

The Melodic and Rhythmic Features of Inherited Popular Songs in Palestine and its Role in the Embodiment of the National Cultural Identity

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Abstract:

The study of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage is not only limited to knowing the elements and vocabulary that make up its multiple forms, and the different images of its diverse musical forms, but also understanding the basis underlying the operations of this music in the formulation of its forms, whatever the simplicity or complexity of these forms which promotes addressing the music of this heritage, not only as a component of the melodies and poems that include pure artistic and aesthetic values, but as a social activity that interacts with other elements of culture.

Therefore, the containment of the music of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage of any artistic elements or particular values of heritage must be affected by the quality and degree of this interaction, which in turn increases the emphasis on the idea that the search in melodic, rhythmic and performance patterns of this heritage should not be limited to the patterns that accommodate many musical elements, or the patterns resorted to a lot of melodies, or even which show creations and perfect melodic, rhythmic and performance styles, but it should include all patterns and musical styles at various levels, both dependent on simple sound configurations or dependent on complex configurations. It also includes all forms of audio and vocabulary elements and other musical components. So, addressing the melodic patterns and musical performance styles along these lines would lead to knowledge of the distinctive properties of the music of the popular lyrical heritage of Palestinians in terms of form and style, and hence the embodiment of the national cultural identity.

Thus, the researcher chose Arab Palestinian popular lyrical melodies as a mediator for the embodiment of the national cultural identity which is related in particular to Arabic popular music, where Arab popular song forms the nucleus of knowledge of this music, as well as knowledge of the Arab cultural values and attitudes, as singing is an important part of Arab culture, having significant abilities in the expression of feelings and conscience of all members of society, in addition to its ability to reflect their thoughts and philosophy towards life.

So, the emergence of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage and its evolution is dating back to many of the accretions and cultural, artistic and social experiences. This heritage is still detecting, in the images of its diverse forms and various patterns, the distinguished artistic grounds that are standing-alone and preserving the traditions of Arab popular musical creativity, as its musical structure depends on theories and methodological rules. Therefore, the problem of this study is concentrated in its approach on an important aspect of the Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage, which is the melodic and rhythmic characteristics of this heritage, and the employment of this aspect in the embodiment of the national cultural identity. So, from this point the researcher carried out this descriptive analytical study to identify the melodic and rhythmic features of this heritage, and its role in the embodiment of the national cultural identity.

Introduction:

The study of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage as a form, elements, linguistic and musical vocabulary, methods of performance and a heritage value, is not only limited to knowing the elements and vocabulary that make up its multiple forms (Al-Husseini, 2005), and the different images of its diverse musical forms (Arnita, 1997), but also understanding the basis underlying the operations of this music in the formulation of its forms, whatever the simplicity or complexity of these forms (Al-Barghouti, 1979), which promotes addressing the music of this heritage, not only as a component of the melodies and poems that include pure artistic and aesthetic values, but as a social activity that interacts with other elements of culture (Haddad, 1985).

Therefore, the containment of the music of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage of any artistic elements or particular values of heritage must be affected by the quality and degree of this interaction, which in turn increases the emphasis on the idea that the search in melodic, rhythmic and performance patterns of this heritage should not be limited to the patterns that accommodate many musical elements, or the patterns resorted to a lot of melodies, or even which show creations and perfect melodic, rhythmic and performance styles, but it should include all patterns and musical styles at various levels, both dependent on simple sound configurations or dependent on complex configurations. It also includes all forms of audio and vocabulary elements and other musical components. So, addressing the melodic patterns and musical performance styles along these lines would lead to knowledge of the distinctive properties of the music of the popular lyrical heritage of Palestinians in terms of form and style, and hence the embodiment of the national cultural identity.

Thus, the researcher chose Arab Palestinian popular lyrical melodies as a mediator for the development of musical knowledge which is related in particular to Arabic popular music, where Arab popular song forms the nucleus of knowledge of this music, as well as knowledge of the Arab cultural values and attitudes, as singing is an important part of Arab culture, having a significant abilities in the expression of feelings and conscience of all members of society, in addition to its ability to reflect their thoughts and philosophy towards life.

