A HISTORY OF SIAMESE MUSIC RECONSTRUCTED FROM WESTERN DOCUMENTS 1505-1932

Introduction

The writing of music history, the chief activity of the musicologist, depends almost entirely on the existence of written documents. Historical studies of various musics of the world have appeared wherever there are such documents: Europe, China, Japan, Korea, India, and in the Islamic cultural area of Western Asia and North Africa. Mainland Southeast Asia, however, has remained much of a musico-historical void since little has remained besides oral traditions and a few stone carvings, although Vietnamese music is an exception to this statement. The fact that these countries have so few trained musicologists also contributes to the lack of research.

In the case of the Kingdom of Thailand, known before 1932 as Siam, little has been attempted in the way of music history in languages other than Thai, and those in Thai, also not plentiful, remain unknown to the outside world.[1] Only the European-trained Prince Damrong has attempted a comprehensive history, but it is based as much on tradition and conjecture as on concrete evidence and is besides quite brief. David Morton's classic study of Thai traditional music, *The Traditional Music of Thailand,* includes some eighteen pages of history, mostly based on oral traditions, conjecture, circumstantial evidence from neighboring musical cultures (Cambodia, China, and India), and some from the same documents used in this study.

At least three reasons can be given for the lack of historical materials originating in Thailand. The most obvious is that written documents must necessarily be on perishable materials such as palm-leaf (*nangsü bailan*) or paper. The wet climate of Thailand along with the many kinds of insects capable of destroying such materials made it unlikely that such documents would long survive without special care. The second reason accounts

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[1] We use the terms "Siamese" and "Thai" to distinguish the culture of Central Thailand, i.e., that embodied by the old Kingdom of Siam (or Syam), from the modern nation-state of Thailand, which includes all regions and their minority peoples.

for the destruction of what weather and insects spared—war. The Siamese, at various times, were attacked by the Khmer, Lao, and Burmese, especially the latter who subjugated the Siamese several times and sacked the capital, Ayutia, in 1767.

The final reason would seem to be an attitude that has not made the recording of history, especially musical history, a very high priority. Performing musicians did not write about their music, especially its history, and general writers knew little of music. In contrast to the document-keeping Chinese, the Siamese primarily kept chronicles of their kings, and few of these documents from before the Bangkok Period (late 18th century to the present) survive in the original. Moreover, we have not observed much interest in present-day Thailand in preserving old cultural expressions either as living traditions or museum pieces as the Japanese or Koreans, for example, have done, but this now appears to be changing. Especially in rural Thailand, when a musical or theatrical genre begins to die or change beyond recognition, there has been little interest in reviving it for the sake of "preserving the culture." Where nearly extinct genres have been taught to students, as at the College of Dramatic Arts, Fine Arts Department, in Bangkok, they tend to have been transformed into something more sophisticated or even stylized rather than preserved in their original environments.

Mostly overlooked by musical scholars is the wealth of European and American writings about Siam. These documents, primarily dating from the 16th century onwards, may be found in the important research libraries of the United States and Europe. Although they describe Siam and Siamese culture from a decidedly European, and often an out-and-out prejudiced, viewpoint, they include much information about the existence of instruments and theatrical genres as well as their functions. Whatever their shortcomings, and there are many, they are preferable to no documents or mere speculation. We have made 1932, the year of the revolution that overthrew the absolute monarchy, the cutoff point for this study.

The inspiration for this study was Frank Harrison's *Time, Place and Music: an Anthology of Ethnomusicological Observations c. 1550 to c. 1800*, published by Frits Knuf in Amsterdam in 1973. This collection includes both text and illustrations from the 1693 English edition of La Loubere's comprehensive study originally published in French in 1691. A student also showed me an English

translation of Gervaise's 1688 book. The discovery of E. W. Hutchinson's *Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century,* published in 1940, with its bibliography of early writings, stimulated the urge to check out all the sources.

We wish to acknowledge the help of a number of research libraries preserving materials consulted for this study. Most important are the Cleveland (Ohio) Public Library (especially the John White Collection) and the New York Public Library. Also of importance were the libraries of Kent State University, Case-Western Reserve University, the University of Chicago, and the Explorer's Club in New York City.

Finally, we thankfully acknowledge Professor Panya Roongrüang's thorough reading of the manuscript and his many corrections and alternate ideas.

FOR READERS FAMILIAR WITH THAI

The romanization system in the present work is that of the ALA-LC romanization tables, with the following exceptions:

จ	j
อี	ü
ออ	aw
ออย	ôi

The letter *w* is a consonant only at the beginning of a syllable. Vowel length, tone, and glottal stops are not shown.

FOR READERS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THAI

Consonants

The Thai consonants *ph*, *th*, and *kh* are aspirated (with a puff of air, as in English *pie*), while *p*, *t*, and *k* are not. Thai *ph* and *th* are *never* pronounced as in English *phone* or *thin*.

Vowels

Thai has nine primary vowels:

i ü u
e oe o
ae aw
a

The vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u* are pronounced as in Spanish.

The vowel *ae* is pronounced as in *apple*.

The vowel *aw* is pronounced as in *saw*.

The vowel *oe* is pronounced as in *earth*.

The vowel *ü* can be approximated by grinning broadly while trying to say "u."

All nine vowels are used in *diphthongs*, which are formed by adding *a*, *i*, *o*, or *u* (but never *e*) to the end of a primary vowel. In the present system *aw* changes to *ô* in the diphthong *ôi*.

There is one *triphthong*: *ieo*.

I

An Historical Survey of Writers and Their Documents

> I consider the Siamese music execrable; nor, indeed, is there any nation in the East that can be said to possess even the first rudiments of music, save and except the Malays inhabiting the straits of Malacca. (Frederick Arthur Neale, *Narrative of a Residence at the Capital of the Kingdom of Siam* 1852: 237)

> There was nothing extraordinary, neither in the Musick nor Voices; yet the novelty and diversity of them, made them pleasant enough not to prove tedious the first time. (Fr. Guy Tachard, S. J., *A Relation of the Voyage to Siam Performed by Six Jesuits* 1688: 186)

Southeast Asia was terra incognito to Europeans until Marco Polo traveled between 1275 and 1295 into the edge of Burma, Yunnan (China), Java, and Bali. Later travelers, on their way to China, also passed through these lands but, like Polo, missed the Kingdom of Siam. The newly founded and unified Siamese kingdom at Ayuthaya of 1350 was unknown to Europeans until the early 16th century. The Portuguese, whose missionaries were given a monopoly on the lands east of Africa by a bull issued in the late 15th century by Pope Alexander VI, captured Malacca on the west coast of the Malay peninsula in 1511. That same year (D.G.E. Hall gives 1516) the Portuguese commander of Malacca, Don Affonse de Albuquerque, sent an envoy to the court at Ayuthaya, one Duarte Fernandes, who has the honor of having been the first known European to visit Siam.

In the following period European contact increased except during the years 1568 to 1583 when Ayuthaya, under attack from Burma, was forced to become her vassal state. Indeed, before the Burmese were entirely expelled, an Englishman, Ralph Fitch, traveling with the Burmese in 1587, became the first person from his nation to enter Siam, albeit in the Chiangmai area to the north

of Siam. During the 17th century four European nations—England, Holland, Portugal, and France—were heavily involved in Siam in various ways and for various reasons. It was during this period that references to music and theatre became common and enlightening.

Of the extant descriptions of early Siam by Europeans, more than half mention music to some extent, from a mere passing reference to a complete chapter. The number of musical sources during each century approximately reflects the number of writings generally and, thus, the activities of Europeans in Siam. Of some fifty-nine sources that mention music written between 1505 and 1932, two are from the 16th century, seventeen from the 17th century, only two from the 18th, twenty-eight from the 19th century, and twelve from the beginning of the 20th century to the Revolution of 1932 when the court music establishment disbanded.

The sources are of many types including travelers' journals, travelers' descriptions published as books or reports, comprehensive books, and later general histories of music and scholarly articles and books. The writers themselves represent varied backgrounds. There are Jesuits and other missionaries, official envoys and ambassadors, soldiers and naval officers, adventurers and travelers, astronomers, a naturalist, a geographer, educators, traders, a doctor, a lawyer, a governess, and later scholars including a musicologist, an ethnomusicologist, and a philologist. Most accounts were based on first-hand experience, but a few were derived secondhand from people who had been to Siam or from Siamese visiting Europe. They range from quasi-fictional to photographic, though sometimes it is difficult to know for sure. The viewpoints vary from detached and objective to ethno-centric and prejudiced against the Siamese as can be seen in the two excerpts opening this chapter. Since few of the writers were trained musicians, their descriptions of music are often quite amateurish or vague. Few had enough musical knowledge to offer any useful appraisal of style or theory. Regardless of their shortcomings, these writers provide us with at least a keyhole view into what is otherwise largely an historical void.

The earliest description mentioning music, that written in 1505 by the Bolognese traveler Ludovico di Varthema, is not strictly speaking a reference to Siamese music since he visited "Ternassari" (Tenasserim, Tanao-sri in Thai) in the upper Malay

Peninsula in what is now Burma but which was then under Siamese suzerainty. His statements are so general as to tell us little:

> And in addition they play all sorts of instruments so that there is a big noise in the town. There are always present fifteen or twenty men, made up like devils in an awe inspiring manner, who make great rejoicing.
>
> There are also present pipers and street-musicians in great numbers, singing and making a big noise, and the men, made up like devils, spit fire from their mouths and perform strange antics. They also offer a sacrifice to Deumo or the devil. (Guehler 1959: 258, 259)

The first description of the Siamese kingdom itself by an eye-witness who mentions music is the *Peregrinacao* (usually spelled *Peregrinacam*) by Fernão Mendes Pinto (1510-1583), a Portuguese adventurer who went to India in 1537 and arrived in Siam for the first time in early 1548. While his Peregrinations are lively, specific, and describe instruments and musical customs, they were also written long after his return to Portugal in 1558, and their accuracy is doubted by some writers. Quoting E. G. Sebastian,

> His contemporaries, as was perhaps not unnatural, were extremely sceptical about his stories. Congreve in his comedy "Love for Love" puts the following words into the mouth of one of his characters: 'Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude,' and later Sir Richard Burton, in one of his footnotes to the third voyage of Sindbad the Sailor, when discussing the huge serpent which ate his companions, mentions Mendez Pinto and calls him 'The Sindbad of Portugal, though not so respectable'. (Wood 1959: 196)

After Mendes Pinto, it is nearly one hundred years, to 1636, before we encounter another mention of music. During this period Siam was conquered by Burma (1568-1683), and after her recovery a variety of foreigners came to establish more-or-less permanent bases for trading and other purposes. Among them were a large number of Japanese, many of them Christian, who came during the period 1605-1610 to escape persecution in Japan. The Portuguese established a church in Ayuthaya in 1606 and two years later, in

1608, the Dutch came trading. The pursuasive Dutch eventually became, or at least appeared to be, the strongest European nation in Southeast Asia, and Siam sent its first embassy to The Hague in 1609, the earliest known visit of a Siamese to Europe. In 1612 the English established a post for the twelve–year–old East India Company at Ayuthaya but were forced out through pressure from the Dutch in 1623, only to attempt other ill-fated re-establishments of the company in 1661 and 1674.

Between 1629, when Prasat Thong became King of Siam, and 1656, when the long-lived Pra Narai became king, Siam was visited by four writers who mention music: Joost Schouten (1636), Johann Albrecht von Mandelslo (published c. 1662), Jeremias van Vliet (ms. of 1647), and Bernhard Varen, although this writer had not gone to Siam. Additionally, an illustration and description of what appears to be a Lao or Northeast Thai musical instrument, the *khaen*, appeared in Marin Mersenne's *Harmonie universelle* published in Paris in 1637. Schouten arrived in Siam in 1628 as an Agent for the Dutch East India Company and spent eight years there, to 1636, during which time he built a "factory" for the company, observed much of Siamese life, and diligently worked to improve Dutch-Siamese relations. Van Vliet succeeded Schouten in that post, but his description remained in manuscript form. Little is known of Mandelslo, whose writings, in various editions, describe his travels throughout Asia. Slightly later is the useful description of Siam, probably written by the Dutch navigator Willem Cornelisz Schouten, included in the *Descriptio regni Japoniae* (1649) written by the eminent German geographer Bernhard Varen (1622-1651), also known as Bernhardi Vareni and Bernhardus Varenius.

Between Narai's accession in 1656 and the period of the Revolution of 1688 after which seven Frenchmen published accounts of Siam describing music, there are only two sources. The first is a description of Tonkin (northern Vietnam) and Laos by Giovanni-Filippo de Marini (1608-1677), a Jesuit missionary who served many years in Tonkin, Macao, and Japan. His description of the Lao court is quite general and decidedly prejudiced:

> Different types of music preceded this pompous march coming out of the Palace of the King, but with so much confusion on their part, and from instruments so badly played, and from voices so rude and so discordant without observing bar lines,

that there is heard absolutely nothing but noise and a confusing sound more capable of irking and deafening the people, than of being pleasant to the ear. (1666: 363)

The second is *A New Voyage to the East-Indies* published in London about 1680 (a second edition of 1682 followed a French translation of the first published in Amsterdam in 1681) by an unknown Mr. Glanius. This account, like many, only mentions the music that accompanied public processions of the king.

The period between the arrival of French missionaries in 1662 and the 1688 Revolution, when they saw their grand schemes collapse, is one of the most fascinating periods of Siamese-European relations and constitutes nothing less than the unfolding of a sometimes sinister, sometimes maudlin, plot to convert the King of Siam to Christianity and through him gain control of the Kingdom. This same technique, or variations of it, had worked elsewhere, and there was no reason to believe it would not also work in Siam. At the same time Pra Narai, alarmed at the precocity of the Dutch in Southeast Asia in battering other Europeans, as well as directly threatening the Siamese, sought to counter their strength through relations with the powerful Louis XIV of France, accounts of whose success against the Dutch in Europe were purposely exaggerated by the ambitious missionaries.

From the beginning of French efforts in Southeast Asia, there was conflict with the Portuguese, whose claim to the geographic area was predicated on the bull issued by Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) granting them a monopoly on missionary activity east of Africa; the Portuguese viewed the French activities as an infringement; and Pope Alexander VII sought to evade the earlier bull by granting French missionaries the obsolete titles of bishoprics in Asia-Minor that had existed prior to that area's conversion to Islam. It was in 1662 that Lambert de la Motte, Bishop of Beritus, arrived in Siam. Further rivalry was to occur over the fact that de la Motte represented the French Societe des Missions Etrangeres found in 1659, an organization that was seen as a threat to the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). At that time, however, Louis XIV, under the influence of his powerful adviser, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, favored the Societe over the Jesuits, a "tilt" that was to change, with interesting results, back to the Jesuits in 1683 after Colbert's death. In 1663, Pallu, Bishop of Heliopolis, and

four priests arrived and the following year established a foothold in Ayuthaya.

It was not until 1678 that events began building towards France's greatest effort to convert King Narai, the year that the English, who had been allowed to reopen their factory in Ayuthaya to help counter Dutch strength, decided to bring in one Constant Phaulkon from Bantam in Java where he had worked for the East India Company. Phaulkon, born Constantin Hieracy, a Greek, on the island of Cephallonia, became a cabin boy on an English ship, and made his way to India by 1670. During this time he also changed his name to the French form known to historians of Siam. Two years after his arrival, in 1680, the English decided to further their interests by pursuading the Siamese government to hire Phaulkon as an official of the Treasury. Later he became Superintendent of Foreign Trade and, because he came to be trusted by King Narai, gained considerable power and influence over the Siamese government. Not only did the English expect him to further their interests, but he was also converted to Catholicism by a Jesuit and became interested in France's scheme to convert the king. It appears, however, that he cleverly mislead both the king and missionaries, the former thinking that Louis XIV wanted to help, the latter thinking that the king was on the verge of conversion. Upon the death of Colbert in 1683, however, the missionaries of the Societe fell from their privileged position. Having, therefore, lost their influence in France and not having made much progress in Siam, they more or less withdrew from the scheme.

In the meantime, Narai sent a mission to France in 1680, which was lost at sea. Upon learning of that mission's fate only in late 1683, Narai sent a second mission. A Jesuit, Father Vachet, assisted the envoys. Moreover, having learned of Phaulkon's conversion by a Jesuit, it was Vachet who conveyed word to Louis, who decided to make another effort to convert Narai, now through the Jesuits.

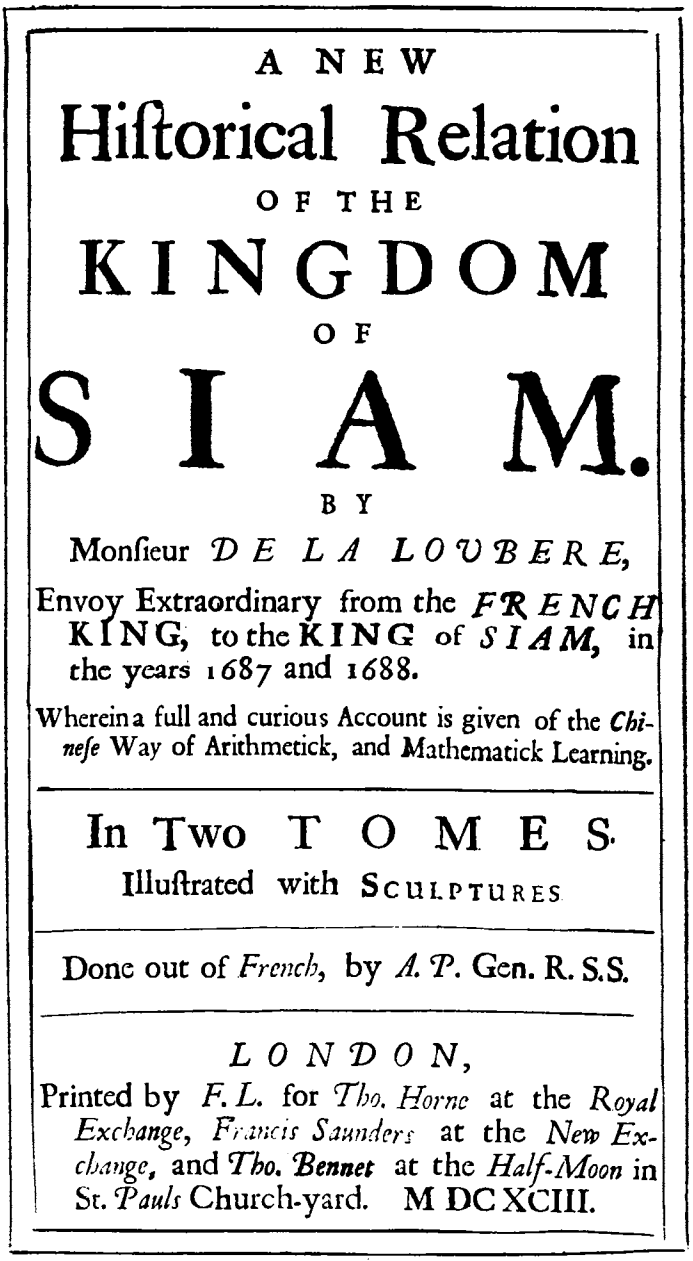
Accordingly, Louis XIV appointed Mr. Le Chevalier de Chaumont (b. 1640) as the first ambassador to the Court of Ayuthaya. Chaumont, whose *Relation de l'Ambassade de Mr. le Chevalier de Chaumont a la cour du Roy de Siam* (1686) provides a description of music, was somewhat fanatical in his faith and desire to convert Narai, who was looking for political support and practical exchanges from France rather than salvation.

Chaumont's mission sailed from Brest on 3 March 1685 in two ships. The battleship *L'oiseau* included Chaumont, Abbe de Choisy, Vachet, the two Siamese ambassadors, three naval officers, six Jesuit astronomers, six gentlemen, and the crew. It arrived in October.

Figure 1
Mr. le Chevalier de Chaumont presents letter to King Narai
(from Hutchinson, p. 42)

Besides Chaumont, four others in this entourage later published accounts of their travels that include references to music. These include the Second Mate, Chevalier de (Claude de) Forbin (1656-1733), whose memoires are not thought to be very accurate. Forbin became, on the request of Narai, a Grand Admiral of the Siamese Navy for two years (1685-1687) and rebuilt the defenses at Bangkok. Another writer describing music was M. L'Abbé de (Francois TimoLéon) Choisy (1644-1724), who became the "Religious Instrument to the King of Siam." Another was the astronomer, Pere Joachim Bouvet, S.J. (1662-1732) whose "Voiage de Siam du Pere Bouvet" remained a manuscript journal until 1963 and mentioned music several times. Finally among the writers of interest here is Fr. Gui Tachard, S.J. (1650-1712) who was also an astronomer but three times later acted as an ambassador to the court of Ayuthaya. At the same time (c. 1681-1685) another French missionary, Nicolas Gervaise (1662-1729), visited Siam and in 1688 published his important *Histoire naturelle et politique du Royaume de Siam.* Some of these men sailed in December, 1685, for France and others remained.

Returning with Tachard and Chaumont was a Siamese ambassador, Kosa Pan, who was to negotiate an arrangement involving French troops at Singora (present-day Songkhla). Thus far the efforts of Chaumont and company had been thwarted by the clever Phaulkon who, while acting as interpreter, told each party only what it wanted to hear. Indeed, Phaulkon and Tachard had secretly negotiated a deal whereby the French might capture Bangkok. Back in France, further maneuvering resulted in the commissioning of a second mission, this time lead by Fr. Tachard. Leaving Brest on 1 March 1687, Tachard's company included six warships, 636 soldiers (many of whom died enroute), two French plenipotentiaries, Kosa Pan, and several Jesuits. Their plan included not only the conversion of the Kingdom but the capture of Mergui (present-day Marit) and Bangkok, cities which the Siamese had not agreed to offer the French as garrisons. Of these, Tachard's second book mentions music, but it was the lawyer and ambassador Simon de La Loubere (1642-1729), whose *De Royaume de Siam* was published in Paris in 1691, who wrote the most important description of Siamese culture. Included in his book is an entire chapter on music, illustrations of instruments, and a song transcribed into staff notation.



A NEW

Hiſtorical Relation

OF THE

KINGDOM

OF

SIAM.

BY

Monſieur *DE LA LOUBERE*,

Envoy Extraordinary from the *FRENCH* KING, to the KING of *SIAM*, in the years 1687 and 1688.

Wherein a full and curious Account is given of the *Chineſe* Way of Arithmetick, and Mathematick Learning.

In Two TOMES

Illuſtrated with SCULPTURES

Done out of *French*, by *A. P.* Gen. R. S.S.

LONDON,

Printed by *F. L.* for *Tho. Horne* at the *Royal Exchange*, *Francis Saunders* at the *New Exchange*, and *Tho. Bennet* at the *Half-Moon* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard. M DC XCIII.

Figure 2
Title page of London edition of
Simon de La Loubere

Events during the period after the arrival of Tachard's mission on 27 September 1687 became extremely complicated. Phaulkon's attempts to play the French, Dutch, and Siamese against each other began unraveling. In March, 1688, two months after La Loubere departed for France, King Narai became ill. Phaulkon was arrested in May and executed on 5 July 1688, and Narai died in August. In the meantime the French garrison, which tried to come to Phaulkon's aid, was overwhelmed by the Siamese who held them captive until September. Following Narai's death, the king's official in charge of the royal elephants, Pra P'etraja, became king. It was he, as regent before Narai's death, who expressed his anti-foreign sentiment by arresting the hapless Phaulkon and precipitating the Revolution of 1688.

The French attempted to repair the damaged relations by sending Tachard on yet a third mission in 1690 and another in 1697, but other than allowing minimal relations, the Siamese began a long period of relative isolation from Europe. For nearly a hundred years, until Turpin's 1771 account was published, there was only one source mentioning music. Indeed, during this period there were precious few accounts mentioning anything. The lone exception was that by the German physician Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716) who left Batavia in May 1690 for Ayuthaya and spent only a few months there, leaving for Japan in September, 1690.

During the 18th century only some five accounts of Siam were published. One of them was a new edition of Forbin's memoires, another was Osborne's *Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1745), which is a collection of reprints. Also among them was an English translation of Kaempfer's account, which is of 17th-century origin. That leaves only Alexander Hamilton's 1727 account of the East Indies, which has no reference to music, and Turpin's *Histoire civile et naturelle du Royaume de Siam* (Paris, 1771), which does. The latter author, François Henri Turpin (1709-1799), however, never visited Siam and based his detailed account "sur des manuscrits qui lui ont ete communiques par M. l'Eveque de Tabraca, Vicaire Apostolique de Siam, & autres missionnaries de ce Royaume" [on some manuscripts which he has gotten from . . . , and other missionaries of this kingdom]. Turpin's vivid account of Siamese music must therefore be taken as secondhand, though he may have quoted from his sources as well. Of interest but little importance is Jean-Benjamin Laborde's *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne*

(1780), which includes two pages of material borrowed directly from (and without attribution) from Gervaise (1688).

Because of the anti-foreign sentiment and the low-keyed presence of Europeans in Ayuthaya, there were few witnesses to the cataclysm to which this royal city succumbed in 1767. The Siamese and Burmese had been rivals for centuries, and now it was again Burma's turn to gain the upper hand. Ayuthaya was beseiged, sacked, burned, and the population carried off; and just as the Siamese had absorbed much of Khmer culture by conquering Angkor in 1432, the Burmese also acquired much of Siamese culture when they destroyed Ayuthaya. Only a few buildings were spared destruction; and few artifacts, such as wood carvings, manuscripts, or other evidences of Siamese music remain. The destruction of Ayuthaya is a prime reason why Siamese earlier musical history must be reconstructed from European sources rather than Siamese ones.

During the invasion of Ayuthaya, a Siamese general of Chinese descent, Phya Taksin, escaped to Rayong with five hundred followers and proceeded to raise a new army. Beginning with the control of the Rayong area along the Gulf of Siam, he gradually extended his territory, recaptured Bangkok, the city that was to become the new captial, successfully drove the Burmese out, and by 1776 not only had reunified the Siamese under his assumed kingship but dominated Cambodia as well. Two years later the Lao Kingdom also came under Siamese suzerainty. Taksin's developing insanity, which was becoming obvious by 1778, eventually spawned a coup d'etat by the would-be king Phya Sankaburi, but a powerful general named Chakri returned to Bangkok in 1782 shortly after the usurper had been evicted by the Governor of Korat, Phya Suriya. He was urged to assume the crown, which he did that same year, founding the Chakri dynasty of kings, which still reigns in modern-day Thailand in the person of Bumipol Adulyadet, the ninth king of the Chakri family.

It was not until the second decade of the 19th century that Europeans aplenty began reappearing in Bangkok and writing accounts of their travels. Now the predominant powers were Great Britain and the United States, though the visitors included Germans, French, and Italians as well. Some thirty-seven accounts of Siam that include musical description appeared in the period from John Crawfurd's visit from 1821-1822 and Reginald Le May's general description published in 1926. During this period their

nature changed from those published in the earlier centuries. Earlier writing had included only descriptions and journals by travelers, ambassadors, and missionaries, but early in the 19th century we begin to find books and articles by scholars and later in the century by musical scholars including ethnomusicologists. Most of the latter encountered Siamese musicians visiting Europe, however. The hoary general study based on personal travel persisted through the period, and a few items were also written by ambassadors and missionaries.

Of the writers known to have been ambassadors, the earliest is the Englishman John Crawfurd (1783-1868), an expert on Malaysian affairs who was sent on a delicate mission to Bangkok in 1822. His purpose was to negotiate a restoration of the Sultan of Kedah, a Malaysian state that had been invaded by Siam in 1821 and whose capture threatened the food supply of Penang, an island. Although Crawfurd's mission failed to attain this goal, he succeeded in obtaining information about Siam and her military strength. Accompanying him on this mission was an English naturalist, George Finlayson (1790-1823), whose journal was edited and published by Sir Stamford Raffles, Governor of Singapore, in 1826.

Although the British had their difficulties with the Siamese monarch Rama II, by the time an American ambassador, Edmund Roberts (1784-1836), arrived in Bangkok in 1833, there was a new king, Rama III, who proved easier to negotiate with. Though Roberts used a clerk position on the United States sloop *Peacock* as a "cover," Roberts' mission was to conclude both commercial arrangements and an agreement covering American citizens visiting Siam. A treaty of amity and commerce was signed on 20 March 1833, after which Roberts left for Muscat where he signed another treaty in September. He then returned to Bangkok in 1835 to ratify the earlier treaty, but it was not proclaimed until 24 June 1837, after Roberts' death from a disease contracted in the course of his travels. His book was published in 1838 after his death, but not until it had been officially censored by the American Government.

Last in the list of known ambassadors is the illustrious Sir John Bowring (1792-1872), an English linguist, writer, and traveler who at various times served as a diplomat to Japan, Cochin China, Corea (Korea), as well as to Siam in 1855 where he was sent to conclude a treaty on commerce. His mission came during the reign of Rama IV, better known as Mongkut, who had revived the custom of

the Second King. Not only did Bowring have to negotiate with two kings, but the Second King was quite musically inclined, a fact that evidently influenced the amount of musical material included in Bowring's two-volume book published in 1857. Bowring himself was a well-known hymn writer, having composed among others the texts of "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" and "Watchman, Tell us of the Night."

Of the three writers known to have been involved with missions, the earliest is Howard Malcom (1799-1879), a Baptist clergyman from Philadelphia who was ordained in 1820. A throat disease forced him out of the pulpit by 1835, but in that year the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Union sent him on a three-year visit to its missions in India, China, and Southeast Asia. This resulted in 1839 in the publication of a two-volumes-in-one study based on his travels, volume 2 of which includes Siam. Much less is known about the French Catholic missionary and scholar, Jean Baptiste Pallegoix (1805-1862), Bishop of Mallos, whose two-volume study of Siam was published in 1854 with several pages on Siamese music. Finally there is the anonymous account of *Siam and Laos as seen by Our American Missionaries* edited by Mary Backus in 1884.

A great number of general accounts of Siam have been written over the years, and most writers felt obliged to at least mention music, and a few wrote fairly extensively of it. For example, W. S. W. Ruschenberger (1807-1895), an American surgeon attached to the East India Squadron from 1835-1837, wrote a two-volume *Narrative....* published in London in 1838 with several pages on music. Another is Frederick Arthur Neale's *Narrative of a Residence at the Capital of the Kingdom of Siam* (1852), but nothing is known about the author. Of some interest, because of its extent, is an article entitled "Siamese Amusements" published in an 1857 issue of the *Southern Literary Messenger* by "A Traveller." Virtually a professional traveler, the American writer Frank Vincent (1848-1916) is said to have traveled some 355,000 miles between 1871 and 1886. His visit to Siam resulted in *The Land of the White Elephant* (1874). One biographer has written, "Vincent was acclaimed a Marco Polo, while his lucid and lively, though careless, style was admired by Longfellow and others of the New England school" (*Dictionary of American Biography* , s.v. "Frank Vincent.").

Of various levels of value are books by a host of others: Carl Bock (1849-1932) written in 1884; Léon de Rosny (1837-1914) written in 1885; Jacob T. Child in 1892; Maxwell Sommerville (1829-1904) published in 1897; Ernest Young (b. 1869) published in 1898; Peter Anthony Thompson (b. 1876), who published a volume on Siam in 1910 as part of an extensive Oriental Series; Walter Armstrong Graham (b. 1868) who published a book of "practical information" in 1912; Salvatore Besso (1884-1912) whose journal of a visit to Siam in 1911 has only one (prejudiced) reference to music. Finally, Reginald Stuart Le May's (b. 1885) well-known 1926 account of Northern Siam includes material on the music of the central region as well.

At least two individuals traveled to Siam for the improvement of education there. Best known of all writers covered by this study is Anna Harriette Léonowens (1834-1914), who was brought from England to the Bangkok court to become the governess for the children of Rama IV (Mongkut), including Prince Chulalongkorn, who succeeded his father in 1868 as Rama V. Of her two published accounts, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (1870) has much more information on music than does her 1872 *The Romance of the Harem*. Thought to have exaggerated the supposed cruelties of Mongkut, Léonowen's accounts are considered less than objective by the Siamese, whose government was later to ban both Margaret Landon's 1944 *Anna and the King of Siam* as well as Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1951 Broadway musical based on Landon, *The King and I*. Secondly, there is the account of Mr. J. G. D. Campbell, a civil servant, sent to Siam from 1899 to 1901 by the British Board of Education to advise Prince Damrong but whose efforts failed to change the "backward" education system.

Scholars in non-musical fields developed an interest in Siam long before those in musical fields, the latter only by the late 19th century. Already noted was the naturalist Finlayson who accompanied Crawfurd's mission to Bangkok in 1822. Admittedly curious is Captain James Low's "History of Tennasserim" published in four issues of *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* between 1835 and 1838. Although most of the musical portion found in the 1837 volume is devoted to the instruments and tunes of Burma, there are also ten Siamese "airs" transcribed into staff notation. And although Dr. Adolf Bastian wrote what may appear to be merely a traveler's report—*Reisen in Siam in Jahre 1863*—he was a German ethnographer and collected

much information on Siamese song texts, both classical songs of the court and folk songs of the villages. Since his studies were worldwide, the exactness of his work in Siam is remarkable.

Nothing is presently known of the German Dr. Friedrick Wilhelm Karl Müller (1863-1930), but his study of Siamese shadow puppets in the Museum fur Volkerkunde in Berlin published in 1894 is still valuable. Müller was one of several European scholars who never set foot in Siam but made a significant contribution to the understanding of Siamese music through contact with musicians and artifacts brought to Europe. Of much less value, but interesting nonetheless, is M. Amédéé Gréhan's (1812-1879) *Le Royaume de Siam* published in Paris (2nd ed., 1868) based on a Siamese exposition at Paris and Le Havre. Included in his book is an engraving showing a collection of instruments. Least valuable in this genre is Judith Gautier's program *La musique Indo-chinoise* written as part of the series *Les musiques bizarres a l'Exposition de 1900*, which includes little of Siam but does include material for Cambodia.

Finally, there is a fine study of Siamese arts and crafts by the Italian Col. G. E. Gerini published in 1911. He was at the time of his study in charge of the Military Cadet School in Bangkok. Nothing is known of Karl Döhring, but his 1923 *Siam* includes many fine photographs of Siamese dancers and musicians.

Trained musical scholars did not "discover" Siamese music until late in the 19th century. By this time the new discipline of Vergleichende Musikwissenschaft (Comparative Musicology), which later became Ethnomusicology, had developed, and several of the greatest scholars in that new field studied Siamese music. The first important event was the London Inventions Exhibition of 1885 that included a large ensemble of court musicians. Evidently deriving his information from both the Exhibition and from Siamese working with him, Frederick Verney (1846-1913), Secretary of the Siamese Legation in London, published in 1885 a pamphlet on Siamese musical instruments. Also important was the work of Alexander John Ellis (1814-1890), an English philologist and mathematician who, although tone deaf, used mechanical means to determine and describe non-Western tuning systems. To measure precisely the intervals, he created the cents system in which an octave has twelve hundred cents, an equal-tempered semitone one hundred cents, and so forth. His article "On the Musical Scales of Various Nations," published in the *Society of*

Arts Journal in 1885, is a landmark in ethnomusicology and includes detailed information on the tuning of the Siamese instruments seen in London. When he published the second revised English edition (1877) of Hermann L. F. Helmholtz' important study, *Die Lehre von den Tonempfindungen als physiologische Grundlage für die Theorie der Musik* [On the Sensations of Tone] (1863), Ellis added, with Helmholtz' approval, an appendix that included a summary of his findings relative to the Siamese instruments and tunings among others.

The final writer taking advantage of the London Inventions Exhibition was the musical instrument scholar, Alfred James Hipkins (1829-1903), whose *Musical Instruments Historic, Rare, and Unique* (1888) is another landmark in Ethnomusicology. Included are detailed drawings of eight instruments from Siam.

