

# A Study of Porn Pirom's Compositions and Thai Thao Composition Composed from Porn Pirom's Melodies

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การศึกษาบทเพลงของ พร ภิรมย์ และการประพันธ์เพลงเถาจากทำนองเพลงของ พรภิรมย์

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## Abstract

The objectives of this research are to study the biography and compositions of Porn Pirom and to study Thao repertoires composed from Porn Pirom's melodies and to compose a Thao repertoire from his melody.

The study was conducted by analyzing 6 songs of different genres, comprising 4 Loog Toong songs which are Grathom Thong Gwao, Bua Toom Bua Baan, Nam Ta La Sai, and Jam nai Jaak; 1 Rajnikloeng melody which is Dao Loog Gai part 1 and 2; 1 Lae melody which is Wang Mae Loog On part 1 and 2. The study of the Thao repertoires composed from Porn Pirom's melodies are Thong Gwao Thao and Bua Toom Bua Baan Thao. The new composition composed from Jam Jai Jaak melody is Piromporn Thao

The result of the study revealed that his registered name is Boonsom Meesomwong. He is the eldest among 11 siblings in the family. He married Ms. Rabiab Paknam and has a son namely Mr. Rangsan Meesomwong. Porn Pirom is talented in multiple aspects, e.g. Li-Ge performing, movie dubbing, singing and composing both text and melody. Especially in singing and composing Loog Toong songs, he won golden record awards in 1966 from his composition Bua Toom Bua Ban and Dao Loog Gai. His last residence was Wat Rattanachai, Phranakhon Sri Ayudhaya province, as a monk.

His Loog Toong compositions are found in both unitary and binary forms. The lyrics are composed in Klon Taiad, Klon Hua Diew and Klon Paed poetic form. He made use of main melody and manipulated it. For the Rajniklerng and Lae songs, a short melody is repeatedly sung on different text. Thai traditional ensemble is used to accompany these songs.

The Thao repertoires composed by a National Artist, Master Samran Koedpon, are Thong Gwao Thao and Bua Toom Bua Baan Thao. These two songs are composed from Gratom Thong Gwao and Bua Toom Bua Baan respectively. Master Samran made use of

melodic augmentation and diminution techniques to complete the Thao form. Adhering to principles of Thao composition, the corresponding ending notes at the end of each Nha Tap, a rhythmic cycle, are maintained.

“Piromporn” Thao is a Thao repertoire composed from Porn Pirom’s melody by the researcher. This Thao repertoire was composed from Jam Jai Jaak song whose original melody is used as Chan Diew melody. By maintaining the same ending tones at the middle and at the end of each rhythmic cycle to complete the Thao form, the researcher made use of augmentation techniques to compose the Song Chan melody, Sam Chan melody and use diminution techniques to compose Kreung Chan melody.

**Keywords :** Porn Pirom, Loog Toong, Rajnikloeng, Lae, Thao

### บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยเล่มนี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายในการศึกษาคือ ศึกษาชีวประวัติและบทเพลงของ พร ภิรมย์ และศึกษาการประพันธ์เพลงเถาจากทำนองเพลงของ พร ภิรมย์ และประพันธ์เพลงเถาจากทำนอง เพลงของ พร ภิรมย์ บทเพลงที่ทำการวิจัยมี 6 บทเพลง จำแนกเป็นเพลงลูกทุ่ง 4 เพลง ได้แก่ 1. เพลงบัวตูมบัวบาน 2. เพลงน้ำตาลาไทร 3. เพลงกระท่อมทองกวาว 4. เพลงจำใจจาก เพลงราชินีเกลิง 1 เพลง ได้แก่ เพลงดาวลูกไก่ท่อน 1 และท่อน 2 เพลงแหล่ 1 เพลง ได้แก่ เพลงวังแม่ลูกอ่อน ท่อน 1 และท่อน 2 ส่วนการศึกษาเพลงเถาที่ประพันธ์จากทำนองเพลงของ พร ภิรมย์ ได้แก่ เพลงทองกวาวเถา และเพลงบัวตูมบัวบานเถา เพลงของ พร ภิรมย์ ที่นำมาประพันธ์เป็นเพลงเถาคือเพลงจำใจจาก

