

# Phleng-ruang Mahori : A New Invention Thai Musical Genre

Panya Roongruang,  
Pakorn Rodchangphoen and Arthorn Thanawat  
Bangkokthonburi University, Bangkok, Thailand  
Corresponding Author E-mail: panyaroongruang@gmail.com

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## Abstracts

*Phleng-ruang* is an instrumental music created during Ayuthaya period (C 15-16) and usually performed by the piphat (wind and percussive instruments) ensemble. A *Phleng-ruang* is a series of variety pieces of music put together in kind of medley, a complete *phleng-ruang* consists of three tempi; *adagio* (slow), *moderato* (medium) and *allegro* (fast) and end up with a coda call *phleng-la*. There were many pieces of *phleng-ruang* in the past but nowadays remain only 36 compositions. Because *phleng-ruang* was never been performed by any other ensembles but the *piphat-maikhane* (hard mallets *piphat*) so that the researcher created a new type of *phleng-ruang* called “*phleng-ruang mahori*” for *mahori* ensemble which is consisted of three movements: *phleng-cha* (a slow tempo), *phleng-sawngmai* (a medium tempo) with vocal music, and *phleng-rio* (fast tempo) each movement has four pieces, then end up with the finale *phleng-la* (literally farewell music). This music use to be performed by *mahori* ensemble which is consisted of *saw-sam-sai* (three string fiddle), *saw-duang* (high fiddle), *saw-ou* (low fiddle), *jakhe* (floor zither), *khlui* (recorder), *thon-ramana* (a pair of goblet drum and frame drum) and *ching* (finger cymbals) with no vocalist. In the *phleng-la*, traditionally the beats must articulate by *klawng-that* (barrel drum) but for *phleng-ruang-mahori* it is substituted with *klawng-taphoe*.

**Keywords:** Phleng-ruang; Mahori; Thai Musical

## Introduction

*Phleng-ruang Mahori: A New Invention Thai Musical Genre* is research and creative in which researcher studied the related knowledge in order to create a new piece entitled

## Principle knowledge on Thai musical genres

### Ensembles

There are five main types of Thai ensemble: *khab-mai* ensemble, *khruang-pra-khome* ensemble, *khruang-sai* ensemble, *piphat* ensemble and *mahori* ensemble.

1. *Khab-mai* ensemble consist of vocal solo, *saw-sam-sai* (three string fiddle), and *bandawh* (waisted drum), this is a special ensemble found in late *Sukhothai* period (13th century) and use for the royal ceremony only.

2. *Khruang prakhom* (a ceremonial ensemble) on the other hand is called *wong khruang klawng khaeng*, it is divided into two subcategory, *klawng malayu* type and *klawng khaek* type. both drums are derived from Malaysia, but their shapes are different:

The *klawng malayu* type consists of four *klawng malayu* (drums), one *pi Java* and one *khawng-meng*. Sometime this ensemble is called “*wong glawng si pi nueng*” (four drums and one oboe ensemble). It usually accompanied the King's parades and the cremation parade by

the king's permission. Then it became the normal ensemble for funeral ceremonial music, with just two drums and one *pi* were used, and was known by the new name *bualoi* and sometimes these were used together with the *piphat* leaving the gong out. This ensemble was called as "*piphat nang hong*".

The *klawng khaeg* type consist of a pair of *klawng-khaek* (high pitch and low pitch) one *pi Java* and one *khawng-mong* (single gong) and widely use to accompany the *wai-khru* (greeting to the teacher) in Thai boxing.

3. *Khruang-sai* (string ensemble). The string ensemble consists of *saw-duang*, *saw-ou*, *jakhe*, *khlui* and the set of percussion *ching*, *chaab*, *tone-ramana* and *mong*. This ensemble is further divided into four kinds in accordance with its size and the different instruments.

4. *Piphat* ensemble (wind and percussive instruments) Its being used since Sukhothai period and has developed gradually especially in the Bangkok period being divided into seven kinds as following: *Piphat chatri*, *piphat khruang-ha*, *piphat khruang-khu*, *piphat khruang-yai*, *piphat nang-hong*, *piphat duegdamban*, and *piphat-Mon*, detail is not available.

5. *Mahori* ensemble, this ensemble is a combination of string ensemble and the *piphat* together; the *piphat* instruments (*ranad* and *khawng-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* is divided into three sizes: *mahori wong-lek* (small size), *mahori khruang-khu* (pair of melodic instruments), and *mahori khruang-yai* (including metalophone).

