

TRANSMITTING TRADITIONAL LANNA MUSIC IN THE MODERN-DAY CITY OF CHIANG MAI

Joel Akins

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Traditional Lanna music is enjoying a renewal, centered on the city of Chiang Mai. How has this come about and how is it being sustained? And what does all this activity mean for the music itself?

This paper addresses the first question by providing a detailed record of the different ways traditional Lanna music is (and has been) passed on in the city of Chiang Mai. This is based primarily on interviews and observations with teachers, students, artists and other professionals involved with Lanna music transmission through formal education, informal instruction and technological developments.

Addressing the second question above means analyzing the relationship between ways of transmission and changing styles of traditional music in Chiang Mai. This paper presents a critical analysis of both historical and present musical activities, as well as a comparison of perspectives on musical change in the North in order to show how the expansion of musical transmission in Chiang Mai has worked in tandem with the increase in variety of Lanna musical styles in recent times.

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The Rebuilding of Traditional Lanna Music Culture in Chiang Mai

By the late 18th century, the once grand city of Chiang Mai was nearly reduced to a ghost town by roughly two centuries of Burmese occupation, warring and a shortage of resources. The Thai Yuan, led by *Chao Kawila*, finally regained control and set about reintroducing population and cultural life into the beleaguered city. About a century after Kawila oversaw the physical and cultural renewal of Chiang Mai, King Intrawichinontra (“Inthanon”) gave his daughter, Dararasmi, in marriage to King Chulalongkorn.¹ She received formal training in central Thai music and dance, and brought this back to Chiang Mai with her after King Chulalongkorn’s death. Under her tutelage, choreography became more defined and coordinated within groups of dancers. She also oversaw improvements to the construction of musical instruments, notably making the *salo* more durable. In 1927, these courtly innovations were finally presented in public view to welcome King Rama VII’s visit to Chiang Mai when Princess Dararasmi was placed in charge of the welcoming festivities. The presentation she organized served to legitimize northern customs as well as equate them with the fine classical traditions of Siam.

Five years after “going public” with these new incarnations of Lanna performance art, the support system for music in Chiang Mai crumbled with Siam’s abrupt shift to constitutional monarchy. The many post-1932 governments – dominated by Field Marshall Phibul Songkhram – were not neglectful in supporting arts and culture in Thailand; rather, they focused on creating a single national identity out of the country’s patchwork of cultures, and Lanna performance traditions suffered accordingly. Folk instruments eschewed as too crude and musical forms deemed no longer appropriate faded from daily life. New or reworked styles like the *ramwong* (circle dance) were strongly promoted through cultural centers.² Several *ramwong* bands formed in Chiang

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With no court to sustain professional musicians and dancers, musicians taught in Princess Dararasmī's court were key in conserving and passing on Lanna music traditions in Chiang Mai. Another figure in the 1950's and 1960's was Kraistri Nimmanhaeminda, a prominent Chiang Mai businessman with a keen interest in traditional northern culture. Not only did he provide financial support for traditional Lanna music, but he also made significant contributions to the available body of knowledge on Lanna culture. One of his most influential contributions was his development of *khantok*, a dinner show that combines customary Lanna dishes with a survey of Lanna performance traditions. After beginning as a send-off to visiting dignitaries, it was adopted by the tourism industry and has been an economic motivator for the rebirth of traditional Lanna music and dance.

An important first for the region was when the Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts (CMCDA; in Thai *Withayalai Natasin*) opened in 1971. Though its focus was (and still is) on central Thai music, this was the beginning of the formal academic world in Chiang Mai taking the lead in conserving and passing on traditional central Thai and Lanna music.

On Children's Day (2nd Saturday of January) 1976, a young, introspective man named Jaran Manopetch went to the government office where he worked and handed out treats to the crowds of visiting children. But that afternoon, he got on a local bus and didn't return; eventually ending up in Mae Sariang as he made the impromptu decision that government service was not for him.⁴ About a year later, Jaran was one of many musicians invited to play his guitar and sing at a birthday party in Chiang Mai.

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“In January of 1977, I went to a friend’s birthday party. There were lots of people there – both professional musicians and non-professionals, and each of us got to play one song. When it was my turn (I was the last one), there wasn’t anything left to play, because the others had already played all the songs I knew. So I dug out an old *phleng kham mueang* [song in the northern dialect], Noi Chaiya. Once I started to sing, my friend (whose birthday it was) and my friend’s mother got up and started dancing. Everyone was able to sing along with at least some sections or lines, but for the most part, they just hummed along with the melody. I realized that songs like this one lived in the very core of every northerner...”⁵

The audience’s powerful reaction – and later the response of the general public – showed how deeply these traditional local melodies stirred emotions and memories. Sanan Thammati of CMU’s Center for the Promotion of Arts and Culture explains that Jaran presented traditional musical material in a new way. By fusing traditional Lanna songs like *Noi Chaiya* with the acoustic folk style popular in the United States in 1960’s, Jaran made it “modern” again, and thus accessible and relevant to modern listeners.

In 1981, Mongkol Boonwong took over as president of CMCDA. In the following years, he and Sunthorn Na Chiangmai heightened the profile of traditional Lanna music – even organizing a special concert for a royal audience at the Kawila military camp in Chiang Mai. In the late 1980’s, Sunthorn (a skilled maker of Lanna and central Thai instruments) told Mongkol he didn’t have to worry about traditional Lanna music sinking back down into obscurity, as he could no longer keep up with orders for Lanna instruments pouring in from schools around the North.⁶

Also in 1981, Sanan Thammati enrolled in CMU and joined the Thai Music and Fine Arts Club. However, he and some classmates wanted to focus more exclusively on Lanna music, art and culture, so Sanan, Suchat Kanchai and Suthep Saenmongkol joined fellow student Suphoj Boonmee to start the Lanna Folk Club in 1984, and set about the task of learning about the traditional culture of the North.⁷ Since expertise was limited in

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Chiang Mai, they made frequent trips around the Lanna region to interview elderly villagers, make recordings and take notes. The club also made recordings under the name *Ueang Lanna*. These early activities of CMU's Lanna Folk Club were crucial in two regards – they began to significantly rebuild the body of knowledge on traditional Lanna culture in Chiang Mai; and made this information available to the growing community of young Lanna culture enthusiasts in Chiang Mai.

