



## **Music Placement and Sonic Branding in Coca-Cola's Holiday Commercials:**

The evolution of consumer marketing and its influence on sonic branding and music placement in television commercials.

**By Ramesh Sital**

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Graduate School of Humanities, University of Utrecht

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Emile Wennekes

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis focuses on the question on how music placement and sonic branding have been influenced by the leading schools of consumer marketing from the second half of the twentieth century until the present day. It provides a historical overview and musical analysis of four Coca-Cola television commercials from holiday campaigns from four distinct decades in marketing history. The leading theories of consumer marketing started to shift since the fifties from a company-oriented perspective towards a consumer-oriented perspective. This led to the rise of multisensory marketing, where the experiential factor of consumers became key for company branding. This development, which is still ongoing, has also had a significant impact on the use, composition, and arrangement of sound in advertisement. This research uses case and literature study to compare the developments and use of sound in television commercials with the historical developments of marketing theory. Furthermore, this study also focuses on musical variables like key, tempo, progression, and instrumentation in order to analyze a theoretical 'ideal' combination for the most effective sound in advertisements and branding. This will be done through literature study and secondary research, which combines the field of marketing and psychology with the field of musicology. Parameters such as a low arousal, a high level of familiarity and a high perceived pleasure are noted as the most important factors to organize sound in the most effective way for television commercials. (Dubé, Chebat, and Morin 1995, 305-320) The four Coca-Cola holiday commercials are analyzed regarding these parameters and are compared with the leading marketing theory of their relevant decades. The noticeable developments regarding music placement and sonic branding are described to identify a significant influence.

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# 1. Introduction

*“The triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them.”*

*Theodor W. Adorno<sup>1</sup>*

This quote from Theodor W. Adorno pictures an interesting aspect of advertisements and marketing in our society. The initial idea behind marketing is perhaps as old as music. It is all based around the primary focus of persuading people to do something like buying a product or participating in an event. This thesis will analyze how consumer marketing throughout the second half of the twentieth century until the present evolved and what influence it had on music placement and sonic branding in television commercials.

This study provides an explication of music placement and sonic branding by analyzing four television commercials from different decades and their developments over time. Therefore, a consistent reference source with a generally unaltered marketing message over several decades should be used as research subject. One of the most famous brands in the world with a consistent and strong marketing campaign is Coca-Cola.<sup>2</sup> This brand is accounted by marketing literature and experts for having a major influence on how western societies celebrate their holiday season today. Therefore, are the Coca-Cola holiday commercials a reliable research subject for analyzing advertising developments over time.

## 1.1 Research Problem, Question, and Motivation

Literature from different professional and academic sources, which will be mentioned in this thesis, have thoroughly described the turn of events that shaped the world of consumer marketing and the leading theories behind it. However, there is not a lot of musicological literature available that compares the historical developments of consumer marketing with the field of advertisement music and composition. The main goal of this thesis is to provide that bird’s-eye view from the second half of the twentieth century till the present. The purpose of this research approach is to link advertisement music from different important decades in marketing history to discover notable developments from a musicological perspective.

The central research question that forms the main subject of this thesis is: *“How did the leading developments in the field of consumer marketing affect music composition and placement in television commercials?”*

This research question requires a reliable source with an excessive historical database of consumer advertising and its development over time. Coca-Cola has been such a reliable brand for over a century.

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<sup>1</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in *Dielectric of Enlightenment* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972): 325-329.

<sup>2</sup> “Born in the USA: Coca-Cola, the brand that turned Christmas red,” Fabrik, accessed January 22, 2019, <http://fabrikbrands.com/coca-cola-the-brand-that-turned-christmas-red/>.

It has a rich history of consumer marketing, which can be analyzed for tracking results over the time span which is relevant in this research. Furthermore, Coca-Cola has a rich history of using music for advertisement purposes, which can also be analyzed to determine developments over time in musical aspects like compositional elements, diegetic and narrative placement, and instrumentation.

## **1.2 Methodological Analysis and Buildup**

The first chapters of this thesis will consist of literature research that will explicate the state and development of holiday advertising of the brand Coca-Cola, the historical development of the use of music in consumer marketing, and the development of the theory behind sonic branding and music placement in television commercials. These chapters are needed in order to provide the necessary theoretical framework and insight for the second part of this thesis.

The second part of this study analyses four Coca-Cola television commercials from four different decades from the late twentieth and twenty-first century. These commercials will be discussed through a consistent method that will analyze the music in each of the commercials on three different elements that have been considered as key dimensions of the sound in television ads. These elements are “voice,” “ambience” and “music.”<sup>3</sup>

The choice of analyzing these specific elements are based on the influential theory about Sonic Branding that was developed by Daniel M. Jackson in his book *Sonic Branding: An Introduction*.<sup>4</sup> In order to create a consistent method, the element of music will be analyzed on a theoretical level, which focuses specifically on used instrumentation and composition techniques. However, considering the expected development in consumer marketing, this thesis will also reflect on the use of music as part of the story within the commercial. This is based on the principles of Claudia Gorbman’s theory from 1987 about the placement of music within the narrative of a film.<sup>5</sup>

### **1.2.1 Voice**

The first element of the analysis on each commercial will be dedicated to the use of voice. This element consists of several different dimensions that could be described through the field of musicology and phonology. The music specific characteristics of voice could be described through music related elements like pitch, tempo and rhythm. These elements are mostly described through subjective terms that will be determined by the relative comparison between the commercials.

Another important key element of voice is timbre, which could be described through phonological terms. This hybrid subfield between sonology and linguistics specializes in the anatomical working of the human voice. This thesis does not focus on the specific human anatomy that determines the production

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel M. Jackson, *Sonic Branding: An Introduction* (New York, Palgrave MacMilan, 2003): 11-16 & 38-47.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard melodies: narrative film music* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987):11-30.

of certain types of voices for each commercial, but it will focus on different voice qualities.<sup>6</sup> Each of these voice qualities describes a certain combination of speech techniques that results in creating a specific timbre.

These timbres are classified as “breathy voice,” which is airy and light. “Creaky voice,” which is specified by frequent low-pitched vibrations at the end of words or sentences. “Nasal voice,” which shares its technique with the ‘twang’ singing technique, mostly known in country music. “Tense voice,” which is sharp and penetrating in its timbre. “Whispery voice,” which contains the techniques behind whispering and contains a lot of hissing. “Harsh voice,” this is mostly perceived as a hyper masculine voice and is characterized as strident and with a rasping sound.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.2.2 Ambience

The second element of the analysis will be based around the concept of ambient sounds and non-composed audio that is present in the commercials. The origins of the use of ambient sounds in order to enhance the immersion and persuasive effectiveness of a message could be traced back to early theatrical practices. In classic Greek theatres copper plates were used to emulate the sound of thunder and therefore to enhance the setting of scenes that took place in a wild and stormy environment. This use of ambient sounds was effective to rouse certain emotions and feelings at spectators.<sup>8</sup>

With the rise of the multisensory marketing theory, the relation between hearing ambient sounds and invoked brand perception was researched in an interesting new way. Whereas the visual aspects of television commercials are limited to the scope of the physical screen, the audio field can rather be perceived as limitless.<sup>9</sup>

In this thesis, the apparent and leading ambient sounds in each commercial will be discussed. An important element in this analysis will be the diegetic importance of the ambient sounds in the commercials, the importance of on- and off-screen diegetic ambience and the relative importance of ambient sounds compared between each of the analyzed commercials.

