

Committee(s)	Dated:
Barbican Centre Board	16 November 2022
Subject: Management Report by the Barbican's Directors	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of: Claire Spencer, Chief Executive Officer	For discussion
Report authors: Chief Executive Officer and Directors, Barbican Centre	

Summary

- The Management Report comprises current updates under six sections authored by Barbican Directors.
- Updates are under the headlines of:
 - Chief Executive Officer Update
 - Arts Programming
 - Creative Learning
 - Operations and Buildings
 - Business and Commercial
 - Development
 - Marketing

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Endorse Management's approach to the future activities of the Centre.

Main Report

1. REPORT: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER UPDATE

I am pleased to share with you our reports from the Director Group. My CEO update will continue to focus on areas that the Director Group team are working on collectively.

Strategy and Planning

We are now well progressed with the exercise to define our organisational purpose, values and desired outcomes – with workshops held across the Director Group, Heads of Departments, Barbican Board and Barbican Trust. Engagement of the broader Barbican Team commences shortly and we expect to be in a position to launch the new framework before Christmas.

Sustainable Creative, Business and Operating Model

Work on creating a sustainable creative, business and operating model has continued since the last meeting – with a particular on the budget for 2023/24. This work has focused on achieving a balanced budget, allocation of space across the period, investment in the creative vision and initiatives to deliver new revenue streams across a more efficient cost base. The Budget and Business Plan for 23/24 are in the non-public section of this meeting, at Agenda Item 18.

In addition, we have been working on business areas and opportunities that will yield returns in future periods. These include activating the Conservatory, dynamic pricing, accessible pricing, technical production, and membership. The Creative Vision also continues to develop, with the realization of the plan to bring together three teams into one (with a streamlined programme of works) and the launch of Barbican Young Changemakers.

As advised at our last meeting, we are in the final stages of revising the contract between the Barbican Centre and London Symphony Orchestra and had hoped to present a final recommendation at this meeting. However, there are two outstanding options yet to be finally resolved:

- Whether the grant would be payable in the event that the Barbican Hall were to close due to renewal. The expected resolution on this point will be the LSO proposing an annual programme of activity to take place in the City of London and beyond in respect of their grant, with the Corporation having absolute discretion about whether the grant should be payable.
- A question of liability should the Concert Hall be unusable resulting in the cancellation of a concert, which cannot be subsequently rescheduled. The anticipated outcome on this point is an acceptance by the LSO that its own insurance policy would need to cover any loss of income.

We anticipate that these items will be resolved shortly, with a contract and recommendation to follow.

We continue to monitor audience response and attendance – both across our programme but also more broadly across the industry. An overview of this review is included in the Marketing section of this report.

Governance and Risk Management

This month we have held two sub-committee meetings at the Barbican as part of our ongoing commitment to increase governance connection to the institution. Feedback from Members and Officers continues to be extremely positive.

In October we held our inaugural “Meet the Board” breakfast with the Barbican team which was very well received. We will build on this in future and also invite members of the Barbican Trust to build mutual understanding of the work the team and the Trust undertake to support our activities.

Our Governance Group will reconvene in December to continue to work through recommended changes to the way we work with the Corporation to maximise the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of our governance activities. We thank our Town Clerk officer, Ben Dunleavy, for his work and expertise in this area.

This meeting, we are presenting the new Barbican Policy for Safeguarding, included at Agenda Item 6.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Work has commenced on our EDI Maturity assessment, from which our EDI strategy will be developed. This will be presented to the Board in January 2023. In the meantime, work continues apace on the EDI and HR Action Plan – the most significant deliverable this quarter will be the Zero Tolerance Statement (at Attachment A to this paper). We have taken time to develop this carefully – engaging members of the Barbican team across many departments.

This statement will be shared with the full team on 15 November, with a full training programme to follow. We are currently working on how this training will be extended to capture Board Members also.

People and Culture

Following our organizational response to the Employee Survey, we have now developed local action plans at departmental level. These were shared across the Barbican Team in October and will be monitored and reported on regularly.

We have opened up our new Co-Lab in the Garden Corridor and we are pleased to see how different teams are coming together to explore opportunities and solve problems. We will continue to look for silo-busting, collaborative ways of working.

We have welcomed more new team members in strategically critical roles, including our new Head of Visual Arts, Shanay Jhaveri.

