



ARTSBOSTON HOLIDAY SAMPLER

12 DAYS OF JOY



As a New Survey Shows Audience Confidence Waning in a Quick Return to Theaters, and Interest Rising in Streamed Content, ARTSBOSTON Launches a New Way to Enjoy Holiday Traditions and Encourage New Ones

“ARTSBOSTON HOLIDAY SAMPLER: 12 DAYS OF JOY” LAUNCHES DEC. 8
at [ARTSBOSTONHOLIDAY.ORG](https://www.artsbostonholiday.org)

BOSTON, MA – December 2, 2020 -- Just-released results from the Audience Outlook Monitor (AOM) – a longitudinal survey of Greater Boston arts audiences sponsored by ArtsBoston – show a recent slump in readiness to resume in-person attendance until epidemiological conditions improve (including wide availability of a vaccine), and a significant jump in interest for online arts consumption.

Armed with this data, and its mission to help audiences find new experiences to enjoy with friends and families, ArtsBoston will launch [“ArtsBoston Holiday Sampler: 12 Days of Joy”](https://www.artsbostonholiday.org) an online destination that guides audiences to the holiday traditions they’ll miss in person this year, and helps them discover new ones. Running Dec 8-19 at [ArtsBostonHoliday.org](https://www.artsbostonholiday.org), the “ArtsBoston Holiday Sampler” provides a single destination to find the many free and low-cost streamed performances that are available in the comfort and safety of viewers’ homes.

ArtsBoston Executive Director Catherine Peterson says the site is a place where treasured traditions and new experiences come together. “Families and groups of friends who miss the story of Clara’s adventures in *The Nutcracker*, the joyful communal experience of *Revels*, or the half-century tradition of Boston’s production of Langston Hughes’ *Black Nativity*, will find themselves a click away from bringing that holiday joy into their own homes,” she says.

Peterson hopes the “ArtsBoston Holiday Sampler” can serve as a path to new traditions, too. “Viewers who love *Holiday Pops* for the sing-alongs and Santa visits may also love the Irish melodies of *A Christmas Celtic Sojourn with Brian O’Donovan*, or Boston Baroque’s all-star version of Handel’s *Messiah*, or Celebrity Series of Boston’s new special *A Mexican Christmas: Songs and Stories with Verónica Robles*,” she says. And while digital performances cannot fully replicate a live experience, Peterson says having multiple affordable choices in one place helps audiences try something new, and discover organizations they may want to visit next year.

Dance lovers can watch two different versions of *The Nutcracker*: Boston Ballet’s lavish stage event and the inventive, inclusive, jazz-inflected *Urban Nutcracker*. Theater lovers can choose offerings new to Boston, including American Repertory Theater’s *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and

Huntington Theatre Company's one-man presentation of *Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol*, starring Tony Award-winner Jefferson Mays. Museum lovers can find plenty to explore here too, from a virtual tour of the Boston Children's Museum's exhibition, *Warm & Fuzzy Feels*, by artist Chanel Thervil, to a behind-the-scenes look at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston's show *Monet and Boston: Lasting Impression*, and much more.

Survey finds rapidly changing attitudes toward streaming

In September, local AOM respondents said they were hesitant to substitute filmed or live-streamed performances for a live experience. Nearly 40% indicated they were "not at all likely" to watch performances from home. But in November, the number of people who showed "no interest" in watching more online performances dropped more than half to 18%. That attitude change came with a caveat: many audience members said they don't know how or where to access the online programming they want to see, much less seek out new options.

Alan Brown, a principal of consulting firm WolfBrown, which gathers and analyzes the Audience Outlook Monitor data, says a good number of the respondents that have difficulty navigating the landscape of digital programming would like an impartial guide. "On average, 40 percent of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they are overwhelmed by the number of online programs they might watch and would benefit from recommendations from a trusted source," Brown says. "The 'Holiday Sampler' is a really smart way for ArtsBoston to meet this audience need," he says.

The most recent AOM survey was deployed in mid-November, as COVID-19 cases began to spike again and vaccine trials had just started raising hope for public health improvement. At the time, just 9% of local respondents said they would be comfortable going to performances and arts gatherings once restrictions are lifted. That was a drop from the high of 14% in September – likely attributable to the state's coronavirus resurgence and uncertainty about the timing of a vaccine. Respondents who cited vaccination and immunity to the coronavirus as a deciding factor in returning to the arts rose to 50% -- the highest number to choose that answer since the surveys began in June, and a likely nod to early news about successful vaccine trials.

Peterson says survey respondents' recognition that live performance restrictions will not be lifted for a while likely drove up interest in watching performing arts content online.

The ArtsBoston Holiday Sampler is produced by ArtsBoston with promotional support from the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture Boston.

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