

# The Non Subscribers of a National Stage: Why they Refuse the Season Ticket?

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## **Abstract**

This communication presents the research objectives and hypothesizes of a study in progress made at French “National Stage” (Performing Arts Organisation). Mixing questionnaires and in depth interviews, this research will allow to list the major reasons why some theatre goers prefer not to subscribe. The first results show that the actual subscription formula must be transform into recompense formula, like loyalty rewarding cards.

## **Keywords**

Subscription, motivations and constraints, France, national stage, performing arts.

## **Résumé**

En nous appuyant sur le cas d’une Scène Nationale française, cette communication présente les hypothèses et objectifs de recherche d’une étude en cours sur les publics occasionnels du spectacle vivant. Combinant une enquête par questionnaire et des entretiens semi-directifs, cette recherche permet de mieux cerner les raisons pour lesquelles l’abonnement n’est pas jugé comme pertinent. Les premiers résultats obtenus vont dans le sens d’une redéfinition de la formule d’abonnement pour aller vers des formules de type « récompense » telles les cartes de fidélité.

## **Mots-clés**

Abonnement ; motivations et freins ; France ; Scène nationale ; spectacle vivant

## **Introduction**

“Priz’Uniques<sup>1</sup> evenings”, “Sandwich Concerts”<sup>2</sup>, “Electro’Music”... The planning of the French National Stages (see Appendix 1) goes on diversifying. These innovations are the new reply of this performing arts organisations network to meet its charge of democratization of cultural practices. If there are numerous spectators coming to these shows, if the audience is always there, fewer and fewer buy subscriptions. The decrease of subscription is becoming so important that, now, individual ticket buyers purchase more tickets than subscribers do. For the National Stage which is our application field<sup>3</sup>, “La Passerelle” (LP), subscribers were in the past the majority of the audience. There were used to represent the main part of the organisation revenue. Nowadays, they compose the minor division of tickets sold during a season. This reversal has occurred during the 2001 season. Since then, this new situation is going on strengthening. As matters, 67% of the tickets sold last season was purchased by occasional attendance.

Performing arts managers are well aware that an important rate of subscribers is vital for their organisation. As it is the most-cost-effective way to sell tickets for performances and shows (Heilbrun and Gray, 1993), theatres concentrated on subscriptions during the 1960's and 1970'. At that past time, obeying to Newman's guide (1977), managers tried to develop their audience mainly through subscription programs. Today, things appear to be quite different.

According to Johnson and Garbarino (2001), the decline in subscription revenue is not always received with anxiety. Conversely, artistic directors and creative personnel express, more or less clearly, the idea that "subscriptions have become passé in the decade of 1990's" (Johnson and Garbarino, 2001). This attitude is perhaps the results of the criticisms usually made on subscribers (i.e. too much conservative, only motivated by price discounts on ticket) and on the subscription principle (i.e. a discriminatory practice against younger, not wealthy, and ethnic spectators, all the audiences who cannot afford the pre-season payments).

Even so, the tendency of decline in the subscription ratio is becoming a general phenomenon encountered by performing arts (Auriacombe, Chalamon and Le Loarne, 2004; Kolb, 2003; Garbarino and Johnson, 1999a, 2001). The weakening of this audience, traditionally defined as more loyal than others, should be considered as a warning signal for managers and researchers.

The progressive lost of this audience in a National Stage close to us has triggered our attention. Therefore, we initiate a study in co-operation with this performing arts organisation. Thanks to a survey, combining face-to-face questionnaires with approximately 500 respondents and more than 40 in-depth interviews, focused on occasional ticket buyers, we attempt to give more empirical cues on the subscription question.

The originality of this research is the choice we made to concentrate our attention on the non subscribers whereas previous researches either have investigated the sole subscribers or have compared the subscribers to the non subscribers. By focusing on the non subscribers group, we expect to give more detailed information on this particular group and on the reasons why he prefers not to subscribe. The managerial implications might be the transformation of the actual subscription formula or the creation of new contractual formulas.

As the data collection has ended in the middle of March, this paper presents only the theory, the objectives and hypothesizes of the research, and the methodology. The results will be presented and discussed during the oral presentation.

