RADIOCENTRE

# Strike a Chord

How music enhances brand communication

# Contents

# Introduction

Everybody acknowledges that music can be a powerful tool for advertising. Working at a subtle, almost subliminal level, music can trigger an emotional response.

Used consistently, music works strategically, creating presence for the brand and acting as a bonding agent between different parts of the campaign.

So why don't brands use it more often?

Well, music is tricky. People have their own strong and subjective views about what's good; this becomes even more subjective when deciding what's right for a brand. Planners and creatives told us that agencies needed more confidence in this area.

That means more information about the effectiveness of brand music, and more guidance on a shared language and approach for bringing it in to the briefing and creative process.

There is an advantage for brands who use music strategically. They find it easier from a creative perspective to exploit the proven effects of radio advertising and boost the overall returns from their marketing plans.

More effect for the same investment has got to be music to the ears of any brand advertiser!

In delivering this project, we would like to thank all of the people who agreed to be interviewed, and our colleagues at Push London, Goldsmiths University and Creative Semiotics.

**Mark Barber MBE**
**Planning Director, Radiocentre**

# Main headlines

Agencies and clients acknowledge the subtle power of music but lack a common language about how to harness that power

This study shows that ads which use music strategically score more highly across a range of measures than ads that do not feature any music and those that use music tactically*

This is true at the explicit level (people scoring the ads for like-ability) but also for brain response at the implicit level measured using EEG tests (beta-gamma brain wave activation)

This endorses the IPA Databank findings – ad campaigns that use music achieve better results across a wide range of success metrics, including sales

Semiotic analysis reveals how music conveys strong rational and emotional associations for brands

The project sees the launch of a new brand music tool: Brand Music Navigator. Alongside the Helpful Questions for Creating Brand Music, this gives advertisers and agencies a new way to plan, discuss and harness the power of brand music

**\*Definitions:** strategic use of music refers to ads that feature music that has run for a minimum of a year and across a minimum of two separate campaigns and is therefore linked to the brand.

# Implications for advertisers

**1**  This project confirms that consistent use of brand music can be one of the most effective tools for advertiser brands and can be implemented in any medium that uses sound

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**2**  The Brand Music Navigator tool allows advertiser and agency teams to develop an effective language for briefing and implementing a music property for their advertising

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**3**  Allocating 20% of a media schedule to radio has already been demonstrated to increase ROI by an average of 8%: the inclusion of brand music will have a multiplier effect on this

# Executive summary

This project was set up because, although music is widely understood to be an extremely powerful tool for brands, it is often neglected, or an afterthought in the creative process. Why?

Planners reveal that brand music is an area of low confidence. Agencies and advertisers need more help to understand how it works, and planners in particular need more guidance on how to brief it in – enabling creativity and avoiding the clichés.

**In terms of how it works:** lab tests show that people respond more positively to radio ads where music is used in a consistent way. This applies at the explicit level, where respondents are asked to score ads, but also at the implicit level, where brain activity is measured.

In addition, EEG tests show that ads which use music in a consistent way generate 41 % more beta-gamma activity than ads with tactical one-off music, and 23 % more than ads with no music. This higher level of response continues for the duration of the advertisement. Beta-gamma activation is linked to increases in both engagement and commercial success.

This echoes existing radioGAUGE data from over 700 real-world radio campaigns – that shows that ads which use music in a consistent way deliver higher creative scores and bigger brand effects.

**In terms of guidance:** in another first, a semiotics-based brand music tool has been developed – Brand Music Navigator. This allows agency planners and creatives to explore the world of brand music as never before, learning more about the way music can bring meaning and value to different brands.

With input from creative agency planners we have also created 'Helpful Questions for Creating Brand Music' for anyone who wants to explore the possibilities for their own brands.

These findings will be of great significance for brands which are hungry to make a difference in their marketing response. Radio is a highly effective advertising medium - allocating 20 % of a media budget to radio advertising can improve overall campaign ROI by 8 % - this research highlights how by using music strategically an advertiser can multiply this effect even further.

# The background to this project

Advertising on TV, radio, cinema and many digital media uses music on a widespread basis; it's recognised to be a powerful tool for creating impact and making an emotional connection.

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*"Music is incredibly powerful in moving a person on an emotional and even an intellectual level."*
*Lee Tan, ECD McCann Worldgroup*

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However, the relationship between the ad business and music is complex.

On the one hand, analysis of the IPA Databank in 2013 revealed that campaigns which generated large business effects were far more likely to use music than not.

But in the WARC database, which lists 48,000 articles about advertising effectiveness research, only 29 look at music in any detail.

And when Radiocentre last questioned advertisers on the topic, whilst 86% said they had visual brand guidelines, only 17% claimed to have audio brand guidelines.

So, it is legitimate to ask why such a powerful tool in the armoury is so neglected.

Radio of course has a special interest in this area. Commercial radio's audience reach remains robustly high, despite the growth of new alternative media, and radio has unmatched published evidence to demonstrate its ability to drive awareness, response sales and deliver increased Return On Investment. With numbers as persuasive as these, the broadcast audio medium is understandably keen to help brands become more confident in their use of music – hence this project.

# Our objectives

Firstly, we set out to discover from advertising experts where the barriers are – what is the industry's attitude to music, how do they work with it and what do they need to allow them to grasp the opportunity and work more confidently with it?

Secondly, we sought to provide new information, insight and resources to help them overcome these barriers and fully exploit the benefits of using music more strategically.

# How the study was done

**Stage 1** — **Desk research**
A review of existing research into the role of music in advertising including radioGAUGE results, the IPA Databank and the WARC international database, plus academic papers (see appendix).

**Stage 2** — **Identifying the challenge**
Interviews with 62 senior creatives, creative agency planners, marketers and music experts (for full list see appendix).

**Stage 3** — **Neuroscience study**
EEG analysis conducted by Goldsmiths University of 27 radio ads featuring a combination of strategic, tactical, or no use of music; matched by sector and broad music genre.

**Stage 4** — **Semiotic analysis of music types**
Semiotic analysis of musical styles and genres and how they relate to a series of 24 rational and emotional brand associations generated by the advertising planners we interviewed.

**Stage 5** — **Using the findings in the real world**
A series of briefings for creative agency planners detailing the findings from the previous stages and workshopping ideas about helpful questions to consider when developing brand music briefs.

