

THE ROLES AND FUNCTION OF PIPHAT MUSIC IN THAI SOCIETY

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Abstract

Piphat music plays a vital role in reflecting the arts, culture, and traditions of Thai society, deeply intertwined with the people's way of life, beliefs, and religious practices. As a cornerstone of ceremonial and theatrical events, it serves not only as musical expression but also as a living representation of Thailand's cultural identity and spiritual heritage. Piphat music is not only a reflection of Thailand's artistic and cultural legacy but also a profound embodiment of belief systems and spiritual practices rooted in Thai society. Traditionally performed in royal ceremonies, Buddhist rituals, and funerals, piphat music is deeply connected to the cycle of life and death, expressing reverence for the sacred and the divine. It reinforces the Thai people's respect for harmony, order, and merit-making, which are core elements of Buddhist philosophy. The symbolic use of instruments and melodies in rituals represents the connection between the earthly and the spiritual realms, making piphat an essential medium through which communal values and religious devotion are conveyed. This inseparable bond between music, belief, and culture emphasizes piphat's enduring role in maintaining Thailand's spiritual identity and transmitting cultural wisdom across generations. The purpose of this research was to study the piphat music legacy, roles and functions of piphat music in Thai society, and constructing a guidebook on piphat music for promotion. The research method was a qualitative and quantitative mixed research approach. Data was gathered by interviewing three key informants who are experts in piphat music at Bangkokthonburi University. Research tools

included an interview form, guidebook, Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) form, and a questionnaire. **The research findings were:** (1) The piphat music legacy traced the historical evolution of piphat music, a traditional Thai ensemble rooted in ceremonial practices from the Ayutthaya to Bangkok periods. It was an adaptive resilience amid socio-cultural changes, with modern Thai educational institutions playing a critical role in preserving its sanctity through structured curricula. However, challenges persist in balancing improvisation with rigid ritual frameworks, necessitating innovative strategies to sustain its cultural authenticity in a globalized era. (2) Roles and functions of piphat music in Thai Society piphat music serves multifaceted roles, including ritualistic, religious as well as secular entertainment. Its rhythmic frameworks and melodic structures based the principle of Thai music as like as other ensembles such as the mahori, while regional variations reflect Thai's cultural diversity. Ethnomusicological analyses highlight its dual identity as a historical archive and a living tradition, though external influences complicated in nationalist's narrative. (3) The piphat music guidebook comprised of four-chapters in piphat music covering history, music traits, roles and functions, and music genres. IOC for guidebook shown average score for five rating scale was at 4.62. (4) Promotional of piphat music of Thailand by using the guidebook had done by conducting the conference on side and online mixes tai'an City, China in February 2025, attended by 231 participants. The participant's satisfaction on the seminar revealed by questionnaire survey was at 4.58 on five level rating scale, the results demonstrated its potential for cross-cultural promotion, fostering global appreciation while reinforcing Thai cultural identity.

Keywords: Piphath music; Cultural preservation; Guidebook; Thai traditional music

Introduction

Thai piphat music, a revered genre of traditional Thai classical music, embodies the spiritual, cultural, and historical essence of Thailand. Characterized by its intricate melodies, rhythmic complexities, and ritualistic functions, piphat has been an integral part of Thai society for centuries. Rooted in Buddhist ceremonies, royal court performances, and folk traditions, this art forms serve not only as a musical expression but also as a carrier of cultural identity and moral values (Roongruang, 1988). This paper explores the origins,

structural elements, cultural significance, and modern challenges of Thai piphat music, drawing on scholarly works such as Roongruang research to illuminate its enduring relevance. The origins of piphat music can be traced back to the Sukhothai Kingdom (1238–1378 CE), where it emerged as an accompaniment to royal rituals and religious festivals. Over time, it evolved under the influence of neighboring cultures, including Khmer, Mon, and Chinese traditions, yet retained its distinct Thai identity (Wong, 1998). Panya Roongruang (1999) emphasizes that piphat's development was closely tied to Buddhist practices, particularly the use of circle gong set for the musical theme and particular rhythmic patterns to create meditative atmospheres during chanting ceremonies. The genre's name itself reflects its combination: Pi (to blow) and Phat (to beat), referring to the sound of the reed-wind instrument and percussion that dominate its texture. By the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767 CE), beyond mahori music the piphat had become a staple of the royal court, performed during coronations, cremation rites, and other state events. Its role expanded during the Rattanakosin (Bangkok) era (1782-present) as it absorbed folk melodies and dance forms, leading to the establishment of distinct regional styles such as piphat nanghong (southern Thailand) and piphat isan (northeastern Thailand). Despite these regional variations, piphat's core principles balance, harmony, and respect for tradition central Thai have remained constant. Piphat ensembles typically consist of four categories of instruments: Ranad (a wooden xylophone) with high and low pitch; Gong (a circle gong set) with high pitch small-gong and low pitch large-gong; Pi (a double reed blown instrument) and rhythmic percussion (drums, single gong and cymbals).

