

Chopin's Music

in the 'Brand

Theatre':

*From Directed Stimulation
to Shared Meaning*

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of sound recording and reproduction techniques in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has contributed to the consolidation of a 'new sound culture', characterised by 'acousmatic listening' to sounds separated from their original source and context. One of the most interesting examples is the use of classical music in different forms of marketing strategies, such as audiomarketing or sonic branding, to influence consumers' responses in agreement with the sender's intentions.

The main aim of this paper is to present selected examples of Polish brands that construct their marketing strategies around Fryderyk Chopin's works in order to build appropriate brand experience and aura around a product or service in accordance with the rules of sensory marketing. The social enhancement model of music and the hierarchical model of musical semantics are the starting points for understanding the psychological mechanisms that determine the effectiveness of such activities. Overall, the analysis reveals that marketing practitioners focus on two complementary mechanisms ('directed stimulations' and 'directed associations'). Both processes can take part in the transmission of meanings especially on a group level. It leads to some controversies and ethical problems that appear when the boundary between persuasion and manipulation seems to be blurred.

Keywords: sonic branding, audiomarketing, brand experience, consumer behaviour, Chopin

INTRODUCTION

In the 1960s, the American Marketing Association formulated one of the first scientific definitions of brand, defined as 'a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or service as distinct from those of other sellers'.¹ Contemporary definitions are more complex and indicate an array of diverse functions that a brand can perform. For example, the currently applicable ISO brand standards emphasise that:

Brands are one of the most valuable yet least understood of assets. A brand identifies an entity's goods, services or itself as distinct from what is offered by another entity. A brand can thus be connected to an entity, to a product/service, or to lines/portfolios of products, a city, a region, etc. The offering entity can be commercial or not-for-profit. In all cases, however, the function of the brand is to establish a distinctive identity for the entity in the market. In practice this has traditionally implied communicating the unique benefit(s) of the entity's goods or services as compared to other goods or services that might otherwise be seen as similar, where these benefit(s) may not only be functional but emotional or social as well. Increasingly brands also seek identification with experiences that are connected

with an entity by its actions, services or other operations. These experiences go beyond the mere usage of the product or service and lead to a higher-level engagement with them. Brands ultimately exist in minds of stakeholders as the impressions, benefits, and experiences that they associate with a good or service.²

At the same time, the ISO definition emphasises the components that make up a brand, namely, functional benefits related to the brand's rational elements and symbolic benefits that refer primarily to emotional aspects. It also indicates a fundamental change in the hierarchy of needs accompanying the purchase process, as presented by Philip Kotler, the 'father of marketing'. As early as in the 1970s, he cited the opinion of one shoe manufacturer who bluntly claimed that:

People no longer buy shoes to keep their feet warm and dry. They buy them because of the way the shoes make them feel – masculine, feminine, rugged, different, sophisticated, young, glamorous, "in". Buying shoes has become an emotional experience. Our business now is selling excitement rather than shoes.³

Nowadays, the issue of brand continues to be the subject of scientific, interdisciplinary reflection. An extensive overview of the psychological approach has been presented by Laura Busche in her monograph *Brand Psychology: The Art and Science of Building Strong Brands*.⁴ She indicates different paradigms that shape brand understanding:

Seen through the lens of behavioural psychology, a brand enacts the role of a cue or stimulus. In being exposed to a brand, whether for the first time or not, we activate different kind of associations. From the cognitive perspective, brand exert influence in information processing through the meanings that are captured in the consumers' memory and he or she retrieves in the various phases of the process – from need recognition to post-consumption.

From a more humanistic understanding, a brand presents itself as a vehicle for self-actualisation: its success depends on its ability to take you from an actual state to a desired state [...] Lastly, the sociocultural approach stresses the importance of context in human behavior, with clear implications in building and sustaining brands. In this view, individuals learn through social and cultural interactions, which go on to shape their perception of the brands

¹ American Marketing Association, [website], <http://www.ama.org>, accessed 13 Aug. 2024.

² ISO/DIS 20671, [website], Brand Evaluation – Principles and Fundamentals, <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:20671:dis:ed-1:v1:en>, accessed 12 Aug. 2024.

³ Philip Kotler, 'Atmospherics as a Marketing Tool', *Journal of Retailing*, 49/4 (1973), 55.

