

## Rabam Klong-yao (Hae) for Jazz Orchestra

Dr Nutthapol Deekum

Faculty of Music, Bangkokthonburi University, Thailand

Warudh Samansap

School of Music, Princess Galyani Vadhana Institute of Music, Thailand

Rungtham Thammakarn

Faculty of Music, Bangkokthonburi University, Thailand

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### Abstract

Rabam Klong-yao (Hae) for Jazz Orchestra is a creative composition that aims to fuse the cultural identity of Thai folk music with the stylistic elements of jazz, arranged specifically for a jazz orchestra. Inspired by the vibrant and festive rhythms of Rabam Klong-yao, a traditional Thai procession music often performed in celebratory and ceremonial contexts, this work reinterprets its characteristic drum patterns into jazz idioms such as funk and Latin. The composition integrates traditional Thai instruments, particularly the klong-yao (long drum) and ranad (Thai xylophone), within the sonic framework of a modern jazz ensemble. Through advanced harmonic layering, orchestration, and a contemporary musical structure, the piece explores new possibilities for intercultural synthesis. This work represents an innovative approach to musical hybridization, contributing to the evolution of contemporary Thai music and promoting cultural soft power by presenting a distinctly Thai identity on the global stage.

*Keywords: Klong-yao, Thai Folk Music, Thai Culture, Jazz, Jazz Orchestra*

### Introduction

Thai folk music has long played a vital role in expressing cultural identity through its distinctive melodies, rhythmic vitality, and unique instrumentation. Among these traditions, Rabam Klong-yao (Hae) stands out as a procession music performed in celebratory and ceremonial contexts. Its dynamic drum patterns and festive atmosphere not only entertain but also reflect the social and cultural vibrancy of Thai communities.

The creative project Rabam Klong-yao (Hae) for Jazz Orchestra seeks to reinterpret and re-create these traditional rhythmic and melodic elements within the framework of contemporary jazz. By transcribing and reimagining the essence of klong-yao rhythms, the composition transforms them into idioms such as funk and Latin, thereby forging a new dialogue between Thai heritage and global jazz practices. The integration of Thai instruments, particularly the klong-yao and ranad, alongside a modern jazz orchestra, further enhances the intercultural synthesis.

This approach highlights the potential of musical hybridization, where traditional materials are not merely preserved but re-contextualized through advanced harmonic layering, orchestration techniques, and contemporary formal structures. Such reinterpretation underscores the adaptability of Thai folk music, presenting it as both a living tradition and a source of innovation. Ultimately, the work exemplifies how Thai cultural identity can be promoted on the global stage through music, contributing to cultural soft power and enriching the discourse between folk traditions and contemporary art forms.

## Literature Review

### *Transcription of Folk Music and the Contribution of Dr Saman Noinit*

Transcription is a crucial tool in the study of folk music, allowing orally transmitted knowledge to be transformed into a systematic format that can be analyzed and applied in new contexts. Dr Saman Noinit has made a significant contribution by developing transcription methods that preserve the rhythmic complexity of *klong-yao* and other Thai folk traditions without reducing their performative authenticity (see Figure 1). His work functions not only as a documentary record but also as a foundation for adapting traditional rhythms into new frameworks, such as arrangements for jazz orchestra.

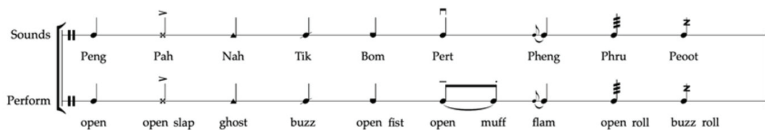


Figure 1 Notation Sound and Performing Techniques

Source: Dr Saman Noinit

### *Interpretation and Re-creation of Folk Models*

Beyond transcription, Dr Saman has emphasized interpretative approaches that promote “continuity through re-creation.” This perspective highlights the importance of reimagining transcribed melodies and rhythms so that they can be meaningfully integrated into contemporary performance practices. Scholars

such as Bohlman (2011) and Taylor (1997) argue that re-creation requires maintaining cultural roots while simultaneously opening space for artistic innovation. In the case of *Rabam Klong-yao (Hae)*, rhythmic patterns documented by Dr Saman are expanded and re-contextualized through funk, Latin grooves, and modern harmonic textures, demonstrating how traditional materials can be revitalized within jazz idioms as shown in Figure 2 (Laohverapanich 2024).

