



THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

# STATE OF THE FIELD

RESEARCH REPORT 2019



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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

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## A MESSAGE FROM THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES/USA

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Theatres across the country serve millions of young people, their schools, their families, and their communities each year. These organizations range from small, itinerant theatre ensembles to multi-million dollar venues dedicated to performances for young audiences year-round. As the national organization representing the TYA industry, TYA/USA includes the vast majority of professional theatres serving children and families nationwide as part of its membership.

TYA/USA works every day to advocate for the growth, sustainability, and recognition of the industry as a whole. While we are able to report on the high quality of the artistic and education programs of our theatres, and their impact on audiences, we identified that virtually no comprehensive data existed to report on the business practices and organizational dynamics of the TYA field.

This report is a significant first step. We are grateful to Matt Omasta and his team at Utah State University for providing this detailed snapshot of the industry, collected from the perspectives of leaders from 97% of TYA theatres in the TYA/USA membership. We hope this report provides TYA organizations with a range of vital information that allows them to:

- 1 Compare their own practices with those of their peers across the industry
- 2 Examine the ways in which they, and the field at large, can expand impact and elevate our practices
- 3 Support strategic planning with detailed data of field-wide trends
- 4 Enhance fundraising efforts with key findings that help contextualize their work within a national context

We recognize that there is so much more information to be collected. We look forward to working with you, our member organizations and institutional partners, to grow our research efforts in the coming years. With an increased understanding of where we are as an industry, together we can build an even stronger, more impactful future for Theatre for Young Audiences.

With anticipation for our next chapter,



**Jonathan Shmidt Chapman**  
Executive Director  
Theatre for Young Audiences/USA

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Photo Credit: Nicole Julien, Stephawn Stephens, David Landstrom, Joe Mallon, Korinn Walfall in the Kennedy Center World Premiere Commission production of Earthrise. Photo by Jati Lindsay.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

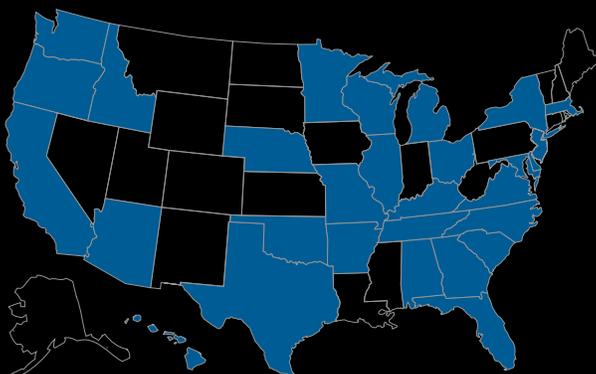
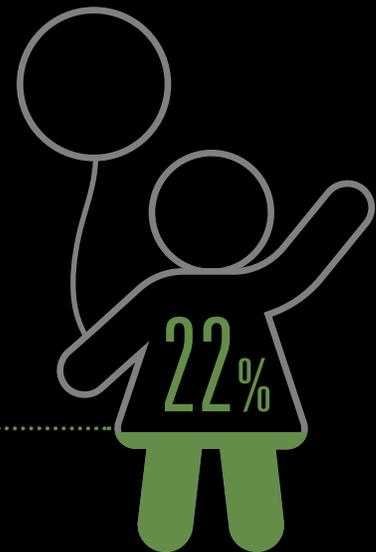
This report shares data from the Theatre for Young Audiences State of the Field Study, which surveyed artistic, business, and education leaders of US TYA companies. While limited survey research related to TYA exists, this study is the first of its kind to systematically survey leaders regarding the broad array of topics it considers.

### Key findings from the study include:

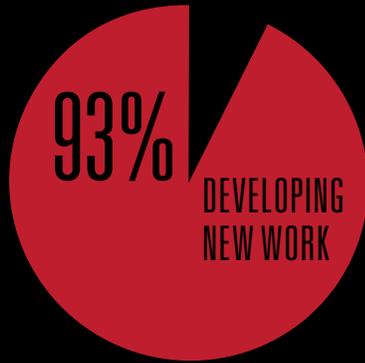


TYA companies may be **opening with increasing frequency** in the twenty-first century, possibly at a rate as great as twice that of the period from 1950–1999.

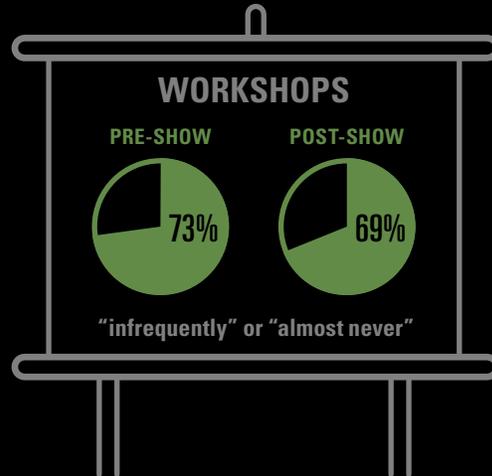
Theatre for the Very Young productions (shows primarily produced for preschoolers under age five) have become increasingly common. **Twenty-two percent of the shows produced and presented by participating theatres** in their 2017–18 seasons served these very young audience members.



While participating TYA companies served young people throughout much of the US, they were **notably absent in states located in the non-coastal west and in northern New England**. While it is possible some TYA activity takes place in these regions, almost none of the participating theatres were located in these areas.



**Ninety-three percent of theatres indicated they develop new work**, including adaptations and wholly original shows, on a regular basis.



While most participating theatres offered some type of educational resources to schools, **pre- and post-show school visits were relatively uncommon**. Seventy-three percent of theatres offered pre-show school visits "infrequently" or "almost never"; this was also the case for 69% of theatres in terms of post-show school visits.

AVERAGE GA THEATRE TICKET PRICES

AVERAGE TYA SCHOOL PERFORMANCE TICKET PRICES

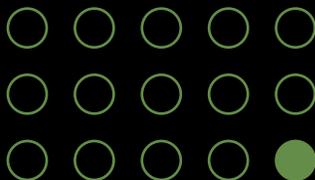


**Average ticket prices were much lower at participating TYA theatres than at theatres for general audiences** (based on data from the Theatre Communications Group's *Theatre Facts 2017*); this was especially true for school performances. The average ticket price to a TYA school performance was \$7.32, just 19% of the average ticket price of \$38.63 charged by theatres in TCG's survey. TYA ticket prices likely depress salaries of TYA artists, educators, and administrators.

On average, theatres of all budget sizes **relied slightly more on earned income than contributed income**. The greatest expense for theatres of all budget sizes was salaries.

**EARNED INCOME**

**CONTRIBUTED INCOME**



The leaders of artistic, business, and educational operations at participating theatres **overwhelmingly identified as White and not of Hispanic origin**. None of the participating leaders identified as American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

## INTRODUCTION

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The Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) State of the Field survey project was conducted by Dr. Matt Omasta of Utah State University and supported by Theatre for Young Audiences USA (TYA/USA). While limited prior survey research has been conducted over the years, this is the first systematic study of its kind.

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We invited all TYA companies affiliated<sup>1</sup> with TYA/USA to participate. Affiliation was established either by the theatre holding an institutional membership with the organization or its leaders holding individual memberships. We asked the artistic, business, and education leaders of each theatre to complete three unique surveys. Leaders who fulfilled multiple leadership roles (typically but not always affiliated with smaller theatres) were also invited to participate. The surveys inquired about a wide range of topics, from leadership perspectives on artistic and educational matters to detailed salary and financial information.

A total of sixty-one theatres were eligible and invited to participate; see Appendix D for details. Ninety-seven percent of these companies participated in the study, at least in part. When statistics are presented in this report, the number of participants (N) is fifty-nine unless otherwise indicated for a particular question or topic.

In addition to this report, we will share further data regarding artistic perspectives in an article in the Fall 2019 issue of *TYA Today*. We have planned another article, focusing on education programs, for the Spring 2020 issue of the magazine. We have also planned additional articles considering trends in leadership perspectives over time and how various artistic, business, and education leaders' views harmonize (or do not) for future publication in scholarly journals in the field.