So, the emergence of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage and its evolution is dating back to many of the accretions and cultural, artistic and social experiences (Granqvist, 1931). This heritage is still detecting, in the images of its diverse forms and various patterns, the distinguished artistic grounds that are standing-alone and preserving the traditions of Arab popular musical creativity, as its musical structure depends on theories and methodological rules (Saarisalo, 1932). Therefore, the problem of this study is concentrated in its approach on an important aspect of the Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage, which is the melodic and rhythmic characteristics of this heritage, and the employment of this aspect in the embodiment of the national cultural identity.

So, from this point the researcher carried out this descriptive analytical study to identify the melodic and rhythmic features of this heritage, and its role in the embodiment of the national cultural identity.

To achieve this, the researcher conducted a field study in which he collected many melodies of this heritage. Also, he looked at many relevant scientific resources, and studied the lyrical melodies that are contained, and then the researcher sorted and classified these songs, and after that he selected models as a sample of the study on the basis of geographical diversity in Palestine, so that to cover most areas in Palestine.

Theme I: Features of the melodic and rhythmic Palestinian lyrical heritage:

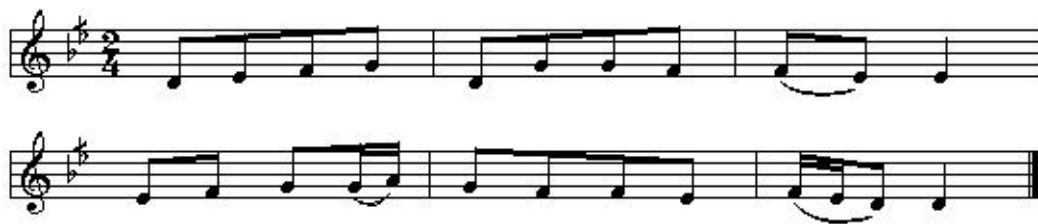
To identify the features of the melodic and rhythmic lyrical heritage of Arab Palestinians, the researcher conducted an analytical study for the lyrical models which were collected.

The following are the most important musical features that were found by the researcher during this study:

1- Al-Makam:

Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage depended in its melodic structure on the basic Makams in Arabic music, or on one of its Jins (Tetrachord), or on a proportion of its Jins (Tetrachord), especially Makams of Bayat, Huzam, Saba, Hijaz Kar, Nahawand, Kurd. for example:

a. Melody on Makam Bayat.



b. Melody on Makam Huzam.



c. Melody on Makam Saba.



d. Melody on Makam Hijaz Kar.



e. Melody on Makam Nahawand.



f. Melody on Makam Kurd.



2- Range:

The melodic range of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage does not exceed the Octave in most cases. Most of the songs are limited to five groups according to the melodic range as follows:

a - The third distance (between E half flat & G), for example:



b - The fourth distance (between D & G flat), for example:



c - The fifth distance (between D & A), for example:



d - The sixth distance (between C & A), for example:



e - The seventh distance (between D & C), for example:



3- Intervals:

Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage is characterized by convergence of intervals between the musical notes, and emptiness in many cases from musical skips, except in the beginning of the phrases (in case if the distance was the starting point of melody from the beginning), or when we repeat the phrase (in case of repeating the lyrical phrase from the beginning, where the big distance appears between the last note of the phrase and the first note of the repeated phrase), or between joints phrases (in case if the distance was a separation point between two lyrical phrases). So, the large distance at the beginning of lyrical phrases is a strong, enthusiastic and vital starting point to the melody. Examples include:

A - A third distance which is a breakthrough of the melody at the beginning

(between C & E):



B- A fourth distance which is a dividing distance between two phrases (between F at the end of the first phrase & C at the beginning of the second phrase):



C- A fifth distance which is a starting point of melody at the beginning (between D & A):



