

An Introduction to Music as Atmosphere

PRODUCTION

Fashion shows are similar in some ways to theatre performances – the stage is very different in shape and layout, but they share some things in common. Like a playwright or director introducing a new work to an audience – for a designer, it's a way for them to show off their hard work and their creativity... and of course, it's also a celebration. A fashion show is often the first introduction of a long anticipated new line of clothing that the designer has probably worked on for many long hours. And, it is entertainment too – especially for the audience watching the runway. Fashion critics, movie stars, musicians, reporters, writers, other designers, store owners and clothing distributors, artists, and others can be seen in attendance at fashion shows (especially once a designer has established some reputation and prestige).

Of course, you already know that the designer makes use of colors and patterns, textures, cuts, angles, shapes and seams in the clothing they design. They also rely on the model's movement to evoke an attitude, and hopefully, get a favorable reaction from the people in the audience.

EXPLORING ENVIRONMENTS AND ATMOSPHERE

But in addition to the actual clothes (and the models wearing them), designers also use other important techniques to dazzle and impress their audience. The *visual setting* of the "runway" is, of course, very important – and many fashion shows use custom props – much like theatre scenery, to create an atmosphere. The creative directors (often one or several people working for the designer) also generally pay a lot of attention to lighting – since lighting can bring out texture and color of the clothing. These elements are also used for creating a mood or atmosphere.

Finally, there is one more crucial element that really ties everything together in a fashion show – that's the MUSIC. Music often serves as the invisible glue that pulls the show together - creating a unique environment that hopefully compliments the clothing. It's like a soundtrack to a movie—you don't necessarily notice it consciously while you're watching the film – but it does so much to create an emotional response. Music with lyrics can be used too – but designers are usually careful to make sure the words have some connection with the design – even if it's a subtle one. Music also provides another important function – providing a rhythm for the models as they walk. Music should be chosen very carefully though – because music can make or break the mood of a show.

CREATIVE DIRECTION

Now we're going to focus on a few simple elements that most creative directors use to choose the proper piece of music.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PICKING MUSIC FOR YOUR DESIGN:

- 1) IMPRESSION/ MOOD / EMOTION - does the song suggest an emotion or feeling that blends well with the overall theme of your design?
- 2) PACE or TEMPO -- can the model walk comfortably to this music? Does the pace suit the mood?

CREATIVE DIRECTION, CONTINUED

- 3) Does the song / group / artist have a character/image that it will harmonize with YOUR image? Or will it distract from your image? For example, a song by a modern TOP 40 pop artist automatically has an "image" that comes with it.. Especially since their videos have probably also been seen by many people.. will this distract from your design? If so you might want to choose something a bit less "obvious" and popular. Instrumentals and dance tracks are often the way to go since they don't come with the "baggage" that a pop song does. However, as you'll see in the examples provided, some pop songs also work well.

HOW TO FIND MUSIC

A good way to find music for your runway show is to check out what other designers are using.

PLEASE GO TO THIS BLOG AND READ THE POST ENTITLED: "MUSIC USED IN SOME OF THIS YEAR'S BIGGEST FASHION SHOWS"

<http://turquoisekid.blogspot.com/2012/11/draft.html>

If you've got your own music collection - browse through your own digital music collection and click through tracks (while thinking about the ideas: IMPRESSION/ MOOD / EMOTION, PACE or TEMPO, and IMAGE). Once you find something that incorporates and addresses those ideas (and that you like!) make a note of it below. Each designer should choose up to three songs.

Once you've picked a song(s) please jot down the following information:

I. ARTIST

SONG TITLE

Please describe the TEMPO of the song (is it FAST or SLOW or MEDIUM paced)

Finally, in a few words or a short sentence, please describe the MOOD (emotion, color, feeling "vibe") that this song conveys.
