

Luenrit Fantasie: Sounding Diversity, Creating Unity

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Abstract

Luenrit Fantasie is a musical composition that showcases the vibrant diversity of Thai-Chinese cultural heritage in Yaowarat, Bangkok. Created for the Luenrit Youth Wind Ensemble, the piece integrates Chinese melodies and traditional Thai music, reflecting the unique atmosphere of this historic multicultural neighborhood. The melodic and rhythmic structures highlight the distinct voices of these influences, forming a cohesive musical tapestry that celebrates cultural heritage and instills pride in one's roots. It is composed in a flexible score, featuring six different wind parts. Music encourages young musicians to engage with diverse musical voices and explore creative expression, which allows for expansive development beyond traditional rules, embodying the spirit of musical exploration and utilizing a blend of classical and contemporary techniques in composition, including imitation, sequencing, call-and-response, and syncopation, facilitating a dynamic dialogue among different cultural motifs. Luenrit Fantasie serves as a community-focused educational platform that bridges young musicians with local heritage and promotes unity through diverse musical expressions. It enhances cultural fulfillment and solidarity among performers and the broader community, positioning music as a tool for fostering connection and belonging across generations and identities.

Keywords: Luenrit Fantasie; Sounding; Diversity, Creating Unity

Introduction

The Luenrit community, nestled in a historic commercial district of Bangkok that grew alongside Sampeng Market and its surrounding areas, is a living testament to the rich tapestry of Thai, Chinese, and Indian cultures. Its diverse heritage is not just a part of its past, but a vibrant force that continues to shape its present and future. The intricate carving on the wooden beams and the distinct roof design, among other unique architectural features, bear witness to its considerable historical value.

The Luenrit community was initially established by Khunying Leun, a figure in Thai society, and her husband, Luangrit, who sold the land to Phraya Phra Khlang. The establishment developed into a commercial building, completed during the reign of King Rama V, making it one of the earliest commercial buildings in Thailand. Initially, the building functioned as rental accommodation for travelers, complemented by a nearby teahouse. Over time, Hakka Chinese immigrants settled in the area, transforming it into a vibrant Hakka neighborhood in Bangkok, known as Xiang Hu Du. This transition began the Luenrit community's evolution into a significant and rapidly expanding industrial hub. As more Indians and other Chinese immigrants established businesses nearby, the area became increasingly multicultural.

In 2001, the Crown Property Bureau (Private Treasurer's Office) issued a letter terminating the lease agreement, with plans to convert the area into a shopping center. This process, which spanned over 11 years, prompted members of the Luenrit community to unite and negotiate with the Crown Property Bureau. Their collective efforts led to the establishment of the Luenrit Community Company Limited, which successfully renewed the lease agreement to restore and revitalize the area, ultimately transforming it into a charming walking street that preserves the character of the traditional architecture.

In 2012, residents were invited to collaborate after establishing a company and securing a lease agreement to preserve the buildings and community grounds. They reached out to the Faculty of Architecture, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, to assess the integrity of the structures, which included overlaying historical maps with contemporary ones. Archaeological excavations were conducted in two phases. The first phase, in 2013, involved excavations within the building to collect data for future renovation designs. In the second phase, from 2014 to 2015, the restoration focused on uncovering evidence of past habitation and land use. Thereafter, the Luenrit community was designated as an ancient site under the Ancient Monuments Act of 1961, as amended (No. 2) in 1992, and the Fine Arts Department was required to participate in the restoration planning process. (Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, 2023)

From the history of the Luenrit community, it is evident that it has adapted and remained flexible in keeping up with modern times. At present, a former commercial building has been renovated into a scenic spot ideal for tourists to visit, serving as a check-in point and a visually appealing photography location in the Yaowarat area. In addition, the Luenrit community has embraced the idea of allocating space and providing opportunities for young people to engage in artistic and musical activities together, particularly through the Luenrit Youth Wind Orchestra. The community has actively promoted the establishment of a youth wind ensemble since 2024, making

Luenrit a widely recognized destination known for being an open, welcoming space where young people can come together to participate in mutually beneficial activities.

The Luenrit Youth Wind Orchestra was established to provide young musicians with the platform to develop their skills in wind orchestra performance. The first activity, the Brass Trio Workshop, took place in 2014, allowing participants to hone their abilities and practice as a three-piece brass ensemble. Over time, the group expanded to include youth playing a variety of musical instruments, ultimately evolving into a full-fledged wind orchestra with a larger membership. The activity of the Luenrit Youth Wind Orchestra is deeply rooted in cultural expansion, using music as a medium for cultural learning. For example, the repertoire includes adaptations of traditional Thai songs to promote the Orchestra's performances. Furthermore, to present them in fresh and engaging ways, flash mobs are organized. To this day, the Luenrit community consistently supports an annual event hosting the Luenrit Youth Orchestra, which has been instrumental in the event's ongoing success.