ผลจากการศึกษาทราบว่า พร ภิรมย์ ชื่อจริงคือนายบุญสม มีสมวงษ์ เป็นบุตรคนโตของพี่น้องร่วมบิดามารดา 11 คน พร ภิรมย์ สมรสกับนางระเบียบ ภาคนาม มีบุตรด้วยกัน 1 คน ชื่อนายรังสรรค์ มีสมวงษ์ พร ภิรมย์มีความสามารถหลายด้านทั้งการแสดงลิเก การพากย์หนัง การร้องเพลง และการแต่งเนื้อร้องและการแต่งทำนองเพลง โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งการร้องเพลงและ การประพันธ์เพลงโดยได้รับรางวัลพระราชทานแผ่นเสียงทองคำปี พ.ศ. 2509 เพลงบัวตูมบัวบาน และเพลงดาวลูกไก่ ซึ่ง พร ภิรมย์แต่งและขับร้องเอง ปัจจุบัน พร ภิรมย์ อุปสมบทอยู่ที่วัดรัตนชัย (วัดจัน) จังหวัดพระนครศรีอยุธยา

บทประพันธ์ของท่านที่เป็นเพลงลูกทุ่ง มีทั้งเพลงที่เป็นเอกบทและทวิบท ลักษณะคำ ประพันธ์เป็นกลอนแปด และกลอนตลาด มีการใช้ทำนองหลักและพัฒนาเป็นแนวทำนองใหม่ ส่วนเพลงราชินีเกลิงและเพลงแหล่เป็นเพลงท่อนเดียว ลักษณะทำนองเป็นประเภทซ้ำทำนอง แต่เนื้อเพลงเปลี่ยนไป คำประพันธ์เป็นประเภทกลอนหัวเดียว ใช้เครื่องดนตรีไทยบรรเลงประกอบ

การศึกษาเพลงทองกวาวเถาและเพลงบัวตูมบัวบานเถาซึ่งครูสำราญ เกิดผล (ศิลปินแห่งชาติ) ประพันธ์จากทำนองเพลงกระท่อมทองกวาวและเพลงบัวตูมบัวบานของพร ภิรมย์ นั้น ครูสำราญ เกิดผลใช้หลักการประพันธ์เพลงเถาโดยยึดทำนองเดิมเป็นทำนองสองชั้นและใช้หลัก การขยายเพลงและตัดเพลงโดยยึดลูกตกท้ายหน้าทับเป็นสำคัญ

การประพันธ์เพลงเถาจากทำนองเพลงของพร ภิรมย์ ผู้วิจัยได้นำทำนองเพลงจำใจจากมาเป็นทำนองชั้นเดียว แล้วแต่งขยายขึ้นเป็นสองชั้นและสามชั้น โดยให้ลูกตกกลางหน้าทับและท้ายหน้าทับตรงกันทั้งหมดเพื่อให้ทำนองเพลงมีความสัมพันธ์กันตลอดทั้งเถา และตั้งชื่อเพลงว่า “ภิรมย์พร” เถา

**คำสำคัญ :** พร ภิรมย์ ลูกทุ่ง ราชนิกเลิง แห่ เถา

## Introduction

Despite having number of genres, Thailand’s active musical cultures today are the traditional music, also known as court music, folk music, ethnic music, popular music, Loog Toong music and Pheua Chee Wit music. However, when referring to musical culture of Thailand and its society, the word “music” is usually substituted by “song” with parallel implication, e.g. “Thai traditional music” and “Thai traditional song” or “Loog Toong music” and “Loog Toong song”.

Each musical culture has undergone different courses of emergence, existence, development and, for some cultures, disappearance. These cultures also serve the society and lifestyle differently. But one musical culture that has long been associated with most of Thai people’s way of life and been part and parcel of the society is “Loog Toong songs”.

Loog Toong songs are originated by adapting folk songs and Western music, also called Pleng Talad or “market songs”. The so-developed genre was not given this very definition until its characteristics became clear and distinct. It was in 1964 when Chamnong Rangsikul first coined the term “Pleng(song) Loog Toong” for the first time that the genre has been called so ever since.

Pleng Loog Toong or Loog Toong songs have exclusive ensemble formation, playing techniques, singing styles and composition. There are number of remarkably famous Loog Toong composers and singers. The latter are viewed as medium that convey the spirit of Loog Toong being, reflecting the livelihood of villagers and the rural society to every Loog Toong Song admirers. Every Loog Toong song is composed with such charming aesthetic which incorporates folk singing, Thai traditional singing and other new singing styles.

It can be observed that the classic Loog Toong composers and singers are already adept in Thai traditional music, folk music and folk performances. Apart from this, there also certain Loog Toong composers who are talented singers as well such as Surapol Sombutcharoen, Somsian Panthong and Porn Pirom.

