections:**
 - Arts & culture in general
 - Professional productions
 - Amateur productions
 - Programming expectations and requirements
 - Marketing activity
 - Local arts centre venue
- **Extent of coverage of each section varied between '07 and '08:**
 - '07 collected more background information on engagement with arts & culture
 - '08 collected more information on engagement with professional touring productions

1.5. Quotes

Code to identify source of quotes

Where appropriate, quotes are used to illustrate a point

Location:	T = Tralee S = Skibbereen L = Letterkenny V = Virginia
Group status:	1 = Regular professional 2 = Occasional professional
Year:	'07 = 2007 '08 = 2008

2. ARTS & CULTURE



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2.1. Defining Arts & Culture

What is arts & culture?

- **It is “entertainment”**: the essence of arts and culture (T2'07) (L1'07)
- **It is alive**: “a living thing” (T2'07), “anything live” (T1'07), “live show” (L1'07), “performing” (V1'07)
- **It is “a cultural exchange”** (S1'07): of “creativity” (S2'07)
- **It is emotionally evocative**: “happy”, “uplifting” (T1'07), “escapism”, “feel great” (L1'07)
- **It is a sociable occasion**: bonding community relationships
- **It is historical**: development over time

2.2. Art Forms

Clear understanding of the category

Driven by local arts centre programming

Theatre

Music

Dance

Visual art

Comedy

Limited recall of

Literature

Film



2.3. Theatre

Main focus of attention

- Top of mind art form:
 - Predominant offering in local venue, except Skibbereen
- Variety:
 - Drama, comedy, classical, opera, musicals, traditional/folklore, puppetry
- Terminology:
 - Predominantly “plays”, “musicals”, “shows”, “am dram”
- Format:
 - Typically, a story with “a beginning, a middle and an end” (T2'08)
 - Familiar: film and novels in particular



Most popular art form

- Familiar: format, story
- Reliable: expect will enjoy
- Comfortable: knowing will understand and relate to it
- Popular: knowing others will enjoy in one's company and may be well attended

2.4. Music

A well known art form

- A top of mind art form:
 - But not as exclusive to local arts centre as theatre
- Variety:
 - Traditional, classical, pop, heavy rock, chamber, jazz, country western, gospel...
- Venue specific:
 - Local arts centre may not accommodate all types: need larger spaces for orchestra, very popular stars, etc.
 - Traditional music fits well with pub scene
 - May prefer to attend a venue where one can stand up and dance
- Terminology:
 - Predominantly defined by performers' names
- Format:
 - A repertoire of pieces on stage
 - Reference to festivals



Discerning interest

- Personal taste in music: developing one's interest over time
- Niche interest in certain varieties: classical in particular, also traditional
- Alternative venues: may attend other than in local arts centre
- A popular choice among occasionals: who may not attend any other art form
- Attracts all ages: regarded as a means to attract young people into local arts centre

2.5. Dance

Limited attention to

- Low mention of dance as an art form:
 - Limited experience of and limited exposure to
 - “I am not sure what it is about” (L2’08), “you may be disappointed” (T2’08)
- Variety:
 - Ballet, contemporary, traditional
 - By type: ballet, Irish dancing, hip hop, modern
- Format:
 - A performance on stage
 - Classes for children
 - Sessions for adults: set dancing, line dancing

Discerning interest

- Personal taste in dance
- Niche interest in certain varieties: ballet, Irish dancing, etc.
- Prejudice against: a challenge for many to attend
- Fear of contemporary in particular: limited understanding, mis-interpretation, waste of money



Ignorance breeds fear which breeds rejection

2.6. Visual Art

Limited attention to

- Not a top of mind art form for a local arts centre:
 - Exhibitions acknowledged as an additional bonus in the centre
- Variety:
 - Contemporary & classical: painting, drawing, photography, sculpture
- Format:
 - An exhibition of artists' work
 - In various venue types: formal (galleries) and informal (cafes, pubs, libraries, hotels, etc)
 - Recall of touring exhibitions
 - Low mention of performance art



Discerning interest

- A personal interest: driven by own involvement and/or appreciation, involvement of significant others and/or locals
- A casual interest: typically visit exhibition in local arts centre when there for another reason
- Claimed preference for classical rather than contemporary/abstract pieces
- Real consumption of visual art is understood to require time and appreciation
- Limited reference to fear of having to buy a piece of work at an exhibition

2.7. Comedy

Limited attention to

- Some mention of:
 - Included in the mix on offer in a local arts centre
 - Also attended in other venues outside town
- Format:
 - Stand-up act and typically interactive
 - Generally solo performances



Discerning interest

- Personal taste: preferred performers and preferred material; love/hate relationship
- An occasional attendance: not widely available, preferred performer
- For some people, may not visit local arts centre otherwise
- Attracts young and old alike

2.8. Film

Low mention of

- Limited awareness of:
 - Accepted as a credible offering from a local arts centre
- Format:
 - Typically, film club
 - Classical films which are not widely available



Discerning interest

- A niche interest
- More good intention than actual attendance
- Competes with cinemas and DVD rentals/purchase

2.9. Literature

Little mention of

- Not a top of mind art form
 - Accepted as a credible offering from a local arts centre
- Variety:
 - Story telling, readings, poetry, writing
- Format:
 - Unfamiliar to respondents
 - Generally expected to be a solo performance



Discerning interest

- A niche interest
- Little discussion on: did not captivate attention

2.10. Other Components of Arts & Culture

Other suggested components in '07 research

Sport

Heritage venues & societies (historical, archaeological)

Museums

Circus

Book clubs

Tax exemption

Irish language

Lap dancing

Arts & crafts

3. ENGAGEMENT WITH ARTS & CULTURE



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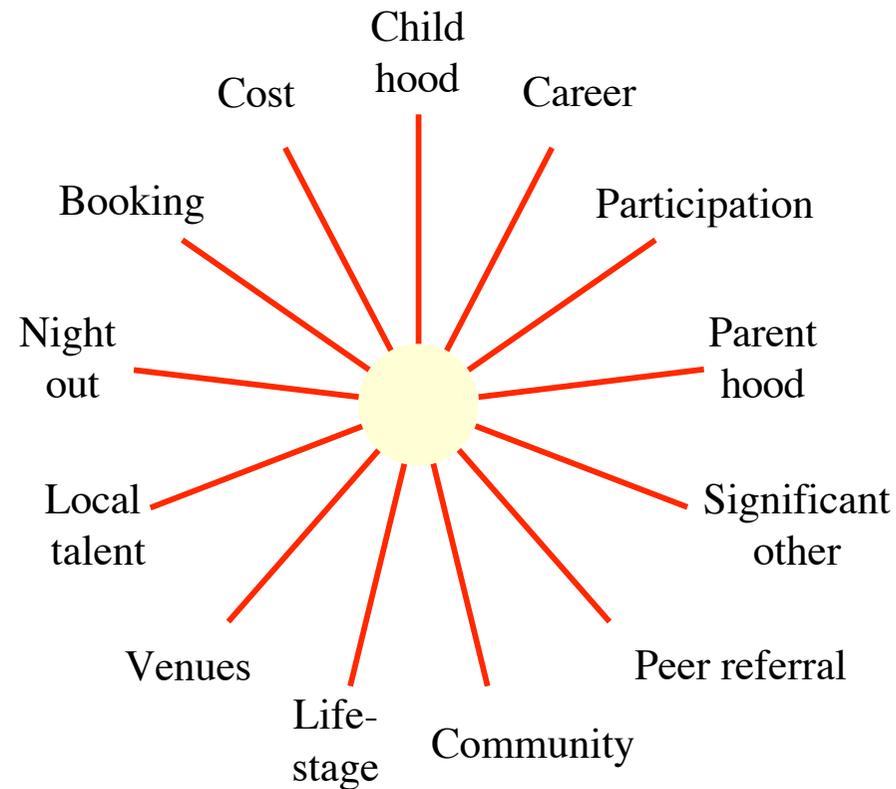
3.1. Lifestyle Issues

Background on respondents

- Respondents represent different stages of life:
 - Young family, older family, empty nesters, single
 - Employed, home-maker, retired
- Predominantly middle-aged and older:
 - Some young adults: having participated in arts and culture at a young age and/or studied it in college and/or driven by own children attending classes

3.2.1. Engagement with Arts & Culture

Drivers for engagement



3.2.2. Engagement with Arts & Culture

Drivers for engagement

- Childhood:
 - Participated in arts & culture as a child: attended classes and performances
 - Attended performances & exhibitions with parents and others
- Career:
 - Studied or currently studying arts and culture
 - Teacher of an arts & culture activity: music, visual arts, dance
- Participation in arts & culture activities:
 - Involved in local amateur groups: theatre, choral, visual arts
- Parenthood:
 - Own children participating in activities such as dance, music, drama
 - Grandchildren performing in events
- Significant other:
 - Supporting partner/spouse/friend who participates in or attends performances/exhibitions
- Peer referral:
 - Invited and/or recommended by others to attend whereby exposure breeds interest

3.2.3. Engagement with Arts & Culture

- Involvement in community:
 - Membership of local groups, involvement on committees, etc.
 - Therefore, socially aware and socially active: e.g. group outings to performances/exhibitions
- Life-stage:
 - Interest in arts and culture associated with becoming older: more time to attend, wider social circle some of whom may be engaged, parenthood...
- Arts & culture venues in locality:
 - Available on one's own doorstep: convenient, local, part of community, aware...
 - Offering an attractive programme
 - Other venues within easy commuting distance: a network of venues to bind interest
- Local writers, performers, artists:
 - Pride in local talent generating engagement
- A night out:
 - Plan the outing, book the event, code of dress, finance...drinks before/after, meal before/after...
- Booking facility:
 - Easy to book, favorable cancellation policy
- Cost:
 - Affordable: well priced source of entertainment

3.3. Benefits Derived From Engagement

Personal benefits

Social

Part of one's social lifestyle

Fit with significant group:
friends, club, etc.

Sense of community:
sharing a night out with
familiar faces in one's
own community

Skill

Development of one's interest
in & understanding of the art form(s)

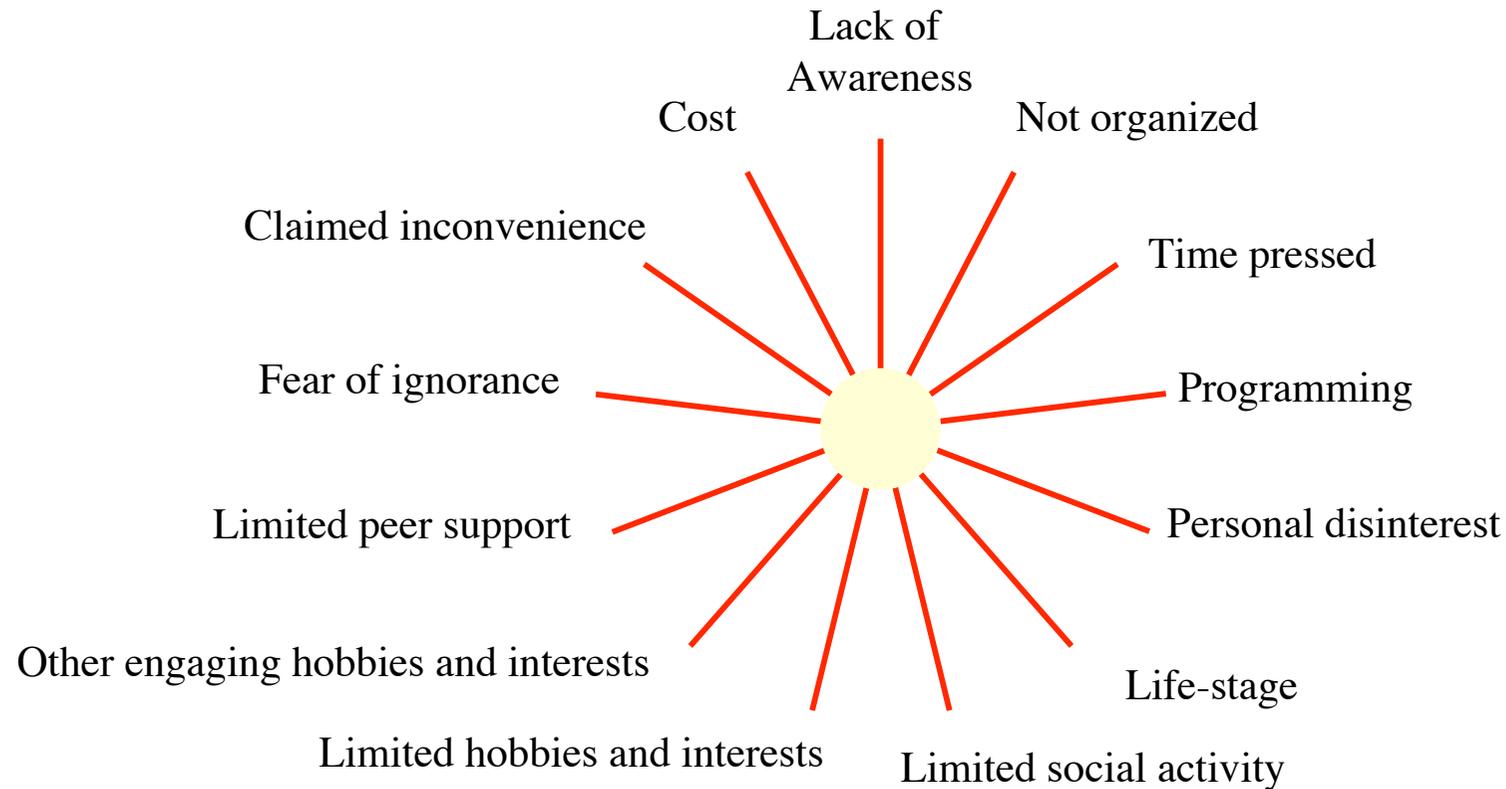
Ongoing pursuit of the art form(s):
continue to cultivate one's
engagement with it

Perform oneself: sing, paint,
act, play instrument...

Sense of belonging/attachment
to the art form

3.4.1. Barriers to Arts & Culture

Inhibitors for more regular engagement



3.4.2. Barriers to Arts & Culture

Inhibitors for more regular engagement

- Lack of awareness:
 - A crutch used by occasional attendees
- Not organized:
 - An excuse for not fulfilling an intention to go
- Time pressed:
 - Busy lifestyle: too busy to attend or too busy to notice/remember performances/exhibitions
- Programming:
 - Not attracted to programme on offer
- Personal disinterest:
 - Not interested in any/some art forms: detached
 - Limited repertoire: low engagement with a range of art forms
- Life-stage:
 - Busy with families and mortgages
 - Older: no longer have young children attending classes and in performances

3.4.3. Barriers to Arts & Culture

- Limited social activity:
 - Little involvement in community: not members of groups, few social outings...
- Limited hobbies and interests:
 - Sedentary lifestyle: typically watch TV, read and/or go for a walk as a pastime
- Other engaging hobbies and interests:
 - Especially sport
- Limited peer support:
 - Not a usual social activity with friends or family; decried by some
 - No one to go with: not inclined to go alone
- Fear of ignorance:
 - Concern one may not understand or correctly interpret the performance/exhibition
 - Some what intimidated by apparent cultural qualifications
- Claimed inconvenience:
 - Work in town and live out of town: not convenient to stay on or return later
- Cost:
 - An expensive outing if one is not interested and/or not entertained by the event

3.5. Guilt Among Occasionals

**Many occasionals admit it is their own fault
that they do not go more often**

They would like to go to but are not organizing themselves to do it

“Not organized” (V2'08)

“Lazy and don't go”, “don't make the effort”, “don't have the time” (V2'07)

Attendance requires an effort and “it is up to you to make the effort” (V2'07)

3.6. Eliticism

Breaking down barriers

- Less snobbery nowadays attached to arts & culture
- Notable improvement on '07 research:
 - Less eliticism associated with arts & culture: may be reflective of recruitment and/or enhanced programming in the past year



Explained by growing accessibility

- Wealth of local opportunities:
 - Venues, locations, art forms, festivals...
- Localization of art centres:
 - An everyday opportunity in own locality for all in the community
- Informality of venues:
 - Delivering a convenient and comfortable environment for the consumption of arts & culture
- Growth in participation by children in a local setting:
 - And subsequent consumption by their families
- Local richness in performers:
 - Having talent among one's own
- Training and educational opportunities:
 - Classes, workshops, talks: making arts and culture accessible

4. AUDIENCE BEHAVIOUR



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4.1. Attendance Patterns

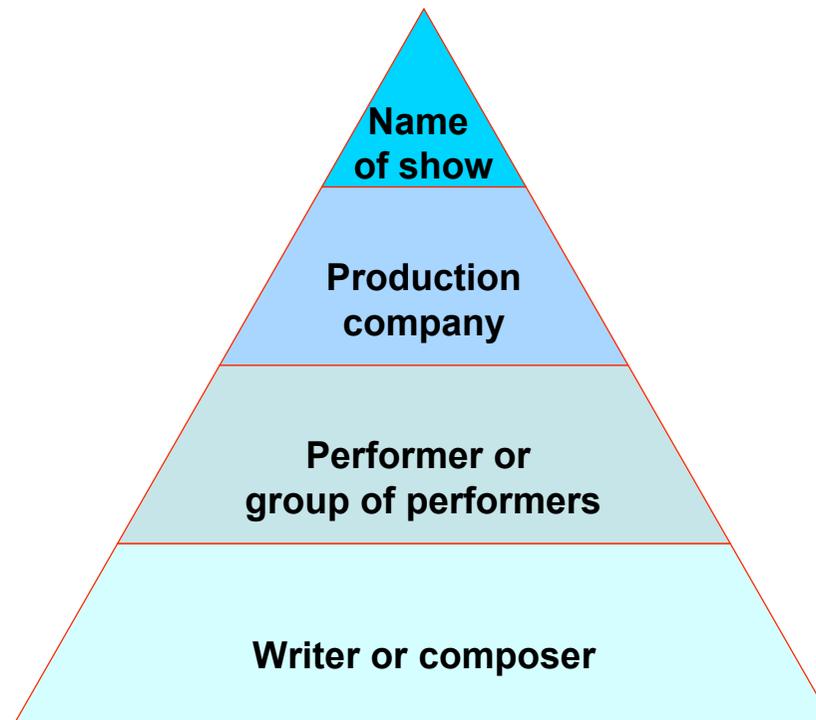
Predominantly ad hoc pattern of attendance
Level of attendance influenced by personal & external factors*
Tendency to over-report frequency of attendance

- Time of year/seasonal effects:
 - Greater attendance from September to May when respondents claim to have more time, less distraction and to be more inclined
 - Typically, too busy in the summer with activities and visitors to attend
- Programming:
 - Influenced by the range and style of shows on offer: and personal interest in
 - Influenced by the timing of shows: midweek/weekend, frequency of its occurrence, number of consecutive shows within a short time frame:
 - “Would go more often if they had more on” (V1’07)
 - Too many on within short time frame so could not go to them all: Barber of Seville, Taming of the Shrew, My Brilliant Divorce, Pearls of the Opera: “theatered out” (T1’08)
- Accompanying attendees:
 - May need to organize or be organized by others to attend: e.g. friends, club
 - May be disinclined to go alone so reliance on others to attend
- Availability of tickets:
 - May be difficult to get ticket(s) if leave it to the last minute
- Convenience:
 - Having the venue in one’s own town enables many to attend
- Cost:
 - The cost of the ticket may attract or detract attendance

* Also, reflective of recruitment specifications

4.2.1. Primary Factors Affecting Attendance

The name of the show supercedes all other factors in affecting attendance



The only time these factors do not apply is when one is influenced to support a significant other: a child, a grandchild, a spouse/partner, a friend...

4.2.2. Primary Factors Affecting Attendance

The name of the show

- Familiarity with the show itself:
 - Seen the performance before
 - Read the book
 - Seen it on film
- Guarantee of enjoyment:
 - Know the material: the story, the music...
 - Recommended by reliable others
 - Read a reliable review

The production company

- Amateur or professional
- Clear understanding of their style and quality of performance
- Know in advance what to expect and enjoy
- But generally an unknown entity: not always a familiar name.
- Thus, the name of the show takes precedence and there is hope that the production company will do a good job

4.2.3. Primary Factors Affecting Attendance

A performer or group of performers

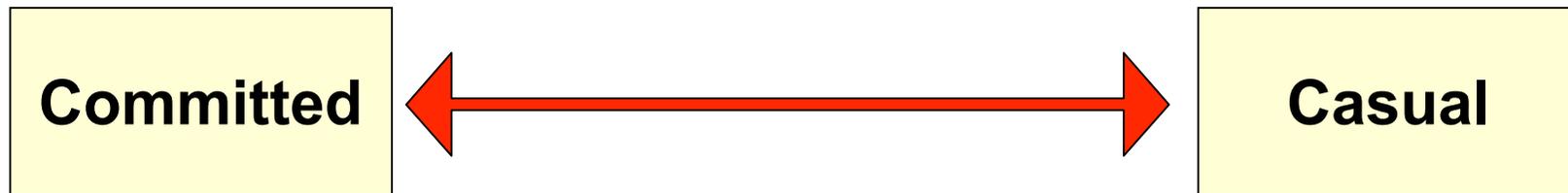
- An attraction to attend: a familiar name who will knowingly entertain
- It may be difficult to separate the person from his/her reputation and there is the danger that the show may become him/her rather than him/her becoming a character within the show

The writer / composer

- An attraction for some people: in particular, if it is a reputable local
- More evident in classical events: ballet, opera, Shakespeare...
- High regard for well-known Irish writers and reputable local writers

4.3.1. Audience Segmentation

Spectrum of engagement



4.3.2. Audience Segmentation

Committed

Casual

- **Enthusiast:**
 - Frequent attender
 - Sophisticated consumer: wealth of experience and well informed
 - Pro-active in keeping informed
 - Participates in an art form or supports a significant other who participates
 - Likely to have an interest in a repertoire of art forms
 - Strong social network to accompany them to the events although comfortable in attending alone
- **Serious follower:**
 - Regular attender
 - May have multi or specialist interest
 - Prolific recall and knowledge of productions: tries to keep well informed
 - Comfortable in attending alone although enjoys company of others
 - Hate to miss a show
- **Social engager:**
 - Night out with social group: unlikely to go alone
 - Frequency of attendance influenced by others
 - Part of night out: pre-drinks, pre-dinner or post-drinks, post-dinner
 - Socio-culturally active: attend most shows
- **Selective interest:**
 - Single art form
 - Discerning uptake: drop in, drop out
 - Not pro-active in seeking information or booking in advance: forgive if forget
 - May be driven by known local in show
- **Rare attender:**
 - Self de-selection: not for me
 - Social circle disengaged also
 - Typically young as well as all ages
 - May go to popular music / comedy event: just happens to be in the venue
 - May have high involvement in other social activities or not

4.4. Audience Opportunities

Arts and culture is becoming more accessible over time

Noticed in '07 groups

Experienced in '08 groups

- **More children are engaging in arts & cultural activities:**
 - Developing their own interests and tastes
 - Supported by willing parents and family who, in turn, are developing their own engagement with arts & culture
- **Growth in community accessibility to arts & culture:**
 - Local art centre venues providing opportunities to consume arts & culture in a convenient and community friendly manner
 - Enhancing community engagement with arts & culture locally
- **Young adults identified as key target group:**
 - Limited attendance
 - Yet interested in popular culture: modern music, stand-up comedians...

5. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



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5.1. The Five Needs From the Experience

1. Need to be informed



2. Need to be attracted to a performance / exhibition



3. Need to be organized



4. Need to be entertained



5. Need to want to return

5.2. The Need to be Informed

To know what is on offer from the venue

- Tend to be reactive rather than proactive:
 - Reliance on brochure arriving through post box
 - Need to be on database: occasionals aware they can sign up
- Limited use of other means:
 - Collect brochure in public venues: including arts centre itself
 - Notice leaflets and posters
 - Read advertisement in local newspaper
- Strong role for referral and recommendation:
 - Word of mouth: listen to opinions of friends and family
 - Open to review articles in local press and/or radio
- Limited experience of reminders in post from arts centre:
 - Targeted direct marketing using one show to recommend another
 - May be accompanied with discount
- Limited use of website:
 - Low awareness of it: no use of it as a source of information on forthcoming shows
 - Potential for email correspondence from venue: brochure, reminder...

5.3. The Need to be Attracted to a Performance/Exhibition

To find a show that will appeal: to want to go to it

- Reliance on current programme offering appealing alternatives
- Regulars disappointed if current programme has low appeal:
 - Can sometimes happen that it has too much appeal: too many shows within a short time period
- Reliance on the name of the show to judge appeal:
 - May not read beyond the name to assess it further
 - Critical role for write-up in brochure: to inform and entice attendance
 - Strong role for visual in brochure and on leaflet and brochure: to attract attention and to appeal
- Limited interest in risking a challenge:
 - Not inclined to attend an unknown entity
 - Fear of not relating to the show, mis-interpreting, failing to enjoy, waste of money

5.4. The Need to be Organized

To prepare for attendance

- To note and remember the appealing show(s):
 - Mark on brochure, mark on calendar/diary, put on notice-board, etc
- To consult with accompanying attendees:
 - Partner/spouse, friends, club, etc, to see if they are interested in going
 - Not everyone will go alone: two or three in each group claim they would
- To book the tickets:
 - Typically by phone or in the booking office
 - Potential to book on website: it was noted that a credit card would be needed
- To organize babysitter, book restaurant, book taxi:
 - Or any other service where relevant
- To dress up:
 - In the sense of making an effort for a night out

5.5. The Need to be Entertained

To be rewarded for attending

- Attend a show with expectations:
 - To enjoy the experience, for it to be “fun” (All '08)
- Expect and hope expectations to be met:
 - To reassure the attendee that one’s choice of show was correct
 - To have the fun required and the good night out
- There may be responsibility for one’s company:
 - To ensure accompanying attendees enjoy it too in light of having encouraged them to go
- To be money well-spent:
 - A disappointment would be a waste of money

5.6. The Need to Want to Return

To want another good night out in that venue

- To look forward to another performance/exhibition:
 - Having been rewarded with enjoyment of the show
- To spread the word and recommend to others:
 - To socially engage with like-minded others
- To be proud of one's local venue:
 - For it to be a valuable part of one's social life and community life
- To continue one's interest in the art form:
 - To regularly engage with it and to grow and develop one's knowledge and understanding around it
 - Especially in the comfort and convenience of one's local art centre

6. LOCAL ARTS CENTRE



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6.1. Local Arts & Culture Venue

Essential to community life

- **Enhances accessibility of arts & culture:**
 - Shows and events available in the area
 - Local to one's home and work
 - Convenience in terms of travel
- **Valuable platform for local talent:**
 - Rehearsal space
 - Performance space
 - Exhibition space
 - Teaching space
 - Support the growth and development of local arts & culture individuals/groups
- **Instilling pride in local offering:**
 - Proud of theatre / arts centre in the locality – as well as other venues in the region
 - Of artists, writers, singers, musicians in the region
 - Of reputation for arts and culture in the region
- **Reaching out to people of all ages and all walks of life:**
 - School children to old age pensioners



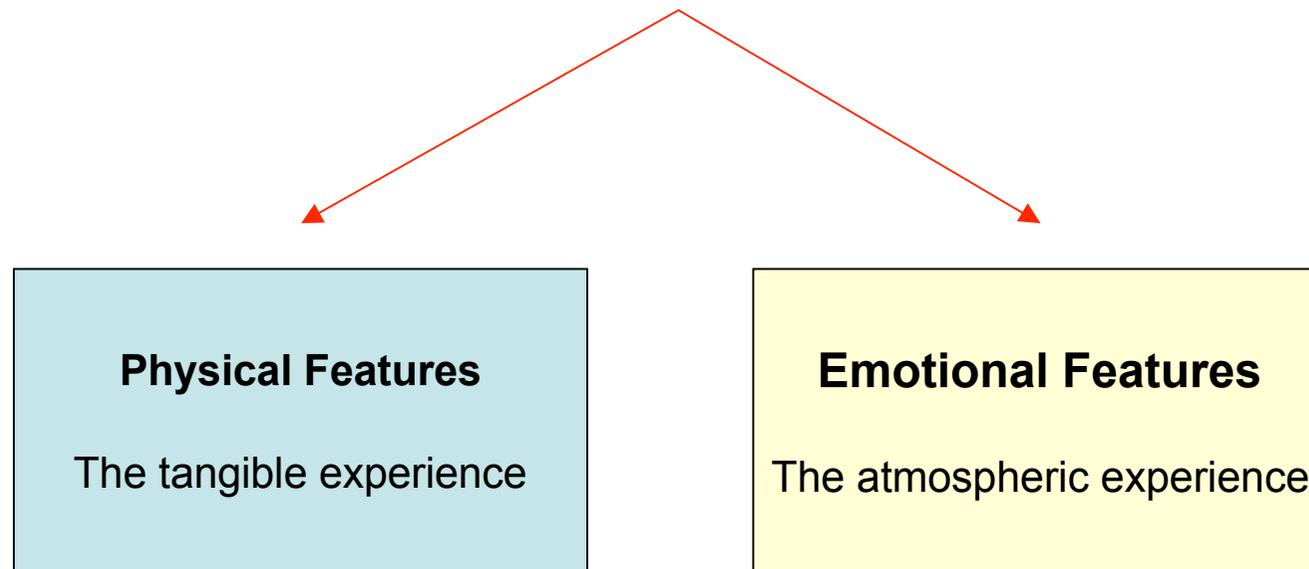
It has achieved a lot in breaking down the “arty farty” image of theatre (V2'08), the “snob's hobby” (L2'08)

Improvement on “years ago halls were cold and draughty” (V1'08)

No one claimed the venue to be a reason for non-attendance

6.2. Judging a Local Arts Centre

Features of local arts centre affects audience experience



6.3. Physical Features

The structure with which and in which the audience interacts

- Convenience of location
- 'Open door' policy: all welcome
- Easy and adequate parking
- Aesthetic features: attractive to the eye, popular on the local landscape
- Socializing facilities: bar, café, toilets, outside ash buckets
- Ease of accessibility to public spaces: walk-ways, not obstructed by furniture, etc.
- Theatre space:
 - Location and number of entrances to theatre: upstairs and downstairs, including wheelchair access
 - Large stage: to accommodate variety of needs: ballet, orchestra, etc.
 - Unobstructed visibility
 - Quality and equal acoustics throughout the space
 - Comfortable seating: home from home, within access of stage
 - Safe and manageable stairs
 - Well ventilated: not stuffy
- Exhibition space: not top of mind but added bonus
- Spacious, clean, warm and well maintained

6.4. Emotional Features

Delivering the required ambience

- Friendly and welcoming environment:
 - From staff: quality of service from front of house in person and on phone
 - From fellow attendees: sense of fitting in and belonging to the scene
- Good attendance:
 - Full house delivers the best experience although not always expected or guaranteed
 - “Small attendance sometimes... is very disheartening” (T1'08)
- Sociable:
 - Before, during and after the show: community setting
- Quality atmosphere:
 - “Intimate”, “homely”, “comfortable”, “buzz” (All '08): delivering the personal experience,
 - Derived from the production company, the setting and the audience
- Reassuringly offering good value for money:
 - Knowing that one’s money is well spent
- Convenient:
 - In terms of location, access to arts & culture, ease of booking...

6.5.1. Assessment of Venues

	An Grianan		Ramor		Siamsa		WCAC
	'07	'08	'07	'08	'07	'08	'07
Location	5	5	5	5	5	5	4
Range of art forms	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Range of shows & events	4	4	5	4	4	4	3
Quality of shows & events	4	5	4	5	4	4	4
Quality of public spaces	4	4	4	4	5	4	3
Marketing	4	4	4	4	3	4	4
Booking service	5	5	4	5	5	5	5
Price of tickets	4	4	4	4	4	4	5*
Quality of service	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Scale: 1 = 'poor' to 5 = 'excellent'

* Price of classes

6.5.2. Assessment of Venues

Improvement on '07

- In general, the occasionals were more critical of the local arts centre than professionals
- Notable improvement on 'quality of shows and events' in the past year:
 - Could be attributable to touring professional productions
- Although, 'range of art forms' receives an average of score of '4', there were many '3's as well:
 - Showing room for improvement
- Likewise with marketing:
 - There is a proportion of '3' scores which indicate the need for stronger communication
 - In keeping with requests for regular and powerful information

7. PROFESSIONAL Vs. AMATEUR



7.1.1. Professional Vs. Amateur

Two distinct offerings

- Common use of the terms: 'professional' and 'amateur'
- Constantly used to distinguish between performances/exhibitions
- Clear differentiation between the two: no confusion
- Each bears its own strengths and weaknesses

Three audience types

- Regular professional attendees tend to be intolerant of amateur productions:
 - Attend if compelled by family or friendship commitment
- Regular amateur attendees tend to shy away from professional productions:
 - Not for me
- Occasional professional attendees may also attend occasional amateur productions:
 - A floating audience depending upon the show and its performers

7.1.2. Professional Vs. Amateur

Professional

- **Paid performers: a career**
- **Funded: Arts Council, government...**
- **Dearer ticket prices**

- **High quality productions**
- **Less tolerant of low quality**

- **Typically touring: many & varied production companies/stars**
- **With or without well-known performers**
- **Also, local companies**
- **Across all art forms**
- **A gamble if unknown: seek reputable names**

- **Mixed levels of attendance: driven by familiarity and comfort with content**

Amateur

- **Non paid hobby-ists**
- **Non funded**
- **Cheaper ticket prices**
- **Economically important to venue**

- **Various levels of quality**
- **Lower expectations for**

- **Typically local: many & varied groups**
- **Predominantly theatre: musicals, comedies, dramas**
- **Other art forms offered by local clubs and class groups**
- **Family involvement: child and/or adult**
- **Usually full house: familiar content, familiar faces**
- **Community bonding: local entertainment**

7.1.3. Semi-Professional

Semi- Professional

- A third category
- In the middle ground
- Typically local with some professional input: director, actors...
- Proud of local effort
- More aligned with 'amateur' than 'professional' expectations and tolerances

7.1.4. Professional Vs. Amateur

Professional

The ultimate in production and performance

High expectations for enjoyment and value for money

A necessary component of local programme: test of a quality venue

Learning curve in progress: on companies, their shows, art forms...

