

Companion Survey



By Nina Gram

During the fall of 2017 the Suitcase went back to basics. After exploring various methods to gain new knowledge about the audience's experience with performance art, we revisited one of the most simple and basic methods: the physical questionnaire. We wanted to make sure that we understood the qualities and challenges of this method before dismissing it completely. Furthermore, this was a simple way of making sure we reached every single audience sitting in the seats.

As mentioned in a previous brief blog post, The Royal Danish Theatre has a lot of data and knowledge about our ticket purchasers, but our knowledge about the companions invited to the theatre is very limited. This survey aims to 'close this gap' and test whether the companions resemble the ticket purchasers when it comes to age, gender, and how they rate the performance and the overall experience in the theatre. We call the project *Companion Survey*.

We have posted videos about this project, and in this report, we describe our process and reflect on what we have learned about the audience (particularly the companions) and about this somewhat basic survey method.

The setup

The last two weeks of November we carried out this Companion Survey on 12 performances in our three different houses. Five different productions with a total of 6,889 audiences. The productions were:

- *The Girl of the West* (opera)
- *Raymonda* (ballet)
- *Dance2Go* (Ballet)
- *Masquerade* (play)
- *Pang!* (play)



We placed a survey (see picture below) on each seat asking the audience about their age, gender, whether they bought the ticket or attended as a companion, and to what degree they would recommend the performance and the overall experience in the theatre to friends or family – a so-called NPS score, explained further in this [report](#). For audience who wanted to leave us a comment, there was a small text box at the bottom of the page.

Udfyldes EFTER forestillingen 

Raymonda d. 16/11 2017

Vi vil gerne vide mere om de oplevelser publikum får i vores huse.
Vi vil derfor bede dig svare på disse spørgsmål efter forestillingen.

1. Hvilken aldersgruppe tilhører du?
Sæt en ring rundt om dit svar.
0-14, 15-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66-75, 76-85, +85

2. Angiv venligst:
Jeg er mand
Jeg er kvinde

3. Angiv venligst:
Jeg er billetkøber
Jeg er ledsager

4. Fra 0-10, hvor 10 er det bedste, i hvilken grad vil du anbefale forestillingen til andre?
Sæt en ring rundt om tallet.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Fra 0-10, hvor 10 er det bedste, i hvilken grad vil du anbefale helhedsoplevelsen i Det Kongelige Teater til andre?
Sæt en ring rundt om tallet.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. Skriv her, hvis der er andet, du synes vi skal vide eller skriv til os på analyse@kglteater.dk



Tak for din besvarelse!
Kortet afleveres i poser i foyeren.

The survey was filled out after the performance and dropped in stands placed in the foyer. We gave the audience a small piece of candy and a Royal Danish Theatre pencil to thank them for their effort and to encourage them to fill out the survey. We received a total of 3,800 responses and 1,001 of these included a written comment.

Watch the two videos where we [introduce the project](#) and [setup the survey](#).

After collecting the responses, we sent them to the research and data company YouGov, who counted and registered them in the data analytics platform Crunch. From here, we started an analytical process with the results looking at the distribution of age, gender, NPS score etc. on the various productions and on ticket purchasers and companions respectfully.

The results

When looking at the results from this survey we have to remember that the responds are based on a couple of productions (one or two for each art form) and not an entire season. Nevertheless, 3,800 responds are considered a significant amount in order to provide decent insight.

A pervasive insight from this survey is how devoted and passionate our audiences are. The fact that so many of them take the time to fill out, hand in, and (in many cases) even leave a comment tells us that they care about performance art and about The Royal Danish Theatre. "We work to live – we live for The Royal Danish Theatre" as one audience member put it.

Even neutral or negative comments attest to an interest in and passion about theatre.