Preservation of piphat music must balance the tradition with innovation. Roongruang advocates for incorporating digital technologies, such as online archives and virtual concerts, to reach global audiences while maintaining authentic performance practices. Similarly, collaborations between piphat musicians and contemporary composers have led to innovative fusion works, such as jazz piphat and electronic piphat, which appeal to younger listeners without sacrificing cultural authenticity. Therefore, Thai piphat music is more than a collection of melodies, it is a living testament to Thailand's spiritual, artistic, and social evolution. From its origins in ancient rituals to its modern adaptations, piphat continues to inspire and resonate, bridging the past and present. As Panya Roongruang states, "piphat is not just music; it is the soul of

Thailand” by understanding and supporting this heritage, we ensure that future generations can experience the timeless beauty and wisdom embedded in its notes.

Research Objectives

- 1.To study the piphat music legacy.
- 2.To study the roles and functions of piphat music in Thai society.
- 3.To construct a guidebook on piphat music for promotion.
- 4.Using the guidebook on piphat music for promotion.

Literature Reviews

The Knowledge on Mahori Music: Thai music tradition, there are three main ensembles: Piphat, khruang-sai and mahori ensemble. The scopes of study which including role, rule, style, instrument aspects, and ensemble that researcher will be investigate on these aspects. **Mode of Mahori:** 1) Compositions: The classification on the basis of the relative lack or occurrence in them of pitches 4 and/or 7 on beats of the colotomic structure (+ and O strokes). Each composition in the group of one hundred and thirty-six representative compositions was outlined in the manner of chart 8, page 121, and as a result numerous categories or styles were shown to involving exist: A) Basic 123 56 pentatonic style. B) Hexatonic and heptatonic styles, involving pitch 4 and/or 7 on "O", +, and O strokes, with definite "modulatory" sections. These conclusion of the compositions in the representative group are in a simple pentatonic style. An additional 16 percent have some use of the other two available pitches but not to the extent that the basic pentatonic nature of the composition is seriously affected, thus making a total of a little more than half of the compositions in the relatively simple style (Brown, 1960). The remainder is in a more complex style involving "modulation" to different pitch levels and/or more heptatonic passages in Mon style. The 1large percentage of compositions in this second group is conclusive proof that a great number of Thai compositions are far more varied and complicated than the simple pentatonic examples of Thai music available until now would indicate (Molton, 1971).

The development of Wong Mahori: Panya Roongruang (interview: January 15th, 2022) states that “Wong Mahori is originated in the royal court since early Ayutthaya period (around 15th century) by adding the pin (lute) solo recital into Khab-mai ensemble. The original of mahori ensemble is mahori-Khruang-si (mahori quartet). The mahori ensemble divides into eight kinds: 1) The mahori quartet (mahori khruang-si) consisted of: Saw-Sam-Sai (three string spike fiddle), Krajabpi (long neck lute), Thab (a small ingle head goblet drum) and a singer who also play Krab-Phuang (a bunch of thin wood and metal mixed percussion). The mahori ensemble is used to entertain the king and performs for some special ceremony related to the king such as lullaby and awakening the king, the royal throne cerebation. 2) The mahori quintet (mahori khruang-hok) consisted of six performers included: saw-sam-sai (three string spike fiddle), krajabpi (long neck lute), Thab (a small ingle head goblet drum) and Krab-Phuang (played by a singer), khlui (end blown flute), pi-chanai (double reed short flare oboe derive from Indian shahnai) was appeared in early Ayutthaya period. 3) The mahori septet (mahori khruang-jed, seven performers) was appeared after the mahori quintet around middle Ayutthaya period consisted of: saw-sam-sai (three string spike fiddle), krajabpi (long neck lute), thab (a small ingle head goblet drum) and krab-phuang (played by a singer), khlui (end blown flute), pi-chanai (double reed short flare oboe), ramana (frame drum) was added into the existed ensemble. 4) The mahori octet (mahori khruang-paed, eight performers) appeared in Ratanakosin (Bangkok or Krungthep period) mahori ensemble was expanded into larger size because of invention of instruments; the mahori octet consisted of following instruments: saw-sam-sai (three string spike fiddle), krajabpi (long neck lute), thab (a small ingle head goblet drum) and krab-phuang (played by a singer), khlui (end blown flute), pi-chanai (double reed short flare oboe, ramana (frame drum) was added into the existed ensemble, ranad (xylophone), ranad-kio (crystal bar xylophone or crystalophone) and was replace by khawng-wong mahori (medium size). 5) The mahori nonet (mahori khruang-kao, nine performers) consisted of: saw-sam-sai (three string spike fiddle), krajabpi (long neck lute), thab (a small ingle head goblet drum) and krab-phuang (played by a singer), khlui (end blown flute), pi-chanai (double reed short flare oboe, ramana (frame drum) was added into the existed ensemble, ranad (xylophone), khawng-wong mahori (medium size), jakhe was added. The krab-phuang in nonet Mahori was replaced by ching (finger cymbals) to produced louder and sharpen sound.

