

Symbolic Construction and Emotional Encoding in the Musical Language of "Forever Ultraman"

《永远的奥特曼》音乐语言中的符号建构与情感编码

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ABSTRACT

As a Chinese commemorative pop song, "Forever Ultraman" carries the symbolic imagery of heroes and the intergenerational memory within the Tokusatsu cultural tradition. Drawing on methods of modern music analysis, this article systematically explores the symbolic construction mechanisms of the piece through lyrical semantics, melodic structure, rhythmic organization, and emotional expression. It reveals how the work encodes collective sentiment and heroic narratives through musical elements, establishing a representative "cultural memory ballad" structure. The study offers insights into both popular culture research and the narrative strategies of music.

摘要

作为一首中国流行歌曲，《永远的奥特曼》承载了特摄文化传统中的英雄符号意象与代际记忆。本文运用现代音乐分析方法，从歌词语义、旋律结构、节奏组织及情感表达四个维度系统探讨了作品的符号建构机制，揭示了该作品如何通过音乐元素编码集体情感与英雄叙事，形成具有代表性的“文化记忆民谣”结构。该研究为流行文化研究与音乐叙事策略提供了双重启示。

1. Introduction: From Tokusatsu Symbol to Cultural Poetics

The character "Ultraman" in tokusatsu works is not only a significant product of postwar Japanese culture but has also evolved into a transgenerational superhero symbol, especially for Chinese audiences. As a tribute song performed by LINE, "Forever Ultraman" employs carefully constructed lyrics and musical layout to musically encode emotional resonance with the cultural symbol of Ultraman. The song demonstrates popularity, symbolism, and

emotional depth, serving as an "audio encoding of cultural memory." This paper uses the lens of musical language analysis to examine how the composition embeds symbols and emotion in melody, rhythm, mode, and vocal delivery, reconstructing the audience's emotional engagement with Ultraman's heroism.

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2. Structural Layout and Modal Design: Layered Emotional Symbolism

"Forever Ultraman" adopts the common A-B-A'-B'-C five-part structure typical of pop music, yet within it lies a clear emotional progression logic.

Table 1. Results of Stability Test

SECTION	BARS	FUNCTION	EMOTIONAL SYMBOLISM
A VERSE 1	1–16	Narrative, introduction	Gentle, nostalgic
B CHORUS 1 C BRIDGE	17–32	Emotional climax	Faith, hope
	33–40	Emotional shift	Memorial, invocation
A' VERSE 2	41–56	Recurrence, reflection	Resonance, sorrow
B' CHORUS 2	57–72	Final climax	Eternity, heroism

From a modal perspective, the song is primarily in C major with closely related modulations. The chorus often employs dominant seventh chords (G7) with delayed resolution, creating an expectation of "emotional arrival" and impending light. The bridge momentarily shifts to A minor to evoke recollection and solemnity before returning to the tonic, symbolizing the passage through darkness.

3. Rhythm and Instrumentation: Layered Emotional Rhythmic Development

Rhythm forms the backbone of emotional trajectory. The rhythmic design of "Forever Ultraman" follows a narrative arc from slow storytelling to passionate uplifting.

The verses use alternating quarter and eighth notes, establishing a lyrical, introspective tone akin to "narrating memories." The choruses introduce syncopation, dotted rhythms, and accents, intensifying emotional urgency and propulsion. Combined with lyrics like “放射光明 / Radiating light,” the musical and textual meanings align.

The bridge applies delayed downbeats, metric disruptions, and rests to momentarily "pause" emotion, creating a spacious, commemorative atmosphere. Upon returning to the final chorus, the rhythm accelerates, sonically representing the hero's return — an aural metaphor for overcoming darkness.

In terms of instrumentation, the verses feature soft string textures and broken chord piano accompaniment to create warmth. The chorus incorporates electronic synthesizers, electric guitars, and brass for a "heroic entrance" effect. Notably, the bridge employs synthetic string pads

and reverberant vocals, contributing ceremonial gravitas and elevating the emotional dimension.

4. Lyric Analysis: From Personal Sentiment to Collective Memory

Written by Qi Fang, the lyrics are rich in symbolic language. The frequent motifs of “蔚蓝的星球 / the blue planet,” “光明 / light,” “守候 / guardianship,” and “英雄 / hero” form a dual symbolic structure of heroic narrative and collective remembrance.

Verse 1

“大地渐渐苏醒 / The earth slowly awakens”
“一丝晨光打破了夜的寂静 / A ray of morning light breaks the night's silence”

These natural metaphors mark the narrative beginning. "Morning light" symbolizes new hope; the melody descends a perfect fifth, connoting calm and tranquility.

“炙热的心在跳动 / A burning heart is beating”
“祈祷和平降临 / Praying for peace to descend”

Juxtaposing “heart” and “peace” expresses internal longing. The rhythm shifts to dotted symmetry, reinforcing emotional steadiness.

Chorus 1

“放射光明 / Radiating light”
“看那蔚蓝色的星球 / Look at that blue planet”
“是我们永远的守候 / It is our eternal guardianship”

This triplet marks the emotional climax, with an ascending melody reaching high C. Rhythmic change to compound syncopation evokes radiant brilliance.

“我伫立在这里倾听风的声音 / I stand here, listening to the sound of the wind”
“来吧我的热情在飞翔 / Come, my passion is flying”

First-person language strengthens emotional immersion. The wind symbolizes memory, and the melodic contour mimics its undulation.

“穿越时空界限冲破黑暗 / Cross the boundaries of time and space, breaking through darkness”

Action-oriented language generates narrative escalation. Paired with minor tonal color and multi-part

chorus, it conjures the sonic illusion of the hero's imminent return.

"You Are Always My Hero !"

An English slogan, it functions as a commemorative monument and represents the emotional peak of the piece.

Verse 2 & Chorus 2 - These repeat earlier lyrics but with intensified melody, instrumentation, and vocal delivery. The repetition is not mechanical but symbolizes "memory deepening" and "meaning ascension." In the final chorus, the line *You are always my hero* is delivered at the highest pitch, ending with strong dynamic emphasis.

5. Cultural Meaning and Conclusion: The Symbolic Mechanism of Memorial Ballads

"Forever Ultraman" maintains pop music's accessibility while employing lyrical construction and rhythmic design to encode a heroic narrative. On the level of cultural memory, it constructs intergenerational resonance. "Ultraman" becomes not only a childhood icon but a symbol of family heritage and collective national emotion.

Here, music is not merely a vessel for emotion, but a transgenerational and transcultural memory device. In a post-pandemic era, such "shared memory ballads" gently reassemble society's emotional community. The success of "Forever Ultraman" lies in its unification of symbolic musical language and layered emotional progression.

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