NARONG PRANGCHAROEN AND THAI CROSS-CULTURAL FUSION
IN CONTEMPORARY COMPOSITION

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by
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NARONG PRANGCHAROEN AND THAI CROSS-CULTURAL FUSION
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ABSTRACT

Narong Prangcharoen (b.1973) has become one of the leading Asian classical composers since he won a number of international awards and received numerous commissions from major orchestras and individual distinguished musicians. His compositions, most of which include distinct Thai musical elements and Thai cultural influences within the guise of Western art music, are emblematic of a trend in contemporary composition that embraces worldwide influences. This thesis is a first step toward the literature of this compositional trend of Thai/Western musical fusion. It begins with a survey to different approaches of applying exotic elements into Western compositions, focusing on the fusion of Western and Far Eastern musical/non-musical elements of China and Indonesia. The focus then shifts to the cross-cultural interplay between Thai and Western elements that has appeared throughout Thai music history. The main topic of thesis ensues, with the presentation of Prangcharoen’s musical background, his creative process, and his synthesis of Thai influences and Western compositional techniques in his orchestral music. The purpose of this thesis is to be not only a principal source in
apprehending Prangcharoen’s life and works, but also a foundation for any future study relating to Prangcharoen or other Thai composers and their compositions.
The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the Conservatory of Music and Dance, have examined a thesis titled “Narong Prangcharoen and Thai Cross-cultural Fusion in Contemporary Composition,” presented by Nathinee Chucherdwatanasak, candidate for the Master of Music degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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CHAPTER 1
CROSS-CULTURAL PROCESSES IN WESTERN MUSIC HISTORY

Introduction

“The Migration of Lost Souls . . . [is] an atmospheric work that weaves some of the spiritual and vernacular sounds of Mr. Prangcharoen’s native Thailand into a skillfully orchestrated tapestry,” claimed Corinna da Fonseca-Wollheim of the New York Times.¹ Her statement justified her belief that Narong Prangcharoen’s composition was the most successful among the three premieres by the American Composers Orchestra on the evening of October 26, 2012 at Carnegie Hall. Her assertion also validates one aspect that has consistently been noted as contributing to Prangcharoen’s success—the “vernacular sounds” which derived from musical and extra-musical elements of the composer’s native country, Thailand.

Musical exoticism of the Far East is a trend that has fascinated composers, musicologists, and ethnomusicologists for years as they have explored the fusion of Eastern and Western musical elements in Western art music. However, their focus has remained largely on exotic musical elements originating from China, Japan, Korea, and Indonesia. Among this avenue of scholarship, the most important literature available includes Catherine Bird’s dissertation “The Influence of the Javanese Gamelan on Selected Piano Works of Claude-Achille Debussy” (1982), which analyzes the music of Javanese gamelan astonishingly encountered by Debussy

(1862-1918) at the 1889 and 1900 Paris Exhibitions and discloses how the composer fused the exoticism of gamelan components in his piano music; Mervyn Cooke’s *Britten and the Far East: Asian Influences in the Music of Benjamin Britten* (1998), which summarizes Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian influences on Western art works from the time of Debussy’s encounter with gamelan music and then focuses on Britten (1913-76)’s association with Balinese gamelan and Japanese Nō drama; Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau’s edited collection *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music* (2004), which, contrary to the other literature mentioned here, focuses on East Asian composers who practiced cross-cultural musical approaches, yet remains their fusion in the territory of China, Japan, and Korea; Jeremy Day-O’Connell’s *Pentatonicism from the Eighteenth Century to Debussy* (2007), which analyzes different types of pentatonic modes in Western classical compositions, some of which refer to Chinese and Indonesian gamelan music; Ralph P. Locke’s *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (2009), which expands the term “musical exoticism” to include influences from extra-musical elements, yet still limits Far East case studies to works derived from Chinese, Japanese, and Indonesian influences; and Adrienne Ward’s *Pagodas in Play: China on the Eighteenth-century Italian Opera Stage* (2010), which, as the title implies, restricts its scope to China alone, scrutinizing Chinese references in Italian opera seria and comic opera and providing a complete list of existing Italian, French, and English theater productions featuring China in the eighteenth century.²

The neglect of other nations of the Far East, particularly those of the Southeast Asia has created a gap in the literature on the cross-cultural interplay in compositions that blend Western and Far Eastern elements in art music. With Thailand in particular, there is no single work on the musical fusion of Thai and Western elements available. Accessible studies related to Thai music include those that focus on Thai music alone, with the most cited being David Morton’s *The Traditional Music of Thailand* (1976), which covers the basic groundwork of Thai music from its history, musical elements, instruments, and compositional techniques.³ Another less-mentioned yet reliable source is Pamela A. Myers-Moro’s *Thai Music and Musicians in Contemporary Bangkok* (1993).⁴

Scholarship that is associated with Thai and Western cross-cultural composition is available in the Thai language; however, its focus is on the advent of the religious, military, popular, and jazz genres, not classical music, and the transformation of those Western musical types in Thai musical culture. In other words, these sources confine their scope to an expanded Thai musical repertoire. The noteworthy sources in this kind encompass two books, Poonpit Amatayakul’s *[The Origin of Thai Popular Music]* (2011) and Pongsin Aroonrat’s *[Modern Thai Music]* (2013); and two dissertations, Ronnachai Rattanaseth’s [“Western Influence on the Development of Thai Musical Culture”] (2011) and Nachaya Natchanawakul’s [“Western Music in Siam: The Development between 1841-1941”] (2012).⁵

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⁵ Poonpit Amatayakul, การก่อเกิดเพลงไทยสากล: แนวคิดด้านดนตรีวิทยา [The origin of Thai popular music] (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing, 2011); Pongsin Aroonrat, สังคีตสมัย [Modern Thai music] (Nakornprathom, Thailand:...
Another dissertation by a Thai scholar, “The Establishment of Western Music in Thailand” (2011), is available in English and is the most relevant to the topic of Thai and Western musical fusion. Although Jittapim Yamprai begins her dissertation with information similar to the Thai sources above (the arrival of Western music and its adaptation into Thai music), she covers research on Western classical music in Thailand and presents cross-cultural compositions in both Thai and Western musical styles. However, she limits the Western-style fusion works to Thai royal and national anthems, disregarding the whole genre of Western concert repertoire.

Apart from literature on musical exoticism and Thai music, research on younger generations of East and Southeast Asian composers likewise overlook the synthesis of Thai and Western elements. Numerous twentieth- and twenty-first century Asian composers from various countries have been studied, leaving out Thai composers who practice similar compositional process. Among these Asian contemporary composers, the Japanese Toru Takemitsu (1930-1996)’s fusion is probably the most scrutinized, including in Hwee Been Koh’s dissertation “East and West: The Aesthetics and Musical Time of Toru Takemitsu” (1998) and Peter Burt’s The Music of Toru Takemitsu (2001), as well as Takemitsu’s perspective on the topic in Confronting Silences (1995), which includes a selection of his writings.


7 Hwee Been Koh, “East and West: The Aesthetics and Musical Time of Toru Takemitsu” (PhD diss., Boston University, 1998); Peter Burt, The Music of Toru Takemitsu (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and
Takemitsu’s Chinese contemporary Chou Wen-chung (b.1923) is a lead figure in synthesizing Chinese musical and philosophical elements with modern Western music. Peter M. Chang’s *Chou Wen-Chung: The Life and Work of a Contemporary Chinese-Born American Composer* (2006), Eric Lai’s *The Music of Chou Wen-chung* (2009), and various of Chou’s own writings comprehensively explain his cross-cultural process. Chou’s new compositional practice enabled the next generation of Chinese composers, the so-called “new wave,” to discover their distinctive musical languages and become successful internationally. Among them, Chen Yi (b.1953), Zhou Long (b.1953), Bright Sheng (b.1955), and Tan Dun (b.1957) are the most distinguished and studies on their cross-cultural composition are ample, whether in the forms of theses/dissertations, articles, interviews, and analyses. Korea also produced two internationally known Germany-based composers, Isang Yun (1917-95) and Unsuk Chin (b.1961), hence the active state of research on their musical synthesis in German and Korean musicological scholarship.

Research on Southeast Asian contemporary composers is relatively small in number and basically features only Cambodian, Malaysian, and Indonesian composers. Among them, Chinary Ung (1942), a Cambodian-American composer, is the most acknowledged, with scholarship on him including John Wesley Kays’s dissertation “The Music of Chinary Ung: A Synthesis of Asian Aesthetics and Western Technique” (2008) and a handful of articles, some

written by the composer himself.9 For Malaysian and Indonesian composers, Charmaine Blythe Siagian’s dissertation “Selected Solo Piano Works by Contemporary Malaysian and Indonesian Composers from 1979 to 2007: An Introduction” (2007) presents short biographies of four Malaysian and three Indonesian composers and an introduction to some of their solo piano works.10 Other existing studies on Southeast Asian music remain in the field of traditional art music. Again, no attempt has been made to explore Thai contemporary composers and their cross-cultural compositions.

This thesis is a first step toward the literature of cross-cultural synthesis between Thai and Western elements in Western art music, presenting Narong Prangcharoen (b.1973) and his orchestral works as a case study. Prangcharoen has established himself as a leading twenty-first century composer, especially after receiving a Fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the Barlow Prize in 2013. Moreover, in the same year, he obtained a three-year residency with the Pacific Symphony and joined Theodor Presser in publishing his works for wind ensemble and orchestra. His compositions were praised by numerous critics, including Daniel Criaga of the *Los Angeles Times*, who admired Prangcharoen’s “gifts for creating orchestral color . . . and compelling sound effects” in the world premiere of *Sattha* (2005); Andrew Patner of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, who described *Phenomenon* (2004) as “absolutely captivating—an explosion of orchestral colors, . . .”; and Corinna da Fonseca-

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Wollheim of *The New York Times*, who proclaimed of “moments of ethereal beauty” in *The Migration of Lost Souls* (2012).\(^\text{11}\)

The thesis begins with a critical overview of research on cross-cultural compositions. This first chapter presents a survey of different approaches to musical fusion from the available literature of Western classical music history, with a focus on the fusion of Western and Far Eastern musical/non-musical elements of China and Indonesia. It summarizes different methods of applying exotic elements into Western compositions, from referencing the Far East in non-musical elements in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, employing original Eastern melodies and pentatonic scales in the nineteenth century, synchronizing Eastern musical elements and procedures in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, synthesizing Eastern philosophies from the mid-twentieth century onwards, and fusing Eastern and Western elements in contemporary Asian-American composers’ works.

Chapter 2 provides a history of cross-cultural processes in different genres of Thai music, from the first fusion practices of the early sixteenth century when Western music first appeared in Thailand, to their proliferation after nineteenth-century European colonization and twentieth-century globalization, and to their transformation in works by twentieth-century Thai composers and Prangcharoen’s contemporaries. Chapter 3 delves into Prangcharoen, focusing on his musical background, creative process, and the specific elements in his orchestral music that synthesize Thai influences and Western compositional techniques. Chapter 4 brings together threads from the preceding chapters to draw large-scale conclusions, connecting Prangcharoen’s

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cross-cultural process with that of other composers from both Thai and Western classical music history.

As more and more Thai classical composers follow Prangcharoen’s path in combining Thai and Western musical practices, scholarly literature on these composers and their compositions is needed to explain who they are, what they compose, and how they achieve a fusion between musical processes so that their craft can be accurately interpreted and understood. Accordingly, it is the purpose of this thesis to be not only a principal source in apprehending Prangcharoen’s life and works but also a foundation for any future study relating to Prangcharoen or other Thai composers and their compositions.

Cross-cultural Processes in Western Music History

Before examining Narong Prangcharoen and his music, I would like to survey different approaches to musical fusion, musical repertoire, and the available literature of cross-cultural compositions in Western classical music history. My focus on these cross-cultural compositions is limited to the fusion of Western and Far Eastern musical/non-musical elements of two nations—China and Indonesia—as they are similar to Thailand in location, cultural contexts, musical concepts, and musical instruments. In doing so, I present the history chronologically and divide this chapter into six parts according to different types of fusion: 1) referencing the Far East in extra-musical elements, such as plots, costumes, and scenes in the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century operas, 2) representing the Far East with original melodies or pentatonicism beginning in the early nineteenth century, 3) synchronizing more specific Asian musical elements, techniques, and procedures starting with Claude Debussy’s encounter with Javanese gamelan in 1889, 4) composing from the “insider’s” point of view resulting from fieldwork and
hands-on experiences in the works of the early twentieth-century American composers, 5) synthesizing Asian aesthetics and philosophies with music in the mid-twentieth century, and 6) fusing all musical and extra-musical elements of the Far East with the twentieth-century Western musical languages by Asian-American composers, known as the “new wave” composers. This survey not only provides background knowledge in approaching Prangcharoen’s music but also reveals the great amount of research that have been done on the topic of cross-cultural compositions within the scope of those two nations and demonstrates a comparable lack of research on Thai composers and their cross-cultural fusion.

**The First Existence of Chinese Music in the West**

Since the early sixteenth century, the Far East, particularly China, has been fascinating to Europeans. Portuguese traders landed on the Chinese coast early in that century, followed a few decades later by the Jesuits who reached the country’s capital, Peking. This rediscovery of China in the Western imagination, some three centuries after Marco Polo’s visit, brought various Chinese decorative objects back into European culture such as Chinese ceramics and paintings, as well as its architectural structures, for example, Chinese closets, pagodas, and gardens.12 Throughout the seventeenth century, writings by missionaries and merchants provided information about the Chinese empire to European centers. A number of these authors never set foot in China, but they were eager to comment on and expand these primary accounts.

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12 Marco Polo’s trip in the thirteenth century was the first European discovery of China followed by the medieval travels of Western missionaries and merchants in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In 1368, however, the Ming rulers banned the travel into and out of the Chinese empire, resulting in the country’s isolationist foreign policies for almost two centuries.
nonetheless.\textsuperscript{13} The testimonies of these two groups, missionaries and merchants, aroused a dichotomy in the European perspective on China. The former had positive view of the country, portraying it as an amenable, religious nation with a serious culture; the latter oftentimes depicted the nation as despicable and secularist with a frivolous culture.\textsuperscript{14} This interest of Chinese styles in a more superficial way of the merchants resulted in the so-called “chinoiserie.”

Writings on Chinese music exist from as early as the late sixteenth century, most of them written by the Jesuits and focused on theoretical aspects.\textsuperscript{15} The first account to remark on the sound of Chinese music is probably Dominican Gaspar da Cruz’s \textit{Treatise in which the Things of China are Related at Great Length} (1569-70), which mentions various musical instruments and describes a musical performance observed in China: “…, they [the Chinese musicians] began not all together, but the one tarried for to enter with the other, making many divisions in the process of the music, some staying, others playing; and the most times they played all together in four parts. . .”\textsuperscript{16} Cruz also complimented Chinese musicians that they “…, consorted in four voices which make a very good consonancy.”\textsuperscript{17} Cruz’s discussion was at odds with Matteo Ricci, the pioneering missionary of the late sixteenth century, who negatively criticized Chinese music.


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 18.


as “nothing but discordant jangle” and “a lack of concord, a discord of discords.”

Jean-Baptiste Du Halde’s four-volume *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l’empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise* (1735) was perhaps the most important source on Chinese music and drama in its time. Du Halde described Chinese musical instruments and provided musical notation for five different indigenous melodies, including the “Chinese airs” which so fired Jean Jacques Rousseau’s imagination that he inserted one of them on the last musical example at the back of his *Dictionnaire de musique* (1768). Jean-Philippe Rameau’s fascination with Chinese musical theory resulted in his description of Chinese whole-tone scale and the first explicit account of pentatonicism in the 1760 *Code de musique pratique*, and Joseph Marie Amiot’s *Mémoire sur la musique des Chinois* (1779) followed suit by including a detailed explanation of Chinese musical instruments, ancient Chinese musical systems, and Western musical notation for the traditional sung hymn but contradicted Rameau’s explanation of Chinese scale system with a heptatonic scale.

In England, Charles Burney noted in the “Old Harmonic” section in his pioneering *A General History of Music* (1776-89) that the Chinese scales and airs were equal to those of the Scots because of their common time signature and their pentatonicism with the exclusion of the

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19 Clarke mentions that Du Halde’s *Description* “provide[s] a comprehensive picture of China” and “was to prove widely influential throughout Europe during the eighteenth century.” See Clarke, “An Encounter with Chinese Music,” 545. Excerpts from Du Halde’s writings on music are available in Frank Harrison, *Times, Place, and Music: An Anthology of Ethnomusicological Observation c.1550 to c.1800* (Amsterdam: Frits Knuf, 1973), 161-66.


fourth and seventh scale degrees. Burney’s article on “Chinese Music” in the seventh volume of Abraham Rees’s *Cyclopædia* (1819) went further to summarize the history, system, instruments, and genres of Chinese music based on primary accounts. Not so long after descriptions of China and its music appeared in European writings, its reference crept into the Western theatrical and, soon after, musical realms.

Beginning in the early seventeenth century, Chinese features appeared in Italian spoken tragedy and, later on the century, in Italian spoken comedy. But it was not until the turn of the eighteenth century that Chinese references emerged in musical compositions, beginning with opera, with the purposes of igniting the fancies of its listeners, as well as forging innovative plots and providing a safe place to gamble on risky subject matters, especially comments on politics and religion following Enlightenment view. However, the presence of authentic Chinese music appeared neither in the scores of eighteenth-century European opera nor any musical pieces of the same period. Composers often used foreign dances or music that deviated from conventional idioms to convey exoticism, regardless of nationality. And it was through non-musical elements such as settings, costumes, plots, and characters that Chinese aspects were primarily manifested as in the final act of Henry Purcell (1659-95)’s *The Fairy Queen* (1692)—the first extant Western music composition to feature China—where “A Chinese Man” and “A Chinese Woman” sing in a Chinese garden. The opera’s visual aspects illustrate chinoiserie, yet

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23 Ward, *Pagodas in Play*, 51. The same purpose was not limited to the inclusion of Chinese references but also the embodiment of other exotic forms.

24 Ibid., 73. The use of percussion instruments in a few works probably referred to Chinese music.

25 Ibid.
the music is in a typical Baroque style.26

Following Purcell’s example and the seventeenth-century Italian *dramma per musica* tradition in featuring protagonists from exotic regions, at least five works of *dramma per musica* with Chinese references appeared in the eighteenth century: Apostolo Zeno (1668-1750)’s *Teuzzone* (1706) was the first European opera completely focused on China with a setting in ancient China and the presentation of Chinese customs and ritual on the stage.27 Antonio Salvi (1664-1724)’s *Il Tartaro nella Cina* (1715) and Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782)’s *L’eroe cinese* (1752) were also based on Chinese history. Unlike those three Italian theatrical works, Urbano Ricci’s *Taican, rè della Cina* (1707) and Domenico Lalli (1679-1741)’s *Camaide, l’imperatore della Cina* (1722) center on love, presenting the idea of chinoiserie.

Chinese references made its way into the territory of comic opera in the second half of the eighteenth century, beginning with Carlo Goldoni (1707-93)’s *L’isola diasabitata* (1757), which portrays aspects of eighteenth-century European imperialism over Asia. Giambattista Lorenzi (1719-1805)’s *L’idolo cinese* (1767) criticized the authority of European churchmen through the figure of a strange Chinese deity and what he characterized as the strangely amusing worship customs of Chinese people. And Giovanni Bertati (1735-1815)’s *L’inimico delle donne* (1771) advanced women’s moral codes by directing the bourgeois domestic ideal to an Italian maiden, the main character who is in love with a Chinese prince.

26 The stage directions of the opera mention that this “transparent Prospect of a Chinese Garden” is to be decorated with “the Architecture, the Trees, the Plants, the Fruit, the Birds, the Beasts [which are] quite different from what we have in this part of the World.” See Michael Burden, ed., *Henry Purcell’s Operas: The Complete Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 397.

27 Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) set music to this libretto in 1719. For the complete list of sixty-six documented eighteenth-century European dramatic and performed works featuring China, see Ward, “Appendix 1,” in *Pagodas in Play*, 173-79.
Pentatonicism as Chinese Representation

In the early nineteenth century, Chinese sound first appeared in Western compositions, mainly in the guise of pentatonicism as explored in the writings of the previous century.\(^{28}\)

Although Europe’s craze for the Arab world, especially seen in the ubiquity of the Turkish march and Hungarian Gypsy music, resulted in a scarcity of Chinese subjects in both dramatic and program music in the first half of the nineteenth century, composers for those few works featuring China either assimilated what they perceived to be authentically Chinese melodies, which are usually associated with pentatonicism, or employed major pentatonic scales. Nevertheless, single-line melodies were the only Chinese musical reference since no treatise in Europe discussed Chinese harmony. These melodies were often harmonized through conventional Western harmonic progressions, giving audiences a dusting of exoticism within a familiar musical language (see figure 1). Until the early twentieth century, the application of harmonized Chinese melodies and a major pentatonic scale became the standard exotic tools for Western composers to evoke the Far East, yet ignore any detailed musical coherence.

In *Pentatonicism from the Eighteenth Century to Debussy* (2007), Jeremy Day-O’Connell observes the use of various pentatonic scales in European art music. With ample musical examples, he traces the origin of harmonized pentatonic tunes in Domenico Corri (1746-1825)’s opera *The Travellers* (1806), Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)’s overture to *Turandot* (1809), and Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1785-1849)’s character piece *hymne des dix mille ans* (ca.1820s) to Chinese tunes included in Du Halde’s and Amiot’s writings. Day-O’Connell claims that Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)’s suite “L’Amour à Pekin” (1857-68), taken from the

\(^{28}\) See Day-O’Connell, *Pentatonicism*, 53-54 for post-Charles Burney writings on Chinese music that feature the discussion on pentatonicism.
composer’s late collection *Morceaux reserves*, is one of the earliest examples of a newly-composed Chinese evocation. The suite begins with six short preludes for piano solo, presenting the composer’s experiments with the possibilities of the Chinese scale: a whole-tone scale perceived by Rossini as the authentic Chinese scale used in Chinese music. The preludes are followed by a salon song, “L’Amour à Pekin,” which consists of a beautiful melody derived from the earlier Chinese scale experiments.

Figure 1. A pentatonic melody with conventional Western harmonic progression in Weber’s Overture to *Turandot*, mm.18-26.

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The pentatonic treatment of Chinese musical reference continued through the early twentieth century as seen in Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)’s Turandot (1920-24), in which the composer employed both authentic and self-invented Chinese melodies supported by non-pentatonic harmonization. Nonetheless, Puccini did not limit the Chinese sound to pentatonic melodies but also emulated the percussive sound of Chinese music by including Chinese gongs, two xylophones of different registers, two gongs of different pitches, glockenspiel and celesta in the percussion section in his score. While Puccini and his contemporaries practiced pentatonicism as a reference to exoticism, particularly China, some composers were not satisfied with this superficial mimicry and began looking for something more authentic and accurate in referring to music of the Other.

The “Original” Synthesis

The turning point of the cross-cultural practice in Western music history took place when Claude Debussy (1862-1918) encountered with the Indonesian gamelan at the 1889 Paris Exposition. Debussy’s awareness and application of the technical features and structure of Asian music was the first significant instance in which a Western composer went beyond superficial emulation of exotic music. Deviating from the thoroughly scrutinized European tonality, Debussy did not merely employ pseudo-Asian pentatonic melodies in the guise of Westernized

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31 Busoni wrote both incidental music (1905) and an operatic version (1917) of the tale Turandot. Busoni’s incidental score not surprisingly utilizes ostinato techniques and pentatonicism for “generalized orientalism,” in addition to the borrowing of Arabian, Persian, Turkish, Idian, and Chinese melodies from A. W. Ambros’s Geschichte der Musik (1880); the operatic version includes a “gamelan-like figure” based on anhemitonic pentatonic ostinato patterns above a dissonant bass. See Cooke, Britten and the Far East, 13.

32 Cooke, Britten and the Far East, 13.

harmonization, rather he transferred the techniques of gamelan music into his post-1889 music in order to achieve “the highly original synthesis of occidental and oriental procedures.”

Catherine Bird’s thesis “The Influence of the Javanese Gamelan on Selected Piano Works of Claude-Achille Debussy” (1982) analyzes the synthesis in the composer’s post-1889 piano music, including *Ballade* (1890), *Nocturne* (1890), *Preludes* Books 1 and 2 (1910, 1913), and “Pagodes” from *Estampes* (1903). Bird asserts that in achieving gamelan sonorities, Debussy applied pentatonic and whole-tone scales, which are roughly similar to the *slendro* tuning of the Javanese ensemble, as the underlying tonal basis for both melodic and harmonic elements. The composer also paraphrased a single “nuclear theme,” creating the gamelan’s distinctive ostinato characteristic, as opposed to developing different motifs or themes in the Western musical practice. To reproduce the gamelan’s texture, Debussy employed heterorhythmic or “layered” textures and colotomic punctuation of the gamelan’s largest gongs. Moreover, he imitated loud-soft dynamics and avoided crescendo or diminuendo and adopted gamelan musical structure which lacks of Western musical concept of development. Besides the piano music, these gamelan features also appear in Debussy’s orchestral works, particularly *La Mer* (“The Sea,” 1903-05) at rehearsal numbers 5, 14, 54-55, and 62-63, where the composer incorporated the combination of various melodic, rhythmic, registral, timbral variants of a single linear movement to mirror the gamelan’s sonorities and compositional techniques. With this new synthesis approach, Debussy created more alternatives for succeeding composers in experimenting with the fusion between Eastern and Western music.

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In “‘The East in the West:’ Evocations of the Gamalean in Western Music,” Mervyn Cooke provides an account of later compositions following Debussy’s footsteps of evoking gamelan sonorities. Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) carefully selected a percussion ensemble to capture authentic gamelan sonorities in the orchestral version of “Laideronnette, impératrice des pagodes” from *Ma mere l’oye* (1908-10), while Béla Bartók (1881-1945) adopted a specific Balinese scale in “Island of Bali” from volume 4 of the *Mikrokosmos* (1940). On the other hand, Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) was retrogressive by merely borrowing from gamelan music without synthesizing it with Western musical concepts in Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra (1932) and the Prologue of the opera *Les mamelles de Tirésias* (1944).

**Through the Insider’s Eyes**

Furthering Debussy’s scrutiny of gamelan music and Bartók’s fieldwork of Eastern European musical cultures starting in 1906, ethnomusicologists began their interest in hands-on experiences of non-Western musical traditions. Accuracy of the studied music in all musical aspects, whether melody, mode, rhythm, texture, formal structure, tuning system, and performance practice, became a crucial standpoint in aurally transcribing the original music into Western notation. Researchers also systematized non-musical aspects, such as aesthetics, philosophies, cultural contexts, languages, and religions, which later became as influential as musical sonorities. These phenomena affected composers in that they no longer added exotic colors to their music merely through simple imitation of non-Western musical elements.

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36 Cooke, “‘The East in the West,’” 263-67.

37 Poulenc’s Concerto for Two Pianos was influenced by Balinese gamelan appearing in the Dutch Pavilion at the Paris Exposition Coloniale in 1931. The event was significant in being the first appearance of a Balinese gamelan in the West.
Moreover, some composers even received firsthand experiences of non-Western musics from native masters. This approach offered the composers a new perception on the actual compositional process through authentic performance techniques and practices and through the point of view of musical insiders.

Growing up near the Chinese and Japanese districts in San Francisco in the first decades of the twentieth century, Henry Cowell (1897-1965) experienced traditional and folk music of immigrants and later absorbed them into his compositions.³⁸ His first Asian influenced composition appeared in 1917 in the piano piece “Amiable Conversation,” which was modeled on the tone of Cantonese dialect.³⁹ In the 1920s and 1930s, Cowell developed relationships with outstanding performers of non-Western musics and studied native instruments with them. In 1931, he received a Guggenheim award to study comparative musicology with Erich von Hornbostel in Berlin, where he also encountered Hornbostel’s collection of 22,000 cylinder recordings of music from all parts of the world. In his speech at the 1961 Tokyo conference “The East-West Music Encounter,” Cowell claimed that he was the first Western composer to study several Eastern musical traditions from within and with Eastern teachers.⁴⁰

Although Cowell did not consider himself an ethnomusicologist, he taught courses on the “Musical Systems of the World” and “Primitive and Folk Music of the World” with live performances at The New York’s New School for Social Research, as well as wrote articles on exotic and world music subjects. He devoted himself to the Asian Society and became the first

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³⁸ Nancy Yunhwa Rao studied Cowell’s instinctive synthesis of cross-cultural tradition and argues that his musical heritage does not merely include the music of non-European immigrants, but is even structured by it. See Nancy Yunhwa Rao, “American Compositional Theory in the 1930s: Scale and Exoticism in ‘The Nature of Melody’ by Henry Cowell,” *The Musical Quarterly* 85, no. 4 (January 1, 2001): 625.


board chairman of the Society for Asian Music. His lectures and articles had a great impact on his colleagues and younger composers in exploring and combining non-Western musical elements in their compositions. As these composers were searching for new musical languages, non-Western music became a means to explore new colors and techniques and to deviate their music from the norm.

From the 1930s to the 1960s, Cowell traveled to Europe and Asia, experiencing a wide variety of musical and cultural practices. His preoccupation with non-Western musics and world travels resulted in two methods of Cowell’s transcultural composition: the first focused specifically on musical aspects of a particular culture and the second blended together various styles in less obviously pronounced ways.41 The first method appears in, for instance, Cowell’s adoption of “sliding tones”—the tonal inflections influenced by Chinese speech and operatic singing into his compositions. Nancy Yunhwa Rao analyzes Cowell’s theory of sliding tones and the way the composer applies the concept to acquire dramatic effect and expressive power in his compositions, for example, the opening movement of the prologue to Atlantis (1926)—ballet music for orchestra and voices, the song “Rest” (1933), Symphony Nos. 11-15 (1954-1961), and the Trio in Nine Short Movements (1965).42 The second method, on the other hand, concerns the blending of Chinese, Japanese, or Indonesian musical references, appearing in, for example, String Quartet No. 4 “United Quartet” (1936), American Melting Pot (1940), and Variations for Orchestra (1956). Within either of these two transcultural musical methods, nonetheless, Cowell


combined the non-Western musical elements with the ultramodern techniques that he practiced in his youth to create his distinctive synthesis, which Cowell himself perceived to be a much more sustainable and more “international” musical style.43

Although Cowell might have been the first American composer to study Asian instruments with native musicians, it was actually his younger colleague Colin McPhee (1900-1964) who pushed the “insider” approach to the extreme when he spent almost seven years in Bali, building not only a Balinese style house but also Balinese gamelans.44 During his time in Bali, McPhee conducted research on Balinese gamelan by organizing and recording techniques and repertoire of various Balinese gamelan groups, which were different from place to place due to the lack of standardization in instrument building, tuning, and notation systems. He spent several hours a day transcribing gamelan music from Balinese masters and published meticulous transcriptions in various forms for Western musical instruments, including the three well-known transcriptions for two pianos published under the title *Balinese Ceremonial Music* by G. Schirmer in 1940.45 These transcriptions are an extension of McPhee’s research, conveying information about performance practice that is not present in the direct notations for traditional instruments such as how a melody must be doubled at the octave or how it is divided between


44 McPhee became interested in the magical sound of Balinese gamelan when he heard newly released recordings of the ensemble in the late 1920s and soon decided to visit Bali for the first time in 1931 before returning to the West for a short period and moving back to Bali in 1933 and staying until Christmas 1938.