# Main findings

# 1. There is strong evidence that music is extremely powerful for brands

Music is an important element in people's lives, and as a culture we recognise its ability to engage, inspire and speak directly to our emotions. This makes it a very powerful tool for brands.

*"We know music's power to define a piece of work...it takes you from an advert that is 100% to an advert that is 120%."*
*Richard Huntington, Group Chief Strategy Officer, Saatchi & Saatchi*

From the advertiser's point of view, a major part of music's appeal is that it doesn't operate in the crowded visual space, where small and large screens compete for attention and most marketing messages are concentrated. It works alongside visual stimuli, sometimes quite independently, affecting people's emotions in ways which go almost unnoticed – hence its value in fields as diverse as Hollywood movies, retail management and music therapy.

This makes it ideal as a component in advertising, and the evidence for its effectiveness is robust. An analysis of the IPA Databank between 2008-2012 concluded that musical ad campaigns are 27 % more likely to report large business effects compared to non-musical campaigns (Binet, Mullensiefen & Edwards, Admap October 2013).

**Figure 1: Music makes advertising work harder**
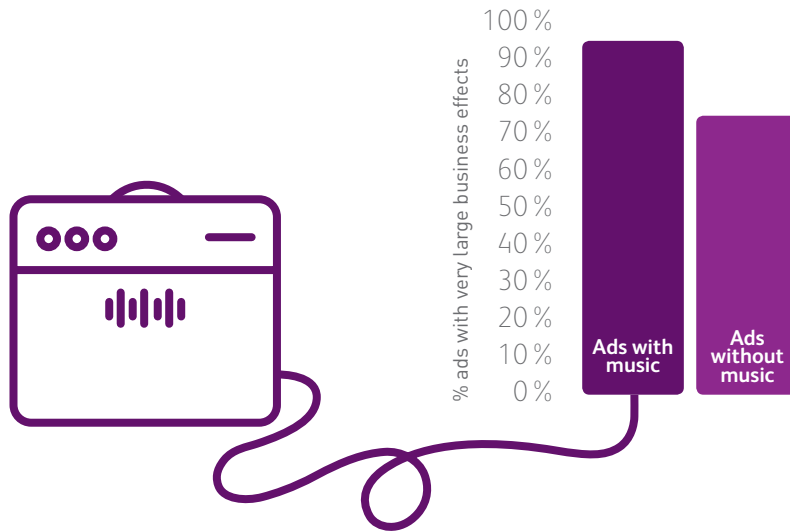


Source: IPA Databank - Binet/Mullensiefen

However, the ad business has always had a bit of tricky relationship with music, even as far back as October 2000 Jeremy Bullmore noted in Marketing:

*"Symbols and music share this huge advantage over words... their effect is subjective, impressionistic, pervasive.... so why have ad agencies been so iffy about music?."*
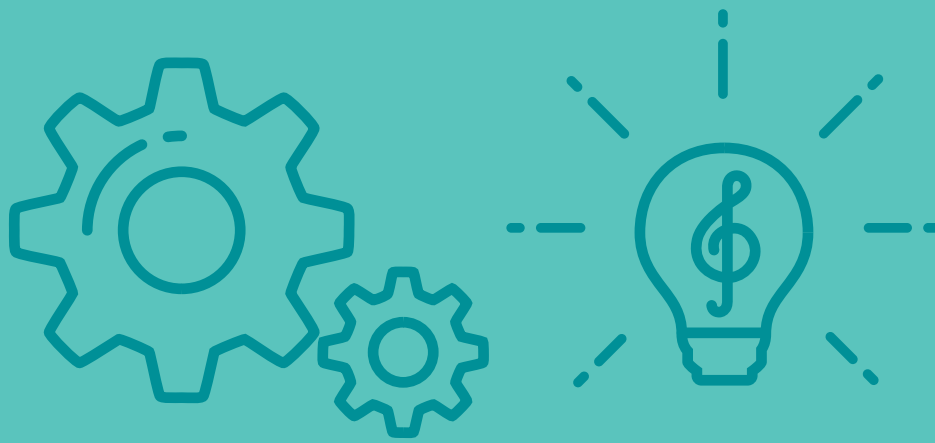
# 2. Current processes work against the creation of strategic brand music

Despite its proven power, music is only one of the huge list of elements which agencies might have to consider for advertising (copy, casting, media, production, animation, usage - the list goes on and on).

Unless there is an existing musical brand property, the first appearance music would naturally make in the creative process is at briefing stage – to act as a stimulus, something which can suggest the kind of communication or values which are being discussed.

Yet music is rarely used at this stage, and it is only haltingly discussed as the process continues. Why?

*"It is more an afterthought…if you are starting a new campaign, music is not the thing that you start with. That is probably a mistake."*
*Lee Tan, ECD McCann, Worldgroup*
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*"It's hard to brief music: it's easier to build a collage which is image or word based than it is music based and I don't know why."*
*Loz Horner, Planning Director, Lucky Generals*
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*"There is not a part of the brief that says what does this brand sound like?"*
*Richard Huntington, Group Chief Strategy Officer, Saatchi & Saatchi*

Our interviews with advertising specialists – agency directors, planners, creatives and advertiser clients – revealed that the potential of music is universally recognised, and they understand the different ways in which it works:
- increase attention/engagement
- communicate brand values
- create emotional response
- get campaigns talked about.

They also recognise the way that consistent music can work strategically for a brand (a much-discussed recent example is the "Here come the girls" song for Boots):
- enhancing brand recognition
- embellishing a brand idea
- reinforcing a message
- strengthening brand presence across media channels
- supporting brands which need many different short-term messages
- improving efficiency of communication
- building a sense of familiarity.

But the interviewees also pointed to a lack of confidence. Compared to other elements of the advertising process, music is felt to be:

- rather subjective and personal
- lacking a language for discussion
- lacking a formal process for development
- often lacking a defined budget
- almost exclusively the domain of the creative department.

*"Music is more subjective ... what I feel when I hear a track might not be what you feel, so there is an opportunity for miscommunication in the briefing process."*
*Loz Horner, Planning Director, Lucky Generals*

*"Planners might have a feeling about music but we wouldn't look to the planning department to do that."*
*Al Young, ECD, St. Luke's Communications*

This is unusual: a contrast could be drawn here with casting, for example. While the final choice of actor will be agreed by the creatives, there is at least a language for all to discuss the subject – age, gender, height, voice, physique, hair, experience, associations, etc. This kind of language is missing for music, which makes it easy for other random factors to dominate – personal preferences, fashion, hearsay etc.

