

Thai Music Culture in the 21st Century: Thai Music and Its Others (The Westernization, Modernization and Globalization of Thai Classical Music): Case Study of Thai Musical Instruments and Innovation ¹

Paphutsorn Wongratanapitak²

Abstract

“Thai Music and Its Others” was inspired by Georgina Born and David Hesmondalgh from their publication “Western Music and Its Others” in 2002. This research topic implies the fact that Thai music has also been greatly influenced by other cultures, especially Western culture. This article provides a history and development of Thai music from the 1930s until the present in different areas, for example, musical instruments and innovations, composition, performance, media, transmission and music education, beliefs, and the connections of Thai classical music to the globe.

¹ The research for this article was partially funded by the Empowering Network for International Thai Studies (ENITS), Institute of Thai Studies, Chulalongkorn University with support from the Thailand Research Fund (TRF).

² Ph.D. candidate at School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London and a guest lecturer in Thai music and its culture.

Introduction

In modern Thailand, people seem to live under two systems of social organization: the old versus the new and the traditional versus the modern. Personally, I have no bias with either system. I believe that there are a number of people who are against the new and the modern. On the other hand, there are also people who forbid everything from the olden days and tradition. From my point of view, there are at least three parties in a society. One is a type of person who preserves tradition because it is important to maintain their roots and identity. Another is a type of person who welcomes modernity and enjoys living in the globalization era. The last type is a person who is neutral on the subject. They do not have any opinions on the preservation of tradition or Westernization, modernization and globalization in their own lifestyle. It could be said that one person can be either a preserver or a modernizer, or even both, depending on the situation. For example, in my own life, even though I prefer to be a traditionalist when teaching or performing, I also never deny modernization. I can be a modernizer sometimes in my own lifestyle and sometimes when teaching or performing depending on the situation.

This topic reminds me of discussions among friends while studying in London. Most of them are Westerners or Westernized. Their opinion is that the only thing unchanged is change. The world changes everyday. We should understand the situation, live our life happily and follow the flow as life is too short. At the same time, our own identity and uniqueness is still important and needs to remain. Adaptation is important in order to live in this new world. I totally agree with them. In my opinion, this idea can be applied to many aspects, including the study of Thai classical music, in particular during the 21st century when the world is becoming borderless and many things have gradually changed.

History of Westernization, Modernization, and Globalization of Thai Classical Music

It is widely known that, according to history, Thai classical music was greatly influenced by India and China for a long time. More recently, during the Westernization and globalization period, Western influences seem to play a serious role in Thai classical music covering many components; for example, musical instruments and new inventions, composition, performance, media, transmission and music education, beliefs, and the connection of Thai classical music to the globe.

Theoretically, Westernization, modernization and globalization mean nearly the same thing. And the spread of cultural practices from Western Europe to other parts of the world, certainly in Thailand, involved a large element of Westernization. In the history of Thailand, importations by monarchs, governments, returning Thai overseas-educated students and the foreign advisers of innumerable specific Western practices constituted the process of Westernization. It appears to be that from the reign of King Mongkut until the present King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Westernization, modernization and globalization have had an increasing influence not only on Thai classical music culture, but also on the country's system and so on. Since most of the kings, apart from King Mongkut, were educated in or had visited Western countries, they could be said to be leaders who brought Western influence to the country of Siam, which later became Thailand.

During the Reign of King Rama IV

According to history, Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia that retained its independence throughout the colonial period. Due to the awareness of the approaching danger of Western colonialism in that period, as well as to be considered "civilized", Western influence began to perform an important role in shaping Thai society towards Westernization and modernization during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With the intention to avoid

being colonized, King Mongkut or King Rama IV (1851-1868) attempted to make Siam organizationally equivalent to Western countries, starting in the second half of the nineteenth century. The first process was the introduction of Western education within the court. English teachers were hired to instruct the royal children at the palace, including Anna Leonowens.³ Senior officers of the European Army were employed to reorganize the Siamese Army and to train personnel in modern military science and technology. Military music from Western culture was also introduced to the Royal Thai Army and the Royal Thai Navy. The *ranat ek lek* [ระนาดเอกเหล็ก], a high pitched metal keyed xylophone, and *ranat thum lek* [ระนาดทุ้มเหล็ก], a low pitched metal keyed xylophone, with their sounds that imitated the traditional pendulum clock imported from the West, were created during this reign.⁴

During the Reign of King Rama V

Programmes to modernize the country became more noticeable during the reign of King Chulalongkorn or King Rama V (1868-1910), in order to remain independent and defend the kingdom against Western expansionism by seeking to modernize Siam after the West and their colonies, such as Singapore and India. The King sent his sons to study in European countries. He also made friends with powerful countries like Britain, France, Russia and the USA. Politically, King Chulalongkorn learned the systems of Western government and then created a ministerial system for Siam in 1892. The abolition of slavery was developed during his reign as well as the expansion of the communications system through the construction of railways and the establishment of postal and telegraphic services. Referring to Thai classical music during the reign of King Rama V, there were many new musical experiments and inventions. For

³ Anna Leonowens was the originator of the stories “Anna and The King” and “The King and I”, the internationally known film and musical show.

