Christopher Olsen

Theatre Audience Surveys: towards a Semiotic Approach

Surveys are used to define an audience in a quantifiable way. Awareness of the typical gender, age, and income of their patrons, along with their rating of a theatre's facilities, help theatre producers to address an audience's needs. However, producers seldom explore the audience response to a specific performance – something that is difficult to quantify. Thus, the audience's interaction with the performance – whether with particular actors, the space configuration, or with fellow spectators – is neglected in favour of such demographics as age, income, and occupation. Christopher Olsen suggests that surveys handed out to audience members might benefit from a more qualitative approach based on semiotic analysis. He asked sixty professional theatres in the USA – ranging from major repertory institutions to small theatres targeting specific audiences – to send examples of recent audience surveys they have conducted. Using the surveys (of which the most extensive is reproduced in full), as a guide, he tabulates the most common questions asked, and offers examples of further survey questions guided by semiotic principles.
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MANY THEATRES conduct surveys periodically as a guide to determining a profile of their core audience by offering their patrons the opportunity to appraise their productions and amenities. These surveys are used generally to define an audience in a quantifiable way. In addition to providing a demographic profile, they help in predicting the theatregoing behaviour of future audiences, such as what genres of plays they would like to see or what days of the week they prefer to go to the theatre. Questions posed to survey participants frequently assess the patron's identity using specific categories such as gender, age, and income. Other questions are asked about the area where the patron lives, the amount of times he/she attends the theatre and his/her favourite production of the season. Sometimes, the patron is also asked to evaluate the theatre's facilities and amenities.

However, surveys rarely include questions that ask patrons to give responses to specific performances by having them comment on the content of a production. Even more rare are surveys posing questions that investigate what their patrons might find pleasurable or objectionable, either on stage or as part of their theatregoing experience. Many surveys simply do not explore 'how' patrons attend the theatre – in other words, the semiotic relationship between theatregoers and the theatregoing experience.

One of the reasons for omitting this line of enquiry is that it is often difficult to quantify. The patrons' interaction with elements of the theatregoing experience – such as relating to the performers on stage, socializing with other patrons, or adapting to a new configuration of the performance space – may be confusing. Patrons might find it uncomfortable and even threatening to articulate their theatregoing experience. Thus, theatres choose to omit probing questions from their surveys and as a result fail to gather important information about their patrons.

Semiotics examines the relationship between senders and receivers (i.e., performers and audience) *via* messages and codes. Originally a method of examining linguistic

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communication, semiotics is applied to text and performance in many disciplines, including theatre, to examine the ongoing encoding/decoding process experienced by individuals when confronted with a constant flow of messages. In performance theory, semiotics offers the possibility of measuring the response of audiences to a performance event using physical codes: for example, codes generated by the performers on stage through their actions or dress. Other codes might be generated by how the configuration of the performing space affects an audience's perception of the event or how its members interact with each other.

'Signifiers' produce signs through coded messages that translate into the 'signified', (i.e., a bright, clingy, red dress worn by a slim, attractive, blonde actress might signify a sexually available character). Semiotics has proved useful in many areas of theatre studies, for example in examining cultural signs and theatre conventions in different societies. This paper sets out to define a more qualitative approach to conducting theatre surveys based on semiotic principles.

Background

Audiences have tended to judge a piece of theatre based on prior expectations. Prepublicity, location, knowledge of the text, critical reviews, and word-of-mouth influence the perspective of an individual.[1] Susan Bennett describes audiences as having 'a horizon of cultural and ideological expectations'.[2] They often take pleasure in choosing the play they want to attend and who they want to attend it with. They want to be free to choose elements in the production that reinforce expectations, and when those expectations are not met on stage – whether because of the content of the play, its execution, or the communicability of its message – the spectator is often left frustrated.

