

**NEW MUSIC:
NEW AUDIENCES**

**How to audiences engage
with the arts?**

Heather Maitland

Is it accurate to talk about “music audiences” or “dance audiences” or “opera audiences”? Let’s look at music audiences... only 15% say they mainly go to just one genre. Most music audiences are “musical omnivores” – they love many different kinds of music.

DO AUDIENCES FOCUS ON ONE ARTFORM?

Genre Enthusiasts



Musical omnivores



Occasional at music



What are music omnivores like?

- Musical taste used to be seen as a sign of people's social class
- Musical omnivores were first noticed in the US in 1990s
- Omnivores are people who like a wide range of music, both highbrow and popular culture
- They come from across social classes but tend to live in urban areas
- High status groups are more likely to be omnivores
- Omnivores are different because they see themselves as generally tolerant and open to diversity

Philippe Coulangeon and Yannick Lemel, 'Is distinction really outdated? Questioning the meaning of the omnivorization of musical taste in contemporary France;', *Poetics*, 35 (2007), passim

Research shows that this is also true for audiences for other artforms.

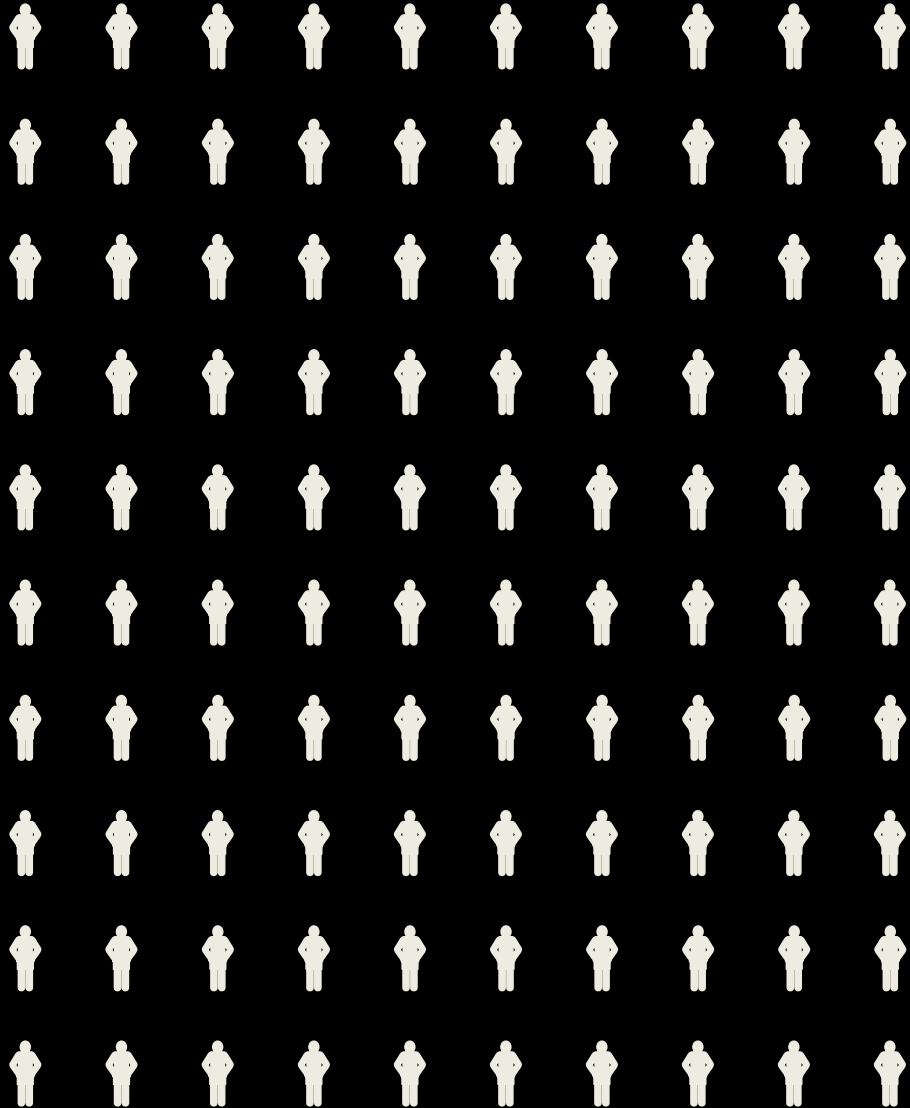
**MOST ARTS ATTENDERS ARE
CULTURAL OMNIVORES**