45 Colin McPhee, *Balinese Ceremonial Music for Two Pianos, Four Hands* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1940). The first recording of the transcriptions, which appeared immediately after the publication, was performed by the composer and Benjamin Britten.
two players of same instruments.\textsuperscript{46} In Bali, McPhee also established gamelan ensembles in order to revive older repertoire. These ensembles allowed him to receive the firsthand study of the music, especially for older styles, as well as the opportunity to observe Balinese pedagogical methods intimately.

McPhee’s musical fusion appeared as early as 1931 in \textit{Octette}, which he included Balinese scales. However, it was not until the toccata for two pianos and orchestra \textit{Tabuh-Tabuhan} (1936) that McPhee took a major step toward fusing the Eastern and Western sounds, borrowing not only from the gamelan but also from jazz and Latin American popular music.\textsuperscript{47} He scored \textit{Tabuh-Tabuhan} for a pseudo-gamelan, comprising two pianos, Western percussion instruments, and two Balinese gongs and placed these instruments against a standard symphony orchestra. Although the Western concept of fast-slow-fast movements influenced the work’s structure, McPhee’s compositional process for \textit{Tabuh-Tabuhan} was similar to the process by which Balinese music is composed (or, to be accurate, “rearranged”) by taking fragments from existing compositions and binding them into new works.\textsuperscript{48} Within each section of the three movements, McPhee drew most of the themes from his own gamelan transcription, either in direct quotations or transpositions of the transcriptions; other few themes are newly-created, yet they still capture the essence of different gamelan styles.\textsuperscript{49}


\textsuperscript{48} Oja, \textit{Colin McPhee}, 104.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
The central concept behind *Tabuh-Tabuhan* is the layering of individual lines, which were McPhee’s apparent fusion of gamelan technique, formed by the stratification of intricate rhythmic patterns through the simultaneous use of distinct registers, pitch patterns, and ostinatos. The harmonic materials, however, have both Western and Balinese characteristics. The Oriental harmony came from various forms of the Balinese *pelog* and *slendro* scales, which resulted in chords generated from four- and five-note scales. Beside *Tabuh-Tabuhan*, Balinese references also appear in most of McPhee’s later compositions: *Transitions* (1954) and *Nocturne* (1958) follow the Balinese manner of drawing upon pre-existent music, punctuating rhythmic structures with gong, and coloring with percussive effects; while Symphony No. 2 (“Pastoral,” 1957) and Concerto for Wind Orchestra (1960) add Balinese melodies to the Balinese compositional systems.

Nevertheless, it was not the transcriptions or compositions but McPhee’s writings on Balinese gamelan that became the composer’s legacy. After McPhee settled back in New York City, he devoted himself to propagandizing Balinese music through articles in *Modern Music*, *Musical Quarterly*, *Musical America*, the *Peabody Bulletin*, and the *New York Times*. While his book *A House in Bali* (1946) details his daily life on the island, *A Club of Small Men* (1948) tells a delightful children’s story about the *gamelan angklung* that he established for Balinese boys. Perhaps McPhee’s most important writing was an encyclopedia titled *Music in Bali* (1966), which is the culmination of McPhee’s almost thirty years of experience and observation of

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50 Oja, *Colin McPhee*, 114.

51 Ibid., 104.

52 Ibid., 151.
Balinese gamelan.\textsuperscript{53} With abundant musical examples and illustrations, the book presents Balinese gamelan’s relation to and position in its culture and thoroughly analyzes the structure and style of each type of the gamelans encountered by McPhee in the 1930s.

Although McPhee devoted himself to gamelan music and made the first inroads for gamelan into the American consciousness, Lou Harrison (1917-2003) ultimately solidified gamelan’s popularity in the United States. For these efforts, Harrison rather than McPhee has been acknowledged as the “Father of Gamelan.” In spite of that sobriquet, Harrison’s interest was not limited to gamelan. Rather, Harrison was the United States’ most prominent and determined advocate of a global approach to instruments and intonational systems, as he immersed himself deeply in the theories, practices, and instruments of various cultures (for example, ancient Greek, European, South American, Native American, or Asian) and composed not only for traditional Indonesian, Korean, and Chinese instruments and ensembles, but also for his replicas of those ensembles constructed out of materials from the United States.\textsuperscript{54}

Similar to Cowell, Harrison experienced many styles of Asian musics at San Francisco’s Chinatown during his collegiate years. In the spring of 1935, he enrolled in Cowell’s course “Music of the Peoples of the World” at the University of California, San Francisco. This course led to subsequent private composition lessons with Cowell, which resulted in Harrison’s great

\textsuperscript{53} Judith Becker, review of \textit{Music in Bali: A Study in Form and Instrumental Organization in Balinese Orchestral Music}, by Colin McPhee, \textit{Journal of the American Musicological Society} 21, no. 3 (Fall 1968): 404. McPhee started \textit{Music in Bali} while he lived in Bali, and Yale University Press accepted it for publication in 1958, but the McPhee’s perfectionism and his time consuming position as a lecturer in composition and Indonesian music at the University of California at Los Angeles from 1960 to 1963 delayed its completion. The press did not publish the book until 1966, two years after McPhee’s death.

\textsuperscript{54} Schwartz and Godfrey. \textit{Music since 1945}, 204.
passion for non-Western music.\footnote{Leta E. Miller and Fredric Lieberman. \textit{Lou Harrison: Composing a World} (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1998), 10-11.} Through Cowell and his friend Dorothy James, Harrison heard recordings of Balinese compositions and other world musics before experiencing a live Balinese gamelan at the 1939 Golden Gate Exposition and later at San Francisco’s Curran Theater.\footnote{Ibid., 20.} In April 1961, Harrison accepted an invitation to the “East-West Music Encounter Conference” in Tokyo. Surprisingly, the conference allowed him to study firsthand Indonesian gamelan with two American experts: Colin McPhee for the Balinese style and Mantle Hood for the Javanese style.\footnote{Harrison did not study gamelan with any native musicians until 1975, when he was invited to teach a course on intonation in world music in the Second Berkeley World Music Festival. In the Festival, Harrison met K.R.T. Wasitodiningrat (Pak Cokro), the renowned central Javanese gamelan master, and became his student. During the mid-1970s, Harrison also studied Sundanese style with Undang. See Miller and Lieberman, \textit{Lou Harrison}, 65-67 and 160.}

Harrison received more hands-on experiences of Asian instruments in 1962 when he traveled to Korea and Taiwan for intensive private study of traditional Korean and Chinese musics.\footnote{Miller and Lieberman, \textit{Lou Harrison}, 51.} Upon his return to the United States, he enthusiastically lectured on Korean and Chinese musics and formed a small Chinese chamber group that presented hundreds of performances of the two nations’ repertoires. He taught world music classes at several universities in California and was appointed composer-in-residence for the “Festival of Music and Art of this Century” of the East-West Center at University of Hawaii in the spring of 1963. However, the most significant of his contributions in the dissemination of world music in the United States took place in 1971 when he successfully constructed an “American Gamelan,”
which consists of a set of metallophones built from easy-to-find materials such as steel conduit tubing, aluminum slabs, and stacked tin cans as resonators.59

Regarding his cross-cultural compositions, Harrison varyingly combined Western and Eastern musical elements to compose for traditional Asian solo instruments, Asian ensembles, and mixed European-Asian ensembles. For Asian solo instruments, he followed distinctive techniques and timbres of Asian instruments, but composed within the standard forms of Western music. For example, in Psalter Sonato (1961) for cheng, Harrison combined the binary form of Domenico Scarlatti’s sonatas and the distinctive instrumental techniques of the cheng—ornamentations and pitch alterations following a single pluck, created by pressing on the strings to the left of the movable bridges with the fingers of the left hand.60 He also fused ancient Western and Eastern tuning systems through the combination of justly tuned and pentatonic scales with an added #7. In Wesak Sonata (1964), Harrison fused standard cheng finger techniques with Western rhythmic concept of tempo shifts and many $3/8$ phrases alternating with $2/8$ or $2/4$ (see figure 2).61

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59 Miller and Lieberman, Lou Harrison, 63. The accomplishment resulted from decades of instrument building experiments by Harrison starting in the 1950s, an interest that exploded after 1967 with the aid of his life-partner, William Colvig. After the success of the American Gamelan, he also founded another gamelan ensemble, this time a traditional one called “Si Betty” to perform both traditional Javanese compositions and new works by Harrison and other members of the East Bay gamelan community.

60 Ibid., 148.

61 Ibid., 149.
While Harrison remained more conventional in composing for traditional Asian ensembles, following Javanese forms and styles with some added Western compositional procedures, he experimented with various cross-cultural practices through his works for mixed East-West musical instruments, in which he added Western solo instruments to an Asian ensemble or vice versa. His first attempt in this area was the *Concerto in Slendro* (1961), which relatively follows the gamelan’s performance practices with some added harmony on the

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62 Harrison wrote in numeric notation, which was then a common way to notate for Chinese traditional instruments.

63 Miller and Lieberman, *Lou Harrison*, 159-60. Harrison composed three works for the American Gamelan: the puppet opera *Young Caesar* (1971, rewritten as a standard opera with Western instrumentation in 1988), *La Koro Sutro* (1972, a setting of the Buddhist *Heart Sutra* in Esperanto); and the Suite for Violin and American Gamelan (1974). After studying traditional gamelan with the native masters, Harrison composed more than three-dozen gamelan works for traditional gamelan ensembles, both in *slendro* and *pelog* tunings.
keyboards, a celesta and two tack-pianos, that are retuned to an Indonesian-inspired pentatonic mode.\textsuperscript{64} In Concerto for \textit{Pipa} and String Orchestra (1997), however, the harmony, structure, and tutti sections lean more toward the Western side, yet the \textit{pipa}'s virtuosic techniques are evident in soloistic passages and its distinctive gliding tone is also imitated by the orchestra.\textsuperscript{65}

The interest of gamelan continued throughout the twentieth century, especially in the United States. With the growth of ethnomusicology and recording companies, recordings of gamelan music increasingly disseminated throughout scholarly circles, causing many American universities to establish gamelan ensembles. Composers no longer necessarily received training from the masters abroad but analyzed gamelan transcriptions, listened to gamelan recordings, and studied in gamelan ensembles in the United States.

\textbf{The Mid-twentieth-century Aesthetical and Philosophical Synthesis}

Unlike those early twentieth-century American composers who aimed to capture the sound, practice, and compositional procedure of traditional gamelan music, their younger colleagues merely evoked the gamelan through the use Western percussion instruments with some incorporated gamelan techniques and turned their focus on non-Western musics more to the aesthetical and philosophical aspects, particularly those of the Chinese \textit{I Ching}. With this interest emerged a new type of cross-cultural composition, synthesizing Asian aesthetics and philosophies with the mid-twentieth century Western musical styles.

Harry Partch (1901-1974) delved into another level of cross-cultural composition by creating musical works possessing not only characteristics of non-Western musics but also their

\textsuperscript{64} Miller and Lieberman, \textit{Lou Harrison}, 160

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 152.
aesthetic principles that are inhabited by both performers and audiences. Partch’s Asian influences came directly from his parents who had been missionaries in China at the turn of the century and his encounters with Chinese music in San Francisco, particularly with Cantonese opera. His interest in the Pythagorean concept from Hermann Helmholtz’s *On the Sensations of Tone* (1923) and his awareness of different Asian tuning systems led him to various experiments in microtonalism and intonational systems, which resulted in his adaptation and invention of musical instrument design and construction, either from conventional instruments or new materials such as Pyrex carboys, light bulbs, and whisky bottles.

Although Harry Partch relentlessly denied his quotation of any Asian musics, S. Andrew Granade proves in his article “Rekindling Ancient Values: The Influence of Chinese Music and Aesthetics on Harry Partch” that the composer adopted not only the Chinese tradition of poet/musicians into his Monophonic system in his early years but also absorbed East Asian musical aesthetic principles into his conception of Corporeality later on in his life. The former—a system in which all intervals emerge from one fundamental pitch, while rhythm and melody originate in the spoken inflection of the text—is found in his Monophonic solo performances on the Adapted Viola and the Adapted Guitar. The later concept appears in his theatrical works, beginning with *King Oedipus: Music-Dance Drama* in 1951, synthesizing both

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68 Ibid., 14.
visual and aural aspects with the intention to engage performers and audiences utterly on a bodily level.69

While Partch reflected East Asian aesthetics through his musical fusion, John Cage (1912-92) absorbed East Asian philosophies and paired them into his compositions, visual art, and poetry. Cage experienced Asian musics began in the 1930s through his studies with Henry Cowell (including the participation in Cowell’s “Music of the World’s Peoples” lectures in New York) and through his lifelong friendship with Lou Harrison. In the early 1940s, he learned about Asian philosophies and aesthetics when Harrison introduced him the Chinese I Ching.70 However, Cage gave little interest in the philosophy and still notably composed in the Western style until a decade later when he found the East Asian sources responsive and inspired him with the potential of compositional indeterminacy.71 He read a fair amount of South Asian aesthetics and East Asian philosophies and was re-introduced to the I Ching by his student Christian Wolff when he was completing Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber Orchestra in 1951. This time he found the I Ching concept correlated with the systematic procedures of the grids he created when composing the concerto’s first two movements, a move he made in order to relinquish his subjective choices. In applying the I Ching, Cage ultimately abnegated the world of choice and successfully moved his composing into the world of chance.


70 David W. Patterson, “Cage and Asia: History and Sources,” in The Cambridge Companion to John Cage, ed. David Nicholls (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 43. During the same period, besides the I Ching, Cage was also exposed to other East Asian philosophies such as Taoism, Buddhism, and Zen, as well as Indian aesthetics when he attended a lecture entitled “Zen Buddhism and Dada” given by Nancy Wilson Ross, and when Joseph Campbell introduced him to Ananda K. Coomaraswamy’s The Transformation of Nature in Art (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934).

71 Ibid., 50.
Cage’s studies of the *I Ching* resulted in striking transformations of his musical language in the early 1950s, especially with *Music of Changes* (1951) and *4’33”* (1952). Although the interpretation of Cage’s notorious work *4’33”* is often associated with the “nothingness” philosophy of Zen Buddhism, the work can also be perceived through the lens of *I Ching*, whose basic principle is derived from *yin* and *yang*—two opposite yet complementary primal forces in nature which include all dualist opposites: silence, as opposed to sound, in this case. Whereas in *Music of Changes*, Cage employed the process of creating the sixty-four hexagrams of *I Ching* in the compositional process so that the sounds were unimpeded and interpenetrating. In the same way as a throw of three coins determines the *I Ching* hexagrams, Cage tossed coins three times to identify his particular hexagrams in order to regulate sonority, durations, and dynamics for the work before notating the results on staff paper. Cage later pushed the boundary of his *I Ching* approach by applying chance operations into more and more aspects of the music, for example, clefs, accidentals, and playing techniques in *Music for Piano* (1953); mode, tonic note, and the first note of each half measure in *Cheap Imitation* for Piano (1969); and the compositional method of the ninety pieces in *Song Books* (1970), deciding that each piece was to be composed by either using a method already employed in the *Song Books*, a variant of a previous method, or a whole new method. Although chance procedures freed Cage from decision making at the micro level, he still took control of the music at the macro level by creating the list of possibilities from which the *I Ching* randomly selected. This choice prevented the music from

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72 Patterson, “Cage and Asia,” 50.
turning into complete chaos while allowing Cage to achieve his aesthetic goal of liberating the sound.

Besides his interest in Chinese philosophy, gamelan music also attracted Cage’s fascination, which might have formed its root from Cowell’s lectures during Cage’s early years. The sonorities and ostinato patterns of the gamelan ensemble are apparent in many of his prepared piano works such as *Bacchanale* (1940), *Amores* (1943), and *Sonatas and Interludes* (1946-48). Moreover, a number of his works for percussion ensemble exhibit Cage’s fondness for the gamelan sonority more clearly, especially in the stratified ostinato patterns and syncopations of *First Construction* (1939) and *Double Music* (1941). *Second Construction* (1940) assimilated the gamelan more closely with its glockenspiel melody alluding to Balinese scales. However, unlike Cowell, McPhee, or Harrison, Cage was inspired by gamelan sonorities to create new sounds in Western music. He rarely applied gamelan techniques such as stratified rhythms, heterophony, colotomic punctuation, and nuclear themes simultaneously throughout a whole composition as in original gamelan music; rather he divided his music into different sections and alternately used the techniques in each section, and combined them with his own experiments of other techniques and sound sources in order to get various tone colors.

Cage’s transformation of Asian aesthetics and philosophies became one of distinct influences on minimalism, a musical movement emerging in 1960s San Francisco and New York. In order to achieve the contemplative, time-suspending qualities of gamelan and other non-Western musics, minimalism reacted against the goal-oriented directionality of Western

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music by replacing tension, release, and climax with repetitions and steady rhythm. Nevertheless, minimalism rejected Cage’s chaotic sound resulting from chance operation, as well as the totally controlled and complicated atonal music of the total serialists—the opposite musical movement to Cage’s chance music—and aimed to create more simple and accessible tonal music that occupied a middle ground. This new guise of Asian aesthetics and philosophies in Western tonal music became a significant framework to the entire minimalist output, including that of Steve Reich.

While other pioneering minimalists like La Monte Young (b.1935), Terry Riley (b.1935), and Philip Glass (b.1937) immersed themselves in Indian raga, Steve Reich (b.1936) focused on Balinese gamelan and West African drumming. Reich began his interest in gamelan during the 1960s after reading McPhee’s *Music in Bali* and listening to recordings of gamelan music. Over a decade later in the summers of 1973 and 1974 at the University of Washington in Seattle and the Center for World Music in Berkeley, respectively, Reich remembered the book and intensively studied gamelan’s instruments and musical structures, which soon yielded its fruits in one of the minimalist landmarks, *Music for Eighteen Musicians* (1976). The work begins and ends with a cycle of eleven pulsating chords, each chord serving as the harmonic foundation of one section of the piece—one way to understand this structure is as Reich’s adaptation of the colotomic structure, the rhythmic foundation of gamelan music. The similarities do not stop with rhythmic structure but extend to aesthetics as well. *Music for Eighteen Musicians* is performed from memory and without a conductor like a communal ritual in gamelan tradition, meaning that

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the metallophone provides cues for changes within and between sections in the same way as a drummer calls for changes of pattern in Balinese gamelan.

The minimalist concept of rhythmic and textural clarity combined with hypnotic repetitiveness through ostinato (most of the time within stratified rhythm) has continued in the works of post-minimalist composers. These composers enriched the concept with their own expressive means and stylistic juxtapositions, resulting in an increasingly diverse musical style as seen in the works of numerous composers, including Daniel Lentz (b.1942), William Duckworth (1943-2012), John Adams (b.1947), Meredith Monk (b.1942), Michael Torke (b.1961), the “Bang on A Can” collective (Michael Gordon [b.1956], David Lang [b.1957], and Julia Wolfe [b.1958]), as well as in the later works of the minimalist pioneers themselves.78

Similar to Cage and Reich, mid-century European composers cared less about capturing the authenticity of Balinese gamelan music than evoking its sonorities and aesthetic qualities although they still adopted some gamelan techniques such as polyphonic stratification, pentatonic emphasis, repetitive motivic structure, and colotomic gong punctuation. Both Benjamin Britten (1913-76) and Olivier Messiaen (1908-92) displayed gamelan sonorities within the confines of Western instruments, particularly through Western percussion instruments grouped in a pseudo-gamelan section in their orchestral works. Reflecting gamelan aesthetics, Britten often associated Balinese materials with a supernatural place or character in his operas and ballet, while Messiaen applied gamelan techniques of cyclical repetition to serve the timeless

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purpose of his quasi-religious music.

The Fusion of Asian-American Composers

During the rise of post-minimalism in the 1980s, a group of so-called “new wave” composers emerged, made up primarily of Chinese composers who were born in the mid-1950s and sent to forced labor in the remote countryside to be “re-educated” by peasants during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). After Mao Zedong’s death, they pursued their study in leading Chinese music conservatories. In this academic setting, they participated in master classes and lectures of guest composers such as Chou Wen-chung, Alexander Goehr (b.1932), George Crumb (b.1929), Toru Takemitsu, and Isang Yun, who visited China through cultural exchange programs between China and Western countries. As part of their conservatory training, the young composition students also went to the countryside to collect folksongs during their summer vacations. After being exposed firsthand to Chinese traditional culture and music during the re-education and to Western modern music during their conservatory years, these new wave composers developed a new trend of Chinese music composition by abandoning the exhausted fusion of Chinese melody and Western diatonic harmony, and incorporating rhythms, timbres, textures, and aesthetics commonly found in Chinese music with Western avant-garde techniques to reflect the social, economic, and political changes of their time.

In the mid-1980s and early 1990s, the new wave composers went abroad to further their education in European and North American continents before establishing themselves as

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79 Britten’s gamelan-influenced works include Peter Grimes (1945), The Turn of the Screw (1954), The Prince of the Pagodas (1955-56), Midsummer Night’s Dream (1960), and Death in Venice (1973). Messiaen’s gamelan-influenced works are Vision de l’Amen (1943) for two pianos; Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant Jésus (1943–1944) and Quatre Études de Rhythme (1949-1950) for solo piano; and Trois Petites Liturgies de la Présence Divine (1943), Turangalîla-Symphonie (1946-1948), and Chronochromie (1959-1960) for orchestra.
composers-in-residence, artistic directors, conductors, guest lecturers, as well as professors at major universities, some in the United States and others in China. Among their numbers were the internationally-known Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Bright Sheng, and Tan Dun.\(^8^0\) These four composers came to the United States and received fellowships at Columbia University to study under the guidance of renowned professors, including the Chinese-born American composer Chou Wen-chung, who has had a great influence on next generations of Asian (as well as American) composers, particularly on the subject of cross-cultural fusion.

Chou Wen-chung is perhaps the first Chinese composer who attempted to synthesize Chinese musical elements with modern Western music.\(^8^1\) Born in China and raised in an extraordinarily intellectual family that placed equal value on Chinese traditions and the study of Western culture, Chou studied both violin and *erhu* (a two-stringed Chinese fiddle) in the multicultural Shanghai scene.\(^8^2\) Japanese occupation during World War II caused Chou to leave the country, and he arrived in the United States in 1946 on a five-year architecture scholarship at Yale University. With a strong desire to be a composer, he later became a music major at the New England Conservatory where he took private compositional lessons with Nicolas Slonimsky (1894-1995) who urged him to develop his compositional style using both Chinese and Western materials. Chou took the suggestion and began studying the sources and playing techniques of the Chinese *qin* (a seven-stringed zither) as well as Chinese aesthetics from poetry, painting,

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\(^8^0\) The names of Chen Yi, Zhou Long, and Tan Dun follow the Chinese practice by beginning with a family name then a first name. Bright Sheng’s original Chinese name is Sheng Zongliang.


calligraphy, and Taoist philosophy. In this holistic search of Chinese arts, Chou was also drawn aesthetically to the Confucian ideal of yö, the high value placed on an individual’s ability to cultivate several different subjects simultaneously.83

The study of Chinese music, aesthetics, and philosophy resulted in Chou’s first successful work, Landscapes (1949), which employs Chinese pentatonic melodies and the aesthetic principle of yö, as do other Chou’s works from his early period (pre-1952). However, Chou did not merely subjugate Chinese melodies under a Western harmonic framework, but applied techniques of musical structure, voice leading, supporting sonorities, timbre, and emotion from the original Chinese melodies to his compositions for Western instruments. With these constructed melodies, together with contrasts in orchestral timbre, sparse orchestration, subtle dynamic changes, and the alternation between quartal consonance and dissonant dyads, Chou evoked the brushstrokes, lines, and spaces of Chinese calligraphy and painting as well as the expression of Chinese poetry.84

Through Colin McPhee, Chou met his next composition teacher, Edgard Varèse (1883-1965), who became the most influential person in Chou’s compositional development. Under Varèse’s influence, Chou entered an experimental period (1952-1959) in which he merged the Chinese concept of a single tone’s timbre—particularly in the music of the qin, whose timbre consists of at least twenty-six varieties—and the idea of controlled flow of ink from Chinese calligraphy with the Varèsean sound mass as reflected in And the Fallen Petals (1954) and


84 Ibid., 54.
The fusion emanated from various sonorities that were organically derived from a single tone or theme and the interplay between these layers of sonorities, creating a continuity of motion and tension in a spatial equilibrium.

Upon his graduation from Columbia University in 1954, the Rockefeller Foundation awarded Chou a grant to study classical Chinese music, philosophy, and drama intensively for two years. The study culminated in Chou’s development of a compositional system called “variable modes,” constructed according to the principles of the *I Ching* that became the principal feature of his later works. Chou created his eight variable modes by translating the eight trigrams of the *I Ching*, and varied the modes’ structure and presentation from piece to piece, for example, the modes of *Metaphors* (1960) derive from the replacement of *yin* as a trichord containing two whole steps and *yang* as a minor third. As two Chinese trigrams are combined to create a hexagram, Chou combined two modes together to form a complete ascending and descending scale. He also applied the concept of inversion, retrograde, and retrograde inversion in creating different types of his modes. Chou applied this fundamental concept of variable modes to all of his post-1960 works, with the exceptions of *Yü Ko* (1965) and *Beijing in the Mist* (1986), but varied the transformational procedure to create different musical contents, formal layouts, and structural organizations for each composition. However, all of these works carry one similarity in that they do not necessarily evidence an Oriental sound, but present Chinese references in the compositional process through their embrace of Chinese aesthetic and *I Ching*.

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85 Chang, Chou Wen-chung, 59.


87 The eight trigrams of *I Ching* present variable combinations of *yin* and *yang* symbolized by a broken line and a solid line, respectively, or by a set of binary numbers, 0 and 1. See Example 8-1a in Lai, “The Evolution of Chou Wen-chung’s Variable Modes,” 152 for the eight prototypes of Chou’s variable modes.
Ching philosophy. Chou’s compositional methods and techniques had a great impact on his students’ works, especially those of the new wave composers, with the most apparent influence remained in the aspect of cross-cultural composition or “confluence,” in Chou’s term, which he described as “a new mainstream that will integrate all musical concepts and practices [of different traditions] into a vast expanse of musical currents. But . . . each individual culture will preserve its own uniqueness, its own poetry.”

Similar to Chou Wen-chung’s compositions, the works of the younger Chinese composers reflect confluence through Asian aesthetics and philosophies. Yet, unlike Chou who was interested in Chinese classical arts, these composers gravitated toward the folk music they encountered in their youth, particularly during the Cultural Revolution (not only their melodies, but also rhythms, timbres, textures, structure, and socio-cultural context). Moreover, while Chou’s fusion approach is arduous, objective, and rational, new wave composers aimed primarily to evoke emotions. As a result, their compositions reflect Chinese sonorities much more than their mentor’s even though they merged Chinese elements with the twelve-tone method, free atonality, as well as other avant-garde musical techniques just like their teacher did. The Chinese flavor is probably most obvious in the works of Bright Sheng, Chou’s first student among the four presented here.

Bright Sheng grew up in an intellectual, artistic family. His father was a radiologist who also played a jing hu, two-stringed fiddle in a Peking opera while his mother was an engineer who played the piano and taught the instrument to Sheng from the age of four. During the Cultural Revolution, Sheng became a percussionist and arranger for an art troupe in Xining, a

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remote region in the Qinghai province of the northwestern China, where he studied and collected local folk music. Sheng entered Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1978 and learned both Western and Chinese traditional music. In 1980, he immigrated to the United States and two years later pursued his master’s at Queens College of the City University of New York, studying under George Perle and Hugo Weisgall before beginning his doctorate at Columbia University in 1984.

Bright Sheng’s works are distinctive for their lyrical melodies, which are derived from folksongs, especially *hua’er*, a type of folksong popular in the Qinghai region. His treatment of these folksongs is congruent with the original practice, which focuses on linear lines. Sheng either quoted folksongs or fragments of the songs or applied pitch class sets derived from folk tunes as the main motifs and built up these fragments or sets through techniques of motivic development, twelve-tone processes, or counterpoint. In addition, Sheng blended Eastern and Western music together by modulating these melodic lines according to the Chinese music theory, while treating the harmonic elements with Western techniques of polytonality through the simultaneous use of several Chinese pentatonic modes.\(^{89}\)

Not only melodies but also rhythms, vocal singing, and instrumental styles of Chinese music motivated Sheng’s fusion. *Tibetan Swing* (2002) illustrates how Sheng assimilated the

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89 There are four pentatonic modes in Chinese music: *gong*, *shang*, *jiao*, *zhi*, and *yu*, which can be alternated through three types of modulation in Chinese music theory: 1) *xuan gong* (change of key) which is equivalent to changing from C Ionian to D Ionian, 2) *fan diao* (change of mode) which is similar to changing from C Ionian to F Lydian and 3) the combination of *xuan gong* and *fan diao* (change of mode and key) which comparable to the modulation from C Ionian to G Dorian. See Ting-Ju Lai, “A Perspective on Ethnic Synthesis in Twentieth-century Art Music with a Focus on an Analysis of String Quartet No. 3 by Bright Sheng” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2001), 27-28.
dance rhythms of Tibetan long sleeves swing and foot stomp steps. The vocal part of *Three Chinese Love Songs* blends Peking opera’s vocal style into Western singing by adding portamenti and glissandi, especially an upward glissando with an abrupt release at the end of a phrase. Similarly, Western string instruments also assimilate the portamenti, glissandi, grace notes, and microtones of Chinese strings’ performance practices, as heard in *Seven Tunes Heard in China* (1995) in which the solo cello plays in an *erhu*-like manner.

Apart from Chinese musical sonorities, Sheng also found an inspiration from Chinese extra-musical elements as seen in his two most well-known symphonic works: *H’un (Lacerations): In Memoriam 1966-1976* (1988) and *Nanking! Nanking!* (1999). *H’un* evokes the terror of the Cultural Revolution mainly through its atonal sonic images and some additional rhythmic figures of Chinese percussion, while *Nanking! Nanking!* depicts the notorious Nanking Massacre with the *pipa* telling the bloody story as the victim, witness, and survivor. These Chinese illustrations are even more discernable in the works of Sheng’s colleague, Tan Dun, whose eclectic cross-cultural compositions represent not only musical concepts and practices of different Asian traditions but also symbolize folk and ancient rituals visually through dramatic theatrical elements.

While the rest of the new wave presented here grew up in intellectual families, surrounded with Western classical music, Tan Dun was raised in a small countryside of Changsha, the capital of Southern Hunan province, where he experienced only folk music and dances, and taught himself Chinese instruments, fiddle, and composition. During the Cultural

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91 Ibid., 6-7.
Revolution, Tan became a stage director, organizing and arranging folk songs and operas to be performed by local villagers in the Huangjin commune in Hunan. At the end of the Revolution, he took a position of a string player in Hunan Provincial Opera Troupe before entering the Central Conservatory in 1978. Eight years later, he pursued his doctorate at Columbia University and settled permanently in the United States.

