Walrus Research

Classical Station Trends
National AudiGraphics

4th Report - Fall 2017

Reality has a way of eventually getting your attention

QUESTIONS

SRG is leading a national initiative of classical station partners – Classical Music Rising.

This is our fourth research report on the classical audience, with station trends from 2012 through 2017.

National AudiGraphics gives us access to each station's total audience, including listeners who reside beyond the metro.

For statewide networks such as Minnesota, NAG combines all audience into a single estimate.

AudiGraphics also captures nearly all listening to the primary streams of these stations, including any audience in distant markets.

SRG specified this list of 53 public classical stations. Some are based in PPM markets, while smaller markets still depend on diary measurement.

PPM Markets			Smaller Markets		
Phoenix	KBAQ		Boise	KBSU	
Salt Lake	KBYU		Colorado Springs	KCME	
Las Vegas	KCNV		Little Rock	KLRE	
San Francisco	KDFC		Iowa City	Iowa Public Radio	
Seattle	KING		Tucson	KUAT	
Austin	KMFA		Oklahoma City	KUCO	
San Antonio	KPAC		Omaha	KVNO	
Portland	KQAC		Eugene	KWAX	
Minn-St Paul	KSJN		Tulsa	KWTU	
Los Angeles	KUSC		Berrien Springs	WAUS	
Denver	KVOD		Fort Wayne	WBNI	
Sacramento	KXPR		Syracuse	WCNY	
Baltimore	WBJC		Dayton	WDPR	
Cleveland	WCLV		Harrisonburg	WEMC	
Raleigh-Durham	WCPE		Tallahassee	WFSQ	
Boston	WCRB		Interlochen	WIAA	
Charlotte	WDAV		Richmond	WKYL	
Washington	WETA		Albany	WMHT	
Nashville	WFCL		Monroe	WMNR	
Cincinnati	WGUC		Buffalo	WNED	
Norfolk	WHRO		Rockford	WNIU	
Columbus	WOSA		Burlington	Vermont Public Radio	
Pittsburgh	WQED		Chattanooga	WSMC	
New York	WQXR		Sarasota	WSMR	
Detroit	WRCJ		Louisville	WUOL	
Philadelphia	WRTI		West Windsor	WWFM	
			Rochester	WXXI	

AQH LISTENING

AQH is the number of persons listening in a typical quarter hour, across Monday-Sunday 6am-12m.

For National AudiGraphics, which includes both PPM and diary measurement, the demo is 12 plus.

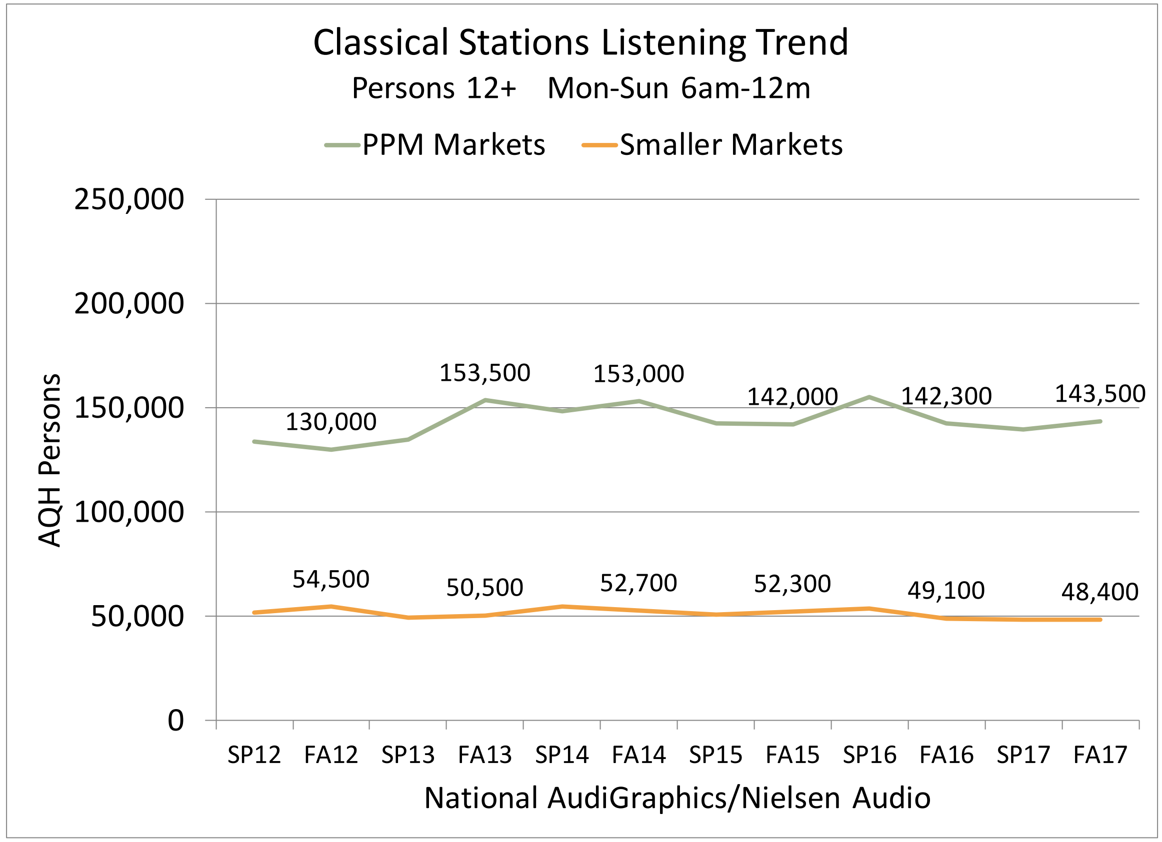
We analyzed a constant set of stations trended over six years.

WCLV did not subscribe to the ratings in 2012, so it is not included in the trend charts in this report.

As of Fall 2017 we found 143,500 AQH persons listening to classical stations based in PPM markets.

Stations in smaller markets added 48,400 AQH persons listening.

Both trend lines are basically flat, with no significant growth or loss.



In Fall 2017 the AQH audience in PPM markets was 143,500 – about the same number as in Fall 2016 and Fall 2015.

48,400 persons were listening to stations based in smaller markets.

LISTENING COMBINED

This chart shows the combined total classical listening across PPM and smaller markets.

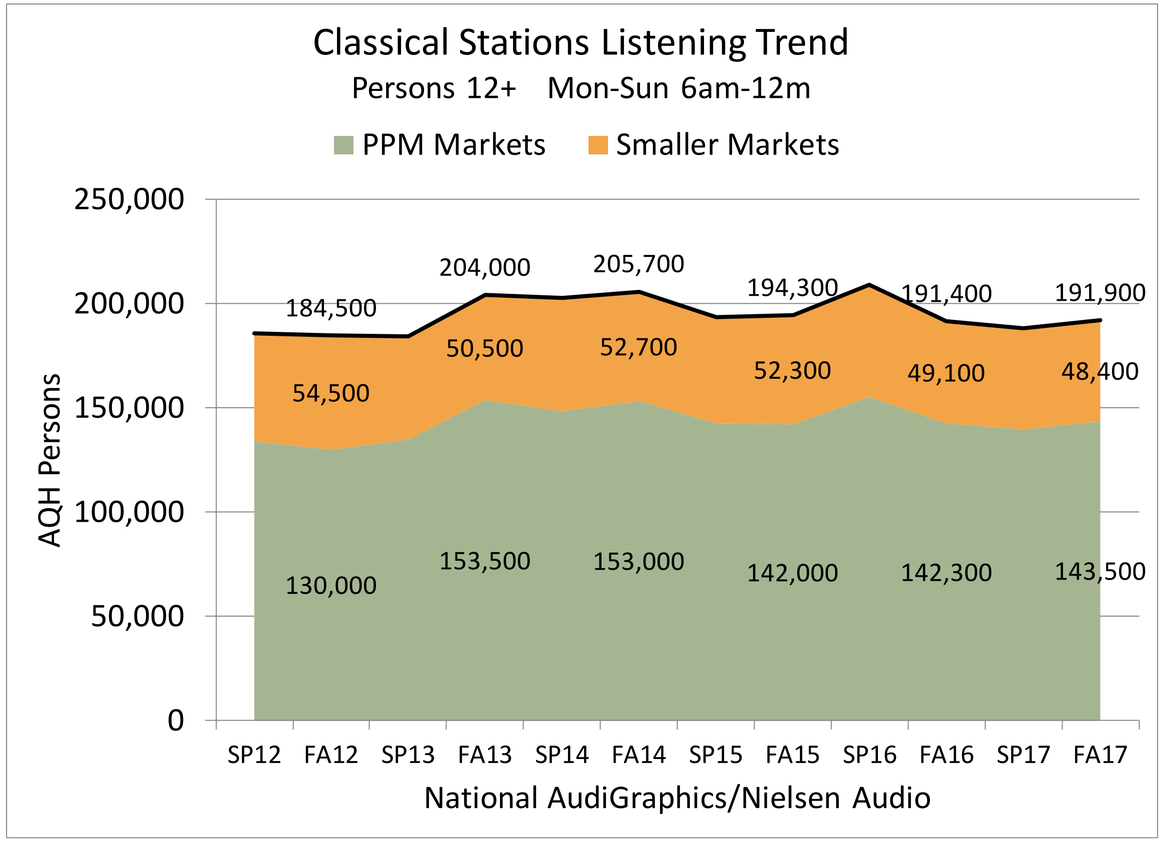
Over the last six years the classical station audience has hovered around 200,000 AQH persons.

