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The Emergence of Thai Opera: Performance as Cultural Synergy

Prawang, Fueanglada

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Bangor University

Bangor, Wales, United Kingdom

School of Music, Drama and Performance

**The Emergence of Thai Opera:
Performance as Cultural Synergy**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts, Humanities and
Business, Bangor University

Fueanglada Prawang

School of Music, Drama and Performance

March, 2021

Yr wyf drwy hyn yn datgan mai canlyniad fy ymchwil fy hun yw'r thesis hwn, ac eithrio lle nodir yn wahanol. Caiff ffynonellau eraill eu cydnabod gan droednodiadau yn rhoi cyfeiriadau eglur. Nid yw sylwedd y gwaith hwn wedi cael ei dderbyn o'r blaen ar gyfer unrhyw radd, ac nid yw'n cael ei gyflwyno ar yr un pryd mewn ymgeisiaeth am unrhyw radd oni bai ei fod, fel y cytunwyd gan y Brifysgol, am gymwysterau deuol cymeradwy.

I hereby declare that this thesis is the results of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. All other sources are acknowledged by bibliographic references. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree unless, as agreed by the University, for approved dual awards.

Abstract

Since the turn of the twenty-first century there has been a small but significant number of operas written by Thai composers or those who identify as being Thai. Most of these Thai operas are based on Thai mythology or histories. The majority of the librettos are in English, with the remainder being in Thai. The music is largely Western in style, looking back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though often incorporating traditional Thai melodies.

This thesis is the first to examine this emerging repertoire of Thai operas. Despite being culturally and musically significant, these works have received scant scholarly attention. This thesis compiles what is known of these works and situates them in their context(s). It offers insights to the development of the genre from its origins: from translations of Western works by King Rama VI in the early twentieth century through to the in-progress Wagner-inspired cycle of Somtow Sucharitkul.

Twenty Thai operas are discussed in this thesis; five unperformed. Of the remaining fifteen, only three are in Thai, with the remainder in English. Much of this research results from fieldwork and interviews with 48 composers and musicians involved in creating and staging these works. Therefore, this is a new area of research. Some of these musicians are elderly or in poor health, making the gathering of information on their first-hand experiences timely. Further insights were derived from the author's professional experience(s) as an opera singer born and educated in Thailand, with experience of performing both Western and Thai operas.

Findings suggest that although socio-culturally and politically-significant, Thai operas are little-known both in Thailand and beyond. As a result, the genre faces challenges in performance and reception. Five key challenges (and barriers) emerge: (1) culture; (2) politics; (3) popularity; (4) religion; (5) language. Arguably the biggest challenge is for Thai opera to be fully embraced as a 'Thai' genre, especially given that the Thai language is often avoided by composers. The reason being that Thai is a tonal language and its words can have multiple meanings depending on how they're pronounced tonally. Non-Thai speakers struggle with Thai because of the tonal nature: when it is sung according to Western notation the text is often

rendered unintelligible to native speakers. Many of the composers turned to English for libretti, which arguably renders the genre neither Thai nor Western, instead falling between the two stools. If there is a way to resolve this issue of singing opera in Thai, and avoid having to use other languages, it would be a step towards Thai language opera becoming a national treasure. Thai is as compatible as any other language in terms of its melodic quality, provided it is sung correctly to avoid mispronunciations due to its tonal nature. This leads to the experiment in chapter 5, which has resulted in expanding the Western notation by adding new symbols. Three simple symbols were created to help the conductor understand where the singers slow the tempo to slide the note to fit the meaning of the words. Non-Thai-speaking singers could sing and imitate native Thai speakers using this method. The experiment addresses the problem of Thai's tonal nature and opens up Thai to become as successfully performed in operas as other languages.

By foregrounding Thai opera this thesis has two main aspirations: (1) to become a vital resource for Thai composers and performers; (2) to increase awareness of this cultural interaction in the West. There are many young Thai composers who want to create operas in Thai but have no examples for inspiration; this thesis will explain the challenges of performing operas in Thailand. It is important for non-musicians to recognise that a national style of Thai opera exists in Thailand. This research has explored why opera in Thai has been challenging for composers and performers. The solution is to translate key elements of the Thai language into Western notation, which allows non-Thai speakers to work with operas in Thai, thus potentially opening up the genre to international singers. Performing these music dramas in schools can help children to develop their confidence and concentration. Moreover, these operas could be an effective way to teach children about important moral and historical lessons from Thai culture.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. 'What is Thai Opera?'

Music in Thailand today reflects a mixture of multicultural influences especially with Western music; it plays an important part in Thai society. Thailand has accepted all aspects of Western music with no boundaries and it has spread everywhere in locals' daily lives. With its origins in the early decades of the twentieth century, since around the turn of the present century Thai opera has emerged as a culturally and musically significant meeting of Western and Thai influences. It has, however, to date received no detailed scholarly enquiry.

This thesis defines Thai opera as: musico-dramatic works written primarily in a Western musical style but using traditional mythologies, characters, instruments, melodies and Thai language in different combinations and context. Thai opera has its origins in the early twentieth century, but mainly developed in the current century. Nevertheless, most Thai people are unaware of this small but significant genre. Indeed, in Thailand the term would probably be most associated with the native *Likay*: a traditional drama similar in some respects to Western opera. This is the understanding of Thai people who are not familiar with Western opera, therefore, they attempt to compare a Thai drama that tells a story by singing to a Western opera, which on the surface does the same. There are more similarities, such as singers dress up according to their role and they act in an exaggerated manner. However, the truth is that the basis of singing is totally different to Western opera, and *Likay* has no fixed notation, instead relying on improvisation on the stage (see Chapter 3.5.3). *Likay* was also not inspired by Western opera. These are two completely different cultural and musical styles. Therefore, the definition of Thai opera as being *Likay*, is just a comparison. Later, Thai opera which uses Western opera patterns was established in 1910 when King Rama VI translated *Mikado* from English into Thai.

1.2. Topic

Given the lack of awareness, it is of little surprise that Thai opera has received minimal scholarly attention. Part of the issue is that there is scant documentary evidence available to support academic inquiry. For example, many of the scores are unpublished. Even finding documentary records of performances proves challenging, and at times impossible. To overcome these fundamental issues, it has been necessary to conduct a significant amount of fieldwork, interviewing those directly involved in these operas, both composers and performers. There were forty-eight people interviewed in total, half of which were personal interviews conducted in Thailand during August 2017, with the remainder having been interviewed online. Interviews are an ideal way to collect data, hear the issues and direct experiences from the composers, learn new aspects of the operas and understand the development of Thai opera. It is also helpful to talk with people who worked on these operas first-hand in order to analyse the challenges of performing Thai opera, which may improve future productions and develop the genre. As such, this thesis offers not only an account of the development of Thai opera but also the only repository that records details of these works. All interview questions received prior approval (see Certificate of Ethics Approval and Consent Form in Appendix F & G).

Traditional Thai music has inspired composers to create their opera with Thai melodies in different ways. However, for some people who have never listened to traditional Thai music, it may be difficult to recognise the tunes. Therefore, it is necessary to include the traditional Thai music involved with composing Thai opera in this thesis. This is important for assessing the way in which Thai opera developed and the inspiration behind it. There are many books and considerable research about traditional Thai music; however, no book has ever focused on the aspect of traditional Thai music in Thai opera. While there are numerous studies of Western opera, relatively little has been published about traditional Thai music. There are two important MA theses which also deal with the subject of opera in Thailand: Lalit Worathepnitinan's 'The History of Thai Drama and the Influence of Western Music on Opera in Thailand',¹ and Sassaya Chavalit's 'Origin and Development of Opera in

¹ Lalit Worathepnitinan, *The History of Thai Drama and the Influence of Western Music on Opera in Thailand*, MA diss. (University of Music Graz, 2018).

Thailand'.² However, both include little about the works discussed in this thesis. Instead their primary focus is on the way in which Western art music was brought to Thailand. Western opera in Thailand is still a new form of entertainment and local people think of it as high-class music.³ Only luxury venues offer this type of music and only rich people can afford to see it, even though they do not understand the music: they still consume it.⁴ Some composers realised this; therefore, they created a new medium in operatic form so that people could enjoy a story that they are already familiar with. As such Thai opera enters into a discourse of privilege and the economics of culture. Indeed, according to Somtow Sucharitkul (the leading composer of Thai opera), another reason is that 'opera can also represent how civilized a country is'.⁵ This reason could apply to King Rama VI who translated the first Thai opera in 1911, while neighbouring countries had been colonised by Western Europeans. Therefore, the king, who is the representation of the country, showed Western nations that Thailand is a civilized country by creating Thai opera. There are several Thai tales and Thai legends that need to be told, not just in Thailand but also around the world. These stories also have important messages and morals within them. Composers chose to write operas in Thai because they are aware that some local people cannot understand English. They also recognised that opera in the Thai language could be an important cultural work for Thailand. However, these works are in the minority: only three of over twenty works are sung in Thai.

² Sassaya Chavalit, *Origin and Development of Opera in Thailand*, MA diss. (University Mozarteum Salzburg, 2014).

³ Author's interview with Thai people who had no knowledge about opera (3-27 July, 2018).

⁴ For example, the Hotel Muse in Thailand offers performances by the pop opera group Fivera at its luxury Italian restaurant.

⁵ Author's interview with Somtow Sucharitkul (17 August 2017).

1.3. Structure and Methodology

This thesis has two complementary components: musicology and performance. The thesis contains all the information involved with the Thai operas in this study, and attempts to situate the genre in its musical and cultural context. This thesis is divided into six chapters. After this introduction, chapter 2 discusses the history and background to the origin of Western music in Thailand from 1511 until the recent day. This provides necessary context for the reception of Western music in Thailand. It also outlines aspects of political change and evolution of the nation that affected Western music in Thailand, and analyses the overall development of Thai opera. As indigenous music and culture directly informs Thai operas, chapter 3 offers an overview of relevant Thai music, learning methods, language and elements involved with Thai operas: this is essential context for chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 discusses all twenty Thai operas and is divided into two parts: Thai Operas (Unperformed) and Thai Operas (Performed). For convenience, the performed operas are also sub-divided into Thai opera in English and Thai libretto. This chapter describes every opera in depth, such as the premiere performance, the plot in each act and analysis between the original and opera stories. The challenges and problems associated with each performance is also included in this chapter. Chapter 5 is a case study approach to addressing the issue of singing in Thai while still retaining the tonal aspects of the language. There is an experiment with new notation involving the creation of three symbols that help singers to sing Thai opera. The final chapter is the conclusion and future challenges. The appendices also contain scores and an original synopsis of each opera. There are also seven composers' biographies who have written Thai operas that have been performed. Included are any relevant music achievements that contributed toward their works in Thai operas, their lifestyles, education, interests, personal views and other contributory factors towards their decision to compose these operas.

1.4. Background of the Musicology Component

Given that Thailand was never colonised by a Western power, the question of how and why opera came to Thailand is an important one to address. The first contact between Thai people and Western Europeans happened in 1511, when a group of Portuguese traders visited the country.⁶ From then on, Western religion and music have continuously influenced the country's culture. The locals adopted cultural elements from the West including music and opera. In 1910, King Rama IV was the first to translate a comic opera into Thai: *The Mikado* by Gilbert and Sullivan. He had planned to have it performed but the production had to be cancelled because the rebel group R.S. 130 tried to assassinate him.⁷ There are a few more Thai operas that never had a chance to be performed and this research focuses on the reasons for their cancellation. It is a substantial amount of work to produce opera: (1) create the music for the whole orchestra and singers; (2) write the libretto and story; (3) find financial support; (4) select good singers and an orchestra; (5) find a good stage director; (6) find costume and makeup artists; (7) conduct the stage technicians; (8) promote the opera. The composer needs to understand Western opera, music theory and poetry/literature. It takes a significant amount of time to learn all of these skills. The only people in Thailand who had the chance to gain all of these skills were those from the royal family and wealthy families. They had financial support and the opportunities to watch Western opera abroad, learn Western music theory, learn all of the above skills and have good connections for finding sponsors. Therefore, the first three Thai operas that were ever written were composed by King Rama VI. King Rama VI's pen name, while he was a prince, was Phra Khanhan Phet; a two-sided sharp diamond weapon only used by a god. After he became king he changed his pen name to Sri Ayutthaya.

⁶ Jittapim Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, D.A. diss. (University of Northern Colorado, 2011), pp. 7-8.

⁷ Poonpit Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี [*Vajiravudh with Music*] (Bangkok, 2012), pp. 134-135.

The first opera performed by Thai musicians was in 1918: *Cavalleria Rusticana*, an Italian opera by Mascagni.⁸ Alberto Nazzari⁹ was the conductor of the orchestra. It was a big moment for Western opera in Thailand. Indeed, there were only six Western operas performed in Thailand by Thai musicians across the entire twentieth century (see Chapter 2). The first opera in Thai to have been performed abroad is *Ngau Pa* by Pathorn Srikaranonda. It was performed in Edinburgh by Westerners in 2000. It is actually the first Thai opera to have ever been performed; however, the performance consisted of just one act (see Chapter 4.2.6). In the subsequent two decades, several Thai operas have been written and performed. Some of them are in Thai and some are in English: all of them have Thai elements. The first Thai opera ever performed in Thailand was *Madana* by Somtow Sucharitkul in 2001. The opera is in English but contains many Thai elements such as the original story which was written by King Rama VI and the traditional Thai melodies used in the opera (see Chapter 4.2.1). There are twenty Thai operas discussed in this thesis; five have never been performed (see Table 1.1). However, to fully understand the genre these too must be assessed. The other fifteen were performed in Thailand and internationally. We can add to this number an opera cycle about the Ten Lives of the Buddha by Somtow Sucharitkul. As of 2020, seven out of a cycle of ten operas have been completed. For all completed operas, full detail is disclosed, including an analysis of the plots and any Thai music elements.

The first opera in Thai to be performed in Thailand is Krisada and Napisi Reyes' *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* (2008). There are many Thai elements in this opera such as Thai musical instruments, traditional Thai tunes and Thai language. However, the plot of the opera is not a traditional Thai tale but a story about modern Thai life (see Chapter 4.2.7). The other opera in Thai is Thanapoom Sirichang's *The Lunch Box* (2009), which was performed in Tasmania, Australia. In this opera, there are several Thai elements such as a famous Thai tale, Thai musical instruments and the Thai language (see Chapter 4.2.8). There are three operas in Thai and all of them tackle the same problem, which is the Thai tonal language. The

⁸ Sugree Charoensook, 'อาศรมมิวสิก การคัดเลือกนักดนตรีวงทีพีโอ โดย:สุกรี เจริญสุข [Music Ashram, the Selection of Musicians in TPO]', *Matichon news online*, entry post 4.04.17, https://www.matichon.co.th/columnists/news_518455 (accessed 5.12.20).

⁹ An Italian musician that taught music in Thailand and conducted the first opera performed by local people in 1918.

same word pronounced with a different tone changes the word's meaning. They use different approaches to solve this problem by teaching non-Thai singers to sing Thai, but there is no research about singing Thai in operatic form so they have struggled to find a suitable solution. Therefore, in chapter 5 this thesis offers a case study of the problems commonly encountered when singing in Thai. The problem is overcome by creating new symbols. Before creating the symbols, some investigation into Chinese opera was required to see if a similar problem exists because Chinese is also a tonal language and there are many Chinese operas. It is difficult to find scholarly material in English or Thai about Chinese opera. Therefore, musicians who had direct experience with Chinese opera were interviewed. They supplied important information about Chinese opera and stated that it was hard to understand and only the older generation watch it. After careful research, three new symbols were created to control the tone and shorten vowels (see Chapter 5).

During the beginning of the twenty-first century, Thai operas were performed almost every year, although it is hard to put a production together because there are not many consumers of opera in Thailand. However, the Thai royal family, famous brands and opera lovers came forth as patrons of operatic arts. Thailand did not have a proper music hall that is suitable for opera and there were not enough trained Thai opera singers who live in Thailand. Sontow Sucharitkul commented on the fact that it is much cheaper to produce an opera in Thailand compared to in the West or in neighbouring countries. One Metropolitan opera production in USA costs around thirty million dollars.¹⁰ However, in Thailand, Sucharitkul used only twenty million baht (around six hundred thousand dollars) to perform many productions throughout a year and took the whole production abroad too. As a comparison, one hour of production in USA costs the same amount of money as a year's worth of productions in Thailand.¹¹ The main reasons being that costumes in Thailand are cheap and musicians earn less than in other places, for instance, Vietnamese musicians earn much more than Thai musicians. Even though it is much cheaper to produce opera in Thailand than other countries, money is still an issue. Sucharitkul had to use his own money to finance his performances.¹² This also happened with other opera

¹⁰ Author's interview with Sontow Sucharitkul (17 August 2017).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

productions in Thailand. Composers need to have support from organisations to be able to perform their operas.

The second component in this thesis is performance: the research presented is supported and complemented by fifty-two minutes of recordings of the author's performances, each of which have been carefully chosen to illustrate key points in the research. Given that none of the works discussed in this thesis are available in commercial recordings, these performances offer essential context. The performances have been newly recorded for this project, except the first scene of *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals*. The arias have been chosen mostly from the Thai operas: *Madana*, *Mae Nak*, *Ayodha*, *Suriyothai*, *Ngau Pa*, and *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals*. These specific examples were chosen because they demonstrate the confluence of Thai and Western music, Thai music melodies and tonal language issues. All of the performed scores were available either through being published or provided by the composers. All of the selected numbers are mostly the main characters' arias; some are duets. The remaining recordings are of Western operas that influenced composers to create Thai operas: *The Mikado* and *Madame Butterfly*. King Rama VI translated *The Mikado* into Thai but the translation was lost. To gain an insight into what the lost opera could have sounded like and to reconstruct something of the process of King Rama VI, an aria from *The Mikado*, 'The Sun Whose Rays Are All Ablaze' was translated into Thai and recorded using correct tonal inflections (see Appendix F). There is also a recording of the Western opera most performed by local people in Thailand: *Hansel and Gretel*. About half of the recordings are from the Ph.D. concert and an opera production. The remaining audio recordings were recorded in the studios at Bangor University. One further recording is of a Thai song composed by King Rama VI called *Alexandra*. This song acts as an example of tonal language issues in chapter 5, as it concisely illustrates the issues identified.

Opera	Language	Composer/ translator/ libretto	Year	Performed
<i>The Mikado</i>	Thai	King Rama VI (translator)	1910	No
<i>Wantee</i>	Thai	King Rama VI (translator)	1911	No
<i>Chao Tak Sin</i>	English & German	King Rama VI (translator)	c. 1868- 1925	No
<i>Daranee</i>	Thai	His Royal Highness Prince Adityadibabha (libretto)	c. 1939- 1945	No
<i>Ngau Pa</i>	Thai	Pathorn Srikaranonda (composer)	2000	Yes (Part)
<i>Madana</i>	English	Sucharitkul (composer)	2001	Yes
<i>Mae Naak</i>	English	Sucharitkul (composer)	2003	Yes
<i>Ayodhya</i>	English	Sucharitkul (composer)	2006	Yes
<i>The Story of the Long-Gone Animals</i>	Thai	Krisada (composer) & Napisi Reyes (libretto)	2008	Yes
<i>A Boy and a Tiger</i>	English & Thai	Bruce Gaston (composer)	2009	Yes
<i>The Lunch Box</i>	Thai	Thanapoom Sirichang (composer) & Bringkop Vora-urai (libretto)	2009	Yes
<i>The Silent Prince, Temiya</i>	English	Sucharitkul (composer)	2010	Yes

<i>Pero Vaz de Sequeira</i>	English	Srikaranonda (composer)	2011	No
<i>Suriyothai</i>	English	Sucharitkul (composer)	2013	Yes
<i>The Lost Prince, Mahajanaka</i>	English	Sucharitkul (composer)	2014	Yes
<i>The Naga Prince, Bhuridat</i>	English	Sucharitkul (composer)	2015	Yes
<i>The Faithful Son, Sama, Suwannasam</i>	English	Sucharitkul (composer)	2015	Yes
<i>The Chariot of Heaven, Nemiraj</i>	English	Sucharitkul (composer)	2017	Yes
<i>The Honourable Prince, Canda-Kumara</i>	English	Sucharitkul (composer)	2019	Yes
<i>The Clever Sage, Mahosadha</i>	English	Sucharitkul (composer)	2019	Yes

Table 1.1: List of Thai operas in chronological order of composition.

1.5. Literature Review

While opera emerged in the academies of northern Italy in the late sixteenth century, it was not cultivated in Thailand until the early twentieth. Thailand first adopted opera in 1910 during the reign of King Rama VI (1880-1925). Initial research for this thesis offered a contextual study of the way in which Western elements were slowly absorbed into Thai culture and Western music became established in Thailand. This research is about Western operas that have Thai elements, which are referred to as Thai operas within this thesis. This topic offers a lot of ground for further exploration as research into this particular field has not been established yet.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, there has been an increase in scholarly study of opera composition in Thailand, although there are still only a few journal articles about Thai opera that have never been performed such as articles by Dr. Poonpit Amatyakul¹³ and Nutthan Inkhong.¹⁴ These articles discuss Thai opera only on a superficial level. On the other hand, this thesis contains an in-depth analysis and extensively detailed discussion of each opera. There is a close study of how and why these operas were performed, what they are about and what problems arose. To achieve this, the research mostly relied on interviews with composers and musicians that were involved with these operas.

This research topic was selected as a continuation and consolidation of the author's 2015 Master's thesis: *Historic Roots and the Influence of Western Music on Opera in Thailand*.¹⁵ For instance, only one Thai opera was analysed in the Master's thesis, whereas here there are twenty Thai operas analysed in great depth. This interest developed from extensive experience performing in both Western and Thai operas. This subject has rarely been researched before, plus personal expertise fits into the field. As an example of this experience, in 2008, there was the opportunity to perform in the role of mother in the first full opera in Thai: *The Story of the Long-*

¹³ Poonpit Amatyakul, 'มหาอุปรากรของไทยสองเรื่อง ที่ไม่มีโอกาสแสดง [Two Thai Operas That Never Had a Chance to Be Performed]', *วารสารเพลงดนตรี [Music Journal]*, *Oknation*, entry posted 1.11.07, <http://oknation.nationtv.tv/blog/insanetheater/2007/05/01/entry-1> (accessed 5.12.20).

¹⁴ Nutthan Inkhong, *มหาอุปรากรในสมัย รัชการที่ 6 [Opera in the Period of King Rama VI]*, in Poonpit Amatyakul (ed.), *พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี [Vajiravudh with Music]* (2012), pp. 133-141.

¹⁵ Fueanglada Prawang, *Historic Roots and the Influence of Western Music on Opera in Thailand*, MA diss. (University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, 2015).

Gone Animals by Krisada and Napisi Reyes. The opera had some interesting issues which needed addressing and resolving. Preliminary research revealed several Thai operas that were almost completely unknown, such as *Chao Tak Sin*. This discovery acted as a catalyst to investigate Thai opera further.

As mentioned, there are two recent dissertations¹⁶ related to Thai opera but neither discusses the subject in-depth. These dissertations mention only three Thai operas: *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals*, *Mae Naak* and *Suriyothai*. They provide only basic information concerning Thai operas and the history of Western music in Thailand. The rest of the dissertations give the background of traditional Thai music that is similar to Western opera. There was no analysis about the challenges nor problems of performing Thai opera. They also included information about traditional Thai instruments, which is not relevant to Thai opera. Worathepnitinan's dissertation contained her own personal experience detailing how she gained an interest in Western music. However, the dissertations were useful because both of them have personal experience performing *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals*. It was reasonable for them to write about only a few Thai operas in their dissertations because a Master's thesis covers a smaller scope than a Ph.D. thesis. This thesis, on the other hand, covers twenty operas, all of which have Thai elements. This research also digs deeper into Thai operas and aims to create a record of interviews with each composer about their personal reasons for creating these operas. Another important issue was the problem with Thai as a tonal language and how to solve this to assist future composers with creating opera in Thai.

While researching about singing in a tonal language, a few papers were discovered such as Marjorie Chan's paper,¹⁷ D. Robert Ladd's presentation,¹⁸

¹⁶ Worathepnitinan, *The History of Thai Drama and The Influence of Western Music on Opera in Thailand* and Chavalit, *Origin and Development of Opera in Thailand*.

¹⁷ Marjorie Chan, 'Tone and Melody Interaction in Cantonese and Mandarin Songs', *UCLA Working Papers in Phonetics*. 68, (n.p. 1987), pp.132-169.

¹⁸ D. Robert Ladd, 'Singing in Tone Languages: Phonetic and Structural Effects', *Text of talk presented at the 27th annual meeting of the Phonetic Society of Japan, Kanazawa*, (University of Edinburgh, 2013), <http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/~bob/TALKS/japan.tone-song.public.pdf> (accessed 5.12.20).

Francis Mading Deng's work,¹⁹ and Wing See Vincie Ho's research.²⁰ These works research about singing in a tonal language in-depth, however, they concentrated only on Chinese and Dinka. There is no research about singing in a tonal language in Thai and all of these papers offered research on pop or folk songs. However, this thesis focuses particularly on singing opera in the Thai tonal language, a subject for which there are no existing research papers.

Most of the data in chapters 1 and 2 came from books and theses relevant to Western music in Thailand and traditional Thai music. One of the richest sources is the thesis: 'Establishment of Western Music in Thailand'.²¹ The paper won the Outstanding Dissertation Award in 2011 at the University of Northern Colorado. Yamprai's thesis researched from the beginning of Western people arriving into Thailand in 1511 until 2011 and it contained every type of music such as church music, military music, classical music, symphony orchestra and opera. It is a broad research of Western music history in Thailand; however, it does not contain much opera. Other studies were not as well-referenced and most of their references came from books that were not up to date, such as Cholmoo Chalanukloh's book.²² His book focuses on Western music in the period of the Rattanakosin Kingdom (1782-1932) including the revolution of 1932 with the transition from the absolute monarchy of Siam to a constitutional monarchy of a democratic Thailand. There is a considerable section of information dedicated to King Rama VI, who was significant in the growth of Western influence in Thai culture. However, this research was used as reference in this thesis but not as much as Yamprai's thesis.

There are also several books about Thai kings referenced in this thesis such as books by Kittipong Wirodthammakul and Kitti Lopetcharat.²³ These historical books about kings provide evidence that kings are the main factor in bringing Western music to Thailand. However, these books concentrate only on the activities

¹⁹ Francis Mading Deng, *The Dinka and Their Songs* (Oxford, 1973).

²⁰Wing See Vincie Ho, *The Tone-Melody Interface of Popular Songs Written in Tone Languages*, Proceedings of 9th International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition (Bologna, 2006), pp. 1414-1422.

²¹ Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*.

²² Cholmoo Chalanukloh, ดนตรีฝรั่งในยุคสมัยรัตนโกสินทร์ [*Western Music in Rattanakosin*] (Bangkok, 1981).

²³ Kittipong Wirodthammakul, ทรงเล่าเรื่อง เสรีประพาสยุโรป [*Telling Story, Travel in Europe*] (Bangkok, 2016) and Kitti Lopetcharat, ดนตรี & กีฬา & ศิลปะ พ่อหลวงของแผ่นดิน [*Music & Sports & Art of the Father of Thailand*] (Bangkok, 2017).

and duties of one king. There were no books or research written about kings and Western music history in Thailand except one book that gathered information about music during the reign of King Rama VI; พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี

[*Vajiravudh with Music*].²⁴ This book was written by many authors, one being Poonpit Amatyakul, an important musician in Thailand. Some authors wrote about Western operas and others wrote about Thai operas that King Rama VI created but never had the chance to be performed. This book contains important information about Thai operas but only for a few pages and the article about Thai opera does not have any references. However, Poonpit Amatyakul did agree to an interview as part of this project. Amatyakul teaches medicine and music at Mahidol University. He is also a consulate of Rajasuda College. He used to work in the media, where he compiled a collection of music books, scores, and historical evidence. That evidence is still kept in the Suthep Library at Mahidol University. Amatyakul grew up in the royal family palace, where he was a chamberlain for thirty years to Hemvadi, a princess of Siam and daughter of King Rama V. He learned much about the royal family and their music during his time in the palace. He wrote more than nine hundred articles and documentaries about music. He was the first person to become a professor of music in Mahidol University and the third person in the whole of Thailand. The interview took place when he was seventy-four years old. Amatyakul gave an interview about his article and also the development of traditional Thai singing before and after Western opera came to Thailand. He possesses extensive knowledge and has a fantastic memory; he is able to vividly recall his youth.

One of the most famous traditional Thai music books that is used for reference in this thesis is *Thai Music, Thai culture series No. 8* (1956) by Phra Chen Duriyang (1884-1968). Phra Chen Duriyang is the Thai alias of Peter Feil, a Thai-German, and highly influential musician in Thailand. He was the first person to transcribe traditional Thai music into Western notation. His book is one of the most well-known reference works for foreigners who want to learn Thai music, giving in-depth detail of Thai music theory and explanations of the differences between Thai and Western notation. It is an old book but it is still one of the best sources for chapter 3. Other traditional Thai music books have similar information and reference

²⁴ Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี [*Vajiravudh with Music*].

Phra Chen Duriyang's books; such as Sujid Wongtad's ดนตรีไทย มาจากไหน [Where is Thai Music From?] (2010) and a book by David Morton; Thai Traditional Music of Thailand (1976). However, Phra Chen Duriyang's book only focuses on Thai theory, how to learn Thai music and music in the traditional Thai style and it is an old book that needs to be updated to include modern learning practices for Thai music with Western notation.

As an illustration of the research gaps in Thai music, there is almost no scholarly material available on *Lae* (traditional Thai singing), despite it being widely known in Thailand. The information that does exist was found on the internet and in various newspaper articles. Most Thai people know of and have heard *Lae*, however, there appear to be no books or any theses written about it.

Chapter 4.1: Thai Operas (Unperformed) was arguably the most challenging section of this thesis to research, largely because it covers works that were never performed or completed. Naturally such works are little known and much of the evidence had to be sourced directly from the composers and others involved. There are only two articles that have looked into this topic. The first article is by Dr. Poonpit Amatyakul²⁵ and the second is by his student, Nutthan Inkhong.²⁶ Both articles have almost the same information. However, Inkhong's article gives more information about Western opera in Thailand around King Rama VI's era (1880-1925). The article helps people to understand the situation in that period and asserts that the king was influenced by the West and the major role he played in establishing many new genres of music. However, Inkhong's article does not contain much information about Thai operas that were never performed, while Dr. Poonpit Amatyakul's article has more depth. Due to this considerable lack of information, it was necessary to travel back to Thailand in August 2017 to interview several outstanding musicians and singers; one of them, as mentioned above, being Dr. Amatyakul. Most of the information in chapter 3 and 4.1 is from his interview.

²⁵ Amatyakul, 'มหาอุปรากรของไทยสองเรื่อง ที่ไม่มีโอกาสแสดง [Two Thai Operas That Never Had a Chance to Be Performed]'.

²⁶ Inkhong, 'มหาอุปรากรในสมัย รัชการที่ 6 [Opera in the Period of King Rama VI]', pp. 133-141.

There is also comparative analysis between the plot of the original stories and the plot in the operas because some productions cut from and add to parts of the original story. This shows the different perspectives of the stories and the way each composer adapted the story to their own style. The differences also highlight the influences in their works. To undertake this comparative analysis, many books, cartoons, movies and TV series were investigated. Some books used ancient Thai language such as *Ramayana* (or *Rammakean*), *Madana*, while other books are written in poetic style, such as *Ngau Pa*, which was hard to understand and took time. To research these stories, it was essential to learn some ancient Thai. However, there are some books and reviews about these stories which are easy to read and understand such as Pattanawiriyawanich's Masters thesis on *Madana*.²⁷

²⁷ Duangduean Pattanawiriyawanich, *Madanabadha: A Study of Aesthetical Approaches*, MA diss. (Srinakarinwirot University, 2009).

1.6. Methodology

This thesis discusses twenty Thai operas by eight composers. Some of the operas are not available and some scores have been lost. Fortunately, five composers are still alive, along with some important musicians in their seventies that were interviewed. This thesis is mostly based on interviews, both formal and informal, with composers, musicians and singers who were involved with the operas. Particular emphasis is placed on the author's experience as one of the main singers in an opera and solving a notation problem by creating an experiment as a part of this research. The methodology also relies on documentary research to gain more information and observation of Thai opera's performances through published online videos.

1.6.1. Defining Thai Opera

At an initial stage of the research it was necessary to define the limitations of the present study: operas written in a Western music style but which contain Thai elements such as story, language, traditional melodies and musical instruments. There are additionally a number of musico-dramatic works described generically as 'operas' but which in fact belong to the genre of the musical. For example, Bruce Gaston's *Chou Chok*, which he defined as opera during interviews but, in terms of the singing style, it is a musical. Some might argue that Thai opera means only operas in the Thai language but the reason this thesis also includes opera in English (with Thai elements) is because these elements come from traditional Thai music and culture. These combinations are significant and originate from Thailand therefore they are referred to as Thai opera.

1.6.2. The Search for Thai Operas

Searching for Thai operas involves undertaking extensive fieldwork because there is little information available in books and theses and most operas have no mention on the internet. The existence of new Thai operas came to light from people who gave personal interviews. After interviews with some of the composers and

musicians, they shared more Thai operas that they have heard of or performed. A pattern formed where, as more people were interviewed, newer Thai operas became known. Therefore, the main way to collect information about Thai operas is to do personal interviews with composers and musicians that were involved with the productions. Many new aspects of interest have arisen in both composition and performance. The interviewees mentioned the difficulties of bringing an opera to production and the challenges of working with the composers or people who were involved with the opera. It shows there are many challenges to putting on one opera production. Most of the recent data is from internet advertisements of the operas such as on the website of Opera Siam and the composers' Facebook.

However, some operas are difficult to research because there is little digital marketing, as some performances took place prior to the internet. This is evident especially in chapter 4.1: Thai Operas (Unperformed); these operas were composed and planned to be performed around the late twentieth century, before the internet came to Thailand. It is difficult to find any information about these five operas except the last opera, *Pero Vaz de Sequeira*, that was composed in 2011. There are only two articles written about the other four operas: by Dr. Poonpit Amatyakul (2007) and his student, Nutthan Inkhong (2012)²⁸. These articles provided a renewed inspiration to research the subject deeper. This is also one of the reasons the topic was chosen because it will benefit the Thai people by producing an archive of Thai opera history. However, further information was still required, therefore it was necessary to return to Thailand in August 2017 to interview many important musicians and singers, one of which was Dr. Amatyakul. The interview went on for over two hours and he allowed researchers to work at his private library which contains many important books and evidence.

Unfortunately, the music scores of most operas in this chapter have been lost. As a way to test the difficulty of translating from English to Thai, an aria 'The Sun Whose Rays Are All Ablaze' from Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* was chosen to translate into Thai; which was originally translated into Thai by King Rama VI in 1910, though later lost. This aria was translated anew from English into Thai and both language versions were recorded separately as a part of this thesis (Tracks

²⁸ Inkhong, มหาอุปรากรในสมัย รัชการที่ 6 [*Opera in the Period of King Rama VI*], pp. 133-141, and Amatyakul, 'มหาอุปรากรของไทยสองเรื่อง ที่ไม่มีโอกาสแสดง [Two Thai Operas That Never Had a Chance to Be Performed]'.

7&8). The score and the Thai text of this song can be found in appendix D. This process offered proof of how difficult it is to write an opera in Thai libretto.

In chapter 4.2: Thai Operas (Performed), the analysis is based on interviews with five composers, one librettist, Thai musicians and singers who were involved with Thai operas that have been performed. Some of the information was taken from programme notes and advertisements of the performances including posters, YouTube videos, and Facebook pages. Some of the composers were hard to contact and most of the music scores are not published. The main composer of focus in this thesis is Somtow Sucharitkul. While it was possible to interview most of the musicians who performed in his operas, it was not possible to arrange an interview with Sucharitkul until the performance day of his opera in August 2017. His opera, *The Faithful Son*, is one of the opera cycles about the Ten Lives of the Buddha performed in the Thailand Cultural Centre hall. Before the show, he agreed to be interviewed. It was interesting to hear his opinion regarding Thai operas and how hard it is to perform operas in Thailand. During this opportunity, there was also a chance to go backstage to talk with many performers and schedule interviews with them. Only eleven of Sucharitkul's operas contain Thai elements. It was hard to find all the scores of these operas. Only two of his Thai operas have been published (*Mae Naak* and *Ayodhya*).²⁹ The rest of his works discussed in (and performed as part of) this thesis were kindly provided by the composer himself.

Chaimongkol Wiriyasatjaporn, Sucharikul's assistant at the time, was contacted to acquire scores for other operas. He extended an invitation to meet Sucharitkul at his home. His house is full of musicians practising and people organising his upcoming concerts. This presented an opportunity for a second interview with Sucharitkul, where he offered the complete *Madana* score for this research.

Sucharitkul also spoke of the *Ngau Pa* (Romance of the Sakai) opera during an interview. He mentioned that there are many Thai operas and the first one in Thai libretto could be *Ngau Pa*. He did not mention who wrote the opera, only that it was a work for a Ph.D. project. There is little information about *Ngau Pa* on the internet,

²⁹ Sucharitkul and Patalung, *Mae Naak* [published piano & vocal score] and Sucharitkul and Patalung, *Ayodhya* [published piano & vocal score].

except that Dr. Patorn Srikananda composed the opera for Queen Sirikit. There are no details of the performance or its year of composition. Luckily, Srikananda's Facebook page was easy to find. It took him a while to reply because he was busy with a concert tour around the world. In September 2019, he supplied information about his two Thai operas and sent on the score for research. He was enthusiastic to share his experiences with creating his opera and hoped that his opera will have a chance to be performed as a full production someday.

One of the most difficult composers to contact was Bruce Gaston, an American musician. A previously interviewed singer, Sarunpong Dechsangworn, a baritone who sang in one of Sucharitkul's operas, mentioned that Gaston's *A Boy and A Tiger* has the potential to be considered a Thai opera. However, Gaston was in poor health and could not be interviewed in 2017. He was seriously ill and had to be in hospital for a long time. Eventually, in February 2019, Gaston replied to an email and attached his biography and included all of his nine operas in the email. However, only one of his operas were chosen for this research because the singing style in his other works is a musical style using the speech voice rather than the head voice like in operatic style. Only the opera *A Boy and a Tiger* was selected out of his nine operas for this thesis. This is because it was the only opera for which the score is available and the main singer confirmed that he used the Western opera singing style whilst performing it.

Krisada and Napisi Reyes, who composed *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals*, were the easiest to get in touch with because Napisi was my acting teacher during high school and while studying for a Bachelor's degree at the College of Music, Mahidol University. They were very helpful and answered all questions in great detail. The interview took place in August 2017 at their house and it lasted almost three hours due to mutual enjoyment when talking with each other and their works being particularly interesting. They are planning to produce more operas in Thai in the future. All seven singers that performed in their opera were interviewed in Thailand in August 2017.

Napisi Reyes also mentioned in her interview an opera named *The Lunch Box* by Thanapoom Sirichang but called it by its Thai name 'Gong Khaownoi Kah Mae'. However, she did not know who the composer was, only that the opera had never

been performed in Thailand. It was difficult to research on the internet without knowing the name of the opera in English. However, in 2018, having searched 'Opera in Thailand' on Google, a website was returned containing the article, 'Opera in Thailand' by Jon Silpayamanant, a Thai cellist, composer, and multi-instrumentalist in New Albany, USA.³⁰ The website listed a few operas by Sucharitkul, amongst them an opera called *The Lunch Box* by Thanapoom Sirichang. Having the English name of the opera and the composer allowed further research to be undertaken, however, it remained difficult to contact the composer. It made sense to try contacting a former teacher of Sirichang named Konstantin Koukias. Koukias was Sirichang's supervisor while he was completing his Master's in Australia, and additionally, Koukias was also the opera director of *The Lunch Box*. Koukias emailed back and provided all the information associated with the opera. However, he did not have Sirichang's details because they were no longer in contact since the end of the production. The main singers of the opera, Monique Klongtruadroke and Saran Suebsantiwongse, were contacted and interviewed online in March 2019. Unfortunately, they did not have the composer's contact details either. A few weeks later, Sirichang's email address was provided by Yuttapon Sakthamcharoen, a former teacher at Mahidol University. Sirichang replied to the email and apologized for the difficulty in contacting him. This was because he changed his name right after the production to Jitrin Sirichang. In this thesis, his former name, Thanapoom Sirichang is used, as it was the name he used while producing the opera. It is reasonable to do this because Sirichang said in the interview that he changed his name many times in the past because his family believes that a name can bring luck, which is common in Thailand. The name, Thanapoom is used, in case he wants to change his current name again in the future which may lead to confusion. Sirichang also provided the orchestra score for analysis in this thesis.

³⁰ Jon Silpayamanant, 'Opera in Thailand', *Silpayamanant*, <http://www.silpayamanant.com/opera-in-thailand/> (accessed 5.12.20).

1.6.3. Interview Questions

In 2017, the initial plan was to interview only five composers and ten singers. The interviews were in both Thai and English depending on the preference of the musicians. However, when the personal interviews began these musicians mentioned further people who were involved with Thai operas. Therefore, there are forty-eight composers and musicians that have been interviewed in this thesis. There were sixteen questions for composers and ten questions for musicians that were involved with the operas. The first question in every interview was 'What is Thai Opera?'. This was a broad opening question to assess their answer and reaction, especially since the genre was yet to be defined. The questions for composers are about their influences, music background, purpose, the details of the opera and the reaction of the audiences. These questions are phrased to acquire the information of the opera and the reason for the opera and to see if the audience likes Thai opera. The questions for the musicians are in regards to the difficulty performing the opera, their thoughts about the opera and the reaction of the audience. These questions were also designed to uncover any issues during the performances of opera in Thailand and to see if the audience enjoyed the show. However, after all questions were asked, the musicians shared other challenges and problems that occurred during the performance of the operas. They supplied more important information in the interviews outside of the questions they had been asked. After the face to face interviews in August 2017, there were further musicians and composers interviewed via email and Facebook messenger.

The questions for the composers were as follows:

1. Could you please introduce yourself and explain what is Thai opera?
2. What is the purpose of this opera? What does this opera mean to you?
3. What are you trying to tell the audience in this opera?
4. What influenced you to compose 'The Opera' and could you please tell me something about this opera? Are there different influences in this work e.g. Western, Thai, Indian, etc.?
5. Why did you choose to do the opera in Thai? Or in English?

6. Why Thai Opera?
7. How was the performance received and are you satisfied?
8. What type of audience came to the performance? Thai? Western? Social class? Education?
9. Why did you choose to do a Thai opera instead of a Western opera or musical as you previously have?
10. Is it difficult to compose a libretto for opera in Thai, and why? Is the libretto in Thai?
11. Is it difficult for the foreign conductor to conduct Thai opera, and why? There are some Thai instruments in the orchestra.
12. Why do you use Thai musical instruments in the opera?
13. What are your aims for the future of Thai opera?
14. Do you think it fits in with Thai culture?
15. What does Thai opera mean in your opinion? How would you define it as opera?
16. Do you know of any Thai operas that have never been performed? What do you think about them?

The questions for the conductors and musicians were as follows:

1. Could you please introduce yourself and explain what Thai opera is to you?
2. What is your first impression of Thai opera?
3. How do you feel about being a part of Thai opera?
4. Is it difficult to conduct Thai opera, and if so, why?
5. Do you think there will be more Thai opera in the future, and if so, why?
6. Is it difficult to sing/play Thai opera, and why?
7. Will you sing again in any new Thai opera, and why?
8. How did the audience react when you sang Thai opera?

9. Do you think there should be more Thai opera, and why?

10. Do you think it fits in with Thai culture?

1.6.4. Thai Tonal Language Experiment

After researching opera in Thai, it was discovered that there was a Thai tonal language issue when performing opera. Therefore, Chapter 5: The Singing Technique of Thai Opera in the Western Style is an experiment involving teaching a Western opera singer to sing in Thai. Three new symbols have been created to instruct the singer to slide the tone upward, downward and change the length of the diphthong.³¹ A soprano was chosen for the experiment because the problem occurs mostly with sopranos due to the melodies being high and hard to understand. Bethany Pennington, an opera singer from Bangor University, was chosen to participate as she was a fellow student during the experiment and shared the same second supervisor: Marian Bryfdir. This was useful for meeting and working at the university together and Pennington was also interested in learning to sing in Thai. The experiment took place on five occasions between 17 October 2018 and 28 February 2019. The chosen music was the first act of *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* by Krisada and Napisi Reyes. It seemed reasonable to select this work as the first act is written for two sopranos. Previous experience singing and working with the composer in this opera allowed the opportunity to teach and direct the act appropriately, ensuring the experiment ran smoothly.

³¹ Diphthong is a speech sound that, within one syllable, changes from one vowel sound to another.

Chapter 2: The Establishment of Western Music in Thailand

2.1. Introduction

Siam, officially known as the Kingdom of Thailand since 1939, is the only Southeast Asian country that has never been colonised by Western powers.¹ As such, Thailand maintained its own distinct cultural identity and remained undiluted by Western influence until the twentieth century when travel and globalisation made the country more accessible. This distinct cultural identity is perhaps most obvious in music, which retains a strong indigenous tradition. Since the late twentieth century several Thai composers have readily adopted the forms and language of Western opera to develop Thai opera. This adaption of Western musical elements is not, however, unprecedented. As Ronnachai Rattanaseth has demonstrated, since the early sixteenth century elements of Western music reached Thailand through trade, military ceremony, religious practices, education and popular culture.²

The aim of this chapter is to offer contextual evidence to help explain why Thai opera developed in a certain way by the late twentieth century. Building on the work of Rattanaseth, it begins by briefly summarising the main influences of Western music on Thai culture between the early sixteenth and early twenty-first centuries. However, the earlier period up to the end of the Siamese-Burmese War in 1767 offers only limited documentary evidence as most records were destroyed by Burmese forces. As we shall see, early influences in some ways opened the door to the development of a Westernized operatic tradition in Thailand, especially through the agency of various members of the royal family. However, it shall be argued that because these points of influence were so piecemeal and unsupported by a colonial power, no infrastructure developed to seriously support the emergence of an indigenous response to the Western operatic model. Instead, the development of Thai opera in the early twentieth century was largely cultivated in elite sections of

¹ Throughout this chapter I will refer to the country as 'Thailand' regardless of whether it refers to pre-1939, when the nation was known as Siam. Thai history is typically periodised according to the reigning king in the relevant time period, ordered chronologically.

² Ronnachai Rattanaseth, *อิทธิพลตะวันตกที่ผลต่อพัฒนาการในวัฒนธรรมดนตรีของไทย [The Influence of the West on the Development of Thai Music's Culture]*, Ph.D. diss. (Mahidol University, 2001), p. IV.

society; raising a range of culturally significant questions about the repertoire and the appropriation of Thai culture. As mentioned, Western musical influences were not significantly felt in Thailand before the twentieth century, as it was never colonised. Of course, it is also true that countries such as Laos and Vietnam, both of which were colonised by France in the late 1880s, never developed an operatic tradition either. The reason for this is most likely the geographical distance from mainland Europe, but also a desire to preserve traditional music. Nevertheless, this chapter will outline several important interactions between Thailand and the West since the seventeenth century and analyse how various factors in the early twentieth century allowed Western opera to emerge, though only as an expression of elite values and traditions.

2.2. Thailand and Western Music: Early Interactions (to c.1900)

The earliest record of substantial interaction between Thailand and the West is in 1511, with a group of Portuguese merchants who opened a trading route.³ Later in 1518, the King Ramathibodi II allowed the Portuguese to establish their community and the Catholic Church in Thailand. In 1662, Liturgical music, such as Gregorian chant, was introduced by missionaries of the first Catholic community.⁴ Documentary evidence can only be found in the year 1686 of the first Thai person experiencing Western opera: the ambassador Kosa Pan, saw a performance of Jean Baptiste Lully's *Alceste* (1674). Kosa Pan also met Lully in France.⁵ Around the same time, Thai music began to influence French composers. Michel Richard de Lalande (1657-1725), composer of Louis XIV, included movements influenced by Siamese songs in one of his instrumental suites, which were part of the symphonies for the king's suppers and which were also included in his ballet *Mirtil et Melicerte* (1698).⁶ It seems that at least some of the musical interaction was disseminated

³ The material in this section is largely based on Rattanaseth, 'The Influence of the West', to which the reader is referred for a more detailed discussion. However, as Rattanaseth's dissertation is only available in Thai a brief overview of his main findings will be useful.

⁴ Jittapim Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, D.A. diss. (University of Northern Colorado, 2011), p. 20.

⁵ Ibid., p.10.

⁶ Jittapim Yamprai, *Franco-Siamese Music Diplomacy in the Seventeenth-Century*, (Bangkok, 2016), pp. 51-53.

through ambassadors such as Simon de La Loubère, stationed in Thailand from 1687 onwards. He was one of the first to transcribe a Siamese song to Western notation, the song 'Sai Samon' which he re-titled as 'Chançon Siamoise'.⁷ Other routes of transmission were, of course, the missionaries such as Nicholas Gervais of the Société des Mission Étrangères, who stayed in Thailand from 1683 until 1686; based on his experiences he published the book *Historie naturelle et politique du Royaume de Siam* (1688).⁸ The book contains a Siamese song transcribed into Western notation called 'Sout Chai'.⁹



Figure 2.1: Sai Samon, Western notation.¹⁰

⁷ Yamprai, *Franco-Siamese Music Diplomacy in the Seventeenth-Century*, pp. 83-95.

⁸ Terry E. Miller and Jareonchai Chonpairot, *A History of Siamese Music Reconstructed from Western Documents, 1505-1932*, (n.p., 1994), p. 138.

⁹ Nachaya Nachanawakul, ดนตรีฝรั่งในกรุงสยาม: พัฒนาการดนตรีตะวันตกในสังคมไทยระหว่าง พ.ศ. 2384-2484 [Western music in Siam: Development of Western music in Thai society between 1841 - 1941] (Bangkok, 2012), p. 41.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 40.



Figure 2.2: Sout Chai, Western notation.¹¹

Later, during the reign of King Phetracha (1688-1703) the relationship between Thailand and the West deteriorated substantially. The king was a staunch nationalist, rejecting the French and cutting ties with the West, which resulted in a poor diplomatic relationship until the nineteenth century.¹² Moreover, in the mid eighteenth-century Thailand lost the Siamese-Burmese War (1764–1769), marking the end of the Ayutthaya Kingdom. It also meant a significant cultural and historical loss for the kingdom, as many records and buildings were also lost. The aftermath of the war and the demise of the Ayutthaya Kingdom also saw the liberation of the Thai population from Burmese occupation. One of the central figures in this was the soldier, Taksin, who took the throne through an uprising and moved the capital city from Ayutthaya to Thonburi, establishing the Thonburi Kingdom.¹³ This event later inspired King Rama VI to write a three-act opera about the victory of Taksin (see Chapter 4.1.3).

Relations between the West and Thailand improved during the reign of King Rama II (1809-1824), again initiated by the Portuguese. In 1828 the first American missionaries arrived, bringing Protestant Christianity and building the first church. An

¹¹ Nachanawakul, ดนตรีฝรั่งในกรุงสยาม: พัฒนาการดนตรีตะวันตกในสังคมไทยระหว่าง พ.ศ. 2384-2484 [*Western music in Siam: Development of Western music in Thai society between 1841 - 1941*], p. 41.

¹² Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, p. 15.

¹³ Pamin Kleuythong, พระเจ้าตาก [*Phra Chao Tak*] (Bangkok, 2014).

organ was installed within this church, representing a key milestone in the introduction of Western religious music into Siam.¹⁴ Western culture kept affecting Thai culture during the reign of King Rama IV, Mongkut (1851-1868). He was the first Thai king who learned English and could therefore play a greater role in communicating with foreign powers and agreeing treaties.¹⁵ He gave religious freedom to the Thai people, who gave him the nickname 'The Father of Science and Technology' because he supported the introduction of technological and cultural innovations from the West into Thailand.¹⁶ In 1851 he established the Western-style brass band by hiring some Western teachers such as, Captain Knox and Captain Imprey. They trained the Siamese royal guard to be proficient in the European style.¹⁷ King Rama IV encouraged all of the royal families to study Western culture by hiring missionaries as teachers, including Anna Leonowens (1831-1915) who came to Thailand to teach the king's children in 1860s. Leonowens kept a diary of her experiences, and published her memoirs in 1870 as *The English Governess at the Siamese Court*. This was in turn fictionalised in Margaret Landon's 1944 best-selling novel, *Anna and the King of Siam*, which spawned a range of television and film adaptations, most notably Rogers and Hammerstein's 1951 hit musical *The King and I* (1951) (see Figure 2.3), as well as the Hollywood movie of the same name (1956). Most recently, the movie was remade as a non-musical version, *Anna and the King* (1999). The song 'Something Wonderful' from *The King and I* musical has been selected for recording as a part of this thesis (Track 11). However, the Thai government banned all these productions in Thailand, as several scenes were considered to be an insult to the king and could ruin his reputation. In Western opinion, this decree of the Thai government may seem to be an overreaction. However, the depiction of the king was difficult for the people of Thailand to accept because some aspects of the movie shows the king as conservative and stubborn. The respected image of King Rama IV was distorted, when in reality he was a monk for twenty-seven years and was nearly sixty years old when he met Anna.¹⁸

¹⁴ Rattanaseth, อิทธิพลตะวันตกที่ส่งผลต่อพัฒนาการในวัฒนธรรมดนตรีของไทย [*The Influence of the West on the Development of Thai Music's Culture*], p. 60.

¹⁵ Cholmoo Chalanukloh, ดนตรีฝรั่งในยุคสมัยรัตนโกสินทร์ [*Western Music in Rattanakosin*] (Bangkok, 1981), p. 1.

¹⁶ Sumonta Promboon, 'The Science Society of Thailand and Its Role in Science and Technology Development in Thailand', *ScienceAsia*, 33 Supplement 1, (Bangkok, 2007), pp. 1-3.

¹⁷ Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, p. 31.

¹⁸ Paradee Tungtang, *Shakespeare in Thailand*, D.A. diss. (University of Warwick, 2011), pp. xxiv-xxv.

One more important record in Leonowens's diary refers to King Rama V, who already as a child vowed to abolish slavery in Thailand. According to the diary, when Anna was teaching the young Rama V about Abraham Lincoln's death, he said 'if I have a chance to rule Siam, I will let all the slaves be free'.¹⁹ This perhaps gives us a glimpse of the way in which Leonowens's teachings influenced King Rama V. Early in his reign, in 1874, he emancipated the slaves, giving all Thai people equal rights – which can be understood as part of his ambition for Thailand to appear civilized in the eyes of the Western world.



Figure 2.3: *The King and I* musical.²⁰

¹⁹ Rattanaseth, 'อิทธิพลตะวันตกที่ผลต่อพัฒนาการในวัฒนธรรมดนตรีของไทย [*The Influence of the West on the Development of Thai Music's Culture*], p. 14.

²⁰ Neil Smith, 'The King and I: timeless classic or dated relic?', *BBC News*, entry post 4.07.18, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-44709484> (accessed 5.12.20).

2.3. Modern Thai Kings and Music

2.3.1. King Rama V (reign 1868-1910)

King Rama V was arguably the most influential figure in the cultivation of Western opera in Thailand. By the late nineteenth century, the neighbouring countries of Thailand, such as Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Burma, were colonised by the French and British. King Rama V decided to travel to Europe in the years 1897 and 1907 to learn more about Western culture and to find powerful allies, such as Russia, Germany and France.²¹ While in France, the king also had the opportunity to see a performance of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*.²² Upon his return to Thailand, he recounted the story to his family and two years later Prince Narathip Praphanphong adapted *Madame Butterfly* for *Lakhon Rong* (singing drama) naming it *Sao Kreua Fah*. The adaptation gained a high popularity in Siam during that time (see Chapter 3.5.2).²³ King Rama V hired many Westerners to teach music in Siam, such as Captain Michael Fusco and Jacob Feit.²⁴ King Rama V also set up the theatre society, *Khrue*, and organised for the operas *Die Offenbarung des Brugu* and *Chao Tak Sin* to be performed. However, the opera *Chao Tak Sin* did not have the chance to be performed (see Chapter 4.1.3).²⁵ As Jittapim Yamprai has argued, Western music became popular among the upper class, courtiers and noblemen.²⁶ Many concerts and theatrical entertainments were performed numerous times in noble houses in the early 1880s,²⁷ until Pen Pengkul built the Prince Theatre in 1884. The theatre was constructed in the style of an English opera house with two seating floors. It was the first theatre to charge an admission fee, as was practice in the West, due to Pengkul having visited the English court and wanting to replicate what he saw as the epitome of culture and sophistication in Thailand, thus enabling a

²¹ Kittipong Wirodthammakul, *ทรงเล่าเรื่อง เสรีประพาสยุโรป [Telling Story, Travel in Europe]* (Bangkok, 2016), p. 41.

²² Ibid., p. 98.

²³ Tadsana Tadsanamit, *รวมเรื่องเอกละคร ร.๖ [Included Master Pieces from King Rama VI]* (Bangkok, 2010), p. 13.

²⁴ Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, pp. 38-40.

²⁵ Poonpit Amatyakul, 'มหาอุปราชของไทยสองเรื่อง ที่ไม่มีโอกาสแสดง [Two Thai Operas that Never Had a Chance to Perform]', *วารสารเพลงดนตรี [Music Journal]*, Oknation, entry posted 1.11.07, <http://oknation.nationtv.tv/blog/insanetheater/2007/05/01/entry-1> (accessed 5.12.20).

²⁶ Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, pp. 44-45.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 46.

representation of the country as 'civilised' in the eyes of the West.²⁸ The Prince Theatre performed different dramas to the usual Siamese dramas owing to the gender of the actors. Before the period of King Rama VI's reign, female performers in Thai dramas could only perform in the court, while most of the male performers could only perform outside of the court. These forms of drama were called *Lakhon Nai* and *Lakhon Nok* (see Chapter 3.5). However, at the Prince Theatre, men and women could both perform depending on the story of the drama. It was an exotic feeling for the Thai people to have innovative mixed gender performances.²⁹

2.3.2. King Rama VI (reign 1910-1925)

During the period of King Rama VI (1910-1925) Western music was performed in Thailand more frequently than under previous reigns, as he was the first king who was educated in England from 1893 to 1902 (see Figure 2.4).³⁰ After graduating from Oxford University, he introduced English cultural elements to Thailand, like the clubhouse and military training, which he learned during his studies. Due to the king's influence, Western music became part of the lifestyle of Thai noblemen. Many emerging artists were becoming popular at this time; indeed, the king himself was a true artist: Thai people referred to him as 'The Father of the Arts'. When he was a young prince, he accompanied his father to many types of live performance inside and outside of Siam.³¹ In 1890 he had his first encounter with modern Western opera, attending a performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *The Mikado* in Singapore. He was so impressed by the show that he asked his English teacher, Robert L. Morant, to obtain a copy of the score so that he could translate it into Thai. However, it proved to be too-demanding a task for the ten-year-old prince. He abandoned the translation, but picked it up again when he went to study in England and had a chance to watch *The Mikado* once more, at the Savoy Opera Theatre. He came back to Siam in 1908 and translated the libretto of *The Mikado* from English into Thai. A performance of the translated work was planned for

²⁸ Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, pp. 49-50.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

³⁰ Poonpit Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวกับการดนตรี [*Vajiravudh with Music*] (Bangkok, 2012), pp. 5-6.

³¹ Ibid., p. 4.

1910, but plans were dropped after his father (King Rama V) died on 23 October. The show was postponed to 1911. However, performance plans were again thwarted when a rebel group tried to assassinate him, resulting in the cancellation of the performance.³² Unfortunately, there is no physical evidence of the opera translation (see Chapter 4.1.1). Due to the loss of the opera translation, an aria from *The Mikado*, ‘The Sun Whose Rays Are All Ablaze’ was translated into Thai for this thesis by Fueanglada Prawang. The reason was to try to understand how difficult it is to translate from English to Thai (see music score in Appendix A.7 & D, see recording Track 7 & 8).

In addition to translating *The Mikado*, King Rama VI composed many dramas and poems, and also translated many Western poems into Thai. For instance, he translated and adapted three Shakespearean plays: *Romeo Juliet*, *As You Like It* and *The Merchant of Venice*.³³ In total, the king penned more than 853 stories.³⁴

Type	Number (stories)
<i>Khon</i> and Dramas	167
Comic Tales	157
Newspaper Articles	278
Poems	151
Musical Documents	100
Summary	853

Table 2.1: Total of King Rama VI’s works.³⁵

³² Inkhong, มหาอุปรากรในสมัย รัชการที่ 6 [Opera in the Period of King Rama VI], pp. 134-135.

³³ Tungtang, *Shakespeare in Thailand*, p. 108.

³⁴ Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี [Vajiravudh with Music], p. 13.

³⁵ Ibid.



Figure 2.4: King Rama VI while studying in England, before being crowned as king. He is the third person from the right in the back row.³⁶

In addition to his personal cultural endeavours, King Rama VI was also responsible for a range of projects aimed at building an infrastructure for the arts in Thailand. For instance, in 1910 King Rama VI established the *Royal Page school* or *Vajiravudh* school, a boarding school modelled after his alma mater, Eton College.³⁷ In 1912 he established the department of Fine Arts and the school of Arts and Crafts, which trained people in all kinds of Siamese arts. He encouraged Siamese drama, dance and music to preserve Siamese culture. In 1913, M.L. Fuea Puengboon (1890-1967) was appointed by King Rama VI as director of the Royal Performing Arts Department (Mahorasop division). Puengboon established the first Thai symphony orchestra called Royal Symphonic Orchestra.³⁸ In 1917, King Rama VI hired Peter Feit (son of Jacob Feit, one of the first music teachers in Thailand during the period of King Rama V) as music director of the Royal Symphonic Orchestra. He also employed the Italian conductor Alberto Nazzari (see Figure 2.5), to assist in

³⁶ Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี [Vajiravudh with Music], p. 6.