⁴ Laura Busche, *Brand Psychology: The Art and Science of Building Strong Brands* (New York, 2024).

presented to them. These same social interactions become the scene for symbolic consumption: consumers acquire products that convey specific meanings that they'd like to associate with their identity.⁵

All of the above-mentioned concepts of brand can actually be seen as a consequence of the development of the modern marketing approach that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. In that period, the saturation of the market with mass-produced goods led to a change in the orientation of companies, which began to focus not only on the production process but also on the customers and their needs.⁶ There were attempts both in theory and practice to identify elements that should be taken into account in the process of planning an effective marketing strategy.⁷ In 1960, the American expert E. Jerome McCarthy proposed what is probably the best known formula of marketing mix, called 4P's,⁸ according to which marketing should be treated as a system of four closely related instruments: product, price, place and promotion. This concept assumes that it is not enough to offer a product at a good price, but it should be made available at the right time and place using properly selected tools of promotion.⁹

With time, more and more importance began to be attached to less tangible mechanisms which build the so-called brand experience and affect the consumer through the emotional sphere. Music has also begun to be treated as a marketing tool in such strategies as sonic branding and audiomarketing. The two activities concern slightly different aspects of the use of music in marketing activities, but they certainly complement each other.

The term sonic branding applies to the strategy of building a brand with sounds and music that aligns perfectly with the brand's attributes.¹⁰ The other strategy, called audiomarketing, consists in deliberate introduction of various types of auditory stimuli (e.g. appropriately programmed music) to a place of sale in order to effectively

influence consumer reactions and decisions (e.g. the pace at which they move, the amount of time they spend in a given place, or the products they choose).¹¹ Both sonic branding and audiomarketing support modern marketing strategies, such as sensory marketing, acting on the targeted recipients' different senses, and experience marketing, aiming to build positive experience.¹² They are intended to support a holistic concept of marketing communication, referred to by Paul Fulberg as 'brand theatre'.¹³ Its aim is to create 'fully immersive brand experiences'¹⁴ based on appropriate emotional responses. Martin Lindstrom, the precursor of the so-called sensory marketing and neuromarketing, explicitly claims that '[t]he path to emotion leads through sensory experience, and emotion is the most important force that pushes us to buy'.¹⁵ Another researcher, Gordon Bruner, stresses the power of music. He argues that '[a]ppropriately structured music acts on the nervous system like a key on a lock, activating brain processes with corresponding emotional reactions'.¹⁶

How can music (including Chopin's music) act on the consumer and be that metaphorical 'key on a lock'? What psychological mechanisms make marketing strategies effective?

MUSIC AND MARKETING IN THE LIGHT OF THE SOCIAL ENHANCEMENT MODEL OF MUSIC

The use of music in marketing strategies such as sonic branding and audiomarketing can be interpreted as a

⁵ Busche, *Brand Psychology*.

⁶ Simon C. Jones and Thomas G. Schumacher, 'Muzak: On Functional Music and Power', *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 9/2 (1992), 156–169.

⁷ John A. Quelch and Katherine E. Jocz, 'Milestones in Marketing', *Business History Review*, 82/4 (2008), 827–838.

⁸ Edmund Jerome McCarthy, *Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach* (Homewood, Illinois, 1960).

⁹ Kazimiera Kotra and Anna Pysz-Radziszewska, *Marketing w teorii i praktyce* (Poznań, 2001).

¹⁰ Daniel M. Jackson and Paul Fulberg, *Sonic Branding. An Introduction* (London, 2003), 149–150.

¹¹ Sylwia Makomaska, 'Audiomarketing – Music as a Tool for Indirect Persuasion', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Musicology*, 10 (2011), 77–86; Sylwia Makomaska, "'Acoustic Wallpaper" as a Tool of "Scientific Management". The Echoes of (Neo-)Taylorism in Public Space Design', *A & P. Art Communication & Popculture*, 3/2 (2017), 63–78; Sylwia Makomaska, *Muzyka na peryferiach uwagi. Od 'musique d'ameublement' do audiomarketingu* (Warsaw, 2021).

¹² Aradhna Krishna, ed., *Sensory Marketing: Research on the Sensuality of Products* (New York, 2011).

¹³ Paul Fulberg, 'Using Sonic Branding in the Retail Environment – an Easy and Effective Way to Create Consumer Brand Loyalty while Enhancing the In-store Experience', *Journal of Consumer Behaviour: An International Research Review*, 3/2 (2003), 193–198.

¹⁴ Fulberg, 'Using Sonic Branding'.

