

**The Effects of Globalization
on the Status of Music in Thai Society**

Primrose Maryprasith

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Abstract

Globalization tends to be accompanied by two contrary processes: the one a celebration of newly opened international communications, the other, resistance to what is seen as an invasion of foreign culture. This research examines such processes in terms of perceptions of the status of music in Bangkok. The focus is on three main musical categories each of which, if vocal, uses Thai language in its lyrics: Thai classical, Thai country popular and Thai popular music. These musical categories, and the changing relationships between them, are examined in terms of three interconnected areas of perceptions of musical value: the position of music in education, the status of musical careers and the role of music in affirming national identity.

Two sets of questionnaires were completed by 100 undergraduate students from 5 universities and 108 secondary-level school music teachers from 108 schools; and interviews were held with 10 respondents from 9 record companies.

Whilst the students valued Thai classical music and country popular music as national symbols, they identified themselves with Thai popular music, which has become the main local musical product as a result of the globalization of the music industry. Contrastingly, the teachers understood Thai popular music as a capitulation to foreign culture. They used Thai classical music as the most common extra-curricular activity, but they nonetheless incorporated Thai popular music most often in classrooms. Careers involving Thai classical music were perceived as offering fewer rewards compared to other types of music. Very recently the nationalist campaign following the 1997 economic crisis in Thailand has drawn attention to national cultures, with 'modernization' as the key word. This has led to an adapted form of Thai classical music which has been used in official ceremonies. Historically a low ranking career, but a hobby of the upper classes, music has been upgraded to a higher career status and as a hobby, it has become available to a larger proportion of the population. The educational value of music continues to be related to cultural conservation and to the status of music in general.

The findings suggest that despite the tension between modernization and conservation, globalization has improved the status of music in education, in career terms and as a symbol of national identity.

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Preface on Romanization

Because Thailand has its own writing system, all Thai terms used in this thesis have to be romanized. The romanization of Thai terms has been done in various ways by different authors. This is partly because there are several Thai vowels that do not exist in the English language and partly because some written sounds are not usually pronounced in certain words. Therefore, this glossary of Thai terms will be helpful for the reader to learn the Thai pronunciation. It has to be noted that some romanized letters are not pronounced in the usual English way, such as ‘ph’ which is pronounced as aspirated ‘p’, /p^h/, not as ‘f’. Apart from this, the romanization of vowels, /ə/ as ‘er’ and /ɔ/ as ‘or’ in particular, have to be pronounced with *British English* sounds where ‘r’ is used as part of the vowel rather than as a consonant. In addition, according to the preferred style of romanization of the sound /ɔ/ in some Thai words, this vowel has been romanized as both ‘o’ and ‘or’ depending on its previously frequent use by other authors and also to make it accessible to English language readers. For the same reason the length of sound, short or long, will not be indicated in its romanized form as it is trivial and will cause clumsiness. Lastly, borrowed words from the English language will be written using the original English spelling, such as ‘*classic*’ in ‘*phleng classic*’ (Western classical music).

The romanization of people’s names in this thesis may be different from the system given above, as each person has their own romanization of their name. Many people do not distinguish the sound of their names by using aspirated and unaspirated symbols.

The glossary that follows will be preceded by a display of the romanization system to be used in this thesis. The display of consonants is restricted to those consonants that may cause confusion in their pronunciation. Thai language is a tonal language, but its tones are not relevant to the focus of this thesis. Therefore, tone marks are only used in this glossary, not in the thesis text. The glossary of Thai terms will show the romanized form, Thai original word and phonetic symbols for each entry.

Glossary

Vowels

| <i>Romanization</i> | <i>Phonetic symbol</i> short/long | <i>Nearest British English Equivalent</i> (pronounce without 'r' sound) |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| a | /a/, /a:/ | father |
| e | /e/, /e:/ | hen |
| ae | /ɛ/, /ɛ:/ | fair |
| er | /ə/, /ə:/ | her |
| i | /i/, /i:/ | heat |
| ia | /ia/ | here |
| o | /o/, /o:/ | doe |
| o, or | /ɔ/, /ɔ:/ | song, corn |
| u | /u/, /u:/ | soon |
| ua | /ua/ | bourgeois |
| eu | /ɥ/, /ɥ:/ | - (high central unrounded vowels) |
| eua | /ɥa/ | - (combine /ɥ/ and /a/) |
| ai | /aj/ | tie |
| ao | /aw/ | out |

*All vowels except /u/, /o/, /ɔ/ and /aw/ are *unrounded*, pronounced with the lips flat in relaxed position.

Aspirated and Unaspirated consonants

| <i>Romanization</i> | <i>Phonetic symbol</i> | <i>Nearest English Equivalent</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| p | /p/ unaspirated | - |
| ph | /p ^h / aspirated | put |
| t | /t/ unaspirated | - |
| th | /t ^h / aspirated | time |
| k | /k/ unaspirated | - |
| kh | /k ^h / aspirated | kind |
| j | /c/ unaspirated | jump |
| ch | /c ^h / aspirated | chin |

Tones

| Middle | Low | Falling | High | Rising |
|-----------|-----|---------|------|--------|
| (no mark) | /˘/ | /ˆ/ | /ˊ/ | /ˋ/ |

Angkalung / อังกะลุง (aŋ-ka-luŋ): shaken bamboo idiophone, of Indonesian origin

Dontri / ดนตรี (don-tri:): music; mainly refers to instrumental music or instrumental part of songs

Fong Naam / ฟองน้ำ (fɔ:ŋ-na:m'): an outstanding ensemble of Thai neo-classical music

Hang-khreung / หางเครื่อง (ha:ŋ~k^hru:ŋ^): a group of dancers usually accompanying *luk-thung* shows on stage

Khim / จิม (k^him^): Thai hammered zither, of Chinese origin

Khon / โขน (k^ho:n^): Thai classical masked dance-drama

Krom Pracha Samphan / กรมประชาสัมพันธ์ (krom-pra`-c^ha:-sam^~p^han): Department of Public Relations in Thailand

Krom Silapakorn / กรมศิลปากร (krom-sin^~la'-pa:-kɔ:n): Department of Fine Arts in Thailand

Lakhorn / ละคร (la'-k^hɔ:n): drama

Lakhorn-rong / ละครร้อง (la'-k^hɔ:n-rɔ:ŋ'): Thai musical urban drama

Li-ke / ลีเก (li'-ke:): Thai musical rural drama in central part of Thailand, of Indian influence

Loka-phiwat / โลกภิวัตน์ (lo-ka:-p^hi'-wat') globalization

Luk-krung or **phleng luk-krung** / เพลงลูกกรุง (p^hle:ŋ-lu:k^~kruŋ): Thai capital popular songs, previously called *phleng phudi* during the 1950s, fashionable among the middle classes in Bangkok until the 1970s

Luk-thung or **phleng luk-thung** / เพลงลูกทุ่ง (p^hle:ŋ-lu:k^~t^huŋ^): Thai country popular songs, previously called *phleng talad*, favoured by the majority population of Thailand with relatively inferior status in Bangkok

Mathayom / มัธยมศึกษา (mat'-t^ha-yom): secondary level of schooling which includes lower secondary level, *Mathayom* 1 to *Mathayom* 3, and upper secondary level, *Mathayom* 4 to *Mathayom* 6

Mor-lam / หมอลำ (mɔːʔ-lam): Thai northeast or Lao songs sung in dialect

Pheua-chiwit or **phleng pheua-chiwit** / เพลงเพื่อชีวิต (p^hle:ŋ-p^hu:a^ˆ-c^hi:-wit'): songs-for-life or protest songs

Phleng / เพลง (p^hle:ŋ): songs or music

Phleng chiwit / เพลงชีวิต (p^hle:ŋ-c^hi:-wit'): life songs, developed in Bangkok in the group of *phleng talad* with texts about folk life or politics

Phleng classic / เพลงคลาสสิก (p^hle:ŋ-kla:s'-sik'): Western classical music

Phleng farang / เพลงฝรั่ง (p^hle:ŋ-fa'-raŋ'): an alternative colloquial term for Western (popular) music

Phleng sakon / เพลงสากล (p^hle:ŋ-saːʔ-kon): foreign music but generally refers to Western popular music

Phleng talad / เพลงตลาด (p^hle:ŋ-ta-la:d'): market songs, a genre of Thai popular songs in Bangkok during the 50s and given the name *phleng luk-thung* in 1964

Phleng phudi / เพลงผู้ดี (p^hle:ŋ-p^hu:ˆ-di:): bourgeois songs, a genre of Thai popular songs in Bangkok during the 50s and given the name *phleng luk-krung* in 1964

Phleng Thai-prayuk / เพลงไทยประยุกต์ (p^hle:ŋ-t^haj-p^hra`-yuk'): applied Thai music, an adaptation of Thai music, a transformation of Thai classical music played on Western instruments, a governmental modernization policy during the 1930s

Phleng wairun / เพลงวัยรุ่น (p^hle:ŋ-waj-runˆ): teen songs, nowadays the biggest genre of Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) developed since the 80s

Thai-derm or **phleng Thai-derm** / เพลงไทยเดิม (p^hle:ŋ-t^haj-də:m): Thai classical music, Thai national inherited musical culture played on traditional instruments

Thai-sakon or **phleng Thai-sakon** / เพลงไทยสากล (p^hle:ŋ-t^haj-sa:~kon): Thai popular music, Thai lyrics sung in Western popular musical styles

Piphat / ปี่พาทย์ (pi:-p^ha:t[^]): the standard Thai classical ensemble, consisting of melodic percussion instruments, hand cymbals and gong and 2 types of drums: *ta-phon* and *klong that*. The *pi* is the only wind instrument, which gives the ensemble its name.

Ranad / ระนาด (ra'-na:d[^]): Thai xylophone used in Thai traditional music

Ratanakosin / รัตนโกสินทร์ (rat'-ta-na'-ko:-sin[~]): Bangkok, the capital of Thailand since 1781

Sakon / สากล (sa:~kon): in favour or popular everywhere; generally refers to worldwide popularity

Sor-duang / ซอด้วง (so:-duan[^]): a type of Thai fiddle

Song-na / สองหน้า (so:ŋ[~]-na:[^]): a type of drum in *piphat* ensemble

Thao / เถา (t^haw[~]): 3-section composition (slow-moderate-fast) in Thai classical music

Trae / แตร (tre:): Western brass instruments adapted to play in Thai ensembles, also refers to Western brass instruments in general such as the trumpet

Trae-wong / แตรวง (tre:-wong): Thai rural style of brass band, using Western brass instruments.

Wai-khru / ไหว้ครู (waj[^]-k^hru:): the rite of paying homage to teachers

Withayalai Natasin / วิทยาลัยนาฏศิลป์ (wit'-t^ha-ya:-laj na:t[^]-ta-sin[~]): Dramatic Arts College, the first music and dance school in Bangkok founded by the Department of Fine Arts, later with branches in various parts of Thailand

Yothawathit / โยธาวาธิธิต (yo:-t^ha-wa:-t^hit[^]): Western military brass band adopted to play for official marching and nowadays has become widely popular as a school extra-curricular activity

CHAPTER 1

Research Area

1.1 The Research Problem and its Background

As we approach the millennium, it is clear that Thailand has made enormous advances in communications with the aid of the new global technologies, especially information technology. This has brought into the country many foreign ideas, as well as a new vocabulary, mostly derived from English. Prior to the recent development of information technology, a great deal of Western culture had come into Thailand in the post-World War II period and especially during the Vietnam War through the posting of troops and the North American mass media which they brought with them. On one hand, foreign culture, ideas and languages have in some degree been seen as an invasion and a threat by Thai educators and cultural conservationists. One response has been to create substitute Thai words such as the newly coined term '*loka-phiwat*', which replaces 'globalization'. On the other hand, the majority of Thai people welcome 'modernization': most things with foreign influence or taken from abroad are considered good, while most of traditional Thai culture is seen as out of date. Thus, for example, whilst the new Thai terms are used formally, the original foreign term is still used in informal contexts.

One obvious global phenomenon is the production, distribution and reception of standardized popular music. The word 'phleng' or 'dontri' (music) nowadays, as often used by the media, can roughly be generalized to imply 'popular music' in a mainstream sense, and seldom signifies other types of music. Global popular culture has threatened the particularisms of native culture. Thai classical music, then, falls into a category perceived as dated (Sasiwanich 1986:12). A decade ago, Sasiwanich (ibid.) pointed out that 'without the conservation of Thai classical music, it will soon remain only in funeral ceremonies', and indeed, the position of Thai classical music towards the end of the twentieth century is not far from this prediction. It is not heard in everyday life, but only on special occasions mostly in temples when traditional ceremonies are held. Alternatively, it is performed for foreign tourists with a commercial aim, but this distorts the overall musical culture because the music chosen for tourists is not representative and very few of the pieces include elaborate techniques. The decline of Thai classical music may be partly the result of the neglect by the public media, especially radio and television, which are inevitably devoted to commercial purposes for their survival.

Back in the music history of Thailand's past when foreign cultures were remote, music in the capital was predominantly supported by the royalty and noble households. Musicians under such patrons were regarded as having a privileged career, at least compared with musicians outside. However, generally speaking, music was not considered to be as honourable as other careers. There were several old phrases condemning performance careers as embarrassing because performers were regarded not as intellectuals but as mere entertainers. The status of the musician's career ranked low and the income was very uncertain (Morton, 1980; Myers-Moro, 1988).

In the second half of the twentieth century, music has become an entertainment industry where musicians are stars. Since the modern music industry was introduced in Thailand, this has brought the image of the musician-celebrity into Thai society and the music scene in Thailand has been changing: more money and fame are now involved, at least potentially; more people have become interested in a musical career and the status of musicians seems to have improved. However, the old stigma is still often detectable.

From the past to the present, the capital of Thailand has remained the centre of all major developments in the country. It is the most crowded city in Thailand with around one sixth of the national population. Bangkok's population is predominantly young: over half of the residents are under 30 (National Identity Board, 1995:136). Bangkok is the gate opening the country to the outside world and is said to be the city where East meets West; here the reception of foreign ideology and practice is at a maximum.

In summary, the present trend of the world system involves globalization, by which time and space have shrunk and the awareness of outside societies has deepened. Information from the global media has influenced the beliefs and practices of the population: this influence may be interpreted as a helpful process of modernization, as an invasion of foreign culture, or as an opportunity for the population to select and adapt the information to suit their own use. However, such selection and adaptation often involves conflicting aims and values. For smaller countries which are the audience of the global media rather than its producer, to be both modern and patriotic represents such a conflict. Music is one area in which this conflict occurs. The movements of the overall scene can be located in the capital where on one hand, foreign imposition is irresistible, and on the other hand, conservationist action aims to combat the popularity of Western cultures and strengthen the value of the national identity. All movements affect music reception practices, music-related careers as well as music in education.

Music in the contemporary world can be roughly categorized as either ‘classical’, ‘popular’ and ‘folk’. By the term ‘classical music’, is meant here a type of music which has previously been developed and flourished at court and in nobles’ households; the type that is considered as ‘art’, and nowadays for the happy few. By the term ‘popular music’, I refer to a group of music widely popularized by the mass media. It includes popular mainstream, rock, rap, soul, and others, which appeal to the mass, and is valued as a commodity. By ‘folk music’, I refer to the non-court music which is still performed in the traditional way. It is less refined and was formerly (before the age of media imperialism) enjoyed by the masses to accompany their rural life. In Bangkok nowadays, people hardly know the original ‘folk music’, only its transformation into a form of popular music. Besides Thai music, foreign music, especially that from the West, is familiar or recognizable to urban ears. Therefore, the music that is available in contemporary Bangkok can be categorized into five main types, three of which originate in Thailand: Thai court or classical music; two styles of Thai popular music; Western classical music and finally Western popular music. This research relates to these five main categories of music with a focus on the above three types of Thai music, and the different value and status they are accorded by certain segments of the population of Bangkok, in relation to globalization and localization.

The organization of the music industry in Thailand is, of course, derived from the West, and popular music in general is Western-influenced. Among all the main types of music in Bangkok mentioned above, only Thai classical music retains its original style and is the least influenced by Western music, in keeping with ancient belief in the necessity of preservation rather than innovation. The conflict between the conservation of the old (Thai classical music) and the development of the new (popular music) results in clashes. The status of each type of music is therefore worth investigating.

1.2 Aims of the Research

The purpose of this research is to examine contemporary common-sense Thai notions of musical value and status which are influenced by the power of globalization, emphasizing notions of educational value in relation to national identity and other influences especially the reception of music in the wider society, focusing on Bangkok.

The influences from outside proceeding from globalization, which has brought changes in economics and technology, have differently shaped the forms of musical categories including their production and reception. As Bangkok is today receiving

global information more than ever, the attitudes towards each type of music may be different from those in the past. This area has implications for music education: given that education implies the introduction of worthwhile knowledge and skills to pupils, the question of which music to select and teach is paramount. Attitudes of music teachers and students, especially those who have already experienced compulsory music education, are relevant to any description of the educational value of music. Moreover, both teachers and students are music consumers. They are able to give a relevant indication of the differences between music in education and music in the wider society. Because nowadays the music industry deals directly with the consumption of music in the wider society, the attitudes of the people inside this business are also crucial in suggesting other musical values and the reasons for and conditions of their production. All these attitudes will portray major aspects of the value and status which each type of music possesses.

1.3 Main Research Questions

What are the views of students, music teachers and record company staff and musicians concerning the main types of Thai music in Bangkok?

What status in the society and in education does each type of music possess?

In what ways do globalization on one hand, and national identity on the other hand, affect perceptions of music in relation to the wider society and to education?

1.4 Literature Review and Background to the Fieldwork

As the main theme of the research is the effects of globalization on the music scene in Thailand, theories of globalization will provide the theoretical framework of the thesis, and will help with the interpretation of the present status of music and music education in Bangkok.