In 1976, Frank Coppieters conducted a survey of audiences attending several productions of The People Show, still one of the most enduring fringe theatre groups from Britain. Formed in 1965, this environmental theatre group continues to subvert its audiences' expectations by introducing unorthodox staging elements – for example, often using non-traditional theatre locations (such as a bar, a natural setting outdoors, or a hall designed for other purposes) and creating an original use of the space. They explore new entrance and exit possibilities, and often directly include the audience in their productions. Coppieters chose questions that explored the audience's reaction to being embarrassed, their recall of staged events during the shows, and their degree of participation in the production. The study revealed that audiences reacted quite differently to unorthodox productions than to traditionally staged ones because their expectations were subverted.[3]

Subversion of audiences' expectations can contribute to creating a different semiotic experience between spectators and performers. Feminist theatres, for example, often subvert traditional separation between audience and performers by performing in venues more conducive to audience interaction.[4] Brechtian theatre draws attention to the difference between the signifier and the signified. If a performer changes from one character to another in front of the audience and explains to them the reason for the change, the action 'alienates' the audience because they can no longer identify with the original mimetic character. Sometimes, audiences don't mind being alienated or confused by action or characters on stage, for example being intrigued by performers who do not fall into their cultural experience in part because they are challenged by their inability to decipher meaning through the usual channels of decoding.[5]

Traditional theatres, however, generally reinforce their audiences' expectations and attempt to homogenize the theatregoing experience so that their patrons feel comfortable as a group. In her study of opera, Rosanne Martorella suggests that works produced are generally contingent upon the audiences' prior knowledge and reception of these works. Audiences won't see an opera unless they are familiar with it and have accepted it as a part of the canon. They judge a theatre by its choice of operas and its

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ability to provide an acceptable cast and staging. Traditional audiences generally have more difficulty in accepting an unorthodox staging concept of a beloved opera.[6]

Nevertheless, many theatres resist the formal atmosphere of the pre-ordained response of an audience accustomed to having their expectations satisfied. Dario Fo often has a drink with patrons in the foyer and helps usher people to their seats prior to a show. He has said that during his shows he tries to create an atmosphere in which the audience feels 'as if they were guests in his home.'[7] Still, Richard Schechner, writing about alternative staging practices over thirty years ago, concluded that theatre follows the path of least resistance to its audience and even programmes its campaign to reinforce old patterns of theatre attendance.[8]

Some Orthodoxies of Surveys

Experts suggest certain strategies for conducting effective theatre surveys. Surveys should ask few questions so that the response rate is higher. Questions should also be as precise as possible to ensure as credible information as possible from the participants. Status and degree questions (often in a scaled format) are often less reliable.[9]

In the past, managers of theatres conducted surveys because they were often more concerned with the demographics of their audience than their aesthetic tastes. But in 1982 the Society of West End Theatres carried out the first of several surveys of West End audiences which were designed to address profile and tastes of audiences.[10] In addition to demographic queries, their survey asked patrons to state what genre of theatre they preferred.[11] It found, for example, that patrons of Shakespearean plays tended to be regular theatregoers.[12] Closed-ended questions were proven more effective, and audiences had clearly defined genre preferences of plays. In addition, the surveys were handed out in person directly to the participants, which gave them a sense that their comments would be given personal attention.[13]

Another survey around the same time focused also on theatregoers' tastes in plays. The Off-Off Broadway Alliance's survey of 1981 contacted patrons as they attended a production, and focused primarily on the reasons patrons attended the theatre and their tastes in plays. Thirty-seven per cent of those surveyed attended Off-Off Broadway because they enjoyed seeing unusual plays. Other reasons included being attracted to experimental work, being devoted to a particular playwright, or being acquainted with members of the cast. The typical audience member was a college graduate living in Manhattan and making under $40,000 a year. This survey also concluded that Off-Off Broadway theatres should aim to develop a long-term audience mix rather than finding an instant profile of a typical theatregoer.[14]

Broadway audiences have also been surveyed as they attended productions. As recently as 1997, the Theatre Development Fund and the League of American Theatres and Producers in New York handed out 10,000 questionnaires to Broadway theatre patrons. In this case, the survey focused on demographics and the results were fairly predictable.[15] Female attendees were more likely to be positive about the productions they saw, and Caucasian married couples constituted the most common attendees. The survey distinguished between musicals and straight plays (three-quarters of the respondents attended musicals, for example), and revealed that the average age for patrons attending musicals was 38, against 49 for straight plays.[16]

Surveys continue to be used to gauge the theatregoing behaviour of audiences, and many have produced useful information. For example, it is useful to know that straight plays presented Off-Broadway will attract a more highly educated audience than a Broadway musical. Not unexpectedly, unknown or unusually staged plays might be more easily tried out Off-Broadway than on Broadway. Modern, non-realistic plays might receive a better reception if the audience were accustomed to seeing plays that challenged them in unorthodox ways. These audiences might prefer to debate the ideas of the play and not necessarily come to a mutually acceptable consensus. However, even these surveys do

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not always reveal consistent data about audiences' preferences and behaviour patterns.