As of Fall 2017 the number was 191,900 persons listening.

The national audience to public classical stations has been stable, with no significant growth or loss.

AQH is the product of cume – how many persons are reached – as well as time spent listening to the station.

Let's look at the trend in reach.



Adding AQH numbers from diary and PPM markets may be problematic.

The diary method reports higher TSL by classical station listeners, which results in higher reported AQH listening.

How many listeners are reached by public radio classical stations?

As of Fall 2017 the classical stations based in PPM markets reached 5,237,900 weekly cume persons.

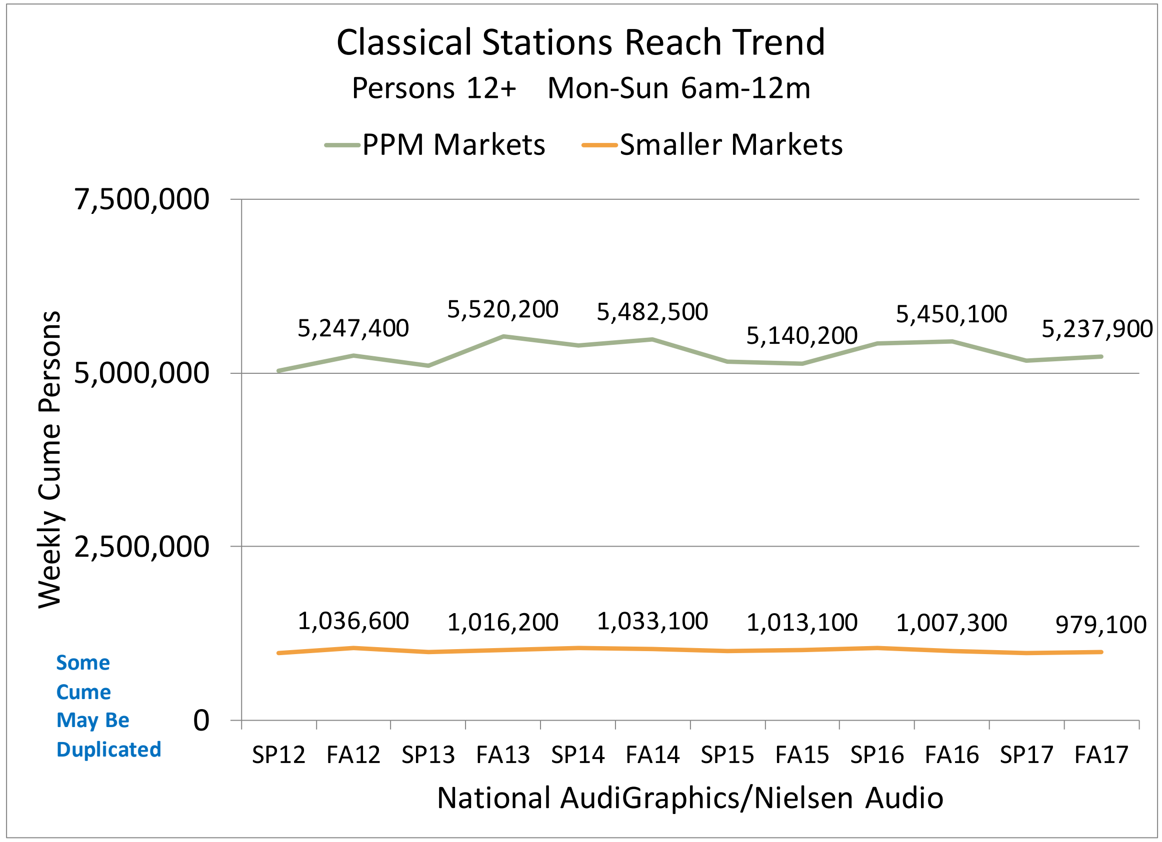
That number was down from Fall 2016 but a little up from Fall 2015.

The classical stations in PPM markets reach over 5 million listeners each week. But there has been no growth in that number.

The smaller market stations reach one million listeners. The trend line is consistent going back to 2012.

Remember that a single occasion of exposure will qualify an individual for your station's weekly cume.

Extremely light users are unlikely to send money to stations.



The number of listeners reached has trended basically flat in both PPM and smaller markets.

Listeners may reside in a location within the coverage area of two or more classical stations. Accordingly, some of the classical cume in this chart may be duplicated.

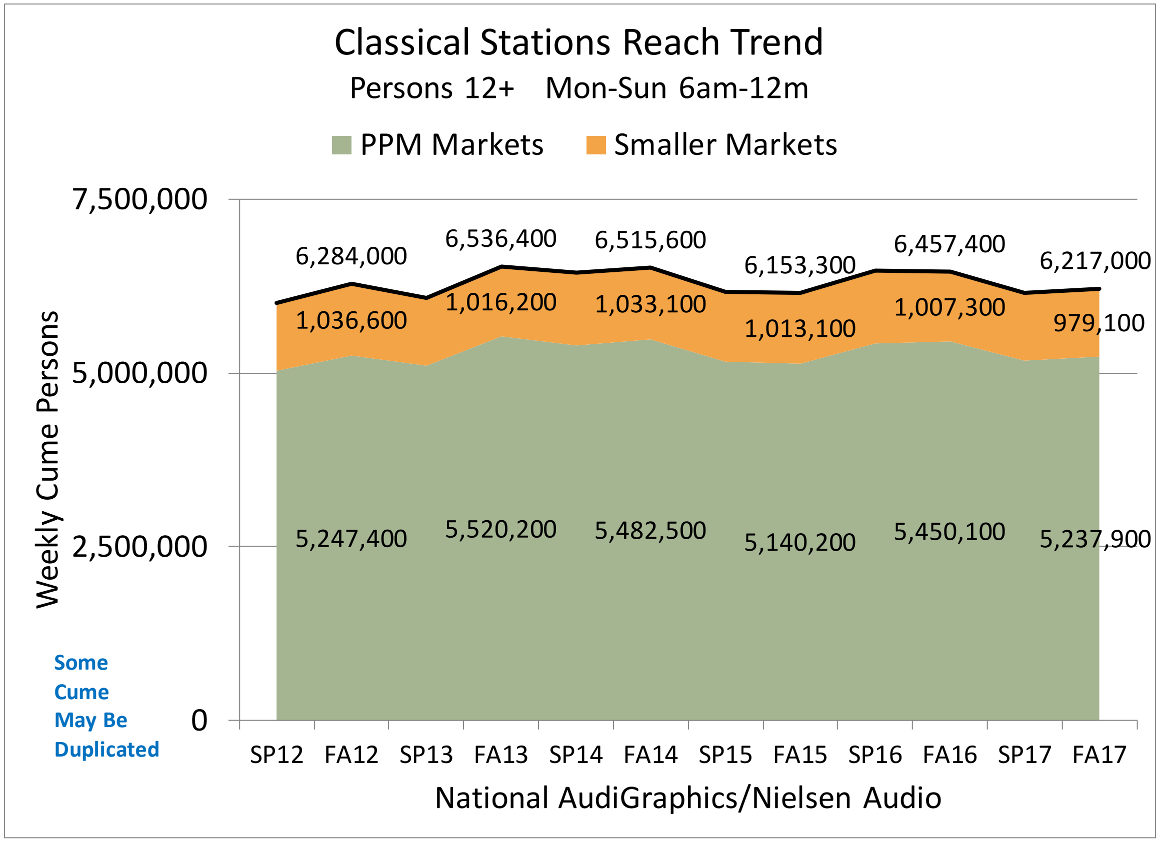
COMBINED CUME

Combined, this set of classical stations reached 6.2 million listeners each week, as of Fall 2017.

