UK THEATRE
EST 1894

SALES DATA HEADLINES 2017

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ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY BY

TRG ARTS

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Introduction & Executive Summary

On 7 June, UK Theatre released 2017 sales figures for over 200 of its member venues across the country. TRG Arts – who collated the results – has since analysed the data further. This subsequent report looks at what conclusions can be drawn about the state of regional theatre in the UK. Here are the headlines of those findings:

HOW DO WE TAKE VENUE SIZE AND TYPE INTO ACCOUNT?

Because the UK's regional theatre landscape has such diversity of venue sizes and business models – from a large commercial presenting house to a 100-seat studio space – UK Theatre members' auditoria are categorised into eight different types:

- A: Main auditoria of larger producing theatres
- B: Principally presenting theatres with a capacity of over 1,000
- C: Concert Halls
- D: Auditoria of principally presenting theatres with a capacity between 500-1,000
- E: Main auditoria of principally producing theatres with capacity over 160
- F: Auditoria of principally presenting theatres with a capacity between 200 and 500
- G: Smaller space, programmed frequently
- H: Smaller space, programmed infrequently

LARGE-SCALE PRESENTING HOUSES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE OVERALL FIGURES

- One of the eight categories, largely presenting houses with a capacity of over 1,000, accounts for only around 10% of the number of performances annually, but around 60% of overall aggregate UK Theatre box office income.
- Because of the variable nature of large-scale touring, figures have fluctuated every year since we started collecting data in 2012, which has a significant impact on the aggregate sales figures for all venue types: Last year, these large venues sold 260,546 fewer tickets than in 2016, accounting for 94% of the overall fall in ticket sales reported across the eight venue types.
- The average percentage of seats filled in these big presenting houses is more constant, however, ranging from 63-67%. Houses are not significantly less full in a lean year – there are fewer performances, particularly in the biggest venues.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER VENUE TYPES?

- Larger producing theatres and Concert Halls saw a small dip in tickets sold but a modest growth in income.
- 500 to 1000-seat presenting houses and smaller producing houses had a record-breaking year for both sales and box office income.
- Smaller (200 to 500-seat) presenting houses recorded a big drop in sales and income, mainly attributable to a substantial reduction in the number of performances.

DO THE FIGURES REVEAL ANY TRENDS?

- In real terms (taking inflation into account) the overall average price paid for a ticket has only risen by 2% since 2013, and actually fell by 2% since 2016.
- The venues with the biggest rises in audience numbers (producing houses of all scales and concert halls) have also recorded the steepest rises in average price paid. For example, subsidised producing theatre has seen strong growth in average price paid and audience numbers over the last five years.
- Those that have seen little or no increase in price paid (the largest and medium scale presenting houses) recorded smaller audiences in 2017 than 2013 – and changes in yield achieved at the big presenting houses have a major impact on the overall figures for all venues.
- Some parts of the sector, predominantly producing theatres, have recorded yield increases, but there is no evidence in the UK Theatre figures that this has had a negative impact on audience numbers.

