Journal of Namibian Studies, 33 S2(2023): 1363–1377 ISSN: 2197-5523 (online)

Research on the Performance Style of Baroque Keyboard Music

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Abstract

This Article aimed to study (1) How to understand and interpret the style of Baroque keyboard music (2) What are the performance characteristics of the harpsichord and piano in Baroque keyboard music. To ensure the objectivity, authenticity, and general validity of the findings, the population sample for this study was selected from piano students, piano teachers, experts, and scholars in music colleges and universities in different regions of China. Receipts were collected by administering a reliability-compliant questionnaire to population sample, and the data were analyzed by SPSS. Analysis data by Descriptive statistics and Content Analysis. The research results were found as follows;

An understanding and interpretation of Baroque keyboard music style should include the following elements: instruments, scores, historical perspective, players, and performance techniques 2. The harpsichord mainly relies on the sound plug to adjust its timbre and volume, which makes it impossible to play the extended tone. The playing technique has more decorative tones added. In order to express the Baroque style, piano performance also requires retaining some of the playing skills of the harpsichord.

Keywords: Harpsichord; Piano; Baroque Style.

1 Introduction

Baroque keyboard music is a musical work created with Baroque keyboard instruments. From the perspective of purpose and means, musical instruments are means and music is the purpose. What kind of music should be used with what kind of instruments. This is the basic theoretical logic of retroists. They believed that only by playing Baroque keyboard music works with the harpsichord can the music style at that time be truly reproduced. The modern music school believes that people's aesthetic concepts are not static, and the musical style and instruments are also in the process of continuous innovation. Playing ancient music works on the piano is more in line with modern people's

aesthetic taste. At present, these two performance styles are quite similar, both have a large number of fans and supporters, and both have their own set of theories. The Cambridge Guide to the Understanding of Music Performance compiled by John Rink and Paul Henry Lang's Musicology and Music Performance both contain relevant articles. Some works on "music aesthetics" and "performance aesthetics" have also discussed this issue. It is generally believed that while pursuing the authenticity of history, the retroists often neglect the individuality and modernity of music interpretation; On the contrary, piano performance pays attention to the personalized understanding of the work, which is more in line with the aesthetic taste of modern people, but is easily detached from the original appearance of the work. The fundamental reason for the difference between the two styles is the difference in the performance of the two instruments.

Because each learner, performer, researcher, and appreciator has different knowledge background and interests, different aesthetic choices will arise in real music activities. Accustomed to the gentle and mellow sound of the piano, it may cause auditory discomfort to the bright and delicate sound of the harpsichord. On the contrary, those who are familiar with Baroque music style and like to explore new things are more likely to accept the timbre of the harpsichord. Once they get used to this sound, they may also take the harpsichord as the authentic and instead become aesthetically repulsed by the piano, believing that it can't reproduce the original appearance of the work. As a rational researcher, I generally look at Baroque keyboard music from both historical and contemporary perspectives, considering the piano and the harpsichord, each with its own characteristics, to be desirable aesthetic objects. To sum up, taking this as the topic, a comprehensive study of the development of Baroque keyboard music in the contemporary era has important reference and reference significance for people to learn, play, study and appreciate Baroque keyboard music.

Therefore, this paper will adopt a quantitative research method to investigate professional piano teachers and students in five music colleges in Chinese Mainland (Xi'an Conservatory of Music, Shaanxi Normal University Conservatory of Music, Central Conservatory of Music, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and Zhejiang Normal University Conservatory of Music) by issuing questionnaires that meet the reliability and validity. During the analysis process, researchers will classify the information obtained from the survey and use the percentage as the evaluation method to judge the attributes of the quantitative research results.

1.1Research Objectives

1. What aspects should the style of baroque keyboard music be interpreted from

2. How to accurately interpret the performance style of baroque music in performance.

2 Literature Review

The study of Baroque keyboard music performance style mainly focuses on three aspects: music style research, instrumental evolution research, and performance research.

In terms of Baroque music style, research achievements have focused on the studies of Bach, Handel, Coupland, Ramo, Scarlatti, and others, The corresponding representative achievements mainly include Jiao Lei (2006)'s Entering the Keyboard Music of Coupland and Ramo, Yu Qing (2007)'s Musician: A Study of the Style of Domenico Scarlatti's Keyboard sonata, Shao Yiqiang (2004)'s Baroque Appreciation of Monteverdi, Vivaldi, Bach and Handel. The research on Baroque music style mainly revolves around music themes, creative techniques, and other content, and combines personal and historical backgrounds to explain Baroque music style.