### 1.2.3 Music

The third and last element of the analysis is based on music. This element focuses on all composed and purposefully scored audio that is present in the commercials. This element might be a part of the visual story within the commercial, but can also be apparent as non-visual synchronized audio to support the narrative story.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> John Laver, *The Phonetic Description of Voice Quality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 157-164.

<sup>7</sup> Hillary J.D. Wiener and Tanya L. Chartrand, “The Effect of Voice Quality on Ad Efficacy,” *Psychology and Marketing* 31, no. 7 (July 2014): 509-517.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision*, edited by Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): 67-69.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

Coca-Cola has a rich history of synchronizing popular music in their commercials. The music could be analyzed on its social impact in society like historical chart rankings and trends that emerged from specific ad-related music releases.

Furthermore, sonic branding is also known for its techniques of adjusting music to fit in a cross-media strategy that encompasses multiple different media outlets like radio, television, but also new media carriers like cellphones and virtual reality.<sup>11</sup>

The implementation of recognizable and recurrent jingle motifs within an interval range of a fifth is not exceptional. Specific composition techniques that even originates from the early twenties are called “crooning,”<sup>12</sup> and its principles are still used today for creating compelling audio logos. Chapter 4 will address this topic into detail regarding the brand Coca-Cola. The analysis of jingle motifs will also take place in each of the analyzed commercials to research if notable developments took place over time in the Coca-Cola holiday campaigns.

## **2. The History of Coca-Cola’s Holiday Advertising**

Coca-Cola is today known as one of the most famous brands that have ever existed. It currently holds the sixths spot of most recognized brands in the world, and is also the oldest company in the top of this list.<sup>13</sup> The official history of the brand dates back to 1886, when pharmacist Dr. John S. Pemberton began experimenting with ingredients to create an herbal-based syrup that he could mix with carbonated water. His aim was to sell it through soda fountains in order to make living out of it. Initially he didn’t book any successes with this formula and discussed this problem with his bookkeeper.

His bookkeeper, Frank Robinson, noted that the problem of his success was based on poor product placement and suggested to brand the carbonated drink as Coca-Cola. Along with registering the trademark under that specific name, he also designed the iconic word logo that is still used today. They also discussed the initial pricing strategy of the drink to settle the first agreements for selling it to soda fountains and bottlers. The price per serving was set on a fixed price of 5 cents, a price which Coca-Cola could maintain for over seven decades. They would also promote it through handing out vouchers to try the drink for free, which was revolutionary for the market in that time.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Bethany Klein, “In Perfect Harmony: Popular Music and Cola Advertising,” in *As Heard on Tv: Popular Music in Advertising* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009): 79-96.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel M. Jackson, *Sonic Branding: An Introduction* (New York: Palgrave MacMilan, 2003): 11-16 & 38-47.

<sup>13</sup> “The world’s Most Valuable Brands,” Forbes, accessed February 11, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/powerful-brands/list/>.

<sup>14</sup> Stewart Hodgson, “Born in the USA: Coca-Cola, the brand that turned Christmas red,” Fabrik, accessed February 11, 2019, <http://fabrikbrands.com/coca-cola-the-brand-that-turned-christmas-red/>.



**Figure 1 (Famous dance hall singer Hilda Clark, Coca-Cola 1900s ad)**

Pemberton sold his company in 1889 by dividing his assets of the brand. One of the buyers was ‘Asa G. Candler,’ a marketer that really started to position the brand successfully in the market. He was the person that determined the iconic red color that still dominates the brand identity of today.<sup>15</sup> He also stated that the brand should function as a personification for human emotions like ‘happiness’ and ‘joy’.<sup>16</sup> Consistency and continuity of these brand values was key to the growth and familiarity of the brand in the eyes of generations that grew up with Coca-Cola. Communication values like joy and happiness were also the main motivators for Coca-Cola to start associating their brand with the festive season. The main mascots for the brand were till the early thirties mostly fair looking women. The use of music and popular celebrities were essential to emphasize values as joy and happiness.<sup>17</sup>(*Figure 1*)

However, as one the first brands in the world that decided to exploit the festive season for marketing purposes, they needed to find a fitting mascot. They decided to use a commercially revised version of the historical St. Nicholas in their campaign. This revised version of St. Nicholas was based on illustrations that were designed by Thomas Nast in 1881.<sup>18</sup> His depiction laid the foundation to the modern look that is associated with Santa Claus in modern times. (*Figure 2*)



**Figure 2 (Thomas Nast’s Santa Claus, 1881)**

The outlook of Santa Claus was until the aggressive holiday marketing campaigns of Coca-Cola not yet set to certain standards. Santa was such as depicted with different colors of outfits and emotions. However, the ‘traditional’ red and white color scheme and jolly appearance are all due to the marketing

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Aashish Pahwa, “Coca-Cola Marketing Case Study,” Feedough, accessed on February 18, 2019, <https://www.feedough.com/coca-cola-marketing-study/>.

<sup>17</sup> “Coca-Cola Music Timeline,” Coca-Cola Company, accessed on February 18, 2019, <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/coca-cola-music/timeline>.

<sup>18</sup> “A Pictorial History of Santa Claus,” Public Domain Review, accessed on February 18, 2019, <https://publicdomainreview.org/collections/a-pictorial-history-of-santa-claus/>.



efforts of Coca-Cola, when they commissioned designer Haddon Sundblom to create the Santa how we know it today.<sup>19</sup>(Figure 3)

The Coca-Cola interpretation of Santa Claus grew over time as the standard western icon for the Holiday season.

Coca-Cola had established a strong visual mascot for their brand values during the holidays, but their marketing strategy wasn't limited to only the visual aspects. The brand also excelled in pioneering unique ways to market their product and values through audio.

The first commissioned Coca-Cola branded sheet music dates even back to 1905. However, their first big musical step takes place in 1930. The beverage brand commissioned Jazz composer and orchestra leader Leonard Joy in 1930 to create a unique theme song to



Figure 1 (Haddon Sundblom ad, 1931)

communicate values like joy, happiness and a moment of tranquility from busy lives. Leonard Joy initially composed a tango, but it didn't result in much success. Shortly after this failure he rewrote the original composition to a waltz. Joy published the new composition on March 19, 1930 as the "Coca-Cola Waltz,"<sup>20</sup> which would become the signature sound for the brand for several decades till the fifties. The motifs of this music composition were used in radio and television commercials and throughout Coca-Cola holiday ads till the late fifties with adjusted lyrics.<sup>21</sup> The in-depth analysis of the 1955 holiday commercial will analyze the musical composition and lyrical use further.

Over time Coca-Cola stayed consistent in their marketing message of joy and happiness. However, the underlying norm of the brand is to stay aware of emotions that are relevant and leading in society. The brand always made use of the popular artists in their generations. The Coca-Cola 1971 holiday marketing campaign could be marked as another interesting example of that strategy. In the last couple of decades an upcoming rivalry between Pepsi and Coca-Cola had emerged. Both of these brands wanted to position itself as the number one choice of society. The use of popular music played an important part in securing that position. On February 12, 1970 Billy Davis, a famous guitarist and artist who was frequently hired by Coca-Cola, wrote a song that would mark one the biggest musical achievements for the brand to date. The song was called "I'd like to buy the world a Coke." It became a popular radio song when the band 'The New Seekers' covered it. The rewritten song "I'd like to teach the world to sing," became a hit

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Ivanecky, "How Coca-Cola Created Christmas," Studybreaks, accessed February 18, 2019, <https://studybreaks.com/culture/how-coca-cola-created-christmas/>.

