

# **Survey of the Audience of the Metropolitan Opera Live in Bulgaria**

## **Summary of Results**

**March 2019**

**Grant Title:** Metropolitan Opera Live in HD

**Grantee:** Varna Summer International Theater Festival Foundation (VSITF)

**Grant Amount:** BGN 70,000 (USD 42,000)

**Total support to the grantee including current grant:** USD 206,842

**Grant Objectives:**

This grant supports the broadcast of the fifth season of Metropolitan Opera Live HD (Met Live) in Bulgaria. The program includes ten live broadcasts from Metropolitan Opera House in New York screened at Cinema City in Sofia and five preliminary announced encores screened during weekdays. Approximately 5,000 non-unique visitors attend the screenings each year.

The Metropolitan Opera Live Bulgaria program aims at:

- Showing quality American art to the Bulgarian audience;
- Attracting new audience to Metropolitan Opera Live in Bulgaria;
- Increasing the awareness of ABF support to quality art among the visitors.

**Survey’s Objective:** The survey of the Met Live audience was launched in October 2018 to find out to what extent the profile of the audience has changed since the second year of the program (2015/2016) when the first survey of the visitors was conducted. We also analyzed the demographics and cultural behavior of the visitors, their awareness of ABF support for these and other programs, as well as attitudes towards the tickets price.

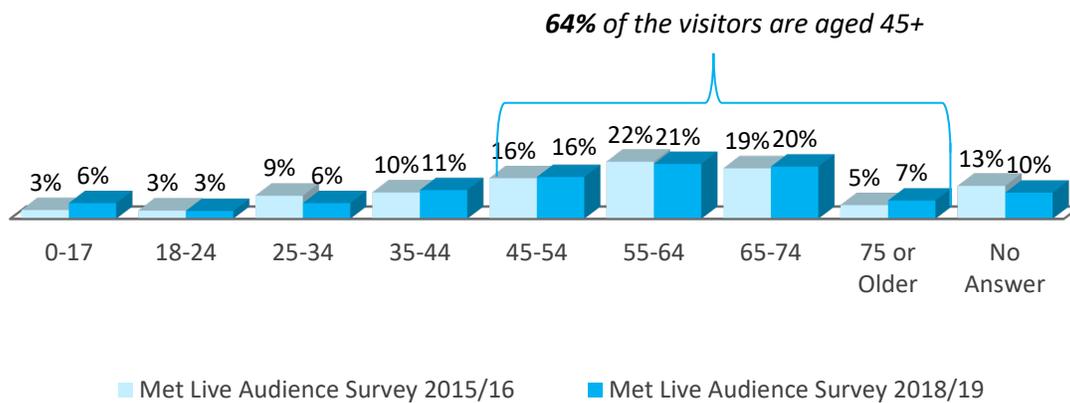
**Survey’s Parameters**

<b>Period of the Study</b>	10/6/2018 – 12/15/2018
<b>Data Collection Method</b>	Structured Questionnaire
<b>Sample Methodology</b>	Convenience Sample
<b>Number of Unique Respondents</b>	358

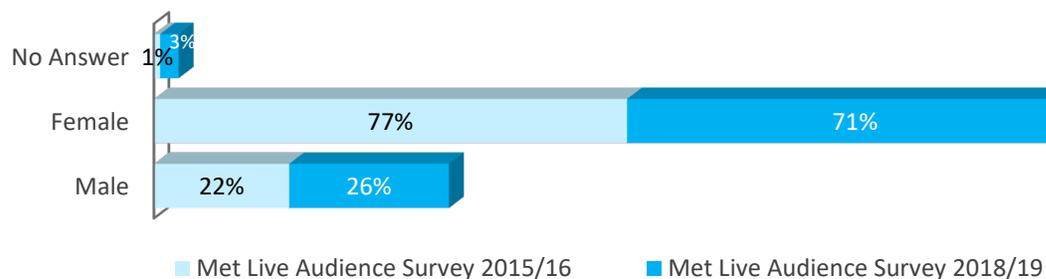
## Key Findings and Conclusions:

- As of March 1, 2019, a total of 3,224 non-unique visitors have attended 11 performances screened at Cinema City in Sofia. So far, the occupancy of the halls has been 93%, except for the broadcast of *Marinie*, when only 30% of the tickets were sold.
- The typical visitor of Met Live Bulgaria continues to be a woman with higher education, aged 45+, retired or working a white-collar job. The young audience, aged below 35, is still 15% of the respondents (see the charts below).