Much of the data shared in this report includes several measures of central tendency (averages). In most cases, we report the mean (the sum of the figures in a range divided by the total number figures in that range) in the main text of this report. For additional context, in the endnotes we report the range (the lowest and highest numbers in a dataset), the median (the number that falls in the middle of a range) and the mode (the most common number in a range). For example, given the range {1, 2, 2, 5, 6, 7, 7, 7, 8} the mean is five, the median is six, and the mode is seven.

Throughout this report the pronoun “we” refers to research team including the Principal Investigator, Dr. Matt Omasta, and research assistants Anne Blotter, Alyssa Landroche, and Madison Nielson. This pronoun does *not* include TYA/USA staff or any other individuals.

For further details about the study's background and methodology please see Appendix A.

## PARTICIPATING THEATRES

The fifty-nine participating theatres were located in twenty-eight states plus the District of Columbia. States with participating theatres are shaded red on the map in Figure 1. The states with the greatest percentage of participating theatres were New York (10%); California (7%); and Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin (5% each).

Participating theatres’ annual operating budgets ranged widely, as indicated in Figure 2. Just over half (55%) had operating budgets of one-million dollars or greater, while nearly a quarter (23%) had operating budgets under \$250,000.

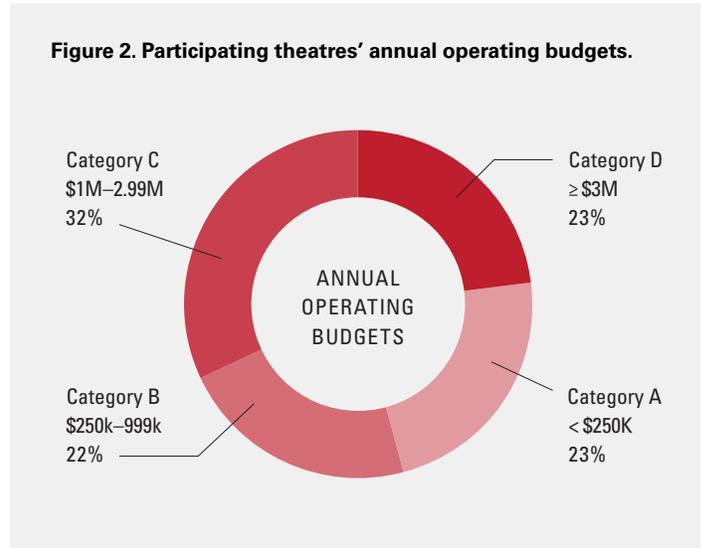
Theatres completing the survey were founded as early as 1919 and as recently as 2015. Thirteen percent of participating theatres were founded prior to 1950; 53% were founded between 1950–1999; and 34% were founded in the twenty-first century.

While these figures do not account for attrition (theatres founded at any time that closed before this survey was administered are not included), the data suggest that TYA companies may be opening with increasing frequency. Thirty-one theatres still in operation were founded between 1950–1999. If theatres continue to be founded at the same rate as they have since 2000, approximately sixty-three theatres will open between 2000–2049, just over double the number of theatres founded in the previous fifty years that remain open today.

### Theatre Venues

Of the fifty-three theatres reporting their ownership of venues, 30% own at least one of their performance venues and 70% rent

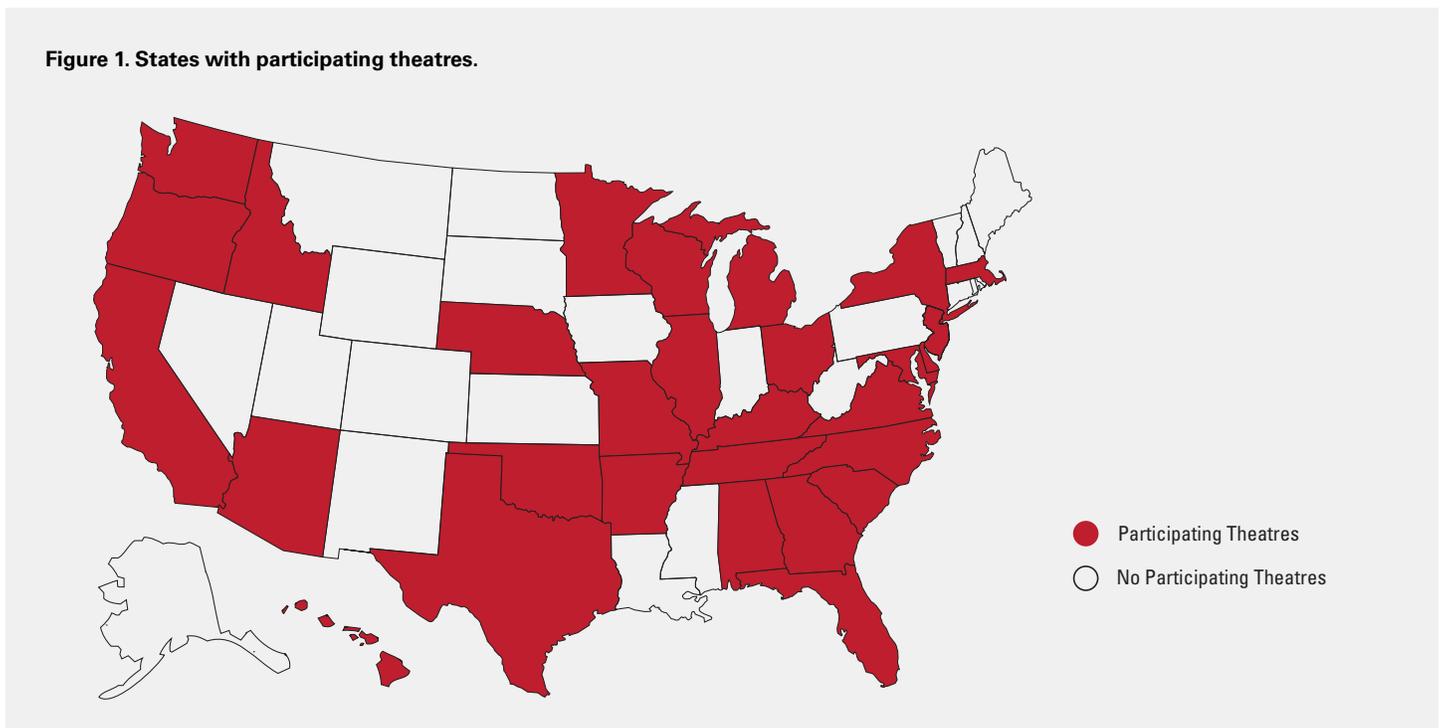
**Figure 2. Participating theatres’ annual operating budgets.**



at least one of their venues. Twenty-five percent of participating theatres were itinerant and performed in a variety of spaces. (As some theatres operated in multiple spaces, these figures do not total 100%).

Fifty-one theatres reported features of their primary performance venues. Of these venues, 43% included quiet spaces, 35% included gift shops, and 49% sold food. Forty-eight theatres reported the seating capacities of their primary performance spaces, and the average capacity was 379 seats.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1. States with participating theatres.**



## Theatre Audiences

One hundred percent of participating theatres indicated they “primarily dedicate themselves to serving young audiences and families.” Attendance at the fifty theatres that provided attendance data averaged 55,023 patrons annually.<sup>3</sup> Most tickets were sold to performances for school audiences (either at the theatre’s venue or in schools), an average of 22,664 annually,<sup>4</sup> with most other tickets being sold to young people attending public performances, an average of 11,821 annually.<sup>5</sup> The remaining tickets were sold to adults.

