

David Della Santa Launches Volume Music + Sound in SF

Composer/Sound Designer David Della Santa has launched Volume Music + Sound. He returns to his native San Francisco following a successful run in New York, where he worked with Tonefarmer. Della Santa (pict., r.) has become known for creating current, alternative and edgy material that sounds licensed, yet is scored to picture. His notable work includes Tylenol "In Concert" (Deutch/NY), Gatorade "X Factor" (Element 79/Chicago), Boost Mobile "RIP" (Berlin Cameron + Partners/NY), Violence Policy Center "Bullet Factory" (Lunar Fish/SF), and Discovery Channel "Shark Week" (Bayles Cronin/ATL).



"I got my start while talking music with a couple guys at a party eleven years ago," Della Santa recalled. "I didn't know it, but they were creatives at McCann SF." Two weeks later, McCann producer Gary Krieg called with a job. That spot won a New York Festivals Award, and Della Santa began putting his stamp on ad work. One of the first composers in San Francisco to do current alternative music for ads, Della Santa was also propelled by an embrace of computer and electronic music in the ad scene. He thrived in San Francisco with his own company, Rebar Sound, until "the dot bomb". A move to New York, and Tonefarmer, followed.

"New York was a great place to work and an important piece of the puzzle when it comes to understanding the advertising industry as a whole," the composer reflected. "I loved the people at Tonefarmer." Ultimately, however, Della Santa envisioned a return to his roots. "I am really enjoying working for myself again, and, of course, the change in weather has been refreshing."

Della Santa described Volume Music + Sound as "a small, personal SF company with a NY way of composing/producing. We have a NY approach in that we deliver several options and ideas. At the same time, we are small and personal in that our clients can give creative direction directly to the composers who will be writing their tracks. We understand what you are talking about even when you don't," he mused.

With AICP, SAG, AFM, and ASCAP affiliations, Volume is also home to two frequent collaborators: composers/producers Dan Miller and Joe Gore. Both have their roots playing with bands and artists, Miller with They Might Be Giants, and Gore with the likes of Tom Waits, Courtney Love, Tracy Chapman, and Primus.

"We share an immense pride in the quality of our work," Della Santa said. "It could be a hard-rocking motocross ad or a warm and fuzzy spot for peanut butter, we're going to

deliver creative you can be proud of." He offered this in reflection on the "real music" style of composition and sound design: "Today, music is very accessible to everyone. There are tons of cool indie music bands and songs that clients can access - and they want that sound for their spots. But most of those bands or artists can't score to picture, nor do they understand the emotion of picture reacting to sound. And most commercial music composers don't understand the subtle textures of the untrained indie musicians. We get it. We do both. And we make every other genre of music sound cool." While Della Santa is open to adding composer/partners both on the West Coast and East Coast, he said he is committed to maintaining a streamlined operation that takes the current economic climate and budgetary constraints into consideration. "I'm finding that there's attractiveness for our clients in a company that is more about the work than the overhead."

Tinkering away on a piano his mom bought for him, Della Santa is a self-taught musician whose journey began with a single objective: "I just had to learn to play some ELO," he laughed. His learn-by-doing philosophy has worked well, translating into awards, inclusion in the AICP/MoMA show, frequent positioning in the SHOOT Top Ten Tracks list, and work for national clients such as Microsoft, HP (McCann-Erickson/SF), Sprint (GSP/SF), AT&T (GSDM/Austin), among others.

Flexing his creative muscles beyond the ad world, Della Santa has recorded with his NY-based band, Machines Kill Music, an indie rock ensemble with an electro edge, for which he writes the music, plays keyboards, and provides vocals. The band's music is available on iTunes and MySpace. He enjoys that experience, but prefers his gig at Volume Music + Sound. "How else could I get paid to rock with out being stuck on the back of a bus with five smelly dudes for months at a time?" he wondered. "And I'm too shy for groupies."