

ATTENDING THE SHOW ALONE: ADVENTURES OF A FEMALE
AUDIENCE ETHNOGRAPHER

by

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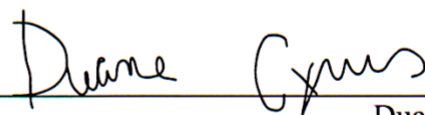
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
Literature Review and Methodology	
Format and Structure	
1 PERFORMANCE 1: MY FIRST ADVENTURE	23
The Purchase Problem	
Position of the Ethnographer	
Preparation and Anticipation	
I Am Not Afraid of the Dark	
Which Way is Up?	
Nice to Meet You	
Musical Chairs	
Dancing Spectators	
The Risk of Research	
2 PERFORMANCE 2: NO ADULTS ALLOWED	38
The Purchase Problem	
This Looks Familiar	
Nice to Meet You	
A Seat Just for Me	
Dancing Spectators and Waving Wands	
3 PERFORMANCE 3: THE UNKNOWN AUDIENCE	43
The Purchase Problem	
Preparation and Anticipation	
The Show Must Go On... Without Me	
4 PERFORMANCE 4: DRINK, DRANK, DRUNK	48
The Purchase Problem	
Position of the Ethnographer	

Maybe I Am Afraid of the Dark	
Preparation and Anticipation	
Navigating Familiar Spaces	
Where are the Chairs?	
Nice to Meet You	
The Risk Returns	
Dancing Spectators	
5 PERFORMANCE 5: SITTING IN A SEA OF SILVER	70
The Purchase Problem	
Preparation and Anticipation	
Meet-and-Greet	
Getting Situated	
Dancing Spectators	
The Risk of Revealing	
Dancing with the Spectators	
CONCLUSIONS	80
Attendance Factors	
Spectator Behaviors	
Safety and Comfort	
EPILOGUE - PERFORMANCE 6: SOCIAL DISTANCING	84
The Purchase Problem	
Online Audiences and Rebuilding	
APPENDIX	87
WORKS CITED	106

INTRODUCTION

I sat in room 202A in the Mary Channing Coleman building at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and prepared for choreography class with Professor Duane Cyrus. The first project assigned in choreography was a “signature solo,” which was meant to encapsulate our movement and choreographic aesthetics. While I developed this work, I kept asking myself “where is this work meant to exist and who is it for?”. Part of my creative process is to ask these questions, as a way to turn the work into a finalized product. With this example, I decided that my “signature solo” was meant to be performed in the corner of a very large room. The audience would create the boundaries of the space and outline the stage. Each spectator was asked to sit very close to the performer, as if they were interrupting the performance and confining the movement. While the audience had very clear instructions, they were also able to make choices. They could lean into the movement and make the movement smaller or lean away from the movement, as if they were apologizing for interfering with the space. This choreographic experiment opened the door for many questions I had about space, place, and people. Each time I met in the studio with my dancers, I found myself questioning the audience’s perspective and how my choreography might be able to challenge their role as spectators.

As the semester continued, I kept experimenting with the concept of people and place. My final showing for choreography class included a presentation of these developed concepts by choreographing the audience as well as the performers. The first choice I made was to move the dancers to the perimeter of the audience. This adjustment of place already changed the dynamic of the performance because the spectators were at the physical center of the work. In this presentation, I also asked the audience to perform a dance. Each spectator lined up behind one another, waiting to enter the space. They were then led into the space where dancers held fixed positions. One by one they entered, and circled the space. I instructed them to have a seat, on the floor, with their backs facing into the circle. They moved closer to one another, as the dancers began to rotate around the circle of spectators. What the audience did not know was that each interaction was choreographed. The dancers knew exactly who they would perform each section of the dance for, even though the audience had a choice of where to sit. While the audience did not participate verbally with the performers, their stillness in the space and eye contact with the performers did allow for a level of audience participation.

The audience for these showings were all dancers. Each spectator had experience performing dance, choreographing dance, and attending performances. Knowing my audience for these showings allowed me to take risk, and trust their openness to respond and participate. These choreography showings fueled my interest in audience research, and shifted my focus from the performer's point of view, to the spectator's perspective. At the start of this research, I had three initial questions that helped form my

trajectory.

- 1) Who attends live performances, and why?
- 2) Who does not attend live performances, and why not?
- 3) How does the audience engage/participate in a performing arts venue?

Literature Review and Methodology

In *Valuing Dance: Commodities and Gifts in Motion*, Susan Leigh Foster addresses the ways in which dance can be viewed as both a gift and a commodity; moving through and between these two forms of exchange. Foster defines the term “value” by using both the Latin and Old French definitions; claiming that “value” means to bring “into consideration the conditions under which something might be deemed to be useful or estimable as well as the prospect of criteria to be used in its evaluation.” (Foster, 1.) In the introduction of *Valuing Dance*, Foster mentions theories of value from David Graeber, James Clifford, and Timothy D. Taylor. These theories outline the factors that determine value including; emotional and intellectual investment, individual choice, assigned significance through institutions, and context-specific value determined by place and time (Foster 1). Foster recognizes that value is not fixed and will change because of its relationship to these factors.

Because dance is ephemeral, Foster specifies the moments of dance that constitute as an exchange. She looks at the act of dance, watching dance, teaching dance, making

dance, and performing dances, as the moments in which exchange can take place as either a gift exchange or commodity exchange (Foster 3). Throughout the book, Foster develops the systems of exchange in which dance exists, and then explains how these moments of exchange occur within the system. She also recognized that the purpose of the book is to “launch a conversation around what dance is, what it does, and why it matters through an examination of value” (Foster 20). She states that the book is not meant to produce “boundaries or narratives” about dance, but to provide matrices and “hypothetical frameworks” for how dance is valued (Foster 20).

Valuing Dance introduces ways of applying theories of exchange to dance. These frameworks allow for dance to move in and out of these structures at different moments, becoming complex and multilayered forms of exchange. Moving into my research, *Valuing Dance* provides insight into two main topics: audience attendance, and audience engagement. In my own research, I analyze the commodity exchange between spectator and performance in my analysis of the ticket sale. However, the gift exchange occurs when the audience receives the gift of dance, or provides openness and willingness to experience a performance (Foster 55). This openness is described by Ben Walmsley as “audience engagement,” which he defines as a “complex and nuanced approach to developing relationships with audiences without attempts to allow them to participate or even co-produce” (Walmsley 10). Foster provides theoretical possibilities for how audience engagement can be viewed as a gift exchange between spectator and performer.

My research plan was to use mixed methodologies to explore two main concepts; audience attendance and audience engagement. In “Audience Engagement in the Performing Arts,” Ben Walmsley problematizes methodologies currently used in audience studies. He addresses thirteen main methodologies of audience research including, quantitative methods, big data, stated preference techniques, revealed preference techniques, methods of subjective well-being, qualitative methods, interviews/focus groups, narrative inquiry, ethnography/anthropology, netnography, deep hanging out, participatory methods, and neuroscience/biometric methods. I have used Walmsley’s review of methodologies to inform my research methods for analyzing audience attendance and engagement.

In chapter five, Walmsley discusses qualitative methods as a way to research *with* the audience, rather than about the audience (111). In my research, I used participant observation to discover a deeper understanding of spectators as individuals. As discussed in the literature, qualitative research can provide depth rather than breadth, and uncover an analysis of why spectators behave in certain ways (Walmsley 124). Even though Walmsley acknowledges the intricate details and descriptions brought by qualitative methodology, he recognizes issues in using the method alone for audience research. The two main issues discussed with qualitative methodology are confirmation biases, and positive biases (120). Walmsley uses Johanson and Glow’s definition of confirmation bias, which states that it is “a form of cognitive bias whereby researchers search for, interpret or remember information in a way that confirms their preconceptions or working

hypothesis” (120). Similarly, he uses White and Hyde’s definition of positive bias as “an overly positive analysis of findings that attempt to prove that positive impacts exist, rather than trying to reach a deeper understanding of what they may be” (201). Along with researcher biases, the audience may also experience positive biases. Walmsley briefly explains how audiences may experience heightened emotions from the performance, which may skew their enthusiasm and provide overly positive feedback (120).

Walmsley explains that quantitative methodologies are the most commonly used methods for audience research. He suggests that quantitative data is best paired with big data to measure local trends with large-scale trends, and recognize this relationship (113). Quantitative data is mainly used to measure demographic and psychographic trends for marketing and audience development. William D. Wells clarifies that the term “psychographics” refers to the psychological behaviors of a consumer. These behaviors may include attitudes, wants, desires, needs, involvement with the product/service, and brand loyalty, which can be found through quantitative data collection (Wells 43). However, Walmsley states that there is “an artistic fear or suspicion of numbers” due to “false belief that it can’t shed any useful light on audience engagement” (113). Other than industry resistance to quantitative data, Walmsley explains that surveys and questionnaires can be poorly designed or may not collect enough participants. In order to avoid these issues, Walmsley suggests using quantitative methods, big data, and qualitative data together.

Originally, I planned to conduct an online survey to collect data on Carolina Theatre audience members. This voluntary survey would have been the primary method for data collection. Survey questions were aimed to collect market data; including demographics, geography, purchase behaviors, personal values and opinions. The data from this survey would be analyzed to show who is in attendance, what motivates their attendance, and how behaviors, values and opinions vary across different segmentation groups. The survey would be designed using Qualtrics, and analyzed using SPSS Statistics. After the survey was created, the Carolina Theatre was contacted in order to distribute the survey in an email blast, inviting customers to participate. In the original agreement, the theater agreed to run the survey for approximately two weeks, and customers will be contacted a total of three times via email, to encourage participation. Unfortunately, due to time restraints, I was not able to conduct the survey.

However, I did conduct a pilot survey for North Carolina residents who have attended the Carolina Theatre. This survey asked 21 questions about demographics, lifestyle, and experiences at the Carolina Theatre. The 122 responses from this survey provided some quantitative data that was valuable to my research. I included information this pilot survey, as well information from available surveys, conducted at other theaters. Even though I was unable to conduct a survey to the Carolina Theatres online subscribers, I was able to support auto-ethnographic research with outside quantitative data.

In “Who reacts when, how and upon what: From audience surveys to the theatrical event,” Willmar Sauter discusses how audience studies focuses on reception research surveys that collect two types of data; macro-aspects and micro-aspects. Sautner claims that macro-aspects include demographic, cultural, and theatrical characteristics of those attending the theater (199). Micro-aspects tend to discover the emotional experience of the spectator (Sautner 125). Sauter compares these two audience research methods to analyze the role of surveys in the theater.

In “Regional voices talk theatre: audience development for the performing arts,” Rebecca Scollen conducted research to communicate with individuals who were not attending the Northern Australia Performing Arts Centres (46). One of Scollen’s findings was that assumptions about theatre culture have changed, but the group of non-theatregoers had not recognized the change because they were not attending (47). Scollen had her participants attend a performance and provide feedback so she could compare their initial assumptions to their actual experiences. Scollen chose to survey individuals who do not attend the theater, instead of interviewing those who already attend (46).

While some surveys may provide questions about the audiences’ physical experience, neuroscience has developed ways to measure and quantify the physical experience (129). Walmsley briefly discusses how neuroscience and biometric methods can be used to measure the physical and psychological responses to experiencing live theatre (129). While I do not have the equipment, funding, or partnerships to conduct this

type of research, I believe it's necessary to recognize the findings of other case studies who have successfully conducted this research. For example, Walmsley mentions the University College of London case study, where the shared experience of live arts caused the spectators to synchronize their heartbeats and brainwaves (130).

Matthew Reason and Dee Reynolds also describe this shared experience in their article "Kinesthesia, Empathy, and Related Pleasures: An Inquiry into Audience Experiences of Watching Dance." They define two key terms in this article; "kinesthesia" as a "sensation of movement," and "empathy" as "embodied simulation or substitution and sympathy as a response involving feelings" (Reason 53). Reason and Reynolds use the same concept of "kinetic empathy" as Susan Leigh Foster in "Choreographing Empathy." Foster describes "kinetic empathy" as an "emotional response from another person's movement" (81). I used this terminology in my ethnographic research when describing the psychological experiences I had while engaging with live art. In "Movement, gesture, and meaning: a sensorimotor model for audience engagement with dance," William P. Seeley suggests that dance can be understood as a language when neuroscience is applied to studying the gestures of dance (42). While Seeley's research offers a unique perspective of understanding dance through neuroscience, my goal is to provide insight on my personal audience experience, without making general assumptions about how these performances can be universally understood. I acknowledge Seeley's research for its contribution to the conversation of neuroscience in dance.

Kinesthesia and empathy are two key terms typically used to describe the connection from performance to spectator, but does not acknowledge the role of the spectator to the performance. In “The Anthropology of Theater and Spectacle,” William O. Beeman aims to define these roles of the audience member. He describes three main roles an audience member can choose to experience; audience as witness, audience as participant, and audience as evaluator. Beeman defines “audience as witness” to be the least involved spectator (384). This individual attends the event to actively watch and to witness the event existing, but does not participate or evaluate the performance. This type of spectatorship as witness is mentioned in Edward G. Thomas and Bob D. Cutler’s article “Marketing the Fine and Performing Arts: What Has Marketing Done for the Arts Lately” from 1993. Even though this source is dated, it addresses the concerns of marketing live art for the purpose of increased attendance. This article suggests that increasing ticket sales with unengaged audiences, does not drive recurring sales. In order to build and develop new audiences, Thomas and Cutler offer ideas of “new research” for engaged audiences. Beeman also describes the “audience as participant” as a spectator that contributes to the event in an active manner (384). One example of this type of spectator is an audience member who attends an immersive performance.

Walmsley uses Tim Ingold’s definition, which states that ethnography describes people with “an accuracy and sensitivity honed by detailed observation and prolonged first-hand experience” (124). This book supports autoethnographies as a respected method of exploring audience engagement on a personal account. Walmsley refers back

to the idea of researching *with* the audience, when a researcher can participate in the audience experience and report on individual engagement levels (128).

Jim Mieniczakowski also claims ethnography to be an effective methodology for understanding audience engagement (321). More specifically, in “Pretending to know: ethnography, artistry and audience,” Mieniczakowski explores the “research loop.” This research loop is the idea of taking ethnographic data, and displaying it in a performance (331). The purpose of this type of research is to connect the audience to the researcher and to the performer; creating metaphorical loops between them. An example of this research loop is presented in Julia M. Ritter’s article “Fandom and Punchdrunk’s *Sleep No More*: Audience Ethnography of Immersive Dance.”