³⁷ Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, p. 53.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 57.

developing the orchestra. Under their direction the orchestra was able to execute its first opera performance, Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, on 16 November 1918, using expatriate foreign singers that were living in Thailand (see Figure 2.6).³⁹ Nazzari was responsible for all aspects of the opera production such as the singers and musicians and stage director (see Figure 2.7). Overall, the performance was a success, though some reports suggest that several of the singers were out of tune.⁴⁰



Figure 2.5: Alberto Nazzari.⁴¹

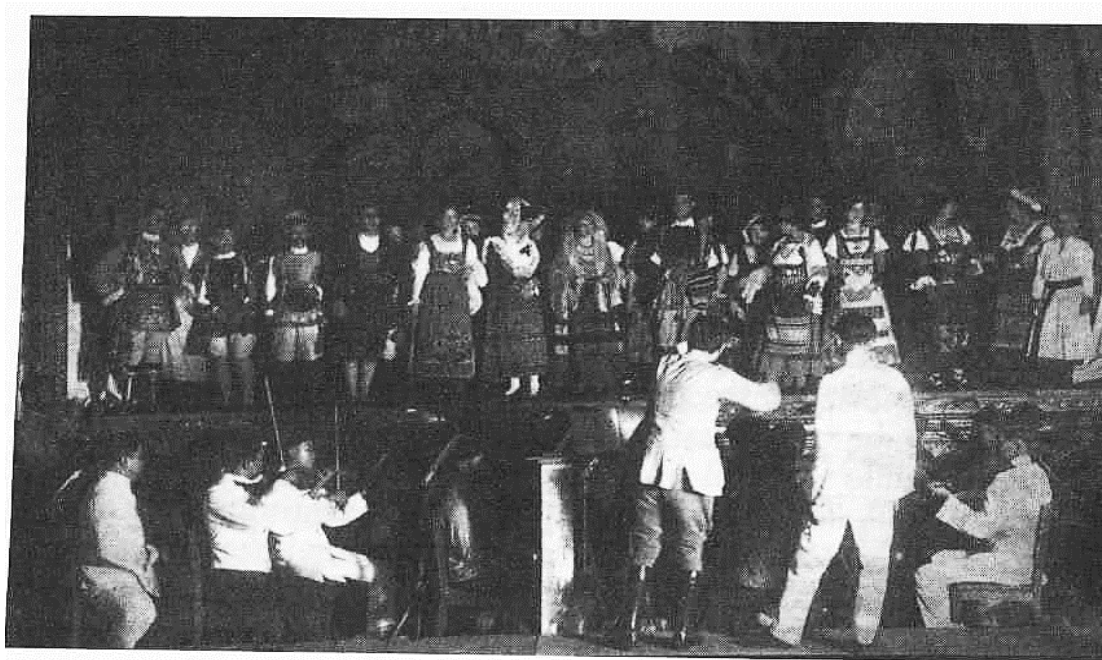
³⁹ Sugree Charoensook, 'อาศรมมิวสิก การคัดเลือกนักดนตรีวงทีพีโอ โดย:สุกรี เจริญสุข [Music Ashram, the Selection of Musicians in TPO]', *Matichon news online*, entry post 4.04.17, https://www.matichon.co.th/columnists/news_518455 (accessed 5.12.20).

⁴⁰ Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี [*Vajiravudh with Music*], pp. 111-112.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 118.



Figure 2.6: Singers in *Cavalleria Rusticana* by Mascagni.⁴²



Il maestro Nazzari dirige l'opera *Cavalleria Rusticana*: i musicisti sono tutti siamesi.

Figure 2.7: Maestro Nazzari conducting *Cavalleria Rusticana* at Migsakawan Theatre.⁴³

⁴² Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวกับการดนตรี [*Vajiravudh with Music*], p.112.

⁴³ Ibid., p.113.

After the first opera performances of the Royal Thai orchestra, Western opera and theatre companies came to Thailand to perform largely in response to King Rama VI's support. For instance, in 1922 the operetta *Yeomen of the Guard* by Gilbert and Sullivan, and the English comic play *The Doormat* by H.S. Sheldon, were performed in Bangkok; King Rama VI donated money for both performances.⁴⁴ However, by the end of the king's reign the economy of Thailand was in crisis. The king had left the country almost bankrupt due to a period of political change and destabilisation associated with World War I. The new monarch, King Rama VII was forced to implement a new economic policy that reduced the production of large-scale Westernised entertainments.

A severe blow was dealt to the operatic arts in 1926 when the government reduced costs by cutting off the budget of the entertainment and theatre department: many musicians lost their jobs.⁴⁵ The remainder of the musicians became waiters at royal parties. Feit reported the concerning situation to the king, who donated money from his personal budget to restore the orchestra. In 1927 the orchestra began to recover by performing every week at Amporn Palace. This was a notable achievement as within two years, the Royal Orchestra performed concerts in public, bringing fame to the nation as many Westerners attended the concerts and the orchestra generated considerable revenue. Feit noted the high quality of the orchestra, regarded by foreign critics to be the best orchestra in Southeast Asia. As further testimony to its quality, the orchestra received critical acclaim in English-language newspapers including *The Bangkok Times*, *The Siam Observer* and *The Bangkok Daily Mail*.⁴⁶ Counteracting King Rama VI's focus on Western music, local people turned their attention to their musical roots after his passing; following a culturally nationalist movement. For example, in 1931 Prince Damrong and Dr. R. Asmis, the German Ambassador, set up a project to record and transcribe the Thai repertoire into Western notation to preserve the music for the future.⁴⁷ Previously, Thai music was preserved through an oral tradition, and as a consequence some of the repertoire was lost when the masters died. Those that were passed down from

⁴⁴ Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, p. 52.

⁴⁵ Tungtang, *Shakespeare in Thailand*, p. 169.

⁴⁶ Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, pp. 64-65.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 65-66.

generation to generation remained but included mistakes. The transcriptions are kept in the *Silpakorn* department.⁴⁸

2.3.3. King Rama VII (reign 1925-1935)

The most important cultural and political event came in 1932, which changed Thai history: the monarchy fell at the hands of the Peoples' Party. The government shifted from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. The party sent soldiers to all the palaces to capture princes and princesses and forced the king to rule under a constitution. In 1935, King Rama VII abdicated the throne and left for England and would never return to Thailand again.⁴⁹ Thailand was under the power of a dictator: Field Marshal Plaek Phibun Songkhram and his party. Everything about the king and royal family was banned and it was at this point in 1939 that the nation of Siam was renamed Thailand. Phibun innovated a 'Nation Building' policy, which had a big impact on Thai dramas in terms of content and artistic concepts. The policy was a combination of the theoretical concepts of anti-monarchism, pro-Westernisation and ultra-nationalism.⁵⁰ This political action helped to expand trading, ameliorated the economy and created an urban middle-class. This in turn also helped to establish a new form of theatre as the urban middle-class audience who lived in Bangkok was able to afford a high-class Western lifestyle or 'newly-rich' lifestyle. They had an appetite for new and exciting entertainment distinguishing their cultural sophistication and difference from the traditional theatre, even though they would not understand Western dramatic arts.⁵¹ It could be argued that many high-class Western restaurants in Thailand hire Thai pop-opera singers to entertain the newly-rich. For instance, a Thai pop opera band, Fivera, performs every week in Hotel Muse and the Italian restaurant Rossano in Bangkok,⁵² which could be viewed as catering to the appetite for cultural distinguishment of the 'newly rich'.

The new government from 1932 aimed to bring modernisation to the country in order to make Thai people 'civilised'. People had to follow the new culture and had

⁴⁸ Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, pp. 62-66.

⁴⁹ Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี [*Vajiravudh with Music*], p. 67.

⁵⁰ Tungtang, *Shakespeare in Thailand*, p. 124.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 123.

⁵² Author's interview with Fivera band members (9 August 2017).

to give up their traditional Thai culture. For example, traditional Thai dresses were not allowed in public, only Western dress, in a bid to make the country look 'civilised' according to Western norms. All traditional crafts, theatre and music were transferred to the *Silpakorn* department, which is now a university in Thailand, resulting in an increased number of private ensembles of music, dancing and movies.⁵³ In 1936, the Royal Symphony Orchestra was forced to perform to celebrate the constitution under the new political system and it was at this concert that a new Thai National Anthem was performed. The anthem was composed by Peter Feit. The song was announced as the official Thai National Anthem in 1939 and it was in Thai language.⁵⁴ Several new types of ensembles were established, such as the first jazz ensemble founded in 1934 by Luang Sukhumnaipradit. In 1935, the *Natrasin* school was established by the *Silpakorn* department: it was the first school in Thailand to offer music programmes in Thai and in Western music.⁵⁵

2.3.4. King Rama VIII (reign 1935-1946)

King Rama VIII (1935-1946) became a king when he was only nine years old while he was living in Switzerland. Due to the political revolution, the National Assembly of Thailand appointed him to become King Rama VIII after the previous king left Thailand. King Rama VIII returned to Thailand in December 1945 but six months later he was shot and died in his bed in Bangkok's Grand Palace. This death is still a mystery; no one knows who shot him.⁵⁶

⁵³ Tungtang, *Shakespeare in Thailand*, pp. 17-18.

⁵⁴ Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, p. 70.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-70.

⁵⁶ Barry Wain, 'Who Killed King Ananda?', *the wall street journal*, entry post 7.01.2000, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB947195451842936035> (accessed 1.11.20).

2.3.5. King Rama IX (reign 1946-2016)

King Rama IX (1946-2016), the longest reigning modern monarch, introduced Western music to Thailand more widely because he was a jazz musician himself.⁵⁷ His musical talent was considered world-class. For instance, the king performed music with Benny Goodman and Louis Armstrong (see Figure 2.8 & 2.9). Goodman, in an interview with an American newspaper, recalled “I admired King Rama IX of Thailand as one of the best musicians in the world”.⁵⁸ On 3 October 1964, The N.Ö. Tonkünstler Orchestra (original: Tonkünstler Orchester Niederösterreich) performed his music in a Viennese concert hall. He received tumultuous applause from the audience. Three days after the concert, the government of Austria presented him with an honourable membership at the *Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Wien*, Austria in recognition of his outstanding musical achievement. He was the first Asian to receive this award.⁵⁹



Figure 2.8: King Rama IX performing with Benny Goodman.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Kitti Lopetcharat, ดนตรี & กีฬา & ศิลปะ พ่อหลวงของแผ่นดิน [Music & Sports & Art of the Father of Thailand] (Bangkok, 2017), p. 19.

⁵⁸ Chalanukloh, ดนตรีฝรั่งในยุคสมัยรัตนโกสินทร์ [Western Music in Rattanakosin], pp. 23-24.

⁵⁹ Lopetcharat, ดนตรี & กีฬา & ศิลปะ พ่อหลวงของแผ่นดิน [Music & Sports & Art of the Father of Thailand], pp. 28-29.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 25.



Figure 2.9: King Rama IX performing with Louis Armstrong.⁶¹

King Rama IX was also a composer, having created 48 songs (see Table 2.2). His music is famous in Thailand. One of his most popular songs ‘Alexandra’ (see Table 2.2, song number 34) was selected to be sung in the recording as a part of this research (Track 10).

Song Number	Name	Year
1	Candlelight Blues	1946
2	Love at Sundown	1946
3	Falling Rain	1946
4	Near Dawn	1946
5	H.M. Blues	1947
6	Never Mind The H.M Blues	1947
7	Royal Guards March	1948
8	Blue Day	1949
9	Dream of Love Dream of You	1949
10	Sweet Words	1949
11	Maha Chulalongkorn	1949
12	Love Light in My Heart	1949
13	New Year Pray	1951
14	Love Over Again	1952

⁶¹ Lopetcharat, ดนตรี & กีฬา & ศิลปะ พอหลวงของแผ่นดิน [Music & Sports & Art of the Father of Thailand], p. 27.

15	Twilight	1952
16	Smiles	1952
17	The Colours March	1952
18	I Never Dream	1952
19	Love in Spring	1954
20	Friday Night Rag	1954
21	Oh I Say	1955
22	Can't You Ever See	1955
23	Lay Kram Goes Dixie	1955
24	Lullaby	1955
25	I Think of You	1957
26	When	1957
27	Magic Beams	1958
28	Somewhere Somehow	1959
29	Royal Marines March	1959
30	A Love Story	1959
31	Nature Waltz	1959
32	The Hunter	1959
33	Kinari Waltz	1959
34	Alexandra	1959
35	Phramahamongkol	1959
36	Thammasad	1963
37	Still on My Mind	1965
38	Old Fashioned Melody	1965
39	No Moon	1965
40	Dream Island	1965
41	Echo	1965
42	Kasedsad	1966
43	The Impossible Dream	1971
44	Rausoo	1973
45	We-Infantry Regiment 21	1976
46	Blues for Uthit	1979

47	Rak	1994
48	Menu Khai	1995

*Table 2.2: Rama IX's music compositions in chronological order.*⁶²

By the latter half of the twentieth century, Thailand was becoming more Westernised and modernised. Most of the music in Thailand was mainly used for entertainment, especially dance music, and new Thai compositions emerged in the Western style more in the city. The Royal Symphony Orchestra had been strengthened and was capable of performing the standard concert repertoire.⁶³ World-famous guest conductors and soloists were invited to perform with the orchestra. Thai musicians who wanted to play in the orchestra would need to audition to be a part of it. Thai parents began to let their children study music because there were real opportunities for actual jobs as musicians or as music teachers. Khunying Malaiwan Bunyarattavej (b.1932) was the first pianist to win the National Piano Competition in 1948 and was the first Thai student at Eastman University in America. She has played a salient role in the development of choral music in Thailand by arranging and conducting choirs. She helped to establish the Bangkok Choir Festival which performed internationally.⁶⁴ Professor Kamtorn Sanidwong (1924-2000) was the first Thai music student to receive a scholarship to study Western music abroad at the Guildhall School of Music in London. He established a professional chamber music ensemble 'The Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra'. He also brought the Trinity College of Music exam for students to sit in Thailand. Both of these musicians are Peter Feit's students.⁶⁵ This demonstrates that Feit had a hand in the development of many high-standing Thai musicians.

In 1982, the Bangkok Symphonic Orchestra (BSO) was established under the Royal Patronage of HRH Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn. This orchestra became famous because of its professional Thai musicians. The BSO performed their first opera featuring Thai singers in a 1982 production of *Hansel und Gretel* by Engelbert

⁶² Lopetcharat, ดนตรี & กีฬา & ศิลปะ พ่อหลวงของแผ่นดิน [*Music & Sports & Art of the Father of Thailand*], pp. 28-29.

⁶³ Yamprai, *Establishment of Western Music in Thailand*, pp. 76-77.

⁶⁴ Sornsil Chumsri, 'Important Person in Music', *Krusornsil*, <https://sites.google.com/site/krusornsil/sara-dntri/bukhkhhl-sakhay-thang-dntri> (accessed 5.12.20).

⁶⁵ Chumsri, 'Important Person in Music' *Krusornsil*.

Humperdinck and in 1983, the BSO performed the opera *Madame Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini. In 2001, Bangkok Opera, now called Siam Opera, was established by Somtow Sucharitkul.⁶⁶ The opera company was most likely renamed to Siam Opera for a broader appeal and to showcase the exotic-sounding former name of Thailand. Somtow Sucharitkul based the stories of his Thai operas on historical Siam, prior to the change of its name to Thailand. Sucharitkul is one of the most influential composers of Thai opera (see Appendix E.1). *Madana* opera was the first Thai opera to have ever been performed, composed by Sucharitkul and was greatly successful.

Due to the positive response to *Madana*, the Siam Philharmonic Orchestra was established under *HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana* as a chamber orchestra in 2002 and became a full orchestra in 2004. That same year, the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO) was established under the Royal Thai Government and the College of Music, Mahidol University, which mostly performs Western music twice a month. Colleges and Universities offer music programmes at undergraduate and graduate levels, which has increased the number of young musicians in Thailand. This subsequently led to a greater number of orchestras such as the Mahidol University Orchestra. Mahidol University offers music programmes starting at high-school level. National and International music competitions honed the skills of Thai musicians and brought classical music into public focus, for instance, a world-famous Thai musician, Ekachai Jearakul, was the first Asian guitarist to win the prestigious Guitar Foundation of American International Concert Artist (GFA) in 2014.⁶⁷ The Bangkok Festival Choir was established and performed internationally. In 2007, the College of Music at Mahidol University and the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO), staged its first performance of a Western opera, Claudio Monteverdi's *L'orfeo*, sung mostly by Thai singers. In 2008, the TPO and Mahidol University performed the first Thai opera sung in Thai, *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* by Krisada and Napisi Reyes. The College of Music at Mahidol University has grown quickly and performed Western operas almost every year. Several voice students won notable international prizes.

⁶⁶ Somtow Sucharitkul, 'Somtow's World', *Operasiam*, <https://www.operasiam.com/> (accessed 6.12.20).

⁶⁷ Ekachai Jearakul, <http://www.ekachaguitarist.com/biography.php?fbclid=IwAR2uPEiTjZY-xznP48tNyWW6Lo6l35p8YPnmRsLbOgbV2D97Ew6B4DChb0o> (accessed 5.12.20).

Recently, music has become a big business industry in Thailand. Music schools have been established, both public and private, to train future professional musicians. Listed below are opera performances in Thailand involving Thai musicians from 1918 to 2020. The majority were performed by Siam Opera and Mahidol University (see Table 2.4):

The opera titles in the following tables are written in the language of the performance.

Year	Opera	Composer	Company
1918	<i>Cavalleria Rusticana</i>	P. Mascagni	Mix Thai Royal and Western musician Symphony Orchestra
1919	<i>I Pagliacci</i>	R. Leoncavallo	Mix Thai Army and Western musician Symphony Orchestra

Table 2.3: List of opera performances in Thailand involving Thai musicians before the political revolution in 1932.

Year	Opera	Composer	Company
1982	<i>Hansel und Gretel</i>	E. Humperdinck	Bangkok Symphony Orchestra
1984	<i>Madame Butterfly</i>	G. Puccini	Bangkok Symphony Orchestra
1985	<i>Carmen</i>	J. Bizet	Performed in front of the Queen Rama IX at Dusitthani Hotel
1986	<i>La Traviata</i>	G. Verdi	Performed at Thailand Cultural Centre
2001	<i>Madama</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2002	<i>Dido & Aeneas</i>	H. Purcell	Opera Siam
2003	<i>The Magic Flute</i>	W.A. Mozart	Opera Siam
2003	<i>Mae Naak</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2003	<i>The Turn of The Screw</i>	B. Britten	Opera Siam
2004	<i>Turandot</i>	G. Puccini	Opera Siam
2004	<i>Don Giovanni</i>	W.A. Mozart	Opera Siam

2005	<i>Aida</i>	G. Verdi	Opera Siam
2005	<i>Mae Naak</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2006	<i>Das Rheingold</i>	R. Wagner	Opera Siam
2006	<i>Così Fan Tutte</i>	W.A. Mozart	Opera Siam
2006	<i>Ayodhya</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2007	<i>Rape of Lucretia</i>	B. Britten	Opera Siam
2007	<i>Madame Butterfly</i>	G. Puccini	Opera Siam
2007	<i>Die Walküre</i>	R. Wagner	Opera Siam
2007	<i>The Mikado</i>	A. Sullivan	College of Music, Mahidol University
2007	<i>L'Orfeo</i>	C. Monteverdi	Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra
2008	<i>Hansel und Gretel</i>	E. Humperdinck	College of Music, Mahidol University
2008	<i>La Bohème</i>	G. Puccini	Opera Siam
2008	<i>Prima La Musica</i>	A. Salieri	Opera Siam
2008	<i>The Impresario</i>	W.A. Mozart	Opera Siam
2008	<i>The Story of The Long-Gone Animals</i>	C. Reyes & N. Reyes	Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra
2009	<i>Thais</i>	J. Massenet	Opera Siam
2009	<i>La Bohème</i>	G. Puccini	Opera Siam
2009	<i>Der Schauspieldirektor</i>	W.A. Mozart	College of Music, Mahidol University
2009	<i>Bastien und Bastienne</i>	W.A. Mozart	College of Music, Mahidol University
2009	<i>The Threepenny Opera</i>	K. Weill	College of Music, Silpakorn University
2009	<i>A Boy and A Tiger</i>	B. Gaston	Meaungthongthanee
2010	<i>Carmen</i>	G. Bizet	Opera Siam
2010	<i>Savitri</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2010	<i>King Arthur</i>	H. Purcell	College of Music, Mahidol University

2010	<i>The Merry Widow</i>	F. Lehar	College of Music, Mahidol University
2011	<i>Bluebeard's Castle</i>	B. Bartok	Opera Siam
2011	<i>Tosca</i>	G. Verdi	Opera Siam
2011	<i>Mae Naak</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2012	<i>The Silent Prince</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2012	<i>Così Fan Tutte</i>	W.A. Mozart	College of Music, Mahidol University
2012	<i>Dido and Aeneas</i>	H. Purcell	College of Music, Silpakorn University
2013	<i>Otello</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2013	<i>Suriyothai</i>	Somtow	Opera Siam
2013	<i>The Flying Dutchman</i>	R. Wagner	Opera Siam
2013	<i>The Silent Prince</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2013	<i>Die Fledermaus</i>	Johann Strauss II	College of Music, Mahidol University
2014	<i>La Calisto</i>	F. Cavalli	Opera Siam
2014	<i>Dan No Ura</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2014	<i>Maha Janaka</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2014	<i>The Magic Flute</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2014	<i>Das Land des Lächelns</i>	F. Lehar	College of Music, Mahidol University
2015	<i>Brundibar</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2015	<i>Bhuridat</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2015	<i>The Snow Dragon</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2015	<i>Suwanna Sama</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2016	<i>Sakontala</i>	F. Schubert	College of Music, Silpakorn University
2017	<i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i>	G. Frid	Opera Siam
2017	<i>Chariot of Heaven</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2017	<i>The Happy Prince</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam

2017	<i>Suwanna Sama</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2017	<i>Der Schauspieldirektor</i>	W.A. Mozart	College of Music, Mahidol University
2017	<i>Bastien Bastienne</i>	W.A. Mozart	College of Music, Mahidol University
2017	<i>Die Zauberflöte</i>	W.A. Mozart	College of Music, Mahidol University
2018	<i>Madame Butterfly</i>	G. Puccini	Opera Siam
2019	<i>The Clever Sage</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2019	<i>The Honourable Prince</i>	S. Sucharitkul	Opera Siam
2020	<i>L'elisir d'amore</i>	G. Donizetti	L'elisi bkk

Table 2.4: List of opera performances in Thailand involving Thai musicians after the political revolution in 1932, most of which were with Thai singers in Thailand.⁶⁸

In late 2016, most performances were cancelled due to the death of King Rama IX so that the people of Thailand could mourn the country's loss for an entire year. The Thai people were particularly mournful when he passed away in October 2016 because he had given so much to the people of Thailand. For instance, he travelled to small villages to visit the poorest people and provide help. He established educational programmes to further agricultural, health and environmental development. He devoted a lot of his time to helping poor people.⁶⁹ Since the passing of King Rama IX, the music industry remains unchanged. King Rama X mostly lives in his second home in Munich, Germany.⁷⁰ He has largely left national affairs to be handled by the Thai government.

⁶⁸ Compiled by the author.

⁶⁹ Kelly Iverson, 'Love King Bhumibol Adulyadej So Much?', *culture trip*, entry posted 4.09.18, https://theculturetrip.com/asia/thailand/articles/why-did-locals-in-thailand-love-king-bhumibol-adulyadej-so-much/?fbclid=IwAR39E7YSb1cuLKoi6hz3NGBrufm82jWdgR1h8RbID-CoAbNhFndkZF_DVeU (accessed 5.12.20).

⁷⁰ Matthew Tostevin and Frances Kerry, 'Coronavirus pandemic prompts rare questioning of Thai monarchy', entry post 22.03.20, https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-thailand-monarchy/coronavirus-pandemic-prompts-rare-questioning-of-thai-monarchy-idUKKBN21918D?fbclid=IwAR0UJgeGq90jCVgZYxB5JBok_cxhJHqPS7eyCDD_9md9iFJEa5SL5ZhUFuo (accessed 6.12.20).

2.4. Conclusions

Over five hundred years, Western culture had already planted its seeds in Thailand. Being the most powerful person in the country; various kings were often the roots for several changes and turning points. For the people of Thailand, experiencing Western opera was not easy as Western opera was largely only accessible to people with power, wealth, education and the courage to actually fly and watch opera in Western countries. This chapter shows the evolution of Western music moved at a slow pace into Thai society, and was often due to the influence of powerful people and political change.

Before the twenty-first century, Western opera was only performed in Thailand for noblemen and the royal family. These days only one or two operas are performed in Thailand every year and the tickets are still considered expensive for the majority of local people. Also, opera is still considered an entertainment for the upper class of Thai society. However, some composers still produce and perform more Thai operas than their neighbouring countries such as Laos and Cambodia, which were colonised by France in the late 1880s. Perhaps these neighbouring nations' strong desire to preserve their traditional music, rather than fusing it with opera, is due to them having been colonised.

When King Rama VI passed away, all music and events were stopped for economic reasons. The crisis contributed to a growing malcontent of the people with absolute monarchy and led to a political revolution. The new government was a constitutional monarchy which was anti-monarchist, pro-Westernisation and ultra-nationalistic. However, political reforms ameliorated the quality of life for a large part of the population, helping them to gain an education, become rich and afford to watch dramas. During the reign of King Rama IX, Western culture gained strong influence in Thailand again as the king himself was a world-class talented jazz musician. These days, Western culture is more accessible than in the past due to the internet. Western operas are often performed in Thailand, and in 2001 Sucharitkul's *Madana* had been performed as the first ever fully performed Thai opera. Many universities have opened music faculties offering Western musical education, and many Thai musicians that graduated abroad returned to improve Western music within Thailand. Recently, Western concerts are performed in Bangkok almost every

week. Thai opera singers have been hired to sing in five-star hotels in order to prove that these hotels are modern and up to date. However, there is still a lack of Thai operas being performed. There are challenges to performing Thai operas; one of the main challenges is singing opera in Thai because it is a tonal language. The same syllables in different tones have different meanings. The challenge of singing opera in Thai lead to the experiment in chapter 5 of this research.

Chapter 3: Thai Elements

This chapter explores the Thai elements contained in the Thai operas in this thesis and traditional music dramas that are similar to opera. It employs a range of perspectives: ways in which Thai people learn music; notation; music theory; language; traditional Thai theatres with similarities to or influenced by Western operas; and folk music with melodies that inspired Thai opera. It is essential to understand how traditional Thai music works to understand Thai opera. Composers used these native musical elements to create the unique and exotic sound of their operas. It is also fascinating to note the differences between Western and Thai music. It is not just the language or music theory that are different but also how people learn the music.

3.1. Thai Music Education

Before the Ayutthaya period (up to 1767), there are no textbooks on the theory of Thai music, no notation of the repertoire, and no other way than the oral tradition to learn music. Thai musicians received their training orally from their teachers, and practised by mimicking their teachers.¹ During the period between 1860-1916, Thai musical notation used Thai alphabets that had been invented by Lieutenant Colonel Phra A-phai Phonrop.²

As David Morton has noted, 'What we know today of Thai music is in actuality only of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—the "classic" or Bangkok period'.³ These teaching traditions are still very much alive today. As a high-school student in Thailand, it was necessary to watch and imitate the teacher in the music lesson. In the following lesson, the teacher would revise the content from the previous lesson and would continue with new phrases. It was a demanding process because there was no score to help with learning the music. Sometimes students would ask their classmates who were especially good at memorising music for help. This oral

¹ Phra Chen Duriyang, 'Thai Music', *Thai culture series No.8*, (Bangkok, 1956), pp. 6-7.

² Boonsube Boonkerd and Surasak Petkontong, The history of Thai musical notation, *Journal of Humanities and social sciences*, Vol. 4/1, (Bangkok, January-June 2016).

³ David Morton, *Thai Traditional Music of Thailand*, (California, 1976), p. 1.

traditional learning culture still exists today. All Thai students in the College of Music, Mahidol University, are literate in Western notation, yet Thai teachers maintain the existing learning culture, where students experience the style of learning music as it was experienced by Thai musicians in the past: thus, keeping the tradition alive, at least in some respects.

3.2. Thai Music Theory

One of the most substantially different elements between Thai and Western music is Thai music theory. The main difference is in the scale upon which compositions are built. The Thai scale is, like in most other Asian music, based on the pentatonic scale.⁴ Thai music can be performed on Western musical instruments because the Western scale has twelve tones, but it is difficult to perform Western art music on Thai instruments since they usually only have seven tones. In Thai music, improvisation is one of the most significant elements. For example, the chorus in Thai music is largely improvised except for the main melodic line, whilst in Western art music the singers usually follow the score instruction. However, improvisation often occurs in other types of Western music, outside of classical, such as jazz and many other traditional music. Thai music is highly individualistic: the same song or piece can be played completely different in two performances although the same instrument was used; every performer has, and is expected to have, their own styles and interpretations. Since Thai music involves excessive improvisation, some Thai musicians find it challenging.

⁴ Sujid Wongtad, ดนตรีไทย มาจากไหน [*Where is Thai Music From?*] (Bangkok, 2010), p. 187.

3.3. Thai Music Notation

As previously mentioned, traditional Thai music is conveyed through an oral tradition. Thai musicians learned directly from their teachers, and practised by playing and singing in their presence. At some point, unknown local musicians created a Thai music notation so that students could learn Thai music easier and they compiled all existing Thai music up to that time as documentation for the future. However, it is not known when Thai notation was invented or by whom, but it was widely used in the twentieth century in the music schools and colleges. Recently, these Thai notations became widely popular as study aids. There are two types of Thai notations: one using Thai alphabet, and the other using ciphers.⁵ For instance, Do = ด or 1, Re = ร or 2.

1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
- - - -	- - - -	- - - -	- - - -	- - - -	- - - -	- - - -	- - - -

Figure 3.1: Thai notation, one line consists of eight bars and every bar contains four beats or notes.

There are two types of cipher notations:

1. Numbers corresponding to the seven fixed pitches of the Thai pentatonic system.
2. Tablature, numbers corresponding to the fingering.⁶

The numbers in Thai notation are arranged from the lowest to highest pitches of the instrument, which most Thai musical instruments are ranged much narrower compared with Western music instruments. The dot above the number represents

⁵ Sompong Karnjanapalin, ดนตรีไทย โน้ตและวิธีฝึก [Thai Music, Notes and How to Practice] (Bangkok, 1994).

⁶ Morton, *Thai Traditional Music of Thailand*, p. 100.

the higher octave. Most Thai musical instruments have only two octaves so the dots above the numbers are not difficult to find (see Figure 3.2).

- - - -	- - - -	- ๑ ๕ ๓	- ๗ - ๑°	- - - ๕°	- ๑° ๑° ๑°	๗ ๓ ๑° ๓	๗ ๓ - ๗
- - - -	- - - -	- 1 2 3	- 5 - 1°	- - - 2°	- 1° 1° 1°	5 6 1° 6	5 3 - 5

Figure 3.2: Illustration of Thai notation Lao Duang Duean with Thai alphabet and numbers.



Figure 3.3: Western Notation of figure 3.2.

3.4. Thai Language

Language is one of the most important aspects of music dramas. To convey the full effect of the drama, audiences need to understand what singers are singing. Therefore, one of the main challenges of performing Thai opera is the Thai language. This is perhaps most obvious in the fact that usually most Thai operas are written to English librettos. On the other hand, the three operas that are written in Thai – *Ngau Pa*, *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals*, and *The Lunch Box* – all encountered problems with the language and with its representation in Western notation.

Thai is a part of the Tai language family, a subgroup from the Kadai family, which is a tonal language and used mostly in Southeast Asia.⁷ The Thai alphabet was invented by King Ramkhamhaeng (1239-1298) during the Sukhothai Kingdom period. The first written monument is an engraved block of stone recognized as an inscription of King Ramkhamhaeng, which he wrote in the year 1283 A.D.⁸ Thai has forty-four consonants, twenty-one vowels and five tones (mid, low, falling, high, and rising) each of which affects the meaning of the word.⁹ For example, as figure 3.4 shows, the word ‘Ma’ can mean something different in each of the five tones, and means nothing at all in the low tone. The tonal nature of the language leads to problems with intonation, which presents its own problems when performing opera in Thai (see Chapter 5). In the illustrated example, the word ‘ma’ can mean ‘come’, ‘horse’, ‘mother’ or ‘dog’ depending on the tone used. These inflections are difficult to represent in Western notation but are essential in conveying the precise meaning of a text.

⁷ Bernard Comrie, *The World's Major Languages*, (London, 1990), p. 757.

⁸ Mary R. Haas, *The Thai System of Writing*, (New York, 1957), p. 1.

⁹ Narapan Jaiton, ‘ความเป็นมาของภาษาไทย [The Origin of Thai Language]’, *GotoKnow*, entry posted 5.08.11, <https://www.gotoknow.org/posts/452510> (accessed 6.12.20).

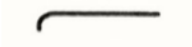




Thai Tone sign	Tone mark	Describe	Example Ma	Meaning
No tone mark		Mid-tone	มา	Come
		Low-tone	ม่า	-
◌̎		Falling-tone	ม่า	Horse
◌̌		High-tone	ม่า	Mother (Slang)
◌̋		Rising-tone	ม่า/หมา	Dog

Figure 3.4: Thai five tones with the same syllables ‘Ma’ in different tones and meanings.

3.5. Traditional Thai Singing

In Thailand there is a rich heritage of narrative music which is unconnected to drama. One of the types is only for singers, such as the Thai *say pha*, which consists of performers accompanying themselves with four sticks clicked together like castanets. Other narrators or storytellers use string instruments for ostinato-like backgrounds.¹⁰ Poonpit Amatyakul succinctly explains in a personal interview that in the past there were three types of musical performance in Thailand: (1) music for the home, in which a group of musicians will gather in the house and improvise music; (2) temple music, in which the musicians would improvise based on Thai folk tales: located in the temple, in costume and accompanied by traditional instruments, such as *ranad* (xylophone) and Thai drums; (3) court music, in which the music is designed to be performed only in the court. Court music is based on the stories of the royal family and only women are allowed to take on performance roles.¹¹ During the reign of King Rama V (1868-1910), these three musical types evolved by adding more singers and characters. Since the number of the performers has increased and the performances consisted of dialogue between the singers, these newly-developed musical types were redefined as *Lakhon*, which means ‘drama’ in the Thai language dictionary by the Royal Institute of Thailand.¹²

The first Thai drama was *Lakhon Chatree* which emerged in the south of Thailand and was first performed around the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767). This drama is performed by three singers, each of whom must know the story beforehand as the performance involves improvisation. This drama concentrates on entertaining the audience. There is no stage; only a bed in the middle of the performance space, which is surrounded by the audience.¹³ After *Lakhon Chatree* became popular, it evolved and separated into two sub-categories: *Lakhon Nai* and *Lakhon Nok*. *Lakhon Nai* was performed only in the court and only women could take part in this drama. The male roles in *Lakhon Nai* would be performed by women. In turn, *Lakhon Nok* was performed in all venues except in the court and only men were allowed to perform. In Thai, *Nai* and *Nok* means “in” and “out” respectively which is why *Lakhon*

¹⁰ William P Malm, *Music Cultures of the Pacific, the Near East, and Asia* (New York, 1977), p. 158.

¹¹ Author's interview with Poonpit Amatyakul (13 July 2017).

¹² Paradee Tungtang, *Shakespeare in Thailand*, D.A. diss. (University of Warwick, 2011), p. 136.

¹³ Montree Meenium, จรรณกรวรรณกรรมแสดง [Performance Literature] (Bangkok, 2017), pp. 22-23.

Nai was performed in the court, whereas *Lakhon Nok* was performed everywhere except the court.¹⁴ These two forms of *Lakhon* were performed during the Ayutthaya period, until King Rama IV (1881-1925) lifted the rule that women could only perform in court. He allowed female singers to perform outside of the court. He decided to lift this rule to better accommodate his busy schedule. This decree was a big change for drama in Thailand. Women joined the *Lakhon Nok* drama because it was easier to get women to sing as the men were busy with other work. Women could also create dresses for shows by themselves. Also, the audience preferred to watch female performances over male.

It was during the reign of King Rama V that Thai drama and performance developed significantly because of the influence from Western music and opera. *Lakhon Rong* and *Lakhon Deuk Dum Ban* were the drama types that absorbed most influence from Western opera during this period. Around 1897, during the reign of King Rama V, a new type of drama called *Likay* emerged as a more traditional-like Thai drama. Most Thai people believe that *Likay* is Thai opera due to its similarity to Western opera (see Chapter 3.5.3). In 1908, King Rama VI returned from studying abroad and his reign became a highlight for music and drama in Thailand. He invented *Lakhon Phud*, a dialogue play, which was influenced by Western drama. Later, the king composed the first three Thai operas, though they have never been performed. As this thesis concentrates on Thai opera, the following discussion only considers examples of traditional Thai theatre which shares similarities with or has been influenced by Western opera, and also focuses on a type of Thai folk music with melodies that have inspired Thai opera.

¹⁴ Meenium, วรรณกรรมการแสดง [*Performance Literature*], pp. 25-40.

3.5.1. *Lakhon Deukdumban*

Lakhon Deukdumban (ละครดึกดำบรรพ์, literally, 'Ancient time drama') was a drama form during the reign of King Rama V (1868-1910). This drama was the first Thai drama that was directly influenced by Western opera. It was popular for ten years, from 1899 to 1909.¹⁵ This form of drama was devised by Chao Phraya Tewedwongvivat (1852-1922), who had visited Europe in 1891 and was deeply impressed by the performances of opera he had seen there. He returned and informed Prince Narisara Nuwattiwong (1863-1947), the son of King Rama IV, about operas. Prince Nuwattiwong enjoyed the stories of the operas so much that he agreed to try and stage a Thai drama as a Western-style opera. For this performance, Chao Phraya Tewedwongvivat built a theatre, created dramas and conducted the Pi-Pat ensemble, which was a traditional Thai ensemble (see Figure 3.8). He let Prince Narisara Nuwattiwong write the script for the drama and prepare the stage costumes and the props. They named the theatre *Lakhon Deukdumban*, a name by which this particular form of drama also became more widely known. Most of the storylines were inspired by ancient Thai literature. *Lakhon Deukdumban* was considered a very innovative form of drama during the period ruled by King Rama V. Before the emergence of *Lakhon Deukdumban*, all forms of dramas in Thailand were rather simple in their structure. There was only a plain stage for the singer to sing and dance, and upon the stage was only a sofa as a prop. However, *Lakhon Deukdumban* required a designed stage with props and background, such as forests and castles as well as advanced lighting effects to indicate day and night scenes and even fire and thunder (see Figure 3.5).¹⁶

¹⁵ Pornthep Boonjanped, ประวัติศาสตร์นาฏศิลป์ไทย: ภาคกลาง [History of Thai Drama: Central Region] (Bangkok, 2015), p. 564.

¹⁶ Narisara Nuwattiwong, ชุมนุมบทละครและบทร้อง [Community Drama & Lyrics] (Bangkok, 1971), p.5.



Figure 3.5: Lakhon Deukdumban drama. The performers dress up as their enacted characters.¹⁷

¹⁷ Anonymous, ‘วธ.จัดการแสดงละครดึกดำบรรพ์ “นางเสือง” เฉลิมพระเกียรติสมเด็จพระบรมราชินีนาถ ในรัชกาลที่ 9 เนื่องในโอกาสวันเฉลิมพระชนมพรรษา 12 สิงหาคม [Thammasat University Organised a Primeval Play "Nang Suaong" in Honour of His Majesty the Queen of King Rama IX on the Occasion of the Birthday of 12 August]’, *Thainews*, entry post 10.08.18, <https://www.thairnews.com/%E0%B8%A7%E0%B8%98-%E0%B8%88%E0%B8%B1%E0%B8%94%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%A3%E0%B9%81%E0%B8%AA%E0%B8%94%E0%B8%87%E0%B8%A5%E0%B8%B0%E0%B8%84%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%94%E0%B8%B6%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%94%E0%B8%B3%E0%B8%9A/> (accessed 5.12.20).

3.5.2. *Lakhon Rong*

Lakhon Rong (ละครร้อง, literally, 'singing drama') is a more modern type of drama that was developed in the beginning of the 1900s, which was significantly influenced by Western music. This drama was introduced by King Rama VI, the successor of Rama V, when he was a prince, who copied from Western opera and concentrated on the singing and acting of the characters.¹⁸ Compared to *Lakhon Deukdumban*, this drama was popular among Thai audiences for a long period, up until the political change of 1932 led to a wider range of entertainment being available; therefore, *Lakhon Rong* slowly faded in popularity and was replaced by Western film and television dramas.¹⁹ One of the most famous *Lakhon Rong* is *Sao Krua Fah*: a brief overview of the work will offer useful context for how the form relates to the later operatic tradition.

Sao Krua Fah (สาวเครือฟ้า) is one of the *Lakhon Rong* dramas with four acts. The drama's title shares its name with the main character. It is very famous and the storyline was adapted from *Madame Butterfly*. In 1906 King Rama V travelled to Europe where he had the opportunity to attend Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* in Turin, Italy.²⁰ He enjoyed the performance so much that on his return to Thailand he shared the story with his family. In 1908, Prince Narathip Praphanphong, a member of the Thai royal family, adapted the opera as *Lakhon Rong* and titled it *Sao Krua Fah*. Praphanphong changed the location in the storyline from Japan to Chiang Mai (a province in northern Thailand). He also changed characters and their names, for instance, the main character Madame Butterfly, 'Jo Jo Sang', became 'Krua Fah', a Thai-Laos northern girl, and 'Lieutenant B.F. Pinkerton' of the United States Navy became 'Second Lieutenant Prom' of the Royal Thai Army.²¹ *Sao Krua Fah* has since been adapted into film in 1953 (see Figure 3.6), remade in 1965 (see Figure 3.7) and once more again in 1989.

¹⁸ Meenium, วรรณกรรมการแสดง [*Performance Literature*], pp. 42-43.

¹⁹ Tungtang, *Shakespeare in Thailand*, p. 166.

²⁰ Kittipong Wirodthammakul, ทรงเล่าเรื่อง เสรีประพาสยุโรป [*Telling Story, Travel in Europe*] (Bangkok, 2016), p. 98.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 101-103.



Figure 3.6: A famous actress, Wilailuck Watthanapanit in the role Sao Krua Fah in 1953.²²



Figure 3.7: Sao Krua Fah's 1965 poster.²³

²² Anonymous, 'สาวเครือฟ้า (2496) [Sao Krua Fah (1953)]', *Thaibunternrg* [https://thaibunternrg.fandom.com/th/wiki/%E0%B8%AA%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%A7%E0%B9%80%E0%B8%84%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B7%E0%B8%AD%E0%B8%9F%E0%B9%89%E0%B8%B2_\(2496\)](https://thaibunternrg.fandom.com/th/wiki/%E0%B8%AA%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%A7%E0%B9%80%E0%B8%84%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B7%E0%B8%AD%E0%B8%9F%E0%B9%89%E0%B8%B2_(2496)) (accessed 5.12.20).

²³ Anonymous, 'Thai Movie Tickets', *Facebook*, entry post 17.07.18, <https://www.facebook.com/ThaiMoviePosters/posts/1038060776358932/> (accessed 5.12.20).

3.5.3. *Likay*

Likay is a hybrid of popular folk theatre from many countries. The first performance was in 1897 in Bangkok when a group of Muslim musicians performed for King Rama V.²⁴ The king was responsible for disseminating *Likay* throughout Thailand and the indigenous people started to include stories from other cultures, using Chinese and Burmese characters, and so the costumes changed as well.²⁵ Most local Thai people think of *Likay* as traditional Thai opera. The costumes are extravagant, and it is performed on a grand stage that is lavishly decorated. The actors must be good at singing, acting, and improvising. Traditionally, singers of *Likay* do not use microphones, although the use of microphones has increasingly become part of modern performances. Nowadays, *Likay* is occasionally performed in rural areas, such as temple fairs and out of town private events. *Likay* performances are also broadcast on TV and radio. This form of folk theatre has, however, become rare in Thailand. *Likay* is famous for elaborate costumes, heavy makeup – from very dark black eyeliner to bright red lipstick – and colourful glittering and fake hair, as well as fake jewellery for both men and women. The singers must bring their own costumes and handle their own makeup and masks. Around 1917 general interest in *Likay* decreased because the first films came to Thailand, but in the countryside, there were still traveling *Likay* groups performing.²⁶ As music accompaniment there is the Pi-Pat, which is a Thai ensemble that consists of five to six players (see Figure 3.8). They play traditional Thai musical instruments such as *ranad*,²⁷ *khong wong yai*²⁸ and *tapone*.²⁹ There are numerous ways in which the singers can signal the musicians to start playing. They either clap their hands or knock on the stage. If the singers are acting at the same time, they give the signal by looking directly at the

²⁴ Wongtad, ดนตรีไทย มาจากไหน [*Where is Thai Music From?*], p. 176.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 176.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 33-34.

²⁷ *Ranad* is a wooden percussion instrument which is similar to the Western orchestral xylophone. It is a three-octave instrument with keys laced together and hung over a wooden boat shape, which acts as a resonator.

²⁸ *Khong wong yai* is made of a type of large, round rattan, which is placed on the floor. The framework is nearly a complete circle or oval, inside of which the player sits. The sixteen gongs are arranged in ascending order of pitch. The smallest and highest-toned gong is located at the back right end of the stand.

²⁹ *Tapone* is a percussion instrument. The covering is made from a single block of teakwood, which is hollowed out and shaped into a drum. The right end is covered with parchment made from ox-or wild goat skin and the left end is made from calf skin.

musicians, pointing their index finger to the ground or simply by bowing their heads.³⁰



Figure 3.8: Pi-Pat Khrueng Ha Ensemble.³¹

The elements of *Likay* appear to be nearly identical to Western opera as there are extravagant costumes, full makeup, fully decorated stages and no microphones. However, even though the elements seem very similar, there is no evidence that *Likay* was influenced by Western opera, but represented a movement back to a more traditional Thai theatre. There are, however, five salient differences between *Likay* and Thai opera in Western style: (1) *Likay* is mostly performed outdoors whereas Western opera is mainly performed indoors, for instance in an opera house; (2) with respect to the techniques of singing *Likay*, singers would sing with a speech voice rather than a head voice; (3) *Likay* is accompanied by a Thai ensemble while Western opera is accompanied by an orchestra; (4) *Likay* is not notation, while Western opera musicians rely on a music score; (5) dialogues and music in *Likay* are improvised whereas dialogues and music in Western opera are composed.

³⁰ Wongtad, ดนตรีไทย มาจากไหน [*Where is Thai Music From?*], p. 69.

³¹ Anonymous, 'วงปี่พาทย์ [Pi-Pat ensemble]', Wongdontrith, https://wongdontrith.blogspot.com/2018/01/blog-post_10.html?m=1&fbclid=IwAR2RfGJeyuOPmyTB5trMUdJ9_O1xgnaxRrL4M_P21m2wDyMq0ECaRGisxRY (accessed 20.03.21).

3.5.4. *Khon*

Khon (โขน) is one of the oldest art forms in Thai traditional performance. The storylines in this form of drama originate exclusively in the *Ramakean* story. Compared to other Thai traditional dramas, *Khon* is commonly known for its exaggerated stage setting and most performers would wear masks throughout the performance. The masks and the story distinguish *Khon* from every other Thai drama as well as their costumes which are glittery and weighty. A signature move of *Khon* is the martial arts gesture of stepping up on the shoulder of the enemy. In *Khon*, the performing musicians and actors are separated: the Thai ensembles and singers perform on the side of the stage while the performers act and dance on the stage (see Figure 3.9).



Figure 3.9: *Khon* performance, which shows the famous martial arts gesture.³²

³² Anonymous, ‘จ.เชียงใหม่ เชิญชวนชมการแสดง โขนศาลาเฉลิมกรุง [Inviting the Khon Dance Show]’, *Chiangmainews*, entry post 23.01.19, <https://www.chiangmainews.co.th/page/archives/894821/> (accessed 5.12.20).

There are only four types of characters in *Ramakean*: *Phra* (male characters), *Nang* (female characters), *yak* (giants) and *ling* (monkeys) (see Figure 3.11). The costumes for *yak* and *ling* characters comprise different masks to underline their distinct characters while actors who perform *Phra* and *Nang* do not need to wear masks. The performers worship their own masks, and after finishing the performance, the actors need to take off these masks immediately as they believe each mask contains a soul that will take over their own. Some Thai dancers believe that the masks possess the dancers and they become their characters during the performances. The most significant *yak* is *Todsgan*, which has green skin with ten faces and hands (see Figure 3.10).³³



Figure 3.10: *Todsgan mask (Ravana mask)*.³⁴

³³ Reunreuthai Sudjapan, นามานุกรม รามเกียรติ์ [*Encyclopedia Ramakean*] (Bangkok, 2016), p. 139.

³⁴ Anonymous, 'ตัวละครฝ่ายยักษ์ [Giant Character]', <https://sites.google.com/site/khon5752/taw-lakhr-fay-the-ph/taw-lakh> (accessed 5.12.20).



Figure 3.11: The main four characters of *Khon Ramayana*.³⁵

Today, *Khon* is still performed but not as widely as it was. Although *Khon* is considered to be one of the oldest forms of drama, the stage is modern and exotic. Modern performances of *Khon* are generally attended by foreign tourists rather than Thai people. In 2006, Sucharitkul composed an opera based on the *Ramakean* called *Ayodhya*, which was influenced by *Khon*. The performance of this opera almost had to be cancelled as it clashed with religious beliefs (see Chapter 4.2.3).

³⁵ Sudjapan, นามานุกรม รามเกียรติ์ [*Encyclopedia Ramakean*], cover book.

3.5.5. *Lakhon Phud*

The key feature of *Lakhon Phud* (ละครพูด, literally, 'spoken drama') is conversation. This form of drama originated in the period of King Rama V (1868-1910). It was initially composed to be watched by King Rama V and was performed by noblemen. During that time, *Lakhon Phud* had no scripts so the noblemen performed the drama based on improvisation. The drama was later improved through singing and by adding old poems into the plot, along with costumes and a stage setting. Later, a script for *Lakhon Phud* was invented leading to a better quality of performance.³⁶

King Rama VI was a main patron of *Lakhon Phud*, bolstering its widespread gain in popularity. In addition to promoting the form, he also composed numerous *Lakhon Phud*, and introduced several new ideas and concepts, like the modern theatre form. The king even acted in some performances.³⁷ The king was influenced by Western dramas while he was studying in Europe (1893 to 1902). He even performed with other Thai students when he was an overseas student. Upon his return, he built a theatre in Saranrom Park and a theatre company for *Lakhon Phud* named *Sri Ayuthayarom*. This extensively increased the popularity of *Lakhon Phud*, hence more theatre companies were established inside and outside of the city centre.³⁸ When the king travelled to other cities for work, he took the *Sri Ayuthayarom* performers with him so that future audiences in the country could be exposed to *Lakhon Phud*. The aim of *Lakhon Phud* is not only entertainment, but to fill the audience with a patriotic feeling, for instance by demonstrating the importance of soldiers within the country.³⁹ One of the most famous *Lakhon Phud* is *Madanapatha*. Somtow Sucharitkul was inspired by and composed a Thai opera based on it (see Chapter 4.2.1).⁴⁰

³⁶ Meenium, วรรณกรรมการแสดง [*Performance Literature*], pp. 59-60.

³⁷ Tungtang, *Shakespeare in Thailand*, p. 168.

³⁸ Meenium, วรรณกรรมการแสดง [*Performance Literature*], pp. 59-61.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 59-61.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 59.



Figure 3.12: Lakhon Phud: Madanapatha.⁴¹

⁴¹ Anonymous, 'ทนนนา เป็นนางมัทนะพาธา_5 [Nuna is a Mrs. Mattana Patha_5]', *YouTube*, entry post 22.07.14, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWqJ1QMloD8> (accessed 5.12.20).

3.5.6. *Lae*

Lae (เลห์) is a religious chant that is sung and occurs mostly in religious ceremonies, for instance, an Ordination Ceremony. There are two types of *Lae*: *Lae Nok* and *Lae Nai*. While *Lae Nok* tells any story, *Lae Nai* is specifically about The Vessantara Jataka; the story about Buddha. To be a good *Lae* singer improvisational skills are essential.⁴²



Figure 3.13: *Lae* by a monk in temple.⁴³

Chamluang Maniwong, a Thai philosopher of folk music explained the origin of *Lae*: it came from monks recounting the stories of The Vessantara Jataka to temple visitors. There are thirteen stories in total. Each monk has a beautiful tone in their own style and unique melodies. Each story of The Vessantara Jataka has a different melody. For instance, for the story of Mahapon, the singer has to sing very

⁴² Anonymous, “เพลงเลห์” อีกตำนานเพลง กลิ่นอายวัฒนธรรม...และศรัทธา [‘Lae music’ Another Legend of Music, Cultural.. and Faith], *Dailynews newspaper*, entry post 30.05.17, https://www.dailynews.co.th/article/576662?fbclid=IwAR1A4fOQ2Zr1ho_3SulotUKRnExJS9LzYN8-JF6wh-ucliy9plvnZ7aGnLk, (accessed 5.12.20).

⁴³ Anonymous, ‘เลห์พระเวสสันดร พระอาจารย์ราชันย์ [Source of Vessantara Master Rachan]’, *YouTube*, entry post 2.11.10, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZN88jMiRWG4&app=desktop> (accessed 5.12.20).

softly and gently, imitating the Thai flute 'Pi'. Later, when the *Lae* melodies became popular in the temple, people copied the monks and started to sing *Lae* melodies during events outside of the temple⁴⁴ (see Figure 3.13).

The tradition became so popular that some monks left monkhood and became singers. There are few *Lae* singers in Thailand. Porn Pirom (1928-2010) is considered the 'King of *Lae*'. He started his singing career by becoming a *Likay* singer. He also won an award as a lead singer by performing a *Likay* ปฐพีขวานทอง [A Golden Axe], composed by Gatekhong's brothers: Boonyong and Boonyung. Phibunsongkhram, the dictator during the political revolution of 1932, awarded him a golden prize. After he got the golden prize, Pirom joined a Jularat music band and he began to include *Lae* music in his performance. He became well-known and toured around Thailand, and received the nickname 'King of *Lae*'.⁴⁵ Another famous *Lae* singer is Waiphot Phetsuphan (b.1942). He was actually a famous *Luk Thung*⁴⁶ singer before transitioning to sing *Lae*. However, he still is the most widely recorded *Lae* artist and became the National Artist of Thailand in 1997. His *Lae* melodies are unique and well-known throughout Thailand.⁴⁷ Currently, Thodsapon Himmaphan is one of the most famous *Lae* singers in Thailand because of his unique melodies and style. His father was a *Lae* singer and taught him until he passed away. Himmaphan continued learning *Lae* with a monk in the temple until he became a monk himself. He sang *Lae* in the temple until he left monkhood and became a *Luk Thung* singer. However, his *Luk Thung* technique is influenced by *Lae*, making him very unique.⁴⁸ His style of putting syncopation in *Lae* melodies is unique and probably accountable for his fame. Melodies from these artists became staple melodies for *Lae*. Somtow Sucharitkul also used these melodies in some of his operas such as *Mae Naak* and *Suriyothai* (see Chapter 4.2.1 and 4.2.4).

⁴⁴ Jenphop Jopkrabuanwan, 'แหล่ [Lae]', *วารสาร ถนนดนตรี [Music Street Journal]*, Vol 1/6 (March, 1987), pp. 62-65.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ One type of traditional Thai singing.

⁴⁷ Anonymous, "เพลงแหล่' อีกตำนานเพลง กลิ่นอายวัฒนธรรม...และศรัทธา [‘Lae Music’ Another Legend of Music, Cultural.. and Faith]’.

⁴⁸ Tosaphol Leongsuporn, "ทศพล หิมพานต์ ศิลปินเพลงแหล่กับความสามารถเหลือแหล่' [Todsapon Himmaphan], *fungjaizine*, entry post 7 .11.16, <https://www.fungjaizine.com/article/nowadays/tossaphol-himmaphan?fbclid=IwAR0TEIBNo5bHwYUq2Go0Q9MGFSGkKHxHswwob5skCdYipA8MdnkN2vLMF5Q> (accessed 5.12.20).

3.6. Conclusions

This chapter addressed many types of Thai music forms which influenced composers to create Western operas combined with Thai elements. The Thai language has a section in this chapter because it is a tonal language which affects singing operas in Thai. However, there is no problem with tonal language in traditional singing. The problems arise with the operatic singing style. Thai dramas are also introduced in this chapter: from their beginning up until more recently. The rapid development of these dramas accelerated despite the influence of music from the West and neighbouring countries. Most of these occurred during the reign of King Rama V and VI, both of which are the main players in bringing Western music into Thailand.

Chapter 4: Thai Opera

The Thai operas in this thesis were written in the Western musical style but using traditional mythologies, characters, instruments, melodies and Thai language in different combinations and context. There are twenty Thai operas included in this thesis: those that have not been performed, those that have been performed and those part of the opera cycle (see Table 4.1 & 4.2). The following operas are separated into two tables which are unperformed and performed.

Opera	Language	Composer	Year	Note
<i>The Mikado</i>	Thai	King Rama VI	1910	Translation
<i>Wantee</i>	Thai	King Rama VI	1911	Adaptation
<i>Chao Tak Sin</i>	English & German	King Rama VI	c. 1868-1925	
<i>Daranee</i>	Thai	His Royal Highness Prince Adityadibabha	c. 1939-1945	
<i>Pero Vaz de Sequeira</i>	English	Pathorn Srikananda	2011	

Table 4.1: List of Thai operas (unperformed).

Opera	Language	Composer	Premiere Year
<i>Ngau Pa</i>	Thai	Srikananda	2000
<i>Madana</i>	English	Sucharitul Sucharitul	2001
<i>Mae Naak</i>	English	Sucharitul	2003
<i>Ayodhya</i>	English	Sucharitul	2006
<i>The Story of the Long-Gone Animals</i>	Thai	Krisada & Napisi Reyes	2008
<i>The Lunch Box</i>	Thai	Thanapoom Sirichang	2009

<i>A Boy and a Tiger</i>	English & Thai	Bruce Gaston	2009
<i>The Silent Prince (Temiya)</i>	English	Sucharitkul	2010
<i>Suriyothai</i>	English	Sucharitkul	2013
<i>The Lost Prince, (Mahajanaka)</i>	English	Sucharitkul	2014
<i>The Naga Prince, (Bhuridat)</i>	English	Sucharitkul	2015
<i>The Faithful Son, (Sama, Suwannasam)</i>	English	Sucharitkul	2015
<i>The Chariot of Heaven, (Nemiraj)</i>	English	Sucharitkul	2017
<i>The Clever Sage, (Mahosadha)</i>	English	Sucharitkul	2019
<i>The Honourable Prince, (Canda-Kumara)</i>	English	Sucharitkul	2019

Table 4.2: List of Thai operas (performed) in chronological order.

4.1. Thai Operas (Unperformed)

To create a new style of opera requires much experimentation before it is ready to be performed in front of audiences. It took many years before the first ever opera was performed. Thai opera is one of the genres that required extensive experimentation before a whole opera could be performed and only some received a good response. However, some are incomplete or have serious issues which is why they were never performed. This chapter explores five Thai operas that have never been performed and discusses the reasons why.

There are many parallels between the development of Thai opera in the early twenty-first century and the birth of opera itself in northern Italy in the early seventeenth century. The story of the latter is well known: the earliest experiments were academic affairs arising from the intellectual interests of the Florentine Camerata, while the first public opera house was not opened until 1637.¹ Similarly, Thai opera underwent a series of experiments as it developed; some operas were staged only in part, while others, for a range of reasons, remain unperformed. This chapter will explore those unperformed Thai operas and in doing so examine why they were not performed and what that can tell us about the development of Thai opera and the challenges it faced and continues to face. The first two operas were translated and adapted from the Western operetta *The Mikado*. The next two were true stories from Thai history and its heroes and the remaining opera was a fictional tale. All of these operas were adapted and created by members and close associates of the Thai royal family.

There are a range of reasons for these operas having never been performed; often suggesting much about the reception of the genre in Thailand and the practical issues involved in Thai opera production. This chapter presents a catalogue of sorts, listing and gathering any known information about these lost and failed works.

¹ Donald Jay Grout, and Hermine Weigel Williams, *A Short History of Opera*, (New York, 4/2003).

Unfortunately, no further evidence exists of these operas, and evidence about operas before the twentieth century is very limited. The interview with Amatyakul and his articles are the only resources used in this chapter.²

4.1.1. *The Mikado*

The Mikado was translated from the well-known two-act English comic operetta of the same name. Set in Japan, the music was composed by Arthur Sullivan (1840-1900) and W.S. Gilbert (1836-1911).³ The libretto was translated into Thai by King Rama VI (1880-1925) in 1910. Two performances of the translated work were planned; however, neither were performed. King Rama VI was inspired to translate *The Mikado* after watching a performance in 1890 in Singapore (Batavia) with his father, King Rama V. He was so amazed by the operetta and its story, that he then asked his English teacher, Robert L. Morant, to find the score so he could translate it into Thai. He put a lot of effort into translating it and brought the score everywhere with him. However, Morant told him to stop translating it because it was too difficult: indeed, he was only ten years old at that time.⁴ The young prince set the translation aside until he went to study in England in 1893 for nine years. While in England he had a chance to see another production of *The Mikado* at the Savoy Theatre. When he returned to Thailand in 1908, he decided to complete the translation. The prince planned to perform his translation towards the end of 1910, but his father, King Rama V, died on 23 October 1910, and as a result the show was cancelled.⁵ The following year, ahead of a rescheduled performance, he revised his translation by changing most of the characters' names and re-titling it *Wang Tee*.

As previously mentioned, to better understand the difficulties involved in translating an English libretto into Thai, and to recreate a sense of how this failed production might have sounded, 'The Sun Whose Rays Are All Ablaze', an aria of the

² Poonpit Amatyakul, 'มหาอุปรากรของไทยสองเรื่อง ที่ไม่มีโอกาสแสดง [Two Thai Operas That Never Had a Chance to Be Performed]', วารสารเพลงดนตรี [Music Journal], Oknation, entry posted 1.11.07, <http://oknation.nationtv.tv/blog/insanetheater/2007/05/01/entry-1> (accessed 5.12.20).

³ Carolyn Williams, *Gilbert and Sullivan: Gender, Genre, Parody*, (New York, 2011).

⁴ Poonpit Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี [Vajiravudh with Music] (Bangkok, 2012), pp. 134-135.

⁵ Ibid.

main character, Yum-Yum, has been translated into Thai and recorded as a part of this thesis (Track 7 for original English & 8 for Thai translation).

4.1.2. *Wang Tee*

Wang Tee is a 1911 adaptation of *The Mikado*. King Rama VI, changed the name of the opera and changed the set of the opera from Japan to China. As a result, the singers imitated Chinese people when they were acting on stage. One of the reasons he changed the set to China could be because Thai people at that time were more familiar with Chinese than Japanese people. He also changed most of the names of the main characters to Chinese names, except for one main character, Yum-Yum. For instance, Nangki-Poo was changed to Keamsintee, Ko-Ko to Haegeung and King Mikado to King Wang Tee. Amatyakul also acknowledges in his article that King Rama VI changed some dialogue as well as some melodies. After he completed the adaptation in 1910, a performance was planned for 21 February 1911 and rehearsals were underway. However, on 13 January 1911, the rebel R.S. 130 group gathered and tried to overthrow the king while he was travelling back to Bangkok from Sanam Chandra Palace. Even though the rebel group was caught, the opera still had to be cancelled because it was too risky for the king to be seen in public.⁶ Amatyakul mentions that one of the arias from this opera has been recorded by *His Master's Voice* from England featuring Pun Muthawapai as the singer. Amatyakul's article claims this recording still exists to this day.⁷ However, no copy of the score is known; the only written mention of this recording can be found in the article by Amatyakul.⁸

⁶ Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี [*Vajiravudh with Music*], pp. 134-135.

⁷ Ibid., p. 41.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 134-135.

