

# The Change in Music Accompanying Nora Rong Khru.

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#### **ABSTRACT**

A traditional folk music performance known as "Nora Rong Khru" in the context of the southern region has been passed down from generation to generation, encompassing knowledge, beliefs, rituals, and cultural aspects. Although some forms of traditional music have declined and disappeared over time, Nora Rong Khru remains popular in the southern region due to changes in its music performance to adapt to the changing society. These changes can be classified into three categories: 1) changes in the structure and sound system,

2) changes in the components of the music, and 3) changes in the music ensemble.

**Keywords:** Musical changes; Musical composition; Music ensemble.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In ancient times, humans lived a simple life, closely tied to and dependent on nature. Humans had very little knowledge about nature, and therefore, in the early stages, they were heavily influenced by the power of nature. When natural events occurred, they learned about nature, its benefits, and its consequences. This made nature fearful, and the fear and wonder of it affected human emotions. Humans believed that these events were caused by supernatural phenomena beyond nature.

Traditional performance is considered as one of the cultures created to respond to the needs of people in society related to beliefs, traditions, cultures, ideas, and ways of life of people in the local area. It serves as a means of communication of various stories within the same group or communication between different groups. Sometimes the performance in each culture may have similar characteristics to adjust and modify to match their own culture the most. Sometimes it may be created uniquely to each locality by considering the environmental conditions used as a format for performing in Thailand. In each region, there are differences in the performance, melody, lyrics, and costumes used.

In the southern region, there are many types of traditional folk performance due to the passing down of knowledge, experience, and culture from previous generations. The popular forms of Traditional performance in the upper and middle southern regions include Nora, NungTalung (shadow play), Pleng Bok, Rong Gnang, and Kalor, which are unique to the region. Some of these have lost popularity over time. In the lower southern region, the traditional performances include Kruetoh, Mayong, Seelah, Banor, and Hoo-Loo musical folk drama. In the eastern southern region, the Traditional performances include Likae Pa, Mho Ngang, and PlengTanyong, among which Nora and NungTalung are the most popular. Nora is a belief tradition that involves the worship of ancestral spirits who are Nora. The spirit of the KruMor Nora is known as "KruMor Ta Yai Nora".

Nora Rong Khru has undergone changes over time in response to societal trends while preserving its cultural traditions and distinctive identity. Many cultural practices have been lost due to societal changes, but Nora Rong Khru has been able to maintain its original traditions and customs perfectly, including ancient rituals, music, beliefs, and ceremonies that have been passed down for a long time. Nora Rong Khru's cultural context has been preserved to conserve its traditions, customs, and musical heritage for future generations or

those interested in the Nora Rong Khru performance to appreciate its importance and preserve it for the future.

#### 2. The Change in Music Accompanying Nora Rong Khru.

The findings are divided into two parts: 1)The changes in music accompanying Nora 2) Nora music composition changes.

#### 3.1 The changes in music accompanying Nora.

The changes in music accompanying Nora Rong Khru are a normal part of development, which means that they undergo changes over time and in accordance with the popularity in each region. Nora Rong Khru performance music has undergone adjustments and changes in response to the changing social conditions of the present era. The nature of these changes is only in some details to make it suitable for various uses and to respond to different events. The fundamental structure of music accompanying Nora Rong Khru has remained intact, maintaining its important characteristics and identity in its original form. There are important factors that have led to changes in music accompanying Nora Rong Khru, such as technological advancement, the spread of Western culture, business development, and limitations in traditional folk music. Changes in music accompanying Nora Rong Khru related to the music itself can be divided into three aspects:

1) structural and sound system changes, 2) changes in music components, and 3) changes in music composition.

#### 3.1.1 The Structural changes and Sound system.

The Nora Rong Khru ensemble consists of a total of 6 musical instruments, including the Pi Nora, Nora Thapdrum, Tuk drum, Mong, Ching Nora, and Trae Nora. Changes have occurred within the ensemble, with some instruments being removed, some instruments being combined together, and some instruments being replaced by alternate instruments for performance.

