Music Branding in Esports

Yongjin Hwang  
University of South Carolina

Armen Shaomian  
University of South Carolina

This paper was presented at the 44th International Summit of the  
Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association  
March 23-25, 2023

https://doi.org/10.25101/23.22

Abstract

Music has been widely used as an effective means to increase customer engagement in a variety of industries. In the context of esports, video games and music create a natural synergy as gaming is rich in sounds and video games often commission big-budget composers to create gameplay soundtracks. For individuals, music can generate different emotions such as excitement or suspense when playing a game but for organizations, it can also serve to develop an organizational identity via a unique sonic (audio) signature. Accordingly, it is no surprise to see how esports entities have recently developed their sonic identity using meticulously composed theme songs. For example, ESL, the world’s largest esports company, developed its brand anthem in collaboration with international music agency MassiveMusic. The League of Legends World Championship also releases an official league song every year with the intent of sonically portraying the image of the league. A sonic brand is a novel way to cement an organization’s brand image and position in the market. However, the field lacks theoretical and methodological direction in the evaluation of music as a means of branding. Research is needed to inform academics and practitioners on how to effectively design and create sonic signatures. Therefore, this study proposes a conceptual model that systematically tests the effectiveness of sonic branding in esports.

Keywords: esports, music branding, sonic identity, sonic brand
at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden, by the age of seven. He has performed concerts at venues in Europe and the United States, including the Royal Concert Hall and the Globe Arena in Stockholm, the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland, Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Orchestra Hall in Detroit, Michigan, and the Gusman Concert Hall in Miami, Florida. His dissertation on Swedish National-Romantic Music is published by VDM Vergal, and his piano recordings of composer Hugo Alfvén are featured on Vax Records’ Vaxholm - Ett Dubbelnöje and are available on Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon. Dr. Shaomian currently serves as the Faculty Principal of Preston Residential College at the University of South Carolina and is the Immediate Past President of MEIEA.
Proceedings of the 44th International Summit of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association

Las Vegas 2023
March 23-25, 2023 • Embassy Suites by Hilton Las Vegas