4.1.3. *Chao Tak Sin*

Another opera composed by King Rama VI is *Chao Tak Sin*.⁹ The story is based on the true event: The Second Burmese-Siamese War. Burma waged war on Thailand over a course of three years, from 1765 until the surrender of Thailand in 1767. Tak Sin (1734-1782) was a leader of the Thai army who returned to Thailand after the capitulation. He instigated an uprising and brought freedom to Thailand again. The legend of *Chao Tak Sin* is famous and important in Thailand; therefore, King Rama VI composed an opera to honour the famous nobleman. Another one of the reasons for King Rama VI to compose this opera could have been his desire to present Thailand as 'civilised' to the West. There is evidence that this was a part of his wider cultural plan to avoid colonisation, as around that time, neighbouring countries near Thailand had been colonised by Western countries. For instance, Laos was colonised by France in 1893 and Cambodia was colonised in 1887, again by the French. Therefore, the legend of *Chao Tak Sin* could be seen as the perfect story to demonstrate to Western countries that Thailand loves freedom and has a strong army, and that the Thai people will fight for freedom. In 1898, King Rama VI went to Paris, and while staying in Europe he established a theatre association named *Khrue*. The members of the *Khrue* association offered to organise an opera, and planned to choose between two operas: *Die Offenbarung Des Brgu* and *Chao Tak Sin*. In the end, the association decided not to perform *Chao Tak Sin*, choosing the other opera instead.¹⁰

There are two sources that mention the opera *Chao Tak Sin*. The first is a handwritten, black-covered book, by King Rama VI, mostly in English, with some passages in German and Thai. The Thai text in the book was a poem about Sisudachan, a wife of the 13th King Chairachathirat of the Ayutthaya Kingdom. The English text was the libretto of the opera and a description of the voice types of the characters in the opera. Some of the German texts in the book contain singers' names and some words of the libretto. In Inkhong's article, Mom Luang Pin Malakul

⁹ Chao is a title of Thai nobility, similar to Lord in the United Kingdom.

¹⁰ Amatyakul, 'มหาอุปราชของไทยสองเรื่อง ที่ไม่มีโอกาสแสดง [Two Thai Operas That Never Had a Chance to Be Performed]', *วารสารเพลงดนตรี [Music Journal]*.

explained that this opera was an original story by Phraya Nonthaburi.¹¹ The melody and German text were composed by Chao Phraya Srithammarad and the English text by Phraya Prasitsanlagan (see Figure 4.1). However, all of the script in this book was rewritten by King Rama VI. The book was discovered by Mom Rajawongse Supphicha Na Pombejra, and was preserved by his father, Dhani Nivat, a member of the current Chakri dynasty.¹²

The second source that mentions *Chao Tak Sin* was discovered in 2016 by Poonpit Amatyakul, when visiting an old book shop in Mrigadayavan Palace in the Phetchaburi Province. This book is only 40 pages and comprises a draft script of *Chao Tak Sin* written in English. The draft only states which voice type sang which role; however, there is no music notation inside either of the two books (see Figure 4.2).¹³

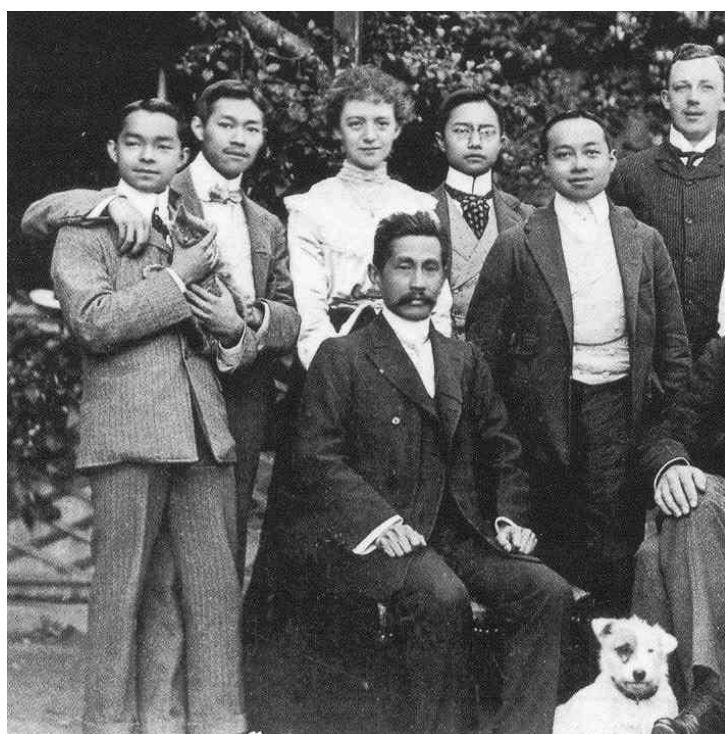


Figure 4.1: Phraya Prasitsanlagan (sitting) and King Rama VI (second from left).¹⁴

¹¹ Nutthan Inkhong, มหาอุปรากรในสมัย รัชการที่ 6 [*Opera in the Period of King Rama VI*], in Poonpit Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี [*Vajiravudh with Music*] (Bangkok, 2012), pp. 133-141

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี [*Vajiravudh with Music*], pp. 134-135.

¹⁴ Ibid.



Figure 4.2: A book cover of Chao Tak Sin, an opera in 3 acts, by King Rama VI.¹⁵

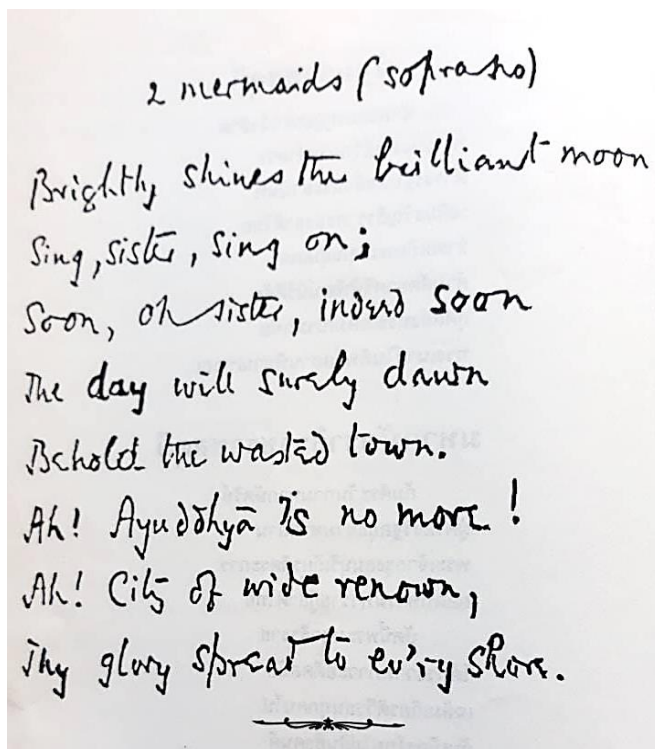


Figure 4.3: The first act libretto of Chao Tak Sin written in the handwriting of King Rama VI.¹⁶

¹⁵ Picture received from Poonpit Amatyakul (August 2017).

¹⁶ Ibid.

The story of *Chao Tak Sin* in the Yellow Book begins in Ayutthaya city centre at the exact moment that Thailand loses the war against Burma. The back of the stage is a ruin of Ayutthaya city. Buildings and temples are burning and the destruction from the war is apparent. A group of mermaids are singing together in the Chao Phraya river, led by two sopranos. The mermaids rise from the river in front of the Pranan Cheing temple. The mermaids are singing and crying that their ancient Ayutthaya city has been destroyed. They are wondering aloud who will reclaim Ayutthaya for its people. There are many souls and ghosts everywhere in Ayutthaya because it was a very old town and the area was settled more than four hundred years ago. The demon (bass) comes to the mermaids and tells them that before he became a demon, he used to be a Thai human who was executed by a former king, even though he had committed no crime. He is vastly satisfied that Ayutthaya is burning down now. He feels that Ayutthaya deserves it. He tells the mermaids not to be sad because a hero will come to set Ayutthaya free again. Chao Tak Sin (bass) and his son (tenor) are marching with an army to fight the Burmese forces. They fight with dignity and win a great victory. During the victory night, while Chao Tak Sin is sleeping, he dreams of five former Ayutthaya kings: Phra Chao Utong, Naresuan, Phranarai, Phrajao Songtham and Khunluang Sorsak. They are delighted that Chao Tak Sin fought bravely and saved Ayutthaya. However, they refuse to let him become its new king and rule the kingdom. They order Chao Tak Sin to leave Ayutthaya after the war is over.¹⁷

This war was one of the greatest defeats for Thailand in its entire history and the most disastrous war the country ever faced. Most of the country's data and records, as well as temples, walls and buildings were burned down and Thailand lost *Tanaosi*, the land in the south, to Burma. Chao Tak Sin was the hero who freed the kingdom from foreign occupation; however, he suffered from mental illness and was actually killed.¹⁸ He remains an important cultural figure and today he is celebrated annually on 28 December. It is interesting to see how the opera's story differs from the real events (see Appendix C.2). Apart from being a patriotic production, it also

¹⁷ Pin Malakul, เจ้าตากสิน บทมหาอุปรากรภาษาอังกฤษ ๓ องค์ [*Chao Tak Sin, an Opera in 3 Acts*] (Bangkok, 1989), pp. 25-41.

¹⁸ Anonymous, 'คำให้การ วันประหาร "พระเจ้าตาก" จากสุดท้ายกรุงธนบุรี [The Testimony to the Day of the Death "Phra Chao Tak", the Last Scene of Thonburi]', *silpa-mag.* entry posted 21.10.19, https://www.silpa-mag.com/history/article_40561 (accessed 6.12.20).

exhibits a wide variety of supernatural creatures present in the opera such as mermaids, demons and ghosts. It aims to display the spiritual world and the morals that Thai people and the king believed in at that time. However, supernatural beliefs remain strong in Thailand to this day. For instance, many famous TV dramas in Thailand are centred around the afterlife, including spirits and ghosts. *Mae Naak* is a very prominent example of a ghost in Thai dramas, television series and movies and has also been adapted into a Thai opera (see Chapter 4.2.2).

4.1.4. *Daranee*

The story of *Daranee* was written by His Royal Highness Prince Adityadibabha (1900-1946), a son of Admiral Prince Abhakara Kiartivongse (Prince of Chumphon), who ruled the kingdom after Rama VIII was killed in 1943 (see Figure 4.4). During that year, he wrote the story of *Daranee*, which was his niece's name. He commissioned two composers, Nard Thawarnboot (1905-1981) and Sgn. Ldr. Pho Santikul, to compose the music for the opera. They had advisers such as Phra Chenduriyang and Ajarn Gardet to help them conclude the arrangement where the chorus is in the opera. The music for this opera was rehearsed by the Air Force Orchestra conducted by Gp. Capt. Khunsawat Tikhamporn. The cast rehearsed at Royal Hall of Borom Phiman. Unfortunately, *Daranee* never had a chance to be performed live due to the outbreak of World War II. Thailand was the only country in Asia, besides Japan, that joined the fight in WWII, which caused the chaos around that time.¹⁹ The story was later reprinted in the *Siam Newspaper* on 8 April 1985.²⁰ *Daranee* is a five-act tragic opera in Thai. His Royal Highness Prince Adityadibabha wrote the lyrics in poetic form, which were sometimes sung in harmony by two, three or four voices.²¹

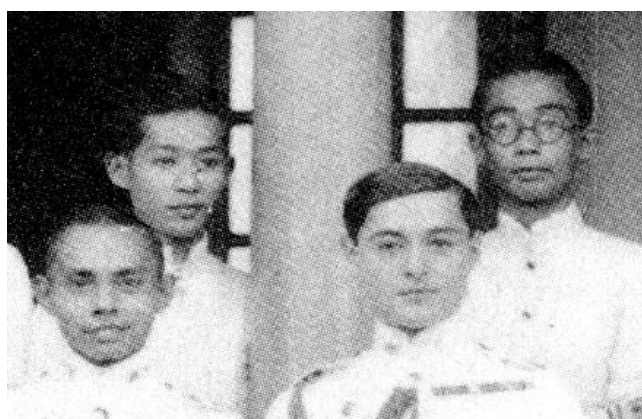


Figure 4.4: His Royal Highness Prince Adityadibabha (bottom left).²²

¹⁹ Chanwit Prichaiphanitpattana, 'การเมืองการปกครองช่วงสงครามโลกครั้งที่ 2- พ.ศ.2500 [Politics and Government During World War II]', *Thailand and World War II – 1957*, https://www.sites.google.com/site/hisstrorym3/2_karmeuxng-kar-pkhrxng-chwng-sngkhamlok-khrang-thi-2--ph-s-2500 (6.12.20).

²⁰ Poonpit Amatyakul, 'มหาอุปรากรของไทยสองเรื่อง ที่ไม่มีโอกาสแสดง [Two Thai Operas That Never Had a Chance to Be Performed]', *Oknation*.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Anonymous, 'HPH Prince Pravitra Vadhanodom Prince of Prachin', updated 14.10.19, <http://www.soravij.com/royalty/pravitra/pravitra.html> (accessed 6.12.20).

Role	Voice Types
King of Chaiyaburi	Bass
Prince Yuppharad	Tenor
Princess Suwannakorn	Mezzo-soprano
Daranee	Soprano

Table 4.3: The voice type of each role in Daranee.

The plot of *Daranee* begins with the king of the city of Chaiyaburi wanting his son, Yuppharad, to marry a princess from Suwannakorn. He arranges the union with the king of Suwannakorn, but does not discuss the deal with Yuppharad beforehand. Also, the king does not know that Yuppharad has been in love with Daranee for a long time. When Yuppharad learns that he is to marry a princess from another city, he refuses. A nobleman tells the king that he will handle the situation by convincing Daranee to stop her meetings with Yuppharad, and if she refuses, he would kill her. Daranee refuses, so he kidnaps and plans to kill her. However, he softens his heart and imprisons her instead. The nobleman returns to the king and lies that Daranee killed herself. Yuppharad does not believe him and tries to find her. He finds Daranee along with the nobleman and a fight ensues, but as Yuppharad is about to kill the nobleman, Daranee steps between them to prevent it. Yuppharad cannot avoid her, and sadly, he accidentally stabs her. The opera ends as Daranee dies in Yuppharad's arms.²³

This was the only Thai opera written during World War II (1939-1945) and there was no other record of any Thai operas created until 2001. It was because of the bad economic situation after King Rama VI passed away and the political revolution. This opera is also the only fictional tragic love story which is not based upon a Thai legend or tale. There is no evidence of what inspired His Royal Highness Prince Adityadibabha to write this opera.

²³ Amatyakul, 'มหาอุปรากรของไทยสองเรื่อง ที่ไม่มีโอกาสแสดง [Two Thai Operas That Never Had a Chance to Be Performed]', *Oknation*.

4.1.5. *Pero Vaz de Sequeira*

Pero Vaz de Sequeira is a historical opera in two acts by Pathorn Srikananda (b.1973). In 2011, the Portuguese embassy in Bangkok approached Srikananda to compose a piece commemorating five hundred years of friendship between Thailand and Portugal. It was planned as a musical tribute based on the story of the first Portuguese embassy in 1511. Ultimately, the Portuguese government ran out of money to proceed with the commission so the opera has never actually been performed. Srikananda finished composing the opera in 2011 and the opera was presented at the World Conference on Educational Sciences at Sapienza University of Rome in 2013. The musical score and the documentary research have been used for students of composition and research methods in the graduate-level composition class at Kasetsart University's music department since 2014. Srikananda proposed the opera to the National Theatre of São Carlos in Lisbon, which planned to perform the opera in 2015. However, the contract for the opera director who was responsible for the collaboration was discontinued; so again, the opera was not performed.²⁴

This opera is based on a true story; however, it did not gain popularity in Thailand until the TV series *Bupphesanniwat* (Love Destiny), was on air from February until April 2018. The series was an adaptation of the novel with the same name by Romphaeng (a pen name of Sanlaya Sukaniwat).²⁵ The story was set in the period of King Narai, which was the same time as the story in the opera. The Love Destiny series enjoyed tremendous success in Thailand and the local people have shown an interest in the historical event since its airing.²⁶

²⁴ Pathorn Srikananda, *The Melodic Construction of Pero Vaz de Sequeira, a Historical Music-Drama in Ten Cantos and Three Epistles* (unpublished provided by Srikananda, Pathorn).

²⁵ Watchchiranon Thongthep, 'ผู้เขียนบทละคร "บุพเพสันนิวาส" แนะนำเขียนบทละครโทรทัศน์อย่างไรให้ดึงดูดใจในยุคดิจิทัล [Novel Writer "Bupphesanniwat" Suggests Writing a Television Series to Appeal to the Digital Age]', *BBC News*, entry post 22.03.18, <https://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-43413965> (accessed 2.11.20).

²⁶ Srikananda, *The Melodic Construction of Pero Vaz de Sequeira, a Historical Music-Drama in Ten Cantos and Three Epistles*.

Roles	Voice type
D. Pero Vaz de Sequeira, Ambassador.	Tenor
D. Maria Guyomar de Pina, Constantine's wife.	Soprano
King Narai the Great, King of Thailand.	Bass (sung by the same person)
Captain-Major Francisco, Captain-Major of the Portuguese bandel.	
Ok-pra Petracha, King Narai's Regent.	Baritone (sung by the same person)
Father Manoel Soares, Superior at St. Paul's Church.	
Constantine Phaulkon, King Narai's First Councillor.	Baritone
Francisco da Cunha Barretto, Interpreter / Captain-Major Francisco's son.	Alto
D. Luiz de Sousa de Sequeira, Portuguese Diplomat / D. Pero's uncle.	Baritone
Francisco Fragozo, Secretary of the Embassy.	Tenor
Ok-luang Samret Maitri, Thai Officer.	Baritone
Ok-kun Chamnan Jaijong, Thai Officer.	Baritone
A Portuguese Crew A Thai Officer	Tenor (sung by the same person)

Table 4.4: The voice type of each role in Pero Vaz de Sequeira.

The story takes place in Thailand c.1684-88 and revolves around three heroes that saved Thailand from being colonised by the French. It begins with the arrival of ambassador Dom Pero Vaz de Sequeira in Thailand in 1684. He has arrived to confirm diplomatic relationships with Thailand, especially to maintain the privileges granted to the Portuguese expatriates already there. De Sequeira was also secretly ordered by the viceroy to gather information regarding the French activities in Southeast Asia. He is given information from Dona Maria that the Greek adventurer Constantine Phaulkon, who incidentally is also her husband and a favourite of King Narai, has indeed high ambitions. Knowledge of his ambition could lead to the complete takeover by the French and thus the end of trade and relations between Portugal and Thailand. Dom Pero tries to persuade King Narai to expel the French but the king refuses, because he endorses modern views and wishes to open his kingdom to the world. However, the king promises to never let any foreigners interfere with the Portuguese in Thailand. At the same time, a Thai noble, Ok-pra Petracha, is aware of the French intentions and is willing to act in order to protect the king and the kingdom. Ok-pra Petracha became king after the death of King Narai in 1688; as king he secretly expelled the French with the help of Dom Pero.

On reflection, although Ok-pra Petracha, Dona Maria and Dom Pero had different motives, no one can deny the fact that each of them played a significant part in preserving the independence of the Thai nation. As more than 300 years passed: Ok-pra Petracha is remembered as a usurper; Dona Maria as a cook and slave; while Pero Vaz de Sequeira has almost disappeared from historical record. The composer dedicates the opera of this true story to their memories, as he considered them to be unsung heroes.²⁷

Orchestration: Piccolo, 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes, English Horn, 2 Clarinets in B-flat, Bass Clarinet in B-flat, Alto Saxophone, 2 Bassoons, 4 Horns in F, 2 Trumpets in B-flat, 2 Trombones Tuba, 3 Timpani, Percussion (2 Players), Marimba, Suspended Cymbal, Cymbals, Finger Cymbals, Gong, Triangle, Wind Chimes, Claves, Snare Drum, Tenor Drum, Bass Drum, Guitar, Violin I Violin II Viola Violoncello Double Bass.²⁸

²⁷ Pathorn Srikaranonda, *Pero Vaz de Sequeira* [unpublished full score].

²⁸ Ibid.

The opera is in two acts, each comprising five scenes. The score also has three 'epistles' in each scene: one at the beginning, one in the middle, and one at the end. The narrative is framed by these monologues in the form of letter readings by the character Dom Pero Vaz, and accompanied by Baroque or Mock-Baroque music. The accompaniment is reflective of the period in which the story took place. Each of the three epistles is comprised of a prelude, an interlude, and a postlude respectively. Each of them contains water and wave motives to underline that each epistle scene happens on a ship. The prelude has the original water motive.²⁹ The opera has leitmotifs and motivic structure similar to the compositional techniques by Richard Wagner in his music dramas. There is Thai tonality such as pentatonic or the use of the mixolydian mode imitative from Thai Luk-tung music.³⁰ Luk-tung music is a Thai country music, developed from Thai songs. It originated during the reign of King Rama VI. Nowadays, it is Thailand's most popular music form, but it is more modern; recent examples are electrified and pop-influenced. Luk-tung songs are always about love and the everyday life of poor locals. The tempo is usually slow and singers sing with a lot of vibrato to emphasize emotion.

²⁹ Srikananda, *Pero Vaz de Sequeira* [unpublished full score].

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

4.1.6. Conclusions

Opera is a large production because it is a combination of a number of arts such as orchestra, singing, acting, and dancing. The creation of Thai operas was a learning process as King Rama VI tried to write his first work since he was only ten years old, and he finally finished translating his first operetta, *The Mikado*, at the age of thirty. Only a few musicians in Thailand know of these Thai operas that have never been performed. This is because the information available is limited.

There are various reasons for the cancellation of the performances, ranging from culture, politics, and war to popularity and support: (1) *The Mikado* was cancelled because of King Rama V's death, (2) *Wang Tee* was cancelled because a rebel group attempted to assassinate King Rama VI, (3) *Chao Tak Sin* was cancelled because the association chose to perform an opera that was more popular, (4) *Daranee* was cancelled because of disruption from World War II, and (5) *Pero Vaz de Sequeira* was cancelled because there were no sponsors. None of these operas were cancelled because the music was too difficult to sing in Thai. However, the Thai language challenge will be discussed in chapter 5. All of these operas involved the king and royal family in some way or another because they were highly educated and had the opportunity to travel and experience operas in the West. Even recently, in the twentieth century, most Thai opera has been composed by a member of the royal family: Sontow Sucharitkul.

This thesis will be of great benefit to future Thai generations to learn about the rich history of Thai opera. These lost and cancelled Thai operas may someday have the chance to be performed as a result of renewed interest. Luckily, King Rama VI's book of hand-written stories of the Thai operas that he composed was preserved. Though, unfortunately the musical score has been lost, so there is not enough material to perform these operas. However, the example of King Rama VI has inspired a Thai composer in the twenty-first century to compose a new Thai opera from the king's original story – *Madana* (see Chapter 4.2.1). This chapter could inspire a young Thai opera director to remake these lost operas and will demonstrate to future Thai musicians the challenges of performing Thai opera.

4.2. Thai Operas (Performed)

At the time of writing, there are fifteen Thai operas that have been performed, both in Thailand and internationally (see Table 4.5, 4.6 & 4.7). There is a rich and increasingly substantial body of Thai operas; however, they are not well known. Even for performers who have been involved in productions, there is little awareness that these works can be placed within a wider range of activity: this is supported by the author's personal experience but also by the experiences of many of the dozens of musicians interviewed during the course of this research.

This chapter offers an insight and analysis into the Thai operas that have been performed, taking a look at the challenges they faced and overcame; while some descriptions are limited due to the lack of primary sources. This is the first comprehensive account of all fifteen Thai operas that have been performed to date (2020), both in Thailand and beyond. It contains the reasons that these operas were created and any associated issues. They were written by five composers, each of them significant figures in the Thai opera music scene: Somtow Sucharitkul, Krisada Reyes, Pathorn Srikananda, Thanapoom Sirichang and Bruce Gaston. The following overview divides the operas into two categories, according to language: (1) those with librettos in English, (2) those with librettos in Thai. Within these categories, each opera is outlined in detail in the order of performances, a brief synopsis of the plot, analysis of plot influences and a brief discussion of the main musical elements.

Number	Opera	Language	Composer	Year
1	<i>Madana</i>	English	Somtow Sucharitkul	2001
2	<i>Mae Naak</i>	English	Sucharitkul	2003
3	<i>Ayodhya</i>	English	Sucharitkul	2006
4	<i>A Boy and a Tiger</i>	English & Thai	Bruce Gaston	2009
5	<i>Suriyothai</i>	English	Sucharitkul	2013

Table 4.5: Thai operas in English that have been performed, ordered chronologically.

Number	Opera	Language	Composer	Year
1	<i>Ngau Pa</i>	Thai	Sucharitkul	2000
2	<i>The Story of the Long-Gone Animals</i>	Thai	Krisada & Napisi Reyes	2008
3	<i>The Lunch Box</i>	Thai	Thanapoom Sirichang	2009

Table 4.6: Thai operas in Thai that have been performed, ordered chronologically.

Opera	Year
<i>The Silent Prince, Temiya</i>	2010
<i>The Lost Prince, Mahajanaka</i>	2014
<i>The Naga Prince, Bhuridat</i>	2015
<i>The Faithful Son, Sama, Suwannasam</i>	2015
<i>The Chariot of Heaven, Nemiraj</i>	2017
<i>The Clever Sage, Mahosadha</i>	2019
<i>The Honourable Prince, Canda-Kumara</i>	2019

Table 4.7: Opera cycle list, ordered by chronologically.

Of all of the Thai operas that have been performed: twelve of them are sung mostly in English. Some operas also contain other languages such as Sanskrit (*Mae Naak*) and Thai (*A Boy and a Tiger*). English is one of the most widely understood languages in the world, therefore some composers decided to create Thai operas in English. Sucharitkul said in his interviews that the reason they prefer to write in English is because their operas can be performed outside of Thailand and can reach a wider audience.³¹ Composing opera in English is also another way to share Thai history and myths with people outside of Thailand. It was also easier to find foreign opera singers to perform opera in English. Of the twelve Thai operas in English that have been performed to date, seven of them are opera cycles by Sucharitkul and of the remaining five, four were composed by Sucharitkul as well: *Madana*, *Mae Naak*, *Ayodhya*, *Suriyothai*; and one by Bruce Gaston: *A Boy and a Tiger*. This section discusses each of the Thai operas in English (five operas) and then the operas in Thai (three operas).

³¹ Author's interview with Sontow Sucharitkul (7 August 2017).

4.2.1. *Madana*

In mid-1997, Thailand faced a financial crisis and was forced to accept money from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Amporn Jirattikorn has pointed out that this situation made Thai people feel like they were being colonised by the West.³² Many people lost their jobs and many businesses faced bankruptcy because Thailand's economy was bad at that point. Locals reacted against the modernisation and globalisation. In that year, King Rama IX gave a speech on his birthday for Thai people to live simply and independently.³³ The government advertised the campaign 'Thais Help Thais, Buy Thai' so people used only Thai products to improve the economy: the popular culture became 'authentic and local'.³⁴ Film was also affected by this priority of Thai culture.³⁵ Movies such as *Antaphaan Khrong Mueang* (1997), *Mae Nak* [sic] (1999), *Bang Rajan* (2000), *Fa Talai Jone* (2000), *Bang Rajan* (2000), *Suriyothai* (2001) and *Kang Lang Phap* (2001) were all based on popular local stories, tales and legends. Opera was also affected; for instance, the first Thai opera to ever be performed was created in this period: Sucharitkul's *Madana* (2001), which was based on a Thai tale. During this time, Thai people were nationalistic in their viewing habits; it was fascinating to see how much the economic crisis period affected the entertainment industry.

Madana was created by Sucharitkul after he was commissioned by Dr. Suprija Mokkahasa, an opera-lover. The premiere was on 16 February 2001 at the Thailand Cultural Centre with the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra. There were three performances between 16-18 February. It was the first production of the Bangkok Opera Company and the first opera of Sucharitkul to have a major staged production. The story is based on a play by King Rama VI in 1920, who dedicated the drama to one of his wives, Queen Indrasaksachi, a great-aunt of Sucharitkul. *Madana* was composed to raise funds for the reconstruction of King Rama VI's Phayathai Palace.

³² Amporn Jirattikorn, 'Suriyothai: Hybridizing Thai National Identity Through Film', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol. 4/2 (2003), pp. 298-299.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Sucharitkul recruited Thai opera singers and several American singers to perform in this opera. The main role of the character Madana was sung by Stacey Tappan, whom Sucharitkul had met in Los Angeles when they were teenagers.³⁶ The king role was sung by Lars Mellander. The jealous wife or Queen Chantri role, was given to Barbara Smith-Jones. All main character roles were given to foreigners because at the time there were not many high-quality Thai opera singers. Sucharitkul received sponsorship from several major international companies, including the Ford Foundation, Mercedes-Benz and the United Nations Educational, and the Scientific and Cultural Organization.

The Thai upper class bought many tickets to watch this Thai opera, including Princess Galyani Vadhana (1923-2008), the sister of King Rama IX. About seventy of Sucharitkul's fans flew in from the United States to attend. The performances were packed and even extra seats were needed. Undoubtedly, Bangkok needed this type of music performance and *Madana* has proved that there is the audience for Thai opera in Thailand. The success and appeal of *Madana* strongly suggests that there was, at the turn of the twenty-first century, demand for this new and innovative Thai opera. Its reception had an international impact, with *Opera Now* magazine describing it as 'one of the operatic events of the year'.³⁷ Many people went to watch *Madana*, because it was a large-scale dramatic opera that included ballet, junior choir and opera chorus; something that had never happened in Thailand before that time (see Figure 4.6). Although the opera received major sponsorship, much of the funding was not approved until late in 2000, and with the premiere planned for mid-February 2001, this resulted in an almost impossibly tight production schedule and little rehearsal time. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, the production was successful, and all three performances were well received, achieving a standard comparable with any international opera house, something which remains a rarity in Thailand.³⁸

³⁶ Author's interview with Stacey Tappan (15 August 2017).

³⁷ Somtow Sucharitkul, *Opera East, The Early Years of the Bangkok Opera* (Bangkok, 2007), pp. 4-5.

³⁸ Jennifer Gampell, 'In Thailand, a Taste of Western-Style Opera', *WSJ Product Montage*, entry posted 15.03.2001, https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB984616785147157517?fbclid=IwAR0KTx2gEzCGTeUSbt_7e1X1f_OzjQoeSn1N49KiiAcaFAiJqARVTk2puDA (accessed 6.12.20).

Madana is based on a *Lakhon Phud* ('spoken play') (see Chapter 3.5.5) called *Madanabhada* (The Romance of a Rose) which was originally written by King Rama VI in Thai. It is a spoken romantic play in five acts. King Rama VI wrote the play while in poor physical condition over a period of forty-three days and completed it on 18 October 1823.³⁹ The plot had been lingering in the back of his mind for many years but he did not have time to write the play down until the doctor asked him to rest from his official duties. The main character in the play was cursed to turn into a rose and only true love could lift the curse. He chose the rose as the namesake flower in his story because it is a universal favourite over other flowers by reason of its beauty and fragrance. According to Monier Williams, the name of the story, *Madanabhada* is in Sanskrit and translates to 'the pain and anxiety of love'.⁴⁰

King Rama VI also began to translate the story into English, in poetical form; however, he only managed to complete three acts and the start of act IV before he died on 26 November 1925; it is considered to be his last work.⁴¹ *Madanabhada* became a famous play in Thailand, and it continues to be produced in different types of musical forms and performed around Thailand. Most recently, in 2018, it has also been transformed into a musical (of the same name) by the Concordian International School at the Grand Theatre, Bangkok (see Figure 4.5).⁴²

³⁹ Duangduean Pattanawiriyawanich, '*Madanabadha: A Study of Aesthetical Approaches*', MA diss. (Srinakarinwirot University, 2009), pp. 22-24.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Anonymous, 'Madanabadha The Musical!', <https://www.concordian.ac.th/news/madanabadha-the-musical/> (accessed 6.12.20).



Figure 4.5: A Poster of Madanabadha the Musical (2018).⁴³

Roles	Voice type
Madana (a celestial maiden)	Coloratura Soprano
King Jayasena	Lyric Tenor
Queen Chanti (King Jayasena's wife)	Dramatic Soprano
Kaldarsin/Vidura (good/evil wizards)	Baritone
Arali (Chanti's confidante)	Mezzo-Soprano
Sudeva (a God)	Mezzo-Soprano or Countertenor
A hunter	Baritone
A soldier	Baritone
A handmaiden	Contralto
Angels	Children's chorus
Hunters, Handmaidens, townspeople	Chorus

Table 4.8: Voice type of each role in Madana.

⁴³ Anonymous, 'Madanabadha The Musical!', (For URL link, see footnote 42).

The story of *Madana* is a three-act love triangle which ends in tragedy. Act one begins in a forest, where there are hunters including King Jayasena and Queen Chanti. The king rides an elephant in pursuit of a tiger and catches it. However, he releases the tiger because he feels something special in the forest. Queen Chanti begs him to return to the castle because she worries that the king will get injured while hunting. The king retorts that the forest has a strong force and he can feel its tender love and he wants to uncover its secret. Therefore, he lets Queen Chanti return to the castle first and vows to follow at dawn. He wanders into the forest under the full moonlight and notices the light shining on a rose. The rose is actually Madana and she transforms from the rose into a beautiful woman. The king found her under the moonlight and he cannot stop gazing at her. Madana sings to the moon, begging God to find her loved one so that the curse can be lifted and she can return to being human again. The king appears and tries to talk to her but Madana runs away far into the forest because she does not want to bring sorrow to other people. The king follows her and encounters a hermit, Kalatatsin, who is the guardian of Madana. The hermit tells the king about Madana's curse and tells Madana that this man could be the lover she has been waiting for. Madana listens to the hermit and opens her heart to the king. They fall in love and the curse is lifted from Madana. The king takes Madana back to his kingdom.

Act two starts in the palace of King Jayasena, Queen Chanti is sad and cries out in her sleep. The king never comes to visit her at night anymore and she blames Madana. Her handmaidens see that Queen Chanti is sad so they prepare a performance for her to make her happy again. The performance is called the Dance of the Avatar. The performance doesn't help, as she is again broken-hearted when she sees them together near the rose bush. Queen Chanti orders a wizard named Vidura to tell lies about Madana to the king and in return she will pay him gold. In the garden of Jayasena's palace, Vidura tells the king that Madana and his best soldier have had an affair. The king is upset and orders Vidura to have Madana and the soldier killed secretly that night. However, Vidura shows mercy by letting both of them live and hide in the forest. Queen Chanti writes a letter to her father, a king of another kingdom, informing him that her husband treats her badly. She requests that he bring an army to destroy her husband's kingdom and rule it himself. As Vidura

hears that Queen Chanti will destroy the king and the kingdom, he feels sad and realises that he did wrong.

In the final act, during the battle, Vidura tells the king the truth: he did not kill Madana and the soldier. The king is upset and rushes to the forest in order to see Madana. Queen Chanti hears the news, so she seeks out Madana in the forest because she wants to kill her. At the same time, the god, Sudeva, descends from heaven on a golden throne, surrounded by nagas⁴⁴, unicorns, and mystical creatures. Sudeva sings about his love to Madana. Queen Chanti hears the god singing to Madana to return to heaven and accept his love. Madana refuses him again, which was the reason she had been cursed to become a rose in the first place. Sudeva is furious so he curses her to be a rose forever and he returns to heaven. After Queen Chanti overhears them talking, she realizes that what she has done is wrong. The king finds both Madana and Chanti. Chanti feels bad for the king and runs away in deepest despair. Madana begins to transform into a rose and loses the power of words and her singing becomes wordless vocalization.⁴⁵



Figure 4.6: Picture of Madana singing with angels (children's chorus).⁴⁶

Madana was the first Thai opera to be performed in Thailand. According to Jennifer Gampell's review, most of the audience enjoyed it but some of them still

⁴⁴ A Naga is a Thai dragon from Thai folk tales.

⁴⁵ Somtow Sucharitkul, *Madana* [unpublished full score] (Bangkok, 2001), pp. 1-25.

⁴⁶ Somtow Sucharitkul, '*Madana*', *operasiam*, <http://www.operasiam.com/new-gallery-74/djcxdfd7t1iemk9b0buk0uun2o2t3n> (accessed 6.12.20).

could not get used to this type of drama. Some local audiences slept through the third act of the two-and-a-half hour-long performance on 17 February 2001 (the second performance).⁴⁷ One of the reasons people enjoyed it could be because they knew the story from the original *Lakhon Phud* by King Rama VI so they were looking forward to seeing this story in operatic form. Sucharitkul claimed that his adaptation was full of emotion and passion, though people familiar with Western style operas said it lacked emotion.⁴⁸

The premiere was recorded by the Opera Siam company and is publicly available on YouTube.⁴⁹ From the video on YouTube, it shows that it was produced as a large-scale dramatic opera containing an enormous stage, Thai-Indian traditional costumes, professional choreographed dancers and a large chorus of children. Jennifer Gampell added that the music is reflective of the composer's talent and the orchestra played beautifully despite the limited rehearsal time.⁵⁰ The voice of Stacey Tappan in Madana's role was emotional and passionate. Her coloratura technique was excellent as the score was demanding to sing because of several jumping notes and as the melodic lines were written in wide register.⁵¹ Other main singers also sang beautifully; however, in the recording, Stacey Tappan's performance stood out. It must have been a challenge for Sucharitkul to find professional opera singers in Thailand at that time because even up until recently it is still rare to find a good Thai opera singer to perform. The professional ballet performance stood out in the beginning of the first act, particularly the scene where a tiger is caught in the forest. The make-up was convincing for all the characters, especially the tiger with the body suit. Furthermore, the choruses sang well with confidence and in tune.⁵²

As mentioned earlier, in the original *Lakhon Phud* story, King Rama VI chose the rose as the heroine character for its fragrance and because it is an internationally known flower.⁵³ However, there may be other interpretations for his use of the rose

⁴⁷ Gampell, 'In Thailand, a Taste of Western-Style Opera. (For URL link, see footnote 38).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Opera Siam, 'Somtow's *Madana*', *YouTube*, entry post 5.01.15, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X87_A9AzY54&t=1114s (accessed 6.12.20).

⁵⁰ Opera Siam, 'Somtow's *Madana*', *YouTube*. (For URL link, see footnote 49).

⁵¹ Sucharitkul, *Madana*.

⁵² Opera Siam, 'Somtow's *Madana*', *YouTube*. (For URL link, see footnote 49).

⁵³ Vajiravudh, มัทนะพาธา ตำนานดอกกุหลาบ [*Madanabhada, The Legend of the Rose*] (Bangkok, 2001), p. 4.

as a metaphor for a woman. It is a common saying that ‘every rose has its thorns’; therefore, using a rose would suggest that her beauty can be harmful too. The sharp thorns could also be used as a means of protection from people who want to harm her.

Sucharitkul hid many lessons in this opera. Love is so powerful that even a god cannot control it, as shown when Sudeva falls in love with Madana but she does not reciprocate. The love of Madana is truly pure and brave; in contrast, the love of Queen Chanti is passionate, angry, jealous and destructive to the point that to reclaim her love, she uses her father’s army to destroy her husband’s kingdom.

Love! Sublime, immeasurable, Incomprehensible
Even the God must bow to the power of love,
For love is the force that sets the stars in motion,
Love is the boundless ocean, On which the cosmos floats,
Love is the one great mystery, More powerful than death – Sudeva⁵⁴ (Act I).

As noted earlier, *Madanabhada* means the pain or anxiety of love. All main characters in the story suffer from their love. A central theme in the opera is the Buddhist teaching ‘where there is love there is suffering’. This reflects that King Rama VI and Sucharitkul are Buddhist and also that Thailand’s main religion is Buddhism. This can be seen in several key plot points:

- (1) Sudeva’s unrequited love for Madana;
- (2) Living with someone you do not love is suffering, as seen with Madana living with Sudeva before he cursed her;
- (3) Loving each other but not being able to be together is painful, as seen at the end with King Jayasena and Madana;
- (4) Stolen love is a form of torture, as in the case of Queen Chanti and King Jayasena.

⁵⁴ Sucharitkul, *Madana*, [unpublished full score], p. 22.

In the scene where Madana transforms into the rose again, there are references to karma and reincarnation, which again reflects Buddhist teaching:

JAYASENA: I cannot defy my karma, I cannot bring dust to life.

May you be mine one day. A thousand lifetimes hence.

MADANA: We cannot defy our karma, I cannot return to life.

I will be yours one day. A thousand lifetimes hence.

Sucharitkul also incorporated Thai popular and social beliefs into his opera, for example:

- (1) Thai people believe in reincarnation;
- (2) Good karma brings people to heaven;
- (3) Magic and curses.

Compared to the original plot of the *Lakhon Phud* of King Rama VI, Sucharitkul's opera omits the beginning, where Sudeva begs for Madana's love for the first time but she refuses him leading to the curse being put upon her. She becomes a rose on Earth (for original story see Appendix C.3). Sucharitkul chose to start the opera from the forest where King Jayasena and Madana met and fell in love with each other. One suspects that the reason for this omission is the popularity of this legend, therefore most Thai people would already know the plot. There were also programme notes for foreigners who were not familiar with the story beforehand.

As Sucharitkul stated in an interview with Gampell, he composed this opera in a late romantic style because he wanted the music to have the flavours of King Rama VI's period. He imagined that he was born during the time of composers Mahler and Strauss while he was writing the opera.⁵⁵ According to Jennifer Gampell, he also added the tastes of Wagner, Debussy, Puccini, Rogers & Hart and even Andrew Lloyd Webber. The tunes of his opera consist of many styles.⁵⁶ For the vocal parts, he composed melodies with wide leaps (see Figure 4.7) which became his style in all of his operas. For example, in *Madana* the interval of a 6th occurs

⁵⁵ Gampell, 'In Thailand, a Taste of Western-Style Opera'. (For URL link, see footnote 38).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

frequently. The coloratura soprano part (Madana) consists of song-like melodies with extremely high notes (see Figure 4.9). Setting the scene for the character, the first appearance of Madana begins with a long, high note. Figure 4.8 is an example of the opening notes of Madana. One can see that it starts with an extremely high and long note with a *pianissimo*.

52

If I could break your sil-ver chain and

Cel. Hrp.

54

catch the moon-light as it wanes, I'd seek a path-way through the wood, to

Figure 4.7: Example of Madana's Aria, act I, scene I, 'Oh Moon'.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Somtow Sucharitkul, 'Oh Moon' [unpublished vocal score] piano arrangement by Zach Reading.

20 *p*

Oh _____ Moon! _____ Pure, _____

pp

25

_____ Pale, _____ Cold! _____

Figure 4.8: The beginning of *Madana*, act I, scene I, 'Oh Moon'.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Sucharitkul, 'Oh Moon' [unpublished vocal score] piano arrangement by Zach Reading.

Figure 4.9: Example of Madana's Aria, act I, scene I, 'Oh Moon'.⁵⁹

Revealing the influence of Wagner in particular, Sucharitkul uses leitmotifs in each of his operas. For example, every time Madana has her solo, the first violin presents her leitmotif (see Figure 4.10). Madana's leitmotif is also heard when other characters are singing about her (see Figure 4.11). However, the composer uses leitmotif with only the main character, Madana.

⁵⁹ Sucharitkul, 'Oh Moon' [unpublished vocal score], piano arrangement by Zach Reading.

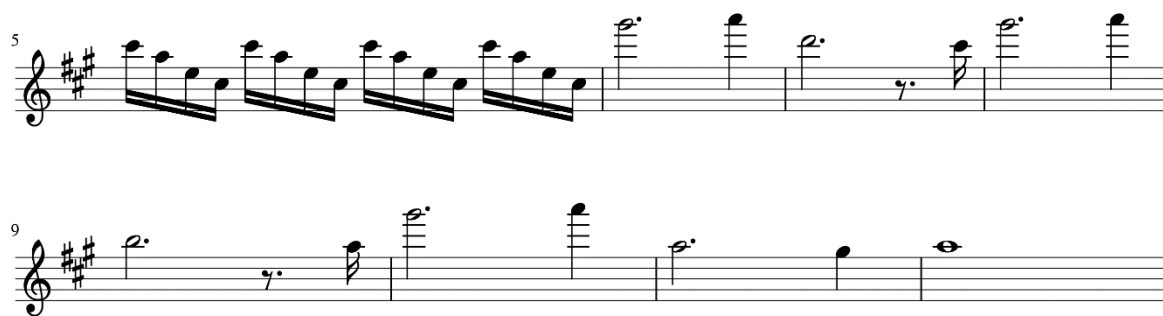


Figure 4.10: Example of violin1 part; Madana's leitmotif from Madana's aria in act I, scene I.⁶⁰

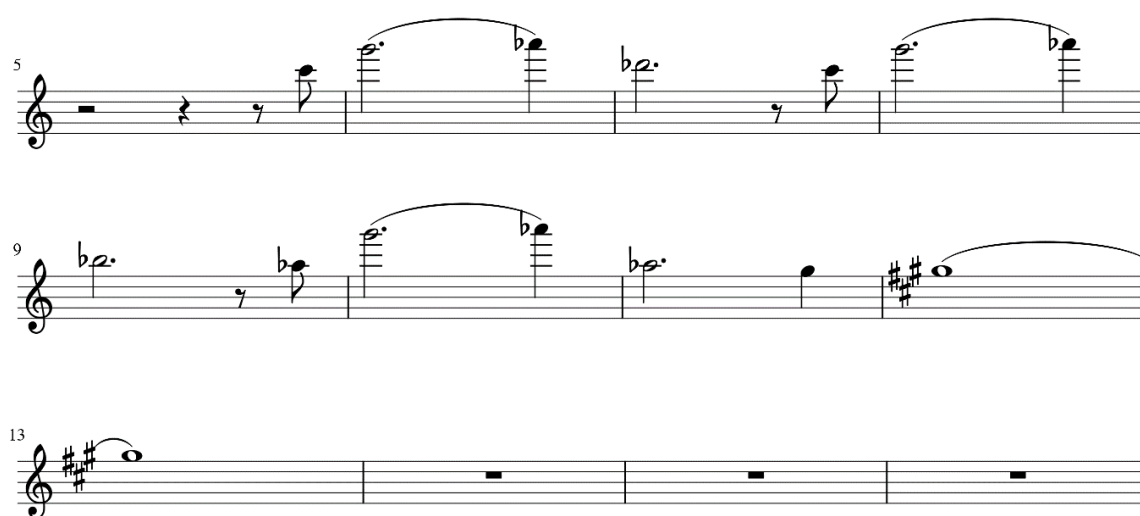


Figure 4.11: Example of violin1 part; the Madana's leitmotifs while Kaladasin, a hermit, sings about Madana to King Jayasena (act I).⁶¹

While in other operas Sucharitkul incorporates traditional Thai melodies, he does not do so in *Madana*. This may be because *Madana* was his first attempt at a Thai opera and he was still afraid of the failures that he faced in 1970 when he combined traditional Thai music with a Western orchestra and was badly received (see Appendix E.1).

⁶⁰ Sucharitkul, *Madana*. [unpublished full score].

⁶¹ Ibid.

4.2.2. *Mae Naak*

Mae Naak is an opera in three acts, composed by Sontow Sucharitkul to an English libretto, based on one of Thailand's best-known ghost stories *Mae Naak Phra-Khanong*. It premiered in 2003 at the Thailand Cultural Centre, Bangkok.

Anake Nawigamune, a Thai folklorist, explored the origin of *Mae Naak*.⁶² He found the first reference to it in a magazine published in 1899; it was based on the historical figure Naak, who lived in *Phra-Khanong* during the reign of King Rama III (1788-1851). The plot that Thai people know best today is the plot from a version presented in the traditional Thai *Likay* drama (for *Likay* see Chapter 3.5.3), between 1920-1930, in which the beginning of the story in the opera was left out. This well-known story has also appeared in various other media. For example, there is a Thai *Lakhon Rong* drama called *Mae Naak* (for *Lakhon Rong* see Chapter 3.5.2). The character of Naak also features in *E Naak Phra-Khanong*, a play written by Prince Narathip Praphanphong (1861-1931), a son of King Rama IV, performed at Pridalai Theatre in 1912 (see Figure 4.12).⁶³ King Rama VI wrote a version of the story of *Mae Naak* in English while he was studying in England in the late 1890s; however, he died before he could finish it. The fragment of the story was translated into Thai by Mom Luang Pin Malakul and published in 1981 as *The Second Ghost of Phra-Khanong* (see Figure 4.13).⁶⁴ The story has also been made popular through cinema.⁶⁵ There are more than twenty *Mae Naak* movies (see Figure 4.14),⁶⁶ the first of which was *Mae Naak Phra-Khanong* in 1936 directed by Anusak Hasadin.⁶⁷ There have also been eight different television series based on the story, the earliest of which was *Mae Naak Phra Khanong* televised by Channel 7 in 1979. In 2003, Sucharitkul used the plot in his opera. The story has also been adapted for musicals. The best-known is perhaps *Mae Nak Pra Kanong the musical* [sic], which was performed fifty-one times between 20 May and July in 2009 by Takonkiet Viravan, a

⁶² Anake Nawigamune, เบ็ดตำนาน นากพระโขนง [*Mae Naak, Classical Ghost of Siam*] (Bangkok, 2006), pp.44-47.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 44-47.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

⁶⁵ Arnika Fuhrmann, 'Nang Nak [sic] —Ghost Wife: Desire, Embodiment, and Buddhist Melancholia in a Contemporary Thai Ghost Film', *Discourse* Vol. 31/3 (2009), p. 350.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 243.

⁶⁷ Nawigamune, เบ็ดตำนาน นากพระโขนง [*Mae Naak, Classical Ghost of Siam*], p. 44.

director of GMM Grammy and the owner of the Muangthai Rachadalai Theatre, which offers a regular programme of musicals (see Figure 4.15).⁶⁸

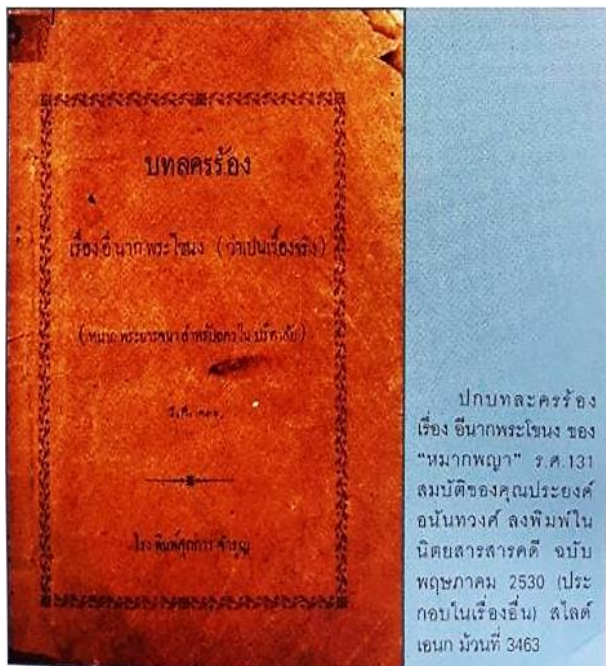


Figure 4.12: A book cover of *E Naak Phra-khanong* in *Lakhon Rong* (traditional Thai singing drama) in 1913 published in a documentary magazine.⁶⁹



Figure 4.13: *Naak Phra-khanong 2* written by King Rama VI in English and translated by Mom Luang Pin Malakul.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Janine Yasovant, 'Mae Nak Pra Kanong the musical [sic]', *scene4*, entry post June 2009, <https://www.scene4.com/archivesqv6/jun-2009/html/janineyasovant0609.html> (accessed 6.12.20).

⁶⁹ Nawigamune, *เปิดตำนาน นาทพระโขนง [Mae Naak, Classical Ghost of Siam]*, p. 16.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.



Figure 4.14: A Poster of one of the Mae Naak Phra-Khanong movies (1973).⁷¹

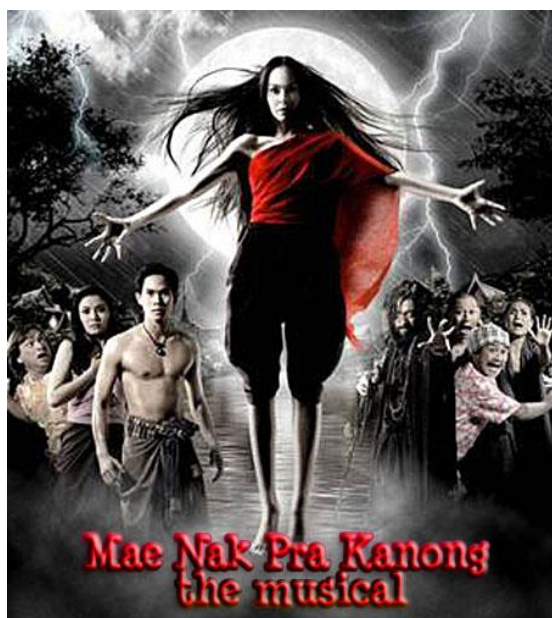


Figure 4.15: Poster of Mae Nak Pra Kanong the musical [sic] (2009).⁷²

⁷¹ Anonymous, 'ตำนานผีในเมืองไทย [Ghost Legend in Thailand]', *blogspot*, entry post 4.07.14, <http://ghost-narakjung.blogspot.com/2014/07/blog-post.html> (accessed 6.12.20).

⁷² Yasovant, 'Mae Nak Pra Kanong the musical [sic]'. (For URL link, see footnote 68).

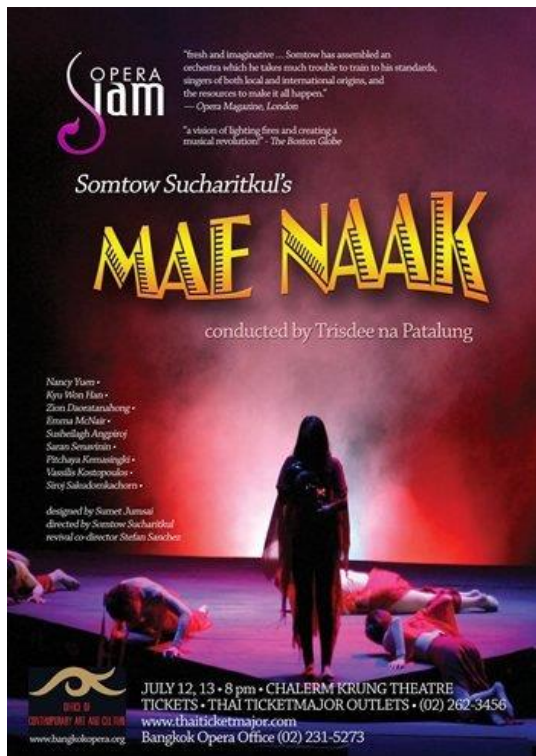


Figure 4.16: Poster of *Mae Naak* (2011).⁷³

Mae Naak was the second Thai opera to ever be performed in Thailand (see Figure 4.16). At the turn of the twenty-first century there were only a few Thai opera singers, therefore Sucharitkul had to hire famous opera singers from other countries. Nancy Yuan, a soprano from Hong Kong, took the main role of Mae Naak, and Kyu Won Han, a baritone from Korea, sang as Maak. The premiere show was directed by Henry Akina, an artistic director from the Hawaii Opera Theatre.⁷⁴ Yuan and Sucharitkul had studied together in Cambridge University and have been close friends ever since. There are rumours that Sucharitkul promised to her that he would compose music for her to sing one day, a promise fulfilled in *Mae Naak*. During the launch of the opera with his company, Opera Siam,⁷⁵ the composer spoke of this delight that Yuan was able to take the main role in the opera. Yuan had sung the role of Madame Butterfly during her graduation recital from the Royal Academy in

⁷³ Richard Barrow, 'How to Visit the Mae Nak [sic] Ghost Shrine in Bangkok', *Thai travel news & events*, entry posted 8.07.11, <http://www.thaitravelblogs.com/2011/07/how-to-visit-the-mae-nak-ghost-shrine-in-bangkok/> (accessed 6.12.20).

⁷⁴ Somtow Sucharitkul and Trisdee Na Patalung, *Mae Naak* [published piano & vocal score] (Bangkok, 2003).

⁷⁵ Opera Siam is an opera company that Sucharitkul founded.

London. In fact, it was her first role in her opera career as *Madame Butterfly* and then she became famous for this role and performed around the world. Therefore, when Sucharitkul wrote *Mae Naak* for Yuan, he wrote it for exactly the same kind of soprano as *Madame Butterfly*. He also added that it is an opportunity for Asian sopranos who sing the role of *Madame Butterfly* to be able to sing *Mae Naak* as well.⁷⁶

After the premiere of *Mae Naak* in 2003, it was performed again several times. In 2005, the opera was performed at the Thailand Cultural Centre. Sucharitkul's mother, Thaithow Sucharitkul,⁷⁷ translated the English libretto into Thai and subtitles were projected onto the screen next to the stage while the opera was being performed.⁷⁸ The subtitles are for local people who could not understand English. To celebrate their 10-year anniversary, Opera Siam planned in 2011 to perform *Mae Naak*, along with other works, outside Thailand. Sucharitkul also arranged for the opera to be performed in Bangkok in July 2011 at the Sala Chalermkung Theatre. After the performance, Sucharitkul planned to tour his music and opera in the United Kingdom with seven events in September 2011. *Mae Naak* was only performed at the Bloomsbury Theatre in London on 15 September 2011. It featured international opera singers, and Nancy Yuan again sang the main role, with Trisdee Na Patalung conducting (see Figure 4.18).

Mae Naak's story is still popular because of her undying devotion to her husband, which has been an inspiration to many people since the story was first told. There is even a shrine devoted to *Mae Naak* at *Wat Mahabut* or more popularly known as *Wat Mae Naak* (*Mae Naak temple*).⁵³ At *Wat Mahabut*, there are always many people visiting to worship *Mae Naak*. It was a great honour to attend there in the summer of 2017, and wait in a long line to worship her and explain to her the intention to write about her story for this thesis. It is common for Thai people to do this before they write a story, record a film, or make a musical about her. Sucharitkul

⁷⁶ Opera Siam, 'Somtow introduces his opera "Mae Naak"' *Youtube*, entry posted 4.02.11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do31JulCT6E> (accessed 6.12.20).

⁷⁷ Thaithow Sucharitkul is a famous Thai author.

⁷⁸ This account is based on the author's attendance at the production.

also went to *Wat Mahabat* to tell the spirit of Mae Naak that he was turning her story into an opera (see Figure 4.17).⁷⁹



Figure 4.17: Trisadee Na Patalung (left) and Somtow Sucharitkul (right) visiting the Mae Naak shrine at Mahabut temple in 2003.⁸⁰

Characters (In order of appearance)

Character	Voice type
Maak	Baritone
Maak's Friend (a Soldier)	Tenor
Captain	Baritone
The Headman's Daughter	Soprano
The Temple Dancer	Light Soprano
The Midwife	Mezzo-soprano
The Ghost of Ai Daeng	Boy Soprano

⁷⁹ Anake Nawigamune, เบ็ดตำนาน นากพระโขนง [*Mae Naak, Classical Ghost of Siam*] (Bangkok, 2006).

⁸⁰ Barrow, 'How to Visit the Mae Nak [sic] Ghost Shrine in Bangkok'. (For URL link, see footnote 73).

Naak	Lyric Soprano
The Novice	Baritone or Boy High Alto
The Shaman	Bass
The Pork Merchant	Character Tenor or Baritone
The Chinese Emperor	Tenor
The Chinese Empress	Soprano
The Villagers	Soprano, or chorus members
Chorus of Soldiers	Male Chorus
Chorus of Villagers	All Voice Types
Chorus of Children	Soprano and Alto

Table 4.9: Voice type in each role in Mae Naak.⁸¹

Mae Naak contains three acts. Act one opens with Maak wounded and asleep at his post in the middle of the battlefield. He wants to finish the battle so that he can return to his family. After the victory, he hurries back home to the village of *Phra-Khanong*. Maak stops and asks the villagers about his wife Naak. They are quiet and warn him not to go back home. Maak is confused but he still wants to go back to his home. Naak's home is broken and filthy but to Maak's eyes it appears warm and inviting. Naak's son, Ai Daeng, is playing on the porch. Daeng runs to Maak as if he had met him before. He calls Maak 'Father Father!' Naak appears at the top of the stairs, looking beautiful in the dark. Maak is curious why no one wants him to return home to his family.

Act two, Maak and Naak wake up and hear the sound of a Chinese opera coming from the temple fair. Maak wants to bring Naak and Daeng to the fair. Naak refuses and asks Maak to go with Daeng first. Maak takes Daeng to the fair. While Naak is taking a bath in the river, a merchant rows past in a boat. The merchant does not know Naak so he thinks that Naak is just an ordinary woman. Therefore, he flirts with Naak and offers to help rub her back. Naak agrees but then she kills him with her unnatural powers. At the temple fair, Maak leaves Daeng watching the

⁸¹ Sucharitkul and Patalung, *Mae Naak* [published piano & vocal score].

Chinese opera alone, while the temple dancer is flirting with Maak. She said, it is time to realise the truth that his family have died. Maak is shocked and refuses. The temple dancer and Maak begin to argue so Maak runs away from the temple, while Naak appears and kills the dancer in front of the crowd. The midwife follows Maak from the temple to explain that she was there when Naak gave birth and saw her die. Maak still does not believe her and runs away. Naak sees what happens so she follows and kills the midwife.

The final act takes place in Naak's house, while she is pounding curry paste in a mortar. Naak accidentally drops a lime through the floorboards to the space below the house. Instead of going downstairs to pick it up, she reaches through the boards and her arm stretches all the way to the ground to retrieve the lime. Maak sees her hand stretching like the hand of a ghost. The lighting abruptly changes. Suddenly, Maak sees cobwebs, rotting food and the decaying corpse of Daeng. Naak is suddenly covered in blood from the events of the previous night. Maak finally realises that she is a ghost, as the others have warned him. Naak begs him not to leave. Maak runs away to the temple, while people in the village are holding flaming torches walking to the gate of the temple with their terrified children. People chant while a shaman comes into the temple. The villagers explain to the shaman what happened and ask for help. Naak appears covered with blood. The novice and two monks drape a *saisin*, a white ceremonial thread, around the area. The monk begins to dig up the grave of Naak at the cemetery. Naak rips open her chest to reveal her beating heart. The shaman tells the villagers to pile up the wood and build a funeral pyre. Soon, a tall funeral pyre is built. Naak flings herself into Maak's arms and they embrace passionately for the last time before Naak throws herself upon the pyre.⁸²

⁸² Sucharitkul and Patalung, *Mae Naak* [published piano & vocal score].

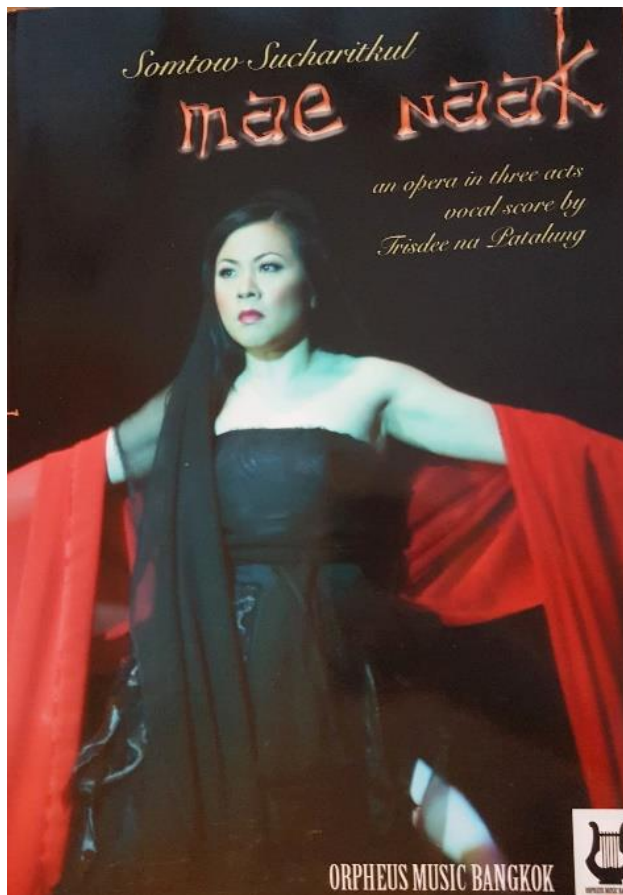


Figure 4.18: Nancy Yuan as Mae Naak in vocal score by Trisdee Na Patalung.⁸³

When people saw the advertisement for this opera, they may have felt compelled to go and watch it because it is one of the most popular Thai ghost stories. As mentioned above there are many reproductions of this story in several forms. Some members of the audience did not know what opera was and had therefore never attended any operas but they came to watch this opera and appreciated it.⁸⁴ Having watched this opera live in 2011, the production was memorable due to the beautiful music, which has traditional Thai elements fused into the music. However, the stage, props and special effects were not well prepared. For instance, the lime drop scene was clumsily handled and the extended arm prop of Naak looked fake and poorly made. The stage was set up unprofessionally. This could be because this production lacked financial support. On his social media, Sucharitkul often requests the need for support for his operas.⁸⁵ The translation of

⁸³ Sucharitkul and Patalung, *Mae Naak* [published piano & vocal score].

