

Ulster Touring Opera
presents
A Night at the Opera

Audience Report
April 2022



Why are we here?

Ulster Touring Opera's "A Night at the Opera" ran from **5th – 25th February**, with 7 performances in total at different venues, including 4 in Northern Ireland and 3 in the Republic of Ireland.

The following report will explore:

- *Audiences' experiences of Ulster Touring Opera performances*
- *Audiences' motivations and behaviours*
- *Feedback on the augmented reality experience*

How was the research conducted?



The survey was distributed in paper format as well as online. The paper format was available on audience seats at each venue, as well as given directly to participants of the AR experience. Online surveys were sent to the event's ticket holders by the venues.

Data was collected on SurveyMonkey from **20th February to 7th March**, and gathered **116 responses** in total. There was almost an even split between responses from the in-person and online surveys.

All open-ended responses can be found in a separate Appendix document.

Table of Contents

	Page
Summary of findings	5
Section One: Who are Ulster Touring Opera's audiences?	8
Section Two: What do audiences think about Ulster Touring Opera?	13
Section Three: What do audiences think about Augmented Reality Opera?	19
Section Four: Insights and Recommendations	23

Summary of findings



Objective

Learn who Ulster
Touring Opera
audiences are

What we learned

- Respondents are in general **an older audience group**. More than 80% of respondents were aged above 45, with over a third aged above 65. Around 4% are aged below 35.
- 71% of respondents attended due to their **interest in Opera**.
- Around two-thirds of audiences said they attended UTO's events in order to be **entertained and to enjoy** themselves.
- Audiences enjoyed attending UTO's events as it allowed rural areas to experience Opera in their local venues without having to travel further locations.

Objective

Learn what audiences think of Ulster Touring Opera's Augmented Reality opportunities

What we learned

Many respondents found the Augmented Reality an interesting experience and were surprised by its ability to look so realistic, making it a nice bonus to the Opera performances. They were interested in the possibilities to be able to bring Opera into their own home.

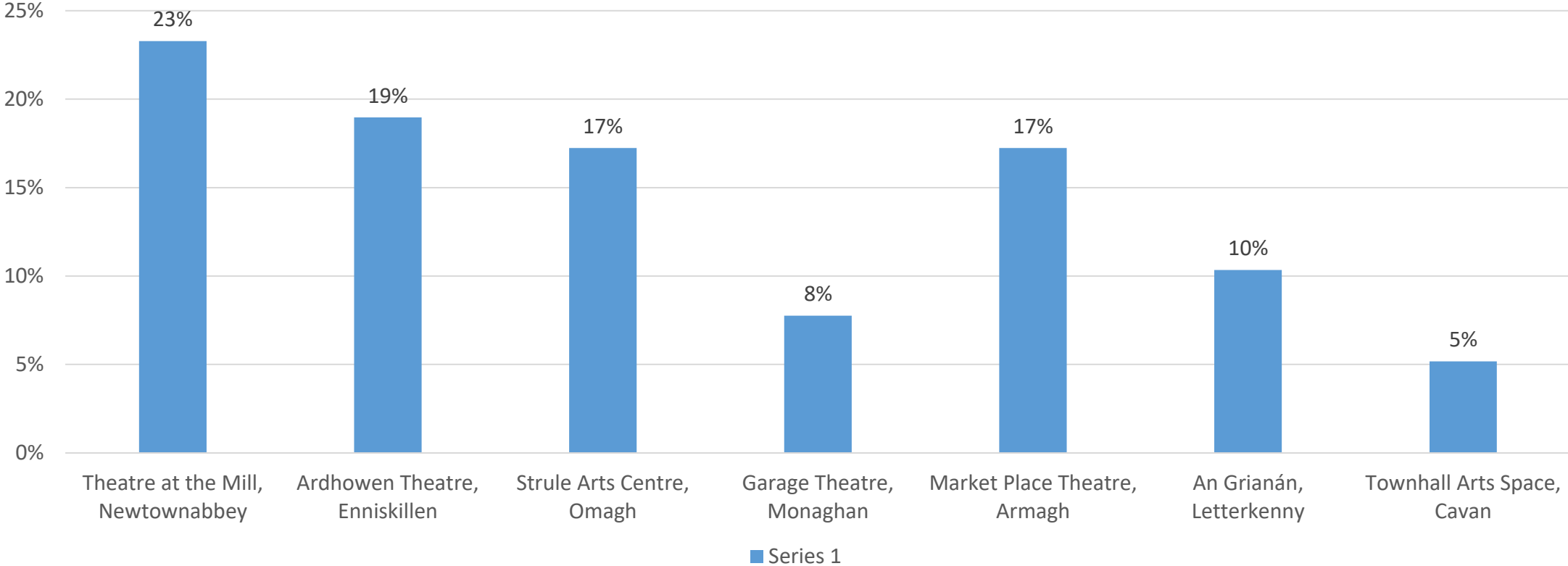
Not all audience members participated in the augmented reality experience, and some noted not understanding what the term meant. The technology is relatively new, particularly for an older demographic. In the future, we would recommend to find alternative, simpler ways to communicate with your audiences, so everyone will be able to grasp the concept of augmented reality.