Arts omnivores

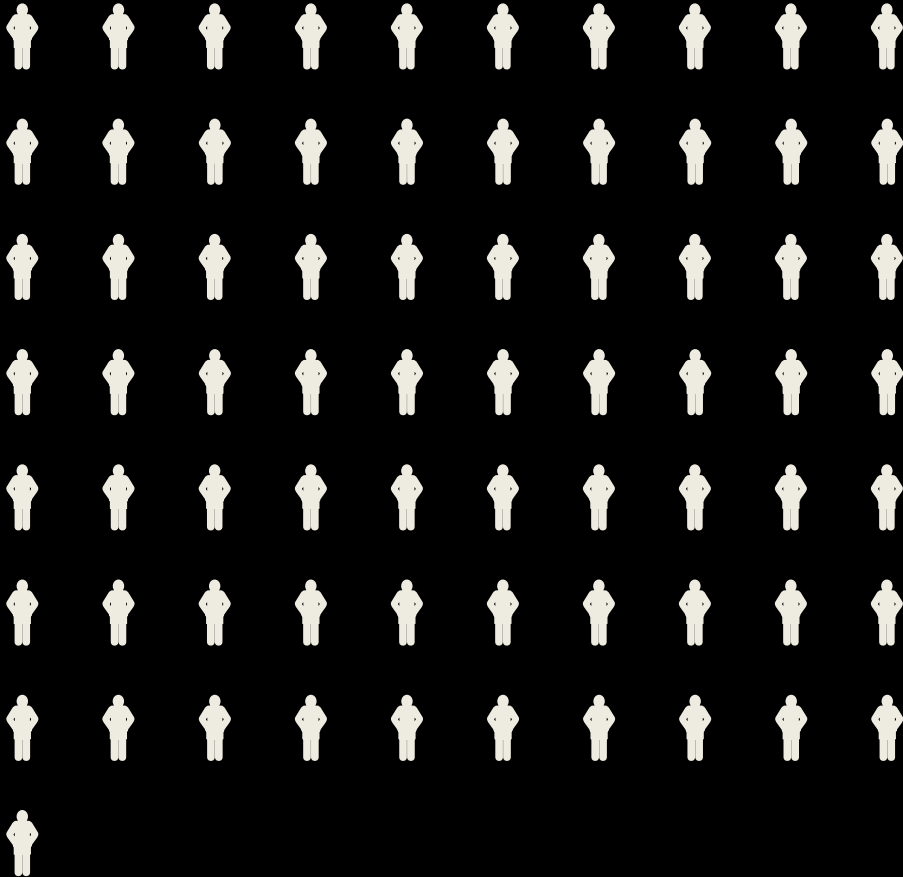
- The more people consume specific forms of culture, the more likely they are to consume other forms of culture as well
- It's about variety not quantity

So what percentage of audiences for different artforms buy tickets at a particular venue more than once and only buy for the same artform. Here are the results of box office data analysis in five arts centres in the UK.