3.1.1.1 Pi Norais a traditional musical instrument with a size of 38 centimeters and 6 holes. It is made of solid wood and crafted by skilled musical instrument makers. The flute has no pattern or decoration on its body, which distinguishes it from modern flutes of sizes 32, 41, and 45, depending on the performer. An additional hole is drilled on the back of the Pi Nora. The characteristics of the new Pi Noracan be divided into keys such as C key, G key, which allows for playing melodies with different sound ranges and higher pitches than normal.



**Figure 1:**Pi Nora Source: Apinan Raknim.

Pi Nora, sound system used in playing music for Nora Rong Khru performances consists of a seven-note scale with each note one full tone apart. This style of playing is called "tang" and each musician's individual style is called "samniang (accent)". The sound system used in playing the music is called "pentatonic scale" consisting of five notes together.



Figure 2:Pentatonic scale. Source: Apinan Raknim.

The pentatonic scale used in Nora Rong Khru's music can be divided into two types:

A. The pentatonic scale used to play the main melody for ritual ceremonies and traditional beliefs.

B. The pentatonic scale used to play other melodies for entertainment, improvisation, and variation in Nora Rong Khru's music.

Changing the pentatonic scale system means using it to play other melodies that are not for ritual ceremonies. Normally, the pentatonic scale is used only for playing music for ritual ceremonies and cannot be used to play other melodies because it is a high-level music that can only be used in certain contexts.

In addition to that, the Pi Nora has been developed in the style of Western music, with a scale of 7 notes that have half-tone intervals, including the notes E, F, B, and C. Each Pi Nora has different keys, such as C, F, and G keys, which can be used to play the main and other melodies of music accompanying Nora Rong Khru as well as other international musical instrument.



Figure 3: Western musical scale, source: ApinanRaknim.

3.1.1.2 Thap drums a traditional percussion instrument made of hardwood. Music instrument makers use chisels to create a shape of a cylinder. Nowadays, a lathe machine is used to produce the instrument, and other materials may be used as a substitute for hardwood. The size of the instrument varies from ancient times, with a diameter of 12 centimeters and a length of 35 centimeters. Today, the size has been reduced for convenience in playing and transportation.

In ancient times, animal skin was commonly used as the drumhead, as it produced a soft, resonant, and rich sound. The drumhead was also flexible, allowing the drummer to play with a softer touch. Nowadays, synthetic materials such as film x-rays are used instead of animal skin as they are easier to obtain and more durable. The drum is often decorated with various colors and patterns to make it more visually appealing.



Figure 4:Thap drumSource: Apinan Raknim.

The evolution of the sound characteristics of the Thap drum from the past until the present has been adapted to suit the usage in each period of time, considering the importance of practicality. The Thap drum is significant in demonstrating the uniqueness of the music in Nora Rong Khru. It can be divided into 5 levels as follows:

A. Tuning by using the feeling of listening to the sound of the Nora two-face drum.

B. Tuning the drumheads of the Thap drum to produce two distinct sounds.

The first sound is a sharp sound, "Chap."

The second sound is a deep sound, "Teng."

C. Tuning the drumheads of the Thap drum to produce international musical notes.

The first sound, "Chap." produces the sound of the note G.

The second sound, "Teng," produces the sound of the note E.



**Figure 5:**Characteristics of the pitch of the face drum, Source: Apinan Raknim.

D.Tuning the drumheads of Thap drum to produce a diverse range of international notes and harmonies that can be played with other Nora Rong Khru instruments and international instruments seamlessly.

E. Due to the difficulty in finding experienced drummers who can play the Nora two-face drum, in recent times, the keyboard has been used as a substitute instrument to play the drum.

3.1.1.3 Tuk drum is the original small-sized Tuk drum is made of hardwood and covered with either cow or buffalo hide on both sides, with a peg attached to the body of the drum. The diameter is 25 centimeters, and one side isdesigned to be placed on the floor with two legs attached to the body for performance, using two wooden sticks to play. The current Tuk drums come in various sizes and sounds to create diversity in performances. The Nora ensemble has added Tuk drums to enhance the colorfulness of the performance.



Figure 6:Tuk drum Source: Apinan Raknim.