¹⁵ Martin Lindstrom, *Zakupologia. Prawda i kłamstwa o tym, dlaczego kupujemy*, tr. M. Zielińska [orig. title: *Buyology: Truth and Lies about Why We Buy*] (Cracow, 2009), 151.

¹⁶ Gordon C. Bruner, 'Music, Mood, and Marketing', *Journal of Marketing*, 54 (1990), 94.

specific form of so-called pragmatic, effect-oriented musical communication. It will be worthwhile to look at it through the prism of the social enhancement model of music proposed by Steven Brown.¹⁷ This universal scheme can be applied to the analysis of intentional actions undertaken in various cultural contexts. The author distinguishes three main types of processes (marked as 1, 2, 3) that lead to the final outcome, that is, behavioural control (4). Stage 1 refers to the way musical communication is organised. A key role is played by the assumed functions of music, among which Brown distinguishes social/political and economic/industrial ones. The next two stages (2 and 3) are closely related to the process of creating a given message, which obviously involves the issue of musical meaning and semantics.

Communication is interpreted as a multi-level process of transmission of various types of meaning. At the lower level, referred to by Brown as 'directed stimulation', the sender uses music to evoke immediate effects in the area of attention, arousal, emotion, or mood. To achieve these goals, so-called 'formulaic devices' are used, such as scale types, melody types (contour), rhythm types, tempos, volumes, registers and other elements that are characterised by clear communicative qualities and that allow for the effective transmission of intended meanings as well as the effective achievement of intended effects. As Brown notes: '[t]he existence of [such] formulas implies that there is a musical lexicon that is shared between the senders and receivers of musical communication within a culture and that defines the borders of that communication'.¹⁸

The second component includes 'directed associations', which involve such higher-order elements as beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies. This is a process in which 'the sender uses musical devices to produce symbolic associations between musical structure and cultural objects'.¹⁹ This process can be viewed as similar to directed stimulation, but it occurs at a higher level of musical semantics. In the case of marketing strategies, the sender takes advantage of the fact that music is inherently ambiguous, and 'has a sort of "floating intentionality"... it can be thought of as gathering meaning from the context within which it happens and in turn contributing

meaning to those contexts'.²⁰ The second important issue is the understanding of music as 'a culturally defined perceptual artefact, existing in the mind of enculturated listeners (Hood 1982; Lomax 1962; Merriam 1964; Nettl 1983)'. This approach assumes that 'successful communication must involve shared implicit and explicit knowledge structures'.²¹

The intricate network of relationships between various levels of musical hierarchy and broadly understood semantic hierarchy (from the most basic to the most complex aspects) is interpreted in terms of Brown's hierarchical view of musical semantics.²² He assumes that basic structural qualities of music, such as for example tempo, volume, timbre, and melodic contour, may play a role in the formation of meaning on the higher level of hierarchically perceived musical semantics (from emotions and mood through symbols towards attitudes). Thus, all the elements on a higher level contain elements of a lower level, and the possible links and dependencies can vary.

Both models may be useful to an understanding of how Chopin's music can work in marketing strategies such as sonic branding and audiomarketing. It is interesting to look at selected cases of Polish brands that build their campaigns on Chopin's music and analyse them through the prism of Brown's models.

CHOPIN'S MUSIC IN THE 'BRAND THEATRE'. THE CASE OF PENDOLINO

One of the most surprising places where Chopin's music can be heard is the Polish High Speed Train (Pendolino). Since 2014, that is, since this brand entered the Polish market, the beginning of Chopin's Nocturne in E-Flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2 is played at every station. The passengers hear Chopin's music (almost in an original version) as soon as they board the train. It starts just after the announcement: 'If you do not have a valid ticket for your journey, you will be charged an additional fare of PLN'.

An analysis of the Pendolino case through the prism of the social enhancement model of music reveals that

¹⁷ Steven Brown, 'How Does Music Work? Toward a Pragmatics of Musical Communication', in Steven Brown and Ulrik Volgsten, eds, *Music and Manipulation: On the Social Uses and Social Control of Music* (New York, 2006), 1–27.

¹⁸ Brown, 'How', 17.

¹⁹ Brown, 19.

²⁰ Ian Cross, 'Music and Meaning, Ambiguity and Evolution', in Dorothy Miell, Raymond A. MacDonald and David J. Hargreaves, eds, *Musical Communication* (New York 2005), 30.

