

The Theatre Audience as a Factor of Interplay then and now - A Comparison of the Echo Audience and Financial Resources of the 54th, 55th and 56th Split Summer Festival

Prof. Ana Penjak¹

Abstract

The aim of this study is to present an overview of the theatrical audience profile who attended the 54th (2008), 55th (2009) and 56th (2010) Split Summer Festival (SSF) in Croatia. The obtained results come from a questionnaire given to the audience after performances and from the available financial data of the SSFs. What has surprisingly emerged is the presence of the relationship between the theatrical audience and the financial resources and its importance and impact on the cultural policy in Croatia. Exploring theatrical audience has become an interest of many scientists and 'theatrical people', today. The most commonly used approach in the research is the sociological one that tries to examine the 'composition' of the theatrical audience, informing us mainly of its socio-professional structure, education and financial status. The article ends in two related ideas: the obtained relationship between theatre, theatrical audience and finance informs us on the expectations, possibilities and choice behaviour of the audience attending SSF; the complexity of the relationship between a theatre, performance and audience extends to a more general picture of the importance and status of the Croatian National Theatre in Split (CNT) across globalised world stage.

Keywords: Croatia, financial research, performance, spectators, theatre audience, theatrical events

1. Introduction: The Theatre Audience as a Factor of Interplay in the Past

Can theatre exist without audience? At least one spectator is needed to make it a performance (Grotowski, 1968).

¹ Prof, Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Split, 06, Nikola Tesla Street, Split, 21000, Croatia. Phone: 00385996918447, E-mail: ana.penjak@kifst.hr

In French: *spectateur*; English: *spectator*; German: *Zuschauer*; Spanish: *espectador*; Italian: *spettatori*; Croatian: *gledatelj*. Although different at first sight, all these terms derive from the Latin word *spectator*. Aristotle, in *On Poetics*, was the first to use the term *spectator*. When talking about the way in which the spectator can access the play, Aristotle distinguishes between two types of spectator: those who watch the events in the scene, identifying with the characters and their feelings, and those who do the same thing but from a certain distance (Aristotle according to Becker, 1979). Today, with the term *spectator*, we typically mean a person sitting in the auditorium passively watching the performance. On the other hand, the term audience is somewhat more complex. The simplest definition of the audience would relate to a group of people, individuals who have their own points of view, political beliefs, personal histories, and expectations and interpretations and who are capable of influencing the process of creating theatrical performances. As such, we usually regard the spectator as an integral part of the audience, even if it is only one individual, as Jerzy Gotowsky noted in the introductory quote.

The spectator, since the first theatrical performance, proved to be the creator of the performance's meaning. Examples throughout history that show the importance of the spectator in relation to theatrical performance are numerous. In ancient Greece, for example, the audience was not considered a key factor in creating the play being performed, but its presence in the theatrical performance was conceived of as an integral part of public life. Furthermore, wanting to protect the spectator from the feelings of pain and discomfort that theatrical performances may provoke, Plato tried to ban drama as a theatrical form from the state, which also meant banning it in the theatre. However, Aristotle, relying on the feelings of fear and pity that drama provoked in spectators, counted on their participation in the theatre. Comedy, on the other hand, positioned its spectators in a different way. Spectators were seen as a mirror in which the actors seek for the approval for their behaviour and attitudes on stage. Marco De Marinis in his book *Razumijevanjekazališta: Obrisinoveteatrolgije* also speaks about feelings, behaviours and reactions that a performance can evoke in a spectator (De Marinis, 2006). Furthermore, we find a different picture of the audience in Roman theatre. The spectator was not required to attend the theatre but was free to choose the performances in which he wished to participate. In the Renaissance, cooperation was expected from the audience, even demanded, and the actors in a *commedia dell'arte* troupe were aware that they would not survive without the audience. The audience in William Shakespeare's time also played an important role.