Three early writers of general histories of music wrote about non-Western musics, including that of Siam. The earliest was the remarkably thorough and detailed *Histoire generale de lá musique* by François-Joseph Fétis (1784-1871), a Belgian. His eight pages in Volume 3 (1869) devoted to Siam are based on La Loubere, Laborde, Finlayson, Crawfurd, and Low. Enclosed are three melodies in notation. The year 1896 saw the publication of two general histories of music that incorporate material on Siamese music. Sir C(harles) Hubert H(astings) Parry's (1848-1918) *Art of Music* first appeared in 1893 and was revised in 1896 as *The Evolution of the Art of Music.* His reference to Siamese music mentions only the tuning system and is doubtlessly based on Ellis. More interesting is Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore's (1840-1914) *Universal History of Music* (1896), an early and useful attempt at writing a truly world-wide study of music by a non-European.

Siamese musicians traveling through Europe, including Berlin, in the year 1900 provided the primary source material for two important studies: one each by Carl Stumpf (1848-1936) and Erich Moritz von Hornbostel (1877-1935). Stumpf's study, "Tonsystem und Musik der Siamesen," appeared in 1901 and was based on his notes, four cylinder recordings he made, and a transcription of one of the four pieces. Hornbostel's article, "Formanalysen an siamesischen Orchester stucken," appeared in 1920, having been based on another transcription made nearly twenty years earlier by Stumpf.

On 24 June 1932, after a period of discontent and economic difficulties, a French-trained lawyer named Pridi Banomyong

carried out a bloodless coup while the King, Prajadhipok, was away. Upon returning to Bangkok, the King accepted the constitution that Pridi had written, and Siam became a constitutional monarchy with the new name, Thailand. Since 1932 Thailand has wavered between military dictatorship and democracy, with the coup d'état having been a common method of changing governments until recent years. Through it all the institution of the King has survived, and though he has no direct political authority, he wields great moral authority. Among the privileges lost by the King in 1932 was the palace musical establishment. Soon afterwards the government organized the Department of Fine Arts with its College of Dramatic Arts, which has continued the tradition of court music to this day. Moreover, the music and theatre, which formerly were reserved for the aristocracy, are now open to the public since they are cultivated in most colleges and universities in Thailand.

The sources describing Siamese music before 1932, surveyed above, vary from useful and objective to uselessly brief and hopelessly biased against Siamese music. Although as time went on, writers tended to become more objective, as late as 1911 we still find someone like Salvatore Besso writing in his journal:

> I shall never be able to describe the music which accompanied these bleating dancers—to call it braying or barking is to say little. From an illustrated postcard which I have sent you, you will see how the ballet dancers dress. This alters—never. (1913: 73)

Obviously, then, we have included all sources which include references to music without making distinctions as to their respective merits, but some are more valuable than others.

Of the nearly sixty sources cited, perhaps sixteen contribute extensive and valuable information. From the 16th century we must include Pinto (1548) simply because of his many references to music and their early date. From the 17th century five are more important than the others: Bouvet (1685), Choisy (1687), Gervaise (1688), Tachard (1688), and La Loubere (1691). Because there is a serious dearth of sources from the 18th century, Turpin's 1771 work is especially significant. From the 19th century and its plethora of sources, five writers stand above the others in value: Finlayson (1826), Ruschenberger (1838), Bowring (1857), Verney (1885), and

Ellis (1885). Although the 20th century includes many individuals who are presumably enlightened, only four (until 1932) are important: Stumpf (1901), Gerini (1911), Graham (1912), and Hornbostel (1920).

In surveying this material we can only interpret it according to what is actually there. It is apparent that few sources were attempting anything that could be called comprehensive. When a writer mentions nothing of instruments or theatrical genres known to exist, we assume he chose to omit them or was unaware of them. Many visitors to Siam described only what they happened on, and in the earlier period they rarely had access to the private areas of the court. One suspects also that in choosing what to include and what to ignore, they opted for those phenomena that caught their attention, those to which they could relate, or those which were specifically pointed out to them by the Siamese. Until the 19th century few writers attempted to spell the names of instruments and genres; and when they did atempt to spell, most of them spelled badly; and when comparing these phenomena to those of their own experience they often used terms inaccurately, such as describing an oboe as a flute or comparing the xylophone to the piano. We have to take these reports at face value. However poor they may seem at times, they nevertheless shed some light on what would otherwise be a rather dark area of the world's music history.

II

West Meets East: The Reactions of Westerners Hearing Siamese Music and Theatre

When people of one culture encounter people of a different culture, especially one that is radically different, their reactions are not uncommonly based on a comparison of their own customs, which represent normality, and those of the newly encountered people, whose customs represent anormality. The life and customs of a people who are so different are often described as exotic, strange, or even bizarre. When a person who feels superior meets someone felt to be inferior, the reactions can be extremely critical and prejudiced. This phenomenon is generally described as ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism, sometimes in extreme forms, is prevalent in many early European and American descriptions of Siamese music.

Although certain of the earlier descriptions, that is, those from the 16th through 18th centuries, included negative remarks, most were either positive or at least neutral regarding aesthetic judgements on Siamese music. Not surprisingly, the most critical and prejudiced descriptions were written during the 19th and early 20th centuries, the age of Manifest Destiny. And yet there are also the beginnings of enlightened viewpoints during the later 19th century and a growing appreciation of Siamese music on its own terms.

Predicting which writers merely described what they saw and heard and which added positive or negative adjectives is difficult, although there is a tendency for missionaries, especially Protestants, whose duty was to bring Christianity as well as Western civilization to the Siamese, to write the more negative descriptions. Sometimes this stems from the music's association with "pagan" activities, but more often it was merely the writer's personal reaction to a strange-sounding music. The Jesuit Marini, describing the "Lao" in 1666, wrote:

> Different types of music preceded this pompous march coming out from the Palace of the King, but with so much confusion on their part, and from instruments so badly played, and from voices so rude and so discordant without observation of the bar lines, that there is heard absolutely nothing but noise and a confusing sound more capable of irking and deafening the people, than of being pleasing to the ear. (1666: 363)

People have a tendency to see negatively things they do not understand. While few of the many French visitors to the Siamese court in the late 17th century made such blatantly critical remarks, the Jesuit astronomer Bouvet did complain of having to sit through a Chinese theatrical piece he did not comprehend.

> Finally the scene was closed with a kind of Chinese tragedy which bored the spectators and us in particular, who were obliged to attend all these shows. Mr. Constance had condemned us to remain to the end, and Mr. Ambassador [Simon de La Loubere] had made us refrain from returning [to our quarters] before him. Mr. Ambassador was extremely curious to know the foreign manners and customs, stopping now and then, and we with him, to consider the funeral ceremonies, but we saw only burlesque dances and ridiculous farces which were played under bamboo and rattan sheds open on all sides with horrible masks and contortions of one truly possessed, a thousand times more insolent than all our charletans on the Pont Neuf. (Bouvet 1685/1963: 132-3)

And yet, one of the French visitors, the Jesuit Tachard, had some positive things to say about the music he heard. "There was nothing extraordinary, neither in the Musick nor Voices; yet the novelty and diversity of them, made them pleasant enough not to prove tedious the first time" (Tachard 1688: 186).

Probably two characteristics of Siamese music were most difficult to accept, the lack of a single clear melody supported by harmony and the timbre of certain instruments, especially the double-reed aerophones. For example, the English writer, F. A. Neale, complained, "The tones produced by this Siamese hautboy, even at the best of time, and whilst executing the liveliest airs, are heart-rendingly dolorous and out of tune; nothing will bear comparison with it, with the exception, perhaps, of old and

cracked bagpipes. . . ." (1852: 235). The American special envoy, Edmund Roberts, complained in 1837 that "their singing is of a plaintive and melancholy cast, and they display considerable taste in its execution: but there is too much monotony, too much sameness in it; still they have got beyond the point of being pleased with mere sound, like the Chinese" (1837: 274-275). The American "professional" traveler, Frank Vincent, Jr., had a similar complaint regarding a Siamese boatman's song: ". . . the native boatmen break out in wild, whimsical, cadenced songs, keeping time to the regular, almost noiseless dip of their oars . . . and we distinguish also a few strains, a trifle more melodious, of the monotonous music of a Chinese theatrical booth" (1874: 174).

Some of the comments can only be considered intemperate and smacking of superiority. The Englishman Neale, about whom nothing has been found, had little good to say about either Siamese or Chinese music. Among his remarks:

> this was the first Chinese play I ever witnessed, and certainly the last I should ever wish to see, for methinks a continuation of such noises for a succession of nights would render one unfit for anything but Hanwell, Bedlam always excepted....Their instruments are extremely primitive....I consider the Siamese music execrable; nor, indeed, is there any nation in the East that can be said to possess even the first rudiments of music, save and except the Malays inhabiting the straits of Malacca. (1852: 95, 235, and 237)

Salvatore Besso, an Italian writing in the early 20th century, noted in a letter home, "I shall never be able to describe the music which accompanied these bleating dancers—to call it braying or barking is to say little" (1913: 73). W. A. R. Wood similarly wrote". . . I found the old style of Siamese classical drama almost insufferably boring" (Wood 1935: 89).

The book *Siam and Laos as Seen by our American Missionaries*, published in 1884, includes articles by different writers. One missionary writer concludes "The Siamese know nothing of music. Their songs are a monotonous chant" (Backus 1884: 190). D. Bradley, a medical doctor who wrote of a Chinese gambling establishment ("Chinamen are the master gamblers of Siam"), described Chinese shadow theatre music: "Here you will at one time hear the deafening peals of the gong...then the grating

notes of their various stringed instruments, then all together with human voices the most unmusical imaginable" (Backus 1884: 233).

Two writers managed to say something pleasant about Siamese music, but only after some other criticism. Sir John Bowring was one of them. "The soft and tuneful notes of their music form an agreeable contrast to the loud, monotonous, and discordant tones of the music of the Chinese...." (1857: 2:150). Howard Malcom had really nothing good to say about the Siamese generally, calling them "crafty, mean, ignorant, conceited, slothful, servile, rapacious, and cruel" (1839: 129). Further, he compared the Siamese to the "Burmans" and found the former inferior. And yet he concluded, "In music, they [the Siamese] use the same instruments as the Burmans, and excel even the Javanese. I have often listened with pleasure both to single instruments and full bands" (1839: 130).

Not everyone from the 19th century wrote with such judgemental pens. Indeed, some wrote with an obvious appreciation for Siamese music. While John Crawfurd could perhaps be accused of faint praise, he nonetheless stated: "In music the Siamese are entitled to some distinction among Oriental nations—their airs being more agreeable at least to an European ear than those of any Eastern people, with the exception probably of the Turks and Persians" (1828: 332-333). An anonymous American "traveller" writing in 1857 paid Siamese music a fuller compliment: "The prevailing characteristic of Siamese music, both vocal and instrumental, is its soft, sweet, thrilling voluptuousness, awakening the softer emotions, exciting the passions, and stirring all the tenderer feelings of the heart" (Traveller 1857: 368). It was, however, the English naturalist, George Finlayson, who wrote most positively of the music.

> The Siamese are naturally very fond of music, and even persons of rank think it no disparagement to acquire a proficiency in the art. This music is for the most part extremely lively, and more pleasing to the ear of an European, than the want of proficiency in the more useful arts of civilized life would lead him to expect of such a nation . . . There is certainly no harsh or disagreeable sound, no sudden or unexpected transition, no grating sharpness in their music. Its principal character is that of being soft, lively, sweet, and cheerful, to a degree, which seemed to us quite surprising. They have arrived

beyond the point of being pleased with mere sound—the musician aimed at far higher views, that of interesting the feelings, awakening thought, or exciting the passions. (1826: 188,190)

Very few writers could be described as being ahead of their times, but this honor is rightly reserved for the Englishman Frederick Verney, who was Secretary to the Siamese Legation in London when Siamese musicians performed at the International Inventions Exhibition in South Kensington in 1884, an event that spawned writing by Verney, Ellis, and Hipkins. Indeed, some of Verney's statements would be received as controversial even today in some quarters. It appears that he is one of the first to see past the problem of ethnocentrism and come to understand Siamese music on its own terms.

In his introduction Verney notes that a great "stumbling-block" for many in the West in their attempts to appreciate non-Western music is education, which "in a certain direction, precludes the possibility of a full appreciation of music of a foreign and distinct school....In order justly to appreciate the music of the East it would be necessary to forget all that one has experienced in the West" (Verney 1885: 5). Readers who have attempted to introduce non-Western or non-classical musics to music majors may find considerable sympathy with this remark. Verney continues noting that Westerners, in attempting to understand non-Western musics, have often resorted to forcing the new music into a Western, usually minor, scale, adding harmony, and in the end creating music that was rejected by the original performers. He notes the tendency of his contemporaries to condemn these unknown musics out of ignorance.

> It is at present the fashion to decry Eastern music, as so much barbaric discord; and it would be difficult to persuade the modern critic that there is any meaning in a language which he and his fellows do not understand. People are apt to forget that, numerically speaking, there is a large preponderance of humanity in opposition to the music of the West....It never seems to occur to the minds of modern musical critics that perhaps there may be something to be said in favour of music which has the power of arousing the passions of the Eastern world. They take up their pens in splendid ignorance of the

> origin, or the effects, of the music they criticise, and at once condemn the performance because it is not consonant with their own training and experience. (1885: 6-7)

Verney, who is apparently responding to the negative reactions of many of his countrymen to Siamese music, concludes: "Whether we scoff or whether we smile at each performance by a Siamese band, the fact remains that, to these people, such music is far more pleasing than the music of the West, and more expressive of that subtle pathos ...so peculiar to the Oriental character" (1885: 8).

In all fairness to the many traveler-writers who ventured to old Siam and attempted to say something of the music—usually based on no or minimal musical training—it ought to be noted that even today Western audiences find Siamese (that is, Thai) music challenging upon first hearing. The possible reasons are numerous. Perhaps most difficult is accepting the instrumental and vocal timbres that differ so markedly from those cultivated in the West. The double-reeds, so often described in uncomplimentary terms, are far more nasal and penetrating than European oboes. The fiddles emphasize the higher partials and sound "thin" or "whiny" to auditors accustomed to hearing only the lusher sounding members of the violin family. Westerners are not used to hearing such rarely-heard combinations of xylophones, tuned gongs, and fiddles, or a plucked zither, flute, and fiddle.

While some Siamese music is tuneful in the Western sense, some of it, especially that associated with the classical theatre, is not. The "action tunes" (*phleng naphat*) of ritual and theatre often lack regular melodic phrasing, and without harmony being present to guide the listener in hearing tension and release it is difficult for many to make sense of the sound. Even with tuneful pieces, each instrument performs the melody in its own idiom (*thang*) creating simultaneous variants, a texture described as "heterophony." One cannot be sure that modern visitors to the tourist shows in Bangkok describe to their friends the music they hear in less critical terms than those found in earlier sources. The main difference is that now such remarks are less fashionable and unlikely to appear in print.

While it is true that most of the remarks cited above tell us less about Siamese music than about the individuals who penned the words, they nonetheless reveal the prevailing attitudes and reactions. In attempting to glean specific information from these writings, one must bear in mind the variety of attitudes seen because

they do have a bearing on what kind of information was recorded and how it was expressed.

III

Foreign Music and Theatre in Siam

Although the musics of modern-day Thailand are distinctively Thai (or Siamese), there can be no doubt that both neighboring and distant cultures had various kinds of impacts on the development of Siamese music. But tracing and describing these influences fully is neither an easy matter nor the goal of the present study. It is the presence of foreign music and theatre and alleged direct borrowing that are the subjects of this chapter. Their implications will be explored in the concluding chapter.

The presence of foreigners, either visiting or living in Siam, can be documented nearly as early as can be an identifiable Siamese (or Tai) kingdom. Indeed, before the Siamese took control of what is now Thailand, much of the land was under Khmer control. Chinese were already present in parts of what is now Siam by 1314 ; and Japanese, Cham, and Malay were recruited as royal bodyguards early in the Ayuthaya period (Wyatt 1984: 65, 108). The people of the northeast region are culturally Lao and only became part of the Kingdom of Siam as the latter expanded in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Additional relationships were created by war, especially when Siamese armies sacked Angkor and carried off a portion of the population at various times during the first half of the 15th century. Later the Siamese were attacked by the Burmese who sacked Ayuthaya in 1767 and carried off many Siamese. Finally, the Siamese Kingdom expanded southwards into territory that was culturally Malay. As noted earlier, Europeans first arrived in Siam in 1511 long before modern boundaries were fixed..

Not all of the above peoples brought music and theatre to the Siamese—at least there is no documentation for some of them—but certain of them did, especially true of the Chinese, Burmese, and Lao; and the documentation is clear. Today, because there remains a large population of ethnic Chinese in Thailand, most of whom are Chao-zhou ("Techiu" in local pronunciation) speakers, Chinese

traditional theatre and amateur "silk and bamboo" (*sizhu*) instrumental music are commonly heard in the cities and towns. The passion for Lao music, at its height in the 19th century, has passed, but music and theatre from the northeast, which is Lao culturally, are still heard in Bangkok because of the presence of northeastern migrants working there. Not surprisingly, Western music, both popular and classical, can be heard today in Bangkok, but this influence, which came more recently, is not part of the present history.

Although there was evidently a significant Japanese population in Ayuthaya owing to the expulsion of both Spanish and Portuguese missionaries and their followers from Japan in the early 17th century, there is no evidence of Japanese music in Siam. This may be partly due to the fact that those expelled had been Westernized to some extent and saw no reason to restore Japanese arts while exiled in Siam. Only one reference has been found to Japanese music, and that is quite vague; indeed, it is not unequivocally a reference to Japanese music. Originally written in 1636 by the Dutch traders Caron and Schouten and published in English translation in 1663, it describes a procession of the King of Siam that included many companies of soldiers and musicians: "Two hundred *Japan* Souldiers follow these with bright Arms and rich Colours, and much noise of Instruments; . . ." (Caron and Schouten 1663/1935: 128) No further references to Japanese music are to be found.

As noted in chapter 2, several writers encountered Chinese theatre and its music and commented on it, negatively more often than positively. Five of the Frenchmen who visited Siam in the late 18th century as part of the effort to convert and control the Siamese King Narai described Chinese theatre, which was evidently performed in a festive situation along with Lao and Siamese theatricals. Additionally, mention was made of instrumental ensembles performing in turn, including Siamese, Malayan, Peguan [Mon], and Lao (Bouvet 1685/1963: 127). Some of the writers (La Loubere and Tachard) described the theatre without judgment, but others (Choisy, Bouvet, and Chaumont) were less than gracious about what they had evidently been required to see.

> After the meal there was a comedy, the Chinese began their posturing, and there were the Siamese, but I heard nothing of

what they were saying, their postures appeared ridiculous to me, and did not at all approach those of our comedians in Europe. (Chaumont 1686: 78)

At first there was a comedy of the Chinese. The clothes were beautiful, the postures good enough; they were alert: the detestable "symphony" [ensemble?], it was the "cauldron" [drum or gong?] that they beat in rhythm. Following came a Siamese opera: the singing is a little better than the Chinese ....The occasion was finished with a Chinese tragedy; for it has comedians (male) from the province of Camtom [Canton or Guangdong], and others from the province of Chincheo [Chaozhou]. The Chincheo are more magnificent and more ceremonious. (Choisy 1687: 172-173)

All these rejoicings were followed by diverse sorts of entertainments, beginning with a kind of Chinese comedy divided by scenes and such as by acts in which different bold and grotesque postures and such leaps and turns of a suppleness that was quite astonishing on the part of some of the actors served as interludes . . . Finally the scene was closed with a kind of Chinese tragedy which bored the spectators and us in particular, who were obliged to attend all these shows. Mr. Constance having condemned us to remain to the end, and Mr. Ambassador having made us refrain from returning before him. (Bouvet 1685/1963: 125, 127)

Tachard also noted that they were required to remain beyond their patience.

In fine the Scene concluded with another Chinese Comedy, which began a little to cloy the Spectators, who were already weary. We were fain to be present at all these Shows. The Lord Constance having obliged us to stay them out to the end; and the Ambassador pressing us not to leave him. (1688: 186)

It was, not surprisingly, only La Loubere who attempted a relatively objective and more complete description of the play.

The one was a *Chinese* Comedy, which I would willingly have seen to the end, but it was adjourned, after some Scenes, to go to

> Dinner. The *Chinese* Comedians, whom the *Siamese* do love without understanding them, do speak in the Throat. All their words are Monosyllables, and I heard them not pronounce one single one, but with a new breath: some would say that it throttles them. Their Habit was such as the Relations of *China* describe it, almost like that of the *Carthusians*, being clasp'd on the side by three or four Buckles, which reach from the Armpit to the Hip, with great square Placards before and behind, whereon were painted Dragons, and with a Girdle three Fingers broad; on which, at equal distances, were little squares, and small rounds either of Tortoise-Shell or Horn, or of some sort of Wood: And these Girdles being loose, they were run into a Buckle on each side to sustain them. One of the Actors who represented a Magistrate, walk'd so gravely, that he first trod upon his Heel, and then successively and slowly upon the Sole and Toes; and as he rested on the Sole, he rais'd the Heel; and when he rested on his Toes, the Sole touch'd the ground no more. On the contrary, another Actor, walking like a Madman, threw his Feet and Arms in several extravagant Postures, and after a threatening manner, but much more excessive, than the whole Action of our Captains or Matamores. He was the General of an Army; and if the Relations of *China* are true, this Actor naturally represented the Affectations common to the Soldiers of the Country. The Theatre had a Cloth on the bottom, and nothing on the sides, . . . (1693: 47)

It is apparent, then, that Chinese theatre was well established and performed for Siamese audiences already in the 17th century. How this form of theatre might relate to contemporary Chaozhou theatre in Thailand is difficult to say, but because the latter is quite traditional, there may be a direct connection. On the other hand, later developments in Chaozhou theatre in its original home in Guangdong Province, China, were probably transmitted to Siam because migration continued throughout the 19th century and into the 20th. Performances today continue to be sponsored by the Chinese business community and given in a Chinese temple courtyard, often for the birthday of the deity of that particular temple. The language is Chaozhou, but the audience is partly Chinese and partly Thai. We have observed a performance during which someone read the Thai translation of the text through a loudspeaker competing with those of the Chinese

performers. Cantonese theatre, if it ever flourished in old Siam, died out in modern Thailand, for the only Cantonese troupe today is an amateur one that performs once a year for the Chinese New Year in Bangkok when we observed them in 1973.

There is no doubt that Chinese theatre continued to flourish in Siam, but descriptions of it from the 19th century indicate that by then it had become an entertainment of common people. W. S. W. Ruschenberger visited Siam in 1838 and paid a daytime visit to a market ("bazaar") where he saw a stage eight or ten feet above the ground erected every two or three hundred yards. He returned that night. "We found it much less crowded. Around the stages were knots of individuals, enjoying puppet-shows and a sort of diorama, exhibited by Chinese" (1838: 79). Similarly, F. A. Neale, writing in 1852, described in great detail a Chinese theatrical he witnessed.

> The amusements of the day concluded with a Chinese theatrical performance, a perfect novelty to many of the European spectators present. The theatre had been temporarily erected, and there was no scenery except the drop scene . . . the shouting of the approaching army, and the beating of gongs was awful in the extreme; it was enough to break the tympanum of the ears, and instinct led us simultaneously to cram our fingers into those tender orifices for fear of a disastrous result . . . The curtain dropped amidst a very whirlwind of applause, and shouting; and this was the first Chinese play I ever witnessed, and certainly the last I should ever wish to see. . (1852: 94-95)

Both Dr. Adolf Bastian and Anna Harriette Léonowens, in 1867 and 1870, respectively, referred to Chinese theatre by its Chinese name, *ngiu*, a term still used today in Thailand. Neither had a great deal to say about it, but Léonowens wrote "Chinese comedies, termed Ngiu, attract the Siamese in crowds; but the foreign is decidedly inferior to the native talent" (1870: 167). A few years later, in 1884, the American missionary ministers had little good to say about Chinese theatre in Bangkok, but they at least included a fascinating drawing of a traditionally performed Chinese shadow theatre, which was described as being like a Punch and Judy show. Chinese theatre was associated both with street festivals and with gambling parlors. Says one contributor, "Chinamen are the master-gamblers of Siam."

Figure 3
A Chinese street show (Backus, 191)

All the front of the room in which the gamblers are seated is open to the river ....Just in front is a little recess on a float, which is occupied by the musicians and play-actors. Here you will at one time hear the deafening peals of the gong,

the horns through which they speak making unearthly sounds, then the grating notes of their various stringed instruments, then all together with human voices the most unmusical imaginable.

Between these play-actors and the gamblers there is a paper screen, with lamplight on the side of the performers, where a man is employed in making shadow puppet-shows for the amusement of the spectators, and no doubt contributing to the fascinating power of the gambling-shop. (Backus 1884: 233-234)

Only two other writers mentioned Chinese theatre, and then to compare it either favorably or unfavorably to Siamese music. Frank Vincent thought in 1874 that the Chinese theatre was "a trifle more melodious" than the song of the oarsmen rowing him up the Chao Payah River (1874: 175). P. A. Thompson, however, writing in 1910, after commenting critically on a Siamese theatre performance, still found a silver lining in the otherwise gray cloud: "Compared with the clashing cymbals, violent gestures, and screeching accents of a Chinese theatre we can have nothing but praise for the *lakhon* [Siamese theatre]" (1910: 173).

No descriptions of the "silk and bamboo" instrumental ensemble tradition are to be found in the literature. It would not have been encountered in public and perhaps has only flourished in Thailand since the later 19th century or later. Descriptions of instruments also do not occur, although several writers compare certain Siamese instruments to Chinese ones, an issue that will be dealt with later.

Lao Music

Although the Lao and the Siamese are in a sense "cousins" and their languages are closely related, their cultures are distinct in certain important ways. This is especially so in the case of music, where *lam* singing and *khaen* (bamboo free-reed mouth organ) playing are quintessentially Lao. Culturally speaking, the Lao inhabit much of the northeastern region of modern-day Thailand as well as the nation of Laos across the Maekong River. The two areas were politically separated because Siamese expansion was stopped in the late 19th century by the French colonialists at the Maekong River. Because of this separation and the economic backwardness of Laos, the Lao culture in Laos has

tended to remain conservative while that of Northeast Thailand has changed rapidly because of greater prosperity and influence emanating from Bangkok. These differences were probably minimal before the 20th century, however, when Lao music enjoyed a vogue at the Siamese court.

Three of the French envoys to King Narai at Ayuthaya in the late 17th century observed not only Chinese theatre but Siamese and Lao theatre and later Siamese, Malay, Mon, and Lao instrumental music as well. Evidently, the Lao performance made little impression on them, because none had a great deal to say about it. Bouvet gives the most detail.

> While the Chinese on the one side played their comedy, the Lao who are the neighboring people of this Kingdom on the north side, gave on the other side to his Excellency the show of Indian marionettes. Those are fairly similar to ours, those which in particular fought with tigers and elephants. (Bouvet 1685/1963: 125-126)

La Loubere adds but little: "The Puppets are mute at *Siam*, and those which come from the Country of *Laos* are much more esteemed than the Siamese. Neither the one nor the other have any thing, which is not very common in this Country" (1693/1969: 47).

The performance witnessed by La Loubere and Bouvet, however, remains intriguing for a number of reasons. First, neither shadow puppets nor marionettes are known to have come from the Lao. Secondly, the term "Lao" has often referred to the people of Northern Thailand, around Chiangmai, rather than the Lao proper of the northeast or modern Laos. Further, the marionettes were probably not Indian, but performed the Indian epic *Ramayana* in its Lao-Siamese adaptation. Marionettes do survive today in Burma, however. Northern Thailand was deeply influenced by the Burmese, who controlled the region during certain periods in history. It seems possible that the marionettes, therefore, had come from Northern Thailand.

No further mentions of Lao music occur until the 19th century. During the interval, major changes occurred. The Siamese court had in one way or another maintained rivalries with most of its neighbors—the Khmer, the Lao, and the Burmese. Alliances shifted, and wars were won and lost. In general the Lao remained weaker than the others, while in 1767 the Siamese lost a major

round to the Burmese, who sacked the capital at Ayuthaya and carried off treasure and population. As the Siamese began regrouping under General Taksin, they also attempted to regain lost territory and secure the border areas. The Lao were at that time divided into three kingdoms—Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Champassak. Some of them had formerly cooperated with the Burmese, who were also attempting to regain lost territory. Consequently, in late 1778 General Chaophraya Chakri, the future Rama I, first king of the Chakri dynasty led a force of twenty thousand men into what is now Northeast Thailand and southern Laos. Eventually they attacked Vientiane. As Wyatt reports, "The city quickly fell. Many hundreds of Lao families were rounded up and dragged back to settle in the region of Saraburi, while the two Buddha-image palladia of Lan Sang, the Emerald Buddha and the Phrabang, were brought back to be enshrined in Thonburi" (1984: 143).

By 1827 the Lao armies of Vientiane felt strong enough to attempt an invasion of Siam. Indeed, their armies reached Saraburi by late February and briefly panicked the Siamese in Bangkok. But the Siamese turned back the invasion, decimated the Lao army at Nong Bua Lamphu fifty miles south of Vientiane, and occupied the capital city. While the general left in charge was ordered to devastate the city, eventually the Siamese left it only looted and with its defenses gone. But the Lao ruler, Anu, had fled to Vietnam, and his return in 1828 led to further fighting between the Lao-Vietnamese alliance and the Siamese. This time the Siamese decided not to spare Vientiane. "The Siamese destroyed all buildings in the environs of Vientiane save for Buddhist monasteries and removed all the population from the area for resettlement in Lopburi, Saraburi, Suphanburi, and Nakhon Chaisi provinces" (1984: 171). It was further reported that Vientiane lay unoccupied and in ruins for nearly half a century afterwards.

The Lao brought with them much of their culture, including music, to Central Thailand. Its survival was noted by two researchers working in Western Thailand in the late 1960s, where they found Lao speakers playing the *khaen* and singing in Lao. (see Stern and Stern, 1971) But before transplanted Lao music fell back into obscurity, it became "the rage" at the Siamese court.

It is apparent from the writings under study that Lao music was fashionable during most of the 19th century, for the *khaen* was noticed by most writers who reported on music. Charles Gutzlaff

was the first to mention the free-reed mouth organ, although with a rather lofty attitude.

> The Laos are dirty in their habits, sportful in their temper, careless in their actions, and lovers of music and dancing in their diversions. Their organ, made of reeds, in a peculiar manner, is among the sweetest instruments to be met with in Asia. Under the hand of an European master, it would become one of the most perfect instruments in existence. Every noble maintains a number of dancing boys, who amuse their masters with the most awkward gestures, while music is playing in accordance with their twistings and turnings. (1831: 41-42)

When W. S. W. Ruschenberger visited Siam in 1838 and was shown throughout the palace of Prince Chutamani (called Prince Momfanoi by Ruschenberger), he was shown a number of musical instruments. These included the *khaen*, which was described as having fourteen pipes ranging in length from eight to fourteen feet. After giving a detailed description of the instrument and how it was held, he continued with the narrative. Because his host was Siamese and not Lao, the result is somewhat unexpected.

> We requested that some of his people would play for us. "Wow!" exclaimed the Prince in his usual manner of expressing surprise, "Wow—I will play for you myself," and, at once, calling an old man who was resting *a la Siamese*, he took the instrument between his palms. The old man crawled close up to the Prince's feet, and sitting *a la Turque*, looked up into his face while his Highness played a showy interlude. The minstrel shut his eyes, and turning his withered countenance heavenward, began singing a melancholy air to his master's accompaniment. We were surprised at the power of the instrument, and much pleased with the performance.
>
> He had no sooner ended his song, than the old man began to move back to his former station, but a word detained him at his master's feet. "Now," said the Prince, "I will give you another kind of tune," and at once struck up an air which might have been mistaken for Scotch, had we not been assured that it was Siamese. The minstrel gathered confidence from the music,

and sang with much spirit and better effect than at first. (Ruschenberger 1838: 38-39)

Similarly, the American "traveller" who wrote extensively of Siamese music in 1857, reported in some detail of a "Laos organ," which reportedly had ten pipes ranging in length from six to fifteen feet (Traveller 1857: 367).

The fashion of Lao music apparently extended nearly to the King himself. When Pra Chomklao-chao-yuhua (1804-1868), better known as King Mongkut or Rama IV, ascended the throne in 1851, he restored an old custom of having a Second King, usually a brother or other close relative. He appointed his brother, Prince Chutamani (1808-1865), to the post of Second King (as Pra Pinklao) in 1851 and gave him nearly equal status, a coronation of great splendor, and a first-class palace. The official *Chronicles of the Fourth Reign* include a description of the Second King's musical activities, which, as noted by Ruschenberger in 1838, were in fact Lao.

> During his lifetime, the Second King had constructed, at *baan sii thaa* district, a small place for pleasure and open air enjoyment where he had a Laos-style pavillion erected for his personal convenience. He enjoyed playing the Laotian reed mouth-organ known as *khaan*, and he often journeyed to the town of *phanad-nikhom* [Müang Phanat-nikhom], to the Laos district of *sam prathuan*, within the city limits of *nakhɔnchajsii* [Nakhawn-chaisi], and to *baan-siithaa* district, within the limits of *saraburii* [Saraburi], where he would pass the time playing the Laotian musical instrument. He could perform the Laotian type of dance [*fawn*] and could skillfully perform the Laotian comedy-singing known as *ɛɛw* [aeo]. It is said that if one did not actually see his royal person, one would have thought the singer were a real Lao. (Jao-pra-yah Ti-pah-gor-ra-wong 1966: 2:254-255)

When Sir John Bowring visited in 1855 to negotiate a treaty of commerce, he had numerous dealings with the Second King. And the latter was not shy about showing off his musical ability, especially in Lao music. Bowring wrote in some detail about the Second King's music making:

> I felt great interest in the Laos people from the first. Often I heard sweet music and sweet voices as I passed along the streets, or floated upon the waters of the Meinam [Maenam Chao-prayah River]; and, on inquiry, I learnt that the sweetest was the music of Laos. Once, calling on the second King, I found him playing on a singularly harmonious instrument, composed of reeds of the bamboo, an instrument nearly eight feet in length: it was, he said, a gift from the Prince of Laos, and he gratified me by presenting it for my acceptance. On visiting the houses of the high nobility, I have been often asked, "Will you see the dances? will you hear the singing? will you listen to the music of Laos?" and groups of meek-eyed, gentle, prostrate people have been introduced, to exhibit the movements . . . Three persons will form a melodious concert: one plays the bamboo organ, another sings romances with the voice of inspiration, and the third strikes in cadence the suspended tongues of sonorous woods. The Laos organ is a collection of sixteen fine and long bamboos, bound by a circle of ebony, where there is an opening for the aspiration and inspiration of the breath, which causes the vibrations of a number of small silver tonguelets, placed near a hole made in each bamboo, over which the fingers run with great dexterity. (1854: 1:88-189)

Both Ruschenberger and Bowring describe Lao singing called *lam* as well as *khaen* playing. Although sometimes performed by a single person who sang an extended story, it usually involved the alternation of male and female singers (*mawlam*—"skilled singer"). Ruschenberger's account differentiates two styles, one slow and plaintive, one fast and rhythmic. These would seem to be what are now known as *lam thang yao*, which is in speech rhythm, and *lam thang san*, which is in a regular meter. Bowring is not so precise. But he does mention an instrument not yet noted, "suspended tongues of sonorous woods." This would seem to be the *krap phuang*, a series of thin tongues of wood (and now alternating with metal) suspended on a wire at one end and enclosed within wooden end pieces.

Finally, the survey of Siamese arts written by the German Dr. Adolf Bastian after his visit to Siam in 1863, which details many singing genres with sample song texts translated into German, includes two songs of the Lao (Bastian 1867: 332-333).

What is clear, though, is that many of the Siamese nobility, even the Second King himself, were skilled at playing Lao music. This would be considered highly unusual today, for in modern-day Thailand, the music of the northeast, that is, of the Lao, has been generally looked down upon. It has been closely associated with rural people from a poor region who have come to Bangkok seeking work in such lowly positions as gardener, maid, and taxi driver. Evidently, Lao music fell out of fashion. Or, was it pushed?

After the Second King's death in 1865, King Mongkut immediately expressed a fear that Lao music's popularity was causing it to supplant Siamese music. He therefore banned Lao musical performances in a proclamation issued "on Friday the fourteenth day of the Waning Moon in the twelfth Lunar Month, in the Year of the Ox," that is, the seventh year of the decade, M.E. 1227 [1865].

