



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

The Nancy Hanks Center
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20506-0001
202/682-5400

Research Division

Note #81

July 2003

2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

Although they changed travel and other plans, Americans continued to attend arts events in the twelve months after September 11, 2001 — based on the 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA). Nearly one-third of adults reported going to at least one jazz, classical music, opera, musical, play or ballet performance during the twelve months ending August 2002, not including elementary or high school performances. About one-quarter of adults said they visited an art museum or art gallery. Combined, 39 percent of adults, or 81 million people, attended these types of events. This is 5 million more than attended (76 million) in 1992, the last year of a directly comparable National Endowment for the Arts survey. The National Endowment for the Arts has been tracking attendance at these “benchmark” events since 1982.

The percentage of adults reporting attendance at live jazz, classical music, opera, musicals, non-musical plays, ballet and art museums/galleries held steady between 1992 and 2002. As in 1992, more people reported attending musical plays than any other type of performing arts examined in the SPPA. The SPPA also examined activities such as visiting historic sites and reading literature.

Counting all of the art forms and types of participation in the arts examined in the SPPA, 76 percent of adults, or 157 million people, made the arts part of their lives in the twelve months ending August 2002. The survey investigated different forms of participation, including viewing or listening to performing arts on television or radio, reading literature, visiting historic sites, performing and creating art, owning art and taking arts classes. Nearly two-thirds of American adults attended arts and cultural events, visited historic sites or read literature from September 2001 through August 2002. Four-in-ten reported personally performing or creating art during this period. Over half watched or listened to the arts on television, radio, recorded media or the Internet. About 5 percent took an arts-related class.

Methodology

The 2002 SPPA marks the fifth NEA survey of arts participation in the past 20 years. The surveys conducted in 1992 and 1982, also conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, are the primary points of comparison for the 2002 SPPA. The SPPA supplements in 1992 and 1982 were attached to the National Crime Survey while the 2002 SPPA was collected as a supplement to the Current Population Survey. The 17,135 adults participating in the 2002 SPPA exceeded previous surveys. The response rate was 70 percent — similar to the rate in the second half of 1992 (68 percent) when a similar questionnaire was used.

Questions asked of respondents were consistent from 1992 to 2002 with the exception of several additional questions asked about traveling to arts events and time spent on the Internet viewing, discussing or learning about the arts. DVD viewing was also added to the 2002 SPPA media participation questions.

In 1997, the SPPA was conducted through a telephone survey independent from any Census research studies. Data are not directly comparable to 2002 because of these differences in data collection. Even though the methodology for the 2002 and 1992 surveys are more similar, comparisons should be made cautiously because of the change of sponsoring survey (National Crime Survey in 1992 versus Current Population Survey in 2002) and different season for the study (surveys conducted each month in 1992 and only in August in 2002). It is unknown how the topic of prior questions may affect responses to arts participation questions.

Attendance

The SPPA has tracked attendance at certain performing arts events since 1982. Attendance rate trends were examined for seven “benchmark” activities followed by analysis of other live arts events.

Benchmark attendance. In the twelve months ending August 2002, 39 percent of U.S. adults attended at least one of the following arts activities: jazz, classical music, opera, musicals, plays, ballet or art museums. These seven activities identify a “benchmark” participation rate for live arts attendance that the NEA has monitored since 1982. Although the 2002 rate is 2 percentage points below 1992’s rate of 41 percent, this difference is not statistically significant. The actual number of participants increased from 76 million to about 81 million reflecting the growth in the adult population from 1992 to 2002.

As presented in Table 1, rates of attendance for most arts activities have remained relatively constant since 1982’s SPPA. There were no statistically significant differences between the percentage of adults attending in 1992 versus 2002.

Table 1.
U.S. Adults Participating in the Arts at Least Once in Past 12 Months: 1982, 1992, 2002

	Percent of Adults Attending/Visiting/Reading			Millions of Adults Attending/Visiting/Reading		
	1982	1992	2002	1982	1992	2002
Performing Arts						
Music						
Jazz*	9.6 %	10.6 %	10.8 %	15.7	19.7	22.2
Classical music*	13.0	12.5	11.6	21.3	23.2	23.8
Opera*	3.0	3.3	3.2	4.5	6.1	6.6
Plays						
Musical plays*	18.6	17.4	17.1	30.5	32.3	35.1
Non-musical plays*	11.9	13.5	12.3	19.5	25.1	25.2
Dance						
Ballet*	4.2	4.7	3.9	6.9	8.7	8.0
Other dance ¹		7.1	6.3		13.2	12.1
Visual Arts						
Art exhibitions						
Art museums/galleries*	22.1	26.7	26.5	36.2	49.6	54.3
Art/craft fairs and festivals	39.0	40.7	33.4	63.9	75.6	68.4
Historic sites						
Parks/monuments/historic buildings/neighborhoods	37.0	34.5	31.6	60.6	64.1	64.7
Literature						
Plays/poetry/novels/short stories	56.9	54.0	46.3	93.3	100.3	95.3
Any benchmark activity	39.0	41.0	39.4	66.5	76.2	81.2

¹ "Other dance" refers to dance other than ballet, including modern, folk and tap.
* Denotes "benchmark" art activity.

