

**Billingham International Folklore
Festival of World Dance 2025
&
'60 Years of the Global Heartbeat of a
Small Town' Project**

Review



Festival Overview



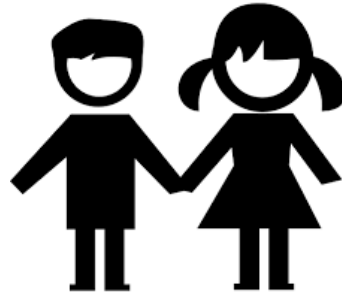
THE FESTIVAL IN NUMBERS



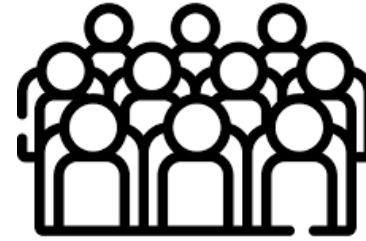
308
performers



23
Concerts
(+ 18 Fringe shows)



53
workshops



8,000
Arena &
Theatre



34
volunteers

22,000
Fringe,
Parade, Free
concerts



'Sixty Years of the Global Heartbeat of a Small Town' events attendance



5,000

Attended BIFF
Heritage
Weekend



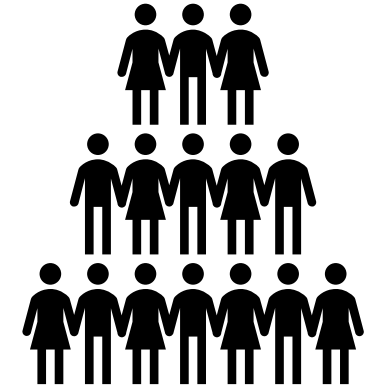
500

Attended
Special
Concert for
Children



300

Watched Live
Costumes
Exhibitions

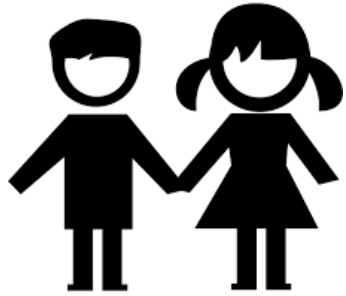


3,000

Visited BIFF
