

MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR OPERA INSTITUTIONS IN THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

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Abstract

This study examines how leading European opera houses translate the experience-economy perspective into marketing practice. A qualitative multiple-case design compares the Paris Opera, the Vienna State Opera, and Teatro alla Scala. The cases were selected through explicit criteria covering institutional prominence, comparability, public availability of recent evidence, and variation in marketing emphasis. Data were drawn from institutional reports, programme documents, streaming and ticketing pages, and official communications available for 2023–2026. A structured content analysis coded initiatives related to experience extension, audience development, digital access, pricing and inclusion, and heritage branding. The findings show a shared layered architecture: the live performance remains the artistic core, while digital platforms, educational formats, visits, workshops, and segmented offers expand the encounter before and after attendance. The three institutions nevertheless differ in emphasis. Paris develops a discovery-to-participation digital ecosystem; Vienna combines free streaming with youth-oriented mediation; La Scala links prestige branding with price segmentation and accessibility programmes. The article proposes a heritage–access–engagement framework and explains how opera managers can widen participation without treating artistic mission and market orientation as opposing goals.

Keywords: Opera marketing, Experience economy, Audience development, Digital engagement, Cultural institutions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Opera houses occupy an unusual position in cultural markets. They preserve repertoires, craft traditions, buildings, archives, and forms of artistic labour whose value cannot be reduced to short-term demand. At the same time, they must earn attention in media environments where leisure choices are abundant, digital discovery is routine, and audiences compare cultural participation with many other uses of time and

money. Marketing in this setting is not simply the promotion of individual titles. It includes the design of access, the interpretation of unfamiliar works, the management of institutional reputation, and the creation of relationships that can begin before a ticket purchase and continue after the curtain falls. The managerial problem is therefore how to widen participation while protecting the artistic and public missions that give opera institutions their legitimacy.

The experience-economy perspective offers a useful entry point because it shifts attention from the isolated service transaction to the total encounter created around it. Pine and Gilmore (1999) argue that organizations generate value by staging memorable experiences rather than delivering services alone. In opera, the performance already integrates sound, narrative, visual design, architecture, ritual, and social interaction. Yet the audience's experience is also shaped by ticket search, information quality, perceived risk, accessibility, pre-performance preparation, venue welcome, and opportunities for reflection or participation. Research on performing-arts audiences similarly shows that quality is assessed through engagement, emotional response, knowledge, risk, and social connection, not only through technical judgments of artistic execution (Brown & Novak, 2007; Radbourne et al., 2009).

This broader view has become more relevant as opera houses develop streaming platforms, digital archives, mobile applications, workshops, youth venues, backstage tours, immersive installations, and segmented ticket offers. Such initiatives may extend reach, but the existence of more channels does not by itself demonstrate strategic coherence. A livestream can operate as a public-access service, a paid extension of the repertoire, a brand-building instrument, or an entry point for first-time spectators. Educational programmes can function as social inclusion, audience preparation, talent development, or community partnership. The analytical task is to identify how these components are combined and what managerial logic connects them to the institution's artistic core.

The study addresses two questions. First, how do major European opera houses operationalize experiential marketing through digital access, audience development, and experience extension? Second, which similarities and differences appear when their initiatives are compared through a common analytical framework? The empirical focus is a qualitative comparison of the Paris Opera, the Vienna State Opera, and Teatro alla Scala. These organizations share high symbolic status and a repertory-based model, but they offer meaningful strategic variation in streaming, youth engagement, visitor experience, pricing, and heritage communication.

The contribution is threefold. The article sets out transparent case-selection and coding procedures, replacing a descriptive list of promotional activities with a reproducible comparative design. It connects institutional evidence to arts-marketing and audience-experience literature, rather than treating each initiative as an isolated example. It also proposes a heritage–access–engagement framework that interprets opera marketing as an architecture of linked experiences. The framework does not assume that

all forms of participation lead directly to ticket sales. Instead, it distinguishes cultural reach, relationship formation, conversion opportunities, and repeat engagement, which are related but analytically different outcomes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Arts marketing and the dual mission of cultural institutions

Arts marketing developed in response to a persistent tension: cultural organizations need audiences and resources, yet artistic products are not normally designed by starting from expressed consumer preferences. Kotler and Scheff (1997) therefore describe performing-arts marketing as the task of finding, informing, and serving publics for an artistic offer whose integrity must be preserved. Later research moved beyond the idea that marketing is a downstream promotional function. Colbert and St-James (2014) show that arts-marketing scholarship increasingly examines consumption, identity, relationships, participation, and the institutional conditions in which cultural value is produced.