<sup>20</sup> Leonard Joy, "The Coca-Cola Waltz," Internet Archive.org, accessed July 22, 2019, <https://archive.org/details/LeonardJoyAllStringOrchestraCollection1930/ZLeonardJoyBroadcast-CocaColaTopNotchers-03-19-1930.mp3>

<sup>21</sup> Jamal Booker, "The Old Coca-Cola Theme Song," Coca-Cola Company, accessed February 18, 2019, <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/stories/the-old-coca-cola-theme-song>.

throughout Europe and the US. Coca-Cola made perfect use of relatively short popularity of the band, that not much later became number 2 in the 1972 Eurovision for the UK.<sup>22</sup> They also made a holiday adaptation of that commercial, which will be analyzed in this study.

The use of popular music stayed a consistent factor in both Coca-Cola (and Pepsi's marketing rivalry) in the global market. Many notable pop icons like Michael Jackson, Robin Beck, and Ray Charles were brought on board to market their products to older and younger generations. This marketing strategy was considered quite successful in the seventies and eighties at the height of the music video era.

1995 marked a very significant and iconic moment in Coca-Cola holiday campaigns for the following decades. In that year, Coca-Cola reintroduced the iconic Santa Claus mascot that was designed by Haddon Sundblom under the campaign name "Holidays are coming." Another visual element in this campaign was a Coca-Cola branded truck that was covered with light bulbs.<sup>23</sup> The company went back to communicating its consistent brand values of happiness and joy, in a festive theme. This thesis will also discuss the 1996 version of this campaign, which proved to be one the most successful of the brand.

The company went also back to its former strategy of using pop stars to market their products, but kept the immense popularity and memorability of the 1995 campaign in mind. This caused the start of the current period of Coca-Cola holiday advertising, a hybrid form of using popular culture and Sundblom's nostalgic Santa Claus. This is all communicated through similar settings and emotions as the iconic "Holiday is coming" campaign. In order to illustrate that strategy, this study will analyze the 2011 television commercial, which features Natasha Beddingfield's adaption of "Shake up Christmas."

### **3. The Evolution of Consumer Advertising**

The concept of advertising is as old as trading itself. Communication on the streets via door signs was already present at merchants in early Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations. However, the earliest academic traces of marketing and advertising started just in the late nineteenth century. One of the most prominent triggers for this development was the increasing interest in globalized distribution of products from companies. Global trade was already present since the late sixteenth century. However, the production and retail of products and services were till the nineteenth century only distributed on a local and national scale.<sup>24</sup>

Key for this development was the Industrial Revolution between 1760 and 1830 that allowed products to be produced in mass quantities. Along with this shift in production was the rise of mass advertising.

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<sup>22</sup> Ted Ryan, "I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke: The Story Behind the Famous Song," Coca-Cola Company, accessed February 18, 2019, <https://www.coca-cola.co.uk/blog/id-like-to-buy-the-world-a-coke>.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew Hepburn, "History of the Coca-Cola Christmas Trucks," Coca-Cola Company, accessed February 18, 2019, <https://www.coca-cola.co.uk/stories/the-tale-of-the-christmas-trucks>.

<sup>24</sup> Colin McDonald and Jane Scott, "A Brief History of Advertising," in *The SAGE Handbook of Advertising* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2007): 17-18.

Social and economic processes as urbanization and a shift in dominance, created a presence of a new working class in society. This new class, that mainly provided manual labor in factories, influenced how products needed to be marketed in a new way. The upcoming middle class of factory workers also provided a new group of representatives in governments and new leaders in more complex professional environments.<sup>25</sup>

Along with the rise of the working class, improvements on (inter)national infrastructure were rapidly made. This made it possible to produce goods and deliver services for lower prices to a bigger market. The rising wealth also created a higher demand of goods that could be derived at a faster pace because of mass production. Streamlined systems for distribution were created. They were promoted by a new, consistent communication style especially for products that were produced in masses. This style of advertising could be marked as the early beginnings of branding and product placement which has its roots in the mid-nineteenth century and onwards.<sup>26</sup>

The field of advertising in the first half of the twentieth century was heavily affected by the two World Wars, which had big influences on the rising feelings of patriotism and the protection of own cultural values and identities. This development in society influenced all aspects of media and advertising, like the rise and use of patriotic musical compositions, film productions, but also advertisements that could affirm unique cultural values. It was until after this period of world wars, that the field of advertisement had its next major shift.<sup>27</sup>

In the first decades after the world wars, economy started to flourish again in many parts of the Western world. Mostly Americans were ready to expand their wealth through purchasing homes, cars and products to facilitate their newly found time for leisure. All these socio-economic changes in society and culture led to the emergence of the field of advertising, which was influenced by the significant technological developments of mass communication through media outlets.

The newly found wealth of the middle class in society also resulted in bigger access to and possibilities to purchase media devices like radios and television in the fifties and onwards. The rise in importance of mass media caused a radical shift in sales philosophy. The strategy to approach the customer with informing them about the superior intrinsic qualities of the product in order to persuade them to buy it became less important. Extrinsic qualities like associated emotions and brand image started to play a bigger role.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 20.

*“It has helped to create a vast new audience of a magnitude which was never dreamed of ... This audience, invisible but attentive, differs not only in size, but in kind from any audience the world has ever known. It is in reality a linking- up of millions of homes.*

*-Owen Young (Chairman General Electric, 1929)<sup>28</sup>*

This shift of focus resulted in a separated position of sales departments within companies. The newly formed departments started to formulate strategies to use mass media in way that it could persuade customers to choose for their brand as the most fitting one for their lifestyle.

One of the earliest Coca-Cola Christmas commercials that was promoted with this new philosophy dates from 1951.<sup>29</sup> The main emotion of the commercial was focused around having a good time with friends and family, especially after a stressful day at work or school. The role of Coca-Cola within this campaign was to be the perfect refreshment to accompany this moment and therefore being the perfect beverage to enjoy with the whole family during the holidays. (See figure 4)



**Figure 2: Screenshots from the 1951 Coca-Cola Christmas commercial.**

Although the most important media outlets within households shifted in the twentieth century from magazines to radio and later to television. The marketing focus, namely creating associated emotions to the brand rather than informing the qualities of the product, is still the most important perspective today in consumer advertising. Even in our present time, when we live in an internet dominated society, branding has been proved to be more important than the product itself.

The philosophy of branding is still leading in the twenty-first century, even though the most dominant media outlets have shifted from traditional mass media towards online platforms like social and personalized interactive media. However, the emerging importance of media consumption on an individual level has caused an increase of interest regarding experience marketing and multisensory

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<sup>28</sup> Marla R. Stafford and Ronald J. Faber, *Advertising, Promotion, and New Media* (New York, Routledge, 2015): 14.

<sup>29</sup> “Coca-Cola Christmas (1950s) – Classic TV Commercial.” YouTube, accessed July 25, 2019, <https://youtu.be/RTei7mzW2Fs>.

marketing. The use and application of particularly music in these marketing developments are interesting to analyze because of the topic of this research.