⁴ Montri Tramot, *Som Song Saeng: Chiwit Dontri Thai Khong Montri Tramot (A Musical Life of Montri Tramot)* (Bangkok: Thanakhan Krung Thep, 2527 [1984]) 36 (in Thai).

example, *wong piphat duekdamban* [วงปี่พาทย์ดีกดำบรรพ์], a percussion ensemble with soft cushioned beaters plus a low pitched fiddle and the *so u* [ซอู้], were formed to play music for the *lakhon duekdamban* [ละครดีกดำบรรพ์], an imitation of Western opera of the “Tableaux Vivant” style. This kind of performance was put on when there were visiting foreign dignitaries. Traditionally, only the melody is sung, either by a solo singer, a chorus, or both, singing only the melody lines. To imitate the Western chorus, the method of singing in harmony, with the male part lower than that of the female, was introduced. The English term “concert”, an innovation based on the model of a Western “royal command concert”, was used. All of these musical innovations were by Prince Naris, one of the King’s avant-garde young men. In the period of King Chulalongkorn, Thai classical music and dance was performed outside Thailand for the first time, across Europe, in the UK, Denmark, Russia, Germany, and Austria, by the “Butmahin Troupe”.⁵ Around 1893, Edison’s Cylinder was imported and the first music record was produced.⁶ As Western music became more accepted in the court, King Chulalongkorn invited Western musicians to work in Siam, including Jacob Feit, the father of Phra Chenduriyang, a former professor of music, Fine Arts Department. A very remarkable innovation in terms of the Western influence on Thai music was the origin of the royal anthem “*Sanrasoen Phrabarami*” [สรรเสริญพระบารมี], inspired by the British national anthem “God Save The Queen”. It was the first *phleng Thai sakon* [เพลงไทยสากล], highly Westernized Thai music, as agreed by the Office of the National Culture Commission in the Ministry of Culture.⁷

⁵ Poonpit Amatayakul, *Dontri Wichak (The Basic Knowledge of Thai Classical Music)* (Bangkok: Raksip, 2529 [1986]) (in Thai).

⁶ Poonpit Amatayakul, *Lamnam Haeng Siam (Thai Music from Old Records)* (Bangkok: Nittayasan Hifi Stereo, 2540 [1997]) (in Thai).

⁷ Surapol Tonawanik, *Mahakam Dontri Lae Wiphithatsana Ha Ratchakan Phleng Thai Sakon (Concerts and Variety Shows, the Five Reigns of Phleng Thai Sakon)* (Bangkok: Samnak-ngan Khanakammakan Watthanatham Haeng Chat (Office of the National Culture Commission in Ministry of Culture), 2538 [1995]) 3 (in Thai).

During the Reign of King Rama VI

During the reign of King Vajiravudh or King Rama VI (1910-1925), the prosperity of “civilized” countries in Europe, America and Asia, particularly Japan, greatly inspired the King to modernize Siam to be equally “civilized”. The main reason was that if the country remained “uncivilized”, there was no guarantee that the Kingdom would not be harmed. The introduction of Western civilization and culture into Siam, after the reign of King Mongkut, was a continuing assimilating and synthesizing process. The King himself was educated in England. He adopted many Western practices and education methods to modernize the nation and encouraged his people to live like modern people in the West. In order to follow the royal desire of his father, King Chulalongkorn, and to witness the first university in Siam, King Vajiravudh announced that an institution of higher learning, Civil Service College, which would become a full university to be named Chulalongkorn University to commemorate his father. The introduction of surnames was also supposed to have been inspired by European practice.

Musically speaking, the King was generous in supporting all kinds of performing arts. He was himself was an artist, composing much music, plays and poetry. He founded an orchestra called “*kong khrueng sai farang luang*” [กองเครื่องสายฝรั่งหลวง] or “the royal Western string ensemble”, supervised by Phra Chen Duriyanga, that played Western classical music at royal receptions and theatrical performances. During this reign, Western performance genres became admired sources of entertainment. Thai classical music was closely involved in the King’s experiments in modern Thai drama and theatrical arts, influenced by the West. *Wong khrueng sai phasom* [วงเครื่องสายผสม]⁸ was created during this period.

⁸ *Wong khrueng sai phasom* is the combination of a Thai stringed ensemble and non-Thai instruments played using Thai methods, mostly Western instruments, for example, violin, piano.