In order to contextualize and provide a model for understanding the diverse musical practices in Thailand, a review of the music industry including musical consumption and media distribution was undertaken. More specifically, the historical background of music and music education in Thailand is vital for an understanding of the influences on the present practices and views of the respondents concerning different types of music, as what has happened in Thailand may be unique. The study of the documentation of the national music curriculum in Thailand and the observation of the contemporary music

scene in Bangkok are also crucial. They help to provide the background for the data collected later by questionnaires and interviews during June 1997.

Thailand faced a sudden economic crisis in July 1997. This crisis has also affected the music scene so that an additional documentary search was undertaken in order to provide an up-to-date report.

1.5 Originality and Contribution of the Thesis

This research will provide an understanding of how Thailand, a small non-colonial country with a long history and a rich culture (see chapter 3), manages to deal with conflicts between globalization and nationalism regarding its music and music education. The research also highlights the effects of globalization on the status and value of music in Thai society, as defined by music teachers, students, and record company staff who are looking outward globally and inward locally.

Additionally, few publications concerning sociological perspectives on music in contemporary Thailand are available, and there is virtually nothing on the attitudes of Thai people towards music and music education in their society. As attitudes may change over time, the research reflects the historical moment when this study was undertaken and should contribute to future research in this area.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Framework

The effect of globalization on the production, distribution and reception of music in Thailand will provide the theoretical framework for my research. The main area of discussion will be the directions of change caused by the process of globalization, the unevenness of the dynamics of globalization, and the effects of globalization on local identities and musical values linked to the status of music. It is important to start by discussing different types of cultural interaction.

2.1 Types of Cultural Interaction

‘Culture’ in general terms, such as cultivation of the mind through artistic skills, as learned behaviour, or as the customary beliefs which influence the way of life in any society, has always been affected by another culture from another society through cross-cultural communication. The acquisition of cultural knowledge from other societies is now taking place more often and more widely than ever.

In the domain of culture, globalizing trends are, in a sense, unambiguous. There can be no doubt that new information technology has exponentially increased the ease, economy and rapidity of communications and that this has given unprecedented access across the world to the global flow of ideas, information and cultural products. (Andy Green, 1997:162)

The new communication technologies have linked every part of the world. Communication between regions has introduced different cultures to one another in unprecedented ways. Interaction between cultures can happen at any level from an individual, a small group, a society to a wider global level. ‘It’s probably fair to say that music is the most universal means of communication we now have, instantly traversing language and other cultural barriers in a way that academics rarely understand’ (Burnett, 1996:1). Nevertheless, not all music has an equal role in world communication; for instance, some forms have a greater influence on other forms; and not all regions open themselves in the same degree to the same music. What cannot be refuted is that the interaction of musical cultures emerges globally. Wallis & Malm (1984:297-302) illustrate and categorize cultural interaction in terms of four patterns: cultural exchange,

cultural dominance, cultural imperialism and transculturation.

1) *Cultural exchange*: Here two or more cultures interact and exchange features under fairly loose forms and more or less on equal terms. This often takes place on a person to person level.

2) *Cultural dominance*: This happens when a powerful society or group in a society is imposed on another in a more or less formally organized fashion. This can be observed in the mass media. However, the notion of cultural dominance has been superseded by the theory of hegemony by other authors, as there is no actual force but rather a negotiation between them. Longhurst (1995:21) points out that audiences have a great deal of power in negotiating with the texts of media products and they use the media texts in different ways.

3) *Cultural imperialism*: Here the cultural dominance is augmented by the transfer of money and/or resources (which can be gifted musicians, pieces of music, etc.) from dominated to dominating culture group. The financial and other gains involved in cultural imperialism contribute to placing a dominated culture under heavier pressure than from pure cultural dominance. Most forms of cultural imperialism in the music sector require, for example, that music is packaged and made into a product that can be exchanged for money in the form of a recording, or a concert in a closed hall where an entrance fee can be charged. This commercial aspect of cultural imperialism has contributed to the spread of the concept of packaging and selling music to more and more music consumers worldwide. Again, this cultural imperialism has no real power to impose its commercial products on the audience. The explanation is similar to those of cultural dominance as the audience has power to choose and use the product in their own way (this will be expanded in section 2.6, and the data in section 5.1.1 will show an example of the restricted power of the music producer).

4) *Transculturation*: This is a mixture of all the above forms of cultural interaction. This pattern of change is the result of the worldwide establishment of the transnational corporations in the field of culture, the corresponding spread of technology and the development of worldwide marketing networks for what can be termed transnationalized culture or transculture. Through the transculturation process, music from the international music industry can interact with virtually all other music cultures in the world, due to the worldwide penetration attained by music mass media.

It has to be noted here that in the pre-globalization era ‘the most significant phenomenon in the global history of music has been the intensive imposition of Western music and musical thought upon the rest of the world’ (Nettl, 1985:3). Different cultures have responded in different ways varying from maintaining to, preserving, modifying, or abandoning their musical traditions (ibid.). Western music has continued to influence other musical cultures worldwide. The influence is not restricted to a sound system but extends to concepts and attendant technology and behaviour.

2.2 Globalization and Transculturation

During the last decade of the twentieth century, the process of transculturation has been rapid and prominent. The new term ‘globalization’ came into frequent use in the early nineties and undermines the former theory of cultural imperialism as no single culture rules the world. Cultural contact, especially the spread of dominated culture, for various reasons, has long been made. As Morley & Robins (1995:108) explain:

The perpetual quest to maximize accumulation has always compelled geographical expansion in search of new markets, raw materials, sources of cheap labour and so on. The histories of trade and migration, of missionary and military conquest, of imperialism and neo-imperialism, mark the various strategies and stages that have, by the late twentieth century, made capitalism a truly global force.

Historically speaking, the worldwide expansion of capitalism came from the West. The global process, in both liberal and socialist senses, has in reality been about universalism which indicates Westernization – the export of Western commodities, values, priorities and ways of life (Morley & Robins 1995, Waterman 1996). The reception of Western cultures is also generally regarded by the periphery as ‘modernization’. However, differences between Westernization and modernization are determined by the intentions of the actor. Nettl (1985:20) distinguishes the two terms in the case of music as follows:

Modernization may be described as the incidental movement of a system or its components in the direction of Western music and musical life, without, however, requiring major changes in those aspects of the non-Western tradition that are central and essential. Westernization is the substitution of central features of Western music for their non-Western analogues, often with the sacrifice of essential facets of the tradition.

To be more precise, modernization can be categorized into 2 types: pragmatic and ideological, while Westernization can be seen as ideological or assimilative (Hughes, in

press in 1999). Pragmatic modernization is the adoption of new approaches which are foreseen to increase efficiency. Ideological modernization is made by people who are familiar with the concept 'modern' and connect it with prestige. It is different from ideological Westernization in that the prestige held in ideological Westernization is linked with the Western culture rather than the concept of modernity. Lastly, assimilative Westernization contains the intention of the borrower to make a portion of the host system a part of the Western system (ibid).

There is an interesting point in that even though the economy and the polity are the main areas affected by globalization, they are globalized to the extent that they are culturalized (Waters, 1995:9-10). In European societies at the end of the twentieth century, the population 'have become more unwilling to surrender individual autonomy to superordinate organizations and have legitimated that claim by reference to universalized standards' (ibid:160). New political symbols and a revitalization of cultural effectivity have occurred. Waters (1995:161) claims that cultural action is now disrupting states, and that party politics are being disrupted by universalizing and diffuse social movements such as those concerned with human rights, the planetary environment and cosmopolitanism. Meanwhile the economy is becoming dominated by lifestyle choices as seen from the arising of consumption as the central economic activity and the diversification of possible occupational experiences.

As Westernization can be seen as a process of development, accordingly, Waters (1995:3) argues that globalization is the direct consequence of the expansion of European culture across the planet via settlement, colonization and cultural mimesis. However, 'Europe until the fourteenth century was invariably the recipient of cultural influences from "the Orient"' (Pieterse, 1995:53). Therefore the West itself may be viewed as a mixture and Western culture as a creole culture (ibid:54). Because the West is also the receptor of the Eastern cultures (for example, the spread of Islam, Hindi film music and karaoke), we then now should move from Westernization in order to describe the effect of globalization more accurately. In this respect, Pieterse (1995:63) argues that the process of globalization can be adequately described as a process of hybridization.

Abu-Lughod (1991:135) claims that an ideal globalization would be the instantaneous, indiscriminate and complete diffusion of all cultural products, with no need for intermediate interpretation. In this sense, transcultural products, or so-called 'global products', are likely to suit the customers' tastes worldwide. Popular music, a

clear example of a transcultural product, has spread globally with the help of new global communication technologies. Although the product may be a transcultural one, the production of global popular music is restricted to a small number of gigantic music companies. The ownership of the world music industry belongs to the European, Japanese and American companies: Sony (Japan), Warner (USA), Polygram (the Netherlands), EMI (UK), BMG (Germany) and MCA (Japan) (Burnett, 1996:18).

At the global level, Shuker (1994:60) claims that mass media and popular culture were transmitted by the predominantly one-way flow of international media, from a few internationally dominant sources of media production, the USA in particular, to media systems in other national cultural contexts. This implies media imperialism, which has established certain forms as the accepted ones, scarcely recognising that there are alternatives. Burnett (1996:10) asserts that ‘much of the information and entertainment material owned by non-American companies is still created by Americans, for the simple reason that Los Angeles remains the film, music and television production capital of the global entertainment industry.’ Therefore the finished American products dominate the world as global popular mass culture. In addition to production in the USA, the present music business which rules the entire world of popular music comes mainly from the English-speaking nations. Popular music from the UK is also available globally and together with popular music from the USA, it creates popular norms and values. Thus Frith (1989:2) points out that no country in the world is unaffected by the way in which twentieth-century mass media have created a universal pop aesthetic.

Although one may argue that the one-way flow of music media from the West to the rest of the world implies cultural imperialism, this is debateable. First of all, the cultural flow is one of transculture and there is more than one layer of this macro-micro relationship. Straubhaar (1997:295) points out that while the media are strong at the global level – for example, media flow from the USA – they do not by any means overwhelm regional and national levels. He points to a pattern of certain regional producers tending to dominate their geo-linguistic markets, such as the USA within the English-speaking world, Hong Kong within the extended Chinese market, Egypt in the Arab world and Mexico within the Spanish-speaking countries (ibid).

Accordingly, it is helpful to distinguish 3 types of repertoires of production in the music industry (Negus, 1996:182-3). The first is the international repertoire: those at global level and sung in standard English only. The second is the regional repertoire, as

described by Straubhaar above and which Laing (1997:124) calls ‘regional blocs’, which are linguistic-based. The last one is the domestic repertoire: those produced to be consumed within one national territory. This last category often mimics the larger categories, and ‘several countries during the last 15-20 years have substantially increased the quantity of domestic and regional productions within their national communication systems and served as a source of supply for other regions of the world’ (Sreberny-Mohammadi et al, 1997:xvii).

2.3 The Global & Local Nexus

The worldwide organization and integration of corporate activities is bringing about a more immediate and direct articulation of global and local spaces. Particular localities and cities are drawn into the ‘logic’ of transnational networks (Morley & Robins, 1995:73). Economically speaking, globalization

is the latest stage of a long historical trend towards the concentration of industrial and finance capital and attempts by companies to overcome national boundaries. Modern corporations seek to operate in all markets simultaneously, rather than sequentially, and target consumers on the basis of demographics, habits and lifestyles, rather than straightforward geographical regions. This has been facilitated by the technologies of the mass media and telecommunications. (Negus, 1992:6)

In a marketing sense, global products are also produced locally in order to sell the latest product everywhere at once. The practice is described by Sony as one of ‘global localization’ which means that ‘while it operates across the globe it aims to gain “insider” status within regional and local markets’ (Morley & Robins, 1995:150). However, McGrew points out that the dynamics of globalization towards even a single locality are uneven.

Some regions of the globe are more deeply implicated in global processes than others, and some are more deeply integrated into the global order than others. Within nation-states, some communities (e.g. financial ones) are tightly enmeshed in global networks, whilst others (e.g. the urban homeless) are totally excluded (although not entirely unaffected) by them. And, even within the same street, some households are more deeply imbedded in global processes than others. This unevenness characterizes a highly asymmetrical structure of power relations. (McGrew, 1992:76)

Besides the distribution of global products, global localization also involves an adaptation of global products to suit a particular locality. This process, or so-called

‘glocalization’, is a global outlook adapted to local conditions (Robertson, 1995:28). This can be taken as an emergence of local popular music or music composed for a particular locality.

Generally speaking, the term globalization also reflects the local counterpart.

Globalisation is, in fact, also associated with new dynamics of re-localisation. It is about the achievement of a new global-local nexus, about new and intricate relations between global space and local space. Globalisation is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle: it is a matter of inserting a multiplicity of localities into the overall picture of a new global system. (Morley & Robins, 1995:116)

As the modern technology of communication has shrunk the world, the awareness of the existence of another part of the world is intense. In the international music arena in 1985, the string of socially conscious ‘charity rock’ mass concerts such as ‘Band Aid’ began. The relationship of the global-local nexus has also led to a sense of world identity or of global ‘*shared-identity*’, an interest of humanitarians. These aspirational developments offer a community feeling that does not really exist in the audience. This phenomenon in music spread all over the world (Rijven & Straw, 1989:203). Until recently, there were still some movements intending to provoke such awareness, e.g. Michael Jackson’s ‘Earth Song’ in 1995. It is worth noting here that such a phenomenon, which may appear to be antithetical to materialistic and commercial values, may be reconciled with and even co-opted into the economic system (Thompson, 1992:253), as evidenced by the emergence of ‘World Beat’ or so-called ‘World Music’ which paralleled the development of charity rock¹ (Garafalo, 1993:23).

At the contemporary global level, consumption of global products can be put into two categories, which illustrate the global similarity and local difference. For the consumption of music, the main stream is a single common culture such as music broadcast on MTV; another is the consumption of global multicultural products in respect of world music (Street, 1997:79). What they both have in common is the exploitation of the latest technology and the expertise in production and distribution at the global level (Guilbault, 1993:37).

¹ This is because charity rock opened up possibilities for cultural politics, as Garafalo (1993:23) points out: ‘While Anglo-American music was disproportionately broadcast to a worldwide audience, the international sounds of artists like Youssou N’Dour, Aswad and Sly and Robbie also gained greater access to the world market.’

At the local level, the struggle to emphasize local identity coexisting with the commitment to the global common culture is apparent. This will be discussed in the following section.

2.4 The Effect of Global Music upon the Local Arena

Morley & Robins (1995) assert that it is important to see the local as a relational and relative concept. As media communication is the key to transnational integration, the boundaries of nation-states are blurred. In consequence, the local may be seen as the container of experience and the global as a dimension of modern life (Sreberny-Mohammadi et al, 1997:xiv). Thus, local cultures are often over-shadowed by an emerging ‘world culture’ and also inevitably by resilient national and nationalist cultures (ibid:118). In this respect, Tomlinson (1996:83) proposes that ‘as a strengthening identification with the world as a whole implies a weakening sense of what divides us as national cultures, it could be argued that simultaneous “nation building” and “world building” is, in a certain sense, a zero-sum situation.’

In the local perspective, Robertson (1995:29) proposes the global-local problematic in that we live in a world of local assertions against globalizing trends, a world in which the very idea of locality is sometimes cast as a form of opposition or resistance to the hegemonically global. In the global perspective, ‘the resourceful global conglomerates exploit local difference and particularity. Cultural products are assembled from all over the world and turned into commodities for a new “cosmopolitan” marketplace: world music and tourism; ethnic arts, fashion and cuisine; Third World writing and cinema’ (Morley & Robins, 1995:113).

For Ferguson (1992:73), ‘globalization conflates the normative and descriptive, and consequently carries ideological as well as temporal, spatial, historical and geopolitical implications.’ Pieterse (1995:61) distinguishes territorial culture from translocal culture: the first is the ground for local identity – an inward-looking sense of place; and the latter involves an outward-looking sense of place, which has created a new (hybridized) identity. The process of globalization has brought translocal culture into the foreground and taken territorial culture into the background (ibid:62). It then causes a struggle for the territorial culture involving its adaptation to suit the current situation. Thus globalization stimulates both standardization and diversity.

Cultural particularisms are more globally visible and present, leading to a greater diversity of cultural options for individuals and groups. At the same time, the dominant cultures of the West (and particularly those of the USA and the Anglophone countries) reach further across the globe, penetrating the national and local cultures of previously more isolated countries. The double movement produces an international veneer of cultural homogenization but, at the same time, an infinity of cultural hybrids and mixes. Cultures are transported across frontiers by similar means everywhere, but they are received and assimilated in different ways. (Andy Green, 1997:162-163)

Thus, for Wallis & Malm (1984:15), globalization causes two main directions of change in musical practices within a national boundary, which interact with each other. The first is the development of popular music, an outward look towards global popular styles. The second involves inward-looking attempts to create national music styles and forms.

2.4.1 Local Popular Music

From the process of globalization, there have emerged what Negus (1996:186) calls ‘transnational practices’, local practices shaped by interaction between local areas at the global level. It is a localization of global cultures for particular local areas, which Straubhaar (1997:288) claims, is for the purposes of global capitalist development and the expression of local identity.

Transnational practices result from hybridization, a process which has been taking place all the time but more rapid since the late nineteenth century (Robertson, 1995:41). In the twentieth century, global popular music is an already hybridized form and local popular music is a localized form of global popular music – a hybridized form of local and global elements. Pieterse (1995:57) claims hybridity functions as part of a power relationship between centre and margin, hegemony and minority, and indicates a blurring, destabilization or subversion of that hierarchical relationship.

Wallis & Malm (1984:301) argue that small countries function as marginal markets for international music as well as sources of internationally exploitable culture. What happens in practice is that individual music cultures pick up elements from transcultural/global music, but an increasing number of national and local music cultures also contribute features to transcultural music. Undermining the Cultural Imperialism thesis, the resulting process is a two-way flow, a ‘transculturation’ (ibid) or ‘hybridization’. Reggae is an example of this transculturation. Reggae was influenced by

and influenced global popular music, and the transculture assimilated elements of reggae (ibid:303). In a similar way, other parts of the world produce their own local popular music influenced by Western popular music. They do not only receive Western mass culture but also adapt it to suit their taste. Thus, the orientalization of Western music (as used by Abu-Lughod, 1991:133) or either the Westernization or modernization of oriental music: the mixture of Western and ‘Oriental’ music, is proliferating all over the world.

