

Fort Worth Opera statement regarding the NEA's report on participation in the Arts:

Today the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) released the full report on their 2008 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA). One of the report's findings is a decline of arts participation overall, including opera.

While we find this report concerning, **Fort Worth Opera has not experienced a decline in overall attendance over the past five years**; in fact, our attendance has increased. We did experience two decreases: in 2007 when we converted to a Festival format, and in 2009 when we cut a production (from four operas to three) in anticipation of a declining economy. Here are the total tickets sold for the past five years:

2004/05 Season – 9,818
2005/06 Season – 13,002
2007 Festival Season – 12,214
2008 Festival Season – 14,707
2009 Festival Season – 13,514

While we do not have scientific data on the age of Fort Worth Opera goers, we have observed a noticeable decrease in the average age of attendees.

We feel that Americans are interested in the arts as much as ever, but they are changing the way they participate in and support the arts, and taking advantage of new ways to engage in artistic expression and consumption. While challenging, we feel it is our job as an arts provider to find creative ways to meet the needs of changing communities in addition to preserving a traditional art form.

For more information on Fort Worth Opera, please call Diane Rhodes Bergman, Director of Marketing/PR for Fort Worth Opera at diane@fwopera.org or 817.269.9795.

For national perspective about trends in the opera industry, please contact Patricia Kiernan Johnson at OPERA America at PKJohnson@operaamerica.org or 212-796-8620, ext. 217.