**Synthesis Article**

**Which performance venue is the most popular? Sydney Opera House or the Wales Millennium centre?**

The Wales Millennium Centre is an arts and performance centre located in the Cardiff Bay area of Cardiff, Wales. The site covers a total area of 4.7 and the building was opened during the weekend of the 26–28 November 2004 with an inaugural concert. The centre has hosted performances of opera, ballet, dance, comedy and musicals and has a capacity of 2,497 seats. The Sydney Opera House is a multi-venue performing arts centre in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. It is situated on Bennelong Point in Sydney Harbour, close to the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the facility is adjacent to the Sydney central business district and the Royal Botanic Gardens, between Sydney and Farm Coves. The venue has a capacity to seat 5738 people although the main performance venue within the Opera house is the Concert Hall. The Concert Hall, with 2,679 seats, the home of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and used by a large number of other concert presenters.

Having popular productions visiting both these venues and being able to seat very large numbers at the same time, increases popularity for the venue with very large numbers coming to the venue at once, which in turn attracts more people from further locations to acquire an interest of the venue. The main Concert hall in the Sydney Opera House and the entire Wales Millennium Centre are of a very similar size and can hold a similar amount of people. This means they are equally as capable to host and perform productions to audiences and receive equal responses from them. An estimated 4.5 million people visit the Opera House annually of which 1.5 million attend a show. This suggests not only are audiences attracted for the performances put on but a larger number are attracted due to global fame and popularity. It takes a number of years for a venue to grow status and popularity and the committee of arts in Sydney, has described the Opera House as of “unparalleled design and construction”.

"It is a daring and visionary experiment that has had an enduring influence on the emergent architecture of the late 20th-century," according to the committee. "The building is a great artistic monument and an icon."

With more than 20,000 people reported to work in the wider arts industry in Wales, the impact of the Arts on the Welsh economy is considered to be significant. The Welsh Millennium Centre has recently been featured more and more on travel and accommodation websites as attractions for tourists to visit when staying at hotels. This is an advantage, increasing the popularity of the Centre with more tourists and non-local people visiting it. As well as being home to productions and shows alike, the WMC is a versatile venue which welcomes ceremonies, award shows and conferences. On an annual basis the WMC becomes host to the Open University graduation ceremony. Not only does this increase the versatility of what the centre can do, it increases the publicity spectrum and advertises the centre to a wider range of people (Students and Teachers)

In terms of audience capacity, both venues have very similar capacity therefore both being able to hold the same amount of people. The Opera House is a bigger institution therefore will attract more people, also it being a global attraction due to its structure, appearance and status will have given it an advantage, making it a more successful venue. This contributes to its ‘popularity’ and researching from terms of capacity and popularity, the Sydney Opera House holds an advantage over the Welsh Millennium Centre.

The amount of funding and government support that venues like this receive will contribute dramatically to the outcome and final success of the venue. Without support or funding, the amount of marketing will be dramatically reduced therefore it will not be able to attract as many people to it.

The Welsh Assembly Government provided a £37m contribution to build the WMC. The final cost of building was £106.2m. Between its opening in November 2004 and April 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government provided the Welsh Millennium Centre annually with £1.2m. This comprised £750,000 in revenue support and £450,000 as a contribution to a sinking fund for the maintenance of the building. In April 2011 responsibility for funding WMC was transferred from the Welsh Government to Arts Council Wales. WMC receives capital funding of £300k per year and revenue funding of £3.7m per year. This creates a total contribution of £4m; this is paid via the annual grant made by the Welsh Government to Arts Council Wales. According to the Welsh Assembly Government, the funding that is inputted into the arts and performing industry in Wales is highly important. Research shows that for every pound of public money invested into the Wales Millennium Centre, £4 is actually raised.

***This work is presented without referencing for the purpose of the synthesis task. All candidates are reminded that they MUST reference their sourced within the text and in the bibliography of their project.***