

AN ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF THREE METHODS
OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT FOR THEATRES
OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

by

JOYCE MITCHELL

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Approved by:

Harold Mitchell

Major Professor

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INTRODUCTION

The performing arts field is being forced to recognize an area of great need--audience development. As the economy tightens and the amount of discretionary money dwindles, performing arts groups must take a hard look at box office receipts, the buying public, and the best methods of attracting an audience.

In the performing arts, crisis is apparently a way of life. One reads constantly of disappointing seasons, of disastrous rises of costs, of emergency fund drives and desperate pleas to foundations for assistance.¹

People in performing arts management are trying to find solutions to these problems. From the many attempts to find an audience, three patterns emerge. The first pattern utilizes extensive involvement of people in the community to promote the performing arts institution and make that institution an integral part of the community. A second method often cited by arts organizations is a successful series sales which is their major audience focus.

When I was offered the job of running the subscription campaign for the New York City Ballet, I'd never done it before. I did it with the advice of someone who is a traveling professional advisor on subscriptions, a fellow called Danny Newman, who is a press agent out of Chicago and whom the Ford Foundation sends around to every theatre, opera house, ballet company and orchestra to advise on their subscription.²

The third method, a part of many arts organizations already, is the use of audience surveys to determine needs and wants of the arts public. Each method comes from different basic concepts and uses different techniques to

establish an audience for performing arts organizations.

In this thesis the first method analyzed is based on the concept of community involvement and responsibility, as exemplified by the Tyrone Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Guthrie audience development plan is described in the book, In Search of an Audience, by Bradley Morison and Kay Fliehr. Additional information on volunteer organizations was gained from Handbook for Symphony Orchestra Women's Associations by Helen Thompson. In an effort to up-date theories in the community commitment area, a personal interview with Bradley Morison was conducted. Additional current information was gained through a personal interview with Douglas Eichten, Marketing Director of the Guthrie Theater (October 1979).

The second method of audience development is advocated by Danny Newman in Subscribe Now. This method devotes all energies toward selling a ticket series for productions with the goal of a sell-out season. Newman feels a full-house with tickets at a premium is the best solution to all problems of a performing arts organization. Mr. Newman claims that public support for the theater will automatically follow.

The third approach states that a responsible program can only be established through knowing the needs of the community and building an audience development program on that foundation. The composition of the community, its needs and expectations, are learned through audience surveys. Audience Studies of the Performing Arts and Museums: A Critical Review was published by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1978. It gives a comprehensive analysis of audience surveys and their application.

In this thesis, each method of audience development is described in detail with the hope that sufficient information is given to allow the

reader to completely understand that specific direction in audience development. Then each method is analyzed in the following ways:

1. The advantages of the method
2. The disadvantages of the method
3. Personnel requirements
4. Financial requirements
5. Results to be expected

It is my hope to be able to specify objectively the alternatives open to arts organizations. Each organization must determine the method or combination of methods best suited to its particular needs, and the one that is most reasonable within its resources. With a rational analysis and existing knowledge of possible directions, each organization may then proceed with its own audience development plan.

SECTION I

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT BASED ON COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

People responsible for administering theaters of the performing arts have been interested in the Guthrie Theater because its audience development plan at the beginning was based on a strong belief in the theater's reliance upon the community. The Guthrie Theater itself was an experiment in classical theater. It did not "grow" in the community, but was arbitrarily placed in the midlands of America. The people in the Minneapolis area responded to this new theater venture, and gave enthusiastic support to its programs and policies.

Oliver Rhea, the first public relations director of the Guthrie, believed that institutions survive in proportion to the efforts they make to respond to the community where they exist.

We believe that the primary function of public relations in today's arts organizations must now be to create an environment within the community which is conducive to the full growth and free expression of the art and of the institution itself. A climate must be established which will encourage public acceptance of artistic policy, long and short range audience development, broad based financial contribution, favorable governmental action and the involved support of every part of the total community.³

Rhea further believed that although a community may seem diversified, it is actually bonded together with many common interests and purposes. To have a good public relations program, institutional policy must be flexible and must constantly adapt to the needs of that community.

An audience development plan for the Guthrie Theater was established in 1962, one year before the opening season. It was called "A Plan of Strategy for Promotion, Publicity and Public Relations for the Tyrone Guthrie Theater, 1963 Season." Subsequently referred to as the Morison Report, this plan was an attempt to apply basic and accepted business techniques to the problems of promoting the theater. The areas covered in the Morison Report were:

1. An appraisal of the product of the Guthrie Theater;
2. Investigation into the characteristics of its audience; and
3. Analysis of the best communications to reach the audience and the potential audience.

The first step as outlined by the Morison Report was an analysis of the product of the Guthrie Theater. For personal ethical balance, any public relations practitioner must be convinced that the product he promotes is of acceptable quality and is of importance to the people. The public relations practitioner can then commit all his talents and skills to promote the product or service he represents. Rhea, Morison and Fliehr were convinced the Guthrie Theater would fulfill a genuine need in the community, since high quality offerings of classical theater were not generally available in the area. The Guthrie Theater planned to concentrate on that type of programming and continues to maintain that artistic policy in 1979.

Throughout the history of the Guthrie, the public relations arm of the organization has not tried to influence the artistic direction of the theater. It has attempted to educate the public to know and accept the theater's philosophy. The importance of this concept was emphasized in a personal interview with Doug Eichten, Marketing Director for the Guthrie

Theater, on October 22, 1979. In the Guthrie's history there have been, he said, "occasional unfortunate mismatches" between the artistic director of the Guthrie and the Minneapolis community. The public relations arm maintained its stance of interpreting the policies as decided by the Board of Directors and did not attempt to direct artistic policy, although a different artistic direction was advocated by some people in the community. The Guthrie organization was able to survive those critical periods.

The second step of the Morison Plan was an outline of methods for gathering information on the audience of the Guthrie Theater. Information was to be gained by:

1. analysis of ticket buyers the first season;
2. information on those attending performances; and
3. place of residence information by breakdown of zip code numbers of the mailing list.

Rhea, Morison and Fliehr were using geographic, demographic, and psychological information to identify the people who were interested in the Guthrie.

During the first season accurate records were kept of ticket buyers. For every town in a six state area, the percent of tickets sold per 10,000 population was computed. This information was plotted on a graph against the distance from the twin cities. They found that the strongest audience potential was within a 100 mile radius of the twin cities. Cities within this primary target area received concentrated publicity and audience development practices.

Major towns within the 100 mile radius were further analyzed by use of the "focus group" technique. A focus group is a small group of people randomly selected and then gathered together to be questioned about ideas

covered in a research project. It is an attempt to gain personal rather than statistical insight on research information. The Guthrie studies investigated the theater's image and the attitudes of potential audiences.

In assembling the focus groups, a church women's group in the town was asked to gather 25 women who were representative of the whole town. A person from the Guthrie staff met with them and talked informally about the entertainment and travel habits of that community. From information gathered at the focus group meeting, a questionnaire was developed which reflected the habits and interests of the community. The same group was then asked to help complete the research project. The interviewing group selected random names from the telephone book, asking them questions on the questionnaire. For each completed questionnaire, the church women's group was paid \$.25. Morison and Fliehr felt that to "capture" a certain group of people you must begin with a small focus group.

Information on theater attenders was gained by inserting a printed questionnaire in every 10th program at several performances at the Guthrie during the 1963 season. The brief questionnaire asked members of the audience where they lived, why they were in Minneapolis, and how they had heard about the theater. It also asked demographic questions such as age, sex, occupation, and education. The response to the questionnaire was excellent.

An additional source of potential audience data was by computer analysis of the mailing list. The mailing list was separated according to zip code designation, and the results gave an indication of areas of strongest support in Minnesota and the surrounding states.

In an effort to gain continuing information, nine towns were set up as "pilot research" towns. It was hoped these towns would serve as a

benchmark on attitudes and knowledge of theater held by people in the area. Studies could be designed to investigate attitude changes and increase of information about the theater. It was hoped through continuing surveys in the "pilot research towns" to verify or refute some of the basic assumptions used in market analysis and promotional programs of performing arts organizations. At the time the book was written (1968), Morison and Fliehr felt the Guthrie Theater had not been able to give sufficient time or money to the follow-up research in the "pilot research towns." Following 1968, the public relations staff of the Guthrie changed, and, to my knowledge, no further efforts were directed to this area.

From information gathered by the above methods, Rhea, Morison and Fliehr drew the following conclusions concerning the audience of the Guthrie Theater. Prospects were divided into three groups:

1. Yeses---People who know they like classical theater and culture for its own sake or because their attendance at such an event gives them intellectual and/or social status. This group represents the major proportion of season ticket buyers and composes about 3% of the population of a community.
2. Maybes--People who are uncertain about whether they like or would like classical theater or things on a so-called "cultural level" and are not driven by a social status urge. This group comprised about 17% of the population.
3. Noes---People who are quite positive that they do not and will not like classical theater or anything which

has to do with culture or art. They have a deep rooted psychological barrier against the arts. This group comprised about 80% of the population.

The combination of Yeses and Maybes are 20% or one/fifth of the population of an area and are the major audience potential.

In the demographic study, the only thing unequivocal was:

A person with a college education earning a relatively high income in the profession or business world is more likely to be a yes or maybe.⁴

The only exception were engineers who were "typically not interested."

Using the potential audience profile described above, the following ticket selling strategy was adopted. The Yeses were assumed to come anyway. They were not ignored in publicity efforts, but promotion was not directed toward them. The Maybes were most susceptible to promotion and publicity, and they had to be cultivated and sold. However, a basic problem existed:

How to convince them that the theater was not so highbrow, cultural, classic, intellectual, and socially oriented that they cannot enjoy it without destroying the highbrow, cultural, classical, intellectual, and social appeal that is necessary to keep the yeses in the fold.⁵

Rhea, Morison and Fliehr decided the best approach to the Maybes was to stress an image of the Guthrie Theater as one which puts entertainment and excitement into great drama.

