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The Influence of Music in Advertising on Emotional Response

An Analysis of and Study on Nike's “You Can’t Stop Us”

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Introduction

There is no doubt that music has a particularly strong influence on human emotion and on the way we perceive things in everyday life. Therefore, it is reasonable that companies use music in their advertisements to encourage certain emotional responses and subconsciously affect the consumers' behavior and their perception of the brand. Plus, since advertising is increasingly developing towards becoming a media event and has been affected significantly by digitalization, it is even more difficult to hold the consumers' attention. Captivating and appealing acoustic stimulation that makes the commercial stand out from the crowd and stay in the consumers' memory can aid with that. While one can find different types of music in commercials, such as jingles, original music pieces or even popular songs, instrumental background music tends to have the greatest effect on the viewers' subconscious emotional response. Thus, when used appropriately, instrumental music in commercials can subconsciously kindle emotions that are unavailable through any other channel. A case in point is Nike's 2020 advert "You Can't Stop Us", which will be analyzed in detail in this portfolio regarding its acoustic and visual properties. Moreover, this paper will attempt to investigate the effects music has on emotional response and expectations by presenting a study specifically designed for this portfolio and evaluating and interpreting its findings. By doing so, I will attempt to answer one of the leading questions of the seminar: How does advertising move us? The study is also supposed to provide answers to the following question: How intensely does the music affect the audience and their expectations towards the advertisement, and how does this change when consumers focus on parts of the commercial separately?

The portfolio consists of two parts: an analysis of Nike's commercial "You Can't Stop Us" and an empirical study on the influence of music in advertising on the consumers' emotional response. For the analysis of the commercial, I will apply the knowledge on media analysis and advertising techniques I gained during the course of this seminar. Butler's "The Persuasive Power of Style" and Mittel's "Exchanging Audiences", the two texts mainly discussed during this seminar, will serve as points of reference throughout the analysis. In the second part, I will first elaborate on the structure of the study I specifically designed for this portfolio, i.e. the questionnaire itself and the group of participants. The results will then be presented and interpreted regarding the

previous analysis and the underlying questions of this portfolio. In a last step, the findings of this paper will be summarized in a short conclusion.

Analysis of Nike's "You Can't Stop Us"

In this ad analysis, I will apply the technique of Reverse Engineering we also used during the course of the seminar. This means that I will first look at the ad in its entirety. More precisely, I will first state some general information, look at the target audience, the ways the ad addresses said target group and the overall atmosphere of the commercial and identify techniques that seek to catch and hold the consumers' attention. I will then divide the ad into its original components, which will be investigated separately. Those components include the overall narrative and the visuals it is told through, plus the non-diegetic and diegetic acoustics. Additionally, Butler's "The Persuasive Power of Style" and Mittel's "Exchanging Audiences" will support my arguments and overall analysis.

Nike's "You Can't Stop Us" advertisement was posted on YouTube on July 30, 2020, and was mainly spread via the company's social media accounts, for instance YouTube and Twitter. Very quickly, the campaign garnered millions of views and received positive feedback and reactions from numerous celebrities and other people. Using old footage from various sports events, Nike created a video that gave people hope during the start of the pandemic and asked them to keep doing sports even inside during isolation. They created a video that shows that all people are equal by including athletes of all ages, genders and various ethnicities, and that does so by using a split screen mirroring the athletes' movements. In the midst of the pandemic, Nike spread a message of hope and unity. People applauded Nike for the brilliant editing, the remarkable narration and storytelling, and the subtle but effective marketing strategy. Because of the vast amount of positive feedback the ad received, I believe it to be worth it to take a closer look at the ad as a whole, its different components and its advertising strategies.