The majority of Tan’s compositions reflect the theory of cross-cultural synchronization he expresses as “1+1=1, but not 2.” In practice, this means the combination of various musical and extra-musical elements from Eastern and Western cultures (Chinese and Tibetan folk music, Peking operas, Middle Eastern and Indian traditional music, European operatic and instrumental practices); conventional and avant-garde styles (Gregorian chant, Renaissance music, tonal Classicism and Romanticism, atonality); classical and indigenous aesthetics (Taoism and Shamanistic rituals); and traditional and creative media (acoustic instruments, electronic sound sources, theatrical arts, films). Tan achieved his “1+1=1” equation by not searching for new techniques or sounds, but naturally fusing the materials he had experienced to create a new musical language which, in Tan’s belief, was more pertinent to daily living and helped rediscover the oneness of human beings and nature. This approach brought Tan outcomes that are prominent for their various forms of collages.

Folk materials are one of the most significant elements in Tan’s collage works. Tan borrowed folk flavors mainly by creating folk-like melodies, although he sometimes quoted folk tunes directly. These folk tunes or created melodies often generate pentatonicism in Tan’s music and normally serve as the backbone of the entire structure, following the developmental concept.

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of Chinese music. This process is apparent in the fourth piece “Blue Nun” of Eight Memories in Watercolor (1978, revised 2002), where Tan based four pieces—“Staccato Beans,” “Herdboy’s Song,” “Blue Nun,” and “Sunrain”—on folksongs from his childhood in Hunan while composing folk-like melodies for the other four. “Blue Nun” uses only one Hunan folksong as its main theme, which is developed throughout the entire piece with variation techniques within a stratified polyphonic texture.

Tan borrowed musical materials not only from Chinese folk music but also from Peking opera vocal styles and Asian instrumental practices and sonorities—all of which emphasize ornamentations and single tone pitch fluctuations. In his opera Marco Polo (1995), Tan blended elements of Peking opera and Western opera by assigning the characters to sing English words in bel canto with Chinese vocal practices. Tan achieved Asian instrumental sounds primarily through grace notes, glissandi, portamenti, and various changes of timbre in single tones. In the trio In distance (1987), for example, the piccolo became a dizhi (Chinese transverse bamboo flute), the harp a koto (Japanese bridged zither), and the bass drum Indian drums, played only with palms and fingers. Tan’s eclecticism is conspicuous in almost all of his output, including Ghost Opera (1994), a five-movement instrumental work for pipa and string quartet, with water, metal, stone,

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and paper. As described in the work’s program, *Ghost Opera* is “a cross-temporal, cross-cultural and cross-media dialogue which touches on the past, present, future and the eternal; employs elements from Chinese, Tibetan, English and American cultures; and combines performance traditions of the European classical concert, Chinese shadow puppet theater, visual art installations, folk music, dramatic theater and shamanistic ritual.”97 This work combines not only a Western string quartet with a Chinese *pipa* but also the shamanistic culture of a rural Chinese village and the five basic elements (metal, wood, water, fire, and earth) of ancient Chinese philosophy, as well as quotations of Bach’s Prelude in C-sharp minor of the second book from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, and a Chinese folk tune.98 Practically, Tan Dun’s eclecticism may reflect Chou’s “confluence” for his works integrate all musical concepts and practices from various cultures. However, the potpourri characteristics of those works disregard the second part of the term’s description by diminishing the *uniqueness* of each individual culture, the component that was more carefully observed in works of Tan’s contemporaries, Zhou Long and Chen Yi.

Zhou Long grew up in an intellectual, highly artistic family: his father was a painter while his mother was a soprano and a professor at the Central Conservatory. From an early age, Zhou received piano lessons from his mother and was surrounded by Western classical music. He became interested in folk music when the Cultural Revolution forced him to work in a song-and-dance troupe in Zhang Jia Kao, a small city near Beijing. There, Zhou encountered different styles of folksongs and started to collect them—an activity he resumed during his years at the


98 Ibid.
Central Conservatory. In 1985, Zhou came to Columbia University for his doctoral studies.

Similar to Bright Sheng’s and Tan Dun’s fusion approaches, Zhou incorporated Chinese musical sonorities in his music through various elements including quoted melodies from Chinese folk music and Chinese traditional operas, extreme range or tense clusters that deviate Western instruments from creating conventional sounds, and expressive melodies and glissandi, which cultivate a distinctive Chinese ambience of tranquility and meditation.99 However, Zhou went beyond superficial quotation and evoked the Chinese essence of music by focusing on the Chinese spirit derived from the ancient culture of the Tang Dynasty (618–907), a golden age when China prospered in diplomacy, economy, culture, and the arts.100 Although Tang Court music is lost to history, Zhou claimed that its spirit could be found through surviving poetry, which, he believed, was the foundation of the music.101

Inspired by the works of four poets of the Tang dynasty, Poems from Tang for String Quartet and Orchestra (1995) illustrates Zhou’s personal re-creation of the eighth-century China.102 Without any intention to elicit historical authenticity, Zhou evoked the ancient atmosphere mainly through creating a Chinese undercurrent of tranquillity and meditation, imitating various tones and performance practices of the qin (an archaic Chinese instrument) in the string quartet, constructing Chinese-style pentatonic melodies, and employing a number of

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unpitched percussion instruments, including Chinese cymbals and bass drum.\textsuperscript{103}

Another approach to evoke the spirit of the Tang dynasty was through Buddhism, which came to China during the Tang period. Though not a religious person, Zhou devoted time during the end of 1980s to studying Buddhism after learning of his mother’s death while he was facing culture shock in the chaos of New York City. Zhou’s works from this so-called “Buddhist Period” (1987-1994) are characterized not necessarily by Chinese sonorities, but rather by the translation of a Buddhist meditative concept into musical form and symbolical sound.

An example of Zhou’s “Buddhist” period, \textit{Dhyana} (1990), takes its inspiration from the Buddhist concept of cultivation of thought, which is a mental process of collecting disorderly thoughts and concentrating on one object until the mind becomes still and arrives at enlightenment.\textsuperscript{104} The work reflects the movement between freely flowing and densely concentrated thoughts through a transformation of complexity and intensity in pitch, rhythm, timbre, and expression to resolved pitch, relaxed rhythm, monochromatic timbre, and serene mood.\textsuperscript{105} Apart from its Buddhist spirit, \textit{Dhyana} also cites ancient Chinese instruments and musical gestures sonically through different instrumental techniques such as microtones, grace notes, and glissandi—the pianist plays inside piano to imitate the bells, chimes, gongs, and harmonics made on the \textit{qin}, the violin and cello replicate the temple blocks and the various sonorities of the \textit{qin}, and the flute and clarinet echo the reciting style of \textit{xiao} (a vertical bamboo

\textsuperscript{103} Zhou Long, e-mail message to author, February 18, 2014.

\textsuperscript{104} From the program notes attached to Zhou Long, Ding \textit{for B♭ Clarinet, Percussion, and Double Bass} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3.

\textsuperscript{105} From the program notes attached to Zhou Long, Dhayana \textit{for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello, and Piano} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1.
Like Zhou Long, Chen Yi grew up primarily with Western classical music, starting piano lessons at the age of three and violin at four. Although her parents were physicians, they were lovers of Western art music and had a large collection of records, which they played every evening. During the Cultural Revolution, Chen was forced to do heavy labor in the suburbs of Guangzhou for two years before taking a concertmaster position with the Beijing Opera Troupe for eight years. This “re-education” familiarized Chen with folk music, the Beijing operatic repertoire, and cross-cultural composition since she had to arrange and compose music for the troupe’s mixed Western and Chinese traditional instruments orchestra.  

Chen became a classmate of Tan Dun and Zhou Long at the Central Conservatory, as well as at Columbia University where she completed her doctorate with distinction in May 1993.

While Tan Dun’s music is the most popular of the new wave in the American and European press, Chen Yi and her cross-cultural compositions have become the most favorite subject for theses and dissertations. Of these scholarly studies, Xin Guo’s dissertation “Chinese Musical Language Interpreted by Western Idioms: Fusion Process in the Instrumental Works by Chen Yi” is probably the most comprehensive, thanks to its meticulous analyses of selected works that range throughout Chen’s career. The dissertation organizes the works according to the

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107 Green, “The Impact of Buddhist Thought,” 565.

composer’s four different fusion approaches: 1) pitch, 2) rhythm and structure, 3) timbre, and 4) texture.

For pitch structure, Chen combined Chinese folk tunes and Western twelve-tone or atonal languages in several ways. In her Woodwind Quintet (1987), for example, she built the piece from a twelve-tone row derived from fragments of a Chinese pentatonic melody and developed the piece in accordance with twelve-tone techniques.\(^{109}\) She applied the same process to Near Distance (1988) and Sparkle (1992), but did not restrict it to the pitch ordering of dodecaphonic writing; rather Chen fused Chinese folksongs with small, unordered pitch-class sets of Western free-atonal techniques by either adding certain pitch classes to the folksongs or by altering the songs’ contours while preserving the original pitches.\(^{110}\)

Although Chen did not quote the Chinese tune directly in Sparkle, she precisely preserved the rhythmic groupings and structure of Baban, a Chinese folksong upon which several Chinese folksongs are based.\(^{111}\) Baban has eight phrases in total, with eight beats for each phrase; however, the fifth phrase has four additional beats, which function as the song’s climax. The rhythmic groupings of the eight-phrase Baban follow this pattern: (3+2+3), (3+2+3), (4+4), (3+2+3), (3+2+3+4), (4+4), (5+3), (4+4). In Sparkle, each A section of its ternary form has two subsections, each subsection consists of two enlarged Baban forms, each of which is twice the length of the original form. The meter changes of Sparkle occur correspondingly to the Baban pattern of rhythmic groupings; for example, (6/4, 4/4, 6/4) replace the first phrase


\(^{110}\) Ibid., 266.

\(^{111}\) Baban’s structure reflects the Golden Ratio, deriving from the proportions between length and number of beats or measures. The Ratio, which corresponds to the Fibonacci series, occur consistently and coincidentally in the forming of climaxes in both Chinese and Western classical music. See Guo, “Chinese Musical Language,” 107-08.
(3+2+3) of *Baban*. Chen also applied this pattern of *Baban* rhythm and structure in Piano Concerto (1992) and *Qi* (1997) but proportionally enlarged and reduced the rhythmic groupings, respectively.

Regarding timbre, Chen fused East and West by transcribing Chinese instrumental sonorities and effects for Western instruments. The most distinct example is *Sound of the Five* (1998) for cello and string quartet, whose four movements are labeled with different names of Chinese instruments: “Lusheng Ensemble,” “Echoes of the Set Bells,” “Romance of *Hsiao* and *Ch’i’n*,” and “Flower Drums in Dance.” The first movement re-interprets the sound and performance ritual of the *lusheng* (a free-reed mouth organ) by employing a group of short motives and double-stops to imitate the blowing characteristics and drone bass of the mouth organ, respectively.112 The second movement emulates the sound of the *bianzhong* (a set of various-sized bronze bells) through the simultaneous application of two string techniques: 1) pizzicati, which symbolize the strike on the bells, and 2) artificial harmonics, which illustrate the bells’ resonance.113

In the third movement, the solo cello plays a long, lyrical melody decorated with three-note trills, grace notes, and descending thirty-second notes to imitate the sound and performance practices of the *hsiao* or *xiao* (a vertical bamboo flute), while different types of pizzicati (which first appear in the solo cello and are then picked up by the whole quartet) created various tone colors to emulate the *ch’i’n* or *qin* (a seven-string zither), an instrument distinctive for its varied timbres. The last movement depicts both the sound of *yaogu* (a waist-drum) and a celebratory traditional dance, which includes female dancers playing small gongs accompanied by a large

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113 Ibid., 177.
group of *yaogu*, big drum, gongs, cymbals, and a pair of *suona* (a double-reed woodwind instrument). Chen achieved the sonorities of *yaogu* and energetic dance scenes through dissonant percussive sound effects and multiple timbres generated mainly by double-stops, triple-stops, portamenti and Bartók pizzicati, cross-rhythms, and short rhythmic ostinato patterns. Chen evoked the sound of *suona*, the only melodic instrument that accompanies the traditional dance, through descending a two-note gesture with a trill on the first note.

The last approach in Chen’s fusion focuses on different textures governed by the concept of Chinese “shape,” which is a flexible structural principle in traditional Chinese instrumental music. A shape is a build up to a climax before a regression, resulting from gradually intensified and reduced textures created by the combination of any structural parameters—whether melodic undulations rhythmic groupings, dynamics, the expansion and contraction of range, or changes of tempo. Chen’s application of the shape resulted in Western compositions with Chinese aesthetics as their foundation, but not necessarily with Chinese musical sonorities.

An example of Chen’s fusion of Chinese “shape” in Western composition is Symphony No. 2 (1993), which Chen formed on a single large shape, comprising four phases derived from varied textures created mainly by different timbres and rhythmic groupings: the first (mm.1-61) is characterized by homophonic texture between the foreground and background, yet in the same way as the foreground is polyphonic, intertwining melodic and counter-melodic lines, the

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114 The flower drum is literally translated from a Chinese word *hua gu*, which has two references: *yaogu* (a waist-drum) and a traditional dance of the Han people in the central and southern China. See Guo, “Chinese Musical Language,” 192.

background is full of contrapuntal, imitative, aleatoric textures, as well as clusters. The second phase (mm. 61-134) is a series of instrumental solos in monophony tinged by orchestral clusters. The third (mm. 135-231) builds up tension to a big climax through the aggregation of multiple textural strata, whose textures are homophonic in general when examining the relationship between the foreground and background. However, similar to the first phase, polyphony is evident within the foreground and background, particularly in the background where aleatoricism and clusters are prominent. The last phase (mm. 231-285) releases the tension by reducing instrumentation from the whole orchestra to only strings and percussion, whose interaction generate the same kind of polyphonic-homophonic texture, but one that is more transparent.

Chen does not limit her fusion approaches only to pitch, rhythm and structure, timbre, and texture. She also looks to Chinese literature, aesthetics, and philosophies for her compositional materials and inspirations. *Chinese Myths Cantata* (1996), one of Chen’s most famous works, is based on popular Chinese myths, while *Momentum* (1998) dramatically depicts the aesthetics of Chinese calligraphy through the shape concept. *Qi* (1997) for a mixed quartet of flute, cello, percussion, and piano translates the mystery and power *qi*—the cosmic energy of Chinese Daoism—through a free, slow tempo with dense texture, illustrating an experience of human beings’ spirits with the eternal power.  

The “Newer Waves”

Chen Yi and her Chinese-American colleagues are not only successful composers but

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116 Samuel Adler explains that the foreground is the most important voice, the middle ground includes countermelodies or important contrapuntal material, and the background is an accompaniment either in the form of chords or polyphonic/melodic figures. See Samuel Adler, *The Study of Orchestration* (New York and London: Norton, 1982), 112.

also sought-after professors: Chen Yi and Zhou Long are faculty members at the Conservatory of Music and Dance, University of Missouri-Kansas City, and Bright Sheng is currently teaching at the University of Michigan. Their success and distinctive compositional language have drawn a number of composition students, particularly Asian students who are attracted to cross-cultural composition, to study with them in the United States. These students stretch their compositional style even further by expanding pre-existing fusion practices and materials. They regard, but do not limit themselves, to the practices of Chinese extra-musical references located in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italian operas, pentatonicism attached to nineteenth-century musical exoticism, gamelan musical elements scrutinized in the twentieth century, and East Asian aesthetics and philosophies favored by American composers of the later century. Among these “Newer Wave” composers is Narong Prangcharoen, who observes cross-cultural processes practiced by his previous generations of composers, but extends the practices to also include materials from his home country, Thailand.
CHAPTER 2
CROSS-CULTURAL PROCESSES IN THAI MUSIC HISTORY\(^1\)

Since its appearance in 1951, Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) and Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960)’s *The King and I* has been central in shaping Thailand for the Western musical imagination. Although the musical deviates from the gendered norm of exoticsim, presenting an Eastern male inherently dominated by a relentless Western female, the racial norm of the imperial West and the colonial East remains conventional, as does the musical’s cross-cultural music, which is typically Western in its Broadway musical score and richly flavored with Orientalist touches of pentatonicism.\(^2\) In the Thai musical realm, however, cross-cultural processes have been prevalent since the first appearance of Western music in Thailand at the beginning of the sixteenth century when the Portuguese became the first Westerners to enter the land. Yet, the process remained simple and almost stagnant for over four hundred years until the early twentieth century as pro- and anti-Western policies alternately dominated the country. Furthermore, it was not until the 1970s, with the presence of many Americans on Thai soil that any substantial development of the fusion process occurred, a progress that has rapidly developed over the last few decades.

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1 Thailand was called “Siam” until 1939, when Phibunsongkrom, the prime minister at that time, changed the name of Siam to Thailand in order to support his doctrine of nationalism during the pre-World War II period. In this thesis, the name “Thailand,” which is commonly used elsewhere in the present day, is applied despite the time period to avoid confusion unless Siam is part of a specific name or title.

This chapter presents the history of cross-cultural processes in Thailand, starting with the first incursion of Western music and the first fusion practices in the early sixteenth century during the mid-Ayutthaya period, then moving to their reappearance in the end of the eighteenth century with the advent of the Rattanakosin period, and continuing to their proliferation in the mid-nineteenth century through the Westernization that resulted from European colonization up to twentieth-century globalization. The chapter ends with the cross-cultural processes practiced by Narong Prangcharoen’s contemporaries, including those of his first composition teacher which play a significant role in his music. This background information is necessary in understanding Prangcharoen’s cross-cultural processes and elements in his orchestral compositions.

Since general audiences may not be familiar with the history of Thailand, Table 1 is included to present the timeline of Thai history in comparison with the world history so that it can be a reference when the chapter discusses specific time period and reigns of Thai kings.

Table 1. Timeline of the World history and Thai history

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>World History</th>
<th>Thai History</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hundred Years’ War between France and England</td>
<td>1337-1453</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gutenberg printing</td>
<td>ca. 1450</td>
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<td>Columbus reaches West Indies</td>
<td>1492</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Luther begins Reformation</td>
<td>1517</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dutch East India Company chartered</td>
<td>1602</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thirty Years’ War</td>
<td>1618-1648</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reign of Louis XIV of France</td>
<td>1643-1715</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reign of Frederick the Great of Prussia</td>
<td>1740-1786</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reign of Maria Theresa as Holy Roman Empress</td>
<td>1740-1780</td>
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<td>1656-1688</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reign of King Narai the Great</td>
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<td>1685-1767</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ayutthaya period</td>
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<td>ca. 1238-1438</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sukhothai period</td>
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<td>1351-1767</td>
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<td>Thonburi Period</td>
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<td>1769-1782</td>
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### Table 1 continued

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<tr>
<th>World History</th>
<th>Thai History</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Revolution</td>
<td>1775-1783</td>
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<tr>
<td>French Revolution</td>
<td>1782-present 1789-1794</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reign of Napoleon</td>
<td>1782-1809 1804-1814</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congress of Vienna</td>
<td>1809-1824 1814-1815</td>
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<tr>
<td>“July Revolution” in France</td>
<td>1824-1851 1830</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Formation of German Empire</td>
<td>1851-1868 1871</td>
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<tr>
<td>World War I</td>
<td>1868-1910 1914-1918</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russian Revolution</td>
<td>1910-1925 1917</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning of Great Depression</td>
<td>1925-1935 1929</td>
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<tr>
<td>World War II</td>
<td>1935-1946 1939-1945</td>
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<td>Korean War</td>
<td>1946-present 1950-1953</td>
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<td>Vietnam War</td>
<td>Bhumibol Adulyadej 1954-1975</td>
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<td>Chinese Cultural Revolution</td>
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<td>The Soviet Union Collapses</td>
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<td>The Fall of Berlin Wall</td>
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**Reigns of the Chakri Dynasty’s Kings**

- Buddha Yodfa Chulaloke (Rama I) 1782-1809
- Buddha Loetla Naphalai (Rama II) 1809-1824
- Nangklao Chaoyuhau (Rama III) 1824-1851
- Mongkut (Rama IV) 1851-1868
- Chulalongkorn (Rama V) 1868-1910
- Vajiravudh (Rama VI) 1910-1925
- Prajadhipok 1925-1935
- Ananda Mahidol 1935-1946
- Bhumibol Adulyadej 1946-present

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**The First Appearances of the West in Thailand**

Western music probably first appeared in Thailand during the reign of King Ramathibodi II (1491-1529) of the Ayutthaya kingdom, whose capital city shared the same title. In 1511, Duarte Fernandes, a Portuguese envoy, became the first Westerner to enter the kingdom of Thailand.³ Later that year, another Portuguese mission arrived in the city of Ayutthaya with a commissioner to negotiate a trade agreement. In 1518, the Portuguese finally received the rights of residence and religious liberty in Thailand after the third mission brought the peace treaty to

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its conclusion. The Portuguese soon established a community in the southeastern part of the city. Although there is no evidence of a missionary presence in Thailand until 1554 (when two Dominicans, Fathers Hieronymus of the Cross and Sebastian de Cantù, joined 300 Portuguese soldiers who entered Thai military service a year earlier at the King’s request), Catholic priests might have traveled with the first envoys since there had been Portuguese religious propagation earlier in Indonesia. After Spain’s annexation of Portugal in 1580, Portuguese authority ceased, resulting in the influx of other European nations, including the Dutch, English, and French for the purpose of trading; only the French were also interested in religious propagation, a move firmly established when Pope Alexander VII created the Thailand Vicariate Apostolic in 1662 and soon the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Augustinians joined the earlier missions.

These missionaries brought with them Western music and instruments through Roman Catholic liturgical music. The priests and congregations sang Gregorian chants and taught catechisms through song. Besides organs in church, each Christian community also had its own music ensemble. Victor Largé, a French missionary, noted that performances of Mass on important feast days featured mixed ensembles of violin, Chinese fiddle, flute, guitar, mouth organ, drums, small drums, cymbal, and khong-wong-yai (large horizontal melodic gongs). Western music was also accessible through Catholic educational systems as the missionary

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4 Wyatt, Thailand, 74.


6 Spitz, “Siam.” The vicariate Apostolic regions are the districts that were ecclesiastically governed by appointed residential bishops called vicars Apostolic.


established theological schools (higher education), humanity schools (high school), and elementary schools in Thailand. All imbedded ritual singing practices in the curriculum. In these Catholic settings, the first cross-cultural musical process appeared through Thai Catholics’ tunes for prayers and teaching catechism. The fusion was as simple as combining reciting tones similar to psalmodic plainchant or existing Latin melodies with the Thai vernacular language. The process required some pitch adjustments to match the intonation of the spoken language as the Thai language consists of five different tones.

Besides religious associations, Western music and instruments entered Thailand through diplomacy, especially in the 1680s when the French court of Louis the XIV (r. 1643-1715) and Thai court of King Narai the Great (r. 1656-1688) exchanged diplomats. The first three Thai ambassadors left for France in December 1680. The trip, however, was unsuccessful due to a shipwreck that occurred between Madagascar and the Cape. In 1684, King Narai sent two other envoys to Louis XIV in Versailles to obtain information regarding the accident. The envoys were granted an audience with Louis XIV because the Sun King had a vision that while French missionaries were converting the Thai people, the French East Indies Company would simultaneously trade with the country. Accordingly, he established the first French embassy to King Narai in 1685. François-Timoléon de Choisy, a French author who accompanied the ambassadors, kept a journal in which he described the appearance of Western instruments in Thailand: “As soon as the gentlemen [the French ambassadors] were in position, we heard the trumpets and drums sound within; those outside replied. This was the signal that the King was

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11 Ibid., 20.
going to be seated on the throne,” and later, “After that, we heard trumpets and drums as before the audience; it was to warn those outside that His Majesty was going to descend from his throne.” In 1686, Louis the XIV officially received Thai ambassadors led by Kosa Pan, who attended a Mass ceremony at the Notre-Dame Cathedral, Italian plays, ballroom dances, and an opera Armide by Jean Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) during their time in France. In return, the French King sent a troupe of ambassadors to Thailand the following year. Simon de la Loubère writes in A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Thailand that the French group performed several airs from French operas on the violin before Narai. Similar to Choisy’s account, la Loubère mentions the presence of trumpets and Western drums, held by some men in the innermost court of the palace; however, unlike the previous account, la Loubère notes that the men merely held the instruments to manifest the king’s grandeur without sounding them.

This close relationship between Thailand and France ultimately provoked a xenophobic reaction at the end of Narai’s reign. Phetraja, a powerful general and foster brother of Narai, succeeded his brother as the king of Thailand in 1688, and proceeded to execute or expell Europeans from the kingdom. Beginning with Phetraja’s policy of isolation, and continuing with persecutions by and invasions of the Burmese (which eventually caused the fall of Ayutthaya kingdom in 1767), the flourishing of Western religious and educational activities, as well as

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15 Ibid., 69.
Western music in Thailand seen in the Narai’s reign died away and did not return to the same level for a century.

The Revival with the West

With the advent of the Rattanakosin kingdom in 1782, the situation of the Catholic mission in Thailand gradually improved. Rama I (r. 1782-1809) moved Thailand’s capital to Bangkok. This adjustment caused people who had scattered in neighboring areas because of the Burmese war to continuously immigrate into the country and settle their communities outside the main walls of the city, while the Roman Catholics descended from Portuguese and Japanese Christians moved into the north part of Bangkok.\(^\text{16}\) Initially, this geographic dislocation allowed Rama I to persecute Christians like other Thai kings before him had done; however, in 1796 he granted freedom to Christian missions and forbade any accusations against the Christians after witnessing their continuous steadfastness.\(^\text{17}\) The Christian population increased from the reign of Rama III (r. 1824-1851) onwards when the number of European missionaries grew and the missions among the Chinese in Thailand began.\(^\text{18}\) In these Catholic communities, the practices of liturgical music remained the same, with the singing of Gregorian chants in Latin and Latin melodies in the Thai vernacular language.

While the Catholics had established missions in Thailand since the sixteenth century, Protestant propagation began in 1828 led by Rev. Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff, a German who

\(^{16}\) Wyatt, *Thailand*, 129.

\(^{17}\) Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix, *Description of the Thai Kingdom or Siam: Thailand under King Mongkut*, trans. Walter E. J. Tips (Bangkok, Thailand: White Lotus Press, 2000), 398. In September 1795, Rama I accused a Christian mandarin of “disloyalty and of scorn for the orders of his sovereign.” He then forcefully demanded that the mandarin’s wife and four children be brought back to Buddhism. The family suffered several cruel persecutions in the course of nine months but remained firm to their faith. This continuous steadfastness eventually set them free and liberated their fellow Christians from persecutions.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 401.
had a brief connection with the Netherlands Missionary Society, and Rev. Jacob Tomlin of the London missionary Society.\textsuperscript{19} A few years later, American missionaries took over the propagation. In 1831, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (A.B.C.F.M.), supported by the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches, sent Rev. David Abeel to cultivate the religious activities, followed by Rev. John Taylor Jones and his wife, who were transferred from a Baptist mission in Burma in 1833.\textsuperscript{20} The Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions followed suit by appointing Rev. William P. Buell and his wife for a new mission in 1840.\textsuperscript{21}

These missionaries, particularly Rev. Dan Beach Bradley of the A.B.C.F.M. who entered Thailand in 1835, began a tradition of Protestant music in Thailand by writing and publishing Western hymn tunes in the Thai language, the similar cross-cultural process seen earlier in the Catholic vernacular tunes in the sixteenth century (although the Catholics were more precise with the process of pitch adjustments).\textsuperscript{22} Also similar to the Catholics, the Protestants established schools whose curriculums encompassed the teaching of Western singing through choirs and popular songs, as well as offering training on musical instruments such as piano, violin, and brass band.

Although the West never completely left Thailand after establishing a beachhead in the Ayutthaya period, its presence was almost negligible until the end of the Napoleonic wars, at which time a resurgence of international trade and the rise of a new Anglo-Dutch trading rivalry.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 5-6 and 21.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{22} Yamprai, “The Establishment of Western Music,” 26.
in maritime Southeast Asia began.\textsuperscript{23} The resurgence of the West in the region started in the form of trade and later morphed into colonization. Fearing this European imperialism, foreign and military affairs were the main concern of Rama III’s reign. In 1826, Rama III signed a treaty with the British. This so-called “Burney Treaty” brought not only a commercial agreement with the British, but also an exemplar for the conduct of Thailand’s relations with the West, as well as a considerable increase in the country’s international trade; by the 1840s, more than fifty square-rigged Western vessels entered the Bangkok port each year.\textsuperscript{24} Among these vessels were military ships, which often had a military band on board.

William Samuel Waithman Ruschenberger’s famous journal, \textit{A Voyage Round the World} (1838) contains the first record of a military band appearance in Thailand. In the journal, Ruschenberger mentions the marching of a marine military band that accompanied the first American envoy to Thailand in 1836 aboard the USS Peacock.\textsuperscript{25} However, because of Rama III’s conservatism, Western culture had not yet penetrated all layers of Thai society, although it was appealing to the Thai elite. Not until Rama III’s open-minded successor, King Mongkut or Rama IV (r. 1851-1868), (an ingenious ruler whose image is misconstructed as a barbaric, dim-witted king in the \textit{The King and I}) that Thailand moved toward the modern era by signing treaties with Britain, France, and the United States to open the country fully to Western trade, by welcoming all religious evangelism, and by adopting some Western culture into Thai societies, including a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Wyatt, \textit{Thailand}, 148.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 154.
\item \textsuperscript{25} William Samuel Waithman Ruschenberger, \textit{A Voyage round the World including an Embassy to Muscat and Thailand in 1835, 1876, and 1837}, vol. 2 (1838; repr., Folkeston and London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1970), 86-87 and 109.
\end{itemize}
distinctly Thai military band, which inaugurated the substantial progress of Western music and cross-cultural musical fusion in Thailand.  

The Nineteenth-century Westernization

Among the Western traditions Rama IV introduced to Thailand was military training, for both the army and navy, and its concomitant military band, the first Western musical ensemble in Thailand outside Christian communities. Initially, the Thai army hired English captains who had resigned from the British military in India to train both the military and its band, resulting in the adoption of the English tradition of using trumpet signals and the English anthem “God Save the King” to salute the monarch. However, the army quickly moved to appointing other foreign commanders, including Jacob Feit (1844-1909), a German-American military officer who came to Thailand in 1866 and worked as a band director, first in the court of Phra Pin Klao (1808-65) then in the Royal Page Department from 1885 until his death. Similarly, foreign musicians who came to Thailand with European and American Navy vessels trained the Thai marine band. Correspondingly, the repertoire of Thai military bands grew to include Western airs, American national tunes, and Thai songs, with the last presenting a more complicated practice of cross-cultural fusion than the practice of merely fitting Thai lyrics into Western melodies as seen in earlier periods.

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26 King Rama IV developed Thailand so much that Peter Anthony Thompson, a British painter and scholar, wrote in his 1910 account that “. . . Thailand may be said to have passed from the Middle Ages to modern times . . . within a few years.” P.A. Thompson, Thailand: An Account of the Country and the People (Boston and Tokyo: J.B. Millet Company, 1910), 57, quoted in Yamprai, “The Establishment of Western Music in Thailand,” 29.


