



# CONSULTATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF CONVENINGS

FINDINGS FROM A MEMBER SURVEY SPRING 2024 & A WEBINAR  
CONSULTATION MAY 9, 2024

# Table of Contents

- Executive Summary ..... 2
  - Consultations on the Future of Convenings for the Association for Opera in Canada (AOC)..... 2
  - Motivations and Attendance ..... 2
  - Concerns and Barriers ..... 2
  - Preferred Convening Formats and Locations..... 2
  - Valuable Summit Elements ..... 3
  - Recommendations for Future Convenings ..... 3
  - Conclusion..... 3
- Summit Webinar Report..... 4
- Summit Survey Results..... 6

# Executive Summary

## Consultations on the Future of Convenings for the Association for Opera in Canada (AOC)

Following its most recent Opera Summit in Winnipeg 2023, The Association for Opera in Canada held a webinar consultation followed by a survey on convening that provided critical insights into the preferences, concerns, and suggestions of its members regarding future convenings. These engagements revealed significant trends and actionable recommendations to enhance the impact and inclusivity of AOC events. At the time of the consultations, there were early plans for a major international conference coming to Toronto in Spring 2025 which was later scuttled in May. Given the late notice of this decision, and the directions revealed from our consultations, the AOC has chosen to defer its annual Summit by one year in order to plan the implementation of many of these findings, as well as to explore the potential of joint conferencing with another national arts service organization.

## Motivations and Attendance

**Community and Connection:** Participants are motivated to attend consultations and summits to be in community with peers, contribute to the next Summit, and promote greater inclusivity and diversity of voices.

**Historical Engagement:** A significant majority of respondents (82.22%) have attended AOC convenings, with a strong core of regular attendees (59.46% participated in 2-5 events).

## Concerns and Barriers

**Costs and Accessibility:** Concerns about travel, lodging costs, and accessibility for diverse groups (physical, financial, and neurodivergent) are prevalent.

**Scheduling and Efficiency:** Efficient time management and actionable outcomes are preferred over theoretical discussions.

## Preferred Convening Formats and Locations

**In-Person Dominance:** In-person gatherings are the most preferred mode (82.93%), followed by virtual (9.76%) and hybrid (7.32%). Face-to-face interactions are highly valued.

**Preferred Locations:** The preferred locations for a future Summit were Toronto, followed by Montreal, then Quebec City, GTA and Victoria showing a clear preference for major city centres.

**Preferred Timings:** There was flexibility in considering Summits as a bi-annual gathering, rather than an annual one. Early fall remains a preferred time of year as spring often coincides with the Opera America conference, and the Opera Europa Conference.

## Valuable Summit Elements

**Highly Rated Elements:** Networking Sessions, Auditions and Panel Conversations are considered vital. There is a strong preference for cocreating content, collaborative workshops, more diverse voices and informal networking opportunities.

## Recommendations for Future Convenings

**Content and Structure:** Continuously evaluating and co-creating summit elements based on attendee feedback. Providing opportunities for greater attendee engagement beyond passive listening.

**Explore new convening options:** Considering different times of year, collaborations, and different modalities.

**Cost Management:** Exploring subsidies or sponsorships to reduce attendance costs.

**Health and Safety:** Implementing robust measures to alleviate health-related concerns.

**Environmental Sustainability:** Incorporating sustainable practices to appeal to environmentally conscious members.

## Conclusion

The insights from AOC's consultations highlight the importance of community, inclusivity, and innovation in convenings. Addressing barriers related to cost, accessibility, health, and environmental concerns while leveraging preferred summit elements and flexible scheduling can significantly enhance the value and impact of future AOC events.

# Summit Webinar Report

## May 9, 2024 1pm Eastern

Who registered?	
Opera Artists	28%
Professional Company Members	24%
Individuals	21%
Business Associates	14%
Associates	7%
Educational Associates	7%

### 1. What is motivating you to attend this consultation?

Participants largely attended this consultation to contribute to their community and to the next summit, and to be in community with each other. Others expressed a desire for greater inclusivity at the Summit, more opportunities for presenters instead of plenaries, to foster a broader exchange of ideas. Others wanted more diversity of voices beyond the usual speakers. Most genuinely wished to contribute to future summits, as well as to express support for the power of collaboration in civic artistry discussions and a desire to innovate collectively.