The brand's usual target audience ranges from teens to people in their 40s. More specifically, the brand particularly appeals to athletes and people who engage in sports since the majority of the brand's products is sportswear. If the commercial is not meant to address a matter concerning gender equality, Nike usually targets both men and women

of most ages equally. However, nowadays, younger audiences wish to connect to their favorite brands and build a relationship with them. They like to see their own values represented in the brand's ideology and crave an emotional connection with it. Moreover, as sporting events are a mass phenomenon, people automatically expect popular sporting brands to also engage in politics due to the platform these types of events offer. Because of this, "[s]ome ads focus less on individual products but rather on building brand awareness, linking positive attitudes with the company's name" (Mittel 2010: 65). Thus, to stay in the viewers' minds and to gain their trust, companies nowadays often include controversies, current social issues or political events into their advertisements. This is supposed to show the audience that the brand supports a cause the consumers themselves support as well, which can lead the viewers to identify and sympathize with the brand. Plus, consumers at times feel like a purchase with this brand will "solve problems and foster happiness" (Mittel 2010: 68). Furthermore, a well-established brand identity can lead to superiority over other brands of the same category (cf. Butler 2010: 114). In this case, including footage of athletes kneeling in support of the Black Lives Matter Movement or supporting LGBTQIA+ rights into their advertisements makes it seem as if Nike indeed takes action for these causes, which leads to consumers wanting to support the brand. Nevertheless, people tend to discuss whether it is ethically right to profit from the struggle of others. But that is a question that each consumer needs to answer for themselves, and that is not supposed to be the main focus of this paper.

While it is not a commercial solely revolving around a certain product, promotional materials are still incorporated into it. You can see Nike's famous Swoosh on various parts of sportswear during the video, for instance on hats, headbands, shirts, and shoes. This indicates that all or at least most of the athletes shown in the advertisement support Nike by wearing their products. This way, Nike is present at all times throughout the commercial without directly mentioning the brand up until the very end of the video. Mittel calls consumption "an emotionally charged practice" (2010: 65) and as already mentioned, this is not a product-oriented ad, but rather one that speaks to consumers on an emotional level. Rather than focusing on its newest products, the company regularly tells moving stories in its commercials that help build a loyal customer base, especially amongst the younger generations. However, the company does not try to deceive their customers into buying their products like other ads sometimes do. Instead, it tells story

that are particularly realistic to inspire compassion. By using the technique of storytelling, Nike's commercials, just as this one, are usually longer than the average advertisement, but evidently do not fail to capture and hold the viewers' attention by encouraging intense emotions.

What part of this ad is it exactly that catches and holds the viewers' attention? I believe it to be the combination of several components. First, the ad shows a particularly dynamic split screen with rapidly changing frames. This way, the viewer does not want to miss anything happening within the narrative and therefore pays closer attention to the ad itself. Second, the ad addresses topics that are particularly important and currently present in the media to build that feeling of affection and connection within the consumers. Thus, especially younger generations will want to see what the ad addresses throughout the whole length of the video. Plus, diversity is not only represented by various different kinds of sports, but also by including athletes of numerous different ages, ethnicities and genders. This portrays that no one is excluded or presented as inferior to another. Most important, the ad sends a message of hope and unity during a time of great uncertainty and hopelessness. Furthermore, the notion of team spirit and community stirs a need inside the consumer to also be a part of this. Especially during the ongoing pandemic, picturing a community overcoming hardship strikes a chord within the viewers. Butler mentions that companies "often promise admission to utopia through the purchase of commodities" (2010: 112). And even though the ad is not utopian in the usually applied way that Butler talks about, it still creates a similar atmosphere to the utopian notion that can be found in many ads and that Butler mentions in his text. It creates an atmosphere we want to be a part of, and all these athletes wearing Nike clothes create a sense of unity that is especially appealing during times of isolation. There are various other parts that also play a role in holding the viewer's attention, such as increased tension supported by particularly emotional music and an inspirational voice-over, but these parts shall be investigated in more detail at a later stage.