In terms of the study of the evolution of Baroque instrumental music, Gerald Abraham (1999) mentioned keyboard music around 1400 in Chapter 9 of his Concise Oxford History of Music. The fourth chapter of the History of Western Music (6th Edition) by Donald Jay Groot (2010) mentioned the historical development of the wedge hammer harpsichord and the harpsichord. Paul Henry Long's (2009) Music in Western Civilization, Mark Ivan Bonds's (2006) A Brief History of Music in Western Culture, and Roland Conde's (2014) A General History of World Music all provide explanations of the evolution of Baroque instrumental music. Overall, there have been few achievements in the study of Baroque instrumental music evolution at the micro level, and they have mainly emerged as a subsidiary part of macro music history research.

In the study of the performance style of baroque keyboard music, there has been a confrontation between retro and modernist views. The representative achievements are Tan Yun's Aesthetic Dimension of Baroque Keyboard Music: Retro and Modern, Colin Booth's (2021), The Amazing Difference between harpsichord and Modern Piano Performance - Taking Bach's Works as an Example, and so on. This type of research explores the historical dimensions of Baroque keyboard music performance style from the perspective of performance aesthetics.

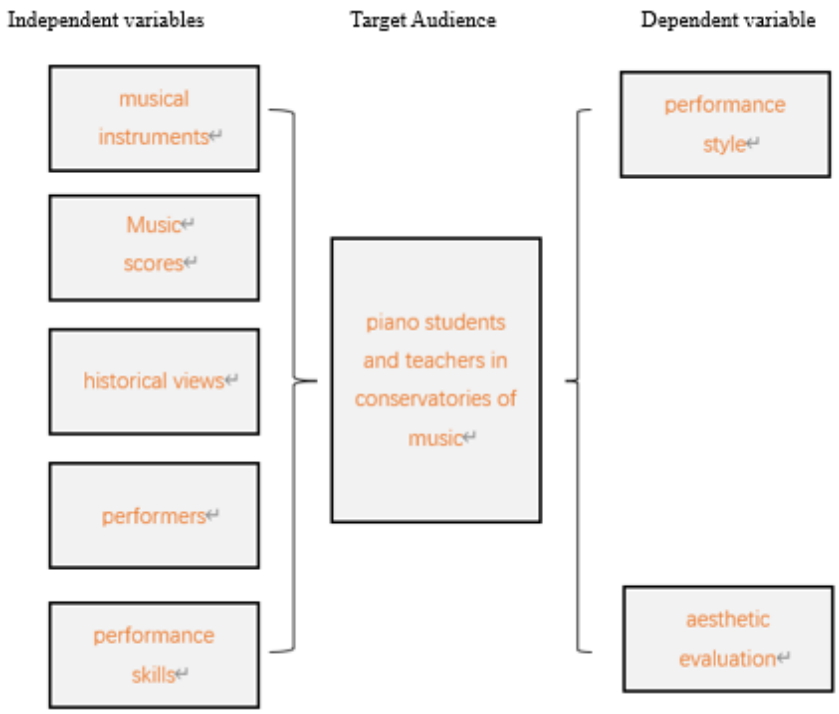
In general, the existing research can use history, music analysis, music aesthetics and other theoretical methods to study Baroque keyboard music. The research methods show the characteristics of qualitative research, and are less involved in quantitative research methods. Based

on this understanding, this paper, on the basis of previous qualitative research, uses quantitative research methods to explore some specific issues of baroque keyboard music.

3 Conceptual Framework

This research is a research study. Based on the basic theory of systematic musicology proposed by H. Riemann, with reference to theories such as music history, music aesthetics, and music performance, this article sets the independent variables as musical instruments, music scores, historical views, performers, and performance skills, and sets the dependent variables as performance style and aesthetic evaluation. The target audience is piano students and teachers in conservatories of music. The specific research framework is shown in the following figure.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



3.1 Research Methodology

The study on the performance style of Baroque keyboard music mainly focuses on the comparison between the style of the harpsichord and the piano. In addition to the investigation of the origin, development, sound effect and performance characteristics of the harpsichord, it also involves the style of Baroque keyboard music, representative

composers, representative works, and the summary of relevant research results. The comparison of performance styles of different instruments is the most important way to investigate the performance style of Baroque keyboard music. Through the questionnaire, it is profit to understand the piano learners' cognition of Baroque keyboard music and harpsichord. Through interviews with experts, scholars and piano teachers, this paper examines their aesthetic and teaching concepts of baroque keyboard music.