Due to limited opportunities for theatrical performance, the audience was seen as an active participant in the realisation of his plays. With the arrival of the Baroque and the development of a new architectural form for theatres, there came a change in the profile of the audience. Audience formation is strictly hierarchical in feudal theatres but relatively democratic in city theatres, such as the buildings of the Elizabethan era. Audience members belonged to all social classes: merchants, aristocrats, workers, servants, lawyers and even prostitutes. However, the audience as we know it today first appeared, according to the available data, in 1562 during the performance of the tragedy *Gorboduc* by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville before Queen Elizabeth I. Its exclusively aristocratic audience, who saw the whole performance sitting in silence, contrasts with the aforementioned audience who saw performances mostly standing and talking, making comments and throwing things at the actors if they disapproved of what they were saying. Based on these examples, it is clear that the role of the audience changed depending on the period, playwright, troupe and even the person in whose honour the drama was performed, from a 'productive and emancipated' audience (Freshwater, 2009) then, to a passive audience in the darkened auditorium now, or 'the artist in seeing' as Bertolt Brecht calls his model of the audience (Brecht, 1966).

Perhaps, to achieve certain changes concerning the passive model of audience, we should proceed as Filippo Tommaso Marinetti described in his manifesto *Variety Theatre*. Marinetti writes that to provoke the audience to a constant reaction, one should poke them, glue their seats, provoke fights and upset them by selling the same seat to two or more people (Kirby, 1971). Following this line of thought Brecht characterised his audience as artist, and using the principle of surprise, we could explain today's vision of the audience by the fact that cooperation is required from the audience of today to achieve the epistemological element. 'The world needs to change', says Brecht, 'To change it, we must understand it. To understand it, we have to start looking at things as if they were unknown; we have to start to be surprised. This process of understanding goes beyond misunderstandings to a new, more complete understanding of insight. Knowing is the enjoyment, joy and fun' (Brecht, 1966). Thus, what the audience should take away from the process of events and characters on stage is its inevitability, that element of clarity and understanding, so that the audience might recognise it as only one possibility in a sea of possibilities (Batušić, 1991).

In other words, the main idea is to enable the audience to confront the situations on stage realistically, thus shattering the view of the audience as spectators who merely indulge passively in the events played out before them. Changing the stereotypical picture of an audience of today, we would create an active audience again, an audience participating in the events not only on stage but also off stage in the broader social context.

1.1. The Theatre Audience as a Factor of the Interplay Today

Today's approach to the theatrical audience is not like the one in Aristotle or Shakespeare's time. Exploring audience today has become an interest of many scientists and 'theatrical people' from Roman Ingarden, Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauss, Bertolt Brecht and Branko Gavella, to Freud and, more recently, Susan Bennett and Umberto Eco. Sociology, economics, psychology, marketing, cybernetics and many other industries have increasingly been engaged in the same research. They all, in one-way or another, try to define, explain and clarify the concept of audience, as well as their role in the theatre from the initial phase to the final realisation of a performance. Also, through the financial profit of a theatre or a single performance, we can obtain the picture of audience. In this case we learn about their preferences for a single performance or a performer, their attendance and the general profile of people who attend such cultural events. But the most commonly used approach in these researches is the sociological one that tries to examine the 'composition' of the audience, informing us mainly of its socio-professional structure, education, and financial status (Lukić, 2014). But how often do these type of researches occur? How important are they for a theatre?

In Croatia there are almost no such systematic researches regarding the topic. Thus, the following overview of the theatrical audience puts new light on the issue. Through a questionnaire, the overview will examine and present the profile of the audience based on their attendance at the 54th, 55th and 56th Split Summer Festivals (SSF) that are a part of the Croatian National Theatre (CNT) Split programme. In addition, the Theatre Mala Scena, Zagreb, conducted a thematically similar study in 2007. The results of the study have been published in daily newspapers, *Vjesnik* (24 January 2007), on the Internet and on the Mala Scena Official website. The theatre Mala Scena itself financed the study. The study was conducted in a form of a questionnaire in a period from September to December 2006 in 27 secondary schools in Zagreb.

In contrast to the first study, this study was conducted on younger audiences, i.e., people 14 to 18 years old. The survey found that only 1.28% of young people attend theatre in their free time, while 39% of them spend their free time in bars. A total of 25% think theatre is stupid, boring and they are not interested at all. A total of 43.6% attend theatre only a few times a year, mostly with their school (Theatre Mala Scena, 2013).

