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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WESTERN MUSIC IN THAILAND

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Arts

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College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Music
Music History and Literature

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in College of Performing and Visual Arts in School of Music,
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ABSTRACT

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Western music as introduced to Thailand in the sixteenth century with the use of Western trumpet in the royal court, sacred music in the Thai Catholic Church, Western songs and instrumental practices inside Western communities. Siamese songs of the seventeenth century were preserved in the French records and French Baroque musical compositions to reveal the political relationship between Siam and France. In the early nineteenth century, American civil war songs, marching songs, and Protestant hymns entered Siam. The official establishment of Western music in Thailand began in the middle of nineteenth century when King Rama IV hired two English military men to train soldiers in European style. Western practices in all kind of arts were brought into the country in the reign of King Rama V through the King's will of creating civilization to be equated with the West. During his reign to the next reign of Rama VI, more Western musicians and professors were hired to develop Western music. Small ensembles and brass band were expanded to small size orchestra and developed to standard size orchestra in the early twentieth century. Thai roles extended from welcoming state visitors and courtly entertainments to public entertainments. Traditional Siamese music and theatrical performance had to be modified by borrowing from Western music and dramatic genres including opera, *Tableaux vivants*, musical comedy, marching

songs, and Western music composition to blend with Siamese musical and dramatic practices resulting in new Siamese genres presenting the best of both practices.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The arts in Thailand in the present day reflect a mixture of multicultural practices. Western music, similar in importance to Thai music, has gained so much acceptance that no boundary between Western and Thai musical culture is recognized in the hearts of the Thai people. Western music is a constant in people's daily lives: in work places, restaurants, department stores, hospitals, and other public places. It seeps into entertainment enterprises, music performances, theatre and drama, and also into Thai music, creating a new, hybrid genre of contemporary Thai music.

Thai society has accepted all aspects of Western music, including performing ensembles, compositions, vocal styles, drama and theatre, and music education. The door to the Western world and its music was opened many years ago, from the first interactions between the Thai nation and the West in the sixteenth century.¹ Trade, politics, and religious proselytizing brought about the settlement of Western communities in Siam, which lead to the introduction of Western culture into the country. The records of French missionaries who worked in Siam show that the Western communities already present at that time were Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, and English.² Although

¹ Michael Smithies, *Siam and the Vatican in the Seventeenth Century* (Bangkok: River Books, 2001), 12.

² Charnvit Kasetsiri, *Discovering Ayutthaya* (Bangkok: Vachirintarn Partnership Ltd., 2003), 163-76.

their accounts mention the music used for the Western communities' liturgy and religious events,³ they do not tell us about the music used for their entertainment. While the earliest missions were predominantly Catholic, Protestant missionaries also made significant contributions by publishing the first Thai hymnal and introducing melodies that became very popular among Thai musical ensembles.

By the end of the nineteenth century, when many Westerners came to Thailand for trading purposes, Thai musicians in the royal court adapted some of these new western musical characteristics (including tone colors, musical styles, and rhythms) and then applied them in composing Thai music; this led to the emergence of a new type of Thai repertory called *Pleng oug phasa*, meaning music having the tonal accent of other nations.⁴ Another avenue of western influence was provided by the military bands which introduced Western brass bands repertories. During the reign of King Rama V the Great (1868-1910), considered the golden age of diplomacy between Siam and other nations, Western music was used as a medium for establishing international friendships.⁵ As the number of Westerners increased, music for entertainment was established in order to fulfill the Westerners' demands. Beginning inside the royal palace, Western music spread to aristocratic houses, where parties, dances, and dinners that brought together important Westerners were held.⁶ Later this music spread to the public and to the common Thai people.

³ Victor Large, *The History of The Catholic Church in Thailand* (Bangkok: Catholic Press of Thailand, 1996), 158-59.

⁴ HRH. Prince Sathitdhamrongsawat, *Wachirayarnwiset Book IV* (Bangkok: Wachirayarn Library, 1890), 173.

⁵ Poonpit Amattayakul, *National Letters on Music During the Five Kings* (Bangkok: Dueantula Press, 2008), 36.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

This establishment of Western music in Thai society required several components: musical ensembles, conductors, teachers, musicians, and repertoires. Acquisition of these raw materials occurred during the reigns of King Rama IV to King Rama VI (1851-1925), who hired Western music teachers to educate the Thai people. The kings also appropriated funds to establish state ensembles and public performances. Several Western music teachers devoted themselves to developing Western music in Thailand, composing many significant compositions for the nation. Moreover, the performance of Western music and drama developed into a new form of Thai drama called *Duegdamban*, which drew upon the musical framework of late nineteenth century opera.⁷ Other types of Thai musical entertainment also borrowed materials from Western music, including its instruments, harmony, and rhythm, blending them with the traditional Thai musical ensemble, and Thai folk drama.

Additional factors that impacted the development of Western music included politics, diplomacy, and economics. Even during the country's most difficult time — a political revolution that brought the development of Western music in Thailand to a halt in 1932 — Western music educators and musicians continued their work despite the serious crisis, resulting in the composition of a national anthem and the establishment of a symphony orchestra.

Western music has so permeated Thai culture that there is no distinction between it and Thai music made in the minds of most people. While the Thai national anthem is sung in public every day, few realize that it was composed by a Westerner; nor are most aware that a number of songs commonly played by traditional Thai ensembles are

⁷ HRH. Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs, [*Dramatic and Vocal Repertoires of HRH. Prince Narisaranuwatiwong*] (Bangkok: Siwaporn Co. Ltd., 1971), 5.

derived from Western hymns and popular songs, such as *Marching through Georgia*.

They are even less aware of the Western musicians who have devoted their lives to developing music education and performance in Thailand.

This lack of awareness stems primarily from the lack of a systematic account of the establishment of Western music in Thailand. Fragments of information are scattered throughout historical records, composers' biographies, articles, and newspaper reports. Significant questions about the origin of several pieces in the Thai repertoire can only be answered by finding their sources in Western music. Among these are the Royal Anthem and the popular song *Yee-hem*. Likewise, some works of Western music can be illuminated when their Thai sources are identified, such as the Siamese songs in the compositions of Lalande. Through the collection of this data, and data from other sources, the story of the establishment of Western music in Thailand can be made clearer.

The principle objective here is to provide a cohesive story of the establishment and development of Western music in Thailand, in which process Western musicians played a significant role. Until now, the impact of Western music on Thai music and drama has been little explored, with only a general idea of how it started, was modified, and merged into the Thai repertoire. Additionally, our knowledge of certain pieces of music within Thai culture has been limited: for example, the identification of the composer and source material of the Royal Anthem, the text and possible source material for *Soutjai*, and the original source of the song *Yee-hem*. Moreover the introduction of the melody of *Marching through Georgia* into Thai music has previously received little notice. Finally, the historical connection between Lalande's Siamese songs and the Thai embassy to France serves to underscore the relationship between the two countries.

The scope of this study is necessarily broad, beginning with the entrance of Western missionaries and traders into Siam in the sixteenth century and continuing through the establishment of the National Orchestra by Phra Chen Duriyang. It is also particularly important to examine the effects of the political revolution in 1932 on the development of Western music, musicians, and music education. It is hoped that this study will result in a better understanding of the music of Thailand, the ways Western culture has influenced Thai music and drama, and a better understanding of the historical events that have shaped Thai society.

Several factors have prevented this information from being organized into a cogent form. One is that many of the historical records have been destroyed. When relations with the French were cut off near the end of the seventeenth century, the historical records in Siam were purged of any mention of foreigners. The records that remain are accounts of the French missionaries and the Thai ambassador to France, Kosa Pan. More historical records were destroyed as a result of the war with Burma in 1767. Another obstacle is that the existing records only mention music incidentally, not as a central topic. These isolated references must be gleaned from lengthy documents from many sources and analyzed to determine what they contribute to the history. Additionally, because Thai music is learned by rote and transmitted aurally, it is not notated and has not survived in written form. Thus, it is almost impossible to find any attribution to a composer or source melody. Furthermore, many events as late as the 1880s were not well documented because their historical significance was not evident at the time. Because of these deterrents, some Thai scholars have considered this research too difficult to pursue.

In addition to collecting information from original source historical records, other methods were required to uncover information. Much of the information came from the diaries and written accounts of missionaries and ambassadors, both foreign and Thai. Research was undertaken in the Thai national archives to find personal notes, letters, and national chronicle records. Secondary sources, such as books and articles, added some information and provided leads to other primary sources. Thai musicologists, historians, musicians were interviewed for information passed down to them from their teachers, and consulted to identify ancient musical material. Western thematic indices and hymnologies were also used to locate source material for some of the music used in Thailand. When necessary, Thai performances of music have been transcribed into Western notation for the purposes of comparison and analysis.

The study of these areas clarifies the history of the establishment and the development of Western classical music in Thailand, and knowledge of the historical background of Thai musical repertoires derived from Western origins reveals the historical and cultural connections between Thailand and the West. This, it is hoped, will uncover some of the missing pieces of the musical histories of Thailand and the Western world.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The background of Western music in Thailand covers the period from the introduction of the first Western communities into Siam during the sixteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century, before the reign of King Rama IV (who assumed the throne in 1851). Since there is no direct information about the practice of western music in Siam during these periods, the records of the westerners who had visited Siam were used as eyewitness accounts of musical practices. By far, the clearest of these discussions of Western music in Siam are the accounts of the French missionaries and their development of sacred music in the Catholic Church. This chapter will present the background of the western communities during the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century and the beginning of sacred music in the Catholic monasteries and Protestant missions in Siam.

Western Communities in Siam and Their Music during the Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century

Siamese historical evidence shows the first Westerners to come to Siam were a group of Portuguese in 1511, lead by Duarte Fernandes under the command of Afonso de Albuquerque. The purpose of their visit was to present gifts to the Siamese King and negotiate a trade agreement. Duartes presented Ramathibodi II with a golden sword in a

diamond-encrusted scabbard, and a cordial letter from the Portuguese government offering an explanation for a recent conflict with Portuguese troops. This was sufficient to please the king and to open the doorway to trade between the nations.⁸

After the Portuguese entered Siam during the reign of King Ramathibodi II (1518), King Chairachatratch (1534-1546) allowed the Portuguese to establish their community and a Catholic church in Siam as a reward for helping Siam in their war with Burma. Soon other Westerners approached Siam for trading purposes. The Dutch entered during the reign of King Naresuan the Great in 1598, the English during the reign of King Ekatotsarot in 1612, and the French during the reign of King Narai the Great in 1662. The record of Pallegoix, apostolic vicar in Siam, indicated that foreigners in the city and camp, including the Portuguese, French, English, Dutch, Japanese, Armenians, and Moors, came to participate in the funeral of King Narai the Great in 1679.⁹

Catholic religious orders and other missionaries played an important role in the settling of westerners into Siam. The records of French Dominican Fr. Meynard (published in 1865) relate the activity of the Dominicans in Siam. The first Portuguese Dominicans who came to Siam were Father Jerónimo da Cruz and Sebastião do Couto, who arrived at Ayutthaya in 1555, and were killed by Muslims shortly thereafter.¹⁰ The short time that the two missionaries were in Siam was not long enough to propagate the faith or to encourage the spiritual lives of other foreign Christians who lived in Siam. The English, Dutch, and other Portuguese were concerned primarily about trade. The establishment of Western culture in Siam was ultimately accomplished by the French,

⁸ Michael Smithies, *Siam and the Vatican in the Seventeenth Century* (Bangkok: River Books, 2001), 12.

⁹ Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix, *Description of the Thai Kingdom or Siam: Thailand under King Mongkut*, trans. by Walter E. J. Tips (Bangkok: White Lotus, 2000), 336.

¹⁰ Dirk Van Der Cruysse, *Siam and the West 1500-1700*, trans. Michael Smithies (Chiangmai: Silkworm Books, 2002), 12.

who entered the kingdom during the reign of King Narai the Great (1656-1688) of the Ayutthaya dynasty, when Apostolic Vicars from the Mission Étrangères de Paris (M.E.P.) were sent in 1662 by Pope Gregory XV to Siam for religion propagation.¹¹

One of the Western practices adopted during this early period was the training of military conscripts in European traditions. In a letter to Prince Naris (a half-brother to King Rama V), Prince Damrong (another half-brother to King Rama V) wrote about European conscript training in Siam, revealing that it had already appeared in the Ayutthaya period during the reign of King Narai the great, when a French soldier named Chavelier de Faubenk, who was stationed at Thonburi,¹² had trained the conscripts in French style.¹³ However there is no evidence indicating the use of any music in this training.

The first records of Western music in Siam are from the reign of King Narai the Great. During the 1680s, diplomats were exchanged between the French and Siamese courts. Siamese embassies were sent to France in 1684, 1686 and 1688, while the French King sent a return Embassy, led by Chevalier de Chaumont, to Siam in 1685, and a second in 1687, led by Simon de la Loubère and Claude Céberet du Boullay. The activities of the delegations at both courts were noted in both the French and Siamese records. However, music was rarely mentioned.

The Siamese records indicate a meeting between the Siamese ambassador, Kosa Pan (1686), and the French court composer, Jean Baptiste Lully (1632-1687),¹⁴ although

¹¹ Jittapim Yamprai, "Music in the Roman Catholic Mass of Thailand" (M.A. Thesis, Mahidol University, 2005), 41.

¹² Thonburi was an important garrison city at the mouth of the Chaophraya river.

¹³ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, ["personal letter to Prince Naris, 24 February 1934"], in [*Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisaramuvadtivongs and HRH. Prince Damrongrajanubhab*], ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 99-103.

¹⁴ Sugree Charoensook, [*99 Years of the Royal Anthem*] (Bangkok: Rueankaew Press, 1987), 36.

it provides no details of their discussion on music. This meeting between Lully and the Siamese Ambassador was recorded in the Siamese Chronicles Volume 57, Chapter 31, which was translated from the French record of François-Timoléon de Choisy (1644-1724), who accompanied the Chevalier de Chaumont on the mission to Siam in 1685. The record indicated that on the morning of the day the Siamese Ambassador went to see Lully's opera, *Alceste*, Lully visited him at his residence, where the ambassador held a welcome meeting with the composer. The translator of this record, Rev. Bro. Herae of the Saint Gabriel mission, added that he had heard from a former French missionary that the Siamese royal anthem was composed by Lully, who had based it on Siamese melodies.¹⁵ Unfortunately, there is no direct written evidence to support this claim.

Lully was not the only major French figure involved with Siamese music: Michel Richard de Lalande (1657-1725), chamber composer to Louis XIV, included two movements based on Siamese songs in one of his instrumental suites,¹⁶ collected in the Symphonies for the King's Suppers. The two Siamese airs were also used in his ballet, *Mirtil et Mélécerte*. No sources can provide the purpose of his composition and the origin of the Siamese songs; only Dirk van der Cruysse, author of *Siam and the West*, discusses the connection between the songs and the presence of the Siamese ambassador in Versailles. The two best sources from this time are both French, and provide transcriptions of Siamese songs in Western notation. The first is by Monsieur de LaLoubère, a French ambassador sent to Siam in 1687, who was among the first to transcribe a Siamese song into Western notation. The record of his visit, *Du*

¹⁵ François-Timoléon de Choisy, ["Kosa Pan in France"], trans. Rev. Br. Francois Touvenet Helaire, *Siamese Chronicles* 57/31 (n.d.), 31.

¹⁶ Dirk Van Der Cruysse, *Siam and the West, 1500-1700*, trans. Michael Smithies (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2002), 369.

Royaume de Siam, reveals an attempt by the Westerner to understand Siamese music through a transcription of the song *Sai samorn*, which he gave the title “Chançon Siamoise.”¹⁷

The second source is from Nicholas Gervais, a French missionary of the Société des Missions Étrangères who was sent to Siam in 1683 and stayed until 1686. His account, *Histoire naturelle et politique du royaume de Siam* (1688), dedicated to Louis XIV, included a transcription of the Siamese song *Sout chai*¹⁸ in Western notation, together with other information about the geography and people of Siam.¹⁹

Around the same time, Western instruments began to be used in the Siamese court. The Western natural horn was adopted in Siamese court during the Ayutthaya period and became a common instrument associated with the King and the royal court. Dhanit Yupho wrote in *Thai Musical Instruments* (1960) that the European valveless trumpet, called *trae farang* in Thai, was common in the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries. They were also called by the name *trae vilanda*, the term derived from Holland.²⁰ (See Figure 1)



Figure 1. The Western trumpet used in the royal ceremony

¹⁷ Simon de La Loubère, *The Kingdom of Siam: With an Introduction by David K. Wyatt*, Oxford in Asia historical reprints (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1969), 113.

¹⁸ Nicolas Gervaise, *The National and Political History of the Kingdom of Siam*, trans. and ed. with an introduction and notes by John Villiers (Bangkok: White Lotus Co., Ltd., 1989), 106.

¹⁹ Terry E. Miller and Jarernchai Chonpairot, “A History of Siamese Music Reconstructed from Western Documents, 1505-1932,” *Crossroads* VIII/2 (1994), 138.

²⁰ Dhanit Yupho, *Thai Musical Instruments*, 2nd ed., trans. by David Morton (Bangkok: Department of Fine Arts, 1971), 84.

There is no clear evidence pointing to the exact date when the natural horn was introduced into Siam. It has been assumed that it was brought to Siam through trade with the Dutch in the reign of King Prasartthong (1630-1655).²¹ Historical evidence and Thai literature shows that the natural horn was used in royal ceremonies, including the entrance and the departure of the King, the audience, the royal barge, and processions.²² It was also used to accompany the King's movements around the palace and city. Evidence of the use of Western brass instruments appears in both Siamese literature and Western accounts. Fernão Mendes Pinto mentioned the use of western trumpets to accompany the King in his 1692 account:

...it was a most dreadful thing to hear the discord and jarring of those barbarous instruments, as Bells, Drums, and Trumpets, intermingled with the noise of the great Ordnance and smaller shot, ...²³

However, one record points to the use of the natural horn before the period of King Prasarttong, during the reign of King Naresuan (1590-1625), for a procession with his brother, Prince Ekathotsarot, along the streets of the capital:

His brother followed him on another elephant, his hands held together above his head and bowed low, like someone being blessed. Around them walked all the trumpeters, horn players and drummers.²⁴

The record of Chevalier de Chaumont (1640-1710), the first French Ambassador of Louis XIV to Siam in 1685, indicated that Siamese soldiers and a band playing trumpets, drums and other instruments accompanied their procession to the palace.

²¹ Sugree Charoensook, ["Western Music in Siam"], in [*Siamese Music*], 3rd ed., ed. Sujit Wongtet (Bangkok: Matchon Press, 2008), 220-1.

²² *Ibid.*, 218.

²³ Fernão Mendes Pinto, *The Voyages and Adventures of Ferdinand Mendez Pinto*, 3rd ed., trans. by H.C. Gent. (London: J. Macock, 1692), 281.

²⁴ Dirk Van Der Cruysse, *Siam and the West 1500-1700*, 26.

Another part of his record also mentioned trumpets and drums that accompanied the King's procession and his audiences with the ambassador.

There were musical instruments, as Trumpets, Drums, Timbrels, Pipes, little Bells and Horns, which music made a pleasant noise. We marched through the street with an infinite number of people. We came to a great open place in which stood the King's Palace.²⁵

Awhile before He goes out of his Palace, you hear the Trumpets sound and Drums beat, who march before the King.²⁶

The officers...all of them were expected to see the King's appearance at a window²⁷ (see Figure 2)...it is known that the King is upon appearing by the noise of Trumpets, Drums and other Instruments.²⁸...Immediately the King retires with the noise of Drums and Trumpets, and other Instruments.²⁹



Figure 2. King Narai appearing at the window for the audience with Chavalier de Chaumont on 18 October 1685; French print of 1686³⁰

²⁵ Chevalier de Alexandre Chaumont, *A Relation of the Late Embassy of Monsr. de Chaumont, Knt. to the Court of the King of Siam with an Account of the Government, State, Manners, Religion and Commerce of that Kingdom* (London: Printed for Henry Mortlock, 1687), 34.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 112.

²⁷ A place for the King to appear for the audience.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 116.

³⁰ Michael Smithies and Luigi Bressan, *Siam and the Vatican* (Bangkok: River Books, 2001), 64.

Confirmation of the use of the Western trumpet in Siam is found in the writing of Monsieur Lanier in his *Relations de la France et du Royaume de Siam de 1662*, in which the Western trumpet was used in the procession of the French Embassy in Siam in 1685.

During the procession of presenting the envoy to the palace, Siamese *Pi-phat* ensemble performed music. The *Pi-phat* consisted of horn, drum, gong, French trumpet, bell, and a reed instrument.³¹

Father Guy Tachard (1651-1712) also confirmed the use of Western horns for the King's audience: "The trumpets and drums remain always outside, warning from time to time by the sound of their fanfares, that which was happening in the audience chamber."³²

During an audience with the King, a trumpet was used to signal his arrival, as described by Gervais (1688):

When the king holds an audience in his palace, it is always at the embrasure of one of the windows. Before the shutters are opened, the trumpets sound to warn everyone that His Majesty is about to appear, so that they can prostrate themselves with their faces to the ground.³³

As late as the nineteenth century, Sir John Bowring, a British consul who traveled to Siam in 1855, indicated the use of band music during the King's procession by land:

...Two hundred elephants lead the procession, each having three armed men, and followed by a band playing on musical instruments, trumpeters, and a thousand foot soldiers well armed.³⁴...The King goes the round of the city in great pomp, once by land, and once by water, ... The artillery form the rear, dressed in European style; ...bands of music accompany the troops; the King follows on a throne.³⁵

³¹ Lanier, *Relations de la France et du Royaume de Siam de 1662* [1883], trans. By Aroon Amatyakul in the Siam Chronicles XXVII/16 (Bangkok: Kurusapha, 1964), 11-12.

³² Guy Tachard, *A Relation of the Voyage to Siam* [1688] (Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1981), 294.

³³ Gervaise, *The Natural and Political History of the Kingdom of Siam*, 223.

³⁴ Sir John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, vol.1 (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 95.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 431.

In addition to the above testimonies to the use of the Western trumpet, Prince Naris, a half-brother to King Rama V wrote in a letter of 1914 to Prince Damrong (also a half-brother to King Rama V) that the western natural trumpet in Siam has four functions: to play with Thai *Chana* drum³⁶ in a leading role in the *Pi-phat* ensemble; to play in the *Jeen lanthan* repertoire for the entrance of the king; to play in the *Jeen lanthan* repertoire for the departure of the king; and to play in the *Long song* repertoire for the royal ablutions. According to information given by the Princes, the role and music for the natural horn has been preserved since Ayutthaya.³⁷ However, the title of the songs used in present ceremonies is different from the songs the Princes mentioned in their letters. Three repertoires are still used in the royal court for different purposes: *sadet oak khunnang*, for the entrance of the King, *song sadet*, for the departure of the King, and *samrab bot* for accompanying the actions of the King in all ceremonies.³⁸

After the reign of King Narai the Great, relations between Siam and France were in a critical state. The new King, Phetracha (1688-1703), who expressed anti-foreign sentiments during King Narai's reign, had expelled the French and cut connections with the West. Westerners who wanted to stay in Siam were to be under strict control and had follow the King's restrictions. Relations with the West ceased and were not renewed until the nineteenth century. Siam in the eighteenth century was involved in several wars with Burma. Finally, by the middle of the eighteenth century, Siam had lost its war to Burma, bringing an end to the Ayutthaya kingdom in 1767. Two years later, in 1769, King Taksin

³⁶ *Chana* drum had previously been used in the army and in the funeral ceremonies for the King and royal families.

³⁷ Prince Narisaranuvadivongs, ["personal letter to Prince Damrong, 23 September 1941"], in [*Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisara Nuvadivongs and HRH. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab*], ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 341.

³⁸ Ektanach Boonpeng, personal interview (Royal Ceremony Department, Royal Grand Palace, Thailand: 5 January 2011).

returned Siam to independence, reuniting the Kingdom and making Thonburi a capital city. King Chakri succeeded King Taksin in 1782, and was renamed King Rama I of the Chakri dynasty. King Rama I moved the capital city from Thonburi to Bangkok in the same year he ascended to the throne. From the reign of King Rama I to that of King Rama II, Siam continued wars with neighboring countries. Concern about the West gradually increased in the first decade of the Chakri dynasty, when European colonialism in the East was expanding. Aware of the West's power, Siam realized the necessity of renewing its relationship with the West. However, it was the West who reached out to Siam first. During the reign of King Rama II (1809-1824), the Portuguese returned to Siam, bringing an envoy to the King. The purpose of their return was to seek the King's permission for trade and ship construction. The King granted the Portuguese land to build their community and established the first western consulate in Siam in 1820.

The next Western nation to reach out to Siam after the Portuguese was England.³⁹ Sir John Crawford (1783-1868) was sent to bring an envoy to the courts of Siam in 1822. The purpose behind this envoy was to create a beneficial free-trade agreement with Siam.⁴⁰ Siam declined to make a treaty at that time, however did allow the British ships entry for trading purposes.

The third King of the Chakri dynasty, King Rama III, ascended to the throne in 1824. In the first year of his reign, the British asked Siam to support them in the first Anglo-Burmese war, which had begun in 1823. The King responded to the request by sending Siamese armies to participate in the war on the side of the British. After the war, the British sent Henry Burney (1792-1845) to negotiate trade and sign a treaty with Siam

³⁹ Sawitri Dhabbhasuta, "The Relations between Thai, Chinese and Western Communities in Bangkok 1855-1910" (M.A. Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1984), 44-5.

⁴⁰ Manich Jumsal. M.L., [*King Mongkut of Thailand and the British*], 3rd ed. (Bangkok: Chalermit, 1991), 6-7.

that allowed free trading and a tax reduction on British trade. After the treaty was signed, a merchant named Robert Hunter entered Siam and began trading inside the city. Hunter established a trading center known to other Westerners in Siam as the British Factory. He became the leader of the Western communities, providing help and other facilities to westerners in Siam. Through his help a great number of English merchants came to Bangkok and set up trade.⁴¹

In addition to the British, Americans made connections with Siam through an American Embassy and missionaries. Their first Protestant mission began in 1832, led by Rev. Jacob Tomlin and Dr. Carl Gutzlaff. Besides their religious mission, the Americans brought Western medicine to Siam, working as missionaries and physicians at the same time.

The first American Embassy arrived Siam in 1836, bringing with them American band music. Pallegoix, a French Apostolic Vicar to Siam in 1838, referred in his *Description du Royaume Thai ou Siam* (1854) to the account of Mr. Edmond Roberts, chief of the American Embassy, who arrived in Siam in 1836. American music was performed on the day of Mr. Edmund Robert had an audience with King Rama III:

The 18th of April had been set for the handing over of a copy of the treaty which had just been ratified by the King of Siam...Mr. Roberts having received it, lifted it to the level of his head out of respect for the King, while the American orchestra played the national anthems.⁴²

William Ruschenberger, in his *Voyage around the World* (1838), provides the detail that the American song “Hail Columbia” was performed by the band of the Embassy’s ship:

⁴¹ Dhabbhasuta, “The Relations between Thai, Chinese and Western Communities in Bangkok 1855-1910,” 47.

⁴² Pallegoix, *Description of the Thai Kingdom*, 143. The Siamese anthem that was played will be discussed later.

The boats proceed at a rapid rate, our band making the still air resound with “Hail Columbia,” and we all wondered at the crowds of spectators who awaited our landing.⁴³

The number of American missionaries was increasing, especially during the period of King Rama IV. By the time King Mongkut, a half-brother to King Rama III, ascended to the throne in 1851, Siam had become home to several Western communities.

Western communities themselves, from the time of Ayutthaya to the early decades of the Chakri dynasty, were the sources providing evidence of the practice of western music in Siam. Sugree Charoensook wrote in *Western Music in Siam* that during Western holidays in Siam, the Portuguese would perform a dance, accompanied by gong, violin, accordion, mandolin, and maracas.⁴⁴

The records of American missionaries Rev. Jacob Tomlin and Rev. Dan Bradley also provide information about the use of Western instruments at the residence of Siamese noblemen and inside the missionary community. Jacob Tomlin, the first American missionary in Siam, wrote in his *Journal* (1831) about the playing of a barrel organ at the house of a Siamese nobleman:

...Thursday, 24. We went up the river this evening with Capt. Coffin, in his boat, to see the fire-works... We took our stations in a water-house belonging to prince Chroma Thibet, ... A young Laos boy played a small English barrel organ most of the time we were there.⁴⁵

Rev. Bradley wrote in his journal (1936) that he had a monthly concert at his house: “September 7th, 1835: Held monthly concert in the evening at our house. It was

⁴³ W. S. W. Ruschenberger, *A Voyage Round the World: Including the Embassy to Muscat and Siam, 1835, 1836, and 1837* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1838), 330.

⁴⁴ Sugree Charoensook, [“Western Music in Siam”], 221.

⁴⁵ Jacob Tomlin, *Journal of a Nine Months' Residence in Siam* (London: Frederick Westley and A. H. Davis, 1831), 62.

my duty and privilege to lead the exercise.”⁴⁶ Unfortunately, Bradley does not reveal any further details of this event.

Westerners brought their culture to Siam, including their musical culture: They performed their music inside their community, brought western instruments for court and military use, and introduced the western notational system to transcribe Siamese music. Over time, their instruments and musical practices were adopted by the Siamese court and their courtiers. Later, western musical culture was expanded and developed, moving from inside the Western communities into the Siamese court and military.

Church Music in the Catholic Monastery and the Beginning of Protestant Music

The introduction of one category of Western music, liturgical music, began in 1662 with the first Catholic community in Siam. French missionaries, following an audience with the King, landed on the riverside, where they constructed a church and school, both called “St. Joseph”. Laloubère included the map of Ayutthaya in his record to show the Western communities and the palace: The letter “G” in the map below indicates the Catholic seminary; letters “H” and “I” indicate Portuguese communities; and letter “K” indicates the Dutch village. (See Figure 3)

⁴⁶ Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, *Abstract of the Journal of Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, M.D. Medical Missionary in Siam 1835-1873*, ed. Rev. George Haws Feltus (Ohio: the Multigraph Department of Pilgrim Church, 1936), 11.

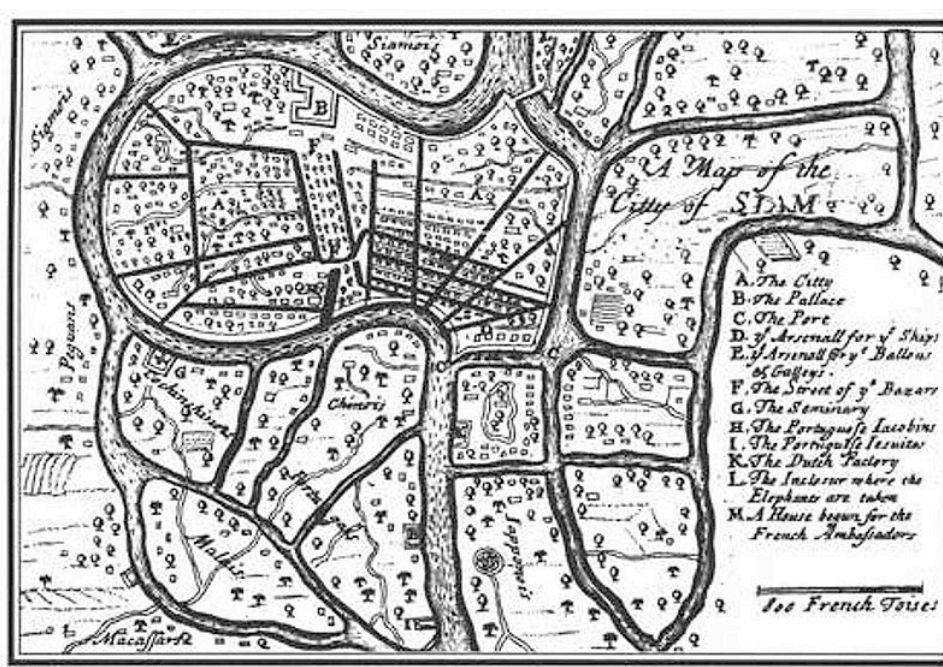


Figure 3. Map of Ayutthaya showing the location of Western communities; La Loubère, *The Kingdom of Siam*⁴⁷

Music was an important part of the missionaries' work. The practice of the Roman Liturgy included the singing of Gregorian chant and the missionaries taught the catechism using songs. In addition, the Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Mon⁴⁸, and Siamese communities of Catholics had their own tunes for singing prayers. Texts of prayers in the vernacular were chanted to reciting tones similar to psalmodic plainchant, with pitches adjusted according to the intonation of each dialect. These vernacular tunes were preserved only through oral tradition.

Missionaries also used the vernacular to propagate the Christian faith, applying Siamese lyrics to Gregorian and other church melodies. Arthorn Jantawimon, Siamese historian and author of the recent *History of Siam* (2003), notes that

⁴⁷ La Loubère, *The Kingdom of Siam*, 34.

⁴⁸ Mon is the earliest ethnic group residing in Myanmar

“Missionaries had put religious faith into Siamese words by using Latin melody as a tool to help laymen to memorize the faith. This method worked effectively.”⁴⁹

After the reign of King Narai the Great (1656-1688), political conflict arose between Siam and France. This brought religious persecution, which would last until the reign of King Rama III (1787-1851). Missionaries were imprisoned and the church was destroyed. There was a prohibition against writing catechisms using the Siamese alphabet. Missionaries responded by borrowing the writing system they used in Vietnam to write catechisms for the Siamese. A system of Romanized transliteration was developed, called *Pha-sa Wat*, and was used for writing the catechism and texts of sacred services outside the liturgy. (See Figure 4)

The figure consists of two parts. The left part shows the text of a prayer in the 'Pha-sa Wat' Romanized script. The right part shows the same text with musical notation, including a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature.

