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THE HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THAI POPULAR SINGING DURING 1925 - 1967

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ABSTRACT

Thai popular singing is a musical activity that is very popular in Thailand. Especially the singing that comes from the songs of Suntraporn band and luk-krung style. These songs are continually being re-recorded for sale. Until today, these songs are used as main elements in television singing competitions. This article therefore presents synthetic data on three main principles, namely (1)the history of singing in Thailand before 1967 to create an understanding of the source and development of singing in Thailand, which has led to the singing of Thai popular songs; (2) the history of Thai popular singing during 1925 – 1967, which presents the timeline of the phenomenon of singing through the entertainment business and government administration policies that led to the popularity of Western-style Thai music among Thai people at that time; and (3) the characteristics of Thai popular singing during 1925 – 1967, which presents five characteristics, including the natural voice projection, the vibrato, the neumatic singing, the melismatic singing, and the interpretation and emotional expression. These data show the connection between Thai traditional singing and the influence of Western music entering Thailand that leads to Thai popular singing having characteristics, which is unique and different from the popular singing of the West and other nations. Because the characteristics of Thai popular singing during 1925 – 1967 came from the combination of singing skills in Western popular music and Thai culture and ways, such as language, expression, beliefs, ideas, etc.

Keywords

History of Singing in Thailand; Characteristics of Thai Popular Singing; Thai Popular Music

Introduction

Thai popular singing is an important component of the Thai music industry. At present, Thai popular singing is divided into many types, such as luk-krung, luk-thung, pop, rock, jazz, etc. The variety of types of Thai popular singing arises from its popularity among listeners in each era, according to the meaning of word “popular music”, which is one of kinds of Western music. Popular music is music that has been widely popular among people in society since the 19th century. Popular music is music that is easy to listen and to remember. Because it has a simple form and characteristics that are different from classical music, art song, and folk song, and the content in the popular music is related to the way of life and culture of people in society. Popular music bands consist of singers, electric guitars, electric basses, keyboards, and drum sets, but some bands also include woodwind and brass instruments such as saxophones, trumpets, trombones, etc. In addition, popular music is composed to meet the needs of specific groups of people in society, especially teenagers in each era. Popular music has become a product of the music industry in the mass market. It is related to commerce, such as mass production, for-profit production, sound recording and mass media distribution, etc. (Kennedy, M., 1993, 686; Manuel, P., 1988, 2; Birrer, F.,1985; Inkhong, N., 2016, 91-92)

Later, when popular music spread to various countries around the world, including Thailand. Thai popular music thus emerged and became a new form of entertainment replacing Thai traditional music. Since 1939 during the Field Marshal government P. Pibulsongkram, large bands were encouraged to form to play an important role in creating songs as a tool for presenting government policy. Until the official name was given to call songs that had Thai lyrics, Western music arrangements, and Western singing as “Thai international songs” (In Thai “Phleng Thai Sakon”) (Inkhong, N., 2016, 229) From the meaning of the word "popular music" and the general characteristics of “Thai international music” in this article therefore defines music composed with Thai lyrics and Western music as “Thai popular music”.

For the reason that Thai popular singing is a musical activity that is very popular in Thai society, especially Thai popular singing from Suntraporn band and luk-krung style had been re-recorded for sale, such as GMM Grammy's Grammy Gold album, Nititad Promotion's immortal album, etc. Moreover, nowadays, there are many singing contest programs both in the mainstream media and on the general contest stage, such as Golden Song, Best Song Contest (In Thai “Phleng Aek”), etc. Therefore, the author is interested in writing the history and characteristics of Thai popular singing during 1925 – 1967 as part of my doctoral thesis for the benefit of interested readers. This article divides information into three parts: (1) The history of Thai popular singing before 1967; (2) The History of Thai popular singing during 1925 – 1967; and (3) The characteristics of Thai popular singing during 1925 – 1967. The details are as follows:

