

Carpenter, G. & Blandy, D (2008). *Arts and Cultural Programming: A Leisure Perspective*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. 264 pages, \$35.00. ISBN-10:7360-6564-4

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This edited book is the first of its kind to attempt to bring together two bodies of knowledge which although very much interrelated, both conceptually and in professional practice, have tended to exist in separate silos from an academic perspective. The concept for such a book arose from the collaborative work carried out between the editors within the Arts and Administration Program at the University of Oregon combining the disciplines of leisure studies and recreation management (Carpenter) and arts education and arts management (Blandy). This resource attempts to bridge that interdisciplinary divide by including the work of leading scholars from both disciplines who are sensitive to the interconnections that do exist. The result is a book that will be of interest to a broad audience including leisure service providers wanting to ensure that high quality program offerings exist to address the artistic and cultural needs of constituents of all ages as well as arts and cultural programmers seeking to understand more deeply how individuals experience leisure in order to ensure that their offerings meet those needs.

The book is directed to a wide audience including students in post-secondary institutions studying in a variety of programs including leisure studies, recreation management, programming, tourism and hospitality, festival and event planning, cultural arts administration, museum studies, public relations, interpretation, education and other arts and cultural related fields. The editors have taken care to ensure that the book is equally applicable as a resource for professionals whose work involves the conceptualization, planning, development, delivery, management, and/or assessment of arts and culture based experiences for either educational or leisure purposes.

The fifteen chapters in the book are well organized under three sections. The first section relates to enhancing the readers understanding of the complex mechanics of successful programming and the considerations for creating truly meaningful arts and culture leisure experiences. Program theories are presented and discussed in the context of the phases of the program process: needs assessment, program design, implementation, and evaluation. The second section demonstrates the application of complex theory to contemporary arts and cultural programming practice. The authors in this section demonstrate how theory can serve to strategically inform best practices relating to program management, audience development, assessment, evaluation, financing, and marketing. The final section is a series of best practices, challenges and trends, as well as international case studies related to traditional and emerging arts and cultural contexts and settings

including festivals, special events, community arts, cultural arts, museums, and performing arts. The chapter authors are all well respected scholars and professionals representing both of the disciplines.

This book definitely fills a gap in existing literature by bringing these two bodies of knowledge together. Although the interconnectedness between leisure studies theory and arts and cultural programming may appear obvious to some, not until this book has there been an attempt to merge and apply the understanding from each in such a comprehensive and thoughtful fashion. Not only is the content of this particular book academically appropriate, but the presentation makes it a valuable resource for students and practitioners alike. The content is written and edited to be an engaging read complimented with models, tables and charts, illustrative photographs, lists of key points, interesting quotes, programmatic examples and strategies, and informative chapter summaries. The editors do a great job at maintaining the conceptual tread throughout the entire book so that the reader does not get side tracked from the primary purpose.

Not only do the editors provide the reader with a strong foundation of understanding of arts and cultural programming from a leisure perspective, supported by many examples of past and present best practices, they conclude with a chapter that focuses upon factors that must be taken into consideration given their potential to radically impact upon future programming. These include changing demographic shifts, technological innovations, the economic climate, changes in community, the state of research, and understanding program needs and interests.

Despite the fact that arts and culture are interwoven into the fabric of society serving to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities, related programming is not always considered essential. Particularly in challenging economic times, the leisure benefits of quality arts and cultural programs are not always recognized by decision makers making them vulnerable to financial cutbacks. This book provides programmers with the knowledge and tools to create experiences that will appeal to a larger segment of the general population than might have previously been case in the past by better understanding the leisure needs of a various societal cohorts, by adhering to sound theory-based practices, and paying heed to current social and cultural forces.