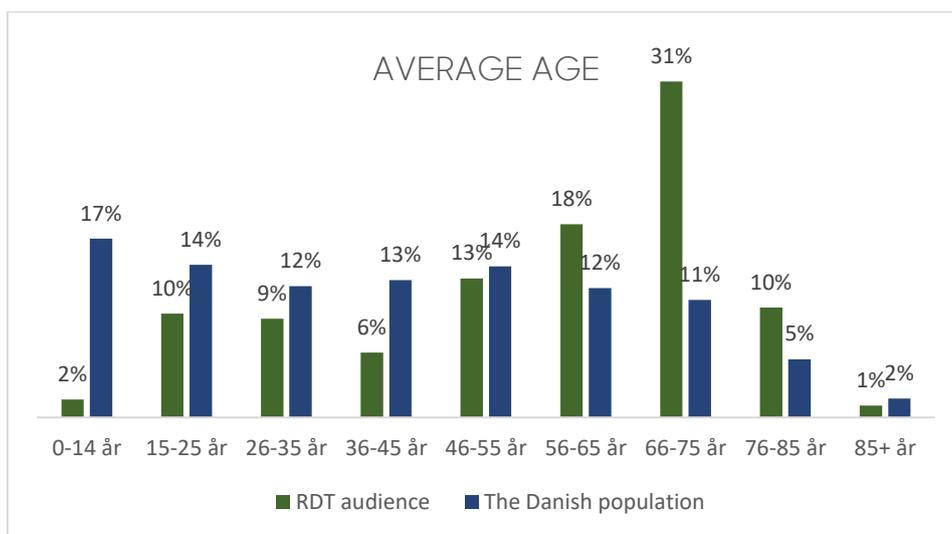
It is extremely laborious to have separate programme coupons!! Please return to the original procedure, so I can get the programme by showing my season card, thank you.

Many of our audiences are long time frequent customers. Some of them have experiences with the theatre that go back decades, and they relate current experiences to a long theatre history.

We even received several questionnaires by post from audiences who forgot to hand in the form as they left the theatre. The responses contained long descriptions on how the experience had affected them and suggestions on how to improve the theatre experience.

The age of the audience

In this survey, the largest age group within the audience is between 66–75 years old. See the table below.



The average age varies slightly across the art forms. The plays have the youngest audience and the highest age average is found in the Opera. These findings reveal general tendencies, but they are also a result of the specific

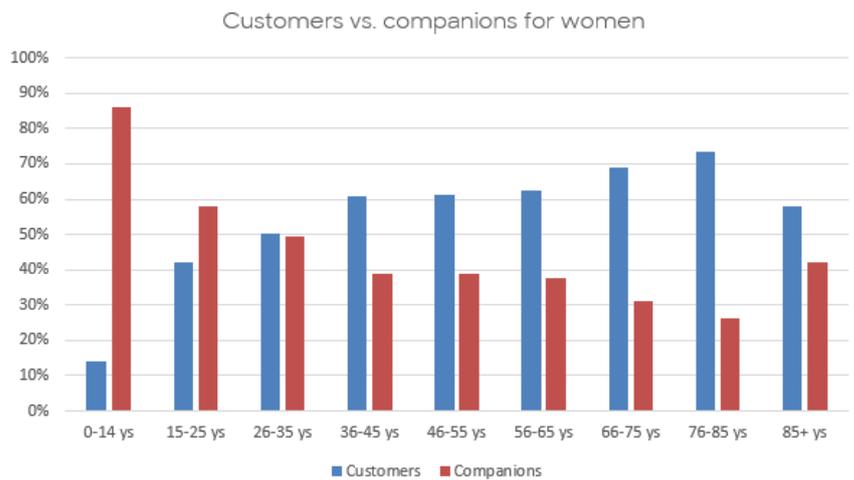
productions performed this period. *The Girl of the West*, for instance, might not appeal to a young audience as much as another more well-known opera could. From our traditional surveys, however, we see that our youth ticket sales are rising within all art forms. 15% of all our tickets are sold to audiences between the age of 15 and 25. This fits with the percentage of this age group in the entire Danish population.

