



Josh Rabinowitz

SVP, Director of Music Grey Worldwide Advertising

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A music teacher, a street musician, a freelance trombone player—those are just a few of the many roles that Josh Rabinowitz took on in pursuit of his ideal musical venture. “I always wanted to stay involved in music, because it is my passion,” Josh explains. After receiving degrees from Tufts University and the New England Conservatory of Music, Josh spent most of his time playing with his band. “But that didn’t really pay the bills, and I thought, ‘I need to start growing up,’” he says. “So I searched for a job that I thought would be appropriate.” Josh began sending resumes to record labels, publishers, booking agencies, management companies, and studios. He kindly related to *Music Alive!* how he finally found his cool music career in advertising.

With all your music experience, how did you end up in advertising?

I was getting a lot of entry-level offers. I knew I had to pay my dues, but being 30 years old, I wanted something a little less on the junior side. Someone suggested I reach out to ad agencies and music houses. So I spent a few years at a couple of music houses working on films and TV commercials. Then I decided to become the guy who supervises and gives out the work instead of the one who does all the work. I moved on to an ad agency, and then there was an opportunity here at Grey to head their music department—and I’ve been here 2 years.

What keeps you in advertising?

Music in advertising has progressed because the music business is shifting away from being just a record business. Today, advertising and TV are great ways of getting music out there. It’s been cool to be on the forefront of how that’s all integrating with the music industry at large.

What are your main responsibilities?

I oversee a department of six people. We guide the choices of all the music that goes into our television and radio ads. As we’re hired to service our clients, we offer them as many different and interesting music possibilities as we can.

What’s the process of placing music in an ad?

Sometimes the music comes first. Other times we create storyboards and we pitch those concepts to our client; then the commercial is shot,

and then the music is selected. The projects that communicate the best message and make the biggest impression are the ones where the music was conceived early on in the process and where it is fully integrated into the commercial. Music is an important part of the process, and great conceptual and visual ideas are often inspired by interesting musical ideas.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

One of my favorite things is to rearrange a song in a distinctive way, to go with the ad concept. There’s something really spectacular about redoing a song in a way that is dynamic and significant to the brand.

What do you find most difficult?

People are saying that the 30-second ad is dying because everyone is DVR-ing and fast-forwarding through commercials. There’s a challenge in advertising to make things entertaining, not just sales-oriented. People want cool, interesting stuff. They don’t want the same old thing over and over again. For me, it’s really about [bringing a concept to life] instead of just throwing in a cool piece of music.

What makes you good at your job?

I think I have an understanding of everything that is necessary for the process of making commercial music: the business aspects, union regulations, publishing, royalties, and the music production. I’m also kind of a music geek in terms of music trivia. I just have a musical approach to everything and try to be musical in every way that I can.

—VERONICA DOMINGUEZ-GARCIA

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