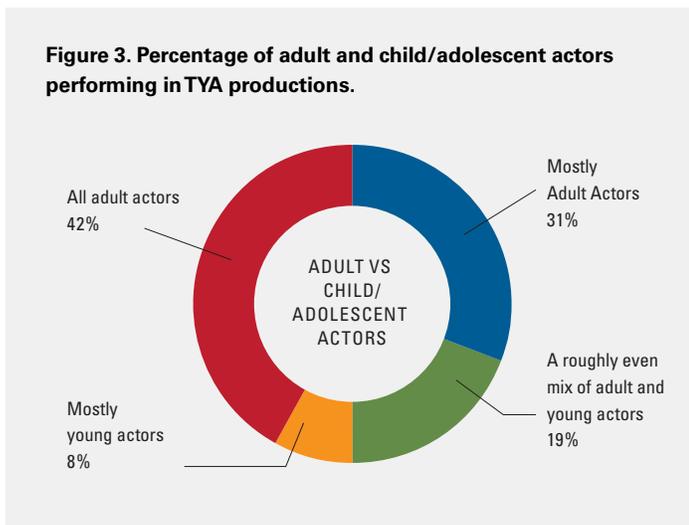
## Productions & Performances

The participating theatres mounted a collective 475 productions during their 2017–18 seasons. Theatre for the Very Young (TVY) productions have grown in recent years and comprised 22% of the productions. Productions for adolescents remain relatively rare; shows for “tweens” (ages eleven to thirteen) comprised 14% of the productions, while show for teens (ages fourteen to seventeen) comprised only 5%. Twenty percent of shows produced were world premieres.

Fifty-three theatres reported the total number of performances held in the 2017–18 season, totaling 11,333 performances. Forty percent were public performances held in-residence at theatres’ venues, followed closely by school performances held in-residence (37%). The remaining 23% were touring school performances. Thirty-eight theatres reported the total number of schools they toured to, and these theatres served 933 schools.

Seventy-three percent of participating theatres offered special performances for patrons with special needs, such as sensory-friendly performances. Eleven percent also produced or presented entire productions exclusively or primarily for patrons with special needs.

Most theatres (73%) primarily or exclusively employed adult actors in their performances, though children and adolescents also appeared on many TYA stages. Figure 3 indicates the types of actors theatres employed.



## NEW WORK DEVELOPMENT

Of the fifty-five theatres that responded to questions about developing new work, 93% indicated that they sometimes commissioned and/or presented new work. Of the fifty theatres producing and/or presenting new work, 90% commission new adaptations of literature or other sources, while a (slightly different) 90% sometimes commission completely original work. However, when considering the frequency with which new works are created, a greater number of adaptations were commissioned than completely original works. For example, 30% of theatres commissioned adaptations *twice or more each season*, while 24% produced completely original work this often. Of the six artistic leaders of theatres that produced *only* adaptations (not completely original work), one-third indicated they did not produce completely original work because they were primarily interested in adapting work from literature or other sources, while two-thirds indicated they were interested in producing completely original work but were unable to do so.

Forty-two theatres responded to questions about developing new works prior to their first public run. These theatres held an average of three workshops for the plays.<sup>6</sup>

Forty theatres shared the commission rates they offered playwrights during their 2017–18 seasons; the percentages of theatres offering various commissions are depicted in Figure 4.

When considering commissioning fees paid by theatres of different budget sizes, just over two-thirds of theatres with annual operating budgets under \$250,000 paid commissions between \$1–1,999 (though all paid commission fees). Only theatres with budgets of one million dollars or greater paid commissions of \$5,000 or above at least half of the time, however, these theatres regularly paid commissions under \$5,000 as well.

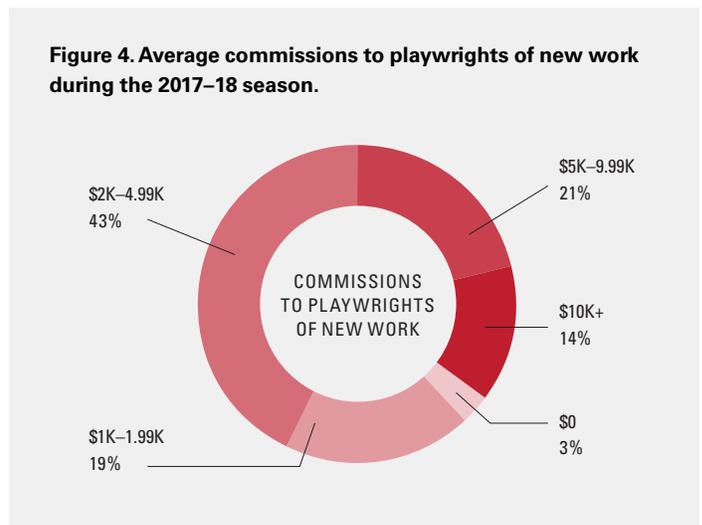
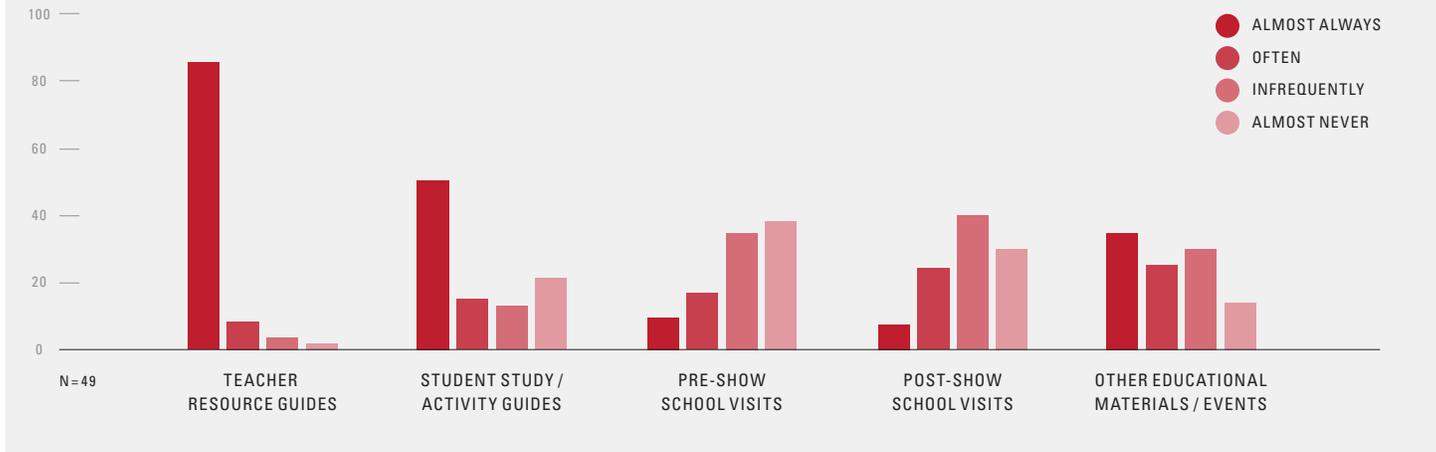


Figure 5. Percentage of theatres offering various types of educational resources for school performances.



## EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Forty-nine theatres indicated the types of resources they offered to young people and educators for school performances; Figure 5 indicated the frequency with which they did so.

As indicated, most theatres (94%) provide teacher resource guides almost always or often, and two-thirds provide student study / activity guides almost always or often. Pre- and post-show visits were much less common. Seventy-three percent of theatres offered pre-show school visits “infrequently” or “almost never”; this was the case for 69% of theatres in terms of post-show school visits.

