

**wslf**  
**uwxn**

# Assessing the Audience Impact of Choral Music Concerts

Alan Brown

August 10, 2016



**Research Commissioned by Chorus America**

**With funding support from:**

**ArtsWave**

**Barr Foundation**

**The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation**

**GALA Choruses**

**Heinz Endowments**

**The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation**

# Participating Choruses

- Bach Choir of Pittsburgh (PA)
- Boston Children's Chorus (MA)
- Cantus (MN)
- Children's Festival Chorus of Pittsburgh (PA)
- Choral Arts Society of Washington (DC)
- Cincinnati Boychoir (OH)
- Cincinnati May Festival (OH)
- Gay Men's Chorus of Washington (DC)
- Handel and Haydn Society (MA)
- Houston Chamber Choir (TX)
- Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia (PA)
- Peninsula Women's Chorus (CA)
- Pittsburgh Camerata (PA)
- Pittsburgh Concert Chorale (PA)
- The Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh (PA)
- The Washington Chorus (DC)
- San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus (CA)
- San Francisco Girls Chorus (CA)
- Seattle Pro Musica (WA)
- Toronto Mendelssohn Choir (ON)
- Vocal Arts Ensemble (OH)
- VocalEssence (MN)
- Windy City Gay Chorus and Treble Quire (IL)

# Research Questions

- How are audiences affected by live choral music concerts?
- What can we conclude about the experiences they have?
- How do their experiences differ?
- Can we identify drivers of impact?

# Methodology

- 23 choruses surveyed audiences at 136 concert programs
- 14,236 audience members took the survey
- A variety of data collection methods were implemented, based on each chorus's situation
  - Pre-concert in-venue paper surveys\*
  - Mail back paper survey
  - Online only
  - Mixed Methods (online & mail-back paper survey)



# Response Rates

<u>Method</u>	<u>Avg. Response Rate</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
Pre-concert in-venue paper surveys (8 programs) .....	51%	15%	71%
Mail-back paper surveys (26 programs) .....	28%	18%	59%
Online only (40 programs) .....	21%	8%	50%
Mixed methods approach – total (14 programs).....	24%		
Mixed methods approach – paper (combined).....	17%	3%	50%
Mixed methods approach – online (combined).....	12%	8%	45%

# Response enhancement efforts are key

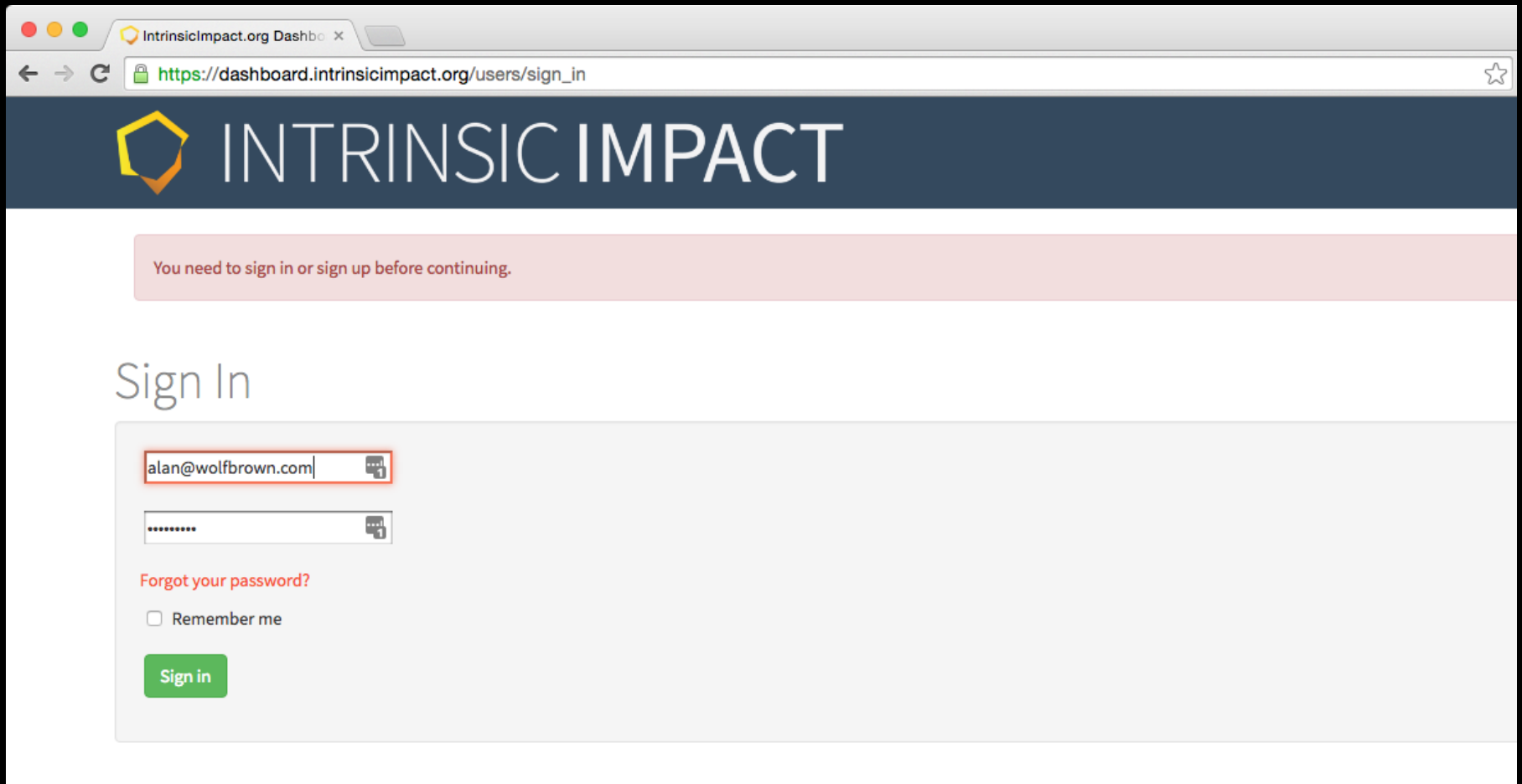
- Announcements from the stage requesting cooperation
- Adequate staff/volunteer support of paper-based surveys
- Verbal requests for survey cooperation from ushers
- Lobby signage requesting cooperation
- Notices about the survey in printed programs, or program stuffers
- Timely distribution of emails requesting survey cooperation, for online surveys
  - Ideally the night of the concert, so that surveys are available to patrons when they get home

# The Survey Protocol

- Participating choruses worked from a common survey design template
  - The protocol template is available in the report appendix
- Mandatory questions (approx. 10 questions)
- Optional questions
- Minor changes between Years 1 and 2




# Choruses accessed their data through WolfBrown's online dashboard reporting interface



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying `https://dashboard.intrinsicimpact.org/users/sign_in`. The page header features the Intrinsic Impact logo, a yellow pentagon with an orange outline, and the text "INTRINSIC IMPACT". Below the header is a pink notification bar with the text "You need to sign in or sign up before continuing." The main content area is titled "Sign In" and contains a sign-in form. The form has two input fields: the first contains the email address "alan@wolfbrown.com" and the second contains a masked password "\*\*\*\*\*". Below the password field is a link for "Forgot your password?". There is an unchecked checkbox labeled "Remember me" and a green "Sign in" button.


IntrinsicImpact.org Dashbo x


← → ↻ [https://dashboard.intrinsicimpact.org/users/sign\\_in](https://dashboard.intrinsicimpact.org/users/sign_in) ☆

 INTRINSIC IMPACT

You need to sign in or sign up before continuing.

## Sign In





[Forgot your password?](#)

Remember me



- ADMIN
- DASHBOARDS
- SURVEYS
- QUESTIONS
- ORGANIZATIONS
- USERS
- WolfBrown

maryann@vocalessence.org

# WELCOME TO YOUR CUSTOM DASHBOARD!

Select a report below to explore your survey data.

EDIT DASHBOARD (VocalEssence)

- Cohort-Wide Mandatory Questions
- Demographics
- Buyer Behavior and Context
- Intrinsic Impact
- Summative Impact
- Engagement Activities
- Open-Ends

YOUR SURVEY RESPONSES		
Chorus America (Aggregate)	AGGREGATE	15133
VocalEssence	AGGREGATE	1047
Made in Minnesota		128
Welcome Christmas (2014)		237
WITNESS: Let Freedom Ring		130
¡Cantaré! Community Concert (2015)		72
Welcome Christmas (2015)		162
WITNESS: Morehouse College Glee Club		117
Listeners' Choice LIVE		62
¡Cantaré! Community Concert (2016)		139

## DEMOGRAPHICS

edit report

clear cache

debug

EXPORT BETA

A limited set of demographic questions was included in the survey, including gender, age and ZIP code. These figures may reflect some amount of bias from respondent self-selection, and may not accurately represent the total audience for these programs.

## 1 PROGRAMS

## 2 FILTERS

## 3 REPORT MODE

Select All Select None

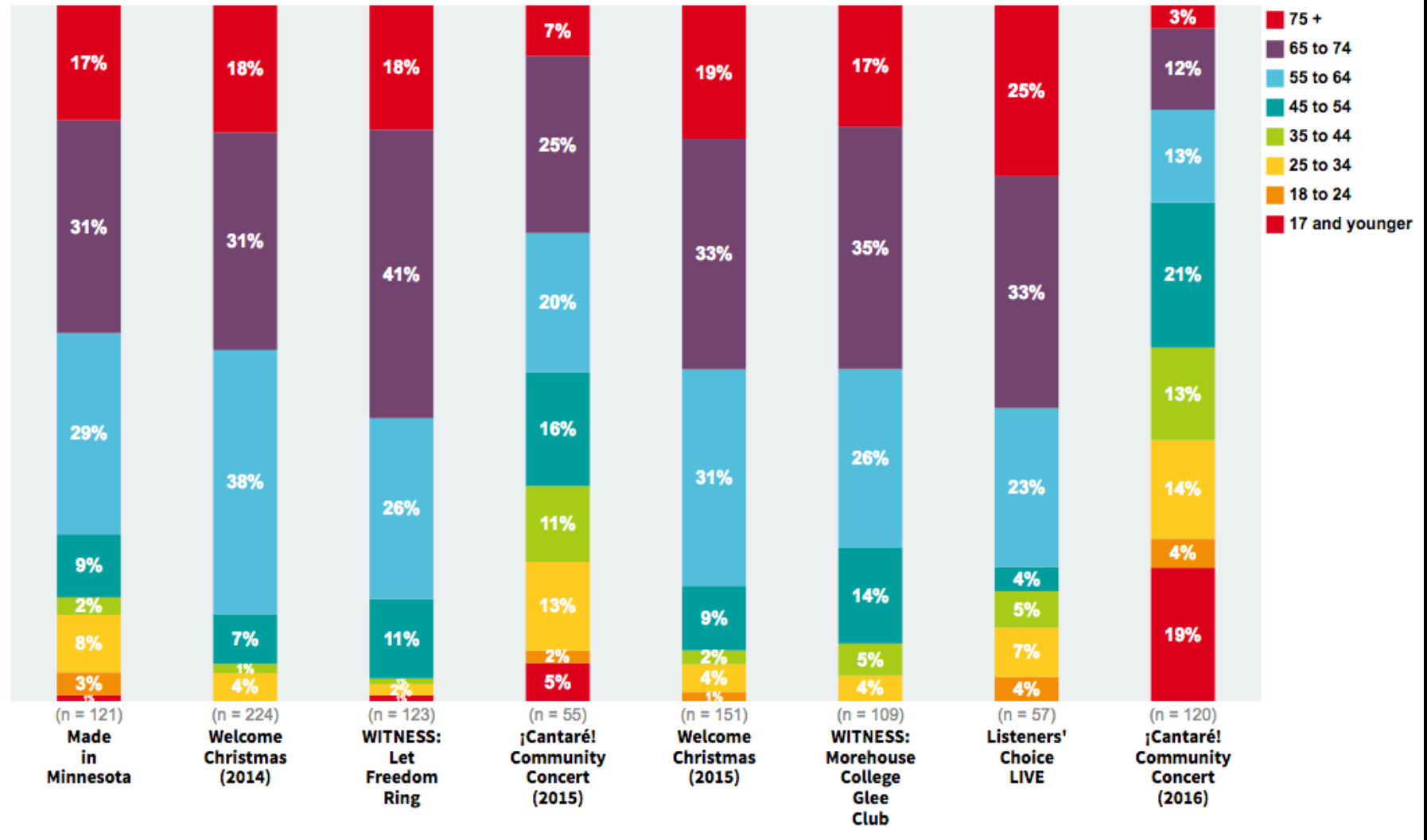
- Made in Minnesota [\[edit\]](#)
- Welcome Christmas (2014) [\[edit\]](#)
- WITNESS: Let Freedom Ring [\[edit\]](#)
- ¡Cantaré! Community Concert (2015) [\[edit\]](#)
- Welcome Christmas (2015) [\[edit\]](#)
- WITNESS: Morehouse College Glee Club [\[edit\]](#)
- Listeners' Choice LIVE [\[edit\]](#)
- ¡Cantaré! Community Concert (2016) [\[edit\]](#)

