



A Review of Research on Stravinsky's Ballet The Rite of Spring

Can Zhang¹ and Kovit Kantasiri²

¹ Ph.D. Candidate, Doctor of Philosophy in Arts Performance Communication, Academy of Arts and Philosophy, Shinawatra University, Thailand

² Assoc. Prof. Dr., Academy of Arts and Philosophy, Shinawatra University, Thailand

E-Mail: 805860985@qq.com, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-2184-9252>

E-Mail: kovit.k@siu.ac.th, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1208-2763>

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Abstract

Background and Aims: Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* is a cornerstone of twentieth-century music and ballet history. The 1913 work has been the subject of a wealth of research on its ground-breaking rhythmic design, harmonic language, orchestration, and impact on ballet aesthetics. The body of musicological research on the work is well established, but studies across disciplines that include music analysis, choreography, and dance dramaturgy remain few in number. The objective of this study is to analyze the body of research on *The Rite of Spring* from the following three perspectives: (1) Stravinsky's biography and the historical context of the work, (2) the evolution of ballet aesthetics and choreographic ideas, and (3) compositional techniques such as rhythm, harmony, and timbre. The study further attempts to identify major research themes, points of scholarly agreement and disagreement, and research gaps, particularly as they pertain to the correlation of music and choreography.

Methodology: The study's methodology is a qualitative literature review. Academic sources were identified through purposive sampling according to their relevance, authority, and scholarly impact. The materials consulted include monographs, peer-reviewed journal articles, doctoral and master's theses, musical scores and manuscripts, and documents related to the creation and performance history of *The Rite of Spring*, drawn from both international and Chinese-language academic databases. The literature was interpreted and analyzed through document analysis, score analysis, and comparative thematic synthesis.

Results: The results of the review show that the majority of research centers on the work's rhythmic innovation, harmonic organization, and orchestration, and confirms the work as a foundational text of musical modernism. Works of ballet history and criticism tend to identify the work as a pivotal moment in the history of ballet that upended classical tradition and paved the way for abstract theatrical expression. There remain few studies that examine the formal correlation of Stravinsky's score with Nijinsky's choreography in an organized way.

Conclusion: The study's conclusion is that while the scholarship on *The Rite of Spring* is expansive and research methods are well developed in the field of music theory, interdisciplinary studies



remain underdeveloped. Choreography, dance dramaturgy, and performance analysis continue to have a tenuous relationship with research on the music of *The Rite of Spring*, pointing to a need for a more comprehensive approach in future research.

Keywords: The Rite of Spring; Stravinsky; Ballet Music; Rhythm Analysis; Harmonic Language; Modernist Aesthetics

Introduction

Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* is universally acknowledged as one of the most influential twentieth-century works in music and dance history. Since its 1913 Paris premiere, the ballet has been widely discussed in terms of its radical rhythmic design, novel harmonic idiom, and general impact on the acceleration of changes in Western art music and ballet aesthetics (Clough, 2004; Sadie, 2012; White, 1987). In international literature, especially European, Russian, and North American musicology, *The Rite of Spring* is often quoted as a landmark of musical modernism and a generative influence on new compositional, performance, and theatrical approaches (Sadie, 2012; van den Toorn, 1987). However, despite the abundance of global literature on the work, the focus of existing research has been uneven, and there is a relative imbalance between the amount and depth of studies on musical technique and an interdisciplinary approach that integrates choreography, dance dramaturgy, and performance communication (Straus, 2022; Zhu, 2001).

At the disciplinary level, new research in arts and performance studies, broadly defined, tends to put increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary models of knowledge and highlight the value of new scholarship at the intersections of musicology, dance studies, and performance theory (Jay, 1995). In recent years, new theoretical directions in performance studies and embodied cognition have converged in asserting that musical meaning is not produced merely by music but is rather the outcome of the perception of relationships between music, movement, space, and physical experience in staged performance. According to these perspectives, canonical works such as *The Rite of Spring* are ready to be reexamined beyond the scope of music-specific analysis and with the broader perception of it as a total dance-theater artwork. Nevertheless, when looking at the landscape of existing literature, one will notice that most studies continue to treat Stravinsky's score and Nijinsky's choreography as two separate phenomena and bodies of artistic data.