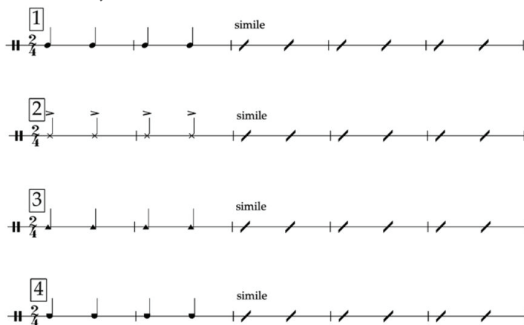


Figure 2 Rhythmic Pattern  
Source: Dr Saman Noinit

### Intercultural Synthesis

According to Nooshin (2003) and Tenzer (2006), intercultural musical creation is not a simple juxtaposition of cultural elements, but rather the construction of new identities through synthesis. Within this context, Dr Saman Noinit’s precise transcriptions serve as a vital bridge between Thai and Western musical systems. His methodologies enable Thai instruments such as the klong-yao (see Figure 3) and ranad to be seamlessly integrated into jazz orchestration, redefining their cultural role within a global musical landscape.



Figure 3 Klong-yao  
Source: Dr Nutthapol Deekum

## *Implications for Contemporary Thai Music*

The integration of Dr Saman Noinit’s methods into creative works such as Rabam Klong-yao (Hae) for Jazz Orchestra highlights the potential of Thai music to sustain tradition while simultaneously evolving within international artistic dialogues. This process not only strengthens Thailand’s cultural soft power but also exemplifies how the dual processes of transcription and interpretive re-creation can revitalize folk traditions, ensuring their relevance and vitality in contemporary music-making.

## Methodology

This study adopts a creative practice-based methodology that combines traditional Thai musical materials with contemporary jazz techniques. The process can be divided into three main stages: transcription and adaptation, development and improvisation, and thematic interplay within orchestration (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Form Rabam Klong-yao (Hae) for Jazz Orchestra

| <b>Rehearsal Marks</b> | <b>Bar</b> | <b>Notation</b>                        |
|------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------|
| Introduction           | 1-25       | Unison Theme                           |
| A                      | 26-33      | Transition                             |
| B                      | 34-60      | Theme Section to Solo                  |
| C                      | 61-76      | Trumpet solo Theme                     |
| D                      | 77-92      | Background Theme                       |
| E                      | 93-108     | Ranad Solo Theme                       |
| F                      | 109-124    | Tenor Saxophone Solo Theme             |
| G                      | 125-140    | Background Theme                       |
| H                      | 141-156    | Trombone Solo Theme                    |
| I                      | 157-172    | Background Theme                       |
| J                      | 173-188    | Klong-yao Solo Theme                   |
| K                      | 189-204    | Background Theme                       |
| L                      | 205-220    | Drum Set Solo Theme                    |
| M                      | 221-236    | Trading Solo Klong-yao, Drum Set Theme |
| N                      | 237-267    | The Final Movement Theme               |

### *Transcription and Adaptation*

The initial step involved the transcription of rhythmic and melodic motifs from Rabam Klong-yao (Hae) into a notated form suitable for jazz orchestration. Particular attention was given to the distinctive klong-yao drum patterns, which were adapted into funk and Latin grooves to align with jazz idioms (Dhamabutra, 2009). This process served as the foundation upon which further musical development was built.