Anniversary
Exhibition



'Sixty Years of the Global Heartbeat of a Small Town' events attendance



95

Children
and young
people took
part in
workshops



100

Children
took part in
Activities



100

Children
took part in
school
projects



THE FESTIVAL IN NUMBERS



2

broadcasts



2

Radio
interviews



18

Newspaper
& magazine
articles



1.3 m

views

10,402

likes

1,107

comments

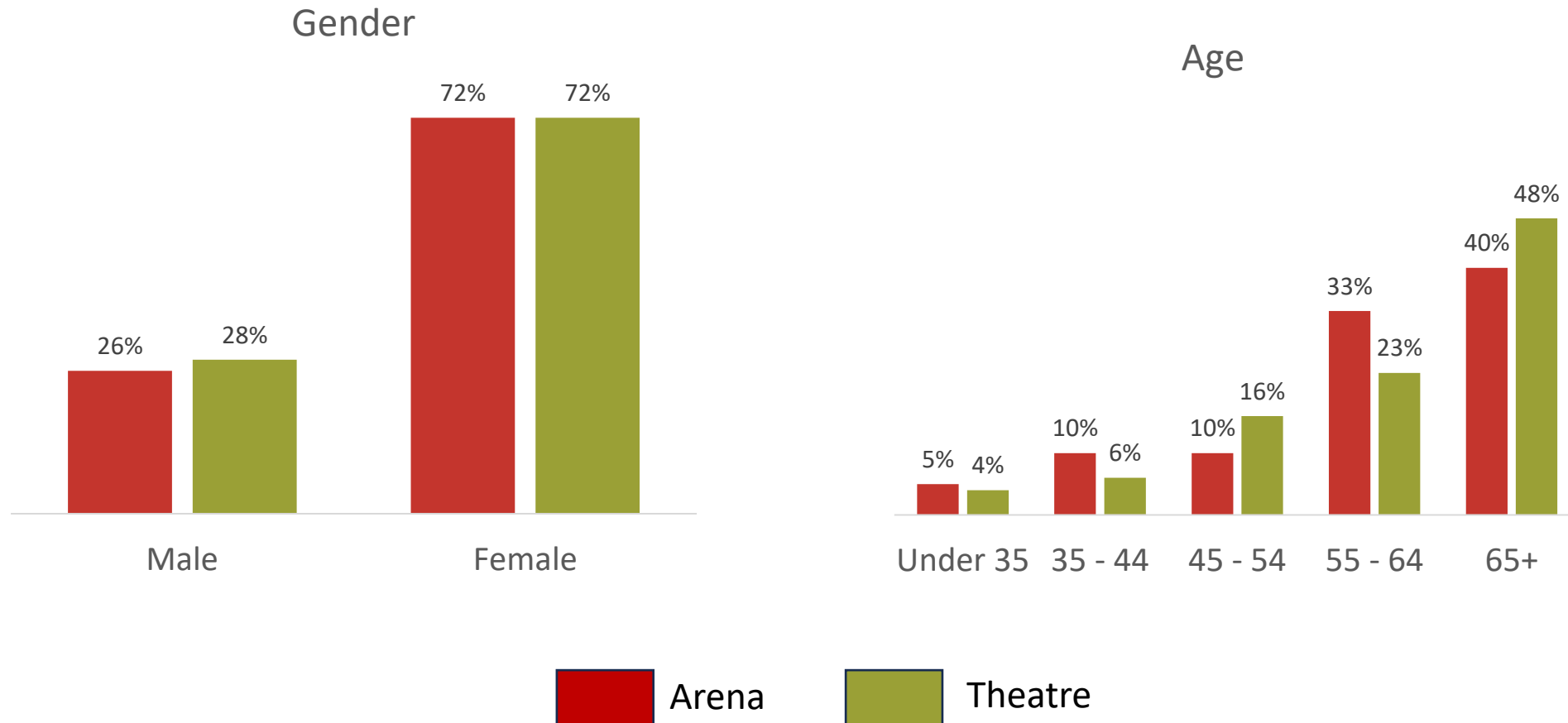
1,590

shares



THE AUDIENCE

Both the arena and theatre shows attracted predominantly female audiences, with the arena shows drawing a slightly younger crowd. The audiences were largely UK-based, with only a small proportion (2%) of arena attendees coming from outside the UK

