

Research on the Stylistic Characteristics of Keyboard Music Works in the Baroque Period

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Abstract: *The Baroque period, playing techniques and the use of ornamentation, is a very important stage in the development of music. This paper first introduces the characteristics of keyboard music in the Baroque period, including the changes in dynamics, playing skills and ornamentation. It also analyzes the formation factors of music style characteristics in Baroque period, including the influence of religion, the development of polyphony, the improvement of musical instruments and genre factors. Finally, the thesis compares the music of Baroque period with the modern music style, and summarizes the value and significance of the music of Baroque period. I hope that through the research of this paper, more people can understand the style of keyboard music in Baroque period, and provide help and inspiration for related study and research.*

Keywords: *Stylistic Characteristics, Keyboard Music, Baroque Period*

1. Introduction

In the history of western music development, the Baroque period is regarded as one of the important golden ages of keyboard music [1]. During this period, the prosperity of polyphony and the gradual improvement of keyboard instruments such as organ and harpsichord made the creative genre and style system of keyboard music more and more mature. In particular, the development of organ and harpsichord not only provided more possibilities for the performance of polyphony, but also laid a technical foundation for later keyboard instruments. This paper discusses the style characteristics of keyboard music works in Baroque period, including polyphonic texture, dynamics change, playing skills and the use of ornamentation. Through the analysis of these stylistic features, performers can more accurately grasp the main points of the performance of the work, improve the performance level, and better understand and appreciate the charm of Baroque music.

2. Characteristics of Keyboard Music in Baroque Period

Performance Dynamics. In the Baroque period, the way of playing keyboard music is obviously different from that of modern piano playing, so now when performing keyboard music works in the Baroque period, we should not adopt the way of "ascending crescendo, descending crescendo", but should highlight the dynamic performance with hierarchical changes. Keyboard music should master the dynamics of playing, usually with phrases as units, to show some slowly increasing or decreasing trends in music, when showing the dynamics of keyboard music, a long passage can be used. The alternation of strong and weak in music can reflect the characteristics of different musical styles. In the process of playing, the transformation of different voices at the same time can be achieved by making full use of the different dynamics in the phrase, reflecting a more distinct sense of hierarchy of the voice. Keyboard music in the Baroque period should master the ladder dynamics, be able to control reasonably and express the changes of dynamics, which is the key point to master the playing style of Baroque keyboard music [2]. At the same time, the strength of the performance should be adjusted according to the specific situation of the performance. The most distinctive feature of keyboard music in the Baroque period is the polyphonic texture. At that time, many composers had their own understanding and control of polyphony, so the musical characteristics presented were different. The cutting method, cutting order, the number of vertical parts and the degree of richness will have a certain impact on the transformation of musical dynamics.

Playing Rhythm. In the Baroque period, the keyboard music system has not yet formed a relatively mature notation, few composers at that time would mark the playing methods of keyboard music on the spectrum, which leads to the fact that it is not easy for us to understand the purpose of the Baroque

composers in the playing methods, but now there are two ways to play the works of the Baroque period [3]. One is a scaled legato; The other is the staccato approach to intervals, which is suitable for intervals above the third degree. Although the method of legato was used in the Baroque period, there are obvious differences between this legato and the legato in the Romantic period in the history of western music. The legato in the Baroque period is embodied in the keyboard music, which mainly plays the role of clauses in the process of playing, while the legato in the Romantic period pursues a far-reaching and broad singing style. To play the keyboard music of the Baroque period, we must grasp the balance between the continuous and discontinuous voices. Musician Bach is an outstanding representative of the Baroque period, whose musical achievements have an important impact on the development of later music. Bach is best at keyboard music, and his works are played and learned by every professional performer, which is an important process of tasting Baroque music style.