While once theatre was a place of gathering, meeting other people and of entertainment, today people are gathered by mass media. Different lifestyles are not just a demographic changes, but cultural, too. Thus, generations born between 1946 and 1965, also known as *the boomers*, gave birth to a completely new, individual approach towards culture and theatre. According to this understanding, Nikša Sviličić conducted a case-study but on different type of spectators - from those who visit online museum, to those who prefer, or not, watching Croatian documentaries in theatres (Sviličić, 2012a; Sviličić & Vidačković, 2013). The same author also discussed on the spectatorship and their interest in reception of films in Croatian cinema and TV distribution (Sviličić, 2012b).

On the other hand, there are numerous examples of audience profile researches done by authors in different countries in the world. For example, Miranda Boorsman and Hans Van Maanen did the study on this topic in Netherlands. They presented it in their article 'View and Review in the Netherlands: the Role of Theatre Critics in the Construction of Audience Experience' (Boorsman & Maanen, 2003). Willmar Sauter in his article 'Who reacts when, how and upon what: From audience surveys to the theatrical event' focuses on behaviouristic surveys of audiences (Sauter, 2002), while Peter H. Mann presents a practical case survey on methodological problems of theatre audience in Britain (Mann 1966; Mann, 1967). Eliza Bent and Cynthia Marshall discuss on the bodies in the audience (Bent, 2008; Marshall, 2011), while Suzanne M. Sato sees audience as a form of an art (Sato, 2005). Although there are many more studies on the topic, still the audience as such remains unexplored, especially in Croatia, thus leaving room for a broader, future perspective.

2. Two Unavoidable Elements of the Split Summer Festival: Financial Resources and Audience

Culture as an investment that brings profit has never gone hand in hand. We are the witnesses of this reality every day.

Culture, if it does not bring profit, might become ideology. It has been happening worldwide, including Croatia (Penjak, 2012). In the previous sections, the author has briefly discussed the concept of audience and its role throughout the history, as well as current research. The results that follow are a contribution to this story.

Furthermore, to be able to understand theatrical audience in Croatia, one should first take into account data concerning the latest Croatian Census of Population, Households and Dwellings from 2011 (Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, 2011). In Croatia, country of approximately 4 million people, 0,8% of the whole population is illiterate, 30,8% has finished elementary school, 52,6% has finished secondary school and just 16,4% of the whole population has a faculty degree (Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, 2011). In comparison to the same profile of the population of the EU countries, Croatia has placed itself on the 7th place (26,7% of highly educated people, age 25-64) behind Finland (39,3%), Ireland (38,2%), Norway (37,6%), United Kingdom (37%), Slovenia (25,1%) and Hungary (21,1%).

The profile of the audience that follows will be made through the use of a questionnaire and financial data of the 54th, 55th and 56th SSF, which will enable us to present a more general profile of the audience. By analysing the results the author will present the following: 1) the profile of the audience attending performances at the SSF; 2) the general image of the SSF and the CNT in Split based on the opinion of its audience; and 3) the work and the state of the SSF and the CNT in Split.

The questionnaire was distributed during breaks and at the end of each theatrical performance at the 54th, 55th and 56th SSF. Respondents anonymously answered 23 survey questions to gauge their opinion about the repertoire, guest appearances, seasonal performances, to assess whether they are subscribers or not, etc. Among other things, they were asked for sex, age, profession and their monthly income. All the data were collected at the end and were presented to the CNT in Split in a form of percentages. On the other hand, available financial data were approached on two levels: 1) the financial budget for culture for the City of Split (including the Split Summer Festival (SSF) as an integral part of the CNT Split) for the period 2008-2009; and 2) financial data on the number of units sold, not sold, and free tickets of the SSF in the same time period.