Text in 'Pha-sa Wat':

★★★★★★★★

BỐT SẢRĂSỐN

PHRA: PHŨTHĪ KUMAN BĂNG KỐT

(Jani.)

1 Na: phela dŭk dŭn
ratri thieng khŭn
khoban bảmrŭng
fŭng sảt nòk thŭng
vèn khŭn dên krŭng
Jerusalēm,

2 Thì nặn pèn ngệm
mŭang Betlehēm
ban rêm sảt tòn.
Theva bŭang bôn
ngam lŏtsălôn
sống rảtsảmí,

3 Pèn sềng phra: rảngsỉ
thieng khŭn ratri

1

Musical notation (later period):

XIII 2/4 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

Figure 4. Text of ‘Na-pe-la duek duen’ written in ‘Pha-sa Wat’, and its notation from a later period.

⁴⁹ Artorn Jantawimon, [The History of Siam] (Bangkok: Oungkarnrabsongsinkalaepassadupan, 2003), 23.

The fall of the Ayutthaya kingdom in 1767 resulted in the loss of almost all written evidence of church records, including manuscripts and liturgical books. Thailand was forced to deal with the restoration of the nation and recovering from war. This civil instability, as well as political upheaval in France, reduced the number of missionaries in Siam, and cut short the development of liturgical music there.

The surviving liturgical sources were scattered and hidden by the faithful lay people who managed to escape from Ayutthaya to other provinces in Thailand. Others were kept as personal records of the missionaries who once were active in Siam.

The record of Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix (1854) shows that, during his time in Siam, chanting was done in Latin. Christians owned instruments and used them in ceremonies.

The Christians of Siam very much love religious ceremonies. Endowed with a good ear they take much pleasure in chanting...They are taught Roman chanting in schools, so they all know how to sing. Every camp of Christians also has its orchestra. The main instruments are: European violin, Chinese violin, flute, guitar, harmonica, drums, and tamborine, cymbal and *Kong wong*.⁵⁰

Father Largé, a French missionary and author of *The History of The Catholic Church in Thailand*, mentions the performance of mixed ensembles on Christian Feast days, revealing that Christian communities in Ayutthaya had brought their own instruments to perform together on the feast day.

String Ensembles in the Christian Community were very well known. Each community had one string ensemble. The musical instruments in the ensemble were violin, Chinese fiddle, klui (maybe the flute or recorder), guitar, mouth organ, drum, small drum, Ching and *Kong wong Yai*. The feast day of the Parish was the Grand Celebration. They were praying together and performing Solemn Mass...at three o'clock, there was chanting of Vesperas and procession.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Pallegoix, *Description of the Thai Kingdom*, 423. *Kong wong* is a Siamese musical instrument, having several gongs tuned in different pitches, structured on a circular frame.

⁵¹ Victor Large, [*The History of The Catholic Church in Thailand*] (Chacherngsao: Maephra Yook Mai Press of Thailand, 1996), 158-9.

During the reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868), Siam was opened again to the West. The King adopted western traditions in the belief they would bring progress to Siam, and granted religious freedom to his people. Missionaries returned to Siam with a hope that they could Christianize Siam by converting the King. Catholic missionaries celebrated the Mass with traditional Latin texts and Gregorian melodies. In addition, other types of sacred songs were introduced by missionaries of various nationalities who brought their own church songbooks, which contained Italian *laude*, French sacred airs, Spanish *canticas*, German chorales, and Latin hymns. All these genres include the products of the adaptation of secular tunes for sacred texts in their respective vernacular languages. The missionaries brought this process to its logical end, creating contrafacta by providing the original melody with a new text in Thai. Musical instruments could be used in the Mass, most importantly the harmonium and the pipe organ. On feast days or important occasions, in addition to harmonium and pipe organ, the local musical ensembles were included in the ritual: for example, a brass band for the procession and a violin ensemble for the introit, communion, and dismissal of the Mass.

A new direction of musical development began in beginning of the twentieth century when Siam received its first Thai bishop, Jaeng Kerdsawang. Bishop Jaeng sought to provide knowledge and an understanding of the music of the Mass through the use of the Thai language. He took melodies from Gregorian chants, Latin hymns, and French sacred airs, and created contrafacta by translating their original texts into Thai. (See Figure 5) He also included his own compositions in Thai. The first Thai

songbook (1933) was a product of his attempt to encourage the participation of the laity in the Mass.

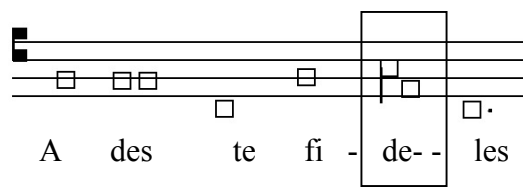
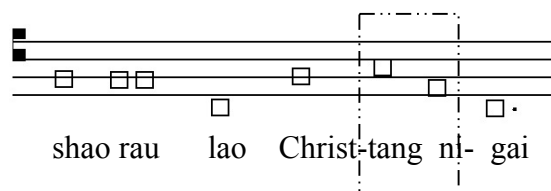
Phrase a (Latin)	Phrase a (Thai)
 <p style="text-align: center;">A des te fi - de - - les</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">shao rau lao Christ-tang ni- gai</p>
- uses two notes per one syllable of text	- uses one note per one syllable of text

Figure 5. The first phrase of *Adeste fideles* in the original Latin version, and Bishop Jaeng Kerdsawang's transcription and contrafactum with Thai text.

Although the vernacular language had been used in the liturgy in Siam for a long time, it took the Second Vatican council (1962-1967), during the reign of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, to officially sanction and promote the use of the vernacular in all sacred actions, according to the concept of inculturation, the application of vernacular culture to the Christian practices. This meant that the Latin Mass could officially be transformed into a Thai Mass. The Catholic Commission for the Liturgy translated the text of the Ordinary and all the readings and prayers of the Mass into Thai. Thai compositions created in previous periods were used for the music for the Proper, but new Thai music was needed for the Ordinary to cover the entire liturgical order of the Mass.

The Second Vatican council had thus opened the door to sacred music of all types. The music of the Catholic church after the council is characterized by the combination of various styles: Gregorian chant, Western polyphonic works of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, French Airs, Italian *laude*, Thai traditional melodies, Thai secular music, Thai music in the pentatonic scale, Thai polyphonic music, and Thai music that

imitated characteristics of Gregorian chant. Music could still be sung in its original version, but most music was modified through contrafactum, translation, orchestration, and arranging.

Church music during the twentieth century in Thailand saw a decline in Latin sacred compositions. The Mass was said in Thai, with Thai sacred compositions for all the texts of the Mass. Latin sacred compositions were retained only for the Mass of the Dead, the Holy Sacrament, the Profession of Faith, and for special occasions. Because of the freedom granted for new compositions, Thai sacred works gradually changed from those based on traditional Thai melodies and pentatonic scales to popular Thai compositions with westernized harmony and popular world rhythms. Recent Thai sacred compositions follow Western music theory. Such changes in musical style reflect the shift in the impetus for the development of sacred music from Bishop to priest to laity. Contemporary composers prefer using the materials of pop-rock, jazz, and popular music.⁵²

While the Catholics had established their western church music in Siam beginning in the seventeenth century, the Protestant missionaries also brought the propagation of their religions to Siam. In 1828, during the reign of King Rama III, Rev. Tomlin and Rev. Gustav were the first group of the American missionaries to Siam. Their first tasks consisted of getting to know the Siamese and Chinese population, translating the Protestant Bible into the Siamese language, and ministering to local people. The development of Protestant music was begun by Rev. Dan Beach Bradley and his wife, who entered Siam in 1835. Rev. Bradley was a medical missionary from the American Board of Commission for Foreign Missions, who spent his life in Siam from 1835 to 1873. One year after arriving in Siam, Rev. Bradley established the first newspaper in

⁵² Jittapim Yamprai, "Music in Roman Catholic Mass of Thailand," 50.

Siam, the *Bangkok Recorder*. In addition to establishing the press, his work as a medical doctor brought Western medicine and vaccination to Siam.

Through his success in publishing, Rev. Bradley could print Siamese books on the Christian faith, evangelical tracts, tracts with medical information, and a hymnal. Dr. Bradley selected his favorite hymns and translated the texts into Siamese. The original version of the hymnal contained only Siamese lyrics.⁵³

Bradley's journal provides information about the practice of Western music in their home, reporting that the family owned a melodeon, which his wife played.⁵⁴

... On May 1844, had an enrapturing view of Jesus this evening...He appeared to me in the sweet music of the melodeon...They touch all the chords of my soul. Language cannot express the power my wife's melodeon often has upon my soul to kindle up a spirit of lively devotion to God.⁵⁵

Both Rev. Bradley and his wife wrote hymns in the Siamese language and published them, beginning a tradition of Protestant song in Siam. Entries in the Rev. Bradley's journal provide the following details:

Mar 2, 1838 - have got very deeply engaged in preparing for the press a volume of sacred hymns in Siamese.⁵⁶

June 12, 1838 - the printing of my book, spiritual songs was completed on the 10th inst. It consists of 72 hymns.⁵⁷

Jan 4, 1846 - The exercises were altogether in the Siamese language. One of the hymns sung had been composed by my wife with the aid of her Siamese teacher some six or seven year ago.⁵⁸

The hymnal published by Dr. Bradley in 1859 was a small book of texts used in several churches. Later, Rev. Samuel Gramble McFarland of the American Presbyterian Mission revised Bradley's hymnbook, adding more hymns and including their melodies

⁵³ Dusanee Boonyasangawong, "The Development of Christian Hymn Service in the Church of Christ in Thailand" (M.A. Thesis, Mahidol University, 2000), 25.

⁵⁴ Siam Chronicles, ["The American Missionaries in Siam"], Vol. 31, n.d., 1.

⁵⁵ Bradley, *Abstract of the Journal of Rev. Dan Beach Bradley*, 94.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

in musical notation. Rev. McFarland recruited a Siamese Christian named Poon to write Siamese lyrics in prose form from McFarland's rough translation. This revised hymnbook was called the McFarland Hymnal, with its first edition published in 1876. The book contained 213 hymns with 68 tunes.⁵⁹ After McFarland published this Christian hymnal, the church in the northern part of Thailand translated the text into the Lanna language (spoken by the Laotian people) in 1895.

Beginning in 1940, all hymnbooks had to be published in the Thai language, due to a declaration by the Thai government of Thai as the national language. Thus, the Hymnal Committee had to revise and choose new hymns for the Christian churches in Siam. This was published in 1985 under the approval of the American Presbyterian Mission of Thailand. The Hymnal of 1985 included a large number of Thai tunes by Thai Christian composers. The committee mandated that new music for the church must be composed by Thai Christians. The use of hymnbooks varies among the denominations represented in Thailand: the Church of Christ in Thailand, the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand, the Southern Baptist and the Seventh Day Adventist. Some prefer using the old hymns while others prefer using the new revision of the Hymnal.⁶⁰

The beginnings of both Catholic and Protestant music in Siam derived from roots of Western sacred music. In order to fulfill their mission, missionaries used music as one of their religious tools, adapting it to the Siamese culture. This adaptation of both Catholic and Protestant music led to a long history of Christian sacred music in Thailand.

⁵⁹ Boonyasangawong, "The Development of Christian Hymn Service in the Church of Christ in Thailand," 25-6.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 37-8.

CHAPTER III

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Although Siam's relationship with the West was renewed during the reign of King Rama III, it was only a beginning, intended for the purpose of trade. Without any attempt to maintain the relationship, Siam could not have remained independent in the face of European colonialism. After the establishment of Western relations with Siam during the reign of King Narai the great of the Ayutthaya period, King Rama IV (1851-1868), known as King Mongkut, was the second King to move Siam toward the modern era, taking it far beyond what King Narai had begun in building a friendship with the West.

When Sir John Bowring, the Governor of Hong Kong, led a British embassy to Siam in 1855, a treaty was signed between the two nations. Through King Rama IV's foresight, the British treaty was used as a starting point for creating successful relationships with the West. Later, Siam signed treaties with France, Prussia, the Hanseatic countries, Austria, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, the United States, Sweden, and Norway.⁶¹ For Siam, the treaties were open doors, welcoming Westerners to Siam.

⁶¹ Manich Jumsai, [*King Mongkut of Thailand and the British*] (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 2000), 68.

Military Beginnings

Even before Western classical music was fully established in Thailand, it found a niche in the military during the reign of King Rama IV of the Chakgri dynasty. In his 1910 account, Peter Anthony Thompson, a British painter and scholar, wrote of King Rama IV's vision for the development of the nation. The King's plan was communicated to his court officers, who accepted it and implemented changes among the Siamese people.

In the reign of King Mongkut (1850-1868), Siam may be said to have passed from the middle ages to modern times...[w]hat European countries were allowed to accomplish gradually, Siam by circumstances had to accomplish within a few years. And these changes were not brought about by pressure of the people, but by the governing classes who had to educate the people to these new conditions.⁶²

After Mongkut ascended to the throne in 1851, several Westerners offered themselves for his service. Mongkut hired Westerners to help in organizing the new political, educational, and military systems of the country,⁶³ which brought tremendous change to the Siamese lifestyle in the areas of society, medicine, and education.

Thompson asserts that the reason for the increase in the social development of Siam was the hiring of westerners to work for significant state departments. Thompson indicated that the general advisor to the government was an American; the officers of the Navy and the Provincial Gendarmerie were Danes; the public works were done by the Italian engineers; the Sanitary Department was run by the French; and the Ministry of

⁶² P.A. Thompson, *Siam: An Account of the Country and the People* (Boston and Tokyo: J.B. Millet Company, 1910), 57.

⁶³ Malcolm Smith, *A Physician at the Court of Siam*, trans. Piman Chamjaras (Bangkok: Ruamtas Press, 1999), 68.

Finance, the Customs, the Bangkok Police, and the Education, Mining, and Survey Departments were filled by the English.⁶⁴

Mongkut was the first King to introduce Western culture in Siam, and his strategies resulted in a new Siam in which Westerners were accepted and welcomed. The King granted close relationships to the Westerners who lived in Siam and worked for him. Each year on his birthday, October 18, these Westerners were invited to dine with the King.⁶⁵ King Mongkut's ultimate goal in planting Western culture and letting his people change their way of life was to convert the attitude of Westerners toward Siam, which they had previously viewed as a barbaric nation; Sulak Sivaraksa discusses this in *National Identity and Its Defenders* (1991):

Monkut also modified the Siamese life style, our dress, our architecture and other exterior aspects of our identity. More important, however, was our education, i.e. we had to understand the West and to change our outward identity in order to preserve our inner strength to cope with the West.⁶⁶

Among the western practices introduced in Siam was military training, designed by an English soldier and modeled after the English tradition, according to which, marching was accompanied by a brass band and marching songs. The brass band tradition was established in Siam in 1851 when King Rama IV decided to hire an English teacher to train the Siamese conscripts. Whenever a foreign warship entered the Siamese port, the people would have a chance to hear a brass band performance, creating a desire for having Siamese brass bands like those in the West.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ P.A. Thompson, *Siam: An Account of the Country and the People*, 56.

⁶⁵ Malcolm Smith, *A Physician at the Court of Siam*, 55.

⁶⁶ Sulak Sivaraksa, "The Crisis of Siamese Identity," in *National Identity and Its Defenders*, ed. by Craig J. Reynolds (Victoria: Aristoc Press Pty. Ltd., 1991), 43.

⁶⁷ Poonpit Amatyakul, ["Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra"], *Silapa-Wattanaatham* 8/3 (Jan 1987), 70.

Poonpit Amartayakul, a famous Thai ethnomusicologist, has mentioned that during the reign of King Rama IV, several aspects of western culture were established in Thai society, including military training in the royal court. In 1851, English military Captain Impey introduced himself to the King offering to train the Siamese royal guard. King Rama IV hired him to train both the royal guards, and the conscripts in his royal court. Another English Captain, Thomas G. Knox, later offered to work for the King. Seeing that the royal guard already had Captain Impey, King Rama suggested that his brother, King Pinklao,⁶⁸ hire Captain Knox (See figure 6) to train the soldiers at his court. Both of these English captains had resigned from the British military in India, and used their experience in that system to restructure the Siamese military units and military rules according to the English system. The soldiers under the training of Captain Knox and Impey were called “European conscripts.”⁶⁹



Figure 6. Photograph of Captain Thomas G. Knox

⁶⁸ The idea of two kings is somewhat novel: It was believed that Pinklao was also destined to be a king, so the expedient thing for Rama to do, in order to avoid a possible coup, was to grant his brother kingship alongside him, though with lesser powers.

⁶⁹ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, [*Memoire*], 3rd ed., for the cremation of Luang Karunnaratorn (Bangkok: n.p., 1983), 104-5.

Under this military training system, a solo trumpet was used to lead soldiers in marching and to communicate general orders. Captains Knox and Impey decided to introduce marching music to the Siamese soldiers by incorporating the trumpets into a band, instead of using it only for signals. While a natural horn or bugle was sufficient for sounding military signals, the recently-invented chromatic trumpet was needed to perform actual music. Hence, the new instrument with valves was introduced to Siam during King Rama IV's reign.⁷⁰ King Rama IV placed Captain Impey in the position of brass band teacher under the royal guard, called *Wang Luang* soldiers, while the king's brother, the secondary King "Phra Pinklao" placed Captain Knox as a brass band teacher to his guard, called *Wang Nha* soldiers.⁷¹ *Wang Luang* and *Wang Nha* at that time were the core of the Siamese army.⁷² After the appointments of Captain Impey and Captain Knox, the trained conscripts were set up as "European frontline soldiers." Prince Damrong wrote in a letter to prince Naris that there were altogether nine regiments whose soldiers were trained in European style.⁷³

Besides adopting the English tradition of using trumpets as a signal to salute the King, Siam also borrowed the English Anthem, "God Save the Queen." This anthem was used in Siamese military training and fulfilled the same function as the English anthem in

⁷⁰ Sugree Charoensook, ["Western music in Siam"], 224.

⁷¹ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, ["personal letter to Prince Naris, 20 October 1941"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and HRH. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 349.

⁷² Amatyakul, ["Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra"], 69.

⁷³ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, ["personal letter to Prince Naris, 23 March 1934"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and HRH. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 103-5.

saluting the King.⁷⁴ Sombat Plainoi, a famous Thai writer (1929), quoted the diary of Sir John Bowring, the English ambassador who visited Siam in 1855: "...as the royal barge passed, His Majesty the King, 'bowed at me' and the band performed 'God Save the Queen'."⁷⁵

A letter of Prince Damrong to Prince Naris indicated that "God Save the Queen" functioned both as a marching song and as a royal anthem to the Siamese King.

The brass band was used in Siam in the reign of King Rama IV. The first brass band teacher was an English military man. The only song used for military marching is "God Save the Queen." Besides the use of the song for marching purpose, it is used as an anthem for saluting the King. The performance of two sections indicated the salutation for the King, and one section for saluting a crown prince. Since then, "God save the Queen" is also used as a Royal anthem to pay salutation to the King till the reign of King Rama V.⁷⁶

The use of "God Save the Queen" by Siamese military bands is supported by William Bradley, who has written about an audience of the American Vice Consul, Mr. James M. Hood, with King Rama IV in 1865. He also noted that "God Save the Queen" was used for welcoming a state visitor.

Having passed within the outer gate, the Consul was again saluted in the same style by another company of the Royal Guard and by the Royal Brass Band playing the first strain of "God Save the King."...a messenger was dispatched to invite the Consul and his suite into the Royal Presence. When we started, the soldiers and the brass band gave another salutation.⁷⁷

⁷⁴Poonpit Amatyakul, ["The music history of Somdej Chaofa Kromphra Nakornsawanworapinit"], *Siamrat*, 19 July 1989, 13.

⁷⁵Bangkok Symphony Orchestra Foundation, [*Anthems of the Nation*] (Bangkok: Printer J. Film Process Co., Ltd., 1994), 55.

⁷⁶ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, ["personal letter to Prince Naris, 8 September 1941"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and HRH. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 336.

⁷⁷ William Bradley, *Siam Then: The Foreign Colony in Bangkok Before and After Anna* (Pasadena, Calif: William Carey Library, 1981), 111.

Bradley also indicates that the King's brass band could perform other Western songs; according to the author, after the audience with the King, Mr. Hood and his company were invited to participate in a royal dinner.

During the dinner, ...the brass band at the foot of the stairs played their usual round of ten or a dozen European airs, and performed quite well. The only drawback to it was that the trumpets made too much noise to allow of easy conversation at the table.⁷⁸

Although "God Save the Queen" was the only western song used for military training, the military band could play Western airs, as well as Siamese songs without any arrangement for brass band.⁷⁹ The instruments would play the melody in unison with some of the instruments improvising on the main melody, a practice known as heterophony, which is the traditional performance method for Asian music.

Amatyakul indicated that most of the brass band soldiers during the reign of King Rama IV came from people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Indian, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Westerners. These groups of ethnic mixture were believed to have better musical knowledge than the Siamese people.⁸⁰ Another reason behind the selection of ethnicities other than Siamese was their Christian religious background. Additionally, a number of them were able to speak French or English, which helped them to understand the training better than would typical Siamese soldiers.⁸¹

Frank Vincent (1871-2) wrote an account describing his audience with the secondary King of Siam, King Pinklao (1851-1866). The King invited him and his party to see his troops (see Figure 7) performing their drills for amusement. Vincent spoke of the European instructors for the military training:

⁷⁸ Ibid., 115.

⁷⁹ Poonpit Amatyakul, ["Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra"], 70.

⁸⁰ Poonpit Amatyakul, ["Marches in Siam"], 13.

⁸¹ Poonpit Amatyakul, ["Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra"], 70.

The second King has two thousand soldiers, ...who guard the palace and its royal occupants...They have had various instructors (drill-masters) at different times — French, English, and German; The orders which we heard were given in broken German. Their uniform of white duck is patterned after those worn by the British troops in India; they wear also (mirabile dictu!) shoes and socks.⁸²



Figure 7. The Royal guards of King Pinklao

Vincent also mentioned that the secondary King of Siam had two bands with different levels of performance skills. During his audience with the secondary King, the band performed the Siamese National Hymn and other Western songs.

After the parade His Majesty's own brass band played for us. There were sixteen instrumentalists, led by a sergeant-major, a mere youngster seven or eight years old and three feet in height; indeed, none of the members of the band were more than twenty years of age; their uniform was the same as that worn by the guards. They played in remarkable good time and tune, first the "Siamese National Hymn," a rather pretty composition; and, second, a very familiar western waltz. Afterwards another band of musicians, who were older, but had had less practice, were ordered out, and they rendered a piece of dance music tolerably well.⁸³

⁸² Frank Vincent, *The Land of the White Elephant* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1874), 151-2.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 152-3.

King Pinklao enjoyed his audience with Westerners, who recorded what they had seen in his palace. George Bacon wrote in *Siam, the Land of the White Elephant* (1893) that during his audience with the King in 1857, the brass band at the secondary King's palace performed American airs. It was King Pinklao who introduced his band to American songs, which the king had heard since the first American embassy arrived Siam in 1836 during the reign of King Rama the III:

He had a band of Siamese musicians who performed on European instruments, though I am bound to say that their performance was characterized by force rather than by harmony. He made them play "Yankee Doodle," and "Hail Columbia," but if I enjoyed it, it was rather with a patriotic than with a musical enthusiasm...But the imperfections of the band were of very small importance compared with the good will which had prompted the King to make them learn the American national airs.⁸⁴

Bacon also provides information about Western instruments at the court of the secondary King, including a piano and music boxes at the King's palace.

I do not know who enjoyed the evening most...we felt so pleasantly at home that when we said goodbye, and left the pleasant, comfortable, home-like rooms in which we had been sitting, the piano and the music boxes, the cheery hospitality of our good-natured host...⁸⁵

The music box that King Pinklao had in his palace was the precursor to the Siamese metallophone, *Ranad thum lek*.⁸⁶ (See Figure 8) King Pinklao studied the mechanical system of his music box, which had metal tines of difference sizes, arranged from short to long in the shape of a comb. When manipulating the controller,

⁸⁴ George B. Bacon, *Siam, the Land of the White Elephant: as it was and is*, compiled by George B. Bacon, revised by Frederick Wells Williams [1893] (Bangkok: Orchard Press, 2000), 95.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁸⁶ *Ranad thum lek* is a Thai metallophone instrument, consisting of 16 flat metal slabs placed over a rectangular resonator. It is played with two mallets similar to the xylophone.



Figure 8. Ranad thum lek

the cylinder inside would turn and strike the metal tines to produce sound. Through this system, the King invented the metal xylophone, *Ranard thum lek*. Sombat Plainoi quotes Prince Naris's confirmation of this in his book, *Prince Jutamani* (1970).⁸⁷

After King Pinklao passed away in 1866, Captain Knox resigned from his brass band teaching position to work as an English Consul to the British Embassy in Siam. To replace him, the second court (*Wang Nha*) hired Jacob Feit (1844-1909),⁸⁸ a German-American military officer. After the American civil war ended in 1864, he traveled to Siam in 1867 and was invited by the American consul, S. Chandler to stay in Siam. Later, *Wang Nha* appointed him to be the brass band teacher in his court.

After the death of Captain Impey around 1860, King Rama IV hired a French soldier named Lamarz to fill Impey's position with the brass band of the first court, or *Wang Luang*. The King gave Lamarz the Siamese title of *Luang Uppatettuayharn*.

⁸⁷ Sombat Plainai, [*Prince Jutamani: King Pinklao*] (Bangkok: Ruamsarn, 1970), 178.

⁸⁸ Amatyakul, ["Marches in Siam"], *Siamrat*, 9 June 1993, 13.

Because Luang Uppatet knew only French, his difficulty in communication resulted in the brass band of *Wang Luang* making no progress under his direction.

The brass band during the reign of King Rama V (1868-1910) developed farther than in the period of King Rama IV. The reformation of the band occurred after His majesty came back from his royal visit to Singapore and Pattavia (present-day Indonesia) in 1871. During his visit, he had seen the brass band that the English had prepared for welcoming him. Noticing the grandness of the sound produced by it, upon his return to Siam His majesty established a royal page brass band in 1873, for which he hired two music teachers: the German Wester Fel and the Dutch Huvitzen.⁸⁹

When King Rama V realized the problem between Lamarz and the musicians, he fired Lamarz and replaced him with four of Captain Impey's best Siamese students. The student named "Lek" received the royal title of *Khun Ratronnayut* and was given the position of the Page brass band teacher; "Wong" received a title of *Khun Rutronnachai* and was given the position of the frontline army brass band teacher; "Chernglerng" received the title of *Khun Janekrabuanhad* and was given the position of marine brass band teacher, and "Krob," who received the title of *Khun Jadkrabuanpol*, was given the position of a brass band teacher in the frontline soldier division.⁹⁰

After establishing the Page brass band in 1873, the King placed his half-brother, Prince Sooksawat, as a chief commander. Twenty-four pages who had served the King before his ascension to the throne were chosen to be trained by Lek.⁹¹ Prince Sooksawat remained as the commander of the royal page brass band until 1878 and let Prince

⁸⁹ Amatyakul, ["Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra"], *Silapa-wattanatham* 8/3 (January 1987), 70.

⁹⁰ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, ["personal letter to Prince Naris, 20 October 1941"], 349.

⁹¹ Poonpit Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*] (Bangkok: Dueantula Press, 2008), 70.

Damrong, also half-brother to King Rama V and a student of Lek, succeed him in the position. Chit Seneewong Na Ayutthaya, a student of Huvitzen, was the last royal page brass band commander who was responsible for the band until 1933, one year after the Siamese political revolution.

In 1855, King Rama V transferred Jacob Feit to a new position of brass band teacher for the Royal Page department,⁹² assigning him the military rank of Captain. Later, Feit was the first person to arrange a four-part harmony for the Royal anthem's melody, a composition by Huvitzen (See details in Chapter 5).⁹³ Under the teaching of Jacob Feit, the brass band expanded their musical repertory of English Marches to include American Marches, since Feit had been in the American Army before coming to Siam.⁹⁴ Feit served in the position throughout the King's reign, until his death in 1909 during the reign of King Rama VI.⁹⁵

Important State Officers also had their own brass bands at their house. On 9 April 1879, the President of the United States of America, Ulysses S. Grant, came to Siam during his world tour. During his visit, he met the regent of King Rama V, Chuang Boonak, who had been a powerful nobleman since the reign of King Rama IV. The meeting was arranged at the regent's residence. As described by J.T. Headley, author of the book *The Travels of General Grant* (1881), Boonak had his band perform the American National anthem:

Our ship had arrived at the gigantic house of the Regent. Behind the regent was Mr. Chandler, an American who has lived in Siam for a long time. The regent

⁹² Ibid., 72.

⁹³ Ibid., 70.

⁹⁴ Poonpit Amatyakul, ["Marches in Siam"], *Siamrat*, 9 June 1993, 13.

⁹⁵ Piti Vattayakorn, [My Biography] (Bangkok: n.p., 1954), 9.

shook hands with President Grant, and led him to his living room. At the entrance door, a brass band performed “Star-Spangled Banner” and “Hail, Columbia.”⁹⁶

In 1886, King Rama V merged the army and the navy under a single command called the *Yuttanatikarn* division. The brass band became stronger under this new arrangement, and were therefore able to give public performances more often. The music the brass band performed included both Western songs and Siamese songs.⁹⁷ Prince Naris together with Prince Panurangsi had trained the brass band soldiers to play Siamese music.⁹⁸ Prince Naris modified the brass band of the Army and the Navy by including Western string instruments to imitate a Western symphony. This mixed ensemble performed on the Birthday Anniversary of King Rama V, September 20th, 1888.

Brass bands in all divisions made much progress during the reign of King Rama V. Since most of King Rama V’s sons had studied in the military in European countries, when they came back to Siam, they were posted in the Siamese military, where they were crucial to the military’s organization and development. Their study in European countries also helped create a good relationship between Siam and foreign countries. Siam, during the reign of King Rama V, received a number of important European visitors, who were welcomed with performances by the brass band. The band itself was expanded to a larger size to reflect Siamese power,⁹⁹ and to function not only in the royal court, but also in other provinces of Siam. When high-ranking Siamese officers needed to work in the rural areas, the band had to be expanded to serve that purpose.

⁹⁶ Krailerk Nana, [*In Searching for Rattanakosin*], vol. 2 (Bangkok: matichon, 2009), 52.

⁹⁷ Poonpit Amatyakul, [“Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra”], *Silapa-Watanatham* 8/3 (January 1987), 71.

⁹⁸ Poonpit Amatyakul, [*The Music of Siam*], (Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1997), 204.

⁹⁹ Amatyakul, [“Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra”], 73.

Navy Band – Beginning of Western Repertoires

Music in the Navy department began during the reign of King Rama V, led by Captain Michael Fusco, an Italian-American Marine band director, who arrived in Siam on the American ship *Tennessee*, under the command of General Renold, in 1833. On this occasion, the Americans performed Marching songs with a full band, with Captain Fusco as the director. Chai Boonnak (Phraya Praphakornvong), a Siamese navy commander, was in the audience and heard the American band performance, which pleased him with their march songs.¹⁰⁰ Boonnak persuaded Captain Fusco to work for the Siamese Navy, an invitation that Fusco accepted, staying in Siam and working as the Band Master for the Siamese Navy from 1833 until his death in 1902.¹⁰¹ In addition to directing the band, Fusco also taught music theory to the Marine band's musicians. Since that time, the Siamese Marine band has been able to perform Western repertoires.¹⁰² The Navy Band under the direction of Captain Fusco was famous for their performances of Western music at a number of State affairs,¹⁰³ and Fusco became known as one of the foreign musicians who developed Western music in Siam. One of his achievements was to compose and perform Western music for King Rama V, as well as writing and arranging Siamese songs in Western styles.¹⁰⁴

In 1903, Prince Paripatra (King Rama V's son) returned to Siam from his military education in Germany. While in Germany between 1894-1903, he had secretly studied music. After his return to Siam, King Rama V placed him in the Yuthanatikarn military

¹⁰⁰ Amatyakul, ["Marches in Siam"], 13.

¹⁰¹ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, ["personal letter to Prince Naris, 20 October 1941,"] in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and HRH. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 348.

¹⁰² Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 21.

¹⁰³ Amatyakul, ["Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra"], 72.