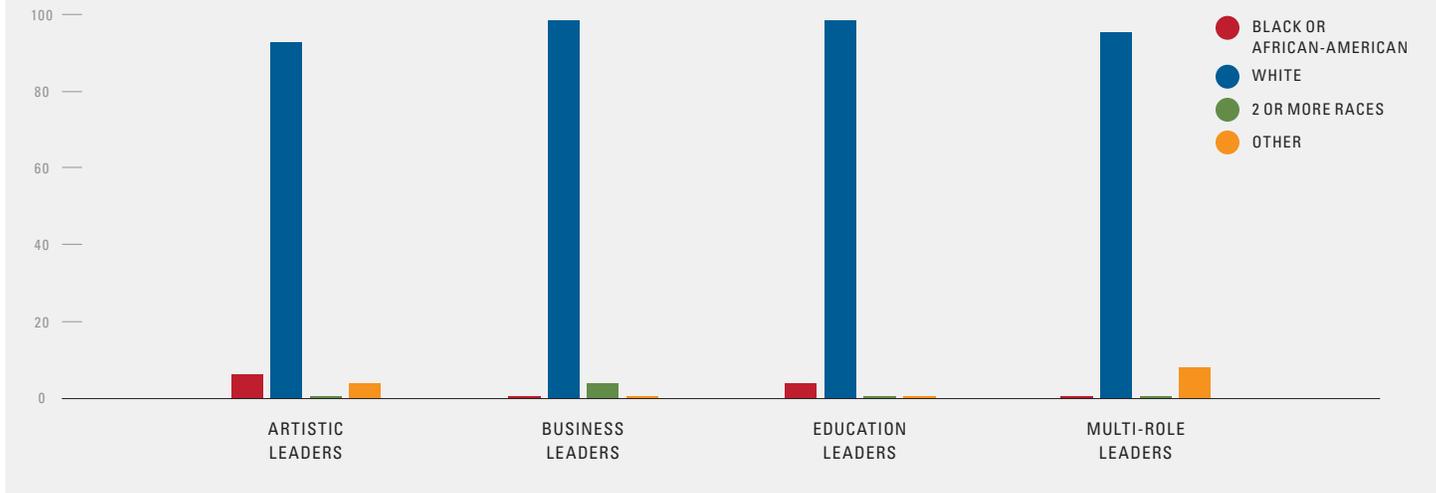
## THEATRE STAFF

### Leadership Demographics

We asked theatre leaders to share their demographic information, including age, gender identity, racial and ethnic identities, level of education, and membership in various organizations in the field. This section compares the demographic traits of artistic, business, education, and multi-role leaders. Because the number of theatres employing each of these types of leaders varied, and because participants sometimes indicated that they would prefer not to answer particular questions, the number of leaders reporting each demographic trait varies; please see each endnote for details.

Participating artistic leaders ranged in age from twenty-nine to eighty-three, with an average of fifty-one. Business leaders' ages ranged from thirty-three to seventy-eight with an average of fifty-two. The age of education leaders ranged from twenty-nine

Figure 6. Percentage of various TYA leaders identifying as members of various races.



to fifty-eight, with an average of forty. Leaders fulfilling multiple roles were aged between thirty-two and sixty, with an average age of forty-five.<sup>7</sup>

The majority of leaders of all types were female, though the size of the majority varied between groups. Among artistic and business leaders, 51% of each group identified as female. Eighty-four percent of education leaders identified as female, as did 71% of multi-role leaders.<sup>8</sup>

The participating TYA leaders overwhelmingly identified as white and not of Hispanic origin.<sup>9</sup> Figure 6 indicates the percentage of each type of leader identifying as members of various races. As none of the leaders identified as American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, these races are not included in the chart.

No artistic or business leaders identified as being of Hispanic, Lantinx, or Spanish origin, though 10% of education leaders did, as did 7% of multi-role leaders.

Nearly all participating TYA leaders held at least undergraduate degrees (97%), with many holding advanced degrees (59%). The majority of education directors (77%) held graduate degrees, as did the majority of multi-role leaders (71%). Forty-six percent of artistic leaders held graduate degrees, while 48% of business leaders did so.<sup>10</sup> While education leaders were more likely to hold graduate degrees than artistic and business leaders, education leaders were also likely to earn less than artistic and education leaders, as addressed later in this report.

### Leadership Development

Participating theatres specified various ways in which they helped develop future leaders for the field. The majority of theatres indicated that they offered internship and/or apprenticeship programs (85%); hired assistant directors, assistant designers, assistant stage managers, Equity membership candidates, and other entry level positions (73%); and offered training programs for aspiring TYA practitioners (63%). A few theatres wrote-in additional ways they helped develop future leaders, such as providing opportunities

for secondary school students to develop artistic and leadership skills, providing support through university partnerships, and providing mentorship at events such as conferences in the field.

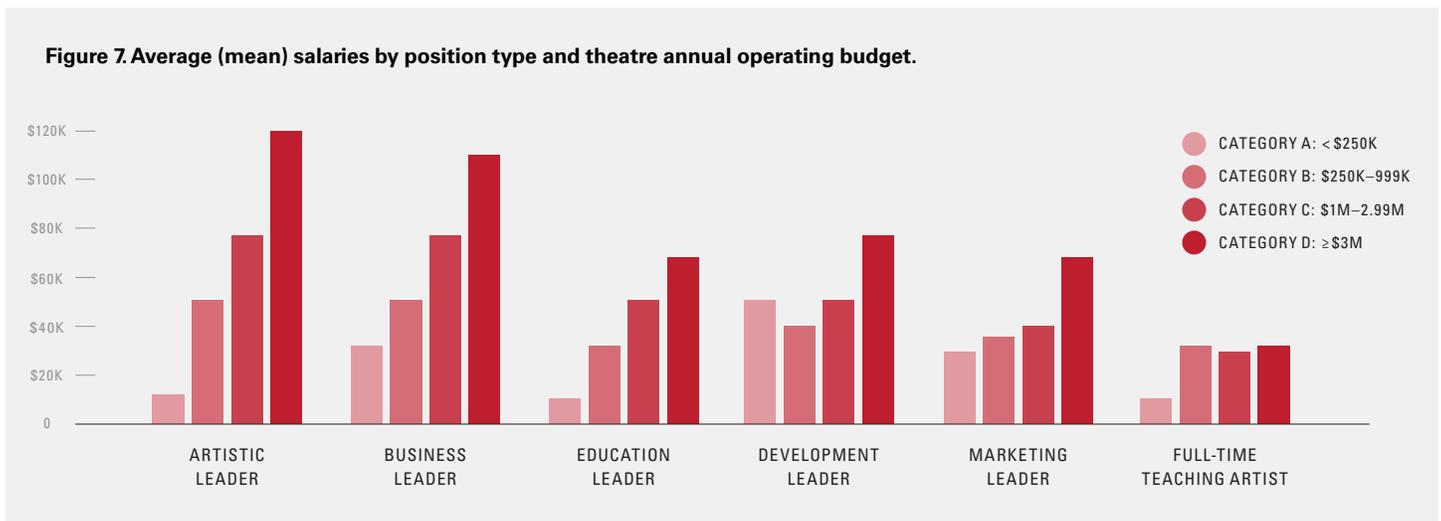
### Salaries

We asked theatres to provide the salaries of their artistic leader, business leader, education leader, development leader, marketing leader, and the average salary of their full-time teaching artists (if their theatre had staff in these positions).

Before reporting average salaries of paid staff, it is important to note that many staff, especially at smaller-budget theatres, were not paid. At Category A theatres, 25% of artistic leaders were volunteers, as were 44% of business leaders, 38% of education leaders, 71% of development leaders, 50% of marketing leaders, and 29% of full-time teaching artists. No theatres with budgets of \$250,000 or greater filled roles with volunteers except for one Category B theatre that reported a volunteer development director and a volunteer teaching artist.

Figures 7 and 8 indicate the average<sup>11</sup> salaries for each role, broken down by theatres' total operating budgets, in chart and table form, respectively. Given that some theatres did not have staff in particular roles and others used volunteers (who were excluded from average salary calculations), the number of respondents for each role was variable.<sup>12</sup> Detailed tables including salary ranges, medians, modes, and Ns broken down by theatres' operating budgets are available in Appendix B: Salary Detail.

As figures 7 and 8 demonstrate, salaries for all positions were almost always positively correlated with theatres' total annual operating budgets. On average, theatres with greater budgets paid higher salaries for nearly all positions. In some cases, the pay discrepancies were considerable. For example, artistic leaders at category D theatres earned, on average, \$106,742 greater than their peers at category A theatres. This means artistic leaders at category A theatres earned, on average, only about 17% of what their peers at category D theatres did. Similar trends exist for most positions, though there were exceptions.



**Figure 8. Average (mean) salaries by position type and theatre annual operating budget.**

	CATEGORY A <\$250,000	CATEGORY B \$250,000–\$999,999	CATEGORY C \$1,000,000–\$2,999,999	CATEGORY D ≥\$3,000,000
<b>Artistic Leader</b>	\$21,667	\$58,500	\$86,441	\$128,409
<b>Business Leader</b>	\$40,000	\$60,625	\$84,218	\$117,750
<b>Education Leader</b>	\$19,000	\$33,889	\$52,059	\$67,292
<b>Development Leader</b>	\$50,000	\$45,000	\$54,167	\$78,611
<b>Marketing Leader</b>	\$25,000	\$34,286	\$46,667	\$66,750
<b>Full-Time Teaching Artist</b>	\$13,000	\$31,000	\$31,000	\$36,429

The least variance in salary amongst theatres of different budget sizes was amongst development leaders. While those at larger-budget theatres still earned more than their peers at smaller-budget theatres, the discrepancy was not as great, with development leaders at category D theatres earning only \$28,611 greater than those at category A theatres. While category A development leaders earned only 63% of the salaries of their peers at category D theatres, this gap was considerably smaller than the gap between artistic leaders at these theatres.

