

Music, Rhythms and Society

Introduction

Today, people in all over the world enjoy many kind of music. Of course I am a part of them. And I am interested in ethnic music. Especially African music. When I listen to them I feel I am alive strongly. It's because they have passion and danceable beats. But why were they born? And how? What is the role of music in our lives? Is it necessary for society? There are too many questions. This time, I researched origins of music especially their rhythms and their backgrounds. I focused on some areas which have typical features. And finally I want to tell you my opinion about the relation between music and our life, society, and human. This is the problem I really wanted know and my best interest.

Literature Review

First of all, what is the origin of music ? There are a lot of theories. And it is not clear even today. *Court ship origin theory* (Darwin, Charles Robert 1809-82) is a theory of the origin of music. Creatures have instinct to carry on their tribes and leave offsprings. We are attracted by males or females or others who are strong and beautiful. As you know, some animals make some noise when they try to fascinate others. Even we humans start to play music because of such reasons. *Origin of language* (Jean Jacque Rousseau 1814-1910) is another theory of that. This theory means music was born when we put feelings on languages with intonations. It made melody. But it also means there is no music before we invented language. *Labor origin theory* (Friedrich Engels) is also such a theory. This theory says our labors like cropping, hunting or fighting made music. It's because during those situations, our feelings become high and excited. But it also says music didn't exist before we started labor. It is a little difficult to think

so. Lastly I'll introduce origin of rhythm . It says rhythms which are around our environment made music. Like this, there are lots of discussions about the origin of music. I want to focus on origin of rhythm. Rhythm is associated with the environment around our life. I don't say origin of rhythm is the strongest theory. Theories are very complicated and carried on discussion. It is impossible to say correct answer about this topic. But each theory connects deeply.

I'll introduce some typical rhythms which is from some areas. Roughly saying, in old days, we humans lived in nature. There is different environment in each area. Every single sound, event moved our feelings and made music. For example, in Japan , we have the four seasons and the wealthy expression of nature. Our main event and labor is rice cultivation , agriculture. Summer is very hot and winter is very cold. This cycle formed Japanese identity.

Variation of nature created polytheism. Japanese traditional music is called Minyo. There are lots of kind of Minyo. Fishing song, agricultural song, song of festival. They all are associated with Japanese daily life. Actually there are little of hunting song. It's because Japanese were not a hunting tribe. Fishing song is sung when people draw up net which is used for catching many fish. These songs was made to put powers together. Their rhythm is attached accents first and third beat like, "soran bushi" in Hokkaido, "tairyo utaikomi" in Miyagi. Agricultural song is very similar. When we do rice planting, it brings about time lag between the start of planting and real rice planting in some areas.

On the other hand , how about Africa, Europe or western? Now popular music in this world consists of European music and African=American music. European music is very sophisticated. It is called classic. African=American music is like blues, jazz rock. They became popular music in this world. Almost all of them are 4/4 or 3/4. This is because they are used to hunt on the horses. They rode horses. Hunting tribes or nomadic tribes often ride horses and it is the way to live for them. Sounds of running horse remind people of rhythmical music . Do you know happy birthday is triple time? There are many songs which compose of triple time in western countries because of their custom. And our language is connected with music as a part of environment deeply. In Japan , vowel and consonant are connected closely. It only makes little rolling of tongues. It makes flat intonation. Thus Japanese rhythms of music also became flat. Western languages are more complicated and more times of tongue rolling than Japanese. It is a factor of such a passionate

rhythm music. African rhythms are more difficult to understand than Europe. In Africa, people live in more strict environment. There is not too much water. There are berserk animals, fighting between tribes and tribes. In this area, it is very important to convey information. When an animal appears which can be dinner, and war between tribes and tribes starts they should send messages as far as possible. In black Africa which is the same thing as south Africa, music is utilitarian. They “use” music as the way of sending information, medical care by shaman, initiation , marriage and more. Music is necessary thing to live in this area. The role of music in Africa is completely different from that of our modern society. We often just enjoy music or play music as art and something different from our dairy life. But in such a strict environment music is connected to life. And also their music is related to language. Most of their languages are tune language. Their words are changed by speaking tone. It made restriction of making music. They should sing correct tone when they sing. They cannot change or arrange pitch for such a reason. This phenomenon made music in south Africa difficult more and more. Cross rhythm is one of the most famous parts of African music. African passionated music consists of cross and colliding rhythms.

1. 3/8A ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ |
 3/8B ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ |
 3/8C ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ |

This is the example of typical cross rhythm. Every single beat starts at different point and they intertwined complicatedly. But this is western style writing. This is not adequate to express this rhythm. Because each part is usually be performed by different instrument, that was related to harmony. This is not only topic of rhythm. There are a lot of other rhythms in south Africa.



This is the typical bell pattern. As you can see, the bell pattern is a loop of different rhythm. In this pattern, it is the loop of 4/4 and 12/8. In fact, there is no concept of time like 4/4,3/4 in Africa. This figure was made by western people. It is only because it is easy to see. When a lot of instruments ring sound , those patterns

make gestalt of rhythm. It is a kind of illusion by human's ears. It can be simpler pattern when we hear those rhythms. That was why African rhythms are so passionate.

On the other hand ,people who live in west African ares like Yoruba in Nigeria, Ghana, created "Talking drum".