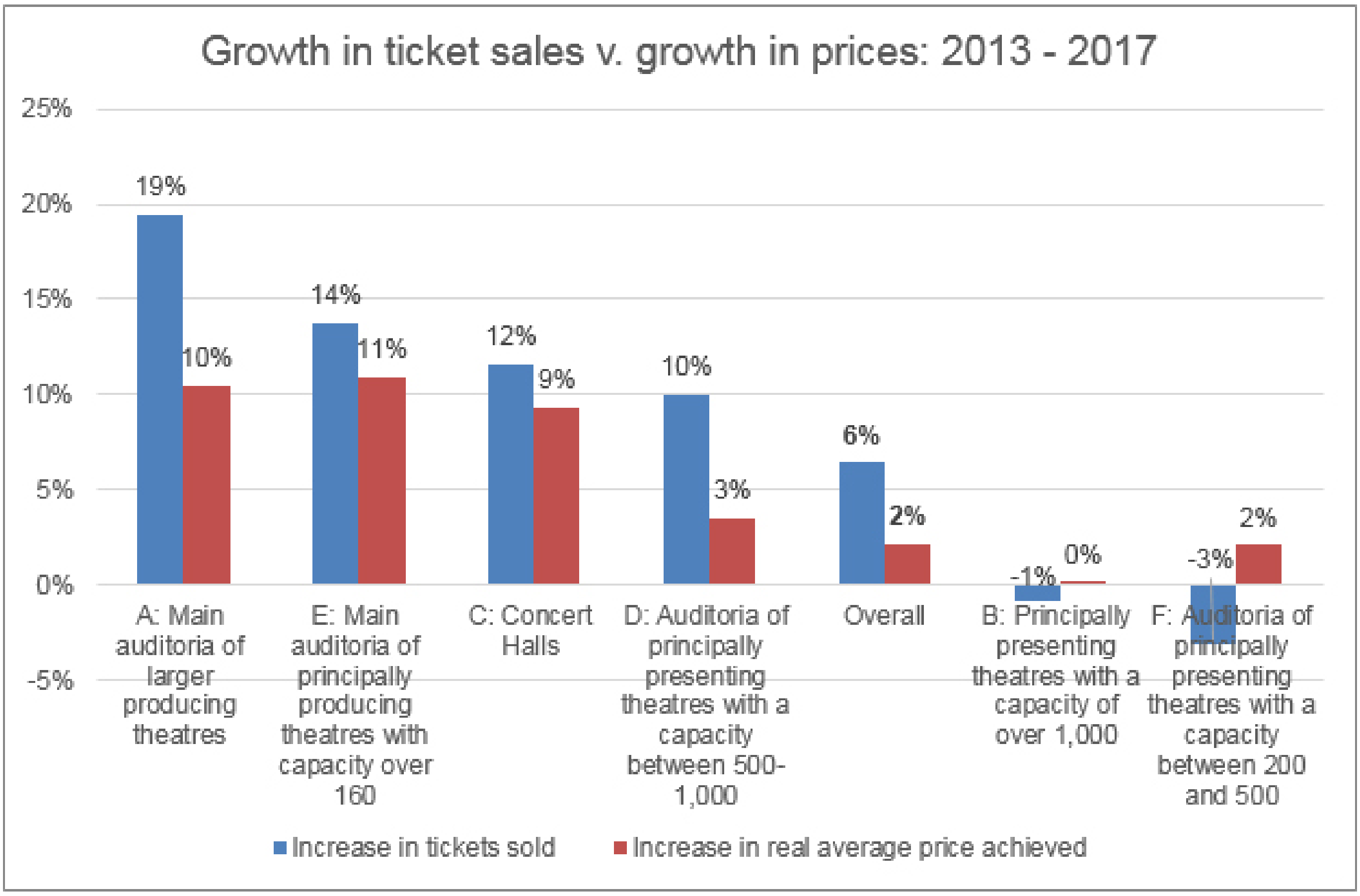
Overall Findings

	Number of productions	Number of performances	Total tickets sold	Total Box Office Income	%age capacity achieved	%age cash value achieved	Average ticket price asked	Average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved REAL - CPI
2013	4933	40,889	17,615,460	£396,912,018	59%	60%	£22.08	£22.53		
2014	5280	43,952	19,084,886	£455,317,021	59%	61%	£23.29	£23.86		
2015	5237	43,308	19,189,156	£455,253,946	59%	59%	£23.76	£23.72		
2016	5496	42,638	19,020,277	£469,991,837	61%	61%	£24.68	£24.71		
2017	***5349***	44,135	18,744,075	£470,260,893	59%	59%	£25.32	£25.09		
Change 2013-17	416	3,246	1,128,615	£73,348,875	0.90%	-0.90%	£3.24	£2.56	11%	2%
Change 2016-17	-147	1,497	-276,202	£269,056	-1.10%	-1.80%	£0.64	£0.38	2%	-2%

- Houses have been 59% full for four of the five years of the study period
- Total tickets sold have fluctuated within a 445k range between 2014-2017
- When adjusted for inflation, the average ticket price paid has only grown by 2% since 2013
- 2016 was a strong year for aggregate income and percentage capacity achieved
- 2017 saw small falls in tickets sold compared to the previous year and the average price paid actually rose less than inflation.

NB: figures for numbers of productions throughout this report are provisional and subject to change

Increase in prices leading to a fall in sales?



- This summary compares the growth in ticket sales across the study period (2013 to 2017) compared to the growth of the real (CPI adjusted) average price achieved for the six main venue types.