⁸⁴ Author attended the performance and interviewed audience members in 2011.

⁸⁵ Somtow Sucharitkul, *Facebook*, <https://www.facebook.com/somtow> (accessed 6.12.20).

the subtitles, which Sucharitkul's mother translated, was difficult to understand because it was written in an old Thai poetry style. The reason Sucharitkul let his mother translate could be because his Thai was not fluent enough to do it himself. He grew up and worked abroad most of his life before moving back to Thailand permanently around 1999 (see Appendix E.1).⁸⁶

In a video introduction prior to the tour of *Mae Naak* in the United Kingdom, Sucharitkul explains that he composed *Mae Naak* with the same voice type as *Madame Butterfly*. With a similar, yet also contrasting plot; he challenges the stereotypical Western archetype of Asian women being passive and submissive, by writing *Mae Naak* as a different character. He notes:

How much it goes against European, American stereotype of passive, submissive Asian women, you see? I mean, if you think of who are Asian woman in opera, the most famous Asian woman in opera is Butterfly. Mae Naak is a very different figure.⁸⁷

There are some similarities in the plot between *Mae Naak* and *Madame Butterfly*; the plots were focused on the loyalty of both Asian women. In the beginning both male characters leave their wives due to wars. Both wives are pregnant and waiting for their husbands to return and in the end, both heroine characters end up dead. However, the resolution of the stories is completely different. Pinkerton needs Butterfly as a temporary wife in Japan until the time he can marry an American woman. In contrast, *Madame Butterfly* commits her love to Pinkerton, even changing her religion. At the end, *Madame Butterfly* commits suicide to preserve her honour instead of living without honour. In addition, *Madame Butterfly* is not representative of a real Japanese woman of the nineteenth century: she was created as a fantasy that could appeal to Westerners.⁸⁸ In the story of *Mae Naak*, Maak and Naak love and are dedicated to each other. Maak comes back to Naak after the war but they cannot be together because they are in different dimensions. Naak is a ghost, who has the power to kill people in the village to protect her love and is willing to do anything to be with her love. Naak's character gives a

⁸⁶ Opera Siam, "MAE NAAK' Opera rehearsal (continue)", entry post 15.07.11, *YouTube*, posted entry 15.07.11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVOm0bNZlw4> (accessed 6.12.20).

⁸⁷ Opera Siam, 'Somtow introduces his opera "Mae Naak"', *YouTube*. (For URL link, see footnote 76).

⁸⁸ Said Edward, *Orientalism*, (New York, 1978).

new perspective of an Asian woman that is not passive and submissive. The characters of the male leads in both operas are also completely different. Pinkerton's aria shows a 'jingoist adventurer'⁸⁹, a man who hungers for war, and describes Butterfly as inhuman and tries to change her to an 'American refinement of a Japanese product'.⁹⁰ On the other hand, Maak's character is peaceful and does not want to go to war. He loves Naak with all his heart. He also respects and cares for her feelings.

The oldest record of *Mae Naak* dates to 1899, which was around the same time as the original story of *Madame Butterfly*, which was written by John Luther Long in 1887 with the opera premiering in 1904.⁹¹ It is interesting to see that Long wrote his Asian main lead lady as a passive and submissive woman, and in contrast, the Asian main lead lady in *Mae Naak* has completely opposite characteristics.

While the various reproductions of the story tell it in different ways, the gist of the story is the same. There are some points of commonality, such as the most famous scene, the lime drop, which is featured in every movie, TV series, musical and opera. However, in 1999, the movie *Nang Nak* [sic], directed by Nonzee Nimibutr, produced a new way of telling the *Mae Naak* story by concentrating on Mae Naak's emotions.⁹² This version was a big success and broke all box office records in Thailand. The film earned seventy million baht (1.7 million pound in 2020 terms) in one week after it was released. It also won the awards for the best director, best art director and best sound from the 1999 Asia-Pacific Film Festival.⁹³ Sucharitkul included this interpretation in his opera giving the opera more depth and evoking a feeling of sympathy towards Naak. Sucharitkul also focused on the love of the couple rather than the victory of the Buddhist character. At the end of most productions of *Mae Naak*, the audience is scared of Naak because they see her as a

⁸⁹ Jingoist adventurer is a type of man who is unreasonably nationalistic.

⁹⁰ Arthur Groos, *Lieutenant F.B. Pinkerton: problems in The Genesis and Performance of Madama Butterfly*, in William Weaver and Simonetta Puccini (eds.) (New York, 1994), pp. 182-184.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 169-174.

⁹² Fuhrmann, "Nang Nak—Ghost Wife: Desire, Embodiment, and Buddhist Melancholia in a Contemporary Thai Ghost Film", p. 348.

⁹³ Jirattikorn, '(2003) Suriyothai: Hybridizing Thai National Identity Through Film', p. 297.

terrifying ghost and see the monk or the shaman as a hero for capturing her in a jar. However, in the opera, instead of being captured Naak willingly leaves.⁹⁴

NOVICE: My Lord Abbot is a wise man, Not a magician
 My lord can pray for you but the spirit must go of her own free will.
 Return to darkness⁹⁵

Sucharitkul also brought Buddhism to his opera by composing a Buddhist chant and wrote the libretto about the circle of life. At the end of the opera, the chorus sings repeatedly about ‘the river’ referring to the Phra-Khanong river, where Maak and Naak live. The river in the libretto represents a deep sign of life as a circle flowing into the ocean of karma; it has the metaphorical meaning that Naak and Maak will meet again in a future rebirth, similar to Buddha’s former life with his wife.⁹⁶ This fact comforts Naak and helps her return to her dimension, because she will meet Maak again in another life.

CHORUS: Day after day,
 Life is a circle
 Life wheels eternally
 In the ocean of karma⁹⁷

It is very interesting that Sucharitkul as a man of Asian origin who grew up abroad, created an opera with this new aspect. He might have learned Thai culture and Buddhism during the time he was a monk for a period in 2001. This could have made him want to refocus all his attention on the country of his birth, in which Buddhism is the main religion.

The music in *Mae Naak* includes many types of Asian music. There are Buddhist prayers, Chinese opera and traditional Thai *Lae* singing in the opera (for *Lae* see Chapter 3.5.6). *Lae* melodies appear many times in the opera including in Mae Naak’s arias. Sucharitkul adapted the *Lae* melodies to a Western operatic style

⁹⁴ Sucharitkul and Patalung, *Mae Naak* [published piano & vocal score], pp. 196-197.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Fuhrmann, ‘Nang Nak—Ghost Wife: Desire, Embodiment, and Buddhist Melancholia in a Contemporary Thai Ghost Film’, p. 348.

⁹⁷ Sucharitkul and Patalung, *Mae Naak* [published piano & vocal score], p. 231.

by creating the melodies in a higher key so that the singers can sing with a head voice. From personal interviews with Thai people who have no knowledge of opera, after letting them listen to Mae Naak's lullaby, most of them could recognise the melody and liked the way Somtow brought traditional Thai *Lae* melodies into Western style of singing.⁹⁸

In Mae Naak's lullaby aria, the singing mimics a *Lae* pattern. She sings 'Ah' with several dotted eighth notes (see Figure 4.19). This line has the same pattern and rhythm as famous *Lae* melodies by Tossapol Himmaphan (see Figure 4.20). The difference is just that the tones in the opera are in a higher key and sung in a Western opera style (head voice). Sucharitkul is also the first Thai composer who fused the traditional Thai *Lae* melodies into opera. The vibrato of opera singing style in this Mae Naak lullaby aria helps Mae Naak express her emotions better. This aria has been recorded as a part of this thesis (Track 5).



Figure 4.19: A sample of Mae Naak's Lullaby in act I, scene II.



Figure 4.20: Sample of *Lae* coloratura, which is sung by Tossapol Himmaphan.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Author's interview with Thai people who had no knowledge about opera (1-29 July, 2018).

⁹⁹ Anonymous, 'สอนทำลูกคอแบบ ทศพล หิมพานต์ [Teaching How to Make a Tossapon Himmaphan]', *YouTube*, entry post 13.03.18, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgi9ZLh05_Y&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR2-59k1_yx2xdITiZb63qLXn5EtjkyLyIXkNtqTuQ5y9_Gv360ov3Myvc (accessed 6.12.20).



Figure 4.21: A sample of the Chinese opera part in act II, scene II in Mae Naak.¹⁰⁰

In the production, there is a Chinese percussion accompanist while the singers sing Chinese opera, which in Thai is called *Ngiew* (see Figure 4.21). The singers also dressed up and mimicked the Chinese singing style.¹⁰¹

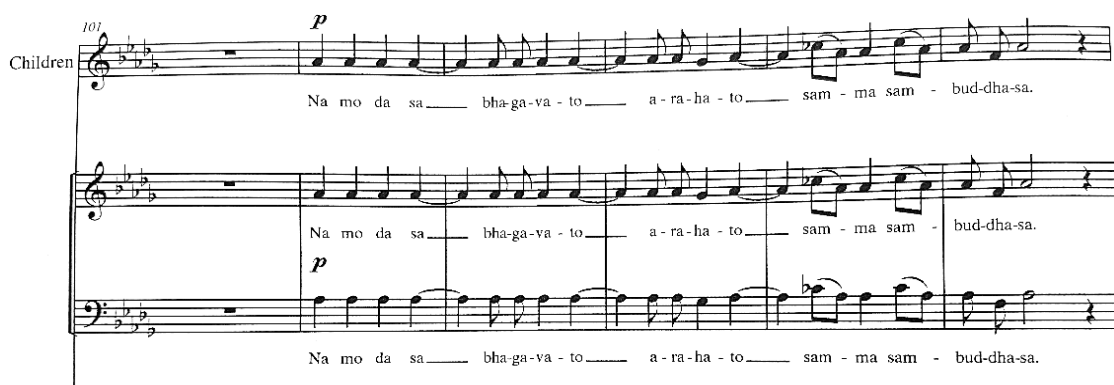


Figure 4.22: A sample of Buddhist chant in act III, scene II.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Sucharitkul and Patalung, *Mae Naak* [published piano & vocal score].

¹⁰¹ Opera Siam, "Mae Naak" Sampler', *YouTube*, entry post 27.02.11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHauueRURc4> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁰² Sucharitkul and Patalung, *Mae Naak* [published piano & vocal score].

The character of the monk sings in the ancient language of Pali.¹⁰³ He sings ‘*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa*’, which translates to ‘reverence to him, the gracious one, the worthy one, the perfect sambuddha’ (see Figure 4.22).¹⁰⁴ This is a prayer to the Buddha, which Buddhist people would say three times before starting another prayer. Most Thai people know this chant well because it is usually learned by heart during childhood.

These four examples illustrate how Sucharitkul included melodies from traditional Thai music in the opera and also added Thai culture and religion (Buddhist chant) to his opera, which is similar to *Madame Butterfly*. Giacomo Puccini added traditional Japanese melodies and Japanese culture to his opera as well.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Anonymous, Buddhist Veneration, <https://www.londonbuddhistvihara.org/teachings/buddhist-veneration/> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁰⁴ Anandajoti Bhikkhu, *Daily Chanting*, (n.p., 2007), p. 6.

¹⁰⁵ David Paul Wagner, ‘The Music of ‘*Madame Butterfly*’ (Italian title: *Madama Butterfly*), an opera by Giacomo Puccini’, *musicwithease*, <https://www.musicwithease.com/puccini-butterfly-music.html> (accessed 6.12.20).

4.2.3. *Ayodhya*

The world's first grand opera based on Asia's classic epic *Ramayana*. I hope it will not offend anyone. Many people in Thailand may find it appalling. It is an opera written for people who grew up on *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings*.... At the same time, the opera is not a simple retelling, but a complete rethinking of the *Ramayana* in terms of contemporary society and culture.¹⁰⁶

As the above quotation by Somtow Sucharitkul suggests, *Ayodhya* was a controversial work. Indeed, it is the only opera that has been at the centre of a political dispute in Thailand and was almost prohibited by the Thai Ministry of Culture because of a scene that contained the death of the giant Ravan (also known as Todsgan). In Thai culture, this giant is highly respected, and local people believe that any depiction of this character's death would bring bad luck to the country. However, Sucharitkul still continued to perform the opera without changing the scene or cutting it out, even after the Ministry of Culture had warned him. The story is famous in Thailand even though it originated in India. Sucharitkul wrote the opera *Ayodhya* to pay a special tribute to King Rama IX (1946-2016) as a part of the nationwide celebrations of the King's Sixtieth Regal Year. HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn was a guest at the world premiere of this opera, bringing it to the attention of local people (see Figure 4.23).¹⁰⁷

Sucharitkul composed *Ayodhya* in five acts and also conducted all performances. The first performance, by the Bangkok Opera,¹⁰⁸ took place in November 2006 at the Thailand Cultural Centre in Bangkok (see Figure 4.24). The opera was directed by Hans Nieuwenhuis, an opera director from the Netherlands. Sucharitkul invited him to direct this opera because he had no prior knowledge of the *Ramayana*, and therefore could bring a fresh perspective to the opera. At the world premiere, Nancy Yuan, who had previously sung Mae Naak, took the role of the

¹⁰⁶ Ker Munthit, 'Ayodhya to Come Alive in Thailand Opera!', *hindustantimes*, entry post 15.11.06, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/ayodhya-to-come-alive-in-thailand-opera/story-wXJguUFzpIIXTOVqozKB7L.html> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁰⁷ Sucharitkul, *Opera East, The Early Years of the Bangkok Opera*, p.85.

¹⁰⁸ The Bangkok Opera is a former name of Siam Opera which was founded by Somtow Sucharitkul.

heroine character: Sita. The god Ganesha was played by famous British countertenor Michael Chance.¹⁰⁹

The story originated in India and has been known in Thailand since the era of the Sukhothai Kingdom (1238–1351).¹¹⁰ The story has changed somewhat over the centuries; the version known today is an adaptation by King Rama I, who had founded the Rattanakosin Kingdom in the early 1800s.¹¹¹ However, the story was so ingrained in Thai culture that it was not until the early twentieth century that its Indian origins became known, with the publication of King Rama VI's monograph *The Origin of Ramakean*.¹¹²

Ayodhya is a district in India, and also a namesake of a city in Thailand but with a different spelling. In Thailand the name of the city is spelled 'Ayutthaya'. Both cities' names were influenced by the *Ramayana* epic because in the epic it is the birth city of King Rama, the main character of the opera. Many neighbouring countries such as Malaysia, Cambodia and Indonesia also have their own versions of the story in their own traditional form. An excerpt of this story also forms the basis of the Thai traditional masked dance drama called *Khon*. This drama is considered high art in Thailand because it contains the themes of kingship and religion (see Chapter 3.5.4).¹¹³

In the programme description, *Ayodhya* is described as based on two concepts: The Buddhist ideal of *Dharmaraja*, and the Hindu ideal of the *Devalaja*. Four words are used to summarise this opera: love, betrayal, sacrifice and redemption.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Somtow Sucharitkul, *Ayodhya* [unpublished programme notes of premiere] (Bangkok, 2006).

¹¹⁰ Reunreuthai Sudjapan, นามานุกรม รามเกียรติ์ [*Encyclopedia Ramakean*] (Bangkok, 2016), p. 5.

¹¹¹ Sucharitkul, *Ayodhya* [unpublished programme notes of premiere].

¹¹² Sudjapan, นามานุกรม รามเกียรติ์ [*Encyclopedia Ramakean*], pp. 48 & 49.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 73.

¹¹⁴ Sucharitkul, *Ayodhya* [unpublished programme notes of premiere].



Figure 4.23: The Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn (Phra Thep) (right), Sucharitkul (centre) and singers who performed at the premiere show in 2006 (left).¹¹⁵



Figure 4.24: The battle scene between giants and Hanuman in the opera.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Somtow Sucharitkul, 'Ayodhya', *operasiam*, <https://www.operasiam.com/new-gallery-6/rgahji0nw8jni5w59l91g1667z2mmy> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Roles	Voice type	Premier singer
Sita	Soprano	Nancy Yuan
Ganesha	Counter-Tenor, Mezzo-soprano	Michael Chance
Rama	Tenor	Charles Hens
Ravan (Todsgan)	Bass (and other voice)	John Ames
Benjakai, niece of Ravana	Mezzo-soprano	Ellen von Beek
A Golden Deer	Coloratura-soprano/ Dancer	Marina Zyatkova
Hanuman, Monkey King	Baritone/ Dancer	Saran Suebsantiwongse
Lakshman, Brother of Rama	Baritone/ Dancer	Ralph Jaarsma
Lava	Boy Soprano	Soponwit Wangcharoensab
Kush	Boy Auto	Dominick Gilbert
Valmiki	Silent	Richard Henderson
Chorus of Soldiers, Courtiers, Demons	All Voice Types	The Orpheus Choir of Bangkok, Bangkok Opera Children's Choir

Table 4.10: Voice type of each role in Ayodhya and singers' name in premiere performance.

Ayodhya is a five-act opera, that begins at King Rama's camp outside the burning gates of Lanka, where a funeral pyre is raging. Sita is walking on the fire to prove her purity. King Rama is sitting and watching on a throne: fire cannot harm Sita. The scene changes to an unearthly place within the funeral pyre. Sita is standing on a lotus outside time and space. She is sad because the king does not trust her and she wants to die in the fire. She calls on the god Ganesha who appears standing among the clouds. Sita begs Ganesha to let her die in the fire. However, Ganesha refuses her plea because he wants her to live so she can be the symbol of honesty for humanity in the world.

Act two takes place many years earlier in the Dandaka forest, King Rama and Sita are sleeping while Lakshman, King Rama's brother, guards them. Ravan, a

giant who has ten faces and ten hands, rides a chariot along with Benjakai, his niece. They hunt in the Dandaka forest.

Sita sees a beautiful deer running past her and she wants to own it. She asks King Rama to catch the golden deer for her. King Rama orders Lakshman to stay at the hut and protect Sita and runs into the forest after the deer. Not long after, Sita and Lakshman hear King Rama's voice asking for help. Sita orders Lakshman to help King Rama without knowing it is a trick of the giant. Sita is alone at the hut, just as Ravan planned. The golden deer transforms into the demoness Benjakai, and Ravan's chariot appears. Ravan kidnaps Sita in the chariot and heads to Lanka city.

For act three, the stage is divided into two areas: on one side King Rama's tent is visible; on the other side there is a garden at Ravan's palace. Ravan has taken Sita to his hometown of Lanka where he lets her stay in the illuminated garden. Ravan tries to rape her but is unable to because she begs Ganesha to help her. Her body becomes unbearably hot to Ravan's touch and he cannot touch her.

King Rama orders his best servant, Hanuman, who is a very powerful white monkey, to tell Sita that they are now travelling across the sea with a big army ready to fight against the giants and to help get her back. Ravan orders Benjakai to transform into Sita and act as if she has died to trick King Rama. The fake Sita is floating on the river where King Rama and his army are resting. King Rama is upset, but in the meantime, some of his soldiers are curious why the body still looks perfect after floating all the way from Lanka. The soldiers take the fake Sita out of the river and burn it. While the body burns, it transforms into a giant and escapes. King Rama is relieved and gets ready to fight and help Sita again.

Act four begins with a battle outside the walls of Lanka. The war is presented on the stage in ballet and a war-chorus of demons and monkeys. The only way to kill Ravan is to find his hidden heart and destroy it. Therefore, King Rama orders Hanuman to steal the golden box containing Ravan's heart from the hermit's hut. King Rama destroys Ravan's heart leading to his death. Before he dies, Ravan curses King Rama that he will never be happy with Sita until he dies and returns to heaven. King Rama wins the war and sees Sita again. However, before King Rama hugs Sita, she steps back and tells him that she wants to prove her purity to him by walking through the fire. This walking through fire scene happens at the start of the

first act; opening with this famous scene before telling the story of why she had to do it. Sita walks on the fire without any harm. She proves her purity to his people.

The final act takes place twelve years later. In the throne room of King Rama in Ayodhya, there is a festival. Among the crowd is the giant, Benjakai, trying to accuse Sita of being impure. People are missing Sita because she has been living in the forest for twelve years. People are gossiping about two magical children: Lava and Kush, who live in the Dandaka forest. Hanuman brings them to King Rama. They happen to be the children of King Rama and Sita. Sita appears in front of him but then she is sucked down into the earth. Ganesha appears and tells people that this is karma from her previous life and it is time for Lava and Kush to become a new king and queen.¹¹⁷

As mentioned above, the opening of the opera was delayed by a censorship debate, which was widely discussed in the international press, such as Bill Condie's article in *The Observer*.

It seems to involve nationalism - I'm not sure what it is. This opera was not designed to be political in any way. They said that if anything happened to anyone in power it would be blamed on *Ayodhya*. It was like this in the Seventies. That's why I left, but this time I'm too old and I'm not just going to go – Sucharitkul (53 years old).¹¹⁸

In act four of this opera, there is a scene where the giant, Ravan, is killed by King Rama. Thai people believe that giants are the protectors of temples and many temples in Thailand have statues of giants. Some of the giant statues stand in front of the temples to prevent bad souls or demons from entering (see Figure 4.25). Some of these giant statues act as a column and are supporting pagodas with their hands (see Figure 4.26). There are examples of these statues at various temples: Wat Pho, Wat Phra Kaew (Temple of the Emerald Buddha), and Wat Jang. Even in Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok, twelve giant statues stand in the middle of the airport as a tourist attraction and people believe that they are a

¹¹⁷ Somtow Sucharitkul and Trisdee Na Patalung, *Ayodhya* [published piano & vocal score] (Bangkok, 2006).

¹¹⁸ Bill Condie, 'World: Thailand's Culture Police Turn an Opera into a Censorship Drama.' *The Observer*, entry posted 26.11.06, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/250465385?accountid=14874> (accessed 6.12.20).

protection against bad spirits and bad people arriving at the airport.¹¹⁹ Although giants are generally representative of anger, greed and desire, some giants are good because local people believe that Buddha taught the giants not to be angry. Some of them listened to the Buddha and became his protectors.¹²⁰ That is why people think that if Sucharitkul's opera has a giant die on the stage, it is considered bad luck because there is no giant to protect the Thai temples and prevent bad spirits and bad people entering Thailand.



Figure 4.25: Wat Phra Kaew temple where it is protected by two giants: Sahassadeja (left) and Ravan (right).¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Anonymous, 'ยักษ์ 'ยักษ์' สุวรรณภูมิ ยักย้ายความเชื่อและศรัทธา [Giants in Suvarnabhumi, Faith and Belief]', *MGRonline*, entry posted 11.11.09, <https://mgronline.com/live/detail/9520000136116> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹²⁰ Anonymous, "ตำนานยักษ์วัดแจ้งและยักษ์วัดโพธิ์" และตำนานกำเนิดท่าเตียน' [Legend of Giants in Wat Jang and Wat Pho]', *Winnews.tv*, entry posted 19.11.16, <https://www.winnews.tv/news/10179> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹²¹ Ibid.



Figure 4.26: Statues depicting giants supporting the pagoda at The Temple of the Emerald Buddha (Wat Phra Kaew).¹²²



Figure 4.27: Mural art about the Ramayana story in Wat Phra Kaew.¹²³

¹²² Anonymous, 'มาหาราชวัง [Come to the Royal Palace], *the cloud*', post entry 20.07.18, <https://readthecloud.co/rail-road-bangkok-2/> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹²³ Anonymous, 'ภาพวาดจิตรกรรมไทยแบบดั้งเดิมลายทศกัณฐ์ขี่ราชรถบนผนังที่วัดพระแก้ว [Traditional Thai Painting, Tosakan Pattern Riding a Chariot on the Wall at Wat Phra Kaew]', *Pabview*, <https://ภาพวิว.com/%E0%B8%A0%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%9E%E0%B8%A7%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%94%E0%B8%88%E0%B8%B4%E0%B8%95%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%A1%E0%B9%84%E0%B8%97%E0%B8%A2%E0%B9%81%E0%B8%9A%E0%B8%9A%E0%B8%94%E0%B8%B1/> (accessed 6.12.20).

Thai people thus have a deep respect for giants, which explains why it was not felt to be appropriate for the giant Ravan to die onstage in act four of *Ayodhya*. The Thai Ministry of Culture approached Sucharitkul a few days before the show's opening, ordering him to remove the scene in which Ravan dies because it could bring bad luck. Traditionally in Thailand, this story is performed in *Khon* without Ravan's death scene onstage: As Saran Suebsantiwongse explains:

As you know Thailand has so many dramas....The story is about *Ramakean*, which is performed mostly in the *Khon* art form in Thailand. Giants cannot die on the stage; people believe that it is unlucky. The stage director does not know about this tradition so we cannot blame him and this is not *Khon*. *Ramakean* is originally from India and has many versions around the world including Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, and Burma. The manager should tell the stage director that Thailand is sensitive about this. Somtow grew up abroad so he might not know about this as well. It is nobody's fault...and there is no law saying that giants cannot die on the stage.¹²⁴



Figure 4.28: *Khon*, Thai drama with masks (The war between giants and King Rama).¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Author's interview with Saran Suebsantiwongse (17 March 2019).

¹²⁵ Nutgredta, 'ศิลปกรรม – โขน [Art-Khon]', Thaigoodview, entry post 29.12.15, <http://www.thaigoodview.com/node/201856> (accessed 6.12.20).

Even though Sucharitkul grew up abroad, he still respects Thai culture. For example, before they performed *Ayodhya*, he made all of the musicians and performers pray to the characters in the opera so the spirits of the characters would allow them to perform without problem (see Figure 4.29).



Figure 4.29: The whole production praying for the allowance to perform *Ayodhya*.¹²⁶

Nevertheless, despite his observance of cultural norms, Sucharitkul refused to remove the death scene of Ravan, even though it risked the opera being shut down. He was warned that if anything offended the 'morals of Thailand', the Ministry would interfere.¹²⁷ In Sucharitkul's book, *Opera East*, he discussed the aftermath of this event where several letters were faxed to members of the royal family, and spam emails were sent across the internet accusing Sucharitkul of trying to personally get rich by doing this opera.

Even though the opera had issues with the Thai Ministry of Culture, it received a generally positive response from important musicians around the world. All of them

¹²⁶ Sucharitkul, *Opera East, The Early Years of the Bangkok Opera*.

¹²⁷ Condie, 'World: Thailand's Culture Police Turn an Opera into a Censorship Drama'. (For URL link, see footnote 118).

complimented the music, such as: an aria from this opera would be famous among sopranos and the music is memorable and passionate.¹²⁸

The Golden Deer aria is one of those pieces that will soon be in the repertoire of every coloratura soprano

- Richard Harrell, head of the opera department in San Francisco

A composer needs only to have written one such passage in his life to be assured of always being remembered

- Hans Nieuwenhuis, head of the Netherlands Opera Studio

I honestly don't remember when I last played a contemporary composition that conveyed so much musically in depth, beauty and passion

- Carol Wolowsky, an American violinist who played in the orchestra in *Ayodhya*

Indeed, the music of *Ayodhya* is arguably the most developed and sophisticated of Sucharitkul's operas. The aria of Ganesha and the Golden Deer aria have the potential to become famous arias around the world because they have beautiful melodies. It was a shame that the opera may only have been performed a few times due to a lack of financial support. Those who did attend the opera either came to watch the opera during the premiere or were involved with the show. Not many people had heard of the opera before now. The stage and costumes of this production were professional, the characters were distinctively recognisable and the background was made up of projected images so the audience could understand the setting. Props were simple but relevant. This could be because Sucharitkul had built up an inventory of props from his previous productions.

The story of *Ramakean* varies in different media depictions. Differing stories can be seen in *Khon*, books, mural art and opera. For example, *Khon* drama focuses on heavy costumes with different types of masks, beautiful stages that change every scene and martial arts in the fighting scenes between the armies of King Rama and the giants (see Figure 4.28). Some literary versions focus on beliefs and the morals in the story. One of the most popular characters in this story is Hanuman (the white

¹²⁸ Bangkok Opera, 'Despite controversy, Ayodhya attacks worldwide attraction...', *Somtow.net*, entry posted January 2007, http://www.somtow.net/newsletter/index.html?fbclid=IwAR26km8l-gDRrGLVt-WzhN8NZK9z6e60tSQZhuTTWGx_3ot6a-yuFsmJ5Hk (accessed 6.12.20).

monkey).¹²⁹ In the case of art in Wat Phra Kaew temple, there is a mural that focuses on the traditional Thai art techniques depicting detailed costumes and marvellous architecture (see Figure 4.27). At the centre of Sucharitkul's opera is the love of Sita and the beautiful music. Several scenes are omitted in comparison to the original story of King Rama I, such as those in which King Rama recruited his armies to fight giants, or the scene in which King Rama receives help from different people as he travels to Lanka. Sucharitkul even omits the end of the scene in which Lava and Kush fight with King Rama in the forest before the latter realizes that the two children were his.

Sucharitkul chose the most famous scene of the story to open the opera *in medias res*, with Sita walking on the fire to prove her purity to her husband. This is the first of his operas where Sucharitkul used this literary technique. It is more common for plays to begin *in medias res* but it does not often occur in opera. As Carl Dahlhaus described it: 'Opera focuses...on the present time and place'.¹³⁰ Expanding upon this quote, operas tend to follow a linear narrative as it is simpler for the audience to understand the plot, which is why it is not common for opera to start in the middle of the story.

The honest and pure love of Sita and King Rama cannot be interfered with; even Ravan who holds Sita captive for many years, fails. King Rama never stops fighting to get Sita back and Sita never lets Ravan touch her. This opera also shows that the many emotions experienced by humans, such as love, greed, anger, passion, happiness and sadness, are also felt by angels, giants and the animal kingdom. Each role has different characteristics for instance King Rama is the ideal good person: he is a good husband, a good father, a good king and a good leader even though he sometimes makes mistakes. Ravan is the representative of an evil person trying to take the wife of another; he is stubborn, easy to anger and deceptive. Sita is representative of a loyal wife and devoted mother. The story also shows that good triumphs over evil despite all odds, which happens in most of the

¹²⁹ Wendy Doniger, 'Hanuman', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, entry post 2.11.20, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hanuman> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹³⁰ Carl Dahlhaus, 'The Dramaturgy of Italian Opera', in Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli (eds.), *Opera in theory and practice image and myth*, (New York, 2003), p. 103.

fairy tale stories around the world. These morals teach the audience to be good so that the world can be peaceful.

During the opening music of *Ayodhya*, there is a tambura, which is an Indian instrument. However, according to several musicians' interviews, in the performance the sound of the instrument was replicated through an iPhone. As for the voice parts, they contain several difficult coloraturas especially for the countertenor role of Ganesha (see Figure 4.30 & 4.33). This approach is different to other Sucharitkul operas as he usually composes the heroine character with a coloratura.¹³¹ The voice type of the heroine is also different from his other operas. Normally, he gives the heroine's part to the coloratura soprano but in *Ayodhya* he gave it to the lyric soprano.

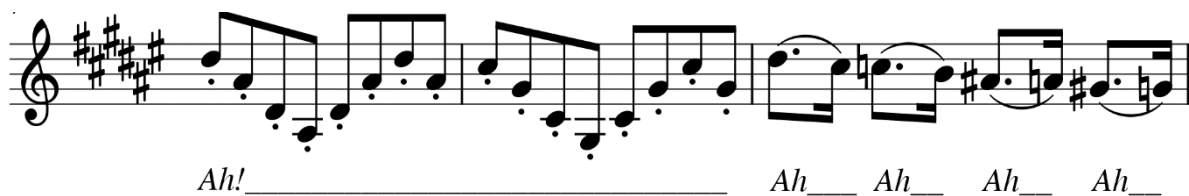


Figure 4.30: Example of the Ganesha aria (act I).

Sucharitkul also composed a beautiful coloratura part for a golden deer to sing. The beautiful melodies of the character mimics the way of a deer running (see Figure 4.31).¹³²

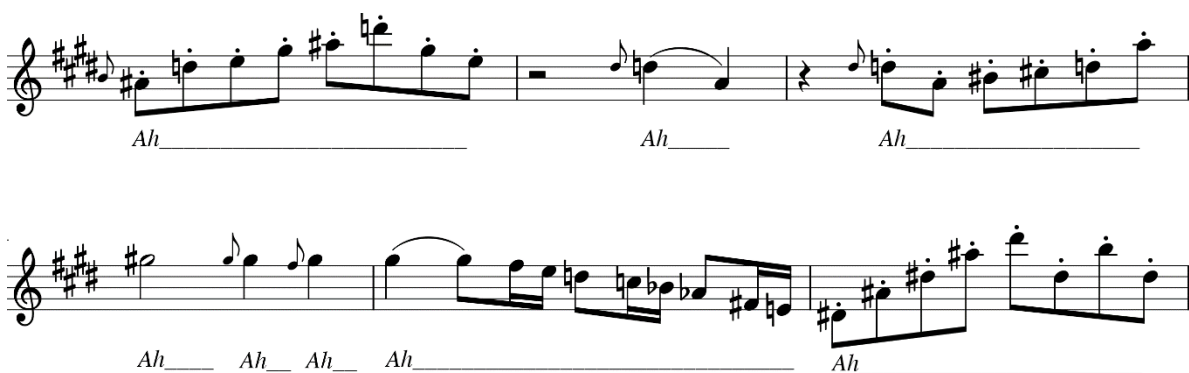


Figure 4.31: Example of the Golden Deer aria (act II).

¹³¹ Opera Siam, 'Somtow's Ayodhya - Complete' YouTube, entry posted 20.01.12, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do31JulCT6E> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹³² Sucharitkul and Patalung, *Ayodhya* [published piano & vocal score].

Sucharitkul composed the Ravan character as a bass, which suits the character well as he is big and evil. For most of the opera Ravan sings quite low in range (see Figure 4.32).¹³³

The musical score for Figure 4.32 is for a vocal ensemble and a solo part. It is in common time (C) with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked 'Poco adagio'. The ensemble consists of Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The lyrics are 'Si - ta' repeated across the staves. The solo part is labeled 'RAVAN' and 'Ravan dies'.

Figure 4.32: Example of Ravan bass part.

Sucharitkul used traditional Thai melodies to create the leitmotif for the Ganesha singing part in act five when the god comes from heaven to Earth.

The musical score for Figure 4.33 is for a solo part. It is in common time (C) with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked 'Poco adagio'. The lyrics are 'O Si - ta Child of Das - kan - - - tha,' and 'Lis - ten to the words of Ga - ne - - - sha, from whose lips on - ly'.

Figure 4.33: Example of a Ganesha singing part.

¹³³ Sucharitkul and Patalung, *Ayodhya* [published piano & vocal score], pp. 244-245. Note that this is a reproduction of the original score, which includes some incorrect presentation of rests.

4.2.4. *Suriyothai*

Suriyothai is based on a legend inspired by the historical warrior-queen heroine, Suriyothai, the wife of King Maha Chakkraphat (1509-1569) during the *Ayutthaya* period (1351-1767). Suriyothai is a famous female figure in Thailand. She sacrificed her life to defend her husband in an elephant battle during the Burmese-Siam war in 1548. This event is famous and is recorded in every Thai history book: every student in Thailand has to learn this legend by heart during primary school.

A famous Thai filmmaker, Chatrichalerm Yukol, made a movie about this legend in 2001 called *Suriyothai* (see Figure 4.34). Because of the familiarity of the plot, the film was greatly anticipated. It is also the most expensive movie ever made in Thailand, costing ฿400 million (about £6,000,000 at that time).¹³⁴ It was so costly because scenes were decorated with luxurious period props. It also broke many Thai film records: the longest shooting and post-production period at three years; the longest screening time at 190 minutes; the biggest cast: seventy main characters and two thousand extras, eighty elephants and seventy horses.¹³⁵ The film received full sponsorship from HM Queen Sirikit (b.1932). She had a big role in many aspects of the film process and she requested Mom Chao Chatri Chalermsri Yugala (known to most people in Thailand as Than Mui), who is a member of the royal family, to be the film director.¹³⁶

The following quote by one of the queen's ladies-in-waiting, Khunying Busaya, demonstrated the queen's sentiment about the movie production:

Her Majesty the Queen said she wants the Thais to feel proud of themselves. She wants people to honour each other and respect themselves. She wants them to appreciate the historical events of the past that have seen the creation of the Thai state and the avoidance of colonialism.¹³⁷

Queen Sirikit supported this production because the movie shows the bravery of Suriyothai fighting for her country and the sacrifice of her life for her husband. The

¹³⁴ Jirattikorn, '(2003) *Suriyothai: Hybridizing Thai National Identity Through Film*', p. 296.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

queen wants to provide a tribute of this true event for her people to be proud of their history and respect their ancestors.



Figure 4.34: A Poster of the *Suriyothai* movie by Chatrichalerm Yukol.¹³⁸

Sucharitkul was inspired by the true event so he composed a ballet-opera version of the legend in 2013. *Suriyothai* is in two acts with English libretto. The world premiere performances were on 23 August 2013 during a gala opening and on 24-25 August 2013 as public performances at the Thailand Cultural Centre. The performance was considered a late birthday present for Her Majesty Queen Sirikit, the wife of King Rama IX, whose birthday is on 13 August. The *Suriyothai* movie (2001) and ballet-opera (2013) were both created by members of the Thai royal family: Mom Chao Chatri Chalermsri and Somtow Sucharitkul. Both events involved Queen Sirikit, the reigning queen at that time.

There are only two main solo singers in the work: *Suriyothai*, the main role, and a French singer, a minor character. At the premiere performance, there were more than two hundred people including dancers, opera singers, the Siam Orpheus choir and musicians from the Siam Philharmonic Orchestra. The opera was

¹³⁸ Kitti Wattanamahat, 'ทวนรำลึกถึง สุริโยทัย ภาพยนตร์แห่งสยามประเทศ [Recall the Legend of Suriyothai, the Film of Siam]', *blogspot*, entry post 20.01.18, <http://chamadewi.blogspot.com/2018/01/blog-post.html> (accessed 21.03.19).

choreographed by Puwarate Wongatichat who had previously worked with Sucharitkul in several productions including *Mae Naak* and *The Silent Prince*. This opera is the first performance where he created a hybrid style fusing modern classical and Thai dance. The role of the French singer was performed by Jak Cholvijarn. The role of Suriyothai is performed by two people: a singer: famous American coloratura soprano, Stacey Tappan (who also sang as the heroine in *Madana*), and a dancer: Winita Lohitkul. The singer communicates her mood by singing and the dancer expresses her emotion through her movements. In the performance, the singer arrives on the stage first to sing her opening song and the dancer follows in the middle of the song.¹³⁹ Lasting about seventy-five minutes, *Suriyothai* is not a long opera. For the production, Sucharitkul entrusted one of his students, Trisdee Na Patalung, with conducting the Siam Philharmonic Orchestra. This was to enable Sucharitkul to focus on directing the opera.

Sucharitkul composed this opera not just for the queen's birthday celebration but also because he wanted to let Europeans know that Thai women can be strong and be the heroes of the country; many European men thought that Thai women are passive and submissive. One more reason that Sucharitkul chose this real story to create the opera might be because he wanted to create international awareness about this legend. This opera would prove to the world that Thai women are brave and willing to join the war with their husbands and give their life for their husbands and country.¹⁴⁰ The following quote by Sucharitkul explained his influence for this opera:

I selected the Suriyothai history, first, to celebrate Her Majesty's birthday, and second, because Thailand is different from other countries in that Thai women have so much more influence in their homeland... I was so bored with hearing Europeans say Asian women are the men's back legs! I wanted to show the world that Thai women can be the heroes.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Opera Siam, 'Suriyothai - The Ballet-Opera by Somtow', *YouTube*, entry posted 27.08.13, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UI75uCo5RCc> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Jeerawut Singharaj, 'Suriyothai rises again, Somtow Sucharitkul brings the heroic warrior-queen to the stage in a sumptuous ballet-opera', *The Nation*, entry post 22.07.13, <https://www.nationthailand.com/life/30210888> (accessed 6.12.20).

Sucharitkul fused ballet with opera because he was surrounded by ballet since childhood. His two sisters studied ballet and he would go to watch several ballet shows as a child. He was proud to have had a chance to watch the legendary figures of ballet Margot Fonteyn and Rodolf Nureyev live. Additionally, during his teenage years, he played the piano for ballet classes. However, Sucharitkul was a big fan of singing, and he claims that it is the highest form of lyric outpouring, carrying deep emotional moments onto the stage.¹⁴² Therefore, he tried to merge the two ideas together, similar to the traditional Thai drama *Khon*. *Khon* is performed by dancers on the stage along with musicians and singers playing music next to the stage. After, Sucharitkul had the idea to combine ballet and opera, which was inspired by *Khon*; he wanted to make the story about his Thai roots and then *Suriyothai* came to his mind.¹⁴³



Figure 4.35: Curtain call at the end of the *Suriyothai* premiere performance in 2013.¹⁴⁴

The costumes of *Suriyothai* were luxurious traditional Thai costumes (see Figure 4.35). They were produced by the Textile Gallery's Pasaya brand. The main Thai characters wore blue, a colour chosen as a means of honouring the Queen of Thailand. Not only is blue her birthday colour but it also evokes calmness, so it was a

¹⁴² Somtow Sucharitkul, *Suriyothai*, [unpublished programme notes of premiere] (Bangkok, 2013), p. 10.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Anonymous, 'Suriyothai A Ballet – Opera', *bangkok.oneplace.events*, entry post 29.05.16, <https://bangkok.oneplace.events/concert/suriyothai-a-ballet-opera> (6.12.20).

fitting representation for a powerful heroine (see Figure 4.36). The Burmese characters wore red and golden costumes, signifying power (see Figure 4.37). The face makeup was all white, with the eyebrows drawn very high up (see Figure 4.38). This style of make-up may have been inspired by the film version of *Suriyothai* referenced above.



Figure 4.36: *Suriyothai* wearing a blue colour in the opera.¹⁴⁵



Figure 4.37: Burmese characters wearing red and gold representing power.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Somtow Sucharitkul, 'Suriyothai', *Operasiam*, <https://www.operasiam.com/suriyothai-2013/> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.



Figure 4.38: Burmese make-up in the opera with white face and thick eyebrows.¹⁴⁷



Figure 4.39: Painting of the battle where Phrachao Plae's elephant overpowers the queen's elephant.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Sucharitkul, 'Suriyothai', *Operasiam*. (For URL link, see footnote 145).

¹⁴⁸ Sunet Chutinatharanon, 'เอกสารพม่าอ้าง "มหาบรมดิลก" คือผู้สละพระชนม์ทรงช้างสู้กษัตริย์พม่า ไม่ใช่พระสุริโยทัย [Burmese Documents Claiming "Mahabarom Dilok" is the One Who Gave Away His Life to Fight the Burmese King, Not Suriyothai]', *Khatti Naree of the Kingdom of Siam, Art and Culture*, entry post 27.10.18, https://www.silpa-mag.com/culture/article_7191 (accessed 6.12.20).

In 1988, there was a Suriyothai monument built to celebrate her bravery, located at Suan Luang Sopsawan temple, Ayutthaya province, where Queen Suriyothai lived (see Figure 4.40).¹⁴⁹



Figure 4.40: Suriyothai monument located at Suan Luang Sopsawan temple, Ayutthaya province.¹⁵⁰

Roles

Role	Voice	Premiere Singer
Suriyothai	Soprano	Stacey Tappan
French Singer	Counter-Tenor, Mezzo-soprano ¹⁵¹	Jak Cholvijarn

Table 4.11: Voice type of each role in *Suriyothai*.

Suriyothai contains five scenes. Scene one opens with chaotic events outside a temple in Ayutthaya. People are confused and afraid about the recent assassination of the Queen Si Sudachan's lover, a soldier with whom she was having an affair, and the subsequent change of the ruling house in Ayutthaya. There

¹⁴⁹ Anonymous, 'พระเจดีย์ศรีสุริโยทัย [Suriyothai Pagoda]', sac, <https://www.sac.or.th/databases/archaeology/archaeology/%E0%B8%9E%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B0%E0%B9%80%E0%B8%88%E0%B8%94%E0%B8%B5%E0%B8%A2%E0%B9%8C%E0%B8%A8%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B5%E0%B8%AA%E0%B8%B8%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B4%E0%B9%82%E0%B8%A2%E0%B8%97%E0%B8%B1%E0%B8%A2> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Opera Siam, 'Suriyothai - the Ballet-Opera by Somtow' (For URL link, see footnote 139).

will be a new king, Thianracha, the husband of Suriyothai, who is currently still a monk at the temple. He is invited to be the new king and has to leave Buddhist monkhood to go back to court. When he comes back and ascends the throne to be the new king of Siam, his wife, Suriyothai sings an aria urging her husband on. He transforms from monk to warrior.

Scene two takes place in Pegu, Burma, where King Tabinshwehti is attending court. He hears the news that Siam has a new king: a monk. Tabinshwehti is dancing happily because it is the perfect time to take revenge (Siam and Burma have been enemies since the sixteenth century).

Scene three starts as the new king of Siam changes his name from Thianracha to Maha Chakrapat. In the throne room of the Siamese king, people are celebrating with international dances from all around the world (this scene also includes the singing of the French countertenor). The final show is interrupted by a messenger with bad news; the Burmese army is now marching to attack Siam.

Scene four opens with Suriyothai planning to help her husband in the war. She decides to dress up like a Siamese male soldier. The Burmese army is passing through a deserted city, which is now empty because people have fled from the war.

The final scene opens with Suriyothai joining the battle. The fighters ride war elephants. In the battle, the elephant of Maha Chakrapat panics. Suriyothai steers her elephant in between Maha Chakrapat and the Burmese soldier. The enemy gets the opportunity to strike his halberd into Suriyothai without knowing that he is killing a woman (see Figure 4.39). Suddenly, Suriyothai's helmet falls off revealing her long hair. This is a famous scene where Suriyothai dies and it confuses the enemy because she is a woman. She has saved her husband from certain death. At Suriyothai's funeral in Ayutthaya, her soul sings to her people that she has sacrificed her life for one man, her lover and a king, who will rule this country in peace, and it was worth it.¹⁵²

The premiere was well attended, with approximately seventy percent of the two thousand seats filled. It was the best attended production by Opera Siam and for

¹⁵² Sucharitkul, *Suriyothai* [unpublished programme notes of premiere], p. 10.

the Thailand Cultural Centre hall.¹⁵³ The following quote is from the Bangkok Post newspaper about the *Suriyothai* production:

Suriyothai premiered in 2013 with five sold-out performances and four additional rounds scheduled a few months later, making it the most widely-attended classical music event in the history of the Thailand Cultural Centre, and probably in Thailand.¹⁵⁴

A blogger who attended the opera commented that the performance was 'astounding'.¹⁵⁵ Audiences who loved this opera may have done so because the performance showcases both Thai and Burmese traditional dance, which is exotic and interesting. The costumes are also well prepared so people could easily distinguish Burmese and Siamese. The soprano was a well-trained opera singer from America. The other singer, Jak Cholvijarn, a Thai countertenor, was considered very exotic and exciting to see in Thailand. He performed beautifully because Sucharitkul knew his voice well, therefore he composed the part to suit him.¹⁵⁶

However, some audience members thought that the ballet-opera was not well balanced. They were expecting more singing and chorus than ballet dancing.¹⁵⁷ The heroine role has two performers: one is dancer and one is singer. In the *Suriyothai* opening scene, the singer role of Suriyothai sings the opening aria but then suddenly the dancer role of Suriyothai enters the stage, dressed exactly the same. It was 'confusing to see two Suriyothai on the stage. However, they touched hands to let the audience know that they were actually the same character. It would be very hard to find an opera singer who also has good ballet skills and it is impossible to do ballet and sing opera at the same time. It is the only character in *Suriyothai* split into two performing people.

¹⁵³ Somtow Sucharitkul, 'Suriyothai surpasses Opera Siam attendance records', *operasiam*, http://operasiam.music-now.org/Opera_Siam/Opera_Siam.html (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous, 'Suriyothai – how my quiet Friday evening became the tragedy of the queen', *chaophrayaprincess*, entry post 29.05.16, <https://chaophrayaprincess.wordpress.com/2016/05/29/suriyothai-how-my-quiet-friday-evening-became-the-tragedy-of-the-queen/> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Opera Siam, 'Suriyothai - the Ballet-Opera by Somtow'. (For URL link, see footnote 139).

¹⁵⁷ Anonymous, 'Suriyothai – how my quiet Friday evening became the tragedy of the queen'.

As noted above, the story of *Suriyothai* is well-known and based on actual historical events.¹⁵⁸ It is taught in schools throughout Thailand and there are many books, cartoons and other adaptations of the story. Most of the stories are the same, but the focus of each version may vary. For instance, the movie version started when Suriyothai was fifteen years old and describes the heroine's teenage feelings before she married Thianracha. It also includes scenes where kings and Sisudachan are fighting for the throne and how her husband became a monk. The movie version gives more historical context, describing important events before the popular Suriyothai death scene. In contrast, Sucharitkul's ballet-opera chose to focus only on the most well-known situation: Suriyothai's sacrifice of herself for her husband and country. The ballet-opera begins with Suriyothai's husband becoming king. The main focus of this opera is the beautiful music, marvellous ballet and the emotions of the heroine.

The plot of the ballet-opera took place in 1548, a time in which women in Thailand were more passive and submissive than nowadays.¹⁵⁹ In the sixteenth century, Thai society believed that men were the leaders and protectors of the family. They also believed that women should respect and be loyal to their husband, with the main role of women being to look after their children and the house. It was not usual for women to be involved with anything political. Aspects of this can be clearly seen in the movie version: a wife has to sit lower than her husband; women are not allowed to argue with men; and during the war, women have to stay at home with their children, waiting for their husbands to return from battle.¹⁶⁰ The story of *Suriyothai* encourages local people to be brave and make sacrifices for their country by going to war and fighting their enemies. Given the focus of the ballet-opera on this traditional and important Thai story it must be considered as being partly nationalistic in motivation.

Suriyothai is also the first of Sucharitkul's Thai operas to be based on a historical event. His other operas were Thai tales and Buddhist tales such as

¹⁵⁸ Siripen Worapassu, งานโบราณคดีและประวัติศาสตร์กับสื่อภาพยนตร์ กรณีศึกษาจากภาพยนตร์เรื่อง "สุริโยไทย" [*Archaeological and Historical Works with Film Media a Case Study from the Movie "Suriyothai"*], BA Diss. (Silapakorn University, 2002), p. 9.

¹⁵⁹ Maeyinglanna, 'สิทธิสตรีล้านนาในอดีต [Lanna Women's Rights in the Society]', <http://www.sri.cmu.ac.th/~maeyinglanna/main9/main.php> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁶⁰ Movie *Suriyothai* (2001).

Madana, Mae Naak and *Ayodhya*. As Sucharitkul is a member of the royal family of Thailand, it is only proper to compose an opera admiring an ancient Thai hero. It is what the royal family always does by reminding people of their roots, preserving legends and their history.

The music of *Suriyothai* could be considered one of the finest works by Sucharitkul. Jak Cholvijarn and Stacey Tappan stated that *Suriyothai* is their favorite of Sucharitkul's operas. Further proof is that a song from *Suriyothai*, 'The Burmese March', was selected by the Siam Sinfonietta orchestra to compete in the International Orchestra Competition in Vienna and they were victorious.¹⁶¹ It was a great victory for Thai classical musicians because the event is one of the biggest competitions in Europe and Siam Sinfonietta contained only Thai classical musicians and additionally they won with Thai music by a local composer. Sucharitkul also uses *Lae* (see Chapter 3.5.6) patterns on *Suriyothai*'s opening aria (see Figure 4.41 & 4.42). An example of this can be seen in his use of dotted-crotchet and quaver rhythms on the same pitch, which is characteristic of *Lae*.



Figure 4.41: Example of *Suriyothai* aria in act I.



Figure 4.42: Example of *Suriyothai* aria in piano part.

¹⁶¹ Somtow Sucharitkul, *Victory in Vienna*, (Bangkok, 2013).

4.2.5. *A Boy and a Tiger*

A Boy and a Tiger was composed by Bruce Gaston. An excerpt was performed many times before without the full orchestration, until Rotary International commissioned Gaston to finish the project for their annual meeting in 2009. Subsequently, the opera was performed in Thai on 28 and 29 November 2009 at the Thailand Cultural Centre, Bangkok.¹⁶² The production was performed by the students of Bann Gerda, a community of HIV infected children. Later in 2012, Gaston translated the opera from Thai to English, scheduling performances with an orchestra and Thai ensembles on 5 May 2012 at the Impact Arena, Bangkok (see Figure 4.43). The performers came from different places: twelve children came from the Bann Gerda community¹⁶³ and the rest were children from international schools and music colleges in Bangkok. One of the main roles went to Myra Maneepatsorn Molloy, the winner of *Thailand's Got Talent* 2011.¹⁶⁴ The score of *A Boy and a Tiger* was provided by Sarunpong Dechsangworn, the main singer who played Pi. It is a skeleton score with no accompaniment parts and certain songs have only the text but not the music.¹⁶⁵



Figure 4.43: Performance of *A Boy and a Tiger* in 2012.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Anonymous, 'A bit of the 'Life of Pi' for Bangkok World Opera Week', *CNNTravel*, entry posted 23.11.09, <http://travel.cnn.com/bangkok/play/bangkok-world-opera-week-033465/> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁶³ Bann Gerda is a community of HIV infected children.

¹⁶⁴ Author's interview with Sarunpong Dechsangworn (9 August 2017).

¹⁶⁵ Bruce Gaston, *A Boy and a Tiger* [unpublished vocal score] provided by Sarunpong Dechsangworn (2012).

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

Bruce Gaston was inspired to create the opera by the award-winning and bestselling novel *Life of Pi* (2001) by Yan Martell (b.1963) (see Figure 4.44). The novel is a religious epic and was translated into more than thirty languages. In 2012, *Life of Pi* was adapted into a film by Ang Lee and became even more famous.¹⁶⁷



Figure 4.44: A scene from the movie *Life of Pi* by Ang Lee (2012).¹⁶⁸

Before Gaston started to write the opera, the owner of the Baan Gerda community, Karl Morsbach, asked him to help start up an orchestra with donations from the Goethe institute. Gaston fell in love with the courage and happiness of these children the first time they met. He used the Orff Schulwerk system of music education to teach children to perform this opera.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Steven R. Serafin, 'Yann Martell', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Yann-Martel> (accessed 7.02.19).

¹⁶⁸ Andrew Schenker, 'Life of Pi', *Little white lies*, entry post 20.12.12, <https://lwlies.com/reviews/life-of-pi/> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁶⁹ Email correspondence with Bruce Gaston, 23 April 2019. The Schulwerk in German means 'Schoolwork', which Carl Orff, a composer and his colleague Gunild Keetman, an educator, developed the system since 1920. Recently, this teaching system's use has spread around the world. The Orff Schulwerk is to give all attention to children and approach them in their world by fantasy. The teacher offers them singing, playing instruments, speech, and movement and not only just the musically talented. The children will learn all of these with their imagination in their development. They will not just learn music, dance, act, and sing, but also this system helps children in other ways: intellectually, socially, emotionally and aesthetically. They will be able to create new ideas, support others, solve problems, be patient, improvise and develop leadership.

This opera was originally written with Thai lyrics. However, Gaston had to adjust and translate the score into English due to the sponsor's request because most of the guests who attend the event are not native Thai speakers. This is also the reason why he allowed international school children to participate in the performance. The Baan Gerda group had sung the entire opera in Thai in 2009 and then sang the English translation with international students in 2012. On the stage, there was an Orff ensemble, played by Baan Gerda musicians and there was a symphony orchestra in the pit. There were also four traditional Thai ensembles located around the audience to create the oceanic atmosphere in which the boat floated.

It is an interesting point that Gaston, an American musician, fell in love with Thailand and so composed an opera in the Thai language. He was later hired to produce an opera in Thailand for non-Thai speakers. Therefore, he had to translate his opera from Thai into English and added an orchestra along with a traditional Thai ensemble to the production. On the other hand, Sucharitkul, a Thai composer, grew up and was educated abroad. He adapted a Thai legend, *Mae Naak*, to opera in English, but as the audience was mostly Thai, his mother had to translate the libretto from English into Thai subtitles. The contrasting paths of these composers proves that they cannot just create opera in the direction they prefer but instead have to pay attention to the audience and the consumers of Thai opera as well.

A Boy and a Tiger is a two-act opera beginning in a zoo, where Pi lives with his family, where there are tigers, bats, orang-utans, elephants, lions and many others. The next scene contains two groups: humankind and animals. They sing about evolution. The next scene depicts Pi's father teaching his son about animals. Humans should not trust animals because they are liars. His father tells Pi to never put his hand in the cage. The father brings a goat into the lions' cage. A TV newscaster interviews the lions who are dressed as American football players; the cheerleaders are cheering the lions on to eat the goat. While the lions eat the goat, Pi imagines himself in the future eating a turtle at the same time. His father said if he forgets this lesson, he would be like the goat and gives Pi a whip and a chair to control the lions. He says that the lions must know who is in control and sings to Pi that it is better to be smart than be strong. He also sings to himself about how tired

and bored he is of the politics in this country. He decides to leave the country and travel to a new land.

For act two, Pi's family and all the animals are in a boat, which is now in the middle of the ocean. The boat sinks in a storm; however, Pi survives in a lifeboat with a tiger, a hyena and a zebra. His family is dead. The zebra is represented by its heart, liver and lungs. The hyena eats the zebra, starting from the liver, the lungs, the heart. Next the tiger eats the hyena.¹⁷⁰ The giant hands of hunger, thirst, and fear are represented by three giant turtles, appearing out of the ocean. Pi tries to fight them off. His father's ghost appears to remind Pi that the day he forgets the lesson he will die like that goat. Pi tries to find a way to kill the tiger. He considers four methods: (1) push him into the ocean, (2) inject the Tiger with narcotics, (3) stab it with a knife, (4) starve it. However, there is another storm coming. They struggle as the lifeboat is pushed around by the angry ocean. The sea calms and both of them are safe in the lifeboat. Suddenly, flying fish pass by and become food for them. After a few days, they start starving again but then one day, they come upon a jungle on an island. They land safely on the island. While Pi is in the jungle, he imagines the hands of hunger, fear, and thirst again. He also imagines a cook trying to kill him but the tiger eats the cook. They leave the island and find another island with shaman trees and people living there. He attains enlightenment and the tiger disappears into the jungle. Pi says good-bye to the tiger. Once Pi's plight at sea is over, a TV newscaster interviews him asking what happened to him and how long he stayed in the ocean. Pi cannot answer, therefore he tells the story to the interviewer, replacing all the animals with a sailor, a cook, Pi's mother and himself. The sailor is injured and the cook kills him to use his body for food. The interviewer asks if this is what really happened. Pi answers there is more and what he has not told would not be believed anyway. At the end, the TV newscaster becomes confused by the story.

Due to the lack of a full score, there is no evidence to clarify which voice types sing in which roles. The only role with a known voice type is Pi as a baritone, confirmed by the singer in his personal interview. Other roles are also sung by

¹⁷⁰ There is confusion in the supplied score about the roles of the hyena and zebra and which is played by three parts. The main singer was also unable to clarify this confusion in his interview. However, figure 4.43 shows there are three zebra parts on stage.

chorus with most of them singing in unison so it could be that there are no voice types in other roles.

Roles: Pi, Father, The Lion, The Chef, The Bureaucrats, Tiger, Hyena, The Zebra's organs (Liver, Lungs and Heart), Giant Hands of Hunger (Thirst, Hunger, Fear), Shaman trees, TV Newscaster.¹⁷¹

In an interview Sarunpong Dechsangworn, the main singer in the role of Pi, revealed that in the beginning of the performance, the hall was full and halfway through the performance people started to walk out. By the end of the performance, the hall was half-full. 'It was not a successful performance', he recalled.¹⁷² When the opera was performed on May 2012, the story was not as well-known as much later when the movie came out in December 2012. The main reason for the poor reaction seems to be that it was too abstract and difficult for the audience to understand the story and especially where the ending was expressed through the opera. The method of the storytelling is also hard to visualise, such as the heart, liver and lung of the hyena or the part where the lion is dressed up like a football player (see Figure 4.45). In his interview, Pi's singer Sarunpong Dechsangworn expressed how the complicated plot was confusing and even though he played the main role in the opera, he did not fully understand what it was about. Additionally, researching this opera by reading the book, watching the movie, reading reviews, reading the skeleton score and researching the information that Gaston provided didn't help in understanding the abstract and complicated plot.

¹⁷¹ Email correspondence with Bruce Gaston (25 April 2019).

¹⁷² Author's interview with Sarunpong Dechsangworn (9 August 2017).



Figure 4.45: American football players attacking the goat in the performance of A Boy and a Tiger.¹⁷³

The plot of Martell's novel and Ang Lee's movie are similar. Some differences include the reduction of the beginning talking about how the narrator heard the story about Pi, religion and the relationship of Pi's family.¹⁷⁴ Gaston's adaptation is very different to both the novel and the movie. He added the father's ghost as a character, as well as three singers for the hyena (as its liver, heart and lungs) and another three singers as giant hands representing hunger, thirst and fear. This could be confusing for people who read the book and also people who are unfamiliar with the story. However, the reason he added more singers was because he wanted many students to be able to perform on the stage equally.

A significant aspect of the novel is that the reader is presented with two different stories of the same event by Pi. Which story the reader believes to be the true one depends on their own character and beliefs. One story involves Pi surviving with the tiger in the life boat. The other story is much darker, involving the ship's

¹⁷³ Anonymous, 'Living with the Tiger – Thailand', *YouTube*, entry posted 6.04.11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7R308WHSxw&t=1s> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁷⁴ Wheelley, 'Abigail', 'Life of Pi', *CliffsNotes*, entry posted 7.02.19, <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/l/life-of-pi/book-summary> (accessed 6.12.20).

cook killing and eating an injured sailor and Pi's mother. The second story implies that the animals in the first story are metaphorical representations of the people in the lifeboat: the cook is the hyena, the sailor is the zebra, Pi's mother is the orang-utan and Pi is the tiger. Pi becomes the tiger in retaliation to the cook killing the sailor and his mother, and subsequently kills the cook (as the tiger killed the hyena in the first story). The message of the novel is that since the outcome of both stories are largely the same: the ship sinks, Pi's family dies and Pi suffers, does the embellishment of the first story, and its omission of the darkness of the second story really matter? The novel is somewhat a commentary on religion, as at the end of the novel, an investigator is questioned by Pi on which story they prefer, and the reply is the one with the tiger because it's the better story. Pi states, 'Thank you, and so it goes with God,' signifying that he believes it is better to live your life believing in a God, and the promise of an afterlife, rather than living without hope.¹⁷⁵ However, Gaston's opera does not present this aspect of the novel as clearly.