I will be using three ethnographic research examples to inform my ethnographic approach including “Fandom and Punchdrunk’s *Sleep No More*: Audience Ethnography of Immersive Dance” by Julia M. Ritter, “Intimate Choreography and the Responsibility of the Audience” by Michael J. Kramer, and “Gambling Femininity: Tango wallflowers and femmes fatales” by Marta E. Savigliano.

Referring back to Ritter’s ethnographic research of *Sleep No More*, she explains how the performance challenged the way spectators view the performance. Ritter highlights the active choice making of each individual spectator, actually choreographs the performance. Ritter’s article begins with her autoethnography of *Sleep No More*. As she continues through the narrative of her own experience, she begins including the personal experiences of other spectators. Ritter claims that “spectators conduct bodily

ethnographies through the movement they perform while following their impulses during performances” (65). She continues to explain that the *Sleep No More* fans, who have attended the performance several times, have more thorough ethnographies than she did since she only attended once. She found the ethnographic fieldnotes of these spectators on a fan blog, sharing their detailed experiences with the show (Ritter 66). Among these blog posts, Ritter discovered sculptures, digital illustrations, ink drawings, oil paintings and more. The spectators of this performance became ethnographers with an artistic response, that disseminated their ethnographic data back into Meinczakowski’s “research loop,” by disseminating their ethnographic data through art. While researching with the audience, I will reflect upon the bodily responses of the audience. This may include the ways individuals engage with the performance through facial expressions, tapping feet, swaying shoulders, nodding heads, or clapping hands. I will also analyze the audiences’ positioning in space, which may be influenced by the theater’s seating arrangement, or by intuition and choice.

Another example of audiences as participants comes from Michael J. Kramer’s article “Intimate Choreography and the Responsibility of the Audience.” Kramer researches BodyCartography Project’s work *closer* to show two ways a performance can challenge the role and responsibility of the audience (3). The first part of *Closer* is a display of site-specific work, where the dancer performs for one individual person. Spectators have the choice to stay and watch the dance, follow the dancer through space, or walk away (Kramer 5). In the second part of the performance, the

interaction becomes a dialogue. When a performer asks an audience member “Can I dance for you?” it becomes an intimate exchange of choreography, and gives the audience the opportunity for response. If the response is “yes,” then the audience makes the choice to experience the dance together. If the response is “no,” then the dance will not happen (Kramer 7). In using these two examples of audience participation, I plan to evaluate how audiences perform as witnesses of live art versus participants. Do spectators weave in and out of these spectator roles throughout a performance? How does the work and environment allow for intimate exchange and engagement? What responsibilities or obligations do I have as an audience member?

In “Gambling Femininity: Tango wallflowers and femmes fatales,” Marta E. Savigliano conducts ethnographic research that examines the experience of the spectator as witness. Savigliano specifically addresses her position as a dance ethnographer and as a wallflower of the tango. She explains these two positions as being temporary identities that confine her to the position of a spectator. While she struggles with the desire to participate, Savigliano acknowledges that she is both an “intruder in the dance scene” as well as a “necessary presence for the dance to actually occur” (238). As in any live performance, a spectator is necessary in changing a practice to a performance, by interrupting the practice with their presence. Because I am both a choreographer and a performer, I frequently take on a position of desire to participate in the performance. It is important for my ethnographic research to acknowledge my desire for live art and my position in the audience as an individual. In my research, I used these sources to guide

and influence my methodology. These audience researches formed my research approach to involve both ethnographic and quantitative methodologies. I used mixed-methodology as an opportunity to think critically about the data and better understand audience attendance and audience engagement.

While the performance itself may alter the role and involvement of the audience, so does the environment in which the performance is held. In “From audience to participants: new thinking for the performing arts,” Ann Markusen and Alan Brown question how the physical structure of a venue changes the ways audiences may experience the work. In this article, they explain how past experience at a venue, and word of mouth, influence how the venue’s atmosphere is described (Markusen 868). Understanding theatre etiquette, Markusen and Brown explain that venues carry expectations of social norms. These social norms have developed from historical implications that theatergoers were once highly represented by the upper class (Markusen 869). Those historical concepts still limit audiences who attend live art in theatre venues. Jennifer Radbourne cites Alan Brown’s research to shed light on the importance of developing diverse audiences and inclusive communities in these theatre venues.

Throughout my ethnographic research, I noticed how venue, space, and location drastically influence my experience. Attending public events alone in downtown Greensboro at night has presented me with many unexpected and unwelcomed interactions. Jack L. Nasar and Kym M. Jones conducted research to measure fear in different locations and environments. In “Landscapes of Fear and Stress,” Nasar and

Jones state that certain areas stimulate more fear, claiming that fear is site-specific” (291). While driving into Greensboro, parking my car, walking to the venue, I examined my levels of comfort and fear.

Once I was situated in the theatre, I re-evaluated my comfort. I have noticed that being a female, alone at the theatre, has opened the door to several unwanted interactions. This might have been triggered by small dark spaces and the presence of alcohol, but nonetheless, it has made me consider the roles of gender and independence in attending the theater. In “Navigating nightlife: women’s discourses on unwanted attention in nightlife settings in Norway,” Kristine Vaadal discusses a vulnerability discourse, an equality discourse and a feminine power discourse in nightlife experiences. The nightlife settings Vaadal explains are dark and enclosed spaces with an environment occupied with drinking. Nasar and Jones explain that drunkenness is a “social incivility” that evokes a fear of crime (293). From a survey conducted of 1,146 adults, Nasar and Jones discovered that 40% are afraid of walking alone at night; even in comfortable environments (291). This research shows levels of fear are higher for females than males, and higher for night than day. (Nasar, 295.) In my research, I reflected on my position as a female attending the theater alone.

While I reflected on my identity in the theater, I also considered my insider/outsider position. In “How Native is a “Native” Anthropologist?” Kirin Narayan discusses the complexities of a researcher identifying themselves as a “native” anthropologist (671). She explains that having a “multiplex identity” may position a

researcher as both an “insider” and “outsider” within a specific community (Narayan 672). In my research of the Carolina Theatre audiences, I reflected on my position as an ethnographer. At times, I found that my position as a researcher separated me from the audience because I have specific motives that differed from the other spectators’ reasons for attending a performance. When walking through downtown Greensboro I studied my feelings of safety, comfort and fear. While I consider myself a Greensboro resident, I spent most of my life in New Jersey. My experiences in New Jersey at night might have altered my perspective of downtown Greensboro. As a spectator in the audience I felt myself shifting between my insider and outside positions. At times, my place in the audience felt comfortable because I am familiar with attending theater venues. My experience as both a performer and choreographer gave me a sense of belonging in the theater. However, I was more familiar with working a show or performing on stage than I was taking a seat in the audience.

Format and Structure

My auto-ethnographic research took place at the Carolina Theatre in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina. This venue uses two different performance spaces: The Carolina Auditorium and The Crown. The Carolina Theater auditorium seats 1,095 spectators with floor and balcony seating options. Most larger productions like musicals and plays are held in this space. The Crown is a black box theater located on the third

floor, that seats 150 spectators with general admission tickets. This space is often used for smaller performances and private events. I planned to attend six performances that varied in genre. Three of the performances were held in the Carolina Theater Auditorium, and the other three were held in The Crown. Even though I discuss the name of the venue and performances I attended, I use pseudonyms for the names of the individuals I interacted with.

As a way to choreograph my research, I play with spacing and formatting through my paper. The spacing in my research paper may reflect my moments of distance from the audience community, or represent spaces of danger. I also use font style to demonstrate time. Italics are used to distinguish my “in-the-moment” reactions from my post-show reflections. Each chapter will discuss a different performance, while the subheadings will guide the reader through a series of recognized themes. The themes will evolve throughout the paper to show my growth and deepened investment as a researcher.

CHAPTER 1

PERFORMANCE 1: MY FIRST ADVENTURE

The Purchase Problem

**Click.* *Click.* *Click.* *Click.* *Click.* SOLD OUT!*

The 7:00pm performance at The Carolina Theatre, “Both Sides: A Tribute to Joni Mitchell,” was sold out! Being a natural planner, I was frustrated and tried to adjust my schedule.

Click.* *Click.* *Click.

The only other option was to attend the 9:30 show, which was less than appealing to me.

If I leave my house at 8:30pm, I will arrive at 9:00pm, park, walk to the theatre, get my tickets, and take my seat by 9:15pm. Most performances are somewhere between an hour and a half to two hours. If the show starts at 9:30pm, I will probably get out around 11:00 or 11:30pm. I will probably be home around midnight.”

Click.* *Click.* *Click.

Your total is \$7.00 for a student ticket.

Your total, plus the \$1.00 facility fee, is \$8.00.

Your total, plus the \$3.50 internet convenience fee, is \$11.50.

Do you want to add ticket insurance for \$2.00?

The rain picked up, hitting my window and flooding the streets. The more I tried to calculate my evening, the more I wanted to just stay home. Rainy nights did not seem like the best nights for a performance.

Position of the Ethnographer

Going into this ethnographic research, I had a very clear agenda. My goal was to experience the Carolina Theatre as a spectator, and observe the audience. Similar to Marta E. Savigliano's research in "Gambling Femininity: Tango wallflowers and femmes fatales," I am taking the spectators and placing them at the center of my research. Savigliano conducts ethnographic research that examines the experience of the spectator as a witness. She specifically addresses her position as a dance ethnographer and as a wallflower of the tango. She explains her position as both a dance ethnographer and a tango wallflower as being temporary identities (Savigliano 238.) My position as a spectator of the performance, and as a spectator of the audience, creates temporary identities throughout my research. My notes reflect my personal experience as an audience member, as well as my observations of other audience members.

Preparation and Anticipation

What time is the performance?

**Click.* *Click.* *Click.* The email says 9:30pm so I will leave at 8:30pm.*

Where do I get my tickets?

Is the same box office that I went to last time?

What time does the box office open?

When do the theater doors open?

**Click.* *Click.* *Click.* The email does not say anything about the tickets.*

What is my seat number?

Is it open seating?

**Click.* *Click.* *Click.* The email does not specify.*

I Am Not Afraid of the Dark

I left my house at 8:30pm and arrived at 9:00pm. I parked across the street from the main entrance of the theater.

The parking lot was open, and free after 5:00pm Monday through Friday.

I checked the time and noticed it was only 9:06pm. I decided to walk across the street to a coffee shop, The Green Bean, so I could fuel myself for a late-night performance.

The Green Bean was closed.

The streets were dark, empty, and quiet.

I noticed a coffee shop one block away, called Cheesecakes by Alex. Looking down the dark and deserted streets, I saw that one coffee shop with its lights on. The strange thing about being alone in the dark, is that you start hoping you really are alone. I am not afraid of the dark, but I fear what might happen in the dark. I decided to walk down the street with my eyes glancing downward, making sure not to invite eye contact with anyone on my path. I noticed each crack in the cement, and became hyper-aware of the shadows and sounds around me. Every now and then, my eyes darted from side to side to check my surroundings. I casually looked back at the sidewalk that stretched behind me; as if I noticed something on the ground as I walked by. After I confirmed that no one was following me, I turned back to the front and continued my walk.

I felt unsafe.

As I approached my destination, I picked up my pace. I rushed to grab the door handle in front of me as I heard “Please! Please! A dollar! Just a dollar! I just need food!” I apologized several times before the door finally shut behind me. Looking around the coffee shop, I found the end of the line and stepped forward.

As suggested by scholar Michel de Certeau, place and location are connected to individual memory (108.) While walking the streets of downtown Greensboro, I started to recall negative memories of feeling unsafe downtown. Even though it was 9:00pm, and the streets were empty and quiet, I still felt unsafe from past experiences. I recognize that I became defensive when the older man approached me asking for money. Whether it was a dangerous situation or not, I immediately associated that moment with other experiences downtown.

Which Way is Up?

I made it to the theater, and saw an arrow that directed me toward the side door. Three theater workers stood still at the entrance, conversing loudly, and blocking my path into the theater. A voice echoed in the space “Will call is over here!” My eyes scanned around the lobby, and searched for the author of this exclamation. Stepping around the three workers in sight, I was able to meet eye to eye with the man working at will call.

“Last name.”

“Hi there! I am here for “Both Sides.” My last name is Rossi. I just have one...”

“Take the stairs or the elevator. Third Floor.”

I began choreographing the path of my evening. I took two steps backward, and turned around myself. I hesitantly moved a few steps to the right, nearing the elevators. Leading with my head, I spiraled back to the stairs. Taking long strides, my feet moved quickly toward the stairs in a direct pathway. I climbed up three flights while completing my “to-do” list.

✓ Put my keys in my purse.

✓ Take off my coat and hold it for coat check.

✓ Silence my phone.

✓ Check the time.

✓ Answer a few text messages.

✓ Put my phone in my purse.

✓ Zip purse.

✓ Check for my seat number.

I arrived at the top of the stairs as was greeted by two ushers. Both employees extended out their hand with a technology device to scan my ticket. I reached my arm forward, pressed the ticket to the device, and then shoved my ticket back into my coat pocket. I roamed into an open space, scanning the room, trying to figure out what was expected of me and where I needed to go.

Nice to Meet You

The instruments are set up to the right, restrooms are to the left, and straight ahead is the bar.

I scoped out the seats that were set in front of the stage. Coats were draped over taken chairs, and purses lined the isles. I took a few steps toward the seating area and then decided that I should join the crowd at the bar before I found a seat. I waited in line as I read the menu. Leaning in, toward the bar, I squinted and noticed the woman next to me, mimicking my action. I realized that I was blocking her view and politely apologized. Without reaction, she turned toward the bartender and ordered her drink.

As she disappeared off into the crowd with her beer, the bartender turned toward me. Without saying a word, her eyes grew wide, and she nodded in my direction. She was signaling that it was my turn to order. I ordered a glass of red wine, and turned behind me as I waited for my drink. An older man, dressed in a formal navy-blue suit, mimicked my movement phrase from a few moments before. He leaned forward, squinting toward the sign. As a way to start up a conversation, I asked if he had been to “The Crown” before. This was my first time at “The Crown,” and I was hoping to get a seat recommendation from a regular. The man looked passed me and hollered to an older woman, also dressed in formal attire, and asked what she would like to drink. Realizing that my second attempt at a conversation had failed, I took my wine from the bar, strategically balanced it in my hand, and made my way toward the seating.

Musical Chairs

Picking a seat was a very important part of this experience. I played musical chairs in the audience testing out two chairs before I found my perfect fit.