28 When Rama IV ascended to the throne in 1851, Prince Chudamani, Rama IV’s younger brother, was concurrently elevated to reign jointly with the King as Phra Pin Klao. He was to succeed Rama IV but was prevented by his early death in 1866.
Since arrangements of Thai songs for military band had not yet emerged, the musical fusion of the two cultures at this stage appeared through the simple employment of Thai melodies and characteristic polyphonic stratification of Thai music performed on Western instruments. Most instruments would play a melody in unison while others improvised on the main melody. Another musical fusion appeared in a new type of Thai musical repertory called Pleng Ok Phasa (“foreign style song”), which gave an exotic flavor to Thai music by composing new Thai melodies over an imitation of foreign language accents and musical characteristics in timbre, musical styles, and rhythms. Another form of Pleng Ok Phasa appears when new Thai lyrics are added to existing foreign tunes, a simple cross-cultural process similar to that of Thai Christian music. These foreign style songs that imitate Western characteristics have a specific name: Pleng Samniang Farang (“Western dialect song”), whose exoticism lies in the assimilation of Western folk or hymn melodies and their march rhythms with Thai melodic percussion instruments playing the melody and a Thai drum imitating the snare’s march rhythm. The most famous Pleng Samniang Farang are Farang Yi Hem, derived from the English hymn “The Heavenly Bridegroom Soon Will Come,” and Farang Doen Tap, which comes from “Marching through Georgia.” Pleng Samniang Farang, as well as other songs of Pleng Ok Phasa, usually served for an entertainment purpose to enliven sorrowful atmosphere in Thai funerals.

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29 The term “polyphonic stratification” is used here instead of heterophony to describe the texture of Thai music since each melodic line of different instruments is not merely an approximation or decoration of the main melody, but has a distinct characteristic and style pertinent to that instrument’s performance practices.

30 Yamprai, “The Establishment of Western Music,” 34.

31 Ibid., 2 and Pichit Chaiseree, การประพันธ์เพลงไทย [Composing Thai music] (Bangkok: Thailand, Chulalongkorn University Press, 2013), 49.
Musical fusion of the West and East continued during the reign of Rama V (r. 1868-1910), who accelerated Westernization by reforming the Thai administrative, educational, and judicial systems, with the reforms in the first two categories ensuing the stability of Western music. As part of the modernization of the Thai military, both the army and navy bands continued musical training by hiring foreign commanders to advance their quality. The overhauled provincial administration resulted in Western music being heard by the public for the first time as military bands were sent together with military units to different areas. Local Thai people learned the instruments, formed brass bands, and adopted the military band’s fusion process by playing polyphonic stratification of Thai folk melodies on Western brass instruments during festivals and important events.

The advent of public schools in 1893 resulted from Rama V’s reform in education, which had been limited only to the king’s children during the previous reign. By the turn of the century, public education, although not yet widespread throughout the country, used standardized textbooks and curricula, which included singing. However, the class’s focus was on mere singing and not on musical techniques. Rama V’s educational reforms also urged concerns for higher education among the upper-class. The King started the tradition by sending first his children, males only, then royal scholars to European institutes and founding the King’s Scholarship for excellent students, regardless of social rank although initially most were the elite, to study abroad.³²

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³² Among those who took advantage of the King’s Scholarship, Ploy Penkul (Lt. Phra Apaipolrop), a royal page of the king’s court, studied military and Western music in India. In 1907, he wrote a book on music theory, which became the first music textbook in Thai.
Thailand’s First Composer

The tradition of oversea education produced the individual many consider Thailand’s first composer in the Western mold, HRH Prince Paribatra (1881-1944), one of King Rama V’s sons. Similar to other royal families, Prince Paribatra learned Thai instruments and singing as a child in the royal court before departing for England in 1894 to further his education. Two years later, he pursued a military education in Germany. Although music was his passion, the prince could not follow the path to a professional music career, but continued to leisurely study piano and conducting and attend musical performances during his time in Europe. Upon his return to Thailand in 1903, Rama V appointed him Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army, and a year later of the Royal Thai Navy, a subsection of the Ministry of Defense at that time. With his interest in Western music, which conformed to Rama V’s modernization policy, the Prince developed the Thai navy band by teaching a course called “Brass Instrument Applications” in 1906 at the Navy Department and occasionally directing the band. Besides his Western musical activities, the Prince also resumed his interest in Thai music by forming a Thai musical ensemble called Wong Phin Wang Phat Bang Khun Phrom at his court, Bang Khun Phrom palace.

Most importantly, Prince Paribatra became the first Thai to compose and arrange music for the military band in the Western style with written musical notation. His works can be

Princess Sirirat Bussabong, Prince Paribatra’s daughter, merely records in her memoir that Prince Paribatra loved to attend opera performances while he was in Germany, without giving any specific titles of the operas. See Princess Sirirat Bussabong and Poonpit Amatayakul, ทูนกระหม่อมบริพัตร กับการดนตรี [Prince Paribatra and music] (Bangkok, Thailand: Chanvanitch, 1981), 9.

In 1910, Rama VI succeeded Rama V to the throne and appointed Prince Paribatra Commander-in-Chief of the new independent Ministry of Navy. Prince Paribatra held the post until 1920 when Rama VI transferred him to Commander-in-Chief of the Ministry of Army. In 1933, one year after Thailand’s political revolution, Rama VI’s successor, Prajadhipok, renamed the Ministry of Navy the Royal Thai Navy and connected it to the Royal Thai Armed Forces.

divided in three categories: 1) newly-composed works, 2) arrangements of Thai music in a Western style, and 3) arrangements of Thai music in a Thai style. His newly-composed works include a march, a polka, and three waltzes in the style of nineteenth-century Western military band music. For his arrangements in a Western style, Prince Paribatra adopted the fusion process of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western musical exoticism, something to which he might have been exposed during his stay in Europe. The process is distinctive for its application of a pre-existing Eastern tune or a newly composed pentatonic melody that rests above Western-style harmonization. Following this scheme, Prince Paribatra regularly borrowed a Thai melody and transformed it for his Western military band by adding harmonization and orchestration. The most prominent works in this category are two songs of honor, *Maharoek* and *Mahachai*, which have been used in ceremonial inaugurations to the present day. The last category of Prince Paribatra’s works, the arrangements of Thai music in Thai style, reflects the Prince’s expertise in Thai music. Influenced perhaps by the cross-cultural process that appeared in the earlier Thai military band’s repertoire of Thai songs, the Prince did not Westernize Thai music, rather he “Thai-ized” a Western military band by assigning them to play Thai music, following the original practices of melody, rhythmic structure, and polyphonic stratification. In other words, he replaced Thai *pi-phat* instruments with Western winds. Two Thai percussion instruments, *ching* (a pair of small cymbals) and *taphon* (drum), govern the rhythmic section while Western wind instruments form two stratified polyphonic lines of melody and variations of the main melody. Bassoon, saxophone, trombone, and euphonium replace *khong-wong-yai* (large horizontal melodic gongs) for the main melody. These instruments, together with trumpet and

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36 *Pi-phat* is one of the three Thai musical ensembles. Composed of melodic and rhythmic percussion instruments and the *pi* (a quadruple reed instrument), *Pi-phat* appears in three sizes: small, medium or doubled, and large. There are also two special types of *Pi-phat*: *Pi-phat Nang Hong* and *Pi-phat Mon*. For instruments and playing occasions for each type of *Pi-phat*, see Morton, *The Traditional Music of Thailand*, 105-14.
tuba, sometimes play the variations that originally appeared on *khong-wong-lek* (small horizontal melodic gongs) or *ranat-thum* (lower-pitched wooden xylophone). Piccolo, flute, clarinet, and oboe are responsible for the *ranat-ek* (higher-pitched wooden xylophone) part, which presents either the melody or its variations.37

Apart from the instrumental music sphere, the appearance of cross-cultural fusion also increased in the theatrical domain. Peng Penkun (Chao Phraya Mahinthornsakthamrong) created *La-khon Phan Thang* (“hybrid drama”) during Rama IV’s reign but it remained in the style of traditional Thai drama. In 1857, Penkun, as Chargé d’ Affaires, joined Rama IV’s diplomatic corps in presenting a royal message to Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom. Influenced by Western plays and operas experienced during the sojourn, Penkun transformed his *Phan Thang* drama from a single-gender cast to one with male and female actors according to the gender of the characters. He also exploited plots, dancing, costumes, and musical styles and instruments of foreign nations.38 The Western influence also appeared in scenic effects of Penkun’s newly built Prince Theatre, the first theatre in Thailand that cost admission.39 After the death of Penkun, his son Boosra took over the theatre and changed the name of the drama to *La-khon Boosra Mahin*.40

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40 Boosra Penkun led his theatrical troope to Europe and Russia for a performance tour from July 1900 to June 1991. During their stop in Berlin, Carl Stumpf (1848-1936), a German ethnomusicologist, made some recordings of Thai music performed by the troope’s music ensemble on wax cylinders. The recording took place at the Berlin Zoological Gardens on 24 September 1990 as part of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, a collection of ethnomusicological recordings. *Kham Hom* (“sweet word”), one of the recorded songs, is included in a CD collection commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv. See the first track of disc 1 of *Music! The Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv 1900-2000*, Wergo B00004YUCI, 2000.
Phan Thang drama opened a way to two short-lived Western-influenced Thai dramas, *La-khon Duek Dam Ban* and *tableaux vivants*. Existed during 1899-1909, *Duek Dam Ban* drama derived from the so-called “Concert”—an adaptation of Thai music for a two-part male and female chorus and *Wong Pi-phat*—which M.R.L Larn Kunchorn (Chao Phraya Thewet Wongwiwat), Director of the Performing Arts Department, and Prince Narisaranuvadtivong, Rama V’s half-brother, developed to entertain foreign royal guests of Rama V. After returning to Thailand from his visit to Europe in 1891, Kunchorn, together with Prince Naris, began developing the Concert after European opera; Kunchorn built a new theatre, the *Duek Dam Ban* theatre, with mechanical devices for scene changes and lighting effects, while Prince Naris prepared the libretti and arranged music. Traditional Thai dramas employed one austere scene for a whole drama, monophonic singing, a description of characters’ posture in libretto sung by a narrator, long melisma at the end of melodic lines, and tardy dancing. On the other hand, *Duek Dam Ban* drama, although based on texts of Thai plays, adopted the musical framework of late eighteenth-century Western opera by utilizing a three-act structure (with two scenes in each act) and stage and lighting effects, adding ensemble finale and two-part singing between male and female, eliminating the narrating part and long melismatic singing altogether, and quickening the dancing pace. The drama is accompanied by a new kind of ensemble under the same title of the

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41 Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, “ตํานานละคอนดึกดําบรรพ์” [History of *La-khon Duek Dam Ban*], in ประชุมบทละคอนดึกดําบรรพ์ ฉบับบริบูรณ์ [The complete libretti of *La-khon Duek Dam Ban*] (Bangkok, Thailand: Phra Chan, 1943), 1. M.R.L. stands for Mom Ratchawong, which is a title for a great grandchild of a king. At first, the Concert designated different single songs. Then it is used to describe a set of music, which had a unified story as a whole. This new kind of Concert originated in Prince Naris’s adoption of texts from Thai plays for the lyrics and Kunchorn’s appointment for the singers to not only sing, but also dance and act in accordance with the story.

42 Yamprai, “The Establishment of Western Music,” 3 and 86-96.
drama.⁴³ Although the instruments are all Thai, *Duek Dam Ban* music adopted Western exoticism when it combined the Thai melodic and singing style with Western concepts of harmonization and tonality.

Another type of Western-influenced Thai drama is *tableaux vivants*, which was brought into Thailand in 1893 by Rama VI (r. 1910-1925), then the crown prince.⁴⁴ The dramatic practice is similar to that of the European original where a scene is presented on decorated stage with a spotlight on the characters who remain silent and motionless as if in a picture (“tableau”). Thai *tableaux vivants* adapted their scripts from existing Thai or foreign plays, with *Tap Nang Cinderella* composed in 1894 by Prince Naris being the only one derived from a European source. The music for *tableaux vivants* is a traditional Thai genre called *Tap*—with six *Pleng Samniang Farang* (“Western dialect song”) included in *Tap Nang Cinderella*—played by a Thai string ensemble mixed with Western instruments such as violin and accordion.⁴⁵ This so-called *Wong Khrueag Sai Prasom* (“Thai mixed string ensemble”) later became popular in Rama VI’s royal court.

Thai drama reached its golden age with *La-khon Rong* (“Thai musical”) in the reign of Rama VI. Influenced by English-language musical theater and Western comic opera, Rama VI invented *La-khon Rong* by exploiting singing and spoken dialogue, comic characters, and ordinary physical expressions instead of specific expression gestures of the traditional Thai

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⁴³ *Duek Dam Ban* ensemble is derived from the traditional Thai *pi-phat* ensemble, but with the replacement of softer instruments or mallets with louder ones. *Duek Dam Ban* instrumentats include a set of *khong-wong-yai, khong-hui* (seven big vertical gongs), *ranat-ek, ranat-thum, ching, taphon, khlui-phiang-o* (medium flute), *khlui-u* (large flute), and *so-u* (a bowed-stringed instrument).

⁴⁴ Yamprai, “The Establishment of Western,” 96.

⁴⁵ Aroonrat, *สังคีตสมัย*[Modern Thai music], 30-31. *Tap* is vocal suite consisting of three pieces or more whose texts derive from the same story, or whose music possesses the same metrical level with some similar melodic phrases.
dance. Some *La-khon Rong* adapted their plots from Western story lines; for example, *Sao Kruea-fa*, the most famous *La-khon Rong*, is Prince Narathip Praphanphong’s adaptation of Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly*. Prince Narathip preserved *Madame Butterfly*’s tragic plot, but changed the location from Japan to Chiang Mai, a northern province in Thailand; the characters (whose names are also changed) from a Japanese geisha to a Thai local dancer and an American navy to a southern Thai military officer; and the time from the end of the nineteenth century to the World War I era. The accompanying music for *La-khon Rong* with Western origins must have taken its influence from *Pleng Samniang Farang* (“Western dialect song”) as it often includes popular Western songs—such as “Farewell Kiss Goodbye” and “Home Sweet Home” in *Sao Kruea fa*, with new Thai lyrics—performed by *Wong Khrueag Sai Prasom* (“Thai mixed string ensemble”). This cross-cultural process of combining Western (or Western-like) tunes and rhythms with Thai lyrics, first seen in Thai Catholic chants and Protestant hymns, then in the “Western dialect song” and “Thai musical,” became influential to the music of later Thai dramas, even when there is no reference to the West. The process eventually became a basis to the writing of Thai popular music, which is still prevalent in the present day.

During Rama VI’s reign, Thailand also witnessed the impact of Western culture in all Thai arts, including painting, sculpture, architecture, handicrafts, dances, and music. Western visiting artists and troupes performed vocal and instrumental recitals, operas, musical theaters, as

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47 Prince Narathip was Rama V’s half-brother who founded Pridalai Theatre, the first *La-khon Rong* theatre.


49 Ibid., 51.
well as dances and magic shows. One of the significant results of the flourishing of Western music in Thailand was the establishment of Thailand’s first string orchestra in 1912, the precursor to the Royal Orchestra. The orchestra was mainly trained by Alberto Nazari, an Italian musician, and Peter Feit (1883-1968), Jacob Feit’s son on whom Rama VI conferred the title Phra Chen Duriyanga (“The Music Master”) in 1922.

Peter Feit was one of the most significant Thai musicians stemming from the Catholic school system. He received his general education from Assumption College in Bangkok, as well as training in violin and violoncello from his father. In his teenage years, he formed a string trio with his two older brothers and later played other forms of chamber music with amateur foreign musicians who lived in Thailand. With his proficiency in string instruments and through self-study of several winds, Feit became acquainted with almost all orchestral instruments. Accordingly, Rama VI appointed him the director of the Royal Orchestra in 1917, supplanting Nazari during his enlistment in Italy for World War I. In order to replace former orchestral players who were traditional Thai musicians accustomed to Thai musical sounds and practices, Feit auditioned twelve- to fourteen-year old boys and personally supervised their musical training. His training method proved so successful that only three years after he implemented them, the orchestra’s performance of Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945)’s opera Cavalleria Rusticana (1889) received high praise in Thailand’s English newspapers, the Bangkok Times, Siam

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51 After the Ayutthaya period to the 1932 political revolution, it was a tradition for the king to confer a title to a government officer. Each title has a specific meaning according to the officer’s specialty or responsibility. In general, Thai music historians and Thai people have referred to Peter Feit by his title and not his English or Thai names, the latter is Piti Wathayakon.

52 Despite “college” in the school’s name, the Assumption College provides education from elementary level up through high school.
Observer, and the Bangkok Daily Mail. With financial support from King Prajadhipok (r. 1925-1935) during the Great Depression, the Royal Orchestra became “the best orchestra in the Far East.”

The Royal Orchestra, along with the development of Western classical music, came to a halt after the 1932 political revolution, which moved the country from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. The new government reduced the budget for the Royal Orchestra (whose name changed to the Silpakorn Orchestra), lowered the musicians’ salary, and cancelled the training program. Thailand under the military dictatorship of Field Marshal Phibunsongkram (Prime Minister from 1938-44 and again in 1948-57) took another step toward full Westernization in order to promote the country’s modernization. However, the government favored Western popular and jazz music rather than classical music. It began actively promoting ballroom dances, which required jazz ensembles in various governmental sectors, including military units. Therefore, members of military bands and the Silpakorn Orchestra quit their positions to form small jazz bands. Since the orchestra deteriorated as musicians transferred to other divisions, resigned for better-paying jobs, and left holes unfilled by younger musicians, Feit founded a private music school called Witthaya Sakon Dontri Sathan (“Western Music School”) in 1934 to train amateurs.

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54 Ibid. Feit writes that the praise was made by foreign critics but he does not mention specific names of the critics or newspapers.

55 The new government Fine Arts Department (Silpakorn Department) was established by in 1933. It supervises fine arts and museums in Thailand.

56 The school had to close within two years because the government sent Feit for a study trip in Europe from March 1936 to December 1937 to observe curriculum and administration of many prestigious schools and concert halls in order to develop music education in Thailand. The Fine Arts Department, however, ignored the report that Feit made upon his return.
In 1940, the government transferred Feit from the Fine Arts department to the Air Force to form a music ensemble for their movie unit. He retired from the Air Force three years later and became a music professor at Silpakorn University. To accompany his teaching, Feit wrote several Thai music textbooks, which were used widely in public schools. As a composer, Feit either harmonized existing Thai melodies or wrote new pentatonic melodies that rested above Western harmonization and orchestration; the latter also appears in the march-like characteristics of some of his writing. The best examples of Feit’s compositions based on Thai and march music are Sri Ayutthaya (1941) and the Thai National Anthem (1932), respectively. Listening to these works, it is clear that Feit was influenced by Prince Paribatra’s arrangements of Thai music in a Western style, or European exotic works, or both, since his father was associated with the royal family and military, providing an introduction to various Western music repertoires at an early age.

A few of Peter Feit’s students became Western classical musicians, but most of them helped develop a new Thai popular music genre that emerged around 1931 from the cross-fertilization of Western popular and jazz music. The popular music influence is evident in the use of Western popular tunes with new Thai lyrics in the La-khon Rong (“Thai musical”), but some of the popular music melodies were newly composed in a Western style. These melodies tended to be pentatonic rather than diatonic since the former was more familiar to the Thai audience palette. The influence of jazz appears in ensemble types and improvisatory practices of the genre, complete with the elaboration of jazz harmonies and rhythms. This new genre often

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57 Feit’s Thai music textbooks include Basic Music Theory (1933), Harmonization (1934 and 1961), Musical Symbols (1936), and Singing Principles (1953).

accompanied *La-khon Rong*, Thai dramas, and Thai movies, but it also stood on its own. Its popularity created great demands for musicians to perform for radio broadcasting, as well as in hotels, nightclubs, and bars. The most famous composer of this novel genre was Uea Sunthonsanan (1910-1981), one of Feit’s students. His *Suntharaphorn* ensemble and its music became the standard for Thai popular music up to the late twentieth century.

A few others of Feit’s students took the Western classical music path, such as Prasidh Silapabanleng (1912-1999), a son of Sorn Silapabanleng (1881-1954), one of the greatest traditional Thai musicians who is also known by the title of *Luang Pradit Phairoh.* Besides training in Thai music with his father, the younger Silapabanleng studied Western music with Feit at the *Witthaya Sakon Dontri Sathan* (“Western Music School”) before continuing his undergraduate study at Japan’s Imperial Academy of Music, Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music under Dr. Klaus Pringsheim (1883-1972), a former assistant of Gustav Mahler. In 1938, Silapabanleng became the first Thai to receive a music composition degree. He immediately returned to Thailand and resumed his association with the Fine Arts Department as Feit’s assistant. After the end of World War II, Silapabanleng resigned from the department and established a school for Thai music called the Phakawali Institute of Dance and Music and a drama company under the same title. While his wife directed the plays of the drama company, Silapabanleng composed music and conducted a small pit orchestra consisting of around fourteen Western instruments. His close to forty songs for the plays are in the fashion of Thai popular music, based on pentatonic melodies above Western harmonies and orchestrations.

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59 The title of *Luang Pradit Phairoh* literally means a composer who writes beautiful, sonorous music.

60 “ประวัติชีวิตและผลงาน นายประชิต์ ศิลปบรรเลง” [Biography and works of Prasidh Silapabanleng], in *อนุสรณ์การพระราชทานเพลิงศพ นายประสิทธิ์ ศิลปบรรเลง ศิลปินแห่งชาติ สาขาศิลปะการแสดง (นักแต่งเพลง) ประจําปี พุทธศักราช 2541* [Memorial book from the royal cremation ceremony of Prasidh Silapabanleng] (Bangkok, Thailand: Vachirintsarn Printing, 1999), 20.
Apart from musical songs, Silapabanleng composed a handful of symphonic works.\textsuperscript{61} Siamese Suite (1954) for orchestra has four movements: “Mood over the Temple,” “In the Grand Palace,” “Siamese Lament,” and “In the Bangkok’s China Town.” All movements are in a mid nineteenth-century Romantic style with lush harmony, expressive mood, and explicit dynamics. The last movement also contains Western exotic music flavors—a pentatonic scale, percussion instruments, and short dotted rhythms—to evoke the Western view of Chinese music. In spite of this style, Silapabanleng occasionally reached for a new fusion of influences. Siang Tian (1970s and 1988), in two versions for string quartet and orchestra with female chorus respectively, pushed the cross-cultural fusion between Western and Thai music to another level by combining not only Thai melodies, rhythms, and textures, but also structures and instrumental performance practices into a Western composition for Western instruments. Silapabanleng based Siang Tian on his father’s composition of the same title, which is the first, slow section (level 3) of a Thai thao piece.\textsuperscript{62}

Thao could be compared to theme and variations in Western music, but the thao does not state a theme and always has three variations. A thao begins with sam chan (“level 3”), the longest and most complex variation, followed by song chan (“level 2”) and chan diao (“level 1”) variations. The three metrical levels—level 1, 2, and 3—are proportional and the relative speed of each level varies according to ensemble types and repertoires, as well as to each individual

\textsuperscript{61} Prasidh Silapabanleng’s other symphonic works are based on pre-existing traditional Thai musical works i.e., Soke Pama (c.1940s); Cherd Nai (The Prelude of Thailand, 1970s), which was orchestrated by John Georgiadis; Damnern Sigh (1996) for string quartet, which was orchestrated by his student Apsorn Kuramarohit; and Siamese Romances in D (1998), whose three out of five movemets are based on his pre-existing musical songs.

\textsuperscript{62} Sorn Silapabanleng’s Siang Tian (1933) is also based on a pre-existing folksong, often performed within a larger structure comprising two other sections by other composers.
ensemble. The metrical levels are specified by particular sets of *ching* (cymbals) patterns, gong strokes, and *na thap* (drum patterns) that determine the length of phrases, sections, and composition. In most cases of *thao* music, a cymbal pattern in level 3 completes every other measure of 2/4 meter (a cymbal pattern composes of two strokes: undamped on unaccented beat and damped on accented beat) and a gong stroke every two cymbal patterns, which is equal to every four measures (see figure 3). The most frequent used drum pattern, *prop-kai*, lasts twice as long as the gong stroke, hence a drum pattern on level 3 governs eight measures. The cymbal pattern occurs every measure and every beat in the level 2 and 1, respectively. Therefore, the phrases and structures of level 2 are twice as short as those of level 3, and those of level 1 are twice as short as those of level 2. In other words, the rhythmic section of each metrical level is roughly twice as fast than the previous one, forming a slow to fast progression as a whole.

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64 Another common drum pattern is *song-mai*, which is twice as short as the *prop-kai* pattern. Other lesser familiar drum patterns have the same length as either *prop-kai* or *song-mai* pattern, with exceptions for only a few patterns.

Thao is a type of solo vocal music with instruments. Unlike Western vocal music, however, vocal and instrumental parts in a thao piece always alternate each other. There are usually two to four sections of music in each metrical level, yet the numbers of sections have to be the same in all levels and all first sections of all levels are based on the same melodic material, as well as all second, third, and fourth sections. A vocal thao piece begins with the first section in level 3, sung by a solo singer and accompanied only by drums and cymbals. After the singer finishes the first section, the instrumental ensemble repeats the same passage. When the singer and ensemble complete all sections of level 3, the singer proceeds on to level 2, followed by the ensemble in the same manner. The same procedure applies to level 1. A thao piece sometimes ends with a fast coda without any vocal intervention. Thus, a thao structure often appears as AA BB CC DD, A’A’ B’B’ C’C’ D’D’, A”A” B”B” C”C” D”D”, coda.
Silapabanleng the Son’s *Siang Tian* follows the three rhythmic levels (slow-medium-fast) and the alternation of vocal and instrumental parts of the *thao* structure; there is no vocal section between the fast, ending sections. Although *Siang Tian*’s texture is based on a homophonic foundation, the main theme often appears in unison in the strings with counter-melodies in the winds, or vice versa, reflecting Thai musical taste despite the rare polyphonic stratification. The sparse texture of the instrumentation over the vocal sections also mirrors the sonorities of the Thai original. Although Silapabanleng applied Western harmony and orchestration, Thai performance practices are ubiquitous; for example, overlapping vocal and instrumental sections and doubling note values as a means of variations on the theme in later instrumental sections. Silapabanleng asked the chorus to sing melismatically over meaningless syllables and decorating melodic lines with groups of small note values to imitate *uean*, which is a Thai vocal style, characterized by melismatic and highly ornamented singing without vibrato. Additionally, he used a pair of grace notes to assimilate *sa-bat*, which is a Thai instrumental technique, theoretically distinguished by interpolating a thirty-second note into a sixteenth note melodic pattern in ascending or descending gesture; in practice, however *sa-bat* also appears in different melodic pattern. The *uean* and *sa-bat* have found its place in many later cross-cultural works by Thai composers and has become one of the most significant features of Prangcharoen orchestral compositions.

By the end of 1960s, Western culture was palpable in Thailand through manners, costumes, transportation, educational systems, and entertainment forms, among others; however, these conspicuous cultural changes were still limited largely to Bangkok, the capital city. In music, Western popular and jazz formed a dominant mass musical culture in Thailand while only

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the elite enjoyed the prestige of Western art music. The fusion of Western and Thai music can be categorized into four practices—with the first three straightforward. The first practice is to simply place a Thai lyric on an existing Western melody or a newly composed tune in a Western style. This process was first practiced in religious music from the Ayutthaya period, then found life in music for dramas from the Fourth Reign. This accompanied music soon became so popular that its style was assimilated in Thai film music and the indigenous Thai popular music of the mid-twentieth century.

Western musical exoticism was a model for the second process, which merely adds some obvious Thai music characteristics (especially pentatonicism) into a Western composition. The most common practice is to have Western instruments play a harmonized existing Thai or newly-created pentatonic melody. Prince Paribatra, Peter Feit, and Prasidh Silapabanleng applied this process to their military band arrangements, film music, and drama songs, respectively. Additionally, later Thai popular music also blended the first and second processes when it combined a Thai lyric with a newly composed pentatonic tune to please Thai audience taste.

The third fusion is the “Thai-ized” process, commencing with the replacement of Thai pi-phat instruments with Rama IV’s the military band in playing Thai songs. The process spread out to local brass bands and culminated in Prince Paribatra’s arrangements of Thai music in a Thai style, in which he notated actual Thai music for Western wind instruments.

The fourth, more complicated fusing process started with Silapabanleng’s Siang Tian, which opened another door to a more intimate cross-cultural fusion of Western and Thai music. While the composition is purely Western in sound, Thai musical structures and practices govern almost every musical element besides the instrumentation and harmony. Throughout the final decades of the twentieth century, the first process remained predominantly in religious music.
settings while the other three proliferated in later Thai composers’ works alongside the advent of a new fusion process, which resulted from a massive Western influence never seen before in Thailand.

**Twentieth-century Globalization**

The 1970s was the turning point for Thailand politically, economically, and culturally. As communism proliferated in Asia after World War II, the United States became interested in Thailand as an ally and as a military base during the Cold War to defend against communist forces, particularly those in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The United States stationed its troops on Thai soil after the 1960 civil war in Laos and continued to increase its numbers in Thailand from 1964 to 1968 to nearly 45,000 military personnel.\(^{67}\) Thailand also became an important base for guarding the withdrawal when America began to wind down its operations after its defeat in Vietnam.\(^{68}\) It was not until 1975-1976 that American troops completely left Thailand. In return, Thailand received tremendous American military and economic assistance. This American patronage enabled the erection of new bureaucratic infrastructures to promote “development,” the Thai government’s key concept in ministering economic, administrative, and educational spheres starting in 1959 during the premiership of Sarit Thanarat.

American influence extended beyond military facets and into nearly every aspect of national life. With American economic assistance and the government’s development plans, Thailand drastically changed during the 1970s. Bangkok tripled in its size while other once quiet

\(^{67}\) Wyatt, *Thailand*, 278.

towns such as Phitsanulok, Hat Yai, Khorat, Khon Kaen, and Udonthani urbanized.\textsuperscript{69} Because of an intensive foreign presence in Thailand, full access to Western culture, to Western ideas, values, and fashions was not limited to a small Thai elite as in the past, but was now available to large segments of the population.\textsuperscript{70} The demand for jazz and popular musicians increased along with the extensive growth of the entertainment business through hotels, bars, cinemas, restaurants, and massage parlors, especially in Bangkok, which became the city for the United States military’s R\&R (“Rest and Recreation”) tours. Education opportunities were not confined to the royal family and the elite, but were available to the whole population. While the elite continued their tradition of sending their sons overseas for education, preferably to Europe, increasing numbers of the burgeoning Thai middle class received higher education (thanks to the economic and education development), and a growing number went overseas, especially to the United States, for study.\textsuperscript{71}

With these drastic cultural and educational changes, Western art music was no longer the exclusive province of the Thai elite, but became an enthusiasm of the middle class as well. Although some elites persisted in tradition and engaged in music as leisure, some pursued music seriously. For example, M.L. Puangroi Apaiwong (1914-2000) received piano lessons from several foreign teachers in Thailand at an early age and became the first female Thai popular music composer.\textsuperscript{72} Professor Kamthorn Sanidwongse Na Ayudhya (1924-2000) was the first

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{69} Wyatt, \textit{Thailand}, 282.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 279. The foreign presence in Thailand was not limited to American military personnel, but include a large number of foreigners who worked in several United Nation bodies, international organizations, and American foundations and settled in Bangkok after the city became the headquarters of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954.
\item \textsuperscript{71} Baker and Phongpaichit, \textit{A History of Thailand}, 185.
\item \textsuperscript{72} M.L. stands for \textit{Mom Luang}, which is a title for a great-great-grandchild of a king.
\end{itemize}
King’s Scholarship student to study music. He majored in voice and cello at the Guildhall School of Music in London. Upon his return to Thailand, he established a professional chamber ensemble called the Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra, which subsequently metamorphosed into the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra in 1982 under the Royal Patronage of HRH Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn. He also initiated music appreciation courses in Thai universities and music examinations by the Trinity College of Music, London. Lady Malaiwan Bunyarattavej (b.1932), a student of Peter Feit, received her bachelor’s degree in piano performance from Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and her master’s from the Eastman School of Music. She pioneered choral music in Thailand by both arranging music for chorus, as well as forming and directing choirs.