Porn Pirom, born November 29, 1928 and died December 5, 2010, is the artist whose compositions are one of a kind and whose versatile singing ability covers various genres including Loog Toong, Lae, Rajnikloeng. His works, mostly composed and sung by himself,

deal with variety of subjects such as romance, fable, moral, and preaching. He was a highly appreciated music personality among fellow composers, singers and listeners of the Loog Toong song. The name Porn Pirom, though, was a stage name. His real name was Boonsom Meesomwong.

Since Thai Loog Toong songs, folk songs and Thai traditional songs are closely interrelated and share many common characteristics, these have given rises to various connected phenomena, e.g. composition of Loog Toong songs from existing Thai traditional songs or Thai folk songs and vice versa. For the latter, a composer should base his composition on an existing Loog Toong song written by a celebrated artist. The form of such Loog Toong song should have tuneful melody and be suitable for rearrangement into Thai traditional music format. And certain works of Porn Pirom has already been done so, i.e. “Bua Toom Bua Ban” and “Grathom Thong Gwao” were rearranged into Thao repertoires, a form of Thai traditional music, by Master Samran Koedpon, national artist in performing arts (Thai music) 2005.

This research has been conducted in appreciation of the life and works of Porn Pirom and also the arranged musical pieces based on his original compositions. Due to distinguished musical characteristics of Porn Pirom’s songs, the researcher, therefore, has selected one of his works and rearranged it into a Thai traditional Thao repertoire.

### **Aims of the Study**

1. To study biography of Porn Pirom.
2. To study the musical works of Porn Pirom.
3. To study Thao compositions based on Porn Pirom’s melodies.
4. To compose a Thao repertoire from Porn Pirom’s melody.

### **Method**

This qualitative research follows mandatory procedures and methods of studying the biographical details of Porn Pirom from several printed sources including books, textbooks, articles, and other documents. Also, the researcher had interviewed Porn Pirom, his family, his fellow composers, singers and musicians. The researcher then compiled Porn Pirom’s biographical information by integrating the printed documents with interviewed data so as to produce a complete and orderly biographical information.

By analyzing vocal techniques, composition, and lyrics, the researcher had selected 3 different genres of Porn Pirom’s compositions to study. The first genre is Loog Toong songs, which are Bua Toom Bua Baan, Nam Ta La Sai, Grathom Thong Gwao and Jam Jai

Jaak. The second one is Rajnikloeng songs, which are Dao Loog Gai part 1 and part 2. The last is Lae songs, which are Wang Mae Loog On part 1 and part 2.

In addition to this, the researcher had also studied Thong Kwao Thao and Bua Toom Bua Baan Thao. These are 2 Thai traditional music's Thao repertoires which were composed by Master Samran Koedpon, national artist in performing arts (Thai music) 2005. In this process the researchers analyzed melodic augmentation, diminution and re-composition of Porn Pirom's original melodies – Grathom Thong Gwao and Bua Toom Bua Baan respectively.

Finally, the researcher had chosen to rearrange Porn Pirom's Jam Jai Jaak song into a Thai traditional music's Thao repertoire by augmenting and diminishing melodically according to principles of Thao repertoire composition, and named the new composition as Piromporn Thao.

## Results

### Biography of Porn Pirom

Porn Pirom was born in Phranakon Sri Ayudhya province on November 29, 1928. His registered name is Somboon Meesomwong. He is the eldest of total 11 of Mr. Prasert Meesomwong and Ms. Samrit Meesomwong. He married Ms. Rabiab Paknam and they had a son namely Ransan Meesomwong. Regarding his educational background, Porn Pirom graduated Matthayom 3. Musically, he did not follow music learning tradition but instead learned from the back door.

Porn Pirom earned his living by performing Li-Ge as a leading actor under the stage name Boonsom Ayudhya. When Marshall P. Pibulsongkram organized a Li-Ge competition in 1957, Porn Pirom was persuaded to join Master Boonyong Ketkong, whose crew – Ketkong Dumrongsilpa – were also a contestant in that event. Boonsom was the script writer and his contribution sent Ketkong Dumrongsilpa crew to victory. Later Boonsom Ayudhya joined another Li-Ge crew – Hom Huan – and portrayed “Jaded” in a play titled “Pu Chana Sib Tid”. This very role became a success for him and his reputation soon became a sensation.

In 1958, Master Mongkol Amatyakul, head of Chularat music band, had a chance to witness Porn Pirom Li-Ge expertise and decided to persuasively ask him to join his band and developed him into a famous singer under a new stage name – Porn Pirom.