At the national/regional level, within the context of Thailand and its neighboring countries in Southeast Asia, existing studies on *The Rite of Spring* are limited in quantity, coverage, and scope. Despite the noticeable increase in programs in music performance, dance communication, and interdisciplinary arts studies in Thai higher education, systematic and comprehensive academic reviews of the repertoire of Western modernist ballet and its artistic relevance have





been limited. The majority of the existing body of studies in Thai academia still takes the form of descriptive history or relies on popular or translated secondary sources with limited critical synthesis or theoretical updates. The result is that many students, educators, and researchers in the field of music and dance performance in Thailand have not been able to have easy access to a convenient, one-point-of-reference, and updated summary of international research directions on The Rite of Spring, particularly on those studies that connect music analysis with choreography and performance communication.

At the still more specific level of existing research, studies on The Rite of Spring can be further organized according to three major areas of focus that are generally maintained in the literature. The largest body of studies can be said to cover the area of compositional techniques, specifically those of rhythmic asymmetry, harmonic layering, orchestration, and timbral design (Cacioppo, 1992; Straus, 2014; White, 1987). Many of these studies draw on modern music theory and analytical frameworks in articulating specific techniques. As a whole, this large and growing body of research solidifies Stravinsky's score for The Rite of Spring as the foundation of reference for twentieth-century compositional practice and analysis (Sadie, 2012; van den Toorn, 1987). A second body of literature looks into the historical and cultural background of the ballet. Several studies focus on Stravinsky and his Russian influences, folk materials, and the broader cultural context of the Ballets Russes (Stravinsky, 1936; Taruskin, 1980). A third, relatively smaller body of research covers the questions of ballet aesthetics and choreographic reform and situates Nijinsky's choreography for The Rite of Spring in early modernist dance movements (Jay, 1995; Zhu, 2001). However, in general, studies that consistently and systematically integrate the three dimensions and speak to how musical structure and choreographic design work together to produce meaning in the context of live performance are still relatively scarce (Zhu, 2001).

In recent years, new trends in contemporary theories in performance studies, dance analysis, and music cognition have increasingly advocated for more integrative and holistic analysis models and for new approaches to interpretation that are contextualized and situate each work as a dynamic system of interactions rather than as an isolated technical object (Jay, 1995). This emerging theoretical background offers a timely platform for a new attempt at reexamining The Rite of Spring, especially as a work of dance theater, for which music construction, bodily movement, and dramaturgical design are inseparable. When using this perspective as a guiding principle in surveying the existing body of literature, a reader will be able to clearly distinguish the current patterns of research, understand the key contributions of existing literature, and see more transparently the current methodological limitations and gaps for further work.

As a result, the present study is conducted in an attempt to synthesize and review the major published scholarly research on Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring from the following



perspectives: (1) composer biography and creative background, (2) ballet aesthetics and historical development, and (3) musical compositional techniques (Clough, 2004; Sadie, 2012; Zhu, 2001). By ordering existing literature from the largest conceptual categories to more specific areas of analysis and interest, this review will be able to better illustrate the current status of research on the topic, highlight the key findings and contributions of existing literature, and demonstrate the more specific research gaps, especially regarding choreography and the interaction of music and dance (Straus, 2022; Zhu, 2001). The research is expected to benefit multiple stakeholders in Thai academia, including university students and researchers in music and dance studies, arts educators at the levels of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs in music performance, dance communication, and interdisciplinary arts studies, as well as scholars interested in interdisciplinary and performance-centered studies of art music and ballet. In the context of Thai higher education and research, the study will be able to contribute to the further development of localized Thai-language resources on the topic and serve as a stepping stone for Thai scholars in performing arts to continue the field's growth and engage more fully with international standards in interdisciplinary arts research.