Gaston cut most of the beginning where Pi talked about his beliefs and that he respected three religions: Hindu, Christianity and Islam. These cuts seem to have been to allow the opera to have more drama, and so heighten the audience's enjoyment. It would be hard to act and explain three religions and how Pi believed in them. Instead Gaston focused on the relationship between humans and animals instead of religion: at the beginning of the first act humans sing about how they think that animals are the worst and the animals sing that they think that humans are the worst living things. In the novel there are references to God and religion several times. However, Gaston's opera did not include any religions, God or belief systems. Even though Gaston was born into a religious Christian family who established churches in the US, he tried not to include religion in this opera. He also learned traditional Thai music from Buddhist culture. Gaston was brave to adapt this novel to opera because the story is multi-layered. The story is actually not for children but for adults. It is not easy at all to adapt the novel into opera and have people consume it in the same way.

There are many Western elements in the opera that did not happen in the novel or movie. For instance, the lions were dressed as American football players.

¹⁷⁵ Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*, (n.p. 2003, first press 2002).

The newscaster interviewed them and the cheerleaders cheered on the lions to eat the goat. For this scene Gaston might be comparing American football culture with animal behaviour. There is also a famous French phrase in act one of the opera: *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*. This famous phrase, came out of the French Revolution in 1789. This reflects that Gaston has an interest in politics and he may believe in freedom of religion. A Buddhist storyline is included at the end of this opera when Pi becomes enlightened. The inclusion of Buddhism in this opera could be because Gaston was influenced by Thai culture and Buddhism is the main religion in the country.

The music of *A Boy and a Tiger* is a fusion of Western and traditional Thai music. He incorporated Thai classical singing, with some parts sang in Thai and added four traditional Thai ensembles performing in different places around the hall. The reason he added the Thai ensembles could be because it created the ocean atmosphere such as the waves. The opera also contains many traditional Thai tunes. For instance, the song เขมรไล่ควาย ['Khmer Ly Kwai']¹⁷⁶ in act one, where Pi is holding a whip and a chair while trying to control the lion (see Figure 4.46). This song fits the story well because the meaning of the song is about chasing a buffalo, though in the opera Pi is chasing a lion. In the interlude to act two, there is a song playing about travelling over water from the traditional Thai drama, *Khon* (see Chapter 3.5.4). There is also a traditional Thai lullaby called เพ็ญนักษัตร ['Pleng Nokkamin'] in act two when the giant hands of hunger, thirst and fear appear. There is a ปากยี่ ['Pak'], a Thai style of speaking of song (Sprechgesang) in several places in both acts one and two.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ เขมรไล่ควาย ['Khmer Ly Kwai'] is a traditional Thai tune. The name of the song means 'Cambodians chasing buffalo'.

¹⁷⁷ Email correspondence with Bruce Gaston (April 2019).



Figure 4.46: Khmer Ly Krai melodies, music Arr. Jazzylemon.¹⁷⁸

A Boy and a Tiger is the first opera combining the whole Thai Pi-Pat ensemble with an orchestra. There are four Pi-Pat located around the audience to create a boundless oceanic atmosphere in which the boat floats. The inclusion of these ensembles greatly adds to the challenge for the conductor, as in addition to the usual duties, the conductor has to control the four Thai ensembles even though they are seated far away from him. No Thai composers have ever tried this before because Thai and Western music theory are different (see Chapter 3.2). However, the performance was successfully completed despite being the first experiment to combine opera, orchestra and Pi-Pat ensemble. One of the reasons that Gaston decided to experiment with Pi-Pat in this opera was because he had previous experience of doing so outside of opera. His band '*Fong Nam*' has created music by combining Thai and Western music together (see Appendix E.2).

¹⁷⁸ Anonymous, โน้ตเพลง เขมรไล้ควาย สำหรับ Harmonica [Khmer Ly Krai Music Notes for Harmonica], Jazzylj, <https://jazzylj.blogspot.com/2011/03/harmonica.html> (accessed 6.12.20).

4.2.6. *Ngau Pa*

Ngau Pa is a three act opera by Pathorn Srikaranonda (b.1973). This opera was a part of his Ph.D. in Music Composition at the University of Edinburgh. It was the first opera in Thai to ever be performed, albeit only partially.¹⁷⁹ It was performed by Western opera singers in September 2000 at St. Cecilia Hall in Edinburgh and then again in August 2001 at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh organised by the Faculty of Music at the University of Edinburgh.¹⁸⁰ Since Srikaranonda and his father worked as musicians for the Thai royal family, he decided to rewrite King Rama V's drama, *Ngau Pa*, into opera form because he might have wanted to express gratitude. Srikaranonda added in the interview that one of the reasons he chose this plot is because he liked the script of *Ngau Pa* that King Rama V wrote, as the language in the script is much more 'down to earth' compared to King Rama VI's scripts, as King Rama V was self-taught unlike his son. The latter's style is too poetic and employs a complicated vocabulary, because King Rama VI was educated and learned Sanskrit at Oxford University so his works are usually infused with too much Sanskrit.

The original *Ngau Pa* was performed in the form of the traditional Thai drama called *Lakhon Nai*.¹⁸¹ Srikaranonda kept the texts of the *Lakhon Nai* version for this opera as they already fit with the meter and only changed the text from monologues to dialogues. He also wrote more libretto in Thai because nobody had done it before and because it was a challenge for him to write the melodies in Thai.¹⁸² After he finished writing this opera in 2000, he gave parts of his scores to the Faculty of Music at the University of Edinburgh. In September 2000 and August 2001, *Ngau Pa* was performed. Unfortunately, Srikaranonda did not have a chance to conduct nor see the performances because he had already returned to Thailand at that time.¹⁸³ It was a shame that this opera was never performed in its entirety and not at all in Thailand.

¹⁷⁹ Author's interview with Pathorn Srikaranonda (23 August 2019).

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ *Lakhon Nai* is a traditional Thai drama that was performed only in the court and only women are the performers (see Chapter 3.5).

¹⁸² Author's interview with Pathorn Srikaranonda (23 August 2019).

¹⁸³ Ibid.

This opera was adapted from a verse drama by King Rama V in 1906. The story was originally written by the king while he had to rest with malaria and he looked for something to do instead of his duties as a king. During that time, a young Ngau Pa called Knang was working as a royal page (see Figure 4.47). The king asked Knang about his childhood in the jungle. Knang told the king a tragic love triangle story that had happened in his village before he worked as a royal page. The king decided to create a verse drama based on the story of Knang. The story was adapted into various drama forms such as *Likay*, *Lakhon Deukdumban* and even a Broadway musical.¹⁸⁴ It took the king eight days to compose and he published the poem in 1913.¹⁸⁵



Figure 4.47: Knang (on the left) and members of the Thai royal family.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Pathorn Srikananda, *Ngau Pa* [unpublished full score] (2002), p.4.

¹⁸⁵ Prib pandao, “เงาะป่า’วรรณคดีสัญลักษณ์ แห่งรัชสมัยรัชกาลที่ 5 [‘Ngau Pa’ The Symbolic Literature of the Reign of King Rama VI]’, *Posttoday*, entry post 26.11.17, <https://www.posttoday.com/life/healthy/527342> (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁸⁶ Piyanai Gatethong, ‘คณะเงาะป่าคนเดียว ที่ได้รับยศขั้นสูงมหาดเล็กพิเศษ จากพระพุทธรเจ้าหลวง ร.๕ !!! เหตุใดจึงหายสาบสูญจากหน้าประวัติศาสตร์ ??? [Knang, the Only Ngau P’a, Who Received an Advanced Rank, Special Servant from King Rama VI]’, *Tnews*, entry post 16.09.17, <https://social.tnews.co.th/religion/358817/> (accessed 6.12.20).

The Ngau Pa are a tribe that live in several parts of Southeast Asia including Thailand and Malaysia. Recently, there are only a few Ngau Pa left because many of them joined modern society.¹⁸⁷ They are a nomadic people, who frequently move their easy-to-construct homes. Ngau Pa people are one of several diverse ethnic groups of Nigrito. According to a YouTube video, the distinguishing features of the Ngau Pa are dark skin and a flat wide nose, thick lips, large teeth, small ears, big toes, and around 140-150 centimetres tall.¹⁸⁸ Most Thai people remember them from their dark skin and their traditional clothing with red pants and a red flower on their ear (see Figure 4.48). There are cartoons and movies telling this story and it still inspires many productions. The book has been republished many times (see Figure 4.49).¹⁸⁹



*Figure 4.48: Ngau Pa people.*¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Anonymous, 'เงาะป่าซาไก | เรื่องจริงผ่านจอ [Ngau P'a Sagai, Real Story Through the Screen]', *YouTube*, entry post 30.03.17, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfQWz3wvYvs&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR24KsOGi4SD16G1Hg7lt5_1l2arRumFDaPctXCnMOIXaR8bkPf8wICPDqQ (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁸⁸ Anonymous, 'เงาะป่าซาไก | เรื่องจริงผ่านจอ [Ngau P'a Sagai, Real Story Through the Screen]'.

¹⁸⁹ Cartoons: Anonymous, 'เงาะป่า ซาไก [Ngau Pa Sagai]', *YouTube*, Movie: Anonymous, 'ตัวอย่างภาพยนตร์เรื่อง เงาะป่า | THE PRIMITIVE [Official Trailer HD]', *YouTube*, entry post 23.11.17, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGsUIPaK8dY> (6.12.20).

¹⁹⁰ Anonymous, 'เซม้ง คือใคร? เรื่องราวที่น่าสนใจของชนเผ่าเซม้ง [Who is Semang? Interesting Story of the Semang Tribe]', *Zcooby*, <https://www.zcooby.com/semang/> (accessed 6.12.20).



Figure 4.49: *Ngau Pa* character in the TV series *Sangthong*.¹⁹¹

Orchestration: Piccolo, two Flutes, two Clarinets in B-flat, Saxophone (switching between Soprano, Alto, and Baritone), two Bassoons, four Horns in F, two Trumpets in B-flat, two Trombones, Tuba, Xylophone, Marimba, Vibraphone, four Timpani, Suspended Cymbal, Cymbals, Tam-tam, Gong, Triangle, Snare Drum, Tenor Drum, Bass Drum, Whip, Temple Blocks, Ching, Chaab, Mong (low, medium, and high-pitched), Glaung T'apon, Grab Sepa, Violin one, Violin two, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Praguydao Laudpraserdkamon, 'ซูมกันชัดๆ!!! เผยโฉมหน้าจริง "เงาะป่า" ในละคร "สังข์ทอง" กล้ามล้ำ ชิกแพคแน่น ทำเอาแทบไม่อยากจะสายตา ! [Zoom in Clearly!!! Revealing the True Face of "Ngau P'a" in the Drama "Sangthong", a Muscular, Tight Pack, You Do Not Want to Look Away!]', *Tnews*, post entry 12.06.18, https://m.tnews.co.th/contents/461589?fbclid=IwAR0867ElIi_Xe6lhzoKXEputNVZmmPIOjVrMZxcgAHc3nMJzReYLi7wSR-o (accessed 6.12.20).

¹⁹² Srikananda, *Ngau Pa* [unpublished full score], p. 12.

Role	Voice type
Lamhab	Coloratura Soprano
Sompla, Lamhab's lover	Tenor
Hanao, betrothed to Lamhab	Baritone
Maipai, brother of Lamhab	High Tenor
Knang, narrator of the story	Tenor
Hau, mother of Lamhab	Mezzo- soprano
T'aungyib, father of Lamhab	Baritone
Manau, mother of Hanao	Alto
Yaup'aan, father of Hanao	Baritone
Sarun, father of Sompla	Bass
Saumlug, Patrician of the Ngau	Bass
Villagers	Chorus

Table 4.12: Voice type in each role in *Ngau Pa*.¹⁹³

Ngau Pa has three acts. The prelude begins at midnight in the forest of the Ngau near the sacred T'akian tree. Everyone in the village is weeping. Three bodies are lying underneath the T'akian tree. Knang, the narrator, explains that a bad omen has occurred. They have to move the entire village to another place.

Act one, scene one, starts with Maipai and Knang enjoying a bonfire in the forest, Sompla appears. Sompla teaches them to use *bila*, a type of blowdart, and to fight a tiger. Sompla admits that he is in love with Maipai's sister, Lamhab, who is betrothed to Hanao. The two boys offer to help him by delivering gifts to Lamhab. He gives three gifts to her: (1) *Jamp'un* flowers; (2) *Hap'aung* flowers; (3) a claw of the tiger. The flowers are to let her know that he is in love with her and the claw is to let her know that he is willing to fight and risk his life to win over her heart. The gifts are wrapped in a *Gaitüan* leaf as a symbol to let her know that if her parents do not accept him, he will run away with her.

In scene two, Lamhab is in the jungle where Maipai and Knang are hiding behind a tree and waiting for Sompla to come out but he is too shy. Suddenly, a

¹⁹³ Srikananda, *Ngau Pa* [unpublished full score], p. 11.

snake attacks Lamhab, making Lamhab faint. Sompla comes out and catches her before she falls. Luckily, the snake did not bite Lamhab. Lamhab wakes up and sees Sompla. He admits to Lamhab that if she died, he would die with her and he finally tells her that he loves her. Lamhab refuses his love because she feels guilty about being betrothed to Hanao. However, she is falling in love with Sompla because he has saved her life. Both finally confess their love to each other and promise that they will never be apart.

In act two, scene one, Hanao's father asks his friends and fellow villagers to help him prepare his son's wedding. Scene two continues at the sacred *Tákian* tree. Lamhab is crying because she will marry Hanao the next day. Sompla promised to rescue her before the wedding day but he still has not come. While Lamhab is about to commit suicide, Maipai arrives to tell her the good news that Sompla plans to take her tomorrow. However, she must play along and follow the wedding ceremony. The next day, after the wedding ceremony, Sompla takes Lamhab while Hanao is lured away from her.

In act three, scene one, Hanao is angry that his wife has been abducted by someone. Hanao and his two brothers go to find Lamhab. Scene two begins at the cave where Sompla and Lamhab live. That night, Sompla dreams that wild beasts are chasing after him and kill him. Lamhab believes that the nightmare is a bad sign. She begs Sompla not to go out but Sompla does not listen and still goes out to find food.

In scene three, while Sompla is looking for food, Hanao attacks him from behind. Both fight until Hanao falls. Lamhab, feeling that something might happen, runs to where they fight. When Sompla is about to stab Hanao, Hanao's brother blows a dart into Sompla's forehead. He falls on Lamhab. Before Sompla dies, he urges her to stay with Hanao so that he can die without worrying about her. Lamhab cries and says that she will not be anybody else's and stabs herself. Hanao cries and is grief-stricken having discovered that the two of them were in love and it was because of him that they both die. He stabs himself and falls beside Lamhab and Sompla.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ Srikananda, *Ngau Pa* [unpublished full score], pp. 15-16.

The tonal nature of the Thai language was a big challenge for Srikananda in composing this opera, as he stated in his interview:

In this operatic version of mine, I have enjoyably (and painstakingly) rearranged the original verses... Setting Thai-language libretto into Western-structured art music is immensely difficult (this is a first original opera that has Thai-language libretto). Thai language has five so-called 'pitch classes' and some words would change the meaning entirely only if the tone drops or rises at the end... Though Thai pop music has no such problem because of the flexibility in the interpretations of the singers. In the past, Thai pop singers would learn to follow to the words and music.¹⁹⁵

Srikananda had to cut and edit most of the narrative verses to transform them into operatic dialogues. He also mentioned that in Thai pop music, Thai singers know how to adapt the tone to fit with the words. His original plan was to write a completely new libretto but after studying scripts of modern theatre versions, he decided that the original poem was the best text. In preparation for the project, he experimented with the tonal nature of the Thai language in his song cycle *Fonram... Baimairuang* [Weeping Rain... Falling Leaves] (1997). He also studied the physical and acoustical properties of Thai spoken sound, and analysed Thai Western classical and older pop music to understand the Thai singing technique. He researched many aspects of traditional Thai music, such as their pitch system, scales, drum patterns, and musical styles in order to create the opera in Thai.¹⁹⁶ He composed the music to fit the tones of the words and tried many experiments for non-Thai natives to be able to sing the opera in Thai.

It was immensely difficult to use Thai language. I had to map out all the sound using spectral analysis and composed the singing lines constructed from the nodes of each syllable... I used the transliteration version for that. I conducted a workshop before that and realized that the transliteration systems (karaoke, ut, etc.) were not so good when it comes to Thai language so I had to construct a new one for that.¹⁹⁷

Both presentations of this opera were performed by non-Thai speakers. However, they performed only two scenes from act three. It was extremely difficult

¹⁹⁵ Srikananda, *Ngau Pa* [unpublished full score], pp. 15-16.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 5.

¹⁹⁷ Author's interview with Pathorn Srikananda (23 August 2019).

for Srikananda to teach them to sing opera in Thai. At first, he used transliteration systems for the singers to sing. However, it was not successful, so he borrowed German and Hungarian letters such as ö, ü, ő, and ũ to improve the singer pronunciation. The transliteration system that Srikananda used is also practised in the opera *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* by Krisada and Napisi Reyes and also tested during an experiment in chapter 5 of this thesis. This was the best way to explain to non-Thai singers to sing Thai. However, Srikananda and Reyes did not add any symbols for singers to slide the tones to fit the words. In chapter 5, three new symbols have been created to control the sliding of the tones and the shortening of the vowels.

Srikananda was not present at both events because he was already back in Thailand and there is no recording of the performance. Later, Somtow Sucharitkul was interested in performing this opera. However, his interest was not enough and without a financial sponsor no production was possible.¹⁹⁸

The story of *Ngau Pa* exhibits the culture and beliefs of the Ngau Pa tribe. It shows how the tribe lives in the forest, dressed in their signature red colour, the way they often move their houses and hunt animals by blowing darts. Embedded in the story are also many life lessons such as (1) jealousy has consequences, sometimes even death; (2) marriage without love can cause complications; (3) families should let their children choose their own partners.

In the beginning of the original story, the king went to Phthalung province, to visit the Ngau Pa village and learn about their culture. However, the opera begins at the end of the original story with all the main characters dead. The narrator addresses the audience and introduces what happens next. The story is then narrated using the flashback technique. Most books, cartoons and TV series have roughly the same plot but add more jokes and focus on their beliefs and culture, such as, the Ngau characters wearing make up to make their skin dark, wearing red clothes, putting red flowers on their ear, and being funny and enjoyable characters.

¹⁹⁸ Author's interview with Pathorn Srikananda (23 August 2019).

After Srikananda decided to turn a famous Ngau Pa story to an opera form, his father, Monrat Srikananda, gave him a couple of his Thai pop songs to use which were commissioned by the queen many years ago. These songs became the setting of *Ngau Pa* texts and they are all from the end of the story where all of the characters die. He experimented with one of these songs by using a traditional Thai composition method that he had earlier used in the third movement of the quintet for piano and string quartet in 1996. The result was excellent, so he used this as the prelude of the opera.¹⁹⁹ There are some traditional Thai musical instruments in the orchestra creating the traditional Thai sounds such as temple blocks, ching, chaab, mong (low, medium, and high-pitched), glaung t'apon and grab sepa.

There are no adaptations of traditional Thai melodies in this opera. The whole opera was constructed from three songs written by Monrat Srikananda, the composer's father. Srikananda had to compose the orchestra score and libretto to follow the three songs that his father provided. Nevertheless, these three song melodies are used for the lament of the fate of the three main characters towards the end of the story. There are several Buddhist prayers in the opera, for example, Bhuddha Vandana (Namo Tassa...) and Metta Bhavana because Srikananda might want to express his religion in this opera (see Figure 4.50).

The musical score is for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). It is written in a single system with four staves. The tempo/mood is marked 'ff' (fortissimo) and '(Free Time with no particular rhythm) whispering'. The lyrics are in Thai: 'จง เป็น สุข เป็น สุข เกิด อย่า ได้ เบียด เบียน ชึ่ง กัน และ กัน เดย'. The score ends with a 'repeating until niente' instruction and a fermata.

Figure 4.50: Buddhist prayers in the opera called *Metta Bhavana*.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Srikananda, *Ngau Pa* [unpublished full score], p. 5.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

4.2.7. *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals*

The Story of the Long-Gone Animals is the first opera in Thai to have been performed as a full production (see Figure 4.51). It was composed by a married couple: Krisada and Napisi Reyes. Krisada Reyes wrote the music and Napisi, his wife, was responsible for the Thai libretto and the story. The plot of the opera is original and depicts modern family life in a chaotic city: Bangkok. The performances were on 21 and 22 November 2008 at the auditorium of the College of Music, Mahidol University (see Figure 4.52). *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* was performed by the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO) and conducted by Claude Villaret, a Swiss composer.²⁰¹ There are only seven singers in the opera: three main roles and four singers of an ensemble. The opera also contains twelve dancers who dress up as the animals they act.

Most of the singers were studying at the College of Music, Mahidol University, where Napisi gives lectures. One singer was a lecturer at the university, while the others were students. One of the main singers joined the production from outside of the university: Piyawat Panthana. The opera was performed in Thai, with English subtitles. The production used life-size puppets, masks and physical movements by the B-Floor Theatre, led by Teerawat Mulvilai (see Figure 4.54). This production was a part of the university project as, at that time, the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra was working under Mahidol University.



Figure 4.51: *Mother and Dao Nua* in the premiere performance in 2008.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, 'TPO 4th Season', *Thailandphil* http://www.thailandphil.com/static/ticket/Book4th_01.pdf, p. 13. (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁰² Fueanglada Prawang, 'Thai Opera "The Story of the Long Gone Animal" Act 1', *YouTube*, entry post 11.11.18, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXHSwAe2fWs> (6.12.20).

Most of the Reyes' works are musicals for children. It was not until Napisi Reyes started to work at the College of Music, Mahidol University, that she worked as a stage director for two operas, *The Mikado* (2007) and *L'Orfeo* (2008). Krisada had a chance to help and watch both shows. Both Napisi and Krisada wondered why there are no operas in Thai. Additionally, in 2007, the quality of voice students at the College of Music, Mahidol University was excellent and at an international level. For instance, Fueanglada Prawang, who sang in the mother role, won the 7th Osaka International Music Competition, Japan in 2007. It was the ideal time for opera and classical music at the university; therefore, Napisi and Krisada decided to compose an opera with the Thai libretto for the students to sing. It was a new challenge for them to create the first opera in Thai after they had worked on so many Thai musicals, as the style and singing technique are completely different. Napisi added in the interview that she wanted to do opera in her mother language because it is more touching when people understand the words the performers are singing. She worked on opera projects in other languages and sometimes the singers did not understand what they were singing because it was not their mother language. Therefore, she wanted to create an opera in Thai, so the singers could understand and communicate correctly and local people could understand. Krisada described how he was inspired to create the opera by a children's musical, a music ensemble and two operas. The children's musical was Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* (1936), and the music ensemble was by Camille Saint-Saens, *The Carnival of Animals* (1886). Both of these music productions tell great stories and introduce children to music by having each instrument representing an animal. Krisada was also inspired by two operas, which were by G.C. Menotti, *Help, Help, the Globolinks!* (1968) and L. Janacek, *The Makropulos Affair* (1925).²⁰³

Their first idea for the length of the full opera was two and a half hours, which is the same as most Western opera lengths. After some consideration, they changed the objective of the work to focus on more general audiences and teenagers. As the length would be too long for them, it was decided to shorten the piece to only an hour and a half. In the end, the length of the opera was fifty minutes because the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra restricted the length, due to its concert programme limits. As a result, both composer and librettist felt that there was too much of a rush

²⁰³ Author's interview with Krisada Reyes (8 August 2017).

in many places in the score because, for financial reasons, they planned the project with TPO before starting to compose the opera. At first, it was scheduled to be performed in July 2008. However, it was postponed until November 2008 because the scores and singers were not ready. Some singers were still young and needed time to further improve their skills in singing Thai language in Western-style opera. It was a big problem at that time because the conductor, Claude Villaret, was from Switzerland and could not speak Thai at all. Therefore, he wanted them to replace the singers with others who would have more experience in singing Thai with the correct opera technique. The opera was postponed for four months so that the singers could learn to sing a Western-style opera in Thai. Additionally, Villaret was a conductor for TPO at that time so there was no chance of replacing him with a Thai conductor who could understand the Thai tonal language.

This problem could actually have been solved if the composer had explained the tonality of the Thai language to the conductor or by rewriting the score and creating symbols in the vocal parts demonstrating where to slide and add notes. This issue led to the experiment that is discussed and explained in chapter 5 of this thesis. However, it was decided to change the two main singers in the production. The role of the Dodo was changed from Natthaporn Thammathi to Piyawat Panthana and the role of Dao Nua from Lalit Woratheptinan to Siriwaranya Supranee only one month before the performance.²⁰⁴ Piyawat Panthana and Siriwaranya Supranee are much older and more experienced in singing the Western opera style in Thai than other younger singers at that time. They were trained to slide and shorten the notes while still being able to follow the orchestra. In spite of that, Natthaporn Thammathi and Lalit Woratheptinan, the singers that were replaced in the production, are now top opera singers in Thailand. Both of them graduated from Austrian music universities and sang in opera houses around Europe. It was a big challenge for Napisi to write the libretto because this was her first ever opera. It was also the first opera in Thai performed as a full production, so she had no direct models to work from. In her interview, she said 'I've spent long hours searching for the right words to fit the notes. It was more difficult than other works I did, especially putting Thai words to recitative and arias and making it continuous.'²⁰⁵ She also added that it was a big

²⁰⁴ Author's interview with Siriwaranya Supranee (6 August 2017).

²⁰⁵ Author's interview with Napisi Reyes (8 August 2017).

challenge to find singers to sing this opera because she was the one casting the singers herself.

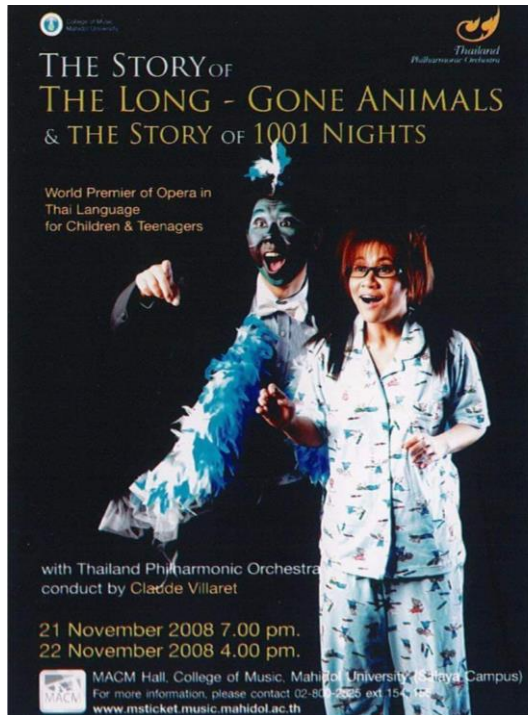


Figure 4.52: A Poster of *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* (2008).²⁰⁶



Figure 4.53: *Dodo and Dao Nua* in the premiere performance.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ Prawang, 'Thai Opera "The Story of the Long-Gone Animals" Act 1', *YouTube*, (For URL link, see footnote 202).

²⁰⁷ Ibid.



Figure 4.54: Puppet entertaining audiences in the performance.²⁰⁸

There are three acts in *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals*. The first act takes place in a chaotic Bangkok, where mother and daughter live together in a flat. One morning, the mother urges her teenage daughter, Dao Nua, to hurry and get ready to go to school. Dao Nua wakes up without hope and does not want to take her medicine after she has been taking it every day for so long. She is tired of being sick. Therefore, she lies to her mother, saying that she took the medicine and still does not feel better. She wants to stay home and not go to school.

The mother is overwhelmed with her daughter's sickness and her own struggle for the family's survival, as she is a single mother. They start to fight because the mother realises that Dao Nua lied about taking medicine. The fight gets more intense until Dao Nua announces that she wishes she were dead. The mother sings a sweet lullaby about the bonds between a mother and daughter to calm her child down. As a result, both of them calm down and hug each other. Before her mother has to leave to an important meeting, Dao Nua promises to take her

²⁰⁸ Prawang, 'Thai Opera "The Story of the Long-Gone Animals" Act 1', *YouTube*, (For URL link, see footnote 202).

medicine and get some rest. After her mother leaves, Dao Nua's mood turns dark again.

Act two begins when Dao Nua takes her medicine and falls asleep. She awakes in an in-between world of half-dream and half-truth. She meets a dodo bird who can speak Thai. The bird takes her to the land of extinct animals. A parade of eleven animals appear to her: the Xerces blue butterfly, the moa, the terror skink, the Kittlitz's thrush, the thylacine, Schomburgk's deer, the kouprey, an auroch, Stellar's sea cow, and homo sapiens. Dao Nua enjoys the parade and feels pity for those extinct animals.

For the final act, Dao Nua wakes up from her fantastical dream. Her school friends come to visit because they were worried about her. Dao Nua shares the dream with her friends. They think that she must be crazy. She also tells her friends that she will keep taking the medicine until her sickness is gone. Life is too important to give up. At the end, all of them sing together about the importance of life.

Roles	Voice type	Singers name in Premier show
Dao Nua	Soprano	Siriwaranya Supranee
The Mother of Dao Nua	Soprano/ Mezzo-soprano	Fueanglada Prawang
Dodo Bird	Tenor	Piyawat Panthana
Four of Dao Nua's friends, Ensemble	Soprano Alto Baritone Bass	Pattaraporn Saengsamang Sasaya Chavalit Tulanan Narasetapisarn Thanis Sonkloe

Table 4.13: Voice type in each role in The Story of the Long-Gone Animals and the singer's name in premiere performance.

Number	Animal	Music Instrument	Key
1.	Dodo	Oboe Key C major	D minor : Scene of Dodo introducing itself: D minor
2.	Xerces Blue Butterfly	Piccolo	D
3.	Moa Bird	Bassoon	B
4.	Terror Skink	Clarinet	B minor
5.	Kittlitz's Thrush	Flute	E
6.	Thylacine	Alto Sax	E minor
7.	Schomburgk's Deer	Marimba (Wood)	C
8.	Kouprey	Horn in F	F
9.	Quagga	Trumpet in C	A Flat
10.	Stellar's Sea Cow	Trombone	A
11.	Auroch	Tuba	G
12.	Homo Sapien	Strings	F major

Table 4.14: List of musical instruments and their notes (or key) for each animal.²⁰⁹

The animal sequences in the score were arranged in this order to mix the musical passages of animal characters and to get a sense of variety, movement, contrast and development. Roughly, the sequence is from smallest creature to the largest creature followed by the human being, except some alterations made to make a better musical sequence. The order of animals in each key (act II): D - E - B minor - C major/ (D minor) - E minor - B - C - G major / (A minor) - F - G - A - F major (see Table 4.14).

²⁰⁹ Author's interview with Krisada Reyes (8 August 2017).

The Story of the Long-Gone Animals was performed while there was political turmoil in Thailand.²¹⁰ There were the yellow and red shirt political demonstrations in Thailand; therefore, the hall was not full because people were afraid to leave home. In spite of the difficult circumstances, many audience members liked it and some audience members encouraged the composers to do more Thai operas, especially one musician from Germany who came to see the opera three times. He thoroughly enjoyed it and was looking forward to watching more of their work in Thai operas.²¹¹ Many members of the audience were already fans of the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO), a famous orchestra in Thailand and renowned as one of the highest quality orchestras in Southeast Asia. The TPO members are a mix of Thai and foreigners, and many of them are talented musicians from around the world.

Roughly half of the audience was made up of adults, while the other half were children. The opera was performed both in the afternoon and evening so they could accommodate children and working families. In the first act, the audience were quiet and tried to listen to the opera. In the second act, when the parade of animals started to appear from different corners of the auditorium, the audience began pointing towards the animal puppets and whispering (see Figure 4.54). The selection of the musical instruments and the music suitable to communicate the character of each animal was chosen with specific consideration. For example, a piccolo represented the Xerces blue butterfly because the high pitch and the running notes demonstrated the delicate nature of the butterfly, with its small size and style of flying. Most of the children really enjoyed the show and some parents were moved to tears during the scene in which the mother and Dao Nua were fighting. This reaction shows that the opera being performed in Thai had more of an emotional impact on the audience, just like Napisi wanted. The reasons the audience gave for attending this opera might be that they were excited to witness the first Thai opera in Thai, but also because it is exotic for Thai people to hear Western opera in Thai.

As noted above, the composers were inspired by children's musicals. It is very clear that the composer took the idea of a unique instrument to represent each

²¹⁰ In 2008 a political crisis resulted in Thailand between the red and yellow shirts (the red shirts support the former prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra and the yellow shirts are opposed to him). People were violently protesting in the street. Anonymous, Profile: Thailand's reds and yellows, *BBC News*, entry post 13.07.12, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13294268> (6.12.20).

²¹¹ Author's interview with Krisada and Napisi Reyes (8 August 2017).

animal in the opera from the symphonic fairy tale *Peter and the Wolf* by Prokofiev and *Carnival of the Animals* by Saint-Saëns. Each animal has its own musical note or key, which helps the audience imagine how those animals move and behave. For instance, the Thylacine was represented by an alto-saxophone for its wild, quick and tricky hunter character. This idea of composition captured the audience's attention well and all the children responded with enthusiasm, with some trying to copy the way the animals moved along with the music.

The composers made the opera educational by selecting eleven extinct animals that were forced into extinction by human actions or activities, directly or indirectly. The last animal is the human being because eventually it will be the last living creature on Earth due to the man-made extinction of every other species. The moral of the opera is aimed at the next generation: do not harm other animals, directly or indirectly. Krisada added that 'actually *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* is not only for young children. It is aimed at more grown up children from high school teenagers to college level. But the underlying concepts speak to any responsible human being'.²¹² The opera does not only tell an emotionally expressive story but also carries an underlying message to adults. The opera also depicts mental health issues such as depression, suicidal thoughts and the chaos and stress of living in big cities.

Krisada noted in his interview that he created a fusion of very different styles and epochs of music. He wanted to show that it has been more than four hundred years since the very first opera was created in the world, and today, finally a Thai opera in the Thai language exists. Krisada also added that he composed the music to sound like two dimensions between real life and dreams by writing polymetric rhythms such as in act one, when the orchestra harmonies are in duplet and the singing line is in triplets (see Figure 4.55).

²¹² Prawang, 'Thai Opera "The Story of the Long-Gone Animals" Act 1', *YouTube*. (For URL link, see footnote 202).

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Mother M-S.

อย่า 3 ห่อ 3 ใจ 3 ก้าว 3 เดิน 3 สู้ 3 ฝ่า 3 ฟัน 3 ไป 3 แสง 3 รุ่ง 3 งาม 3 ที่ 3 บน 3 ฟ้า 3 ไกล 3 จะ 3 ทอ 3 เมื่อ 3 ยาม 3 ที่ 3

Pno.Red.

149

Mother M-S.

พา 3 ยุ 3 หาย 3 ไป 3 ลุก 3 จะ 3 ต้อง 3 มี 3 คำ 3 สั่ง 3 ใจ 3 อย่า 3 หลีก 3 หัน 3 สิ่ง 3

Pno.Red.

Figure 4.55: Example of act I showing the polymeter rhythm.²¹³

The main singers agreed that the music was difficult to sing, because of the mixture of many types of music in the opera, and especially in regards to rhythmical aspects.²¹⁴ One of the big challenges for Napisi was to write Thai words in the right melodies and add notes in the score to help the audience understand the Thai words. One singer noted in the interview that while she practised for the opera her friends heard the words that she sang and started to laugh, and said it sounded very weird. It sounded like a person with a foreign accent that could not get the tones of the language right because it is hard to put the tone of Thai into melody. All singers confirmed in personal interviews that performing the first Thai opera was not easy; however, it was a lot of fun because they were young and excited to perform with a famous orchestra and everyone learned a lot from this opera.²¹⁵

The composers chose to create an original opera by focusing the story around a modern life narrative, compared with other Thai operas that focus on old tales or legends. *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* shares parallels with Gaston's *A Boy*

²¹³ Krisada and Napisi, *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* [unpublished vocal score].

²¹⁴ Author's interview with singers from *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* (10-14 August 2017).

²¹⁵ Ibid.

and *A Tiger* as both were based on a modern story unrelated to Thai legends.

Krisada took this idea from J. Janacek's *The Makropulos Affair* (1925) and its use of modern recitative. Because the story of *The Makropulos Affair* is complex and the audience needs a lot of information to understand it, Janacek used many recitatives enabling the opera to take a quicker pace. Krisada also stated that to get attention from audiences who are not familiar with opera, it is essential to be clear and not too complicated. This goes especially for audiences who do not have the background to consume or enjoy this art form. A general audience may have some experience with musicals and theatre but not much in opera.²¹⁶ Therefore, it is the composer's task to find easy ways to present the material to them. This led him to use a similar musical structure as was done in *The Makropulos Affair* for *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals*.

The opera covers a range of moods; some sections are ironic, some educational, some are dark in tone, while others are comedic. For instance, there is a funny part in the opera where Dao Nua's friend, after knowing she had a chat with a dodo bird in a dream, asks her: 'How do the animals speak, don't say it is in Thai?' and Dao Nua replies: 'He (dodo) does not only speak in Thai but he also sings beautifully in Thai' (see Figure 4.53).²¹⁷ This means that Dao Nua was dreaming and it was not reality, though when she woke up from this dream it left her appreciating life. In contrast, a darker scene involves Dao Nua not wanting to live anymore because of her sickness.

Although the plot of *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* is a universally relatable story, it is most obviously Thai through the use of its language. The story is reflective of modern family life in chaotic cities around the world, where consumerism has taken preference over sustainability. Also it provides a commentary on the difficult predicament that poverty brings, as with the scene where Dao's mother has to go to work instead of staying home to care for her child.

There are some Thai musical elements in the opera, especially in act two, when the parade of animals enters the stage. A Thai melody, immediately recognisable to the audience, is utilised when the Schomburgk's deer melody is

²¹⁶ Author's interview with Krisada Reyes (8 August 2017).

²¹⁷ Krisada and Napisi, *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* [unpublished vocal score].

played by the altered 5-note scale of the four-hand marimba, imitating another Thai musical instrument: the *Ranad ek* (see Figure 4.56). This is accompanied by Thai finger bells. The rhythmic pattern echoes the famous traditional Thai song: *Assawaleela* (see Figure 4.57&4.58). The traditional Thai melodies are representing the horse character in Thailand, which the local people know through this song. Many children were enthusiastic to see a horse appear on the stage, looking around excitedly, even though it was actually a deer.



Figure 4.56: *Ranad ek*, a traditional Thai music instrument.²¹⁸

- - - -	- - - ญ	- - ญ ญ	- - ญ ญ	- - ล ๑ ^๐	- - ล ญ	- - ม ญ	- - ล ๑
- - - -	- - ๑ ๑	- - ๑ ๖	- ๑ ญ ๑	- - ๑ ๖	- ๑ ญ ม	- - ญ ๖	- - ม ๑

Figure 4.57: The famous traditional Thai song *Assawaleela*.



Figure 4.58: Transcription of the song *Assawaleela* from Thai notation to Western notation.

²¹⁸ Anonymous, 'ประวัติระนาดเอก โดยย่อ [Brief History of Xylophone]', *blogspot*, entry post 5.10.15, <http://thaimusicinstrument.blogspot.com/2015/10/21-39.html> (accessed 6.12.20).

4.2.8. *The Lunch Box*

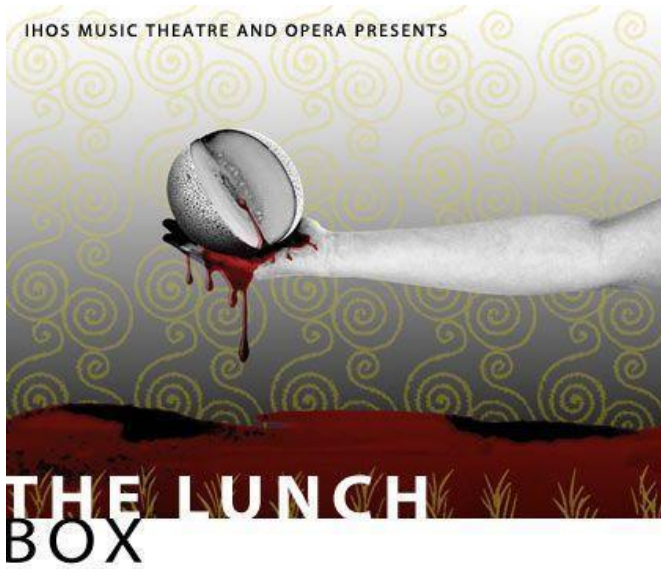


Figure 4.59: Poster of *The Lunch Box* (2009).²¹⁹

The Lunch Box is a one-act opera in five scenes and lasts about one hour. The world premiere was on 26 March 2009 in Tasmania as a part of the Ten Days on the Island Festival, a biennial event for creative music. As a part of this event, *The Lunch Box* was performed four times during 26, 27 and 28 March 2009. *The Lunch Box* is a chamber opera, performed by a chamber orchestra and two singers. It was composed by Thanapoom Sirichang to a libretto by Bringkop Vora-urai. The stage director was Constantine Koukias, a composer based in Tasmania and also Sirichang's former teacher. The sound designer was Greg Gurr from Tasmania and the lighting was designed by Sydney Bouhaniche from France. The stage director is Joey Ruigrok van der Werven, who created the props and built the stage. The orchestra was conducted by Michael Lampad. The production was commissioned by IHOS Music Theatre and Opera in Australia (see Figure 4.59).²²⁰

²¹⁹ Mark Cutler, 'The Lunch Box, Australian Stage Online', *australianstage*, entry post 29.03.09, https://www.australianstage.com.au/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2383&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=313 (accessed 6.12.20).

²²⁰ Anica Boulanger-Mashberg, 'Delicacies in a Lunch Box', *Tasmaniantimes*, <https://tasmaniantimes.com/2009/03/10-days-a-cautionary-tale/> (accessed 6.12.20).

The Lunch Box took almost three years to create and needed a month of rehearsals before the premiere at the Ten Days on the Island Festival event.²²¹ In his interview, Sirichang mentioned that he had found it difficult to choose a story to adapt into opera because there are so many legends and some require many roles in the story. He wanted to showcase his Thai heritage; however, he needed a short story that could be told with minimal performers, therefore the production would not require much finance. *The Lunch Box* was perfectly suited because the story is short and has only two big roles. It is about a mother and her son, and according to Sirichang, the universality of that relationship meant that every nationality would understand the story.²²² As Sirichang stated during his interview:

In Thailand, everyone knows this Buddhist tale of a mother's devotion to her only son. They hear it from their parents, at traditional ceremonies even from the monks in the temples. I thought, if *The Lunch Box* can bridge traditional and modern life in Thailand today, it's the perfect subject for an opera that can also cross cultural boundaries.²²³

The original story of this opera is a famous tale that every child in Thailand would have heard many times from their family, school or in temples. Sirichang wanted to turn this story into opera form as he believed that it could link with modern lifestyles. Koukias, his former teacher, also encouraged him to choose a story from his roots in order to establish his own style.

The mother's role was sung by Monique Klongtruadroke, a Thai-Italian soprano; the son was played by Saran Suebsantiwongse, a Thai baritone who was educated abroad. Koukias and Sirichang had contacted Somtow Sucharitkul about Thai singers who would be suitable for the roles. Sucharitkul was the one who introduced Suebsantiwongse to them.²²⁴ Suebsantiwongse has previously worked with Klongtruadroke so he contacted her to sing in the opera together.²²⁵ The musicians who were involved with this opera revealed in their interviews that they thought *The Lunch Box* was the first opera in Thai.²²⁶ However, this was not true. As

²²¹ Author's interview with Thanapoom Sirichang (17 May 2019).

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Author's interview with Saran Suebsantiwongse (17 March 2019).

²²⁶ Author's interview with Saran Suebsantiwongse and Monique Klongtruadroke (17 March and 17 April 2019).

has been revealed in this research, *Ngau Pa* is the first opera in Thai, though partially performed, and *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* is the first opera in Thai performed as a full production.

There were many stage effects and props for the four performances in 2009. The stage was set in a rice field in Thailand (see Figure 4.61), created by Joey Ruigrok van der Werven. On the left side of the stage was a bamboo house with foldable stairs that could slide in and off stage (see Figure 4.62). On the right side of the stage were the six members of the orchestra: flute, piccolo, clarinet, cello, violin, keyboard and percussion (see Figure 4.63).²²⁷ The musicians not only played their instruments but also acted as a part of the scene.²²⁸ At the back of the stage was the kabuki curtain drop system, where the subtitles in English were projected. In scene five of the opera, van der Werven designed the climax of the opera to have rice drop down to imitate raindrops. He also added a red light in the scene to make the rice look like raining blood (see Figure 4.65). To achieve this effect, the stage director built a rice dropping machine and installed it above the stage (see Figure 4.64). For the opera's finale, the stage director included a statue of Buddha hanging from the ceiling to represent a temple (see Figure 4.66).²²⁹ The stage effects and props in this opera helped the audience to enjoy the show and invest their emotions in the story.

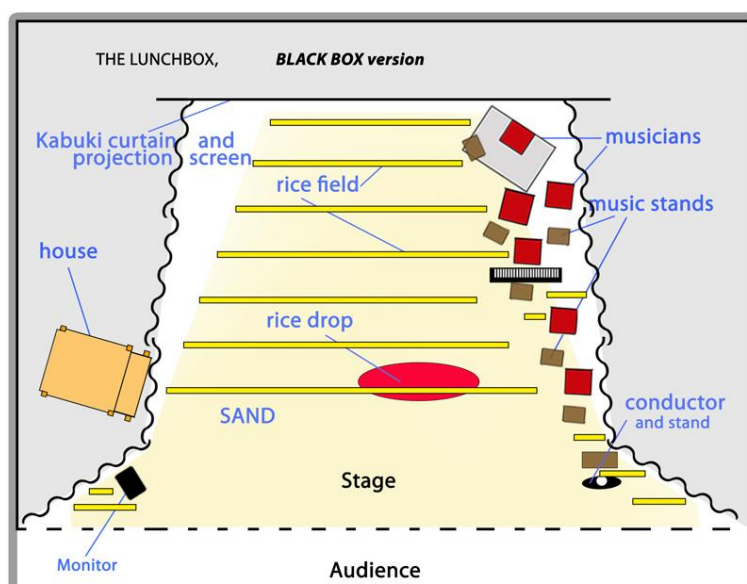


Figure 4.60: The plan view of the stage, a Black Box version.²³⁰

²²⁷ Cutler, 'The Lunch Box'. (For URL link, see footnote 219).

²²⁸ Author's interview with Monique Klongtrudroke (17 April 19).

²²⁹ Constantine Koukias, *The Lunch Box* [unpublished documents] (2009).

²³⁰ Cutler, 'The Lunch Box'. (For URL link, see footnote 219).



Figure 4.61: *The rice field on stage.*²³¹



Figure 4.62: *A house: normal and folded.*²³²

²³¹ Cutler, 'The Lunch Box'. (For URL link, see footnote 219).

²³² Ibid.



Figure 4.63: Orchestra amongst the rice field.²³³



Figure 4.64: Rice dropping machines.²³⁴



Figure 4.65: Rice falling on top of the mother.²³⁵

²³³ Cutler, 'The Lunch Box'. (For URL link, see footnote 219).

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.



Figure 4.66: The temple revealed with its five sheets hanging from the ceiling.²³⁶

The story of *The Lunch Box* is commonly told by Buddhist monks. It is called ก๋องข้าวน้อยฆ่าแม่ [The small rice box that killed mother].²³⁷ There is a pagoda called พระธาตุ ก๋องข้าวน้อย, Phratad Kongkhaonoi [The small rice box Pagoda], located in the Baan Dadthong village in Yasothon province, North-Eastern Thailand (see Figure 4.68).²³⁸



Figure 4.67: ก๋องข้าว [Lunch box].²³⁹

²³⁶ Cutler, 'The Lunch Box'. (For URL link, see footnote 219).

²³⁷ Anong Buachan, 'การวิเคราะห์องค์ประกอบของนิทาน [Analysis of Folk Tale Elements]', *wordpress*, entry post 14.08.12, <https://kruanongdotnet.wordpress.com/2012/08/14/1377/> (accessed 6.12.20).

²³⁸ Thawat Puntotok, *สารานุกรมวัฒนธรรมไทย [Thai Culture Encyclopaedia]* (Bangkok, 1999), p. 110.

²³⁹ Anonymous, 'กระต๊อบข้าว/ก๋องข้าว ชนิด ส่วนประกอบ และวิธีทำกระต๊อบข้าว [Rice Box / Kratib Rice Ingredients and Method of Making Kratib Rice]', *Siamroommate*, entry post 14.03.20, <https://siamroommate.com/%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B0%E0%B8%95%E0%B8%B4%E0%B8%9A%E0%B8%82%E0%B9%89%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%A7/> (accessed 6.12.20).



Figure 4.68: The Phratad Kongkhaonoi [A small rice box Pagoda].²⁴⁰

The Lunch Box contains five scenes. Scene one opens with the son, Thong, who is working in the rice field. Thong is an unhappy farmer, but he is very proud of his rice field, where he works to provide food for the people of the world. He thanks the earth and the sun for giving energy to the farmers so they can carry on their daily life. He is in the rice field with his friends. They have lunch together. They are showing each other what food they have in their lunch box (see Figure 4.67). One of his friends has grilled duck with chilli dip, cherry tomatoes, zucchini, bok choy and bamboo shoots. Another friend has snapper and fresh salad with sticky rice and salty chicken. It is Thong's turn to show his food. There is a Thai omelette with minced pork in the lunch box. He is disappointed with his mother because she has always cooked this dish for him since he was a boy. His mother is the only member of his family. However, he feels contempt against her and blames her for all his suffering. He behaves childishly and complains about his meal to his friends.

²⁴⁰ Anonymous, 'พระธาตุกองข้าวน้อย จังหวัดยโสธร เทียบตามรอยตำนานกองข้าวน้อยฆ่าแม่ [Phra Tard Kong Khao Noi, Yasothon Province, Travel to the Legend of Kong Khao Noi, Killing Mother]', *Thailandtopvote*, entry post 3,04,17, <https://www.thailandtopvote.com/%E0%B8%97%E0%B8%B5%E0%B9%88%E0%B9%80%E0%B8%97%E0%B8%B5%E0%B9%88%E0%B8%A2%E0%B8%A7/%E0%B8%97%E0%B8%B5%E0%B9%88%E0%B9%80%E0%B8%97%E0%B8%B5%E0%B9%88%E0%B8%A2%E0%B8%A7-77-%E0%B8%88%E0%B8%B1%E0%B8%87%E0%B8%AB%E0%B8%A7%E0%B8%B1%E0%B8%94/48044/> (accessed 6.12.20).

Scene two starts with the mother alone at home. She is a widow devoted to her son. She is good-natured and habitually spoils her son. She cleans the house, prepares a hot bath and cooks for her only son. All of this is to show her son how much she loves him. She understands that her son works very hard in the field and that he must miss his father deeply. For that reason, she feels she must double her efforts to care and cook for her only son.

Scene three begins when Thong returns home from the field. He bursts through the door in a bad mood before even laying eyes on his mother. He checks the house to see if his mother has cleaned up. His mother seems to not notice that her son is in a bad mood. After the embarrassing lunch, Thong shows his disappointment, comparing his mother's food to his friends' food. After a short discussion, they agree that she will deliver his lunch to him at the rice field, giving her more time to cook and the food will be fresh to eat. However, the son is still grumpy and leaves to take the bath that his mother has drawn for him.

Scene four takes place the next morning. The mother is hurrying to buy food at the market and to cook for her son. She is still sad, but with great effort, she manages to cheer herself up by deciding to make the tastiest lunch ever. This lunch will be her greatest gift to her son and he will show a son's true love to her in return. She hurries back home to cook the meal she has planned.

In the final scene, the mother arrives to the field late. The son is waiting hungrily and is upset. When she arrives and offers him his lunch box, he becomes even angrier than before. He tells his mother to give the food to a dog and that he no longer wants her food. His mother tries to persuade him to have the lunch she prepared. Thong's anger grows and he loses self-control. Without thinking, he hits his mother with a wooden stick. He then sits down to eat the food in the lunch box without looking back to his mother. After he has eaten a little of the lunch, he isn't so hungry anymore and starts to think straight again. He realises that he was very hungry and did not think before hitting his mother. He runs back to his mother but finds her dead.

The Lunch Box is another opera in Thai that faced the challenge of the Thai tonal language. Monique Klongtruadroke and Saran Suebsantiwongse, the main singers, mentioned that they decided to focus more on Western singing techniques

than on the meaning of the words as the show was performed in Australia and the audience was not Thai. Klongtruadroke also added that the composer is brave to compose an opera in Thai and it was a challenging process, needing a lot of time to work on it. However, his composition was a success.²⁴¹

Sirichang stated in his interview that to compose opera in Thai is not simple and writing melodies for singers was the hardest part of this project. Sirichang also added that he was fortunate that he was close friends with the conductor, Michael Lampad, who is also a baritone singer. When he wrote the music for the opera, he regularly asked the conductor to sing it himself to see if it was good. Therefore, the conductor was already familiar with the music and that is why he had no problem with singers sliding their voice or adding some notes even though he cannot speak Thai.²⁴²

The audience were enjoying the different cultures combined in the opera; Western music and Thai elements such as the story and props. It was a successful performance.²⁴³ However, the opera was performed only in Australia and has never been performed in Thailand. The hall was only half-full for the first night of the premiere.²⁴⁴ During the performance there were subtitles in English to help the audience understand the story.²⁴⁵

Monique Klongtruadroke stated in an online interview that the audience appreciated the performance as well as the plot. There were many reviewers from Tasmanian newspapers and magazines that attended the show, and their feedback was positive. They loved the musical elements and the tragic story.²⁴⁶ The audience also enjoyed how the members of the small orchestra were acting with the singers on the stage, producing a warm atmosphere for the audience.²⁴⁷ For example, the musicians act as the son's friends in the rice field, and they were sitting and showing

²⁴¹ Author's interview with Monique Klongtruadroke and Saran Suebsantiwongse (17 April and 17 March 2019).

²⁴² Author's interview with Thanapoom Sirichang (17 May 2019).

²⁴³ Kylie Eastley, '10 Days: A Cautionary Tale ...', *tasmaniantimes*, entry post 26-18.03.09, <https://tasmaniantimes.com/2009/03/10-days-a-cautionary-tale/> (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁴⁴ Cutler, 'The Lunch Box'.

²⁴⁵ Tim Baines, 'The Lunch Box Scene III' *YouTube*, entry posted 30.04.09, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phHYy_7U-ic (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁴⁶ Author's interview with Monique Klongtruadroke (17 April 2019).

²⁴⁷ Stephenie Cahalan, 'Ten Days On the Island: *The Lunch Box*', *The Mercury online and artshub*, entry post 26-28.03.09, <https://performing.artshub.com.au/news-article/reviews/performing-arts/stephenie-cahalan/ten-days-on-the-island-the-lunch-box-177579> (accessed 6.12.20).

each other their lunch boxes. Reviewers mentioned that both singers have strong voices and sang marvellously while their acting skills were also of a high standard. However, the *Tasmanian Times Magazine* noted that Monique Klongtruadroke looked too young to be the mother.²⁴⁸

Klongtruadroke was impressed with the bamboo house²⁴⁹ and another reviewer, Anica Boulanger-Mashberg liked the minimalistic stage and thought that the stage director was clever to build a folding bamboo house.²⁵⁰ On the one hand, reviewer Kylie Eastley said that the folding house was wheeled in and out without distraction.²⁵¹ An alternative view was offered by reviewer, Stephenie Cahalan, who found the set changes a little distracting.²⁵²

There were some scenes in the opera which did not appear in the original story, for example, (1) the scene where the son compares his food with his friends making him feel disappointed with his mother, (2) the scene where she is late bringing her son the lunch box because she went to the market, (3) the scene where the red rain is falling after the son discovers his mother's death. These scenes were carefully planned so that the audience could better understand the characters' motives and the plot. However, the original story in books, cartoons and the tale that local people have been told does not include these scenes. It is clever that the composer included these scenes to add comedy, context and emotion. The opera ends with the son discovering his dead mother but in the original story, the son goes on to become a respected monk who builds a pagoda to his mother.

There are only two traditional Thai musical instruments that contribute a Thai flavour to the opera, namely the Thai gong and the water gong.

²⁴⁸ Anonymous, 'The Lunch Box', *Tasmanian Times*, entry post 27.03.09.

²⁴⁹ Author's interview with Monique Klongtruadroke (17 April 19).

²⁵⁰ Boulanger-Mashberg, 'Delicacies in a Lunch Box'.

²⁵¹ Eastley, '10 Days: A Cautionary Tale...'

²⁵² Cahalan, 'Ten Days On the Island: The Lunch Box'. (For URL link, see footnote 247).

4.2.9. Conclusions

If we don't count Sucharitkul's opera cycle in these fifteen performed Thai operas, there are eight individual operas. Five of these are in English and the remaining three are in Thai. Four out of the five performed Thai operas in English libretto focused their plot on Thai myths, legends, and heroes: *Madana*, *Mae Naak*, *Ayodhya* and *Suriyothai*. These operas seemed to enjoy more success and a better response from the audience than *A Boy and a Tiger*, which was based upon a foreign story, unfamiliar to the Thai audiences.

All of these five Thai operas being produced in English could be because of the composers' experiences growing up and living outside of Thailand. Sucharitkul's Thai was not strong enough to write an opera in Thai. For example, his mother, Thaitow Sucharitkul, had to translate the *Mae Naak* opera subtitles for him and in his interview his Thai was not fluent and he always added some English words to every sentence. Gaston is also an American musician who moved to Thailand so his Thai writing was not perfect. However, *A Boy and a Tiger* was previously composed in Thai but it may not have been the best Thai libretto, which could be why he had to change it to English in the complete version of the opera. Additionally, the sponsor also requested Gaston translate the opera from Thai to English because the audience were mostly non-Thai speakers.

While Sucharitkul's operas contained *Lae* melody patterns and focused on the emotions of the main characters in the music, Gaston's opera was focused on four Thai Pi-Pat ensembles and the visual presentation of many animals rather than the melodies. Their differing styles of composition perhaps suited different audience demographics, such as Sucharitkul's operas are suitable across all ages, whereas Gaston's opera may appeal more to a younger audience due to the presentation.

However, *A Boy and a Tiger* is a big step for Thai opera even though the story did not originate from Thai culture and the composer is also not from Thailand. The music contains many traditional Thai tunes and is performed by Pi-Pat ensembles, which is the first time that this has ever occurred in opera. All of these Thai operas would be good examples for young Thai composers in the future. Hopefully the

mixture of traditional Thai singing in the Western opera style of Sucharitkul and Gaston will become a new trend for the future.

Sucharitkul's operas also seem to improve with each one as if he is learning from each production. However, it is difficult to compare with Gaston as he does not have the same extensive catalogue of Thai operas as Sucharitkul, therefore he has not had the same opportunity to improve over time. Sucharitkul also has an educational background in opera from studying in Cambridge University. In contrast, Gaston's profession is piano performance in classical and jazz and later in traditional Thai music. Gaston has no academic experience in opera. Therefore, his opera was not received well as the plot is abstract and difficult to understand. This could be because Gaston lacked knowledge of how drama is communicated in opera; for instance, there was little emotion expressed in his opera. This could be evidence supporting the argument that having an educational background in opera is an advantage when it comes to composing a successful opera: consisting of a large audience, good reception and positive reviews.

Overall, Thai opera is still in its infancy in comparison to Western opera. Thai operas have only been performed since 2001, so there is still much room for learning and improvement. As an example, Sucharitkul should undertake adequate research before staging an opera in order to avoid provoking sensitive issues as he did in *Ayodhya* with the death of the giant scene.

Ngau Pa, *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* and *The Lunch Box* are the only three operas in Thai that have been performed to date. However, *Ngau Pa* differs in that it has only partially been performed. Two of these operas use famous stories that most Thai people are familiar with, but *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* was an original story by the composer. *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* was also the only opera in Thai that was performed in Thailand, while the others were performed abroad for international audiences. The plot of *Ngau Pa* was the only opera in Thai that is about love between men and women, not mother and child as in the other two operas (see Table 4.15).

Opera	<i>Ngau Pa</i>	<i>The Story of the Long-Gone Animals</i>	<i>The Lunch Box</i>
Performance Year	2000	2008	2009
Act	2	2	1
Full Production		X	X
Performed in Thailand		X	
Performed by Thai Singers		X	X
Thai Conductor			
Thai Composers	X		X
Famous Thai Story	X		X
Story About Parents and Children		X	X
Issue With Thai Tonal Language	X	X	X

Table 4.15: Comparison between the three operas in Thai.

All three operas in Thai had issues with the tonal nature of Thai. However, the way these three productions addressed the issue was different. *Ngau Pa* had never been performed in Thailand and also never performed as a full production. *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* had to change singers and was postponed for four months for the new singers to learn the music. For *The Lunch Box*, on the other hand, the composer and the librettist took almost three years to finish the production and the singers took a whole month to learn the music even though the opera is comprised of only one act. All three operas were conducted by Westerners who had no knowledge of Thai. The *Ngau Pa* and *The Lunch Box* audiences were not Thai natives so singers were focusing on a Western singing style rather than the meaning of words. From interviews with five Thai speakers who listened to recordings of the operas, they could understand *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* much more than *The Lunch Box*.²⁵³

It is interesting that many people who were involved in each opera production had never heard about any other operas in Thai. Some thought that *The Lunch Box*

²⁵³ Author's interview with Thai speakers (10-29 August 2019).

or *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* was the first Thai-language opera. There are many possible explanations such as Thai opera is still new for Thai society and there is an assumption that it is only for upper class people. Also, there was not much in terms of advertisements for these operas as there was little financial support for promotion.

This research took more than four years to uncover the information about all of these Thai operas. Often it involved tracking down the composers themselves after learning via word-of-mouth about their involvement. There are few books or records regarding these operas, so the hope is this thesis will act as a documentation of these Thai operas. There are not a lot of opera practitioners in Thailand and those who do exist are not aware of operas that have Thai elements. Again, this could be because of a lack of communication and promotion. Recently, only Sontow Sucharitkul is still involved in producing new Thai operas. Other composers have ceased their involvement to focus on other interests or different professions. Unfortunately, no new composers have tried to produce a new Thai opera. This could be because it is difficult to receive sponsorship. This may have a lasting effect on future productions of opera in any capacity.

Thai education also needs to be updated with a more recent history of music, especially Thai opera, in order to let the younger generation increase their knowledge. Therefore, they could learn from the mistakes of past productions and avoid repeating those problems in their own productions. It is a shame that not many operas in Thai have had a chance to be performed in Thailand. Any new Thai operas would have a greater chance of success because there are already a few Thai operas that have set an example to be followed. Reproductions of these existing Thai operas is an option and the possibility of their success would be increased by avoiding the mistakes of the originals. It would be a great outcome if the Thai government recognise the importance of Thai opera and support future performances around Thailand, and even internationally, so these famous legends and tales could be shared and enjoyed around the world. Recently, there are also many high quality Thai opera singers who are able to perform these operas at an international level.