The history of singing in Thailand before 1967

Before studying characteristics of Thai popular singing during 1925 – 1967, the author wants to present the history of singing in Thailand before 1967 to create an understanding of the source and development of singing in Thailand, which has led to the singing of Thai popular songs. The history of singing in Thailand before 1967 divided into two groups: (1) Traditional singing in Thailand; and (2) Singing influenced by Western music. Brief details are as follows:

Traditional singing in Thailand: Lullaby – Folk music - Traditional music

Thai singing began at home when mothers or nannies would sing lullabies or cradle songs to the infants. These songs had lyrics which comforted the baby with love, affection and care, and aimed to lull the baby to sleep. Later, it began to include the function of storytelling, which supported the morality, cultural beliefs, kindness, love, and warmness between a mother and her child (Amatyakul, 1993). This particular style of singing is known as folk music, and still exists in a number of agricultural communities. Some examples of these folk songs are *Pleng Kiao Khao* (Harvest Song), *Pleng Song Fang* (Straw Song), and *Pleng Ten Kam Ram Khiao* (Scythe Dance Song). Later, the singing was developed into ceremonial songs, such as *Pleng Tham Khwan* (Ceremony for Encouragement Song). They were also developed into the songs used in various performances, such as dancing, theatre productions, and puppet shows. These songs could be either instrumental music or vocal music, and could also be divided into two categories: *Pleng Cha* (slow-tempo songs) and *Pleng Reo* (fast-tempo songs). Then, they were transformed into Thai traditional music with two types of rhythm: *Na Thab Song Mai* and *Na Thab Prob Kai*. *Na Thab Song Mai* is used either in songs with short or flexible melodies or in songs with an indeterminate length. On the other hand, *Na Thab Prob Kai*'s length is two times longer than that of *Na Thab Song Mai* and it is used in songs with orderly melodies (The Royal Institute, 2002, pp. 168–169). Thai traditional music thereafter has been used in many kinds of Thai performing arts, such as *Lakhon Ram* (Thai Dance Theater), *Khon* (Mask Dance), *Nang Yai* (Big Puppet), *Sepa* (Singing with Wooden Clappers), and *Pi Phat* (Thai Classical Band) (Inkhong, 2016, pp. 117–120). For this reason, singing that was popular in Thai society appeared in vocal songs in Thai traditional music through Thai performing arts.

Singing influenced by Western music: Church music – Court music – The royal anthem

Before 1932, Thailand was known by its former name, Siam. The Siamese had their first meeting with Portuguese people in 1511. This was also the first time that Western music was introduced to Siamese people, as they heard the European church songs from the Portuguese village located near the capital of Ayutthaya. From the 16th century onwards, many foreigners such as Dutch, British, and French nationals arrived in Siam and consequently stayed, traded, worked as missionaries, and worked for the court as well as the army. They played music and sang the church songs and later they taught the Siamese to sing Western style songs. During the mid-17th century, the Siamese court had a very good connection with the French court of Louis the 14th and they had exchanged the visiting ambassadors to France (1684–1686 AD). During these visits to Paris, many Siamese saw and heard high-level operatic European singers, but the Siamese could not imitate them. Centuries later, in 1828, many Presbyterian missionaries arrived in Bangkok. They built schools and started singing classrooms for children. They brought their folk music and traditional songs to Siam along with them. At that time, the new Siamese generation learned to sing in both English and French. There were many Siamese who were able to sing Western songs and they learned more church, folk, and traditional songs of European styles (Natchanawakul, 2012, pp. 32–98).