- (No Filter)
- Gender
- Age (3 cohorts)
- Race/Ethnicity
- Frequency of Attendance (Detail)
- First-timers vs Returners
- Ticket Type
- Experience with Choral Music
- Relationship w/Singers
- Relationship vs No relationship
- Post-Concert Activities
- Pre-Concert Activities

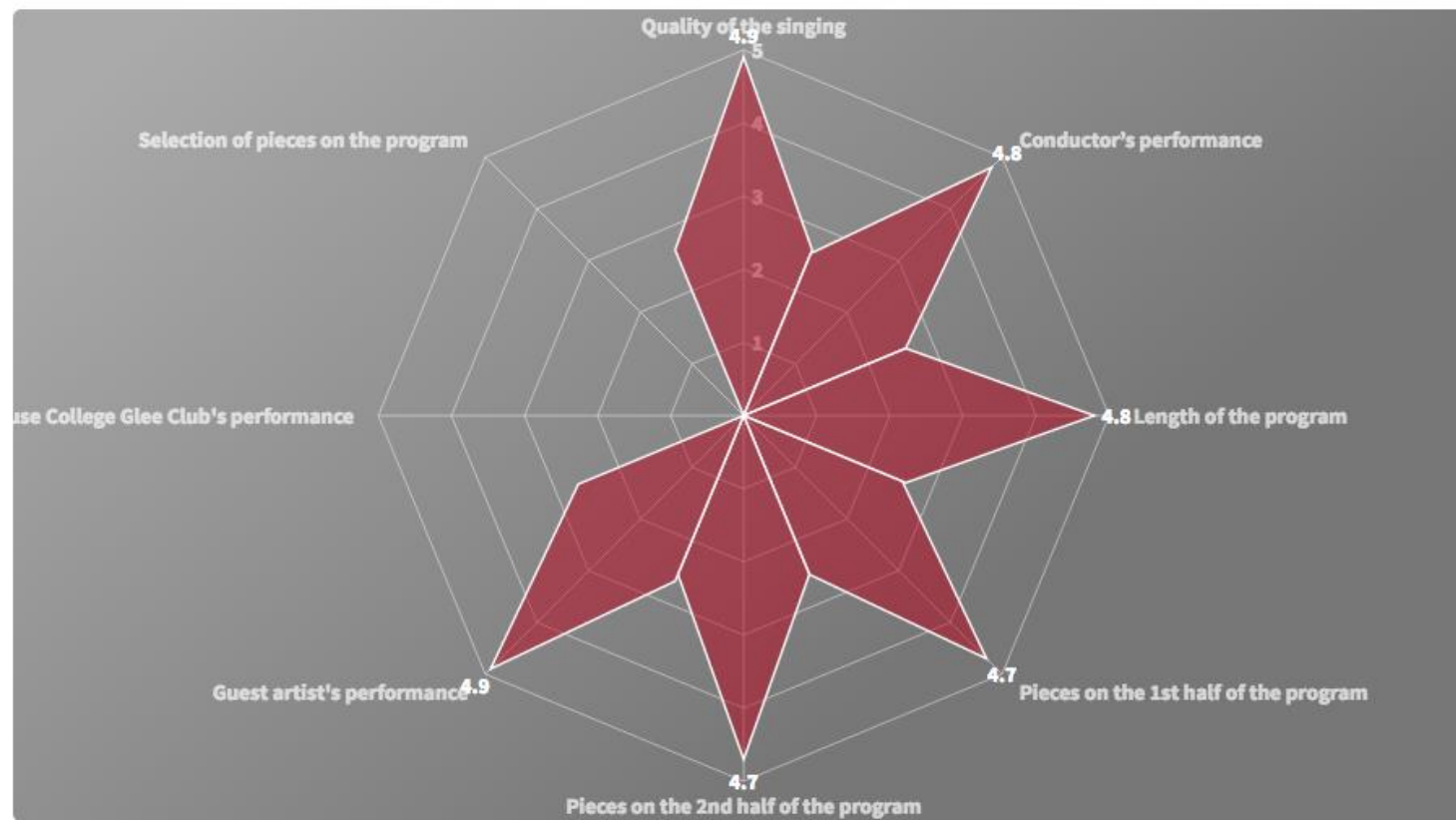
be shown as 'all together'.

 By Survey  All Together

# Age - Seven Cohorts



# Artistic Satisfaction



- ¡Cantaré! Community Concert (2016)
- Listeners' Choice LIVE
- WITNESS: Morehouse College Glee Club
- Welcome Christmas (2015)
- ¡Cantaré! Community Concert (2015)
- WITNESS: Let Freedom Ring
- Welcome Christmas (2014)**
- Made in Minnesota



The background features a large, textured red brushstroke that curves across the top and left sides. Overlaid on this are several semi-transparent red circles of varying sizes. The left side of the image has a white background with a grid of small, semi-transparent red circles.