Quantitative research mainly obtains research data through questionnaires, of which subjects are mainly piano students in music colleges. The questions of the questionnaire focus on the content of this study and the knowledge structure of students, and strive to be accurate and comprehensive to ensure that the information obtained can truly reflect the music knowledge and aesthetic concepts of the students. In this research, the researcher samples piano majors from five music universities across China and obtains relevant information through questionnaires. In the students' questionnaire, one of the questions is to have students listen to and appreciate two recordings. In order to ensure the reliability of information, researchers try to go to the universities in person and explain the meaning of the question to students. If there are inevitable objective reasons, the researcher will entrust the school teacher to conduct a questionnaire survey on the students according to the requirements.

The population sample for this study is as follows:

Table 1. Population sample distribution

Name of Institution Number of Students	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior		postgraduate		Total Number
Xi'an Conservatory of Music（Piano Major）	Male	7	Male	8	Male	7	Male	9	Male	8	91
	Female	9	Female	12	Female	10	Female	8	Female	13	
School of Music, Shaanxi Normal University（Piano Major）	Male	8	Male	9	Male	9	Male	8	Male	6	75
	Female	7	Female	8	Female	6	Female	5	Female	9	
The Central Conservatory of Music（	Male	5	Male	6	Male	7	Male	7	Male	9	72
	Female	6	Female	8	Female	9	Female	8	Female	7	

Piano Major ）											
Shanghai Conservatory of Music（Piano Major）	Male	5	Male	7	Male	7	Male	9	Male	9	74
	Female	5	Female	8	Female	10	Female	6	Female	8	
School of Music, Zhejiang Normal University（Piano Major）	Male	6	Male	9	Male	8	Male	10	Male	10	88
	Female	5	Female	11	Female	10	Female	8	Female	11	
Total Number: 400											

The questionnaire used in this study has passed the reliability and validity test, and the specific results are as follows:

Table 2. Reliability statistics

Cronbach Alpha	Number of terms
.892	24

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin			.908
Bartlett's Test	Sphericity	Approx.Chi-Square	1764.32
		Df	89
		Sig.	.000

4 Research Results

Correlations are analyzed between different instruments, different music scores, historical views, performers, performance techniques and performance styles. The results show that there is a significant correlation between the two. There are significant positive correlations between different musical instrument, different music scores, historical views, performers, performance techniques and performance style, with correlation coefficients of 0.877, 0.755, 0.816, 0.753 and 0.832 respectively.

Correlations are analyzed between different instruments, different music scores, historical views, performers, performance techniques and aesthetic evaluations. The results show that there is a significant correlation between the two. The correlation coefficients are 0.773, 0.814, 0.790, 0.818, and 0.610, respectively, for different instruments, different music scores, historical views, performers, performance techniques, with aesthetic evaluations, as shown in the following table.

In regression analysis of this research, it first takes different musical instruments, different music scores, historical views, performers, performance techniques and performance styles as dependent variables to conduct multiple linear regression analysis.

Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R squared	Adjusted R squared	standard error of estimate	Change statistics				
					R squared variation	F variative	Df1	Df2	Sig variation
1	.914[a]	.834	.832	.37055	.834	397.325	5	394	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant) A Performance Techniques, A Historical Views, A Music Score Version, A Performers, A Different Musical Instruments.

The R-squared is found to be 0.834 and the adjusted R-squared is 0.832. The R-squared illustrates the percentage of the dependent variable explained by the independent variable and the closer the value is to 1, the better the regression equation fits the data. It can be seen that the regression equation is a good fit with a percentage explanation of 83.4%.

Table 5. ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	272.778	5	54.556	397.325	.000[b]
	Residual	54.099	394	.137		

Total	326.877	399			

a. Dependent Variable：Performance Style

b. Predictors: (Constant), A Performance Techniques, A Historical Views, A Music Score Version, A Performers, A Different Musical Instruments.

As can be seen from the table above, the corresponding F-value in the ANOVA table is 397.325, p equals 0.000 less than 0.05, indicating that the regression equation established is valid.