When it comes to strategic use of music – brand music (i.e. an owned musical property) – things only get more difficult. Our interviewees offered a set of pros and cons for having consistent use of music:

| Agency perceptions relating to consistent use of music in advertising | |
|---|---|
| **Pros** | **Cons** |
| Potentially powerful and long-lived | Can be annoying |
| A "bonding agent" / unifying messages | Not always a good fit |
| Creates impression of ubiquity | Creatively limiting |
| A palette to work from | Loss of surprise or freshness |
| Guaranteed linkage to the brand | Detracts from the message in the ad |
| Cost-effective | A bean-counter's choice |

*"Consistency is very important - it can make your money go further."*
*Al Young, ECD, St. Luke's Communications*

*"It is effective and efficient because if you are going to increase the saliency of your brand and you have a consistent branding device then it saves money - you can spend less for the same effect."*
*Moray MacLennan, Worldwide CEO, M&C Saatchi*

*"If you want trust in terms of behaviour, performance and dependability then consistent music works a treat. But if your brand is about surprise and edge, then I can't imagine it having a consistent piece of music."*
*Al Young, ECD, St. Luke's Communications*

The perceived cons are more characteristic of the creative department view so, in the absence of a common language for different departments to discuss the strategic role of music, it tends to be ignored.

**In seeking to change the status quo, the interviewees set two implicit challenges for this project:**

- **Information:** what is known about the effects of using strategic music in advertising?
- **Guidance:** can we help agencies to develop an effective language for navigating the possibilities of brand music?

# 3. Strategic use of music aids advertising effectiveness

Given the evidence that music works in a subtle, pre-conscious way on people, it was important to explore the subject using a method which could take account of this.

A project was set up with the neuroscience specialists at Goldsmiths University which measured explicit response (agreement scores) and implicit response (changes in brainwaves detected by EEG). The key objectives were:
- to explore similarities and differences in the way people respond implicitly and explicitly to ads
- to explore whether ads which use music generate higher levels of response
- to explore whether ads which use music strategically* outscore ads which use music as a one-off.

Sixteen (nationally representative) volunteers were exposed to 27 radio commercials ordered randomly, and for each commercial they were asked to give a rating (4-point scale) for:
- liking the ad
- finding it familiar
- liking the music
- good fit between music and ad.

The commercials used in the tests were selected to cover a wide range of sectors, ad strategies and brand sizes. They were matched and balanced as far as possible by sector and broad musical style.

| Sector | Strategic | | | Tactical | | | No music |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Brand | Title | Music type | Brand | Title | Music type | Brand |
| Finance | Lloyds TSB | Elena Kats-Chernin: Eliza's Aria, from Wild Swans ballet | Orchestral | Natwest | Jon Brion: Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind | Orchestral | Mastercard |
| Food/drink | Diet Coke | Etta James: I just wanna make love to you | Retro | Shreddies | Mitch Miller Chorus: Soundtrack to 'The longest day' (End theme) | Retro | John West Tuna |
| Food/drink | Twinings | Charlene Soraia: Wherever you will go | Contemporary | Muller Rice | Vanilla Ice: Ice Ice Baby | Contemporary | Lurpak |
| Gov info | HMRC tax credits | Re-record of The Upsetters: Return of Django | Retro | DCMS Super Fast Broadband | The Who: Won't get fooled again | Retro | DWP - Benefit Thieves |
| Household Products | Karcher | Fats Waller: Spring Cleaning | Retro | Dulux | Composed for Dulux | Retro | Domestos |
| Retail | B&Q | Snap!: The Power | Contemporary | Next | Vampire Weekend: A-Punk | Contemporary | LiDL |
| Retail | Homebase | Peter, Bjorn & John: Young Folks | Contemporary | M&S | Ed Sheeran: Sing | Contemporary | PC World |
| Travel | British Airways | Delibes: Flower Duet from Lakme | Orchestral | Monarch | Composed for Monarch | Orchestral | Hotels.com |
| Utilities/services | British Gas | Blur: The Universal | Orchestral | Total Jobs | Composed for Total Jobs | Orchestral | Npower |

The results of the Goldsmiths tests on our three sets of radio ads in terms of explicit response were very clear:

- ads which used music scored higher than those which did not, on all four parameters - liking, familiarity, liking of music and fit between music and ad
- within this, ads which used music strategically scored higher than ads with tactical music, again on all four parameters.