By the early 1990's, a core of young musicians emerged in this drive for renewed traditional Lanna music culture in Chiang Mai. One of these people was a gifted musician named Panutat Apichanatong, at that time a student at CMCDA. Panutat (today widely known as Khru Add) was fascinated by traditional Lanna music from a young age, but didn't really begin playing it until he borrowed a friend's *khlu*. Because of his years of careful watching and listening, Panutat quickly learned many Lanna folk instruments; the wider Chiang Mai community was especially surprised to see a young *pi* player, something many hadn't seen for a generation.

Before long, Panutat and a few of his friends formed an ensemble named Nakatan. In the words of Prasong Saeng-ngam (Khru Bird), one of several notable traditional music teachers in present-day Chiang Mai, Nakatan had “three tigers”: Panutat, Somboon Kawichai⁸ (Khru Boy) and Udomli Trakul (Khru Kiat). Another key member of the group was Lipikorn Makaew, who helped found the Lanna Folk Arts Club at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL), a club that would come to collaborate frequently with their counterparts at CMU.

One of Nakatan's efforts was a set of recordings released in 1996 to mark the 700th anniversary of Chiang Mai. In fact this anniversary – a celebration of regional history and local pride – provided an impetus and highly visible opportunities for young traditional musicians to perform. For Boonying Kanthawong (another music teacher in Chiang Mai), an especially significant performance was at Chiang Mai's newly built 700th Anniversary Sports Complex, where the 1995 Southeast Asian Games were held.

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Boonying remembers the opening ceremony, which featured a large number of *klong sabadchai* playing together and made an impression on many in the city.

In late 1996, Chatchawan Thongdeelert assembled a coalition of area artists, academics, local and national government representatives and professionals out of concern for the declining position of traditional Lanna heritage.⁹ Their desire for a return to local roots instead of reliance on Western-style development was swiftly justified when Thai markets imploded during the financial meltdown of early 1997. Further discussions led to the establishment of an annual *Suepsan Lanna* festival, celebrating traditional local food, music, dance and other cultural expressions. The first *Suepsan Lanna* festival was held in 1997 at CMU's Center for the Promotion **TRANSMITTING TRADITIONAL LANNA MUSIC IN THE MODERN-DAY CITY OF CHIANG MAI**

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⁹ Sirinut Wongsakul, Personal interview, 21 January 2009.

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Ways and Spaces for Transmitting Lanna Music in Modern-Day Chiang Mai

Formal Education and Transmission

Nowadays, most transmission of traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai falls within the scope of formal education. Though it is often combined with more traditional informal study outside school, most children will have significant encounters with traditional Lanna music in the classroom. This instruction often focuses on acquainting the young learner with the basics of Lanna music – the instruments, the melodies, and probably some basic techniques for playing. Many schools also have a traditional Lanna music club, where students who are more interested can hone their talents further.

At Wattanothaipayap School, students learn in a classroom that incorporates computer, audio and video technology. The music club there performs locally, nationally, and internationally. Thepbodint School is well known for its traditional Lanna music club, which won a prize from Princess Sirindhorn in 2004. Thepbodint also had a

¹⁸ Sirinut Wongsakul, Personal interview, 21 January 2009.

connection with CMCDA – Witep Kantima, a recently deceased expert in traditional Lanna music at CMCDA, regularly made trips to Thepbodint to help advise. There is also an active student-run traditional Lanna music club at Yupparaj Wittayalai School.

The Christian private schools Dara Academy and Prince Royal’s College also have a strong reputation for teaching Lanna music. Phiphatphong Maisiri, a professor at Payap University, often helps teach the club at Dara Academy. The Lanna music program at Prince Royal’s College was especially strong several years ago, but has nearly discontinued because of the original teacher’s advancing age. The school has recently hired a graduate of Chiang Mai Rajabhat University to rebuild the program.

The Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts has had a larger part than any other secondary school in transmitting traditional Lanna music. Central Thai music has been the focus since its opening in 1971, but the CMCDA has been a repository of regional performance traditions as well. The school is regarded as a purveyor of the “high” traditions of *Chao Dararasmi* because many of her former students went on to teach there.¹⁹ Students of CMCDA are often active in the community, whether dancing or playing in *khantok* shows or collaborating with other area youth in performing traditional Lanna music. Traditional Lanna music is not offered as a “major” (*wicha ek*), but music students still spend two hours per week learning local music, and there are opportunities for further study in clubs.

When questioned about conserving traditional forms versus teaching adaptations in Lanna music, Rakkiat Panyayot, a teacher of traditional Lanna music at CMCDA, explained that the school regards conservation as the foundation, or basis, for creativity. Rakkiat believes in fostering students’ natural creativity. For example, a melody will be taught according to tradition, but if students “put themselves into the music” by changing some notes, rhythms, or ornamentations. Rakkiat approves what he considers a natural musical development. On the other hand, if traditional dancers try to wear trendy costumes that don’t actually reflect Lanna customs, they would be told to change. This

¹⁹ Thitinadda Maneewan [ธิตินัดดา มณีวรรณ], *Folk Performing Arts of the Tai Yuan Ethnic Group, Book 2*

[ศิลปะการแสดงพื้นบ้านของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ไทยวน เล่ม ๒]
(Chiang Mai: Social Research Institute, CMU, 2551 [2008]): 10.

kind of carefully regulated change is a hallmark of musical adaptation in CMCD, and similar approaches are shared by several other musicians and teachers in Chiang Mai.

There are also a few higher education options for the study of traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai. Chiang Mai Rajabhat University is regarded highly for its instruction in Lanna and central Thai music. Students cannot major in Lanna music – they must choose Thai music, – but the university offers classes on the subject. Payap University is known best for Western music, but it also offers a Thai music program. All students are required to study at least some Thai music, and they can also choose to join a traditional Lanna ensemble. Phiphatphong Masiri teaches both Thai and Lanna music, and says that each semester, around five to seven students choose to study traditional Lanna music. Adaptations to traditional music are somewhat more prominent due to the music department’s strong Western music focus. Also, like the affiliated schools Prince Royal’s College and Dara Academy, Payap is a Christian university. So certain ceremonies – such as the *Wai Khru* – have been adjusted to Christian beliefs.²⁰

The most significant musical activity at CMU is the aforementioned Lanna Folk Club. Nowadays, members don’t go out to record information on northern traditions very often, though they sometimes invite experts to come teach. Most of the teaching is from the older members (*run phi*) to the younger ones (*run nong*). Their performances include both university and outside activities, occasionally in neighboring countries.