> His Majesty the King directs this royal decree to all government officials and all citizens in and out of the capital: Thailand has long been as assembly point for foreigners from near and far. Alien singing and dancing have occasionally been performed alongside ours, and this adds to the honor of our country. Since they are alien entertainments, however, the propriety of imitating them is questionable. It is of course good that Thai are able to imitate others such as monks who can chant *Mahachat* [the story of Prince Wetsundawn, the penultimate life of the Buddha] in other styles such as that of the Lao, the Mawn, the Burmese, and the Khmer. Still, alien singing and dancing should not have priority over ours. Ours should maintain their priority and others should be a little less important.
>
> The situation has now changed. Thai have abandoned their own entertainments including *piphat* ensemble, *mahori* ensemble, *sepha-khrüng-thawn* [a kind of story telling in sing-song accompanied by pairs of wood blocks called *krap*], *brop-kai, sakrawa, phleng-kai-pa-kieo-khao* [three types of folksong], and *lakhawn rawng* [a play with singing]. Both men and women now play *laokhaen* [*mawlam*] throughout the kingdom. Those who play in the *piphat* or *mahori* ensembles must sell their instruments because they are no longer hired. *Laokhaen* is always played for the topknot cutting ceremony and for ordinations. The price is as high as ten to twelve *tam-*

lüng [forty to forty-eight baht]. His Majesty the King finds this kind of situation unfavorable. We cannot give the priority to Lao entertainments. *Laokhaen* must serve the Thai; the Thai have never been the Lao's servants. Thai have been performing *laokhaen* for more than ten years now and it has become very common. It is apparent that wherever there is an increase in the playing of *laokhaen* there is also less rain. This year the rice survived only because of water originating in the forests. In towns where there was much *laokhaen* it rained only a little and there was little rice growing. Even though the farmers were able to plant rice near the end of the season, too much water from the forests destroyed the rice in floods. Consequently the King has been worrying about this, and through his authority he now requests all Thai who remain loyal and grateful to him to stop performing *laokhaen*. Please do not hire *laokhaen* or perform it yourselves. Try this for a year or two. Thai entertainments including *lakawn, fawn, ram, piphat, mahori, sepha-khrüng-thawn, prop-kai, sakrawa,* and *phleng-kai-pa-kieo-khao* ought to be revived. They should not be forgotten and finally lost. You are requested to stop performing *laokhaen*. Try this for a year or two and see whether the amount of rain becomes sufficient again or not.

Anyone who disobeys this proclamation will be taxed. Both the player and the owner of the house will be assessed a stiff tax. Those who play secretly will be fined by two or threefold. (Quoted in Thanjaokhun-thamthirarat-maha-muni 1962: 417-419)

What was the effect of this ban? It is hard to know. King Mongkut died in 1868 and was succeeded by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V). One is led to believe that while the passion for Lao music probably subsided, it did not cease altogether. Perhaps a better balance between Siamese and Lao musics was achieved. Only one year after the King's death, indeed, a set of instruments (and players?) was exhibited in France at an exposition in honor of the King of Siam. An engraving of the display case shows, besides numerous Siamese classical instruments, two *khaen* (Gréhan 1869: unnumbered illustration). Perhaps these instruments had been brought to France in 1867 when the late King Mongkut had sent Phya Suriwong Waiyawat on an embassy to NapoLéon III. The

purpose of the embassy was to negotiate and sign a treaty involving the border between Laos and Siam.

After this royal edict, mentions of the *khaen* are routine in studies of Siam. Anna Harriette Léonowens, the English governess at the court of Chulalongkorn, described an instrument called *lapthima* as "another very curious instrument, formed of a dozen long perforated reeds jointed with bands and cemented at the joints with wax" (1870: 170). Additionally, she mentions in passing a Lao "tambourine," a "guitar," and "flutes of several kinds, one is played with the nostril instead of the lips" (1870: 170). If accurately described, the Lao "nose flute" has become extinct.

When the Siamese court organized a band of musicians with instruments to travel to London for the Inventions Exhibition in 1885, *khaen* were included. Consequently, Verney, Ellis, and Hipkins all mention it. Verney describes the instrumentation of four "Siamese" ensembles, the fourth being the "Lao phan band," *phan* being the term by which the Siamese came to call the *khaen*.[2] The instruments included: 2 *Phans*, 2 *Kluis* (flutes), 2 Fiddles, 2 Alligators (*ja-khe* zithers), 1 *Thone* (goblet drum), 1 *Rumana* (shallow drum), and 1 *Ching* (small brass cymbals) (1885: 13). Although little was said of the instrument, a *khaen* player and perhaps a singer were sent to Berlin in 1900. Hornbostel included a photograph of the musicians and listed the "phan" player (1919: 306-307).

Although P. A. Thompson described the *khaen* as having fourteen pipes up to twelve feet in length (1910: 175-1756), A. W. Graham two years later went into greater detail and indicated that the fashion of the 19th century, noted earlier, had evidently reasserted itself.

> The favourite instrument [of the Lao] is the *Ken*, a reed instrument . . . made of all sizes, from the small pocket affair which almost every man plays to the large instrument of fourteen or more reeds, of sonorous tone and wide compass, which is used by professionals. The *Ken* has long ago made its way to the south and is very much admired by the Siamese. A well-trained band of fifteen performers is maintained in

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[2] The term *phan* or *phaen* denoting the *khaen* mouth organ results from a Central Thai misunderstanding. *Phaen* in Lao actually means a dance whose accompanying ensemble included the *khaen*.

> Bangkok by one of the Royal Princes who, being himself an accomplished musician, has provided it with an extensive repertoire, the orchestra for which he has arranged himself. The band plays Scottish airs and European dance-music most effectively. (1912: 161-162)

The situation today in Central Thailand is quite different from that described by early writers. Lao music is a music of the common people. The *khaen* rarely exceeds six feet in length and is usually under five feet—the older lengths became impractical to carry, for example, on a bus. The elite of Bangkok are more likely to cultivate Western or Westernized music, both classical and popular, than something "regional" like Lao music. Neither the King nor the many Thai princes maintain private musical establishments anymore, let alone play the *khaen* or sing *lam*. And yet Lao music is to be heard in Bangkok on television, radio, and cassette tapes for the benefit of the many migrants from Northeast Thailand without whom Bangkok would grind to a halt. And finally, perhaps as an echo, one piece of music remains popular among the Siamese, a piece called "Lao phan," which imitates the *khaen* and is usually played on the *ja-khe* zither.

Other Foreign Musics

References to foreign musics other than Chinese and Lao are rare and usually sketchy. With regard to the Mon, often referred to in the literature as Peguans, three French writers of the late 17th century listed this ancient music as one of the instrumental groups heard. Writes Tachard, "The *Siamese, Malayes, Pegus* and *Laos*, gave a tryal of their harmony by turns, striving to surpass one another" (1688: 186). Because Tachard and Choisy closely parallel each other, the latter's words are nearly the same as those of Tachard. "The Peguans have a dance that is pleasant enough" (Choisy 1687: 172).

In later accounts of Siam, those from the 19th century, numerous references are made to certain Siamese instruments that are said to be of Burmese origin. Finlayson, Malcom, and Crawfurd all allude to this, but Neale asserts that there were Burmese actually playing certain instruments.

> Next to the band-master comes the performer on the Siamese pianoforte [*ranat* xylophone]. This, however, is in reality

> strictly a Burmese instrument of Burmese invention, and on which the Burmese far excel their flat-nosed neighbours . . . there are some of the Burmese who fly over the notes with amazing rapidity and precision." (1852: 235-236)

There are two possible explanations for the presence of Mon and Burmese music. The Mon people inhabited what is now Thailand and southern Burma long before the Siamese arrived and constitute one of the oldest Indianized civilizations of Southeast Asia. Mon villages can still be found west of Bangkok. Today one of the Central Thai classical ensembles is called *piphat mawn* [Mon ensemble], which, while played usually by Thai people, includes several non-Siamese instruments. The function of the Mon ensemble is chiefly to play at funerals. Although the Burmese had razed Ayuthaya in 1767 and carried off Siamese culture, which in turn influenced Burmese culture, there were evidently also Burmese villages in parts of Central Thailand stemming from war and what was described by Westerners as "slavery." Possible Burmese influence on the Siamese instrumentarium will be discussed in later chapters.

Virtually nothing can be said of Malaysian music at the Siamese court. Passing mention was made to it by Bouvet (1685/1963: 126) and Tachard (1688: 186), but there are no details. The Kingdom gradually expanded south during the Bangkok period and annexed areas that had formerly been Malay, but music and theatre from the southern part of Thailand are not mentioned in any of our sources.

Western Music

Regarding Western music in Siam, little is mentioned in the sources under study, but one subject deserves mention—brass bands. Evidently, the court during the 19th century adopted certain of the status symbols of the European courts, including military bands. Frank Vincent's 1874 account offers the earliest description.

> After the parade His Majesty's own brass band played for us. There were sixteen instrumentalists, led by a sergeant-major, a mere youngster seven or eight years old and three feet in height; indeed, none of the members of the band were more than twenty years of age; their uniform was the same as that worn by the guards. They played in remarkably good time and tune,

> first the 'Siamese National Hymn', a rather pretty composition; and, second, a very familiar western waltz. Afterwards another band of musicians, who were older, but had had less practice, were ordered out, and they rendered a piece of dance music tolerably well. (1874: 152-153)

J. G. D. Campbell, who was in Siam to advise the education system, wrote in 1902 the first indication of the use of Western music in schools.

> The creditable performances, too, by Siamese bands indicate that they cannot be altogether without aptitude for European music; though the boys and girls in the schools show such little evidence of talent for it that it is hardly worth the trouble of teaching them, and few of the Siamese who have been in Europe seem to have acquired any taste or love for it. (1902: 123)

The practice of forming brass bands in schools persists in modern Thailand, where Thai traditional music is less likely to be taught than Western music.[3] Finally, Graham in 1912 also mentions that there were several fine military bands in Bangkok and that their performance of European tunes was quite acceptable. (1912: 467)

The extent to which the presence of foreign musics influenced Siamese music is difficult to ascertain. To a great extent they remained separate, but certain of them likely contributed new instruments, melodies, rhythms, and even perhaps visual effects, as is probably true of Chinese theatre. Regardless of the source, however, Siamese music remained distinctive in its sound, absorbing the foreign into an ever developing Siamese style, which maintains today a great diversity of genres.

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[3] I remember an experience in Northeast Thailand in 1973 when I was invited to listen to a band play the American national anthem. The musicians consistently missed the raised tone in the second phrase, and I could do nothing to change that. It is possible that the difference was not apparent because there are neither tones nor semi-tones in the Thai equidistant tuning. It is also possible the musicians had only learned the basic diatonic notes and did not know how to produce raised pitches.

IV

Musical Instruments and Ensembles

Because most of the writings under examination were contributed by non-musicians, descriptions of musical style tend to be either non-existent or ambiguous. But at least the early visitors to Siam could see instruments. Instruments are real while most other aspects of music have to be described symbolically or by analogy. Instruments can be touched, drawn or photographed, even purchased and brought home, whereas sound was lost before recording became possible and notation was inexact and problematic when attempted. Consequently, there is a greater wealth of information about instruments in these writings than on any other subject.

Most descriptions are clear, and some even included the Siamese names in romanization, but writers often resorted to minimally appropriate European terms such as guitar, violin, forte-piano, and banjo, and sometimes with judgemental adjectives. Not surprisingly, some of the descriptions are too muddled to permit us to identify the Siamese instrument. A number of writers did, however, include drawings—or later, photographs—of some or all of the instruments. Lastly, we allow that the lack of mention of a particular instrument does not necessarily mean it did not exist at the time. This study, however, concerns only what *is* mentioned.

Two modern scholarly works, one by a Thai, one by an American, discuss musical instruments in Thailand at some length. David Morton's *The Traditional Music of Thailand* (1976) surveys both history in general and each instrument systematically based on numerous sources, including some of those studied here. Morton also translated Dhanit Yupho's *Thai Musical Instruments* (1971). Both have much valuable information, but some of Dhanit's statements must be taken with the proverbial grain of salt as speculations rather than facts. The earliest known list of Tai musical instruments is found in a 14th-century Buddhist cosmology called *Trai phum phra rüang* [Traiphum P'a Ruang], believed to

have been a rewriting of an Indian document called *Traibhumikatha* carried out in 1345 by Lu T'ai (also called Phraya Lithai or Lidaiya), who in 1347 became the fifth king of Sukhotai (Hall 1970: 175). None of the names of instruments mentioned can be understood in relation to contemporary ones, however. The *saw phung thaw*, included in the list of "human" or "earthly" instruments and evidently a kind of bowed lute (because *saw* is a generic term for such instruments), is thought by some modern Thai to have been the *saw sam sai*, a bowed lute with three strings.

We have sensed a degree of irritation on the part of some modern Thai intellectuals when confronted by assertions that the Thai received this or that aspect of culture from another people, especially Chinese or Indians. It is true that in the past some historians were inclined to a view "Indochina" as a cultural void until these two major cultures filled it with civilization. The fact that this or that Thai instrument resembles one of a nearby culture, however, does not prove borrowing in either direction. Even when it can be shown that the Thai borrowed an instrument, they altered it in some way to express their own sense of musical aesthetics. Instruments, being objects, travel easily, while musical style, being somewhat analogous to language, travels little if at all. Therefore, one culture can borrow another culture's instruments but play music on them which in no way resembles that of the donor. This is certainly true of the Thai, whose music remains individual regardless of the source of the instruments.

Dhanit, at least, is willing to admit the possibility of foreign origins. He classifies instruments into four groups according to their names—a system which that useful—but also argues that they developed this way chronologically, an idea too facile to be taken seriously. His five categories are:

1. Instruments with onomatopoetic names: for example, *krap, krong, chap, ching, pi, khlui;*
2. Instruments with names according to characteristic shape: for example, *saw sam sai* (fiddle with three strings), *ja-khe* (crocodile [zither]), *klawng yao* (long drum), and *sawng na* ([drum with] two heads);
3. Instruments named according to their appropriate ensemble: for example, *khawng rabeng* (gong for *rabeng*) and *klawng chatri* (drum for *chatri* dance);

4. Instruments named for their country of origin: for example, *klawng khaek* (Indian [or Muslim] drum), *pi chawa* (Javanese oboe), *klawng malayu* (Malaysian drum), and *klawng merikan* (American [bass] drum)
5. Instruments whose names derived from foreign languages: for example, *phin, sang, pi chanai,* and *ban thaw* (Dhanit 1960/1971: 5).

Thai commonly classify instruments by their playing method: *tit* (plucked), *si* (bowed), *ti* (struck or beaten), and *pao* (blown).

We shall proceed by surveying the evident histories of Thai instruments according to the four categories of the Sachs-Hornbostel classification.[4] Following this we will consider the named and described ensembles.

Melodic Idiophones

Khawng wong.

Khawng denotes a gong, in this case with a boss, and wong is a circle. Today's instrumentarium includes two such instruments, the *khawng wong yai* (large) and *khawng wong lek* (small), the latter being slightly smaller in circumference and having a range that extends higher than the *khawng wong yai.* There is also a smaller version of each used in the *mahori* ensemble. It appears, however, that there was only one size until at least the mid-19th century. The *khawng wong* is evidently from the older stratum of instruments, for virtually every writer who describes instruments from 1685 onwards includes the *khawng wong.*

Bouvet (1685), Chaumont (1686), Tachard (1688), Gervaise (1688), and La Loubere (1691), all members of the French mission that sought to convert King Narai in Ayuthaya, each mention the

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[4] In 1914 two German scholars, Curt Sachs and Erich Moritz von Hornbostel, proposed a system for classifying musical instruments based on an earlier system by Victor-Charles Mahillon, which was ultimately derived from an Indian system. The principal determinant is what vibrates to produce sound. Four categories were created: 1) aerophones (vibration of a defined body of air); 2) chordophones (vibration of strings); 3) idiophones (vibration of the instrument itself); and 4) membranophones (vibration of a membrane or skin).

instrument. Bouvet offers first a generalization, then describes the instrument:

> Their instruments are only a little different from ours but they are more imperfect, and they have spoiled them. The one that pleased us more was an instrument with a dozen suspended bells mounted on it, which being lightly struck with small beaters, gave a quite harmonious sound. (1685/1963: 127)

Chaumont adds nothing and Gervaise only describes the instrument as ". . . un carillon avec de petites Clochettes, qui rejouit assez. . . ." [". . . a carillon with small bells, a pleasing performance. . . .] (1688: 130; 1928, 53). Tachard also speaks highly of the instrument but did so in words almost identical to those of Bouvet. Not surprisingly, it is the ever more observant La Loubere who offers not only the best description but an illustration.

> They have another instrument composed of..., which they call *Patcong*. The...are all placed successively every one on a short stick, and planted perpendicular on a demi-circumference of Wood, like to the selleys of a little Wheel of a Coach. He that plays on this Instrument is seated at the center cross-legg'd; and he strikes the....with two sticks, one of which he holds in his right hand, and the other in his left; To me it seems that this Instrument had only a fifth redoubled in extent, but certainly there was not any half notes, nor any thing to stop the sound of one...,when another was struck. (1693: 68)

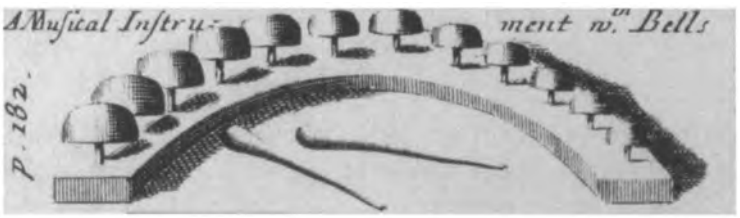

Figure 4
Khawng wong as drawn by La Loubere

The illustration, however, while it matches the description, raises some difficulties. Twelve bell-like hemispheres are mounted each on a vertical stick, all on a semi-circular base. Two straight beaters with bulbous ends are also seen. Today's *khawng wong yai* consists of sixteen bossed gongs suspended on leather thongs that pass through four holes in the gong and over a rattan frame that is nearly a complete ellipse (that is, it appears circular [wong] but is actually elliptical). The mallets each have a disc-shaped beater attached to a stick.

Relief carvings from Angkor Wat from the 13th century show instruments with eight or nine gongs on a frame covering one-third of a circle and beaters apparently without discs. (Morton 1976: 10) A carved wooden bookcase from the Ayuthaya period kept in the National Museum, Bangkok, shows an ensemble that includes a nearly circular instrument with twelve gongs (Morton 1976: 47). Another clear illustration of the instrument is found in the exquisite gilded bas relief front wall under the portico of Wut Mai (Vat Mai) in Luang Prabang, Laos, where a nearly circular frame supports nine or ten gongs played with disc-type mallets. While Finot dates this building at 1796 (1917: 8), Clarac and Smithies give 1820 (1972: 261). It appears, then, that the *khawng wong* of the late 17th century was still semi-circular and that during the 18th century it gradually became rounder and grew in number of gongs. La Loubere's statement that "this instrument had only a fifth redoubled" suggests a pentatonic tuning since there are only twelve pitches. Unfortunately, there are no further European accounts of the *khawng wong* until 1826.

While La Loubere normally appears to be painstakingly accurate, one aspect of his description cannot be taken seriously. He says that each gong is "on a short stick," which is confirmed by his engraving. Further, there is no evidence of a boss. Were this representation correct, how would the gongs stay on the stick? The player would have to strike the gongs (actually bells in this arrangement) on the side, but the supporting stick would likely dampen the vibrations. We have concluded that both the description and the illustration, probably written and drawn at a later date, are in error. There is nothing else like it in Southeast Asia, and it would not seem to work as illustrated.

The next mention of the instrument is not until 1826 when Finlayson describes the "khong-nong" as a circle "sometimes so large, that the performer may sit within the circle. . . ." (1826: 191).

One wonders where the player sits when it is *not* large enough. Crawfurd (1828) calls it a "staccato" (1828: 333). By 1854 when Bishop Pallegoix wrote of his visit to the Siamese capital, he described a *khawng wong* that is more familiar.

> . . . but the khong-vong has a magnificent effect; it is an instrument composed of a semi-circular series of bells suspended on strings, and on these the musician strikes with two small hammers made of wood which he holds in each hand. When the bells are rightly tuned, and the player is skillful, the sounds of this instrument are very harmonious, and yet so loud that it can be heard for a quarter of a league and more [about one kilometer]. (1854: 1:345-346)

Sir John Bowring's memory was evidently faulty concerning the "khong-bong," which he wrote was "composed of sonorous wood or metal; in the centre of which the musician stands [stands?] and strikes the notes with two wooden hammers." (1857: 2:147). Léonowens, however, is rather more accurate in her description (1870: 169-170).

The question remains, when was the *khawng wong lek,* the smaller of the pair, created? Dhanit asserts that it appeared during the reign of King Rama III (1824-1854) (Dhanit 1960/1971: 28). Our sources do not show any evidence of two sizes until 1869, but earlier writers could easily have missed the distinction, especially when considering how many other distinctions were missed. Gréhan includes an engraving of an instrument case for an exhibition in Paris that clearly shows two *khawng wong,* one smaller than the other (Gréhan: 1869). These two sizes are confirmed and named by Frederick Verney (1885: 15-16) and A. J. Ellis (1852: 1103). Verney writes that the *khawng yai* has sixteen gongs and the *khawng lek* twenty-one, but A. J. Hipkins, who based his book on the same exhibition, describes and illustrates a *khawng yai* with eighteen gongs. Nonetheless, it is clear that both sizes existed by the mid-19th century.

Ranat

While the *khawng wong* gong circle is prevalent in the earliest sources, the *ranat* xylophone only appears in the early 19th century. Dhanit asserts that the *ranat* originated from the *krap,* a pair of wooden concussion idiophones in bar form

(1960/1971: 12). These pitchless bars were laid in a series, gradually tuned, then suspended, according to his theory. While this progression from simple to complex seems logical, it is difficult for us to accept at face value.

Xylophones are fairly prevalent in Southeast Asia, both on the mainland and in the islands. In an earlier study, we described all of the known types, plotted their known distribution, and attempted to answer the questions regarding their relationships (Miller and Chonpairot: 1981). While it is recognized that the vertical xylophone, for example, the *pong lang* or *khaw law* found in Northeast Thailand, could be mounted horizontally and become a kind of *ranat*, we are not convinced that things happened this way.

The earliest known description of a ranat was written in 1826 by George Finlayson:

> It [khong-nong (that is, khawng wong)] is usually accompanied by the instrument called ran-nan; this is formed of flat bars of wood, about a foot in length, and an inch in breadth, placed by the side of each other, and disposed so as to form an arch, the convexity of which is downwards. Both this and the last-mentioned instrument are struck with a light piece of wood, or a small mallet. (1826: 191-192)

After this most writers describe the instrument. For example, Crawfurd mentions it as a regular member of the Siamese "band": "The second is another staccato of the same materials, but less compass, in form of a boat" (Crawfurd 1828: 333). Crawfurd, like many other writers, noted the "boat"-like shape of the resonator-base over which the keys are suspended on cords. Edmund Roberts is the first to write the name properly and to describe it accurately.

> . . . and an instrument called a ranat: it is made in Lao or Laos, of graduated pieces of bamboo, which give a sweet sound when struck with a sort of wooden hammer covered with pieces of coarse cotton thread: it has eighteen keys or bars, each fifteen inches long, two inches broad, strung together, and suspended over a wooden boat-shaped box; the top part being left open. (1837: 238-239)

Up to this point no writer offered any opinions regarding the origin of the *ranat*. Neale's 1852 description, however, does so.

> Next to the band-master comes the performer on the Siamese pianoforte [*ranat*]. This, however, is in reality strictly a Burmese instrument of Burmese invention, and on which the Burmese far excel their flat-nosed neighbours. The notes consist of oblong pieces of wood, hewn and shaped from the cashoo-nut tree, and varying in size from six inches by one broad, to fourteen inches by two; these are strung upon pieces of twine, a knot intervening between each note to prevent jarring and confusion. These are fastened on a mahogany stand of about three feet in length and a foot high; and the method of performing upon this instrument is by striking them with two knob-ended batons, one of which the player holds in either hand. The effect is harmonious. The notes are regular, and admit of a vast scope for cadence [rhythm] and harmony of touch, and there are some of the Burmese who fly over the notes with amazing rapidity and precision. (1852: 235-236)

Figure 5
Ensemble of Musicians (Neale, p. 234)

An accompanying illustration (see figure 5) crudely shows such an instrument. His description closely matches the modern *ranat ek*, except that keys are no longer separated by knots. Interestingly, however, the vertical xylophones do have such knots, which of course would be absolutely necessary in that configuration.

Regarding a possible Burmese origin, a distinction must first be made. The Burmese term for xylophone, *pattala*, is actually Mon (sometimes called Paguan or Talaing), that is, of a people who predated the Burmese in what is now Burma and whose language is related to Khmer. *Pat* derives from the Sanskrit *pataha* (Sachs 1921: 26) meaning drum. While in Burma *pat* continues to refer to drums (for example, the circle of tuned drums is called *patwaing*), in Thai *pat* means percussion instruments generally and may derive also from either *pataha* or *vadya*, Sanskrit for instrument. Tala means "coffin, or any receptacle in which a corpse is placed to receive funeral rites" (Judson's Burmese-English Dictionary, p. 614). Thus, the *pattala* is a set of struck keys over a coffin-like resonator. An argument for a Mon origin of the instrument is further strengthened by Haswell's study of the Peguan language where he defines pattala as "a Mon musical instrument, about three quarters of a circle [sic] in form, . . ." (1901: 195)

Documentation for the existence of a xylophone in Burma (whether Burmese or Mon in unclear) dates back to Alexander Hamilton's *A New Account of the East Indies* of 1727.

> They have one sort [of instrument] in the shape of a galley, with about twenty bells of several sizes and sounds, placed fast on the upper part, as it lies along. The instrument is about three feet long, and eight or ten inches broad, and six inches deep. They beat those bells with a stick made of heavy wood, and they make no bad music. (1727: 427)

It is perhaps significant that Major Michael Symes' account of his embassy to Ava, an early Burmese kingdom, in 1795 fails to describe a xylophone, though he uses the term "Patola" to denote a three-stringed zither, otherwise known as the *mi-gyang* (Symes: 1850: 508). To a certain extent this seems consistent with a Mon theory of origin, since Hamilton had visited the Mon (Pegu) while Symes visited Ava, a Burmese state. Evidently the *pattala* was still not a regular member of the Burmese ensemble at that time, but it is now. By 1839 Howard Malcom's description of Burmese instruments

includes the "Pa-to-lah," "a row of flat pieces of bamboo, the largest two inches broad, and twelve or fifteen long, placed on horizontal strings, and struck with a little hammer in each hand" (1839: 205). A Mon origin for the Siamese *ranat*, then, not only appears plausible, but conforms to the evidence in these early accounts.

Today's instrumentarium includes two sizes of xylophone, the higher-pitched *ranat ek*, the leader, and the lower-pitched *ranat thum*, whose function is to play a somewhat more syncopated and "playful" version of the melody. Further, there are equivalent instruments with keyboards of bronze bars on metal frames placed over the resonator box. Dhanit believes these latter instruments—*ranat ek lek* or *ranat thawng* and *ranat thum lek*—to have been invented during the reign of King Rama IV (1854-1868). Indeed, he asserts that the brother of the King, that is, the Second King, invented the latter instrument. (Dhanit 1960/1971: 16-18) While Verney's 1885 description is the first to name and describe these metal equivalents, Bishop Pallegoix in 1854 writes that "The harmonica [*ranat*] that they use is sometimes of sonorous wooden keys or sometimes of iron" (1854: 346). We still cannot be sure that he is referring to the metallophones, however, since other writers have made mistakes with regard to materials. Yet the existence of the metal variety is apparently confirmed by the anonymous Traveller of 1857 who describes both a wooden "Rah-nat" and a metal equivalent. No distinction, however, is made between *ranat ek* and *ranat thum* (1857: 366-367). Gréhan, ten years later, nonetheless, pictures what appear to be two *ranat*, with the right one having the apparent shape of a ranat thum case, but he does not show any metallophones. (Gréhan: 1869)

Neither Bowring nor Léonowens add to our understanding, only describing a *ranat* with wooden keys. Engel describes a specimen with nineteen keys of wood in the South Kensington Museum (1874: 316). When A. J. Ellis attempted to measure the intervals of this instrument in cents in 1885, he found that Engel's description of the tuning system—a kind of diatonic scale—was not in fact true. Ellis found that the intervals varied from 45 cents to 258 and was frankly baffled. He concluded: "Let us hope that the Siamese musicians who are to come to the Inventions Exhibition of this year, will give a better notion of Siamese music than this *Ranat* affords" (1851: 506-507).

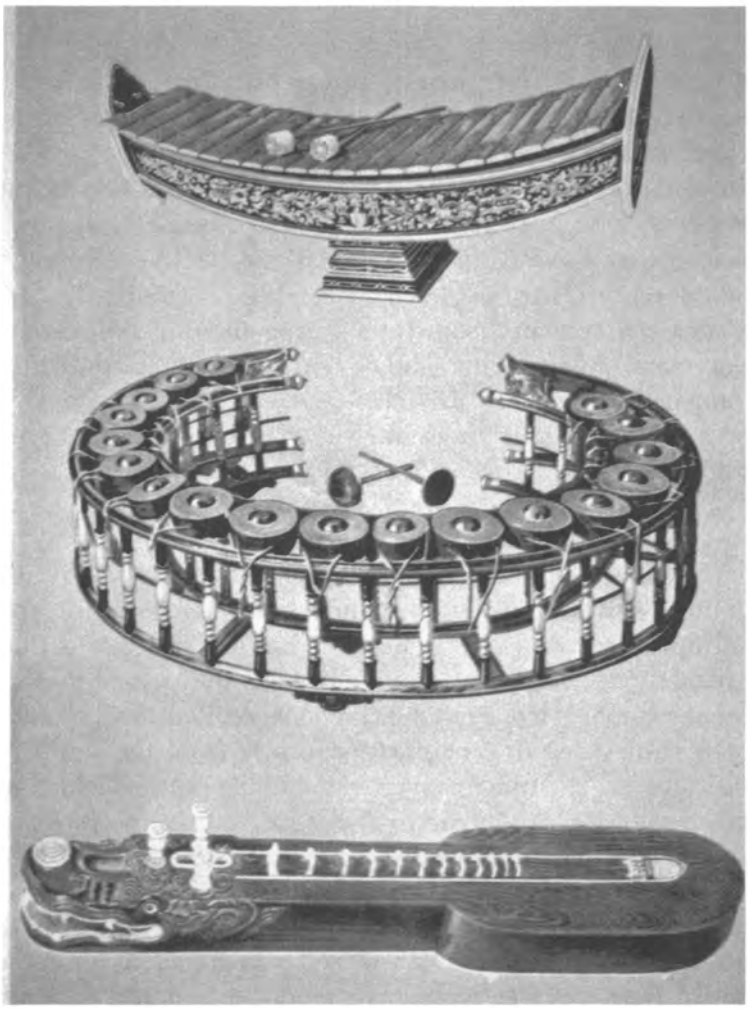

Figure 6
Ranat, khawng, and *ja-khe* (Hipkins, pl. XLIII)

Verney, whose booklet constitutes the most complete list from all the documents surveyed, clearly describes and differentiates four kinds of *ranat*, a *ranat ek* with twenty-one bamboo keys—and from the illustration, identical to the modern *ranat ek*—*ranat thum, ranat thong* [*thawng*] with twenty-one bars of "brass" placed directly on the resonator, and the *ranat lek* with seventeen bars of "iron" (1885: 13-15). The only difficulty is that *ranat lek* must be taken as a shortened form of *ranat thum lek.* We also presume that the *ranat thum* had seventeen bamboo keys, for he left out that

detail. Today's instruments, additionally, may have bamboo or hardwood keys. Verney also notes how the keys of each are tuned, those with bamboo keys having lumps (weights) attached to the lower sides of the keys, while those with metal keys being filed. Hipkins, who also observed the same ensemble, illustrates the *ranat ek* as having an exceptionally attractive resonator with inlaid ivory (Hipkins: 1888: plate xliii). Apparently, then, the *ranat thum* appeared sometime during the mid-19th century and the metal instruments about the same time, confirming the information given by Dhanit. The *ranat ek* was, however, the original member, though it evidently became common at the beginning of the Bangkok Era (late 18th century).

Rhythmic Idiophones

The colotomic structure of Thai classical music is today defined and articulated by a number of percussion instruments (idiophones) as well as by several types of drums (membranophones). Most important is the pair of small, thick, bronze cymbals (concussion idiophones) called *ching* or *ching chap,* both names deriving onomatopoetically from the sounds of the instrument. The *ching* provides an audible beat, which, in a sense, functions as a conductor (without, of course, the interpretation expected of modern-day conductors in Western classical music). It has two strokes, the undamped or ringing sound "ching" and the damped sound "chap." While the *ching* stroke marks significant beats in the music, it is considered non-accented while the *chap* stroke indicates the accent. In much Thai music a *ching* cycle consists of four strokes—"ching-chap-ching-chap"—the last being the most heavily accented, coming on the *siang tok* or final note of the melodic phrase. Consequently, the *ching* has an important role, but this has rarely been noted, even by modern observers.

In addition to the *ching* there are two larger pairs of thin cymbals called *chap,* or, according to size, *chap lek* (small) or *chap yai* (large). These are not required in an ensemble, but when present play a pattern of offbeats consisting of raps of one piece on the other or the rattling of the two pieces together (described as "tok" and "chae" respectively).

Of less consequence are various sizes of a single-bossed gong called *khawng mong,* various kinds of wooden castanets called *krap,* and a bundle of alternating thin wooden slats and metal tongues enclosed in thick end pieces and held together with a wire

called *krap phuang*. These are usually played on the final "chap" stroke in the four-stroke cycle, that is, on the *siang tok*. Descriptions of these instruments in the sources are spotty and more often than not vague.

Chronologically, the earliest source for these instruments is La Loubere, who briefly mentions bronze gongs "which distress those not accustomed to the sound" (1688/1928: 53). We would expect the more observant La Loubere to notice the *ching* if then used, but he does not. However, he described two kinds of hanging gongs:

> . . . and accompany them [a fiddle and an oboe] with the noise of certain copper Basons, on each of which a man strikes a blow with a short stick, at certain times in each measure. These Basons are hung up by a string, each has a Pole laid a-cross upon two uprigtick [sic], at certain times in each measure. These Basons are hung up by a string, each has a Pole laid a-cross upon the Forks: the one is called *Schoungschang*, and it is thinner, broader, and of a graver sound than the other, which they call *Cong*. (1691: 68)

La Loubere's illustrates a gong with an unusually large diameter boss hanging by one rope from a bar supported, as he described, by two forked vertical sticks. While the frame is now different and *khawng* are suspended through two holes normally, the principle remains the same. La Loubere also noted a kind of *krap*, probably *krap sepha*: "They sometimes accompany the Voice with two short sticks, which they call *Crab*, and which they strike one against the other. . . ." (1691: 68).

Other than a passing mention of the striking of "copper basins" by Turpin (1771/1811: 597), there are no descriptions of idiophones until the 19th century when Crawfurd completes his description of "a full Siamese band" by writing ". . . and the band is completed by the addition of a drum, cymbals, and castanets" (1828: 333). By "cymbals" does he mean the *ching* or *chap*? Ruschenberger, writing ten years later, still does not confirm the existence of the *ching*, for he only mentions:

> Their instruments were gongs, hautboys, and pieces of wood about a foot long, which were struck together in time with the

other instruments, producing altogether a great deal more sound than melody. (1838: 81)

The first possible allusion to the *ching* is found in Neale, who mentions that large "bands" include "a set of triangles" (1852: 237). Similarly, the anonymous Traveller uses the same word to describe some kind of percussion instrument: "Three or four triangles make up the list" (1857: 367). It is not until 1854 that Pallegoix confirms the existence of both the *ching* and *chap*: "Besides the large cymbals, they also have a small type whose high and piercing sound has a very good effect" (1854: 1:346). In addition, he mentions that certain actors "are accompanied with castanets to mark the time, and the noise of these sonorous wood pieces is not without agreeableness" (1854: 1:345). It is to Sir John Bowring that the honor belongs for first mentioning the *ching* by name (1857: 1:149). In spite of a fairly good list of instruments, however, he does not mention other rhythmic idiophones.