**Who's in the audience?**

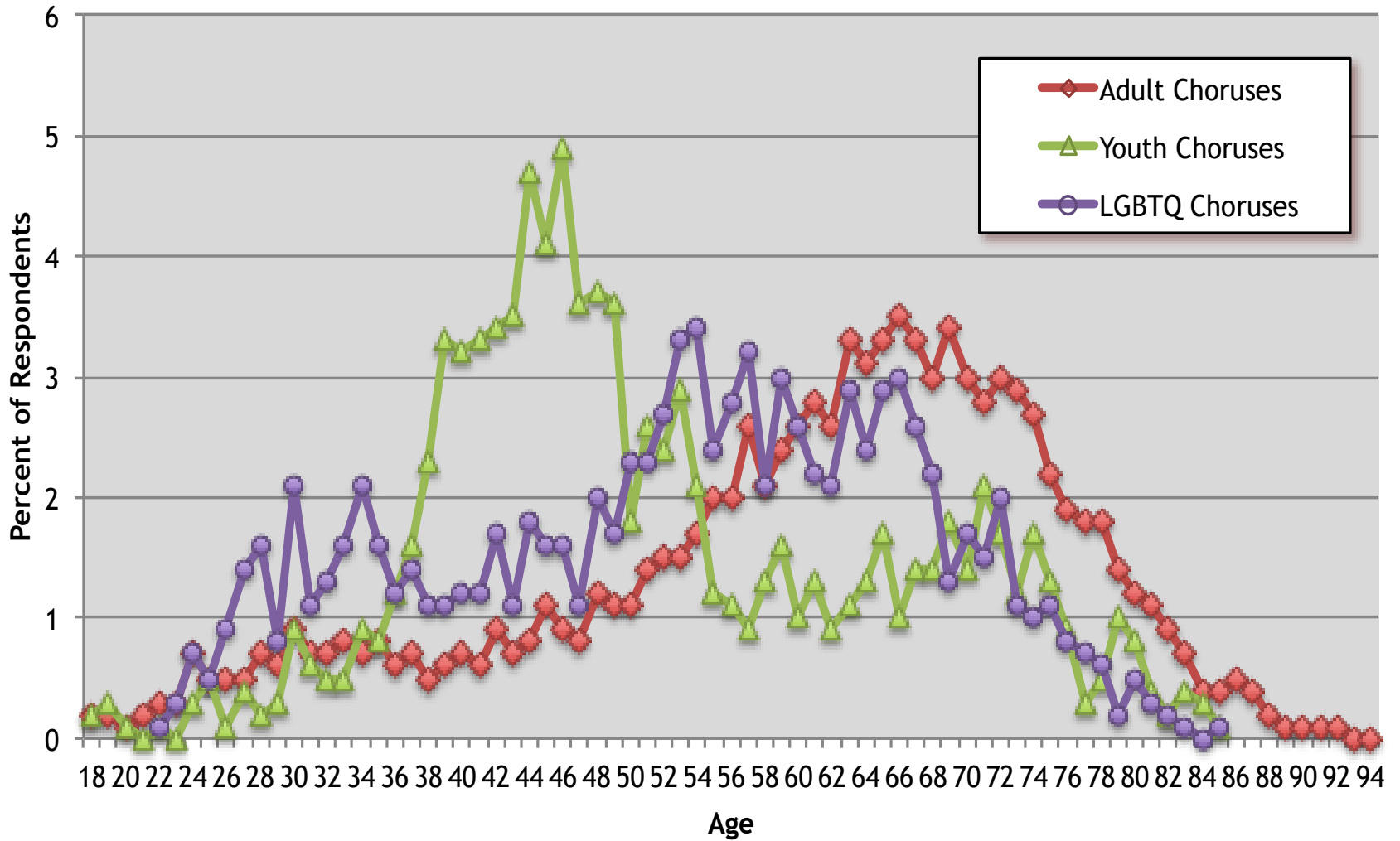
**Chorus America**



# Demographics

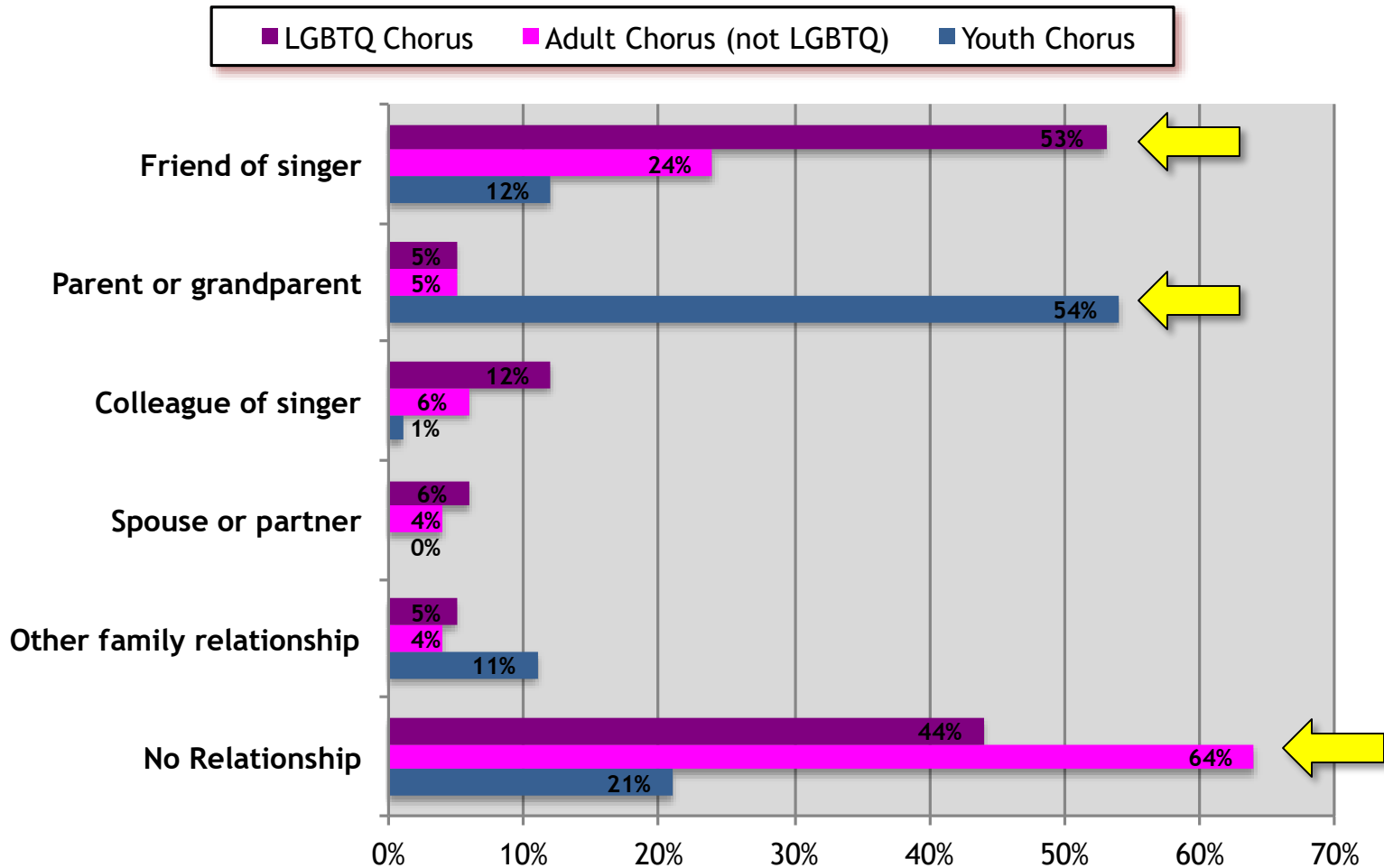
- Gender (mandatory)
- Age (mandatory)
- Home ZIP code (mandatory)
  
- Race/ethnicity
- Household Income
- Educational Attainment
- Sexual orientation
- Relationship status
- Disability community

Figure 3. Age Distribution, by Type of Chorus



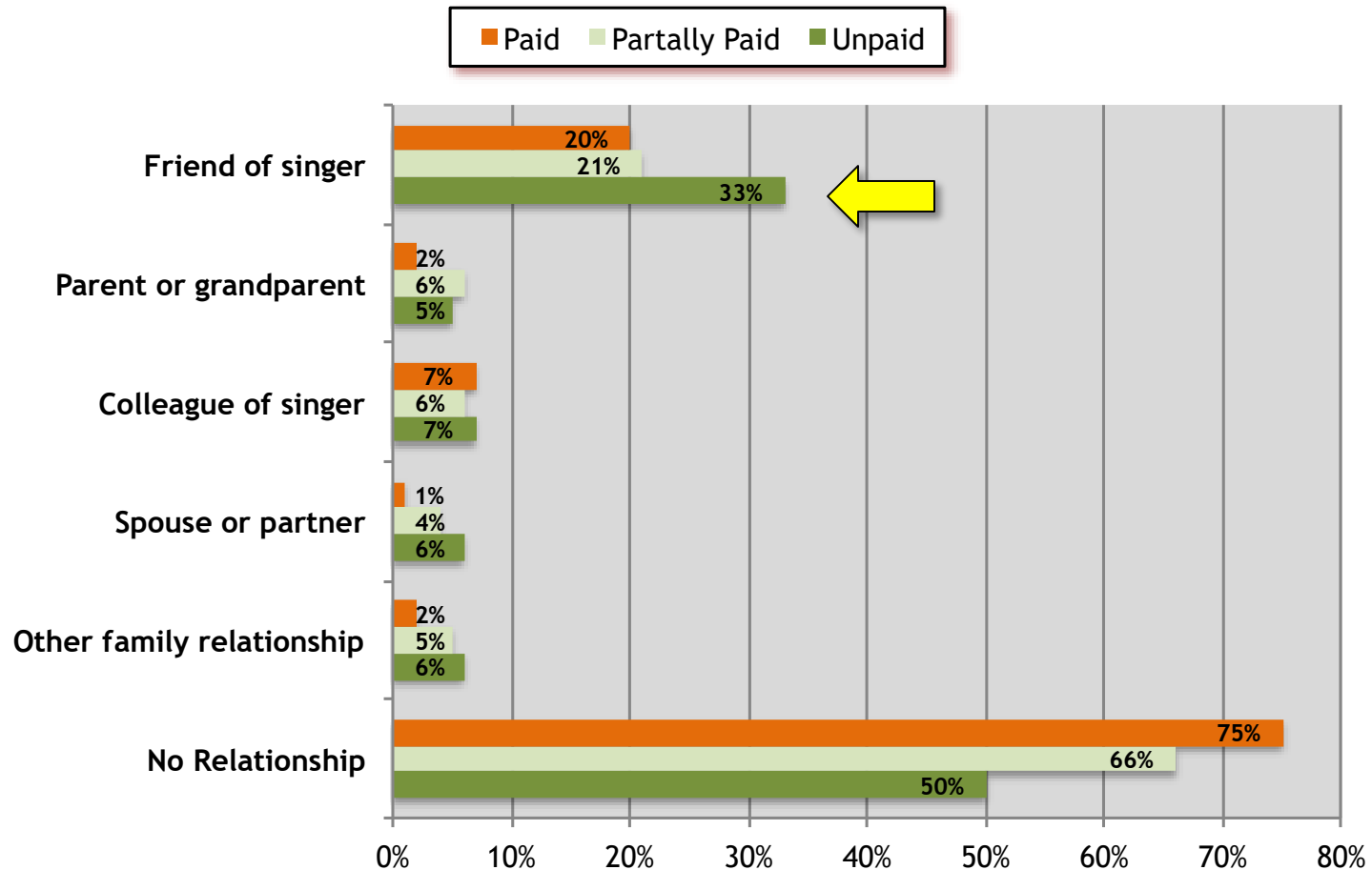
# Audience/Performer relationships fuel the audience

Incidence of Audience/Performer Relationships, by Chorus Type (multiple responses allowed)

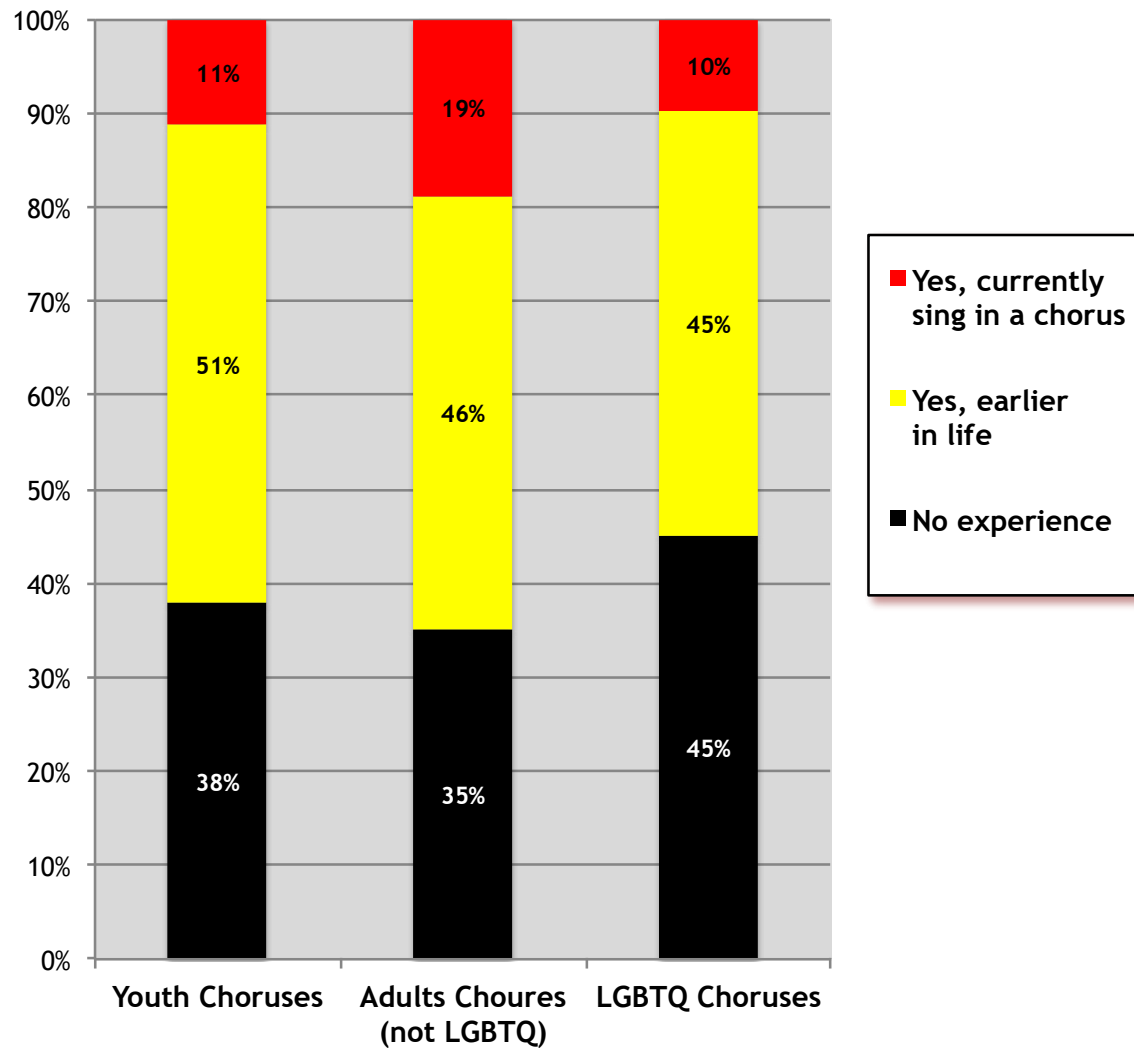


# Choruses with unpaid singers tap into friendship relationships

Incidence of Audience/Performer Relationships, by Paid vs. Unpaid Singers (multiple responses allowed)