After 8 years, our Head of Music Huw Humphries, will depart the Barbican in December. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Barbican Renewal and Sustainability

Work with the Creative Team is progressing well and the underpinning work for the Business Case is proceeding to plan. We have launched a full programme of community consultation – in the form of an online survey and planned open sessions. We look forward to taking all this feedback into account as we continue to develop our options for consideration. A full report is provided at Agenda Item 19.

Leadership

The Director Group has commenced work on ourselves as a team – to enhance trust and understanding and to enable us to work ever more closely together to lead the Barbican through this period of change. We remain focused on delivering on our shared objectives agreed in the first quarter.

City of London and Sector

A challenging time in the sector as Arts Council England (ACE) announced the outcomes of its latest round of funding reviews, which particularly impacted London based organisations. As part of this announcement, we also learned that ACE is no longer in a position to continue support for the Barbican.

While we're understandably disappointed with this outcome, it is by no means a reflection of the quality of the work that we've been doing very successfully for many years. This outcome is part of a broader government programme of levelling up with a heightened focus on London's outer boroughs and we know that many organisations in Central London have been impacted.

In order to support the implementation of these cuts, ACE has extended their transition budget, meaning the cuts will come into effect from April 2024 as opposed to spring next year. On a more positive note, ACE are aware of the exciting work we are doing and noted that we remain eligible for project grants.

As always, we thank Members and External Board Members for your commitment and support.

2. REPORT: ARTS PROGRAMMING

Programming

After huge anticipation and a record-beating advance box office, *My Neighbour Totoro* has now opened to an array of positive reviews including a 5* in the Guardian.

The first two shows in the autumn Pit season *You're Safe Til 2024: Deep History* and *Centre for the Less Good Idea* were well received and exceeded target. We will now welcome the two winners of the Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award, *High Rise* and *Zoo Co*, before we end the year with our Christmas show for babies and their families, the Olivier nominated Barbican commission, *To the Moon and Back*.

The 6 new Open Labs have now been awarded to the following artists who will have their Pit residencies starting in January 2023 - Elisabeth Gunawan/Saksi Bisou, Jennifer Jackson, Libby Liburd, Quiplash, Madeline Shann and BULLYACHE.

In the Barbican Art Gallery, Carolee Schneemann: *Body Politics* opened on 8 September the show opened to excellent reviews although visitor numbers are lower than anticipated – it is hoped that they will pick up towards the end of the run. Soheila Sokhanvari: *Rebel Rebel* opened in the Curve on 7 October to wide-spread news coverage with the artists appearing on the BBC's Today Programme and Front Row. We have self-published the catalogue for this exhibition, and will be reviewing our future Curve publication strategy. *Noguchi* opened at Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern Switzerland on 22 September, until 8 January 2023.

The LSO, returned to the Barbican after their summer break, opening their season with a warmly received programme of Elgar, Bridge and a new work by Daniel Kidane. Other classical music highlights have included, collaborations with Nina Dunn Studio on immersive projections for a performance by the Academy of Ancient Music; the return of the Barbican's International Associate the Australian Chamber Orchestra to Milton Court, for a three-concert residency; produced Netia Jones's new multimedia project *Anatomy of Melancholy*, melding music, narration and images in an exploration of melancholia throughout the ages; and hosted the Barbican debut of rising star pianist Clare Hammond. September/October contemporary music highlights included The Divine Comedy's sold-out, 5-show career retrospective, a collaboration between Portico Quartet and Turner-nominated artist Hannah Collins, and sold-out appearances from Autechre, Max Richter, Lykke Li and Brian Eno, plus the beginning of Yahael Camara Onono's year-long Milton Court residency.

The New Release Cinema programme has seen an increase in attendance, with the Barbican being the top site for the Netflix title *Blonde*. October has also seen a number of well attended New Release ScreenTalks, including *Emily* and a sold out *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Additionally, Barbican Cinema has hosted special one off ScreenTalks to sold out audiences this month; *What About China?* with director Trinh T. Minh-ha and *Storm Damage* as part of Black History Month.

Curated by Awa Konaté (Culture Art Society), September's *Hidden Figures* programme celebrated the works of filmmaker Idrissa Ouédraogo, whose films explored the tensions between traditional and modern life in rural Burkina Faso. The October half term break

saw the return of our annual in-house curated *Family Film Week*, which included one day of accessible events.