Due to the immensely extensive and time-consuming editorial work, this ad certainly stays in the customer's minds. In his text, Butler mentions that "aggressive style serves as a hailing function" and that the "commercial needs to stand apart from the [...] material that surrounds it" (2010: 117). And even though I would not call the editing of this add aggressive, it is for sure extraordinary and excessive. However, the thing most

memorable about this ad is the overall mood it creates and the message it delivers. It is a message of hope, telling people they are never alone, that we will overcome this hard and trying time together and that nothing can stop us as long as we support each other and believe in ourselves. This message is not only delivered by the voice-over, but also through the visual material. The team spirit and sportsmanship pictured in the ad leaves the viewer motivated, inspired, and empowered. The celebration of sports that is so common for Nike's commercials is taken to a whole new level when footage of people finding ways to engage in sports at home during isolation is shown. It leaves us with a sense of positivity towards the end and speaks to us on a particularly affective level. Using the current time of uncertainty, Nike tells a story within these 90 seconds that evidently moves its audience and spreads hope by using the technique of emotional branding.

For a thorough analysis of the formal aspects, the acoustic and visual components of the commercial should be examined separately. So, in the following section, I will first focus on the visuals and the narrative of the ad, including the extensive editing. I will then analyze the non-diegetic and diegetic acoustics in other separate sections. From the very beginning on, the consumer is confronted with a split screen that combines different athletes and kinds of sports, emphasizing the unity of athletes through sports. The commercial uses close-ups as well as wider shots and incorporates particularly short frames and fast cuts. And although commercials typically inhabit a faster pace than for instance sitcoms or soap operas, “[r]apid editing serves as a hailing device because each shot quickly present new information for viewers to absorb” (Butler 2010: 124). Still, the transition from one screen to the other is nearly completely fluid, which supports the notion of unity conveyed by the overall ad. At the beginning, we are confronted with several single athletes, cheering from a crowd and active athletes and teams succeeding and being focused. This atmosphere spreads a feeling of excitement and anticipation. However, at minute 0:36 (Nike 2020: You Can’t Stop Us), a runner falls, and the following frames show hurt athletes lying on the ground and frustrated players breaking their bats before the frame switches to empty stadiums being disinfected. This is supposed to represent the way we felt when the pandemic first started: everything came to a halt very abruptly, and we have been isolated and kept from seeing our loved ones in order to keep them safe ever since. The situation is scary and uncertain. We feel as if the world suddenly stopped. However, as the video goes on it shows people who found a way to

continue doing sports during isolation, athletes that get back up from the ground and players that stick together and stand up for what they believe in. While the beginning showed us people engaging in sports on football fields or in stadiums, people are now playing tennis in their living rooms or from one roof to another. Plus, athletes kneeling in support of the Black Lives Matter Movement are pictured, which stresses the socially conscious character of this ad. Towards the end, an increasing number of pairs or groups of athletes is shown to emphasize the message that together we can get through everything. Triumphant moments and athletes achieving their goals stand out. In short, the central narrative consists of a circuit that starts with motivated athletes doing what they love, continues with an interruption that is essentially caused by the pandemic, and ends with athletes overcoming hardship and looking at the future enthusiastically again together. Butler states that in many advertisements, the speech is reinforced by “the same or similar words [that] crawl up the screen – frequently at the conclusion of the spot and usually accompanied by the [...] visual logo, its brand identity further reinforced by its logo” (2010: 128). This is also the case in this advertisement. At the very end, a black screen with white writing puts the ad’s central message into words by stating, “You can’t stop sport. You can’t stop us.” (Nike 2020: You Can’t Stop Us 1:26). This element is closely followed by Nike’s famous Swoosh.