CMU’s Lanna Folk Club is and has been an important source of adaptations in traditional Lanna music and dance. The club is responsible for the creation of dances and music such as *Fon Hariphunchai*, which has entered the standard repertoire, and is widely performed in Chiang Mai and throughout the region.

As mentioned earlier, members of the Lanna Folk Arts Club at RMUTL have also supported the traditional music culture of Chiang Mai. Though this club’s focus is more specifically on art, dance and music, many activities are similar to the CMU’s Lanna Folk Club – performances at university functions, temple fairs and ceremonies, and other outside engagements such as area festivals.

Informal Education and Transmission of Traditional Lanna Music

²⁰ Phiphatphong Masiri, Personal interview, 16 Nov. 2009.

Lai Muang is a prominent ensemble established in 1996 when Somboon Kawichai left Nakatan (the ensemble with Panutat Apichanatong and Udomli Trakul). Lai Muang's first performance was for the inaugural *Suepsan Lanna* festival held in 1997. The group gained renown, and in 2001 they even traveled to Canada for a performance in Vancouver. Today they give fewer performances, but are still highly regarded. Their repertoire consists of traditional melodies, original compositions, and even improvisation. Lai Muang was the first group to incorporate *phin pia* into an ensemble. This traditionally solo instrument produces a soft, subtly undulating sound, but with the aid of amplification, it can be heard alongside other instruments like *salo* and *sueng*.²¹ Lai Muang has also included instruments from other ethnic groups in the North, like the *sae mu*, a Lahu lute. Occasionally they have even invited vocalists to perform with them, such as Suntaree Vechanont, the former duet partner of Jaran Manopetch.

The Rak Lanna group, led by Prasong Saeng-ngam, has shared the stage with Lai Muang. Prasong started the group in 1999 as a university student, and – like the Lanna Folk Club at CMU – the group has sought a holistic understanding of traditional Lanna culture. Besides playing music, Rak Lanna goes on outings to learn about the area's natural resources, takes part in traditional ceremonies such as the *Dam Hua* during Songkran, and even develops their own traditions. Since 2000, Rak Lanna has met at *Hong Hian Suepsan Phumipanaya Lanna* (English name: Lanna Wisdom School), where Prasong sometimes teaches music.

The Lanna Wisdom School grew out of the *Suepsan Lanna* festival organized by Chatchawan Thongdeelert. Though the festival was a success, organizers wanted to go further. In June of 2000, *Hong Hian Suepsan Phumipanya Lanna* opened to teach Lanna arts and traditional local wisdom to a total of about 80 students. Each subject is further divided into basic instruction and advanced classes. While the advanced classes are

²¹ Thitinadda Chinachan [ธิตินัดดา จินาจันทร์], *The Role of Lanna Youth in Lanna Performing Art's Maintenance: a Case Study of Lai-Muang Group*

[บทบาทของกลุ่มเยาวชนล้านนาในการสืบสานศิลปปะการแสด
งพื้นบ้านล้านนา: กรณีศึกษากลุ่ม ลายเมือง] (Chiang Mai: Social
Research Institute, Chiang Mai U, 2543 [2000]): 63.

mostly arranged between the students and teachers, the more structured basic classes are taught on Saturday and Sundays over an eight-week period.

The school has identified two main challenges facing their continued success. The first is that printed materials are scarce because transmission of these subjects has traditionally been oral. The school is working to develop texts, but meanwhile the shortage is most problematic with younger students, who expect books, and handouts. School officials are also concerned that the knowledge student's gain from their time at the Lanna Wisdom School is not deep or lasting enough because of limited class time and conflicting social pressure on the students.²²

Two initiatives that teach only traditional Lanna music are at temples. At Wat Suan Dok, the main instructor is Panutat Apichanatong. He started this weekend instruction program at Wat Loi Kroh in 1999, and in 2005 he started a second program at Wat Suan Dok. Panutat's goal is to help the group of learners cooperate and have fun together – not shape them into professional musicians, so he encourages pupils to relax and enjoy what they're doing. When Panutat started teaching at Wat Loi Kroh, about 30 pupils showed up. By the second year, the number reached about 200. Now the number in the program at Wat Suan Dok is back around 30, but instruction at both temples has always been free of charge and open – students can attend classes whenever they choose. Another temple offering free instruction in traditional Lanna music is Wat Lam Chang, inside the walled portion of the city. The temple owns the instruments, and allows anyone to come practice. Boonying Kanthawong often teaches here on weekends, and he sometimes takes musicians to perform in other temples or engagements in Chiang Mai.

A group that grew out of temple instruction is Phet Lanna; the first members of this group were students of Panutat at Wat Loi Kroh. One of them – a nine-year-old boy (Chinachot Phumwiset, now 19) – asked his mother to help his friends and him start an ensemble. In 2000, they began rehearsing at Wat Lok Moli, just across from the north wall of the city, and closely affiliated with Wat Phra That Doi Suthep. They built their musical prowess and soon began playing for free (sometimes they were offered a free meal) on a variety of occasions. They now accept mostly paying jobs as they no longer have regular rehearsals and only get together to prepare for an upcoming performance. If

²² Lanna Wisdom School, Untitled document, N.D., Obtained 21 Jan. 2009.

some cannot make it, or the performance is especially large, they enlist the help of students from CMCDA.

The last main type of informal transmission of traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai is the most traditional – instruction at a teacher’s home. However, even this is quite different from the past, when pupils would live with the teacher and help around the house in exchange for the knowledge and skills learned. Nowadays, a common setup is that a group of neighborhood youths gather at the home of a local expert. The group often has a form of semiofficial recognition, and may even receive modest financial or material support from government or private organizations to offset costs. The focus and style of the teaching are almost entirely determined by the expert musician. Sometimes this expert is a highly experienced local musician, like National Artist Manop Yarana, while other times such projects are led by younger musicians like Suthas Sinthopthong, a native of Mae Hong Son with a Tai Yai ethnic background. Suthas enjoys teaching both Tai Yai and traditional Lanna music.

A unique meeting point between formal and informal music education in northern Thailand is the *Withayakon* system, which helps foster cohesion, and variety in teaching about traditional Lanna music. *Withayakon* means expert or special lecturer on a given topic; in this case, Lanna music. Because official government curricula support it, schools in Chiang Mai are often able often invite these experts from around the community to come teach on different topics. *Withayakon* can be from any background – from experienced musicians in the Chiang Mai area to teachers at other educational institutions – as long as they have expertise to share.