An image is the total impression which an individual has of an organization. It is a combination of everything he has read, heard, or personally experienced with that organization. It is often created, or altered, by relatively minor things; e.g., a small part of a picture in a newspaper, the condescending attitude of a friend, or even a tone of voice

in an advertisement on the radio. It is important that the image tell accurately what the organization is and what it wants to be. The image must be presented in an honest way, so the organization succeeds or fails by its own merit. The image must be consistent with the organization's true intent and ideals.

Rhea, Morison and Fliehr wanted to establish the Guthrie as a theater for all people in the area. It was tempting to plan a campaign among the socially prominent and the intellectual leaders of the community, because those people are often the sources of large gifts and other forms of support. But the Guthrie management decided this approach was damaging if the long range plan were toward a larger, more representative audience.

During the opening season (1963) publicity for the Guthrie was not planned. Newspapers contained photos of opening night parties, prominent people attending performances, and well-known Minneapolis residents involved in the work of the Guthrie. Rhea, Morison and Fliehr concluded the "social image" of that first year was damaging to long range goals. In 1964 certain publicity restrictions were enforced:

1. Pictures of formal fashions were not allowed to be taken in the lobby of the Guthrie.
2. Photographs of socially prominent volunteers were avoided. Efforts were made to include everyone.
3. Fancy formal dress was continually de-emphasized.

Within the Guthrie organization there was some disagreement about breaking down the high society image. In 1966, however, Morison and Fliehr felt strongly that to get a more broadly based audience you must break the image of a theater for the wealthy and socially prominent.

The image of a theater can also be determined by "the company you keep." The Guthrie made an effort to associate with things in the Minneapolis area that would indicate their interest in a broad audience base. They established a close relationship with the Minnesota Twins baseball team. Team members were special guests of the Guthrie, and the Guthrie cast attended the Twins games. This was accompanied by appropriate publicity.

Radio advertising was done on the most popular radio station. A special matinee promotion combined the friendliness of the radio station with one of the nicest hotels in town. The luncheon was hosted by a popular TV personality. People, particularly women, liked the "packaging" of several appealing events such as luncheon and the theater, and matinee attendance soared.

Brad Morison, author of In Search of an Audience and member of the original Guthrie public relations team of Rhea, Morison and Fliehr, and currently Director of Arts Development Associates, a private consulting firm, was interviewed in October, 1979. He was asked what audience development techniques hold most promise for the future. Morison feels the "packaging" of arts products is very important because it attracts people's attention and encourages attendance. An example is his current project of bringing Isaac Stern to play with the Minneapolis Symphony. The concert will be "staged" in three of the large and beautiful cathedrals in St. Paul. Packaging is a development technique which combines specific interests or places of people in a community with a particular art form.

Another audience development thrust during the opening season of the Guthrie Theater (1964) was designed to reach the blue collar community

and organized labor in the Minneapolis area and to encourage attendance of this segment of the community. Initial discussions were held with labor leaders as they were hosted in Mr. Guthrie's home. From this social gathering, the idea emerged of taking the Guthrie Theater to the laborers as they met in labor union meetings. Dramatic presentations were given at regular union meetings. This was followed by a special performance at the Guthrie Theater for the AFL-CIO. Box office analysis showed this audience development attempt was not successful, at least in the short range goal of immediate attendance.

However, a special performance for taxi drivers was successful. According to Morison and Fliehr, the enthusiastic taxi drivers became one of the best word-of-mouth advertisers of the Guthrie. Doug Eichten, current Marketing Director of the Guthrie, considers this an undependable audience development technique. It catches interest for a short period of time, but has relatively little long term effectiveness.⁶

In 1979, Brad Morison feels that broadening the base of the audience is much more difficult than he imagined during the beginning years at the Guthrie. An audience survey in 1963 showed 21.0 per 1,000 audience were blue collar workers. In 1973 another audience survey was run. The number of blue collar workers attending was 21.3 per 1,000. There was not a statistically significant change. The percentages in occupational categories remained relatively the same, even though many audience development programs aimed at broadening audience base had been used during the ten years.

In 1979, Doug Eichten is not concerned with the high society image. He feels the 1960's broke down status symbols and dress codes. Some people like to dress up and some do not, Eichten says. Everyone feels comfortable

at the Guthrie. The thing to remember, he feels, is not to act arrogant.

The third step of the audience development plan as described in the Morison Report in 1962 was "to effectively and efficiently" reach people showing interest in the Guthrie Theater.

The satisfied audiences and envious admirers of this theater constitute our best advertising-- we must create a hard core of devoted personal sales within the prime potential area in the form of women's organizations, advisory groups, etc.⁷

The public relations staff of the Guthrie felt word-of-mouth was the best possible advertising for the theater. Morison and Fliehr hoped through careful use of volunteers to create not only a large public relations arm, but also sell tickets in the most effective and efficient way. The Morison Report recommended major use of women volunteers.

In 1962 "Stagehands," a women's volunteer group, was established. One woman gathered 35 interested volunteers to work on the task of selling tickets. Each woman brought an interested friend to the first meeting. At the first meeting they were persuaded by Tyrone Guthrie to recruit more friends. Before opening night in 1963, according to Morison, 1,400 women had sold 21,295 tickets. Their activities were directed by Danny Newman and coordinated by the Guthrie organization.

Morison and Fliehr realized that the haphazard development of Stagehands was not the best method for establishing such an important organization. In looking back, they recommend the detailed approach of Helen Thompson in Handbook for Symphony Orchestra Women's Associations. Thompson's book stresses four basic areas:

1. Membership
 - a. Representative of all women in the community
 - b. Require only modest membership dues

2. Leadership
 - a. Strong, intelligent and practical
 - b. Works well with others
 - c. Has a healthy sense of humor
 - d. Has a wide range of acquaintance in the community
 - e. Willing to share "attractive" jobs
3. Privileges
 - a. Activities provide a pleasant social relationship
 - b. Opportunities to become acquainted with artists, conductors, etc.
 - c. Advance information on activities, policies and plans of the organization
 - d. Recognition of outstanding work
4. Responsibilities
 - a. Spending at least part of their time, energy, talent, influence, and money toward the program of the artistic institution
 - b. Buying or "earning" a season ticket
 - c. Accepting work assignments consistent with interests and abilities
 - d. Being responsible for work assigned
 - e. Keeping accurate accounts of projects and submitting reports at the end of a project

In spite of the random development of Stagehands, they became the key sales force for the Guthrie. The primary method of selling was the neighborhood coffee parties. At the coffee parties, information was given about the Guthrie, and season tickets were sold.

Although Stagehands, under Danny Newman's direction, was the sales force of the Guthrie, it quickly became the main informational and public relations tool of the theater as well. The staff of the Guthrie gave whole-hearted support to the Stagehands and tried to provide them with the best possible equipment in the form of printed material and audio-visual aids. In 1963 volunteers worked with a 8 1/2 x 11 brochure which they distributed to the guests at coffee parties. A 12-inch record describing the Guthrie Theater and the current season offerings was played.

The second year (1964) the brochure was bigger (16 pages) and guests were shown the film "Miracle in Minnesota." The campaign lasted about three

months. It was noted that the drive went well at the beginning, but toward the end of the second month, sales were slow. Analysis of the season showed volunteer enthusiasm was dwindling, and that a three month campaign was too long to sustain enthusiasm.

In an effort to motivate volunteers, in 1965 they were re-organized along geographical lines. It was hoped that a smaller geographical area to work would appeal to volunteers. It was also hoped that the personal contact with people in their own neighborhood and with Guthrie personnel would be motivating factors.

Additional efforts to motivate ticket buyers such as the bi-monthly newsletter, "Subscriber Only" performances and bigger brochures were developed.

In spite of efforts to motivate both the volunteer ticket sellers and the buying public, ticket sales were down in 1966. The Guthrie organization began to raise questions about concentrating so heavily on the series tickets and their buyers.

Between 1963 and 1966 within the Stagehands, an effective group called the "Speaker's Bureau" was developed. Any outside organization requesting a speaker from the Guthrie Theater was not turned down. Guthrie management felt it was a very positive step to take the theater to the people.

The most potent way to interest them is to bring the artistic experience to them in any way possible. Let people participate in an artistic experience in their own familiar surroundings and in terms meaningful to them, and the arts will begin to chip away at the rigid barriers which keep them from seeking out the artistic experience.⁸

The records, films, and brochures were an attempt to introduce the Guthrie Theater and its philosophy to people in the comfort of their own homes and with their own friends. It was even more effective if the Speakers could present their programs at civic groups and other public gatherings. A detailed description of the program and its implementation are given in Chapter 19 of In Search of an Audience. It was a highly coordinated and very effective program.

The Guthrie management felt Speaker's Bureau audio-visual aids were very important in helping speakers feel at ease about speaking assignments and ensuring the quality of the meetings. The recording mentioned previously was prepared for the 1963 season ticket drive. It was narrated by a popular newscaster and included the voices of Tyrone Guthrie and the cast. They explained the intent of the Guthrie and why it would be exciting to attend performances there. Six hundred records were made.

Ford Foundation money made possible the production of the film "Miracle in Minnesota," which was used extensively by the Speaker's Bureau. This film documented the story of the creation of the Guthrie Theater. Three prints were made. The Guthrie organization distributed the film.

The following year another 12-inch recording was made. This one described the current season offerings of the Guthrie. Filmstrips on technical aspects of the theater were made.

From our experience, we concluded that the possibilities for audio-visual aids are limited only by imagination, need, and money. They are so valuable that it would seem expedient to curtail other expenditures in order to probe more deeply into this field of educational service and audience development.⁹

To utilize special expertise in the Stagehands organization, a separate group called "Special Projects Division" was established in 1966.