Up until 1855, The Siamese army had not had any royal anthem. The two militaries (Capt. Impey and Capt. Thomas G. Know) therefore used Great Britain's saluted song "God Save the King" without lyrics instead (Natchanawakul, 2012, p. 108). This song, however, was disused in 1871 (during the reign of King Rama V). In 1888, during the reign of King Rama VI, a new royal anthem was

composed with many lyrics. Later, the official lyrics for the royal anthem were decided upon and chosen, and have been used ever since the official announcement on March 1, 1913 (Inkhong, 2015, pp. 126–132). Therefore, the royal anthem of Thailand was the first modern Thai song which had Thai lyrics and a Western melody (Amatyakul, 2015). Moreover, in 1904, Siamese students were regulated to sing the royal anthem every Monday and Friday. This aimed to create the gratitude towards King Rama V (Amatyakul, 2009, pp. 63–64). Siamese people, as a result, were more acquainted to Western singing. As time passed by, the Siamese who could sing Western songs in several styles passed on their skills to the following generations. This later created popular singers and composers within the land of Siam.

The History of Thai popular singing during 1925 - 1967

In the late nineteenth century, popular music emerged in the Western Hemisphere and spread to countries around the world, including Thailand. It resulted in a new form of music emerging and being used in Thai society in place of traditional Thai music. A new style of music influenced by Western popular music began after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, musicians, bands, singers, and theater groups from various parts of Europe sailed to Southeast Asia. Since then, Western musical theaters and operas have become more and more common in places such as Singapore, Batavia (Jakarta), Hong Kong, and Bangkok. By the late 1890s, a native Siamese composer named Mr. Prawat Khojarig (1892–1949), the most famous leader of Thai traditional musical theater, had observed a lot of Western musical arts. He then imitated their work, their styles of acting, as well as their music and singing styles. By 1917, Siamese musical theaters had adopted new musical compositions which imitated the Western styles. They used Western melodies but the lyrics were sung in the Thai language. They used Thai traditional string ensemble mixed with some Western instruments such as pianos, violins, pedal organs, and saxophones (Amatyakul, 2015).

The above information represents the transition point between traditional Thai singing and new styles of singing influenced by Western music. Because even though this musical theater uses Western instruments to accompany the singing, but the performers still use the traditional Thai singing method. Until, Thai film entrepreneurs in the pioneering era used a new style of film music, which was Western popular music to accompany the singing of Thai words since 1925. Therefore, the author sets the time scope of the study of Thai popular singing as starting in 1925.

The singing technique was gradually changed from a traditional Thai style to a more Western one. It developed continually and consequently became the new singing technique. Thai popular songs originated in 1925 in the film industry by the first Thai-owned popular stringed ensemble which was named the *Sri Krung* Soundtrack Movie Company (Amatyakul, 2006, pp. 5-6). In Thai musical theaters, around the year 1930, there were many Thai composers such as Pranboon (Mr. Juangjan Jankhana, 1901-1976), and Petcharat (Mr. Somprasong Rattanathatsanee, 1901-1965) who started to apply the Westen music compositions in to their works. Therefore, the songs from the films and the musical theaters were well-received because they were very up to date at that time. After the Thai kingdom revolution in 1932, the new constitutional government used Thai popular music as a tool to declare their policy through the radio stations, theaters and also established two big bands for public entertainment as well as ballroom dancing. One of the big bands of Thai government was the “Krom

Khotsanakarn Band" (currently means Public Relations Department), which used the name "Suntaraporn Band" when performing music outside of official hours. The government encouraged all Thais to listen to Thai popular music instead of Thai traditional music. They had Thai popular songs composed almost every day, and broadcasted these songs repeatedly all over the country (Inkhong, 2016, pp. 161-231). The above information shows that the government's use of Western Thai popular music is based on the idea of promoting internationalism. Music became representative of government policy at the time, according to Adorno wrote "Since the mid-nineteenth century a country's music has become a political ideology by stressing national characteristics, appearing as a representative of the nation, and everywhere confirming the national principle." (Chun, A., Rossiter, N., and Shoesmith, B., 2004, 1) Since 1946, HM King Bhumibol (1927-2016), introduced his compositions of blues, jazz, and other styles to the kingdom. His compositions were broadcasted all over the country and they were well-received by all Thais (Amatyakul, 2007, pp. 36-37). Therefore, the king's compositions were one of the main influences which promoted Thai popular music throughout the nation.

