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Takadimi Syllables

Late in the 20th century, an alternate rhythm syllable system was introduced. The authors refer to it as Takadimi—a rhythm system for all ages. Claims that it is an improvement over the original beat function system, heretofore described, are dubious. However, it has three commendable borrowed features from that system. It is based on beat functions, it posits different syllables for usual duple and usual triple meters, and it supports the concept of enrhythmic measure signatures. Noteworthy as these assets are, and among questionable declarations made in its behalf, the system has critical limitations. To facilitate discussion of inherent problems in Takadimi, reference will be made to its component syllables presented below in notational form.

The image displays musical notation for Takadimi syllables in various meters. Each syllable is represented by a specific rhythmic pattern of notes on a staff, with the corresponding syllables written below. The syllables are: "Ta Ta Ta Di" for 2/4; "Ta Ta Ta Ki Da" for 6/8; "Ta Va Ki Di Da Ma" for 6/8; "Ta Di Ta Ki Da" for 5/8; "Ta Ki Da Ta Di Ta Di" for 7/8; "Ta Ka Di Mi Ti" for 2/4 with 5 sixteenth notes; and "Ta Va Ki Di Da Mi Ti" for 2/4 with 7 sixteenth notes.

Fixed within confines of the rhythmically empty words “simple” and “compound,” which are rooted in arithmetic, the syllables for four sixteenth notes written with the measure signature 2/4 in this system are “ta ka di mi.” Each division of the two microbeats, “ta” and “di,” are, as seen, assigned different syllables. The situation is similar for the three microbeats “ta ki da” written in 6/8. Syllables for the six sixteenth note divisions are “ta va ki di da ma.” The purpose for distracting students by unnecessarily and detrimentally directing them to count and rename

consecutive division syllables is not clear. In audiation, divisions do not, of course, signify trenchant beat functions.

Perhaps the reason for insisting on complexity is to specifically emphasize what are called “attack points,” or, to paraphrase the authors, to mark midpoints of the beat in both simple and compound meters. The assertion is the syllable “di” in both simple and compound meters will coincide when one group of musicians is performing duple meter and the other triple meter. However, that is not the case when both groups are chanting divisions of microbeats with, of course, macrobeats in both meters occurring in the same tempo. “Di” is not synchronized in the two meters. For that to occur, musicians in the triple group necessarily need to chant two groups of sixteenth notes triplets rather than six ongoing sixteenth notes microbeats, and such rhythm counterpoint is rare in artistic literature. That anomaly is overlooked when touting, even in notation, this questionable extraordinary feature of the Takadimi system. Succinctly, reality is noncompliant with the theory.

Although different syllables are used for unusual duple and triple meters, it can be observed in the notated examples the same syllables are used for usual and unusual meters, the latter typically notated with the measure signatures $5/8$ and $7/8$. This inconsistency in philosophy underlying the system is unfortunate. Just as students easily identify tonalities when each tonality has a different syllable for a resting tone, the difference between usual and unusual meters is swiftly identified when different syllables for microbeats are used in accordance with each type of meter. Furthermore, there are no Takadimi names given to usual combined meter or meter incorporating triplets and duplets, and neither are unusual meters distinguished by name from one another.

It will be noticed both quintuplets and septuplets are performed with the same “simple meter” syllables, but with the “add-on” of “ti.” As explained in Part 12, to be required to listen for an extra final syllable to determine if a quintuplet or septuplet is to be or was performed is much like being required to listen for presence of a chromatic alteration in the movable “do” tonal system with a “do” based minor to determine tonality of music. Again, adding a syllable inappropriately emphasizes an individual note, rather than a rhythm pattern. That debilitating element of the system notwithstanding, the fact is quintuplets and septuplets

are actually modulations from usual meter to unusual meter. Actually, a quintuplet is audiated as comprising two macrobeats and a septuplet, three macrobeats.

Finally, in published sketches of the syllables, it is suggested the sound “a” be pulsated for an elongation, for example, a dotted quarter note in 2/4. That such practice results in unmusical performance requires no debate. The same might be said for use of the syllables “ka” and “ki.” They cause contorted tongue motion in relation to articulation of the remaining syllables.