Source: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts.

Other live arts attendance. In addition to the seven activities described above, survey respondents were asked about going to arts and crafts fairs and festivals and visits to historic sites. September 11 may have affected attendance at fairs, festivals and historic sites. Festival and fair attendance fell to 33 percent of adults in 2002, 7 percentage points below 1992 and a statistically significant decline. This was the largest decline of any live attendance event in the SPPA. Visits to historic sites dropped from 34 percent of adults in 1992 to approximately 32 percent in 2002, the second largest drop among live events. This decline was also statistically significant.

Other arts activity. The SPPA also asks about reading habits. In 2002, 56 percent of respondents indicated they had read a book during the previous twelve months, about the same as in 1992. However, the percentage of respondents reading literature, defined in the survey as plays, poetry or novels, decreased by 8 percentage points from 1992 to 2002 (46 percent of 2002 respondents), a statistically significant drop.

Broadcast and Recorded Media

Although the past decade saw impressive advances in media options for viewing and listening to the arts, this form of arts participation experienced a relatively large decrease from 1992. Participation via every type of listening or viewing showed statistically significant declines. Even so, the percentage of adults reporting viewing or listening via broadcast and recorded media remained higher than live attendance. Table 2 examines the percentage and number of adults viewing or listening to different art forms, and, for the first time in the SPPA, use of the Internet for learning about, listening to, or discussing topics related to the arts.

Table 2.
U.S. Adults Who Watched or Listened to Performing Arts on TV, Radio, Recordings or the Internet in the Past 12 Months: 1982, 1992, 2002

	Percent of Adults Listening or Watching			Millions of Adults Listening or Watching		
	1982	1992	2002	1982	1992	2002
Performing Arts						
Music						
Jazz						
TV/VCR/DVD	18.0 %	22.0 %	16.4 %	29.6	40.9	33.5
Radio	18.0	28.0	23.5	30.4	52.0	48.0
Audio recordings	20.0	21.0	17.2	32.4	39.0	35.2
Classical music						
TV/VCR/DVD	25.0	26.0	18.1	40.8	48.3	37.0
Radio	20.0	31.0	23.9	36.0	57.6	48.9
Audio recordings	22.0	24.0	19.3	35.6	44.6	39.5
Internet, exploring all types of music			13.1			27.0
Opera						
TV/VCR/DVD	12.0	12.0	5.8	20.9	22.3	11.9
Radio	7.0	9.0	5.7	11.2	16.7	11.7
Audio recordings	8.0	7.0	5.5	12.5	13.0	11.3
Internet, exploring opera			1.3			2.7
Plays						
Musicals						
TV/VCR/DVD	21.0	17.0	11.7	29.8	31.6	24.0
Radio	4.0	4.0	2.4	8.3	7.4	4.9
Audio recordings	8.5	6.0	4.3	13.0	11.1	8.8
Non-musical plays						
TV/VCR/DVD	26.0	18.0	9.4	36.5	33.4	19.2
Radio	4.0	3.0	2.1	6.4	5.4	4.3
Internet, exploring all types of theater			4.1			8.4
Dance						
TV/VCR/DVD		20.0	12.6		37.2	25.7
Internet, exploring all types of dance			2.0			4.1
Visual Arts						
TV/VCR/DVD	23.0	34.0	25.0	43.3	63.2	51.0
Internet, exploring visual arts			5.9			12.1
Literature						
Listen to poetry or novels			12.4			25.5
Internet, exploring novels, poetry or plays			9.2			19.0

Source: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts.

TV, VCR or DVD viewing. Jazz, classical music, opera, musicals, plays, dance (including ballet) and visual arts each experienced at least a 5 percentage point decline in respondents' viewing of these art forms on broadcast or cable TV, video or DVD from 1992 to 2002. The largest decline, from 34 to 25 percent, was for respondents indicating they had watched a program about artists, art works, or art museums in the previous twelve months.