## **The Season Ticket Subscription: Managerial Interest and Challenge**

### **The Subscription: an Helpful but Weakening Behaviour**

Johnson and Garbarino (1999a) remind us that the season subscriber is the art organisation's ideal. In fact, numerous researches have shown that the consumer who maintains long-term relationships with an organisation, as subscribers do, present multiple advantages.

As an overview of theses benefits, let's note that they repurchase during more time than occasional buyers (Keaveney, 1995). They speak more positively about the firm to their familiars (Reichheld and Teal, 1996; Dick and Basu, 1994). They pay less attention to concurrence offers (Dick and Basu, 1994). They are less influenced by prices (Krishnamurthi et Raj, 1991; Keaveney, 1995). They are characterised by a greater tolerance to dissatisfaction

(Dick et Basu, 1994) and a tendency to attribute the fault to themselves or to contextual reasons and not to the organisation (Auriacombe, Chalamon and Le Loarne, 2004). Moreover, Bendapudi and Berry (1997) have noted that they are more likely to identify with the organisation and that they present both active and passive co-operation. Passive co-operation is expressed by their approbation of firm's activity and proposals and allows the enrichment of the relationship (i.e. purchases of complementary services). Active co-operation is observed as they are trying to work together with the firm (e.g. giving information about their request and needs) and ready to invest their resources without considering it as a cost. In the service sector, this co-operation is valuable as it increases the customer's ability to learn and participate to the production of the service (Bové and Johnson, 2000).

Even if retaining and renewing subscriptions request important monetary and manpower costs (Hobson, 1983), benefits of long-term relationship for the theatre must deny these negative attitudes. Without being exhaustive, let us remind two major benefits of subscribers: they fill the seats of the less popular productions of the season, and they are the principal fund contributors to the art organisation (Ryans and Weinberg, 1978; Schlosser, 1983).

Moreover, from a marketing point of view, subscribers are particularly interesting. First, these theatre goers are already known. When they subscribed, they gave numerous data like their age, their social level, their location, and even their tastes when they have to make a pre-selection of the shows they will attend. Marketing analysis of their demographics and tastes should help the manager to give the right promotion to the right location for each type of performance. Such promotion actions respond to the mission of arts marketing, that is to facilitate the mediation between the cultural offer and audiences with a constant respect to the mission of both the artistic managers and the creative personnel.

Second, subscribers already have expressed their heavy cultural demand and that they are convinced of the quality of the organisation. They have experimented earlier theatre facilities, the repertoire promoted and the customary theatre performers because, before becoming subscribers, mainly were individual ticket buyers (Currim, Weinberg and Wittink, 1981). Consequently, during these past experiences of attendance, they should have discovered, and have accepted, the quality level of the art organisation. In the case of French National Stages, the repertoire is systematically composed of different types of shows. So, as well as the quality level, this heterogeneity in the repertoire must have been accepted, often appreciated (Grasset and Peduzzi, 1998).

Third, subscribers are easy to get in touch with. Thank to the address (email, mail, phone number) they gave when they subscribe, the theatre organisation is able to communicate individually with them, thanks to direct marketing practices, for example to inform them of a deadline for booking a show they must taste, to propose them to come to a creation, to send them invitations for a première of a original show for further word of mouth communication...

To conclude, on a marketing point of view, subscribers represent the idyllic audience. Loyal with the organisation, it is easy to contact them if the theatre needs their co-operation and they are very likely to respond favourably to the theatre requests. But despite their numerous virtues, quite all researchers who have recently dealt with this subject, noted either a general decrease in the subscription rate or particular situations of subscription drops (Auriacombe, Chalamon and Le Loarne, 2004; Kolb, 2003; Johnson and Garbarino, 2001 ; Garbarino and Johnson, 1999a).

## Weight and Tendency of the Subscription Behaviour in France

The general assessment of a turn down in performing arts subscription was also observed in the recent French context. In fact, at the very beginning of this research, we wanted to know if the continuous deterioration of the number of tickets sold to subscribers, observable at the organisation in study, was shared by other performing arts organisations in France.