Volunteers with professional experience in journalism, theater, or education were asked to help in developing film strips, newsletters, press conferences, and in establishing a teen advisory council. These volunteers were treated as demanding as hired personnel although they were not paid.

Auxiliary Stagehands chapters were established in outlying areas. Duluth, Minnesota had a particularly effective group. Communities distant from Minneapolis were given total responsibility for their programming. They established their own Speaker's Bureau, made personal contact with clubs, civic organizations, schools, libraries and the media. They used their own judgment in applying information to their local communities.

In Search of an Audience covers the history of Stagehands from its inception until 1966. A telephone interview was conducted in 1980 with Shiela Livingston, Assistant to the Artistic Director/Public Relations Director of the Guthrie Theater. She described the Stagehands activities in the following years.

Stagehands remained a solid organization even during a time of crisis for the theater in 1970. Even though there were difficulties revolving around artistic direction, the Stagehands continued extensive ticket selling, guiding tours and giving speeches for the Guthrie.

Michael Langham, hired for the 1971 season, artistically rejuvenated the Guthrie and began a "golden era" for the organization. Once again, the people of the community wanted to be identified with the theater and an extensive program of outreach was established.

The Stagehands program got so big, that the Guthrie organization felt some of the activities should be handled by a staff person. Shiela Livingston, who was President of Stagehands in 1973, was asked to join the

staff. There was strong feeling in the management of the Guthrie that all activities concerning the theater should be carefully integrated. The Guthrie organization thought by establishing a staff position related to the volunteer organization, this integration would be established. However, some members of Stagehands considered the change a threat to the independence of their organization. During a tempestuous two weeks in March, 1974, feelings ran so high that Stagehands was disbanded.

A volunteer organization currently exists at the Guthrie of about four hundred members. It carries the traditional name of Stagehands. The members work in the costume shop, conduct tours, and are beginning some educational outreach. Their activities are coordinated by a staff person, Jean McGraw, Volunteer Coordinator. They have no officers, no requirements for membership and no independent programming. There are men as well as women in the current Stagehands group.

Shiela Livingston said Stagehands membership ranges from four hundred to six hundred. She felt the number of members of Stagehands given by Brad Morison (1,400 members as cited in In Search of an Audience) was inflated, and that total membership of Stagehands had never been much more than seven hundred.¹⁰

The relationship problems the Guthrie organization and Stagehands experienced are not unusual according to Helen Thompson. A volunteer organization can become very powerful.

If it [Orchestra's Board of Directors] fails to take cognizance of the women's association's eagerness to work for the orchestra, it likely will discover that the women's association is beginning to displace the board as a governing body and that the board has been relegated to a position of merely passing a series of resolutions approving the "faits accomplis."

Seldom does this situation prove to be advantageous for the orchestra. All too often it results in the orchestra being considered a women's club activity, instead of a cultural institution of wide community significance.¹¹

The constitution of an auxiliary organization should establish the authority for projects in the main Board of Directors of the artistic organization. The methods for accomplishing the projects are determined by the auxiliary group.

In 1974, Doug Eichten was hired as Marketing Director of the Guthrie. He felt the promotion program of the organization had become so complex that it must be done by professionals. Coordination and timing were essential, and this was impossible with a large volunteer organization.

However, Brad Morison still strongly believes in the power and potential of volunteers. He feels it is even more important in 1979 with the financial situation of most performing arts organizations growing tighter. Morison feels concentrated attention should be given to the "development" of the volunteer, defined as the continuous process of involving a volunteer person in arts events. The important "point of entry" of a volunteer is attending several performances of the organization. If accurate box office records are kept, these people can be spotted. A place within the arts organization must be made accessible for the volunteer to work and show his talents. Upward mobility should be possible within the artistic organization toward the decision-making Board of Directors. The concept of volunteers stuffing envelopes is obsolete, according to Morison. Work of that nature should be hired at minimum wage. Morison says the fastest growing categories of volunteers are men over 45 and senior citizens.

In the early years of the Guthrie Theater, audience development practices were directed toward the teen age audience as well as toward the

volunteer. Rhea, Morison and Fliehr found most adult ideas in teen programming were not effective. A focus group, called the Teen Advisory Council, helped to determine the teen program. School representatives for the council were selected from student leaders, not the "egg heads" of the school. This was an attempt to make theater going an "in" thing. The most effective occasion was an after-performance coke party. Students, actors, and actresses mingled together, exchanging questions and ideas.

In a further attempt to capture the high school audience and to build an audience for the future, high school matinees were established. Students could see professional drama at a reduced price. A teacher could attend free if he/she chaperoned 20 students. A letter was sent to the high school principal describing the student matinee program, asking the cooperation of the school, and advising that the English teachers would be contacted. In a follow-up letter to the English teacher, the plan and ticket ordering procedures were explained.

In studying the student audience, it was learned that student response had little to do with home background or other sociological differences.

The more carefully the teacher had prepared the students, the more attentive, well disciplined, aware and perceptive they were in the theater.¹²

To help the secondary teachers, a kit was composed which included articles on related areas of history, music and art. Part of the kit covered suggestions about living theater--how to enjoy watching a play and how to read a play. Visual materials were stressed. The teachers were free to interpret and use this kit as their particular situation demanded.

By 1967 a smoothly functioning program of high school matinees had been established, but the Guthrie organization was seriously questioning

whether you can "make an audience for the future." However, time has confirmed that you can. In 1979, Brad Morison says, age of audience is the only part of audience composition that has changed. In an audience survey run in 1963, the median age of attenders at the Guthrie was 35.4 years. A similar survey run in 1973 showed a median age of attenders at 30.5 years. In 1973 the Guthrie was playing to a significantly younger audience.

In 1966 when In Search of an Audience was written, the Minnesota Theater Company had developed a valuable product, had pinpointed their potential audience and had developed effective ways of reaching those groups. They had concentrated on the use of volunteers and had tried to broaden the base of their audience in other ways. It was an innovative and effective program at that time.

Interviews with Morison and Eichten ten years later show Morison still convinced that the use of the volunteer and close ties with the community is the best approach to audience development. In contrast, Doug Eichten now markets the Guthrie Theater with minimal use of the volunteer and complete reliance on a professional staff.

An Analysis of Audience Development
Based on Community Commitment

Advantages

The major advantage of building an audience through community commitment is that the interest and support of that portion of the community most likely to be interested in your program is gained quickly. Volunteers, regardless of what they do, disseminate information, enthusiasm and personal validation to their friends. The circles of interest in the artistic organization rapidly widen.

A second advantage is that this kind of promotion is relatively inexpensive to the artistic organization. "Host families" pay for the parties, speakers assume costs of transportation to meetings, and special volunteer expertise in journalism, theater and education is free.

If an artistic organization is experiencing a birth, or re-birth, volunteers can be easily obtained. The human quality of wanting to be associated with the "thing of the moment" can be exploited. A third advantage, particularly at times of building or change in an artistic organization, is the easy availability of workers.

A fourth advantage is that young people are interested in theater programs. Audience development plans directed at this segment of the population create both an immediate audience and also influence audiences in the future.

Finally, developing an audience through community commitment establishes a deep and loyal support for an artistic organization. This strong interest remains even though the artistic organization may experience

periods of crisis. People in the community will defend "our theater," help restore balance to the organization, and occasionally be the financial backing until stability returns. The theater becomes important to their way of life and to their community, and they share the responsibility for it.

Disadvantages

The primary disadvantage of audience development through the use of volunteers is its undependable nature. The work of some volunteers is of high quality, while that of others is marginal. It is necessary to establish an elaborate system to check whether volunteer plans are completed in a professional manner and on time.

A second disadvantage is that professional time must be given to the planning and coordinating of volunteer activities. The professional must have expertise in dealing with volunteers and realize that should they become dissatisfied, they will simply withdraw, leaving no one else to complete the assigned task.

Third, in volunteer organizations it is difficult to implement policies and procedures quickly, and immediate problem solving is impossible in a large, loosely knit organization.

Finally, strong community commitment, to the extent that a community feels it can determine artistic policy, can undermine a performing arts institution. A Board of Directors is sensitive to the many aspects that influence programming. A dissatisfied community will often seek a quick and simple solution. During a recent crisis within the Guthrie organization, the following editorial appeared in a Minneapolis newspaper.

In the wake of the abrupt (if not unexpected) resignation-firing of Guthrie artistic director, Alvin Epstein, a discussion of that theater's role in the community seems more timely than just a review of a new Guthrie play. . . . Here, is the vital problem--a broadly-based "official" theater in a large metropolitan area has to create a balance between public taste and artistic taste. Perhaps in New York and London a theater can create public taste, but there is no glossing over the fact that the Twin Cities are inevitably the "provinces" (in spite of any pretensions they may harbor).¹³

Community support does not mean community management.

Personnel

The Minnesota Theater Company began their audience development work with a small, experienced, and capable staff. Oliver Rhea was the director. He had two assistants, Brad Morison and Kay Fliehr. A secretary, a part-time "jack of all trades," and a Ford Foundation intern were also employed. They operated on a \$80,000 budget (not including staff salaries).

Rhea, Morison, and Fliehr were equipped by training to conduct in-house audience surveys and carefully analyze the results. They were experienced in locating target groups for directing audience development programs. In the first seasons of the Guthrie, they enjoyed the highest level of cooperation from the theater's cast and crew. On many occasions members of the Guthrie organization used personal time to talk with people of the community to further knowledge of and personal contact with the Guthrie Theater. Because the Guthrie was a new enterprise, enthusiasm ran high, and strong interest in the venture prompted many to give of themselves to an extent that might not be possible under different circumstances.

