



Case Study: Nike ??? music conversations in original music production (T&F Insights)

Description



Brand



Territory

Japan

Awards



CLIO
A W A R D S



CICLOPE



The case

Turning handclaps into a full, award-winning score

Nike asked for an original track to accompany a film featuring renowned hip hop choreographer and dancer Koharu Sugawara, celebrating the Air Force 1 collection. The director, Tsuge-san, had a very precise musical vision: rhythmic handclaps only, as minimal as possible.

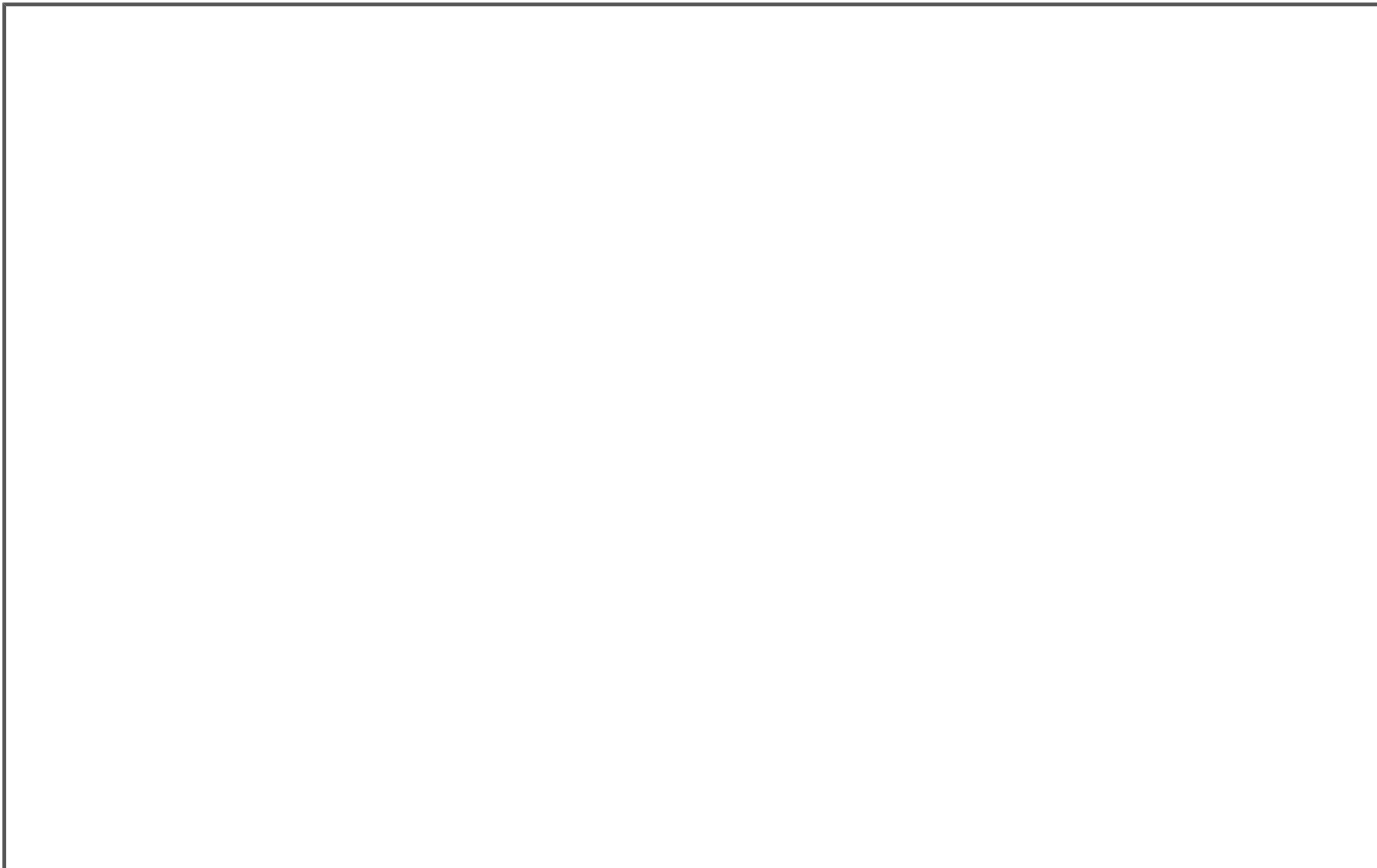
Minimalism in music can be harder than maximalism. With only handclaps, the risk was a track that felt thin or disconnected from the choreography. Tracks & Fields saw the challenge not as saying 'no' to the idea, but as finding the absolute minimum set of additional elements that could make the score effective, while staying true to the director's intent and bridging the language gap between a Japanese director and English-speaking composers Michael and Christian.

What our infrastructure unlocked

The process looked like this:

- **Start from the pure brief:** The first production step was just a handclap beat; exactly what Tsuge’san had imagined. This became the foundation and reference, not something to be overwritten.
- **Use shared language to guide tiny additions:** With the Music Language Map, the team forced themselves to describe every proposed addition in clear, agreed terms (e.g., tension, warmth, propulsion, grit), rather than vague “more energy” or “cooler sound”. This allowed micro-layering: tiny percussive or tonal elements added only when they had a clearly articulated purpose.
- **Build in very short feedback loops:** Instead of long rounds with big changes, they worked in tight iterations: add one small element, share, discuss using mapped vocabulary, keep or remove. The track was layered together step by step, letting the music itself show whether the language and intent were aligned.

Production steps video (from pure handclaps to final film, with keywords for each layer):



The result was a score that still felt minimal and handclap-driven, but now had enough structure, groove and character to carry Koharu Sugawara’s performance and Nike’s brand energy.

The result

Because Tracks & Fields's infrastructure focused on music language and translation, not just production, Nike and the director could keep the minimal concept intact while arriving at a track that truly worked on screen. The final film's music was recognised widely, winning several awards for Best Original Music, including a Bronze at Adfest, and earning shortlists at Cannes Lions, Spikes, Ciclope Asia and the Music & Sound Awards.

If you want original music that stays true to bold, specific creative ideas without getting lost in translation, Tracks & Fields can bridge the gap between client language and composer language: so minimal, maximal, or anything in between becomes executable.