

การเรียบเรียงเสียงประสานบทเพลงพระราชานิพนธ์ที่มีคำร้องจำนวน 41 บทเพลง
ในพระบาทสมเด็จพระบรมชนกาธิเบศร มหาภูมิพลอดุลยเดชมหาราช บรมนาถบพิตร
สำหรับวงขับร้องประสานเสียง

An Arrangement of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's

41 Royal Songs for Choir

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยชิ้นนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาวิธีการเรียบเรียงเสียงประสานบทเพลงพระราชานิพนธ์ในพระบาทสมเด็จพระบรมชนกาธิเบศร มหาภูมิพลอดุลยเดชมหาราช บรมนาถบพิตร สำหรับการขับร้องประสานเสียง โดยเป็นบทเพลงที่มีคำร้องจำนวน 41 บทเพลง การศึกษานี้ใช้การวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพผ่านการสัมภาษณ์กลุ่มผู้ให้ข้อมูลแบบยึดจุดมุ่งหมาย โดยเป็นผู้ที่ทำหน้าที่เรียบเรียงเสียงประสานเพลงพระราชานิพนธ์ ทั้ง 41 บทเพลง จำนวนทั้งสิ้น 3 ท่าน ผลการวิจัยพบว่า วิธีการเรียบเรียงเสียงประสานต้องยึดข้อกำหนดของทางสำนักพระราชวังเป็นพื้นฐาน ต้องมีเลือกรูปแบบที่จะเรียบเรียง มีการวางโครงสร้างของบทเพลง โดยต้องวางแผนเลือกใช้เทคนิคใดเป็นโครงสร้างของบทเพลงก่อน นอกจากนี้ ยังมีการสร้างความน่าสนใจให้แนวประสาน การเติมสีสันทันกับบทเพลง และพิจารณาการสร้างท่อนนำ ท่อนบทบรรเลงคั่น ท่อนจบของบทเพลง

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Abstract

This research paper aims to investigate the process of arranging 41 of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's royal songs for choir. The study employs a qualitative method in order to understand the process of arranging these royal compositions. The instruments used for information gathering in this study were interviews. The participants were selected using purposeful sampling. The interviewees were three arrangers who adapted 41 royal compositions for choir. The result showed that the arrangement needs to follow the regulations of the Bureau of the Thai Royal Household, select styles for arrangement for each piece, structure the piece, create harmonic lines, add colour to each piece, and create an introduction, instrumental section, and ending.

Keywords: Royal composition / Choir / Music arrangement

Introduction

His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej was renowned as one of Thailand's greatest artists, who had holistic knowledge in performing, composing, and arranging music. In Thailand, he was a leader and an expert in composing Western music by using interesting chords that create colourful arrangements. Together with various styles and rhythms, the royal compositions are melodious and have become legendary.

As a musician, he was a professional performer and composer who produced 48 compositions including those for which he composed the melody and those for which he wrote English lyrics. The first composition is *Sangtien* which was composed in 1946 when the king was 18 years old.⁴ The royal compositions are well-known and performed widely by both Thai and foreign musicians. This is because these royal compositions are

⁴ Poonpit Amatyakul, *Lamnam Hang Siam* (Bangkok: Amarin Printing & Publishing Public Company Limited, 1997), 35.

allowed to be performed in various styles such as jazz, classical, pop, vocal, and instrumental pieces. In the initial period, Kru Eau Sunthornsanan performed the royal compositions with the Government Public Relations Department band (Suntraporn band) which popularised the royal compositions.⁵

On October 13, 2016, King Bhumibol Adulyadej passed away. The researchers, as musicians and music educators, wish to honour the King and allow people to witness his musical genius. Therefore the project to record the royal compositions with vocals by Suanplu Chorus has been established. The Suanplu Chorus is a well-known and renowned choir which has won many prizes and has performed all around the world.⁶ The director and vice-directors of Suanplu Chorus were contacted and asked to arrange 41 royal compositions with lyrics for choir. The arrangements of these 41 pieces were then recorded and compiled into an album which is the first complete album of royal compositions for choir in Thailand's history.

