

# Better together: Uniting to reach the next generation of arts & culture lovers – The ArtsCard Boston app for engaging under-35 audiences

## **Moderator:**

Rebecca Herberson, Tessitura

## **Introduction:**

Jack Rubin

## **Presenters:**

**Vawnya Nichols**

Celebrity Series of Boston

**Wolfgang Graf**

easy-connect/Ticket Gretchen GmbH



## **Distraction-free zone**

Please keep keyboard and other  
distractions to a minimum



## **No recording**

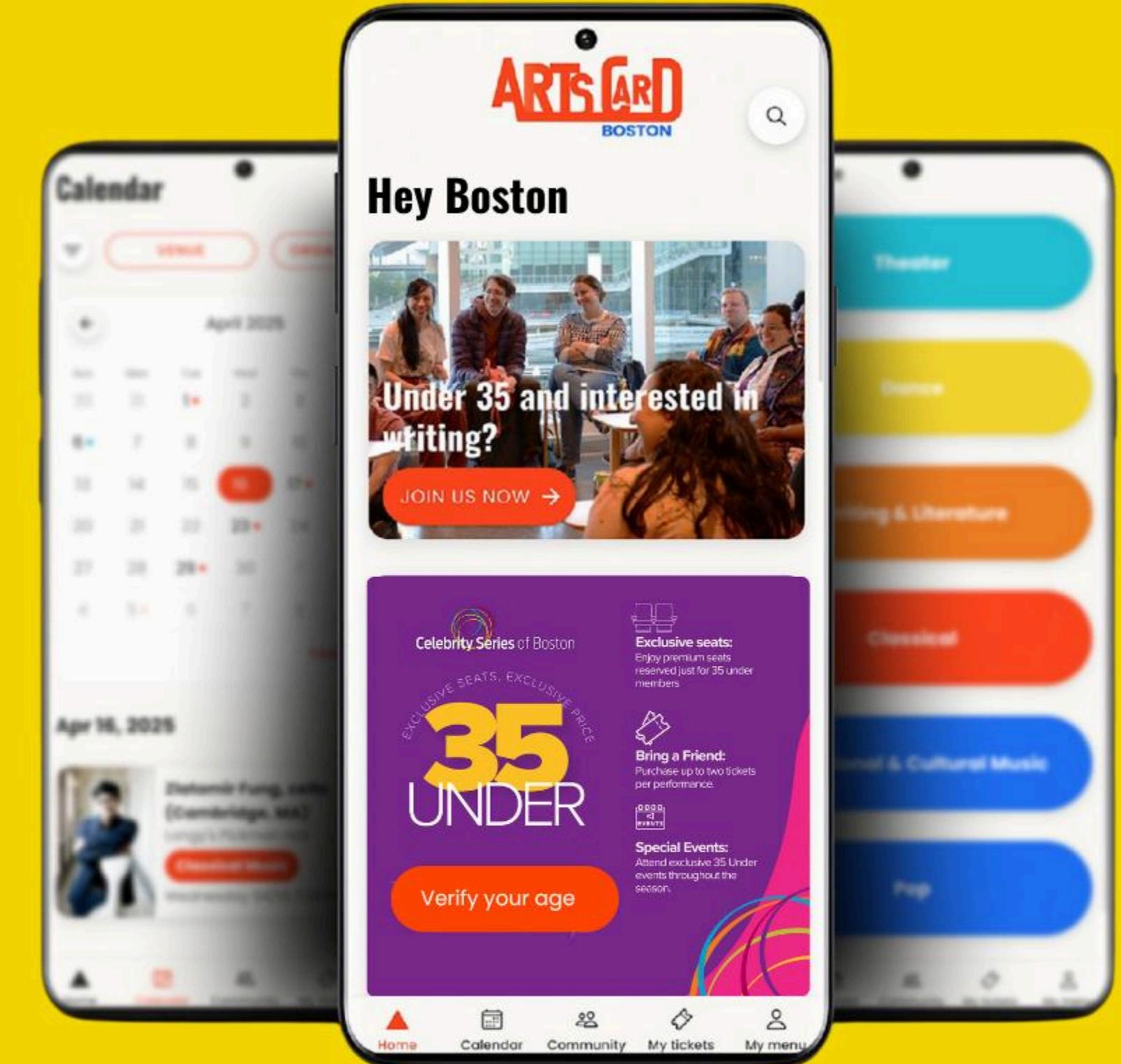
Do not record or broadcast  
concurrent sessions



# FOR ENGAGING UNDER-35 AUDIENCES

**Better together:** Uniting to reach the next generation of arts & culture lovers –

[ArtsCardBoston.com](http://ArtsCardBoston.com)



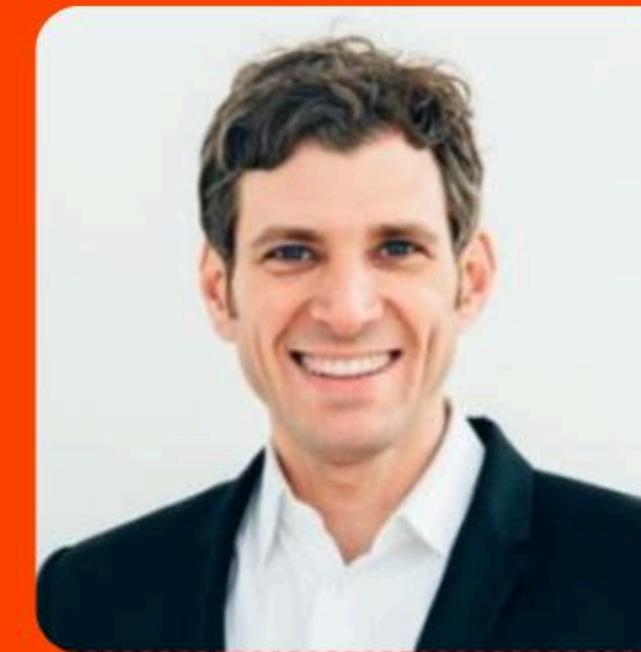


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## Vawnya Nichols

Associate Director, Ticketing and  
Audience Services  
**Celebrity Series of Boston**



## Wolfgang A. Graf

CEO & Co-Founder  
**easy-connect**



# About easy-connect

- Tech & Product company based in Vienna
- Like Tessitura **focused on Arts & Culture**
- ~10 years in business,  
over **100 clients in Europe and the US.**
- Our mission: We want to **support Arts & Culture organizations to increase visibility** in the global & digital entertainment competition, so that more people can enjoy Arts & culture.
- easy-connect offers a **NextGen App-framework**, fully adoptable to corporate design & specific needs with **many innovative out-of-the-box features for digital audience development**



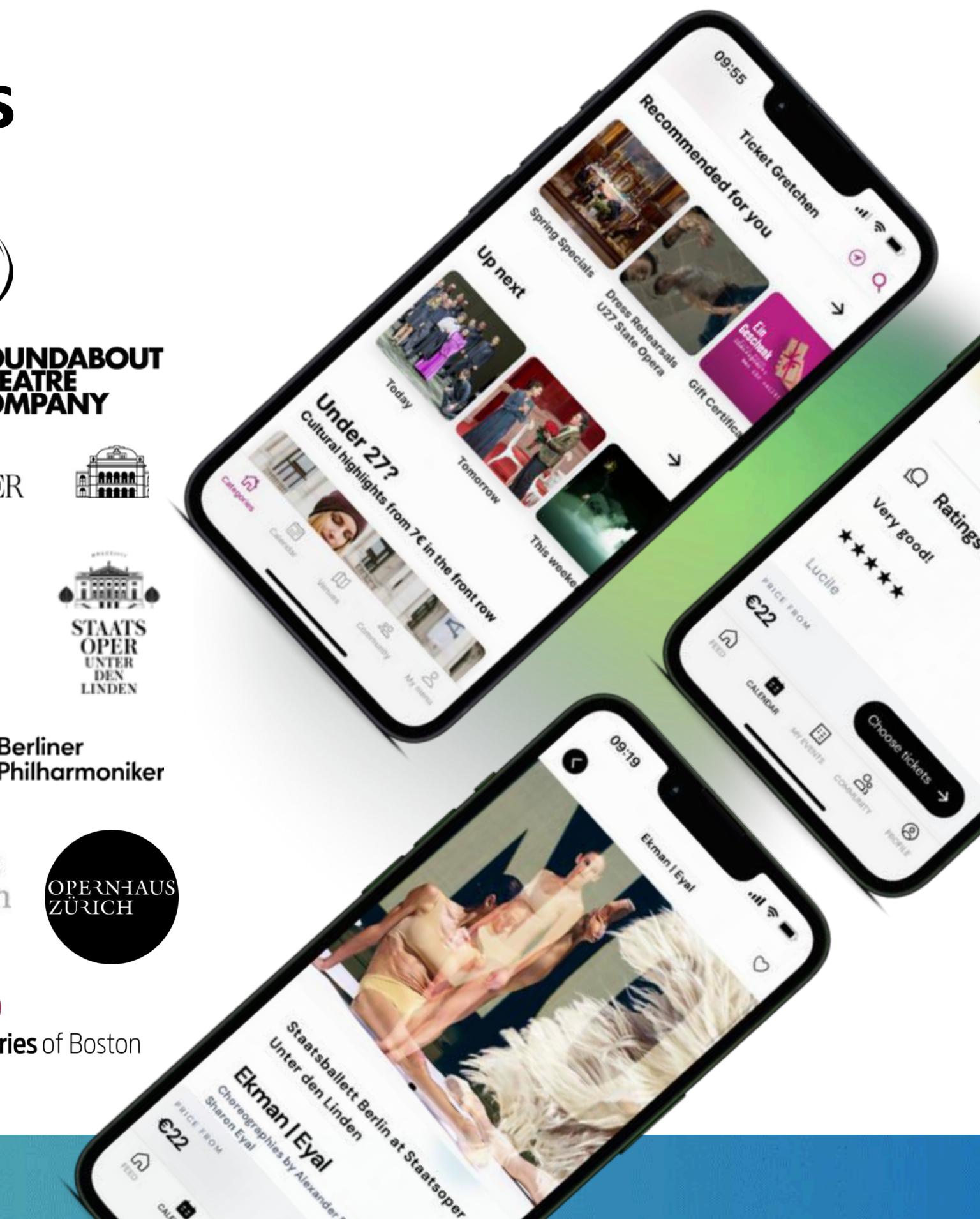
# Flexible & powerful NextGen Digital Audience Engagement & Ticketing Apps

## Our App solutions supports you to...

- lower barriers for entry & boost convenience
- reengage audiences & increase customer loyalty and engagement
- reach out to new and NextGen Audiences
- increase revenue & ticket sales

## easy-connect White-Label App features highlights:

- Social & Community Features
- Enhanced content presentation
- Mobile tickets
- Digitization of membership & young audience programs
- Direct & personalized communication



# OUR FOCUS

## 1 App First

Bring Arts & Culture to where people spend most of their time – on their smartphones

## 2 Easy Access

- Fast & easy booking flow
- Know before you go info
- Personalized recommendations
- Digitize discount & membership programs
- Based on real-time API based connection

## 3 Community & Fandom

- It's a social event!
- Make it easy for your fans to share their passion & enjoy culture events together
- Initiator & responder logic
- Loyalty programs

## 4 Data Personalization Automation

- Your customers – your data
- Use behavioral data to personalize content & communication
- Direct communication channel

# Key Features

## Seamless Mobile Experience

- All events at a glance with categories, filters (e.g. genres and tags) & search
- User stays logged in, discounts apply automatically
- Digital Ticket Delivery/Ticket Wallet
- Real-time integration with ticket availability and website content updates
- Full data ownership

## Lottery & App-Only Promo Events

- Enable access to special events or last-minute tickets
- Events for specific member groups
- Professionals or behind the scenes access opportunities
- Collect user data for future cultivation

## A Platform for Fandom

- Build an Arts & Culture community
- Referral program
- Share wishlists
- Gamification
- ...and much more

## Loyalty Programs

- Encourage repeat visits with personalized rewards, special access, tailored content, or gamification

## Digitize Targeted Audience Programs

- Students
- Age-based programs
- Access & low-income programs
- Military & Veterans
- First responders
- ... and many more

## Personalization

- Personalized content based on constituent record, app behavior, etc.
- Personalized communication with push notifications and in-app messages



# Celebrity Series of Boston

Celebrity Series is a multi-disciplinary, non-profit, performing arts presenter.

## **Our Mission**

To enrich and inspire our community through exceptional live performances.

## **Our Vision**

We envision a community of Greater Boston where the performing arts are a valued, life-long, shared experience—on stages, on streets, in neighborhoods—everywhere.

**Our Values:** Collaboration - Curiosity – Equity – Integrity - Joy



# DIGITAL BACKGROUND

Celebrity Series has been a proud Tessitura client since 2011.

- Cloud hosted by Tessitura and operate on version 16
- Traditional subscriber audience base, but not a typical subscription model.
- Over 70 paid performances and over 20 performances that are free and open to the public per season.
- Performing in ~ 20 venues across the greater Boston area.

