

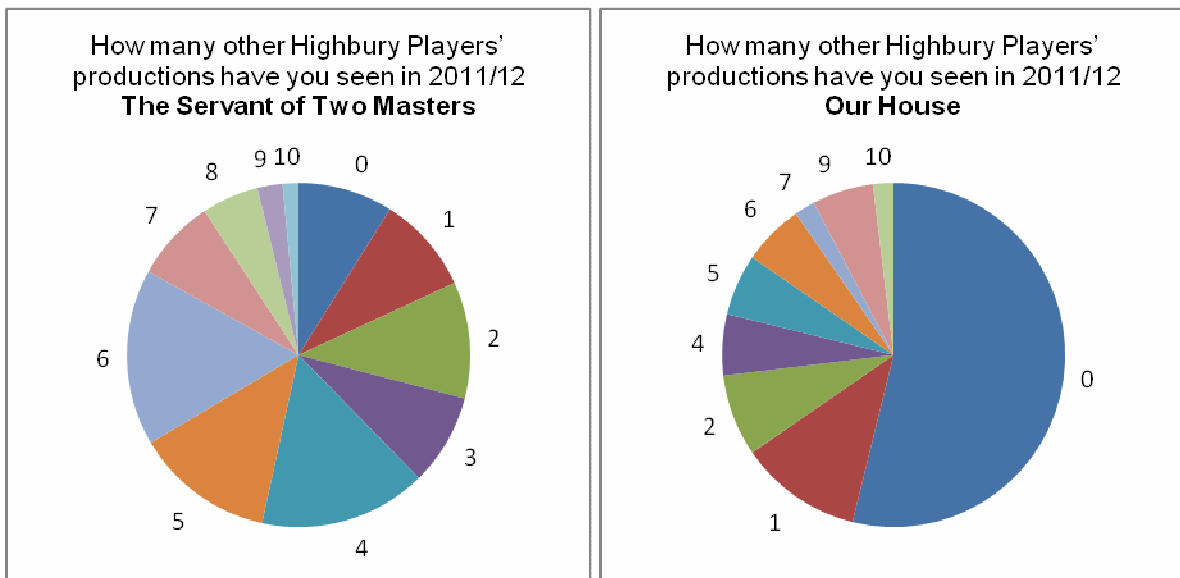
HIGHBURY THEATRE CENTRE Audience Survey by our Marketing Committee

At the end of last season, we invited the audiences of *The Servant of Two Masters* and *Our House* to fill in a short survey which was designed to help us find out more about their theatre-going, how satisfied they were with 'the Highbury experience' and what suggestions they had about how we might improve. This is the first in a short series of articles to let you know what our audiences said and to respond to some of the comments and suggestions that were made.

More of the *Servant* audience filled in the survey than the *Our House* audience, but we were really pleased with the overall response rate of 31% and would like to thank everyone who took part. We have had a lot of useful feedback and some great ideas to work on.

How often do people come to the theatre?

Over half the *Servant* respondents had seen five or more of our main productions last season, although nearly 10% said that was the first production they had seen. In contrast, just over half the *Our House* respondents were coming for the first time. The graphs show the differences between these two groups.



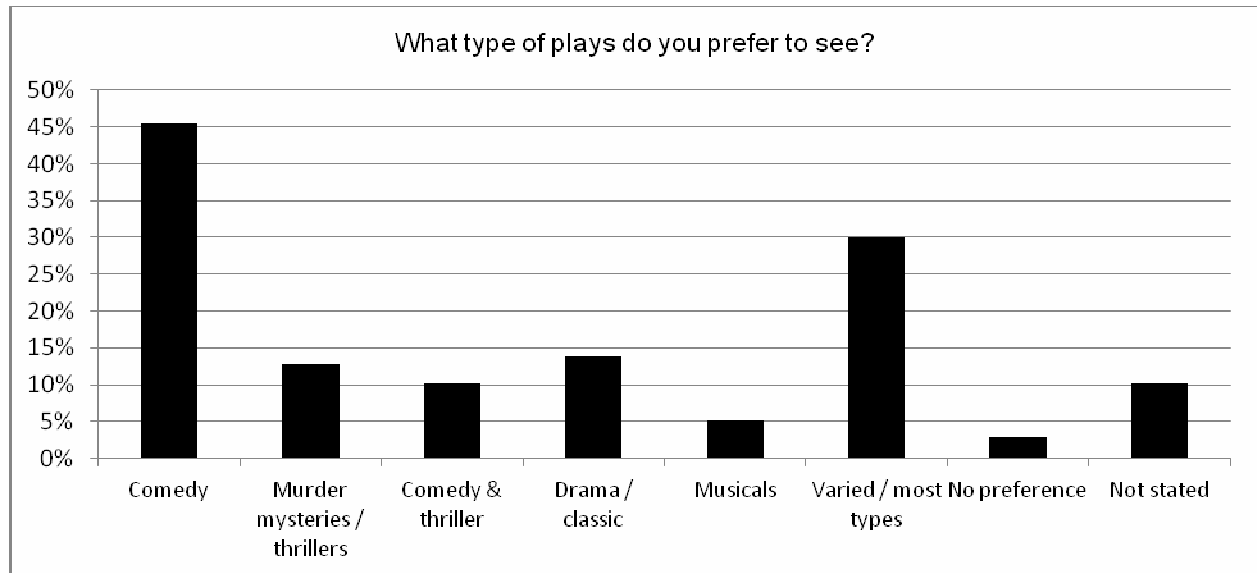
We love the support we have from our regular audiences who are the lifeblood of our theatre. We're also very pleased to welcome people who are coming for the first time. We sincerely hope they enjoy our productions enough to come back again and again, until they, too, turn into our 'regulars'.

About a quarter of both sets of respondents said they had seen five or more productions at other theatres in the year, which is great news for the theatres of Sutton Coldfield and the surrounding area.

What do people prefer?

Nearly half the respondents said they preferred comedies, while about a third said they preferred a variety or most types of play. The graph shows the majority of responses.

Some people said they liked more than one type of play (often comedies and thrillers) while some preferences didn't fit into any of these main categories (for example, "good quality").



For many years, we have designed our seasons around 'the Highbury formula' which includes such categories as comedy, thriller, international classic, a play for our times. We believe this gives a good mixture that will keep the interest of both our audience and the Highbury Players.

Two-thirds said they didn't mind whether they came to the first or second week of our main productions. Some people said that when they came depended on other commitments. We would encourage people to come during the first week if they can, because nights in the second week often get booked up and we don't like having to disappoint people when there aren't any seats left.

Nearly two-thirds of people said they were very likely to recommend our productions to a friend or relative. As a small charity, we try not to spend a lot of money on advertising. The value of 'word of mouth' recommendations cannot be overstated and we are delighted with this form of support.

What do people think?

We also invited people to make comments and suggestions about how we might improve. We had a lot of really lovely comments, such as "It is a delight to come to the Highbury", "Very good value and excellent entertainment", and "Talented actors and very friendly staff". The support for the Highbury Players and our Youth Theatre shone through and made us quite emotional!

In the next article, we'll have a look at some of the more specific comments and suggestions and let you know how we are taking them forward.