A talking drum is the way to speak. But people who use it should have amazing drum skill. The players of talking drum have power. But in some areas like Yoruba, all people tried to learn talking drum. Because if they can communicate with only drumming, the colonists cannot understand their talking. Talking drum took a part of secret code.



And after African countries were invaded, they scattered all over the world as slaves. And also their rhythm scattered. They had a great influence on music. Slaves who were in south America made samba, afro cuban music. On the other hand, people in America made jazz, blues, funk, rock'n'roll, and hip hop. But it is mixed with a lot of countries' music and culture. And it is also often said that great development of music by African people was because of their depressed feeling , rage , hope and something strong feeling. It is a kind of environment. But it is not environment of nature. It is social environment. It can be said music is born with environment by this way. And environment contains a lot of things around our life as mentioned above , court ship, group work or labor. They all inspired us under the consciousness. Everything around us can make music.

Method



I met Dr. Razia Sultanova in the faculty of music in the university of Cambridge. In fact, I couldn't see her during our visit. But she arranged her schedule and we talked with Skype after I came back to Japan. She studied music of identity, music of female, music of shamanism and something more interesting. I asked some question of her. I mainly asked her “what the origin of music was”. Her view was very interesting

This is the picture of book miniatures. The book miniature is a traditional art in Uzbekistan. The era of book miniatures is 10-12 centuries. Territory of today's Uzbekistan was under the influence of the Arabic country. It was written portrait of famous kings, philosophers. After those days, some kind of history, tales, ideas, and thoughts were written. 14-16 century, the epoch of the Timurids, artistic story, picture were written in book miniatures. This is a kind of constellation art. And several centuries passed. After 20 century, book miniatures were rediscovered in Uzbekistan. A lot of artists of book miniatures appeared. And they won a lot of national awards in Uzbekistan. The culture of book miniatures started to become a new feature in Uzbekistan. Book miniatures are born in the place which is the territory of Uzbekistan. But it was another country. But it can say that Uzbekistan took this culture from Arabic ancient country. It became their identity.





This is *karnay*. This is a kind of trumpet in Uzbekistan. In old days, it is made from a curved mountain goat horn, ranging in length between 30 and 40 cm. This is the nice example of relation between hunting and music. People in Uzbekistan probably used it to hunt goats. According Dr. Razia this Long trumpet was used as a knife. They were used in war.



She also said now the situation and environment of music was changed with Internet. We humans used to be dominated by environment and narrow society. However the chance will be equal by using SNS. Everyone can make and enjoy music. Music became commodity.

Discussion



First I want to talk about Karnay. I researched a history of trumpets after meeting. According to my research, these phenomena could be seen around the world. Most of the wind instruments similar to trumpets were made from parts of animals which cannot be eaten. Another instrument similar to trumpet was made from ivories. It is a nice example that music is always created by accident.

Conclusion

Secondly the first story and last story are very similar thing. I want to explain.

The story of book miniatures is related to art and identity. Certainly, this story is connected to music deeply. After 20 centuries, this world is covered with capitalism. In addition, we can know each area of world by using Internet. The consequence is that we want identity of every single area. Because we knew different world and we can get opportunity to provide benefits by travelers who comes from different areas. Capitalism's typical way to make money is changing differences into commodities. Differences, things we've never seen are exciting constantly. And we can listen to and play every kind of music, see, imitate every kind of art. That is the wonderful thing. But it is like our own area's identity is fading out. Lots of tribes have adopted western life style. It is the true of music. Most people listen to popular European music. On the contrary, some tribes make money by selling souvenirs or music, picture as commodity. It is not in use in their really life style. Nowadays a lot of tribes have started such business.

Music is the most flexible thing. Courtships, rhythms, melodies, group works, labors, strong feelings, depressing, artistic feeling everything around us can make music. Making music is individual an action. It is based on individual experience. It is not a surprising thing, If most people feel the same idea from their environment, someone can come up with another idea. Then if the idea is good for someone, it becomes good music and good culture. There are huge exceptions.

By developing computers, we get the information around the world quickly. It changed its music life. It has been thought popular music and the nicest music is western classic music. It's because it is sophisticated with their theory.

Old days our simple society made music. It is the origin of music. Such environment made various kinds of rhythms. And rhythms made unique music. Those kinds of "natural music" reflect the area's environment deeply. After the computer developed, we knew this fact. We

rushed up next stage of music. Then our environment of nature was absolutely changed. Probably we are able to live without music. It is not necessary music for ceremony, initiation, calling people who are in the distant, fight to just live. Our technology can take parts alternately. Nevertheless, people don't stop music. Why? Because music has power to relax, keep motivation, therapy, heal. And it reminds us of identities. That identity is necessary to understand each other. Every environment and people are different , but beautiful. When I listen to world music ,I feel so. It is the role of music today. We can enjoy music in this unique world.

Images :Embassy,

Magazine Allwbenefitsu,
University of Cambridge,
Wikipedia ,
World digital libra

Information: Dr Razia Sultanova university of cambridge

http://www.academia.edu/5198421/Music_and_Identity_in_Central_Asia_Introduction

音楽と環境(藤井知昭)

音楽とリズム(藤井知昭)

民族音楽概論 (藤井知昭)

音楽以前 (藤井知昭)

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