Porn Pirom had been a singer under the service of Chularat music band for many years and recorded over 200 songs, most of them composed by himself.

Porn Pirom had entered monkhood at Ratanajaya buddhist monastery, Ratanajaya district, Phranakhon Sri Ayudhya province since 1981 and remained so until his death.

## The study of Porn Porim's compositions

### - Bua Toom Bua Baan

The song was inspired by his real life experience when he fell in love with 2 young ladies simultaneously. He compared one lady to a budding lotus (Bua Toom) and the other to a blossomed one (BUA BAAN). One lady was to marry to other man so he could do nothing but to marry the other one. It is in binary form while its lyrics is in the Klon On Talad poetic form. The melodic movements of the song are mostly descending.

### - Nam Ta La Sai

The song is composed and sung by Porn Pirom for the Golden Records contest. Describing a man's desperate wait for his loved one, Nam Ta La Sai consists of two movements. One movement is repeated with different lyrics in the form of A1 A2 B A3. Its lyrics is in the Klon Talad poetic form.

### - Grathom Thong Kwao

The song Kathom Thong Kwao was composed at the time when Porn Pirom was still performing Li-Ge. It makes metaphor of a man secretly in love with a young lady as brilliant yellow Thong Kwao flowers – bastard teak flower – near a cottage. The song is in binary form whose lyrics is in the Klon Talad poetic form. Jumping the ending note of each phrase to a much deeper note is a prominent characteristic of the song.

### - Jam Jai Jaak

Porn Pirom was, at that time, hired by Sombhoj Salaokul to compose music and lyrics of this song. It describes unpleasant behaviors of a drunkard mother-in-law. The song consists of a unitary form being repeatedly played 4 times with different lyrics. The melody of the song features sudden moderations.

### - Dao Loog Gai

This song uses a Rajnikloeng melodic format, which is a melody used in Li-Ge performance. Its Song Chan melody is accompanied by a Thai drum - Tapone. The lyrics is in the Klon Hua Diew poetic form, describing the gratitude of little chicks to their mother hen, teaching the morals in the process.

- Wang Mae Loog On

This is a Lae song type whose lyrics is in the Klon Paed poetic form. The singer is accompanied by a pair of Klong Kaek playing Nha Tap Lao rhythmic pattern. It describes the legend of Mae Loog On palace where a mother and her child drowned to death wherein.

### **The study of Thao composition from Porn Pirom's melodies**

- Thong Gwao Thao

The repertoire was composed by Master Samran Koedpon, based on Porn Pirom's song Grathom Thong Gwao. The original melody of Kra Thom Thong Kwao is used as the Song Chan melody and it is further augmented and diminished to make Sam Chan and Chan Diew melody respectively, hence completing it as a Thao repertoire. Master Samran Koedpol then named his new composition as Thong Kwao so that it conforms to the original version.

The composition is entirely based on the Porn Pirom's original melody with augmentation and diminution to create Sam Chan and Song Chan melodies, respectively. Every corresponding ending notes of each rhythmic cycle of Sam Chan, Song Chan and Chan Diew are the same throughout the composition, which is the principle of Thao repertoire composition. There are, however, few corresponding notes in the middle of a rhythmic cycle which are different.

In addition, Master Samran created variations for Sam Chan and Song Chan melody to be played in its respective repetition while keeping the Chan Diew melody intact.

- Bua Toom Bua Baan Thao

Bua Toom Bua Baan Thao is a Thao repertoire based on Porn Pirom's original song Bua Toom Bua Baan. It was also composed by Master Samran Koedpon, using the original melody as Song Chan melody while augmenting and diminishing it to complete the rest – Sam Chan and Song Chan melody, respectively.

The composition is entirely based on the Porn Pirom's original melody with augmentation and diminution to create Sam Chan and Song Chan melodies, respectively. Every corresponding ending notes of each rhythmic cycle of Sam Chan, Song Chan and Chan Diew are the same throughout the composition, which is the principle of Thao repertoire composition. There are, however, few corresponding notes in the middle of a rhythmic cycle which are different.

In addition, Master Samran created variations for Sam Chan and Song Chan melody to be played in its respective repetition while keeping the Chan Diew melody intact.

### **Thao Composition from Porn Pirom's Melody**

Piromporn Thao is a repertoire that the researcher has composed based on Porn Pirom's song titled "Jam Jai Jaak". The repertoire's title Piromporn was named to honor Porn Pirom, the composer of the original melody. Piromporn Thao uses Prob Kai rhythmic pattern due to the quick movement of its original melody, which is used as Chan Diew melody for the new composition.