That number was down from Fall 2016 but a little better than 2015.

Classical stations in PPM markets account for 84 percent of listeners.

Over these years, for this set of classical stations, the number of listeners reached has not changed significantly in either PPM or diary markets.



Weekly cume simply counts the reach of a station – even a single occasion, without taking into account TSL.

As of 2017, the combined reach of these public radio classical stations was 6.2 million listeners, although the figure has topped 6.5 million in previous years.

TOP THREE

Which classical stations drive the national audience?

Here are the top three stations, as ranked by their Fall 2017 AQH.

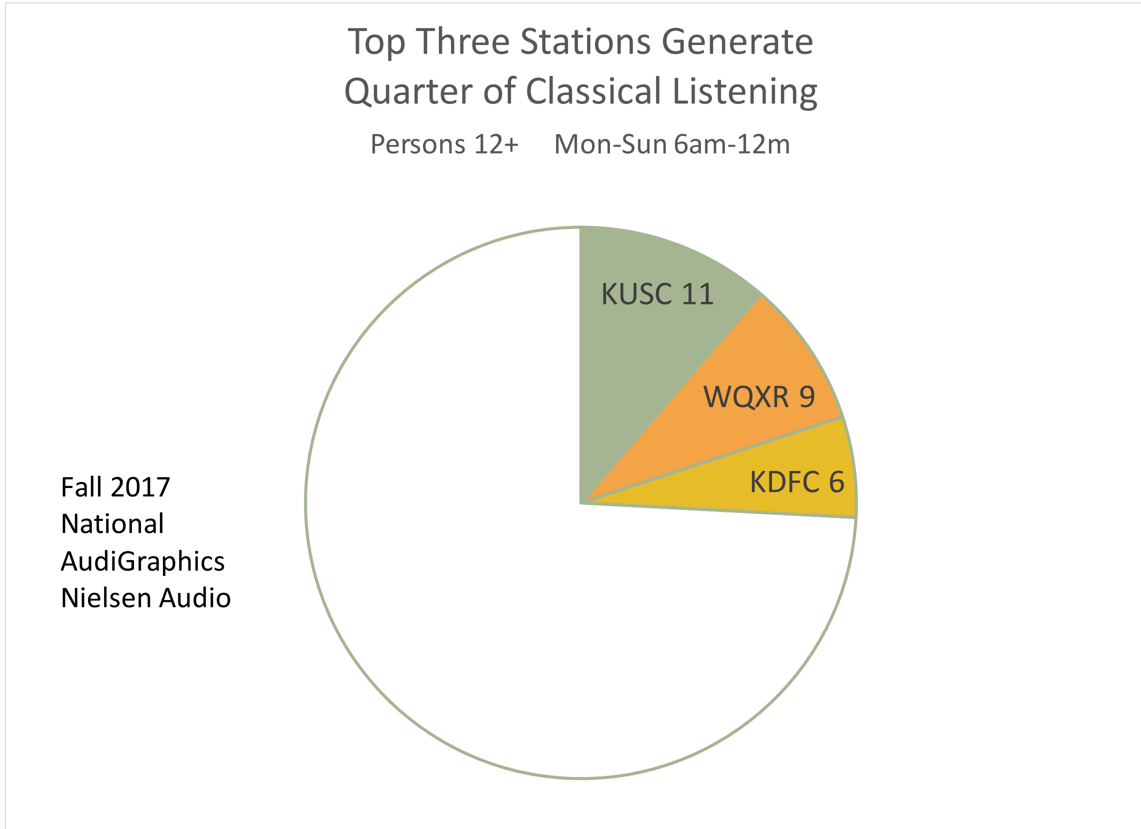
KUSC accounts for 11 percent of the national audience for classical public radio stations.

KUSC, WQXR and KDFC are based in very large markets – Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco.

Together they generate one quarter of the national listening audience.

Yet these three stations have limited impact in their own markets. As of Fall 2017, KUSC ranked 25th in metro Los Angeles with a 1.6 share among persons 12 plus.

KUSC's listening audience is large because its FM signals cover the huge LA metro and beyond.



KUSC generated 11 percent of the national audience as of Fall 2017.

Keep in mind there are 53 classical public radio stations in this study.

TOP EIGHT

Half of the classical station audience is generated by eight stations, all based in PPM markets.

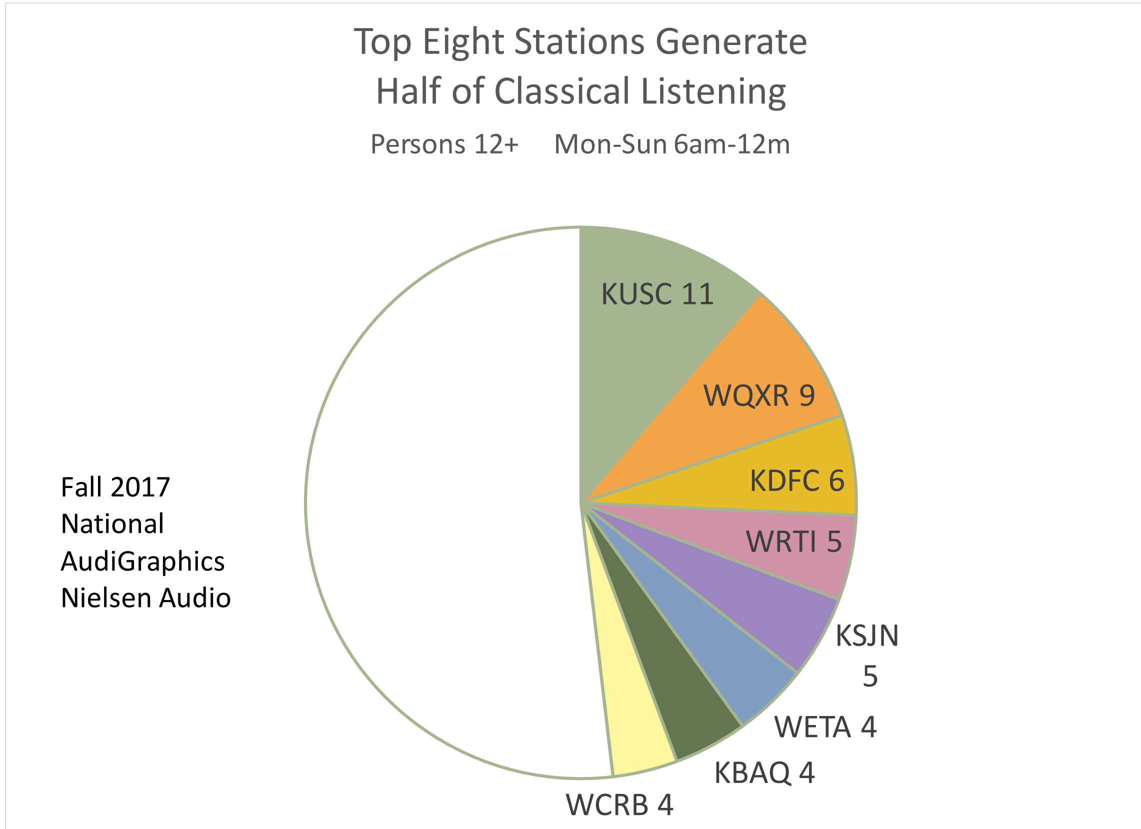
WRTI benefits from the large population in Philadelphia, as does KBAQ in Phoenix.

Washington, Minneapolis and Boston are not as large but enjoy highly educated populations.

Previous studies have established that education predicts audience levels for classical stations.

So, to build the national audience, there are two strategic options:

- Classical stations must become more competitive in very large markets like LA.
- Focus on markets with high education levels, which are fertile ground for public radio.



Of the 53 classical stations, 8 generate half of the national audience.

How are we doing in Los Angeles and New York?

KUSC's AQH listening audience peaked back in Fall 2013 with 25,900 persons.