The visual narrative is accompanied by a distinctive voice-over that tells us a compelling story of hope and confidence. In this voice-over, American soccer player Megan Rapinoe indirectly addresses one of the hardest challenges we had to face during the pandemic: isolation and distancing. This can only be interpreted by looking at the time the ad was made public. At the very beginning, she states that “we’re never alone” (Nike 2020: You Can’t Stop Us 0:02), which according to her is our strength. Her motivating statements continue throughout the whole ad and the most powerful ones surely stay in the consumers’ minds. For instance, she states motivational things like “If we don’t fit the sport, we’ll change the sport” (Nike 2020: You Can’t Stop Us 0:28), “We’ll find a way” (*ibid.* 0:47), “And when things aren’t fair, we’ll come together for change” (*ibid.* 0:50), “No matter how hard it gets, we will always come back stronger” (*ibid.* 1:02) and “Because nothing can stop what we can do together” (*ibid.* 1:12). As becomes obvious, most of her statements accentuate the central message about hope and unity the ad conveys. Plus, as Butler calls it, persuasive speech in advertisements is often perceived

as “a voice of authority” (2010: 127). Rapinoe’s captivating speech is not used to provide information about a product or the brand itself, but rather accompanies the story that is told visually. Moreover, the word ‘Nike’ is not once mentioned throughout the whole commercial. Rapinoe’s constant repetition of the word ‘we’ further emphasizes the notion of unity displayed on the visual level. As Butler puts it, repetition serves the reinforcement of the ad’s message and the strengthening of brand identity (cf. 2010: 115). However, it is not made clear who is addressed with ‘you’ in the title. I believe that this is intentional as it provides the individual viewer with the possibility of assigning whatever hardship they are experiencing to the word ‘you’, i.e. the pandemic, systematic racism or anything else. This way, everyone can make it out to what they need it to be. This is possible because the ad is supposed to deliver a general message of us being able to overcome hardship and times like these if we stay united and optimistic. Additionally, we can also hear crowds cheering, athletes encouraging each other or screaming in frustration and news reporters talking in the background as an omen of bad news. Essentially, these additional sound effects we can hear in the background accompany and validate what we can see on the visual level. They give viewers an idea of what the ad is about in case they are not able to see the visual as well.

But the speech and sound effects are not the only acoustic elements used in this commercial. To create a connection with their customers and to build a loyal customer base, companies – among other things – regularly use emotional music to indirectly tell the consumer what they are supposed to feel while watching the ad. This technique is used in Nike’s “You Can’t Stop Us” ad as well. The instrumental music helps to convey the intended message of the commercial and guides the viewers’ emotions into the intended direction. As already mentioned in the introduction, instrumental music tends to have the greatest effect on consumers’ emotional response. Plus, it highlights the importance of the verbal content and makes Rapinoe’s voice-over stand out. This is because the instrumental music demands only low cognitive involvement and thereby enables the viewers to focus on the verbal elements while still being influenced by the instrumentals subconsciously. Butler states that this kind of music “strives for invisibility, hoping to shape the emotions of viewers without being noticed” (2010: 128). Plus, Musical congruity is a particularly important factor when it comes to the success of a commercial. In this case, next to the extensive visual editing, the composition of the

acoustics of this advertisement is congruent to its overall content as well as its intended message, which leads to an even more intense emotional response. Furthermore, it enhances the understanding of the visuals and intensifies the experience, since consumers usually understand the conveyed meaning.

