

## Editorial

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### **Music, advertising and transmedia storytelling**

The ubiquity of advertising in everyday life and the importance of music demand a critical study on how brands use music for commercial purposes. In a context of convergence and participatory culture, it is necessary to develop new strategies, codes and narratives that brands and artists are creating to connect with consumers. Music is the basis of the collective experience and, in addition, it connects intensely and emotionally with the identity of groups that are its potential target. Brands use music to generate memorable experiences for consumers who reject traditional advertising forms. In addition, music, as a product of the cultural industry, needs marketing strategies to connect with fans.

Music in advertising is a research field not sufficiently developed and fragmented, and this special issue aims to contribute to reduce the gaps that might exist in this field. Thus, the biggest challenge is to link musicological perspectives with marketing and communication research. Therefore, this special issue presents a multidisciplinary approach that comprehend studies from different disciplines, such as Musicology, Psychology, Semiotics and Media Studies, and it also deals with research trends related to transmedia narratives in music. At the same time, it establishes interesting links and reflections for future interdisciplinary developments in the study of music and advertising.

Commercial is one of the formats most analysed. Not only it has been one of the fundamental pieces of the creation of advertising messages, but also its discourse constitutes a broad field for the study of its meanings. However, the persuasive capability of music has been used by brands since the early twentieth century. This means that there is a wide field of study which involves the relationship between music and advertising and has hardly been analysed. If we observe the evolution of the relationship between music and advertising, we will see how the first music content and programmes created for brands appeared with the birth of radio as a social communication medium at a time when broadcasters and advertisers were establishing the bases of radio programmes and their advertising formats. In this context, it was considered that advertising should not enter the private sphere because this would be invasive. Consequently, the radio stations offered advertising agencies spaces for brands to produce their own music programmes. From the 1940s onwards, and as a result of the growth of capitalism, radio stations realised that profits could be made from radio by creating programmes, bringing together a massive audience and selling advertising space. Music entered advertising through the use of jingles, which were easy to remember and embedded themselves in consumers' minds. Television adopted the radio advertising model, and radio stations specialised in order to compete with the new medium. In the 1950s, and with capitalism in full swing, jingles were consolidated and advertising separated from music content. In the 1960s, a counterculture emerged as a critique of consumerism, rock music became a mass phenomenon and advertising responded with a creative revolution. The crises of the 1970s led to a restructuring of the cultural industries in the 1980s. The counterculture was assimilated by capitalism, the use of jingles declined and licensing of pre-existing songs was consolidated as a means to assimilate the symbolism of popular music culture. Some brands began to drop sponsorship in favour of producing concerts. The birth of MTV represented a strengthening of ties between the popular music industry and advertising. Music videos were transformed into advertising for many brands. From the 1990s onwards, advertising became a platform for alternative music to reach audiences. Internet and the new

technologies changed the business model of the music industry. Live music, synchronisation and collaboration with brands became business strategies to offset the fall in income from record sales. As regards advertising, the existence of multiple platforms for entertainment consumption, advertising saturation and rejection of advertisements that interrupted entertainment led to the development of branded content. Advertisers found an ally in music as a means to reach dispersed, demanding and disloyal users.

The analysis of music and advertising relationships requires more research capable to establish links among methodologies and perspectives from all the different areas that are involved in this field of study. We are still in a scenario characterized by univocal and fragmented approaches, and this situation should change to develop tools that allow us to deal with the current media scape, where the advertising strategies involving music are becoming more and more complex. Marketing, Communication and Psychology are disciplines that have already analyzed different music in advertising attending to its effectivity and its capacity to facilitate the communication with a potential target; Semiotics has explained how music contributes to articulate meanings in advertising. However, music and advertising have developed new strategies and new ways of interaction, and research methodologies from these disciplines still need to improve their methodologies and design more open and integrated approaches. In the decades brands are not just synchronizing songs for their spots; they crossed the boundaries of their traditional media and have become active in the production of entertainment through musical branded content in music videos, live performances, cinema, tv series, videogames... In these cases, borders between music and advertising are blurred and require a critical and interdisciplinary analysis.

This special issue is concern with this context and gathers five articles that reveal not only the variety of disciplines interested in the relationships between music and advertising, but also the numerous possibilities of this field of study to study everyday practices in current society. Nicolas Ruth and Benedikt Spangardt offer a critical overview on this topic; they claim more attention to particular issues in academic research and highlight the necessity of interdisciplinary approaches in this field of study. Thus, this special issue opens with a state of the art and presents a reflection on the ways academics approach music and advertising. Manuel Palencia-Lefler presents a content analysis of television spots broadcasted in the main Spanish television channel during the last ten years (2008-2017). By monitoring a significant sample, he demonstrates the increasing use of music (especially preexistent music) in the spots. Daniel Torras and Jordi Roquer approach advertising sound logos from the perspective of Semiotics and Musicology as a persuasive tool of audio branding in current advertising. Isabel Villanueva focus on the renewal of advertising and marketing strategies in opera, articulating discourses that contribute to attract new audiences. Alex Jeffery analyses the transmedia promotion strategies for the album *Plastic Beach* (2010) by Gorilaz, approaching new forms of interaction with music audiences and pointing out some possible developments in the strategies of musical marketing.