Section One

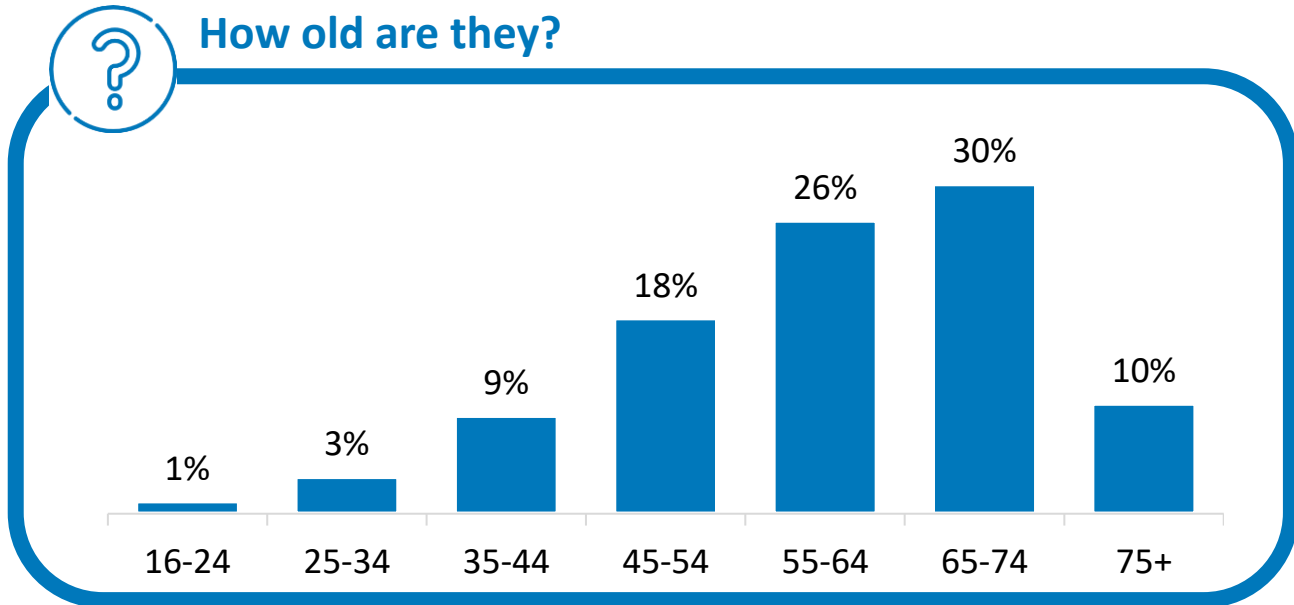
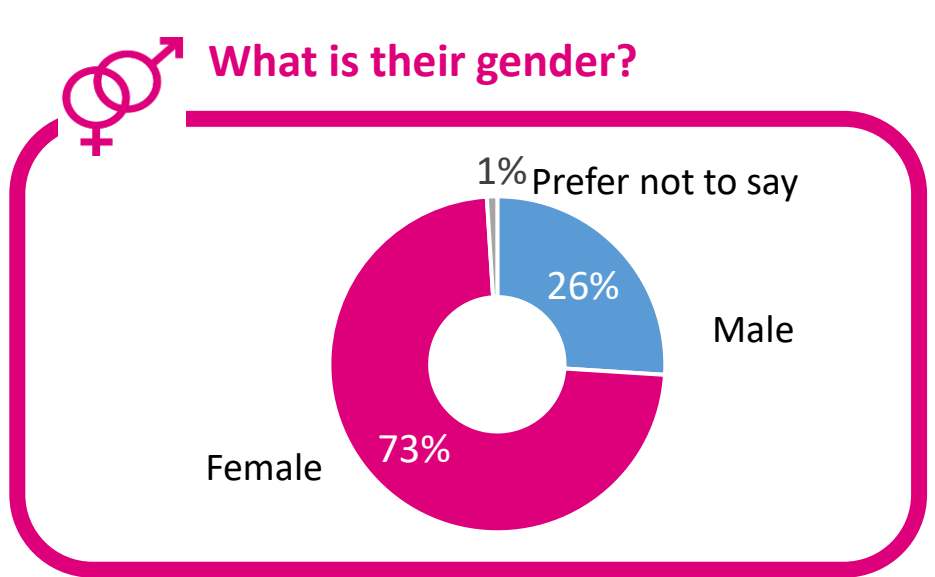
Who are Ulster Touring Opera's audiences?