Surveying the Surveys

I first surveyed the surveys by asking some 60 professional theatres in the USA to send me examples of recent surveys they had conducted. The theatres ranged from major repertory institutions to small theatres targeting specific audiences. Then I compared the survey questions and noted the most common. (I reproduce the most comprehensive survey that I received, from the Actors Theatre of Louisville, as an appendix to this article.) Finally, I offer an example of additional survey questions guided by semiotic principles.

My conclusions suggest that surveys asking probing questions can become a useful predictor of audience's theatregoing behaviour patterns and the production genres they prefer. Theatre producers do not necessarily have to antagonize their patrons by asking personal questions of their audience. Frequently, people do not give opinions because they fear their answers might be considered embarrassing or unreasonable. Instead, producers can frame the questions so that audiences feel comfortable answering a question truthfully or about not giving an opinion. Theatres must continue to ensure their economic survival by acknowledging their audiences' preferences for plays and theatregoing amenities; but they can also expand their repertoire and take greater artistic risks if appropriate questions are asked of patrons as a means to better communication between theatre staff and audience.

The surveys I received revealed that theatres generally rely on the following categories to gauge their audiences: identity, reasons for attending, rating of the facilities, and tastes in plays. Some surveys omitted some of these areas and several included additional information such as the patrons' support of community events or their connection to members of a cast. Some companies identified themselves with specific interest groups such as the hearing-impaired, women's groups, or community activists. Others simply sought general information about their patrons and concentrated on audience reactions to issues of accessibility, convenience, and price. Few surveys asked about the content of productions or the experience of a patron as audience member.

Surveys asked questions about employment, education, income, gender, and age. Sometimes they asked for the zip code area, or if the respondent had a disability. Such categories of identification assist the theatres in creating a demographic model for their typical patrons – for example, a 47-year-old female with a Master's degree working in public relations, living ten miles away in an upper middle-class suburb, might be a typical patron of a repertory theatre. This demographic compares favourably to a 1997 survey of Broadway and Off-Broadway theatregoers, which involved 10,000 questionnaires: here, married, white women with Master's degrees represented nearly 45 per cent of attendees at non-musical plays.[17]

I received 14 responses to the 60 requests sent out, a proportion which can hardly reflect all the survey policies of repertory theatres in the country. However, the results provide a glimpse into the survey practices of theatres that vary in size and location, artistic mission, and targeted audiences.

Tabulating the Results

I tabulated the results, organizing them on the basis of the most frequently asked questions. Some questions were worded slightly differently and others were included as part of a series of questions. Surveys also varied in scope from the 'sixty-second handout' to an extensive questionnaire with over 40 questions. Some surveys were handed out at a particular production, while others were sent to subscribers. Others focused on particular groups, such as educators bringing teenagers to a particular production. Still others were conducted by telephone during or at the end of the season. Virtually all responding theatres were repertory groups of varying size and scope. I have divided questions into the two categories 'Self-Disclosure' and 'Attitude' in the table opposite.

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Self-Disclosure Questions	*No.*	*Per cent*
Gender	11	78
Age range	11	78
Household Income	11	78
Race/ethnicity	8	57
Education completed	7	50
Occupation	7	50
Factors that brought you here	7	50
Zip code of residence	6	42
How did you find out about today's production/productions in general/media outlets, etc	6	42
What type of ticket did you use?	5	35
How many shows have you seen in the past?	4	28
Personal disability?	4	28
What other arts performances do you attend regularly?	4	28
Restaurants you dine out at before/after production	3	21
Have you purchased season tickets/single tickets for other theatres?	3	21
Place of employment	2	14
With whom are you attending?	2	14
Internet connected?	2	14
What productions have you seen in the past at the theatre?	2	14
Member of Frequent Flyer Program/Guest/Shoppers	1	7
Car you own: luxury/standard?	1	7
People who live in your household	1	7
Married/single/divorced	1	7
How did you make your reservation?	1	7
How far do you live in miles from the theatre?	1	7
How much did you spend on food, drinks after the performance?	1	7
Where did you go?	1	7
Where did you park?	1	7
When you attend the theatre, how many people are usually in the car?	1	7
Attitude Questions		
General comments	12	85
Rating of theatre amenities, i.e., parking, service, prices, convenience of location, etc	8	57
Choose from among several subscriber offerings	5	35
Why the respondent was not a subscriber	5	35
Rate the production/experience	4	28
What production did you attend today?	4	28
What is the ideal time for performances?	4	28
Rate the plays during the past season	3	21
Which play did you like best?	3	21
Which types of plays would you like to see produced?	3	21
What would you change about the season?	2	14
How do you rate special events? (i.e., lecture series, talks with cast, readings, etc.)	2	14
How important are the following factors/and how satisfied are you with your decision to attend? (Location, quality of show, parking, etc.)	2	14
What is the ideal number of plays per season?	2	14
Did your performance meet with your expectations?	1	7
Criticisms of the performance? Improvements?	1	7
What would you be doing if you weren't at this production?	1	7
What motivated you to first visit the theatre?	1	7
Three most important reasons for attending the theatre	1	7
Genres of plays you would like to see performed	1	7
Describe a production to a friend	1	7
How do you rate the sign-language facilities?	1	7
When deciding to attend the theatre, what factors most strongly affect which show you choose?	1	7