Full-time teaching artists (TAs) earned much less than all of their colleagues at theatres of all budget sizes, especially at larger-budget theatres. For example, TAs at category C theatres earned, on average, the same salaries as TAs at category B theatres, a 0% increase. However, all other roles at category C theatres earned significantly more than their peers at category B theatres. For example, education leaders at category C theatres earned 154% of the salaries of those at category B theatres.

The discrepancy in pay between teaching artists and artistic and business leaders is also noteworthy, especially at larger-budget theatres. On average, TAs at category B theatres earned only 53% of what their artistic leaders did. At category C theatres this dropped to 36%, and at category D theatres TAs earned merely 28% of their artistic leaders' salaries.

**Benefits**

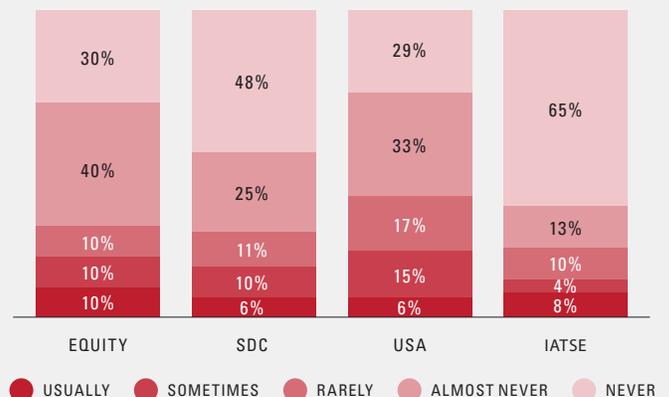
Of the fifty-four theatres that responded to questions about employee benefits, a minority (46%) offered retirement plans for their staff, though the likelihood of offering retirement plans was positively correlated with theatres' annual operating budgets. Only 8% of Category A theatres and 30% of Category B theatres offered retirement plans. Just under two-thirds of Category C theatre provided such plans, and although Category D theatres were most likely to offer them, almost a third of these theatres (which usually paid their artistic and business leaders six-figure salaries) did not offer any retirement plans for their staff. Of the theatres that did offer retirement plans, 92% were defined-contribution plans (such as 401k plans) and 8% were defined benefit plans (such as pensions).

Theatres were much more likely to offer staff paid vacation or holidays. One hundred percent of Category C and D theatres offered this benefit, as did 90% of Category B theatres. Only 39% of Category A theatres offered this benefit. On average,<sup>13</sup> theatres offered their staff twenty-one paid vacation / holiday days annually.

**Unions**

Of the fifty-two theatres that indicated their relationship with unions such as the Actors Equity Association; Stage Directors and Choreographers Society; United Scenic Artists; and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, most indicated that they typically did not hire union artists and technicians. Figure 9 indicates the frequency with which of theatres (of all sizes) hired individuals affiliated with unions. Of the various types of artists and technicians they worked with, theatres were most likely to work with Equity actors and stage managers, though only 10% usually did so, and 70% never or almost never did so. Only 6% usually worked with SDC directors and choreographers or USA designers, and 8% usually worked with IATSE technicians.

**Figure 9. Frequency with which participating theatres hire union artists and technicians.**



## THEATRE FINANCES

### Ticket Prices

Figure 10 indicates the average (mean) ticket prices for adults and children purchasing single tickets, season tickets (the amount reflects the cost of an individual show when purchased as part of subscription), and tickets to school performances.

For comparative purposes, the Theatre Communications Group's *Theatre Facts 2017* reports that the average (mean) single ticket price for TCG member theatres was \$38.63. As such, if an "average" theatre for general audiences sold out a performance in a 300-seat venue, its gross proceeds would be \$11,589. An "average" sold-out TYA school performance in the same venue would gross only \$2,196, a mere 18.9% of the revenue generated by the non-TYA performance, despite the fact that non-salary production expenses for the productions may be equal. This economic reality likely plays a significant role in driving down salaries of TYA artists, educators, and administrators.

**Figure 10. Ticket Prices<sup>14</sup>**

AUDIENCE MEMBER	TICKET TYPE	AVERAGE (MEAN) PRICE
Young People	Single Ticket	\$16.00
	Season Ticket	\$12.37
	School Performance	\$7.32
Adult	Single Ticket	\$19.18
	Season Ticket	\$14.10

### Income

This section reports the average (mean) percent of income theatres of each budget size earned and received in contributions during their 2017–2018 seasons. More detailed breakdowns of the specific types of earned and contributed income theatres of various budget sizes received, along with the number of theatres of various sizes reporting data, are available in Appendix C: Budget Detail.

Figure 11 presents the average (mean) percent of earned and contributed income TYA theatres of various budget sizes collected during their 2017–18 seasons. As indicated, percentages were fairly similar, with most theatres earning about 55–56% of their income and receiving the rest from contributors.

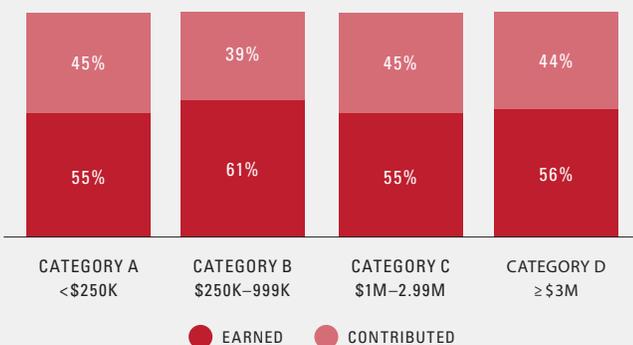
### Fundraising Events

Fifty-four theatres reported various events they held to raise funds directly or generate goodwill with patrons and prospective donors. The most common types of events, held by 70% of theatres, were fundraising galas, parties, tastings, or meals. Fifty percent of theatres held benefit performances and opening night receptions, 39% conducted auctions, and 22% held non-performance-related events for families, youth, and/or community members.

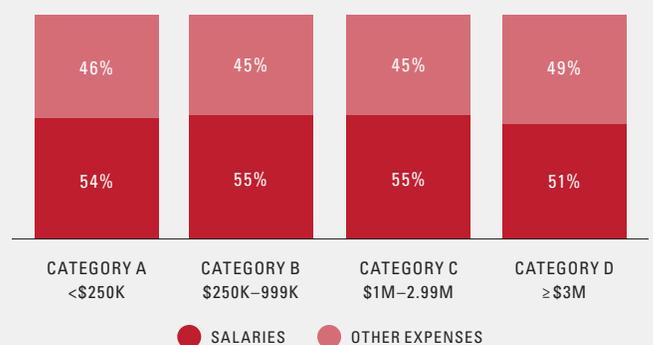
### Expenses

The greatest expense for all theatres of all budget sizes was salaries. Again, there was relatively little difference in the total allocated to salaries percentage wise between theatres with different budget sizes; most allocate 54–55% to salaries, while Category D theatres allocate less (percentage wise) to salaries, at 51%. Figure 12 indicates the average (mean) percent of budget that theatres of various sizes allocate to salaries versus all other expenses. A more detailed breakdown of expenses is available in Appendix C.

**Figure 11. Percentage of income earned and contributed, by theatre budget size.**



**Figure 12. Percentage of expenditures on salaries and all other expense, by theatre budget size.**



## APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND, METHODOLOGY, AND REFERENCES

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the state of the field of Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) in the United States by conducting a census of artistic, educational, and business leaders of TYA theatres<sup>15</sup> affiliated with TYA/USA, the nonprofit professional organization serving the field. This included theatres that were institutional members of TYA/USA as well as theatres whose senior leaders (e.g., artistic directors, managing directors, or similar) were individual members of the organization.

While not every TYA theatre in the US maintains formal affiliation with TYA/USA, many do, and they represent a diverse range of theatres of various sizes and types throughout the country. This study aimed to provide insights into the artistic, educational, and business operations of contemporary US TYA companies as well as the leadership perspectives of their senior staff members, while recognizing that data collected is representative only of those theatres that participated, as discussed in the “limitations” section below.