Need for strong marketing & communication to secure audiences



Genuine interest in professional productions breeds regularity in attendance

Amateur

Warm reaction to local amateur productions

Sense of loyalty to locals and enjoyment in seeing locals in action

High assumption for quality and enjoyable show

Strong reliance on local arts centre to serve and promote the community

Commendable response to achievement of same to date



A vital means of engaging people with arts & culture

7.2. Touring Professional Productions

A clear understanding

- **Various companies: from the well known to obscure**
- **Across all art forms: some more popular than others**
- **Grant aided to afford travel: generally understood to be the Arts Council**
- **Commanding high prices: although known to be relatively cheaper than travelling to and paying for ticket in city venue**

- **Expected to bring quality productions to country locations: outside of the main cities, especially Dublin**
- **Travelling a circuit of small venues cultivating engagement with the arts**
- **Accepted as a norm in '08: likened to a revival of travelling theatre companies years ago in '07**

- **High appreciation for convenience of having such productions in local venue**
- **Proud local venue attracts the productions**
- **Size of venue is known to affect nature and scope of productions that arrive**

- **Discerning uptake of productions: risk averse audiences**
- **Reactive rather than proactive to information so need clear, comprehensive and inviting communication**

7.3. Assessment of Touring Professional Productions

Based on those seen in past year

- Generally highly commendable
 - Highly professional”, “very impressive” (L1’08)
 - “Absolutely fantastic”, “enthralled” (L2’08)
- Driven by:
 - Name of show
 - Well-known performer (Deirdre O’Kane, Pauline McGlynn),
 - Production company (Druid, Rough Magic),
 - Writer (Shakespeare)
- Source of enjoyment:
 - Strength of acting
 - Enthusiasm of performers
 - Clarity of speech/dialogue
 - Energy of pace
 - Humour
 - Strong characters in leading roles
 - Large cast, small cast, one-person show
 - Lots of props, no props

7.4. Professional Production Companies

Limited knowledge

- **Top of mind:**
 - National institutions: Abbey, Gate, RTE Symphony Orchestra
 - Certain reputable companies: Druid, Lambert Puppet Theatre, River Dance
 - Local companies: Livin Dred....
 - Well known performers in music and comedy,
- **Growing knowledge:**
 - More frequent visits to local venue: Rough Magic
- **Niche knowledge:**
 - Niche art forms: ballet, opera
- **Very little knowledge:**
 - Familiar with the name mainly: “If you know the name they are reputable” (T2’08)
 - For example: Barabas, City Theatre Dublin, Cosceim, Dubblejoint Theatre Company, Hawkswell, Red Kettle, Zyber Theatre, many more
- **No awareness at all:**
 - Of many of the names mentioned in research
- **Requests for information on a production company:**
 - Origin, age of company, composition of company
 - Qualifications
 - Reputation
 - Style of performance and previous experience with the show
 - Website and other sources of information

8. PROGRAMMING



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8.1. Programming

The responsibility of the venue

- Assume the venue has a choice of productions to consider:
 - Some of which it is honored to put on: reputable professional tours
 - Others it is dutiful in accommodating: local productions
 - Others to fill the remaining gap
- Expect a broad mix of events to cater for a range of tastes within the community:
 - Range of art forms
 - Range of professional and amateur companies
- Do not expect equal proportions of each:
 - Long runs for popular shows
 - Short runs for less popular shows, more difficult-to-get artists and niche interests
- Expect seasonal variation:
 - In keeping with availability of local audiences from late autumn to spring
 - To accommodate tourism in the summer period
 - To provide seasonal material at Christmas time
- Expect different price points:
 - Reflecting the popularity and professionalism of the show

8.2. Wish List

A choice of performances and exhibitions

- Dispersed throughout the year:
 - Autumn to spring
 - Particularly important to “get a few good shows at the start of the year” (T1'08) to establish a momentum for audiences
- With weekly intervals at least between the popular shows:
 - Cannot afford time and money to go to four consecutive dramas within a few weeks
- Weekdays and weekends:
 - Each suits different circumstances
- Offering variety in productions:
 - Across art forms
 - Within art forms
 - All groups agree that their venue “has a good mix to suit most tastes” (L1'08)
- Reassuringly familiar material:
 - Or positively encouraging to attend low-risk challenges

8.3. Specific Requests

All focused on professional productions

- Notable attention on Irish companies:
 - Some international material may be “out of our comfort zone” (V2’08)
- Attract young audiences: music, comedy
- Greater offering in the summer programme:
 - Not just for tourists – although limited attendance expected by locals
- More music:
 - Traditional music
 - Popular music
 - Classical music
- More comedy:
 - Stand-up comedy
- Increased frequency from certain niche art forms:
 - Ballet and opera in particular: two to three times a year
 - Orchestra if the stage can accommodate it
- Theatre:
 - O’Casey plays
- Dance:
 - Traditional dance
- Certain production companies:
 - Abbey, Druid....

8.4. Outreach

Low awareness

- Limited mention of
- Understood:
 - Workshops, classes, talks
- Low interest: expected to suit niche audiences:
 - Who want to be educated as well as to be entertained
 - Who want to participate and perform as well as consume
- Some interest in post-show talks:
 - Informal setting: not in theatre space
 - Sociable opportunity: to share opinions and learn... with a drink in the hand
 - Opportunity for audience and performer to show appreciation for each other
 - Limited duration: to end the evening without prolonging it; 15 to 30 minutes
 - For certain shows: not for every show
 - Seen to be the responsibility of the production company
 - More appealing to regulars than occasionals: "it is great to have the interaction" (T1'08)
 - Occasionals were less favorable: "it is nice to be amused and entertained rather than going into it too deeply" (V2'08)

9. COMMUNICATION

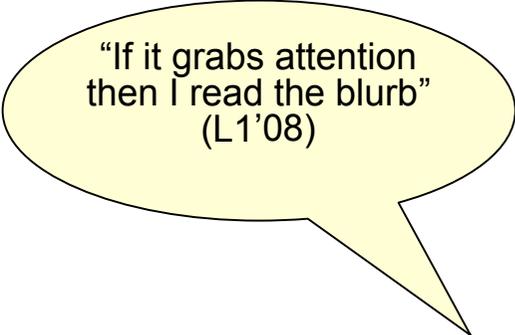


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9.1. Information

Information on each show is critical

- Nature of information:
 - Enlightening description of what the performance/exhibition offers the audience
 - In common language that is clear and concise
 - That accurately foretells what the audience should expect: meaningful not abstract
- Scope:
 - The name of the show, the performers, the production company
 - The content of the show: the storyline and its portrayal
 - Any unusual features: bad language, nudity, sex scenes, no interval, etc.
 - Referral to further sources of information: e.g. website of venue, website of production company
 - Price and payment methods,
 - Seating plan is useful rather than necessary
- Format:
 - Visual images, distinctive headings and simple text
- Timing:
 - At least one month in advance of show
 - Preferably with reminders closer to the show
- Source:
 - High appeal for brochure, especially through post
 - Leaflets and posters
 - Local press advertising and reviews
 - Radio advertising and reviews
 - Email and website: currently to a less extent but with future potential



“If it grabs attention
then I read the blurb”
(L1’08)

9.2. Needs

The art centre needs to be pro-active

- Admission of neglect:
 - Respondents claim to be lazy and negligent in keeping themselves informed
- Request for regular communication:
 - For fear of missing out on what is on
- Request for powerful communication:
 - Deliberate targeting of relevant audiences
 - High quality motivational messages
- Appeal for relationship marketing:
 - Comfortable with database extrapolation to ensure significant shows are promoted to relevant audience groups

9.3.1. Brochure

An essential information tool

- Strong reliance on brochure
- Seasonal timing:
 - Currently experiencing 2 to 4 months in advance
 - 2 is preferable: more recent, easier to manage, less confusing as less content
 - 4 is acceptable to those who are used to it
- Tend to read on receipt:
 - Regular professional respondents tend to look through it in detail
 - Occasionals are generally less attentive and, therefore, miss opportunities
- Subsequent booking varies:
 - Advance booking depends on expected popularity of the show, knowledge of one's availability and organization of accompanying attendees



Thus, the brochure is the initial contact

Subsequent reminders are necessary to secure bookings

9.3.2. Brochure

Required physical features

- Manageable size:
 - As per the current offering from venues
- Easy access to information:
 - Legible font size
 - At-a-glance chart index
 - Laid out in chronological order
 - Varied spatial arrangement indicative of the show: e.g. popularity, professionalism...
- Production quality:
 - To inspire confidence in the quality of the venue and its offering
- Branding:
 - Distinctively identifiable with the venue

9.4. Booking

Booking is easy

- Usually by phone or in person:
 - Quality service delivered from staff
- Various and easy booking options are required:
 - By phone, in person
 - Claimed interest in potential of website
- Options for receiving tickets also:
 - Receive by post
 - Collect from desk in advance or on night of show

9.5. Price

Price is a sensitive issue

- Price is a factor in determining attendance:
 - Occasionals tend to be more price sensitive
 - All operate within a limited budget: “I cannot go to them all financially” (L2’08)
- Comparative reference:
 - Comparatively cheaper than main venues in cities: e.g. Point, Abbey, etc
 - More expensive than cinema but paying for live performance
 - Cheaper than dinner and drinks
- Variations between amateur and professional are acceptable:
 - €10 to €30+
- Special offers are requested:
 - To encourage trial and reward loyalty
 - Especially, two for the price of one
 - Also, concessions, group rates, discounts for OAPs and students
- Appeal for gift vouchers
- Mixed appeal for season tickets, friends scheme
- Low appeal for credit card booking charge
- High expectation for refunds or credit if advance notice of being unable to use ticket(s)

9.6. Arts Council

A national body

- **A guess that they are involved in this research**
- **Provider of grants & other funding:**
 - For professional productions and touring productions
- **Regular and obscure productions:**
 - “Some are only there because they got grants” (T2’07)
- **Unsure how Arts Council selects productions:**
 - Suspicious of brown envelopes and political clout (T2’07)
 - Removed from local area: operated from Dublin
 - “Loads of money... don’t know how to spend it” (T2’08)
- **Supporting artists and performers:**
 - To tour (S’07)

10. CONCLUSIONS



10.1. Regular Vs. Occasional

The regular experience

- Extremely vocal, enthused and informed about the topic
- Very much part of their lives; their identity
- Very engaged and interactive with the area
- Like to keep informed and up-to-date
- Committed goers and plan to remain so

The occasional experience

- Considerably interested in the topic
- Delighted to have the opportunity to share opinions and experiences
- Certain level of learning within the group from others
- Some motivated to increase attendance: inspired by others and plans made to go together
- Others content with their level of attendance and will continue to go depending upon what is on: more lackadaisical in their commitment

10.2. Choosing a Show

A personal experience

“For me” (L1'08)

- Discerning uptake of programme offering :
 - Both regulars and occasionals
- Seeking a quality experience:
 - Need to know in advance the “quality of what is on” (L1'08)
- Highly dependent upon familiarity:
 - Security in knowing what to expect
- Time precious:
 - Need to organize oneself and/or attending company in advance so benefit from brochure in advance: regulars are more organized
 - Busy lifestyle so benefit from reminders in case forget: regulars are more likely to receive
 - Only have time to attend so often so do not want the occasion to be wasted by a poor/disappointing performance
- Money conscious:
 - Do not want to waste money either

10.3. Local Venue Programming

On the right track

- Mixed experiences:
 - The regulars are well catered for
 - The occasionals do not know how well they are catered for
- Change in the past year:
 - The regulars recognize the growth in the programme in the past year: spoiled for choice so much they could not go to everything
 - Occasionals have missed the extent of that change because they are not as engaged with the venue
- Strength of professional offering:
 - Clear distinction between professional and amateur productions
 - High regard for quality performance
 - Appreciation for growth in professional offering
 - Regularity of attendance at professional shows strengthens engagement with it

10.4. Information

The market is information reliant

- Reactive rather than proactive:
 - Need to receive in the hand, through the ear and through the eye
- Occasionals more dependent upon detail:
 - Dismiss write-up if not attracted by heading or visual
 - Claim responsibility for not actively seeking or remembering information
- Move with the times:
 - Promote the **website** for immediate access to current information
 - Facilitate booking on site
 - Correspond by email: brochure, reminders, etc.
 - Ensure website has memorable address, is visually impressive/inspiring, is interactive and entertaining

10.5. The Professional Production Company

Critical need for guidance
Ignorance can breed dismissal

- Company name is not top of mind when choosing a show:
 - Familiarity with show itself is more influential so willing to accept production company name
 - More important when the show is not known: production company needs to promote itself
- Positive experience of a production company sells its next performance:
 - As evidenced by Druid, Rough Magic etc.
 - Thus, repeat visits by a quality company grows attendance: reinforcing the role of familiarity
- High awareness that professional production companies do differ:
 - Quality of show is known to rest with production company: it is a factor in the decision equation
- Limited recall of professional company names:
 - Limited knowledge on known names

10.6. Future Attendance

Expected to remain the same or grow

- Responsibility of the local arts centre:
 - To offer an attractive programme: especially at the start of the season
 - To strategically and effectively communicate its offering
 - To incentivize attendance with competitive prices and special offers
 - To reward loyal custom with relationship marketing, discounts and added value events such as post-show talks
 - To be innovative in approach: e.g. to cultivate a 'theatre group' for individuals to go together
- Responsibility of the production company:
 - To offer popular shows
 - To deliver a quality performance
 - To develop its image, grow its reputation and engage regular custom
- Responsibility of the audience:
 - To pro-actively seek information on forthcoming shows and to book tickets
 - To recommend to others and to spread the word within the community



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Thank you



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TOURING EXPERIMENT

Exit Surveys

September to December 2007

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Overall Rating
3. Prompts for Attending
4. Previous Experience
5. Supporting Information
6. Associated Activity
7. Booking of Performance/Exhibition
8. Price of Ticket
9. Venue Facilities
10. Distance Travelled
11. Summary & Conclusions

1. INTRODUCTION



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1.1. Research Background

Audience Research Study

- **This is the second phase of an audience research study conducted on behalf of the Irish Arts Council:**
 - The first phase involved qualitative research involving focus groups – May 2007
- **The overall purpose of the research was to:**
 - Ascertain and evaluate audience attitudes and behaviour towards consuming arts and culture in their local arts centre
 - Provide direction for audience development in relation to professional touring productions
- **More specifically, the study set out to establish:**
 - Audience attitudes towards professional productions in general
 - Response to recent programming
 - Attitudes towards local arts centre – positive and negative
 - Key motivations and barriers towards attendance
 - Key opportunities for greater attendance
 - Suggestions as to how best arts centre can communicate with their audiences

1.2. Research Objectives

Audience reactions to performances

**To ascertain audience response to select performances
Some of which are Touring Experiment productions
Across a number of art forms
In four chosen venues**



Thereby, provide direction for future touring productions

1.3. Methodology

Self-completion survey

- ❑ Structured questionnaire applicable to all art forms and venues
- ❑ Targeted at all attendees of the event during a specified period
- ❑ Distributed to the audience by the venue: on seats or at reception
- ❑ Completed by the audience at the end of the performance or visit to the exhibition
- ❑ Collected by venue personnel or returned to dedicated boxes

- ❑ All managed by PCC

1.4. Research Issues

Structured questions

- What do you think of this performance?
- What prompted you to come to see this performance?
- Have you seen any of the following before: performance/exhibition, writer/composer/artists' work, touring company before?
- How would you rate the supporting information?
- Did you or do you plan to attend any activity connected to this performance/exhibition?
- How easy or difficult was it to book?
- How would you rate the price of the ticket?
- How would you rate the facilities in this venue?
- How many kilometers do you live from this venue?

1.5.1. Sample

1151 responses

Four venues

- | | | |
|-----------|--|----------------------|
| 1. | The Ramor, Virginia | 265 responses |
| 2. | An Grianán, Letterkenny | 204 responses |
| 3. | Siamsa Tire, Tralee | 334 responses |
| 4. | West Cork Arts Centre, Skibbereen | 348 responses |

20 productions

- 5 touring productions per venue
- Range of sample sizes per exit survey
- From **17 to 117** respondents per survey

1.5.2. Sample

Six art forms

1.	Theatre x 6	374 responses
2.	Dance x 3	102 responses
3.	Music x 2	113 responses
4.	Opera x 1	68 responses
5.	Traditional Arts x 1	24 responses
6.	Visual Arts x 7: 6 exhibitions & 1 symposium	470 responses

Mixture of Touring Experiment & Non Touring Experiment productions

<input type="checkbox"/>	Touring Experiment x 8: 7 returned	373 responses
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non Touring Experiment x 12	778 responses

1.6.1. Productions

Theatre capacity = 200

The Ramor

<u>Art form</u>	<u>TE*</u>	<u>Production</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Responses</u>
1. Theatre	Non TE	Cavan Arts Office & Ramor: Carnival at Glenaduff	6-8 Sept	77
2. Theatre	TE	Upstate Theatre Company: At Peace	11 Oct	25
3. Dance	Non TE	Ballet Wales: Copelia	12 Oct	36
4. Visual Arts+	Non TE	Jim McPartlin: Landmarks & Landscapes	22 Oct+	52
5. Theatre	TE	NOMAD: Conversations on a Homecoming	25-27 Oct	75

* TE = Touring Experiment

+ Visual Arts exhibition unless otherwise stated

1.6.2. Productions

Theatre capacity = 345

An Grianán

<u>Art form</u>	<u>TE</u>	<u>Production</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Responses</u>
1. Trad. Arts	TE	No Piobairí Uileann: Piperlink	15 Sept	24
2. Theatre	Non TE	The LPS*: Blood Brothers	21 Sept	79
3. Dance	TE	Rionach Ní Néill: How did we get here?	2 Oct	36
4. Music	TE	Ulster Orchestra: Featuring Emma Johnson	22 Oct	65
5. Theatre	TE	Druid Theatre Company: My Brilliant Divorce	16 Nov	Awaiting

* Letterkenny Pantomime Society

1.6.3. Productions

Theatre capacity = 355

Siamsa Tire

<u>Art form</u>	<u>TE</u>	<u>Production</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Responses</u>
1. Visual Arts	Non TE	Artists of Kerry: <i>In Pursuit2</i>	6 Sept	70
2. Music	Non TE	10 th International Kerry Chamber Festival: <i>Salut d'amour</i>	14 Sept	48
3. Opera	Non TE	Opera Theatre Company: <i>Orlando</i>	4 Oct	68
4. Theatre	TE	Rough Magic: <i>Improbable Frequency</i>	8 Nov	117
5. Dance	TE	Echo Echo Dance Company: <i>Consequences</i>	25 Nov	31

1.6.4. Productions

No theatre space

West Cork Arts Centre

<u>Art form</u>	<u>TE</u>	<u>Production</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Responses</u>
1. Visual Arts	Non TE	West Cork Artists: <i>A Celebration</i>	14 July- 4 Aug	160
2. Visual Arts	Non TE	Eithne Jordan: <i>City</i>	11 Aug-1 Sept	85
3. Visual Arts	Non TE	Arno Kramer: <i>Everywhere is Here</i>	8 Sept-20 Oct	58
4. Visual Arts	Non TE	Cecily Brennan: <i>Cadere</i>	27 Oct-21 Nov	28
5. Visual Arts Talk	Non TE	Triptych: <i>Framing Practice</i>	1 Dec	17

2. OVERALL RATING



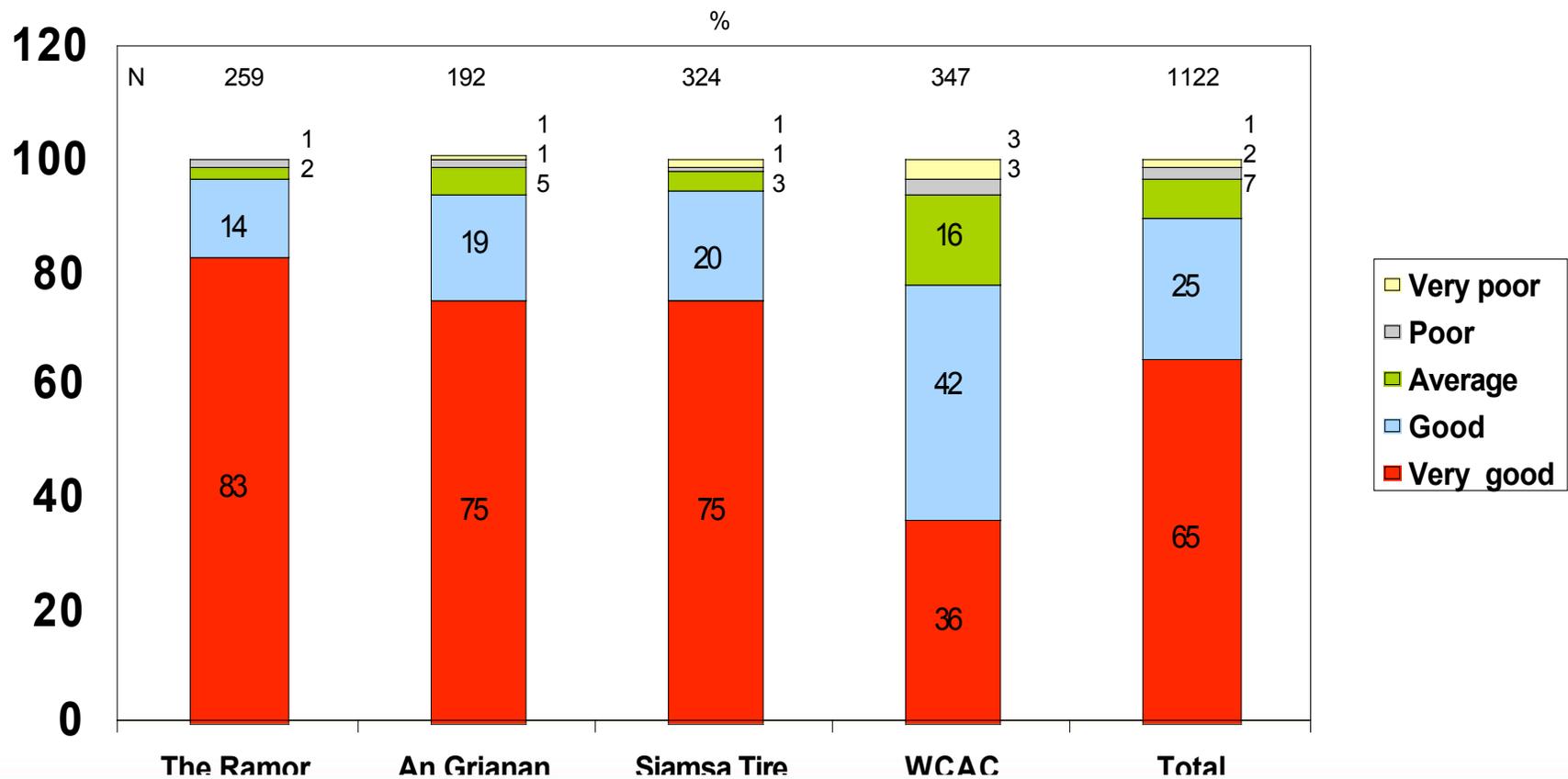
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2.1. Rating of Performance/Exhibition By Venue

Response varies by venue

Generally a positive response

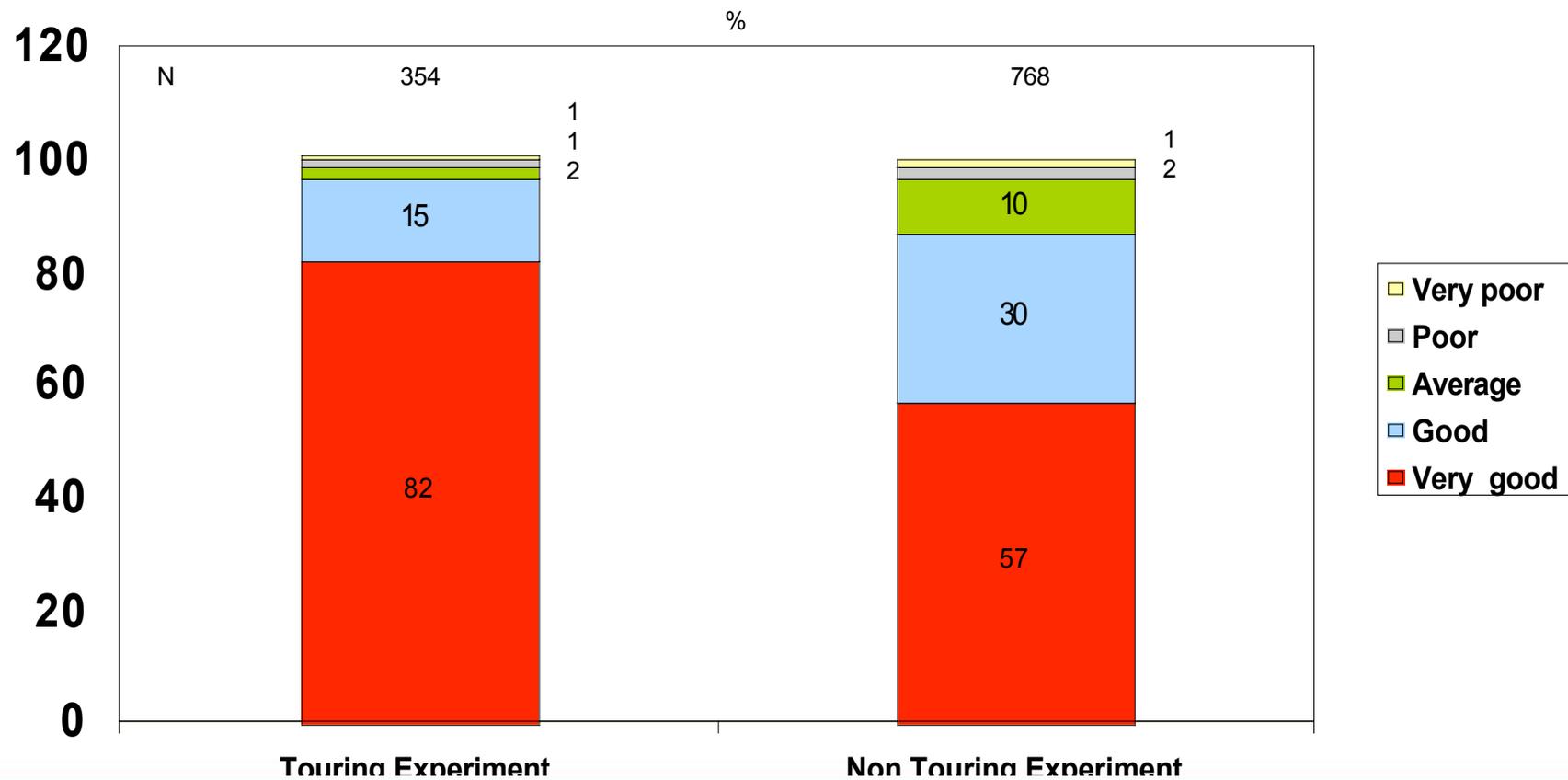
Warmest response in Ramor; poorest response in WCAC



2.2. Rating of The Performance/Exhibition By Touring Experiment Status

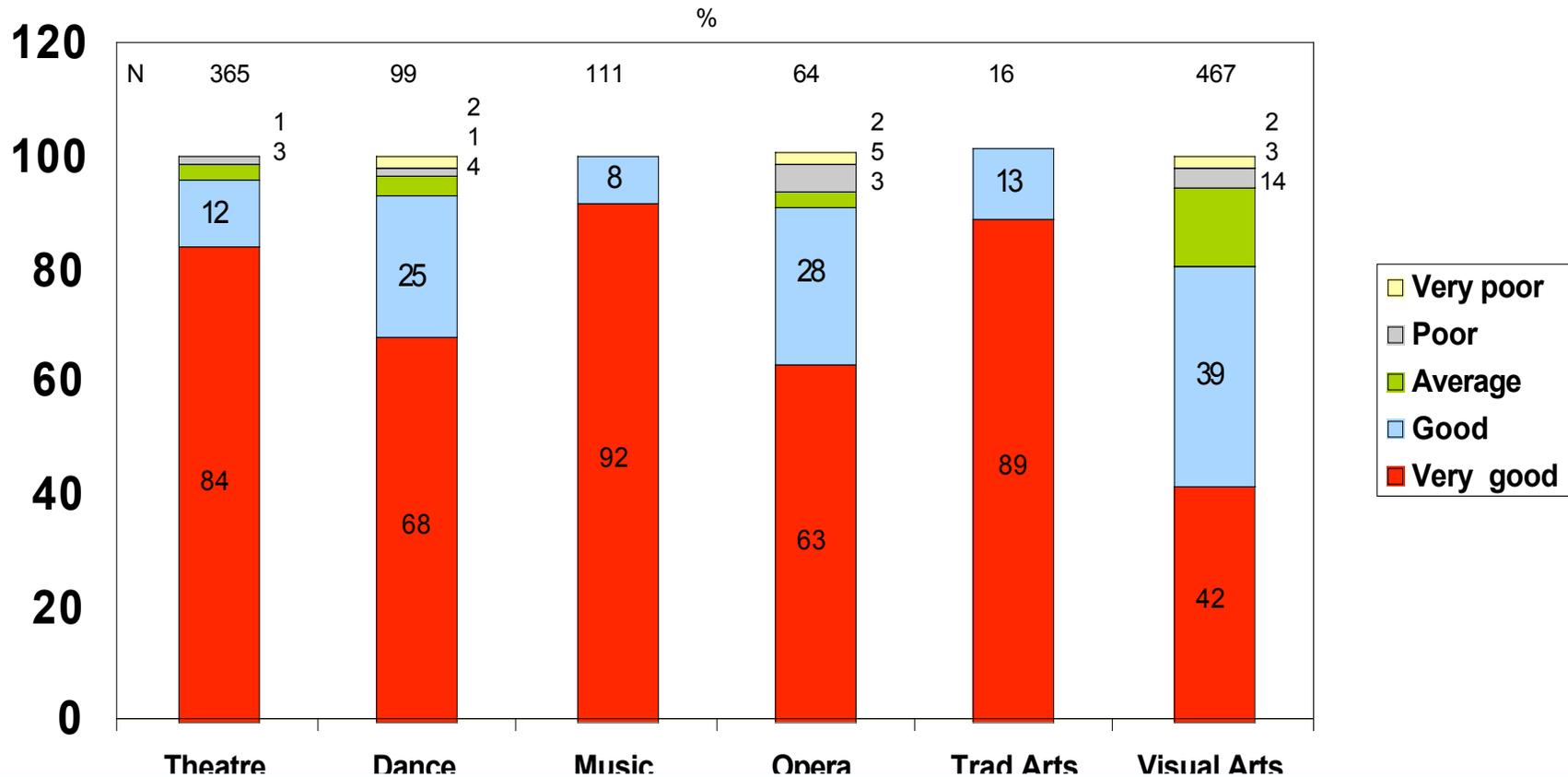
Higher rating for Touring Experiment events

Slightly weaker appeal for Non Touring Experiment events



2.3. Rating of Performance/Exhibition By Art Form

Variations by art form: all generally positive
 Music and traditional arts out-perform the rest
 Visual arts display weakest performance



2.4. Rating of Performance/Exhibition By Event

Rating: 'very good'

Highest

- International Kerry Chamber Music Festival: 96%**
- Rough Magic: 92%**
- Cavan Arts Office & Ramor: 90%**
- Ulster Orchestra: 89%**
- No Piobairi Uileann: 88%**

Lowest

- West Cork Artists: 29%**
- Eithne Jordan: 37%**
- Cecily Brennan: 43%**

3. PROMPTS FOR ATTENDING



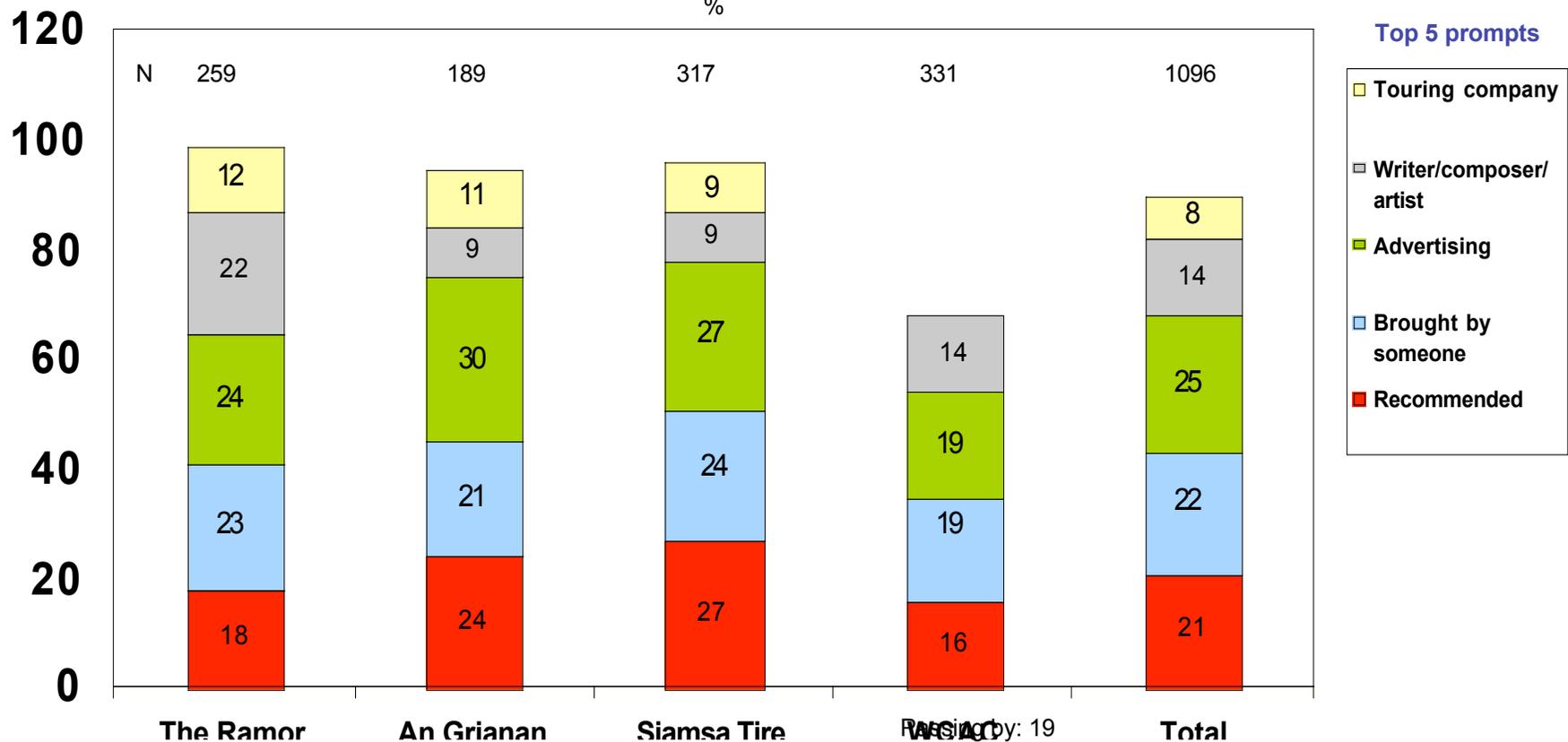
3.1. Prompts to See Performance/Exhibition By Venue

