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**Donations to Performing Arts Organizations in North America Show Small Decline in First Half of 2020**

*Downward Trend of Contributions in May and June Could Foretell Greater Shortfalls*

*to Come*

**Colorado Springs, CO—July 29, 2020**— Despite widespread initiatives to convert cancelled tickets to donations and the launch of special fundraising campaigns, giving to performing arts organizations in North America fell 2 percent in the first half of 2020 according to a new study from international arts management consultants [**TRG Arts**](https://trgarts.com/) and UK arts data specialists [**Purple Seven**](https://purplesevenanalytics.com/)**.**

The June release of the [**COVID-19 Sector Benchmark Insight Report**](https://go.trgarts.com/InsightReport_July20)is the first major study revealing the impact of COVID-19 on philanthropic giving in the arts and cultural sector, using almost real-time data from 105 not-for-profit organizations of all scales the U.S., Canada and the United Kingdom.

The report reveals there has been no aggregate growth in donations in 2020 in either North America or the U.K. However, some individual organizations, particularly ones with a lower initial ratio of contributed income, have seen substantial increases in gift revenue.

In North America overall giving has only been sustained due to an increase in very large gifts ($100K+). Gifts of over $100K accounted for 46 percent of all contributed revenue, up from 36 percent for the same period in 2019.

Analysis of donations by month reveals a worrying trend in the U.S., with gifts of less than $100K down 35 percent in May and 27 percent in June.

Analysis shows that in both the North American and U.K. markets there has been growth in the value of gifts of under $100K/£80K received from the most loyal audiences. In North America, the growth in revenue from larger gifts is driven by fewer people giving considerably more, with average gift size up 55 percent.

“It is encouraging to see the biggest individual donors digging deep in North America to support the sector,” said [TRG Chief Executive Officer Jill Robinson](https://trgarts.com/Whoweare/StaffProfiles/JillRobinson.aspx). “With both new major donors and some donating for the first time in many years, arts and cultural organizations need to show how much they value this support, demonstrate its impact, and maintain and develop dialogues with them to nurture partnerships for the long term.”

Robinson added, “The concerning findings in this analysis are that donations are down overall and that a smaller proportion of patrons are supporting at a time when arts organizations need them most. We must prioritize communicating with our audiences and broader communities, take the time to listen to their needs and plan our work accordingly.”

“It is encouraging to see that some U.K.-based organizations have used the crisis to dramatically increase the volume and value of gifts generated from their patrons.” said Purple Seven CEO Stuart Nicolle. “To flourish in the future, organizations will need to work hard to ensure this is not a one-off gesture of goodwill but the first step towards growing a more loyal audience that engages both through ticket buying and philanthropy.”

The full June COVID-19 Sector Benchmark Insight Report, the second in a series that will be published during the pandemic crisis and recovery, is available at <https://go.trgarts.com/InsightReport_July20>. TRG Arts and Purple Seven plan to publish further studies on, at least, a monthly basis while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the arts and culture sector.

TRG Arts offers a range of free resources for cultural and arts professionals throughout the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and the EU to ensure the field of arts and culture thrives now and after the COVID-19 crisis:

* [TRG 30](https://go.trgarts.com/TRG30)**,** a weekly 30-minute webinar series of crisis counsel and best practices that attracts hundreds of executives globally each week: <https://go.trgarts.com/TRG30>.
* [TRG 30 Virtual Network](https://go.trgarts.com/TRG30_LinkedIn) on LinkedIn, where arts professionals gather and have their questions answered by TRG consultants: <https://go.trgarts.com/TRG30_LinkedIn>
* [TRG blog](https://trgarts.com/TRGInsights.aspx) for the latest on COVID-19 related topics: <https://trgarts.com/TRGInsights.aspx>

**About the COVID-19 Benchmark Dashboard**

Purple Seven and TRG Arts continue to offer free access to the free COVID-19 Benchmark Dashboard to organisations in the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and now the Republic of Ireland. To register visit <https://go.trgarts.com/benchmark>.

Expansion of the COVID-19 Benchmark Dashboard is supported in part by a grant from the [National Endowment for the Arts](https://www.arts.gov/) (NEA) to [SMU DataArts](https://culturaldata.org/), a national center for arts research and TRG Arts’ long-time partner in advancing the arts and culture sector.

**About TRG Arts**

TRG Arts (The Results Group for the Arts) is an international, data-driven change agency consulting with arts and cultural executive leaders, marketers and fundraisers on a patron loyalty-based approach to increasing sustainable revenue. Experts in the arts sector for 25 years, TRG Arts has earned a reputation unsurpassed for achieving results and building successful business models for non-profit and commercial arts and cultural organizations. TRG Arts is an industry pioneer in areas including audience loyalty development, membership and the subscription model, and dynamic pricing. TRG Arts believes in the transformative power of arts and culture, and that positive, profound change in the business model of arts organizations can lead to artistic innovation and the ability to inspire entire communities. Visit [www.trgarts.com](http://www.trgarts.com).

**About Purple Seven**

Purple Seven has been working in the UK Arts sector for 16 years, analysing audience behavior across hundreds of organizations. Purple Seven’s extensive knowledge and experience of audience trends allows them to offer an industry context to audience data that helps cultural organizations focus on the important, not just the interesting. Visit <https://purplesevenanalytics.com/>

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