Verney's list, not surprisingly, is the most detailed. He mentions the *ching* by name, and both describes and pictures the *chap* [he spelled it "Charp"] and the *krap phuang*. Further, certain of these are listed in the makeup for each of the described ensembles. (1885: 11, 20, 21, and 26) Similarly, Ellis, who observed the same musicians, notes the existence of "Charp" and "Ching" (1852: 1104).

Finally, a single reference exists using the French term *timbales*, which normally means timpani or kettle drum. Chaumont's 1686 description of a royal ceremony mentions these as part of the ensemble (1686: 54), although there are no known kettledrums in Thailand. Gervaise, in Siam at the same time, also lists a *Tambour d'Airin*, which we take to be *airain*, that is, bronze. Literally, then, these men seem to have listed a bronze "drum," called *mahora thük* in Thai. Turpin's 1771 account, based on reports by other travelers and perhaps the 17th-century accounts, also states ". . . ils frappent sur des bassins de cuivre. . . ." (1771: 125). While most bronze drums are known from excavations elsewhere in Southeast Asia, they continue to be used to the present in some Thai Buddhist temples.

Aerophones

In the historical descriptions, aerophones tend to suffer from the least exact terminology: anything blown is called a flute or a

trumpet. Since reeds are not normally seen, observers often do not distinguish them from flutes.

The most important Thai aerophones include three sizes of end-blown fipple flutes called *khlui* [khlui], three sizes of quadruple reeds instruments having a buldging shape called *pi*, three kinds of quadruple reeds with conical bodies and flared bells called *pi chanai*, *pi chawa*, and *pi mawn*, and three kinds of trumpets, two of metal and one of shell, called *trae ngawn*, *trae farang*, and *sang*, respectively. Because they are normally accompanied by drums, they are usually associated with drums in the early literature. Today, one normally encounters the fipple flutes (*khlui*), buldging reeds (*pi*), and two of the flared-bell reeds (*pi chawa* and *pi mawn*), but the others are rarely heard.

TRUMPETS

A trumpet consists of a tube whose air column is set in vibration by the player's lips, usually on a mouthpiece. Without valves or slides, the instrument is only capable of playing the pitches of the overtone series, and consequently trumpets have traditionally been more closely associated with signaling than melody playing. Indeed, none of the Thai trumpets were or are members of standard ensembles. As in many other parts of the world, especially India and elsewhere in South and West Asia, trumpets are typically accompanied by drums.[5] The most common function of the trumpet and drum ensemble in old Siam was to announce the appearance of the King or some other dignitary and to accompany his movements about the palace and city. This function is noted by many European authors as well as the authors of traditional Siamese literature. For example, the story *Phra aphai mani* describes trumpets, reeds, and drums in reference to a royal ceremony for the King of Garawek as he receives a diplomat.

> The trumpet and the conch shell played together loudly challenging the pair of *glawng khaek* drums with a melodious sound. The *pi chanai* played the melody while the *glawng chana* drums accompanied with a loud, sonorous sound. A high official led the officials of the royal household and the envoy

[5] Similarly, in 17th-century Europe, trumpet and tympani were closely associated and existed outside the regular orchestras until the later 18th century.

> in prostrating themselves humbly to pay respects to the king. Thus they remained awaiting further orders. (quoted in Dhanit 1960/1970: 80)

Because many of the earliest observers were in Siam for diplomatic purposes, they did not have a primary interest in describing musical phenomena. However, in their descriptions of the King, numerous references to "trumpets and drums" are to be found. The earliest was written by Fernão Mendes Pinto circa 1548 as he described the funeral and cremation of the recently deceased king.

> . . . and this was accompanied with so horrible a din of cries, great Ordnance, Harquebuses, Drums, Bells, Cornets, and other different kinds of noyse, as it was impossible to hear it without trembling. (1692: 276)

He also mentioned the use of trumpets in the description of a scene of battle between the King of Siam and the King of Burma.

> . . . for it was a most dreadfull thing to hear the discord and jarring of those barbarous Instruments, as Bells, Drums, and Trumpets, intermingled with the noise of the great Ordnance and smaller shot, . . . (1692: 281)

Typical of the mentions of trumpets were those of Chaumont who noted their use to accompany movements of the King.

> When the King goes out to go on the hunt or for a walk, they warn all the Europeans not to be on the road unless they want to slowly prostrate themselves. A moment before he leaves the Palace, one hears trumpets and drums which inform and which walk before the King....They know that the King is going to appear by the noise of trumpets, of drums, and of other instruments. (1686: 17, 178)

Similarly, Tachard tells how the instruments announced events unseen in the private chamber of the King. "The trumpets and drums remain always outside, warning from time to time by the sound of their fanfares, that which was happening in the audience chamber" (1689: 294). In his earlier book (1688), Tachard also

mentions a function for the trumpets not noted elsewhere. While seeing "Chinese illuminations" [shadow puppets?], he remarked, "These illuminations were accompanied with the Noise of Drums, Fifes, and Trumpets" (1688: 213).

Gervaise describes an instrument more specifically. "Their copper trumpets resemble in sound the cornets our peasants use to call up their cattle" (1688/1928: 53). Considering that cattle calls in Europe were usually given on cattle horn trumpets, the instrument he is describing is most likely the *trae ngawn*, a curved metal trumpet.

Dhanit writes that the *trae farang*, the European valveless trumpet common in the 17th and early 18th centuries [*farang* means France, but came to mean European generally], was also known as the *trae wilanda*, the latter word derived from Holland. Perhaps we have an eyewitness account of its acceptance into Siam from LaLoubere, who writes, "The *Siamese* do extreamly love our Trumpets, theirs are small and harsh [*trae ngawn*], they call them *Tre*; . . ." 1693: 69)

Up to this point, then, there are fairly clear references to two sorts of trumpets, the *trae ngawn* and the *trae farang*. The *sang*, or conch shell is not mentioned until 1854 when Bishop Pallegoix lists the conch as well as "trumpets" (1854: 1:345). Similarly, Bowring mentions the use of the conch during a coronation ceremony. In describing the activities of the Chief of the Astrologers and nine "mandarins," Bowring (1857: 2:424) writes, ". . . after which, the priests or astrologers sound their conch shells, and beat gongs and drums."

The last reference to trumpets, made in 1912 by Graham, resembles uncannily that of Mendez Pinto from 1548, for the function has not changed. "

> Long trumpets of a shrill and piercing tone are used on state occasions to herald the approach of the King, and the fanfare blown with a number of these in unison, is striking and very much in keeping with the oriental surroundings amid which it is heard. (1912: 467)

Writers who concentrated on the classical ensembles did not mention trumpets because they were not part of these ensembles. Indeed, a visitor to modern Thailand seeking to see and hear trumpets would probably have quite a challenge in locating them.

They continue to be used on state occasions, but these are fewer than in the 17th century.

FLUTES

Because untrained observers often failed to distinguish between reeds and flutes, especially since both are played vertically in Thailand, the few early references to flutes (that is, Caron and Schouten 1636/1935: 128; Gervaise 1688/1928: 130; Glanius 1682: 112; Tachard 1688: 213) are unhelpful. Even La Loubere has nothing to say of flutes. It is not until 1826 that specific references to the *khlui*, the bamboo fipple flute, begin to appear. Finlayson lists the *klani*, which he says "resembled a flageolet [fipple flute], as well in form as in the tones, which however, were fuller, softer, and louder" [than those of the *ja-khe* zither] (1826: 190). Crawfurd, however, confuses the issue by mentioning that a full "Siamese band" consists of both a flute and a flageolet (1828: 323). Ruschenberger (1838: 35) similarly mentions both. Pallegoix, Bowring, and Léonowens all mention the flute (Bowring calls it "klue"), but we are perplexed about their mentions of a nose flute as well. Writes Bowring, "One of their flutes is played through the nostrils" (1857: 1:147). Even more confusion is caused by Verney's account, which while helpful for other instruments, suggests the existence of three kinds of flutes. Listing "other" instruments seen, Verney enumerates the following:

xviii. The "larger Bamboo flute" has eight notes.
xix. The "smaller Bamboo flute" has ten notes.
xx. The "Khlui" is a kind of flute, in which the sound is produced by a membrane over one hole. (1885: 22)

Ellis, who examined the same set of instruments, only mentions the "Khlui," which he writes "rhymes [with the] German *pfui*, or French *Louie*," (1852: 1104) and could not be examined "as it was out of order." While the Thai *khlui* includes a hole for a buzzing membrane, similar to that on the more familiar Chinese *dizi*, modern Thai musicians normally cover it with tape, because they do not care for the buzzing timbre it creates. Interestingly, the Khmer, who use a similar instrument called *khloy*, do use the buzzing membrane. Hipkins (1888) illustrates the *khlui*. Neither Hipkins nor Ellis mentions the "large" and "small" flutes noted by Verney. It is possible that Verney listed separately the three sizes

of *khlui* (from largest to smallest), the *khlui u, khlui phiang aw,* and *khlui lip.*

One gathers from these descriptions that the flute was not an apparent member of an ensemble until the 19th century (although it may have existed earlier). Even then it did not command much notice. Today we suspect it would be noticed because it is the only aerophone in both the *mahori* and *khrüang sai* ensembles.

QUADRUPLE REEDS

The generic term in Thai for reed instruments is *pi.* There are three specific types (one of which has three sizes): *pi nai/pi klang/pi nawk* (the buldging type used in classical ensembles), *pi mawn* (with flared metal bell used in Mon ensemble), and *pi chawa* (conical wooden body with wooden flared bell, used for boxing music and elsewhere [of Javanese origin?]). Again we are plagued by the problems of ambiguity between reeds and flutes, making some of the early references inconclusive.

The earliest reference creates more confusion than it resolves. Chaumont lists "small horns whose sound resembled those of shepherds in France" (1686: 54). La Loubere, however, comes to the rescue, mentioning the pi by name: "They have . . . some very shrill Hoboys which they call *Pi,* and the Spaniards *Chirimias*" (1693: 68). After that "hautboys" receive only passing mention (Turpin 1771/1811: 596; Ruschenberger 1838: 81), but Pallegoix is the first to describe the *pi mawn,* since the Mon ensemble is primarily associated with funerals. "In their funeral ceremonies they use a kind of crying clarinet whose sound is truly very doleful" (1854: 1:346). A most helpful (and prejudiced) description, however, finally appears in Neale's 1852 narrative, and includes a drawing showing a *pi chawa.*

> The hautboy player is seldom, like the rest of his brother musicians, seated on the floor. This important individual, who is usually the leader of the band, chooses a kneeling posture, as the one not only best suited to his dignity, but as affording him more freedom of action; and he might as soon be expected to jump over the moon, as to play an air, however doleful and dolorous, without swaying his body to and fro to keep time with the movements of the melody. The band-master is usually professionally a snake-charmer, and his long practice in that rather unenviable calling, has forced on him the habit of

> rocking his body to and fro with greater or less energy, as the time and cadence of the music may require....The Siamese band-master and snake-charmer prefers this position, because it gives his arms full swing ....So, in his double profession of musician and snake-charmer, this individual demands no small degree of respect from his brethren. His instrument has six holes for notes, is roughly and carelessly shaped, has no keys, and has only acquired a high polish from the fact of its having been continually handled about and played upon during the last ten or fifteen years. The wood of which it is made is commonly from the jack-fruit tree, a wood capable of receiving a high polish....The tones produced by this Siamese hautboy, even at the best of time, and whilst executing the liveliest airs, are heart-rendingly dolorous and out of tune; nothing will bear comparison with it, with the exception, perhaps, of old and cracked bagpipes....(1852: 234-235)

Similarly, the anonymous Traveller (1857) provides a detailed description of both the instrument and the playing posture. But it appears to have been based on that of Neale, minus the sarcasm. There is no known tradition today for either snake charming in Thailand or pi players doing it.

Bowring lists the instrument as a member of the *Pe pat* [*piphat*] ensemble, saying only that it is manufactured of Siamese "red wood" (1857: 1:148). Léonowens confirms the Traveller's report, asserting also that the hautboy player (also said to be a professional juggler and snake charmer) kneels and sways from side to side. She adds that the instrument has six finger holes (1870: 170). Additionally ,she describes, but does not name, the *pi mawn*. "In their funeral ceremonies the chanting of the priests is usually accompanied by the lugubrious wailing music of a sort of clarinet" (1870: 171).

Verney provides both a detailed description of the *pi nai* and a drawing, but his text, in quotes, is borrowed from Ellis. Stating that the instrument can be made of marble, ivory, or ebony, he mentions six finger holes in groups of four and two, and notes which hand plays which holes (1885: 17). Verney is the first to describe (and picture) the *pi chawa*. He writes, "The Java flute (*Peechawar*) . . . has seven notes, and is generally made of ivory, though sometimes of marble, or of ebony" (1885: 17). Hipkins, who

observed the same instruments, only mentions and pictures the *pi chawah* (Hipkins 1888: plate xlii).

Since the early references to the *pi* fail to distinguish the type, we have no specific description of the commonest reed today, the *pi nai/klang/nawk*, until Verney's description in the later 19th century. Since Neale clearly lists the *pi chawa* rather than *pi nai/nawk* as the leader of the ensemble, there is the suggestion that the latter types did not appear until late, but this would be surprising indeed. This is underscored by the fact that the Thai *pi* is unique to Thailand and neighboring ensembles (Laos and Cambodia), while the *pi chawa*, by its name, was apparently introduced from Java. As a type, however, the latter was more likely derived from the Indian reeds, *shahnai* or *nagasvaram*, which in turn are probably related to Western Asian reeds, such as the *zurna*. Dhanit offers no specific history of the *pi nai* type, and we are left with evidence, which if taken at face value, suggests a 19th century origin for the *pi nai*. It is also possible that instruments of this type were used earlier outside the courts and not observed by visitors. However, there are no "folk" reeds resembling the *pi nai* in use today.

Chordophones

Stringed instruments in Central Thailand today are of three types, the bowed lute, plucked lute, and zither. Of these, the plucked lute is least likely to be encountered. The terminology used to denote these in the early European and American accounts is not exact enough in the case of the fiddles to make identification certain in all cases, but the zither, because of its crocodile shape, caught the attention of many visitors and was noted clearly.

BOWED LUTES

The generic term for all bowed lutes (commonly, fiddles) is *saw*. Today, there are three kinds in central Thailand, the *saw sam sai* (fiddle with three strings), the *saw duang* (two-stringed fiddle with cylindrical body), and *saw u* (two-stringed fiddle with coconut body). There is no way of knowing whether the *saw phung thaw* mentioned in the 14th-century *Trai phum phra rüang* is related to any of these (see above). While some Thai scholars have assumed this term refers to an early *saw sam sai*, it cannot yet be demonstrated through any documents.

Saw sam sai

The earliest mention of a fiddle occurs in Gervaise' 1688 account, but it is perplexing. Gervaise writes:

> The most pleasing of these instruments is somewhat similar to that we hear here from two violins playing in perfect harmony. But there is nothing more disagreeable than the small edition of this instrument—a kind of violin with three brass wires. (1688/1928: 53)

The statement obviously suggests that there are two sizes, but this conclusion is not borne out by other writers. We often depend on La Loubere to clear the air, and this he does, but only briefly. "They have very ugly little Rebecks or Violins with three strings, which they call *Tro*, . . ." (1693: 68). It is evident that the term used at the time was *tro*, not *saw*, but interestingly *tro* is a Mon-Khmer term possibly derived from Sanskrit *saro*. There is in Burma a rather striking bowed lute, evidently no longer used, which resembles a European violin with large carved scroll called *tayo*; and in Cambodia the three-stringed fiddle, which is the near equivalent of the Siamese *saw sam sai*, is called *tro khmer*, deriving from the Indian *saro*. While La Loubere thought the Siamese fiddle "ugly," when the Frenchmen played their operatic airs on violins they had brought with them, the King "told us that he did not think them of a movement grave enough" (1693: 68).

Little is added by Turpin, whose account is second-hand. But he also writes of two sizes. ". . . they have a kind of violin and bass-viol, which they disfigure to make them shriller. Their violins have but three strings, . . ." (Turpin 1771/1811: 596). Since Turpin had not seen these for himself, his account cannot be taken too seriously. However, the charge that they disfigure them to make them shriller suggests some alteration to the instrument. The tone of the modern *saw sam sai* is altered (for the better, according to Thai musicians) by placing a decorated weight on the calf skin, which deadens certain vibrations.

Nineteenth-century accounts by Crawfurd, Pallegoix, and Bowring all mention a bowed lute. While Crawfurd mentions three strings, Bowring clearly describes a three-stringed "violin" with an expensive and special coconut body (because it has to have three aesthetically pleasing buldges) with a goat-skin resonator, and played in a slanting position. He even mentions a "small eye-

shaped instrument affixed thereto" for regulating the tone (1857: 1:149). But Pallegoix must be confused in suggesting that the resonator is of boa skin. Finally, Verney in 1884, using Ellis' words, describes the modern instrument, which he calls *saw thai*, in detail and includes a drawing. But strangely he also lists a three-stringed violin called *saw sam sai*. Hipkins also includes a painting of this same specimen in plate xlii.

Saw duang

The cylindrical bodied, snakeskin-covered, two-stringed *saw duang* is neither alluded to nor mentioned by name until Verney's 1884 booklet, in which it is listed by name and shown in a drawing, two details of which require mention. First, the bow is shown separately, when in reality its hairs pass between the two strings. Second, no loop is shown pulling the strings towards the neck and defining the vibrating length. Ellis mentions the instrument by name but reports that he did not examine it. Hipkins, however, pictures it with the bow in the correct position but again without the loop.

Saw u

As in the case of the *saw duang*, the only descriptions of the *saw u* occur with Verney, Ellis, and Hipkins, who examined the same set of instruments brought by visiting Siamese musicians to the 1884 London Inventions Exhibition. However, the instrument called *saw u* is pictured both by Verney and Hipkins as a larger version of the *saw duang*, that is, with cylindrical body. Although Verney again omits the loop and shows the bow separately, Hipkins' drawing has both the loop and the bow in correct position. In short, none of the sources available to us shows the modern *saw u* with coconut body.

It is apparent, then, that the *saw sam sai* dates at least to the 17th century. The *saw duang* and *saw u*, however, do not appear to have become regular members of Thai ensembles until the later 19th century. This may come as some surprise, since they are now essential instruments, and the *saw duang* has developed a fairly substantial solo repertory in the hands of several exceptional players (for example, Luang Phairo Siang Saw).

Both two-stringed fiddles have close Chinese equivalents, the *er hu* (cylindrical body) being similar to the *saw duang* and *yeh hu* (coconut body) being similar to the *saw u*. Indeed, Hipkins' cap-

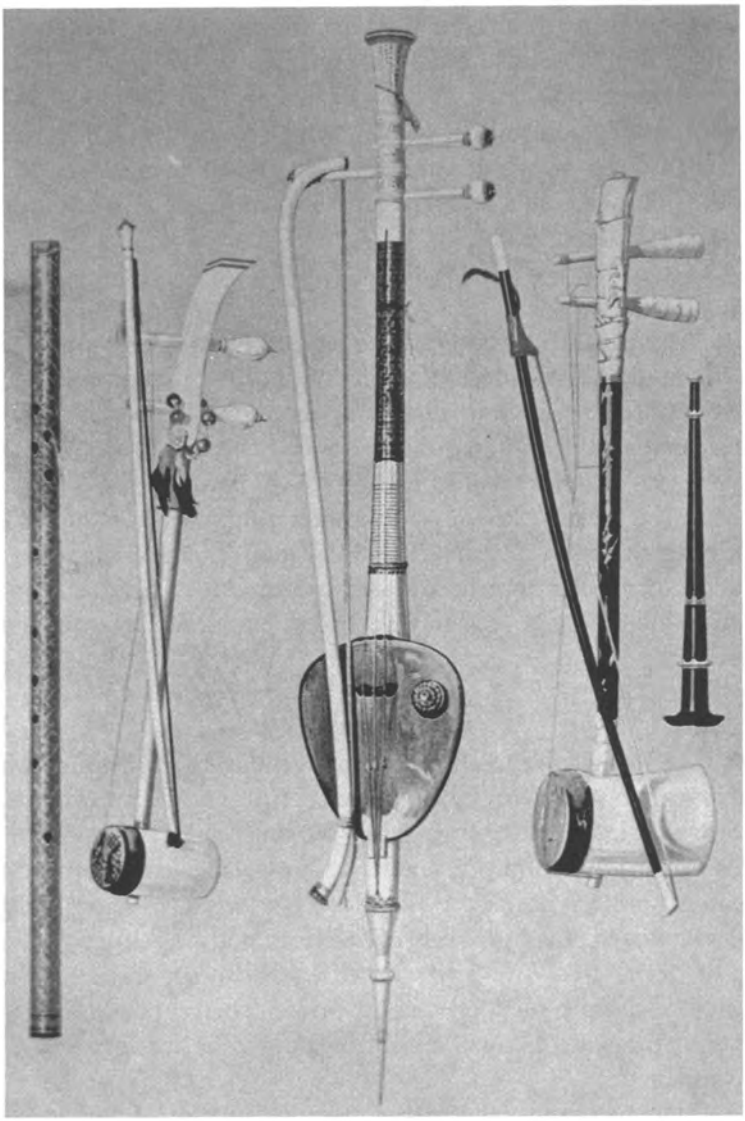

Figure 7
Saw duang, saw thai, saw u, khlui, pi
(Hipkins, pl. XLII)

tion reads "Saw Chine, or Chinese fiddle" (1888: plate xlii). While Dhanit asserts that Thai call the *saw u* thus because of its "oo oo" sound, it seems more likely that "oo" derives from *hu*, the

generic Chinese term for bowed lute. Chinese fiddles were certainly well known in old Siam through their likely use in musical theatre and puppetry. Further, a great number of Chinese came to Siam in the 19th century from southern China, especially Guangdong Province's Chao-zhou District, and even today there are numerous Chao-zhou "silk and bamboo" (*sizhu*) ensembles of amateur Chinese-Thai musicians in the cities and towns as well as professional theatre troupes.

Most of the Chinese in Thailand are Chao-zhou speakers, a language from eastern Guangdong province. Although a relatively small group, the Chaozhou (or Teochiu, as they call themselves) are distinctive for their silk and bamboo music and its compositions that use stereotyped variation patterns. Most Chinese ensembles and theatrical troupes in modern Thailand are Chaozhou. The lead instrument is a fiddle distinctive to the Chaozhou, the *cu xian* or *tou xian*, whose body appears cylindrical but whose inside is carved in a conical shape, with the smallest part of the opening being at the snakeskin head. Consequently, the timbre is quite shrill, causing the instrument to stand out because of its prominent overtones. The sound of the *cu xian* is quite different from the more usual Chinese *er hu*, which has a "warmer" tone with less emphasis on the upper partials. It happens that the Thai *saw duang* has a tone more similar to the Chaozhou instrument than to the standard Chinese version. Since the Chaozhou instrument is the one most commonly heard among Chinese in Thailand, it seems possible that the *saw duang* originated from the *cu xian*. Other musical influences from the Chaozhou can be noted. For example, the Thai dulcimer (*khim*) is exactly, sometimes even in decoration, the same as the Chaozhou *yao qin*.

This leaves us, however, with the perplexing problem of Verney's *saw u*, which has a cylindrical body, not one of coconut. Two possibilities seem likely: 1) the term applied to both kinds, and since Verney et al., who only saw what the Siamese delegation brought, could not know this; 2) the coconut-bodied instrument only replaced the larger cylindrical one around the turn of this century. The existence of larger and smaller cylindrical-bodied fiddles point to Cambodia, where the smaller instrument is called *tro chhe* (tuned d and a) and the larger *tro so*, which itself has two sizes: *tro so tauch* (G and d) and *tro so thom* (D and A). The *tro so* is a rough equivalent to the *saw u* shown by Hipkins, while the *tro ou* is equivalent to the modern coconut-bodied *saw u*. Obviously more

information is needed before these possible inter-relationships can be ascertained.

ZITHER

Other than the *khim*, which is a hammered zither brought from the Chaozhou-speaking part of Guangzhou Province in southern China and which is not mentioned in any of the literature under examination, the only *plucked* zither is the *ja-khe*, a three-stringed floor zither that resembles a lute because of the distinctiveness of the neck from the body. The player ties a plectrum of horn tightly around the middle finger with an attached silk cord to strum the strings. The left hand stops the strings on a series of eleven frets graduated in heighth. The word *ja-khe* is a shortened form of *jara-khe*, which means crocodile. Indeed, the instrument is zoomorphic in shape, representing an abstract form of the reptile; the peg box is the head. The Cambodians use an identical instrument called *krapeu*, which also means crocodile. The instrument's morphology suggests derivation from India as a type of *vina* (see Chonpairot 1981), including the *mayuri vina*, in peacock shape. In Burma the Mon people formerly used a two-stringed floor zither called *mi-gyaun*, which not only means crocodile but was carved and painted to look like a crocodile, with tail, feet, head, eyes, and teeth. It is now rarely played. Crawfurd's 1828 account mistakenly describes the Siamese instrument has having four strings, but, interestingly , he adds that the Siamese had told him that the instrument was of "Peguan" [Burmese] origin (1828: 333). In Thailand the *ja-khe* is often played alone but is also commonly heard in both *khrüang sai* and *mahori* ensembles.

None of the 17th-century travelers mentioned the instrument. It is not until Turpin's 1771 secondhand account that we read "The crocodile is a piece of wood hollowed out, and on the back of which are strings which produce the same sound as our psaltery" (1771: 596). Finlayson, writing in 1826, provides a fuller description, but his name for the instrument—tuk-kay—is that of a peculiar lizard whose mating cry is "tuk-kay." Either he heard it wrong or someone was using that term at the time for the *ja-khe*.

> The other, a more curious, as well as more agreeable instrument, is called tuk-kay, from its fancied resemblance to a lizard, . . . It is about three feet long, has a hollow body, and

> three large sounding holes on the back, which is of a rounded form. It is composed of pieces of hard wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Three strings, one of brass wire, the others of silk, supported on small bits of wood, extend from one end of the instrument to the other, and are tuned by means of long pegs. The performer pressing his left hand on the cords, strikes them at proper distances, with the fore-finger of the right. (1826: 190-191)

The anonymous 1857 Traveller seems to echo Finlayson in his description, probably because he paraphrased it, although certain details differ slightly (for example, calling it *Tokay*). Regardless, today's players do not use their fingers to strike the strings, but use the plectrum described earlier.

Concerning the question of a plectrum or nails, Pallegoix wrote that the wives of the princes often played the *ja-khe* with large, false nails (1854: 1:346). Not only do Pallegoix and the Traveller say so, but Bowring emphasizes it.

> The *Takhe* is a species of guitar placed on the ground, with metal chords, which are struck by the artificial nails, or claws, of the ladies, fixed like thimbles on the tops of the fingers. They are several inches long, and are bent outward, ending in a sharp point. They are invariably worn by the women in dramatic representations. (1857:1:147)

Léonowens (1870: 171) also speaks of false nails worn by lady players. However, Verney is the first to describe the modern plectrum. "He touches the strings on the frets with his left hand, and sounds the string by a plectrum, like a large ivory tooth, which is fastened to his fingers and drawn rapidly backwards and forwards across the string. . ." (1885: 16). The instrument seen by both Verney and Hipkins is unusual in that the tuning pegs are set vertically (rather than horizontally) into a carved crocodile head complete with teeth, eyes, nose, and scales (1888: plate xliii). The *ja-khe* pictured by Gréhan (1869), although unclear in all details, does not appear to have such carving.

The sources under study, therefore, suggest that the instrument only became prominent in the 18th century, that a Burmese (or Mon) origin is possible, and that, at least in the mid-19th century, players used false fingernails instead of the plectrum.

PLUCKED LUTE

The only plucked lute used in Central Thailand is the *krajap-pi*, a four-stringed, long-necked lute with eleven frets played with a finger-held plectrum of horn, bone, or shell. Actually, the present tense is barely true, for the instrument is no longer a regular member of any ensemble, and players are rare. A nearly identical instrument, the *chapei veng*, however, is still commonly used in Cambodia to accompany narrative singing called *charieng chapei.*

The earliest mentions of the instrument include Crawfurd's allusion to a four-stringed "guitar" (1828: 333) and Neale's perplexing description of a "veritable banjo":

> manufactured entirely out of a large long-necked gourd, which, when green, is sliced in halves longways, cleared of pulp and seed, and so left to dry in the sun. When dry, the aperture is covered with parchment, and from four to six strings strung after the fashion of a guitar. (1852: 236-237)

His illustration (see figure 5) shows a player bowing a round-bodied lute held vertically on a stand. It is possible that he mixed together the *saw sam sai* and the *krajap-pi.* Both the anonymous Traveller and Léonowens repeat the "gourd cut in half" description, but the former writes that there are from four to eight strings (Traveller 1857: 367).

Bowring is first to identify correctly the instrument by name, calling it "Kajape (Guitar)" (1857: 1:149). He says little of its construction, and he only notes that it is played with long nails *or* a plectrum of ivory or wood. While instruments of this type appeared in Europe both in 1869 (Gréhan) and 1884, Verney and Ellis made only passing reference to it, and Hipkins ignored it altogether. The final mention of the plucked lute is a brief reference to it in Sommerville's 1897 travelogue, where ten *krajap-pi* were part of an ensemble of Berliozian standards that included ten each (if the author is to be believed) *ranat, khawng wong, ja-khe,* and *rammana* drums in addition to the lute (1897: 195).

The term *krajap-pi* is derived from the Sanskrit *katjappi* denoting anything in turtle shape, but that does not prove an Indian origin. The term is encountered widely in Insular Southeast Asia to describe various chordophones, including plucked zithers. Vaguely similar instruments with round bodies are common to parts of China

Figure 8
Lao lute (St. Vráz, p. 37)

and Vietnam and known as "moon" lutes because of their round-bodied shape (that is, *yue qin* [Chinese] and *đan nguyet* [Vietnamese]). Some are short necked and some are long necked. A photo in a Czech publication from 1901 shows a Lao musician playing a four-stringed, long-necked lute with a round body and widely spaced frets (St. Vráz 1901: 37). This particular specimen

resembles the Chinese *yue qin* far more than it does the Siamese *krajap-pi*. The latter, however, has characteristics peculiar to mainland Southeast Asia, which suggests a Thai or Khmer origin.

Membranophones

Siamese drums are of many types—Dhanit lists nineteen—and even among trained observers, it takes some concentration to distinguish the construction features which differentiate them. These include number of heads, shape of body, size, and method of fastening the heads. Siamese drums come with both one and two heads. The bodies vary greatly in shape, and heads are fastened either with tacks (in the Chinese fashion) or with lacing (in the Indian fashion). They have a variety of names, some of which suggest origin (e.g., *klawng malayu* [Malaysian drum]) and some shape (for example, *klawng yao* [long drum]); the generic term for drum is *klawng*. Virtually all Siamese drums are struck with the hands, the large *klawng that* and *klawng taphon* being exceptions, since they are played with sticks.

Few of the early accounts of Siam, La Loubere excepted, describe drums in enough detail to allow identification. As noted earlier, drums were often associated with trumpets and used to announce the King's movements about the court and city. While these references are interesting, we shall concentrate on those that allow us to identify specific drums. Those that can be identified include the *thon, rammana, klawng that, taphon, klawng khaek, sawng na, talot pot, püng mang,* and *ban thaw*. The fact that a given drum is only found in 19th-century sources has little bearing on whether it existed prior to that time, for the reasons given above.

Thon

The *thon* is a goblet-shaped drum whose body is of clay (less commonly of wood) and whose single head is tightly laced to a metal ring around the body. By shape, it is related to drums distributed through Southern and Western Asia and even into Northern Africa. Of these, the best known versions are the Arabic *darabukka* and Persian *dombak*. Both Gervaise and La Loubere describe the *thon*.

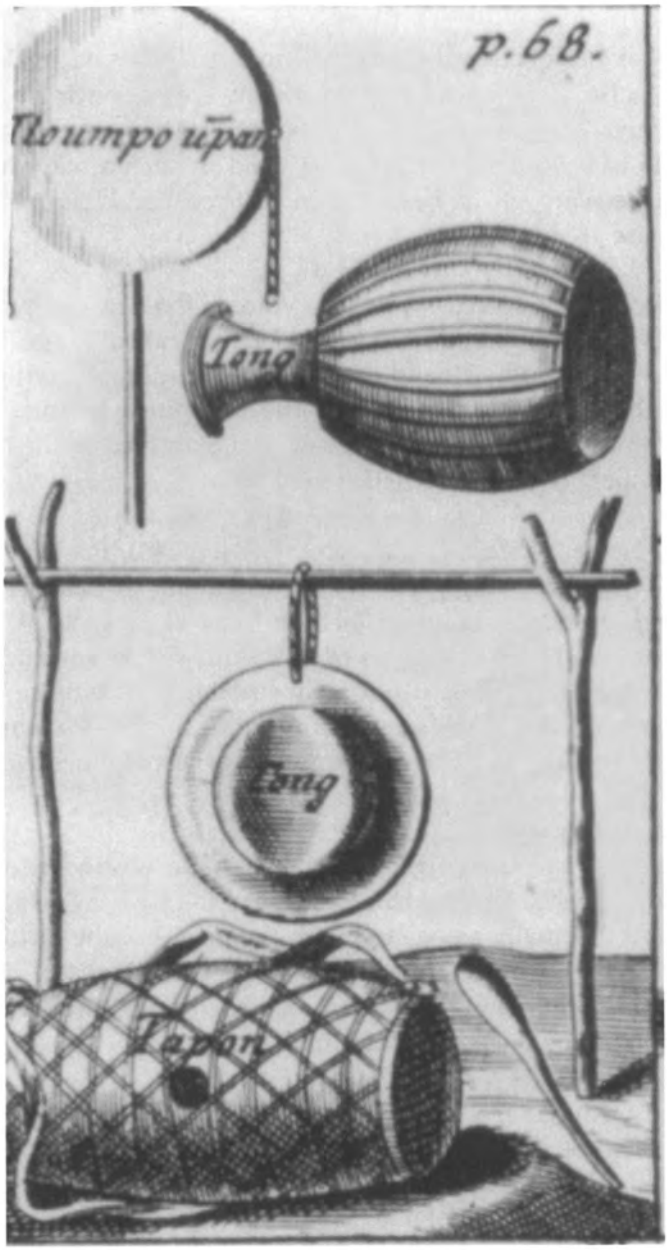

Figure 9
Three drums and gong (La Loubere)

> They have also an earthenware drum which does not make so much noise. It is a hard-baked earthenware pot having a long and very narrow mouth but no bottom. They cover it with buffalo-hide, and beat it with the hand in such a way that it takes the place of the bass viol in their concerts [ensembles]. (Gervaise 1688/1928: 53)

> The people do also accompany the Voice in the Evening into the Courts of the Houss, with a kind of Drum called *Tong*. They hold it with the Left hand, and strike it continually with the Right hand. 'Tis an earthen Bottle without a bottom, and which instead thereof is covered with a Skin tyed to the Neck with Ropes. (La Loubere 1693: 68-69)

Similarly, Neale (1852: 236), Pallegoix (1854: 1:346), the Traveller (1857: 367), and Bowring (1857: 149) all mention or describe the drum. Neale and La Loubere include line drawings of it, and Bowring asserts that the head is of boa skin. Verney includes a fairly detailed drawing of it but writes nothing of its use. It is clear, then, that the *thon* was an important and much noticed member of the Siamese ensembles from the earliest of times.

Rammana

The *rammana* is a shallow, conical shaped, wooden drum with a single head of cowskin tacked onto the body. In today's ensembles it is usually associated with the *thon*, but the historical evidence suggests that this has not always been the case. Only Bowring and Sommerville identify it, but Bowring is exceptionally observant in noting the method of tuning the head.