Multi-faceted prompts: personal reasons

Strong reliance on advertising

High incidence of being brought by someone and recommended by someone

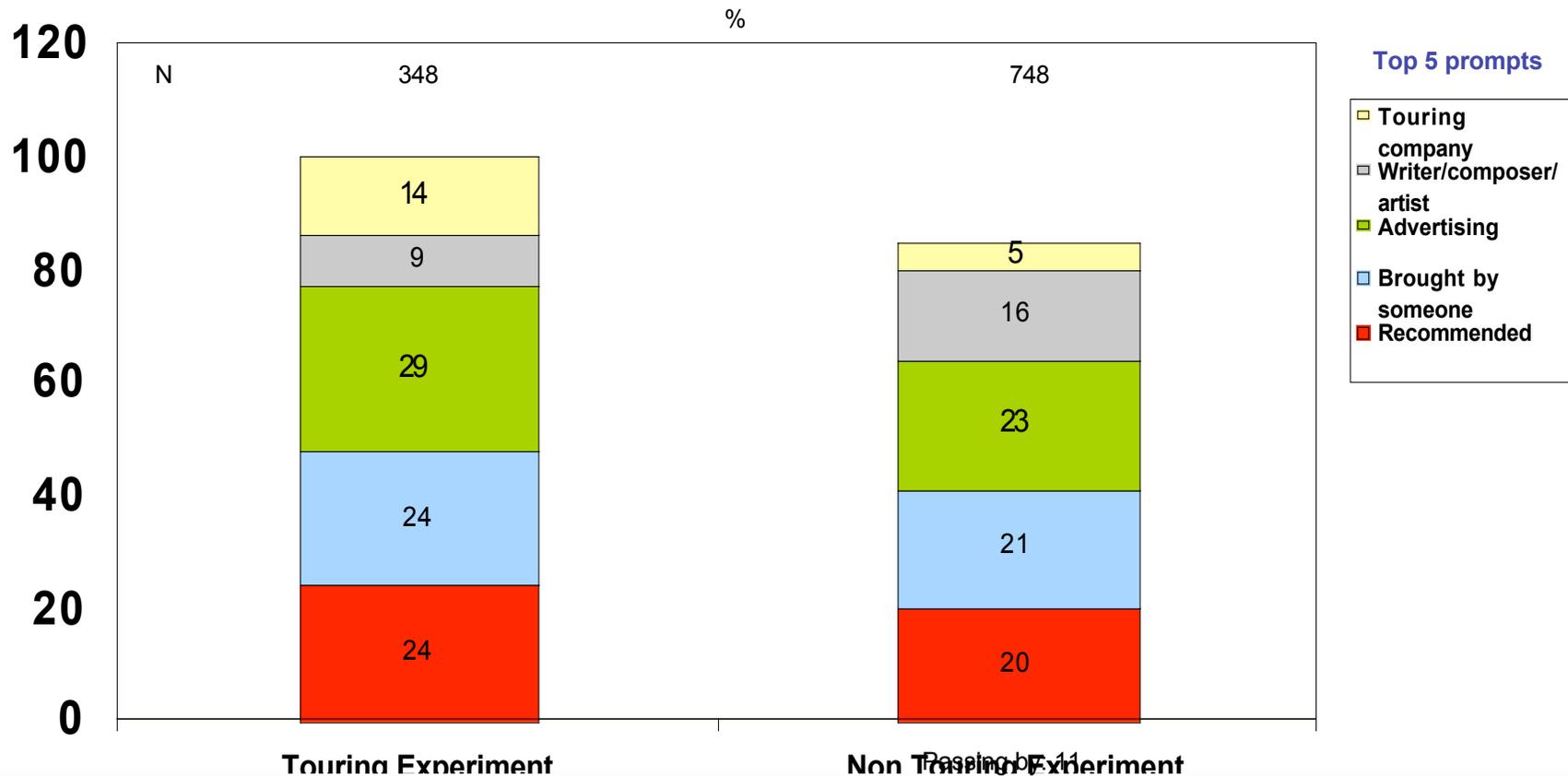
WCAC differs considerably: notable impulse activity



3.2. Prompts to See Performance/Exhibition By Touring Experiment Status

Similar pattern for both

Touring company is a draw for Touring Experiment
 Writer/composer/artist is a bigger draw for Non Touring Experiment



3.3. Prompts to See Performance/Exhibition

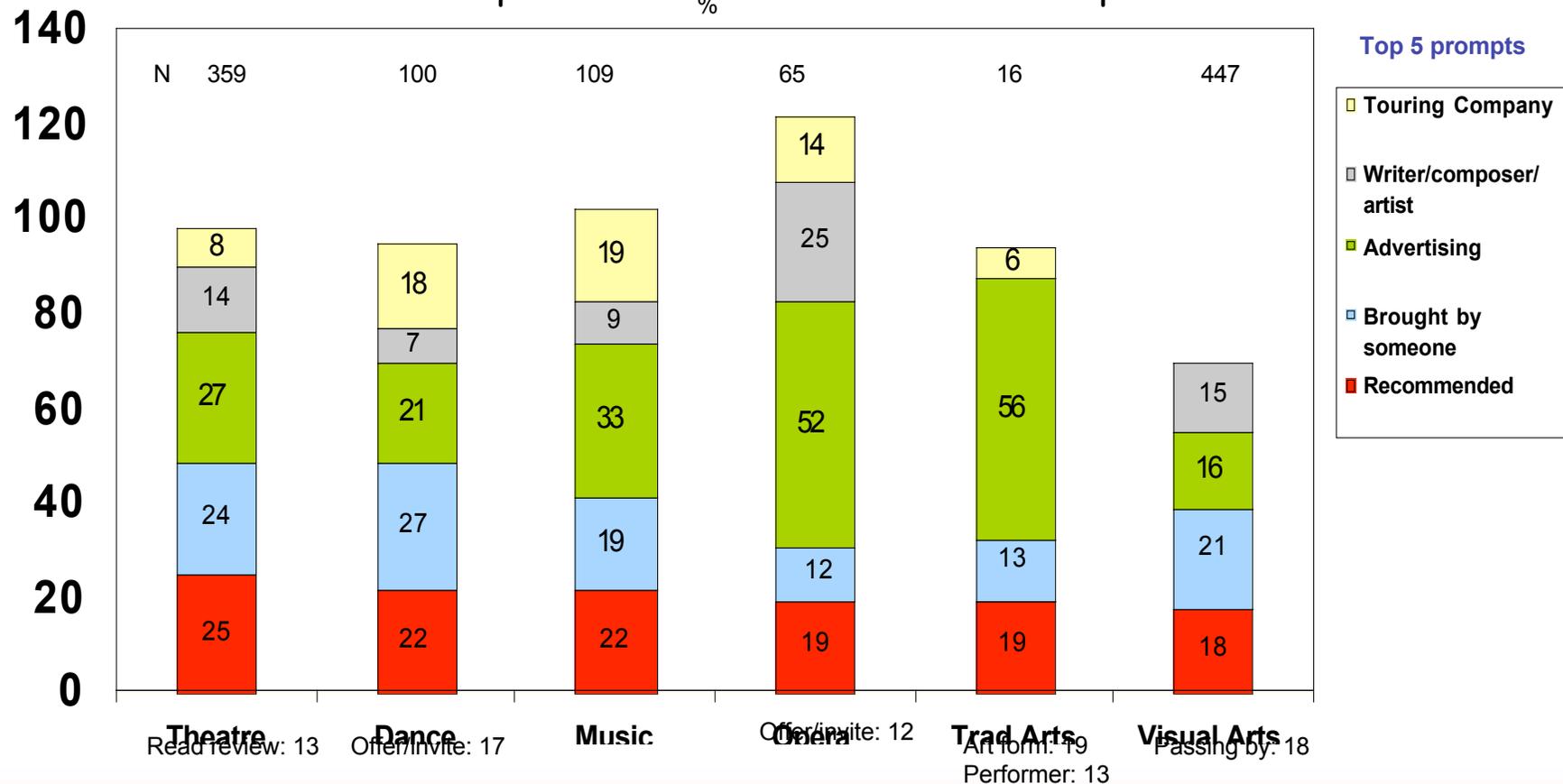
By Art Form Variation across art forms

Advertising plays critical role for traditional arts and opera

Personal referral and brought by someone is more evident for theatre, dance and music

Touring company is greatest for music and dance

Writer/composer/artist is most relevant to opera



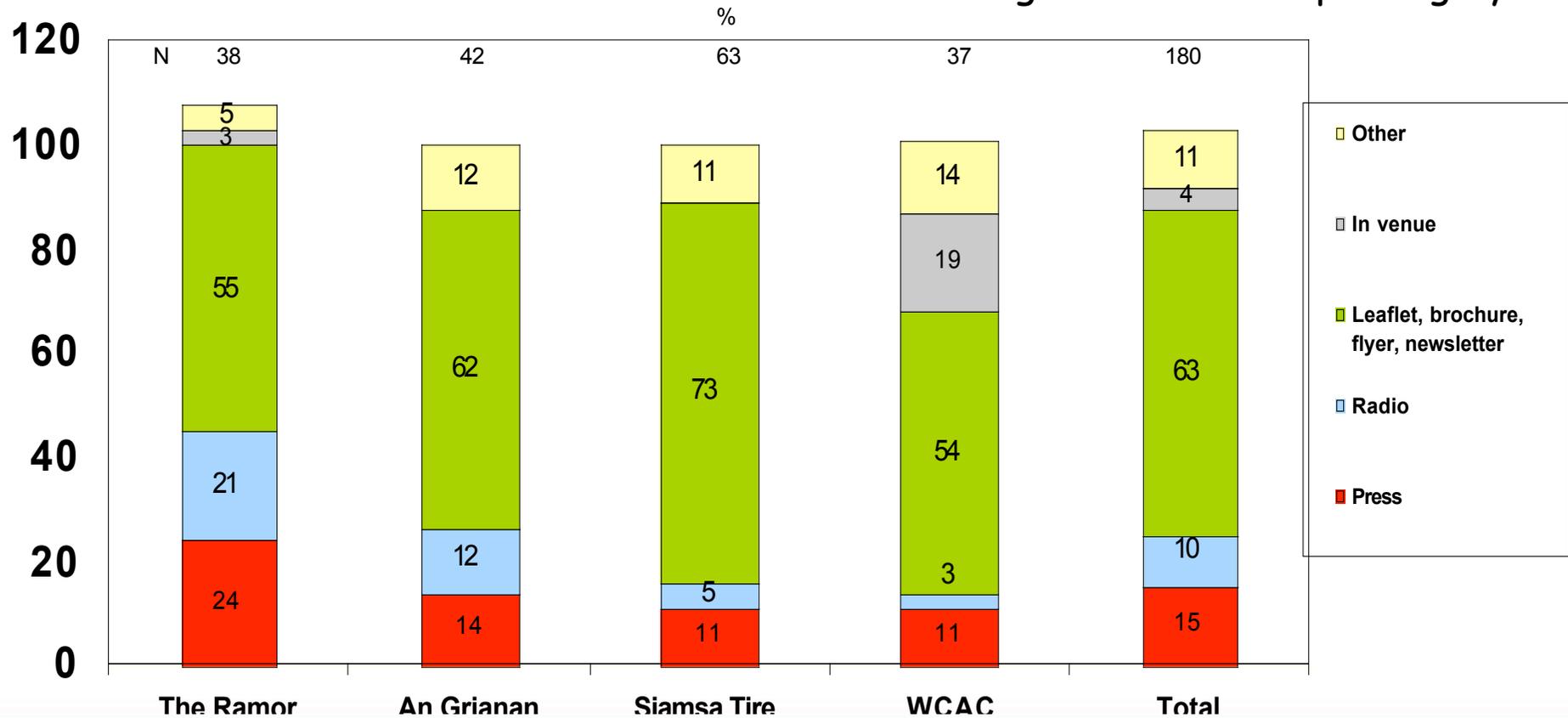
3.4. Recall of Advertising By Venue

Critical role for venue literature: leaflet, brochure, flyer, newsletter

Especially for Siamsa Tire

Followed by press; especially for The Ramor

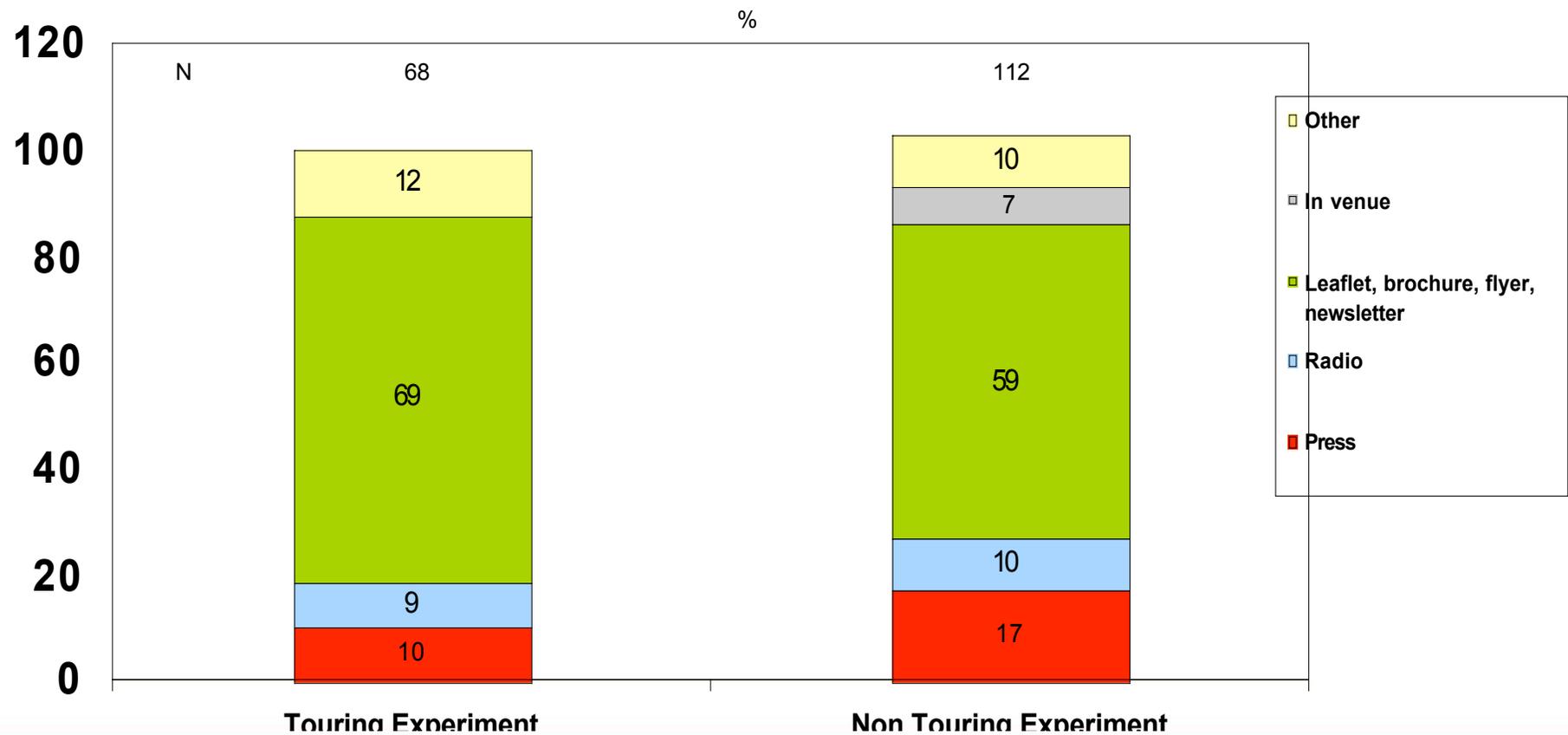
'In venue' more influential in WCAC: reflective of high incidence of passing by



3.5. Recall of Advertising By Touring Experiment Status

Differences between the two

Greater role for venue literature for Touring Experiment
Press and 'in venue' more influential for Non Touring Experiment



3.6. Recall of Advertising By Art Form

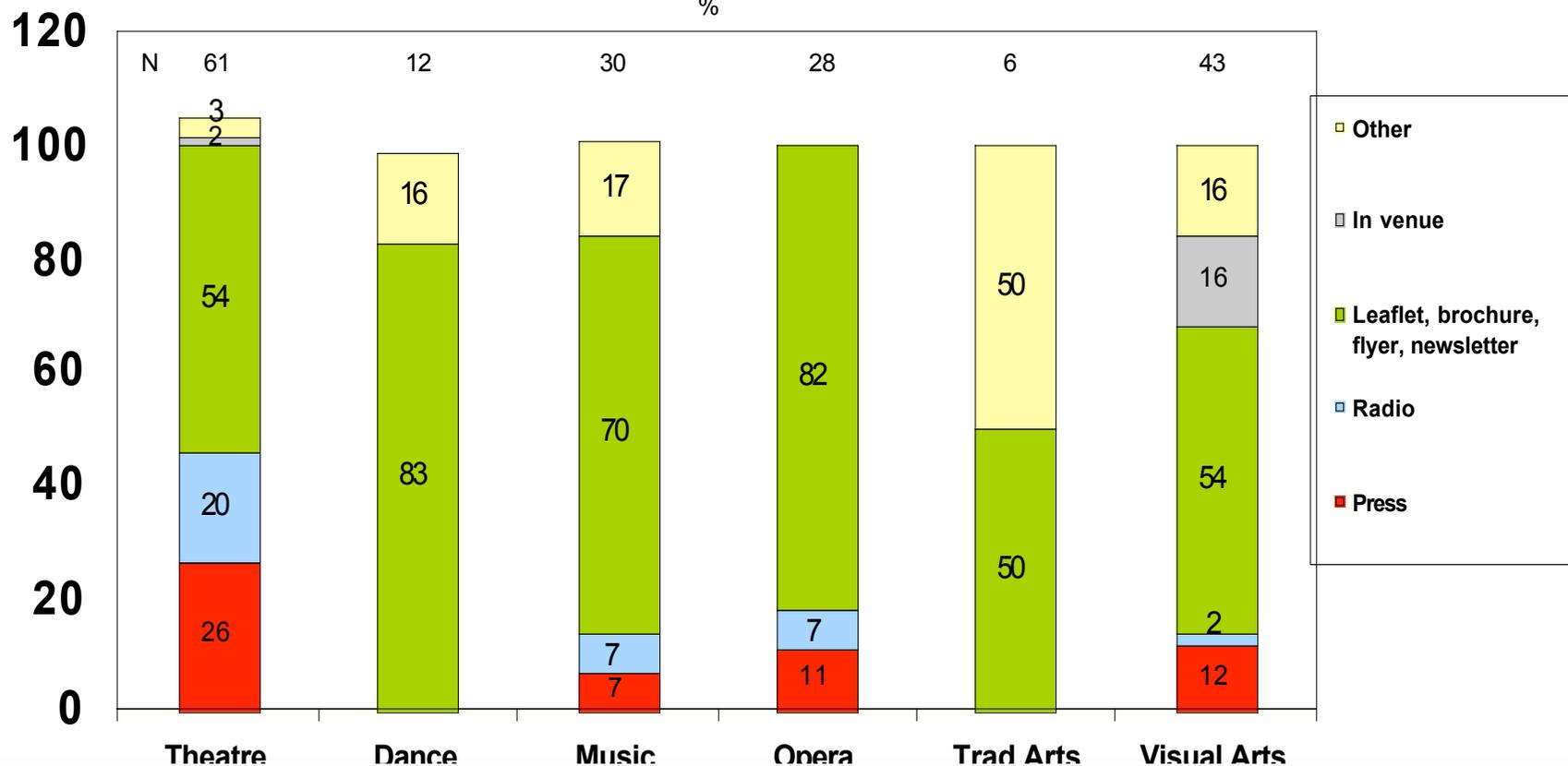
Variation across art forms

Dance, opera and music: strong reliance on venue literature

Highest incidence of personal referral and brought by someone for theatre

Main occurrence of 'in venue' for visual arts

Limited recall for traditional arts



4. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE



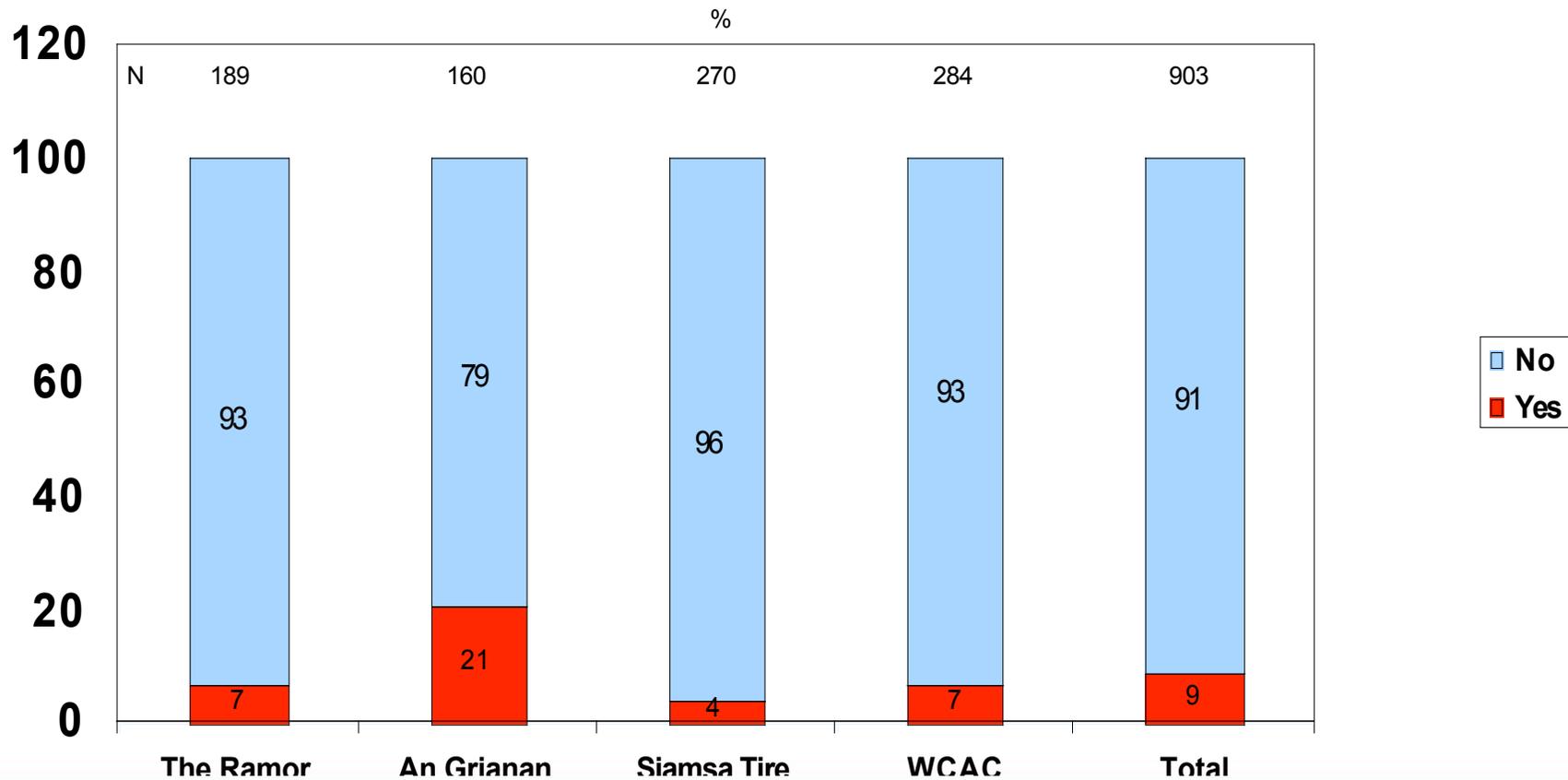
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4.1. Seen Performance/Exhibition Before By Venue

Low occurrence of previous experience of performance/exhibition

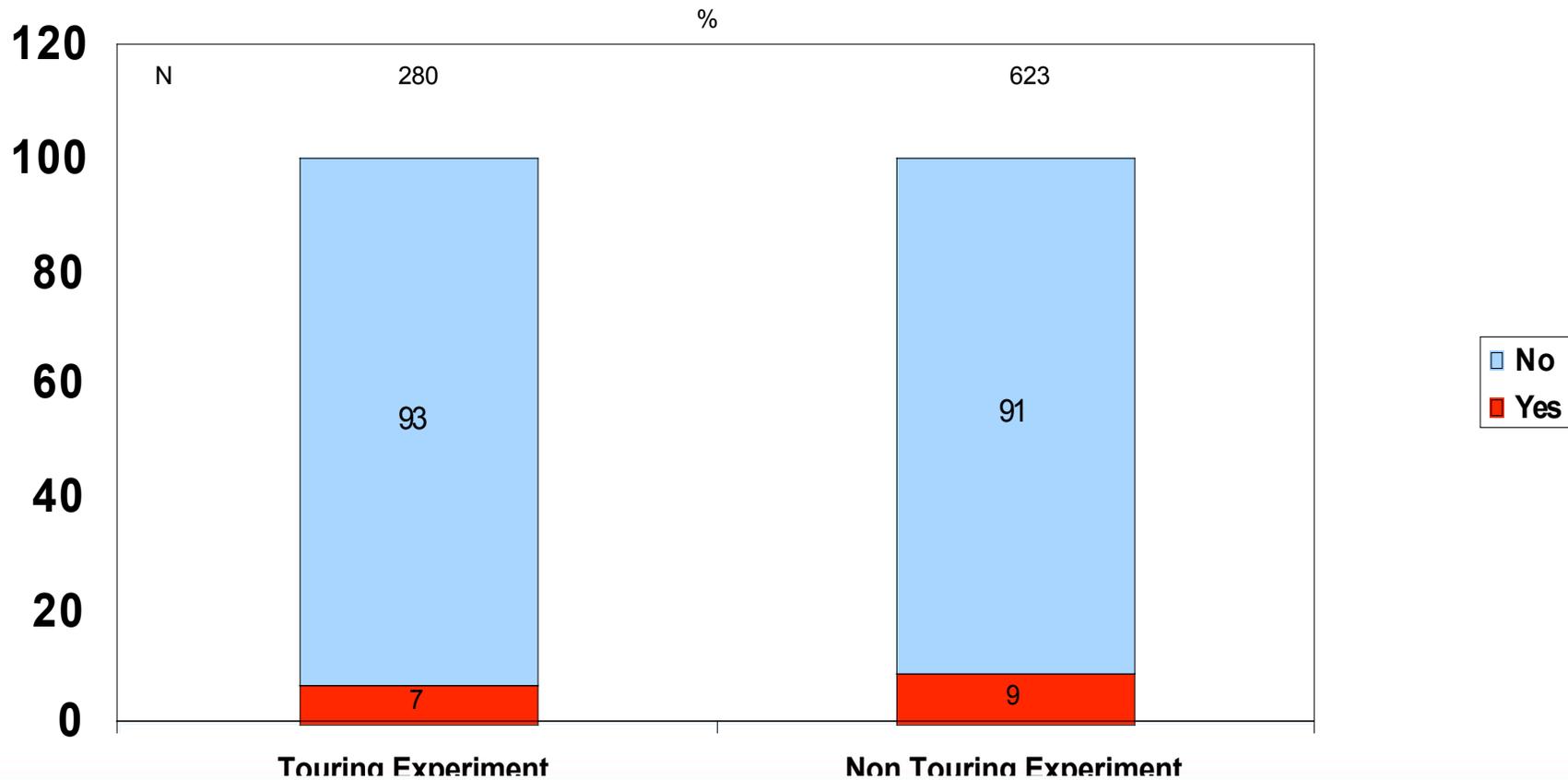
Lowest for Siamsa Tire

Highest incidence for An Grianan



4.2. Seen Performance/Exhibition Before By Touring Experiment Status

Little difference between the two
Limited previous experience of performance/exhibition



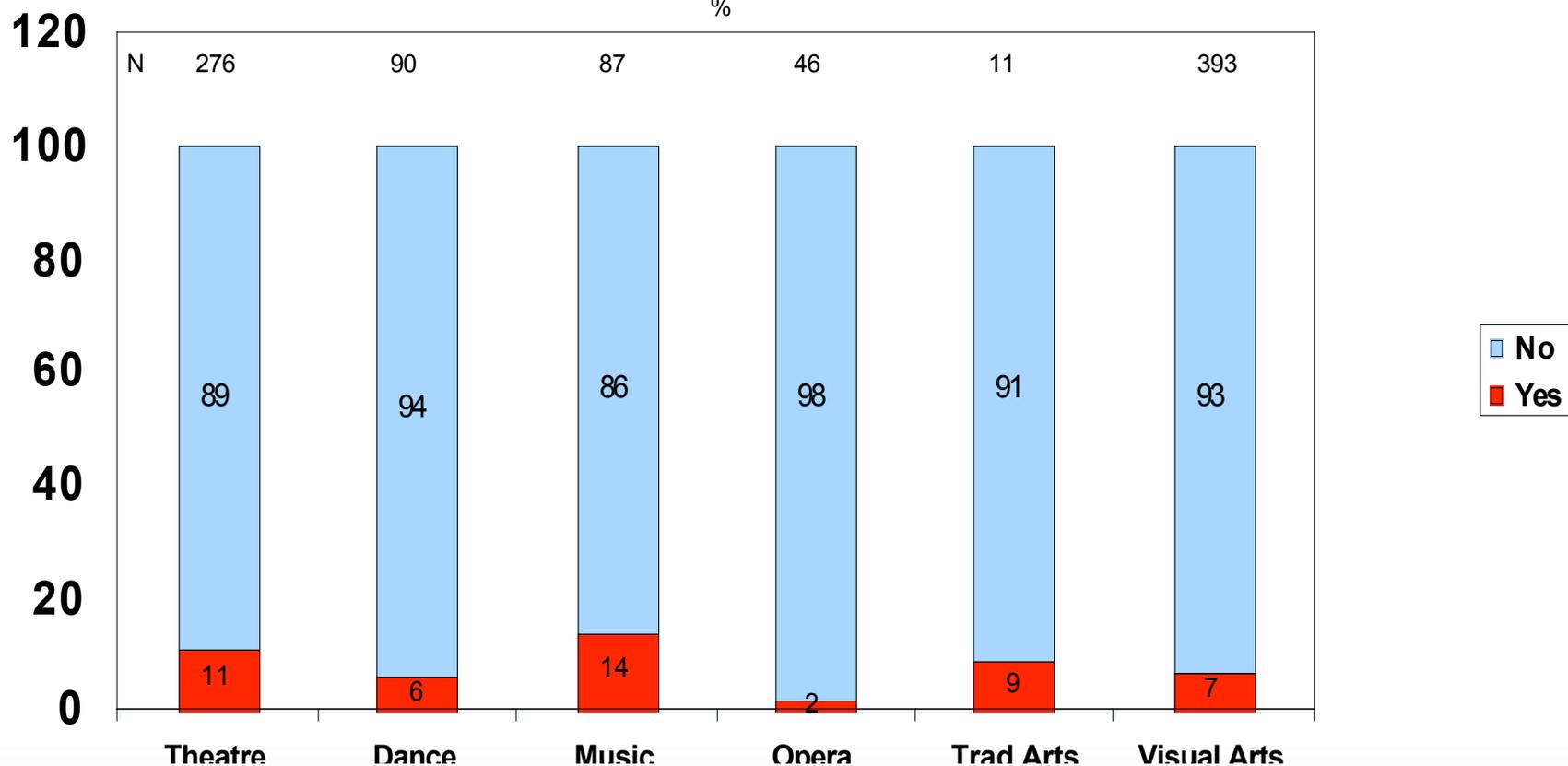
4.3. Seen Performance/Exhibition Before By Art Form

Variation across art forms

Almost no previous experience of opera

Little of dance or visual arts

Greatest for music and theatre, albeit small



4.4. Seen Performance/Exhibition Before By Event

Answer: 'yes'

Highest

- The LPS, Blood Brothers: 34%**
- Ulster Orchestra, Featuring Emma Johnson: 18%**
- NOMAD, Conversations on a Homecoming: 11%**

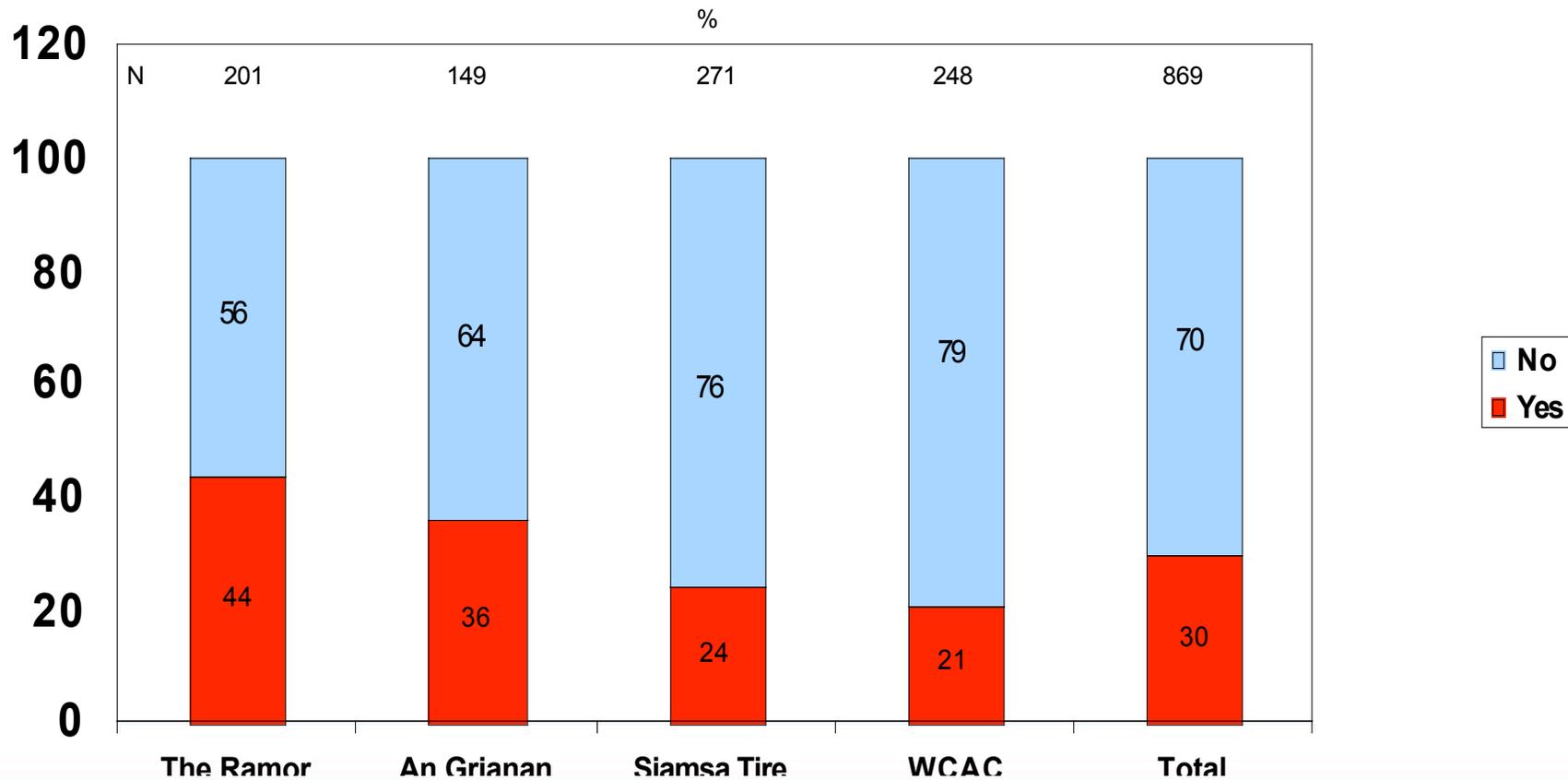
Lowest

- Rough Magic, Improbable Frequency: 1%**
- Eithne Jordan: City: 1%**
- Cavan Arts Office & Ramor, Carnival at Glenaduff: 2%**
- Opera Theatre Company, Orlando: 2%**

