CultureCase

Concert-going is related to increased civic engagement

This research was conducted by **Donald J. Polzella and Jeremy S. Forbis** at the **University of Dayton, Ohio**.

Summary

This paper investigated whether attending arts events – specifically, jazz, opera, or classical music concerts – made people more civically engaged. The authors found that those who attended these concerts were almost twice as likely to vote than those who did not. Overall, the results demonstrate a correlation between attending jazz, opera, or classical concerts and the likelihood that a person will be civically engaged.

The paper used data from the 2008 U.S. Department of Commerce Current Population Survey and its Participation in the Arts Supplement

The authors measured the extent to which people had been civically engaged over the course of a year. They based this measurement on whether individuals participated in three “pro-social” behaviours: voting in the most recent presidential election, attending community meetings, and making a charitable donation or volunteering. The authors then compared the extent to which individuals participated in these behaviours with their frequency of attending jazz, opera, or classical music concerts.

Concert attendance increased the likelihood of other pro-social behaviours (not just voting)

Concert attendees were over two-and-a-half times more likely to volunteer or make charitable donations, and nearly three times more likely attend

community meetings. According to the authors, this finding reinforces past studies that have found a similar connection between music participation and pro-social behavior. However, they suggest that more research is needed to determine precisely what part of this participation impacts pro-social behavior: it could be the act of listening to the music itself, or the act of being part of a concert audience.

Adapted from a summary by Kerri Malone that first appeared in Issue 7 of *The Digest* from the Cultural Policy Center at the University of Chicago

Keywords

survey **jazz** **civic** **USA** **opera** **attendance** **audience** **Classical Music**

Title	Relationships between traditional music audience participation and pro-social behaviors
Author(s)	Polzella, D. J. & Forbis, J. S.
Publication date	2014
Source	Empirical Studies of the Arts, Vol 32, Iss 1, pp 109-120
Link	**http://art.sagepub.com/content/32/1/109.abstract**
Open Access Link	**http://art.sagepub.com/content/32/1/109.abstract**
Author email	**polzella@udayton.edu**

By **Culture.Case** | 3 August 2015 | **Other social impacts of arts and culture** |

King's Culture
© Copyright 2026
Designed, developed and maintained by **King's Digital Lab**
Originally built by **weheartdigital Ltd**
Accessibility Statement