Most responses came from audiences who attended A Night at the Opera at Theatre at the Mill, Ardhoven Theatre, the Market Place Theatre and Strule Arts Centre. These venues were able to follow up with ticket holders by sending them the link to the online survey. An Grianan in Letterkenny also shared the link with bookers, but as they hosted one of the last performances of A Night at the Opera, their collection time was shorter than for others.

Which performance of A Night at the Opera did you attend?



Almost three-quarters of respondents were female. More than 80% of respondents were aged above 45, with over a third aged above 65. One in five respondents have children in their household and 8% of respondents have a disability. No respondents identified as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic.



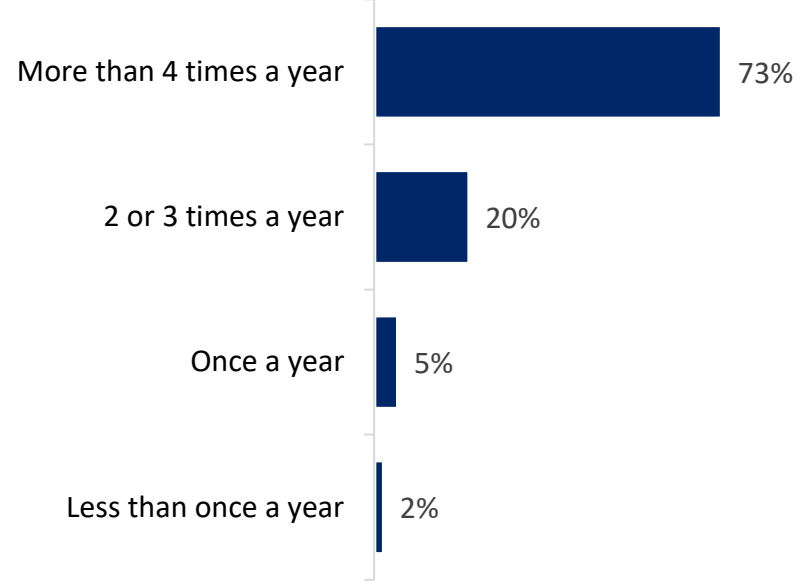
19% of respondents have children within their household