Before processing the collected data, it is necessary to note a few important facts. According to Art. 13 para. 1 of the *Law on Theatres* (*Official Gazette* No.71/2006), the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Croatia determines the criteria and standards for providing funding for the National Theatres (Law on Theatres 2006; Ministry of Culture, Republic of Croatia, 2010). Money that provides necessary funding for programmes, expenses (salaries, stage equipment, etc.), investment and maintenance comes from national, regional and local funds. Resources include funding for the program of the theatres, funds for the expenses and funds for investments and investment maintenance. From the funds for the program salaries and fees are provided, as well as the costs of equipment required for the execution of the program. From the funds for the expenses the on-going expenses of the theatre are provided. However, all the National Theatres in Croatia (the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, the Croatian National Theatre in Split, the Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc in Rijeka and the Croatian National Theatre in Osijek) are directly financed from the state budget for culture and from the city budget in which the theatre is located (Law on Theatres, 2006; Sauter, 2000). Accordingly, the city of Split sets a budget each year for a specific period within which the specific amount is set aside for culture. The city of Split's estimated financial budget for culture for the period 2008-2010 is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The City of Split's Financial Budget for Culture for the Period 2008-2010 (USD)

	2008	2009	2010
National budget for culture	16,220,905.75	15,024,880.00	694,087,940.06
Theatre and music-performing arts	818,070.56	823,300.03	888,396.30
Regular Theatre Activities ²	762,130.84	648,362.89	700,860.17
The Croatian National Theatre Split	648,147.74	667,188.76	720,582.51
Theatre Programme Activities	24,921.86	18,825.87	19,722.34

² Under the regular activity of the culture we include all those activities that take place in a theatre throughout the year. Regular activity can be tracked through: a) music-performing arts (theatre, concerts); b) exhibitions; c) cinema; d) various lectures and book promotions; e) courses and creative workshops; f) horizontal-vertical cooperation with other institutions, entrepreneurs, associations and generally throughout the community.

From the Table 1, it is evident that the city of Split set aside the least for culture in 2009 (15,024,880.00 USD) and the most in 2010 (694,087,940.06 USD), i.e., 1,032,912.62 USD more than in 2009. The budget for culture for the period 01 January 2008 – 31 December 2008 was 16,220,905.75 USD. From each of these amounts, the budget for SSF was always the same – 233,082.18 USD. Furthermore, it should be noted that the SSF is traditionally held under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Croatia, the Croatian Ministry of Culture, the city of Split, Split-Dalmatia County Tourist Board and the Croatian Tourist Board of Split. The general sponsors of the festival in this period are Croatian Telecom (T-Com), various insurance companies, banks, the press, radio, hotels, airlines, etc.

Furthermore, the ticket price for each production in the repertoire also plays an important role in creating the whole picture. Thus, ticket prices for the opera performance at the 54th SSF were from 26.89 to 53.79 USD. For a dramatic performance, depending whether it was a premiere or not, the tickets were from 14.34 to 26.89 USD, while the cheapest tickets were for a ballet performance, from 14.34 to 26.89 USD. Ticket prices for a classical music concert ranged from 10.76 to 35.86 USD. Concerning the diversity of performances, the 54th SSF included 43 performances in Split: 26 plays, 5 ballets, 5 operas, 7 concerts, 5 exhibitions, 1 literary event, 1 performance of *The Night of Diocletian* (a 3 days' ceremony held by the citizens of Split that faithfully recreates some of the processions that would have occurred in ancient times), 1 performance of the play *Ero s onog svijeta* in the village of Vrlika, 1 *Viva gitara* concert in the village of Selca and 1 concert featuring the artist Vlatko Stefanovski.

Table 2 shows the sum of the tickets sold in free and organised sales for each production at the 54th SSF. These numbers, however, do not include free tickets that were divided as follows: 509 for dramatic performances, 167 for opera, 85 for ballet and 205 for concert performances.

Table 2: The Sum of the Tickets Sold at the 54th Split Summer Festival (USD)

	Free sale	Organized sale	Total
Ballet	227,882.65	1,093.69	238,819.58
Drama	1,196,787.32	125,864.37	1,322,651.70
Concert	725,423.45	93,591.46	818,835.61
Opera	746,580.14	153,834.24	900,414.37

Based on Table 2, we conclude that the most money was earned from the tickets sold for dramatic performances and the least was earned from the tickets sold for ballet performances, concerts and opera performances.