²¹ Scott D. Lipscomb and David E. Tolchinsky, 'The Role of Music Communication in Cinema', in Dorothy Miell, Raymond A. MacDonald and David J. Hargreaves, eds, *Musical Communication* (New York, 2005), 384.

²² Brown, 'How', 15.

the sender combines two types of mechanisms: directed stimulation and directed association. The first one directly influences the recipients, especially their level of arousal. The sender assumes that, owing to the characteristics of music such as its slow and steady tempo, the recipients will adjust their physiological parameters to the music and their level of arousal will decrease. At least in theory, this should result in a blissful state of relaxation and a sense of comfortable and safe journey should appear.

The very choice of a Chopin nocturne also indicates the directed association strategy. First of all, the sender uses a classical music genre. It arises from the correct assumption that different musical genres can evoke different 'images' of the brand, product or place. It has been confirmed by the results of scientific research carried out in the field of marketing, social psychology of music, and broadly understood business-related scientific research. One of the most interesting conclusions drawn from experimental research is the fact that, for instance, classical music evokes a sophisticated and up-market image, pop music evokes a fun and lively image, whereas easy listening music evokes a rather down-market and 'tacky' (poor taste and quality) image. What is more, on the cognitive and behavioral level classical background music can lead to higher price estimates and can also influence customer spending, because customers decide to buy more expensive products.²³ On the other hand, classical music can also work as a 'repellent' by discouraging less affluent customers.

The effect of the upmarket stereotype of classical music is one of the examples of a psychological process which is known as a knowledge activation effect. It is based on the fact that music (also when it is listened to in a passive way) can activate superordinate knowledge structures which can mediate customers' purchase behaviour.²⁴ This process is based on music's ability to

prioritise certain thoughts and networks of associations which individuals have built up through their experience and which can be shared by large groups of people. This is especially effective in the cultures dominated by the media²⁵. Chopin's Nocturne on Pendolino trains is thus meant to create the image of a premium Polish brand. At the same time, the music piece (repeated over and over again) functions in the passengers' awareness as a jingle representing the brand.

CHOPIN'S MUSIC IN THE 'BRAND THEATRE'. THE CASE OF CHOPIN PERFUMES

In 2011 the Polish brand Miraculum launched the series of Chopin Perfumes for men, licensed by the Fryderyk Chopin Institute.²⁶ As we read in the promotional materials of the brand available on its website: 'This unique [men's] collection of three fragrances ['Op. 9', 'Op. 25', and 'Op. 28'] combines the atmosphere of classical music with modern minimalism, where the power of scent is equal to that of sound'.²⁷ Analysis of a commercial characteristic of this campaign²⁸ shows that in this case the reference to Chopin is literal. It appears both in the verbal, audio and visual layers. Chopin's Nocturne in E-Flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2 again becomes a constant element of promotional campaign, now present also on the website. What is more, high level of consistency in marketing communication can be observed. The visual layer is dominated by black, usually associated with classics and the stability of certain canons. In marketing activity, it is generally used to emphasise uniqueness, elegance and prestige. Again, the broadcaster builds a highly consistent image of a Polish premium brand, which is in a way reflected in the rather high prices of individual products. Marketing materials available on the brand's website are also remarkably

23 One of the first experiments that confirmed this observation was carried out at a British student cafeteria by Adrian North and David J. Hargreaves, 'The Effect of Music on Atmosphere and Purchase Intentions in a Cafeteria', *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 28/24 (1998), 2254–2273, and in a wine shop by Charles S. Areni and David Kim, 'The Influence of Background Music on Shopping Behavior: Classical versus Top-Forty Music in a Wine Store', *Advances in Consumer Research*, 20 (1993), 336–340. More details in Makomaska, *Muzyka na peryferiach uwagi*, 185–223.

24 Colin Martindale and Kathleen Moore, 'Priming, Prototypicality, and Preference', *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, 14/4 (1988), 661–670; Adrian North and David J. Hargreaves, *The Social and Applied Psychology of Music* (Oxford, 2008).

25 Sylwia Makomaska, '(Shared) Meaning in the Strategy of Audiomarketing – Theory and Practice', *Journal of Interdisciplinary Music Studies*, 9 (2019), 18–31, <http://musicstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/JIMS-19SI-02-Makomaska.pdf>, accessed 10 Aug. 2024.

26 The Fryderyk Chopin Institute Store, [website], <https://sklep.nifc.pl/en/kategoria/228-kosmetyki>, accessed 14 Aug. 2024.