22% of respondents mentioned going for a meal or a local drink before/after their visit to A Night at the Opera

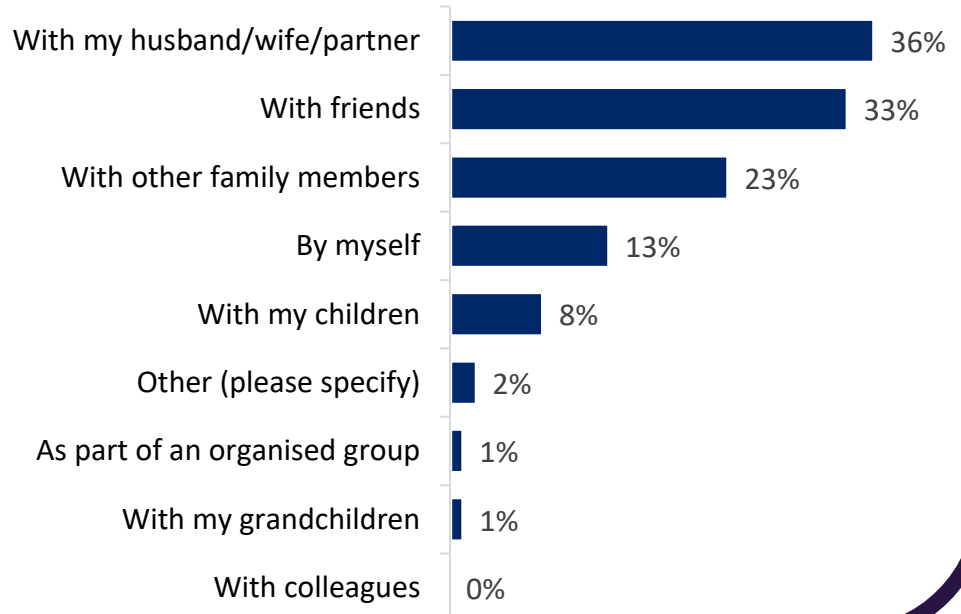
8% of respondents have a disability/long-term health condition

Respondents indicated that they were frequent attenders of arts and culture events. Respondents most frequently attended Ulster Touring Opera events with their husband/wife/partner (36%), followed by friends (33%) and other family members (23%).

In general, how often would you say do you engage in cultural experiences?