Other Spaces for Musical Transmission

A major outlet for traditional Lanna music transmission is funerals and other temple ceremonies. These events are a common setting in which Chiang Mai residents encounter traditional Lanna music, through live performance, or through recordings. It is also a significant source of performance opportunities for traditional Lanna musicians.

Another popular venue for traditional Lanna musicians in modern society has been competitions. As opposed to temples, music competitions are not a traditional venue for Lanna music, but they have motivated youth to perform Lanna folk music. Competitions also give musicians a chance to mix with each other, share ideas and show

their creativity and expertise. In the recent past, competitions were more prevalent and took place in a wide variety of settings, but now they are mostly limited to large-scale competitions put on by the Cultural Council of Chiang Mai or the Ministry of Culture. There are typically three age levels: students (in primary school), youth (any contestants under 18), and competitions for adults. There are often multiple rounds, and the winners of prestigious regional competitions get prizes from Princess Sirindhorn or other royals.²³

Tourism has become a big industry in Chiang Mai and the region, and one reason foreign and Thai tourists flock to the North is to experience Lanna culture. Performances and recordings geared toward the tourist market are therefore, big moneymakers for many Chiang Mai musicians. They understandably tailor performances to please their patrons, and end up changing the musical traditions they transmit. The classic example of this is *khantok*. After Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda's aforementioned development of the *khantok* dinner show in 1953, his younger sister opened the Old Chiang Mai Cultural Center in 1971 to present these shows to tourists.²⁴ The time allotted to each performance is strictly managed, so musicians and dancers have had to find ways to shorten each presentation.²⁵ Some establishments also mix repertoire, removing it even further from its "proper" context; for example, audiences might witness a scene from central Thai *Khon* and a Tai Yai dance formerly reserved for *ok phansa* interspersed with dances from *Chao Dararasmi's* palace.

Despite these criticisms, it has been an immense force in supporting traditional music and musicians in Chiang Mai. *khantok* has also been a kind of a stepping-stone as students from CMCDA and elsewhere seek to advance their musical skills and careers. However, CMU's Thitinadda Maneewan wrote of one *khantok* performer whose skills "neither regressed nor progressed" over the term of employment there, and the performer's enthusiasm for playing was sapped by the constant repetition.²⁶

Though *khantok* dinners are also popular among northern Thais and can be held at homes and schools, a more widespread effect of tourism on traditional Lanna music

²³ Kiatisak Phosiri, Personal interview, 3 January 2010.

²⁴ Andrew C. Shahriari, "Lanna Music and Dance: Image and Identity in Northern Thailand," diss. Kent State U, 2001: 85.

²⁵ Thitinadda Maneewan, *Performing Arts ... Book 2*: 113.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

transmission for the average Chiang Mai citizen is from large performances for festivals and other occasions. Though most attendees are probably from Chiang Mai and the surrounding area, the city welcomes a huge number of tourists to these celebrations each year. Many festival performances in parades or on stages around the city are meant to entertain the latter group. This is one of the clearest examples of what some scholars point to as one of the main differences between traditional performance contexts and modern ones. Long ago, Lanna music and dance were much more participatory. Performers and audiences were not so clearly split into a creator-spectator dichotomy, though now this is customary.²⁷

Many musicians and academics point to the Sunday Walking Street as the most authentic and spontaneous context for traditional Lanna folk music in modern-day Chiang Mai. Every Sunday evening, hundreds of area vendors line the road in the middle of Chiang Mai. They are joined by enterprising traditional Lanna music ensembles selling CD's and instruments, or simply performing for donations.

Technology and Transmission

Recording on wax cylinder first came to Siam between 1894 and 1897. At first, it was only a hobby of wealthy Siamese, but some ventured out of Bangkok and recorded folk songs in the surrounding area.²⁸ Northern musicians later made recordings for Chiang Mai's first radio station, *Withayu Pracham Thin 2* (WPT2; Thai “*wo po to song*”) which officially opened in 1956. Today, musicians no longer need WPT2's studio as technological advances have made recording equipment common, but they distribute recordings to the station, and the broadcasting schedule still includes regional music.²⁹

Jaran Manopetch first released a tape that sold well in Marnit Atchawong's (his eventual manager) shop. Initially, it provoked the ire of some staunch traditionalists, but

²⁷ Thitinadda Maneewan, Personal communication, 27 Oct. 2009.

²⁸ Phunphit Amatyakun [นายแพทย์พูนพิศ อมาตยกุล], “The Initial Era of Folk Music Records, Part 2 [แผ่นเสียงเพลงพื้นบ้านสมัยแรกเริ่ม ตอนที่ 2],” *Songs of Siam* [ลำนำแห่งสยาม], 11 Feb. 2010 <http://www.oocities.com/tonchababshop/new_page_10.htm>.

²⁹ Wanlop Manvongprom. Personal interview, 8 Dec. 2010.

Jaran gained support as the folk song *kham mueang* greatly increased in popularity.³⁰ His early albums featured newly composed songs alongside songs that blend traditional Lanna folk music with modern musical tastes. Jaran's fame and popularity spread as he released approximately 20 albums³¹ and acted in many movies, television shows and stage plays. In early September 2001, Jaran died of a heart attack at his home in Lamphun. He was only 50 years old, but over his 24-year career as an entertainer, he not only pioneered a genre but also helped firmly establish it as the next step in the evolution of Lanna's popular folk music.

Besides making his compositions widely available through recordings, Jaran directly affected transmission by opening his studio free of charge to area students in need of recording technology. Jaran's recordings have also inspired other musicians, like Pannarawee Pojanasun, a 27 year-old singer with several years of formal musical training and Mai Mueang, a duo who composes, performs, and records a *kham mueang folk song* of their own. Patinya Tangtrakul also composes and records a *kham mueang folk song*. He has worked in radio and with the Thai recording giant GMM Grammy, but is currently an independent songwriter and musician in Chiang Mai.

As described earlier, recordings of traditional Lanna music have been more frequent since the time of *Ueang Lanna* (of the CMU Lanna Folk Club) and Nakatan. In the 1980's and 1990's, the Chiang Mai record store Tippanetr Enterprise helped enable emerging traditional musicians create and market recordings. Another important step came in the late 1990's, not long after Bringkop Wora-Urai returned to Chiang Mai after studying abroad. Bringkop Wora-Urai met Panutat Apichanatong by chance, and they agreed to make a CD.