**Figure 2: Ads that used music strategically performed best on all explicit measures**



**Ad likeability**

**Ad familiarity**

**Music likeability**

**Music to fit brand**

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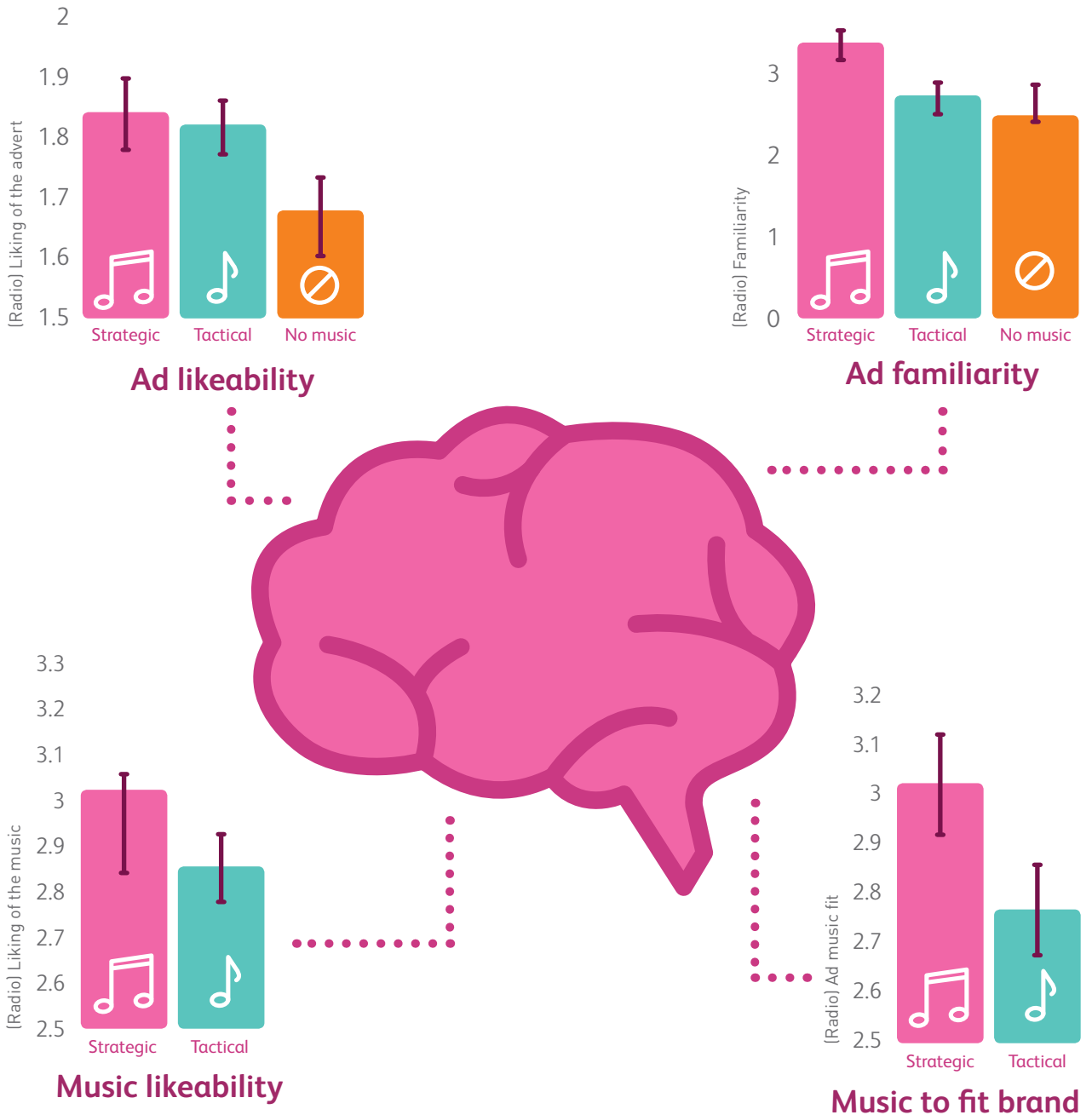
The EEG tests used 32 electrodes attached to the participants' heads to measure changes to electrical activity across different frequency levels in the brain as the radio ads were played. This data was then analysed in the context of existing neuroscientific understanding (detailed below) to reveal what these subconscious responses mean about the stimulus:

- gamma and beta band activity are indicators of increased brain activation (or "engagement")
- beta-gamma oscillatory activity is an important neural signature of reward-related networks (Hajihosseini et al, 2012; Marco-Pellares et al, 2008; Cohen et al, 2007) and is therefore an indicator of enjoyment
- frontal region asymmetry in the Alpha band (left > right) is indicative of 'approach' behaviour (Davidson, 2004)
- a very recent study (Boksem and Smidts, 2015) measured brain activity during exposure to film trailers and found a significant correlation with the commercial success of the film, suggesting that beta-gamma oscillations are also a neural marker of commercial success.

In summary, beyond the softer measures of engagement and enjoyment, a strong EEG response to advertising is also likely to be linked to better business results.

To a large degree the EEG measurements for implicit response mirrored the findings from the explicit test, in that ads which used music strategically generated significantly greater frontal beta-gamma activity than ads with tactical (41% higher combined) or no music (23% higher combined).

## Figure 3: ads which used music strategically generated significantly greater frontal beta-gamma activity than ads with tactical or no music
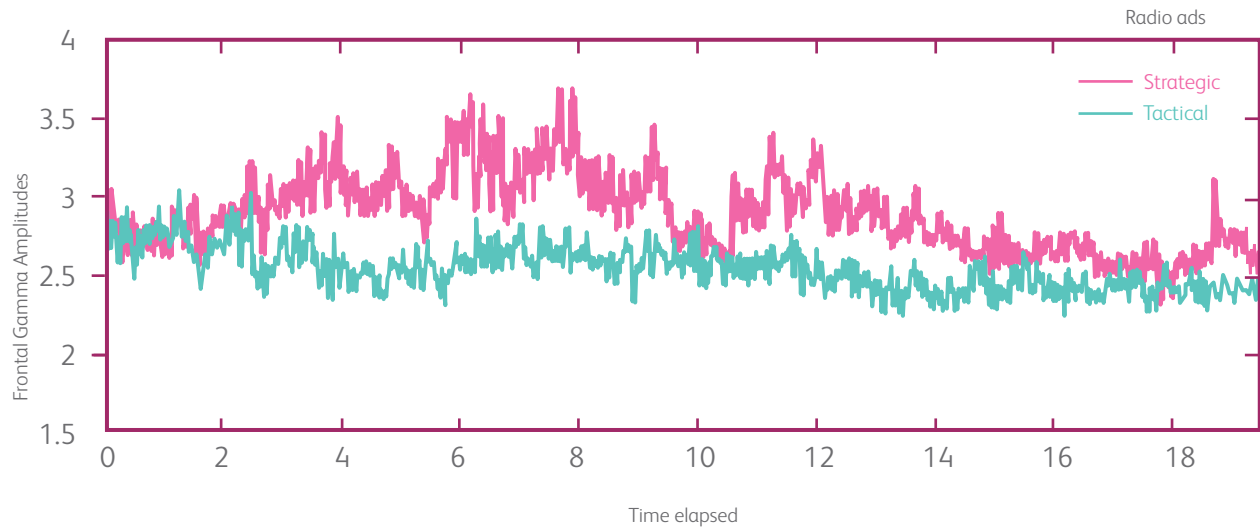
Beta band activity
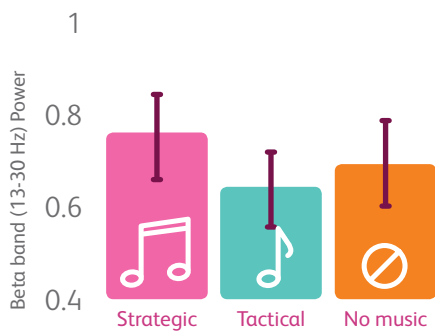
Gamma band activity
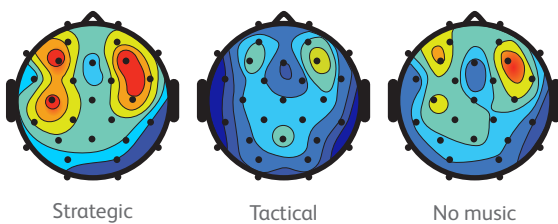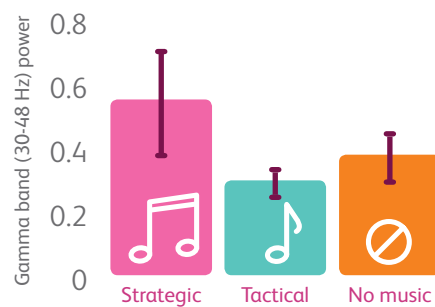
Ads using music strategically also showed higher levels of engagement throughout the ad (indicated by raised frontal gamma amplitude).