During the Reign of King Rama VII

Throughout the period of King Prajadhipok or King Rama VII (1925-1935), who was educated in the West along with his brother, King Vajiravudh, the programme of Westernization and modernization was not much implemented due to financial problems. The King focused on turning Siam from an agricultural country into an industrialized one and introduced the country to the new world of technology. Speaking of music, King Prajadhipok himself had musical talent. One of his three compositions, "*homrong khluen krathop fang*" [โหมโรงคลื่นกระทบฝั่ง] which has Western characteristics, would sound like a good Western symphony if performed by a Western orchestra.

One of the projects under his patronage, a programme to transcribe Thai classical repertoire into Western notation, began in 1930 but stopped with the 1932 Revolution. The revolution action occurred in 1932 and turned Siam from an absolute monarchy into a constitutional monarchy.

During the Reign of King Rama VIII

In March 1935, King Prajadhipok abdicated from the throne and Prince Anandha Mahidol, who was studying in Switzerland at that time, became the next King Rama VIII or King Anandha Mahidol (1935-1946). Since the new King was too young to rule, at only ten years old, administrative power was held by the group of the 1932 Revolution, including Pridi Phanomyong and Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram (known as Phibun), during the period of the King's reign.

Thailand's process of Westernization and modernization started up again when Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram was prime minister in 1938-1944 and 1948-1957. Phibun was deeply concerned with the image of the country in the eyes of foreigners. He believed that Western culture provided an ideal model for modernizing the country as a result of his experiences and education in France. During World War II in December 1941, the presence of Japanese troops in Thailand forced Phibun to give them authorization of transit when they invaded Southeast Asia. Then he decided to ally Thailand with Japan. Phibun,

at that time, took serious action with various processes to modernize Thailand in order to become as “advanced” as other “civilized” nations. Some scholars believe that Phibun did his best for the security of the country as far as the war situation allowed and that he had no alternative except cooperation with Japan.

The programmes for modernizing Thailand were mainly concerned with aspects of Thai culture: language, arts, behaviour, daily activities, dress, etc. In 1942, the National Institute of Culture was established to supervise all these aspects. There were five bureaus under the institute: the Bureau of Spiritual Culture, the Bureau of Customary Culture, the Bureau of Literary Culture, the Bureau of Artistic Culture and the Bureau of Women’s Culture. Mass media was used to convince people to follow the government guidelines. All traditional culture that was not adapted to match Western aesthetics was discouraged. Western elements were welcomed. This was because Phibun wanted Thai people to live like people in modernized countries with Western standards. However, his cultural policies were not suitable for Thai people. For example, people were told to wear a hat, a pair of gloves, and a Western style costume when going out. In addition, Phibun decided to rename the country from Siam to be called Thailand, which made the country sound more Western. Since art was considered an indicator of the progress of the nation and an effective means of disseminating government policy, Phibun issued laws and regulations concerning modernization and purification of all forms of Thai arts (music, dance etc.) in order to represent a “civilized” nation. Traditional arts were ignored and preserved only as symbols of cultural heritage. Artists suffered under his policies. Since there were changes in Thai cultural values, these changes were all reflected in Thai aesthetics of arts. Many anthropologists agree that Phibun did much damage to the Thai cultural tradition. Several scholars have made the assumption that the reason why all traditional arts, which were usually under royal patronage, were abandoned, was probably because Phibun and his Revolution group were anti-absolute monarchy. These traditional arts could be seen as a reminder of the country under absolute monarchy. Therefore, Phibun and his group clearly preferred the Western style of arts.

The period of the 1932 Revolution group was a nightmare and a dark age for Thai classical music, which was closely controlled to the point of being abandoned. Musicians of Thai classical music needed to register for a license and ask permission to perform. Phibun appreciated the fact that music can create a respectable image of a civilized and culturally rich country in the eyes of Western nations. As a result, Thai classical music, which was under the supervision of the Bureau of Artistic Culture, was classified following Western traditions. Western aesthetics were affected by Thai classical music. Musicians and music teachers needed to be trained and to exchange knowledge with foreign countries in order to adapt Thai classical music to suit contemporary needs.

The use of music for national purposes resulted in various developments of Thai classical music culture. Phibun issued several regulations to control Thai classical music. For example, in 1939, the Government Public Relations Department set up *wong dontri krom kotsanakan* [วงดนตรีกรมโฆษณาการ], a Westernized Thai orchestra to perform Western style music. The musical scales of Thai instruments were adjusted to suit the Western standard. This period was when applied Thai music started, *phleng Thai prayuk* [เพลงไทยประยุกต์], *dontri Thai prayuk* [ดนตรีไทยประยุกต์], and *sangkhit prayuk* [สังคีตประยุกต์]. Music and lyrics had to be composed following government policy, including both entertaining songs and nationalist songs [*phleng plukchai* - เพลงปลุกใจ] aimed at arousing nationalist sentiment and propagating the new culture. “*Phleng Chat Thai*” (National Anthem) [เพลงชาติไทย] was composed in the Western style by Phra Chen Duriyanga, following Phibun’s demand. A very successful band, *Suntaraporn* [สุนทราภรณ์], that was formed in 1939, is a good example of the Westernization of Thai classical music. Many Thai classical pieces were arranged into Western style by this group and have remained popular until the present. Many members of this band are musicians of the Government Public Relations Department ensemble - *wong dontri krom kotsanakan*, including the leader; Khru Uea Suntonsanan [ครูเอื้อ สุนทรสนาน].