The middle class subsequently followed suit by pursuing Western art music as a profession. In 1976, Dr. Wipa Khongkhakul (1940-2003) received her Ph.D. in music education from Syracuse University and became the first Thai to obtain a doctorate in the field. Thereafter, she took a position at Srinakharinwirot University in Thailand and, after her retirement from that institution, at Mahidol University. Khongkhakul’s colleague at Srinakharinwirot University, Dr. Panya Roongruang (b.1947) graduated from Kent State University in 1999 with a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology. With the clear growth of music education among the population, from the 1970s onwards, it was not only the Thai elite but also the Thai middle class as well as Americans who have played significant roles in shaping the direction of Western classical music in Thailand. The music composition scene also grew in the same fashion; the elite, the middle class, and Americans have become active in creating new kinds of cross-cultural compositions, which directly and indirectly influenced Prangcharoen’s orchestral works when he started composition study in Thailand at the end of the 1990s.
Among the Thai elite, Rear Admiral M.L. Usni Pramoj (b.1934) is one of the most conspicuous pioneers of Western classical music in Thailand. Although he followed the elite fashion in pursuing law studies in the United Kingdom and serving as privy councilor and manager of His Majesty’s Private Property Office, as well as taking a post of director on the board of many business concerns, he has been greatly active in music and has contributed tremendously to the classical music scene in Thailand. In 1958, upon his return to the country, Admiral Pramoj, together with Professor Sanidwongse, became a co-founder of the Pro Musica Orchestra, of which he was a violist and guest conductor. In recognition of his accomplishments, he was named a Thai National Artist in 1994.

As an active orchestral and chamber music player, Admiral Pramoj has written primarily for orchestra, chamber orchestra, and string quartet. He is also well known for his orchestrations of Thai music and the present King’s compositions, most of which are in a jazz style. The Western exotic technique of harmonizing a pentatonic melody lays the foundation of Admiral Pramoj’s arrangements of Thai music as heard in his renditions of Lao Duang Duan, Khamen Sai Yoke, and Lao Charoen Sri. His compositions, in contrast, provide a new path of cross-cultural processes by fusing Thai extra-musical elements, derived from Buddhism, Thai literature, and Thai history, with a Western-dominated compositional style; they do not necessarily sound “Thai,” as they are predominantly in the style of nineteenth-century Romanticism.

Admiral Pramoj reflects Thainess through Buddhism, a major religion of Thailand, in Buddhist Lay Chants: In Praise of the Triple Gem (1979) and Mahajanaka (1999), which intertwine newly composed music with existing Buddhist lay chants and a Jataka tale, respectively. The later also displays the influence of Thai literature as Mahajanaka is a literary work, adapted and translated from the Sanskrit original by Thailand’s present King. The music of
both works mainly serves the dramatic purpose of the texts. Although spoken, the texts are in a Thai language, which consists of five different pitches in itself, hence the naturally intoned recitation.

Besides Buddhism and Thai literature, Admiral Pramoj’s music also expresses both ancient and current Thai. His compositions include Sri Praj (1992), a three-act ballet, which tells the life of Sri Praj, a seventeenth-century Thai poet, in the style of Tchaikovsky’s ballet music; Golden Jubilee (1996), which is an Elgarian piece to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of His Majesty’s ascension to the throne; Threnody (2009), a tribute to the memory of HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana, the King’s sister, who passed away a year earlier and is in the style of Classical film music; and String Quartet No. 1 (2010), which offers a response to the 2010 turmoil in Bangkok. All these programmatic compositions, though based on Thai narratives, do not feature any Thai sonority except for intermittent pentatonism, which relatively refers to Thainess sonically.

A radical change in the course of Western classical music in Thailand took place in the mid-1970s when three composers, Somtow Sucharitkul (b.1952), Dnu Huntrakul (b.1950), and American Bruce Gaston (b.1947) founded the Thai Composers Association in 1975 under the patronage of HRH Princess Chumbhot of Nagor Svarga.73 They were also active in an avant-garde and experimental music ensemble called The Temple of Dawn Consort, formed in 1976. The three composers, together with other Thai musicians whose backgrounds covered Thai, to Western, and rock to jazz musics, presented a new fusion by integrating Thai music with avant-

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The Temple of Dawn Consort performed extensively in Bangkok and offered various kinds of musical activities like house concerts, orchestral concerts, multi-media events, multi-stage music fairs, free improvisations, workshops, experimentations, as well as concert tours and workshops in Taipei, Manila, Seoul, and Calcutta. Unfortunately, its performances and works no longer appear in any form, including recordings or music scores. The musicians’ memories alone preserve the musical experiments described in Huntrakul’s reminiscences:

New compositions that flowed from our pens bursted forth with brave new ideas and almost competed to show off the weirdest concept of sound that we could create from instruments of various types and traits, musical and non-musical alike. Western and Thai instruments were often coupled; electronic devices and sounds were almost always present; percussionwares spectacularly showcased unexpected household items. . . . We continuously experimented with new ideas, new concepts of music expression, new directions, new horizons.75

The Thai Composers Association reached its zenith hosting the Fifth Asian Composers League Conference (EXPO ’78) in 1978. Founded in 1973, the Asian Composers League expressed as its object “to create, promote, preserve, and develop the music cultures of Asia, and to advance the present and future welfare of Asian composers.”76 The League began with four nations at its first conference in Hong Kong and expanded to include fourteen nations and almost 200 musicians by the EXPO ’78. Attandees included not only classical composers but also ethnomusicologists, broadcasters, music teachers, music administrators, amateurs, traditional and


75 Ibid.

contemporary music performers, orchestral musicians, and film and popular music composers. In his report to the Composers Association of New Zealand newsletter, Jack Body, a New Zealand composer and ethnomusicologist, described the conference as a “showcase for Asian music, both ancient and modern,” and the organization as an “East-Asian-Non-Communist-Western-Oriented-Composers’ League.” The report testifies that musical fusion—the musical meeting of East and West—was the main reference in both performances and lectures. However, the solution for a satisfactory fusion process seemed in stasis because most composers and musicians were Western trained and had limited background in traditional musics while the traditional music composers/performers were hardly familiar with Western music. Since there was no consensus on the perfect cross-cultural path, all that was left at the conference were prolonged discussions and various musical experiments. Included in the program of conference’s concert series was an experimental, fusion work by, in Body’s word, “an accomplished young Thai composer,” Somtow Sucharitkul.

Born in Thailand, Somtow Sucharitkul followed the elite mainstream by obtaining his education from Eton College and St. Catherine’s College of Cambridge University where he received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in English literature and took composition lessons with Patrick Gowers. His brief stay in Thailand in the second half of the 1970s allowed him to

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78 Ibid., 9-10. The majority of musicians came from Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Japan, and Korea with one composer each from India, Sri Lanka, and Turkey. Australia and New Zealand had recently joined the League. The United States also sent representatives to the conference. Although irrelevant geographically, their presence should not be a surprise since America had been a “model for most non-communist Asia” for over two decades and was (and still is) a place where most Asian musicians had their training.

79 Ibid., 11.

discover his Thai roots and revolutionize its musical art, which resulted first in *Views from the Golden Mountain* (1975), the work the composer claimed was “the first to combine Thai and Western instruments into new sonorities.”  

As seen through the chronology presented in this chapter, this claim is clearly misleading since the instruments of the two continents appeared together as early as the Ayutthaya period; however, Sucharitkul’s assertion may be legitimate if the framework of serious Western music composition is included in the consideration.

Sucharitkul describes *Views from the Golden Mountain* as “quasi-Bartokian (or perhaps George-Crumbian) night-music” that combines an existing Thai melody “played on a khong-wong like a half-remembered dream.” He continues that this composition is “an attempt at synthesis in which each element [of post-serial and Thai music] completely preserved its own identity and aesthetic.”

The synthesis of post-serial and Thai music is apparent in his subsequent composition *Gongula* (1976), which appeared at EXPO ’78. Similar to *Views from the Golden Mountain*, *Gongula* included Thai khong-wong-yai, which appears alongside a Western ensemble of piano, flute, violin, harp, and percussion. The composer preserves khong-wong-yai’s identity by keeping its authentic tuning. With this practice of blending the original tuning systems of the two cultures, Sucharitkul constructed a new cross-cultural process made possible by the basic conception of the avant-garde instead of the formal classical norm. The combination of khong-wong-yai’s original tuning and Western equal temperament in *Gongula* sounds concordant because Sucharitkul was not concerned with natural consonance, but instead with chromaticism.

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and high speed, which he placed in the foreground on percussion instruments such as glockenspiel, vibraphone, and wind chimes whose timbre is similar to Thai gongs.

Although Sucharitkul rapidly established himself as a prominent Southeast Asian avant-garde composer, the hostile reception and controversy over the avant-garde style and his improper use of ancient Thai music caused so much anguish that he relocated to the United States and turned to writing. He produced over forty books of science fiction and gothic literature under the pen name S.P. Somtow and dabbled in filmmaking, directing a couple of low-budget films during his years in Los Angeles. 83

Sucharitkul did not return to Thailand or music until almost the new millennium, when he reappeared as a composer. He no longer pursued the modernist path but converted himself into a neo-Classic and neo-Romantic devotee. He has written five operas and some orchestral works in the years since adopting this style. The operas’ libretti are in English, yet, like many of Admiral Pramoj’s works, their plots are based on Thai stories: Madana (2001) and Ayodhya (2006) on Thai literature, Mae Naak (2003) on Thai myth, The Silent Prince (2010) on a Buddhist Jataka tale, and Suriyothai (a ballet-opera, 2012) on Thai history. The Thai extra-musical elements also appear in the operas’ scenes, costumes, and the synthesis of Thai dancing in the ballet. The operas is basically in late nineteenth-century Romantic style with some hints of mid-century Broadway harmonies. In other words, Sucharitkul’s cross-cultural process of this period reverted back to the practice of exotic European Romantic opera by using traditional instruments—or imitating their sonorities and characteristics—and pentatonic tunes to depict Thainess. For

83 “Somtow Sucharitkul: Artistic Director,” Bangkok Opera, http://www.bangkokopera.org/Site/Somtow.html (accessed July 31, 2013). This venture brought Sucharitkul various prestigious literary honors, including the Hugo Award, the World Fantasy Award, the John Campbell Award, and the Bram Stoker Award. Sucharitkul served as president of the Horror Writers’ Association from 1998-2000 and his novels have been translated into about a dozen languages. Robert Chase, Memento Mori: A Guide to Contemporary Memorial Music, 252.
example, in *Suriyothai*, a ballet-opera on a chapter of Ayutthaya history, harmonized pentatonic melodies are prevalent in the orchestral part and in the chorus, which sings many Buddhist lay chant-like tunes, and in the Thai instrumental ornamentations, such as the non-stop sixteenth note passages of *ranat-ek* on a xylophone. The composer also includes Thai gongs, *ching*, and *pi* (a quadruple reed instrument) in the orchestra for an exotic coloration. The exoticism goes beyond depicting only the Thai people to portraying the Chinese and Japanese who lived in the ancient city by emulating their distinctive musical sonorities through specific modes and instrumentations. The appearance of the European ambassadors is even accompanied by French suite dances: chaconne, sarabande, pavane, and galliard.

Sucharitkul’s orchestral works from 2000 continue to have a Thai extra-musical association in their programs. The strictly programmatic works feature a neo-Romantic style with some brushes of pentatonicism, while most of his symphonies feature neo-Classical flavor. This alienation with modern music did not happen only to Sucharitkul, but also to his colleague, Dnu Huntrakul, who resorted to the ventures of music business and Thai popular music as early as the 1980s and never again put his feet into the classical music sphere, let alone the avant-garde realm.

The founder of the The Temple of Dawn Consort, Dnu Huntrakul no longer cultivates an avant-garde image; instead he is now known for Thai easy-listening music with his ensemble, *Mai Thai*. With the 1970s rise of the Thai middle class, Huntrakul was among one of the first representatives of that economic stratum to practice Western classical music professionally. In 1974, he received a bachelor’s degree in composition from the University of Oregon and two years later his earned his master’s degree from the Royal Conservatory in Hague, the Netherlands where he studied with the country’s leading composers, Peter Schat (1935-2003)
and Louis Andriessen (b.1939). Upon his return to Thailand, he was active as a Thai modernist composer but gradually faded away from the circle when Sucharitkul left for the United States. Huntrakul soon ventured into various kinds of music businesses by establishing the Butterfly Music Company, which produced music mainly for film, theatre, and TV commercials; the Butterfly Music Band, whose music fell into a pop-rock category; a private music school called St. Cecilia Academy of Music; and the Mai Thai Orchestra, whose treatment of cross-cultural process turns back to Western exoticism by assigning Western chamber ensembles, mostly violin and piano duos, to play a harmonized version of simple Thai tunes or newly written works in the same style. After this move, Huntrakul never returned to the Western art music besides some easy or popular classical tunes using Western instrumentation that are the underlying materials for his Mai Thai orchestra music.

Unlike Sucharitkul and Huntrakul, Bruce Gaston, the other spearhead of the Thai modernists and a Los Angeles native who has lived in Thailand for over forty years, has continued his musical interest in experimenting with cross-cultural paths. Since he is the only figure from the 1970s who continued in the avant-garde, he has become a model for the “new school” East-Meets-West music fusion, especially in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Gaston first came to Thailand in 1969 after receiving his degrees in philosophy and music composition from the University of Southern California. Unlike most of the Americans who entered Thailand as part of the American military to battle with Communism in Southeast Asia, Gaston’s entry resulted from his personal anti-war position; he was sent to Thailand by the United States government to serve as a music teacher in a small Christian school in the quiet

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84 The “old school” is the combination of Thai and traditional classical music while the “new school” implies that of Thai and avant-garde music
province of Phitsanulok. His modest surroundings sparked his imagination and soon became a substantial musical influence when he encountered Thai music and Buddhism.

Gaston’s interest in Thai music grew so intense that he started taking private lessons with traditional Thai musicians. In 1976, after a brief return to California, Gaston expanded his obsession with Thai music to the northern Thai folk when he became a professor at the Music Department, Faculty of Humanities of Payap University in Chiang Mai, the largest and most cultural significantly province in northern Thailand. Three years later, he moved to Bangkok to become a professor at the Dramatic Arts department, Faculty of Arts, and an adjunct professor at Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts at Chulalongkorn University, the top university in Thailand. Gaston continued his intensive study of Thai music by receiving training and education from the finest Thai musicians at that time. He took ranat-ek lessons with Boonyong Katekong, a Thai music master who was a student of the great Sorn Silapabandleng (Luang Pradit Phairoh), and learned Thai music theory and history from Montri Tramoj, a resident composer and senior teacher of the Fine Arts Department.

In 1979, the same year he moved permanently to Bangkok, Gaston—together with Katekong and Jirapan Ansvananda, a rock and jazz guitarist and producer—founded a so-called fusion Thai music ensemble named Fong Naam with the purpose to “maintain the highest standard of performance of ancient Thai music” as well as to “broaden the appeal of Thai music through modern instruments and techniques.” The ensemble consists of standard Western

85 Bruce Gaston’s other teachers include Sirichaicharn Phuk-chamroon for ranat-ek and Sopon Suetoechart for other pi-phet instruments.

86 “ร่วมสมัย ฟองน้ํา คอนเสิร์ต” [Fong Naam’s Contemporary Concert] (program notes presented at the Fong Naam’s 33rd anniversary celebration concert, The National Theatre, Bangkok, Thailand, September 17, 2013), 19. The Thai word Fong Naam literally means “bubbles.” The name actually comes from a song title, which is a part of a ceremonial suite called Pleng Ching-Pra-Chan. Bruce Gaston explains the underlying meaning of the ensemble’s name in the liner note of Siam Classic Music Volume 1: “Fong Naam…is a unique insight of Thai Buddhist culture
instruments, primarily piano and occasionally violin, oboe, guitar, and drums; ethnic Thai instruments, mainly those from the pi-phat ensemble; and electronic instruments. In contrast to the momentary existence of the Thai Composers Association and The Temple of Dawn, Fong Naam was active up to 2010, producing recordings and film music with the Nimbus and Marco Polo labels among others, and performing throughout the North American, European, and Asian continents, especially during the 1980s and 1990s.87

Fong Naam presents both traditional and contemporary Thai music, striving for originality by reviving historical ensembles and arrangements of ancient Thai music. Their efforts resulted in a series of recordings, collectively titled “Siamese Classical Music,” released by Marco Polo during 1990-1992. However, it is their cross-cultural contemporary Thai music that has brought distinction to the group and to Gaston as its leader. With their fusion repertoire, Fong Naam became the first, and perhaps only, fusion Thai ensemble to systematically combine both instruments and practices of Western and Thai music, carefully integrating the duality and not merely adding Thai or Western instruments and practices as a sort of exotic coloration.

Gaston’s, or Fong Naam’s, cross-cultural works are clearly a representation of Thai music, but they are also governed by a basic Western conception of a neatly constructed, tightly rehearsed, and fast-moving production.88 The works mark a new fusion process by remaining

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87 The most prominent appearances of Fong Naam are at the 1987 concert series Music of the Royal Courts in London, the 1991 Aldeburgh Festival in Suffolk, U.K., and the 1995 Prom 19—Music from the Far East at the Royal Albert Hall. In addition, Fong Naam performed regularly at Tawandang German Brewery in Bangkok. The ensemble had their 33rd anniversary celebration concert in September 2013.

faithful to the compositional process, structure, texture, and performance practices of Thai music while adding Western concepts of chromaticism, harmony, and development (not in terms of structure, but by creating a sense of climax by building up tension through chromaticism and/or dynamics). This cross-cultural process might be comparable to that of Prasidh Silapabanleng in his *Siang Tian*, which is roughly based on Thai music’s structure and performance practices. However, Gaston pushes the process even further as he relentlessly adopts the minute details of Thai musical structure, not only the large-scale form, but a phrase structure governed by the rhythmic framework. His concern with Thai performance practices adheres beyond Thai ornamentation to Thai instruments’ handiwork, a unique characteristic of each Thai instrument’s practice, which consists of melodic figures appropriate to the given instruments between the pillar-tones that lie at the main pulses of the original melody.\(^8^9\) The “new school” of cross-cultural music also emerged from Gaston’s fusion of these structural elements of Thai music with avant-garde music notions and techniques as seen in his two major works *Fong Naam* (1981) and *Chao Praya Concerto* (1982, revised 1986 and 1993, revised for chamber ensemble in 1996).\(^9^0\)

In order to comprehend fully Gaston’s fusion method in the two works, it is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of Thai musical structure. Thai music consists of three metrical levels—levels 1, 2, and 3—each defined by the specific rhythmic patterns of cymbals, gong, and

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\(^9^0\) *Fong Naam* was released with the group’s first album “Fong Naam 1” in 1982. It is based on a pre-existing melody from several songs of a ceremonial suite called *Phleng-ching-phra-chan-phen*. *Chao Praya Concerto* is commissioned by the Bangkok Bank for the Bicentennial of Bangkok. The original idea is to have five orchestras with the main orchestra representing the *Chao Praya* River, which is the principle river of Thailand, while the other four orchestras represent the river’s headwaters: the Ping, Wang, Yom and Nan rivers. The work is a mixture of pre-existing and newly composed melodies; the former includes *Phleng-rua-ching*, *Mu-long*, *Pu-lom*, and *Then-loi-that* as well as some northern Thai folk melodies.
drum (see figure 3). These distinctive rhythmic patterns subsequently provide a hierarchical pitch structure on which traditional Thai musicians base their compositional process and polyphonic stratification. The notes that fall on the end of each cymbal pattern are called luk-tok (pillar-tones), with those luk-tok that fall on the end of the drum patterns defining the end of each phrase. Between each pillar-tone, every player is free to play anything within the instrument’s thang (handiwork or performance practice). For example, the ranat-ek handiwork would often be in sixteenth notes. However, all instrumental parts have to meet on the pillar-tones, whether in octaves or unisons. They can occasionally miss some pillar-tones on cymbal strokes but they never miss the pillar-tones on the end of the drum patterns.\footnote{See Jiradej Setabundhu, “Aspects of Thai Music and Compositional Techniques in Selected Works of Jiradej Setabundhu” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2001), 7-15 for explanations and examples of the Thai metrical levels, pillar-tones, and compositional process.}

In Gaston’s Fong Naam and Chao Praya Concerto, the Thai compositional process and polyphonic stratification lay the foundation of the works, as well as the thao structure of slow-medium-fast. As to the Western process, Gaston fuses twelve-note chromaticism into the Thai handiwork. Instead of directly applying the traditional handiwork with limited rhythmic and melodic patterns and Thai pentatonic modes, Gaston keeps the main pillar-tones and some melodic fragmentation, but alternates an existing handiwork or creates a new one by utilizing all twelve chromatic notes. For example, in Fong Naam the vibraphone part is an extended version of ranat-ek’s thang; the piano sometimes plays a newly created handiwork, melodic fragment, or counter-melody; and the guitar freely improvises on a pre-existing melody. Applying the tradition of Thai polyphonic stratification but without the limitation of the handiwork concept, each instrument has the freedom to play almost anything under only one condition—they have to meet on each pillar-note. With that one condition and the fact that the harmonic element is alien
to Thai music, the musicians pay almost all attention to the horizontal line; hence, chromaticism is prevalent. This chromatic handiwork also applies to the creation and performance of *Chao Praya Concerto*.

Besides chromaticism, Gaston adds a Western harmonic dimension to his Thai music-based compositions. Although this process may sound similar to Western musical exoticism in harmonizing a Thai pentatonic tune, Gaston’s process is substantially different. He does not directly apply a Thai tune but instead bases his melodic line on a mere Thai pillar-tone skeleton. Moreover, he does not add functional Western harmony to the line, but constructs non-functional harmony through intermittent supplementary chords and counter-melodies—the latter leaning more toward a Thai stratified polyphonic rather than a homophonic texture as seen in the earlier harmonized Thai tunes.\(^{92}\) In *Fong Naam*, harmony derives mostly from the piano’s counter-melody and sporadic chords. The slow beginning section is chiefly based on white key modal harmonies, similar to that of French Impressionism. However, it lacks either a strong tonal progression or an evident tonal center. *Chao Praya Concerto* also has an ambiguous tonal center, but its tonal ambiguity actually results from the mixture of an altered pentatonic scale, bi-tonality, and constant chromatic shifts that appear throughout the work. The added harmonic element is not only Westernized in itself, but also adds another important Western musical concept—climactic development.

As Western harmony removes the pieces from Thai practices, so does the concept of development. In Thai music, even when the tempo is getting faster and faster in the *thao* structure, the music remains static and lacks any sense of tension and resolution, a musical function needed in building up a climax. With the added harmony, Gaston intensifies his music

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\(^{92}\) Bruce Gaston, interview by author, Bangkok, Thailand, January 13, 2014.
through increased chromaticism both linearly and harmonically, yet non-functionally. The most obvious example occurs in *Chao Praya Concerto* when the Western instruments (piano, harp, violin, and flute) gradually increase chromaticism vertically and horizontally and reach the peak at the piano cadenza; the *ranat-ek*, however, remains static with its sixteenth note pattern on a pentatonic scale. Unlike Western music, this climatic development does not articulate the piece’s structure as Gaston bases the concept of Thai drum patterns—which governs the structure of all phrases, sections, and the whole composition. Still, he does not directly quote those patterns, but instead keeps only the main pulses and the patterns’ length for each metrical level.

When he began composing, Gaston’s cross-cultural process was the most complicated and the most seamless integrated fusion of Western and Thai music. He bases his core compositional elements on Thai music, whether its compositional process, structure, texture, and performance practices, and synchronizes Western chromaticism, harmony, and climatic development into the Thai foundation. Only composers who are competent in both kinds of music can achieve this level of fusion.

**Thai Contemporary Composers**

The decades following the advent of 1970s globalization witnessed the growing number of Thai middle class students studying Western art music as more music departments emerged in Thai universities. Among the population were Gaston’s students at Chulalongkorn University where he taught acting and counterpoint at the dramatic arts and music departments, respectively. Many of Gaston’s students have become musicians and music teachers with a handful pursuing their teacher’s path of composition. Among the most important are Kaiwan

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93 In 1970, Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University established Thailand’s first music program for higher education in its Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences with an emphasis on music education.
Kulavadhanothai (b.1967), Boonrut Sirirattanapan (b.1972), and Jiradej Setabundhu (b.1967). The first two produced some cross-cultural compositions but their focus remained more in media music, choral music, music for drama, and musicals rather than the mainstream Western music. On the other hand, Setabundhu developed the cross-cultural process to its most abstract conceptualization and transported it into the electronic music sound world.

Jiradej Setabundhu studied counterpoint with Bruce Gaston when he was a guitar performance major at the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts at Chulalongkorn University. Setabundhu not only absorbed counterpoint techniques from Gaston, but Gaston also exposed him to new music by playing musical works by European modernists such as Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951), Béla Bartók (1881-1945), and Edgard Varèse (1883-1965). Setabundhu also obtained Thai music training when Gaston invited him to join his Fong Naam ensemble. Surprisingly, Gaston never gave formal composition lessons to any students but simply offered them comments and suggestions, which Setabundhu also received prior to pursuing his master’s degree at the University of Southern California (USC).

Most Thai composition students turn to their Thai heritage for its distinctive musical elements when studying abroad, perhaps in a quest for their own compositional identity. Setabundhu was no exception as he fused superficial Thai music elements such as color and texture into his compositions during his time at USC. It was not until his doctoral study at Northwestern University that his cross-cultural processes crept into the conceptual level, seizing the most essential elements of Thai music and integrating into his compositional process. The procedure crystallized into a new approach of cross-cultural composition which is neither restricted to the Thai musical sound nor directly drawn from its elements.

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Setabundhu’s early musical works derive from Thai compositional processes, textures, and sonorities by simulating the variation concept of thao structure, the three metrical levels, instrumental practices, and the tuning system of Thai music. While the fusion process of thao structure, metrical levels, and instrumental practices are similar to Gaston’s practice, the assimilating process of the Thai tuning system was novel, focusing on the unstable tone and the seven-tone equal temperament of Thai music. Setabandhu achieved the unstable tone by assigning three to four Western instruments to play close pitches simultaneously to imitate the pi, whose tone often includes distorted sounds, while also applying polytonality to twist the diatonic scale’s stability. He accomplished seven-tone equal temperament by replacing quarter tones for a lowered major third, sixth, and seventh and raised perfect fourth. With the replica of Thai music’s compositional process, texture, and sonority, Setabundhu’s music from this period possesses the sound of Thai music to some extent. Beginning with Eine schöne Zeit war es (2000), Setabundhu was no longer concerned with the Thai sound but delved into what he thought was the most essential element of Thai music, upon which the whole Thai composition is built.

For Setabundhu, the hierarchical pitch structure and centonization are the essence of Thai music. The hierarchical pitch structure derives from the distinctive rhythmic patterns of cymbals, gong, and drum. Centonization is a technique of creating a new composition basing on pre-existing elements. In Thai music, pre-composed melodic fragments called luk-khong are the foundation of a new work; a composer chooses the fragments and arranges them in a specific

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95 See Setabundhu’s analyses of his own compositions in his Ph.D. dissertation, “Aspects of Thai Music.”

order for a new melody.\textsuperscript{97} Setabundhu’s initial idea was to find a system that was comparable to these Thai hierarchical and centonization structures. After experimenting with some newly-created, artificial systems, he turned to language since he believed that a language’s structure has long been tested and refined and already contains in itself a hierarchy of word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph—the characteristics similar to those of Thai music.

In \textit{Eine schöne Zeit war es}, Setabundhu began his compositional process with a paragraph from the English version of Wassily Kandinsky’s 1936 letter to Schoenberg. To invent his own \textit{luk-khorn} for the centonization, he specified duration and pitch for each letter in the alphabet, making a group of musical notes derived from each word comparable to a single \textit{luk-khorn}.\textsuperscript{98} For the hierarchical structure, the first attack of the beginning of each word is equal to the damped cymbal stroke, represented by a high C, D, or F on an accented beat; the beginning of a subsentence or phrase is equal to the gong stroke, characterized by the same high note and a higher F#, B, or B♭ (or a bass F for a more important phrase); and the beginning of each sentence is equal to the drum pattern, marked by a low B and a high D or F. Therefore, the piece has its foundation laid upon the camouflaged centonization and hierarchical pitch structure of Thai music, which appears in the form of an English language system, yet its music materials are Western and its sonority is completely foreign to Thai music.

After his first experiment with this language-based system, Setabundhu continued to explore this conceptual fusion by translating other language elements such as parts of the speech (such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives) into different musical parameters such as dynamics and timbre. In \textit{At Dusk} (2002), Setabundhu went a step further by expanding the process of a


\textsuperscript{98} See Chapter 3 of Setabundhu’s dissertation for the complete analysis of \textit{Eine schöne Zeit war es}. 99
language-based system to a Yamaha synthesizer’s synthesis diagram—whose sound operating system has a hierarchical structure similar to that of the English language and Thai music—and translated a passage of J.G. Ballard’s surreal story of the same name to an electronic musical code based on the hierarchical system of the synthesizer, English language, and Thai music.\footnote{Jiradej Setabundhu, “At Dusk,” Jiradej Setabundhu, http://www.art-prinda.com/atdusk.htm (accessed November 19, 2013) and Jiradej Setabundhu, interview by author, Nakornprathom, Thailand, July 11, 2013.}

Setabundhu is probably the only Thai composer who practices this conceptual level of cross-cultural processes, which no longer emulates Thai sonorities, textures, or performance practices, but molds its own compositional process and structure from the hierarchical structure and centonization—the absolute cores of Thai music.

Along with the first generation of Gaston’s students emerged another group of composers who first learned music composition by self-study before going abroad to pursue composition degrees. These composers came back to Thailand around the 1990s to serve as professors in universities, including Surat Kemaleelakul (b.1961), a graduate from Roosevelt University, Chicago who is teaching at Mahidol University; Dr. Chaipruck Mekara (b.1971), the dean of the College of Music, Payap University in Chiang Mai, is a 2003 graduate from Northwestern University; and Dr. Weeracha t Premananda (b.1955), a professor at Chulalongkorn University who graduated from the University of Oakland before receiving a Fulbright scholarship to do post-doctorate work at Columbia University under Chou Wen-chung. These composers have become more active in the academic domain rather than in composition. Nevertheless, Dr. Narongrit Dhamabutra (b.1962), a colleague of Premananda and Prangcharoen’s first composition teacher, also took the same compositional training path, but he is exempted from the group because he is still involved in composition along with his academic career.
Narongrit Dhamabutr began his self-study from the age of thirteen before obtaining his master’s and doctoral degrees in music composition from Michigan State University. In 1991, a year after his graduation, he took a position at the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chulalongkorn University to teach composition, harmony, and counterpoint. There, he became acquainted with a ranat-ek musician Thaworn Sriphong, who drew Dhamabutra’s interest to the sonority of Thai music, which soon appeared in his composition.