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The results suggest that most theatres are evaluating their audiences based on their demographics and are still marketing principally to season subscribers. The concerns revolve around their audiences' appraisal of the amenities and proximity of the theatre. There is some evidence that surveys are examining the theatregoing behaviour of their patrons (such as preference of performance time, number of shows attended in a season) but not to a very great extent. When questions ask for patrons to explain their reactions to a particular theatregoing experience, these are stated in general terms ('rate the production/experience'). Only rarely do the surveys ask their audiences for a preference in genres or the factors that motivate them to attend a particular production.

Space is almost always given in the surveys for individual comments, but often patrons choose not to use this. The survey from the Actors Theatre of Louisville was the only one that directly asked for a patron's preference of genres. These results suggest that surveys continue to be concerned with the demographics of their audience rather than their aesthetic tastes. They continue to rely on degree questions in a scaled format which can often prove less than reliable.

I have chosen to reprint the survey from the Actors Theatre of Louisville at the end of this paper since it was by far the most extensive I received, and most detailed with regard to questions of self-disclosure and attitude. The problem of administering such a long survey is that many respondents might find it too difficult to fill out. However, the theatre assured me that the response rate was high for this comprehensive survey conducted almost three years ago. This may be the sort of survey one conducts only every few years or so.

Questions that challenge audiences to articulate why they enjoy certain genres of play or how they expect to behave and be treated in a theatregoing experience seem to be in short supply. Perhaps this is because theatres feel they might offend their core audiences and thus eventually lose them. This belief is of genuine concern, although most theatres take great pains to get to know their audiences through promotional and educational activities. Surely, the greater the knowledge these theatres gather about their audiences' tastes, the better they will be able to articulate a clearly defined artistic mission.

Opposite, I suggest my own 'twenty questions' as possibilities for theatre surveys. I have not arranged them in any order of priority, nor do I suggest that these are the most revealing about an audience. There are many more questions that theatre surveys have used effectively. It is not a matter of right or wrong questions, but of which elicit a more active response. Below each question I have added (in italic) a note on its purpose.

Conclusion

In addressing the problem of administering an effective theatre survey, it appears that few surveys address audiences' responses to the content of productions. They rarely ask probing questions about audiences' behaviour patterns or details about their theatregoing experience. Questions such as, 'Why did you choose to attend a production?' or 'With whom did you attend the theatre?' may sound intrusive, but they often produce a more accurate profile of an audience member's motivation for attending a particular theatre. The OOBA survey revealed that most audiences attending Off-Off Broadway are interested in experimental work and often attend shows because of acquaintances in a cast. Similarly, effective repertory theatre surveys can also gauge their audiences' motivation for attending their theatre.

Demographic data can help theatres target specific groups among their audiences (for example by presenting children's plays), but demographics do not necessarily predict audience behaviour. An African-American or a gay audience member may not necessarily want to see African-American plays or plays with gay themes. Musical tastes vary widely, because often younger audience members prefer rock musicals whereas older audiences may prefer to see a more traditional kind. What constitutes an 'experimental' production these days is not immediately clear, and a theatre's knowledge of the age,

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The Twenty Questions

1 How often do you go to the theatre in a year? What is your favourite day of the week to go? Favourite time of performance?

To discover if there might be a regular pattern of attendance.

2 What is the principal reason for *not* attending our theatre on a regular basis?

Too costly	Few plays of interest
Too difficult to get to	Lack of recreational time
Not easily accessible for the physically disabled	Other

To discover what the principal obstacles are to regular theatre attendance.