As stated earlier, although there is more than a single flow, the transcultural global music industry developed in the West is generally the strongest flow at the global level. It is mainly music (or transcultural music) produced by the West that is spread to the rest of the world, creating a taste for global popular music for local areas to acquire. Wallis & Malm assume that the transculturation process will continue and accelerate, encouraged by the fact that musicians in peripheral cultures will continue to dream about success in the world market (ibid:311).

2.4.2 Local Music Identities

As a resistance against global cultural trends, localities have imagined their long-lost or never-existing identities. It is a nostalgic paradigm suggesting that:

We – the global we – once lived in and were distributed not so long ago across a multitude of ontologically secure, collective ‘homes’. Now, according to this narrative ... our sense of home is rapidly being destroyed by waves of (Western?) ‘globalization’. (Robertson, 1995:30)

Robertson (ibid:33) points out that in numerous contemporary accounts, globalizing trends are regarded as in tension with ‘local’ assertions of identity and culture.

The following passage by Hall (1992:295) is interesting in revealing the construction of national identities from national culture which is often in struggle:

The discourse of national culture is thus not as modern as it appears to be. It constructs identities which are ambiguously placed between past and future. It straddles the temptation to return to former glories and the drive to go forwards ever deeper into modernity. Sometimes national cultures are tempted to turn the clock back, to retreat defensively to that ‘lost time’ when the nation was ‘great’, and to restore past identities. This is regressive, the anachronistic element in the national cultural story. But often this very return to the past conceals a struggle to mobilize ‘the people’ to purify their ranks, to expel the ‘others’ who threaten their identity, and to gird their loins for a new march forwards.

Morley & Robins (1995:93) point out that the representation of the past is very much a question of active processes in the present. Accordingly, Friedman (1994:141) agrees that the past is constructed and reproduced in the present because subjects in the present fashion the past in the practice of their social identity. A way to create an identity is to appropriate the past (ibid:125). Gellner (1994:26), who studies European nationalism, points out that

a High Culture becomes the pervasive culture of an entire society, instead of being a minority accomplishment and privilege. The expression 'High Culture' is of course here used in a sociological and not in an evaluative sense: it means a standardized culture transmitted by professional educators in accordance with fairly rigid, coded norms, and with the help of literacy, as opposed to a 'Low Culture' transmitted without formal education in the course of other and generally unspecialized activities of life.

Gellner implies the unequal status and roles of cultures within a nation. In parallel, musical identity at the national level is likely to be that of 'high culture', i.e. classical music, as a polar opposite to 'low culture', other music beyond academic transmission such as folk music. Although 'high culture' is chosen to represent the prestigious identity of the whole population and even though the population accepts this assertion, in practice it may be different. One main reason seems to be that for reasons of prestige. The prestigious identity is displayed in order to impress outsiders, whereas country people prefer and enjoy their folk roots. Because the proportion of population in the countryside outnumbers those in cities, their local culture is undeniably significant. Wallis & Malm (1984:14) argue that from 1900 onwards, 'folk music became a symbol for country and people. It was used to strengthen feelings of national unity and seems to have had a unifying function between different ethnic groups and social classes in society'. However, folk music, to represent a national identity, is selected by authorities, as Reeves (1993:210) points out that

'folk' music is often a symbol of country and people: dominant classes and ruling regimes invariably prefer carefully orchestrated, choreographed, and selected 'folk' music and dance which has been expunged of national consumption purposes.

The expansion of new communicative technology in the twentieth century has introduced new forms of music which have affected and threatened traditional folk music. The attempt to strengthen local identity gave rise to an appreciation of folk music. For contemporary local music composition, folk music is an ideal source of local identification for conservative musicians. Reeves points out that

Musicians frequently regard 'folk' music as a major source of inspiration, styles, lyrics, and national reassertion and identity, and in some instances a source of style to be opposed to imported musical expression, ruling classes and the state. (Reeves, 1993:210)

After the Second World War, travelling to other countries became the starting point of the dramatic growth of the tourist business. Waters (1995:155) argues that globalization exposes tourists to cultural variation confirming the validity of local cultures and their difference. Traditional music, as culture, has become saleable and attracts tourists. However, it seems to have more cultural than musical value.

The global links and the inward flows of foreign cultures have threatened the local cultures, especially music. Morley & Robins (1995:71) point to the problems of resisting cultural invasion and fortifying indigenous identity. They see change as problematical, a form of cultural erosion and even extinction. Since the 1980s, Braman (1996:27) claims, interest in the local has become stronger in response to the experience of globalization: 'the local became visible as a resistance, as the source of particularities and variety, and as the ground of meaning for individuals and communities.'

Reeves (1993:229) also argues that indigenous musical traditions have been substantially transformed, not simply by the influence of global musical styles and musical technologies, but also by the basic changes in the social relations of production which affect both the production and reception of music. Braman (1996) describes some of this transformation as 'adaptation' of traditional music. The degree of adaptation varies: in one way it is seen as the creation of local popular music, and from a more conservative perspective it is seen as modernized traditional music.

The modernized traditional music, either classical or folk, of a particular country is placed in the category of 'World Music' for the global market. Indeed, this category, introduced in 1987, includes mainly local popular music originating in countries outside the normal Anglo-American (and Australian and Canadian) sources (Mitchell, 1993:310). The commercialization of music has changed its traditional functions. Garafalo states that:

Commodification can separate culture from everyday life... Musics which have developed primarily in live performance and which serve ritual social functions can now be packaged and sold to the world as entertainment.... Mass mediation exerts a transformative influence on traditional cultures. (Garafalo, 1993:23-24)

The commercialization of traditional music is sometimes seen by local areas as an effective way to preserve the local musical heritage, albeit through modernization, and it is also aimed to stimulate the awareness of its existence at the global level. The marketing of World Music, apart from to make money, therefore, can be seen partly as the struggle of a local arena to assert its identity at the global level. Guilbault claims that:

World musics have contributed to some degree to the repositioning of the local cultures to which they are associated, by being part of a world movement that advances the desire of every nation not only to be recognized but also to participate in the workings of global economics and power. (Guilbault, 1993:43)

2.5 Status of Music

As a member of the Thai population, born and raised in Bangkok, I consider myself an ‘insider’ when describing Thai society, as well as an ‘outsider’ when I analyze and discuss data. According to Nettl (1983:154-156) the insider, attached to the traditional beliefs and knowledge, generally gives ‘emic’ statements which express ideals while the outside analyst generally makes ‘etic’ analytical statements which aim to be objective and of cross-cultural validity. However, Nettl also suggests that an insider is also capable of making ‘etic’ statements. Although, it is difficult to prove empirically, both the insider and the outsider can observe the use of music, but it is the outsider who more easily sees the function of music underlying its use, something which most insiders are unaware of or consider irrelevant. Merriam (1964:209-210) points out that through the use of music, analytical evaluations stemming from the folk evaluation can assess the function of music. The function of music is abstract and is the source from which the ‘value of music’ derives. However, in their own society people perceive the value of music through its use.

The main functions of music described by Merriam and regrouped by Nettl are:

- 1) The function of emotional expression
- 2) The function of aesthetic enjoyment
- 3) The function of entertainment
- 4) The function of communication
- 5) The function of physical response
- 6) The function of validation of social institutions and religious rituals
- 7) The function of symbolic expression of the main values, patterns, or theme of a culture

Interestingly, the last 2 functions above are the preserve of local music which can express the sense of locality. The role of music in promoting social integration, in validating social institutions and religious rituals and in providing symbolic expression of the local cultural values strengthens the ability of local cultures to resist the pressure of globalization. These sociological functions of music play a crucial role in protecting local cultures.

Music as an activity that contributes to the integration of society appears highest in cultures 'under siege', that is, confronted by imminent change as a result of forced contact with other cultures. (Nettl, 1983:151)

As Martin (1995:62) points out, 'our perceptions and values can change'. This study is valid at this moment in time. My research explores the views of respondents who are aware of the value of music arising from its use. So I will now discuss 'use and value' of music, from which the status of music can be traced. Use and value give meaning to music and they permeate the process of socialization that people in the same society or the same group share. This can explain why musical preferences are influenced by social class and education.

Socialisation leads us to interpret the music we hear in particular ways, and the ways that we invest it with meaning reflect our cultural conventions, rather than intuition or the decoding of its inherent message. (Martin, 1995:64)

A consensus of agreement about musical value is never reached but is often resolved by the imposition of the preferred value by the authorities. In present-day society, formal music education and the mass media have that authoritative power to define musical value (ibid), although they do it in different ways: music education conveys the concept of musical value in an academic way, whereas the media are mainly concerned with the commodity value of music and thus these two may come into conflict.

This thesis explores the use and value of music from the point of view of both the individual and the national perspective. Use and value may come into conflict in, for example, an individual whose musical preference and consumption habits focus on Thai popular music, but whose concern for the preservation of traditional Thai culture simultaneously suggests that Thai classical music should not be altogether lost (the data of the thesis will later illustrate this conflict).

The 2 main areas in which the status of music will be investigated are within the scope of authoritative powers: music in education (influenced by the national curriculum, the school and the teacher) and music in the wider society (influenced by record

companies and mass media). Music in education refers to music both inside and outside the school curriculum, which means music as a subject of study whether as a compulsory subject or in the form of extra tuition. Music in the wider society refers to music that is available for general consumption, prevaillingly the music produced by record companies, which are the main media resource. In general, music in educational use is considered to be of high value, but in the wider society it may not be widely in favour. This is one of the distinctions between classical and popular music. While popular music has economic importance, its success depends on its sales and consumption, whereas the significance of classical music is more historically grounded. Although its sales are much lower, it is endowed with high educational value. However, music in the wider society does influence the choice of music for education. The degree of influence may vary depending on locality. On the other hand, music education may help create certain categories of musicians for the wider society.

In the following sections, music in the wider society and music in education will be discussed to provide an introduction to the fieldwork.

2.5.1 Music in the Wider Society

In 'Constructing a Sociology of the Arts', Zolberg (1990:136) points out that artists depend directly or indirectly on social structures that provide them with support unless they create the work solely for their own pleasure. More importantly, in the production and reception of arts, neither artists nor audiences are passive but they interact in the process of negotiation, selection and conflict. For artists, gain or loss of standing depends on the prestige of the support structure, the quality of the audience and the value placed on the art form (ibid). Support structures apply sanctions, positive and negative, in which material and symbolic rewards and deprivations are included. From the main source of church and royal patronage in the past, up until the commercial market of today, certain features of important support structures have become prototypes by providing traditions and ideas about artistic value. The value of arts is restricted under the patronage of the commercial market, as they have to follow the demands of the market (ibid:138-139). As Zolberg (1990) says,

Whereas under repressive regimes it may be nearly impossible for [artists] to create just what they wish, even in the most liberal they are never completely free from restrictions. This is because inherent to the very institutional supports that permit them to work (the free market, for example), are material constraints:

marketability depends upon making a profit, which in turn depends upon consumer preferences, governed by demographics and the changing meanings of cultural codes, both dependent in turn on various unpredictable factors. (Zolberg, 1990:138)

By contrast with the classical arts, Zolberg (1990:141-142) claims that popular or mass commercial arts make no claim to be disinterested; lack the aura of the individual, romantic genius creator; attract the many rather than the 'happy few.' 'Fine' arts provide high status for those who are involved with them:

For the artist, being associated with the highly valued social definition of fine art provides a warrant for access to patronage from governmental, foundation, or other honorific sources; for the institutions that foster fine art, nonprofit status wins fiscal advantages; finally, the audience gains not only the (presumed) pleasure and stimulation of the art, but symbolic rewards as well...

Concerning the use of music in the wider society, Wallis & Malm (1984:14) claim that it has changed in comparison with the traditional roles of music in the past. They claim that

music is used to a greater extent as a medium for different propaganda activities, for political or commercial information. Its use as entertainment as a 'time-filler', also increases as a professional corps of entertainers emerge, often performing to a large audience via mass media. Music gradually assumes a new function, different from that in traditional music cultures where it had a primarily communicative or ritual role.

This new important role of music in the modern world in the entertainment industry has been supported by the process of globalization. Global cultures are commodified and tend to be judged in terms of what gives immediate pleasure and makes money (Thompson, 1992:232). In many parts of the world a variety of forms of music have been created for the role of entertainment, and the majority of this mass entertainment is known as popular music. It is popular and widespread because it has been vigorously promoted by the media. Compared with classical music, popular music provides its predominant value as commodified product or 'economic value'; it is the type of music enjoyed by the majority of people in the world, whereas classical music is for the 'happy few' and has much less to say to the wider masses.

In Thai society, the gulf between Thai popular and Thai classical music is more extreme than in the West, because Thai classical music is still attached to its tradition while Thai popular music has its roots in Western popular music. In the music industry, Thai classical music recordings are far fewer in number compared to Thai popular music.

On Thai classical recording covers, musicians' names are rarely indicated and composers of particular pieces are rarely known. Wong (1995:51) claims that 'there is an almost Buddhist impermanence to the names and memories of Thai classical musicians. Their primary survival over time occurs as they became links in the chains of teacher-pupil relationships that continue to form the backbone of the tradition' (see 3.1.6).

2.5.2 Music in Education

From a global perspective, it would appear that forming citizens and shaping national identities is still one of the primary functions of education in most countries. National curricula still tend to place great emphasis on national languages and cultures. (Andy Green, 1997:183)

Within the academic system, in contrast to the sciences which aimed to promote the latest discoveries, 'when it came to the arts the academy took its cues from the past, as a reinterpretation of classical ideas in order to construct the idea of the national state' (Zolberg, 1990:178). Music in education in any country tends to include traditional types inherited from the past, which express the identity of the nation. Local musical values are partly involved with the notion of national identities. Miller (1995:184) points out that 'people value the rich cultural inheritance that membership of a nation can bring them; and they want to see continuity between their own lives and the lives of their ancestors.'

Traditional culture, including music, is important because it reflects the identity of a nation. So traditional culture is put into the curriculum as a way of preserving it or in some situation as a way of creating it. As Miller (1995:195) points out,

... where some cultural feature - a landscape, a musical tradition, a language - has become a component part of national identity, it is justifiable to discriminate in its favour if the need arises. This might mean devoting resources to its protection, giving it a place in the school curriculum, and so forth.

Traditional cultures have been brought into the school curriculum by governments as a way to conserve them and introduce young people to their national cultures. In the case of music, this raises the educational value assigned to traditional music. In the Western world, music education in school generally appreciates the value of classical music as artistic knowledge. 'Classical music in school has for long appeared to communicate its own importance and delineate the intrinsic value of its inherent materials' (Green 1988). In the UK up to the early eighties, unlike popular music, Western classical music was regarded by music teachers as the most privileged music, the cultural heritage which

embodies autonomous musical value. Vulliamy and Lee (1982:5-6) suggest that it is because popular music is regarded as dance music in contrast to ‘serious listening’ music and because popular music is commercial, that it is regarded as inferior.

In her survey in 1982, Green (1988) confirmed that the majority of music teachers stuck to the classical style and saw popular music as less academic:

...pop music, having for so long been relegated to the less serious curriculum, did not readily communicate its own educational importance and did not delineate intrinsic value. Because of pop’s seemingly natural inferiority in this situation, its supporters have had to repeatedly justify its use in schools. (Green, 1988:57-58)

She continued to point out that popular music was maintained as having inferior educational value, ‘not only by teachers who were against its use but also by many who used it, and even many who favoured it’ (Green, 1988:64). So despite the negative attitudes towards the educational value of popular music, it still has a place in education.

Regarding the different interests of music teachers and students, a cultural clash may arise as pupils tend to prefer rock music in accordance with the tastes of their peers rather than the types of music recommended by the teacher (Olsson, 1997:293). In 1988 there came the Education Reform Act and in 1991 the National Curriculum (England). Orthodox instrumental teaching has been in decline and the range of musical types has broadened, giving way to more types of music. In the first GCSE examination in 1988, the types of music included European classical music, jazz, pop, Afro-American styles and other ethnic styles (GCSE Examination papers, 1988).

In Thailand, modernization, or in other words, opening the door to Western culture, has long been the concern of past governments since the late 1930s (see 3.1.4). In education, music in the Thai National Curriculum since 1978 always includes all the main types of music available in Thai society. In compulsory music education at lower secondary level, the music content includes Thai classical music, Thai popular, Thai folk and also Western styles (see details in 3.4.2). The content of music in the Thai national curriculum, which is influenced by globalization, includes Western music theory and styles as well as Thai popular music which has already adopted Western styles. However, Thai classical music has a firm place in the curriculum in line with the educational aim of inherited cultural appreciation and conservation.

As elsewhere in the world, classical musicians normally have lengthy skill training, and they need guidance from teachers who contribute to the maintenance of music’s strict conventions and transfer their knowledge to the younger generation. For musicians in the

popular music field, informal learning is normal and self-taught imitation can lead a person to become a popular musician. Frith (1996:55) points out that imitation becomes the source of individual creativity: ‘without the master there to tell you what to do it’s up to the would-be musicians to put together what’s heard and what’s done, to come up with their own way of doing things.’ On the other hand, the unique style and intonation of the singer become more important than what is being sung, and ‘the record industry encourages this kind of naïve talent precisely because, in being untutored, non-professional and unorganized, it is easy to exploit’ (Chanan, 1994:271).

Bennett (1980), in his study of how to become a popular musician written in the early seventies, points out that a person generally starts by acquiring an instrument, practising the instrument somewhere with someone, forming a group, writing songs, working up the songs into a set or sets, finding and getting to a gig. In the mid-1980s, the goal of popular musicians generally was not only self-employment but also to obtain a contract with a record company which they need in order to develop their own creativity (see Cohen, 1991) and to get rich!