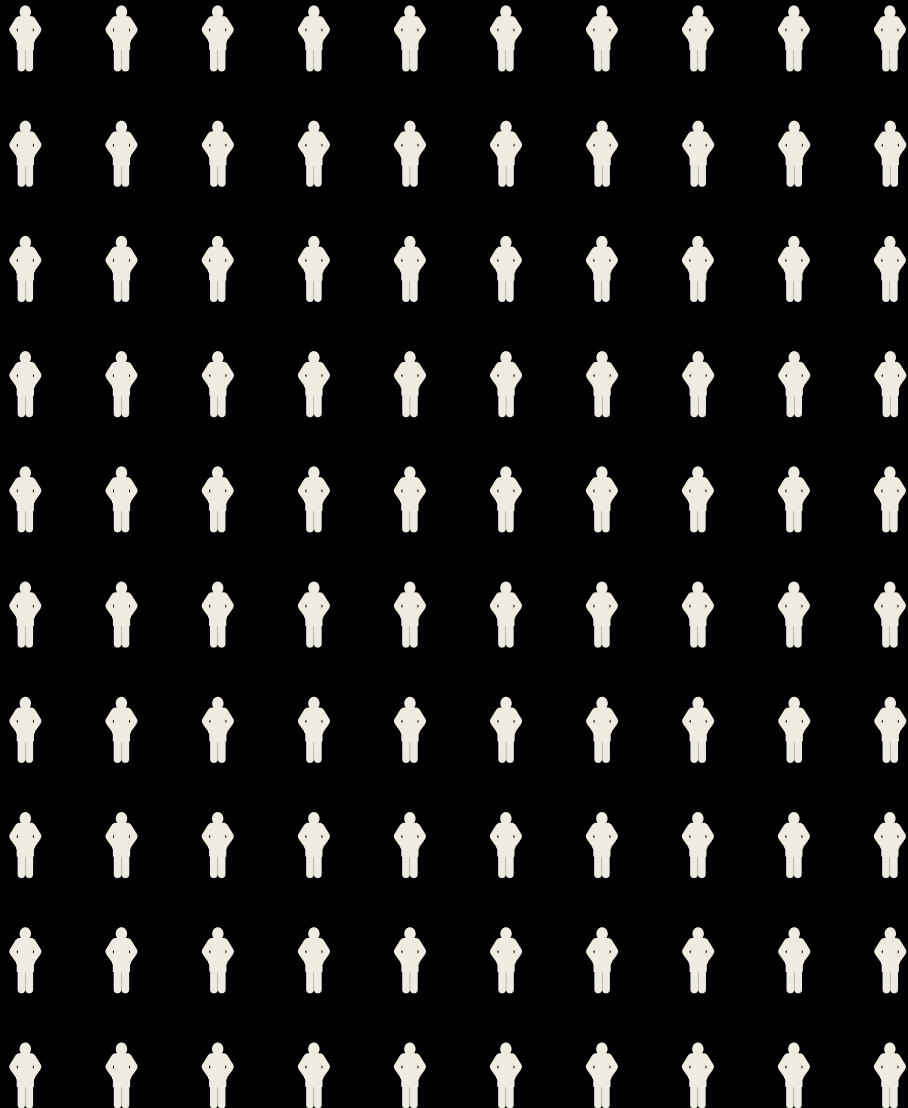
**Guess what
percentage of
ticket buyers for
classical music
bought for more
than one event at
the venue**



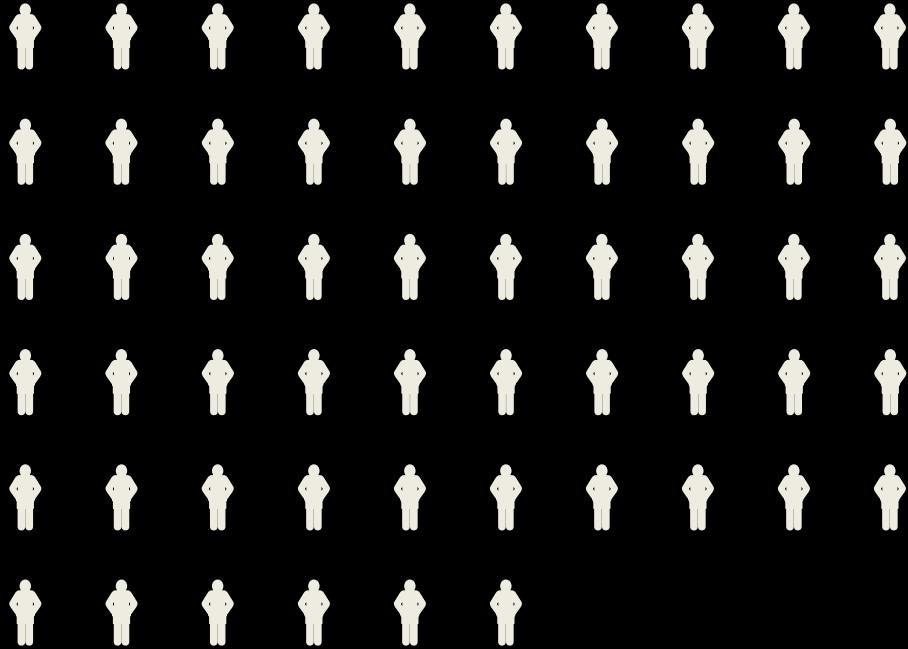
**71% of ticket
buyers for classical
music bought for
more than one
event**