Taking a closer look at the alignment of the instrumental music with the visuals, one notices that in parts of the ad, dynamic sports images are combined with rhythmic music, which creates a particularly vivid imagery. Furthermore, tempo, rhythm and pitch follow the narrative and are adjusted to it. As already mentioned, most of these elements affect the viewer subconsciously. Plus, when analyzing instrumental music, one should always investigate the various components individually in order to understand how they work together. For instance, the first thing consumers hear in this ad is a soft and calming note that is followed by a soothing piano melody once the voice-over starts. Soon after this, one can hear strings in a steady rhythm that slowly increase in volume and thereby spark a feeling of excitement and enthusiasm. Strings playing short notes in a major key are known to evoke this kind of feeling. Thus, the ad introduces the viewer to the situation calmly and then steadily increases the tension and the extent of excitement. However, this feeling comes to a very abrupt halt when one of the athletes falls. Simultaneously, the instrumental music stops with a loud drumbeat. The positive feeling is torn from viewers, and they are left with a very quiet and somehow somber piano melody while looking at disconsolate athletes and empty stadiums. They are now feeling confused, pessimistic, and desperate. Nevertheless, the piano melody becomes more positive once the strings set back in. The combination of the two instruments and the rhythmical drumbeats lead to an optimistic and enthusiastic atmosphere again once the crowd's cheering sets back in and athletes start to get up from the ground. This is also the point of the highest volume and tempo. At the end, viewers are confronted with an uplifting ascending melody right before the last frame is shown, and the music reaches a harmonic resolution with additional cheering sounds. The structure of this instrumental music shows just how close to the narrative it is designed. It does not fail to excite viewers when needed, and to spark a feeling of desperation during the right sequences. All in all, the instrumental music subconsciously steers the audience's emotions in accordance with the narrative portrayed by the visual and textual elements.

One last thing that needs to be addressed in this analysis is the influence of the athletes chosen for this ad. Butler states that “the most common way that advertisers assert the desirability of their products is to associate them with activities, objects, or people that are themselves desirable” (2010: 110). Nike is well known for its association with star athletes. Thus, it is no surprise that this commercial indeed features a significant number of popular athletes, such as Megan Rapinoe, LeBron James, Naomi Osaka, Serena Williams, Colin Kaepernick, Cristiano Ronaldo and many more. All these people are seen as idols that achieved something they had been working for very hard. This inspires others to want to achieve the same things their role models accomplished. Plus, the commercial indicates that it is possible to become a part of this great community that sticks together and can surpass hard times by simply continuing to do sports at home during isolation. Moreover, the diversity depicted by various kinds of sports is also represented in the individual athletes shown in the ad. Different ages, ethnicities and genders are depicted, which additionally supports the notion of team spirit and sportsmanship conveyed. The simultaneous picturing of tennis, soccer, football, and other kinds of sports emphasizes the unity portrayed by the overall add.

Empirical Study

In this part of the portfolio, the elaborated analysis will find practical application in an empirical study. I chose to prepare a small study for this portfolio because I have always been particularly sensitive and perceptive to the music used in advertisements, TV shows or movies. However, as it is a small and personal study, it will not be compared to other research studies done in this field. It would go beyond the scope of this paper. During the course of this seminar, we did consider the role of music in advertising, but not as thorough and detailed as I was interested in, simply because of a lack of time. Since the Nike commercial was one of the ads we mainly focused on and because I was particularly touched by it, I decided to focus on “You Can’t Stop Us” and the way it works in this portfolio and in my study. And while the seminar was a great chance to gain knowledge about how advertising works and a deeper understanding of various advertising techniques, I wanted to obtain empirical data that might support or refute my assumptions and further investigate one of the leading questions of the seminar regarding the acoustic

effects used in the Nike commercial: How does advertising move us, affect our behavior, and prompt us to start a conversation? Thus, I created a small study since I was interested in investigating to what extent music in advertising influences the audience's emotional response. Plus, I wanted to examine how much the music of an advertisement influences the viewer's expectations as to what the ad could be about. For this, I divided the advertisement into three individual parts: the non-diegetic sound, the diegetic sound and the visual. The non-diegetic sound of an advertisement usually consists either of a melody designed specifically for the respective ad or a popular song of which the company has obtained the license rights. Other acoustic parts, such as speech and sound effects, are called diegetic sounds. These two make up the acoustic part, which is then combined with visual effects that have usually been attuned to the acoustics or the other way around to make up the finished commercial. In the following part of the portfolio, I will first explain the structure of the study. Then, the results will be presented followed by an interpretation of the findings.