### 2. What concerns do you have as an attendee?

Attendees expressed concerns over travel and lodging costs, accessibility for diverse groups, including physical, financial and neurodivergent considerations. Efficient scheduling and time management are crucial, as is addressing the feeling of isolation in networking contexts. Participants preferred actionable outcomes over theoretical discussions and valued informal networking opportunities while stressing the importance of content relevant to Canadian contexts. There was a preference for collaborative workshop formats, and for decreasing carbon footprint.

### 3. Rank the following Summit Elements

Keynote address	100%
Auditions	100%
Panel conversation	74%
Learning breakouts	50%
Conversation Cafes	48%
Keynote address	41%
Opera performance	43%
Speaker discovery series	31%
Meals	27%
Pitch sessions	26%
Showcases	26%
Coffee breaks	18%
Tours	11%
Closing session	9%
Exhibitor room	6%

## Breakout Exercise

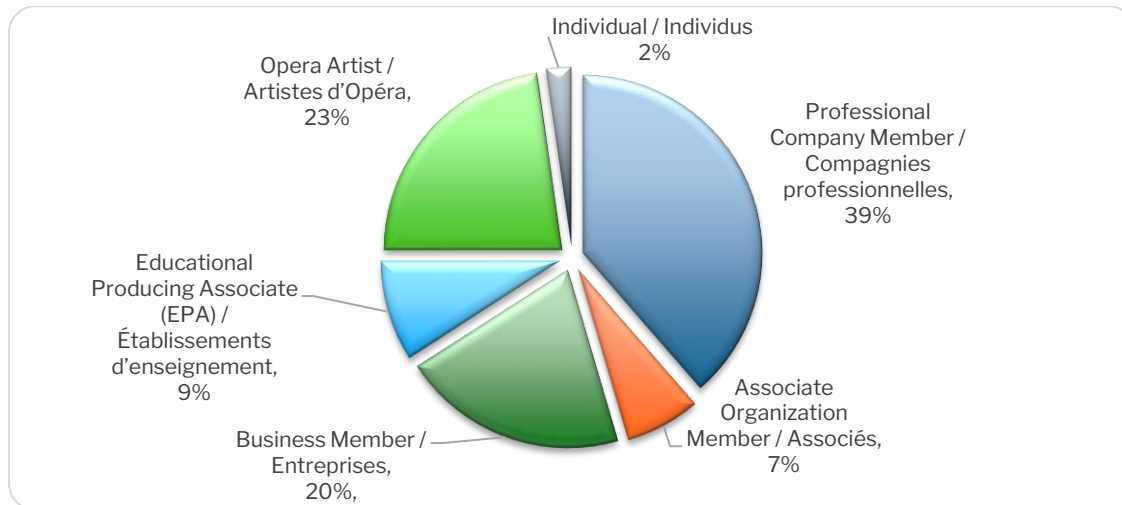
Attendees were split into three breakout sessions and asked to select a Summit format based on the one they would most likely attend and to ideate on it, asking three questions: What are the benefits of this model, what are the barrier/drawbacks, and how can this model be improved?

- Summit on the Road (we come to you)
- Summit 365 (virtual Summit, with sessions throughout the year)
- Hybrid summit
- Ye Olde Summit (in-person)

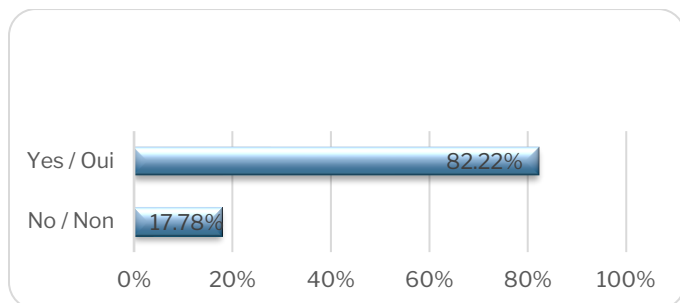
Groups 1 and 2 chose Ye Olde Summit, and Group 3 chose Summit on the Road. No group chose Hybrid Summit or Summit 365 to ideate.