From 1963-1966 the Guthrie relied heavily on the volunteer and established an effective network of volunteer support. Morison and Fliehr

said that coordination of this volunteer activity required "no more than one-fourth of one staff person's time."

In 1979 there is a different structure. According to Doug Eichten, the Guthrie audience development staff contains:

1. Marketing director
2. Publicity director
3. Public relations director
(Handles special events, open houses, student programs, tours, visiting artists and complaint letters)
4. Publications director
(Handles programs, magazines and \$200,000 advertising)
5. Sales director
6. Marketing coordinator
(Assures things happen on time)
7. Department secretary
8. Intern from a college arts management program

Additional jobs not mentioned by Eichten, but listed under "Supporting Staff Services" in a Guthrie Theater program were:

1. Resources development director
2. Community class coordinator
3. Group sales
4. Exhibit coordinator
5. Volunteer director
6. Four "development associates"

These people are also employed by the Guthrie but under a different administrative area and reporting to a different person.

The total budget of the Guthrie Theater in 1979 is \$4.2 million. The marketing budget is \$400,000 (including salaries). This is less than 10 percent of the total Guthrie budget.

The Guthrie Theater no longer makes extensive use of volunteers. Current Guthrie audience development programs are complex, expensive, and staffed by professionals.

Whether a performing arts organization has a large or small budget, people responsible for its management must have a business orientation and

training. Audience development programs must be evaluated, target audiences identified and all promotional programs planned and coordinated. Whether plans are carried out by volunteers or hired professionals depends upon the scope of the performing arts organization's program and its available resources.

Financial

According to Brad Morison, at the end of the fourth season (1966), the budget of the Guthrie Theater was just under one million dollars. The amount for promotion was \$80,000, excluding salaries. That was about 12.5 percent of the budget. In 1979 the total budget for the Guthrie was \$4.2 million with \$400,000 allocated for marketing (including staff salaries). Current marketing practices cost the Guthrie less than ten percent of its budget. Eichten states that the industry standard for marketing is fifteen percent of an organization's total budget.

Any audience development plan presented to a Board of Directors of a performing arts organization ranging from ten to fifteen percent of the total budget would be realistic. However, in low budget organizations, the dollar value of ten percent could be insignificant. Management would have to look for capable volunteer help and become skilled in working with it. The effective Speaker's Bureau program cost the Guthrie only \$1,200 to administer, and it sold thousands of dollars of season tickets.

Results to be Expected

When the Board of Directors of a performing arts organization decides to base audience development plans on community commitment, it should direct

the management to proceed with establishing a volunteer organization. From the beginning this volunteer group should carry out policies as established by the Board of Directors. Management should organize the volunteer group carefully, by establishing methods of maintaining personal contact and by checking activities of the members, while leaving room for volunteer experience and talent.

Based on the Guthrie experience it can be expected that enthusiasm will run high for about three years, especially if there is a "new" aspect to the artistic organization. During that time it is essential to pinpoint exceptional volunteers who will become the driving force to keep the volunteer organization thriving as less interested volunteers drop out.

As audience development programs using volunteer assistance are established, management can expect from some members high quality work, efficient follow through, positive criticism of programs and management, and a "catching" enthusiasm. Management can expect from other volunteers lapses in responsibilities, negative criticism, and outright rebellion. It is a special quality to be able to work effectively with volunteers. The benefits, if done well, are an extremely effective and far-reaching program at relatively little cost to the performing arts organization.

If it becomes necessary to adopt more specific and tightly knit audience promotion and ticket selling practices, it can be expected that the volunteer organization may become too cumbersome. While the changes which become necessary may bring difficult moments, the shift to a strictly business approach to ticket selling and promotion can be made.

SECTION II

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT BASED ON SUBSCRIPTION TICKET SALES

Attracting an audience for a single production is like picking blackberries off a hedge. It takes a lot of leg work, and a long reach, and it is a thorny business at best. In the end, depending on the weather and the changing winds of popular taste, the result may be either feast or famine. But developing an audience for the theater, for a season, for a succession of seasons--that's gardening.¹⁴

Danny Newman tends only one garden: the season ticket subscription campaign. In an almost evangelical stance Newman holds the season ticket subscription as the only way. He feels aggressive drives for season tickets will automatically broaden the audience base and break the dominance of "old line, blue blood patrons" in artistic organizations and audiences. Newman further states that often staff executives of an artistic organization are told public apathy toward buying tickets is a result of lack of charisma of their artistic leaders or poor judgment in programming, when actually it is because the organization has not established a positive attitude toward a dynamic subscription campaign. Only a successful subscription campaign can put an arts organization on a solid financial base, Newman says.

One of the most exciting qualities of such subscription promotion is its potential for dramatic, affirmative, overnight changes in the position of an arts entity.¹⁵

Newman believes arts organizations have no responsibility to the single ticket buyer. The single ticket buyer, by attending only occasionally,

develops no discernment or perspective in the arts. He eats dessert after dessert and usually the same kind. Responding to the tyranny of the single ticket buyer, Newman feels, makes a very limited repertoire for a performing arts organization. The single ticket buyer often makes the decision to attend the theater at the last minute depending on how he feels, what the weather is like, or perhaps whether he is bored and wants to get out of the house. The only defense against this pattern of ticket buying, says Newman, is to sell all seats on a subscription basis and have none available for the single ticket purchaser. Newman further states that the only time all the attractions of a theater are saleable is before the season begins. When the curtain goes up on the first performance, subscription selling is finished. He concludes if it isn't sold on subscription, it probably won't sell at all.

I submit that professional performing arts institutions, in a society where government subsidy is new and still a minor element in their economics, owe very little to the general public. They owe a great deal to their specific public, their subscribers, who are more and more becoming their contributors too.¹⁶

Newman is conservative in his estimates of the number of possible subscription purchasers in a community. He states that only two percent of a community's population are potential subscribers. But with characteristic enthusiasm, Newman adds, "In some communities two per cent would be a great boon."

A subscription campaign for a performing arts organization begins with the assumption that there will be no single ticket sales. The total campaign for selling by subscription should take six to eight months. Newman does not give financial guidelines for a subscription campaign. He

only suggests it must be proportional to the capacity of the theater or auditorium you have to fill and the number of performances that are scheduled.

It is necessary to have a clear mandate from the Board of Directors of the artistic organization to begin a subscription campaign. Plans for the campaign must be clearly defined and tightly organized when presented to the Board. Newman laments that while artistic appropriations are rarely questioned, promotional money is "analyzed, scrutinized and compromised." Newman feels there should be a single standard which recognizes the equal importance of the art and its audience.

When presenting a subscription series plan to the Board, an arts manager can expect resistance. Sometimes Board members are not, Newman says, "genuine enthusiasts for the art on which behalf they are doing their civic duty." If so, it is hard to get them enthusiastic about season ticket selling. The ideal situation, Newman feels, is a Board with a vice president for audience development and a committee for subscription sales.

As the Board discusses a subscription campaign, they may also be concerned about the price of the tickets. Newman feels increasing ticket prices must be handled very carefully, keeping the following points in mind:

1. If sales are low, don't double the price of the tickets to make up the difference. This is "an act of vengeance" against those that do go.
2. It is unwise to raise ticket prices unless there is a sell-out or near sell-out.
3. Make increases in small increments.

After a thorough discussion, the Board will support a dynamic subscription campaign.

Newman does not encourage the use of guilds, associations or auxiliaries for selling subscriptions. He feels people in those groups do not subscribe themselves, are infrequent attenders, and are usually offended at being asked to undertake the task of ticket selling. They are usually willing to ask for funds to establish buildings, but not willing to press their friends into spending their time and money going to performances.

If the energy and resources put into fund drives were channeled into subscription sales, an arts organization would end up with the money and the audience as well. However, Newman says, if volunteers request to work in the ticket selling area, they often find great satisfaction in helping at this fundamental level. If auxiliaries decide as a group to help in the subscription campaign, it is important to stress that the majority of the total auxiliary membership must subscribe. However, Newman was not optimistic, and said even with this requirement only about ten percent actually subscribe.

One danger with auxiliaries is the "kit" obsession. Management often feels that a huge kit and an order blank is sufficient for a volunteer, but it is not, Newman states. The volunteers must be carefully organized and supervised.

We must give our volunteers inspiration, a sense of involvement, incentive (nothing wrong with prizes), continuing supervision, leadership, and we must try to find, out of the many methods by which we may be selling subscriptions during the campaign, the ones that individual volunteers will respond best to and then "cast" them for their proper roles in the overall drive.¹⁷

Direct contact with the volunteer is maintained through a reporting system. This also impresses the volunteer that his success in selling is being checked. Reporting forestalls one of the hazards of using an

auxiliary as a selling group. Constant information on sales shows what progress is being made. If sales are slow, there is still time to make additional promotional moves to solve problems.

In organizing a dynamic subscription campaign, Newman mentions a number of techniques that could be used, but he emphasizes the following:

1. Creation of a brochure which effectively states the case.
2. Use of mailing lists to facilitate large scale distribution of the brochure.
3. Coffee, cocktail and patio parties for selling subscriptions.
4. Telephone solicitation.
5. Tracking down renewals.

According to Newman, the most effective advertising for a performing arts institution is a brochure. It can reach the greatest number of people in the shortest time. It is the first step in a dynamic subscription campaign. Basic information covered in the brochure is:

1. Planned repertoire
2. Artists involved
3. Series offered
4. Dates and prices
5. Method of ordering

This information must be presented simply, clearly, and in a print size and style that can be read easily. Unusual, special, or highly decorative print repels reading, Newman adds. The brochure should:

Offer the strongest, most affirmative and attractive statement concerning who we are, what is so special about our project, what is so great about the productions we are listing, and why subscribing to them and to us is so desirable.¹⁸

Mr. Newman gives specific ideas on design, content, and printing of the brochure on pages 119-166 in Subscribe Now. He concludes this area of the book warning against brochures "dulled with dignity" or "having uninspired academic tone." Enthusiastic brochures, carefully designed, are the best promotional media of any arts organization, according to Newman.