**The Challenge:** Technology roadmaps difficult to coordinating with so many variables.





Celebrity Series of Boston

EXCLUSIVE SEATS, EXCLUSIVE PRICE

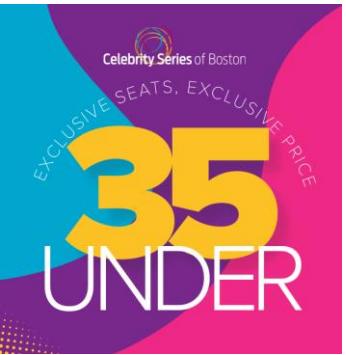
**35  
UNDER**

35 UNDER . 35 UNDER 35 UNDER 35 UNDER . 35

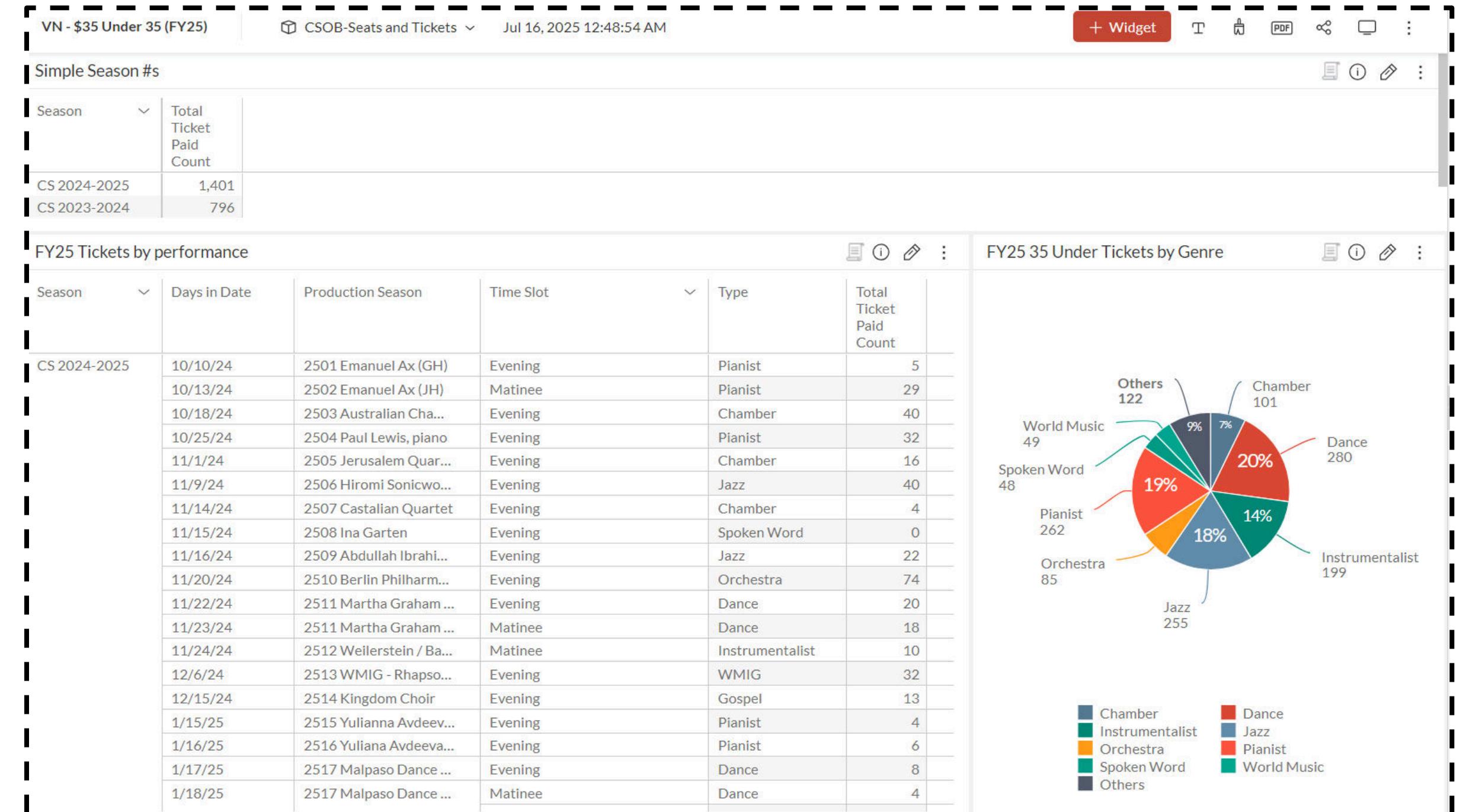
# 35 UNDER PROGRAM

- Celebrity Series launched our 35 Under program in 2023
- Over the last 2 years, the program has grown at a rapid pace
- Demand was high, but systems were behind the times

# Celebrity Series 35 Under Program



- We were tracking **35 Under** sales through analytics dashboards
- Growth in orders & tickets
  - FY24: 479 unique orders for 778 tickets
  - FY25: 810 unique orders for 1,401 tickets
- Genre buying was highly diverse



# Session Goals:



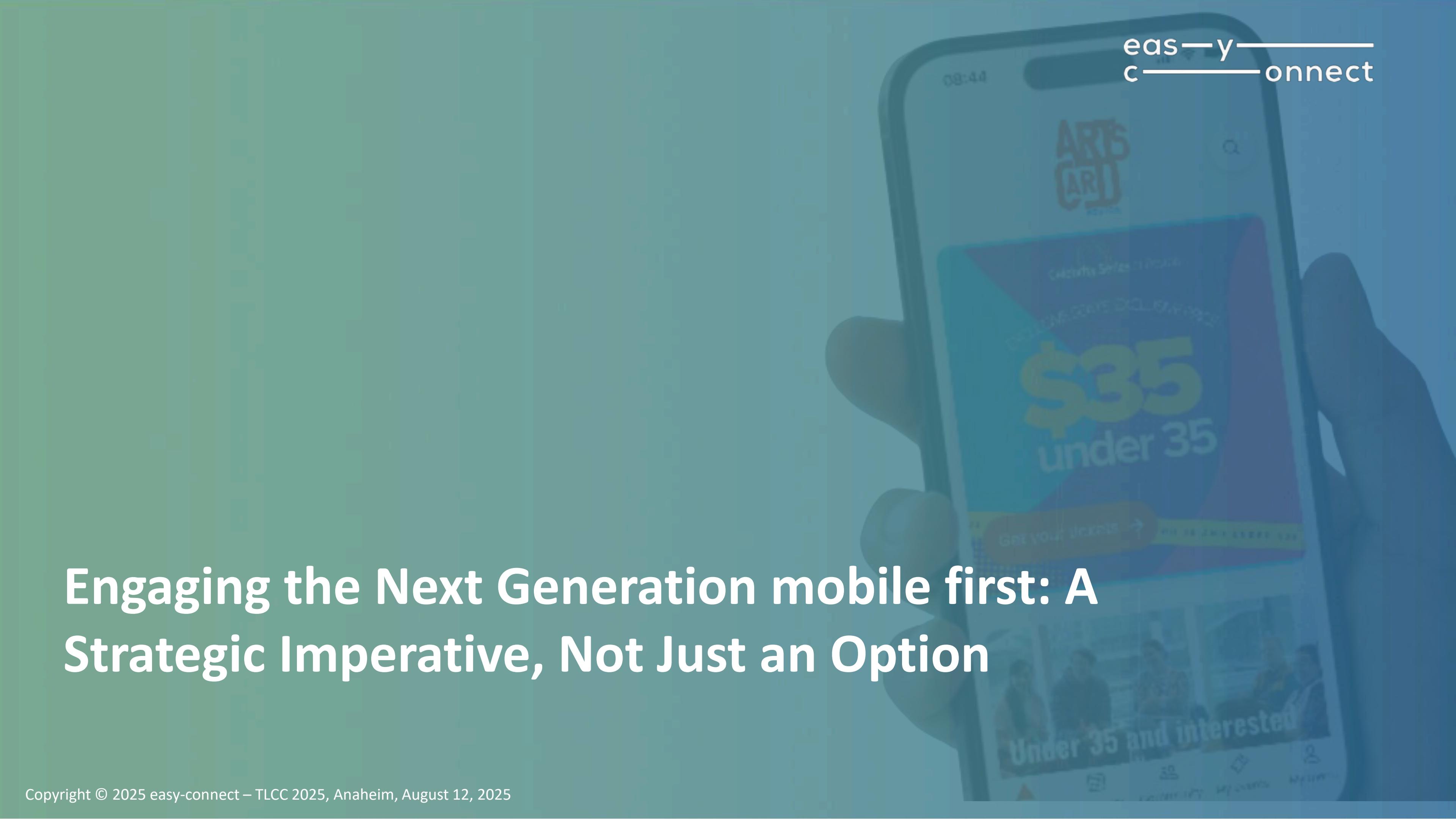
Understand how cultural organizations can successfully partner and drive digital audience engagement for all audience segments



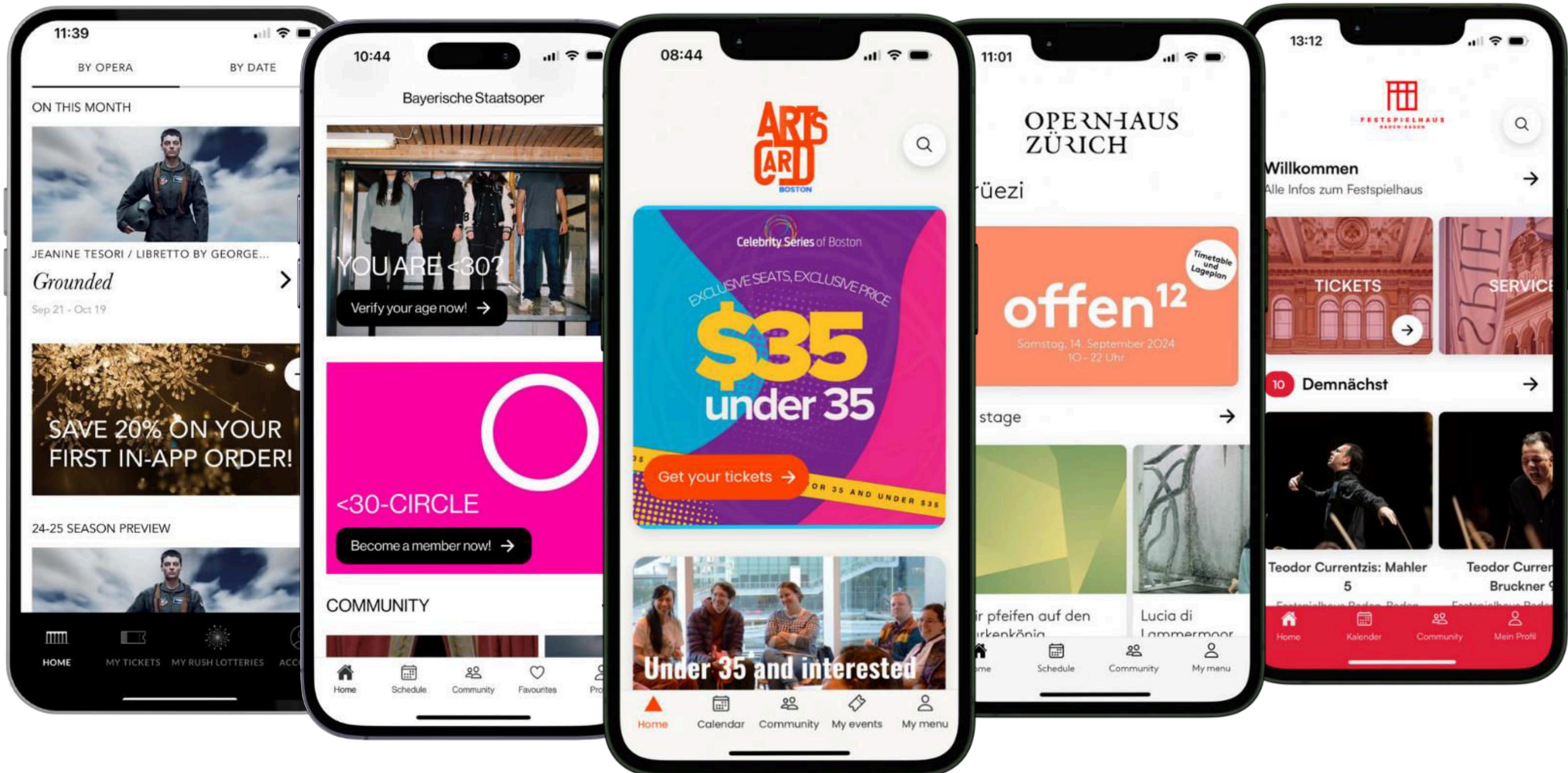
Discover practical strategies for engaging audiences through an app-only approach, community-building features and a digital word-of-mouth strategy



This session will highlight how a dedicated U35 program as well as a personalized content & communication strategy foster deeper audience connection and long-term loyalty



# Engaging the Next Generation mobile first: A Strategic Imperative, Not Just an Option



[www.easy-connect.io](http://www.easy-connect.io)

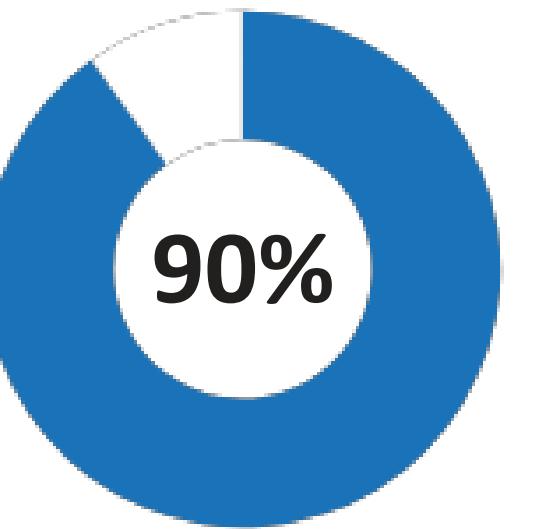


**94%**

## Smartphone penetration

In 2025 94% of the US residents aged 16 years and over were owning a smartphone. Recent studies of early 2025 show numbers of over 95%, up to 98%.