Furthermore, the 55th SSF, according to the numbers shown in Table 3, attracted larger audience than the previous SSF.

Table 3: The Sum of the Tickets Sold at the 55th Split Summer Festival (USD)

	Free sale	Organized sale	Total
Ballet	9,700	390,00	10.090,00
Drama	65.340,00	3.370,00	68.710,00
Concert	22.970,00	3.180,00	26.150,00
Opera	85.100,00	7.520,00	92.620,00

The reason for this may be hidden in the picturesque programme that counted, in total, 43 events - 36 performances in Split, 4 exhibitions and 3 guest performances of the Croatian National Theatre in Split, which included 1 opera performance, 1 ballet premiere and 2 drama premieres. Out of the 36 performances in Split, 2 were opera-ballet performances, 4 were operas, 19 were dramatic performances, 2 were ballets and 9 were concerts. According to data obtained from the annual report, based on the number of tickets sold at the Croatian National Theatre in Split, there were 11,000 spectators, i.e., 83.29% of all tickets sold.

Ticket prices did not change much. For example, ticket prices for the opera were from 17.93 to 44.82 USD, i.e., 8.96 USD less than for the same performance the previous year. While the tickets for dramatic performances cost the same regardless of whether the performance was a premiere or not, the 55th SSF instituted some changes in price. For a dramatic premiere one had to pay from 17.93 to 26.89 USD, while the price for subsequent performances was slightly lower, from 7.17 to 21.52 USD. The cheapest ticket for ballet performance at the 54th and the 55th SSFs remained the same, 14.34 USD, but the most expensive at the 55th SSF was raised from 5.38 to 21.52 USD per performance. The only ticket price that did not change was the one for classical music concerts, from 10.76 to 35.86 USD. Using the same working method, the sum total of tickets sold in a free and organised sale of each production, Table 3 shows the total income from ticket sales for the 55th SSF.

Free tickets are not included in the income. Free tickets were distributed as follows: 332 free tickets were given for dramatic performances, 167 fewer than for the 54th SSF; 173 for opera performances, i.e., 6 more than for the 54th SSF; 58 for ballet performances, i.e., 27 fewer than for the same type of performance the previous year; and 162 for the classical music concerts, i.e., 33 fewer tickets than for the previous year. Whereas the 54th SSF earned the most from tickets sold for dramatic performances, the 55th SSF earned the most from ticket sold for the opera, followed by dramatic performances, concerts and ballet performances.

Shifting attention to the 56th SSF and its ticket sales, we may conclude that it did not differ much from the previous two SSFs. Ticket prices for the opera for the 56th SSF were from 17.93 to 44.82 USD and from 14.34 to 39.44 USD for dramatic performances. Ticket prices for ballet performances, compared to the 54th and the 55th SSF, increased from form 14.34 to 21.52 USD for the most expensive seats, while the cheapest seats were 7.17 USD. The only ticket price that did not change over the course of the three SSFs was the price for the classical music concerts, from 10.76 to 35.86 USD. The 56th SSF had, in total, 40 performances, 50 if you include the opening, exhibitions and awards. 3 of these were opera performances, 20 were dramatic performances, and 3 were ballet performances and classical music concerts. The 56th SSF welcomed one new event – a presentation of the best film from the 57th Pula Film Festival. However, based on the numbers of unsold tickets for the film, it seems that the audience in Split was not prepared to accept the introduction of a new media in a traditional month-long summer performance festival. Thus, the total earnings from ticket sales for the film presentations were 2,790.00 USD. Out of a total of 400 tickets, just 28 were gratis. Most of the tickets were sold for the film *Seventy - Two Days* by DaniloSerbedzija (286 tickets) and just 45 tickets for the film *The Show Must Go On* by NevioMarasovic.

