



Difference between Melody and Harmony

Komal Rani

Assitant professor in edu of teaching of music (National college of education)

Introduction

When one listens to a song on the radio, we often do not think of separating the melody and harmony, and compare which of the two is stronger. However, both melody and harmony play key roles in the development of any musical piece. It is the melody which we often focus on first, the vocal quality of a song or tune. However, it is the harmony, the notes and chords of the music, which holds up the melody and makes the song a success.

A melody can be used to get any message across, as the lyrics can depict exactly what they are intended to. The lyrics can clearly draw the attention of its chosen audience. A harmony is able to do the same but in a less obvious manner. Harmonies are made up of various notes, C, D, E, G and A, which can create the mood and tone for a piece of music. There are even songs which are created without a melody, focusing on instruments to harmonize well enough together to tell a story to the audience.

The differences between harmonies and melodies are numerous, however when the two are created to complement one another, the results can be great.

Summary:-

1. Harmony and melody partner to create a successful song. The melody is made up of the words or the main instrument in a song, the harmony is the background tone created by other instruments.
2. Melody is the horizontal portion of a song and harmony is the vertical portion of a song.
3. Melodies incorporate shape, range, and movement. Harmonies are either subordinate or coordinate.
4. Melodies are often completed with lyrical music notes. Harmonies used musical instruments and a combination of notes to make a fluid sound.



Music is based on – melody, harmony, rhythm, and dynamics –

Melody:-

Melody is a musical and successive line of single tones or pitches perceived as a unity. Its characteristics include range, shape, and movement. Each of these will be discussed separately.

Range — The range of a piece is the distance between the lowest and highest tones. Singers refer to an arrangement being in a low, medium, or high range, meaning that the notes focus on those scale pitches. A piece that has a narrow range is one in which the melody centers around a few given notes. In contrast, an arrangement calling for a wide range takes the musician from low to high pitches, often encompassing as many as fifteen whole steps on the scale.

Shape — Melody takes its own direction, or shape notes were joined together as in a dot-to-dot puzzle. Notes that ascend up the scale take on an upward shape, while phrases that descend are shaped in a downward motion. If the phrase stays within a narrow range, the shape is wavelike.

Movement — Movement can be either conjunct or disjunct. When the melody moves stepwise and is connected, the movement is termed conjunct. Melody that leaps from pitch to pitch with no natural connection or flow is said to be disjunct.

.

Harmony:-

Harmony is the relation of notes to notes and chords to chords as they are played simultaneously. Harmonic “patterns” are established from notes and chords in successive order. Melodic intervals are those that are linear and occur in sequence, while harmonic intervals are sounded at the same time. Whether or not a harmony is pleasing is a matter of personal taste, as there are consonant and dissonant harmonies, both of which are pleasing to the ears of some and not others.



Chords have meaning as they lead to other chords. Certain progressions are encouraged as acceptable in certain styles of music. But basic to all harmony – regardless of style – is the triad. A triad is the most common chord form. It is built on the first, third, and fifth notes of the scale – do, mi, and so – and is symbolized in musical notation by the Roman numeral I. A triad built on the second note of the scale would include the second, fourth, and sixth notes of the scale, still keeping one scale degree between each jump. A triad built on the second note of the scale is written as ii. Triad chords may be built on all seven notes of the scale (with the eighth note a repeat of the first.) Chord symbols for the triads built on the third through seventh notes of the scale are as follows: iii, IV, V, vi, and vii. The I chord is named the Tonic, and the IV chord is called by the name Sub-Dominant. The V chord is the dominant. The vii is referred to as the Leading Tone, as it is often used to change (or “lead”) into a new key. This organization around tones is known as “tonality.”

Rhythm:-

Rhythm is, by its simplest definition, musical time. The origin of the word is Greek, meaning “flow.” Rhythm is indeed the embodiment of timely flow. As meter regulates and pulsates a poem, rhythm organizes music in much the same way. The regular pulsations of the music are called the beat. Stronger beats are referred to as “accented” beats. Measures of music divide a piece into time-counted segments. Strong beats occur in patterns. For instance, in 4/4 time, the conductor would beat a strong beat on the first beat of every measure and another accented beat – although not as strong – on the third count of the measure. Because the conductor’s arms move downward on strong beats, especially those that begin a measure, accented beats are also referred to as “downbeats.”

