

Thai Classical Music ‘Tub Kheak Sai (Oh Phra Phai)’ Song Played by Acoustic Guitar Quartet

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ABSTRACT

This creative research project aimed to (1) develop the Thai classical composition Tub Khaek Sai (Oh Phra Phai) for acoustic guitar quartet and (2) disseminate the resulting arrangement through musical notation and audio recording. The study employed a creative research methodology that integrated musical analysis, reharmonization, arrangement, score preparation, and performance production. The original composition served as the primary source material, while principles of Western music theory, jazz harmony, and guitar arranging techniques were applied to create a contemporary adaptation suitable for acoustic guitar ensemble performance.

The arrangement was developed as a four-part texture consisting of melody, harmonic support, chordal accompaniment, and bass functions. To enhance the musical character of the work, the researcher employed various compositional and arranging techniques, including broken chords, staccato articulation, motivic development, intervallic writing, interval alteration, drop-2 voicings, rhythmic augmentation, and rhythmic diminution. The original key was transposed from B-flat major to E major to better accommodate the technical and idiomatic characteristics of the guitar.

The results of the study demonstrate that Thai classical music can be effectively adapted for contemporary guitar ensemble performance while preserving its essential melodic identity. The project produced a complete performance score and professional audio recording, providing valuable educational, performance, and research resources for musicians, students, and scholars interested in Thai music adaptation and cross-cultural musical development. The study also contributes to the preservation and dissemination of Thai musical heritage through contemporary creative practice and digital media.

Keywords: Tub Kheak Sai (Oh Phra Phai), guitar quartet, acoustic guitar

Introduction

Recording is the music score to keep as important historical evidence. It preserves the aesthetics of the playing and can be forwarded to those interested in studying and performing it in a timely manner. But if the transfer of work is not clear It may cause things to be inherited to be distorted. Important things aside from writing music notes are worthy of praise. We must also make known to the world the beauty of Thai music by translating Thai music scores into international scores. The transmission must be accurate and clear according to the original author or teacher of that song. Thai songs are which has a unique identity indicating Thai culture by using Thai musical instruments to play and has a characteristic accent. The researcher is interested in studying the 'Set of Tub Song' and bring creativity This is because the set of songs is long and consists of many songs in one set. and has an appropriate length, so it has been Rearrangement to be in the form of playing with a guitar instrument (Guitar)

Therefore, the researcher has chosen to study and rearrange the sheet music of Tub Kheak Sai (Oh Phra Phai) and compose into a guitar format. The research topic is “Thai classical music “Tub Kheak Sai” (Oh Phra Phai) for acoustic guitar quartet.” And published online which is an online learning innovation The media can promote learning quickly. Can be practiced at other times. (Rungkiat

Siriwongsuwan, 2023, p.84) The researcher expects that this study will be useful for the development of Thai music and international in the future.

Research objectives

1. To develop the piece “Tub Khaek Sai” (Oh Phra Phai) for acoustic guitar quartet.
2. To distribute the song “Tub Khaek Sai” (Oh Phra Phai) in the form of music notation and music recording.

Scope of the Study

“Thai classical music “Tub Kheak Sai” (Oh Phra Phai) for acoustic guitar quartet” is the creative qualitative research which the scope is divided as follows:

1. Duration of research project; The research period for the entire project from May 2025 - October 2025.
2. Scope of exchange; Composer took the Thai classical music “Tub Khaek Sai” (Oh Phra Phai) in the form of musicscore that wrote it in full score.
3. Scope of Reharmonization; Composer develops the song “Tub Kheak Sai” (Oh Phra Phai) for acoustic guitar quartet
4. Scope of Recording; The audio recording to present the song “Tub Khaek Sai” (Oh Phra Phai) has been transformed and reinvented by recording sound in the form of four acoustic guitars.