## 4. Music in Marketing Literature and Theory

### 4.1 Experience Marketing

The increasing emphasis of individual enrichment and achievements in society has caused that marketing based on personal experiences became widely popular. The most influential idea around the principle that customer behavior could be influenced and analyzed by experiential dimensions was introduced by Holbrook and Hirschman in 1982. The most important aspect of their theory was that having a deeper understanding of the personal experiences of the customers could provide essential information regarding purchasing decisions.<sup>30</sup>

This relatively new perspective on customer marketing created a doorway for many marketing gurus to publish their findings and strategies on how customers would react on experiences that they could encounter during their marketing campaigns. Active and positive emotions of fantasy, feelings, and fun were quickly noted to be the most important factors for customers to push them towards consumption and purchase.<sup>31</sup> This caused that many big brands that mainly generated revenue through retail reserved increasing amounts of marketing budget for customer entertainment from the early eighties. This was the noted as the rise and development of experience marketing. Unsurprisingly did Coca-Cola the same regarding their consumer marketing activities. The company realized since the beginning of the twentieth century that using popular idols to promote and endorse their products would be essential to create the cultural status of being the status quo carbonated beverage in society.

This company culture, which shaped their marketing philosophy to the core, resulted in a vast network of hit songwriters and music directors with a proven track record over the decades. Leonard Joy, who was mentioned in the previous chapter was one them, but Coca-Cola also contracted notable songwriters from the sixties like Roger Greenway and Roger Cook. Together with Bill Backer, the creative director of Coca-Cola in the sixties and seventies and Billy Davis, they wrote the song “I’d Like to Buy the World a Coke,” which had its origins on January 18, 1971 in London.<sup>32</sup> This original song was well received, but the biggest success of the song came with a different strategy. Billy Davis decided to reproduce the song as a pop version for the radio with rewritten lyrics under the title “I’d Like to Teach the World to Sing.” This version became an instant Top 10 hit, which resulted in a global marketing success for Coca-

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<sup>30</sup> Caroline Tynan and Sally McKechnie, “Experience marketing: a review and reassessment,” *Journal of Marketing Management* 25, no. 5-6 (2009): 501-517.

<sup>31</sup> Morris B. Holbrook and Elizabeth C. Hirschman, “The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun,” *The Journal of Consumer Research* 9, no. 2 (1982): 132-140.

<sup>32</sup> Ted Ryan, “The Making of I’d Like to Buy the World a Coke,” Coca-Cola Company, accessed July 26, 2019, <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/stories/coke-lore-hilltop-story#TCCC>.

Cola. It also became one of the best-selling singles in history with more than 6 million sales.<sup>33</sup> The Christmas adaptation of this marketing campaign will be analyzed in the fifth chapter of this thesis.

Coca-Cola's biggest rise in brand worth and stock value still had to come in the early eighties. Vastly investing in brand endorsement by the most popular idols in the entertainment industry seemed to be the golden combination to expand their brand worth.<sup>34</sup>

Another big influence that added the needed motivation to heavily invest into attracting the most popular entertainers and musicians were the 'Cola Wars.' Seven years after the foundation of Coca-Cola in 1889, Pepsi Cola was founded. Although Coca-Cola always had the upper hand in the market, Pepsi noticed in the early eighties the opportunity that they could become the most dominant beverage brand in the world. It resulted in a series of aggressive advertising and marketing campaigns from both Coca-Cola and PepsiCo towards each other. During these campaigns did PepsiCo manage to position itself as the brand that represented youth culture and the new generation in the eighties. Music and popular culture played a very important role during this marketing battle, because both brands wanted to bind the most popular music artists to their own brand. Commissioning custom-made music from well-known artists based on their current radio hits became a very important strategy to create a culture around their products.<sup>35</sup> One of the most famous examples of this battle was Michael Jackson's involvement to endorse Pepsi Cola in 1984 with a customized version of his 1983 hit 'Billie Jean.'<sup>36</sup>

## 4.2 Multisensory Marketing

The use of custom-made music for advertisement purposes became an interesting topic for marketing researchers from that period. Hirschman and Holbrook's theory of experiential marketing proved to be effective, which resulted in an increasing focus in academic literature on the sensory dimensions that consumers could experience while being exposed to advertising. Even though the relation of brand-experience with smell, touch and taste were analyzed in much literature, was the biggest focus logically put on sight and sound in the field of television commercials.<sup>38</sup>

Theories around formulating sensorial sound strategies analyzed on how sound, and especially music, could be used to reinforce the identity and image of brands. Music was noted as a source of inspiration, that should commemorate consumers to personal experiences and emotions. This insight resulted that brands started to adapt their unique jingles to different themes and seasons that could enhance the specific

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>34</sup> Kim Bashir, "Coke vs. Pepsi: The story behind the never ending 'Cola Wars'," Business Insider, accessed on July 26, 2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/coca-cola-vs-pepsi-timeline-2013-1?international=true&r=US&IR=T>

<sup>35</sup> Joanna Love, "From Cautionary Chart-Topper to Friendly Beverage Anthem: Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" and Pepsi's "Choice of a New Generation" Television Campaign," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 9, no. 2 (2015): 178-203.

<sup>36</sup> "Michael Jackson Pepsi Generation," YouTube, accessed on July 26, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=po0jY4WvCic>

<sup>38</sup> Bertil Hultén, "Sensory marketing: the multi-sensory brand-experience concept," *European Business Review* 23, no. 3 (2011): 256-273.

emotions that they want to associate to their brands. This could be done in different ways, like adding a theme specific motif like a Christmas carol or through special instrumentation and arrangement.<sup>39</sup>

In multisensory marketing sound is considered as a significant dimension to create certain atmospheres. This was also noted in a meta-analytical review from Garlin and Owens about the effects of different sound variables to consumers when they encountered background music with advertising purposes. This study noted that audiences tended to stay captivated when there was background music noticeable as opposed to no music. Furthermore were variables like a slower tempo, lower volume, and high familiarity to the music favorable to attract more attention. Opposite variables like a higher volume, unfamiliar music and higher tempo seemed to create a longer perceived time duration. Tempo was in this study the variable that was associated with excitement and arousal.<sup>40</sup>

Most of the theories analyzed different variables to measure audience perception to background music. However, the most notable variable that was left out in most marketing literature was music genre. The reason was that music researchers noted the use of genre specifications as highly problematic.<sup>41</sup> Aucouturier and Pachet noted that there is not one clear definition regarding specific music genres. It is a poorly defined observation that cannot be objectively based on any intrinsic property of the musical composition, it rather depends on extrinsic factors like cultural perceptions and habits.<sup>42</sup>

However, the development of approaching music through different compositional variables that could be intrinsically measured for advertising and branding purposes became an important step to create the theoretical framework for sonic branding.

### 4.3 Sonic Branding

Sonic branding could be described as the method for professionally organizing all aspects of sound to create the most effective strategy for advertising campaigns. The development and application of this method is since the early nineties relatively young in the field of consumer marketing. This is the reason why most of the academic literature that specifically focuses on sonic branding, is relatively scarce and mainly from the last decade. However, the earliest academic article that proved to be significant in developing the theoretical framework around sonic branding strategies was written in 1995 by Dubé, Chebat and Morin.<sup>43</sup>

This study refers back to the initial idea that Hirschman and Holbrook formulated around the principles and observations of experiential marketing. However, the study of Dubé, Chebat and Morin focused on

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Francine V. Garlin and Katherine Owen, "Setting the tone with the tune: A meta-analytical review of effects of background music in retail settings," *Journal of Business Research* 59 (2006): 755-764.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Jean-Julien Aucouturier and François Pachet, "Representing Musical Genre: A State of the Art," *Journal of New Music Research* 32, no. 1 (2003): 83-93.