To know more about that, we examined the statistics and data sent each year by the different National Stages to their national authority<sup>4</sup>. We were disappointed to discover that the part of the document dealing with subscription numbers, categories, and renewal rate was rarely filled out. Consequently, what must be an inventory became a sample study. However, we finally obtained data about thirty or so National Stages from 2001 to 2003. The results (see Table 1) show that, in average, the diminishing of subscribers fairly attains 8%.

**Table 1:**  
**The Decreasing of Subscribers from 2001 to 2003**

National Stage	Subscribers 2002-03	Subscribers 2001-02	Trend rate
Alençon	1277	1592	-19,8%
Amiens	3821	4398	-13,1%
Angoulême	2019	2524	-20,0%
Bayonne	1203	1198	0,4%
Belfort	1844	1860	-0,9%
Besançon	1183	742	59,4%
Blois	2071	3452	-40,0%
Calais	5141	7196	-28,6%
Cergy-Pontoise	2249	5230	-57,0%
Château-Gontier	1302	1488	-12,5%
Chateauroux	3282	2904	13,0%
Cherbourg	747	1393	-46,4%
Douai	1411	1969	-28,3%
Dunkerque	2564	3536	-27,5%
Fort-de-France	2975	4132	-28,0%
La roche/Yon	2012	3353	-40,0%
Le Creusot	1009	718	40,5%
Malakoff	1184	1066	11,1%
Marne-La-Vallée	6665	9672	-31,1%
Meylan	2272	2810	-19,1%
Mulhouse	3613	3169	14,0%
Narbonne	2811	3231	-13,0%
Niort	8893	8485	4,8%
Orleans	5061	4596	10,1%
Quimper	3161	2846	11,1%
Reims	422	411	2,7%
Saint-Brieuc	1392	1594	-12,7%
Sénart	2191	2023	8,3%
Sète	3397	3774	-10,0%
Valenciennes	2292	1696	35,1%
Average rate			-7,9%

A major study made on French citizens' cultural practices (Donnat, 1998) shows that, in 1997, only 2% of the total population were current subscribers of a theatre whereas they were 10% who had been subscribers before, at least one time. This weak subscription rate observed in 1997 added to the appraisal we made, demonstrate that the subscription decline is still a topical problem for French performing arts managers.

Yet, it is interesting to note that if the subscription rate is going down, the frequency of cultural activities is more or less constant (Donnat, 1998 ; Ministère de la Culture, 1998). As well are the characteristics of the core audience of cultural activities: even now, arts and culture are for younger audiences, families without children, single, that is people who have no family constraints on their leisure time. Therefore, how should we explain this contradiction?

According to Donnat (2001), cultural practices in France are stable in frequency and type of audience, but they have changed in their nature. Nowadays, there is a development of the "out the walls" practices (Dapporto and Sagot-Duvauroux, 2000) like concerts or plays performed in the streets, out-door shows, visits of historical centres... The growing of this new type of attendance custom is so important that two thirds of the individuals who have attended to a theatre performance have done it apart from a cultural establishment (Ministère de la Culture, 1998). Two main explications should be activated to understand that. On the one hand, there is an real rise of the number of performing shows proposed out of the establishment as for instance, sometimes designed by the National Stages (i.e. "Les Allumés" in Nantes or "Le Réveillon des Boulons" in Montbéliard). And, on the other hand, it is possible that consumers have changed the way they consider the cultural practice. This latter explanation suggests that a profound modification in the mode of practicing cultural activities is perhaps at work.

## **The Subscription Phenomena: Theories and Main Evidences**

Taking into account the managerial objective of discerning how to induce subscription among occasional theatre goers, here are the results of previous researchers dealing with the subscription phenomena in performing arts. The first point, also the oldest research theme, is about the subscription process. The second point is an overview of all the different determinants of the subscription behaviour. Finally, the third point is focussing on the reasons and constraints generally evoked by customers to justify their refusal of subscribe.

