

Music Branding: Claudio Ordaz talks about the podcast's theme tune with Eila Burns

Welcome to this podcast series on Solving the Global Learning crisis. We will discover how Ethiopia, Nepal and Mozambique are reshaping their higher education programs in response to the changing demands of the 21st century.

Eila: Hello, I am Eila Burns from the School of Professional Teacher Education at JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland. Today we talk about music branding for podcasts, and that is quite an interesting area to look at. With me here is a great musician Claudio Ordaz, and he will talk about his experience to create podcast music. So welcome to the program, Claudio.

Claudio: Thank you for having me, Eila. It's a great pleasure to be here with you today.

Eila: Well let's start with you, can you tell us a little bit about your background, you are a musician. What kind of musical background do you actually have?

Claudio: First of all, I am a native of Mexico, and I come from a family of musicians and I am a performer of classical music. I left Mexico more than 25 years ago, and I have been a musician for over 30 years now and I have had the privilege to leave and perform as a musician in different countries conducting orchestras, playing with different orchestras and chamber music. And also I've been teaching violin, orchestra and chamber music for several years now.

Eila: Very impressive background on music - how did this long extensive experience help you to create podcast music or did it not?

Claudio: Although I am an experienced music performer and teacher, creating music for a podcast using different music software has been completely unfamiliar. My experience with music had been until this project specifically in actual contact with playing the real instruments, performing or teaching. My knowledge of music computer programs and applications software such as Finale, Sibelius or MuseScore, which are the basic programs that we use to notate music when we want to compose or make an orchestration. Those are the basic programs what we use when we write music.

This application had covered about 20 years of my needs, as I mentioned, when it came to composing, orchestrating or just simply notating different exercises that I make for my students. And in other words, these applications can only write down the music notes into the paper in a form of a score or partiture. So that's basically it but making music for podcasts has been completely new thing for me. Using the software that can create music for a podcast is, basically I have no experience (laughing) for creating music for podcasts. So this journey or this project has been a wonderful experience for me to learn, something new.

Eila: So how did this music or podcast music creation then start?

Claudio: Last autumn I had the pleasure to be invited by you to participate in this group in branding the music for this podcast and, being aware of my low experience with podcasts, like I had mentioned, my non existing knowledge about branding the music and creating it. At first, I thought, oh my goodness, what am I going to do, I have no new experience!

I had only listened to some podcasts on a few occasions and the topics were always related to classical music performers. So, I started immediately reading about podcasts and I tried to figure out how I can create music for a podcast. At first, I thought I could play my violin and record my playing and later it came to my mind the idea of playing together with my wife on the piano, since she is a pianist, but neither of these two possibilities seemed suitable, and the idea of having professional musicians playing real instruments was also not feasible, since it would mean that I would need to hire them and that would have been a little bit outside of budget. (laughing)

But nevertheless, I continued to inform myself more about how to create music for a podcast, and soon I found that it can be done with software such as GarageBand, Cakewalk Logic, among others. And I immediately started looking into these applications. At first, I thought it would be easy to use them since I am an experienced musician. But to my surprise, learning how to use this software took me several days suddenly, using these softwares was many times more complicated than my ordinary work reading a musical score for a Symphony Orchestra that sometimes involves 80 musicians. So, it was not that simple as I thought at the beginning.

Eila: Sounds like really hard work. Let's play one example of the music you created.

(Music playing, including for example flutes.)

Eila: So, what happened after this sample?

Claudio: The first day was a bit frustrating since I am a bit slow with technology. But I decided to get in contact with a friend in Mexico, because I thought he might know, how to use these programs that I've mentioned before, and fortunately he had experience with one of them with one of the programs. So, we set up a time to meet in Zoom and he gave me a basic presentation on how to use the Garage Band, which, together with Logic, are the ones that I have worked with so far.

Like I mentioned before, it took me days to learn how to produce a tune, and I had to check several tutorials available on the Internet. And in order to use Logic for example, I have also watched tutorial videos and just simply spending a lot of time experimenting and trying these programs. What is an advantage, I believe, obviously, is when it comes to rhythms, melodies or harmonies and I can understand easily, quickly, how to manipulate or understanding the basic elements of music.

Just thinking that perhaps our audience can be young students, and I was thinking how I could reach them, how this could relate to a young audience interested about aspects of education, and you know, issues like that.

Eila: Then, as you said, you created another one. Let's listen to the next piece of another sample.

(Happy music playing.)

Eila: So that was the second sample you created, what happened after this? You created these two samples and what was the next step?

Claudio: Then the next step after creating these two samples was sharing these samples of music with my group. Certainly, right away I received feedback from them. And the feedback was perhaps that there was no connection - my group was not exactly happy (laughing) about these two samples. My group didn't find the connection between the music and the countries that we are working with,

Mozambique and Ethiopia. And certainly, they were right, perhaps the music is too distant from the culture that represents these countries.

Then one of the members of our group suggested that if we create rather one music sample for both intro and outro, would be perhaps more suitable than have two completely different and contrasting samples of music. And I could right away, understand the point so, they also suggested right away that why not creating music for music that connects better to the countries that we work with, and I immediately started working on the new sample.

And I took this as if I would have been hired so that I wanted to make my group happy, so that hopefully our podcasts is listened to by a lot of people.

Eila: This has been very interesting. I think we will leave the listeners, who have been waiting for the tune by playing the final version of your podcast music. By the way, are you happy with the final version, before we play it?

Claudio: Definitely, I'm pleased with the final sample. I think it sort of transports us to and brings us closer to the music and culture of these countries. I am happy that my group is also satisfied, they were happy about it and that it relates to the cultures of these countries and what I am especially happy about is to having participated in this project, and I thank you Eila you for inviting me to this project.

Eila: Thank you very much Claudio, it was a real pleasure to talk to you and now let's tune into this happy music of the final version of podcast music. Thank you again.

Claudio: Thank you for having me Eila!

(Happy music with different drums and flutes playing.)

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