# 4 hours each day



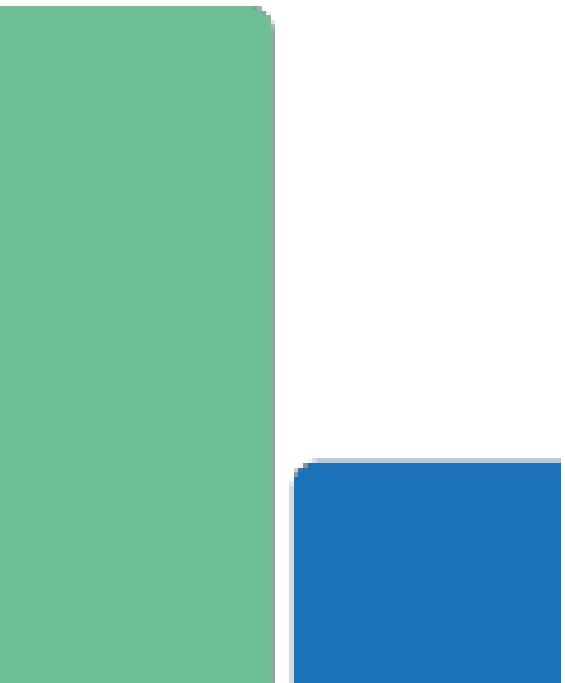
nearly 90% of mobile internet usage is spent in apps, owing to the better user experience apps provide for mobile web users

\* Mobile Apps Vs Mobile Websites: Why People Spend 90% Of Their Time in Apps (mobiloud.com) & April 2023 Study by Scanbot

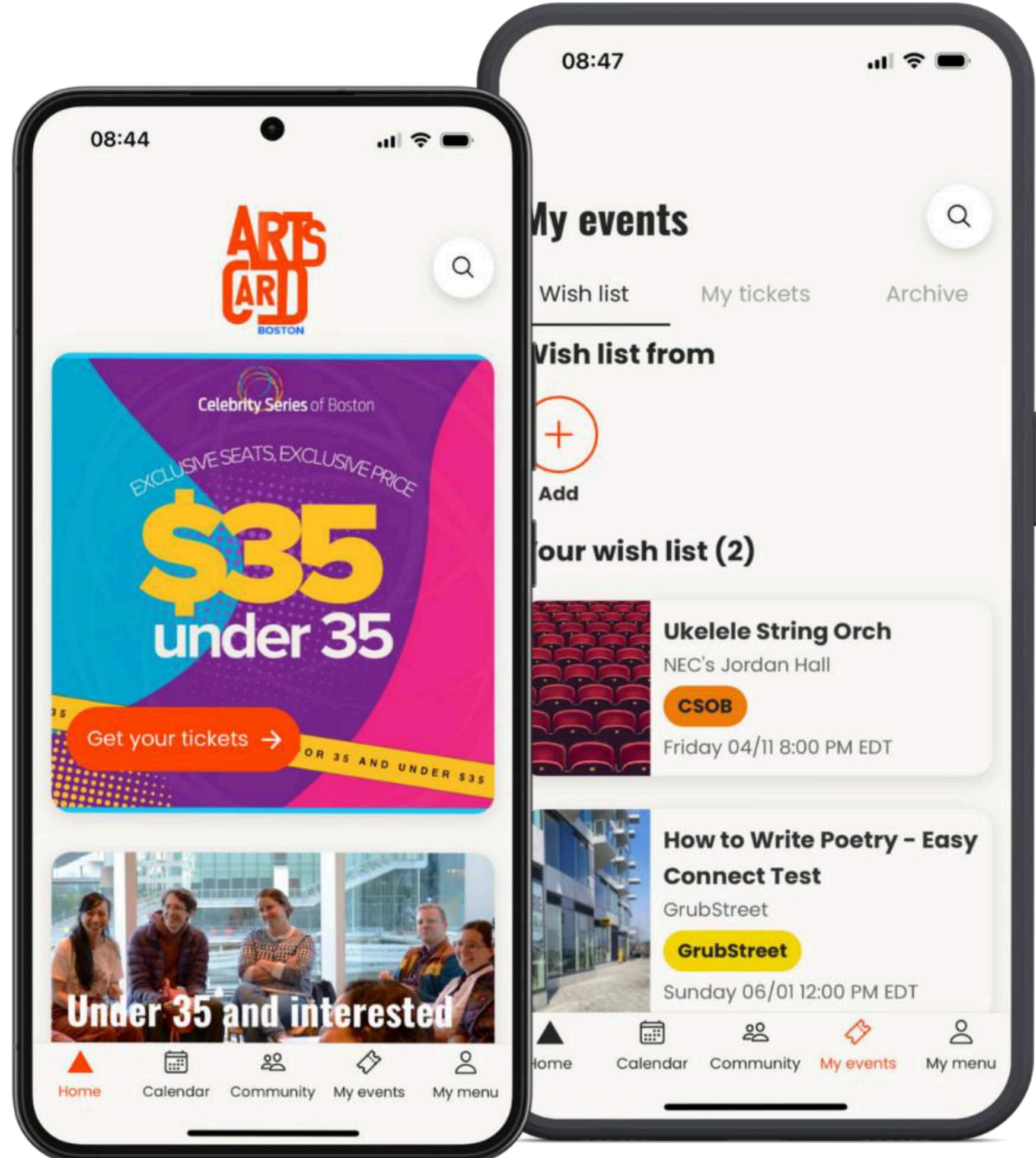


# 233%

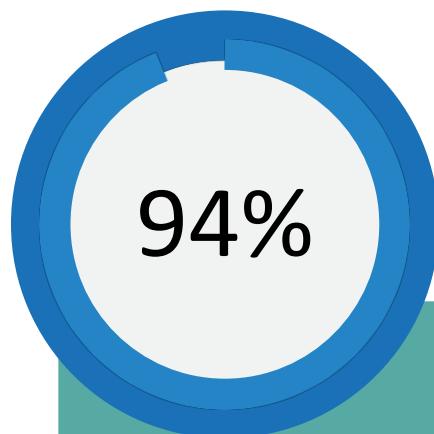
3x



Conversion rates on apps are 3x higher than mobile websites



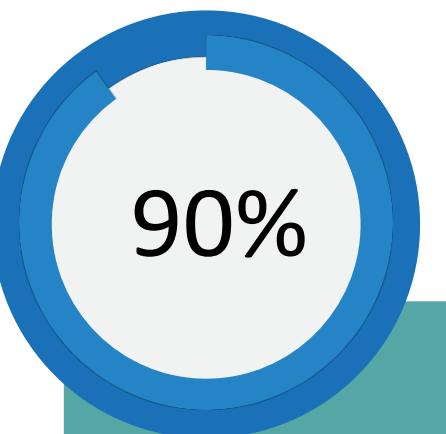
## The Mobile Reality in 2025



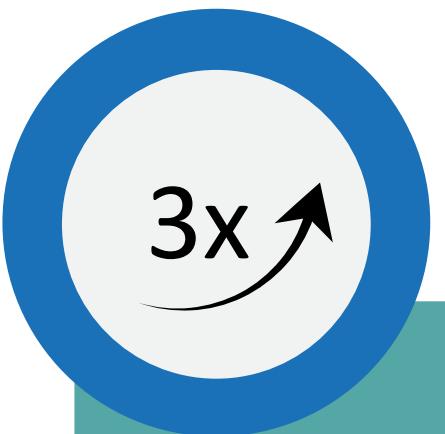
**94% Smartphone Penetration:**  
US- residents from the age of 16 own a smartphone



**4hrs Daily Mobile Usage:**  
Average Time spent on mobile devices



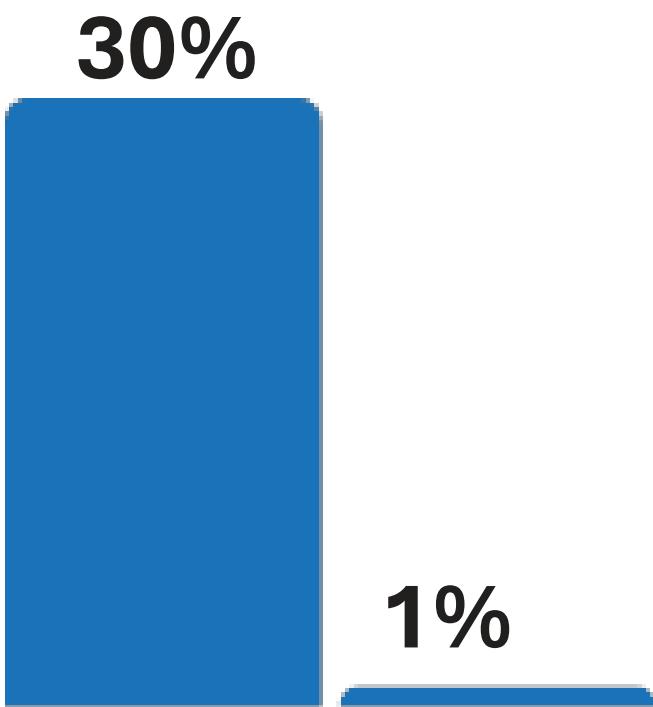
**90% Time in Apps**  
of mobile internet usage is in apps vs browsers



**3x Higher Conversion**  
Apps convert 233% better than mobile websites

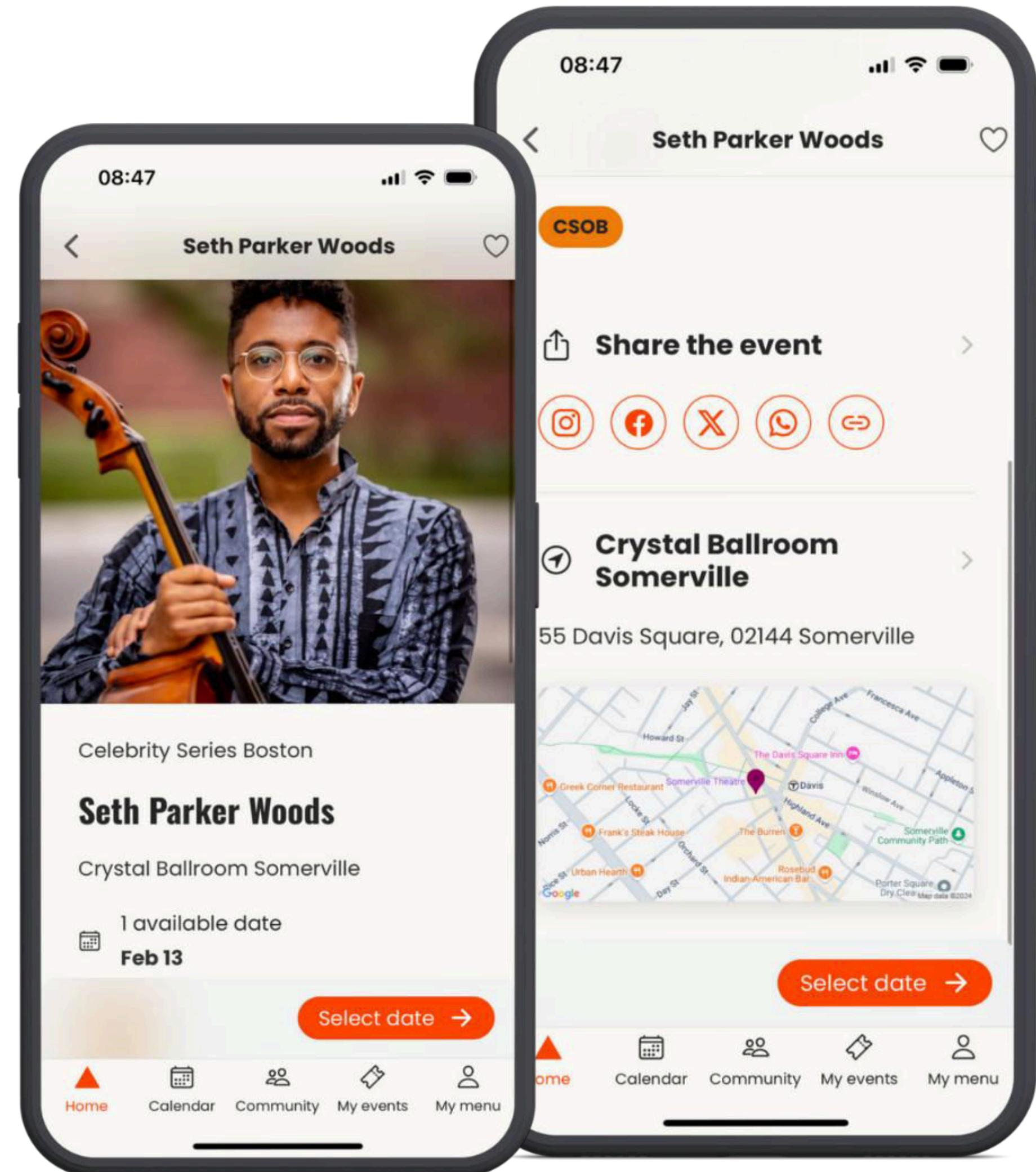
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# 30% vs 1%