In the composition of Piromporn Thao, the researcher has augmented the original Jam Jai Jaak melody to Song Chan and Sam Chan respectively and also diminished the original melody to Kreung Chan, followed by a Loog Hmod – ending melody. The augmentation and diminution followed the principles of Thai traditional music composition by maintaining the same corresponding ending tones and middle tones of each and every rhythmic cycle in Sam Chan, Song Chan and Chan Diew.

### **Discussion**

Porn Pirom's status of the great Loog Toong artists can be attributed to wide-ranging artistic skills. Not only was he a highly capable stage actor who efficiently delivered his inner feelings through his meaningful choreographic movements, he also possessed a trademark voice and unique style of singing that blends in well with his songs. Above all, he was a delicately considerate composer who, with carefully chosen words, could stimulate his audience's different emotions at his will. His ability to concretely elaborate sceneries, situations and expressions enabled his audience to imagine and comprehend exactly what Porn Pirom had intended to convey. The works of Porn Pirom are, therefore, the treasure of multi-aesthetic value, featuring a fine music, a fine lyrics and a fine meaning. The beauty of his rhyming poetic lyrics is another notable archetype of his artistic genius. The contents of Porn Pirom's works are very expansive, covering happy and tragic romance, nature, morals, ethics, dharma, fables and patriotic content. Musically, his various works contain single movement, double movements and multi movements. Lyrically, his compositions are in the Klon Talad, Klon Hua Diew and Klon Paed poetic forms. The results of Porn Pirom's composition analysis will serve as knowledge that can be applied likewise to study the works of other Loog Toong artists as well.

By studying Thong Kwao Thao and Bua Toom Bua Baan, Master Samran Koedpon's compositions from Porn Pirom's melodies, it has allowed us to understand the concept and methods of Thao composition and to appreciate the contextual diversity under which Thao repertoire can be composed. The results will broaden our search for inspiration and add more alternative sources to Thao repertoire composition. The trans-cultural phenomenon



between Thai traditional music and Loog Toong music will promote and sustain each other for better musical cause.

Piromporn, a Thai traditional composition from Porn Pirom's original song Jam Jai Jaak, is inspired by the sudden changes in note cluster of the original melody, in which the first movement sees 4 changes while the second movement sees as many as 5 changes, including entire melodic change at the end of the song. The researcher pinpointed and used these melodic changes as a motive to compose a Thao repertoire. Adhering to the principles of Thai traditional music composition, the researcher created melodic links that connect between two melodies of different note clusters. To make Piromporn a perfect Thao repertoire and suitable for performing in various occasions, the researcher is, however, yet to take opportunity to seek an artist who can oblige with composing the lyrics. During his life, Porn Pirom has not only received several awards to honor his glittering Loog Toong music career, but was also presented several other important awards such as Honorary Venerable Personality awards for outstanding Thai language usage in 2010 and Department of Fine Arts' Ganesh awards for his song "Dao Loog Gai" in the National Thai Language Day, 2010.

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Appendix

Appendix

Musical score in 2/4 time, consisting of eight staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 2/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is written in a single melodic line. The first staff contains a whole rest followed by a quarter note F#, then a repeat sign. The second staff continues with a quarter note F#, a quarter note G, a quarter note A, and a quarter note B. The third staff continues with a quarter note C, a quarter note D, a quarter note E, and a quarter note F#. The fourth staff continues with a quarter note G, a quarter note A, a quarter note B, and a quarter note C. The fifth staff continues with a quarter note D, a quarter note E, a quarter note F#, and a quarter note G. The sixth staff continues with a quarter note A, a quarter note B, a quarter note C, and a quarter note D. The seventh staff continues with a quarter note E, a quarter note F#, a quarter note G, and a quarter note A. The eighth staff continues with a quarter note B, a quarter note C, a quarter note D, and a quarter note E. The score concludes with a first ending bracket over the final four notes of the eighth staff, labeled '1.'



The image displays a musical score for a piece in 2/4 time, consisting of six staves of music. The notation is in treble clef and includes various rhythmic values such as quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes. The score is divided into two main sections, each with a first ending and a second ending. The first section begins with a measure of rest followed by a quarter rest, then a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The first ending is marked with a '1.' and leads to a final cadence. The second ending is marked with a '2.' and leads to a different cadence. The second section follows a similar pattern, starting with a quarter rest and a quarter note, followed by eighth and sixteenth notes. It also features first and second endings, with the first ending marked '1.' and the second ending marked '2.'. The piece concludes with a final cadence on the sixth staff.