A Brief Biography of the Composer and a Study of the Background of the Creation of the Ballet, The Rite of Spring

The literature on Stravinsky's life and on the background of the creation of the ballet *The Rite of Spring* is available at home and abroad, and it can provide a very comprehensive knowledge of the composer's life and creative experience through reading and studying the relevant papers and writings. In this chapter, the author summarizes five clearer and more authoritative theoretical works: Stravinsky's own compilation of writings *Chronicle of My Life* (Stravinsky, 1936), Russian scholar Druskin's *Stravinsky: Character, Creation, Opinion* (Druskin, 2002), American scholar Robert Clough's *Stravinsky Interviews* (Clough, 2004), German scholar Wolfgang Domling's book *Stravinsky* (Wolff, 2003), and Stanley Sadie's thesaurus document, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Sadie, 2012).

Stravinsky (1936) *Chronicle of My Life* is a book on the personal life experiences of the composer Stravinsky, written and edited by himself. It contains an in-depth discussion of the influence of the great painter Pablo Picasso on Stravinsky's musical compositions, especially in relation to the dance music *Pulcinella*, as well as an assessment of the relationship between Stravinsky and Picasso by the French writer Jean Goucaudot. There exists some kind of correlation between Stravinsky and Picasso (Taruskin believes that Stravinsky is the Picasso of the music class). However, in the literature collected so far in China, no literature examines Stravinsky's musical works from the perspective of painting (pp. 206–309). This book very clearly demonstrates





and excavates Picasso's influence on Stravinsky's music and expresses his opinionated viewpoint in the composer's personal words. Therefore, it can be used as a base for a more in-depth study.

Deruskin's (2002) *Stravinsky: Character, Creation, Opinion* discusses the two main features of Stravinsky's early compositions, namely the Russian themes and the focus on dramatic compositions. The author says: Stravinsky's Russian theme comes from his mentor Rimsky Korsakov, the ballet *The Firebird*, the opera *Scrooge*, and so on, with the fairy-tale allegorical works deeply embodied in the spirit of Rimsky-Korsakov's interest. The ballet *The Firebird* can be considered a fruitful beginning of Stravinsky's creative work, which, in a sense, determined the direction of Stravinsky's creative work in the following four years, that is, the musical creation of Russian themes. The author spends a great deal of time describing the dramatic creation of Stravinsky's ballets, and Stravinsky's beginning of musical-theater creation had a direct influence on the artistic concepts of his early acquaintances, such as Diaghilev, Benoit, and Fokine. The author points out that dance and dramatic performance are not a relationship in which one influences the other, but rather a relationship in which the two are mutually constraining and integrated, which is the source of the danceability that is prominent in Stravinsky's music. While retaining the structure of the Romantic ballet, Stravinsky symphonizes Tchaikovsky's as well as Glazunov's music, realizing the infinite possibilities of symphonizing dance as well as music. In addition, the author points out that Stravinsky's music is characterized by two main features: "visibility" and "audibility", which means a strong sense of musical modelling, and "audibility", which means a strong sense of musical modelling. "Audibility" is the preservation of the complete melodic line of the music. The interaction between his "visibility" and the stage drama will be reproduced through the stylized form of the drama, thus strengthening the "visibility" of the music (pp. 13–46). Drewskin's *Stravinsky: Character, Creation, Opinion* carefully categorizes the composer's musical opinions at different times, which is an important help to the author in clarifying Stravinsky's musical concepts, and provides an important inspiration for the writing of the thesis. However, Drewsky did not analyze the principles of symphonization and the principles of drama in ballet; thus, the author can expand the literature about this aspect.

Clough (2004), *Stravinsky Interviews*, records the composer's views and opinions on musicians, musical styles, musical works, and so on through a question-and-answer format, enabling the author to fully understand Stravinsky's musical ideas at the time of composing *The Rite of Spring*. The book has three sections: the first part is a memoir, the second part is about his own works, and the third part is a musical reverie. The first section, *Memoirs*, discusses the various artists who influenced Stravinsky; the second section, *Talking About His Own Work*, details the history of the composition of *The Rite of Spring*, including the conception of the work, the process of its premiere, and its subsequent reception; and the third section, *Musical*



Reminiscences, documents Stravinsky's own conceptions of composition, including compositional techniques, his views on classical music and modern music, and so on (pp. 1–104, 199–219). Overall, this book is a direct record of Stravinsky's musical views in a question-and-answer format, which is a great help in understanding the composer himself as well as the composer's creative concepts.