During the Reign of King Rama IX

After King Anandha Mahidol passed away in 1946, King Bhumibol Adulyadej (King Rama IX) became the next king until the present. However, during the first period of his reign, the country was still under government rule because King Bhumibol Adulyadej was studying abroad. He returned to Thailand permanently after graduation in 1951. Since the world has entered the era of globalization, high technologies have influenced countries around the world, including Thailand. The behaviours and tastes of Thai people have gradually changed. Westernized Thai music has received higher acceptance than the traditional original.

The King himself, who is very keen on jazz and blues music, has composed many songs with Thai and English lyrics. His musical accomplishments became known worldwide when, on a state visit to Austria in 1964, the “Nieder Osterreich Tonkünstler” performed a concert of several of his compositions in the Vienna Concert Hall. This concert was broadcast on Austrian Radio to the delight of European audiences. On 5th October 1964, “Die Akademie für Musik und Darstellende Kunst” in Wien elected His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej as an Honorary Member. He is the 21st Honorary Member of this famous institute and the first Asian composer to be thus honoured. Since then, jazz and blues music seem to play a large role in Thailand. His compositions can be heard all over the country.

Besides Western music, the King also takes an interest in Thai classical music. There are always Thai classical music projects under his patronage. Like her father, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn also takes deep interest in Thai classical music. She has granted musical instruments and supported teachers in many countries to teach, perform and promote Thai classical music internationally, for example, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, at the Royal Thai Embassy in the UK, and at the National University of Singapore. HRH herself is also a talented Thai classical musician. She always encourages people to be interested in Thai classical music and many Thai classical music projects are under her patronage.

Since Thai people have been more open to Westernized art forms, especially music, in comparison to previous reigns, besides *phleng Thai doem* [เพลงไทยเดิม] (Thai classical music), many new musical genres were created in the twentieth century. For example; *phleng sakon* [เพลงสากล] (non-traditional songs from overseas), *phleng Thai sakon* [เพลงไทยสากล] (Westernized Thai songs), an umbrella genre for *phleng luk krung* [เพลงลูกกรุง] (a highly Westernised popular song style), and *phleng luk thung* [เพลงลูกทุ่ง] (fusion of traditional Thai and Western popular singing styles), and *phleng Thai ruam samai* [เพลงไทยร่วมสมัย] (Thai fusion or contemporary music).

Music from outside Thailand, especially the USA, as well as from other Asian countries, began to be imported into Thailand. Thai music melodies were sometimes borrowed or adapted from such international sources and then recorded with Thai lyrics, allowing a strong feeling of Thainess to remain. There are also a large number of new melodies.

One good and impressionable example from 1993 until 1994, was when I was in *matthayom* [มัธยม] 2 in secondary school.⁹ There was an English song named “Broken Hearted Woman”, which was very popular among Thai people, sung by Jessica Jay. I remember that there were over 20 lyrics in Thai for this melody, which were adapted into various styles; for example, *luk thung* style, *luk krung* style, *mo lam* style [หมอลำ] (Westernized traditional music from North-Eastern Thailand), and popular style, amongst others. This melody with different lyrics was played for years almost everywhere: on TV programmes, on radio programmes, in department stores, in restaurants and even in PE lessons at my school when students had to do exercises.

In 21st century modern Thai society, Thai classical music exists under two systems of social organization: the old versus the new, and the traditional versus the modern. Media and technologies play a greater role in Thai music culture. Mass communication is used to support these two systems of social organization. *Phleng Thai ruam*

⁹ Similar to Year 9 in the British Curriculum System.

samai is now accepted in Thai society and widely performed through the media. Much Thai popular music derives from Thai classical music. For example, Bird Thongchai McIntyre, a popular singer, released his album “*rap khaek*” [รับแขก] in 2002. Most of the songs on this album use Thai traditional instruments, and some songs are derived from traditional Thai music. For example, the song “*kaew ta kaew tow*” [แก้วตาแก้วโตว] is a reworking of the traditional dance song “*lao krathop mai*” [ลาวกระต๊อบไม้]. According to the Grammy record company, the “*rap khaek*” album sold more than two million copies. As well as *phleng Thai ruam samai*, *phleng Thai doem* is promoted widely through media including TV, cinema, radio, internet, magazines, CDs and computer software.