Participants

The participant group consisted of ten females between the age of 20 and 25. The average age is 22,5. In order to be able to interact with each participant personally and thoroughly discuss the ad, a small group was chosen intentionally. Plus, a small sample group makes it possible to form a particularly accurate interpretation of the results in regard to this specific target audience. However, one must keep in mind that these results cannot be generalized as the study took place in a controlled environment and only with a small group of contestants and does not represent the general public. All participants were recruited by personally inviting them to take part in this small study. Therefore, the group consists of fellow students and personal friends of mine. All contestants understand and speak English to a sufficient degree, and none of them had seen the ad before or read about it. While seven out of ten participants are students, three are currently doing an apprenticeship. Still, all ten contestants have obtained the general higher education entrance qualification (Hochschulreife) or an advanced technical certificate (Fachhochschulreife).

Questionnaire & Execution of the Experiment

In this study, a questionnaire designed by me specifically for this purpose was used to examine the effects music has on the audience's emotional response. Some advantages in using a questionnaire are that participants can fill it out at their own discretion and that data can be gathered relatively quickly in comparison to other methods. And as I am working with only ten participants, the evaluation of the results was fairly quick. However, since the data gathered is self-report data, it might not be entirely reliable and cannot be transferred onto the general public. The questionnaire was sent to each contestant shortly before our scheduled online meeting during which the experiment would be carried out. First, each participant was asked to write down their name and age as that is the only demographic information needed for this study. This is because all the participants of this experiment belong to a fairly similar target group. Just as the experiment itself, the questionnaire is divided into three parts. While the first part focuses on the non-diegetic music of the ad (instrumentals), the second part concentrates on the diegetic music (speech and sound effects) and the third on the ad as a whole, including the visual effects. Each section contains three questions the participants are supposed to answer during or after every run-through. During the first and second part, the contestants are asked to describe their emotional state using only three words (or word clusters), to state the element that had the strongest influence on them and to explain what kind of ad they expect. The questions of the first two sections were kept similar intentionally to get clear results and to make possible differences within the answers of the two sections visible. During the third part, the participants were asked whether seeing the visual changed the way they feel after watching the complete ad. They were also asked whether they focused more intensely on the visuals or the acoustic, if they had expected this kind of ad after only listening to the sounds, and what they think the purpose of this kind of music in such an ad is.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, I met with each of the participants via Webex Meetings rather than in person. The meetings lasted 30 minutes on average. First, I introduced the experiment and its structure and explained what the contestants were expected to do. I then stressed that this experiment is about spontaneous answers and that there are no wrong answers in this context. Moreover, I drew attention to the fact that their data would be handled anonymously. Before each run-through, I went through the

respective questions with each participant and told them which element they were supposed to focus on. I also asked whether there were any questions before we started. During the first two run-throughs, I made sure the video was not visible and only played the sound since the participants were asked to focus on the two acoustic parts of the advertisement. During round three, I showed them the ad including the visuals and asked them to look at it in its entirety. After each round, they took a few minutes to write down their answers. At the end of the meeting, the participants were given time to write down any other thoughts or comments if they desired to do so. They were also presented with the possibility of discussing their answers with me if they wanted to.

Results and Interpretation

When conducting an experiment like this, one must remember that not everyone is influenced by music in the same way. Some people are more sensitive to it, while others do not feel touched by it at all. This depends on the memories people connect to music and on personal preferences. It varies considerably from one person to another. However, it has been proven by various studies that music does generally influence our emotional response, which can be proven by people experiencing goosebumps or an increased heartbeat while listening to music. For better transparency and to not make this too confusing, I decided to include tables that display the results of the study's respective sections. The presented results are organized according to the descending number of mentions and are not fully complete, simply for a better overview.