# Summit Survey Results

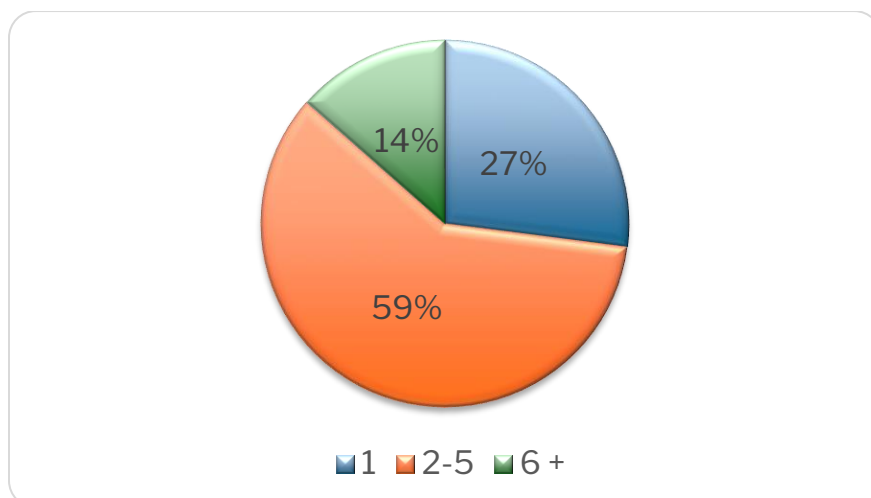
## 45 Total Respondents



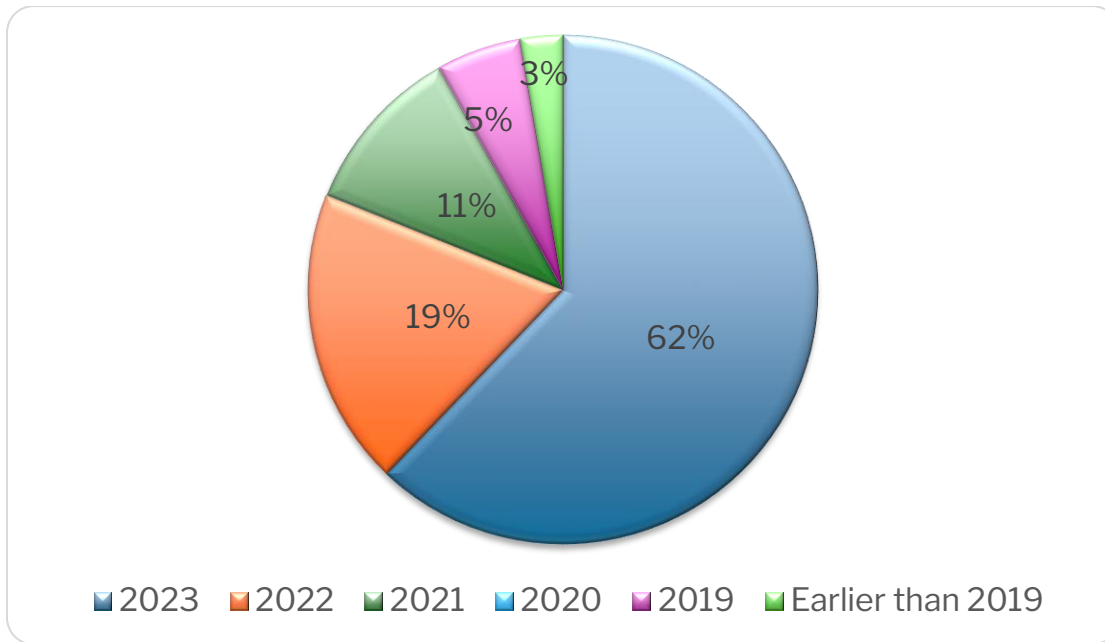
## 82% of respondents had attended an AOC event in the past



