

Music Branding in Esports

Yongjin Hwang
University of South Carolina

Armen Shaomian
University of South Carolina

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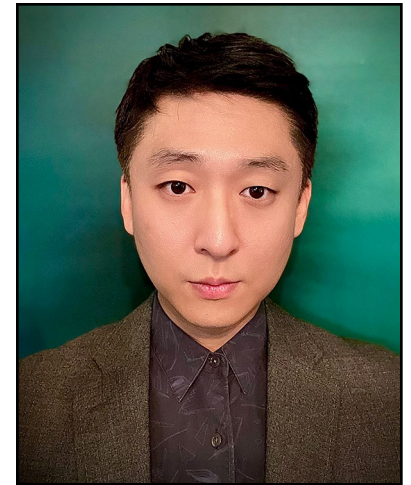
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Abstract

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

Yongjin Hwang is an associate professor in Sport and Entertainment Management at the University of South Carolina. He received his bachelor's degree in business administration from Sungkyunkwan University in South Korea, after which he moved to the United States to become an audio engineer. While working in the recording studio, Flux Studios in New York City, Hwang completed a master's degree in music technology at New York University. As a result of his educational experience, Hwang decided to combine the two-degree subjects together as a doctoral student at the University of South Carolina in the Department of Sport and Entertainment, where he now serves as an assistant professor in the department researching entertainment-related topics such as consumer behaviors in music and esports.



Armen Shaomian is an associate professor in Sport and Entertainment Management at the University of South Carolina. He is a pianist and educator, with an extensive background in performing arts, education, and arts management consulting. An active concert pianist, he was one of the youngest students accepted



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 Verlag, 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.



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