Cinema's response to the Carolee Schneemann exhibition in the Gallery is also drawing large audiences. *Intimacy and the Body* with a special introduction by Elena Gorfinkel in was a fascinating programme of experimental shorts screened to a near sell out cinema 1 audience.

Barbican Immersive's *Our Time on Earth* closed in the Curve Gallery having welcomed almost 60,000 visitors. The exhibition will next travel to Musee de la Civilisation, Quebec in 2023, before continuing across North America to Peabody Essex Museum. *AI: More than Human* opened at Sede Afundación A Coruña in Spain on 5 September. This October we collaborated with the BFI London Film Festival (LFF) to show 'Planet City' by Liam Young at LFF Expanded. We extended our future international collaboration prospects at Muscon, Milan and HUB Montreal in Canada.

Update on Digital

The Live from the Barbican series 2022/23 season continues and started with a Barbican Hall live stream of emerging British pianist, Isata Kanneh-Mason, on 10 October. Two new developments included inaugural Live from the Barbican broadcasts from Milton Court on 27 October (Australian Chamber Orchestra: *Beethoven & Bridgetower*) and from the Pit Theatre (*Anatomy of the Melancholy*) on 28 October. The Music team has been in further discussions with Sky Arts about broadcasting various titles in the Live from the Barbican series – negotiations are ongoing whilst Sky Arts consider their broadcast options for this series.

Visual Arts continue to support Carolee Schneemann: *Body Politics* with digital content including a trailer film, Spotify playlist, Instagram reel (13.k views) artist biography long-read, introductory film with Curator, and partnerships with Nowness, Talk Art and Girls on Top. For Soheila Sokhanvari: *Rebel Rebel*, we have produced a trailer film, Instagram reel (which had over 67k views), exhibition guide and film in Soheila's studio (over 13k views).

Barbican Cinema has expanded one of the entries in the Emerging Film Curator's Season onto Barbican Cinema on Demand, widening the programme and utilising our digital offer to reach larger audiences the team will continue to explore ways to best utilise the Cinema on Demand platform in the medium to long term.

Future Planning

The February-July 2023 Music programme launched in September, with promising initial sales markedly stronger than for the equivalent on sale last year. The Music team future planning focus is now on the 23/24 season.

The spring January-June 2023 Theatre and Dance season has launched featuring new work by Katie Mitchell/Headlong, Simon McBurney/Complicite, Ballet Black, Cheek by Jowl, Trajal Harrell, Rachel Mars and Transpose. The year will start with an array of innovative work as part of the much-loved London International Mime Festival. Press reactions to the launch were very favourable and bookings have got off to a healthy start.

November sees the return of a number of partner festivals for Cinema, including Palestine Film Festival, London International Animation Festival and Doc'n Roll, as well

as a contribution to the EFG Jazz Festival with the in-house curated Jazz on Screen Programme.

Barbican Immersive continues the development of *Fundamentals of Music* to open at Barbican in 2025 as well as confirming *Mangasia: Wonderlands of Asian Comics* exhibition to go to three venues in North America. The team is also in the initial stages of planning for *Game On* to visit the National Museum of Scotland in summer 2024.

3. REPORT: CREATIVE COLLABORATION AND LEARNING

Creative Collaboration and Learning

Karena Johnson joined us in September as our Head of Creative Collaboration and Learning. This new department brings together four teams: Barbican Futures, Communities and Neighbourhoods, Creative Learning and Public Programming. Monthly meetings across all departments receiving Arts Council England funding have begun and are chaired by Karena. The purpose of these meetings is to reflect on and enhance our progress towards meeting our Key Performance Indicators and Investment Principle aims for 2022/2023. A decision on

Barbican Futures – Action research continues in four areas of the new Creative Vision. Future Producers has moved into Phase 2, which will focus on the co-creation of the programme with young people and the internal requirements to deliver to the need identified in Phase 1 of the research. In September, we began a Creative Curriculum pilot which will span the 2022/2023 academic year. Eight Creative Practitioners have been selected and paired with eight teachers across two partner schools: Phoenix School (primary SEN in Tower Hamlets) and City of London Highgate Hill (secondary in Islington). Consultant Nadine Patel started Phase 1 research into International Exchange, which includes mapping of existing connections and exploring potential opportunities internationally. This research will also feed into the International Arts Summit work, which will continue the end of November with the development of pilot round tables in the Spring of 2023.