The resulting CD was recorded in a single, uninterrupted 48-hour session. Panutat played each instrument on a separate track, and Bringkop layered them together to create an ensemble sound. The finished CD was released in 2000 under the title "Traditional Music of Lanna: Khantoke." In 2001, this was followed with another release, titled "Traditional Music of Lanna: Instrumental Music." Whereas previous

³⁰ Si Re 49.

³¹ Sources disagree on the number of Jaran's albums because some were released only locally or in a limited capacity.

recordings of traditional Lanna music were mostly intended for a specialized, local audience, these two recordings focused on educating people in Bangkok and foreign countries about the music of northern Thailand. Album notes were in English, and the musical selections were chosen to help people understand the nature of Lanna music.

Panutat has gone on to play on many other recordings, and he has even gained a notable following as a *Luk Thung* recording artist. He has made a number of CD's with producers outside Thailand as well. Bringkop has produced more albums for others, and has even released recordings of his own. In addition, he has given lots of advice to other musicians who want to make CD's. While the technology of the day has made it relatively simple for any musician to record, they are sometimes unfamiliar with the process of creating and releasing a recording, so they ask Bringkop's advice on production and distribution.

One musician Bringkop has worked with is Somboon Kawichai, the founder of Lai Muang. Bringkop penned the liner notes for the ensemble's most recent release (2008), "Spirit of Lanna," which is another CD of traditional Lanna music aimed primarily at listeners outside Thailand. The album is part of a regional music project by AMI Records in Bangkok, and they recruited the services of Thomas Van Nes; a Dutch recording engineer who has lived just outside of Chiang Mai for many years. Van Nes decided to try what he terms a "bluegrass" or "jazz" approach – letting individual instruments take the lead for different sections of each song. Somboon advised on aspects of the music, such as when the music reached a point of repetition fitting for a change in timbre or texture, and Van Nes would choose to highlight one or two instruments while softening the other instruments.

Today there are university and community radio stations in Chiang Mai that broadcast Lanna folk music – from traditional instrumental pieces such as *Salo So Sueng* to more recent adapted forms like the *kham mueang* folk style. The website of stations CM77 has a searchable database of primarily *kham mueang* genres (*kham mueang - folk style*, *luk thung kham mueang*, *kham mueang-hip hop*, etc.). The Northern Thai Information Service of Chiang Mai University maintains a website with detailed background information on folk music types in northern Thailand, as well as an archive of over 500 tracks recorded by artist from Chiang Mai and elsewhere in Lanna.

Another trend has been for teachers to incorporate recordings and other technology into their instruction, though some teachers prefer not to teach this way. A frequent complaint against recordings of folk music – not only from Thailand – is that they remove the music from its context. However, as CMU professor and musician Thitipol Kanteewong have described, traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai is in a process of “re-contextualization” that is, practitioners are determining how to once again make it relevant to Chiang Mai’s modern urban society.³² Recordings and related technological applications are a part of this search for a new context.

Conclusion

Understanding how traditional Lanna music has been passed on is the key to recognizing its ebb and flow in Lanna society. From its generally overlooked position in the middle decades of the 20th century, traditional Lanna music again became widespread in Chiang Mai through a confluence of events, circumstances, and individual efforts. The many avenues for transmission have helped traditional folk music culture embark on a process of “re-contextualization” in Chiang Mai. Instruction through schools, institutions of higher education and informal education are passing on knowledge of traditional Lanna music to new generations. Some knowledge has been lost, and some customary practices discarded, but other expertise is being gained. Teachers and pupils of traditional Lanna music pursue different strategies in passing on their music culture, but together they result in the transmission of what is proving to be a more fluid, amorphous and diverse rendition of traditional Lanna culture. Present-day Lanna musicians are figuring out how to harness the sizeable possibilities opened by technological developments in service of their own creativity and their shared musical heritage. They are also determining how to incorporate traditional Lanna culture into modern urban society, by doing things like taking advantage of the *Withayakon* system and establishing unique ventures like the Lanna Wisdom School. Through these efforts, younger generations of

³² Thitipol Kanteewong, “The Re-Contextualization of Lanna Traditional Music in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand,” *Urban Culture as Social Interface*, presentation (Academic Forum at Chulalongkorn University, 16 Feb. 2009).

Lanna musicians are learning traditional music, and continuing the cycle of conservation and creation for future learners and listeners.

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of Arts and Culture and was widely attended by the general public. Performers mostly consisted of youths and young adults, with the audience made up of all ages.

Ways and Spaces for Transmitting Lanna Music in Modern-Day Chiang Mai

Formal Education and Transmission

A lot of traditional Lanna music transmission in Chiang Mai nowadays falls within the scope of formal education. Though it is often combined with more traditional informal study outside school, most children will have significant encounters with traditional Lanna music in the classroom. This instruction often focuses on acquainting the young learner with the basics of Lanna music – the instruments, the melodies and

probably some basic techniques for playing. Many schools also have a traditional Lanna music club, where students who are more interested can hone their talents further.

At Wattanothaipayap School, students learn in a classroom that incorporates computer, audio and video technology. The music club there performs locally, nationally and internationally. Thepbodint School is well known for its traditional Lanna music club, which won a prize from Princess Sirindhorn in 2004. Thepbodint has also had a connection with CMCDA – Witep Kantima, a recently deceased expert in traditional Lanna music at CMCDA, regularly made trips to Thepbodint to help advise. There is also an active student-run traditional Lanna music club at Yupparaj Wittayalai School.

The Christian private schools Dara Academy and Prince Royal’s College also have a strong reputation for teaching Lanna music. Phiphatphong Maisiri, a professor at Payap University, often helps teach the club at Dara Academy. The Lanna music program at Prince Royal’s College was especially strong several years ago, but has nearly discontinued because of the original teacher’s advancing age. The school has recently hired a graduate of Chiang Mai Rajabhat University to rebuild the program.

The Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts has had a larger part than any other secondary school in transmitting traditional Lanna music. Central Thai music has been the focus since its opening in 1971, but the CMCDA has been a repository of regional performance traditions as well. The school is regarded as a purveyor of the “high” traditions of *Chao Dararasmī* because many of her former students went on to teach there.³³ Students of CMCDA are often active in the community, whether dancing or playing in *khantok* shows or collaborating with other area youth in performing traditional Lanna music. Traditional Lanna music is not offered as a “major” (*wicha ek*), but music students still spend two hours per week learning local music, and there are opportunities for further study in clubs.