3 If possible, what amenities would you like to see our theatre create?

A café	A bar/restaurant
A bookstore	Half-price ticket programme
Reduced parking fees	Day/evening care for children
More seating outside the theatre	Lectures
More opportunities to meet the artists	Other

To determine what audiences like to do other than attending a production during their theatregoing experience.

4 What is your favourite type of play?

Traditional musical	Rock musical	Drama
Comedy	Multi-media production	Mystery
Musical revue	Classical play	No preference

To determine the genre/category of plays most desired by the audience.

5 If you were to forego going to the theatre to see another performing art, which of the following would you be most likely to attend?

Rock concert	Dance performance	Opera
Circus	Symphony orchestra	Live comedy
Choir	Folk festival	Other

To determine a wider 'arts profile' of audience members.

6 Do you usually attend a play at this theatre alone? With one other person? With a group?

Alone	With one other	With a group

Although most audience members come in small groups, larger groups might suggest that word-of-mouth is spread at community functions.

7 Do you like to see familiar actors playing different roles at our theatre?

Yes	No	No opinion

To test the extent of the audience's desire to relate to familiar or celebrity performers directly rather than through the characters they are playing.

8 Do you enjoy seeing well-known television and film actors play leading roles at our theatre?

Yes	No	No opinion

This is a 'celebrity' question. Many theatres attract popular performers in other media to increase the visibility of a play.

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9 Do you feel that our theatre produces enough plays that reflect our audiences' ethnic diversity?

Yes No No opinion
If not, what ethnic groups appear under-represented?

This question might be useful in determining whether there is an untapped cultural group which may have stayed away because of lack of representation on stage.

10 Do you think our theatre produces enough contemporary plays?

Yes No No opinion

To determine whether a majority of audience members prefer traditional plays (usually known quantities) or new plays whose quality may be in question. This kind of question separates the audience member who likes to judge for him/herself from the one who accepts the judgement of others (*e.g., 'Ibsen is a great playwright so any of his plays must be worth seeing because of his stature in world theatre'*).

11 Does it bother you when the seating arrangements are altered? For example, creating a performance in the round or asking you to move from one area to another during the play?

Yes No No opinion

This question measures an audience's acceptance of alternative staging.

12 Does it bother you when, as an audience member, you are included in the performance by having actors engage you directly?

Yes No No opinion

Reality TV – particularly talk shows – have increased the possibility of audience members being willing to participate in a production.

13 If the production at our theatre was labelled 'For Mature Audiences', what would you think the play might contain that would appear to be unsuitable for children and young adults?

Reveals potential objections to certain subject matter and stage activities.

14 What would be the most likely reason for you to find a production offensive? (You may check more than one)

Obscenities uttered by the performers/sexual activity on stage
Nudity
Degrading a religion

gender, and income of an audience member may not predict whether they will be receptive to an experimental production. A few years ago, plays such as *Angels in America* or *How I Learned to Drive* (with its incest theme) would have been risky to include in many repertory seasons. Nowadays, these plays are performed regularly around the country.

Semiotics offers an alternative framework for measuring an audience's response. Questions about an audience's theatregoing experience before and after the production can help to determine the choices they will make when considering attending a future production. The time of the production, the theatre's amenities, and contact with performers might be major concerns to an audience. Questions pertaining to the production itself might include the seating arrangements of the audience, the communicability of the performance codes, and the message of the play. In either case, a semiotic framework helps in determining audience behaviour.

There is no such thing as a definitive survey but a number of options remain unexplored. Many theatres are with justification concerned about their economic survival and often cut financial corners by staging small-cast plays, popular musicals, and safe Shakespeare. However, they may be cutting themselves off at the knees, because unusual and experimental plays need not be so

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The play advocates an extreme political point of view
The play makes use of outdated racial stereotypes
The play demeans women and/or minorities to an excessive degree
Enactment of Torture
Other

To ask the audience to articulate its objections specifically.

15 Do you mind sitting through a play that lasts over two and a half hours?

Yes No No opinion

To test the temporal boundaries of audience attention.

16 Do you favour having a main stage season *and* a second stage for new and experimental work? Would you consider subscribing to both seasons?

Yes No No opinion

To give an audience an opportunity to demonstrate their preferences on stage by separating the genres.