As part of our Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation funded work which includes developing a new model of evaluation and impact measurement framework for the Creative Collaboration and Learning department, we have conducted a Theory of Change workshop with members of the department in collaboration with external consultants Cornish and Grey to inform the new model and measurement framework. We are in the process of reviewing the outcomes of the workshop and identifying suitable projects within the department for testing in late Autumn. We continue to conduct desk research and pilot different evaluation methods to inform the new model and measurement framework. We are reviewing the stakeholder consultation processes followed during the early phases of research and scoping for the four area of the new Creative Vision to feed into a model for stakeholder consultation and co-creation.

Communities and Neighbourhoods – Community Collaborators, [Headway East London](#) spent the day at Barbican at the end of Sept, getting behind the scenes access to the installation of Rebel Rebel in The Curve, as part of planning their Curve takeover for next Summer 2023.

Seven local Londoners have now been selected to form a new Community Film Fund Panel, as part of neighbourhood project, Leytonstone Loves Film, in East London. The panel will work together throughout October to design and launch the fund, which will be open for applications from November.

At the end of Oct we'll be welcoming new Communities In Residence partner [Phosphoros Theatre Company](#) into the building for the first time. They will be hosting weekly Theatre workshops every Thursday evening with, for, and by refugees and asylum seekers.

Creative Learning

Young People – Barbican Young Changemakers

Barbican Young Changemakers (previously known as Barbican Young Leaders) was launched on 10 October and the first cohort of young people will be recruited in the coming weeks. Through the programme, young people will work with lead facilitator Remi Harris and the Barbican Creative Learning and Marketing teams to drive two projects that support two of the key areas of change for the centre: Building Change (Barbican Renewal) and Culture Change (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy). Barbican Young Changemakers will enable young people to have a central role within decision making processes by being connected directly with the Barbican CEO and Artistic Director with whom they will be able to share thoughts and perspectives.

Young People – Barbican Young Poets, Young Visual Arts Group, Young Film Programmers

We have just recruited 57 young people, across three new cohorts, for our Young Creatives Programmes: Young Barbican Poets, Young Visual Arts Group and Young Film Programmers. Programmes will run until Spring 2023 and will culminate with poetry and visual arts showcases and a film festival curated by the young people. Since April 2022 we have worked with a total of 94 young people, of which 78% identify with one of more under-represented protected characteristic.

Schools – Teacher Lab

In October we launched Teacher Lab, a 6-month professional development programme that promotes creative practice in the classroom by supporting cross-curricular teacher and artist exchanges to re-imagine the curriculum and develop practical tools for learning and creative thinking through the arts. The schools-artists pairs taking part in the programme are:

- City of London Primary Academy Islington and artist Hannah Calascione.
- Dagenham Park Church of England School / Marsh Green Primary School and artist Esme Allman.
- Ickburgh School and artist Oliver Hymans.

Bespoke CPD resources will be developed through the programme and launched in Spring 2023, and hundreds of young people will experience them through workshops delivered at the Barbican in our School Takeover Week.

Families – Squish Space

On 31 August we launched Squish Space's new commission exploring ideas about the planet and our ecology. Designed by artist duo India Harvey and Lisa Marie Bengtsson, the new commission includes sound and moving image from artists Di Mainstone and Xavier Velastin. The new season was co-developed with local families in a series of 21 workshops at neighbouring community centres, Mildmay Community Centre, Morningside Children's Centre and St Luke's Community Centre. Future plans for Squish Space include continuing the relationship with local families and making this unique offer available for families, including children with SEND, who might not otherwise visit the Barbican. From July-September, Squish Space welcomed a total of 4,303 visitors, with an average of 94 visitors per day. In this quarter, Squish Space was opened for a total of 46 days, which is an average of 4 days per week. Since 31 August, Squish Space capacity has been increased to 40 people per timeslot, a total of 200 people per day, which is similar to pre-pandemic levels.

Public Programme & Archives

The Edge of the Centre

September's event saw a well-attended screening of [Ireland Behind the Wire](#) by the Berwick St Collective, curated by the artist Stewart Home. October's sold-out event, [Black Arsenal](#), will be livestreamed and is partnership between Arsenal FC and UCL, curated by scholar Clive Nwonka.