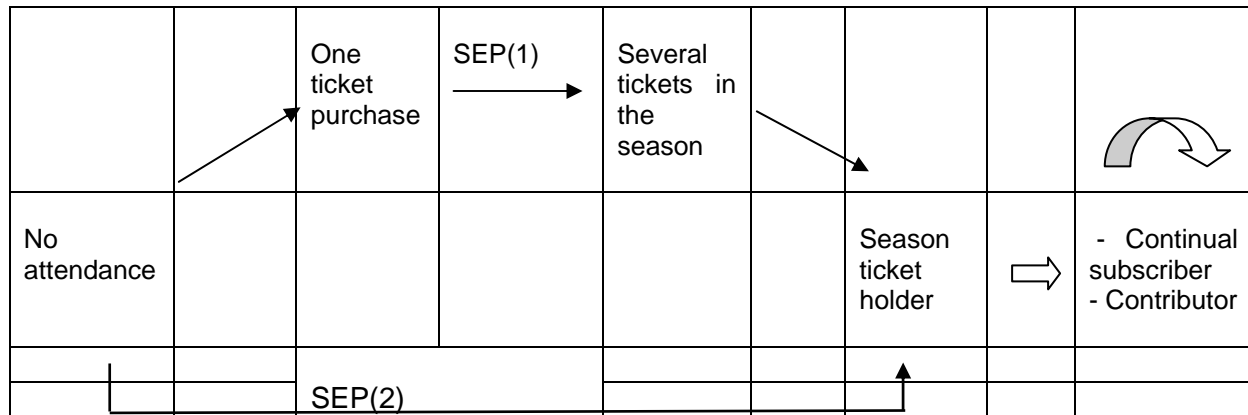
### **The Subscription Process**

Michaelis (1978) has investigated the entry patterns of subscribers. He found that this process is divided in three stages. First, they start by purchasing one individual ticket. Then, they attend several performances in a season. Finally, they become season ticket buyers.

According to this author, consumers are unlikely to skip stages in this sequence even if he observed that a minority of people become immediately subscribers (sudden subscribers). Conversely, Ryans and Weinberg (1978) noted that, among the season subscribers who composed their sample survey at the American Conservatory Theatre of San Francisco (ACT), 32% were continual subscribers, 31% were gradual subscribers (no involvement → some involvement → subscription) and 21% were sudden subscribers (no involvement → subscription) <sup>5</sup>. The size of the sudden subscriber segment was surprising for the theatre. Therefore, as a cross-check, they replicate the analysis using only the new subscribers of the last season. They found that 40% were gradual subscribers and 33% were sudden subscribers. Consequently, if there is two coexisting sequences leading to subscription behaviour. Has it is

resumed in figure 1 (see below), the gradual subscription pattern is the 3-steps route (Subscription Entry Pattern n°1, SEP1), the sudden subscription pattern is the one-step route (Subscription Entry Pattern n°2, SEP2).

**Figure 1:  
The Two Routes of Subscription Entry Pattern**



Despite the priority objectives of their study weren't to identify the determinants of sudden subscribers' entry pattern, Ryans and Weinberg (1978) proposed some trails. They noticed that sudden subscribers were characterized by fewer cultural activities than gradual and continual subscribers and that the ACT subscription is often their introduction to the performing arts. Thanks to their high income, they can afford to subscribe without the need of gradual introduction over a period of years. According to authors, some precipitating events, such as changes in income or marital-status may be the contributing factors. Moreover, the status symbol represented by the ACT subscription should be another explanatory factor.

### **The Determinants of the Subscription Behaviour**

Concerning the determinants of the subscription behaviour, different variables were identified by researchers. These determinants are related either to the consumer's characteristics, either to the subscription characteristics, or to the performance and organisation characteristics.

#### *Consumer's Characteristics*

The consumer determinants of subscription behaviours are as follow.

(1) The residence location which is the most important attribute if measured in term of driving time (Currim, Weinberg and Wittink, 1981). Actually, the closer a theatre-goer is living, the more likely he takes the season ticket. Location is also important in term of duration in the same residence location (Ryans and Weinberg, 1978).

(2) The age is another determinant since subscribers are generally older than non subscribers. According to Ryans and Weinberg (1978), it may be because people who enter in a more mature stage in the life cycle (i.e. without children responsibility), have more time to attend performing arts.

(3) Being a fan is also an important determinant of subscription behaviour. Subscribers are more likely hard-core art enthusiasts and connoisseurs of the genre (Johnson and Garbarino,

2001).

(4) Operating as a corollary of the latter contributor, the level of cultural activities (Ryans and Weinberg, 1978) and the number of shows attendance (Michaelis, 1978) are also determinants of subscription behaviours.