## Past Experience Singing in a Chorus, by Type of Chorus



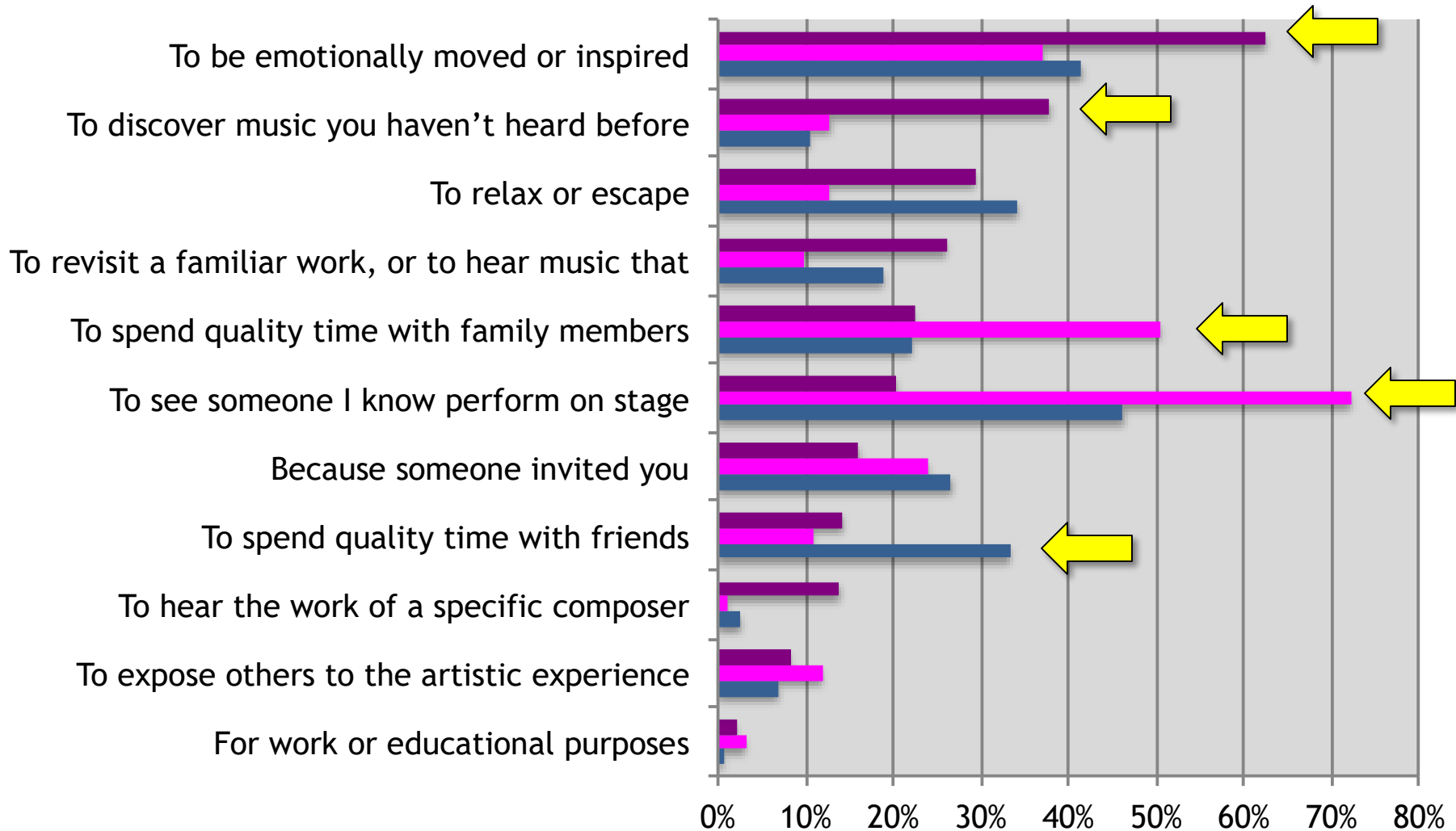
On average,  
two-thirds of  
audience  
members  
have  
experience  
with singing  
in a chorus.

# Motivations for Attending

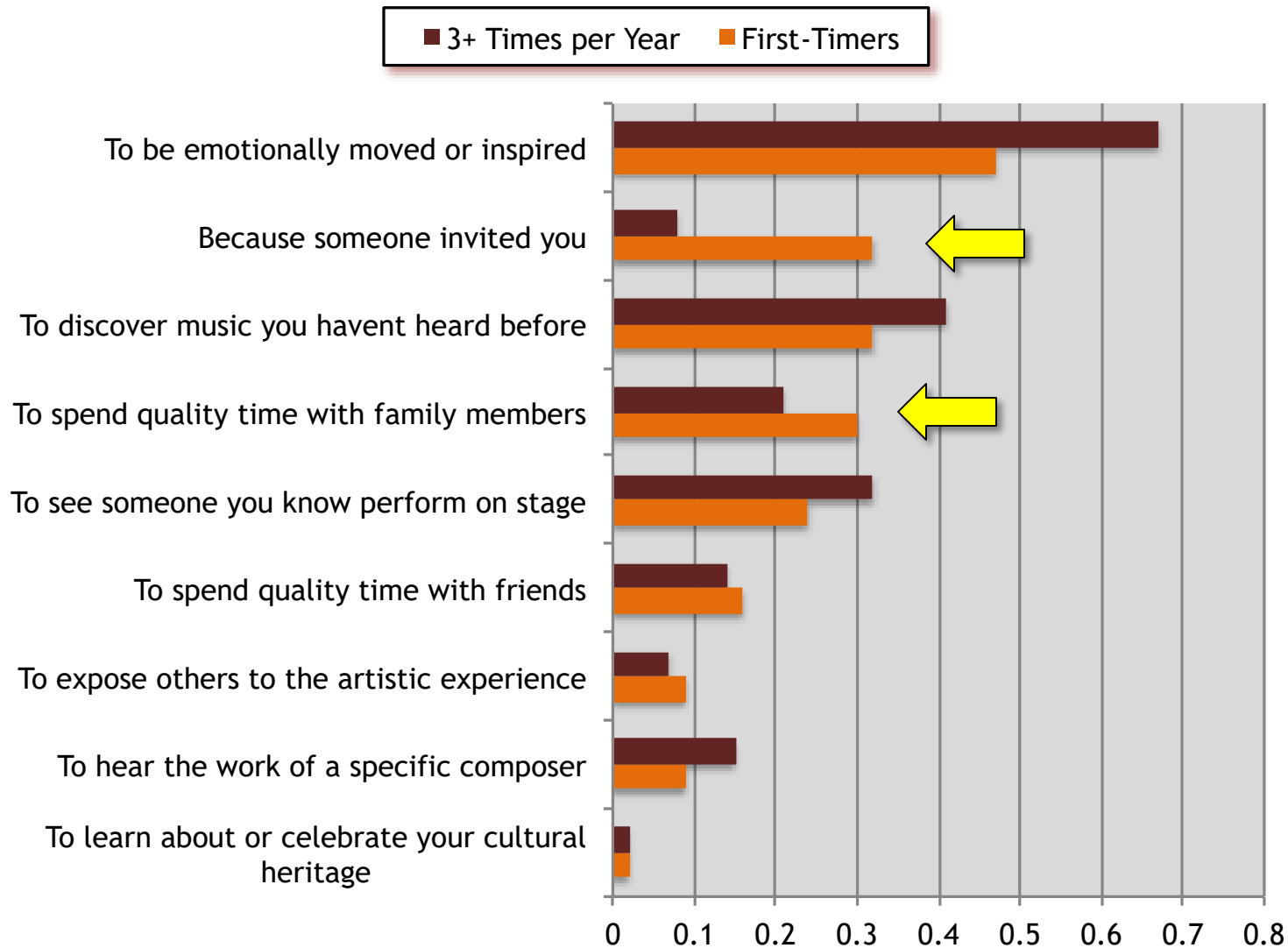
- A flawed, but helpful line of questioning
- Motivations change
- Motivations are often subconscious
- Self-reported motivations Indicate overall degree of “intentionality”
- Helpful in reflecting on impact
- 11 different answer items were provided



# Figure 6. Motivations for Attending, by Chorus Type (multiple responses allowed)



**Figure 7. Incidence of Citing Motivations, by Frequency of Attendance at Chorus's Programs**



**The critical role of a social stimulus in driving first-time attendance**

The background features a large, textured red brushstroke that curves across the top and left sides. Overlaid on this are several semi-transparent red circles of varying sizes, some of which contain a pattern of smaller, solid red circles. The overall color palette is dominated by shades of red and white.

# What is “Intrinsic Impact?”

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# Five Core Constructs of Intrinsic Impact

- Captivation
- Emotional Resonance
- Intellectual Stimulation
- Aesthetic Enrichment
- Social Bridging and Bonding



*Measuring the intrinsic impacts of arts attendance,*  
by Alan S. Brown and Jennifer L. Novak-Leonard  
*Cultural Trends*, July 22, 2013

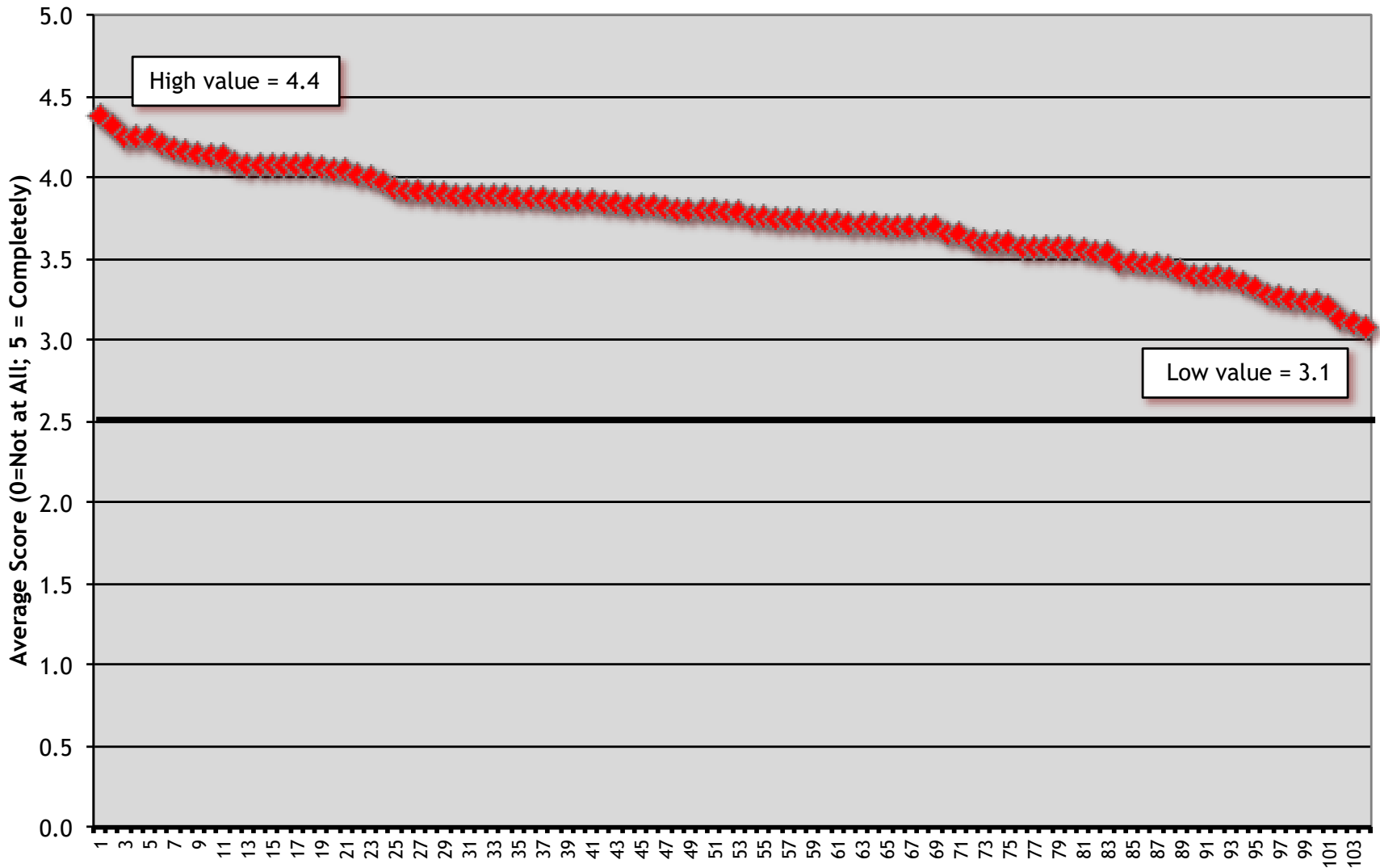


**Captivation:**

*At any point during the concert did you lose track of time and get fully absorbed?*

# Average Captivation Scores for 104 Choral Programs

"At any point during the concert did you lose track of time and get fully absorbed?"