1. Seat #1

Seat #1 was located on the right side of the audience. The clear pathway from the audience to the seat looked like an easy walk, which made the seat a very attractive option. I walked to the far-right aisle entrance and side stepped through the seats. Approaching one occupied seat I said “excuse me.” The woman (who appeared to be around 40 years old,) swung her knees to the left. I kept my eyes on the red wine, prayed not to split it, and started to climb. I lifted my right knee, and extended my leg over the woman’s foot tall purse. I then twisted my body, shifting my weight onto my right leg. Still trying to balance my wine, I noticed my legs straddling the stranger’s purse. I lifted my left leg, shuffled my right away from the bag, and eventually brought my whole body to the safe side of the purse. Returning to the side step, I made my way to Seat #1. As soon as I sat down, I noticed a two-foot-wide column that stretched vertically from the floor to the ceiling, obstructing my view of the performance. I reversed my isle dance and made my way back out of the audience.

2. Seat #2

Seat #2 was a wide-open bench along the wall. I sat for a few moments as I tried to convince myself that the seat was not so bad. I had plenty of leg room and open seats on either side of me. It was further away from the performance, but gave me a great view of the audience. The longer I sat there, the more I started to regret my decision, and started looking for another seat.

3. Seat #3

Seat #3 was right in the center of the audience. There were two empty seats sandwiching seat #3. I walked to the left of the seat, up the aisle, and approached a couple on the end of the row. I said “excuse me,” and both of them stood up and exited the row. I was able to side step to the seat, rest my belongings on the empty chair, and get comfortable. I was ready for the show.

At this performance, I knew to expect general admission seating because there was no seat assignment on my ticket. I had the choice to find the seat that I felt most comfortable in. In “The Power of Place: How Our Surroundings Shape Our Thoughts, Emotions, and Actions,” Winifred Gallaher’s claims a relationship between comfort and place (74). Comfort can be stimulated by a lack of constraint, and ample amounts of

control and choice (74). Walking into The Crown, I felt a sense of agency. I had the power occupy the space that felt most conducive to me.

Dancing Spectators

The music played and I began to dance with the audience around me. Spectators swayed side to side, in ripples. One head would move to the right, and another would bolt to the left. Each set of eyes staggered in windows, so they could each see the performance. Some songs generated a similar response from the audience. The performers clapped, so we clapped. The performers swayed to the beat of the music, so we swayed. At one point, I noticed a nodding of the head, that synchronized in the audience, and became the unison phrase of the audience. This dance continued, and the heads began to tilt off center, as if they were falling sideways into the music. The crowd grew more vocal, throughout the performance. By the last song, the spectators were shouting out positive remarks to the performers. “Woo!” “Incredible!” “Wow!”

During this intimate performance, spectators engaged and responded to the musicians. This audience shifted from being mere spectators, watching and observing the show, to active participants (Beeman 384). The physical and verbal responses from the audience suggested a level of kinesthetic empathy. Matthew Reason and Dee Reynolds describe kinesthetic empathy as a physical response where an audience member experiences the show to his or her own sense of movement (53). The audience at this

show responded physically by imitating the movements of the musicians. Each musician had their own way of encouraging audience participation. Some musicians nodded their head to the beat, while others tapped their feet. A few of the musicians cheered one another on during the song by clapping their hands or shouting. I found myself mimicking the musician's movements and behaviors. I had a desire to feel what they felt, and to move with them to the music.

The dancing spectators stood up and applauded the performance. They leaned side to side, collecting their belongings. Waves of people shuffled out the doors of the theater, strangers pressed shoulder to shoulder conversing about the performance. As I shuffled out with the group, I met a couple.

“Did you enjoy the show?”

I mentioned the strong vocals and another woman invited herself into the conversation. She agreed and explained that she knew one of the performers. Quickly, I found myself outside the theater. I walked over to my car, opened the door, and crawled inside.

I sat for a moment.

The streets were dark, but full of people.

The spectators dispersed toward their cars.

Once the streets started to empty again, I headed back home.

The Risk of Research

I returned back to my condo where I reflected on my experience. I had enjoyed myself. Reaching for my phone, I wanted to call someone. I thought about calling my mom or a friend, just to talk about the show, but I could not get myself to call. The truth is, no matter what I said on the phone, the only people who could relate and understand the experience, were the others that were there. In this moment, I felt how my personal experience was part of a larger community experience (Wood 32). Karen Wood's audience research draws attention to the "spectator community" and how it may enhance the individualized experience (32). Even though my experience was specific to myself as an individual, having the opportunity to discuss it among members of the audience could have provided me with an "interpretive community" (Wood 33). Often times, a performance allows for interpretation or "sense making," which allows the spectator to become an audience evaluator (Wood 33; Beeman 384). I had a desire to discuss the performance, share ideas, and engage with other members of the audience. I had a desire to join the spectator community by sharing my individualized experience, and receiving the experience of other audience members.

The next morning, I woke up to a notification on my phone for a message request on Instagram.

Click.

“Hey, my Name is John. I was at the 9:30pm tribute to Joni Mitchell last night and you sat behind me alone. I was with my mom or I might have tried talking to you. I enjoy jazz music and hope to make it to more events like that in the future. If you would like someone to go with next time, I would love to accompany you. I know this is straight forward but you are beautiful and the same taste of music as me apparently:)”

Click. “Block”

Click. “Are you sure you want to block this user?”

Click. “Yes”

I suddenly felt very vulnerable about attending the show alone.

Was it perceived that I needed to be accompanied?

Did going alone to the theater suggest that I was single and looking for the company of another person?

I never even thought to bring a friend with me.

Is that the common thing to do?

A wave of discomfort washed over me.

How did he figure out my name?

How did he find me on social media?

Was it public knowledge who attended this event?

I was worried, concerned and very confused. Because of this one message, I questioned all of my actions at the theater. I started to assume that my actions must have placed me in this predicament.

Maybe I shouldn't have gone to the show alone.

Maybe I shouldn't have had any wine.

Maybe I shouldn't have worn heels and lipstick.

Maybe I posted something online about the show and my whereabouts.

Maybe I shouldn't have been out so late on the weekend.

Maybe I shouldn't blame myself.

I realized that the message made me feel vulnerable, as if I did something to invite that type of unwanted attention. This message may not have caused me harm in any way, but it instilled fear and self-blame (Fileborn 246). In 2018, Bianca Fileborn conducted research to show the common occurrences of unwanted sexual attention in venues. Her research showed that minor occurrences are very common among young women in a social setting (Fileborn 256). In some instances, women refrained from attending certain venues because of past experience of unwanted attention. Even though I felt

uncomfortable with this message, I found comfort knowing that he refrained from approaching me during the show. This situation did not discourage me from attending another show performance, but did make me feel like it was no longer a safe place. Next time I attend the Crown, I will be a bit more guarded.

CHAPTER 2

PERFORMANCE 2: NO ADULTS ALLOWED

The Purchase Problem

Again, I woke up to horrible weather. It had been raining all night and I was still not sure if I actually wanted to attend this event. I could not purchase a student ticket for it, so the most affordable option was to get a balcony seat.

Click. *Click.* *Click.* No seats available in the balcony for The Wizard of Oz.

Time to check the next tier of seating.

Click. *Click.* *Click.* Your total is \$15.00. Your total plus the \$3.00 facility fee is \$18.00. Your total plus the \$3.50 internet fee is \$21.50. Your total plus \$1.21 tax is \$22.71.

Nice to Meet You

I arrived at the theatre lobby and made my way through a large group of families. Surrounded by children, I found the end of the line that leads to the box office. While I waited in line, a woman noticed that our umbrellas matched.

“Look! We have the same umbrella!”

“That is too funny! I was lucky to find this one in my car. It started raining again as soon as I got here.”

“It always seems to happen that way. I’m here with my granddaughter. This is my granddaughter. Hey Emily, say ‘Hi.’”

The child seemed to be around the age of five. She twirled in her Dorothy-inspired blue dress, and waved to me.

This Looks Familiar

I arrived at the theatre lobby and made my way through a large group of families. Surrounded by children, I found the end of the line that leads to the box office. Right after collecting my ticket, I shuffled with the group of spectators, toward two ushers who were ripping the ticket stubs. They smiled, greeted me, and politely asked for my ticket. As I made my way through the ticket check, I passed by the concession stand.

I ordered popcorn, and continued in the direction of the crowd. As soon as I approached the theater doors, another usher asked for my seat number. She escorted me quickly to my seat and I settled in.

A Seat Just for Me

1. Assigned Seat

My assigned seat for The Wizard of Oz was in the back right section of the floor level. I had a perfect view of the stage, but was far away from the performance. My section was empty with scattered spectators. I appreciated a little distance from the screaming and crying children who sat close to the stage.

Dancing Spectators and Waving Wands

In front of me was a man with two children. During the performance, the family left three times in the first act, once at intermission, and twice in the second act. The first time the family left, the man looked left and right, planning the pathway for his exit. He looked embarrassed as he picked up the little boy, extended his arms into the sky, and flung the child over the back of the seat. This boy giggled and the young girl scolded her father for his behavior. He then looked around again. Appearing guilty, he kept his eyes on the usher, making sure she did not see him do it again. He quickly grabbed the little

girl and lifted her over the seat. Without letting another second pass, the man placed his dirty sneaker on the seat of the theater chair. He drove his left knee into his chest, placed both hands on the back of the seat, and swung one leg over at a time. He jumped down from the seat and ran down the aisle after his children. He repeated this movement phrase every time they left the theater, and reversed the phrase upon their return.

At intermission, the theater sold battery powered wands with flashing bright lights. Act two turned into a dance of the children spectators. As their patience slowly ran out, the children stood on the theater seats, climbed on their parents, and stomped their feet on the ground. The young girl behind me decided to kick the back of my seat as she twirled my hair and sang “we’re off to see the wizard.” The lucky children, whose parents’/grandparents bought them magic wands, waved their lights up high, obstructing my view of the entire second act. I was distracted by all the entertainment in the audience but, I didn’t mind. A smile stretched across my face when I saw an audience full of engaged children.

This performance is not for me.

This performance is for the children.

The children’s eyes were fixated on the stage, but the adults all had their eyes fixated on the children.

Did the adults come to see the show?

Or, did the adults come to see their children see the show?

At the end of the performance, I slipped out the side door and walked quickly toward my car, hoping to beat the traffic. Once I returned home, I jumped right back into my daily routine. The performance never came back into my mind, but I kept hearing the little girl's voice singing in my head, "we're off to see the wizard, the wonderful Wizard of Oz."

Some people believe that arts venues have certain etiquette expectations that feel like "stifling social norms" (Radbourne 53). These norms are outlined in an unspoken "theatre contract" (Sedgman 11). This "contract" suggests that most theater venues have an expectation for audiences to sit in their seat, stay quiet, watch and listen. However, not all performances have the same etiquette expectations. For example, immersive theater may expect audiences to stand and participate throughout the performance (Sedgman 13).

Most of my theater etiquette came from my childhood experiences attending the theater. I was taught to stay quiet, sit in my seat until intermission, and clap when everyone else did, whether I liked the show or not. The children of the "Wizard of Oz" seemed to have a very different experience in the theater than I did. The children were not told to clap, stay quiet or sit in their seats. The children were lively and full of energy. They sang and danced along, waving their wands in the air. Referring back to Gallaher's idea of comfort, I noticed that the children and I had a lot in common. We both found comfort being in control, with few restraints (Gallaher 74).

CHAPTER 3

PERFORMANCE 3: THE UNKNOWN AUDIENCE

The Purchase Problem

Click. *Click.* “My Account”

Click. ”Log In”

Click. “Upcoming Event”

No. That is not right.

Click. “Order History”

No.

Click. “Message Center”

No.

Click. “Account Home”

No.

Scroll. *Click.* “Events”

Click. “The Crown” “Carolina Theatre”

I don’t know. I am looking for an event. How would I know what theater it is in? I have not picked one yet.

Click. “Carolina Theatre” *Scroll.*

Click. “Events”

Click. “The Crown” *Scroll.*

Click. “My Account”

Click. “Logout”

X. out of the browser.

I grew more and more frustrated each time that I tried to purchase tickets online. Every online purchase came with that “internet convenience fee” for \$3.50. There is nothing convenient about purchasing tickets online. One can argue that you do not have to call the box office or drive to the theatre, but I still felt unfamiliar with the website. I let some time pass and tried again a few minutes later.

Click. “Tickets”

Click. “Buy Tickets”

Scroll.

Scroll.

Scroll.

Click. “Next Page”

Scroll.

Scroll.

Scroll.

Click. “Next Page”

Scroll.

There it was. Saturday, November 30th. That is my next available evening to see a show. My only option available was a traveling blues band, that I have never heard of. Might as well give it a chance!

Ticket Cost: \$10.00

Facility Fee: \$1.00

Internet Convenience Fee: \$3.50

“Do you want to add ticket insurance for \$2.00?”

No! I am already paying 50% more than my original ticket price. I have no desire to spend \$2.00 on insurance.

Total Cost: \$14.50

Preparation and Anticipation

I woke up at 9:00 am to the sound of rain hitting my window. It was a gloomy and dark Saturday. Before getting out of bed, I reached for my phone to check my emails. I searched for the ticket confirmation. The show started at 7:00pm, so I set a calendar event for 6:00pm titled “Time to Leave.” I then proceeded to check the weather... Thunderstorms. All day.

Struggling to remember the name of the band, I tried to do some research. Nothing about the performance was appealing to me, except for the chance to experience something new. It was not easy to motivate myself on a rainy day. I had no desire to get all dresses up and leave the house. Something about rainy days made it difficult to get out of the house, and go to the show. While I lacked motivation from the rainy weather, I felt an urge to get out of my home. I started to get myself ready for the show. My excitement started to grow, along with the desire to escape the gloomy weather, and immerse myself in a new experience.

This concept of “escapism” I experienced was a motivational factor of my attendance (“Why People Go to the Theatre” 5). Escapism is known to be one of the core motivators for theater attendance, because the experience allows individuals to be immersed in a place that differs from everyday life. (“Why People Go to the Theatre” 6).

In this instance, I had the desire to remove myself from dark and rainy day, to a place for music and socialization. While escapism was the immediate motivator that I experienced, each individual spectator may have their own motivations to attend a performance.

The Show Must Go On...Without Me

At 6:00 pm, as planned, I stepped outside with my umbrella in hand. After I climbed into the car, I checked the weather again. As a person who does not feel comfortable driving at night, I feared the drive back home. The sun was already setting and the thunderstorms would be continuing through the night. I started to drive with my windshield wipers at full speed. My body hinged toward the steering wheel, while my eyes squinted. I struggled to see the road. About a minute away from my house, I felt my car hydroplane and shift into the next lane.