In viewing music as an occupation, the separation between amateur and professional is frequently blurred (Finnegan, 1989). Finnegan claims that the term ‘professional’ suggests social status and local affiliation rather than income or musical competence. She says:

From one viewpoint, it connotes high-standard or serious performance as against ‘mere’ amateur playing’, and from another, outsiders coming in from elsewhere to take prestige or fees from local players, or entertainers who try to charge more than those paying them would like. (Finnegan, 1989:16)

The ambiguities between the ‘professional’ and ‘amateur’ also implies the instability of music as an occupation, as it seems that there are more amateur musicians than amateurs in other occupations. So either musicians tend to have a second occupation as their main source of income, or equally its attractiveness may draw people of other occupations to become amateur musicians.

As shown above, the status of music can be drawn from the career status of musicians and other music-related professions. It is quite clear that different types of music such as popular and classical have different levels of status in the wider society as well as in education. While music in the wider society, where popular music dominates, has a predominantly commercial aim, music in education has a crucial role that ties in

with music that expresses the prestigious national identity; moreover, the educational value of music is not always directly linked with its occupational value.

2.6 Music Audiences

Crozier (1997:71) distinguishes personal identity from social identity: 'personal identity refers to an individual's unique qualities, values, and attributes, and reflects his or her personal history, whereas social identity refers to the social categories to which people belong, aspire to belong, or share important values with.' Moreover, a person may represent themselves as private self or public self. As indicated earlier, social influence has an effect on personal preference or taste, and is sometimes connected with the notion of 'prestige'. The pressure to be seen as having high status may lead people to hide their personal private self for fear of embarrassment (ibid:72).

Referring to musical tastes, Russell (1997:141) points out that in everyday life, people's musical tastes are identifiable by the music they choose to listen to, the recordings they buy, and the live music performances they attend. Musical taste then is tied into personal identity in that we express ourselves through our deployment of other people's music (Frith, 1996:237). The social influence on personal musical preferences or tastes begins with personal social class, which varies according to socio-economic status and occupational category. Several surveys conducted in the UK and the USA report that the higher status groups are the majority consumers of 'high culture' (Russell, 1997:143-145). Additionally, a survey of the American's cultural consumption reveals that education was a better predictor of the consumption of 'high culture' cultural commodities than was income (DiMaggio & Useem quoted in Russell, 1997:144). On the other side of the globe, according to Reeves (1993:68), global cultures from the West are mainly aimed at upmarket audiences. He argues that, in contrast to the working classes, the upper middle classes in the third world preferred imported rather than locally produced material because they have advantages in education, finance, and links with abroad (e.g. foreign language proficiency, temporary stays abroad).

As to the age factor, Russell (1997:146) suggests that people's preferred music styles are those of the hits when they were in their late adolescence or early adulthood. Young people's distinctive musical tastes serve to separate them from their parents and older people (ibid:152). The acceptance of global cultural products, for example music, has undermined the theory of cultural imperialism in that foreign musical cultures are mainly

appreciated by young people in a spirit of rebellion in order to distance themselves from a parental 'national' culture (Laing, 1986:338).

In addition to social class and age, gender and ethnicity also have some effect on personal musical tastes. According to Lucy Green (1997), gendered musical meaning was shaped through the history of music and continues to exist and affect our musical experiences. Studying the school experience, she finds that

'popular' or 'fast' music contrasts with the conformist, feminine image of classical or 'slow' music, and appears more 'macho', up-to-date, vital. In this crevice, boys enter the school music scene, and the masculine delineation of music stakes its first claim. This claim is most fully realised through the delineations of masculinity that are associated with compositional and improvisational practices, in which girls are subject to the threat posed to femininity; boys meanwhile are able to harness this delineation to an experience of celebration in their musically constructed gender-identity. (Green, 1997:257)

As for the influence of ethnicity on musical taste, there are suggestions that in multicultural societies, different ethnic and cultural groups have different musical tastes (Russell, 1997:147). However, it is not as straightforward, as Russell (1997:151) argues, as that subscribing to a particular musical taste is one way in which people seek to identify with a specific social class. In the present situation of media imperialism, the global or local media have a certain influence in creating and shaping people's musical tastes (ibid:153). Nevertheless, the audience is not passive: in receiving global musical messages, local meanings are often made within and against the symbolic resources provided by global media networks (Morley, 1993:17). This means that although the audience are persuaded by the value the record company put on their musical product through the operation of the media, they are invited to give their assessment of the music (Frith, 1996:61). Nevertheless, the audience often have the *pleasure* of following the promotion of music which somehow has a forceful effect that moves them in the specific directions designed by the record company (Frith, 1983). On the other hand, the tastes of the audiences affect the production of music. They provide feedback, which informs the success and failure of the music. According to Frith (1978:204), 'the industry had to learn about these audiences and their demands, and the musical results have followed rather than led youthful tastes and choices.'

Among the social factors which influence musical preference stated earlier, ethnicity and gender are not issues studied in this thesis. The reasons are, firstly, that Bangkok, the focus of the thesis, is not considered a multicultural society like the capital cities in

Western Europe and America. Secondly, although issues of ethnicity, gender and social class are vitally important in music production and consumption, a thorough examination of such areas lies outside the scope of this thesis. The focus of this work is the common-sense values and assumptions about music and about musical careers held by 2 middle class groups of Thai people distinguished from each other by a) age, and b) the fact that one group consists of students and the other of teachers.

2.7 Globalization, Music and Music Education in Thailand

Changes in the production and reception of music in Thailand resulted from the modernization policy of the government in the past (see Chapter 3), which was affected by the early form of globalization, and by the current accelerated process of globalization.

According to the argument of Wallis & Malm (1984), there are two main directions of change in the forms of music in Thailand. One is the strengthening of inherited national music identity and the other is the development of local popular music.

2.7.1 The Forms of Popular Music in Thailand

In their study of music in Tanzania, Tunisia, Sweden and Trinidad, Wallis & Malm (1984:13) make the observation that folk music in these countries has undergone a tendency towards ‘stage shows’. Analogously, most folk music in Thailand has been transformed into a stage show in the form of Thai country popular songs called *phleng luk-thung* or simply *luk-thung* (Nawikamol et al, 1989:15). Literally, *phleng* means songs or music, *luk* means offspring and *thung* means field. With Western musical and technological influence, this transformation has resulted in the adaptation of Thai folk songs to meet the demands of stage performance. It can be said that the development of local popular music is affected by economic influences (Robinson et al, 1991:238-243).

Thai country popular music not only includes the transformation of folk music into a type of popular music but also includes new compositions in the same styles (see details in 3.2). For a local composer in recent decades, as Ryker (1991:15) argues, ‘there is a steady pressure on the [Asian] composer to demonstrate how he is acting to enhance the collective national heritage passed down to him.’ As popular music is often based on the traditional music of the country in question, Robinson et al (1991:228) point to a

phenomenon they call ‘indigenization’ by which local musicians begin to blend together elements from their own cultures with those of alternative cultures.

A similar phenomenon of musical blending is happening everywhere. It is true to say that ‘local cultures are over-shadowed by an emerging “world culture” - and still, of course, by resilient national and nationalist cultures’ (Robins, 1992:320). In Thailand, this results in the emergence of Thai local popular music which later divided into Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) and a more Western influenced Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*; ‘*sakon*’ means popular everywhere). *Luk-thung* is a hybrid of Western popular and (mainly central and northeast) Thai folk style while *Thai-sakon* sounds more like Western popular song sung with Thai lyrics. The difference between the two streams was also caused by their audience location. *Luk-thung* is favoured in provinces where folk music dominates and the area is less exposed to new global technological communication, while *Thai-sakon* is favoured in the capital and big cities where the new technologies of global communication are more available.

By their audience location, *luk-thung* then represent country people, who are more ‘down-to-earth’ and have occupations in agriculture, and the musical style is ‘folklike’. Much Thai country popular music (*phleng luk-thung*) has developed from folk music (see section 3.2). It still retains its role as folk culture to serve the majority population. In contrast, Thai popular music (*pheng Thai-sakon*) represents the modern world of life in the capital through the eyes of or as experienced by city people; its style is closer to global popular music. Thus, these two types of Thai popular music have different identities and social status.

Thailand also has a type of popular music which contains the essence of folk styles conveyed through the voice and sometimes through the inclusion of folk musical instruments, but its overall musical part is more like *Thai-sakon* than *luk-thung* and its lyrics express a different issue than those of *luk-thung*. It is called ‘songs-for-life’ (*phleng pheua-chiwit*), a kind of protest song, and is based on humanism. The important part of these songs is the lyrics, which appeal to people to fight for those with less opportunity, expose the tragic reality of society and other social problems. This genre of Thai popular music has pushed itself to the national level calling for *shared-identity*, ‘*the nation*’.

As mentioned earlier, globalization creates unevenness in its dynamics and it has changed the production and reception of all kinds of music in the modern world. In

Thailand the uneven effect of globalization has moulded two different forms of Thai popular music: it has a stronger effect on *phleng Thai-sakon* than on *phleng luk-thung*.

2.7.2 The Musical Identity of Thailand

The strengthening of national musical identity is caused by the threat of losing local musical heritage because of the invasion of popular music both from outside and within the country. As opposed to global popular culture, the local culture of any country is regarded as more authentic, traditional, and supportive of a conception of distinctive national cultural identity (Shuker, 1994:60). In the case of traditional music, Wallis & Malm (1984:14) point out that ‘what has happened to traditional music is that there is a clear tendency towards a decrease in the number of stylistic variations. Particular styles are regarded as being of higher quality and, although they might be affected by elements from other musical forms (art music, religious songs etc.), they become the norm for the traditional music of a particular country.’

According to this argument, Thai classical music (*phleng Thai-derm*; *derm* /dɛ:m/ means original), a form of traditional music rooted in the capital of Thailand, has been in such a condition. However, from its origin, the status of Thai classical music has been high, as historically it represents the court and the ruling class. In the past, it developed within strict limitations. As a national inherited art, a traditional symbol of Thailand, there has been very little development due to the fear of distorting this collective national musical culture. The result is museum music, in a static condition, which has been held to be a perfect national musical style with the result that composers dare not, or are extremely reluctant to change any of its conventional elements.

2.7.3 The Effect of Globalization on Thai Music in the Capital

The categories I have chosen to focus on in this research are the 3 most important types of music in Bangkok: Thai classical music (*phleng Thai-derm*), Thai country popular music (*phleng luk-thung*) and Thai popular music (*phleng Thai-sakon*). Each has distinctive styles and values. Thus their status or position in the society are different (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: The effect of globalization on Thai music

| | THAI CLASSICAL (THAI-DERM) | THAI COUNTRY POPULAR (LUK-THUNG) | THAI POPULAR (THAI-SAKON) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Musical Styles | Conventional Thai | Hybrid of Thai folk & Western | global |
| Identity | Thai National | Thai Provincial | Modern Thai urban |
| Prevailing Value | Inherited culture | Economic / Thai folk culture | Economic / Modern Thai culture |

Thai classical music (*Thai-derm*) is placed at the highest level because of its historical roots. It shows the national identity of distinctive Thai music. For popular music in Bangkok, which has economic value as a commodified product, Thai-ness in country popular music (*luk-thung*) is not held in high regard as it is considered provincial, while the greater global appeal of Thai urban popular music (*Thai-sakon*) is regarded as modern. As folk is regarded as less prestigious than urban in the capitalist society, Thai country popular music has lower status compared to Thai popular music which is primarily urban. However, *luk-thung* fills the gap between the extreme Thai-ness of Thai classical music and the extreme global influence of *Thai-sakon*. *Luk-thung* is the type of music enjoyed by the majority of the Thai population throughout the country.

CHAPTER 3

Music & Music Education in Thailand:

A Socio-historical Background and a Contemporary Scene

From ‘The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music’ (1998:6-8)’ music in Southeast Asia including Thailand can mainly be categorized as classical, folk and popular. ‘Classical has connotations of sophistication, high value, being representative of the best of a culture and expressive of political and economic power’. Although Thai classical music flourished at court, to call it ‘court music’ is too rigid as it has never been restricted to court. Folk music is the music heard in villages, frequently performed by non-specialists, and usually is conjunction with functional contexts, like rituals, festivals, and daily activities. Thus folk music is restricted to rural districts. Unlike popular music, whether derived from traditional indigenous music or influenced by outside cultures, which is disseminated through the media to almost all members of society and has become predominant, or at least present, in people’s lives. However, as Wong (1995:185) points out, popular music also has a folk influence and it can be said that folk songs have been transformed into a genre of popular music and thus play a part in urban lives.

According to Nawikamol et al (1989:14-15), Thai music in Thailand can be categorized as: folk, traditional or classical, country popular, and capital popular. Making a rough categorization, these include folk and country popular music within one category and classical and capital popular within another category according to their audiences. There is a difference of status between these 2 groups. Music of the capital (classical and capital popular) has a higher status than the music of the provinces (folk and country popular music).

My research is based on the main types of music in Bangkok, so folk music in its original form, which is specifically enjoyed outside the capital, is of little relevance here. In my categorization, there will be 3 main categories of music in Bangkok: classical, country popular and popular music. Firstly, I would like to introduce the Thai terms for these categories. Thai people use the word ‘*phleng*’ which literally means ‘song’ to refer to any piece of music whether vocal or instrumental. This term is used interchangeably with ‘*dontri*’; however ‘*dontri*’ is generally used more specifically to refer to instrumental music or instrumental part of vocal music. Thai classical music is known as ‘*phleng Thai-derm*’

which means Thai original music. Western-influenced Thai popular music originally came under the term '*phleng Thai-sakon*'. Literally, *sakon* means in favour or popular everywhere. It is also often translated as 'universal' as well as 'international' but generally refers to the West or Occident (Wong, 1995:46). Thai-sakon refers to Thai music in the Western style that is popular everywhere (worldwide). *Thai-sakon* was later divided into 2 genres of Thai country popular music¹ or '*phleng luk-thung*' and capital popular music or '*phleng luk-krung*'. *Luk-thung*, literally means 'child of the field', is largely based on Thai folk music (Wong, 1995:185), whereas *luk-krung*, which literally means 'child of the capital', has followed the Western popular musical fashion. However, for Thai capital popular music at present, the original term, '*phleng Thai-sakon*', is preferable. The reason is that, perhaps, the meaning of '*luk-krung*' restrictedly refers only to the area within the boundaries of the capital while '*Thai-sakon*' has a broader meaning and is more suitable as *Thai-sakon* music is developing towards the global trend of Western popular music (see 3.2.6). Moreover, the term '*phleng Thai-sakon*' is parallel to its Western model '*phleng sakon*'.

However, some of these terms do not have only one definite meaning and they can be used interchangeably with other terms. The term '*phleng Thai*' sometimes refers to all types of music either Thai classical or popular styles with Thai lyrics; sometimes it refers specifically to *Thai-sakon* as can be seen in record shops. *Phleng Thai* is often simply used to distinguish Thai musical styles from Western musical styles, *phleng sakon*. Similarly, *phleng sakon* sometimes referred specifically to Western popular music; and sometimes, it is used to refer to Western types of music including *Thai-sakon* as opposed to Thai classical music².

Samples of Thai music are provided on the compact disk inside the back cover of the thesis. The samples will show the development of Thai music through time, starting from Thai classical music (tracks 1-4). This is followed by Thai country popular music (tracks 5-10) and Thai popular music (tracks 11-15). All these samples include music from the earliest days until the present time (see Appendix III for detail of content for each piece).

For Western music in Bangkok, there are 2 main categories: classical and popular music. Thai people generally call Western classical music '*phleng classic*' or more formally '*dontri tawantok*' (*tawantok* literally means the West); and call Western popular music, as

¹ I include all rural-based popular styles, including *mor-lam* – a northeast country style within this category in the same way that my category of Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) includes 'songs-for-life'. More detail will be shown later in this chapter.

² Data from music teachers in Chapter 7 will illustrate this use.

mentioned above, '*phleng sakon*' or informally '*phleng farang*' (*farang* literally means white people).

The main categories of music consumed in Bangkok are then:

- 1) *Phleng Thai-derm* (Thai classical music)
- 2) *Phleng luk-thung* (Thai country popular music)
- 3) *Phleng Thai-sakon* (Thai popular music)
- 4) *Phleng classic* (Western classical music)
- 5) *Phleng sakon* (Western popular music)

As Thailand is quite a conservative country, its history has greatly influenced present practice. The socio-historical background of music and music education in Thailand will provide a description which is needed for the understanding of the practice of music and music education in Thailand at present. Throughout history, each type of music in Thailand has been influenced by both political and economic forces, and by global trends. These have shaped the musical forms and practices and also given values and status to certain types of music.

3.1 Thai Classical Music

3.1.1 Music History Before the Bangkok Period

There is no certain evidence of where the original Thai people came from. The area where Thailand, formerly called 'Siam', is located used to be governed by various kingdoms. The most powerful kingdoms were the 'Khom' in the northeast and east, the 'Mon' in the west, and the 'Lawa' in the central area of present Thailand (Roongruang, 1990:5). The historical period can be divided into three pre-Thai periods: Davarawadi, Srivichai, Lopburi; and six Thai periods: Chiengsaen, Sukhothai, U-thong, Ayuthaya, Thonburi, and Ratanakosin. The cultures of the pre-Thai periods were predominantly Indian. The religious beliefs were Hinduism and Buddhism. Both religions, especially Buddhism, influenced Thai art, architecture and literature (Rajadhon, 1953b:5). The historical periods of some of the kingdoms overlap with one another. During the Davarawadi period (4th-8th century AD), the Mon people dominated the area. Their musical culture had an influence on later periods of Thai music. During the period between the 8th and the 13th century, two kingdoms were inhabited: Srivichai, located in the South, and Lopburi, or Khmer Empire,

in the East and Northeast. The Khom, also known as the Khmer, left many architectural masterpieces in Thailand, including music which, in some respects, resembles Indian music especially in its use of drums (Roongruang, 1990:6).