4.5. Seen Writer/Composer/Artist's Work Before By Venue

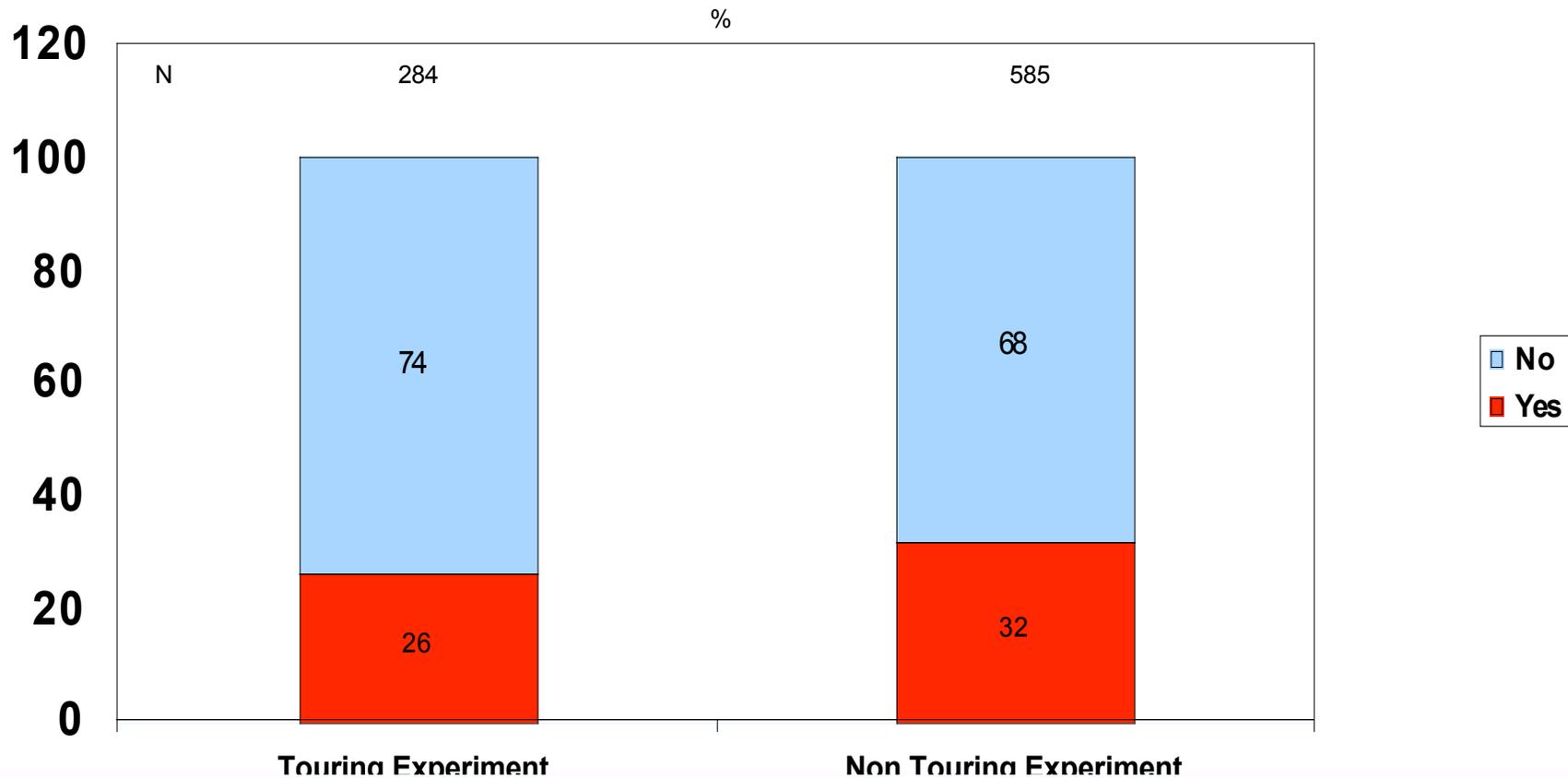
Higher incidence of previous experience of writer/composer/artists
than of performance/exhibition

Highest for Ramor and lowest for WCAC



4.6. Seen Writer/Composer/Artist's Work Before By Touring Experiment Status

Greater occurrence for Non Touring Experiment

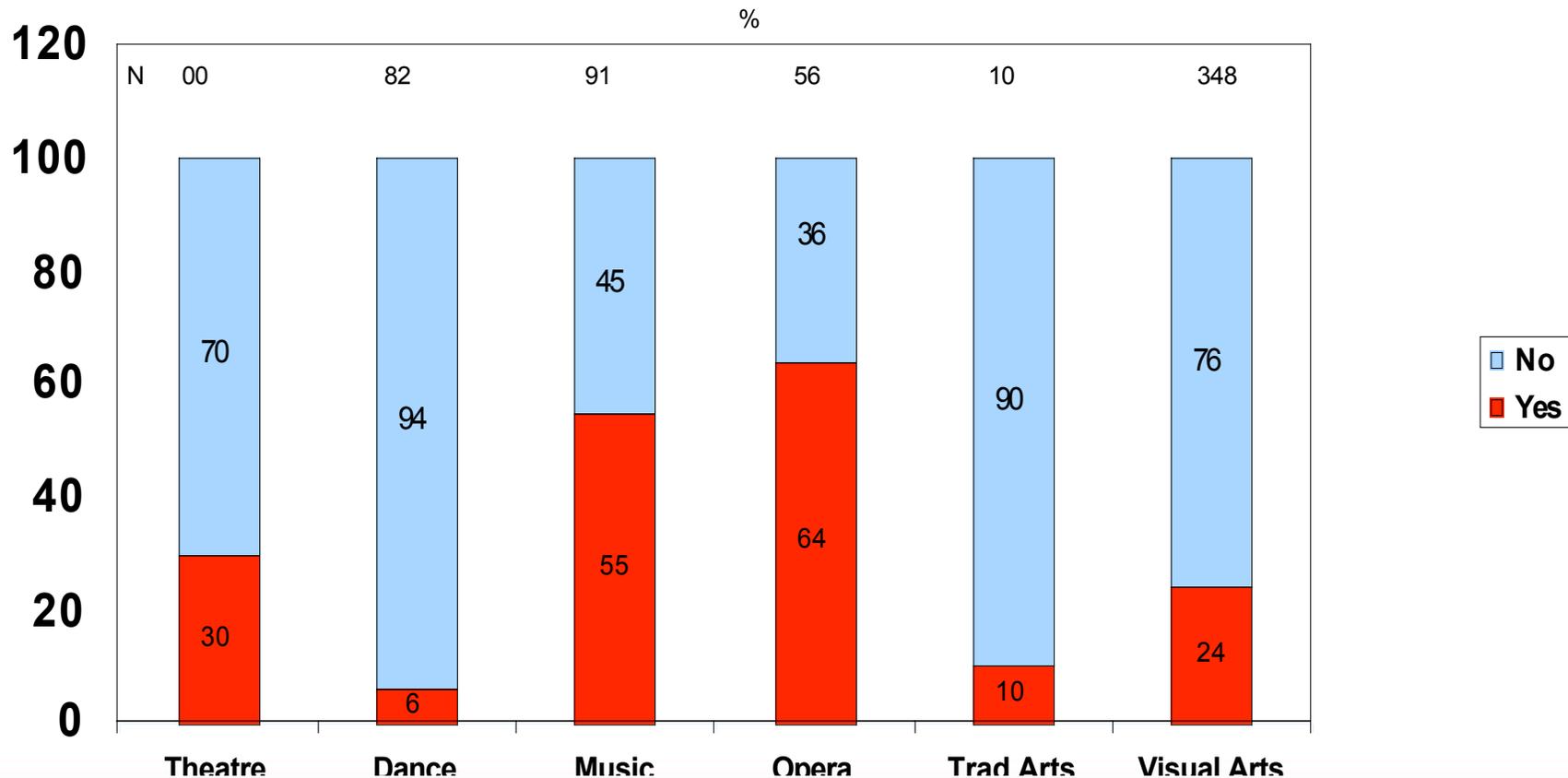


4.7. Seen Writer/Composer/Artist's Work Before By Art Form

Variation across art forms

Most familiar with opera and music

Least previous experience of dance and traditional arts



4.8. Seen Writer/Composer/Artist's Work Before By Event

Answer: 'yes'

Highest

- Opera Theatre Company**, Orlando: 63%
- Ulster Orchestra**, Featuring Emma Johnson: 62%
- NOMAD**, Conversations on a Homecoming: 54%

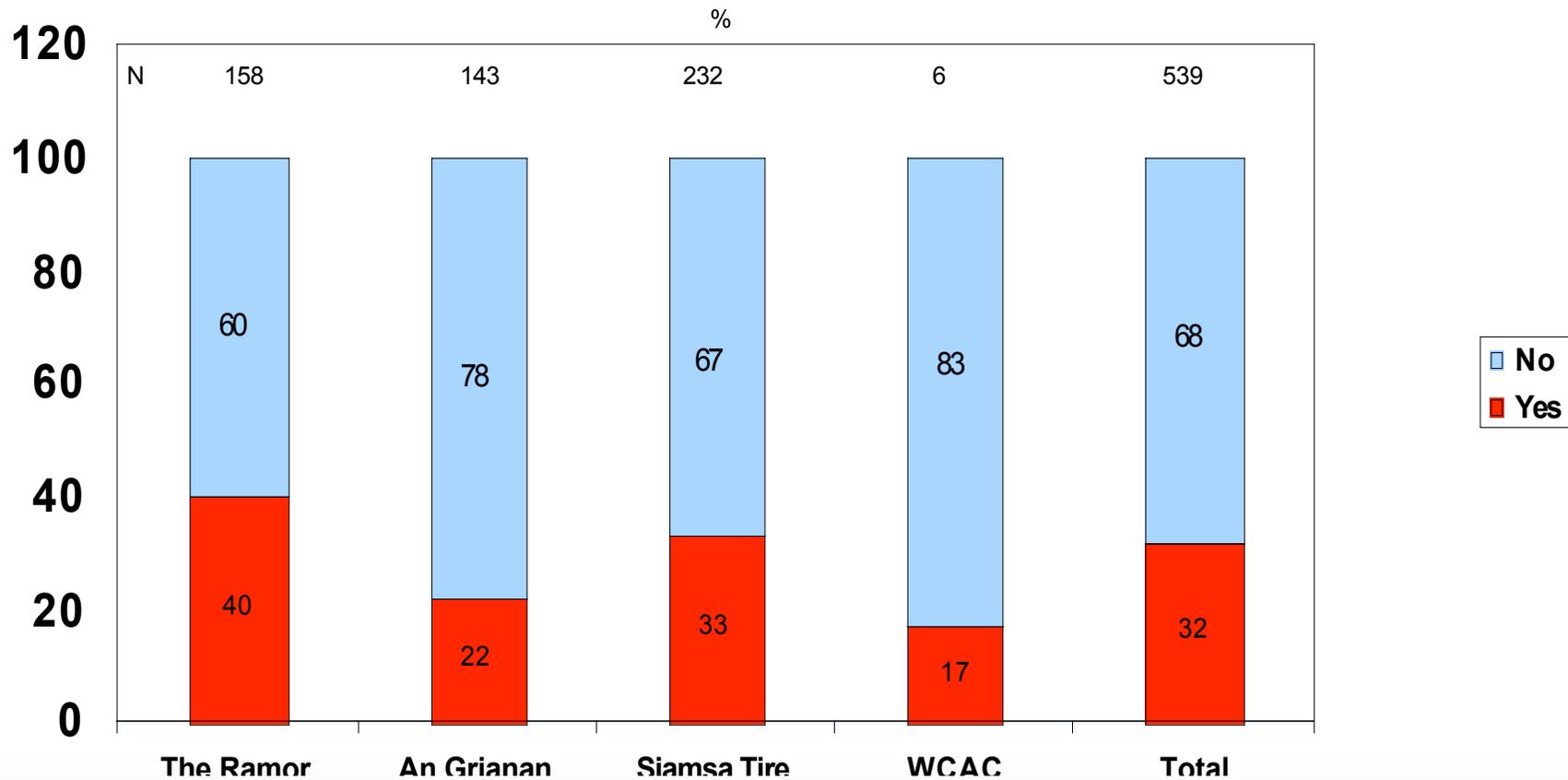
Lowest

- Echo Echo Dance Company**, Consequences: 0%
- Rough Magic**, Improbable Frequency: 1%
- Rionach Ni Neill**, How did we get here?: 6%
- Arno Kramer**, Everywhere is here: 6%

4.9. Seen Touring Company Before By Venue

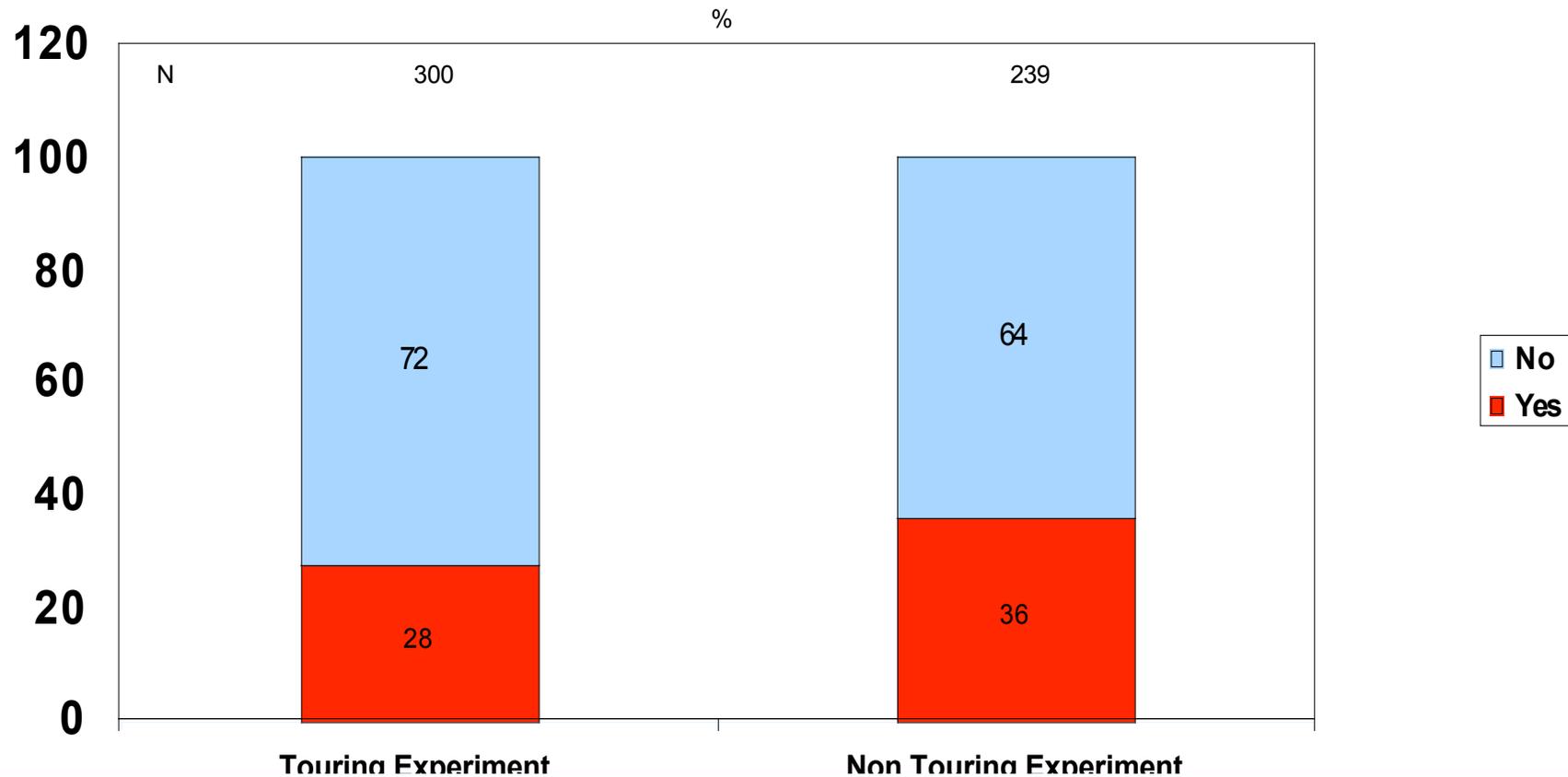
Variations across venues

Greatest occurrence of having seen touring company before in Ramor
Lowest relevance and occurrence in WCAC



4.10. Seen Touring Company Before By Touring Experiment Status

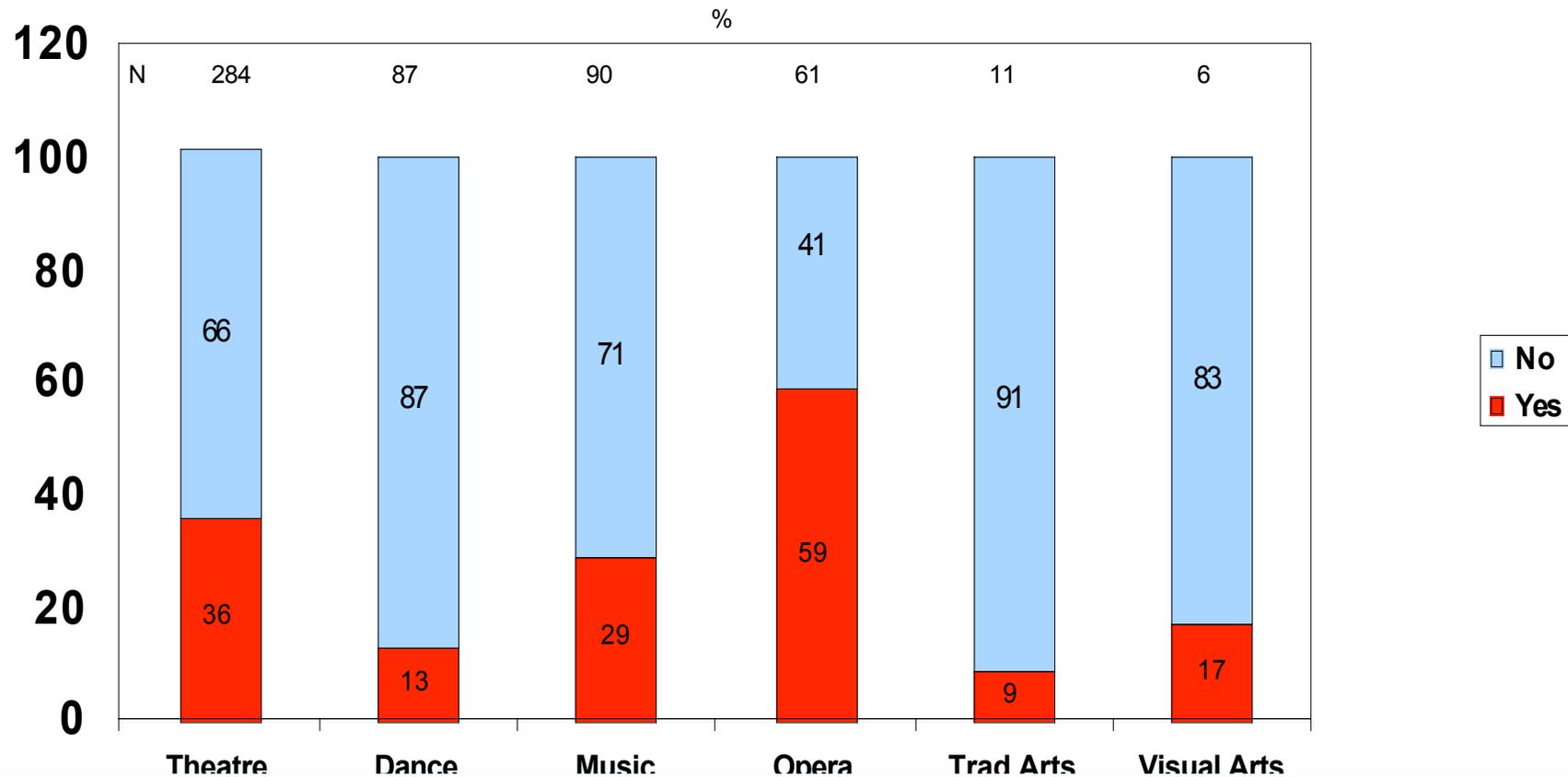
Greater experience of touring company for Non Touring Experiment
Perhaps attributable to localized productions



4.11. Seen Touring Company Before By Art Form

Variations across art forms

Most familiar with opera touring company
Least familiar with traditional arts and dance



4.12. Seen Touring Company Before By Event

Answer: 'yes'

Highest

- NOMAD: 59%**
- Opera Theatre Company: 59%**
- Ballet Wales: 31%**

Lowest

- West Cork Artists: 0%**
- Echo Echo Dance Company: 0%**
- Rionach Ni Neill: 6%**

5. SUPPORTING INFORMATION



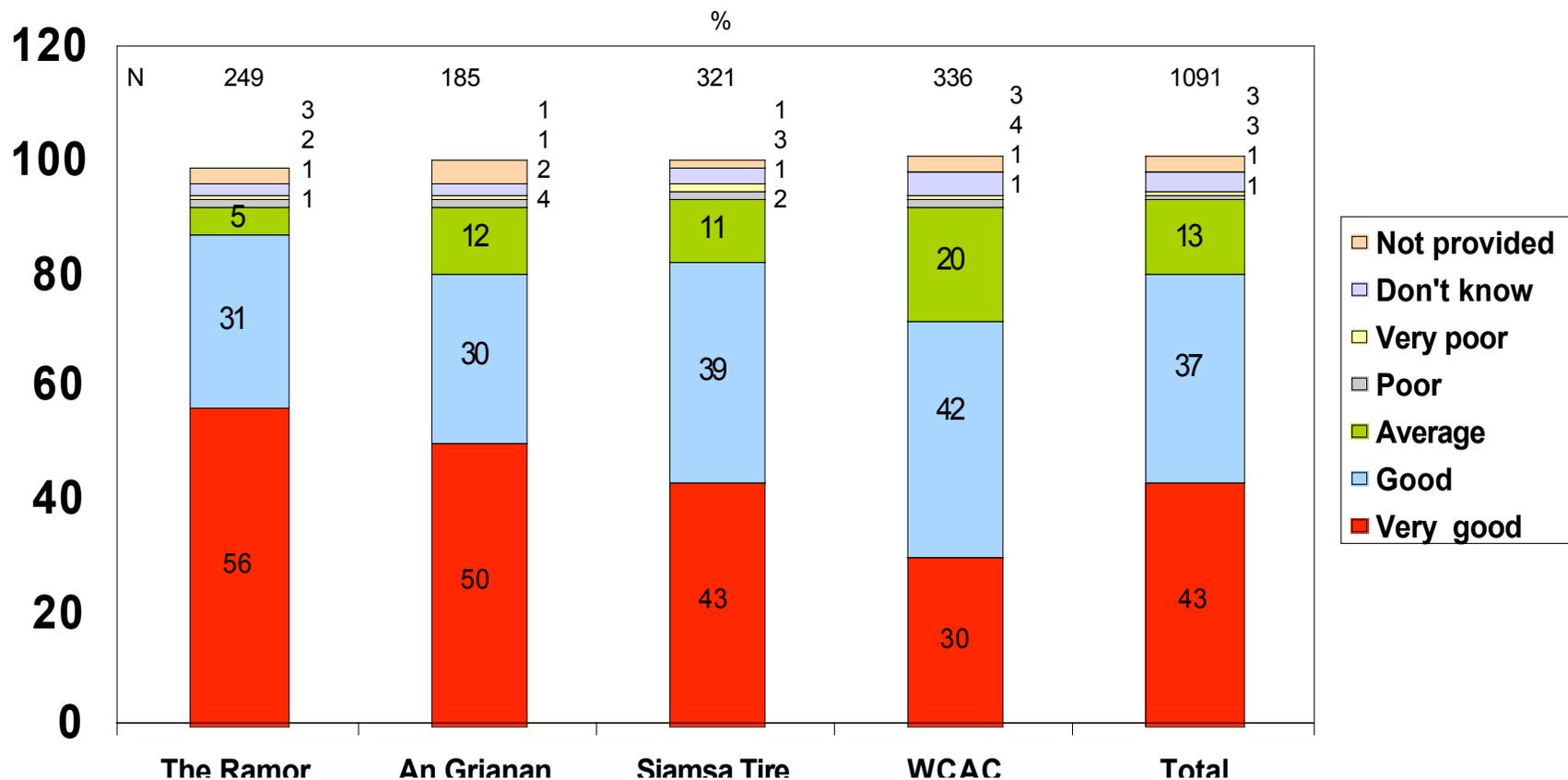
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5.1. Rating of Supporting Information By Venue

Mixed opinions on supporting information

Most positive for Ramor and An Grianan

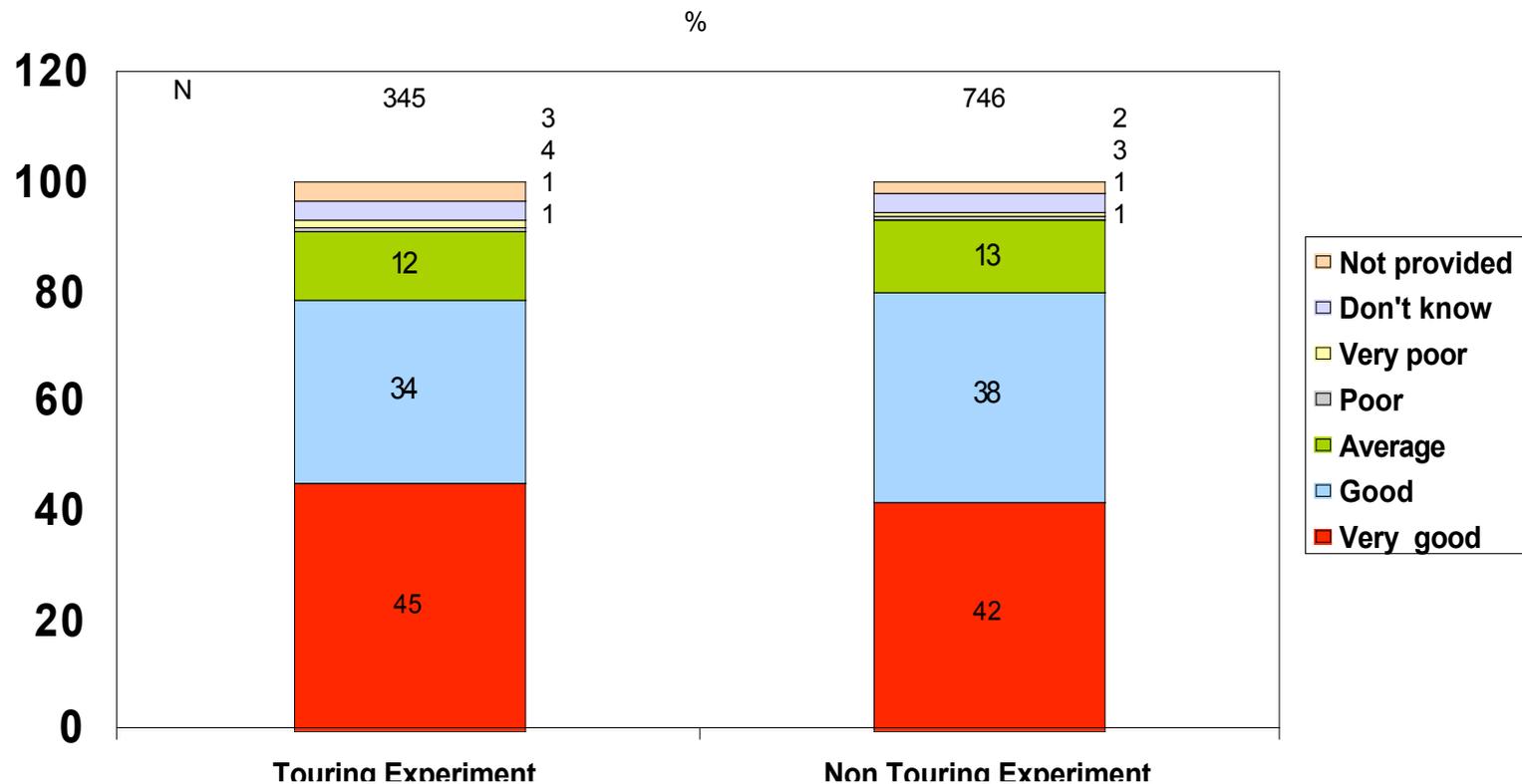
Least positive for WCAC



5.2. Rating of Supporting Information By Touring Experiment Status

Similar findings for both

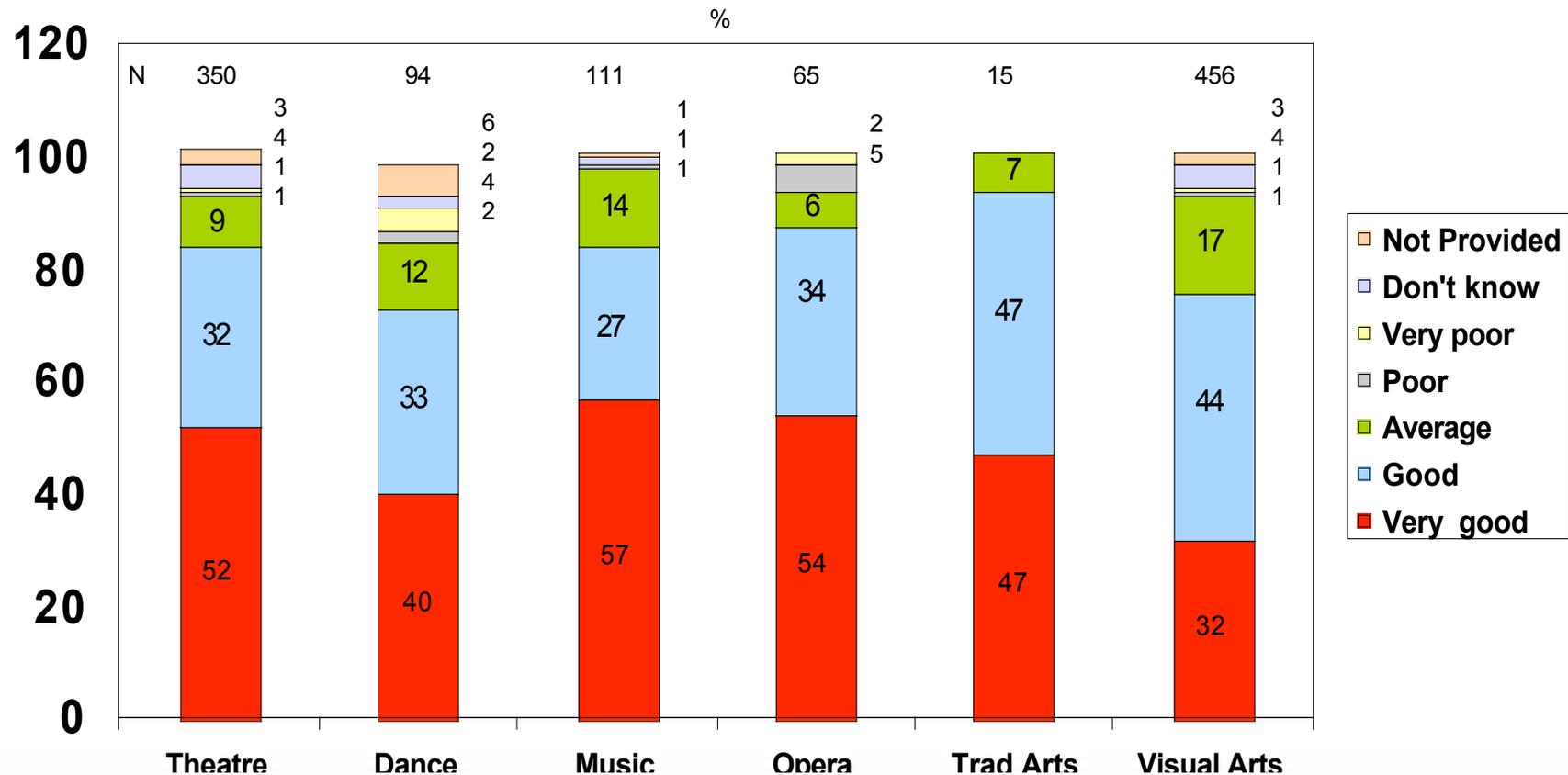
Differences are venue specific rather than by touring experiment status



5.3. Rating of Supporting Information By Art Form

Variations by art form

Most commendable information supply for music, opera and theatre
Least commendable for visual arts



5.4. Rating of Supporting Information By Event

Answer: 'very good'

Highest

- Cavan Arts Office & Ramor: 72%**
- Ballet Wales: 68%**
- Ulster Orchestra: 64%**

Lowest

- Upstate Theatre Company: 20%**
- Rionach Ni Neill: 24%**
- Cecily Brennan: 25%**

6. ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY



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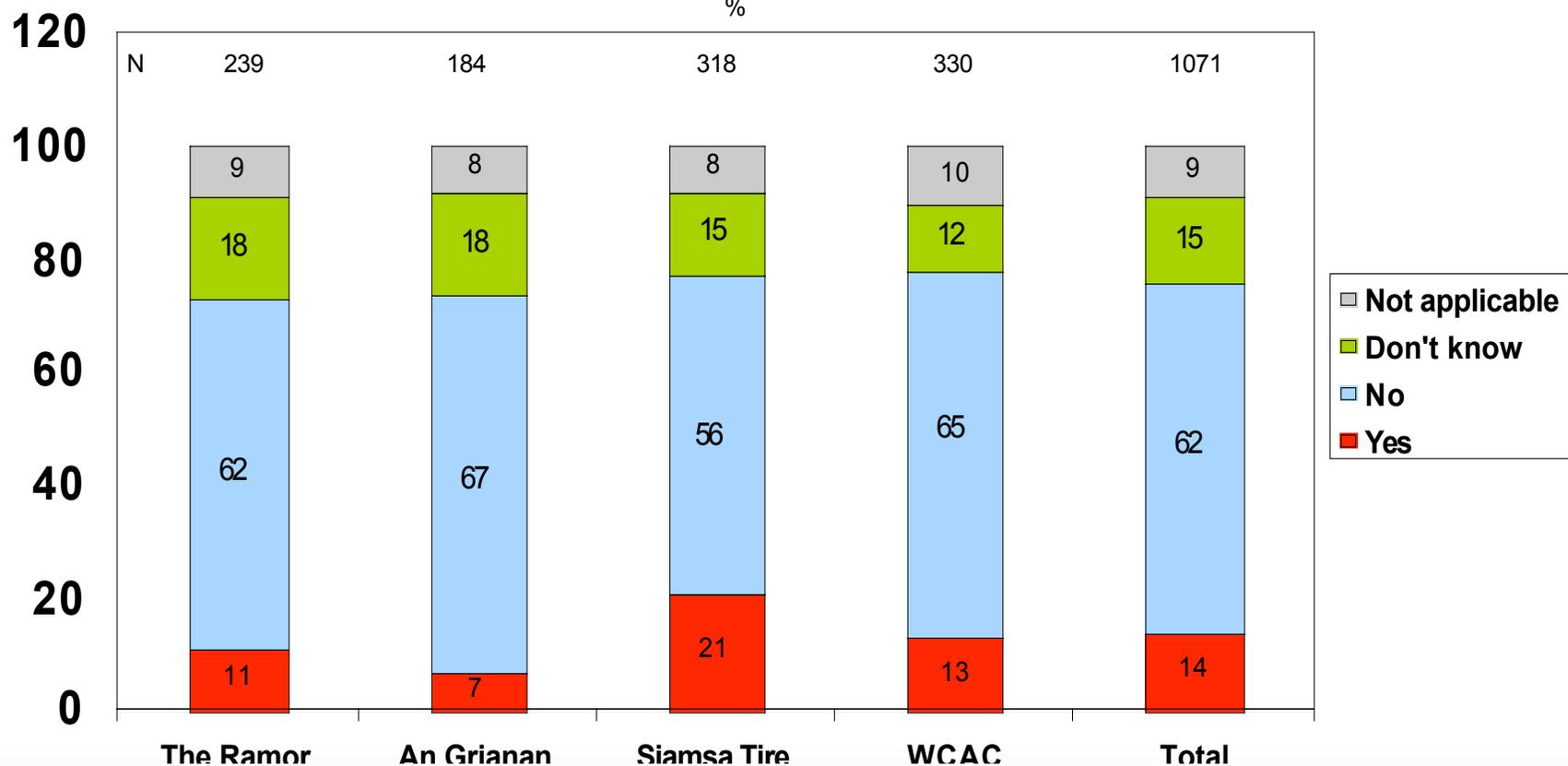
6.1. Attendance at Activity Connected to Performance/Exhibition By Venue