**Figure 4: ads with strategic music showed higher levels of engagement throughout the ad**

Radio ads



In addition, the ads with strategic music showed significantly greater asymmetric alpha-wave response (more activity in the left frontal lobe), which is associated with "approach" rather than "avoidance" behaviour.

**Figure 5: ads with strategic music showed significantly greater asymmetric alpha-wave response associated with "approach" behaviours**

Alpha band frontal asymmetry
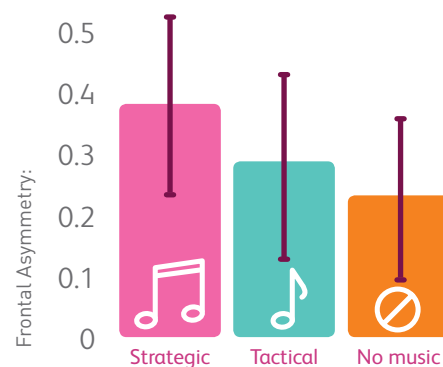


In a nutshell: at both the explicit and implicit level, people respond more favourably to ads which use music strategically, and the EEG data in particular is an indicator of likely commercial success resulting from these.

This is backed up by analysis of the radioGAUGE database of around 700 real-world advertising tests, where campaigns which use music in a consistent way deliver higher creative scores and bigger brand effects.

*"Anything that trains people to be more selective, to issue more disciplined briefs rather than saying 'I want music a bit like Coldplay' would be very welcome. There is an education job to be done."*
*Gerry Moira, UK Director of Creativity Havas Worldwide London*

# 4. Music conveys strong rational and emotional associations for brands

## a. The challenge

The research findings left a challenge: if consistent (strategic) "brand music" is so powerful, what can be done to help agencies and clients harness it more effectively?

Initially we explored the idea of analysing consumer response to a range of different brand music genres, but this was likely in the end to give us predictable results – showing how people associate certain kinds of music with certain kinds of brand.

Specifically the agencies needed more help with:
- finding a common language to discuss brand music
- using it creatively and avoiding the clichés.

This led towards a solution which was less about finding an answer and more about navigating a territory – and that's where semiotic analysis comes in ("the study of meaning beyond words"). Semiotics works on the principle that we are conditioned through cultural exposure to respond to any stimulus implicitly and unconsciously. It doesn't mean that music means the same thing to all people, it means that it's not just subjective - there is meaning in music defined by culture and associations.

We set out to understand how and what music communicates at a subconscious level.

| Think Words | Feel Words |
|---|---|
| Confident | Entertained |
| Down to earth | Galvanised |
| Trustworthy | Touched |
| Rebellious | Amused |
| Dynamic | Enchanted |
| Sophisticated | Inspired |
| Empowered | Esteemed |
| Edgy | Excited |
| Innovative | Reflective |
| Witty | Reassured |
| Intelligent | Nurtured |
| Traditional | Surprised |

The planners in our interviews were asked to generate a set of words which are regularly used in contemporary advertising to define a brand's character or tone (these are usually found on the creative brief). They came back with two separate sets of words – 12 x "think" words and 12 x "feel" words.

These words were taken as a starting point for analysis by Creative Semiotics, with an objective of:
- creating a navigation system or matrix which could help people understand and discuss how different areas of brand character and musical style or genre could be related
- understanding the elements of music that generate an implicit response linking it with a specific notion or emotion
- analysing the aspects of each word which would link it to certain examples of music and not others
- finding eclectic examples of music which related to each word (obvious and less obvious).

## b. Parameters of the music analysis

Creative Semiotics reviewed the latest literature concerning sound and music to develop the parameters of the matrix. They then sub-contracted the following team of music and semiotics experts to identify specific pieces of music relating to each Think/Feel word:

- Terry O'Garra, sound designer, composer, New York, USA
- Jon Rattenbury, musicologist, analyst, Brighton, UK
- Soren Lynne, MA Cognitive Semiotics, Aarhus, Denmark
- Drew Schnurr, sound designer, composer, Los Angeles, USA.

The matrix used six different parameters to analyse the music in a way that characterises the generic attributes that music assessed as, for example, Confident or Enchanted will typically possess. By being precise and nuanced about the specific elements that music possesses this helps demonstrate that choice of music can create differentiated emotional effects.

The six parameters are listed here with a basic explanation of the questions they typically address.

PSYCHO-PHYSICAL: the idea that music in its tempo, volume, dynamics and predictability causes us an involuntary physical reflex response depending on how arousing it is (drum & bass = excited; a piece of Mozart = reassured)

INSTRUMENTATION: the idea that the timbre of instrument used can bring its own associations through its inherent character and conditioning over time (saxophone = sophisticated, harmonica = down to earth; harp = enchanted)

TONAL CHARACTER:  the idea that certain types of harmony and pitch convey certain types of feeling. The most basic idea is that major keys are happy and minor sad. Different types of tonal system can also change what music implicitly communicates e.g. pentatonic scales cue 'unschooled' or 'down-to-earth'; the 12-tone scale is unfamiliar to our ears and therefore can convey 'edginess'; etc.

SONIC METAPHOR: the idea that music expresses an 'auralised physicality' - physical movement and gestures  - and can make us imagine our movement. So staccato or glitchy rhythm makes us feel uneasy, smooth legato is reassuring.