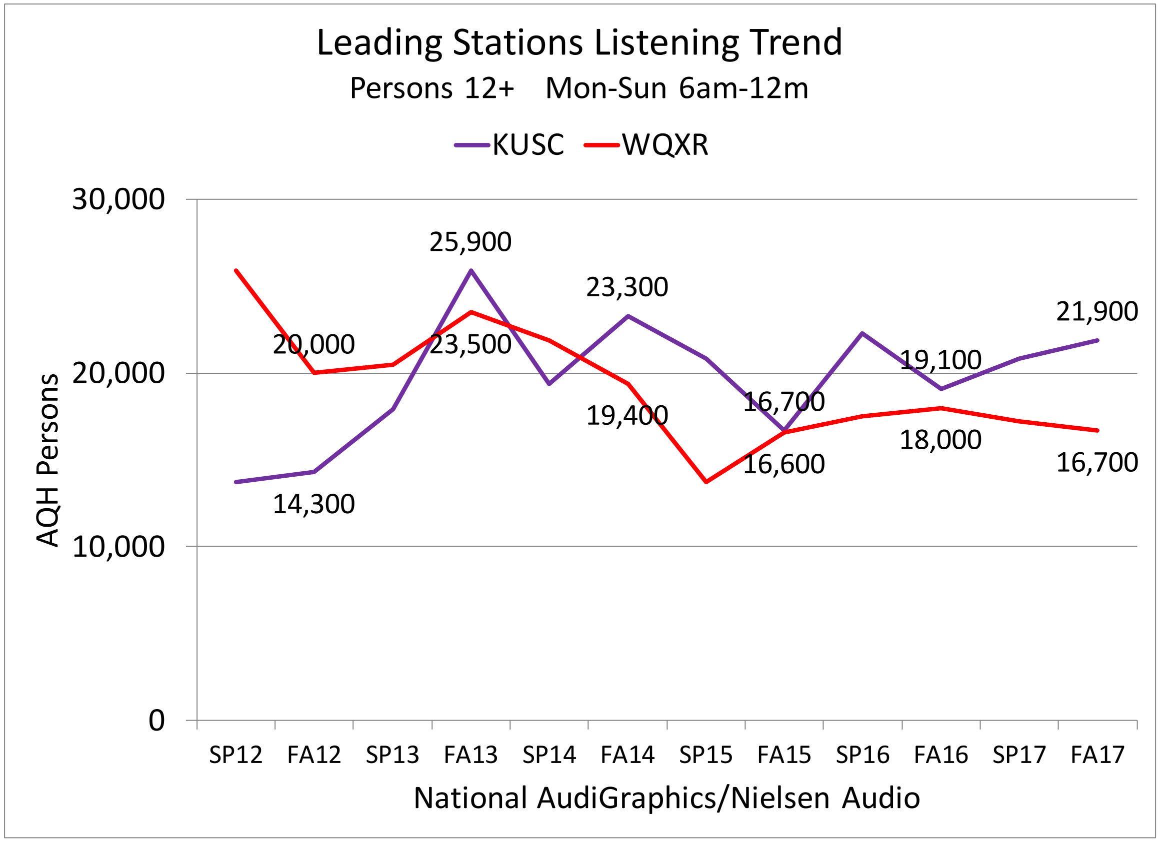
The Fall 2017 number is 21,900.

Over the last three years, 2015-2017, the New York station has dropped to a lower level of audience.

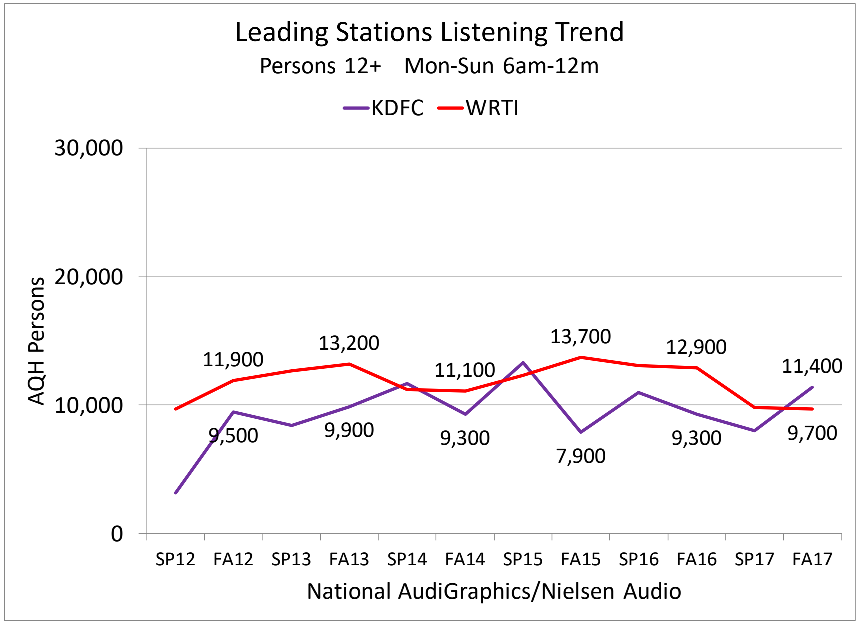
For WQXR the Fall 2017 number is 16,700 persons listening.

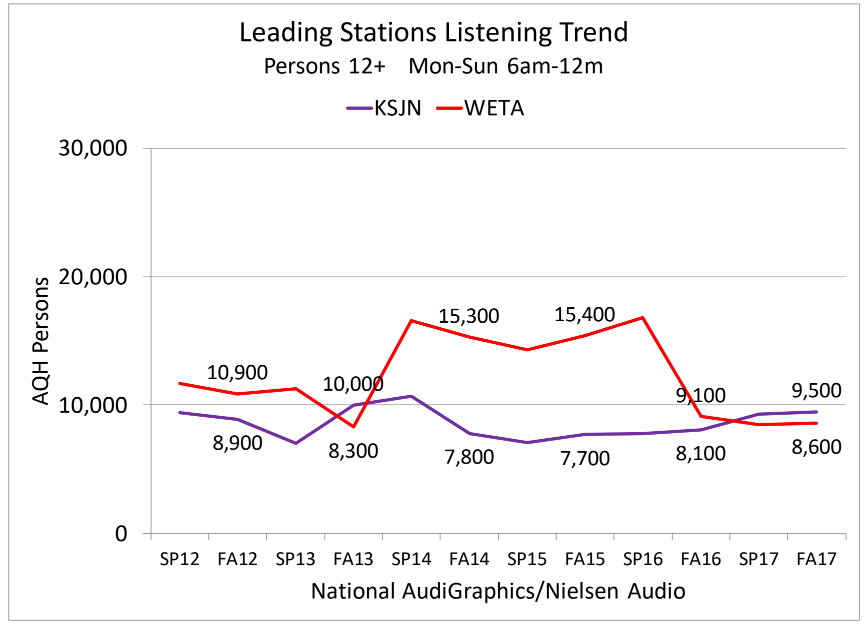
Audience estimates are based on sampling and can bounce from survey to survey.

Yet neither of these very large market stations has been growing AQH audience.



Neither KUSC nor WNYC has been growing AQH audience.





KDFC requires three FM frequencies to cover the greater San Francisco area. Its AQH audience has hovered around 10,000 persons listening.

WRTI has been running between 11,000 and 13,000 persons listening – with no significant change.

KSJN feeds multiple transmitters around the state of Minnesota. Its trend has been flat, around 8,000.

WETA illustrates how Nielsen ratings can bounce, in this case due to reported time spent listening.

Recall that AQH is the product of TSL and the number of weekly cume listeners. For a couple years WETA was benefiting from high TSL, which drove AQH up to 15,000. Yet over the longer term, WETA held to 10,000.