Inhale.* *Exhale.

I pulled into a parking lot and waited for the rain to lighten up. As time passed, the rain showed no signs of stopping. At 6:45 pm, I made the decision to turn on my flashers, and head back home.

Not only did I risk my safety trying to attend this performance, but I also made a risk purchasing the ticket in the first place. I did not know anything about the performers,

so there was no guarantee that I would have enjoyed my experience. I also purchased a ticket without insurance.

If I spent the \$2.00 for insurance, I would have had the option of a refund?

Would the insurance cover my ticket?

Is weather a reason for a refund?

Weather became a demotivator for me several times throughout my research, but in this instance, it caused me to turn around and miss the show. For each reason for attending the theater, there are several reasons why someone may not attend the theater. Those reasons may include the cost of the ticket, outside commitments, quality of the show, lack of interest or having no one to go with (Scollen 50). In a pilot survey prior to beginning my research, I asked Greensboro residents how they like to spend their free time. The results showed that 12.96% of residents enjoying staying home in their free time, while only 5.56% enjoyed live entertainment. It seems like I am not the only one demotivated from leaving home on the weekend.

CHAPTER 4

PERFORMANCE 4: DRINK, DRANK, DRUNK

The Purchase Problem

**Click.* *Click.* “My Account”*

**Click.* “Log In”*

**Click.* “Tickets”*

**Click.* “Buy Tickets”*

**Scroll.* *Click.* “Buy”*

Here we go again.

Event Total: \$15.00

Facility Fee: \$1.00

Internet [In]Convenience Fee \$3.50

Total: \$19.50

**Cli--*

Did I really want to buy this ticket? I did not know anything about this band. I have no idea what type of music they perform, nor do I have any reason to spend \$20.00 on this ticket (other than for research.)

My mind struggled with this concept, so I asked myself a series of questions.

- 1. Is the experience going to be worth \$19.50?*
 - 2. How much would I spend on a performance I am excited to see? \$20.00?*
 - 3. How much would I spend on a performance if I knew someone in the show?
\$10.00? \$20.00?*
 - 4. On what criteria am I assessing the value of this performance?*
- *Click.* “Place Order”*

I had a difficult time purchasing a ticket for “Southern Gothic” because I didn’t know what I was buying. In this transaction, all I knew is that my ticket would give me entry into a show. I couldn’t discern a fair cost of this ticket, because I didn’t know if it would be “impressive” or “desirable” (“Valuing Dance” 52). Susan Leigh Foster explains that performances can be commodified through standardizing, spectacularizing, and promoting the material (“Valuing Dance” 54). At the time of purchasing a ticket for “Southern Gothic,” I did not see any promotions for the performance. I did not see

anything “spectacularizing” the performance or “standardizing” it with anything familiar to me.

Position of the Ethnographer

As an ethnographer, I felt myself purchasing tickets based on my availability. Given the time restraint on my research, I neglected to let my desires and curiosity lead me in making a decision. That being said, my most influential motives for buying a ticket, were my research timeline and desire for variety. I wonder what other external influences may have motivated other spectators to attend these shows.

My plan was to arrive earlier than last time. I wanted to avoid risk and avoid the dark when I walked around downtown Greensboro. I also wanted to avoid playing musical chairs, since this was another “general admission” ticket.

“I don’t know anything about this show!”

The more I thought about it, the more my curiosity wandered.

What if...

...they play country music?

What if...

...I am the only one who doesn’t know the words?

What if...

...they start line dancing?

What if...

...they have a small audience?

I had fears and anxieties about what I was getting into. It was the simple fear of not knowing what to expect. When purchasing a ticket, I typically have a few formed expectations. For example, I might have expectations about the venue, the show, the performers, the set design or even an expectation of my enjoyment. At one point in my research, I had clear expectations of the venue, but being unfamiliar with “Southern Gothic,” I had low expectation for the show, the performers’ talent, and my enjoyment. In a field study conducted in 2016, a group of researchers attended 19 performances. At each of these performances, the audience was asked to complete a survey before and after the show, and then “Pay What You Want.” This research was conducted to measure the relationship between expectations, enjoyment, and the concept of value (Rey-Biel 4). It was found that in most scenarios, the spectators who paid more, showed the largest gap between their initial expectations, and their end enjoyment (Rey-Biel 19). In my experience attending “Southern Gothic,” I had no expectations of enjoyment prior to the show. Even though it felt like a risk to purchase a ticket, it was easy for the show to meet or exceed my low expectations.

5:30pm

I parked in the same spot as I did two weeks prior. Habit started to create comfort for me. I did not have to question if a spot was free, or how long I could park there. It became *my* theater parking spot. The sun was still up and I was ready to treat myself to a pre-show dinner.

Cross the street.

Through the parking lot.

Turn left.

Keep going.

Cross the street.

5:34pm

I walked into the restaurant and was greeted right away. Turning to my right I walked over to the bar and sat alone. I chuckled to myself, here I am again, *alone*. To me, a bar seemed like a communal table. It was a place where people could go sit by themselves, and still enjoy other's company. I first looked down the bar, noticing that I was the only person there. I then looked around the restaurant and saw families, couples, groups of friends all interacting. Heads turned side-to-side, so each person could watch the one speaking. Hands moved elegantly with the motions of their lips. My impolite staring was stopped by a waiter.

“What can I get you to drink?”

“I will have water. Can I see a food menu?”

Without speaking, he grabbed a menu and placed it in front of me. At that point I decided to shift into my ethnographer position. I grabbed my notebook and pen to appear busy.

Maybe I Am Afraid of the Dark

6:30pm

After dinner, I realized I still had time for coffee. I stepped outside and it was already dark.

**Click.* *Tap.Tap.Tap.Tap.* *Click.* “Ma.”*

I kept my mom on the phone for my short walk. Being on the phone made me feel like I was less approachable. It was important for me to avoid interaction when I was on the streets of downtown, *alone*.

Turn right.

Keep Going.

Where did he come from?

Am I being followed?

Cross the street.

I have to lose him quickly!

I'll check my watch and act like I am in a rush.

I need to speed up.

Cross again.

I can look in the shop window.

I'll be able to see behind me.

He is wearing red and is holding something that looks like a jar.

Maybe he's homeless?

Keep going.

Arrived.

6:33pm

Standing in line at the coffee shop, I saw the man in red lurking at the door. He did not come in, but he continued to watch me from outside. I made eye contact with him once, but he did not break his stare. I ordered my coffee, and felt the comfort of the community around me. The coffee shop was crowded enough for me to navigate the space perfectly. I traveled through the line while always maintaining one person between

myself and the man in red. I was able to move around the coffee shop in a way that kept one person obstructing his view and breaking his stare.

Fear is site-specific, meaning that fear can be evoked by particular environments that may show “social incivilities,” or “physical incivilities” (Nasar 293). The darkness in Greensboro initiated my fear before I noticed the man behind me. Being in an environment that challenged my abilities to see, made me anticipate danger. Once entering to coffee shop, my role changed. While the stranger was still outside in the dark, I had made myself more visible to him in a well-lit coffee shop. Jones Nasar’s research “Landscapes of Fear and Stress” shows how offenders enhance their ability to see without being seen” (295). In my situation, I noticed the man watching me while he hid in darkness. I found myself quickly adapt and try to obstruct his view. I felt safe knowing that I too, was unseen.

I may not have been in any risk at all, but I felt the need to protect myself. I needed to protect myself from the man in red, watching and observing me. Then again, the man in red had a lot in common with me. Once I step into the theater, I become a researcher, and oftentimes find myself watching a person for too long. Am I the woman lurking in the theater?

Preparation and Anticipation

6:45pm

I waited for my coffee to cool and notice that the man in red left. I revisited my previous anxieties about the unknown. I had an urge to properly prepare myself for the show.

Click.* *Tap.Tap.Tap.Tap.* *Click.

I began my Google search, and tried to uncover what music the band performed, where they were from, and video clips of their shows. I didn't get very far before I remembered the musical chairs. In an effort to avoid playing, I quickly tossed my cup of coffee and headed for the door to see "Southern Gothic."

6:55pm

Turn left.

Cross the street.

Through the parking lot.

Cross the street.

Cross the street.

“The Crown ← “

Navigating Familiar Spaces

Arriving at the theater, I remembered my past experiences in the space. My embodied memory influenced my choices. Similar to how I parked in the same spot as before, I found myself wanting to repeat most of my same actions. To change up my new experience, I decided to avoid my natural instincts. Instead of taking the stairs, I used the elevator to the third-floor venue. As the door opened in front of me, I was greeted by a woman. She said nothing. I greeted her to break the awkward silence in the empty hallway. She still said nothing.

“Do you have a program available for this show?”

“No.”

If my interaction was not awkward enough, I was the very first person to arrive. The room was familiar but incredibly bare. There were no chairs and the lights were bright. Looking around the room I saw a few people dressed in all black. One person carried a speaker toward the back of the room and shouted “where do you want this?” It was made very clear to me in a short period of time that they were not prepared for any spectators. I curved my pathway slightly to the left, bringing me to the

restrooms. I thought it may be a good place to hide out for a few minutes.

Restrooms are never a good place to hide.

It was a one stall bathroom. The smell proved that it had not been cleaned in quite some time. I grabbed my phone and saw that it was 7:05pm. The show started in 25 minutes, but I was the only one there. Regardless, I could not stay in that bathroom much longer. I came up with a game plan.

- ✓ Leave the bathroom.
- ✓ Head to the bar.
- ✓ Order a drink.
- ✓ Ask the bartender about the band.
- ✓ Find a spot for the show.

I heard my heels clicking on the black slick floor. At this point, the lights were dimmed, which made the empty space seem a bit more inviting. I went over the bar and ordered a glass of red wine. The young lady standing behind the bar served me quickly, and then turned away to arrange the alcohol bottles behind her. With little opportunity for conversation, I walked away to look for a spot to sit.

Where are the Chairs?

There were still no seats set up in the space. Circling the room, I saw the musical instruments set up on a small platform stage. Up against the wall were red fabric benches. I knew from my last visit to the theatre that I would struggle to see the stage from those seats. About ten feet away from the stage, were two columns that stretch from the floor up to the ceiling. These pillars have blocked my view in the past. On either side of each column stood a single bar table. I had a sudden fear of feeling “left out.” I did not want to place myself so far from the center of the room, so I went to the bar table closest to the center of the room.

✓ Set my purse down.

✓ Set my drink down.

✓ Take off my coat.

Never mind, there is no place for me to put it.

By the time I chose where I would be standing, a small crowd trickled in. Hearing the conversation around me, I noticed that several spectators were frustrated about not having chairs. A woman, around forty years old, came to stand at the bar table on the other side of the column. She was also there alone, but the conversation was

uncomfortable because of the structure between us. I heard her ask a staff member about bringing out a chair for her. A few minutes later, the staff member came back with a regular sized chair, and placed it next to the bar table. It was quite comical to see the lady straighten her arm all the way up above her head to retrieve her beer from the bar table. However, I was incredibly envious of her chair, and started reconsidering my choice of wearing heels.

Two women around the age of 60 asked that same staff member if they could have chairs as well. The staff member returned with two chairs and placed them right behind my bar table. I knew that was a very poor placement for those chairs, so I grabbed the bar table I was at, and moved it past the column, and over to the left. The ladies thanked me. While the lady next to me and I occupied the bar tables, every other spectator was standing to the outskirts of the room. I started to feel like my choice was very bold. The audience was still small with about twelve individuals, and I felt vulnerable standing so close to the center of the room.

Nice to Meet You

Almost everyone in the room appeared to be between the ages of 40 and 70. Each spectator dressed very casually. I scanned the room and saw jeans, plaid, cowboy boots, and baseball caps. I was dressed in all black, with a formal peacoat and heeled suede boots. Again, I felt out of place, and uncomfortable with the amount of empty space still

in the room. I already knew what each person in the theater looked like, where they stood, and who they came with. It was easy for me to assume that they noticed me already too.

Last time I was at The Crown, the space was differently. I remembered how the chairs were lined up in rows, with an isle down the middle. The space has now been converted from a familiar small theater space, to what reminded me of a bar. I expected that I would feel more comfortable this time because I already attended a performance here, but it was the opposite. I noticed that the design of the theater had a large impact on my level of comfort. Jennifer Radbourne claims that setting of a theater performance plays a significant role in audience attendance (51). In most venues spaces that display performances, spectators face one direction in the dark. This design allows spectators to hear others in the space, but not see them or their faces (Radbourne 56). Radbourne claims that spaces designed for more visual interaction can create a greater sense of community, and allow for more interpersonal contact (56). Even though this was not the space I was expecting, I did feel a sense of awareness of the spectators around me.

The opening band entered the space from the back of the room. Passing by my bar table, the woman next to me waved to one of the performers. She caught me looking at her.

“I go to church with him.”

I smiled and nodded to see if she would continue.

“Their band is really great. I am just here to see them.”

I was shocked to hear that she came for the opening band and not for the show itself. I wondered if other people in the room were there for the same reason. After a minute of small talk, the opening band started to play.

The Risk Returns

A man in his 40s came over to me and started engaging in casual conversation. My drink sat on the left side of the table. I wonder if that gave the appearance that I was intentionally leaving space for another person to join. He placed his mixed drink in the center of the small round table. He leaned forward, placed his forearm onto the table, making the drinks shake vigorously. His body dangled and draped over the table, allowing it to support all his weight. The table was a necessary prop to support his drunk body to stand. His face was turned toward me with a grin, as if he was waiting for me to start a conversation. My gaze remained fixated on the band. I slowly settled my tapping and swaying and angled my shoulder away from the drunk man.

“What are you drinking?”

It was quite difficult to hear him over the music, so I pointed to my ear and shook my head apologizing.

“I cannot hear you, sorry.”

He gestured toward my drink and repeated himself a little louder.

“What are you drinking?”

Now this was a very familiar situation I was put in. I could play out the next few steps. If I told the man my drink, he would buy me another and assume that his gesture would also buy him a few minutes of conversation, and potentially a phone number. I had no interest in my theatre experience to turn into a bar experience, but that atmosphere already suggested that type of environment. The theatre space I knew was disguised tonight as a bar. With audiences standing and dancing, drinks in hand and bar tables scattered in the space, this was not the theater I was expecting.

I understood that being a female, alone at a bar, might have suggested that I was interested in conversation. I politely responded.

“I had a glass of wine, but one was enough for tonight.”

My goal was to be clear that I was not going to accept a drink, before he even offered. Unfortunately, that response was not enough. While I tried to listen to the band play, the man continued to offer me a drink.