### Background & Rationale

TYA scholars have long called for empirical studies in the field related to a wide range of research questions (e.g., Cornelison, 1975; Davis, 1961; Klein, 1989; Saldaña 1988; Ward, 1950), including questions that might best be explored through survey research.

The literature reveals, however, that when TYA researchers employ surveys, they do so primarily in two contexts. Most commonly, researchers survey young people who have viewed productions in hope of better understanding some aspect of the young people’s engagement with, interpretation of, or understanding of a piece, or how the performance might have affected the young people’s attitudes, values, and beliefs (see, for example, Betzien, 2007; Johari 2018; Omasta, 2011; Pretorius, 2008; and Queponds, 2016). The second major type of survey research involves administering questionnaires to educators, often asking about their students’ theatrical experiences (e.g., Adamson, 2011; Klein, 1997; Swallow, 2012). Only one recent study (Omasta, 2015), surveyed TYA professionals,

academics, funders, and educators who bring students to view work; this study focused primarily on issues of censorship, “appropriateness,” social issues, and best practices for presenting work dealing with controversial material.

To date, only two studies have attempted to more broadly assess the state of the US TYA field through survey research. The first study (van Tassel, 1969), collected survey responses from 104 “individuals or producing organizations practicing in the field of theatre for children in the United States” from the directories of the now-defunct American Educational Theatre Association and the American National Theatre Academy (p. 414). The second (Blackwell, 2008), collected response from 36 “directors, playwrights, university faculty, and educational theatre artists” (p. 12). Neither of the previous surveys explicate the precise sampling strategies they employed, nor provide data regarding the degree to which the findings may or may not be representative of the broader field.

The present study surveyed a similar population to the previous studies (TYA professionals), but in more systematic manner. By conducting a census of leaders of TYA/USA-affiliated theatres, the study’s population was clear and explicit. The study addressed questions that have been posed over time (e.g., in 1968 and 2008), as well as new questions we developed in collaboration with TYA/USA leaders including board members (almost all of whom were actively involved in the field as practitioners or scholars).

### Conceptual / Theoretical Framework

This study aligned with the pragmatic paradigm, which values “utility and what works in the context of a particular research question” (Leavy, 2017, p. 14). In this study, this involved adopting perspectives from both constructivist and post-positivist paradigms. We agree that as humans, “we are actively engaged in constructing and reconstructing meanings through our daily interactions” and as such value participants’ “subjective interpretation and understanding of their experiences and circumstances” (Leavy, 2017, p. 13). At the same time, we

posit that these “subjective interpretations and understandings” are knowable, that we can identify and test relationships, and “support or disprove assertions” (Leavy, 2017, p. 12).

Pragmatically, this means that we can accept that participants’ views of what constitutes “quality” in TYA work (for example) are socially constructed. We can also, however, discover how many respondents share a particular understandings of what constitutes quality, and can test whether participants who have constructed particular understandings of quality share other traits as well (e.g., are more likely to value certain priorities when selecting shows to be included in a season).

### Research Questions

The primary research question for this study was: What is the current state of the field of Theatre for Young Audiences from the perspectives of the leaders of TYA companies affiliated with TYA/USA? The surveys assessed a broad range of topics including business operations, leaders’ philosophical perspectives, works produced, season selection, audience traits, leadership development programs, education programs, performance venues, theatre finances, leadership demographics, and information regarding theatres’ staffs.

### Methodology & Methods

#### PARTICIPANTS

Artistic, business, and educational leaders of TYA companies affiliated with TYA/USA, as well as leaders who serve in multiple roles, served as the participants in this study. All participants were adults; we did not invite any vulnerable populations (such as minors) to participate in the study.

TYA/USA provided the names of the theatres to be included in the census, as well as the names and e-mail addresses for the specific participants (leaders of those theatres), as the organization maintains this data for its affiliated theatres. We contacted all potential participants by e-mail to invite their participation in the study and sent several follow-up invitations to non-respondents.

We maintained confidentiality by removing all identifiers from the data immediately after completing data collection. We linked the responses of participants from specific theatres by randomly assigning a theatre ID number to each response. Immediately afterward, we deleted participant identifiers from the data. We did not maintain a master list of theatres, so it is not possible to identify any individual participant or theatre company.

We report quantitative study data in aggregate form. When possible, we quantitized qualitative data, and reported it in aggregate form. We did not attribute any qualitative data to any individual participant, and we did not share any raw qualitative data that readers of research outputs would likely be able to attribute to any specific participant.

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

This study involved four questionnaires completed by (1) Artistic Directors or similar, (2) Managing/Executive Directors or similar, and (3) Education Directors or similar. A fourth questionnaire comprised of questions from the first three questionnaires was developed for leaders who serve in multiple leadership roles at their theatres.

We designed original survey instruments in collaboration with TYA/USA. We drew some survey questions from earlier, similar studies (van Tassel, 1969; Blackwell, 2008), but most questions were developed based on input from the TYA/USA Board of Directors (comprised of TYA practitioners and scholars). The Board identified numerous topics of interest, which we and the TYA/USA Executive Director used to develop specific survey questions.

## VALIDITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Groves et al. (2009) note that “with questionnaires that ask about subjective states, such as knowledge, feelings, or opinions, there is no possibility of a ‘gold standard’ independent of the respondents’ reports” (p. 276). While the questionnaires developed for this study measured some objective data (e.g. the price of tickets for different types of performances), many of the latent concepts measured were subjective and attitudinal in nature.

In order to design the most valid and reliable instrument possible, we assessed the instruments using the methods described below and refined the instruments accordingly.

### Expert Review

The principal investigator, a TYA expert with previous experience conducting questionnaire research, designed the instrument based on input from other experts in the field. Content experts including TYA practitioners, scholars, and administrators reviewed the questionnaires. We used feedback from these expert reviews (Groves et al., 2009, p. 260) to refine and further develop the instruments.

### Cognitive Interviews

We conducted cognitive interviews (see Groves et al., 2009, p. 264), specifically cognitive verbal probing (Hofmeyer, Sheingold, & Taylor, 2015) to assess the validity of the questionnaires. This involved asking “respondents to paraphrase the questions in their own words ... to explore their comprehension. Probing will identify words that could be misinterpreted or misunderstood” (Hofmeyer, Sheingold, & Taylor, 2015, p. 263). Knafel (2012) notes that paraphrasing is helpful in identifying comprehension and interpretation issues. We conducted cognitive interviews with individuals who were similar to the study participants but not part of the potential study population (for example, education directors from non-TYA theatres completed interviews for the education director survey). We made minor revisions to the questionnaires as based on the results of the cognitive interviews.

### Readability

We assessed each questionnaire for readability using the Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level tests (Kincaid, Fishburne, Rogers, & Chissom, 1975), and found all were readable by individuals with high school educations.

### Time Burden

The professional survey software program Qualtrics estimated completion times for each survey based on an algorithm including words in the question/answer choice text, eye movement, scrolling, and page breaks. We included these estimated completion times in the informed consent information participants reviewed before deciding to participate.

## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Because this study surveyed a rare population (leaders of TYA companies affiliated with TYA/USA), we employed a census approach. We invited the artistic, business, and educational leaders of every theatre meeting the inclusion criteria described above. Several reasons justified a census. Sampling would not have been appropriate given the small potential total population of ~205 individuals. To conduct inferential statistics with a 95% confidence level and 3% confidence interval, the potential sample would have needed to include ~172 participants, which was ~82% of the potential population.

Given this, and given that a census approach is more inclusive, this study employed a cross-sectional (Barr, 2004) census design, in which we systematically attempted to survey all units in a population (Fricker Jr., 2008, p. 195; Groves et al., 2009, p. 3). Indeed, as Cantwell (2008) observes, “Often, only a census can produce useful information for rare populations” (p. 4), and given the relatively small number of TYA theatres in general, and those affiliated with TYA/USA in particular, leaders of such companies constituted a “rare population.”

We collected data through Qualtrics, within a window of about one month. Data analysis began immediately upon the completion of data collection. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS to provide descriptive statistics (such as measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion), as well as to assess correlation between variables. All quantitative data appears in aggregate form.