# Why are some programs more captivating than others?

- Uncomfortable seating
- Excessive sound from amplified artists
- Inaudible volume from balcony seats
- Dissatisfaction with the selection of music (especially when expecting something different)
- Unable to understand music sung in foreign languages; poor diction
- Dissatisfaction with visual elements or announcements from the stage
- Disagreement with selections of religious music, or implied religious “message”
- Lack of emotion conveyed by singers; looking for more eye contact with singers
- Depressing or disturbing subject matter

# What can you do to increase Captivation levels at your concerts?

- Captivation levels are a confluence of:
  - personal background factors
  - social contexts
  - situational factors
  - program elements
- Captivation is an impact, but also a precondition for other impacts to occur.
- In a simple regression analysis, Captivation levels explain 26% of the variance in overall impact.

## Emotional Resonance

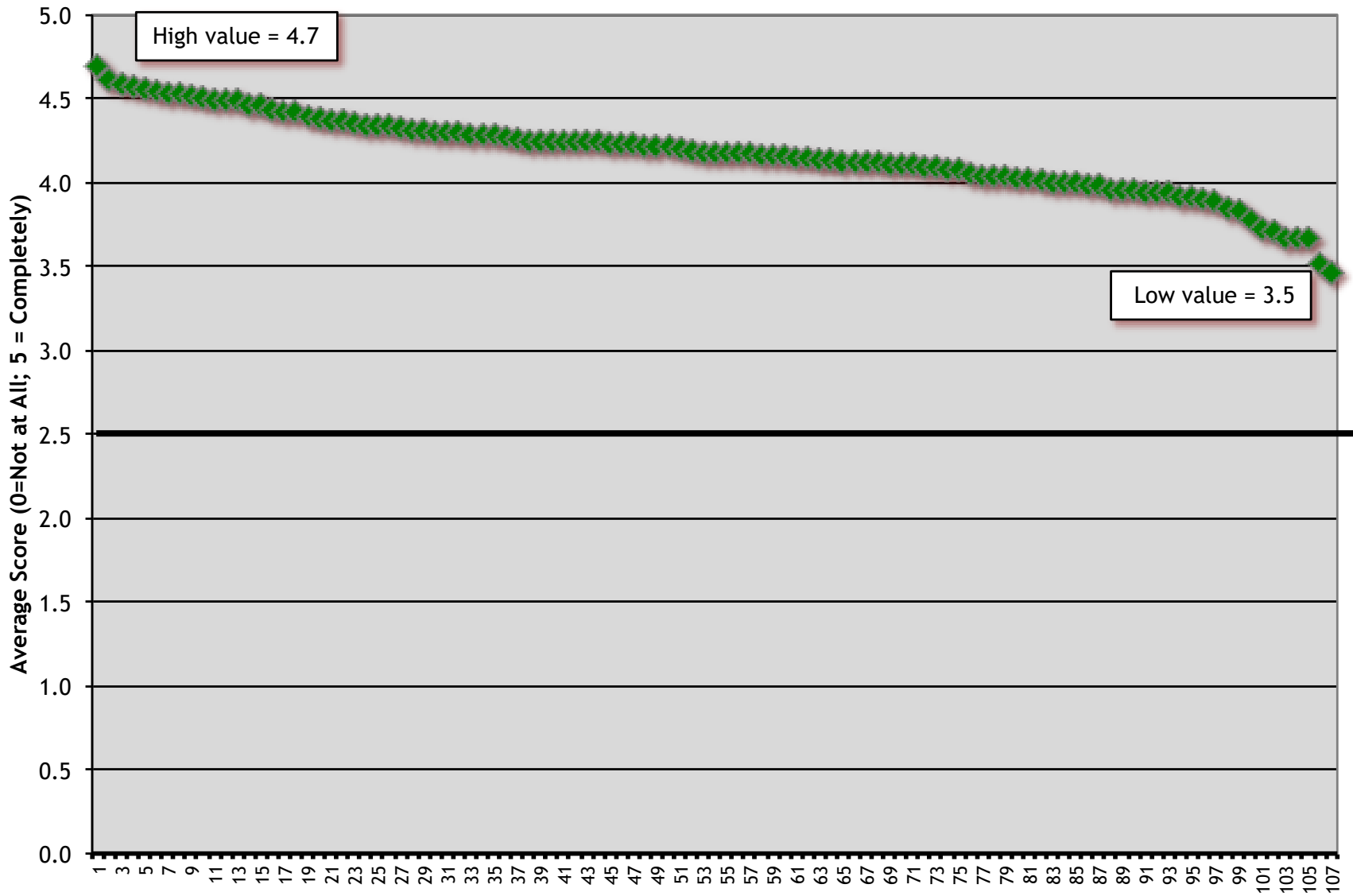
*Overall, how strong was your emotional response to the concert?*

*What words best describe how the concert made you feel? Please answer using single words, one per line, up to six words.*



# Average Emotional Resonance Scores for 104 Programs

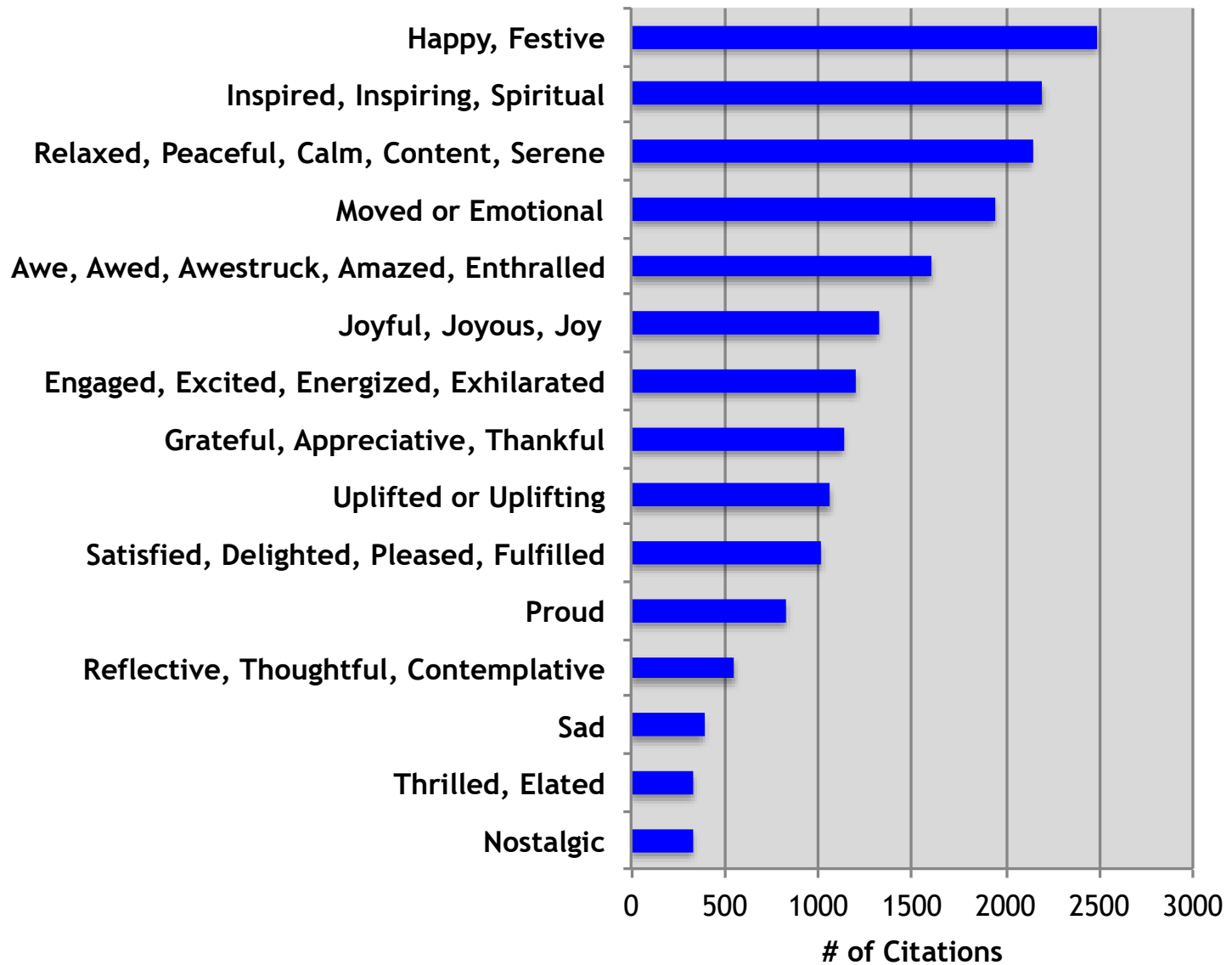
"Overall, how strong was your emotional response to the concert?"



*“What words describe how the concert made you feel? Please answer using single words, one per line, up to six words.”*

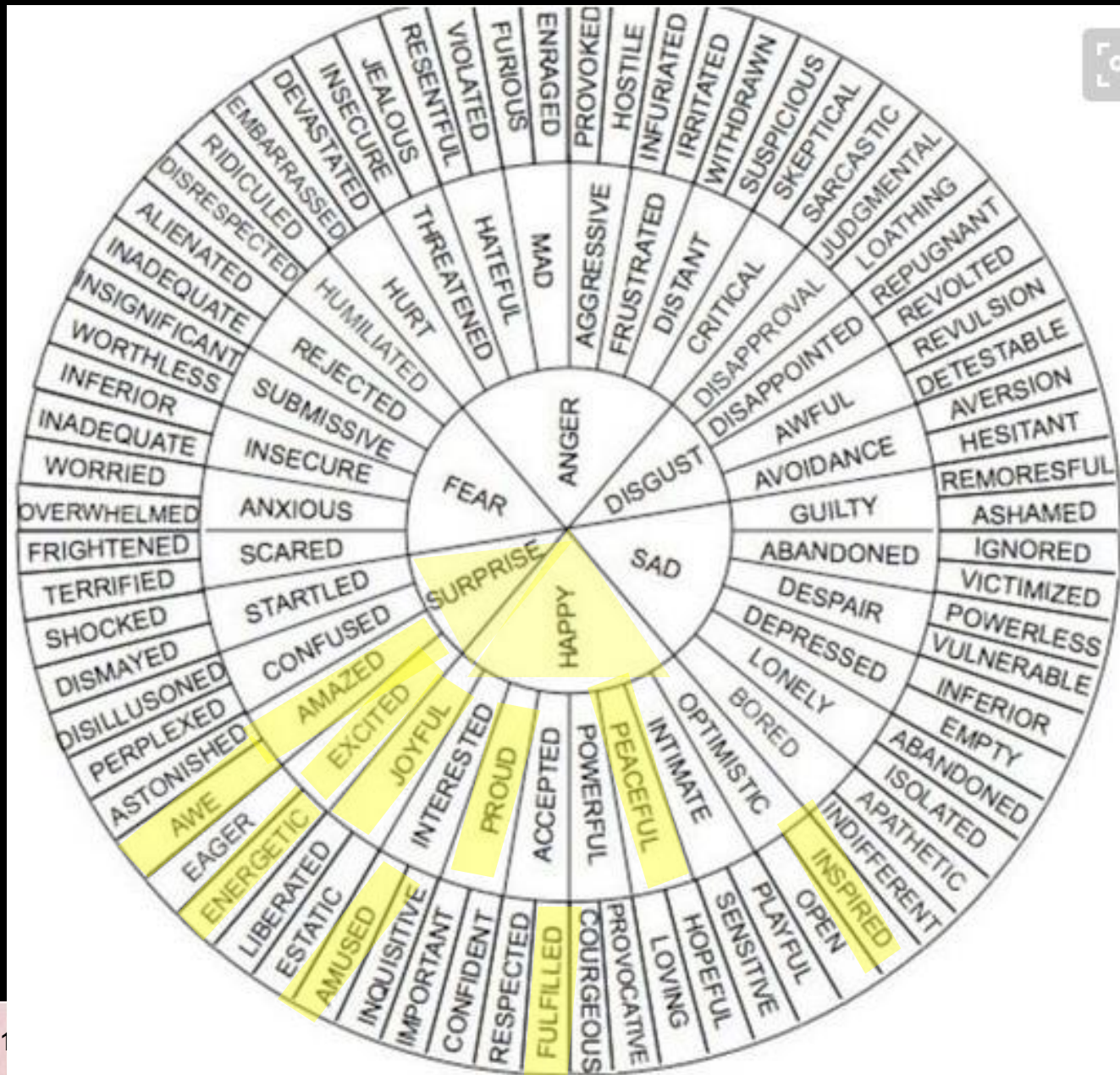
- 34,400 individual words were submitted
- 3,061 unique words, but some were similar
  - Joy, Joyful, Joyous
  - Grateful, Appreciative, Thankful
- This is the unfiltered language of “affect”