GENRE MARKER: the idea that certain genres carry certain connotations. Hip-hop is still seen as rebellious, classical music, be-bop jazz and bossa nova can signify sophistication, and gospel music or power ballads suggest empowered.

INTER-TEXTUALITY: the idea that music can communicate concepts outside of itself so a national anthem conveys certain meanings as does a football chant. "Entertained" music may bring to mind a circus, or reflective music a sense of spirituality.

Each of the Think/Feel words was deconstructed using these parameters to help identify the attributes of music most closely associated with them.

# Using the six musical parameters to link music more objectively to brand associations.

| Think words | Psycho-physical | Instrumentation | Tonal Character | Sonic Metaphor | Genre Marker | Inter-Textuality |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Confident | Predictable, heart stimulated but not extreme | Power chords, brass fanfare, percussion | Stable major keys, rhythmically even | Continuous flowing, with no hesitation | Rock, hip-hop, funk bombastic classical | Heroic movie motif (e.g. Westerns) |
| Down to earth | Low to medium pulse, heart relaxed | Acoustic guitar, or brass, or whistling | Pentatonic scales = unschooled auteur | Gravelly textures and sonic intimacy | Folk, nu-folk genre local brass bands | References to grass roots (Delta South) |
| Trustworthy | Regular, and solid and predictable | Soaring strings or a keyboard (organs) | Plays out rules of classic music theory | Repeating patterns architectural shape | Baroque classical or ambient minimalist | Reference to church or spiritual, abstract |
| Rebellious | Drives high arousal via tempo, volume | Spiky guitars, shrill SFX, and distortion | Xenomusical; may use 12 tone scale | Dissonant disrupts, distorts and assaults | Punk rock, hip-hop + derivative genres | Protest, anti-establishment + urban attrition |
| Dynamic | High tempo and dynamic shifts | Not confined to a specific instrument | Tends to the major but shift in keys too | Groove with vibrant forward movement | Cross genre but big symphonic is best | Physico-kinaesthetic activity (e.g. car chase) |
| Sophisticated | Low to medium pulse, heart relaxed | String quartet or a small jazz ensemble | Breaking rules but within certain rules | Lushness, smooth, clear, nimbleness | High classical or refined jazz music | References to rarity and to privilege |
| Empowered | Low to medium pulse, heart relaxed | Thick sound texture organs, rich synths | Something agitated but also confident | Richness, swelling and resoluteness | Choral harmonies, gospel, female soul | Uplifting via signs of spiritual infusion |
| Edgy | Anxious and highly unpredictable | Uses sound design, untuned instrument | Harmonic dissonant augmented fifths | Dissonance, glitch brokenness | Avant-garde and the xenomusical | Post-industrial, or urban alienation |
| Innovative | High tempo and dynamic shifts | Mallet based timbre & electronica SFX | Percussive parts or palpable sampling | Voyaging, neutral, lacking humanity | Minimalist ambient or drum and bass | Reference to robots space, machine age |
| Witty | Like edgy designed to keep us guessing | Pizzicato strings or tuba, piccolo | Choppy, discordant and incongruent | Inventive & nimble with mimetic effects | Vaudeville, gypsy jazz, folk, caprices | Anthropomorphic sounds, mischief |
| Intelligent | Low to medium pulse, heart relaxed | String quartet, jazz ensemble, or piano | Musical range and transcending codes | Interesting timings intricacy of melody | High classical, be bop jazz, and Bach | Complexity via an architectural motif |
| Traditional | Varies depending on ritualistic usage | Ukelele, harmonica, accordion or banjo | Often unschooled, indigenous element | Participation from the wider group | Folk music, world music, church music | Artisanal, earthy, crafted, vernacular |

| Feel words | PSYCHO-PHYSICAL | INSTRUMENTATION | TONAL CHARACTER | SONIC METAPHOR | GENRE MARKER | INTER-TEXTUALITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Entertained | Generally upbeat in tempo, arousing | Drums and brass voicing forceful dynamics | Stable major keys, carrying strong tune | Analogies of both grandiosity and play | Stadium, pop, swing, bands, club anthems | Spectacle or circus, carnival or nightclub |
| Galvanised | Strong, steady, beat pacy but contained | Military bands and maximalist sounds | Emphatic chord progressions | Musical build or an increase in density | Mainstream rock or hiphop motivational | Heroism, valour or preparing for a fight |
| Touched | Low arousal, quiet beats and soporific | Bowed instruments, cellos, violas, violins | Diminished seventh and minor keys | Warmth, softness and lushness | Classical romantic, bossa nova, nu jazz | Refers to romantic yearning or of loss |
| Amused | Generally upbeat due to sharp tempo | Hyperbolic FX, trills, glissandi (oboe) | Shifts in harmonic progression | Exaggerated effects or nonsense sounds | Ragtime or swing klezmer, brass band | Stage, vaudeville cartoon or humour |
| Enchanted | Slow to mid tempo cardiac and legato | Piano, harp plucked strings or a celeste | Tends to the major but shift in keys too | Enveloping sounds transporting images | Romantic, US movie soundtrack, musical | A magical or dreamlike, infantile realm |
| Inspired | Generally upbeat with high arousal | Angelic harmonies fine tremulo voice | Cascading melody / virtuosic passages | Transcending the mundane reality | Choral music but can be cross genre | Connection to a Higher Power |
| Esteemed | Steady and robust pulse, heart relaxed | Mass participation in huge sounds | Positive and driving major chords | Richness, swelling and resoluteness | Anthems, club songs, marches, protests | Martial or national association of glory |
| Excited | High excitation and likely high arousal | Electric guitars and intricate polyrhythm | No particular chord associated with this | Exaggerated effects infectious, euphoria | Samba, fast dance music, breakbeats | Dance music or a cinematic thriller |
| Reflective | Slow, soft tempo with low arousal | Single instrument, piano, voice, cornet | Minor keys and use of non major chords | Hesitant wandering, veering off, wistful | Jazz suite, tango nocturnes boleros | Depicts exotic place or ethereal dreams |
| Reassured | Steady and regular tempo mid arousal | Classical guitar or harpsichord, strings | Ostinato, repetition, with no surprises | Safety, simplicity or peaceful resolution | Folk music, baroque but other genres too | Safety, security and refuge (homeliness) |
| Nurtured | Slow to mid tempo cardiac and legato | Often female voice flute or pan pipes | No particular chord associated with this | Aquatic enveloping, or womblike depth | Love songs, eulogy, children's music | The nursery, lullaby, hugging, comforted |
| Surprised | Constant disruption of expectations | Muted backdrop before big entrance | Dissonant, or non mainstream chords | Dissonance, trickery, mischief, startles us | Experimental music, or a singular genius | Incongruous music, cites other genres |

## c. The Brand Music Navigator

By bringing together the 24 keywords and the six-column matrix, it was possible for the musicologists to create a set of musical examples for each word.