Two research assistants coded qualitative data; they achieved intercoder reliability of 96%, well above the 80–90% thresholds typically considered viable. A third coder reviewed the 4% of discrepant codes and reconciled them. We analyzed the qualitative data to identify emergent findings and salient themes. When possible, we quantitized qualitative data and reported it in aggregate form; in other cases, we generated syntheses that report salient data in other ways (e.g., word clouds, or discussion of key categories of data discovered).

## LIMITATIONS

While censuses attempt to gather data from all members of a population, it is doubtful that any census has successfully captured *all* potential participants, for reasons involving frame deficiencies, census procedures, the cooperation of respondents, and other issues (Cantwell, 2008, pp. 91–92). As such, like all survey research, censuses are susceptible to certain biases and errors. While the probability of sampling error is very low with a census survey (Cantwell, 2008, p. 90), the possibility of other errors, such as non-response biases (Fricker Jr. & Schonlau, 2002, p. 359) or missing data such as unit nonresponse or item nonresponse (Cantwell, 2008, p. 92) remain.

This survey achieved a theatre-level response rate of 97%, drastically reducing the probability of non-response bias. This rate may be due in part to deliberate strategies for increasing response rates, including those that Rogelberg & Stanton (2007) describe as “response facilitation approaches” (p. 197). Approaches employed in this study included pre-notification of participants, publicizing the survey through e-mail, designing the surveys carefully with regard to aesthetics, using reminder notes, and establishing survey importance (see Rogelberg & Stanton, 2007, p. 197). However, given the opt-in nature of this census project and a response rate under (but near) 100%, there is likely a mild degree of nonsampling bias, such as non-response bias. Unfortunately, as Cantwell (2008) notes, “The level of nonsampling error in a census is generally not known or published” (p. 92); a thorough follow-up study with non-respondents is beyond the scope of this study.

Further, this study surveyed only leaders of TYA companies (as defined above) affiliated with TYA/USA, and outputs from the study report descriptive statistics and qualitative syntheses from the participating theatres. We cannot generalize data provided by participating theatres to any other population (such as all TYA theatres in the US).

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## APPENDIX B: SALARY DETAIL

### Category A Theatres (Budgets <\$250,000)

	ARTISTIC LEADER	BUSINESS LEADER	EDUCATION LEADER	DEVELOPMENT LEADER	MARKETING LEADER	FULL-TIME TEACHING ARTIST
<b>Mean</b>	\$21,667	\$40,000	\$19,000	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$13,000
<b>Median</b>	\$25,000	\$35,000	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$17,500	\$10,000
<b>Mode</b>	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Minimum</b>	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Maximum</b>	\$35,000	\$75,000	\$25,000	\$75,000	\$55,000	\$25,000

N=2-9 depending on position

### Category B Theatres (Budgets \$250,000-\$999,999)

	ARTISTIC LEADER	BUSINESS LEADER	EDUCATION LEADER	DEVELOPMENT LEADER	MARKETING LEADER	FULL-TIME TEACHING ARTIST
<b>Mean</b>	\$58,500	\$60,625	\$33,889	\$45,000	\$34,286	\$31,000
<b>Median</b>	\$60,000	\$70,000	\$35,000	\$55,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
<b>Mode</b>	\$55,000	\$75,000	\$45,000	\$55,000	\$25,000	\$35,000
<b>Minimum</b>	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$10,000	\$25,000
<b>Maximum</b>	\$85,000	\$75,000	\$45,000	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$35,000

N=5-10 depending on position

**Category C Theatres (Budgets \$1,000,000–\$299,999,999)**

	ARTISTIC LEADER	BUSINESS LEADER	EDUCATION LEADER	DEVELOPMENT LEADER	MARKETING LEADER	FULL-TIME TEACHING ARTIST
<b>Mean</b>	\$86,441	\$84,219	\$52,059	\$54,167	\$46,667	\$31,000
<b>Median</b>	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$55,000	\$50,000	\$45,000	\$35,000
<b>Mode</b>	\$112,500	\$65,000	\$55,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$35,000
<b>Minimum</b>	\$55,000	\$65,000	\$35,000	\$45,000	\$35,000	\$25,000
<b>Maximum</b>	\$162,000	\$137,500	\$85,000	\$75,000	\$55,000	\$35,000

N=10–17 depending on position

**Category D Theatres (Budgets ≥\$3,000,000)**

	ARTISTIC LEADER	BUSINESS LEADER	EDUCATION LEADER	DEVELOPMENT LEADER	MARKETING LEADER	FULL-TIME TEACHING ARTIST
<b>Mean</b>	\$128,409	\$117,750	\$67,292	\$78,611	\$66,750	\$36,429
<b>Median</b>	\$112,500	\$112,500	\$65,000	\$75,000	\$65,000	\$35,000
<b>Mode</b>	\$112,500	\$112,500	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$45,000	\$35,000
<b>Minimum</b>	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$25,000
<b>Maximum</b>	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$112,500	\$137,500	\$112,500	\$45,000

N=7–12 depending on position

## APPENDIX C: BUDGET DETAIL

This appendix presents a detailed breakdown of theatres' sources of revenue and expenses, by budget category. *All figures in the following tables are percentages.* For example, Category A theatres earned between 0–85% of their income from ticket sales. The mean percent of income from ticket sales was 34%, the median was 25%, and the mode was 23%.

### Income

#### Category A Theatres (Budgets < \$250,000)

	TICKET SALES	EDUCATION PROGRAMS	OTHER EARNED INCOME	GOVERNMENT GRANTS	GIFTS (INDIVIDUAL)	GIFTS (CORPORATE, FOUNDATION, OTHER)	FUNDRAISER EVENTS	OTHER CONTRIBUTED INCOME
<b>Mean</b>	34	21	2	13	7	5	10	10
<b>Median</b>	25	10	0	7	5	0	0	0
<b>Mode</b>	23	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Minimum</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Maximum</b>	85	72	7	50	28	36	66	100

N=11

#### Category B Theatres (Budgets \$250,000–\$999,999)

	TICKET SALES	EDUCATION PROGRAMS	OTHER EARNED INCOME	GOVERNMENT GRANTS	GIFTS (INDIVIDUAL)	GIFTS (CORPORATE, FOUNDATION, OTHER)	FUNDRAISER EVENTS	OTHER CONTRIBUTED INCOME
<b>Mean</b>	47	20	4	6	6	16	1	< 1
<b>Median</b>	33	16	2	5	4	10	0	0
<b>Mode</b>	21	0	0	0	0	10	0	0
<b>Minimum</b>	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Maximum</b>	89	60	12	20	17	33	3	2

N=7

#### Category C Theatres (Budgets \$1,000,000–\$299,999,999)

	TICKET SALES	EDUCATION PROGRAMS	OTHER EARNED INCOME	GOVERNMENT GRANTS	GIFTS (INDIVIDUAL)	GIFTS (CORPORATE, FOUNDATION, OTHER)	FUNDRAISER EVENTS	OTHER CONTRIBUTED INCOME
<b>Mean</b>	35	18	7	13	6	14	5	2
<b>Median</b>	37	15	4	14	4	13	5	0
<b>Mode</b>	8	8	2	4	3	7	2	0
<b>Minimum</b>	8	5	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Maximum</b>	49	41	35	28	19	30	17	8

N=12

**Category D Theatres (Budgets ≥ \$3,000,000)**

	TICKET SALES	EDUCATION PROGRAMS	OTHER EARNED INCOME	GOVERNMENT GRANTS	GIFTS (INDIVIDUAL)	GIFTS (CORPORATE, FOUNDATION, OTHER)	FUNDRAISER EVENTS	OTHER CONTRIBUTED INCOME
<b>Mean</b>	32	20	8	4	7	19	3	8
<b>Median</b>	30	21	2	4	7	15	5	3
<b>Mode</b>	13	21	1	2	7	15	0	0
<b>Minimum</b>	13	9	0	2	1	3	0	0
<b>Maximum</b>	51	36	28	7	12	37	6	33