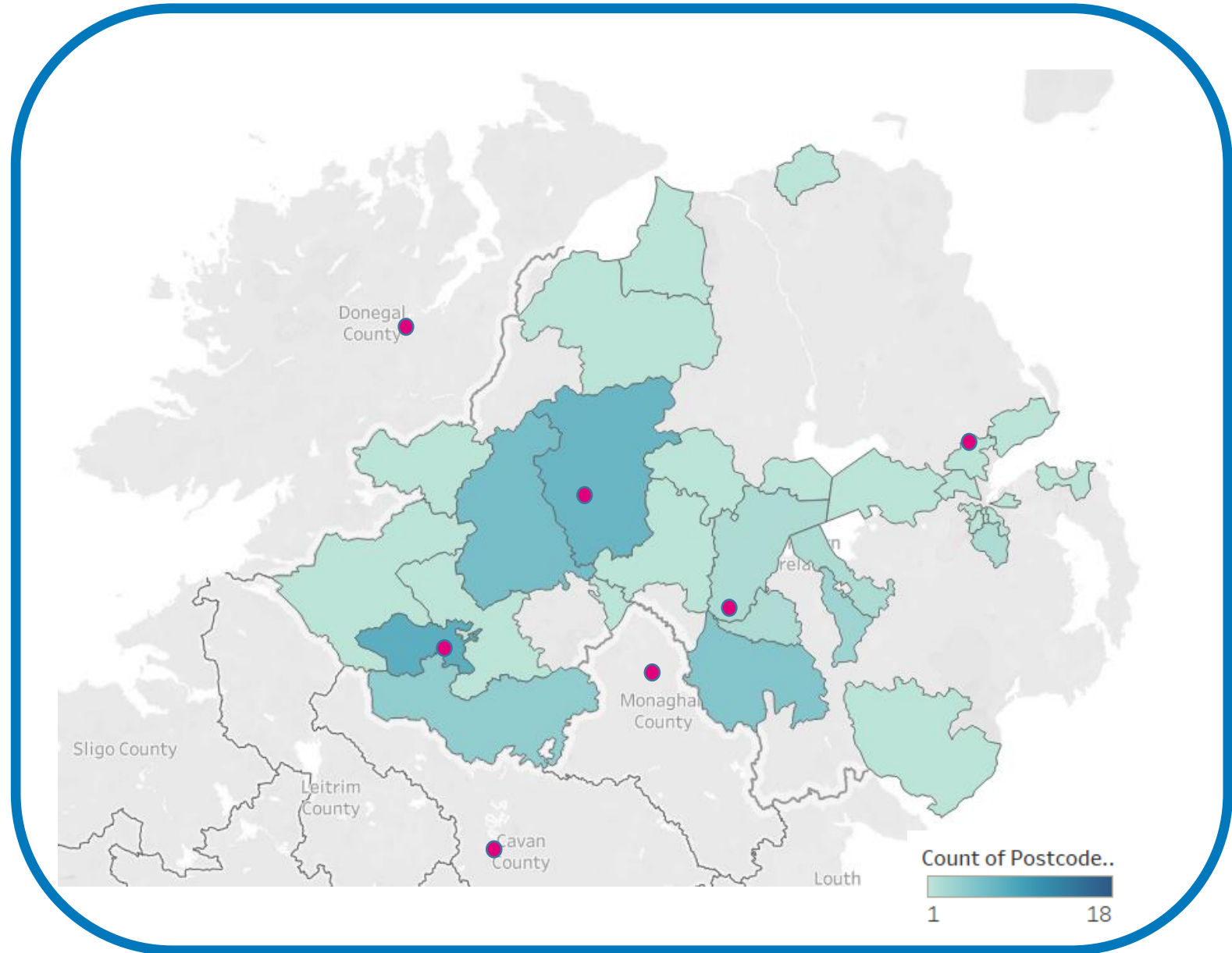
Who did you attend Ulster Touring Opera with?



76% of respondents are based in Northern Ireland where 4 of the 7 performances were held.

A remaining 23% were from ROI, 1 respondent had come from Wales.

This map shows the locations of each venue, in red, and a representation of where UTO attendees came from in NI, in blue and green.