The gender distribution of the audience

When going through the numbers we see that more women than men attended The Royal Danish Theatre in November 2017 - 65% women versus 35% men. Again, the numbers vary in relation to the art form. The ballet has the highest percentwise difference between men and women (73% women and 23% men). When it comes to the plays, there is almost no difference between the number of men as women in the audience.

Ticket purchasers versus companions

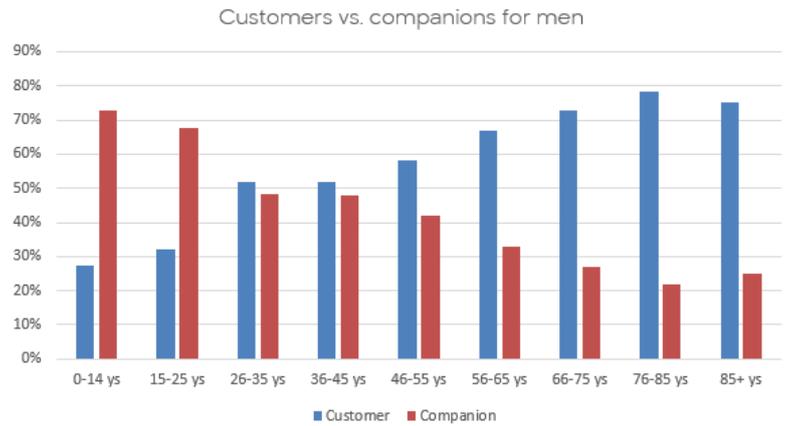
When we look at how genders are distributed in regards to ticket purchasers/customers and companions they are almost completely evenly distributed. However, in the graphs on the right and below we see the age of the customers versus the companions for men and women respectfully. This gives us an indication of when our customers start taking initiative to buy their own tickets.



As seen below, men start taking this initiative around the age of 26-35, whereas the women start somewhat earlier. There is a notable rise in female customers between the age of 15-25. Furthermore, it seems that the older we are (until we reach 85+ years old) the more likely we are to purchase our theatre tickets ourselves.

This knowledge could be useful in relation to new audiences. With this data in mind, it might be relevant to consider how we approach this young group of audiences, who might be on the verge of purchasing their first ticket. We aim to reach them through our various outreach initiatives etc. and this graph seems to emphasize why it is necessary to focus on young audiences.

Furthermore we see that 62% of the customers have answered the questionnaire whereas 38% of the companions have filled out the survey. There could be several reasons for this. First of all, there were more customers than companions sitting the auditoriums. But it could also indicate that when you take initiative and plan a theatre visit, you might be more prone to answer questions like ours and reflect on your satisfaction with the experience.



Net Promoter Score

As mentioned, we asked the audience how likely they are to recommend the production and the overall experience in the theatre. Their responds gave us the so-called Net Promoter Score (NPS) for this limited selection of productions and the overall theatre experience. From these numbers we could see that the overall experience is rated higher than the experience with a specific performance. This is in line with results from our traditional online surveys, where we often receive comments on issues like transportation, lines in bars, and lighting in the foyer, etc. This feedback tells us that the venues, the surroundings, and the practical circumstances surrounding a theatre visit are of great importance, if we want to deliver excellent customer service as well as great art.

In terms of NPS, it is interesting that responds from the ticket purchasers versus the companions are very similar. However, we do see a difference in the opera-ratings, where ticket purchasers are more likely than the companions to recommend both the production and the over-all experience.

Again, there may be several reasons for this. First-of-all, it seems natural to expect the ticket purchasers to have positive expectations of the experience as they most likely have made the decision of taking the time and spending the money. But the findings could also tell us something about opera as art form. Perhaps opera requires a bit more of its audience than ballet or plays. This assumption is supported by comments such as this one received by a companion, who had just seen the opera *The Girls of the West*.

I am really glad, my husband introduced me to the production with two different DVDs before we came here today.

When comparing this NPS with the NPS from our traditional online surveys on the same productions we see that both production and the overall experience receive lower scores in the physical questionnaires. The only exception is the overall experience rated by the ballet audience, which is exactly the same for the two survey methods. This attests to the method's extensive impact on the data that is produced in a survey. We will reflect on this further below.

