

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Keyboard *ordre* was one of French Baroque instrumental music which played a very important role in French culture and politics. During the French monarchy, Louis XIV was the most powerful monarch and serves as the model for artistic patronage. All of French arts, tastes and manners were refined and highly developed.¹

“The French clavecinists (harpsichordists) flourished amid the luxurious atmosphere of the royal court and the aristocratic salons. Although history pays great attention to the excellent literature and art produced in late-seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century France, many contemporary accounts of that period remind us of the favored position held by music, particularly in court circles.”²

Indeed, many French composers did compose *ordres*, such as Chambonnières, Couperin, Rameau, Lully, and spread to other countries including England (Handel) and Germany (Froberger and Bach). The *ordre* or suite (in general term) established into the order of Allamande-Courante-Sarabande-Gigue and reached its peak in the hands of J.S. Bach (1685-1750).

However, regardless the long history of this genre, composers in the nineteenth century were not inclined to continue writing *ordre* which caused by several reasons. First, nineteenth century composers were challenged to be an

¹ J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *History of Western Music* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), 352.

² John Gillespie, *Five centuries of keyboard music* (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1965), 80.

innovator, which they must be aware of the traditions, but at the same time, strive for individuality and novelty unseen previously.

“One path to success was to specialize, becoming a virtuoso on one instrument or a composer for one medium. Another path was to create music that was novel, individual, evocative, spectacular, nationalist, exotic, or in some other way distinctive yet attractive.”³

Second, the Suite gradually become sonata, although the term suite itself was called “sonata” in England. This sonata genre was highly preferred (in sonata itself or in any other form) because of the nature for composers to express two contrasting ideas.

“Series of dances were called sonatas, although they were actually suites.”⁴

“[...], but the major keyboard genre became the sonata, commonly in two to four movements of contrasting mood and tempo”⁵

Lastly, the main genre for keyboard in the nineteenth century were focusing on character pieces, not suite anymore.

“The nineteenth century is connected with the concept of Romanticism ... Romanticism seeks realization and identity through exploration of an inner emotional life and courts the freedom to express emotional states freely, even at times passionately and wildly.⁶ [...] new concepts, represented by the tone poem and the character piece, molded structure by the following story line, transforming thematic motives to express a variety of emotional states or capturing a mood in a brief miniature.”⁷

Composers in the early twentieth century expressed an interest of simple or traditional music, such as Brahms incorporating his current highly romanticism

³ Ibid., 559.

⁴ Ibid., 147.

⁵ Ibid., 503.

⁶ Steward Gordon, *A History of Keyboard Literature*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 196.

⁷ Ibid., 197.

music and folk idioms to create a unique personal style.⁸ In addition to the revival of keyboard *ordre* (the term was not in used any longer). Other figures in the early twentieth century who revived piano suite includes Debussy and Ravel in their *Suite Bergamasque* and *Le Tombeau de Couperin* respectively, Poulenc, in his work *Suite Française*, up to Germany such as Schoenberg, with his work *Suite op. 25* and etc.

The purpose of the research is to analyze a specific work of Poulenc's *Suite Française* and its musical elements. Then, evaluating how specifically Poulenc revived French piano suite in the early twentieth century, which the impact is that the technique (among many others) led to the birth of postmodernism music (a new and important resources of composition), although the similar technique had been done previously, it did not open a new path. The research is conducted by literature study of the development of suite and trends throughout the sixteenth century Renaissance to the diverse styles of music in the twentieth century; descriptive analysis on Poulenc's *Suite Française* and supported by Gervaise's *Le livre de dancieries* to discover the result on how Poulenc revive French piano suite in the twentieth century.

1.2 Purpose of the Research

The result of this study concludes how Poulenc became one of the important figures in the early twentieth century to revive the long history of French piano suite; and not only that, but also his act would open a new composition resource in the later part of twentieth century, which was the postmodernism.

⁸ Ibid., 717.

1.3 Scope and Limitations of Research

The twentieth century *Suite Française* that are closely related to the early suites will be used in this research. The *Durand* edition are used for analysis.

1.4 Research Writing Structure

Chapter I, “Introduction” contains the background, purpose, scope and limitations of the research.

Chapter II, “Theoretical Framework” contains a brief history of French Keyboard music to the Baroque era, development of French keyboard suite entering nineteenth century, stylistic diversity and French piano music in the twentieth century, background of Poulenc, and their respective suites.

Chapter III, “Methodology” contains the methods and analysis process, mentions sources, literature and research methodology.

Chapter IV, “Discussion” contains musical analysis of *Suite Française*.

Chapter V, “Conclusion”.

Appendix A, Score analysis of *Suite Française*

Appendix B, Score analysis of Gervaise’s *Le livre de danceries*