Downloadable Music Studies

Melody: Section 1 The Power of Form and Lyric

Have you ever wondered why hit songs or favorite worship songs work? Melody is the most significant element of the song that most people can identify; in theory, it is simple, memorable and easy to sing. Good songs have well constructed melodies. In worship, melody is the key element for singing and is the voice of congregational song. However, if melodies are not well composed, interpreted and produced, it's effects can leave any singer or participant confused or even discouraged from singing.

The congregation, as moved by harmonies and interesting chord progressions, are not concerned with the F#m7_b5 over D

resolving to the 4th suspension just before the ripping guitar solo in the pentatonic scale of the Dorian mode in ³/₄ time (even this is confusing). People in worship simply want to sing. Again, our job as leaders is to help them sing and to worship. In the next few sections, we will observe the Macro Study of Songs or another way to title it is "**The Big 3 of Song Form**," <u>melody, harmony and rhythm</u>; these alone are the 3 basic elements of song formation. These sections contain key insights into the what, why and how melodies are crafted.

Keep in mind: there is no set formula for writing songs in general; niether is there "the greatest melody" or even "the greatest song" - they don't exist on this side of Eden. Although, if we can be guided in our understanding in learning the power of melody, song and their mechanics, we are further ahead in our ability to produce them.

Melody

A coherent succession of pitches. The whole of music is divided in 3 domains: Melody, Harmony and Rhythm. As seen previously, all notes of a scale demonstrate their relationship to the tonic note. Intervals 1,3,5 are stable and 2,4,6,7 are unstable in their relation to the tonic.



Pitches 1,3 and 5 are considered consonant because their relationship is closer and sounds more equal (pleasing) to the tonic note. Pitches 2, 4,6 and 7 are considered dissonant because their measurement in a frequency scale is further from the tonic (producing a more un-natural sound or even harsh). One way to understand pitches and their frequencies is to observe the fundemental theory of light. Color that we see comes from white light. In looking through a quarts prism, you can see the divisino of colors, tones and shades. A tonic note is similar when you compare its relative intervals of the scale. Like colors, all notes are divided in relation to their interval of the tonic.

Melodies occur in both space and time (pitch and rhythm), conveying a natural flow which makes musical sense to the listner/singer.

Name That Tune:



You can easily bring to mind this tune from just these 4 pitches. In this familiar hymn, the melody begins on the 5th, up to the tonic and to the 3rd. What you first hear are equally divided notes of the tonic that give a pleasing and memorable sound. As most hymns, choruses and songs on the radio or your ipod, often start on one of these stable pitches: 1,3,5 (1 being the strongest).

Arranging Pitches

Recognizing the tune by Rees, John P. \Newton, John\Excel, "Amazing Grace" (Public Domain) wouldn't be as clear if we began on the 4th and 5th bar (provided that this is the middle section of the song), because the pitches are arranged on the 2nd moving down through the 1st and 6th tones. This time, you begin hearing the une begining on the 2nd - a dissonant relative of the tonic - producing an unstable sound.



Again, melodies are constructed from the major or minor scales of a given key. Simplified versions of the major scale is also used to create melodies called "the pentatonic scale." Pentatonic (meaning 5 notes from tonic) is the major scale excluding the 4th and 7th pitches. This approach to using this system provides the listener a more direct relationship of pitches to the tonic.



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Built on the pentatonic scale, Amazing Grace features more stable note directions. Notice how this hymn primarily centers on the I chord notes. Here is the first section of the melodic phrase:



Shout To The Lord by Zschech, Darlene - Hillsong Publishing.

Melodic Range - fixed notes on the melody that designate the tune's highest and lowest pitches.



Conjunct and Disjunct - fixed notes on the melody that designate the tune's highest and lowest pitches.



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It Came Upon The Midnight Clear by Sears, Edmund Hamilton/Willis, R. - Public Domain.