Wolff's (2003) *Stravinsky*, one of the Rowohlt series of biographies of musicians, follows the traditional biographical approach of organizing Stravinsky's life in roughly chronological order. It is characterized by a large number of illustrations and a classification of the composer's life according to the four countries in which he traveled: Russia, Switzerland, France, and the United States. Among them, during the Russian tour, the history of the creation of *The Rite of Spring*, the influence of the Diaghilev Dance Company, and the choreographer Nijinsky on Stravinsky are mentioned (pp. 1–51). As a biographical work on Stravinsky's life, this book helps the author to organize the composer's complete life as well as his compositions, but in general, it does not go deep enough to be understood as an introductory book.

In addition, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Sadie, 2012), which discusses in detail the historical context of Stravinsky's musical compositions with a historical-critical eye and an additional chronological table of all of his works, encompassing all of the composer's musical compositions for the dance theatre, has been a tremendous help to the author in summarizing Stravinsky's music for the ballets (vol. 26, pp. 528–557).

In summary, Drewskin's *Stravinsky Biography* has made a very detailed study of the composer in the vein of historical development, and comprehensively and clearly recounted Stravinsky's life experience; Robert's *Stravinsky Interviews* recorded the composer's insights on musicians and musical works through the way of interviews, and intuitively and lucidly presented Stravinsky's ideological concepts. Based on reading the above literature, one can be better informed about the composer's biography and creative history, which lays a good foundation for the study of Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring*.

A Study of the Concept of Ballet and Its Historical Origins

Emerging in Italy in the fifteenth century, ballet crystallized into a codified and theatrical art form in France during the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. The evolution of ballet was characterized by the emergence of the court ballet tradition and the system of professional dance schools. As a result, ballet gradually evolved into a multi-disciplinary genre of performance, drawing upon music, movement, design, and the theatrical embodiment of concepts. The Russian ballet of the nineteenth century both inherited and reinterpreted the legacy of the French classical ballet, eventually becoming the dominant global force in ballet by the early twentieth





century. An understanding of this historical evolution is useful in establishing the context for The Rite of Spring in terms of the general aesthetic development of ballet and the conceptualization of its performance (Zhu, 2001).

The historical origins and conceptual development of ballet have been the subject of academic inquiry, which has been fruitful in terms of historical and theoretical books. The contributions of these studies to the present research are the information on the historical context of ballet and the formation of aesthetic criteria, on which this research will focus. In general, these works help establish the evolution of ballet aesthetics, choreographic principles, and the principles of music–dance correlation in the history of ballet before the advent of modernist ballet such as The Rite of Spring. The most valuable source is Zhu Liren’s Outline of the History of Western Ballet, which is a work on the evolution of ballet from its ancient ritual origins to modern times. Rather than the chronology of styles, the work is organized according to changes in concepts, function, and choreographic principles over historical periods (Zhu, 2001).

Special attention is paid to the Russian ballet and the ballet reform at the end of the nineteenth century. In particular, the import of the French classical ballet into Russia is mentioned as a major influence on the subsequent formation of the aesthetics of Russian ballet. Even more importantly, the study is oriented around the reformist movements and ideas developed by Gorsky, Fokine, and other Russian artists who criticized the mechanical and decorative nature of traditional ballet. Focusing on the over-reliance on fixed compositional formulas, stylized gestures, and pictorial aspects of stage design, reformers advocated for greater integration of music, movement, and meaning. The result was the concept of the ballet as a theater of movement, where choreographic expression and musical design were more closely coordinated with each other, and the entire work was more cohesive and theatrical in nature. These ideas formed the artistic milieu in which The Rite of Spring was created (Zhu, 2001).

In this milieu, Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes played a particularly important role in the development of ballet as a modern art form. Collaboration between composers, choreographers, and visual artists in this milieu was particularly productive in terms of creating a community of like-minded artists. Zhu’s work features a discussion of The Rite of Spring that positions Nijinsky’s choreography in the context of other innovations of the Ballets Russes. Rejecting the pictorialism and focus on symmetry, line, and gracefulness of classical ballet, Nijinsky emphasized downcast eyes, earthbound movement, repetition, ritual gestures, and other choreographic means in building a structure of movements, which was, from his point of view, more tightly aligned with the rhythms of Stravinsky’s music. The result was a choreography, which, while not universally praised by audiences, was a clear step in the direction of modernist ballet and enriched the expressive potential of dance as theater (Zhu, 2001).