4.3 Opera Cycle

This section discusses the first Thai opera cycle, composed by Sontow Sucharitkul to an English libretto. The cycle is the first Thai opera to use Buddha as its main material. The story is based on the 'Ten Lives of the Buddha' from the epic cycle of the *Das Jati Jatakas*, which has been retold through Buddhism for over two thousand years.²⁵⁴ There are ten stories in this cycle, with each one being used as the basis for an opera within the cycle; however, Sucharitkul has to date only completed seven of the ten (see Table 4.16).

The reason that this opera cycle is considered part of the Thai operas in this thesis is because Buddha plays a major role in Thailand. The main religion in Thailand is Buddhism and all students are taught these stories in school. In the temples, these stories of the Buddha are recited and scenes are painted on the walls to share these tales with the local people. These stories are culturally significant in Thailand. This opera cycle has the potential to become an educational national treasure of Thailand due to the nature of its subject matter. The cycle also provides the opportunity to share Thailand's culture to an international audience through opera. Some operas in the cycle also contain Thai musical instruments.

Sucharitkul stated in interviews that his ambition is to compose the largest opera series about the Ten Lives of the Buddha.²⁵⁵ If he succeeds and completes the whole ten operas then this would be one of the largest opera cycles in the world. Sucharitkul has discussed how he came up with the idea of composing this opera cycle:

When this happened, I thought, 'Nah, this is ridiculous. We already have [Wagner's] *Ring*, but it was an idea which just wouldn't let go. The seeds of the whole cycle are all planted. I suppose I am now essentially watering them.'²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ Anonymous, 'Das Jati', <http://www.dasjati.com/> (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁵⁵ Author's interview with Sontow Sucharitkul (7 August 2017).

²⁵⁶ Denis D. Gray, 'Meet the Thai "Renaissance man" on the verge of making musical history', *nikkeiasianreview*, entry posted 10.11.16, <https://asia.nikkei.com/NAR/Articles/Meet-the-Thai-Renaissance-man-on-the-verge-of-making-musical-history> (accessed 6.12.20).

The idea for the first opera of the cycle about Buddha came from Opera Vista in Houston. They commissioned Sucharitkul to compose *The Silent Prince*, which is based on the first of the ten *Das Jati* tales. This was Sucharitkul's first opera outside of Thailand. Four years later, he continued to adapt more stories from the Ten Lives of the Buddha into opera form. These operas in the cycle were composed on a massive scale, containing hundreds of characters. For example, *Nemiraj*, one of the opera cycle, includes an ensemble with separate vocal lines for 33 soloists, each representing an individual goddess, which he described as a 'harmonic tsunami' and for which he used only three chords stretched out over eight minutes.²⁵⁷ As noted, he conceived the opera cycle as one of the largest musical works in history, surpassing Wagner's *Ring*, which was a cycle of four works performed over four days. Sucharitkul stated, 'Since any one of the ten tales has a story as complex as the entire *Ring Cycle*, we're talking about the musical equivalent of those massive fantasy multi-volume works like *Game of Thrones* or *Lord of the Rings*'.²⁵⁸ In his interview, Sucharitkul candidly shared that he wishes to finish and watch the opera cycle before he passes away.²⁵⁹ This opera cycle was created with the intention of increasing Thailand's reputation on the cultural world stage, with festival performances of the cycle in its entirety to become a popular tourist attraction, similar to Germany's *Ring Cycle* at the Bayreuth Festival where audiences travel from around the world to watch the opera cycle.²⁶⁰

Sucharitkul announced in 2019 that the biggest production of the opera cycle, *Prince Vessantara*, would premiere in 2020 for Opera Siam's 20th anniversary.²⁶¹ However, due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, the performance did not happen.

²⁵⁷ Denis D. Gray, 'Meet the Thai "Renaissance man" on the verge of making musical history', *nikkeiasianreview*, entry posted 10.11.16, <https://asia.nikkei.com/NAR/Articles/Meet-the-Thai-Renaissance-man-on-the-verge-of-making-musical-history> (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁵⁸ Kaona Pongpipat, 'The biggest opera in history', *Bangkok Post*, entry post 21.5.15, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/lifestyle/music/568539/the-biggest-opera-in-history> (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁵⁹ Author's interview with Somtow Sucharitkul (7 August 2017).

²⁶⁰ Anonymous, 'Das Jati'. (For URL link, see footnote 254).

²⁶¹ Stan Gayuski, 'Somtow's daring DasJati continues magnificent run', *Bangkok post*, entry post 20.06.19, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/life/arts-and-entertainment/1698452/somtows-daring-dasjati-continues-magnificent-run> (accessed 6.12.20).

This section offers an overview of the in-progress cycle. However, Sucharitkul has not yet published the music for any of these operas, and the scores were not available for this research project. Thus, the music is not discussed here in detail.

Type of Opera	Name of the Tale	Name of the Buddha in Each Life	Premiere Year
Opera	<i>The Silent Prince</i>	Temiya	2010
Ballet-opera	<i>The Lost Prince</i>	Mahajanaka	2014
Ballet-opera	<i>The Dragon Lord</i>	Bhuridat	2015
Ballet-opera	<i>The Faithful Son</i>	Sama, Suwannasam	2015
Opera	<i>The Chariot of Heaven</i>	Nemiraj	2017
Opera	<i>The Sacrifice</i>	Chandakumar	2019
Opera	<i>Architect of Dreams</i>	Mahosot	2019

Table 4.16: List of operas in the opera cycle by Sontow Sucharitkul ordered chronologically.

4.3.1. *The Silent Prince (Temiya)*

The Silent Prince was the first production of the opera cycle. It comprises five scenes and tells the story of Temiya Jataka, an incarnation of the Buddha. Opera Vista in Houston commissioned Sucharitkul to compose an aesthetic fusion of Eastern and Western opera. The premiere was on 15 October 2010 at the Hobby Centre for the Performing Arts (see Figure 4.69).²⁶² Three years later, The Bangkok Opera Foundation and Opera Siam International, in cooperation with The Department of Cultural Promotion's Ministry of Culture, sponsored Sucharitkul to produce the opera in Thailand. On 5 December 2013, the performance went ahead at the Thailand Cultural Centre in honour of King Rama IX and conducted by Trisdeena Patalung (see Figure 4.70).²⁶³ It was performed again on 13 and 17 August 2016 in Palac Akropolis, Prague and Theater Orli, Brno (see Figure 4.71).²⁶⁴ This opera contains a traditional Indian musical instrument called a tambura.²⁶⁵



Figure 4.69: Performance of *The Silent Prince* in Houston, 2010.²⁶⁶

²⁶² Anonymous, 'Opera Vista's The Silent Prince', <https://www.downtownhouston.org/calendar/opera-vistas-silent-prince/2587/> (accessed 6.1.20).

²⁶³ Anonymous, 'Reviews For the Silent Prince', *Das Jati*, <http://www.dasjati.com/the-silent-prince> (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁶⁴ Author's interview with Zeon Daoratanahong (15 August 2017).

²⁶⁵ Opera Siam, 'Somtow's The Silent Prince, Czech Premiere', *YouTube*, entry post 13.09.17, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aKfnc13-HM> (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁶⁶ Ibid.



Figure 4.70: Performance of *The Silent Prince* in Bangkok, 2013.²⁶⁷



Figure 4.71: Performance of *The Silent Prince* in Prague, 2016.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Somtow Sucharitkul, *Opera Siam*, <https://www.operasiam.com/> (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

Roles	Voice	Singer
Temiya	Counter-Tenor	Jak Cholvijarn
King of Banares	Baritone	Kyu Won Han
Temiya's Mother, Queen Chandra Devi	Mezzo-Soprano	Grace Echaui
Queen of Heaven, Suja	Coloratura Soprano	Nadlada Thamtanakorm
Goddess of Illusion		
Courtesan		
King of Heaven,	Bass	John Ames
God of Underworld		
Procurer		
Amba	Soprano	Zion Daoratanahong
Apsara		
Sunanda	Tenor	Duo Pan

Table 4.17: Voice type in each role in The Silent Prince and singers in Bangkok's performance in 2013.²⁶⁹

The prologue begins with the drone of the tambura opening the opera while a woman cries above the stage. The Goddess Suja hears the woman crying from heaven; therefore, she asks the King of Heaven to send a Deva to be reborn on Earth as the Prince of Kashi. The King of Heaven tells the unborn Bodhisattva, a perfect boy sitting in a lotus, that many souls are suffering in the world and waiting to be released from their karma and that even gods face the same issue. He requires that the Bodhisattva breaks his meditation and agrees to be reborn.

The first scene is set in the Royal Palace of Benares. Queen Chandra gives birth to a boy from heaven, who sits on a lotus. The queen tells her handmaidens to

²⁶⁹ Somtow Sucharitkul, *The Silent Prince, Temiya* [unpublished programme note] (Bangkok, 2013).

bathe the boy with water from the Ganges, dress him in nice clothes and choose a wet-nurse to feed him. The King of Kashi thanks the god for the birth of the child and as he was born during the monsoon, he is given the name Temiya.

Many years later at the palace, it is the day of judgement (scene two). A criminal is sentenced to death. The king tells Temiya that he should order the execution. Suddenly, before the boy can give the order, he has a vision of hell. He is reminded by the God of the Underworld that he was once a cruel king in Benares in a past life and was sentenced to suffer for millions of years. Maya, the God of Illusion, convinces him to obey his father instead of becoming Buddha. The vision ends. The boy is unable to kill the criminal and becomes silent. The king executes the criminal instead. The boy's hesitation makes all those in attendance worry.

The third scene begins after several years have passed: the boy has grown up and still does not speak. The wet-nurse and the queen discuss all the cures they have tried to make him speak. Sunanda, an adviser to the king, recommends that they tempt his appetite to make him talk. The royal couple demands a large amount of delicious food for Temiya. However, he still does not speak, which makes everyone frustrated.

In scene four, the king, in desperation, crowns Temiya for a day and sends him on an elephant through the city for people to applaud. However, Temiya does not react. The king is furious so he orders Sunanda to take Temiya to the forest, cut his head off and then bury him.

The final scene reveals Sunanda taking the prince to the forest, where he digs a grave for Temiya. He is disturbed by a heavenly light and voice; he looks up and sees that Temiya has become the Bodhisattva Deva. Temiya reveals to Sunanda why he was mute. Temiya begs Sunanda not to kill him and make his karma worse as he is on a mission to understand human suffering. He tells Sunanda to go back to the city and tell the truth. Suddenly, the king and queen arrive and see the Bodhisattva. The king begs for forgiveness. The king and queen decide to leave the city and live in the forest as followers of Temiya. All rejoice in heaven.²⁷⁰

²⁷⁰ Sucharitkul, *The Silent Prince, Temiya* [unpublished programme note].

As noted, the opera was produced three times. The premiere in Houston (2010) featured a real elephant on the stage. It was advertised as a Bollywood opera and choreographed by the Anjali Dance Centre.²⁷¹ *The Houston Chronicle's* reviewer stated that Sucharitkul's music was enchanting, meaningful and memorable. The performance was emotional, stimulating and full of mystery. Audiences noticed the use of the traditional Indian instruments in the orchestra, such as tamburas, celeste and harmonium, with the music opening up contemporary opera to a wider audience.²⁷²

For the second performance in Bangkok (2013), *The Nation* newspaper reported that "'*The Silent Prince*" is indeed modern-day Mozart: unfathomably profound and yet highly communicative'.²⁷³ His composition invites the audience to embrace a Buddhist message of hope. His opera communicates the struggle of good and evil despite being complex in its delivery. All of the main singers performed professionally with an abundance of emotion and honed technique. The acting was emotive and it was easy to understand the plot.²⁷⁴ At the end, when Temiya began to sing, the audience were amazed with his counter-tenor voice, as he had been sat meditating for the whole opera until the end where he finally sang.²⁷⁵

The third show was in the Czech Republic in 2016. Unfortunately, there is no existing review available for this performance. However, there is a video recording of the Prague performance with subtitles.²⁷⁶ The music of the opera is atmospheric and spiritual, with the orchestra and main singers' performance being compelling and filled with emotion. The stage and lighting were minimalist but powerful. The costumes were elegant and well prepared.²⁷⁷

²⁷¹ Anonymous, 'Opera Vista's The Silent Prince' (For URL link, see footnote 262).

²⁷² Anonymous, 'Reviews for the Silent Prince' (For URL link, see footnote 263).

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Opera Siam, 'The Silent Prince (Bangkok Premiere)', *YouTube*, entry post 7.12.12, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rpmvvhc36zg> (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁷⁵ Anonymous, 'Reviews for the Silent Prince' (For URL link, see footnote 263).

²⁷⁶ Opera Siam, 'Somtow's The Silent Prince'.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

4.3.2. *The Lost Prince (Mahajanaka)*

The Lost Prince is a ballet-opera with four scenes. The premiere performance was on 23 July 2014 at the Thailand Cultural Centre in honour of HRH The Crown Prince's birthday. Trisdee na Patalung was a conductor for the Siam Philharmonic Orchestra and Orpheus Choir of Bangkok. There is only one singer in this opera, an American soprano named Stacey Tappan, who sang as Mekhala. The rest were ballet dancers, for which Puwarate Wongatichat was the choreographer.²⁷⁸ This was a short performance, coming in less than an hour.²⁷⁹



Figure 4.72: *The prince lost in the sea scene in the Bangkok performance in 2014.*²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ Opera Siam 'Mahajanaka [performed by Opera Siam]', *Opera in video*, <https://www.operainvideo.com/mahajanaka-somtow-bangkok-2014-stacey-tappan/> (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁷⁹ Opera Siam, 'Mahajanaka World Premiere', *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BSvgOAVSMg> (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁸⁰ Opera Siam, 'Mahajanaka', <https://www.operasiam.com/new-gallery-37> (accessed 6.12.20).



Figure 4.73: Finale scene of *The Lost Prince* in Bangkok, 2014.²⁸¹

Scene one takes place in the city of Mithila as it is being destroyed by the onset of war. After the battle, Prince Mahajanaka promises his mother that he will return to save his kingdom. Scene two is set at sea during his return. The prince's ship is destroyed by a storm and he is washed into the sea. In scene three, after being stranded in the sea for seven days and nights, the prince is struggling not to drown. The Goddess Mekhala witnesses and respects his desire to live, therefore, she saves the prince. In the final scene, the prince wakes up ashore in the land of Suwannabhumi. He sees two mango trees. The first one has almost no fruit; the other has tempting poisonous fruit. He accepts that he will need to follow the first tree's generosity and gives up all the fruit for the wellbeing of his people. A powerful nation will grow from Prince Mahajanaka's mango seed.²⁸²

The stage and props in this production were communicative and eye-catching. A particular highlight were the dancers, who were professional and well-choreographed. As a result, the music and dancing flowed together seamlessly. The main singer, Stacey Tappan, sang outstandingly with her high pitch and showed her ability of coloratura. At the end, the chorus was delivered with collective power and

²⁸¹ Opera Siam, 'Mahajanaka'. (For URL link, see footnote 280).

²⁸² Dharma Documentaries, 'Somtow's Mahajanaka Opera-Ballet', *Dharma Documentaries*, entry post 1.12.14, <https://dharma-documentaries.net/somtows-mahajanaka-opera-ballet> (accessed 6.12.20).

strength which filled the hall and impressed audiences.²⁸³ The stage and lighting were well selected to fit with the story. It was not easy to bring a sea scene into opera on the stage and this production succeeded in making it a reality. The stage turns into a sea and moves like a wave. The dancers were dressed in a blue colour to mimic waves while in the ocean scene (see Figure 4.72). The chorus at the end is also outstanding with the strength of their voices filling the big hall in the Thailand Cultural Centre.²⁸⁴

Most of the music in this opera is in support of the ballet in the performance and less so for the singing. The music enters with a strong brass opening, to demonstrate the perilous situation of the war and maintains this mood for the whole of scene one. The music in scene two still utilises many brass musical instruments showing the adventure of the boat's journey in the sea. Scene three begins with a soft chorus singing in harmony as a way to communicate the sound of heavenly angels and continues with Mekhala singing in an extremely high pitch. The music in this scene is mostly *pianissimo*, so the singer's voice projects the sound to the audience. At the end of scene three, the singing part is full of many wide leaps between notes. The final scene is the longest, where most of the music contains three choruses and one main singer. One of these three choruses is made up entirely of children. These three choruses switch between each other and end up all singing together at the end (see Figure 4.73).²⁸⁵

²⁸³ Opera Siam, 'Mahajanaka World Premiere', *YouTube*. (For URL link, see footnote 279).

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

4.3.3. *The Dragon Lord (Bhuridat)*

The Dragon Lord is a two-act ballet-opera conducted once again by Trisdeena Patalung. It is based on the sixth life of Buddha. However, Sucharitkul decided to compose this opera as the third instalment of his opera cycle because he was inspired by the plot and had not planned to produce the whole ten stories at that time.²⁸⁶ The performances were on 22, 23 and 24 May 2015 at the Main Hall of the Thailand Cultural Centre. The production was presented by the Department of Cultural Promotion's Ministry of Culture, Opera Siam International and the Bangkok Opera Foundation.²⁸⁷

This production contains numerous performers with one hundred artists (see Figure 4.74), seventy musicians in the orchestra, a big stage setting, outstanding costumes (see Figure 4.75), and acrobatics similar to the famous *Cirque du Soleil* (see Figure 4.76). Sucharitkul said that this opera is suitable for the whole family as it is a cross between *Dragon Slayer* and *Harry Potter*.²⁸⁸



Figure 4.74: *The Dragon Lord (Bhuridat)*.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁶ Bangkok101, 'Bhuridat, The Dragon Lord', *Bangkok101*, entry post 19.05.15, <https://www.bangkok101.com/bhuridat-the-dragon-lord/> (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁸⁷ Somtow Sucharitkul, *The Dragon Lord, Bhuridat* [unpublished programme note], (Bangkok, 2015).

²⁸⁸ Bangkok101, 'Bhuridat, The Dragon Lord', *Bangkok101* (For URL link, see footnote 266).

²⁸⁹ Opera Siam, 'Bhuridat', <https://www.operasiam.com/bhuridat/> (accessed 6.12.20).



*Figure 4.75: Make up and costumes.*²⁹⁰



*Figure 4.76: Acrobatics in The Dragon Lord (Bhuridat).*²⁹¹

²⁹⁰ Opera Siam, 'Bhuridat' (For URL link, see footnote 289).

²⁹¹ Ibid.



Figure 4.77: A prop, imitating a naga, that can stretch across the stage from the performer.²⁹²

Roles	Voice type	Premier Singers
Bodhisattva / Bhuridatta	Counter-tenor	Jak Cholvijarn
Child Bodhisattva in Heaven	Boy Soprano	Rit Parnichkun
King of Heaven/ Kashi	Bass	Dag Schantz
Queen of Heaven/ Kashi	Soprano	Monique Klongtruadroke
Queen of the Dragons/ Samudaja	Soprano	Stacey Tappan
Alambayana	Baritone	Damian Whiteley
Apsara/ Amba	Soprano	Barbara Zion
Dragon Prince/ Sudassama	Baritone	Kyu Won Han
Brother of Bhuridatta	Tenor	Chaiporn Phuangmalee
Bother of Bhruridatta	Baritone	Yotsawan Meethongkum
1 st Concubine	Soprano	JC Manar Kaewtae

Table 4.18: Voice type in each role in *Bhuridat* and premiere singers' names.²⁹³

²⁹² Opera Siam, 'Bhuridat', *YouTube*, entry post 28.04.15, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_qkaQZeo-E (accessed 6.12.20).

²⁹³ Sucharitkul, *The Dragon Lord, Bhuridat* [unpublished programme note].

The prologue begins with a battle between Garuda and a naga up in the air. Up above Himavanta, the lords of the sea and air are flying high. The naga wraps himself around a tree, rips it out of the ground and uses it to destroy the home of a holy man. The Garuda eats the naga and flies down to Earth to make good with the holy man, offering him a magic fan that can control nagas.

The king and queen of heaven look down at the earth and notice there is trouble. A Brahmin without any morals has stolen the fan and intends to cause mayhem. Both the humans and the sea nagas appeal for the Buddha's enlightenment. The Bodhisattva must return to Earth again and enters the dreams of the naga queen, the human woman Samuddaja.

Act one starts in the naga kingdom, where Samuddaja has a dream that the Bodhisattva is in her womb. She hatches the egg and Bhuridatta is born. She takes him to the court of the dragons. The young child grows into a man-serpent who wants to discover how to end pain and suffering. The prince of the nagas takes him to a hidden place where he is able to meditate about the mysteries. The prince promises that his meditation will never be disturbed.

Between the naga and human worlds, Bhuridatta remains meditating while being watched by nagas, humans and angels. Eventually they leave him alone. A ruthless Brahmin named Ambalayana makes a deal with a greedy hunter, who offers to lead him to where the naga prince is hidden in return for a precious jewel. When Ambalayana sees the prince, he tosses the jewel to the hunter, but the jewel slips between his fingers and drops into a crack in the earth and returns to the naga kingdom. Ambalayana casts a spell to capture Bhuridatta which crushes his bones so he will fit in a basket. Bhuridatta is taken as his captive. In the village, Ambalayana plays a pipe and orders the snake prince to dance, which amazes the villagers. They give the wicked Brahmin money and presents. He decides to go to Benares, the centre of the world.

Back in the naga palace (act two), Samuddaja has a nightmare. She organises a search with Bhuridatta's wives. Three brothers volunteer to help, and each search a different world. The oldest, Sudassana chooses the world of men. His sister, Ajimukhi, transforms into a frog and hides in his hair. At the city square of Benares, The King of Benares watches the Brahmin's performance, where Bhuridatta is dancing. Sudassana arrives and Bhuridatta immediately recognises him and dances in his direction, which amazes the crowd. Ambalayana challenges

Sudassana to a magical duel, as he claims he is the mightiest wizard of all. Ajimukhi spits three drops of poison onto Sudassana's hand. Sudassana creates three holes on the ground and drops the poison in each hole which makes magical fire come out and transforms Alambayana into a monster. Alambayana is terrified, therefore he breaks the spell keeping Bhuridatta prisoner. Bhuridatta returns to the Bodhisattva's form and reveals that Samuddaha is his mother. He tells how he suffered while he was a prisoner. At the end, he returns to his family and the nagas. They celebrate his triumph.²⁹⁴

The extravagant costumes, detailed props and elegant make up in this opera make it one of the best stage productions out of the seven performed in this opera cycle. The opera starts with a prelude where ballet dancers dress up as eggs and dance. The lighting on the stage demonstrates the scene in each act very well. For instance, blue and green colours help the audience imagine the underwater scene of the nagas kingdom. All performers' make up and costumes, often as varying creatures, suit their roles creatively (see Figure 4.75).

In act one, trapeze artists are required to appear from the ceiling, dangling high above the stage on two occasions. During the first instance, two artists performed acrobatic stunts that filled the hall with suspense and invoked shocked screams from the audience. For the second instance, one artist appeared alone flying around stage in the air with ribbon, once again drawing an excited reaction from the audience. The singers were also able to exit the stage via a descending platform built into its structure, which imitated magical powers. There was clever use of props, especially where the naga performers' bodies could stretch across the stage (see Figure 4.77).

The dance choreography was well thought out and expressive. Stacey Tappan demonstrated her coloratura vocal ability to the maximum leaving the audience in awe. Her running notes, staccato and extremely high pitches were some of the best qualities of this opera. The bass singer, Damian Whiteley, also performed excellently as a bad guy, where his strong low voice and acting presence can project to the audience with great effect. The orchestra also contains many great musicians especially those within the brass section. There are also Thai and Indian musical

²⁹⁴ Sucharitkul, *The Dragon Lord, Bhuridat* [unpublished programme note].

instruments that appear in this opera to bring a Thai and Asian flavour to the performance, which creates an air of familiarity for the native audience.²⁹⁵

The music in this opera opens with a four-minute prelude which explains the beginning of the story over mysterious accompanying music made up of brass instruments. Act one begins with progressively increasing percussion, imitating a marching army supported by a repetitive chorus. The first soprano, who performed as a duet and trio for act one, sang with wide leaps, staccato and extremely high pitches. The boy soprano solo in act one contains recitative before and after his aria. In act one, scene two, the prelude starts with flutes in pianissimo and continues with a waltz, which happens a few times in the opera. The chorus in this act is divided into two groups: men and women singing in response to each other. Act two has no prelude but opens directly with a vocal. There is a traditional Indian musical instrument in this opera called a tambura and there are also Thai musical instruments, such as a *ranad*, *pi*²⁹⁶ and *ching*²⁹⁷ in the beginning of act two. The opera concludes with a chorus singing the word 'chanti', while some main performers sing staccato in repetition until the end.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ Opera Siam, 'Bhuridat' (For URL link, see footnote 289).

²⁹⁶ A Thai pipe.

²⁹⁷ A Thai cymbal.

²⁹⁸ Opera Siam, 'Bhuridat' (For URL link, see footnote 289).

4.3.4. *The Faithful Son (Sama, Suwannasam)*

The fourth opera in the cycle, *The Faithful Son*, premiered on 5 December 2015 as a ballet-opera to celebrate the birthday of King Bhumibol Adulyadej (King Rama IX) at the Rangsit Suryadhep Auditorium of Rangsit University, Thailand (see Figure 4.78). Two years later, the opera was again performed on 5, 6 and 7 August 2017 in honour of HM Queen Sirikit's birthday at the Thailand Cultural Centre's Main Hall. This production was conducted by Trisdee na Patalung.²⁹⁹



Figure 4.78: Poster of *The Faithful Son* in 2017.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ Bangkok Post, 'To honour the Queen, The Faithful Son returns', *Bangkok post*, entry post 2.08.17, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/life/arts-and-entertainment/1298423/to-honour-the-queen-the-faithful-son-returns> (accessed 6.12.20).

³⁰⁰ Anonymous, 'Suwana Sama The Faithful son' *Thaiticketmajor*, <https://www.thaiticketmajor.com/performance/suwana-sama-the-faithful-son-2017.html> (accessed 6.12.20).



Figure 4.79: Sama's dead body.³⁰¹



Figure 4.80: The performance of The Faithful Son in Bangkok, 2017. ³⁰²

³⁰¹ Anonymous, 'Suwana Sama, The Faithful son' (For URL link, see footnote 300).

³⁰² Opera Siam, 'The Faithful Son', <https://www.operasiam.com/new-gallery-41> (accessed 6.12.20).

Roles	Voice type	Singer (2017)
The Faithful Son, Bodhisattava	Counter-Tenor	Jak Cholvijarn
The Bodhisattava	Boy Soprano	Rit Parnichkum
Bahusodari	Soprano	Stacey Tappan
King of Heaven	Bass	Damian Whiteley
Piliyakkha		
King of Kashi		
Apsara	Soprano	Kaleigh Rae Gamache
Queen of Kashi (Head wife)		
Mother of Parika	Soprano	JC Manar Kaewtae
Queen of Kashi (No1. wife)		
Mother of Dukulaka	Soprano	Areeya Rotjanadit
Queen of Kashi (No.2. wife)		
Father of Dukulaka	Baritone	Yotsawan Meethongkum
Head Huntsman		
Father of Parika	Tenor	Chaiporn Phuangmalee
Grand Vizier of Kashi		

*Table 4.19: Voice type of each role in The Faithful Son and singer's name in the Bangkok performance 2017.*³⁰³

This is a two-act opera, where act one begins in the Kingdom of Benares. There are two hunters' villages, where they have an agreement that their first-born are betrothed to each other. However, there are two children promised to each other who are different, because they were born with golden skin. They refuse to kill

³⁰³ Somtow Sucharitkul, *The Faithful Son, Suwannasam* [unpublished programme note] (Bangkok, 2017).

because they have a destiny to stay pure and receive good karma. In a past life, they performed evil deeds so they have to replace this karma. However, they are married against their will. They decide to live their marriage as siblings and refrain from sexual intimacy.

The man is named Dukulaka and the woman is Parika. As they refuse to hunt, their parents allow them to live in the forest to meditate and remain pure. However, a miracle happens, Dukulaka touches his finger to Parika's naval and she becomes pregnant. Parika gives birth to the Bodhisattva and he is named Suvannasama, or Sama for short. When Sama reaches sixteen, as the god Sakka predicted, bad karma comes to his parents. While his parents shelter beneath a tree, they step on a snake. The snake spits his deadly venom at them and they become blind. Sama ties ropes around the forest for his parents to use as a guide. He collects water and food and bathes and comforts them. Deer are never afraid of him and often accompany him.

One night (act two), Sama goes to get water from a pond. The deer go with him and he uses them as a carriage. The King of Benares, Piliyakka, is hunting deer as a trophy. He sees Sama and believes him to be a divine creature with golden skin, so shoots a poison arrow at him. Sama collapses and wonders who tries to kill him and what they would gain from doing so.

King Piliyakka is surprised that Sama does not blame him and pretends he was aiming for the deer. Sama knows this is a lie, but instead mourns for his blind parents, who need his help to survive. The king promises to take care of Sama's parents. Sama falls into unconsciousness and the king believes him to be dead, so decides to go back on his word. A goddess, who is a former mother of Sama in a previous incarnation, tells the king to care for the parents and his bad karma will be forgiven. He tells the parents he killed Sama, and they believe this is because of their bad karma, which ends due to their suffering.

The parents cry over their son's body and he is brought back to life. The goddess reveals herself and declares the virtue of Sama. Sama recovers from his injury and his parents see his recovery with their own eyes. The king leaves in amazement, oblivious that he played an important part, for without his malicious deed, Sama's parents would not have been cured of their blindness.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴ Sucharitkul, *The Faithful Son, Suvannasam* [unpublished programme note].

The Indian ambassador, Bhagwant Singh Bishnoi, tweeted after watching the performance in 2017, 'I can't think any [sic] other contemporary work that brings out the civilisational connections so beautifully'.³⁰⁵ The *Opera Now* reviewer stated that the performance was entertaining and enjoyable: the opera was deeply moving and the ending was magical.³⁰⁶

Having attended the 2017 production in person, it was noticeable that the performance was impressive compared to *Mae Naak*. The staging, props and costumes were of a high standard (see Figure 4.79). The music was a beautiful mix of Western and traditional Thai musical instruments. A traditional Thai flute was used when the main role, Sama, was killed, which surprised the local audience and made them feel at home. The animal costumes were recognisable to the local people as they were inspired by Thai culture. A strong group of singers made up the chorus, which was a fitting support for the main singers of the performance, who were of an international standard (see Figure 4.80). The stage and lighting helped the audiences' excitement.³⁰⁷

The music in this opera contains a Thai musical instrument: kluy, which is a type of Thai flute. It plays where the main character, Sama, dies onstage. The music continuously switches between the kluy and an orchestra drum. This opera also contains several Buddha prayers sang by the main singers and chorus. There are also several leitmotifs which Sucharitkul always uses when the Bodhisattva sings.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Anonymous, 'The Faithful Son' returns', *The Nation*, entry post 27.08.17, <https://www.nationthailand.com/lifestyle/30322078> (accessed 6.12.20).

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Opera Siam, 'Sama - The Faithful Son', *YouTube*, entry post 13.09.17, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tliYYJxxV0> (accessed 6.12.20).

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

4.3.5. *Chariot of Heaven (Nemiraj)*

Chariot of Heaven is the opera of the cycle that contains the most participants on stage, requiring over two hundred performers. The shows were on 20, 21 and 22 January 2017 in the Main Hall of the Thailand Cultural Centre (see Figure 4.81).³⁰⁹ This production was presented by the Department of Cultural Promotion's Ministry of Culture, ThaiBev and Opera Siam in honour of the 70th Regnal Year of His Majesty the King. Trisdee Na Patalung was again the conductor for the Siam Philharmonic Orchestra and Siam Orpheus Choir. The main singer, Damian Whiteley, acted as the chorus master. Sucharitkul composed this opera, though he also participated during the performance as the stage director. Siriphong Sunthornsanoth was in charge of choreography and Natthawan Santiphap had the responsibility of designing the costumes.³¹⁰ For this two-act opera, Sucharitkul composed the operatic ensemble number with thirty-three solo voices to represent the gods, which was an incredible feat and expanded upon the usual sextet. The costumes of thirty-three gods were all white, a combination of elegance and luxury, and danced in an intricate style that exuded class (see Figure 4.82).³¹¹



Figure 4.81: *Chariot of Heaven*.³¹²

³⁰⁹ Anonymous, 'Opera in praise of the late King', *The Nation*, entry post 13.01.17, <https://www.nationthailand.com/kingdomgrieves/30304089> (accessed 6.12.20).

³¹⁰ Anonymous, 'Chariot of Heaven', *Opera on video*, entry post 16.12.16, <https://www.operaonvideo.com/chariot-of-heaven-somtow-thailand-2017/> (accessed 6.12.20).

³¹¹ Anonymous, 'Somtow's chariot halfway to Heaven', *The Nation*, entry post 17.07.16, https://www.nationthailand.com/noname/30290751?utm_source=category&utm_medium=internal_referral (accessed 6.12.20).

³¹² Opera Siam, 'Chariot of Heaven', <https://www.operasiam.com/new-gallery-92/> (accessed 6.12.20).



Figure 4.82: *Thirty-three gods welcoming King Nimi.*³¹³

Roles	Voice type	Premiere Singers
<i>Makha Deva/ Nemi</i>	Counter-Tenor	Jak Cholvijarn
<i>The Charioteer</i>	Counter-Tenor	Puntwitt Asawadejmetakul
<i>Indra</i>	<i>Bass</i>	Damian Whiteley
<i>Mitra</i>	Tenor	Chaiporn Phuangmalee
<i>Aryaman</i>	Soprano	Thamonwan Khumprakob
<i>Bhaga</i>	Soprano	<i>Thasanaiphorn Moreerat</i>
<i>Varuna</i>	Soprano	<i>Kangsadan Kroekkamon</i>
<i>Daksha</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Thanapat Supornaset</i>
<i>Amsha</i>	Soprano	<i>Arisa Tuntiam</i>
<i>Tvashttra</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Saran Senavinin</i>
<i>Vivasvat</i>	Soprano	<i>Pattanan Art-Ong</i>
<i>Savitr</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>John Tneoh</i>

³¹³ Opera Siam, 'Chariot of Heaven' (For URL link, see footnote 312).

<i>Vishnu</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Matthew Phillips</i>
<i>Atma</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Ashiraya Supalaknaree</i>
<i>Ananda</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Patcharanat Aunkaew</i>
<i>Vijnyana</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Patrapa Bhumipak</i>
<i>Manas</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Mihi Fuktome</i>
<i>Prana</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Arunporn Taksintaweesap</i>
<i>Vaca</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Chantal Gopinath</i>
<i>Shiva-Ishana</i>	<i>tenor</i>	<i>Naprach Satchathai</i>
<i>Aghora</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Surapong Wattananontachai</i>
<i>Vamadeva</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Charin Sumakka</i>
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Sen Guo</i>
<i>Sadyajata</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Krittahad Pisuttiwong</i>
<i>Tatpurusha</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Howard Yang</i>
<i>Prthivi</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Barbara Zion</i>
<i>Antariksha</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Kaleigh Rae Gamache</i>
<i>Jala</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Emm Panichkun</i>
<i>Vayu</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Nopparut Pana</i>
<i>Vayu</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Jonas Anderson</i>
<i>Dyaus Pitar</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Edward Stein</i>
<i>Surya</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Lullalit Supatravanij</i>
<i>Soma</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Areeya Rotjanadit</i>
<i>Nakshatra</i>	<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Sotida Chairidchai</i>

<i>Ashvin</i>	Boy-soprano	<i>Rit Parnichkun</i>
<i>King Nemi as a Child</i>		
<i>Ashvin</i>	Boy-soprano	<i>Raphael Ayrlle</i>
<i>King Nemi as Adolescent</i>		

*Table 4.20: Voice type in each role in Chariot of Heaven and premiere performer's name.*³¹⁴

The prologue begins when King Makhadeva notices that his hair is turning grey and decides to give up his kingdom. This tradition to give up the throne continues for the next eighty-four thousand generations. However, 83,998 generations later King Makhadeva looks down from heaven and decides to end this tradition by being reincarnated and bringing the Bodhisattva into the world.

Act one opens with an almsgiving ceremony. King Nimi donates many gifts to poor people, but then weighs up which is the better deed between living a spiritual life or being charitable. One day, King Nimi dreams of the Indra, the King of Heaven. Mathali, aboard a chariot drawn by a thousand horses, is sent by Indra to bring King Nimi to heaven. The people of Mithila look up at the sky aghast as they see a second moon, which is actually Mathali's chariot. Mathali invites King Nimi to rise up to heaven. The people of Mithila are overcome by the generosity of the gods and sing hymns of victory and offer praise.

Act two starts as the chariot comes to a parting in the road. One side leads to heaven and the other leads to hell. King Nimi believes that after his death he will go to heaven, so he is intrigued by the road leading to hell and chooses to go there instead. King Nimi is shown many hells by Mathali, which makes the gods impatient and they demand that Mathali returns on his chariot to heaven. As Mathali heads up towards heaven, thirty-three gods appear and sing a heavenly ensemble. King Nimi remains in heaven for seven days and finally returns to earth where his people are waiting for him. After his experience of heaven and hell, King Nimi preaches to the people about what he has seen and urges them to be pure and not evil, so that they can be accepted into heaven.³¹⁵

³¹⁴ Somtow Sucharitkul, *Chariot of Heaven, Nemiraj* [unpublished programme note] (Bangkok, 2019).

³¹⁵ Sucharitkul, *Chariot of Heaven, Nemiraj* [unpublished programme note].

The Nation newspaper in Thailand stated that Sucharitkul added several exotic musical instruments in this opera, such as Tibetan bowls, an Indian tambura and theremin. He utilised these instruments to create an impressive musical effect, especially in the entry to heaven scene, that according to the article is Guinness Book of Records worthy. A French tourist, so moved and impressed by the visual and auditory display, stated: 'If this is Heaven, I'm not afraid of death anymore.'³¹⁶ This opera was well received, one of the reasons being because there are many performers, including famous singers such as Jonas Anderson from Sweden. He is famous in Thailand for singing Thai country music, and his existing fan base came to watch the performance. This is a good avenue for new audiences to see opera for the first time.

There were Thai musical instruments in this opera such as *ranad*,³¹⁷ *pi*,³¹⁸ and *ching*.³¹⁹ There is also an Indian musical instrument called a tambura in the opera. This opera contains the largest amount of singing as an individual singer. There is a trio sung by three sopranos where it contains many staccatos in the music. The first soprano sang solo which contains coloratura and jumping notes. There is a synthesiser sound in act two that represents hell. One of the most famous scenes the audience was waiting to watch is where thirty-three singers perform as gods at the same time in act two. Every singer has their own individual vocal line and they sing and repeat each other in the same melodies, which is started by sopranos and then the tenors follow with new melodies.³²⁰

³¹⁶ Sucharitkul, *Chariot of Heaven, Nemiraj* [unpublished programme note].

³¹⁷ A traditional Thai xylophone.

³¹⁸ A traditional Thai pipe.

³¹⁹ A traditional Thai cymbal.

³²⁰ Opera Siam, 'Nemiraj - Chariot of Heaven', *YouTube*, entry post 13.02.17, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKtljbswKA> (accessed 6.12.12).

4.3.6. *The Sacrifice (Chandakumar)*

This production is a ballet-opera, and it was performed as one of two operas in one show: *The Sacrifice (Chandakumar)* and *Architect of Dreams (Mahosot)*. The performances were on 7 and 8 June 2019 at the Thailand Cultural Centre conducted by Voraprach Wongsathapornpat and Trisdee Na Patalung³²¹ (see Figure 4.83). *The Sacrifice* lasts only thirty minutes.³²² This short length could be the reason Sucharitkul put these two operas together and performed them in one production. This production has no available music scores or recording of the performance.³²³

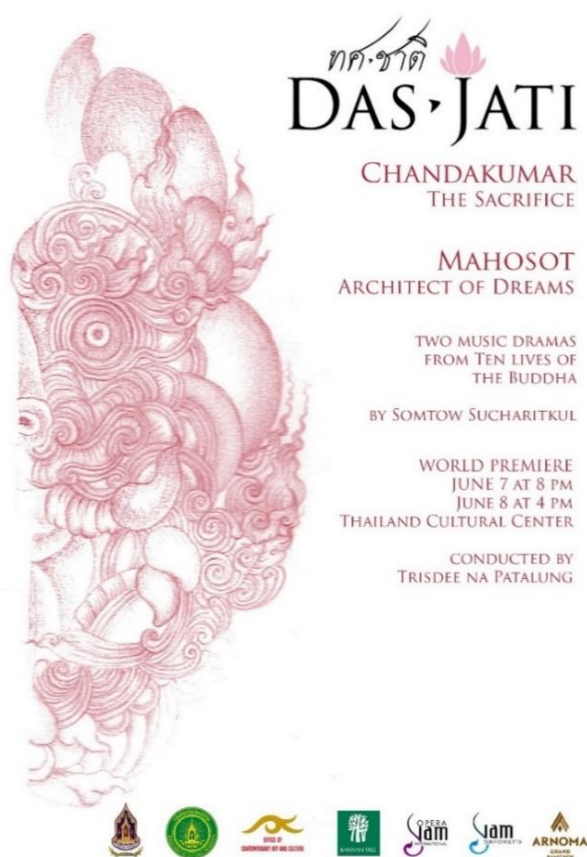


Figure 4.83: Poster of *The Sacrifice (Chandakumar)* and *Architect of Dreams (Mahosot)* in 2019.³²⁴

³²¹ Author's interview with Jak Cholvijarn (6 October 2020).

³²² Sian Gayuki, 'Sontow's daring DasJati continues magnificent run', *Bangkok Post*, entry Post 20.6.19, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/life/arts-and-entertainment/1698452/somtows-daring-dasjati-continues-magnificent-run> (accessed 6.12.20).

³²³ There is no music analysis for this opera.

³²⁴ Anonymous, 'Bangkok Opera Foundation press conference to announce the next two Dasjati performances: Chandakumar & Architect of Dreams', *fccthai*, entry post 30.5.19, <https://www.fccthai.com/events/bangkok-opera-foundation-press-conference-to-announce-their-performances-of-dasjati-chandakumar-architect-of-dreams/> (accessed 6.12.20).



Figure 4.84: The dancers who play as angels used an electric hoverboard to simulate floating in The Sacrifice 2019.³²⁵



Figure 4.85: The giant head prop.³²⁶

³²⁵ Anonymous, 'Bangkok Opera Foundation press conference to announce the next two Dasjati performances: Chandakumar & Architect of Dreams'.

³²⁶ Anonymous, 'Chandakumar (Somtow) Bangkok 2019', *Operaonvideo*, <https://www.operaonvideo.com/chandakumar-somtow-bangkok-2019/> (accessed 6.12.20).

Roles	Voice type	Premier singers
Phra Chandakumar	Counter-Tenor	Jak Cholvijarn
Girl in Ekaraja's Dream	Soprano	Napapach Ausvayok
Indra	Bass	Damian Whiteley
King of Heaven		
Agni	Soprano	Mintra Manchakra
Anthariksha	Soprano	Thanaporn Promweang
Prthivi	Soprano	Barbara Zion

*Table 4.21: Voice type of each role in The Sacrifice and premiere singer's names.*³²⁷

The plot of this opera starts as the king dreams of heaven, with a great desire to go there. However, he is deceived into sacrificing his family and friends to a false divinity in the hope of achieving rebirth in heaven. Many people disagree with the actions he is about to take. They pray to the gods for help, and in response the King of Heaven descends to assist. As a result, the king cancels the sacrifices. The people were still angry so they asked the king to leave the city. Prince Chandakumar replaces the king.

The music of this opera invokes a gamelan-style atmosphere.³²⁸ The dancers who play as angels used an electric hoverboard to simulate floating (see Figure 4.84). It was an impressive visual effect. The costume and make up were imaginative such as the parrots which were bright and colourful. There was clever use of a prop on the stage where the head of the giant with red eyes is the gate way to death (see Figure 4.85).³²⁹

³²⁷ Somtow Sucharitkul, *The Sacrifice, Chandakumar* [unpublished programme note] (Bangkok, 2019).

³²⁸ Gayuki, 'Somtow's daring DasJati continues magnificent run'.

³²⁹ Anonymous, 'Chandakumar (Somtow) Bangkok 2019' (For URL link, see footnote 326).

4.3.7. *Architect of Dreams (Mahosot)*

As noted above, this opera was first performed with *The Sacrifice (Chandakumar)*. *Architect of Dreams* is another ballet-opera, performed on 7 and 8 June 2019 at the Thailand Cultural Centre and conducted by Trisdee Na Patalung (see Figure 4.86).³³⁰ Unfortunately, there are no publicly available recordings of the work.³³¹



Figure 4.86: Performance of *Architect of Dreams* in Bangkok 2019.³³²



Figure 4.87: Sassaya Chavalit, a Thai soprano, who sang as Princess Panjalajandi in Bangkok, 2019.³³³

³³⁰ Anonymous, *Opera Siam Facebook page*, entry post 3.06.19 <https://www.facebook.com/OperaSiam/posts/2718819518132198> (accessed 6.12.20).

³³¹ There is no music analysis for this opera.

³³² Opera Siam, 'Architect of Dreams', <https://www.operasiam.com/new-gallery> (accessed 6.12.20).

³³³ Sassaya Chavalit provided the picture (October 2020).

Roles	Voice type	Premiere Singers
Phra Mahosot	Counter-Tenor	Jak Cholvijarn
Kevatta	Bass	Damian Whiteley
Myna Bird	Soprano	Mintra Manchakra
Sumana	Soprano	Barbara Zion
King Vedeha	Tenor	Chaiporn Phuangmalee
Devinda	Baritone	Krittahad Pitsuttiwong
King Julani	Bass	Dag Schantz
Kavinda	Baritone	Panuwat Phiansa
Senaka	Soprano	Thamonwan Khumprakob
Pukkusa	Tenor	Ohmmapat Kaosan-ang
Princess Panjalajandi	Soprano	Sassaya Chavalit
Young Mahosot	Boy Soprano	Naphat Luke Sathienthirakul
Parrott	Soprano	Elizabeth Moran

*Table 4.22: Voice type in each role in Architect of Dreams and premiere singers.*³³⁴

The plot of this opera is about a boy called Mahosot, who is the son of a wealthy and respected family. The boy is extremely clever and blessed with problem solving skills. He is of great help to many members of the community. The town where the boy lives is called Mitila. The King of Mitila has four advisers who are clever and wise. The king has a bad dream about four fires, when suddenly a fifth fire explodes and extinguishes the other four. The king asks his fortune teller to unravel and explain the meaning of his dream. The fortune teller says there is another clever man outside of his circle who is smarter than his four advisers. One

³³⁴ Somtow Sucharitkul, *Architect of Dreams, Mahosot* [unpublished programme note] (Bangkok, 2019).

day, the king hears about Mahosot and his intelligence. The king orders the four advisers to bring Mahosot to visit him.

The four advisers go out and find Mahosot as instructed; however, they don't want him to return as they know they will be replaced. So, they attempt to kill the young boy during the journey. However, they are unable to kill him as Mahosot is smart enough to know their intentions. Finally, Mahosot arrives at the castle and works with the king, along with his colourful parrot. He proves to the king that he is the most intelligent of all men. He also helps to build a magic castle overnight. He helps the king to repel a neighbouring kingdom from invading the city by sending his parrot to spy on the enemy. At the end, his wise words help the two opposing cities build a friendship and stop being enemies.³³⁵

Stan Gayuski, a reviewer for the *Bangkok Post* newspaper stated that of all the seven operas that have been performed in the cycle, *Architect of Dreams* is the first of Sucharitkul's works that could be considered *opera buffa*, as the music is of a comedic tone. The performance was an explosion of instrumental colour, full of characters, full of comedy, magical displays, bird songs and paintings, and a finale of love winning through and redeeming oneself.³³⁶ Gayuski also made a special mention of Sassaya Chavalit, a Thai soprano, who sang as Princess Panjalajandi (see Figure 4.87). Her aria quickly became a social media sensation and is likely to increase the opera's reputation. The other main singers were professional, such as Damian Whiteley, who sang with a variety of colour. Barbara Zion sang in the role of Bodhisattva's mother, a short appearance but with a memorable voice and an American soprano, Elizabeth Moran, sang as a parrot, which demonstrated her coloratura vocal. However, a criticism was that sometimes the percussion section overpowered the singer.³³⁷

³³⁵ Anonymous, *Opera Siam Facebook page* (For URL link, see footnote 330).

³³⁶ Gayuski, 'Somtow's daring DasJati continues magnificent run' (For URL link, see footnote 261).

³³⁷ Ibid.

4.3.8. Conclusion

Sucharitkul's plan was to compose the first opera cycle about the Ten Lives of the Buddha. Seven of these operas have been composed and performed to date (2020). It is already one of the biggest and longest opera cycles in the world even with only seven of them having been completed. Sucharitkul is still working hard to continue writing the rest of this work and completing the cycle.

Sucharitkul's opera cycle has five operas that are ballet-opera. All of the operas contain a main singer who plays the role of Bodhisattva, Jak Cholvijarn, except the second opera, *The Lost Prince (Mahajanaka)*, where the Bodhisattva was played by a ballet dancer without any singing. Most of the operas in the cycle contain counter-tenor singers in leading roles. In every opera of the cycle there is a leitmotif where the Bodhisattva appears on the stage. The costumes of the main characters are almost the same throughout the cycle, such as angels and the King of Heaven who always wear white traditional Thai clothes.

His work goes beyond just telling the story of Buddha to native Thai people, where most of the population are Buddhist. His ambition is that this body of work could become one of the most popular festivals in Thailand, which will attract Buddhist followers to come and watch Thai opera. There is also the opportunity for an element of educational entertainment to emerge. People unfamiliar with these Buddhist teachings will be able to learn of these Thai cultural stories through a fun visual and auditory medium.

This opera cycle is of significant benefit to young Thai musicians and singers by granting them the opportunity to work as a professional performer. This is an admirable endeavour, as there are so few opportunities for young Thai musicians to perform classical music, particularly opera. This also acts as a platform for upcoming Thai musicians and singers to demonstrate their talents to large audiences, owing to Sucharitkul's respected reputation within international opera circles. Most of the performances were in honour of the king's birthday or other notable events significant to the royal family. Thai opera is an activity that is largely the preserve of the royal family. This could be because Sucharitkul is also an extended member of the royal family. It is also easier to secure support and funding for productions in honour of the royal family.

Chapter 5: The Singing Technique of Thai Opera in the Western Style

There are three operas in Thai: *Ngau Pa*, *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals*, and *The Lunch Box*. Each of them has a similar challenge in performance: the tonal quality of the Thai language. Thai contains five tones, which need to be sung in the right tone so the meaning of the word will not change (see Chapter 3.4). This makes tonal languages more difficult to sing than other non-tonal languages such as English and Italian. To try to understand what performers sing in opera is already difficult, especially the high tones, so imagine singing opera that has a tonal language as a libretto. It is double the work for singers, conductors, audience and especially difficult for the composer. The process of translating an aria from *The Mikado*: ‘*The Sun Whose Rays Are All Ablaze*’ from English into Thai for this thesis was a particularly complex experience. Therefore, it is reasoned to be extremely hard to compose an opera in Thai because there is the need to find the right word in the right tone.

These three operas in Thai handled the difficulty of the tonal language in different ways. Srikananda's *Ngau Pa* (2000) is the first opera in Thai to have been performed (in Edinburgh) but only in part. Due to the singers all being non-Thai speakers, the composer conducted a workshop and wrote the Latin alphabet on the score so they were able to sing. However, Srikananda stated in his interview that it still did not work; therefore, the opera has not been performed since.¹ The second opera, Reyes's *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* (2008), is the first opera in Thai that was performed in Thailand. Though the original cast were all Thai singers, the performance was postponed by four months because the conductor, being a non-Thai speaker, was not understanding why Thai singers were sliding the notes and sometimes even adding notes that were not in the score. Therefore, the singers had to be replaced with those who had more experience with singing Thai words in a Western musical style. This issue also arose in *The Lunch Box* (2009) by Thanapoom Sirichang. The opera took the composer three years to complete; it took the main singers a month – rehearsing every day from morning until evening – to get the right tones with the right words. Later, the singers eventually decided that the

¹ Author's interview with Pathorn Srikananda (23 August 2019).

singing technique took priority over the meaning of the words. This was because the show was performed in Australia; there were no Thai-speakers in the audience and subtitles were available. Since then, there have been no operas in Thai written or performed again. This could be because of the tonal language issue; these composers stopped creating more operas in Thai and young composers are afraid to write. Therefore, this chapter is concerned with finding a solution to this issue.

After conducting research and holding interviews to gain a further insight into the tonal problem, it was discovered that there was a common issue. The composers of these three operas were focused on finding the right words to fit the melodies, which is a necessary part of the process, but this is extremely difficult to do with every single word and takes a lot of time to compose. In some situations, the melody could not change; for instance, some composers prefer to compose with leitmotif for each character or the main theme of the opera. The chosen words will be limited in order to make sure that the word goes along with the melodies and still matches the meaning. They also arranged workshops and rehearsed for a considerable time to ensure the singers performed in the correct tonal language so that the Thai audience could understand.

However, as a performer myself, and having appeared in *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* in 2008, I noticed this problem arise while on stage and had the idea of creating symbols. These symbols would instruct non-Thai speaking singers when to slide and communicate to the conductor where to slow the music down. Unfortunately, I was young and this was one of the first operas I ever performed, which is why I never shared the idea of symbols. Nevertheless, it was discovered through further research that there are two other operas in Thai that had the same problem and still no symbols had been created to resolve the issue. This could be because the composers were attempting to fix the problem from a composer aspect, rather than a performance aspect. Therefore, they were unaware that there was another solution to this problem: the creation of symbols.

. The score of *Ngau Pa* and *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* have not been published; however, the composers personally provided the scores for this

research and to perform.² Problems with these operas arise from a lack of knowledge of the Thai language. Nevertheless, there are operas in many languages and it is not necessary for conductors to know those languages. Thus, creating symbols for non-Thai speakers such as singers and conductors is essential. *The Lunch Box* presented no problems for the conductor, even though the conductor was not a local familiar with the Thai language. This is because the conductor was a close friend of the composer and they would always play and sing the music together after the composer had finished writing a song.³ They also rehearsed every day for a whole month before the performance, even though the opera is only in two acts.

Stacey Tappan, a professional singer who sang in several Thai operas with Sontow Sucharitkul, stated in a personal interview: 'Thai language is more suited to singing than speaking. I feel as if I can get into Thai through a singing channel more than a speaking channel'. She also added that it was terrifying for her to learn the Thai anthem because there are many notes that she had to adjust from the notes in the original score. If she had to sing the whole opera in Thai, it would have required a lot of time for her to learn'.⁴ Tappan also stated that she felt the score was not detailed enough for singing in Thai. She needed to go to a Thai speaker to help her with the tones and she found that singing Thai is much easier than speaking it.⁵

This chapter experiments with a solution to solving the issue of tones through notation. These symbols show non-Thai speakers where to slide the notes and thus reproduce more accurately the correct tonal inflections. To demonstrate the viability of this, an experiment was conducted as part of this project, which used symbols to overcome the tonal issues. Three symbols have been created to help non-speakers sing the Thai language. As a result, Thai operas can be performed anywhere in the world without the need for a Thai speaker to be present.

² Pathorn Srikananda, *Ngau Pa* [unpublished full score] (2001) and Krisada Reyes provided *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* opera score (August 2017).

³ Author's interview with Thanapoom Sirichang (17 May 2019).

⁴ Author's interview with Stacey Tappan in Thailand (15 August 2017).

⁵ Ibid.

5.1. Symbols Devised for the Experiment

Before the experiment took place, three new symbols were created to help singers sing Thai correctly. The first two symbols (see Figure 5.1 & 5.2) were created to solve the tonal issue and their creation was first considered during the performance of *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* in 2008. The first symbol (see Figure 5.1) means that the singer should slide down the note; the second symbol (see Figure 5.2) means that the singer should slide up the note. By using these symbols, the musicians know which notes they should slide to get the correct meaning of the word.

The reason for designing the symbols to resemble the letter 'U' is because the shape communicates that the note is not only to be sung with a slide up but more like a curve so the singer's voice should slide up like a curve. The shape similarly works well when flipped vertically for the sliding down of the note like a curve. However, there is a macron above and beneath the 'U' because there are already some existing symbols that were used in music notation and this macron will avoid any misunderstanding.



Figure 5.1: This symbol means to slide down the note.



Figure 5.2: This symbol means to slide up the note.

The third symbol (see Figure 5.3) was created during this research, as though it was known that the Thai language used closed and open vowels, and these could change the meaning of a word if not sung correctly, non-Thai speakers were unaware of this. This third symbol was created to solve this problem by stressing the

last vowel and closing the vowel right away. For example, in Italian, the word 'Pai' is always sung as [pa:i], whereas in Thai it needs to be sang as [pai:]. Thai does not have a word stress like European languages. When speaking these European languages, Thai speakers tend to emphasise the final vowel of a word, but it is not stressed. Therefore, in these European languages, the meaning does not change if the stress is misplaced. This is the reason why Thai people speak English with an accent, where they stress the last vowel in almost every word. For instance, Mozart [mosa:t], Beethoven [bi'hə'fɛn], and Holiday [həli'de:].⁶



Figure 5.3: This symbol means to close the vowel immediately.

These three symbols have been designed to make it easy to read and write them when notating a score and also easy to understand when to slide up and down when singing. Their design was also carefully considered from a visual means as a way to communicate the intention i.e. the curve of the 'U' demonstrating that the note should slide in a curve.

There are many other tonal languages in the world besides Thai, such as Chinese, Vietnamese, Punjabi, Zulu, Norwegian, Croatian, Swedish and many more.⁷ One might wonder if these symbols could be used with other tonal languages as well. This may be successful; however, these symbols were created with the focus of solving the issues with singing opera in Thai. As previously stated, these symbols were created to resemble a 'U' because the Thai language is more sliding the tones rather than stressing the tone, so this curved shape may be confusing for other tonal languages. Other tonal languages have no open and close vowels, as is the case in Thai.

⁶ This is how the author would say those words in the Thai accents.

⁷ Thomas Moore Devlin, What Are Tonal Languages?, *Babbel Magazine*, entry post 28 August 2019, <https://www.babbel.com/en/magazine/tonal-languages> (accessed 6.12.20).

5.2. Experiment

The methodology of this chapter was to experiment with a non-Thai speaker or a Western singer, who has no knowledge of Thai because a Thai speaker would instinctively know how to sing the correct tone before looking at the symbols. The subject of this experiment also needed to receive Western opera training for many years so they know how to read Western music notation. To add a challenge into this experiment, a voice type of soprano was chosen to do the experiment as soprano is sometimes difficult to understand in the Western opera style because of the high pitches.

Bethany Pennington, an undergraduate voice student from Bangor University, was selected for this experiment. Having previous experience singing together, and knowing her voice very well, she was the perfect choice. Another reason for choosing her was due to her being an intermediate level in terms of singing skill and training. Having a mutual vocal teacher at the university also provided convenience when organising sessions.

In the voice and piano music score there is Thai text written beneath the notes. However, the singer could not read Thai so the text was transliterated into the Latin alphabet below the Thai words so the singer could read it. Along the text there were the three new symbols above the notes that need to slide and vowels that needed to be cut faster (see Figure 5.4). Notes not needing the vowel to slide or be cut did not have any of the new symbols above them in the notation. The meaning of each sentence was also written above the music, so that the singer could sing with emotion and understand the context. The selection of the music for this experiment was the whole of act one, scene one from *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals*. It was reasonable to choose this work because the first act is sung by two sopranos, and there was a familiarity with the material due to previous experience singing and working with the composer in the opera. Therefore, it was possible to teach and direct the action appropriately.

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Dao Nua M-S, Mother M-S, and Pno.Red. The score is written on three staves. The top staff (Dao Nua M-S) has the lyrics 'เจ็บ คอ' and 'ไม่ มี แรง'. The middle staff (Mother M-S) has the lyrics 'ไร' and 'แล้ว ใจ มี ไข่ ไหม ตัว'. The bottom staff (Pno.Red) is a piano accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. Transliteration symbols like 'u' and 'i' are used above the Thai text.

Figure 5.4: Fragment of The Story of the Long-Gone Animals, showing the texts and the transliteration.⁸

The subject attended five times for the experiment (see Figure 5.5). The first meeting took place on 17 October 2018 with the singer, Bethany Pennington, at Bangor University. It was challenging because the singer had no knowledge of the Thai language and opera. However, it was to be expected and she was open and positive with the experiment. The first meeting was spent explaining the opera, the Thai language, and the aims of the experiment. She also received the score with the new symbols for the first time and learned to read transliteration writing. From the interview that followed this session, she explained that she was not sure if she could sing the music but she still wanted to participate in the experiment.

The second session took place on 9 November 2018 at Bangor University. Bethany started to learn the music and it became clear that the tempo was a big issue. The rhythm of the opera is difficult to count; even an expert musician would need some time to sight-read the music. This meeting introduced the backing track for which she could practise at home and become familiar with the tempo. She had no problem understanding the new symbols and the transliteration writing. Though, she explained in the interview following the session, that she found Thai is hard to sing because she had to read the transliteration, music, and the new symbols at the same time.

⁸ Krisada and Napisi Reyes, *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* [unpublished vocal score] (2008).

The third meeting took place on 22 January 2019 at Bangor University. Bethany started to sing in the right tempo after practising with the backing track before the lesson. She ran through the music and encountered difficulty with the middle part, where the music is fast and has the most complicated tempo, (bar 68-108, see Appendix A.1). From the following interview, she felt much more confident that she could sing this opera in the recital but the middle part still needed work. She added that Thai is the same as other languages such as Italian or French; one just needs to practice and follow the notation.

The fourth session took place on 26 February 2019 at Bangor University. We worked on the Thai diction where Bethany was still mispronouncing words. She read and sang slower and made sure she stressed the right vowels. The run-through of the music showed that the middle part, where there were many texts and fast tempo, still needed work and she needed to be confident. She still miscounted the beats in many places in the hardest parts but it was much better than the previous meeting. In the following interview, she was unhappy with the middle part but felt more confident to perform.

The fifth session took place on 28 February 2019 at Bangor University. It was a meeting with Marian Bryfdir, our singing supervisor and who also acted as the accompanist. Marian Bryfdir saw the notation with the new symbols for the first time during this session. The symbols' meanings were explained and she understood immediately where to slow the tempo down so the singer could slide the note properly to get the right tone. We had three hours to work on the music, especially on the hardest part. It was the first time that we sang with the accompaniment and not the backing track. It went well, but we had to adjust many places due to the change of accompaniment. One thing we discovered is that the slides affected the rhythm of the music. However, we decided to keep sliding the notes so the tone remained correct to a Thai speaker, and the accompaniment can follow the singer's tempo. Bethany stated after the session that it is much easier to sing with Marian as accompaniment than a backing track because Marian was able to slow down and wait for the singers. During the session, Marian was pleased with the use of the symbol and agreed that it could help the conductor and accompaniment be aware to adjust the tempo while the singer is sliding the tone. She also stated that the symbols will help Thai opera to be performed internationally by non-Thai speakers

and will inspire Thai composers to compose more opera in Thai.⁹ After the session, all in attendance agreed that we were ready to perform this piece, which we planned to perform at the end of 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, this performance had to be cancelled.