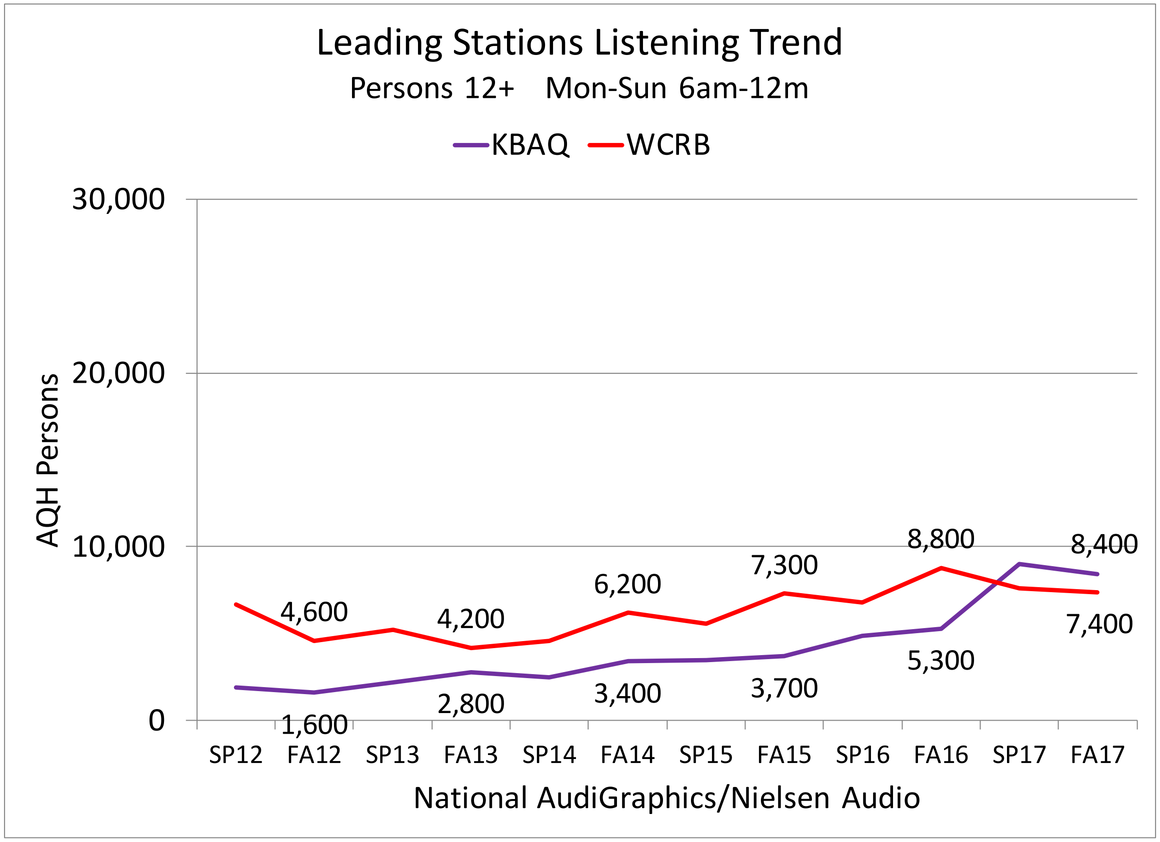
KBAQ has grown the classical audience in Phoenix.

Back in Fall 2012 the AQH audience consisted of 1,600 persons listening.

By Fall 2016 KBAQ had grown to 5,300 persons listening. And the most recent number is 8,400 AQH.

In Boston, WCRB has shown some improvement.

Back in 2012 and 2013 WCRB was serving between 4,000 and 5,000 persons listening. Now the station is in the range of 7,000 to 8,000 AQH.



CORE and LOYALTY

Core listeners are a subset of your weekly cume. They use the classical station as their first choice. Thus, they are most likely to send money.

Loyalty is an audience estimate that was invented for public radio. If a listener uses your station for 3 hours per week, yet spends 10 hours using radio, the listener is 30 percent loyal.

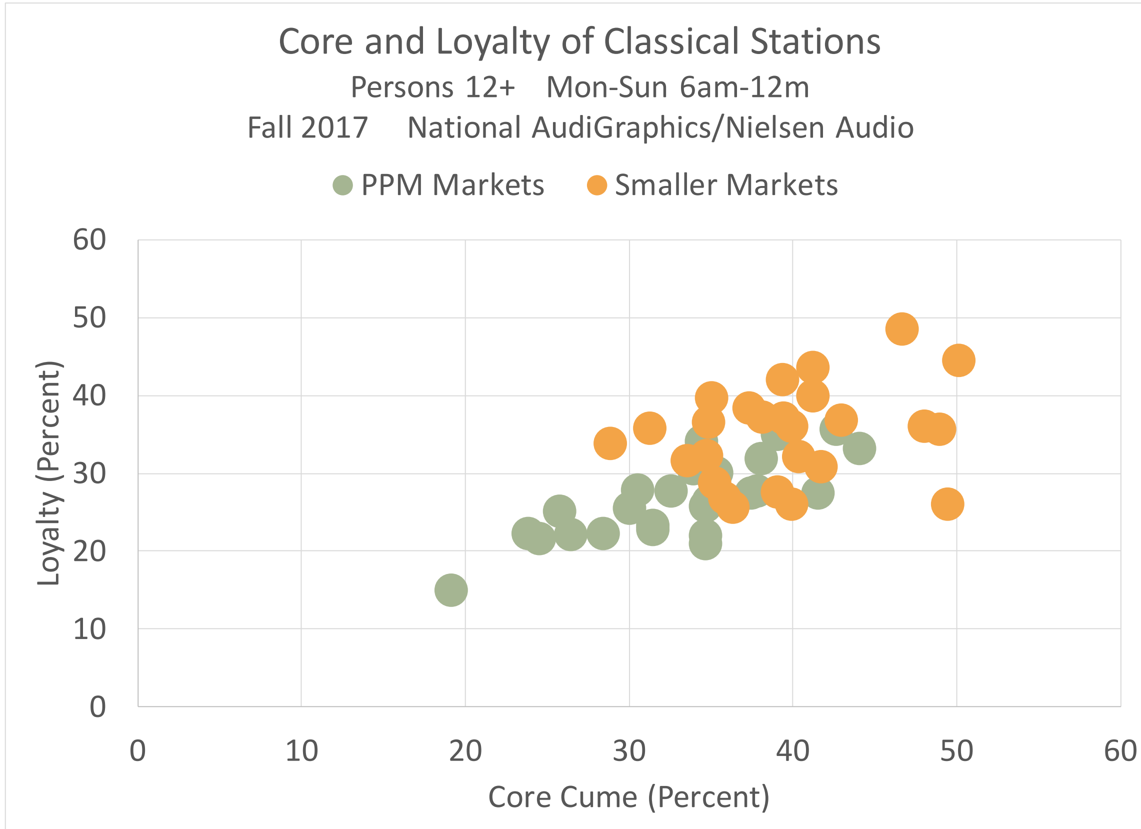
Each marker on this chart is one of our classical stations.

- We see that core composition and loyalty are strongly related.

That makes sense. Having more core listeners means your overall audience is going to be more loyal.

- It <u>appears</u> that listeners are more dedicated in the smaller markets.

That is, the markers for smaller markets cluster in the upper right, stronger in loyalty and core cume.



The horizontal axis is core cume – the percent of weekly listeners that are core, using your station as their first choice.

The vertical axis is loyalty – listening to the classical station as percent of all radio use by the station's listeners.

TYPICAL CORE and LOYALTY

In a PPM market, the typical classical station generates an audience that is 26 percent loyal.