- There is a clear correlation between growth in numbers of tickets sold and increases in price achieved.

- While every venue type saw some growth in average price achieved, the two with the lowest (large and smaller presenting houses) recorded reductions in aggregate audiences.

a: Main auditoria of larger producing theatres

	Number of productions	Number of performances	Total tickets sold	Total Box Office Income	%age capacity achieved	%age cash value achieved	Average ticket price asked	Average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved REAL - CPI
2013	388	3,586	1,586,413	£31,313,794	63%	57%	£21.90	£19.74		
2014	429	3,923	1,813,886	£36,957,014	66%	60%	£22.11	£20.37		
2015	384	3,860	1,916,536	£42,524,435	67%	61%	£24.17	£22.19		
2016	429	4,374	2,024,760	£44,982,781	65%	59%	£24.67	£22.22		
2017	***369***	4,229	1,894,978	£45,047,642	63%	57%	£26.22	£23.77		
Change 2013-17	-19	643	308,565	£13,733,848	-0.30%	0.10%	£4.31	£4.03	20%	10%
Change 2016-17	-60	-145	-129,782	£64,862	-2.20%	-1.60%	£1.54	£1.56	7%	3%

- Larger producing theatres saw income rise in every year from 2014-2018.

- In real terms, the average price paid has risen more for this type of venue than almost any other in the study period (the exception being E: Main auditoria of principally producing theatres with capacity over 160, for which ticket prices have risen by 11% - see page 9).

- Across the five years, the growth in average price asked has exceeded the growth in average price achieved, suggesting there has been some price resistance and a growth in the proportion of purchasers choosing lower priced seats and/or a higher degree of discounting.

- This was not the case in 2017, when the growth in average price achieved marginally exceeded the growth in average price asked.

- Audience numbers grew by over 100k in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The reduction of 130k in 2017 still left a total audience well in excess of what was recorded in 2014.

b: Principally presenting theatres with a capacity of over 1,000

	Number of productions	Number of performances	Total tickets sold	Total Box Office Income	%age capacity achieved	%age cash value achieved	Average ticket price asked	Average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved REAL - CPI
2013	775	10,161	9,166,796	£247,244,833	60%	63%	£25.58	£26.97		
2014	846	10,634	9,783,320	£281,851,015	61%	64%	£27.34	£28.81		
2015	825	10,786	9,599,245	£267,388,867	59%	61%	£27.35	£27.86		
2016	805	10,117	9,355,087	£275,596,116	61%	63%	£28.66	£29.46		
2017	***856***	10,045	9,094,541	£267,780,474	60%	61%	£29.17	£29.44		
Change 2013-17	+81	-116	-72,255	+£20,535,641	+0.2%	-2.5%	+£3.60	+£2.47	9%	0%
Change 2016-17	+51	-72	-260,546	-7,815,642	-1.0%	-2.2%	+£0.52	-£0.02	0%	-4%

- Principally presenting theatres with a capacity of over 1,000 accounted for 57p of every £1 taken at the box office in 2017.

- Ticket sales for these large venues fluctuate significantly year-on-year depending on what and, crucially, how much product is touring.

- While cumulative ticket sales have varied by almost 800k across the study period, the percentage capacity achieved has varied by only 2%.

- The 261k fall in ticket sales in 2017 accounted for 94% of the total fall recorded across all venue types.

- In real terms the average price paid for a ticket at these venues has not risen at all from 2013 to 2017.

c: Concert Halls

	Number of productions	Number of performances	Total tickets sold	Total Box Office Income	%age capacity achieved	%age cash value achieved	Average ticket price asked	Average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved REAL - CPI
2013	917	2,326	1,550,086	£33,726,291	60%	62%	£21.19	£21.76		
2014	955	2,428	1,623,905	£37,251,094	60%	63%	£21.87	£22.94		
2015	886	2,463	1,729,722	£42,166,508	60%	63%	£23.17	£24.38		
2016	967	2,421	1,741,559	£44,280,588	61%	62%	£24.77	£25.43		
2017	***785***	2,416	1,729,820	£44,842,707	61%	62%	£25.71	£25.92		
Change 2013-17	-132	90	179,734	£11,116,416	1.00%	-0.10%	£4.52	£4.17	19%	9%
Change 2016-17	-182	-5	-11,739	£562,119	0.50%	-0.60%	£0.94	£0.50	2%	-2%

- The performance of Concert Halls was very similar in 2017 to what was recorded in 2016, which had been a record year.