In the Thai periods, the kingdom of Chiengsaen (9th-16th century) was in the north of Thailand where Chiangmai was its capital. In the central part, Thai nobles had succeeded in making themselves independent from the Khmer and established the powerful kingdom of Sukhothai (13th-15th century) (Syamananda, 1967:6-7). Sukhothai was an important kingdom where Thai culture was developed. During that time, the Thai alphabet was invented by King Ramkhamhaeng. ‘Much of what we know about the Sukhothai in the 13th century derives from King Ramkhamhaeng’s stone inscription of 1292’ (The National Identity Board, 1995:16). The inscription indicates that the people of Sukhothai greatly enjoyed the music of strings, percussion, winds, drums, horns, trumpets, conch shells, bells and singing (Herabat, 1976:57). As the power of Sukhothai was in decline, it became a vassal state to the U-thong Kingdom (13th-15th century), and the City of Ayuthaya (14th-18th century) was founded. Ayuthaya was the most important kingdom. It was during this period that Thai culture was moulded and flowered. Playing music in public was very popular until the time of King Barom Trai Lokanat (1448-1488), who forbade singing and playing instruments in or near any royal household without royal permission. Roongruang (1990:9) makes the point that the necessity for the enactment of such a royal decree more than testifies to the fact that Thai music was very popular and people played it freely and liberally everywhere. Around the 16th century, Ayuthaya began to have contact with European nations for the first time. It received European technology from that time onwards and also adapted some musical instruments such as brass instruments, which is called in Thai ‘*trae*’, for use in the Thai ensemble. Besides the European influence on musical instruments, the *ranad* or Thai xylophone was invented, presumably of Javanese origin (Herabat, 1976:58). *Piphat*³ which later became the standard Thai ensemble was also developed in this period.

In 1767 the Ayuthaya Kingdom was demolished by the Burmese. The city was burnt in such a way that almost nothing was left as evidence of its civilization for later generations to witness. The people who escaped the destruction, including artists and musicians, fled southwards and established a new kingdom, ‘Thonburi’, which King Taksin ruled for 15

³ *Piphat* is the standard Thai ensemble and consists of the melodic percussion instruments, the hand cymbals and gong, and the *ta-phon* and *klong that* drums. The *pi* is the only wind instrument included and gives the ensemble its name. (The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. 18:715)

years (Roongruang, 1990:11).

3.1.2 Thai Classical Music in the Early Bangkok Period

In 1781 after King Taksin's death, a new King, Rama I, moved his capital city across the Chaophraya River and called it 'Bangkok'. This was the beginning of the Ratanakosin era, or, followed the name of the capital, 'Bangkok period'. Bangkok has been under the Jakri Dynasty until the present time. Many kings and members of royal families have played an important part in developing Thai classical music. In the early Bangkok period, the development of Thai classical music mainly consisted of the development of the *Pi-phat* ensemble, which was derived from the Ayuthaya period. In the period of King Rama I, music was similar to that of the Ayuthaya period; only one other instrument, the *Klong-tad* (a type of drum), was added to the *Pi-phat* ensemble, which has been in use until now (Intanin, 1993:14). King Rama II (1809-1824) was a string instrument player and composer who composed a famous piece '*Bulan Loileuan (floating moon)*' which is well known among Thai classical musicians today. Another type of drum, the *Song-na*, was introduced for the *Pi-phat* ensemble, which was first used for accompanying recitative singing in this period (Intanin, 1993:14-15). During King Rama II's reign, the patrons of music were the court and aristocratic houses where the most well known musicians from villages, who also played Thai classical music, were persuaded to accept royal or noble patronage (Herabat, 1976:58). During the reign of King Rama III, the size of the *piphat* ensemble was expanded by optionally doubling the instruments (Intanin, 1993:15).

3.1.3 The Golden Age of Thai Classical Music

The golden age of Thai classical music was between the mid-nineteenth and the early twentieth century, from the reign of King Rama IV to early part of King Rama VII's reign. King Rama IV and V had over sixty children. The number of royal households increased and then gave their support to traditional music (Morton, 1968:6). In the reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868), musical contests were popular. Musicians composed their own version from principal or basic melodies to compete with one another. The contest is interesting in that there were no judges: 'each musician would know in his heart who was the champion' (Gaston, 1991, from his interview with Gatekong:123). The music contests led to a great deal of new composition and development in skill in instrument technique (Morton,

1976:15). Apart from many talented musicians who were hired in the court and noble houses, there were a number of local musicians who possessed comparable musical skill. An exchange of knowledge occurred. The musicians under patronage were encouraged by their masters to learn and adapt new techniques as a basis for composing new songs, for drama, and to improve their music skills in order to compete with other ensembles (Herabat, 1976:59). In this period of the golden age of Thai classical music, although in reality musicians were servants, they were prestigious in the sense that they served royal or noble families (Morton, 1980:79).

An important form of Thai classical music composition, '*Thao*', was developed in this period. It is a 3-section composition, slow-moderate-fast⁴ (Intanin, 1993:61). For ensembles, the *Piphat* ensemble was made larger by the addition of two metal xylophones, and a string ensemble (*Khreung-sai*) was introduced (ibid:15).

In the reign of King Rama V (1868-1910), the Department of Entertainment was established, to be in charge of musical activities in the country. During the reigns of King Rama V and VI (1868-1925), elements of prominent Western and other foreign cultures were officially introduced into the country. In the field of music, there was an integration of foreign music and Thai classical music, in terms of musical instruments and styles (see 3.2.1).

Early in the twentieth century, foreign forms of entertainment had already spread throughout the capital city. In 1925, when King Rama VII came to the throne, Thai classical music was at the height of its glory. The King himself composed a number of well-known pieces (Intanin, 1993:16). Unfortunately, the royal household faced a serious financial crisis soon afterwards, due to the excessive expenditures of the previous reign. The new King had to solve the situation by reducing the royal budget, which partly affected the support for Thai classical music. The government also had to abolish the Department of Entertainment to reduce the extravagant spending (ibid:17).

Nevertheless, the King still maintained the royal Thai classical orchestra. He also continued to compose and play Thai classical music. He contributed quite significantly to the development of Thai classical music and also welcomed Western music. A Western-style orchestra was formed for the first time at the royal court. Court music flourished during this

⁴In Thai musical drama terms, parts in *Thao* are called 3rd level (*sam-chan*) for the slow section, 2nd level (*song-chan*) for the moderate section and 1st level (*chan-dio*) for the fast section.

reign (Rutnin, 1993:182). Many members of the royal family had a private orchestra under their patronage (ibid:183).

3.1.4 The Dark Age of Thai Classical Music

The royal reduction of the budget for government sections while support was still being given to music caused dissatisfaction among nobles and the government. The Revolution then erupted in 1932. It forced the absolute monarchy to change to a form of democracy. That means that the management of Thai classical music was no longer under royal patrons but was transferred to the government (Myers-Moro, 1988:342-343). Then the musicians under the former royal patronage were given a new status as civil servants.

In 1933, the Department of Fine Arts (*Krom Silapakorn*), under the Ministry of Education, was set up to take charge of all national cultural activities. Cultural heritage in its highest form was to be public property and was no longer attached to the institution of the monarchy. Royal patronage for *khon* (masked dance-drama), *lakhorn* (classical dance-drama), including orchestra were also brought under the administration of the Department of Fine Arts for educational purposes (Rutnin, 1993:189). In 1934, a school for training musicians and classical dancers, which is now known as *Withayalai Natasin* (name in English 'Dramatic Arts College'), was founded within the Department. The Department of Fine Arts and its school have provided a place for both Thai and Western classical music. Rutnin (1993:189) points out that 'it is precisely this change in the structure of administration that caused the change in the nature of classical dance-drama (and other performing arts), in that *educational values and purposes have become the essence of all arts engaged in some degree of public entertainment* (my emphasis).'

The Department of Public Relations (*Krom Pracha Samphan*) houses national classical music ensembles and orchestras. This Department administers and directs both national Thai TV and radio stations (Myers-Moro, 1988:346).

Unfortunately, the government support for Thai classical music was severely reduced during the long 2-period run of the autocratic government of Phibulsongkhram (1938-44 and 1948-57), which marked the 'Dark Age' of Thai classical music. Phibulsongkhram had a policy to Westernize Thai culture, so he introduced new laws following the Western fashion: chewing betel was banned; Western trousers, skirts, hats and shoes were to be worn in public; the country name 'Siam' was changed to 'Thailand' (Myers-Moro 1988:411). The

government believed that this would prevent the colonial powers from interfering in Thai politics as they would be unable to accuse Thailand of being uncivilized (ibid.).

The government of Phibulsongkhram saw Thai classical music as an indicator of backwardness. Thai classical music was then forced to be performed on Western instruments, and popular songs were composed and came almost to replace Thai classical music. Many Thai classical musicians suffered from this policy. From his own experience, Gatekong⁵ says,

The austerity measures of the Phibulsongkhram government in response to the world depression only exacerbated the plight of those many musicians who had been released from their posts in the civil service. Those who did not leave the profession altogether usually switched to playing Western instruments in nightclubs and hotels. Only a fraction of the former number of professional Thai classical musicians was left. I, myself, had to drive a taxi during that time to make ends meet. (Gaston, 1991:134)

During this ‘Dark Age’ of Thai classical music, the Department of Public Relations also modernized Thai classical music by adding Western harmony, rhythm and tuning on either Western or adjusted Thai instruments. This music was then called ‘applied Thai music (*phleng Thai-prayuk*)’. The official musicians generally used the Western, equal-tempered scale instead of the Thai scale. They also sometimes performed *phleng Thai-sakon* (the early stage of Thai popular music), which was becoming popular during that time. The eclectic performing of applied Thai music is, however, disapproved of by the stricter Thai classical performers at the Department of Fine Arts and among some university faculties (Myers-Moro, 1988:348).

3.1.5 The Revival Period of Thai Classical Music

In 1932 monarchical rule gave way to a democratic form of government, and the environments in which court music flourished began to disappear. Westernization was rapid during the decades that followed, and traditional Thai culture, including music, was threatened. Attempts by the government to maintain Thai cultural traditions were at least partly successful, so that today, *piphat* ensembles play at the one remaining royal court in Bangkok, at ‘live’ and televised cultural shows, and at Buddhist religious functions. (Campbell, 1995:21)

⁵Boonyong Gatekong (1920-1996) was an acknowledged master of the *Piphat* orchestra and a renowned composer. He was one of the most famous students of the great composer, *Luang Pradit Phairoh*, and was for 17 years Musical Director of the Thai Classical Orchestra of the City of Bangkok.

After 1957, when the ‘Dark Age’ of Thai classical music under the regime of the Phibulsongkhram government ended, subsequent governments have had a contrasting policy to strengthen Thai identity through traditional cultures. However, Western cultures had already been absorbed and had become part of modern life. In the field of music, while Thai classical music was beginning to heal its wounds, Thai popular and Western popular music were already rapidly becoming the favourite music of the time. In the eighties, when Bangkok had already been strongly influenced by Western values, an appropriate occasion to revive the national arts and cultures arrived when Thailand held the Bicentennial Celebration of Bangkok in 1982. Thanks to a strong policy focussed on the enhancement of national pride, private organizations began to take an interest in cultural activities and social development. The life of Thai classical musicians has been improving ever since. Most schools, banks and large corporations have a resident Thai orchestra. This scenario is also encouraged by Crown Princess Sirindhorn, who plays an important part in promoting Thai classical music.

Government organizations are also involved: the Department of Public Relations has the task of promoting Thai music ensembles on radio according to the national identity policy, thus relating the Department’s work to that of Thailand’s National Identity Board (Myers-Moro, 1988:347). The Department of Fine Arts is the most active institution in keeping traditional arts alive. ‘The Department often plays a conservator role, for certain obscure ensemble types and repertoires’ (Myers-Moro, 1988:343). The musicians in the department produce tape recordings of Thai classical music. These musicians and dancers generally perform at the National Theatre. This Department is also responsible for the reception of the government’s foreign guests by providing traditional performances and building up the arts and culture for the benefit of Thai society. Their funding comes mainly from public performances (ibid:348).

After establishing the first music and dance school *Withayalai Natasin* in Bangkok in 1934, the Department of Fine Arts subsequently, during the following decades, increased the number of its schools. In the late 1990s, there are 9 *Withayalai Natasins* in various parts of Thailand (Nakhorn-srithammarat, Angthong, Sukhothai, Chiangmai, Kalasin, Roi-et, Pathalung, Lopburi and Chantaburi) which have already been founded (Miller & Williams, 1998:121). These schools also provide general compulsory education concurrently (Myers-Moro, 1993:199). The aim of establishing these schools is to conserve, develop and promote both Thai and Western classical music and dance. The Department of Fine Arts also

developed a set of ‘archaeological dances’ and accompanying music inspired by each of the great epochs of Siamese history. To promote Thai arts to a wider audience, these performances are frequently performed at large restaurants aimed at tourists (ibid:257). This has been done with the emphasis on the entertainment function of music, which Thai people regard as its primary function, and it thus helps the musicians financially.

3.1.6 The Traditional Style of Music Teaching

In Thailand, being a Thai classical musician also means being a music teacher (Myers-Moro, 1988:222-223). Thai classical music was previously transferred orally from teacher to student because of the lack of a notation system. The traditional method of transferring this knowledge then created a deep relationship between teacher and student. The teacher has a dual role: ‘he is not only the living authority who hands down the tradition to his students, but, through loving reticence, he sometimes also withholds information in order to stimulate self-discovery through improvisation’ (Gaston, 1991:117). Wongthes (1982:41) points out that a teacher is as important as parents, and that Thai classical music students show high respect for their teacher.

In the traditional teaching of the past, a young student was required to stay with his/her teacher and did housework for the teacher in exchange. This way the student is said to have the best concentration and control of the subject. Whenever he/she was practising, everything was overheard by the teacher. The direction of the development of musicianship was strictly guided. There were also students who did not live with a teacher but came to study occasionally; they might bring flowers, fruit, or other items of food for the exchange (Myers-Moro, 1988:224-225). The Thai classical music teacher has full authority over his/her students. A student, in the expectation of a teacher, ‘is respectful, practices diligently, takes his or her role as a musician seriously, and is devoted in religion’ (ibid:227).

In the times of Royal patronage, good musicians were invited to serve in the ensemble of a royal or noble household. When a young musician became known as being musically talented, he or she (normally male) was appointed to serve a noble or royal house where senior musicians provided formal teaching. The young musician would master musical techniques and might become a composer and transfer his/her knowledge to the next generation (Morton, 1976:15).

Gatekong (interviewed by Gaston, 1991:121), a well-known senior musician-composer,

describes his own technique of teaching: his students must practice until they are bored with a song. He explains that the kind of boredom which develops from technical mastery can be useful in that it stimulates the desire to know more and that it is the start of finding an alternative way which will develop from their own ideas.

In 1932, music schools were established and an alternative and more modern way of teaching was introduced. This modern approach to academic education changes the relationship between teacher and student. There is an advantage in that a student will be exposed to wider knowledge, and not be restricted to only one or very few teachers as in traditional teaching. Together with the modern way of teaching, the use of notation was introduced. Many old musicians regarded it as disrupting tradition, but others see it as the *only* hope for recording and preserving a repertoire which is otherwise being lost and forgotten (Myers-Moro, 1988:245).

Another addition to modern teaching is the use of a tape-recorder (Myers-Moro, 1988:249). By recording what a teacher plays during the lesson, a student can replay the recording at home as many times as he/she wants. This helps them in memorizing and imitating their teacher's style.

3.1.7 Beliefs in Supernatural Power

It is necessary to acknowledge traditional beliefs which have affected the practice of Thai classical music. Thai society was traditionally associated with many ceremonies, which had and still have links with the power of the supernatural. One obvious example is '*Wai-khru*' (the rite for paying homage to teachers), which is an obligatory annual school and university ceremony (Myers-Moro, 1993:160-161).

Regarding the lack of music notation, attempts to introduce notation were discouraged by traditional beliefs and practice: music performance should be the preserve of those with competence. A music teacher did not transfer his masterpiece(s) to all of his students; he always selected the one who was both morally upright and the most able. The compositions were not shared with all students but always reserved to be transferred only to the student(s) a teacher-composer chose (Myers-Moro 1993:117). 'This strict guarding has saved the most sacred repertoire from falling into the hands of students who are likely to abuse tradition by passing the repertoire on to others indiscriminately or who might be harmed by the supernatural power associated with some songs' (ibid:118).

In general Thai traditional society, there is a belief derived from a legend that a teacher is comparable to an angel who gives knowledge to students. If students do not respect and follow what the teacher has taught, they will be cursed and become insane or die. Thai classical musicians also believe that every musical instrument is divine and deserves respect, and they regard musical instruments as their teachers (Wongthes 1982:41-42).

In a place where Thai classical music or drama is practised or performed, there is an altar or shrine used for honouring the gods associated with music and drama (Myers-Moro, 1993:161). 'Flowers, candles, incense, food, etc. are placed in front of the shrine to honor gods' (ibid:162). The belief in spirits is very strong and their curse is very severe. This forces musicians to follow the conventions and to be reluctant to deviate because of the fear of the supernatural. Myers-Moro (1993:163) points out the main belief in Thai classical music that:

Devas are responsible for the origin and transmission of music and for the protection of musicians from demonic magic or forces, *saniat* (evil, misfortune, wickedness) ... which can cause illness, death, and insanity.

In the history of music competitions, it is a custom, as Morton (1964:355) points out, that musicians were not allowed to compose absolutely new music. Compositions would be based on existing basic melodies. Most contemporary composers still follow this tradition, believing that any deviation from this custom may cause bad fortune.

