

**MUSICAL-FANTUM.
EINE CHARAKTERISIERUNG VON MUSICAL-FANS
ANHAND IHRER KULTURELLEN PRAKTIKEN**

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Abstract

The study evaluates cultural practices of German-speaking musical fans. Its aim is to characterize the fans' behavior and to draw conclusions on their musical theatre reception. Therefore, quantitative methodology was applied: 323 German-speaking musical fans participated in an online survey realized in 2011. They were recruited employing a snowball sampling, starting from seven German-language online forums which focus on musical fandom. The fans can be described as predominantly young, female, unmarried and well educated. The survey shows a broad variety in their musical related cultural practices, for which the actors are a central point of reference. The fans use online media more frequently than offline media (where specialized magazines dominate) and the main motives for the usage of media are the need for information and social interaction. Younger fans deal with their fan object more frequently (especially in online media), which can be understood as a strategy to compensate infrequent visits at live performances. It is shown that the fans use musicals as a resource for own creative work and produce fan art to express themselves in grounded aesthetics. Their media consumption proves to be active and supportive for processes of collectivization and identity formation. The prevailing emphasis on escapism as a central motive for musical theatre reception must thus be reconsidered.