Table 6. Coefficient [a]

Model		Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Standard error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(constant)	.249	.104		2.389	.017		
	A Different Musical Instruments	.284	.030	.269	8.753	.000	.289	3.458
	A Music Score Version	.138	.033	.138	4.194	.000	.389	2.569
	A Historical Views	.236	.028	.288	8.541	.000	.368	2.715
	A Performers	.102	.038	.091	2.663	.008	.358	2.790
	A Performance Techniques	.263	.045	.242	5.914	.000	.251	3.983

a. Dependent Variable: Performance Style

From the above table, it can be seen that the sig. of corresponding constant coefficients is less than 0.05 and need not be omitted in the regression equation. The sigs. of corresponding coefficients of different musical instruments, different music scores, historical views, performers and performance techniques are less than 0.05. The final regression equation is: performance style equals 0.249 plus 0.284 multiplied by different instruments plus 0.138 multiplied by different scores plus 0.236 multiplied by historical views plus 0.102 multiplied by performers plus 0.263 multiplied by performance techniques. Different musical instruments, different music scores, historical views, performers, performance techniques all positively predicted performance style. The larger the coefficient, the greater the degree of influence.

Multiple linear regression analysis is conducted with different musical instruments, different music scores, historical views, performers, performance techniques, and aesthetic evaluation as dependent variables.

Table 7. Model Summary

Model	R	R squared	Adjusted R squared	standard error of estimate	Change statistics				
					R squared variation	F variative	Df1	Df2	Sig variation
1	.877[a]	.770	.767	.44178	.770	263.368	5	394	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant) B Performance Techniques, B Different Musical Instruments, B Historical Views, B Music Score Version, B Performers

The R-squared is found to be 0.770 and the adjusted R-squared is 0.767. The R-squared illustrates the percentage of the dependent variable explained by the independent variable and the closer the value is to 1, the better the regression equation fits the data. It can be seen that the regression equation is a good fit with a percentage explanation of 77%.

Table 8. ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	257.012	5	51.402	263.368	.000[b]
	Residual	76.898	394	.195		
	Total	333.910	399			

a. Dependent Variable：Aesthetic Evaluation

b. Predictors: (Constant), B Performance Techniques, B Different Musical Instruments, B Historical Views, B Music Score Version, B Performers

From the above table, the corresponding F value in the ANOVA table is 263.368, p equals 0.000 less than 0.05, indicating that the established regression equation is valid.

Table 9. Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Standard error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constants)	.636	.151		4.204	.000		
	B Different Musical Instruments	.171	.047	.162	3.669	.000	.299	3.345
	B Music Score Version	.305	.065	.236	4.704	.000	.232	4.306
	B Historical Views	.254	.044	.244	5.719	.000	.322	3.103
	B Performers	.258	.061	.224	4.218	.000	.208	4.818

B	Performance Techniques	.186	.045	.126	4.111	.000	.625	1.600

a. Dependent Variable: Aesthetic Evaluation

As can be seen from the above table, the sig. of corresponding constant coefficients is less than 0.05 and need not be omitted in the regression equation. The sigs. of corresponding coefficients of different musical instruments, different music scores, historical views, performers, performance techniques are less than 0.05. The final regression equation is: aesthetic evaluation equals 0.636 plus 0.171 multiplied by different musical instruments plus 0.305 multiplied by different musical scores plus 0.254 multiplied by historical views plus 0.258 multiplied by performers plus 0.186 multiplied by performance techniques. Different musical instruments, different music scores, historical views, performers, performance techniques all positively predicted aesthetic evaluation. The larger the coefficient, the greater the degree of influence.

5 Discussions

Through the above data analysis, we can make it clear that the five independent variables proposed in this article are important factors in interpreting the Baroque keyboard music style. In other words, the factors that affect the performance style of Baroque keyboard music include musical instruments, music scores, historical views, performers, performance skills.

Musical instrument: Musical instrument is the first factor that determines the music style. Due to the different structure, sound production principle and production materials of musical instruments, the sound of the harpsichord is crisp, bright, gorgeous and elegant with single timbre; The piano's voice is warm, mellow, rich in timbre and expressive. Therefore, using two instruments to play the same piece of music will produce very obvious style differences.

Music score: Because the notation of the Baroque period was not complete, and improvisation was popular at that time. Therefore, when composing music, composers usually write only the main notes. Later generations will turn this music into the original version. Later, with the progress of keyboard instruments, music styles, performance techniques and notation, the publisher will annotate and evaluate the original score, and add performance marks and expression marks to the score in order to facilitate the performance of the performer.

