

On Study of Conception and Application of Counterpoint Texture in Composing Technological Theory

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Received 5 September 2016; accepted 8 November 2016
Published online 26 December 2016

Abstract

The music composing technological theory is the premise for music to develop and the counterpoint texture is especially important in composing. No matter in time or space, it should show the music arts, while spatiality is the main expression in counterpoint texture. Understanding to counterpoint texture is the indispensable part of composing. By briefly introducing counterpoint texture, this article analyzes its main expressive types and studies its practice so as to provide reference for relevant people and make our music pieces to develop better and better.

Key words: Composer of polyphonic music technology theory; Texture; Design and application

Zhang, S. H. (2016). On Study of Conception and Application of Counterpoint Texture in Composing Technological Theory. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 11(6), 12-15. Available from: URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/hess/article/view/9257>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/9257>

INTRODUCTION

As the syntagmatic relation of each melody in composition, music texture is especially important in composition. The counterpoint texture could show the music types. The main expressive types of counterpoint music are homophony, polyphony and heterophony, which have long history of development and different features in composing. No matter independent existence or interdependency is the expressive type of individual music feature. Many domestic and foreign great musical compositions would show it. Thus, studying the

counterpoint texture is the indispensable step in music composing.

1. TEXTURE CONCEPTION IN COMPOSING TECHNOLOGICAL THEORY

1.1 Spatial Structure and Time Structure

With musical terminology, time structure is called “musical form”. Whatever composition has its fixed duration and corresponding structural form. No matter its content is a paragraph or many paragraphs, it should be combined with practice and both constitute the musical form together. Only after enjoying the whole piece of music composition for its duration can we know its structural form. This is the musical time structure, being musical form.

Music pieces are different from other works. Music should be enjoyed by ear. But actually, music is tridimensional. If some one is very sensitive to music, he can feel the melody lines, layer between harmony background and melody lines in a piece of musical play so as to recognize such condition of multiple musical melodies interweaving or overlapping, etc. Combination of melody lines and many elements constitute the structural form of music in space, crossing in the music score which we can also directly see. Thus the terminology in music is called texture.

Texture usually refers to the structural forms in time and space, being one of the most important structural forms in music. The word “texture” vividly shows the music structure which could make us unconsciously have vision of the spider web, handcraft knitting, etc. whose feature is not only close, power and in order, but also understated; not only plain but also colorful. As for the powerful music, all parts would be filled in the actual music score which would become very thick and full. As for the mild music, there is less notes in the actual music score, being quite and free.

1.2 Monophonic Texture

The monophonic texture refers to a single melody. It is the simplest form of texture. Simple melody goes through the whole music composition, without crossing of harmonic background and other melodies. It was one of the main musical forms of western intersection music long time ago. With the development of society, it started to add harmony and polyphony into it. The monophonic texture is the basic musical form, for example, accapella is a kind of single melody. Since the single melody is very sweet and could make people feel delighted, it is also one of the main expressive forms of Chinese music. We keep its aesthetic feature. Many light musical pieces are the expression of monophonic texture. There are many well-known works, such as *A Moonlit Night on the Spring River*, *The Moon Over a Fountain*, etc..

1.3 Counterpoint Texture

The monophonic texture is constituted by a single melody line, while the counterpoint texture is formed by many melody lines or voice parts crossing or overlapping. As to the structure, the counterpoint texture is more complicated than monophonic texture, with richer and more colorful musicality. The crossing and overlapping form of each voice part changes a lot, with many different types. Its advantage is the combination of several voice parts but each has its own expressive feature. Some would attach to a single melody to show itself. Under the counterpoint development, it gradually constitutes polyphonic music and harmonic music.

With literal meaning, polyphony refers to the combination of multiple tones, rather than just one tone. In the polyphonic music, each melody occupies the same position, without primary or secondary position. Each is a perfect composition, slightly different from counterpoint music. As for the harmonic music, each melody has primary or secondary position. Though it is constituted by multiple voice parts, it makes those voice parts as accompaniment music.