Unlike Gaston or Setabundhu, Dhamabutra does not delve into Thai musical structure but examines its sonority through Western instruments. In evoking the Thai sound, Dhamabutra imitates the sound of Thai instruments in, weaves pentatonic tunes into, quotes Thai music within, and layers stratified polyphony on the homophonic texture of his neo-Romantic compositions. This fusion process and style is largely similar to that of Admiral Pramoj and later-phase Sucharitkul; however, Dhamabutra’s musical language contrasts with those composers’ for its addition of twentieth-century colors created by modal mixture, polytonality, extended chords, octatonic scale, and chance music (box, time, and enlarged beam notations). Still, tonal centers remain strong in Dhamabutra’s music.

Also related to Admiral Pramoj’s and Sucharitkul’s cross-cultural process, Dhamabutra’s programmatic music features Thai extra-musical elements and their titles often appear in Thai, Pali, or Sanskrit languages. Buddhism is his first and foremost inspiration, beginning with his early works *Night and Morning in the Spheres* (1987), a symphonic poem derived from the Buddhist writing *Der Pilger Kamanita* by Karl Adolph Gjellerup, and *Dhammachakra* (The Wheel of the Law, 1989), whose four central tones’ distance is intervally equal, symbolizing
the roundness of the wheel.\textsuperscript{100} Dhammachakra also consists of, in the composer’s own term, “the temple sound” created by glockenspiel, vibraphone, and chimes alternately playing soft, floating motives to evoke random sounds of various sizes of bells hung in a Thai temple.\textsuperscript{101} This temple sound has become Dhamabutra’s signature, appearing in many of his more recent compositions.

Besides Buddhism, Dhamabutra also turns to Thai history and Thai customs in his music. Thai history appears in the title of Sinfonia Ayutthaya (1995) and also its sonority, which evokes the different sounds of four Thai ensembles from the Ayutthaya period.\textsuperscript{102} Thai customs are mostly centered on the King, with Sinfonia Chakri (1996) composed to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the King’s ascension to the throne, Concerto Maharaja for ranat-ek and orchestra (1999) for the celebrations of the King’s seventh cycle birthday anniversary, and Violin Concerto Sankitamankala (2006) for the King’s eightieth birthday anniversary.\textsuperscript{103} Sinfonia Suvarnabhumi (2005), on the other hand, was inspired by both royal and local customs. Dhammabutra evokes the atmosphere of the royal barge procession in the sixth movement through newly composed melodies that gradually transform into Kap He Ruea (Thai water music used in a royal barge procession). The fourth movement depicts the Chiang Mai’s city pillar worship ceremony by quoting a Thai northern folk song Sao Mai (filature). And the second movement depicts Phanom Rung pagoda, which locates the work in northeastern Thailand (Isan) through the sound of Pong-lang, a log xylophone from the Isan region and the ostinato rhythm of Isan folk music. This Isan sound was so influential to Prangcharoen that it has become one of his sound signatures.

\textsuperscript{100} Narongrit Dhamabutra, อรรถาธิบายและบทวิเคราะห์บทเพลงที่ประพันธ์โดย Narongrit Dhamabutra [Explanation and analyses of music compositions by Narongrit Dhamabutra] (Bangkok, Thailand: Thana Press, 2010), 1-2.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 2.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 4.

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 5-7.
It was not only the *Isan* sound that Prangcharoen inherited from his teacher, but every element, both musical and extra-musical, that Dhammabutra fuses in his compositions. As Thai music sonorities—derived from Thai musical instruments’ sound, pentatonic melodies, Thai music quotation, and polyphonic stratification—are the core of Dhammabutra’s cross-cultural process, so they are with Prangcharoen. The programmatic aspect based on Buddhism, Thai history, and Thai customs is evident in both composers’ works. Moreover, their Thai, Pali, or Sanskrit titles also add another dimension to the extra-musical cross-cultural process.

**Cross-cultural Compositions in the Twenty-first Century**

The musical works of Prangcharoen’s contemporaries mark five-centuries of the history of cross-cultural composition in Thailand that fused elements of Western and Thai music. Throughout the five hundred years, Western conceptions of Thai music have remained largely the same since the elements that are identified as being “Thai” are similar. On the other hand, the forms and styles of Western music that have been adopted by Thai composers have shifted radically. Hence, the fusion process of these two types of music has similarly altered through the years, although the process was barely noticeable prior to nineteenth-century colonization and proceeded slowly before Westernization in the twentieth-century. With the advancement of transportation and communication of late twentieth- and twenty-first century globalization, cross-cultural fusion has exploded. Thai composers are unfettered in using any elements—Thai or Western or others—in their compositions and not restricted to any pre-existing methods. The traces of the fusion processes created and developed by preceding Thai composers, especially those of his first teacher, have found their place in numerous moments of Prangcharoen’s works. Like *The King and I*, Prangcharoen’s cross-cultural compositions have successfully brought
Thailand to Western musical scenes, but unlike the Orientalist Broadway show, Prangcharoen’s fusion carries unprecedented sonorities and programs derived from distinctive combinations of discrete Thai and Western musical and extra-musical elements, which weave their ways into his individual compositional processes.
CHAPTER 3

NARONG PRANGCHAROEN AND CROSS-CULTURAL PROCESSES IN HIS ORCHESTRAL COMPOSITIONS

Narong Prangcharoen is one of the most prominent Thai composers today and takes his place beside other remarkable Asian composers of his generation. Although he was not involved in the professional compositional realm until he reached his thirties, international recognition of his musical works exploded after he received the second prize from the 2004 Toru Takemitsu Composition Award with Phenomenon..............The Mysterious and Unexplained (2004), his first orchestral work to synthesize Thai influences and Western musical elements. His reputation rapidly grew again when the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation awarded him a fellowship in 2013. Among the three compositions Prangcharoen submitted to the committee to win the Fellowship were two orchestral works, The Dawn of Darkness (2012) and Illuminations (2012), both of which display his approach to blending Western and Eastern musical elements. It is this cross-cultural interplay between Thai and Western influences, whether musical or extra-musical components, that has shaped Prangcharoen’s distinctive musical language and distinguished his compositions from those of his contemporaries.

This chapter presents Prangcharoen’s musical background from his childhood in Thailand to his student life in the United States and his professional career as a composer active in both the North American and Asian continents. Following the biographical section is a discussion on Prangcharoen’s creative process, which explains the composer’s writing scheme for his musical
works from their first conception to the complete output. This broad presentation of
Prangcharoen’s compositional method is succeeded by a description of his orchestral works,
whose individual specific narratives require a background introduction. The chapter concludes
with analyses of Prangcharoen’s cross-cultural synthesis, examining his fusion with Thai and
other Southeast Asian musical elements, as well as Thai extra-musical influences.

**Biography**

Born in 1973, Narong Prangcharoen is originally from the Uttaradit province in northern
Thailand. None of his family members were musicians, although his father, who emigrated from
China with his family, played contemporary Thai and Chinese popular songs on an electric
keyboard in his leisure time. However, Prangcharoen spent most of his childhood with his
paternal grandparents and grew up listening to contemporary Chinese popular songs. Besides
those few musical experiences, he did not have any music lessons or activities until he moved to
live with his relatives in Bangkok after finishing elementary education at Anuban Uttaradit
School in 1985.

Prangcharoen’s first experience with classical music took place during his secondary
education at Horwang School in Bangkok. He became a member of the school’s wind ensemble,
which performed standard concert band repertoire alongside arrangements of Thai and Western
popular music. He first took trumpet as a primary instrument during junior high school and
afterward broadened his musical abilities by occasionally seizing a conducting position as well as
arranging popular music for the ensemble. Although the wind ensemble provided Prangcharoen
with practical musical skills, he did not receive any systematic education in music history and

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1 Prangcharoen’s biographical information is mostly taken from Narong Prangcharoen, interview by author,
theory until he taught himself those subjects during his senior year by studying the few Thai textbooks available in order to prepare for university entrance examinations.

Prangcharoen’s first systematic musical training began when he became a music education major at Srinakharinwirot University in 1991. His primary instrument remained trumpet, yet instrumental skills were not an emphasis in his major. He took some music theory classes with Kit Young, an American composer and pianist who exposed Prangcharoen for the first time to twentieth-century music such as that of Béla Bartók (1881-1945) and Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), whose recordings and scores were almost impossible to find in Thailand at that time.2 Besides trumpet lessons and music courses, Prangcharoen was also responsible for conducting and arranging music for various ensembles since there were not enough professors to supervise.3 During his college years, he took private conducting lessons with Vanich Potavanich, a trumpeter, resident conductor of the Thai National Symphony Orchestra, and music director and conductor of the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra (BSO). Through Potavanich, Prangcharoen also received extra conducting lessons from guest conductors of the BSO, as well as from foreign musicians who visited the university.

During his junior year, Prangcharoen turned his focus to piano when he went to Kit Young’s piano recital and was fascinated by sonic variety of her contemporary repertoire. He started taking piano lessons with Young and within a year, passed the grade 6 piano examination

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2 Kit Young went to Srinakharinwirot University for ranat lessons and became the university’s adjunct professor in music theory and piano. She holds degrees from Bennington College and New England Conservatory and did doctoral work at the University of Michigan and Peabody Conservatory. After finishing her education, she lived in Asia for twenty years, pursuing a career as solo and collaborative pianist, composer, and teacher organizing concerts, festivals and exchanges with Asian colleagues in both contemporary and traditional music from Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and China. Currently, she is a pianist, improviser, composer, and artistic Director of the Alliance for New Music-Theatre in Washington DC. See “Kit Young,” Alliance for New Music-Theatre, http://newmusictheatre.org/blog/about/artists/kit-young/ (accessed March 1, 2014).

3 According to an interview with Prangcharoen, there were only four to five full-time professors, while the number of undergraduate students altogether reached almost one hundred.
of the International Examinations Board, Trinity College, London. He then became a piano instructor at Chintakarn Music Institute where he met another American pianist, Bennett Lerner (b.1944), who was the Head of the Piano Department of the Institute, and received piano lessons from him while continuing instruction with Young.4

Hitherto, Prangcharoen did not have any experience in music composition. However, his involvement with wind band arrangements throughout his high school and college years led him to write a musical composition for chamber orchestra to fulfill the credits for his undergraduate thesis prior to his graduation in 1995. Although a harbinger of things to come, it simply fulfilled a requirement at the time and the work was left unattended for the following three years.

After graduating, Prangcharoen was active first in piano activities, teaching at Chintakarn Music Institute and performing at various venues in Thailand. His repertoire included standard literature such as piano sonatas by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) and Johannes Brahms (1833-97), as well as contemporary piano works, especially those by American composers Charles Ives (1874-1954), Aaron Copland (1900-1990), Leslie Bassett (b.1923), and Robert Helps (1928-2001). In 1996, he became Bennett Lerner’s piano student fulltime when Kit Young moved to Malaysia. Under Lerner’s instruction, Prangcharoen achieved a Certificate Examination for solo piano from the Guildhall examinations board. Despite his concentrated

4 Born in Boston, Bennett Lerner has lived in Thailand since 1990 and currently is a lecturer in the Music Department of Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand. He is a well-known performer of contemporary music and has presented world premieres of many pieces by major American composers such as Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, Marc Blitzstein, Roy Harris, Otto Leuning, Alexander Tcherepnin, and Samuel Barber. As Copland’s chosen soloist, Lerner performed the Copland Piano Concerto with Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic in honor of the composer’s 85th birthday. He has also appeared with the Los Angeles Symphony in the Hollywood Bowl and Boston Pops Orchestra under Arthur Fiedler among other major orchestras. His primary teachers were Claudio Arrau and Robert Helps. Lerner received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from City University of New York in October, 2001, and Master and Bachelor of Music degrees in piano performance from the Manhattan School of Music. “Bennett Lerner,” Music by My Friends, Bennett Lerner, Albany Records Troy 695-96, CD, 2004, liner notes.
efforts and continuing success, Prangcharoen stopped pursuing performance and took an important step when he changed his musical course to composition in 1998.

Although the switch seems to have come out of the blue, boredom and stress from piano playing triggered Prangcharoen’s move. Kit Young first suggested Prangcharoen try composition as an alternative to cope with musical fatigue and introduced him to Narongrit Dhamabutra (b.1962), a composition professor at Chulalongkorn University. After three years, Prangcharoen returned to his thesis composition as a token to venture into a new musical realm. In spite of technical flaws in the composition, Dhamabutra accepted Prangcharoen as his student, suggesting that he audit his theory classes at Chulalongkorn University while taking private composition lessons.

Through his composition exercises and analyses of standard classical music literature (works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart [1756-91] and Beethoven were the primary role models) Dhamabutra taught Prangcharoen basic rules of composition such as how to write a melody, transform a theme, construct a rhythm, and develop materials. His instruction often began with an analysis of a musical genre, followed by a compositional assignment to write a piece in that genre, before ending with corrections and comments on the newly written work. Prangcharoen’s first attempts were miniature works for solo piano such as sonatinas and sonatas, but they soon expanded to embrace chamber, choral, and other large scale compositions. The composition lessons with Dhamabutra continued for two years and reached their apex with Prangcharoen’s first composition recital in 2000 at the Goethe-Institut Thailand. The concert consisted of Prangcharoen’s works in different musical genres, including a concertino for piano and chamber wind ensemble, a choral piece with two pianos, and solo piano works.
In August of the same year, Prangcharoen began his master’s program at Illinois State University (ISU). This opportunity came to him when he met Stephen Andrew Taylor (b.1965), an American composer who had come to Srinakharinwirot University as part of an exchange program between the university and ISU a year earlier. Taylor was so impressed with Prangcharoen’s compositions that he invited the young Thai composer to study with him. During his time at ISU, Prangcharoen was a graduate assistant, teaching group piano classes and playing the piano in the ISU Wind Symphony. He took composition lessons with both Taylor and David Kahn Feurzeig (b.1965), though Taylor became the chief influence on Prangcharoen’s musical sensibilities. Taylor introduced him to a great amount of twentieth-century music such as that of the post-war serialists, Olivier Messiaen (1908-92), and György Ligeti (1923-2006), as well as American popular music. But most importantly, Taylor instructed him how to organize effective pitch and rhythmic materials, abilities that became Prangcharoen’s most significant compositional tools in setting up and developing his compositional style.

After the two-year master’s degree program at ISU, Prangcharoen received offers to study toward a doctoral degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he could continue his composition lessons with Taylor, and at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Conservatory of Music and Dance. He chose the latter because of a financial reason since UMKC offered him both an exemption of tuition fees and a stipend. His preference also derived from suggestions of some professors that it would be a “perfect match” for him to study with Chen Yi (b.1953), whose compositions had a similar accent to his. The prophecy was indeed fulfilled when Prangcharoen’s compositional language finally crystallized under the guidance of Chen Yi.

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Prangcharoen met Chen Yi when he arrived at UMKC in the fall of 2002. Although Chen Yi had just received the Charles Ives Living Award and was on leave from her teaching position at UMKC for three years starting in 2001, she offered Prangcharoen private composition lessons whenever she visited Kansas City and continued teaching him irregularly for about six years. Chen Yi paid attention to the overall effectiveness of Prangcharoen’s composition, commenting on his orchestration, structural proportion, and musical style. With an emphasis on the last component and the influence of Chen’s cross-cultural compositions, Prangcharoen finally achieved his distinctive musical voice: a synthesis of Thai and Western musical elements.

At UMKC, Prangcharoen also studied with Zhou Long (b.1953), James Mobberley (b.1954), and Paul Rudy (b.1962), for at least one semester each. He was a pianist for the UMKC Composers’ Guild, a student organization of composers at UMKC that holds four concerts a year, but quit after a few years to devote himself fully to composition. The active scene in the UMKC composition department, which discouraged him in the beginning since he felt so behind, led him to his first appearances in music festivals: he attended the 2003 and 2004 California Summer Music and was nominated to be one of eight composers at the John Duffy Composers Institute in the 2005 Virginia Arts Festival. At Virginia, Prangcharoen met John Corigliano (b.1938), a visiting composer of the festival who had for three decades constructed his music by meticulously graphing the formal flow and architecture of a work, appointing almost every musical element for each minute of the composition. Corigliano’s procedure became Prangcharoen’s model in planning a composition’s structure. Moreover, after listening to Prangcharoen’s works, the senior composer also encouraged him to move away from the early

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twentieth-century’s musical language, dominated by Impressionistic harmony and texture, and to explore the harmonic and textural palettes of the later twentieth century.

The dynamic atmosphere at UMKC also drove Prangcharoen to participate in a number of composition competitions, from which he received numerous prizes that brought him fame on both national and international stages. After receiving the second prize from the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award, he won first prizes from the Pacific Symphony’s American Composer Competition and the 18th ACL (Asian Composers League) Yoshiro Irino Memorial Prize, and second prize from the Alexander Zemlinsky International Composition Competition in 2005. In 2007, he was a recipient of the Silapathorn Award, an honor for living Thai contemporary artists presented by the Office of Contemporary Art and Culture, Ministry of Culture of Thailand. A year later, he was the winner of the Annapolis Charter 300 Young Composers Competition. In addition to attending festivals and competitions, Prangcharoen was also appointed an adjunct professor at ISU when David Feurzeig took a sabbatical leave during the 2005-2006 academic year, teaching undergraduate and graduate music theory courses and composition lessons.

Prangcharoen received his Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) from UMKC in 2010. Heretofore, he has worked as a freelance composer and taught composition and piano at the Community Music and Dance Academy of the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance. After the graduation, he won the 2010 Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute Competition, as well as the American Composers Orchestra’s 2011 Annual Underwood Commission and its 2011 Audience Choice Award. Besides the Guggenheim Award, Prangcharoen received the Barlow Prize in 2013. In the same year, he obtained a three-year composer residency with the Pacific Symphony and joined Theodor Presser in publishing his works for wind ensemble and orchestra.
Besides the United States, Prangcharoen has been active in Asian continent. In Thailand, he founded the Thailand International Composition Festival (TICF), an annual weeklong summer music festival which had its tenth anniversary in June 2014, with a purpose to promote the contemporary classical music’s scene of Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries. He has received commissions from the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition, Prangcharoen was a guest composer at the 2012 and 2014 Beijing Modern Music Festival in China, whose commission resulted in *Illuminations* (2012), which was programmed in the 2012 Festival’s opening concert.

**Creative Process**

Considering Prangcharoen’s biography, it may seem like he is inherently equipped with exceptional compositional skills since he started composition lessons quite late in life but quickly proceeded forward to winning numerous major composition competitions and commissions. Yet Prangcharoen does not rely on the innate expertise alone; rather, he pays tremendous attention to the course of crafting his works. He plans out the structure and musical materials prior to notating anything on a page, despite the fact that he usually already hears music in his head.\(^7\) Moreover, his working procedure begins even before the planning stage comes into the scene. When these entire steps are put together, they form Prangcharoen’s individual creative process.

In the introduction of the book *The Creative Process in Music: From Mozart to Kurtág* (2012), William Kinderman compared works of art to icebergs, rising from a deep context that is not always approachable. Consequently, research into the creative process is needed in

\(^7\) Narong Prangcharoen, interview by author, Kansas City, MO, February 2, 2014.
uncovering this submerged landscape and opening new perspectives to the artworks. Accordingly, it is crucial to explore Prangcharoen’s creative process since his compositions are not scientific products or mathematical results that can always be universally proven; rather they are subjective artistic works that require individual authentication in order to fully comprehend their conceptions, contexts, and specific meanings. This section provides Prangcharoen’s step-by-step writing procedure from the idea’s formation to the finished product. Its purpose is to present a broad view of his compositional method before delving into a more detailed analysis of his specific musical elements.

In examining the creative process of six European composers, Kinderman scrutinized every available sketch, draft, and published edition of each composition. Prangcharoen, however, composes on a computer and never kept any sketches or drafts, saving over earlier versions in a newly edited version of a work. Therefore, it is impossible to trace his compositional process through modification and revision. Nevertheless, because Prangcharoen is still alive, it is viable to learn of his creative process directly from interviewing the composer himself.

Prangcharoen followed his intuition when composing his early works. He did not necessarily plan the entire composition or form any materials before the actual writing stage began. Basically, he observed standard literature of Classical and Romantic composers and conformed his writing to those model works. Throughout his master’s at ISU and early years at UMKC, he remained intuitive with structural planning, yet his conception in organizing pitch and rhythmic materials was securely formed when he became a student of Stephen Taylor. While

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9 Information on Prangcharoen’s creative process is taken from Narong Prangcharoen, interview by author, Kansas City, MO, February 2 and 28, 2014.
continuing to develop his technique of pitch and rhythmic organization, Prangcharoen finally crystallized a thorough compositional process when John Corigliano showed him how to construct a piece’s structure through graph drawing at the Virginia Arts Festival in 2005.

Since most of his compositions are commissioned works, Prangcharoen does not usually determine the instrumentation; oftentimes the commissions even specify approximate length and subject. Accordingly, Prangcharoen’s creative process does not always emerge from inherent impulse. Rather, after trial and error over the course of fifteen years of composing, Prangcharoen formalized his creative process into four stages: researching, realizing concept, planning, and writing.

After receiving a commission, Prangcharoen first delves into researching existing works of particular genres or instruments, especially solo instruments. He spends time listening to music, reading scores, and studying the instruments—paying attention to complicated features such as extended techniques, intricate fingerings, and distinctive tone colors. The research allows Prangcharoen to become thoroughly acquainted with all possibilities of the genres and instruments, as well as to create peculiar yet practical techniques and passages. The length of this research stage is varied. It can last as little as one month to as long as six months, depending on how vast the existing repertoire is and how much Prangcharoen is already familiar with the genres or instruments.

After learning many of the possibilities of the genres and instruments, Prangcharoen continues the second step of his creative process by seeking for inspiration or a subject from which he can derive a concept of the work. The inspiration and subject usually come from people, events, elements, or topics involving in his daily life. For example, when he sought for a subject of Phenomenon in 2003, the Naga fireballs was a controversial issue in Thailand after a
Thai film *Mekhong Full Moon Party*, released at the end of 2002, set up a conflict between science and religion. Likewise, *Sattha* (2005) was a by-product of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the deadliest tsunami in world history that had a direct effect on Thailand, causing severe casualties and damage in the six southern provinces facing the Andaman Sea. On the other hand, the subject of *Namaskar* (2010) derived from Prangcharoen’s personal study of Buddhist doctrine, while that of *Illuminations* (2012) reflected his attraction to the concept of light at that time after recovering from emotional suffering.

Having an inspiration or a subject is important for Prangcharoen so that he can construct a concept of the work and know specifically what to convey through music. Prangcharoen’s concept for *Phenomenon*, for instance, was to recreate the experience of observing the Naga fireballs at the Mekong River. At the beginning, he wanted to depict a mass of people traveling to the Mekong River, followed by the delineation of the fireballs’ foundation at the bottom of the river, their soaring through the water into the sky, and their extraordinary disappearance. In the same way as *Phenomenon*’s concept is the description of the fireballs’ developmental stages, *Sattha*’s approach is the narrative of the tsunami waves’ phases. Although Prangcharoen has a definite concept for each moment of the compositions and employs specific titles, he never expects the audience to perceive the work exactly he conceived it. Rather than forcing a program, he wants to merely suggest the audience a subject and encourage them to construct their own images or remind them of their feeling from similar life situations.

The planning stage comes after the work’s concept is fully realized. It involves a technical process in creating musical devices that will successfully convey the outlined concept: how to form a melody, rhythm, or texture that will illustrate a crowd and the Naga fireballs in
Phenomenon or portray the tsunami waves in Sattha. In this planning stage, Prangcharoen concentrates mainly on two things: structural planning and pitch and rhythmic organization.

Prangcharoen formalized his structural planning after John Corigliano’s method, yet his graphs are much less exhaustive than his model’s. Prangcharoen does not necessarily plan all the musical details minute by minute, but does chart what will happen from the beginning to the end. In his graphs, Prangcharoen first maps out the whole structure and then arranges the proportions of each section to generate the approximate length and tempo of all the sections. He then designates the numbers and places of climaxes, determining how they will differ from each other and how they will enter and depart from their context.

During the structural planning, Prangcharoen also crafts pitch and rhythmic materials for the composition. The two materials commonly govern an entire composition since Prangcharoen often constructs the work from different variations, all derived from the main melodic and rhythmic motives. As the materials must have enough potential possibilities to develop a whole composition, this planning step usually consumes a lot of time. To justify the possibilities of the materials, Prangcharoen considers the relationship between pitches, the numbers of themes and textures that can be created from the materials, and the available transformations of the themes. Another reason for this time-consuming process is that Prangcharoen often uses serial technique in treating his materials. Although he does not always use all twelve tones at once (for example, eight pitches belong to the theme, while the other four to the main harmonic structure), he follows the pitch order strictly. Hence, not only the pitches have to be effective, but the pitch order must also be carefully constructed as well.
Additionally, Prangcharoen regards himself as a composer who practices neotonality, a type of tonal music in which tonal centers are established through nontraditional means. Prangcharoen achieves the neotonality by forming tonal centers through repetition and assertion of pitches or chords, most of the time deriving from the established pitch material. Therefore, Prangcharoen has to formulate the pitch material that will serve a piece’s harmonic structure successfully as well. Once he realizes the full structure and pitch and rhythmic materials of the work, Prangcharoen adds the materials’ placing to the graph. Similar to the treatment of the climaxes, he decides how the materials will be transformed, prepared, and retired each time they appear.

Contradictory to general understanding of music composition, Prangcharoen’s writing stage is brief and effortless once he realizes all the possibilities of the genres and instruments, concept, structure, and the materials of pitch and rhythmic. He merely fills blank stave papers with notes, dynamics, articulations, and phrasing according to the structure and materials that he has already planned. However, Prangcharoen does not treat the graphs as a fixed idea, but as a map to provide him direction. He still relies more on his musical senses than a dry, theoretical chart, as fundamental in adjusting the already outlined proportion, climaxes, and materials.

Recently, Prangcharoen has stopped drawing graphs during the planning stage as he found they cause him to repeat himself. He has constructed another method, combining the intuitive structural planning of his early days with the graph drawing technique of Corigliano by imagining structure, sectional proportion, and climaxes of a piece from its beginning to end without making a solid plan on a paper. While he still drafts the pitch and rhythmic materials, he

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relies on inherent sounds his head rather than a visual graph as his guide and reviews the work after finishing the whole piece.

Prangcharoen’s four stages of his creative process—researching, realizing concept, planning, and writing—always appear in the same order, although they can overlap, especially when the composer is working on more than one piece of composition at that time. For example, while Prangcharoen is writing one piece, he might be researching on a new project or searching for a subject of other commissions simultaneously. Nevertheless, these four stages are significant in approaching the context of and uncovering different perspectives to Prangcharoen’s artworks.

With this distinctive creative process, Prangcharoen has produced a number of music compositions. His major works include eleven compositions for orchestra, seven for wind symphony, two for choir, nine for chamber groups, and a handful of solo pieces for piano, cello, and viola. Among them, orchestral works are perhaps the most significant and widely known to the audience since they have brought him numerous awards and commissions and they have been performed most often in various concert venues in North American, European, and Asian continents.

**Orchestral Works**

have specific narratives, it is necessary to examine the background of each work before delving into his compositional process and musical analyses. With the omission of *Tear of Dust*, all of Prangcharoen’s orchestral pieces up to 2012 are presented here, with their information including compositional dates; performers, dates, and venues of the premieres; the narratives and their sonic impact.\(^{11}\)


First performed on May 30, 2004, by the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Norichika Iimori at the Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall, *Phenomenon* earned second prize from the 2004 Toru Takemitsu Composition Award and won the 2005 Pacific Symphony’s American Composer Competition. *Phenomenon* portrays the mysterious and unexplainable natural occurrence of the Naga fireballs over the Mekong River that takes place each year at the end of Buddhist Lent. Although flammable phosphine gas is assumed to be a scientific cause of this natural phenomenon, Prangcharoen based *Phenomenon* on a Thai Buddhist legend, which explains the occurrence as executed by the Nagas in Mekong River who performed the fireballs to celebrate the Lord Buddha’s return from visiting the second heaven where he had preached a sermon to his mother.\(^{12}\) The first part depicts a mass of people gradually inundating the scenic point to witness the occurrence through layers of active melodic lines in the whole orchestra. Prangcharoen then achieved the portrayal of the fireballs, light in the darkness, through

\(^{11}\) The description of each orchestral composition is taken from the program note attached to the score; Narong Prangcharoen, e-mail message to author, March 2, 2014; and Narong Prangcharoen, interview by author, Kansas City, MO, March 20, 2014.

elaborated textures, vast instrumental ranges, and extreme crescendo and diminuendo.

_Sattha_ (2005)

Scored for strings, piano, and percussion, _Sattha_ (“faith”) was a result of the 2005 Pacific Symphony’s American Composer Competition. Prangcharoen dedicated it to Carl St. Clair and the Pacific Symphony, who gave its premiere on November 30, 2005, at the Segerstrom Concert Hall in Costa Mesa, California. Commemorating the first anniversary of the tragic tsunami of December 2004 in South Asia, _Sattha_ was composed in memory of the event’s victims. _Sattha_ begins with an imitation of crack sounds of the oceanic crust through Bartók pizzicato (snap pizzicato) in the strings, accented by a chromatic cluster on the piano and a strike on the percussion metal plate.\(^\text{13}\) It then conveys the atmosphere of the tsunami from its origin as rather quiet, impotent vibrations through sustained notes in the low register. The sound gradually becomes louder and tenser throughout the course of the entire composition to illustrate the formation of small, distant currents to enormous, powerful waves that consumed over 200,000 lives in thirteen countries.

_Respiration of the Sun_ (2006)

_Respiration of the Sun_ is a commission from the Alexander Zemlinsky Composition Competition. Dedicated to His Majesty the King of Thailand to celebrate his 80\(^{\text{th}}\) Birthday Anniversary, the work was first performed on June 30, 2007, by Andreas Hérm Baumgartner and Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra in the Czech Republic. The composition illustrates the flow of fluid circulation on the sun’s surface that generates the sun’s energy, which is the main supply of the energy for the entire living system. Prangcharoen depicts this fluid flow by using

\(^{13}\) Narong Prangcharoen, “_Sattha_ for Strings, Piano, and Percussion” (Keynote slides presented at Prangcharoen’s dissertation defense, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City, MO, Spring 2010).
different motives, each has with derivative ideas from the others. He also quoted fragments of *Sa-Du-Di Maharajah* (“Praise to the Great King”), a blessing song to the Thai King and Queen, in commemorating the King’s birthday.

*Tri-Sattawat* (2007)

The Annapolis Symphony Orchestra commissioned *Tri-Sattawat* (“three centuries”) to celebrate 300 years of the City of Annapolis. The work won the Annapolis Charter 300 International Composers Competition Prize and was premiered by Jose-Luis Novo and the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra on November 7, 2008, at the Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts in Annapolis, Maryland. In commemorating this auspicious celebration, Prangcharoen assimilated the concept and spirit of *Sathukarn*, a piece of Thai music believed to be given to mankind by Shiva (the Supreme God of Hinduism) to invite angels and gods to descend from heaven and bless mankind. He represented the Western City with references of American Revolutionary War through marching-like rhythmic pattern in the timpani, rhythmic forces in the brass, and fanfare-like gestures in the trumpets.