Assumption

1. The researcher chose to develop the song for acoustic guitar
2. The researcher uses principles of western music theory (jazz chord analysis)
3. The researcher develops the song for acoustic guitar playing in pop-jazz musical style

Research methodology

This study employed a creative research methodology to develop the Thai classical composition Tub Khaek Sai (Oh Phra Phai) into an original work for acoustic guitar quartet. The research process combined musical analysis, arrangement techniques, composition, and performance production in order to transform the traditional Thai melody into a contemporary ensemble work while preserving its musical identity. The primary source material was the original version of Tub Khaek Sai (Oh Phra Phai), which served as the basis for all stages of the creative process. In addition, literature related to Thai music, Western music theory, jazz harmony, arranging techniques, and guitar performance practice was reviewed to support the development of the arrangement.

The creative process began with an analytical study of the original composition. The researcher examined the melodic structure, phrase organization, rhythmic characteristics, and formal design of the work in order to identify important musical elements that contribute to its stylistic identity. Following the analytical stage, the composition was arranged and reharmonized for acoustic guitar quartet. The original melody was preserved while new harmonic structures and textures were developed through the application of Western music theory and jazz harmonic analysis. During this process, the composition was transposed from B-flat major to E major to create a more idiomatic setting for the guitar and to facilitate performance.

The arrangement was conceived as a four-part texture consisting of independent musical functions. Guitar 1 was assigned the principal melodic line, Guitar 2 provided harmonic support and counter-melodic material, Guitar 3 supplied chordal accompaniment and rhythmic motives, and Guitar

4 established the bass line and harmonic foundation. To enrich the musical texture and create a contemporary pop-jazz character, the researcher incorporated a variety of arranging and compositional techniques, including broken chords, staccato articulation, motivic development, intervallic writing, interval alteration, drop-2 voicings, rhythmic augmentation, rhythmic diminution, and other techniques derived from jazz arranging practice. These techniques were integrated while maintaining the essential melodic characteristics of the original Thai composition.

Upon completion of the arrangement, a full performance score was prepared using music notation software. The score was reviewed and edited to ensure musical accuracy, readability, and practical performance considerations. The final stage of the project involved producing an audio recording of the completed arrangement using four acoustic guitar parts. The recording served both as documentation of the creative work and as a means of dissemination. Through this process, the study generated a complete musical score and a professional audio recording, providing educational and performance resources for musicians, researchers, and students interested in the adaptation of Thai classical music for contemporary guitar ensemble performance.

Expected Benefits

This research project can be beneficial to education at different levels. The complete version of musical notation can be used by musicians, researchers, students, academics, and professors, as well as various music experts to study, research, develop, play, or integrate. along with other approaches to benefit the education network in Thailand and abroad.

Findings

The researcher has worked on the development of Thai songs “Tub Khaek Sai” (Oh Phra Phai), focusing mainly on the creation of musical scores to create a new different style of playing Thai traditional music. This research project can be beneficial for the Thai and international music industry and can be integrated with other subjects in different branches in the future.

“Tub Khaek Sai” (Oh Phra Phai)

The song “Tub Khaek Sai” (Oh Phra Phai) by Kru Pim Puangnak for acoustic guitar. The works are in the four-part composition. The manner of each part is explained as follows: guitar 1: melodic line, guitar 2: harmony, guitar 3: chords and harmonies drive by various techniques, guitar 4: bass line. Composer had changed from the key of Bb Major to E Major to make the piece more suitable for guitar playing.

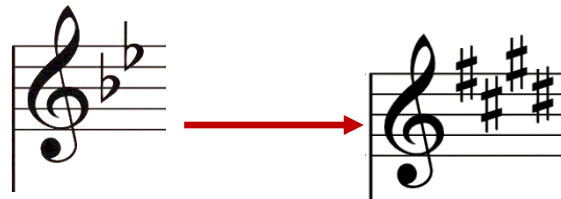


Figure 1. The key change form Bb major to E major
Source: Kritavit Bhumithavara

The pieces are presented in order as follows:

1) Khaek Sai

First part of Khaek Sai contains 19 measures of music. The first guitar governs the main melodic line while the second guitar acts as the harmonic line move in (Major 6th) in the first three measures.