This shift matters for opera because the product is both stable and variable. A canonical work may be familiar at the level of title and music, while each production changes through casting, direction, design, interpretation, and venue. The audience also faces unusually high informational and psychological costs. Long performance times, foreign-language libretti, formal buildings, and inherited social codes can make attendance attractive to experienced spectators but risky to newcomers. Marketing practice must therefore reduce uncertainty without trivializing the work. Synopsis material, introductions, trailers, open rehearsals, and educational formats are not peripheral communication; they influence whether the institution appears navigable and welcoming.

The dual mission also affects performance measurement. Attendance, occupancy, earned income, and digital reach are useful indicators, but they do not capture the entire public value of an opera house. Throsby (2001) distinguishes economic value from cultural value and emphasizes that the two interact without becoming identical. A youth workshop may create learning and cultural confidence even when it does not produce an immediate sale. A free stream may support access and international visibility while weakening neither the scarcity nor the local meaning of live attendance. A suitable analytical framework therefore needs to track several forms of value rather than treating revenue as the only endpoint.

2.2 Experience economy and audience value

The experience-economy concept describes a progression from commodities and goods to services and staged experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Its use in the performing arts requires care because artistic

events were experiential long before the term entered management literature. The concept is nevertheless helpful when it directs attention to orchestration: organizations can shape the context in which an already experiential artistic work is discovered, prepared for, encountered, remembered, and shared. The managerial question is not how to manufacture emotion on demand, but how to remove avoidable barriers and support conditions in which aesthetic attention can develop.

Audience research supports this relational interpretation. Brown and Novak (2007) distinguish readiness, captivation, intellectual stimulation, emotional resonance, spiritual value, and social bonding as dimensions of intrinsic impact. Radbourne et al. (2009) similarly argue that audience experience offers a richer basis for discussing quality than traditional proxies such as reviews or reputation alone. These approaches suggest that opera marketing should include expectation management, contextual information, welcome, participation, and post-performance meaning-making. The experience begins before the event and is influenced by the audience member's prior knowledge, confidence, and social setting.

Experience design can also create risks. Excessive packaging may displace attention from the art, and immersive or digital additions may be adopted because they appear innovative rather than because they serve a defined audience need. The experience-economy perspective is strongest when linked to institutional purpose. For an opera house, a backstage tour can reveal craft and labour; a digital archive can support learning and memory; a conversational application can lower the entry threshold for young adults; a youth venue can enable experimentation with scale and format. The same tool can have different value depending on its relationship to the repertoire and the target public.

2.3 Audience development, co-creation, and access

Audience development combines marketing, education, and organizational change. It includes efforts to deepen the experience of existing audiences, diversify participation, and build relationships with people who do not yet identify as opera-goers. Bourdieu's (1984) account of cultural capital explains why familiarity, education, and social confidence affect participation. Price reductions can remove a financial barrier, but they may not overcome symbolic distance or uncertainty about behaviour, content, and belonging. Effective audience development therefore combines affordability with mediation and repeated opportunities for contact.

Co-creation research adds a further distinction between inviting audiences to respond and giving them meaningful influence. Walmsley (2013) shows that participatory practice can create value when engagement is authentic rather than used only to legitimize predetermined institutional choices. For opera organizations, full co-production is not appropriate for every artistic decision, but participatory workshops, youth projects, community partnerships, and feedback processes can change how programmes are

interpreted and communicated. The relevant managerial question is where participation enhances cultural agency and where expert artistic authority remains appropriate.

Digital access extends this discussion. Streaming can reduce geographic barriers, subtitles can widen linguistic access, and mobile distribution can reach audiences outside traditional schedules. Yet digital reach should not be confused with engagement. A view, click, or follower indicates exposure, not necessarily attention, learning, or future attendance. The strongest strategies connect discovery to pathways: introductory content leads to a full stream; a stream leads to repertoire exploration; a workshop leads to a visit; a youth offer leads to repeat attendance. This pathway logic provides the basis for the coding framework used below (Table 1).

