



ESSENCE OF MUSIC: A STUDY

Arts

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ABSTRACT

Some scholars define the components of music as (1) Sound, (2)Harmony, (3) Melody and (4) Rhythm. Sound is the basic component of music which carries with it the texture of music. To make the piece of music pleasant the multiple pitches played by different instruments and the voice of the singer are always played in unison which defines the harmony in music. Of course, there are exceptions when the notes or pitches are not played in a harmonious way such as in offbeat music. Melody is the tune of a song or a music piece composed with different pitches played in succession in combination with a rhythm. Rhythm is the clock of the music, the time-keeper that controls the duration of each part of the music piece. It sets the timeframe for different notes to be played and at what specific time intervals, and also determines when to repeat the sequence within the piece of music. Michael Drake in his book 'The Role of the Drums' says, "Rhythm is the heartbeat of life. Rhythm is a universal vibrational language.

KEYWORDS

Odissi, Music, Antiquity, Dance, Song, Utkal, Gamak, Kalinga, Raga, Saint Poets, Lord Jagannath, Sound, Harmony, Melody, Rhythm.

The drum's sonorous voice expresses the basic rhythm patterns: the tides, the phases of the moon, the changing seasons, and the myriad cycles of life." Rhythm also controls the silence introduced in between the notes that makes the piece of music pleasant. This alternative discretion of components of music is more or less an abstract of the components of music described earlier. Ancient philosophers like Confucius and Plato have said that listening to music is good for mental health, According to Plato, Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything. Music is the language of emotions and different emotions create different moods. Hence, music creates different moods in the mind of the listener depending on the type of music played or recited. Music can also transform one type of mood of the listener to another say from a sad mood to a joyous one. Listening to certain type of music reduces anxiety, boosts happiness and eradicates depression. Music makes us dance to its rhythm and tune. Once immersed in music we are listening to, we start clapping or tapping our toes. It brings tears to our eyes and even brings back our memories associated with that particular tune. Some say, at times even sad music lifts our mood. Such is the power of music and its association with mood. Responsiveness of the brain to music is developed as early as in the childhood days of the human beings and this quality grows with its growth, though it is not known if it goes on increasing throughout its lifespan or stabilises at a point before the end.

The creation of mood in human minds by music and its magnitude are quite subjective in nature, being different for different listeners. The degree of response to the music for creating a mood depends on the degree of its perception by the individual listeners. The more the perception the more is the intensity of the created mood, or swing of the mood from the existing to the new. Cultural background and individual characteristics of the listener also affect the perception of a particular genre of music.

The mood created by a piece of music generally depends on certain features that can be broadly divided into four types like, (1) Structural Features, (2) Performance Features, (3) Listener Features and (4) External Features. The individual components of each of these features of music and their characteristics with reference to the mood they create are stated below.

- (1) Structural Features: The components of Structural Features have already been described earlier and are listed here again in a slight different way.
 - i) Tempo The speed or pace of the music piece. It can be lust or slow. It is also known as Laya. A fast tempo represents happiness, excitement, anger and a slow tempo creates sadness or serenity.
 - ii) Mode — The type of scale or tonality, a combination of notes which can be of a major or a minor tonality. Major tonality expresses joy and happiness while the minor tonality depicts sadness.
 - (iii) Loudness — The intensity, amplitude or volume of notes. It can be high or low. High volume represents anger, power while low volume represents humbleness.
 - (iv) Melody — The linear successive arrangement of notes in a music

piece or the tune defines melody. In a performing group it can be complementary or contrasting to the group. Complementary melody projects happiness, relaxation and serenity while contrasting or clashing melody creates excitement.

- V) Rhythm — The pattern or the beat of the music piece. It can be first or slow or a combination of both. It also can be a symmetrical or regular pattern or be asymmetric with an irregular pattern or a variable one. Rhythm is one of the most important factors of music in creating a mood as it quickly induces physical involvement and expressions in the listener. A fast, consistent and smooth rhythm represents happiness and peace while a rough and irregular pattern creates amusement and also uneasiness. A varied pattern of rhythm is associated with joy.

As stated by Krushna Das in Geeta Prakash and Sangeeta Muktavali of Harishchandra the Tala in Odissi Music is devised as per the rules of Bhatata Muni and they are Aadi, Yati, Nisar, Adda tala, Tripata, Rupaka, Jhampaka or Jhampa, Mantha and Ektal. There are also some other contemporary Talas used in performance of Odissi Music in Odisha are Adatali, Athatali, Kuduk, Sariman, Pahapata, Jhula, GajaJhampa, Khemta, Kaharba, Tetola (Tritala), Chautala and Dhamara.