6) The chamber mahori orchestra consisted of eleven performers: saw-sam-sai (three string spike fiddle), krajabpi (long neck lute), thab (a small ingle head goblet drum) and krab-phuang (played by a singer), khlui (end blown flute), pi-chanai (double reed short flare oboe, ramana (frame drum) was added into the existed ensemble, ranad (xylophone), khawng-wong Mahori (medium size), jakhe was added, ranad-ek-hlek (high metallophone) was added, ranad-thum-hlek (low metallophone) was added. The ranad-ek-hlek and ranad-thum-hlek were added during the reign of King Rama IV. Lastly during the reign of King Rama V, the krajabpi was omitted because the sound is too soft. (Sangad Phukhaothong: pp. 124-125)

Present Mahori Ensemble: Mahori ensemble become standardize during King Rama V. Panya Roongruang wrote in “Dontri Thai Prakawb Siang (Thai music in sound) about Thai ensemble including mahori and researcher studied only on the mahori ensemble to match with the research title. The following is what Panya Roongruang wrote: “There are many different types of Thai musical instruments and several distinct ensembles. There are two special ensembles and three standard ensembles in the Thai classical, the standard ensemble is wong khruang sai, wong piphat and wong mahori.” This thesis concentrates on wong mahori only (Himeno, 1965). Wong Mahori (mahori ensemble): Mahori is the ensemble combining the string ensemble and the piphat together with the piphat instruments (ranad and gong wong) reduced to a small size suitable to play with the strings by lady performers. During the early Bangkok period the Mahori orchestra was played only in the Palace by the ladies. The mahori was divided into three sizes: (1) mahori khruang lek (2) mahori khruang khu (3) mahori khruang yai. 1) Mahori khruang lek: A small size mahori ensemble comprises of the following instruments: Each of ranad-ek, khawng-wong-yai, saw-sam-sai, Saw-Duang, saw-ou, jakhe, ching, a pair of tone and ramana and krab-phuang, (can add other percussion if needed). 2) Mahori khruang khu: It is a double melodic percussive instrument mahori ensemble has the following instruments: one ranad-ek, one ranad-thum, one khawng-wong-yai, (mahori size), one khawng-wong-lek, two saw-sam-sai, two Saw-Duang, two saw-ou, two jakhe, one khlui-phiangaw, one khlui-li, a couple of klawng khaek, ching and krab-phuang, (other percussion is added sometimes). 3) Mahori khruang yai: This is the largest mahori orchestra consisting of four groups of instruments as followed:

(1) String Instrument: Saw-Duang; not less than two fiddles but sometimes many Saw-Duang are used, normally four fiddles, saw-ou not less than two but usually equal to Saw-Duang in the same performance.

Jakhe; two or three jakhe one is normal jakhe and other is jakhe Lip. Saw-sam-sai; normally used two (regular one and the lip one) in having different timings and different sizes; one at high pitch and the other at low pitch. These string instruments are usually played in a different style: one keeps the normal melody, based on the principal melody of the gong-wong-yai but with different variation and the other would play a different variation from the first one with additional melodic decoration, also based on the principal melody of gong wong yai.

(2) Gongs and xylophones. Khawng-wong-yai (mahori) is two pitches higher than what is used in the piphat and it plays the basic melody as the base instrument of the orchestra. Khawng-wong-yai plays variations based on the principal melody. Ranad ek is the leader of the ensemble and plays the full melody of the principle khawng player but with different variations from the khawng-wong-yai and it has varied styles of playing. Ranad -thum is the joker of the orchestra and plays variations in different styles. Ranad-e-hlek plays like the ranad-ek. Ranad –thum- hlek plays principal melody similar to Gong Wong Yai.