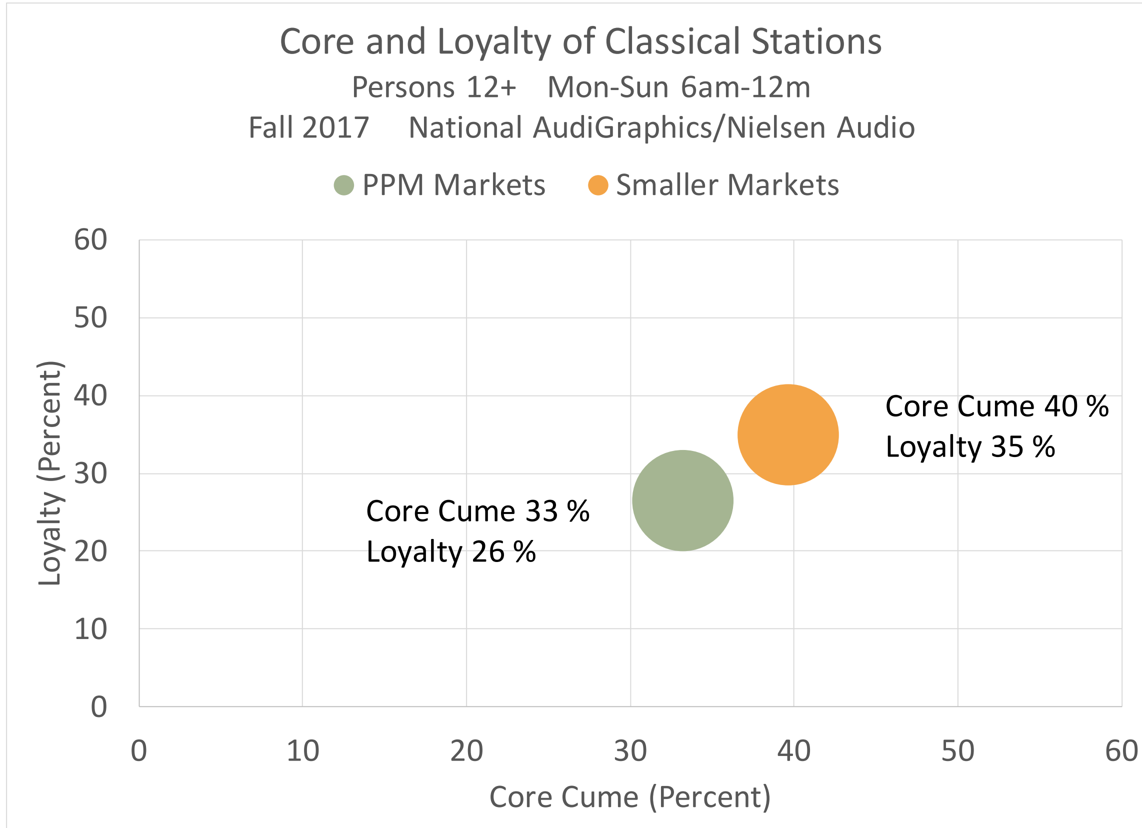
But in smaller markets typical loyalty is reported to be 35 percent.

In a PPM market, the core cume composition is 33 percent. But it is 40 percent in smaller diary markets.

One might spin a theory about the relative value of classical music in smaller markets with fewer cultural options. But the explanation is two different Nielsen methods.

Diary keepers usually report more TSL to stations, higher than TSL found by the newer PPM system.

For example, a classical fan might write in continuous listening for several hours. But a dispassionate meter would document the authentic patterns of daily life.



To evaluate the performance of your classical station, first consider the system of audience measurement.

In a PPM market 26 percent loyalty would be average performance.

In a smaller diary market average loyalty would be 35 percent.

TIME SPENT LISTENING

Here's the same chart with the addition of a 3rd variable – TSL.

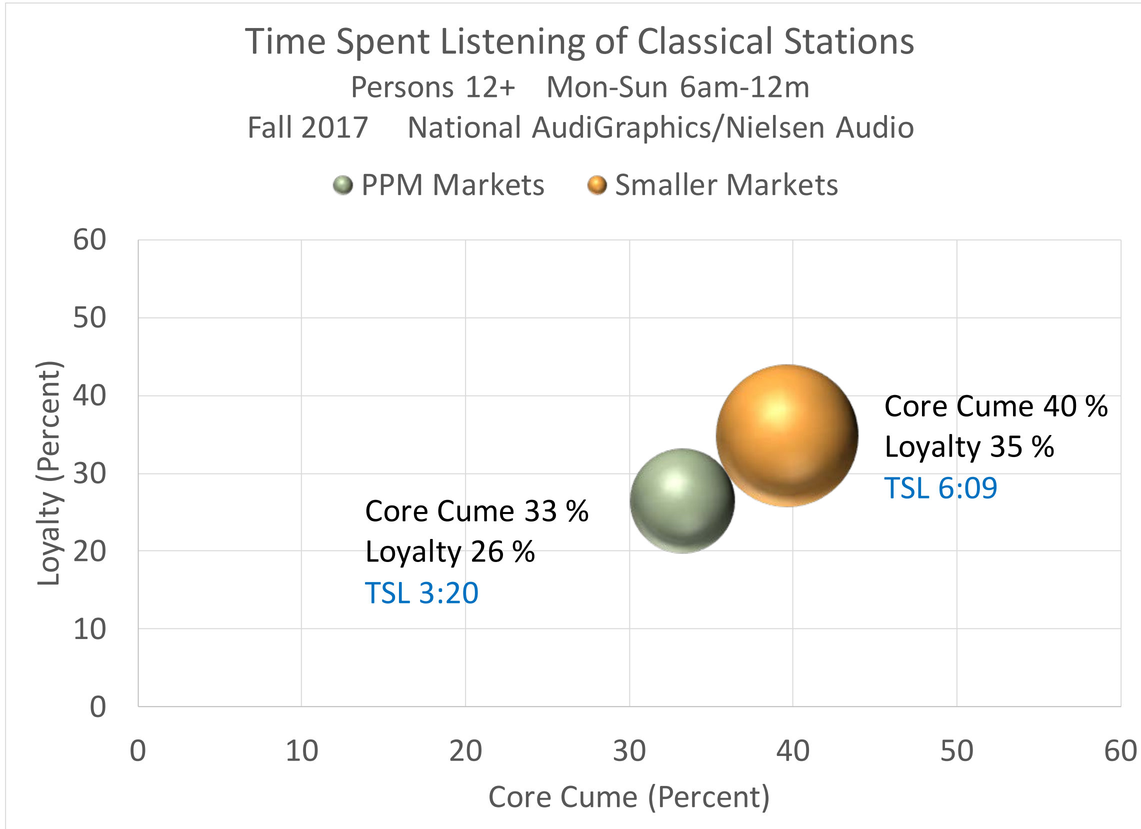
The <u>size</u> of each bubble represents time spent listening.

In PPM markets an average listener uses the classical station for 3 hours 20 minutes per week.

According to the diary in smaller markets, the typical TSL is 6:09.

That is a huge difference.

For the critical benchmarks of TSL, loyalty and core composition, it is not valid to mix PPM markets with smaller diary markets.



In a PPM market, compare your core cume, loyalty and TSL only to the average for classical stations in PPM markets.

In diary markets, to evaluate classical station performance, the standards are different

QUESTIONS

This chart shows the trend in core composition over six years.

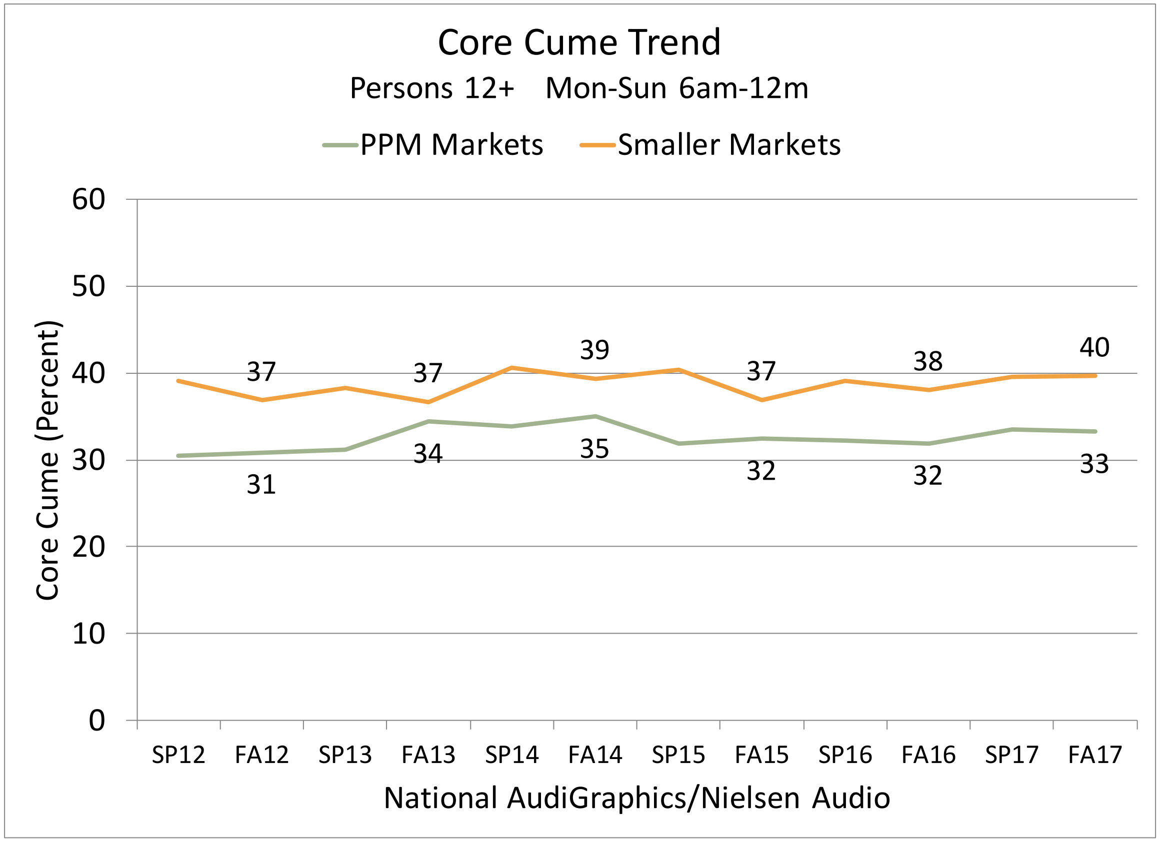
In PPM markets the average has hovered right around 33 percent.