*Namaskar* (2010)

*Namaskar* (“worship” or “salutation”) is originally for wind symphony, commissioned by Texas Tech University Wind Ensemble for the CBDNA Southern Region Conference in April 2010. Prangcharoen orchestrated the piece for the 2010 Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute Competition, from which it won the first prize. The premiere took place on October 29, 2010, by the Minnesota Orchestra under Osmo Vänskä at the Minneapolis Convention Center. *Namaskar* is the first step of worshipping gods before commencing an activity or ceremony in Brahman-Hinduism. Prangcharoen evokes the spirit and sound of traditional *Namaskar* ritual through brass
and percussion, which imitates the sonorities of the ritual’s traditional instruments: conch, horn, and drum.

*Pubbanimitta* (2011)

Prangcharoen revised *Pubbanimitta* (“foreboding”) from *Presage* (2009), a work for wind ensemble commissioned by Kasetsart University Consortium in Thailand. The edited version was for the American Composers Orchestra (ACO)’s 2011 Annual Underwood Commission. *Pubbanimitta* won the Commission as well as the Audience Choice Award. The ACO premiered it on June 3, 2011, under the baton of George Manahan at the Miller Theatre in New York City. The work depicts the natural catastrophes that have resulted from climate change throughout the world. It begins with a folk-like material to represent the earth. The folk theme is then transformed to more complex textures to reflect the earth undergoing a number of disasters.

*The Dawn of Darkness* (2012)

This concerto for tenor saxophone and orchestra was a commission from Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, which premiered the work on March 17, 2012, at the Music Auditorium of the College of Music, Mahidol University in Thailand, with Wisuwart Pruksavanich as the soloist and Dariusz Mikulski as the conductor. Prangcharoen dedicated the work to Dr. Sugree Charoensook, the dean of the College of Music, Mahidol University. It represents the composer’s personal expressions of his first experience with such difficult season of pain, loss, and heartbreak. The solo tenor saxophone mourns of the anguish, while the orchestra reinforces the agony through its desperate, fierce ostinato outcry almost throughout the piece.
Illuminations (2012)

*Illuminations* was commissioned by the Beijing Modern Music Festival for its 10th Anniversary. The premiere took place on May 19, 2012, at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, China, as part of the opening concert of the 2012 Beijing Modern Music Festival, and was performed by the China National Theatre of the Performing Arts Orchestra under the direction of Lu Jia, conductor. The work explores different kinds of energy and movements of light and fire, illustrating matches being lit, fire being blown up and down by the wind, flame rising and falling, and light dashing inward and outward. Prangcharoen sonically depicts the flashing and flickering of light mainly through pulsating crescendo and simultaneously unsynchronized rhythmic groupings of different melodic patterns in the wind parts, with sustained notes gradually fading in and out representing other light moving around in space.

The Migration of Lost Souls (2012)

A product of the American Composers Orchestra (ACO)’s 2011 Annual Underwood Commission, *The Migration of Lost Souls* had its premiere in a chamber orchestra version on October 26, 2012, by José Serebrier and ACO at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Prangcharoen revised it for an orchestra in the following year for Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra. Similar to *Pubbanimitta*, *The Migration of Lost Souls* took its inspiration from various natural disasters happening around the world, which caused the loss of many souls. However, instead of depicting the disasters themselves, *The Migration of Lost Souls* is a meditation on the lost souls’ journey to the afterlife.
The work is in slow-fast-slow ternary form: the outer slow sections’ main theme originating in the bell sounds of Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, a Theravada Buddhist temple in Chiang Mai, Thailand, which is a lament to a struggling life journey. In contrast to the first section’s solemn mood, the middle section presents a cheerful melody deriving from the Lam, a lively folk, vocal music from northeastern Thailand (Isan), in the depiction of the joyful sides of life. The piece ends with mixed sounds of gongs as heard in a Buddhist temple before the sounds gradually wither away, depicting the last breath of the lost souls before their journey to heaven.

Although Prangcharoen’s orchestral works portray different narratives and are based on varied inspirations, they all share one common feature: the relation with Thai music and culture. As an orchestra offers the most possibilities of sound palate, it advantageously allows Prangcharoen to emulate and evoke a Thai accent through uniquely sonorities created by combinations of Thai and Western musical components. Even when his music does not sound Thai, Prangcharoen still makes a connection to his native land by embracing Thai extra-musical elements, which lay a foundation to unique conceptions of his orchestral music. These musical and extra-musical elements are best observed by analyzing each element of Prangcharoen’s cross-cultural synthesis directly from his orchestral scores.

**Synthesis of Cross-cultural Elements**

Prangcharoen’s orchestral works are known for their vivid tone colors and distinctive sonorities created by the fusion of Thai and Western music. Although his musical training did not include Thai music, Prangcharoen grew up absorbing both traditional Thai art and folk music naturally through different surroundings since both types of Thai music were available in various media, school activities, and traditional ceremonies. However, growing up in the Westernized
city of Bangkok, Prangcharoen’s Thainess was naturally veiled behind American culture, whether through chain stores, movies, or music. It was not until he came to the United States and lived in a foreign culture that he realized the extent of Thai music’s impact on his aesthetic.

After becoming interested in Thai music, Prangcharoen filled the gap of his Thai musical knowledge by conversing with Thai musicians, reading Thai music books, and listening to a lot of Thai music, both traditional and folk.\textsuperscript{14} Thai musical influences soon appeared in Prangcharoen’s fusion of Thai musical sonorities and Thai extra-musical aspects with Western compositional techniques, which allowed him to expand his compositional palettes and, most importantly, to accomplish his unique musical voice and distinguish himself from contemporary composers. Among the Thai musical elements that appear in his music, the most significant are structure, texture, pentatonicism, quotation, performance practice, and percussion instrument—all applied in Prangcharoen’s orchestral music with a broad sense of the original models. Since these elements are the most prevalent, it is helpful to explore them individually.

Structure

Most of Prangcharoen’s orchestral compositions have structures that are similar to Western classical works of the common practice period. While \textit{The Dawn of Darkness} is a moderately fast piece with a slow introduction, the others are practically considered in a tripartite form (ABA), comprising of either fast-slow-fast or slow-fast-slow sections, usually with different subsections in the B and second A parts. Almost all of them also include an introduction and a coda.

\textsuperscript{14} Although Thai musical sonorities are prevalent in Prangcharoen’s music, the composer never had any formal Thai music lessons, besides taking some courses such as Thai music notation, \textit{khong-wong}, and Thai music singing during his college years at Srinakharinwirot University.
The structure of *Tri-Sattawat* and *Pubbanimitta*, however, display the structure of *thao*, a Thai musical genre.\(^\text{15}\) From that genre, the two works remain the concept of a gradual tempo increase but ignore the notion of proportional speed of the *thao*’s three metrical levels. The tempo marking of *Tri-Sattawat*’s first section is *Allegro clamo* (\(\downarrow = 56\)), while those of the second and third are *Allegro* (\(= 134\)) and *Vivace* (\(= 134\)), respectively. Likewise, *Pubbanimitta* begins with *Adagio misterioso* (\(= 60\)) and increases the tempo to *Allegro agitato* (\(= 132\)). Although the latter two sections of both pieces share the same speed, Prangcharoen’s made the last sections sound faster by increasing intensity.

Similar to the melodic variations in all three metrical levels of the *thao*, Prangcharoen based all the sections of *Tri-Sattawat* and *Pubbanimitta* on the same melody, but his approach was distinct from the Thai original. Instead of limiting himself to the rigid Thai structure by building variations on *luk-tok* (pillar tones), he adopted the Western variation concept by keeping some melodic contours and intervals of the main theme in the variations.\(^\text{16}\) Moreover, the sections in *Tri-Sattawat* and *Pubbanimitta* are more flexible than those in the *thao* with Prangcharoen’s extension of existing melodies, as well as addition of new materials and transitions.

At the end of both pieces, Prangcharoen mirrored the *luk-mot* (coda) of the *thao* by having the orchestra to play continuous a subdivided rhythmic pattern before abruptly concluding the pieces; the coda of *Tri-Sattawat* follows the Thai fashion even more accurately with its continuous sixteenth-note melodic pattern. However, Prangcharoen distinguished his

\(^{15}\) See pages 75-77 of Chapter 2 in this thesis for the explanation of *thao*’s structure.

\(^{16}\) See page 93-94 of Chapter 2 for the explanation of *luk-tok.*
codas from the Thai original by preceding them with a brief slow passage to build up tension before reaching the climax at the end of the pieces.

Although Tri-Sattawat and Pubbanimitta resonate the Thai structure of the thao, Prangcharoen merely grabbed the thao’s main concepts of slow to fast tempo, melodic variations, and abrupt ending. He expanded and altered the Thai structure according to Western compositional concepts, adding harmonic intensity, different manners of creating variations, and smooth transitions. Similar to Prangcharoen’s fusion process with Thai musical structure, the texture of his music reflects the overall view of its Thai model other than slavishly following it.

**Texture**

Prangcharoen’s orchestral music is melodically based and does not depend considerably on vertical sonorities. This linear characteristic is perhaps an influence from Thai music which, similar to many traditional Asian art musics, establishes itself upon melodic lines instead of harmonically as in Western music. Each instrument of a Thai musical ensemble follows its thang (handiwork or performance practice) in creating variations of a melody under a condition that the pillar-tones of variations must match those of the original melody. All instruments then play their own variations simultaneously, creating a texture known as stratified polyphony.

Prangcharoen regularly adopts this polyphonic stratification, yet fuses its melodic-based notion with other Western textural treatments of homophony and polyphony. Prangcharoen’s orchestral music primarily consists two layers: foreground (the most important voice and usually a melody) and background (an accompaniment either in the form of chords or polyphonic/melodic figures). The coordination between the two layers is usually homophonic, while the texture within each layer often displays traces of polyphony and stratified polyphony.
when Prangcharoen assigns counter-melodies or variations of the melody to be played simultaneously with the main melodic line. Prangcharoen’s two most common textural practices are foreground with ostinato background and foreground with sustained background.

The first texture, foreground with ostinato background, often appears as a tool to build up a climax. The foreground is generally in *forte* unison, providing a clear declamation of the theme, while the background includes a rhythmic ostinato (and sometimes is followed by proportionally increased subdivisions of the rhythm to create more intensity). For example, the ending of *Phenomenon* leads to the last and biggest climax of the piece (see figure 4). The foreground consists of two parts: first, the treble wind instruments (piccolo, flutes, oboes, clarinets, and trumpets) which carry out the main theme; and second, the French horns and lower winds (bass clarinets, bassoons, contrabassoon, trombones, bass trombone, and tuba) which are responsible for counter-melodies. The piano and strings provide the second texture, a layer of a restless ostinato background.
Figure 4. Foreground with ostinato background in *Phenomenon*, mm. 188-192.
The second texture, foreground with sustained background, often appears when Prangcharoen wants to introduce a lyrical theme. The foreground is generally in unison, occasionally includes one or more counter-melodies. The background includes sustained lines, usually in either high or low register to avoid the melody. For example, in the first appearance of *The Migration of Lost Souls*’ main theme, the oboe presents the melody, which is supported by an E♭ tremolo in the cello and bass (see figure 5).

Figure 5. Foreground with sustained background in *The Migration of Lost Souls*, mm. 20-26.

On other occasions, Prangcharoen relies solely on the foreground to handle melodic execution. For instance, in the middle section of *Namaskar*, the second violin and cello play the melody in unison with the viola, the first violin, and flute providing counter-melodies (see figure 6). Although the bass and timpani produce a background contour, their function is trivial in this section. Sometimes the same practice of mixing polyphonically stratified or polyphonic lines appears in the background layer alone without the existent of the main melody; this practice
often find its place in Prangcharoen’s introductions and transitions (see the opening of *Phenomenon* for an example).

Figure 6. Foreground alone with polyphonic texture in *Namaskar*, mm. 69-74.

At times, Prangcharoen writes in three layers: foreground, middleground (which consists of a filled-in harmony or rhythm), and background. Again, all three layers often form a homophonic texture among each other but are polyphonic within themselves. For example, in the coda of *The Dawn of Darkness* (see figure 7), the solo tenor saxophone carries a foreground melodic line, embellished by counter melodies in the treble woodwinds; the treble strings in the middleground fill in rhythmically and harmonically with repetitive patterns; the lower
woodwinds and strings in the background support the whole section with a bass line which coincides with the timpani.

Figure 7. Three layers in the coda of *The Dawn of Darkness*, mm. 235-239.
While Thai music helps shape the texture of Prangcharoen’s music, its influence remains in the characteristic linearity and not the pure polyphonic stratification. Prangcharoen adopts the Thai archetype flexibly by applying polyphonic and loose stratified polyphonic texture within each layer of foreground, middleground, or background. Besides structure and texture, pentatonicism is another component that reflects the broad influence of Thai musical elements on Prangcharoen’s orchestral music.

Pentatonicism

Pentatonic modes have been associated with Asian references since the early nineteenth century in Western music history and since the twentieth century in works by Western-trained Thai composers. It usually appeared in a form of a lyrical, Orientalist melody harmonized with conventional Western harmonic progression as seen in Weber’s Turandot (see figure 1 in Chapter 1) and a large amount of Thai popular music. This naïve fusion process does not creep into Prangcharoen’s orchestral composition since he treats pentatonicism through motivic and thematic development.

Prangcharoen created the pitch material of Phenomenon with four notes of a pentatonic scale separated by two tritone intervals: C-F#-E-Bb-A-G. At the recapitulation of Phenomenon, a pentatonic motive (m. 115) appears as an extension of the thematic restatement (m. 109) in the unison string with a rhythmic imitation in the percussion (see figure 8). This pentatonic idea serves as a motivic development, building up tension through rhythmic diminution to a sub-climax of the piece in measure 123. Another function of this pentatonic motive is to add briefly a different color to the piece; it does not necessarily portray any Orientalist ideas since it is the only pentatonic component in the work.
Texturally, Prangcharoen also treats pentatonicism differently from many other Thai and Western composers when he places the pentatonic melody as a main theme in the foreground, usually accompanied by sustained harmonic lines in the background, and occasionally supported by counter-melodies. This approach is obvious in the first slow section of *Pubbanimitta*, whose main theme consists of a pentatonic collection B♭-C-D-F-G with the notes B♭-C-F-G in the main theme and D in the sustained accompaniment line (see Appendix).

Figure 8. Pentatonicism in *Phenomenon*, mm. 106-121.
Figure 8 continued

Pentatonic motive
This main theme governs the entire first part of the piece (from the beginning to m. 59). Each of its three statements in this section appears with a pair of solo instruments doubling each other: the first (m. 5) is for solo flute and clarinet with other flutes and clarinets playing a sustained harmonic background. The piccolo and bass clarinet take up the second statement (m. 16) with bassoon providing a counter-melody before the oboe and trumpet state the second half of the theme and the whole orchestra joins in with imitative contrapuntal texture. The English horn and bassoon play the last statement (m. 48) above another sustained harmonic background in the clarinets and rhythmic driven figures in the string pizzicato. In addition, in an expanded tutti section (mm. 33-43), Prangcharoen treats the theme as a tool for motivic development, similar to the pentatonic motive in *Phenomenon* above, but with overlapping points of imitation.

Harmonically, Prangcharoen followed neither pentatonic nor conventional harmonic schemes. Although all three melodic statements are in the B♭ pentatonic mode, the counter-melody and background harmony include the notes E and E♭ (m. 20 in the bassoon, mm. 39-43 and mm. 50-55 in the strings), the fourth scale degree which is almost entirely omitted in Thai music, and scalar passages occasionally contain the seventh scale degree, A, another rare tone (mm. 27, 30, 38, 40, and 44).\(^\text{17}\)

Prangcharoen’s treatment of pentatonic melodies with motivic and thematic development deviates from the norm of pentatonicism in previous Western and Thai cross-cultural music, which usually features a pentatonic tune resting above chords that follow conventional harmonic progression. With the polyphony and polyphonic stratification replacing the homophonic chordal texture, as well as the use of several non-chord tones in both melody and counter-melody, Prangcharoen’s pentatonicism become even more distant from the old-fashioned pentatonic

\(^{17}\) Thai tuning system divides an octave in to seven, not twelve, quasi-equidistant parts; therefore, Thai fourth scale degree in the B♭ major scale lies between E♭ and E.
practice. As pentatonicism exemplify Prangcharoen’s broad synthesis of the Thai model, another Thai musical component, quotation, follows the same suit even when Prangcharoen pays more specific attention to the sources of his quoted materials.

Quotation

Quotation of Thai music appears often in Prangcharoen’s orchestral music, yet he rarely quotes Thai melodies or rhythms directly. Prangcharoen believes that a straight quotation is not only too simple but also restricts options of compositional elements.\textsuperscript{18} Therefore, instead of transporting a whole melodic line, he depends more on characteristics and fragments of a melodic phrase and cultivates them through his accustomed practice of motivic and thematic development.

In \textit{Sattha}, Prangcharoen quoted characteristics of a Thai traditional song called \textit{Mon-Rong-Hai}, a lamented song improvisarily sung with a \textit{pi-phat mon} ensemble in a Thai funeral to describe the deceased’s virtue and to create mournful atmosphere through an intermittently sobbing and moaning sound.\textsuperscript{19} The \textit{Mon-Rong-Hai} quotation first appears with a solo cello to imitate the moaning with sustained pitch narrowly sliding up and down (see mm. 29-31 of figure 9) and the sobbing with portato repeated notes (m. 32). The later solo part is elaborated with grace notes (m. 34) and sixteenth- and thirty-second-note groups in a turn-like gesture (mm. 35-36) to assimilate the \textit{pi-mon}, the only melodic instrument accompanying the singing in \textit{Mon-}

\textsuperscript{18} Narong Prangcharoen, interview by author, Kansas City, MO, March 20, 2014.

\textsuperscript{19} Ong Banchun, “\textit{มอญร้องไห้}” [\textit{Mon-Rong-Hai}], Mon Studies, \url{http://www.monstudies.com/show_content.php?topic_id=110&main_menu_id=8} (accessed March 25, 2014). \textit{Pi-phat mon} is one type of Thai \textit{pi-phat} ensembles, which composed of melodic and rhythmic percussion instruments and the \textit{pi} (Thai quadruple wind). \textit{Pi-phat mon} usually performs in funerals. For specific instruments in a \textit{pi-phat mon} ensemble, see David Morton, \textit{The Traditional Music of Thailand} (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976), 113.
*Rong-Hai*, which usually plays a more decorated counter-melody. The joining of a solo violin with a variation of the melodic line in measure 42 creates a polyphonic texture, practically assimilating the stratified polyphony of the voice and *pi-mon* in the traditional song.

Figure 9. Quotation of *Mon-Rong-Hai* in *Sattha*, mm. 29-46.
In *Sattha*, besides *Mon-Rong-Hai*, Prangcharoen also quoted another Thai traditional tune, *Kap He Ruea* (Thai water music used in a royal barge procession), which appears in the sixth movement of Dhammabutra’s *Sinfonia Suvarnabhumi* (2005) as well. Although both composers directly quote almost the same fragment from the original music (see fundamental notes of the solo viola in mm. 59-62 of figure 10), Dhammabutra merely stated the tune twice and borrowed the first three notes for a brief, simple motivic development. Prangcharoen adopted the tune as the main pitch and rhythmic materials and developed it throughout the entire composition melodically and rhythmically.

Figure 10. *Kap He Ruea* tune in *Sattha*, mm. 58-65.
Melodically, Prangcharoen focused on the intervals of seconds and thirds derived from the tune. In the beginning (mm. 15-16), he stated only the first four notes of the tune in the second violins and violas and did not finish the first half of the tune until measure 22. After stating the complete tune in measures 59-62, Prangcharoen created a variation of the tune, which appears first in a more elaborated fashion in measures 92-109 in the violas and piano, then repeats at measure 110 in the cello (see figure 11), before transposing its tonal center from D# to B♭ in measures 136 and 146.
Rhythmically, Prangcharoen developed the four quarter-note group of the theme (see m. 60 of figure 10) from measures 85 to 164 in order to create intensity and driving rhythmic contrast in the background of the work. From measures 85 to 109, the timpani and tom-toms play the ostinato rhythmic motive (see figure 12a), while the lower strings intermittently intervene with a lyrical thematic variation featuring the same rhythmic pattern. At measure 109, the eighth note rhythm continues, but is dispersed among all the treble strings (see figure 12b). Prangcharoen copied the same rhythmic distribution but compressed it to the piano at measure 125 (see figure 12c). As the music becomes more intense, the quarter-note rhythmic motive gradually transforms itself to triplets (see figure 12d) and then sixteen notes (see figure 12e) to accelerate the rhythmic drive proportionally and to help bolster intensity.
Figure 12. Development of the rhythmic material in *Sattha*.

a. Timpani and tam-tams play ostinato quarter notes, mm. 85-89.

b. Treble strings play a quarter-note rhythmic motive, mm. 111-113.

c. Piano plays the same quarter-note rhythmic motive, mm. 125-127.
Figure 12 continued

d. Transformation of the rhythmic motive, mm. 136-137.

![Musical score image]

e. Transformation of the rhythmic motive, mm. 156-157.

![Musical score image]

Commemorating the King of Thailand’s 80th Birthday Anniversary, *Respiration of the Sun* quotes fragments from *Sa du-di Maharajah* (“Praise to the Great King”), a blessing song to the Thai King and Queen usually sung in their birthday anniversary ceremonies (see figure 13). The trumpet blast quotes the instrumental introduction of *Sa-Du-Di Maharajah* (see m. 14 of figure 14). Prangcharoen did not directly cite the tune, but twisted the original melody and rhythm, and focused on the tonic and dominant notes of E♭ major scale and the brass sonority. The trumpets do not play homorhythmically as in the Thai original, but they cooperate in a stratified polyphonic texture similar to the practices of wind instruments in *Wong Trae Sang*, an ancient Thai fanfare ensemble whose roaring tune is the original model of *Sa du-di*.
Maharajah’s introduction. Prangcharoen developed this melodic motive further in the middle section of *Respiration of the Sun* by creating a variation of the main motive for the brass section (see m. 103 of figure 15). At the recapitulation, fragments of the main motive return in an aleatoric process, yet they create the same effect of stratified polyphony as the beginning (see figure 16).

Prangcharoen did not only quote the introduction of *Sa du-di Maharajah*, but also its first singing phrase (see mm. 14-18 of figure 13). He referred to this first verse in the transition (mm. 48-68) before the second theme by incorporating all the pitches, but altered their rhythm and added different grace notes to the main pitches (see figure 17). In addition, he treated this pitch material in polytonality: the three consecutive statements appear in B♭, B, and C major respectively.

Figure 13. Beginning of *Sa-Du-Di Maharajah*

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20 *Wong Trae Sang* is a fanfare ensemble performed in important Thai royal ceremonies. The instruments are only wind and percussion instruments: conch, clarion, *trae-ngon* (an old Thai horn in curved shape), *pi-cha-nai* (a kind of Thai reed wind), *cha-na* drums (a pair of two-head cylindrical drums), *ban-doh* (a small drum used in Brahmin rites), and *ma-ho-ra-thuek* (ceremonial kettledrum).
Figure 14. Quotation of *Sa du-di Maharajah’s* introduction in *Respiration of the Sun*, mm. 14-19.

Figure 15. Variation of the main motive in *Respiration of the Sun*, mm. 100-107.
Figure 16. Main motive in aleatoric process in *Respiration of the Sun*, mm. 176-180.

Figure 17. Quotation of *Sa du-di Maharajah* in *Respiration of the Sun*, mm. 43-59.
In addition to traditional Thai art music, Prangcharoen also quoted Thai folk music. In the middle section of *The Migration of Lost Souls*, Prangcharoen referred to music of the *Pong-Lang* ensemble, a northeastern Thai folk troupe whose flexible instrumentation usually comprises *pong-lang* (a log xylophone), *khaen* (a reed mouth organ), *wot* (a pan-pipe), *phin* (electric folk guitar), electric bass, and a set of *klong-yao* (a hand drum). *Pong-Lang*’s music is usually in the A major pentatonic scale: the *pong-lang*, *wot*, and *phin* play the melody, almost always in unison; the *khaen* fills in the harmony; the bass renders a tonic-dominant ostinato bass line; and the *klong-yao* provides rhythmic support.

In *The Migration of Lost Souls*, Prangcharoen first introduced the *pong-lang*’s sonority and its characteristic tremolo in the form of repeated sixteenth notes on the xylophone (m. 93) before bursting into a solo passage imitating one of *pong-lang*’s stock melodic patterns (m. 97). The same melodic pattern reappears (m. 121) with a full *Pong-Lang* ensemble accompaniment: the xylophone remains its *pong-lang* role; the flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, and bassoon’s passages, comparable to those of the *wot* and *phin*, are in unison with the xylophone’s part; the violin and viola imitate the *khaen*’s sonority; and the cello and bass are responsible for the tonic-dominant ostinato bass line (see figure 18).

Although Prangcharoen becomes more specific with the sources of his Thai quoted materials, his adoption of Thai musical quotations remains in a broad sense. He simply observes significant characteristics, melodic and rhythmic materials, and sonorities of the Thai original, and approaches them with his own treatment of motivic development, whether melodically or rhythmically. This same fusion process appears as well in Prangcharoen’s adoption of Thai performance practice, which he specifically draws from Thai singing and instrumental practices, yet flexibly applies them in his music.
Figure 18. Quotation of Pong-Lang music in *The Migration of Lost Souls*, mm. 131-136.
Performance Practice

In the same way as Prangcharoen rarely quotes Thai music directly, he hardly ever imitates specific Thai musical instruments in his orchestral music (besides the *Pong-Lang* section in *The Migration of Lost Souls*). Rather, he adopts the performance practices of Thai singing and musical instruments and fuses them into newly-created melodic lines. Among them, the most common that appear in Prangcharoen’s music are *uean* and *sa-bat*. *Uean* is a Thai vocal style, characterized by melismatic, highly ornamented singing without vibrato and a slide between two notes, most of which are in thirds, as a decoration of the melodic line (see figure 19a).  

*Sa-bat* is an instrumental technique, theoretically distinguished by interpolating a thirty-second note (on an unaccented beat) into a sixteenth note melodic pattern (see figure 19b) in an ascending or descending gesture; in practice, *sa-bat* also appears in disorderly pitches and in different types of melodic patterns.

Figure 19. Thai musical performance practices.

a. *Uean*.  

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22 Ibid., 388.

23 This musical example is an approximate transcription of the beginning of *Saen-Kam-Nueng Thao* sung by Surang Duriyapan. “*Saen-Kam-Nueng Thao*, Surang Duriyapan, voice,” YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPM4bxdCiJ (accessed April 1, 2014).
Both *uean* and *sa-bat* are prevalent in the melodic lines and counter-melodies of Prangcharoen’s orchestral music. Prangcharoen assimilates *uean* by adding single grace notes, inserting groups of small note values into long melodic lines, and implanting glissandi or portamenti between leaps of intervals. A pair of grace notes is Prangcharoen’s imitation of *sa-bat*, but these grace notes do not necessarily appear in ascending or descending order as in the original. Instead, they essentially are a quick gesture that interpolates the melody. Prangcharoen does not restrain himself by applying *uean* and *sa-bat* in Thai or Thai-like melodies, but he embraces these performance practices to evoke a Thai musical accent elsewhere in his orchestral music, whether in a Thai-influenced pentatonic or Western twelve-tone melody.

Through *Tri-Sattawat*, Prangcharoen reflected the concept of *Sathukarn*, a piece of Thai music usually performed at the beginning of sacred rituals. In the piece’s opening (mm.1-17), he appointed the solo bassoon to resemble *pi* in *Sathukarn* (see figure 20). However, Prangcharoen did not quote any Thai melody or specific *pi* performance practices for the melody, but he composed a newly composed quasi-pentatonic melody (the main theme) and decorated it with *sa-bat* gestures (a pair of grace notes) and *uean* melodic motions (single grace notes and a sixteenth-note group) to preserve the atmosphere of Thai music. Prangcharoen then developed the whole piece by creating different variations of this main theme, with one variation in the
middle of the piece (mm. 70-84) showing evident influence from the *uean* singing practice through its highly elaborated melodic line (see figure 21).

Figure 20. Main theme with *Uean* and *Sa-bat* decoration in *Tri-Sattawat*, mm. 1-11.

![Main theme with Uean and Sa-bat decoration](image)

Figure 21. Variation of main theme in *Tri-Sattawat*, mm. 70-77.

![Variation of main theme](image)
Prangcharoen did not limit the use of *uean* and *sa-bat* practices to pentatonic melodies, but applied them to Western modes, including the twelve-tone system. Built upon a twelve-tone pitch collection, B-F-E-C♯-C-A-E♭-D-A♭-B♭-G, *The Dawn of Darkness* sounds non-Thai throughout the piece. However, the solo part retains Prangcharoen’s unique sound signature by seamlessly fusing *sa-bat* manners in twelve-tone melodic passages, yet using only pitches from the twelve-tone collection. In measures 86-93, for example, the *sa-bat* practice is evident, mirroring by decorated paired grace notes (see figure 22).

Figure 22. *Sa-bat* in a twelve-tone passage in *The Dawn of Darkness*, mm. 81-94.

The Thai performance practices allow Prangcharoen to fuse Thai sonorities anywhere in his orchestral music without being restricted to quoting Thai musical material, using a pentatonic passage, creating a stratified polyphonic texture, or mimicking the *thao* structure. Although Prangcharoen applies the *uean* and *sa-bat* flexibly to correlate with his compositional process, he draws them specifically from Thai singing and instrumental practices. This twofold specific-broad application of Thai musical elements appears in Prangcharoen’s adoption of Thai musical instruments as well.
Thai Percussion Instrument

In some of his orchestral works, Prangcharoen specifically calls for khong-mong, a bossed Thai gong whose size can be varied from twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, yet he does not follow its archetypal role in Thai music. Instead of letting the gong govern the rhythmic section as in the Thai original, Prangcharoen ignores the pattern of gong strokes and uses it to enhance his music sonically and spiritually. He sometimes asks for specific pitched Thai gongs in his orchestral scores, yet they are tuned to Western tuning system. Prangcharoen is not concerned with the fusion of two tuning systems, unlike his Thai predecessor Somtow Sucharitkul, who combined Thai tuned khong-wong-yai and Western-tuned instruments in his Gongula.

A small Thai gong in Respiration of the Sun and a large Thai gong in Tri-Sattawat, both with indefinite-pitched tuning, function similarly to a tam-tam but provide different sonorities. Their sparse punctuation throughout both pieces either supports forte chords for climaxes or creates soft sustained lines. In The Migration of Lost Souls, however, five small tuned Thai gongs (F-D♭-A♭-C-E♭) appear only at the end of the piece. Their aleatoric passage accentuates the piece’s main pitch material, which originates in the bell sounds of Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, a Theravada Buddhist temple in Chiang Mai, Thailand. This gong sonority evokes religious atmosphere as the music depicts of the lost souls’ last breath before their journey to heaven. The appearances of a small tuned Thai gong at the end of Sattha and a large untuned Thai gong in the final measures of Namaskar imply the same spiritual meaning as Sattha concludes its

25 From the program notes attached to Narong Prangcharoen, “The Migration of Lost Souls for Orchestra,” score, 2012.
memorial to the tsunami’s victims and Namaskar pleads gods to protect the humanity from natural disasters.