Supplementing this historical information is O Jianping's Appreciation of Foreign Dance History and Works, which approaches ballet through the lens of dance typology. Dividing modern ballet into three types, the work lists neoclassical ballet, abstract dance without a narrative, and theatrical dance with a focus on dramatic structure as the three main categories. In this classification, The Rite of Spring can be best described as an example of abstract dance, in which the emphasis is placed not on the direct narrative potential of movements, but on the dynamic development of the form, its interaction with music and rhythm, and other elements of dance composition. This typological approach can help situate The Rite of Spring in the context of modern dance history and give a better sense of the aesthetic position of this work (reference details needed for APA 7th).

Finally, The Aesthetics of Contemporary Western Dance by Jay F provides an orientation to the subject of dance aesthetics based on conceptual and philosophical rather than purely historical questions. Probing into the relationships between movement, space, music, and perception, this work challenges the reader to rethink dance expression and the sources of theatrical meaning. It is relevant for the present study are the discussions of abstraction and hybridity, along with the larger questions about the fundamental tension between classical ballet and modern dance. While too theoretical to be used for historical contextualization, its conceptual categories and many suggestions provide a valuable lens through which to view and interpret the aesthetic import of The Rite of Spring, in particular, its iconoclasm, rejection of received ideas of beauty and symmetry, and the aesthetic principles, which were a clear repudiation of the traditional ideas about dance as an art form (Jay, 1995).

In sum, these works describe the historical and conceptual background of ballet as a dance form that changed over time through the process of cultural exchange, aesthetic reform, and interdisciplinary collaboration. They make it clear that the historical specificity of The Rite of Spring was conditioned by the general evolution of ballet aesthetics and the philosophy of its performance. Aspects such as the collaboration between composer and choreographer, the integration of movement and music, and the focus on theatrical coherence all help explain the fundamental difference of The Rite of Spring from The Firebird and Petrushka (Zhu, 2001; Jay, 1995). It is with this background in mind that the study will now turn to the issues of compositional innovation and choreographic and musical alignment.

1. Study of Rhythmic Accents

Most of the existing domestic research on the rhythmic accents of the ballet The Rite of Spring is in journal papers, and the number of studies is relatively small, and almost all are translated. For example, the translation of Huiling and Ding (2012), published in the Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music (34), Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring (Upper and Lower), written



by the French composer Méchain; the translation of Yuan, Z.'s (2020) *In Talking About the Rite of Spring—Stravinsky's Layered View, Psychological Characteristics of the Beat, and African Compound Rhythm*, and so on. The music book is the French composer Méchain's magnum opus, *Treatise on Rhythm, Color and Ornithology*, which is based on the excerpts from which Méchain's *The Rite of Spring* (Upper and Lower) is written. The book has a composer's music-making research perspective, and Méchain analyzes in detail the rhythmic motifs of the music of the ballet *The Rite of Spring* from the compositional techniques and theoretical origins, arguing that the rhythmic language that Stravinsky used in the work was quite radical, and he even called it a "rhythmic role". Méchain also made a very detailed analysis of the musical score in terms of rhythm, tonality, orchestration, and melody in order of the structure of the choreography (pp. 129–143, 115–134). This article is so detailed in the research of compositional techniques and theoretical origins that it can be considered the "bible" of every study of the musical compositional techniques of the ballet *The Rite of Spring*.

Yuan, Z.'s (2020) translation, *On the Rite of Spring: Stravinsky's View of Layering, the Psychological Characteristics of the Beat, and African Compound Rhythms*, published in the *Yellow Bell* (03), is by the American scholar Pieter van den Toorn. The article systematically describes the phenomenon of stratification in the music of *The Rite of Spring*, and argues that the work uses a weaving, layered, or compound rhythmic structure, in which melodic fragments and rhythmic patterns are repeated in different cyclic combinations and time periods to form a longitudinal superposition (pp. 25–165). The article, through a variety of research methods, provides a very detailed study of the harmonic weave as well as the rhythmic tonality of *The Rite of Spring*, to enrich the author's understanding of the compositional techniques of *The Rite of Spring*. In addition, Binbin and Zhongyu (2016) provide a literature review in *Yellow Bell* (03) that evaluates Pieter's study from the perspective of Chinese music composition, discussing its theoretical value and practical significance for compositional research in China.