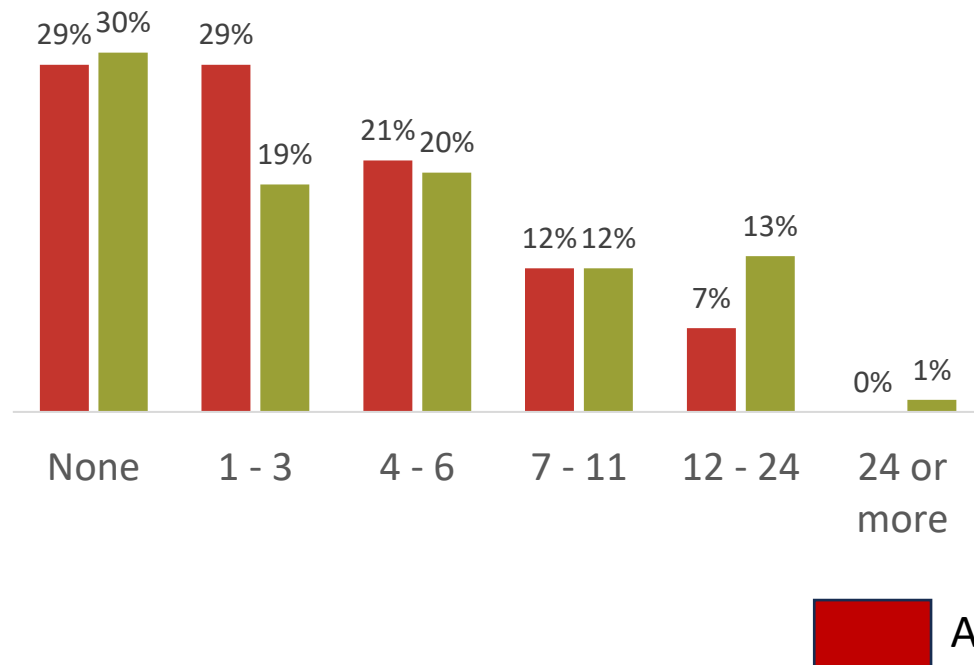


THE AUDIENCE

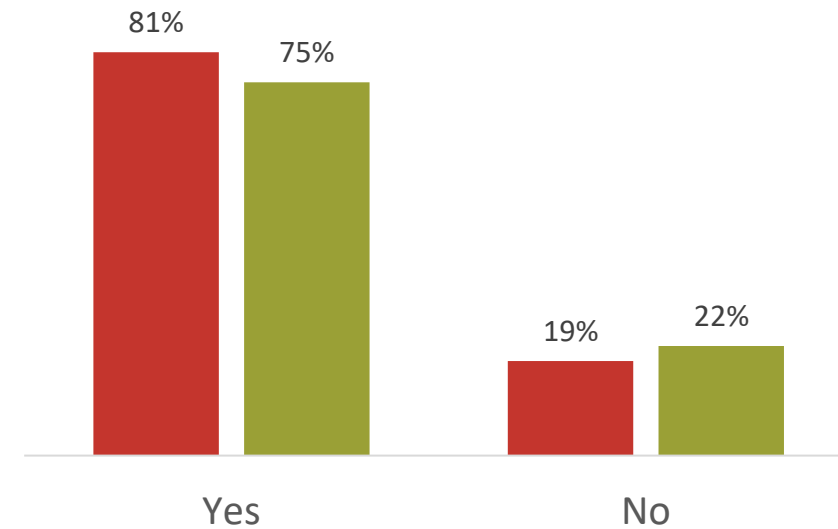
Nearly one-third of attendees at both the arena and theatre shows had only attended BIFF as a cultural event in the past 12 months, highlighting the festival's significance in people's calendars. As expected, theatre audiences tend to be more frequent cultural eventgoers, with 45% attending seven or more events annually. It's also great to see that BIFF continues to appeal both to cultural aficionados and to new audiences alike.

Additionally, eight in ten attendees came with friends, family, or groups, demonstrating the festival's strong social appeal and its ability to attract a wider audience through shared experiences

Number of cultural events attended in last 12 months?



Attendance with friends/family

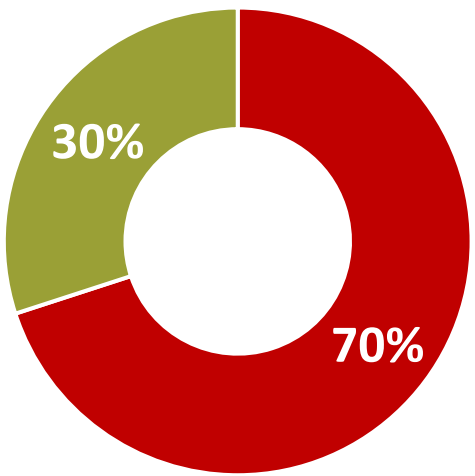


AUDIENCE FEEDBACK – PREVIOUS VISITS

The festival clearly succeeds in attracting returning visitors, but it's encouraging to see that the theatre shows brought in more new attendees. The mix of well-known arena shows, and newly introduced theatre performances is proving effective in expanding the festival's audience base

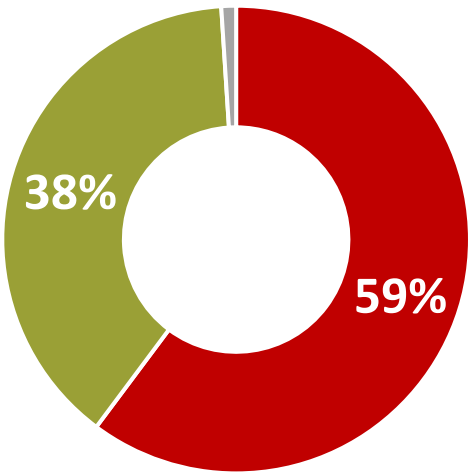
Before this year's festival, have you previously visited Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance?