Massive mailing of the effective brochure is the second step of a dynamic subscription campaign. Increasing the number of brochures distributed will automatically bring better results, Newman says. The first and most important mailing list to use is of people who are already attending your performances. The box office must devise methods of getting the name and address of every ticket buyer. This information can be gained by having the ticket buyer fill out a card as tickets are purchased. An arts organization may place tables in the lobby with persons asking attenders to fill out cards. It is often effective to have a raffle, using an entry card which gains the necessary information. Mail order patrons are easily transferred to a mailing list, and telephone orders can be recorded in a similar way.

Mr. Newman feels it is important for arts organizations to share mailing lists. He suggests the following additional sources of mailing lists:

1. Lists from sister resident theater groups.
2. Lists from summer stock companies, little theater groups and drama schools.
3. All culturally oriented organizations in the community.
 - a. Opera
 - b. Symphony
 - c. Chamber music
 - d. FM radio stations
 - e. Public television

4. Teachers in public and private schools at all grade levels.
5. Faculty members of universities and colleges.
6. Graduate students and extension students.
7. Various alumni organizations.
8. Librarians.
9. Subscribers of art film series.
10. Professional people in the community
 - a. Doctors
 - b. Lawyers
 - c. Dentists
 - d. Accountants
 - e. Practitioners in Public Relations and Advertising

Sharing lists is reciprocal. Any performing arts organization must cheerfully share its own list.

Another source of mailing lists (which Newman says can bring in seven percent to twenty percent overall subscription) is from individuals. One hundred persons are asked to give one hundred names with accompanying addresses of their friends. The "sponsoring" person also gives to the campaign organizer one hundred pieces of personal stationery. The staff of the artistic organization prepares the letter, takes it to the sponsor for signature, and puts the finished letter in the mail. This method has the powerful advantage of the personal relationship of the sponsor with the people on his list. It has the disadvantage that persons may object to giving one hundred names.

Newman feels you should consider buying mailing lists, if you think it may get positive results. Before purchasing a list, the "freshness" of the list must be evaluated. Twenty-five to thirty-five percent of the addresses change each year. A random sample phoning would determine a

list's accuracy. Effectiveness of lists can be established by test mailings in smaller numbers. (Newman suggests tens of thousands rather than hundreds of thousands.) By a system of coding, the number of tickets purchased from a list can be established. A good return rate is .5% to 1.5% returned subscriptions.

Newman discourages "piggy-back" mailings. This method involves gaining permission to include your brochure with another organization's mailing. He says results from piggy-backing are "infinitesimal."

Mr. Newman does not worry about duplications in mailing. It is a sound basic principle in advertising, he says. Newman suggests controlled duplication accomplished by spacing the mailing lists. A person would receive no more than one brochure in the same day, or in the same week. A detailed description of coordination of mailing is given in Chapter 17, "Once More Unto the Breach--Duplications in Mailing" in Subscribe Now.

Massive mailing is currently an inexpensive approach because government has a policy of low mailing rates for bulk mailings. Newman warns that any attempt by government to remove those rates should be met with vigorous resistance by arts organizations.

The massive mailing of an attractive brochure is followed by coffee, cocktail or patio parties. The purpose of these parties in homes is to SELL subscriptions. Newman says if the potential host appears to have negative feelings about having a party, it is better not to have a party in that home. The best results are obtained when a willing host invites ten to fifteen couples. Sales will be higher if the hosts "prepare" their guests as to the purpose of the party at the time of the invitation. The content of the party should focus on a speaker from the arts organization. It is fine if

this speaker is supplied with films, slides, or records, but it is essential to have order forms, seating charts, pens and pencils. Newman views audio-visual aids as a luxury, while the Guthrie organization feels they are of such value that monies should even be taken from other areas to develop better and more visuals.

Newman always states the importance of completing the sale at the time of the party. "Informational" parties are tempting to hosts, but sales must be the focus, says Newman. Once the guests leave the house, it is difficult to complete the sale.

The Guthrie Theater organization in its early development stages made extensive use of the home parties given by volunteers. These parties were coordinated by Danny Newman. While tickets were sold at the parties, the motives behind the Guthrie parties were diverse. The Guthrie organization hoped also to educate the public about its type of theater and the building itself, and to use the parties as a public relations tool in establishing good will toward the Guthrie in the community.

Danny Newman feels the only goal should be selling tickets.

I am also four square for improving community relations. But I wouldn't depend on these activities, coffee parties, and community programs to bring in so many subscriptions per day, everyday during the many months of our campaigns. And I am against diverting monies and energies that could be much more effectively used in direct-selling work.¹⁹

Coffee parties can be a primary activity for a performing arts organization. They require, however, much preliminary planning and organizational work. The best results, Newman says, are obtained by having a chairman or co-chairmen from a volunteer group.

The main advantage of coffee parties, according to Newman, is direct personal contact selling.

Coffee parties are a truly grass-roots kind of subscription promotion--very community and people oriented.²⁰

Concurrent with coffee parties should be a telephone sales campaign. It can be done by volunteers or by a professional telephoning organization. If volunteers are used, it is more successful for the volunteers to gather at a telephone center equipped for this kind of project. Volunteers calling independently from their own homes is an undependable process. If a professional telephone manager is hired, the contract should be on an "attractive" percent of the sale, from which the telephone professional pays all expenses. Newman warns that almost one-fourth of the telephone sales evaporate when the payment is due. When establishing goals for the telephone campaign, set the number at 125 percent of what you actually hope to achieve.

A fifth important step in a subscription campaign is the renewal of current season's subscribers.

We must approach each renewal drive with the resolve that we will not, by any omission on our part, lose one subscription more than is dictated by the effects of transiency and mortality.²¹

A good renewal rate is between sixty and ninety percent. A bad return would be below fifty percent. The good renewal rate is easiest when the subscribership is older and where the artistic success of the organization is greatest. It is enhanced by continued communication with the subscriber through the year by newsletters and other mailings. The subscriber will feel he is contacted at times other than renewal periods.

Printed renewal forms should be carefully designed. Newman suggests these forms have the appearance of a billing statement, thus "assuming

rather than soliciting" renewals. Renewal notices can be typed on triplicate color coded carbon forms which can be used in three stages of the renewal drive, if necessary.

White: renewal notice
 Pink: second renewal notice
 Yellow: third and final renewal notice

If the renewal statement is properly designed, the address will fit into a window type envelope and no additional typing is necessary for each additional step in the campaign.

Newman defends his concentration on the renewal campaign by saying it takes ten to thirty times as much in promotional money and energy to obtain a new subscriber than to get a renewal from a previous one. Pages 88-100 in Subscribe Now give a detailed description of a three-month process to obtain as many renewals as possible.

There are other effective tactics for successful subscription campaigns which Newman mentions but does not develop. Suggestions are:

1. recruitment of present subscribers to sign up friends and relatives;
2. on campus solicitation of students;
3. enlistment of philanthropic, religious and fraternal organizations to sell subscriptions on a commission basis;
4. block sales to industry and service clubs; and
5. door to door direct sale of subscriptions.

Arts organizations must decide which techniques best fit their community needs and are workable within the resources of the organization.

Newman closes his book with a strong defense of subscription selling. To attacks about "trapping" people into the theater, he responds:

This wonderful, large audience body was indeed artificially created, but the moment it existed as an audience, there was nothing artificial about it. It had substance, reality, from the very moment that these people walked into the theater for the first performance of the first season to which they subscribe.²²

Analysis of Audience Development Based
on Selling Subscription Series

Advantages

The primary advantage of audience development based on subscription selling is that an audience is guaranteed for every performance. All energies have been put toward one basic objective--selling the house. Plays that might not have initial appeal are sold as well as the more attractive performances. Thus audiences gain varied experiences within the art form. With no single tickets available, the public is forced to make a pre-season commitment for all productions.

Second, selling a season series with one large campaign consumes less energy and money than individual sales campaigns for each performance. One campaign, conducted within a specific time frame can be carefully organized, implemented and checked whether completed by volunteers or paid staff.

A third advantage is that the campaign, as described by Newman, could be planned and organized by one hired person. Whether this person chooses to use volunteers exclusively or to hire other professional persons depends on his preference and the financial strength of the arts organization. The financial in-put to a Newman campaign can be relatively small.

Finally, through subscription sales an arts organization knows at the beginning of the season the amount of money available. Since single sales are not counted upon because of their unreliable nature, the arts organization must base the operating budget on the amount of money which has been collected at the box office.

Disadvantages

The major disadvantage of audience development by selling subscription tickets is that the arts organization must maintain a FULL HOUSE in all seasons. However, performances and artistic direction can be uneven. A full house, which becomes dissatisfied, will make it very difficult for the subscription campaign the next year. The following year, when all the subscriptions are not sold, there is the temptation to make single tickets available. This breaks the power of subscription selling.

Second, some people are unwilling to commit themselves to arts events a year in advance. However, it should be stressed that sports events tickets are often sold on a pre-season commitment.

A third disadvantage is that current ticket costs of performing arts programs are high. Combining several events in one package could make the total ticket price prohibitive.

Personnel

The dynamic subscription campaign described by Danny Newman appears to be effectively organized by one person. This person must himself be dynamic and highly organized. Whether assistants are hired or volunteers are used would be determined by the financial strength of the performing arts organization. If he chooses volunteers, he must be able to work with them and be willing to search for the best ways to use their talents. The plan as described in Subscribe Now seems possible for one person to direct and complete in one year's time.