The composition "Phleng-ruang mahori" to be performed by a small mahori ensemble comprise of three groups of instruments; chordophones (string), aerophones (wind), idiophones (xylophones, gong and finger cymbals) and membranophones (drums).

The strings instruments include in the ensemble is a group of bowed string instrument: These are classified as members of the fiddle family; *sa-sam-sai* (three stringed spike fiddle), *saw-duang*, and *saw-ou*. *Saw-duang* is a two-stringed fiddle with a sound chamber made of hard wood covered with skin of snake on one side; leave opened a sound hold on the other side. *Saw-ou* has its sound chamber made of coconut shell. These fiddles have their bows laid down on the body between the two strings, one of which giving high pitch and the other low pitch and being tuned in 5th perfect. *Saw-ou* has a coconut shell sound chamber covered with cow skin, with a sound hole on the opposite side of the skin surfacing; being usually played in accompaniment of a *saw-duang*. *Saw-sam-sai* is the most beautiful fiddle, it is a spike bowed lute that had been used in the Thai ensemble for quite a long time probably in the *Sukhothai* period (1350). This instrument is played in a leader of mahori ensemble and sometimes being used also for the music accompanying a King's ceremony.



Saw-duang



Saw-sam-sai



saw-ou

*Jakhe* (floor zither) is a plucked string which is approximately 20 cm. high and 140 cm. long, and the width of the sound box is about 30 cm; with its first two strings made of silk yarn and the last of brass. The player of this instrument used his right hand to strike the strings with an ivory plectrum tied to the index finger.



Jakhe

The aerophones used in small mahori ensemble is *khloi*, a bamboo recorder having seven sound holes of one and half octave.



Khloi

Idiophones group are xylophones and gongs: the xylophone has two *kinds ranad-ek* and *ranad-thum*: *ranad-ek* is a high pitch which consists of 21-22 wooden bars strung together into a bridging set, being hooked on top of a long resonant box by both ends making an oblong curved shape that looks like a boat. The bars can be made either of bamboo or a kind of hard wood such as *mai-ching-chan*. *Ranad-ek* is played as the leading instrument of an ensemble; and its playing method has been known of developing into very high degree of skill. *Ranad* playing in this mahori ensemble is played by soft hammers. *Ranad thum*; a low-pitched xylophone having 18 bars in the set. Its shape looks like a *ranad-ek*, but lower and wider and is usually played in different variation to accompanies *ranad-ek*.



Ranad-ek



Ranad-thum

*Khawng-wong* has two sizes, a large one and a small one; the large one is *khawng-wong-yai* (large circle gong set) is played both hands of the performer to strike in octave, sixth, fifth, fourth, and third and some occasion second to give principle melody or theme of the tunes. *Kawng-wong-lek* (small circle gong set) comprises of 18 kettles and is a higher pitch than which of *khawng wong-yai*; being played by the same method but with different variation that is based on principle melody.

*Khawng-wong-yai**Khawng-wong-lek*

Membranophones group used here are a couple of small sized single head drum, *thone* and *ramana* which is used for articulating the rhythmic patten by their fore strokes of playing *tung*, *ting*, *jo* and *jah* together with instrument in percussion group; *ching*, *chaab*, *krab-phuang* and a single gong (*mong*).

*Ching* is a pair of fingers cymbals it is the most important percussion made of brass and have two ways of playing; one by open cymbal to produce sound like *ching* and the other by closed produces *chab* sound. *Ching* is being used to articulate the rhythm to control the performance as a conductor. *Chaab* is a small cymbal made of metal and looks like a plate being used to accompany *ching* in a syncopation manner. There are two types of *chaab*, one is *chab-lek* (small size) being small and the other being big one is *chab-yai* (larger size). *Mong* s a single small gong use for articulating the main beat at the end of the main melodic phrase.



## Phleng-ruang

*Phleng-ruang* (ceremonial suite) has long been developed since Ayuthaya period (14 century), it was a series of many preexisted single pieces put together for continuously performances.

*Phleng-ruang* has a specific structure in which consists of three movements, each movement has many compositions. There are three types of *phleng-ruang* structure: A complete *phleng-ruang* structure contains all three movements; *phleng-cha* (slow tempo), *phleng-sawng-mai* (moderate tempo), *phleng-rio*; others are the two movements structure (*phleng-sawng-mai* and *phleng-rio*) and the one movement structure (only *phleng-rio*), and ever types of *phleng-ruang* must end up with *phleng-la* (farewell).