Later around 1967, during the Vietnam War, a new style of Thai popular music emerged and the characteristics of singing were different from the Thai popular singing in the previous period. Thai singers in this period changed the singing style into totally American singing, which was a lot louder both in terms of singing voice and in terms of music, and it was called rock. Therefore, the author sets the time scope of the study of Thai popular singing as ending in 1967.

The characteristics of Thai popular singing during 1925 - 1967

In the study, after *Prawat Khojarig*'s work in the musical theater, around 1930, there were many Thai composers beginning to create new Western popular compositions. Their musical bands used three – five Western instruments to accompany the singing. Those band instruments were usually violins, pedal organs, pianos, saxophones, guitars and a percussion set (Amatyakul, 2016). This conforms to the statement of Kennedy (1997, p. 686) that "Performers are usually singers, guitarists, or drummers, sometimes with complicated electric effects". Based on the analysis, the sample records during 1931–1932, included ten songs of two singers including *Ms. Bunnak Chenchopphanthakit and Ms. Prathum Prathiprasen.* The study reveals that there were problems in singing: (1) sometimes the singing did not go along well with the music, (2) there was no pitch adjustment to make it more suitable for Thai pronunciation, and (3) some of the lyrics were not clear (Inkhong, 2015, pp. 181–182). Since the problems were later solved by singers and composers alike, Thai popular singing finally has the correct pronunciation with an appropriate matching pitch. This conforms to the statement of Morettini (2006, p. 18) that the important skill of singing is the matching pitch: singing to pitch notes with accuracy. Thai popular singing was continually developed during 1925–1967. Ultimately, the singing style has completely changed from the old Thai traditional singing style to the new Thai popular style.

From the study, the author found that the characteristics of Thai popular singing can be divided into five categories: the natural voice projection, the vibrato, the neumatic singing, the melismatic singing, and the interpretation and emotional expression. Based on the analysis, the sample records produced during 1933–1967 (consisting of 66 songs from 20 different singers), were divided into three groups: (1) the singers of Thai film group, such as Mr. *Chamrat*

Suwakhon, Ms. Chuangchan Chankhana, Mr. Luan Wainunawin, Mr.Mani Sumonnat, etc., (2) the singers of *Suntharapon* Band, such as Ms. *Manthana Morakun, Mr. Uea Sunthonsanan, Mr. Luan Kwantham, Mr. Winai Chunlabudsapa,* and Ms. *Phensi Phumchusi*, and (3) the singers outside *Suntharapon* Band, such as Mr. *Suthep Wongkamhaeng, Ms. Sawali Phakaphan, Mr. Charin Nanthanakhon, Mr. Kasem Milinthachinda,* and *Mr. Thanin Intharathep* (Inkhong, 2015, pp. 181–182). The study reveals the information as follows:

1. The natural voice projection in the Thai popular singing can be divided into two types: (1) the true voice and (2) the falsetto voice. Each individual sound differs in its beauty and a singer can choose to use any of the two types. If the composer knows the singer's natural voice, he will compose the song that is suitable for each of them. Therefore, the voice of each singer is different. This finding corresponds with the study of Kennedy (1997, p. 817) that styles of singing and methods of voice producing have varied over the centuries and the study of Phillips (2003, p. 43) that tone is what's known as the color or timbre of voice, and every voice has a specific color, which can be described as warm or strident. Two singers singing the same song in the same key may sound different.