Financial

Hiring one man as director for the total promotional campaign is not expensive. Brochure printing is an expected cost of most performing arts organizations. Making the brochure as effective as possible would appeal to a Board of Directors. A massive mailing is relatively inexpensive, and costs of coffee parties lie with the hosts, not the performing arts organization. All the major components of Mr. Newman's campaign are low cost.

Mr. Newman cites many examples of successful financial campaigns of artistic organizations. These are usually the initial, abrupt turn-arounds in selling policies and show dramatic financial improvements. However, he does not give an historical perspective of the sales patterns of organizations. The Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis experienced the highly successful initial campaign, but in the years following had diminishing success. An analysis of the first four years of subscription selling at the Guthrie revealed the following: ³

	1963	1964	1965	1966
Season tickets sold	21,295	19,483	16,614	15,928
Cost per dollar season ticket income	.148	.152	.177	.235
Cost per dollar single ticket income	.115	.116	.131	.178

Season ticket sales were going down while the costs of obtaining the season ticket had almost doubled.

Results to be Expected

If an arts organization is new or has had a relatively quiet existence, a dynamic subscription campaign will probably result in an almost overnight success. This is an exhilarating situation for both the campaign manager and the Board of Directors.

It is important to maintain the momentum in the following years to insure a full house. Mr. Newman's plan is based on solid promotional procedures which must be continued year after year. It may be necessary every few years to insert a "promotional trick" which will capture the imagination of the subscriber and rekindle interest and enthusiasm for the artistic organization.

It is necessary to keep accurate records of the costs of a dynamic subscription campaign. A yearly analysis and comparison of sales in other years must be done. This enables management to have factual data concerning costs and returns.

SECTION III

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT BASED ON AUDIENCE RESEARCH

Conflicting opinions are held by people in the performing arts field concerning the value of audience research. For example, Oliver Rhea, the first public relations director of the Guthrie Theater, was firmly convinced that audience research was essential in establishing development plans. He felt there was fierce competition for the available time, attention, and money of the general public, and only by careful handling could these resources be captured for the Guthrie Theater. On the other hand, Sir Tyrone Guthrie, the first director of the Guthrie Theater, felt differently.

It seems to me that with limited staff and a limited budget, there was rather too much reliance upon costly and time consuming projects like Customer Research to cough up information which any reasonably experienced and sensible person already possesses, and much of which is any way pretty irrelevant.²⁴

Rhea responded by saying:

The difference between artistic and administrative decisions--the former can be made on the basis of instinct, taste, and opinion while the latter can and must be made from factual knowledge.²⁵

By 1976 the National Endowment for the Arts was aware that many performing arts institutions were involved in some form of audience research. The National Endowment applauded this concern:

Information on audience is of vital interest to individuals concerned with managing the arts, to those making general policy for the

arts, and to the public which has an important stake in these decisions and policies.²⁶

However, the National Endowment for the Arts became concerned about the general quality of audience research, the methods employed by the inquiring artistic organizations, and the evaluation and use of the information gained from the audience surveys. In 1976 a critical review of audience studies was sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and assigned to the Center for the Study of Public Policy, Cambridge, Massachusetts, for completion. The areas addressed by the Center were:

- a. Information shown by past audience studies.
- b. Methods and application of audience studies.

The National Endowment for the Arts hoped the results of this critical review would bring "improvement of the art of studying the audience and the capability of arts and cultural institutions to serve their audiences."²⁷

The Center for the Study of Public Policy hoped to find 100 to 150 completed audience surveys from across the United States. They sent inquiries to 1,200 performing arts organizations and museums. They received over six hundred positive responses from which 270 studies were useful for their project. These surveys were analyzed further, and from them 112 directors of arts organizations were selected to receive a longer survey containing detailed questions on: (a) the profession, education, and experience of the director, (b) the budget of the organization conducting the research, (c) the research's methodology and (d) policy application of research findings. Eighty-six directors responded to this request. From the 86 that responded, 42 gave personal interviews to the Center for the Study of Public Policy.

The report of the study was divided into two areas: demographics of the arts audience as represented by the 270 studies, and an evaluation of the methods and utilization of audience studies.

I will first consider the motives for audience research followed by an analysis of research quality and research application as developed by the Center for the Study of Public Policy.

Noted in the Center study was the general assumption held by people in the arts management field that audience studies are undertaken to gain an information base from which specific direction in audience development can be taken. The purpose of audience surveys, theoretically, is to gain information from which decisions on such matters as marketing development, ticket pricing, fund raising, and legislative lobbying can be made. The Center found that in actual practice:

Research was not undertaken to solve specific problems and findings were applied in a variety of ways. The chief motives for undertaking audience research were for political leverage or because the opportunity was offered gratis or out of a vague sense of concern for more information of some sort.²⁸

The most frequently cited reason for undertaking an audience study was political advantage. Arts organizations felt it would help to acquire some kind of evidence for use when seeking funds. Occasionally arts administrators used audience research to gain leverage in internal policy debates. Sometimes audience research was used to placate members of the organization's Board of Directors who were pressing for action of some sort. Often the primary motive was to gather information to strengthen the administrator's position, rather than to resolve an issue or discover a problem. In external political relationships, organizations hoped audience

research would emphasize the importance of the organization to the community and show the necessity for more money.

The National Endowment hoped, even though the reasons for conducting surveys were diverse and vague, that research of high quality would benefit arts organizations. The Center for the Study of Public Policy developed a set of criteria to analyze the technical quality of audience research. Technical quality was defined as "The extent to which a study is properly conceptualized and executed in accordance with the norms of scientific investigation."²⁹ The criteria are described on pages 43-46 of Audience Studies of the Performing Arts and Museums: A Critical Review. The Center went on to analyze factors that produced research of this high quality.

The Center found that the investigator's highest academic degree did predict high quality study. It was reported that people with training as a social scientist produced the best quality research. People with training in research related professions such as urban planning, architecture, and engineering also did research rated high in quality.

If the authority of the researcher was strong or if the researcher was associated with a prestigious university or a reputable marketing or public relations firm, the technical quality of the research was high. In discussions of research results, conclusions of these researchers were not likely to be challenged by people in the arts organization reviewing the report.

The Center for the Study of Public Policy stated unequivocally.

By technical standards the best research in this sample is produced by individuals with a Ph.D. or comparable degrees who are social scientists with private research firms or academic institutions.³⁰

The Center also found that the budget of the research project was a strong indicator of quality. Through a complicated system of assigning a quality standard, it was found that

audience research conducted with less than \$350 is more than 5 points below standard, while research performed with budgets of more than \$1,650 is 6 points above the mean.³¹

Researchers found that increasing the research budget from \$0 to \$1,000 added 5.8 quality points to the research. It required an additional \$10,000 to raise the quality score an additional 5.8 points.³²

Median budgets from research projects analyzed in 1976 were:³³

From private firms	\$6,260
From academic institutions	\$ 750
From arts organizations	\$ 253

After examining the total range of audience research, the Center stated:

If the study were allocated virtually no budget and placed in the hands of an investigator primarily identified with the arts, the resulting quality index was more than a full standard deviation below the average level for all the studies.³⁴

The conclusions of the National Endowment report were that expanding the budget up to \$1,000, selecting a market analyst, and conducting the study in an academic institution with a social scientist or a research related person doing the investigating produced research of consistently dependable quality.

However, when quality of research was evaluated against use of research it was found:

The most notable finding is that nothing we have measured, neither quality nor its correlates-- investigator background, resources and institutional

setting--has any substantial impact on research utility, at least as applied by study directors.³⁵

The relationship between quality of research and its application was found to be small and inconsistent.

The Center discovered, in addition, that if the researcher was based within the arts organization there was increased application of research results. An in-house researcher was able to design a study directly related to the problems of the organization. Utility of research was increased even more if the in-house investigator had previous experience in audience research.

The Center researchers found there were other organizational factors that determined the extent to which research results would be used. One of the most important factors was the director of the arts organization. It was found that if the results of the research confirmed the director's position then action followed. If the research results opposed the director's opinions, the data were ignored.

There was also a difference among the directors in the ability to recognize the utility of audience research data. Some were able to comprehend the implications of data immediately, while some viewed research results merely as interesting information. It was found that if directors were involved with the design of the research instrument they were more likely to be able to interpret the results and translate them into action for their organization.

The political climate of the organization also influenced the use of audience research results. Of the twenty-five cases examined by the Center, eighteen reported political usage. Audience research data gave leverage for increased funding, although this was only effective at the

local level. Other political leverage cited were increased trustee interest, increased interest in marketing, and changed relationships with parental or affiliated organizations.

The most frequent use of the studies in twenty of the twenty-five organizations was for physical planning. Resulting changes in the arts organizations involved better brochures and signs, guide training, special bus service, cleaner washrooms, roadway markings, ticket and admission price changes, exhibit labeling and design, changes in performing times, and new exhibit acquisition policies. The Center reported there was also a change of attitude of the staff following audience surveys. The staff became more responsive to the comfort and desires of the public.

Occasionally research results produced unexpected information. This information was given high usage because it pin-pointed problems which were not known to exist.

While audience research results were often described by arts managers as "highly useful," it was noted by the National Endowment study that the total effect on arts organizations was "marginal." The items addressed were often small and easy to change. The larger questions of policy, marketing and program planning were not altered. Major changes in arts organizations required radical reallocation of funds. This was seldom done.

The Center gave five reasons for failure to use study results. The first was high staff turnover, which is a big problem in arts organizations. The staff person enthusiastic about an audience study was often gone by the time the study was completed and could be applied.

Inadequate funding was given as the second difficulty. The most critical scarcity was money to start new programs.

Occasionally, it was found that persons of influence within the arts organizations were indifferent, and even openly hostile, to social science research. Administrators of arts organizations sometimes felt the responsibility to "maintain quality" or "scholarship" rather than to respond to public desires. However, it was noted that as financial constraints tighten, there will probably be more interest in public opinion, business approaches to the arts, and the recognition of some arts organizations as public institutions.