The Russian scholar M. Aranovsky's (2005) book *Russian Composers and the 20th Century* (Z. Hongmo, Trans.) includes a study of the rhythmic accentuation of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, and in the article *Stravinsky's World* by S. Savko, he points out that rhythm is one of the important areas of Stravinsky's musical achievements, and the only major innovation he has made in 20th-century music is in the field of rhythm. This achievement is reflected in the use of an unprecedented irregular rhythmic accent that permeates his entire musical output (from the early *Rite of Spring* to the late *Agone*). The principle of the use of rhythm is closely related to the ontology of time, thus reflecting Stravinsky's outlook on life and the world (pp. 200–206). S. Savinko's article does not focus on the micro-details of the musical works, but examines Stravinsky's musical creations from the macro-whole and makes more innovative interpretations





of Stravinsky's rhythmic accent from the socio-historical and cultural contexts. The article also gives more innovative interpretations of Stravinsky's rhythmic accent from a socio-historical and cultural context.

White's (1987) doctoral dissertation, *The Rite of Spring: A Rhythmic Perspective*, was to closely examine the rhythmic accents of *The Rite of Spring* from the perspective of music analysis. The author points out that in *The Rite of Spring*, rhythm is the equivalent of "pitch"; that is, *The Rite of Spring* created a continuum of growth, expansion, and contraction. Each passage of *The Rite of Spring* is made up of a series of rhythmic systems, each with its own character, each of which can be distinguished from the others; and there is no clear change in the layering of the music as the work progresses. On a macro level, these passages produce their own series of units, none of which are rhythmically independent within them. Instead, the final form of the work is created by the juxtaposition of these passages (pp. 232–238).

In the rhythmic accent research, it can be found that domestic scholars have already discovered and paid attention to the striking rhythmic patterns in the ballet *The Rite of Spring* and have translated some of the important foreign literature. In the translation of foreign literature, a series of innovative theses with a Chinese perspective has been published. However, from the macro point of view of the theory of compositional techniques, the harmonic, melodic, and orchestral aspects of *The Rite of Spring* have not been paid enough attention, resulting in fewer research results in these aspects. Therefore, more research on the harmony and melody of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* can be carried out in the future.

2. A Study of Harmonic Organization

The research on the harmonic organization of the ballet *The Rite of Spring* is about the same as the research on rhythmic accents above; most of the articles are focused on, and the number of foreign research results is richer and more solid than that of domestic literature (also mostly in translation).

Binbin, B., and Zhongyu, W. (2016) transcribed Aaron Ford's Review of the Harmonic Organization of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* in *The Yellow Bell* (03). This article was written by Russian scholar Richard Taruskin. The article introduces Allan Ford's views on harmony (arguing that Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* has a fixed harmonic system, which he calls "meta-harmony") and also comments on Allan Ford's research on Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. In this article, Taruskin, through historical comments and insights, gave a very sharp assessment of Aaron Ford's harmonic research. Although the article focused on the criticism of research methods, Taruskin also said that Aaron Ford's harmonic research method gave Stravinsky scholars some inspiration (pp. 158–168). On the one hand, I got ideas from the article to broaden the perspective on the



study of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, and on the other hand, I got to learn Taruskin's critical spirit (Binbin & Zhongyu, 2016).

In addition, Russian scholar M. Aranovsky's (2005) book *Russian Composers and the Twentieth Century* (Zhang Hongmo, Trans.) also has a study on the harmonic organization of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* (also from S. Savchenko's treatise *The World of Stravinsky*). Russian scholar S. Savchenko analyzed the origin of the harmonic organization of *The Rite of Spring* (partly from the Russian ancestors, and partly from Russian folk music) and pointed out the "latent" national nature of the harmonic weaving of *The Rite of Spring*. Nationality is also reflected in the structure of the harmonic line and the principle of highly superimposed dissonance (pp. 200–206). The question of the origin of the harmonic organization of *The Rite of Spring* is discussed clearly from the point of view of music history (Aranovsky, 2005).