Arena



■ Yes ■ No

Theatre



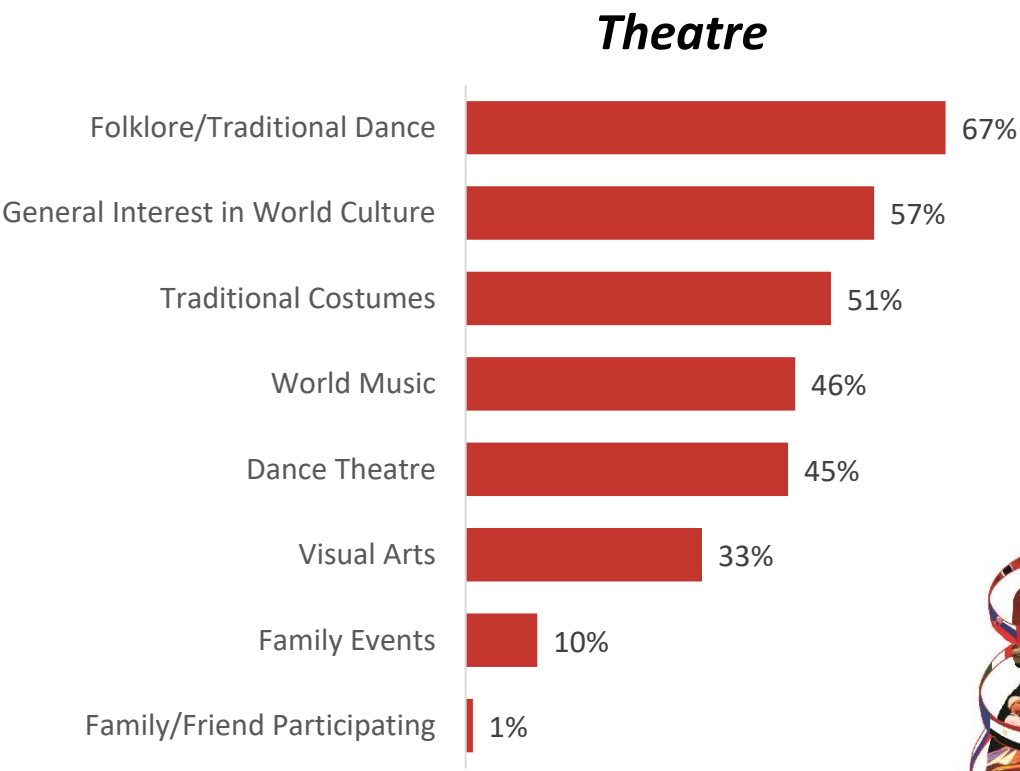
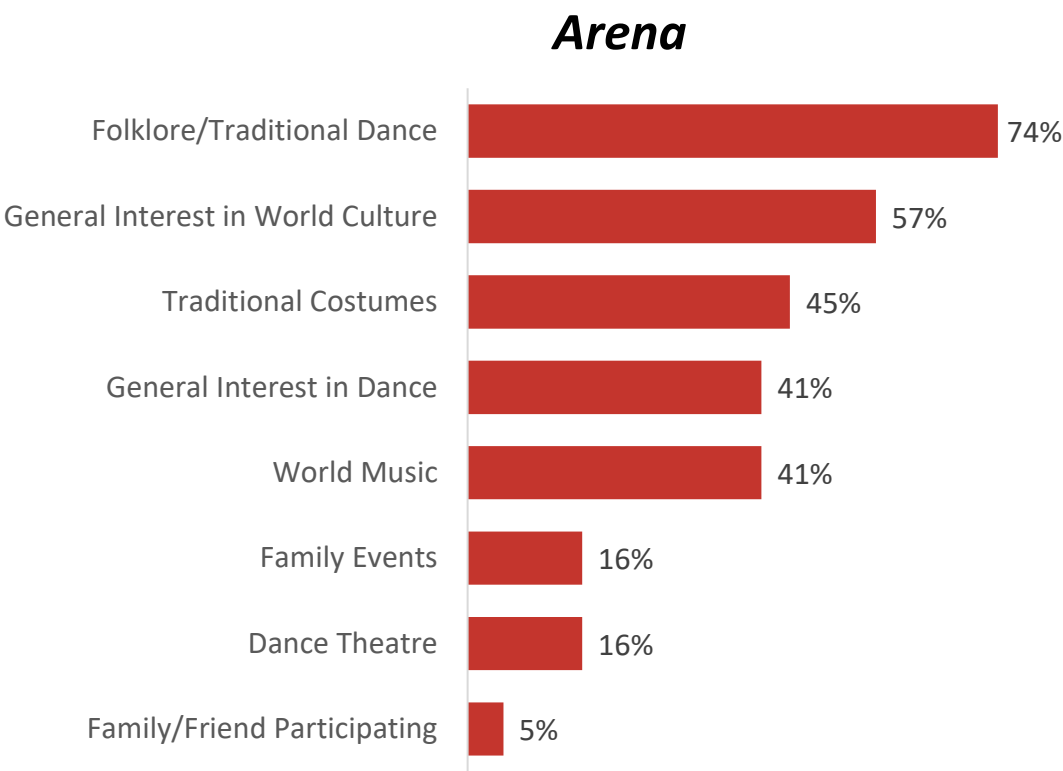
■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure



MOTIVATING FACTORS TO ATTEND

While traditional folklore, culture, and dance remain the main motivations for attending the festival, it’s encouraging to see that the addition of visual arts and dance theatre has also become a strong draw for those attending the theatre shows

Which of the following motivated you to visit Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance?



RATINGS

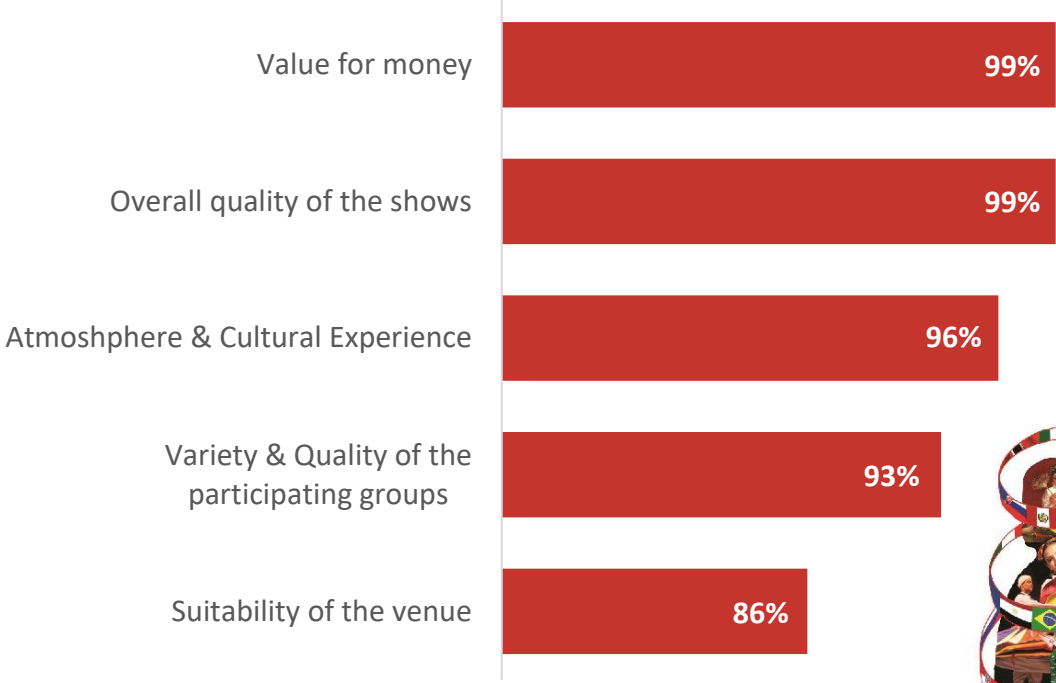
There was near-universal agreement on the quality of the shows, with all aspects receiving ratings above 75%, and most scoring in the high 90s

How would you rate the following aspects of The Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance??