Changes in sound system from the past to the present, the sound of the Tuk drumis unique and distinctive. These changes include:

A. Tuning the Tuk drumto produce a diverse range of international notes that can be tuned to the desired sound of the performer, such as 'Tuk' sound, C note, G note, E note. as follows:



**Figure 7:** Tuk drumnotes. Source: Apinan Raknim.

B. Tuning the Tuk drumto produce a diverse range of international notes that can be played together to create a wider range of sounds, such as C and G Perfect fifth, C and E minor third.



Figure 8: Tuk drumnote pairs. Source: Apinan Raknim.

C. The use of a keyboard instrument as a substitute for Tuk drumbecause it can be played along with traditional Nora or other Western instruments.

3.1.1.4 Mong, and ChingNora are cast from brass or bronze and consist of two discs. They have different sizes, with the first disc having a diameter of 15 centimeters and the second disc having a diameter of 13 centimeters. They are hanged within a rectangular cloth-covered frame, which is 20 centimeters wide, 45 centimeters long, and 22 centimeters deep. The sizes may vary in different regions.

The transformation involves combining these musical instruments together. The lower part of the Ching Nora is blocked and held in the corners of the gong frame. During the performance, they are played simultaneously with the ChingNora. The diameter of the Ching Nora is 5 centimeters, and they are played in pairs.



Figure 9: Mong and Ching Nora Source: Apinan Raknim.

Nora Rong Khru performance on the sound system of the Mong, consisting of two gongs, produces the sound for driving the Nora music. The music performance directions go in the same direction. In ancient times, selecting mong was based on listening and experience. It included:

- A. Choosing by feeling, listening, and experience in selecting mong.
- B. Choosing Nora mong to get the desired sound.

The first gong produces a high-pitched sound, "Hom-mong."
The second gong produces a low-pitched sound, "Mung."

C. Selecting mong that produce international note sounds.

The first gong produces a high-pitched sound "Hom-mong" with note sound (E).

The second gong produces a low-pitched sound "Mung" with note sound (G).



Figure 10:Mong note G-E Source: ApinanRaknim.

D. Tuning mong to be a pair of international note sounds for broader performance.

The note sounds include the pair of minors (E, G).

The pair of perfect (G, C).



**Figure 11:**Mong note E-G; G-C Source: Apinan Raknim.

 $3.1.1.5\ Trae\ Nora$  is the history of the origin of music accompanying Nora Rong Khru instrument comes from two instruments, which are the cymbal and Trae Nora. They are played together with reciting poems. The Trae Nora is a flat wooden percussion instrument made from solid wood, used to strike against each other to produce loud sounds. It comes in pairs, with a length of 1 x 10 inches or customized to the user's needs. Currently, the performance of Trae Norais not commonly seen. Some Nora ensembles have eliminated the use of the Trae Nora in their music performances and have replaced it with the use of Tuk druminstead.

Nowadays, more pairs of Trae Nora are added to the Nora Rong Khru ensemble to create a more compact and dense sound when playing music. However, some Nora Rong Khru ensembles have removed the Trae Nora from the music performance and replaced it with Tuk drum to reduce the size of the ensemble.

#### 3.2 Nora music composition changes.

The music structure of Nora Rong Khru's musical composition can be divided into two types: the main melody and other melodies. The other melodies have changed over time, with famous melodies being incorporated and performed as part of the performance. As for the main melody, during ancient times, it was performed in a single melody straightforwardly without any recorded international musical notation or techniques, so it is difficult to accurately name the techniques used in the performance.

The music performance for Nora Rong Khru has been enhanced by young musicians or musicians who have studied music theory. They have incorporated music theory into the Nora Rong Khru music performance, embellishing the melody to make it more rhythmic, sweet, and tender, so that it can express the emotions and feelings of the music, and musicians even better. The changes in the melody of Nora Rong Khru can be divided into four categories:

#### 3.2.1 Musical Techniques.

*3.2.1.1 Acciaccatura-* A technique that involves a quick grace note played before the main note. This technique is used in the main melody of the song to create a more lively and prominent rhythm. It is similar to signaling other instruments to start playing. This technique is used in the main melody of songs such as room 14, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27. The notes of the melody are shown below:



Figure 12:Acciaccatura Source: Apinan Raknim

3.2.1.2 *Trill* -This is a musical technique where the player quickly alternates between two adjacent notes. This adds complexity to the melody and creates a more nuanced and dynamic sound. It is used in the main melody of songs such as Room 1, 4, 7, and 13. The notes of the melody are shown below:



Figure 13: Trill Source: ApinanRaknim

3.2.1.3 *Slur* -In the Nora language, this technique is called "The blowing sound of a note quickly moving from one note to another." which means playing notes from one to the next very quickly using only one breath. The melody is divided into two types: ascending and descending. For example, playing a low note quickly followed by a high note or playing a high note quickly followed by a low note. This technique is used in songs such as Room 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86. The notes of the melody are shown in



Figure 14: Slur Source: Apinan Raknim

3.2.1.4 *Inverted Turn* -In the Nora language, this technique is called "The blowing sound of a note which is similar to speaking" which means playing as if speaking. It is a technique that involves using

spoken words inserted into the melody of the Nora music. This is an advanced technique that requires someone with expertise and experience in Nora music to be able to perform. It is used in songs such as Room 1-9.

จังหวะ และทำนองลงเครื่อง

The notes of the melody are shown below:

## J=60 คณะโนรา ชะสุ้ม อมรศิลป์ ท่านอง

Figure 15: Inverted Turn Source: ApinanRaknim

#### 3.2.1 The Rhythm Pattern.

The beat, or continuous pulse, progresses continuously and cannot be stopped. Its primary role is to determine the tempo and speed of performing a musical composition. In addition to this, it also has other functions such as guiding the vocal performance, maintaining percussion rhythm, driving poetic verses, and accompanying dance movements. It can be said that the beat is the fundamental rhythmic structure of Nora Rong Khru's music composition. Beat of the performance is based on international musical notations and consists of instruments such as Mong, Ching Nora, and Trae Nora.

3.2.1.1 Mong:it serves as the primary beat emphasizing the beat, derived from Ching Nora. The mong serves as the accentuating dynamic of sounds, making the melody of the song more distinct. The sound of the mong helps the reciter maintain the correct rhythm by focusing on the sound of the mong and using it as a guide when reciting the poetic verses. It can be altered according to the characteristics of the melody and the performer of the musical instrument, based on the melody of the Pi Nora composition shown in the music room 2-12. The following figure illustrates the performance of the mong.



Figure 16: Performance of MongSource: Apinan Raknim

3.2.1.2 Ching Nora: plays the role of the primary beat controller or the pulse in the tempo and speed within the Nora Rong Khru music ensemble. They help communicate within the ensemble between the performers and musicians about which part of the song they are performing. They aid in maintaining the correct direction during the performance, ensuring that the ensemble does not deviate. They can be altered

according to the characteristics of the melody and the performer of the musical instrument, based on the melody of the Pi Nora composition shown in the music room 2-12. The following figure illustrates the performance of the Ching Nora.



Figure 17:Performance of ChingSource: Apinan Raknim

*3.2.1.3 Trae Nora:* It emphasizes the primary rhythm and accentuates the dynamic in the melody to ensure that the performers and musicians do not deviate or stray from the prescribed framework during the performance. This can be observed in the music rooms 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19. The Trae Nora is composed of the following notes:

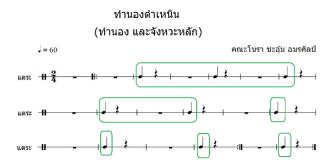


Figure 18: Performance of Trae Nora. Source: Apinan Raknim

#### 3.2.2Rhythmic Pattern Group.

The rhythmic patterns in music accompanying Nora Rong Khru are characterized by their distinctiveness, diversity, complexity, and improvisational nature. They emphasize the development of rhythms based on the main rhythm patterns in the melody. It can be said that rhythm is the heart of music accompanying Nora Rong Khru. The rhythm can vary depending on the characteristics of the performer. The melodic structure is based on the rhythm as the foundation. The musical instruments consist of the Tabla and the divided Tabla, which can be classified into three types:

3.2.2.1 The main rhythmic pattern group, which is the main structure used in the melody and is developed into other rhythms for diverse performances. This can be seen in the following music rooms: 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 15, 17. These rooms consist of the following sound notes:



**Figure 19:**Primary rhythmic pattern Source: ApinanRuknim

3.2.2.2 The secondary rhythmic pattern is played alternately with the main rhythmic pattern, or sometimes developed into other rhythmic patterns that fall under the structure of the main rhythmic pattern. The secondary rhythmic pattern helps to create variety and differences in the rhythm, making the performance of Nora Rong Khru's music more interesting. This can be seen in rooms 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, with the following notes:



Figure 20:Secondary rhythmic pattern, source: Apinan Raknim

3.2.2.3 Other rhythmic patterns differ from the main and secondary rhythmic patterns, and they may be developed from other rhythms that can be played together within the structure of the rhythmic pattern. However, these patterns may not appear as frequently in Nora Rong Khru's music. They can be observed in rooms 5 and 7, with the following notes:



Figure 21:Other rhythmic patterns, source: ApinanRaknim

#### 3.2.3Rhythmic Ornamentation.

The patterns of rhythmic ornamentation serve to add color to the rhythmic performance. They can vary depending on the era, the characteristics of the musicians, and the style of the melody,

showcasing their unique differences. Rhythmic ornamentation reflects the musicians' expression, musical experiences, and the performance context. It can be categorized into four different patterns:

*3.2.3.1 Roll Technique*: The roll technique involves using the black notes or other note variations to produce longer sustained sounds, creating excitement and interest in the rhythm and melody. In some regions, it may be referred to as "Tuk Drumming." This can be observed in music rooms 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, with the following notes:



Figure 22: Roll technique, source: Apinan Raknim

*3.2.3.2. Flam Technique:* The flam technique is characterized by striking the drum to create a heavy and dense sound, adding dimension to the musical performance. It is used to emphasize weight, enhance color, and provide accents in rhythm and accompanying melodies. It involves striking the bass note and the second-layer bass note. This technique can be seen in rooms 2, 11, 13, with the following notes:



Figure 23: Flam technique, source: Apinan Raknim

3.2.3.3 Dragging Technique: The dragging technique aims to add detail to the main note, emphasizing and adding color to the performance of rhythmic Norah music. It is often used by newer generation musicians who have studied music and incorporated these patterns, blending them with traditional music. Additionally, there is an increasing trend of blending traditional and international music, as musicians who play Norah music are typically newer generation musicians who have studied both international

and traditional music, replacing older generation musicians. Thus, there have been changes in the composition

of the music played in Nora Rong Khru.



Figure 24: Dragging Technique, source: Apinan Raknim

*3.2.3.4 Beating Technique:* The beating technique focuses on the downbeat, emphasizing the synchronized playing of all instruments together or alternating between instruments that play the rhythm. This technique serves as the primary rhythm, connecting with other musical instruments. It is characterized by black notes and can be observed in rooms 1-9, 14, 15, 16, and 17, with the following notes:



Figure 25: Beating Technique, source: ApinanRaknim.

#### 3.3Changes in terms of Nora Ensemble blending

The music ensemble of Nora Rong Khru has developed various forms of ensemble blending in order to maintain the essence of music accompanying Nora Rong Khru. It is important to enhance the aesthetics, create a vibrant atmosphere, utilize specialized instrumental performances, and enable diverse melody compositions. These can be categorized as follows:

#### 3.3.1 Blending traditional folk music ensembles:

- 3.3.1.1Adding the Sor-Ou(low-pitched two-stringed fiddle) and Pi Nora: The Sor-Ouproduces low tones, while the Pi Nora produces high-pitched tones. When combined in an ensemble, it results in a complete range of tonalities, including both high and low pitches. This enhances the dimensions of melody compositions.
- 3.3.1.2 Adding percussion instruments: Typically, the rhythmic aspect of music accompanying Nora Rong Khru already possesses prominence and complexity. By introducing percussion instruments,
- it further emphasizes the rhythmic dynamics, increasing the complexity and creating a more colourful and captivating rhythmic experience.
- 3.3.1.3 Blending contemporary music: Combining contemporary music elements with music accompanying Nora Rong Khru and traditional folk instruments from different regions. This blending creates a harmonious fusion between Norah music and traditional folk music, showcasing the distinctive qualities of music accompanying Nora Rong Khru while resonating with contemporary trends.
- 3.3.1.4 Blending Western music: The proliferation of Western music culture has made music styles more complex. Performances emphasize musical completeness, notation recording, and diverse song performances. Nora Rong Khru is adapted to accommodate these cultural changes and to keep up with the