Time patterns in music are referred to in terms of meter. Two beats to a measure is duple meter, while the three beat measures of a waltz indicate triple meter. Four beats to a measure is known as common time, or quadruple time. Six beats to a measure is representative of time that can be divided by three, such as six beats to a measure with accented beats on the first and fourth beats. When the melody falls on notes that occur between beats, it said to be syncopated time.



Along with rhythm comes the idea of rate or pace. Not every song is slow. Neither is every song fast. Tempo is the musical term that indicates the overall pace of an arrangement. Tempo markings include grave, meaning solemn and extremely slow or allegro, meaning fast and cheerful. A gamut of musical terms for rhythm exists.

Dynamic:-

Once a song is organized by melody, harmony, and rhythm, it is technically presentable. Although some indication of mood is expressed through the tempo at which a piece is meant to be played, without dynamics, music lacks the emotion behind the musical thought. Dynamics tell the performer when to play loudly or more softly and when to change from one to the other. From pianissimo (as soft as you can play) to fortissimo (the loudest you can play), music ranges from a whisper to the fullest of sound.

Hence, the composer utilizes the tools of composition for the intimacies of musical expression – melody, harmony, rhythm, and dynamics – all a part of what we know simply as song. Many melodies are easy to sing, while others are difficult to sing. Still other melodies are impossible to sing.

Conclusion

The cognitive system of processing melody, harmony, and key may be described as partial hierarchical. When key structure is stable, a chord progression implicates key structure, and a melody is perceived, at least in part, in relation to the chord progression. In addition to such interlevel encoding strategies, it is presumed that there are encoding strategies at each level that are somewhat independent of the properties of other levels. These intralevel encoding strategies may include pattern-induction rules, as discussed by Deutsch and Feroe (1981), and melodic principles governing musical expectancies, as outlined by Narmour (1990, 1991). Both interlevel and intralevel strategies of encoding music may



contribute to the development of expectations for successive events (see Schmuckler, 1989). A schematic outline of these principles is displayed in Figure 7. Key movement appears to weaken interlevel encoding strategies within the system. This effect may reflect the fact that functional connections between levels develop as part of the process of establishing a key. When a key change occurs, the established interlevel relationships dissolve, and new relationships must be established. For moderate key changes, in which keys are highly overlapping in structure, relationships between levels may be quickly reestablished. For large key changes, interlevel relationships may be slower to develop, thereby encouraging listeners to process melodic and harmonic materials through independent strategies.

REFERENCES :-

1. Geeta pantal, Bhartiya sangeet ka itihās, publication date 1jan2010, isbn-108171247245.
2. Dr ramvilas Sharma, sangeet ka itihās, publisher vani prakāshan, publication date 2009.
3. NARMOUR, E. (1991). The top-down and bottom-up systems of musical Conclusion The cognitive system of processing melody, harmony, and key may be described as partially hierarchical
4. Scruton, R. (1997) The Aesthetics of Music, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
5. NARMOUR, E. (1977). Beyond Schenkerism: The need for alternatives in music analysis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
6. CUDDY, L. L. (1989). Sensitivity to key change in Chorale sequences: A comparison of single voices and four-voice harmony.





















Szabolsci, B. (1965) A History of Melody, trans. C. Jolly and S. Karig , London: St. Martin's Press.



ADDITIONAL MEDIA



•



MORE ABOUT Melody

24 REFERENCES FOUND IN BRITANNICA ARTICLES

Assorted References

- major reference
 - In musical form: Principles of musical form

motive

- canon
 - In canon
- cantus firmus
 - In cantus firmus
- chamber composition
 - In chamber music: Melody
- concerto grosso
 - In concerto: Orchestration
- instrumental melody
 - In Ludwig van Beethoven: Structural innovations
- orchestration
 - In instrumentation: The Classical period
- organum
 - In organum
- sonata form
 - In sonata form: Exposition
- symphonies
 - In symphony: The concept of symphony before c. 1750

VIEW MORE

ARTICLE HISTORY

ARTICLE CONTRIBUTORS

FEEDBACK

Corrections? Updates? Help us improve this article! Contact our editors with your feedback.