Keyboard Decorative Sound. During the Baroque period, the keyboard ornamentation reflected a distinct style from other periods. Unlike today's pianos, the strings of ancient pianos vibrated for a long time, so it was difficult to reflect the characteristics of long tones in the music at that time. In order to make the music more perfect and make the music of the Baroque period have the style of singing, many musicians at that time would create some music randomly. There are many kinds of ornamentation in the Baroque period. Different ornamentation uses different symbols. Some works have special vibrato or Boeing symbols, while others do not. They are only added temporarily by the performers during the performance. In the Baroque period, ornamentation was already an important part of melody, not just for decorative effect. At that time, the ornamentation would have a duration within the beat, and at the same time, the vibrato was required to have a specific number under the requirements of the beat, which was obviously different from the vibrato in the later development of Western music in order to show the performance skills. When playing the ornamentation of the Baroque period, we must pay attention to the conversion between continuity and discontinuity, grasp the structure of the whole piece, and not play it randomly. We must have a correct judgment, master each voice, achieve harmony and unity, any short phrases and musical expressions need to be treated rigorously.

3. Formation Factors of the Characteristics of Keyboard Music Style in the Baroque Period

Influence of Religion. From the 13th century to the end of the 15th century, the central government of Germany was weak, the policy of centralization of power could not be effectively promoted, the princes decentralized their powers, and the development of the whole country was at a low ebb. The polarization between the rich and the poor and the power of the city's dignitaries have led to the community crisis in the city. Among them, the farmers are in the most miserable situation. But the Church's policy of indulgences further aggravated the peasants' suffering. Indulgences were issued by the Pope in 1313, which means that money can be used to atone for all sins to God. In fact, it is also an excuse for the Pope to collect money, which can be said to be worse for the social situation at that time. At this time, the authority of the church as a spiritual belief was also questioned, and people's church activities seemed lazy and inactive, so music, as the basic content of religious activities, was not taken seriously, but only the basic form, without too much demand and desire [4].

Because of the existence of this serious social factor, the reform of Lutheran Protestantism came into being. Luther carried out extensive Protestant publicity, and his belief in the supremacy of the Bible and all believers are priests was also very important. Luther was also one of the creators of Protestant hymns, using a rhythmic prose style, divided into paragraphs, and created a form of hymns acceptable to the people with his comrades in the Reformation. There were also religious songbooks that introduced German and new forms of religious music into the church. At that time, due to political factors, national fragmentation and material scarcity, people in Germany took Lutheran Protestantism, which advocated the popularization of religion, as their spiritual dependence when their objective material needs could not be met. Therefore, church music is more active at this time. Civilians trust the church and actively participate in it, and the creativity of church musicians has been stimulated to the greatest extent, which has been greatly improved and perfected from form to content. With the reform and division of religion, the change of people's ideological understanding and the change of artistic aesthetics, the style and taste of art have also changed, and with the development and development of religious forces and religious dissemination. Luther's reform line was widely supported by the common people and posed a great threat to the Roman Catholic Church. Faced with the challenge of Protestantism, the Roman Catholic Church, in order to reshape its image, in addition to its own introspection, recruited well-known artists to publicize its church. In this way, the art of music, which was originally subordinate to the church, played a more prominent role and status in this period.

Polyphony Development. Polyphony can be said to be a synonym for keyboard music in the Baroque period. As early as the 12th and 13th centuries, instrumental music was basically monophonic. By the 14th century, the most primitive polyphonic music appeared. The polyphonic music of this period mostly adopted the most primitive form of polyphony- Organon, whose method was to add one or several parallel octaves and fifths to the single melody of plain songs, which was called the Notre Dame School of Paris by later generations. At that time, most of the instrumental music was not keyboard instruments, but it had a far-reaching impact on the polyphonic music of keyboard instruments in the future.