Historical view: The historical view here refers to the attitude of performers towards ancient music works, which can be generally divided into retro school and modern school. The retro school believed that the

harpsichord should be used to play Baroque keyboard music, and the original version of the music should be used; The modernists believe that the piano should be used to perform with the times, and have a more diverse choice of scores, favoring different versions of annotated scores and advocating a new understanding and interpretation of ancient music.

Performer: Performance is essentially a second creation. As pianists or harpsichorists, due to their different personalities, interests, life backgrounds and learning experiences, they all inject their unique understanding of music into their performance while following a style and genre, thus forming their own performance style.

Performance skill: performance skill is one of the factors that can best reflect the performance style. The performance skills of Baroque keyboard music are mainly embodied in the performance speed, strength, pedal, ornament, staccato, legato, non-legato, skip, stress, etc. The performance skills of different performers usually show different degrees of difference.

6 Knowledge from Research

Conclusion

Regarding the performance techniques of the Baroque keyboard music style, we can draw the following conclusions:

The structure of the instrument determines the performance characteristics. Due to the limitation of the sound production principle, the harpsichord can't play the sustain, and the change of strength is not as obvious as the piano. Therefore, the performer mainly relies on various ornaments, such as appoggiatura, trill, mordent, echo, glide and others to fill and modify the gaps in the music. The performance techniques are mainly staccato and non-legato. Although a more expressive keyboard instrument, the piano, emerge
deviate from the original style characteristics of the work.

Music score is a visual music symbol marked by the composer, and the performer mainly performs according to the music score. As we said earlier, the notation of the Baroque period is relatively simple. The original music score generally doesn't indicate the performance mark and expression mark. The performer mainly improvises according to the style of Baroque music. As musical techniques and notation matured, people became less accustomed to improvising and playing primarily from the marks of the score, which necessitated illustrations and annotations of the original score. For example, some lyrical musical passages, which originally had no legato mark, are usually added in the annotated version and played not with staccato, but with legato. Some

long time value notes, which originally had no ornament mark, are usually played as trills, depending on the style of the music.

The retroists seek to restore the original appearance of their works, emphasizing the historical identity from musical instruments to music scores to performance techniques. The performance of the retroists is often based on the study of historical documents, looking for historical vestiges of Baroque keyboard music in various musical documents. Through the efforts of the performers represented by Landowska at the beginning of the 20th century, the harpsichord came back to the music stage, and the Baroque keyboard music was revived, and the retro school of playing strictly according to the original instruments and original music scores was formed. Its performance techniques are mainly staccato, non-legato and various ornaments. And this kind of performance technique has almost become the standard for playing Baroque keyboard music. Although the piano can play legato, sustain and contrast, it still does not break away from the original performance characteristics of music.

The performance characteristics are related to the musical instruments, music scores, historical views and performers mentioned earlier. Firstly, musical instruments directly affect the performance skills. The sound production principle of the harpsichord is different from that of the piano. The former is the sound produced by the pluck fluctuation of the strings rather than the fingers, which mainly changes the volume and tone through the stop. Therefore, when playing, the fingers don't need to be raised too high. Normal strength is enough, and the fingers do don't to stay on the keys. In addition, the harpsichord doesn't have the sustain. When playing, it mainly uses the ornament to prolong the sound. The piano can not only extend the sound freely, but also play the sound with different volume and tone. Therefore, the performance skills are correspondingly very diverse. Secondly, the difference between music score and historical view also has an important impact on performance skills. Different performers are usually affected by different historical views, so they will choose different versions of music. In the performance, performers will use different performance skills according to their own personality and interests to express their ideal sound.

Suggestions

By studying Baroque keyboard music and comparing the performance characteristics of the harpsichord and the piano, it is possible to know the real face of Baroque keyboard music to a certain extent, including musical style, instrument performance, performance techniques, and score versions. If we don't study the history and current situation of Baroque keyboard music performance, it is difficult to accurately interpret the style of the work with the piano. Most Baroque keyboard music is made for the harpsichord, and its performance skills are also based on the harpsichord. For example, the performance techniques are

mostly staccato and non-legato, and the strong beat and long duration and often use ornaments. Although the musical expression of the piano is more abundant, it can play staccato, non-legato, and linear legato, and can freely extend the length of the sound through the pedal, and change the strength of the sound through the strength of the fingers, we can't arbitrarily change the original techniques when playing these works with the piano. It is because staccato, non-legato and ornament are not only the characteristics of the harpsichord, but also the basic style of Baroque music. Therefore, studying the performance style of Baroque keyboard music and learning from the performance techniques of the harpsichord should be an important topic for piano performance and teaching.

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