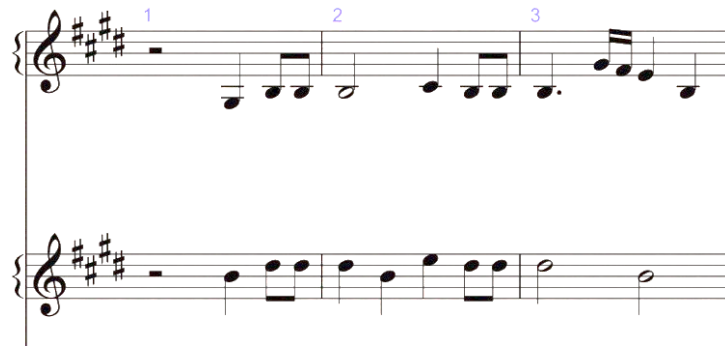


Figure 2. The first guitar melodic progression and the harmonization of the second guitar
Source: Patommavat Thammachard

The reharmonization process begins in Measures 4-6 which uses chord progression as follows, ii-7 IMaj7/ vi-7 ii-7 /V7 biii-6 with appropriate rhythmic and melodic lines that enhance the strength of the piece as shown in the figure.



Figure 3. The example of melodic progression of the third guitar
Source: Krittavit Bhumithavara

To make the melody of the second guitar more appropriately harmonized, the forth guitar (Bass line) is added in measure 4. Tension chord is most used for the color of the piece as follows: IVMaj7 iii-7b5 VI7b9/ ii-7 I9 iii-7b13/ ii-7 IMaj7 biidim/ ii-7 IMaj7 biidim/ V13 vi-7/ IMaj7 V7/ vi-7 iii-7b5 VI7b9/ ii-7 IMaj7 IMaj9. However, the third guitar is in the chord format to support the first and second guitar as shown in the figure.



Figure 4. The example of melodic progression of the forth guitar
Source: Patommavat Thammachard

To make the melodic line of the first and second guitar more interesting, composer make more changes in style in measures 15-16, also, the specific chord change (C#-9 D# C# and B) in measures 17. Finally, the fourth guitar took care of the bassline in root position to make the chord stronger as shown in the figure.



Figure 5. The example of melodic progression of the fourth guitar (the repeat section measure 15-18)

Source: Krittavit Bhumithavara

In the refrain of first section of Khaek Sai contains 17 measures of music, which the first guitar also govern the melody over the chord as follow: Maj7/ ii-7 IMaj7/ vi-7 ii-7/V7 bii-7/IVMaj7 iii-7b5 VI7b9/ ii-7 I9 III7b13/ii-7 IMaj7/ ii-7 Imaj7 ii(dim) with the second guitar act as the harmony of the first guitar. The third section also highlights syncopated notes on the upbeat and chord at the down beat of 4. However, the fourth guitar mostly uses motive in ostinato style while beating 3 and 4 suggests playing in staccato manner as shown in the image.



Figure 6. The example of melodic progression of the guitar four (the refrain section measure 19-26)

Source: Patommavat Thammachard

In measures 27-34, composers still use first guitar as the main melody using V13 vi-7/ IMaj7/ IMaj7/ii-9 V7/ IMaj7/ IMaj7 V7/ IMaj7 V7/ IVmaj6 chord progression and the second guitar harmonize the melodic line. In measure 27-30, composers move the melody mainly using perfect 5th and major 6th. Additionally, the variety uses of chord and motive to promote the strength of the melodic line (the drop 2) is found measures 31-34, while the guitar four using the same manner as measures 19-26.



Figure 7. The four-part melodic and harmonic progression (the refrain section measure 27-34)

Source: Krittavit Bhumithavara

The second section of Khaek Sai contains 17 measures of music. The melodic line still in the first guitar part using I /vi-7 / V7 /V7 / V7 /IMaj7 / V7 /V7 / V7 /V7/ ii-7/ / V7 /V7/ ii-7/ IMaj7 chors progression. The use of perfect 5th is found in guitar two as the supporter of the melodic line. The Composer mainly uses the “rhythmic alteration augmentation” technique in the third guitar part. However, the guitar mainly uses the chord on a strong beat (beat one) and using intervals in the other beats of the measures.