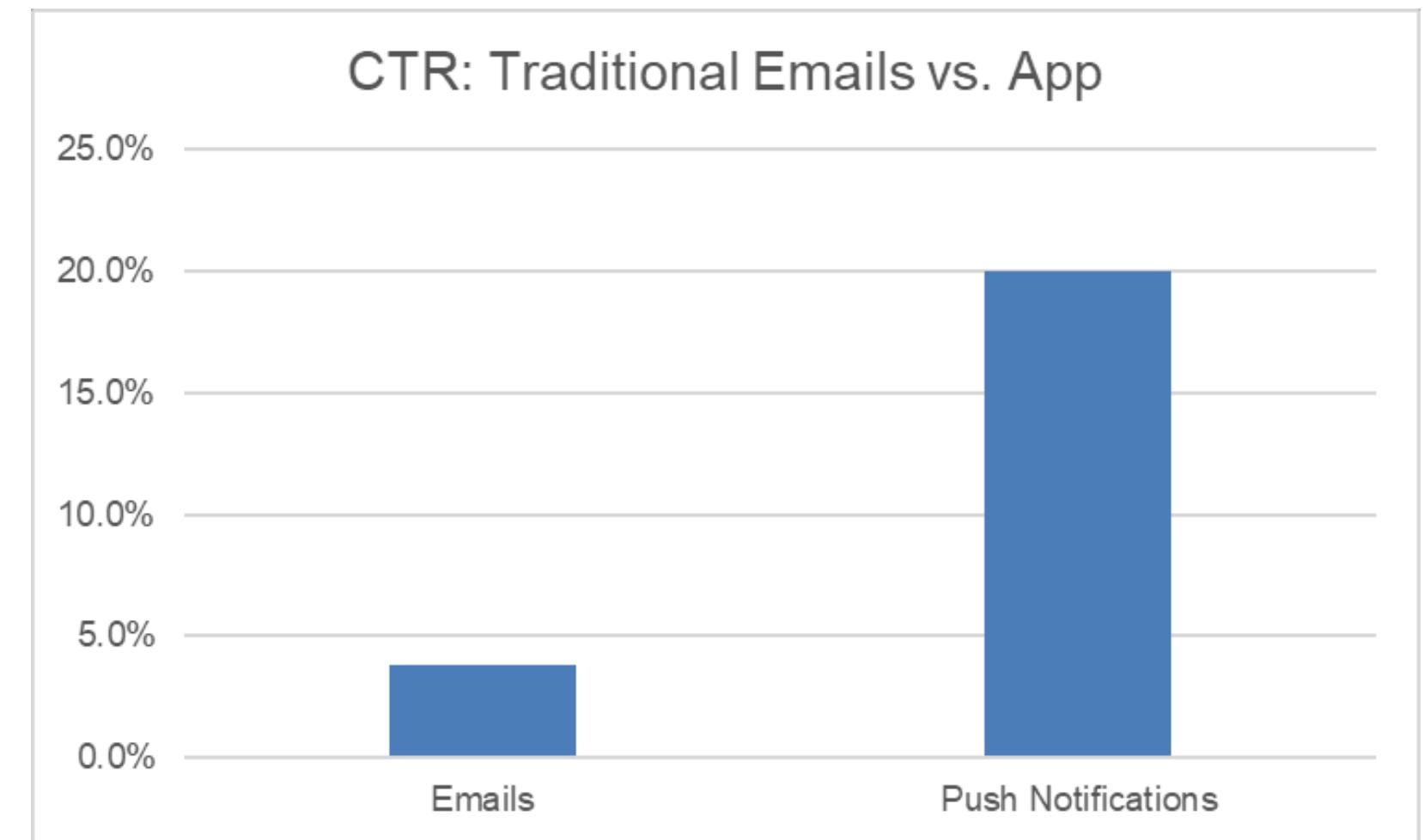
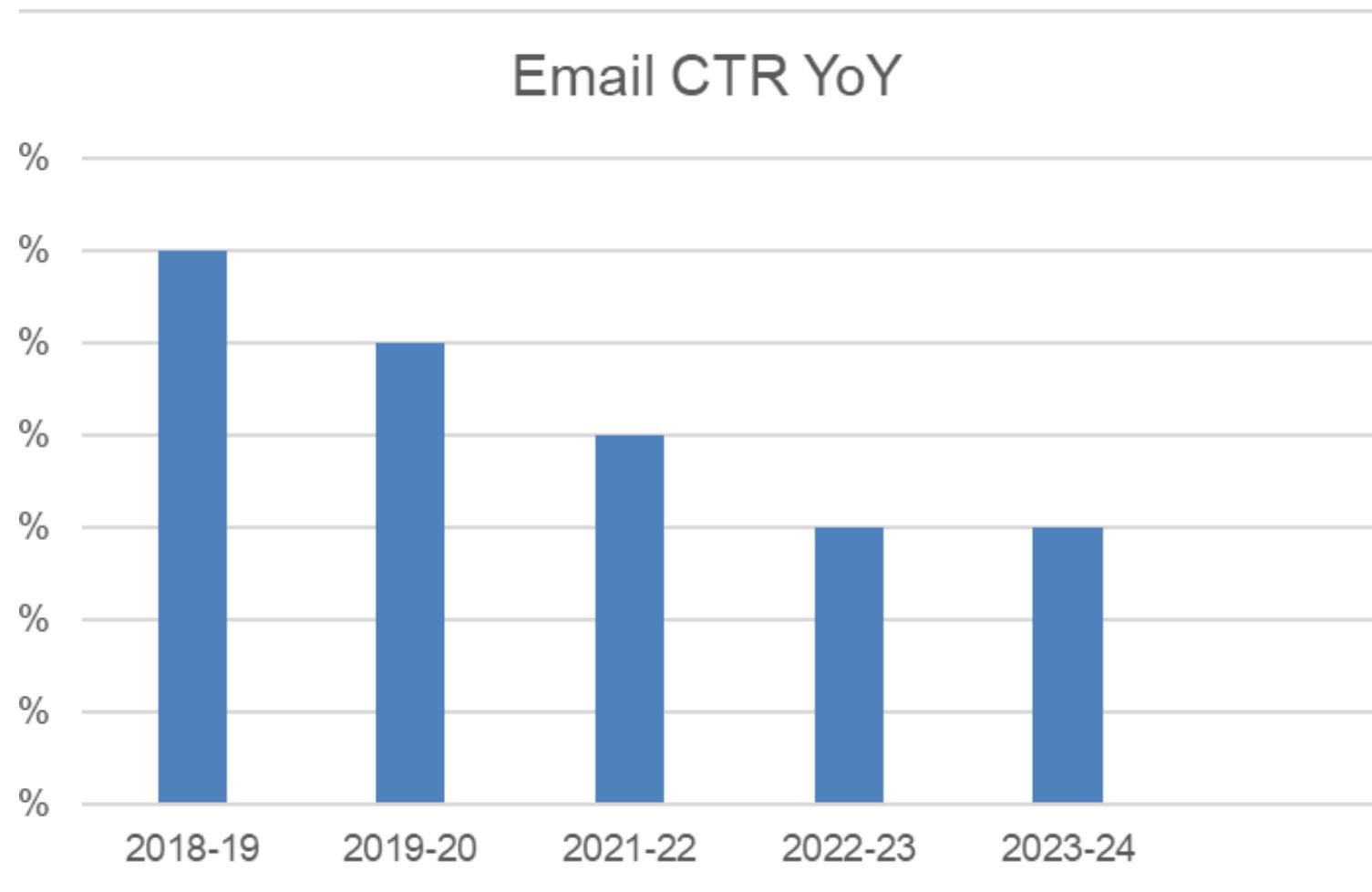


Personalized Push notifications have a click-through rate of up to 30%, significantly higher than the 1-3% rate for emails\*

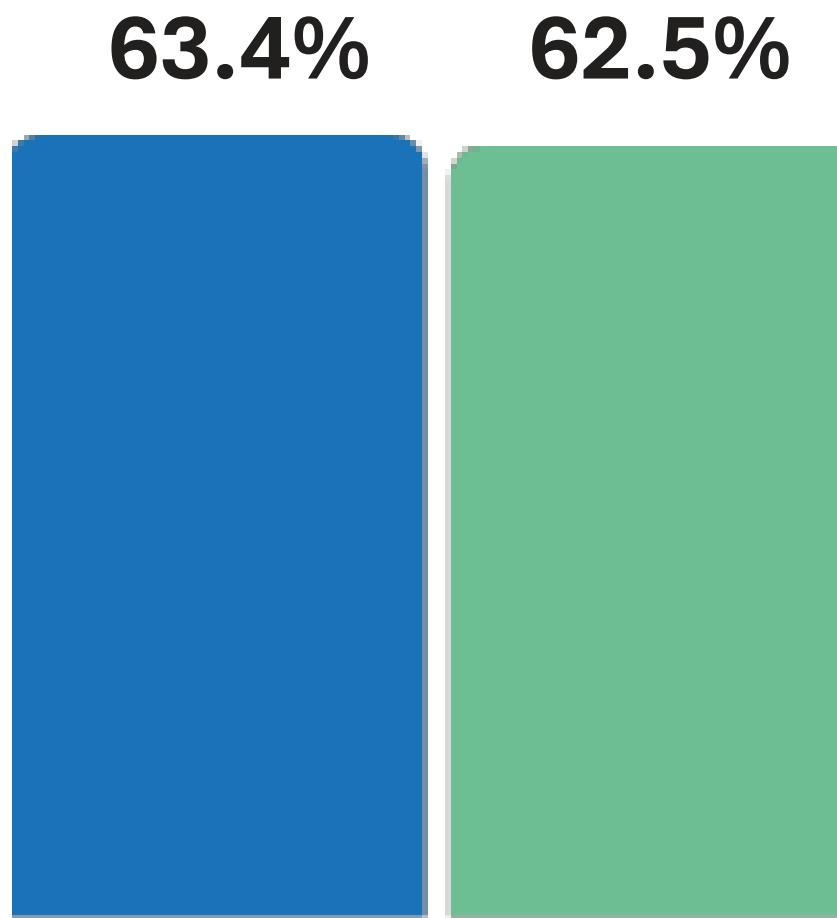
\*Mobile Apps Vs Mobile Websites: Why People Spend 90% Of Their Time in Apps (mobiloud.com)  
& April 2023 Study by Scanbot



# Example



## → Apps features wishlist focus on digital engagement



Features such as loyalty programs (63.4%) and exclusive offers (62.5%) are considered the most valuable to consumers

Consumers trust people more than brands

98%

of consumers believe recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising\*

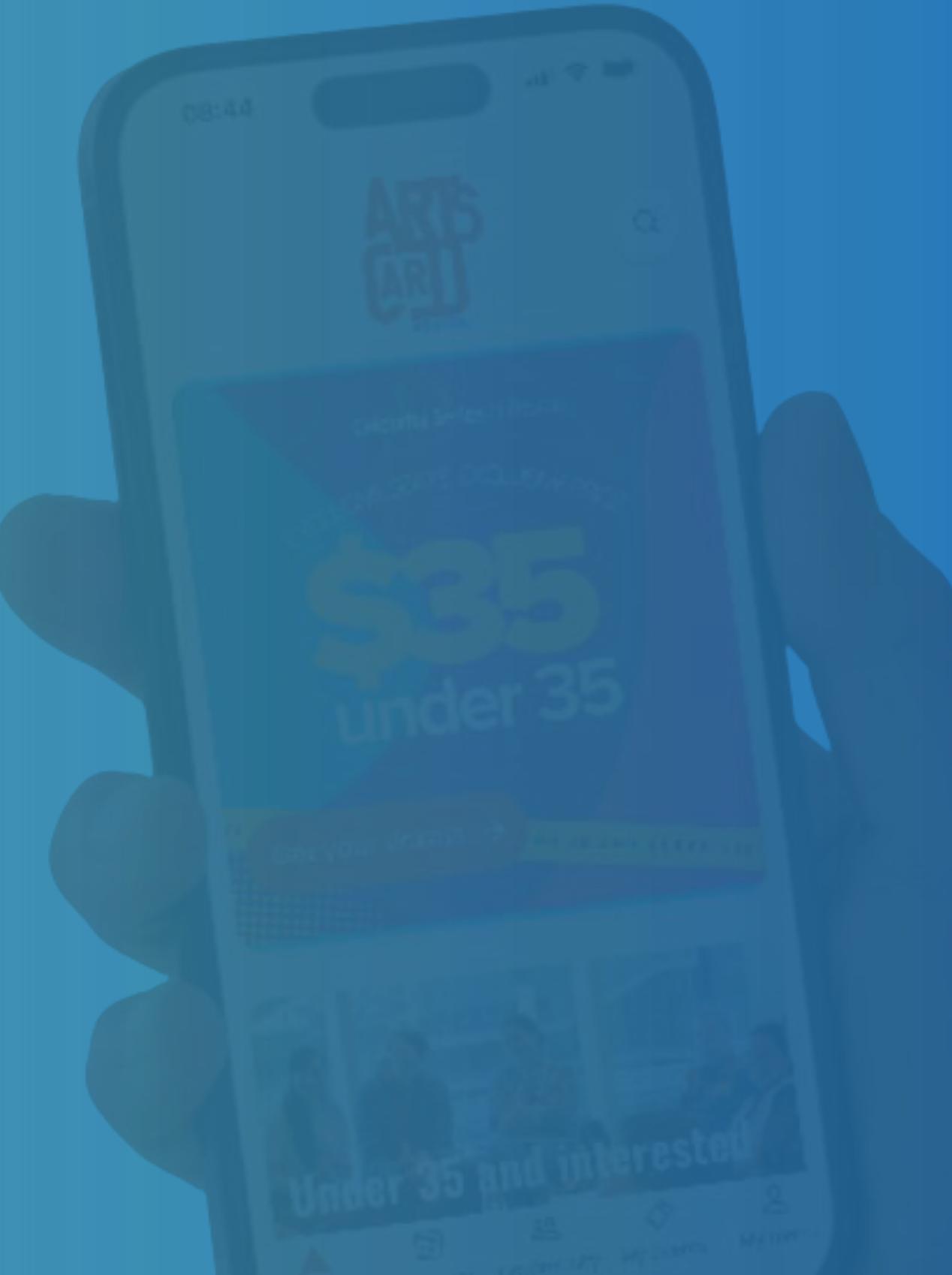
\* according to Nielson



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Introducing  
Arts Card Boston  
Boston's solution for a broad NextGen  
Audience Engagement