Since these first variables do not explain totally the subscription behaviour, further researchers recommended integrate psychological variables. In this perspective, Boudier-Pailler (1997) then Boudier-Pailler and Le Doeuff have spotlighted the influence of (5) individual time conception. Their results demonstrate that four dimensions of this construct have significant relationships with the performing arts subscription. To synthesize, we could say that the more an individual is able to plan and control his time, the most frequently he subscribes. Consequently, the appraisal of time should be an element for understanding the non subscription of occasional attendance. And, we can hypothesize that lack of time would be regularly evoked by occasional buyers for not attending further shows (i.e. the minimum number of shows proposed in the subscription formula).

Two other psychological variables should be introduced to better understand the subscription behaviour: the customer's orientation to a relationship (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999a), and the aversion to commitment (Auriacombe, Chalamon and Le Loarne, 2004).

(6) The customer's orientation to a relationship is based on the idea that consumers are positioned on a continuum of transactional to collaborative (relational) exchanges (Jackson, 1985). Arguing that customers could be classified by their contractual relations, Garbarino and Johnson (1999a) tested two alternative models thanks to structural equation methods. Dedicated to highly relational customers (i.e. subscribers), the first model shows that overall satisfaction does not affect the commitment and trust of theatre goers. In the second model, the one designed for low relational customers (i.e. individual ticket buyers), overall satisfaction behaves as a mediator. Trust, commitment and future intentions are reflexive of overall satisfaction. That is to say, individual ticket buyers must be satisfied to plan ahead future attendances. Albeit the categorisation of theatre goers by their contractual relationship is not a perfect and secure way to distinguish the customer's relationship orientation, this variable is interesting for managers who want to pursue adequate marketing : transactional versus relational, or, transactional for some segments and relational for others as Anderson and Narus (1991) advocate.

(7) The aversion to commitment was recently detected by French researchers investigating the concept of loyalty in the performing arts field (Auriacombe, Chalamon and Le Loarne, 2004). They stated that among the non subscribers, some of them express a vigorous refusal to the idea of being committed by a contractual relationship. Whereas they are loyal to the theatre, they reject the principle of a subscription. This result represents an interesting additional explanation for further investigations on arts organisation subscription.

### *Subscription Characteristics*

To sort the subscription characteristics contributing to the consumer's subscription behaviour, it is worthy to quote the research of Currim, Weinberg and Wittink (1981). These authors used a conjoint analysis to determine the impact of factors such as renown of performers, seating priority, season discount. Even the sample is only composed of subscribers, their results give us an idea about the hierarchy of critical attributes to subscription formula. The most important subscription attributes are "seating priority" and "price", followed by the "number of events" and

“discount percentage”<sup>6</sup>.

The fact that “seating priority” appears more important than “price” is explained by authors by the risk of scarcity. For some very renowned performances, it is likely that the number of available seats is not sufficient for the whole audience. In those cases, to be “more certain to attend” is a main benefit sought for purchasing a subscription (Ryans and Weinberg, 1978).

Concerning the economic attributes (price and discount percentage), there is a link between their importance value and the income of the subscribers. “Discount percentage” is of average importance value for the low-income segments and vividly decreases for higher-income segments. On the same idea, “price” is the most important attribute for the low-income segments and less for the other-level-income segments. The impact of economic factors, chiefly for lower income attendances, was underline for decades since a well-known audience development consultant (Newman, 1977) had argued that discount percentage is a formidable factor in the promotion of a subscription. On the contrary, Ryans and Weinberg (1978) observed that a discount of “7 tickets for the price of 6” had no perceptible impact on renewals or new subscriber acquisition. These contradictory results advocate in favour of more investigation on that subject.

But, taking into account the results of Abbé-Decarroux (1994) on the demand for theatre tickets at regular prices versus reduced prices, we can already expound that the price elasticity of cultural demand, and by extension of subscription demand, depends on the consumers’ income-level. If high income and high level in education are determinants of cultural practices (Bourdieu, 1979; Dimaggio, Useem and Brown, 1978; Colbert, 1993; Guy and Miromer, 1988) but not contributors to the separation between subscribers and non subscribers (Ryans and Weinberg, 1978), low-income should be a reason for non subscription behaviour. All these lead us to the idea that income influences the sensitivity to economic attributes of subscription formulas.