4- Constructing musical lyrical phrases depending on the starting note:

The beginnings of musical phrases are considered very important in affecting the process of the structure and the interaction of melody and the development of its itinerary after that. And the Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage is characterized by its diverse notes of the beginning of its melodic phrases, as follows:

First: Songs that depend at the beginning of its lyrical phrases on the basic note of Makam (Tonic) as a starting point of departure, which is in two forms:

A - Lyrical melodies with a gradual rising evolution from the basic note of Makam, then interact downwardly to be completed as it began on the basic note of Makam, for example:



B - Lyrical melodies that are initiated by a large skip from the basic note of Makam, and then start to downward directly to be completed as it began on the basic note of Makam, for example:



Second: Songs that do not depend at the beginning of its musical melodies on the basic note of Makam (Tonic), which are in two forms:

A - Lyrical melodies based in its beginning on a note higher than the basic note of Makam, then take to interact downwardly until it ends with the basic note of Makam, for example:



B - Lyrical melodies that depend in its beginning on a note lower than the basic note of Makam, and then take on the interaction around the basic note of Makam until it finally ends with the basic note of Makam, for example:



5- The movement of lyrical melodies:

The melodic movement in the Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage is characterized in most cases by the decreasing melodic movement toward the basic note of Makam (Tonic), or centralizing around it, and then focusing on it. And the reason is that the musical phrases are short, which necessitates a quick and downward decline of melody to the bottom towards the basic note of Makam (Tonic), and this forms a note of stability to the melody. Also, the melodic movement is characterized by the absence of wide skips, in addition to the convergence of musical notes, as the melodies come in a connected sequence, so the melodic skips don't usually exceed the fifth perfect, as well as being distinguished by ornamented melody (an ornament improvised by the singer while singing, and depends on his/her musical abilities), for example:

- **The first melody:** A semi- straight musical movement that centralizes around the basic note of Makam (Tonic) which is (E). For example:



- **The second melody:** Inconsistent melodic movement ups and downs, moving quickly towards the stable basic note of Makam (Tonic) which is (D). For example:



- **The third melody:** A melodic movement that shows the range of convergence of musical notes, as well as the range of their connected sequence, and the absence of skips. For example:



- **The fourth melody:** A melodic movement that shows a skip at the beginning of the phrase (between D & A), and also shows another skip within the melodic phrase (between D & A as well). For example:



6- Rhythm:

- **First:** Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage is divided in terms of rhythm into three parts as follows:

A – Non measured songs: they are songs which are characterized in most cases by an improvisation character, for example:



B. Measured songs: they are songs that are limited to specific time signatures, for example:



C – Songs that combine in its structure (A) and (B), so the first part is performed as non measured followed by the second part which is measured. For example:

- Part (1):



- Part (2):



- **Second:** Most Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage depends on simple time signatures, so that it is mostly structured on a 2/4 or 4/4 time signature. Also, the rhythmic structure and notes values that are used in the basic melody vary from simple notes values to others with small divisions coming from words syllables, in addition to diversity in (Tempo). For example:

Example 1:



Example 2:



Example 3:



Third: Apart from the non measured forms (that don't have one specific melodic form), other forms of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage are characterized by the following:

A- Such forms are divided in its internal structure into two parts in terms of the number of bars that make up the lyrical phrases as the following:

- Forms of triple division, for example:



- Forms of quad division, for example:



B- They are divided in terms of the number of its musical phrases into two parts as the following:

- Forms that consist of a single musical phrase that is repeated until the melody settle down, for example:



- Forms that consist of two musical phrases, for example:



7- Musical form:

The musical form is predominantly characterized in most forms of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage by melodic repetition, so it is based on one repeated melodic phrase according to the poetic text, and it is considered as the basic predominant form, and it can be seen in all previous melodic examples.

Theme II: National cultural identity that can be embodied through Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage.

