

# From Signification to Self-signification

## Musicologic and socio-economic study of soundalikes in advertising music

Christophe MAGIS

Ph.D. student

Faculties of Musicology and of Communication Sciences

Université Paris 8, France

christophe.magis@gmail.com

If, since a couple of years, mostly under the impulsion of the major recording companies, the in thing for advertising is the licenced synchronization<sup>1</sup>, the majority of TV advertising music is « original », — *i.e.* created for a particular spot — and most of the analysis that have studied these « original » pieces have merely been working towards the definition of a complex typology of semiotic functions that music could take on. But, in fact, it's really rare for this commissioned music to be totally « original ». We would like to investigate a common practice in music advertising : the case of *soundalikes* ; or the musics that are overtly copying another one.

This presentation will, thus, offer a socio-economic analysis of the practice, based on interviews of different actors (in France) such as composers, ad-music producers, advertising creatives, recording company executives from our on-going Ph.D thesis, as well as a musicological analysis of some typical examples taken from the last decade of TV-ad music in France. We will try to understand why some social actors can give support to a practice that is so legally risky and how the composers can craft something that could be so close to something else and yet so distant to be legally beyond reproach. In the same time investigation of

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1. This practice, offering musical editors new opportunities for selling their catalogues has been precisely analysed by Bethany KLEIN, 2009, in the case of popular music. This strategy wasn't very popular in France before the last ten years but has been largely reinforced by the crisis that the whole recording industry is suffering since the end of the nineties.

this object will offer an analyse of the ultimate function music could take on : self-signification.

## Indicative bibliography

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This presentation will need a beamer for displaying a computer screen on a whiteboard. I can bring my own computer and/or a USB key with my slides in a file.