We created the Brand Music Navigator web tool to bring this analysis to life in a practical way:
- to give agencies easy access to information to help in developing a specific brief
- to provide them with relevant audio inspiration.

The Brand Music Navigator provides all of the data and audio generated by the semiotic analysis searchable by each of the Think/Feel words. The example image below shows how the tool presents the audio stimulus for the word ENCHANTED.
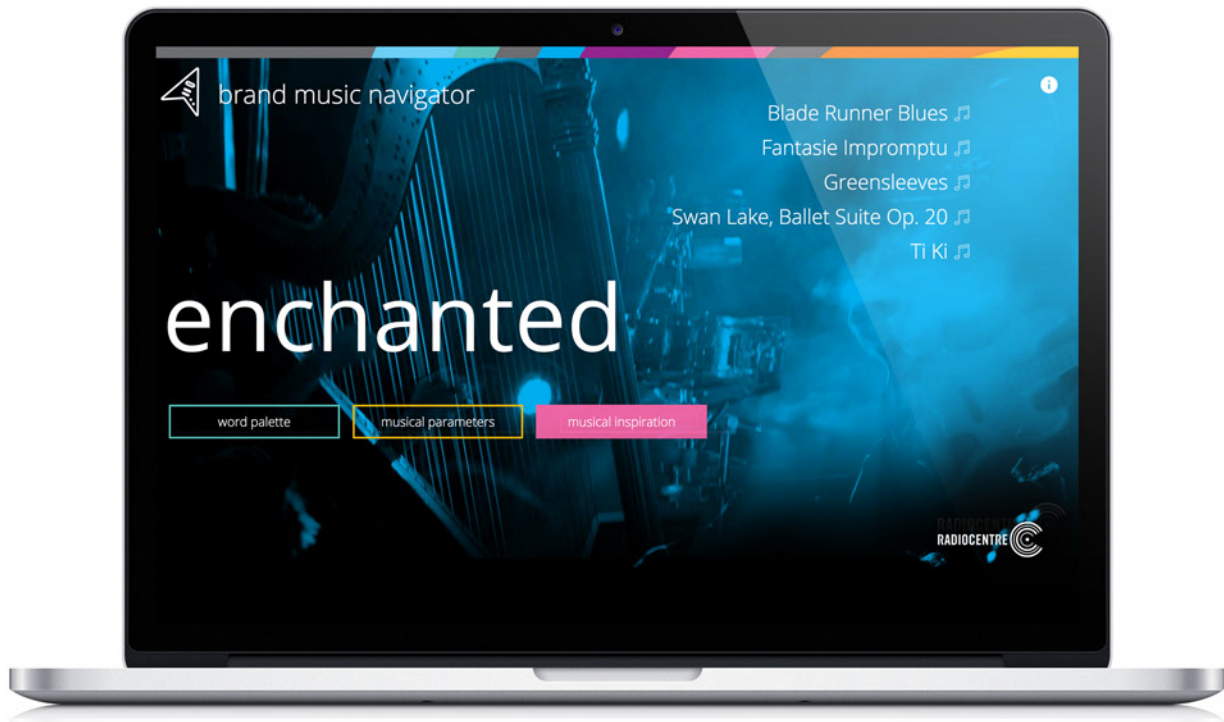


Five tracks are featured and, in each case, explanations are given for why that track appears under the word heading. In each case the notes indicate which attributes of the track relating to the six parameters qualify it for inclusion, and which other keywords the track also relates to.

Beyond its value for identifying specific pieces of music linking to a brand's attributes or desired response, it is anticipated that the Brand Music Navigator will be a valuable addition to the strategic agency planner's creative briefing stimulus – helping to get music discussed and considered earlier in the creative process.

For the interactive version of the Brand Music Navigator please go to: http://music.radiocentre.org
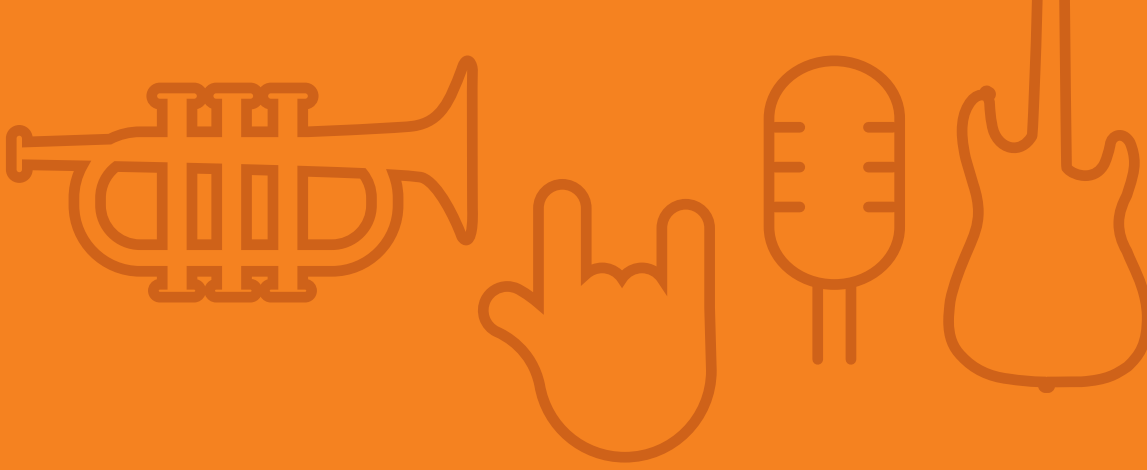
# 5. Helpful questions to consider when developing brand music

*"Creatives and strategists engage with music when they have a very clear brief."*
*Loz Horner, Planning Director: Lucky Generals*

So: the evidence in favour of using strategic brand music is strong. But how do you go about getting some?

As with most other aspects of advertising development – you need to start asking questions.

