



Audience clubs

Audience clubs are becoming increasingly common in London, with organisations such as the National Theatre, Battersea Arts Centre, the Young Vic and Camden People's Theatre all hosting their own form of post-performance audience clubs.

Some examples:

Dialogue

Initiated by theatre writers Jake Orr and Maddy Costa, Dialogue is an audience club where members of the audience critically discuss the production with either Maddy or Jake after the performance. No theatre makers or associated artists with the show attend.

Talkaoke

The People Speak ran a few Talkaoke sessions following NT Shed performances in 2013, where audiences were invited to the bar post-show to meet around an illuminate round table in which the facilitator sits in the middle. The company describe Talkaoke as a 'talk show club'.

Talk Show Club

Described as a new theatre club for adventurous audiences, Camden People's Theatre's club is facilitated by an associate artist of the venue, giving audiences a different perspective on the work being watched.

Audience Club at The Point, Eastleigh

Simply called the audience club, The Point facilitate their own session run by a staff member. Notecards with questions are placed face-down on the table to stimulate conversation if the room goes quiet- but they haven't needed them yet.

Some considerations:

The booking process:

Planning of how and when audiences can reserve a ticket must be considered, making sure this is a simple process that audiences can do when booking a ticket for the chosen performance.

Finding a host or a facilitator:

Each audience club has some kind of host, be that a staff member, associate artist or independent facilitator. It is important that the host spends time researching the production and company ahead of the session so that they are able to spur debate and move the conversation along if required.

An appropriate space:

A space outside the theatre that is warm and relaxing will aid club members in their conversation, some preparation of this space will also help members feel at home in the theatre

The cost:

Starting an audience club can come with costs in terms of space and marketing and could equally generate bar income. Planning on how these can be recouped over time or spent within an audience development budget should be considered when looking at the long term development of the club initiative.

Members become ambassadors:

Over time, audiences can become more attached to the venue and the programme, often informing friends of their club attendance and the shows discussed.

**Audiences take more risks:**

With the opportunity to discuss contemporary production within a group post-show, audiences are able to make more risks in their attendance choices, often attending the show to then have the chance to discuss it afterwards.

Understand your audience taste and identity:

An audience club allows programmers to meet and hear about audience tastes and preferences.

Further resources for research

Dialogue: <http://welcometodialogue.com/>

Talkaoke: <http://thepeoplespeak.org.uk/blog/2011/07/03/talkaoke/>

Talk Show Club: http://www.cptheatre.co.uk/page/talk_show_club.php

Audience Club at The Point, Eastleigh: <https://www.thepointeastleigh.co.uk/artists-at-the-point/audiences-artists/audience-club/>

Catherine Love's Open Dialogue article: <http://catherinelove.co.uk/2013/11/01/open-dialogue/>