

THE LANGUAGE OF MUSIC

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The language of speech and the language of music are akin, speech and song are composed of the same four elements of sound, expressed through the same organ, the larynx, The four elements are these : Pitch, Rhythm, Dynamic Intensity and 'Timbre',

Pitch is determined by the Idea, the spiritual concept.

Rhythm is the expression of the Will.

Dynamic Intensity is the amplitude of sound, the expression of Feeling, the vehicle of the emotions.

'Timbre' is the synthesis of the other three elements, the fourth dimension of sound.

We can say further of 'Timbre' that it is the quality of Tone, that it consists in the combination, in infinite different differentiations, of Pitch, Rhythm and Dynamic Intensity produced in the harmonic constituents or mass chord of any musical note.

The sounds which are used in Speech are modal; they seem to be infinite, supremely fine and rapid in their gradations: they are called forth and governed sub-consciously. If, while speaking, we try to arrest the movement and dwell deliberately for an appreciable moment on any point of pitch, the flow of spiritual concept is checked and speech becomes sing-song. A richly modulated voice indicates a wealth of spiritual experience welling up freely from the sub-consciousness,

We should not, however, be justified in concluding that a monotonous voice denotes a dearth of spiritual experience; the explanation is to be sought rather in some check or hindrance to the flow caused by a want of harmony or freedom in the inner life of the individual.

As Dr. Steiner has said, these spiritual experiences are garnered during the course of our investigation of the Universe by means of our Sense organs. Speech remains an unsolved mystery to Scientists, who are not even yet agreed on the scientific origin of vowel sounds, as to what, for instance, constitutes the common factor that enables voices of various registers, treble, tenor, bass, possessing very individual qualities of timbre, to utter standard vowel sounds, at different points of pitch.

Rudolf Steiner is probably the only man who could supply the clue to the mystery, which is connected with the basis of the Art of Eurhythmly inaugurated by him. When the right day comes he will meet the illustrious professors of Phonetics and other Scientists interested in this vital question on their own ground and will give them the clue.

The language of Music, like Speech, comes to us from out of the Cosmos, and in a manner only slightly less mysterious. In Antiquity the language of Music was modal and was mainly experienced through the fourth dimension of sound. It is not the purpose of this short article to explain further this particular point, for the object here is to draw attention to the element of Rhythm, the movement of sound in time, as an expression of WILL.

Musically speaking Rhythm is the chief factor in melody; universally speaking Rhythm is the great differentiator in sound. The Rhythm of the single note or "clang" belongs to the domain of the Fourth Dimension in music and calls for a more detailed explanation than can be given in this short introductory article.

Rhythm presents itself most obviously as:

- (1) The time measure; the grouping of musical beats into units of equal duration.
- (2) As accent or emphasis.

(3) As phrasing

(4) In a still more significant manner by the interplay of the functions assigned to Tonic and Keynote, thus placing the emphasis on this or that note, governing the rhythmic phrase associated in modern music with Tonality.

The value of Rhythm as the chief factor in melody may be tested by taking any well-known melody and changing the rhythm entirely, while preserving the pitch values intact, as for instance, with the following melodic material: c c d b c d e e f e d c d c b c g g g f e f f f e d e f e d c e f g a f e d c.

The more radically the rhythm is altered, the more unrecognisable will the melody become. The ancient modes (differing essentially from the Ecclesiastical Tones or Modes) were in reality the common occult language of music in the Ancient East.

They are based upon the principle of proportion connected with our inner life, and for this reason, they appealed intimately to humanity.

For this reason the language of music consisting of modal sequences, every note of which bears a harmonious proportional relation to every other note, as well as to the common fundamental or root, forms the most perfect means of expressing the spiritual aspirations and emotions of man.

The ancients identified each of the seven original modes with one of the Planets, whose power to influence their destinies they were thus enabled through music to invoke at will, as a nation or as individuals, The Greeks of Hellas adopted the Sun or Dorian mode as the foundation of their wonderful musical system, whereas the Phrygians appealed to Venus, Lesbos to the Moon, Lydia to Mercury.

In spite of the changes which have occurred during the development of music, the ancient modes still remain with us to the present day among the Folk, having survived through the boring of holes in reedblown pipes and flutes according to a method which, while it is instinctive, yet invariably produces one or other of the modes, Thus the ancient modes form the foundation of the oldest Folk melodies in the world.

Kepler is right in interpreting the coursing of the stars in terms of music, experiencing the revolutions in the major key, and the contractions- that is, when the stars are approaching another (perihelion; aphelion)- in the minor key. We are dealing with musical phenomena.

Dr. W. J. Stein.

The idea of the Planetary basis of music originated with the Egyptians and was accepted by the Greeks who connected the twenty-eight notes of the scales with the days of the moon's rotation. The fifteen notes of the diatonic scale were related to the same number of days of the moon's increase, The seven days were associated with the seven notes of the octave,

"Encyclopaedia of Numbers: Their Essence & Meaning" (Emerson Press)

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils:
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
Let no such man be trusted.

Shakespeare, "The Merchant of Venice"

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