N=7

**Expenses****Category A Theatres (Budgets < \$250,000)**

	ARTISTIC PAYROLL	ADMIN PAYROLL	PROD / TECH PAYROLL	ARTISTIC	ROYALTIES	PROD / TECH	DEVELOPMENT	MARKET/ FOH / EDUC	BUILDING / EQUIP / MAINT	GENERAL MGMT/ OPS	OTHER EXPENSES
<b>Mean</b>	36	14	4	10	2	11	7	4	6	6	< 1
<b>Median</b>	31	8	2	4	< 1	9	< 1	3	3	6	0
<b>Mode</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Minimum</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Maximum</b>	85	39	22	50	10	40	60	15	28	15	4

N=10

**Category B Theatres (Budgets \$250,000–\$999,999)**

	ARTISTIC PAYROLL	ADMIN PAYROLL	PROD / TECH PAYROLL	ARTISTIC	ROYALTIES	PROD / TECH	DEVELOPMENT	MARKET/ FOH / EDUC	BUILDING / EQUIP / MAINT	GENERAL MGMT/ OPS	OTHER EXPENSES
<b>Mean</b>	36	14	4	10	2	11	7	4	6	6	4
<b>Median</b>	31	8	2	4	< 1	9	< 1	3	3	6	0
<b>Mode</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Minimum</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Maximum</b>	85	39	22	50	10	40	60	15	28	15	4

N=6

**Category C Theatres (Budgets \$1,000,000–\$299,999,999)**

	ARTISTIC PAYROLL	ADMIN PAYROLL	PROD / TECH PAYROLL	ARTISTIC	ROYALTIES	PROD / TECH	DEVELOP- MENT	MARKET/ FOH / EDUC	BUILDING / EQUIP / MAINT	GENERAL MGMT / OPS	OTHER EXPENSES
<b>Mean</b>	21	16	14	7	3	8	2	6	10	10	3
<b>Median</b>	24	16	13	5	2	8	1	5	9	8	0
<b>Mode</b>	25	10	10	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Minimum</b>	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Maximum</b>	33	32	30	33	6	21	5	17	23	39	25

N=12

**Category D Theatres (Budgets ≥ \$3,000,000)**

	ARTISTIC PAYROLL	ADMIN PAYROLL	PROD / TECH PAYROLL	ARTISTIC	ROYALTIES	PROD / TECH	DEVELOP- MENT	MARKET/ FOH / EDUC	BUILDING / EQUIP / MAINT	GENERAL MGMT / OPS	OTHER EXPENSES
<b>Mean</b>	19	22	14	3	3	8	2	10	12	8	2
<b>Median</b>	20	23	13	1	2	5	2	10	12	7	0
<b>Mode</b>	6	5	7	0	2	5	2	6	6	4	0
<b>Minimum</b>	6	5	7	0	1	2	1	6	6	3	0
<b>Maximum</b>	28	34	23	8	5	21	3	14	16	13	10

N=6

## APPENDIX D: ELIGIBLE THEATRES

Below is an alphabetical list of the sixty-one theatres affiliated with TYA/USA that were eligible to participate in the study. As discussed earlier in this report, 97% of these theatres participated in the study, with some participating only in part. All data was anonymized upon the completion of data collection; as such, we cannot indicate which theatres participated or to what degree they did so.

24th Street Theatre	Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater	Seattle Children's Theatre
Adventure Stage Chicago	Filament Theatre	South Carolina Children's Theatre
Adventure Theatre MTC	First Stage	Spellbound Theatre
Alliance Theatre Education Department/TYA	Honolulu Theatre for Youth	Spinning Dot Theatre
Arkansas Arts Center Children's Theatre	Imagination Stage	StageOne Family Theater
Arts on the Horizon	Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences	Stages Theatre Company
Bay Area Children's Theatre	Lexington Children's Theatre	Stepping Stone Theatre
Birmingham Children's Theatre	Lionheart Youth	Talespinner Children's Theatre
Brave Little Company	Main Street Theatre City of Rancho Cucamonga	Teatro SEA
Chicago Children's Theatre	Metro Theater Company	Teller Productions
Children's Theater of Madison	Miami Theater Center	The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati
Children's Theatre Company	Nashville Children's Theatre	The Gottabees
Children's Theatre of Charlotte	New York City Children's Theatre	The Growing Stage
Childsplay, Inc.	NorthWest Children's Theatre	The Magik Theatre
City of Palo Alto Children's Theatre	Oklahoma Children's Theatre	The New Victory Theater
Columbus Children's Theatre	Olympia Family Theater	Treasure Valley Children's Theater, LLC
Coterie Theatre	Omaha Theater Company (The Rose)	Treehouse Shakers
Creative Arts Theatre Company at The City of Tampa	Oregon Children's Theatre	Trike Theatre
Dallas Children's Theater	Orlando Repertory Theatre	Trusty Sidekick Theater Company
Dare to Dream Theatre Inc	Peppercorn Theatre at Kaleideum	TRYPS Children's Theatre
		Wheelock Family Theatre

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this study, “TYA theatres” were defined as theatre companies that exclusively or primarily produce or present theatrical productions for young people (ages 0–17) and families, excluding youth theatres. For the purposes of this study, “youth theatres” are defined as theatres that exclusively or primarily produce work with casts of unpaid children or adolescents who are primarily participating for educational and / or recreational purposes.
- <sup>2</sup> Range: 45–2,200; Mean: 379; Median: 300; Mode: 300; N=51
- <sup>3</sup> Range: 300–250,000; Mean: 55,023; Mode: 5,500; N=55
- <sup>4</sup> Range: 0–141,000; Mean: 22,664; Median: 21,000; Mode: 0; N=55
- <sup>5</sup> Range: 0–72,000; Mean: 11,821; Median: 4,700; Mode: 0; N=55
- <sup>6</sup> Range: 0–10; Mean: 3; Median: 2; Mode: 2; N=42
- <sup>7</sup> Artistic Leaders: Age Range: 29–83; Mean: 51; Median 50; Mode: 34; N=37  
 Business Leaders: Age Range: 33–78; Mean: 52; Median: 50; Mode: 43; N=33  
 Education Leaders: Age Range: 29–58; Mean: 40; Median: 38; Mode: 39; N=34  
 Multi-Role Leaders: Age Range: 32–60; Mean 45; Median: 45; Mode: 43; N=14
- <sup>8</sup> Artistic Leaders: 51% Female, 49% Male; N=35  
 Business Leaders: 51% Female, 49% Male; N=33  
 Education Leaders: 84% Female, 13% Male, 3% Nonbinary; N=32  
 Multi-Role Leaders: 71% Female, 29% Male; N=14
- <sup>9</sup> Artistic Leaders: 6% Black, 91% White, 3% Other; N=35  
 Business Leaders: 97% White, 3% Two or More Races; N=32  
 Education Leaders: 3% Black, 97%, White; N=32  
 Multi-Role Leaders: 93% White, 7% Other; N=14
- <sup>10</sup> Artistic Leaders: 5% High School, 49% Bachelor’s, 43% Master’s, 3%; N=37  
 Business Leaders: 3% High School, 49 Bachelor’s, 42% Master’s, 6% Professional; N=33  
 Education Leaders: 23% Bachelor’s, 74% Master’s, 3% Professional; N=35  
 Multi-Role Leaders: 29% Bachelor’s, 64% Master’s, 7% Doctoral; N=14
- <sup>11</sup> “Average” (mean) salary calculations were made by first converting the ranges reported into specific values by using the median of each range. For example, a salary range of \$20,000–29,999 was converted to \$25,000 for the purpose of determining mean salaries. Also for this purpose, the highest salary range (\$200,000 or greater) was converted to \$250,000. Theatres that used volunteers in any given role or that did not have a staff member in a given role were excluded from the analysis for that role.
- <sup>12</sup> The Ns for various roles with theatres of different budget sizes were highly variable, ranging from 2 to 17. With the exception of development and marketing leaders at Category A theatres, the minimum N was always 5 or greater. Data regarding the two roles mentioned should be interpreted with caution.
- <sup>13</sup> Excluding one outlier theatre that indicated staff received eighty paid vacation and holiday days annually, the number of days ranged from five to forty-four. Mean: 21; Median: 20; Mode: 15.
- <sup>14</sup> Single Ticket Price N=26; Season Ticket Price N=17; School Ticket Price N=25. Median ticket prices for all categories within \$1 of mean ticket prices indicated.
- <sup>15</sup> See endnote 1.