¹⁰⁴ Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 166.

division and later made him Commander of the Navy department in 1904. Prince Paripatra, a music lover, further developed the Navy brass band by introducing the musicians to recordings of some of the best Western brass bands. He also arranged Thai repertoire for brass band and taught the musicians to read and write Western notation and arrangements. Prince Paripatra's biographer, his daughter, Princess Siriratanabussabong, indicated that Prince Paripatra had brought a western music teacher from Java to give guidance and suggestions, and to conduct the Siamese Navy brass band. In his free time, the prince regularly listened to the brass band rehearsals.¹⁰⁵ During this time the knowledge and skill of the musicians continued to improve, and within a short time, they could perform wind ensemble repertoires and gave impressive concerts. The Prince's palace, *Bankhunprom*, had a place for concerts, where important performances of both Western and Siamese music were held. The musicians in the Navy frequently performed at the palace, increasing their skill as musicians and making the Navy band progress faster than the Army band.¹⁰⁶

Army Band - Beginning of the Western Orchestra

The Army band at that time (1910) was under the command of Prince Jakkrapong (King Rama V's son). When Prince Jakkapong finished his military study in Russia, he was placed in the position of the second commander of the Army.¹⁰⁷ Prince Jakkapong knew that the reason the Army band was inferior to the Navy band was the lack of good musical training. The Prince thought that hiring a professional music professor to train the band was the best way to improve its musical skill. In 1912, he therefore hired

¹⁰⁵ Siriratbutsabong, Princess, [*The letter of King Rama V and Queen Sukhumalmarasri to Prince Paribatra, with the Biography of Prince Paribatra*], ed. Princess Siriratbutsabong (n.p., 1990), 155.

¹⁰⁶ Amatyakul, ["Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra"], 74.

¹⁰⁷ Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 57.

Professor Alberto Nazari, an Italian professor with a deep knowledge of instrumental and vocal techniques. Nazari was successful in his teaching and improving the Army band.¹⁰⁸ Finally the Army band could perform western repertoires in concert.

Unfortunately Prince Jakkapong passed away in 1920. King Rama VI (King Rama V's son, 1910-1925) transferred Prince Paripatra from the Navy to the Army. Prince Paripatra was also responsible for the Siamese Red Cross, which previously had been under the direction of Prince Jakkapong. Under Prince Paripatra's command, the Navy band would perform for Red Cross fairs. Since the Red Cross fair involved ambassadors and Westerners, the band chosen to perform had to have a reputation for performing Western music; the Navy band under the direction of Captain Fusco was best able to fit the bill.¹⁰⁹

The performances of both the Army and the Navy bands had an influence on the public because through them the sound of the bands entered the ears of the Siamese people. Not only military people were interested in brass band music, but also everyday Siamese people, who started hearing band music, including brass band ensembles, during their festivals and important events. Eventually, the brass band ensemble was counted as a type of folk ensemble, performing in any ceremony: ordinations of Buddhist monks, funerals, festivals, and preceding theatrical plays. Local people often used brass bands in the same way they used the traditional *Pi-phat* ensemble.¹¹⁰ Most of their houses were located near the rivers, especially the Chaopraya River and Thajeen River at Samut songkram province, where musicians in *Pi-phat* ensembles easily adopted western brass band traditions and applied them to the performance of their music.

¹⁰⁸ Amatyakul, ["Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra"], 74.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 75.

¹¹⁰ Sugree Charoensook, ["Western music in Siam"], 228.

The brass band in the military, begun by the two English captains, had planted the seed of Western music in Siam. In the court of King Rama IV and his brother, King Pinklao, the band had gradually taken on other functions besides providing signals for the military and performing the royal anthem. More Western repertoires were introduced for the band to perform for state events. The development of the Army band and the Navy band by Western music teachers initiated the spread of Western music to Siamese musicians. Moreover, the introduction of the Western music in the military was a starting point for planting in Thai culture, waiting for the time that it would grow to be an integral part of the nation.

Western Impact: Civilization and Popular Trends in the Royal Court

After the country was opened to the West by King Rama IV, more Westerners came to reside in Siam, bringing with them their cultures, including religious practices, ceremonies, and entertainments. They continued to practice in Siam the lifestyles that they led in their own countries. What Westerners wanted for their lifestyles coincided with the King's desire to have his people learn Western culture. This made the Siamese court during the reign of King Rama IV a starting point for the adoption of Western culture, which continued in the reign of King Rama V and under later kings. Western culture became a popular trend for the upper class. Courtiers and noblemen accepted all kinds of Western entertainments and tried to restructure Siamese culture to merge with that of the West.

In addition to introducing brass bands into his court, of the second King of Siam, King Pinklao made his palace a place for Westerners to entertain themselves with European music. The Western tradition of having parties at their homes became a new

courtly practice that expanded to the houses of noblemen and state officers. These parties were events where Western music was performed during dinner and dancing. Frederick Arthur Neale, in his *Narrative of a residence at the capital of the kingdom of Siam* (1852), records the practice of Western music at the court of the second King, showing the instruments that Westerners in Siam had brought with them, including the fiddle, the oboe, the flute, the fife, and drum:

On Christmas day 1840, the Prince Chou-Fa invited all the Europeans then residing at Bangkok to spend the day at his palace. The invitation included the officers and mates of all the merchant vessels then in the river, and the American and French missionaries... amongst the crews of the English vessels we mustered a couple of fiddles, a hautboy, a flute, a fife and a drummer, and with the magnificent band commenced the business of the day with the British National Anthem. Everybody joined in chorus, and though the music was execrable, and the singing alarmingly out of time... Jigs, reels, country dances, and Highland flings were all executed to admiration.¹¹¹

The European tradition of “the Ball” was practiced during the reign of King Rama IV. The state ball was a formal event at which all the state officers and the Westerners who worked in Siam gathered. Campbell wrote in *Siam in the Twentieth Century* (1902) that on November 16th, the anniversary of King Rama IV’s accession to the throne, a State ball was held at the Foreign office:

A State ball is given at the Foreign Office, to which are invited the corps diplomatique and the leading European residents. The Siamese nobles and officials appear... a sight which recalls the brilliance of European courts and levees, but with a strange stream of barbarism running through it withal.¹¹²

Music education was introduced to the court when King Rama IV decided to have his children learn English and Western culture. His Majesty established a school inside the palace and hired a Westerner to educate his children. Prince-Patriarch Vajiranana, one

¹¹¹ Fred. Arthur Neale, *Narrative of a Residence at the Capital of the Kingdom of Siam* [1852] (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1997), 89.

¹¹² J. G. D. Campbell, *Siam in the Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1902), 157.

of King Rama IV's sons, mentioned the study of Western music in the royal court in his autobiography: "When I was in the European school I practiced the accordion, but I could not play with both hands. When I tried to read music or 'notation,' as it was called, I could not comprehend."¹¹³

After this, attempts were made to educate the general populace about Western music. Ploy Penkul (Lt. Phra Apaipolrop), a royal page in the court of King Rama V, had studied military and Western music in India. After returning from his study, he taught brass music and wrote a music textbook in 1907 that is considered the first music textbook in Siam.¹¹⁴

The most important Western trend at the court was the performance of Western music. A concert of Western music became a popular event at the court and noble houses. During the reign of King Rama V, Prince Naris was the organizer of all the concerts and theatrical entertainments held by the Directorate of Military Operations. Concerts and dramas marked courtly celebrations or welcomed significant state visitors and royal guests.¹¹⁵ During the reign of King Rama V, several significant Western visitors came to Siam. Welcoming parties were organized around Western traditions of dancing, dinner, and a Western ensemble. The Army, the Navy, and the Royal Page's ensembles were all involved in concerts welcoming state visitors.

Another occasion for Western entertainments was the Birthday anniversary of King Rama V. Princes and courtiers usually hosted parties at their palaces or homes,

¹¹³ Prince Wachirayānawarōrot and Craig J. Reynolds, *Autobiography, the Life of Prince-Patriarch Vajirañāṇa of Siam, 1860-1921* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1979), 24.

¹¹⁴ Poonpit Amatyakul, [National Letters on Music During the Five Kings], 212.

¹¹⁵ Prince Narisaranuvativongs, ["personal letter to Prince Damrong, 8 April 1943"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisara Nuvativongs and HRH. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 372.

handled according to Western traditions: dinner, dance, and music. Poonpit's chronicle of the reigns of five kings indicates that on King Rama V's birthday anniversary, September 2nd, 1879, Prince Panurangsisawangwong (half-brother of King Rama V) hosted a birthday party for the King. The prince invited several Westerners to attend the party at Saranrom palace, at which music was performed by a woodwind ensemble of the royal pages.¹¹⁶

Records show that other Western ensembles could be heard at Western-style parties. At a party at the house of Tuam Bunnark (Chaophraya Phanuvongmahakosathibadi) on September 22nd, 1882, a Western string ensemble performed with wind and percussion instruments.

The chronicler Amatyakul, describes parties welcoming state visitors at which Western string ensembles performed. According to this record, Tuam Bunnak organized welcoming parties for significant state visitors, mostly Europeans.¹¹⁷ On one occasion, an English military ship from Singapore had arrived at Chaophraya River, bringing a variety of exotic goods. Tuam, as a port controller, sent out invitations to Westerners and merchants who lived in Siam to visit his house and participate in the welcoming tea party. As seemed to be the common tradition of that time, the party was accompanied by Western music played by a Western string ensemble. Amatyakul added that the ensemble that performed at Tuam Bunnak's house could have been directed by Capt. Fusco, who was hired to work in the Siam Marine Department.¹¹⁸ Another welcoming party was held on May 23rd, 1883, by Prince Kromluangphanupanwongvoradetch (a half-brother of King Rama IV, 1859-1928) invited Westerners to attend a welcoming party for the Duke of

¹¹⁶ Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 37.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 55.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 59.

Macklenburg. The agenda included dinner, a fireworks display, dancing, and a string ensemble.¹¹⁹

Performing on Western instruments became a trend at the court started around 1880. Queens, Princes, Princesses, and concubines all tried to learn to play Western instruments, creating their own ensemble mixed with Siamese musical instruments. Solo performances were also attempted, primarily on piano and violin. One of King Rama V's Queens, Chao Dararasmi (1873-1933) was a music lover. Around the year 1886, the queen ordered Western instruments, including the piano and the violin to form a string ensemble in her court.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, her string ensemble still performed Siamese music.¹²¹

One of King Rama V's sons, Prince Jutatuchataradirok, a graduate of Cambridge University, was interested in both Siamese and Western music. He was skilled in playing the piano and is regarded as the first Siamese to play the harp.¹²² While studying at Cambridge, He bought a double piano built in France by Pleyel, Wolff, Lyon & Cie Company, and brought back to Siam in 1918.¹²³

The combination of Siamese string instruments with piano was established at the Payathai palace during the reign of King Rama VI (1910-1925). In 1922, Prueng Sujaritkul (Phra Sujaritsuda), one of King Rama VI's concubines, set up a string ensemble with piano. The musicians in the ensemble were all female, and they performed every evening after the supertime of King Rama VI, who usually sang with the

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 60.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹²¹ Ibid., 42.

¹²² Ibid., 105.

¹²³ Ibid., 293. Pleyel's double piano was two full sized grand pianos built into a single square cabinet with keyboards at each end.

ensemble. Pianists at the court tried to adapt techniques similar to those used for the Siamese xylophone for the piano, creating a mixture of Western and Siamese style. King Rama VI is credited with suggesting that Sumitra Singholaka, the pianist and ensemble leader, play the melody with his right hand and use his left hand to imitate the technique of the Siamese xylophone (*Ranard Thum*) instead of playing chords as in Western accompaniments; this technique incorporates syncopation, ascending and descending scales, and trills of seconds, fourths, and octaves. Sumitra is regarded as the first piano soloist of Siam. After King Rama VI passed away in 1925, the ensemble continued its performances, taking the new name of *Narisrisumitra* and performing at state events until the political revolution of 1932 during the reign of King Rama VII.¹²⁴

Theatre and drama were another aspect of Western culture to arrive in Siam during the reign of King Rama V. In 1884, Pen Pengkul (Chaophraya Mahintorasakdamrong) opened the “Prince Theatre” (see Figure 9), constructed in the style of an English opera house with 2 floors of seating. This was the first theatre in Siam to charge an admission fee as in the West.¹²⁵ This idea was conceived during Pengkul’s visit to the English Royal Court during the reign of King Rama IV. The dramas performed at the Prince Theatre were different from Siamese drama because of the gender of the actors. Normally, Siamese drama was performed with only male or only female actors, but the dramas at the Prince Theatre used both females and males according to the storyline of the drama.¹²⁶ Pen’s drama aroused an eagerness in society

¹²⁴ Ibid., 214.

¹²⁵ Amatyakul, [*The Music of Siam*], 71.

¹²⁶ Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 67.

to know what the courtier had seen in the West. It was an exotic thing for Siamese to have strange performance with dialect songs¹²⁷ (see chapter 4).



Figure 9. Photo of “Prince Theatre”

The *tableau vivant* was another Western art form used in the court of Siam during the reign of King Rama V, brought into Siam by Prince Mahavachirunnahit (1878), King Rama V’s eldest son. Performances took place inside the court, with young princes as the actors of the story. However, performance of *tableaux vivants* declined after Prince Mahavachirunnahit’s death in 1894.¹²⁸

Most of the homes of Siamese nobles had their own theatre and a place for performing concerts. During the reign of King Rama V, Western movies were brought into Siam. Both Westerners and upper-class Siamese enjoyed seeing movies, which were screened in the theatres of noble homes. Such theaters were also used for live drama, with sound effects, scene decoration, and other types of western technology adopted for

¹²⁷ Anant Narkong, personal interview (Bangkok Arts and Culture Center, Bangkok, 6 January 2011).

¹²⁸ Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 32.

Siamese theatrical performances. M.R.L. Larn Kunchorn (Phraya Tevej), director of the entertainment department during the reign of King Rama V, brought these technologies back from his visits to European countries. After returning to Siam around 1891, Kunchorn worked together with Prince Naris to incorporate such scenic and sound effects into Siamese drama. The Prince wanted to create a good impression for state visitors, who mostly were Westerners.¹²⁹

In 1897, a French movie company run by Marcovsky brought a foreign movie, *Parisian Cinetrocraft*, to Siam. The movie was shown at the Mom Chao Alangkarn Theatre for courtiers and the upper class. The same movie was also presented at the royal court.¹³⁰ The showing of Western movies in Siam later influenced Siam's own movie production, which typically imitated Western movies shown during this time.

By the reign of King Rama VI, Western culture had impacted on all kinds of Siamese arts: painting, sculpture, architecture, handicrafts, and performance of dance and music.¹³¹ Many varieties of Western entertainment had entered Siam during King Rama VI's reign; records from that period reveal that famous vocalists, dancers, actors, and magicians had been to Siam to perform before the King and the public. Letters written by King Rama VI's private secretary indicate that during the 1920s Russian and Polish pianists performed recitals for the King and the public, including Polish pianist Andrew Wagner Scalsky, who performed music by Liszt in a recital for the public in March 1920. Mods Rafalewski, pianist and violinist, performed with his wife (a vocalist) in a recital for King Rama VI in January 1922. In December 1922, Russian pianist Alexander

¹²⁹ Amatyakul, [*The Music of Siam*], 238.

¹³⁰ Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 133-4.

¹³¹ Walter Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism*, assisted by Dorothy B. Vella (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1978), 230.

Sklarevski performed a recital in Bangkok, after which Prince Dhani (private secretary to King Rama VI) wrote to the King to say that Sklarevski's performance of Chopin's piece was good, but that he had no opinion on the works by Bach and Beethoven.¹³²

In addition to such recitals, opera troupes and theater companies also came to Siam. Most operas performed in Siam were by English composers. We find out in a letter by Prince Dhani, that a stage play with magical entertainment was performed by Bryant & Bryant & Buster at Paruskavan Palace on April 4th, 1921.¹³³ The Gilbert and Sullivan operetta *Yeomen of the Guard* opened in Bangkok in February 1922.¹³⁴ Later that year, the English comedy *The Doormat* by H. S. Sheldon was performed in Bangkok on December 21st. King Rama VI donated all the money from the performance to charity.¹³⁵

These Western entertainments changed the atmosphere of the city, becoming part of the lifestyle of Siamese courtiers and noblemen. The King himself was a true artist, converting Western entertainments into several kinds of Siamese arts. During his reign, western music was performed not only by the Westerners who came or lived in Siam, but also by the Siamese court and the musical bands of the military units. The King's birthday and other national holidays were occasions for parades, which included the Wild Tiger unit, army units, and marching Boy Scouts. These units came out of experiences the King had during his education in England. In 1910, the King established a boarding school—the "Royal Page" school (*Vajiravudh* school)—modeled on Eton in England. Students in the Royal Page school has to study Rugby, football, squash, pipe band, basketball, tennis, etc. King Rama VI ordered Scottish bagpipes from England and

¹³² Prince Dhani, [*personal letter to King Rama VI*], 13 December 1922.

¹³³ Prince Dhani, personal letter to Bryant and Bryant and Buster, 1 April 1921.

¹³⁴ Prince Dhani, personal letter to Mr. Nunn, 6 December 1922.

¹³⁵ The Doormat troupe, personal letter to Prince Dhani, 27 November 1922.

formed a pipe band in 1921 for his Wild Tiger units.¹³⁶ The King sent Samarn Seangprajak, a musician in the Royal performing arts department, to learn Scottish bagpipe from the English soldiers at the English Embassy. The bagpipe band later became part of the Royal page school (see Figure 10).



Figure 10. The bagpipe band at Vajiravudh school¹³⁷

All of these products of the arts were made to satisfy people in the higher levels of the society, who were influenced by Westernized taste. This resulted in the decline in the popularity of Siamese culture, as King Rama VI noted in an article titled, “Siamese Art,” for the *Siam Observer* newspaper, dated January 1914:

The best example of Siamese decorative painting with beauty and grace in every line is despised and has to make way for a piece of lithographic horror, whose colours knock you down at the distance of ten yards; for we prefer to defile our walls with the horror in order to show people that we are civilized.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Panya Ruengrueang, *Thai Classical Music and its Movements from Oral to Written Transmission, 1930-1942: Historical, Context, Method, and Legacy of the Thai Manuscript Project* (Ph. D. Diss., Kent State University, 1999), 146.

¹³⁷ Vajiravudh College, “Vajiravudh News,” http://www.vajiravudh.ac.th/News/2553/VisitSchool/01_VisitHistoryBd/index.htm, accessed 27 January 2011.

¹³⁸ Walter Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 231.

As the King began to realize some of the problems with Western influence, he took on the role of a strong patron of Siamese Arts to initiate nationalism in Siam. He supervised a new department by himself, the department of Fine Arts, established in April 1912 and directed by Prince Nares (a half-brother of King Rama V). All craftsmen and artists from other units were placed in the new department. The King also established the school of Arts and Crafts to train people in all kinds of Siamese Arts, promoting arts and crafts exhibitions, renovating buildings that were constructed in the Western style, and encouraging Siamese drama, dance, and music in order to preserve Siamese culture.¹³⁹ However, this nationalism could not stop the growth of Western influence. Most of the foreigners who lived in Siam were not interested in Siamese arts and culture: Western entertainments were the only culture they desired. The King lamented the effect of Western impact in his article “Siamese Arts”:

We may, in our innermost hearts, really prefer to sit through the performance of a “Khon¹⁴⁰” or “Lakorn¹⁴¹” of the old Siamese style, but instead we go and sit through a fearful entertainment called an “operetta” at the Pramothai or some one of the other houses, because we think the style of entertainment is more like what they give in European theatres.¹⁴²

The imitation of Western art-forms, especially in Siamese literature and theatrical drama, was initiated by King Rama VI, who himself wrote plays and also translated or adapted several foreign plays, including Shakespeare, for Siamese theatrical entertainment. These types of plays were created primarily for the enjoyment of foreigners in Siam.¹⁴³ In 1916, Prince Pissanuloke and his wife, Catherine, performed a new Siamese drama at

¹³⁹ Ibid., 235.

¹⁴⁰ *Khon* is Thai classical dance drama, depicting the story of Ramayana. Performers wear masks to present the characters of the story.

¹⁴¹ *Lakorn* is similar to *Khon* but features stories of folk tales and Jataka.

¹⁴² King Rama VI, “Siamese Arts,” *Siam Observer* (January 1914), 13.

¹⁴³ W. A. R. Wood, *Land of Smiles* (Bangkok: Krungdebarngar Press, 1935), 91.

Paruskawan palace. One novelty of this drama was the use of both male and female actors.¹⁴⁴

King Rama VI wrote 60 Western-style plays, including one called *Lakorn pood*, which means “spoken play.”¹⁴⁵ Most of his plays were written as expressions of nationalism, to promote the idea of love for the land, religion, and the king. Ten of his sixty plays were written in English for foreign audiences. The king hoped to earn money from Westerners to support the country.¹⁴⁶ Even his Siamese plays were written for an educated audience, which was a minority group within the Siamese population. Despite the king’s participation, Western styles were slow to influence local Siamese drama and plays.

The impact of Western trends on the Military units increased during the reign of King Rama VI, beginning in 1910. Since he had graduated from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and Oxford University in England, he promoted English culture and the Military training he had learned during his study. The King introduced the tradition of the clubhouses for military units, as well as the Scout Order, which became the present Thai Military Reserves. All corps units during the reign of King Rama VI had clubhouses, which were meeting places for lessons and lectures, and served as the headquarters for the unit. It was also used as a gathering place after duty. Military officers participated in indoor-games and parties resembling the social events in England with which the King had been acquainted. The first clubhouse was constructed in 1911 close to the area of the palace.¹⁴⁷

Also in 1911, The King established the Wild Tiger Corps, its members drawn from

¹⁴⁴ Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 291.

¹⁴⁵ Satit Semanil, [*A Discuss on Thai Newspaper during King Rama the V to King Rama the VII*] (Bangkok: Phrae Phittaya, 1970), 14.

¹⁴⁶ Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 248-9.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 37-8.

the king's entourage. For important ceremonies such as the Coronation or the King's Birthday, the Wild Tiger Corps and the Army would participate in a parade and perform marching songs. On Wild Tiger day, which fell on December 9th, there were field displays, marches, and flag presentations. The pageant of the Wild Tiger was another big day of celebration in honor of the King's Birthday, for which party was held in the clubhouse with all kinds of entertainments. The king himself was the organizer of the event, together with Prince Damrong, the Minister of the Interior, and Prince Paribatra, the Minister of the Marines and music director.¹⁴⁸

The reign of King Rama VI was a time of many innovations, including the introduction of recording technology in 1894 when Edison records were brought into Siam. Both Siamese music and Western music were recorded on gramophone records, which provided important historical recordings for the nation.¹⁴⁹ Another innovation was the establishment of several types of mixed ensembles of Siamese and Western instruments, most importantly the Siamese string ensemble with other Western instruments such as organ, accordion, piano, or violin.¹⁵⁰

One of the more unique experiments was the establishment of the palace of Prince Paripatra in 1899, called *Bangkhunphrom*, as a place for Western education, offering language lessons in English, French, and German, Western cooking classes, and Siamese and Western music classes. The Royal family and courtiers referred to his palace as "Bangkhunphrom University."¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 40.

¹⁴⁹ Poonpit Amatyakul, [*The Music of Siam*], 100.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 234.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 244.

The Royal Western Symphony Orchestra

King Rama VI ascended to the throne after King Rama V passed away in 1910. Western music in Siam during the reign of King Rama V had been based on the brass band as a fundamental ensemble in the military and the court. However, the brass band was developed to mix with Western string instruments or was modified as a wind ensemble to perform at parties or to welcome state visitors. By the reign of King Rama VI, Western music was flourishing in Siam, creating new developments in the areas of ensemble, repertoire, styles, and performance practices. Marches of Western origin were performed, as well as newly-composed marches of Siamese origin in Western styles. The arts and music were managed under the new Royal Performing Arts Department, which King Rama VI established in April 1911.¹⁵²

In 1913, King Rama VI appointed M.L. Fuea Puengboon (Chaophraya Ramrakop, 1890-1967) as the director of the Royal Performing Arts Department (*Mahorasop* division), which included Siamese theatrical mask and drama (*Khon* and *Lakhon*), *Pi-Phat* and Siamese String ensembles, traditional visual arts, and the Western string ensemble.¹⁵³ M.L. Fuea Puengboon decided to establish the first Siamese symphony orchestra, drawing many of the musicians for this new orchestra from the Siamese music division. The musicians chosen were those who had proven their skill in the Siamese string and wind instruments of the royal music ensemble during the reign of King Rama V. At the beginning, the royal symphonic orchestra was made up of 20 musicians. Very soon afterward, Teab Assavarak (Phraya Katatarabodi) hired two English musicians, one of whom was named John Innoke, to direct and teach the ensemble. However, they made

¹⁵² Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 249.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 94.

little progress because they could not speak Siamese. Teaching had to be done through the Siamese translator, Sawad Chuto (Phraya Noratepprida), who volunteered to translate and learn to play violin at the same time. The two English teachers claimed that, under their instruction, the Siamese musicians could manage the skill of playing the instruments within six months. However their efforts were not as successful as they expected. Beyond the communication problem, the real issue was the Siamese musicians themselves, all of whom were already familiar with the traditional method of Siamese learning, which was done through oral transmission. The Western learning style was the main obstacle for Siamese musicians. None of them could read and write Western notation and they refused to change their traditional learning method.¹⁵⁴ Finally the English teachers gave up and resigned from their positions before the year was over.¹⁵⁵

In 1912, Prince Kromluangpissanuloak (half-brother of King Rama V and commander of the Army Band), hired Italian musician Alberto Nazari, to teach the Army band. Like the English teachers, Nazari was also initially unable to communicate in the Siamese language; therefore one of the clarinet players, Kul Senawatin, was selected to be a translator for Nazari, who was a strict teacher. Under the direction of Professor Nazari, the ensemble made great progress, and within a few months was able to perform Western music. Pleased with these results, King Rama VI brought Nazari into the Royal Performing Arts Department to teach the other musicians in order to form a Royal Symphonic Orchestra. In addition to the previous group, new students were selected from

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 280-1.

¹⁵⁵ Piti Vattayakorn, [*My Biography*], 15.

the artillery and cavalry officers, who were a source for the ensemble's title, the Western Artillery Orchestra. Nazari ordered new instruments to form a medium sized orchestra.¹⁵⁶

All of the progress Nazari made came to a halt during the World War I, when Siam entered the war on the side of England and the Allied forces. Nazari, who as an Italian national was not allowed stay in Siam when war was declared against his nation and Germany, left Siam for Italy on July 22, 1917.¹⁵⁷

After Nazari left, the Western ensembles faced a difficult situation without a teacher. King Rama VI recognized the deterioration of the ensemble and decided to find someone who could develop it. On September 1, 1917, The King hired Peter Feit, Jacob Feit's son, to be the music director of the Royal Symphonic Orchestra. Feit was transferred from the Traffic Department to train musicians to perform Western music for the court.

Although the Western orchestra had existed since 1912 in the Royal Performing Arts Department, it had yet to be established as the official state orchestra. On July 13, 1917, King Rama VI removed the Western orchestra from the Royal Performing Arts Department¹⁵⁸ and officially established the Royal Symphonic Orchestra as an independent entity. King Rama VI made Phraya Varasiri deputy chief of the Royal Symphonic Orchestra on September 1st, 1917.¹⁵⁹ Peter Feit, the chief of the Royal Symphonic Orchestra, was also responsible for the brass band of the royal scouts and the

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 16.

¹⁵⁷ Amatayakul, ["Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra"], 74.

¹⁵⁸ Amatayakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 306.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 310.

artillery division. Some musicians in the Royal Symphonic Orchestra also participated in the brass band, whose main task was to lead processions.¹⁶⁰

In 1922, Feit was appointed the deputy director of the Royal Western Music department.¹⁶¹ After accepting the position, Peter Feit reformed the Symphonic Orchestra. He realized that the ensemble could not progress further because most of the musicians were elderly and it was difficult to train them to play new instruments. Another problem was the aural skill of the musicians. Since they had spent all of their lives performing Siamese music, their ears were adjusted to the Siamese tuning system, which is different from the Western tuning system. Due to these problems, Feit decided to recruit new students, and auditioned young players between 12-14 years of age. His method worked very well. Within a few years, the older Siamese musicians could go back to their *Pi-phat* ensembles and perform only Siamese music. The new students, on the other hand, after their training, could perform Western music in concert.¹⁶²

Nazari returned from Italy in September 1919, at the end of WWI, and took up his former position in the Army. Nazari, together with Feit, further developed the Royal Symphonic Orchestra. As the skill level of the ensemble rose, the orchestra was able to perform the first Italian opera in Siam, Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*. The singers were selected from Westerners who lived in Siam. The musicians who performed for the opera were drawn from the integration of the Royal Symphonic Orchestra and the Cavalry band. Nazari arranged the music to suit the skill of the performers.¹⁶³ Nazari himself not only taught the musicians to manage the orchestral score, but also taught the

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 335.

¹⁶¹ Piti Vattayakorn, [*My Biography*], 10.

¹⁶² Ibid., 19.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 17.

singers to sing the vocal score; he also served as stage director, and controlled the lighting and staging of the production. The evening of the premiere began with the Army orchestra performing several Western pieces as a prelude for state visitors, showing off the nation's musical talent.¹⁶⁴ The first performance occurred in 1920 and was deemed a great success. Unfortunately, soon after the performance, Nazari almost drowned in an accident. Although he was saved from the river, he could not survive the onset of pneumonia. After Nazari's death, Feit took sole responsibility for the orchestra.¹⁶⁵

King Rama VI ordered the orchestra to be involved with several annual public events, including the King's Birthday, the Red Cross Fair, the Winter Fair, and the national day of each of the embassies in Siam, in addition to performing for the welcome of important state visitors.¹⁶⁶ In 1921, King Rama VI wanted the greater Siamese people to have an opportunity to enjoy the music of these professional groups. He provided a place for a public entertainment venue called Café Norasingh with a capacity of 300 to 400 people; it sold soft drinks and snacks and provided a setting for concert performances. Concerts were free, but the audiences were required to dress formally. Concerts alternated between performances of Western music by the Royal Symphonic Orchestra (see Figure 11) and traditional Siamese music by the Siamese Orchestra, and were held from 5pm to 7pm every Sunday from December to June. Most of the audiences for the Western music concerts were Westerners who lived in Siam.¹⁶⁷ However, the public concerts stopped when the King passed away in November 1925.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Amatyakul, ["Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra"], 75.

¹⁶⁵ Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 308.

¹⁶⁶ Piti Vattayakorn, [*My Biography*], 21.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 19-20.

¹⁶⁸ Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 346.



Figure 11. The Royal Symphonic Orchestra, which performed at Café Norasingh in 1922.

The Problem

In 1925, at the end of the reign of King Rama VI (1910-1925), the economy of the country was in crisis, with economic problems continuing through the reign of King Rama VII. King Rama VI had left the country almost bankrupt because of budget deficits, made worse by the onset of the Great Depression. Rama VII set up a Supreme Council of State made up of King Rama the V's half brothers to solve the problem. The council realized that there were too many state officers and not enough money to pay them, recommending a reduction in the number of officers as the solution to recovery.

The concept of a civilized Siam, as King Rama VI had tried to present to Westerners, was seen as extravagance by King Rama VII. King Rama VII thought that the entertainments required too great expense, one Siam could no longer afford. The council reduced expenses by cutting off the budget of the entertainment and theatre departments, which were dismantled on July 24 1926,¹⁶⁹ with both the Royal Siamese Orchestra and the Western orchestra transferred to the royal household. In order to keep

¹⁶⁹ Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 381.

the budget down, some musicians lost their jobs and the remainder had their salaries cut.¹⁷⁰ The council also demanded that entertainments such as fairs, exhibitions, and concerts be cancelled.¹⁷¹

The musicians of the Royal Symphonic Orchestra faced a good deal of trouble. Besides their routine job, they were required to be able to perform other tasks, such as performing Siamese music, *Khon*, and even serving as waiters at royal parties. Peter Feit observed the suffering of the musicians and realized that they were not able to perform all these duties at the same time. Consequently, he reported the problem to the page of King Rama VII, who had been unaware that the royal orchestra had been in crisis. The King told Feit to handle the musicians and the orchestra as he had done before.¹⁷² He also gave money from his personal budget to restore the orchestra. This issue created a conflict between the commander of the council and Feit; according to Feit, the commander declared: “This is Siam; no need to have Western Music!”

With the king’s intervention, the orchestra began to recover from their disaster. They started to perform weekly at Amporn Palace around the year 1927. Although the situation of the orchestra was resolved, musicians still faced problems with their living expenses. The benefits they had received during the Reign of King Rama VI, which included housing, food, and clothing, had been cut off. Nevertheless, the musicians continued the progress they had been making, and within three years, they were able to perform advanced orchestral repertoire, including symphonic suites and symphonic poems.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 376.

¹⁷¹ Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism*, 259.

¹⁷² Piti Vattayakorn, [*My Biography*], 23.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 24.

Fame for the Nation

Pleased with the orchestra's performance, His Majesty King Rama VII agreed to have the orchestra perform a symphonic concert for the public in 1929. All the admission fees to the concert were donated to charity: the Siamese Red Cross and hospitals. The orchestra's performance was praised by a number of Westerners who attended the concert. The Royal orchestra (see Figure 12) had achieved great success and brought fame to the nation during the reign of Rama VII.¹⁷⁴



Figure 12. The Royal Symphonic Orchestra in 1931 during the Reign of King Rama VII

In his memoir, Peter Feit noted the high quality of the playing of the orchestra, which was regarded by foreign critics to be the best orchestra in Southeast Asia. The orchestra was praised in English-language newspapers including the *Bangkok Times*, the *Siam Observer*, and the *Bangkok Daily Mail*.¹⁷⁵ On March 27, 1931, the *Siam Observer* printed this favorable review:

The final concert of the series by the Royal Orchestra under the baton of Phra Chen Duriyanga was given at the Sahadaya Hall of the Grand Palace

¹⁷⁴ The Thai Composers Association, [*Memory to the Teacher who Established Music in Thailand*], n.p., 1983, 2.

