



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Theatre attendance at record high

In the 1998/'99 theatre season people attended professional theatre performances in the Netherlands some 16.1 million times. This includes dance, music and stage performances, but not pop concerts. The 3% increase on the previous season brings the number of visits to the theatre and also the average number of visitors per performance to a record high. Most types of dance, and modern dance in particular, are gaining in popularity. The latest figures by Statistics Netherlands show that the greatest increase in the number of visitors was observed in the province of Utrecht. State subsidised theatre companies lag a bit behind the rest.

Record attendance per performance

The total number of visitors attending professional theatre performances went up while the total number of performances fell slightly. The average attendance per performance increased to 287 spectators per performance, which is an all time record high. Remarkably the circus and vaudeville saw a substantial drop in the number of spectators.

Modern dance gaining in popularity

Of all art disciplines, modern dance has shown the most consistent, continuous increase in the last five seasons both in the number of performances and in attendance levels. Light music and the group operettas, musicals and music theatre did better than in the previous season. Compared to 10 years ago these two categories increased attendance levels by three to four times.

Great regional differences

There were also great regional differences in the 1998/'99 season. The influence of the major cities makes that the provinces of North and South Holland head the way. One in every six to seven performances took place in Amsterdam. The 4 major cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht) generated one third of the total supply, which had 40% of all attendance. Compared to the season 1997/'98 the province of Utrecht, and to a lesser degree North Brabant, show a substantial increase in the attendance level. Almost all provinces profited from the increased popularity of theatre except for Friesland, Gelderland and North Holland.

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Compared to 10 years ago the highest growth rates were in the provinces Friesland, Flevoland and North Brabant.

Structurally subsidised theatre companies lagging behind

The theatre companies and institutions subsidised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in a structural manner did not do as well in the 1998/99 season. A 5.5% drop in the number of performances and a drop in attendance levels of more than 2% is disappointing when compared to other companies which saw a 4% increase in attendance and had no drop in the number of performances.

Both turnover and expenditure of the subsidised companies increased by 3% on the previous season. The income from government subsidies was higher while the turnover from performances remained the same. The government-subsidised companies still derive an average of three quarters of their income from subsidies.

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