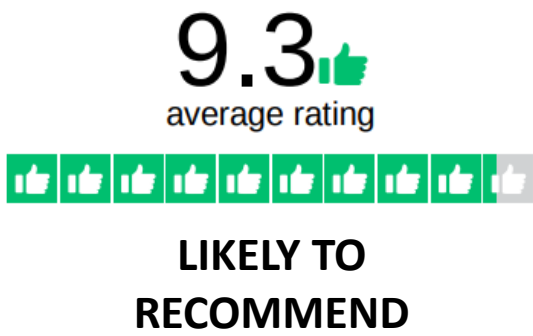
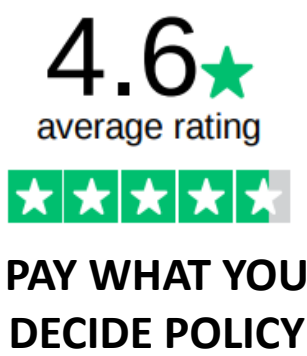
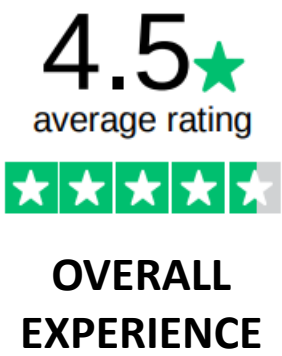
Arena



Theatre



FESTIVAL RATINGS

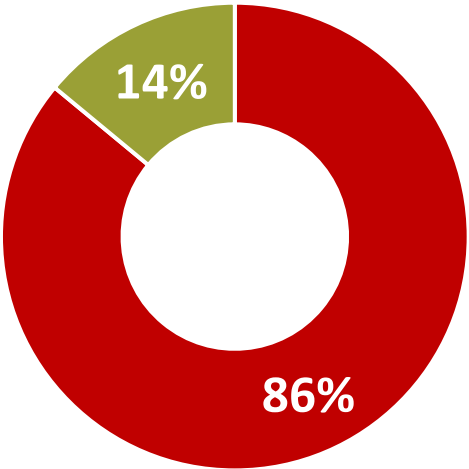


PAY WHAT YOU DECIDE

The Pay What You Decide scheme was well understood by audiences and influenced attendance for over half of respondents. While it didn't affect the number of concerts people chose to attend, it did encourage 17% to pay more than they would have under a fixed ticket price

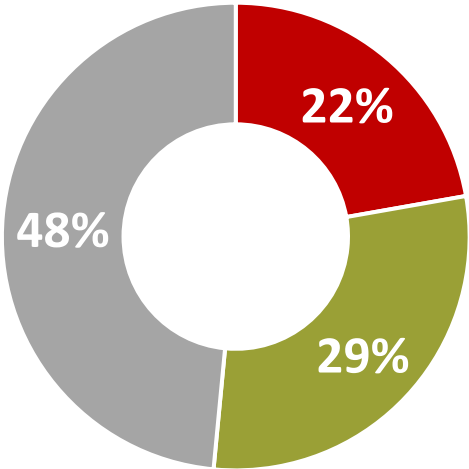
This year the concerts were offered on a Pay What You Decide basis, allowing each audience member to choose how much to contribute after attending. We'd like to hear your thoughts on how this scheme worked for

Clarity



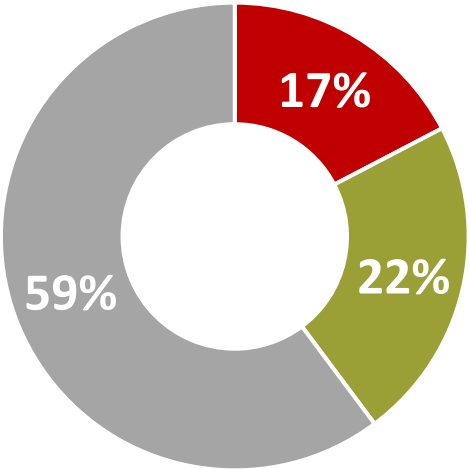
■ Clear ■ Not Clear

Influence



■ A great deal
■ To some degree
■ Not at all

Amount Paid



■ More
■ Less
■ About the Same



RECOMMEND

An overwhelming majority of audiences would recommend the festival's shows, reflecting exceptionally high satisfaction across both theatre and arena performances