¹⁷⁵ Piti Vattayakorn, [*My Biography*], 23.

last evening, to a disappointed meager audience. This was more to be deplored since the programme given, was from the musical standpoint, probably the best of the whole series. It opened with Mendelssohn's overture to *Ruy Blas* which was played with great swing and verve and met with general appreciation. It was followed by Beethoven's No. 5 symphony, in C minor, each of the four movements of which were rendered extremely well.¹⁷⁶

Each symphony concert featured program notes giving full descriptions of the works performed. The surviving programs (see Figure 13), which Peter Feit included in his book, *My Biography*, list the repertory performed on 5 February 1931, including Mendelssohn's *Overture to a Midsummer Night's Dream* and Schubert's *Symphony No. 8 in B minor*. In addition to the Royal Symphonic Orchestra under the direction of Peter Feit, two other symphonic orchestras were active in Siam during the reign of King Rama VII: The Navy Symphonic Orchestra and the Army Symphonic Orchestra.¹⁷⁷

Alongside the progress of Western music during the reign of King Rama VII, Siamese traditional music saw a resurgence. In 1931, one year before the political revolution, Prince Damrong and Dr. R. Asmis, the German Ambassador, initiated a project of recording and transcribing Siamese repertoires in Western notation. The purpose of this project was to preserve the music for the future. Siamese music before this time was preserved through oral tradition, existing only in the memory of Siamese masters. Some repertoires were lost when the masters died; some were transferred from generation to generation with mistakes. Princess Pattanayu (Prince Damrong's daughter) was the head of the project, with Prince Naris, Sorn Silapabanleng, and Peter Feit as the advisory team. For the recordings, Princess Pattanayu brought in Western percussion for

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Poonpit Amatyakul, [*The Music of Siam*], 308.

greater clarity in the recording.¹⁷⁸ Peter Feit, together with his musicians from the Royal Symphonic Orchestra, made the transcriptions, which were produced as both orchestral score and parts¹⁷⁹ and kept in the Silprakorn department.¹⁸⁰

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THE ROYAL ORCHESTRA.
SECOND CONCERT.
On Thursday, February 5th. at 9.30 p. m. sharp.
PART I.

1.—OVERTURE "A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM." ... (MENDELSSOHN)

Mendelssohn wrote this Overture seventeen years before the rest of his incidental music to Shakespeare's play. In 1823 the composer's father bought a beautiful house with park-like ground in the Liepziger Strasse, Berlin. Here the family lived an ideally cultivated and pleasant existence. Next to the works of Jean Paul, the young people loved Shakespeare, especially "A Midsummer-Night Dream". 'This wonderful life' says Hensel, 'gave a new impulse to Felix's creative spirit.....The most brilliant result of that strangely poetic frame of mind is the Overture to "A Midsummer-Night Dream"'. We may consider it as a piece of Mendelssohn's own life, for it is as much the result of the events of 1826 in the Mendelssohns' house as of the influence of Shakespeare; and if we are not very much mistaken, this origin is just what lends such a singular charm to the Overture. The circumstance that it was a product of Mendelssohn's inmost nature may explain the fact—perhaps that

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Figure 13. The part of the program note for the performance of the Royal Symphonic Orchestra performed on Thursday, February 5th 1931.¹⁸¹

The efforts of Western teachers and Siamese musicians had reached their greatest success and garnered recognition beyond the other Asian nations. This would not have been possible without funding provided by the military and the monarchy to support them.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 240.

¹⁷⁹ Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 232.

¹⁸⁰ Vattayakorn, [*My Biography*], 32.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 28.

However, a greater challenge than they had faced before lay ahead, as the future of both these entities came into question.

The Crisis of Western Music During the Political Revolution

Even though Western music in Siam had passed through a difficult time at the beginning of King Rama VII's reign, the personal support of the King, together with the determination of Peter Feit and the spirit of the musicians, resulted in great progress for the ensemble, whose quality and fame brought pride to the nation. However, the ensemble faced a greater problem when political revolution occurred in 1932, and the government changed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. No matter how much progress the orchestra had made, it could not survive the impact of the political revolution in 1932.¹⁸²

The revolution was led by groups of civilians and military officers, most of whom had developed their political thinking during their educations in France and England. On June 24, 1932, the absolute Monarchy fell at the hand of the Peoples' party, the first political party of Siam. The party sent soldiers to all the palaces to capture the Princes and Princesses and forced the King to rule under a constitution, which was drafted in June 1932. On March 2, 1935, King Rama VII abdicated the throne and left for England, never to return to Siam. Prince Paripatra, Prince Damrong, and other important Princes were exiled from the country, never returning. Their palaces became government property.

Siam after the revolution was under the power of a dictator, Field Marshal Pibunsongkhram and his party. Pibun, who was actually a fascist, followed the ruling

¹⁸² Ibid., 32.

styles of Hitler and Mussolini, executing many state officers who were monarchists. Anything about the King and royal dynasty was banned. The nation of Siam was renamed “Thailand” on June 23, 1939.

After the political revolution in Thailand, the Thai government issued twelve new cultural acts called *Ratthaniyom*, promoting the practice of Western culture in Thailand. Pibun ignored the reality that, by changing Siamese culture and adopting Western culture, Thailand would be under the power of the West. Instead, the Marshal thought that the practice of Western culture would make the Thai people civilized.¹⁸³ The government of Pibulsonggram aimed to bring modernization to all the country. Before the revolution, Western trends were mostly for people in high social levels. During Pibul’s time, every Siamese, regardless of his or her societal class, had to follow the twelve Cultural Mandates, called *Rattaniyom*, that controlled cultural practices in Thai society. People had to give up their Siamese traditional culture: For example, Siamese traditional dress was not allowed; only Western dress could make the country look civilized.¹⁸⁴

After the political revolution, most of the state administrative departments were transferred to departments under new government administration. All traditional crafts, theatre, and music were transferred to the *Silapakorn* department, which supervised Fine Arts and Museums.¹⁸⁵ According to Pibul’s mandate, Western entertainments were promoted, resulting in the increase of private ensembles to provide music for dancing and movies.

¹⁸³ Judith A. Stowe, *Siam Becomes Thailand: A Story of Intrigue* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), 187.

¹⁸⁴ Michael Hayes, *Capitalism and Cultural Relativity-The Thai Pop industry, Capitalism and Western Cultural Values*, in *Refashioning Pop Music in Asia*, ed. by Allen Chun, Ned Rossiter and Brian Shoesmith, (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 19-20.

¹⁸⁵ Poonpit Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 462.

Peter Feit, as the most important Western music figure in Siam, was asked to compose a Thai National Anthem for the people. Peter Feit could not deny the request, even though he was not willing to write any composition for the revolution.¹⁸⁶ (See details in chapter 5) The Royal Symphonic Orchestra, after being transferred from the royal household to the Silapakorn department, was to perform a concert on June 27, 1936, to celebrate the constitution under the new political system; this concert was to include a performance of the new Siamese National Anthem (see Figure 14).

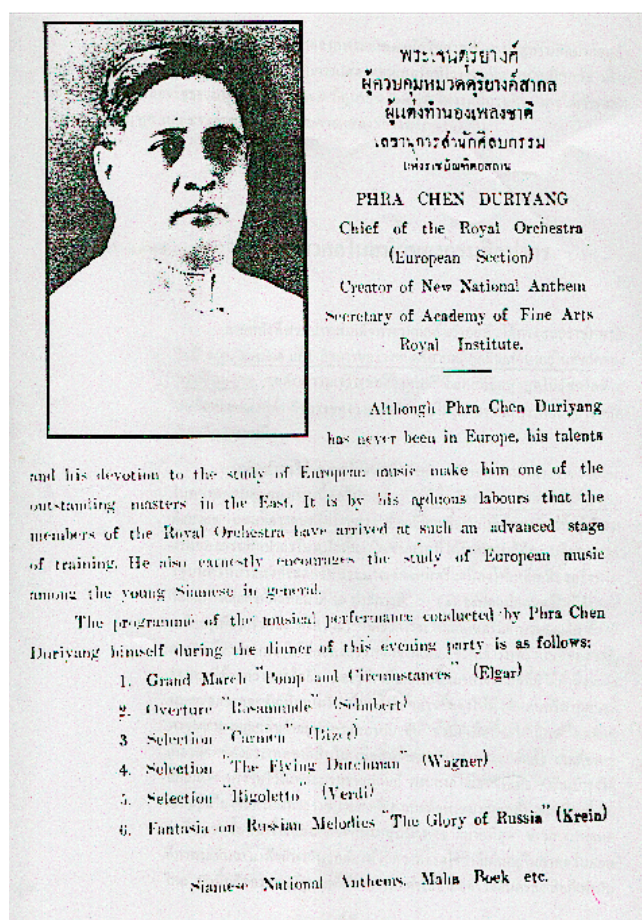


Figure 14. The announcement of the performance of the Royal Orchestra on June 27, 1936¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Piti Vattayakorn, [My Biography], 44.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 47.

The prime minister of the revolution party, Phraya Paholpolpayuhasena, wrote a letter to Feit to compliment him on his composition of the new anthem. He stated that the music could invoke the patriotic spirit of the nation. After Feit's music was approved, a competition for lyrics was held, and Sagna Kanchanakapan's text was selected. The government announced Feit's music with Kanchanakapan's lyrics as the official Thai National Anthem on 10 December 1939, the year that the country changed its name from Siam to Thailand. Feit, after successfully responding to the government's request, was fired from his tenured position and his salary was cut by half.¹⁸⁸

Several new types of ensembles were established in accordance with Pibul's practice of modernization. The first Jazz ensemble was established in 1934 by Luang Sukhumnaipradit, a student at the royal page school who had won first prize for academic excellence. He was sent to study at Boston University, where he became acquainted with jazz music; when he came back from his study, he formed a jazz ensemble and performed at the Payathai Hotel.¹⁸⁹

In 1936, the government established a new type of ensemble in the Army, called *Hassadontri*, created to perform a new type of Thai music called *Thai Sakol* (Thai pop music). Most of the members of the ensemble were students of Peter Feit. The government's plan was to use the band to create a new Thai culture that sounded modern and civilized. This *Thai Sakol* music functioned in all kinds of entertainments, especially at dances which were held frequently.¹⁹⁰ *Thai Sakol* is a Thai song sung with Thai lyrics but in the Western style of melody and rhythm.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 46.

¹⁸⁹ Poonpit Amatayakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 176.

¹⁹⁰ Poonpit Amatayakul, ["Note on the Siamese Military Orchestra"], 77.

In the same year, Peter Feit was sent to a number of European countries to observe the music educational systems, visiting London, Berlin, Munich, Paris, Rome, Milan, and Vienna. While traveling abroad, Feit also attended symphonic and operatic concerts. After Feit returned to Thailand in 1938, he tried to improve music education in Thailand according to his observations. Feit wrote a proposal and presented it to the Silapakorn department, which, contrary to Feit's expectation, rejected the project.¹⁹¹ His proposal was never implemented.

The political revolution created a good deal of trouble for all the musicians of the royal orchestra, and also for the development of Western music in Thailand. In addition to changing the name of the orchestra from the Royal Western Orchestra to the Silapakorn Orchestra, the new government cut the music budget by dismissing half of the musicians in the ensemble or reducing their salary by half.¹⁹² Peter Feit strongly objected to this policy and clarified to the committee the need for the full number of musicians in the orchestra. He presented this information to the government in a graphic fashion, by having the ensemble perform first with the full orchestra and then with half the musicians of each section. His demonstration achieved its desired results; the government allowed the orchestra to have the full number of musicians as Feit had requested, but with the condition that the orchestra could no longer include musician trainees.¹⁹³ While this reduced the budget, it also reduced the number of musicians being nurtured to fill seats in the orchestra as they became vacant.

In 1936, the situation of the orchestra became a state of crisis. The dean of the Silapakorn Department had scattered the musicians of the orchestra to other divisions: 18

¹⁹¹ Piti Vattayakorn, [*My Biography*], 54.

¹⁹² Ibid., 48.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 51.

musicians were positioned at the Silapakorn drama division, and 8 were transferred to the public announcement department to be positioned in the jazz band. The number of musicians in the orchestra had declined significantly due to transfers, resignations, firings, and deaths.¹⁹⁴ The orchestra finally had come to a critical point.

In 1939, the orchestra lost several more musicians. Again, Feit fought with the dean of Silapakorn department to get permission to hire new musical trainees and the salaries to pay them. After his request was granted, Feit had to find a place for a school to train these new musicians. At the same time, none of the new musicians actually received any salary from the government. When Feit tried to demand their payment in 1941, he was fired from his director position and was sent to work at the Air Force department.¹⁹⁵ The Air Force department at that time included a theatrical division, which required an orchestra to provide music for the theatre. Peter Feit established the Air Force music school to produce musicians for this orchestra, and within 2 years, the Air Force Orchestra was able to perform the basic symphonic repertoire.¹⁹⁶

Feit returned to the Silapakorn orchestra again in 1942 at the request of the government. This time he was placed in the position of music professor of the Silapakorn University, but not as music director.¹⁹⁷ Unfortunately, after the music department was established, no music students applied to the program. Feit then asked the musicians of the Silapakorn Orchestra to study with him to gain more musical knowledge and to learn the English language.¹⁹⁸ The musicians, lacking the desire to improve their skill, did not attend the classes, and only four musicians participated in the program. Without further

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 51.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 55.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 62.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 56.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 63.

musical education and financial motivation, the Silapakorn Orchestra declined in its ability to perform. In 1947, Feit was transferred from the University back to the Music department to restore the now almost defunct orchestra.¹⁹⁹

Feit pointed out the necessity of an adequate budget to restore the strength of Silapakorn Orchestra. He reported several other problems, including old and broken instruments that needed replacement, the lack of parts for repairs, the dismissal of repairmen, missing sheet music, musicians with weak abilities due to lack of practice, and musicians who earned little money and had to do other jobs to survive. Feit also proposed solutions to restore the orchestra. He stated that, in addition to having an adequate budget, it was also important to produce new qualified musicians. He pursued the idea of establishing a school for building a junior orchestra as a training orchestra. This orchestra would help to fill in for the missing musicians of the primary orchestra. Feit also laid down rules and instructions for musicians to achieve discipline in their practice. He guaranteed that by following this plan, the orchestra would be able to perform symphonic concerts in the next few years.²⁰⁰ Unfortunately, Feit's proposal was denied; the director of the Silapakorn department refused to acknowledge the orchestra's problems.²⁰¹ Feit still tried to have the orchestra perform for public concerts, which were held 3 times after the rainy season in 1951 and 1952. After all the obstacles Feit had faced and the effort he gave to restore the orchestra, he decided to resign from Silapakorn department on January 31, 1954.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 63.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 59-61.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 65.

²⁰² Ibid., 68.

This period of political revolution resulted in changes to the social structure, royal institutions, culture, tradition, and all types of music in Thailand. The royal institutions, which until the first decade of the twentieth century had been the center of arts and culture, had lost their power and authority in leading the development and progress of the country. The growth of Western classical music that began during the reign of King Rama V, the establishment of the full orchestra during the reign of King Rama VI, with its high level of success during the reign of King Rama VII, was disrupted by a lack of understanding on the part of the country's leaders, both politically and academically. At the same time, music for dancing and theatre became popular in the society at large, resulting in new types of ensembles and music, such as marches with patriotic and nationalistic themes, Thai popular music composed for Western popular dance, music for strings, and jazz music. The aesthetic of Western classical music had somehow been lost within the new political system.

The Growth of Western Classical Music in Thailand

While the Silapakorn orchestra that had flourished during the reigns of King Rama VI and VII failed to progress after the political revolution, the Navy orchestra was still developing. In 1935, the Navy ensemble had been split into 2 divisions: brass band (*Trae wong*) and string ensemble (*Saw wong*). The string ensemble would later become the Navy Symphonic Orchestra. The music programs of the Navy maintained their development by participating in social events and performing many concerts that featured Western classical music. The concerts brought together people with a common interest in classical music, strengthening the community of classical music lovers. After the revolution, it was the Navy Symphonic Orchestra that brought classical music

performances to the public. Since 1944, the Navy orchestra has performed for the public more often than any other group, both in live concerts and on the air.²⁰³

The goal of the ensemble was to provide knowledge of classical music to the general public. Every performance was announced with advertisements in all types of media: radio, television, and newspapers. Their strategy in promoting classical music performance was to link their name with the Thai Red Cross; part of the income from the concerts was given to that charity. Queen Sirikit, wife of King Rama IX, was the Chair of the Thai Red Cross, and initiated the Red Cross concerts in 1961. The Navy orchestra not only continues to present these annual public concerts, but it also performs for many important events, including royal and diplomatic ceremonies, as well as accompanying ballet and theatrical performances, and performing for other charities.²⁰⁴

Thai musicologist Anak Charanyanont studied the concert repertoires performed by the Navy orchestra from 1961-2005. He found that most of the classical repertoire was selected from the symphonic compositions and concerto repertoire of the Romantic period. Additionally, they performed several symphonic works and art songs by Thai composers.²⁰⁵

Because of the progress of the Navy orchestra, the other military departments including the Army, the Air Force, and the Police tried to develop their own orchestras, resulting in an increase in performances of Western classical music after 1967. When Feit was transferred from the Silpakorn department to the Air Force in 1941, the brass band of the Air Force was under the Air Force Movie Department.²⁰⁶ In the Air Force, Feit

²⁰³ Poonpit Amatyakul, [*The Music of Siam*], (Bangkok: Amarin Printing, 1997), 349.

²⁰⁴ Anak Charanyanont, ["Classical Music in Thailand"] (Term paper, Mahidol University, 2007), 173.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 179.

²⁰⁶ Royal Thai Air Force, [*Thai Air Force Brass Band*] (Bangkok: Air Force, 1996), 29.

established three types of ensembles: the Military band, the Orchestra, and the Jazz band.²⁰⁷ In 1942, the music school of the Air Force was established, with Peter Feit as its director.²⁰⁸ Feit composed and arranged a number of compositions for the bands, and wrote several musical textbooks on music theory, harmony, and vocal technique for the school.

In 1952, the Police department asked Feit to develop their brass band. He helped them improve the skill of the musicians and expanded their repertoire, making the Police brass band famous and capable of performing at state events. Feit remained in the police department until he passed away on December 25, 1968.

After Feit's death, cultural organizations and Western embassies gave additional support for classical concerts. Today, music activities are provided by many institutions and organizations inside Bangkok, with an objective of promoting classical music for the public.²⁰⁹ People who have knowledge of Western music have gathered together to form clubs, the most famous of which is the "Student of Phra Chen" Club (students of Peter Feit), which was established in 1969. Members of the club are the former students of Peter Feit such as Samrej Niyondej, Aree Sukakate, Chusak Pataranavik, Boonlert Kartsuwan, Chonlamoo Chalanukrau, and Sugree Jorakan.

By the second half of the twentieth century, Thailand had already been Westernized and modernized. In music, several types of Western ensembles were established, such as big bands, Dixie-land jazz bands, and strings bands, both inside the military and as private organizations. Music was mainly used for entertainment purposes, especially dance music and new Thai compositions in Western style.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 32.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 41.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 172.

By the second half of the twentieth century, the orchestra had been revitalized. The pre-existing orchestra of the military and the *Silapakorn* orchestra reorganized their structure in order to promote new skillful musicians, set new disciplines in rehearsal, and to introduce the standard worldwide concert repertoire. World-famous guest conductors and soloists were invited to perform with the orchestra, at the same time that standards in the new orchestra were raised by choosing professional musicians through the audition process. Musicians now work for the orchestra under contract for a designated period of time and they are required to maintain their skill at a high standard in order to get through the next audition.²¹⁰

In 1982, the Bangkok Symphonic Orchestra (BSO) was established under the Royal Patronage of HRH Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn. It has earned a strong reputation through the abilities of its professional Thai musicians. More recently, in 2002, the Siam Philharmonic Orchestra was founded under the patronage of HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana. It began as a chamber orchestra, mainly performing the works of Mozart and Haydn. Within 2 years, the size of the orchestra was expanded, and in 2004, it became a full orchestra, performing the large-scale orchestral works of Brahms and Mahler.

In addition to the BSO, the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO) has come to represent national prestige. The TPO was established in 2004 under the patronage of the Royal Thai Government and the College of Music, Mahidol University. In addition to performing Western classical music, the orchestra also aims to promote the arts and culture of Thailand. Through the new emergence of these symphonic orchestras, along with the older military orchestras, the Thai people now have opportunities to listen to

²¹⁰ Ibid., 185-6.

Western classical music more frequently. Since concerts follow a season schedule, with performances twice a month, people have more opportunities to attend concerts.

One reason for the growth of Classical music in Thailand is the expansion of its music educational institution. The *Natrasin* school, established by the Silapakorn department on May 17, 1935, was the first in Thailand to offer a music program. Luang Vijit Vatakarn, rector of the Silapakorn department, wanted to model the school after the music conservatories of France. Programs offered at the school were both in Thai music and Western music, with Peter Feit as the main professor in charge of teaching in the Western music program.²¹¹

Universities and colleges now offer music programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, increasing the number of younger people who are knowledgeable in music. International and national music competitions also increase the skills of Thai musicians and the popularity of classical music among the public. Schools in all levels have Western music in their curriculum, following the rise of school brass bands and symphonic bands in all parts of Thailand.

Besides the growth of symphonic orchestra, several other types of ensemble have been established in Thailand. Khunying Malaiwan Bunyarattavej, a student of Peter Feit, has developed choral music in Thailand by both arranging music and directing choirs. The Bangkok Festival Choir was established and has performed internationally.²¹² After Peter Feit, the chamber orchestra was developed by Professor Kamtorn Sanidwong Na Ayutthaya, the first Thai to study Western music in London. After returning, Professor Kamtorn established a professional chamber ensemble called the Pro Musica Chamber

²¹¹ Poonpit Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 458.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 442-3.

Orchestra.²¹³ Chuchart Pitaksakorn, who studied violin at the Royal College of Music in London, also formed an orchestra. After his studies in London, Chuchart worked for a military department and later at the Chulalongkorn department. He helped develop the BSO orchestra as well as the Chulalongkorn and Kasetsart University orchestras.²¹⁴

Since its introduction to Siam, Western classical music has expanded in its popularity in several directions. Music has become a business that today has no boundaries. The Thai people, including Westerners, can enjoy all styles of Western music, both in recordings and live performances. Music schools have been established by both public and private organizations to train future professional musicians, while large national institutions, including national banks, the stock market, and embassies, give funds to support the performance of classical music in Thailand.²¹⁵

²¹³ Ibid., 366.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 457.

²¹⁵ Sugree Charoensook, ["Western music in Siam"], 237.

CHAPTER IV

THE EFFECT OF WESTERN MUSIC ON THAI MUSIC AND DRAMA

Music was not the only area in which Westerners brought changes to Thai culture and society. Because Western ideas were equated with popular trends and the appearance of being “civilized,” Thai artists in all areas experimented with merging Western and Thai culture in order to present themselves to the West. One result was the creation of new types of modernized Thai music and drama. During the period from King Rama V to King Rama VII, courtiers and noblemen typically maintained their own dramatic troupes and musical ensembles at their homes. On special occasions or national holidays, their troupes would perform for the public for free. In Siamese culture, the maintenance of a dramatic troupe and ensemble reflected the owner’s status and wealth in the society.

The effect of Western music on Siamese drama and music began during the reign of King Rama IV, when Pen Penkul (Chaophraya Mahintorasaktamrong), a second Ambassador of the Siamese Embassy, traveled to London in 1857 to present a gift to Queen Victoria of England. On this occasion, Pen had opportunities to see operas, orchestral concerts, and carnivals. His experience of Western theatrical entertainments was translated into the construction of a Siamese theatre that imitated the structure of the English opera hall, incorporating scenic and lighting effects. The theater gave rise to a

new type of drama, called *Pan-tang*²¹⁶ drama. In Pen's *Pan-tang* drama, actors dressed according to their role in the story, a change from traditional Siamese drama, in which all the characters dress similarly, making it difficult to identify the character. Even the music that accompanied the drama was used to support the image of the character, including dialect songs to represent the ethnicity of each character. A dialect song, or *pleng oak phasa*, is a Thai song with a foreign accent that indicates the character and the subject of the song. The particular accent is created by adding an instrument specific to the nationality being portrayed, and applying specific modes and rhythms to present character and style. The title of the song also provides a clue to the listener as to what nation and character the song is representing: For example, a Chinese character dressed in Chinese costume could sing a dialect song with a Chinese accent.

Pen was regarded as the first to officially blend Western culture into Siamese music and drama.²¹⁷ His innovation impacted the taste of the courtiers, who were familiar with traditional Siamese costume, repertoires, and dancing. Anant Narkong, Thai ethnomusicologist, commented that *Pan-tang* drama was a new type of Siamese drama that attacked Siamese society, comparable to what cabaret theatre did in the nineteenth century to French society. Siamese people were alert and eager to see the exotic things that Pen had seen in the West. This new type of drama also reflected changes in Siamese music that were intended to serve the desires and trends of society, akin to a revolution of culture.²¹⁸

During the period from the reign of King Rama V to Rama VI, Western entertainments of various kinds were performed in Siam, and were supported by the kings,

²¹⁶ *Pan-tang* in Thai is the word used for a dog that is born from mixed breeds.

²¹⁷ Poonpit Amatyakul, personal interview (Ratchasuda Foundation, Thailand: 9 July 2010).

²¹⁸ Anant Narkong, personal interview (Bangkok Art and Culture Center, Thailand: 6 January 2011).

princes, and noblemen who were educated in Europe, and whose taste in the arts influenced the Siamese upper class. Western trends that originated during the reign of King Rama V brought a decline in the popularity of Siamese theatrical performances. Many in the upper class who had the opportunity to see Western opera thought that Siamese traditional drama was too long and too boring. To satisfy the upper class, Siamese drama and theatrical performance were modified by borrowing from Western dramatic genres such as opera, plays, and musicals.

Western materials and techniques in music and drama – such as melodies, notational system, musical instruments, stage and light effects, story lines, Western rhythms, and performance practices – were introduced into the framework of Siamese music and drama, resulting in a number of new practices: dialect songs with foreign accents; *Duegdamban* drama, which adopted Western opera practices; a Siamese version of *tableaux vivants*; Siamese musicals, and new Thai compositions using Western structures.

During the reign of King Rama V, Siam received many state visitors. To please his guests, the King thought that Siamese music and drama should be presented in the same manner as in Western concerts. Around 1880, the King ordered M.R.L. Larn Kunchorn, the chief of the Performing Arts department, to organize a concert of fine Siamese music in the manner of a Western concert, including features such as vocalists performing selected pieces with the ensemble. M.R.L. Larn Kunchorn was a close friend of Prince Naris, and helped in producing music, drama, and other theatrical entertainments, especially *Duegdamban* drama and concerts for welcoming state

visitors.²¹⁹ At that time, the use of English words implied something trendy, so the term “concert” was used for Siamese musical performances. Moreover, the invention of a new dramatic genre — *Duegdamban* — using a sound system as in Western drama was intended to please the ear of Western guests.

Prince Naris was the primary force behind the introduction of Western-style dramatics into Siamese society. He was talented in many arts, especially in the visual arts and music. He realized that Siamese music needed to be modified to make it more accessible to state visitors. Like others among the privileged classes, he thought Siamese music performed in the traditional manner was out of date and took too long. Prince Naris adopted ideas from the Western practice of musical theatre, selecting pieces attached to different traditional Siamese plays, and presenting them in a concert as a form of story telling. In this way, music that was once attached to a number of different stories was brought together. The prince called this performance “dark drama,” because the listener could imagine the story while hearing the music.²²⁰

It was not unusual for Siamese drama to draw upon ideas from foreign sources. According to P.A. Thompson, theatrical performances in Siam around the turn of the twentieth century were produced for an upper class audience, with many of the plays based on foreign sources such as Burmese and Javanese tales. But by 1910, at least two stories were of Western origin,²²¹ including a Western movie shown during the reign of King Rama V, which subsequently influenced Siamese theatrical practice. Thompson also notes the influence of French opera and English drama on Siamese theater:

²¹⁹ Poonpit Amattayakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*] (Bangkok: Dueantula Press, 2008), 353.

²²⁰ Princess Duangjit Jittapong, [*The Drama and Music of Prince Narisaranuvadivongs*] (n.p., 1971), 4.

²²¹ Terry E. Miller and Jarernchai Chonpairot, “A History of Siamese Music Reconstructed from Western Documents, 1505-1932,” *Crossroads* VIII/2 (1994), 111.

Not long ago an adaptation of *La Poupée*²²² was played with great humour at the private theatre of the Minister of Agriculture, and more recently they have, with great ambition, attempted *The School for Scandal*.²²³

That the Siamese adopted all kinds of Western innovations into their theatrical entertainments is confirmed by William Wood, the English Consul-General of Chiangmai during the reign of King Rama VI. Wood felt that applying Western concepts made Siamese drama more interesting than traditional Siamese performances. He cited an example of a performance of *Yi-ke*, a local drama, that included Western characters in its plot.²²⁴

I once saw a comic funeral scene performed in a Siamese village theatre. One actor, dressed like a Bishop, wearing a huge mitre, and carrying an enormous book, walked at the head of the procession, saying at intervals, "Goddam, Goddam." I asked the man next to me what sort of a Bishop it was, and he slyly assured me that it was an English Bishop, because French Bishops never said "Goddam."²²⁵

Further engagement with Western materials could be seen during the reign of the next king, when Western literature, drama, and music were promoted not only in the court but also for the general public. The reign of King Rama VI has been considered a golden age of Siamese drama because of the King's great support for Siamese literature, plays, music, and theatrical performance. The King himself recomposed a number of songs he heard in England during his education, to give them Siamese lyrics. Eventually these songs were used in Siamese drama, becoming Siamese songs derived from Western sources. For example, the songs "Nothing New," and "Jack's the Boy," two songs from

²²² *La poupée* (The Doll) is an opéra comique in a prelude and three acts composed by Edmond Audran with a libretto by Maurice Ordonneau. It opened at the Théâtre de la Gaîté, Montparnasse, Paris, on 31 October 1896.

²²³ Peter Anthony Thompson, *Siam: An Account of the Country and the People* (Norwood: The Plimpton Press, 1910), 174.

²²⁴ William Alfred Rae Wood, *Land of Smiles* (Bangkok: Krungdebanagar Press, 1935), 89.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 90.

the drama *Geisha*, were recomposed by King Rama VI and given new titles, “An Undergrad’s Song,” and “Jolly Jack.”²²⁶

By the reign of King Rama VII, Western influence had impacted all classes of society: Local dramas sung with Western tunes were popular and musical dramas performed by students of Prince Naratippongprapan²²⁷ (King Rama IV’s son) borrowed both Western tunes and rhythms. After the political revolution in 1932, music and drama with patriotic themes were introduced in Thailand. Because Siam’s political revolution was in many ways modeled on the French revolution, the French concept of nationalism was introduced, invoking the spirit of the Siamese nation. One of the military generals, Major-General Luang Wichitwathakan, who received his degree from the University of Paris, introduced aspects of French opera into Thai drama. As head of the Fine Arts Department from 1934-1942, Wichitwathakan’s duty was to control culture in Thailand. In that role, he wrote several political dramas based on the concept of tragedy that he had absorbed from French *tragedie lyrique*. The characters in the drama display courage in sacrificing themselves for the nation, invoking a spirit of nationalism. Peter Feit arranged the music for Wichitwathakan’s libretto, with the Silpakorn Symphonic Orchestra accompanying the drama.²²⁸

²²⁶ The Foundation of King Rama the VI, [*The Encyclopedia of King Rama the VI: Works and Events in his Reign*] (n.p., 2002), 196.

²²⁷ Prince Naratippaprapong own a dramatic troupe, famous during the period of King Rama the V

²²⁸ Poonpit Amatayakul, [*The Music of Siam*] (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing, 1997), 340.

From Opera and Ballet to Thai Musical Drama: *Duegdamban*

Duegdamban is the first Siamese drama to unify libretto, music, choreography, orchestration and instrumentation, and make use of Western-style rehearsals. Before *Duegdamban* drama, music, libretto, and choreography were created at different times. Librettists were not concerned with the musical setting of the libretto, resulting in an imbalance of text and singing. For *Duegdamban* the libretto and music were composed together, creating what many viewed as a perfect artwork for a new society.²²⁹ The term *Duegdamban* in Thai means “ancient.”²³⁰

Duegdamban drama was created by M.R.L. Larn Kunchorn (Chao Phraya Tevet) during the reign of King Rama V. Kunchorn was the chief of the Performing Arts department, in charge of all courtly entertainments. In 1891, King Rama V ordered Prince Damrong, Prince Jiraprawatworadej, M.R.L. Larn Kunchorn, and several officers to present gifts to the rulers of European countries, including Tsar Nicolas II of Russia. During the trip, Kunchorn had the opportunity to see performances of operas, which impressed him and inspired him to create a new type of Thai drama modeled on Western opera.²³¹

After returning to Siam, Kunchorn and Prince Naris set out a plan to re-invent Siamese drama by incorporating aspects of Western opera. Kunchorn proceeded little by little, beginning with adjusting the Siamese musical ensemble. He thought that Thai music performed by the traditional *Pi-phet* ensemble was too noisy to be played indoors; the sound of the instruments is too high and loud, and would cover the singing of the

²²⁹ Anant Narkong, personal interview (Bangkok Art and Culture Center, Thailand: 6 January 2011).