The unique challenges in managing the project have led to an interest in studying the arrangement process of each arranger in order to provide a model for people who are interested in this kind of work. Therefore this study aims to investigate the process of arranging 41 of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's royal compositions with lyrics for choir. This work will not only be a historic and valuable music creation but also a dissemination of valuable knowledge for the music community.

⁵ Warawut Sumawong, *History of Suntraporn band in Suntraporn day and 25 guests* (Bangkok: Saksopa Publishing, 1986), 56.

⁶ Vitchatalum Laovanich and Monsikarn Laovanich, "Transferability Process of Musical Knowledge by Ramon Lijauco Jr. in the Development of Thailand's Choral Representatives for the World Choir Games 2014: Suanplu Chorus and Chulada Choir of Chulalongkorn University Demonstration Secondary School-Case Studies," *Journal of Education Studies* 45, 2 (2017): 93.

Literature Review

List of Royal Compositions

There are 48 royal compositions by King Bhumibol Adulyadej in total⁷ which can be grouped into two categories as follows:

1. Compositions without lyrics (seven pieces): *March Thongchai Chalermopol* (*The Colors March*), *Lay Kram Goes Dixie*, *Nature Waltz*, *The Hunter*, *Kinari Waltz*, *Phramaha Mongkol*, and *Blues for Uthit*.

2. Compositions with lyrics (41 pieces):

2.1 Only Thai lyrics (nine pieces): *March Rachawanlop* (*The Royal Guards March*), *Maha Chulalongkorn* (*Chulalongkorn*), *Rachanawigyothin* (*Royal Marines March*), *Thammasat*, *Kasetsart*, *Kwamfun An Sungsud*, *Rao Su*, *Rao-Loalarp 21* (*We - Infantry 21*), and *Menu Khai*.

2.2 Only English lyrics (two pieces): *Oh I Say* and *Can't You Ever See*.

2.3 One version of Thai lyrics and one version of English lyrics (27 pieces): *Sangtien* (*Candlelight Blues*), *Yam Yen* (*Love at Sundown*), *Sai Fon* (*Falling Rain*), *Kai Rung* (*Near Dawn*), *Chata Cheewit* (*H.M. Blues*), *Duangjai Kab Kwamrak* (*Never Mind the Hungry Men's Blues*), *Arthit Ab Sang* (*Blue Day*), *Thewa Pa Koo Fan* (*Dream of Love Dream of You*), *Kam Wan* (*Sweet Words*), *Keaw Ta Kwanjai* (*Love Light in My Heart*), *Porn Peemai* (*New Year Greeting*), *Rak Keun Reun* (*Love Over Again*), *Yam Kham* (*Twilight*), *Yim Soo* (*Smiles*), *Mea Some Song* (*I Never Dream*), *Lom Nao* (*Love in Spring*), *Suk Sanyalak* (*Friday Night Rag*), *Kham Leaw* (*Lullaby*), *Sai Lom* (*I Think of You*), *Sang Dean* (*Magic Beams*), *Pirom Rak* (*A Love Story*), *Pandin Khong Rao* (*Alexandra*), *Nai Duangjai Niran* (*Still on My Mind*), *Tien Jai* (*Old Fashioned Melody*), *Koh Nai Fan* (*Dream Island*), *Weaw* (*Echo*), and *Rak* (*Love*).

⁷ The Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary, *The Musical Compositions of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand*, 2nd ed. (Bangkok: Amarin Printing & Publishing Public Company Limited, 2016), 11.

2.4 Two versions of Thai lyrics and one version of English lyrics (two pieces): *Fan - Plearn Bhubing - Somewhere Somehow* and *Rai Deun - Rai Chandra - No Moon*.

2.5 Two versions of Thai lyrics and two versions of English lyrics (one piece): *Klai Kangwon - Kerd Pen Thai Tai Peu Thai - When I - When II*.

Regulations of Royal Composition Arrangement

Since the royal compositions of King Bhumibol Adulyadej are valuable and special, arrangers need to study their backgrounds, purposes, and regulations in order to arrange the music correctly in terms of music notation, lyrics, and chords which helps to convey the king's intention completely. The complete version of the arrangement must still be submitted to the Bureau of the Thai Royal Household to be checked for validity and adjusted until the arrangement is approved for dissemination. The regulations in arranging the royal compositions are as follows:⁸

1. The reference score must be the version produced by the Bureau of the Thai Royal Household because this version has been investigated for correctness.