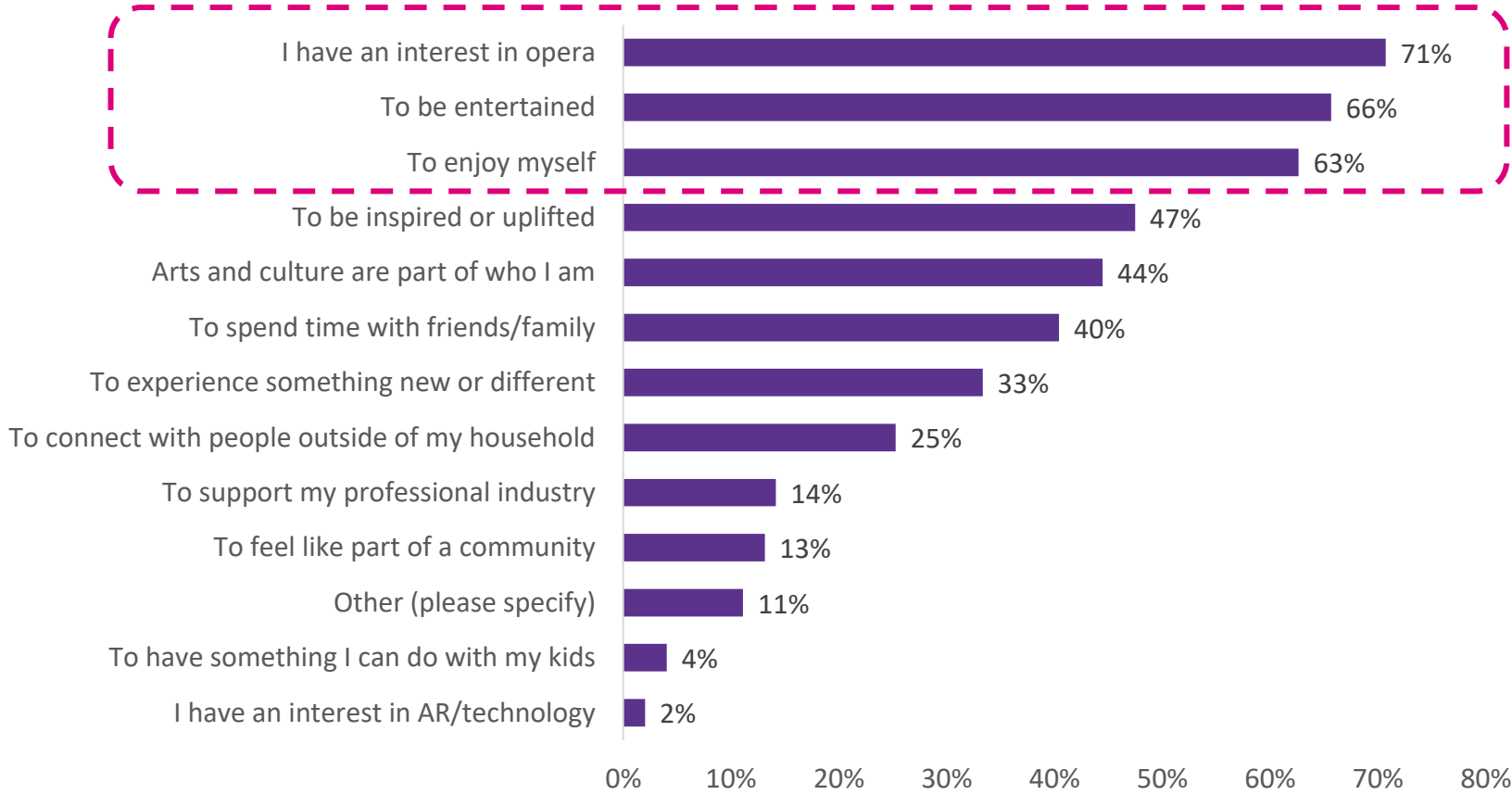


Section Two:

What do audiences think
about Ulster Touring Opera?

People chose to attend A Night at the Opera mostly due to their interest in Opera. Many also wanted to be entertained and to enjoy themselves.

Why did you choose to come to Ulster Touring Opera?



2% of audiences made the choice to attend the event due to their interest in Augmented Reality.

Audiences rated their experience at Ulster Touring Opera events very highly and 95% would probably/definitely recommend an Ulster Touring Opera event to their friends or family. This is a great response from attendees as we know word of mouth and trusted personal recommendations make a real impact on bringing in new audiences to events.

How likely would you be to recommend an Ulster Touring Opera event to your family/friends?

4.8/5 



The performances were well enjoyed and perceived as very professional and talented. Audiences enjoyed the atmosphere and found it was a very relaxed and pleasant evening of music. A few respondents also mentioned how they appreciated that UTO brought Opera to their local area.