Limited attendance at/interest in connected activity

Siamsa Tire stands out with greatest attendance and/or interest

An Grianan displays least attendance and/or interest

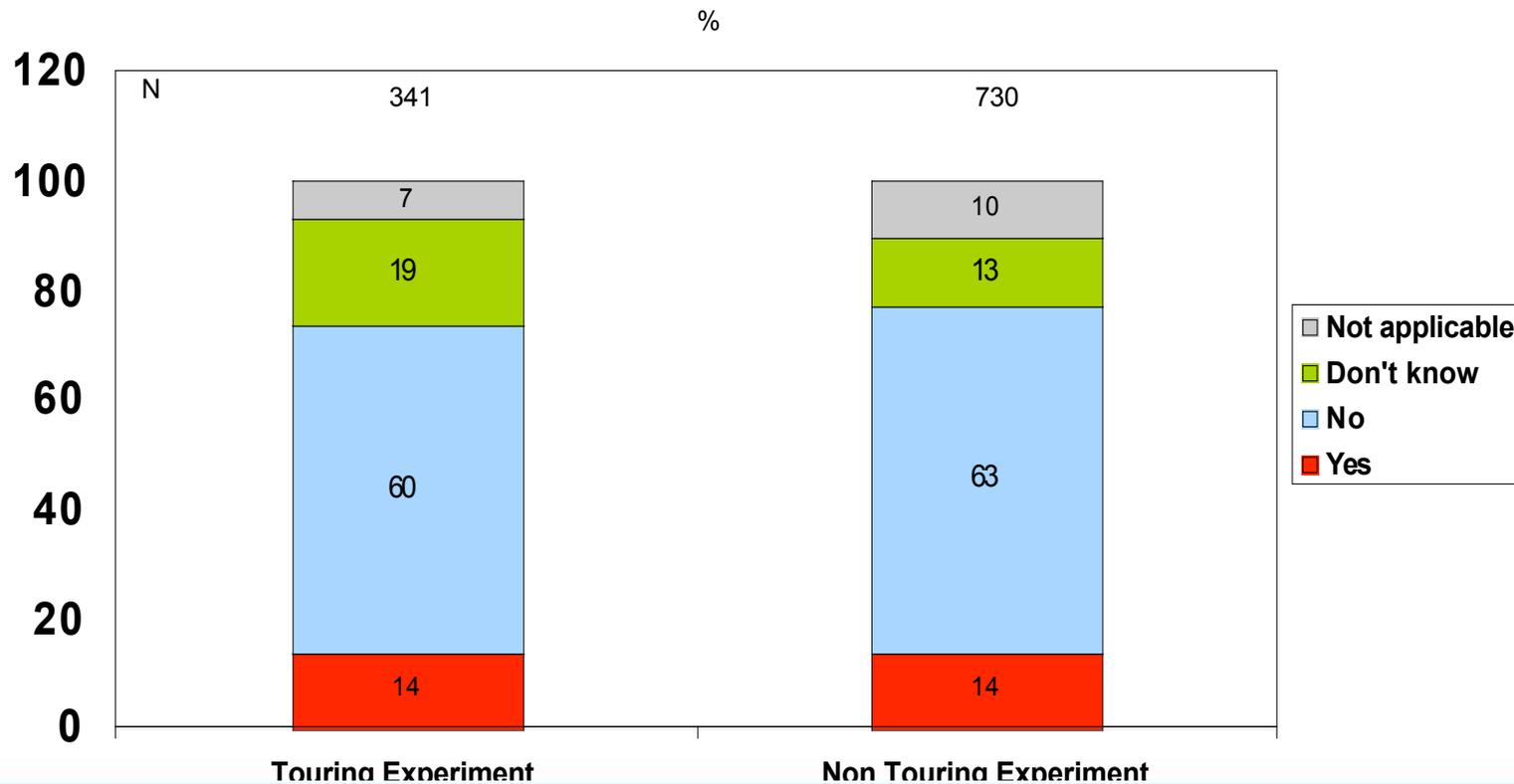
Notable level of ignorance of activity



6.2. Attendance at Activity Connected to Performance/Exhibition By Touring Experiment Status

Little difference between the two

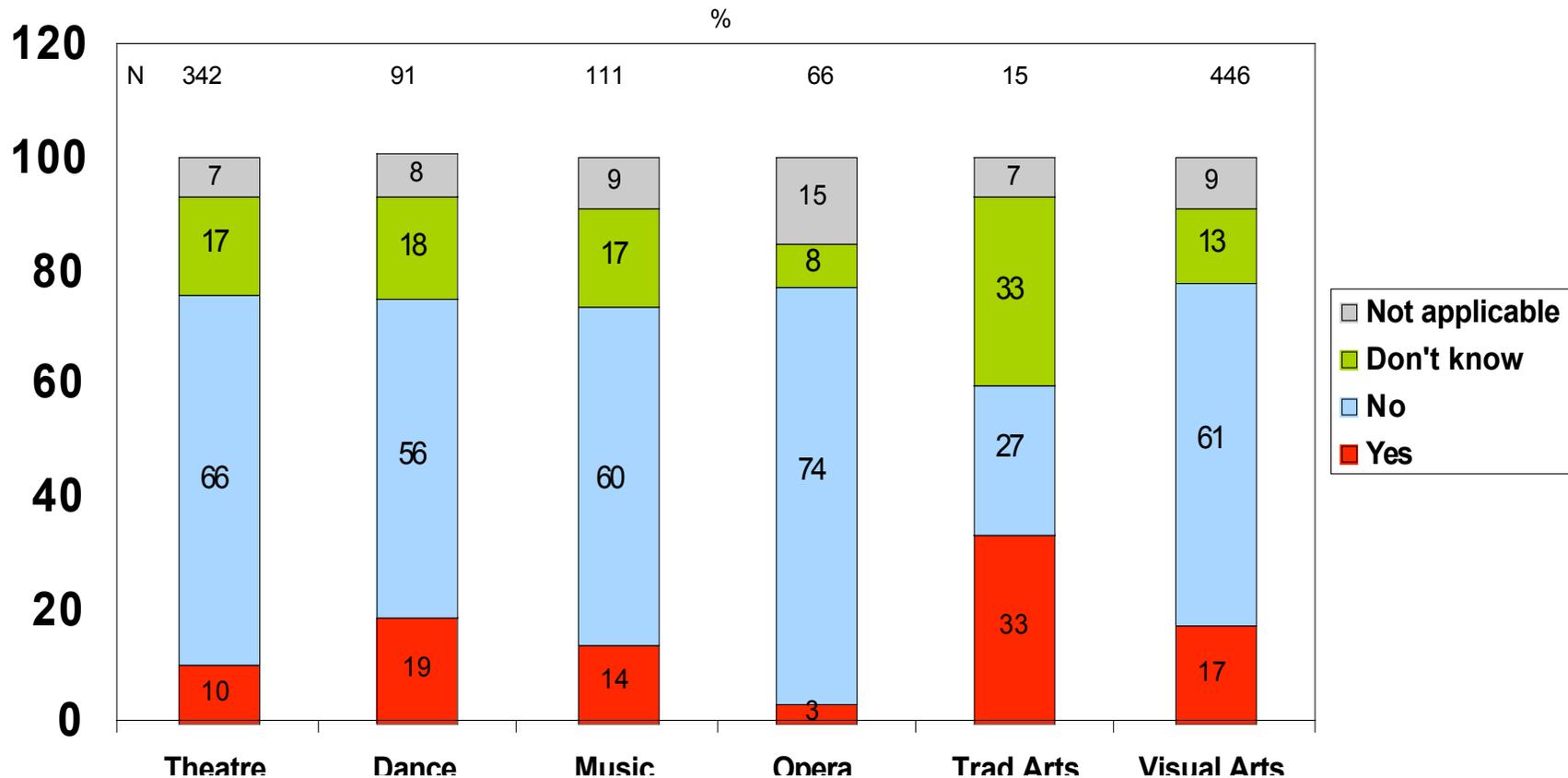
Low attendance regardless of Touring Experiment status



6.3. Attendance at Activity Connected to Performance/Exhibition By Art Form

Variation by art form

Traditional arts exceeds all others
Opera is considerably lower than all the rest



6.4. Attendance at Activity Connected to Performance/Exhibition By Event

Answer: 'yes'

Highest

- Artists of Kerry: 38%**
- Na Piobairi Uileann: 33%**
- International Kerry Chamber Music Festival: 31%**
- Echo Echo Dance Company: 31%**

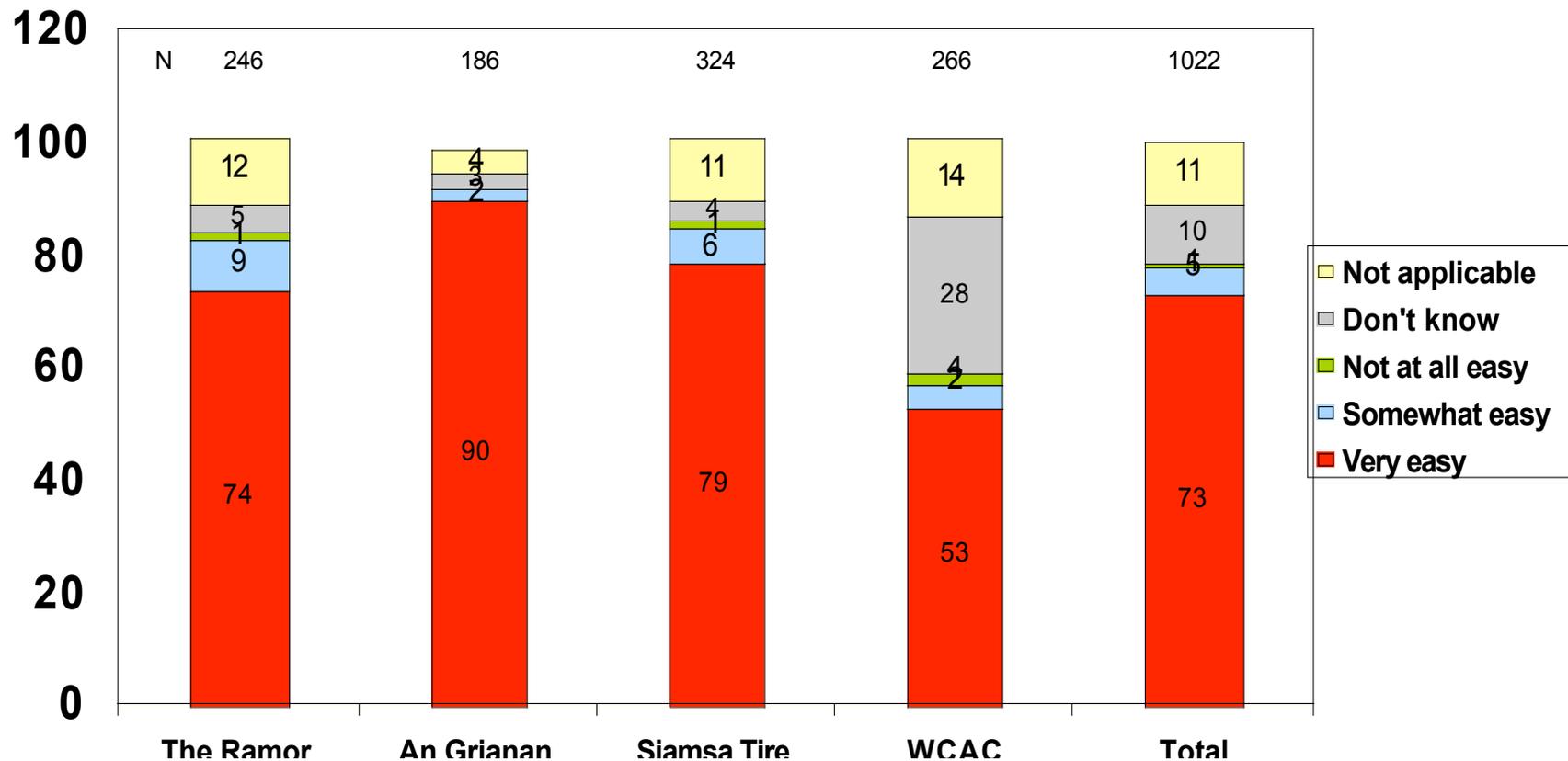
Lowest

- Ulster Orchestra: 2%**
- The LPS: 3%**
- Opera Theatre Company: 3%**

7. BOOKING OF PERFORMANCE/EXHIBITION

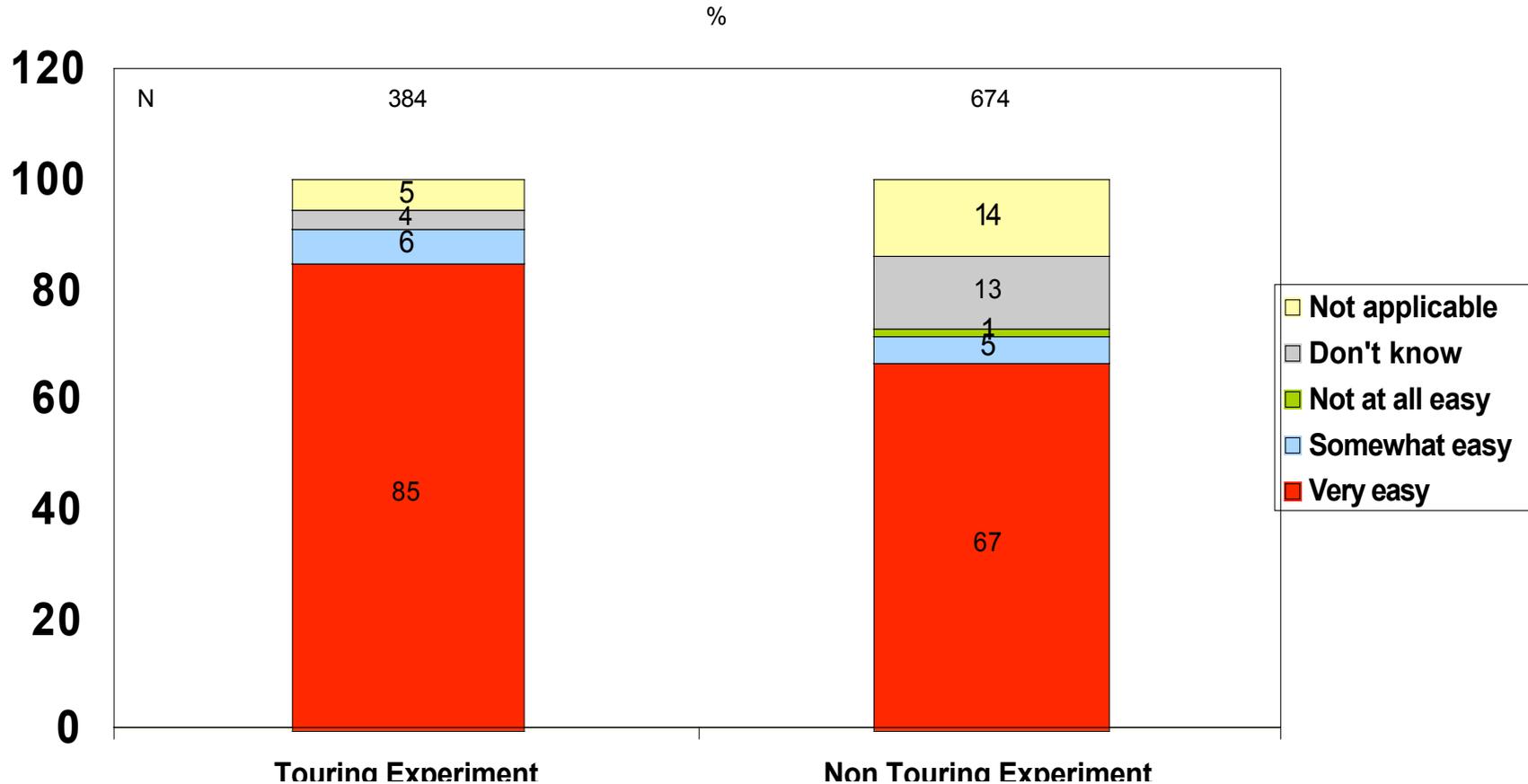
7.1. Booking of Performance/Exhibition By Venue

Very easy to book
Especially in An Grianan
Not necessarily in WCAC



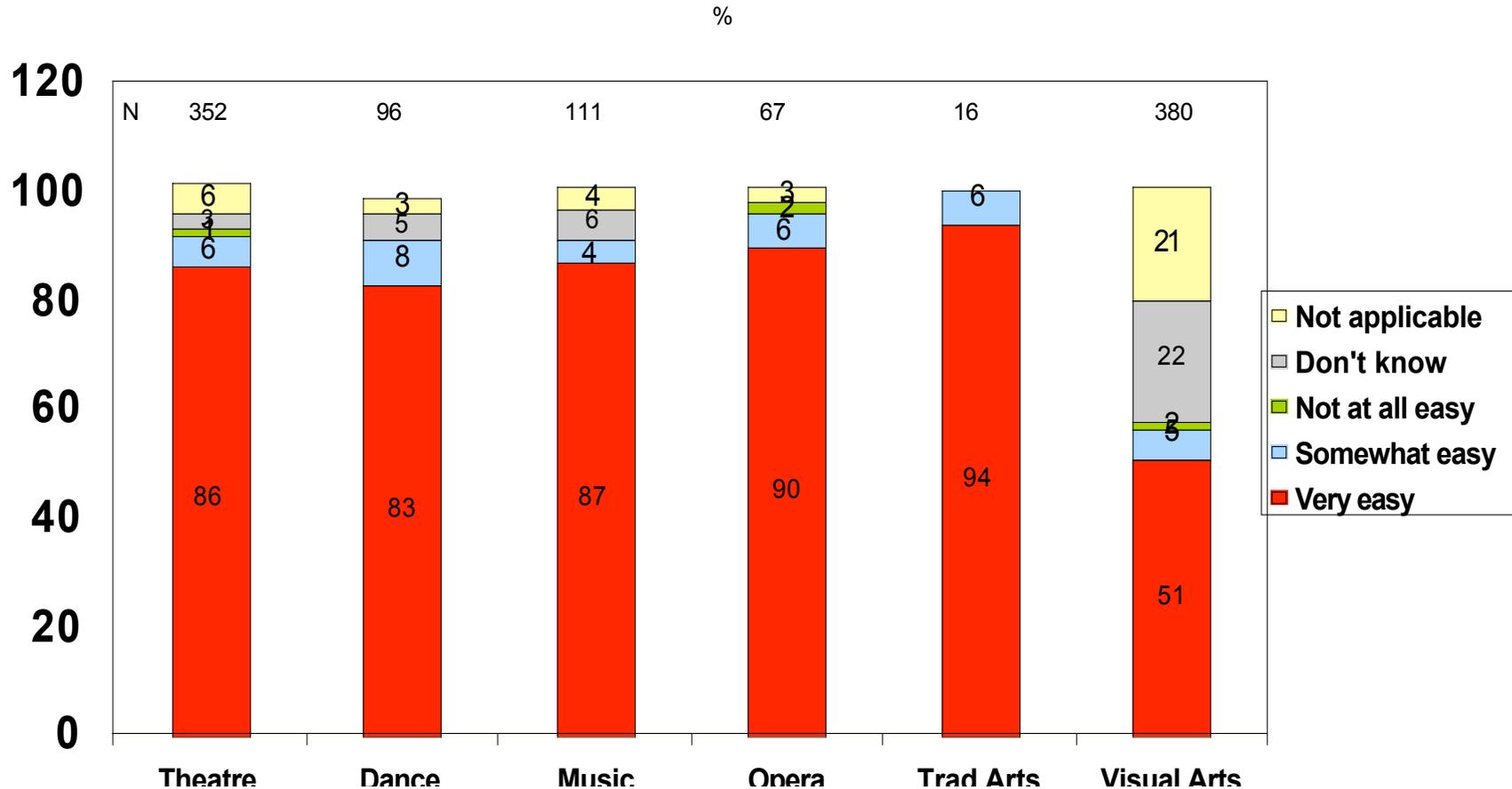
7.2. Booking of Performance/Exhibition By Touring Experiment Status

Easier to book for Touring Experiment
Non touring experiment affected by visual arts



7.3. Booking of Performance/Exhibition By Art Form

All relatively easy
Least applicable to visual arts



7.4. Booking of Performance/Exhibition By Event

Answer: 'very easy'

Easiest to book

- Na Piobairi Uilleann: 94%**
- The LPS and Ulster Orchestra: 91%**
- Cavan Arts Office & Ramor: 90%**

Most difficult to book

- Jim McPartlin and Arno Kramer and Cecily Brennan: 42%**
- Artists of Kerry: 50%**

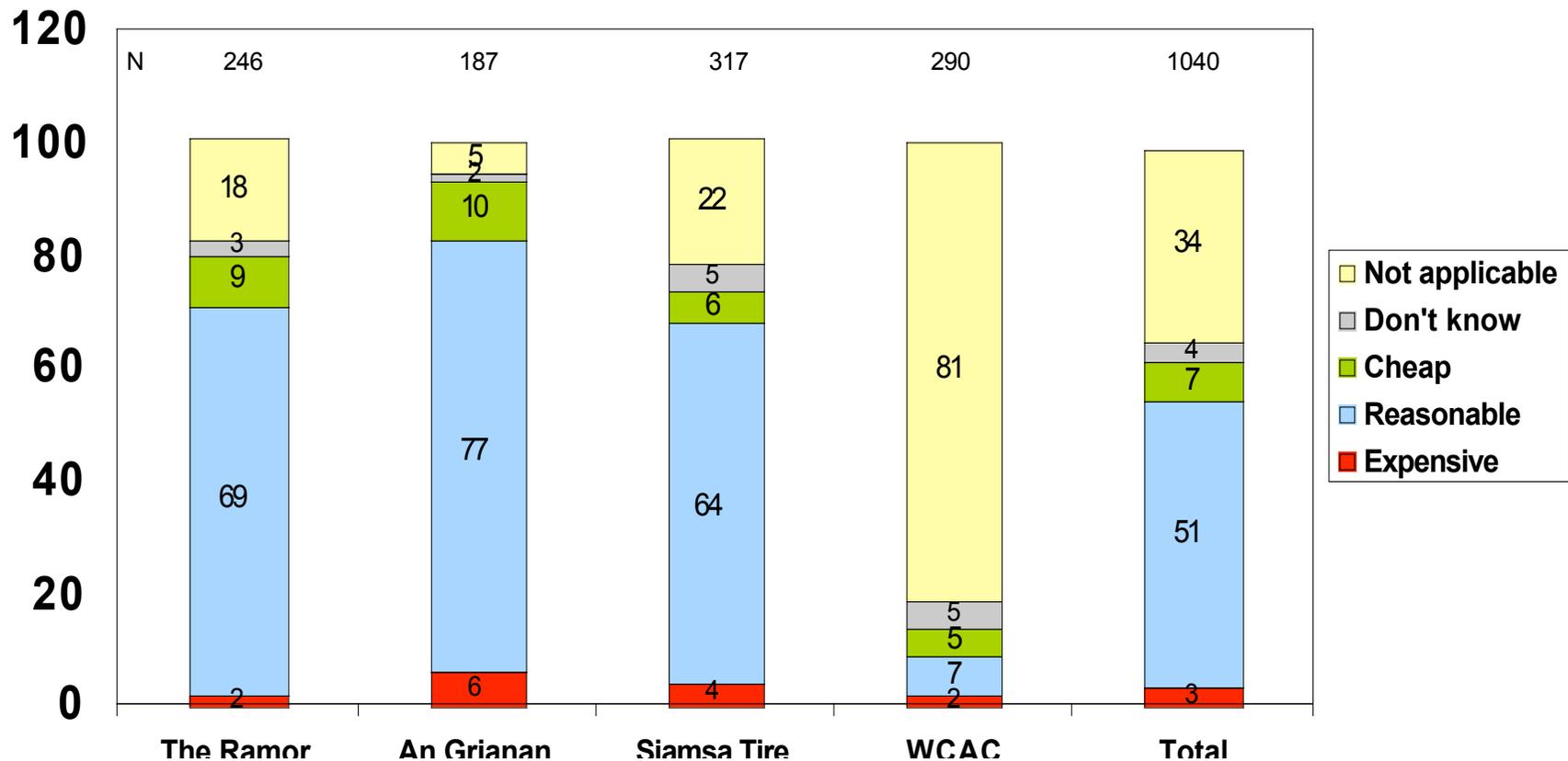
8. PRICE OF TICKET



8.1. Price of Ticket By Venue

Generally reasonable

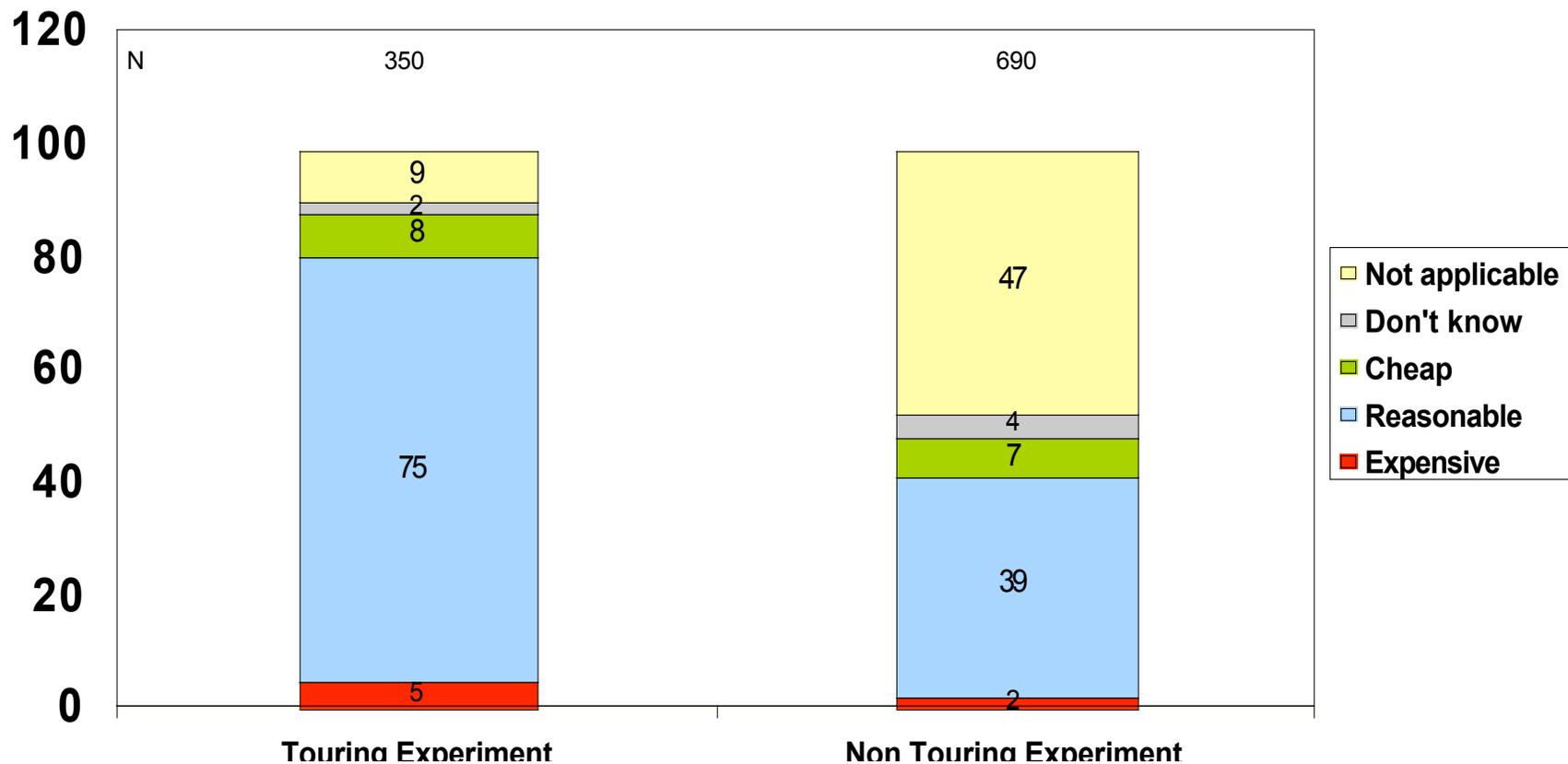
Minimal reference to tickets being 'expensive': price is not a deterrent
Most applicable to An Grianan; least applicable to WCAC



8.2. Price of Ticket By Touring Experiment Status

Similar rating of price for both

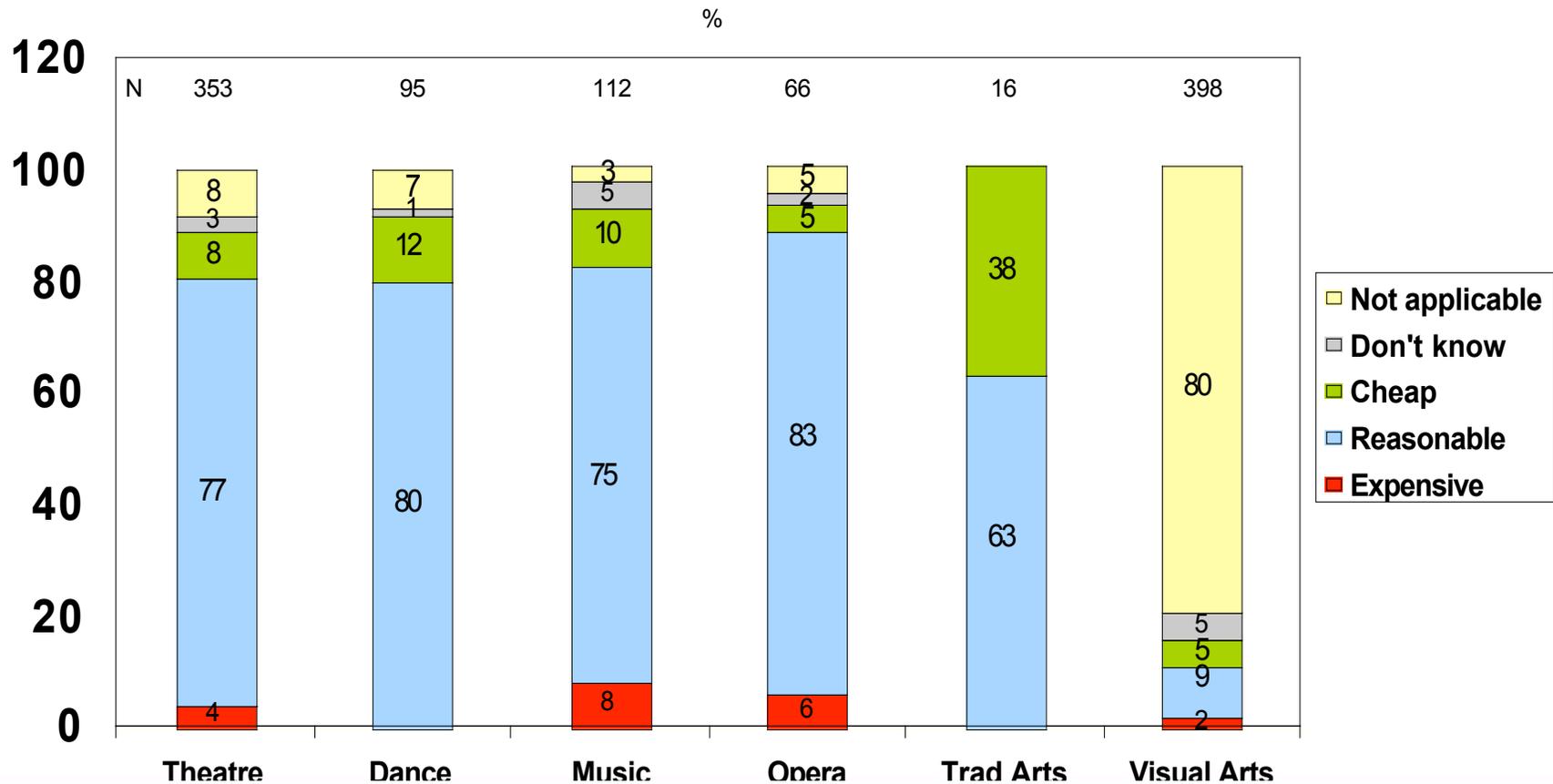
6% of Touring Experiment & 5% of Non-Touring Experiment is 'expensive'
(i.e. if discount 'Don't know' and 'Not applicable')



8.3. Price of Ticket By Art Form

Similar finding across art forms

Difference in traditional arts affected by low sample size
Least applicable to visual arts



8.4. Price of Ticket By Event

Most expensive

Answer: 'expensive'

- Ulster Orchestra: 13%**
- Upstate Theatre Company: 8%**
- Rough Magic and Opera Theatre Company: 6%**

Cheapest

Answer: 'cheap'

- Na Piobairi Uileann: 38%**
- Upstate Theatre Company: 24%**
- Cecily Brennan: 23%**