Library Lates

Public Programme were pleased to announce the launch of Barbican Library's new event series Library Lates. The launch event will feature a conversation between a selection of London's leading female short-story authors published by indie [Influx Press](#).

Barbican Archive

The Barbican's archive reached a new phase of its Google-sponsored digitisation work, focussing on the Art Centre's archive. Work has now been completed on the architectural drawings collection. Planning for a foyers installation of the archive, featuring the original architectural model of the Barbican, is underway for February/March 2023

4. REPORT: OPERATIONS & BUILDINGS

Purpose: Create an environment that enables and inspires others to achieve their best. To be achieved through:

Plan: Providing services that are 1. compliant 2. efficient and 3. appropriate.

Priorities: Life-critical, business-critical, other.

General: Our buildings remain safe and compliant. We continue to deliver training in areas such as security, fire safety, and 'one-team' which includes customer care and brand.

All casual workers are now transferred to PARiM, our new IT shift system, and we continue to roll out training in its use to ensure that all get the benefits of the system, including being able to pick up shifts across different areas of the business. The one-team training programme also enables this and continues the move towards an ever-more consistent offer and experience.

We continue to deliver our CWP projects and are working with City colleagues on the City capital funding review and associated projects.

We continue to deliver against our strategy and plan, using any findings of the various recent audit regime to review and shape our priorities moving forward.

We will be focussing on designing and delivering further 'one-team' training, with a view to offering a more seamless front of house experience across the various teams and structures. This will offer opportunities to workers and staff, plus serve to further reduce risk across the Barbican.

We continue to work with our Barbican Renewal design team to ensure alignment between ongoing projects and to identify and prioritise the need going forward.

5. REPORT: BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL

Business Events: As we approach the end of the summer, business level expectations across the meeting and event industry are in the most confident period to date since Covid, and, despite the uncertainties of the previous quarters, they appear to have eased for short term expectations. Despite current concerns over increasing costs, life experience events such as weddings and corporate summer parties have performed extremely well, along with graduations including Open University.

Over the past few months, Stanley Tucci and Mel C (of Spice Girls fame), provided evening 'in conversation' events through Fane Productions, whilst the Barbican provide the perfect backdrop for the NLA's (New London Architecture) annual 'London Real Estate Forum', bringing together leaders from the industry, public sector, government, investment and business communities, to imagine what cities and urban areas will look like in the future and how to best shape and how they are best shaped and influenced by their stakeholders. We were also delighted to welcome the ECO City World Summit launch – with the main event being held at the Barbican in June 2023.

There is no doubt that 2023/24 will present challenges due to external and internal influences. We are therefore working on recession proofing our business model in order to ensure that we enter the next financial year with a layer of business on the books which will be economically sound in the event of a downturn of business.

Catering & Bars:

The **Barbican Kitchen** has had a mini-refresh, with new indoor plants making a big impact and softening the space. Additionally, the interior is being re-painted and refreshed throughout in the latter half of October. A sushi bar has also been introduced for pre-theatre audiences, in time for My Neighbour Totoro.

Osteria Restaurant on Level 2 is now the **Barbican Brasserie** – after 8 years a refresh “celebrating British classics and European dishes with a modern twist” will enable the team to create familiar dishes with lower food miles aimed squarely at our audience.

Barbican Bars have taken over the **Members' Lounge**, with a Japanese-inspired menu aimed at maximising the presence supporting My Neighbour Totoro around the Barbican during its run. This was a team effort pulled together at short notice between several department, demonstrating what can be achieved when everyone pulls together with a common goal

6. REPORT: DEVELOPMENT

The Trust and Grants team have recently secured a grant towards family programming across Cinema, Creative Learning and Theatre. They have also secured support from two embassies towards music projects in 2023: the Patricia Kopatchinskaja Artist Spotlight concert series and The End of the World concert. The team are currently focusing on artform fundraising for 2023 onwards.

Corporate Membership renewals are continuing positively, and we are currently in negotiation with two potential new Members.

Members of the Exhibition Circle supporter groups for both current exhibitions have enjoyed special events around the openings.

Since the last meeting, we have hosted successful stewardship and cultivation events for our supporters for the *Carolee Schneemann Body Politics & Soheila Sokhanvari: Rebel Rebel* openings. The team also co-hosted a cultivation event with Trustee Tom Bloxham MBE, and continue to plan supporter events for the upcoming Barbican programme.