To give examples of Thai classical music and the media, around 1984 on Channel 7, there was a TV soap opera called “*ranat ek*”, referring to the musical instrument that the main male character played. In 1997 on Channel 3, there was a TV soap opera called “*so sam sai*” [ซอสามสาย] (three stringed fiddle), referring to the musical instrument that the main female character of this soap opera played. At the beginning of 2004, there was a film about Thai classical music called “Homrong [โหมโรง]: The Overture”, which is a biography of Luang Pradit Pairon, one of the most famous Thai traditional music composers of the twentieth century. This film became an instant success with socialists and royalists alike. At the end of his life, Luang Pradit Pairon was involved in the country’s revolution when Western music and culture were promoted at the expense of all kinds of traditional music, which were in turn marginalized through the restriction of performances and official disapproval. During the period in which this film was promoted and in the following years, people took more interest in Thai classical music, especially the *ranat ek*, which is the major instrument of the film. For example, *ranat ek* was the best-seller product throughout the country, *ranat ek* lessons were fully booked at almost every music school, and there were meetings between the “Homrong” fan club and the film’s team.

In the middle of 2004, after the release of “Homrong”, the Work Point Company produced a new generation of variety show called “*Khun Phra Chuai*” [คุณพระช่วย], which concentrates on Thai

contemporary arts and culture. The programme has received a good response from viewers and is still broadcast. At the beginning of the show, there is always a performance of Thai music in contemporary style played by Thai contemporary musicians and their bands. At the final break of the show, there is a contemporary Thai music competition, in which the candidates have to play a Thai musical instrument together with pop music, or sometimes a Western orchestra. The show has rapidly achieved popularity with people of all ages, in particular the young generation. This is one example of how contemporary Thai music can be seen and heard more easily than in the past. In contemporary society, audiences have more opportunities to enjoy Thai music. They can also enjoy Thai contemporary music performances at restaurants, tourist places, department stores, etc. Thai contemporary music seems to have more platforms than in the past.

Case Study of Thai Musical Instruments and Innovation

In this century, there are many agendas to Westernize, modernize and globalize Thai classical music; for example, a programme to standardize the scale of Thai musical instruments. Most instrument makers traditionally tune their instruments by ear and as a result, factories have varying standards for the Thai heptatonic scale. Instruments from different factories could hardly be played in the same ensemble. However, traditionalists do not prefer the standardization because they claim that it will destroy the individuality of each factory's instruments. At this moment, listening to the scale of each ensemble, they can easily tell where and at which factory the musical instruments were made.

Theoretically, the scale of Thai instruments is comprised of a set of seven equidistant pitches. Compared to the Western scale, the Thai scale sounds slightly "out of tune", with tones appearing in the gaps between Western semitones. There are no flat or sharp notes in the Thai scale, only the seven pitches. On the contrary, the Western scale or chromatic scale consists of twelve pitches, which divide the octave into semitones.

In this section, the research and interview with Mr. Anusorn Thaweelarb,¹⁰ one of the musical innovators who Westernized the traditional scale of Thai musical instruments to match the chromatic scale, will be reviewed. Anusorn had been studying Thai classical music for over twenty years, but abandoned his study when he realised that this kind of music was very old fashioned and that he could not make his living as a Thai classical musician, at which point he turned to focus on Western music instead. He described that his intention in creating the Thai chromatic scale musical instruments was to solve the diffusion when using traditional Thai instruments to perform Western repertoires.

In 2003, he decided to invent new Thai classical musical instruments in the chromatic scale. He claimed that the greatest challenges in creating chromatic scale musical instruments were retaining the appearance of the traditional instruments as he added more notes to the instruments, and also preserving the traditional playing techniques. His first inspiration came from his daughter, who has a background in Western music and who wanted to learn the Thai traditional *khim* [ชิม], a 7 fretted hammered dulcimer. He wanted his daughter to avoid becoming confused between the two scales, Thai and Western, so he invented the *khim sakon* [ชิมสากล] or *khim chromatic* [ชิมโครมาติก] as his first chromatic scale instrument, to teach his daughter and later other students in his music school. After the *khim sakon*, he invented more instruments in the chromatic scale as he realised that with only the *khim sakon* there was no ensemble and he did not want his daughter to be alone in playing a chromatic instrument.

Later, Anusorn invented the *khæ* [แข่] or *chakhe chromatic* [จะเข้โครมาติก], a new invention derived from the *chakhe* [จะเข้]¹¹ in the chromatic scale with 4 strings and 19 frets. The *taleng ek* [ตะเลงเอก] with 37 keys and the *taleng thum* [ตะเลงทุ้ม] with 30 keys are the newly invented and given names of the Thai traditional *ranat ek*¹² and

¹⁰ Mr Anusorn changed his name to be Mr Wasu a few years after this interview.

¹¹ A traditional three stringed floor zither.