2. The main melody must remain unchanged; notes cannot be altered but rhythm modifications can be made. Embellishment of vocal tone is not considered as note changing.

3. Original chord progression composed by the king must be used. However, the chords can be modified into varying forms. Moreover, they can be extended into 7th chord or others. Sometimes, extension notes in chords can be removed and become basic chords such as removing the 9th of Bm₉, thereby becoming Bm₇. If the basic chords are 7th chords or others, chord tones can be deleted and extension notes such as 7th, 9th, or 11th can remain to enhance the piece's attractiveness.

4. In some parts, a unison and all types of non-chord tone can be used.

⁸ Wirach Yoothavorn, interview (January 14, 2017).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative method in order to understand the process of arranging 41 royal compositions with lyrics for choir. The instrument used in this study was an informal interview in order to make the interviewees relax. The interview first followed the objective of the study, and after initial analysis of the data, individual interviews of each arranger were conducted to collect in-depth information. The participants were selected using purposeful sampling. The interviewees were three arrangers who had arranged 41 royal compositions for choir: a conductor of Suanplu Chorus⁹, a vice-conductor of Suanplu Chorus¹⁰, and a vice-conductor of Suanplu Chorus¹¹. The interview questions were sent to each participant prior to the interviews. The participants permitted to reveal their information by signing consent forms. The interviews were recorded using a video recorder, a voice recorder, and a notebook.

With regard to data analysis, the data from the recording devices and the notebook were analyzed. After that, the data was coded and grouped. All analyzed data were summarized into points in order to understand the overall process of arrangement. Then the summary was sent to the participants and specialists to check data accuracy and provide additional suggestions.

Findings

The arrangement needs to follow the regulations of royal composition arrangement from the Bureau of the Thai Royal Household. Therefore arrangers need to examine and follow those rules. From the interviews of three arrangers, the method of arranging the royal compositions for choir can be summarized as follows:

⁹ Ramon Lijauco, Jr., interview (January 31, 2018).

¹⁰ Sege Chaiyapechara, interview (February 5, 2018).

¹¹ Atichai Trakuldech, interview (February 7, 2018).

Style selection

The process of style selection for the arrangement in this study includes listening to various versions of each piece and then considering the suitability of the score, melody, rhythm, and chords. If the piece fits with the existing version, the arrangers will select that version for the arrangement. If not, new styles will be chosen for the arrangement by referring to various styles that suit the royal compositions, for example, swing, big band jazz, ragtime, march, gospel, Broadway, Hawaiian, Latino-Caribbean, and bossa nova.

Structuring the piece

After style selection, the next step is to select music elements for each part simultaneously because all the parts are related and also have direct impacts on each other. The methods used to structure the piece are as follows:

1. Use one technique as a main structure. For example, using a four-part harmony technique so that all parts sing similar lyrics, having one part sing the main melody and other parts sing rhythm and chord (doo wop style), or using vocals as an instrumental sound (vocal orchestration).
2. Select a language for singing (or sing in both languages). This depends on the styles of the pieces and their lyrics because Thai and English lyrics provide different meanings and there is only one language in some sections of some pieces.
3. Select a key signature that suits a choir; the range within which the singers have perfect control over their voices.

Creating harmonic lines

Four-part harmony is used as a foundation of the arrangement. However, it can be flexible and sometimes the parallel must unavoidably be used. For example, using parallel fifth or eighth to make the melody stronger (double melody).

1. Using words in harmonic lines: lyrics and words with no meaning. The issue to be aware of when creating harmonic lines with lyrics for Thai compositions, is how

to move the lines do not go against Thai consonance. The arrangers need to consider this point carefully in order to provide the right meaning and convenience when singing. Using words with no meaning (doo wop or vocal orchestration) is easier than using lyrics because it is unnecessary to consider the consonance. For example, using “hoo” for softness, using “ha” for elegance and loudness, using “ba da pa doo” or “doot bap dap pap” to emphasize rhythm and rest, using “noom” to differentiate the harmonic lines from other pieces that use normal “hoo” or “ha”.