12:40

Today

ARTS CARD

What's New >

Version 2025.4.4

5d ago

- Stability improvements

Preview

Exclusive discounts on Boston's best arts & culture events

Genre

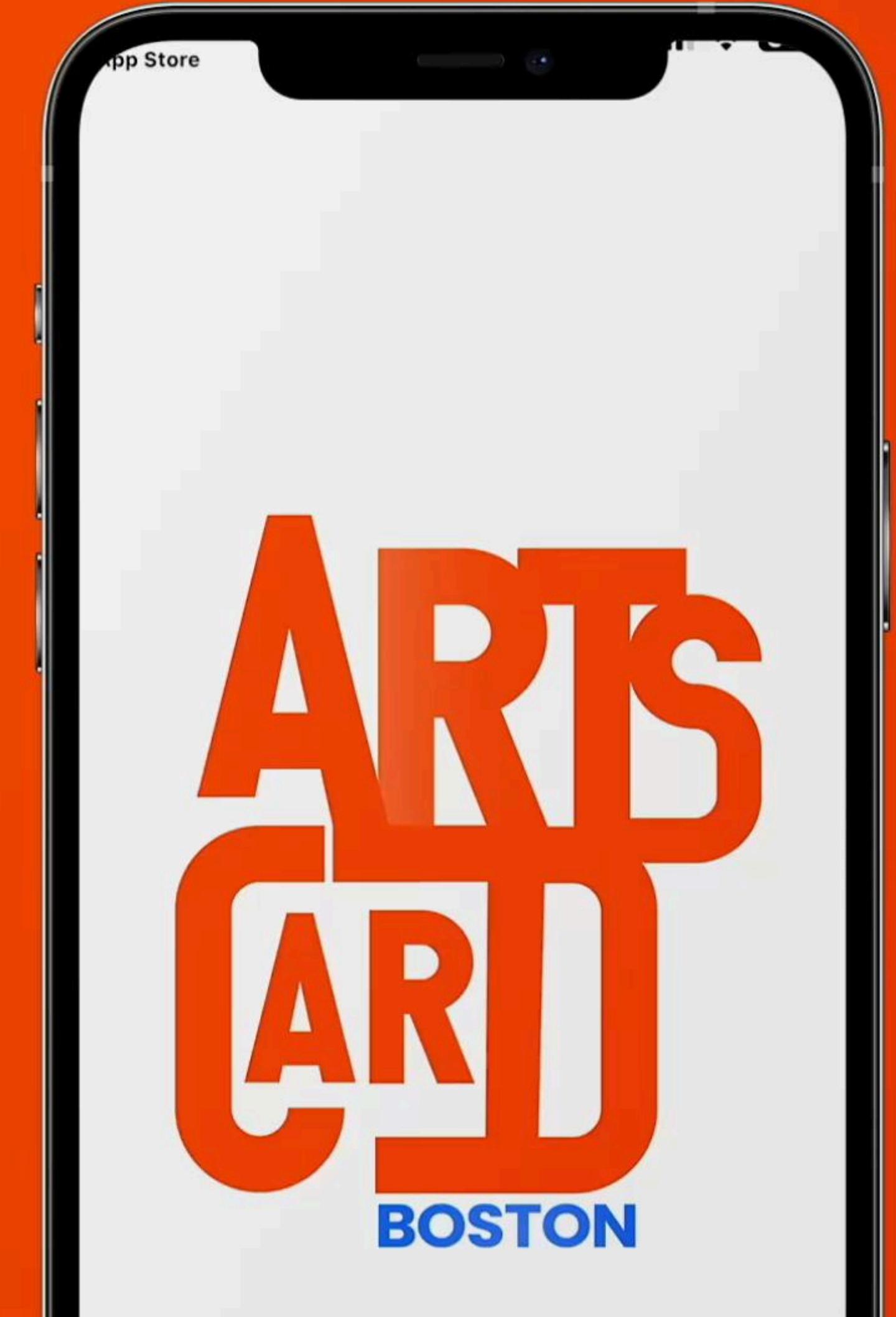
Global Music

Classical

Dance

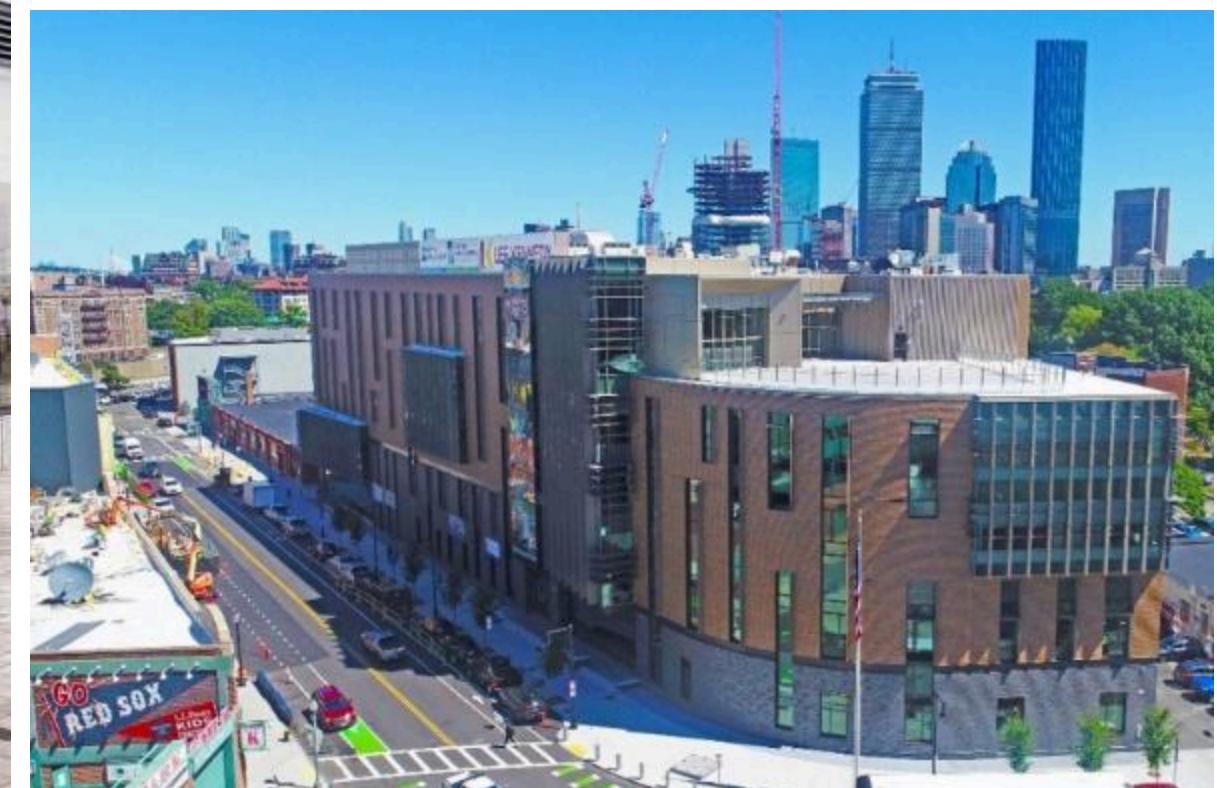
Writing & Literature

Traditional & Cultural Music





- \$35 for Under 35 scheme
- Facilitate Accessibility digitally
- Founding partners: Celebrity Series of Boston + GrubStreet
- Target audience: digitally native, price sensitive, experience seeking



# ArtsCard Boston App – From Idea to Collaboration

## CHALLENGE

### Challenges Facing Arts Organizations:

- Difficulty attracting and retaining young, diverse audiences (esp. under 35).
- Competing for the same demographic with separate programs & ticketing paths.
- Lack of mobile-first tech solutions expected by younger users.
- Departure of third-party discount ticketing apps (e.g., in Boston), widening the gap.

### Core Issues:

- Fragmented audience experience.
- Limited collaboration across institutions.
- Tech and resource limitations for direct digital engagement.

DANCE

COMM

BOOK

ART

CLASSICAL

WRITING

KER

LECTURE

PIANO

JAZZ

JAZZ

SPEAKER

ORCHESTRA

DANCE

•

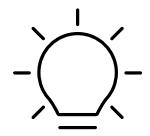
SINGER

TURE

CLASSICAL

# ArtsCard Boston App – From Idea to Collaboration

GrubStreet & Celebrity Series believe arts orgs can better engage young audiences by:



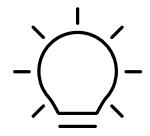
## **Creating a unified, mobile-first platform**

→ One app for multiple organizations = easy access



## **Hosting collaborative social events**

→ Build a shared community around the arts



## **Cross-promoting events across institutions**

→ Reach wider audiences through partnership

**It's for YOU.  
35 and  
under.  
In Boston.  
Into arts,  
culture, and  
doing cool  
stuff.**

**-ARTSCARD BOSTON**



# Why a combined App-solution works best for Boston

Boston is a young, vibrant city—with more colleges than anywhere else in the U.S. Yet, there's a **gap**: major city-wide discount apps have disappeared.



## Our Goals:

1. Boost engagement with existing members
2. Enable smart data tracking (e.g. attendance, social, demographics)
3. Increase brand visibility among under-35s
4. Drive new memberships across all partner orgs

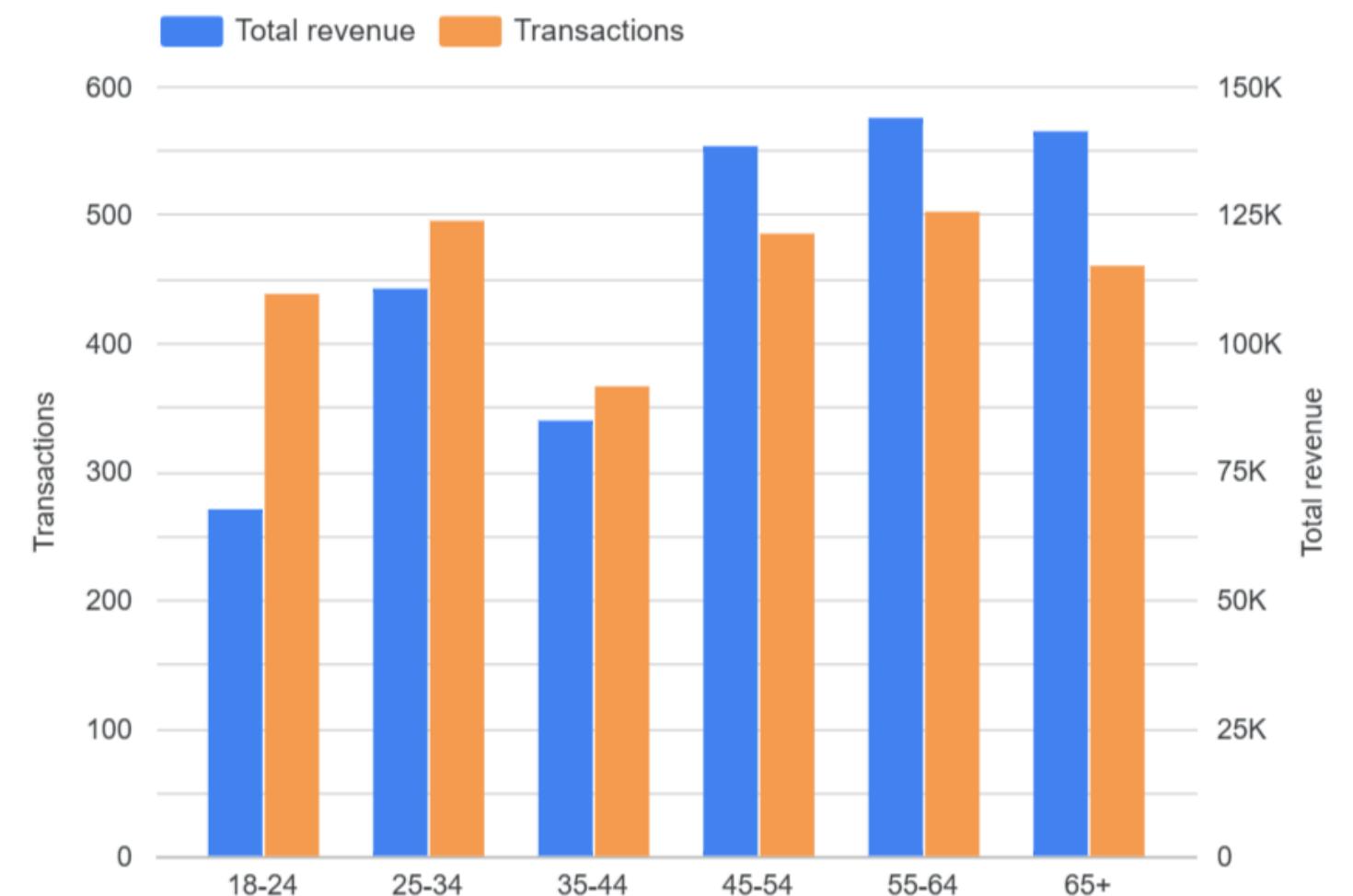
**A seamless, shared mobile experience can fill this gap—and build a stronger arts community.**