Together with the planners who were interviewed for this project, Push London and Radiocentre have collaborated to create a set of questions which can help develop thinking about the use of strategic brand music.

Remember, these have been designed to stimulate initial ideas for the brand music briefing process and you might find that not all the questions are relevant to your specific brief. The Brand Music Navigator may be helpful in answering some of these. Give them a go and see what works for you.

## Objective: what do you want music to achieve?
Remember, this is the music specifically, aside from the words, pictures etc.  - eg. represent the brand, consistency of music for a campaign, support a creative idea?

## Heritage: What is the brand's existing musical heritage and/or current use of music?
Are there musical assets from the past that could be exploited? Are there any current musical assets that are worth keeping? What are their strengths? Do they need updating?

## Brand as sound: what is the current brand personality as sound?
What is it like as a musical style/instrument/song/genre/artist/era? If the brand's world had sound what might it be like? By contrast, is there a style it would definitely NOT be?

## Future of the brand: where do you want to take the brand?
What sound could best represent the new (if appropriate) direction of the brand? In a year's time if the brand personality was a musical reference point (style, genre, song) would it be the same?

## Competition: is there a musical space that you can occupy that is true to the brand but different from competitors?

Do the rival brands have a consistent sound? If the key rival was a style/genre/artist/song what would it be? What would it not be? How are you different?

## Audience: what music would delight your core audience?

What music do they like? What is there musical world? What music makes them laugh/ smile/ cry/sing/dance? What would be on their playlist? Who are their musical heroes/heroines? What music do they dislike?

## Take-out: what do you want the audience to feel or do?

What feelings/emotions do you want people to feel? If these emotions or feelings were a sound/ style/ genre/ artist what or who would they be?

## Tone: what is the tone of the communications?

What music would best represent it? Is the tone on a brief different to the brand personality? What would the tone be as a sound/style/genre/artist?

## Media: should the pace or style change by different media touch-points?

What media are you using? Big spaces like cinema, or private places like YouTube? How might the sound vary across different touch-points?

## Implementation: how ubiquitous will this sound be?

Are you looking for brand music which "bursts" -  has high initial impact and lingers in the memory, or a "drips" – always there, a soundtrack to people's lives?

# Appendix

## A. Key desk research sources

**IPA Databank:**
http://www.ipa.co.uk/Page/IPA-Effectiveness-Advertising-Case-Studies

**Binet et al, Admap:**
http://www.doc.gold.ac.uk/~mas03dm/papers/BinetMullensiefenEdwards_Admap_2013.pdf

**Robert Heath "Seducing the Subconscious"**
http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470974885.html

**radioGAUGE:**
http://www.radiocentre.org/advertising/research/radiogauge/

**WARC:**
www.warc.com

## B. Neuroscience papers

- On the link between brain patterns and reward networks:  Hajihosseini et al, 2012; Marco-Pellares et al, 2008; Cohen et al, 2007
- On the link between movie trailer neural response and commercial success: Boksem & Smidts, 2015

## C. Qualitative interviews

John Hegarty, Chairman of BBH; Richard Huntingdon, Chief Strategy Officer of Saatchi & Saatchi; John Deathridge, British musicologist, Retired;  Lee Tan, ECD at McCann Worldgroup, McCann London; Peter Souter, Chairman and Chief Creative Officer, TBWA; Loz Horner, Planning Director, Lucky Generals; Gerry Moira, UK Director of Creativity, Havas; Alan Young, ECD, St Luke's; Trevor Robinson OBE, Owner, Quiet Storm; Ollie Raphael, Founder, Delicious Digital; Margaret Jobling, Director of Brand Marketing, British Gas; Lucy Jameson, CEO, Grey London; Jack Fryer, Head of Insight, Universal Music; Moray MacLennan, Worldwide CEO, M&C Saatchi; Daniel Jackson, CEO, Cord Worldwide; Tim Rabjohns, Music Director, Soho Sonic; Rory Sutherland, Vice Chairman, Ogilvy; Dave Trott, Former Chairman and ECD of The Gate London and author, Retired; Toto Ellis, Head of Strategy, Droga 5; Les Binet, Head of Effectiveness, adam&eveDDB; Dr. Daniel Müllensiefen, Senior Lecturer and co-director of the MSc Music, Mind, and Brain, Goldsmiths; Elizabeth Fagan, Marketing Director, Health & Beauty, International & Brands, Boots; Matt Davis, Creative Director, Red Brick Road; Paul Carter, Managing Director, Get Carter Productions; Jo McCrostie, Global Radio, Creative Director; Sam Crowther, Head of Creative, Bauer Media; Marc Cave, Founding Partner, Green Cave People; Malcolm Green, Founding Partner, Green Cave People; Matt Wyatt, Group Head of Planning, VCCP; Kit Fordham, Head of Strategy, Wednesday; Jennifer Lewis, Senior Strategist, 72Sunny; Jonny Ng, Strategy Director, Sunshine; Indiana Matine, Strategist, Wieden + Kennedy; Diana Caplinska, Strategist, TBWA; Danni Mohammed Strategist, Loose Lips Tea; Ben Stewart, Planning Director, Now; Paddy Frazer, Creative Director, Mother; Sarah Rabia, Planning Director, TBW; Cat Wiles, Board Account Planner, AMVBBDO; Tom Patterson, Planner, Now; Flo Sharp, Planner, Now; Emma Barry, Planner, Now; Steph Simon, Planner, Now; Amanda Lim, Strategist, BBH; Bianca Petroff, Strategist, BBH; Sarah Booth, Strategy Director & Partner, BBH; Zoe Chen, Strategist, BBH; Alice Mcginn, Planning Partner, Grey London; Matt Sadler, Planning Director, Karmarama; Matt Roskill, Managing Director, Albion; Paul Alexander, Director, Marketing Communications, Barclaycard; Irene Jeffrey, Owner, Marketing Mums Ltd; Katie Mackay, Head of Strategy, Mother; Gregor Findlay, Creative Director, Publicis; Helen Trimm, Junior Planner, Now; Pete Giblin, Creative, Grey London; Jo Arden, Head of Strategy, 23RED; Jourik Migom, Executive Planning Director, AKQA; Max Kennedy, Freelance; Krupali Cescau, Planning Director, Amplify.

## D. Research partners

Push London, Goldsmiths, Creative Semiotics and their music specialists.

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