This type of composition aims for the purpose of long playing; example of *phleng-ruang* such as *phleng-ruang Tao kin phak-boong*, *phleng ruang jin-sae*, *phleng ruang nang-hong*, *phleng-ruang tam-khwan*, etc.

There are three ways of naming the piece; one by using the name of the first piece for example: *Tao kin phak-boong*; two, using the name of *nathab* (rhythmic pattern) of the suite such as *nang-hong*; three, naming bases the occasion of playing (*tam-khwan* suite). Some suites are for entertainment, other for the ceremonies such as *tam-khwan* suite is for the *tam-khwan* (spiritual invitation) ceremony, *phleng-ching pra-chan* for food offering to the monks in a Buddhist ceremony, *phleng-ruang nang-hong* for a cremation, etc.

The new composition “*Phleng-ruang mahori*” do not follow manner of title’s naming but it’s named after the type of ensemble to be played the “*mahori* ensemble”. Traditionally the *piphat* instruments; *ranad* (xylophone) and *gong-wong* (circle gongs set) was 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 but in the present time, it normally play by men and women both so that the normal size of xylophone and circle gong set is allowed for the modern *mahori* ensemble.

A new composition “*phleng-ruang mahori*” will be performed by a small *mahori* ensemble consists of each of following instrument; *saw-sam-sai*, *saw-duang*, *saw-ou*, *khului*, *ranad-ek*, *ranad-thum*, *khawng-wong-yai*, *khawng-wong-lek*, *thone-ramana* and *ching*.

## Creation of *phleng-ruang mahori*

### Ideal background and inspiration

In 2021, there was a new composition composed by Assistant Professor Dr. Chutasiti Yodwised, Associate Prakorn Rodchangpoen and companies entitled “*Phleng tab mahori*” and performed for public which was inspired researcher to get an idea to invent a new type of Thai composition that has never been found in Thai musical category the “*phleng-ruang mahori*”. *Phleng-ruang* usually being performed by *piphat* ensemble only but the new composition will perform by *mahori* ensemble. This is the newest kind of composition in Thai category.

### Creating the “*phleng-ruang mahori*”.

According to the *phleng-ruang* structures mention earlier, the “*phleng-ruang mahori*” is a full scale three tempi type consists of *phleng-cha* (slow), *phleng sawng-mai* (medium) and *phleng-rio* (fast) end up with *phleng-la* (Coda). Steps of creation are 1 layout the main idea of the composition, 2 laying a musical structure, 3 constructing the principal melodies or the musical theme, 4 composing the variations of others instruments.

Main idea of the composition is to portray a scenery of a noble man in his mansion that located in a large area of trees, flowers, bush and pond surrounding with servants, musicians, and dancers. The mansion is among the trees and flowers in a nice park, it is calm and beautiful. The music portrays the atmosphere of the whole daytime and nighttime, begins which early morning, at dawn through the daytime, sun set in the evening, at night and next morning. The composition divides into 10 parts:

Part 1: *Phleng-cha* (slow tempo)

1. Early morning: Rising of the sun warm up the cool morning and the dew on the plants and evaporated; the music section entitled “*nam-khang tong saeng ta-wan*”

(น้ำค้างต้องแสงตะวัน) literally, the dew touching with the sun ray.

2. In the daytime: The sun shines brightly showing six colors of ray all day long; the music section entitled “*chapananrat-rujee*” (ฉัพพรรณรัตน์รุจี) literally, six colors ray of sunshine.

3. In the evening: The sun is falling and disappeared afterward; the music section entitled “*duang suree la lap*” (ดวงสุรีย์ลาลับ) literally, disappearance of the sun.

Part 2: *Phleng sawng-mai* (medium tempo)

A series of this movement are derived from “*phleng-tab Mahori*” which mention earlier. Original pieces are “*prateep-kio, prio-rasami, amata-norathi* and *thawiwat*. And the new three pieces of the new revision version has changed the titles to match with this new series these are; “*sadab sang mahori, darunee roeng rabam* and *phra tham nam thang*” as follow:

4. At night: Hearing sound of music performed by mahori ensemble; the music section entitled “*sadab sang mahori*” (สดับเสียงมโหรี) literally, hearing the mahori music).