The range of music performance is also restricted by such beliefs, as it is indicated that 'Thai music is protected by divine power, if a performer violates tradition by openly sharing or altering a song, outside of the allowed parameters⁶, he may suffer through the law of karma, by which an individual is reborn in a higher or lower status according to deeds performed in previous lifetimes' (Myers-Moro 1988:234). However, the belief is sometimes broken but often with reluctance. Myers-Moro (1988:234-235) gives an interesting example:

Rota recording (and manufacturing) company, one of the biggest in Thailand - Rota tapes of just about any musical genre can be found for sale throughout the streets of Bangkok - has issued a tape of '*Ong Phra Phiraap*'. Some musicians must have agreed to record it, though bootlegging is a possibility. However, the tape, like many inexpensive cassettes, was anonymous, not naming performers, so it is difficult to tell who did the playing. My informant insisted that this song never should have

⁶Gatekong had adapted and changed the meter of an existing piece. He said, 'we have an old tradition in Thai music that one should 'never break the one,' and that each note you compose in a 'broken' meter will take time off your life! I had been very ill and wasn't sure how long I would live, so I felt in the mood to gamble with this superstition'. (Gaston 1991:131)

been recorded, because now just anyone could listen and learn to play it, risking supernatural misfortune.

Wongthes (1982:39) points out that Thai musicians believe that most pieces of Thai classical music are holy and demand high respect. Some pieces such as *Sathukan*, *Tra Phra Phiraap*, and *Bulan Loileuan* must be played with high concentration and only occasionally.

This belief in supernatural power is an essential part of an explanation which can clarify the development and status of Thai classical music: why the music remains mostly unchanged and why the recording industry gives very little help in distributing this type of music. This is a key answer to my research question about the status of Thai classical music and its educational value.

3.1.8 ‘Change’: Decay or Development?

Merriam’s (1964) view on changes in music is that they depend primarily on culture. It is possible that ‘change and receptivity to change will be more frequent in those cultures which stress the importance of the individual composer as opposed to those which receive their music materials from a fixed superhuman source’ (ibid:305). This accords with traditional belief concerning Thai classical music in that many musical pieces derive from or are protected by supernatural power. As a result, many musicians refuse to make any deviation from this music. Another possibility is that musicians dream of the former golden time (see 3.1.3) when music was at its peak, and they hope to revive music repertoires from that peak and refuse to make any changes in them, as Myers-Moro (1988:424) points out:

The view of most accomplished musicians is conservative in the sense that musicians for a variety of reasons, are past-oriented, nostalgic for the time when their profession was esteemed and classical music thrived - that is, pre-1930 Siam. Many alterations which outsiders might dispassionately view as ‘change’ are seen by Thai musicians as deterioration.

As described in section 3.1.4, a change or adaptation of Thai classical music by political force has been made, and from this emerged another style of Thai music called ‘applied Thai music’, a Westernized form of Thai classical music. Applied Thai music, however, is regarded as a different type of music, and Thai classical music in its pure form still retains its conventions. Morton (1980:80) argues that Thai classical music is very restrictive, which has obstructed its development. It is ‘more of an anachronistic museum piece than a vital force in contemporary Thai culture’ (ibid).

The main reason for the refusal to change is definitely the *belief* in the supernatural. Because of traditional beliefs, which discourage most musicians from inventing anything new in their own music, very few music composers had or have experimented with Thai classical music. To make such experiments acceptable, a composer must be a respected guru. In previous times, Luang Pradit Phairoh⁷ introduced the Indonesian *angkalung* (a set of bamboo tuned shaken idiophones) to traditional ensembles in 1917. Inspired by Luang Pradit Phairoh's idea, Gatekong (1920-1996) established a Thai orchestra 'Fong Naam' (*Fong-Naam* means foam or bubbles) in 1982 to play Thai classical music both in a traditional way and a new way. As it suggests a new form of Thai classical music, I shall call this 'Thai neo-classical music'. Unlike 'applied Thai music', the avant-garde Thai neo-classical music retains the principle of Thai musical elements as crucial parts:

The repertoire Fong Naam plays comes essentially from the last 200 years, but as this is a constantly developing oral tradition with an element of improvisation, every generation of musicians can add something new to the piece, and Fong Naam are no exception. Each of the instruments improvises in its own way around the shared melody, which is not played aloud by any of the instruments but sung in the hearts of the musicians. (Broughton et al, 1994:443)

The Fong Naam orchestra for Thai neo-classical music contains a combination of Thai and Western instruments aided by computers. The orchestra was named after its first recording of works from ancient Thai classical music, which were almost completely forgotten. Gatekong (in Gaston, 1991:131-132) argues that what he has created is different from popular music. He tends to use Thai scales tuned electronically. The tuning of Thai classical music is different from that of the West: whereas Western music divides the octave into 12 intervals, Thai tuning has only seven equal divisions of the octave⁸. The difference between Thai and Western scale systems gives the composer a choice of systems. When it is not too difficult to adjust Western instruments to play in Thai tuning (for example, the violin), the Thai scale system will be used, but when it is too problematic, for example, tuning the whole piano into the Thai scale system, the Western scale system has to be used. However, vice versa, there are also problems in adjusting Thai instruments to play Western scales. Gatekong points out that there are many melodies whose basic character is lost when transferred into a foreign scale, so the songs to be played must be chosen carefully.

⁷Luang Pradit Phairoh (1881-1954) was the great composer of the first half of twentieth century. He was Gatekong's teacher.

⁸In theory, though in practice rarely, Thai octave is divided into seven equidistant tones. 'Beyond the relative distance between scale pitches, however, Thai tuning frequently varies in another way as well, and that is

However, he points out that almost all melodies are trivialized by the transposition into Pythagorean tuning. In the area of mixing instruments, Gatekong says that when the sounds of the electronic and the organic are mixed, it should be in a way that the electronics should never dominate. He gives the reason that he does not ‘want future generations to emulate a situation where quantity of sound is considered more important than personal expression through improvisation and ornamentation’ (Gaston, 1991:132-3).

It is a huge loss for Thai classical music and Thai neo-classical music in the nineties that Gatekong passed away in May 1996. However, his group continues with his work. Bruce Gaston⁹, a present composer and leader of the group, seeks to push Thai classical music forward through praise and sanction. Although their music retains the characteristics of Thai style, it still causes disapproval from some conservative Thai classical musicians for, as they see it, distorting the conventions. However, ‘Fong Naam’ received the high honour of being invited to compose music for the Bicentennial Celebration of the present dynasty and the ‘Bangkok era’ of Thai history (Myers-Moro, 1988:427).

At present when traditional classical music is ignored by most music listeners, Fong Naam and a few other similar groups of Thai neo-classical music are continuing their efforts in the hope that modernization, while still retaining the crucial essence of Thai classical music, can attract more audiences (ibid).

3.1.9 A Symbol of National Identity

Traditional Thai classical music today is a product of the Ratanakosin or Bangkok period of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Morton, 1980:75). There has been no major change in its evolution to mark its stages in development. Nowadays, Thai classical music maintains its daily existence by being a part of formal ceremonies especially in religious cremation ceremonies (Campbell, 1995:22).

Moreover, Thai classical music is appreciated for its unique cultural identity and has a place in the national school curriculum and other non-formal music schools. Apart from that, it is an image of Thailand in tourism. It is also regarded as economically and culturally aiding the promotion of Thai cultural heritage worldwide:

between circles of musicians’ (Myers-Moro 1993:31).

⁹Gaston (b.1946), of American origin, lecturer and composer, has been living in Thailand for more than 25 years, studied traditional music with Gatekong for more than 15 years and is an accomplished player of the *ranad-ek* (a type of xylophone).

Thai classical musicians today exist simultaneously under two systems of social organization: one the old, one the new; one traditional, one modern; one disintegrating, one growing more influential. Historically, highly accomplished musicians trained and identified themselves with stylistic schools, each tied to the court of a royal patron. While today some still feel tied to specific schools, and others can at least cite the 'pedigree' or affiliation of their teachers, the most recent generation of musicians has studied and gained employment entirely in the modern context of the bureaucracy, the universities, and the public schools. The government, including ministries, the military, and the national educational system, is the primary patron of musicians today. (Myers-Moro 1988:214)

With Western influences globally affecting Thailand, many organizations try to balance the modern with the traditional way of life. Thai people are always eager for modernization; this has caused a fear of losing traditional cultures. In consequence, campaigns have emerged to promote the traditional cultures within the nation which help to encourage awareness of, and pride in, being Thai. Thai classical music is then regarded as an indication of Thai identity, with its history involved with the high institutions of royal patronage and Buddhism.

The campaigns promoting Thai cultures in the eighties were successful enough to make people feel it is prestigious to encourage their family members, especially young children, to learn Thai classical music. Moreover, big institutions will be proud to advertise themselves by sponsoring Thai classical music (Myers-Moro, 1988:221-223). As a national symbol, Thai classical music is always performed in national and royal celebrations. However, Thai classical music does not allow a money-making career, and Thai classical musicians feel that it is more prestigious to play for the King (or royal family) than for the general public (Myers-Moro 1988). Thus, Thai classical music is still not widely favoured, because modern society is surrounded by other types of contemporary music. Thai classical music is only a pale reflection of its former glory, reminding of national pride and heritage (Wong, 1995:55).

3.2 Thai Popular Music

3.2.1 Early Western Influence: Introduction and Integration

More than a century ago, music in Thailand or so-called 'Siam' was Thai classical music, which was normally played in ensembles or orchestras such as *piphat* ensembles, string ensembles, and *mahori* orchestras. In the early reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868), Western music influence first reached the country and the Royal Brass Band (*trae-wong*),

consisting of Western brass instruments, under the leadership of two English soldiers, was first established. The band was introduced to play ‘God Save the Queen’ in march time. Nevertheless, musical training in the Western tradition was always struggling for survival because no single trainer could stay in Thailand for long enough and the language barrier created problems. The band, therefore, casually played Thai classical music adapted for marching without any use of Western notation and harmony (Herabat, 1976:59).

In the following reign of King Rama V (1868-1910), following the European fashion of having a national anthem, a salute song called ‘*San(ra)sern*¹⁰ *Phrabarami*’ was composed, but who composed it is still debatable¹¹. King Rama V wanted Thailand to have the same development and progression as the Western world in order to raise the status of the country to a level equal to those civilised countries. The Royal Brass Band was developed and was given the Thai name ‘*Yothawathit*’ (Military Band). With his appreciation of the West, King Rama V sent his children and some selected officials to further their education in Europe. On their return, they brought back Western ideologies including general ideas and taste in the arts. As the King had many children educated abroad, the development of art and music under Western influence was mainly supervised by the princes. Prince Naris, one of the great composers, created a play, the *piphat deuk damban*, by adapting the opera buffa (Herabat, 1976:59). The play was accompanied by an adapted piphat ensemble called *piphat deuk damban*, following the name of the play. To reduce the sound, *khlui(s)* (bamboo flute) was used instead of *pi*.

In the area of vocal music, near the end of King Rama V’s reign, with inspiration from Western opera, Prince Narathip first introduced the system where by lyrics and dialogues, which were formerly dubbed by singers, were now sung and spoken by the actor-dancers themselves. This musical form of performance was called ‘*lakhorn-rong*’ (Rutnin, 1993:138). The Western method of singing was introduced, and a chorus was added. (ibid:142). Music for this Thai musical drama was partly adopted from traditional and folk tunes and partly original composition. In the early period of *lakhorn-rong*, the traditional

¹⁰ This word can be pronounced in both ways as *san-sern* or *san-ra-sern*.

¹¹ Some authors claim that a Russian composer, Pyotr Shchurovsky, composed it in 1888 (Wongthes, 1995:intro.). But from an article by Phra Chen Duriyang, in his reference to Prince Naris’s claim in 1935, King Rama V chose a piece of composition from a selection given by a European conductor who worked in Singapore at that time. The lyric was later added and revised several times; the final revision was completed in the reign of King Rama VI (Duriyang, 1993:87, translated by Phiphatananon). However according to a textbook ‘Art and Life’, *San(ra)sern Phrabarami* was derived from a Thai classical song of the same name and was a composition of King Rama II. When King Rama V visited Singapore, he appointed a composer to rearrange it and a lyric by Prince Naris was then added. After several revisions, the lyric was finally revised

piphat ensemble was adapted to provide the accompaniment (ibid:143). This *piphat* ensemble, called '*piphat mai nuam*', used cushioned beating sticks for melodic percussion to decrease their volume and, by the same reason, replaced *pi* with *khlui(s)* (Nakhirak et al,1996:74).

It was Thai musical drama (*lakhorn-rong*) that gave birth to the expression of emotion in songs, such as love, anger, violence, or jealousy (ibid:143), which, according to the teaching of Buddhism, Thai classical music never involved. *Lakhorn-rong* was first performed at Narumit Theatre, but unfortunately the theatre burned down. Another theatre called '*Pridalai*' was established with the Prince's support, and the performances began to gain public popularity. *Lakhorn-rong* then became known by the public as '*Lakhorn Pridalai*' (Rutnin, 1993:222).

During the reign of King Rama VI (1910-1925), drama was very popular. Music, as an accompaniment in drama, was developed concurrently. Developments in Thai music and dance inspired by the West also reached their peak, as arts were the King's particular interest. Herabat (1976:59) points out:

His works, both in drama and literature, clearly showed the impact of Western influence, since he had his education in England and was naturally interested in drama, especially the plays which were performed at that time. During the time he was Crown Prince, he devoted most of his leisure time to Western and Thai drama and music. The plays had Thai music performed during the intermission.

One important development is the introduction of foreign instruments into Thai ensembles. There was an integration of the *Mon* ensemble and the *Thai piphat* ensemble, which was given the name of *Piphat Mon ensemble*. This ensemble has been used in funerals until today. *Angkalung*, the Indonesian bamboo idiophone mentioned above, was also introduced and adapted. In addition, *khim* (a hammer-dulcimer) and the Western organ were sometimes included in Thai string ensembles (Intanin, 1993:15-16).

The piano is one of several important Western instruments used for the performance of Thai classical music. There is some evidence that the piano was introduced to Thailand around the period of King Rama V's reign (1868-1910) (Amatayakul, 1970:101). During the following reign of King Rama VI (1910-1925), a female string ensemble '*Nari-Srisumitr*' had introduced a new integration of the Thai classical string ensemble and the piano to accompany voice. The piano had an important part in this accompaniment. The

ensemble had made a recording of King Rama VI's compositions (ibid:101-105). Later, there is an introduction of Thai classical music pieces arranged for piano solo. This has created a taste for Thai classical music played on the piano. It means that Thai classical music played on Western instruments must use Western tuning. Though the Thai scale is different from the Western scale, as its seven pitch intervals are equidistant, Thai ears can accept the transfer of Thai songs into the Western scale, as this was already familiar to their ears.

Apart from the introduction and integration of foreign music instruments and the Western influence upon various forms of stage performances, a significant influx of Western melodies occurred in the reign of King Rama VI by Prince Boriphatr, who had been educated in England and Germany (Wongthes, 1995:intro.). Prince Boriphatr composed many Waltzes and Marches for the Royal Military Band. Many of his other compositions were made by adding Thai words to both Western and Thai traditional melodies as well as composing original Thai-style songs (Nawikamol et al, 1989:8-9).

3.2.2 Advent of Thai Popular Music

Popular music developed from both film and Thai musical drama (*lakhorn-rong*) (Kuslasai, 1992:30-32; Nawikamol et al, 1989:9). As mentioned earlier in section 3.2.1, Thai musical drama (*lakhorn-rong*) was first introduced near the end of King Rama V's reign. During King Rama VII's reign, it became very popular. Songs and play scripts from these popular shows were published and sold. 'Many stories were adaptations of Western and Eastern tales with exciting plots of romantic adventures. The popular songs were mostly sentimental love songs' (Rutnin, 1993:183). The music had become more Westernized. The most famous songwriter/composer was Phranboon, who introduced a jazz band to accompany his show in 1931 (Gaston, 1991:131). From that time the term '*phleng Thai-sakon*', which means 'Thai songs in (worldwide) popular style', was given to this new style of Western-influenced Thai popular songs (ibid:131).

Another development in Thai popular music took place in the cinema theatre. Thai cinema started importing films from Japan in 1902. In 1922, a Thai film company began to produce its own silent films. In 1931, Western techniques were introduced, and this was the beginning of the Thai film industry (Rutnin, 1993:186).

In 1934 the Sri Krung Film Studio was established in the Bangkapi district of Bangkok. It became a very fashionable centre for young upper-middle-class people.

The Sri Krung Studio produced numerous feature films with sound and music and also released phonograph records of popular songs and tunes from box office successes. (Rutnin 1993:187)

During the 1930s and 1940s, film music became very popular among the younger generation. Rutnin (1993:188) points out that it was customary for film stars to sing their favourite theme songs on stage during the intermission. This continued to be a tradition in Thai cinemas until the early 1950s.

During World War II, silent films were accompanied by brass bands (Aarampi, 1966:32). Both films and music became favoured until film negatives could not be imported because of the War. Films were then replaced by stage acting performances including Thai musical drama (*lakhorn-rong*). Film stars, directors, scriptwriters, composers, and technical crews returned to the stage theatre business to work on these plays. Many features from cinema, particularly the use of a live modern orchestra, dance revues, songs, and comedy shows during intermissions, were adopted (Rutnin, 1993:188). After the war ended, films returned. However, other stage plays, especially those with music, still attracted audiences. Many new groups emerged and performed competitively until 1952, when Thai musical *lakhorn-rong* came to an end because most performers left to perform for films and the audience turned to films instead (Aarampi, 1966:74).

3.2.3 Political Interference and the Arrival of Folk Culture

Political influence played a vital role on the early stages of Thai popular music development. In 1932, the economic-political change (described in section 3.1.4) gave the opportunity for the spread of Thai popular song (*phleng Thai-sakon*). With the government policy set to modernize Thai culture, Thai popular music was developed with government approval despite the plight of Thai classical music.