“Oh come on, it’s just a drink. You have to have another. Red or white? I’ll go get you one.”

Mr. Persistent still had not introduced himself, but was very stern in commanding me to have another drink.

“No thank you, but I appreciate the offer.”

The woman sitting in the chair next to me must have noticed my discomfort. She jumped into conversation and asked “So have you been here before?” I engaged in small talk for a few minutes and learned that she prefers coming to the theatre for live music over attending a bar. She explained that the theatre was more “intimate” and “enjoyable” to her. She explained how she too, was disappointed in the set-up of the space. Due to medical circumstances, she could not stand for long periods of time, which was her main reason for attending the theatre over a bar or restaurant with live music. As the

conversation between us fizzled out, I noticed Mr. Persistent still staring, waiting to continue the conversation.

He inhabited a position of power.

He was the initiator.

He was the decider.

I was the defender.

Since the music was loud, I was off the hook when it came to conversation. The only time I had to actively avoid conversation was, when the band transitioned from one song to the next. In between each song the lead singer would introduce the next piece and give time for the other performers to change their instruments. I found myself disengaged with the performance and distracted by the drunk man next to me, but he wasn't the only one who was drunk. Recent research shows the desire for performing arts venues to offer alcohol as a way to increase comfortability (Radbourne 55). However, drinking can be a "social incivility" that may stimulate fear of danger (Nasar 293). In my experience, I had mixed feelings about the space and environment created.

On one hand, I enjoyed having a glass of wine, chatting with the lady next to me, and becoming familiar with the other members of this audience community. On the other hand, when the drunk man leaned on the bar table, I was bothered and uncomfortable. In this theater experience, alcohol and venue design converted the audience behavioral

expectations. Nightlife spaces can be identified by alcohol, intoxicants, lights or music (Vaadal 2). With The Crown disguised as a nightlife space, I was in a male-dominated space of courtship (Vaasdal 2). Being a young female alone in this “nightlife” space made me vulnerable to gender power differences. No matter how many times I declined Mr. Persistent’s drink offer, he still inhabited a position of power. He was the initiator. He was the decider. I was the defender.

Dancing Spectators

Throughout the show I felt myself responding to the music. Although it probably looked like I had the same reaction to each song, that was not the case. I found myself disengaged with some of the music. I continued to tap my foot, move my shoulders, or smile whether I was interested or not. At times it felt really hard to “appear” engaged, since there’s no singular way to show engagement. It was forced, and I felt like I was faking my enjoyment. In these moments, I felt responsible to respond to the performance. Given the intimacy of the space, I felt obligated to showcase my enjoyment.

Was this something I was trained to do?

Was I faking it because I thought it was polite?

How would it affect the performers if they saw me disengaged?

Since I had no prior knowledge about the band or what I might experience, I was able to attend this show with an open mind. During this performance I felt a sense of obligation to show my support for the performance, regardless of my personal preference. While the performers shared their art with me, I felt the need to reciprocate and share my support with them (Foster 55). Susan Leigh Foster describes this viewer responsibility as a “gift exchange,” where the performers give their art, viewers accept, and then reciprocate in some way (55). In a performance the exchange between performer and spectator is not a tangible gift exchange, but rather an exchange in energy (57). While I mimicked the physical response of the spectators around me, I wondered if I still exchanged energy back to the performers. Did they know I was faking it, or did they still feel my effort to engage?

Toward the end of the show, several people were celebrating, dancing and cheering. I heard a “yeehaw” echo from one side of the room, and signing from the other side. I felt out of place for several reasons. My age, my attire, and my behaviors set me apart from the rest of the group. While the lady next to me was also alone, and sitting in a chair, I noticed that we were both outcasts of the nightlife scene.

One couple threw their drinks on the bar table I was standing at, so they could approach the dance floor. The man reached his hands into the back pockets of her jeans while she draped her arms around his neck. She swung her head left and right, smacking the man with her hair. He squinted his eyes and made the choice to stop dancing. The woman was not fazed by this. She continued to dance by herself. She

stood with her legs wide, bent at the knees. She reached one hand behind back, with a finger holding up the back-belt loop of her jeans. She raised her other arm up in the air, with a flexed hand and straight elbow. Her arm swayed in sync with her from head side to side. She lost her balance several times, and very precisely would repeat the same four movements.

Movement One: She sat on the floor with her arms and legs crossed pouting.

Movement Two: The woman walked on her hands and knees, expecting the floor as if she was trying to understand why it made her lose her balance.

Movement Three: She abruptly transferred her weight into her hands and tucked her toes under and find her feet flat on the ground.

Movement Four: She arched her back, keeping her hands attached to the front of her legs, and led with her head to come up.

There were not many people on the dance floor, but since the dancing audience blocked my view of the band, they quickly became part of the entertainment for the night.

CHAPTER 5

PERFORMANCE 5: SITTING IN A SEA OF SILVER

The Purchase Problem

Sitting in the office at UNCG, I pulled up my calendar and the Carolina Theatre website.

**Click.* *Click.* “My Account”*

**Click.* “Log In”*

**Click.* “Tickets”*

**Click.* “Buy Tickets”*

**Scroll.* *Click.* “Buy”*

Here we go again.

Event Total: \$35.00

Facility Fee: \$3.00

Internet [In]Convenience Fee: \$3.50

Sales Tax: \$2.56

Total: \$44.06

**Cli--*

My ticket was originally \$35.00. After all the fees and tax is included, the price was 25% higher than what was advertised. Even though I knew to expect these fees, I started to compare \$44.06 to what else I could experience for that price.

How many times could I go out to eat with a budget of \$44.06?

What could I buy for \$44.06?

How many times could I attend the movies with \$44.06?

Click.

“Place Order.”

In a pilot survey conducted prior to my auto-ethnographic research, I found that 39.76% of people spend between \$31-\$50 on a night out in Greensboro. However, this does not show how much North Carolina residents would typically spend on a night out at the theater specifically. In a research study conducted by Francesca Borgonovi, performing arts attendance was measured with” personal socio-economic characteristics” (1884). Results showed that art education was the most influential variable of theater attendance (Borgonovi 1884). One the other hand, results showed that frequency of

attendance is more affected by age and occupation (Borgonovi 1885). With my personal background of arts education, I see value in new artistic experiences. However, being a 24-year-old graduate student and part time teacher, I was resistant to spending \$44.06 on an evening at the theater.

Preparation and Anticipation

The show started at 2:00, so I planned to leave my condo at 1:00 pm. I arrived downtown at 1:18 pm. My car was stopped in standstill traffic in front of the theater doors. I watched groups of older women, hop out of their cars and strut down the street, dressed in fancy dresses and heels. It seemed like all the traffic was for the show. After thirty minutes of waiting, traffic finally moved, and I found a parking spot.

With a line stretch along the sidewalk, I knew it would be a while before I could get my ticket. I stood in the will call line, and noticed that I looked out of place again. Most of the spectators waiting in line were women over the age of forty. Of course, when I bought this ticket for “Menopause the Musical,” I already assumed that this would be the case.

Meet-and-Greet

I approached the window at the front lobby and gave my last name. The box office attendant responded.

“I am so sorry, it looks like we only have one ticket under that name.”

“Yes, that’s correct.”

She looked at me quite confused, but I ignored it and walked inside by myself.

Women were crammed in the lobby. Some were in small groups chatting, and others were on their phones. I heard a few say “Hi, how are you?!” as if they were surprised to see one another. The women on their phones kept their eyes fixated on the entrance doors. They shifted their heads left and right. Each phone conversation ended with an arm reaching up in the air, waving vigorously, while the spectator exclaimed, “We are over here!”

I passed the snack stand on my right and noticed several people drinking beer, wine or cocktails. I just finished my coffee and had no idea how this audience was ready to start drinking at 2:00pm on a Saturday. On my left was a “selfie station” with props including boas, plastic tiaras, and sparkly sashes. I felt like I was at a children’s birthday party (minus the alcohol.)

Getting Situated

I remembered seeing my seat X11 on the map when I purchased the tickets. I entered through the left doors that brought me down a sloped red carpet. On my right, I found row X. I had an aisle seat, next to a gentleman, who seemed to be the only one there. I took my seat and folded my jacket onto my lap. Looking out I saw the stage, which was framed by the balcony that hung above me. I kept finding myself switching positions.

Cross my legs.

Uncross my legs.

Cross again.

Stretch my legs into the aisle.

Bend my knees.

Back to crossing.

This battle lasted the entire show.

Dancing Spectators

The entire room smelt like a mixture of popcorn butter and strong perfumes. *Hot Stuff* by Donna Summer was blasting and my ears started to ring. In front of me was a sea of silver-haired women, they chatted loudly trying to hear one another. A staff member made an announcement on the microphone that they were selling fans for \$1.00. At that time, women stood up at their seats, and waved money in the air to get the staff member's attention. I looked down the aisle and saw several canes stretch out onto the red carpet. Beer bottles were already rolling on the floor. It was obvious that this was not just a theater venue. It was a party space, but I was not invited to the party.

The Risk of Revealing

Overtime, I heard the audience grow more and more comfortable. From the beginning of the show, the audience responded verbally with signs, cheering, and *a lot of* laughing. The laughter seemed to happen in waves. A few confident spectators, close to the stage, would break out in uncontrollable laughter. As they started to quiet themselves, the rest of the spectators would join in, echoing the first group's laughter. Sitting in the back corner, and not always understanding the references to menopause, I found myself in the second wave of laughter.

The content of the musical clearly drove a particular audience to the theater. I was just as much out of place as the man next to me. I was not bothered by his presence until the sex scene. All of a sudden, the actors are in a store shopping for lingerie. Each

song was about their personal sexual experiences. I suddenly felt very uncomfortable sitting next to an older man. Actors made sexual innuendos and references about male genitalia. I started to think, if I laugh out loud, it means I understood the jokes. If I understood the jokes, it revealed my knowledge about connection to the subject matter. As the performers sang “there’s only you” and danced with their dildo props, I made the decision to keep quiet, in hopes to portray my naivety to the subject. I felt myself get very hot and uncomfortable.

Dancing with the Spectators

The performers strutted off the stage into the audience. One performer leaned in, whispered to a man in the front row, sat on his lap, blew him kisses, placed her hands on his shoulders, and gestured toward him “call me,” while shaking her fist with her pink and thumb sticking outward. The audience quickly became a part of the performance. Each of the four actresses had a solo. They sang about their experiences with hot flashes, while they danced up and down the aisles.

These solos placed responsibility on the spectators. What if the performers danced on an audience member who was disinterested? What if the spectator stood up and left the performance? Did the spectator have a choice to engage with the performer or to leave? In Michael J. Kramer’s research of BodyCartography Project’s “Closer,” he analyzes the responsibility of the audience. When a performer asks an audience member

“Can I dance for you?” it becomes an intimate exchange of choreography, and gives the audience the opportunity for response. If the response is “yes,” then the audience makes the choice to experience the dance together. If the response is “no,” then the dance will not happen.

The performers of “Menopause the Musical” took risk in leaving the stage space and physically engaging with the audience. When the performer sat on the spectator’s lap, she gave him trust to engage and respond to her character. Even if the spectator was not interested in participating, he had a social responsibility to the audience to continue the show (Alston 137). In this moment, that particular audience member became an “active spectator,” immersed in the performance (Bonet 129). Can the performers, choreographers, and directors encourage or demand that we change our engagement?

By the end of the show, everyone around me was on their feet applauding the performance. This made me think.

Are standing ovations an obligation?

If the person in front of you stands, you can’t see.

Is the only option to stand?

How genuine is a standing ovation?

Is it expected now?

Who starts them anyway?

Is it just group think?

Are we trying to avoid being the person who doesn't stand?

I tested this theory and stayed sitting. People around me gave looks of disgust in my direction. They seemed very unhappy that I was sitting. I scooted closer to the edge of my seat. Eventually, I stood. I honestly could not take the discomfort of being the outcast. While a standing ovation is a way for an audience to acknowledge an exceptional experience, it is becoming an obligatory response in theater culture and losing its credibility (Heim 31). There was no way of knowing how genuine this standing ovation truly was.

The audience was invited up onto the stage to join in a celebration of menopause. It seemed like a safe space was created. Women eagerly jumped up onto the stage, dancing and forming a kick line. I was excited to see their enthusiasm, but I was not part of the community that was built in the audience today. My age set me apart drastically. I wondered...

If I stepped on stage, would I be welcomed regardless of my age?

If I stepped on stage, would that negate the purpose of the celebration?

I stood in the audience and clapped along to the beat. The seats cleared out around me, as the older women stepped onto the stage. I decided it was time for me to leave the party...I wasn't invited in the first place.

CONCLUSION

In taking a holistic approach to my research, I was able to view the individualized spectator experience as one that is influenced by external factors and past experiences. By investigating three main areas of theater audience engagement including attendance factors, spectator behaviors, and site-specific safety, my research gave me a better understanding of how the individualized spectatorship. Experience is developed, shaped, and sustained.

Attendance Factors

Audiences attendance is difficult to measure because it is influenced by motivators to attend, demotivators, performance expectations, and ticket cost. Throughout my ethnographic research, I found myself motivated by the concept of “escapism,” but demotivated by weather (Walmsley 6) (Scollen 50). At times my demotivator overpowered my motivator, causing me to miss a show. When researching audience attendances, both motivators and demotivators need to be considered. Another attendance demotivator was the ticket cost. I felt several moments of hesitation during the ticket purchasing process, because I was uncertain about what I was buying at the time of the commodity exchange (Foster 52). Purchasing a ticket for a performance

comes with several risks. At the time of purchasing a ticket, the spectator may have expectations of the experience they are paying for. However, when buying a ticket, the spectator is paying for the experience of the venue, the seat, the show, the talent, the set design, the choreography and more. While an individual may be confident that they will enjoy the show, they may be uncertain about the performers, the overall appeal, or even the seat they paid for (Rey-Biel 19). This risk of ticket purchasing can feel even greater depending on the financial security of the spectator. The value of a \$40 ticket may seem less or more expensive to an individual based on their socio-economic position (Borgonovi 1884). Audiences consist of diverse and complex individuals with a variety of motivators and demotivators. To analyze current audiences and develop new audiences, it is imperative to understand the complexities of the individualized experience and how it affects attendance.