2. CONCEPTION OF COUNTERPOINT TEXTURE IN COMPOSING TECHNOLOGICAL THEORY

The counterpoint texture in China has many expressions and kinds. But it can be summarized according to the main feature, including troll texture, imitation texture, sustained or fixed bass texture, supporting texture, texture of harmonic contraposition, etc.. Each expressive form has its own feature and representative works. Troll texture is to play high and low voice part one by one, entering successively and constituting longitudinal superimposed relationship which is well arranged. It is fully applied in “playing tone” of Va nationality and “Thrash Rice Song” of the Jingpo nationality. The imitation texture is

applied in “he e” and “la le la” in folk songs of Zhuang nationality as well as “honk whistle” and “throat method” in folk songs of Dong nationality. The sustained or fixed bass texture refers to the method to associate activity and inertia. The low voice part adopts supporting drone or sustained tone with rhythm. On the other hand, the fixed melody compares to the upper voice part. The activity and inertia of both parts express each other and combine to a whole, for example, the “narration” songs and “voice” songs of Dong nationality, as well as “Worere” folk song of Naxi nationality. The supporting texture is to brightly show the main tone so as to support it, in such folk songs as “On a Folk Song”, “North and South Road Folk Song” of Zhuang nationality, “Song of Butterflies” of Yao nationality, etc.. As to the texture of harmonic contraposition, its high and low voice parts have their own melody conditions. Thus these two voice parts are in the same position. Sometimes it is synchronized or crossing to play, reflecting very strong harmonic color, such as “Mu Gua Ji” and “Bai Shi” of Lisu nationality, “Harvest Sacrificial Song” of Gaoshan nationality, etc..

We can also understand the counterpoint texture constitution as this: (a) Supplying form, whose form is to connect each voice part from the beginning to the end, overlapping the music period and music comma. It is widely applied in such songs of leading and instrument ensemble, which means to begin the playing of next sentence music when the last one is not finished totally. Thus, the music piece would have to layer sense. It is applied in the beginning of “Small Donkey” of wind music in Hebei, also more in many folk song chorus. (b) Supporting form is a kind of part of counterpoint music. Performers could adjust in the music by their own willing and fully play each instrument’s performance, coordinating and reflecting each other to go forward as the direction of main tone. It is widely used in folk performances. Full coordination with the main tone could make the whole music frame more complete, with much artistic attraction. It is changed from the main tone, dividing into different voice parts and performing around the main tone so as to make the whole music more attractive. The famous representative music piece is *Playing Around the Street* of South Yangzi string and pipe ensemble. (c) Homophony is to decorate a certain main tone with one or some voice parts as accompany. As to polyphony, the main tone of homophony could be shown in any voice part, mainly in high voice part.

The following article aims at the most representative three types in counterpoint music, homophony, polyphony and supporting music.

2.1 Introduction and Application of Homophony of Counterpoint Texture

As a main form of counterpoint music, homophony uses high voice part as its main tone. Other parts are its assistance, by fixed tone or rhythm to provide accompany

for the main tone. The setting main tone is at the primary, while other parts are not emphasized, whose function is to serve the main tone to perfectly show. It is also a main music form. Many famous musicians tend to use the homophony, such as Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, etc. Though many works emphasize the homophony, polyphony is also indispensable in many works. Excellent composers all know well to use the polyphony. Combining the homophony and polyphony could form counterpoint to better show the music aesthetic feeling. This is a common way in many music works at present.

Haydn is the originator of instrumental music homophony. His music is lively and ultrafast. He applies the sonata form of the piano to string music ensemble, assimilating the former independent voice part to show with a fixed main melody. Most works of "Beyé" are homophony while some are polyphony. There is little polyphony in the 599 works of Carl Czerny. The Sonatina of Mozart is also homophony. Only some works have polyphony in the second chapter. The polyphony gradually entered into homophony age form 17th century. The broken chord texture used in folk music is the main restraint for the development of homophony. It could independently perform harmony. In Márok period, the digital bass application also greatly promoted the development of homophony. After the 18th century, homophony was regarded as the mainstream of foreign music, while the polyphony coexisted with homophony or combining each other. Till today, many works in China are partial to homophony. Harmony is the main creative form.

