

Classical Music as Symbolic Capital in Advertising: Structural Regularities, Motifs, And Cultural Resignification

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Abstract

This paper examines the recurrent use of selected works from the Western classical music repertoire in contemporary advertising, focusing on the structural and symbolic mechanisms that enable their effectiveness within consumer-oriented audiovisual contexts. Classical music has historically functioned as a marker of distinction, cultural capital, and aesthetic legitimacy; however, its increasing presence in commercial media raises critical questions regarding processes of resignification, adaptation, and symbolic instrumentalization. Drawing on an interdisciplinary framework that combines musicology, semiotics, and cultural sociology, the study proposes that certain canonical works share identifiable motivic regularities that favor recognizability, structural stability, and high symbolic appropriability when repurposed for advertising. The research adopts a dual methodological approach: first, a detailed musicological analysis of melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, and textural parameters; second, a computational formalization of musical motives through graph-based modeling and network metrics, allowing for systematic comparison across works and contexts. This approach enables the identification of common structural patterns that persist despite typical advertising transformations such as fragmentation, transposition, temporal compression, or orchestral adaptation. The findings suggest that these regularities contribute to the effectiveness of classical music as a persuasive audiovisual resource, independent of the specific product being promoted. Rather than offering an aesthetic judgment, the paper interprets these patterns within a broader socio-cultural framework, addressing issues of cultural legitimization, kitsch, and aspirational affiliation in contemporary media consumption. The study ultimately contributes to current debates on art, commerce, and symbolic value in mediated cultural practices.



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