²³⁰ Narongchai Pidokratch, personal email, 31 January 2011.

²³¹ Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five King*], 102-3.

characters. He therefore changed the instruments in the traditional ensemble by eliminating some loud instruments. Sung drama requires tender, beautiful, and low voices; therefore, cutting out some instruments and adding others could soften the sound of the ensemble.²³² Instruments that were eliminated are the Siamese Glockenspiel (*Ranard thong*), the small gong circle (*Khong wong lek*), and the Siamese oboe (*Pii*), which was replaced by the Siamese flipper flute (*Klui*). Additionally, the hard mallets used with the Siamese xylophone were replaced by soft mallets, and a *Hui Gong*²³³ was added. This resulted in the new *Duegdamban*²³⁴ ensemble, named by Kunchorn in accordance with the name of his dramatic troupe (see Figure 15). Prince Naris also changed the role of the traditional *Pi-phat* instrument by using it to create sound effects and adjusted their normal performance techniques to achieve the desired sound. All these changes were made in 1892.



Figure 15. *Duegdamban* ensemble, Department of Fine Arts, Thai Government²³⁵

²³² Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs, ["personal letter to Phraya Anumarnratchathon, 12 January 1937"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and Phraya Anumarnratchathon*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 20.

²³³ *Hui Gong* is the biggest type of gong in the Siamese ensemble. The *Duegdamban* ensemble has 7 gongs with 7 different pitches.

²³⁴ Amatyakul, personal interview (Ratchasuda Foundation, Thailand: 9 July 2010).

²³⁵ Fine Arts Department, ["Thai Music,"] <http://www.finearts.go.th/en/node/325> (2005), accessed 6 January 2011.

Duegdamban drama was established only after the *Duegdamban* ensemble. Since Kunchorn wanted performers to sing and dance at the same time, like the Western opera singers, he had to wait for the singers to improve their skills to meet this requirement. Khunchorn's wife, Malai, was the first who could both act and sing at the same time.²³⁶ The first performance of *Duegdamban* drama was held on December 27, 1899, to welcome King Rama V's guest, Prince Henri, the younger brother of the King of Prussia. Since then, many royal guests have been invited to see *Duegdamban* drama.²³⁷ Prince Naris was in charge of the libretto, music, and stage direction, while Kunchorn built the theatre for the performance at his home,²³⁸ *Banmor* palace. He named the theater and the drama after it.²³⁹ Five people were in charge of the new *Duegdamban* drama performances: Kunchorn was the owner of the theatre and general manager; Prince Naris was the librettist, scenic designer, and arts manager; Khem (another wife of Kunchorn) did the choreography; Tard (Phra Praditpairau) was music director; and Tongdi (Luang Sanauduriyank) did the vocal training.²⁴⁰

One traditional aspect of Siamese drama that was retained was that of *Lakorn Nai*, the use of women to perform all the characters. Other aspects of Siamese traditional drama were rejected, including the use of a single set with a dais for the actress to be seated upon. In traditional Siamese drama, the story and lyrics were

²³⁶ Poonpit Amatayakul, personal interview (Ratchasuda Foundation, Thailand: 9 July 2010).

²³⁷ Somonmarn nimnetipan, [*Thai Drama*] (Bangkok: Thai Wattanapanit Pree, 1994), 142.

²³⁸ Princess Duangjit Jittapong, [*The drama and music of Prince Narisaranuvaditivongs*] (n.p., 1971), 5.

²³⁹ Poonpit Amatayakul, [*The Music of Siam*], 57.

²⁴⁰ Princess Duangjit Jittapong, [*The Drama and Music of Prince Narisaranuvaditivongs*] (n.p., 1971), 9.

sung, but not by the actors portraying the characters. The characters only presented emotional gestures and supported the story through their dancing.²⁴¹

Duegdamban drama, in contrast with the traditional drama, consisted of soloists, a choir, spoken dialogue, instrumental music, and scenic and lighting effects. The text was both sung and spoken. Prince Naris also introduced make-up techniques, used to differentiate each character according to their role in the story. The stage was occupied with all sorts of mechanical devices for changing scenes according to the details of the story, including lighting effects that could create the illusions of day and night, lightening, and flames, all run by electric devices. Animal noises, such as those of birds and hens, were used to create realistic sound effects. Prince Naris even had bats fly over the stage to make the drama more real.²⁴² He also eliminated the tradition of beginning each section of the libretto with an introduction describing the posture of the character. Prince Naris thought that in the new style of *Duegdamban* drama, the audience could see the character and their action with their own eyes; it was unnecessary to explain the actions of the character. To assure an understanding of the drama, the story line was included in the program notes. Anything that could distract from the flow of the drama was cut out. Prince Naris included spoken text in the libretto to move the story along. Scenes involving quarrels between the characters and normal dialogue were handled with spoken text, while scenes representing the characters' emotions were sung in a manner similar to the aria of Western opera. Prince Naris's goal was to create a realistic opera.²⁴³ In his

²⁴¹ Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs, ["personal letter to Phraya Anumarnratchaton, 17 March 1937"], in [Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and Phraya Anumarnratchaton], ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 83.

²⁴² Princess Duangjit Jittapong, [The Drama and Music of Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs], 10.

²⁴³ Jittapong, [The drama and music of Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs], 6.

reform, a story that once had lasted for several nights was abbreviated into three or four hours.

The music that accompanied *Duegdamban* drama was derived from several sources, including preexisting tunes and newly-composed melodies.²⁴⁴ Prince Naris selected several beautiful tunes from Siamese traditional drama and changed their texts to insert them into the story. Musical details were also chosen to fit the story: If a character expressed anger, the music had to have a fast, agitated rhythm. The songs from the Siamese repertory were modified by adjusting their rhythm and style to fit the emotional expression of the character. Music for sensitive moments would have a sweeter and more tender sound. The traditional long *melisma* at the end of the phrase was cut short. In the sections in which a character had to express sorrow and grief, the prince invented a new type of Siamese lament to express deeper feelings.²⁴⁵ The traditional role of Siamese dance was kept, but changes to the tempos of the songs affected the tempo of the dance. Overall, by changing the tempos of pre-existing melodies, the music could be made to fit the character and the story. An example of changes made to a traditional song can be seen in the music to accompany the worship scene in *Inao*, whose music was originally in a slow tempo. Prince Naris thought the traditional singing style could not present the grandness of the scene in which the king, queen, and several actors were together on stage. He therefore composed new music for the scene, maintaining the original slow tempo, but adding two voices to create a chorus for this grand scene (see Figure 16).

²⁴⁴ Prince Damrong, ["personal letter to Prince Naris, 1 November 1943"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and HRH. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankawkam, 2009), 377-8.

²⁴⁵ Princess Duangjit Jittapong, [*The Drama and Music of Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs*], 7.



Figure 16. Creating a chorus in the song *Cha pasom*

Siamese drama before *Duegdaman* included the concept of a response part sung by two or three people, which Prince Naris adapted to the role of the chorus, using it for scenes that require many people on stage. According to the Prince, the music that accompanied majestic scenes needed to be emphasized by the addition of more voices:

For the grand scene, having the King, the Queen, princes and princesses, noblemen, courtiers, and ladies in waiting on the stage, the music need to be extremely loud, I had made all the people in the house of Chaophraya Tevet stand on the stage and sing together.²⁴⁶

For this choral singing, Prince Naris adopted some practices of Western vocal music. Although traditional Thai song is monophonic, the Prince noticed that the combination of both male and female singers on the same pitch was not pleasing. Because traditional Thai music has no harmony or transposition, Prince Naris introduced the idea of transposing the male voice down a fourth or a fifth, adding both volume and texture to the sound.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Princess Duangjit Jittapong, [*The Drama and Music of Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs*], 8.

²⁴⁷ Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs, ["personal letter to Phraya Anumarnratchathon, 12 January 1937"], in *The Music from the Letter of Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs to Phraya Animarnratchaton*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: CMMU publishing, 2009), 18-9.

Prince Naris's manuscript of the song *Vessugam* shows his use of Western tonal language and reveals his understanding of Western musical harmony. The example below shows his addition of intervals of the third, fourth, and fifth to the melody, together with his brief note about triads and inversions at the bottom of the score (see Figure 17).

The manuscript shows a handwritten musical score for the song *Vessugam*. It features a melody line and a bass line, with a transcription of the notes at the bottom. The transcription is as follows:

Do, Sol, Mi, Do	Sol, Re, Ti, Sol
Re, Ti, Sol, Re	La, Fa, Do, La
Mi, Do, Sol, Mi	Ti, Fa, Re, Ti
Fa, Do, La, Fa	

Below the transcription, there are handwritten notes in Thai script, including the word "Transcription" in a box.

Figure 17. Manuscript of *Vessugam* showing Prince Naris' use of Western harmony

Duegdamban drama also borrowed theatrical elements from Western traditions. The plainness and simplicity of the dramatic structure of Siamese dramas was reconstructed with more complexity. The new drama was set in three acts, each with two scenes. The stage was divided into three sections, with three sets erected in each section, one behind the other: The set at the front would be removed at the end of the first scene so that the second scene would have a new setting, and so on. As part of the Prince's efforts to create realistic effects, instruments in the ensemble were used to create sound effects to support the atmosphere of the story.²⁴⁸ As a multi-faceted artist, Prince Naris also created the visual elements of the drama: painting, character make-up, and scenic design, which adopted the Western technique of perspective drawing.²⁴⁹ Figure 18 below shows Prince Naris's use of perspective drawing for the temple scene in *Inao*.

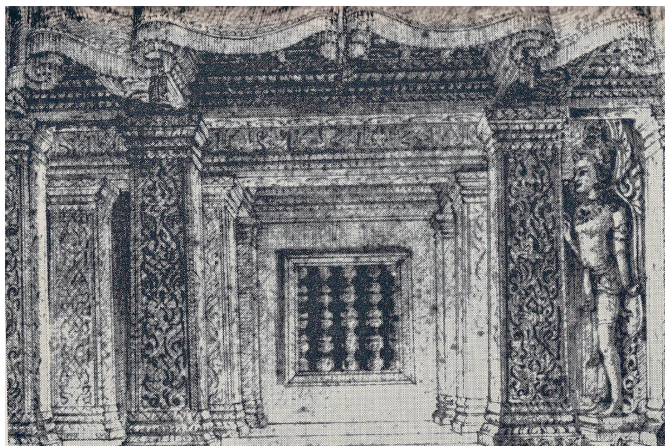


Figure 18. The sketch of the temple scene in the story of *Inao* by Prince Naris²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Princess Duangjit Jittapong, [*The Drama and Music of Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs*], 7.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 10.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 108.

Traditional Siamese dancing for theatrical drama uses hand gestures, together with positioning of the head, feet, arms, and body to display subject, action, and emotion. Typically several sets of dances are used to accompany the story, which is often very time-consuming. In *Duegdamban* drama, traditional dance was reduced in order to shorten the play, and was retained only in scenes of increased sentimental or emotional moments. Prince Naris also adopted the Western opera tradition of the ensemble finale to *Duegdamban* drama by putting all the performers on the stage together for a grand ending.²⁵¹

Because of Prince Naris' increased responsibilities as Interior Minister, Kunchorn took over production of *Duegdamban* drama from 1899 to 1909. Kunchorn wrote several librettos, including *Sakultara*,²⁵² *Mahapali*, *Lusi seanglook*, *Phranorasinghavatarn*, and *Phrakanesseanga*, with music composed by Phraya Prasarn Suriyasap.²⁵³ When Kunchorn became sick and resigned from state work in 1909, the performance of *Duegdamban* drama ceased. It was revived during the reign of King Rama VI, when *Duegdamban* drama was performed again in the palace. Nevertheless its popularity declined during the reign of King Rama VI, and it almost disappeared during the reign of King Rama VII. Recently, the Fine Arts department of Chulalongkorn University has tried to preserve *Duegdamban* drama by teaching it in the Thai music division, and collecting artifacts and recordings of the original productions²⁵⁴ (see Figure 19).

²⁵¹ Ibid., 9.

²⁵² Poonpit Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five King*], 335.

²⁵³ Ibid., 343.

²⁵⁴ Poonpit Amatyakul, [*The Music of Siam*], 274-6.



Figure 19. The performance of *Duegdamban* drama on 18 December 1987 at Chulalongkorn University

Prince Naris also introduced other kinds of Siamese songs, including children's songs, folksongs, and Brahman and Buddhist chanting. In some sense, the new invention of *Duegdamban* drama and the reformation of traditional Siamese drama was similar to what happened to Western opera in the 1760s, following Gluck's reformation. In its structure and details, *Duegdamban* drama was a combination of several Western opera styles performed in the late nineteenth century: the *bel canto* style of Italian opera; the grand scenery, battles, chorus, and stories of royalty found in French grand opera; the spoken dialogue of operetta; the dance, folksong, and stage effects of German Romantic opera. With its blend of Western styles and Thai traditions, *Duegdamban* drama was suitable for performance for state visitors, a number of whom were invited to see it during the reign of King Rama V. In the many short libretti he wrote, Prince Naris reduced the number of vocal and spoken parts to avoid the problem of language for the foreign state visitors. He utilized visual

elements instead, such as sword fighting and boxing, to attract foreigners.²⁵⁵

Duegdamban drama, at least briefly, became a successful genre of new Siamese drama by incorporating the realistic plot, scenic effects, and beautiful melodic style of Western opera while maintaining the grace of traditional Siamese dance.

Siamese versions of *Tableaux Vivants*

The *tableau vivant* is another type of Western performance that was used in the court of Siam during the reign of King Rama V. Brought into Siam by the crown prince, Prince Mahavachirunnahit (b. 1878 — King Rama V's eldest son), the first performance of *tableaux vivants* began at his court in 1893, with young princes of the court as the actors. In *tableaux vivants*, actors dress as the characters in the story, posed in front of beautifully decorated scenery with spot lighting on the characters. When the musical interlude begins, the lights go out, and the actors take their positions; when the music ends, the lights come on again to reveal the characters standing and sitting like wax figures, before returning to movement to perform the story.²⁵⁶ Figure 4.6 shows a *tableau vivant* performance under the direction of the Crown Prince Mahavachirunnahit in 1893, with his brothers portraying the characters in the story.²⁵⁷ (See Figure 20)

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 17.

²⁵⁶ Poonpit Amatayakul, [*The Music of Siam*], 57.

²⁵⁷ The Foundation of King Rama VI, [*The Encyclopedia of King Rama VI: Works and Events in his Reign*], 256.



Figure 20. *Tableaux Vivant, Nitra Chakrit*

Prince Naris composed the libretto and selected songs to be sung for most of the *tableau vivant* performances: Some libretti, such as *Lilit Nitrachakrit*, were written by King Rama V.²⁵⁸ The music and lyrics that accompanied *tableaux vivants* were composed in the Siamese traditional style called *Tab*. One *Tab* consists of 4 to 6 pieces lasting a total of 25-30 minutes, similar to the Western suite. The music for the suite was derived from pre-existing compositions that were selected to fit the story.²⁵⁹ In 1894, Prince Naris composed several short pieces of *Tab* for accompanying performance of a French *tableaux vivant* for Prince Vachirunahid. Eight of his *Tab* were composed for stories with foreign themes, including “Romance of the Three Kingdoms,” “Cinderella,” “Hindu Gods,” *Phralor*, *Rachatiratch*, *Komdamdin*, *Unarut*, and *Abuhadson*.²⁶⁰ Most of the stories required the use of dialect songs. For one of his *tableaux vivants* Prince Naris adapted the

²⁵⁸ The Royal Institution, [*The Encyclopedia of Thai Music Terminology: History and ‘Tab’ Repertoires*] (Bangkok: The Royal press, 2007), 49.

²⁵⁹ Poonpit Amatyakul, [*The Music of Siam*], 58.

²⁶⁰ Princess Duangjit Jittapong, [*The Drama and Music of Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs*], 4.

Western tale of “Cinderella,” selecting the scene at the Ball, for which he wrote the libretto to be sung in 6 songs: *Vilanda*, *Farang joraka*, *Kroab jakavarn*, *Farang ramtao*, *Vetsugam*, and *Hongtong*²⁶¹ — all are Siamese songs using Western dialects. The term *Vilanda* is derived from the word “Holland,” and *Farang* from the word “foreign,” which, in the Thai context, indicates a Westerner.

The ensemble that accompanied *tableaux vivants* was a mixed string ensemble with Western instruments, such as violin and accordion.²⁶² The performance of *tableaux vivants* declined after the death of Prince Mahavachirunnahit, who contracted typhus and died in 1894.²⁶³

***Lakorn Rong*, A Musical of Siam**

Lakorn Rong is a dramatic genre that includes singing, similar to Western musical comedy. Both musical comedy and traditional Siamese drama were combined to create this new genre.²⁶⁴ *Langkorn Rong* originated during the reign of King Rama V and flourished during the reign of King Rama VI and VII. King Rama VI enjoyed British drama during his education in London. While there, he wrote an English musical comedy called *Miss Honeybone*, which was performed at the Siamese Embassy in London on December 26, 1895. King Rama VI, when he was crown prince, also participated in the performance of a spoken play, *Lindes and Rudd* on December 25, 1896.²⁶⁵ When his father King Rama V visited Europe in 1897, the crown prince arranged a play, *My Friend Jaret*, to welcome his father. The actors included the sons of King Rama V and his

²⁶¹ The Royal Institution, [*The Encyclopedia of Thai Music Terminology: History and ‘Tab’ Repertoires*], 55-6.

²⁶² Poonpit Amatyakul, [*The Music of Siam*], 163.

²⁶³ Poonpit Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 32.

²⁶⁴ Kunlayarat Lormanenoprat, [“An Analytical Study of Pranboon’s Musical Plays”], (M.A. Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1992), 7.

²⁶⁵ The Foundation of King Rama the VI, [*The Encyclopedia of King Rama the VI: Works and Events in his Reign*], 257.

courtier's sons. The photo on the left in Figure 21 below shows King Rama VI in the role of Marie (sitting in the middle), with Prince Penpattanapong, Prince Jakkapongpuwanart, and Prince Wuttichaichalermlarp. The picture on the right shows the actors and musicians; standing left to right is Prince Paripatra, Momchao Jaroonsak Klidakorn, Prince Mahavachiravuth (later King Rama VI), Prince Burachatchaiyakorn; sitting left to right is M.R.L. Sit, Momchao Setsiri Chakkapan, Momchao Bavorndetch, and Momchao Sittiporn.²⁶⁶



Figure 21. King Rama VI (Crown Prince) in the play, *My Friend Jaret* with other actors and musicians

On August 21, 1901, before King Rama VI returned to Siam, he performed in three dramas at Westbury Court. The first drama was *In Honour Bound*, by Sydney Lacy Grundy, in which King Rama VI played the role of Phillip Graham. The second was his own composition, *The King's Command*, and the third was *Old Cronies*, written by S. Thayre Smith.²⁶⁷ Figure 22 shows King Rama VI in the role of François, Duc de Morbihan, in the play *The King's Command*.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 259.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 258.



Figure 22. King Rama VI in the play, *The King's Command*

When he returned to Siam in 1902, King Rama VI adapted British musicals that he had acted in during his study in England, and also set up Siamese musicals. While traditional Siamese dramas relied on tales of the King and Queen, the sung dramas of King Rama the VI told the stories of the middle class, as part of the King's plan to inspire the Siamese middle class to take an interest in all kind of arts.

Siamese musicals followed the introduction of spoken plays, which began during the period of King Rama V in 1872. They became popular during the reign of King Rama VI; the King himself translated Shakespeare's plays into Siamese, and wrote new plays in accordance with Western traditions. Scripts for spoken drama came from three sources: Siamese literature, modifications of Western literature, and newly-written stories.²⁶⁸ Spoken drama was popular since it was easy to perform: There was no need to include Siamese traditional dance. Characters dressed as in Pen's *Pan-tang* drama (with costumes reflecting the characters in the story) and acted as ordinary people. King Rama VI also invented a type of Siamese musical that includes both singing and speaking in equal proportions. All of the King's stories included a comic character similar to Western

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 31.

comic opera, and used Western story lines. He also translated Western libretti into Siamese, changing the names of the characters; for example *The Mikado* (1885), based on the work of Arthur Sullivan and W.S. Gilbert, had the same story but different character names.

King Rama VI was not the only member of the royal family to create musical dramas: Prince Naratipprapanpong (half brother of King Rama V) created sung drama with both singing parts and spoken dialogue. Similar to King Rama VI's dramas, the Prince's stories were drawn from Siamese folk literature and Western literature, and included comic characters. His drama was popular among all classes of people, and he was able to collect a large amount of money in admission fees. The popularity of Prince Nara's drama was mentioned in a letter from King Rama V to Queen Dararasmi:

All courtiers from the royal family to the servants are extremely crazy with Prince's Nara drama... his theatre could not contain all the audiences in every performance.²⁶⁹

One of his famous stories, *Sao kruea fa*, used the story line of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*,²⁷⁰ which King Rama V had the opportunity to see on a visit to France in 1907. After returning to Siam, he told Prince Nara the story of the opera, inspiring the Prince to create *Sao kruea fa* in that same year. In 1908, Prince Chumporn (King Rama V's son) volunteered to provide music for the play. He included several Western songs, such as "Farewell Kiss Goodbye"²⁷¹ and "Home Sweet Home," with Siamese lyrics and titles. To make it modern, the accompanying ensemble was mixed: Siamese strings and Western strings with organ. Other music was drawn from either Siamese traditional music or was

²⁶⁹ Sumonmarn Nimnetipan, [*Thai Drama*] (Bangkok: Thai Wattanapanit Press, 1994), 37.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 151.

²⁷¹ This is the song title given in [*The Encyclopedia of King Rama the VI: Works and Events in his Reign*], but the song itself is unknown. It was probably a popular song inspired by Jean de la Fonataine's 1795 etching known in English as "A Farewell Kiss Goodbye" in its 1883 reprint, which was widely circulated.

newly-composed, including dialect songs to fit the characters in the story. Prince Nara's dramas were famous during the reign of King Rama VI. After the Prince quit performing dramas in 1913, his actors and students united to form their own troupe and continued to develop this type of drama until the Second World War. A number of Western songs were translated into Thai, such as "Scotland the Brave," "Over There," "Auld lang syne," etc. Musicals during the reigns of King Rama VII and Rama VIII continued to include Western characters and English phrases mixed with Thai words to make the story look Western, an important trend during that period.²⁷²

Influences of Western Popular Music on *Pleng oug phasa*

Since ancient times, Thailand has been a place whose residents included a variety of nationalities and religions, including Asians, Muslims, and Europeans. Residents brought their own musical cultures and instruments with them. Their music has influenced Thai musicians, who have always wanted to insert new exotic material into their own music. Prince Damrong noted in a letter to Prince Naris that a number of Thai musical works have foreign titles, and that Thai musicians have heard many foreign songs. He thought that composers who were skilled in adapting foreign songs would create a new repertory based on them.²⁷³

As noted above, Dialect songs, besides satisfying the creativity of Thai musicians, were composed to accompany drama and other entertainments. By the reign of King Rama V, Siamese drama had adopted foreign stories from regions

²⁷² Kunlayarat Lormanenoprat, ["An Analytical Study of Pranboon's Musical Plays"] (M.A. Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1992), 212.

²⁷³ Prince Damrongrajanubhab, ["personal letter to Prince Naris, 27 July 1941"], in [*Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and HRH. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab*], ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 330.

including Arabia, Java, India, and Europe; dialect songs from these regions were used to make the drama more effective by making the portrayal of a foreign character more vivid.

Exactly when dialect songs began to be composed is unknown; however, Thai musicians agreed that they were written as early as the Rattanakosin period (ca. 1782).²⁷⁴ Most of the dialect songs had newly-composed Siamese melodies that were overlaid with particular characteristics of a foreign nation. On the other hand, some dialect songs were composed to foreign tunes with new Siamese lyrics. Traditionally, the dialect song was performed after the main musical numbers, singularly or combined with other dialect songs, or performed as an overture before the performance.²⁷⁵

One of the popular accents within this category is the Western dialect song, called *Pleng samneang farang* (song-dialect-Western). The music for them is drawn from a combination of *Pi-phat* and brass band repertoires. The title of each song was derived either from how Siamese musicians heard the pronunciation of English, or how they perceived the image and character of Westerners. Like other Thai repertoires, *Pleng oug phasa* was not notated.²⁷⁶ To create a Western dialect, Western drums and trumpet were added to the *Pi-phat* ensemble, or a brass band was used. The bass drum added to the *Pi-phat* ensemble, called *klong marican* (*klong* means “drum” and *marican* means “American”), was the bass drum that

²⁷⁴ Pongsilp Arunrat, [*The Foundation of Thai Music*] (Nakornprathom: Silapakorn University Press, 2007), 156.

²⁷⁵ King Bhumipholadulayadej, [*Thai music*], Book I (Bangkok: Silapakorn Department, 1961), 23-25.

²⁷⁶ Sugree Charoensook, [“Western Music in Siam”], in [*Siamese Music*], 3rd ed., ed. Sujit Wongtet (Bangkok: Matichon Press, 2008), 229.

arrived in Siam with American missionaries in 1831. Later, the bass drum was used as an optional instrument in the *Pi-phat* ensemble.²⁷⁷

There are altogether 15 Thai songs using Western dialects: *Khun luang* (*Farang rampueng*), *Yeehem*, *Queendamras*, *Farang kuang*, *Vilanda*, *Yoslum*, *Farang klai*, *Farang khu*, *Farang ramtao*, *Farang tod samor*, *Farang tad*, *Farang Joraka*, *Farang dermat*, *Farang yam tao*, and *Farang nha daeng*.²⁷⁸ Methods for creating a Western dialect song could be the use of an original Western tune with Siamese lyrics, the modification or variation of the refrain of the original Western tune, or the invention of a new tune with a Western rhythm.²⁷⁹

Examples presented here are popular dialect songs during the reign of King Rama V. The first song, *Farang ram pueng* is based on the Civil War song, “Marching Through Georgia,” which came to Siam through the visit of the American naval ship USS *Tennessee*, under the control of Capt. Reynolds, during the reign of King Rama V. The song was known in Thai as *Farang rampueng* or *Khun Luang*.²⁸⁰ Siamese musicians took the tune for “Marching Through Georgia” and gave it Siamese lyrics. The verses and the refrain are separated into 2 sections. In an actual performance, the two sections could be played either together or separately.²⁸¹

Farang rampueng was played by both *Pi-phat* ensembles and brass bands. Several new Siamese lyrics were added to the melody of both sections, although

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 223.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 229.

²⁷⁹ Pongsilp Arunrat, [*The Foundation of Thai Music*] (Nakornprathom: Silapakorn University Press, 2007), 159-162.

²⁸⁰ Khun Luang was one of the titles showing the rank of a government officer.

²⁸¹ Somchai Tabporn, personal interview, (Fine Arts Department, Thailand: 4 January 2011).

their meaning was different from the original “Marching Through Georgia.” The most popular lyric is used for the second section (refrain section) of the song: *Khun Luang* tells of a high ranking officer in the Defense Ministry (see Chart 1).

Chart 1. Thai text and its translation of “Khun Luang”

Text	Translation
Khun Luang, Khun Luang	Khun Luang
Yu gra-suang yut-ta-na	of the Defense Ministry
Sai suea rat-pra-tan	wearing a uniform
Tam-mai mai kwean na-ri-ka	Why don’t you hang the watch
Ngen duean yee sib bat	With a salary of 20 baht,
Du perd sa-gard suea tem pra-da	you look so pompous

The melody and rhythm of “Marching to Georgia” underwent a few modifications, but the character, structural pitches and dotted rhythms were well preserved, with some new ornamentation added. “Marching Through Georgia” is set in strophic form, with a 4-phrase strophe and refrain. *Khun Luang*, in a similar way, was constructed into 2 sections; however, the original time signature of 4/4 was changed to 2/4 following the tradition of Thai music, and the original key of Bb major was changed to a C pentatonic scale. The changes to the rhythm occurred by means of eliminating the repeated note, and adding ornaments to the melody. In the first section of *Khun Luang*, most of the original melody was kept in its original form; repeated notes and passing notes are left out in the

first two phrases, and the figure at the end of the second phrase is displaced by an octave.

In the third and fourth phrases, new embellishing figures are added (see Example 1)

Marching Through Georgia, mm. 1-4

Eliminated notes

Khun Luang, mm. 1-8

First Section

Octave displacement

- a. Elimination of repeated note and passing note

Marching Through Georgia, mm. 5-8

Khun Luang, mm. 8-16

New embellishing figure

- b. Adding new embellishing figure at the beginning and the ending of the phrase

Example 1. The Comparison of the first section of “Marching Through Georgia” and *Khun Luang*

The second section of *Khun Luang* features similar modifications, but with considerable melodic changes and octave displacements (see Example 2).

Marching Through Georgia, mm. 5-8



Eliminate repeated notes & octave displacement

Khun Luang, mm. 8-16

Melodic modification



Adding embellishment



Octave displacement

Example 2. The modification of “Marching Through Georgia” to *Khun Luang*, section 2

Thai musicians and audiences feel that blending this Western tune into their traditional music made them look modern. Its marching rhythm, together with the timbre of the bass drum, created a new sound in Thai music, one that made them feel the need to perform and compose more songs in this style.

The song *Yee-hem* is derived from an English hymn that arrived in Siam during the reign of King Rama III, when English trading was established in Bangkok. Thai musicians heard the tune with the English text and memorized it, without any attempt to notate the melody or understand the text. As the song was passed down by oral transmission from generation to generation, both the melody

and lyric were corrupted to the point that the English lyric was unrecognizable. Lawan Sotamara (1920), a Siamese writer on the history of the Siamese court, tried to transcribe the text back into English.²⁸² (see Chart 2) But because the original text did not make much sense within Thai literature, Thai musicians in a later period composed an unrelated Thai lyric to the melody. However, the *Yee-hem* lyric is still the most popular version of the song. Today, the song is often sung at the end of funeral ceremonies to alleviate the atmosphere of sadness.

According to Arunrat, in his *Foundation of Thai Music* (2007), the title of *Yee-hem* is the corrupted Thai pronunciation of the English hymn “The Heavenly Bridegroom Soon Will Come” and the lyrics are not actually Thai words.²⁸³ The text of the original English hymn, based on Jesus’s parable of the ten brides (Matthew 25:1-13), is found only in Rev. J. McLean’s publication *Lone Land Lights* (1882). A slightly different version of the hymn text is found in *The “Ark” Israelites Hymn Book* (1877), but no melody is given in either source. I believe this to be the original text for the hymn because it is the only hymn text with this title that was written early enough to be the source. Moreover, the beginning and ending syllables of each line parallel the corrupted pronunciation in the Thai lyrics.

²⁸² Poonpit Amatyakul, personal email, 28 Jul 2010.

²⁸³ Pongsilp Arunrat, [*The Foundation of Thai Music*] (Nakornprathom: Silapakorn University Press, 2007), 158.

Chart 2. The comparison of *Yee-hem* text and the original English hymn

Yee-hem	Hymn
Yee-hem prepai ma su vane su gram	The Heavenly Bridegroom soon will come
Tu ren ris prai and ted huea hon	To claim his bride, and take her home
Su see dis prin oo la frai	To reign with Him on high
Yoram Yoram sam voriri	Trim your lamps and be ready
Farami nai krai	For the midnight cry

As for the melody, the hymn tune titled “Sheltering Rock,” written by W. E. Penn in 1887, shares the same melody through the first two phrases (eight measures of 2/4) as the *Yee-hem* melody. Though no other evidence directly connects these tunes, the “Heavenly Bride” text can be used with “Sheltering Rock,” and both the text and tune were in use at the same time (see Example 3)

The number of pitches in *Yee-hem* does not match the number of syllables in the English text, but this is accounted for because the fourth line (*Yoram Yoram sam voriri* – Trim your lamps and be ready) is repeated three times before going on to the fifth line. This is frequently found in hymns of this period, usually paired with an ascending melodic pattern. The tune of “Sheltering Rock” lends itself to this practice, having such a sequence in mm. 9-13 with figures beginning on Ab – Bb – C. The ascending sequence in *Yee-hem* is found in mm. 12-20, rooted on the pitches C, D, then G (see Example 4).

Sheltering Rock

W.E. Penn, 1887

Example 3. The hymn, “Sheltering Rock” by W.E. Penn

Sheltering Rock, 9-13

Yee-hem mm. 11-20

Example 4 . Ascending melodic pattern in Sheltering Rock, mm. 9-13 and Yee-hem, mm. 11-20

The opening of the “Sheltering Rock” melody and that of *Yee-hem* both have the same melodic features of an opening fourth, repeated notes, and the same structural pitches.

In *Yee-hem*, the dotted figure of the Marching style is found throughout the piece, adapted to the 2/4 meter typical for Thai ensembles (see Example 5).

Apply dotted figure with a slight melodic modification

Sheltering rock mm. 1-4

Yee-hem mm. 1-8

Example 5. Comparison the opening of “Sheltering Rock” and *Yee-hem*

Even though the beginning of “Sheltering Rock” and *Yee-hem* are similar, the rest of *Yee-hem* seems to be almost a melodic improvisation of “Sheltering Rock” (see Example 6). Because no hymn has been found that matches the entire melody of *Yee-hem*, the origin of the song still remains unclear.