On a scale of 0 -10, how likely are you to recommend the Festival to a friend, family member or colleague, with 10 being extremely likely and 0 not at all likely

81% gave a recommend score of 9+ for both arena and theatre shows

98% gave a recommend score of 7+ for the arena shows

94% gave a recommend score of 7+ for the theatre shows



AUDIENCE FEEDBACK - GENERAL

WELL ORGANISED

"**Organsation** was **fantastic** and **staff** were **brilliant**."

"The **organisation** was **brilliant** and the shows ran **smoothly**."

"The **staff** and **volunteers** were **lovely**."

"**Extremely professional**.
Excellent on every level."

EXCELLENT SHOWS

"**Amazing atmosphere** and **amazing dancers**."

"The **acts** are **wonderful** and all the participants so **friendly**."

"The **dancers** were **sensational**.
It felt like a **real celebration**."

"**Great entertainment**, including the **workshops**"

GREAT EVENT ALL ROUND

"I cannot express what an **amazing event it was**."

"It was **beautiful**. We **loved every part of it**."

"It was **wonderful**. The **sound and lighting perfect**."

"It was **fantastic from start to finish**."

To all the organisers, volunteers, musicians, dancers and behind the scene people. Thank you for organising and arranging a fantastic week full of happiness and laughter. It has been incredible to watch my little boy enjoy the festival as I did as a little girl – I will always remember this feeling – thank you again! I really do hope the festival continues to attract new and enthusiastic people and is here for many more years to come!



AUDIENCE FEEDBACK - ARENA

HIGH QUALITY

"The Festival was **a vibrant and colourful display of world dance.**"

"Went to dance workshops too on 4 occasions. They were **brilliant.**"

"The groups we saw were **excellent and performed to a very high level.**"

"It's amazing to see **world culture, so many beautiful costumes and perfect dance offs.**"

"An **outstanding festival** with great variety. **Volunteers were clearly working very hard.**"

FAMILY APPEAL

"It was **fantastic and great to see so many children enjoying the shows.**"

"We **thoroughly enjoyed** the **kids club** and **attended every session.**"

"I **attended all the workshops** and attended some of the concerts only because I was going to the workshop."

"I **was also very pleased to see the turnout, it looks like locals enjoy this event and are well aware.**"

EXCELLENT ORGANISATION

"**Excellent organisation and atmosphere.**"

"An **outstanding festival** with great variety. **Volunteers were clearly working very hard.**"

"I **love the festival.** It is probably the **best activity in Teesside** over the summer."

"I **absolutely loved it,** it gave me such a **boost to my wellbeing** and it was just great to see."



AUDIENCE FEEDBACK - THEATRE

NOSTALGIA/FAMILY

"**Joyous, happy occasion.** **Nostalgic** taking me back to happy times of 60s and 70s."

"**Wonderful.** I've been visiting every year since I moved to Billingham."

"Took my **daughter** for the first time and she **was blown away.**"

"I attended with my **grandma** when I was a child

"I have attended the festival for **the last 50 years.**"

ATMOSPHERE

"It is extraordinary to see such numbers of **talented, enthusiastic, colourful dancers in Billingham..**"

"I intend to continue attending in future years as I **thoroughly enjoyed the performance and atmosphere.**"

"The festival is such an important part of my year - my favourite event, it provides a **beacon of light and culture in times when it's really needed.**"

"It was **an amazing evening.** **The advertisement didn't do the show justice.**"

EXCELLENT QUALITY

"**Great show all groups were amazing. Brings colour to the town.**"

"Continue BIFF. **Excellent value and good variety.**"

"It was an **absolutely breathtaking show!** We loved the whole thing."