7. REPORT: MARKETING

Visual Identity Refresh

We'd been living with our previous visual identity for ten years and, although strong and recognisable, it didn't reflect our aspiration to present our brand as diverse and 'multitudinous'. A new direction came into focus following Will's vision of 'surprising collaborations and awkward combinations'.

We worked with our design agency North, briefing them to:

1. Evolve the current visual identity but retain its DNA
2. Acknowledge our many audiences and the diversity of our offer
3. Embrace our surprising collaborations and awkward combinations
4. Introduce more flexibility and dynamism, especially in digital formats

The two key innovations to our visual identity, being phased in since early September, are:-

The split wordmark: Not only can the wordmark appear in different positions, but we've split it, so while the top portion is still Futura, the bottom half can be... anything we want it to be, allowing for a number of iterations and creating a sense of 'awkward combinations'.

Different fonts: Using different fonts alongside Futura brings more variety to our work and, again, creates this sense of 'awkward combinations'.

We've not yet tested this with audiences, but the response to the Centre takeovers from staff and partners across the organisation has been overwhelmingly positive, being seen as being fresh, less corporate and more edgy.

Post Covid audience trends

Classical Music

UK classical venues report revenue currently down 20% on pre Covid, although this is an improvement on 30% earlier this year. General trends being reported are later booking, price resistance on top tier tickets, subscriptions declining as are older audiences, but some have suggested student audience seems to be growing in response to a lot of offers being available.

Our year so far has not looked quite so positive in terms of sales. We're never comparing like with like but, according to ABO reports, as of 3 November:

3 Nov 22/23

Achieved average of 46% of seating capacity and 59% of income target for matured events

3 Nov 19/20

Achieved average of 76% of seating capacity and 105% of income target for matured events

Contemporary Music

UK Music reports the UK's music industry is around a third smaller than pre pandemic. Despite this, the industry has been very busy with promoters and artists trying to make

up for the lull over the peak of the pandemic. We actually had a better early part of 2022 than many, maybe because a seated venue was felt to be safer than a crowded, standing venue.

The feeling within the team is that audience behaviour and attendance in Contemporary has returned to pretty much what they would have expected back in 2019, and figures bear this out. As a 'premium' music venue with maybe a more comfortable audience demographic, we don't seem to be experiencing the issues of the market as a whole.

3 Nov 22/23

Achieved average of 79% of seating capacity and 102% of income target for matured events

3 Nov 19/20

Achieved average 82% of seating capacity and 91% of income target for matured events

Visual Arts

Between April and June 2022, DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries saw around a third (34.6%) fewer visits than the same period in 2019. The Art Fund also reported in the early summer that visitor numbers were at 61% of pre pandemic. Neither have reported numbers since, but among London galleries and museums the consensus seems to be that business is around 70% of what it was, and their free offers performing better in comparison to paid exhibitions, which seem to be doing very mixed business.

Certainly, our Gallery shows this year – *Post War Modern* and *Schneemann* – have performed below expectation, despite positive reviews.

Film

Although summer was a success, overall, UK cinema admissions are still only about 70% of what they were in 2019. However, a strong autumn is predicted to take it to 80%.

In terms of bouncing back the Barbican is doing very well compared to London Curzons and Everymen, showing an 83% improvement on 2021. Our August was 43% up on the five-year average and September was 22% higher.

Theatre

Audience Agency in their October *Cultural Participation Monitor*, a survey that goes out to audiences of UK venues (mainly subsidised theatres), report that half of respondents say they're worse off now than they were pre-pandemic and 65% are planning fewer paid-for entertainment/leisure activities due to the cost-of-living crisis. However, Audience Agency segments such as Metroculturals and Culturebuffs (our type of audiences) are more likely than others to say they're *not* looking to cut back...

They report also, as of the end of the summer, overall income and ticket sales are more-or-less back to pre-pandemic levels, although there is a lot of underlying variation. London is at 91% of pre pandemic income, which they put down to the slowness of the older demographic to return, although other reports claim visits to the West End are easily back to what they were and SOLT reports October was the best month since the pandemic started.

Theatre at the Barbican is looking buoyant for theatre with *Totoro* an obvious sell-out hit, and very good attendances for Pit shows recently.

Post event Survey/NPS

For the last three months our Net Promoter Score has been 55 (there is no apparent NPS benchmark for live arts, but generally over 30 is considered very good and over 50 is considered excellent).