Spectator Behaviors

My research showed how this individualized audience experience exists within a large audience community experience (Wood 33). The spectators may have a personalized experience, while also being a part of a shared community experience, and upholding certain audience responsibilities. At times, I found myself engaged with a performance, experiencing kinesthetic empathy and active audience participation. (Reason 53) (Beeman 384). I felt natural bodily responses, swaying, tapping my feet,

laughing, and smiling at the performers. At other performances, I felt myself forcing these behaviors to mask my disengagement. One reason I *acted* engaged was to abide by my “audience contract” (Sedgman 11). I felt restricted to the rules of the theater and needed to demonstrate my satisfaction. Another reason I *acted* engaged was because I felt a sense of responsibility and obligation to the performers. Being a performer myself, I knew and understood the effort and vulnerability in displaying art. I was open and appreciative of the “gift” the performers gave me (Foster 55). Regardless of my personal preference, I still felt that the performers were “gifting” me with their talents and commitment. Since I received a gift from the performers, I was then responsible for reciprocating the gestures and sharing my enjoyment. My research demonstrated how spectator behavior was individualized, but always reflective of the spectators’ responsibilities to the audience and performers.

Fear and Comfort

Throughout my research, I encountered unexpected themes of safety and comfort, which strongly impacted my ethnographic experiences. I noticed how place and environment created site-specific fears, as well as site-specific comfort. Since most of the performances I attended took place in the evening, darkness triggered my anxieties of safety (Nasar 293). I felt how dark spaces surrounding the theater stimulated fear, but darkness within the venue amplified my feeling of comfort. Being seen in the theater

caused me to feel vulnerable, however, being able to see and familiarize myself with the other spectators in the space gave me comfort (Radbourn 56).

Each performance I attended at the Carolina Theater served alcohol. This choice to serve alcoholic drinks, at night, in a dark venue, disguised the theater venue as a “nightlife” space (Vaadal 2). Nightlife spaces don’t employ the theoretical “theater contract” (Sedgman 11). Instead, they insinuate that pursuing a lone individual is accepted or encouraged (Vaadal 2). My perceptions of fear and comfort were challenged by place and environment, as well as identity. Being a 24-year-old female, alone at a show put me in situations where I was confronted with unwanted attention. These predicaments revealed concerns of gender power differences in these disguised theater spaces (Vaadal 2). While unwanted attention is common among young females, my safety and comfort were compromised by unwanted interactions. My level of comfort directly impacted my ability to engage with the audience community and performance.

Epilogue

PERFORMANCE 6: SOCIAL DISTANCING

The Purchase Problem

“In light of additional COVID-19 concerns, we are working with presenters, renters, and promoters to make adjustments for events scheduled in the immediate future. Additional changes will be noted online, so please check the listings for specific updates. In the event of a cancellation, refunds for all tickets will be issued. In the event of a postponement, tickets will be honored for the new show date” (Carolina Theater Website).

3/27/2020

Governor. Roy Cooper of North Carolina issued “Stay at Home” order and “COVID-19 Essential Businesses and Operations” order. Starting Monday, March 30th, 2020 at 5:00pm North Carolina residents and businesses would be affected by this act (North Carolina, Executive Office of the Governor [Roy Cooper]1).

**Call.* 4/6/2020 at 3:20pm*

“Theater is closed.”

**Email.* 4/6/2020 at 3:21pm*

Hello!

I hope you are doing well. I purchased a ticket for Cinderella, but am unavailable to attend the rescheduled show. Please let me know what necessary steps I need to take to be refunded for the ticket.

Thank you,

Amanda Rossi

**Response.* 4/6/2020 at 3:32 pm*

Ms. Rossi~

I have refunded your ticket to the Greensboro Ballet's Cinderella. It typically takes 3-5 business days for your bank to complete the transaction. Due to unprecedented circumstances, it may take a little longer.

I have sent a new confirmation email reflecting the refund, as well.

Stay safe and we'll see you at the Theatre again soon!

~Michelle

Online Audiences and Rebuilding

As the theaters close their doors, online opportunities for viewing performing arts are increasing dramatically. The Carolina Theatre is now hosting a free “Open Mic Night: A Virtual Series.” The mission of this online series is to connect the community and support local artists. The theater has also connected their YouTube channel to show free online musicals. I have been thinking about the online arts communities being created around performance during the current lockdown, and wondering what a post-COVID-19 theater world might look like.

How can spectator behaviors be observed through online community spaces?

How will access to free streaming of performing arts impact the spectators’ perceptions of value?

Will accessibility increase arts education and impact theater attendance in a post-pandemic world?

How will theaters retain and rebuild their audiences during a time of social-distancing?

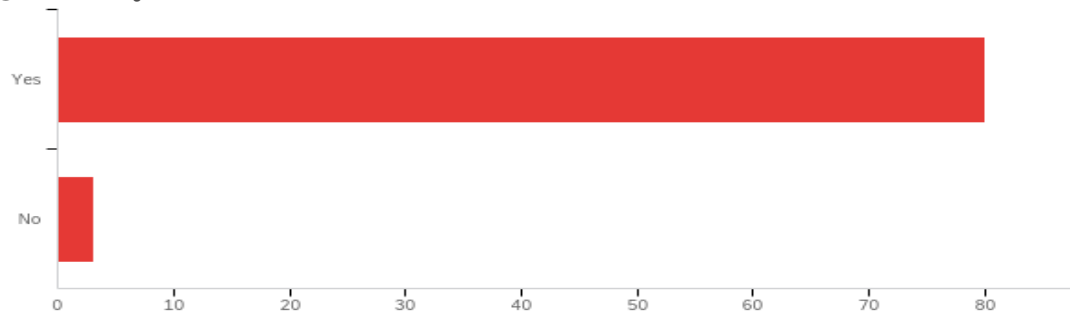
Appendix

Pilot Survey Results

Carolina Theatre

In the Fall of 2019, I conducted an online pilot survey. This survey included 21 questions about demographics, lifestyle, and experiences at the Carolina Theatre. The 122 responses from this survey provided some quantitative data that is used throughout my research.

Q1 - Are you a North Carolina resident?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Are you a North Carolina resident?	1.00	2.00	1.04	0.19	0.03	83

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	96.39%	80
2	No	3.61%	3
	Total	100%	83

Q2 - If yes, please provide the city you live in. (Leave blank if not applicable)

If yes, please provide the city you live in. (Leave blank if not applicable)

High Point 19

Jamestown 9

Greensboro 22

Boone 1

King 2

Oak Ridge 2

Summerfield 3

Winston Salem 6

Colfax 4

Kernersville 1

Charlotte 1

Germanton 1

Archdale 2

Pleasant Garden 1

Advance 1

Walkertown 1

Lewisville 1

Tobaccoville 1

Q3 - If no, please provide what state do you live in? (Leave blank if not applicable)

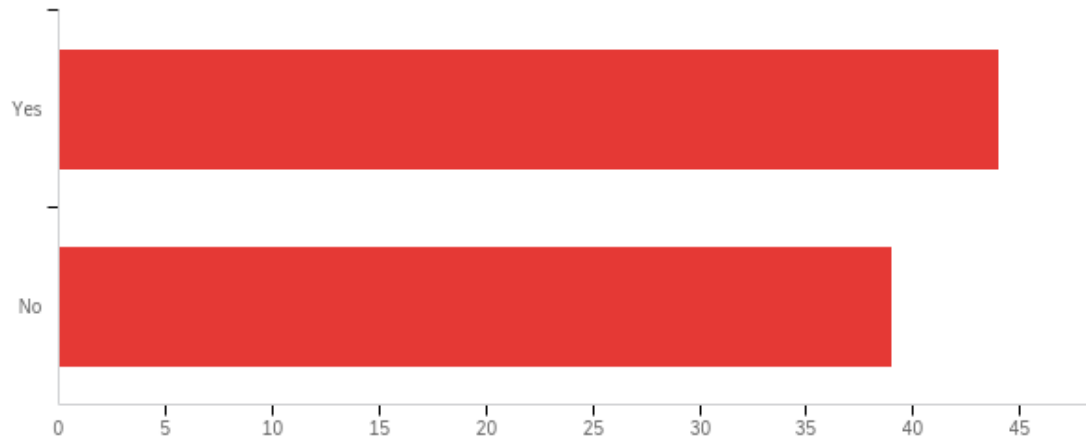
If no, please provide what state do you live in? (Leave blank if not applicable)

NJ

Virginia

Maryland

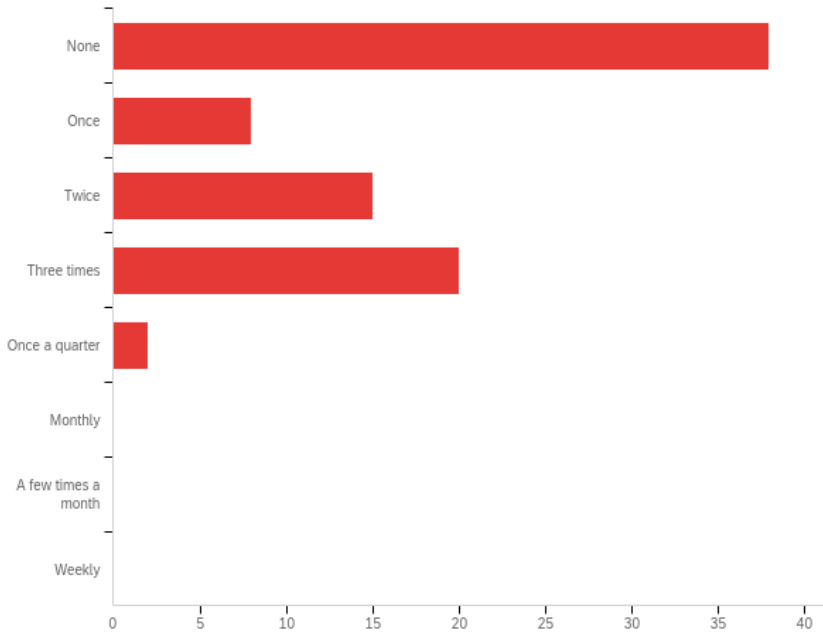
Q4 - Have you attended the Carolina Theatre in the past year?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Have you attended the Carolina Theatre in the past year?	1.00	2.00	1.47	0.50	0.25	83

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	53.01%	44
2	No	46.99%	39
	Total	100%	83

Q5 - If yes, please indicate how many times you have attended the Carolina Theatre in the past year?

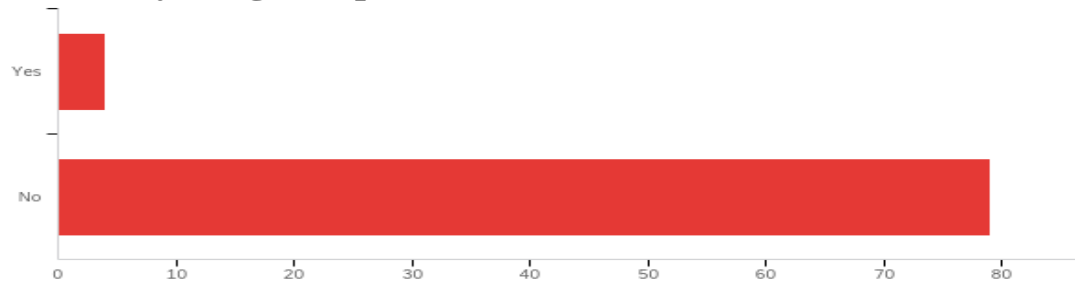


#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	If yes, please indicate how many times you have attended the Carolina Theatre in the past year?	1.00	5.00	2.28	1.32	1.74	83

#	Answer	%	Count
1	None	45.78%	38
2	Once	9.64%	8
3	Twice	18.07%	15
4	Three times	24.10%	20
5	Once a quarter	2.41%	2
6	Monthly	0.00%	0

7	A few times a month	0.00%	0
9	Weekly	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	83

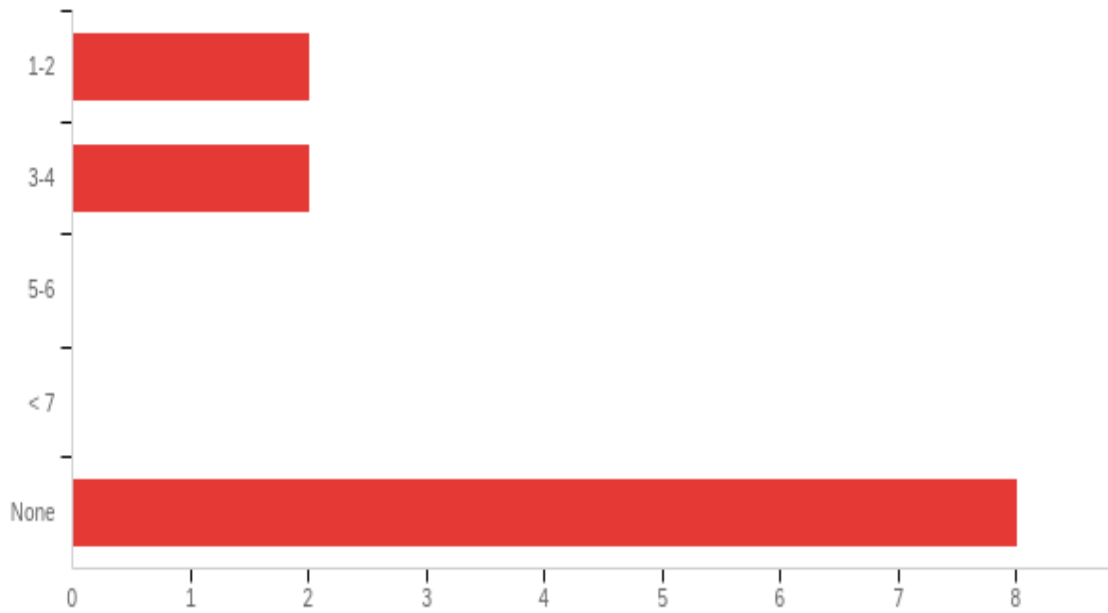
Q6 - Have you signed up for the Carolina Theatre Newsletter?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Have you signed up for the Carolina Theatre Newsletter?	1.00	3.00	2.90	0.43	0.18	83

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	4.82%	4
3	No	95.18%	79
	Total	100%	83