That means 33 percent of their listeners use the station as first choice. They are potential givers.

In smaller markets the average has hovered just below 40 percent.

For both, the trend lines are flat.

Given that the number of weekly cume listeners has run generally flat, this means that the number of core listeners – potential givers – has not increased.



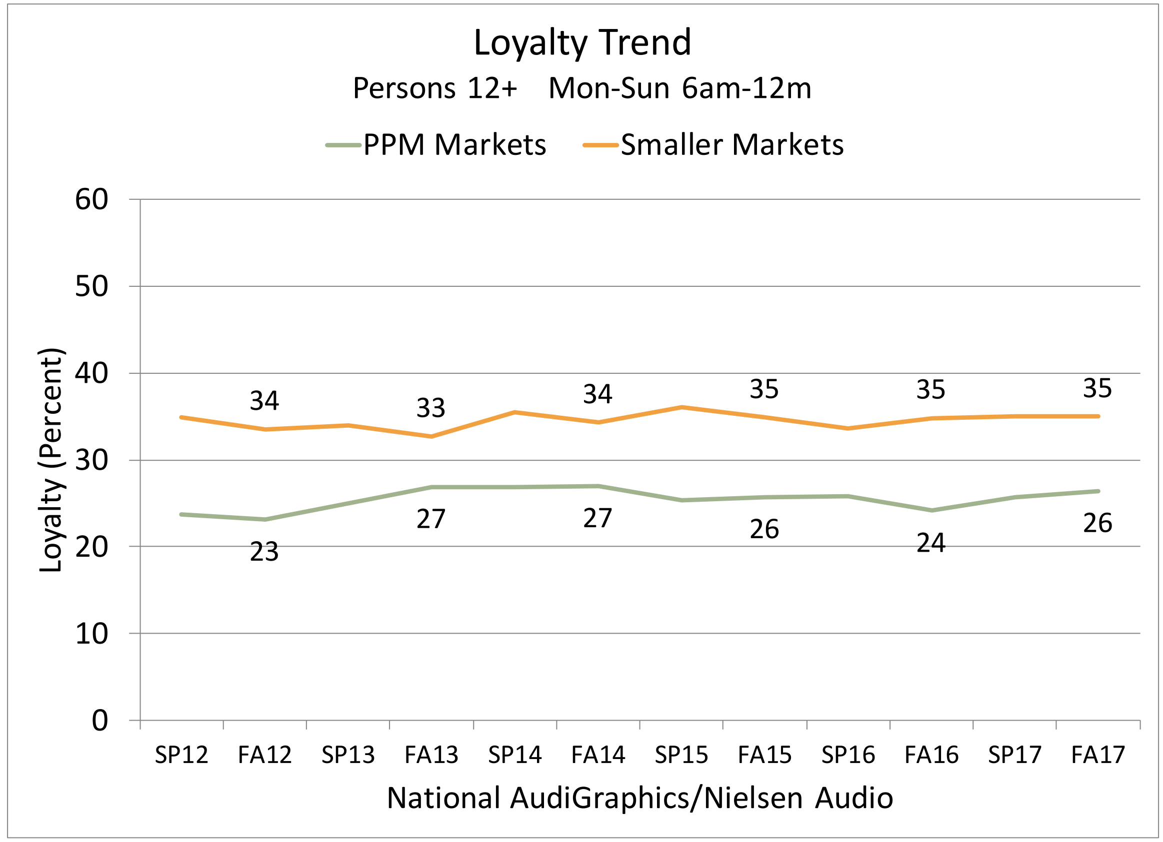
There has been no general improvement in core cume composition, as measured by PPM or the diary system.

As of Fall 2017, the typical classical listener in a PPM market is 26 percent loyal.

That means the listener spends 74 percent of weekly radio time using other radio stations.

In a smaller market, the typical loyalty to a classical station is 35 percent.

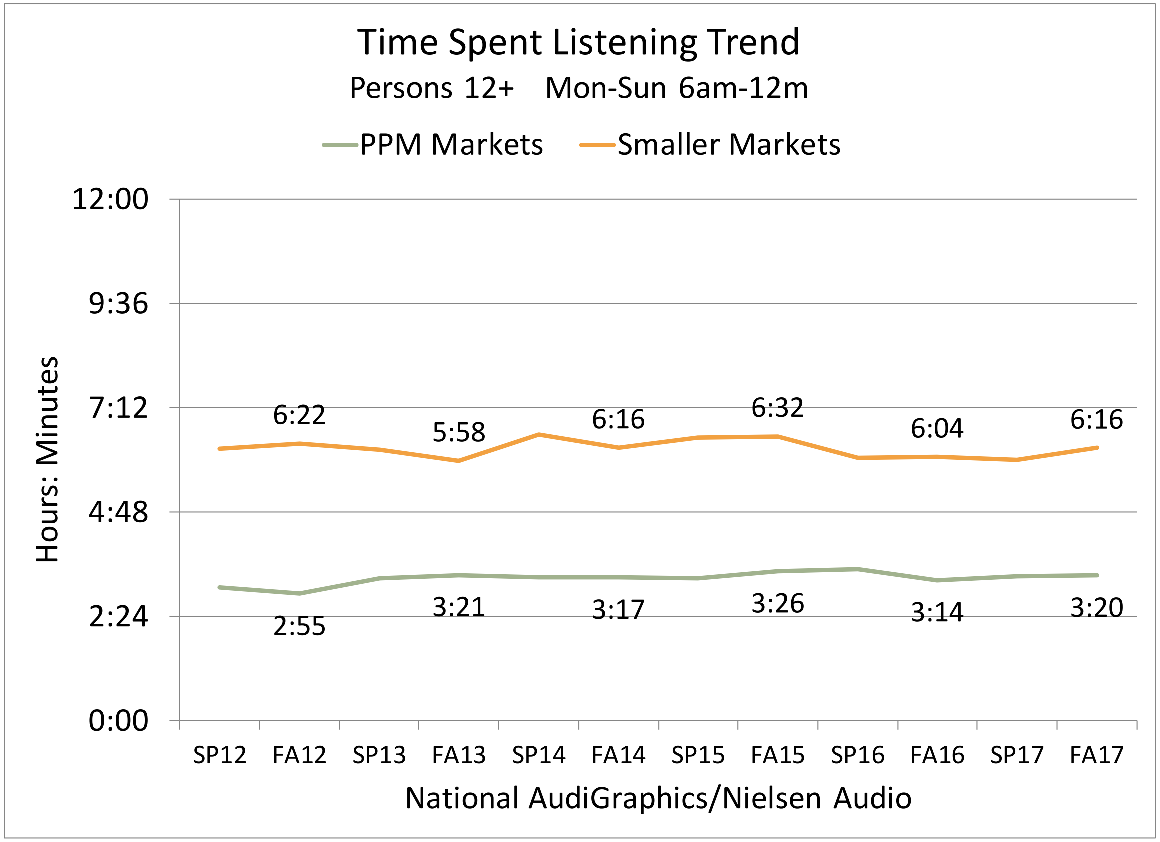
The point of this trend chart is that classical listeners are not changing in their loyalty to the station.



No improvement or loss in the loyalty of classical listeners.

Core, loyalty and time spent listening are related – all are measures of listener dedication to the format.

Spring 2012 to Fall 2017, there has been no significant change in TSL to the average classical station.



Reported time spent listening is higher in smaller markets, but both of the trend lines have been consistent.

MEDIAN AGE

How old is the classical audience?

This chart trends median age.