The percentage of respondents who reported watching non-musical plays and opera decreased by one-half. The percentage of adults viewing classical music performances declined from 26 percent in 1992 to 18 percent in 2002. Those viewing dance declined from 20 to 12 percent of adults. Viewing of jazz and musicals declined as well. Projecting these results to the adult population in the U.S., the number of adults viewing these art forms on TV, VCR or DVD declined from 1992 to 2002.

Radio. The percentage of adults reporting that they listen to jazz, classical music, opera, musicals and plays on the radio declined from 1992 to 2002. Though not as dramatic as for viewing performances on TV, declines were substantial. The largest absolute decrease was for classical music, falling from 31 percent of adults listening on the radio in 1992 to 24 percent in 2002. However, it should be noted that the 49 million classical music listeners reported in 2002 was still more than a third larger than the number in 1982 (36 million).

Recordings. Classical music also saw the largest absolute decline in the percentage of adults listening to audio recordings, from 24 percent in 1992 to 19 percent in 2002. Other performing arts also experienced large declines.

Internet. The 2002 SPPA asked several questions regarding use of the Internet. About 53 percent of respondents said they use the Internet. A total of 19 percent of all survey respondents (one-third of Internet users) reported exploring at least one arts topic on the Internet.

Of the art forms, music is the most frequent topic of Internet investigation, totaling 13 percent of respondents, or 27 million American adults. The second most commonly investigated arts topic on the Internet is literature (9 percent of respondents), followed by visual arts (6 percent), theater (4 percent), dance (2 percent) and opera (1 percent).

Personal Participation in the Arts

The 2002 SPPA researched personal participation in the arts through questions on performing and creating art.

Performance and creation. Singing in a choir, chorale or other vocal group remained the most popular form of personal performance in 2002. With 9.8 million adults participating, it had more than double the number of participants than any other type of personal performance except dance. Weaving, sewing and other needlework remained the most popular among the visual arts activities. Though these activities have relatively higher levels of participation than other performing arts or visual arts activities, both experienced statistically significant declines from 1992 to 2002.

Table 3 shows rates of personal performance and creation of art in 1992 and 2002. Measured in millions of adult participants, only photography, ballet, composing music and writing literature increased in activity from 1992 to 2002. The percentage of adults who said that they had performed classical music in the past twelve months dropped by one-half in 2002, from 4 percent to 2 percent. Adults who performed dance other than ballet dropped from 8 percent to 4 percent of respondents. Both declines are statistically significant.

Table 3.
U.S. Adults Performing or Creating Art at Least Once in Past 12 Months: 1982, 1992, 2002

	Percent of Adults Personally Performing or Creating		Millions of Adults Personally Performing or Creating	
	1992	2002	1992	2002
Performing arts				
Music				
Jazz	1.7 %	1.3 %	3.2	2.7
Classical music	4.2	1.8	7.8	3.7
Opera	1.1	0.7	2.0	1.4
Choir/chorale	6.3	4.8	11.7	9.8
Composing music	2.1	2.3	3.9	4.7
Plays				
Musical plays	3.8	2.4	7.1	4.9
Non-musical plays	1.6	1.4	3.0	2.9
Dance				
Ballet	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.6
Other dance ¹	8.1	4.2	15.0	8.6
Visual Arts				
Creating art				
Painting/drawing	9.6	8.6	17.8	17.6
Pottery/jewelry	8.4	6.9	15.6	14.1
Weaving/sewing	24.8	16.0	46.1	32.7
Photography	11.6	11.5	21.6	23.5
Own original art	22.1	19.3	41.1	39.5
Literature				
Plays/poetry/novels/short stories	7.4	7.0	13.7	14.4

1 "Other dance" refers to dance other than ballet, including modern, folk and tap.
Source: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts.

Classes. In the 2002 survey, more respondents took classes in the performing arts in the prior twelve months (6 million adults) than in the visual arts (5 million). The most popular type of class was music — 2 percent of respondents reported that they had taken a music class in the past twelve months (4 million adults).

Summary

Table 4 presents an aggregate view of arts participation for the 2002 SPPA data. About the same share of adults participated in performing arts and visual arts activities (about 59 percent) in the twelve months ending August 2002. For performing arts, most adults participated by watching or listening to music, plays or dance on television, the radio, via audio recordings or the Internet. Over half of adults say they have viewed some type of performing arts media in the previous twelve months. Participation through attendance at live events is smaller (32 percent), with more adults attending plays (musicals or non-musical plays) than other types of performing arts events.