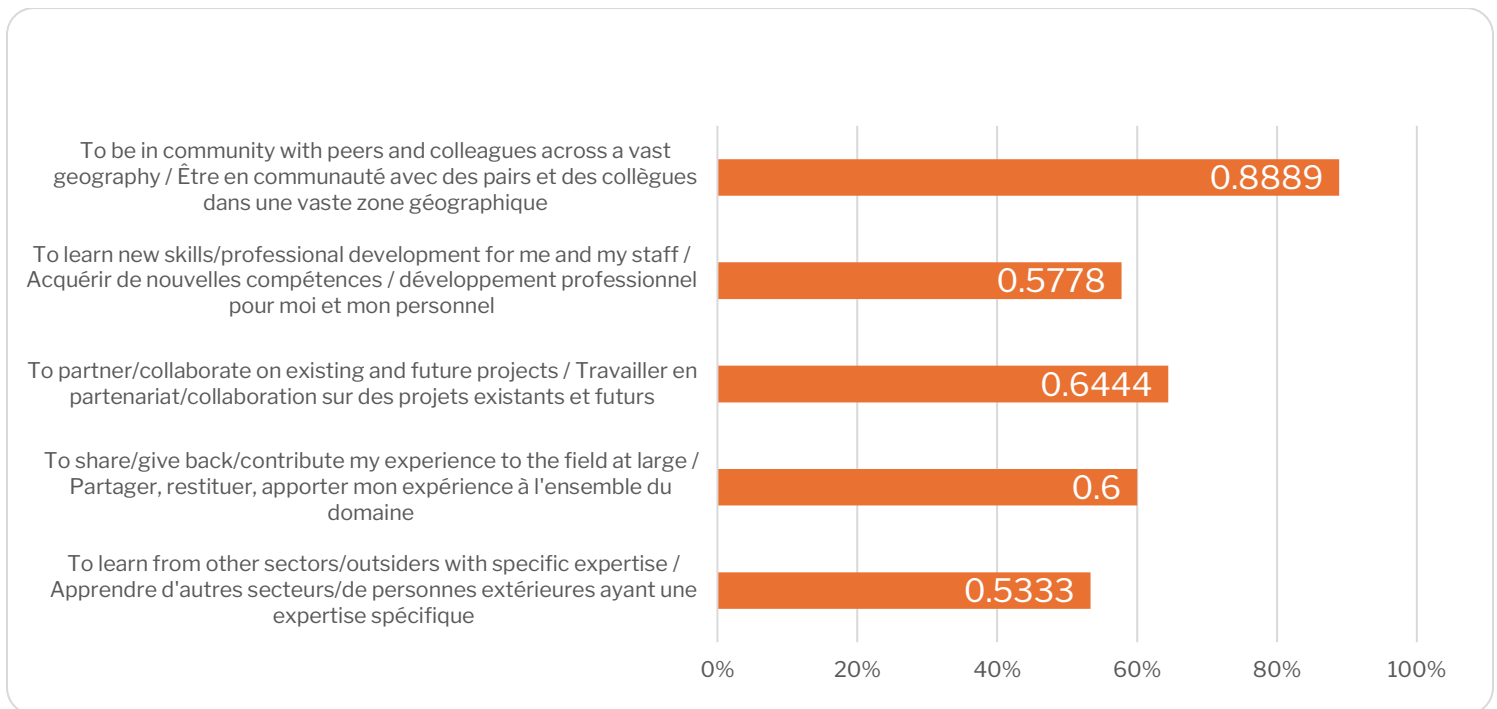
## FREQUENCY: 59% of respondents had attended 2-5 past convenings