A minor factor influencing usage of the report was the manner in which the report was given to the sponsoring organization. The results of audience studies were often reported in a confusing manner. Arts managers should condense the report, use fewer statistics, and present the report to a small group of people who could question it fully.

Finally, the results of audience research sometimes seemed to the sponsoring organization to be trivial and inconclusive. Surveys that did not address specific problems were open to the criticism that common sense could give the same answers.

The National Endowment was concerned about the willingness of arts managers to accept the findings of low quality research. It concluded that such research was accepted because the arts managers knew there was no money, time, or experience to develop high quality research. The research the organizations were able to conduct was "problem signaling" which pinpointed problems but did not necessarily give a guide to their solution.

The National Endowment did, however, encourage arts organizations to conduct research at the highest level possible within their resources. The Endowment hoped local arts organizations would publish their research

results and make them available to other arts organizations. Workshops and tutorials from state and federal arts agencies were suggested to train arts managers in the methods and application of good audience research.

The Audience Studies of the Performing Arts and Museums: A Critical Review concluded on a pessimistic stance by saying:

The best development and use of arts audience research will require money for a research infrastructure, money for staff time to execute and follow through the implications of research and money to permit institutions now living from crisis to crisis to become involved in long-range planning. . . . But, ultimately, systematic use of research on a wide scale, after the fashion of many government agencies and private industry, may be prohibitively expensive.³⁶

However, the most positive contribution for arts managers given in Studies of the Performing Arts and Museums: A Critical Review was the profile of performing arts audiences as established by the compilation of 270 arts audience surveys from across the United States. The studies used in this compilation were evaluated by the Center for the Study of Public Policy to be of acceptable quality. The Center found arts audiences to be surprisingly similar. Following is a summary of the profile of arts audiences developed in 1976 and reported in Audience Studies of the Performing Arts and Museums: A Critical Review in 1978.

Gender

The compiled research reveals that arts audiences are almost equally divided male-female. This negated the sometimes expressed idea that arts participation is primarily a feminine activity. The analysis of the audience surveys of the Center revealed:

% of Men in Arts Audiences³⁷

(49% -- percent of men in the United States)

%	Type of Art
43	general performing arts audience
40	ballet and dance audience
46	opera audience
46	general museum audience
43	art museum audience
53	science and history museum

Women participate in arts audiences more than their percent of the population, but the difference is very small. Research on public attitude indicated 65% of the audience surveyed didn't think the arts were too feminine.

Age

Age was an important characteristic enabling administrators to direct audience development efforts toward specific targets.

Median Age of Arts Audiences³⁸

Type of Performance	Median Age
All performing arts	35
Ballet and dance	33
Theater	34
Orchestra	40
Opera	41
Museums	31

Young people were a very small percent of the audience in both performing arts events and art museums. The Center researchers felt it was not fully documented that young attenders become old attenders.

The season of the year influenced the age of attenders. In New York state the summer median age of the performing arts audience was 33. Median age in the fall was 38.

The time of performance also affected the median age. Statistics from the state of Washington showed:³⁹

	Median age
Week-end evenings	40
Week-day evenings	42
Matinees	49

Education

The Center found the most reliable predictor of attendance at arts events was education.

Of all the characteristics of individuals that studies frequently measure, a person's educational background appears to be the best predictor of his or her attendance at museums and live performing arts events.⁴⁰

Education was more important than income. People with much education and little income attended. The study attributed the strong interest in the arts to formal training in the arts during time in school, habits of attending arts events developed during the time in school, and discussion of arts events in their own social circles after they finished school.

Amounts of Education of Arts Event Attenders⁴¹

Amount of education	% of audience	% of US adults
Some graduate training	30	NA*
Bachelor's degree	54	14
No schooling beyond high school	22	74
Not high school graduate	5	38

* not available

Dance, music and opera attenders had the highest level of education. Theater audiences were slightly less educated, and museum visitors came closest to the education level of the general population.

Occupation

Next to education, occupation was the characteristic most closely related to involvement in the arts.

Occupations of Arts Audiences⁴²

Occupation	% of Audience	% of US work force
Professionals	56	15
Teachers	21	4
Students	18	6
Clerical/sales	15	24
Homemaker	14	23
Retired	5	18
Blue Collar	4	34

A rough index showed 69.5% of attenders came from 25.5% of the work force. The audiences of the performing arts and museums are from high prestige occupations, particularly teachers. There is a low percent of blue collar workers.

Income

In 1976 when this research was compiled, the median family income was \$14,000. In surveys of arts audiences, the median family income was \$18,985. In surveys of university theater audiences, the median income was below the national average of \$14,000. Median income for other theater audiences was \$19,342. Median income for opera attendance was \$21,024.

Personal income data were reported as being a sensitive issue to respondents. Up to 29% of those completing surveys did not respond to this question.

Income did not seem to predict attendance at arts events as well as education and occupation did.

Racial

Minorities, described by this report as blacks and persons of Oriental and Hispanic background, were under-represented in arts audiences. This group was seven percent of the arts audience compared to twenty percent of the total population. Statistics relating to the specific racial minority of blacks showed a representation of three percent in arts audiences as compared to twelve percent of the population as a whole. Researchers reported that data from the south differed little from that of the rest of the country. Researchers surmised that poverty and lack of education rather than cultural factors or racial exclusion were the reasons for minorities' small percent of audience.

The conclusion of the National Endowment for the Arts report was that consistently the audience for the arts is more highly educated, of higher occupational status, and has a higher income than the population as a whole.

Further investigation was conducted to see whether the composition of arts audiences had changed in the last fifteen years. Five areas were studied: gender, age, education, occupation, and income.

We could find no evidence that audiences were becoming more democratic. None of the variables showed any significant change in over the last

fifteen years for the performing arts, the only studies for which we had sufficient data.⁴³

The research report made one qualifying statement concerning its audience surveys. It said the statistics covered in this report were from studies throughout the United States, but researchers noted that the 270 studies available generally represented larger audiences in larger cities. The researchers felt responses would be somewhat different from smaller towns and community based organizations.

Analysis of Audience Development
Based on Audience Research

Advantages

A first advantage resulting from audience research is accurate information on performing arts audiences. Effective and efficient marketing and audience development must be based on solid information. Targeted publicity makes the best use of time and money. For example, an early practice of the Guthrie Theater was to put paid advertising on the sports page. Although this practice caught the attention and interest of many arts managers, it is a waste of advertising funds. The even split of male-female audience shown by audience research statistics indicates advertising for arts events is most effective when placed on general interest pages of newspapers.

A second advantage of audience research is the now existing profile of performing arts audiences of the United States as compiled by the Center for Social Research. The Center found United States audiences very similar. A master profile was compiled from 270 independent arts audience surveys. Thus, the basic research in this area has been done. It is not necessary to spend local time and money to discover what is already known. It is necessary to be thoroughly familiar with the Center's findings. If a manager feels the audience of his institution varies considerably from the national profile, an independent research project would be justified. The manager's evaluation process concerning the need for additional research would be the first step in fitting an audience survey to the specific needs of the local arts institution.

Disadvantages

A hard look must be taken at the reasons an audience research project is proposed by either an arts administrator or a Board. Research is often suggested to give the appearance of something being done, when in reality the research project has no direction, no specific information being sought, and no allocation of money or other resources for implementing research results.

It is essential to evaluate the realities of your arts organization. People in decision-making positions must be open to new ideas, or the survey will be "interesting" and discarded. If the manager of your institution considers change a non-viable alternative, any information gained from the project will not be used. Your institution must have funds available and be willing to commit them to the research project.

A final disadvantage is that good audience research is expensive. It discovers dissatisfactions, trends, and small pieces of information which must be creatively reassembled to build a strong program. The money and time expended on audience research is just the beginning. The implementation often requires changes in previously held ideas and a radical change in allocation of funds.

Personnel

The best technical research, according to the National Endowment for the Arts, is produced by a person with a Ph.D. in social science research affiliated with a private research firm or an academic institution. However, the most applicable research comes from a design established by a person from within the performing arts institution who knows the institution's problems on a daily basis.

At first thought it would seem beneficial to hire within the arts organization someone with the social science research training. This is unrealistic. A person with a Ph.D. in social science or related fields would be interested in employment using his highly specialized knowledge in narrow organizations paying relatively high salaries. In addition, since audience surveys would be conducted once every five years, at the most, it is questionable whether such specialized training should dominate the background of an arts manager. It would mean other areas such as public relations, marketing, and business would be slighted in the education of such a manager.

It appears necessary to devise other ways to combine statistical expertise with experience expertise to design a survey statistically valid but responsive to the needs of the organization.

Part of an arts manager's training should be an introductory course in the fundamentals of research. With this background a manager would be sensitive to areas adaptable to research and would be able to give sufficient in-house information to a hired social scientist. Also, a social science researcher who has shown a strong interest in the arts might be included on the Board of Directors. Members of boards are often selected for special abilities. Through regular board meetings, the social scientist would become familiar with in-house problems. While the board member would not execute the details of the research, his contributions would be invaluable in the design.

The National Endowment for the Arts, which already possesses evaluated audience research and has access to the best statistical minds in the country, could develop sample surveys for each performing arts genre. The suggested

surveys could be used as guides for independent surveys. The workshops and tutorials on audience research recommended by the National Endowment report should be expanded to include technical assistance in adapting sample surveys to local arts organizations.

Financial

Good audience research costs money. A Board of Directors would have to be willing to allocate up to \$1,000 to adequately fund a survey. Amounts near \$1,000 would enable an organization to hire a social science researcher. However, to hire a top quality researcher from a private firm could cost \$6,000 or more. Expensive research is within the reach of only the largest and most successful artistic organizations. Amounts around \$250 would probably only cover the fundamental costs of printing and distribution. Small organizations with severely limited funds are usually hesitant to release funds for any use, and particularly toward a project of questionable value.