2. The vibrato is one of the elements of popular singing style. The vocal vibrato is defined differently by each era. In earlier eras, the singers of musical theatre and Thai films rarely used vocal vibrato. They just sang the last word of a phrase with a long note. Afterwards, most Thai singers in the government's big band sang a little vibrato. They only vibrated their voice very little in order to add the sweetness of the singing and the vibrato was found mostly in female singers with the low vocal register. Some singers outside the government's big band group used vibrato on the last note of the phrase, especially when the last note was either whole or half note. The vibrato was not used in every phrase because it was supposed to be used sparingly, yet properly. It was used only when it was suitable for the meaning and emotion of the song. Therefore, the vibrato produced variety of voices. This finding corresponded with the study of Bunch (1997, p. 75) who mentioned, "Seashore (1936) has defined a good vibrato as a pulsation of pitch usually accompanied with synchronous pulsations of loudness and timbre, of such extent and rate as to give a pleasing flexibility, tenderness and richness to the tone" , and the study of Morettini (2006, p. 18) who mentioned that vibrato is important to having variety in singing tone. The vibrato was a new element of singing which did not appear in Thai traditional singing but appeared later in the Thai popular style and it was well-received as a good characteristic. This conforms to the statement of Bunch (1997, p. 75) that the artistic quality of singing is frequently judged by the presence of vibrato in the sound. Therefore, the vibrato is believed to be influenced from the Western popular singing because this technique has never been used in Thai traditional singing.

3. The neumatic singing is a method to produce the correct tonal qualities of Thai language. Some Thai popular singers have some problems concerning Thai linguistic nature. Thai language is a tonal language which owns 32 vowels and five tone marks ranged from low to high pitch (a̗ à̗ â̗ á̗ ǎ̗). Each tone has a different meaning. Moreover, there are 44 Thai consonants which are classified into three ranging groups. There are 11 consonants for high pitch, nine for middle pitch, and 20 for the low pitch. These are extremely important elements of the pronunciation of Thai language. This conforms to the statement of Miller (2004, p. 111) that diction is the description of the production of vowels and consonants both of which are equally important.

The properly articulated vowels and consonants are the very substance of good voices. Moreover, Phillips (2003, p.95) claimed that the production of consonant sounds with clarity and precision helps the singer to sing clearly to the audience. This is because the lyrics of a song are the vehicle for telling a song's story. Therefore, Thai singers have to be trained to produce the exact linguistic pitches (frequencies). This includes both singing in tune and uttering the correct tonal qualities of its original language. To sing in Thai, singers must have good ear training in order to express the meaning of the lyrics used. Therefore, techniques of word uttering become an important duty of each singer. They need to emit the sound with the correct linguistic approach, the correct pitch and also the correct meaning.

According to the Western singing technique, if the singers sing two – three notes with one single word, it is the neumatic singing. Mahrt (2015 p. 7) explained that neumatic means several syllables receive a group of notes which can be two, or three, or sometimes a few more. In the past (before 1932), neumatic singing began when a number of singers tried to utter sounds with the correct pronunciation of Thai language. This was made by the singers themselves without the intended notations composed by the Lyricist. Afterward, the composers paid more attention to write lyrics which appropriately matched with the notation of the music. If the pronunciation of the lyrics did not match the music, the composer would change those lyrics instead of using the technique of neumatic singing. Therefore, neumatic singing in Thai popular songs has been reduced and rarely appears. The results from this study showed that there are two types of neumatic singing: (1) the utterance from the lower pitch to the higher pitch in order to match the tone mark of the lyric and (2) the utterance from the higher pitch to the lower pitch in order to match the tone mark of the lyric. Some examples are shown below:

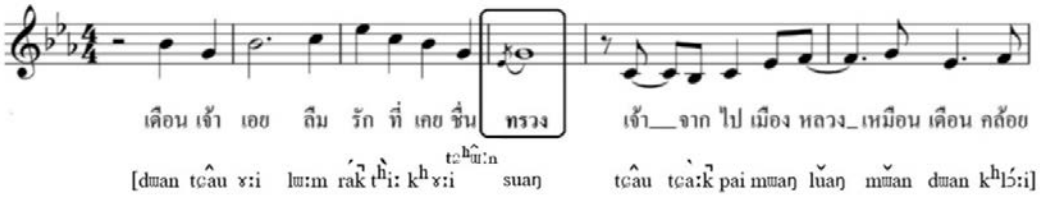

Figure 1 The neumatic singing in *'Mon Rak Ban Na'*, sung by *'Mr. Suthep Wongkamhaeng'*