**Figure 9. Top 15 Felt Emotions (entire sample)**





# The Feelings Wheel (G. Willox)



# Major “Veins” of Emotional Affect

1. **Amusement** (happiness, joy, thrill, festivity)
2. **Fulfillment and gratitude** (contentedness, satisfaction, grateful, appreciative)
3. **Spiritual awareness** (inspired, uplifted, meditative)
4. **Captivation, focus and stimulation** (amazement, awe, excited, engaged)
5. **Relaxation** (calmness, serenity)
6. **Pensiveness** (reflective, thoughtful, curious)
7. **Empowerment** (proud)





# *Carmina Burana* (two productions, combined)



















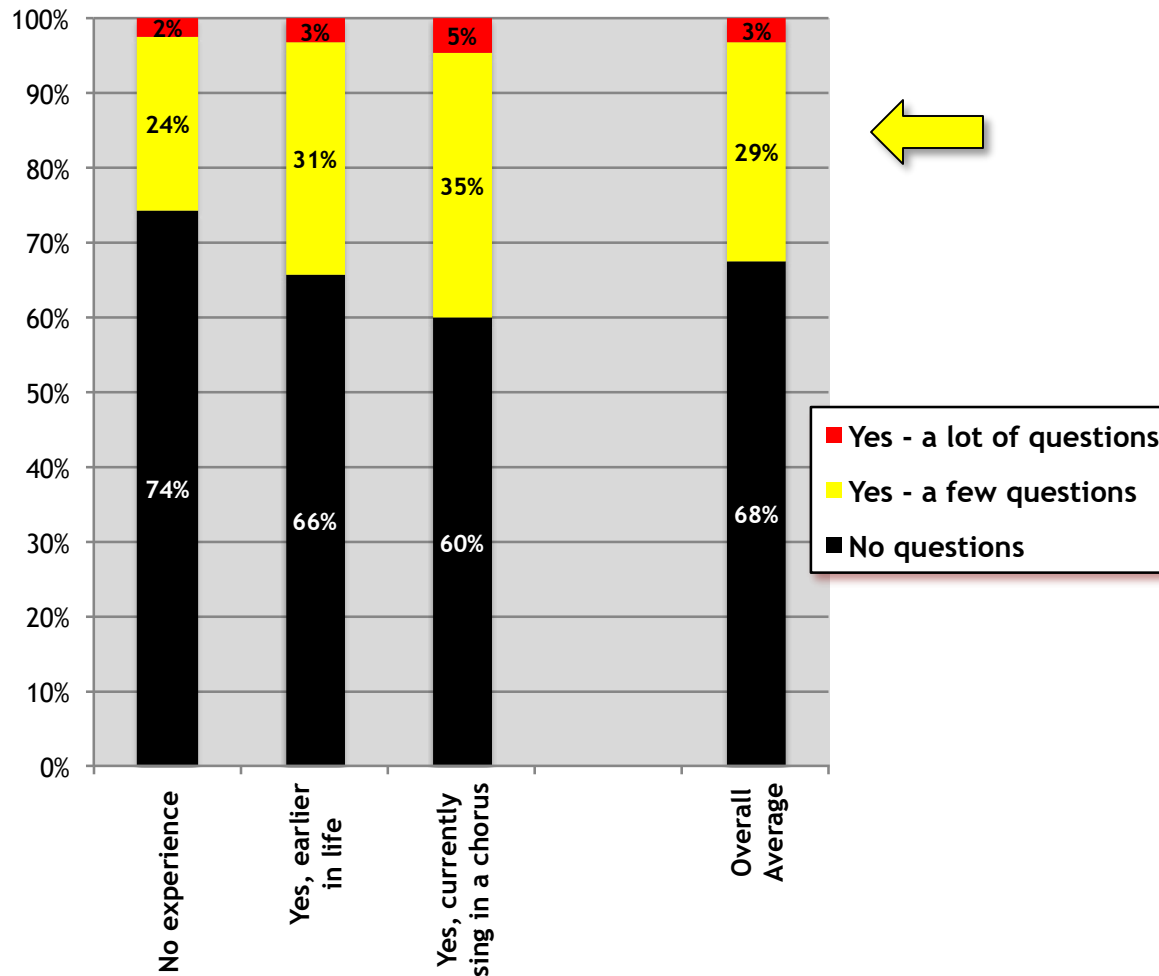
## **Intellectual Stimulation**

*Did the concert raise questions in your mind that you would like to ask the performers or creators of the work?*

*If 'Yes', what were one or two of your questions?*

# A third of audience members leave with unanswered questions

% with "Unanswered Questions," by Past Experience Singing in a Chorus



# Overall, what types of questions do audiences have?

- 22% Questions about program choices and overall design
  - Predominantly questions about the theme or selection of pieces
- 19% Questions about the singers/choir members
  - Predominantly questions about the singers' feelings, or how they learned the pieces
- 18% Questions about the repertory/pieces on the program
  - Predominantly questions about the history/origin of the pieces on the program
- 16% Questions about the texts/lyrics
  - Mostly questions about singing in foreign languages, foreign texts



# Types of Questions, continued

- 8% Question about the ensemble/company
  - Predominantly questions about how singers are selected; how collaborations happen
- 6% Questions about the rehearsal process
  - Seeking insight into the process of preparing
- 3% Questions about a composer
  - Predominantly questions about the composer's life and feelings
- 3% Questions about technical production elements
  - Mostly questions about choreography, staging, lighting

# Audiences seek “curatorial insight,” particularly for thematic concerts

- *“[It] made me curious about the historic aspect of the subject of the concert and how they came to create this concert around that subject.”*
- *“How were the performance pieces chosen?”*
- *“How is it that a composer can read a poem of someone else's thoughts and be so inspired to set to music?”*
- *“How did you select the music? How were decisions made as to pieces selected for the program, and how particular arrangements were selected?”*



The background features a light red field with a pattern of overlapping circles. A prominent, thick red brushstroke curves across the top and left side of the image. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

**Aesthetic Enrichment**  
*(five indicators)*

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# Aesthetic Enrichment protocol questions

- *“Were you already familiar with the artistic work of [name of chorus]?”\**
- *“Were you exposed to a type or style of [music/choral music] that you had not heard before?”*
- *“Were you exposed to the work of a composer whose work you’d not known before?”*
- *“Were you exposed to at least one unfamiliar musical work, even if you were previously familiar with the composer?”*
- *“Were you exposed to a different interpretation of a [musical work] you had previously heard?”\**
  - \*mandatory in Year 1 only

# Overall results for Aesthetic Enrichment

- 16% Exposed to a new ensemble/chorus\*
- 34% Exposed to a new type or style of music
- 68% Exposed to the work of a composer you'd not heard before
- 85% Exposed to at least one unfamiliar musical work
- 72% Exposed to a different interpretation of a familiar work\*

\*Year 1 only

## Creative Activation (3 choruses)

- *“Did you leave the performance with an impulse or idea for being more creative in your own life or work?”*
  - *If “Yes”, how did the concert inspire you to be more creative?*



# Overall results for Creative Activation

- 40% Re-dedicated or inspired to practice music or improve music skills  
(choral, instrumental, composing)
- 21% Sparked an interest in attending more concerts/listening to more music/being a better appreciator
- 13% General creative activation/increased awareness of beauty
- 9% Re-dedicated or inspired to make art (not music)
- 4% Inspired/dedicated to pursue excellence or creativity in my life's work (not the arts)
- 4% Emboldened to be more daring or innovative/think outside the box

## **Social Bridging and Bonding**

*Did you feel a sense of connection with others in the audience?*

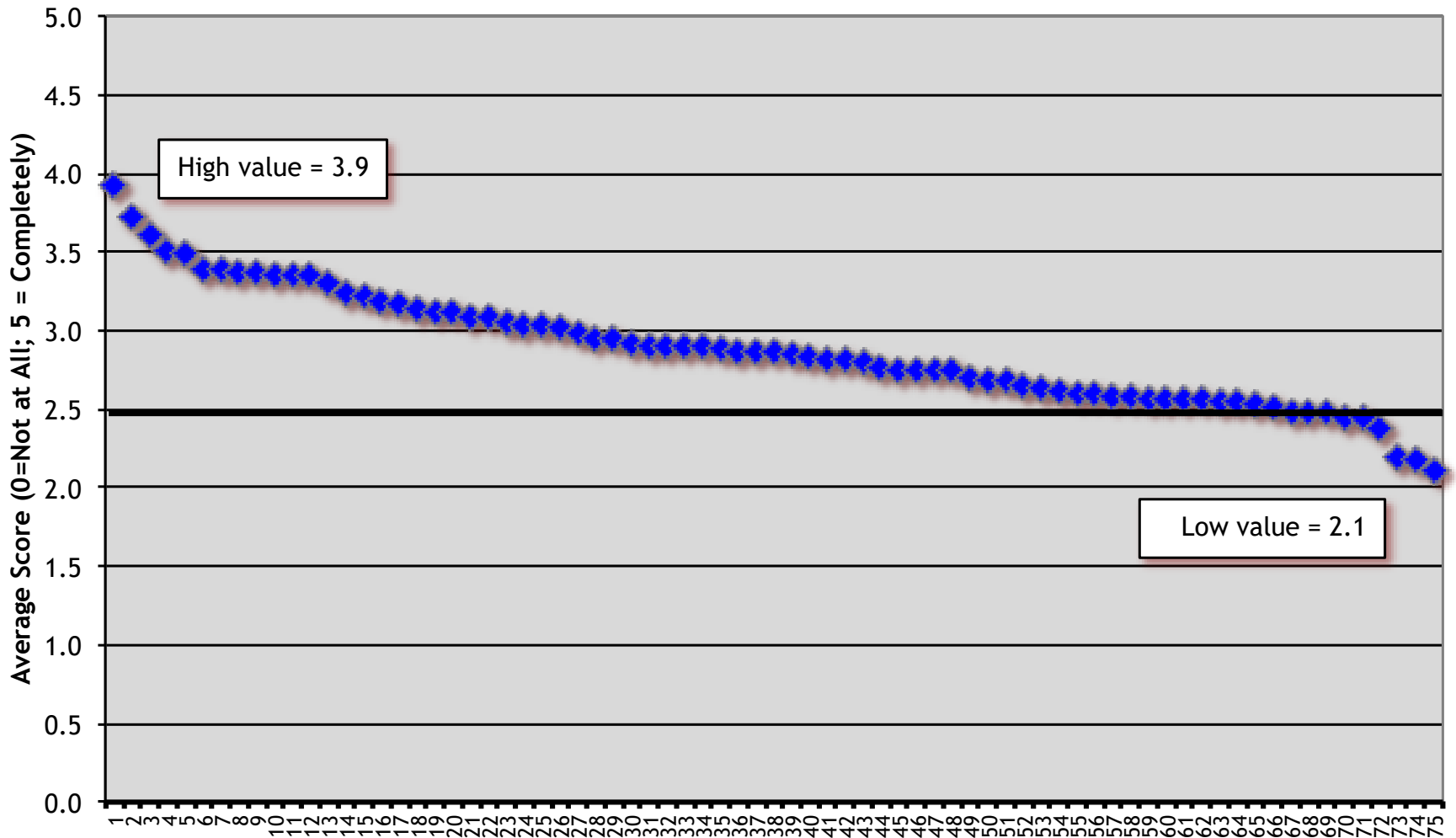
*Did the concert explore or celebrate your own cultural background or identity?*

*Did you gain a new appreciation for people who are different from you, or for a culture other than your own?*



## Average "Social Connection" Scores for 75 Choral Programs

"Did you feel a sense of connection with others in the audience?"