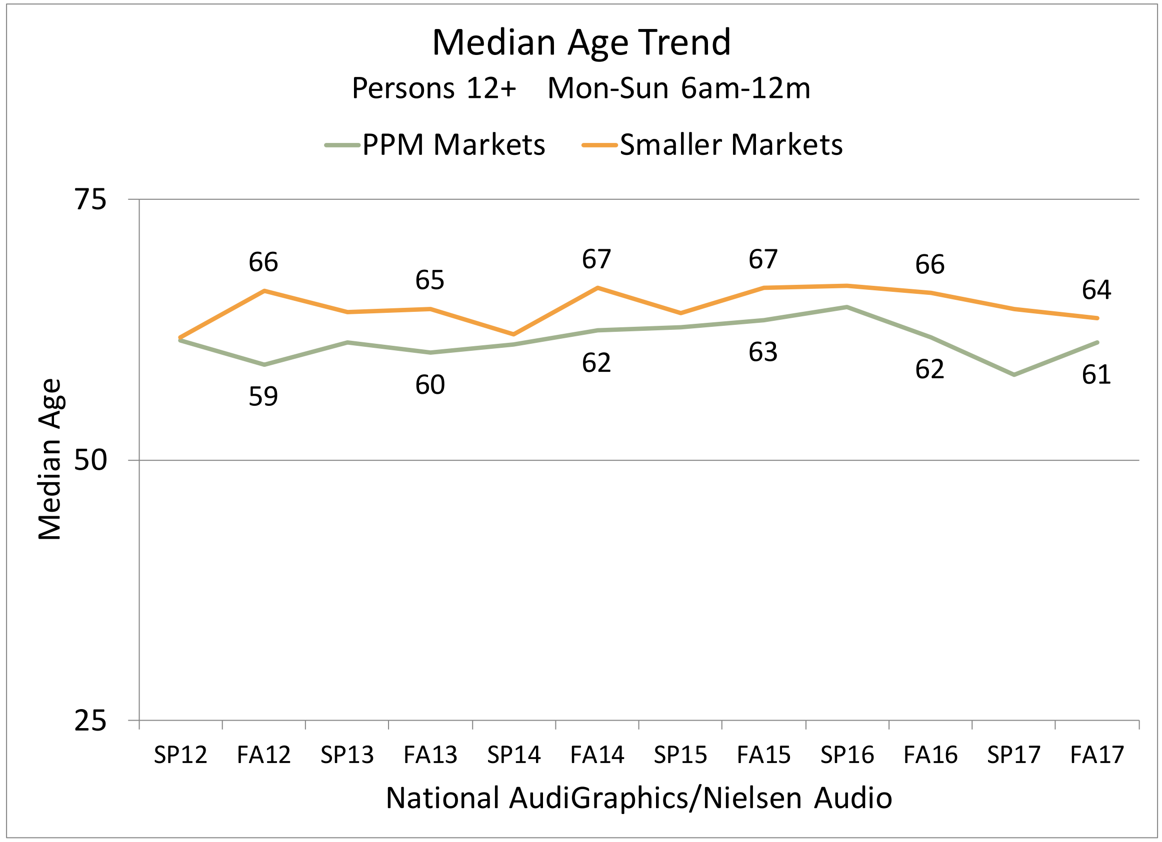
Half of the AQH listening audience is younger than the median.

The top line for smaller markets hovers around 66 years old.

PPM stations appear to be a few years younger – around 62.

That minor difference is another artifact of measurement. The PPM system picks up lighter listeners in the cume, who tend to be younger.

All classical stations have to handle the reality of an audience divided between two life stages – those who are still working vs those retired.



The median classical listener is transitioning into retirement.

That means half the audience may be employed and commuting, while the other half may have more time to listen at home.

BLACK and HISPANIC

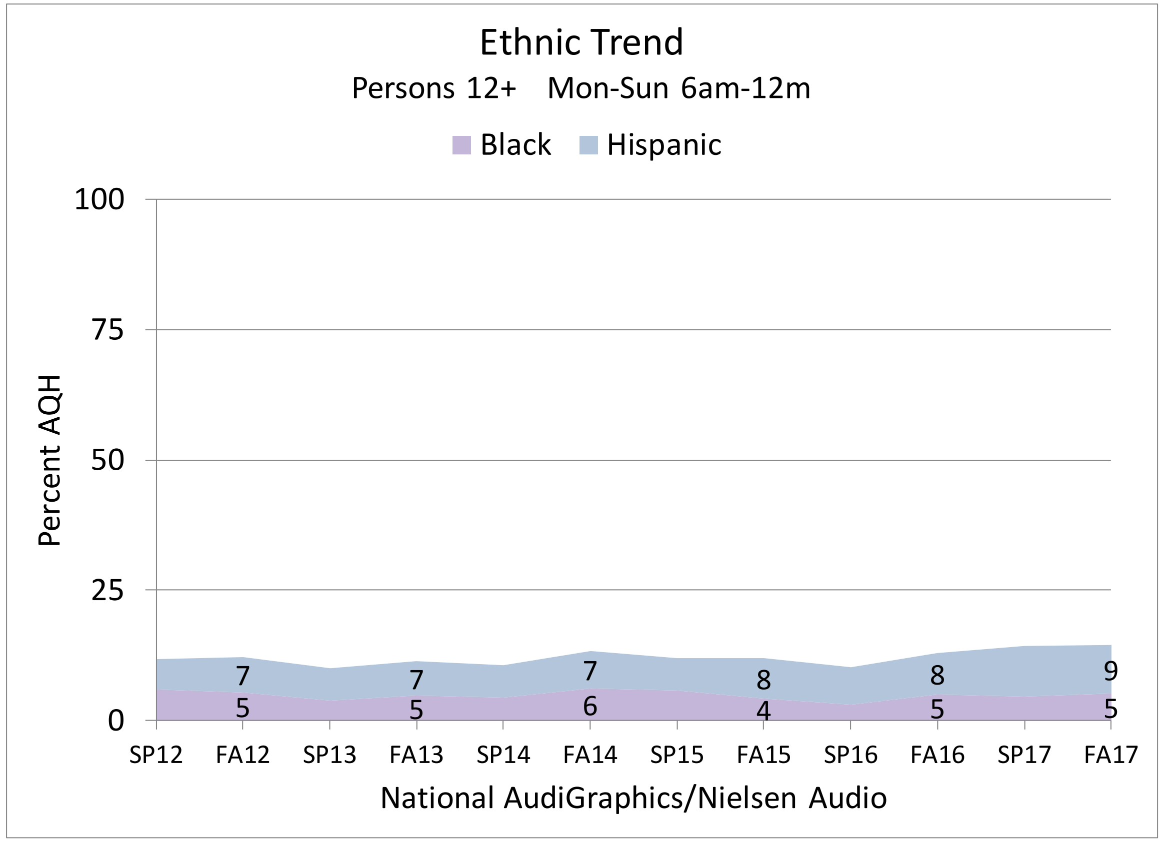
Nielsen has designed complicated procedures to identify and sample Black and Hispanic audience.

This chart trends those audience estimates for classical stations in PPM markets.

As of Fall 2017, Hispanics account for 9 percent of the AQH audience.

Blacks generate 5 percent.

There has been no variation in minority composition.



Nielsen breaks out Black and Hispanic respondents.

These numbers are based on PPM markets only.

QUESTIONS

IMPLICATIONS

Nearly 200,000 persons are listening to a public radio classical station during a typical quarter hour – 150,000 of those in large PPM markets.

It can be said that the stations reach over 6 million classical listeners, but that includes some very light users.

There has been no significant growth or loss of the overall classical audience from Spring 2012 to Fall 2017, trended over a constant set of stations.

Eight stations in large markets account for half of the national listening.

Every classical station, large or small, must strive to build audience loyalty, core composition and time spent listening. Personal importance leads to listener support.

TSL is driven by occasions of tune in. We want those listeners within our weekly cume to come back more often, returning for another listening occasion.

About the Sample

This study focuses on multi-year audience trends for the classical format. The sample is a constant set of public radio stations that devote 70 percent or more of their schedule from 6am to midnight to classical music.

Some classical stations are not included because their service launched after the study period began or their data was not acquired under public radio's arrangement with Nielsen for part of the study period.

Some stations devote 70 percent or more of their schedule to classical music – our classical format threshold – but also carry one or more NPR news magazines. To keep the focus squarely on classical music, these stations were also not included.
