

Discrimination of Music Basic Elements and Music Formal Elements Under the Care of Music Aesthetics

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ABSTRACT

Currently, there are different opinions about whether the basic elements and the formal elements of music are equivalent and the composition of the formal elements of music. This article analyzes the concepts of music basic elements and music formal elements through sorting out related literature and discusses the difference between the two from the perspective of music aesthetics, in order to clarify the relationship of part and whole between "music basic elements" and "music formal elements", aiming to provide a logical sequence for appreciating the formal beauty of works.

Keywords: Music formal elements, Music basic elements, Music aesthetics.

1. INTRODUCTION

What is the composition of music? From the perspective of music aesthetics, music is composed of the form and content of music, and the form of music is composed of the combination of various elements of music, namely "music formal elements", and music basic elements also make up the music itself, that is, the music form. At present, there are different opinions on whether the "formal elements of music" and the "basic elements of music" are equal.

As of April 2021, the author has conducted a literature search in the more authoritative Chinese database using "music formal elements" and "music basic elements" as keywords and a total of 21 valid documents (including 1 monograph) have been obtained. Among them, there are two different views about the two, namely, "music formal elements include music basic elements" and "music formal elements are equivalent to music basic elements". And there are 7 documents that agree with the view that "music formal elements include music basic elements", and a total of 14 documents that agree with the view that "music formal elements are basically equivalent to music basic elements".

This article analyzes the concepts of "music basic elements" and "music formal elements" through sorting out related literature and dialectically analyzes the relationship between the two from the perspective of music aesthetics to clarify the question of "whether music formal elements are equal to music basic elements", in order to explore the relationship between the two. [1][3][4][5][7]

2. THE CONCEPT OF "MUSIC BASIC ELEMENTS" AND "MUSIC FORMAL ELEMENTS"

2.1 The Concept of Music Basic Elements

Regarding the concept of music basic elements, the current academic circles basically hold the same view. In the article "On the Form and Content of Music Art from the Perspective of Music Aesthetics", Liu Li proposed that the basic elements of music form include four aspects and eight specific elements. [2] Here, the four aspects are the basic elements of music, namely the pitch of the sound, the intensity of the sound, the length of the sound, and the timbre. Chen Dan put forward the same point of view in the article "Infiltrating the Elements of Form and Enhancing the Aesthetics of

Music", and came up with the view that "the basic elements of music combine to form the formal elements such as intensity, speed, harmony, and musical form and so on". [6] But this view seems not comprehensive enough, because the basic elements of music are not only the above four.

First of all, to analyze the composition of the basic elements of music, the first thing needs to be done is to analyze its literal meaning. For the interpretation of the basic elements of music, one has to mention the core word, namely "basic". The so-called "basic" means "fundamental" and "main", and the so-called "elements" are the necessary factors that constitute things, therefore, "music basic elements" are the fundamental and main necessary factors that make up music. Secondly, can a simple single melody consist of only the pitch, length and intensity of the sound, and the timbre? Music is closely related to time from the moment it sounds. For time, in addition to length, it also includes speed. People often say: "It feels like time passes quickly". This is the best proof that speed exists in time subjectively. So is music. People feel music through hearing, and even for a simple single melody, there will be speed — whether it is fast, medium or slow. Furthermore, as is known to all, the production of music cannot be separated from the production of sound, and the production of sound is a regular sound wave vibration; even if it is noise, it is also regular. Then the so-called "regular progress" includes the beat.

Therefore, to sum up, the basic elements of music are composed of the pitch of the sound — the pitch, the length of the sound — the rhythm, the strength of the sound — the intensity, speed, timbre and beat. It can also be understood as: these basic elements of music are indispensable elements that make up music.

2.2 The Concept of Music Formal Elements

There are different opinions about the composition of music formal elements. Zhang Qian and Wang Cizhao mentioned in articles and monographs that music formal elements basically include intensity, speed, rhythm, interval, etc., while melody, harmony, and musical form are all classified as organizational means. [8] Mr. Yang Yihe also mentioned the formal elements of music in "Formal Aesthetic of Music Performance", which include timbre, intonation, intensity, speed, and rhythm. They equate the formal elements of music with the basic elements of music. The author

believes that this view is too one-sided and fails to clarify the difference in meaning between the two.

From an aesthetic point of view, music is composed of music form and music content, which is also a combination of rationality and sensibility. Rationality is the objective form, and sensibility is the subjective content. To understand what the musical formal elements are, one must first clarify what the form is and what the musical form refers to. "The so-called 'form' refers to the organization or arrangement of the various elements that constitute things. Although it is the appearance of things, it has its internal organization rules".¹ Then the music form can be understood as: the organization or arrangement of the various elements that make up the music form, that is, the music formal element. In the field of music aesthetics, music form is also called music noumenon. Therefore, music form elements are the various elements that constitute the music noumenon. In addition to the basic elements of music such as pitch, rhythm, intensity, speed, beat, and timbre, it also includes melody, harmony, musical form, orchestration, etc.