TABLE 1. ANALYTICAL DIMENSIONS USED IN THE STUDY

Dimension	Operational meaning	Illustrative evidence
Heritage	Use of repertoire, architecture, craft, and reputation to frame institutional identity	Brand narratives, tours, archives, international partnerships
Access	Reduction of financial, geographic, linguistic, physical, or informational barriers	Price schemes, subtitles, free streams, accessibility services
Engagement	Opportunities for preparation, participation, reflection, and relationship-building	Workshops, youth programmes, applications, talks, interactive formats
Experience extension	Activities before, around, and after the live performance	Trailers, backstage content, visits, on-demand viewing, post-show material
Strategic linkage	Connection between channels and a defined audience pathway	Discovery-to-attendance journeys, repeated contact, membership or conversion routes

Source: Author's framework based on Pine and Gilmore (1999), Radbourne et al. (2009), and Walmsley (2013).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design and case selection

The research uses a qualitative multiple-case design. The purpose is analytical comparison rather than statistical generalization. A case was defined as the institutional configuration of marketing, audience-development, and digital initiatives associated with one opera house. The period of observation covers evidence published or available from January 2023 to August 2026, while earlier scholarly sources are used to establish the theoretical framework.

The three cases were selected through four criteria. First, each institution has international artistic recognition and a strong heritage brand, making the management of tradition and accessibility visible. Second, all three are large European repertory institutions that present opera and ballet in permanent venues, which supports comparability. Third, each publishes enough official material to permit source triangulation across programme pages, institutional reports, access schemes, and digital platforms. Fourth,

the sample provides strategic variation: Paris has invested in a proprietary on-demand ecosystem and digital discovery; Vienna combines multilingual free streaming with a dedicated youth venue and mediation; La Scala links a prestige brand to age-based pricing, accessibility, and a streaming service. These criteria were defined before the cross-case analysis and provide a transparent basis for the comparative analysis.

3.2 Data sources and analytical procedure

The evidence base (Table 2) consists of public institutional documents. For the Paris Opera, sources include information on Paris Opera Play (POP), free educational content, the Aria conversational application, immersive visitor experiences, audience and digital-reach figures, and accessibility initiatives (Paris Opera, n.d.-b). For the Vienna State Opera, the analysis uses the official streaming platform, annual-report portal, youth-performance pages, the NEST youth venue, and workshop descriptions. For Teatro alla Scala, evidence includes the 2023 Social Report, LaScalaTV materials, season and ticketing information, youth offers, accessibility programmes, and institutional communication on young audiences. Academic literature was not used as a substitute for institutional evidence; it supplied concepts for interpretation.

TABLE 2. CASE-SELECTION CRITERIA AND EVIDENCE BASE

Case	Reason for inclusion	Principal evidence used
Paris Opera	High heritage value; proprietary streaming and interactive discovery tools	POP pages, Aria and youth-content information, visitor experiences, reach figures
Vienna State Opera	Comparable repertory institution; multilingual free streaming and dedicated youth formats	Streaming platform, annual reports, NEST, youth performances and workshops
Teatro alla Scala	Prestige-led brand with documented age segmentation, inclusion, and digital distribution	2023 Social Report, LaScalaTV, Under-30 offers, accessibility and institutional communication

Source: Author's research design.

The material was coded in two stages. Within each case, initiatives were assigned to the dimensions in Table 1. Evidence was then summarized in a cross-case matrix. In the second stage, pattern matching was used to identify recurring configurations and differences. Three questions guided the interpretation: What barrier or audience need does the initiative address? How is it linked to the artistic core? What form of value—reach, preparation, participation, conversion, or loyalty—can reasonably be associated with it? The analysis avoids causal claims about attendance or revenue because comparable outcome data are not available across all three organizations.

Source triangulation reduces the risk of relying on isolated promotional statements. Whenever possible, a strategy is supported by more than one institutional source or by a report containing quantitative

information. Still, official materials present the institution's own account and may emphasize successful programmes. The findings should therefore be read as an analysis of observable strategic architecture, not as an independent audit of effectiveness.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Paris Opera: a digital discovery-to-participation ecosystem

The Paris Opera combines heritage communication with a growing set of digital and on-site experiences. POP, launched in 2023, provides access to recorded performances and related content across devices and outside France (Paris Opera, 2023). The platform is more than a digital box office for recordings. Its catalogue includes performances, documentaries, and shorter material that can support different levels of familiarity. Since March 2025, selected performances and Academy documentaries aimed at education or young audiences have been available without charge, and content from the former 3e Scène has been incorporated into the free catalogue (Paris Opera, 2025a). The Aria conversational web application, designed to introduce young adults to opera through interactive quizzes, has also been linked to POP. This arrangement creates a pathway from low-commitment discovery to longer viewing and, potentially, live participation.