### Age of the Visitors



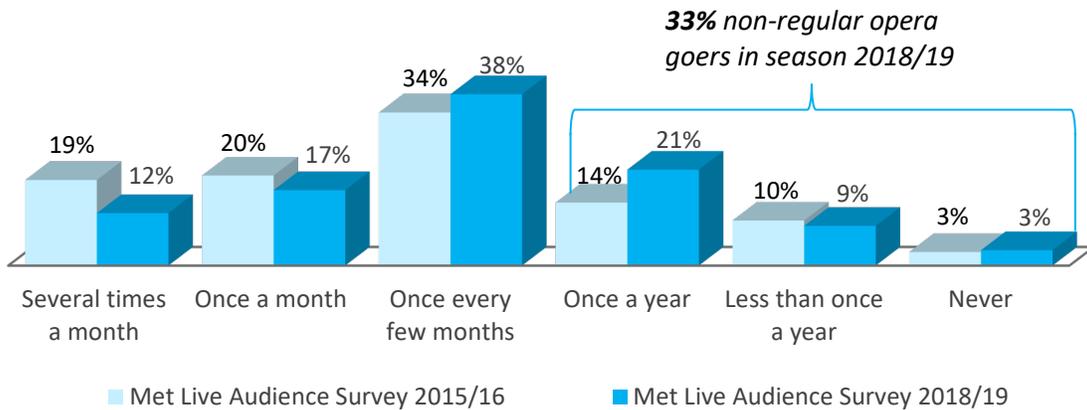
### Gender of the Respondents



- The Met Live Bulgaria continues to attract mainly regular opera audience (66% of all visitors). Nevertheless, the program still manages to attract (1) **non-regular opera**

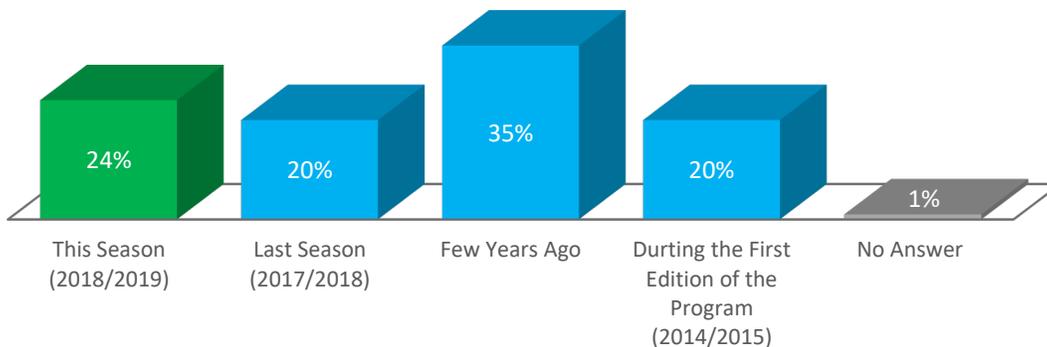
**audience** (21%) and even **non-opera audience**<sup>1</sup>(12%). This finding illustrates the added value of initiative in terms of creating new cultural experience (i.e. attending an opera performance) for part of the audience, which otherwise most probably would not have occurred (see the chart below).

### How Often Do You Attend Performances at the National Opera and Ballet?



- Further, the program continues to attract **firs-time visitors**, who have not attended a broadcast of the Met Live in the previous years of the initiative (see the chart below). This is very positive finding, given the narrow profile of the audience and the fact the program has been running for five years already.

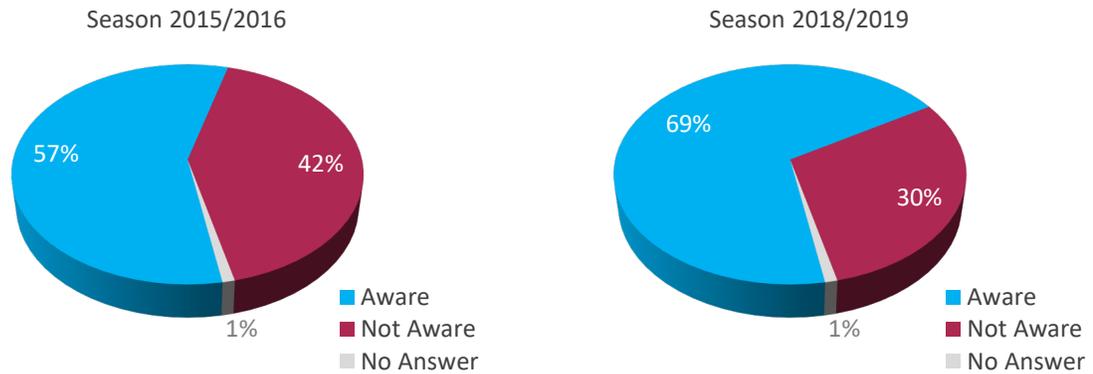
### When Did You Attend Met Opera Live Bulgaria for First Time?