times. The purpose is to create diversity for the audience of Nora Rong Khru performances. This can be divided into the following sections:

3.3.1.5 Blending Western music instruments: The keyboard, which has a significant influence on music transformations, can be used to perform both the melody and rhythm of Nora Rong Khru songs. Other traditional Nora instruments are still preserved as before.



Figure 26: Keyboard Source: Apinan Raknim

### 3.3.2 Blending Western music instruments and Nora instruments: Performance formats are divided into groups of listeners. There are two types of performance formats:

a Blending music accompanying Nora Rong Khru ensemble with some Western instruments for related songs such as those used in rituals and beliefs of Nora Rong Khru. For example, keyboards and percussion instruments may be used.

b. Blending music accompanying Nora Rong Khru ensemble with Western instruments for entertainment purposes. This includes all Western instruments such as electric guitars, bass guitars, keyboards, drum kits, percussion, and other musical instruments such as saxophones, played to Nora Rong Khru melody and other melodies or popular songs alternately for entertainment and fun.

**3.2.3. Blending a Western music ensemble as the main component**: This involves incorporating Nora Rong Khru instruments into a string band, adding some or more Nora instruments. The focus is on performing in different styles such as reggae, bossa nova, funk, and other music styles to create a vibrant atmosphere for the band.

**3.2.4. Blending a music ensemble for theatrical performances:** This type of ensemble is used for various aspects of the show, including music performances, singing, dancing, and various costume designs. It consists of a large ensemble with diverse groups of instruments such as strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion, keyboards,

and Nora instruments. The performances include different types of songs, such as city songs, folk songs, and contemporary songs, all presented on a complete stage with lighting, sound, and visuals. The main structure is derived from the foundation of music accompanying Nora Rong Khru, adapted to the modern era.

#### 4.CONCULSION

The structure of the ancient Nora musical instrument was originally designed with appropriate characteristics, simple structure, and materials used in the local context. This is different from the structure and style of the modern Nora musical instrument, which emphasizes versatility in usage, aesthetic design, and accessibility to the audience.

The sound system used to perform Nora music can be divided into four types: pentatonic scale and the sound system of international music, which is used as the main melody for playing Nora music.

- Pentatonic scale (for playing the main melody).

- Pentatonic scale (for playing other melodies).
- The sound system of international music (for playing the main melody).
- The sound system of international music (for playing other melodies).

Tuning of Nora instruments to match the pitch value and pairing with international music notes for harmonization during performance, creating a colorful and diverse melody in the music, and to match the sound system of international musical instruments for future use.

The musical instruments used in Norah music can be divided into two categories: the main melody instruments and other accompanying instruments. The composition of the melody instruments has undergone changes throughout different eras. The melodies with diverse techniques and theories of international music have been blended together. The changes in the melody composition can be categorized into four types including Acciaccatura, Trill, Slur, and Inverted Turn. Additionally, there are changes in the rhythmic aspect of Norah music, characterized by distinct variations, alternating rhythms, and dynamic beats. The rhythmic patterns are divided into three groups: rhythmic group, rhythmic pattern, and rhythmic ornamentation.

The changes represent various developments in different formats, transitioning from traditional formats to new ones. There is a blending of Nora Rong Khru music with traditional folk music from other regions to foster creative development and create different types of ensembles. Additionally, the most significant transformation is the increasing use of Western music, with a greater emphasis on Western music formats. This development includes performing songs in different styles and blending them with modern technologies, bringing significant changes to Nora music. These transformations have led to the creation, preservation, development, and continuation of Nora music.

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