2.2 Introduction and Application of Polyphony of Counterpoint Texture

Polyphony means several melodies in the work with rather independent texture. Each texture has no primary or secondary position. Both supplements the other or make comparison, such as "16 Plates" in "13 String Cable".

As a kind of counterpoint, polyphony was called paraposition before. Its main form is several melodies with the same position in the music to show the independent self and coordinate with each other. The rhythm of each voice part in music, fluctuation and power of melody line, etc. are all independent, coordinating and affecting to form the harmony. As to the monophonic music, polyphony is the counterpoint constituted by many voice parts; as to the homophony, polyphony is the music combining several melodies. Polyphony emphasizes the melody of each voice part, coexisting and with the same position. There is no affiliated relation. Polyphony means several melodies in the work with rather independent texture. Each texture has no primary or secondary position. Both supplements other or make comparison, such as "16 Plates" in "13 String Cable".

It can be divided into three categories:

(a) Counterpoint music is the polyphony applying the control methods. The most representative work is the *Chinese Cowboy With His Flute* by He Luting. It was the

first and most successful work to use polyphony in China. It belongs to piano solo.

(b) To become Canon is the work using imitation, as well as the round singing or round playing of the second, third and fourth part in the work, such as *Defending Yellow River*, the fourth part of *Yellow River Cantata*, *Canon in D Major* by Pachelbel.

(c) Works that being called as supporting polyphony or assisting polyphony, meaning the polyphony works applying foil which is a common way in folk. By using the mutual echo, filling content and foil to decorate the works, it would get more perfect works with richer contents. Main representative work is the *Xiangyang of Blossoming Flowers Red of Dong* nationality, female duo in *History of Zunyi Meeting*, etc. in China. The foreign countries also use such method to create works, such as *The Art of Fugue* by Bach.

2.3 History of Polyphony Development

As a kind of counterpoint music, polyphony is the music formed by many melodies with a proper way. In the church of 19th century, it was used to sing the bible, singing different melodies of the ode. It was firstly formed in 9th century Western Europe and in the period of great prosperity in the later period of 15th century and 16th century, called Organum at that time with the representative of a cappella of Palestrina. In the 18th century, J.S Bach created instrumental Fugue and became the representative of instrumental polyphony. With the more and more application of polyphony, its position became higher, including scripture eulogizing, polyphony Chamson, Canzona, etc.. In the Netherlands music school, it further developed the technology and composing of polyphony. The composer, Dufei, created "Four Parts Harmony", helping the later polyphony to open up a perfect road. In our polyphony, it was also shown in traditional music. Polyphony was widely used and took references from other countries' creation methods. The famous works include "Little Bach", "Little Prelude and Fugue", "Invention", etc..

3. INTRODUCTION AND APPLICATION OF HETEROPHONY OF COUNTERPOINT TEXTURE

Heterophony was the third way of counterpoint, mainly in the way of unison. When some parts are singing or playing, some need to expend independent tone to provide and foil the main tone. It belongs to a branch of the main tone, but with the same essence. Heterophony has the same rhythm and tone quality with main tone, just changing tone's high and low voice. It is to coordinate with the main tone, making the music better complete. It can be regarded as the simplified existence of the main tone, to briefly play according to the main form of tone.

It is the main form of folk music, such as all kinds of instrument's ensemble, classic traditional opera, etc. it is also used in the creation of counterpoint to make music more vivid and add active atmosphere. To some degree, heterophony could turn to the form of polyphony.

Whichever form of counterpoint, it is to make music getting better creation. It is of great importance. During creation, it is to make the artistic performance reaching to the peak with each feature. It is of great significance to combine each form and create the unique music piece, with profound impact on the development of music in our country and necessity to promote composing technology.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, there are many kinds of counterpoint texture, being widely used in composing technological

theory. The composing technological theory has some connotation, while the counterpoint texture is just a part. By adjusting and applying homophony, polyphony and heterophony in composing, it is to manifest music pieces' arts. Its wide application is of long-term exploration and perfection, the choice of many musicians after a lot of practices and helps our Chinese Quyi to promote to a higher level.

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