9. VENUE FACILITIES



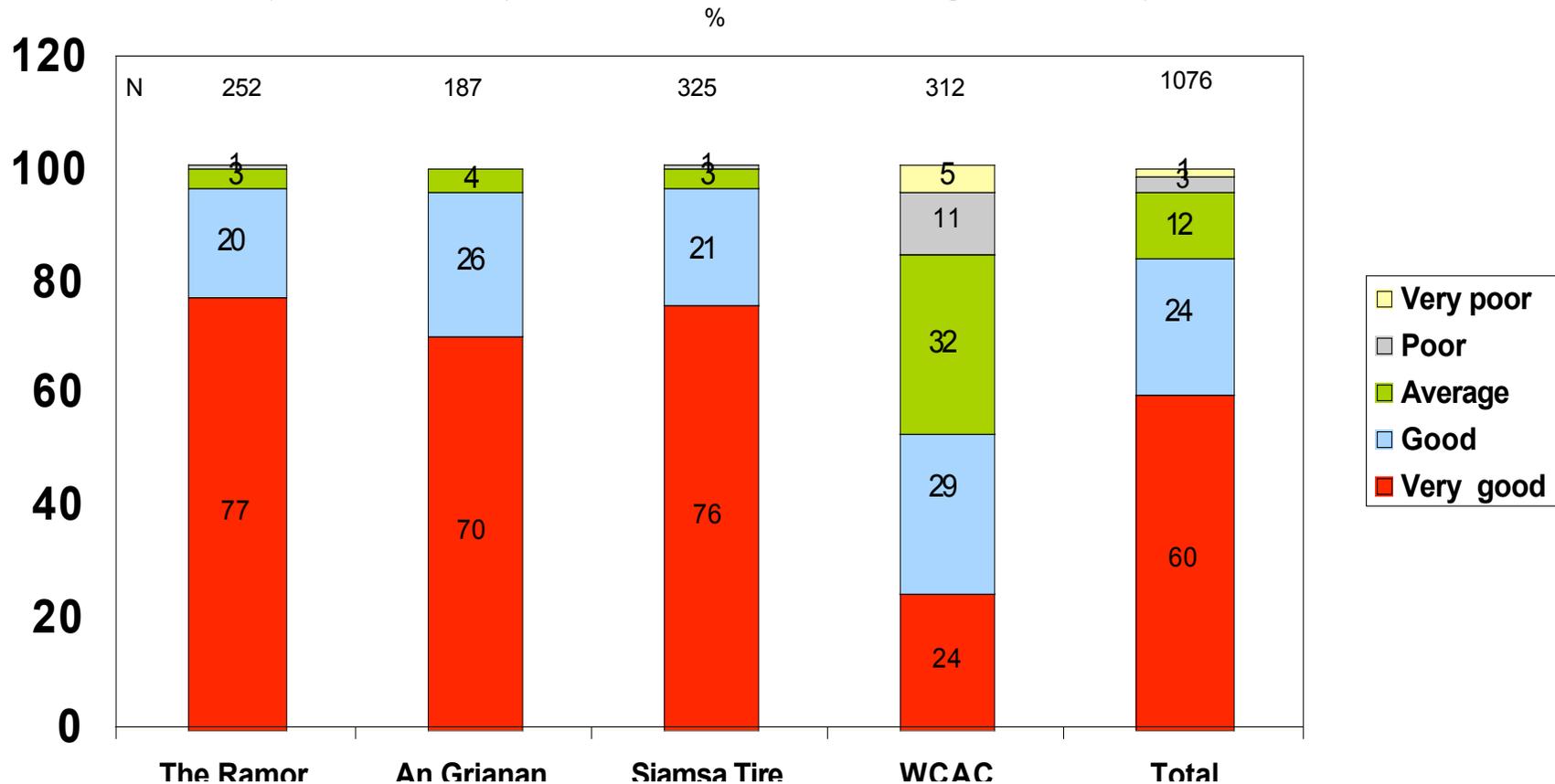
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9.1. Facilities in Venue By Venue

Positive rating of venue facilities in 3 venues

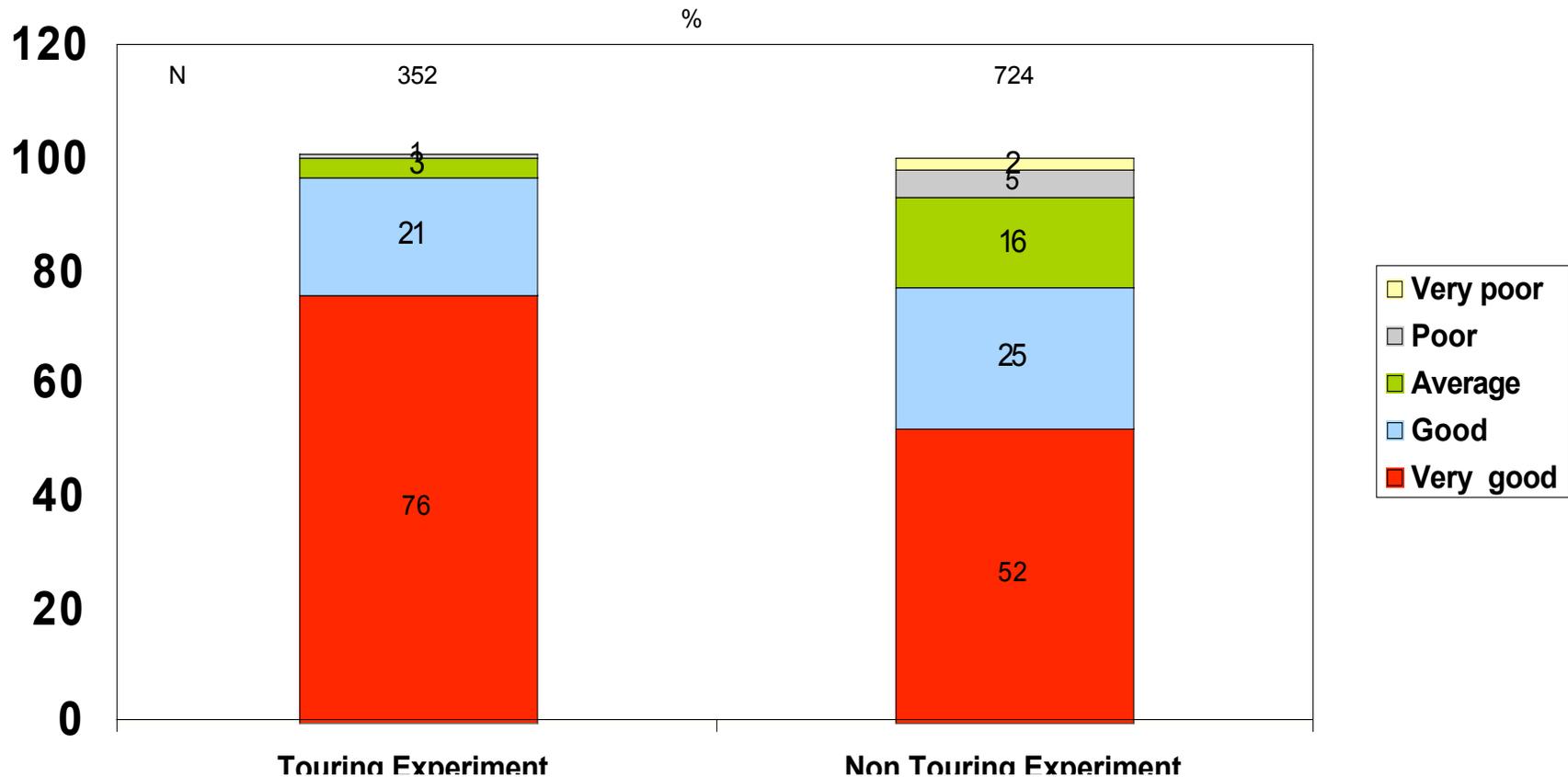
Although, all show room for improvement

Very mixed response to WCAC, as might be expected



9.2. Facilities in Venue By Touring Experiment Status

More favorable rating for venues hold Touring Experiment events
Non Touring Experiment venues affected by WCAC

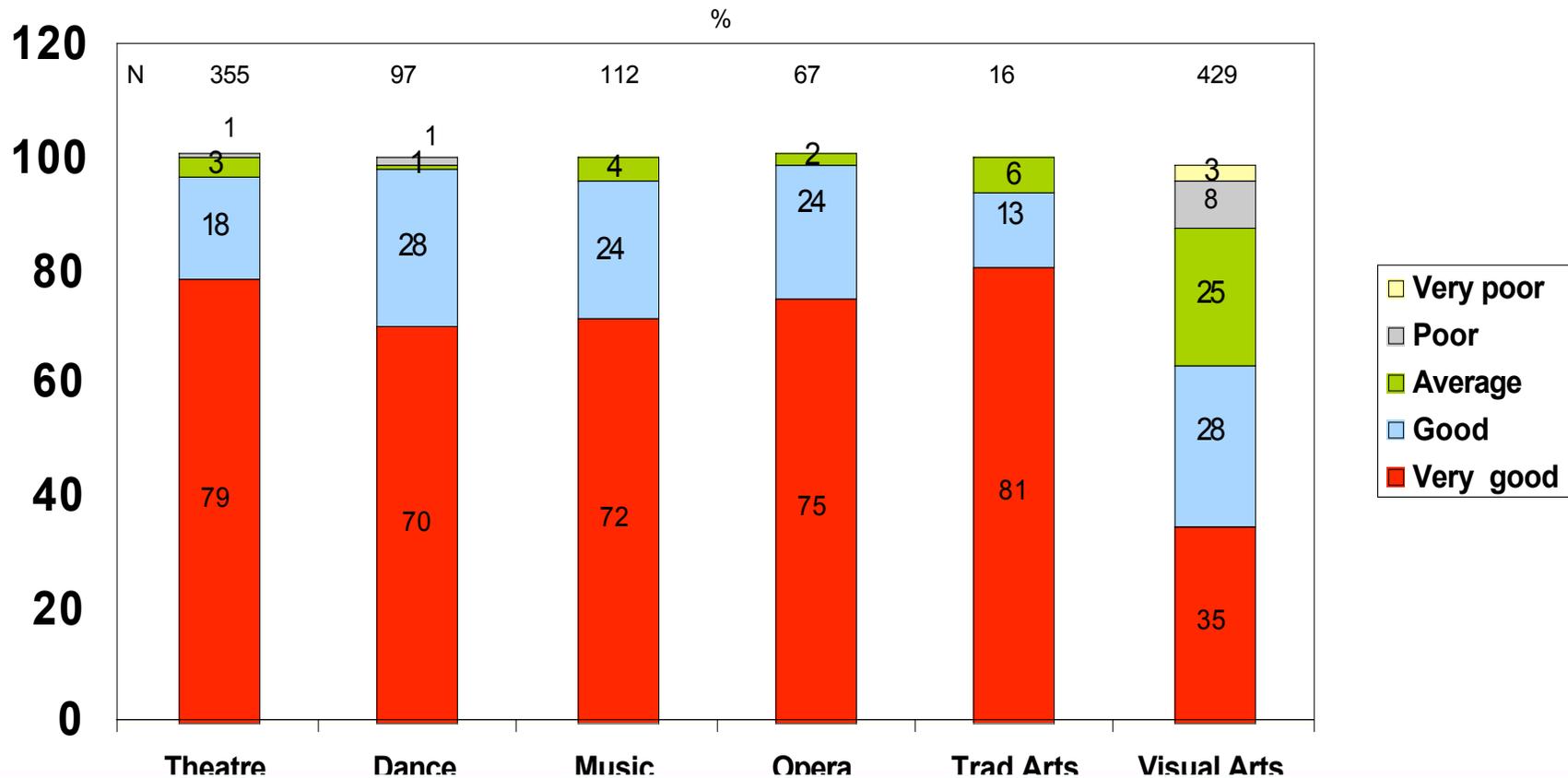


9.3. Facilities in Venue By Art Form

Visual arts digresses from other art forms

In keeping with rating of WCAC

Theatre venues rated more favorably



9.4. Facilities in Venue By Event

Answer: 'very good'

Highest

- Cavan Arts Office & Ramor: 93%**
- Rough Magic: 83%**
- Na Piobairi Uileann: 81%**

Lowest

- Eithne Jordan: 21%**
- West Cork Artists: 23%**
- Arno Kramer: 25%**

10. DISTANCE TRAVELLED



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10.1. Distance Travelled to Venue By Venue

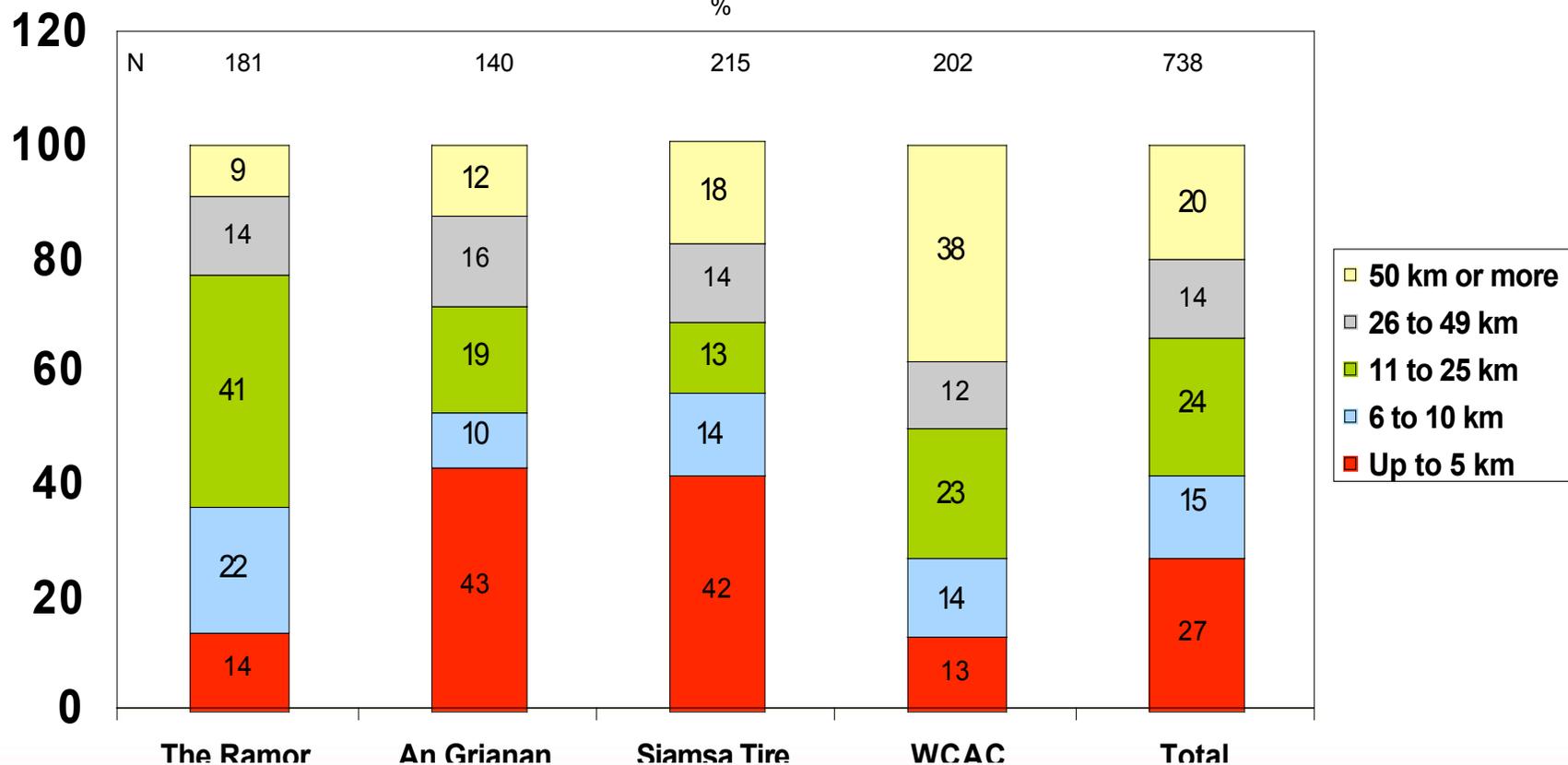
Variations between venues

WCAC attracts furthest travellers: many visitors to town drop in on passing

The Ramor serves a wide catchment area

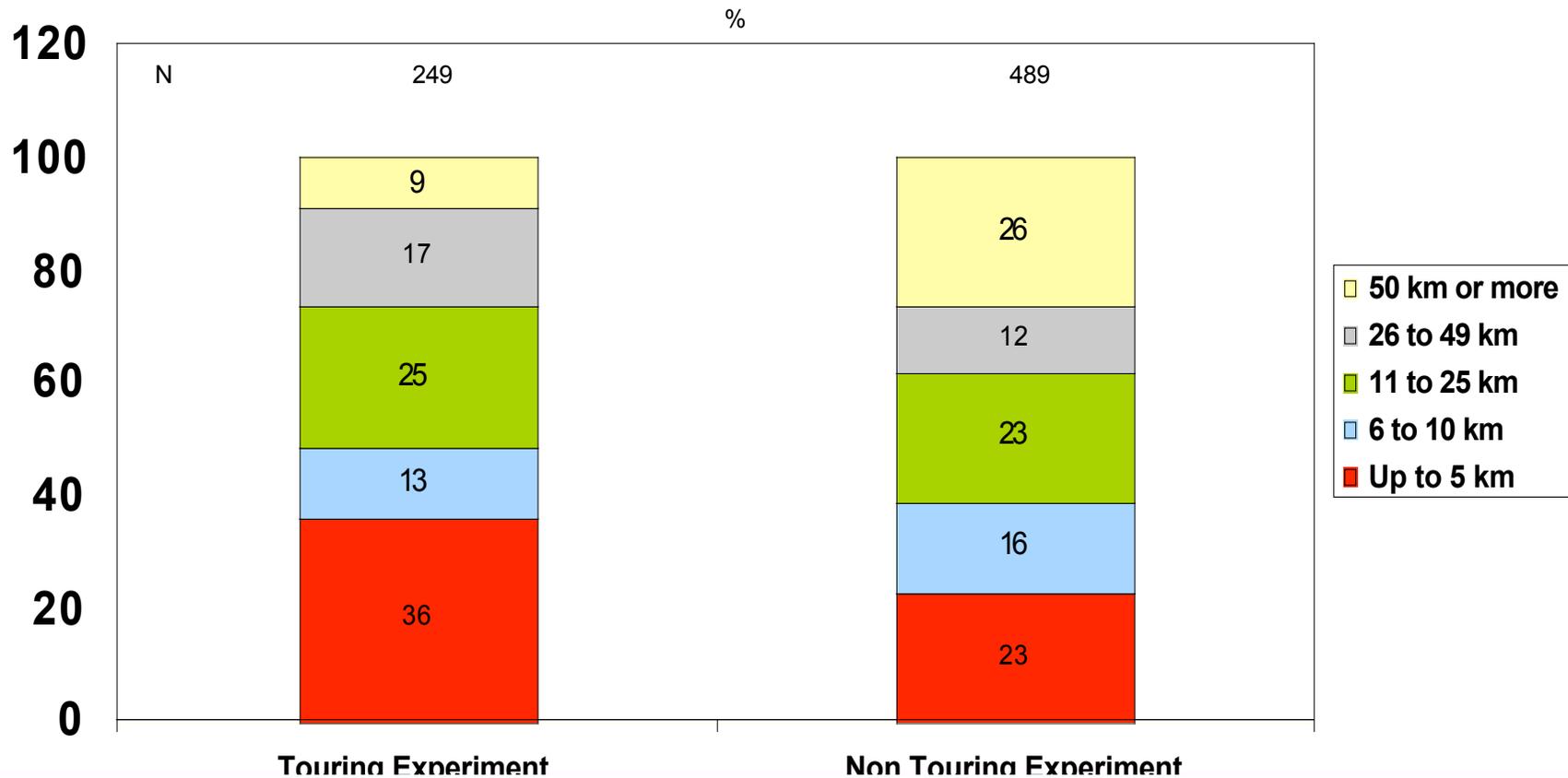
An Grianan and Siamsa Tire audiences are predominantly local: up to 11 km

Answered by 66% of respondents



10.2. Distance Travelled to Venue By Touring Experiment Status

Longer distances travelled for Non Touring Experiment events
Especially to WCAC

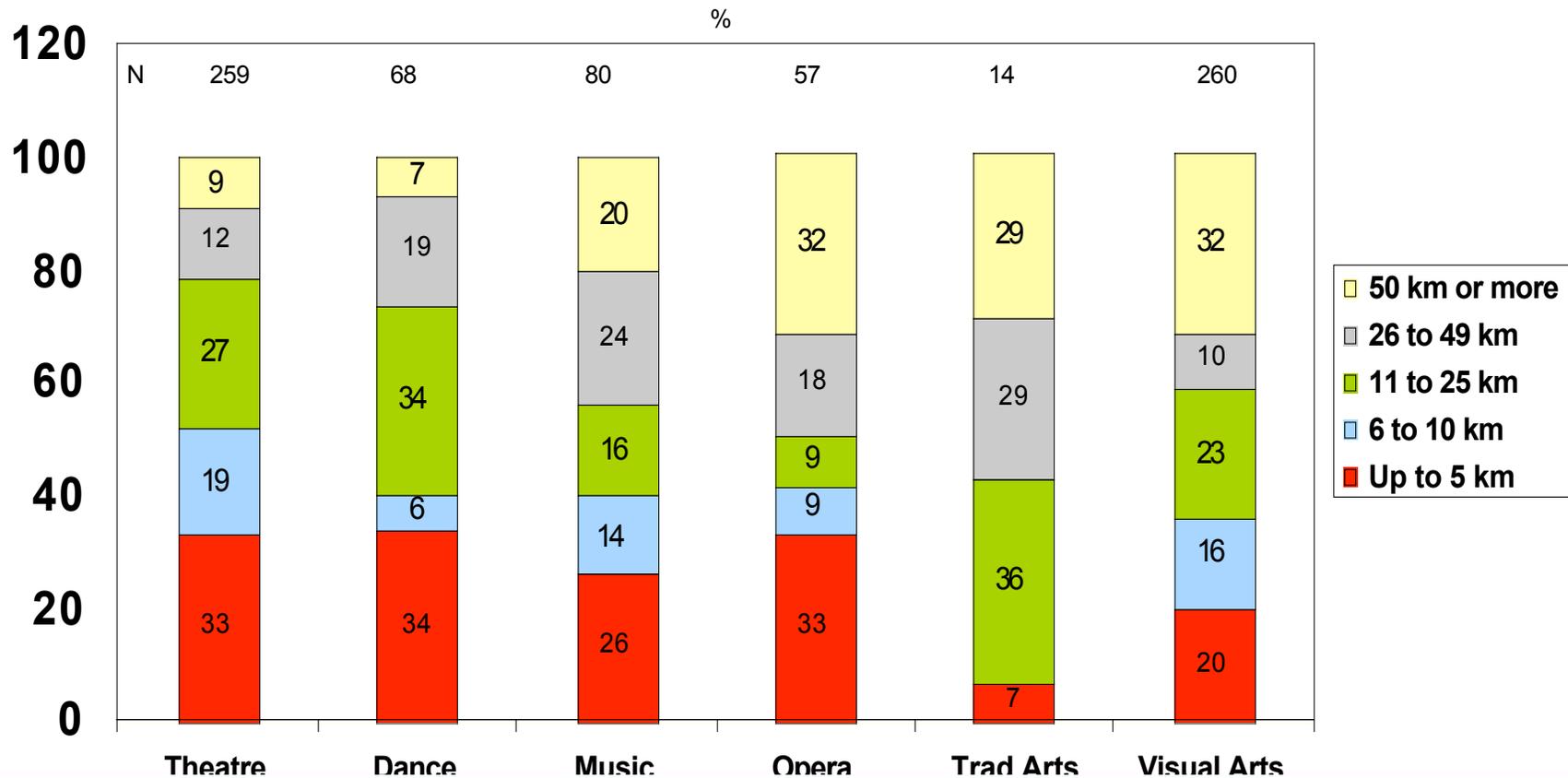


10.3. Distance Travelled to Venue By Art Form

Longer distances travelled for visual arts, opera and traditional arts

Also for music

To a much lesser extent for theatre and dance



10.4. Distance Travelled to Venue By Event

Nearest

Answer: 'up to 5 km'

- Rionach Ni Neill: 75%**
- The LPS: 63%**
- Rough Magic: 53%**

Furthest

Answer: '50 km or more'

- Triptych: 60%**
- West Cork Artists: 46%**
- Cecily Brennan: 41%**

11. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS



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11.1. Summary & Conclusions

Rating of Performance/Exhibition

- The rating of the performance /exhibition is generally positive
- Overall, 65% rate their experience as 'very good' and 25% as 'good'

Prompts for Attending

- There are five critical prompts for attending
- Predominantly advertising (25%), brought by someone (22%) and recommendation by someone (21%)
- Also, the writer/composer/artist's work is a draw (14%) as is the touring company (8%)
- In terms of advertising, venue literature is the predominant source: i.e. leaflet, brochure, flyer, newsletter (63% of all advertising mentioned)
- This is press (15%) and radio (10%)

11.2. Summary & Conclusions

Previous Experience

- There is a low occurrence of having seen the performance/exhibition before:
 - Overall, 9% had seen the performance/exhibition before

- There is a higher incidence of having seen the writer/composer/artist's work before:
 - Overall, 30% had seen the writer/composer/artist's work before

- There is a similar incidence of having seen the Touring Company before:
 - Overall, 32% claimed such

11.3. Summary & Conclusions

Supporting Information

- There are mixed opinions on supporting information
- 43% rate it as 'very good' and 37% as 'good' overall
- There is room for improvement

Associated Activity

- There is a low attendance at any activity connected to the performance/exhibition or any intention to do so
- Overall, 14% claim such
- There is a certain level of ignorance: 15% answered 'don't know'
- There is an apparent need for marketing activity to inform and encourage participation

11.4. Summary & Conclusions

Booking of Performance/Exhibition

- The booking process is generally easy: overall 73% say 'very easy'
- As high as 90% in An Grianan

Price of Ticket

- The price is 'reasonable': 51% claim it to be so

Venue Facilities

- There is a positive rating of venue facilities in 3 venues
- WCAC is in the process of change

Distance Travelled

- The venues attract local as well as distant custom
- Predominantly up to 11 km: 42%
- The remainder travel up to 50 km or more



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Thank you



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TOURING EXPERIMENT Full Report

May 16, 2007

Contents

Full Report

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Arts & Culture
4. Audience Behaviour
5. Art Forms
6. Amateur & Professional
7. Programming
8. Marketing
9. Money Matters
10. Service
11. Venue Features
12. Tralee
13. Skibbereen
14. Letterkenny
15. Virginia
16. Conclusions
17. Appendix

1. INTRODUCTION



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1.1.1. Research Objectives

Primarily

- To ascertain and evaluate audience attitudes and behaviour towards consuming arts and culture in their local arts centre
- To provide direction for audience development in relation to professional touring productions

1.1.2. Research Objectives

More specifically, to establish:

- Audience attitudes towards professional productions in general
- Response to recent programming
- Attitudes towards local arts centre – positive and negative
- Key motivations and barriers towards attendance
- Key opportunities for greater attendance
- Suggestions as to how best arts centre can communicate with their audiences

1.2. Methodology

Focus group discussions

- **8 focus groups:**
 - 2 in each of 4 locations
- **4 locations representing 4 local arts centres:**
 - Letterkenny: An Grianán
 - Skibbereen: West Cork Arts Centre (WCAC)
 - Tralee: Siamsa Tire Theatre & Arts Centre
 - Virginia: The Ramor
- **Standard focus group method:**
 - Each discussion lasting 90 minutes
 - Held in objective venue: local hotel
 - Nine respondents recruited to attend each group
- **Two group types in each location:**
 - 'Regular professional': regular attendees of professional shows and events in local arts centre
 - 'Occasional professional': occasional attendees of professional shows and events in local arts centre; more likely to attend amateur productions

1.3.1. Sample

Recruitment criteria

- **Database:**
 - Recruited from local arts centre database except Virginia
- **Attend arts and culture shows and events:**
 - At least 6 times a year regardless of venue
 - In local arts centre at least 4 times a year
- **'Regular' attendees of local arts centre:**
 - Attended at least 4 'professional' productions in past 12 months in local arts centre
 - Last attended since Dec. '06
- **'Occasional' attendees of local arts centre:**
 - Attended 1 to 2 'professional' productions and 2 to 3 'amateur' productions in past 12 months in local arts centre
 - Last attended since Dec. '06
- **Definition of 'professional' and 'amateur' shows and events determined by art centre:**
 - Relevant shows identified and requested for attendance
- **Each focus group represented a range of art forms:**
 - Drama, dance, music, visual art...
 - Each respondent had attended more than one art form
- **Demographics:**
 - Male and female
 - Age and social class determined by database
 - Living in the town or within 20 mile radius of it
 - Living in the area for three or more years

1.3.2. Sample

Profile of the 8 groups

	<u>Town</u>	<u>Arts Centre</u>	<u>Group Type</u>
1.	Tralee	Siamsa Tire	Regular Professional
2.	Tralee	Siamsa Tire	Occasional Professional
3.	Skibbereen	WCAC	Regular Professional
4.	Skibbereen	WCAC	Occasional Professional
5.	Letterkenny	An Grianán	Regular Professional
6.	Letterkenny	An Grianán	Occasional Professional
7.	Virginia	The Ramor	Regular Professional
8.	Virginia	The Ramor	Occasional Professional

The groups were convened from 29th April to 23rd May 2007

For the purpose of identifying quotes, each location is coded as follows:

T = Tralee, S = Skibbereen, L = Letterkenny, V = Virginia

1 = 'regular professional', 2 = 'occasional professional'

1.4. Discussion Outline

- Topic list to ensure all pertinent information discussed in each focus group
- 3 main sections:
 - Arts & Culture
 - Amateur Vs. Professional
 - Programming

See Appendix

2. BACKGROUND



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2.1. Lifestyle Issues

- **Respondents represent different stages of life**
- **Predominantly middle-aged and older:**
 - Few young adults reflecting database composition
- **Interests and hobbies are many and varied:**
 - Arts & culture:
 - Spectators
 - Performers / artists
 - Students / go to classes
 - Club members: gramophone circle, folk group, trad session
 - Sports
 - Pub
 - Cinema
 - Family commitments
 - Clubs: bridge, active retirement, reading, quilt making...

3. ARTS & CULTURE



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3.1.1. Arts & Culture

What is arts and culture?

- **Clear understanding of the category**
- **Top of mind components:**
 - Drama: amateur dramatics, comedy, classical (Shakespeare), opera, musicals, traditional (Irish writers about Irish history), puppetry
 - Visual art: contemporary & classical: painting, photography, cartoon, sculpture, performance art
 - Music: traditional, folk, ballad, popular, classical, heavy rock
 - Dance: traditional, contemporary, ballet, set dancing, line dancing
 - Film: cinema
 - Literature: story telling, readings, poetry, writing

3.1.2. Arts & Culture

- **Other suggested components:**
 - Sport
 - Heritage venues & societies (historical, archaeological)
 - Museums
 - Circus
 - Book clubs
 - Tax exemption
 - Irish language
 - Lap dancing
 - Arts & crafts

3.1.3. Arts & Culture

- **“Entertainment”**: the essence of arts and culture (T2) (L1)
- **Alive**: “a living thing” (T2), “anything live” (T1), “live show” (L1), “performing” (V1)
- **“A cultural exchange”** (S1): of “creativity” (S2)
- **Emotionally evocative**: “happy”, “uplifting” (T1), “escapism”, “feel great” (L1)
- **A sociable occasion**: bonding community relationships
- **Historical**: development over time

3.2. Attachment to Arts & Culture

- **Clear difference between:**
 - Regulars and occasionals
 - Spectators & performers
 - Different art forms
 - Location in Ireland
 - “Great tradition in Kerry” (T1); proud of local writers, artists, performers, companies
 - “There is a cultural ethos here in West Cork”, “very broad and very outward looking” (S2)
- **Affected by:**
 - Accessibility
 - Exposure
 - Personal interest
 - Lifestage
 - Significant others
 - Comfort zone and sense of belonging
 - Price
 - Social engagement and peer group
- **Effort required to attend:**
 - Plan the outing, book the event, code of dress, finance...
 - Generally, regulars like making the effort: enhances the social occasion
 - Others claim it is no effort: would not change their code of dress!

4. AUDIENCE BEHAVIOUR



4.1. Attendance Patterns

- **Reflective of recruitment**
- **Level of attendance influenced by:**
 - Time of year:
 - Seasonal effects
 - Programming:
 - What is on offer: “would go more often if they had more on” (v1)
 - Continuous / ad hoc: may attend more than one show in a month, then skip a few months
 - Social group / club / peers:
 - Organization of attendance by others
 - E.g. Active Retirement Association in Virginia
 - Availability of tickets
 - Convenience
 - Cost
- **Inaccurate recall:**
 - Think they go more often than they do

4.2.1. Reasons for Attendance

Many & varied

- **Attachment to the art form(s):**
 - Developed a keen interest over time
 - Continue to learn and develop
 - Perform oneself: sing, paint, act, play instrument...
 - Involved in club / society
 - Strong attachment among artists in Skibbereen: “It (painting) is my life’s blood” (S2)
- **Accessibility:**
 - Shows and events available in the area
 - Local to one’s home and work
 - Convenience in terms of travel
- **Pride in local offering:**
 - Proud of theatre / arts centre in area
 - Of other venues in the region
 - Of artists, writers, singers, musicians... in the region
 - Of reputation for arts and culture in the region
- **Local support:**
 - Support local effort: drama group, choral society...

4.2.2. Reasons for Attendance

- **Social:**
 - Part of one's social lifestyle
 - Fit with peer group
 - Sense of community
- **Lifestage:**
 - Time and money to spend on arts and culture
 - Acquired interest over time
 - Personal circumstances allow / inspire involvement: e.g. relocation, children...
- **Significant other:**
 - Significant other involved in art form: partner/spouse, child, sibling, parent, in law, friend
 - Encouraged / requested to go along
- **Comfortable with the scene:**
 - Not intimidated by involvement
 - Sense of belonging
 - Not deterred by effort

4.3.1. Reasons for Non-Attendance

Many & varied

- **Lack of interest:**
 - Have never developed an interest in arts & culture
 - “People are into it or not” (v2)
- **Detachment:**
 - Do not connect with arts & culture: “it is not me” (L2)
 - Feel it is for others and not for me
 - Do not know of anyone connected with arts & culture
- **Eliticism:**
 - Intimidated by apparent cultural qualifications
- **Non-convert:**
 - Tried but did not follow-up
- **Rejection:**
 - Used to go (a lot) but disappointed in quality and range of shows on offer
 - Programme does not interest: no show to go to
- **Inconvenience:**
 - Work in town and live out of town: not convenient to stay on or return later

4.3.2. Reasons for Non-Attendance

- **Expensive:**
 - Price of more than one ticket and drinks
- **Peer fit:**
 - Not within activity of peers; would have to go alone (v2)
 - Fit with “ordinary punter” (T2) who does not attend either
- **Not socially active generally:**
 - Little interest in going out to pub, cinema (v2)
 - Not involved in clubs or groups such as Active Retirement, etc. (v2)
- **Life stage:**
 - Busy with family and mortgages
- **“Guilty of not going” (v2):**
 - “Lazy and don’t go”, “don’t make the effort”, “don’t have the time” (v2)
 - Attendance requires an effort and “it is up to you to make the effort” (v2)



“Need to experience live performance to appreciate it” (v2)

“Need to be pushed more and more” (v2)

4.4. Attendance Outside Town

Mobility of audiences

- **Within the region:**
 - Local venues
 - Amateur and professional offering
 - Sense of occasion in the area
- **Outside the region:**
 - Predominantly Dublin and other cities
 - Predominantly music: professional performers; popular & classical; NCH, Point
 - Also drama: renowned venues such as Abbey & Gate
 - Few mentioned abroad: musicals
- **Costly to travel:**
 - More expensive than local: tickets more expensive, transport, food, accommodation...
 - Less convenient: time, alcohol consumption, uncomfortable journey...