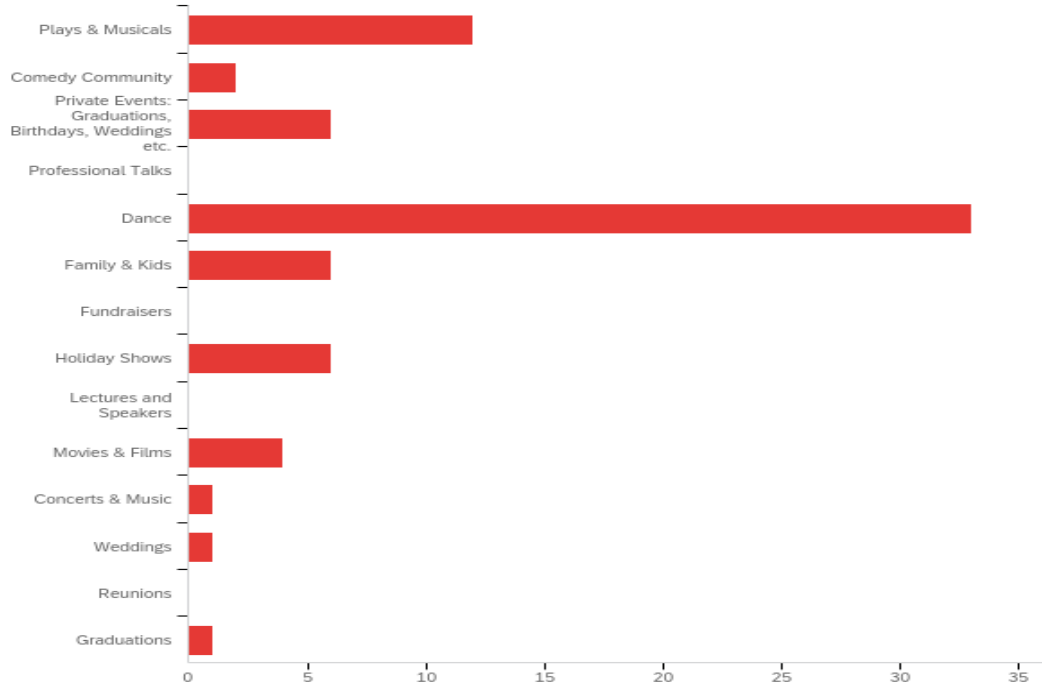
Q7 - How many emails have you received in the past month after signing up for the Carolina Theatre Newsletter?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	How many emails have you received in the past month after signing up for the Carolina Theatre Newsletter?	2.00	7.00	5.50	2.14	4.58	12

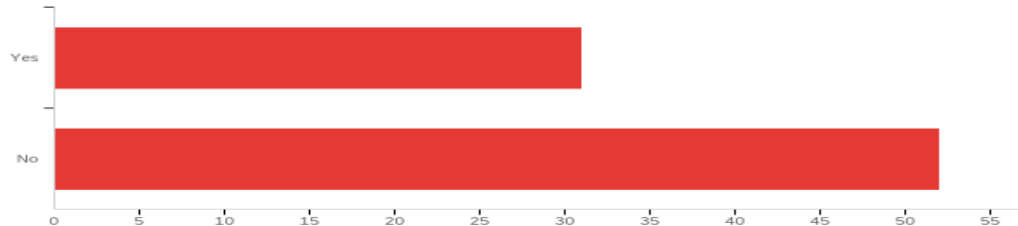
#	Answer	%	Count
2	1-2	16.67%	2
3	3-4	16.67%	2
4	5-6	0.00%	0
5	< 7	0.00%	0
7	None	66.67%	8
	Total	100%	12

Q8- If yes, what events have you attended? (Select all that apply)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Plays & Musicals	16.67%	12
2	Comedy Community	2.78%	2
3	Private Events: Graduations, Birthdays, Weddings etc.	8.33%	6
4	Professional Talks	0.00%	0
5	Dance	45.83%	33
6	Family & Kids	8.33%	6
7	Fundraisers	0.00%	0
8	Holiday Shows	8.33%	6
9	Lectures and Speakers	0.00%	0
10	Movies & Films	5.56%	4
11	Concerts & Music	1.39%	1
13	Weddings	1.39%	1
14	Reunions	0.00%	0
15	Graduations	1.39%	1
	Total	100%	72

Q9 - Are you aware of the movies that are shown at the Carolina Theatre?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Are you aware of the movies that are shown?	1.00	2.00	1.63	0.48	0.23	83

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	37.35%	31
2	No	62.65%	52
	Total	100%	83

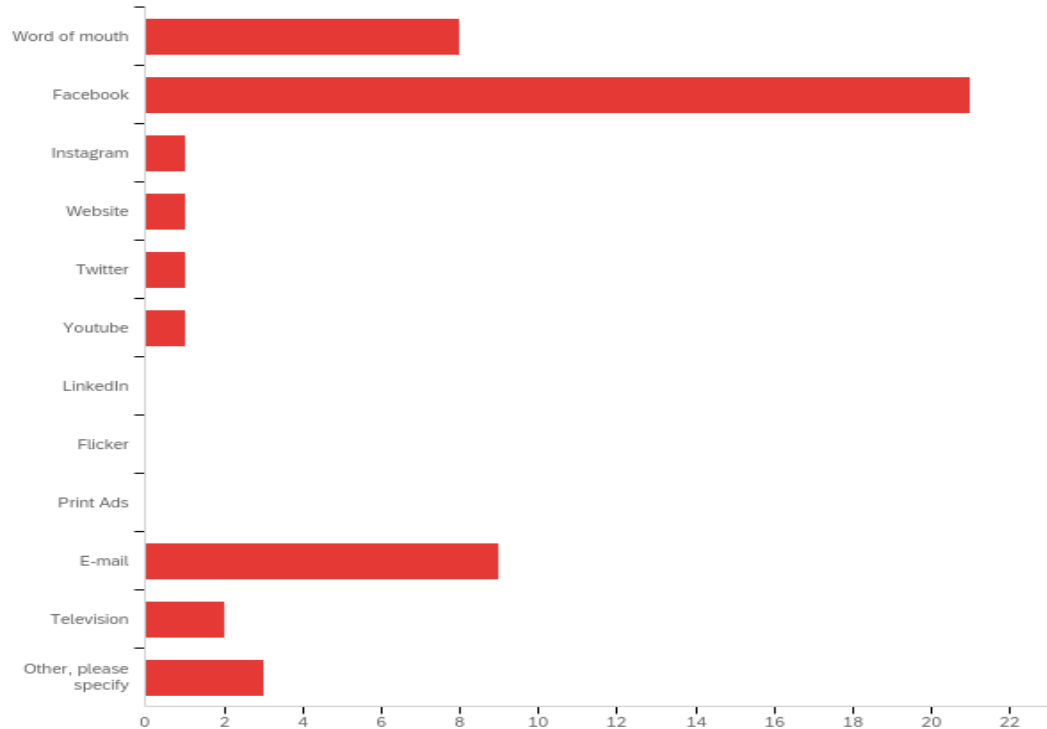
Q10 - Have you heard of any events happening this month at the Carolina Theatre?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Have you heard of any events happening this month at the Carolina Theatre?	1.00	2.00	1.73	0.44	0.19	83

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	26.51%	22
2	No	73.49%	61
	Total	100%	83

Q11 - If yes, through what channel were you informed about these events? If no, please disregard this question.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Word of mouth	17.02%	8
2	Facebook	44.68%	21
3	Instagram	2.13%	1
4	Website	2.13%	1
5	Twitter	2.13%	1
6	Youtube	2.13%	1
7	LinkedIn	0.00%	0
8	Flicker	0.00%	0
9	Print Ads	0.00%	0
10	E-mail	19.15%	9
11	Television	4.26%	2
12	Other, please specify	6.38%	3
	Total	100%	47

Q11_TEXT - Other, please specify

I just know they have ongoing problems events

work

Employee promotional at work

Q12 - What types of events would you like to see on the Carolina Theatre calendar?

Plays 16

Music Concerts 12

Charities/Fundraiser Events 2

Movie Variety 10

Dance 12

Fashion Shows

Painting events

Opera 2

Musicals 9

Comedy 4

Broadway Plays/Musicals 2

Q13 - What concession items would you like to see at the Carolina Theatre?

Gluten free items 2

beer & wine 12

Dark chocolate 2

Maybe similar to movie theater food

Puffs 1

Popcorn 13

Cakes 2

Homemade cookies

More candy variety 4

Pretzels 4

Chick fil a sandwich

Sandwiches 2

Coffee/Tea and Latte Products 2

hot dog 2

Pizza 2

Cotton candy

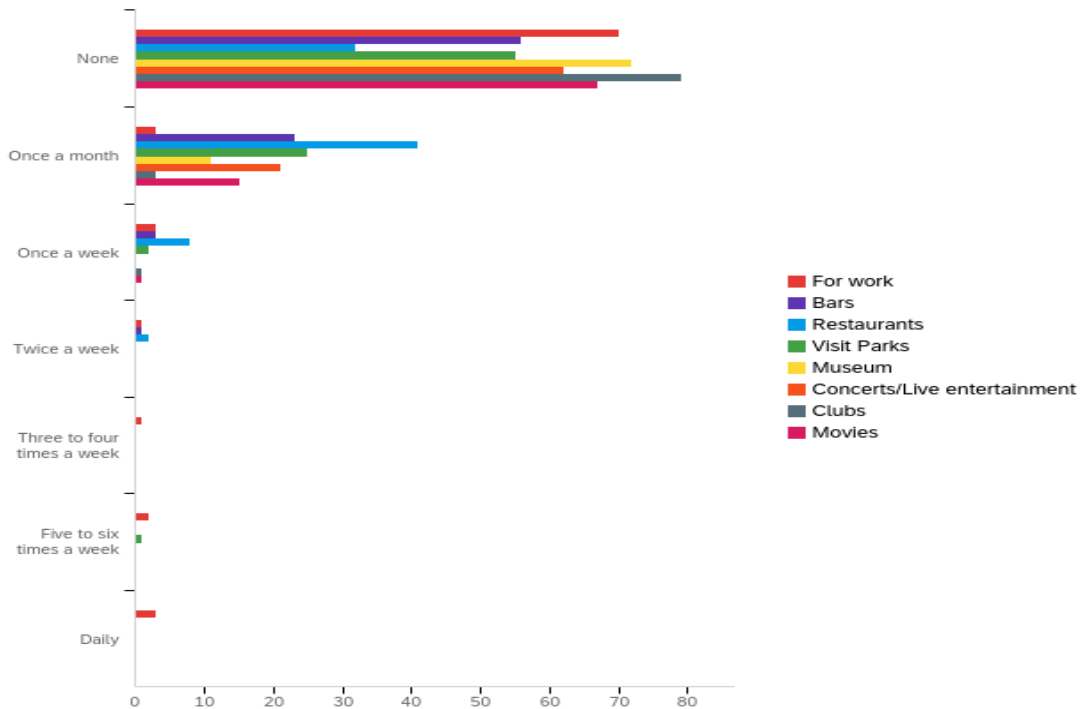
Soy free items

Slushies

Keto food

Healthy (cheeses, veggies, hummus) 2

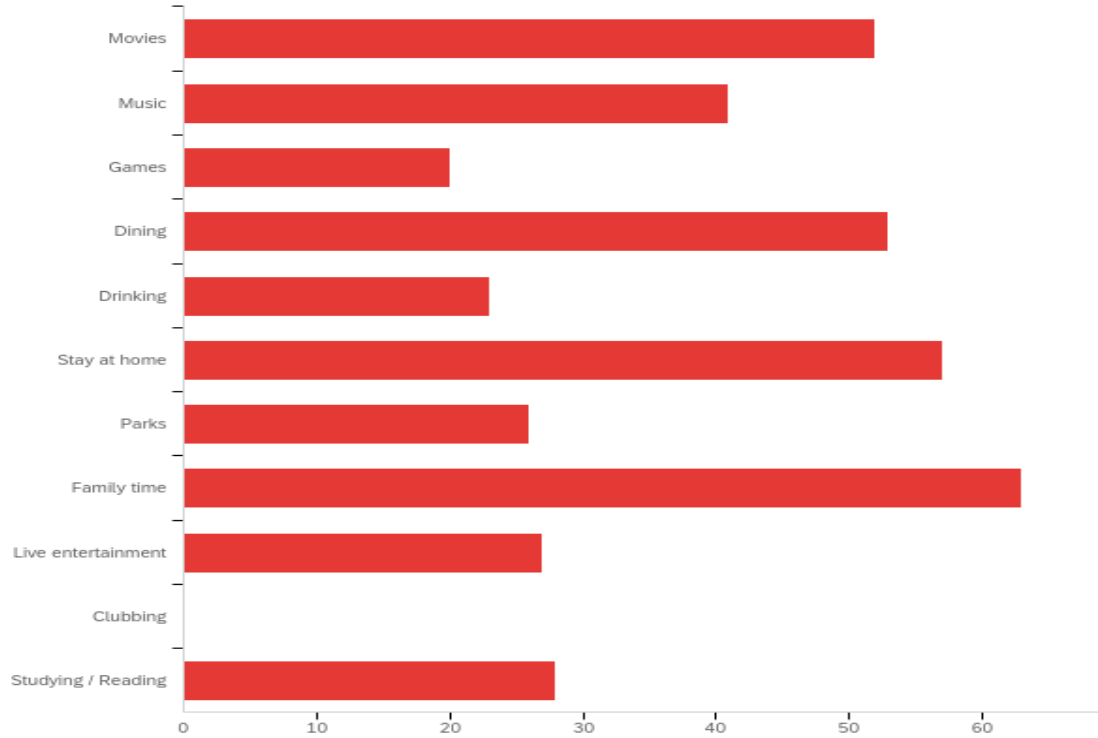
Q14 - How often do you visit downtown Greensboro for the following activities?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	For work	1.00	7.00	1.53	1.45	2.10	83
2	Bars	1.00	4.00	1.39	0.62	0.38	83
3	Restaurants	1.00	4.00	1.76	0.72	0.52	83
4	Visit Parks	1.00	6.00	1.41	0.73	0.53	83
5	Museum	1.00	2.00	1.13	0.34	0.11	83
6	Concerts/Live entertainment	1.00	2.00	1.25	0.43	0.19	83
7	Clubs	1.00	3.00	1.06	0.28	0.08	83
8	Movies	1.00	3.00	1.20	0.43	0.19	83

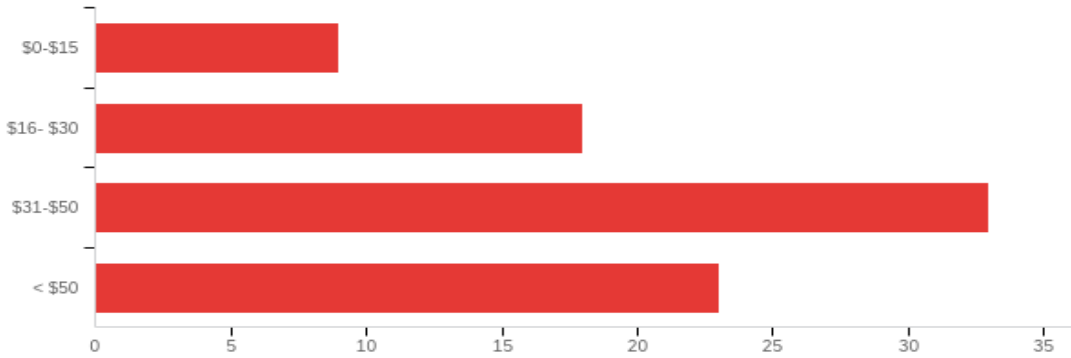
#	Question	None		Once a month		Once a week		Twice a week		Three to four times a week		Five to six times a week		Daily		Total
1	For work	84.3 4%	7 0	3.61 %	3	3.61 %	3	1.20 %	1	1.20 %	1	2.41 %	2	3.61 %	3	83
2	Bars	67.4 7%	5 6	27.7 1%	2 3	3.61 %	3	1.20 %	1	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	83
3	Restaurants	38.5 5%	3 2	49.4 0%	4 1	9.64 %	8	2.41 %	2	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	83
4	Visit Parks	66.2 7%	5 5	30.1 2%	2 5	2.41 %	2	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	1.20 %	1	0.00 %	0	83
5	Museum	86.7 5%	7 2	13.2 5%	1 1	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	83
6	Concerts/ Live entertainment	74.7 0%	6 2	25.3 0%	2 1	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	83
7	Clubs	95.1 8%	7 9	3.61 %	3	1.20 %	1	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	83
8	Movies	80.7 2%	6 7	18.0 7%	1 5	1.20 %	1	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	0.00 %	0	83

Q15 - What do you like to do in your free time?



