
Abstract: The phenomenon of music as a conduit of emotion and dramatic, romantic and contemplative incidence is well-documented elsewhere; moreover, it is also effectively used as a vehicle to promote and sell holiday packages to tourism consumers worldwide. The purpose of this paper, therefore, will be to examine this phenomenon in detail by exploring various musical genres to convey messages considered relevant to the region or destination. The ulterior objective will be to ascertain the effectiveness of this type of human communication in attracting holiday seekers to a given destination.

Introduction

Nothing more clearly affirms one’s class, nothing classifies more infallibly than tastes in music (Bourdieu, 1984: 18)

According to William Congreve (1697) ‘music (sic) has charms to soothe a savage breast’; an invocation that suggests rather anodyne properties to this most fundamental form of human communication, but which nonetheless carries certain positive qualities. With regard to the topic in question, there would appear to be no doubt that music influences mood and responses to a given stimulus or set of stimuli, and that as an efficacious tool in tourism and leisure advertising, can impact on behaviour and product choice. It can, according to Alpert, Alpert and Maltz (2005:370) ‘enhance recall for a product or an ad through an invoked image’. If we further assume therefore that ‘imagery’ is created in the mind as much as our surroundings, then this would strongly suggest that the effect of certain sound arrangements on the brain also raises pleasant emotive sensations that, from the premises of this article title, are conducive to marketing strategies as they relate to tourism.

Accordingly, this paper will examine the phenomenon of musical arrangements as stimuli to attract consumers to a given product. As Alpert et al (369) would further inform us, ‘... we know that in some instances, music appears to increase communication effectiveness in the context of advertisements.’ This being the assumption, the paper will investigate a range of musical variations to determine the efficacy, or otherwise, of these assumptions and will subsequently offer suitable concluding remarks. Initially, however the paper will consider an overview of what
‘music’ is; of itself, this is a problematic undertaking as it can mean different things to various listeners and practitioners, but to qualify further: the aim of this approach is not to determine *taste*, but *impact*. From the perspective of the advertiser, therefore, the issue is about reaching the target, not catering to his or her specific musical appreciations as in, for example, liking heavy metal, jazz or classical genres. In the final analysis, it is about melding sound with imagery to produce a desired outcome.

**Music: what *is* it, exactly?**

As we are aware, music is a complex arrangement of sounds that are capable of influencing mood, behaviour, emotions, and so on – *the validity of which are rarely debated*. (Scherer, 2004: 239) The usual intention is to produce pleasurable sensations, but it is noted that it can also invoke fear, trepidation and a feeling of unease, as is the case in horror movies, and notably the soundtrack to the film *Jaws*. What is not in doubt, though, is the notion that emotion plays a key role in divining what music is. However it is accepted here that a full and exhaustive exploration of a huge and highly complex subject area such as this would indeed be a protracted affair, and as such falls outside the scope of this paper. That said, and from a Sociological approach, it also divides and sub-divides people in terms of class as Bourdieu alludes to above, and also defines identity, race and, in some cases, nationality with national anthems, for example. (Macionis and Plummer, 2012)

Tellingly, and as Matravers (2003) informs, music is a form of communication that plays heavy on emotional content, a factor not lost on its use in advertising. That said, and to expand slightly, Scherer (2004: 240) offers the following to establish what we mean by emotion:

> **Across the centuries, [there exists] three major reactional components of emotion: physiological arousal, motor expression, and subjective feeling.**

Scherer continues to examine these components is some detail, but to do so here loses the central theme and so it is left to the reader to examine these personally if enough interest in elicited. However, suffice it to sat that, in arguably the most salient component, subjective feeling, Scherer identifies a rich emotion vocabulary (3004: 240) and that
These internal sensations, often considered as necessarily conscious experiences, constitute irreducible qualities of feeling unique to the specific emotional experience of a particular individual. (Emphasis added). This is further explored, albeit in a different contextual scenario (that is, in nursing and related research), by Siedliecki and Good 2006: 561) when they suggest that Music is safe, inexpensive, and easy for nurses to teach patients to use. Music alters patterns of pain, depression and disability. What this infers is that music has an overwhelmingly positive component that is disposed to engender feelings and well-being in the recipient; this is, of course, a useful asset when targeting consumers for tourism and leisure rationales.