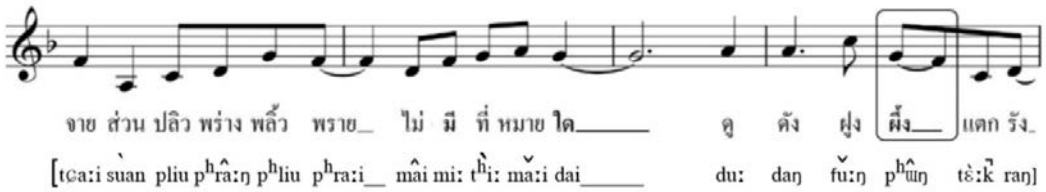

Figure 2 The neumatic singing in *'Chan Kapho Ruang'*, sung by *'Ms. Manthana Morakul'*

The neumatic singing corresponds with the Thai words in the voice production. There are two specific terms: (1) *Pan Kham* (pânk^ham) and (2) *Pan Siang* (pânsi$\check{a}$ŋ) which mean the way of expressing the correct words and the way of expressing the correct notation (sound) respectively. These two terms are concerned with phonation, especially when one single word is phonated with two or more notes. This conforms to the statement of Mahrt (2006, p. 7) that "…the neumatic means several

syllables receive a group of notes, two, or three, or sometimes a few more…". The neumatic singing in Thai popular singing may sound like an ad-lib technique of the Western popular style. Later, neumatic singing in each song became the prototype for the new generation of the Thai popular singers who fully imitate the singing of the original song. They do not improvise the melody while they sing. Therefore, neumatic singing is not classified as the ad–lib technique of the Western popular style. The neumatic singing is a characteristic which presents the importance of Thai pronunciation. This is because the clear utterance helps the audience to understand the meaning of lyrics as the composer originally intended to convey. This consequently leads to the appreciation for the song. This conforms to the statement of Phillips (2003, p. 95) that "…the production of consonant sounds with clarity and precision helps the singer to sing clearly to the audience. This is because the lyrics of a song are the vehicle for telling the song's story…".

4. The melismatic singing is one of the techniques in Thai popular singing. This technique was adapted from Thai traditional singing, in which singers may use the vocal sound to create the continuous melody with the sounds of (əː), (əːj), (əːŋ), etc. This is in accordance with the meaning of melismatic singing defied by Mahrt (2006, p. 7) that " … the melismatic means some individual syllables receive a long and complicated series of notes… " . Before understanding in the melismatic in Thai popular singing, the author would like to explain further that this singing technique has been the Thai traditional singing method which showed the abilities of the singer to emit the appropriate continuous throat sound along with wording. The throat sounds of the melody must be able to express the meaning as well as the emotional and stress of verbal interpretations. For example, the melismatic singing in the Thai traditional song named *'Khamen Sai Yoke'* was written in Western notations as shown below:

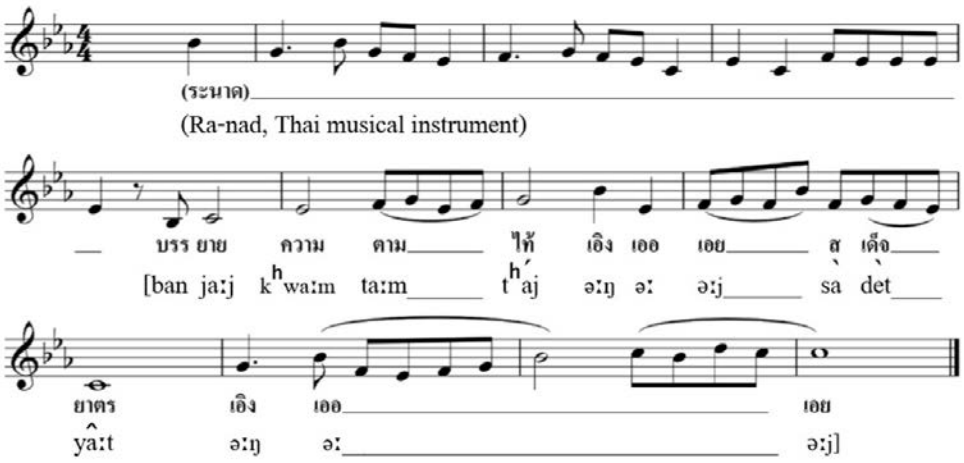

Figure 3 Notes from the Thai traditional song named *'Khamen Sai Yoke'*

In Thai popular music, many Thai composers commonly use this technique in their pieces in order to show that such songs are derived from the original Thai traditional singing. Therefore, singers who used to sing with a melismatic pattern may have trouble adjusting their throats and other speech organs when they practice the new style of Thai popular singing. For example, the melismatic singing in Thai popular music is to phonate one syllabic word by humming the tone ɯː, ɤː, ɤːŋ, etc., as shown below:

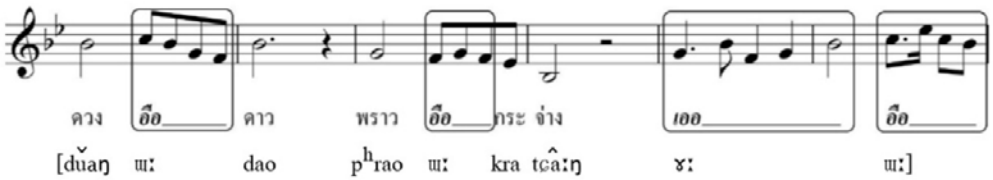

Figure 4 The melismatic singing in *'Jub Jan'*, sung by *'Mr. Thanin Intharathep'*

5. The interpretation and emotional expression are the last characteristics of Thai popular singing. They were developed continuously during 1925 - 1967. Concerning the singers of musical theatres and Thai films, the interpretation and emotional expression were up to the plot and the role of the characters. The interpretation subsequently is up to the meaning and the emotional expression of the lyrics. The singers use their own imagination and experience to understand, to analyze, and to express the correct emotion through the voice and body expression such as the eye expression, facial expression, and gestures. This conforms to the statement of Miller (2004, pp. 226–227) that "...a singer must know about the external body language, and that facial expression is of prime importance for communication..."

For example, one singer reported that, in a sad song, she could use her own experience in her life when she saw her mother being heartbroken and crying because of a father's unfaithfulness. This was due to the fact that she was just only 14 years old and she did not understand about love and sadness. Therefore, she imagined her mother's feelings in order to sing and convey this to the audience. For new singers, the composer would suggest to the singers how to sing and express the feeling until the singers could understand the meaning of the lyrics and interpret the song by themselves. Therefore, the singing has been performed by various methods, such as lessening the voice, singing loudly or softly, singing in short or long voices, singing weakly or forcefully, and singing with a concise voice. These methods enable the listener to understand the variety of emotions: sweetness, cheerfulness, sadness, romance, etc. Finally, the singers are able to interpret and express the feeling of every singing word, which makes the expression relate to the dynamic, vibration, and the accompanying music. Therefore, the interpretation and emotional expression has become an important characteristic in Thai popular singing. This conforms to the statement of Bunch (1997, pp. 153–154) that the communication of emotion deserves the attention of every singer and he also mentioned Manfred Clynes' (1989) explanation in his book (Sentics: The Touch of the Emotions) that has gone a long way towards clarifying and defining what pure emotion means because he has found a way to measure and quantify the pure states of joy, love, grief, hate, anger, and no emotion. The interpretation and emotional expression in Thai popular singing are unique because singers use the lifestyles, concepts, emotions, and their experiences in Thai culture in order to further interpret, imagine, and express the meaning of the song.