> 11. Rumana; a kind of drum, beaten by the hand. The piece of wood and cord attached are for tuning the instrument; the string being inserted between the skin and frame by the stick: ox-skin (not buffalo) is here used. (1857: 1:149)

The method of tuning to which he refers is evidently the wedging of material between the skin and the body. We have not previously noted drums with a stick and string attached, however. Sommerville (1897) only mentions the instrument in passing, and Verney only includes it in two lists of instruments for specific ensembles. It is, of course, possible that the *rammana* has only been

a part of the Siamese instrumentarium since the 19th century. Larger versions are also used in village *klawng yao* ensembles to and accompany *lam tat* singing.

Klawng that

The largest of the drums regularly used in Thailand is the *klawng that*, a pair of Chinese-style barrel drums each with two tacked heads. They are mounted on an inverted "V" stick frame that slants the upper heads of the drums towards the player, who strikes them with wooden beaters held in each hand. La Loubere provides a clear description of them and possibly alludes to a smaller version as well.

> . . . they have true Drums, which they call *Clong*. But tho' their Drums be lesser than ours, they carry them not hanging upon their Shoulder: They set them upon one of the Skins, and they beat them on the other, themselves sitting cross-leg'd before their Drums. They do also make use of this sort of Drum to accompany the Voice, but they seldom sing with these Drums but to dance. (1693: 69)

The Traveller (1857) also describes them but imagines that the bodies are carved from coconut trees and that the skins are from the rhinocerous. Bowring also mentions them, and Gréhan pictures one; but it is Verney who offers the most complete description, although of an exceptional pair ornamented with mother-of-pearl and enamel. He also notes that the drum is tuned with mashed boiled rice (1885: 18-19).

Taphon

Today's *taphon* is an asymmetrical barrel drum with two laced heads which are struck with the hands. The drum is mounted permanently in a horizontal position on a stand, and the heads are tuned with a mixture of burnt rice and charcoal. Considered sacred, the *taphon* is traditionally kept in a high position, and anyone who plays it must observe proper etiquette. According to La Loubere, however, it was not always mounted on a stand. "The *Tapon* resembles a Barrel; they carry it before them, hung to the Neck by a Rope; and they beat it on the two Skins with each fist" (1693: 68). Bowring calls it "Ta paen" and Gréhan illustrates it on a

stand (just like the modern drum), while Verney, who spells it "Taphone," also shows it on a stand with a handle.

Klawng khaek

The word *khaek* suggests variously India, Malaysia, or Islam. Doubtlessly, this pair of drums came from either Malaysia or Indonesia. They are asymmetrical and therefore conical; but they have a buldge nearer one end, and the two heads are laced on. Although both drums appear to be identical, one is slightly smaller, has a higher pitch, and is called *tua phu* (male or husband drum); the other is slightly larger, has a lower pitch, and is called *tua mia* (female or wife drum). Both ends are struck with the hands. Pairs of drummers realize interlocking patterns. In Malaysia and Indonesia there are similar drums called *gendang* which are played either with the hands, with sticks, or a combination.

Although Roberts (1837: 238) refers to a pair of drums beaten with the hands, the only clear description and illustration is found in Verney where he writes, "X. The Malay drum, called *"Klong Khek."* While the drum appears as the modern ones, what is interesting is the inclusion of a single stick like that used in playing the Malaysian *gendang*.

Altogether in Thailand there are three drums all having two heads laced tightly over the ends of a slightly conical body. The heads are distinctive for the black patch in the middle, which is made of tuning material (burnt rice and charcoal). The three differ both in size and in function; from smallest to largest: *püng mang* (54 cm.), *sawng na* (58 cm.), and *talot pot* (78 cm.).

Püng mang

The *püng mang* drum was traditionally played in military processions by the chief drummer but was later used in the *piphat* ensemble. Considering its former function, it is possible that this drum was seen by some of the earlier observers who failed to distinguish it by name. Only Bowring describes it by name ("Puang-man"), observing its resemblance to the *taphon*, which is larger (1857: 1:148).

Sawng na

The *sawng na* drum (literally, "two faces") is a longer version of the *püng mang*, but was used in the piphat ensemble in place of

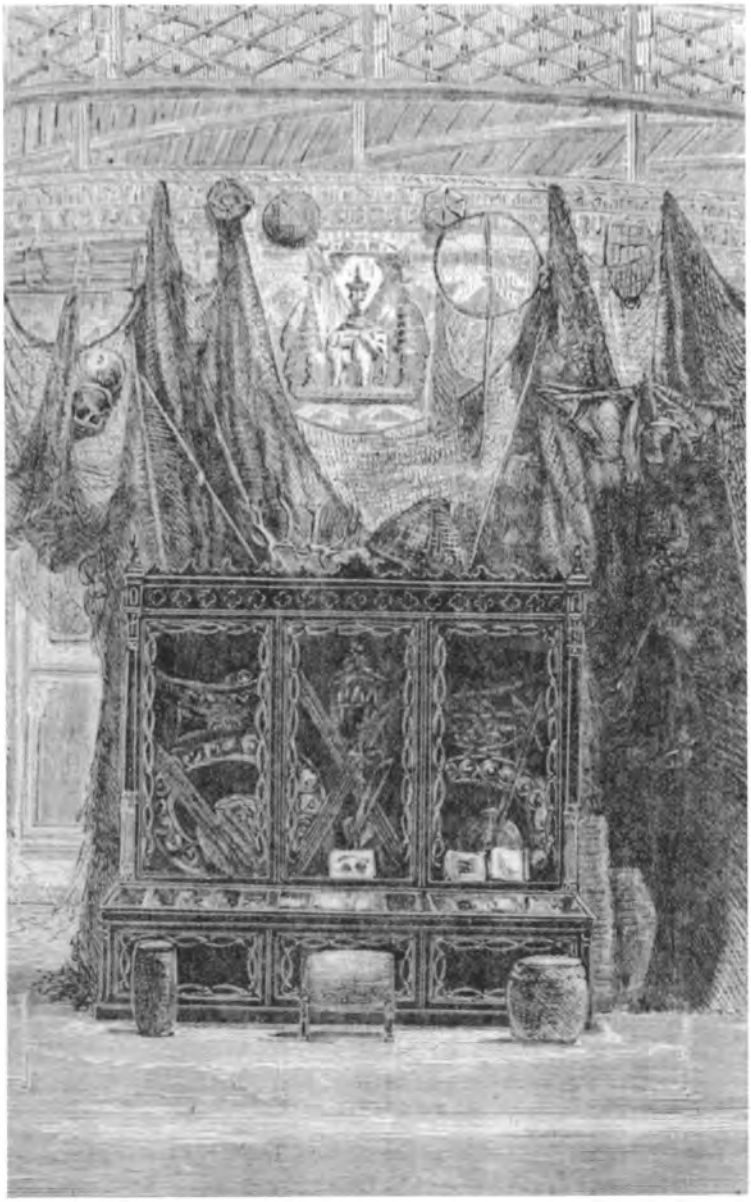

Figure 10
Case of instruments for international exhibition (Gréhan)

the *taphon* drum, and, like it, one head was tuned. It is said by Dhanit to have become common in the *piphat* ensemble that accompanied *sepha* recitation (Dhanit 1960/1971: 51). Only Verney lists and illustrates it (1885: 19).

Talot pot

The longest of the set, the *talot pot*, is primarily used in Northern Thailand. This is recognized by the only writer who describes it, Verney, who writes that it "comes from the Lao States" (1885: 18). Even though it has two heads, it is played with a stick on one end only.

Ban thaw

A rarely used and little known drum in modern Thailand, the *ban thaw* is an hourglass shaped drum with a handle. The two heads are alternately struck by a tiny metal ball on the end of a string attached to the handle. As the player turns the handle, the ball is swung from head to head. According to Dhanit, it is used today in ceremonies associated with the King. Since the courts of mainland Southeast Asia were early on modeled after Indian kingdoms, it is not surprising that Indian objects continue to be associated with the court. This is said because the *ban thaw* is in fact the same as the Indian *damaru*. Only La Loubere described it, but he called it *Tlounpounpan* after its sounds ("talung-bung-bang"). His description goes into considerable detail and he included an illustration of it that shows it to be flatter than we know it to be.

> The wood of the *Tlounpounpan* is about the size of our Timbrels, but it is cover'd with skin on both sides like a true Drum, and on each side of the wood hangs a leadenball to a string. Besides this the wood of the *Tlounpounpan* is run through with a stick which serves as a handle, by which it is held. They rowl it between their hands like a Chocolate-stick, only that the Chocolate stick is held inverted, and the *Tloungpounpan* strait: and by this motion which I have described, the Leaden Balls which hang down from each side of the *Tlounpounpan*, do strike on each side upon the two Skins. (1693: 68)

Ensembles

Conceptually, Thai instrumental ensembles have fixed instrumentation, but in practice there is some flexibility. Nonetheless, each ensemble by definition requires certain obligatory and defining instruments. The three most important are: 1) *piphat*, 2) *mahori*, and 3) *khrüang sai*. Each subdivides according to size as well.

Piphat

Probably the oldest ensemble, the *piphat* or *phin phat* consists of melodic idiophones and one aerophone, in addition to the usual drums and ever-present *ching*, the latter two realizing the rhythmic cycles. A moderate-sized ensemble would consist of *ranat ek, ranat thum, khawng wong yai,* and *khawng wong lek,* plus *pi nai* playing melody. The larger gong circle along with the higher xylophone are obligatory and defining. An important variant is the *piphat mawn*. While this ensemble doubtlessly originated among the Mon people who still live to the west of Bangkok and into Burma, the *piphat mawn* is now actually a Central Thai ensemble used almost exclusively for funerals. While the makeup of the ensemble is essentially the same as the *piphat*, the gong circles have vertical, horseshoe-shaped frames with the gongs mounted on the concave side. In addition, the aerophone is the *pi mawn*, a conical bodied quadruple reed with a flared metal bell. The ensemble may also include a set of seven tuned drums, the *püng mang khawk.*

Mahori

The only ensemble to include all four Thai classes of instruments, the *mahori* includes the four melodic idiophones of the *piphat* ensemble (but in smaller sizes), the *khlui* (flute), and strings (*saw sam sai, saw duang, saw u, ja-khe*) in addition to the usual rhythmic idiophones and membranophones. The *saw sam sai* is an obligatory and defining instrument.

Khrüang sai

The term *khrüang sai*, meaning "stringed instruments," refers to the makeup of the ensemble: *saw duang, saw u, ja-khe* plus the *khlui*. Numerous variants that add particular instruments also occur.

In practice these ensembles, however, are not always as rigid or clearly differentiated as observers might desire. In many cases an ensemble consists of those instruments available, especially in educational institutions. Further, there are a number of variants that may confuse, such as the *piphat mai nuam* (*piphat* with soft sticks), an ensemble like the *piphat* except that the *khlui* is used and sometimes the *saw u* as well. Clearly differentiated ensembles are to a great extent a 20th-century phenomenon, especially owing

to the influence of the School of Dramatic Arts in the Fine Arts Department. Therefore, we do not expect nor do we find much information about coherent ensembles before the 19th century.

While groups of instruments are mentioned before the 19th century (for example, La Loubere 1691: 68) and others are alluded to (for example, Finlayson 1826: 188), Bowring is the first to name an ensemble, in 1857. Crawfurd (1828: 333), however, writes, "A full Siamese band ought to consist of not less than ten instruments." He then lists gong circle, xylophone, *saw sam sai, krajap-pi,* flute, flageolet (another size flute?), *ja-khe,* cymbals, and castanets (*krap*?). No mention is made of drums. In modern terms, this is a kind of *mahori* ensemble. The Traveller (1857: 366-367) also states that a full "band" consists of ten instruments, but his (or her) list is not a coherent ensemble. Among those listed is the *khaen* of the Lao, which is not a Siamese instrument but may have enjoyed at that time a vogue that allowed it into the classical ensembles.

Sir John Bowring is the first to name and itemize two ensembles, the *piphat* and *mahori* (1857: 1: 148-9). Calling the first "Pe pat," he lists six instruments: *pi, khawng wong, ranat, taphon, püng mang,* and *klawng that,* although using phonetic spellings somewhat different from these.[6] No mention of the *ching* is made for the *piphat* ensemble, although it is for the second group, which he calls "Mahari." It consists of *ranat, khawng wong, saw sam sai, krajap-pi, khlui, thon, rammana,* and *ching.* The main difference between this ensemble and a modern *mahori* is the loss of the *krajap-pi* and the addition of the two-stringed fiddles, *saw duang* and *saw u.*

Verney is quite specific about ensembles and lists the contents of four such groups based on miniature instrument models sent along with the troupe to the London Inventions Exhibition of 1884.

1. "Mahoree," with twenty-one instruments:
   4 Ranats. (Two metal, two bamboo.)
   2 Khongs. [*khawng wong*]
   2 Ta'khays. [*ja-khe*]
   1 Chapee. (Family of the banjo.) [*krajap-pi*]
   2 Saws. (Family of the viol, heart-shaped.) [*saw sam sai*]

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[6] The presence of the *püng mang* suggests a *piphat mawn.*

2 Fiddles. (Having only two strings.) [*saw duang* and *saw u*]
1 Thone. (Vase-shaped drum.)
1 Rumana. (A drum of the tambourine kind.)
1 Castanet. (Fan-shaped—ivory and bamboo.) [*krap phuang*]
2 Cymbals. (Charp and Ching—large and small.)
3 Khluis. (Flutes.)

2. "Bhimbhat" [*Piphat*] with nineteen instruments:
5 Drums. (Klongs.)
1 Khong-mong. (Gong)
2 Cymbals.
1 Flageolet.
2 Flutes.
2 Khongs.
4 Ranats. (Same as in the Mahoree band.)
1 Rumana.
1 Thone.

3. "Klong Khek" [*Klawng khaek*] with eight instruments, used for "Military Tournaments and Athletic Sports":
3 Pees. (Java oboes of brass) [*pi chawa*]
2 Drums. (Long shaped, like tom-toms) [*klawng khaek*]
2 Fiddles. (Same as used in the Mahoree band.)
1 Cymbals. (Ching.)

4. "Lao Phan" ensemble with eleven instruments, said to be used in the "north of Siam" (actually, northeastern region and Laos):
2 Phans. [*khaen*]
2 Khluis.
2 Fiddles.
2 Alligators. (So named from their shape.) [*ja-khe*]
1 Thone.
1 Rumana.
1 Ching. (Cymbal.) (Verney 1885: 11-13)

In addition, Verney provides seating charts for the various ensembles. Ellis also includes a seating chart in his study but did not discuss ensembles.

Gerini, an Italian writer whose exceptionally detailed study of theatre appeared in 1912, included an instrument list for the ensemble that accompanies theatre. He listed two *ranat*, two

khawng wong, two *pi* (*nai* and *nawk*), *taphon*, and *klawng that* (1912: 88). Two strange things are to be noted in this description of the *piphat* ensemble, first, that the *ching* is missing, and second, that he claims the *klawng that* consists of three drums. He perhaps alludes to *ching* and other small percussion instruments in noting "...but certain other minor instruments may be added if required" (1912: 88).

While Graham's 1912 study of Siam provides a detailed list of instruments, he only mentions ensembles in passing, referring to the "Bimbat," which is for open-air playing, the "Mahori," a funeral ensemble (*piphat mawn* ?), and an ensemble of *khaen* and stringed instruments, what Verney called a "Lao Phan" ensemble[7] (1912: 467). He does, however, include photographs of two ensembles.

Figure 11
Siamese orchestra [*piphat*] (Graham, p. 464)

Opposite page 464 is an illustration of a large *piphat* ensemble outdoors that includes besides the usual xylophones and gong circles, the two metallophones (*ranat ek lek* and *ranat thum lek*), and *pi chawa* (instead of *pi nai*). Drums include a large *taphon* and

[7] Phan [*phan*] means to dance, and the function of the "Lao Phan" ensemble, which mixes *khaen* with Central Thai instruments, is to accompany Lao-style dance.

a pair of *klawng khaek*, the right ends of which are struck with curved wooden sticks. It is not clear whether a player seated on stage left is playing *ching* or a single, hanging *khawng mong*. If the latter, there appears to be no *ching* player.

Figure 12
Siamese orchestra [strings] (Graham, p. 465)

The illustration opposite page 465 shows an indoor *mahori* ensemble consisting of *saw sam sai*, two *ja-khe*, *saw u*, *saw duang*, *khlui*, *thon*, and *rammana*. Once again, no *ching* player is in evidence. The presence of sticks for the *klawng khaek* and absence of the *ching* may indicate practices of the time that have now changed.

V

Pomp and Ritual in Early Siam

Because so many early visitors to Siam were there on official business, they had more contact with the court than with the ordinary people. Many described various kinds of ceremonies, both secular and sacred, processions, and other ritualistic circumstances in which music played some role. Unfortunately, few writers are detailed regarding music, but from them we can deduce something of music's function in earlier times. A comparison of these early ceremonies with contemporary royal life is difficult, however, because there is no longer a court music establishment and the ceremonies are fewer and probably simpler than before. For example, the king's movements in the city are no longer preceded by musicians warning the populace to withdraw and avoid seeing the king's personage, but rather he and his family are transported by motorcade with police escort.

Ceremonies of the Court and People

Seventeenth-century descriptions of grand processions are particularly common; for some reason, there are few found after that period. Today, however, at least one ceremony remains, the procession on the Chao Phraya of royal barges, one of which transports the King, to Wat Arun (the Temple of Dawn). It is customary at the end of the Buddhist "lenten" period (*phansa*) in October to present new robes to the monks as part of the *kathin* festival. Ordinary people organize processions through their town, encircle the temple three times, and enter to present their gifts and new robes. This is also done by the King traveling by barge to Wat Arun, and his procession is the grandest public ceremony remaining in modern Thailand.

The earliest description of a *kathin* procession that includes music was written by Caron and Schouten in 1636.

> Once every year, about the moneth of *October*, the King of Siam shews himself by water and land in state to his people, going to the principal Temple of the Gods, to offer there for the welfare of his Person and Kingdom, the manner follows: When he goes by land, the procession is led by two hundred Elephants, each attended with three armed men; these are followed by many Musitians with Gomnies, Pipes and Drums, and a thousand men richly armed, and provided with Banners . . . Two hundred *Japan* Souldiers follow these [Lords of the Kingdom with sixty to a hundred men each] with bright Arms and rich Colours, and much noise of Instruments; then comes the Lifeguard with the King's Horses and Elephants, richly adorned with precious Stones and Gold furniture; which is followed by many Servants loaden with fruits and presents for the Sacrifice, accompanied with a sweet consort of Musick:...(Caron and Schouten 1663/1935: 128)

The most likely group of instruments would be conch shell trumpets, horns (*trae ngawn*), and European-style trumpets in addition to drums. If the "sweet consort of Musick" is other than instruments that can be carried, there must have been a barge transporting what we now call *piphat*-type instruments. Samuel Pepys, who got it secondhand from a Captain Erwin, described similar processions allegedly having thirty to forty thousand persons. Erwin also claimed that when the King traveled on other occasions, no one was to look upon him or make a sound, on pain of scalping (Pepys 1666: 7:250-251).

Gervaise offers considerable detail about the royal barge procession, the only one when subjects were permitted to look upon the King, but does not mention music. Although music was likely played on certain barges, the onlookers who lined the shores of the Chao Payah River could not see much detail because the river is quite wide. Nonetheless, Vliet noted in his detailed description that following the King's barge are "four or five boats with musicians. . . ." (Vliet 1692: 25).

Several other writers tell how instruments were used to warn people that the King was approaching. Writes the obscure Mr. Glanius in 1682:

> From the palace to the place where the Emperour goes, the Life-Guard stands in a row on each side, all well apparelled

> and mounted to advantage; principally the chief Officers, who are upon Elephants, whose Houses are of Gold and Silver. All along the way nothing is to be heard but Fifes, Drums, Flutes, and other instruments, which make a passable Harmony. (Glanius 1682: 112)

> When the King goes out to go on the hunt or for a walk, they warn all the Europeans not to be on the road unless they want to slowly prostrate themselves. A moment before he leaves the Palace, one hears trumpets and drums which inform and which walk before the King. (Chaumont 1686: 176)

Gervaise also mentions processions by land.

> Whithersoever the King goes the people are ordered to do three things. First, every person is required to raise in front of his house a hedge of canes high enough to hide it from view and to stop people from looking out from the house. Secondly, all windows and doors must be closed immediately they are warned of the King's approach by the sound of the fifes and drums which precede the procession. Thirdly, they must all keep absolute silence until the King has passed by. (Gervaise 1688/1928: 121)

Vliet, in describing the land procession for kathin, attempts to list instruments in greater detail, but leaves us confused by the European terminology. "The musicians who follow the soldiers play on pipes, trombones, horns and drums and the sound of all these instruments together is very melodious" (Vliet 1692: 23).

Music played a role on certain other occasions. For example, the King's movements to and from the throne were accompanied by music. Writes Vliet, "Many musicians escort the king to the throne playing melodiously" (Vliet 1692: 21). Tachard, writing of his own experience, describes how the drama of the King's appearance was heightened by music. "Sometime after all were thus placed, a great Noise of Trumpets, Drums, and many other Instruments was heard, and then the throne was opened, and the King appeared sitting on it" (Tachard 1688: 167). On his second visit, Tachard wrote how music announced the business of the court. "The trumpets and drums remain always outside, warning from time to time by the sound of their fanfares, that which was happening in the audience

chamber" (Tachard 1688: 294). That the King of Siam, like contemporary crowned heads in Europe and many uncrowned heads throughout the world to this day, needed music to encourage sleep is borne out by Gervaise' mention that after the midday meal the King "then goes to sleep lulled by vocal and instrumental music...." (Gervaise 1688/1928: 117).

Later writers offer a few glimpses of ceremonial use of music too. Bowring, quoting an eyewitness, described the coronation of King Mongkut (Rama IV) in 1851. After the chief astrologer performed a naming ceremony, "The priests or astrologers sound their conch shells, and beat gongs and drums" (1857: 2:424). Bowring then tells how "conchs are sounded, with other musical instruments" throughout the cleansing ceremony (1857: 2:425). Then, when the King mounts the third throne to seat himself on a golden lion, "an old Brahmin sings a benedictory hymn, and prostrating himself, delivers the kingdom to the King's keeping" (1857: 2: 425) Although Thailand is Buddhist, the early tradition of the Indianized kingdoms of mainland Southeast Asia was Hindu, and consequently a brahmin is retained even today for certain ceremonies.

Other less formal ceremonial uses of music are noted here and there. Frank Vincent, the peripatetic world traveler, told how a white elephant (which he cautions was actually the color of "burnt coffee") was captured in a forest outside Bangkok. "The King and Court went a long way out into the country to meet him, and he was conducted with a grand procession, much pomp, and music, and flying banners, to the capital" (Vincent 1874: 163). Elephants, "white" or otherwise, no longer roam Thailand's disappearing forests. A rather humorous use of a musical instrument was described in 1861 by French explorer Mouhot, who while traveling in the provinces northeast of Bangkok, was advised by a Chinese man, "'Buy a tam-tam, and, wherever you halt, sound it'. They will say, 'Here is an officer of the king'; robbers will keep aloof, and the authorities will respect you" (Mouhot 1966: 140). Mouhot then noted that because the people turned out to be friendly, there was no need for the tam tam after all.

Ceremonies of the Temple

Buddhism in Thailand is of the Theravada branch, whose home was originally Sri Lanka and whose sacred language is Pali. Temples are centered around a single image, that of Prince

Siddhartha incarnated as Buddha. Resident monks and novices are expected to chant, unaccompanied, the sacred texts each morning (*tham wat chao*) and evening (*tham wat yen* or *tham wat kham*). While information on chant gleaned from these references is somewhat slight, it at least confirms that patterns have not greatly changed.

The earliest description of temple ritual was written in 1636 by Caron and Schouten: "They have their morning and evening Song, Readings, and other Services, celebrated in their Cloisters every day, and frequented by their society" (Caron and Schouten 1663/1935: 105). Not all the prose under consideration was written so evenhandedly. A significant number of the early visitors were there to convert King Narai to Roman Catholicism, and they tended to show little tolerance for Buddhism. Jeremias van Vliet's 1692 study of Siam refers to both chants and sermons (*thet*).

> The principal ceremonies of this heathen religion (which is read by priests from printed [*sic*] books) are doctrines, as pointed out here afore, concerning the praise, the life, and the deeds of old famous kings, songs, morning and evening tides, offerings to the priests, which is done in the temples with many torches, candles, incense, herbs, and flowers. (1692: 79)

The "deeds of old famous kings" evidently refers to Jataka stories, that is, stories of the previous lives of the Buddha before enlightenment.

Gervaise relates the particulars of the marriage ceremony. The couple's friends and relatives arrive in procession followed by their "slaves." Then, the young men hoist the couple on a litter for a parade.

> The rest of the company follow them, dancing to the strains of music from native instruments. But more often, when the weather is not suitable for walking on the ground, they go on the water in balons [boats], where they spend the rest of the day in playing and singing . . . The priests . . . enter the house next morning at break of day to chant their customary prayers. (Gervaise 1688/1928: 40)

It remains customary for Buddhist monks to visit the home of someone making a meritorious offering a (*bun*) both during the

evening and following morning, chanting on both occasions. The reference to spending the day in boats playing and singing describes a kind of repartee song still found in Thailand, *phleng rüa* (literally, "boat songs"). This is one of many genres, past and present, in which individual males and females alternate and compete in battles of wit that amount to ritualized courting. The rest of the males and females sing as a chorus in response to the solos. These repartee genres are discussed in greater detail in chapter 6.

A number of writers witnessed and described funerals, including Ludovico di Varthema, whose account of travels to Siam, Banghella, and Pegu in 1505 includes the earliest mentions of music in Siam. In describing a cremation witnessed in Tarnasseri [Tenasserim], now southern Burma, then under Siamese control, di Varthema listed the materials used to annoint the body. He then wrote, "And in addition they play all sorts of instruments so that there is a big noise in the town. There are always present fifteen or twenty men, made up like devils in an awe inspiring manner, who make great rejoicing" (Varthema as found in Guehler 1959: 258). At a banquet following the burning, the author adds, "There are also present pipers and street-musicians in great numbers, singing and making a big noise, and the men, made up like devils, spit fire from their mouths and perform strange antics" (Guehler 1959: 259).

Another early explorer, Fernão Mendes Pinto, described the funeral of a king in 1548 (probably Yot Fa, the sixteenth king of Ayuthaya, who died in June, 1548 [Wyatt 1984: 312]). After the burning of the King's body,

> . . . this was accompanied with so horrible a din of cries, great Ordnance, Harquebuses, Drums, Bells, Cornets, and other different kinds of noyse, as it was impossible to hear it without trembling. (Pinto 1692: 276)

J. A. de Mandelso noted in 1639 simply, ". . . at their Obsequies the Corps is attended with Musick, and Fire-works" (Mandelso [1639/1662] as found in Harris 1705: 2:138).

Gervaise (1688) offers one of the most complete accounts of a funeral. After the body has been prepared and kept for three days:

> . . . the priests go there each night to chant their prayers. The first night they chant them in a low tone; the second, they raise

> their voices a little more; and the third night they cry out with all their might. (1688/1928: 92)

Afterwards the body is placed in a painted coffin, but rather than be buried, it is covered with the clothes of the deceased. "Afterwards the monks from the pagoda assemble and, to the strains of music of drums, fifes, bells and other instruments, the relatives and friends of the deceased meet together dressed in white" (1688/1928: 92). Gervaise, stating that most funeral processions consist of barges, mentions that in the first boat are found "female mourners and the dancers." When the procession reaches the cremation site and the body has been prepared,

> The nearest relative of the deceased lights the fire and while the firework display is in progress, the female mourners and the dancers, who are masked and disguised, dance round continually and assume a thousand horrible postures. The music does not cease nor do the priests stop their chanting until the corpse has been entirely consumed with fire. (1688/1928: 92)

In the case of noblemen, the procedures are much the same except that the body is preserved and lies in state for up to a year. "From the hour of death until the time of the cremation, there are always monks around, taking turns in chanting prayers" (1688/1928: 93). Kaempfer adds nothing new, but notes:

> The Corpse is carried to the burial place by water in a stately Prow, as they are here call'd; which is sometimes gilt all over, the Drums beating and the Music playing all the while. (Kaempfer 1690-1692/1906: 21)

When the body is cremated, music is again used.

> After this manner the Corpse is brought to the burial place, accompanied...by Talapoins [priests], the Music playing all the while, and there burnt...together with the coffin. (1690-1692/1906: 22)

No other descriptions of funerals make significant mention of music until 1884 when D. Bradley, an American missionary, wrote of the "Siamese Customs for the Dying and Dead." He noted that

during a king's funeral there were theatricals—human, puppet, masquerades, and wire-dancing—outside for the "vulgar" (as found in Backus 1884: 254). Whose funeral he may have witnessed is unclear since no monarch had died since 1868 when Mongkut passed on. R. S. Le May writes of funeral music in Northern Thailand, a region whose instruments and music are mostly distinct from those of Central Thailand:

> At ordinary funerals, the 'Seung,' or banjo [a small, plucked lute], 'So,' or viol [two-stringed fiddle], the 'piah,' or mandoline [four-stringed, chest-resonated stick zither], and 'Khlui,' or flute, are played together by a small band in the house of the deceased, before the hearse leaves it; but they do not accompany the procession. (1926: 116)

Even in modern Thailand there remains a peaceful co-existence of Buddhism and animism. There is no problem in believing in spirits, even as a Buddhist. Persistent illness is often thought to have been caused by spirits, and there remain to this day various kinds of mediums who intervene on behalf of the victim to help affect a cure. Only Vliet in the mid-17th century describes such a ceremony and its musical implications.

> In case of sickness they have strange feasts with many ceremonies, gambling, drinking, dancing, jumping. Several fruits and animals are offered and when these animals die when the dancing and singing is going on, this is a sign that they have reconciled the devil and that the sick will recover....For at these feasts sometimes women are engaged, who by old age are bent and stiff and who are incapable of dancing, but who by influence of the devil are able to make such demonstrations and strange jumps, as is not in accordance with their weak nature and high age. If young maidens are taken to dance, it is believed that the devil gets more pleasure out of it. . . . (1692: 81-82)

The type of ceremony described is called *lam song* or *khao song* today. Such ceremonies continue to be performed by old women. The spirit that inhabits them is not the devil but whatever spirit may have caused the illness or is capable of influencing the one that did. In Northeast Thailand *lam phi fa* denotes a ceremony for an

ill person performed by old women, accompanied by *khaen* mouth organ in which a slow dance may occur, indicating possession. The mediums sing spontaneously, as the spirits move them.[8]

[8] See S. J. Tambiah, *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-East Thailand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

VI

Theatre and Dance

Perhaps because they are visible and concrete manifestations, dance and theatre were often described by early writers. Musical sounds, which are not concrete, are decidedly more difficult for the untrained person to convey in writing, and, consequently, writings about theatre and dance tend to be more exact than those about music. In a number of cases the genres are specifically named, characters listed, and actions clearly described. We have previously discussed foreign, that is, primarily Chinese, theatre in Siam in chapter 3.

The earliest mention of theatre was written in 1636 by Caron and Schouten, who listed "plays" as one of the events held in conjuction with a funeral (Caron and Schouten 1663/1935: 143). Similarly, Vliet's 1647 account of a funeral lists "theatrical performances" as one entertainment (1692: 80). Information becomes far more explicit at the end of the century in the writings of the French missionaries and ambassadors. Bouvet, Gervaise, and La Loubere offer the greatest specificity, but Chaumont, Choisy, and Tachard also contribute a few morsels. Choisy, after discussing Chinese theatre, writes of several Siamese types:

> Following came a Siamese opera: the singing is a little better than the Chinese. The female comedians are very ugly: their great beauty is to have nails a half foot long. The rope dancers did marvelously. They put long sticks on the end of the other, as high as three houses, and held upright without balance poles, sometimes their feet in the air. They lie down on the points of swords and large men walk on their bare stomach. (Choisy 1687/1930: 172)

What James Brandon has written of Southeast Asia in general—"Music and dance are inseparable companions of most drama in Southeast Asia" (Brandon 1967: 125)—is equally true of

Thailand in particular. Traditional theatre in modern Thailand can be divided into two classes, although at least one genre at times straddles the division. These two groups are theatre of the court and temple on the one hand and theatre of the common people on the other. All include music and dance. Some are played by humans, some by puppets. The more sophisticated kinds of theatre associated with the court and ritual include: 1) *khon*, the masked drama that plays but one story, *Ramakian*, that is, the Thai version of the Indian epic *Ramayana*; 2) *lakhawn*, the non-masked dance drama that plays a variety of tales; 3) *lakhawn chatri*, a theatre that originated in Southern Thailand and which is usually performed as a ritual offering at a temple or shrine; and 4) *nang yai*, large leather shadow puppets held by male manipulator-dancers who appear both before and behind a screen. The less sophisticated types, associated with the general populace, include: 1) *li-ke*, which can be serious or humorous drama; 2) *hun krabawk*, a theatre of bamboo rod doll puppets; and 3) *nang talung*, a theatre of small leather shadow puppets. In addition there are dance types performed outside theatre as well as numerous kinds of repartee between male and female singers that are semi-dramatic.

Khon

Although Bouvet neither indicates the name nor admits any fondness for the theatre he saw, he nonetheless alludes to what must have been *khon*.

> Mr. Ambassador was extremely curious to know the foreign manners and customs . . . but we saw only burlesque dances and ridiculous farces which were played under bamboo and rattan sheds open on all sides with horrible masks and contortions of one truly possessed, a thousand times more insolent than all our charletans do on the Pont neuf. (Bouvet 1685: 133)

While Gervaise only mentions masked dance as part of the funeral ritual, it is La Loubere who not only describes it but names it for the first time.

> The *Siamese* have three sorts of Stage-Plays. That which they call *Cone* is a Figure-dance, to the Sound of the Violin, and some other Instruments. The Dancers are masqued and armed, and represent rather a Combat than a Dance: And

> tho' every one runs into high Motions, and extravagant Postures, they cease not continually to intermix some word. Most of their Masks are hideous, and represent either monstrous Beasts, or kinds of Devils. (La Loubere 1693: 49)

The use of a "Violin," however, is odd in that the *piphat* ensemble, which includes no strings, is the usual ensemble for *khon*. We are, therefore, somewhat surprised to learn of the use of the *saw sam sai* for *khon* at that time.

The one reference to *khon* from the 18th century, that of Turpin, is confusing because it refers to dance first, and only afterwards does it become clear that it is in the context of theatre.

> Within these few years they have invented a dance, which is much admired; it is performed by a troop of young persons of from ten to twelve years of age, who form a circle, and whose motions are guided by the sound of instruments. They fasten wings to their thighs, and wear behind them a cock's tail, as so many symbols of their agility. The dances are composed of several entrances. The dancers, always masked, either represent a battle or a hunting party: the more extravagant their attitudes, the more they are applauded. When the dance is a representation of war, all the performers are armed, and these cowardly men inspire dread by their contortions. Whenever they burn the body of a minister or great man, a theatre is erected on the side of a river, where the actors appear habited according to their parts, and during three days they never quit the scene, from eight in the morning till seven at night. (Turpin 1771/1811: 597)

Some writers in the 19th century tended to go into great detail about theatre, and a few wrote specialized studies that deal at length with theatre (for example, Gerini, Döhring, and Ehlers). Because these latter writers are of more recent vintage and describe theatre essentially as it exists today, we shall concentrate on the earlier writers. Especially in the case of *khon*, we are dealing with a theatrical genre that probably has undergone relatively little change over the last several centuries.

Ruschenberger's 1838 account provides the most extensive retelling of a *khon* performance up to that time. Unfortunately, in this account, as in so many, we tend to learn more about how the

writer felt about the performance than about the performance itself; ethnocentrism is a fact of life in this literature.