When questioned about conserving traditional forms versus teaching adaptations in Lanna music, Rakkiat Panyayot, a teacher of traditional Lanna music at CMCDA, explained that the school regards conservation as the foundation, or basis, for creativity.

³³ Thitinadda Maneewan [ธิตินัดดา มณีวรรณ], *Folk Performing Arts of the Tai Yuan Ethnic Group, Book 2* [ศิลปะการแสดงพื้นบ้านของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ไทยวน เล่ม ๒] (Chiang Mai: Social Research Institute, CMU, 2551 [2008]): 10.

Rakkiat believes in fostering students' natural creativity. For example, a melody will be taught according to tradition, but if students "put themselves into the music" by changing some notes, rhythms or ornamentations, Rakkiat approves what he considers a natural musical development. On the other hand, if traditional dancers try to wear trendy costumes that don't actually reflect Lanna customs, they would be told to change. This kind of carefully regulated change is a hallmark of musical adaptation in CMCD, and similar approaches are shared by several other musicians and teachers in Chiang Mai.

There are also a few higher education options for the study of traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai. Chiang Mai Rajabhat University is regarded highly for its instruction in Lanna and central Thai music. Students cannot major in Lanna music – they must choose Thai music – but the university offers classes on the subject. Payap University is known best for Western music, but it also offers a Thai music program. All students are required to study at least some Thai music, and they can also choose to join a traditional Lanna ensemble. Phiphatphong Masiri teaches both Thai and Lanna music, and says that each semester, around five to seven students choose to study traditional Lanna music. Adaptations to traditional music are somewhat more prominent due to the music department's strong Western music focus. Also, like the affiliated schools Prince Royal's College and Dara Academy, Payap is a Christian university. So certain ceremonies – such as the *wai khru* – have been adjusted to Christian beliefs.³⁴

The most significant musical activity at CMU is the aforementioned Lanna Folk Club. Nowadays, members don't go out to record information on northern traditions very often, though they sometimes invite experts to come teach. Most of the teaching is from the older members (*run phi*) to the younger ones (*run nong*). Their performances include both university and outside activities, occasionally in neighboring countries.

CMU's Lanna Folk Club is and has been an important source of adaptations in traditional Lanna music and dance. The club is responsible for the creation of dances and music such as *Fon Hariphunchai*, which has entered the standard repertoire, and is widely performed in Chiang Mai and throughout the region.

As mentioned earlier, members of the Lanna Folk Arts Club at RMUTL have also supported the traditional music culture of Chiang Mai. Though this club's focus is more

³⁴ Phiphatphong Masiri, Personal interview, 16 Nov. 2009.

specifically on art, dance and music, many activities are similar to the CMU's Lanna Folk Club – performances at university functions, temple fairs and ceremonies, and other outside engagements such as area festivals.

Informal Education and Transmission of Traditional Lanna Music

Lai Muang is a prominent ensemble established in 1996 when Somboon Kawichai left Nakatan (the ensemble with Panutat Apichanatong and Udomli Trakul). Lai Muang's first performance was for the inaugural *Suepsan Lanna* festival held in 1997. The group gained renown, and in 2001 they even traveled to Canada for a performance in Vancouver. Today they give fewer performances, but are still highly regarded. Their repertoire consists of traditional melodies, original compositions and even improvisation. Lai Muang was the first group to incorporate *phin pia* into an ensemble. This traditionally solo instrument produces a soft, subtly undulating sound, but with the aid of amplification, it can be heard alongside other instruments like *salo* and *sueng*.³⁵ Lai Muang has also included instruments from other ethnic groups in the North, like the *sae mu*, a Lahu lute. Occasionally they have even invited vocalists to perform with them, such as Suntaree Vechanont, the former duet partner of Jaran Manopetch.

The Rak Lanna group, led by Prasong Saeng-ngam, has shared the stage with Lai Muang. Prasong started the group in 1999 as a university student, and – like the Lanna Folk Club at CMU – the group has sought a holistic understanding of traditional Lanna culture. Besides playing music, Rak Lanna goes on outings to learn about the area's natural resources, takes part in traditional ceremonies such as the *dam hua* during Songkran, and even develops their own traditions. Since 2000, Rak Lanna has met at *Hong Hian Suepsan Phumipanaya Lanna* (English name: Lanna Wisdom School), where Prasong sometimes teaches music.

The Lanna Wisdom School grew out of the *Suepsan Lanna* festival organized by Chatchawan Thongdeelert. Though the festival was a success, organizers wanted to go further. In June of 2000, *Hong Hian Suepsan Phumipanya Lanna* opened to teach Lanna

³⁵ Thitinadda Chinachan [ชิตินัดดา จินาจันทร์], *The Role of Lanna Youth in Lanna Performing Art's Maintenance: a Case Study of Lai-Muang Group* [บทบาทของกลุ่มเยาวชนชนล้านนาในการสืบสานศิลปะการแสดงพื้นบ้านล้านนา: กรณีศึกษากลุ่มลายเมือง] (Chiang Mai: Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai U, 2543 [2000]): 63.

arts and traditional local wisdom to a total of about 80 students. Each subject is further divided into basic instruction and advanced classes. While the advanced classes are mostly arranged between the students and teachers, the more structured basic classes are taught on Saturday and Sundays over an eight-week period.

The school has identified two main challenges facing their continued success. The first is that printed materials are scarce because transmission of these subjects has traditionally been oral. The school is working to develop texts, but in the meantime the shortage is most problematic with younger students, who expect books and handouts. School officials are also concerned that the knowledge students gain from their time at the Lanna Wisdom School is not deep or lasting enough because of limited class time and conflicting social pressure on the students.³⁶

Two initiatives that teach only traditional Lanna music are at temples. At Wat Suan Dok, the main instructor is Panutat Apichanatong. He started this weekend instruction program at Wat Loi Kroh in 1999, and in 2005 he started a second program at Wat Suan Dok. Panutat's goal is to help the group of learners cooperate and have fun together – not shape them into professional musicians, so he encourages pupils to relax and enjoy what they're doing. When Panutat started teaching at Wat Loi Kroh, about 30 pupils showed up. By the second year, the number reached about 200. Now the number in the program at Wat Suan Dok is back around 30, but instruction at both temples has always been free of charge and open – students can attend classes whenever they choose. Another temple offering free instruction in traditional Lanna music is Wat Lam Chang, inside the walled portion of the city. The temple owns the instruments, and allows anyone to come practice. Boonying Kanthawong often teaches here on weekends, and he sometimes takes musicians to perform in other temples or engagements in Chiang Mai.