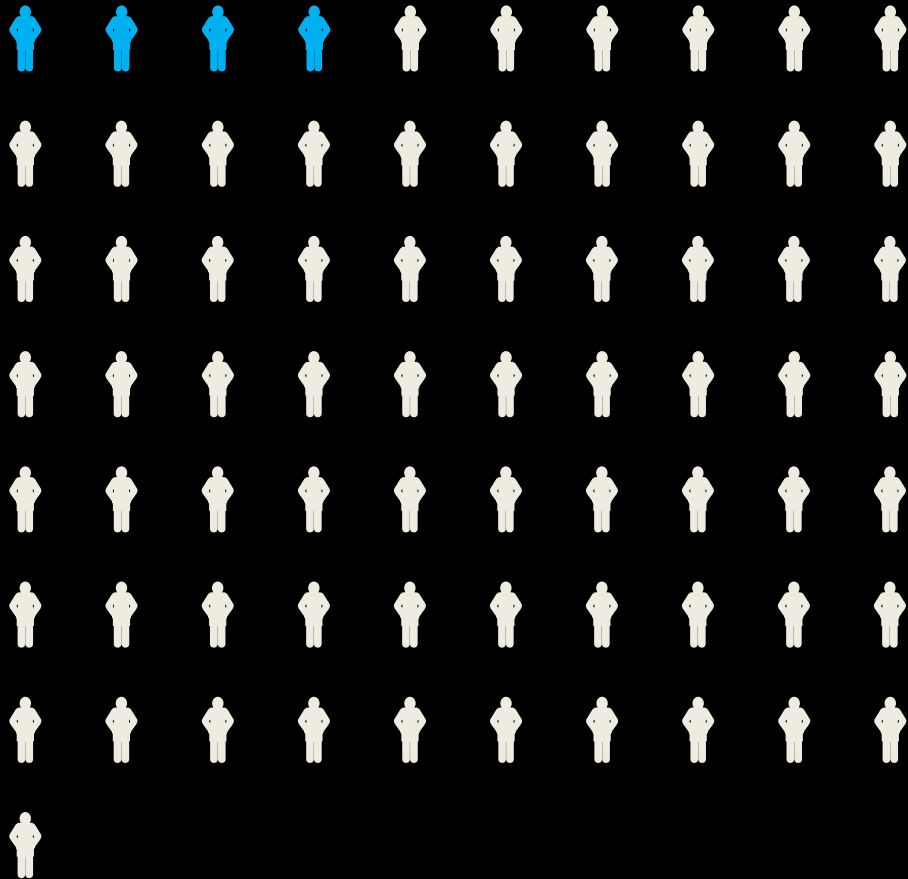
**Guess what
percentage of
ticket buyers for
jazz, world music,
folk, rock and pop
bought for more
than one event at
the venue**