The continuing dilemma for arts organizations remains: which comes first, the research designed to find methods of building a successful organization with a strong financial base, or a strong institution which finally has discretionary funds to allocate to research.

Results to be Expected

Arts administrators and influential people on the Board may show strong enthusiasm for conducting audience research. They may be met by total indifference and high skepticism by other members of the Board. The house is probably divided at the beginning.

Presenting the idea of audience research to the Board should be preceded by a thorough evaluation of your organization's needs in this area. The Board should be shown national norms so they can make a solid decision whether the local institution's audience may differ radically from that norm. Information that is hoped to be discovered and problems that need to be solved should be thoroughly explained to the Board. Financial commitments necessary for good research must be precisely explained.

It appears that local audience research, at this time, is "fine tuning" to discover minor problems. Existing audience development and promotional plans are influenced very little by audience research results. If there are no development plans currently in operation, it can be expected that audience research, however well executed and expensive, will be of limited usefulness. However, if the organization is already working from solid information on an audience profile and wants to explore additional directions in audience development, audience surveys could uncover other areas of potential.

Audience research is a sophisticated building tool. It must be carefully designed, integrated, and interpreted to influence the internal and external problems of an arts organization. It is not a magic wand which will suddenly bring interest, enthusiasm, and money to the arts organization.

CONCLUSIONS OF AN ANALYSIS OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT METHODS

The three methods of audience development investigated in this thesis, while they may overlap in promotion programs of existing arts organizations, come from different motives and use very different practical techniques.

The primary motive of audience development by community involvement is to commit the public psychologically to the artistic organization and thus insure the public's interest, attendance, and money. This method relies heavily on the volunteer to assist in educational programs, social contacts and, finally, selling tickets. The community commitment approach has strong social overtones, even though it attempts to reach the total community. Volunteers usually come from the same financial and social bracket and have available the personal resources of time and money. This method is only effective in communities which have a number of people with such resources. A successful program depends on volunteers' creativeness, abilities, and energies to "sell" the theater to the community.

In subscription sales, the motive is always the business approach of selling tickets. Volunteers may be used, but only toward that goal. Audience development based on subscription sales can be directed by one person, based on a small budget, operated within a specific time frame, and aimed at one goal--A FULL HOUSE. Its essential nature is business. The only social requirement is that activities of volunteers be "pleasant."

Audience surveys seek information. The people using this tool want to know who the arts attending public is. They are interested in the

psychological characteristics of that public as well. By using audience survey information, marketing practices and audience development plans have a factual base. It takes special expertise to conduct accurate research and then adapt research findings to concrete audience development plans.

In an artistic organization, the Board of Directors must decide which approach their organization should take. While one or two practical techniques may be repeated, thoughtless overlapping wastes valuable resources. The Board must carefully analyze its own artistic organization and its management characteristics. Emphasis must be placed on the organization's situation at that time, not what the Board wishes it were or dreams it will be in the future.

The Board must first make a realistic assessment of the management of the artistic organization. Regardless of the amount of time and money spent in determining audience development approaches, if the manager is unable or unwilling to make a plan and follow it, the efforts of the Board will be a total waste. Managers of artistic organizations are often captivated by clever promotional ideas and do not analyze how the idea may fit into a total program. Managers may talk about change but may not be willing to expend the time and energy necessary to bring about that change. And finally, if the organization is going to work with audience research, the manager must have the personal ability to see the implications of research data and apply it to specific audience development programs.

The Board of Directors must then analyze the financial situation of the arts organization. A careful examination must be made of the financial stability of the organization, the percent of capacity of audience at each performance, the evenness of attendance at all performances and a realistic

assessment of the amount of money that might be voted by the Board for audience development.

If the artistic organization is suffering hard times with no audience and no money, Danny Newman's Subscription Series method is the best. Operated successfully, this method produces instant audience and instant money. It has inexpensive components: a staff of one, use of volunteer labor, and the elimination of unnecessary and ineffectual practices. The total campaign is closely monitored until the goal of selling a full house is reached. The amount of money available at the end of the subscription series selling sets realistic financial constraints on the organization.

Organizations under financial stress should not consider becoming involved with audience surveys. Good research is expensive and the application of research requires large amounts of time to gain even small results. Arts organizations with financial and attendance difficulties must concentrate energies and resources on ticket selling. However, it is essential that these organizations be familiar with the basic profile of performing arts audiences as established by the National Endowment for the Arts in order to use publicity and promotional resources in the most effective ways.

If an arts organization has enjoyed fairly successful seasons and reasonable financial stability, it must develop methods to satisfy that audience and reach even more people. Financial stability insures time for audience development plans to gain momentum. Involving people in the community in ever-widening circles brings the arts organization into focus and establishes greater interest. Volunteers are especially effective because they establish friend-to-friend personal endorsement, as well as being an inexpensive promotional resource. Community volunteers can

successfully carry your institution's programs and goals to schools, clubs, and civic organizations. A large volunteer organization can become a dynamic force for an arts organization. It can also become a slow-moving, unyielding, bureaucratic system.

Audience research can be of use to moderately successful arts organizations if the surveys are designed to discover specific publics and solve internal problems related to the comfort and convenience of the ticket buyers.

If the artistic organization has experienced success and has moved in program, scope, and budget into the big business category, its audience development practices will change. Audience surveys, done at the highest quality level possible will "fine tune" the business practices of the organization. Advertising and promotion will be handled professionally, quickly, and accurately by paid personnel. If there is a volunteer group attached to the arts organization, creative efforts must be made to change the areas of community involvement, maintaining the volunteer's commitment to the arts organization but channeling volunteer energies and skills toward different aspects of the theater's total audience development program.

If a careful analysis of an arts organization's situation is made and appropriate development plans selected and implemented, a performing arts institution can move from the crisis state and expend all efforts toward a smooth running organization providing a product essential to the life of a community.

FOOTNOTES

¹William J. Baumol, and William G. Bowen, Performing Arts--The Economic Dilemma (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1966), p. 3.

²Harvey Lichtenstein, Director, Brooklyn Academy of Music, in Stephen Langley, Producers on Producing (New York: Drama Book Specialists (Publishers), 1976), p. 258.

³Bradley Morison, and Kay Fliehr, In Search of an Audience (New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1968), p. xvii.

⁴Ibid., Chapter 9.

⁵Ibid., p. 45.

⁶Statement by Douglas Eichten, Marketing Director, Guthrie Theater, personal interview, Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 22, 1979.

⁷Morison and Fliehr, p. 96.

⁸Ibid., p. 118.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Statement by Shiela Livingston, Assistant to the Artistic Director/ Public Relations Director, Guthrie Theater, telephone interview, Minneapolis, Minnesota, January 29, 1980.

¹¹Helen M. Thompson, Handbook for Symphony Orchestra Associations (Symphony Hill, Vienna, Virginia: American Symphony Orchestra League, Inc., 1971), p. 10.

¹²Morison and Fliehr, p. 192.

¹³B. C. Rossman, "After Epstein's Sudden Departure--the Crisis of the Guthrie," Many Corners Newspaper, Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 1979, p. 5, col. 1.

¹⁴Lee Mitchell, Director, Northwestern University Theater, in Morison and Fliehr, p. 165.

¹⁵Danny Newman, Subscribe Now (New York: Theater Communications Group, Inc., 1977), p. 12.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 121.

- ¹⁹Ibid., p. 52.
- ²⁰Ibid., p. 209.
- ²¹Ibid., p. 89.
- ²²Ibid., p. 269.
- ²³Morison and Fliehr, p. 135.
- ²⁴Ibid., preface.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 42.
- ²⁶Paul DiMaggio, Michael Useem, and Paula Brown, Audience Studies of the Performing Arts and Museums: A Critical Review, National Endowment for the Arts, November 1978, p. 9.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. i.
- ²⁸Ibid., p. 4.
- ²⁹Ibid., p. 43.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 46.
- ³¹Ibid.
- ³²Ibid., p. 48.
- ³³Ibid.
- ³⁴Ibid.
- ³⁵Ibid., p. 51.
- ³⁶Ibid., p. 79.
- ³⁷Ibid., p. 15. Tables were compiled from data provided in this book.
- ³⁸Ibid., p. 17.
- ³⁹Ibid., p. 18.
- ⁴⁰Ibid.
- ⁴¹Ibid., p. 2.
- ⁴²Ibid., p. 22.
- ⁴³Ibid., p. 3.

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AN ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF THREE METHODS
OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT FOR THEATRES
OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

by

JOYCE MITCHELL

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In theatres of the performing arts, three approaches toward audience building are most prominent. One method works toward extensive community involvement and aims at developing psychological commitment of the community to the artistic institution. A second method relies completely on subscription ticket sales and follows only business practices aimed at selling. The third method entails the use of audience surveys to analyze the needs of a community and develop a program based on that information.

This thesis is a detailed study of each method. A description of the audience development plan is given, and an analysis is made concerning the advantages and disadvantages, the personnel and financial requirements, and the results that can be expected from each approach.

This researcher concludes that the method of audience building selected by an arts organization relates to the financial condition of that institution.

If the arts institution is in financial difficulty, the subscription sales method should be utilized immediately. It has low cost components and brings audience and money quickly. This method gains three or four years time in which community commitment procedures can be established.

The extensive use of community volunteers in educational and promotional programs does bring community endorsement and public pride in an arts institution and results in financial support as well. Programs involving volunteers must be carefully organized and monitored to insure satisfactory results.

Audience surveys have limited use. The basic performing arts audience profile developed by the National Endowment for the Arts and

described in this thesis is essential information for arts managers. Surveys done by individual institutions are expensive to execute and of minor usefulness in solving the problems of performing arts institutions.