Summing up the above, when music works themselves are analyzed, it is necessary to pay attention to the scope of music basic elements and music formal elements in the elaboration. If one analyzes from the basic elements of music, one should analyze from six aspects: pitch, rhythm, intensity, speed, timbre, and beat, while the analysis of harmony, musical form, etc. is more rigorous when it is included in the analysis of music formal elements.

3. "MUSIC BASIC ELEMENTS" AND "MUSIC FORMAL ELEMENTS" — THE PART AND THE WHOLE

From the above, it can be seen that music basic elements are pitch, rhythm, intensity, speed, beat and timbre. Music formal elements include melody, harmony, musical form, orchestration and so on. If the music form is compared to a building, then the elements of music form are the building materials. Building materials include rebars, concretes, etc., and concrete is made by stirring and mixing the most basic materials such as water, sand, and stone in a certain proportion. Then it is ideally appropriate to compare the basic elements of music to the water, sand, and stone in the building.

1. Zhang Qian and Wang Cizhao: Music Aesthetics Foundation, People's Music Publishing House, 1992.5, p. 44.

Therefore, in the huge building of music, melody, harmony, musical form, etc. are building materials, and these "building materials" are composed of the basic elements of music in a regular manner. For example, melody is a regular combination of basic elements such as pitch, rhythm, and beat; harmony, the horizontal harmony, is composed of two different melodies, which also includes the basic elements of the melody. From this point of view, music basic elements and music formal elements should essentially belong to the relationship between the part and the whole.

Although simple music can be composed of only the basic elements of music, from the point of view of music aesthetics, as an aesthetic art, only simple pitch, rhythm, beat and timbre cannot constitute a beautiful musical work. Therefore, to achieve a musical work with formal beauty, it is necessary to combine the basic elements of music to form richer formal elements. The formal elements are combined according to the principles of symmetry, contrast and unity, which constitute the musical form of beauty (music noumenon). And this kind of music with formal beauty is endowed with rich and profound content, including realistic content and potential content, which is, basic emotions, style system, spiritual characteristics, etc., and then becomes an excellent music work.

Mr. Zhang Qian and Mr. Wang Cizhao believed that harmony, musical form, etc. are only a means of organizing music forms, and this means of organizing is an orderly combination of various basic elements of music. [8] So what does the so-called "organizational means" refer to? "Organizational means" is defined as one of the management means in the Superstar entry. It is a measure and method to achieve organizational goals, apply management science, and influence individuals through the overall strength of the organization in a planned way. In short, the organizational means is to integrate individual scattered individuals into a whole through a certain form and achieve unity. Then, if harmony is an organizational means of musical form, is a musical work composed of music basic elements arranged in order to form harmony? Does the so-called whole mean harmony? As everyone knows, it is impossible for the elements contained in the music itself, the so-called musical form, to only include harmony, but should include more elements (mode and tonality, musical structure, orchestration, etc.). Only with mode and tonality, harmony, musical structure, etc., can a complete music noumenon be formed. Therefore, it seems that mode and tonality,

harmony, and musical form are only a member of the form of music. Because of their orderly combination, they constitute a beautiful work. Then the above elements are also a part of the formal elements, and it is more appropriate to call them music formal elements. And the so-called principle of the formal beauty should be the organizational means, that is, to organize the formal elements of music in an orderly manner based on the principle of beauty.

To sum up, the relationship between music formal elements and music basic elements is not equivalent, but the relationship between the part and the whole. Moreover, the so-called melody, harmony, musical form, etc. cannot be called the so-called "organizational means", but one of the music formal elements.

4. CONCLUSION

Through the above conclusions, one can analyze the form of a musical work more logically — from the part to the whole. When analyzing the noumenon of a musical work, one can first observe the music basic elements to analyze the combination and arrangement rules of the various formal elements, and then explore the subtle connections between the formal elements and the musical work. In this way, from point to surface, the noumenon of a musical work will be analyzed in a more detailed and logical manner.

At present, the relationship between music formal elements and music basic elements has not been paid much attention by a lot of people. As for what the truth is, it needs to be analyzed and demonstrated in depth by more authoritative scholars. The above is only the author's personal opinion. Musical aesthetics is similar to philosophy. It is a subject that requires careful study and perceiving to understand. Many of these views are worthy of in-depth analysis and exploration by more scholars. In addition, the study of this subject will also enable more music lovers and professional music learners to understand music better, and know how to appreciate a good musical work. As a researcher, what one needs to do is to provide more music learners with a way to understand and appreciate music. On the way to research, there still is a long way to go.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Xin Zuo was responsible for article writing, and Yuetong Lu was responsible for literature collection.

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