(3) Woodwind Instrument: Khlui-lip plays a sweet melody at high pitch. Khlui-phiang-aw plays a sweet melody in the alto having different style from the khlui-lip. Khlui-ou plays the low pitch melody as a principle like the gong but having different variation. (4) Rhythmic Percussion:

Ching is the conductor and controls the tempo in the patterns of sam- chan, sawng-chan and chan-dio. Chab-lek is used for decoration and interrupts the ching beat. Krab-phuang controls the strong beats on every two beats of ching in strong stroke. Mong-Rao is a three different sizes gong sets for controlling the beat played after every four strong ching beats. Klawng-khaek (couple) one in high and the other in low pitch, it plays the nathab (rhythmic pattern in cycle) to control the tempo. It is very important percussive instrument for measuring the melody in any tempo. The mahori orchestra consists of 19 performers using percussion of the orchestra to make different sounds with different pieces which includes klawng-chatri, klawng-yao, klawng-tuk, and any percussion included in order to play intonations in foreign accents. The taphone

and klawng-thad may be used for naphat music and the plan of the mahori orchestra is usually as depicted in figure shown below. The khawng-wong-yai for mahori and ranad-mahori are not essentially needed to accompany in an ensemble but the normal khawng and normal ranad are used by performers and so the mahori orchestra could present every piece due to its high level of performing technique. (Panya Roongruang, interview: January 15th, 2022).

Research Methodology

The research methodology was mixed research method of qualitative and quantitative research; qualitative research is to interviews with four key informants in Thai music regarding Piphat music of Thailand as follows: 1) Assistant Professor Dr. Chuchat Pinpart, 2) Instructor Mr. Watchara Prempre, 3) Instructor Dr. Nayos Sartjinpong, 4) Instructor Mr. Anant Narkkong.

Qualitative research the researcher organized a seminar on dissemination and preservation by using the guidebook namely “Piphat: The Heart of Thai Music” both online and onsite on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, between 08.00 am. and 03.00 pm. at Jinli Art School, Tai'an City, Shandong Province, The People's Republic of China, which attracted 203 participants online and 40 participants onsite, totaling 243 people. The participants included both men and women from different professions, such as students, teachers, and the public. To know the result of seminar researcher used questionnaire and cellulated by five level rating scale.

Results

In this research, the researcher studied according to the research objectives, which resulted in the following research results: The piphat music legacy: Piphat music has evolved over time, reflecting the changing cultural contexts and lifestyles. Conservation and advocacy are vital elements of 21st-century Thailand, ensuring respect for the music's context, sanctity, and atmosphere while promoting its continued evolution. Modern educational institutions in Thailand have successfully maintained and advanced piphat music, mahori music, and other musical genres. They organize curricula to guide students through academic years and semesters, promoting the dissemination

and retention of knowledge. Advocating piphat music requires innovative ideas and a fresh worldview. To promote piphat music, musicians must create a balance between the performer and the audience, with music directors or artists developing effective public performance tactics. Education is crucial for the growth and preservation of Thai music, as it conveys the importance of music, the value of a degree, and the enjoyment of nature. A thorough understanding of these topics cultivates a sincere appreciation for them, facilitating their preservation and continuity for future generations. Participation in performances, practice diligently, and listen attentively can significantly improve one's understanding of piphat music.

Piphat music is a distinctive and culturally significant ensemble, with its sound quality constraining its ability to produce all tonalities. It is used in rituals and ceremonies, and its rhythmic framework distinguishes it from other traditional Thai music styles due to its rapid, distinctive tempo. Musicians must understand their roles and adjust to their playing style, as piphat music differs from other mahori bands. The Wai-khru ritual features piphat music, which has several distinctive rhythmic patterns, distinguishing it from other traditional music genres. The master conducting the ritual has higher importance than the piphat itself, forbidding improvisation. As the piphat transitions to the middle, dancers are required to devise methods to improvise to match or surpass competing groups. Harmony is horizontal and cohesive, characterized by rhythms that use the sound of the concluding beat, with all participants converging on the same note. Comprehension of piphat music requires familiarity with the notion and the capacity to see all elements concurrently. Engaging with piphat fosters a profound comprehension of the linguistic and conversational nuances articulated by the musical instruments, particularly the ranad-ek and ranad- thum, which establish a compelling discourse amongst themselves. Contemporary Piphat music has transformed from its traditional origins due to changes in the nation and its economy.