2. Using harmonic lines to support or emphasize some parts. For example, alternating with the main melody in a mid-tempo piece which can drive the music forward, or echoing the lyrics when emphasis of ideas or chords are required. This mostly occurs in parts where the chords sound different, parts with light lyrics, or parts with prolonged notes, and using various techniques that suit the music style (syncopation, emphasizing off-beats, using proper rhythmic pattern, etc.).

Creating colour in the music

Various techniques used to create colour are listed as follows:

1. Arranging in jazz style by adding 6th, 7th (major and minor), 9th, suspension, and resolution in appropriate places to make the piece more interesting. Though the royal compositions already contain these notes, more notes can be added.

2. Building strength in the piece by using various techniques. For example, designing the bass line in root position, moving four parts together without prolonged notes, creating uncomplicated rhythm, using block chords, and using suspension and resolution in downbeats.

3. Creating light and floating sound within the piece by using inversion of chords rather than chords in root position, using fewer notes, starting with unison and then extend into a chord, and removing some of the notes in some parts for a more floating sound.

4. Creating diversity within the piece by using various techniques such as singing both languages (Thai and English) in a short piece, changing rhythmic pattern in some parts, and using modulation either with or without transition to the new key.

Creating introductions, instrumental sections, and endings

1. Creating the introduction

The arrangers need to consider whether the introduction is necessary. If the introduction can be added before the first lyrics section, the arrangers need to create a new section, which can be done in many ways as follows:

1.1 Recomposing the entire section. This is to change the style of the piece so that it differs from existing versions.

1.2 Rearrangement of notes and chords from the original piece. For example, in the introduction of *Lom Now*, the notes in the chords of the first lyrics section are used as a soprano line in the first three bars (figure 1), then the tenor is arranged to sound more like the wind (tenor bar 1-4) as in figure 2. The bass line uses notes in 2nd inversion instead of root position in order to create a feeling of falling leaves. Bars 5-8 are newly arranged, and the introduction ends with a dominant chord (figure 2).

Figure 1 The soprano line of *Lom Now*'s introduction



Figure 2 The introduction of *Lom Now*

Freely (m.m. ♩ = 67)

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

hoo

hoo

hoo

hoo

1.3 Adjusting from the existing arrangement of the piece. For example, the introduction of *Yam Kham* was created after arranging the section with lyrics (figure 3). It was found that the alto, tenor, and bass of this part can become the introduction by themselves. So the soprano was removed, and the remaining parts were arranged as an introduction (figure 4).

Figure 3 The arranged section with lyrics of *Yam Kham*

A Tempo

S.

A.

T.

B.

ยาม ประกาย แสง ท้อง ส่อง งาม เรือง ผ่อง น - ภา ประ - เทือง ผ่อง มวล ชี -

ยาม ประกาย แสง ท้อง ส่อง hoo ประ - เทือง ผ่อง มวล ชี -

ยาม ประกาย แสง ท้อง ส่อง hoo ประ - เทือง ผ่อง มวล ชี -

ยาม ประกาย แสง ท้อง ส่อง hoo ประ - เทือง ผ่อง มวล ชี -

Figure 4 The introduction of *Yam Kham*

The musical score for the introduction of *Yam Kham* is written for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 96, and the piece concludes with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking. The Soprano part is mostly silent, with a final note in the last measure. The Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts are active throughout, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics include "doo loot doo loo", "doo", "doo loo doo", "doo loo doo doo", "loot doo loo doo", "doo loo", "doo loo doo", "ba doom", "badoom", and "ba doo doo doo".

1.4 Adapting from the original introduction. The original introduction can be modified in various ways, for example, removing some parts and rearranging and changing rhythmic patterns, or changing tempo.

2. Creation of an instrumental section

This section has been created to break from the lyrics. It mostly derives from the introduction or from some of the lyrical parts. The methods used are as follow:

2.1 Imitate the introduction by repeating it.

2.2 Create a variation from the introduction such as extending the 4-bar-introduction to make it an 8-bar-instrumental section.