¹² A high pitched wooden xylophone with 21-22 bars.

*ranat thum*¹³ in the chromatic scale. The *khong sakon* [ฆ้องสากล] or *khong chromatic* [ฆ้องโครมาติก] is a chromatic tuned gong circle with 26 pots in a semicircular frame, adapted from the *khong wong yai* [ฆ้องวงใหญ่]¹⁴ and the *khong wong lek* [ฆ้องวงเล็ก].¹⁵ Again, through Anusorn's intention of becoming Westernized, he created the *klong sakon* [กลองสากล], which is a set of drums tuned in a chromatic scale hanging on a circular wooden frame, like a *poeng mang khok* [เปิงมางคอก].¹⁶

Anusorn described his further intentions in creating chromatic scale instruments, saying that, in this period of globalization, some changes are needed in order to preserve and promote Thai classical music worldwide. Nowadays, because there are many new compositions in Western music, there seem to be fewer in Thai classical music. He believed that there must certainly be some Thai classical musicians who want to perform Western melodies but do not want to play them on the pentatonic scale instruments and that the traditional scale of Thai musical instruments seems outmoded if performing the Western repertoire. His chromatic scale inventions will be the alternative in musical society in Thailand. It is like when you want to communicate with English people but you speak Thai to them; they will never understand what you are trying to communicate. If you speak English to them, they will understand you more, even if you have a Thai accent. In Anusorn's opinion, it is the same in Thai music culture; the accent of Thai music and the feeling of Thainess still appear when performing on chromatic Thai instruments. He believed that his invention is an advantage for Thai musical society because Western instruments cannot perform the Thai heptatonic scale repertoire, while Thai instruments can do so perfectly. Now there are two choices of scales for Thai musical instruments; the heptatonic scale and the chromatic scale. Anusorn wants to separate the performance of Western pieces on the Thai chromatic scale

¹³ A low pitched bamboo xylophone with 16 bars.

¹⁴ A large gong circle with 16 pots.

¹⁵ A high pitched small gong circle with 18 pots.

¹⁶ A set of seven drums tuned in the Thai traditional scale, hanging in a circular wooden frame.

instruments and Thai classical pieces on the Thai heptatonic scale instruments.

Once, when visiting his music school in Bangkok, I noticed that students who take a course in chromatic scale Thai classical instruments use Western musical notation for their lessons. Most of his performances are of compositions by His Majesty King Bhumibol, English nursery rhymes, such as "Mary had a little lamb", Western symphonies, Western sonatas and popular music. His inventions have gained acceptance from some classical Thai musicians, and from many Western musicians. Professional musicians have attended his music school to experiment with his inventions. The problems associated with playing his chromatic instruments are, firstly, that most Thai musicians who take an interest in playing his instruments cannot read Western staff notation, and secondly, in contrast, most of the Western musicians who can understand Western staff notation do not know the playing techniques for Thai traditional instruments. To solve these problems, Thai classical musicians either learn to read Western notation or memorise the song, whereas Western musicians must learn the techniques for playing traditional Thai instruments.

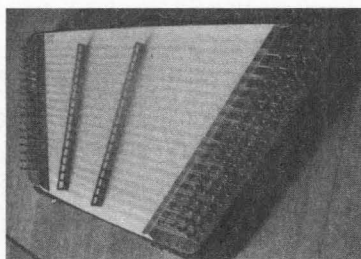
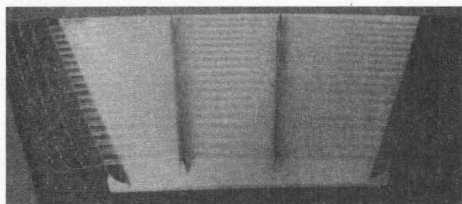
Since there are some nationalists, traditionalists and Thai music scholars who disapprove of his new inventions as a destruction of Thai classical music culture rather than a creation, Anusorn declared that he does not mean to oppose Thai classical music by creating such Westernized Thai musical scales but to support Thai music to become internationally accepted. He also never expected those people to accept his inventions, and he does not want them to predict that the Thai people of the whole country will not like his inventions as well. He said that he never forgot that he is Thai and he is very proud of his Thai nationalism, but he also wants to communicate to people around the world using his chromatic instruments, with the world standard scale as a tool, just as English is the language spoken around the world. There are some traditionalists who claimed that his chromatic inventions encouraged Thai people to neglect traditional Thai instruments. He argued that, prior to his inventions, Thai people seemed to ignore Thai classical music for a long time because of the limitations of, for example, new compositions and creativity, and also

the lack of encouragement and development. He advised those traditionalists to think of developing and encouraging Thai people to take an interest in Thai classical music rather than blaming others who were trying to help to preserve and promote Thai music by using Westernization and modernization methods.

