



“Tha Crossroads”: Defining Melodic Rap

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Fig. 1 – Six-Parameters Inventory Table

Intonation	<i>intoned</i> = pitches are scale steps <i>inflected</i> = pitches are any frequency
Text setting	<i>syllabic, neumatic, or melismatic</i>
Vibrato	not all singing has it, but no rapping has it
Syllables/m.	average taken from 8 measures of verse
Rhymes/ph.	average take from the same 2 phrases of verse (few exceptions)
IVMR or IVMV	<i>(inter-verse melodic repetition/variation)</i> : whether verse material repeats

Ex. 2 – No Doubt, “Don’t Speak,” (1995) 0:07-0:32
(rhymed syllables underlined)

Fig. 2 – Sung vs. Rapped Inventory Table

	Sung	Rapped
SINIM	6 19 8	33 0 0
Vibr. vs. straight	26 : 7	0 : 33
Syl./m. range	2.13 - 7	6.9 - 17.8
Syl./m. avg.	4.15	11.5
Rhyme/ ph. range	0.5 - 3	2.5 - 27
Rhyme/ ph. avg.	1.15	7.95

Ex. 2 – Dr. Dre & Snoop Dogg, “Nuthin’ But A ‘G’ Thang,” (1993) 1:15-1:37
 (rhymed syllables underlined)

Well, I'm pee-pin, and I'm cree-pin, and I'm cree - pin' but I damm near got caught 'cause my bee-per kept beep-in. Now, it's

time for me to make my im - pres - sion felt so, sit back re - lax and strap on your seat - belt. You nev - er

5 been on a ride like this be - fore with a pro - du - cer who can rap and con - trol the mae - stro at the

same time with the dope rhyme that I kick. You know, and I know, I flow some old funk - y shit.

Ex. 3 – Lil Tjay, “FN,” (2019) 2nd verse, 1st phrase, 1:52-2:09
 (rhymed syllables underlined)

My ma - ma know 'bout the pain, thought I'd ne - ver change, but look - in back for the fame, I don't feel the same

I was stuck up in the streets, but I had a brain. I ain't have no mo - ney, we was look - in for a nig - ga chain.

5 And she know all I 'er want - ed was to have a name. Had a lot of shit to lose, not e - nough to gain.

And that fuck nig - ga changed, went a - gainst the grain. Found out my ho - mie went fed, al - most went in - sane.

Fig. 3 – Sung vs. Melodic Rapped vs. Rapped Inventory Table

	Sung	M. Rapped	Rapped
SINIM	6 19 8	23 8 2	33 0 0
Vibr. vs. straight	26 : 7	2 : 31	0 : 33
Syl./m. range	2.13 - 7	4 - 16.1	6.9 - 17.8
Syl./m. avg.	4.15	9.06	11.5
Rhyme/ ph. range	0.5 - 3	1 - 11.5	2.5 - 27
Rhyme/ ph. avg.	1.15	4.94	7.95