### *Performance and Organisation Characteristics*

Although we note them at last, there are not least. Here, we point out the performance and the organisation characteristics. Inevitably, the quality of the cultural proposal is important.

As a proof, Currim, Weinberg and Wittink (1981) demonstrated that the renown of the performer is a decisive attribute of subscription intention. More recently, Garbarino and Johnson (1999a) investigated the antecedents of subscribers’ commitment and trust. They found that actor satisfaction, actor familiarity attitudes, plays (satisfaction and judgements on diversity, interest, provocative...) and theatre facilities (comfort of seating, intimacy, facilities) conduct to future intentions (attendance, subscription, donation) with commitment and trust acting as mediators.

Finally, the type of plays proposed by the organisation is important. In fact, there is two customers’ goal orientation motivating their decision to attend a theatre: enrichment or leisure (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999b). If theatre goers are motivated by enrichment goals (i.e. cultural enrichment, educational experience, being a patron of the arts and having an emotional experience) and if the theatre does not provide the classical and modern plays expected, they don’t become subscribers. On the contrary, if customers are leisure orientated whereas the theatre promote only serious and classical repertoire, they are unwilling to subscribe.

### **The Reasons for the Subscription Refusal**

According to “defensive marketing”, it is also valuable to discover the reasons why customers



do not compromise more with the firm or, even, desert its facilities and spaces (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). Remembering that individual ticket buyers are generally not dissatisfied customers, and that have favourable disposition to the organisation, Johnson and Garbarino (1999b) made a factor analysis of eleven reasons for not subscribing. Three factors were extracted and two reasons remain autonomous. The first factor expresses uncertainty about use of ticket, lack of time and lack of flexibility (not possible to refund unused tickets, want of more flexibility). The second factor encompasses considerations about the difficulty to reach the theatre and about its facilities (don't like theatre facilities). The third factor concerned lack of interest for plays. The two items that did not load on these three factors are cost of subscription and the quality of performances.

## Research Questions

### **Not to Subscribe: what are the Main Reasons?**

Subscription determinants were mostly identified by comparative analyses between subscribers and non subscribers. Since we focus on occasional ticket buyers, it is possible that their explicative power won't be the same. But, we are not trying to demonstrate another time the explicative relevance of these determinants. Neither we are willing to sort out these determinants for people who never attend to organisation performances. Our first objective is to identify and position the main reasons of the non subscription behaviour of actual attendance.

In the (LP) situation, the subscription formula consists in the purchase of a discount card (13€) that allows to buy each further performance ticket at the reduced price of 13€. The card is compensated at the fourth purchase and becomes profitable at the 5th. To make future subscribers confident with the profitability of the subscription deal, and because either it is interesting to know which performances they select (it is an good indicator of the future success of shows), the organisation ask them to chose, and pay, early in the season (in September, that is to say one month before the order will be opened) a minimum of five performances.

Consequently, and according to the literature review, we propose to filter occasional theatre-goers with three main reasons for not subscribing. The first one is a rational and economic reason. Since they don't attend at least 5 performances, it is not profitable to buy the subscription. Managerial implications of this possible cause of not subscribing behaviour will be discussed after deeper investigations on the tastes and practices of this occasional buyers group.

The second one is linked to the possibility of actual subscription to another art organisation. Unless this answer give us a possible reason for not subscribing, it is useful for the arts organisation to identify its competitors in general and to know what type of shows drives competitors' subscribers to their theatre. Even if it is interesting for the managers of (LP), this point won't be detailed further. This kind of results is too monographic to interest the reader.

The third one expresses the idea that actual subscription formula is too constraint-full. By looking forward on the consumers who agree with this latter question, the second objective is to investigate more closely the "resistant to subscription" segment, already encountered by Auriacombe, Chalamon and Le Loarne (2004).