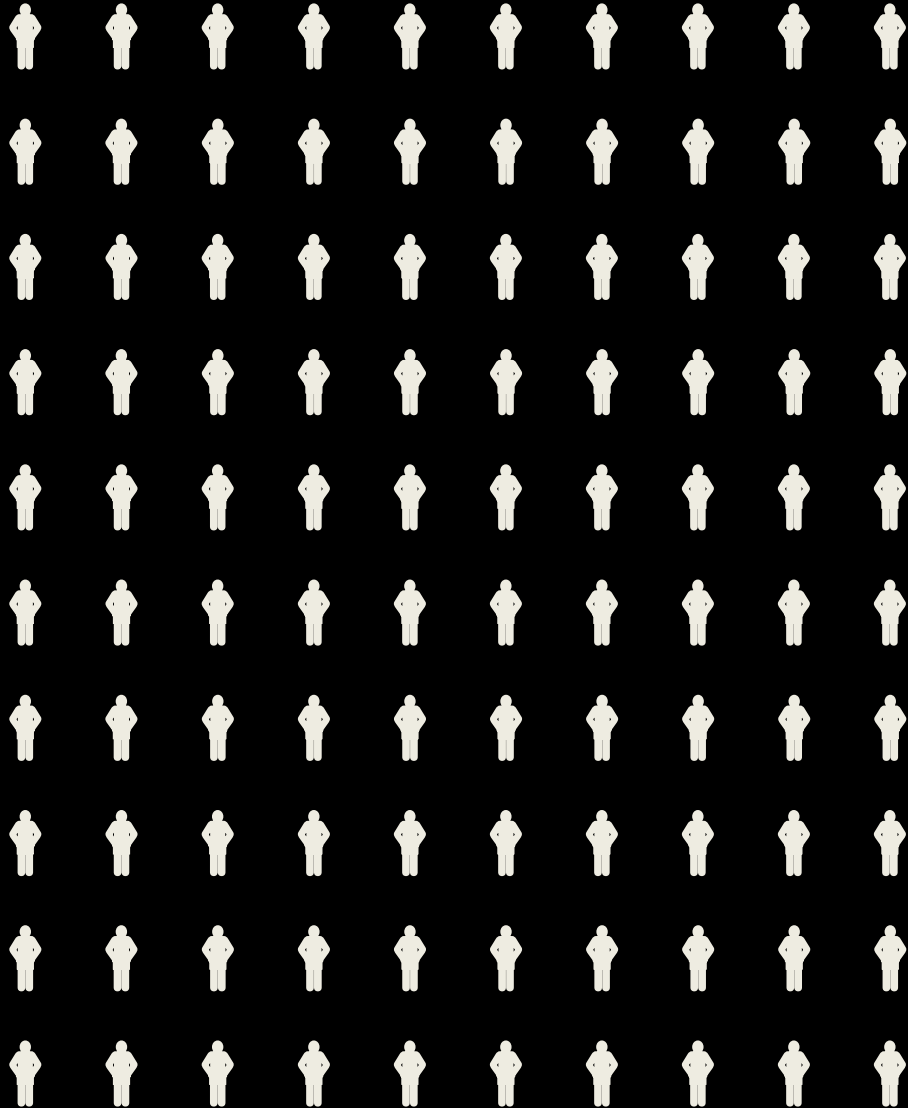
**56% of ticket
buyers for all non-
classical music
bought for more
than one event**



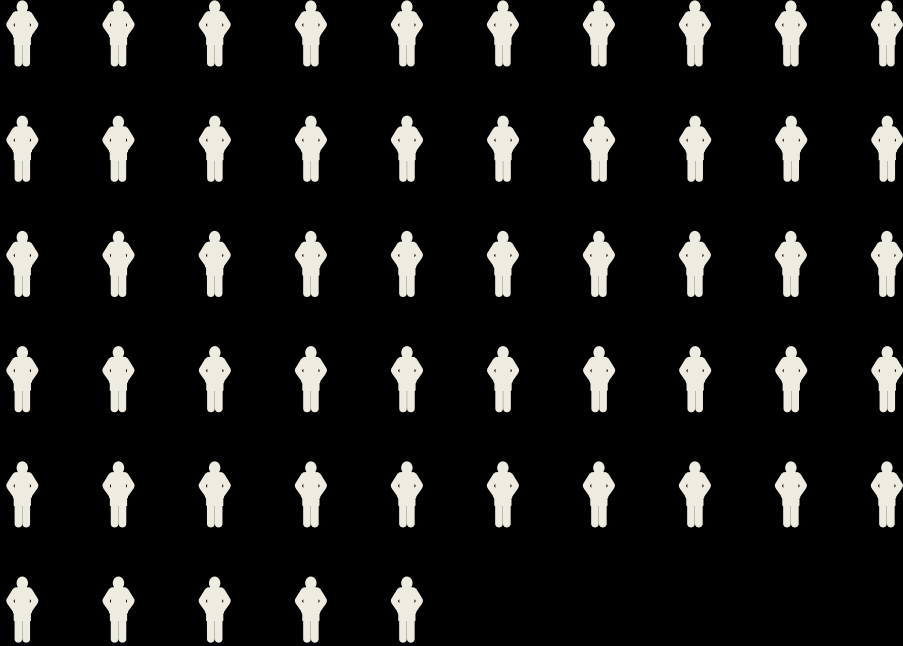
Just 4% only
bought for non-
classical music



