

## Changes in the attendance of young adults at jazz events

### 1.1 Introduction

This paper discusses the changes in the demographics of young people attending jazz events. Since 1986 there has been a fall in attendances of young people in the 15-24 age groups which in 1986 accounted for 36% of the audience for jazz. In 2009-2010 the audience for jazz in the 16-24 age groups was 11%.

### 1.2 Arts participation in the USA

A survey of arts participation in the arts in America by the National Endowment for the Arts (Arts Participation 2008 produced some interesting findings. <http://www.nea.gov/research/2008-SPPA.pdf> . Since 1982, young adult (18 – 24) attendance rates have declined significantly for jazz, classical music, opera, ballet and non- musical plays. In jazz the decline has been a 58% change.

**Table 1. Percentage of adults Ages 18 – 24 attending Arts Events in 1982 and 2008 in the USA**

	1982	2008	Percentage change
Jazz	17.5%	7.3%	-58%
Classical music	11.0%	6.9%	-37%
Opera	2.0%	1.2%	-40%
Musicals	16.6%	14.5%	-13%
Non-musical plays	10.7%	8.2%	-23%
Ballet	3.9%	2.5%	-36%
Art museums	22.7%	22.9%	+1%

*Table 1. Source: National Endowment for the Arts 2009*

The crucial question is, will this problem be replicated in the UK along assuming that events in the USA are eventually mirrored in the UK (for example sub-prime mortgages and toxic debt) – or is jazz holding its own in the UK?

### 1.1 Arts participation in the UK

**Table 2. Percentage of all adults who attend each type of music event in England 2005 – 2011**

Music	2005/06 %	2006/07 %	2007/08 %	2008/09 %	2009/10 %	2010/11 %	Percentage change 2005/11 %
Jazz	5.6	5.6	5.4	5.7	5.4	5.4	-3.7
Opera	4.4	3.8	3.9	4	4.3	4.1	-6.8
Classical	8.3	7.7	7.6	8.1	7.6	7.7	-7.7

*Table 2 Source: Kantar Media Taking Part survey 2005/11*

Table 2 shows that jazz has suffered less than opera and classical music in the overall decline of its audiences from 2005/06 to 2010/11

**Table 3. Percentage of adults aged 16 – 24 attending Arts Events in 2005 and 2011 in England**

	<b>2005 %</b>	<b>2011 %</b>	<b>Percentage change %</b>
Jazz	4.5	4	-11
Classical	3.3	4	+21
Opera	1.7	1.8	+6

Table 3 Source: Kantar Media Taking Part survey 2005/11

Table three however shows that when compared to opera and classical music the audience for jazz among the 16-24 year olds has declined by 11%. The audience for opera and classical music among 16-24 year olds has increased.

**Table 4. Percentage of adults who attend each type of jazz event by age in England from 2005 - 2011**

	<b>Total %</b>	<b>16-24 %</b>	<b>25-44 %</b>	<b>45-64 %</b>	<b>65-74 %</b>	<b>75+ %</b>
<b>2005/06</b>	5.6	4.5	4.7	7.4	7.2	2.6
<b>2006/07</b>	5.6	5.1	5.1	7.2	6.3	2.4
<b>2007/08</b>	5.4	4.5	4.6	6.8	7.9	2.8
<b>2008/09</b>	5.7	4.8	4.6	7.0	8.8	3.5
<b>2009/10</b>	5.4	5.0	4.9	6.7	6.1	2.7
<b>2010/11</b>	5.4	4.0	4.6	6	8.1	5.0
<b>Percentage change 2005/11</b>	-3.7	-11	-2.1	-19	+12.5	+92

Table 4 Source: Kantar Media Taking Part survey 2005/11

In Table 4 there is a change of 3.7% in audience figures, from 5.6% in 2005/06 to 5.5% in 2010/11. However in the age range 16-24 there is an overall decrease of 11% attendance from 4.5% in 2005/06 to 4% in 2010/11. The age ranges 65-74 and 75+ both show increases of 12.5% 93% in audience figures.

The figures in Table 4 all reflect the fact that the UK has an 'ageing' population with an increasing number of people reaching old age and the increase in the average age of the population. Karen Dunnell from the Office for National Statistics in "Ageing and Mortality" in the UK, National Statisticians' Annual Article on the Population (Winter 2008), noted that "Over the last 25 years the number of people aged 65 and over in the UK has increased by 16%, from 8.5 million to 9.8 million. The number of children under 16 has declined by nearly 800,000 over the same period, from 12.23 million to 11.5 million. In 1982 the population aged 65 and over accounted for 15% of the population; by 2007 the figure had reached 16%. There are far more old people in the population than ever before. In addition the older population is ageing

## 2 Changes to the distribution jazz attenders in the UK by age

When you examine the distribution of jazz attenders by age and compare this to the distribution of the UK population at large, a different picture emerges.