17 Who is your favourite classical playwright? Modern playwright (American and/or foreign)?

Classical Modern

To test author visibility and audience loyalty.

18 Do you look forward to regular opportunities of meeting the director and actors? Would you favour meeting the actors and director at regular reception nights?

Yes No No opinion

This is an often-used audience development ploy.

19 What productions during the last three years did you enjoy *most* at this theatre?

The individual answers may be unreliable but the entire survey will generally come up with the most popular productions. This question also helps determine the genre of play most liked by an audience.

20 If you could choose a play/musical that you would like seen done at our theatre, what would it be?

This question continues to help the theatre determine the genre of play most liked by the audience.

Any further comments?

Always an opportunity to allow audiences to use their own words and express opinions in greater detail. Unfortunately, the responses are not always reliable.

readily sidelined. Educating an audience is one of the primary functions of a theatre and an effective survey can help it communicate more directly with its audiences.

Notes

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2. Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 198.
3. Frank Coppieters, 'Performance and Perception', *Poetics Today*, II, No. 3 (1981), p. 40.
4. Bennett, op. cit., p. 62.
5. Ibid., p. 103.
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8. Richard Schechner, 'Approaches', in *Public Domain* (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1969), p. 43–91.
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10. Caroline Gardiner, 'From Bankside to the West End: a Comparative View of London Audiences, *New Theatre Quarterly*, No. 37 (Feb. 1994), p. 71.
11. Organized with the Department of Arts Policy and Management at City University, the Society of West End Theatres used the following categories: drama; comedy; pop musicals; traditional musicals; revue; variety; dance; opera; operetta; children's shows; pantomines; thrillers; classical plays.

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12. Gardiner, op. cit., p. 85.
13. Caroline Gardiner and Martin Collins, 'A Practical Guide to Better Audience Surveys', *Journal of the Market Research Society*, XXXIV, No. 4 (Oct. 1992), p. 292.
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16. Lefkin, op. cit., p. 11.
17. Ibid., p. 12.

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APPENDIX

Actors Theatre of Louisville

Subscriber Perception Study 1998

1 How many years have you lived in the Louisville metropolitan area? (Jefferson, Oldham, Bullitt, Clark, or Floyd counties.)

Less than 5 years	25 to 34 years
5 to 14 years	35 years or more
15 to 24 years	I live elsewhere (please specify state/county)

2 To which ATL series do you currently subscribe?

Both the Mainstage Series *and* Off-Broadway Series
Mainstage Series *only*
Off-Broadway Series *only*

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3 How many *total* productions are in the ATL series to which you currently subscribe?

4 How many years have you subscribed to each type of ATL series? (Please answer for *each* series.)

Mainstage Series Off-Broadway Series

5 Please read the following statements and indicate which one describes you best.

I have subscribed to an ATL series . . .
Every year consecutively since my first subscription year.
Almost every year since my first subscription year.
Several years at a time, but there have been several years at a time where I have *not* subscribed since my first subscription year.
None of these statements describes me at all.

6 With whom do you often attend ATL performances? (Check all that apply.)

Spouse/intimate partner	Friend(s) who are neighbours
Children (under 18)	Friend(s) who are *not* neighbours
Adult children	Out-of-town guests
Other family members	Co-workers/business associates
Attended alone	Other (specify)

7 Overall, how personally satisfied have you been with your experiences at Actors Theatre of Louisville?

Extremely Very Somewhat Not too Not at all

8 How *important* was each of the following factors in your decision to subscribe to Actors Theatre of Louisville this season?

	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	Not too	Not at all
Convenience of ATL's location					
Quality of the productions					
Family/friends/associates who subscribe					
Variety of productions in the subscription					
Affordability of the subscription					
Your personal interest in live theatre					
Friendliness of ATL staff/management					
Scheduled performance times of the productions					
Convenience of available parking					
Option to dine at *The Restaurant at Actors Theatre*					
ATL's policy on exchanging tickets					

9 Have you or anyone in your household purchased tickets for an ATL play *not* included in your subscription packages during the *past two years*?

If yes, how many separate plays did you purchase tickets for during the past two years?

10 Have you exchanged tickets to any ATL performance during the *past two years*?
If yes, how many separate plays did you purchase tickets for during the past two years?