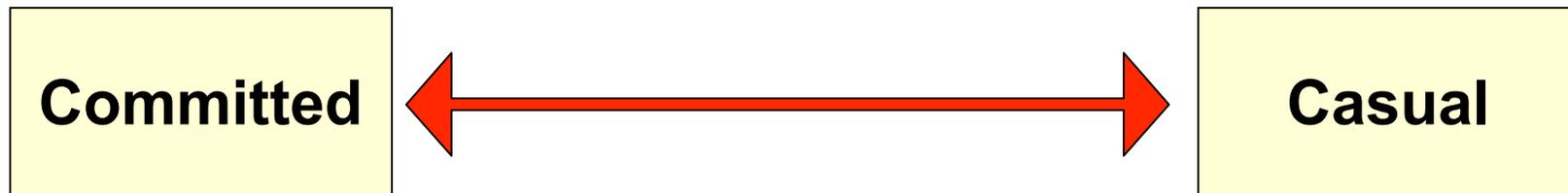
4.5.1. Audience Segmentation

Niche targets

- **Critically defined by demographics and personal interest**
- **Age patterns:**
 - Older age groups: classical music, opera, ballet, serious drama
 - Younger age groups: popular music; all 4 locations lament that there is not enough for young adults
 - Non-age specific: comedy, visual art, musicals, trad music
- **Social class /background:**
 - Typical supporter: well educated, well traveled, professional career, reared on arts and culture
 - Especially for classical music, opera, ballet, drama
- **Accessibility & experience:**
 - “You grow your interest over time” (L2)

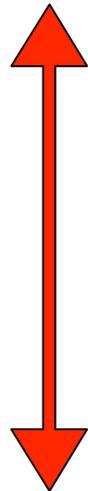
4.5.2. Audience Segmentation

Spectrum of engagement



4.5.3. Audience Segmentation

Committed



Casual

- **Enthusiast:**
 - actor, musician, painter, sculptor...
 - or significant other is: child, partner, family member, friend
 - sophisticated consumer: wealth of experience and well informed
 - predominantly regard themselves as amateur; few claim to be professionals
 - interest spreads across art forms
- **Serious follower:**
 - may have multi or specialist interest
 - drama, opera, ballet, classical music, traditional music...
 - prepared to go alone
 - prolific recall of productions
- **Social engager:**
 - night out with social group
 - theatre, drinks.. maybe even dinner
 - socio-culturally active: attend most shows
- **Selective interest:**
 - single art form: am dram, trad music
 - discerning uptake: drop in, drop out
 - may be driven by known local in show
- **Rare attender:**
 - self de-selection: not for me
 - social circle disengaged also
 - typically young as well as all ages
 - may go to commercial music / comedy event: just happens to be in the venue

4.6. Future Audiences

Arts and culture expected to be more accessible over time

- **More children are engaging in arts & cultural activities:**
 - “Getting a taste for it when they are young”, “it is great to introduce kids to it”, “they will have a more rounded life experience” (T1)
 - Classes & associated performances: “there is far more emphasis on the arts now”, “school kids use it (WCAC) a lot... go to exhibitions... write in comment book...” (S1); “trying to create proper theatre experience... making theatre more accessible” (S2)
 - “Kids are more exposed to theatre”, “our parents did not bring us”, “there are school trips” (L2)
 - Some parents are developing interest through their kids
- **Growth in venues and opportunities to consume arts & culture:**
 - Arts Centres
 - Festivals
 - “There are more events and shows to go to” (L2)
- **Affluent society:**
 - “People have more money to spend nowadays” (L2)
- **Concern for young adults:**
 - Not frequent attendees: pub culture, peer pressure; no one to accompany them
 - “You need more to introduce young people to theatre”, “intimidating... not friendly”, “will not even go to the panto” (L1)
 - Go to music gigs

4.7. Accompanied or Alone

- **A gathering of sociable souls; a sense of community:**
 - Driven by common interest & regular attendance
 - “You always meet people you know... it’s a friendly thing.... Some people you find sitting in the same seats” ^(T2)
 - “Same few people go to all the shows” ^(T2) ... “must be heart breaking for the performers and organizers” ^(T2)
- **Go alone:**
 - Many respondents go alone ^(T2)
 - Comfort in knowing some faces there
 - Easier to go alone to theatre than to pub or cinema

4.8. Poor Attendance

- **Limited audiences for certain shows:**
 - Apparently highest for local drama and commercial/popular professional touring companies/performers
 - “Not enough people go to live drama” (T1)
 - “Fifty to seventy people might turn up on a good day” (T2)
 - “Five to 6 people turned up... so we moved to the Green Room” (L2)
 - ‘The Loves of Cass McGuire’: “only thirty people turned up... no atmosphere... demoralizing for the people performing” (V2)
 - E.g. classical recitals, unknown touring productions
- **Affects audience experience:**
 - Disappointed in low attendances
 - Preference for a fuller audience/attendance
 - Affects experience of the show
- **Attendance level attributed to marketing:**
 - “Publicize a bit more” (T1)

4.9. Seasonal Effects

- **Typically, highest attendance in autumn/winter**
- **Summer audience differs from rest of year: holiday makers & tourists:**
 - Time & activity driven: respondents have less availability for summer attendance
 - Local amateur groups not active: not available to rehearse, perform or attend; Folk Theatre fills the gap in the summer
 - Dedicated folk theatre programme in Tralee: acceptable to locals because “tourists pay the bills” (T2); locals typically attend with visitors although some visit anyway; there is a sense that Siamsa would be empty without the Folk Theatre
 - Festival focus: holiday festivals draw attention

4.10.1. Eliticism

- **“Snobbery” associated with arts and culture:**
 - By regulars and occasionals, but especially the latter
 - People can be “intimidated”, “I know nothing about the arts”, “there is snobbery attached to it” (T2)
 - “There is a degree of the arts becoming precious” (S1)
 - “You expect snobbery”, “but it is not so” (L1)
 - “Older generation... and younger generation... feel intimidated” (L1)
- **Seen to reflect education, wealth, up-bringing and social status:**
 - Typically: “professional people” with a “glass of wine” (V2)



Leading to a general lack of comfort with arts & culture:

“You feel ignorant” (T2), “world’s apart” (T1)

4.10.2. Eliticism

- **Barrier seen to be raised by consumers of art & culture:**
 - Rather than by artists/performers
- **Across all art forms but especially:**
 - Visual art, classical music, opera, ballet
 - Less so with traditional music, amateur dramatics, comedy: familiar, local, in the comfort zone

4.11.1. Non-Eliticism

- **Regulars less likely to associate arts and culture with eliticism:**
 - “There is no snobbery” (T1)
 - Local venues are seen to enhance the accessibility of arts & culture: making it more an everyday experience for all in the community
 - First night may have a social cachet like no subsequent night: thus, may increase elitist notions

4.11.2. Non-Elitist

Non-elitism explained by growing accessibility

- **Wealth of local opportunities:**
 - Venues, locations, art forms, festivals...
- **Localization of art centres: an everyday opportunity in own locality:**
 - “There is no snobby status here as with other theatres“, “it is for the “community” (L2)
 - “There is an openness here in Skibbereen, “nobody cares” (S2)
- **Informality of spaces: exhibition, performance**
 - Skull arts festival exhibits in a variety of locations including a launderette and a local national school
- **Local richness in performers:**
 - “There is a lot of exposure here”, “you get the best”, “it is the only place in Ireland that is so wealthy” in arts & culture (S2)
- **Training and educational opportunities:**
 - Classes, workshops, talks: making arts and culture accessible

4.12. Elitist Vs. Non-Elitist

Arts & culture is elitist

- Casual attendee
- Young and old
- Non-performer
- Not culturally active
- Comfort zone of traditional / popular styles

Arts & culture is not elitist

- Frequent attendee
- Older
- Culturally active
- Performer / consumer
- Significant other involved in local group
- Comfortable with variety of art forms & styles

5. ART FORMS



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5.1. Drama

- **Top of mind art form:**
 - Inherent offering in local venue, except Skibbereen
- **Language:**
 - Predominantly “plays”, “musicals”, “shows”, “am dram”,
 - Rather than “theatre” or “drama”
- **High regard for amateur dramatics:**
 - Local community
 - Familiar material
 - Entertaining, high quality
 - Full house
 - Familiar faces: same people
 - Family involvement: child and/or adult
 - Many and varied groups in region: spoiled for choice
- **High regard for well established professional touring productions:**
 - Abbey, Druid
- **High regard for local writers:**
 - ‘Children of the Dead End’ by local writer who had cancer; a story about local issues; performed by local amateurs – great support: “sold out” (L1)
- **Lower regard for contemporary professional work:**
 - Unfamiliar
 - Strange to the point of being peculiar
 - Small audiences
- **Low regard for focus on the “troubles”:**
 - “Time to move on”, “Guns at Easter’ is too political”, “Remnants of Fear’ is heavy stuff... too much talking” (V1)

5.2. Comedy

- **A distinct form of arts & culture:**
 - Stand up and drama
- **Discerning interest in comedy:**
 - Depends upon performer: can be crude and rude
 - Age specific targets: young adults, old adults...
 - Less debate about comedy plays
- **Love / hate relationship:**
 - Love/hate certain performers

5.3.1. Visual Art

- **Not a top of mind art form:**
 - Top of mind in Skibbereen
- **Personal interest:**
 - Personal taste is acknowledged: everyone has individual taste
 - Classical, familiar, safe, “realistic”, “colourful” (T2); “trees”, “landscapes” (L2)
 - Uncomfortable with “obscure”, “trendy” (T2), “unusual” (L1) pieces
 - “There is an emphasis on modern and contemporary which is almost revered... fried egg on blue background” (S2)
 - Appreciative of classical rather than contemporary art which is usually exhibited in The Ramor (V1)
- **Select interest:**
 - Seek it out: “check it out”
 - Come across while in venue: “see before the show” (T1)
 - “Curiosity” (L1) is a key driver
- **Driven by personal experience of this art form:**
 - As an artist oneself: classes & course, hobby & work
 - Comfortable spectators: “like to see it” (T2)
- **Driven by local interest:**
 - Related to artist (family/friend): “a friend exhibits... she tells me and I go” (T1)
 - Known local artist: “local sculptor” (L1)
 - Auction: in local school and Lions Club in An Grianán: of local and famous artists (L1)

5.3.2. Visual Art

- **Expensive:**
 - Non visual-art consumers fear “duress” of having to buy: “it is nice to have a choice... but to have no pressure to buy” (L1)
 - “Need to be in the buying frame of mind”, “can be quite expensive” (v2)
 - An investment
- **Monthly+ exhibitions cater for casual interest:**
 - Come across it while visiting venue: drop in and drop out
 - Free: do not have to pay to see
 - Recall of touring exhibitions
- **Various types of visual art:**
 - Painting, photography, sculpture...
- **Accessible in various venue types:**
 - Formal: galleries
 - Informal: cafes, pubs, libraries, hotels...
- **Retail opportunities:**
 - Gift purchase, personal purchase
 - Fund-raising
 - Purchasing patterns vary: to support a friend, a charity, investment, interest

5.4. Music

- **Broad range of tastes:**
 - Something for everyone
 - Traditional, classical, opera, chamber...
- **High level of attention in Skibbereen**
 - Wealth of shows & performances locally:
 - in a variety of venues: town hall, churches, outdoors...
 - Wealth of societies & clubs locally
 - Wealth of festivals in the region
 - In particular:
 - classical & chamber music
 - revival of trad & pub sessions
- **Of critical importance to occasionals:**
 - In many cases, music may be the only/main form of arts & culture that is consumed
- **High regard for well established professional touring productions:**
 - RTE Symphony Orchestra
- **Request from all groups to expand the range of music on offer**
 - Especially traditional and classical
- **Classical music:**
 - “It is hard to get a full orchestra to travel... the Ulster Orchestra go to Derry... they should come here twice a year” (L2)
 - Why did the NCH play in the Mount Errigal Hotel with “its flat floor and no acoustics” rather than in An Grianán? (L2)
 - “Only a small market” (V2)

5.5. Dance

- **Little discussion on:**
 - Not a core interest among respondents
- **Ballet:**
 - Individual interest in
 - High appreciation for professional tours
 - Would welcome more but little expectation for
- **Contemporary dance:**
 - Mixed appeal for
 - Fear of non-appreciation due to lack of understanding
 - Expect contemporary in programme offering but limited likelihood of attendance

5.6. Film

- **Little mention of film clubs:**
 - Old movies: classics
 - May have “seen when first out” (V2)
 - Get to see on video or DVD at home
 - Film club may have been more valuable years ago before DVD

5.7.1. Festivals

- **High appeal for**
- **Adds life to the community:**
 - “Brings people in” (S1) from many areas: local & afar; performers & spectators
 - “Vibrant atmosphere”, “lively”, “happy”, “interaction” (L1)
- **Making arts and culture accessible:**
 - Street entertainment & parades
 - Free as well as priced
 - Popular venues: local pubs and cafes
 - Formal venues: theatres, galleries, churches
- **Confers status on town:**
 - Especially if for specified term: Fleadh Ceoil, Pan Celtic
 - If regional or national competition: drama
 - If unique: chamber music
- **Limited attendance:**
 - Free gigs, sell tickets...
 - If on holiday weekend, may be away oneself
 - Attended before
 - “A good thing” but “I don’t go” (T2)
- **Competitive spirit:**
 - Many festivals run a competition which ensures a standard of performance

5.7.2. Festivals

Tralee

Fleadh Ceoil, Kerry Drama Festival,
Knocknagoshal Halloween Night,
Samhlaoicht

Skibbereen

Ballydehob Jazz Fest, Ballydehob Trad Fest,
Baltimore Boat Festival, Baltimore Fiddle Fair,
Bantry House Festival (literary & chamber music), Bealtaine Festival, Cartoon
Festival, Rossmore Drama Festival,
Skibbereen Children's Festival, Skibbereen Piper Festival,
Skibbereen 'Maid of the Isles' (no longer), Skull Drama/Arts Festival,
West Cork Drama Festival,

Letterkenny

Comedy Festival, Fleadh Ceoil, Pan Celtic

Virginia

Drama Festival in Cavan town, Frolicks Variety Show in Ballyjamesduff

6. AMATEUR Vs PROFESSIONAL



6.1. Amateur Vs. Professional

- Clear differentiation between ‘amateur’ and ‘professional’
- Common distinction between shows and events
- Each bears its own strengths and weaknesses

6.2.1. Amateur Productions

- **Non-paid hobbyists:**
 - “They have day jobs” (T2)
 - “Fun”, “a hobby”, “not for profit” (S2)
- **Not funded:**
 - “Done on a budget” (L1)
- **Spectrum of quality:**
 - Varies by amateur group
 - Can have professional producer and/or other element(s)
- **Generally light entertainment:**
 - E.g. musicals, comedy (L)
- **Lower expectation for amateur than professional production:**
 - Allowances made
 - Generally impressively surprised by local am dram in particular
- **Committed members of local groups:**
 - “Great talent”, “standard is quite high” (T1)
 - “They have won awards” (S1: Skibbereen Theatre Society)
 - “Enjoy if you know people” (L1)

6.2.2. Amateur Productions

- **Usually of local origin**
- **Local productions:**
 - High quality; almost professional quality
 - “some are excellent”, “Abbeydorney crowd is of a high standard” (T2)
 - “the Local Theatre Society is almost professional”, “helps keep the local standard high” (S1)
 - “amateur can be high quality” (S2)
 - “locals put a great deal of work into it “ (L2)
 - “amateurs do a professional job”, “part-time hobby”, “professional attitude and an ability to put it on”, need not be a professional to be a good performer, “if get a good producer”, “The Ramor Players are “amateur with a professional attitude” (V1)
 - “do their best”, “can make mistakes” (V2)
 - High entertainment: local interest
 - Not all local is amateur – local can be professional also
- **Contributes significantly to the community:**
 - Some people may not go to theatre otherwise
 - An outlet for the members of the group
 - Delivering quality productions at Christmas (Panto) and year round (typically two a year in total)
 - Engages surrounding communities: each visits each other’s productions
 - Tours within regions

6.2.3. Amateur Productions

- **Amateur is acceptable:**
 - “Don’t expect high class every night” (V2)
- **High attendance:**
 - Full houses: “a sell out”, Letterkenny Drama Group, ‘Oklahoma’ (L1)
 - “Brings people into the theatre” (L1), “can be enjoyable” (L2)
 - Locally driven: there is a good sense of local drama and support for it:
 - “most villages go to each others plays” (T2)
 - “it is local... therefore would support it and go” (L2)
- **Relatively easy to get a ticket:**
 - May book well in advance to ensure ticket
 - Generally “easy to get a ticket if local” (V1)
- **Familiar content:**
 - Names of shows, writers, performers



Warm reaction to local amateur productions: sense of loyalty to locals and enjoyment in seeing locals in action.

High assumption for quality and enjoyable show.

6.3.1. Professional Productions

- **Broad definition based on career**
- **Main income:**
 - “They make their living from it”, “main source of income” (S1)
 - “Most of your living”, “80% is the Equity markup” (S2)
 - “Full time job” (V1)
 - “Paid”, “their job” (V2)
- **Great expectations for quality:**
 - “Slick” in terms of timing, costumes, sets, choreography, voice projection, lighting, etc. (T1)
 - “Superior quality” direction, sets, costumes, props (L1)
 - “High standard... in the pacing of the production... rather than awkward pauses” (L2)
 - “Trained and qualified”, “quality” (V1)
 - “Perfectionist”, “hard training”, “work at it”, “rehearse 8 to 15 hours”, “highest standard” (V2)
 - But they “can make mistakes” (V2)
- **Reputable:**
 - History of performing: “well established”, “well known” (S1)
 - Well known actors (L)
 - Reviews in national papers (L)



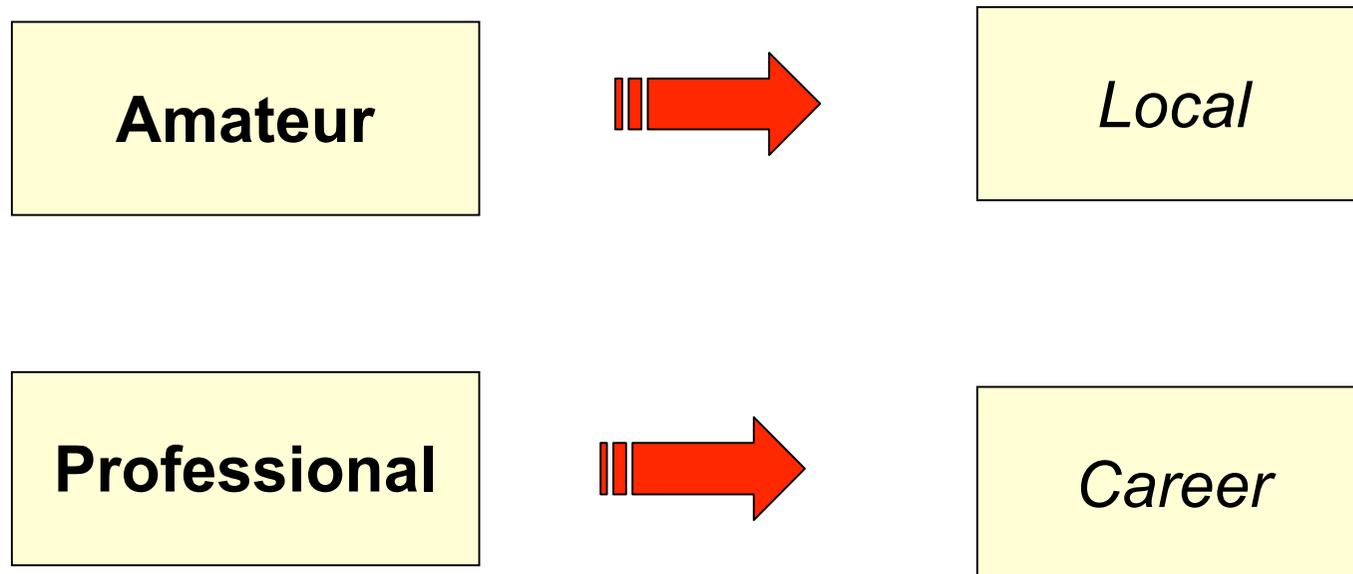
Thus, less tolerant of poor performance

6.3.2. Professional Productions

- **Have funding to support them:**
 - Typically, from the Arts Council
- **Tickets may be more expensive:**
 - €12 for local production compared to €25 for Frances Black: “very expensive” ^(V1)
 - “You pay for the quality” ^(V1)
- **There are local professional productions:**
 - All or part professional
 - Usually part – with amateurs included
 - Folk Theatre ^(T), An Grianán ^(L)
- **Mixed recall and awareness of professional production company names:**
 - Recall of name of show rather than name of company e.g. Trousers, Wallflowering (T)
 - Claim to look at the show, the performers, the writer or suchlike first
 - There are exceptions: well known and highly travelled names come to mind – e.g. Druid, Abbey
 - A well-known performer may precede the production company in attracting attention: Mick Lally, Pauline McGlynn
 - If production company not local, expect it to be professional tour: e.g. MorWax, Playhouse Productions ^(L2)
 - Need to be informed on production company: “Big Telly Theatre Company... no information... where they are from... might support them if we knew something about them... a name sells” ^(V1)

6.4. Amateur / Professional

Key association



6.5.1. Professional Touring Productions

- **Generally a clear understanding:**
 - Touring generally implies professional
 - Although local tours may be amateur
- **Grant aided professional productions:**
 - “Getting grants so can afford to travel” (T)
 - “The Opera Theatre Co. used to tour but not now because of funding” (S1)
- **Bringing quality productions to country locations:**
 - “Feel part of the nation instead of stuck up in Donegal” (L1)
 - “Why should everything happen in Galway, Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Sligo?” (L2)
 - A “them and us” (S2) issue – e.g. Dublin has the Caravaggio exhibition
 - Whereby ‘they’ have everything and ‘we’ are privileged to have ‘them’ travel to ‘us’ – otherwise ‘we’ have to travel to ‘them’ (S)
 - “You learn something new”, “it is not convenient to go to Dublin to a play” (V1)

6.5.2. Professional Touring Productions

- **Meant to attract audiences:**
 - Locals: “informative locally” (S2)
 - Tourists: “a draw for visitors” (S2)
- **Not necessarily a guarantee of success:**
 - May be too contemporary: “peculiar”, “rubbish”, “obscure” (T2)
 - “The professional plays from Dublin are not always great” (S2)
 - May be unfamiliar: show, writer, performer, production company...
- **May be poorly marketed: reliant on brochure, poor & confusing description**
 - Generating low volume of sales; a risk to go:
 - Guna Nua ‘Trousers’ “had to cancel their last night” because of poor sales...most people were on complimentary tickets” (T2)
 - Rex Levitates, The Same Jane & Cross Purposes: “if they get twenty to thirty people they’d be lucky” (T2)
 - “Not well enough supported” (S2)
 - Leading to a poorer experience for the audience
- **May be second-rate to original/larger location:**
 - ‘Riverdance’: “we got a second rate performance” (T1)
 - ‘I Keano’: “was lost in Killarney” (T1)
- **May be short run:**
 - “May not stay long enough” (V2)

6.5.3. Professional Touring Productions

- **Economical:**
 - More economical to see professional production in local venue than travelling to city to see it there: cost of travel, cost of ticket (usually dearer), accommodation, etc.
- **Not unique to local venue:**
 - Professional production “on a touring circuit” (T) (S)
 - Sense that the local venue may blindly book it in
- **Request for greater frequency and more diversity:**
 - “There is not enough here” (S2)
 - Typically, the well known tours visit once or twice a year : Druid, Abbey
- **Touring production is likened to a revival of travelling theatre companies years ago:**
 - “Drama has come back” (V1)

6.6. Druid

- **High recall:**
 - Top of mind in all 4 groups
- **Popular choice:** name draws attentions
- **Strong brand:** appealing brand
- **Galway based**
- **Experience of:** have toured to local venue
- **Quality productions:** “guaranteed a good performance”
- **Variety:**
 - Contemporary and traditional, from Yeats to McDonagh (T)
 - “Lots of productions” (L1)
- **Gary Hynes**
- **Motivational:**
 - Most respondents likely to go regardless of show; others more discerning
 - “More than likely go to a Druid... it depends” (L2)

6.7. Abbey

- **High recall:** in all 4 groups
- **Dublin based**
- **National theatre of Ireland:** “paid by the tax payer” (T2)
- **Experience of:** in Dublin and locally
 - “But they do not travel that often” (L2)
- **Selective venues:**
 - Need space and capacity
 - “Not likely to come here”, “too costly to come”, “it goes to Russia so why does it not come here?” (T2)
 - “Would not travel to here... too small” (V1)
- **Quality productions:** professional
- **Distinctive style:** Dancing at Lughnasa
- **Name draws attentions:** most respondents likely to go regardless of show; others more discerning

6.8. Other Professional Touring Productions

- **Big Telly Theatre Company:**
 - Very limited awareness in Virginia
- **Cosceim:**
 - Limited recall in Tralee, Skibbereen
 - Unsure of in Letterkenny
 - Contemporary dance
- **Dubblejoint Theatre Company:**
 - Very limited awareness in Virginia
 - Uncertain of their origin: are they from Leitrim? (v1)
 - Likewise, Storyteller Theatre Company: “who are they?” (v1)
- **Hawkswell:**
 - Mentioned in Tralee
 - Sligo based
- **Lynwood Productions:**
 - Professional tour, “high class” (v2)
- **Macnas:**
 - Mentioned in Skibbereen
 - Mixed expectation they will travel
 - Trained Craisnacaoilte in Skibbereen
- **Red Kettle:**
 - Mentioned in Tralee
 - From Waterford
 - Tour twice a year
 - A combination of professional and amateur

7. PROGRAMMING



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7.1. Programming

- **Little spontaneous comment on**
- **Low understanding of**
- **Assume to be responsibility of venue**
- **Assume venue has choice**
- **Expect variety of offering:**
 - “Acceptable that the full programme is not for me” (V1)

7.2.1. Wish List

- **Quality production**
- **Familiar production:**
 - Show, writer, performer(s), production company
 - Safe in the comfort zone of knowing something about the show in advance
 - Poor risk takers:
 - E.g. Virginia are local, narrow and parochial; they don't go to anything they don't know
- **Variety:**
 - Across all art forms: performance and exhibition:
 - Traditional, classical & contemporary
 - Not “peculiar” (T2: Romanian performance)
 - Irish and international
 - “To see more culture outside of Ireland” e.g. ‘In Translation’ (T2)

7.2.2. Wish List

- **New material:**
 - Non-repetitive in the same venue and/or region
 - Not to have been here in past few years: Hansel & Gretel, Opera Theatre Company “came here with that show before” (T2)
 - Tralee Folk Theatre: add a fifth show: 'Forging the Dance' (bring it back)
- **Frequency:**
 - More frequency for certain art forms: opera, ballet (select interest)
- **Seasonal shows:**
 - Christmas shows and pantomimes
 - Summer shows for visitors and holiday-makers



Respondents focused on style of show rather than a named production company

7.3. Tralee: Wish List

Professional Tours

By company

- Abbey
- Ballet Ireland / Irish Ballet
- Comedy: Unbelievables, Brendan O'Carroll
- Druid
- Fr Ahern
- Hawkswell
- Irish Opera Theatre
- James Last
- Kettler
- Macnas
- Red Kettle
- RTE Symphony Orchestra

By other

- 'Forging The Dance' as a fifth show in summer
- 'The King of Friday's Men' by MJ Molloy
- Elvis
- Flamenco
- Sive
- Sean O'Casey

7.4. Skibbereen: Wish List

Professional Tours

By company

- Abbey
- Barabas
- Cosceim
- Druid
- Gate
- Lambert Puppet Theatre
- Macnas
- Patrick Scott (artist)
- Shanabary (Derry)
- West Cork Craft Guild

By other

- Arts & crafts
- Dance:
 - Contemporary, ballet
- Drama:
 - “So little here” (S2)
- Lectures
- Local history:
 - Leaving Blasket islands
- Music:
 - Orchestral
- One-person show
- Visual art:
 - Classes: life drawing
 - Mixed Media
 - Performance art
 - Sculpture
 - Textile painter
 - Library: literature on artists
 - Internet: sale of paintings
 - Caravaggio

7.5. Letterkenny: Wish List

Professional Tours

By company

- Abbey
- Druid
- Lunasa
- Solus
- Ulster Orchestra

By other

- Conscious small capacity of theatre may limit options
- Better balance in programming
- Diversity of art forms
- Comedy:
 - Smaller proportion of programming (L2)
- Music:
 - Classical music
 - Country music
 - Multicultural bands & world music (L2)
 - Traditional music
- Non-repetitive material
- Shows to suit young people
- Local productions

7.6. Virginia: Wish List

Professional Tours

By company

- Abbey
- Elaine Brennan (local)
- Flash Harry
- The Furys

By other

- More for young people:
 - “There should be more music for young people” (V2)
 - “young aged 19 to 20 years” (V1)
- More variety:
 - Less stories about the “troubles”
- Irish theatre:
 - Sean O’Casey, Oscar Wilde
 - Juno & the Paycock
- Music:
 - Fleadh Ceoil: “we never get a chance to see that” (V1)
 - Uilleann pipes
- Drama:
 - “More drama”, “upbeat... any” (V2)

7.7. One/Few Man Show

- Acceptable
- No negative feedback
- One-man show positively likened to “seanachai” years ago ^(T1)

7.8. Shows without Interval

- **Mixed reactions**
- **Positives:**
 - May suit style of show
 - Engaging: “get stuck into the show” (T1)
 - Allows for variation in time-tabling: late start
 - If short duration: 90 minutes
- **Negatives:**
 - Short evening out
 - No interval opportunity for socializing
 - People leaving to use bathroom disturbs audience

7.9. Outreach

- **General understanding of concept:**
 - “Learn artistic things” (T1)
 - “Workshops”, “talks”, “schools work in the gallery” (S1)
- **Expected to be the preserve of the young:**
 - Used to going to classes
 - In the market for learning
 - Daytime activity
 - “Usually for school kids” (T1)
- **Limited interest by adults:**
 - Unless specific engagement with the art form – e.g. visual art, ballet
 - May pro-long event: talk before or after show



Respondents demonstrated limited excitement in the prospect of going to talks, lectures or classes

8. MARKETING



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8.1. Marketing

- **Reliance on brochure through post:**
 - Assume on database through credit card or other booking means
 - Not dependable: do not always receive: “something wrong with the computer system” (T2)
- **Other sources of awareness of shows and events:**
 - Postcard invitation by post
 - Leaflet on individual shows sent out
 - Brochure available in venue & other outlets: library, shops, etc.
 - Recall of radio and press:
 - Especially local for both; also, national press for Abbey, NCH, suchlike
 - Limited recall of leaflets and posters
 - Some mention of billboard:
 - Outside Theatre entrance (L)
 - In town square: “vandalised” (S1)
 - On road: ‘Up & Coming Events’ on way into town (S)
 - Influenced by word of mouth: performers, previous attendees, others
 - Little mention of teletext and website (V2)
- **Request for greater marketing:**
 - Mention of some shows & events not being marketed:
 - “Some things come up off the programme and you don’t hear about it... until the day it is on... Rebecca Storm” (L1)
 - The Ramor “should advertise outside the county” (V1)
 - Consider e-mail as an additional means of notifying people (T)

8.2.1. Brochure

An essential information tool

- **Seasonal timing:**
 - 3 months in advance is adequate: “you know 3 months in advance what is coming up... write it into your calendar” (T1)
 - Need up to 6 weeks for very popular shows
 - 6 months is “too long”, “you may forget” (S1)
- **Read on receipt:**
 - Common pattern in all four locations:
 - “Look through it when it arrives”, “tick what interested in”, “usually see at least one show you would like to go to”, “book then or later” (L1)
- **Critical role for description of show in brochure:**
 - To be clear and concise
 - Inviting and encouraging attendance
 - Enlightening and inspiring
 - Informative on suitability for children (L1)
 - “Good write up” (L1) accompanied by pictures
 - Not:
 - Rex Levitates Dance Company, ‘The Same Jane & Cross Purposes’: *‘The Same Jane is a duet exploring genealogy while Cross Purposes explores speed and relentless opposition’* (T)
 - Co. Cavan Youth Drama: *‘An exciting and vibrant night of theatre, performed by young people from Cavan County Council’s Youth Drama Network’* (V1)

8.2.2. Brochure

- **Size:**
 - Neat and manageable
- **Easy access to information:**
 - Legible font size: Samhlaoicht brochure very illegible: “need a magnifying glass” (T2)
 - At-a-glance chart:
 - “pull out and keep in handbag” (L1)
 - also in WCAC
 - codes easy to read
- **Production quality:**
 - Not necessarily glossy although quality production inspire confidence in the quality of the venue and what it has to offer
- **Seating plan:**
 - Useful if required
- **Branding:**
 - Commendable reaction to ‘Art Beat’ from WCAC: monthly pamphlet

8.3.1. Booking

- **Various approaches:**
 - Phone, in person, internet, walk in
- **Advance booking depends on expected popularity of show:**
 - Expect need to book for local amateurs and popular/well known shows
 - Less urgency for unfamiliar touring productions: “just walk in”, “rarely booked out” (T2: Wallflowering)
- **Disappointed when requested show is booked out:**
 - Pre-book 2 to 3 weeks in advance
 - Especially if received little notice of show
 - Request for more nights: Fr Ahern Jubilee Show (T)
 - Reflective of seating capacity: small for a good show (V2)
- **Cancellation list:**
 - An issue in Virginia (V2)
 - Popular productions: local and professional
 - Need to run for more nights
 - May receive very short notice: 30 minutes: “at eight o’clock for show at eight thirty” (V2)

8.3.2. Booking

- **Tendency for regulars to book on receipt of brochure:**
 - May book a number of shows together
 - Pattern of going to a few in a row and then a gap before go again: depends on what is on
 - “Peaks and hollows”, “depends on what is on” (L1)
- **Usually book more than one seat:**
 - For oneself and companion(s)
 - Also, may book more than one show at a time
- **Disappointed when there is nothing of interest to book:**
 - “With the last programme, I did not book anything at all... there was nothing that interested me”, “I do find now that I am not booking... I used to book that day” of getting the brochure (L2)
- **Return of tickets:**
 - Can return tickets “if you don’t want to go” (V1)

9. MONEY MATTERS



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9.1. Funding of Centres

- **Not a top of mind issue:**
 - Other than in Skibbereen where new location is planned; fund-raising in progress
- **Unsure:**
 - Expect local government
 - Also, Arts Council

9.2. Arts Council

Familiar name

- **Mentioned spontaneously**
- **Grants & other funding**
- **Professional productions**
- **Touring productions**
- **Regular and obscure productions:**
 - Romanian performance got arts grant but a “peculiar” (T2) show!
 - “Some are only there because they got grants” (T2)
- **Unsure how Arts Council selects productions:**
 - Suspicious of brown envelopes and political clout (T2)
 - Removed from local area: operated from Dublin
- **Supporting artists and performers:**
 - To tour (s)