After the study that was conducted by the researcher to identify the melodic and rhythmic features of the Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage, the researcher thinks that these melodies are capable to embody many of the elements of the national cultural musical identity as follows:

1- Embodiment of the perception of Makam Character:

Through studying the previous models of musical melodies of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage in terms of Makam, it is clear that it depends on the diversity in the use of various Arabic Makams, as well as the clarity of the Arabic Makam character in such melodies, making them a good tool to consolidate and develop this perception. This diversity and clarity could be noticed in all the melodic examples that mentioned in the study.

2- Embodiment of the concept (Theme and Variation):

The dependence of the melodies of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage on the verbal transition from one person to another, from one generation to another and from one region to another gave the melodies many variations because the verbal transition process is likely to cause simple changes in melody, giving it a beautiful character and several variations (Adileh, 1996), so these melodies are able to embody the national cultural musical identity in the concept of theme and variation.

As a matter of fact, the melodic variations in all forms of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage maintained fixed elements in their melodic structure as follows:

1. The basic Makam of melody.
2. The melodic context within the basic melodic phrase (Sahab, 1990).
3. The length of the melodic phrase associated basically with the unchangeable poetic measure.
4. Melodic rhythm generated by the rhythm of poetic measure (AlBarghouti, 1990).
5. Rhythmic division of the melodic phrase resulting from the rhythmic division of speech.

3- Embodiment of Dialogue Songs:

One of the characteristics of popular music is that it is performed collectively, and it is rarely to be practiced individually (Jacob, 1987), and that what is observed in Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage (Sarhan, 1989), as they depend in some forms on all forms of collective performance, especially the dialogue, since there are a lot of melodies that are performed in a dialogue manner, both among person and another person or between one person and a group or between group and another, and thus these melodies embody the concept of dialogue regarding Arab popular music. The following example consists of two melodic phrases, the first which consists of eight bars is performed by a popular artist (Azzajjal), and the second phrase which consists of four bars is performed by the group and repeated twice, and it takes the form of the dialogue:



4- Embodiment of musical lyrical elements (time signatures, notes values (rhythm), melody movement, internal structure and accompanist).

The melodies of Arab Palestinian popular song are able spontaneously and simply to embody many basic concepts in the national cultural identity of the music content of the song as follows:

A- Time signatures and notes values (rhythm):

Arab Palestinian popular song is considered from a rhythmic point of view as a rhymed poetic text of certain musical poetic measures (Al-Muzayyan, 1984), and this singing has dealt with many poetic measures, especially the short-and soft in line with the lightness of its words and measures (Granqvist, 1935). So, the Palestinian popular song is based on several regular time signatures that are related basically to its own melody. Therefore, the rhythm is considered as a key element of the artistic elements underlying this song, whether in the form of the internal rhythm represented by the temporal relationship between its various melodies within the single melody, or in the external rhythm represented by the fixed beat accompanying each form which is related to its time signatures and rhythmic measure. So, Arab Palestinian popular song consists

of basic set of time signatures and beats, and thus it is able to embody the Arab popular music time signatures and beats and its various rhythmic forms.

B - Melody movement:

The most important characteristic of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage is that its direction and movement are clear, which makes this music able to stabilize and consolidate the concepts of the movement and progress of the popular melody.

These are examples of the direction of the melodic movement in Palestine:

- a- A melodic line that starts from thick notes and then graded in intensity.
- b- A melodic line that starts from sharp notes and then graded in thickness.
- c- A melodic line that combines a and b.
- d- A melodic line that combines b and a.
- e- A melodic line that revolves around a certain melody.

C - Internal structure:

The majority of the melodies of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage depends in its internal structure on a single short musical phrase, or two phrases at most which are repeatedly used, and it consists of two bars or twice as much, or three bars or twice as much. So, these melodies can be used as an easy tool for the embodiment of the concept of musical phrases and the formation and structure of popular music.