11 Please indicate your *general impression* of the current regular prices that ATL charges for a subscription series and for single tickets? (Check only one for each.)

	very low	low	moderate	high	very high
Subscriptions are					
Single Tickets are					

12 How likely would you be to subscribe to an ATL series for the 1999/2000 season?

Extremely Very Somewhat Not too Not at all

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13 If all subscription series prices were raised by 15 per cent (for instance, if a $100 subscription cost $15 more), how likely would you be to subscribe to an ATL series for the 1999/2000 season?

Extremely Very Somewhat Not too Not at all

14 Have you visited *The Restaurant at Actors Theatre* during the *past two years*?

If yes, how satisfied were you with your most recent visit to the *The Restaurant at Actors Theatre*?

Extremely Very Somewhat Not too Not at all

15 Has your household made a financial donation to the *Fund for the Arts* during the *past two years*? (Do not include tickets, subscriptions, or fees.)

16 Please indicate your relationship with each of the following performance arts groups during the *past two years*? (Check all that apply.)

I have seen a performance of . . .
My household has subscribed to or been a member of . . .
My household has made a direct financial donation to . . .

Actors Theatre of Louisville
Louisville Orchestra
Louisville Ballet
Bingham Endowed (New Masters) Series
The Broadway Series
Kentucky Opera
New Directions in Dance Series
Lonesome Pine Series
Bunbury Theatre
Stage One Children's Theatre
Walden Theatre
Derby Dinner Playhouse
Music Theatre of Louisville (Iroquois Park)
Shakespeare at Central Park
Other (specify):

17 Where do you have Internet access (check all that apply)

I do not have access to the Internet
At home
At work

Did you know that ATL has a website on the Internet?
If yes, have you ever visited ATL's website?

18 Read the following statements regarding Actors Theatre of Louisville and insert the number that best reflects your level of agreement with each.

Strongly agree 5 Agree 4 Somewhat agree 3 Disagree 2 Strongly disagree 1

The staff/management is always friendly
The box office is quick and efficient
The available parking is convenient
Scheduled performance times are convenient
ATL's location is convenient
My current ATL subscription is good value for money
ATL's theatres have comfortable seating
ATL keeps me well informed about plays and upcoming events
ATL's theatres have good acoustics and stage lighting

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The design of the stage sets and costumes is always good
The plays in my current ATL subscription are varied and different
ATL is located in a safe area
Being able to dine at *The Restaurant at Actors Theatre* when seeing performances is a valuable option to me
The ATL ticket exchange policy is easy to use without a hassle

19 Read the following statements and insert the number that best reflects your agreement with each.

Strongly agree 5 Agree 4 Somewhat agree 3 Disagree 2 Strongly disagree 1

When asked, I am always willing to make a direct financial donation to ATL
I would like to select which plays are in my subscription series
I would like to select which I attend end at 10 p.m. or later on weeknights
I prefer plays which have many characters
I like to attend plays that address modern issues

20 Please indicate which ATL theatre that you like the most. (Check only one.)

The Pamela Brown Theatre	I like *both* theatres equally
The Bingham Theatre	I dislike *both* theatres equally

21 Please rank the following eight types of plays staged by ATL using the numbers from '1' to '8' according to your preference for them. Write a '1' beside the type of play you like the most, a '2' by the type of play you prefer *second* most, and so on. (Please be sure *not* to write the same number twice.)

Classics	Modern/contemporary plays
Comedies	Family plays
Dramas	Mysteries
Musicals	Shakespeare

22 What *other* types of plays or specific works would you like to see on stage at ATL?

23 Now think about the types of plays that ATL has tended to select for the packages that you have subscribed to during your time as an ATL subscriber. Would you like ATL to select *more*, *fewer*, or the *same number* of each of the following types of plays to be packaged among the current number of plays in your subscriptions? (Please reply for *each* type of play.)

Classics	Modern/contemporary plays
Comedies	Family plays
Dramas	Mysteries
Musicals	Shakespeare

24 Please read the following statements and indicate which one you agree with most.

I would like to have *more* total plays in my ATL subscription series
I would like to have *fewer* total plays in my ATL subscription series
I like the total number of plays that are currently in my ATL subscription series

How many total plays would you like to attend during a typical ATL subscription series?
(A typical season is the nine-month period from September through May.)

25 Read each of the possible ATL subscription series packages below, then indicate which one is the *most* appealing to you and which one is the *least* appealing to you.

Your subscription series would be *mostly dramas* with *a few* comedies, classics, musicals, and other types of plays.

Your subscription series would be *mostly comedies* with *a few* classics, musicals, dramas, and other types of plays.