	Words used to describe the emotional condition after the respective run-through:
1 st run-through (instrumentals)	encouraged, motivated, enthusiastic, energetic, excited, hopeful, positive, powerful, strong, self-confident, united, connected, not alone, tense, curious, inspired, ambition, ready for change
2 nd run-through (speech & sound effects)	team spirit, connected, feeling of belonging, motivated, confident, hopeful, optimistic, solidarity, positive, cheerful, ambition, dedication, encouraged, uplifting, powerful, meaningful, impactful

Table 1: Overview of emotional condition after listening to acoustic parts

This first table shows the words the participants chose to describe their emotional state after focusing on the instrumental music of the ad in the first run-through and on the

speech and sound effects in the second. The quantity of words in the first row shows that even though the instrumentals may only require a low cognitive involvement, they result in high affective involvement. It also confirms that instrumental music indeed induces emotional arousal, at least within the participants of this study. Some of them even mentioned getting goosebumps during the first round. While the words of the second round are still similar to those of the first, they also closely mirror the contents of Rapinoe's speech. This proves that the participants really did focus more on the speech and sound effects in this run-through. The results focus more intensely on the notion of team spirit, the feeling of belonging, on ambition and encouragement. No participant gave the same answers in both rounds, which accentuates that the second round evoked a slightly different emotional response compared to the first.

	tempo/crescendo	strings	strings, esp. violin	piano
number of mentions	5	2	2	1

Table 2: Number of mentions of most prominent instrumental elements

According to these results, the changes in tempo and volume were the elements the participants felt to be the most prominent. The strings, especially the violin, also had a big impact on them while the piano was only mentioned once. This was surprising to me as I expected the piano to play a bigger role. However, I can also understand why most participants chose the tempo and volume as they are very impactful elements of music.

quotes	<p>“Whatever it is, we’ll find a way”</p> <p>“Nothing can stop what we can do together.”</p> <p>“If we don’t fit the sport, we’ll change the sport.”</p> <p>“We will always come back stronger.”</p> <p>“We’re never alone.”</p>
others	<p>repetitive ‘we’-statements</p> <p>togetherness</p> <p>focus on team spirit</p> <p>work and grow together</p>

Table 3: Answers on the textual element with the strongest influence

The textual elements mentioned here demonstrate their importance, since many participants even remembered whole sentences from Rapinoe's speech. This accentuates the significance of an ad's convincing and compelling text. Thus, if consumers actually listen to and remember what exactly is said in an ad, the chances of purchase are higher if a commercial incorporates a well thought out text. The results obtained by this study show that the textual elements of this ad were successful in being perceived as convincing.

	What kind of ad do you expect after listening?
1 st run-through	sports event, something connected to sport, bad event with good outcome, encouragement to participate in sports, sportswear, ad for sports channel, world cup, reason to change the world
2 nd run-through	sports event, team sport, team spirit/solidarity, working together to achieve something, ad for Olympics, organization that wants great changes in sports, something connected to the pandemic

Table 4: Expectations towards the ad after the respective run-throughs

This table shows what kind of advertisement the participants expected after first and second run-through. Even by just listening to the acoustics of the ad once, the great majority of participants could already guess that it is related to sports. This proves the importance of music and sounds in delivering a message. But there are already several differences between the results of round one and round two, indicating that while the first run-through already gave the participants a basic idea of what the ad could be about, concentrating on the diegetic acoustics notably specified that idea and thereby the expectations towards the ad. However, it needs to be pointed out that the speech and sound effects were also audible during the first run-through and probably already influenced the initial answers that were supposed to be focused on the instrumentals. But there is still a noteworthy difference in the answers given. Plus, COVID-19 and the pandemic were first mentioned during the second run-through. This shows that participants listened to Rapinoe's speech, which did not explicitly mention the pandemic, and transferred its contents onto the current situation.