- (2) Performance Features: Performance features are related to the performer itself and the manner the performer executes his recitation. It is mainly of two types:
 - (i) Performance skill of the performer — The ability and appearance of the performer including his technical skill, reputation and physical appearance.
 - (ii) State of the Performer — It relates to the on-spot motivation of the performer towards the presentation, his or her perfect interpretation to the listeners and also to his or her stage presence.
- (3) Listeners' Features: It is related to the individual and social identity of the listener like,
 - (i) Personality or personal character of the listener
 - (ii) Age of the listener like being a child, young, adult or old.
 - (iii) Knowledge or familiarity of the listener to the type of music
 - (iv) The extent of motivation of the listener at the time towards the type of music being performed.
- (4) External features or Contextual Features: Music performed at a place should be proper for the type of location and the occasion for which it is being performed. Hence the external features those affect the perception of the music by the listener are
 - i) The location where the performance is being executed.
 - (ii) On the occasion for which it is being performed.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz says, "The pleasure we obtain from music comes from counting, but counting unconsciously. Music is nothing but unconscious arithmetic." The statement clearly indicates that music or the musical notes and other artefacts are primarily based on mathematical principles and can be investigated in an organised manner using experimental scientific and numerical methods. The scholars say that the total degree or amplitude of emotion experienced by the listener to create the desired mood in his or her mind for a

specific type of music is the product of all these above-mentioned features with proper weightage assigned to each of it. It can be expressed as stated below.

The figures shown within brackets below are the values after application of the respective weight factor.

The mood created by a performance is greatly enhanced by the use of lyrics in a language comprehended by the listener. Again, proper physical expressions, like movement of the hand, facial expressions, etc. made by the performer during the recitation help to enhance the mood further. When the listener is engrossed in the music, he or she merges himself or herself completely with the performing group and transforms itself to the same psychological state as that of the performer and starts to show reciprocating physical activities like tapping its toe and clapping to the rhythm of the music or singing aloud or silently along with the performer. At this moment the listener losing his individual mood gets merged with the environment or the mood of the performers, the performance and the mass of the audience. He loses his individual identity. As per T. S. Eliot, "You are the music while the music lasts."

Listening to music activates the pleasure centres of the brain by making the body of the listener releasing and balancing the required hormones, lowering the blood pressure and stress factors. Hence, the main motivation for the human beings for listening to music is seeking pleasure and for creation of the desired mood or to change the prevailing mood.

Every event that occurs in one's life can be associated with a particular tune or music, be it in the conscious or sub-conscious state of the mind. As said by Donna de Matteo in 'Interviews with Contemporary Women Playwrights,' "The wonderful thing about music is that it immediately evokes certain eras of one's life, brings you back to where you've been, even if you don't want to go there." Hence, most love music, be it instrumental, vocal or an ensemble, as almost all the listeners are able to associate themselves with it and with their mind. In the words of Ludwig van Beethoven, "Music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life." Music just not entertains the audience. Music heals, energizes, surprises, soothes, delights and inspires the listener and the listener feels connected to it. Tribal people play music and dance to its tune celebrating every event in their life just to create the mood proper for the celebration. Since the basic emotions and the respective moods are all the same throughout the world, the reaction to music is universal in nature. A group of people listening or participating in a musical performance feels more united and their team work is improved and at the same time they feel less fatigue. That is why the sailors, soldiers or labourers sing while doing difficult jobs. We have also seen in classic movies slaves singing in unison to a rhythm while rowing a war ship. It improves their united effort, controls the timing and lessens their fatigue. Getting people involved in music is the best way to make them move together, as a united group. It makes the individuals to forget their individual characters and synchronizes them with each other to form a tight group. In Sarah Dessen's language, "Music is the great uniter, an incredible force. Something that people who differ on everything and anything else can have in common."

Music succeeds in communicating with others where verbal language fails. It helps in psychological treatment by assisting the patient with self-expression, improves attention and concentration and help in curing autism. It is seen that a singer who stammers during normal conversation sings to a rhythm with perfect diction, un-interrupted. The well-known German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche had once rightly said "Without music life would be a mistake".

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