## RECENCY: 62% of respondents attended the last Summit in 2023

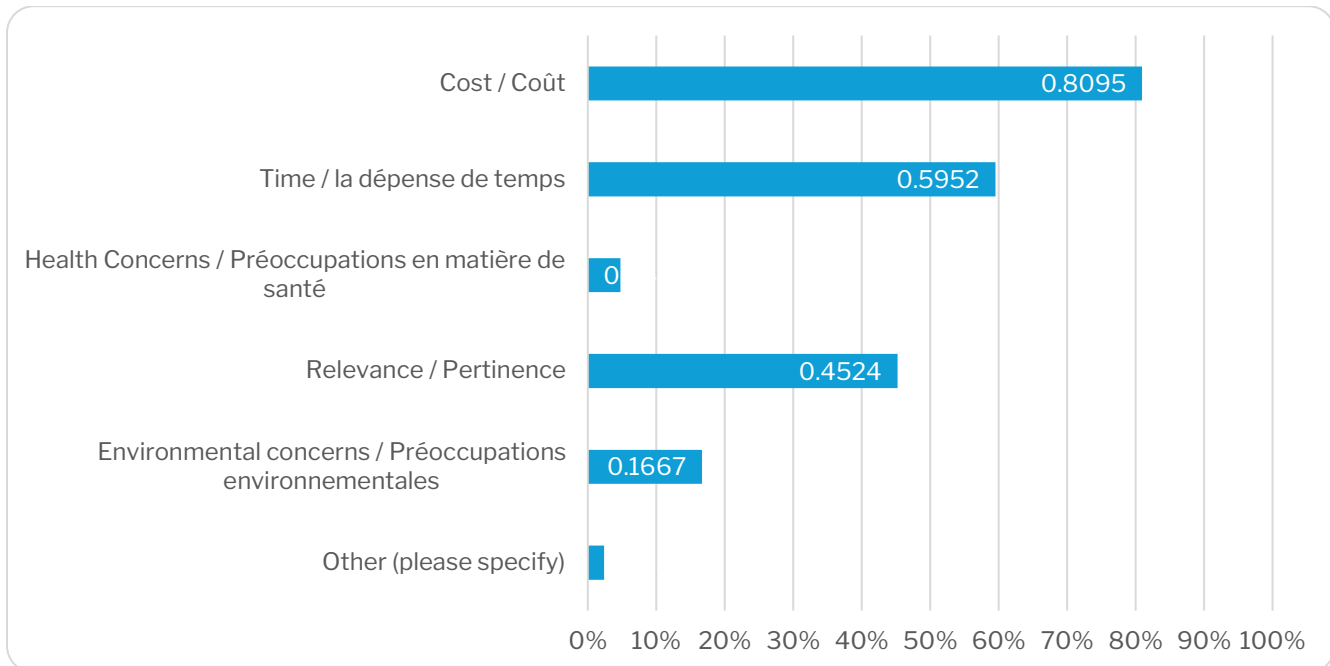


## Top 5 Motivations to attend a Convening



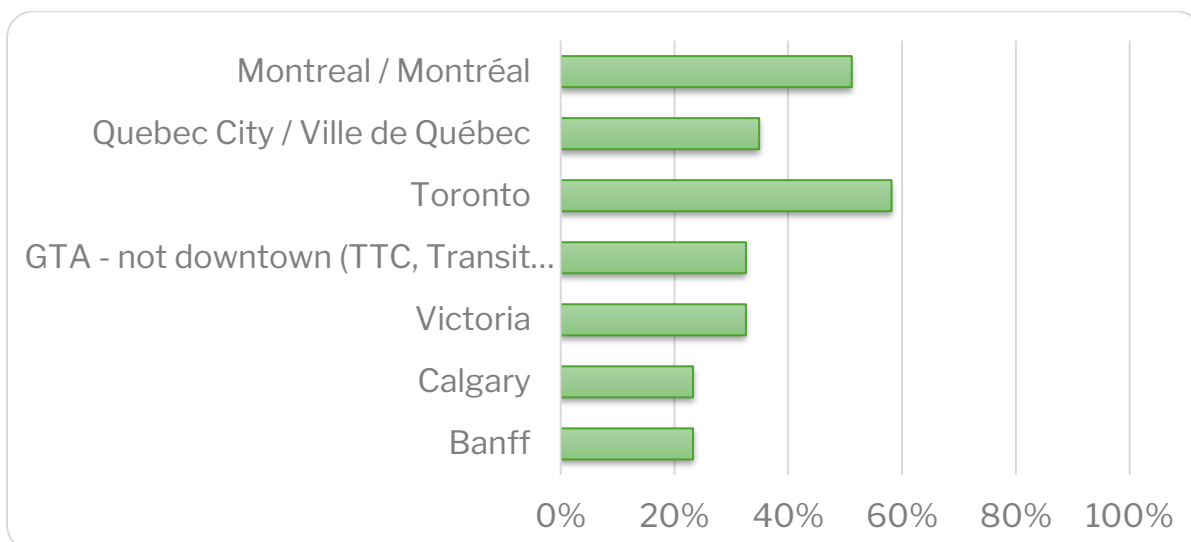


## BARRIERS to Convening



83% of Respondents Ranked “IN-PERSON” as their top choice of Convening Mode (other choices were Hybrid Virtual)

Strong preference for “TORONTO” as the location for the next Summit, followed by “MONTREAL”, “QUEBEC”, “GTA” and “VICTORIA”.



Networking (72%) and Auditions (50%)\* ranked the most vital Summit elements.

The elements most frequently ranked as Not Valuable were Exhibitor Room, (37%), Mentoring (27%), and Auditions (23%):