Table 4: The Sum of the Tickets Sold at the 56th Split Summer Festival (USD)

	Free sale	Organized sale	Total
Ballet	243,481.23	681.32	250,115.10
Drama	1,572,228.92	78,889.35	1,651,118.27
Concert	469,750.23	31,376.45	501,126.68
Opera	594,000.96	65,800.89	659,981.14
Film	9,502.58	40,520.44	50,023.02

The final total income of the 56th SSF tickets (Table 4) shows that the highest income was gained from the ticket sales for dramatic performances, followed by opera, classical music concerts and ballet performances. Free tickets were not included in the total overall. 332 free tickets (167 less than for the 54th SSF) were divided in the following way: 173 for the dramatic performances (6 more than for the 54th SSF), 58 for ballet performances (27 less than for the 55th SSF) and 162 for the classical music concerts (33 less than for the 55th SSF).

In addition to the data presented so far, and with the aim of getting the whole picture, the author of this article decided to take a look at the changes in the number of performances of each production (Table 5) and, consequently, the total earnings.

Table 5: The Number of Plays for the Period 2008 – 2010 Per Repertoire

	2008	2009	2010	Total
Ballet	5	2	3	10
Drama	26	22	20	68
Concert	7	10	8	25
Opera	5	6	3	14
Film	0	0	6	6

What is interesting to note from Table 5 is that the number of dramatic performances decreased from 26 in 2008 to 20 performances in 2010. Nonetheless, the total earning from the dramatic performances did not decrease. The results show a completely different picture (Table 6).

Table 6: Total Income Per Repertoire for the Period 2008 – 2010 (USD)

	2008	2009	2010	Total
Ballet	239,895.35	180,907.63	250,115.10	670,918.08
Drama	1,328,568.40	1,231,928.94	1,651,118.27	4,211,615.61
Concert	822,600.78	468,853.76	501,126.68	1,792,581.22
Opera	904,538.13	1,660,620.85	659,981.14	3,225,140.13
Film	0	0	50,023.02	50,023.02

3. Discussion

People who attend theatre can be divided into three categories: those who attend theatre on a regular basis (small percentage); those who never attend any cultural events including the theatrical ones (big percentage); those who attend theatre occasionally depending on their interest (undetermined percentage). Willmar Sauter states that in researching the relationship between the theatrical audience and a performance, one should always take into consideration the aforementioned fact, but also different cultural conditions, cultural policy of a country, class structures of a society, political, ideological and economic heritage, gender relationships, personal interests, genre expectancy and many other cultural contexts (Sauter, 2000). Although it was not before the 60s of the 20th century that the first research was conducted on this issue (William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen, *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma*, 1966), the first traces of this relationship date back in ancient Greece. The obtained data from that period state that the financial realities of the polis and the state of the time were of great importance.

They were taken into account through the ticket prices. It was one of the ways in which the theatre tried to connect to the audience, which, if we recall, consisted mainly of citizens of the middle and lower classes. Moreover, Elizabethan audience is another one of these examples. Around 1550, in London, theatre plays were mostly held in the backyard of inns. One might think that because the performances were not held in a theatre, that the spectators did not have to pay for the tickets. On the contrary, the spectators, indeed, had to pay for the tickets for a performance they wanted to see. It was from the money earned from the tickets that the travelling troupes earned for their living, paid their performers thus making possible future performances. But, at the same time, the spectators would only buy tickets for a performance they found of an interest and up-to-date. Thus, wishing to earn some money, Shakespeare wrote, between 1600 and 1602, *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It* and *The Twelfth Night*, which he knew would please the taste of the audience of the time. The money earned from the sold tickets enabled Shakespeare to buy 127 acres of land in Old Stratford. However, with the establishment of private theatres in the 17th century, the increase in ticket prices was due to the state's reduction of financing and resulted in audience stratification within the theatre.

But who are the people who attend theatrical performances, today? What do we know about them?

How important is the relationship between theatrical audience and the financial realities in obtaining more general picture a theatre and a country? Do theatres and performers still depend on the number of sold tickets, or has this relations been neglected and put aside?