5. Entering of the dancers: Group of lady dancers enter the hall and performing nice dances; the music section entitled “*darunee roeng rabam*” (ดุณีเรจระบำ) literally, young ladies enjoying dance.

6. Enlightening of dhamma: After listen to music and watching the dance for a while, a noble enlightening in to dhamma and seeing the truth of life: the music section entitled “*phra tham nam thang*” (พระธรรมนำทาง) literally, dhamma leads the way of life. This piece includes vocal music portrayal the feeling when the mind gets in to deep entrance after understanding of the Buddha’s teaching

Part 3: *Phleng-rio*

7. At night: The earth getting cool, and the dew has covered the plants and flowers; the music section entitled “*nam-khang prao*” (น้ำค้างพร่า) literally, the dew showers.

8. The stars twinkle all over the dark and clear sky: the music section entitled “*dao kloen*” (ดาวเกลื่อน) literally, stars spread over the sky.

9. At late night, the moon set, left over darkness under the shining stars; the music section entitled “*doen tok*” (เดือนตก) literally, the moon is falling.

#### Part 4: Coda

10. Phleng la: The phleng-ruang traditionally is end up with a Coda called. “*phleng-la*” which is a kind of normal *naphat* (movement music) usually performs by *piphat* ensemble, in this case the *klawng-that* (a pair of barrel drums) is substituted by *klawng-taphone* for suiting with the mahori ensemble.

#### Musical form

The musical form of the piece *phleng-ruang mahori* is as shown below

<i>Phleng-cha</i>	<i>Phleng sawng-mai</i>	<i>Phkeng-rio</i>	<i>Phleng-la</i>
Adagio	Moderato	Allegro	Coda
A – B – C –    -----    D – E – F    -----   G – H - I    -----   J			

Movements/tempo	Sections	Titles
<i>Phleng-cha</i> Adagio	A	Namkhang Tong Saeng Tawan
	B	Chapanarat Rujee
	C	Duang Suree La lab
<i>Phleng sawng-mai</i> Moderato	D	Sadab Siang Mahori
	E	Darunee Roeng Rabam
	F	Phra-tham Nam Thang (with song text)
<i>Phleng rio</i> Allegro	G	Nam-khang Phrao
	H	Dao Kloen
	I	Doen Tok
Coda	J	Phleng la

#### Musical notation

The musical notation here available only the theme or principle melody on *khawng-wong-yai* (large circle gong set) and only on some selected pieces: *phleng-cha*, *Namkhang Tong Saeng Tawan*; *Phleng sawng-mai*, *Sadab-siang-Mahori*, *Darunee Roeng Rabam*. *Pratham Nam thang*. *Phleng-rio* is not included, and finally the Coda - *Phleng La* is available due to the limitation on the pages amount of the paper.

## Phleng-cha

### Namkhang Tong Saeng Tawan

The piece contains 12 cycles of the rhythmic pattern in a slow tempo (*phleng-cha* or *sam-chan*) portraying the evaporation of the dew. The theme or principle melody (*look-khawng*) is as shown in notation below. Due to the limitation of the paper that cannot contain every section of music completely, so that only the first section of this slow movement is shown below.

$\bullet = 80$

The musical notation is presented in a single system with 10 staves. The first staff begins with a tempo marking of 80. The notation is in 2/4 time. The piece features a slow tempo and a rhythmic pattern that evokes the evaporation of dew. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines. The piece is characterized by a slow tempo and a rhythmic pattern that evokes the evaporation of dew.



2

## ห้องวงใหญ่

The musical score is written for a Big Band (ห้องวงใหญ่) and consists of ten staves of music. Each staff begins with a measure number: 41, 45, 49, 53, 57, 61, 65, 69, 73, 77, and 81. The music is written in treble clef and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. The notation includes stems, beams, and various musical symbols such as slurs and ties. The overall style is characteristic of mid-20th-century big band music.



