



Understanding upon the Reasons of JS.Bach's "Mixed Style" Formation

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ABSTRACT

J.S. Bach is a great musician, a man of vitality and humanity, a composer with love of countryside and romantic feelings, and an individual of holy and noble, ordinary but extraordinary. When it comes to his music style, from the perspectives of the majority, it is serious, rigorous, holy, noble, courtly, and so on. In fact, Bach's music is "mixed", a reformed German style after integrating the music styles of the two countries—both the magnificent French court dance style and the dramatic style of Italy. Bach has formed his distinctive music style of personality—"Mixed style".

Keywords: JS.Bach, Mixed Style

Introduction

In Bach's "mixed style", the three repertoires of the most significance are *French Overture*, *Italian Concerto*, and *Partita*. These three works stand out as the most conspicuous works through Bach's life span.

Analysis

French Overture has two versions, one in b minor and the other in c minor. Bach eventually changed the mode from c minor to b minor as in the Baroque period, Bach regarded c minor as the darkest mode. In many of Bach's works, there are rare work in c minor, and are all tragic and sad. On such foundation laid by Bach, Beethoven and Mozart's works written in c minor are also tragic and heroic later on. For example, Beethoven's sonata *Pathétique*, sonata *Eroica*. Bach's *French Overture* is actually an imitation Copland's work. Copland is a French composer whose works have a typical French court dance style. During the period of Louis XVI in France where Copland was in, it was an era of extravagance. Louis XVI often held a ball with the nobles at the Palace of Versailles. The music composed by Copland, also, served the emperor with an abundance of gorgeous decorative sounds and cheerful rhythms within to match the gorgeous and exaggerated dance steps of Louis XVI and the nobles. The most typical "French rhythm" includes continuous syncopations, free rhythms, a large proportion of 1/32 notes, various decorative sounds, etc. And in Bach's *French Overture*, a lot of "French rhythm" also appeared, which is to imitate the "French elements" in Copland's works. Therefore, the whole "French Overture" is full of various gorgeous decorative sounds, syncopated rhythms, and 1/16 and 1/32 notes, from which it can be seen that Copland has a great influence on Bach. Therefore, *French Overture* has a strong French musical style.

"*Italian Concerto*" is the most performed repertoire during Bach's lifetime. Bach titled his solo *Italian Concerto* for the harpsichord in 1734 as "Concerto in Italian Taste", now referred to as "Italian Concerto". As a "music servant" serving under the rule of the church and the court, in addition to the church, Bach also paid great attention to maintaining close contact with the Dresden court. *Italian Concerto* was a hymn dedicated to the king. Bach had not earned his recognition at the time and his musical works have not received attention from the majority either, even not as good as that of Taylorman. Under the drive of receiving recognition from the public as well as obtaining the title of court composer, Bach must try his best to show his performance and creative talents multi-prospectively. Not only did he held a solo concert in a church in Dresden, but also needed to produce works of various styles to prove his outstanding competence. Various genres of religious works, such as Passion, Oratorio, Mass, Cantata, etc. are all areas of composition that Bach familiars with. It is not difficult to create works of such genre, but in terms of the taste of the court, secular music seem to arouse their interest more. At that time, Italian music was popular in this land where the Protestant religion had been entrenched for more than two hundred years. Bach was also very fond of this fresh and lively music style in popular. So *Italian Concerto* came into being under Bach's composing. The development of Italian music during the Baroque period had two outstanding features: the birth and rapid development of opera gradually replaced the dominant position of religious music, and string music, represented by the violin, became dominant and the most frequently heard instrumental music in secular music. The two types of music have a common trend, which is to gradually apart from polyphonic music, and tend to be the dominant and monophonic. The Italian music created with this novel technique has a fresh style and beautiful melody, which immediately was of competence when polyphonic creation techniques were popular, and attracted widespread reputation in European countries. Especially the listening groups of the court and the citizen class showed great interest in it. Bach, who is known for his ability to use complex polyphonic composing techniques, was also attracted by this creative method, and tried his best to imitate his main tune in this *Italian Concerto*. With technique and the customary musical image closing to

the current bright Italian music, Bach's work showed his composing talents that had ever seen. Therefore, this *Italian Concerto* has a typical Italian musical style.

Conclusion

Partita is a keyboard suite composed by Bach with a total of 7 leftovers. The first piece was completed in 1726; thereafter, other pieces were completed by 1731. It includes not only dance music, but also fantasia, scherzo, etc. Keyboard works like Partita were developed in Germany between the 17th and 18th centuries, and were brought to a climax by Bach. Later generations also called this suite the "German Suite". Among these suites composed by Bach, there are some frequently used dance music, such as: Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Menuet, Gigue, Gavotte, Bourree and Passpied. This repertoire has a strong local German color.

It is with these three masterpieces of different styles, *French Overture*, *Italian Concerto*, and *Partita*, that Bach's unique "mixed style" get to form.

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