Harmony and Voice Leading in the Music of Stravinsky (2014) was published on behalf of the Society for Music Theory by Oxford University Press. The book analyzes two compositional techniques customarily used in the music of Stravinsky. The author also points out that Stravinsky has a preference for the use of a five-dimensional structural framework in the harmonic system and four-dimensional intervallic relationships in melodic progressions. This frame feature is found in essentially all of his works, from *Petrushka* to *Agon* (pp. 1–33). Examining Stravinsky's music, including *The Rite of Spring*, from the point of view of harmonic progression can give a clearer and more concise understanding of the technical characteristics of Stravinsky's compositions (Straus, 2014).

Clash of Harmonics in Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring by Rathbone (2018) was published in *The Physics Teacher*. The article explains the harmonic system in *The Rite of Spring* from the point of view of music physics. The analysis of intervals from physics, mathematics, and cognitive psychology is a highly interdisciplinary approach that inspires the author (pp. 218–221) (Rathbone, 2018).

Harmonic Behavior in The Rite of Spring (College Music Symposium) by Curt Cacioppo (1992) stated that there are two types of harmonic expression in *The Rite of Spring*, and the author pointed out that two types of harmonic expression can be found in *The Rite of Spring*: one is to use the main chords repeatedly to form a fixed pattern. The other is a series of chords used ultimately to determine the tonality, which involves several complex techniques performed on both chords based on the pentatonic scale and traditional harmonic functions (pp. 129–142). In the studies known so far, the first type of chords has been studied more, while the second type has been studied less. There is a possibility of expanding the research on the second type of chords (Cacioppo, 1992).



From the collected studies on harmonic organization, the research horizons and research methods of foreign scholars are richer and more diversified. By reading and studying the relevant foreign literature, it is found that the harmonic organization of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* has two main characteristics: one is to use the fifth frame as a chord unit, but rather to use the fourth-degree relationship of voice progression (Cacioppo, 1992; Straus, 2014).

3. A Study of Melodic Timbre

Compared with the two above, the research situation on the melodic timbre of the ballet *The Rite of Spring* is different. The salient rhythmic and harmonic issues in the work have received more attention from domestic scholars, and the work on the issue of melodic timbre has not been as careful as possible. Therefore, the research on the problem of melodic timbre mainly relies on the reading and digestion of foreign literature, such as Russian scholar Taruskin's (1980) Journal paper "Russian folk melodies in *The Rite of Spring*," the American scholar Van den Toorn's (1987) book *Stravinsky and The Rite of Spring*, etc. (Taruskin, 1980; van den Toorn, 1987).

Wang (1995). Journal paper "Trial analysis of the technique of timbre treatment in the orchestration of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*," which was published in *Yiyuan* (02), studies the issue of pitch timbre in *The Rite of Spring* in detail. It talks about the work from the point of view of orchestration, discusses the special performance method of *The Rite of Spring*, the individualized handling of pitch timbre, the horizontal separation of pitch timbre, and so on in detail (pp. 24–30). Jianyuan W.'s treatise has a systematic study of the problem of pitch timbre in this work, but the research method is relatively traditional, so more modern research methods can be used to explain pitch timbre (Wang, 1995).

Kangman L.'s (2021) master's thesis, *A study of the orchestration technique of Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring*, analyzes *The Rite of Spring* from the research perspective of orchestration, borrows Pieter's research results from the American academy in the weave's musical structure, and holds an innovative point of view on the diffraction of timbres and the layout of the orchestra (pp. 12–79). This can enable the author to think more about *The Rite of Spring* from the orchestration point of view (Kangman, 2021). White's (1987) doctoral dissertation, *The Rite of Spring: A rhythmic perspective*, concentrates on the central role of rhythm in Stravinsky's compositional language. From an analytical standpoint, the study interprets *The Rite of Spring* through rhythmic structure and perception, emphasizing how rhythmic organization shapes musical understanding and presents challenges for rhythm-based analysis and pedagogy (pp. 232–238).