#	Answer	%	Count
4	Movies	13.33%	52
5	Music	10.51%	41
6	Games	5.13%	20
7	Dining	13.59%	53
8	Drinking	5.90%	23
9	Stay at home	14.62%	57
10	Parks	6.67%	26
11	Family time	16.15%	63
12	Live entertainment	6.92%	27
13	Clubbing	0.00%	0
14	Studying / Reading	7.18%	28
	Total	100%	390

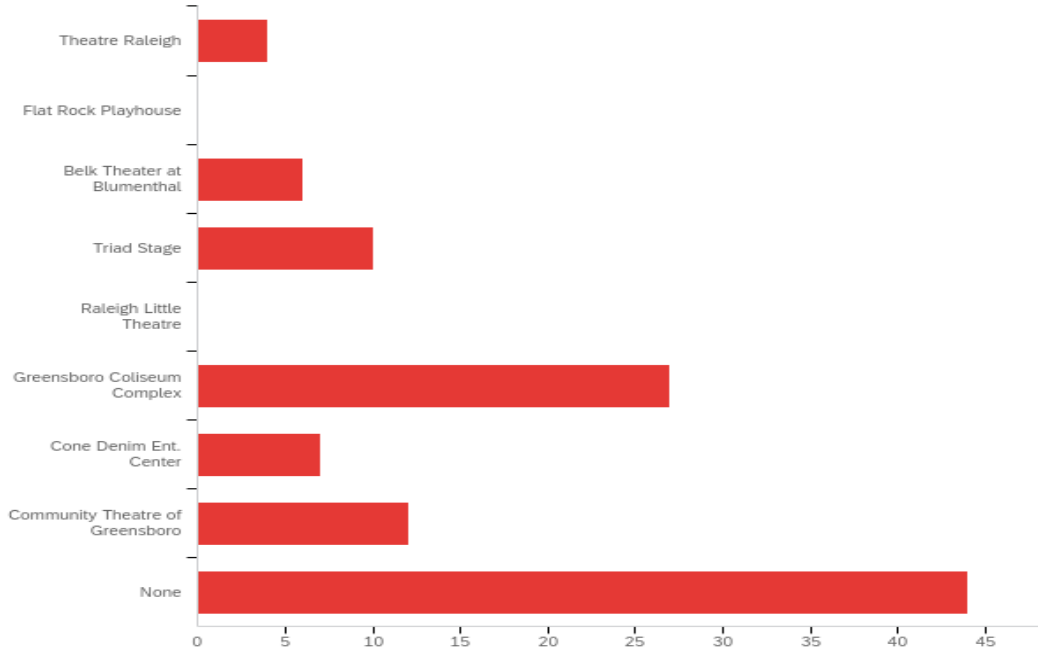
Q16 - How much money do you spend on a typical night out?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	How much money do you spend on a typical night out?	1.00	4.00	2.84	0.95	0.90	83

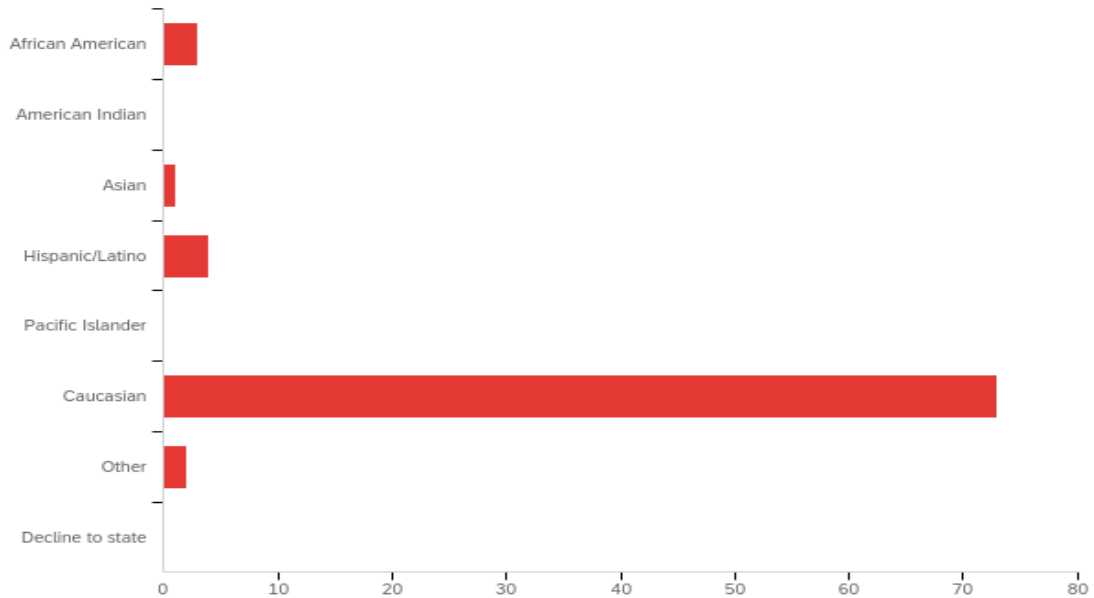
#	Answer	%	Count
1	\$0-\$15	10.84%	9
2	\$16- \$30	21.69%	18
3	\$31-\$50	39.76%	33
4	< \$50	27.71%	23
	Total	100%	83

Q17 - What other theaters have you attended to in the past year?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Theatre Raleigh	3.64%	4
2	Flat Rock Playhouse	0.00%	0
3	Belk Theater at Blumenthal	5.45%	6
4	Triad Stage	9.09%	10
5	Raleigh Little Theatre	0.00%	0
6	Greensboro Coliseum Complex	24.55%	27
7	Cone Denim Ent. Center	6.36%	7
8	Community Theatre of Greensboro	10.91%	12
9	None	40.00%	44
	Total	100%	110

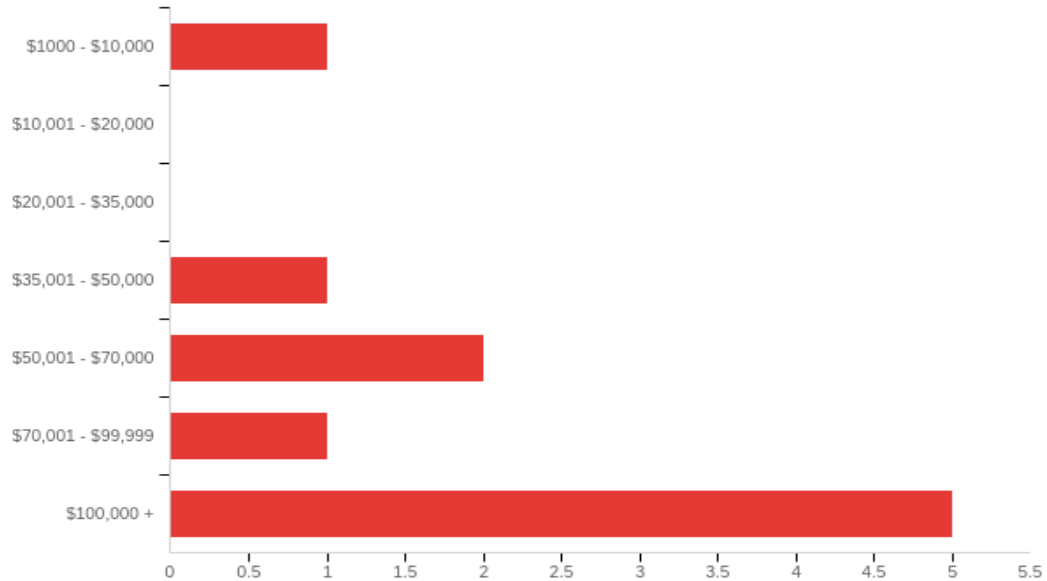
Q18 - What is your race/ethnicity?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	What is your race/ethnicity?	1.00	7.00	5.71	1.07	1.15	83

#	Answer	%	Count
1	African American	3.61%	3
2	American Indian	0.00%	0
3	Asian	1.20%	1
4	Hispanic/Latino	4.82%	4
5	Pacific Islander	0.00%	0
6	Caucasian	87.95%	73
7	Other	2.41%	2
8	Decline to state	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	83

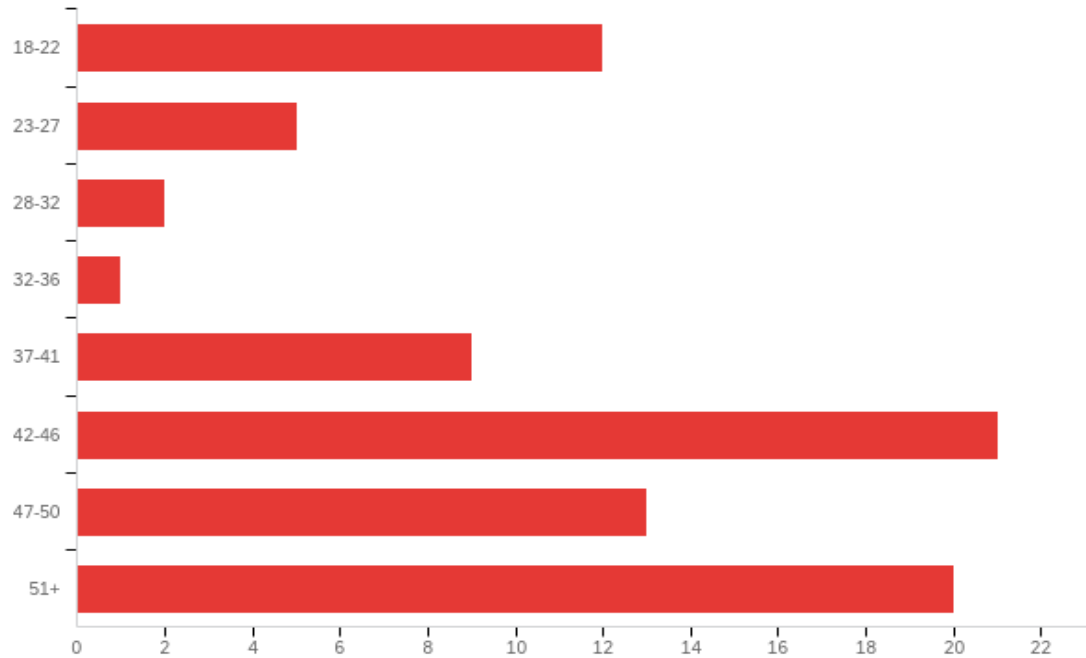
Q19 - What is your annual income?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	What is your annual income?	2.00	8.00	6.60	1.85	3.44	10

#	Answer	%	Count
2	\$1000 - \$10,000	10.00%	1
3	\$10,001 - \$20,000	0.00%	0
4	\$20,001 - \$35,000	0.00%	0
5	\$35,001 - \$50,000	10.00%	1
6	\$50,001 - \$70,000	20.00%	2
7	\$70,001 - \$99,999	10.00%	1
8	\$100,000 +	50.00%	5
	Total	100%	10

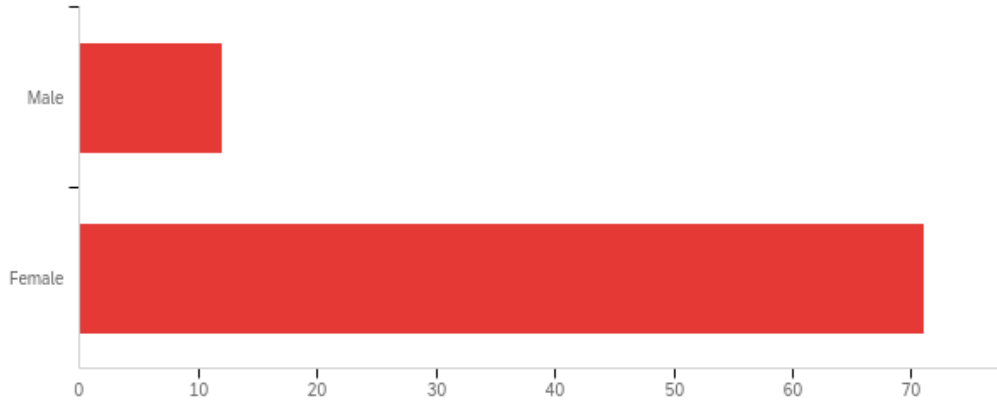
Q20 - What is your age?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	What is your age?	1.00	8.00	5.47	2.41	5.79	83

#	Answer	%	Count
1	18-22	14.46%	12
2	23-27	6.02%	5
3	28-32	2.41%	2
4	32-36	1.20%	1
5	37-41	10.84%	9
6	42-46	25.30%	21
7	47-50	15.66%	13
8	51+	24.10%	20
	Total	100%	83

Q21- What was your gender at birth?



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	What was your gender at birth?	1.00	2.00	1.86	0.35	0.12	83

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	14.46%	12
2	Female	85.54%	71
	Total	100%	83

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