Taken an alternative stage further with Heavy Metal music, admittedly through the simplistic, very rudimentary harmonies and melodies [with an] endless repetition of simple [power] chords with extremely short progressions (Denski and Sholle, 1992: 43) which may or may not be an accurate description that this author would certainly contest, but more importantly the music can be felt, not only metaphorically, but literally, particularly in the listener’s chest. (Weinstein (1991) in Lenske and McKay, 2000: 290)

This contextualisation does not apply merely to heavy metal and rock music, which usually underscores the more dramatic and exciting advertisements, but also other genres to convey, amongst other considerations, tranquillity, introspection, aesthetic landscapes, and social gatherings. Or, as Kivy (2006: 274) would have it when one contemplates some kind of activity whilst touring for example, It seems fair to say that the impression of movement in music [dancing for example], with non-random frequency, engenders feelings that in one way or another bring to mind certain kinds of movement. Similarly, smoky blues or jazz may well invoke images of New Orleans, or the American Deep South. Similarly, haunting stringed music may invite appreciation of Asian cultures. Again, it depends on context to a large extent. This applies equally to other forms of music that apply to geographical context, like the advertising song ‘truly Asia’ singing the praises of Malaysia as a desirable tourist destination.
Music and Business/Commerce: motivation, genesis and outcomes

It is often accepted that so-called ‘modern’ music is the sole preserve of the young, and as such is a useful tool for ‘socialising’ that social sub-group, and as such epitomises music’s ability to reach large numbers of (but, not exclusively) young people through various global media technologies (Sullivan, 2004: 81). This, as much as anything else, suggest that the phenomenon is all-pervasive (or, perhaps invasive) and therefore capable of reaching almost every person on earth. Quite whether this is uniformly positive remains a moot point at this time, as there are perhaps some negative connotations to be addressed; as Bogart in Klein (2008) reminds us:

the negative reactions to the practice of song licensing in advertising parallel critiques about commercial art that arose in the early 20th century, when “many observers perceived the forces of commerce to be adversely affecting the intents and practices of artists and to be encroaching inappropriately into realms of experience once deemed private”

Moreover, as Klein elaborates further:

The cola corporations have borrowed characteristics of rock music, such as authenticity and anti-authoritarianism, and applied them to their products, obscuring the archetype of preyed-upon artist and malevolent commercial interest often activated in the art versus commerce debate.

Quite; there has often been a consideration that artists ‘selling out’ to commercial concerns is deemed to be unwholesome, and contrary to the often spiritual, pure and unsullied nature of musical compositions, but perhaps turning a blind eye (or, indeed a deaf ear) to the practice of classical compositions evolving due to contractual arrangements between the composer and, say, a royal court, and these for pecuniary gain. In the final analysis, it is admittedly difficult to turn money down when you don’t have any – a mitigating factor for impoverished musicians living several socio-economic strata below the easily-recognisable élite musical plutocracy.
Putting that to one side, there is no doubt that music – a ‘sonic brand trigger’ (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001: 182) allied with, for example, visual stimuli creates a powerful brand image that draws the consumer to the product. As Morgan and Pritchard (2001: 195) further elaborate, Songs are highly significant components of tourism advertising since music has the ability to stimulate extraordinary emotional feelings … and, transports viewers and listeners to a different place. (Noting the ‘There’s nothing like Australia’ advertisement shown on PowerPoint earlier).

Moreover, music easily lends itself to the identification process of a particular geographical region, a fact not lost on advertisers and local/national tourism boards looking for the next strapline to bring attention to their ‘product’, for want of a better word. Whilst this would be problematic for regions celebrated for a single song or anthem (Scott MacKenzie’s 1960s offering, ‘If you’re going to San Francisco’, or ‘I love Paris’ as examples), this is not the case for musical icons such as the Beatles or the Beach Boys, forever associated with Liverpool and California respectively. In such scenarios, there is an inextricable nexus between specific people and places that pretty much guarantees an on-going association that is culturally fixed in the popular imagination. From a purely de-personalised perspective, there is an unmistakable attachment to Ireland when the ‘haunting strains’ of Irish music are used to significant advertising effect (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001: 195).