<sup>43</sup> Laurette Dubé, Jean-Charles Chebat and Sylvie Morin, "The Effects of Background Music on Consumers' Desire to Affiliate in Buyer-Seller Interactions," *Psychology & Marketing* 12, no. 4 (1995): 305-320.

the practical results of consumer interaction towards sellers and brands when they were exposed to different musical variables during advertisement campaigns.<sup>44</sup> They did perform an experiment with 270 undergraduate business students to observe the significance of tempo and familiarity of background music for creating an increased brand affection and willingness to transact with that company.<sup>45</sup>

The groups of students were exposed to different classical compositions while watching exactly the same advertisement video, but each musical composition resulted in a different level of brand affection. The results showed the same conclusions as described by Garlin and Owen. A Low tempo was associated with a low arousal and vice versa. A low arousal was generally associated with positive emotions and a high arousal with negative emotions. Combined with the level of familiarity to the music, it determined the level of pleasure that the students experienced while watching a television commercial. The study noted that Mozart's Horn Concerto no. 3 in E-flat major, K. 447 was perceived as producing a low arousal with its allegro, larghetto and allegro movements. However, because of its high familiarity it was perceived as highly pleasurable for sonic branding. The opposite seemed the case for the even more famous Symphony no. 5 in C minor by Beethoven. With its faster movements, it produced a high arousal, but that decreased the sense of pleasure among the students and therefore its effectivity for branding purposes.<sup>46</sup>

The field of sonic branding is all based around the idea to tie those positive emotions to the image of the brand, to create a memorable experience. Therefore are sonic branding strategies developed to create integrative "sonic languages" that could communicate sub-conscious messages through sound strategy across various platforms.<sup>47</sup> It is important to note that these strategies are not limited to only composed music, but to all dimensions of sound that contribute to a positive sense of familiarity to a brand image<sup>48</sup>

Daniel M. Jackson's strategy consisted of separating the three elements of sound into voice, ambience and music to organize the sonic language for creating the most positive brand image among consumers.<sup>49</sup> The fifth chapter of this research will analyze four Coca-Cola commercials regarding these three defined dimensions of sonic branding. The theory applied for the analyzing the voice will be based on the theory of Wiener and Chartrand,<sup>50</sup> which was mentioned in the chapter 1.2.1. The elements of ambience and composed music will be analyzed according to the academic theories explicated in chapters 1.2 and 4.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>47</sup> Warren Brodsky, "Developing a Functional Method to Apply Music in Branding: Design Language-Generated Music," *Psychology of Music* 39, no. 2 (2011): 261-283.

<sup>48</sup> Khalid Ballouli and Bob Heere, "Sonic branding in sport: a model for communicating brand identity through musical fit," *Sport Management Review* 18, no. 3 (2015): 321-330.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 7.



## 5. Coca-Cola Holiday Commercials: Four Different Decades, One Single Message

### 5.1 Fifties “There’s Nothing Like a Coke”<sup>51</sup>

The first commercial was from a musical variety series, which was funded by Coca-Cola between 1953 till 1957. It was broadcasted every Wednesday and Friday by NBC on American television between 6:30PM and 6:45PM. The program was called “Coke Time with Eddie Fisher.”<sup>52</sup> In the fifties, Eddie Fisher was one of the most popular artists with his distinctive crooning voice and scored multiple international hits.<sup>53</sup> He was contracted to have a central role as singer and actor in the show.

Television was a relatively new luxury item after the Second World War. After the war it was owned by 33% of American households. This statistic made the new media outlet interesting to bind customers for companies. Even though the first dedicated advertisement broadcast was legalized in 1941, it was more popular for brands to sponsor programs. Coca-Cola entered into the market with this musical program.<sup>54</sup>

The commercial that this research focuses on was broadcasted during the Christmas special of 1955,<sup>55</sup> and was hosted by Freddy Robins, a prominent radio host and celebrity interviewer in radio history. The focus of the commercial was to highlight the qualities of the beverage, especially for the holidays.

#### 5.1.1. Voice

The first hearable voice in the commercial is a spoken part by Freddy Robins (00:02). He speaks about happy Christmas memories and winter recreation like ice skating. Meanwhile, a young couple are having a good time on the background (00:09). He quickly connects it with the refreshing qualities of Coca-Cola, which perfectly complements the moments of refreshment from all daily activities. The intonation of the voice is active with logical pauses. The volume is on a regular speech level, without any harsh timbre.

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<sup>51</sup> “Coca-Cola Christmas (1950s) – Classic TV Commercial.” YouTube, accessed July 29, 2019, <https://youtu.be/RTei7mzW2Fs>.

<sup>52</sup> “Coke Time with Eddie Fisher,” IMDB, accessed on July 29, 2019, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0045379/>.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Freedland, “Eddie Fisher Obituary,” The Guardian, Accessed on July 29, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2010/sep/24/eddie-fisher-obituary>.

<sup>54</sup> Alyssa Mertes, “History of TV Ads,” Quality Logo Products, accessed on July 29, 2019, <https://www.qualitylogoproducts.com/promo-university/history-of-tv-ads.htm>.

<sup>55</sup> “Coke Time with Eddie Fisher in 3D,” Archive.org, accessed on July 29, 2019, [https://archive.org/details/CokeTime-EddieFisher\\_3D](https://archive.org/details/CokeTime-EddieFisher_3D).

Freddy Robins is followed by a Coca-Cola jingle (00:52) with the following lyrics:

There are times everyday  
And you work or you play  
When a pause would be welcome to you  
And it's then when you'll find a bright though in your mind  
That only a Coke will do  
50 million times a day  
At home, at work or on the way  
There's nothing like a Coca-Cola  
Nothing like a Coke.

The jingle is sung by a female vocalist with a crooning technique. Humming male and female voices are hearable on the background. During this part, a group of young people are enjoying their Coca-Colas in front of a jukebox. The camera pans back to Freddy Robins after the jingle, after which he emphasizes the sixth and seventh line of the jingle while the background voices continue with humming (1:25). Freddy concludes with a confirmation that Coca-Cola is the best that the world has to offer. The singers come back to repeat the last two lines of the jingle (1:40).

### **5.1.2 Ambience**

The commercial contains only one sound effects that could be marked as ambience. That is the “popping” sound when a bottle of Coca-Cola was opened at a branded bottle cap opener (00:26).

### **5.1.3 Music**

The commercial begins with an instrumental coda of Bing Crosby's “I'll Be Home for Christmas” (00:00).

After the spoken part of Freddy Robins, the singers start with a Coca-Cola jingle, which was used to promote Coca-Cola during the advertising parts of the television program (00:52). Just like the instrumental coda in the beginning, was this musical part arranged in B-flat major with a melodic range of exactly one octave for the voices. It has a tempo of 78 Beats Per Minute, which makes it suitable to associate it with positive emotions according to Garlin and Owen's theory.<sup>56</sup>

The last two lines of the jingle are hearable in the commercial in two slight variations (1:14 and 1:39). The melodic phrase of these lines form a perfect authentic cadence in the key of B-flat major. However, the first version ends with the low B-flat on the word “Coke” (1:18) and the second one on the high B-flat (1:44). (*Figure 5*)

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 39.



**Figure 3**

The jingle seems to take place in the narrative of the image on the screen. The group of young people are visibly moving in the same beat as the jingle while the suggestion has been made that the jukebox is playing the jingle (00:52-00:53). So, this jingle could be marked as off-screen diegetic (00:52-00:53), on-screen diegetic (00:53-1:20), off-screen diegetic (1:20-1:33). The last two repeated lines of the jingle seem to be an off-screen non-diegetic part (1:39-1:45).