The Roles and functions of piphat music in Thai society: Piphat music is a unique form of Thai traditional music that has been integral to the social and cultural activities of ancient Thai people. It has been a vital medium for recording and conveying historical and cultural tales across generations, with its diversity providing a profound and significant experiences for the

community. Traditional Thai music has faced constraints as the nation's distinctiveness and nationalism evolved, necessitating its extrication from the influences of neighboring music tradition at times. Piphat music mainly serves for two functions in society, one for ritual and other for entertainment. For ritual: Piphat ensemble functions for the following occasions. 1) To be performed for the evening prelude before evening chant by the monks and performs the morning prelude for monks' food offering in the morning. These performances offer for both ordinary events such as marriage, opening the new house and for funeral both for the royal court and ordinary people. The music genre to be performed i.e., homrong yen (evening prelude) and homrong chao (morning prelude), etc. 2) To be performed for teacher's greeting ceremony (wei-khru) for music and dance, this occasion required a specific genre of music called naphat most of which are the highest class of a series of compositions (naphat genre) in complex form that must be played by virtuoso on piphat-maikhaeng (hard mallets) ensemble. The series normally begins with the piece sathukan for greeting the Buddha, (music is shown below).

ฆ้องวงใหญ่ (Gong Wong Yai)
 สาธุการ

โหมโรงเย็น
 (Evening Prelude)

Saddhukarn

M.M. ♩ = 63

The musical score is written in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. It consists of ten staves of music. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and ornaments (accents and slurs). The score is marked with measure numbers 7, 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, 49, 56, and 63. The music is characterized by a steady, rhythmic pattern with occasional melodic variations and ornaments.

2 ชื่อวงไทย (Gong Wong Yai)