> The court below was covered with fine white matting, and except a clear space in front, presented a mass of half-naked human beings on their hands and knees . . . On the left were about twenty musicians, who began their performance the moment we entered the court. Their instruments were gongs [*khawng wong*], hautboys [*pi*], and pieces of wood about a foot long, which were struck together in time with the other instruments [*krap khu*], producing altogether a great deal more sound than melody.
>
> The representation of a pantomimic drama, entitled the 'Angels' now commenced. The plot seemed to be allegorical and illustrative of some portion of Boudhist religious history. The actors were accompanied in their performance by the band, and a recitative in a squeaking female voice and an occasional chorus, altogether enough 'to split the ears of the groundlings.'
>
> They wore masks, and conical caps terminating in a spire two feet high, ornamented with a profusion of tinsel and paint. Besides, they had long metallic-looking nails; in short, they were representing mongrel monkeys. . . .
>
> These knights and ladies ranged themselves in two lines, confronting each other, as in a contra-dance, and, in time to the slow music, assumed various attitudes, some of which were very graceful. (Ruschenberger 1838: 82-83)

He continues with a detailed account of the actions, evidently a scene in which Sita, the wife of Rama, dances before the monster king, Totsagun, with a shiny ball. While the author was able to follow the story to some extent and understood that good finally triumphed over evil, he obviously was left uncharmed by the conventions of Siamese *khon* in general and its musical aspects in particular. Concerning the end of the performance, normally only an excerpt from the long *Ramakian* story, he wrote, "The native musicians now brought their instruments in front of us and performed several airs, which were repaid by as many from our band." (Ruschenberger 1838: 84)

Before going on to systematic studies of theatre, it is worth mentioning that Anna Léonowens, not surprisingly, included *khon* and probably *lakhawn*—neither by name—in her chapter,

"Amusements of the Court." After giving her impression of the costumes and accessories, she adds, "The play . . . is often performed in lively pantomime, the interludes being filled by a strong chorus, with songs and instrumental accompaniment. At other times the players, in grotesque masks, give burlesque versions of the graver epics, to the great amusement of the audience." (Léonowens 1870:167)

Figure 13
Theatrical dancers (Döhring)

The first systematic list of theatre and repartee types was given by the German Dr. Adolf Bastian in his 1867 *Reisen in Siam im Jahre 1863*. While his list is quite extensive—seven theatrical and thirteen repartee genres—he provides minimal information about them. Col. G. E. Gerini's 1912 study of Siam's arts and manufactures, written for the International Exhibition of Industry and Labour in Turin of 1911, offers fairly detailed commentary on theatrical material representing five genres evidently displayed. After discussing three kinds of "miscellaneous entertainment"—*like, hun krabawk,* and *nang yai*—he concludes with "drama proper," that is, *khon* and *lakhawn*. About the theatres in which they are performed, he writes:

> The *Theatre* where the *khon* and *lagor* are performed is anything but an elaborate building. It possesses the beautiful

simplicity of an ancient Greek theatre, only more simple still. Neither stage nor scenery is required, and very little stage furniture is used. The chief requirement is a clear space where the dances and actions can be performed adequately. A wide bench is provided at either end of the clear space to form a throne for the chief personages. (1912: 85-86)

After a detailed description of costumes, the author includes the most extensive discussion to date of theatrical music.

> The music, like practically everything else connected with the Siamese theatre, is somewhat strictly bound by tradition. Although 'singing tunes' may be altered and arranged to suit each individual theatrical manager's taste up to a certain extent, those which we may call 'action tunes' [*phleng naphat*] are quite unalterable. Each 'action tune' is a conventional sign in itself, and is indissolubly connected with certain dances or actions. Thus, there is a 'walking tune', a 'marching tune', a 'laughing tune', a 'weeping tune', an 'anger tune', and so on. When the orchestra strikes up one of these tunes the actor knows at once what he is supposed to do, and dances or acts accordingly. Some of these tunes are really very expressive of the action they denote, but of course it is imperative that one should first have learnt to understand the character of Siamese music, when these tunes will be duly appreciated at their true value.
>
> Songs are not, as a rule, sung by the actors themselves, as it is practically impossible to sing and execute the accompanying elaborate dances and posturing required at the same time. Experiments have of late years been often tried, but they have not been attended with any considerable amount of success. Since this is so, it is more usual to have the songs sung by a troupe of singers, the actors merely dancing and posturing to illustrate the words sung. This plan, though it may seem strange to foreigners, works extremely smoothly, and appears to the Siamese to be perfect. (1912: 87-88)

There is nothing in his enlightened description that appears ethnocentric, and we can consequently admire this forward-looking study. According to current practice, what he writes is accurate.

Besides listing the musical instruments of the accompanying ensemble—the *piphat*—he offers material on *khon* specifically. After stating that *khon* is played in masks, he writes:

> As a rule women do not play in the *khon*, even the female parts being taken by men. . . .
>
> Taking the fact of the strenuousness of the dancing and posturing into consideration, it is obviously impossible for the actor to sing or speak his own lines; besides, even if he were not too tired to do so, the mask he wears would effectually prevent him from being heard clearly. Therefore, his lines are spoken for him by a chorus, the actor suiting his actions to the words. There are also certain occasions when the actor relies upon pantomime to express his words, and such pantomimic action could be as expressive as words when performed by a first-rate actor.
>
> The plays presented by the *khon* are always some portions of that great Indian epic, the *Ramayana*, the whole of which has been done into Siamese. (1912: 88-89)

Concluding Gerini's study is a classified list of 311 defined characters in the *Ramayana* compiled by Maha Vajiravudh (King Rama VI).[9]

Lakhawn

The word *lakhawn* denotes dance drama and is distinguished from *khon* in its lack of masks, its use of stories other than the *Ramakian*, a greater amount of singing and dance, and the fact that troupes were all male or, later, all female. The term *lakhawn nawk* was used to later distinguish the all-male type performed for a broad segment of the population as well as royalty, from *lakhawn nai*, an all-female genre thought to have developed later and confined to the court. Because the female dancers traditionally doubled as concubines, they had to be kept segregated from males, and thus female or male troupes. Today *lakhawn nawk* is functionally obsolete and *lakhawn nai* is danced by mixed troupes of males and females, but both types are kept alive by the Fine Arts Department and its several schools.

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[9] In modern *khon* females play female roles as well as the two lead male roles, Rama and Luksaman.

Only one early writer, La Loubere, names and describes *lakhawn*, that is, *lakhawn nawk* because of the male dancers.

> The Show which they call *Lacone*, is a Poem intermixt with Epic and Dramatic, which lasts three days, from eight in the Morning till seven at Night. They are Histories in Verse, serious, and sung by several Actors always present, and which do only sing reciprocally. One of them sings the Historian's part, and the rest those of the Personages which the History makes to speak; but they are all Men that sing and no Women. (1693: 49)

Numerous writers in the 19th century took note of *lakhawn*, beginning with Bowring, who commented on the *lakhawn nai*. After discussing the training designed to attain "unnatural positions," and commenting on what appears to have been an all-female instrumental ensemble, he notes, "Their perception of concord in the notes is as acute as that of an European musician, and they are equally as long in tuning their instruments." (Bowring 1857, 1:150) Whereas Bowring provided a neutral observation, the writers of *Siam and Laos as seen by our American Missionaries* had nothing good to say about any aspect of Siamese culture. The writer associated performances of all-female dance drama with Chinese gambling establishments, that is, performance outside the court as a diversion to gambling.

> Play usually begins late in the afternoon, and lasts half the night. At one end of a Chinese gambling-saloon is often an altar, and on it a figure of the god of luck. When tired of gambling the Siamese adjourn to the neighboring theatre, where they spend an hour or two watching the Lakons' theatrical performances, in which only girls, as a rule, take part. (Backus 1884: 235)

Included is an engraving of a "Siamese actress" in full costume. Earlier the writer deftly described the performance with such terms as "unearthly sounds," "grating notes," and "with human voices the most unmusical imaginable." While these terms tell mostly of the writer's aesthetics, the assertion that female *lakhawn* was performed in public is at odds with the usual history.

Ernest Young's 1898 contribution includes some useful details. "The members of the 'lakhon' companies are all women with the exception of a few clowns" (Young 1898: 163). Regarding the musical aspects of performance, he writes:

> There is no acting in our sense of the word. The words of the play are dolefully chanted by a chorus of women, whose screeching voices produce sounds that are painfully unmusical when judged from the European standpoint. the only words uttered by the actresses themselves are similarly chanted at times when they feel that the situation has reached a climax, and consequently needs an extra amount of noise to make it thoroughly effective. The orchestra employed is called the "Mahoree", and contains twenty-one instruments when complete. (1898: 164)

In listing the instruments he betrays a failure of observation in claiming the use of a one-stringed fiddle. He then describes at length the actresses and especially the bent-back fingers, long false finger nails, and makeup. Of more interest is his comment on the audience and stage.

> The audience either stands or sits on the floor, and smokes incessantly. The stage is simply a portion of the floor marked out by mats, round the sides of which sit those members of the audience who are nearest the performers. There is a raised seat or small platform at the back of the stage for the use of those who represent kings and queens in the different scenes. (1898: 167)

P. A. Thompson (1910) provides a fairly extensive description of *lakhawn* performed by females and apparently done for an upper -class audience. After commenting that many of the plays were of Burmese and Javanese origin, he claims that at least two Western stories had recently been enacted. "Not long ago an adaptation of *La Poupee* was played with great humour at the private theatre of the Minister of Agriculture, and more recently they have, with greater ambition, attempted *The School for Scandal* (1910: 174).

W. A. Graham also writes extensively on *lakhawn* and includes a photograph of what appears to be an all-female troupe. In addition to the usual description of costume, makeup, dance, and

stories, Graham tells us something of the performance conventions of the time. These are of interest because the modern context for performance is normally a proscenium theatre in a public auditorium, not the private residence of earlier days.

> The stage is merely an oblong space on three sides of which the audience sits while the fourth is reserved for the orchestra and as a sort of green room and dressing-room where the players dress and make up and sit to await their cues. In the houses of the well-to-do who have their private stage, this fourth side is screened off leaving two entrances right and left, but it often remains quite open so that the performers can be seen by the public while going through the interesting operation of changing their clothes. No scenery whatever is used, and the only piece of stage furniture is a dais, or raised seat, placed at the end of the stage just in front of the orchestra and dressing-room, and between the two entrances, which serves as a throne, as a bed, as the interior of a cottage or what not, according as the action of the play demands. (1912: 470-471)

Figure 14
Theatrical dancers (Graham, p. 472)

Preceding his comments on *lakhawn* in particular, the author remarks on drama in general in early 20th-century Siam.

> . . . though the people are passionately addicted to play-going there existed until lately no truly public theatre in the whole country. Professional players of whom the number is very great, are either strollers who perform in private houses, in temporary sheds or in market places whenever hired to do so, or are persons permanently retained in the households of the nobility where they play for the amusement of their master and his friends. From time to time efforts have been made by the nobles to turn their private troupes to pecuniary advantage by admitting the public on payment to their representations . . . but owing partly to bad management and partly to the fact that the public has endless opportunities for seeing plays for nothing, these ventures have always hitherto failed. (1912: 469)

He concludes this section by claiming that a small theatre had been opened that offered what sounds like salty all female performances of stories adapted from the French and English. Young also discusses public theatres, writing in 1898 that there was only one charging admission in the city of Bangkok. He also claims that there was no theatre unless the moon was out so that people could find their way home. While all other performances are at private homes, wandering bands of players, who live on donations from their audiences, are also hired privately (1898:162-163).

Gerini is the first to name genres of *lakhawn* other than the basic court variety, which is reported to have been played by women, except the clown roles played by males. Also as noted earlier, the dancers do not sing but a chorus relates the story in song, while the dancers realize the tale in movement, although players sometimes do speak lines. The author also mentions a comic genre played by men and women, both of whom sing their own lines aided by a chorus, this genre called *lakhawn talok* [comic dance drama]. This he says is being eclipsed by *li-ke*, however. Lastly, he includes two theatres of Southern Siam, the *manora*, which he says is the "more primitive," and *lakhawn chatri*, which has a southern origin but was and continues to be played in Central Thailand, especially as an offering at temples and the city shrine (*lak müang*) of Bangkok (1912: 89-90).

Puppet Theatre

Puppet theatre in Siam was of three varieties: doll puppets, string puppets or marionettes, and shadow puppets. Today, doll and shadow puppets persist, but only the shadow theatre of Southern Thailand (*nang talung*) and of Northeast Thailand (*nang pramothai*) are commonly seen (see Miller and Chonpairot 1979).

The earliest references to puppets are a bit vague. La Loubere, one of the earliest to mention them, writes: "The Puppets are mute at *Siam*, and those which come from the Country of *Laos* are much more esteemed than the *Siamese*. Neither the one nor the other have any thing, which is not very common in this Country" (1693: 47). Since today the Lao have no known puppets, except the *nang pramothai* of Northeast Thailand mentioned above which likely had a central Thai origin, the reference to the "Country of the Lao" is perplexing unless it refers to Northern Thailand, which was at various times under Burmese control. The Burmese retain today marionettes, and it may be to these that La Loubere refers. Bouvet seems to confirm this when he writes, ". . . the Lao . . . gave on the other side to his Excellency a show of Indian marionettes [because they performed *Ramayana*]. Those are fairly similar to ours, those which in particular fought with tigers and elephants." (1685: 125-126) Of the early writers, only Tachard refers to what might have been Chinese shadow puppets. "These illuminations [shadow puppets?] were accompanied with the Noise of Drums, Fifes, and Trumpets" (Tachard: 1688: 213).

Turpin, the only 18th-century writer available to us, does clearly describe marionettes. He also notes that performances take place exclusively at night. "The puppet-shows, . . . do not scruple to shew themselves by day-light, to astonish by their deceptions. The strings which put them in motion are within the figure, and he who works them is concealed under the stage: thus every thing favours the deception" (1771/1811: 597). Operating marionettes from *below* seems to contradict both custom and gravity, but as will be seen in Gerini's 1912 description, Turpin is correct.

In the 19th century the situation becomes clearer, though Ruschenberger, writing in 1838, only mentions Chinese puppets. "Having seen the Bazaar by day, we now paid it a visit at night. We found it much less crowded. Around the stages were knots of individuals, enjoying puppet-shows and a sort of diorama, exhibited by Chinese" (1838: 79). Backus' 1884 account, which

includes an engraving of "A Chinese Street Show" clearly showing a one-person theatre and Chinese-style shadow figures, claims that such theatre was associated with gambling establishments. He also writes, "During the national holiday season these theatrical performances are going on all the time, besides Chinese street-shows very much like our Punch and Judy; and fathers, mothers and children all gamble" (1884: 190).

During the latter half of the century writers become far more explicit. Bastian lists three types of puppets, *nang khaek*, *nang jin*, and *nang thai*, that is, Malay, Chinese, and Thai puppets respectively. The Malaysian puppets, said not to be liked by Siamese, are played in relation to a lantern, giving large shadows. The Chinese puppets are said to be manipulated from strings and made of paper. The Thai puppets are made of leather, and their cutouts are brought into relief by a light, evidently the *nang yai* (1867: 329). Léonowens, while alluding to other kinds of puppets, only describes the latter type, simply called "Nang."

> "Nang," so called, is a sort of tableau, masked, representing characters from the Hindoo mythology. Parts of the popular epic, Ramayana, are admirably rendered in this style. In front of the royal palace an immense transparent screen, mounted on great poles, is drawn across the esplanade, and behind this, at a moderate distance, great fires are lighted. Between the screen and the fire masked figures, grotesquely costumed, enact the story of Rama and Sita and the giant Rawuna, with Hanuman and his army of apes bridging the Gulf of Manaar and piling up the Himalayas. . . . (Léonowens, 1870: 167-1688)

It is not quite clear whether the humans who animate the leather figures are wearing masks or whether she is referring to the leather cutouts, since the latter in *nang yai* are tableaus rather than individual characters.

Gerini, however, offers a completely clear description of this now dying theatrical genre.

> *Nang*.—The *nang* (literally 'skin' or 'hide'), or transparencies, is a form of entertainment . . . often seen at the more important cremations. The transparencies are frequently real works of art. Figures are beautifully drawn and embossed upon pieces of skin and beautifully painted, so that they form

> perfect decorative pictures. They are each mounted on two sticks by which the transparent picture could be held up. A large screen of white sheet is fixed up with lights behind, and the transparencies are displayed against the screen, either from within or without. These pictures represent various characters in drama, principally figures in the *Ramayana*. The words of the drama played are recited by a chorus, the transparencies being moved about in accordance with the words by men who are generally accomplished dancers, as they are required to dance while they move the pictures. (Gerini 1912: 84-85)

Gerini also describes, for the first time clearly, another type of shadow theatre that is still fairly common, the small figure puppets called *nang talung*. He notes that audiences find the latter genre far more entertaining than the grander, but slow moving *nang yai*.

Regarding *nang talung*, it is Graham who writes most extensively regarding its performance customs and uses. After noting that it is more popular in the southern provinces than around Bangkok, he describes how the play is given in a small hut "erected for the purpose, one entire side of which consists of a white sheet. The audience sits on the ground outside and watches the movement of the shadows cast upon the sheet. . . ." (1912 473). Additionally, there are two manipulators, one on each side of the light, who keep the puppets on stands next to them. As is done to this day,

> if the scene is a long one, [the puppet] is stuck upright upon the soft trunk of a banana tree laid along the floor just behind the sheet. The principal characters have practicable lower jaws and arms which, during the endless dialogue which forms the greater part of the entertainment, and which is spoken by the operators, are worked violently up and down thus providing the chief movement and action of the play. The performances, which are accompanied by a band composed of cymbals and gongs, are nearly always stories from Brahman mythology and . . . afford evident pleasure to the large audiences which flock to see them and which remain seated under the starlight in perfect content the whole night through, . . . (1912: 473-474)

Graham also goes into some detail concerning a custom that is evidently rare or nonexistent now, the use of shadow theatre in conjuction with curing someone made ill by spirits. He continues:

> A good deal of superstition centres round them and the manipulators never use a figure representing an evil spirit without previously fortifying themselves with charms against the harm which might be incurred by handling it. The shadow play is sometimes used in Southern Siam to exorcise evil spirits which have brought disease into a house or village. A play is selected in which a particularly powerful malevolent spirit takes the leading part. The spirits of the sickness are supposed to be attracted to watch the movements of one whom they recognise as their superior and the scene towards the end of the play (when, the shadow curtain being drawn aside, the leather puppet, violently agitated by the operator who appears as one possessed, is supposed to entice the spirits into a specially prepared trap amid the shouts of the excited audience and the firing of guns) forms one of the strangest exhibitions of superstition and credulity which can be imagined. (1912: 474-4745)

One further type of puppet theatre remains, the *hun krabawk* or rodpuppet theatre. In a three-page mimeographed historical essay written by Tej Bunnag for a Siam Society sponsored performance of *hun*, the author relates that the present form originated in 1893 when Prince Damrong Rajanubhab's son became fascinated with a puppet theatre observed in Uttaradit. According to the puppeteer, they had originated on Hainan Island, China, and had been copied in Siam and used in Sukhotai province. The single remaining troupe was founded in 1899 and continues under the leadership of Khun Chusi Sakunkaew, daughter of the troupe's founder, Nai Piak Prasoetkun.(see Tej 1973).

The term *hun* is first mentioned by Bastian in 1867 but in reference to Burmese ("Peguer") marionettes called "Hun Mon Ram." (Bastian, 1867, 328) Indeed, there must have been a now extinct form of marionette theatre by this name since Gerini also discusses it.

> *Hun.*—The *hun* (literally 'model'), or 'marionettes', is very seldom seen nowadays, and in point of fact even when it is

presented it seldom draws a good audience. Eveything points to its being painfully out of date. The figures, however, are often genuine works of art, being carefully made, and correctly dressed in almost every detail. They are manipulated by means of a number of threads, concealed within the figures, and are pulled from below, not from above, as is the case with European marionettes. They are by no means easy to manipulate, and practically the only people who can do so are those belonging to the royal troupe. The plays represented are mostly classical dramas, which, if anything, further tends towards the *hun's* want of favour among present-day audiences. (1912: 84)

But Gerini also discusses, although briefly, a *hun krabawk* as mentioned earlier.

> There is, however, a more popular form of *hun*, known as *hun krabawk* (literally 'cylindrical model'), which is a sort of Punch and Judy show, the figures being manipulated in the same manner as Punch and Judy figures. The plays represented by the *hun krabawk* are usually of the lighter kind, and are therefore rather more popular than the legitimate *hun*. (1912: 84)

It is actually quite amazing that Gerini knew of this form of puppet theatre since it was apparently never widespread in terms of number of troupes and today remains quite obscure, unknown to most observers and unrecorded until recently.

Li-ke

There exists in modern Thailand a popular genre of human theatre performed for ordinary people on temporary stages throughout Central and to, a lesser extent, in other regions of Thailand, which is called *li-ke*. In 1971 Michael Smithies summarized the known theories of origin (Smithies 1971: 35ff), but none of them satisfactorily explains the origin of the genre. Perhaps the writings under discussion, five of which mention *li-ke*, help close the gap.

Ernest Young, writing in 1898, is the first to describe this kind of theatre, calling it "yeegai" and asserting that it had its origin in Malaysia. These statements are consistent with Prince Damrong's

idea that *li-ke* came from Malaysia in 1880 and with an account written by W. Chayangkul that a genre called *yeekay* came from Pattani, a Malaysian state (as found in Smithies 1971: 35, 37). Young continues:

> The performers are all men or boys, and belong generally to the lower classes. Chorus and orchestra are not considered indispensable, the former being always absent, and the latter generally consisting of seven large drums. There is no posturing and fantastic dancing, but genuine acting. The old legends give way to more modern and original works of a strictly farcical character. The buffoonery is excellent, but the language is nearly always coarse. Current events are burlesqued, and foreign residents with pronounced mannerisms get caricatured. (1898: 170)

This description is at odds with the modern form, which includes both men and women and is accompanied by classical instruments, even a kind of *piphat*, but change in popular genres is to be expected as tastes change.

Thompson in 1910 contrasts "eekays" with *lakhon*, the latter being played by females, and the former by men and boys. Gerini offers the most detailed account of origin.

> *Like.*—The *like* is the form of entertainment now most regularly presented. Its origin is curious. It was at first merely a form of religious worship, indulged in by a certain section of Muhammadan Malays, and in no way resembled the form which is to be seen at the present day. In the original *like* devotees or dervishes were seated in a ring, and chanted certain prayers or hymns to the accompaniment of tom-toms or large tambourine-like drums called *ramana*. Occasionally there were solos. Later, the irreverent amongst the Malays improved upon the original *like* by interlarding jokes into the solos. The Siamese, seeing the humorous side of the affair, began to imitate the *like* performance. This was how the *like* obtained its footing as a form of secular entertainment. It went on developing, losing more and more of its original character, until it finally reached its present form, which is nothing more than a sort of parody of the more dignified and graceful *lagor* [*lakhawn*]. The performers in the *like*, as now played, are, for

> the most part clowns who sing and dance in a very indifferent manner; but as they generally contrive to be funny, in a sort of rough fashion, they are popular with a certain class of people who are not very discriminating in their taste. (1912: 83-84)

Therefore, most of the theories summarized by Smithies that suggest a Malay origin have in fact a solid basis, at least according to Gerini, but the form by 1912 was already simply a new theatrical genre with a borrowed and exotic name. Graham, publishing in the same year, reinforces Gerini's statements. He writes that until recently there were no women on stage, that men impersonated them. He also points out the coarseness of *li-ke*. Indeed, nothing written by either Graham or Gerini about *li-ke* differs essentially from the modern manifestation (1912: 472-473).

Finally, Wood confirms in 1935 the existence of both all male and mixed troupes and notes the skill these performers have at improvisation of text, a fact that remains true today, since *li-ke* is performed from a scenario rather than a script. He concludes:

> I once saw a comic funeral scene performed in a Siamese village theatre. One actor, dressed like a Bishop, wearing a huge mitre, and carrying an enormous book, walked at the head of the procession, saying at intervals, "Goddam, Goddam." I asked the man next me what sort of a Bishop it was, and he slyly assured me that it was an English Bishop, because French Bishops never said "Goddam." However, I explained to him that Anglican Bishops never say "Goddam" at funerals, that expression being reserved by them solely for use on the golf links. (1935: 90)

Dance

Many descriptions of dance within theatre have been written and cited earlier in this chapter. This section deals only with dance independent of theatre. Turpin pointed out a certain irony in Siamese custom regarding dance. "Women are forbid the profession of acting; and, by an inexplicable contradiction, they have dancing-women by profession, on whom the law does not impose any imputation" (Turpin 1771/1811: 597).

The French ambassadors witnessed entertainments, including dance. Bouvet describes the scene but reveals little of the exact genre.

> Between the Chinese and Lao, a troupe of Siamese men and women arranged in a circle danced in their manner, which was quite bizarre, that is to say of their hands as well as their feet making as many diverse figures with one as with the other. The voice of some male and female singers who sing more through the nose than of the mouth, joined in the noise their of hands to keep the rhythm. (1685: 126)

Both Choisy and La Loubere mention "rope dancing," but from the descriptions it sounds like acrobatics performed on the top of long poles balanced beneath them. (Choisy 1687: 172; La Loubere 1693: 47)

La Loubere also discusses a genre of dance called *rabam*. Danced by both men and women for entertainment purposes, this genre was evidently performed for the French party of which La Loubere was a member.

> These Dancers, both Men and Women, have all false Nails, and very long ones, of Copper: They sing some words in their dancing, and they can perform it without much tyring themselves, because their way of dancing is a simple march round, very slow, and without any high motion; but with a great many slow Contortions of the Body and Arms, so they hold not one another. . . . The *Cone* [*khon*] and the *Rabam* are always call'd at Funerals, and sometimes on other occasions; and 'tis probably that these Shows contain nothing Religious, since the *Talapoins* [Buddhist monks] are prohibited to be present there-at. (La Loubere 1693: 49)

Non-Dramatic Genres

The writers under examination rarely mention non-dramatic genres, such as narratives or repartee types, but the few that do provide significant documentation. It is valuable to find that La Loubere in 1691 refers to *sepha* recitation, a kind of sing-song

narrative accompanied by *krap sepha*, that is, pairs of wooden sticks that are struck together.

> They sometimes accompany the Voice with two short sticks, which they call *Crab*, and which they strike one against the other; and he that sings thus, is stiled *Tchang cap* [*chang khap*, "person who sings"]. They hire him at Weddings with several of those Instruments I have mentioned. The people do also accompany the Voice in the Evening into the Courts of the Houses with a kind of Drum called *Tong*. . . . (La Loubere 1693/1969: 68-69)

Whether the second genre, that accompanied by *thon* drum, is also a kind of *sepha* is uncertain. Twentieth-century *sepha* performances are broken up with interludes played by the *piphat* ensemble in order to allow the singer time to rest his or her voice.

Perhaps it was *sepha* that Frank Vincent saw while in Bangkok in the early 1870s. The description remains perplexing, however, and could also refer to some form of theatre proper. As is usual with Vincent, his adjectives are autobiographical in a sense.

> In returning to the hotel we stopped at a floating booth where a theatrical entertainment was in progress. The dresses of the performers were rich, and the acting was much in the Chinese style, though there was perhaps not so much ranting, the voices being pitched to a more natural key. A great part of the dialogue was in verse; and the accompanying music was most primitive and droll, consisting simply of beating two bamboo sticks together. A band of three 'pieces' was also in attendance, and the music discoursed was of a lively character. . . . The play was gross and obscene throughout, as is usually the case among eastern nations. (1874: 127)

Verney, going on second-hand accounts, associates *sepha* with the top-knot cutting ceremony:

> This curious rite is generally followed by an entertainment, at which a romantic tale, or *sebah* is told in verse by a skilled narrator. This tale, which is generally profoundly interesting to the audience, is interrupted at stated periods by songs. The audience, thus held spellbound, listens

apathetically to the song with a silent wonder at the probable *denouement* of the romance. . . . (1885: 12)

Repartee, that is, competition between male and female solo singers each answered (in most cases) by a chorus of onlookers, pervades mainland Southeast Asia. The names of each genre normally indicated its function, for a great number of them were performed during work breaks in the fields throughout the agricultural process, from ploughing to harvesting. Certain genres became more or less professionalized, especially the Central Thai *lam tat* and *phleng khorat* as well as northeastern *lam*. Only the latter is accompanied by a melodic instrument (the *khaen* mouth organ) while the others are sung without accompaniment or at most by a drum or small idiophone. The non-professional genres are nearly extinct in modern Thailand, where individual farmers use tractors and work alone in place of entire villages working together communally.

One of the repartee genres that was noted by at least three writers was *phleng rüa*, literally, boat songs. The males and females occupy separate boats and conduct their vocal competition on the river. Gervaise noted it in 1688: "They often have barge-races on the river. These races are made very entertaining by concerts of a vocal and instrumental nature, when they clap their hands in cadence." (1688/1928: 53). Turpin's 1771 history of Siam also mentions *phleng rüa* in conjunction with temple ceremonies.

> In new festivals, every thing resounds with songs already known, or impromptus, which are the weapons with which authors fight their battles of genius. They go to the temple singing. Whenever they go out in their ballons [boats], the men and women mingle their voices, and form a concert which inspire a simple gaiety. Europeans take much delight in them . . . Those who go in ballons attack those who pass in couplets, which they never fail to return in like manner. In the ceremony in which they wash their idols, several families assemble, and proceed singing to the pagoda: they all form a concert during the whole time the ceremony lasts; and they return singing to their homes. (1771/1811: 596)

The ceremony of washing idols probably refers to *songkran*, a festival taking place in mid April at the height of the hot, dry

season, when people first wash the Buddha images, then splash water over each other.

Dr. Adolf Bastian, however, collected text examples of thirteen types of repartee songs and translated them into German for his 1867 book on Siam. Since the texts usually include many double entendres, it is uncertain whether Bastian got the surface or underlying meanings. The genres he studied are listed below in his spelling, the Thai romanized spelling when known, and translation, when possible. The word *phleng* found in most genres means "song" or "piece."

Phleng Chak (Abschiedslieder), *phleng jak*, song of departure
Errntelieder (Phleng kian), *phleng kieo*, courting song
Phleng Heh (Gesellschaftslieder), *phleng hae*, procession song
Phleng rua (Schifferlieder), *phleng rüa*, boat song
Phleng Chakrava (Gesange im Kreise), *phleng sakrawa*, a type of love song
Phleng tob kai (Lieder mit Handeklatschen), *phleng prop kai*, song with hand clapping
Phleng Nok Krathung (Pelecanus Philippensis), *phleng nok krathung*, pelican song
Phleng Nok Xonghoi, "xonghoi" bird song
Phleng Nok Jang, "jang" bird song
Phleng Majura (der Nok-Yung oder Pfau heisst in der Dichtersprache Majura), *phleng yung*, peacock song
Phleng Hera, *phleng he-ra*, crocodile song
Phleng kong dek (Kinderreime), *phleng khawng dek*, child's song
Phleng Klom (Wiegenlieder), *phleng klawm*, lullaby (Bastian 1867: 331-342)

Certain of these, for example, *phleng kieo*, *phleng rüa*, and *phleng klawm*, are well known, but most are extinct or nearly so.

VII

First Attempts to Understand Siamese Music Technically

As discussed in chapter 2, few of the writers whose materials are under study had evident musical training, and even those who did often exhibited rabid ethnocentrism. Aesthetically, few of the visitors to Siam were able to muster much appreciation for the music since it sounded so different from that with which they were familiar. In this chapter we are concerned with comments that attempt to describe Siamese music technically.

Describing music in language is a tricky business. As Charles Seeger has pointed out in his cogent article, "Speech, Music, and Speech about Music," "The undertaking [speech about music] must, then, be conducted mainly in terms of speech-music analogy, allowing for indeterminate amounts of homology and heterology" (Seeger 1977: 16). Since sound is non-concrete and cannot be seen, we tend to use vocabulary that better describes non-musical phenomena (for example, *rich* texture, *dense* counterpoint, *bright* orchestration, *plaintive* melody, etc.) than music. Within specific musical communities vocabularies have developed that are mutually understood but which may have no meaning or create misunderstanding when used with people outside that community. Anyone who has attempted to teach music to non-music majors in college knows of this difficulty. The early Western writers who attempted to describe Siamese music exhibited many of the problems alluded to here. Ironically, the most enlightened writings were contributed by individuals who never set foot on Siamese soil but who experienced the music through musicians visiting Europe, especially Verney, Ellis, Parry, Stumpf, and Gerini.

It is neither the goal of this study nor appropriate that we provide a complete technical and theoretical description of Siamese (Thai) music; that would constitute a book in and of itself.

Only a brief essay is permitted in order to put into perspective the writings under study.

Siamese music is pentatonically based, with emphasis on the 123 56 scale taken from a seven-tone tuning system that is functionally equidistant (that is, theoretically each interval measures 171.4 cents) on instruments of fixed pitch. The voice and instruments without fixed pitch (for example, flute, bowed lutes, and quadruple reeds) often produce pitches and slides outside the basic tuning system. In the case of the voice this is because melody must realize, to a great extent, the inflections of speech since Tai languages are tonal. Certain of the melody instruments imitate the style of the voice, albeit with their individual styles of ornamentation. Coupled with the fact that the beats are not accented, making demarcation vague, traditional melody remains even more resistent to description than do many other national expressions. When instruments, with or without voice, are combined, the texture is heterophonic or polyphonically stratified (to use an expression associated with Southeast Asian ensemble music), that is, each instrument realizes a fundamental (and unspecified) melody in ways unique to the medium. To persons accustomed to melody and harmony, the effect often seems chaotic. Even to this day, the traditional musics of Thailand are for many an acquired taste rather than immediately appreciated.

La Loubere, the first non-Siamese writer to attempt a systematic description of the music, had a number of observations which can be described as perceptive.

> Musick is not better understood at *Siam*, than Geometry and Astronomy. They make Airs by Fancy and know not how to prick them by Notes. They have neither Cadence, nor quaver no more than the *Castilians*: but they sometimes sing like us without words, which the *Castilians* think very strange; and in the stead of words, they only say *noi, noi*, as we do say *lan-la-lari*. I have not remark'd one single Air, whose measure was triple, whereas those are without comparison the most familiar to the Spaniards. (1693: 68)

La Loubere observes correctly that music was unnotated (at that time), but improvisation ("make Airs by Fancy") is unlikely. In fact, players realize melodies that have a fixed skeletal structure

in the idiom of a particular instrument, and this process could be considered a kind of improvisation.

As noted earlier, the beat is vague unless a *ching* articulates it, and consequently La Loubere failed to detect it ("Cadence"). As for not "quavering" (filling in with much activity) their melody, he can only compare it with the Castilians for reasons that elude us. It is interesting that he noted the use of nonsense syllables ("noi, noi") in singing. It is also possible he is alluding to a phenomenon called uan used for the melismas between pronounced syllables of the song text. It remains true today when Thai sing a melody without the words, they use the syllable "noi." It is correct that Thai music is virtually all in duple meter, and thus La Loubere's observation that no melodies were heard in triple meter is apt.[10] Finally, La Loubere noted the heterophonic texture of the instrumental music. "They understand not more than the *Chineses* the diversity of Parts in composition; they understand not the Variety of the Parts; they do all sing Unisons" (1693: 68).

The other pre-19th-century technical description, that by Turpin (1771) and based on information given to him by travelers to Siam, includes evident errors, at least compared to the living tradition.

> They have pieces which they sing in several parts, and they execute them with the utmost precision: the women sometimes take the bass. These concerts would have their charms, if their hoarse and discordant instruments were not too loud, and destroy the harmony. (Turpin 1771/1811: 596)

Nineteenth-century writers vary from near useless to scientific, however. A typical example of the former was written early on by George Finlayson in 1826.

> My friend Captain Dangerfield, himself an adept in musical science, remarks, that the music of the Siamese differs from that of all barbarous tribes, in being played upon a different key—on that, if I understand him right, which characterizes the pathetic music of certain European nations. (Finlayson 1826: 189-190)

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[10] There is, however, one piece that alternates between duple and triple time, "Chom talat" or the "Ram mae bot" dance.