The creation of the Luenrit Youth Wind Orchestra inspired the development of a piece of community music specifically for the group, which serves as the theme song for all its performances, promoting unity and identity within the orchestra and the wider community. Developing such a piece enhances the musical repertoire and strengthens the community engagement and pride in the organization's activities. The composition, entitled "*Luenrit Fantasie*," was composed by Natsarun Tissadikun, the orchestra's initiator and conductor, who has also worked on composing and arranging the flexible score for this wind ensemble. By playing a diverse range of compositions, the Luenrit Youth Wind Orchestra aspires to motivate young individuals, from beginners to advanced players, to enhance their skills on wind instruments through a collaborative learning process. This approach reflects the Luenrit Youth Wind Orchestra's identity of coexistence amidst diversity, promoting awareness of individual differences, enriching mutual support, and encouraging sustainable, nuanced development among youth.

In addition to being composed for the Flexible Ensemble, it is also suitable for players at a foundational or equivalent level of Grade 2, enabling them to explore and learn Chinese cultural melodies. Through the performance of contemporary wind instruments, we aim to provide a meaningful experience for young musicians, creating a positive experience for the youth and helping them develop an integrated understanding of the Luenrit community's culture.

Composition

Composed for the Luenrit Youth Wind Orchestra, "*Luenrit Fantasie*" emphasizes the integration of community cultural identity through the use of Chinese melodies and rhythms. The composition echoes the lifestyle and atmosphere of the Thai-Chinese community in the Luenrit community, which is located in Yaowarat. This diverse area has served as a significant trading and tourism hub in Thailand since its inception. The piece features six wind parts, along with percussion parts, and adopts the fantasia form for its structure. The composition techniques include imitation, sequencing, call-and-response, and syncopated rhythms, enabling the melody to unfold across multiple dimensions. This music provides students with a valuable platform and experience through community music culture. The composition details are as follows:

The arrangement of the sound for the composition *Luenrit Fantasie*:

Part 1: Flute, Clarinet, Soprano Saxophone

Part 2: Flute, Clarinet, Soprano Saxophone, B flat Trumpet

Part 3: Alto Saxophone, B flat Trumpet, French Horn, Tenor Saxophone

Part 4: Alto Saxophone, French Horn, Tenor Saxophone,

Part 5: Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, Trombone, Euphonium

Part 6: Baritone Saxophone, Bass Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba

Optional parts: Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Cymbals

In the composition, the composer specified the types and number of instruments required for the Orchestra. The composition was then arranged to accommodate these instruments, which strives to provide individual interested in wind orchestra performance with opportunities to engage in collaborative music-making. The process supports mutual growth and self-improvement through the performance of music that proudly reflects the identities of their respective communities.

The concept behind the composition of *Luenrit Fantasie*

The composition concept of *Luenrit Fantasie* is that the composer envisioned and crafted a piece as a flexible score, containing six melodies, each derived from distinct themes, without specific instrumentation. Flexible Ensembles—often referred to as Flex Band, Flexible Music, or Adaptable Music—embody innovative arrangements that offer freedom in instrument selection for performances. This approach was developed to address the challenges small wind orchestras face, which often struggle to perform in mixed instrument sets, according to traditional wind orchestra scores. It is particularly beneficial in situations where there are limitations on the number of musicians, when the

precise number of players is uncertain, or when only certain types of instruments are available (Panapongpaisarn & Kanchanahud, 2024, p. 5).



The image shows a musical score for six parts of 'Luenrit Fantasie'. The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = 100. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). Part 1 (Soprano) starts with a rest for the first three measures, then enters with a melodic line marked 'f' (forte). Part 2 (Soprano and Alto) also starts with a rest for three measures, then enters with a similar melodic line marked 'f'. Part 3 (Alto) enters in the fourth measure with a sustained harmonic accompaniment. Part 4 (Alto and Tenor) enters in the fourth measure with a melodic line marked 'mp' (mezzo-piano). Part 5 (Tenor) enters in the fourth measure with a melodic line marked 'mp'. Part 6 (Bassline) enters in the fourth measure with a steady bass accompaniment marked 'mp'. The score concludes with a final measure for all parts.