The institution also uses the building and its symbolic capital as part of the experience offer. The Palais Garnier functions as a performance venue, architectural destination, museum-like site, and setting for immersive projects. In 2025, the Opera promoted a virtual-reality experience that combined exploration of the building with emblematic arias, extending the institution beyond a conventional guided visit (Paris Opera, 2025b). Earlier sound-and-light installations similarly framed the venue as a place of sensory discovery. Such formats translate heritage into active encounter: the building is not only represented as prestigious but made available through movement, sound, narrative, and technology.

Scale strengthens this strategy. Institutional communication reports more than 880,000 annual spectators, nearly 800,000 visitors, over eight million website visits, and approximately 1.5 million social-media followers (Paris Opera, n.d.-a). These figures should be interpreted as reach indicators rather than proof of engagement, yet they show why coordination between visitor marketing, performance marketing, and digital communication matters. The Paris model can be described as portfolio-based. Free and interactive content lowers informational risk; premium streaming monetizes deeper interest; venue experiences activate heritage; the Academy and youth material introduce social and educational value. The strategic strength lies in the links among these layers rather than in any single channel.

4.2 Vienna State Opera: public access through streaming and youth mediation

The Vienna State Opera gives digital access a clear public-service orientation. Its streaming service offers live broadcasts without charge, supports web, mobile, and television devices, and keeps performances available for up to 72 hours after the live event. Where available, subtitles can be activated in several languages, including German, English, Spanish, Italian, French, Japanese, Chinese, and Russian (Vienna State Opera, n.d.-a). These design choices reduce geographic, financial, scheduling, and linguistic barriers simultaneously. Free access does not replace the live product; it makes the institution observable and usable by audiences who cannot enter the building at that moment.

Youth development is organized through both programming and place. Selected repertory performances are offered to audiences under 16 at reduced prices, while workshops invite children, young adults, and families to explore plot, themes, music, or movement before encountering a production (Vienna State Opera, n.d.-b; n.d.-c). NEST, the institution's newer venue, adds a differentiated environment for children and young people. Its programme includes premieres, experimental formats, discussion events, introductions, and participatory workshops (Vienna State Opera, n.d.-d). The venue reduces the pressure to make every youth initiative conform to the scale, conventions, and economics of the main house.

Vienna therefore links access to mediation. The stream broadens reach, but the workshops and NEST create opportunities for interpretation and active participation. This combination responds to the limitations of a channel-only strategy: digital visibility may increase awareness, while confidence and cultural literacy are more likely to develop through guided and social encounters. The annual-report archive also provides continuity and accountability, allowing stakeholders to follow programmes across seasons (Vienna State Opera, 2026). Compared with Paris, Vienna's observable emphasis is less on a monetized content portfolio and more on the opera house as an accessible public institution with multiple entry points.

4.3 Teatro alla Scala: prestige branding combined with segmented access

Teatro alla Scala begins from exceptionally strong symbolic capital. Its international reputation, historic building, and association with Italian opera allow prestige itself to function as a marketing asset. The managerial challenge is to prevent prestige from becoming distance. La Scala addresses this through segmented offers, digital distribution, and documented inclusion programmes. Its 2023 Social Report states that around 150,000 spectators used age-based incentives, that approximately 25% of spectators—excluding minors—were under 30, and that older audiences also benefited from targeted offers (Teatro alla Scala, 2023). The report additionally describes accessibility measures, including reserved places and concessions for spectators with disabilities and their companions.

The Under-30 preview model offers a highly visible mechanism for changing the social composition of attendance. For the 2025/2026 season, dedicated previews were offered exclusively to people under 30 at a fixed price of EUR 20 for any seat (Teatro alla Scala, 2025a). The value of this format is not only financial. A performance attended by an age-homogeneous public changes the atmosphere of the institution, reduces the fear of violating unfamiliar etiquette, and turns attendance into a generational event. Institutional communication later reported that under-35 spectators represented 35% of total audiences in recent seasons (Teatro alla Scala, 2025b). Because the age bands and source years differ, the figures should not be directly compared; together, they indicate that youth segmentation is treated as a sustained strategic priority rather than an occasional discount.