In the Renaissance period, the development of Western music was even more brilliant. As the Renaissance advocated freedom from scholasticism and freedom of musical expression, the creative techniques and performance styles of music also brought forth new ideas and expanded the scope of music. With the introduction of chromatic system and modulation, the creative concept gradually transited to simultaneous, and the development of instrumental music became more independent, but at this time the development of instrumental music lagged far behind vocal music. The Flemish School in the 15th century is the representative of polyphonic music in this period. The genres are roughly divided into motets, masses, secular songs and so on. Most of them are spread in churches. In Germany, the development of music before the Renaissance was relatively slow, and the main way of transmission was the temple at that time. Monasteries run schools that teach monophonic hymns and know little about polyphony. The influence of polyphony mainly comes from neighboring countries, such as France and Italy [5]. French polyphonic music has been mature since the 12th century, and people also like Lute music, keyboard music and dance music. The organ is the best form of polyphony in Germany. At that time, there were many liberalized towns in Germany, many of which had organs, and the Germans expressed polyphonic music in the organ, thus establishing the central position of keyboard music polyphony. The representative figure of German music at this time was the organist Konrad Baumann. The Renaissance was the golden age for the development of keyboard music, and the clavichord became popular. In addition to the organ, the harpsichord and the wedge-hammer harpsichord also appeared.

Perfection of Musical Instruments. Before the 8th century, any musical instrument was regarded by the Catholic Church as the “voice of the devil”. After the 9th century, it was allowed to enter the church as an accompaniment instrument. From this point of view, the development of instrumental music is later than that of vocal music, and it is attached to vocal music in some form. In the Middle Ages, instrumental music was generally devalued and was not regarded as an art form by the upper class. Playing musical instruments is regarded as a shameful thing.

Baroque keyboard instruments are mainly organ and harpsichord. The earliest pipe organ was the hydraulic pipe organ of the 3rd century BC, also known as the hydraulic organ. After the 9th century, organs were added to Christianity in various parts of Europe. At this time, the organ was relatively thick, with hundreds of pipes and dozens of bellows, and a player could not complete the performance independently. Therefore, the organ music of this period can only be used as the horn of the church, and cannot form the aesthetic feeling of music. By the 14th and 15th centuries, the organ had three rows of hand keyboards and one row of foot keyboards, but the organ at that time did not have a stop to change the tone, and the caliber of the pipe was the same, so it could not achieve the change of tone. At the beginning of the 16th century, the organ had the characteristics of the modern organ, and the perfection of the instrument created the necessary conditions for the performers. In the Baroque period, the organ entered the golden age. At that time, the organ was quite perfect, with various stops, four to five layers of hand keyboards and two layers of foot keyboards, which was an indispensable keyboard instrument for Baroque music at its peak.

The other main instrument is the harpsichord. The harpsichord was produced around the end of the 14th century. Similar to the modern piano, the high and low strings are of different lengths, and the sound is plucked by the harpsichord or plectrum. By the mid-18th century, the harpsichord had reached its golden age, when it was 6 to 8 feet long and contained two rows of five 8-degree keys. The volume and tone of the harpsichord are not controlled by fingers, but by stops, so the change of tone and volume is not obvious. However, in the Baroque period, the harpsichord was favored by Bach, Handel, Scarlatti and so on, and created a large number of works, but also an important part of Baroque church music. The harpsichord was not replaced by the piano until the 19th century. The development of keyboard instruments provided an essential condition for the music of this period, and also paved the way for the innovation of new genres and performance skills.

Changes in Music Genres. In the development of western music history, the progress of instrumental music is far behind that of vocal music. Before the Middle Ages, instrumental music was completely attached to vocal music and had no independent status, let alone common genre forms. It was not until the Renaissance that the various genres of instrumental music gradually matured, which was reflected in

the music forms of all parts of Europe at that time. As early as the 14th century in Italy, some music lovers were keen on learning lute and clavichord, and some even turned their attention to secular folk music, which was presented in instrumental music works in the form of dance music, contributing to the polyphonic music of instrumental music. During this period, dance music almost became the core genre of instrumental music creation, with various forms and titles, such as galliard, a single three-time dance music popular in the 15th century. Music and dance were two closely related art forms at that time, running through each other. People who can dance are often proficient in instrumental music, so dance music became an important genre in the creation of instrumental music in this period.