2.3 Creating variation from lyrics sections. For example, the instrumental section of *Yam Kham* that was created by adapting from the lyrics section and changing the lyrics in the soprano to words without meaning such as "ba da" or "doo loot" (figure 5).

Figure 5 The instrumental section of *Yam Kham*

3. Creation of an ending

The ending is used to emphasize the last section in order to make the piece more powerful. The methods used to create the ending are as follows:

3.1 Creating a grand ending. The word "ha" is mostly used to harmonize chords, extend rhythm, and is sung by a high voice (soprano) to achieve a powerful sound. For example, the ending of *Kerd Pen Thai Tai Peu Thai* consists of prolonged notes with "ha" in each part together as a chord (figure 6). The tempo is decreased and the soprano sings high B during the last chord.

Figure 6 The ending of *Kerd Pen Thai Tai Peu Thai*

3.2 Modification of lyrics sections. The lyrics are changed into other words. For example, the ending of *Yam Kham* uses the melody from the lyrics section and changes to "doo loo", and then adjusts the last section (figure 7).

Figure 7 The ending of *Yam Kham*

The musical score for the ending of *Yam Kham* is presented in four staves, labeled S. (Soprano), A. (Alto), T. (Tenor), and B. (Bass). The tempo marking **molto rit.** is placed above the Soprano staff. The score begins at measure 77. The lyrics for each part are as follows:

- Soprano (S.):** doo loo doo doo loo doo doo loo doo loo doo
- Alto (A.):** doo loot doo loo doo loot doo loo doo loot doo loo doo
- Tenor (T.):** doo loo doo loo doo loo doo loo doo loo doo loo doo
- Bass (B.):** doom ba doom ba doom ba doom ba doom ba doo doo doo

The piano accompaniment in the Bass staff features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, providing a steady accompaniment to the vocal lines.

3.3 Repetition of the lyrics. The lyrics are repeated at the end by adding some elements and changing rhythm patterns.

3.4 Ending with the name of the piece in chord form. The name of the piece is sung in the last two chords with original chord progressions.

Discussion

This arrangement for choirs is quite special and different from arrangements for other types of ensembles because it is the first time that the complete 41 royal compositions of King Bhumibol Adulyadej have been arranged. Therefore, the arrangements need variety in order to make the whole collection more interesting. There were some experiments in going beyond the nature of human voice and singers' abilities; it was quite tough for the singers to pay so much more attention during practice. However, when the singers were able to sing the arrangement, it was found

that human voice can express music in different ways which make this collection unique.

The challenge in arranging royal compositions is that the arrangers cannot change original chords and those chords are quite difficult. It is not easy to arrange the chords for choir due to the restrictions of the human voice. For example, in some pieces, there are complicated chords and intervals, and though the singers can sing them, the sound quality is not perfect and not suitable for the piece. The solution is to have a piano perform those chords and intervals instead. This is not only a good solution, but it also creates variety within the pieces rather than using only a cappella. A good arrangement needs to be able to help the singers to sing difficult pieces perfectly. Thus, it is important for the arrangers to study and understand the piece thoroughly in terms of style selection, piece structure, and avoiding nature vocal restrictions in order to let the singers express the music efficiently.

In addition, the in-depth study into the details of the royal compositions of King Bhumibol Adulyadej allows us to clearly see his musical potential. Some pieces are already perfect by themselves; the arrangers only use basic techniques in arrangement, but they can be expressed perfectly. While some pieces can be arranged in many different ways, which however are still interesting. The researchers hope that the principles of arranging royal compositions for choir seen in this study will benefit and be an example in the production of other creative works.

Conclusion

From the investigation of arrangements of 41 royal compositions for choir, it was found that the arrangement needs to follow the regulations of the Bureau of the Thai Royal Household such as not changing chords and using original chord progressions. The first step of arranging was to select the style of arrangement that suites each piece, then structured the piece by using one technique as a main structure, selecting a language for singing, and selecting a key signature. Followed by

creating harmonic lines and creating colour within the music by arranging it in jazz style, managing the voicing, using block chords, or changing key signature. The final step was to create introductions, instrumental sections, and endings by using the original versions that already exist, that have been properly arranged by others, that have been arranged from some parts of the piece, or that have been newly composed.

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