## 5.2 Seventies “I’d Like to Buy the World A Coke”<sup>57</sup>

The second commercial is the Christmas version from the famous “I’d Like to Buy the World a Coke” campaign. This song had its origins on January 18, 1971 and was commissioned by Bill Backer, the creative director of Coca-Cola. He met up with the famous rock and blues guitarist and singer Billy Davis, who wrote the original song with fellow hit songwriters Roger Cook and Roger Greenaway. It was intended to record this song with the New Seekers, a popular British pop group.<sup>58</sup>

The initial idea came when Backer was travelling to London and he had to wait at the airport of Shannon, Ireland because of heavy fog in London. He saw many irritated passengers waiting at the airport café. However, when these passengers received their bottles of Coca-Cola, he saw them lighten up while having happy conversations with each other. He brought this concept to Davis and the other songwriters, who quickly created “I’d Like to Buy the World a Coke” with it. The initial campaign was an instant success in society with many emotional responses to the song. Because of the success many people begged for a radio version of the song. Billy Davis rewrote the lyrics under the new title “I’d Like to Teach the World to Sing,” which became an instant chart hit with both of the versions from the Hillside Singers and the New Seekers. This version was featured in the Christmas commercial of 1972.<sup>59</sup>

### 5.2.1. Voice

The commercial begins with a choir singing in a soft harmony, while a lit candle is shown (00:00). A singing female lead vocalist with possibly a mezzo-soprano range is then introduced while a close-up of her face is displayed (00:04). The camera shows another close-up of woman with a different ethnicity (00:13). During these shots a male vocalists with a baritone voice seems to sing louder and he takes over the lead after he appears in a close-up on the screen (00:15). Both of the lead vocalists were singing unisono.

After this part the choir becomes visible with lit candles in their hands (00:19). The lead vocalists are fading away and the choir becomes the dominant voice. The choir shows multiple techniques like singing with canons on sentences like “in perfect harmony” (00:25) and responses like “that’s the song I sing” (00:34). A contrasting female voice appears at 00:36, singing “Coca-Cola” (00:40) in a higher octave than the choir. This voice disappears after that sentence and seems to reappear to emphasize the last sentence of the commercial in an octave higher (00:47). The choir sings the following lyrics:

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<sup>57</sup> “Coca-Cola 70’s Christmas Hilltop Commercial,” YouTube, accessed July 30, 2019, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_zCsFvVg0UY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zCsFvVg0UY).

<sup>58</sup> Ted Ryan, “I’d Like to Buy the World a Coke: The Story Behind the Famous Song,” Coca-Cola Company, accessed February 18, 2019, <https://www.coca-cola.co.uk/blog/id-like-to-buy-the-world-a-coke>.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

I'd like to buy the world a home  
 furnish it with love  
 Grow apple trees, honey bees, and snow-white turtle doves  
 I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony (in perfect harmony)  
 I'd like to buy the world a Coke  
 And keep it company (That's the song I sing)  
 I'd like to teach (*go get*) the world to sing  
 in perfect (*Coca-Cola*) harmony  
 I'd like to buy the world a Coke  
 And keep it company (It's the real thing)

### 5.2.2 Ambience

There are no audible sound effects or ambience sounds in this commercial.

### 5.2.3 Music

The choir begins with singing “*ahs*” in harmony. The instruments start the melody with traditional Christmas instrumentation including glockenspiel and sleigh bells, that confirm the tempo of 120BPM. The female vocalists starts singing the song in E major, after which the male vocalists joins unisono. After this part the dominant volume of the lead vocalists gets lower. The choir continues to sing in harmony. All the added repetitions and responses seem to stay in the same key of E Major and vocal range as the lead vocalists. All the tones in the choir stay consonant and the tempo stays fairly constant.

However, the female voice that appears at 00:36 appears to sing an octave higher than the choir. Most of her tones are still in E major. However, her second ad lib that states the brand name “Coca-Cola” shows a contrasting A-sharp, which is not part of the key. The timing of this voice also seems to syncopate with the rhythm of the choir in order to emphasize the name of the brand. (*Figure 6*)



**Figure 4**

This commercial displays a choir singing, so the hearable voices of the lead vocalists and choir can be noted as on-screen and off-screen diegetic. However, the extra female vocalist who sings an octave higher at the end could possibly be noted as non-diegetic because it is not clear if she is part of the choir. All hearable music instruments are non-diegetic.

### 5.3 Nineties “Holidays are coming”<sup>60</sup>

The third commercial that will be analyzed is the first version of the “Holidays are coming” campaign. This advertisement campaign from 1995 could be noted as one of the most iconic holiday advertisements within all age groups of western society. Advertisement agency W.B. Doner was commissioned to create a new iconic holiday campaign that would emphasize their traditional brand values of nostalgia and sharing happiness with the world.<sup>61</sup>

The eighties were marked as one the biggest marketing nightmares for Coca-Cola, after introducing a renewed recipe under the name New Coke in the market. The company wanted to compete even more with Pepsi Cola with their renewed taste. However, sales figures plummeted drastically. The market didn’t like it, and Coca-Cola quickly returned to their original recipe, but the damage was already done. In the following years their marketing was primarily based on winning back the trust of many generations that grew up with a familiar brand.<sup>62</sup>

W.B. Doner introduced in 1995 with the “Holidays are Coming” campaign the famous Coca-Cola trucks. These trucks featured the iconic Santa Claus illustrations from Haddon Sundblom from the thirties.<sup>63</sup> They also featured the red color of Coca-Cola and were covered with more than 30.000 bulbs. A newly created jingle was introduced, which would become iconic for the brand in the upcoming decades.<sup>64</sup>

#### 5.3.1. Voice

The first voices are slowly fading in at 00:11 with the repeated line “holidays are coming.” The choir sounds bright and consists of male and female vocalists. At 00:20 a harmonic and bright sounding female choir with a notable soprano range takes the lead while the other choir keeps repeating their line on the background. The soprano choir keeps singing the lead lines until a section of this choir set up a modulation at 00:40. The mixed background choir keeps repeating the “holidays are coming” line but in the modulated key. The female lead choir keeps singing the lyrics till 00:52 when they hold on to the line “... the real thing.”

The mixed background choir comes back to the foreground with their repeated line at the same time. The female choir comes back at 00:57 to repeat the line “always Coca-Cola, watch out, look around, cause we’re coming.” The lyrics of the choirs are:

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<sup>60</sup> “Coca-Cola Christmas 1995 International 60,” YouTube, accessed on July 30, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EPs3RFxBJA>

<sup>61</sup> Matthew Hepburn, “History of the Coca-Cola Christmas Trucks,” Coca-Cola Company, accessed on July 30, 2019, <https://www.coca-cola.co.uk/stories/the-tale-of-the-christmas-trucks>

<sup>62</sup> Mark Pendergrast, *For God, Country & Coca-Cola* (New York: Basic Books, 2013): 428-447.

<sup>63</sup> The background information of these illustrations are explicated in the second chapter of this thesis.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

### MIXED BACKGROUND CHOIR

Holidays are coming

### FEMALE LEAD CHOIR

Taste the season  
Watch out, look around, something's coming  
Coming to your town (coming to your town)

*The female choir sings two times "dodododo" while the background choir is briefly on the foreground*

Always Coca-Cola (coming to your town)  
Something magic in the night  
Can you see it shining bright (*Shining bright – modulated*)

*The female choir starts singing "lalalalala" in the modulated key while the background choir sings their repeated line in the modulated key.*

The holiday refreshments that we drink  
Taste the season, it's always the real thing.