Yee-hem

Example 6. The melody of *Yee-hem*

***Tang farang*, a brass band
version of Siamese repertoire**

The brass band was one of the earliest Western music ensembles to be heard in Siam, and was important to genres that adopted characteristic of Western music. In addition to Western dialect songs, several songs from the *Nha-part* repertoire were arranged for brass band: *Nha-part* refers to the music used to accompany the gesture of the characters in theatrical drama. This type of arrangement is called *Tang farang* in Thai; in Thai music, the word *Tang farang* at the end of the title means that the song is an arrangement for brass band. According to an account by Poonpit Amatyakul, published in the *Siamrat* newspaper, Prince Boripatra was one of the main figures who arranged Thai songs for the brass band.²⁸⁴ Concerts at his *Bangkunprom* palace featured several significant pieces of the *Nha-part* repertoire arranged for the Marine brass band; additionally, several Siamese songs were performed by brass band, including *Pama Tao*, *Krob chakkavarn Tao*, *Tayoi nork Tao*, *Khakesarai Tao*, and *Khakemasari Tao*. One of his famous arrangements, *Sanseersueapa*, was a setting of a composition by King Rama II.²⁸⁵ Another significant arrangement of a Siamese song in a Western style was that of *Paya soak* in a slow march rhythm by Prince Nakornsawanvorapinit. The arrangement was performed on May 24, 1920, during the reign of King Rama VI, for the funeral procession of Queen Sripacharintara (a Queen to King Rama V). The new title of the arrangement was *Soak*, meaning “sadness” in Thai. The arrangement imitated a Western funeral march by incorporating its slow march rhythm. King Rama VI proclaimed that the “Soak March” would be used as a funeral march for all Siamese funerals regardless of

²⁸⁴ Poonpit Amatyakul, [“Marches in Siam”] *Siamrat*, 9 June 1993, 13.

²⁸⁵ Amatyakul, [National Letters on Music During the Five Kings], 315.

social class.²⁸⁶ This song is still performed during the procession around the funeral pyre or during the cremation.²⁸⁷

Alberto Nazari, the Italian professor who taught the Siamese Army band during the reign of King Rama VI, also arranged Siamese songs in the Western style, including one of the most important *Nha-part* pieces, *Bathsakuni*, for brass band. The arrangement was performed at the wedding ceremony of Prince Prachatipok (later, King Rama VII) on August 26, 1918, by the Army brass band, with Peter Feit conducting the performance at the *Bangprain* palace.²⁸⁸ Other Western musicians in Siam also arranged Siamese melodies; Captain Fusco arranged the song *Sansernphranarai* for brass band, as well as the ancient Siamese tune recorded in the eighteenth-century account of Monsieur La Loubere, *Sai samorn* (see chapter 5). Fusco's arrangement of *Sansernphranarai* was published in Leipzig in 1899 in Ernst von Hesse-Wartegg's *Siam: das Reich des weissen Elefanten* (see Figure 23).

Because the brass band was the first prominent Western ensemble in Thailand and the gateway that would lead to the development of the state orchestras, these arrangements take on great significance. They established that Thai music could be set to Western harmonies and played on Western instruments. They also created a new aesthetic as Thai audiences began to hear their own music in a new way, expanding their concept of musical sounds. It also paved the way for the acceptance of new compositions by Thai composers written for Western instruments and using Western music theory.

²⁸⁶ Poonpit Amatyakul, ["Marches in Siam"], 15.

²⁸⁷ Poonpit Amatyakul, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 330.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 318.

Pra Narai.
Alles siamesisches Volkslied.

Andante.

The musical score is written for piano. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has five staves, and the second system has five staves. The music is in 2/4 time and marked 'Andante'. The melody is characterized by trills and a steady eighth-note bass line. The piece ends with a 'Fine.' marking.

Figure 23. *Sansernphranarai* by Michael Fusco
in *Siam das Reich des weissen elefanten* (1899)

Thai repertoire composed in Western style

The composition of Thai music in a Western style began during the reign of King Rama V, initiated by Prince Paripatra. During his study in England and Germany, Prince Paripatra spent his free time studying Western music. According to Amatyakul, in his *Paripatra and His Music* (1981), the Prince composed Western music before he started composing Siamese music.²⁸⁹ In addition to developing his skills on all the Thai musical instruments that he could manage, Prince Paripatra also played the piano,²⁹⁰ his knowledge of Western music made him capable of composing and arranging in that style.

²⁸⁹ Princess Siriratbutsabong and Poonpit Amatyakul, [*Paripatra and His Music*] (n.p., 1981), 68.

²⁹⁰ Princess Siriratbutsabong, [*The letter of King Rama the V and Queen Sukhumalmarasri to Prince Paribatra, with the Biography of Prince Paribatra*], ed. Princess Siriratbutsabong (n.p., 1990), 154.

After he returned to Siam in 1903, Prince Paripatra worked in the Marine department with the Marine Brass Band. When he was placed in the position of Navy commander, Captain Fusco, the first leader of the Navy brass band, had already passed away. The Prince undertook the task of directing the band by himself. As part of that effort, he made arrangements of Thai compositions for brass band and composed Siamese songs in a Western style, using Western rhythms — including the waltz, polka, and march — in pieces such as *Prachumpon Waltz*, *Mekla Waltz*, *Preumjit Waltz* and *Nori Waltz*, and the *Monthathong Polka* and *Boripatra March*.²⁹¹ According to Amatyakul, the Prince was entirely successful in writing and arranging in Western styles; “without knowing the composer’s name, the listener would think the compositions are purely Western Marches.”²⁹²

An analysis of Prince Paripatra’s *Boripatra March* shows that its structure, harmony, melody and rhythm were all constructed within the concepts of Western music theory. Prince Paripatra composed his March following the grammar of the nineteenth-century German march tradition, including features such as a trio section in a contrasting key, a simple homophonic setting, phrasing in 2 and 4 measures, and the emphasis of repeated notes and dotted figures.²⁹³ Since the Prince’s musical experience was in German schools of the nineteenth century, he also included features of the chromatic language of the Romantic period.

²⁹¹ Poonpit, [*National Letters on Music During the Five Kings*], 32.

²⁹² Princess Siriratbutsabong and Poonpit Amatyakul, [*Paripatra and His Music*] (n.p., 1981), 69.

²⁹³ Erich Schwandt and Andrew Lamb, “March,” *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians and Musicians*, 2nd ed. (online version, accessed 1 August 2010), <http://ezproxy.mylibrary.us:2120/subscriber/article/grove/music/40080>.

In his *Boripat* March, the Prince begins with a 4-measure introduction that moves from dominant to tonic (D to G). The melody is constructed from fragments of a repeating dotted rhythm and a small melodic motif in a fanfare style (see Example 7). Following the tradition of the march, the trio section is in a different key (see Example 8). The piece ends with a two-octave descending chromatic run that creates the momentum needed to give a sense of finality to the arpeggio in the last measure (see Example 9).

Example 7. Measures 1-8 of *Boripat* March, showing repetition, simple harmonic structure of dominant and tonic and dotted rhythms

Example 8. The beginning of Trio section in a different key of *Boripat* March, mm.47-51



Example 9. The use of chromatic passage in Boripat March, mm. 74-77

Prince Paripatra began a trend that continued during the reigns of King Rama V through King Rama VII, during which a number of Siamese songs were written in a march style. However, the purpose of these compositions expanded during the reign of King Rama VI from exclusively military use to general entertainment as a part of concerts and theatrical dramas. Marches also had a political function in the revolution that took place during the reign of King Rama VII, when they were composed for the purpose of invoking the spirit of the nation.²⁹⁴

It could be argued that most of the currently existing Thai music and drama is a product of courtiers and high-ranking officers who applied Western concepts of music, drama, and visual arts to Thai music and drama. From the change to traditional Thai drama introduced by Pen Pengkul, to the development of music and drama by Prince Naris, Prince Nara, Kunchorn, and King Rama VI, to the musical talent shown by Prince Paripatra in composing Thai music in a Western style, important and high-ranking court members expanded the boundaries of traditional music and dramatic practice. It could be argued that the merging of practices from these two cultures, combining the effectiveness and realism of Western drama and the grace of Siamese dance, Siamese music and drama was preserved from generation to generation by the

²⁹⁴ Poonpit Amatayakul, ["The Second Period of Marches in Siam"], *Siamrat*, 16 June 1993, 13.

upper class through the influence of Western arts. The artistic tastes of Thailand's upper classes had now changed so that they demanded the new Western styles for their entertainment. This corresponded with the monarchy's vision of presenting Siam as a modern nation on a par with Western countries, to avoid being subjugated by imperialism. Had such merging not taken place, Siam would have been considered a backward country, incapable of surviving in the modern world, and subject to political and economic domination by other countries. Because the Siamese creative class was able to incorporate Western art forms, Siam was able to maintain its identity both culturally and politically.

CHAPTER V

SIGNIFICANT NATIONAL COMPOSITIONS BY WESTERN COMPOSERS

Several significant Thai compositions have been created through the efforts of Westerners who were active in Siam during different eras. Some of the compositions are still in active use today, such as the royal anthem and the national anthem. Some became significant historical artifacts, such as the Siamese song notated in the seventeenth-century record of the French Ambassador. These surviving Siamese songs have remained a mystery to Thai musicians and ethnomusicologists who have tried to trace the original Siamese tunes through their transmission in Western notation. Because the transcriptions are problematic, due to the differences between French musical language and Siamese music, what the French notated by ear most likely does not reflect the actual sound of Siamese music. They reconstructed the music to the best of their abilities within the scope of their musical knowledge, but without knowledge of Siamese music. Therefore, the Siamese tunes were distorted and thus transformed into incomprehensible versions of Siamese songs.

The compositions presented in this chapter are discussed according to the time of their origin, beginning with four compositions from the seventeenth century: an anonymous Siamese song, *Soutjai*, and the compositions of Michel Richard de Lalande. The royal anthem and its development in the nineteenth century follows, then the national

anthem of the twentieth century. The authorship of one of the compositions, the royal anthem, is a critical issue, as is its unsubstantiated relationship to possible source material. Historical information, together with an analysis of the anthem will help to reveal the most likely composer and musical connections to other compositions.

Siamese song (*Sai samorn*)

The first record of Thai music written in Western notation is an anonymous composition transcribed during the reign of King Narai the Great of the Ayutthaya dynasty (1656-1688), considered the golden age of Siam. As discussed in Chapter II, a Siamese ambassador was sent to the French court in 1686 to present a gift from the Siamese King to King Louis the XIV. In return, the French King sent back a French ambassador to Siam.²⁹⁵ Both the Siamese and the French ambassadors wrote records of their visits to the respective countries, which became important historical documents of both countries. Included in the 1687 account of Monsieur La Loubère, the French ambassador to Siam, was a song transcribed into Western notation with the simple heading “Chanson Siamoise.” This Siamese song, considered to be the first Thai music written in Western notation, is one of the very few ancient tunes that has survived from the Ayutthaya period. A suggestion was made by French missionaries, who were active in Siam during the period, that the song may have been written originally by Lully;²⁹⁶ however, there is no evidence for this either in the French records or in the biography of Lully. Even though the Siamese song was not composed by a Westerner, it was preserved by a Westerner by means of the Western notation system. Without the record in Monsieur La Loubère’s account, this melody would have been lost.

²⁹⁵ Dirk Van Der Cruysse, *Siam and the West 1500-1700*, trans. Michael Smithies (Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 2002), 356-7.

²⁹⁶ Sukit Nimanhemmin, [“Phra Chenduriyank and I”], in *The Biography of Phra Chenduriyank: Essays in the Funeral Ceremony of Piti Vatayakorn*, 15 February 1969 (n.p., 1969), 8.

The melody became important later as musical material used by Western composers to create several Thai anthems.

Although La Loubère labled the song in his account “Chanson Siamoise,” the actual title of the song in Thai can be identified through the transliterated lyrics as *Sai Samorn* (see Figure 24). The song was published in 1691 as part of La Loubère’s account with engraved music and text transliterated according to French guidelines. The account was re-engraved and published in an English translation with a different spelling of the transliteration. In 1915, Prince Naratipprapanpong (a half-brother of King Rama V) transliterated the text back into a Siamese pronunciation. However, his attempt was not entirely successful, since the text in his version was not arranged according to normal Siamese grammatical structure, creating problems of comprehension and making it difficult to trace back to the original Siamese text.²⁹⁷

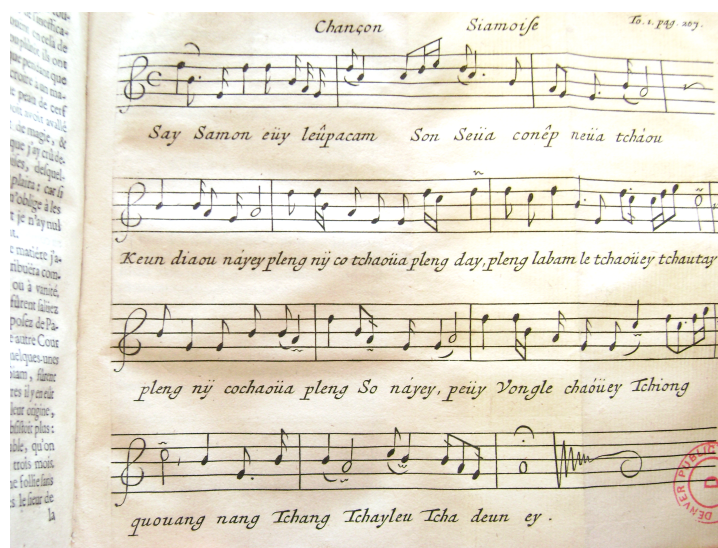


Figure 24 “Chanson Siamoise” in *Du Royaume De Siam*, published in Amsterdam in 1691.

²⁹⁷ Terry E. Miller and Jarernchai Chonpairot, “A History of Siamese Music Reconstructed from Western Documents, 1505-1932,” in *Crossroads* VIII/2 (Illinois: Northern Illinois University, 1994), 144.

Sai samorn is a love song. In the Thai tradition, love songs are usually written by a man and dedicated to his beloved. Several ethnomusicologists, both Thai and Western, have tried to transliterate the text back into Thai. A transliteration by Thai ethnomusicologist Jarernchai Chonpairot probably comes closest to the original (see Chart 3); Chonpairot separated the text into 8 lines according to Thai poetic structure.²⁹⁸

Chart 3. The transliteration of Sai Samorn by Chonpairot

Line	Transliteration by Chonpairot (C) of Laloubère's text (L)	Meaning
1	C: Sai Samon euy L: Sai samawn oei	Oh, dear lady
2	C: leupacam Son Sua L: Luk prakham sawn sūa	You have beads hidden under your blouse
3	C: conep neya tchaou Keun diaou nayey L: Khaw naep nūa jao khūn dieo noi oei	Please let me sleep with you for just one night
4	C: pleng ny co tchaoua pleng day L: Phleng ni khao chū phleng dai	What is the name of this song
5	C: pleng labam le tchaouey tchaytay L: phleng rabam rū chao oei chao thai	Is it a dance song or a Thai song?
6	C: pleng ny cochaoua pleng Sa nayey L: Phleng ni khao chū pleng sao noi oei	The song is called "Young Lady" song
7	C: peuy Vongle chaouey Tchiong quouang L: Phi wang choei khioang khang	I hope to sleep with you
8	C: nang Tchang Tchayleu Tcha deun ey L: Nang chang chalieo ya tūn oei	Oh, smart young lady, don't wake up yet

Following Chonpairot's 8-line structure, I have constructed a new suggestion for the proper Thai lyric by comparing La Loubère's text with French transliteration procedures typically used in the seventeenth century. A slight change to Chonpairot's transliteration was necessary to make the text fit the Thai historical context: the fifth

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 147.

phrase in Chonpairot's transliteration uses the word "chao thai" transliterated from the French version "tchautay." Since the term "thai" was not used in the seventeenth century, I have replaced it with "chao auey" ("chao auey" in this context means "the lady") that more closely matches the context of a love song from the Ayutthaya period. In it, the protagonist tells his lady that he wants to hold her closely at least for a night. He indicates that this is a love song (*pleng sor*) sung only for her, to tell her how much he wants to be with her (see Table 1).

Table 1. A comparison of French text, an English pronunciation and its meaning in Thai

Line	French Text	Reconstructed Thai Text (with English transliteration and meaning)
1	Say Samon eüy	Sai sa morn auey My dear lady
2	leûpacam Son Seüa	look pra-kam son suea the beads are hidden in your shirt
3	conêp neüa Tchâon Keun diaou náyey	kor naeb nuea chao kuen duea na auey May I hold you just for one night
4	pleng ny cothaoüa pleng day,	pleng ni khoa chue pleng dai what should I call this song,
5	pleng labam le tchaoüey tchautey	pleng ra-bam lue chao auey chao auey a dance song ? my dear...my dear
6	pleng ny cochaoüa pleng So náyey.	pleng ni khao cheu pleng sor na auey it is a love song
7	peüy Vongle chaóüey tchiong quouang nang	phu wang choei keang-khang nang from someone who wants you
8	Tchang Tchayleu Tcha deun ey.	chang cha-leoi ya tuen auey You, who sees through me, please do not wake up.

The melody of *Sai samorn* can be divided into 3 overlapping phrases, each of which has the same beginning, but closes with a slight modification. Although the middle of each phrase is different, each maintains the same structural pitches: a descending fifth from D5 to G4 (see Example 10).



Example 10. The 3 phrases and the structural pitches of *Sai samorn*

Several Thai musicians have tried to perform *Sai samorn* on Thai instruments to try to find any resemblances to known tunes, but without success. Similarly, the text does not resemble any known songs; Thai historian and anthropologist, Sujit Wongtet, does not think that the text has been successfully transliterated back into Thai. Nevertheless, the song can be included in the category of Ayutthaya Mahori repertoire, since that was the most popular style at the time and the most likely to have been heard by visiting dignitaries.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁹ Sujit Wongtet, "Sai samorn," in [*Siam through the View of Foreigners*]
<http://www.reurnthai.com/index.php?topic=4186.10;wap2> (1968) accessed 10 February 2011.

Soutjai

The second known transcription of a Siamese song was made by Nicolas Gervaise, a French missionary of the Société des Missions Étrangères, who lived in Siam for four years from 1683 to 1686. In 1688 he published his account, *Histoire naturelle et politique du royaume de Siam*, in which he included a Siamese song called *Soutjai*,³⁰⁰ written in Western notation. Gervaise included a second part in an f3 clef. As suggested by Chonpairot, the song could have been accompanied by an ancient *Khong wong*³⁰¹ (a circle of gongs) to provide rhythm for the melody (see Figure 25). *Khong wong* is used in Thai ensembles to provide a second harmonic line a wide interval away from the melody,³⁰² which seems to be reflected in Gervais' transcription. Because the lower line of the *Khong wong* would not use the actual pitches seen here, Gervais' transcription could be a Western approximation of the rhythm that accompanied the singing.



Figure 25. *Soutjai* notated into two line staves in the English publication of 1928

³⁰⁰ Nicolas Gervaise, *The National and Political History of the Kingdom of Siam*, trans. and ed. with an introduction and notes by John Villiers (Bangkok: White Lotus Co., Ltd., 1989), 106.

³⁰¹ The ancient Siamese *khong wong* is found in the Surin province.

³⁰² Assadavuth Sakrik, [*Thai Musical Instruments*] (Bangkok: Sarakadee Press, 2007), 73.

Like *Sai samorn*, *Soutjai* disappeared from the repertory of Thai music and is known only from its seventeenth-century transcription. Neither the melody nor the lyric could be identified by any of the Thai musicians consulted. Narongchai Pidokratch, a Thai ethnomusicologist, said that the character of both the melody and the lyric of *Soutjai* can be considered similar to Thai folksong because of their simplicity and the use of repeated notes and phrases in the melody. Among these Thai ethnomusicologists and musicians, only Chonpairot thought that *Soutjai* still survived today, but under a different title: *Chuichai*, a song used in Thai traditional theatre for the story of Ramayana and Jataka.³⁰³ Chonpairot also believes it can be found in Myanmar in the Yodia repertoires,³⁰⁴ with the same title as the Thai song³⁰⁵ (see Example 11).



Example 11. An instrumental version of *Chuichai* in the Yodia repertory (first 3 sections)

³⁰³ Terry E. Miller and Jarernchai Chonpairot, "A History of Siamese Music Reconstructed from Western Documents, 1505-1932," 143.

³⁰⁴ Yodia is a Myanmar word referring to Thai people who were captured and brought to Myanmar after losing their war in 1767.

³⁰⁵ Jarernchai Chonpairot, personal interview, 4 August 2010.

Unfortunately, the lyrics and the melodies of *Chuichai* that exist in Thailand are different from *Soutjai*.³⁰⁶ The text of *Chuichai* from the Ayutthaya period is used in the *Khon* performance (mask dance) of the story of Ramayana. Part of the story tells of the Demon king who captured Rama's wife in his garden; it describes the way the Demon king dressed and prepared himself to meet her.³⁰⁷ The other *Chuichai* from the Ayutthaya period was used to accompany the traditional dance called *Chuichai Prahm*: The text is a compliment to the beauty of the dance.³⁰⁸ Because *Chuichai* from the Ayutthaya period had many different texts and melodies, the one mentioned by Chonpairot might be different from the one shown in Example 11, and thus would not match the text or melody of *Soutjai*.

It is difficult to compare the melodies of *Soutjai* and the *Chuichai* from Myanmar because Gervaise gives us a simple vocal version, but *Chuichai* from the Yodia repertory is a highly ornamented instrumental version performed on *Pa'talà*,³⁰⁹ a large wooden xylophone that serves as the Burmese version of the Thai *ranat*. Moreover, the piece has undergone 300 years of distortion through minor changes and lapses in memory as it was passed down aurally. Still, there are motivic fragments that show similarities between the two pieces. Generally, both *Soutjai* and *Yodia Chuichai* share similar significant pitches of C, D, E, G, and A with an occasional use of F in *Soutjai* and F and B in *Yodia Chuichai*. A comparison of both melodic figures shows a similarity between the descending fifth followed by an ascending sixth in *Soutjai*, and the important motif in

³⁰⁶ Narongchai Pidokratch, personal interview, 30 January 2011.

³⁰⁷ The Encyclopedia of Thai Performing Arts, "Chuichai Tosakan longsuan," <http://www.anurakthai.com/encyclopaedia/index.asp?rid=1&pageno=12> (n.d.), accessed 12 February 2011.

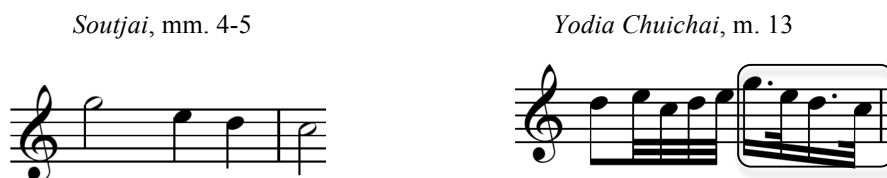
³⁰⁸ The Thai Cultural Preservation, "Thai Dance," <http://www.bloggang.com/viewdiary.php?id=banrakthai&group=6> (n.d.), accessed 12 February 2011.

³⁰⁹ Ward Keeler, "Burma," in *The Garland Handbook of Southeast Asian Music*, ed. Terry E. Miller and Sean Williams, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 209.

Yodia Chuichai that begins with a descending fifth followed by an ascending octave (see Example 12). Moreover, the melodic descending pattern of G to C in measure 4 to 5 of *Soutjai* is the same as measure 13 in the *Yodia Chuichai* (see Example 13). Another similarity is the repetition of the melodic figures at the beginning of each section in *Soutjai* and *Yodia Chuichai*, which reveal a similar structure (see Example 14). Finally, the use of the note F in *Soutjai* as an auxiliary note is found in measures 21 to 22 of *Yodia Chuichai* (see Example 15).



Example 12. The motif begins with a descending fifth and an ascending sixth and octave in *Soutjai*, mm. 2-3, and *Yodia Chuichai*, m. 10



Example 13. The descending melody of G to C in *Soutjai*, mm. 4-5, and *Yodia Chuichai*, m. 13

Soutjai, mm. 1, 6, 14



Yodia Chuichai, mm. 2, 10, 16



Example 14. The repetition in the beginning of each phrase in *Soutjai*, mm. 1, 6, and 14, and *Yodia Chuichai*, mm. 2, 10, and 16

Soutjai, mm. 15-18*Yodia Chuichai*, mm. 21-23

Example 15. Note F as an auxiliary note in both *Soutjai*, mm. 15-18, and *Chuichai*, mm. 21-23

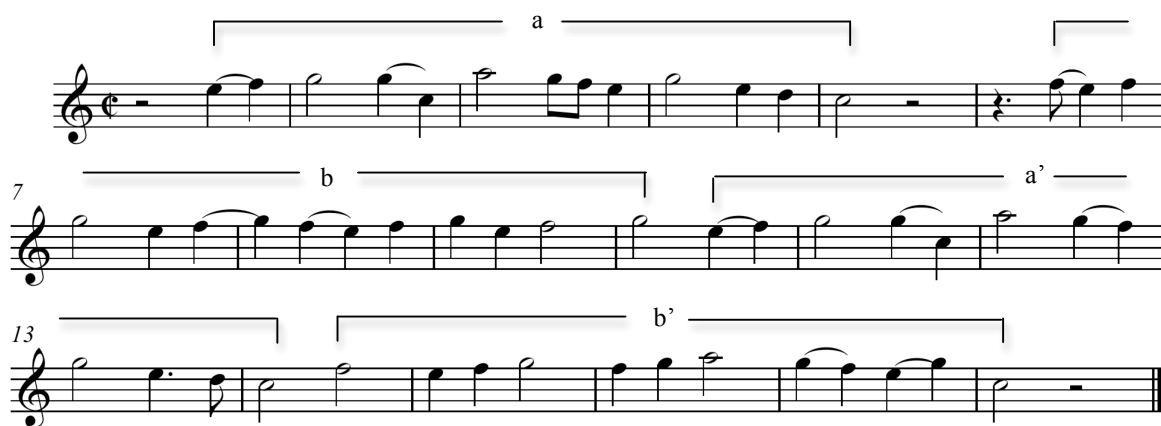
Prince Naratipprapanpong was the first person to attempt to transliterate the French text of *Soutjai* into Thai. Unfortunately, the text that Gervaise transcribed has no meaning as Thai words; apparently what Gervaise heard was not written down accurately. Nevertheless, Ethnomusicologist Chonpairot has attempted to recreate the accurate text in Thai (see Table 2).

Table 2. Transliteration of Gervaise's text into Thai by Chonpairot³¹⁰

Line	French Text	Reconstructed Thai text (English transliteration)
1	Sout Chai eui	Chui Chai oei
2	Sai Chai Cha Cam pra pai sou an	Sai jai ja jam phrak pai suan
3	na nou an Chaou machit tanc pi ban	Na nuan jao ma chit tak phi bang
4	Sout chai eui	Chui Chai oei
5	Sai chai lou chanc pai	Sai jai ru jak pai
6	ton re uang reuang re uang nai eu i	Tong ra-wang ra-wang noi oei

³¹⁰ Terry E. Miller and Jarernchai Chonpairot, "A History of Siamese Music Reconstructed from Western Documents, 1505-1932," 144.

According to Chonpairot's reconstruction of the text, *Soutjai* is about a beautiful woman who is entering a garden. The protagonist tells her to come closer to him and reminds her to be careful. Musically, *Soutjai* is constructed in 4-bar phrases similar to the Western structure of antecedent and consequent: a + b and a' + b'. This separates the text of *Soutjai* into 2 stanzas; the first stanza sets lines 1 to 3 of the text, and the second stanza sets lines 4 to 6 (see Example 16).



Example 16. Division of the text following the musical structure

Airs des Siamois

One of the most interesting examples of eighteenth-century interaction between Western and Thai music is found in the works of Michel-Richard de Lalande (1657-1726), a court composer of King Louis the XIV. Subsequent to the Siamese ambassador's audience with the king, Lalande included what he called two Siamese airs in Suite no. 9 of the *Symphonies for the King's Supper*, copied in 1703.

The symphonies *pour les Soupers du Roy* are collections of movements from various stage works — including ballets, concert, idylls, intermèdes, operas,

pastorals, and serenades — that Lalande composed between 1682 and 1721.³¹¹ In 1690, Lalande put the works together in the form of suites to be performed at the King's Supper. The Supper began at ten in the evening, with Lalande's music performed between the end of one course and the arrival of the next, which means that three pieces were drawn from the suite for each day's four-course supper.³¹² The *Airs des Siamois* (see Example 17-18) appear in manuscript Rés. 582 of the Bibliothèque nationale of France, a collection of 10 suites for the King's supper, their 160 movements taken from Lalande's stage works and instrumental music. The *Airs des Siamois* are included in Suite no. 9, but according to Lionel Sawkins, they appeared earlier in the ballet *Mertil et Méricerte* of 1698. Additionally, the second Siamese Air was used in another later Ballet, *Les Folies de Cardenio* (1720), with a different title, *La Pagode*, and transposed from the original key of g to the key of d. Unfortunately, there is no record of when the Siamese Airs were first written, or for what use.

Lionel Sawkins believes that the two Siamese Airs were written on the occasion of the Siamese embassy's visit to Louis XIV in 1686, and used as part of a suite or divertissement performed at that time.³¹³ The use of the airs in the ballet *Mertil et Méricerte* is puzzling. The play, begun by Moliere and later completed by his son, is about the troubled romance of a shepherd and shepherdess who ultimately learn that they are both Egyptian royalty. It was performed at Fontainebleau in October of 1698

³¹¹ Lionel Sawkins, *A Thematic Catalogue of the Works of Michel-Richard de Lalande (1657-1726)* (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 2006), 426.

³¹² Hugo Reyne, notes to Michel-Richard DeLalande, *Symphonies pour les Soupers du Roy*, trans. Derek Yeld (1990), CD, Harmonia mundi 901337.40

³¹³ Sawkins, *Thematic Catalogue*, 516. Sawkins mistakenly describes the embassy as a visit by the King of Siam.

in conjunction with the wedding of Mademoiselle Elizabeth Charlotte d'Orléans and Henri, duc de Lorraine. A second version of the ballet exists in which eight of the movements are not included, among which are the Siamese Airs. The exact scene in which the first air is used in the ballet is difficult to ascertain, especially since there are no Siamese characters listed in the play's personae. Barbara Coeyman concludes that this group of pieces was added to the ballet to make the production more festive:

The eight movements in Rés. 581 added to the ballet could have formed a new *grande entrée* for the several exotic or comic characters indicated in the titles of these movements. These dances may have included special visual effects, as suggested by descriptions in the accounts of the *Menus Plaisirs* for a series of highly decorated costumes which seem to correspond to the descriptions of most of the characters named in these extra airs.³¹⁴

This would suggest that the music was not composed for the ballet, but added to it from pieces already composed for other reasons. The title given in Sawkins catalogue is "Air: Entrée de Siamois" which could confirm its use as an entrance in the ballet, but it also could point to its original use as ceremonial music when the Siamese envoy entered the royal court to meet with the king. LaLande's use of these airs also shows some sophistication in his understanding. As mentioned above, the second air is also used in a later ballet, *Le Folies de Cardenio* with the title "La Pagode." This might be a coincidence, or it may refer to actual "pagodas," which were among the gifts King Narai the Great sent with the Siamese embassy to present to Louis XIV.³¹⁵ If this is the case, LaLande would seem to have had some awareness of authentic Siamese politics and culture, and was making a deliberate attempt to portray it accurately.

³¹⁴ Barbara Coeyman, *The Stage Works of Michel-Richard Delalande in the Musical-Cultural Context of the French court, 1680-1726* (Ph.D. Diss., City University of New York, 1987), 232.

³¹⁵ Dirk Van Der Cruysse, *Siam and the West 1500-1700*, 373.

Air des Siamois

Lalande

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Air des Siamois" by Jean-François Lalande. The score is written for piano in G minor (three flats) and 3/4 time. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. Measure numbers 8, 14, 20, and 26 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes), rests, and accidentals. A sharp sign (+) is placed above the treble staff in the third measure of the first system. First and second endings are marked with "1." and "2." above the staff lines in measures 11-12 and 25-26. The piece concludes with a double bar line in the final measure.

Example 17. The First “Air of Siam,” in Suite No. 9 of the manuscript
Les Symphonies de M. de la Lalande, F-Pn Rès 582, copied in 1703.

2nd Air des Siamois

Lalande



Example 18. The second “Air of Siam” in Suite No. 9 of the manuscript
Les Symphonies de M. de la Lalande, F-Pn Rès 582, copied in 1703.