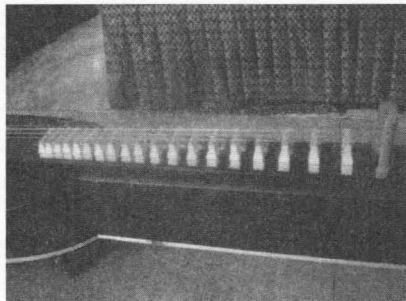
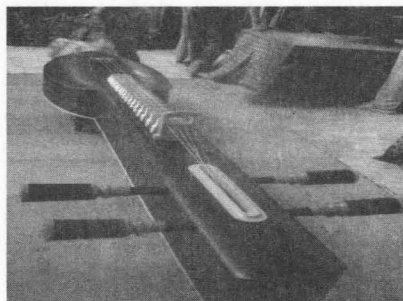
Fortunately, there are many nationalists, traditionalists and music scholars who are neutral, believing that, if Anusorn's invention is suitable for modern Thai music culture, it will exist in Thai classical music culture forever, comparable with the traditional Thai musical instruments. If his invention is unsuitable for modern Thai music culture, the Thai chromatic scale instruments will not survive in Thai music society. Only time will prove which is the case. Compared to other inventors who created Thai chromatic scale music instruments, Anusorn's innovation is widely accepted in public, but not in Thai music society. His chromatic Thai musical instruments have been promoted on TV programmes, in magazines, on websites, and also performed internationally. There have been some musicians from overseas who observed his inventions at his music school. He will only sell the chromatic instruments, which are made to order, because they are more expensive than the traditional Thai instruments.

Finally, one thing that concerns me is the recognition by the Department of Fine Arts, the governmental department working on all issues concerning Thai classical music. Referring to Anusorn's inventions, of course he attracts lots of attention and interest from Thai classical musicians and government but, unfortunately, he has never been granted official authorization to recognize his newly invented chromatic scale musical instruments as national instruments from any governmental department, such as the Ministry of Culture or the Department of Fine Arts.

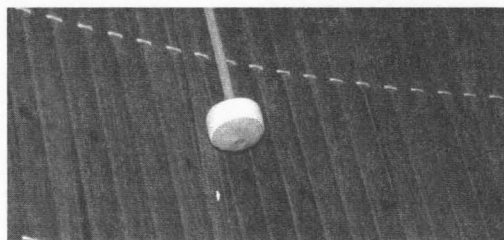
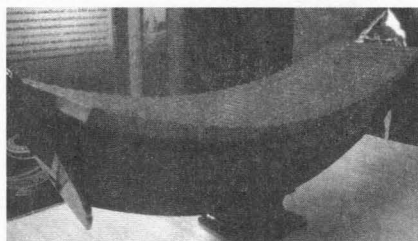
Appendix



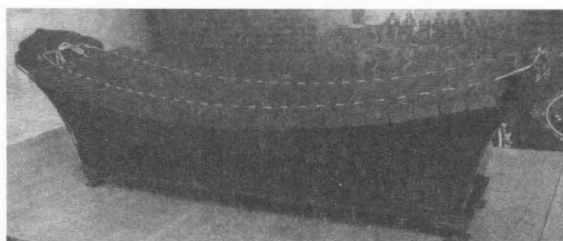
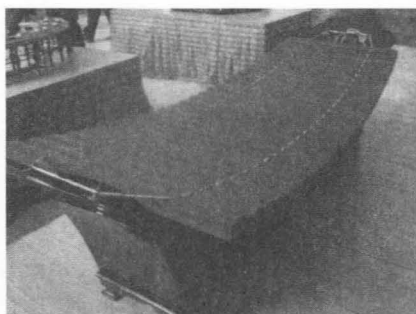
khim chromatic



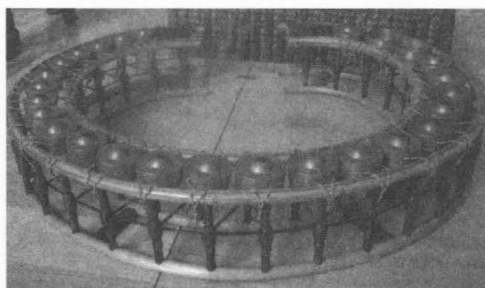
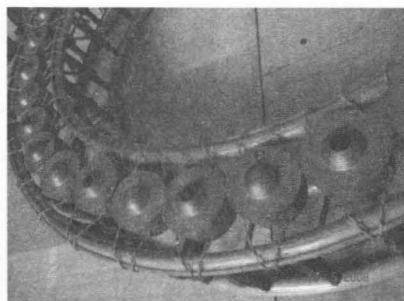
chakhe chromatic