Dance music, as an important genre, was popular in many countries at the same time, reflecting the interconnectedness and integration of music culture at that time. But there are stylistic differences between countries. In France, for example, there are many kinds of dance music, such as Pavin, Blonlet, Gayalde, and Courant. The French Courant is a mixture of triple and double time, while the Italian Courant is only triple time. Other genres include the prelude. In the 15th and 16th centuries, a solo piece of free improvisation on the organ or lute was often called a prelude. This genre is popular in many countries, such as Poland, Spain and Germany. In addition, there are many genres that have matured in this period, such as Allemand dance music. Allemand dance music originated in Germany and is a relatively slow duple dance music, which is widely popular in Britain and France. The combination of these dances forms an important genre of keyboard music in the Baroque period. The suite usually consists of a series of dances with different rhythms, tempos and moods, such as Minuet, Allemand, Saraband, Jig and so on. In addition to suites, variations and fugues were also important musical genres in the Baroque period.

4. Comparison between Baroque Music and Modern Music Style

Baroque music includes music from the birth of opera in 1600 to Bach's death in 1750. The author takes the Gothenburg Variations created by Bach in his later period as an example, in which Bach is amazing with his superb creative techniques. The whole piece is divided into thirty different variations, each of which is divided into three groups, and the last variation of each group is expressed in the form of Canon. Those that do not belong to the canon form also adopt a variety of styles, such as arias, creations, French overtures, small fugues, and finally return to the theme. This piece was played on a harpsichord double-deck keyboard at the time, but now it is more difficult to play on a modern single-deck piano.

Taking modern composer Joe Hisaishi as an example, Joe Hisaishi's music not only has the characteristics of traditional classical music, but also has a strong modernist color. It has its own unique style, which can make people feel that it is the music of Joe Hisaishi. When you get Joe Hisaishi's score, you will find that his score is mostly concise and organized, and rarely too complex to deal with. Hisaishi's harmonic treatment is obviously different from Bach's. Hisaishi's harmonic arrangement is loose and simple, which also makes his own style gradually established. Hisaishi's composition is more based on traditional harmony and tends to use dense arrangement to write chords. At the same time, his music is not bound by the traditional rules of harmony and is innovative, because most of his music is the soundtrack of the film, when in order to set off the tense atmosphere in the film, he boldly uses dissonant intervals. In the chord connection, he is good at using the high overlapping chords of the secondary chords to weaken the function of the harmony. Joe Hisaishi also does a good job of incorporating modern chord rules, adding seventh and ninth chords to make the melody sound richer.

Taking modern composer Rodion Shchedrin as an example. Shchedrin, his *24 Preludes and Fugues* created inherits the style of Bach's Preludes and Fugues suite from the Baroque period in terms of structure. In terms of creative techniques, this piece inherits traditional polyphonic writing techniques and incorporates modern compositional techniques such as binomial tones, polyphonic tones, and twelve tone sequences. The extensive use of second and ninth harmonic tones, extreme expansion of tonality, and interval relationships in answering questions have demonstrated various timbre changes through discordant harmonic vocabulary and polyphonic techniques.

Their creative techniques, life backgrounds and emotional expressions are different, and the feelings they bring to people are also different. But in some ways, we can also see the interconnectedness of music. Although the variations of the Baroque period are rich in changes, the theme runs through the whole process, and the harmony pursued between the various voices coincides with the modern aesthetics. Both of them are representative figures of the two times, creating great works and having an important impact. The achievements of music in the Baroque period are worth studying and learning from each of us. Modern music is still developing. Whether it is the gorgeous exaggeration of Baroque or the simplicity and beauty of modern times, it deeply touches our hearts and gives us great strength.

5. Conclusion

The keyboard music in the Baroque period, with its unique style and characteristics, laid a solid foundation for the development of music in later generations. Its polyphonic texture, dynamic changes, playing skills and the use of ornamentation all reflect the beauty and complexity of Baroque music. From the Lutheran Reformation to the perfection of musical instruments, and then to the maturity of the genre, the formation of keyboard music style in the Baroque period is the result of many factors. Compared with modern music, Baroque music is more gorgeous and exaggerated, but they are similar in pursuing harmony and expressing emotions.

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