LaScalaTV provides the digital layer. Selected performances are streamed live and may remain available on demand for a defined period, creating both remote access and event scarcity (Teatro alla Scala, 2024). This differs from an unlimited archive and preserves a time-bound relationship with the live season. The model combines heritage and contemporary distribution: the brand promises artistic distinction, while digital access, youth previews, and accessibility programmes create more routes into the institution. The tension between exclusivity and inclusion is not eliminated; it is managed through differentiated products and publics.

4.4 Cross-case comparison

TABLE 3. COMPARATIVE MARKETING CONFIGURATION OF THE THREE OPERA HOUSES

Dimension	Paris Opera	Vienna State Opera	Teatro alla Scala
Digital access	POP subscription/on-demand ecosystem plus selected free youth and educational content	Free multilingual livestreams with 72-hour availability	Live and time-limited on-demand distribution through LaScalaTV
Audience development	Aria, Academy content, young-audience programming	Reduced youth tickets, workshops, NEST youth venue	Under-30 previews, age-based incentives, Academy-related communication
Experience extension	Immersive visits, digital art, documentaries, architectural discovery	Workshops, introductions, discussions, youth experimentation	Prestige events, digital viewing, targeted previews, access services
Dominant logic	Discovery-to-participation portfolio	Public access plus cultural mediation	Prestige plus segmented inclusion
Main managerial risk	Fragmentation across many digital products	Reach without measurable conversion or sustained engagement	Discount segmentation without deeper mediation

Source: Author's comparative analysis of institutional evidence.

The comparison (Table 3) reveals a common structure beneath different institutional choices. Each opera house protects the live performance as the core offer while adding layers that reduce barriers or deepen

experience. Digital channels expand geographic reach and enable repeated contact. Youth and educational formats lower symbolic barriers. Visits, workshops, and immersive projects make artistic labour and heritage visible. Price schemes address affordability and change the social context of attendance. Marketing is therefore best understood as the coordination of an experience system rather than a collection of promotional campaigns.

The cases also show that no single channel performs every function. Paris uses a broad digital portfolio to move users from curiosity to longer engagement. Vienna combines free distribution with guided participation, suggesting that access and mediation should be planned together. La Scala uses segmentation to reconcile a scarcity-based prestige brand with inclusion goals. In all three cases, institutional identity shapes the strategy: the same streaming technology serves different purposes depending on the surrounding offer.

Evidence quality remains uneven. Digital reach and attendance figures are more available than measures of learning, belonging, or repeat behaviour. None of the public sources permits a consistent comparison of how many streaming users later attend, how workshops affect cultural confidence, or whether youth discounts produce long-term loyalty. The stronger managerial approach would therefore connect programme data across the audience journey while respecting privacy. Registration source, content use, first attendance, repeat attendance, and participation in educational formats could be analysed as separate stages rather than collapsed into a single engagement metric.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 The heritage–access–engagement framework

The findings support a three-part framework. Heritage supplies distinctiveness, memory, artistic authority, and place. Access concerns the practical and symbolic conditions that determine who can approach the institution. Engagement concerns the depth and continuity of the relationship once contact has occurred. These dimensions are mutually dependent. Heritage without access can reinforce exclusion; access without engagement can produce shallow reach; engagement without a coherent heritage proposition can weaken institutional distinctiveness. Marketing strategy should therefore balance all three rather than maximize one in isolation.

The framework extends the experience-economy perspective by distinguishing the artistic experience from the infrastructure that supports it. Opera houses do not need to turn every performance into an interactive spectacle. Their task is to orchestrate pathways around the performance: discovery, preparation, attendance or viewing, reflection, and return. This interpretation is consistent with audience-experience

research, which treats readiness and meaning-making as part of quality (Brown & Novak, 2007; Radbourne et al., 2009). It also respects the dual mission described in arts marketing, because market orientation is directed toward access and relationship design rather than toward altering repertoire solely to match short-term preference.

The three cases illustrate different balances. Paris invests strongly in heritage and digital engagement, with a risk that users face too many entry points. Vienna places access and engagement at the centre, supported by an established heritage brand. La Scala uses heritage as the initial attraction and segmented access to change audience composition. The framework helps managers identify imbalance. An institution with extensive streaming but little contextual material may need mediation. One with successful youth discounts but weak retention data may need a post-attendance relationship plan. One with rich educational programming but low visibility may need stronger discovery channels.