D - Accompanist:

Accompanist, and particularly the rhythmic, is considered as one of the basics of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage (Hafez, 1988), as it shows the effectiveness of words and melodies, and contributes to clarify the popular character of the song (Adileh, ٢٠٠٦). Also, it helps to support and enrich singing. Rhythmic accompanist on the whole is simple and suits the simplicity of popular melodies, so it can be relied upon in the embodiment of the concept of Arab popular accompanist.

5- Embodiment of the concepts (Dynamic Expression and Voice Diversity):

The melodies of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage reflect the environmental and psychological circumstances of this community (Grant, 1921), therefore, it is noticed that the dynamic expression and the voice diversity are essential features in this singing. It is through them that we can reflect the idea to be expressed, and thus we can rely on these melodies in the embodiment of the national cultural musical identity, and this can be noticed through listening to and performing these melodies.

Results of the study:

After this analysis of the melodic and rhythmic features of Arab Palestinian popular lyrical heritage, and its role in the embodiment of the cultural national identity, the researcher reached to the following results:

First: Results related to the melodic domain:

- 1 - The melodic structure of these melodies depends on a simple structure pattern, so its structure is clear and the melodic range is narrow which does not exceed the circle of Octave, also it is noticed that the melodic ranges which consist of three to five consecutive notes are the most commonly used.
- 2 - The melodic line depends on a sequential melody, so most of the melodies revolve around convergent notes and we seldom find skips.
- 3 - Melodic phrases are based on frequency, so that the melody is built on one frequent melodic phrase according to the poetic text, and this is considered as the prevailing basic form.
- 4 - Melodies are based on the middle pitch in its structure and singing.
- 5 - The dependence of melody on the main Arab Makams, and the employment of Al-Jins (Tetrachord) in most melodies, and most melodies do not exceed the range of Jins.
- 7 - The dependence of the melodic line on an ornamented melody (an ornament improvised by the singer while singing, and depends on his/her musical abilities).

Second: Results related to the rhythmic domain:

1. The internal rhythmic structure of melodies is simple and easy, and it uses redundancy in most cases.
2. The use of notes values with primary structures without any complexity.
3. The use of common and simple rhythmic forms, such as Al-malfouf and the small Masmoudi.
4. The dependence of the notes value on a crotchet in most cases.
5. The dependence of musical melodies on measured and non measured rhythms.
6. The musical value of the rhythm appears in the integral structure between the rhythm of applause, and the rhythm of dancing (Dabka), the musical rhythm of the accompanying musical instrument, and the rhythm of the lyrical melodies of the performers, resulting in the enrichment of melody.
7. The speed of rhythm (Tempo) and the melodic performance vary from one region to another, where it is noticed that the tempo and performance is fast in the central region comparing with the north, and south.
8. The musical features of these melodies are able to embody the national cultural musical identity, and also help to give insight on the culture of Arab Palestinian community, and his vision of life.

Research Recommendations:

The following recommendations are suggested by the researcher depending on his study:

1. The Palestinian Community should be interested in the dissemination of these melodies, and in acquainting people with such melodies, in order to preserve this heritage and transmit it to future generations.
2. Relevant Palestinian universities and institutes should be interested in teaching music and Arab Palestinian popular song within specialized courses, in order to maintain the continuity of an important part of the history, culture and identity of the Palestinian people.
3. Conducting training courses for graduates of music education specialization, to train them in how to employ Arab Palestinian popular lyrical melodies in the teaching of Arab popular singing.
4. Interest in collecting these melodies chronologically, and documenting these melodies to be a record of the historical and social events of the Palestinian community.
5. The encouragement of conducting comparative studies for Arab popular musical heritage among various Arab countries, in order to maintain a very important part of the Arab cultural heritage.
6. Arab audio-visual media must pay attention to the promotion of this heritage by presenting this heritage and devoting programs for it.
7. Providing required financial support for the establishment of popular bands, to perform this form of lyrical heritage, as well as holding festivals and musical evenings, in addition to the production of tapes and discs carrying melodies of this beautiful art within the popular framework.

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