# Social Bonding

- Avg. scores range from 1.5 to 3.4 (scale of 0 to 5)
  - Lower scores for programs of popular and holiday music
  - Higher scores for programs featuring world music and music in the African American tradition
- The top five programs in terms of high scores for Social Bonding all belong to youth choruses:
  - *The Polar Express, Ignite: Patriotism, and Ignite: Spark* (Cincinnati Boychoir),
  - *Holiday Blessings* (Pittsburgh Youth Chorus)
  - *Winter Sky* (Boston Children's Chorus)

## A deeper look at Social Bonding: Five culturally-focused concerts

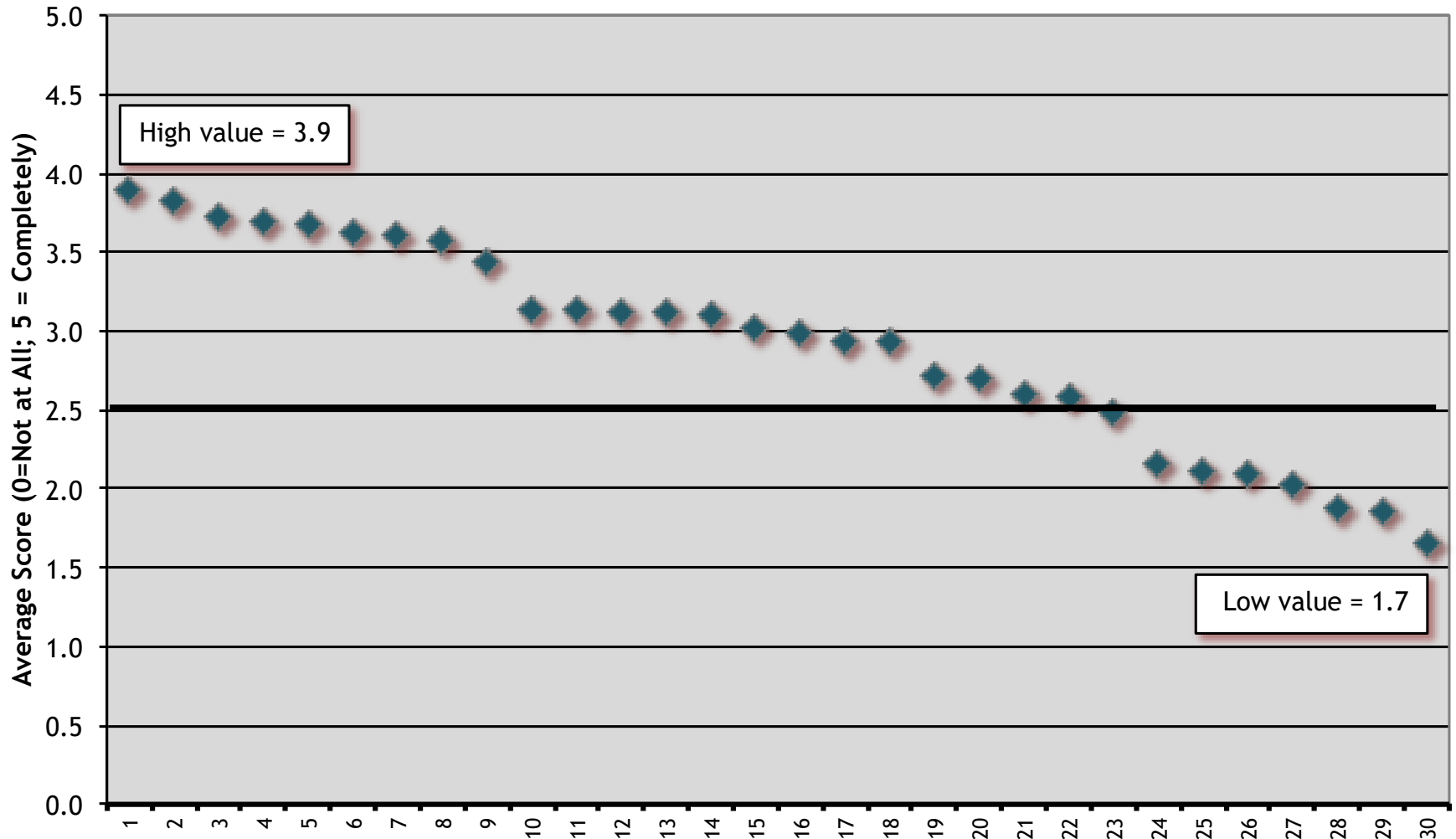
- *12th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Concert and 13th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Concert* (Boston Children's Chorus)
- *WITNESS: Let Freedom Ring* (VocalEssence)
- *WITNESS: Morehouse College Glee Club* (VocalEssence)
- *Living the Dream* (The Choral Arts Society of Washington)
- *The Heart of Darkness* (Pittsburgh Camerata)

# A deeper look at Social Bonding: Five culturally-focused concerts

- Black or African American respondents reported Social Bonding scores at 3.5 times the rate of other respondents (4.5 vs. 1.4, respectively)
  - A highly significant relationship

# Average "Social Bridging" Scores for 30 Choral Programs

"Did you gain a new appreciation for people who are different from you, or for a culture other than your own?"





# The interplay between bridging and bonding outcomes is highly dynamic

- Indicators of Social Bridging and Social Bonding have a positive and statistically significant relationship.
  - Social Bridging and Social Bonding are, in fact, opposite sides of the same coin. Programs that trigger one tend to trigger the other.
- Social Bridging and Social Bonding both have a positive and highly predictive relationship with summative impact.
  - In other words, audience members who experience both outcomes are more likely to have memorable, satisfying experiences at choral concerts.

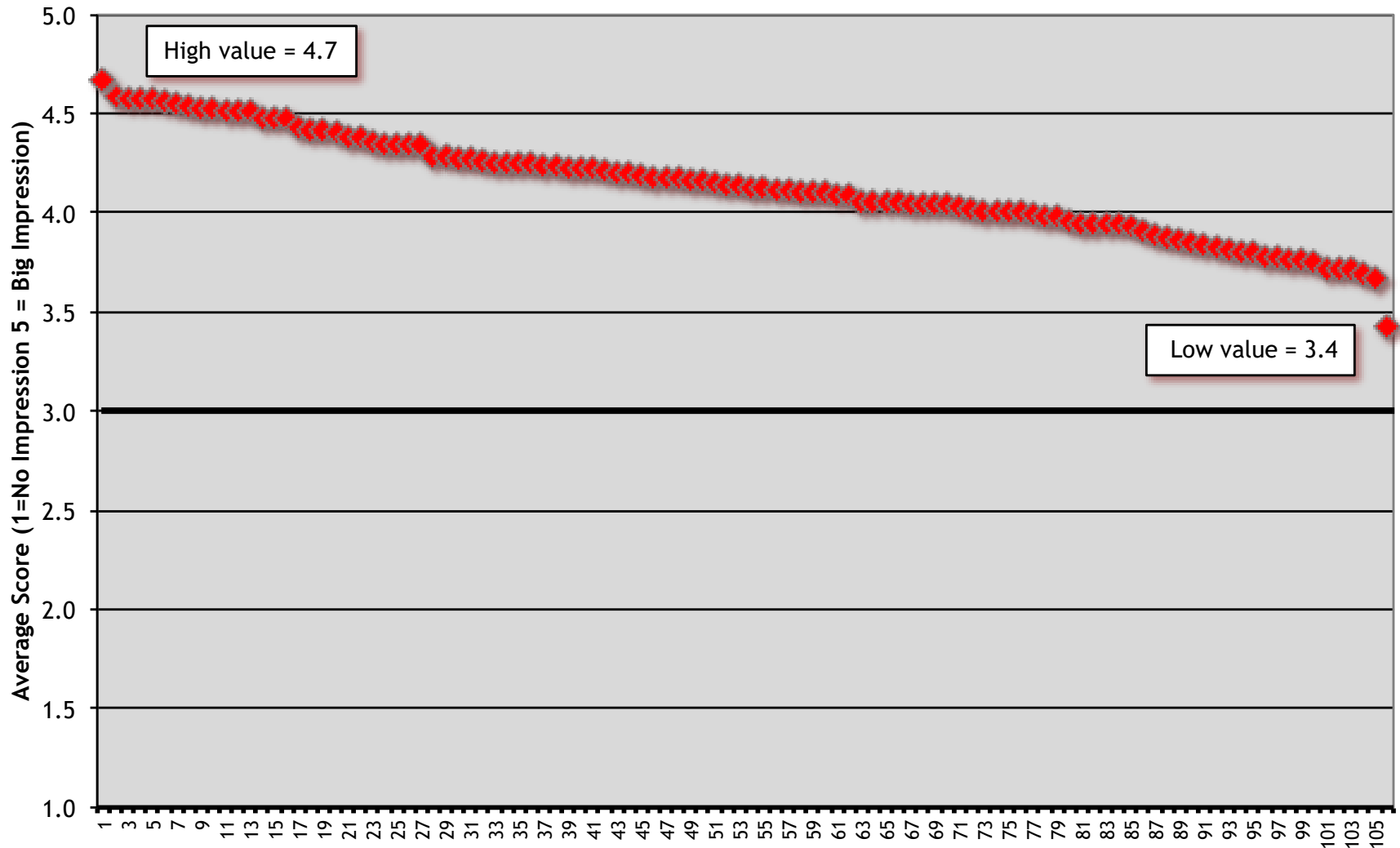
## Summative Impact

*“When you look back on this concert a year from now, how much of an impression do you think will be left?”*