*The background choir takes the lead with their repeated line*

Always Coca-Cola  
Watch out, look around, cause we're coming

*Both choirs fade out*

### **5.3.2 Ambience**

This commercial is filled with instrumentational sound effects. The first one takes place at 00:08 when a Christmas ornament magically appears with a bell sound. At 00:11 three stars appear with a bright sounding pad that blends well with the key of the music. The next sound effects takes place at 00:36 when Christmas lights magically lights trees. The sounds are clearly from chimes, which stand out from the music and regular instrumentation and are slowly faded out. The chimes reappear in a higher tune to accompany the modulation when a house is lit with Christmas lights at 00:42. The same bell which is hearable in the instrumentation is emphasized and repeated at 00:46 when a bridge got lit with Christmas lights. The bells are also emphasized and repeated at 1:03 when the next town gets lit by the Coca-Cola trucks.

### **5.3.3 Music**

The music starts at with a choir synth pad in C major, this is also the key of the music. Some bells that are part of the instrumentation are also introduced. The sound effect of the Christmas ornament at 00:07 is in the same key with when it rises diatonically with a staccato from e'' to g''. this also counts for the sound effect of the three stars that appear at 00:11 with rising notes from d'' to e''.

At 00:11 the main instrumentation fades in, the Christmas themed sleigh bells indicate a steady 150BPM. The background choir and the strings are fading in with the repeating rhythm around the line “holidays are coming.” Both the strings section and background choir hold the keynote of the chords of the music. The first part of the music only progresses between the C and A minor chords until the modulation at 00:39. The sound effects of the chimes at 00:36 are also consonant to the fifth chord of C major with a *g*’ note.

The key modulates at 00:39 from C major to D major through a response from the female choir that repeats the line “shining bright” in the notes *d*’, *g*’, and *a*’. The background choir and string section follow the modulation with singing the keynote in D major. The church bells and chimes that start at 00:41 confirm the new key with the notes *d*’ and *a*’. the chimes at 00:42 emphasize again the fifth step of the modulated key. Even the sleigh bells that only indicate the beat are tuned a whole tone higher.

The progression after the modulation works toward a perfect authentic cadence with a *G-A-D (IV-V-I)* progression from 00:47 till 00:53. Meanwhile the background choir keeps repeating their “holidays are coming” line in D. The coda from 00:53 till the end consists of the same *I-vi* progression from the beginning of the commercial while the background choir keeps repeating their familiar line in D.

The whole song is based around the famous jingle “Always Coca-Cola” that was written by Jon Nettlesbey and Terry Coffey in 1993.<sup>65</sup> This audio logo and jingle with the line “always Coca-Cola” could be heard at 00:31, 00:45, and 00:57 during the commercial. This audio logo also had a major influence on the rhythm of the song. (Figure 7)



Figure 5

All the sound of this commercial doesn't seem to be a part of the narrative story that is displayed on the screen. All music is therefore off-screen non-diegetic (synchronized).

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<sup>65</sup> Dale Kawashima, “Jon Nettlesbey & Terry Coffey: How They Wrote & Produced Commercial Jingles for Coca-Cola,” Songwriter Universe, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.songwriteruniverse.com/coffey.htm>



## 5.4 Twenty-tens “Shake up Christmas”<sup>66</sup>

The fourth commercial is the Christmas version of the highly successful 2009 “Open Happiness” marketing campaign. The original song was specially commissioned by Coca-Cola to revisit the historical values of the brand to connect with the emotions of consumers.<sup>67</sup> The central element of this campaign was music, and many versions of the original jingle were recorded by popular artists around the globe.

Each of the artists adjusted the version of the “Open Happiness” song and jingle for specific occasions between 2009 and 2011. A notable example of this was the global hit song ‘Wave your Flag,’ from South-African artist K’NAAN, which became the highest scoring song that was related to the FIFA World Cup in 2010. This unexpected success for the Coca-Cola branded song resulted in more songs that featured musical elements from the Open Happiness campaign. One of these was the Christmas song ‘Shake Up Christmas’ from the American band Train. This song even reached the number 6 position in the Dutch charts in December, 2010.<sup>68</sup> This global success resulted in a special Coca-Cola commercial that featured the song. This thesis will analyze the reimagined version from 2011 of that song, which was sung by pop artist Natasha Beddingfield.

### 5.4.1. Voice

Natasha Beddingfield starts singing at 00:11 in the lower ranges of her voice. She is known as a mezzo soprano with a three octave vocal range from *e till e*’’. Her timbre in the lower ranges is clear and is sung without any special singing techniques during the verse which lasts till 00:23. The chorus of the song starts at 00:23 with the introduction of background vocals in the same vocal range. The background vocals add a harmony to Natasha Beddingfield’s voice, but they are barely hearable. The chorus ends at 00:33, after which she sings with a *‘lalalalala’* sound the signature motif of the Open Happiness campaign. An instrumental interlude starts at 00:41. She sings her last line “It’s Christmas time” at 00:54, after which the instruments end the commercial with the signature motif. The lyrics of the song are:

There’s a story that I once told  
One I want to tell the world before I get too old  
And don’t remember it, so let’s December it  
And reassemble it (oh yeah)  
Shake it up, shake up the happiness  
Wake it up, wake up the happiness  
Come on yeah, it’s Christmas time (lalalalala)

It’s Christmas time yeah.

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<sup>66</sup> Belu B., “Shake up Christmas Coca-Cola 2011 Natasha Beddingfield,” YouTube, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRkTmhbJw5E>

<sup>67</sup> Ray R. Gehani, “Corporate Brand Value Shifting from Identity to Innovation Capability: from Coca-Cola to Apple,” *Journal of Technology Management & Innovation* 11, no. 3 (2016): 14.

<sup>68</sup> Top 40, “Train – Shake Up Christmas,” Top 40, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://www.top40.nl/train/train-shake-up-christmas-21309>

### 5.4.2 Ambience

The commercial uses sound effects as an essential part to illustrate the narrative. It starts in a busy restaurant, so the background noise of people having a wonderful time is hearable from the start. A fizz-like sound that could represent the bubbles of soda is hearable at 00:11. All the actors in the commercial notice the sound and look up. Santa Claus appears on screen with a bottle of Coca-Cola, after which he tilts a snow globe. At 00:18 a sliding sound is hearable, while many Coca-Cola trucks are starting to move. The whole world tilts towards each other and one of the protagonists, a pianist, passes by a crowd while there is a hearable applause for him. This sound effect starts already at 00:40, while two other people are on screen, but it becomes on-screen ‘diegetic’ at 00:42 before this sound fades out for the music. It is notable that most of the used ambience sounds are from positive emotions in crowds, except from the fizz sound that represents Coca-Cola. The piano could be considered as the only diegetic instrument.