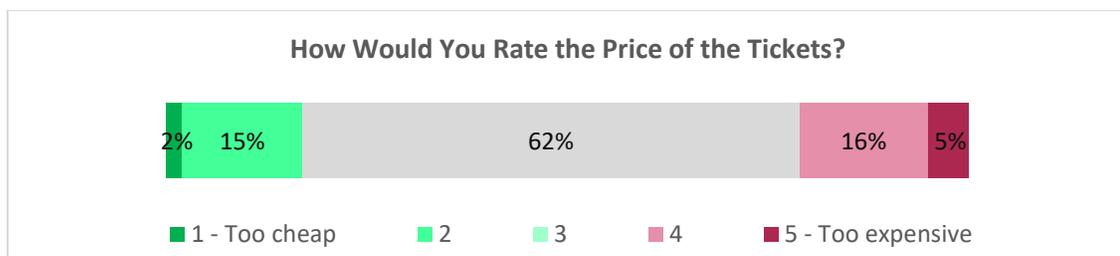
<sup>1</sup> Respondents who do not go to opera or visit opera performances less than once a year.

- The share of respondents who were aware (prior to the performance) of ABF’s role in the initiative has increased by more than 10% for the past three years (see the chart below).

**Awareness of ABF Support to Metropolitan Opera Live Bulgaria**

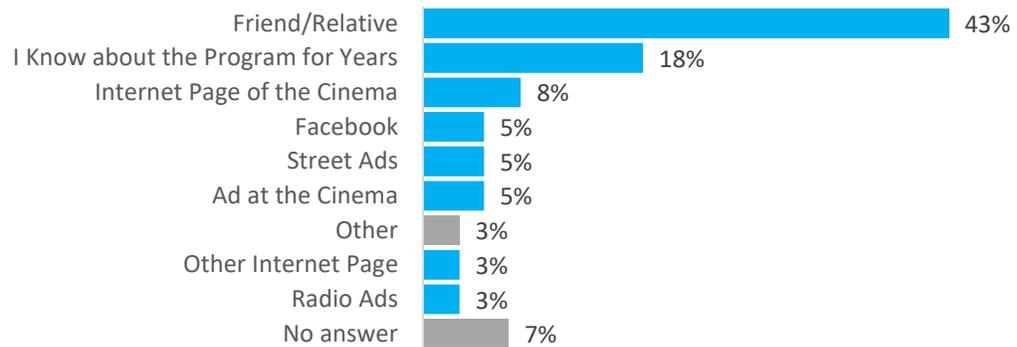


- Going deeper into testing their knowledge about ABF, the majority of the respondents (72%) declare awareness of other initiatives supported by ABF. Still, the share of respondents who stated that they have not heard of other programs supported by ABF hasn’t decreased significantly for the past years – **28%** in 2018/19 compared to **32%** in 2015/16.
- The average ticket price for Met Live in Bulgaria is approx. \$10, compared to \$7 for a movie premiere and \$6 for a classical music concert. The majority of the respondents think that this price of the tickets is acceptable. Noteworthy, 60% of the ticket revenues are paid to the Metropolitan Opera and the rest 40% to Cinema City Sofia for the distribution of the screenings. No money is left for the managing organization Via Fest Foundation.



- The word of mouth continues to be the most successful communication channel in terms of popularizing the initiative. Other 18% of the respondents know about the program for years and don't remember how they heard about the initiative for first time.

**How Did You Hear about Metropolitan Opera Live Bulgaria?**



## Conclusion

The Met Live program is achieving its goal to offer a high-quality art product to the Bulgarian audience. This is confirmed by the high level of occupancy of the halls for most of the performances. Although the program has been taking place for a fifth consecutive year, the Met Live Bulgaria still has added value for development of the high culture in Bulgaria, attracting first-time visitors and non-regular opera goers. The share of visitors who are aware of ABF support to the initiative has increased by more than 10% for the past three years, reaching two-thirds of all respondents. Given that 40% of the ticket revenues go to Cinema City Sofia, it is worth exploring their interest in adopting the initiative. If that happens, we can claim contribution to the availability of high-quality products on the arts market offered by private businesses. Besides, the very nature of such initiatives contributes to maintaining the friendly relations between the two countries.