9.3.1. Price

- **Conscious of price:**
 - Not free
 - Usually pay for more than one ticket and drinks at least
- **Price of ticket is one element of night out:**
 - Price of drinks: €1 for tea and €3.50 for bottle of wine: “two bottles would be €7” (V1)
 - Usually paying for two or more
- **Price determines quality of show and origin of production company:**
 - “Different prices” determine “the grades of the show” (V2)
 - €8 and €5 for Co. Cavan Youth Drama is “not expensive”: “probably for the parents” (V1)
- **Expect to be cheaper locally than in Dublin**
- **Expect to be more expensive for professional productions:**
 - E.g. €12-€20 for local amateur drama compared to €25-€30 for touring professional musician/singer
 - Aware spend more outside of local venue: €35 in INEC (T) to €60 + in Point
- **Assume ticket price subsidized for touring productions:**
 - Courtesy of grants received
 - Otherwise may have to pay €50 to €60 per ticket (T)

9.3.2. Price

- **Concessions and group rates:**
 - Brochure suggests “come and haggle”: did not know this (L1)
 - Request for group price in Virginia
- **Generally satisfied with venue price:**
 - €15 is “good value” (T1)
 - “The price is very reasonable... student concessions” (L1)
 - “Fair to ok” (L2)
 - “Excellent”, “value for money”, “OAP concession” (V1)
 - “Reasonable” (V2)
 - Comparatively price of touring company is dearer and less satisfactory



“If you like the act or the artist, the price doesn’t matter” (V1)

9.4. Season Ticket

- **Little mention of**
- **Associated with:**
 - Film club: €40 for 11 films in Virginia
 - 3 for 2: Druid, Siamsa (T)
- **Attractive concept:**
 - Offers a saving
- **Discerning appeal:**
 - Need to be sure avail of all events in the package
- **A commitment:**
 - Need to attend all events to acquire the saving
- **Appeal for option:**
 - Season ticket for package of events as well as ability to purchase per individual event

9.5. Friends / Cairde Scheme

- **Low familiarity with**
- **Economic decision:** assessed on personal benefit:
 - What is in it for me?, the cost to me
 - Little benefit other than complimentary tickets to unpopular shows: “prefer to pick my own show” (T1) (L1)
 - “It only suits what you don’t want to see” (L2)
- **Limited interest in being patrons of venue:**
 - A form of funding for the venue
 - Expect it is of more interest to business
- **Dismissed for selfish reasons:**
 - By regulars and occasional alike
 - “It is not a benefit to me!” (T1)

9.6. Complimentary Ticket

- **Familiar with concept**
- **Usually:**
 - “If the show is not popular so that the place will not be empty” (V1)
- **Not a very attractive proposition:**
 - In light of its association with the non-popular shows

9.7. Gift Tokens

- **Only mentioned by one person in one venue:**
 - A Tralee regular
- **Appealing to others**
 - For personal use and as a gift

10. SERVICE



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10.1. Service

- **Not a top of mind issue:**
 - Service delivery from staff is generally good
 - No complaints, no issues

10.2. Community Service

- **Venues deliver a community service**
- **Providing a space for local productions to perform / exhibit their works:**
 - “Supports my creativity” (S2)
- **Bringing in touring productions:** adding diversity to the programme
- **Providing a comfortable & welcoming venue for enhancing social activity in the community:**
 - “Like your sitting room”, “like your second sitting room”, “going into the parlor” (T1)
- **Providing facilities for outreach activities & local classes:**
 - In the area of arts & culture: dance, drama, visual art, literature, etc.
- **Making arts and culture more accessible to the local community:**
 - Shows & events
 - Outreach
- **But expensive for local groups to rent:**
 - Tralee, Letterkenny: “€1,000 a night” (T2)
 - Pressure to get sponsorships, pressure to fill seats
 - By comparison, professional productions are subsidized but do not fill seats!
- **Sense of local ownership:**
 - “It would be nice to have some input into it” (S1: new building for WCAC)
 - “Even to have your child photographed in the pamphlet” (S2): 6 respondents in Skibbereen were featured or had a family member featured in the brochure

11. VENUE FEATURES



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11.1.1. Venue Requirements

- **Location:**
 - Passing crowd / visibility
 - Easy access
- **Parking:**
 - Essential
 - Nearby
 - Free
 - Adequate capacity
- **Seating capacity:**
 - Determines audience experience
 - Some shows suit small audiences, others require larger capacity
 - Some shows require intimate setting, others need to cater for large crowd
 - Some shows are seated, others benefit from standing (music)
- **Seating:**
 - Comfort is essential: size, leg room, upholstery, ease of movement
- **View:**
 - Unobstructed
- **Acoustics:**
 - Perfect in all seats

11.1.2. Venue Requirements

- **Aesthetics:**
 - Well presented, good paintwork
 - Town Hall in Skibbereen is “decrepit and run down.... the seats are not great.... the paintwork is poor... it is an uncomfortable venue“ (S2)
- **Clean**
- **Heating:**
 - Warm not cold
- **Refreshments:**
 - Confectionery, soft drinks, tea/coffee, alcohol
- **Spacious gallery space:**
 - To accommodate viewing of large pieces and crowds of people e.g. at opening
- **Cloakroom:** not top of mind
- **Above all: atmosphere:**
 - Intimate or crowd puller
 - Converted church



“People have standards” (S2)
“The venue can make a difference” (L1)

11.2. Identity of the Venues

- **Each venue has a distinct identity**
- **Typically based on:**
 - Its history
 - Its offering
 - Its audience

11.3.1. Identity of Siamsa Tire

- **Primarily a dual identity:**
 1. National folk theatre:
 - Fr Ahern; Mime and Irish language; summer specific; the essence of its identity; own professionals as well as amateurs; specially built performances; better than Riverdance: “our crowd can dance, sing and mime” (T1), occasional may expect “diddley eye”
 2. Contemporary theatre:
 - “Trying to be a general theatre in the winter” (T2) with amateur and professional productions
- **Also, associated with a third identity:**
 3. Training school for professionals
 - This association is primarily made by regulars
 - Three locations, reputable training, from childhood to adulthood
- **Siamsa holds onto its original identity in the summer:**
 - While this is to be applauded respondents welcome more diversity but they do not want it to be too contemporary

11.3.2. Identity Siamsa Tire

- **The name ‘Siamsa Tire’ is meaningful:**
 - ‘Siamsa Tire’ is seen to mean “people’s theatre” (T2)
 - ‘Siamsa’ itself is translated as “fun”, “sport” (T2)
- **“We’d be very proud of Siamsa”** (T1)
 - In the town
 - Own professional Folk Theatre productions in summer
 - International audience
 - Reliable and consistent
 - Family members trained there

11.4.1. Identity of WCAC

- **Primarily a gallery space:**
 - Monthly turnover of exhibitions
 - Members exhibition:
 - spread across 4 venues in the region: Baltimore, Castletownbere, Sherkin Island, Skibereen
 - “you don’t know where your work is going to exhibit”, “you don’t even go to the opening” (S1); so not as engaged
 - only one painting per artists: “you used to be able to put in two paintings” (S1)
- **Also, cinema space:**
 - Film club
- **And a learning space:**
 - Variety of classes: for children & adults; developing & inspiring art in the area
 - Drop into gallery en route to/from classes
- **A growing space:**
 - Planning to move location and expand offering:
 - gallery space, performance space, coffee shop
 - “potential is huge”, “providing more space for local artists to permanently show their work” (S1)
 - Fund-raising still in progress
 - Appeal for middle of town & retaining old bakery façade

11.4.2. Identity of WCAC

- **A community space:**
 - A drop in facility
 - Facilitating the engagement in and enjoyment of art & culture
 - Mobilizing fund-raising activities by the community for the community
 - Photographs of locals in the WCAC brochure
- **An artist space:**
 - Linking local artists together with each other
 - Linking local artists with artists from outside the area
 - A source of career development for artists
 - Members feel connected with the centre and have a sense of ownership of WCAC
- **Three key targets:**
 - Children: classes and school work; engages parents through this
 - Creative people: engaged in the art form, supporting their work, supplying space to work in, offering classes & workshops to attend
 - Tourists: browsers
- **But a limited space in terms of:**
 - Its offering: - visual art only
 - although classes extend its programme
 - Its physical structure: - small gallery spaces
 - tight reception

11.5.1. Identity of An Grianán

- **Well established:**
 - Serving Letterkenny for 5 to 6 years
- **A public facility:**
 - A place to go
- **Comprehensive offering:**
 - Theatre, gallery, bar/coffee shop, classes
 - Opportunity to be more diverse in its variety of shows and events
- **Comfortable facility:**
 - Informal, casual, social entertainment
 - With room for improvement in practical terms: the foyer space, bar offering, toilets, gallery space...
- **Community service:**
 - Performance venue for local groups, clubs, schools
 - But expensive to hire
- **Impressive capacity:**
 - “450 seats”, “not too small and not too big” (L1)
 - “300 seats”, “600 seats” (L2)
- **Interpretation of the name:**
 - ‘Grianán’ means: “round stone circle”, “sun worship”, “place of the sun”
- **But distant relationship with respondents:**
 - No reference to ownership
 - Consumers rather than engagers
 - Passive rather than active audiences

11.5.2. Identity of An Grianán

New Arts Centre opening

- **Some awareness of it:**
 - Greater among regulars than occasionals
 - Uncertain of what it has to offer and how it will sit alongside An Grianán
 - Expect it may open July '07
- **Compliment or compete with An Grianán?**
 - Compliment:
 - “central venue in town” for “the arts and wellbeing in the middle of town” (L1) with the theatre, the arts centre, the tennis club and the swimming pool all located adjacent to each other
 - expected to focus attention on the arts and to increase public awareness of what is on offer in Letterkenny
 - expect may attract more arts and culture to Letterkenny
 - Competition:
 - similar space adjacent to An Grianán: “will it conflict with An Grianán?” (L2)
 - offering similar facilities?: auditorium & gallery; may hold concerts and art exhibitions
 - as well as additional facilities: dance studio (first in town) (L1)
 - expect to be an information centre: book tickets, make enquiries... (L1)
- **Modern appearance:**
 - “Dramatic looking building”, “Cunningheim”



**Positive sense about its potential contribution to Letterkenny
but unsure of what exactly it is going to offer and how it will sit with An Grianán**

11.6.1. Identity of The Ramor

- **About ten years old**
- **Local church:**
 - An old church renovated as a theatre
- **Strong pride in it:**
 - “One of the best things ever” (V1)
 - Would be “devastated if it closed” (V1) (V2)
- **Part of the community:**
 - Offering an alternative night out to the pub
 - After the show, can still go to the pub
 - Enhances social activity in the town
 - Great venue for schools and local drama groups to perform (V2)
 - For visitors and friends
- **Promotes arts and culture:**
 - “Promotes our own culture” (V1)
 - “Offering a wide variety: musicals, comedies, etc” (V2)
- **Convenient:**
 - “The Ramor is handy”, do not have to travel far to see a play (V1)

11.6.2. Identity of The Ramor

- **County Council:**
 - Run by the County Council (v2)
 - Funded by the County Council (v2)
- **Well managed by Mary Hanley**
- **Nomad:**
 - Unaware of
 - Commendable: proud of Ramor in being part of this: “having the courage to do it”, “good on them”, “show it off” (v1)
 - Enhances influence of Ramor: Ramor alone is “parochial... being part of a group makes it more influential” (v1)
 - Should offer “economies of scale” in terms of costs and prices (v1)
 - Should grow awareness of Ramor: “known in more places”, “broadening the net” (v1)



“Excellent”, “best thing that ever happened to Virginia” (v2)

Extol its virtues and tolerate its short-comings

11.7. Assessment of Venues

	Siamsa	WCAC	An Grianan	Ramor
Location	5	4	5	5
Range of art forms	4	4	4	4
Range of shows & events	4	3	4	5
Quality of shows & events	4	4	4	4
Quality of public spaces	5	3	4	4
Marketing	3	4	4	4
Booking service	5	5	5	4
Price of tickets	4	5*	4	4
Quality of service	5	5	5	5

Scale: 1 = 'poor' to 5 = 'excellent'

* Price of classes

12. TRALEE



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12.1. Tralee: Venues Visited

In Region	Outside Region
<p>Tralee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CYMS years ago: no longer• Local hotels• Siamsa Tire, Tralee• Sports Complex, Tralee <p>Outside Tralee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ballybunion: Tintan• Castleisland: Iveagh• Killarney: INEC• Listowel: St. John's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abbey• Gate• Limerick University• Millstreet, Cork• NCH• Olympia• Opera House, Cork• Point• Wexford Opera <ul style="list-style-type: none">• London• Italy

12.2. Tralee: Recall of Touring Productions

By company	By other
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abbey• Anna Manahan• Ballet Ireland / Irish Ballet• Ballymac Drama Group• Brendan Grace• Druid• Guna Nua• Harlem Gospel Singers• Irish Opera Theatre• Kettler• Macnas• Niall Tobin• Riverdance• RTE Symphony Orchestra• Three Tenors• Tommy Tiernan• Welsh Ballet Group• Zyber Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drama:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Chamber Maid– I Keano– Romanian performance– Trousers• International Women's day

12.3. Siamsa: Positives

- **The fact it exists in Tralee:** live theatre/entertainment: music, dance, song, drama
- **The building:** lovely
- **Art forms:** “good mix” (T1), “covers a lot” (T2)
- **Variety of shows:** “good mix”, “lots of shows a month” (T1); Folk Theatre productions, musicals, ballet, plays; amateur & professional; art exhibitions
- **Quality of shows:** mixed reactions: “could be a bit better” (T2)
- **Good timekeeping:** shows “start dead on time” (T2)
- **Facilities:**
 - Seating: new, more leg room, “fabulous”, although colour may not wear well (T2)
 - Layout of theatre
 - Semi-circle stage
 - Improvement to foyer; spacious foyer
 - Acoustics
 - “Spotlessly clean” (T1)
 - “Like your sitting room” (T1): comfort, community
 - Bar: “Irish coffee... during the summer” (T1)
- **Atmosphere:** social event, good evening out
- **Service of staff:** friendly & helpful, “excellent” (T2)
- **Notice of events**
- **Location:** “excellent” (T1)(T2)
- **Parking:** adjacent, free

12.4. Siamsa: Negatives

- **Programme:**
 - There is not enough on offer; would like more plays, opera, ballet, professional theatre
 - Would like less obscure shows
 - Would like different art exhibitions
 - Summer programme: geared to tourists, locals miss out, “starved of drama for three months” (T1)
- **Inconsistent quality/standard of shows:** lapsed occasionals disappointed in quality of touring shows
- **Marketing:** could improve; poor ticket sales; email event list
- **Atmosphere:** small audiences affects atmosphere
- **Limited bar facility:** wine only, small size; congestion at bar during interval: “same in every theatre” (T2)
- **Allowing food & drink in auditorium**
- **No one to replace Martin Whelan:** as front of house
- **Seating:** need more, dislike new seating
- **Toilets:** small, hand-drier ineffective
- **Parking:** “harassment” (T2) having to pay although free in evening
- **Nothing**

13. SKIBBEREEN



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13.1. Skibbereen: Venues Visited

In Region	Outside Region
<p>Skibbereen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bars & cafes: local artists exhibit work• Catholic Church• Church of Ireland Church: Abbeysturery• Library• Townhall• WCAC <p>Outside Skibbereen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alahees• Ballydehob• Baltimore: incl. Glebe Gallery (indoor theatre & outdoor amphitheatre)• Bantry House• Cape Clear• Rosscarbery• Rossmore• Sherkin Islands• Skull	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cork:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Galleries: Crawford, Fenton, Triscal– Theatres: Everyman, Opera House• Carrick-on-Shannon: Dock• Dublin:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Galleries, museums• Enniskillen: theatre & gallery• Roscommon Arts Centre• Tralee • London:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– “it is nearly easier to see in London than in Dublin” (S1)

13.2. Skibbereen: Recall of Touring Productions

By company

- Abbey
- Amanda Coogan (performance artist)
- Baltimore Amateur Drama (BAD)
- Cork School of Music
- Lambert Puppet Theatre
- Macnas
- Macra Na Feirme
- Mary Black
- Opera House
- Opera Theatre Company
- Red Kettle
- RTE Symphony Orchestra
- Skibbereen Theatre Society
- West Cork Choral Society
- West Cork Craft Guild
- West Cork Singers

By other

- Drama:
 - John B Keane plays
- Music:
 - Skibbereen Bell Ringers
 - West Cork chamber & classical music
- Visual art:
 - Cartoons
 - International artists
 - Local artists

13.3. WCAC: Positives

- **Community:**
 - Social environment: meet people with the same interests
 - Give great support to locals of all ages & backgrounds
 - Friendly, welcoming, approachable, relaxed
 - Enables people to appreciate art in various forms on their own door step
 - Links artists into the community
- **Gallery space:** large
- **Location:** “good”, “handy” (S1)
- **Parking:** opposite
- **Classes:**
 - Children and adults
 - Day & evening
 - Wide variety
 - Great accessibility
- **Staff:** friendly
- **Diverse range of artists:** local & international
- **Diverse range of mediums**
- **Variety of styles:**
 - “Challenging work e.g. video art” (S1) (S2), “children's work” (S2)
 - “Fantastic”, “great” (S2)

13.4. WCAC: Negatives

- **Entrance / reception area:** “dire” (S1)
- **Class room / workspace:** small size, light is poor, single room
- **Poor state of building:** run down
- **Limited gallery space:**
 - “Cramped” and “stuffy” when busy with people – especially at an opening
 - Insufficient to view large piece: “you need space to appreciate and view it” (S2)
- **Variety:**
 - Limited
 - Request for greater diversity of art forms
 - Broader range of artists
 - More classes and courses
 - “Too much abstract art” (S2)
- **No retail:** there used to be a shop selling paintings
- **Location:**
 - Could be more central
 - “Not many pass...only those who go to the church and the library” (S1)
- **Attitude of some staff members**

14. LETTERKENNY



14.1. Letterkenny: Venues Visited

In Region	Outside Region
<p>Letterkenny:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ace of Arts: shop• An Grianán• Arts Centre• Library• Local hotels• Local pubs• School <p>Outside Letterkenny:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ballybofey: Balor• Derry: Millenium Forum, Nerve Centre• Dunfanahy• Dunlooey• Fanad• Glebe Gallery• Lifford Courthouse• Omagh Folk Park• Ramelton: Town Hall• Strabane	<p>GAA NCH Point RDS Vicar St</p> <p>Birmingham London</p>

14.2. Letterkenny: Recall of Touring Productions

By company

- Abbey
- Balor Players
- Ballet Ireland
- Brendan Grace
- Brian Kennedy
- Conal Gallen
- Des Bishop
- Des Bishop & Rosie Linehan
- Druid
- Freddie White
- Glen Hansen, The Frames
- James Galway
- Lifford Players
- Macbeth
- Playhouse Production
- Proclaimers
- Rebecca Storm
- Riverdance (coming)
- Sharon Shannon
- Solus
- Waterboys

By other

- Local writer:
 - 'Children of the Dead End
- Mick Lally:
 - 'Matchmaker', 'Sive'
- TV personality:
 - Clarke: artist

14.3.1. An Grianán: Positives

Mostly emotional reasons – practical too

- **It's existence:**
 - “Being there”, “there was nothing before here in Letterkenny” (L2)
- **Location:**
 - Centre of town
 - Local to home
 - Can walk to it and walk up town after
 - Easy by car
- **Range of art forms:**
 - Wide range
- **Variety of shows and events:**
 - Mixed reaction
 - “Range of events available”, “the variety of entertainment available on our doorstep”, “professional acts performing”, “it provides a sociable place to see events otherwise unavailable” (L2)
- **Quality of shows & events:**
 - “Excellent”, “not disappointed” (L1)
 - “Always enjoyed what is on there” (L2)
- **Marketing:**
 - Brochure is “really good” (L1)
- **Booking:**
 - “Very good” (L2)
- **Price:**
 - Reasonable (L1)

14.3.2. An Grianán: Positives

- **Building:**
 - “Well designed” (L1)
- **Theatre seats:**
 - Adequate: “good enough”, “not as good as cinema” (L1)
 - “Auditorium is very comfortable” (L2)
- **Stage:**
 - Impressive size: “it is a great size for dance companies” (L2)
- **Café:**
 - “Lovely lunches” (L1)
- **Toilets:**
 - “Excellent” (L2)
- **Foyer:**
 - Small: get to meet people
- **Service:**
 - “Very helpful”, “excellent”, “lovely”, “friendly staff” (L1)
 - “Friendly”, “helpful” (L2)
- **Atmosphere:**
 - “Friendly”, “comfortable”, “relaxing”, “casual... you do not have to dress up” (L1)
 - “Sociable to meet people”, “great place for a pleasant evening” (L2)
- **Accessible:**
 - Accessible to everyone
 - Bringing art and culture to all
 - Informal: “you don’t have to dress up, you can go casually” (L1)

14.4.1. An Grianán : Negatives

- **Range of art forms:**
 - “Middling” (L2)
- **Variety of shows and events:**
 - Can be repetitive: “tend to trot out the same thing” within a year, “crowd pleasers” (L1)
 - Not enough diversity to suit different tastes: “there is a lack of diversity in programming” (L2)
 - “The balance between programming has changed”, “there wasn’t single thing there in this brochure”, “too much comedy acts”, “need more diversity” (L2)
 - “Not enough traditional music”, “lack of good classical music” (L2)
- **Quality of shows:**
 - “There has been a decrease in the quality of plays... awful”, “the quality of events has dropped a bit” (L2)
- **Acoustics:**
 - Inconsistent: poor in places; on stage and in the seating
 - “You wouldn’t catch the tail end of something”, “you have to concentrate” (L1), “dreadful” (L2)
 - Despite this, respondents continue to go and ensue they book a different seat next time or request advice on a good seat
- **Foyer:**
 - Congested area: bottom of stairs: “bottleneck in staircase” (L1)
 - Small lobby: “crowded lobby before the shows”, “difficult to walk around” (L2)
 - Cold in winter
- **One staircase:**
 - “Can get very crowded before and after a show” (L1)
- **Toilets:**
 - Downstairs while theatre entrance upstairs: “no toilet facilities upstairs where the actual theatre is!” (L1)
 - Congested area: “have to go through crowd” (L1)
 - Lead off café downstairs: people visible inside when door open

14.4.2. An Grianán : Negatives

- **Gallery:**
 - Exhibition area is small and can be cluttered
- **Auditorium:**
 - “It can get too warm... fell asleep once” (L2)
- **Bar:**
 - Poor positioning: congested with people sitting, standing and moving
 - Not open after show
 - No tea or coffee in evening
- **Consumption of food & drinks in auditorium:**
 - “Need to be stricter about alcohol consumption in the auditorium... people get loud and boisterous” (L2)
- **Not allowed to stand for bands:**
 - “Have to sit down when there is lively dance music, especially African, jazz, etc” (L2)
- **Price:**
 - “Price of shows.. some are expensive”, “Friend’s discounts” (L2)
- **Time schedule:**
 - Would like more variation in start times: not just 8pm: “early start times for performances”, “too early”, “juggle it about”, also “if shows were on during the day it would open up more for young people to attend” (L1)
 - 8.30pm or 9pm start time for a non-interval show
- **Non-use:**
 - “Come 6 o’clock it goes black’ some evenings; “get irked” to see it closed and not being used , “the number of times I pass and it is in darkness” (L1)
 - Attributed to marketing for not selling seats (L1)
- **Too old an age profile:**
 - Attract younger people: “target schools and give advance notice” (L1)

15. VIRGINIA



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15.1. Virginia: Venues Visited

In Region	Outside Region
<p>Virginia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local pubs: sessions (tin whistle) (V1)• Hotel• School• The Ramor <p>Outside Virginia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bailieboro: church, library• Ballyjamesduff: community hall, museum• Carrigallen• Castleblaney• Cavan: town hall• Cootehill: uilleann pipes• Kells• Leitrim: Cornmill• Longford• Monahan• Navan• Slane: Slane Castle• Slieve Russell, hotel• Tullyallen castle: musical events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abbey• Belfast• Helix• NCH• Point• RDS• Northern Ireland: Riverfront• Vicar Street • Edinburgh• London

15.2. Virginia: Recall of Touring Productions

By company	By other
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Drifters• Bailieboro Drama Group• Ballet Ireland• Big Telly Theatre Company• Carngarth Players• Dana• Eleanor Shanley• Frances Black• Johnny Cash• Jon Kenny• Killeshandra Drama Group• Livin Dred• Lynwood Productions• Nyah• Pioneer Variety Show• Tall Tales• Tommy Fleming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dance:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ballet• Drama:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– John B Keane plays– Stones in his pockets• Music:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Tribute show to Jim Reeves

15.3.1. Ramor: Positives

- **Location:**
 - “Its location”, “closeness to my home” (V1)
 - “It’s local”, “close to town” (V2)
- **Variety of shows:**
 - “Variety of shows available” (V1)
 - “Wide variety of shows” (V2)
- **Building:**
 - Renovated church
- **Auditorium**
 - “Small and intimate” (V1) (V2)
 - No orchestra for ballet: piped music (V1)
 - “Comfortable seating”, “there are no bad seats”, “excellent viewing positions” (V1), “very comfortable seats” (V2)
- **Gallery:**
 - Small: “not a lot of space” (V1)
- **Service:**
 - “Friendly staff”, “the staff are nice” (V1)
 - “Warm friendly service” (V2)
- **Atmosphere:**
 - “Comfort”, “very intimate”, “very sociable” (V1)
 - “Atmosphere”, “comfortable”, “homely”, “sociable”, “happy”, “intimate” (V2)

15.3.2. Ramor: Positives

- **Audience:**
 - “Friendly people” (V1)
 - “Friendliness of people and their enthusiasm for the shows that are on” (V2)
- **Alternative night out:**
 - “It’s a change from going to the pub... it is very interesting” (V2)
- **Visual Art:**
 - Accessible: “not iron bedsteads”, “not modern art” (V1)
- **Wine bar** (V2)
- **Community service:**
 - Delivering arts and culture to Virginia
 - Great venue for schools and local drama groups to present (V2)

15.4. Ramor: Negatives

- **Parking:**
 - “Lack of parking”, “parking is often a problem”, “parking is scarce” (V1)
 - “Lack of parking”, “a major problem... don’t know how it could be improved”, “have to park on corner... dangerous” (V2)
 - Have to park all over town, in hotel car park, on bend
- **Size:**
 - “Seating capacity” is poor, “200 seats” (V1)
 - “Quite small because it is so popular” (V2)
 - Results in certain shows being booked out quickly
- **Variety:**
 - “There is not enough available for young people” (V2)
- **Booking:**
 - “Always booked out for certain shows”, cancellation list (V2)
- **Stairs:**
 - Steps can be awkward for elderly people, “mother-in-law”, “very difficult”, “fear may fall” (V2)
- **Marketing:**
 - Provide more detail on each event: production company, story... (V1)
 - “Get young people interested” (V1)
- **Nothing:**
 - “It’s great overall” (V2) (V1)

16. CONCLUSIONS



16.1. Entertain

- **Arts & culture is expected to entertain:**
 - To engage interest
 - To evoke emotion
 - To reward attention
 - To challenge expectations without losing the audience



**To provide an experience unique to arts and culture
Unlike the pub, the cinema, the night club...**

16.2.1. Programme

- **Diversity is required:**
 - In range of art forms
 - In style of art form: contemporary, classical, traditional...
 - In style of execution: grand production, one-man shows, acts without interval, single media, multi-media...
 - In form of production: professional, amateur, combined
 - In origin of production: local, touring



**It is acceptable that the programme will target different tastes
No person expects the full programme to suit him/her only**

16.2.2. Programme

- **Familiarity is relied upon:**
 - To guarantee a satisfactory experience
 - To sell tickets
 - To deliver the 'full-house' experience for the audience
- **Risk taking needs to be challenged:**
 - Audiences can be risk-averse
 - Based on ignorance and fear of disappointment



Programme needs to evolve the audience's relationship with the art form

Offering contemporary as well as familiar work

16.3. Amateur

- **Amateur is an essential part of the mix:**
 - Expected and sought after
 - Localized community building
 - Delivering quality entertainment
 - Typically familiar work
 - Main draw for occasionals



Inherent in 'our society'
Grew up on and continue to respond to

16.4. Professional

- **The ultimate standard:**
 - High quality productions
 - Delivered by qualified professionals: career-ists
 - Predominantly touring productions although local is possible
 - A mix of familiar and 'risk-taking' work



Audience expectations are at their highest
Less tolerant of disappointment

16.5. Professional Touring Productions

- **Highly welcomed:**
 - Clear understanding of the concept
 - Growing the accessibility of arts and culture in the area
 - Promising quality shows and events to the locals
 - Acknowledging the locality on the national map



Discerning uptake
Need to be good

16.6. Professional Production Companies

- **Assessment based on familiarity:**
 - Company name
 - Style of production
 - Repertoire of productions
 - Reputation
 - Origin



Low level of recall of companies
Audiences need information and direction on their offering

16.7. Marketing

- **Communication is essential:**
 - On all shows and events happening
 - On what the show / event promises to offer
 - On who is delivering that show / event



Critical role for brochure

As part of the marketing mix

Develop means of targeting additional audiences

Challenge audiences to consider shows and events outside the box

16.8. Audience Development

- **Differentiate between the needs and expectations of various audience niches:**
 - To retain regulars: not to lose them with poor quality, repetition, etc.
 - To grow occasionals: beyond their comfort zone
 - To attract non-attenders: especially young audiences



Within the realms of what is possible

In terms of the audience: interest & potential engagement

In terms of the product: diversity & familiarity

17. APPENDIX



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THE TOURING EXPERIMENT

Discussion Outline

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

THE ARTS

What comes to mind when you hear the term ‘**the arts**’?

What sorts of art forms come to mind?

Which **interest you** and why? Which do not interest you and why?

Prompt the non-mentions and ask for level of interest and why.

How well does the **local area cater** for your needs in that regard?

What changes, if any, would you like to see in your area?

EACH ART FORM

Drama, dance, visual art, literature, music...

What is your involvement in this art form?

Do you participate in it in any way: member of local drama society....

How often do you go to a show or a performance or exhibition in that art form?

What **types of shows** interest you? Why? What types do not interest you? Why?

Prompt for differentiation between contemporary and classical/traditional works.

Thinking back over the past twelve months:

How many shows did you go to?

What **times of the year** did you go?

Where were the shows on; what type(s) of venue(s)?

How far did/would you travel to a show? What influences this?

Did you go **alone or accompanied** or both?

Why **types of shows** did you go to? Why did you go to those shows?

How do you **decide to go** to a show or not?

What **influences** whether or not you will go?

How do you **hear** what shows are on – where and when?

What are the best forms of communication for you?

How do you normally **book your tickets**?

How far in advance do you book your tickets? Why

Thinking back over the past 5 years, how have your **habits changed**?

Are you going **more or less often** or about the same? What has affected this change?

Are you going to the same or different **types of shows**? Explain.

Are you going to the same or **different places**? Explain?

SECTION B: VENUES

What **types of venues are in your area** – for engaging in or experiencing arts and culture?

How do you **judge a venue**? How does a venue influence whether or not you will go there?

What type of venues do you **like to go to** and what types do you not?

What would be your **ideal venue**?

Questionnaire: *to ascertain individuals' assessment before discussing as a group?*

How **familiar** are you with your **local Arts Centre**?

How **often** do you visit it?

Why would you go there? Not go there?

How well do you feel you **know it**?

How would you **describe it** to me?

What do you **like** about it? What do you not like about?

How would you **rate the centre** in terms of the following:

- **programme:**
 - recall and actual/likely attendance
 - local & non-local, professional & non-professional: choice, quality, timing, duration/run....
 - what do you particularly like and dislike about each, what changes if any would you like to see happen and why
- **marketing:**
 - advertising, PR, database, reviews, catalogues....
 - what do you particularly like and dislike about each, what changes if any would you like to see happen and why
- **service:**
 - quality of, consistency, attitudes towards the public/audience, expertise in the art form, communication with the public...
 - management, desk, floor, other staff
 - services: booking, web-site...
 - what do you particularly like and dislike about each, what changes if any would you like to see happen and why
- **facilities:**
 - location, parking, lobby, bar, type of spaces (theatre, gallery, etc.), size of spaces, seating, visibility...
 - what do you particularly like and dislike about each, what changes if any would you like to see happen and why
- **cost:**
 - price per ticket, season/annual ticket, specials, 'friends' policy...
 - art-related items: art, CDs, catalogues...
 - what do you particularly like and dislike about each, what changes if any would you like to see happen and why
 - how much does it cost to attend: ticket, interval drinks, babysitter....
- **complete offering from the centre:**
 - range of art forms in general
 - other community based activities: e.g. dance classes....

SECTION C: PROFESSIONAL TOURING EVENTS

PROFESSIONAL TOURING EVENTS: production/show/exhibition

What do you understand by the **term 'professional production/show/exhibition'**?

What do you **compare** it to?

How does it compare to 'semi-professional' or 'amateur'? Give me examples of all.

How does the status of the production/show/exhibition **affect whether you will visit/attend** it? How do your expectations for each differ?

What is your understanding of **'professional touring production/show/exhibition'**?

Which ones are you **familiar with**?

Which ones have you **seen / not seen**?

Which would you **like to see**? Why?

What do you expect of a professional touring group/artist? How does this differ to what you might expect of a local group or a professional group which does not tour?

How do you decide whether to go to a professional touring production?

- **track record**: what type is important...
- **production**: what types are appealing/not appealing, how important is familiarity, what types of risk are you prepared to take...
- **nature**: contemporary, classical/traditional...
- **quality of work**: how is this assessed...
- **local connection**: with the artist, performer, writer, story...
- **duration of run**: how long should a run be, what influences that...
- **time of year**: how does the time of year affect whether you would attend a professional production....
- **cost**: what type of pricing is expected for a professional touring production...
- **branding**: how important is the name, the image, the origin, the style of productions...
- **outreach activities**: what types of activities interest you or work best for the area, does it vary by show type, give examples...
- **presence**: regularity of visits ...
- **reasons for going**: why go / not go to the production, what would be the alternative...

What type(s) of professional touring productions/shows/exhibitions would you **like to see coming to your area**?

What would interest you most?

How would you like to hear about them?

How do you think it would **affect local audiences** generally?

SECTION D: NATIONAL PICTURE

CULTURE IN IRELAND NOWADAYS

What **types** of cultural activities do you think Irish people or people living in Ireland are drawn to nowadays?

What are the **typical associations** with places like the arts centre and how do you think this affects attendance?

What **role** does the local art centre play in this regard? What do you think are its main sources of competition?

How do you see this affecting the **future** of local art centres?

What can the centres do to **attract audiences**?

How do you expect your own attendance to **change in the future**?

What will **influence** that?

How could the venue **serve you better** and/or in different ways?

How do you **maintain and develop your interest in the arts** – other than attending events?

For example:

- watching on media: TV, cinema....
- purchase of items: piece of art, CDs/DVDs, books, downloads....
- attendance at classes: dance, acting, poetry....
- membership of clubs/societies: drama society, book club....

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

What is your opinion on the **current level of spending** on the arts by the Government?

How do you think it should be? Why is that?

Where do you think the Government should allocate its spending on the arts? Why?



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Thank you