<p>changes in emotional state after watching the whole ad:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased feelings/emotions - more inspired and touched - more connected (actually seeing people work together) - more confident - more depressed due to shown effects of pandemic - visuals more prominent (due to extensive editing & diversity pictured)

Table 5: Changes in emotional state after seeing the whole ad, including visuals

This last table shows the changes in participants’ emotional states after watching the whole ad for the first time, including the visuals. It becomes clear that the visuals had a strong influence on the way they felt. Many of them stated that some parts of the ad were to be expected while others were not detectable by only listening to the acoustics, like the diversity depicted in the commercial. Most participants also said they focused more on the visuals. However, I believe it is hard to decide if that is because the visuals are perceived as more important or because the participants already knew the acoustics from the first two run-throughs and therefore focused more on the part they did not know yet.

The last part of the questionnaire asked the participants whether they expected this kind of ad. Most of them answered they mostly expected what they saw in the commercial. However, according to them, the unusual and impressive editing was unexpected and captivated them. The political character and diversity pictured were unforeseen as well. Some participants also answered that they did not expect this kind of ad to come from a sportswear brand like Nike. The connection to the pandemic was unexpected for some as well.

Nearly all of the contestants wanted to engage in a detailed discussion about the ad afterwards, even when this was not an obligatory part of the questionnaire itself. This fact alone proves to me that the ad was successful regarding this target group due to the need of discussion. Many participants applauded the overall structure of the ad, mentioning that the visuals and acoustics played very well together and made the ad even more impressive.

Conclusion

I believe the secret to this ad's success is the combination of Nike's own brand identity as a sports company, the extensive and brilliant editing of this amount of footage, the richness in storytelling and the offer of hope during the current crisis. The perfect timing of the release must have played a role as well. A sense of unity and equality was created by the visual imagery of athletes being forged together via the split screen. All mentioned things plus the ad's socially conscious character and Nike's subtle marketing strategy create a commercial about the unifying power of sport that attracts the audience's attention and strikes an emotional chord.

The narrow group of participants enabled extensive discussions that provided a great deal of information. However, it needs to be mentioned again that these results only apply to said small group and cannot be generalized. The results of each question demonstrate how big of an influence each element of a commercial can have. Moreover, it became obvious that only listening to the acoustics of a commercial can already give consumers a good idea of what it is about. Plus, volume and tempo can have a bigger influence than individual instruments. If the textual elements are well thought out, viewers might even remember whole passages. Last, focusing on different parts of an ad can alter the consumers' expectations towards it. It would be interesting to do this study with a group of male participants and compare the findings.

To conclude, the small study provided several results that prove the powerful impact of music on the emotional response. It also demonstrated how different that impact can be if one focuses on different parts of the ad individually. All in all, the seminar and this paper have certainly provided me with a completely new and more critical perspective towards advertisement. It has even led me to my decision of pursuing a career in marketing, which I believe is the best way to describe what I have taken away from the course.

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Appendix 1

Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen

Name:

Institut für Anglistik

Age:

A Questionnaire by Johanna Becker

Music in Advertisement: Effects on Emotional Response – Questionnaire

1) During the first run-through, please focus on the **underlying music** (the soundtrack) of this ad. Take notes to answer the following questions:

- How does the music affect you? Use three words to describe your emotional state at the end of the track.
- What musical element had the strongest influence on your emotional state?
- What kind of advertisement or content do you expect after listening?

2) During the second run-through, please focus on the **text**, i.e. what the speaker is saying. Again, take notes to answer the following questions:

- How does the text affect you? Use three words to describe your emotional state at the end of the track (can be the same as above).
- What textual element/part of the speech had the strongest influence on your emotional state?
- What kind of advertisement or content do you expect after listening?

3) This time, try to focus on **the ad as a whole** (music, text and visual) and take notes to answer the following questions. You may watch the ad a second time if you want to.

- Did the visual influence a change in your emotional state? If so, why? What part did you focus on more intensely, the acoustic or the visual?
- Did you expect this kind of advertisement after only listening to the audio?
- What do you think is the purpose of using this kind of music in advertisement, especially in ads that make use of current political events and/or controversy?

4) Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to express?