For the visual arts, participation is most often in the form of attending an art museum or gallery or an arts and crafts fair or festival. In addition, nearly 39 percent report personally creating some type of visual art, though this includes ownership of an original artwork.

Approximately one-half of U.S. adults experienced “literature” in some way in 2002 (poetry, plays, novels or short stories).

In sum, over 76 percent of adults have experienced art in some form in the twelve months ending August of 2002.

Table 4.
Percent of U.S. Adults Participating in the Arts at Least Once in the 12 Months Ending August 2002

	Attended/ Visited/ Read	Watched or Listened to on TV/Radio/Rec. Media/Internet	Personally Performed or Created	Took a Class	All Forms of Participation
Performing Arts	31.7 %	51.8 %	12.6 %	2.7 %	59.0 %
Music	18.8	47.9	8.1	1.8	51.9
Plays	22.3	21.0	3.5	0.5	33.2
Dance	8.7	13.7	4.3	0.8	20.5
Visual Arts	41.9	26.3	38.9	2.2	58.8
Historic Sites	31.6				
Literature	46.3	18.2	7.0	1.0	50.0
Total	65.1 %	56.0 %	43.9 %	4.8 %	76.3 %

Source: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts.

Additional Information from the 2002 SPPA

The 2002 SPPA collected a wealth of information beyond what is summarized in this Research Note. Research Division Report #45, *2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts: Summary Report*, will present these results in more depth and be available later in 2003. Additional Research Division Notes and Reports will examine further topics such as differences in arts participation by geographic area, age and educational levels. These reports will be available in 2004. Current information on these and other Research Division Notes and Reports can be found at www.arts.gov/pub/Research.html. Those interested in the complete 2002 SPPA

dataset can download it from the Cultural Policy and the Arts National Data Archive website at www.cpanda.org, or order it from the U.S. Census Bureau by calling the Customer Services Center at 301-763-INFO (4636).

Research Division Reports and Notes of Related Interest

Notes:

- Note # 8 Studies of the Arts Public: A Status Report (March 1984)
- Note # 12 Audience Crossover: Media Participation and Attending Live Events (June 1985)
- Note # 14 Age, Desire, and Barriers to Increase Attendance at Performing Arts Events and Art Museums (February 1986)
- Note # 16 Public Participation in the Arts by Urban and Rural Residence (May 1986)
- Note # 18 Population Location and the Barriers of 'Art Form Not Available' and 'Too Far To Go' (September 1986)
- Note # 27 Public Participation in the Arts: 1982 and 1985 Compared (December 1987)
- Note # 50 Public Participation in the Arts: 1982 and 1992 (October 1993)
- Note # 51 Demographic Differences in Arts Attendance: 1982-1992 (February 1994)
- Note # 52 Demographic Differences in Arts Participation Via Broadcast and Recorded Media: 1982-1992 (February 1994)
- Note # 55 Public Participation in the Arts in Regional and Metropolitan Areas, 1982-1992 (June 1995)
- Note #70 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts: Half of U.S. Adults Attended Arts Performances or Exhibitions, 1997 (September 1998)
- Note #71 Demographic Characteristics of Arts Attendance: 1997 (January 1999)
- Note #72 Arts Participation by Region, State, and Metropolitan Area (January 1999)

Reports:

- Report # 21 Socialization and Participation in the Arts
- Report # 22 Who Reads Literature: The Future of the United States As a Nation of Readers
- Report # 23 The Audience for American Art Museums
- Report # 24 Expanding the Audience for the Performing Arts
- Report # 25 Race, Ethnicity, and Arts Participation
- Report # 26 Summary Report: 12 Local Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts
- Report # 27 Arts Participation in America: 1982-1992
- Report # 30 A Practical Guide to Arts Participation Research
- Report # 31 Jazz in America: Who's Listening

Report # 32 American Participation in Opera and Musical Theater 1992

Report # 33 Turning On and Tuning In: Public Participation in the Arts Via Media in the United States

Report # 34 Age and Arts Participation with a Focus on the Baby Boom Cohort

Report # 35 American Participation in Theater

Report # 36 Effects of Arts Education on Participation in the Arts

Report # 39 1997 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts: Summary Report

Report #41 The Geography of Participation in the Arts and Culture

Report #42 Age and Arts Participation: 1982-1997

Forthcoming Report, 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts: Summary Report
(available in the fall of 2003)

Further information on these Research Notes and Reports can be found on the National Endowment for the Arts web site:

Notes — www.arts.gov/pub/ResearchNotes.html

Reports — www.arts.gov/pub/ResearchReports.html