Discussion

Studying the history of Thai popular singing requires understanding historical information about traditional singing in Thailand and singing influenced by Western music. Because both parts led to the beginning of Thai popular music and Thai popular singing. In the part of Thai popular music, after Western music culture accessed Thai society, many Thai musicians used the knowledge gained from their exposure to Western musical instrument performances and Western–style singing to create a new music culture. They mixed the Western style with the context of Thai society and culture and created a new music culture. Thai popular music is therefore unique and different from Western classical music and Thai traditional music. This conforms to the statement of Kennedy (1997, p. 686) that "popular music has had the special meaning of non-classical music since the late 1950s", and Manuel (1988, p. 2) that "popular music is a new form of music that distinguishes the music of the people from the more artistic music associated with the elites". Moreover, during 1925–1967, Thai popular music was an important element of the entertainment industry including musical theater, film, and big band performances. Thai popular songs were very well–received by all listeners, especially ignoble people and teenagers, because the songs were very up to date at the time. This statement corresponds with the study of Middleton (1990, pp. 3–4) that "popular music is defined as songs for the bourgeois market", the study of Manuel (1988, p. 2) that "The popular music is in close relationship to the mass media", and the study of Shuker (1994, p. 10) that "the dominant characteristic of popular music is socio-economic in nature, includes mass production, and appeals to a predominantly youthful market." On the other side, The leaders of the nation carried out many policies with the use of Thai popular songs: (1) demanding that Thai students sing The Thai Royal Anthem to show loyalty to the king, (2) encouraging the dissemination of Thai popular music in order to change the tastes of the people in the country from Thai traditional music to the new genre with the Western characteristics so the nation could be considered as modern as Western countries (civilized countries), and (3) many Thai popular songs were composed to support various government policies aiming to develop the country. The songs were performed by big bands which encouraged the people to absorb the information and behave themselves accordingly, etc. From the above discussion it can be seen that Thai popular music has been influenced by Western music since the Ayutthaya period. Especially when Western popular music entered Thailand, the country's popular music changed markedly from Thai traditional music to Thai popular music. In the part of studying the characteristics of Thai popular singing, it was found that one of outstanding results of characteristics of Thai popular singing is the neumatic singing which relates to Thai words in the voice production. The author found that the neumatic singing reflects the linguistic culture. Because it is caused by the intention of expressing the correct Thai words corresponded with musical pitches in Western music. As a result, the neumatic singing of Thai popular singing has a different sound identity from Western style. Moreover, the melismatic singing in Thai popular singing appeared between 1925 – 1967 and was directly influenced by Thai traditional singing. For two reasons: (1) early singers of Thai popular music had experience from Thai traditional singing. Therefore, those singers use this technique in Thai popular singing; and (2) composers used the melismatic singing, which is one of important methods of Thai traditional singing, in many Thai popular songs.

Conclusion

Studying the history of Thai popular singing during 1925 – 1967 shows the connection between Thai traditional singing and the influence of Western music entering Thailand led to Thai popular singing having characteristics, which is unique and different from the popular singing of the West and other nations. Characteristics of Thai popular singing during 1925 – 1967 came from the combination of singing skills in Western popular music and Thai culture and ways, such as language, expression, beliefs, ideas, etc. according to the statement of Klahan (2017) that Thai culture is the basis of living together; and Demonstration School, University of Phayao (2017) that Thai culture is unique in its spoken language, writing, costumes, beliefs, manners and customs, food, etc. This study allows one to know and understand the source and development of methods or techniques for singing Thai popular songs to be able to develop or expand singing skills in Thai popular songs. On the other hand, understanding the value of the methods of Thai popular singing during 1925 – 1967 is one way of realizing the preservation of the traditional methods of Thai popular singing. Finally, in the academic area, the results of this study can serve as a guideline for research on methods of Thai popular singing in other eras to find similarities or differences in characteristics, which can be used as knowledge used in the education system.

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