Please let us know what you enjoyed most at this event

- “What a **truly magnificent show** in Cavan Town Hall last night. It was wonderful to have such talent perform in our local Town Hall. Thank you for your **professional and entertaining performances** during such a bad spell of weather. Each and everyone of you **brought your own beautiful talents to life**. You lifted all our hearts. **Can't wait for your return visit**. It's such a shame you didn't have a larger audience, but your small intimate audience were very appreciative. **Thank you for the music.**”
- “The whole **ambiance of the event. It was a night outand out of the ordinary**”
- “I enjoyed everything about tonight, if there were more events like this I would go”
- “The quality of the event was very good in many respects: the singing was superb; the set was well done and stage layout worked well; the ladies wardrobes were fabulous.”
- “The presentation and the pleasant informal nature of the show. Not an operatic drama which has its place but a good jolly occasional indulgence.”
- “The programme was very helpful! **Having opera “local” was key!** We wouldn't be able to make it to Belfast. The set was brilliant”
- “I enjoyed the way the stage was set creating a **warm expectant atmosphere**. The presentation throughout and interview with the performers making it a **relaxed and friendly event**. I enjoyed the range of songs and music some familiar and some not previously known.”
- “I liked the intimacy. I enjoyed the humorous side of the performances and each of the artists engaged well with the audience”

Somewhat surprisingly audiences noted a number of simple moves that had a big impact on their enjoyment of “A Night at the Opera” performances. Little extras such as the interviews with the performers, the inviting nature of the compere and the helpful information in the programmes about the performances were all greatly appreciated.

Please let us know what you enjoyed most at this event



- “John Toal is a unique presenter. We love him! The singers had great personalities. We loved the baritone”
- “I thought the regular information and the interviews with the sopranos was very important to the show”
- “I enjoyed the way the stage was set creating a warm expectant atmosphere. The presentation throughout and interview with the performers making it a relaxed and friendly event. I enjoyed the range of songs and music some familiar and some not previously known.”
- “Obviously the absolutely amazing singers, and the gentleman who introduced us to the story of each piece, hugely entertaining and relevant”
- “The whole event went really smoothly. The singing was excellent, and the compering was informative and amusing. Well done to all concerned and let's have lots more.”
- “Introduction of different sections and arias with their context was excellent , interview of performers with explanation of their usual roles was refreshing and quality of performances superb”
- “The singers were great as was the pianist. And the acting really added to the performance. also liked the translations in the programme”

Respondents were in general very positive about their experience at Ulster Touring Opera. There were very few points given for areas to improve in. Some would like to see more from UTO, with longer performances and more instrumental to add to the overall sound of the performance.



Please let us know if there is anything we could improve on:

- “The only negative about the show was that it was too short. I think that anything less than one hour each half is too short.”
- “It was all very enjoyable from the piano player to all four singer and the MC added a lot with his introductions and interviews. I would have liked to hear more instrumental from Ruth McGinley.”
- “I liked it all, especially pieces sung in Italian. What I’d like to see is probably the whole opera or parts of them at least (acted and sung) and I’d love to see an orchestra or at least a few instruments accompanying the singing, not just piano.”
- “A larger audience would lead to an enhanced atmosphere. It must have been hard for the performers to feel engaged as there were only approx. 40 people present. Such a shame.”
- “I liked how John Toal placed the performances in context but to be honest I was just swept away by the music and performances, so it didn't really matter. I did buy the programme but couldn't read it in the dark. Maybe the option to buy a programme in advance.”

Section Three:

What do audiences think
about Augmented Reality
Opera?

Audiences were mostly satisfied with the Augmented Reality experience. Almost half of respondents would be likely to use the UTO Augmented Reality again, 37% were unsure if they would try again. As most respondents had attended the events for their interest in Opera rather than technology, it is important to ensure there is clear communication about the potential of AR to deepen their experiences.

How likely would you be to use the Ulster Touring Opera Augmented Reality experience again?

3.7/5 



Using sentiment analysis, 83% of respondents answered positively about their experiences with the Augmented Reality experience. 40% of those less interested in the AR experience were aged 75+ while all those who enjoyed it were below the age of 75, with the majority of that group being 35-54.

If you used the Augmented Reality experience, can you tell us about how it added to your evening?