Figure 1 Luenrit Fantasie 6 parts

From Figure 1, the composer initially created a 6-part composition and subsequently categorized the instruments for each section, dividing them into fundamental groups: Part 1 features soprano, Part 2 includes soprano and alto, Part 3 is dedicated to alto, Part 4 encompasses alto and tenor, Part 5 highlights tenor, and Part 6 is designated for bassline. This takes into account the types and number of instruments, as well as the performers, and ensures that the arrangements are appropriately aligned. The dynamics of the different parts are modulated to enhance the prominence of the main melody. This flexible score challenges the composer but requires the conductor to skillfully arrange the orchestra, fine-tune the overall sound, and execute the piece with beauty and precision. In terms of the overarching concept behind the main melody, the composer has introduced a new melody as shown in Figures 2 to 4.



The image shows a single melodic line for 'Melody 1 of Luenrit Fantasie'. It is in 4/4 time and G minor. The melody begins with a quarter note G4, followed by an eighth note A4, a quarter note B-flat4, and a quarter note C5. This is followed by an eighth note B-flat4, an eighth note A4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter note F4. The melody continues with an eighth note E4, an eighth note D4, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note B-flat3. It then moves to an eighth note A3, an eighth note G3, a quarter note F3, and a quarter note E3. The melody concludes with a quarter note D3 and a quarter note C3.

Figure 2: Melody 1 of Luenrit Fantasie

In Figure 2, the main melody is established on the G minor scale by the composer, utilizing the Eighth note and Quarter note groupings to impart a distinct Chinese feel. This main melody is featured throughout different sections of the piece and serves to conclude each segment.

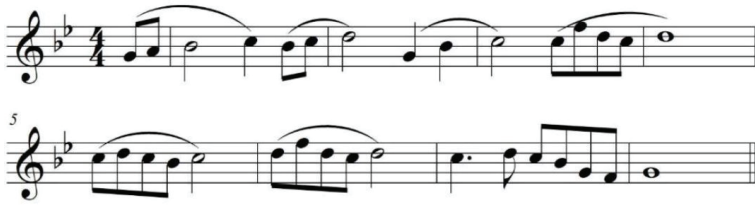


Figure 3: Melody 2 of Luenrit Fantasia

Figure 3, melody 2 serves as an expansion of the first melody introduced in the opening section. This main melody resurfaces throughout the song, concluding each section. It is further developed in various ways, utilizing changes in rhythm and chords to evoke different emotions that align with the essence of the first melodic line.



Figure 4 Melody 3 of Luenrit Fantasia

Melody 3 (see Figure 4) appears in section B, utilized by the composer to depict two distinct passages of the song, grasping the vibrant hustle and bustle of trade within the Luenrit community. Melody 3 has been recognised for its unique syncopation and sequencing, making it a standout musical element in every instance it is featured.

The structure of the song Luenrit Fantasia

The composition is structured using the Fantasia form, a free-form imaginative style often infused with thoughts, dreams, and imagination (Pancharoen, 2021, pp. 126–127). The composer focuses on melodies inspired by personal imagination. In contrast, the piece maintains a consistent 4/4 time signature, the rhythmic pattern altered to evoke an engaging atmosphere.

The structure is achieved by reusing the main melody at the end of each section. Ostinato repetition is particularly prominent in the percussion and brass instruments. It is set in the G minor scale, utilising just five notes from the Pentatonic scale that compose a Chinese melody which embodies the Luenrit community. The structure of the song is as follows:

Table 1: The structure of the Luenrit Fantasie

Sections	Bar	Details
Introduction	1-8 (Introduction)	Presenting the main melody 1
A	9-12	Expansion to develop the main melody 2
	13-16	Changing the feeling to be denser in sound
	17-24	Changing the feeling to be tight and firm in rhythm
B	25-36	Presenting the main melody 3
C	37-44	Using a question-answer style sentence
D	45-52	The return of the main melody again, combined with the melody in section B, but with more strength
Coda	53-60	Repeating the main melody as the conclusion of the song

Figure 5 Section A Bar 9-12, Luenrit Fantasie

In Section A, the composer has continued to enhance and develop the main melody by utilizing Parts 1-3, which are performed softly from Bar 9-12 (see Figure 5). This choice effectively evokes the early morning atmosphere of trading, as shops begin to set up their goods and prepare to welcome customers. By employing the vocal range of Parts 1-3, the composer presents a melody that builds upon the introduction, thereby reflecting the identity of the Luenrit community through the theme that frequently appears in the composition.