A group that grew out of temple instruction is Phet Lanna; the first members of this group were students of Panutat at Wat Loi Kroh. One of them – a nine-year-old boy (Chinachot Phumwiset, now 19) – asked his mother to help his friends and him start an ensemble. In 2000, they began rehearsing at Wat Lok Moli, just across from the north wall of the city, and closely affiliated with Wat Phra That Doi Suthep. They built their musical prowess and soon began playing for free (sometimes they were offered a free

³⁶ Lanna Wisdom School, Untitled document, N.D., Obtained 21 Jan. 2009.

meal) on a variety of occasions. They now accept mostly paying jobs as they no longer have regular rehearsals and only get together to prepare for an upcoming performance. If some are unable to make it, or the performance is especially large, they enlist the help of students from CMCD.

The last main type of informal transmission of traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai is the most traditional – instruction at a teacher’s home. However, even this is quite different from the past, when pupils would live with the teacher and help around the house in exchange for the knowledge and skills learned. Nowadays, a common setup is that a group of neighborhood youths gathers at the home of a local expert. The group often has some kind of semi-official recognition, and may even receive modest financial or material support from government or private organizations to offset costs. The focus and style of the teaching is almost entirely determined by the expert musician. Sometimes this expert is a highly experienced local musician, like National Artist Manop Yarana, while other times such projects are led by younger musicians like Suthas Sinthopthong, a native of Mae Hong Son with a Tai Yai ethnic background. Suthas enjoys teaching both Thai Yai traditional Lanna music.

A unique meeting point between formal and informal music education in northern Thailand is the *withayakon* system, which helps foster cohesion and variety in teaching about traditional Lanna music. *Withayakon* means expert or special lecturer on a given topic; in this case, Lanna music. Because official government curricula support it, schools in Chiang Mai are often able to often invite these experts from around the community to come teach on different topics. *Withayakon* can be from any background – from experienced musicians in the Chiang Mai area to teachers at other educational institutions – as long as they have expertise to share.

Other Spaces for Musical Transmission

A major outlet for traditional Lanna music transmission is funerals and other temple ceremonies. These events are a common setting in which Chiang Mai residents encounter traditional Lanna music, through live performance or through recordings. It is also a significant source of performance opportunities for traditional Lanna musicians.

Another popular venue for traditional Lanna musicians in modern society has been competitions. As opposed to temples, music competitions are not a traditional

venue for Lanna music, but they have motivated youth to perform Lanna folk music. Competitions also give musicians a chance to mix with each other, share ideas and show their creativity and expertise. In the recent past, competitions were more prevalent and took place in a wide variety of settings, but now they are mostly limited to large-scale competitions put on by the Cultural Council of Chiang Mai or the Ministry of Culture. There are typically three age levels: students (in primary school), youth (any contestants under 18), and competitions for adults. There are often multiple rounds, and the winners of prestigious regional competitions get prizes from Princess Sirindhorn or other royals.³⁷

Tourism has become a big industry in Chiang Mai and the region, and one reason foreign and Thai tourists flock to the North is to experience Lanna culture. Performances and recordings geared toward the tourist market are therefore big moneymakers for many Chiang Mai musicians. They understandably tailor performances to please their patrons, and end up changing the musical traditions they transmit. The classic example of this is *khantok*. After Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda's aforementioned development of the *khantok* dinner show in 1953, his younger sister opened the Old Chiang Mai Cultural Center in 1971 to present these shows to tourists.³⁸ The time allotted to each performance is strictly managed, so musicians and dancers have had to find ways to shorten each presentation.³⁹ Some establishments also mix repertoire, removing it even further from its "proper" context; for example, audiences might witness a scene from central Thai *khon* and a Tai Yai dance formerly reserved for *ok phansa* interspersed with dances from *Chao Dararasmi's* palace.

Despite these criticisms, it has been an immense force in supporting traditional music and musicians in Chiang Mai. *Khantok* has also been a kind of a stepping-stone as students from CMCDA and elsewhere seek to advance their musical skills and careers. However, CMU's Thitinadda Maneewan wrote of one *khantok* performer whose skills "neither regressed nor progressed" over the term of employment there, and the performer's enthusiasm for playing was sapped by the constant repetition.⁴⁰

³⁷ Kiatisak Phosiri, Personal interview, 3 January 2010.

³⁸ Andrew C. Shahriari, "Lanna Music and Dance: Image and Identity in Northern Thailand," diss. Kent State U, 2001: 85.

³⁹ Thitinadda Maneewan, *Performing Arts ... Book 2*: 113.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 114.

Though *khantok* dinners are also popular among northern Thais and can be held at homes and schools, a more widespread effect of tourism on traditional Lanna music transmission for the average Chiang Mai citizen is from large performances for festivals and other occasions. Though most attendees are probably from Chiang Mai and the surrounding area, the city welcomes a huge number of tourists to these celebrations each year. Many festival performances in parades or on stages around the city are meant to entertain the latter group. This is one of the clearest examples of what some scholars point to as one of the main differences between traditional performance contexts and modern ones. Long ago, Lanna music and dance was much more participatory. Performers and audiences were not so clearly split into a creator-spectator dichotomy, though now this is customary.⁴¹

Many musicians and academics point to the Sunday Walking Street as the most authentic and spontaneous context for traditional Lanna folk music in modern-day Chiang Mai. Every Sunday evening, hundreds of area vendors line the road in the middle of Chiang Mai. They are joined by enterprising traditional Lanna music ensembles selling CD's and instruments, or simply performing for donations.

Technology and Transmission

Recording on wax cylinder first came to Siam between 1894 and 1897. At first it was only a hobby of wealthy Siamese, but some ventured out of Bangkok and recorded folk songs in the surrounding area.⁴² Northern musicians later made recordings for Chiang Mai's first radio station, *Withayu Pracham Thin 2* (WPT2; Thai “*wo po to song*”) which officially opened in 1956. Today, musicians no longer need WPT2's studio as technological advances have made recording equipment common, but they distribute recordings to the station, and the broadcasting schedule still includes regional music.⁴³

Jaran Manopetch first released a tape that sold well in Marnit Atchawong's (his eventual manager) shop. Initially, it provoked the ire of some staunch traditionalists, but

⁴¹ Thitinadda Maneewan, Personal communication, 27 Oct. 2009.