# Phleng Sawng-mai

Sadab Siang Mahori

① ♩ = 60

5

9

13

17 ②

21

25

29

**Darunee Roeng Rabam****Phra-tham Nam Thang**

song text

Phutabuch kha khaw bucha Praputhachao	Kajat sia sueng kwan sao kwan soke lae tuk tung puang
Praphutha kun tee song karun yai luang	Nam thang tuk khon phon buang pon huang a-bai
Praphuthakun tee song klarun lua lon	Patibat tham nam ton pon hang jak thang wot wai
La awicha tee prakaruna sawn wai	Pa ton khawng ton nan hai dai phob kwam jing
Ruan jit kon kit kwam penpai	Phob thamma pai nai nan pen tham soong ying
Mua jit sangon kaw ja dai phab kwam jig	Sa-aad sawang phrang pring pon sing lok luang
Phutabuch kha khaw bucha Praputhachao	Kajat sia sueng kwan sao kwan soke lae tuk tung puang
Praphutha kun tee song karun yai luang	Nam thang tuk khon phon buang pon huang pon huang
antarai	

**Intro**

(1)พุท ธ ฐ

4 ฐา ฐ้า ฐอ ฐุ ฐา พระ พุท-ธ ฐ เจ้า ฐ ข-ฐัด ฐเสี ฐย ฐซึ่ง ฐควา ฐม ฐเศร้า-ฐวาม ฐโศก ฐและ ฐทุก ฐข์ ฐทั้ง ฐปวง-ฐพระ พุท-ธ

8 ฐคุณ ฐซึ่ง ฐทรง ฐกา ฐรณ ฐใหญ่ ฐหลวง ฐนำ ฐทาง ฐทุก ฐคน ฐพัน ฐบวง ฐพัน ฐห้วง ฐอ- ฐบาย (3)พระ พุท-ธ

13 ฐคุณ ฐที่ ฐทรง ฐกา ฐรณ ฐเหลือ ฐสิ้น ฐป-ฐฏิ-ฐบัติ ฐธรรม ฐนำ ฐตน ฐพัน ฐห่าง ฐจาก ฐทาง ฐวอด ฐวาย ฐละ ฐอ-ฐวิษ

18 ฐชา ฐที่ ฐพระ ฐก-ฐรณ ฐา ฐสอน ฐไว้ ฐพา ฐตน ฐของ ฐคน ฐนั้น ฐให้ ฐได้ ฐพบ ฐควา ฐม ฐจริง (3)รวม ฐจิต ฐค้น ฐคิด ฐควา ฐเป็น

23 ฐไป ฐพบ ฐธรร-ฐมะ ฐกาย ฐใน ฐนั้น ฐเป็น ฐธรรมะ ฐสูง ฐยิ่ง ฐมือ ฐจิต ฐส- ฐง ฐบ ฐก็ ฐจะ ฐได้ ฐพบ ฐควา ฐม ฐจริง ฐส-ฐง ฐส-ฐว่า ฐพ่วง

28 ฐพริ้ง ฐพัน ฐสิ่ง ฐหลอก ฐลง (1)พระ พุท-ธ ฐ ฐุ ฐา ฐข้า ฐขอ ฐ ฐุ ฐา ฐพระ ฐพุท ฐธ ฐเจ้า ฐข ฐจัด ฐเสี ฐย ฐซึ่ง ฐควา ฐม ฐเศร้า

32 ฐควา ฐโศก ฐและ ฐทุก ฐข์ ฐทั้ง ฐปวง-ฐพระ พุท ฐธ ฐคุณ ฐที่ ฐทรง ฐกา ฐรณ ฐใหญ่ ฐหลวง ฐนำ ฐทาง ฐทุก ฐคน ฐพัน

37 ฐบวง ฐพัน ฐห้วง ฐอัน-ฐต - ฐราช

## Phleng rio Nam-khang Prao



Dues to limitation of the paper, the two pieces of *phleng-rio* section; *dao-kloen*, *doen-tok* and *phleng la* are not available here.

## Conclusion

*Phleng-ruang mahori* is a new creative Thai music composition under *phleng-ruang* genre. The composer was inspired by the composition entitled “*phleng tab mahori*” for creating a new piece which is comprise of three movements: 1. A slow tempo (*phleng-cha*) contains three sections *namkhang tong saeng tawan*, *chapanarat rujee* and *duang sure lalab*: 2. A medium tempo (*sawng-mai*) contains three sections *sadab siang mahori*, *darunee roeng rabam* and *phratham nam thang* (song text is included): 3. A fast section (*phleng-rio*) contains three sections, *namkhang-prao*, *dao-kloen*, and *doen tok*. The composition ends with *phleng-la* following Thai musical traditional style and to be performed by *mahori* ensemble that has never happen before.

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