Figure 5.5: One of the sessions, Bethany Pennington on the left.¹⁰

5.3. Result

Within five lessons, Pennington improved on each occasion and for the final session she sang opera in Thai to an almost flawless degree. At the beginning she was not sure that she could do this because it was a language that she was not familiar with and had never heard before. However, during the later sessions, she grew in confidence and felt that singing in Thai is the same as other operatic languages, such as Italian or French. The result had a significant positive effect on the singer who does not speak Thai. It is easier to teach singers to sing in Thai than to speak it because the symbols helped the singer slide the tones appropriately. The accompanist, Marian Bryfdir, also confirmed that the symbol alerted her to be aware where to slow the tempo down and wait for the singer to slide the tone. This is proof that this symbol could fix the problem for non-Thai musicians and conductors too.

⁹ Interview with Marian Bryfdir (28 February 2019).

¹⁰ Screenshot of the session from author video recording (22 January 2019).

Before undertaking this experiment, it was expected that the singer would require a minimum of ten sessions before reaching a level where they could perform. However, Bethany took to the sessions extremely well and was a fast learner. She was able to recognise and respond to the new symbols much quicker than anticipated, therefore, she was able to reach a performance level in only five sessions. Nevertheless, other singers may require more sessions than Bethany, depending on their ability to adapt to these new symbols.

The experiment of the whole of act one from *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* was planned to perform at Bangor University as a PhD final recital in the end of 2020. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 lockdown and restrictions, the recital had to be cancelled. However, this experiment has the opportunity to be expanded upon in the future after already demonstrating the effectiveness of using symbols with a Western soprano. This example could form the basis for future experimentation with varying voice types and nationalities, which was one of the progressions intended after the completion of this thesis to offer a broader analysis of the symbols' effectiveness.

After the completion of this experiment, there were many opportunities for me to present my results with these symbols. There were many positive responses to the findings and a few questions arose about other national operas in different tonal languages, such as Chinese opera. Due to this question, further research was undertaken in this area and musicians who had experience with Chinese opera were interviewed to find out if they also had similar issues.

5.4. Comparison with Chinese Opera

The following information in this section is from a small sample of Chinese operas because there are many types, such as, Peking, Cantonese and Shanghai opera.¹¹ As this is not all of the existing Chinese operas in their entirety, it may not be representative, but still offers a valuable point of comparison nevertheless. Chinese opera is also in a tonal language. However, the issue with the tonal language seems to occur with younger generations as opposed to older people who often listen to Chinese opera. As one musician noted:

My mother tongue is Cantonese... but when I listen to the Cantonese opera, I can't really understand a word... but for people used to listening to Cantonese opera, they can understand it... It is because in the older generation the opera is always on TV so they always listen to it every day... and they usually have the subtitle so now if they listen, they are used to the texts and tones already... The notation is also very rare and are written in the word rather than number.¹²

Most people that I interviewed regarding Chinese opera were referring to Peking opera, in which Mandarin Chinese is sung. There are four tones in Mandarin and twelve in Cantonese.¹³ Some of those interviewed did not think that Chinese opera has a problem with tones. In this case, it is because the technique of Chinese opera requires singers to form their voice from the throat, and this technique is closer to that of speech.¹⁴ Using a speech voice to sing helps vowels and tones to be clearer than head voice, therefore audiences can understand the words better. This is the reason why Chinese operas have less problems with their language and the audience can understand their singing very well. In an interview with Manar Kaewtae, a Chinese opera singer who is also an opera singer in Sucharitkul's opera cycle, she stated that she did not use notation to sing Chinese opera. Instead, she

¹¹ Joyce Lau, Chinese Opera Gets a Modern Edge, *The New York Time*, entry post 18.07.11, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/19/arts/19iht-cantonopera19.html> (accessed 17.03.21).

¹² Author's interview with Wingyan Cheung (26 July 2019).

¹³ Author's interview with Elly Chan (13 August 2018).

¹⁴ Anonymous, 'cultural differences in singing techniques | Comparison of Learning European & Chinese Singing', *wordpress*, entry posted 7.08.11, <https://learningeuropeanandchinesesinging.wordpress.com/tag/cultural-differences-in-singing-techniques/> (accessed 6.12.20).

copies and imitates.¹⁵ In this research, Chinese opera and Thai opera are using completely different singing techniques. Thai operas in this research are sung in the Western opera singing style; they use head voice and Western notation whereas in Chinese opera they use speech voice and improvisation in the style of a traditional folk drama.



Figure 5.6: Chinese Opera.¹⁶

From an interview with a musician who has experience in accompanying Hokkien opera;¹⁷ he performed with notation. However, he also had to learn from and imitate older musicians. The singers had no music notation to practice so they had to follow the text. These singers used speech voice and the female singers do not use as much nasal voice as in Peking opera. It is different from Western opera because the rhythm is not strict and follows the singer depending on how they sing. One of the drummers is also the conductor. Sometimes the singers will improvise so the musicians will have to adapt to them as necessary.¹⁸ There is some slight similarity to traditional Thai opera, *Likay*, where the singers sing with the speech voice and have no music notation. They have to improvise and the musicians follow the singers (see Chapter 3.5.3). From this research, it is clear that there is no comparison to be made between Chinese and Thai opera in this thesis due to their differing styles of singing.

¹⁵ Author's interview with Manar Kaewtae (8 June 2019).

¹⁶ Joyce Lau, Chinese Opera Gets a Modern Edge, *The New York Time* (For URL ink, see footnote 11).

¹⁷ Hokkien opera is one type of Chinese opera, which performed mainly in Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

¹⁸ Author's interview with Irfan Rais (25 July 2019).

5.5. Similar Symbols

As was stated at the beginning of this chapter, there is a similarly shaped 'U' symbol already used in Western notation. This symbol is called a breve and is used internationally for noting word stress in poetry (see Figure 5.7). It is the 'U', which means to shorten the syllable and not stress it. However, the new Thai tonal symbols have a macron above and below them to distinguish from this existing symbol. There is a macron on its own in this example which means to stress the syllable. Also, the new symbols are placed differently on the notation. The new symbols are written above the notes not under the words. The example below is from Erhart Dreßler's (1974) understanding of Schubertian declamation:

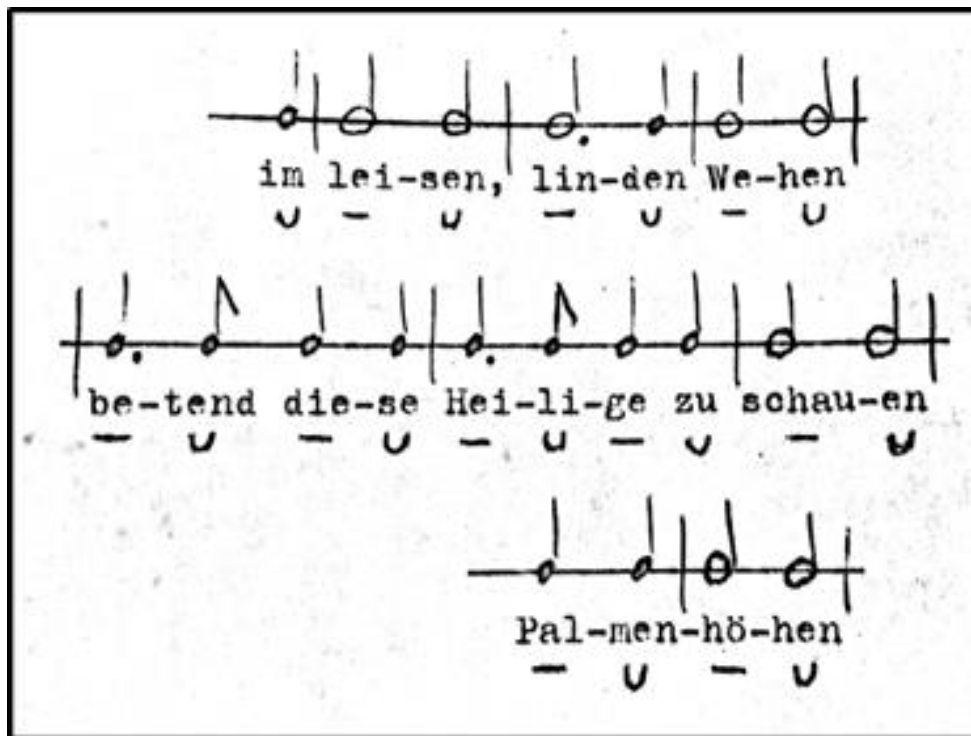


Figure 5.7: Erhart Dreßler's 1974 Schubertian Declamation

5.6. Conclusion

Ngau Pa (2000), *The Story of the Long Gone-Animals* (2008) and *The Lunch Box* (2009) are the only Thai operas in Thai. The singers struggled to perform these operas because of the tonal nature of Thai. The composers still tried even though other composers decided to create their own Thai operas in English, which became internationally recognised and performed outside Thailand, allowing non-local people to enjoy the exotic Thai stories and heroes. However, Krisada and Napsi Reyes and Thanapoom Sirichang had a different aim. They wanted their operas to be a national treasure and a valued drama in Thailand, which inspired the creation of Thai operas in Thai. There were other local composers who wanted to create opera in Thai but were afraid to do so. Therefore, this research led to the experiment to develop the Western notation by adding the created symbols. The experiment required five meetings to prove that the symbols worked. However, the experiment will continue in the future to get a more detailed and stable result. Future experiments may require a greater number of sessions depending on the subject's ability to learn these new symbols.

These symbols are proven to be effective with singers. They help the non-Thai speaking conductor to understand where singers need to slow the tempo, so that they could slide the note to fit the meaning of the words. The non-Thai speaking singers could also sing and sound closer to the Thai people. The symbols could help to expand Thai national opera to the international level. In Thailand, there are not many opera singers. It is rare to see a whole opera performed by Thai people; most professional opera events have international guests participating in the show. Only university productions have contained a whole Thai cast. However, such performances are still in need of improvement.

This thesis is just the start of an opera revolution in Thailand. From a personal perspective as a Thai opera singer, there are more ways of fixing this tonal issue. A Thai native speaker could make a recording of the Thai text as a means for non-Thai singers to learn from. However, it would be difficult to follow the text and would take a considerable amount of time to learn from a recording. Also, this method would not work with a conductor because they would not have the time to learn from a recording alongside the responsibility of overseeing an orchestra of musicians.

Therefore, the symbols are the best solution to fix this issue and will save the most amount of time for all involved.

This experiment could be the beginning of a revolution in using symbols to sing in tonal languages and hopefully these symbols will help young composers to produce more opera in Thai. In the future, if the composers use these symbols, it could also help opera in Thai become popular with the aim of being performed outside of Thailand for both Thai people and non-Thai speakers.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Future Challenges

This thesis has argued that we can identify the specific development of what I have termed Thai opera. We can easily trace the origins of the genre in the translations of King Rama IV, as a mark of his desire for the emerging country of Thailand to be considered modern in the eyes of the world. This idea of indigenous responses to (Italian) opera is of course not a new one: since the seventeenth century composers and connoisseurs have conspired to offer local variations on opera, with varying levels of success.¹ What we find in Thailand is a complex story for which we lack the full details – the lack of published scores, and even those operas that remain unperformed, not to mention the lack of documentary evidence of performances and productions. This thesis has aimed to fill some of that knowledge gap by first identifying the limits of the genre and offering a repository of it.

Various kings throughout Thailand's history played a major part in bringing Western opera to Thailand, and the subsequent emergence of Thai opera. This was because the king is the most powerful and influential person in the country. Since King Rama IV (1804-1868) hired a Western missionary to teach his children in Thailand; his oldest son could travel abroad and his nephew could study in Western countries. The oldest nephew (King Rama VI) brought Western culture and music into Thailand. He is the composer who created the first three Thai operas, which have never been performed. Most of the twenty Thai operas in this thesis were composed by the royal family or were involved with the royal family in some way. This was because they have the power and support to study abroad and were granted the opportunity to watch opera in Western countries.

Significant political events also contributed to the growth and influence of Western music in Thailand, especially around 1932-1935. The government shifted from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy.² Everything about the king and royal family was banned. The policy was a combination of the theoretical

¹ Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, *A History of Opera: The Last Four Hundred Years*, (London, 2015).

² Poonpit Amatyakul (ed.), พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว กับการดนตรี [*Vajiravudh with Music*] (Bangkok, 2012), p. 67.

concepts of anti-monarchism, pro-Westernisation and ultra-nationalism.³ The new policies had a big impact on Thai dramas, as they helped to establish a new form of theatre. The urban middle-class audience who lived in Bangkok were able to afford a high-class Western lifestyle or 'newly-rich' lifestyle. They desired to experience new and different forms of entertainment away from the traditional offerings. This provided a platform for the Thai people to become more accepting of Western influence on the arts and entertainment. However, even during this period of interest in Western music, there were no advances in Thai opera. There was an absence of Thai opera for a period of ninety years between King Rama VI's composition in 1911 and the first Thai opera to actually be performed in 2001. That opera, *Madana*, was also composed by a member of the royal family: Sontow Sucharitkul. This may have been possible because King Rama IX was ruling Thailand during that time, and being a talented musician himself he often lent his support to the development of music. *Madana* was also created to raise funds for the reconstruction of King Rama VI's Phayathai Palace.

Madana was highly successful due to all performances having been sell-outs. This could be because the opera was associated with the royal family. For instance, many famous brands sponsor performances as a way of honouring the royal family and helping to raise the funds for Phayathai Palace. The audiences were mostly high-class and rich people. The Thai Cultural Minister has always supported Sucharitkul's operas because the stories that he composes, such as *Madana* and *Suriyothai*, highlight Thai culture and the history of the royal family. Thai people hold King Rama IX in extremely high regard, and most of Sucharitkul's Thai operas were performed during his reign, with all of them honouring the royal family. There is a difference between Thailand and the West concerning the relationship between the monarchy and the people. Thai people worshipped King Rama IX and most local people have a picture of him hanging on the wall in their houses. They have a great love for this king because he cared for his subjects and helped many poor people.

Other Thai operas' audiences were also high-class, rich and educated people. One of the reasons for this is because most Thai operas that were performed in Thailand were in English and the audience needs to have a good education to

³ Paradee Tungtang, *Shakespeare in Thailand*, D.A. diss. (University of Warwick, 2011), p. 124.

understand English. This is unlike most national operas, such as French or German, where they used their own local language. The performance of Thai operas in English is creating a barrier for a wider acceptance of a 'Thai' genre in Thailand. There are three operas in Thai, only one of which has ever been performed in Thailand. Thai being a tonal language is a big issue. This is why the experiment in chapter 5 is necessary; the problem of singing the Thai tonal language in opera needs resolution for the genre to progress. The symbols created help non-Thai singers to sing and sound like a native singer, so hopefully this will make a difference for the success of any future productions. At the very least this is a step in the right direction for Thai opera to become a national treasure.

It should be noted that singing correctly in Thai is only an issue if you speak Thai or sing the opera in Thailand, so it's not really a barrier to getting the works staged in the West. Though, obviously a performer would prefer to sing the language correctly.

All twenty operas in this thesis keep the traditional Western style such as accompaniment by orchestra, singing operatic style and full stage and costumes. They also contained Thai elements in different ways and combined them to create a new type of operatic style. Most of these operas had some issues and problems such as tradition, popularity, political issues, beliefs and the tonal language. This thesis also gives examples of other issues that have occurred in Thai operas so future productions may avoid similar problems. Some of the composers are local people who have an interest in opera and another is an American musician who loves Thai music. After interviewing all of these composers, it became evident that performing Thai operas is difficult. There are only a few halls that are suitable for performing opera and there is currently not much appetite for consuming opera in Thailand. However, Sucharitkul also made a statement that a year of his productions would cost less than only one production in the USA by Metropolitan. Nevertheless, there is no money to produce operas in Thailand. As one can see there is no obvious musical infrastructure to support opera in Thailand.

Somtow Sucharitkul is the main composer of Thai operas. He composed twelve Thai operas and he alone continues to compose and perform Thai operas until recently. Other composers had to concentrate on other jobs such as teaching,

conducting and managing instead of producing operas. One composer even changed his job completely to work in an office rather than composing.

Around the year 2000, there was a problem that there were not enough Thai opera singers in Thailand good enough to perform opera in Thai, therefore most main characters are not Thai. Since 2017, Sucharitkul has given chances to Thai opera singers to perform his operas such as Sassaya Chavalit and Nadlada Thamtanakom. They graduated from Austria and Belgium respectively, and both had experience internationally. Sucharitkul also approached myself to sing in his opera, however, being a final year Ph.D. student and having conferences to attend; available time was limited. However, it would be considered an honour to perform in one of his operas should the opportunity arise in the future.

There are a few young Thai composers that have graduated from Western countries and are slowly returning to Thailand to begin their careers. They will take time to build up their reputation and gain the trust of sponsors to support their productions. They could start with composing music for the needs of customers in Thailand then after they have become famous, they could approach a notable orchestra company or music university in Thailand to support their production. This is a concerning situation with Thai opera because the main composers are growing older and will not be around forever. It is still hard for young composers to produce opera, but it is probably easier than twenty years ago. The new generation of Thai composers writing in the genre do not have an easy task to succeed with an opera production. It will be a real shame if Thai opera dies with these leading composers. Hopefully, Thai society will recognise the importance of this genre and support these new Thai composers to produce more Thai operas.

Another issue of concern is the lack of published scores. For instance, with the Thai operas that have never been performed, for four of them, the scores had been lost. Of fifteen Thai operas that have been performed, only three of them have had their scores published. The composers personally provided the scores of some operas for this research, but the majority were not available. This will become an issue in the future, as it will be difficult to preserve the work of these Thai operas and they may die with their composers.

It is a hope that this thesis has collected as much information about these Thai operas as possible. This research was undertaken with the desire to help future researchers gain a new aspect of how to solves these issues. Hopefully, this thesis will play a part in new Thai operas being composed and performed with less challenges.

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Appendices

A.0. List of Recordings and Scores in the Performance Component

Track 1: Act I, scene I of *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* by Krisada and Napisi Reyes.

This piece is a 10-minute-long recording. It is an original performance that took place on 21 November 2008 at the auditorium of the College of Music, Mahidol University, Thailand. This piece is accompanied by Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra. The role of Dao Nua was sung by Siriwaranya Supranee and Dao Nua's mother was sung by Fueanglada Prawang.

As stated in chapter 5, this piece was selected for the experiment and was planned to be performed at the end of 2020. However, because of the Covid-19 lockdown the performance had to be cancelled. Nevertheless, this original recording was performed by the author and demonstrates the opera singing style in Thai. This recording played a big part in this research, therefore, it is necessary to include this recording as a part of this thesis, even though it was not recorded while the author was researching this thesis.

Track 2: Lamhab's aria from *Ngau Pa* by Pathorn Srikaranonda.

This aria was sung by Fueanglada Prawang with piano accompaniment by Timothius Adiel Prasetyo. It was recorded at Matthias Hall at Bangor University on 11 March 2020. This aria demonstrates the opera singing style in the Thai language.

Track 3: Suriyothai's aria from *Suriyothai* by Sontow Sucharitkul.

This recording of Suriyothai's aria was sung by Fueanglada Prawang with piano accompaniment by Timothius Adiel Prasetyo. It was recorded at Matthias Hall at Bangor University on 12 March 2020. This aria demonstrates the borrowing of *Lae* melodies at the beginning of the aria.

Track 4: 'Oh Moon, Pure...' from *Madana* by Sontow Sucharitkul.

This recording of Madana's aria was performed as a PhD recital on 21 October 2019 at Matthias Hall at Bangor University. The aria was sung by Fueanglada Prawang with piano accompaniment by Dr. Iwan Llewelyn-Jones.

Track 5: ‘Let Me Stay in the Twilight’ from *Mae Naak* by Sontow Sucharitkul.

This recording of Mae Naak’s aria was sung by Fueanglada Prawang with piano accompaniment by Marian Bryfdir. This aria also shows the influence of the *Lae* music in the beginning of the aria.

Track 6: Dark Duet from *Mae Naak* by Sontow Sucharitkul.

This duet recording was performed as a PhD recital on 21 October 2019 at Matthias Hall at Bangor University. The Mae Naak role was sung by Fueanglada Prawang, the Maak role was sung by Steffan Dafydd, and the Dangrole role was sung by Yilia Feng with piano accompaniment by Dr. Iwan Llewelyn-Jones.

Track 7 & 8: ‘The Sun Whose Rays Are All Ablaze’ from *The Mikado*, to a Thai Translation.

Track 7 is an original English language performance of ‘The Sun Whose Rays Are All Ablaze’ from *The Mikado* and track 8 is the Thai translation. Both recordings were sung by Fueanglada Prawang with piano accompaniment by Timothius Adiel Prasetyo. They were recorded at Matthias Hall at Bangor University on 14 March 2020. King Rama VI had translated this whole opera into Thai, however, the translation had been lost. To demonstrate this action, I translated this aria so one can hear the differences of the sliding sounds between the English original and the Thai language version.

Track 9: ‘Evening Prayer’ from *Hansel and Gretel* by E. Humperdinck.

This duet was performed in a production of ‘Hansel and Gretel’ by Viva Opera UK on 7 March 2020 at JP Hall, Bangor University. The Gretel role was sung by Fueanglada Prawang and the Hansel role was sung by Morgana Warren-Jones. This performance accompaniment is by the Viva Opera UK small orchestra and conducted by Sa Do Kim. This aria is included in this thesis because *Hansel and Gretel* is one of the most performed Western opera by Thai singers and musicians in Thailand.

Track 10: ‘Alexandra’ by King Rama IX.

This song recording was performed as a PhD recital on 21 October 2019 at Matthias Hall at Bangor University. The aria was sung by Fueanglada Prawang with

piano accompaniment by Dr. Iwan Llewelyn-Jones. It was included in this recording because this song demonstrates the sliding of the tonal Thai language very clearly and it was composed by King Rama IX, who was one of the most supportive kings in Thailand for Thai opera.

Track 11: ‘Something Wonderful’ from *The King and I* by Oscar Hammerstein.

This song recording was performed as a PhD recital on 21 October 2019 at Matthias Hall at Bangor University. The aria was sung by Fueanglada Prawang with piano accompaniment by Dr. Iwan Llewelyn-Jones. This musical was inspired by the diary of Anna Leonowens when she came to teach in Thailand. This is one of the first musicals to contain Thai elements.

Track 12: ‘Un Bel di Vedremo’ from *Madame Butterfly* by G. Puccini.

This song recording was performed as a PhD recital on 21 October 2019 at Matthias Hall at Bangor University. The aria was sung by Fueanglada Prawang with piano accompaniment by Dr. Iwan Llewelyn-Jones. The story of *Madame Butterfly* had inspired King Rama V to adapt it into a Thai drama called *Sao Krua Fah*.

Track 13: Ganesha’s Aria from *Ayodhya* by Sontow Sucharitkul

This aria recording was performed as a PhD recital on 21 October 2019 at Matthias Hall at Bangor University. The aria was sung by Fueanglada Prawang with piano accompaniment by Dr. Iwan Llewelyn-Jones. This aria also demonstrates the influence of *Lae* melodies.

A.1. Act I, scene I of *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* by Krisada and Napisi Reyes.

The Story of the Long Gone Animals (Concert Version) : Act 1

Composed by Krisada Reyes
Libretto in Thai by Napisi Reyes
June 2008

Allegretto (♩=100)

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S

Piano Red

5 **A**

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

9

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

13

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

รับ หนอย ขึ้น รถ เร็ว ก่อน จะ
ไป โรงเรียน สาย หนู ไม่ สบาย
อาจจะไป โรงเรียน ไม่ ไหว อย่า ชัก ช้ำ เดี่ยว แม่ ไป ทำ

17 B

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

ไป ไม่ ไหว_ หรอก

งาน ไม่ หัน_____

f *mp* *f* *mf*

20

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

— คง ต้อง ขาด ชัก วัน

ได้ ที่ ไหน_ กัน_

mf *f* *mp* *mf*

23 C

meno mosso *rall.* *Andante (♩=76)*

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

หนู รู้ สึก ไม่ ค่อย สบาย

— ขาด แล้ว เกือบ ทั้ง เทอม ไม่ เห็น เป็น

mf *mp*

Red.

28

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

ฉบับ คอ

ไม่ มี แรง

ไร

แล้ว ใจ

มี ไข่ โหม

ตัว

35

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

ไม่ ร้อน

กิน ยา ครบ หรือ ไม่

กิน แล้ว

(นับยา)

mf

3

39

D

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

กิน ยา แล้ว

อย่า โกหกนะ

หรือ ไม่ ได้ กิน

ยัง ไม่

mp

45

Dao Nua M-S

คอ ก็ เจ็บ

Mother M-S.

หาย แผลง เสีย จริง อย่าง นี้ ต้อง ไป หา หมอ

Pno.Red

mf

50

Dao Nua M-S

ไม่ ไป... หมู ไม่อยาก พบ ใคร

Mother M-S.

ไปจะ เลือด

Pno.Red

ff

E

F

53 Allegretto Moderato (♩=110)

Mother M-S.

กิน ยา ครบ แล้ว... แต่ ว่า ยัง มี อา การ ต้อง ให้ หา หมอ

Pno.Red

mf

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

— ตรวจ ที่ โรง พ ยามาล ขอถาม อีก ที่ _____ กิน ยา ครบ หรือ ไม่

กิน

f *mf* *f* *mp*

6

60 **Meno mosso**

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

ไม่ครบ แปล่า ทั้ง

แล้ว ยา _____ อยู่ ไหน อย่างนอก ว่า ลูก ทั้ง ไป

f *mf*

65 **Molto Allarg.** G **Allegro (♩=120) with energy**

Dao Nua M-S

Pno.Red

mf

Red.

70

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

เหตุใด ลูก จึง ได้ ทำ เช่น นี้ ป่วย แล้ว จะ หาย เมื่อใด ลึก ที่ ต้อง คอย เฝ้า

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red.

76 Cresc. poco a poco - - -

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red.

79

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red.

82

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red.

86

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red.

Red.

Mother M-S. รัก แม่ เลย

Pno.Red

91 [H]

Dao Nua M-S แม่ ไม่ เข้าใจ ไม่เคย ป่วยไข้ แม่ คง ไม่

Mother M-S จ ง อ ด ทน เพื่ อ

Pno.Red

94

Dao Nua M-S รู้ ว่ามัน กลุ้มใจ อย ่างไร ที่ ต้อง พึ่งพา ย าร ำ ไป ไม่ หาย สัก ที่ หน้ กใจ สัน ต

Mother M-S วัน ที่ ตี ข้าง หน้ า แม่ เข้าใจ ลูก

Pno.Red

98 Cresc. poco a poco

Dao Nua M-S เคราะห์ร้าย ยิ่งนัก ที่ เป็นเช่น นี้ ได้ แตนอน พัก ต้อง กิน ยา ต้อง กิน ยา

Mother M-S เมื่อ หน้ ก หนา ด้วย โรค ภัยร้าย ที่ ไม่หาย ต้องทน ทุกข

Pno.Red

101

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

อยู่ อย่าง นี้ ไม่ เคย หาย ได้ แต่ กิน ยา หมด

ต้อง เศร้า ใจ ฟัง แม่ นะ มัน จะ ผ่าน ไป แต่

104

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

ความ หวัง ต้อง กินยา เป็น อยู่ อย่าง นี้ มา นาน หนัก หนา เล็ก กิน ยา อยู่

ใคร จะ ดู แล ลูก เอง ได้ ดี เท่า ตัว ลูก นี้ ขอ เกษะ รัก ษา ตัว

107

I Continue with same tempo

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

ไป ไร ค่า หมด แรง หมด หวัง ถ้า ดาย เสีย

ให้ ดี เพื่อ แม่

ff

111 **Molto Allargando**

Dao Nua M-S

ค ง ตี กว่

Mother M-S.

เล็ก พุด__แบบนี้ ลูก นั้น มี คำ__ เจ้า ตัว เล็ก แสน ขน

Pno.Red

118 **Adagio** (♩=70)

Mother M-S.

แม่ รัก ลูก นั ก หนา__

Pno.Red

mp

Red.

124 **J**

Mother M-S.

โอ__ เด็ก เอ๋ย เด็ก

Pno.Red

128

Mother M-S.

ลูก รัก ของ แม่ ลูก__ จะ ต้อง หาย ป่วย

Pno.Red

K

132

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

L

140

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

144

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

149

Mother M-S.

พา ญ หาย ไป ลุก จะ ต้อง มี กำ ลัง ใจ อย่า หลีกหนี สิ่ง

Pno.Red

153

Mother M-S.

ใด เพื่อ วัน ที่ มี รุ่ง ทอ บน ฟ้า

Pno.Red

157

Mother M-S.

สัก วัน คง มี รุ่ง ที่ บน ฟ้า

Pno.Red

161

Mother M-S.

Mobile phone ring

Allegretto (♩=110)

Pno.Red

164

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

แม่ มี นิด ทำ ธุ ร กิจ เป็น deal ใหญ่ ที่ ต้อง

mf

168

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

N

Allargando

รับ ปิด เป็น นิด สำ คัญ ตอ บ ริ ษัท มาก แต่ แม่ คง ต้อง เลื่อน ไป ก่อน เลย

mf

175

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

Adagio (♩=70)

แม่ ไม่ อยาก ให้ ลูก อยู่ คน เดียว ใน ตอน นี้

Red. _____

180

Dao Nua M-S.

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

(ยกมือท้าวไมให้ร้องต่อ)

ถึง 3 แม่ โลก 3 จะ มี ด มี ด เทา 3 ไห่ร อย่า 3 ท้อ ใจ 3 ก้าว เติ น

184 **Stretto** **O** **Andante (♩=90)**

Dao Nua M-S

แม่ มี นิด สำ คัญ แม่ ต้อง ทำ หน้า ที่ ไป เกิด

Pno.Red

f *mf*

┘

188

Dao Nua M-S

หนา แม่ อย่า รอ รี ลูก จะ กิน

Pno.Red

192

Dao Nua M-S

ยา ไม่ ละ เลย ลูก ดู แล ตัว เอง ได้

Pno.Red

196

Dao Nua M-S

ลูก จะ พัก ผ่อน เข้า นอน

Mother M-S.

ต้อง กิน ยา ให้ ครบ

Pno.Red

200

Dao Nua M-S

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

ให้ ไว ลูก สัญ ญา

ต้อง กิน ยา

P

204

Mother M-S.

Pno.Red

แม่ลูกจากกัน แม่เดินออกไป

mf

3

Red

208

Pno.Red

ff

3

ff

A.2. Lamhab's aria from *Ngau Pa* by Pathorn Srikananda.

Lamhab's Aria

Composed by Pathorn Srikananda
Transcribed by Timothius Adiel Prasetyo

$\text{♩} = 62$

Soprano

อ - นี - จา ครา นี ละ อก ฤ เห็น จะ

Piano

$\text{♩} = 62$

6

S.

มิ พ้น อาย - เพราะ - ชาย ชิด จะ

Pno.

5

10

S.


เฝ้า - รก ชี - วิด ไป ไย มิ แม่ จะ รอ ต่อ


Pno.

5

The musical score is written for Soprano and Piano. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 62. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the Soprano part with lyrics 'อ - นี - จา ครา นี ละ อก ฤ เห็น จะ' and the Piano part with a 6-measure rest followed by a melodic line. The second system shows the Soprano part with lyrics 'มิ พ้น อาย - เพราะ - ชาย ชิด จะ' and the Piano part with a 5-measure rest followed by a melodic line. The third system shows the Soprano part with lyrics 'เฝ้า - รก ชี - วิด ไป ไย มิ แม่ จะ รอ ต่อ' and the Piano part with a 5-measure rest followed by a melodic line. The Piano part includes various rests and melodic lines in both hands.

15

S. 

Pno. 

20

S.

เป็น พี่ - สุด จะ รัก - ษา - ดัน

Pno.

23

S.

พิน ัย คี

Pno.

A.3. Suriyothai's Aria from *Suriyothai* by Sontow Sucharitkul.

Suriyothai
(Soprano)

3. Suriyothai's aria

from a ballet - opera SURIYOTHAI by Sontow Sucharitkul

Adagio ♩ = 55

p

6

O - - - my lord, my liege, my

mp *p*

11

prince, my love, My heart is ___ torn This land cries out ___ for ___ a King, ___ Your

16

peo-ple ___ yearn for peace.

20

Come forth, _____

24

_____ come, _____ My Lord. Come, _____ my

28

love. My heart is torn,

32

This land _____ cries out, cries out _____ for a

35

King. O heal _____

40

Your peo - ple, O heal _____ this na - tion, heal, _____ O

44

heal this heart.

p

49

p

Heal O heal this heart.

55

A.4. 'Oh Moon, Pure...' from *Madana* by Sontow Sucharitkul.

Moon Aria
from *Madana* - Act One

Sontow Sucharitkul
reduction by Zach Reading

Poco Allargando

MADANA

Orchestral Reduction

Vla. + Vlc.

ff

4

7

10

Vlns.

ppp

mp

mp

14

pp

10

17

6

18

3

3

20 *p*

Oh _____ Moon! _____ Pure, _____

pp

25

_____ Pale, _____ Cold! _____

30

On - - ly com - pa - nion of

35

my grief!

pp

37

pp

39

Your

41

sil - ver light in - vades the night and sings of my cap - ti - vi - ty, The

mp

43

si-lent stars, my pri-son bars, cry out to me of ec-sta-sy de nied, ah_____ de-

Hrp.

mp *p*

47

nied_____ of_____ ture love_____ de - nied.

p *pp*

52

(b)

If I could break your sil-ver chain and

Cel.

Hrp.

53

54

catch the moon-light as it wanes, I'd seek a path-way through the wood, to

55

56

find a love that's pure and good, I'd fol - - - -

ppp

57

58

- low, fol - low. fol - low my true love I'd fo-low my true love un-til the

63

dark-ness scat-ters in - to dawn un - til the dark-ness scat-ters

68

in - to dawn.

A.5. 'Let me stay in the twilight' from *Mae Naak* by Sontow Sucharitkul.

17. Ler me stay in the twilight

The musical score is written for a vocal duo (Naak and Maak) and a large orchestra. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into five systems of measures.

- System 1 (Measures 1-5):** Features vocal staves for Naak and Maak, which are mostly rests. The instrumental section includes English Horn, Harp, and Double Bass. The English Horn and Harp play a melodic line with triplets. The Double Bass plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.
- System 2 (Measures 6-8):** The vocal parts enter with a melody. The instrumental section includes Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon. The Flute and Oboe play a melodic line, while the Clarinet and Bassoon provide harmonic support.
- System 3 (Measures 9-11):** The vocal parts continue their melody. The instrumental section includes Piano and Horn. The Piano plays a complex melodic line with many accidentals, while the Horn provides harmonic support.
- System 4 (Measures 12-14):** The vocal parts have a rest, and the instrumental section features a Piano solo. The Piano plays a melodic line with many accidentals. The Harp and Double Bass provide harmonic support.
- System 5 (Measures 15-17):** The tempo is marked "Poco più lento". The vocal parts enter with a melody. The instrumental section includes String and Harp. The String plays a melodic line, while the Harp provides harmonic support.

(Naak)

19 Ah Ah! Ah!

8va

Glock.

Clst.

Ob.

Bsn.

22 Let me stay in the twi - light, Don't call me back.

3

Fl.

Ob.

(with pedal)

Cl.

Hrp.

27 In - to the end - less dark. Oh, my child, my

Fl.

Cl.

Str.

Db.

33 child. my child, You have ne - ver known the light, You shall ne - ver

Cl.

(Fl. with voice)

38

see the sun. - - - the sun. - - -

Str.+Clt.
(with pedal)

Solo Vln.

43

Hrp.

48

Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo.

52

child. my child. my child. You have ne-ver known the light.

57

You shall ne - ver see the sun.

57

(Ob.)

61

sun, the sun!

61

Clt.

Solo Vin.

(optional)

(Ah)

8^{va}

pp

A.6. Dark Duet from *Mae Naak* by Sontow Sucharitkul.

10. Dark Duet

The musical score is written for a vocal duet and piano. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The score is divided into systems, with measures numbered 1 through 17.

System 1 (Measures 1-2): Features a Violin (Vln.) part in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The piano part begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic.

System 2 (Measures 3-4): Continues the piano accompaniment. A Trp. (Trumpet) part enters in measure 4.

System 3 (Measures 5-6): The vocal part for Mank begins in measure 5. The piano accompaniment continues. A Trp. (Trumpet) part is also present.

System 4 (Measures 7-8): The vocal part for Mank continues. The piano accompaniment continues. A Trp. (Trumpet) part is also present.

System 5 (Measures 9-10): The vocal part for Mank continues. The piano accompaniment continues. A Trp. (Trumpet) part is also present.

System 6 (Measures 11-12): The vocal part for Mank continues. The piano accompaniment continues. A Trp. (Trumpet) part is also present.

System 7 (Measures 13-14): The vocal part for Mank continues. The piano accompaniment continues. A Trp. (Trumpet) part is also present.


System 8 (Measures 15-16): The vocal part for Mank continues. The piano accompaniment continues. A Trp. (Trumpet) part is also present.


System 9 (Measures 17-18): The vocal part for Mank continues. The piano accompaniment continues. A Trp. (Trumpet) part is also present.

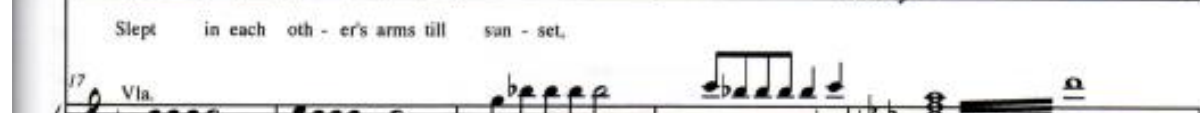
Instrumental parts: Vln. (Violin), Trp. (Trumpet), Fl. (Flute), Ob. (Oboe), Cl. (Clarinet), Tmp. (Timpani), Ve. (Violoncello), leggio (Leggiero).

Vocal parts: Mank, O (Other voice).


Lyrics:
 night of won - der, Night of pas - sion! We loved from
 night-fall till dawn! —


17 Naak  O night

Maak  Slept in each oth - er's arms till sun - set,

17 Vla.  O night


Hrp.  Let day - light ne - - - - ver


22 Naak  O night


Hrn.  Let day - light ne - - - - ver

25 Naak  come! The sun is a poi - son that burns my limbs, _____

Str.  come! The sun is a poi - son that burns my limbs, _____

Tbn. Hrn.  come! The sun is a poi - son that burns my limbs, _____

28 Naak  With night comes love _____ that lends life to my

Tbn.  With night comes love _____ that lends life to my

48 Naak day, the sun that shows the truth a - about my bri - tle

Vc.

51 Naak bones my face mottled by time, my gnarled, de-cay - ing skin.

Vln. Hrn. Str. Tbn.

55 Naak You glim-mer in the moon - light with a sup - er - na - tu - ral

58 Naak beau - ty that chills me. O give me

Str. Cl. Bsn.

61

Naak

For me there is no sunlight, my

Maak

warmth, — give me the sweat and passion of the bril - liant sun!

61

Ob.

66

Naak

love is cold and end - less as e - ter - ni-ty!

Maak

Day is — dark in your em-

66

72

Naak

Sha - - - dow is light, Re -

Maak

brace.

72

Tpt.

76 Naak a - nima - ted love, _____

Maak Oh em-brace me, spi - rit of dark - ness!

76

80 Naak Dark is day - - - light,

80 Fl. Cl. *p* 3 3 Vln. Vcl. 3

Hrp. *f*

82 Naak Death is dark _____

82 Tpt. 3 6

Hrp. Vcl. Db. Hrp.

84 Naak _____ is love.

84 Picc. 8^{ooo} Ob. (8vb) 8^{ooo} Celest. 3

Hrp.

88

Maak

The tem-ple fair,

8va Picc.

Fl.

Tambourine

Hrp.

mp

92

Maak

Come, Naak, let me walk — hand in hand with my beau-ti-ful be-loved.

(8va)

Hrp.

Hrn.

95

Naak

No! In dark-ness we hid, in

Daeng

Maak

Fa-ther! the fair! I want to go!

8va Picc.

Piano

Harp

Str.

99

Naak

dark-ness we stay, — we — stay. I told you, I've warned you what would hap-pen, those

104

Naak
wag-ging tongues, those cru-el voi-ces! You go first, I'll

Maak
Let the child go, The time for fear is over.

104

Hrn.
Hrp.

Str.

Hrp.

Ob.

Cl.

mf

109

Naak
follow, I need — some time to wash a -

109

Fl.

Vln.

Cl.

112

Naak
way the soil

112

8va
Celest.

8va

Fl.
Ob.

Vln.

Str.

Cl.

Db.

A.7 & 8. 'The Sun Whose Rays Are All Ablaze' from *The Mikado*, to a Thai Translation.

Andante comodo. (♩ = 69.)

VOICE.

PIANO.

mf *p sostenuto*

The sun, whose rays are all ablaze with the ver-
 Ah tid peang kōn puang hai lok nee mī shee vid

-liv-ing glo-ry, Does not de-ny His ma-jes-ty- He scorn to tell a sto-ry!
 Tee - suay ngam ah tid kong rau mai koei pid bang koi song sang took - wan pai

He don't exclaim "I blush for shame, So kindly be in-dul-gent" But, fierce and bold, In fiery gold, He glories
 tua chan nan kor mai ai tau rai su sad leaw mai pid bang krai ah tid kong rai nan mī - fai rung rueng mua

all ef-ful-gent! I mean to rule the earth.
 dang kong pleaw fai tua chan nan ku lok nee

As he the sky— We real - ly know our worth, — The sun and I
 ta ahti ku fha ah ti lā tua khong chang nan krong lok nee

cresc. *dim.*

I mean to rule the earth, As he the sky— We real - ly know our worth, The sun and
 tua chan nan ku lok nee ta ahti ku fha ah tid lāe tua kong chan nan krong lok

rall. *a tempo* *rall.* *a tempo*

I Observe his flame, That placid dame, The moon's Co.
 nee doo tee phra jan nan suay - ngam mee sang -

mf *p sostenuto*

les - tial High - ness; There's not a trace Up on her face Of dif - fi - dence or shy - ness:
 song tee nuah ta phra jan khong rau nan mai koey ai koi song - sang yam mud mid

She bor-rows light That, thro' the night, Mankind may all ac-claim her!

ah ud nan na sang jan nan song pua nai phoo kon shuen shom thoey

And, truth to tell, She lights up well, So I, for one, don't blame her. Ah,

phoo kon kong chom phra jan mae wa kuam suay nan ma jak ah tid tua

pray make no mis-take, — We are not shy; We're ve-ry wide a-wake, —

chan nan mai kue ai moen dang duang jan puak rau nan koi tor sang

The moon and I! Ah, pray make no mis-take, We are not shy; We're

phra jan gab chan tua chah nan mai kue ai moen dang phra jan puak

ve-ry wide a-wake, The moon and I! chan

rai nan koi tor sang phra jan gab a tempo

rall. *mf* *p*

A.9. 'Evening Prayer' from *Hansel and Gretel* by E. Humperdinck.

Moderato

1st Voice GRETEL (*mezza voce*) *HANSEL*

When at night I go to sleep,

2nd Voice HANSEL (*mezza voce*)

When at night I go to sleep,

PIANO

pp

Four-teen an-gels watch do- keep; Two my head are guard - ing,

Four-teen an-gels watch do- keep; Two my head are guard - ing,

Two my feet are guid - ing. Two are on my right hand,

Two my feet are guid - ing. Two are on my

poco cresc.

sempre p

Two are on my left hand, Two who warm-ly cov - er,

sempre p

right hand, Two are on my left hand, Two who warm-ly

pp subito

cresc.

Two who o'er me hov - er, Two to whom'tis giv - en To

cov - er, Two who o'er me hov - er, Two who guide my

p

poco rit. *a tempo*

guide my steps to Heav - en!

steps to Heav - en!

poco rit. *a tempo*

pp

One more an - gel by my bed, Holds my hand and soothes my head.

One more an - gel by my bed, — Holds my hand and soothes my head.

Glad am I when she is near Sing - ing songs I love to hear.

Glad am I when she is near Sing - ing songs I love to hear.

Gone is all my griev - ing Love is ne'er de - ceiv - ing

Gone is all my griev - ing Love is ne'er de -

poco cresc.

sempre p

Then her part - ing pray'r To the an - gels there.

sempre p

ceiv - ing Then her part - ing pray'r To the an - gels

pp subito

cresc.

Ten - der watch to keep While I in dreams lie a - sleep.

there While in dreams, in dreams I lie a - sleep.

poco rit. *a tempo*

poco rit. *a tempo*

pp

A.10. 'Alexandra' by King Rama IX.

แผ่นดินของเรา
(Alexandra)

ถึง อยู่ แก้วนี้ ไฉน ไม่ สุข สัก - รวย เหมือน อยู่ บ้าน เรา ชื่น จ้า คำ เจ้า สุข
Toeng you kuen dai mai sook sam ran moean you ban rao shoehn sham kam chao sook

ทวี ทรัพย์ จาก มั่น ดิน สิ้น จาก น - ทิ มี สิทธิ เส - รี สัน - ติ ครอง
Tawee sub jak peun dim sin jak na tee mee sit say ree san ti krong

เมือง เรา มี ป่า ไม้ อยู่ สม - บุรณ ไร่ นา สด
meaung rao mee pa mai you som boon rai na sod

ใส ได้ ฟ้า เรือง ไบ - ราม ส - ถาน สง นาม ประเทือง เกียรติ เมือง
sai tai fah reang bo ran sa taan song nam pra-theang kead moang

ไทย ข - จร ไป ทัว มั่น ไกล รัก ชาติ ของ เรา ไว้ เกิด ผ่อง
Thai ka john pai tua dan glai rak shad kong rao wai toed pong

ไทย ดิน แผ่น แหวม ทอง รวม ที่ รวม น้อย ด้วย กัน รัก เกียรติ รัก
Thai poen pan lam thong ruam pee ruam nong duay gan rak kiad rak

วงศ์ เสริม สง สัม - พันธุ์ ขุน เติบ เมือง ไทย นัน ให้อิน ชง
wong same song sam pan toon toed muang Thai nana hai yoen yong

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A.11. 'Something Wonderful' from *The King and I* by Oscar Hammerstein.

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SOMETHING WONDERFUL

from THE KING AND I

Lyrics by OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II
Music by RICHARD RODGERS

Molto moderato

N.C.
mf

(slowly and smoothly)

G G+ G7 G(b5)

This is a man who thinks with his heart, His heart is not al - ways

G G+

wise. This is a man who stum - bles and falls. But

G7 G(b5) G Eb7#5

this is a man who tries. This is a man you'll for -

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A13/D F#7/D

give and for - give and help and pro - tect, as long — as you

Moderato

G F#7/G C G F#7/G C

live.

Refrain (slowly, with expression)

G D+ C G D+ C

He will not al - ways say What you would have him say.

G C/E Am7 D7

But, now and then, he'll say some - thing won - der - ful.

G D+ C G D+ C
 The thought - less things he'll do will hurt and wor - ry you

G C/E A7 D
 Then, all at once, he'll do some - thing won - der - ful. He

Gm Dm/F Gm A7 D
 has a thou - sand dreams that won't come true. You

Gm Gm/F A7/E D
 know that he be - lieves in them And that's e - nough for you.

più espressivo
cresc.
mf

G D+ C G D+ C G
 You'll al - ways go a - long. De - fend him when he's wrong And tell him

C/E A7 D/F# B7 Em
 when he's strong. He is won - der - ful. He'll al - ways need your love

G7 C/E G/D D+ C/D G/D
 And so he'll get your love A man who needs your love can be

C/D 1 G F#/G C/G 2 G
 won - der - ful.

p *mf* *dim.* *pp*

A.12. 'Un Bel di Vedremo' from *Madame Butterfly* by G. Puccini.

Un Bel di Vedremo

Madame Butterfly

Giacomo Puccini (1904)

Transc. : Bernard Dewagtere

Andante molto calmo

p

Un — bel di ve - dre - mo le - var - si un fil di fu - mo sull' e -

Piano *pp* *come da lontano* *sostenuto*

poco rall.

stre - mo con-fin del ma - re. E poi — là — nave ap - pa - re. —

un poco mosso *mf* rit.

Poi la na - ve bian — ca en - tra nel — por - to,

Piano *mf*

2
13 *un poco mosso* *f* *rit. con passione*

rom - ba il/suo sa - lu - to. Ve - di? E - ve - nu - to!

Pno

mf *con passione*

17 *dolcemente* *rall.* *p* *a tempo* *mp con semplicità*

lo non gli scendo in - con - tro. Io no. Mi met - to là sul ci - gli-o del - le

Pno

dolcemente *pp*

21

e/a - spet - to e/a - spet - to, gran - tem - po e non mi pe - sa

Pno

25 *rit.* *a tempo* *animando un poco*

— la lun - ga at - te - sa. E...u - sei - to dal - la

Pno

pp *p*

29 *3*

fol - la ci - ta - di - na un uomo, un pic - cio!

Pno

33 *rall. un poco*

pun - - to s'av - via per la col - li - -

Pno

37 *Lo stesso movimento*
p sostenendo molto

na. — Chi sa-rà? chi sa - rà? E co-me sa - rà giun-to che di-rà? che di-

Pno

41 *rall.* **Lento**

rà? Chia-me - rà But - ter - fly dul - la lon - ta - na. lo sen - za dar ri -

Pno

4
45

rall. molto

con molto passione

spo - sta me ne sta - ro na - scos - sta un po' per ce - lia e/un po' per non mo-

Pno

col canto

Andante come prima

49

ff con forza

f

rit. < >

ri — re/al-primo in con - tro, ed egli al-quanto in pe-na chia-merà, chia-me-rà. — Pic-

Pno

ff con molto passione

p

53

mf

ci-na mo-gliet-ti - na o-lez-zo di ver - be - na, i no-mi che mi da - vā al suo ve - ni - re. —

Pno

pp

cresc.

57 *f*

Tut-to que-sto avver-rà, te lo pro-met-to. Tien-ti la tua pa-u-ra, io con si-cu-ra

Pno

61 poco rall. *ff* *Largamente*

fe-de l'a-spet-to.

Pno *fff* *meno f dim.*

65 rit.

Pno *p*

68 *sostenuto*

Pno *pp* *mf* *p*

A.13. 'Ganesha's Aria from *Ayodhya* by Somtow Sucharitkul.

23. Ganesha

DIVINE BEINGS

System 1:

- Vocal:** DIVINE BEINGS. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.
- Str.:** Lento. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.
- Harp:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.
- Harmonium:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.
- Tambura:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.

System 2:

- Vocal:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.
- Str.:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.
- Harp:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.
- Harmonium:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.
- Tambura:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.

System 3:

- Vocal:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.
- Str.:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.
- Harp:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.
- Harmonium:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.
- Tambura:** Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (half). Ah vocalization.

Tip: Use a lot of sustain pedal

13

Ah _____ Ah _____ Ah

Hrp.

(+Tambura)

solo violins
(+Gong Wong +solo viola)

Vc.

18

GENESHA *Semplicissimamente*

p O Ra- ma chan - dra

DIVINE BEINGS

Ah _____

5

5

Harmonium *pp*

+Tambura →

22

GANESHA

O Si - ta Child _____ of Das - kan - - - tha,

22

(Tambura)

GENASHA

29

Lis - ten to the words of Ga - ne - - - sha, — from whose lips on - ly

29

34

truth — can spring. The cos - mos is an il - lu - sion and

+Hrp.
Str. 8vb (tutti) *pp*

Hrp.
Db.

39

love and death but sha - dow's cast by the turn - ing of the cos - mic wheel.

(Hrp.)

Vln. (tutti) *mf*

43

Fl.

3

Str.

Cls.

Moderato

45 GANESHA

The mar - riage of Si - - - -

45 Moderato Fl. (+Glk.) (Hrp.) 8va (with L.H.)

Hrp.

Str.

47 ta and Ra - ma is the

47

49 u - nion of Earth and Sky.

49

51 For-e - ver a - part, yet each un-think - a - ble with -

51 Hrp.

Str.

GANESHA

54 *rit.* *a tempo*

out the o - ther. A - yo - dh - ya is

Clst. Fl. Str. *p* *a tempo* Str.+Hrp.+Harmonium *Arpeggiate ad lib*

Hrp.

57 *3*

more than a ci - ty. It is an i - dea be - yond space and time.

solo vln. *mf* solo vln.

63

Where mor - tals dream of truth. Where Kings yearn to

Str.+Hrp (arpeggiated)

67

rule in the way of Dhar - ma.

104

Naak

wag-ging tongues, those cru-el voi-ces! You go first, I'll

Maak

Let the child go, The time for fear is over.

104

Hrn. Hrp. Str. Hrp. Ob. Cl. *mf*

109

Naak

follow, I need — some time to wash a —

109

Vln. Fl. Cl.

112

Naak

way the soil

112

Celest. Fl. Ob. Vln. Cl. Str. Db.

B. Thai Adaptation of *Madame Butterfly*

Synopsis of *Sao Krua Fah*

Place: Chiang Mai, Time: In Rattanakosin's period

Act I

There was an orphaned Chiang Mai girl called Krua Fah. She stays with the elderly she respects such as her grandmother, grandfather and khum Jerd (the gardener). One day, she meets a young soldier called Mr. Prom, a volunteer lieutenant from Bangkok and they both fall in love and get married.

Act II

Krua Fah and Prom's wedding was largely attended. During the ceremony, there was a priest called Tudsipai who interrupted the wedding, but was later dismissed by Prom.

Act III

After settling down, the couple have a child. One day, Second Lieutenant Prom received an order to return to Bangkok and report to the government on the supplies and army in Chiang Mai. Prom promises Krua Fah that he will return very soon.

Act IV

After Second Lieutenant Prom returns to Bangkok, Krua Fah waits for his return but she does not receive any news from him. One day, Krua Fah receives news that Second Lieutenant Prom has reached Lamphun and will be arriving in Chiang Mai very soon. Krua Fah is delighted to hear that, so she dresses up and tidies up the house for her husband's return. It seems that Second Lieutenant Prom has been promoted to captain and has acquired the position of Luang Narong Raksak Charoen. He returns with his new wife called Champa. Krua Fah is devastated by the appearance of Champa. Krua Fah believes Champa will take her son away. She is extremely depressed and bitter, so she decides to commit suicide.¹

¹ Rakpong Thammapusana, 'สาวเครือฟ้า [Sao Krua Fah]', นามานุกรมวรรณคดี, http://www.sac.or.th/databases/thailitdir/detail.php?meta_id=255 (accessed 7.12.20).

C. Original Story of Thai Opera

C.1. The Original Story of *The Mikado*

The setting of *The Mikado* is in Japan. The Mikado is the King of Japan. The Mikado appoints a former tailor, Ko-Ko, to be the Lord High Executioner. Ko-Ko flirts with one of the Mikado's women in the castle. As a result, he is sentenced to be executed. Ko-Ko has not executed any criminals yet because he is caught before any other criminals; the rule being that criminals are to be executed in order. Therefore, Ko-Ko is the next one to be executed. The Mikado gives an order to execute all criminals within a month and if not he will demote Ko-Ko.

Ko-Ko has a young ward called Yum-Yum; the Mikado has a son called Nanki-Poo, who is in love with Yum-Yum. The Mikado wants his son to marry with Princess Katisha. She is much older than Nanki-Poo. However, Nanki-Poo is unwilling and runs away to see Yum-Yum to tell her that he is actually a prince. Because of his refusal to marry Katisha, Nanki-Poo is sentenced to death. Ko-Ko devises a plan to trick them by telling them that they can get married to each other but only after Nanki-Poo gets executed (in that case Yum-Yum will marry Ko-Ko later). However, it is the law the wife has to die when the husband is executed. With this plan, they realize that all of them will die.

So, Ko-Ko tries to find a way out by lying to the Mikado that he has executed Nanki-Poo. The Mikado is very angry because Nanki-Poo is his son. Nanki-Poo threatens Ko-Ko that he will prove that he is still alive unless Ko-Ko agrees to marry Katisha. Ko-Ko has to agree to prevent the Mikado's anger and so at the end no one is executed. Nanki-Poo and Yum-Yum are married. Ko-Ko has to marry the old lady, Princess Katisha.²

² W.S. Gilbert, *The Mikado*, https://www.gsarchive.net/mikado/mk_lib.pdf (accessed 7.12..20).

C.2. The Original Story of *Chao Tak Sin*

It was the second war between Siam and Burma. This war Siam lose to Burma. It takes three years to end this war. The Burmese soldiers destroy important temples, palaces, historical papers and burn down the capital city Ayutthaya. This is the war that destroys most of the evidence of Thailand's history before 1767. Chao Tak Sin was a leading soldier in this war. In the beginning of the war, Chao Tak Sin runs away from the war with his soldiers and leaves his friends to die; he predicts that this war will be the end of Ayutthaya. It was a big shame that he ran away and guilt brings him back to gather the soldiers and fight back with a clever plan. He sets Ayutthaya free again after they lost.

After seven months, he sets himself up as king and moves the capital city from Ayutthaya to Thonburi. He rebuilds everything back to normal but he lasts only fourteen years as king before his best friend, Phra Phutthayotfah or King Rama I, kills him. Phra sets himself up as a new king in a new kingdom called Rathanagosin. It is not clear how he died but most books write that Chao Tak Sin had a mental disorder and that was the reason Phra Phutthayotfah had to kill him. Therefore, Thonburi Kingdom has only ever had one king.³

³ Pramin Kleuatong, พระเจ้าตาก *[Pra Chao Tak]* (Bangkok, 2014).

C.3. Synopsis of *Madana*

The story is set in Heaven and Earth. In Heaven, Sutheb falls in love with Madana but she does not, therefore Sutheb asks Mayawin to cast a spell on Madana to love him. However, she loses her soul after being put under the spell. After knowing Madana has lost her soul, Sutheb decides to reverse the spell. Sutheb expresses his love to Madana after she receives her soul again, however she refuses his love once more. Sutheb becomes furious and therefore curses Madana to be born on Earth. Madana begs Sutheb to be a rose because its smells good and useful. Sutheb agrees and curses her to be a beautiful rose on Earth. She can only become human once a month, for one whole day and night, starting from the night of the full moon. The only way to lift the curse is if she loves someone. Sutheb knows that this action would cause Madana pain and suffering. When she can no longer bear the pain, she will beg him to lift the curse. Meanwhile on Earth, there is a hermit named Kalathornsinn who lives in Himaone forest. He likes the Madana rose thus he moves the rose to his house. Every month during the night of the full moon, Madana transforms into a woman and she grows close with the hermit. He treats her as his own child.

On one full moon night, King Jayasena goes hunting. There he meets Madana and they fall in love with each other. Therefore, he orders his soldier to camp next to the hermit hut. Because Madana has found love, the curse is lifted and she becomes human again. She tells her true story to the king. The next day, the king marries Madana. However, the king was already married with Chanti before he met Madana. The king returns to his kingdom with Madana. Chanti, the wife of the king, becomes jealous of Madana. She pushes Madana around so the King treats Chanti badly. Chanti is furious so she tells her father that her husband treats her bad and begs her father to bring war to the town. She also plans to lie to the king that Madana is having an affair with one of the soldiers by ordering Vidura to spread the lie to the king. The king believes him and so he orders his nobleman to kill Madana and the soldier. However, the nobleman does not kill them. Vidura becomes afraid of karma and ashamed that he has lied to the king. He reveals the truth to the king about the queen's order. The king is now upset. The nobleman also tells the truth to the king that he did not kill both of them; he left Madana to return to the forest and

the soldier went to war and died. The king wins the war that was instigated by Queen Chanti.

In the forest, Madana calls Sutheb to bring her back to heaven. Sutheb asks Madana to go back to heaven with him and asks her to love him. Madana still refuses because she cannot love anyone anymore. Sutheb is angry thus he curses her again. This time he curses her to become a rose forever. After King Jayasena won the war, he tries to find Madana in the forest but it was too late. He takes the Madana rose back to his palace with sadness.⁴

⁴ Vajiravudh, มัทนะพาธา ตำนานดอกกุหลาบ [*Madanabhada, the legend of the Rose*] (Bangkok, 2001).

C.4. Synopsis of *Mae Naak*

This story is believed to have happened around the period of King Rama IV. The story is about a beautiful young woman named Naak, who lives near the *Phra Khanong* canal with her husband, Maak. Naak is pregnant but Maak has to go to war. Maak is injured whilst fighting in the war and almost dies, therefore he has to heal before he travels back home to Naak. While Naak is waiting for him, she is ready to give birth. Unfortunately, Naak and their child both die because there are complications whilst giving birth. When Maak is finally healed, he returns home. He finds his loving wife and child waiting for him, but they are ghosts. In the story, Maak does not know this before returning. The people in the village try to warn him but they are all killed by Naak.

One day while Naak is cooking, she drops a lemon from the first floor of the house to the ground floor. Then, Naak stretches her arm to get the lemon, while Maak is on the ground floor next to where the lemon landed. Maak sees Naak's long, unnatural arm reaching for the lemon. In that moment, he realises that his wife is a ghost as everyone had warned him. Maak runs to the temple and asks a monk to help him. Naak cannot go into the temple because it is a sacred place. She calls Maak outside the temple and begs him to come back to her. Maak tells her that they exist in different dimensions and for her to please let him go. He also promises to meet her in his next life. Naak's ghost is captured by a powerful exorcist.

C.5. Synopsis of *Ramakean*

The plot of this opera is a reduced version of the *Ramayana* epic, since the original poem is very long. The story begins with a female giant, Sammanagka, who is a lonely widow. She sees King Rama, an embodiment of the god Vishnu, his lover Sita, and Lakshman, King Rama's brother. She falls in love with King Rama, and therefore the giant transforms into a beautiful woman in order to seduce the king, yet he refuses her. She is angry and jealous because she sees Sita with King Rama. Thus, Sammanagka tries to kill Sita but Lakshman stops her. Lakshman punishes her by cutting off her arms, legs, ears and nose. Sammanagka is angry so she tells her brothers. When her two brothers see that Sammanagka has lost her beauty, they want to seek revenge on the king and Lakshman. However, her two brothers die during the fight with the king and Lakshman.

Sammanagka is filled with more anger. She wants to have her revenge on King Rama by using a giant called Todsgan (Ravan), a green giant with ten faces and ten hands. She lies to Todsgan, telling him that her brothers died in the fight with King Rama because they wanted to take Sita as an offering to Todsgan. She also mentions that Sita is very beautiful. Todsgan falls in love with Sita even though he has never seen her before. Todsgan orders his soldier, Maris, to transform into a golden deer and find Sita.

While King Rama, Lakshman and Sita are in the forest, Sita sees the golden deer. She asks King Rama to capture it. While the king tries to catch the deer, Lakshman is taking care of Sita in a hut. King Rama follows the animal to the far end of the forest, while the giant Maris fakes his voice to imitate King Rama asking for help near the hut. Sita hears the voice and becomes worried, so she orders Lakshman to help her lover. Sita is now alone. Todsgan sees his chance, therefore he transforms into a hermit and kidnaps Sita, taking her to his town called Langka.