## **The “Resistant to Subscription” Group: How Many, Who and Why?**

Loyalty is defined by the central concept of commitment (Jacoby and Dyner, 1973). In Relationship Marketing (RM) applied to arts management, as subscription is a contractualisation of a commitment between an organisation and its customers, it is often postulated that subscription versus individual purchases express the commitment level of the consumer's relationship (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999a; Johnson and Garbarino, 2001; Currim, Weinberg and Wittink, 1981; Ryans and Weinberg, 1978). However, a recent study of the performing arts attendance of a French theatre (Auriacombe, Chalamon and Le Loarne, 2004) show that it is not systematically true. There is no systematic link between subscription and commitment.

Actually, Auriacombe, Chalamon and Le Loarne (2004) studied the loyalty of performing arts attendances through the three main dimensions that gather all characteristics and benefits of long-term customers (N'Goala, 2003): stability, co-operation and loyalty. As a replica of Garbarino and Johnson (1999a), they distinguished three groups: the individual ticket goers, the occasional subscribers and the regular subscribers. Thanks to focus group interviews, they concluded that subscription does not prove the commitment of theatre goers. If subscription is a good indicator of the attendee's commitment with the theatre, not to subscribe does not mean not being committed. Conversely, some individual ticket buyers present major committed and loyal behaviours. For example, they express heavy co-operation since they attend creations and not only classical repertoire, and they are as loyal as regular subscribers are (e.g. they consider that the cancellation of a show is not the theatre fault).

Finally, if they don't subscribe, it is mainly because they are resistant to subscription formulas. So, understanding the reasons leading to this resistance must be fruitful for arts managers. In particular, it should be interesting to be able to respond to such questions like:

- Is the actual formula which doesn't fit consumers' habits and needs?
- Are non subscribers definitely resistant to the loss of any parcel of liberty?

If so, what characterize those resistant customers to others? Past experience of subscription? Psychological features? Demographics?...

## **Methodology**

In order to respond to our two main research objectives, a methodology combining a face-to-face questionnaire and in-depth interview was designed. The interest of the interviews was to obtain longer explanations about the reasons of their non subscribing behaviour than it is possible in a questionnaire context. For more details about the questionnaire and sample survey and for a look to the interview guide, see respectively appendixes 2 and 3.

First, thanks to the filter question about the reasons for not subscribing, we can measure and distinguish the three groups of non subscribers.

Second, thanks to general questions composing the questionnaire, like the location (a), the age (b), their tastes and preferences (c), the type and number of shows attended (d), the professional status (as an indicator of the income) (e), previous subscription (f), time constraints (g),..., we can describe more precisely the characteristics of all groups, and focus on the “resistant to subscription” segment.

## Results and Discussion

## Notes

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- 11

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## Appendix 1

### The National Stage ("Scène Nationale") network

Les Scènes Nationales ont été instituées sous l'égide d'André Malraux dans les années 1960 au nom des premières politiques de décentralisation culturelle. En assurant une diffusion délocalisée du spectacle vivant, leur fonction première est de « permettre à tous l'accès aux grandes œuvres de l'art et de l'esprit ».

En France, parallèlement au réseau des Centres d'Art Dramatique, il existe de nombreux établissements pluridisciplinaires de ce type qui appartiennent au réseau des « Scènes Nationales ». Ce label est décerné par l'Etat Français, depuis 1990, aux établissements d'action culturelle dont le projet artistique de l'équipe dirigeante répond à certains critères. Subventionnés par le Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication<sup>7</sup>, ces établissements ont d'une part la vocation de diffuser la production de spectacle vivant à un large public, et d'autre part, la promotion de la création et de la diffusion de spectacles contemporains (Grasset et Peduzzi, 1998). A ce titre, ces établissements ont un rôle moteur dans la création et la médiation artistique et culturelle comme le montrent ces quelques chiffres : 8255 représentations, 1 898 149 entrées payantes et 2 192 875 entrées totales pour le spectacle vivant (chiffres récoltés auprès de 61 Scènes Nationales sur les 63, saison 1996-1997, Ministère de la Culture, 1998).

Ces établissements se caractérisent par leur pluridisciplinarité. Ils peuvent donc proposer des séances de cinéma pour quelques uns, des spectacles dramatiques (théâtre tout public et jeune public, théâtre musical, opéra, lyrique, autres spectacles dramatiques), des spectacles chorégraphiques (danse classique, contemporaine et traditionnelle, danse jeune public), des spectacles musicaux (musique classique, contemporaine et traditionnelle, musiques du monde, jazz, rock et variétés, cabaret, musique jeune public) mais aussi du mime ou du cirque, des spectacles café-théâtre et des spectacles d'humour.

