Call and Response in Music

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Introduction

Music genres have different characteristics that can be heard in any song. Five characteristics can be heard when you listen to the music. These characteristics include call and response, buzzy timbre, ostinato, community participation and rhythmic complexity. First, call and response is music that has two different phrases succeeding one another and played by different musicians; thus, the second phrase is usually a direct response to the first phrase. Therefore, the characteristic of music reflects normal human interactive communication and is one of the basic elements entailing musical forms. In African culture, call and response is a pervasive pattern of direct participation where people meet to address the civic and religious affairs affecting them and use vocal and instrumental musical expression. Buzzy timbre is sound quality: timbre is a characteristic that enables us to differentiate between one instrument and another used in music. It also helps to use different vowel sounds in the music (for example, “aaaaaaaaaa” or “oooooo”). There are different terms that can describe timbre in music, for instance, reedy, pure, raspy, etc. Thus, one can describe timbre by identifying and naming the instruments used in music. Ostinato is a repetition of a phrase in music. The repeating idea can either be a rhythmic pattern or a complete melody. Therefore, the music with this characteristic must have the same repetition. Community participation is music that involves the community in its setting; thus, the music is culturally based. (Miller) This paper considers two different videos, one based on African culture and the other based on Latino culture. Thus, the paper discusses call and response characteristics, which are common to both genres of videos. Therefore, the discussion includes components in the aural analysis.

Video 1 And Video 2 Analyses

The Ghanaian dance video is community-based music that includes call-and-response characteristics of music. The dancers respond to music, dance, and phrase response after one group has already sung and danced. The first group claps and dances and the other responds. Thus, this musical characteristic is well-featured in the song. Therefore, to understand the song, we should use the elements of music. (Philips)

The Salgueiro 2017 video is a samba musical genre from Brazil but with roots in Africa. The song in the video involves the call-and-response characteristic of the music. Thus, the first musician sings and the second in the chorus responds differently. In conducting the video analysis, we must consider elements of music in the song. (SALGUEIR)

Elements Of Music In The Ghanaian Dance And Salguiro 2017 Video

Beat and Meter

A beat in music is what gives music rhythmic organization and pattern; it is either regular or irregular, but in this video, the beat is irregular. The beats in the songs involve drums beating and hand clapping. There are different danceable beats in the song, which act as call and response. Thus, the group is engaging in an interactive song, hence contributing to different beats. The meter is defined as rhythmic patterns that are produced by grouping the beats together. The response beats in the video are weak compared to call beats, which are strong.

The Salgueiro 2017 video song has a very rich beat and meter. The song has different musical instruments that complement each other in producing the beats of the song. The beats in the song have a regular rhythmic pattern, unlike the Ghanaian video. The meter in the song helps in making the call and response beats complement each other effectively.

Dynamics

Dynamics in a song is the volume or intensity of the performance. Thus, dynamics are symbols that signify the appropriate note to be played or sung. Therefore, dynamics emphasizes precise and accurate moments when the right note should be sung. In the Ghanaian video, the dynamics of the song are directed by the instruments used in the song; for instance, while clapping, there are different clapping sounds that influence where to be sung. Thus, the instruments in music are influenced by call-and-response music characteristics, thus influencing the song dynamics. Although from a different perspective, the Salgueiro 2017 video involves dynamic elements. The song involves singers who use different vocals to demonstrate the intensity of the performance of the song. The call singer uses high notes, while the response singer uses low notes.

Harmony

Harmony in the song is what you hear when different notes are played at the same time. It influences the music texture and melody of the song. The harmonic chords in the Ghanaian video use major notes, while the Salgueiro 2017 video uses diminished notes. In the Ghanaian video, the caller and respondent, at some point, both use major harmonic chords in the song. In the Salgueiro 2017 video, at some point, both caller and respondent use the same diminishing harmonic chords.

Melody

Melody is the overarching tune made by a series of notes, and it is influenced by the pitch and rhythm. A song may have a single melody or multiple melodies arranged in chorus verse. The Ghanaian video has a single melody throughout the song that is repeated at different intervals of the song, while the Salgueiro 2017 video has both single and multiple melodies, which are arranged at the verse-chorus of the song. In both videos, melodies are influenced by the music characteristic of call and response.

Pitch

The pitch of the sound is founded on the sequence of vibration and the size of the vibrating object. Thus, slow vibration implies that the vibrating object is bigger, the pitch is lower and vice versa. Thus, in the video, the song has a higher pitch compared to the pitch in the Salgueiro video.

Rhythm

Rhythm can be referred to as a pattern of sounds in periods and beats in music. Thus, there are particular arrangements of the song taking into account the time and beats. Thus, the call and response feature in the Ghanaian video is determined by the tempo. The song is recorded as the people are dancing; thus, it has a high tempo. The Salguero 2017 video rhythm is shaped by the meter with a low tempo.

Tempo

Tempo is the velocity at which music is sung or played. The tempo of the Salguero is both slow and moderate, while the Salgueiro tempo is very fast.

Timbre

Timbre is sound quality: timbre is a characteristic that enables us to differentiate between one instrument and another used in music. It also helps to use different vowel sounds in the music (for example, “aaaaaaaaaa” or “oooooooo”). There are different terms that can describe timbre in music, for instance, reedy, pure, raspy, etc. Thus, one can describe timbre by identifying and naming the instruments used in music. The Ghanaian video timbre is raspy since it uses drums and hard clapping as instruments, while the Salgueiro video timbre is pure since it uses guitar and human sounds, among others.

Cultural Ethnomusicology

Both songs are based on cultural contexts. Thus, Salgueiro is a samba musical genre, while the Ghanaian video represents the Ghanaian musical genre. The songs are used in cultural contexts, especially in matters relating to those communities, either religious or civil affairs.

Conclusion

The characteristic of call and response is present in both genres. Call and response is music that has two different phrases succeeding one another and played by different musicians; thus, the second phrase is usually a direct response to the first phrase. Therefore, the characteristic of music reflects normal human interactive communication and is one of the basic elements entailing musical forms. In African culture and Brazilian culture, call and response is a pervasive pattern of direct participation where people meet to address the civic and religious affairs affecting them and use vocal and instrumental musical expression.

References

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