Figure 6 Section A Bar 17–24, Luenrit Fantasie

In section A (see Figure 6), bars 17–19 exhibit a textural density characterized by numerous running notes, significantly influencing the overall sound and necessitating a greater volume in that range (Pancharoen, 2020, p. 79). This section employs a more pronounced use of dynamics and accents. Following this, Bars 20–24 again introduce the main melody from the introduction, seamlessly transitioning into Section B, which features a distinct melody.

Figure 7 Section B Bar 25–32, Luenrit Fantasie

As shown in Figure 7, bars 25–28 form the transition into Section B, introducing a distinct mood that contrasts with Section A. This section evokes the vibrant hustle and bustle of commerce in the Luenrit community, driven by the sixteenth-note patterns that create a tight rhythm. The use of syncopation in Parts 3–6 contributes to a dense sound, imparting the impression of increased tempo, even though the rhythm remains unchanged. Then, in Bars 29–32, there is an immediate shift in mood, characterized by only three vocal lines, which lend a lighter quality and a more ethereal rhythm to the piece.

Figure 8 Section B Bar 29–36, Luenrit Fantasie

In Figure 8, Section B, Bars 29–36 employ the repetition technique between Part 1 and 2. There is an alternation between long notes and eighth notes, creating a conversational quality reminiscent of the call-and-response technique. This interplay between Part 1 (Bars 29–32) and Part 2 (Bars 33–36) conjures an atmosphere reflective of price negotiations between buyers and sellers in the Luenrit community.

Figure 9 Section C Bar 37–44, Luenrit Fantasie

Bars 37–44 of Section C (see Figure 9) employ the Variation technique by altering the notes. The melody is introduced in the first phrase of Bars 23–40, specifically in Parts 4–5, followed by a Variation in Bars 41–44 within Parts 2–3. Additionally, the continuity in this section can be analyzed through imitation between the tones in Parts 4–5 and 2–3.

Figure 10 Section D Bar 45-52, Luenrit Fantasie

Figure 10 illustrates that section D, Bars 45-52, features a return of the melodies from Sections A and B, played simultaneously to conclude the song. Parts 4 and 5 present the main melody from Section A, which symbolises the identity of the Luenrit community amidst changing times. Following this there is a transfer of the main melody to strengthen the harmony with Parts 2 and 3. In contrast, Part 1 presents the melody from Section B, which reflects the continuous chaos of vibrant trade from the past to the present. The intertwining of melodies between Parts 1, 4 and 5 creates a rich polyphonic texture.

Figure 11 Coda Bar 53-60, Luenrit Fantasie

Figure 11 illustrates the Coda (bars 53-60), where the melody links back to Part 2 with a downward tempo, in contrast to the upward contrary motion of Part 5. It is a melody that moves in opposite directions, when one line moves up, the other line moves down, or vice versa, when one line moves down, the other line moves up (Trakulhun, 2021, p. 13). It also features a Fanfare style of playing in Part 5, returning to the introduction melody as the final melody of this song.

Conclusion

In summary, Luenrit Fantasie was composed as a flexible ensemble format for the Luenrit Youth Wind Orchestra. The composition offers musicians a chance to explore Chinese melodies and rhythms that reflect the multicultural identity of the Luenrit community, blending Thai and Chinese cultures. The contributions of youth in the community orchestra enhanced the song's recognition, and the performance level is well-suited to the performers' skills. The composition aligns with the objectives of the Luenrit Youth Wind Orchestra, which is to encourage collaborative performance skills among youth, thereby further elevating their wind instrumental performance potential. It reflects the community's diverse identity, serves as a catalyst for creativity through musical activity, enriches daily life, revitalises local communities, and stands as an exemplary model for other communities seeking to establish youth wind orchestras. The composition allows them to cultivate musical opportunities for young people while celebrating their community's songs.

Acknowledgements

Luenrit Fantasie is committed to serving the Luenrit community, which has developed concurrently with youth development initiatives and the revitalization efforts in Yaowarat. This community embodies a multicultural Thai-Chinese identity and is increasingly gaining recognition.

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Biography

Natsarun Tissadikun is a hornist and currently works as an Assistant Professor, taking charge as the program chair in Master of Music Education, the College of Music, Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand. Natsarun received a Ph.D. in Music from Khon Kaen University, a Master's from Mahidol University, and a Bachelor's in Western Music from Kasetsart University. A prolific contributor to academia, she has published numerous articles promoting the potential of music in various aspects that impact people. Natsarun received research funding from the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT) in 2023 for her composition "Kudi Chin Suite." In addition to her research, she has composed and arranged flexible-score pieces for youth wind ensembles, aiming to inspire and cultivate young musical talent. Through her work, Natsarun continues to impact the field of music education and composition significantly.

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