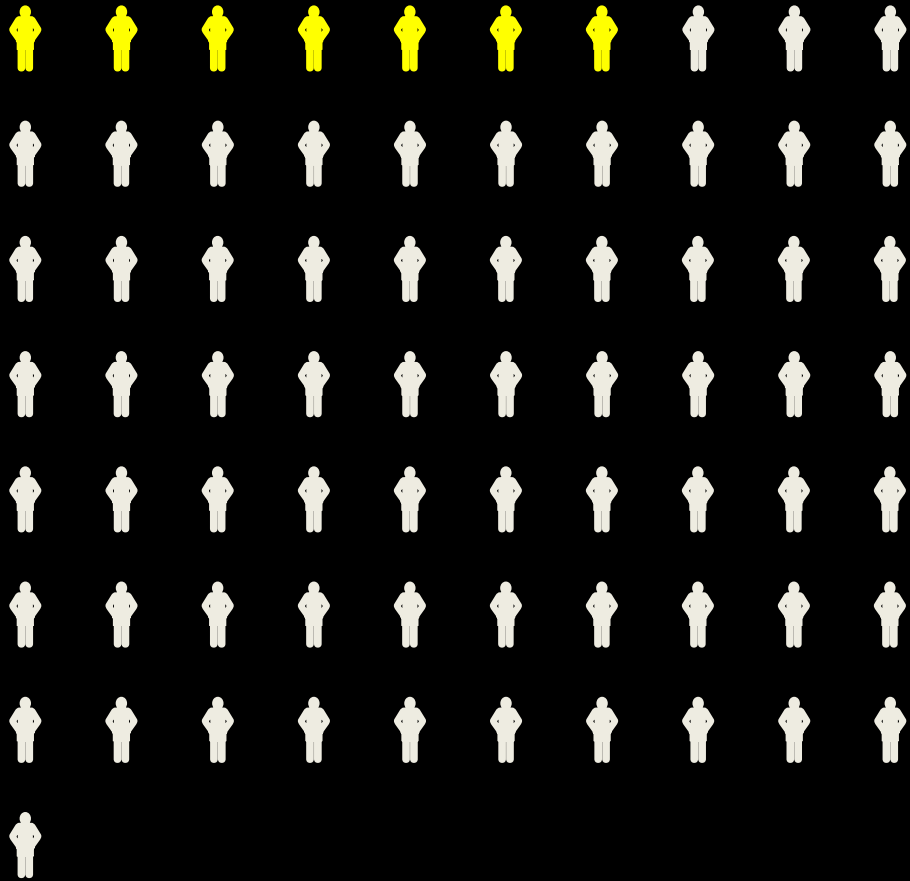
**Guess what
percentage of
ticket buyers for
stand-up comedy
bought for more
than one event at
the venue**