"The performance I attended gave **me aesthetic pleasure.**"



PARTICIPANTS/CHOREOGRAPHERS FEEDBACK

PERFORMERS

"Thank you so much for letting me be part of the show and Billingham festival, **it was a wonderful experience.**"

Matthew Miller, Irish Dancer

"Thank you for the most **wonderful experience** yet again working with you guys. From the bottom of my heart it has been **a pleasure to watch Kingston gain so much experience and take in the different cultures and art.**"

Teissy Euston, African Dancer

"Thanks again for organising such a **wonderful show** and festival. I have loved being a part of it. **Well done for all your efforts.**"

Gemma Bennett, Irish Dancer

"The festival **was amazing** and everyone thoroughly enjoyed being part of it **and making new friends.**"

Christine Eskildsen, Community Cast Director

GUEST CHOREOGRAPHERS WHO ATTENDED THE SHOWS

"I attended the World Dance Gala at the Forum Theatre on 16 August 2025, and I was **truly impressed by the level of curation** that offered Billingham's audiences such exceptional access to international dance. The **vibrancy and diversity of cultures** represented on stage **embodied a spirit of universal connection**, leaving me with **an incredible sense of joy and belonging**. Informative, entertaining, joyful, and deeply impressive **it was an exceptional evening of dance.**"

Mathieu Geffré
Award winning choreographer
Artistic Director 'Rendez-Vous' Dance

"The Festival brings great **inspiration and vitality** to the people of Billingham and the North East. At the same time, it is a **great catalyst** for bringing together such **a rich and varied global cultural mix to share experiences**, make new friendships, and create local pride. The Festival continues **its magical journey: spreading joy, laughter and long lasting memories.**"

Balbir Singh, MBE
Artistic Director Balbir Singh Dance Company
Arts Council NPO



INTERNATIONAL DANCE COMPANIES FEEDBACK

'Thank you again for hosting us at your legendary festival this year. We were so honored to come and take part in the lovely events! The stages and tech were outstanding; our band said many times that the tech in the Arena was one of the best setups they've ever had. All the volunteers were just delightful - we love them all so much

It made our dancers feel so cared for and comfortable, which hopefully reflected in our performances and energy levels in the shows. The kids threw their hearts into it and loved it all!

The 18:25 show you created was so powerful and we again were honored to take part in it. We especially LOVED the collaboration with Absolutely Legless for the percussion number. The calibre of all the international teams was so high and we loved hanging out with them and getting to know them!

We hope that everyone there is getting some rest now that the festival is over, and is confident and comfortable that the festival you hosted was an amazing, beautiful experience.

Thank you again so much for all you do to keep this festival going. You are valued, honored and loved by American Footworks! '

Mindy Larsen
American Footworks Festival Team, USA

'On behalf of the entire delegation from Puerto Rico and the Brumas de Borikén Folkloric Company, we want to express our most heartfelt gratitude to you and your team. Participating in the Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance was a true honor and an unforgettable experience for each of us. We return home full of pride and joy, deeply inspired by the warmth and professionalism of your entire organization. We also want to take a moment to acknowledge your personal commitment to the preservation, promotion, and celebration of cultural diversity. You are an extraordinary cultural leader, and the legacy of this festival is a testament to your vision and dedication.

Thank you for everything you have done; not only for us but for folklore and world dance. We look forward to staying in touch and collaborating again in the future.

With admiration and gratitude, '

Edwin Gilberto Ramírez Aponte

President, Compañía Folklórica Brumas de Borikén Inc.

Charles Anthony Marzant Ortiz

General Director, Compañía Folklórica Brumas de Borikén Inc.

Puerto Rico



BIFF 2025 IN A NUTSHELL

**HIGH QUALITY &
ENJOYABLE
EXPERIENCE**

**CULTURAL
DIVERSITY &
ATMOSPHERE**

**NOSTALGIA &
LOYALTY**

**COMMUNITY &
TRADITION**

FAMILY APPEAL

**GENERATIONAL
EXPERIENCE**

**VOLUNTEER
APPRECIATION**

**POSITIVE
EMOTIONAL
IMPACT**

**ENGAGING THEMES
& STORYTELLING**