About the comments

As mentioned we received 1,001 comments for this Companion Survey. Combined with comments from our traditional online surveys this feedback helped us to understand characteristics and personality traits within each audience group. We have audiences who watch almost everything we present, but we also have groups who are oriented primarily towards one art form. When reading through the comments for each art form certain characteristics arise. Each art form seem to have its own 'tone of voice' in the comments. Some are very enthusiastic, some are oriented towards the production, others report primarily about feelings, and others yet again give feedback about practical circumstances affecting the theatre visit. We use this knowledge to better understand what is important when watching the various art forms and visiting the different venues.

Another interesting insight is, that the comments in this survey tend to be slightly shorter (due to the small text box) and a bit more critical than comments from our traditional online survey or comments from the survey ['Where in your body...'](#). It seems thus, that practicalities and general circumstances around filling out this survey affect the message the audience want to give the theatre. Again, this points at how much the method used when gathering knowledge affects the content we receive.

Methodological reflections

First, it is important to mention that the traditional questionnaire is a very simple method design. It is easy to design and carry out a survey using this method. However, the results may also be somewhat simple as it is difficult to get in depth answers with the small textbox. The method is useful when you need certain facts or assumptions confirmed or denied. When choosing this method it is also important to be aware of the task of collecting and analysing the data afterwards. It is time consuming if applied on large groups of audiences.



Audience's reactions

A physical questionnaire placed on the seats disturbs the audience and requires something from them in a situation where they most likely expect to just sit back, relax, and take in the experience. We saw for instance a few negative reactions to the survey itself. One audience described it as:

American analysis crap

It is thus important to be aware not to disturb the audience too often, and make sure that we make good use of the data and insights in future communication, customer relation, and when gathering knowledge about the

audience in the future. Another way of catering to critical audiences is by informing them about the reasons for our surveys, and specifically about how we use data and insights in our organization.

It is important to mention, though, that we also get positive feedback from audiences, who appreciate the interest in their opinions and experiences.

The methods in relation to NPS

In relation to the aforementioned difference in NPS, it seems that circumstances surrounding the physical questionnaire (the material of the survey, the time of the survey, the space in which we ask audiences to reflect on their experience etc.) affect the responses and make the audience more prone to focus on negative aspects of the production and their experience.

At this point we cannot be sure which of these factors affect the responses the most. It seems likely, however, that the disturbance caused by asking audiences to relate to a current and still ongoing experience interrupts their immediate relation to the art experience, the surroundings, the atmosphere etc. This may have a negative impact on the experience and generally affect their mood and thus their responses. Furthermore, this points at interesting aspects about the relation between time and our memory in relation to artistic experiences. We touch on this aspect in the [report #4 Experience and Memory](#).

Summing up

This survey had two primary focus points: 1) To see whether our knowledge about ticket purchasers represent the entire audience and thus the companions as well. 2) To test the qualities and limitations of the traditional questionnaire in comparison to our more exploratory methods.

In relation to the first focus point, it turns out that companions on basic issues are similar to the ticket purchasers. We can therefore conclude that our data based on the ticket purchasers for most parts also applies to the companions. Still, we got new insight about the companions in the opera. As mentioned, we saw that companions in the opera gave a lower NPS than the customers. Even though there could be several reasons for this we use this insight to focus on how preparation and information affect and potentially improve the art experience – particularly in the opera.

This survey has thus made us more aware of the challenges of communicating directly with companions. We customarily send out information to *ticket purchasers* right before their theatre visit in order to ensure that they are prepared and to some extent know what to expect. This survey has emphasized the potential qualities communicating directly to the companions as well. One way we currently do this is through a *companion membership*, where companions get most of the same advantages as our subscribers. Just as our regular subscribers, they give us their email address and thus enable us to communicate directly to them.

If you want more information about our results, you can watch our reflections in [this video](#).