

What shapes demand for opera?

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This research was conducted by **Jani-Petri Laamanen** at the **University of Tampere, Finland**

Summary

The paper reports an analysis of eight years of data from the box office of the Finnish National Opera. The research found that there was increased demand for tickets when the opera was new, of Finnish origin (rather than classical), where the performer is famous and on certain days of the week and months of the year. They were also able to estimate that the demand for tickets falls roughly in proportion to the level of price rises (a 1 per cent increase in ticket price results in 1.16 per cent fall in demand).

Their dataset was large enough to allow them to measure the effect of changes to a variety of different variables

They looked at individual performances of particular shows (rather than relying on averages for a run or a season) and were able to take account of discounted or free tickets. They recognise that it is difficult to measure the true demand for a show that is sold out (because the capacity of the house limits the number of tickets that can be sold) but they are able to compensate for this using a particular analytical technique.

Some of the things that increase or decrease demand

Demand was higher on Fridays and Saturdays, highest in November and lowest in August, demand increased as consecutive performances took place (perhaps as word-of-mouth takes effect), increasing the total number of all opera performances at the venue lessened demand, reviews had an effect on demand

(especially in a premier season), and the more an opera had been performed worldwide the more demand there was for tickets.

A few practical considerations

The results of the analysis suggest that demand for operas in their premier season operates slightly differently than reprises and that the results overall are likely to be true for other types of performing arts, not just opera.

Keywords

demand **Finland** **opera** **box office**

Title	Estimating demand for opera using sales system data: the case of Finnish National Opera
Author(s)	Laamanen, J-P.
Publication date	2013
Source	Journal of Cultural Economics, Vol 37, Iss 4, pp 417-432
Link	http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10824-012-9190-6
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By **Culture.Case** | 11 April 2014 | **Insights into arts and culture** , **Consumer behaviour in arts and culture** , **Developing new audiences in arts and culture** |



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