In Croatia, there are no such systematic researches regarding the issue of theatrical audience. The reason may be traced in the fact that such researches are expensive, long-lasting and do not present cultural priory of the country. Considering the latter, it should come as a surprise since the need for artistic value is not something with which a person is born. Thus, it should be 'the duty' of every society to encourage and develop such a 'need' starting from the educational system to more general values in the society that would be in accordance with its cultural policy. Following this line of thoughts, the aforementioned analysed data present just a piece of the larger picture.

Considering that the author only had the basic information on the audience profiles (sex, age, profession and their monthly income) and the financial reports for the chosen SSFs, the author was not able to draw any conclusions on the 'internal factors' of the targeted audience (its experience, knowledge about the performance, its expectations, prior knowledge of some actor, of previous works by the same director, and so on). What the author could do and did was that she draw information from the type of sold tickets for each performance within each SSF as to obtain inform on: a) the audience's taste and preferences (if there was a performance featuring some famous performer it generally attracted more people); b) their trendiness and c) the economical power of the audience.

The data showed that the audience attending the SSF is mostly highly educated audience and that the percentage of audience with higher incomes was larger than the one with the lower incomes. Also, the author concluded that only the true theatre lovers, who also come to be highly educated, were the ones who were ready to pay the most for the tickets for a certain performance on 54th, 55th and 56th SSF. In comparison to this, in Great Britain 98% of high class people attend theatre, on regular bases, while those from middle and lower classes make 58%. The example from Spain shows quite opposite situation. People of high economic status make 1,46% of theatrical audience, while those of lower economic status make the majority of the theatrical audience, 64,80%(Lukić, 2011).

In addition, each new SSF came with changes, not just regarding ticket prices and financial resources made available by the City of Split for the festival, but in their repertoire. As an example, the 56th SSF introduced the film, *Seventy-TwoDays*, as a type of a new medium as part of the traditional summer festival. A small number of sold tickets for Serbedzija's film *Seventy-TwoDays* reveal an idea that the audience is not ready for this 'avant-garde' breakthrough within traditionally structured repertoire based on sequences of opera, drama, and ballet. Also, it seems that the audience who attends the SSF, in spite of its financial possibilities or its education still gives preference to theatrical performances over film.

In addition, opera performances brought in the most revenues, thus revealing that attending opera still has that status symbol, that sound of prestige, nobility and classiness in the society. Ballet and classical music concert performances mostly remained constant from year to year-based on attendance as well as financial figures. This is probably due to the fact that only people who are either professional ballet dancers or musicians attend these performances. The difference can be observed only in the changes made by concert performances which depended on the performer and his popularity in the world – the more he or she was well-known, the more he or she attracted audience. Here very useful proofed to be data analysis, although thirty-years-old made by the most developed countries in the world. French CDED research from 1975 showed that the profile of the audience attending concerts is made of 95% 'professional audience', i.e., 95% of people who have either finished some musical academy or are musicians by the profession(Lukić, 2011). Cases from Germany and Sweden tell the same story as the one aforementioned.

4. Conclusion

Going back to the quote from the beginning of the article, even Grotowski agrees that performance does not exist as an autonomous phenomenon, a completed entity; on the contrary, performance only makes sense in relation to its reception, even if its reception consists of one sole spectator(Grotowski, 1968). Thus, the audience as such results to be the creator of a theatrical performance. The audience typically consists of a number of individuals who carry within themselves their own points of view, political beliefs, personal histories, expectations and interpretations. The audience not only affects the creation and process of theatrical performance but also influences the status (whether economical or the popularity status) of theatre in society, as well as the development of theatre across time and space.

With this point of view in mind, the author of this article presented a practical case on the audience of the SSFs through two aspects: the relationship between the financial aspects of the three festivals and the audience profile aspects obtained through a questionnaire. The results revealed the presence and the importance of the relationship between spectator's interests as well as their financial possibilities with theatrical performances. Although there are many various studies on similar topics, the author believes that the topic as such is still unexplored. Thus, the author believes that this overview presents new, original contribution to the topic, as well as the stimulating exchange of information and feedbacks for all those who wish to engage and interrogate the boundaries between theatre, audience and surrounding social contexts and elements in Croatia, in the future.

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