Later he writes, "In conclusion, we may observe, that there is a very remarkable difference between the character of their vocal and instrumental music, the former being as plaintive and melancholy, as the latter is lively and playful" (1826: 192 192). The last point makes sense, for the vocal version that precedes the instrumental version is difficult to follow because of the lack of accent and the sliding pitches; it is also difficult to realize the word tones while the instrumental part has clearer accents, greater note density (in certain parts), and is often performed at a faster overall tempo. The remaining non-specialist writers at least note the lack of harmony in the music. Bowring also remarks that there is no musical notation. Perhaps Pallegoix is the most articulate of them. "Their music does not permit harmony, of thirds, fifths, etc., but only the harmony of the octave, of the sort that is always in unison, and, what makes the ornaments of their music, is the variety of instruments and the flowingness of the execution" (Pallegoix 1854: 1:345).

All but one of the remaining writers heard Siamese music in Europe, but among them are two eminent scholars, Carl Stumpf (1848-1936) and his student, Erich M. von Hornbostel (1877-1935), who recorded Siamese musicians visiting Europe for the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv in September, 1900. Also included is Alexander J. Ellis (1814-90) who, along with Frederick Verney and A. J. Hipkins (1826-1903), observed Siamese musicians attending the London Inventions Exposition of 1884. Ellis, the tone-deaf creator of the system for measuring intervals in cents (that is, 1200 cents in an octave), was primarily interested in determining the intervals of the Siamese tuning system and scales, while Stumpf and Hornbostel strove to provide scientific analysis of the pieces recorded in 1900. Finally, it is necessary to mention that François-Joseph Fétis (1784-1871) and Sir Charles Hubert H. Parry (1848-1918) discussed Siamese music technically in their comprehsive histories of music, but both were based on the writers already under discussion.

Ellis' first study of Siamese tuning proved a failure because he examined the only specimen available at the time, a *ranat* with nineteen bars in the South Kensington Museum in London (Engel 1874: 316). The results were perplexing to Ellis because intervals varied from 45 to 258 cents. Concluded Ellis, "This scale is quite enigmatical. The second Octave, of which only the beginning was

measured, quite disagrees with the first" (1851: 506-507). He hoped that the musicians arriving shortly for the Inventions Exhibition could clarify the mystery. They did.

By October, when Ellis had published his second study, he had examined the instruments brought that summer from Siam. After describing eighteen instruments, he examined carefully the tuning of the *ranat ek* and *ranat lek* and found intervals ranging in the case of the latter from 127 to 219 cents and in the case of the former from 160 to 200 cents. But these instruments were evidently for display and not part of the set at the Siamese Legation meant for playing. There were some discrepancies between them. Ellis notes that while measuring intervals at the Legation, Prince Prisdang, the Siamese Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary for Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and other capitals,

> told us that the intention was to make all the intervals from note to note identically the same. This would give the above division of the Octave into seven equal intervals, each containing 171.43 cents (logarithm .043004). In order to test the correctness of this information, I made a finger-board for my dichord . . . on which I could play such a scale, and I played it before the musicians at the Siamese Legation. They unanimously pronounced the scale good. I then played the scale I had heard from the Ranat Ek, and they said it was out of tune. This experiment may be considered decisive. The ideal Siamese scale is, consequently, an equal division of an Octave into seven parts, so that there are no Semitones and no Tones, when the instrument is properly tuned. . . . (Ellis 1852: 1105)

Ellis also admitted that the *ranat* at the South Kensington Museum had lost some of its tuning wax, the mixture of lead and wax attached to the undersides of xylophone keys and into the undersides of the bosses of gongs in order to tune them. Without the tuning weights, the pitch would register much higher than it should.

The subject of Thai tuning remains controversial. As Ellis found out, measuring the intervals of instruments in actual use will demonstrate a lack of equidistance, but this does not necessarily prove intention. Were an ethnomusicologist from Thailand to go to Europe or the United States and begin measuring the intervals on pianos in faculty studios and (heaven forbid) the average practice

room, he or she would find a lack of equidistance in our system as well. In the Thai case, instruments are tuned by ear and not with the aid of a machine to assure intervals of 171.4 cents. Tuning is arduous—melting the wax and lead mixture and adding it to the lump or chipping off bits of it. In the course of moving instruments or playing, pieces may fall off. But musicians generally agree that the notes are to be functionally equidistant. On the other hand, if they were really equidistant, one could presumably begin a piece on any pitch level, but in fact only certain of them are used, partly, however, to accommodate the aerophones. And so, the arguments rage on. Regardless, Ellis was the first to describe intervals in cents and, in particular, the Thai tuning system.

Ellis was also the first to name the seven pitches of the basic octave, from which each pitch level (a rough equivalent to key name) gets its name. His names and translations are followed by the modern name and usual Fine Arts Department pitch in parentheses.

I. *T'hang* = Sound; *thang* (actually, *thang* [thang] is a classifier word for any pitch level) (*thang chawa,* E).
II. *Rong T'hang* = Second or under sound (*thang phiang aw lang* or *thang nai lot,* F)
III. *Oat* = Voice (*thang nai,* G)
IV. *Klang* = Centre or middle, from its position (*thang klang* or *thang luk ot,* A)
V. *Phong oar,* merely the name of the fifth tone, without any other special significance known to the musicians (*thang phiang aw bon* or *thang nawk tam,* $B^{(b)}$)
VI. *Kruert* = Sharp sound (*thang kruat* or *thang nawk,* C)
VII. *Nark* = Outside (*thang klang haep,* D) N.B., Ellis evidently divided the two names for the mode on C (VI) and used one for D (VII).

Whether the confusion results from changes in terminology or error on the part of either the musicians or Ellis is uncertain. In any case, even today the names of pitches are not rigid in Thai theory.

Ellis then discusses other aspects of Siamese music including how songs are named, the name of the principal note of the song ("Sieng Yuens") and something of the context of music and theatre. Regarding the teaching of music, he remarks,

> There are guild [*sic*], and classes of musicians, but they do not prosper, as wealthy people keep their own musicians or bands, outsiders being seldom engaged on account of their bad performance. Children of musicians do not necessarily follow the occupation of their parents. There are no rules or customs in connection with the teaching of music, although children often learn from their parents. (1852: 1106)

Evidently, he learned nothing of the rituals associated with the study of classical music. Regarding texture, Ellis only mentions vocal music. "Women sing both singly and in chorus. Choruses have to sing strictly in unison, and no discanting is allowed, as with the leading Ranats. The singers have to keep strictly to the same notes and the same time" (1852: 1107). Frederick Verney has much to say about Siamese music too, but it is mostly through quotations from Ellis. It appears that Verney was not technically trained in music.

The Siamese ensemble that performed in Berlin in September, 1900, was recorded by Carl Stumpf and Otto Abraham on cylinders for the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv. Six items were recorded: 1) "Lao kham hawm" (spelled "Kham hom" by Stumpf) played first by the full ensemble, then by individual instruments; 2) "Thayôi khamen" ("Thai oi kamen") by the full ensemble and individual instruments; 3) "Khamen pi kaeo" ("Pi keo gal") by the full ensemble; 4) "Lao kra sae" ("Krau kra sah") for full ensemble; 5) the Siamese national anthem ("San ra soen phrabarami"); and 6) an excerpt played by two khawng wong, title unknown. The cylinder containing piece #1 was lost, but Dr. Artur Simon of the Museum fur Volkerkunde in Berlin, the successor to the Phonogramm-Archiv, kindly supplied us with a tape of the remaining cylinders. Not surprisingly, the sound quality is no longer good.

Stumpf, who published his article "Tonsystem und Musik der Siamesen" in 1901, transcribed the individual instrumental parts for "Lao kham hawm" and based his study on this piece. Hornbostel, whose "Formanalysen an siamesischen Orchester stucken" was not published until 1919, based his work mostly on "Thayôi khamen" but with some attention to the previous piece as well. He also included a photograph of the ensemble. Both articles are lengthy and make demanding reading for non-native speakers of German.

Stumpf's article is divided into several sections. In the first, "Die Instrumente und ihre Stimmung," he lists and describes the instruments, their ranges, tuning, and makes reference to a number of earlier writers, the latter constituting a virtual review of literature. The second section, "Die siamesische Tonleiter und ihre muthmaafliche Entstehung," is a study of the Siamese scale and its probable origin. Very extensive and conjectural, this section is only recommended for students of acoustics and the psychology of music. In the third section, "Einige akustische Beobachtungen an siamesischen Musikern," the author solicited the opinions of the Siamese musicans regarding certain intervals and chordal sonorities. Among other things, he found that the musicians thought major triads "good" and minor triads "not good." In the fourth section, "Proben siamesischer Musik," he examined aspects of individual pieces, including the relationship between the vocal part and the instrumental lines as well as the texture. Finally, in section five, "Ueber die Erforschung exotischer Musik und besonders uber die Methoden zur Beschaffung des Materials," he speculates generally on the nature of "exotic" music. Following the article proper is a "Tontabellen," that is, a "Partitur" score of the piece "Kham hom=Susse Worte" ["Lao kham hawm" is literally "Sweet words in Lao accent"], but actually refers to a girl named Kum Hawm] scored for both gong circles (*khawng wong*), flutes (*khlui*) of two sizes, both xylophones (*ranat*), gong, and two drums. The picture published with Hornbostel's article shows many drums, leaving us uncertain as to which ones were used here. It is perhaps worth noting that Willi Apel and Archibald Davison included this piece in their *Historical Anthology of Music*, vol. I, better known to a generation of music students by its acronym, *HAM*, under the heading "Ancient and Oriental Music." The assumption used to be, and still often is, that "Oriental" music does not change and therefore belongs with "Ancient" (for example, early Greek) music.

Hornbostel's article emphasizes the analysis of form, especially in "Thayôi khamen." He too begins with a general introduction to Siamese music and its instruments, including a section of "Bemerkungen zur Ubertragung" [Remarks on the Transcription]. This is followed by detailed studies of both "Thayôi khamen" and "Lao kham hawm." A number of transcriptions follow, including the full score (melodic instruments only) of the ensemble noted above.

Figure 15
Group of musicians in Germany
(Hornbostel, p. 307)

On first appearance these transcriptions are good enough that they could be played by the indicated Thai instruments and listeners would recognize the work at once. Every attempt was likely made to transcribe accurately. However, the transcribers had particular difficulty with the more fluid parts played by the flutes, and the liberal use of "tr" (trill) signs evade the actual details, which cannot be heard very clearly on the recording. Moreover, the *ching* was omitted from the transcriptions, although this seemingly insignificant set of cymbals functions as an audible conductor and is therefore essential, both in providing the beat and in defining the various tempo levels (*chan*). Nonetheless, it remains true that these transcriptions are the only ones of the group that would allow for any meaningful analysis.

The value of these two articles could be debated. Both are examples of the study of decontextualized music, but both are also excellent specimens of the systematic methodology of the rapidly developing field of German "comparative musicology." In a way they tell us at least as much about German musical intellectualization as they do about Siamese music. It may be observed that Stumpf and Hornbostel have yielded to a peculiarly

Western predilection for formal analysis—a kind of musical autopsy—to a music that native musicians do not analyze. Perhaps they do expose something of the logic of Siamese music, but one wonders whether it is not really Western logic being seen in Siamese music. Regardless, no other scholars to that time had studied Siamese music so closely or scientifically, and their studies remain as landmarks both in ethnomusicology and musicology.

Since W. A. Graham's "handbook" on Siam was perhaps the most extensive and systematic up to that time, and one that was based on firsthand experience, its extensive section on music and theatre not surprisingly includes some discussion of the music's structure. Its relative brevity and lack of precision, however, betray a writer who evidently had little training in music, a problem somewhat compensated for by his lengthier descriptions of instruments and theatrical genres. Graham, perhaps having read Ellis and others, understood that the "gamut" had seven equidistant intervals said to be 5/7 tones each,

> which division renders the chromatic scale impossible and prevents the satisfactory rendering of European music on Siamese instruments, though, thanks to the influence of American missionaries, the repertoire of every Siamese Orchestra contains inspiring Western airs such as 'Yankee Doodle,' and 'Marching through Georgia' which are performed with a zest that possibly compensates in a measure for want of accuracy in tone. The general impression of Siamese music is that it is all played in a minor key, but this is not the case for the ordinary scale has no relation to the European minor. . . . Harmony is not understood or practised, but some extent of simple variation is obtained by the use of counterpoint. Time is very carefully observed, and is always either 2/4 or 4/4. Orchestral music is always played in unison. (Graham, 1912, 459-60)

Some of this is true, but some of it is not. This description, like so many others, is flawed by a writer groping to explain phenomena only vaguely understood using terms that were familiar because they were derived from a totally different musical system. But in doing so, much was usually lost in the translation. Nonetheless, it can be seen that a fair number of observers penned surprising perceptions about this evidently strange music but that

their lack of musical training (or sometimes *because* of their music training) prevented them from hearing Siamese music on its own terms. Listeners in the mid-1990s, however, continue to experience the same obstacles when confronted with "strange" musics, and we cannot read these early attempts to explain the mysterious with too much self-righteous condescension.

VIII

A Study of Notated Songs and Melodies

"They make Airs by Fancy and know not how to prick them by Notes" (La Loubere 1693: 68). Anyone who has heard a performance of Siamese classical music, especially the vocal part, understands how difficult it is for someone unfamiliar with the style to notate this music, regardless of the notation used. The Siamese tuning system, at least with the fixed-pitch instruments (for example, *khawng wong* gong circle and *ranat* xylophone) consists of seven functionally equidistant steps, which expressed in cents each measure a theoretical 171.4 cents. Because the five-line staff, as used in the West, is predicated on a twelve-tone tuning system of (tempered) semi-tones each measuring 100 cents, notating Siamese music on the staff distorts the actual intervals.

In the case of vocal music or those instruments that are capable of playing at any pitch level and sliding between pitches, for example, *khlui* flute or saw fiddles, the Western staff is quite incapable of representing the actual pitches. In addition, these "expressive" instruments (unlike the xylophones or gong circles, which play in stricter rhythm) may play *around* the beat and include extremely subtle rhythmic nuances and ornaments that, even were they accurately notated, could not be read by players because of their complexity. This situation is similar to that of jazz—the player simply has to know the style by ear. Besides, Siamese classical performers had no notation whatsoever until the 20th century; and the more recent notations, based either on arabic numbers or Siamese initials of the Western do-re-mi-solmization, not having been intended for "descriptive" notation, provide only the bare essentials of the melody in a "prescriptive" sense. Finally, skilled players do not use notation in performance in any case, because the music must be remembered and to some extent reinterpreted each time it is played according to the idiom (*thang*) of the instrument.

If transcribing Siamese music to staff notation is problematical for trained musicians and even specialists in Siamese music, then one can only imagine the challenge to musical amateurs. With two exceptions, the writers who attempted to notate songs were probably musical amateurs. A total of seven writers presented Siamese music in notation and an eighth simply reproduced (without ascription) one of the seven. The two exceptions were the early ethnomusicologists Stumpf and Hornbostel, who carefully transcribed instrumental parts from cylinders recorded in Berlin in 1900. The value of these notated pieces is limited, but at least they provide a keyhole view of repertory of earlier times.

The earliest notation appeared in Gervaise's 1688 account of Siam in the form of a song entitled "Sout Chai." The melody and apparently composed instrumental accompaniment were notated on two five-line staves in duple meter with the text in French romanization beneath. The melody encompasses six tones (the diatonic pitches from C ascending to A) and has been harmonized in a kind of A minor (without the raised leading tone) or Aeolian mode—the bass part begins and ends on A. Performed as notated, with the implied Western intonation, "Sout Chai" does not sound Siamese at all. We can only presume that this example is a pale reflection of the original, which was evidently sung for either Gervaise himself or the person who notated the song.

Two attempts have been made to interpret the song, one into Thai orthography by Prince Naradhip Brabhanbong (hereafter, Prince Nara) and one into English translation by Herbert Stanley O'Neill, who translated Gervaise into English. Because O'Neill's translation was based on Prince Nara's transliteration, any problems in the latter were obviously retained in the former.

In attempting to reconstruct the actual text from these early writings, one must be aware that the Europeans probably did not know Siamese and consequently missed certain of the sounds and mixed up certain words. The French spellings are attempts at phonetic recreation of the sounds heard rather than a consistent romanization of the original written text. Persons not acquainted with Siamese, for example, may not hear the final consonants, which are swallowed rather than articulated. Since French may be pronounced similarly, it is somewhat surprising that both Gervaise and La Loubere missed some of the final consonants. For example, La Loubere wrote "leupacam" instead of the actual

"leu*k*pacam" (ลูกประคำ). Gervaise wrote "Cam pra" and "pi ban" instead of the actual "cam pra*k*" (จำพราก) and "pi ban*g*" (พี่บ้าง).

Similarly, certain of the consonant and vowel sounds were either not heard clearly enough or could not be represented accurately because they were so different from those of French. For example, they had difficulty distinguishing ก (k), ค (kh), จ (j), and ช (ch). Similarly, ด (d), ต (*t*), and ท (th) presented problems. In the case of vowels, it was both difficult to represent and distinguish อา (a), ออ (aw), โอ (o), เอา (ao), and ไอ (ai) from each other. For example, in the song "Say Samon" (La Loubere), the vowel sound ออ (aw) was represented as "o" ("Son Seua" and "conep neua") while the vowel sound เอา (ao) was also written "o" ("cochaoua" and "So nayey").

Thirdly, because the transcribers did not know the form of the poetry, their phrase divisions did not always coincide with the actual phrases. In cases where the text is highly poetic, finding the phrases is not difficult, but when the text is prosaic, finding the phrases is quite challenging. In the latter case, we must examine the musical phrases, which usually correspond to the phrases of poetry. Generally, however, neither melodic nor poetic phrases structures were accurately represented because of the inherent flexibility of the performance. Indeed, the transcriptions create more problems than they solve. If the purpose of these transcriptions was to convey some sense of Siamese musical style to the reader, they failed.

Sout Chai (Gervaise)

The song "Sout Chai," which appeared in Gervaise's 1688 account of Siam, appears below in three permutations: (A) original phonetic text in French spelling; (B) Prince Nara's transliteration into Siamese; (C) Herbert Stanley O'Neill's translation into English.

1. A. Sout Chai eui

B. สุด ใจ เอย

C. Sout Chai, My maiden!

2. A. Sai chaou cha cam pra pai eou an

B. สาย เจ้า จะ จำ พระ ไป สู่ อัน

C. Thou'rt be an orphan, Thou'rt off to the garden

3. A. na noun chaou machit tunc pi ban

B. นะ นุ อัน เจ้า มา ชิด ตัก พี่ บ้าน

C. With face so fine! No thought for me given

4. A. Sout Chai eui

B. สุด ใจ เอย

C. Sout Chai! My maiden!

5. A. sai chai l'ou chanc pai

B. สาย ใจ จะเอาชั่ง ไป

C. With what comfort laden

6. A. ton teu ang re uang reuang nai eui

B. ต้น เรื่อง เรื่อง ไหน เลย

C. Thy life to mine!

Most of the spelling problems noted above are to be found in "Sout Chai." Because of that, attempting to translate the words exactly as spelled can be misleading. A far more productive approach is to ascertain the word from its context, even though this requires fairly serious changes in spelling. We believe, however, that the changes are justifiable, because Gervaise could only attempt a phonetic version of the text as he heard it.

One discrepancy between the text in the score and that quoted by O'Neill is in line 2. In the latter the line begins "Sai chaou," but in the score the text is "Sai chai." One way to resolve this problem is to look elsewhere in the text. Line 5 begins with the phrase "Sai chai," which suggests that line 2 is the same. Further, in Siamese "sai chai" is a term widely used when addressing the person you love or care about, while "sai chaou" has no suitable meaning here or elsewhere. However, while "sai chai chaou" does have meaning, it is likely that "sai chai" was intended in both lines 2 and 5.

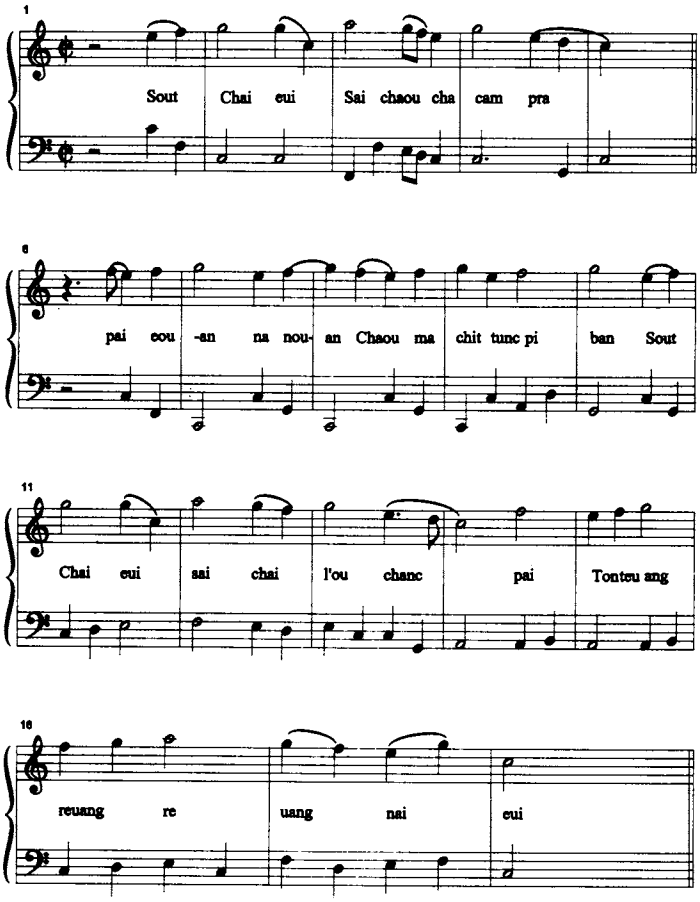

Figure 16
"Sout Chai" (Gervaise)

Line 2 is especially problematical, both in Prince Nara's transliteration and O'Neill's translation. The original reads "sai chaou cha cam pra pai sou an," but as pointed out above, "chaou" would properly be "chai." Prince Nara changed the sound to สายเจ้าจะจำพระไปสู่อัน (*sai jao ja jam phra pai su an*). The word "cam pra," which means "orphan," therefore, was translated into the line by O'Neill as "Thou'rt be an orphan." This makes no sense in the context of the poem, unless the speaker is a parent with a known terminal illness. However, adding "k" to "cam pra," since

the final consonants were often missed, the word becomes "cam prak" (or *jam phrak*), meaning "You are leaving for the park [or garden]," which makes a good deal more sense than "Thou'rt be an orphan, thou'rt off to the garden."

In the third phrase, if one attempts to understand it according to Prince Nara's transliteration, some subtleties will be lost. The correct Thai spelling would seem to be หน้า นวล เจ้า มา ชิด ตัก พี่ บ้าง (*na nuan jao ma chit tak phi bang*), which translates as "[You], with a beautiful white face, please come close to my lap." Similarly, Prince Nara wrote the fifth phrase as สายใจจะเอาชั่งไป (*sai jai ja ao chang pai*), but Gervaise original "lou" is more likely "rou" because the initial "r" is usually pronounced "l." If the transliteration is สายใจรู้จักไป (*sai jai ru jak pai*), the meaning is "You ought to know about [the safety of] your journey." Finally, the sixth phrase includes the word "reuang," which Prince Nara wrote as เรือง (*rüang*). The better word would be ระวัง (*ra-wang*).

The overall form of the poem, therefore, is two sections, the first consisting of phrases 1-3 and the second of phrases 4-6. Each section begins with "Sut-jai oei," [Oh, dear Sut-jai], a kind of greeting.[11] This particular poem includes rather little rhyme, as

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[11] During the final preparation of this manuscript, Professor Panya Roong-rüang has offered an alternate interpretation of the "Sout Chai" song, as follows. Prof. Panya feels that the poetry is a kind of *rai* possibly associated with *lakhawn chatri* theatre. *Lakhawn chatri* is believed to have been prevalent at Ayuthaya, but soon after that city's destruction in 1767 a troupe fled to what is now Southern Thailand. Later, when General Taksin invaded Nakhon Sri Thammarat, he brought back to Thonburi a *lakhawn chatri* troupe, which by then had acquired some influence from the south. There appears to be the suggestion of the Manora story in this poetry.

Professor Panya interprets the opening as "Sut jai" (literally, "at the end of the heart," but in effect, "Oh my dearest"). Line 5 could well be "sai jai lü ja pai" ("Dearest, will you go?"). Line 6 makes more sense as "tawng ra-wang ra-wai nôi oei" ("You must be

compared to the next song, "Say Samon." Musically, the form is A1, A2, A3, A4, that is, a four-measure line repeated three times (total of four), each time varied in order to conform to the linguistic tones of the words. The bass part, written on a staff with an F-clef for the middle line, appears to be a European attempt to harmonize the Siamese melody and is of little consequence.

The song "Sut-jai" dates, obviously, from the Ayuthaya Period. Does it survive today? The answer would seem to be yes, in the form of a song called "Chui Chai," which is known to date to the Ayuthaya Period. It is now used to describe a beautiful girl or woman in glittering costume and refined make-up. This song is used in two different situations. "Chui Chai Benyakai" is used in the Siamese Ramakian epic and "Chui Chai Pram" is used in jataka (Buddha birth) stories. Therefore, it appears that "Sut-jai" ought to be "Chui Chai." This song consists of four repeated lines of melody, each of which has two phrases (each phrase being two measures) of four measures. This corresponds almost exactly to Gervaise song "Sout Chai."

In conclusion, an improved and hopefully correct version of the song appears below. A is Gervaise's original text; B is our suggested Thai text; C is the romanization; and D is the translation into English.

1. A. Sout Chai eui

B. ฉุย ฉาย เอย

C. Chui Chai oei

D. Oh, dear Chui Chai

2. A. Sai Chai Cha Cam pra pai sou an

B. สายใจ จะ จำ พราก ไป สวน

C. Sai jai ja jam phrak pai suan

D. You are leaving for the [royal] garden

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careful"); the second "ra-wang" likely stems from a repetition in the singing, and the third "ra-wang" makes more sense as "ra-wai," both in meaning and in rhyming with "ja pai" in the previous line.

3. A. na nou an Chaou machit tanc pi ban
B. หน้า นวล เจ้า มา ชิด ตัก พี่ บ้าง
C. Na nuan jao ma chit tak phi bang
D. [You] with a beautiful white face, please come close to my lap

4. A. Sout Chai eui
B. ฉุย ฉาย เอย
C. Chui Chai oei
D. Oh, dear Chui Chai

5. A. Sai chai lou chanc pai
B. สายใจ รู้ จัก ไป
C. Sai jai ru jak pai
D. You ought to know about [the safety of] your journey

6. A. ton re uang reuang re uang nai eu i
B. ต้อง ระวัง ระวัง หน่อย เอย
C. Tawng ra-wang ra-wang nôi oei
D. You be careful!

Say Samon (La Loubere)

La Loubere's impressive tome was published both in French and in English. The song "Say Samon" appears in both, but evidently it was reengraved for the English edition, with very slight differences in spelling, but without any attempt to translate it into English. Prince Nara also transliterated the text back into Siamese but attempted to follow La Loubere's text too closely, resulting in some problematical passages. In trying to make apparently incomprehensible terms understandable, he sometimes drew upon ancient and now archaic words that create more problems than they solve.

In the following, A is La Loubere's French version; B is La Loubere's English version; C is Prince Nara's transliteration into Thai; and D is a romanization of Prince Nara.

1. A. Say Samon euy
B. Say Samon euy
C. สาย สมร เอย
D. Sai samawn oei

2. A. leupacam Son Seua
B. leupacam Son Seua
C. เลี้ยว ประคอง สร เสื้อ
D. Lieo pra khawng sawn süa

3. A. conep neua tchaou Keun diaou nayey
B. conep neua Tchaou Keun diaou nayey
C. ขอแนบ เนื้อ ฉอ้อน ข่วน เดี่ยว เหนื่อย
D. Khaw-naep nüa cha-awn khuan dieo nüai

4. A. pleng ny co tchaoua pleng day
B. pleng ny co tchaoua pleng day
C. เพลง นี้ ขอ เจ้า
D. Phleng ni khaw jao

5. A. pleng labam le tchaouey tchautay
B. pleng labam le tchaouey tchautay
C. เพลง ระบำ หรือ ไฉน เจ้า ไท่
D. Phleng rabam rü chanai jao thai

6. A. pleng ny cochaoua pleng So nayey
B. pleng ny cothaoua pleng So nayey
C. เพลง นี้ ขอ เจ้า เพลง สาว น้อย
D. Phleng ni khaw jao phleng sao nôi

7. A. peuy Vongle chaouey Tchiong quouang
B. peuy Vongle chaouey Tchiong quouang
C. เผย หว่ง แล เชย ข้องของ
D. Phoei wang lae choei khawng khawng

8. A. nang Tchang Tchayleu Tcha deun ey
B. nang Tchang Tchayleu Tcha deun ey
C. นาง ช่าง เฉลียว ระ เดิร เอย
D. Nang chang chalieo ra doen oei

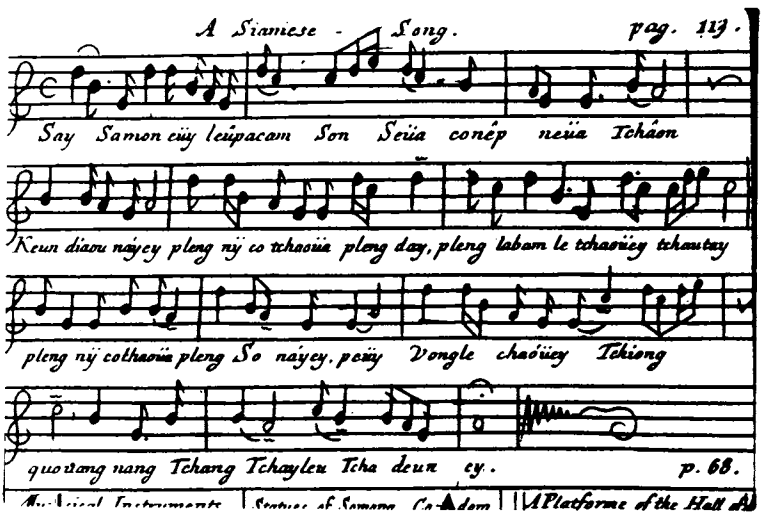

Figure 17
"Say Samon" (La Loubere)

The English version of the text conforms to the French version except for the last words of both the third and seventh measures. In the case of the former, the original had "tchaou" and the English edition "tchaon." While either term might be transliterated with meaning into Siamese, "tchaou" is more proper and, therefore, likely. It would appear that the English editors simply made a typographical error. In the second case (last word of measure 7), there appears to be an engraving error in the English edition. The French has "cochaoua" while the English has what appears to be "cothaoua." In actuality, both c and t are written in the same space as the c in "cochaoua."

La Loubere, like Gervaise, sometimes missed endings of words because of the Siamese manner of pronunciation. "Leupacam" (measure 1) ought to be "leuk pacam," because the author failed to hear the final "k" sound of "leuk." In numerous places the author

used the same romanization for several distinct vowel sounds, for example, "Say" (สาย sai), "nayey" (หน่อยเอย nôi oei), "day" (ใด dai), "tchautay" (ชาวไทย chao thai), "So nayey" (สาวน้อยเอย sao nôi oei), and "Tchayleu" (เฉลียว chalieo).

Regarding poetic form, it is clear that "Say Samon" is a *rai*, a poem with three sections. Therefore, lines 1-3 constitute the first section, lines 4-6 the second, and lines 7-8 the final section. Melodically, the song consists of a melody sung three times, each corresponding to the sections of poetry. Within this melody, the form is A A B B. The phrases "Say Samon euy" and "leupacam Son Seua" are each set to the same phrase, while "conep neua tchaou" and "Keun diaou nayey" are each set to a different phrase. The same pattern holds true for the second section. In the third section, the A phrases set "peuy Vongle chaouey" and "Tchiong quouang" while the B phrases set "nang Tchang Tchayleu" and "Tcha deun ey."

It is uncertain who transcribed the melody or when it was done, that is, on the spot or later. The combination of rhythmic freedom plus subtleties of vocal ornaments made transcription difficult. It can only be assumed that there were numerous errors. While La Loubere provided a time signature of "C" (4/4), his sixth measure has more than four beats.

In the final analysis, La Loubere, perhaps without realizing it, preserved for posterity a melody and text of considerable sensuality. Addressed to "a lady" (rather than to a lady named "Say Samon"), this is a lover's appeal. The following, we believe, is an accurate reconstruction of a song that is apparently no longer in the Siamese classical repertory. A. is La Loubere's original spelling; B. is a corrected romanization; C. is the Siamese text; and D. is a translation.

1. A. Say Samon euy
B. Sai samawn oei
C. สาย สมร เอย
D. Oh, dear lady [sai samawn]

2. A. leupacam Son Seua
B. Luk prakham sawn süa
C. ลูก ประคำ ซ่อน เสื้อ
D. You have beads hidden under your blouse.

3. A. conep neua tchaou Keun diaou nayey
B. Khaw naep nüa jao khün dieo nôi oei
C. ขอ แนบ เนื้อ เจ้า คืน เดียว หน่อย เอย
D. Please let me sleep with you for just one night

4. A. pleng ny co tchaoua pleng day
B. Phleng ni khao chü phleng dai
C. เพลง นี้ เขา ชื่อ เพลง ใด
D. What is the name of this song?

5. A. pleng labam le tchaouey tchautay
B. Phleng rabam rü chao oei chao thai
C. เพลง ระบำ หรือ ชาว เอ๋ย ชาว ไทย
D. Is it a dance song or a Thai song?

6. A. pleng ny cochaoua pleng Sa nayey
B. Phleng ni khao chü phleng sao nôi oei
C. เพลง นี้ เขา ชื่อ เพลง สาว น้อย เอย
D. This song is called "Young Lady" song

7. A. peuy Vongle chaouey Tchiong quouang
B. Phi wang choei khiang khang
C. พี่ หวัง เชย เคียง ข้าง
D. I hope to sleep with you.

8. A. nang Tchang Tchayleu Tcha deun ey
B. Nang chang chalieo ya tün oei
C. นาง ช่าง เฉลียว อย่า ตื่น เอย
D. Oh, smart young lady, don't wake up yet.

Whether these two songs successfully represented Siamese music or not, each was again used by a later writer for that very purpose. Laborde's 1780 description of Siamese music, all of which is either quoted or paraphrased from earlier writers, and without attribution, reprints "Sout chai" from Gervaise, reset into type. Similarly, the French musicologist Fétis in his five-volume *Histoire generale de la musique* (1869-1876) not only quotes several earlier writers, but reprints "Say samon" from La Loubere.

In addition Fétis included two "chansons siamoises" that had been published in Bombay in 1837. Interestingly, the first, entitled "Chanson de bain," is in triple time, which is not usual for Siamese music. Furthermore, neither of them sounds particularly Siamese if sung as written. Thus far we have not been able to match either the "Chanson de bain" nor the "Air appele 'O! Lau-laos'" to any currently played melodies.

An interesting collection of ten melodies was published in 1837 by Captain James Low under the heading "Siamese Airs." Nine were given titles, and all were notated in either G major or D major. Perhaps because they have been simplified to such an extent, and therefore distorted, we have not been able to recognize them, but a number of the titles art still known but associated today with different tunes. Below are listed Low's original titles, the likely Siamese spellings,[12] and their romanizations (Low 1837: 51-54).

1. Unnamed [introductory in style, cannot be identified]

2. Rong rap, ร้องร้าย rawng rai (J), ร้องรับ rawng rap (P). Rawng rap means to sing a section of a composition followed by the instrumental version. Perhaps the first section is for voice and the second for instruments.

3. Cha lok lo-ang, ชลกเรือง cholok rüang (J), ช้าลูกหลวง cha luk luang (P). Panya argues that "cha" is slow, "luk" is son or daughter, and "luang" indicates royalty. This is likely a piece for *saw sam sai* sung and played as a lullaby for a prince or princess, but the music is here incomplete.

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12 The interpretations of these titles was provided jointly by Jarernchai Chonpairot and Panya Roong-rüang. Alternate interpretations are distinguished by a J (Jarernchai) and a P (Panya).