70

77

81

91

98

105

112

119

126

133

140

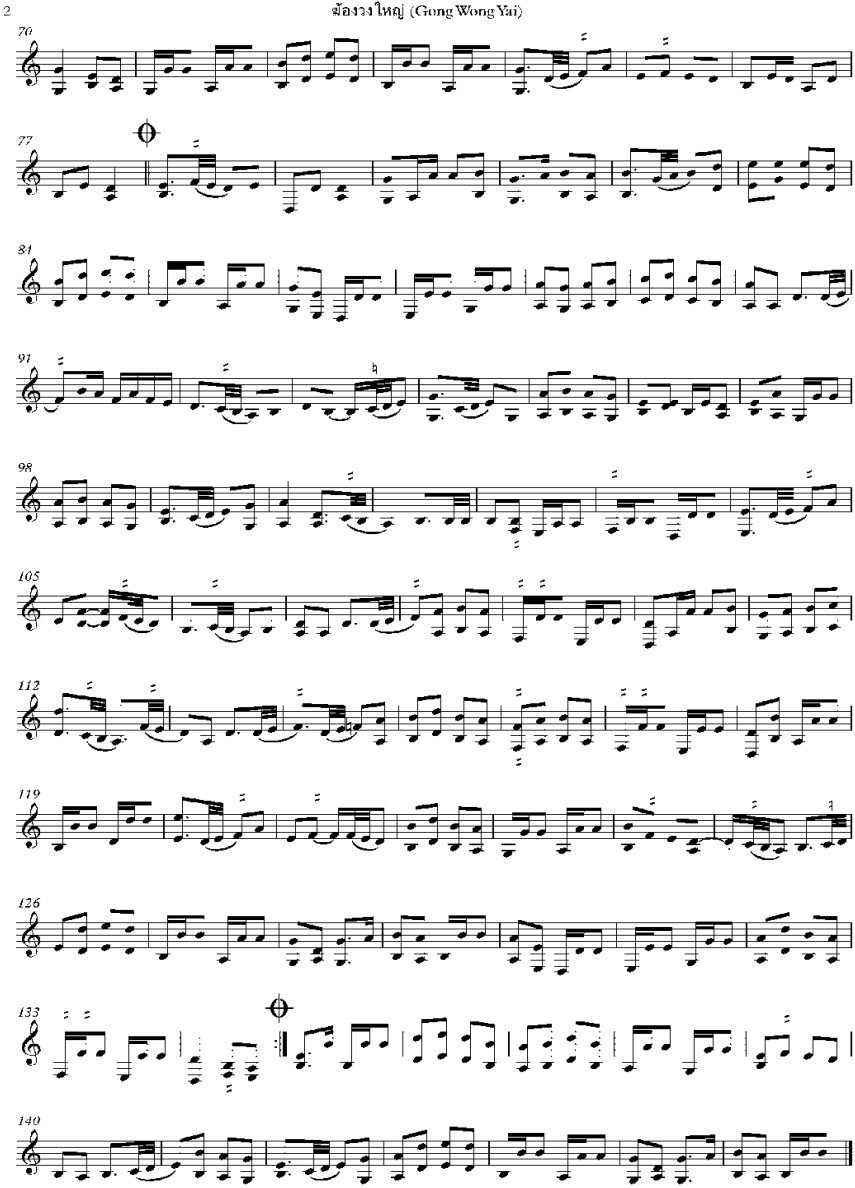


Figure: Sathukan
Source: Mi Yang (2024).

Naphat is instrumental music divides in to two types, normal naphat and high naphat: The high naphat is used for accompanies with one in high position such as god, prince, king, etc., participating in a very important ceremony like Wai khru ceremony (teacher greeting ceremony), khon and lakhawn initiation ceremony as a piece in the, ceremonial suite such as in the morning overture prelude, evening overture prelude and so the high Naphat has a special name phleng khru (a piece for the teacher). The high Naphat has permanent style of performing it as in position of playing rhythm, emotion, and feelings, etc., and a performer cannot afford to vary bringing in new melody but must strictly stick to the ancient style composed many centuries ago as per the original composition. The year in which the music was composed is unknown but as believed to be since early Ayutthaya period during the reign of King Naraya as this accompanied the Nang Yai (Central Thai Puppet) and theatrical drama and have been standardized pieces since the reign of King Baromakot. Originally naphat was composed by the musician and as such it has no song text; the music with vocal solo was added later in Thai music in the old days, the singers had their songs, and the musicians had their pieces separately, some examples of high naphat are: For body transformation - tranimitr, krabongkan and chamnan; for miracle occasion - rua sam la; for marching of the army – prathom, graonai (giant army), graonok (human).

For entertainment: Piphat music for entertainment appears in to two categories one for stage performance and two for concert; stage performances include khon (mask drama) and lakhawn (stage drama). Music for these two kinds of performances said above, requires vocal music to sing the lyrics of a particular story. Khon the mask drama needs singer to sing and give conversation for the cast who was the mask as well as singing the lyrics to tell the story of Ramakian (Thai derived version of Indian epic Ramayana), and Lakhawn need singer to sing the narrative in lyrical form for telling the story. The music concert is to perform piphat ensembles in a specific event such as for competition and other variety occasions in any kind of piphat ensemble. Rhythm and melody of piphat music is crucial in delineating the artistic of piphat music. The primary rhythmic pattern framework consists of five categories: nathab-probkai, nathab-sawng-mai, nathab-phasa, nathab-taphone-klawng, and nathab-pised. Both of the probkai and the song-mai have three tempi, i.e. samchan (slow tempo), sawngchan (medium), and chandio (fast). Nathab Probkai is

developed out of the ancient folk play named phleng probkai that consists of vocal ballad solo being repeated by a chorus and accompanied by the tapon or the following sample notes. Nathab song-mai: The drum pattern is for accompaniment of folk play called rong-don (impromptu singing) in the melody of the type sawng-mai, as example in the thep-thong folk play. Nathab song-mai is half length in comparison with which of the nathab probkai. Nathab phasa: This nathab is used for phleng phasa (literally Thai music in foreign accent) for the purpose of giving more enjoyable variety. The name of the accent is known by the meaning of its nomination and the special style of nathab, such as the name of tapon mon for mon accent, the long drum for Burmese accent, etc. The name of these nathab is therefore corresponding the foreign accent, for example, nathab khmer, nathab mon, nathab burma, nathab khaek, etc. Nathab taphon-klong: This one is for pleng-naphat accompanying the action of khon and lakhawn actors, such as sameo for a short trip, the nangkin for eating, tra non for sleeping, etc. The naphat is always accompanied by the nathab to be played by tapone (double face conical drum) and klong-that (double face barrel drum). Nathab pised (special rhythmic pattern). The special Rhythmic Pattern is accompanying the special pieces that cannot fit in other categories said above.