Whether in structure, texture, pentatonicism, quotation, performance practice, or musical instrument, Prangcharoen draws only the broad concepts, conspicuous characteristics, or distinctive fragments from his Thai models. He never assimilates any Thai musical elements directly, but almost always handles their concepts, characteristics, and fragments within his compositional process, especially with motivic development and variation techniques.

Musical Influences from Other Southeast Asian Traditional Music

Apart from Thai music, influences on Prangcharoen’s orchestral music also extend to musical elements from other Southeast Asian cultures, namely Indonesian gamelan and Khmer traditional music. Again, Prangcharoen does not directly imitate any of these musical traditions, but captures their prominent musical features. He evokes the sound of Khmer and Balinese pentatonicism by combining two- or three-note group, each from their different scales.26 For example, Prangcharoen built a theme of Illuminations (mm. 167-192) from a G-A-B♭-C♯-E pentatonic pitch collection (see figure 23), while basing another theme of Namaskar (mm. 65-90) on a G-A-B♭-D-E collection. Both collections reflect the combination of Khmer and Balinese modes: the first three notes derive from the Balinese heptatonic pelog saih pitu scale, the last two notes of Namaskar’s theme from the Khmer pentatonic mode. And in both themes, Prangcharoen

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adopted the concept of Khmer modes, which are always in the key of G, although here the final tone (tonal center) is shifted to A.\textsuperscript{27}

Figure 23. Khmer and Balinese pentatonic scales and Balinese gamelan’s interlocking rhythmic pattern in \textit{Illuminations}, mm. 172-177.

Another feature derived from gamelan music is Prangcharoen’s use of interlocking rhythmic patterns. In the same way as the treble woodwinds intertwine different layers of rhythmic motives in \textit{Pubbanimitta} (mm. 84-87 and again in mm. 95-98), the percussion and piano imitate the Balinese musical practice in \textit{Illuminations} (see figure 23). The latter also echoes Balinese gong sonorities and mirrors the angular and shaking movements of Balinese

dance through its alternation between patterns and pauses that sporadically take place throughout the accompaniment lines.²⁸

This broad-sense application of Thai and Southeast Asian musical elements provide Prangcharoen with different alternatives of musical materials in order to establish distinctive cross-cultural processes and sonorities in his orchestral compositions. However, it is not the “exotic” accents alone that distinguish his orchestral works from others; the Oriental subjects and inspirations also contribute to the effect. Accordingly, Prangcharoen’s synthesis of Thai and Southeast Asian elements does not confine itself to the musical components of their musics, but extra-musical aspects as well.

Thai Extra-Musical Elements²⁹

In Musical Exoticism, Ralph P. Locke claims musical exoticism is “the process of evoking in or through music—whether that music is ‘exotic-sounding’ or not—a place, people, or social milieu that is not entirely imaginary and that differs profoundly from the home country or culture in attitudes, customs, and moral.”³⁰ In other words, elements that contribute to music exoticism do not restrain themselves to mere musical components, but extend to extra-musical features, evoking exotic locales without possessing exotic or even unusual sound.³¹ In the same way that dramatic composers of Locke’s case studies carried exoticism through extra-musical

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²⁹ Information on Prangcharoen’s Thai extra-musical influences is mostly taken from Narong Prangcharoen, interview by author, Kansas City, MO, February 2 and 28, 2014.


³¹ Ibid., 59.
Prangcharoen conveys Thainess in his orchestral music through their narratives.\textsuperscript{32}

Prangcharoen’s extra-musical influences overlap his general interests in daily life, most of which involve Thailand and its culture since he maintains a strong connection with Thai people, habits, attitudes, and beliefs although he has been living in the United States for over a decade. He surrounds himself with a Thai community at his residence in Kansas City and follows the news in Thailand. These Thai connections impact his musical conceptions in ways equal to the Thai musical elements.

Prangcharoen’s ideas of Thai lifestyle ranges from a considerably flexible conduct to a disorderly pattern as he believes that Thai people in general are malleable and have great tolerance, yet lack of discipline and do not conform to societal rules and regulations.\textsuperscript{33} He views Thais as possessing great patience, but ignorant of why they standing in line. He also observes that when Thai people walk as a group, they often form a cluster. He contrasts this Thai disposition to the Western one, which often conforms to regulations, and in which people, although assembled as a group, often walk in pairs. His musical translation of this perception is reflected through intermittently disordered moments, asymmetrical proportion of phrases and sections, and unusually extended phrases in his music.

Aside from the characteristics of the Thai society, Prangcharoen pays attention to incidents in Thailand that have international reach and employs them as subjects of his compositions to create connection with a broad audience. For example, when the tsunami hit Thailand in 2004, its impact was not limited to southern Thailand, but affected eleven other

\textsuperscript{32} Ralph P. Locke, Chapters 5-10, in \textit{Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections}.

\textsuperscript{33} Narong Prangcharoen, interview by author, Kansas City, MO, February 28, 2014.
countries.\textsuperscript{34} This event was a universal experience, disturbing people around the world directly and indirectly. Prangcharoen expressed this part of Thailand’s, as well as the world’s, history through \textit{Sattha}. With \textit{Pubbanimitta} and \textit{The Migration of Lost Souls}, Prangcharoen extended his contemplation of similar natural disasters and the damages occurred in Thailand and other parts of the world.

Embracing Thai traditions as his subjects and inspiration is another way for Prangcharoen to conceive distinctive narratives for his orchestral works. Dedicated to the celebration of His Majesty the King of Thailand’s 80\textsuperscript{th} Birthday Anniversary, \textit{Respiration of the Sun} does not only refer to the Sun as its main subject, but also to the King of Thailand. Prangcharoen compared the King to the Sun as he believed that the Sun supplies energy for every living system, the King is the cornerstone for all Thai people. He conveyed the tradition of the royal celebration of the King’s birthday anniversary through a festive, majestic sound. Another portrayal of Thai tradition lies in \textit{Phenomenon}, through which Prangcharoen depicts the custom of Thai people, especially the northeastern Thais, who visit the Mekong River in the Nong Khai province at the end of Buddhist Lent to witness the Naga fireballs. Surprisingly, with this Thai background, the music of \textit{Phenomenon} does not sound Thai and mainly consists of tritones and impressionistic textures, the only exception being the pentatonicism (mm. 115-121).

Prangcharoen is relatively devoted to Buddhism, yet he never applies any explicit Buddhist principles in his music but simply incorporates the ritual concept of Brahman-Hinduism, which has long been harmoniously fused with Thai Buddhist rites. In \textit{Namaskar}, Prangcharoen conveys the Brahman-Hinduism ritual of \textit{namaskar} (“worship”) more through its ideology than its sonority, although \textit{Namaskar} evokes Thai musical ambience through a

relatively minor pentatonic mode with decorations of *uen* and *sa-bat*. The sound of the brass and drums reflect the concept of *Wong Trae Sang* played in the original ritual, yet Prangcharoen did not follow any musical practices or elements of the ancient ensemble.

*Tri-Sattawat* is also influenced by another Brahman-Hinduism ritual practiced in Thai music ceremonies that respectfully engages angels and gods to join the congregation and bless the ceremonies. Among the music accompanying this ceremony is *Sathukarn*, a song from *Phleng Na-phat* genre. In Thai music, *Phleng Na-phat* is musical pieces that accompany actions or emotions of characters in Thai stage and masked dramas.35 There are two categories of *Phleng Na-phat*: a normal level which accompanies commoners and a high level for royal characters, gods, and angels. *Sathukarn* belongs to the second category, accompanying the procession of gods and angels from heaven to the earth. Similar to the brass and drums of *Namaskar*, the solo bassoon (representing *pi*, a Thai quadruple-reed instrument) followed by the gradual appearance of the whole orchestra (mirroring *pi-phat*, a Thai music ensemble) in *Tri-Sattawat* assimilates mainly the concept of *Sathukarn* music, and not its musical sound.

Moreover, Buddhism allows Prangcharoen another way to perceive the sense and meaning of time, which impacts the overall timing in his orchestral works. Prangcharoen believes in time’s capacity to reveal problems and solutions in life through consciousness; likewise, time is able to unfold intensity and resolution in music through individual placement of musical materials.36 He often places two contrasting kinds of time in his music: the first is illustrated through a stagnant, calm section, which represents a peaceful, focused mind; the


36 Narong Prangcharoen, e-mail message to author, April 5, 2014.
second is a forward moving moment, which, together with dissonant harmonies, increasingly creates tension and leads to a climax, which can either be a resolution or generate more tension toward another climax.\textsuperscript{37} Another approach to evoke the sense of time through the Buddhist perspective appears in \textit{Namaskar}, which Prangcharoen explored the use of different types of energy within slow sections to echo the Asian philosophical view of time as a long, slow folding line.\textsuperscript{38}

Prangcharoen’s fusion of Thai musical and extra-musical elements with Western musical instruments and principles in his orchestral music moved the borderline of cross-cultural processes practiced by Thai composers further. He did not confine himself either to adding Western conventional harmony to Thai pentatonic melodies, or to the rigid structure and practices of Thai music. Rather, he fused Thai sources with Western conventional and modern musical techniques, particularly neotonality, tritones, and motivic development. These Western compositional devices, when combined with the composer’s impressions of the Thai lifestyle, tradition, and religion, and fused with Thai musical elements—whether structure, texture, pentatonicism, quotation, performance practice, or musical instrument—ultimately formed Prangcharoen’s distinctive cross-cultural synthesis.

\textsuperscript{37} Narong Prangcharoen, e-mail message to author, April 7, 2014.

\textsuperscript{38} From the program notes attached to Narong Prangcharoen, Namaskar \textit{for Orchestra}.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Through the fusion of Thai elements with Western compositional principles in his orchestral music, Narong Prangcharoen did not only stretch the boundaries of cross-cultural processes practiced by Thai composers, but he also extended those applied by Western composers. While the Thais often limited their Western musical devices to those of the Classic and Romantic periods (with occasional flourishes of the mid-twentieth century), the Westerners restricted their cultural and musical references of the Far East to China, Japan, Korea, and Indonesia. Prangcharoen embraces those paths not taken by previous Thai and Western composers to form his individualistic cross-cultural process, which has enriched the repertoires with more possible compositional devices and sonorities. To bring this thesis to its conclusion, it is necessary to compare the fusion processes practiced by Prangcharoen and other Thai and Western composers in order to fully place Prangcharoen in his historical milieu.

When placing Prangcharoen’s fusion alongside the five main practices from Thai cross-cultural music history, traces of each practice are clear although Prangcharoen adjusts them to suit his writing style by depending more on modern compositional devices and treating the Thai elements with more flexibility. The fusion of Western music with Thai lyrics that appeared in Thai religious music (Catholic chants from the sixteenth century and Christian hymns from the nineteenth century) and contemporary Thai popular music is a completely different process from
Prangcharoen’s fusion technique in his orchestral music. Prangcharoen never adds Thai words to any composition, with the exception of his single choral work, *Echo of the Mountains* (2009), which broadened this fusion by including Asian languages: Thai, Korean, Japanese, Malaysian, Indonesian, and Chinese.

The “Thai-ized” process of the early military band repertoire that first appeared in the late nineteenth century presents the Western military band playing arrangements of Thai music in Thai style, accurately assimilating Thai practices of melody, rhythmic structure, and polyphonic stratification. Prangcharoen’s cross-cultural process is different from this second fusion practice as he never strictly follows any Thai musical practices, but instead adopts all of the Thai musical elements and conforms them to his writing style. Prince Paribatra, who systemized the “Thai-ized” process in the early twentieth century, also explored the fusion process of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western musical exoticism in Thai military music by applying a Thai or pentatonic melody and resting it above Western-style harmonization. Prangcharoen advances this exotic/pentatonic process; he never harmonizes it with Western conventional harmonic progressions but often treats pentatonic tunes with devices of motive development, polyphonic writing, and atonality.

The cross-cultural process that combines Thai musical structure and performance practices in a Western-style composition first appeared in *Siang Tian* (1970s and 1988) by Prasidh Silapabanleng. This process was stretched much further by the American-Thai Bruce Gaston, who precisely observed Thai musical manners but fused them with avant-garde techniques. This Thai structure process was transformed to a conceptual level in works by Gaston’s student Jiradej Setabundhu, who literally translated the hierarchical pitch structure and centonization of Thai music to his invented language-based system, on which he grounded his
Western-guise compositions. Although Prangcharoen adopts the slow-medium-fast structure of the Thai thao as well as Thai instrumental and singing performance practices, he never limits himself to the rigid setting of the Thai original but merely applies their concepts in a broad sense.

The influence of Thai extra-musical elements appeared in the cross-cultural practice of Rear Admiral M.L. Usni Pramoj’s and Somtow Sucharitkul’s neo-Classic and neo-Romantic works from the late twentieth century. Prangcharoen adopts this practice but develops it further by synthesizing Thai narratives with newer musical languages of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Among all Thai composers, Prangcharoen’s cross-cultural process is related primarily to that of his first composition teacher, Narongrit Dhamabutra, who combines almost all the fusion practices of Thai and Western elements in his compositions. Nonetheless, even though Dhamabutra incorporates twentieth-century timbres, his musical language remains largely neo-Romantic. Prangcharoen’s orchestral works, on the other hand, display more advanced writing style by fusing Thai musical elements with more contemporary compositional devices.

Turning attention from the East to the West, Prangcharoen’s fusion brings out traits from the cross-cultural processes that appeared in Western music history. However, when compared with the elements drawn from Asian sources, it is obvious that Prangcharoen’s fusion is different from Western composers’ by the addition of Thai materials. Chinese references in opera have tickled the European’s fancy since the late seventeenth century, beginning with Henry Purcell’s The Fairy Queen (1692) followed by Italian dramma per musica and comic operas of the eighteenth century. This first fusion of the Far East and the West in Western music history expresses the Chinese implication only through non-musical elements, including settings, costumes, plot, characters, and language; the accompanied music, however, remains in typical
Baroque and Classical style. Prangcharoen’s synthesis is similar to this fusion for his application of Thai extra-musical elements in his orchestral music without any reference to Thai sonorities. However, unlike European composers, Prangcharoen does not refer to the East in order to escape from the everyday world; on the contrary, Thai extra-musical references are a significant part of his personality and through them he expresses his impression toward elements that make up his life as a Thai living and working in the West.

The fusion of pentatonicism in nineteenth-century Western compositions is comparable to the Thai exotic/pentatonic synthesis above, where a pre-existing Eastern tune or a newly-composed pentatonic melody rests above Western-style harmonization. Although sometimes Prangcharoen’s cross-cultural process is similar to this fusion for the evocation of Orientalist flavor, Prangcharoen’s process does not restrict itself to Western conventional harmonic progressions but also includes extended harmonies and atonality as well.

When Claude Debussy transferred the techniques of gamelan music into his post-1889 music, a more “original” synthesis emerged in Western music literature. Debussy strove toward a more definite evocation of the gamelan sonority by drawing out characteristic features of the original music—whether pentatonic and whole tone scales, an ostinato nuclear theme, heterorhythmic, and colotomic punctuation—and fusing them into his timbrally-based melody, harmony, and atmosphere. Prangcharoen’s and Debussy’s syntheses are similar for the sonic transformation of the composers’ impression toward the traditional music without any attempt to assimilate the original musical elements accurately.

Accordingly, Prangcharoen’s synthesis is completely different from that of the early twentieth-century American composers such as Henry Cowell, Colin McPhee, and Lou Harrison, who composed from an “insider’s” point of view. Similar to Bruce Gaston, these American
composers passionately studied the traditional musics and attempted to emulate the archetypal musics in their compositions. Contrarily, Prangcharoen never had any formal lessons in Thai music, neither did he express any intention to write traditional musical pieces.

While those early twentieth-century American composers aimed for the accurate practices of Asian musics, mid-century American composers turned their interest to East Asian aesthetics and philosophies for their cross-cultural fusion. While Harry Partch was captivated by East Asian musical aesthetic principles and translated them into his Monophonic system and Corporeality, John Cage found a correlation between the Chinese I Ching and his concept of chance music. The contemplative, time-suspending qualities of gamelan and other non-Western musics also laid a foundation for the entire minimalist output. Prangcharoen’s fusion of Thai aesthetics and philosophy is analogous to these American composers’, as neither clung to the authentic meanings of those aesthetics and philosophies, but handled them according to their own interpretations and fused them with different Western compositional techniques.

Prangcharoen’s fusion is most closely related to that of the contemporary Asian-American composers, especially the “new wave” generation of Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Bright Sheng, and Tan Dun. These composers reflect Chinese sonorities from both traditional and folk musics and merge Chinese elements with the twelve-tone method, atonality, as well as other avant-garde music techniques, even while retaining strong tonal centers. These new wave composers also fuse the Chinese references from extra-musical elements, including Chinese history, Buddhism, literature, aesthetics, and philosophies. Similar to many of these composers’ disciples, Prangcharoen follows the footsteps of these Asian-American composers, but extended the materials for Asian references to include Thai elements as well.
After scrutinizing cross-cultural processes in Western and Thai classical music history, it is obvious that Prangcharoen did not invent his musical fusion from a void but imbedded influences from all existing syntheses and shaped them in his compositional style to establish his distinctive fusion practice and musical language. His cross-cultural fusion of Thai and Western elements in the form of Western art music has contributed different perspectives to the familiar musical exotic repertoires and the new trend of Asian-American compositions in the Western music history, as well as to the conservative fusion still found in Thailand. In the same way that this thesis narrows the gap of musical scholarship on cross-cultural composition through the study of Prangcharoen’s fusion practice, Prangcharoen fills a hole in practice of musical exoticism and tightens the relationship between Thai traditional and folk music and Western modern music through a powerful fusion, joining new ripples of musical influences spreading around the world.
APPENDIX A
PENTATONIC THEME IN PUBBANIMITTA, MM. 1-59

Theme: first time

Foreground melody
Sustained background
foreground melody
Sustained background
Transition

Theme: second time

Foreground melody

Foreground counter-melody

Sustained background

Non-chord tone

Foreground counter-melody

Page 169
Expanded tutti section

Theme for motivic development

Non-chord tones
Transition

Theme: third time

Non-chord tones
Non-chord tones
APPENDIX B
SELECTED WORKS BY NARONG PRANGCHAROEN

Orchestra

The Migration of Lost Souls (2012)
- Commissioned by the American Composers Orchestra with the support of Paul Underwood
- First performed on October 26, 2012, by the American Composers Orchestra, conducted by José Serebrier at Carnegie Hall (Zankel Hall), New York
- Scored for piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion (3 players), piano, and strings
- Duration: 15 minutes

Illuminations (2012)
- Commissioned by Beijing Modern Music Festival to celebrate its tenth anniversary
- First performed on May 19, 2012, by the China NCPA Orchestra, conducted by Lu Jia at the National Centre for the Performing Arts, Beijing, China
- Scored for piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion (3 players), piano, and strings
- Duration: 12 minutes

Pubbanimitta (2011)
- Winner of ACO (American Composers Orchestra)’s 20th Underwood New Music Commission
- First performed on June 4, 2011, by the American Composers Orchestra, conducted by George Manahan at the Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York
- Scored for piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion (3 players), and strings
- Duration: 9 minutes

Namaskar (2010)
- Winner of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute, 2010.
- First performed on October 29, 2010, by the Minnesota Orchestra, conducted by Osmo Vänskä at the Auditorium of the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, MN
- Scored for piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion (3 players), piano, and strings
- Duration 10 minutes
**Tears of Dust** for String Orchestra (2008)
- Commissioned by the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra
- First performed on February 21, 2008, by the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Hikotaro Yazaki at Thailand Cultural Centre (Main Hall), Bangkok, Thailand
- Scored for strings
- Duration: 6 minutes

**Tri-Sattawat** (2007)
- Commissioned by the Annapolis Symphony
- First performed on February 15, 2008, by the Annapolis Symphony, conducted by José-Luis Novo at the Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, Annapolis, MD
- Scored for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (2 players), and strings
- Duration: 7 minutes

**Respiration of the Sun** (2006)
- Commissioned by Alexander Zimlinsky’s Composition Competition
- First performed on June 30, 2007, by the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Andreas Hérm Baumgartner at the Concert Hall of Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra, Zlin, Czech Republic
- Scored for piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion (3 players), piano, and strings
- Duration: 13 minutes

**Sattha** for Strings, Piano, and Percussion (2005)
- Commissioned by the Pacific Symphony Orchestra
- First performed November 30, 2005 by the Pacific Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Carl St. Clair at the Segerstrom Concert Hall, Costa Mesa, CA
- Scored for strings, piano, and percussion (2 players)
- Duration: 10 minutes

**Phenomenon** (2004)
- Winner of the Pacific Symphony’s American Composer Competition 2005
- Awarded second prize of the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award 2004
- First performed on May 30, 2004, by the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Norichika Iimori at the Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall, Tokyo, Japan
- Scored for piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion (3 players), piano, and strings
- Duration: 10 minutes
Concerto

*Maha Mantras* for Alto/Soprano Saxophone and Orchestra (2013)
- Commissioned by the Fourth International Jean-Marie Londeix Saxophone Competition
- First performed on February 14, 2014, by Shyen Lee (soprano and alto saxophones) with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Chan Tze Law at the Music Auditorium, College of Music, Mahidol University, Nakornprathom, Thailand
- Scored for solo alto/soprano saxophone and orchestra: piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion (3 players), piano, and strings
- Duration: 17 minutes

*Anatman* for Cello and Wind Ensemble (2012)
- Commissioned by UMKC Wind Symphony
- First performed on April 26, 2012, by Carter Enyeart (cello) with the University of Missouri-Kansas City Wind Symphony, conducted by Steven Davis at White Recital Hall, James C. Olson Performing Arts Center, Kansas City, MO
- Scored for solo cello and wind ensemble: piccolo, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, clarinet in E♭, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, 2 trumpets, 4 horns, trombone, bass trombone, euphonium, tuba, timpani, percussion (3 players), piano, and double bass
- Duration: 18 minutes

*The Dawn of Darkness* for Tenor Saxophone and Orchestra (2012)
- Commissioned by the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra
- First performed on March 17, 2012, by Wisuwat Pruksavanich (tenor saxophone) with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Dariusz Mikulski at the Music Auditorium, College of Music, Mahidol University, Nakhonpathom, Thailand
- Scored for solo tenor saxophone and orchestra: piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion (3 players), piano, and strings
- Duration: 15 minutes

*Mantras* for Solo Soprano Saxophone and Wind Ensemble (2009)
- Commissioned by the 15th World Saxophone Congress
- First performed on March 23, 2010, by John Sampen (soprano saxophone) with the University of Missouri-Kansas City Wind Symphony, conducted by Steven Davis at White Recital Hall, James C. Olson Performing Arts Center, Kansas City, MO
- Scored for solo soprano saxophone and wind ensemble: piccolo, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, clarinet in E♭, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 2 alto saxophones, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, 3 trumpets, 4 horns, 2 trombone, bass trombone, euphonium, tuba, timpani, percussion (4 players), piano, and 2 double basses
- Duration: 15 minutes
Wind Ensemble

In the Dark Cloud (2009)
- Commissioned by Illinois State University for the 40th Anniversary of the College of Fine Arts
- First performed on October 3, 2010, by the Illinois State Wind Symphony, conducted by Stephen K. Steele at the Center for the Performing Arts Concert Hall, Normal, IL
- Scored for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, clarinet in E♭, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, soprano saxophone, alto saxophones, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, 3 trumpets, 4 horns, 2 trombone, bass trombone, euphonium, tuba, timpani, percussion (3 players), piano, and double bass
- Duration: 8 minutes

Namaskar (2009)
- Commissioned by the Texas Tech University
- First performed on April 8, 2010, by the Texas Tech University Wind Ensemble, conducted by Sarah McKoin at the CBDNA Southern Region Conference 2010, New Mexico State University, Los Cruces, TX
- Scored for piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, clarinet in E♭, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 2 alto saxophones, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, 3 trumpets, 4 horns, 2 trombone, bass trombone, euphonium, tuba, timpani, percussion (3 players), piano, and double bass
- Duration: 8 minutes

Presage (2009)
- Commissioned by the Kasetsart University Wind Symphony
- First performed in January, 2010, by the Kasetsart University Wind Symphony, conducted by Nipat Kanchanahud at the Kasetsart University Auditorium, Bangkok, Thailand
- Scored for piccolo, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, clarinet in E♭, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 2 alto saxophones, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, 3 trumpets, 4 horns, 2 trombone, bass trombone, euphonium, tuba, timpani, percussion (3 players), piano, and double bass
- Duration: 9 minutes

Chakra (2007)
- Commissioned by the Illinois State University Wind Symphony
- First performed on April 22, 2007, by the Illinois State University Wind Symphony, conducted by Stephen K. Steele at the Center for the Performing Arts Concert Hall, Normal, IL
- Scored for piccolo, 4 flutes, 2 oboes, clarinet in E♭, 4 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 2 alto saxophones, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, 4 trumpets, 4 horns, 2 trombone, bass trombone, euphonium, tuba, timpani, percussion (5 players), piano, and double bass
- Duration: 14 minutes
**Fata Morgana (2006)**
- Commissioned by the Texas Tech University
- First performed on October 5, 2006, by the Texas Tech University Wind Symphony, conducted by Sarah McKoin at Hemmle Recital Hall, Lubbock, TX
- Scored for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, clarinet in E♭, 4 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 2 alto saxophones, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, 3 trumpets, 4 horns, 2 trombone, bass trombone, euphonium, tuba, timpani, percussion (4 players), piano, and double bass
- Duration: 10 minutes

**Chamber Ensemble**

**Aberration of the Earth** for Trombone and Piano (2011)
- First performed in July 16, 2011, by the Amrein/Henneberger Duo at the College of Music, Mahidol University, Nakornprathom, Thailand
- Duration: 5 minutes

**Bhāvanā** for Baritone, Cello, Piano, and Guqin (2011)
- Commissioned by Thomas Buckner
- First performed on May 29, 2011, by Thomas Buckner and the Beijing New Music Ensemble at the National Centre for the Performing Arts, Beijing, China
- Duration: 13 minutes

**Vedana** for Violin, Horn, and Piano (2011)
- Commissioned by the Third Angle New Music Ensemble
- First performed May 26, 2011, by the Third Angle New Music Ensemble at the Old Church, Portland, OR
- Duration: 8 minutes

**Between Heaven and Earth** for Flute and Piano (2009)
- Commissioned by Music Teachers National Association/Missouri Music Teachers Association Commissioning Project
- Won Distinguished Composer Honorable Mention of the 2010 Music Teachers National Association, USA
- First performed on June 6, 2009, by Jonathan Borja (flute) and Christopher Janwong McKiggan (piano) at Whitmore Recital Hall, Columbia, MO
- Duration: 7 minutes

**Whispering** for Soprano Saxophone, Bass Clarinet, Piano and Percussion (2008)
- Commissioned by the newEar New Music Ensemble
- First performed on November 1, 2008, by the newEar New Music Ensemble at the Unity Temple, Kansas City, MO
- Duration: 11 minutes
Vayu for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello and Piano (2007)
- Commissioned by the New York New Music Ensemble
- First performed on July 15, 2008, by the New York New Music Ensemble at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand
- Duration: 9 minutes

Sanyata for Violin, Cello and Piano (2007)
- Commissioned by the Eon Trio
- First performed on July 28, 2007, by the Eon Trio at the Thailand Cultural Center (Small Hall), Bangkok, Thailand
- Duration: 8 minutes

Lom for Flute and Clarinet (2006)
- Commissioned by Yos Vaneesorn
- First performed on December 9, 2006, by Yos Vaneesorn (clarinet) and Adam Calliham (flute) at Grant Recital Hall, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City, MO
- Duration: 4:30 minutes

Anusorn for Cello and Piano (2006)
- Commissioned by Madeleine Shapiro and Bennett Lerner
- First performed on May 7, 2006, by Madeleine Shapiro (cello) and Bennett Lerner (piano) at the Greenwich House Music School, New York
- Duration: 7 minutes

Shadow for Woodwind Quintet (2003)
- Commissioned by the Lyrique Quintette
- First performed on November 16, 2003, by the Lyrique Quintette at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR
- Duration: 7:30 minutes

Pain, Loss, and... for String Quartet (2003)
- Winner of the 18th ACL (Asian Composers League) Yoshiro IRINO Memorial Composition Award
- First performed on July 26, 2003, by the Student’s String Quartet at the California Summer Music Concert, Monterey, CA
- Duration: 8 minutes

Bencharong for Flute, Cello, and Piano (2002)
- Commissioned by Kit Young and the Lanna Music Festival
- First performed on April 3, 2002, by the Lanna Music Festival Ensemble at the 2002 Lanna Music Festival, Payap University, Chiang Mai, Thailand
- Duration: 9 minutes
Solo Instrument

*Antahkarana* for Viola (2010)
- Commissioned by Michael Hall
- First performed on July 15, 2010, by Michael Hall (viola) at the 9th Thailand International Composition Festival, Rangsit University, Pathumthani, Thailand
- Duration: 5 minutes

*Far from Home* for Cello (2004)
- First performed on July 31, 2004, by Nick Dinnerstein (cello) at the California Summer Music Concert, Monterey, CA
- Duration 9:30 minutes

*Three Minds* for Piano (2003)
- Commissioned by Bennett Lerner
- First performed on October 4, 2003, by Bennett Lerner (piano) at the Lincoln Theater, Miami Beach, FL
- Duration: 9 minutes

*The Temple in the Mist* for Piano (2000)
- First performed on July 31, 2000, by Bennett Lerner (piano) at the Geothe Institute Auditorium, Bangkok, Thailand
- Duration 3 minutes

Choir

*Echo of the Mountains* for SATB, a cappella (2009)
- Commissioned by the Bangkok Christian College Glee Club
- First performed on June 27, 2009, by the Bangkok Christian College Glee Club, conducted Satid Sukchongchaipruck at Thailand Cultural Center, Bangkok, Thailand
- Duration: 3:30 minutes
APPENDIX C
NARONG PRANGCHAROEN’S DISCOGRAPHY


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VITA

Nathinee Chucherdwatanasak was born on February 4, 1986 in Bangkok, Thailand. She attended Daruna Ratchaburi School and Ratchaborikanukroh School in Ratchaburi province for her elementary and secondary education, respectively. In 1999, she was admitted to Trium Udom Suksa School in Bangkok, where she attended for one year before completing her senior secondary education from the Pre-College of Music, Mahidol University in 2003 as a piano performance major. She pursued her bachelor’s degree in piano performance at the College of Music, Mahidol University, from where she graduated in 2007 with first-class honors. Thereafter, she earned a Master of Music in Piano Performance from Eastern Michigan University in 2009.

Upon her graduation, Ms. Chucherdwatanasak returned to Thailand and became a piano instructor at the Trinity-Guildhall Thailand music institution from 2009 to 2011, as well as an adjunct professor of Western music history at the Conservatory of Music, Rangsit University from 2010 to 2011. She also gave private piano lessons at her music studio during her staying in Thailand.

In the Fall of 2011, Ms. Chucherdwatanasak began work toward her second Master of Music, this time with an emphasis in musicology, at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where she also served as a graduate teaching assistant in musicology from 2012 to 2014. Upon completion of her degree requirements, Ms. Chucherdwatanasak will continue her Ph.D. in Musicology at the University of Michigan in the Fall of 2014.

Ms. Chucherdwatanasak is a member of the American Musicological Society and the Society for American Music.