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Your subscription series would be *mostly classics* with *a few* musicals, dramas, comedies, and other types of plays.

Your subscription series would be *mostly musicals* with *a few* dramas, comedies, classics, and other types of plays.

Your subscription series would have an *equal number* of dramas, comedies, classics, musicals, and other types of plays.

Your subscription series would have an *equal number* of all types of plays with each play *emphasizing family fare* suitable for all ages.

26 The statements on either side of this page have opposite meanings. Please insert a number on the scale that is closest to your general impression. (For example a '10' means the statement on the *left-side* of the scale is *extremely* close to your general impression. A '0' would mean the statement on the *right-side* of the scale is *extremely* close to your general impression. Of course, you may use any number in between.)

Plays are more enjoyable to me when I am very familiar with the play	Plays are more enjoyable to me when I am *not* very familiar with the play
ATL mostly focuses on productions that have a *wide*, *mass* appeal	ATL mostly focuses on productions that have a *specific* appeal to *few*
ATL patrons are from a *wide* and *diverse* range of socio-economic backgrounds	ATL patrons are from a *narrow* and *similar* socio-economic background
The types of plays in the Mainstage series and the types of plays in the Off-Broadway series are *distinctly* different	The types of plays in the Mainstage series and the types of plays in the Off-Broadway series are *not noticeably* different
ATL is my first choice for live entertainment	ATL is *far* from my first choice for live entertainment

27 A change to the start times of *Saturday* plays is being considered for next season. The 5:00 p.m. play would be one-hour earlier at 4:00 p.m. and the 9:00 p.m. play would be at 8:00 p.m. Please indicate your preference below. (Check only one.)

Prefer 5:00/9:00 Saturday times Prefer 4:00/8:00 Saturday times No preference

28 Overall, what do you like *most* about Actors Theatre of Louisville?

29 Overall, what do you like *least* about Actors Theatre of Louisville?

30 Has your houshold had *season tickets* to any UK/UL/IU athletic programs during the *past two years*?

No Yes Specify school and sport

31 Please indicate with the appropriate number how often you use each of the following sources to learn about any live shows, music concerts, plays, and other live performances in Louisville.

I use this source *all the time*	5
I use this source *frequently*	4
I use this source *sometimes*	3
I use this source *rarely*	2
I *never* use this source	1

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Courier-Journal: Sunday arts/leisure section	Courier-Journal: Saturday Scene
Courier-Journal: Friday weekend section	Courier-Journal: Features section
The LEO	The Voice-Tribune
The Louisville Defender	Business First
Louisville Magazine	Word-of-mouth: friends/neighbours
Word-of-mouth: family/spouse	Word-of-mouth: co-workers/business contacts
Brochures/fliers/postcards in the mail	Newsletters/bulletins in the mail
Outdoor posters/banners/billboards	Direct telephone contact/telemarketers
The Internet	Local radio
Local television	

32 Which local radio station do you listen to *most*?

33 Which television station do you watch *most* for *local* evening news?

Your answers to the following demographic questions will remain strictly confidential.

34 What is your sex?

35 What is the zip code where you *live*?

36 What was your age on your last birthday?

37 What is the zip code where you *work*?

38 What is your marital status?

Married	Divorced/separated	Widowed
Single (never married)	Living with intimate partner (never married)	

39 How many people currently live in your household including yourself and any children/babies?

40 How many people currently live in your household including yourself are *17 years of age or younger*?

41 Which of the following best describes the highest level of education that you have successfully completed? (Check one.)

Some high school	Junior college graduate (two-year school)
High school graduate/GED	College graduate (four-year school)
Some college/technical school	Attended graduate school
Completed graduate school	

42 What was your total household income *before taxes* for the previous calendar year (Jan.–Dec. 1997)? (Please include income from *all* sources. This includes, but is not limited to salaries, bonuses, dividends, interest, capital gains, profits, pensions, etc.)

Less than $12,000	$50,000 to $59,999	$100,000 to $124,999
$12,000 to $19,999	$60,000 to $69,999	$125,000 to $149,999
$20,000 to $29,999	$70,000 to $79,999	$150,000 to $199,999
$30,000 to $39,999	$80,000 to $89,999	$200,000 or more
$40,000 to $49,999	$90,000 to $99,999	

43 Please indicate the racial/ethnic group you are a member of:

African-American	Caucasian	Mixture of race
Asian	Hispanic/Latino	Another race

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