*Scaled Response: 1 = No Impression; 5 = Big Impression*

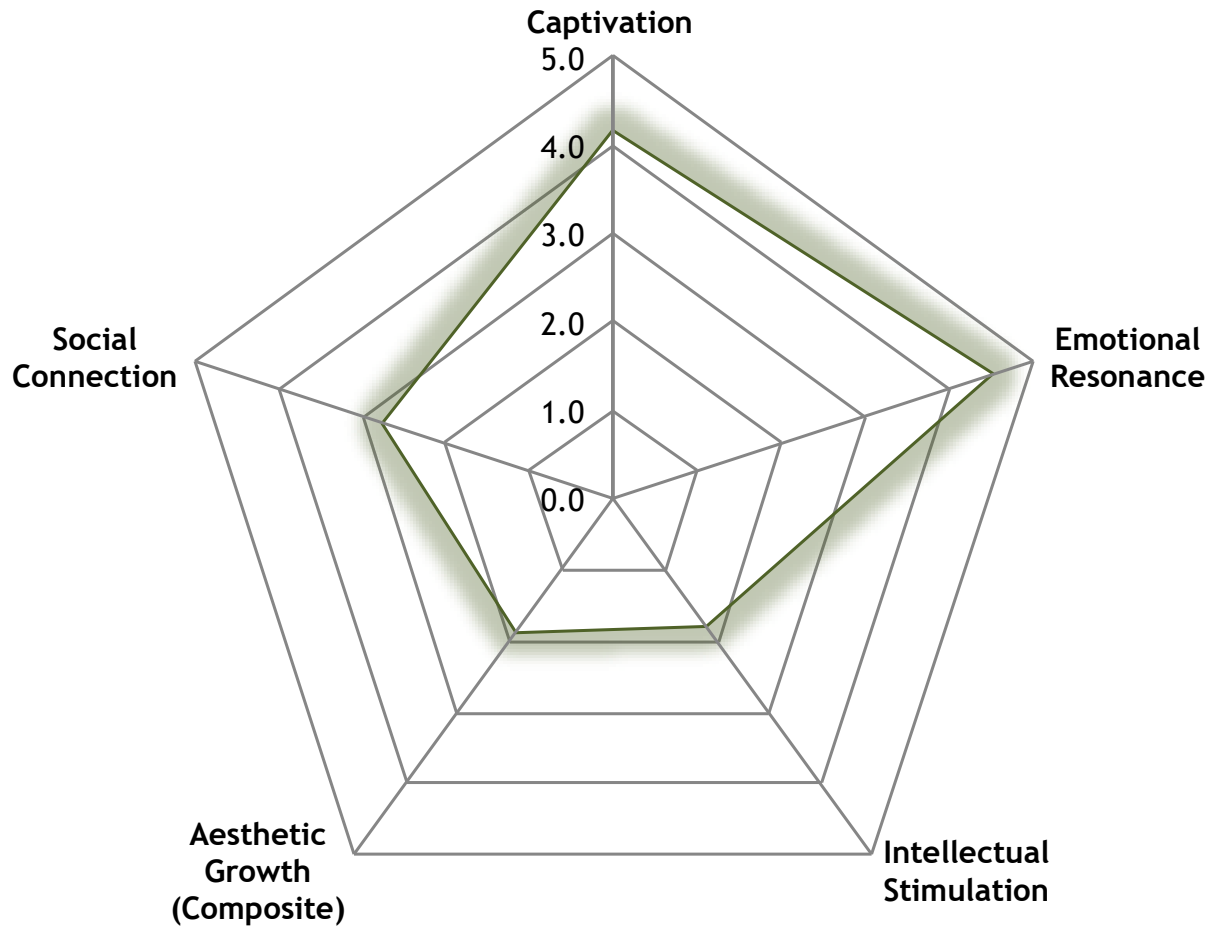
# Average "Summative Impact" Scores for 104 Choral Programs

*"When you look back on this concert a year from now, how much of an impression do you think will be left?"*

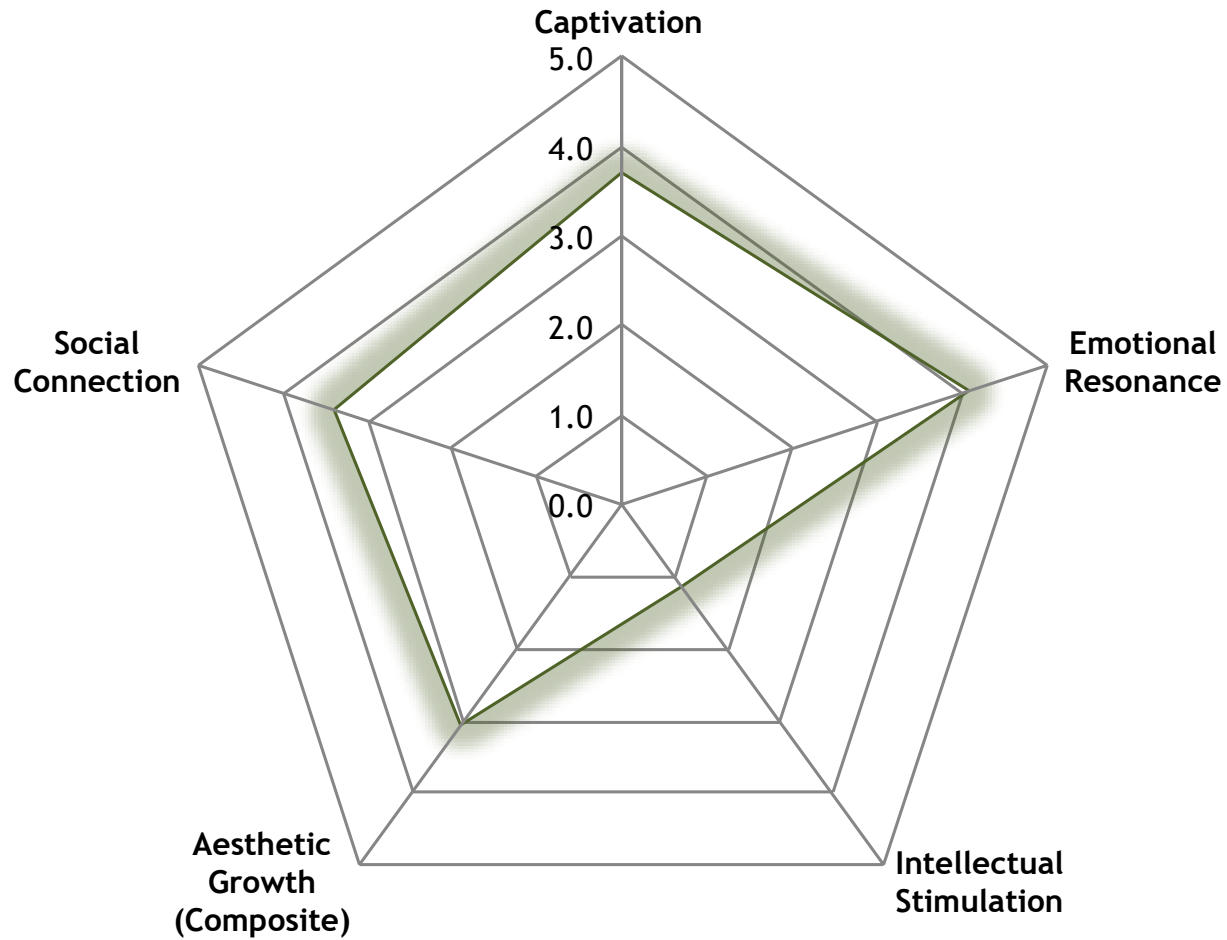




# Figure 1. Orff: Carmina Burana (Cincinnati May Festival)

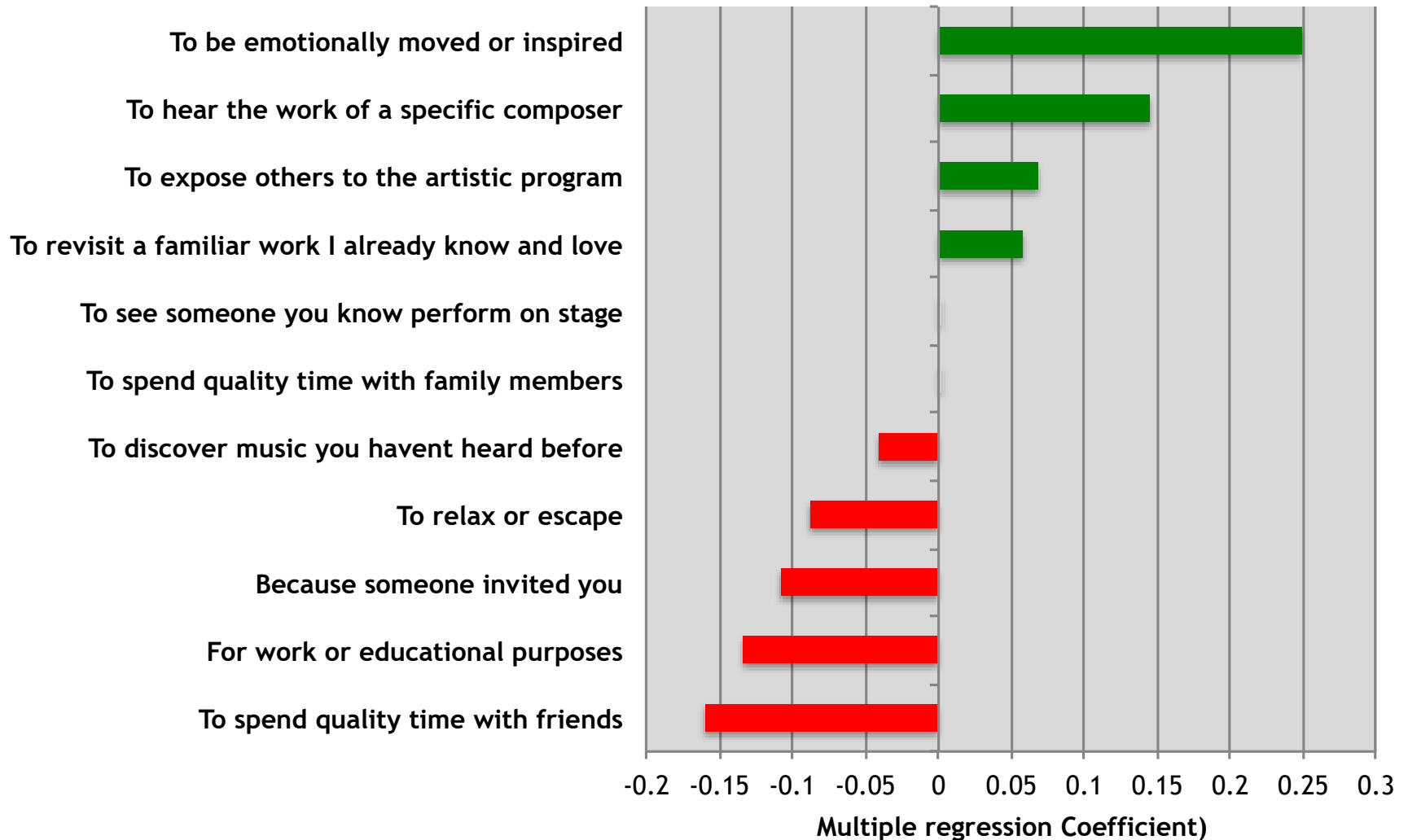


# Figure 2. WITNESS: Let Freedom Ring (VocalEssence)





# Predictive Power of Motivations over Summative Impact (i.e., memorable experience)



# Audience participation can move impact

Predictive Power of Audience Participation over Different Impacts	Captivation	Emotional Resonance	Intellectual Stimulation	Social Connection	Summative Impact
Clap along with the music	Not Predictive	Weakly Predictive	Negatively Predictive	Predictive	Predictive
Sing along with the music	Not Predictive	Not Predictive	Negatively Predictive	Predictive	Not Predictive
Talk to someone you didn't know	Predictive	Predictive	Predictive	Strongly Predictive	Predictive
Dance or move to the music	Strongly Predictive	Predictive	Predictive	Predictive	Predictive
Adjusted R Square*	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.11	0.04

\*Amount of variance explained in a multiple regression analysis

# Why is this important?

- The language of impact
- An opportunity to reframe internal conversations about artistic programming
  - Different programs generate different impact. What impact do we want to have?
  - What audience engagement techniques are likely to magnify impact?
- An opportunity to change the conversation with external stakeholders about relevance and impact



## Assessing the Audience Impact of Choral Music Concerts

Alan Brown, Sean Fenton, Kyle Marinshaw, Rebecca Ratzkin,  
Jason Tran, Mitch Menchaca

June 2016



Research Commissioned by Chorus America

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ArtsWave

Barr Foundation

The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation

GALA Choruses

Heinz Endowments

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

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tel: 415.796.3090 wolfbrown.com

The report will be available through the Chorus America website next Monday.



The background features a large, thick red ring on the left side, partially overlapping a white area with a pattern of smaller, semi-transparent red circles. The rest of the background is a solid, textured red color.

**Thank You**

**Chorus America**