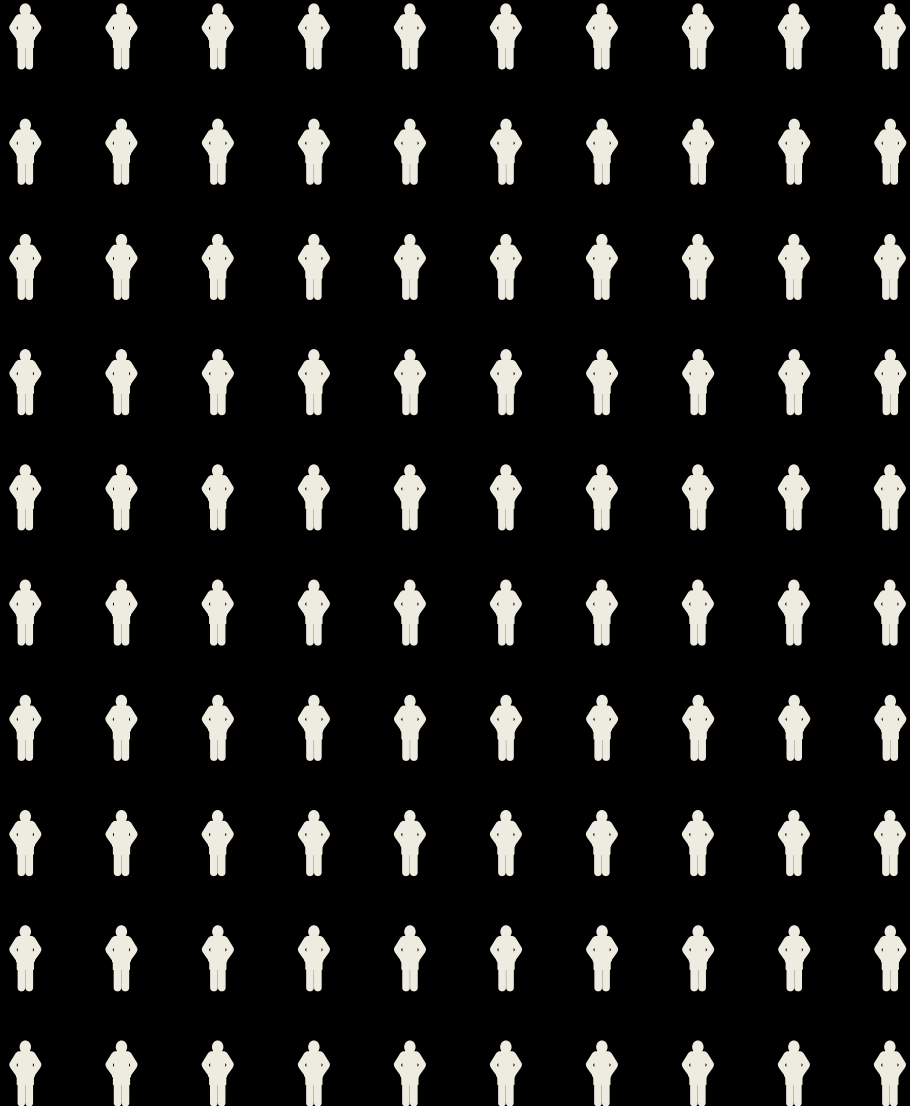
**55% of ticket
buyers for stand-
up comedy bought
for more than one
event at the venue**