Media input: further analysis

Media is the collective term for the agencies of mass communication. Its individual participants – editors, reporters, critics, commentators, and commentators – are often described as the gatekeepers of public opinion. Their job is to monitor the constant worldwide flow of new data and report only the information deemed to be most appropriate for targeted readers, viewers, and listeners. (Lathrop, 2003: 139).

Subsequent to that:

With the increasingly global organization of media businesses, the impact of digital technology and new platforms on media distribution, the economic importance of content industries, and the hegemony of market led approaches to the provision of
goods and services, it is hardly surprising that media policy-making has expanded in scale and scope. (Freedman, 2006: 907)

As Freedman aptly informs, the apparent ‘hegemonic’ status of market-led media and related industries strongly infers that the seemingly exponential growth of this sector will pervade just about every type of commercial transaction, tourism and leisure included, and especially in view of this particular business’s critical importance to local, national, regional and global trade.

When one also includes the global import of the music industry we imagine a scenario in which saturation coverage by media vehicles seek to circumvent what Morgan and Pritchard refer to as the ‘sceptical consumer’ syndrome, and that musical form has a significant role to play in interest re-capture.

Therefore, within the music industry, the marketing of the ‘product’ is of prime significance. As Lathrop (2003: 138) explains,

The importance of the media to the marketer is substantial. The media provides the mass-communication channels through which marketers can publicize their products. The media also provides feedback – via reviews – about how the product is perceived in the marketplace.

The principal outcome of these deliberations, therefore, is to apply these thoughts to the central premises of the title. The paper accepts that the media, as described elsewhere in this paper, is an important conduit for transmitting information to the consumer in several forms, be they aural, verbal, visual, or electronic. Accordingly, media representations of a tourist destination invoke powerful messages about the efficacy of the target area as a worthwhile – or, perhaps otherwise - holiday destination.

The power of the transmitted imagery is thus complemented by a soundtrack – music – that conjures imaginings of mystery, magic, romance, adventure, excitement, or other highly emotive stirrings.
Conclusions

What this paper has offered for scholarly reflection amounts to a considered appreciation of a fascinating area of academic interest. Whether it breaches codes of acceptability, and by extension invites matters of ethical reproach in the contexts of what it has been used to ‘sell’ is open to question, and as such is a moot point worthy of further intellectual enquiry, at some juncture.

However, and in terms of the data presented here, there is no doubt of the impact music has on the leisure and tourism industry with regards to consumer interest capture. What is also not in question is the manner in which music affects consumers; this logically extends to the medical profession and elsewhere, which if nothing else attests to the universality of musical appeal as a form of relaxation and/or entertainment. As Morgan and Pritchard (2001: 262-263) further elaborate, it can, in conjunction with accompanying visual imagery, transform the fortunes of mere denim jeans manufacturers!

Adopting a more serious tone, it is noted that the business of business is to make money, and thence profit, in line with the principal ethos of Capitalism. As such the utilisation of music as a conveyance of emotion, tied intimately to the so-called ‘hard sell’ and perhaps more subtle approaches, lends itself rather well to packaging imagery invoked by pleasing sounds.

Taking this a stage further, the paper accepts the mitigating role that the media plays in communicating messages, sounds and images to a global consumer base, and the importance that music plays to ensuring that this implies for customer capture. Moreover, it is also accepted that the role of media outlets to informing, if not educating, the consumer in terms of choices is becoming more significant with the advent and propagation of online advertising, for example with the increasing popularity of websites like TripAdvisor and similar webpages. Add to this a soupçon of appropriate music, and the created illusion or, perhaps, manufactured reality is complete. There is, however no doubt as to the persuasive quality of advertising, as Cooper Megrue and Hackett (1928) might have it.

That said, there may well be certain misgivings regarding the ‘prostitution’ of music to sell products that, in the final analysis, the human condition does not
necessarily view as ‘essential’, and especially when one ponders the views of Klein (above) and doubtless others. From the purists’ point of view, the ‘Coca-Colarisation’ of music is a retrograde step that cheapens the essence of what many view as an art form in and of itself. With regards to the ethics of such an undertaking, the reader must make their own judgements.
Bibliography


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