The categorization of piphat music serves to preserve and convey cultural values and traditions within Thai culture. Thai music may reinterpret contemporary songs within the piphat tradition, revitalizing rituals and preserving cultural identity. By acknowledging the significance of piphat music within the wider context of Thai musical traditions, scholars can enhance the comprehension and enjoyment of this distinctive and varied genre. Therefore, piphat music is more than just an art form; it is a cultural and spiritual pillar of Thai society. Its roles in religion, theatre, social life, and politics highlight its significance. The music's functions, from expressing emotions to structuring performances and preserving traditions, ensure its continued importance in Thai heritage.

The guidebook on piphat music for promotion: The guidebook of piphat music for promotion was created by the researcher from knowledge gained from interviews with four key informants, the knowledge providers who were experts in piphat music and passed the inclusion criteria set by the researcher. The purpose of constructing guidebook was to collect knowledge and organize a seminar to disseminate knowledge on the February 19, 2025, at

Jinli Art School, Tai'an City, Shandong Province, The people republic of China. After the seminar, the researcher gave the participants a questionnaire to evaluate the work and inquire about the knowledge gained after the seminar. The guidebook is divided into four chapters as follows: Chapter 1: History of piphat music, Chapter 2: Distinctive characteristics of piphat music, Chapter 3: The Role and Function of Piphat Songs, Chapter 4: Genres of piphat music. The evaluation table of the piphat music guidebook by the four experts shows that the guidebook is effective and ready to be used because the average evaluation score is at the highest level at 4.60. However, there are some minor corrections according to the recommendations of the judges in the part that received a low score of 3.75, but it is still at a high level by adjusting the content to be more comprehensive.

The used the guidebook on piphat music for promotion: The researchers organized a seminar on the dissemination and preservation of piphat music, The heart of Thai music (Online and Onsite) on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, 08.00 am. to 03.00 pm. at Jinli Art School, Tai'an City, Shandong Province, The People's Republic of China, which attracted 203 participants online and 40 participants offline, totaling 243 participants. The participants included both men and women from different professions, such as students, teachers, and the public.

Seminar Schedule	
Semina	Academic Seminar on the Dissemination and preservation of Piphat Music, The heart of Thai music (Online and Onsite)
Date:	Wednesday, February 19, 2025
Time:	8:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Place:	Jinli Art School, Tai'an City, Shandong Province, The people republic of China.
Organizer:	Mi Yang and Team
Keynote Speech	Mr. Mi Yang
8:00 am. – 8:30 am.	Registration and Welcome Reception
8:30 am. – 8:45 am.	Opening Ceremony
8:45 am. – 9:30 am.	Keynote Speech: “The Historical and Cultural Significance of Piphat Music”
9:30 am. – 10:15 am.	Panel Discussion: “Challenges in the Preservation of Piphat Music”
10:15 am. – 10:30 am.	Coffee Break and Networking Session
10:30 am. – 12:00 am.	Piphat Music in present Society
12:00 pm. – 1:00 pm.	Lunch Break and Informal Networking

Seminar Schedule	
1:00 pm. – 1:45 pm.	“Innovations in the Promotion of Piphat Music”
1:45 pm. – 2:30 pm.	Live Performance and Analysis: “The Art of Piphat Music” (Video)
2:30 pm.– 2:50 pm.	Closing Remarks and Future Action Plans
2:50 pm. – 3:00 pm.	Group Photo and Adjournment

From the table above, the academic seminar on the dissemination and preservation of piphat music, the heart of Thai music started at 8:00 am. and continued through the process until 3:00 pm. Each step had its time reduced as appropriately due to problems with online seminar connection and equipment preparation. However, there were no major problems, and the program was able to proceed until completion. The questionnaire results of the seminar project from all 231 participants, both online and on-site. The results showed that the seminar participants gave the highest scores for the entire seminar project, with an average score of 4.58. The highest-scoring aspect was the content and presentation, which had an average score of 4.81. The aspect with the lowest score, with an average score of 4.20, was the general aspect of seminar management, including suggestions, recommendations and criticisms about organizing this seminar project.

Discussions

Piphat music is a unique form of Thai traditional music that has been integral to the social and cultural activities of ancient Thai groups. It has been a vital medium for recording and conveying historical and cultural tales across generations, with its diversity providing a profound and significant experience for the community. Traditional Thai music has faced constraints as the nation's distinctiveness and nationalism evolved, necessitating its extrication from the influences of Islam, Hinduism, and Mon culture at times (Roongruang, 1999). The categorization of piphat music serves to preserve and convey cultural values and traditions within Thai culture. Thai music may reinterpret contemporary songs within the piphat tradition, revitalizing rituals and preserving cultural identity. By acknowledging the significance of piphat music within the wider context of Thai musical traditions, scholars can enhance the comprehension and enjoyment of this distinctive and varied genre. Corresponds to Thai instruments are fairly extensive, and their sources are varied. According to early European

descriptions, over the past four hundred years the body of available instruments has gradually expanded, while a few instruments became obsolete. In contrast to the Chinese, the Thai have proven quite conservative about their instruments in resisting the urge to "improve" Thai Musical Instruments by David Morton (1971).