The visit of the Siamese embassy to the French court that inspired these two pieces occurred in June 1686: Three Siamese Ambassadors and twenty officers, led by Kosa Pan, were sent by King Narai the Great to present a letter and gifts to King Louis XIV of France. They traveled to France along with the returning French embassy to Siam of 1685, which included the Chevalier de Chaumont, François de Choisy, and Father Guy Tachard. The Siamese embassy stayed in France until March 1687. According to records written by Bénigne Vachet (1685), Lucien Lanier (1883), and Marquis de Sourches (1893), the Siamese ambassador became a major point of interest in France. His procession to Versailles was followed by a great number of courtiers, both men and

women,³¹⁶ and was accompanied by drums and horn³¹⁷ (see Figure 26). On September 1st, 1686, the ambassadors presented the envoy to the French King in the Salon de la Paix³¹⁸ (see Figure 27). Dirk van der Cruysse wrote that on the day of the audience, “the services of twenty-four trumpeters and thirty-six drummers from the Great Stables were enlisted and Siamese music at the time was the rage at court.”³¹⁹ Marquis de Souches indicated that fifteen hundred people came to see the audience of the Siamese ambassadors.³²⁰

The solemn entry into Paris took place on 12 August in the midst of considerable crowds and monstrous traffic jams... Trumpet and cymbals preceded a carriage from the king carrying the *ratchathut* Kosa Pan, accompanied by La Feuillade and Storf, ... The long procession, surrounded by a regiment from the guards, entered Paris by the St. Anthony's gate.³²¹

On the day of the audience [1 September 1686], ... They went up the marble steps between two rows of Swiss guards. A Siamese touch was added to the ceremony: “They climbed to the sound of Trumpets and drums, to imitate the manner of the King of Siam who never enters the audience chamber without this music.”³²²

Dirk Van der Cruysse wrote in *Siam and the West* that it was Chaumont, the first French Ambassador to Siam in 1685, who gave Blainville, the master of ceremonies, information about the music used in the audience at the court of Siam. Chaumont told Blainville about the use of trumpets, drums, kettledrums, musettes, little bells, and horns.³²³

³¹⁶ Lucien Lanier, *Etude Historique sur les Relations de la France et du Royaume de Siam, 1662-1703*, trans. Arun Amatyakul, in [Thai Chronicles], vol. 27. (online version, 2008; last updated 26 July 2008), 94-96.

³¹⁷ Marquis de Souches, *Mémoires*, ed. J. de Cosnac (Paris: Hachette, 1882-1893), vol. 1, 436.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 102.

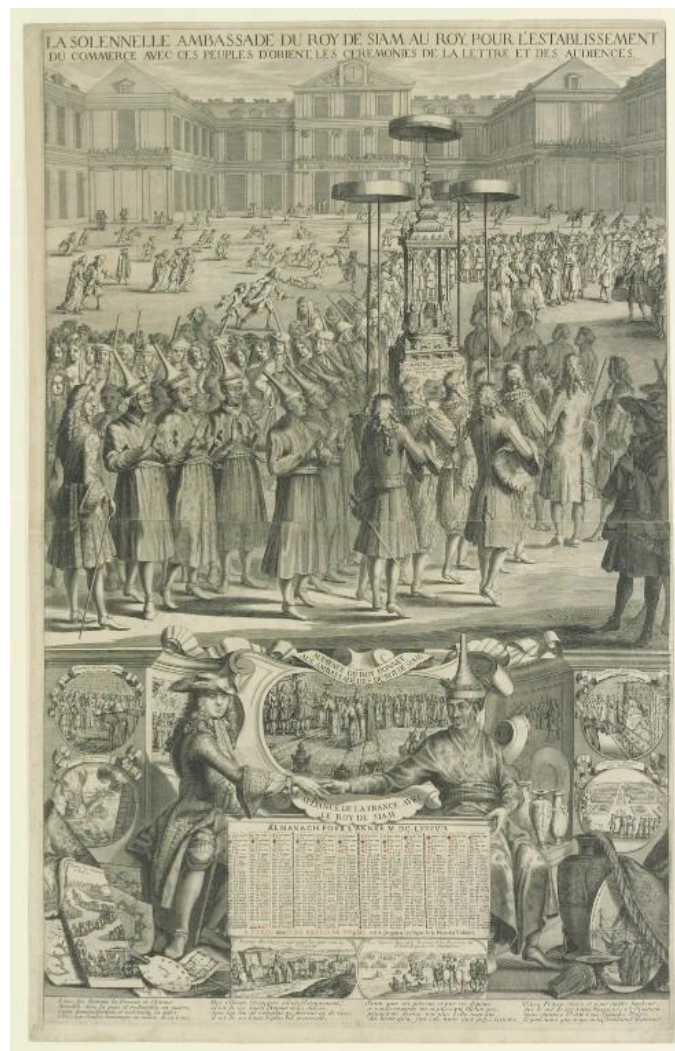
³¹⁹ Dirk Van Der Cruysse, *Siam and the West 1500-1700*, 369.

³²⁰ Marquis de Souches, *Mémoires*, ed. J. de Cosnac (Paris: Hachette, 1882-1893), vol. 1, 436.

³²¹ Bénigne Vachet, *Les mémoires de Bénigne Vachet*, trans. Rev. Bro. Hirae, in [Thai Chronicles], vol. 57. (online version, 2008. Last updated 26 July 2008), 18.

³²² Marquis de Souches, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, 436.

³²³ Dirk Van Der Cruysse, *Siam and the West 1500-1700*, 369.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

*Figure 26. The procession of the Siamese embassy to Versailles on 1 September 1686.*³²⁴

³²⁴ Bibliothèque nationale de France, *La Solennelle Ambassade du Roy de Siam au Roy*, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6945510m.r=siam.langEN>, accessed 14 February 2011.

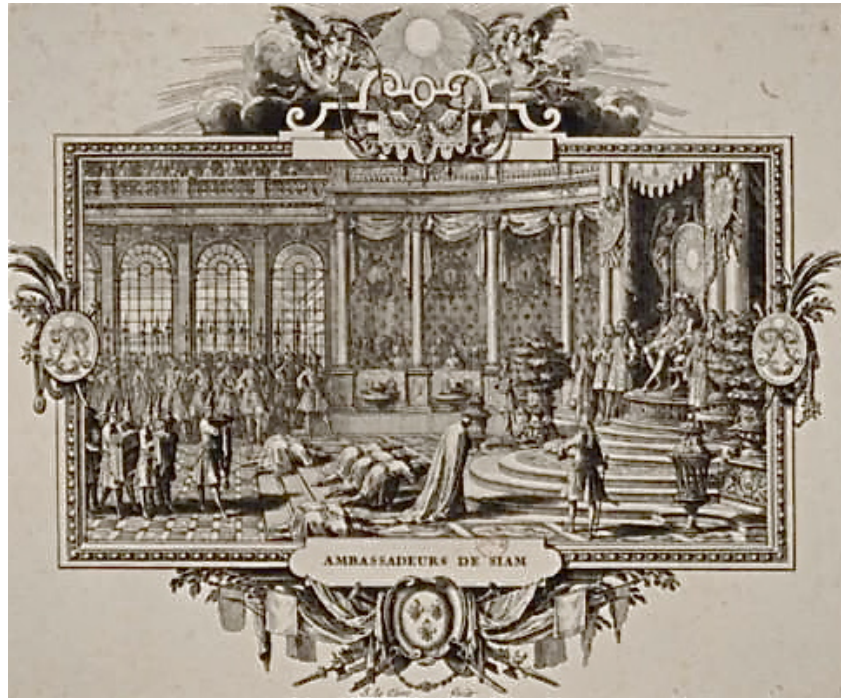


Figure 27. An audience of Kosa Pan with King Louis XIV, 1 September 1686.³²⁵

King Narai sent presents to King Louis XIV, and also to the crown princes and princesses. On the same day as the audience with the French King, the ambassadors visited several courts of the royal families. During the time the embassy resided in France, they were guided to significant points of interest in a number of towns, sights that included palaces, parks, and cathedrals. They had opportunities to see operas, dramas, concerts, and dancing.³²⁶ One member of Siamese embassy was a poet, who described in Siamese poetry what he saw.³²⁷ Every day, a long line of people from all classes came to

³²⁵ Bibliothèque nationale de France, *Audience donnée par le roi aux ambassadeurs de Siam dans les appartements de Versailles*, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8406437b.r=Siam.langEN>, accessed 14 February 2011.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 101.

³²⁷ Bénigne Vachet, *Les mémoires de Bénigne Vachet*, trans. Rev. Bro. Hiraie, in [Thai Chronicles], vol. 57. (online version, 2008. Last updated 26 July 2008), 8:40.

see the Siamese ambassadors.³²⁸ Even Lully, the court composer, visited the ambassador's residence and had lunch with ambassador Pan.³²⁹ Wherever the embassy visited court or the homes of nobility, music, dance, drama, and food were well provided for them. The records point out that the ambassador favored music and frequently stopped at churches that he passed by to listen to the organ.³³⁰

Lalande was working at the French court during the period that the Siamese Embassy was in France. His first position at court began in 1680, as the harpsichord teacher to King Louis XIV's daughters by his mistress, Mme de Montespan: Louis-Françoise (Mlle de Nantes) and Françoise-Marie (Mlle de Blois). In 1682, Lalande was appointed organist at the church of St. Jean-en-Grève, remaining in that position until 1691.³³¹ The next year, Lalande was appointed as *sous-maître* at the Royal chapel for the October quarter. In 1685, he also was appointed as *compositeur de la musique de la chambre*,³³² and became *surintendant de la musique de la chambre* in 1689. Although Lalande's biography includes no information about his meeting with the Siamese ambassador, his intention to create music to commemorate events at the French court reflects a common practice to use music and art as media to display political images and events of France in the *ancien régime*. It is possible that Lalande heard some Siamese tunes during the time of the Siamese ambassadors' audience with the French King, or on any of the days during the Siamese residence in France. Another possibility is that Lalande never heard any Siamese tunes, but wrote the compositions from his impression

³²⁸ Ibid., 23.

³²⁹ Ibid., 31.

³³⁰ Ibid., 46.

³³¹ James R. Anthony and Lionel Sawkins, "Lalande, Michel-Richard de," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online. (accessed 23 May 2010), <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.source.unco.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/15860>.

³³² Barbara Coeyman, *The Stage Works of Michel-Richard Delalande in the Musical-Cultural Context of the French Court, 1680-1726* (Ph.D. Diss., City University of New York, 1987), 26.

of the events. Without exact records to indicate how Lalande encountered the Siamese *Airs*, suppositions have to be made by analyzing the document records, Lalande's composition of the two *Airs des Siamois*, and Siamese compositions that were known during that time.

The first possibility is that Lalande heard the music on the audience day of the Siamese embassy. Prince Damrong has explained the ancient Siamese rule that the envoy represents the King; therefore, the procession of the envoy needed to be treated as if the King himself were present. Every place that the envoy stopped would be treated as the King's residence, and music needed to be played to announce the King's departure from each residence.³³³ According to Prince Damrong, one or more members of the Siamese embassy would have had the role of announcing the presence of the King by playing natural trumpet and/or conch shell, the instruments that functioned in this role.

The second possibility is that Lalande heard Siamese chanting from the Brahman or sorcerer who might have accompanied the embassy. Historical records indicate that the French soldiers demonstrated the firing of a gunshot in the direction of the envoy, although no one was hit by the bullet.³³⁴ In light of such a perceived threat, Siamese medicine-men or sorcerers might have been involved in chanting to casting a spell to protect Siamese soldiers from the bullets shot by the French gunmen. The character of Lalande's second air — in triple meter and a minor key — is consistent with this type of chant. Unfortunately, there is no written record about the chant itself or the presence of a sorcerer.

³³³ Prince Damrongrajanubhab, ["Sending Embassy to Europe"], in [*Thai Chronicles*], vol. 29. (online version, 2008. Last updated 26 July 2008), 6.

³³⁴ Ayutthaya Chronicle Letters, ["Kosa Pan in France"], in *Ayutthaya Chronicle Letters* (n.p.), 189-192.

A third possibility is that Lalande might have heard the Siamese tune from anyone in the embassy or from ambassador Pan himself. After the official audience with King Louis XIV, ambassador Pan resided in France for nine months. During that time, he visited several courts and towns. It might have been the ambassador Pan himself who sang the tunes to Lalande when he visited the court of King Louis XIV's daughter or one of his followers.

A fourth possibility is that Lalande might have encountered Siamese airs from other French ambassadors, missionaries, or officers who had worked in Siam: for example, Nicholas Gervaise's transcription of a Siamese song in his book, *Histoire Naturelle et Politique du Royaume de Siam*, published in Paris in 1688. He also might have heard Siamese songs from the last Siamese embassy to France, which consisted of Father Guy Tachard, Ok-khun Chamnan, La Loubère, Céberet, and five young Siamese men, who were chosen from the sons of Siamese aristocrats to study at the Collège Louis-le-Grand in Paris. That embassy embarked in 1688 and had an audience with King Louis XIV in February 1689.³³⁵

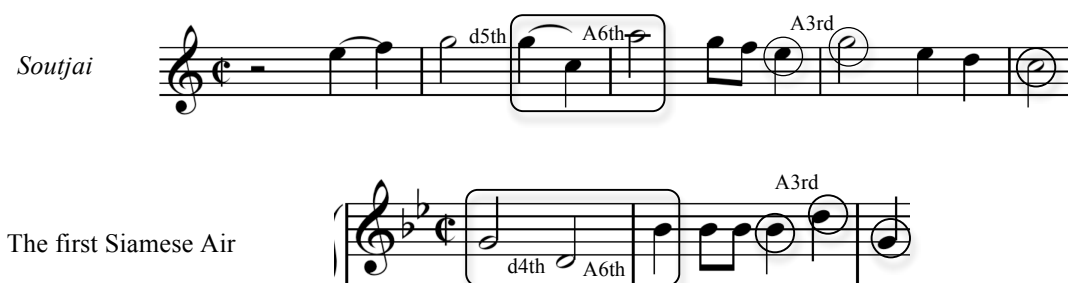
To search for the Siamese melodies that Lalande may have used as sources, the features and structural pitches of Lalande's airs first need to be analyzed. The first Siamese Air is written in duple time, which is identical to traditional Siamese music. However, the tune when played in the modern tuning system has no connection to the sound of Thai music.³³⁶ The structural pitches and melodic characteristics, on the other hand, share some similarities with the ancient popular Siamese Mahori repertory of the

³³⁵ Guy Tachard, *Second voyage du Père Tachard et des Jesuites envoyez par le roy au royaume de Siam: Contenant diverses remarques d'histoire, de Physique, de Geographie, & d'astronomie*, trans. G.E. Gerini, in [Thai Chronicles], vol. 18. (online version, 2008. Last updated 15 October 2008), 26.

³³⁶ Poonpit Amatyakul, Personal Interview, 9 July 2010.

seventeenth century.³³⁷ Thai ethnomusicologist Sugree Charoensook has proposed that the tune was derived from *Soutjai*, the tune notated in Gervaises' account. Another Thai ethnomusicologist, Anant Narkong, suggested that the melodic figure at the beginning of the first four measures shares the character of Ayutthaya Mahori pieces, while measures 13 to 14 are similar to the Siamese song *Namlodtaisai* (see Example 20). Narkong also thinks the second Siamese air is closely related to *Sorrapanya*, a Buddhist chant.

The opening melodic figure of *Soutjai* shows a decided resemblance to the intervals used in the first three measures of Lalande's first Siamese Air, differing only in a descending 5th instead of a descending 4th in the Siamese Air. Also, the second measure of Lalande's tune has a similar melodic shape and rhythmic figure to measures 3 to 5 of *Soutjai*, with two eighth notes followed by longer notes a third higher (see Example 19).



Example 19. The similarity in the beginning motifs of the first Siamese Air and *Soutjai*

³³⁷ Anant Narkong, electronic mail, 19 August 2010. The Mahori ensemble in the Ayutthaya period consists of a lady playing Sor samsai (Three-stringed fiddle), krajab pii, tone-ramana, klui, krab puang, and vocalist.



Example 20. The melody of Namlodtaisai

As noted by Narkong, the first Siamese Air shares some features with the Thai Mahori melody *Namlodtaisai*. The melodic intervals in measure 13 and 14 of the first Siamese Air and the opening melody of *Namlodtaisai* share the same intervallic structure of ascending and descending major seconds, followed by a descending fourth (see Example 21). More melodic similarity occurs between measures 21-22 of *Namlodtaisai* and measures 2-4 of the first Siamese Air. The significant notes of *Namlodtaisai* are retained in the first Siamese Air, with some adjustments through the techniques of octave displacement, augmentation, and melodic inversion (see Example 22). Also significant are the four repeated notes grouped at the beginning: This is a common characteristic of Siamese music used in both instrumental and vocal performances, but rarely found in French music of the time (see Example 23). Finally, both melodies feature a number of ascending and descending 4ths (see Example 24). In general, Lalande's first Siamese Air

seems more closely related to *Namlodtaisai* than *Soutjai*, but it is not possible to determine if *Namlodtaisai* was the original model for Lalande's Air.

First Air of Siam (mm.13-14)

Namlodtaisai (mm.1-2)

The image shows two musical staves. The first staff, labeled 'First Air of Siam (mm.13-14)', is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time, showing a half note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The second staff, labeled 'Namlodtaisai (mm.1-2)', is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time, showing a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5.

Example 21. Comparison of mm. 13-14 of the first Siamese air and the opening of *Namlodtaisai*

Namlodtaisai (mm.17-23)

First Air of Siam (mm.1-4)

The image shows two musical staves. The first staff, labeled 'Namlodtaisai (mm.17-23)', is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time, showing a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff, labeled 'First Air of Siam (mm.1-4)', is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time, showing a sequence of half and quarter notes.

Example 22. Melodic similarity between mm. 17-23 of *Namlodtaisai* and mm. 1-4 of the First Air

Namlodtaisai m. 4

Namlodtaisai m. 20

First Air of Siam m. 2

The image shows three musical staves. The first staff, labeled 'Namlodtaisai m. 4', is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time, showing a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff, labeled 'Namlodtaisai m. 20', is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time, showing a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff, labeled 'First Air of Siam m. 2', is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time, showing a sequence of half and quarter notes.

Example 23. The 4 repeated notes in *Namlodtaisai*, m. 4 and m. 20, and in of the First Air, m.2

First Siamese air

mm. 5



mm. 9



mm. 13-15



mm. 20



Namlodtaisai

mm. 1-2



mm. 5-6



mm. 8-10



mm. 24



Example 24. Ascending and descending fourth in both songs

Lalande's second Siamese Air bears some similarity to the *Sorapanya* prayer, both in its meter and in its solemn character. The prayer has existed as a Buddhist chant since ancient times and was cultivated as a Buddhist song during the Rattanakosin period (beginning in 1782). The *Sorapanya* chant differs from all other Thai pieces in its triple meter (see Example 25).



Example 25. The melody of the *Sorapanya* prayer

It is difficult to say for certain if Lalande modeled his *Airs* on these two particular Siamese tunes. The analysis shows only the possibility that he applied Siamese melodic and rhythmic materials in his compositions. Tracing the material back to its original Siamese sources is almost impossible, since there is no written record of the seventeenth century tuning system, which is different from the modern Thai tuning system: For example, seventeenth century pitch levels are approximately one tone lower than in the modern system.³³⁸ Also the differences between the Western scale and the Thai scale make any relationships problematic, since the Thai octave has seven equidistant tones, and no semitone as in Western scales. What Lalande perceived was probably different from the actual sound of Siamese music: For example, his use of accidentals on E natural and F sharp no doubt reflects French intonation rather than a Siamese sound. Since there is no semitone in the Thai scale, the distance from E to F is a whole tone; moreover, the difference in frequency means the actual E and F in the Thai scale are higher than in the Western system.

Nevertheless, Lalande's *airs* feature some musical characteristics that are not found in French music, but bear a striking similarity to those of Siamese music. For example, the frequent leaps, melodic tritones, groups of 4 repeated notes, and some unusual harmonic progressions are not typical of French musical style.³³⁹ The two *Airs* are full of ascending and descending fourths, fifths and sixths, as well as the tritone of Bb and E natural in measure 17 of the first *Air of Siam* and measure 6 of the second *Air* (see Example 26). Although the

³³⁸ This measurement was determined through the investigation of ancient metal artifacts of the xylophone or gong circle. Narongchai Pidokratch, personal interview (Mahidol University, Bangkok: 31 December 2010).

³³⁹ Deborah Kauffman, personal email, 22 Mar 2011.

tritone can be found in Lully's works, it is used for the purpose of voice leading, but not as part of the melody.³⁴⁰

First Siamese Air, m. 17



Second Siamese Air, m. 6



Example 26. The use of the tritone in measure 17 of the first Air of Siam and measure 6 of the second Air

In addition to these melodic features, Lalande uses some rhythmic figures that are atypical for French music, but can be found in Siamese music. For example, the use of groups of repeated notes in a long-short-short-long pattern, as well as the rhythm of long-short-long. The rhythmic figure of long-short-short-long on the same pitch, prominently placed in measure 2 of Lalande's first Air, is used in virtually all of the Siamese music, since it represents the Siamese technique of playing metallophone and chordophone instruments, and is used in vocal music as well. The long-short-long pattern in conjunct motion is a common characteristic in Siamese music and is found in Lalande's first Air in measures 11-12, 19, and 30-31 (see Example 27).

³⁴⁰ Miriam Karpilow Whaples, *Exoticism in Dramatic Music, 1600-1800*, 102.

First Air of Siam

mm. 11-12 m. 19 mm. 30-31

Kabmaibandau, mm. 1-5

Example 27. The long-short-long with conjunct melodic motion in mm. 11-12, 19, 30-31 of the first Air of Siam and the opening of *Kabmaibandau*

The phrase structure at the end of the first air also indicates a possible acquaintance with actual Siamese music. Rather than maintaining the typical periodic phrases of four measures each, the second half of the air begins with a phrase six measures long. This is followed by a series of elisions and asymmetrical semi-cadences that stretch to the end of the piece. This complex structure is very commonly found in traditional Siamese music. Lalande even includes ties across bar lines, which is highly unusual in French Baroque music. The presence of these figures suggests that LaLande was not entirely ignorant of Siamese music and was intentionally using a Siamese device to express that culture.

Example 28, below, presents four Siamese songs from the Aytthaya period that demonstrate the use of groups of repeated notes, wide leaps, and characteristic rhythmic patterns that are also found in Lalande's airs.

Phram deed nam-tao

Phram deed nam-tao

ascending 4th

9

16 ascending 4th descending 5th

26

Detailed description: This musical score is for a piece titled 'Phram deed nam-tao' in 2/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score consists of four staves. The first staff begins with a half note B-flat, followed by quarter notes C, D, E, F, G, A, B-flat, and a half note C. A bracket under the last four notes (F, G, A, B-flat) is labeled 'ascending 4th'. The second staff starts at measure 9 and continues the melody with eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff starts at measure 16 and includes a bracket labeled 'ascending 4th' over a half note B-flat and a bracket labeled 'descending 5th' over a half note C. The fourth staff starts at measure 26 and concludes the piece with a final half note B-flat.

Soisontad

Soisontad

8

13

Detailed description: This musical score is for a piece titled 'Soisontad' in 2/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a half note B-flat, followed by quarter notes C, D, E, F, G, A, B-flat, and a half note C. A bracket under the last four notes (F, G, A, B-flat) is labeled 'ascending 4th'. The second staff starts at measure 8 and continues the melody with eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff starts at measure 13 and concludes the piece with a final half note B-flat.

Morn du dao

Morn du dao

ascending 7th

ascending 5th

7

14

18

descending 5th

The musical score for 'Morn du dao' is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of four staves. The first staff contains measures 1 through 6, with an 'ascending 7th' interval highlighted in a blue box between measures 1 and 2. The second staff contains measures 7 through 13. The third staff contains measures 14 through 17, with an 'ascending 5th' interval highlighted in a blue box between measures 16 and 17. The fourth staff contains measures 18 through 24, with a 'descending 5th' interval highlighted in a blue box between measures 18 and 19. The piece ends with a double bar line at measure 24.

Kamen pakthor

Kamen pakthor

8

13

1. ascending 7th

2.

The musical score for 'Kamen pakthor' is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of three staves. The first staff contains measures 1 through 7, with a repeat sign at the end. The second staff contains measures 8 through 12. The third staff contains measures 13 through 16, with a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.') at the end. The first ending is an 'ascending 7th' interval, and the second ending is a whole note. The piece ends with a double bar line at measure 16.

Example 28. Repeated notes, wide leaps, and long-short-long pattern in Phram deed nam-tao, Soisontad, Morn du dao, and Kamen pakthor.

Lalande's Siamese airs can also be viewed within the historical context of the development of exoticism in seventeenth-century French Baroque music. Lalande's airs bear some resemblance to other "exotic" works by his contemporaries, including the use of a

minor key, maintaining Western harmonic practices, and the half-note incipit, which was used by Lully to represent the style of ceremonial marches.³⁴¹ However, Lalande's inclusion of specifically Siamese musical features distinguishes these pieces from the other forms of musical exoticism of his time, precisely because he actually had the opportunity to hear authentic Siamese music in his court position at the time of the Siamese envoy. While there is no direct testimony that Lalande met with the Siamese ambassador, there was certainly adequate time, both before and after the envoy's presentation to the king, for Lalande to have been exposed to their music.

The introduction of authentically exotic foreign elements into French culture is commonly dated to 1669, when the Turkish ambassador, Soliman Aga brought a letter from the Turkish emperor to Louis XIV.³⁴² Even though the mission was considered a diplomatic failure, Louis XIV loved to see Turkish elements included in entertainments performed at his court. Miriam Whaples discusses at length the circumstances surrounding the Mammouche scene in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, a ballet written in 1670 at the request of Louis XIV. Lully and Moliere, the librettist, consulted with a nobleman, Chevalier Laurent d'Arvieux, who had actually been to Turkey and witnessed the ceremony they were to imitate.³⁴³ Having gathered this information, Lully incorporated the ideas into a musical expression that was suitable for European tastes while still making reference to authentic practices. One such device was the repetition of

³⁴¹ Miriam Karpilow Whaples, *Exoticism in Dramatic Music, 1600-1800* (Ph.D. Diss., Indiana University, 1958), 101.

³⁴² Miriam Karpilow Whaples, "Early Exoticism Revisited," in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 13.

³⁴³ Whaples, *Exoticism in Dramatic Music*, 96.

the word “Allah” on a G major triad.³⁴⁴ Nevertheless, it is not clear that Lully ever actually heard any Turkish music.

Similarly, Louis XIV may have requested the inclusion of Siamese elements in the entertainments performed at his court after the Siamese ambassador’s visit. By 1686, when the Siamese embassy arrived, Lully had fallen out of favor with the king, so it would have fallen to Lalande to compose music for the ambassador’s entertainment, and possibly for their procession into the king’s presence. Even before hearing Siamese music during the ambassadors’ residence, Lalande would have been able to glean information about it from André-Cardinal Destouches, who had been to Siam with Father Tachard and would later become Lalande’s successor as court composer. Accurate information about Siamese music was available to Lalande to use in his own music, whether during or after the ambassadors’ visit.

Any one of these observations by itself might be dismissed as coincidence, but the force of them taken together strongly suggests that Lalande’s music is not like the other exoticism of his day. While composers of exoticism typically relied on a general notion of what sounded “foreign,” Lalande seems to have attempted to use authentic Siamese music as a vantage point for his works. Even though Lalande used several features of Siamese music in his works, in order to be appreciated in the French court the *Airs* needed to be presented within French musical grammar and played on European instruments by European musicians; they could not be a transcription or a reconstruction of Siamese music. Thus it is not surprising that most aspects of the music seem very Western. It is the accuracy with which Lalande incorporates elements of Siamese music into his compositions that separates them from the culturally indistinct exoticism that surrounded him.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 104.

Even though no final conclusion can be reached regarding the original source material for Lalande's two Siamese airs, the compositions themselves have more value than their intrinsic musical materials. The abstract value of the compositions is formed by its importance to three persons: the Siamese ambassador, who crossed the continent to bring good will to France; King Louis XIV, who granted a warm welcome to the small nation of Siam; and Michel-Richard de Lalande, who used musical sound to portray this event in his compositions. The Airs of Siam were performed during the King's suppers for almost 50 years³⁴⁵, bringing back the memory of the Siamese embassy at the French court. Lalande's *Airs des Siamois* functioned as more than musical sounds; they represent the relationship of the two kingdoms in the seventeenth century.

The Royal Anthem

The royal anthem sung today in Thailand has a long historical background that intersects with Western music in a number of ways. It was first officially used in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the period that saw the reopening of the country to the West, and became standardized as the present royal anthem in the first half of the twentieth century, with a major change in its function after the political revolution from the Absolute Monarchy to the Constitutional Monarchy. The first royal anthem was a song borrowed from England, "God Save the Queen," then afterward a Siamese version of the same tune under a new title of *Jomratch jongjaroen*. The third royal anthem was a preexistent Siamese tune, *Buranloyluean*, arranged for band. The final anthem is the present tune, but with a revised text. The details presented below make up the background of these developments.

³⁴⁵ Hugo Reyne, notes to Michel-Richard DeLalande, *Symphonies pour les Soupers du Roy*, trans. Derek Yeld (1990), CD, Harmonia mundi 901337.40.

The first stage of this development was the use of the English national anthem, “God save the Queen,” with a Siamese text, *Jomratch jongjaroen*. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the English training of Siamese troops marked the beginning of the establishment of Western music in Thai society. During the reign of King Rama IV, Captain Knox and Captain Impey introduced the British anthem, “God Save the Queen,” which was used as the first Thai royal national anthem during the period of 1852-1871.³⁴⁶ In a letter to Prince Naris, Prince Damrong noted a difference in the singing tradition according to the rank of the King and the crown prince:

“God Save the Queen” is used in military marching and pays a salutation to the King. Performing the song in two sections refers to the king, and singing only the first section refers to the crown prince. Since then, “God save the Queen” was used as a Royal anthem till the reign of King Rama V.³⁴⁷

According to the diary of Sir John Bowring, an English ambassador who visited Siam in 1855, musicians on the royal barge played “God save the Queen” as King Rama IV floated by.³⁴⁸ Thai poet Phraya Srisoontornvoharn (1822-1891) provided a new Thai text for the melody and renamed the song in Thai as *Jomratch jongjaroen*, which means “glory to the king.”³⁴⁹

Although the new Thai text is different in meaning from the original English, its topic and function remained the same. The translation of the Thai text is “Blessings to the King to have happiness, treasure, followers, strength, wisdom, long life of more than a hundred years, and glory spreading like the moonbeam” (see Example 29).

³⁴⁶Sukree Charoensuk, [*National Anthem*] (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 1989), 6.

³⁴⁷ Prince Damrong, [“personal letter to Prince Naris, 8 September 1914”], in [*Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisara Nuvadtivongs and HRH. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab*] (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 336.

³⁴⁸ Sombat Plainai, [*Prin Jutamani: King Pinklao*] (Bangkok: Ruamsarn, 1970),

³⁴⁹ Poonpit Amatyakul, personal interview (Ratchasuda Foundation, Thailand: 9 July 2010).



Example 29. Jom ratch jongjaroen

Jormatch jongjaroen was used as the Siamese royal national anthem from the period of King Rama IV to the early period of King Rama V, even though the use of the English anthem created the erroneous impression that Siam was under English colonial control. The search for a proper Siamese national anthem was initiated from King Rama V's royal visit to Singapore and Java in 1871.³⁵⁰ Although the English in Singapore knew that Siam used the English national anthem for their own royal anthem, the Dutch had to ask the king what Siamese royal national anthem to play upon his arrival in Java. When told to play "God save the Queen," Dutch officials asked if Siam was under English colonial authority like America.³⁵¹ King Rama V then realized the significance of the royal anthem in representing the independence of the nation.

The second stage was an attempt by King Rama V to create a true Siamese anthem without borrowing music from other nations. At first, the King ordered three

³⁵⁰ Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs, ["personal letter to Phraya Anumarnratchaton, 24 September 1941"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisara Narisaranuvadtivongs and Phraya Anumarnratchaton*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 169.

³⁵¹ America had used "God Save the Queen" when they were a British colony in the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries.

Thai court musicians — Phra Praditpairau, Phra SanauDuriyang, and Khru Morakot — to find a proper composition to become the Siamese royal national anthem.³⁵²

According to Thai ethnomusicologist Poonpit Amatyakul, the three Thai musicians selected one of King Rama II's own Thai compositions, *Bulanloyluen*, and gave it to the brass band teacher, Huvitzen, to arrange it in Western style for a brass band.³⁵³

According to a letter from Prince Damrong to Prince Naris, *Bulanloyluen* was originally written for *Mahori* ensemble³⁵⁴ during the reign of King Rama II.

Bulanloyluen also had another title, *Sansernphrabarami*, taken from the beginning of its lyric.³⁵⁵ Nevertheless, this second song was never used as an official Siamese anthem, and the king continued his search.

There are several different opinions as to the authorship of the present Siamese Royal National Anthem. According to one, Phra Praditpairau, a Thai musician at the royal court was the composer of the anthem, while Prince Krommuenchumporn stated that King Rama V bought the song during his royal visit to Johor, present-day Malaysia. The research of Peter Feit suggested that Huvitzen, the royal brass band teacher for King Rama V, was the composer, while more recently the research of Sugree Charoensook on Russian sources identified Peter Schurovsky as the composer of the anthem.

The first theory, that Phra Praditpairau was the composer of the anthem, is presented in a letter Prince Naris wrote to Prince Damrong in 1941. In it, he writes

³⁵² Prince Damrong, ["personal letter to *Prince Narisaranuvadivongs* 8 September 1941"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisaranuvadivongs and Prince Damrongrajanubhab*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 337. The prince also confirms that the arrangement was written, p. 338.

³⁵³ Poonpit Amatyakul, ["The Royal Anthem"], *Saimrat*, 11 January 1989, 13.

³⁵⁴ Mahori ensemble is the combination of instruments between Thai String Ensemble and *Pi-phet* ensemble.