27 Chopin Perfumes, [website], <https://chopinperfumes.com/en/man-collection/>, accessed 13 Aug. 2024.

28 Chopin Perfume for men – a commercial exemplary of this campaign, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJ93B31AtuM>, accessed 14 Aug. 2024.

consistent. Specific slogans referring to the musical roots of the brand dominate, e.g. 'Chopin – the symphony of sound and smell'; 'Chopin perfume – the classics with a touch of modernity', 'Chopin perfume – elegant fragrances for every occasion'. The promotional materials that were available on the Polish website previously stated that it is 'an original fragrance inspired by the music of the greatest Polish composer, which for years has been ranked among the Premium Class. Intensive and long-lasting, it is dedicated to strong and self-confident men who nurture their romantic character deep inside'.²⁹ The current product description is a bit different:

Inspired by the three musical forms typical of the masterful work of Frédéric Chopin. The Chopin brand proposes intriguing and original fragrances that express everything that the modern man follows, giving a sense of discreet luxury and perfect balance.

Moreover, they are dense and long-lasting, which is due not only to the ingredients used, but also to the concentration of the eau de parfum. Although they are separate entities, they are composed in such a way that anyone can creatively combine them on the skin. A symbol of perfection and harmony.³⁰

In 2023, the Chopin Perfume brand expanded its offer with a line of perfumes dedicated to women. As explained in the promotional materials:

The CHOPIN brand opens another chapter in the history of its luxury fragrances with the launch of a collection for women, which is inspired by the muses of the eminent piano virtuoso Frédéric Chopin. The unique line of three fragrances was composed from carefully selected ingredients of the highest quality. Developed with precision and craftsmanship, it captures the unique personalities of the women who played important roles in the life of Fryderyk Chopin [Maria Wodzińska, Constance Gładkowska and George Sand – note by S.M.].³¹

The famous Polish pop singer Natalia Kukulska became their ambassador. She was chosen for a reason. August 2020 saw the release of her thirteenth studio album *Czule struny* [Tender Strings]³², featuring compositions by Fryderyk Chopin arranged for voice. This time, the brand decided to use three intense colours

in the visual layer: red – reserved for the 'George Sand' perfume,³³ pink – linked to the 'Marie'³⁴ collection, and yellow for 'Constance'.³⁵ As experts in colour psychology emphasise, these colours can evoke different associations. Red is a sign of attractiveness, sexual desire, arousal, and excitement. Yellow suggests associations with happiness, excitement, summer, and arousal. Pink means sophistication, charm, glamour, femininity, and calm.³⁶ The music in the commercials was probably intended to emphasise these differences. The 'George Sand' collection is accompanied by Waltz in A Minor, B. 150, Op. Posth.,³⁷ and the 'Constance' perfume – by modern orchestral music, probably inspired by Chopin.³⁸ Even a perfunctory analysis shows that in the case of series for women, the company decided to change brand profile, although the strategy is more chaotic and unpredictable. At the same time, the brand continues to use Nocturne E flat major Op. 9 No. 2 as auditory background on the website, regardless of whether the given tab is dedicated to the men's or the women's series.

FINAL REMARKS

Chopin's music is becoming one of the most important parts of the 'brand theatre' created by contemporary Polish companies. Both case studies show that Chopin's Nocturne in E flat major, Op. 9 No. 2 is meant as a social construct 'gathering meaning from the context

²⁹ Chopin Perfumes, [archive website], <https://chopinperfumes.com>, accessed 8 Dec. 2021.

³⁰ Chopin Perfumes, [website], <https://chopinperfumes.com/en/product/op-25/>, accessed 13 Aug. 2024.

³¹ Chopin Perfumes, [website], <https://chopinperfumes.com/en/woman-collection/>, accessed 13 Aug. 2024.

³² *Czule struny*, [website], <https://www.nataliakukulska.pl/bio/20-solowe/sub-solowe/3866-czule-struny>, accessed 8 Aug. 2024.

³³ 'It is a composition full of passion and passion [sic!]. The fragrance opens with the freshness of citrus in a herbal accompaniment, flowers combined with sparks of resins, an intense core of woody notes, crowned with sensual amber. The character of the whole is underlined by strong vanilla and musk accents', Chopin Perfumes, [website], <https://chopinperfumes.com/en/product/george-sand/>, accessed 13 Aug. 2024.