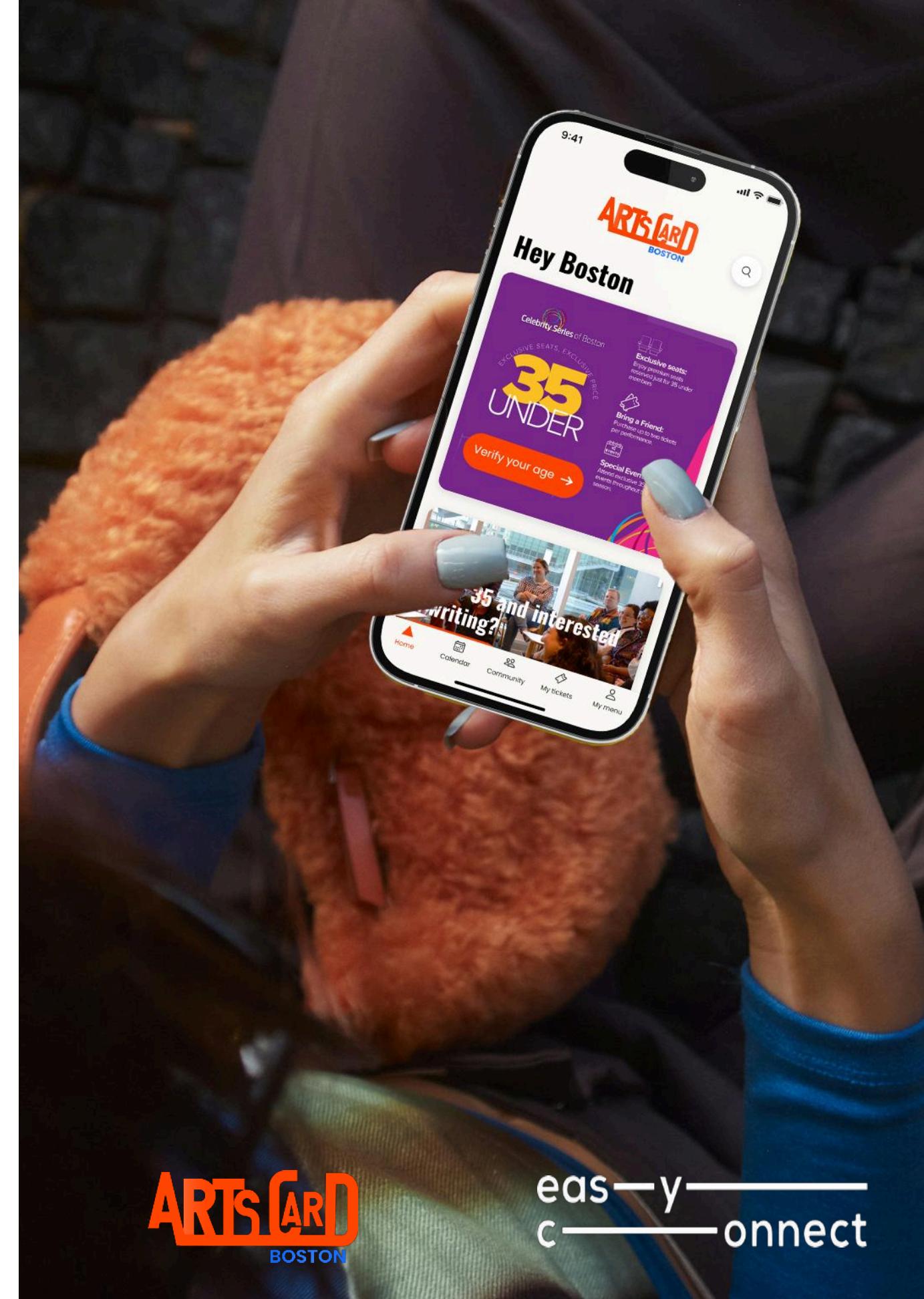
# Under-35 Audience Opportunities

At Celebrity Series, the **under-35** audience is strong, with significant growth potential.

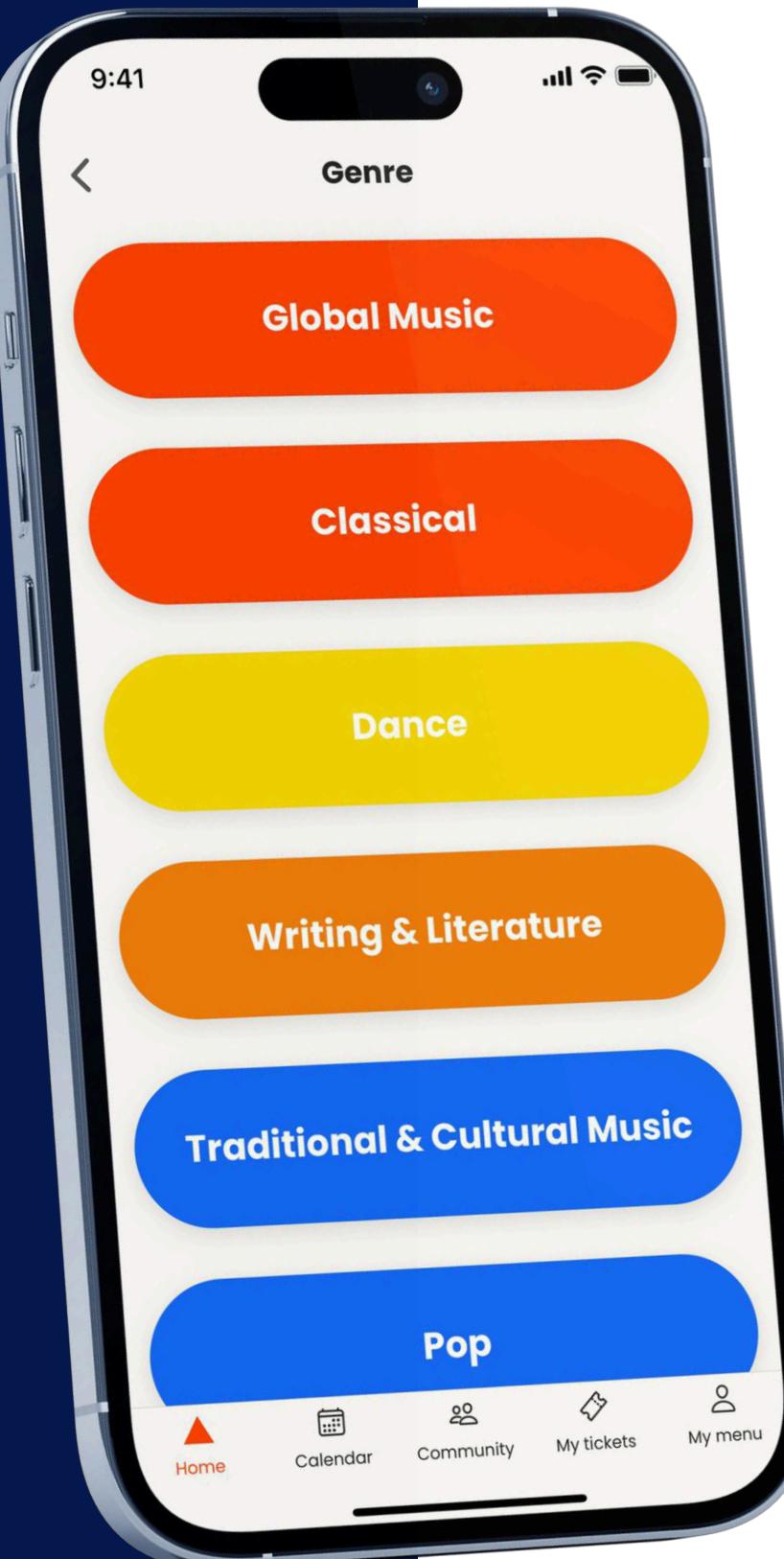
Total revenue and Transactions by Age, 2024/25 Season



Before the **ArtsCard Boston** launch, our 25-34 cohort was already strong, representing the second-largest group of transactions for all users with known/modeled ages in Google Analytics.



# Under-35 Audience Opportunities



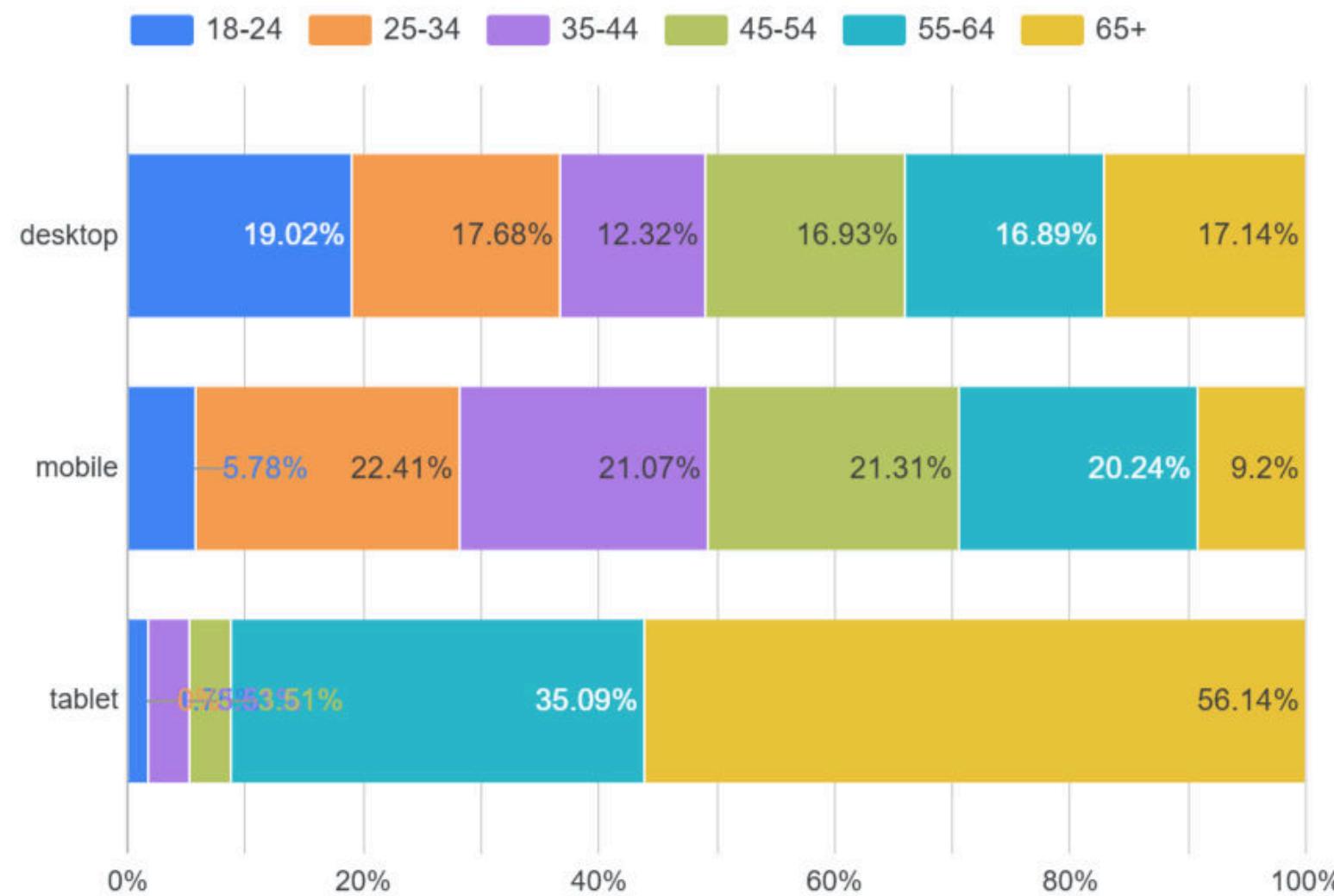
At Celebrity Series, the under-35 audience is the **#1** segment for website active users, the **#1** segment for sessions and views, but the **#4** known segment for total revenue

Age	Active users	Sessions	Views	Total revenue
18-24	8,343	14,818	49,845	\$67,563.38
25-34	11,858	19,956	60,770	\$110,530.89
35-44	9,881	15,921	43,079	\$84,837.86
45-54	10,530	16,534	53,286	\$138,264.78
55-64	11,071	16,981	53,207	\$143,783.34
65+	9,473	15,473	50,745	\$141,168.61
unknown	718,300	913,263	1,702,647	\$2,431,775.70

# Mobile Conversion Opportunities

At Celebrity Series, we are well-positioned for strong growth on mobile from our youngest segments.