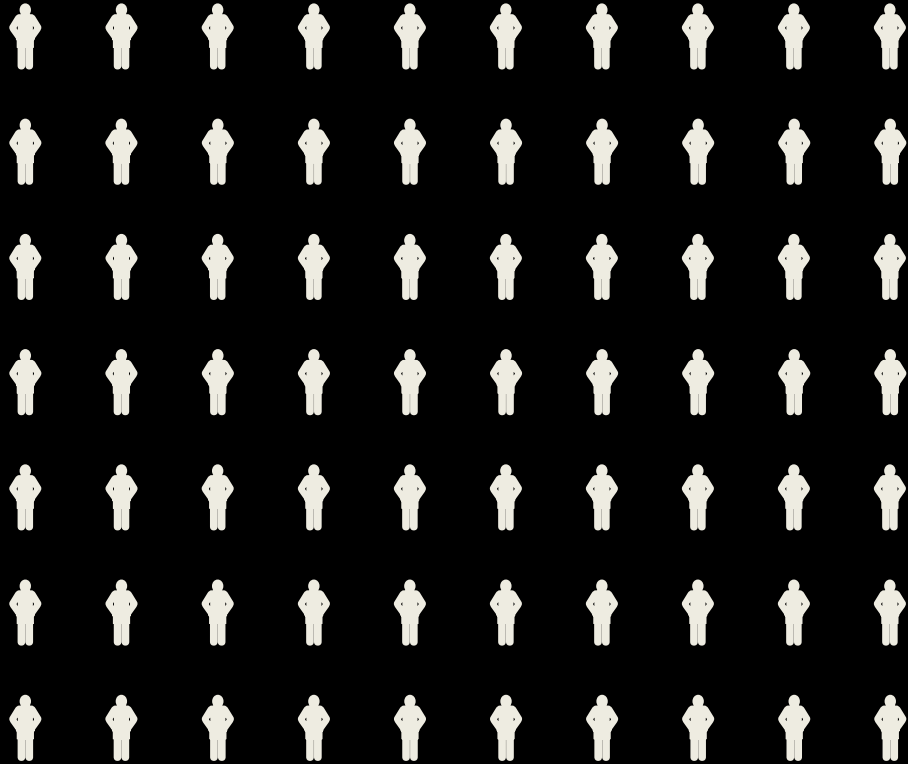
7% only bought for stand-up comedy



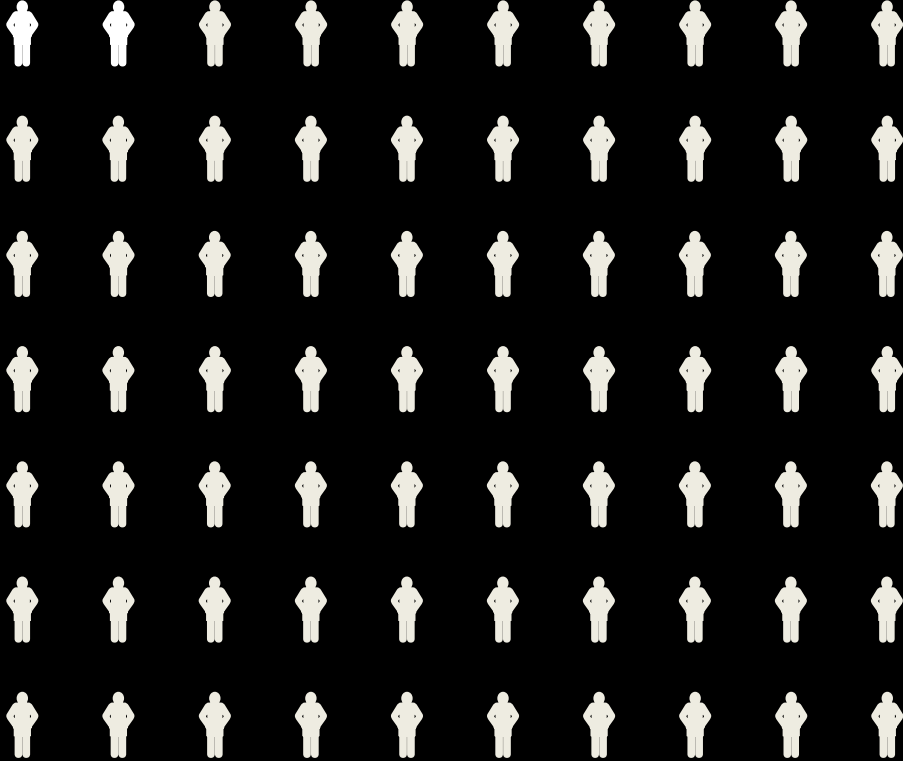
**Guess what
percentage of
ticket buyers for
drama bought for
more than one
event at the venue**



**70% of ticket
buyers for drama
bought for more
than one event at
the venue**



Less than 1% only
bought for drama



How can we persuade people to take the risk of going to challenging arts events? Ticketing systems in mixed programme venues mean we can see exactly what people buy and when they buy it. A research project looked at all the artform purchases of 35,000 ticket buyers for contemporary dance in the UK. It shows that there are lots of audiences who want a challenge and start with something difficult...

WHAT JOURNEY DO PEOPLE TAKE TO CHALLENGING ARTS?

What journey do people take to contemporary dance?

- People don't seem to need to take a journey
- Between a quarter and two thirds were local first time ticket buyers
- Between a third and a half of all ticket buyers started their journey with dance

Heather Maitland, Audiences for Dance in the East Midlands, 2008, p34

Journey to risk taking?

Let's look at ticket buyers for all artforms, not just dance:

- People who see high risk events also see mainstream events
- Ticket buyers' purchases reflect the nature of the overall programme
- They do not appear to be making decisions based on perceived risk
- Ticket buyers for high risk dance events attend the venue more frequently than ticket buyers for low risk dance events
- They are loyal to the venue and choose from the whole menu it offers

Heather Maitland, Audiences for Dance in the East Midlands, 2008

So we have to be can't assume that people start with 'easy' artforms and build their knowledge until they are ready to try something difficult like contemporary dance or contemporary music. Any arts attender could be persuaded to take a risk.

Again, this research showed there was no such thing as the "dance audience". Many ticket buyers for dance were just as likely to go to music as dance. But what about contemporary music?...

What else do they see?

Here are the artforms that three typical ticket buyers for contemporary music purchased over three years:

- Dance Dance Comedy Drama Drama Dance Drama Music Comedy Opera Dance Music Music Dance Music Dance Music Music Dance Dance Drama Dance
- Drama Music Music Literature Drama Talk Music Music Music Drama Music Music Dance
- Music Music Music Drama Music Music Dance Dance