New Knowledges

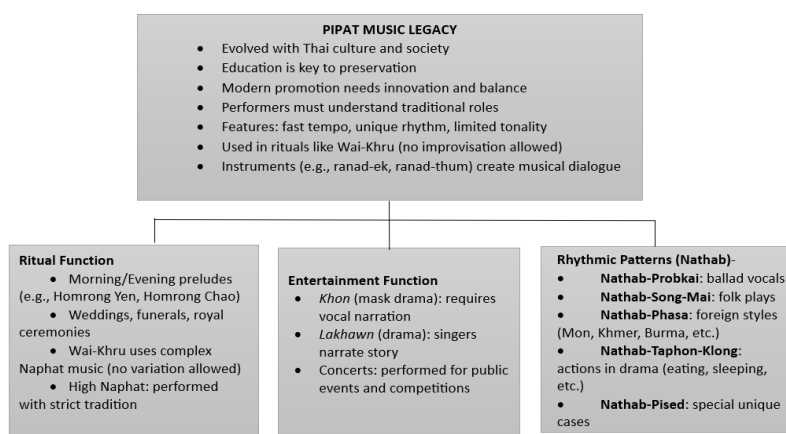


Figure 1: New Knowledges Diagram of the Roles and Function of Piphat Music in Thai Society.

Conclusions

1) The study the piphat music legacy, this study traces the historical evolution of piphat music, a traditional Thai ensemble rooted in ceremonial practices from the Ayutthaya to Bangkok periods. Findings reveal its adaptive resilience amid socio-cultural changes, with modern Thai educational institutions playing a critical role in preserving its sanctity through structured curricula. However, challenges persist in balancing improvisation with rigid ritual frameworks, necessitating innovative strategies to sustain its cultural authenticity in a globalized era. 2) A study roles and functions in Thai Society, piphat music serves multifaceted roles, including ritualistic, religious (Buddhist temple events), and secular entertainment. Its rhythmic frameworks and melodic structures distinguish it from ensembles like Mahori, while regional variations reflect Thailand's cultural diversity. Ethnomusicological analyses highlight its dual identity as a historical archive and a living tradition, though external

influences complicate its nationalist narrative. 3) A constructed a guidebook on piphat music for promotion, A four-chapter guidebook (The Piphat Music) was constructed through interviews with four expert musicians, covering history, characteristics, roles, and genres. Expert evaluations rated the guidebook highly (average score: 4.62/5), with minor revisions suggested for content depth. The resource synthesizes oral traditions with pedagogical frameworks, aiming to bridge intergenerational knowledge gaps and standardize piphat education. 4) Promotional Efficacy of the Guidebook, the guidebook's effectiveness was tested through a seminar in Tai'an City, China (February 2025), attended by 231 participants. Post-seminar surveys indicated high satisfaction (average score: 4.58/5), particularly in content relevance (4.81/5), though logistical aspects scored lower (4.20/5). Results demonstrate its potential for cross-cultural promotion, fostering global appreciation while reinforcing Thai cultural identity.

Suggestions and Recommendations

To ensure the sustainable preservation and promotion of piphat music, it is recommended that educational institutions in Thailand and abroad integrate piphat music into their formal curricula through both theoretical and practical training. Teachers should emphasize the historical background, structural characteristics, and traditional performance practices of piphat music to help students deeply appreciate its cultural value. Additionally, using interactive learning methods—such as live demonstrations, participation in rituals like Wai-Khru, and comparative music studies—can further engage students and foster a meaningful connection with traditional Thai music.

It is advisable that future efforts in promoting piphat music include regular academic seminars, workshops, and cross-cultural exchange programs to reach wider audiences, particularly youth and international communities. Guidebooks and instructional materials should be continually improved based on expert feedback, with updated content that reflects both tradition and modern context. Government agencies, cultural institutions, and music educators are encouraged to collaborate in creating platforms for performance, discussion, and innovation in piphat music to strengthen its role as both a cultural heritage and a living art form in contemporary society.

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