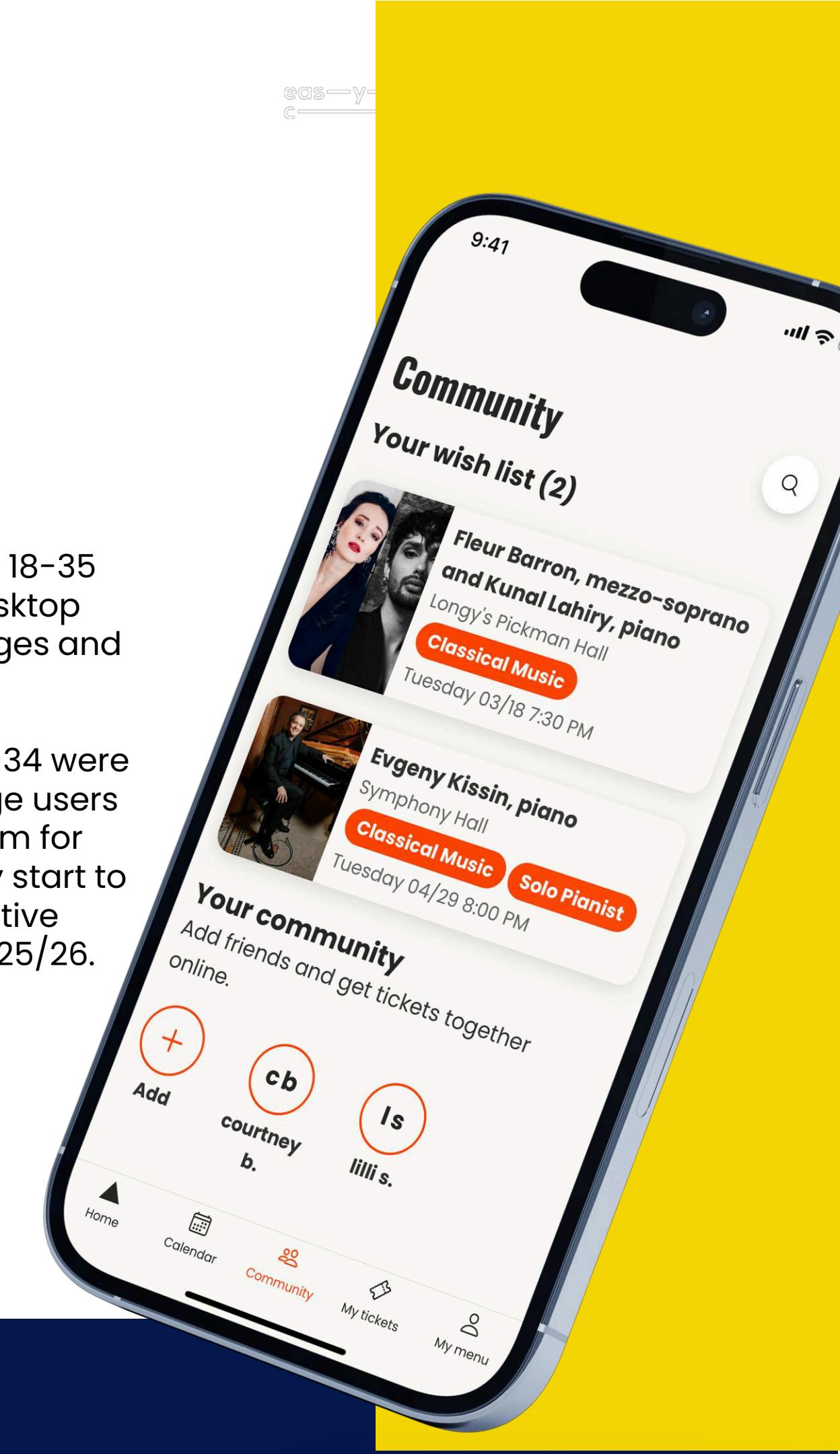
Key Event Shares by Device category and Age, 2024/25



During the 2024/25 Season, users 18-35 had more GA4 key events\* on desktop than on mobile, both in percentages and in absolute numbers.

But young professionals ages 25-34 were the largest segment of known-age users of our mobile site, suggesting room for growth and improvement as they start to enjoy the frictionless and informative ArtsCard Boston experience in 2025/26.

\*add-to-cart or purchase



# Insights of Arts Card Boston

1

Arts Card Boston uniquely blends digital convenience with access to Boston's diverse arts scene, catering specifically to the under -35 crowd

2

Backed by Boston's premier cultural institutions, Arts Card Boston has the credibility and commitment to engage and grow the next generation for arts enthusiasts

3

Young Bostonians value connection, exclusive experiences, and FOMO-free access to the city's cultural pulse

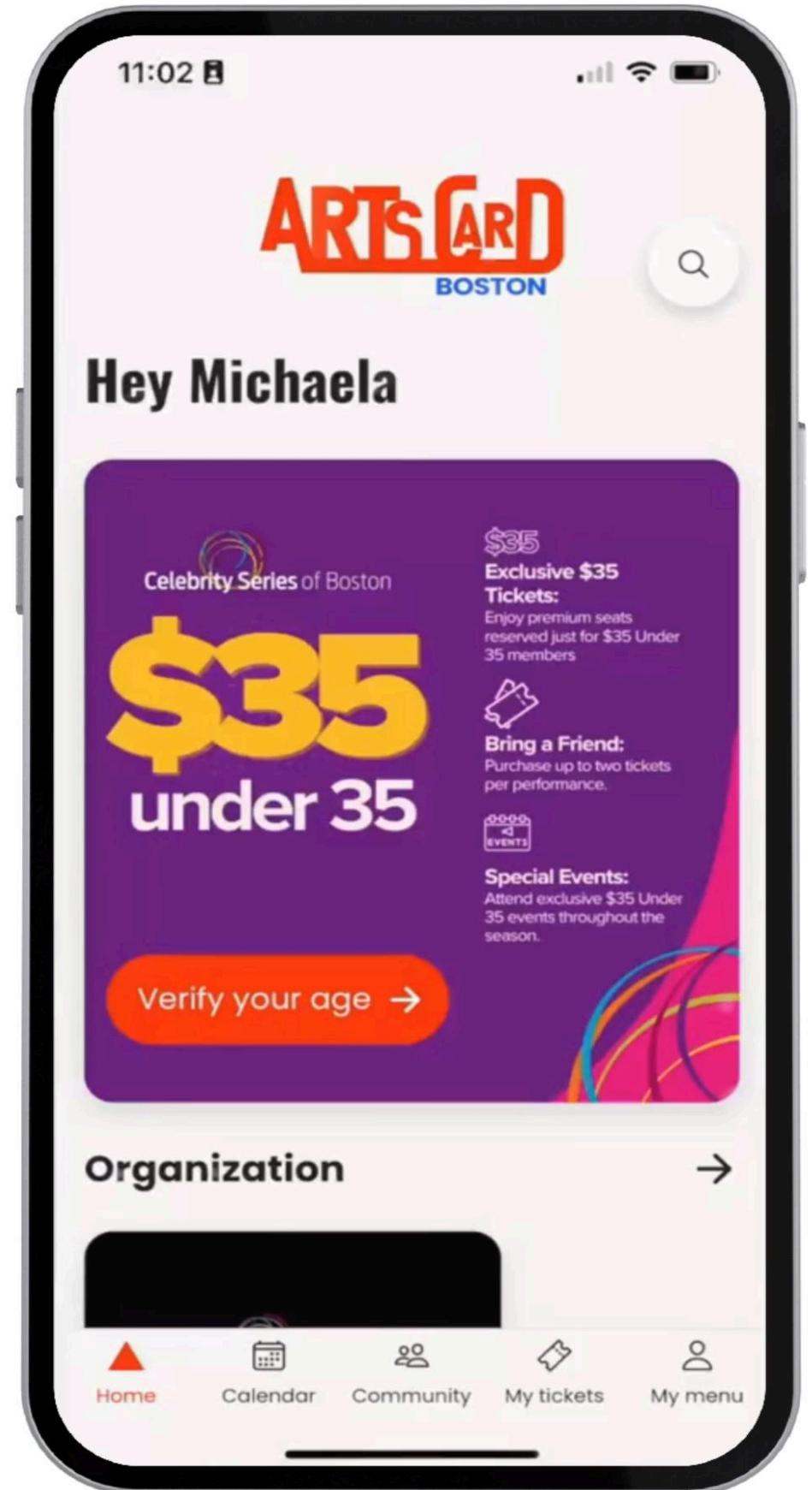
4

The app is timely, aligning with the digital-first, inclusive, and community-driven ethos of today's youth

# Screenflow Video

- ✓ Automated ID-Verification
- ✓ In-App U-35 Membership

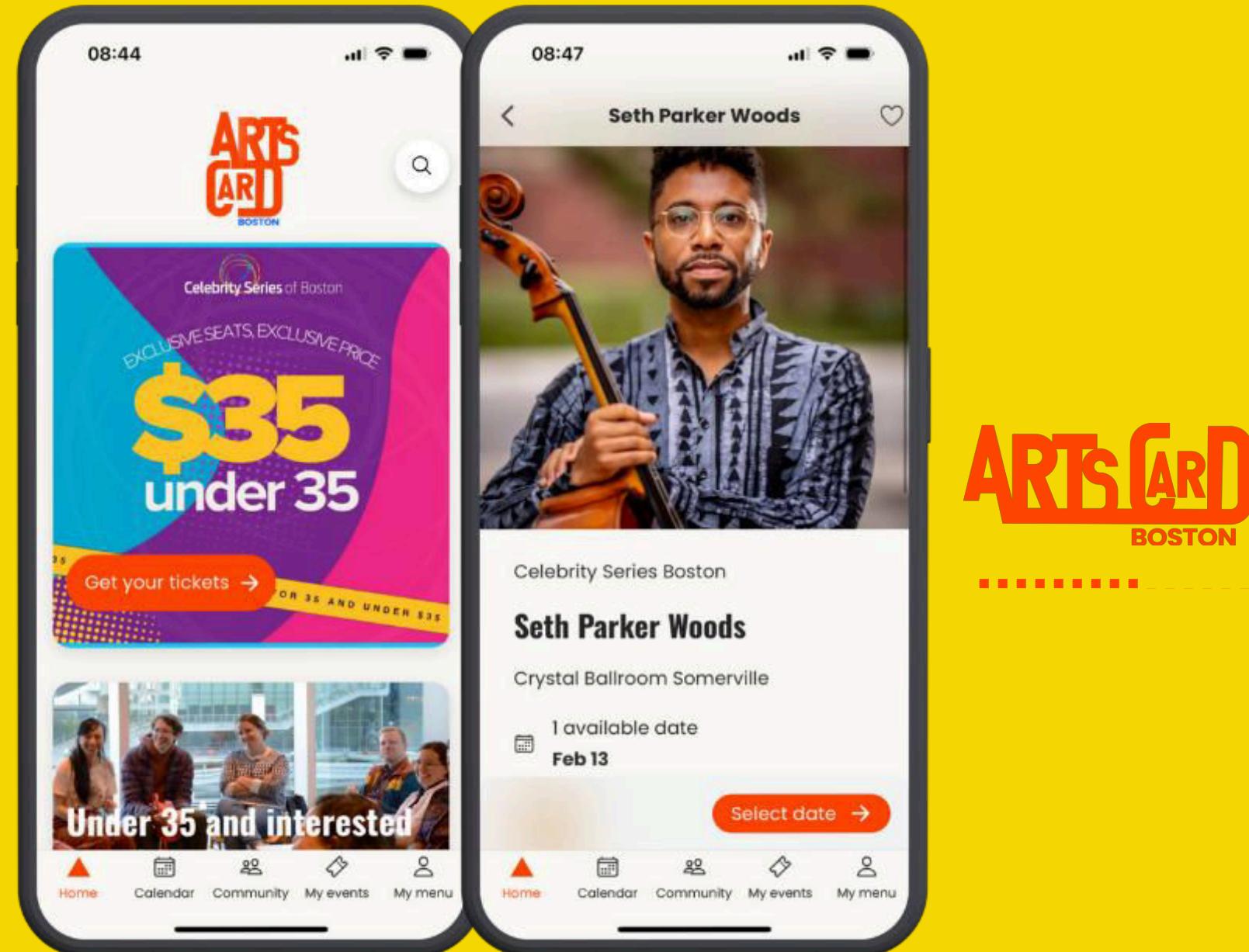
Download the app:



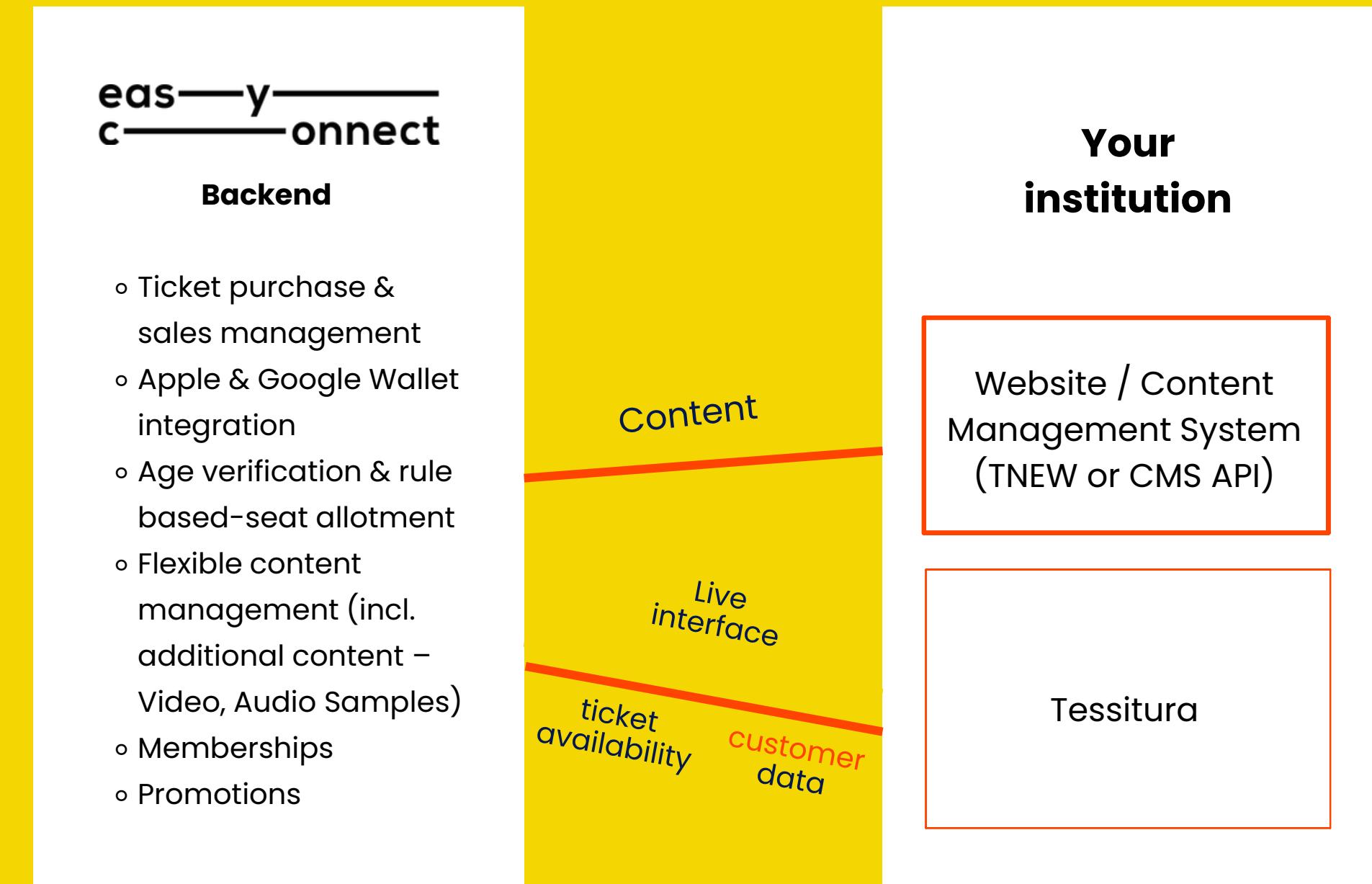
# HOW DOES IT WORK?

- ✓ Tech-provider and app maintenance by easy-connect
- ✓ Real time interfaces (API-based) to existing Ticketing/CRM and CMS systems: all data is stored in your systems
- ✓ In-App membership purchase and (discounted) ticket purchase with automated ID & age verification
- ✓ Know-before-you-go: Compelling & personalized content to target new audiences
- ✓ Social & Community Features: users can enjoy arts in Boston as a shared experience, adding friends to the app, sharing wishlists and much more
- ✓ Push & In-App notifications: communicate with users based on their in-app activity & booking behavior
- ✓ Mobile tickets (including Apple & Google Wallet integration)
- ✓ Reporting & analytics

# Behind the scenes: system map



**ARTS CARD**  
BOSTON



# ArtsCard Boston – expected numbers and prospect



1 year horizon – hope to onboard **3 to 5 new organization partners**



On average every visitor brings **~1.5 new people** to the venues,  
most active users bringing **up to 15** individual & new customers



Over 50% of app users to date **are under 40 years old**



**66% of downloads** convert to registered users who convert to **76% Monthly Active Users**



# Timeline

- Funding Secured: September 2024
- Project Kick Off: December 2024
- App submitted to App Store: April 2025
- Soft-launch: in May/June 2025
- Fall Marketing Campaign: July-September 2025
  - App Download Goal
- Partner outreach and onboarding: Ongoing



# Deep Links with Branch.io

- One link to serve current and prospective users:
  - Link to Calendar, or Event within app for already-installed users
  - Link to Apple App Store or Google Play Store page for mobile users
  - Link to website event page for desktop users
- Customize Source, Campaign and Keywords for all unique links
- Generate QR codes in-platform with tracking and routing parameters

Create Quick Link

artscardbos.app.link/ TIVYc9ZjNu

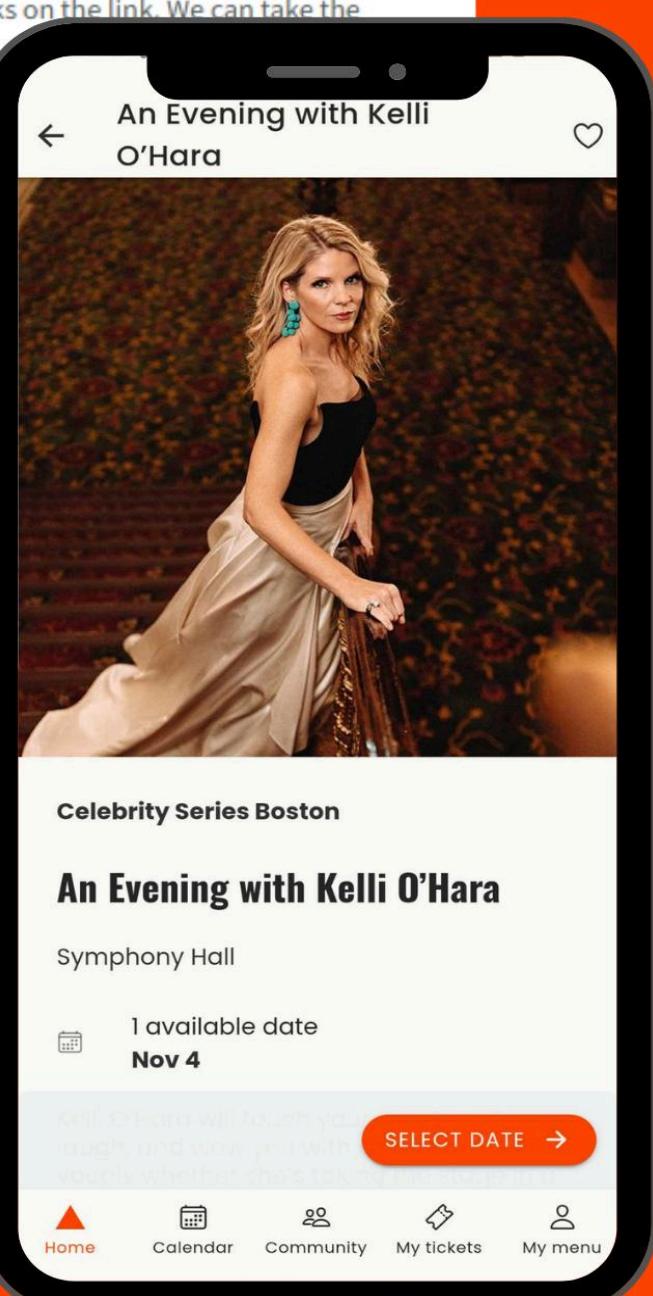
**Redirects**

Tell us what to do if the app is not installed when the user clicks on the link. We can take the user to the app store, open a web page, or open a [deepview](#).

ios  
Default Redirect [Apple App Store: ArtsCard Boston](#)

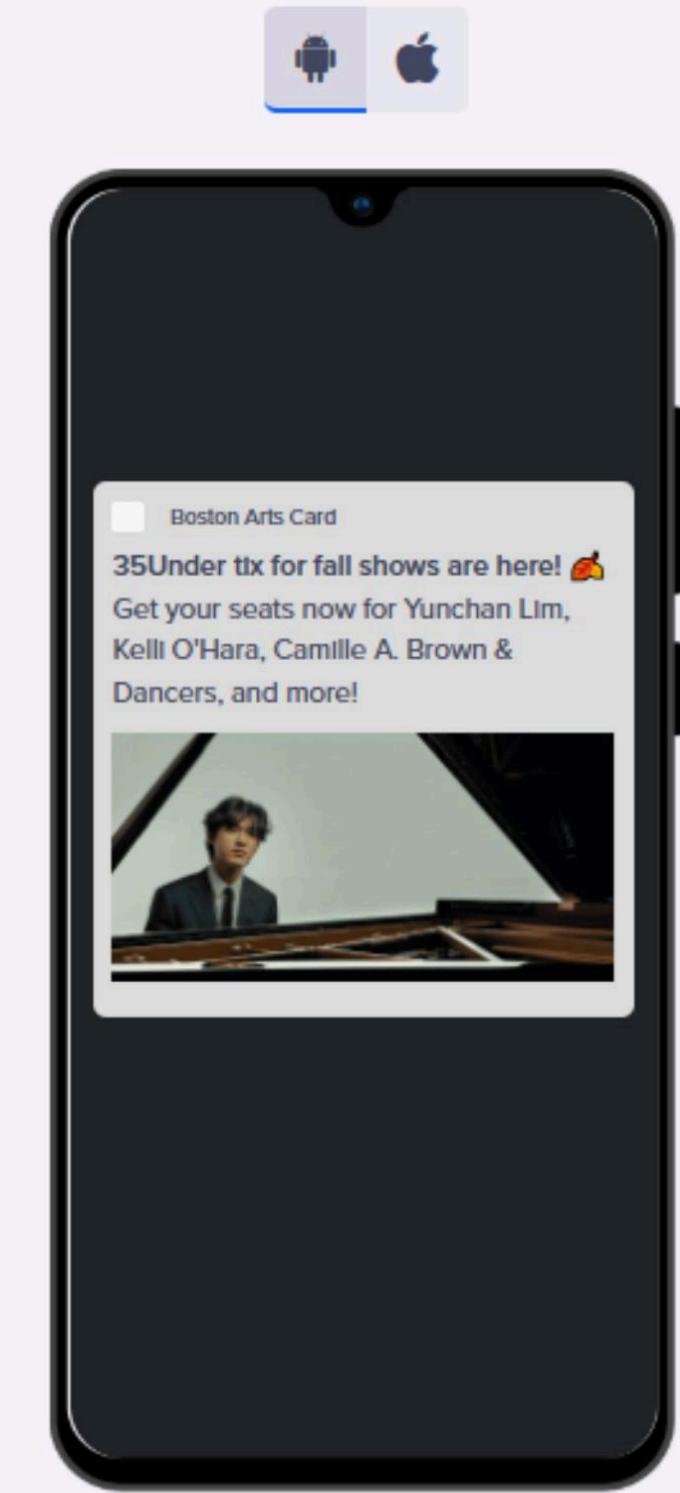
Android  
Default Redirect [Android Play Store: com.boston.arts](#)

Desktop  
Web URL <https://www.celebrityseries.org>



# Push Notifications with CleverTap

- Detailed targeting based on activity within app, clicks, purchases, and status with own or any organization.
- Supports rich text, single images, and image carousels
- Use Branch Deep Link to direct users to the most strategic destination within the app:
  - Calendar, Organization, or Event



# Launch Party

- Celebrity Series joined GrubStreet at their Seaport offices and Bookshop to host the official ArtsCard Boston Launch Party on April 23rd
- Attendees enjoyed refreshments, entertainment, and swag



# Marketing

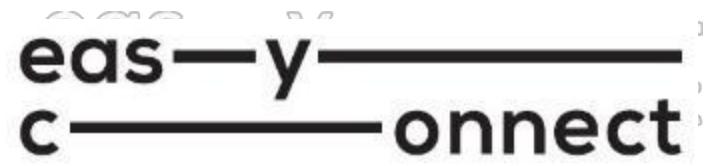
- **Campaign Phase 1: Awareness & Downloads**
  - Meta Ads (Apr 23–Jun 30) and App Store Campaign (May 14–Jun 30) focused on driving app downloads.
  - GrubStreet-led promotions included digital out-of-home (OOH) boards and Boston Globe's B-Side newsletter, targeting Millennials and Gen Z.
- **Campaign Phase 2: Ongoing Engagement & Conversions**
  - Meta Ads resume Aug 7 to align with Celebrity Series' single ticket launch.
  - Dual goal: drive app downloads + promote ticket purchases through the app.
  - Runs for 4 weeks, repeated with each of the remaining two single ticket on-sale periods.



## Key take-aways & wins

- Age-verification integrated
  - Save Box Office time and resources
- Seamless Membership and Ticketing
  - Frictionless for digital savvy young patrons
- Marketing Opportunities
  - One platform for young audiences to one stop shop





# Outlook – what's next...

# THANK YOU!

**easy-connect**

[www.easy-connect.io](http://www.easy-connect.io)

**Celebrity Series Boston**

[www.celebrityseries.org](http://www.celebrityseries.org)



**Download**  
ArtsCard Boston



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**ARTS CARD**  
BOSTON

easy-connect

**ARTS CARD**  
BOSTON



# Your opinion matters!



## Complete the short in-app survey

**Give your feedback**

Rate and share your experience with the event organizer about this session.

★★★★★

Add a review (optional)

Send



# Q&A

Please use a microphone so that everyone  
in the room can be part of the conversation