S'il existe une diversité entre les établissements selon l'importance des moyens humains, techniques et financiers mis en œuvre, tous possèdent la spécificité de la diffusion du spectacle vivant au point d'être leur principale source de revenus (les ¾ des entrées payantes).

En 2004-2005, le réseau des Scènes Nationales comprend 72 établissements.

## Appendix 2

### L'enquête par questionnaire

Portant sur un échantillon final qui avoisinera les 500 personnes, sélectionnées au fil de 24 spectacles diffusés au cours de la saison 2004-2005, l'enquête par sondage a été réalisée du 12 octobre 2004 au 16 mars 2005.

Entre 510 et 558 spectateurs seront interviewés par des enquêteurs formés aux techniques d'étude de marché et 60 par les contrôleurs de salles.

Pour que l'échantillon soit le plus représentatif possible, tout en prenant en compte les contraintes tels que le nombre d'enquêteurs et le nombre de contrôleurs, nous avons choisi que le nombre de personnes interrogées seraient légèrement plus faible pour les spectacles ayant une jauge très faible et lors des week-end puisque les personnes sont moins nombreuses à venir le week-end (conclusions tirées du rapport d'activité sur la fréquentation des années précédentes).

Ainsi, selon la date et la jauge du spectacle, les intervieweurs sont 2 (faible jauge) ou 4 (forte jauge).

La passation s'effectue en face à face et selon une méthode aléatoire. Chaque intervieweur interroge six personnes lors de chaque spectacle. Idéalement, quatre avant le spectacle et deux lors de la sortie pour ne pas occulter les spectateurs qui arrivent au dernier moment.

Le questionnaire comprend 7 grands thèmes : le comportement, le goût, l'accès à l'information, Les horaires, les tarifs et abonnement, les pratiques culturelles et la fiche signalétique. Il est relativement court puisque les personnes ont peu de temps avant le début du spectacle.

## Appendix 3

### Le guide d'entretien

Consigne 1- « Que pensez vous des formules d'abonnement et d'adhésion (en général, c'est-à-dire, pas nécessairement dans le domaine culturel) ? »

Thèmes :

Avantages et Inconvénients

Conditions de rentabilité d'un abonnement

Bénéfices recherchés ou reçus pour un abonnement

Expérience passée des abonnements : positive ou négative

Consigne 2- « Je vais vous décrire la formule actuelle d'abonnement à la Passerelle. J'aimerais avoir votre sentiment sur cette formule et savoir pour quelles raisons vous ne vous abonnez pas. »

Consigne 2A – Perception de la formule d'abonnement

« Cette formule d'abonnement est la suivante : vous achetez une carte d'abonnement qui coûte 13 euros. Elle vous permet ensuite de bénéficier du tarif préférentiel de 13 Euros pour tous les spectacles de la saison. Cela représente 4 euros d'économie, elle est donc remboursée à partir du 4ième spectacle et rentable à partir du 5ième spectacles dans la saison.

Que pensez vous de cet abonnement ? Quel est votre sentiment concernant cette formule ? »

\* Réactions : Jugement – impressions

\* Avantages et Inconvénients de la Formule de la Passerelle

Consigne 2B – Raisons personnelles du non abonnement

\* Les freins à l'abonnement ➔ Voir Annexe A.

Consigne 3 – « Pourriez vous me donner des idées ou des suggestions d'amélioration de la formule actuelle d'abonnement à la Passerelle ? »

\* Les suggestions

« Quels sont, à votre avis, les points qui sont à améliorer dans la formule d'abonnement à la Passerelle ? »

➔ Faire décrire les différentes suggestions ET les faire justifier à chaque fois : « Pourquoi pensez vous que ce soit une formule qui conviendrait mieux ? »

\* Relance finale (sur la consigne 3) : « Si vous deviez décrire en résumé à quoi correspond l'abonnement idéal à un établissement culturel, qu'est ce que vous me diriez ?

Remercier.

Avez-vous des remarques à me faire concernant cet entretien ?