⁴² Phunphit Amatyakun [นายแพทย์พูนพิศ อมาตยกุล], “The Initial Era of Folk Music Records, Part 2 [แผ่นเสียงเพลงพื้นบ้านสมัยแรกเริ่ม ตอนที่ 2],” *Songs of Siam* [ตำนานแห่งสยาม], 11 Feb. 2010 <http://www.oocities.com/tonchababshop/new_page_10.htm>.

⁴³ Wanlop Manvongprom. Personal interview, 8 Dec. 2010.

Jaran gained support as the *kham mueang* folk style greatly increased in popularity.⁴⁴ His early albums featured newly composed songs alongside songs that blend traditional Lanna folk music with modern musical tastes. Jaran's fame and popularity spread as he released approximately 20 albums⁴⁵ and acted in many movies, television shows and stage plays. In early September 2001, Jaran died of a heart attack at his home in Lamphun. He was only 50 years old, but over his 24-year career as an entertainer, he not only pioneered a genre but also helped firmly establish it as the next step in the evolution of Lanna's popular folk music.

Besides making his compositions widely available through recordings, Jaran directly affected transmission by opening his studio free of charge to area students in need of recording technology. Jaran's recordings have also inspired other musicians, like Pannarawee Pojanasun, a 27 year-old singer with several years of formal musical training and Mai Mueang, a duo who composed, performed and recorded *kham mueang* styled folk songs of their own. Patinya Tangtrakul also composes and records in this folk style. He has worked in radio and with the Thai recording giant GMM Grammy, but is currently an independent songwriter and musician in Chiang Mai.

As described earlier, recordings of traditional Lanna music have been much more frequent since the time of *Ueang Lanna* (of the CMU Lanna Folk Club) and Nakatan. In the 1980's and 1990's, the Chiang Mai record store Tippanetr Enterprise helped enable emerging traditional musicians create and market recordings. Another important step came in the late 1990's, not long after Bringkop Wora-Urai returned to Chiang Mai after studying abroad. Bringkop Wora-Urai met Panutat Apichanatong by chance, and they agreed to make a CD.

The resulting CD was recorded in a single, uninterrupted 48-hour session. Panutat played each instrument on a separate track, and Bringkop layered them together to create an ensemble sound. The finished CD was released in 2000 under the title "Traditional Music of Lanna: Khantoke." In 2001, this was followed with another release, titled "Traditional Music of Lanna: Instrumental Music." Whereas previous

⁴⁴ Si Re 49.

⁴⁵ Sources disagree on the number of Jaran's albums because some were released only locally or in a limited capacity.

recordings of traditional Lanna music were mostly intended for a specialized, local audience, these two recordings focused on educating people in Bangkok and foreign countries about the music of northern Thailand. Album notes were in English, and the musical selections were chosen to help people understand the nature of Lanna music.

Panutat has gone on to play on many other recordings, and he has even gained a notable following as a *luk thung* recording artist. He has made a number of CD's with producers outside Thailand as well. Bringkop has produced more albums for others, and has even released recordings of his own. In addition, he has given lots of advice to other musicians who want to make CD's. While the technology of the day has made it relatively simple for any musician to record, they are sometimes unfamiliar with the process of creating and releasing a recording, so they ask Bringkop's advice on production and distribution.

One musician Bringkop has worked with is Somboon Kawichai, the founder of Lai Muang. Bringkop penned the liner notes for the ensemble's most recent release (2008), "Spirit of Lanna," which is another CD of traditional Lanna music aimed primarily at listeners outside of Thailand. The album is part of a regional music project by AMI Records in Bangkok and they recruited the services of Thomas van Nes, a Dutch recording engineer who has lived just outside of Chiang Mai for many years. Van Nes decided to try what he terms a "bluegrass" or "jazz" approach – letting individual instruments take the lead for different sections of each song. Somboon advised on aspects of the music, such as when the music reached a point of repetition fitting for a change in timbre or texture, and van Nes would choose to highlight one or two instruments while softening the other instruments.

Today there are university and community radio stations in Chiang Mai that broadcast Lanna folk music – from traditional instrumental pieces such as *salo so sueng* to more recent adapted forms like the *kham mueang folk style*. The website of stations CM77 has a searchable database of primarily *kham mueang* genres (*kham mueang – folk style, luk thung kham mueang, kham mueang - hip hop*, etc.). The Northern Thai Information Service of Chiang Mai University maintains a website with detailed background information on folk music types in northern Thailand, as well as an archive of over 500 tracks recorded by artist from Chiang Mai and elsewhere in Lanna.

Another trend has been for teachers to incorporate recordings and other technology into their instruction, though some teachers prefer not to teach this way. A frequent complaint against recordings of folk music – not only from Thailand – is that they remove the music from its context. However, as CMU professor and musician Thitipol Kanteewong has described, traditional Lanna music in Chiang Mai is in a process of “re-contextualization,” that is, practitioners are determining how to once again make it relevant to Chiang Mai’s modern urban society.⁴⁶ Recordings and related technological applications are a part of this search for a new context.

Conclusion

Understanding how traditional Lanna music has been passed on is key to recognizing its ebb and flow in Lanna society. From its generally overlooked position in the middle decades of the 20th century, traditional Lanna music again became widespread in Chiang Mai through a confluence of events, circumstances and individual efforts. The many avenues for transmission have helped traditional folk music culture embark on a process of “re-contextualization” in Chiang Mai. Instruction through schools, institutions of higher education and informal education is passing on knowledge of traditional Lanna music to new generations. Some knowledge has been lost and some customary practices discarded, but other expertise is being gained. Teachers and pupils of traditional Lanna music pursue different strategies in passing on their music culture, but together they result in the transmission of what is proving to be a more fluid, amorphous and diverse rendition of traditional Lanna culture. Present-day Lanna musicians are figuring out how to harness the sizeable possibilities opened by technological developments in service of their own creativity and their shared musical heritage. They are also determining how to incorporate traditional Lanna culture into modern urban society, by doing things like taking advantage of the *withayakon* system and establishing unique ventures like the Lanna Wisdom School. Through these efforts, younger generations of Lanna musicians

⁴⁶ Thitipol Kanteewong, “The Re-Contextualization of Lanna Traditional Music in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand,” *Urban Culture as Social Interface*, presentation (Academic Forum at Chulalongkorn University, 16 Feb. 2009).

are learning traditional music, and continuing the cycle of conservation and creation for future learners and listeners.

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