Taruskin's (1980) "Russian folk melodies in The Rite of Spring," published in the Journal of the American Musicological Society, is a long article dedicated to the melodic material in Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring as seen through the eyes of performers and music critics. This article looks at the Hungarian composer's assessment of the work, discusses the origin of the melodic material, and shows that the early Stravinsky musical works were still in the writing process. The article also discusses the question of the source of the melodic material, which points out that in the early stage of the creation of Stravinsky's musical work, the creation of Stravinsky was still in the process of learning from his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov (pp. 501–543) (Taruskin, 1980).

Van den Toorn's (1987) Stravinsky and The Rite of Spring has a detailed study and analysis of the melodic pitch. The fourth part of this work, "Rhythmic structure" (a discussion on the rhythmic composition of The Rite of Spring), has been translated and published in The Yellow Bell by the domestic scholar Yuan, Z., and the translation has been discussed in the previous article. The fifth part, "Pitch structure," is a discussion on the melodic pitch, pointing out the source and components of the melodic pitch in The Rite of Spring, and taking care of the inheritance of Russian predecessors and the influence on the middle and late works (pp. 115–214) (van den Toorn, 1987).

Straus' (2022) "The melodic organization of The Rite of Spring" in the Society for Music Theory points out that most scholars have focused on the rhythmic and harmonic system of The Rite of Spring while ignoring the melodic organization of the work. The author, from the point of view of dramatic connotation and characterization, and melodic framework and melodic source, gives a detailed analysis of the melodic organization of The Rite of Spring (pp. 28–36) (Straus, 2022).

To summarize the above literature, it can be seen that the compositional technique of Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring is very complex. Domestic and foreign scholars used a variety of theoretical research methods to enrich the research results on the compositional techniques of The Rite of Spring from different perspectives. Comparing the research methods of domestic and foreign scholars, we found that the research perspective of foreign scholars is more diversified than that of domestic scholars. Due to the relative scarcity of the music of the ballet The Rite of Spring in China, we should continue to look for foreign literature to do more research and analysis on the music of The Rite of Spring.

Conclusion

Through the collection and sorting out of the relevant literature on the music of Stravinsky's ballet The Rite of Spring, it can be found that the literature on the life of Stravinsky's composers



and the background of the creation of the ballet *The Rite of Spring* is mostly concentrated in the form of writings and thesauri, and the study of this kind of literature can also be a better way to learn the history of Stravinsky's music creation. On the concept of ballet thesaurus and the study of the historical origin of ballet, domestic research results are rich, especially the relevant writings of Prof. Ping, Y., based on the author's great inspiration. Research on the body of the work of the ballet *The Rite of Spring* is relatively less than the former two, and the research on the music is a bit insufficient. Most of the domestic scholars' research on the music of the ballet *The Rite of Spring* is related to the theory of compositional techniques and still adopts relatively traditional research methods, such as research on rhythmic accents, harmonic organization, and pitch and timbre of the work. Therefore, in this aspect, we can also refer to the research methods of foreign scholars to further conduct more research and interpretation on the music of the ballet *The Rite of Spring*. In addition, in addition to the more in-depth research on compositional techniques, attention can also be paid to the specificity of the music of the dance drama ontology, as well as the relevance of the ballet choreography to the music of the dance drama. Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring* is a classic in the history of ballet, which has been passed down to become one of the revered repertoires of ballet. The work, whether in the content of the subject matter, form and structure, or music, technology, choreography, etc., all reflect the unprecedented innovation and vanguard of the mid-20th century. The reason why the ballet *The Rite of Spring* can achieve such remarkable achievements is inextricably linked to the creative concept of the choreographer Nijinsky. Nijinsky put forward the creative concept of abstract ballet, according to Stravinsky's music, conceptualization, and design of the dance movements to match, so that the music and dance could achieve a perfect fusion. At present, in domestic research, results have been found on the special characteristics of the genre of dance theater to take care of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* music creation in the literature. Therefore, it is possible to do more interpretive research on the music of Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring* from the point of view of the dance theater and the choreographer's point of view.

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