**Table 5. Age distribution of the population in Great Britain compared to the age distribution people attending jazz events 1986 – 2009**

Age	0-14 %	15-24 %	25-34 %	35-44 %	45-64 %	65+ %	Total %
Age distribution of population of GB 1986	19	16	14	14	22	15	100
Age distribution of people who attend jazz 1986	-	38	20	14	23	5	100
Age distribution of population of GB 2002/03	19	12	14	15	24	16	100
Age distribution of people who attend jazz 2002	-	7	13	20	42	18	100
Age distribution of population of GB 2005	18	13	13	15	25	16	100
Age distribution of people who attend jazz 2005/06	-	15	14	16	35	20	100
Age distribution of population of GB 2007	18	13	13	15	25	16	100
Age distribution of people who attend jazz 2008/09	-	17	18	16	34	15	100
Percentage change	-	-55%	-20%	+14.2%	+47.8%	+200	

Table 5 Source: BMRB Target Group Index 1986/2009 and National Statistics Office Mid-Year Population for the UK

Between 1986 and 2009 the Arts Council subscribed to the Target Group Index (TGI). TGI GB is a continuous survey of consumer usage habits, lifestyles, media exposure and attitudes. Established in 1969, the survey provides accurate and independent marketing information on adults aged 15+.

In 1986, 38% of the audience for jazz was aged between 15-24 years as compared to the overall proportion of population in the same age group was 16%. The population aged 65+ was 15% and the audience for jazz in the same group was 5%.

By 2008/09 this had changed dramatically. 17% of the audience for jazz is aged 15-24 whereas the audience for jazz in people aged 65+ had risen to 15%. The demographic shift illustrates the decline among the 15-34 year olds that are crucial to ensuring that jazz continues to build its audiences.

## 3 Changes to the distribution of jazz attenders in England by age

Taking Part is a major continuous survey of cultural and sport participation in England commissioned by the Department for Media Culture and Sport in partnership with Arts Council England, Sport England and English Heritage. Every year it collects information from a nationally representative sample from children and adults about their attendance at a wide variety of arts events. The data is collected by TNS-BMRB and has been conducted since 2005. Set out below in table 6 are the distribution figures for jazz, from the Taking Part survey, compared to the general population distribution figures.

**Table 6. Age distribution of the population in England compared to the age distribution of people attending jazz events 2005 - 2011**

Age	0-14 %	16-24 %	25-44 %	45-64 %	65-74 %	75+ %	Total %
Age distribution of population of England 2005/06	19	12	29	24	8	8	100
Age distribution of people in England who attend jazz 2005/06	-	11	30	41	14	4	100
Age distribution of population of England 2006/7	19	12	29	24	8	8	100
Age distribution of people in England who attend jazz 2006/07	-	13	32	39	12	4	100
Age distribution of population of England 2007/08	19	12	28	24	9	8	100
Age distribution of people in England who attend jazz 2007/08	-	12	30	38	15	5	100
Age distribution of population of England 2008/09	19	12	28	25	8	8	100
Age distribution of people in England who attend jazz 2008/09	-	12	29	37	16	6	100
Age distribution of population of England 2009/10	19	12	28	25	8	8	100
Age distribution of people who attend jazz 2009/10	-	14	31	38	12	5	100
Age distribution of population of GB 2010/11	19	12	28	25	8	8	100
Age distribution of people in England who attend jazz 2010/11	-	11	29	35	16	9	100
Percentage change	-	0	0	-17.1	+100	+12.5	-

Table 6 Source: Kantar Media Taking Part survey 2005/11 and National Statistics Office mid-Year Population for England

The figures show that the audience in England for jazz among the 16-24 year old has stabilised and is commensurate with the general population at large. However it is important to note that the percentage of 16-24 year olds in 2005-2006 is the same as 2010-2011 at 11%, the percentage of 16-24 year olds attending jazz events 2009-2010 fell 3 percentage points to 11% in 2010-2011. The participation rate for the 45 to 65 year olds is decreasing and is down by 6 percentage points. The attendance rates for 65-74 year olds has doubled and that for the 75+ is up by 5 percentage points.

At the present rate audiences for jazz are getting older and are not being replaced by younger audiences at the same rate therefore the crucial question is how can jazz rebuild its audience aged 16-24?