4. Nang nok, นางนก nang nok or "female bird."

5. Sarika keo, สาริกาแก้ว sarika kaeo or "crystal sarika bird."

6. Nang nak, นางนาค nang nak or "female snake [naga]."

7. Khamin luang an, (นก)ขมิ้นเหลืองอ่อน (nok) khamin lüang awn or "a light yellow bird." The actual title is "nok khamin" (นกขมิ้น), but the text begins with "jao nok khamin lüang awn" (เจ้านกขมิ้นเหลืองอ่อน)

8. Phriya dun, or The King of Siam's March, พญาเดิน phaya doen. This music is different from the usual tune of this title.

9. Cha Hong, ช้าหงส์, cha hong

10. Thewi, เทวี, thewi

N.B. The music in songs 4 through 10 is incomplete, usually just the beginning.

SIAMESE AIRS.

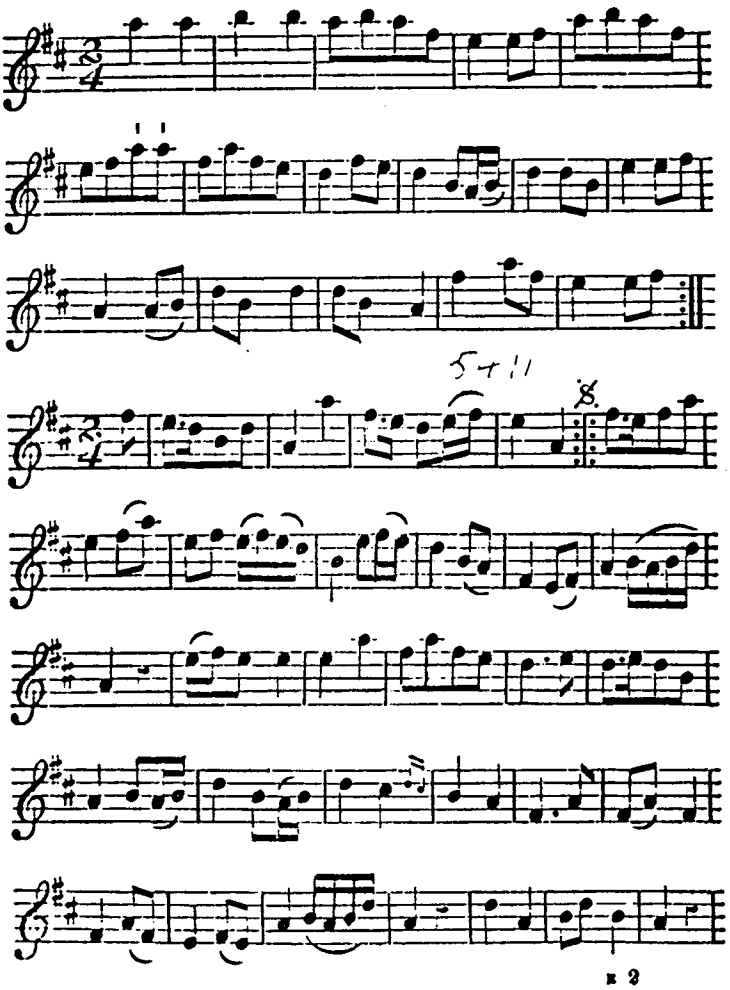

Figure 18A
Selected musical examples (Low)

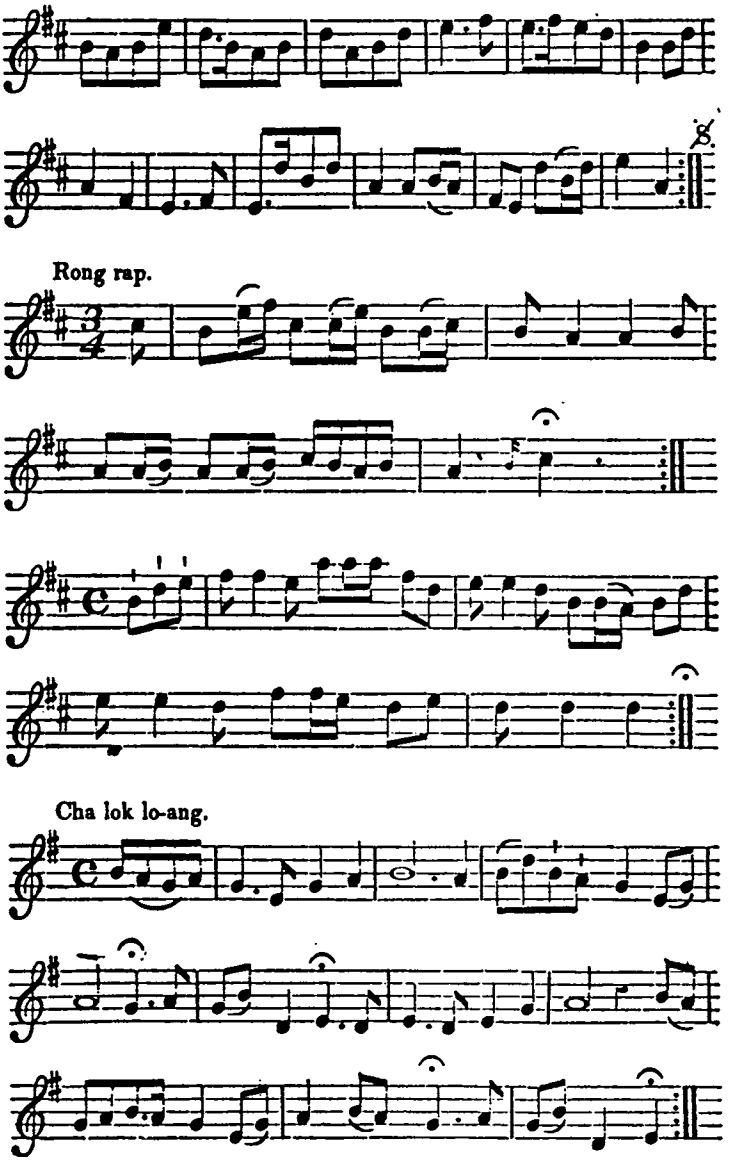

Figure 18B
Selected musical examples (Low)
(Continued)

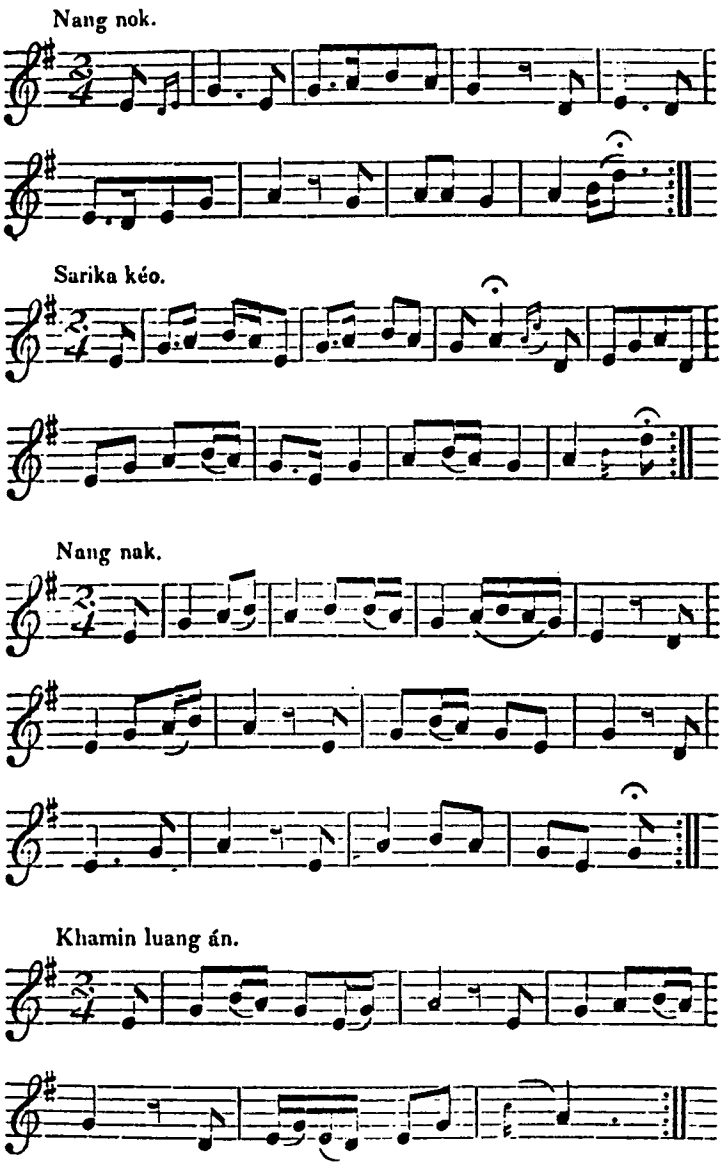

Figure 18C
Selected musical examples (Low)
(Continued)

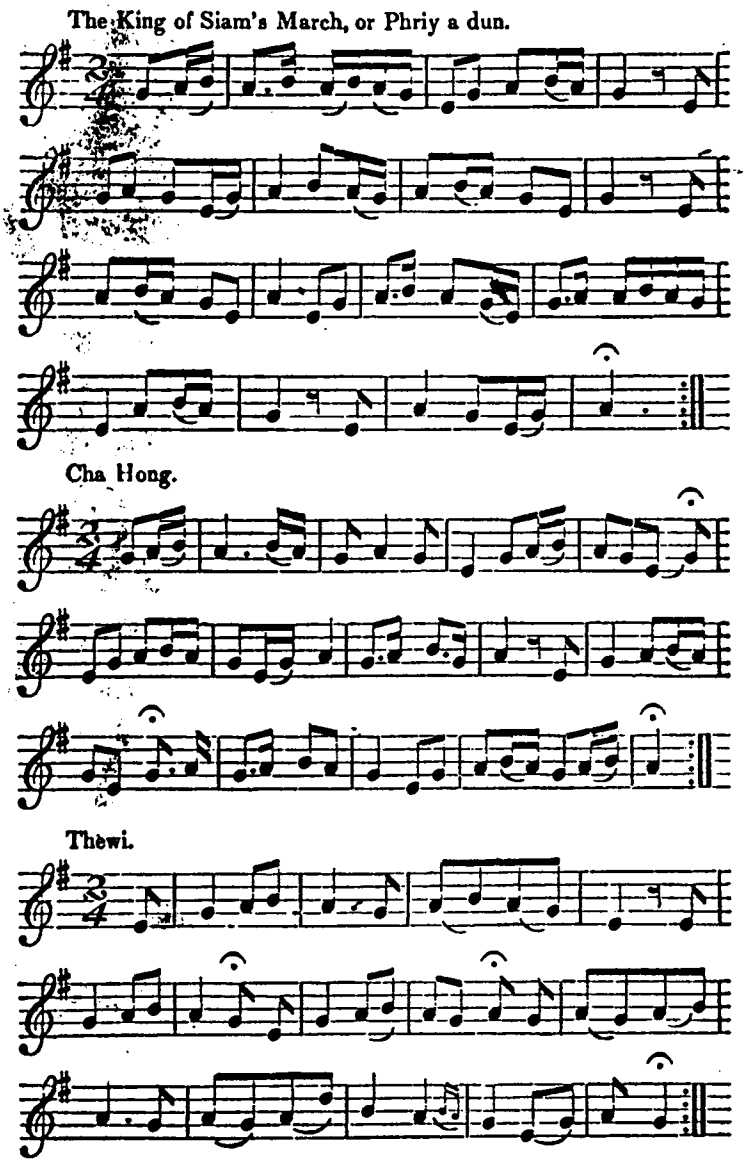

Figure 18D
Selected musical examples (Low)
(Continued)

Although beyond the scope of this study, a number of Thai melodies similar to those in Low were evidently used by Bernard Herrmann in the film score for the 1946 20th Century-Fox production of *Anna and the King of Siam*. A photocopy of the tunes alone—and no bibliographic citation—was found in the manuscript collection now housed at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The photocopy is of "Appendix XV: Some Airs of Siam" and includes eight pieces in single-line staff notation. We have identified several of them. The original title is given first, followed by Panya Roong-rüang's conclusion of the meaning, given in Thai and romanization.

1. Praya Don (Siamese), พญาเดิน, Phaya doen
2. (Siamese Air), title unknown
3. Plaeng Lo (Siamese), เพลงโล้, phleng lo, a *phleng naphat* for travel by sea.
4. Talumpong (Siamese), ตะลุ่มโปง, Ta lum pong
5. Lao Air. This is more likely of Khmer origin, entitled "Khmer om tuk" (เขมรอมตุ๊ก, The Cambodian rows a boat). The Thai borrowed the tune and created their own version called "Khamen pai rüa."
6. Lao Air. This is actually "Lao krasae" (ลาวกระแซ), a piece from the "Phralaw Suite." It is not Lao in origin but rather "samniang lao" or in Lao accent.
7. Ma Yong (Siamese), ม้าย่อง, Ma yawng or "The horse walks stealthily."
8. Lin La Katum (Siamese), ลินลากระทุ่ม, Lin la krathum.

If Mr. Herrmann actually quoted these in his soundtrack score, hoping to sound Thai, the listener would still not likely hear them as Thai. The process of transcription by amateurs often results in changes—compromises—that result in Western-looking melodies. This is certainly true of the melodies quoted by Low and in the latter unknown collection.

The presentation of Thai classical music (or any kind of Thai music for that matter) in five-line staff notation cannot be

considered ideal no matter how accurately it is done. Few attempts have been made to symbolize the sounds in systems other than the staff. The complexity of the weave of sound requires a sophisticated system, and none that is widely known, other than staff notation, has yet been devised. The relatively few examples of Thai music that survive from the past are more important as curiosities than as useful specimens.

IX

Conclusions: The Reconstruction of Thai Music History

Written history cannot recreate the reality of the past. It offers at best a partial vision based on fragmentary evidence and interpreted through the experience of the researcher. In the case of Thai music history, the 20th-century researcher is required to reconstruct the past based not only on an incomplete set of puzzle pieces, but pieces that are distorted by sometimes outrageous Euro-American ethnocentrism and prejudice. Because of this, our conclusions cannot, in many cases, be accepted as proven. But to ignore the writings that have been studied here would leave us in a far more precarious position. Having these sources is better than not having them.

What of parallel Thai sources? Obviously, a more complete history could be reconstructed by taking these into account. While there are no known comprehensive musical treatises on Siamese music comparable to the Korean *Akhak kwebom* of 1493 or theoretical studies like those of China, India, or the Islamic cultural area, music and musical instruments are commonly mentioned in royal annals and especially literature. The main difficulty with these sources is dating, for most exist in later versions and copies. There are also iconographic resources—mural paintings in temples and the palace, a carved bookcase, relief decoration on a Lao temple, and so on—which offer clear views of instruments, dancers, and theatre. Again, there is a problem of dating. Some mural paintings have been restored by artists who may have changed details. Nonetheless, a full study of sources in Thai is needed to complement the present study.

As noted earlier, previous writers of Thai or Siamese music history have been few. Among the most important Thai scholars are Prince Damrong, Dhanit Yupho, and Montri Tramote. Western scholars include Klaus Pringsheim and David Morton. The

limitations in the work of these writers include brevity or the fact that the writer's main purpose was other than writing history. Morton's work includes a substantial section on history, and he makes use of some of the sources cited in the present study; but it remains inconclusive and includes statements that are not borne out by the evidence. We too may fit that description, but we believe that we have at least moved the process forward a few steps.

The sources that have been studied tell us most about music at the court, since most foreign visitors were in Siam on some kind of "official" business and spent most of their time in the capital cities of Ayuthaya and later Krungthep [Bangkok]. A good number of them would be classified as travel and description books, and in those the writers only described what they saw; there was no systematic search for the rest. Another group of writers attempted to write more or less comprehensive descriptions of the Kingdom, and they evidently inquired about phenomena which they might not have seen otherwise. A last group of writers, almost entirely people who never set foot in Siam, concentrated on musical matters based on the de-contextualized musicians visiting Europe. Therefore, the sources are strongest in the following areas:

1. Organology. Musical instruments were concrete and lent themselves to enumeration and description.
2. Theatre. Theatre too was concrete, and apparently visitors were routinely exposed to theatrical presentations.
3. Function. Because musical events were often described in context, especially in the travel and description sources, we can learn something of the role music played in Siamese court life and its rituals.
4. Autobiography. Perhaps unfortunately, we also learn in many cases more about the preconceptions of music held by the writers and their reactions to hearing Siamese music than we do about the actual music.

The sources are particularly weak in providing the following kinds of information:

1. Music theory. Since none of the writers who actually visited Siam was trained in either musicology or *vergleichende Musikwissenschaft* ("comparative musicology," an earlier name for ethnomusicology), there is little information about music theory.

2. Regional musics. While a few of the later writers traveled throughout the kingdom and offered some descriptions of regional music, especially from the north, there is little attention to this subject unless the music was encountered in the city. This was the case for northeastern music, for *khaen* playing and *lam* singing enjoyed a vogue in central Siam during the 19th century.
3. Siamese views on music. Perhaps because so few of the writers could speak Siamese and were additionally uninterested in the native point of view, the music is mostly seen through Euro-American thinking.
4. Repertory. There is little information on specific pieces or classes of repertory. The few notated songs (other than the transcriptions of Stumpf and Hornbostel) are amateurish.

One of the limitations of this study is the dearth of material covering the period from the end of the 17th century until the beginning of the 19th, a time during which Ayuthaya first retreated into relative isolation following the failed attempt of the French missionaries to convert the king and establish control of the Kingdom and was later destroyed by the Burmese in 1767. While there are a few sources other than Turpin's 1771 account during this period, they have nothing to say about music. Turpin's detailed essay is based on reports he received from travelers, but he did not himself visit Siam. In actuality, we are missing the time period from about 1688 to 1767, for following the ruin of Ayuthaya music was surely disrupted until the present dynasty was established in 1782. After that Europeans began to visit Siam once again and by the 1820s were writing profusely about their travels. By this time, it was apparent that many musical changes had taken place. New instruments appeared and new genres were described. But the crucial 18th century is known through only one source, and we are consequently uncertain of conclusions based on Turpin alone.

Foreign Influence

We are aware that many Thai do not encourage the view that the Thai borrowed this or that cultural phenomenon from another people. The fact that such borrowing and any resulting acculturation are facts of life for just about everyone does not detract in any way from the uniqueness of Thai music. For example, instruments, being objects, move from one place to another with

ease, through visits, trade, and outright borrowing. But the music played on them does not travel nearly so well. Music is not really a language, but like language it is intimately bound to the culture that speaks it. South Indians play the violin, Burmese play the piano, Vietnamese play the electric guitar, and Chinese play the western Asian dulcimer, but in each case, with a few alterations, the music is peculiarly expressive of the new context, not the old. The same is true of Thailand.

There have been numerous opportunities for contact with foreign musics. The Khmer not only lived nearby but occupied nearly all of modern Thailand for many centuries. Further, when the Siamese conquered the Angkorian empire in the 15th century, they followed custom and carried off some of the population. No doubt many cultural artifacts from the Khmer made their way to the Siamese capital of Ayuthaya. But it is difficult to know more than a few details about Khmer music at that time. The surviving bas relief illustrations of Angkor and other temples show quite a number of instruments that can be seen in the modern Thai instrumentarium. Many of these are pictured in Morton's *The Traditional Music of Thailand*. They include:

1. Processions that may relate to those described in 16th- and 17th-century Siam.
2. Cymbals and gongs.
3. Chest-resonated monochord similar to the *phin nam tao* and *phin phia* of Northern Thailand as well as to the *sadev* of modern Cambodia.
4. Drums of many types, including some that relate to the Thai *taphon, klawng khaek,* and possibly the *klawng yao.*
5. Aerophones that could be either flutes or reeds.
6. Eight or nine gongs mounted on a semi-circle, an evident predecessor to the *khawng wong.*
7. At least three types of horns, the conch shell, a straight trumpet, and a curved trumpet.
8. Arched harp, a type of instrument that has disappeared from Asia except for Burma.
9. Stick zither or long-necked lute, not like any surviving today.

Notably missing from these are xylophones, bowed lutes, mouth organs, zither, and dulcimer. But whether Cambodia or India was the source for these instruments is still not proved, because

instruments similar to certain of these were widely distributed in Asia.

The assertions by several 19th-century writers that certain instruments, particularly the xylophone, came from Burma make sense, for the Siamese capital of Ayuthaya had been sacked by the Burmese in 1767 and the population carried off. The possibility that the Siamese acquired a few musical souvenirs from their neighbor is reasonable, and if Siamese were telling visitors in the first half of the century that the xylophone came from Burma, this may constitute the best proof available. That the two-stringed bowed lutes (*saw duang* and *saw u*) were borrowed from the Chinese during the 19th century seems likely since Chinese theatre had been played in Ayuthaya from at least the 17th century and Chinese in great numbers emmigrated to Siam in the 19th. The dulcimer, *khim*, which is not mentioned in any account up to 1932, was certainly borrowed from the Chao-chou Chinese, perhaps after 1932. It is primarily used as a solo instrument. Drums with tacked heads (especially the *klawng that* but less likely the *rammana*) may have come from China as well. While the *khaen* mouth organ was heard in central Siam, it was of Lao origin and remained Lao after it went out of fashion. A more complete essay on the possible origins of Siamese instruments, however, is beyond the scope of this study.

A second aspect of foreign influence concerns imitation, especially in the fact that Southeast Asian courts were mostly modeled after those of India as understood through missionaries and traders from that culture. The Indianization of Southeast Asia is a given, and is easily seen in Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, and to lesser extents elsewhere. In the case of Siam it is seen in language and scripts, literature, drama, dance, religion, certain court ceremonies, and etiquette to name but a few. In the case of music there are several instruments similar to those of India, including certain drums and reeds. The cyclic patterns of beats played by the drums are similar to the *tala* cycles of India. Regardless of the depth of Indian influence, however, Thai music sounds like Thai music, not at all like Indian music. But because the sources under study were written after most of these influences had already taken place, they are not prominently discussed.

Conclusion

Much of the richness of musical and theatrical culture revealed in the documents examined survives to this day, but modern Thai prefer newer, more Westernized, styles. The former absolute monarchy, which supported music and theatre is now constitutional and non-political; and while the royal family encourages traditional music, it no longer maintains a resident musical establishment as it did in the past. Indeed, the King is an accomplished jazz clarinetist, but several of the royal children play Thai music. H. R. H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn in particular plays and supports traditional music. The royal musical and theatrical troupes were suppressed after the 1932 revolution, but eventually traditional music and theatre came under the protection of the School of Dramatic Arts within the Fine Arts Department. Classical music and theatre are taught in the schools and universities; they are no longer the exclusive privilege of the aristocracy. Generally, there is less pomp than in years past but more circumstances for traditional music. Ceremonies are fewer and perhaps simpler.

Gradual change is shown in these sources. Instruments have been added and lost. Ensembles have coalesced. Theatre once common is now seen only rarely or not at all. Rituals that were formerly common became obsolete or were performed only rarely and in a scaled down form. And yet much that was true in the past remains true today. To a certain extent we can understand the experiences of these earlier writers through contemporary experience. Certainly, visitors to Thailand—and there are many—continue to experience the same difficulties in accepting the sounds of Thai traditional music and report back to their friend in terms not unlike those written in the 17th or 19th centuries. But what they are seeing is largely one component of a full commercial "tourist" package that includes the de rigeur "floating market" tour, the Palace and Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the Temple of the Reclining Buddha, shopping for crafts, the Rose Garden, and last but not least an allegedly traditional meal on low tables followed by performances of Thai classical ensemble and excerpts from the masked drama and dance drama, all in the midst of a lightning storm of strob flashes and whirring camcorders. The modern visitor probably has just as superficial an experience with traditional music and theatre as did the early visitor, but in the

past these things were a part of the daily life of the Siamese, while today they are not.

Appendix A

Chronology of Writers and General Events in Siam

Column A is either a general date or the first year of travel for a specific writer.
Column B is the year of publication of a specific writer.
Column C is the writer's name.
Column D lists general events.

A	B	C	D
1350			Founding of Ayutia
1480			Papal bull gives Portuguese exclusive control of missions beyond Africa
1505	1959	Ludovico di Varthema	
1511			Malacca captured by Portuguese
1516			Duarte Fernandes, first European in Ayutia
1548	1558	Fernão Mendes Pinto	
1569-84			Siam, a vassal state to Burma
1587			Ralph Fitch, first Englishman in Siam
1590			Naresuen becomes King of Siam
1605-10			Japanese flee from uprising to Ayutia
1606			Portuguese establish first church in Siam

1608			Dutch establish trading privileges at Ayutia
1609			First Siamese Embassy to The Hague
1612			English establish East India Company in Siam
1613	1934	Peter Floris (in Pattani)	
1628	1663	Joost Schouten	
1629			Prasat Tong becomes King
1636	1647	J. van Vliet	
—	1636	Marin Mersenne	
1638	1651	J. A. von Mandelslo	
—	1649	Bernhard Varen	
1657			Pra Narai becomes King
1662			Arrival of Bishop de la Motte at Mergui
1664			Arrival of Bishop Pallu and establishment of French mission at Ayutia
—	1666	G. F. de Marini	
1678			Phaulcon sent to Ayutia from Java
c1681	1688	Nicolas Gervaise	
—	1682	Glanius	

c1682		Phaulcon won over to French interests	
1684			Pascol and Vachet and two Siamese go to France
1685	1853	Claude de Forbin	
1685	1963	Joachim Bouvet	
1685	1686	Mr. Chaumont	
1685	1687	F. T. Choisy	
1685	1686	Guy Tachard	
1687	1689	Guy Tachard	
1687	1691	Simon de La Loubere	
1688			Phaulcon arrested, King Narai dies
1690	1727	Engelbert Kaempfer	
1690			Tachard's third mission to Siam
1697			Tachard's fourth mission to Siam
1767			Conquest of Ayutia by Burmese
— 1771		F. H. Turpin	
1782			Rama I, first King in Chakri dynasty
— 1789		J. B. Laborde	
1809			Rama II becomes King
1821	1826	George Finlayson	

1822	1828	John Crawfurd	
1824			Rama III becomes King
c1832	1834	Charles Gutzlaff	
1833	1837	Edmund Roberts	
—	1837	James Low	
c1835	1838	W. S. W. Ruschenberger	
—	1839	Howard Malcom	
1851			Rama IV (Mongkut) becomes King
—	1852	F. A. Neale	
—	1854	Mgr. Pallegoix	
1855	1857	John Bowring	
—	1857	A Traveller	
c1858	1966	Henri Mouhot	
1862	1870	A. H. Léonowens	
1863	1867	Adolf Bastian	
—	1863	H. L. F. Helmholtz	
1868			Rama V (Chulalongkorn) becomes King
—	1869	M. A. Gréhan	
—	1869	F. J. Fétis	

1873			Subjects allowed to see face of king
—	1874	Frank Vincent	
—	1884	Carl Bock	
—	1884	Mary Backus	
1884	1885	Fred. Verney	
1884	1885	Alexander J. Ellis	
1884	1888	A. J. Hipkins	
—	1893	C. H. H. Parry	
—	1894	F. W. K. Müller	
—	1896	S. M. Tagore	
—	1897	Maxwell Sommerville	
—	1898	Ernest Young	
1900	1901	Carl Stumpf	
1900	1920	E. M. von Hornbostel	
—	1901	Otto E. Ehlers	
—	1901	St. Vráz	
—	1902	J. G. D. Campbell	
1910			Rama VI (Vajiravudh) becomes King
—	1910	P. A. Thompson	
—	1911	G. E. Gerini	

—	1912	W. A. Graham	
—	1913	Salvatore Besso	
—	1923	Karl Döhring	
1925			Rama VII (Prajadhipok) becomes King
—	1926	R. S. Le May	
—	1926	W. A. R. Wood	

Appendix B

Interrelationships Among the Sources

Although it is usual for later authors sometimes to base their work on that of an earlier author, it is also customary to acknowledge the relationship. In earlier times plagiarism was not a legal issue, and wholesale borrowing, both paraphrasing and quoting without attribution, was not uncommon. Among the sources under study there are numerous relationships that range from possible paraphrasing to word-for-word quotation, few of which are acknowledged. The following list describes in brief the known and recognized relationships. The borrower is listed first, followed by the source(s) and years. For details, consult the Bibliography of Primary Sources.

1. Bernhardi Vareni (1673) based on Francois Caron and Joost Schouten (1663). The description of the procession appears to have been borrowed.
2. Guy Tachard (1688) is based on Pere Bouvet [1685]. Although they both attended the same events, the writing is more than merely similar.
3. François Henri Turpin (1771) echoes Simon de La Loubere (1691). Since Turpin did not travel to Siam, his use of a well-known earlier source would not be surprising.
4. Jean-Benjamin de Laborde (1780) based on Nicolas Gervaise (1688). Laborde is really a secondary source, since he did not travel to Siam. He both paraphrases and quotes Gervaise, including the song, but without attribution.
5. Sir John Bowring (1857) appears to have borrowed some information from Mgr. Jean Baptiste Pallegoix (1854).
6. François-Joseph Fétis (1869-76) based his writings on Siamese music on La Loubere (1691), Laborde (1780)—which is based on Gervaise, George Finlayson (1826), and John Crawfurd (1828). Fétis, who wrote one of the first comprehensive histories of music, obviously had to depend on earlier sources. That he mixed in such early sources with more recent ones, all carefully documented, seems a bit odd, but Fétis was serious about saying something significant about Siamese music.
7. Richard Wallaschek (1893) based his brief section on Siam on Turpin (1771) and Bowring (1857), quoting the former as if it is contemporary.

8. Frederick Verney (1885) worked closely with and borrowed material from both Alexander J. Ellis (1885) and A. J. Hipkins (1888).
9. C. Hubert H. Parry (1893) wrote a survey of music and used A. J. Ellis (1885) as his source for Siam.
10. Raja Sir Sourindro Nohun Tagore (1896) wrote the Siamese section to his universal history based on Verney (1885), Crawfurd (1828), George Finlayson (1826), and Captain James Low (1835-1838).
11. Carl Stumpf (1901) and Erich M. von Hornbostel (1920) based their writings on the same source material—an ensemble of Siamese musicians in Berlin and the resulting recordings.
12. P. A. Thompson (1910) based his account of Siamese music in part on Parry (1893), odd when you consider that Thompson visited Siam and Parry based his on Ellis, neither of whom visited Siam.

Appendix C

Iconographic Evidence In Thailand

Besides the illustrations included in a few of the works under study, we have access to some in Thailand and Laos whose dating is uncertain but where evidence would hopefully correspond to our findings. Two have been reproduced by Morton, and the third is found on the front wall of a temple in Luang Prabang, Laos. In addition, a number of details from temple murals that show theatre and music have been published in Thailand in a booklet entitled "Entertainments, Toys and Pastimes in Thai Mural Painting." A great many more have been seen at Wat Phra Kæo in Bangkok, in the paintings of the Jim Thompson House collection, and at various temples in Ayuthaya. While this list is preliminary, it suggests a rich resource for further study.

1. Morton's frontispiece shows two illustrations from a book dated c. 1730 said to have been saved from the destruction of Ayuthaya. The left picture shows a three-stringed fiddle (*saw sam sai*), a long-necked lute (*krajap-pi*), a goblet-shaped drum (*thon*), and a horizontal drum (either *taphon* or *sawng na*). Although the *saw sam sai* predates 1730, the earliest listing of the lute is only 1828. This tends to contradict the 1730 dating. The right picture shows clearly a reed (*pi*), a xylophone (*ranat ek*), a gong circle (*khawng wong*), and a drum (*sawng na*). At the extreme left, and partially cropped, is possibly another aerophone, although combining flute and reed would be unusual. Both include dancers. La Loubere specifically names the *pi* but does not indicate whether it is the buldging type, that shown here, or the type with flared bell. The presence of a *pi* does not prove or disprove the date. The gong circle similarly predates 1730. But the xylophone does not appear in the literature until the 1820s, after Ayuthaya was sacked by the Burmese, and writers refer to it as a Burmese instrument. This instrument's presence casts doubt on the 1730 date. In conclusion, we do not feel safe in assuming these pictures date from before 1767.

2. Morton's shorter study, that which accompanied the set of two-records, includes a rather blurry photograph of a carved wooden bookcase said to have survived the destruction of the royal city. As many as nine musicians are shown seated in a row before the royal throne. A few can be identified. Two appear to be playing either reeds or flutes. One person is playing a gong circle with twelve

gongs, but the instrument has been tilted vertically for visual effect. It is clearly not a Mon gong circle. On the right side are two string players, one holding a long-necked lute, the other what may be a fiddle with rounded body. In the center a figure is playing a narrow, horizontal drum, perhaps *sawng na*. The remaining three figures are too indistinct or are covered by others. If the dating of this artifact is correct, then the *krajap-pi* lute probably did originate before the nineteenth century.

3. Wut Mai (Vat Mai) in Luang Prabang, Laos, a striking temple in a city of striking temples, whose front exterior wall under the portico is covered with gilded reliefs of the Buddha's life, shows clearly several musical instruments. From left to right: a mouth organ (*khaen*), a woman kneeling before a palm-leaf manuscript on a stand, small cymbals (*ching*), a fiddle, two large drums (*klawng that*), a xylophone (*ranat ek*), a gong circle (*khawng wong*), and a horizontal drum (*taphon*). In modern terminology, the ensemble is difficult to classify. Because of the fiddle, it would seem to be a *mahori* ensemble. It is uncertain whether the khaen player is part of this scene or part of the next one to the left. The manuscript reader may indicate a performance of *sepha* recitation, which alternates with instrumental ensemble. The date of the building is disputed. Finot (1917: 8) gives 1796 as the date of erection, but Clarac and Smithies assert that it was built in 1820 (1972: 261). Either date allows consistency with when the instruments shown appeared in the literature.

4. The booklet, "Entertainments, Toys. . . ," published in Bangkok around 1980, includes eighteen full color details of murals from temples in and around Bangkok, Ayuthaya, and Nan (in the north). Most date from the present era which began in 1782. The exact dating of the paintings, however, is unknown, and they are described only as, for example, "fifth reign workmanship" (1868-1910) and "second reign workmanship" (1809-1824). Some were painted as late as 1930. While they show the masked drama (*khon*), the great shadow play (*nang yai*), the small shadow play (*nang talung*), rod puppets (*hun*), Chinese marionettes, the dance drama (*lakhawn*), and Chinese human theatre, all of these were known to exist during the period of their provenance. Also shown are two illustrations of long drum (*klawng yao*) ensembles from the villages and musical instruments from two temples in Nan, Northern Thailand. The latter date from the fifth reign (1868-1910). Page 27 shows clearly a round-bodied lute with medium

length neck played with a pick held between the thumb and first finger. On the neck are sixteen fairly high frets. Since there are no tuning pegs shown, the number of strings is uncertain but appears to be three. The instrument is labeled as a northern lute (sang). It is larger than most sang of today are but has too short a neck to be a Central Thai *krajap-pi*. The facing page has an illustration from another temple in Nan showing the same kind of lute, a gong circle with fifteen gongs, a large quadruple reed with flared bell, probably pi mawn or large *pi chawa*, and a narrow aerophone with finger holes, either a flute (*khlui*) or free-reed pipe (*pi jum*). The player to the right of the lute player is unclear.

Perhaps the most surprising illustrations are the rod puppets and the Chinese marionettes. The former painting, dating from 1824-1851, shows rod puppets predating the introduction of the *hun krabawk* in the late nineteenth century. The Chinese string puppets were painted in 1930 and, if accurate, would indicate a surprisingly recent survival of this now-defunct genre of theatre.

5. Wat Phra Kæo, Bangkok, includes a vast mural of the *Ramakian* along the inside walls painted during the reign of Rama III (1824-1850). These have undergone restoration at least once, most recently for the 1982 bicentennial, and we cannot be certain that all details are as originally painted. It is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this book to examine the many scenes involving musicians at Wat Phra Keo.

6. Ayuthaya. Both Wat Suwandaram (period of Rama II, *bot*) and Wat Senasanaram (1851-1910 period) include murals of musicians.

7. Bangkok, Jim Thompson House, has a collection of period paintings, some of which show musicians.

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