### 5.3.3 Music

The song in the commercial is performed in the key of F major, with a tempo of 82BPM. It doesn’t have any modulations and the only progression that is played throughout the song is *F-Gm-Bb-F (I-ii-IV-I)*. This commercial is entirely built around the motif of the Open Happiness campaign. (Figure 8)



Figure 6

This motif is particularly hearable at 00:03 when the piano plays. The last note of the melody goes a half step up towards the B-flat in order to dissolve logically in the G minor chord of the progression. At 00:03, there are already sleigh bells and chimes hearable to confirm the holiday theme of the commercial. The sleigh bells accelerate at 00:09 while the piano arpeggiates a few octaves high on the F chord. It ‘announces’ the fizz sound at 00:11 after which the chorus starts. The chorus introduces the guitar, bass, drums, and Natasha Bedingfield. All instruments repeat the *I-ii-IV-I* progression three times and Natasha sings in the last time the Open Happiness motif three times at 00:32, 00:35, and 00:38. A trumpet is introduced at 00:43 to create an emotional climax with three perfect cadence-like movements in de melody. (figure9)



Figure 7

The trumpet plays three *Bb-C-F* lines. However, the last cadence is played with the higher *f*. This adds a feeling of satisfaction while the video displays a lot of positive emotions. This ‘climax’ is followed by

a calmer coda where Natasha Bedingfield sings her last line, after which the ‘Open Happiness’ motif is repeated one last time before the commercial ends. (00:57)

## **6. Comparing the Results with the Literature**

After having analyzed all four commercials, the results could be compared to the developments and theories that are described in the marketing literature. This chapter reflects on the most notable developments regarding each of the dimensions that was described for each commercial.

### **6.1. The use of voice**

The use of human voices could in general be classified in two categories, spoken and sung voice. It was notable that only the earliest commercial used spoken voice to communicate with its viewers, the other commercials only had sung voices. The majority of sung voices were choirs that sung in arranged harmonies. The female voices tend to take the lead in all of the choirs with male voices in the background with a lower volume. All choirs seem to make use of techniques to highlight certain events that require extra attention.

The use of spoken voice was used in the fifties commercial to directly communicate the qualities of a product. This is a clear example that the tone of voice in marketing campaigns did shift over time from a company oriented stance towards a consumer oriented stance. The fifties commercial did solely inform viewers about Coca-Cola’s qualities, which was confirmed by the lyrics in the sung part of that commercial. The seventies however can be noted as a shift towards taking notice of customers needs. However, the song “I’d Like to Buy the World a Coke” is still written from the perspective of the Coca-Cola Company. This is the main difference that is noticeable since the nineties, which focuses more on the experiences of the consumer, rather than Coca-Cola’s perspective. The lyrics of the song “Holidays are Coming” positions the soda as the ultimate holiday experience. It is still company oriented but far less than in past campaigns. The ‘Open Happiness’ campaign is totally different regarding this orientation, the company name doesn’t even appear in the lyrics. This shows the gradual shift over time from a company and product orientation towards the orientation of putting customer experience first. Coca-Cola uses that to tie itself to values like happiness, love, sharing, and kindness.

### **6.2. The use of ambience**

The use of ambience was already common since the time of radio dramas in the early twenties. Commercials used it regularly to emphasize certain events. However, the use of ambience sounds in advertisements is rather interesting. It already occurred in the fifties commercial that opening a bottle of Coca-Cola was emphasized. That commercial already featured the sound effect of a bottle cap that popped when the bottle was opened on the screen. This was also in a form hearable during the “Shake up Christmas” commercial, when all the actors watch up when they hear the sound effects of the fizz coming from a bottle of Coca-Cola. The increasing use of ambience sounds like fizz and an opening bottle is used to emphasize emotions that Coca-Cola want to tie itself to. This is a sign of the increasing

importance of multisensory marketing for the brand. This was recently confirmed by the brand, where they explain the use of sonic branding and a specific soundscape for their newest marketing campaign “Taste the Feeling.”<sup>69</sup>

### **6.3. The use of music**

Musical themes and jingles were always an important part for Coca-Cola. This was already present in the earliest musical commissions from the twenties, up till sponsoring musical television programs to this day. However, the used music showed some interesting developments over time. First of all, Coca-Cola seems to commission their music to songwriters and artist that are relevant for their specific period in time. This causes a valuable insight to see which music styles were considered commercially popular for each decade. From the fifties crooning techniques of Eddie Fisher, the popularity of the New Seeker in the seventies towards the pop-rock sound of Natasha Bedingfield, all genres proved to be highly relevant for their own time. This strategy resulted in multiple chart topping hits, to which Coca-Cola could attach their name to.

The study of Dubé, Chebat and Morin about the perceived pleasure through variables like tempo and familiarity of the music is very interesting. All of the commercials were considered as major successes for Coca-Cola and enjoy a high level of familiarity. However, the seventies and nineties commercial have a considerably higher tempo with respectively 120BPM and 150BPM. the theory showed some exceptions of music that was perceived as pleasurable with higher tempos, and that could make these songs even more special than expected.<sup>70</sup>

One thing that is noticeable in all of the songs is the use of major keys. Positivity in the melody was present in all decades. All the chord progressions also tend to include endings with a form of perfect cadences in order to maximize the feeling of satisfaction. It also concludes with mentioning the brand name Coca-Cola. This emphasizes for viewers that Coca-Cola should be associated with the perceived happiness that is present throughout the music.

Another noticeable development was the increasing use of campaign specific motifs. This started since the nineties with the “Always Coca-Cola” campaign. That motif basically formed the backbone of the “Holidays are coming” song. This use of special motifs only increased over time to the point that the “Open Happiness” campaign provided inspiration for multiple hit songs. This is a fine example of sonic branding, where a positive customer experience through sound was explicitly related to the brand ‘Coca-Cola.’ This could be noticed as a confirmation of Brodsky’s theory about creating familiarity through sonic language.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Viacom, “Sonic Branding: Coca-Cola,” YouTube, accessed August 2, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QymLzVtbsBo>

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 46.

## **7. Conclusion, Discussion and Further Research**

### **7.1 Conclusion**

This study has provided some valuable insight on how television commercials and sonic branding has changed since the second half of the twentieth century. It shows that the dominant theories and schools regarding consumer marketing have had a significant influence for advertising in general. This is not only limited to the tone of voice of the marketing message, which is where most of academic management literature focuses on, but also to the practical setup of multisensory elements in television commercials. Sound, and especially music is one of those elements that was researched specifically for this musicological thesis. Each of the sound elements showed enough developments over the decades to provide valuable insights on the central question of this thesis:

*“How did the leading developments in the field of consumer marketing affect music composition and placement in television commercials?”*

The results of analyzing four Coca-Cola commercials from the festive period provided valuable insights on how dominant consumer marketing approaches have affected the placement and arrangement of music over time. This thesis separated the analysis of each commercial in the three dimensions of voice, ambience, and music according to Daniel M. Jackson’s theoretical work to assure the analysis of all possible auditory elements. All of these elements showed sufficient results to conclude that there is a significant development and influence in the use of music in television commercials, which is definitely inspired by the dominant schools of thought in the field of consumer marketing.

### **7.2 Discussion and Future Research Possibilities.**

The results of this research and already published academic and professional research provide many opportunities for future research about the subject of this thesis. The academic field of musicological research in advertising music is very young, with the earliest theories dating back to only the mid-nineties. However, advertising through television commercials has been a media outlet with at least eight decades of reference material.

This provides many new possibilities to analyze the role of music in television commercials through history with theories like Gorbman about music as part of the narrative on screen. Theoretical analysis could also add interesting insights to the musicological field with discussions on how to compose the perfect advertising music. Most of the current academic literature is published in the fields of marketing, management and psychology. However, this thesis could be seen as a practical example that musicological research can add substantial insights to the historical and future understanding of advertisement music.

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