

Report - November 2001

Going on with the Show

Lost amidst predictions of mass joblessness, budget deficits and overall economic turmoil has been the plight of arts and culture organizations, which have seen their revenue sources shrivel since the terrorist attack.

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This is an excerpt. Click here to read the full report (PDF).

Artists may live for applause, but they can't live on it.

Broadway ticket sales have rebounded since September 11, in large part because Mayor Giuliani did just about everything but join the cast of "Cabaret" in an effort to bring New Yorkers and others back to the Great White Way. But even with audiences returning to Broadway and beyond, most of the city's 2,000 arts organizations are gearing up for their rockiest period in 30 years.

The arts sector has witnessed severe blows to all three of its core funding streams—earned income from ticket sales and other sources, contributed income from wealthy individuals and foundations, and government funding. Those organizations reeling from deep setbacks in all three of these areas have virtually no recourse: Unlike businesses that can rely upon insurance, seek government bailouts or turn to new markets when they hit hard times, most arts organizations simply have no safety net.

With all of the other pressing problems in the city, why should we care? Well, for one, arts organizations are responsible for 130,000 jobs and contribute $13 billion to the local economy. In addition, New York's economy has always been driven by creativity and ideas—the city is a media, marketing and fashion center—and a vibrant cultural sector is one of the reasons many businesses choose to locate here. Even financial organizations cite the city's world-class cultural offerings as one of the factors that keep them in the Big Apple.

A prolonged slump in New York's cultural sector will not only mean more layoffs, it will be a substantial blow to the city's identity and allure.

This report is the first comprehensive assessment of the field of arts and cultural organizations in New York post-September 11. The results of our survey shine a spotlight on an industry that is fundamental to our local economy and to our quality of life. Beyond documenting the impact, this report contains recommendations that can serve as a roadmap for all involved in rebuilding New York.



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