When times get tough, the marketing of jazz is awash with arguments for dumping the name jazz. For market place against subsidy; that jazz should be part of a contemporary music lexicon along with folk, world music and contemporary classical music; the egregious and fatally flawed economics of scale arguments of erasing diversity in favour of *“a strong corporate identity ... a suite of discreet brands. An entity that would provide a strong operational platform and the benefits of economy of scale for support services ... such an organisation would benefit from entrepreneurial leadership, a clear mission and market position.”* (Boulding 2005)

Simon Frith argues for a blurring of boundaries:

*“The key to jazz success is not getting records into the shops but listeners into the venues. And the issue here is not how to get the mainstream jazz audience to attend avant-garde gigs but how to get*

*the audience for avant-garde rock and dance and contemporary music to attend avant-garde jazz shows too. Jamie Cullum fans are unlikely to enjoy a Polar Bear gig (their jazz interests are quite different); Bloc Party fans might. The way forward, in other words, is to blur the boundaries between jazz and other kinds of music rather than to try to mark them out more clearly. This is happening already in some venues and festivals (such as the Arches in Glasgow and Scotland's Tryptic Festival), on some labels (such as Babel) and for some musicians (such as Acoustic Ladyland, Soweto Kinch and Spring Heeled Jack). (Frith 2007)*

Stuart Nicholson argues for subsidy as a bulwark against the homogenization of the market place for jazz:

*"We are, then, at a key moment in jazz history. The music is being reshaped and reimagined beyond the borders of the United States through the process of glocalisation and transculturation with increasing authority by voices asserting their own cultural identity on the music. Non-American musicians want to connect with their own surroundings and want to give the music life and vitality that is relevant to their own socio-musical situation, so they are broadening the expressive base of the music in ways over which American jazz has no control. Key to these developments in Europe is that they are not a response to commercial logic. Sheltered by subsidy from the homogenizing effect of this marketplace, the music has been able to grow and develop in ways musicians want, rather than conforming to the expectations of the marketplace or shaped by the conventions of previous practice". (Nicholson 2005)*

On the other hand, Eric Hobsbawm in *Uncommon People* takes a different angle:

*"Is jazz becoming terminally fossilized? It is not impossible. If this should be the fate of jazz, it will not be much consolation that Clint Eastwood has buried Bird in a celluloid mausoleum and that every hairdresser and cosmetics store plays tapes of Billie Holiday. However, jazz has shown extraordinary powers of survival and self-renewal inside a society not designed for it and which it does not deserve. It is too early to think that its potential is exhausted. Besides, what is wrong with just listening and letting the future take care of itself". (Hobsbawm 1998)*

Many people wrestle with the word jazz; Peter Ind; jazz musician, environmentalist, painter and author says people *"like the word but hate the music"*. However, if jazz is that bad why do cosmetic companies, car dealers and car manufacturers fall over themselves to exploit the word jazz? A rhetorical question and best answered by the simple fact that there is a market out there with definable characteristics and with people who may only like one genre of jazz or a number of genres; or the 'early adopter' who attends the innovative variety. Jazz is a broad church and when there is an altercation in the choir stall or the vestry, someone is busily adding an extension to the chancel.

Hobsbawm is right to let the music take care of itself but we should use every tool available to market jazz from the classroom to old and new media.

The answer to the question 'how can you rebuild the audience aged 15-24 is inextricably bound up with access to hearing jazz. When you go to see a film you buy the ticket first "but music is different – and radio proves that whether it is a pop tune, a heavily political punk album or an experimental avant garde suite the key is very simple: people have to hear it – repeatedly if possible – and for free. After a while if you're lucky people get to know and like the music. Sooner or later they are going to have to own it". (Dubber 2007)

Exposure has always been – for jazz – a defining component that affects the eventual buying decision. For example, *thejazz*, the UK's first 24 hours-a-day digital national radio station launched at Easter 2007, had 334,000 listeners in the RAJAR survey period ending in June 2007. By the period ending 16<sup>th</sup> September 2007 the listenership had increased to 388,000 or an increase of 16%. In addition to the 338k 15+ listeners to *thejazz*, there were 53,000 children under the age of 15 listening in each week. (Byrnes 2007) *Thejazz* came off the air in March 2008 due to a proposed takeover bid.

To rebuild attendance at jazz events by the 16-24 year age group, the use of radio and new media is crucial and tactics need to be researched, developed and refined in a way that will enable promoters and musicians to gain access to the ears of young people and 16+ listeners.

Chris Hodgkins  
Jazz Services  
30<sup>th</sup> June 2013

## References

- Boulding. H. (2005). Letter from Hilary Boulding Music Director, Arts Council England. 7<sup>th</sup> February 2005.
- Byrnes.S. (2007) Jazz, jazz everywhere – but not on television. The Independent Monday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007
- Dubber. A. (2007). 20 Things you must know about music on line. Digital Central 2007 p6.
- Dunnell.K. (2008) Office of National Statistics. Aging and Mortality. National Statisticians' Annual article on the Population. Winter 2008.
- Frith.S (2007). Is Jazz Popular Music. Equinox Publishing Ltd 2007 p20.
- Hobsbawm. E (1998) Uncommon People, Resistance, Rebellion and Jazz. Liedenfield and Nicholson.1998. P291 - 292.
- National Endowment for the Arts. (2008) 2008 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts Research
- Nicholson.S. (2005) Is Jazz Dead (or has it moved to another address) Routledge 2005 P239-240