taleng ek



taleng thum



khong chromatic

References

English

- Blacking, John. "Some Problems of Theory and Method in the Study of Musical Changes." *Yearbook of the Intl. Folk Music Council* 9 (1997): 1-26.
- Born, Georgina and David Hesmondalgh, eds. *Western Music and its Others*. London: University of California Press, 2000.
- Campbell, J.G.D. *Siam in the Twentieth Century*. London: Edward Arnold, 1902.
- Damrong Rajanubhab, H.H. Prince. "The Introduction of Western Culture into Siam." *Journal of the Siam Society* 20.2 (1926): 89-100.
- Dhanit Yupho. *Thai Musical Instruments*. Bangkok: Department of Fine Arts, 1960.
- Duriyanga, Phra Chen. *Siamese Music in Theory and Practice as Compares with that of the West and a Description of the Piiphaat Band*. Bangkok: Department of Fine Arts, 1948.
- Evers, Hans-Dieter, ed., *Modernization in South East Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Gaweewong, Gridthiya. 2001. *Thai Artists and an Issue of Cultural Identity*. <<http://www.apexart.org/conference/Gaweewong.htm>>.
- Jacobs, Norman. *Modernization Without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study*. New York: Praeger, 1971.
- Jiraporn Witayasakpan. "Nationalism and the Transformation of Aesthetic Concepts: Theatre in Thailand during the Phibun Period." Ph.D. Dissertation: Cornell University, 1992.
- Landon, Kenneth Perry. *Siam in Transition: A Brief Study of Cultural Trends in the Five Years since the Revolution of 1932*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968.

- Lockard, Craig A. *Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998.
- Miller, Terry E. and Jarernchai Chonpairot. "A History of Siamese Music Reconstructed from Western Documents, 1505-1932." *Crossroads* 8.2 (1995): 1-192.
- Miller, Terry E. and Sean Williams. *Southeast Asia (Garland Encyclopaedia of World Music, Vol. 4)*. London: Garland, 1998.
- Myers-Moro, Pamela. *Thai Music and Musicians in Contemporary Bangkok*. Berkeley: Centers for South and Southeast Asia Studies, 1993.
- Nettl, Bruno. *The Western Impact on World Music: Change, Adaptation and Survival*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1985.
- Nettl, Bruno. *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005.
- Rutnin, Mattani Mojdara. *Dance, Drama, and Theatre in Thailand: The Process of Development and Modernization*. Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for UNESCO, 1993.
- Tanin Kraivixien, ed. *The Music of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej*. Bangkok: Katavethin Foundation, 1987.
- Wyatt, David K. *Thailand: A Short History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

Thai

- Anuman Rajadhon, Phraya [พระยาอนุมานราชชน]. *Wiwatthanakan Haeng Watthanatham* [วิวัฒนาการแห่งวัฒนธรรม] (The Development of Culture). Bangkok: Rong-phim Thai Borikan, 2496 (1953).
- Montri Tramot [มนตรี ตราโมท]. *Som Song Saeng: Chiwit Dontri Thai Khong Montri Tramot* [โสมส่องแสง: ชีวิตดนตรีไทยของมนตรี ตราโมท] (A Musical Life of Montri Tramot). Bangkok: Thanakhan Krung Thep, 2527 (1984).

- Poonpit Amatayakul [พูนพิศ อมาตยกุล]. *Siam Sangkhit* [สยามสังคีต] (Articles on Thai Classical Music and Thai Musical Culture). Bangkok: Chaophraya, 2524 (1981).
- Poonpit Amatayakul [พูนพิศ อมาตยกุล]. *Dontri Wichak* [ดนตรีวิจิตร] (The Basic Knowledge of Thai Classical Music). Bangkok: Raksip, 2529 (1986).
- Poonpit Amatayakul [พูนพิศ อมาตยกุล]. *Lamnam Haeng Siam* [ลำนามแห่งสยาม] (Thai Music from Old Records). Bangkok: Nittayasan Hifi Stereo, 2540 (1997).
- Ratchabandit-tayasathan [ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน] (The Royal Institute). *Photchananukrom Thai* [พจนานุกรมไทย] (Thai Dictionary). Bangkok, 2542 (1999).
- Surapol Tonawanik [สุรพล โทณวณิก]. *Mahakam Dontri Lae Wiphitthatsana Ha Ratchakan Phleng Thai Sakon* [มหกรรมดนตรีและวิพิธทัศนา ห้ารัชกาลเพลงไทยสากล] (Concerts and Variety Shows, the Five Reigns of Phleng Thai Sakon). Bangkok: Samnak-ngan Khanakammakan Watthanatham Haeng Chat (Office of the National Culture Commission in Ministry of Culture), 2538 (1995).
- Thamsook Numnonda [แถมสุข นุ่มนนท์]. *Mueang Thai Samai Songkhrum Lok Khrang Thi Song* [เมืองไทยสมัยสงครามโลกครั้งที่สอง] (Thailand During World War II). Bangkok: Duang Kamon, 2530 (1987).