³⁴ 'A sensual composition, tempting with juicy pear, apricot blossom and mandarin. The fragrance closes with soft musk and ambergris'. Chopin Perfumes, [website], <https://chopinperfumes.com/en/product/marie/>, accessed 13 Aug. 2024.

³⁵ 'A fresh composition that tempts the senses with a blend of juicy fruits, aromatic flowers and an enveloping musk'. Chopin Perfumes, [website], <https://chopinperfumes.com/en/product/constance/>, accessed 13 Aug. 2024.

³⁶ More details in Busche, *Brand Psychology*.

³⁷ Chopin Perfumes for women – commercial 1 available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCVjaEHRHTY>, accessed 10 Aug. 2024.

³⁸ Chopin Perfumes for women – commercial 2 available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlxvGu66BRc>, accessed 10 Aug. 2024.

within which it happens and in turn contributing meaning to those contexts'.³⁹ Both examples confirm that in modern society music informs most everyday activities. Technological progress in sound recording and reproduction techniques in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has contributed to the consolidation of a 'new sound culture',⁴⁰ characterised by 'acousmatic listening'⁴¹ to sounds separated from their original source and context. On the one hand, music constitutes a vital element of the individually shaped human acoustic environment. On the other hand, it appears in the broadly understood public space, frequently as 'acoustic wallpaper' imposed on those present. In the latter case, music usually functions on the periphery of the listeners' attention. Because of this specific manner of perception, it can become a very effective tool of hidden persuasion or even manipulation.⁴²

Both analyses show how Chopin's music is used to create the image of a top-shelf Polish company. Irrespective of the evaluation of such actions' marketing effectiveness, some receivers will undoubtedly experience various aesthetic and ethical concerns. Consumers are usually unaware that they are subjected to manipulative activities. Among other things, because of its hidden, manipulative and persuasive function, the presence of background music in public places is so controversial. In this context it is not surprising that some organisations fight for a ban on background music. In the 1990s, for instance, a UK organisation called 'Pipedown' launched a campaign for freedom from so-called piped music. The organisation is supported by many famous personalities from the world of music, such as Julian Lloyd Webber (brother of the composer Andrew Lloyd Webber), Lesley Garrett, and Simon Rattle. 'Pipedown' invites into its ranks people who:

[...] hate unwanted piped background music (also called piped music, canned music, elevator music, muzac etc.). Do you loathe its incessant jingle? Do you detest the way you can't escape it? (in pubs, restaurants and hotels; in the plane, train or bus; down the phone; ruining decent television programmes; adding to the overall levels of noise pollution in public places).⁴³

³⁹ Cross, 'Music', 30.

⁴⁰ Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, eds, *Audio Culture, Revised Edition: Readings in Modern Music* (London, New York, Sydney and Delhi, 2017).

⁴¹ Pierre Schaeffer, *Traité des objets musicaux* (Paris, 1966).

⁴² Makomaska, 'Audiomarketing', 77–86; Makomaska, *Muzyka*.

⁴³ Pipedown, [website], <https://pipedown.org.uk/about-pipedown/>, accessed 14 Aug. 2024.

The debate concerning the presence of Chopin's music in marketing campaigns turns up like a bad penny during the International Chopin Piano Competitions, which take place in Warsaw every five years. A perfect example in this context is an article by Roman Pawłowski titled 'Pendolino, or how to ride the Chopin horse to death', which came out in 2015:

A traveller going from Krakow to Gdynia will hear the Nocturne in E-Flat Major twelve times. If they are unlucky and travel to the seaside from Silesia, Chopin's chords will attack them at fourteen stops. After such a dose, the 'charming tunefulness' and 'exquisite fluency of melody' that critics rave about will evaporate. Even the most beautiful music becomes torture when you have to listen to it over and over again. In addition, Chopin on the Pendolino train serves as a background for a charming message about the high penalties for travelling without a valid ticket. Cascades of notes flow in the air, black and white keys flash in my imagination, and I nervously check whether I have brought the ticket printout with me. For the rest of my life, I will associate Chopin with ticket control.⁴⁴

Hopefully this would not be the dominant association in the Polish society.

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⁴⁴ Roman Pawłowski, 'Pendolino, czyli jak zajeżdźć Chopina', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Warszawa, 9 Oct. 2015, <https://warszawa.wyborcza.pl/warszawa/7,34862,18994129,pendolino-czyli-jak-zajezdzc-chopina-felieton-pawlowskiego.html>, accessed 14 Aug. 2024.

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