The style of popular songs was also adopted for political use; for instance, the Thai anthem was then composed by Phra Chen Duriyanga who was promoting Western music in Thailand. The government radio station did not play Thai classical music but its Westernized form ‘applied Thai music’ (*Thai-prayuk*) and Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) songs instead. The division between the old and new Thai music was later officially made. Thai classical music was regarded as old music and the term ‘*phleng Thai-derm*’ (original Thai music) was given, whereas the new Westernized style continued to use the name it had already been given,

'phleng Thai-sakon' (Thai songs in worldwide popular style) (Wongthes, 1995:intro.).

The changes in political life in Bangkok after 1957 affected the production and reception of Thai popular music. After the revolution led by Sarit Thanaraj, the new economic development plan created a lot of industrial factories in Bangkok where a large number of people from the countryside were employed. The migration from the countryside into Bangkok dramatically increased (ibid).

It was the people who arrived from the countryside who created their own musical culture, *'trae-wong'*¹² (brass band). They played Thai classical and folk music and also some adopted Western music. Early provincial *trae-wong* practised their music unsystematically, playing at traditional ceremonies such as parish ceremonies, wedding ceremonies and even funeral ceremonies. They played only the instruments they had, which could not be compared with the Western brass band standard, and only the music they could recall. Their music was mainly aimed at entertainment, and local people liked it (Wongthes, 1995:intro.). Their popularity perhaps pushed these provincial bands to play on cinema stages which were formerly occupied by urban brass bands.

Another form of folk performance culture, *'li-ke'*, is a play in which the characters, wearing Western-adapted costumes, recite and sing in a unique Thai style accompanied by a Thai ensemble (Rutnin, 1993:184). The *'li-ke'* is Indian-influenced, as it was originated by Indians in Thailand in the reign of King Rama V (1868-1910) (Chanreung, 1996:241). The Indian-influenced style of singing is still in use as an overture which is called in Thai *'Ork-khaek'* (*'ork'* means 'out' and *'khaek'* means 'Indian'; *'ork-khaek'* can be translated as 'out in an Indian way'). During the mid-fifties it was very popular in the central part of Thailand (Wongthes, 1995:intro.), and the style of singing later influenced some Thai popular songs.

3.2.4 The Split in Thai Popular Music

All these stages in the development of Thai popular music had occurred in the heart of Bangkok because television and radio stations had not yet spread throughout the country. Early Thai popular music or so-called *'phleng Thai-sakon'* (Thai songs in worldwide

¹² *Trae-wong* (*Trae* means brass instruments with wide-end and *wong* means an ensemble) is a Thai-term to call a Western brass band first established in Thailand by the military musicians (as shown in 3.2.1). Because it was introduced by the military it was then officially given a new name *Yothawathit* (military band). Later in 1950s this type of band was adopted by the provincials. They preferred to call it *trae-wong*

popular style) comprised a wide range of songs including political songs and those with either a rural or an urban quality. Later, in the 1950s, it was divided into the sub-genres ‘market (*talad*) song’ and ‘bourgeois (*phudi*) song’ corresponding to their distinctive musical characteristics and socio-economical background of the audiences. The market song (*phleng talad*), sometimes called ‘life song’ (*phleng chiwit*), may contain either folk life or political texts, while the bourgeois song (*phleng phudi*) reflects life in capital (Wongthes, 1995:intro.).

When the bourgeois song (*phleng phudi*) was developing towards Western ballroom styles (Chanreung, 1996:187), the market song (*phleng talad*) retained its lively simple Thai folk style. In its early stage, *phleng phudi* took over the radio stations whereas *phleng talad* was not welcomed by this branch of the media because the urban audience did not like it. Thanks to the introduction of the transistor, which reduced the cost of radios, there was a rapid spread of radio throughout the country. More radio stations were established, and poor people had more opportunity to create and spread their own culture. Because this group of people was much larger, the market song (*phleng talad*) was then spread throughout the country and gained more and more influence (Wongthes, 1995:intro.).

In Bangkok, the popularity of *phleng talad* mainly resulted from the growing number of industrial factories, which had increased the number of employees from the countryside. This means that *phleng talad*, their preferable style, had become part of the dominant musical culture in the society as a whole. In 1964, the status of market song was gradually raised as it was first televised under the programme named ‘*phleng luk-thung*’ (‘*luk*’ means ‘offspring’ and ‘*thung*’ means ‘field’; the term as a whole can be translated as ‘offspring or child of the field’). This term has become the permanent term for this genre of Thai music. In the meantime *phleng phudi* was then given the name ‘*phleng luk-krung*’ (‘*krung*’ means ‘capital’, so the term means ‘song of the child of the capital’) as comparison between the genres. Both styles originated and developed in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand (ibid).

Although the term *phleng luk-thung* has only existed since around 1964, I will use it to refer to its predecessor, *phleng talad*, as well.

as it was not for military use and it is far simpler.

3.2.5 Thai Country Popular Music (*Phleng Luk-thung*)

Thai country popular music (*Phleng luk-thung*) is a genre which is closely identified with the peasantry, the urban poor and the lower middle classes (Siriyuvasuak, 1990:61). In its early period, it was much influenced by Thai classical and especially folk music. It is simple in its style; its method of singing is liberal enough for a singer to use any technique from his/her knowledge and experience (Khochayuth, 1995:169). So it was the individual singer too who influenced the style of the music, especially if he or she possessed a unique singing technique. Chai Muengsing (b.1939), a singer and composer, for example, who came from the countryside and used to be a monk, successfully adapted the technique of Buddhist chant in his singing (Khochayuth, 1995:108-9).

In keeping with its folk characteristics, the language used in Thai country (*luk-thung*) songs is also simple and unpretentious, telling mainly of rural life but often including the struggle of country people who moved into Bangkok in the hope of finding a better job. It illustrates feelings of love, departure and pressure from the economic situation as well as other aspects of life (Marre & Charlton, 1985:204). Whoever it represents, whether the rural central Thai or northeast Thai, the language in the texts is always central Thai.

Following the tradition of Thai classical music teaching, the music teacher, who was also a composer, transferred his music to a student by rote. It was the practice that Thai singers respected a composer as a teacher who taught them new songs. A singer who wanted to be famous would go to ask for a new composition from a famous composer. The teacher/composer has to be creative in blending traditional and Western ways of composing the music (Khochayuth, 1995:14). For example, Khru Phaibun Butrkhan (1917-72) (*'Khru'* means 'teacher', and the prefix *'khru'* shows respect for the person), a well-known *luk-thung* composer, gave his compositions to many singers who later became famous. At the time when there was no tape recording, he sang his compositions, and his pupils memorised them and sang them back to him (Khochayuth, 1995:17). It might take a whole day to finish transferring a song.

During the forties and fifties, various annual temple festivals provided the best opportunity and location for people to come together. In Bangkok and nearby areas, every temple had its own traditional festivals where a singing competition was the highlight. Professional singers in the seventies used to acquire trophies before they became famous (Khochayuth, 1995:45). Temple festivals as a centre for social gathering are now less

common in Bangkok, but in the countryside the tradition continues.

Before the end of the 1950s, the promotion of *luk-thung* through the media was very much under strain. This was caused by political intervention as the government (Phibulsongkhram) banned 'market' or 'life songs' (both are former terms for *luk-thung*) on radio because their song-texts were politically dangerous (Khochayuth, 1995:30, 213-4). In the decades of political struggle (1930s to early 1970s approximately), music was very political. There are two kinds of political songs: nationalist and protest. The government usually banned the latter by accusing it of expressing communist ideas which posed a danger to political stability, for example, those whose texts were about the poor who had fewer opportunities in society (ibid:30-34).

In the early stages of the music industry in Thailand, music was promoted by live performances on stages in cinemas and theatres during the intervals of films or plays (Khochayuth, 1995:29,146-7). Many singers also gained their reputation from this kind of promotion. However, compared with Thai popular music during that time (*phleng luk-krung*), Thai country popular music (*phleng luk-thung*), which was originally brought into the capital by migrants from the countryside a majority of whom were from the northeast, had an inferior status (Khochayuth, 1995:212-3).

In 1964, *luk-thung* was first presented on television. These early broadcasts provoked controversial responses from audiences, as most of them were middle class and did not like the music due to its low social status (Khochayuth, 1995:216). The situation improved when, later in the same year, the Royal Gold Recording Award was given to *luk-thung* recording and its singer. In the following year, the same prestigious award was for the second time given to another *luk-thung* recording and singer. This raised its prestige and marked its acceptance in the capital (ibid:217).

As a result of Thailand's Copyright Act which became law in 1979 (Siriyuvasak, 1990:61), the production, distribution and reception of music has changed and the music industry has grown enormously. Record companies and the media have become middlemen between musicians and audiences (ibid:65). During the 1980s, a new style of Thai popular music, which is a dance-oriented style, has emerged from the composer Khru Lop Burirat which he calls it 'electronic *luk-thung*'. With this new style, Phumphuang Duangjan, who was awarded the title of Queen of *Luk-thung*, brought the *luk-thung* business to its peak (Khochayuth, 1995:175-181). Her songs were heard everywhere throughout the country as well as in the capital. Sadly, she died prematurely at the age of 31 in 1992 (Broughton et al,

1994:444) at a time when the peak of Thai country popular music and its flowering in the capital was also fading.

During the early 1980s, *mor-lam*, another type of country song which originated in the northeast of Thailand, and is accompanied by the *kaen* mouth organ arrived in the capital, brought in by migrants in search of work. It was a hit among the lowest classes of the population, mainly labourers from the northeast. In the mid-1980s, a combination of the central Thai *luk-thung* style and the new northeastern *mor-lam* style was introduced and called ‘*luk-thung prayuk*’ (*prayuk* means applied). Although *mor-lam* competes with *luk-thung* songs, it is less widely popular, as it is sung in the northeastern dialect which needs linguistic competence (Broughton et al, 1997:445-446).

From the eighties, the Thai government has had a strong policy of emphasizing the national culture. In this context, *luk-thung* is valued as an example of the unique Thai culture. The government has encouraged *luk-thung* by presenting official awards to selected recordings and singers. The first awards ceremony addressed specifically to *luk-thung* songs was held in 1989 under the title of ‘Half a century of Thai Luk-thung Songs’ by the National Cultural Committee Association (Khochayuth, 1995:76). However, the award was issued especially for ‘oldies’, ignoring the significance of the current highly commercialized country popular songs.

Luk-thung today, however, is the most commercially successful of all music in Thailand (Gaston, 1991:137). In the capital, due to the status conflict, it is not the most popular kind of song, but looking at the audience in the country as a whole, the population outside the capital is huge and they are loyal *luk-thung* fans.

3.2.6 Thai Popular Music (Phleng Thai-sakon)

In the early period of Thai musical drama (*lakhorn rong*) (see 3.2.1), Thai classical music was the musical style used in the show. Later, since the 1930s, the music has become more westernized (see 3.2.2). The singing method has been westernized/modernized by singing without the traditional *milismas* and using one word per pitch. This omission of *milismas* meant that the prolonged non-word tones were discarded, which made the singing more concise. Since the 1930s, Western instruments have been used to accompany the show (Gaston, 1991:131; Kuslasai, 1992:31). When Thai musical drama (*lakhorn-rong*) lost its popularity in 1952 (Aarampi, 1966:74), its music did not die away. This music, with the use

of Western style bands playing courting songs, continued to be the main features of the later *Thai-sakon* (Rutnin, 1993:184).

The *Thai-sakon* style of music had become popular in the forties and fifties with the approval of the government of Phibulsongkhram (1938-44 & 1948-57), who started the policy of modernizing Thai culture. Thai popular music has also tended to replace Thai classical music ever since (Myers-Moro 1988). However, during the subsequent government of Prime Minister Thanaraj,¹³ there was a policy to bring back the emphasis on Thai identity, and *Thai-sakon* music, which contains pronounced Western rhythms, was banned on radio. Nevertheless, the official ban could not prevent the continuity of this Westernized Thai popular music: it continued to be promoted through live performances (Khochayuth, 1995:107-8). The politics under Thanaraj's regime was regarded as autocratic, which was reflected in some Thai popular songs during that time. Under the influence of the political pressure, Thai popular music in Bangkok comprised both songs with the aim of entertainment and songs with political texts (Krung-tep Thu-ra-kit, 3/6/98: Jut-pra-kai:1).

During the sixties, Thai popular music in the style of capital popular (*phleng luk-krung*) was in Big Band style, which was jazz-based. The most famous singer was Suntharaphorn¹⁴ whose music was also called 'dance (ball-room) music' (Chanreung, 1996:187). Some of his songs contain familiar traditional melodies arranged in the Western style, which sounds distinctively different from *luk-thung*. His music is widely regarded by the audience as good Thai popular music, and his recordings are available in record shops throughout Thailand nowadays (Myers-Moro 1988:417). The influence of Western popular music massively transformed Thai popular music during the 1960s and 1970s (Siriuyasak, 1990:63). This can clearly be seen in the emergence of 'Combo'¹⁵, which imitated the style of the British Cliff Richard back-up band, using only electric guitar, bass and drum (Krung-tep Thu-ra-kit, 3/6/98: Jut-pra-kai: 1). This style became a new genre in Thai popular music in the 1980s called '*String*' (Siriuyasak, 1990:63). In addition to the styles described above, American music in the styles of 'Rock' and 'Folk' were brought in by American soldiers who were stationed in a number of cities in Thailand. These styles of Western music have influenced Thai local popular music making. In the early 1970s, under the political tension, a group of university students adopted American rock and folk musical styles, inspired by Bob Dylan,

¹³ At that time Elvis Presley's songs were very popular and influenced Thai popular music.

¹⁴ An example of his music is in the attached CD at the back of the thesis.

¹⁵ This imitation style of back-up music was usually known as 'Shadow', following the name of Cliff Richard's back-up band, The Shadows.

in their protest songs against the government (Krung-tep Thu-ra-kit, 3/6/98: Jut-pra-kai: 1). Thus, ‘songs-for-life’ or *phleng pheua chiwit*, another genre of Thai popular music developed¹⁶.

In 1977 the cassette tape arrived in Thailand, marking a starting point for the Thai popular music business in Bangkok (ibid). From the eighties onwards, Thai popular music began to be heavily influenced by Western popular music, especially rock styles, and Thai popular songs in the style of big band was becoming out of date. The new rock styles were targeted at teenagers rather than adults. This marked a new era in Thai popular music. As a consequence, the former term ‘*Thai-sakon*’ has been unofficially taken back into use for this modern type of Thai popular music while the term ‘*luk-krung*’ now refers to the previous style of Thai bourgeois popular music of the sixties and seventies (as used in Marre & Charlton, 1985:204).

Therefore, since the 1980s, the music scene in Thailand has developed rapidly.

For the last decade or so, the Thai popular music industry has developed at an unprecedented rate, reflecting the high economic growth rates and rapid industrialization, the wider availability of cheap cassette players, and the introduction of the 1979 Copyright Act (Broughton et al, 1997:441).

In 1985, music became big business in Thailand commencing with the establishment of ‘Grammy Entertainment’, the biggest local major record company in Thailand. Modern Thai popular music in the style of rock has been prominent since the eighties, following the Western fashion from rock and roll, to hard rock, to alternative rock in the late nineties. Most Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music today has been Westernized to an extent that almost nothing of Thai-ness remains except the Thai language used in its lyrics, as will be shown later in this thesis. It has become the mainstream of music listening in Bangkok, and *Thai-sakon* music has developed into one of the most successful businesses in Thailand.

It is also worth mentioning the present King Rama IX’s compositional activity as it is highly regarded by Thai population and his pieces have been taught in school music education. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej is a jazz musician who used to play with world-famous jazz musicians. He composed numerous Thai songs in jazz (including blues)

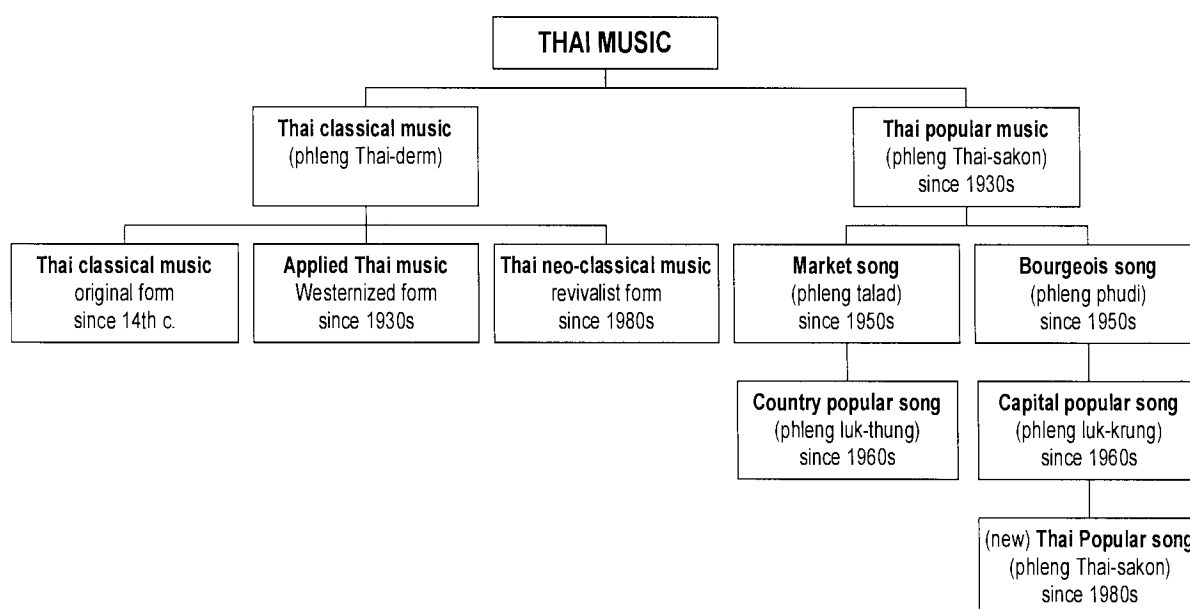
¹⁶ However, as shown earlier, popular song with political texts emerged earlier within the group ‘market songs’ but it was not a genre in its own right. It was resurrected again by musicians whose background was in Western country and pop/rock music (Pheua chiwit Magazine No.7, p.19). Songs-for-life (*phleng pheua chiwit*) has become a separate genre from Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) and Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music. Its song texts have a different purpose from the mainstream pop/rock; however, its musicians cannot completely deny their position in the category of Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music.

style from the 1940s to the 1960s. One of his compositions was featured in a Broadway show in the 1950s, and a selection of his compositions was performed at the Vienna Concert Hall where he gained his Honorary Membership from the Institute of Music and Arts of the City of Vienna (National Identity Board, 1995:200). Although his music is in the Western style and some of his songs have two versions of lyrics: in Thai and English, it is usually sung with Thai lyrics, and is also frequently used on patriotic occasions and accompanies national Royal functions such as the King's birthday celebrations. Forty-three of his pieces were published in 1979 by the Yamaha Corporation who own the largest number of music schools in Thailand.