- Although there was a very small dip in aggregate audience numbers in 2017 (0.7%), capacity achieved was actually higher than 2016.

- Although average ticket price paid has increased substantially since the start of the study period, in real terms the average price paid fell in 2017.

d: Auditoria of principally presenting theatres with a capacity between 500-1,000

	Number of productions	Number of performances	Total tickets sold	Total Box Office Income	%age capacity achieved	%age cash value achieved	Average ticket price asked	Average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved REAL - CPI
2013	1,226	6,762	2,604,312	£48,770,471	53%	52%	£19.05	£18.73		
2014	1,380	7,286	2,795,770	£53,658,386	53%	52%	£19.63	£19.19		
2015	1,398	7,621	2,966,403	£58,550,007	54%	53%	£19.99	£19.74		
2016	1,322	6,450	2,715,858	£55,335,631	56%	56%	£20.64	£20.38		
2017	***1275***	7,030	2,865,308	£60,517,745	55%	54%	£21.25	£21.12		
Change 2013-17	49	268	260,996	£11,747,274	2.00%	2.50%	£2.21	£2.39	13%	3%
Change 2016-17	-47	580	149,450	£5,182,115	-1.40%	-1.00%	£0.61	£0.75	4%	0%

- Audience numbers have fluctuated by 360k across the study period, with 2017 recording the second highest aggregate figures

- While aggregate box office income was at an all time high in 2017, in real terms the average price paid per ticket did not increase.

- Between 2013 and 2017, average price paid has only risen 3% in real terms.

e: Main auditoria of principally producing theatres with capacity over 160

	Number of productions	Number of performances	Total tickets sold	Total Box Office Income	%age capacity achieved	%age cash value achieved	Average ticket price asked	Average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved REAL - CPI
2013	859	7,886	1,696,753	£25,342,030	57%	51%	£16.66	£14.94		
2014	892	8,082	1,742,496	£27,458,470	59%	51%	£17.94	£15.76		
2015	900	7,595	1,675,044	£27,287,747	60%	53%	£18.41	£16.29		
2016	874	7,531	1,774,463	£30,753,509	63%	57%	£19.32	£17.33		
2017	***1025***	8,347	1,929,447	£34,842,957	61%	54%	£20.31	£18.06		
Change 2013-17	166	461	232,694	£9,500,927	4.70%	3.80%	£3.65	£3.12	21%	11%
Change 2016-17	151	816	154,984	£4,089,447	-2.00%	-2.20%	£0.99	£0.73	4%	1%

- Besides 2015, smaller producing theatres have seen growth in ticket sales and income during every year of the study period.

- Ticket prices have risen by 11% in real terms since 2013, while aggregate ticket sales have risen by 14%

f: Auditoria of principally presenting theatres with a capacity between 200 and 500

	Number of productions	Number of performances	Total tickets sold	Total Box Office Income	%age capacity achieved	%age cash value achieved	Average ticket price asked	Average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved	%age increase in average ticket price achieved REAL - CPI
2013	1,063	3,386	612,930	£7,721,612	49%	48%	£13.06	£12.60		
2014	1,258	3,986	691,126	£9,875,230	49%	50%	£13.99	£14.29		
2015	1,249	4,030	754,197	£10,233,815	53%	53%	£13.73	£13.57		
2016	1,432	4,370	798,021	£10,900,968	53%	53%	£13.52	£13.66		
2017	***878***	3,586	594,130	£8,329,662	51%	53%	£13.32	£14.02		
Change 2013-17	-185	200	-18,800	£608,050	1.40%	5.80%	£0.26	£1.42	11%	2%
Change 2016-17	-554	-784	-203,891	-£2,571,306	-1.80%	0.30%	-£0.20	£0.36	3%	-1%

- Like the largest presenting venues, the aggregate box office and audience figures for 200-500 seat presenting houses vary significantly year-on-year largely because of the number of performances taking place.

- In 2017 auditoriums were on average only 1.8% less full, but total ticket sales fell by a quarter.

- Average ticket prices paid have only risen 2% in real terms since 2013 and actually fell slightly in 2017.