Figure 8. Rhythmic Alteration Augmentation in the third guitar part,
Source: Krittavit Bhumithavara



Figure 9. The four-part melodic and harmonic progression (measure 35-43)
Source: Patommavat Thammachard



Figure 10. The four-part melodic and harmonic progression in measure 35-43 (second section)
Source: Krittavit Bhumithavara

Khaek Sai's refrain of the second section contains 14 measures of music, which present the similar music structure and harmonization of the main second section except the third guitar parts uses "rhythmic alteration diminution" technique that derives from the melodic line of the first guitar part. The same process also appears in the guitar four section as well as shown in the picture.



Figure 11. The rhythmic alteration diminution of the third guitar
Source: Patommavat Thammachard

The fourth guitar also uses "rhythmic alteration augmentation" technique that derives from the second guitar part.



Figure 12. The rhythmic alteration diminution of the third guitar
Source: Kittavit Bhumithavara

2) Khaek Hmong

The first section of Khaek Hmong contains 25 measures of music. The melodic line is presented by the first guitar while the second guitar harmonizes the first guitar parts using mainly octave movement. The motif in the manner of ostinato appears in the third guitar part. The guitar four part is using mainly the chord written in arpeggio manner. Dominant7 sus4 is the main chord type for this composition, which the progression is V7sus4/ I7sus4/ II7sus4/ V7sus4/ V7sus4/ I7sus4/ V7sus4/ V7sus4/ II7sus4/ as shown in the picture.



Figure 13. The four-part melodic and harmonic progression in measure 66-74 (first section)
Source: Krittavit Bhumithavara

In measures 75-84, most of the intervals of harmonic progression has changed into major 3rd and octave. However, I7sus4/ I7sus4/ I7sus4/ I7sus4/ V7sus4/ V7sus4/ V7sus4/ II7sus4/ II7sus4/ chord progression and the composition technique of the other three section remained the same in measures 85-90.



Figure 14. The use of Major 3rd in measure 75-84
Source: Krittavit Bhumithavara

The refrain section of Khaek Hmong contains 25 measures. The melodic line and the harmonic progression style is the same as the first section (measures 91-115). However, the third guitar uses “rhythmic alteration diminution” technique and composes the ways that require the use of broken chords. Moreover, the chord progression is the same as the first section as shown in the figure.



Figure 15. The four-part melodic and harmonic progression in measure 91-99 (refrain section)
Source: Kittavit Bhumithavara

3) Khaek Toi Mo

The first section of Khaek Toi Mo contains 36 measures. The melodic line and harmonic of the melodic line are also in the first guitar and second guitar parts. The use of perfect 5th appears in measure 116. However, measures 117-127 use Major 6th. The guitar four part is mainly using the E major chord in this section and performs using the harmonic technique while the third guitar parts use a series of short motive patterns.



Figure 16. The use of Perfect 5th in second guitar part measures 110-115 (refrain section)
Source: Kittavit Bhumithavara

The refrain section of Khaek Toi Mo contains 36 measures. The melodic, harmonic progression, and the use of E major chords of the first guitar, second guitar, and forth guitar parts is the same as the first section (measures 152-187). However, the third guitar uses “rhythmic

The refrain section of Khaek Toi Mo contains 36 measures. The melodic, harmonic progression, and the use of E major chords of the first guitar, second guitar, and forth guitar parts is the same as the first section (measures 152-187). However, the third guitar uses “rhythmic alteration diminution” technique in measures 185-187 with added the ritardando (rit) minking the original version as shown in the picture.



Figure 17. The four-part melodic and harmonic progression and the use of ritardando
Source: Krittavit Bhumithavara

In summary, this study employed a creative research methodology to transform the Thai classical composition Tub Khaek Sai (Oh Phra Phai) into an original work for acoustic guitar quartet. The research process integrated musical analysis, arrangement, reharmonization, score preparation, and audio recording. Through the application of Western music theory, jazz harmonic principles, and contemporary arranging techniques, the researcher developed a new musical setting while preserving the essential characteristics of the original composition. The resulting score and recording demonstrate the potential for adapting Thai classical music into contemporary guitar ensemble repertoire and provide valuable educational and performance resources for future musicians, researchers, and educators.

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