Audiences for *Totoro* are delivering an NPS score of 62 so far, while audiences for *Anything Goes* just 36. There are a number of possible reasons for this, but a likely explanation is the *Anything Goes* audience was of a significantly older demographic who are less tolerant of the physical limitations of the building. Audiences with a physical disability also deliver a low NPS score of 37.

NPS has varied between artform (please remember we're only looking at attendees from August – October)

1. Cinema 66
2. Contemporary Music 53
3. Gallery 50
4. Classical 45
5. Theatre 44

Audience Development

Following the creation of our bespoke segmentation system in 2019, we identified a development segment, who constituted 18% of the London market but only 1% of the Barbican database. We called this segment **Next Generation**. Next Gen are younger, more ethnically diverse than the other segments and have a wide and inclusive view of what constitutes culture. Valuing self-expression, they are sociable and culturally active, but tend not to have close relationships with the formal arts institutions.

Our brief to **The Elephant Room** <https://theelephantroom.net/>, an award-winning creative agency that builds inclusive brands, was to undertake some research and to work with us on how we could creatively and authentically engage with Next Gen.

Their four strategic recommendations are to

1. Shift what we engage in from establishment culture to fuzzy culture
2. Rethink our sense of place, from a fortress to a wonderland
3. Shift how we communicate, from telling stories to having conversations
4. And to think about social programming as well as in-building programming

This strategic work has informed our new social and content strategy and on 9 November we're launching a collaboration between the Barbican and The Elephant Room, a new podcast series. **At the Barbs** is a new weekly podcast delving into the world of art and creativity – through the lens of culture and its influences on a younger generation – and each week focusses on a discussion of an event in the Barbican's arts programme, including Carolee Schneemann, *Black Arsenal* and the *UK Drill Project*.

Data Principles

We recognise that we do not currently have a data strategy as such, but some working principles we've employed as the data team within Marketing. A full strategy could be as detailed as the Digital Strategy and should complement it; we believe this could be developed collaboratively between the Marketing data team, Head of Systems & Data, and Head of Digital Experience.

1. **Deepen audience's relationship with the Barbican (CRM):**

Send effective marketing communications by targeting the right audience, at the right time.

2. Expand audience horizons (Segmentation):

Use data to unearth audience trends, patterns and behaviours to create meaningful groups.

3. Share knowledge, make data accessible (Tools & Skills):

Ensure our data infrastructure is easy to manipulate, automate and accessible to wider teams via our visualisation platform Power BI.

4. Build data products, not reports (Agile methodology):

Avoid siloed, ad hoc, and resource-intensive manual reports that only serve one use-case or need.

5. Data collection & audience privacy (information control & GDPR):

We believe the best form of data collection happens with audience's willingness and permission. If data collection does not make an audience's experience better, its internal goal is not defined, or the same info is already captured elsewhere, we shouldn't collect it.

Dynamic pricing

US-based Digonex is the leading provider of dynamic pricing solutions in the arts and cultural industries. They work with many prestigious US venues and, more recently, started working with Royal Albert Hall and Wales Millennium Centre. Digonex have developed a tool they call SEATS, which can recommend on-sale prices for each pricing template, then go on review and manage daily price recommendations, up or down, (manually accepted or declined by a Box Office manager).

This is based upon 8-12 weeks of:-

1. Defining the organisation's strategic, financial and operational goals
2. Data gathering and analysis (primarily historical transaction and data but can also include programming detail, marketing plans, previous pricing research, Google Analytics etc)
3. Algorithmic development

Recently Digonex announced a partnership with Spektrix and are about to begin development work which will integrate their systems. Subject to this, we're embarking on a trial with Digonex in the Theatre and Hall for the first six months of 2023. Digonex clients experience an uplift in income of between 5-18%, partially on how wholeheartedly they embrace its potential and has been used very successfully by Royal Albert Hall with whom we've been in close contact.

Dynamic pricing speaks to all three of the key areas of focus for our business as usual:

1. **Venue Utilisation** – Ensuring our events are appropriately priced
2. **Capacity** – Allowing us to be responsive, lowering prices to sell tickets where there may be price resistance
3. **Spend per head** – Increasing prices on popular events within a tolerable range (while maintaining a low 'accessible' price band)

Appendix A – Barbican Zero Tolerance Statement (final draft)