5.2 Managerial implications

First, digital strategy should be designed as a journey, not a content inventory. Short videos, quizzes, free streams, paid archives, and ticket offers need explicit links that help users progress according to their interest. The Paris case shows the value of connecting interactive discovery with a broader viewing platform. Managers should define the intended next step for each format while avoiding pressure that turns cultural access into a purely commercial funnel.

Second, pricing works best when combined with social and interpretive design. A reduced ticket can remove cost, but a dedicated youth preview can also reshape atmosphere and belonging. Workshops, introductory material, and peer-oriented communication help first-time visitors understand what to expect. The Vienna and La Scala cases show complementary approaches: one builds cultural confidence through mediation and a youth venue; the other changes the event context through age-specific performances.

Third, prestige should be treated as a resource that can be shared rather than a barrier that must be diluted. Heritage buildings, archives, crafts, and repertoires can generate tours, digital stories, educational material, and partnerships. Such activities expand the meaning of the institution without replacing live performance. They can also support tourism and sponsorship, provided that commercial activation remains consistent with artistic identity.

Fourth, evaluation should match programme purpose. Reach, conversion, learning, inclusion, and loyalty require different indicators. A free stream may be assessed through geographic reach, completion, subtitle use, and subsequent content exploration. A workshop may be assessed through participation, confidence, knowledge, and repeat involvement. A youth preview may be assessed through first-time attendance,

return within a season, and movement into other ticket categories. Comparable dashboards would make it possible to test the strategic claims identified in this study.

TABLE 4. MANAGERIAL ACTIONS DERIVED FROM THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Observed issue	Recommended action	Appropriate indicators
High digital reach, weak pathway visibility	Connect discovery content, full viewing, ticketing, and follow-up through clear next steps	Content completion, pathway movement, first attendance
Youth discounts without relationship-building	Add peer communication, introductions, post-event contact, and repeat offers	First-time share, repeat rate, cross-format participation
Strong heritage but symbolic distance	Use tours, backstage stories, craft demonstrations, and accessible interpretation	Visitor diversity, learning, satisfaction, return intention
Many initiatives with fragmented evaluation	Define purpose-specific metrics and a common audience-journey dashboard	Reach, preparation, participation, conversion, retention

Source: Author's synthesis.

5.3 Limitations and future research

The study has three limitations. It relies on public secondary evidence and cannot verify internal objectives, budgets, or user-level outcomes. The cases are large Western European institutions whose resources and symbolic capital are not representative of regional opera companies. The observation period captures strategies in development, and some programme information may change between seasons. These limits restrict causal inference but do not invalidate the comparative patterns.

Future research should combine institutional analysis with interviews and audience data. A matched study could compare first-time visitors recruited through streaming, youth pricing, tourism, and educational programmes. Longitudinal analysis could test whether digital participation predicts live attendance or whether it represents a distinct form of cultural consumption. Research on smaller institutions would also show which components of the heritage–access–engagement framework can be implemented with limited resources.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The comparison shows that contemporary opera marketing is moving from campaign-based promotion toward the orchestration of linked experiences. Paris Opera, the Vienna State Opera, and Teatro alla Scala all extend the live event through digital distribution, audience preparation, youth offers, and heritage-based experiences. Their approaches differ in emphasis: Paris develops a portfolio that links discovery and viewing; Vienna combines broad digital access with mediation and a dedicated youth setting; La Scala uses prestige, segmentation, and accessibility to diversify entry routes.

The heritage–access–engagement framework explains these differences while preserving a common managerial logic. Heritage gives opera institutions a distinctive cultural proposition. Access determines whether publics can approach it financially, geographically, physically, linguistically, and symbolically. Engagement determines whether contact develops into attention, understanding, participation, and return. Sustainable audience strategy requires the three dimensions to reinforce one another.

The practical implication is not that every opera house should copy the same platform or programme. Institutions should identify the barrier they are addressing, clarify the intended audience pathway, and evaluate outcomes that match the programme's purpose. When marketing supports discovery, preparation, participation, and memory around the artistic core, it can widen cultural participation without reducing opera to a conventional entertainment product.

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DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The author declares that there are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the revision of this work, the author used OpenAI ChatGPT to support language editing, structural reorganization, and consistency checking. The author reviewed and edited the resulting text, verified the cited sources, and takes full responsibility for the content of the article.

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