

Using mega events to increase profile and reach audiences

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This research was conducted by **Duncan Low and Peter V. Hall** at the **Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada**.

Summary

This paper looks at the benefits of hosting a Cultural Olympiad for different kinds of arts organisations in the host city. It takes Vancouver 2010 as an example and argues that hosting a Cultural Olympiad is not necessarily beneficial for everyone. The local arts sector is often promised better results than they actually get. However, their success also depends on how the different organisations approach their audiences.

Mega events like the Olympics are usually called a ‘once in a lifetime opportunity’, but seldom achieve all aims set out in the bid

They often promise to place local organisations on a global stage, but the desire to attract global attention with the flagship event often overshadows local initiatives. In addition to that, major events are often most beneficial in the short term only (by a temporary increase of tourism, job creation and global recognition for the host city), but are less significant over a long period of time.

By examining media coverage of three specific organisations during the Vancouver Olympiad the authors show that not every organisation is a beneficiary of the major event

Organisations, by choosing the right approach, have the ability to respond strategically to the mega event and turn their involvement into a beneficial one. Some seem to be successful, others are not. The paper looks in detail at

the Vancouver Opera, Vancouver Symphony and the Arts Club, and shows how their particular responses to the Olympic event provided them with an opportunity to strengthen the ties with their local audiences. The analysis shows that organisations focusing on the local audience (as opposed to trying to attract global attention) were most efficient in achieving their goals. Through strengthening their local audience they might then be able to build a more global following in the long term.

This summary is by **Stella Toonen** from the **Cultural Institute at King's**

Keywords

major events **olympics** **Canada** **audience** **media**

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