A huge condor, a friend of King Rama's father, sees Sita with Todsgan during their journey to Langka. He attacks Todsgan, but Todsgan uses Sita's ring to kill the condor. Before the condor dies he finds King Rama and Lakshman and tells them that Todsgan has kidnapped Sita. Todsgan arrives at Langka and tells his son to look after Sita. On the way to Langka, the King and Lakshman meet Hanuman, a

powerful white monkey who has diamond fur and canines made of crystal. Later, he becomes King Rama's servant. King Rama and Lakshman find many more soldiers who willingly fight against the Todsgan's army. They also receive help from people they meet during their travels to Langka. Todsgan tries to please Sita but he is still unable to win her heart. Todsgan tries to rape Sita, however she is protected by her god with fire, so Todsgan cannot touch her. Sita tries to kill herself but Hanuman stops her and tells her that King Rama is coming to help her. Before Hanuman returns to King Rama, he destroys Langka city until the giant captures him. Todsgan tries to kill Hanuman in all sorts of manners but Hanuman still does not die. He lies to Todsgan that only fire can kill him. While Hanuman's body is burning with fire, he runs through Langka, burning the whole city down. Todsgan has to invite all the angels to rebuild Langka.

One night, Todsgan has a bad dream, where his brother Pipek predicts that bad luck will befall Todsgan and he might die. The only way that can prevent his misfortune is to return Sita to King Rama. Todsgan refuses and expels his brother out of Langka. Pipek goes to King Rama and asks to join the army with the king. Pipek drinks a special water that signifies his fealty. King Rama appoints him to be the supervisor for the war. Later, Todsgan comes up with a plan by ordering a giant to transform into Sita and to act like a dead person while floating in the river near where the king stays. This makes the king believe that Sita is dead. He is in grief but Hanuman suspects that it is not the real Sita. Hanuman sets fire to the dead body. Suddenly, the giant reveals herself.

The two brothers continue to fight with Todsgan to get Sita back. Todsgan loses many family members and friends because they try to stop King Rama's army. Since Todsgan knows that they will kill him, he puts his heart into a box and hides it at the top of a mountain. During the fight, Todsgan is still not dead even though there are many arrows in his body. Later, Hanuman discovers the location of where Todsgan hid his heart and brings it back to the battle. Todsgan knows that the king is now in possession of his heart, so he puts a curse on King Rama so that he will never be happy with Sita. The fight is over. Sita is now back safely, however she begs to prove that she is still pure by walking on a path covered with fire. Because of Sita's purity, lotus flowers appear under her feet every step she takes. She successfully proves herself and then they all return to Ayodhya. However, Sita, for

some reason, returns to the forest to live there while she is pregnant. In the forest where Sita lives with the hermit, a devil transforms into a servant of Sita and asks her to draw a picture of Todsgan because she is curious to see what the giant looks like. Sita draws a picture of Todsgan. However, she does not know that King Rama happened to be in the forest. He walks past and sees the drawing. Sita tries to erase the drawing but she could not. King Rama is upset so he orders Lakshman to kill her. Lakshman decides not to kill her but lets her run away into the forest. Lakshman uses the heart of a deer to prove to King Rama that he killed her. After this incident, she gives birth to her son, Phra Mongkut.

One day, Mongkut goes missing, the hermit draws a picture of a child to replace him. Sita comes back with Mongkut and before the hermit could erase the picture, Sita begs him to use a magic to make the picture come to life. They called him Phra Lop.

While Mongkut and Lop are playing, they make a very loud noise, so much so that people in Ayodhya could hear them. Hanuman, King Rama and many soldiers come to capture them because they thought it was a monster. A fight broke out between King Rama and the children. They find out that both of them are King Rama's children. King Rama begs Sita for forgiveness but she refuses. King Rama has to lie to Sita that he has died to make her come to Ayodhya. Sita finds out about the deception so she runs to the underworld.⁵

⁵ Reunreuthai Sudjapan, นามานุกรม รามเกียรติ์ [*Encyclopedia Ramakean*] (Bangkok, 2016).

C.6. Synopsis of *Suriyothai*

Siam (Thailand's former name) and Burma have always been enemies, and fought with each other for one hundred and seven years. Since the Ayutthaya Kingdom period (1351-1767) until the Rattanakosin Kingdom period (1782–present), there were forty-four battles between Siam and Burma: twenty-four during the Ayutthaya period, ten during the Thonburi period (1767–1782) and ten during the Rattanakosin period.

The legend of Suriyothai takes place in the battles during the Ayutthaya Kingdom period. The story began when Thianracha (1509-1569), the husband of Suriyothai, was still a member of the royal family when King Chairacha (1539-1546) was ruling the Ayutthaya Kingdom. The king became sick and passed away in 1546. His son, Chao Fa was going to be the next King, however he was only eleven years old. Thianracha was the regent for the prince Chao Fa whilst he is still growing up. However, the queen, Si Sudachan was afraid that Thianracha would take her power, as she wanted it all to herself. She tried every way to force Thianracha to leave the position. Thianracha was in fear of his life so he resigned and became a monk at the Rajabhat Temple. Si Sudachan was satisfied. She was in love with the soldier, Worawongsathirat, and had a baby with him. Si Sudachan was also afraid that the Crown Prince Chao Fa would take her power when he gets older. Therefore, she poisoned Chao Fa, and lied to the people that he was very sick. After Chao Fa died, Si Sudachan and her new lover had full power of the kingdom. Many Thai people could not accept Si Sudachan and her lover as rulers of Siam any longer because they broke royal protocol. Thus, they assassinated Worawongsathirat, Si Sudachan's lover. Since Worawongsathirat was dead, the Thai governor invited Thianracha to be the next king, the seventeenth King of Ayutthaya. He had to resign from being a monk and return to the throne. Suriyothai was still the wife of Thianracha from before he became a monk, therefore she became the Queen of Siam. Thianracha also changed his name to Maha Chakkraphat. Thai people lived in peace while he was the king until six months later, when the Burmese tried to take Siam again.

Tabinshwehti (1516-1550), the Burmese King, heard that Siam had a new king, Maha Chakkraphat and he was a monk who was not skilled in war. Therefore,

Tabinshwehti thought that it was the perfect time to attack and destroy Ayutthaya, while the Siamese soldiers were not ready for war and the king was still very new.

Tabinshwehti brought 300,000 Burmese soldiers with him to attack Ayutthaya. Maha Chakkraphat heard the bad news about the Burmese soldiers marching to destroy the kingdom. He left Ayutthaya to fight against the Burmese army. He brought his soldiers and his family along with him. He rode into the battle on a war elephant, accompanied by Queen Suriyothai, and one of their young daughters, Princess Boromdhilok. The queen and princess rode together on a small war elephant called Plai Song Uriyakasatr. Both of them were dressed up in male military clothes, including helmets and armour. Also, two princes, Prince Ramesuan and Prince Mahin, accompanied their father on elephant mounts of their own.

When the elephant battle began, Maha Chakkraphat's elephant panicked and ran in the opposite direction to that of the enemy soldiers. Then the soldier, Phrachao Plae, took this opportunity to chase after the king. Suriyothai saw this situation unfolding, and fearing that her husband was in danger, she charged ahead to put her elephant between the king and the enemy, thereby blocking his attack. Phrachao Plae fought with the queen without knowing that he was fighting with a woman. However, Phrachao Plae's elephant overpowered the queen's elephant, forcing it to rear up onto its hind legs. Phrachao Plae took his chance to kill the queen with a strike of his halberd. The queen dies on the elephant. The wound runs from her shoulder until her breast. The princess, Suriyothai's daughter who rode the elephant with her, also died, however no one knows the cause. The princes tried to help but it was too late. They were only able to protect the dead bodies until the battle ended. They then brought them back to the city.⁶

⁶ Anake Nawigamune, เบ็ดตำนาน นากพระโขนง [*Mae Naak, Classical Ghost of Siam*] (Bangkok, 2006).

C.7. Synopsis of *Life of Pi*

Pi is a young man, born in a family that owns a zoo in India. Pi believes in three religions: Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. Students in his school always mock his name as Pee even though he tries to explain that it is Pi. He has an older brother. When he was young, his father always taught him to be aware of the wildness and true nature of animals. Animals do not behave like humans and we should not treat or think of animals like us. His father knows that Pi is very naïve and is not aware of the danger posed by the tiger. Therefore, he forces Pi to watch the tiger kill and eat goats.

When Pi becomes a teenager, his father decides to emigrate to Canada because of the politics in India. They want to sell their animals in Canada and travel to live there. They travel on a cargo ship called *Tsimtsum*. Unfortunately, while they travel, a storm happens. Pi wakes up early and hears the engine noise so he cannot sleep. He tries to wake his brother but is not successful. He is excited to see the storm. He goes onto the ship's deck, where he is thrown into a lifeboat by the crew. The ship sinks and he is the only human who survives the harrowing shipwreck. He also finds himself in a lifeboat with four animals: a seriously injured zebra, a hyena, a female mature orang-utan and a four hundred and sixty pound Bengal tiger, named Richard Parker. He realises that the crew threw him in the lifeboat because they saw the hyena in the boat and planned for it to attack him and leave the lifeboat. He realises how cruel humans can be. A few days later, the hyena attacks and eats the wounded zebra, then he goes after the orang-utan, named Orange Juice. Even though the orang-utan fights back, the hyena still kills her. Pi was too scared to help and to kill the hyena before it happened. Finally, the tiger jumps out to kill and eat the hyena. Now, there is two living things on the lifeboat: Pi and the tiger. Pi realises that he must survive and tame the tiger because the tiger almost eats him and the tiger will kill him faster than hunger will. Therefore, he creates a raft built from oars and lifejackets. He attaches this raft to the boat. He tries to train and control the tiger by blowing a whistle and shaking the lifeboat to make the tiger seasick. Pi now controls the tiger and has his own place on the lifeboat. Pi starts to lose his mind by talking with the tiger and imagining food. Luckily enough, Pi and the tiger find an island. It is

full of trees and plants. Pi finds out that actually this island eats everything that lives on it. They have to return to the lifeboat and go into the ocean again.

Finally, they arrive in Mexico. The tiger runs into the forest and is never seen again. Pi is in custody and questioned. The officials do not believe Pi's story at first. Later, he changes the story by replacing the animals with people. The zebra was an injured crewman. The hyena was a foul-tempered French cook and the orang-utan was his own mother. The cook kills the crewman in order to eat him. When Pi's mother objects, the cook kills her too. Pi says that he stabbed the French cook in the throat and watched him die, therefore, Pi was the tiger. The officers are satisfied by the second story, but they admit to Pi that his first story where he survives with the tiger in the lifeboat is the better story.⁷

⁷ Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*, (n.p., 2003, first press, 2002).

C.8. Synopsis of *Ngau Pa*

The whole original story of Ngau Pa is a very long poem. Performing the poem drama takes fifteen-and-a-half-hours. However, the opera version shortens the story and cuts some parts out. King Rama V had a chance to visit a city called Phthalung. Here he learned about the Ngau people and then visited where they lived. A young Ngong, named Knang, told him the story about the love triangle in the Ngau Pa village. Knang is an orphan who lives with his brother. Knang's best friend is Maipai, who has a beautiful sister called Lamhab. Both Knang and Maipai always play with each other. One day, they meet Sompla. Both of them admire the courage of Sompla. Sompla teaches them how to use bila and even fight with a tiger. Later, Sompla reveals to them that he loves Lamhab. Even though she will marry with Hanao very soon because Hanao's parents asked Lamhab's parents to marry with their son. Sompla tries to forget Lamhab but he cannot. After a long day with Sompla, both boys offer to help him by delivering gifts to Lamhab. There are three gifts: (1) *Jamp'un* flowers; (2) *Hap'aung* flowers; (3) a claw of the tiger. The flowers mean that he is in love with her and the claw means that he is willing to fight and risk his life to win over her heart. The gifts are wrapped in a *Gaitüan* leaf as a symbol to let her know that if her parents do not accept him, he will run away with her. They also devise a plan to lure Lamhab to this part of the jungle in the morning so that Sompla can persuade her to come with him.

Lamhab has agreed to come to the other side of the jungle. Both Maipai and Knang are hiding behind a tree and waiting for Sompla to come out. Before, Sompla comes out, suddenly, a snake attacks Lamhab, making Lamhab faint. Sompla comes out and catches her before she falls. Luckily, the snake did not bite Lamhab. Lamhab wakes up and sees Sompla. He admits to Lamhab that if she died, he would die with her and he finally tells her that he loves her. Lamhab refuses his love because she feels guilty about being betrothed to Hanao. However, she is falling in love with Sompla because he has saved her life. Both finally confess their love to each other and promise that they will never be apart.

One day before the wedding day, Lamhab is crying because she will marry Hanao the next day. Sompla promises to rescue her before the wedding day but he

still has not come. While Lamhab is about to commit suicide, Maipai arrives to tell her the good news that Sompla plans to take her tomorrow. However, she must play along and follow the wedding ceremony. The next day, after the wedding ceremony, Sompla takes Lamhab while Hanao is lured away from her.

Hanao is angry that his wife has been abducted by someone. After a while, Hanao and his two brothers decide to go find Lamhab and vow not to return until they have found her.

One morning at the other side of the forest. While Sompla is looking for food, Hanao attacks him from behind. Both fight until Hanao falls. Lamhab feeling that something might happen, runs to where they fight. When Sompla is about to stab Hanao, Hanao's brother blows a dart into Sompla's forehead. He falls on Lamhab. Before Sompla dies, he urges her to stay with Hanao so that he can die without worrying about her. Lamhab cries and says that she will not be anybody else's and stabs herself. Hanao cries because he discovers that the two of them were in love and it was because of him that they both died. He stabs himself falling right beside Lamhab and Sompla.⁸

⁸ King Rama V, រាជប្រាសាទ [Ngau Pa] (Bangkok, 2012).

C.9. Synopsis of *The Lunch Box*

In a small village in Yasothon, a province in Isan, the north-eastern region of Thailand, lives a poor family: a mother and a son called Thong.¹⁵⁶ They live near a rice field and work as farmers. The mother is old and Thong is a teenager. Thong always helps his mother tend to their rice field so that his family can have a better life. During the harvest season, Thong goes to work in the field every day, and his mother prepares his food and delivers it to him.

One day, Thong goes to work in the rice field as usual. The mother oversleeps that day, which causes her to be late in preparing and delivering her son's lunch. Thong works all morning in the middle of the rice field in very strong sunshine. He feels tired and hungry. He waits for his food from his mother but she still does not show up. He is angry because he feels that he has worked very hard for his family, so he expects his mother to deliver his lunch on time. By the time his mother arrives, he is starving. He notices that the lunch box that his mother has brought looks smaller than usual. He thinks there is not enough food to fill him up. Because of his anger and hunger, he hits his mother with a piece of wood. He eats the food in the lunch box without checking on his mother. After he feels full, there is still some food left. He realises that he was very hungry and did not think before he hit his mother. He runs back to his mother but she is dead. He feels so sad and upset so he confesses to the city governor. He also asks them if he can be a monk. The governor allows him.

He is strict with the Buddhism principles so the people in the village respect him. They give him a golden broom as a reward. The village is renamed Baan Dadthong later, which literally means 'the house of golden broom'. His story is famous and people in the other villages also respect him. The monk wishes to build a pagoda for his mother so he can get rid of his bad karma. People heard his wish, they help him to build this high pagoda until completion.⁹

⁹ Udom Dusriwat, นิทานพื้นบ้าน กองข้าวน้อยฆ่าแม่, [*A Folk Tale, a Small Rice Box Kill Mother*] (Bangkok, 1994).

D. Libretto of ‘The Sun Whose Rays Are All Ablaze’ from *The Mikado*, to a Thai Translation. (Track 8)

อาทิตย์เพ่งขึ้นเพื่อให้โลกนี้ มีชีวิตที่สวยงาม

อาทิตย์ของเราไม่เคยดับบัง คอยส่องแสงทุกวันไป

ตัวฉันนั้นก็ไม่อยเทาไหน ซ้อสตัยและไม่ดับบังใคร

อาทิตย์ของเรานั้นมีไฟรุ่งเรืองเหมือนดังกองเปลวไฟ

ตัวฉันนั้นคือโลกนี้ ถ้าอาทิตย์นั้นคือฟ้า

อาทิตย์และตัวฉัน นั้นครองโลกนี้

ตัวฉันนั้นคือโลกนี้ ถ้าอาทิตย์คือฟ้า

อาทิตย์และตัวฉัน นั้นครองโลกนี้

ตัวฉันนั้นคือโลกนี้ ถ้าอาทิตย์คือฟ้า

อาทิตย์และตัวของฉัน นั้นครองโลกนี้

ดูที่พระจันทร์ข้างสวยงาม มีแสงสองที่นวลตา

พระจันทร์ของเรานั้นไม่เคยอาย ค่อยส่องแสงยามมืดมิด

อาทิตย์นั้นให้แสงจันทร์นั้นส่องเพื่อให้ผู้คนชื่นชมเธอ

ผู้คนคงชมพระจันทร์แม้ว่าความสวยนั้นมาจากอาทิตย์

ตัวฉันนั้นไม่เคยอายเหมือนดังดวงจันทร์

พวกเรานั้นคอยทอแสง ดวงจันทร์กับฉัน

ตัวฉันนั้นไม่เคยอายเหมือนดังดวงจันทร์

พวกเรานั้นคอยทอแสง ดวงจันทร์กับฉัน

E. Composers of Thai Opera (Performed)

Getting to know the lives of these creatives who have composed Thai opera (which have subsequently been performed) is important in order to understand their stylistic taste and motivations. Therefore, this thesis includes relevant details of their childhood, education, influences, awards, works, lifestyle and reputation.

E.1. Somtow Sucharitkul

Somtow Papinian Sucharitkul or S. P. Somtow (b.1952) was born in Thailand, but raised in Europe (see Figure 1). He is the main composer who created most of the Thai operas in this thesis. He is the first Thai to graduate high school from Eton College. He also won a scholarship to study his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Literature and Music at Cambridge University. He graduated his BA with honours. He is known as a Thai composer and author. He is a member of the royal family in Thailand as his grandfather's sister was a cousin of King Vajiravudh or King Rama VI.¹⁰

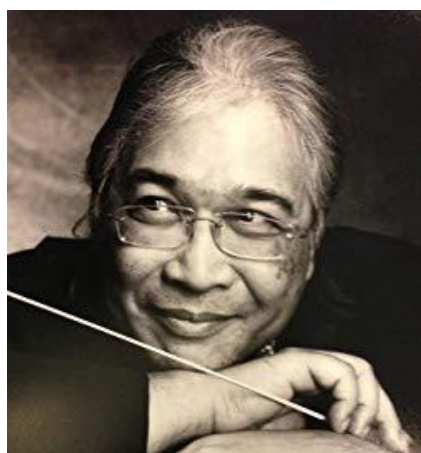


Figure E.1: Somtow Sucharitkul.¹¹

Sucharitkul conducted an orchestra for the first time when he was only nineteen years old. He composed the music himself and conducted the Holland Symphony Orchestra in the Netherlands for Queen Juliana. After he graduated from Cambridge, he returned to Thailand in 1970. While he was in Thailand, he collaborated with Bruce Gaston (b.1947), an American musician and another Thai

¹⁰ Somtow Sucharitkul, *Victory in Vienna*, (Bangkok, 2013), p. 7.

¹¹ Somtow Sucharitkul, 'Somtow's World', <https://www.somtow.com/> (accessed 6.12.20).

composer, Dnu Huntrakul (b.1950) to make new music. It was the first contemporary music in Thailand that combined with ancient traditional Thai instruments.

Sucharitkul thought that this new music would be a turning point for contemporary music in Thailand, but it was the opposite. The result was not what they expected. They were heavily criticised by Thai musicians; Sucharitkul was given the nickname 'Ultra-modern novel'.¹² After he received many negative comments, Sucharitkul took a break from creating music and moved to America. In 1980, he published his first novel: he has since written more than two-hundred stories under the pseudonym S.P. Somtow. In the 1990s, Sucharitkul established himself as a successful Asian novelist, although he has always written his books in English.¹³ Nevertheless, he still has a passion for music, therefore he started to compose music again. He returned to Thailand in 1999 and started to composed music in a Neo-Classical style. In 2000 he got a commission to compose an opera, which is based on the story of King Rama VI. *Madana* was performed in February 2001 in Bangkok. Since this successful event, he has kept producing Thai operas almost every year. He also won many national and international awards.¹⁴

Awards	Year
Distinguished Silpathorn Award from Thailand's Ministry of Culture	2008
First Prize, Symphony Orchestra Category, Siam Sinfonietta (director) Summa Cum Laude Competition, Musikverein, Vienna	2012
W Award from International Wagner Society	2013
Gold Award, Los Angeles International Music Festival, Siam Sinfonietta (director) Disney Hall, USA	2013
Showcase Award, Sounds of Summer International Music Festival, Siam Sinfonietta (director), Carnegie Hall, US	2014

Table E. 1: Sucharitkul's List of Music awards.¹⁵

¹² Somtow Sucharitkul, 'Hitting The Right Note', *thailandtatter*, entry post 13.01.18, http://www.thailandtatter.com/arts-culture/arts/society-maestros-hitting-the-right-note-1-of-3-somtowsucharitkul?fbclid=IwAR3i_IRR0Ok2_gMQ34fB6DV-kTqgypUXPhMxE5Je8hEPdcAbhqpZ10gNoU (accessed 19.02.19).

¹³ Somtow Sucharitkul, 'Somtow list of awards', <http://www.somtows.com/awards/> (accessed 25.02.19).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

As well as composing music, Sucharitkul also established the Bangkok Opera company, Siam Philharmonic Orchestra, Siam Sinfonietta and Orpheus Choir of Bangkok. The Siam Sinfonietta entered the world competition *Summa Cum Laude* in Vienna in 2012 and they won first prize. The International Herald Tribune wrote that Sucharitkul is ‘the most well-known expatriate Thai in the world’ (see Figure 2). He taught music to the members of Siam Sinfonietta and his teaching method is known as the *Somtow System*.¹⁶ His music is a mixture of Strauss, Monteverdi, Mozart, Puccini and Wagner. All those flavours mix together with Thai melodies, Bali, Indian, Raga scales and has influenced his compositions and become his unique style of music.¹⁷



Figure E.2: Picture of Somtow Sucharitkul.¹⁸

Operas	Year
<i>Madana</i>	2000
<i>Mae Naak</i>	2003
<i>Ayodhya</i>	2006
<i>The Silent Prince</i>	2010
<i>Suriyothai</i>	2013
<i>Dan No Ura</i>	2014
<i>The Dragon Lord</i>	2015
<i>The Snow Dragon</i>	2015

¹⁶ Sucharitkul, *Victory in Vienna*, pp. 14-21

¹⁷ Author's interview with Somtow Sucharitkul (7 August 2017).

¹⁸ Sucharitkul, *Victory in Vienna*, p. 6.

<i>The Faithful Son</i>	2015
<i>Chariot of Heaven</i>	2017
<i>The Happy Prince</i>	2017
<i>The Sacrifice</i>	2019
<i>Architect of Dreams</i>	2019

Table E.2: List of operas composed by Somtow Sucharitkul.

Additionally, he composed *Reya - the musical* in 2012, an adaptation of a famous TV show series in Thailand written by his mother, Thaithow Sucharitkul, a Thai writer and translator. He also wrote an opera cycle about the Ten Lives of the Buddha (see Chapter 4.3).

Sucharitkul's operas have been performed with success because he had huge support from the royal family since a young age and received a good education. HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana was the most supportive figure of his works. Most of his work is dedicated to the royal family, which is why many Thai companies have provided him with financial support as a means of showing respect to the royal family.¹⁹ However, Princess Galyani Vadhana passed away in 2008 but his works are still performed successfully.

'You cannot really get upset when Somtow Sucharitkul arrives more than 30 minutes late for an interview'.²⁰

The reputation of Sucharitkul is well known as an unorganised, slow-working person that lacks punctuality. There was an interview with both Thai and foreign musicians who had worked with Sucharitkul. Most of the Thai singers were younger than twenty-eight years old and with little experience in singing opera. The other professional singers were hired from abroad to sing as the main roles in this opera. They complained that Sucharitkul always provided the music only a few days before the performance and though some of the young singers had no experience, they had to learn the music quickly when working with him. His music is also difficult to sing

¹⁹ Somtow Sucharitkul, *Opera East, The Early Years of the Bangkok Opera*, (Bangkok, 2007). p. 2.

²⁰ Denis D. Gray, 'Meet the Thai 'Renaissance man' on the verge of making musical history', *nikkeiasianreview*, entry posted 10.11.16, <https://asia.nikkei.com/NAR/Articles/Meet-the-Thai-Renaissance-man-on-the-verge-of-making-musical-history> (accessed 7.12.20).

with wide leaps from a low tone to very high tone, and the intervals always reach a seventh. Nonetheless, all singers are delighted to perform and get the experience to sing with a living composer.²¹ Another big complaint about working with Sucharitkul was about the payment. It took them more than a year to receive the fee and some chorus singers never earned any money from him. Nevertheless, they worked with him because they admired his music and desired the experience. They believed he was a genius composer, and as he always supported young Thai musicians, they were thankful to work with him.²² All the singers had to meet and sing for Sucharitkul before he composed the music because he composed just for individual singers, therefore each role can bring out the best of them in the music. After the singers received the music score from him, they had the option of asking him to change some notes and he would consider it. Sucharitkul works at a slow pace because he has to organise everything alone, from auditioning musicians, composing the music, contacting sponsors, and managing the stage, actors and costumes, as well as everything else that is involved with his operas. Therefore, he cannot dedicate his time and focus on one area in particular. This also affects all the singers in the sense that they have to study and interpret the entire role by themselves. He is rarely critical about singing technique, thus, these young Thai singers had to have their own private lessons outside of the production. In one of the musician's interviews, it was said: 'Sucharitkul had to spend his own money to create those performances by selling his three houses in USA to move to Thailand and build Opera Siam.' 'Sucharitkul's house is like a music home industry', said by a famous Malaysian musician. I observed a similar scenario when Sucharitkul invited me to his house to collect some music scores. His house was full of musicians rehearsing and collaborating on a project. He also kept a large amount of important music scores and there were some musicians living at the property too.

Some Thai musicians respect Sucharitkul as a father figure because he allows them to stay at his place, provides them food, teaches them music, and gives them the opportunity to perform in important events and supports them to study and perform abroad. One of his significant students, Trisdee na Patalung, a young famous Thai composer and conductor, recently became a music director of the

²¹ Author's interview with Thai musicians (10-29 August 2017).

²² Ibid.

Bangkok Baroque ensemble and the Resident conductor of the Orpheus Choir in Bangkok. Patalung studied music at College of Music, Mahidol University, Bangkok when he was thirteen. However, he dropped out before graduating because he found the best music teacher: Somtow Sucharitkul. Sucharitkul became his home school teacher and mentor in Sucharitkul's house. Since then Patalung conducted most of Sucharitkul's works and operas.

From the interview with singers who worked with Patalung, they agreed that he is a talented conductor. Many Thai and foreign musicians are pleased to work with him because he works professionally. Patalung is the only Thai conductor that performed with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI (a national orchestra from Italy) and signed a contract with Columbia Artist Management Inc. New York (CAMI). In 2011, the magazine *Class Filoſafia* from Italy, wrote that Pathalung is one of the most talented conductors in the world that is younger than thirty years old. The *Bangkok Post* newspaper wrote that he is one of the "sixty-six young leaders shaping Thailand's future".²³ He also worked as a vocal coach for opera singers in Opera Studio Nederland when he was only eighteen years old and conducted at Concertgebouw, whose hall is one of the most important classical halls in the world. He conducted opera *La Cenerentola* for the Dutch National Touring Opera for twelve cities around the Netherlands. In 2009-2010, he conducted in the Rossini Opera Festival at Pesaro, Italy. He was the youngest conductor in this festival in both years.²⁴ Patalung is the main example of a student of Sucharitkul who proves that his teaching skill is magnificent, even though his student has no degree: his works are accepted internationally. On top of that, Sucharitkul does not teach only music students but he also adopted other children who are talented in other skills. One recent student of Sucharitkul is Jiraros Kewjaila, a Thai artist. Kewjaila appreciated that Sucharitkul takes care and supports him to study art after seeing his drawing. 'I would not be here if I do not have him and I love him as a father' Kewjaila said with tears in his eyes.²⁵

²³ Sucharitkul, *Victory in Vienna*, pp. 11-12.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Author's interview Jiraros Kewjaila (26 June 2018).

E.2. Bruce Gaston



Figure E.3: Bruce Gaston.

Bruce Gaston (บุรุษ เกตกรรณ [Burus Katekan], literally meaning ‘Boy with a Good Head and Good Ears’) is an American musician and composer (see Figure 3). He composed the Thai opera called *A Boy and a Tiger* in this thesis (see Chapter 4.2.8). His Thai name has an important history as it is often attributed to Hanuman, the famous white monkey who was a central figure in the *Khon* drama based on the Ramayana epic (see Appendix C.5). The name was given by Naowarat Phongpaiboon, a national artist and a close friend of his.²⁶ Gaston was born in 1947 in California, and has become one of the most important musicians in Thailand. He taught many famous Thai musicians and influenced many local people. He formed a crossover band between Thai traditional music and Western instruments. This idea captured the attention of locals and Westerners and encouraged them to listen to a new type of music, and as a result, Thai music became more well-known around the world. He also brought his band to perform abroad many times. The local people have a lot of respect for Gaston.²⁷

In his autobiography, he describes his motivation before studying music. When he was in third grade his friends were bullying him while they were playing

²⁶ Bruce Gaston, Bruce Gaston [unpublished autobiography] (2019).

²⁷ Bruce Gaston, ‘บุรุษ แกตตัน รางวัลศิลปาธร: สาขาดนตรี [Bruce Gaston, A Sinlapathorn prize: music]’ RCAC84, http://www.rcac84.com/portfolio_page/%E0%B8%9A%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%B9%E0%B8%8B-%E0%B9%81%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%AA%E0%B8%95%E0%B8%B1%E0%B8%99/ (accessed 8.12.20).

²⁷ Gaston, Bruce Gaston [unpublished autobiography].

baseball. No one wanted him to be part of their team. He cried that night and dreamed that one day he would do something to earn the respect from his friends and would find some talent that those boys cannot do. The next day his mother told him that it is time for him to learn piano. He was born into a musical family. Both of his parents are musicians and he has always loved music since he was young. He started practicing the piano every day before and after school, seven hours a day. His grandfather and his father were important Christian people who set up churches in Western USA. He travelled on a donkey with them from Oklahoma to California. During this time, he was influenced by gospel music.²⁸ He continued studying music at the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music with the head of the piano department, Mr. Horowitz. He helped Mr. Broadwell, the band teacher, by playing a trombone in the band. He also helped Don Fontana, the choral teacher, to accompany the choral groups on the piano, who introduced Gaston to the world of Presbyterian Churches. These paid a good salary to the organist. He also composed music for these choral groups. This made him feel like he had finally 'beaten' the old rejection of the baseball friends.

Moreover, the faculty submitted his name to the Danforth Foundation for an experimental program which allowed him to enter the University of Southern California. He skipped his senior year in High School and went directly to university with a full scholarship. The university has a film department where he took a course with Professor White, where they would watch and discuss movies. Steven Spielberg was one of the topics in the class and he learned a lot about storytelling from his interactions with the professor. It was the beginning of his interest in opera and musical theatre. Since then, his music career began. He performed with Nat King Cole, a famous American jazz pianist and vocalist. He also performed with the Supremes, a famous American female group. He joined the famous USC marching band and toured around America. He also played for the Roger Wagner Chorale and was a part of many performances with Zubin Mehta and the L.A. Philharmonic Orchestra.²⁹ While he was pursuing his BA, Gwendolyn Koldofsky, a piano teacher, decided to take him as one of her students. This was very rare. She married Adolph Koldofsky, a first violinist of the Budapest String Quartet and a personal friend of

²⁸ Gaston, Bruce Gaston [unpublished autobiography].

²⁹ Ibid.

Béla Bartók. As a result of this, Bartók became one of Gaston's favourite musicians. One day, Koldofsky asked him what he planned to do after his BA. Gaston was not sure what he wanted to do but he was thinking about becoming a priest like his father and his grandfather. Koldofsky said, 'Bruce, music is your muse and she will never desert you.' This reminded Gaston about the fear of not being acceptable to his baseball friends and he was saved by music. Since then he decided to live his life giving the gift of music to all whom he would meet.³⁰

Gaston received a master's degree in Music Theory, Composition and Philosophy from the Southern California University in 1969. However, during the period of the Vietnam war (1955-1975), the American government conscripted young Americans to enlist in the armed forces. Gaston fell into this group, so he decided to go to Thailand to teach music and to help people by using his talents, rather than being a soldier in Vietnam, in which he had no skill or the desire to do so.³¹ When he arrived in Thailand, he had to take a train from Hua Lamphong train station to Phitsanulok. He had to sit in the cabin with farmers, chickens and pigs and he could not speak a word of Thai. When he arrived at Phitsanulok, no one came to pick him up, therefore he had to wait for over sixteen hours until some school officials finally came and apologised for arriving on the wrong day. When he started to teach music at *Padoongrasdra* elementary school, they showed him the only piano they had. However, half of the keys could not move up and down and half of them could not make a sound. He felt stressed because he will be stuck in this small town in Thailand for two years without any musical instruments to play and cannot speak Thai.³² The school was located next to a cemetery, which he walked past every day. While he walked past it, he heard traditional Thai music playing. As a musician, he started to love Thai music, and one day he decided to stop and listen. The musicians were teenagers playing strange gongs and xylophones brilliantly in a funeral. He was impressed with their talents. Without his piano, he began to be interested in Thai music. He was also impressed with the Buddhist lifestyle of the farmers who live in that region. It was so simple, and everyone smiled a lot. His new purpose was to

³⁰ Gaston, Bruce Gaston [unpublished autobiography].

³¹ Gaston, 'บุรุษ แกสตัน รางวัลศิลปาธร: สาขาดนตรี [Bruce Gaston, A Sinlapathorn prize: music]'.

³² Gaston, Bruce Gaston [unpublished autobiography].

learn traditional Thai music, and he wanted to be a part of this peaceful and happy existence.³³

In 1974, Payap University in Chiang Mai opened a music faculty for bachelor's degrees. They contacted Gaston to teach there and he accepted the job. After a few days in Chiang Mai he went to the School of Fine Arts and enrolled with Sirichaichan Fugjamroong, a Thai classical music teacher.³⁴ After two years of teaching music in Thailand, he had to travel back to America; however because of his passion in Thai music, he came back to Thailand again and this time he moved to live there permanently.³⁵ Gaston came back to Thailand and taught at Payap University again, where he learnt how to play the *Ranat Ek*. In this period (around 1977), he took a famous Thai drama, *Chu Chok* and turned it into a musical for his students to perform. The story is based on the Mahanipata Jataka (The Story of the Ten Lives of the Buddha). He composed this music by adapting Thai traditional musical instruments (Pi-Pat ensemble) and Western music (choir) together. Gaston's *Chu Chok* performance was successful and was a big step for the music college in Payap University. He also taught music and drama at the faculty of Arts in Chulalongkorn University, before resigning to become a freelance musician.

Gaston has a Thai wife and a son who holds a Thai passport. His wife is a professor in the faculty of Arts in Chulalongkorn University. His son is a guitar player in the famous Thai rock band *Flure*. They are clearly an artistic family. Gaston was educated in Western music before moving to Thailand. His primary instruments are the piano and organ. He has great piano skills in many styles such as classical, jazz, rock and accompaniment. When he moved to Thailand, he studied traditional Thai music with the Thai teacher Boonyong Gatekong, an expert on Thai music. It took a whole year for Gatekong to accept Gaston as his student. Gaston followed him everywhere to see his performances.³⁶ His works have always received positive feedback, both nationally and internationally, including America, Europe, Canada and Asia. In 1970, he worked with Sucharitkul and Danu Huntrakul. They created a new type of music that revolutionised contemporary music in Thailand. They

³³ Gaston, Bruce Gaston [unpublished autobiography].

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Gaston, 'บุรุษ แกสตัน รางวัลศิลปาธร: สาขาดนตรี [Bruce Gaston, A Sinlapathorn prize: music]'.

³⁶ Gaston, Bruce Gaston [unpublished autobiography].

combined traditional Thai instruments with Western music. However, they were heavily criticised by Thai musicians and Thai people. Gaston did not give up and continued his work, even though Sucharitkul decided to move back to America. Despite this, Gaston continued improving his work, which is always a mixture of Western music and traditional Thai music. He created a band called *Fongnam* in 1981, which is famous for fusion music. Gaston said in an interview that when he started composing Thai music, it was difficult to fully understand the significance of it. His teacher Gatekong, said that when Gaston first started to learn how to compose Thai music; his compositions sounded like Chinese music. This is because both traditional Thai and traditional Chinese music make use of the pentatonic scale.³⁷

Bruce Gaston also composed music for advertisements on Thai television. He gave an interview for *The New York Times* in 1984 about his works in Thailand, in which he said 'Making commercials here is a little different than in the West', 'Here they use the music in generating the movie. The agency may come to us with a story board and an idea, but they won't make the movie till we make the music; they cut the tape around it'. Thai words have their own built-in music, and you cannot just write a jingle and put catchy words around it'.³⁸

Gaston went to an orphanage house and a house that takes care of children who suffered from HIV. He travels to teach them every weekend. He also wrote many dramas, most of them have Thai elements, such as, *Chuchok*, *The Truthful Tree*, *Phra Sang-Iphigenie*, *Churning Up The Waters of Everlasting Life*, *The Birth of Ganesha*, *A Boy and a Tiger*, *Ann and I*, *Felix Culpa*, and *Sacred Water*.

His first drama, which he claimed to be an opera, *Chuchok*, is actually a musical. *Chuchok* is a story about the Ten lives of the Buddha, which is known by most Thai children because Thailand is a Buddhist country. *Ann and I* is also about King Rama IV. However, this research focuses on the opera in Western singing style, which the women sing mostly with head and chest voice. Some singers in the opera said in the interview that the singing part sounds like something from a musical and some said it was a mix between opera and musical theatre. However,

³⁷ Anonymous, 'How are You: อ บรูซ แกสตัน [Bruce Gaston]', *YouTube*, Post entry 2.08.15, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrwQ5g7qc2A> (accessed 8.12.20).

³⁸ Barbara Crossette, 'American writes jingles for Thai TV', *New York Times*, entry post 13.10.1984, https://www.nytimes.com/1984/10/13/arts/american-writes-jinles-for-thai-tv.html?fbclid=IwAR3QVPR-mb6E24r_jPsYGtaEIaQkmXDevBB6dMlkCC_AvbcQPqc5jls-fMo (accessed 7.12.20).

Bruce Gaston wrote in this book (unpublished) that he defined all these eight works as modern opera that contained dance, and the lyrics are expressed in three ways: speech voice, full singing and the Thai style of speaking in song or *sprechgesang* in German.³⁹

³⁹ Bruce Gaston, *A Boy and A Tiger* [unpublished documents] (2019).

E.3. Dr. Pathorn Srikananda



Figure E.4: Pathorn Srikananda.⁴⁰

Pathorn Srikananda was born in Thailand in 1973 (see Figure 4). He is a performer, composer, director, teacher and consultant. He composed two Thai operas: one in Thai called *Ngau Pa* (see Chapter 4.2.6.) and one in English called *Pero Vaz de Sequeira* (see Chapter 4.1.5). He is an associate professor of composition and saxophone at Kasetsart University. He is an artist of Kim's Korea Saxophone brand and endorses their alto saxophones exclusively. He received his BMus, MM, and Ph.D. degrees in composition from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, Yale University, USA, and the University of Edinburgh, UK respectively: all with full scholarship grants from King Rama IX.

Srikananda is interested in all genres of music but considers jazz and classical music to be his specialty. He is also the youngest member of the Au-Sau Jazz Band, a band that King Rama IX established.⁴¹ Srikananda was born into a musical family. His grandfather, Reimondo Maria de Sequeira, was one of the first Portuguese nationals who performed Western music in Thailand. His father, who was Thai-Portuguese and known as Manrat Srikananda or Reimondo Amato de Sequeira (1928-2018): worked for King Rama IX, and received a scholarship from

⁴⁰ Pathorn Srikananda, *Facebook* (accessed on 8.12.20).

⁴¹ Pathorn Srikananda, 'Pathorn Srikananda' [unpublished autobiography] (2020).

him to study conducting at Berkley College of Music (see Figure 5).⁴² Manrat was one of Thailand's greatest composers. His works were popular during his period and they have become classics, such as Rak Oey (Oh Love) and Jai Oey (Oh Heart).⁴³ He was honoured with the prestigious title of National Artist in 1992 and established the College of Music at Silapakorn University.⁴⁴



Figure E.5: Manrat Srikananda performed music with King Rama IX (Monrat is playing accodian).⁴⁵

Srikananda was awarded scholarships from King Rama IX to pursue a BMus in composition and saxophone Performance at the University of Michigan, and an MA in Composition at Yale University, followed by a Ph.D. in Composition at the University of Edinburgh. His career as a composer began in 1991 when Dorn Publications published his work, *The Life of Christ*, for soprano saxophone and piano in Massachusetts. He received many commissions such as his Piano Quintet (1996) by the German Embassy and Goethe Institute to commemorate the 140th Anniversary of Friendship between Germany and Thailand, his song cycle ‘ฝนรำ...ใบไม้ร่วง’ *Fonram...Baimairuang* (Weeping Rain...Falling Leaves) (1997) by the Royal

⁴² Anonymous, ‘สิ้นแล้ว! “แมนรัตน์ ศรีกรานนท์” อ.ส. วันศุกร์ วงดนตรีใน ร.9’ [Pass away! ‘Manrat Srikananda’ Or Sor Wansook, a music band of King Rama IX], *New18*, <https://www.newtv.co.th/news/21003>, (accessed 7.12.20).

⁴³ Post Reporters, ‘Famed national artist Manrat dies, aged 90’, *Bangkokpost*, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1534662/famed-national-artist-manrat-dies-aged-90?fbclid=IwAR0P9e5kgMKeopo8aOHKDCFvQTWfy-3oXrN5Dqmqb4TqvqxBhxu9pi7Plal>, entry post 6.09.18, (accessed 8.12.20).

⁴⁴ Anonymous, ‘สิ้นแล้ว! “แมนรัตน์ ศรีกรานนท์” อ.ส. วันศุกร์ วงดนตรีใน ร.9’ [Pass away! ‘Manrat Srikananda’ Or Sor Wansook, a music band of King Rama IX].

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Command of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit (The Queen Mother) as a requiem for her entourages who perished in a helicopter accident earlier that year and so many more. In 2001, Srikananda composed his first opera: *Ngau Pa*. It is the first opera in Thai and part of it was premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival the following year. It is also a part of his Ph.D. study.⁴⁶

As a champion of the music of King Rama IX, Srikananda arranged and produced royal compositions in various styles and genres. Most notably was the Royal Lullaby project featuring his arrangements for the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in 2006. The HM Blues project (2006-2008), where he served as a director and producer, released a series of CDs and DVDs featuring his arrangements and performances on various instruments. In 2010, he collaborated with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band of New Orleans, Louisiana, in a project named 'The Royal Jazz Celebration', which was a year long program celebrating His Late Majesty the King's 7th cycle (84th) birthday anniversary. The project was launched with a New Orleans Jazz Cruise performance for the late King; Her Royal Highness Princess Sirindhorn also joined in on the vibraphone. The CD and DVD album 'Royal New Orleans Jazz Celebration,' became the bestselling jazz record in Thailand in decades.⁴⁷

As a performing artist, Srikananda is a classical saxophone soloist performing with many famous orchestras such as the National Symphony Orchestra, the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Thai Air Force Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Thai Navy Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra (Ohio), The Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra (UK) and l'Orchestre National de Lille (France). He also performed with many famous jazz musicians such as vibraphonist Gary Burton, saxophonists Benny Carter, Jimmy Heath, David Liebman and Ernie Watts, bassist Milt Hinton, trombonists J.J. Johnson and Urbie Green, the Ophelia Ragtime Orchestra of Norway, the Dutch Swing College Band of the Netherlands, the New Orleans Jazz All Stars, and the Preservation Hall Jazz Band. He joined the Preservation Hall Jazz Band at the prestigious New Orleans Jazz Festival and at the

⁴⁶ Srikananda, 'Pathorn Srikananda' [unpublished autobiography].

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Snake City Jazz Festival held in Slangerup, Denmark in 2011 and later at the Copenhagen City Hall.

In 2012, he returned to Denmark to perform at the Copenhagen Zoo and at the World View Festival in the City of Århus. In 2013, he and his quintet were invited to perform at the Nordens Madfestival, held in Copenhagen, Denmark and at the prestigious Music på Slottet (The Royal Festivals) held at the magnificent Hall of State of the Royal Palace in Stockholm, Sweden. The concert marked the Swedish national celebration of His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustav's 40th anniversary of his enthronement. In this same year, he also collaborated with the great soprano saxophonist David Liebman and his quartet in a series of workshops and a concert commemorating the 180th anniversary of Thai-American diplomatic relations. A CD from this collaboration, *Near Dawn*, was released in 2014. In 2015, he appeared as a guest soloist on clarinet and alto saxophone with the Dutch Swing College Jazz Band in its 70th Anniversary Celebration concert in The Hague. He also took his band on tour in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain and taught at the 2015 International Association of Schools of Jazz programs held in Lisbon, Portugal. In 2016 he was invited back to the Snake City Jazz Festival once again and also performed at the famed Charlie Scott's in Copenhagen. In November-December 2016, he organized the memorial service for the late king with a special tribute concert and a candlelight vigil on the late king's birthday which drew a crowd of over seven thousand people in front of the Bangkok City Hall.⁴⁸

In 2017, he travelled abroad to perform around the world (especially the music of the late king) beginning with the French Quarter Festival in New Orleans and a mixed-arts program in Houston (USA); Thai-Mozambique Friendship Concert and the Maputo Jazz International Festival (Mozambique); with Johan Bylling Lang at the Charlie Scott's Jazz Club in Copenhagen (Denmark); a memorial concert for the late king with the New Orleans Jazz All Stars; a successful concert program with the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra in London featuring his composition 'In Memoriam', his arrangements of the royal composition, and his solo alto saxophone with the orchestra. In 2018, Srikananda and his band continued their summer tour, performing in Copenhagen and at the Snake City Jazz Festival in Slangerup,

⁴⁸ Srikananda, 'Pathorn Srikananda' [unpublished autobiography].

Denmark. In October, he joined the Dutch Swing College Band in the third edition of the memorial concert for the late king.⁴⁹

2019 was a transformational year for Srikananda, moving from traditional jazz style by incorporating Thai traditional musical instruments into his mainstream performances. He and his band, the Kitasewi, were invited to perform in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, and in Yangon, Myanmar, where he performed on both the Thai pi-nai and the Myanmar hne, along with the alto saxophone. He also recorded the pi-nai and pi-chawa for video-game soundtracks by Bandai Namco of Japan. Srikananda is a recipient of many awards such as the Band Award from the Interlochen Center for the Arts, Michigan; Best Jazz Improvisation from the Collegiate Jazz Festival, South Bend, Indiana; Best Jazz Performance from the Tri C Jazz Festival, Cleveland, Ohio; and the 1998 Lyra Prize from the Foundation for Hungarian Performing Arts. He was also honoured with Certificates of Commendation in recognition of his accomplishments and achievements from the City of Los Angeles in 2003, from the Prime Minister of Thailand in 2005 and 2007, from the Thai House of Senate in 2011, and from Kasetsart University in 2012. He was also made the Commander of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Portugal in 2011 and Commander of the Most Noble Order of the Crown of Thailand in 2012.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Srikananda, 'Pathorn Srikananda' [unpublished autobiography].

⁵⁰ Ibid.

E.4. Krisada Reyes



Figure E.6: Krisada Reyes.

Krisada Reyes is a Thai composer, born in 1960 (see Figure 6). He composed a Thai opera in Thai called *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* (see Chapter 4.2.7). He is currently working as an engineer for Thai Airways. However, he composes music as a part-time job as well. Most of his works are Thai musicals and entertainment music such as for advertisements. His interests include jazz, classical music and later contemporary music. His favourite composers are Debussy, Stravinsky and Ravel. It is stated in an interview with Krisada that he has been interested in music from a young age. He learned music as a hobby and attended many classical concerts when he was young. His musical instruments are guitar and piano; he studied piano at Yamaha while he was studying engineering in Chulalongkorn University. After he completed grade 8, he taught piano in Yamaha for five years. During his first year in university, he composed a movie soundtrack for the first time. He also created a Thai musical for Chulalongkorn University when he was in his third year. These experiences inspired him to continue composing movie soundtracks and musicals until now.⁵¹

He studied twelve-tone music and contemporary music with Werner Müller Jakob, a German composer in Thailand. Since then he attended many contemporary music concerts including the first contemporary concert of Somtow Sucharitkul when Sucharitkul came back to Thailand for the first time to perform crossover music

⁵¹ Author's interview with Krisada and Napisi Reyes (5 August 2017).

between Thai and Western. These concerts influenced him to create his own contemporary music. Later, he established a music studio with most of the work focused on creating music for entertainment companies. He composed a lot of advertisement music for his customers. However, the company closed because he ultimately did not enjoy working with the advertisement industry. He was forced to compose to the client's specifications and found that there was no money to be made in the contemporary music that he preferred. He also composed music for documentaries, presentations, light and sound productions, institution's songs, TV programs and Thai movies.⁵²

Krisada Reyes has improved his knowledge of musical theatre thanks to his wife, Napisi Reyes; who studied and worked within the musical theatre field. Napisi encouraged him to listen to more musical style, and she even let him compose whole musicals for her students. Since that time, he has composed musicals and contemporary music and created new work with his wife. In an interview, he gave some examples of the creation process of his music. For example, twenty-one tones of the twenty-one stairs at his home. When his wife started to work at Mahidol University in 2007, they were able to compose more orchestra music and Thai musicals and later in 2008, they created the first Thai opera in Thai libretto.⁵³

Krisada created many theatre productions such as Bussaba-Unakan, Pimpilalai, Raden-Lundai, I Love Bangkok, Equus, Rachomon, Dearest Moon version 1, The Toothless Shark, Phaya Kunkark, Rachomon Condominium, Heha Pakedron, Shanghai the Musical, I Shall Ride the Rainbow When I'm Growing Up, Arkansaw Bear and Dear Death, etc. He also created the Silent movie: Nanook of the North, The Cabinet of Dr. Calihari, Tales of Horror, Oodid and the Magic Picky Bank (series 1 & 2), Mr. Dictionary the Musical, Amelia, and The Mysterious of 157 - 337 The Musical. Krisada's musical works are performed inside Thailand as well as outside, for instance in Singapore and Germany.⁵⁴

After interviewing Krisada Reyes, I left with much admiration for his passion in music. Even though he had no degree in music and works as an engineer; he still finds the time to compose so many music works. The interview took place in his

⁵² Author's interview with Krisada and Napisi Reyes (5 August 2017).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Krisada and Napisi Reyes [unpublished autobiography] (2017).

working room, which contained two keyboards and a lot of equipment for composing music. He composed more than twenty musicals and the first opera in Thai: *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals*. Many Thai composers with a music degree and who work full-time as a composer, are still afraid to write opera in the Thai language as it is a tonal language and difficult to compose. However, Krisada and his wife, Napisi, have had a lot of experience with composing Thai musicals and Thai theatre. They successfully performed the first opera in Thai as a full production; overcoming delays and having to change two main singers.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Author's interview with Krisada and Napisi Reyes (5 August 2017).

E.5. Napisi Reyes



Figure E.7: Napisi Reyes.

Napisi Reyes is the wife of Krisada Reyes (see Figure 7). She wrote the libretto for the Thai opera called *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* (see Chapter 4.2.7). She is a lecturer, acting teacher and a stage director. She was born in 1963 in Thailand. She currently works as a lecturer in the College of Music, Mahidol University since 2007. In 2006, Napisi worked on the opera *The Mikado*, which was the first opera production for both Napisi and Mahidol University; it was due to *The Mikado*'s success that she was later given the job of lecturer full-time in the university. In 2007, while working at the university, she also worked with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO) as a stage director opera *L'Orfeo* by C. Monteverdi in 2007.⁵⁶

Reyes graduated her bachelor's degree in Drama from the Department of Dramatic Arts, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University in 1986. During her studies, she wrote songs for Children's theatre. She earned her master's degree in music education from the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) and another master's degree in educational theatre from New York University, USA. She has been actively involved in the field of music theatre as a stage director, musical book author, and lyricist from her graduation until the present day. She has worked in many operas such as, *Der Freischutz*, *The Mikado*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Merry Widow*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Bastien und Bastien*, *the Impresario*, *Così fan Tutte*, and *Land of Smile*. However, *The Story of the Long-Gone Animals* was the first opera for which

⁵⁶ Krisada and Napisi [unpublished autobiography].

she wrote the libretto. She also worked as a stage director for the first Thai opera in Thai for the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra.⁵⁷

Both Krisada and Napisi Reyes possess a hard-work ethic due to their passion for music. Their catalogue of work is wide, from advertisements to musicals and opera. This is due to them being very open-minded to new types of music and having a desire to listen to and try new things. The first time I worked with both of them, they said 'let us know if you want to change any melodies or texts'. I was impressed, as this was the first time I had ever worked with living composers. They are extremely dedicated to their work and always work late through the night. Since I have known them, it is clear that all musicians and singers highly admire them. Sometimes they let singers rehearse in their house until midnight on the weekend. Thailand is lucky to have both the Reyes in the music industry. They are now planning to do more Thai modern operas.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Krisada and Napisi [unpublished autobiography].

⁵⁸ Author's interview with Krisada and Napisi Reyes (5 August 2017).

E.6. Thanapoom Sirichang



Figure E.8: Thanapoom Sirichang.

Thanapoom Sirichang is a Thai composer, born in Chiang Mai (see Figure 8). He composed the Thai opera called *The Lunch Box* (see Chapter 4.2.8). He has changed his name several times over the years and currently goes by the name Jitrin Sirichang. He changed it a few years after *The Lunch Box* production because he believed it would bring him luck. It is common practice in Thailand to change names because names are believed to bring people luck and a better life.

He began studying music at the age of eight by joining the Prince Royals College Ensemble, a private Christian school in Chiang Mai. In an online interview with Thanapoom Sirichang, he explained that he started studying music out of serendipity. He was very tall when he was young, so he wanted to apply to the basketball society. However, he went to the wrong society because the music society was next to the basketball society. When he went to the basketball society, they said his name was not on the list and it was already full. The music society teacher called him to attend the society after he was missing a class. Since then he became a trombone player.⁵⁹ He studied music with Gain Tepparat and Yutthapol Sakthamjareon until he finished college in 1998. Sirichang completed his Bachelor Music degree with first class honours in 2002 at the Payap University in Chiang Mai before completing a Masters of Music in Composition with Professor Douglas Knehans and Professor Constantine Koukias in 2006 at the Tasmanian

⁵⁹ Author's interview with Thanapoom Sirichang (17 May 2019).

Conservatorium of Music in Australia. After he received his Masters, he worked with Constantine Koukias at the IHOS Music Theatre and Opera in Australia.⁶⁰ In the same interview, he shared that the time spent during *The Lunch Box* was the best moments of his life. He got the job straight after finishing his masters and worked with his favourite professor: Constantine Koukias. He also had a chance to adapt a famous Thai story into opera. The story came from his childhood.⁶¹ After the production, he planned to tour the opera with Constantine Koukias, before publishing the music, but then the sponsor stopped continuing⁶² its support for the artist. He had to cancel all of his future projects. Currently, he lives in Australia and works in an office and composes music part time.⁶³ He also added in the interview that when he was younger, he would never work in an office but now he has no choice as he cannot make a living from a music career alone.

⁶⁰ Author's interview with Thanapoom Sirichang (17 May 2019).

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

E.7. Bringkop Vora-urai



Figure E.9: Bringkop Vora-urai.

Bringkop Vora-urai, an important Thai musician, was born and raised in Chiang Mai (see Figure 9). He wrote the libretto of the Thai opera called *The Lunch Box* (see Chapter 4.2.8). He currently gives lectures in Payap University where Sirichang received his Bachelor. He composed many famous Thai northern music works as a music producer. He is also a conductor of the Nimman Street Orchestra and the Lanna Orchestra.⁶⁴ He studied for his Bachelor of Geology at Payap University because he loves to be alone in the forest. However, one of his teachers introduced him to music so he pursued a Bachelor of Music in the same university. After he received his second bachelor, he was granted a scholarship from the university to do a Master's Degree in Ethnomusicology at the Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, USA. He decided to study Ethnomusicology because he still enjoyed traveling in the countryside and would like to go out and experience life amongst various groups to learn their life style and culture. After graduating, he

⁶⁴ Bringkop Vora-urai, 'Bringkop Vora-urai', *Collective changes*, entry posted 8.05.2017, <https://collective-changes.org/%E0%B8%9A%E0%B8%A4%E0%B8%87%E0%B8%84%E0%B8%9E-%E0%B8%A7%E0%B8%A3%E0%B8%AD%E0%B8%B8%E0%B9%84%E0%B8%A3/> (accessed 8.12.20).

returned to Thailand and became a lecturer at Payap University. He also established a music school, Musicolli, for children from the age of two years old.⁶⁵

Most of the music that he worked on is traditional *Lanna* music from Northern Thailand. He combines *Lanna* music, modern music and Western music together. Many people disagreed with what he did with *Lanna* music. Some people said he ruined traditional *Lanna* music by mixing it with Western music. However, he received an award at the Bright & Charm Awards in 2014 for promotion and conservation of *Lanna* culture.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Bringkop Vora-urai, 'Bringkop Vora-urai'.

⁶⁶ Anonymous, 'อาจารย์บึงคพ วรอุไร - รางวัลด้านการส่งเสริมและอนุรักษ์วัฒนธรรม Bright&Charm Awards 2014 [Bringkop Vora-urai- Awarded Bright & Charm Awards 2014 for promotion and conservation Lanna culture.]', *YouTube*, entry post 24.07.14, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMhLY5V9occ&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR22dOBLXz-alubbk4q3VnsmxivctTXVuxj51K1ytX7hLBu4m99KNswo5HQ> (accessed 23.05.19).

F. The Certificate of Ethics Approval



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Ysgol Cerddoriaeth, Drama a Pherfformio Prifysgol Bangor

School of Music, Drama and Performance Bangor University

Myfyriwr/Student: Fucenglada Prawang (500453993)

Dyddiad/Date: 05 June 2017

Mae'r astudiaeth hon wedi cael ei chadarnhau o ran agweddau moesegol, yn dilyn ymgynghoriad gyda'r arolygwr (os yn berthnasol) a gyda swyddog Moeseg yr Ysgol. Mae rhyddid i'r myfyriwr/fyfyrwraig a enwir uchod barhau gyda chasglu'r data a gweithio ar yr astudiaeth.

This study has been approved with regards to ethical concerns, following consultation with the supervisor and the School Ethics officer. The student named above is now free to continue with collecting the data and working on the study.

Dr Guto Pryderi Puw

Swyddog Moeseg Ysgol Cerddoriaeth, Drama a Pherfformio
Ethics Officer for the School of Music Drama and Performance

Yr Athro / Professor Thora Tenbrink

Cyfarwyddwr Moeseg Coleg y Celfyddydau, Dyniaethau a Busnes / Athro mewn leithyddiaeth
Director of Ethics at the College of Arts, Humanities and Business / Professor of Linguistics

G. Consent Forms



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Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant *ฉัตรพร วรรณกุล (Zion)*

Date *27 July 2017*

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Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant  (Jc Manair Kaewtae)

Date 02 Aug 2017

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Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

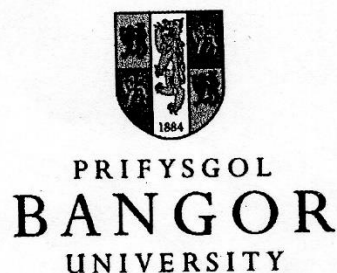
The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant *Yotsawan Meethangthai* (Yotsawan Meethangthai)

Date *2/08/2019*

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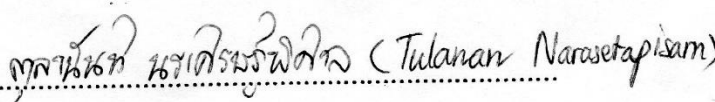
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Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant  (Tulanan Narasetapisam)

Date 10 / 7 / 2017

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Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name Fueanglada prawang

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant

Syuth W.
(Pattaraporn)

Date 24 July 2017

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Participant Consent Form

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The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant *21/08/2017 C Piyawat Panthana*

Date *11/08/2017*

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Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant  (Ditsale)

Date 4/08/2017

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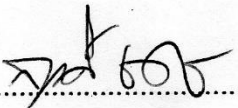
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Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant  (Salith Dechsangworn)

Date 14/07/2017

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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant *B. Balloon* (Balloon)

Date *07/08/2017*

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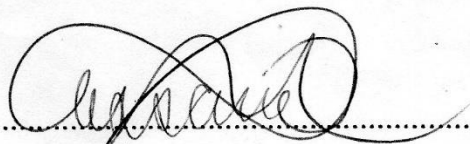
Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant

 Cassandra

Date

8/7/17

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES


Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant

 stacey tapp

Date

8-8-17

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant

Dee Lhar (Dug)

Date 7 / 08 / 2017

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant

(K. Reyes)

Date

4 AUG 2017

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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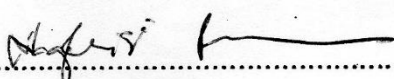
COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant  (Napsi)

Date 4 / 08 / 2017

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant

Date Aug 7 2017

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant

[Handwritten signature] Damien

Date

7/08/17

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND BUSINESS

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name FUEANGLADA PRAWANG

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

I agree to having the interview audio-recorded. (delete/amend as needed)

Signature of participant  Chotima Ratamsakprakan

Date 16 March 2019

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND BUSINESS

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name FUEANGLADA PRAWANG

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I agree to having the interview audio-recorded. (delete/amend as needed)

Signature of participant ផល្លា ធីតា (Thamara Tharun)

Date 16/03/19

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND BUSINESS

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name

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I agree to having the interview audio-recorded. (delete/amend as needed)

Signature of participant *(Signature)* (PRANGPROM RATTANA)

Date 9-Mar-19

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND BUSINESS

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name

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I agree to having the interview audio-recorded. (delete/amend as needed)

Signature of participant *Jirarat P.* (Jirarat Pipatnarepong)

Date *9 March 2019*

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant
Puntumth Asanadejmetakul

Date
12/07/2017

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant *Bongpit Amatyakul*

Date 13 / 07 / 2017

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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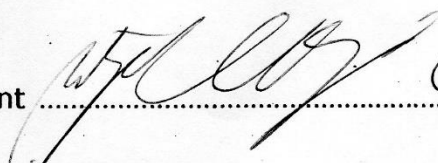
Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant

 C Sak Cholvijarn

Date

12. 07. 2017

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name Fveanglada Prawang

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant Lalit

Date 24 July 2017

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant Areeya Rotjanadit

Date 18 / July / 2017

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant *Cz* (Ashiraya Supakulnane)

Date *14/07/2017*

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name Fueanglada Prawang

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant  (Mr. Thanis Sonkloe)

Date 8/07/2019

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant *Nadloda* (Nadloda)

Date *26 July 2017*

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant *Pitchaya Kemarasinghi*

Date *25 July 2017*

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name ...Miss...Fueanglada...Prawang.....

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant

Phu (Chai Porn Phuangmae)

Date 26 July 2017

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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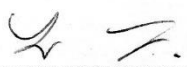
COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name Fueanglaela Prawang

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant  (Saran Senavirin)

Date 9/7/17

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COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name Fueanglada prawang

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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. (delete if not relevant)

Signature of participant Siriwaranya Supralee

Date 25 July 2017

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