### *Development and Improvisation*

Once transcribed, the original motifs were subjected to processes of expansion and transformation. Melodic ideas were extended through techniques such as harmonic layering, rhythmic variation, and call-and-response phrasing (Trakulhun, 2015). Improvisation played a central role in this stage: solo sections for trumpet, saxophone, trombone, ranad, and drums were designed to allow performers to reinterpret the traditional materials freely (Laohverapanich, 2024). This emphasis on improvisation not only reflects the essence of jazz but also resonates with the flexible and spontaneous nature of Thai folk performance practices.

### *Thematic Interplay and Orchestration*

The composition further explored the interplay of themes between Thai and jazz instruments (see Figure 4). Melodic fragments were exchanged across instrumental sections, creating a dialogic structure that mirrors the antiphonal style found in traditional klong-yao ensembles (see Figure 5). Through orchestration, motifs introduced by Thai instruments such as the klong-yao and ranad were echoed, developed, or contrasted by sections of the jazz orchestra (see Figure 6), generating a layered texture that emphasizes intercultural synthesis (Pancharoen, 2010).

# Rabam Klong-yao (Hae)

for Jazz Orchestra

Nutthapol Deekum

The image displays a musical score for a jazz orchestra, specifically measures 1 through 25. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. At the top left, there is a rehearsal mark '-124' and a dynamic marking 'f'. At the top right, the composer's name 'Nutthapol Deekum' is written. The instruments listed on the left side of the score are: Alto Saxophone I, Alto Saxophone II, Tenor Saxophone I, Tenor Saxophone II, Baritone Saxophone, Trumpet in B♭ I, Trumpet in B♭ II, Trumpet in B♭ III, Trumpet in B♭ IV, Trombone I, Trombone II, Trombone III, and Bass Trombone. Each instrument part is written on a five-line staff with a treble or bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The music consists of rhythmic patterns and melodic lines, with many notes beamed together in eighth and sixteenth notes. The dynamic marking 'f' (forte) is repeated at the beginning of several staves.

Figure 4 Rabam Klong-yao (Hae) for Jazz Orchestra (mm. 1-25)

Source: Dr Nutthapol Deekum

Figure 5 is a musical score for a jazz orchestra, spanning measures 44 to 49. It features twelve staves: Alto Saxophone I and II, Tenor Saxophone I and II, Baritone Saxophone, Trumpet in Bb I, II, III, and IV, Trombone I, II, and III, and Bass Trombone. The score illustrates melodic imitation and distribution. Blue arrows point to specific melodic lines in the saxophone and trumpet parts, showing how a motif is passed between instruments. Dotted vertical lines indicate the boundaries of these melodic phrases.

Figure 5 Melodic imitation and melodic distribution,  
*Rabam Klong-yao (Hae)* for Jazz Orchestra (mm. 44 – 49)  
 Source: Dr Nutthapol Deekum

Figure 6 is a musical score for trading solos between the Drum Set and Klong-yao. It includes three staves: Drum Set, Ra-Nad, and Klong-yao. A legend at the top indicates the solo order: Klong-Yao Solo, Drum Set Solo, Klong-Yao Solo, Drum Set Solo, and Klong-Yao Solo. The Drum Set and Klong-yao parts are marked with 'solo' and hatched patterns. Blue arrows point to the trading sections between the two instruments. The Ra-Nad part is shown in a treble clef with a dynamic marking of  $f$ .

Figure 6 Trading Solo Klong-yao and Drum Set (mm. 221–235)  
 Source: Dr Nutthapol Deekum

## Summary of Approach

This methodology demonstrates how traditional Thai motifs can be preserved, expanded, and transformed through processes of transcription, improvisation, and thematic interplay. By merging the spontaneous expressiveness of jazz with the rhythmic vitality of Thai folk traditions, *Rabam Klong-yao (Hae) for Jazz Orchestra* offers a creative model for intercultural composition that is both innovative and rooted in cultural heritage (Dhamabutra, 2009).

## Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in this study, several recommendations can be made for scholars, composers, and educators interested in the transcription, adaptation, and intercultural application of Thai folk music.

### *Promotion of Systematic Transcription Practices*

Scholars and musicians should continue to adopt and refine systematic transcription methods, such as those developed by Dr Saman Noinit, to document folk music traditions accurately. Preserving rhythmic intricacies and performative authenticity ensures that transcriptions can serve as reliable sources for both academic research and creative adaptation.

### *Integration of Re-creative Approaches*

Encouraging interpretative re-creation of transcribed material can help bridge traditional and contemporary practices. Educators and composers are recommended to explore methods that maintain cultural integrity while allowing for artistic innovation, such as rhythmic expansion, harmonic reinterpretation, and improvisation within ensemble contexts.

### *Fostering Intercultural Collaboration*

Musical exchange between Thai and Western idioms can be enhanced by using precise transcriptions as a foundation for intercultural synthesis. Composers should experiment with integrating traditional Thai instruments into modern orchestral or jazz frameworks, promoting cross-cultural dialogue and new musical identities.

### *Incorporation into Music Education*

The methodologies highlighted in this study can be incorporated into higher

education curricula, especially in courses on ethnomusicology, arranging, and composition. Students should be encouraged to transcribe, analyze, and creatively reinterpret folk materials, developing both technical skill and cultural sensitivity.

### *Support for Documentation and Archiving Projects*

Institutions and funding bodies are recommended to support projects that document, archive, and make accessible transcriptions of folk music. Such initiatives would not only safeguard intangible cultural heritage but also provide a rich resource for contemporary composers and performers.

### *Further Research on Cross-Genre Adaptation*

Additional research should investigate how traditional Thai musical motifs can be adapted into various contemporary genres beyond jazz, including electronic music, film scoring, and experimental ensembles (Trakulhun, 2015). Understanding the dynamics of intercultural adaptation can inform best practices for both preservation and innovation.

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## Biography

Dr Natthaphol Deekham is currently a lecturer at the Faculty of Music, Bangkokthonburi University, specializing in music performance, composition, and various styles of music writing. He is also a member of The Superglasses Ska Ensemble, where he plays the baritone saxophone and received an Outstanding Award in the Music Composition category at the Young Thai Artist Award, which acknowledges his creative achievements in music and composition.

Warudh Samansap, is now a lecturer at the School of Music, Princess Galyani Vadhana Institute of Music, He graduated from Wang Klai Kangwon School under the royal patronage at the secondary level. He earned a bachelor's degree from the Faculty of Music, Silpakorn University, majoring in Music Performance with Trumpet as his primary instrument. He then pursued a Master of Music degree from the Princess Galyani Vadhana Institute of Music, where he studied composition with Dr Jean-David Caillouët. In addition to teaching, Warudh also composes music, arranges harmonies, and serves as a special lecturer in brass instruments for wind bands. He has also written lyrics and arranged music for brass ensembles for various artists and concerts. Warudh is a member of The Superglasses Ska Ensemble (Ska), Srirajah Rockers (Reggae), and Temp. (Pop). He is also the founder of The Don (Experimental) and was a member of the Banglumpu Blues Company (Blues). He has recorded with these bands and has been responsible for recording soundtracks for several films. He previously taught music at Sarasas Witaed Bangbon School (Bangkok), where he taught music theory, basic ear training, and ensemble classes, and conducted the school's wind orchestra. He also worked at Soundspace Co., Ltd. as a manager, handling sound system rentals and working behind the scenes at various concerts.

1. Dr Nutthapol Deekum

Email: [lopahttun@gmail.com](mailto:lopahttun@gmail.com)

2. Warudh Samansap

Email: –

3. Rungtham Thammakarn

Email: –