³⁵⁵ Prince Narisaranuvadivongs, ["personal letter to Phraya Anumarnratchatun, 17 September 1941"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisaranuvadivongs and Phraya Anumarnratchatun*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 167.

that he heard that information from Krommuen Tivakorn (King Rama IV's son).³⁵⁶ Boonchuay Sowat, Thai musician and professor at Chulalongkorn University, analyzed the Royal anthem by means of Thai music theory to identify the musical structure of the anthem. His research, in *The Analysis on the Origin of the Royal anthem* (2007), indicates that the anthem was composed within the structure of Thai music using Thai compositional methods.³⁵⁷ He points out that the fact that the anthem is explainable within the concept of Thai music theory confirms that it was created by Thai musicians, not by Westerners. Sowat suggested that the Thai song *Sadet oak khunnang*³⁵⁸ was used as the basis for the anthem. By expanding the rhythm of the song from the first metrical level to the second metrical level, a technique used in Thai music composition, Sowat compared it with the Royal anthem. Through the result of his compositional experiment, he proposed that the present Royal anthem was written by Phra Praditpairau, based on a Thai song *Sadet oak khunnang*, using the Thai compositional technique of expanding the metrical level (see Example 30).

Sowat also demonstrated the similarity of the structural pitches, called *look-tok*, in *Sadet oak khunnang* and the Royal anthem. As seen in the above analysis, the beginning and the final notes of both songs are the same, as are the endings of most of the melodic phrases. Although some differences occur in measures 10, 14, and 18, their melodic figures share some similarity.

³⁵⁶ Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs, ["personal letter to Prince Damrongrajanubhab 2 July 1941"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisaranuvadtivongs and Prince Damrongrajanubhab*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 336.

³⁵⁷ Boonchay Sowatt, [*The Analysis on the Origin of the Royal anthem*], paper for the seventh Preechayarn Saim conference on 6 September 2007 at Chulalongkorn University, 1.

³⁵⁸ "Sadet Oak khunnang" is an ancient Siamese song performed by the Couch shell ensemble, played during the King's entrance

สรรเสริญพระบารมี : เสด็จออกขุนนาง
 บุญช่วย ไสวทร ปราบัติสูงเนิน
 ๒๐ พฤศจิกายน ๒๕๔๖

The Royal anthem
Sadet oak khunnang

สรรเสริญพระบารมี
 เสด็จออกขุนนาง

ไม้กระดานหก

Example 30. Sowat’s analysis showing the connection of *Sadet oak khunnang* and the Royal anthem

However, the Royal anthem was constructed on a Western F major scale, while *Sadet oak khunnang* was constructed on the Thai F pentatonic scale. In measures 19-20 of the royal anthem, Bb functions as part of the melody, whereas only B natural is used in *Sadet oak khunnang*. It is clear that the melody of *Sadet oak khunnang* features the F pentatonic scale; this and other characteristics found in the song identify it as a fully traditional Thai music composition.

Moreover, the Royal anthem contains several features of Western music construction. Its musical form is through-composed, with clear melodic phrases and

consistent rhythmic figures in each phrase (a long note followed by eighth notes) leading to a musical climax near the end of the song. Motivic development plays an important part of the anthem's structure. All these features are common musical principles of Western musical composition.

The second theory, that King Rama V bought the song during his royal visit in Johor, was proposed by Krommuenchumporn (King Rama V's son).³⁵⁹ However, there is no evidence to prove that any composition was purchased in Johor. It is therefore unclear on what basis Krommuenchumporn based his conclusion.

The third theory, which points to Huvitzen as the composer of the Royal Anthem, has appeared in several sources, including a letter of Prince Naris to Prince Damrong, the autobiography of Peter Feit, the official publication of *Significant Thai Anthems* issued by the Thai government, and from personal documents of Samarn Napayont.

According to information provided by ethnomusicologist Amatyakul and Prince Damrong, Huvitzen must have been employed by the Siamese royal court before the end of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, there is no clear written evidence that chronicles the life and works of the earliest Western composers in Siam, including Huvitzen. The only direct testimony about Huvitzen is in letters by Prince Damrong to Prince Naris,³⁶⁰ including one from 1941.³⁶¹

³⁵⁹ Prince Narisaranuvadivongs, ["personal letter to *Prince Damrongrajanubhab* 2 July 1941"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisaranuvadivongs and Prince Damrongrajanubhab*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 336.

³⁶⁰ Prince Damrongrajanubhab, ["personal letter to *Prince Narisaranuvadivongs* 8 September 1941"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisaranuvadivongs and Prince Damrongrajanubhab*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 337-8.

³⁶¹ Thai ethnomusicologist Montri Tramoj agrees that Huvitzen was the composer of Thai royal anthem, Bangkok Symphony Orchestra Foundation, *Anthems of the Nation*, 57.

I knew Mr. Huvitzen, who arranged *Sansernphrabarami* for brass band ensemble. He has dark skin, and Dutch in his blood. The King probably hired him during his visit to Pattavia. Phraya Vatitboratet (M.R.L. Chit), a student of Mr. Huvitzen, told me that Mr. Huvitzen has a very good musical knowledge. He spent all of his life in Siam.³⁶²

Prince Damrong clarified that the title *Sansernphrabarami* actually referred to two separate pieces. First, it is a composition by King Rama II also known as *Bulanloyluean*. Second, it is an ancient song played on the Western trumpet with the *chana* drum to announce the presence of the King. The two songs have very similar melodies. Prince Damrong also stated that when Huvitzen composed the present royal anthem, the old title *Sanserphrabarami* was adopted as the title of the new composition.³⁶³

Sansernphrabarami is an ancient tune. Krom muen Thiwakorn told me that the *trae farang* (natural trumpet) that played with the *chana* drum also played *Sansernphrabarami*. He sung the tune of the *trae farang* and the tune played by the brass band. I also agreed with him that it sounded similar.³⁶⁴

Samarn Napayon, a Thai musician and writer, has gathered information on this matter. He believes that King Rama V ordered Mr. Huvitzen, a brass band teacher of the royal pages, to create a new composition that would combine an ancient tune played on the natural horn with the *Siamese* song that had been notated in Monsieur La Loubère's report of his visit to Siam.³⁶⁵ In order to identify the likely original material of the Siamese Royal national anthem, I have made a comparison of the three

³⁶² Prince Damrongrajanubhab, ["personal letter to *Prince Narisaranuvadivongs* 8 September 1941"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisaranuvadivongs and Prince Damrongrajanubhab*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 337-8.

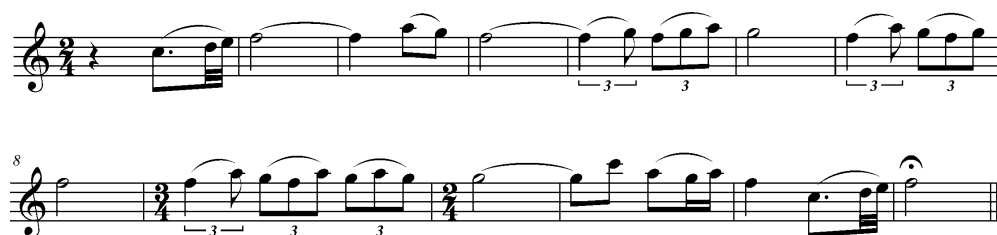
³⁶³ Prince Narisaranuvadivongs, ["personal letter to Phraya Anumarnratchatton, 24 September 1941"], in *Music and Drama from the Letter of HRH. Prince Narisaranuvadivongs and Phraya Anumarnratchatton*, ed. Poonpit Amatyakul (Bangkok: Rueankaewkarnpim, 2009), 169.

³⁶⁴ Prince Damrongrajanubhab, ["personal letter to *Prince Narisaranuvadivongs* 8 September 1941"], 337-8.

³⁶⁵ Samarn Napayon, personal interview (Napayon's house, Bangkok: 15 July 2010).

melodies. The ancient fanfare is called *Samrabbot*, and has been used in the Royal court from ancient times to the present (see Example 31).

a) Siamese Fanfare, notated by Peter Feit



b) Siamese Song in the account of Monsieur La Loubère



c) The present Thai royal anthem



Example 31. Comparison of the ancient fanfare tune, LaLoubère's Siamese song, and the present royal anthem

It is clear that motives and figures from the Siamese ancient fanfare and Siamese song in LaLoubère's account are found in the present Royal anthem. First, one of the motives from La Loubère's Siamese song forms the opening of the royal national anthem (See Example 32).

LaLoubère's Siamese song

Opening of the Royal anthem

Example 32. Motif of Siamese song in the opening phrase of the Royal anthem.

Additionally, musical figures from the ancient fanfare are found in the anthem, transformed through several techniques, including retrogression, inversion, and melodic and rhythmic modification. The opening figure of the anthem is the same as the figure in measures 6 to 7 of the fanfare, but in retrograde (See Example 33).

The ancient fanfare, mm.6-7

Opening of the Royal anthem

Example 33. Retrograde version of the fanfare, mm. 6-7, in the opening of the Royal anthem

Also the embellishing notes in measures 4 to 5 of the fanfare, when inverted and modified by the addition of F, resemble measures 3 to 4 of the royal anthem (see Example 34).

The ancient fanfare, mm. 4-5



The Royal anthem, mm. 3-4



Example 34. Inversion and melodic modification of mm. 4-5 of the fanfare to mm. 3-4 of the anthem.

Another figure, from measures 9 to 11 of the fanfare, is similar to measure 11 of the royal anthem. The rhythm of the half-note G has been modified, and the C changed to Bb (see Example 35).

The ancient fanfare, mm. 9-11



The Royal anthem, mm. 11



Example 35. Modifications of a figure from the Royal anthem.

The above analysis clearly relates materials from the Fanfare to features in the Siamese Royal National Anthem.³⁶⁶ The use of Western techniques such as retrogression, inversion, and melodic and rhythmic modification probably points to the work of a person who knew Western music, rather than a Thai musician of the nineteenth century.

However, there is no clear indication of when the present royal national anthem was composed. A publication by the Thai government gives 1872 as the year it was written and credits Huvitzen as the composer.³⁶⁷ Another source indicates that the musical materials may have been put together at an earlier date in a brass band arrangement by Captain Michael Fusco, but this is undocumented.³⁶⁸ Thai lyrics were later written by His Royal Highness, Prince Narisaranuvadivongs, and were first performed on the King's birthday in September 1888. The lyrics continued to develop until the last modification was made during the reign of King Rama VI. Because the Royal anthem has been published in different keys, it is hard to identify Huvitzen's original key.

After the Royal anthem was first used in public in 1888, the melody and lyrics (written by Phraya Srisoondhornvohan) were published by the Education department to distribute to every school in Siam. Anant Narkong stated that the purpose of the publication was to unify the nation under the acceptance of the absolute monarchy. This was a major change in Thai society, for all classes to sing the same song, no less

³⁶⁶ Samarn Napayont, personal document, 12 January 1997, 4.

³⁶⁷ [The Thai National Anthem]. This was also the source used by Martin Shaw and Henry Coleman in his *National Anthems of the World*, editions 1-5. Later editions contain the Peter Feit composition, which has been the national anthem since 1932.

³⁶⁸ Bangkok Symphony Orchestra Foundation, *Anthems of the Nation* (Bangkok: Bangkok Symphony Orchestra Foundation, J. Film Process Company, 1994), 24.

in a Western style;³⁶⁹ the previous Royal anthem was used only in the court, by officers, and for the announcement of the King. A third edition of the 1888 publication was published in 1906 in a run of 30,000 books (the first and second editions were probably published around 1900). The melody is given in the key of C major (see Figure 28); however, this may not be the original key, but a transposition for use in an educational edition for Siamese students to learn without difficulty.

This publication as a whole demonstrates several influences of Western music within the nineteenth century Thai educational system: first, its use of Western melodies; second, the use of the Western solfège system to notate the melody, but using the Siamese alphabet; and finally, its attempt to teach Siamese students in the nineteenth century to sing the Royal anthem (see Figure 28).

The figure consists of two parts. On the left is the cover page of the book, which is yellowed and has a decorative border. It features a central emblem and Thai text. On the right is a page from the book showing the beginning of the song. The text is written in Thai script using the Western solfège system. A blue arrow points from the first line of the song to the text '1st phrase' on the right. Below the arrow, the first phrase is written in Thai script: 'ด : — | ร. ด: ร. ม | ด : — | — : |' and 'C : — | D. C: D. E | C : — | — : |'.

Figure 28. The cover page and the beginning of the song in the Royal anthem book, Khamnamasakarn kunanukun, 3rd edition, published in 1906 with the Western solfège system in Thai alphabet

³⁶⁹ Anant Narkong, personal interview (Bangkok Art and Cultural Center, Bangkok: 30 January 2011).

Although Huvitzen seems likely to have composed the melody, Jacob Feit, the German American composer and Siamese royal army brass band teacher from 1867 to 1909, created a 4-part piano harmonization in the key of G that was printed in 1908³⁷⁰ (see Example 36). However, the melody and this accompaniment are also found in an earlier publication, *Siam, das Reich des weißen Elefanten*, written by Ernst von Hesse-Wartegg and published in Leipzig in 1899. In this publication, the Royal anthem is written in the key of Eb major (see Figure 29).

SANRASÆN BARAMI.
(Siamese National Anthem.)

JACOB FEIT.
(State Bandmaster.)

Piano

Copyright arrangement 1908. H. & S. 4318

Example 36. The 4-part arrangement for Piano by Jacob Feit

³⁷⁰ The Office of National Identity Preservation, *The Handbook of National Anthems* (Bangkok: Srimuang Press, 2004), 69.

Siamesische Volkshymne.

Sehr langsam.

Hesse-Wartegg, Siam. 8

Figure 29. The Royal anthem in the key of Eb major in
Siam, das Reich des weißen Elefanten, Leipzig 1899.

Jacob Feit's son, Peter, who composed several significant anthems himself, including the Thai National Anthem, contributed to the search for the origins of the present royal national anthem. Peter Feit reported that one of the European bandmasters who worked in Singapore offered several compositions to the King, who bought one of them. After returning to Siam, the king commanded the Thai royal court musicians to write Siamese words for the melody. The words of this anthem were altered several times, until the final version was made during the reign of King Rama VI. In the early days, this anthem was played by a full military band outside the throne hall of the palace to create an atmosphere of serene solemnity while His Majesty the King was seated on the throne. Peter Feit also reported that His Royal Highness Prince Damrong, during a conference of Siamese musical experts in his palace, confirmed that the composer of the royal anthem was Huvitzen.³⁷¹

Feit's research would seem to suggest that the composer in Singapore from whom King Rama V had bought the music was probably the same person as the brass band teacher who composed the third royal anthem. Therefore, the King probably met Huvitzen in Singapore, and persuaded him to work in the royal court. Later, Mr. Huvitzen was asked to compose the royal national anthem based on Siamese melodies and Western compositional techniques.

However, one source contradicts the clear evidence that Huvitzen composed the third royal national anthem. Sugree Charoensuk cites an article by Russian writer, Alexander Karchava entitled *Pytor Schurovsky: Everyone Understands Music*. According to Karchava, the royal anthem was composed by a Russian pianist, Pyotr

³⁷¹ Piti Vattayakorn, [*The Record of Phra Chen Duriyang: 35 Years of My Musical Life*] (Bangkok: n.p., n.d.), 112-3.

Schurovsky. Karchava claims that around the year 1888-1889,³⁷² King Rama V held a composition competition for a new Siamese royal national anthem, which Schurovsky entered and won, receiving a silver snuffbox with the King's autograph on it.³⁷³

Even though this claim for Russian authorship of the third royal anthem has been published in some prominent Western reference sources, there are several reasons to reject it outright. No national record exists to show that King Rama V called for any competition, and his brother, Prince Naris, never mentioned anything about the competition in his letter of 1941. There is a notable lack of evidence indicating that the King ever received the composition from a Russian composer, and no explanation for why the earliest publications of the anthem attribute its composition to Huvitzen. Also, the royal national anthem must have been created before 1888, the year it was premiered, with a full text and arrangement for band and chorus, not in 1888 or 1889 as claimed by Karchava. The analysis of the piece also displays a clear motivic development from ancient Siamese songs, eliminating Schurovsky from the possibility of being the composer of the royal anthem, since Schurovsky never visited Siam. Despite the weakness in the case for Russian authorship, it continues to create ambiguity about the composer of the present royal anthem among Thai musicologists.

In addition to the possibility of the composers of the Royal anthem mentioned above, Anant Narkong has pointed out the connection of the Siamese Royal anthem to the Javanese song *Ladrang Siyem*. Narkong indicated that the Javanese Gamelan

³⁷² Sugree Charoensuk, [99 Years, *Thai Royal Anthem*], 44-5.

³⁷³ Alexander Karchava, *From the History of Russo-Thai Relations*, trans. Satein Pantarungsi (Bangkok: Praepittaya Press, n.d.), 43-8.

performed to welcome King Rama V and the melody featured on this occasion was memorized and passed down from generation to generation in Java, known as the song for the Siamese King. Narkong noted that Huvitzen had worked in Java before moving to Siam. It is possible that Huvitzen used some parts of the Javanese Gamelan's welcoming composition for the Siamese King, together with Siamese musical materials, to create the Siamese Royal anthem. Narkong referred to the research of David W. Hughes, who had interviewed him on the connection between the anthems.³⁷⁴ In Hughes's research, *Thai Music in Java, Javanese Music in Thailand: Two Case Studies*, the traditional Gamelan tune was used with new lyrics for welcoming King Rama V in 1870. In 1929, King Rama VII visited Java and the song *Ladrang Siyem* was composed for that occasion.³⁷⁵ According to Hughes's analysis of the Thai Royal anthem *Ladrang Siyem* shows a number of close connections that suggest the melody of the Siamese Royal anthem was used as the basis for *Ladrang Siyem*, adapted to the Central Javanese gamelan style (see Example 37).

³⁷⁴ Anant Narkong, personal interview (Bangkok Art and Cultural Center, Bangkok: 30 January 2011).

³⁷⁵ David W. Hughes, "Thai Music in Java, Javanese Music in Thailand: Two Case Studies," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 1 (1992), 20.

The image displays a musical score comparing two pieces. The top staff is labeled 'Thai Royal Anthem' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Ladrang Siyem'. Both are in 4/4 time and D major (one sharp). The score is divided into five systems, with measure numbers 5, 10, 16, and 21 marked at the beginning of their respective systems. The Thai Royal Anthem consists of a single melodic line. The Ladrang Siyem consists of two melodic lines, with the second line often providing a harmonic or counter-melodic accompaniment to the first. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes) and rests, with some measures containing complex rhythmic patterns.

Example 37. David Hughes' comparison of *Ladrang Siyem* and the Thai Royal anthem.

Following Narkong's supposition on the connection between Huvitzen, the Javanese song, and the Thai Royal anthem, we should consider the possibility that Huvitzen used some musical characteristics of a Gamelan melody that was also used as a foundation for *Ladrang Siyem*. When King Rama V hired Huvitzen to work in Siam and asked him to compose a Siamese royal anthem, the composer might have applied the musical material of the Javanese song that was used in welcoming the King on his 1870 visit and incorporated motives from the Siamese royal fanfare and the Siamese Song in La Loubère's account.

Thai National Anthem

The origins of the Thai National anthem are in a request made before the revolution in 1932 by navy lieutenant commander Luang Tetkolakit, who asked Peter Feit to compose a melody similar to the French national anthem, *La Marseillaise*.³⁷⁶ This request went against the political system of absolute monarchy, because the King was still the ruler of the country, and the royal anthem already functioned as the national anthem. Peter Feit initially turned down the request, but after the revolution on June 24, 1932, Luang Tetkolakit told Feit that the revolution party wanted a Siamese National Anthem for the people, not just a royal anthem for the king. He told Feit to finish his composition as fast as possible. Feit felt he could not deny this command, so he asked for seven days to finish the composition and requested that the lieutenant conceal his name as its composer.

This composition created a good deal of trouble and an uncomfortable situation for Feit because he had worked for the King all of his life. Composing the anthem aligned him with the revolution. Samarn Napayont, a student of Peter Feit, told me in an interview about Feit's feelings while working on this national anthem:

My teacher, ..., could not sleep or eat anything. All day, he just kept walking and walking inside his house. Until the seventh day, he still was not able to compose any music, even a single phrase.³⁷⁷

Peter Feit himself wrote in his journal about the circumstance of composing the national anthem:

When the due date arrived, which was a Monday, I prepared myself to go to work as usual. I took the tram car from Suriwong road to the S.A.B. intersection, for my work place at Missakawan. On the tram car, the motive, the rhythm and the whole song, had appeared in my head.

³⁷⁶ Sugree Charoensuk, [*National Anthem*], 10.

³⁷⁷ Samarn Napayont, personal interview (Jittapim Yamprai, Bangkok: 27 June 2008).

When getting off the tram car, I notated the melody down, on a piece of paper, and hurried to my office to add the harmony on the piano. When the naval lieutenant arrived, I played the anthem on the piano. He was pleased with the composition.³⁷⁸ (See Figure 30)



Figure 30. An autograph of the Thai National Anthem by Peter Feit, personal document of Samarn Napayont

Napayont also added in the interview that “My teacher told me that the rhythm of the tram car he took on that morning gave him the tempo of the anthem.”³⁷⁹

After the composition was completed, Peter Feit faced more trouble when his name was included as the composer of the new Siamese national anthem when it was published in the newspaper (see Figure 31), leading to his dismissal from the music department, which still belonged to the royal palace.

³⁷⁸ Vattayakorn, [*The Record of Phra Chen Duriyang: 35 Years of My Musical Life*], 44.

³⁷⁹ Napayont, personal interview (Bangkok, 27 June 2008).



Figure 31. News of Peter Feit, composer of Thai National Anthem

Shortly thereafter, Feit was hired by the new government's agency in charge of the arts, called the Silpakorn Department, and charged with leadership of the national symphony orchestra. Feit willed the rights to the composition to the people of the nation. The melody of this new National anthem has some of the same characteristics as *La Marseillaise*: Both serve political ends, and both use a similar musical style.

The history of these significant musical works demonstrates the cultural connection between Siam and the West. Through the efforts of a seventeenth-

century French ambassador, missionaries, and court composer, Siamese music was preserved and passed down in records and manuscripts, which now serve as important historical evidence in the area of music and seventeenth-century political events in both Siam and the West. These early sources also served as important musical materials for several Siamese compositions from the past to the present. Both the Royal anthem and the National anthem are products of Western composers, representing the efforts and good will of Westerners who devoted their life and work to Thailand's development. Both anthems create stability in uniting the nation as one. Moreover, their musical features and characteristics make them suitable vehicles for national identity, the story of Thai history, and the political and cultural beliefs of the nation.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Research into the establishment of Western music in Thailand presents a number of difficulties. The main problem is the lack of sufficient information to fill in the missing parts of the history, especially information on music, composers, musicians, and instruments that could explain the whole story in more detail. Because Thailand in the sixteenth century was dealing with territorial conflicts and defending itself from both neighboring lands and the Dutch, written documents of that period consist mainly of records of wars and important events within the reign. It is difficult to find any information specifically about music in any written sources before 1900. Also, wars between Thailand and Myanmar resulted in the loss of important national documents. Information in the surviving historical documents — such as national chronicles, national letters of Kings, Queens, Princes and Princesses, personal records, and writings — is not enough to cover all research questions. Therefore, Western sources must be relied on in searching for music information of each period. Unfortunately, very little has been written specifically on Western music in Siam. Accounts of Westerners who were once active in Siam are helpful; as witnesses of actual musical performances and musical events in Siam, they become significant sources in this research, even though the

information on music is hidden within other topics, such as royal ceremonies, the royal court, royal invitations, audiences with the King, military training, state affairs, and so on.

Not only is the lack of written documentation about music a problem, but also the music itself is problematic, since it has never been preserved in written form. Thai music has been passed down from generation to generation through oral transmission, and varies from one school to the other. This means that there are several versions of each song, making it difficult to identify any particular one or to be certain about its use as source material. Also, because they are kept within people's memory only, many songs have disappeared from the ancient Siamese repertoires. Even when songs have been preserved in Western sources and presented to Thai people at a later date, often no one can recognize the tune, and some doubt that the songs are really Siamese. Songs such as *Sai samorn* and *Soutjai* are significant relics from Siam's musical past, but it could be said that without Westerners' attempts to notate them, they would have been lost to Thai people today. However, these two songs, like other surviving historical music, lack any clear written explanation regarding the text, the melody, instruments, musicians, or social function. The quest to solve these mysteries may be endless.

Even the French songs by Lalande do not present a situation different from that of the other songs in this research. Everything about the tunes is problematic: where and how did Lalande get the Siamese originals, which Siamese tunes he actually used as bases for his compositions, or whether he just composed something from his impressions of Thai music to represent the event at the French court in the late seventeenth century. Reconstructing Lalande's exposure to Siamese music is a considerable challenge, and I have presented all the possibilities suggested by both Thai and French sources.

Identifying source tunes more challenging yet, since Lalande's airs were written in Baroque musical grammar. The tuning system between French Baroque and Siam is different, as are the Thai tuning systems of the seventeenth and twenty-first centuries. Attempts to translate Lalande's actual sound for the ears of today's Thai musicians and ethnomusicologists were not successful: they perceive the tunes as Western, not Thai. The only remaining option — identifying the tunes by analyzing Lalande's musical scores — is also problematic, because many Thai musicians are not familiar with Western notation. Even though one ethnomusicologist could find some connection between Lalande's first air and the ancient Siamese *Mahori* repertoires, and the second air with Siamese Buddhist chant, locating Lalande's tunes within *Mahori* repertoires means analyzing approximately a hundred *Mahori* tunes, transcribing each one into Western notation and adjusting for the differences in tuning systems. Moreover, a number of tunes have been lost from the ancient *Mahori* repertoires; the results would be speculative at best.

The modification of American Civil War songs and hymns into Thai music presents similar problems, especially the song *Yee-hem*. The mystery of its background has persuaded ethnomusicologists to search for the original text and tune. Again, to find the original tune of *Yee-hem* requires an inspection of all of the many hymnals of the period, hoping to find the one hymn that is similar. Even if the melody can be linked to similar hymns of the period, the problem of the text still remains: no one has been able to explain how the now-deceased Thai historian came up with the English text.

All of these difficulties are caused by either the simple lack of information, or its vagueness as to times, dates, and places — a common problem with Thai sources. All

music is anonymous, with no designation of date. Other written information about the time of the events, assignments, performances, appointments, or establishment is likewise missing, along with details about the person in charge and the people involved. The results are always unclear, with clues from four or five sources needed to determine the approximate time of an event. This problem also occurs in the secondary sources. Researchers who wrote articles, books, or newspaper columns did not include footnotes to indicate the sources of their information.

Research in the area of Western music in Thailand has been taken seriously only in this decade. Before this time, only a few ethnomusicologists conducted research on topics such as marches in Siam, Western trumpets in Siam, or the general issue of Western music in Thailand. Not surprisingly, research in Thailand tends to focus on the area of Thai music rather than Western. The lack of research in the area of Western music in Thailand has limited the number of sources available for anyone who wants to do further research. Unfortunately, those who witnessed these events have all passed away, leaving a few ethnomusicologists or musicians of the later generation who may have heard a story or had some connections to the people in the history of Western music in Thailand. However, the mean age of that group is over 70. Even during the course of this research, some important people have passed away. It is imperative that research on the history of Western music in Thailand is done in this generation, before these sources are also lost.

Because of all the difficulties I encountered in doing this research, answers to all of the questions about the various compositions must remain conjectural. Nevertheless, this research can present a framework for understanding how Western music was

established in Thailand from the sixteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century. It also demonstrates the Western influence on Thai music and drama and its effect on Thai society. Significant compositions (especially the Royal anthem) and the conflicting theories about the history of its composition have been clarified somewhat, and new information about Lalande's airs has been added to the history of Thailand and France. This research thus helps to explain how Western music has grown in Thai culture.

Musicologists and ethnomusicologists should continue to search for answers to the problems that remain unresolved. Future work might include research on the Western trumpet in Siam, its construction and mechanics, the exact period during which the trumpet was brought into Siam, and how it came into the royal court. Research on Western music at the court of King Pinklao should be furthered by studying more sources and/or personal letters of Westerners who visited his court. Other areas for research can be identified: the music at Boonnark's house, since their family has been serving the royal court for generations and are powerful; closer evaluation of Gervaise's transcription of *Soutjai* by finding connections with surviving Thai music in Myanmar; further research on *Yee-hem* in order to find a method of transliteration that explains the transformation of the English text into distorted Thai and back, and on how Thai musicians heard the tunes; research on the music of Lalande's Siamese airs by studying more French sources of personal letters and notes to discover his contact with the embassy, and to compare both tunes with all the ancient *Mahori* repertoires; and finally, further research on the Royal anthem by finding more reference sources on Indonesian music and the background of Huvitzen in the Javanese court. Recommended research in other related areas includes studying the history of Western pop, rock, jazz, and

commercial music in Thailand; the study of both French texts of *Sai samorn* and *Soutjai* in the areas of linguistics, phonetics and Thai poetry; and the study of American, French, and English songs in Thailand.

The fundamental story of Western music in Thailand is the interaction of the West and the East, and a moment of beauty that is expressed in the Arts and music, even while the nation was under the attack of colonialism from the West. The story of seventeenth-century colonialism in the East is not a happy one; nations in the East suffered the loss of rights to their own land, the loss of the benefit of trading, of properties and treasures, and threats to their traditions and cultures. The East was viewed as uncivilized and exotic, encouraging the Dutch and Portuguese to use their military power to exploit the local populations. Even though Thailand at that time was in a similar situation, its rulers found strategies to avoid control by the Dutch by creating relationships with other Western countries such as France. What makes Thailand different from other Eastern nations is the will and vision of its Kings, the openness of the mind, and their philosophy of free will. Throughout its history, Thailand was a place that allowed all ethnicities to establish their communities; other Asians, including Japanese, Chinese, and Vietnamese, along with Muslims and Western Christians, all lived together, regardless of the differences in their religious beliefs. The King allowed freedom for each nation to practice their cultures and religious ceremonies. It was only during the period after King Narai the Great (the end of the seventeenth century) until the early Rattanakosin period (beginning of the eighteenth century) that Thailand stopped seeking relations with the West; Western culture flourished in Siam during every other period. In addition to King Narai the Great of the Ayutthaya period, kings from Rama IV to the present king (Rama IX) have been

staunch supporters of Western culture in Siam. Through the Kings' visions for developing the country to be equal with the West in every area, Western culture has permeated the practice of arts and music, gaining favor in Thai society. With the support of the royal court, state officers, and the members of the upper class who have studied abroad, Western culture is growing fast and merging with Thai culture, resulting in a beautiful blending of both. This research reveals the value of the arts; regardless of political issues and economic problems in all periods, art has survived and grown through the work of both Westerners who worked in Siam and Thai artists.

In this twenty-first century, a period when the world is less separated by the identities of West and East, Western culture in Thailand is no longer viewed as a different culture, but as a part of Thai culture. Western practices in all areas — including language, food, attitude, life style, social value, arts, culture, and entertainments — are blended with Thai culture. People of this generation have already perceived Western culture as their own, singing and listening to Western popular songs at performances on national holidays, for commercial events and receptions, at wedding ceremonies and birthday parties, in television and radio commercial advertisements, in songs playing at restaurants, department stores, and at work places. Even though Western music has taken an important role in Thai society, Thai music has not disappeared, but survives in several forms. The most popular form consists of Thai songs written in Western popular styles, such as Thai jazz, Thai hip hop, Thai Reggae, Thai hard rock and metal, Thai Latin, and Thai pop songs. The only thing that is readily identifiable as Thai in these types of song is the language, which is sometime mixed with Western words. The Thai traditional music that is performed with *Pi-phat* ensembles still functions in traditional theatrical

performance and dance, royal ceremonies, religious ceremonies, some funeral ceremonies, movies and drama, and local festivals. However, Thai musicians and ensembles who still want to perform simply as entertainment for the public have to find new ways to survive in this century. Since the taste of the society has changed, Thai ensembles have had to modify their performance styles by blending traditional instruments with popular instruments such as drum set, electric guitar, and bass. Non-traditional techniques must be developed to attract people, including virtuosic styles, such as playing on two instruments at the same time with driving rhythm and fast tempo, or performing as a solo instrument with a Western orchestra.

Looking toward the future of Western music in Thailand, it seems that the popularity of classical music and other popular Western music will keep growing. The expansion of Western music education in Thailand in all levels from elementary school to graduate university programs assures the continuation of Western music. The internet world provides electronic resources of Western music to the Thai-net generation. Everyone can download music and video clips of Western musical performances from all over the world. Nevertheless, while Western music is growing, the future of Thai music is in crisis. It is the Ministry of culture's responsibility to promote Thai arts to society by supporting Thai musical artists who try to improve the quality of traditional music and performance. They have been successful in gaining the attention of tourists, but not of the Thai people. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, at a time when Western music was a new trend, Thai artists, musicians, and the courtiers tried to blend the practices of Western music to Thai culture. Instead of ignoring traditional Thai culture, they developed Thai arts that maintained the gracefulness, delicacy, and unique technique

of Thai music with the application of Western practices. Through this idea, Thai music has been preserved and is able to serve the desire of the society.

I think it is the time for all organizations and artists to use the story of the past as their model in improving the situation of music in Thai society. Promoting only Western music without supporting Thai culture jeopardizes the independence and identity of the nation. Leaders of entertainment companies, the cultural ministry, educational institutions, local music schools, and Thai artists can cooperate with each other, to form new policies with the vision of the leaders of the past, for the good of promoting both Western and Thai cultures to live together side by side, not only in this century, well into the future.

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