- Fabulous invention. Amazing augmented reality brought a very interesting warm up to the show
- A lovely bonus
- Was very interesting and good fun
- Very interesting, great for people who can't get out and about
- It was a great experience and lovely to listen too
- It was amazing to see the possibilities from an app in your home
- Something different!
- Such a real life experience
- I absolutely love this, truly magical. I told everyone about it and not something I will forget.
- It was a great surprise and very enjoyable. It kept the evening going
- It was great to know that there is new apps to access further opera experiences
- It was a wonderful experience
- Interesting and intriguing!
- Increased understanding of the value of AR in enhancing the opera experience
- Prefer face to face
- Not technology skilled. Did not grasp its potential
- Don't think it added anything much to my evening
- It didn't
- Very little.

Many respondents did not have any suggestions to add to the AR experience and enjoyed it as it was. As some had noted they could not comment on the AR experience due to time constraints, others had also suggested including additional screens to use or to access the experience through their own devices. Others noted that they didn't fully grasp the potential of the experience and would appreciate more context and information to understand the process.

What would you like to change about our Augmented Reality experience?



- Higher fidelity picture
- Virtual screens throughout the building
- Make it more accessible to grasp experience
- Use my own device
- More iPads / availability- model is great
- It seems to be making good progress. It would be nice to sing along??
- Would be great to have a group session with others listening at the same time
- More focus and clarity
- Not sure really it will always depend on the programme. It's a new experience for me so don't feel I've got enough understanding of how it can be applied.
- More info
- Would love to see the characters in full format is front and back when turned
- Make it more integrated to the evening

Section Four:

Insights and
Recommendations

Insight

Audiences mainly
come from
surrounding areas
of performance
venues

Recommendation

Audiences responded well to the performances of Ulster Touring opera and appreciated that they were able to access it within their local area.

The removal of the barrier of distance and travel made it more accessible for many of your audiences. It is recommended that Ulster Touring Opera continue to tour across Ulster and consider venues in other council areas not previously visited.

Insight

Audiences enjoyed
the Augmented
Reality experience

Recommendation

Having an Opera singer in your hand is certainly a new experience for audiences. Many found it magical and were excited by its potential. With the development of the app, audiences look forward to being able to access this technology in their own homes.

The main reasons that audiences chose to attend “A Night at the Opera” was because of their interest in Opera but also to be entertained and to enjoy themselves. The AR experience has the potential to add to audiences’ enjoyment and it is important that UTO focuses on the fun of the technology.

Insight

Some audiences were unaware of the Augmented Reality experience

Recommendation

Those who experienced the Augmented Reality experience reported it was enjoyable and they were happy to try something new and exciting. However, a number of patrons were unable to comment on the AR as they either had not heard of it or were concerned they wouldn't be able to work it.

In this situation, communication is key. Assume that none of your audiences are familiar with the term of AR or how it works and explain what it is in simple words. Additionally, ensure that individual venues each provide all necessary information about the AR experience and not just on the UTO sites, as this is where local people will find out about you first.

Insight

Ulster Touring
Opera has an older
audience in
attendance

Recommendation

19% of audience respondents had children living in their household but only 8% of respondents attended with their children. What about changing your copy to spread the message that their children are welcome too? The AR experience is another opportunity for you to appeal to a younger audience.

To appeal specifically to children and family audiences you may want to produce family operas with strong storytelling or offer the opportunity for children to meet the performers and learn a bit about what it's like to be an Opera singer.

Alternatively, for the under 35 demographic, you could consider incentives such as a free drink at reception, or partnering with local restaurants to encourage people to make an evening event of it.

For many younger people, they enjoy being able to share fun experiences on social media. Many respondents commented on the beautiful set up of the stage, this has potential to be an Instagram-worthy spot where you can invite audiences to take a picture and do their best Opera pose.

Recommended reading: [Orchestras, young people don't care about cheap tickets](#)

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