In conclusion, there are five main types of Thai music which have developed in Bangkok.¹⁷ In chronological order, Thai classical music dates from the 14th century. The second 2 types, 'applied Thai music' and 'Thai popular music', developed from Thai classical music during the 1930s. Thai popular music was later divided into 'market' and 'bourgeois' songs in the 1950s, which developed into country popular, which was highly influenced by folk music, and capital popular in the 1960s which developed towards the Western fashion. In the 1980s, the influence of global musical culture created new trends in Thai music including the desire to strengthen the national identity. Thai popular music in the capital has followed the trends of global popular music whereas Thai neo-classical music is a revivalist form of Thai classical music developed in an avant-garde style (see Figure 3.1).

¹⁷ However, in general, applied Thai music and Thai neo-classical music are referred to as Thai classical music. I then include them in the category of Thai classical music in my data collection and analysis.

Figure 3.1: The main types of Thai music developing in Bangkok



3.3 Western Music in Thailand

3.3.1 Western Classical Music

Since the mid-nineteenth century, a number of members of Thai royal and noble families have been educated in Europe. After finishing their education, several brought back Western ideas, customs and culture including music, and some began to adopt and adapt Western musical styles (see 3.2.1). The outstanding development of Western classical music in Thailand was led by Phra Chen Duriyang, whose German father had taught him string instruments and piano. He established Thailand's first orchestra in the Royal Entertainment Department and gave tuition to young Thai musicians. In the late 1920s, other small orchestras were established as part of the branches of the Thai armed services. In 1934, Phra Chen's orchestra was transferred to and became the nucleus of the Fine Arts Department (National Identity Board, 1995:199-200).

From the eighties the development of Western classical music in Thailand has been mainly in the hands of private organizations. During the eighties, the development of Western classical music in Thailand has entered another stage in its progress as evidenced by the establishment of the first private orchestra and ensemble, and also the setting up of music departments in some universities. In 1982, the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra (BSO) was established. It is the first and only privately-run and professional orchestra in Thailand.

Initially performing 3 or 4 concerts a year, it has subsequently performed as many as 30 events a year (Bangkok Post, 21/6/98, Outlook:1). Its concerts are also regularly conducted by guest conductors from world-famous symphony orchestras. In 1985, the Ibycus Chamber Music Ensemble was founded. This ensemble is organized like a company and has a monthly programme featuring foreign and guest artists.

Western classical music (in Thai, '*phleng classic*') in Thailand has been historically associated with the upper classes, the wealthy and the educated (especially those who have studied abroad). This has given Western classical music an elitist image. The audience for Western classical music is mainly restricted to the elite, Western classical instrument players and their families.

In the nineties, Western classical music is still struggling to gain wider audiences and to develop the musical competence of its musicians. Progress is slow but steady. In the mid-1990s, the Piyabhand Saitwongse Foundation was established. Most of its chamber music programmes promote budding local musicians and vocalists. The foundation also holds a piano contest every 3 years (*ibid.*). More recently in 1998, the College of Music of Mahidol University was formed (its music department was founded in 1989). It offers a Bachelor of Arts not only in Western classical music but also in jazz, Thai and oriental music including music studies in industry and technology, musicology and music education (*ibid.*).

In school education, Western classical music is not usually taught. Despite this, it appears at university level, a fact which is made possible by the large number of music schools (non-formal schools) in Bangkok where classical music skills are taught. This may result from the prestige one can gain from being involved with the most prestigious music (see 2.4.3). However, as evidence from my research data shows, most children give up their Western classical music studies before they reach an advanced level.

3.3.2 Western Popular Music

Western popular music was introduced in Thailand in the mid-twentieth century. The previous generation of popular music listeners grew up with Western pop and rock (Siriuyasak, 1990:61). Music tastes shifted from Western pop and rock to Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) after the Thai music industry was systematically formed followed by music production influenced by Western popular music fashion. Generally speaking, Western popular music has become a model for contemporary Thai popular music (*Thai-*

sakon).

The main influx of Western cultures first took place in Thailand in the mid-sixties when the Vietnam War (1965-1975) began. During this war, approximately 60,000 Americans soldiers used several towns in the eastern part of Thailand as their campsites. Their arrival had brought American forms of culture, especially music, into Thailand. They brought the latest American recordings of the time, and in addition, popular American bands arrived to entertain their soldiers. In consequence, the entertainment business in Thailand expanded rapidly.

In fact, as stated above, Western popular music had already been heard in Thailand before this period, but the arrival of American soldiers spread the popularity of popular music, especially 'rock', to a wider area. Outside Bangkok where the soldiers were camped, musicians from America and the Philippines started to play their music. It was not long before musicians from Bangkok were attracted to the area; and later, Thai musicians became the main employees. This was because Thai musicians were willing to accept lower wages than their foreign counterparts; however, the wages at the camps were still better than in Bangkok. They played music which was already popular or the latest rock from the United States. Not only inside the camps, but outside, there were also pubs or nightclubs where many Thai musicians were employed. Several Thai 'rock' bands emerged during that time, but their audiences were mainly American both inside and outside the camps (Pimchon et al, 1996, 8-12).

After the war ended in April 1975, American soldiers gradually returned to their country and the businesses around the campsites gradually faded; some musicians diverted to other careers, some returned to their former clubs in Bangkok and some with distinctive musical skills went abroad (ibid, 1996:13).

Since the eighties and especially the nineties, global communication has become extremely efficient. In Thailand, with effective communication with the outside world, Western popular music has more opportunity to spread more widely and become more popular. It may become a competitor with Thai local popular music in the future. However, the data of the thesis suggest some interesting points concerning this issue. Most Thai people do not understand the English lyrics of Western popular music, but they like the musical style. As Thai popular music now has adopted the same style, Thai people tend to choose Thai popular music in preference to Western popular music.

Music schools in Bangkok also provide courses in popular music. As the musical styles

of Western and Thai popular music are similar, therefore, they are both taught in the same course. However, in general, popular musicians often do not learn their skills formally (see 2.5.2); for example, many Thai musicians, amateur and professional, have learnt informally.

3.4 The Music Industry and Music Education in Bangkok, 1996

The first part of this section will describe the music industry with reference to the Western system and then look at the situation in Thailand. Although the music industry in Thailand may not be identical with that in the West, the core operation of a record company is similar throughout the world. The information on music production and reception in Bangkok in this section came from my own one-month observation between August 26 and September 25, 1996. The observation was carried out by taking notes on the kinds of music and how they were used in a range of places. I visited record shops, shopping malls, hotel-lobbies, pubs, karaokes, nightclubs, restaurants and tourist attractions. I also explored the public media: radio, television and the music press, by direct experience, by a content-analysis of programming, and by reading. The second part of this section will describe music education in Thailand both within general schooling and outside it.

3.4.1 Music in the Wider Society

3.4.1.1 The Music Industry

In the late twentieth century, the music industry is one of the largest industries in the world. In a sense it is a global entertainment industry. It is normally not an industry managed by artists but by businessmen who exploit the artists' skills and products.

Record companies have changed considerably since they came into being with the arrival of the recordable cylinder back in the late nineteenth century. The most noticeable change over the last 15-20 years is that they have become increasingly like proper businesses, in other words run to make a profit by people who know how to make a profit rather than people who simply love or enjoy music. (Barrow and Newby, 1995:20)

In addition to such criticism, Martin (1995:241) offers a positive perspective, arguing that the market does in fact provide a choice for consumers, who can buy what they like, interpret and use it in anyway they choose.

According to Frith (1978), the production of pop-rock music is from an economic point of view, as well as technically, a complex process. 'Music can't be *just* a product, even in

its rawest commodity form, and the artistic value of records has a complicating effect on their production and use' (Frith, 1978:75). The consumer does affect the production of the music. The music that is accepted by the widest number of consumers is a successful piece of music, and in the business sense, how successful the music is depends on the quantity that can be sold.

According to Barrow and Newby (1995), there are three types of record companies: '*indie*' or independent record companies, '*major*' record companies and '*label*' or quasi independent record companies, subsidized by a major company. Independent companies are small privately owned companies; in contrast, major companies are large or multinational firms, which may subsidize other smaller record companies. These small and large record companies exist side by side with different roles. It is independent companies who create diversity in musical taste, which causes a decline in the popular taste for music produced by the large firms (Burnett, 1996:70).

The major companies (generalists) often provide mass products for a mass audience or a wide range of products for different groups of consumers. The minor companies (specialists) may concentrate on a limited product or genre. Thus the generalist core and the specialist periphery operate as two distinctly different strategic groups within an industry. Firms within the generalist group resemble each other closely and are likely to respond in a similar fashion to market disturbances. Specialist firms tend to be somewhat more heterogeneous. (Burnett, 1996:78)

Burnett (1996:79-80) points out that to prevent the independent companies gaining a large share of the market, major companies may expand their power by buying or subsidizing independent companies or else they may diversify to include other up-and-coming styles. When their new 'differentiated' musical style becomes the norm, the independent companies will develop another style which may become another norm waiting to be replaced within a continuing cycle.

Amongst the types of record company mentioned above, the most systematic is no doubt the major record company. While an independent record company can be a bedroom operation, a major company is a large scale multinational firm operating within a complex organizational structure. The main sections within a big record company (major and big independent companies) will be described in the following paragraphs.

A record company is divided into different departments with different tasks, which may overlap each other, such as artist and repertoire (A&R); marketing; public relations; publicity and press; radio and television promotion; sales; business affairs including finance

and legal; manufacture and distribution; administration and secretarial (Negus 1992).

A&R staff may work as employees for the company or they may be freelance. Besides seeking for artists, A&R staff spend their time watching and listening to unknown acts, and assessing their potential. They often pick up an act when its contract with a rival company runs out. They also deal with the financial and investment calculations, which have to be worked out with precision.

Such calculations rest on an assessment of the market, on an understanding of how records get sold: a record is rarely made without reference to who it's being made for. But ultimately the A&R man's chief responsibility is for the translation of the talent he's signed into a saleable product; traditionally, his most important role was as record producer. (Frith, 1978:79)

Negus (1992) points out that successful A&R staff are some of the most highly paid personnel in the recording company. The task of A&R staff will be impossible unless the musician group has its own efficient management (Frith 1983). On behalf of the musicians, their manager deals with the record company, the music publisher, the press, and whoever else needs to be involved. A manager acts like a businessman: organising his client's finances, negotiating the best deals with record companies and protecting musicians from exploitation, by negotiating reasonable royalties from the record company. The main duty of managers is to make things easy for musicians; they might be producers at the same time. As Frith (1983) has put it: 'the manager, in other words, is not just the representative of the musicians' own interests, but also guarantees that they will be, in record company terms, 'reasonable'.' Most managers are also involved in the creation of the product itself. By the end of the 1970s, managers were being employed to work for musicians, which meant increasing the power of the musicians to deal with the record company. Negus (1992) points out that a manager usually receives between 15 and 25 per cent of the artists' earnings.

Frith (1983) points out that musicians are treated as property, each with a price, a measurable value that can be exploited, increased and realized in the market place. However, musicians nowadays must have received professional legal advice before signing a contract. In a contract there is an agreement on the payment of advanced money, and royalty percentage points on the sales of the recordings. 'The contract will usually cover a period of 5-7 years, but will contain an option clause every 12-18 months. This gives the record company the right to retain or release an artist from a contract' (Negus, 1992:42). For most contracts, the percentage royalty points, which are from 10-14 points to start with, are

expected to increase each year. The contract is also likely to prevent musicians from recording for other companies. The negotiation between musician and record company is made by middle-men: one middle-man, A&R staff, acts on the company's behalf, the other middle-man, the manager, acts on the musicians' behalf. These middle-men look after the contract and support of their clients.

After a contract with a record company is made, if musicians do not write the songs themselves, the next move is to find songwriters. This is done through music publishers. A music publisher employs songwriters and finds the work for them. The duty of a publisher is to give advice on 'well known and previously published material - a publisher's back catalogue is a permanent source of potentially re-recordable songs' and to act as 'the supporter and promoter of a writer in much the same way as a manager acts as the supporter and promoter of a performer' (Firth, 1978:83). Moreover, another role of the publishers is as the administration of a song's rights after it has been recorded and performed.

Frith (1983:132) points out that the copyright on a song (which means tune and lyrics combined) lasts until fifty years after the death of the author and entitles the copyright holder to payment on every copy of the song sold, whether in sheet music or recorded form (which can include its use, for example, on soundtrack, commercial and segment of *muzak* tape). The copyright holder is usually the song's publisher, who has his own contract with the songwriter, but the various rights available to the publisher are administered differently, according to whether they are mechanical or performing rights. Mechanical rights are the royalty rights on the use of a song as a recording, and the rights resulting from record sales are the main source of income for the songwriter and publisher. Performing rights mean that whenever a song is performed in public or broadcast on radio or TV the writer and publisher must be paid.

When a song is ready to be recorded, it is the duty of a producer to take charge in the studio. In this most important stage, the producer works as organiser and coordinator with musicians and sound engineers. Producers must have both musical and administrative abilities; they have to 'plan a recording session in advance, decide how the potential material can be best arranged and embellished' (Frith, 1978:84). It is a producer's responsibility to get the music to sound right, this involves the availability of technical equipment. Frith (1978:85) points out that producers are 'more influential than the people they produce, as record companies look to them as the source of sales success.' Two different aspects to the job of producers, according to Firth, are the ability to put the musicians' music, including

their musical ideas, into recorded sound; on the other hand, a producer is a creator of the sound.

Technical development in manufacture helps progress in record making. As the material used in producing tape or CD improves, the quality of recorded music also improves. The packaging of the products is also important in that it affects sales. It is the work of the manufacturer to carry out the final process of making the records.

Before discussing the distribution of recordings to the public, I would like to describe the music business in Thailand in relation to the stage of business development and the types of music it produces.

Music has become a booming business in Bangkok during the nineties. At beginning of the decade, the business was predominantly conducted by only four local major record companies: *Grammy*, *Nititat*, *Kita*¹⁸, and *RS*. But from the mid-nineties, business progressed towards the stage of de-concentration in which small companies started to take a part in the overall scene.

Within the last year, there has been an enormous development in the presentation of new musical styles in our country (Thailand). This has resulted from the mushrooming of small record companies, which would not have occurred in the last decade, as no one would have dared to compete with the large companies. This is a good omen. (my translation from 'Intro', Hot Progress Vol.3, August 1996)

It has to be noted that the four big companies mentioned above are local and are not comparable with the major global companies. They are major in the sense that they provide the majority of recorded music for local public consumption. Small record companies in Bangkok include independent and label companies. The mushrooming of record companies in the mid-nineties mainly included a large proportion of independent companies.

The music industry in Thailand deals mostly with *Thai-sakon* (Thai popular songs) and *luk-thung* (Thai country popular songs). *Thai-sakon* songs today can be divided into three main categories: teen songs, adult songs and songs-for-life. The division is based on their consumer groups and the different purposes of the music.

Teen songs or *phleng wairun* is the biggest category of Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music, and is mainly 'dance music', developed in the 1980s, and known as '*string*', a rock oriented genre. It has been popular among the urban middle classes and elite and is regarded as high modernistic culture (Wong, 1995:184). Musicians in genre tend to emulate the

¹⁸ *Kita* later declined and closed down in 1997. This shows the impact of the de-concentration stage of the

musical styles of the Western latest hits such as disco, rap and hip-hop. This type of music is undoubtedly the most influenced by global popular music. As its name implies, this category is aimed at young consumers.

Another category of Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music is adult songs. These songs sound closer to Thai popular oldies (*luk-krung*) and include the recycled popular oldies. Their styles are usually pop, pop-rock and pop-jazz which are in lighter rhythms compared with teen songs. Their lyrics express adult married life, for example.

The last category of Thai popular music is songs-for-life. Coming from the same root as 'market song' (*phleng talad*) which later became *luk-thung* (see 3.2.4), 'songs-for-life', as they are now called in Thai '*phleng pheua chiwit*', a type of protest songs (see 2.6.1). The musical style of songs-for-life is often said to be in the middle between *Thai-sakon* and *luk-thung*. Similar to *Thai-sakon*, their use of musical instrument is basically rock influenced. However, compared to *luk-thung*, songs-for-life emphasizes socio-political themes (Lockard, 1998:203). As their musicians tend to be nationalist¹⁹, their use of instruments often involves folk instruments such as the Thai bamboo flute (*khlui*), and occasionally makes use of folk melodies (Wong, 1995:193-194). This type of music had become very popular by the mid-1980s, with appeal to a wider range of youth (Lockard, 1998:203). However, by now in the late 1990s, its popularity has declined.

As mentioned above, a number of new independent record companies were established during the mid-nineties. In 1996, there were about fifty record companies of which around twenty were successful. Most of them produced *Thai-sakon*. *Sakon* or Western popular music sold in Thailand is partly imported and partly locally reproduced under the mother company names: Warner Music, Polygram, EMI and Sony Music. The airplay of Western popular music through cable television, satellite and concerts by foreign musicians, which has been increasing since 1994, contributes to the growing popularity of Western popular music. And to enlarge their market, these international record companies have started to produce *Thai-sakon* songs.

Many *Thai-sakon* singers, dreaming of an international market, have been trying to raise the quality of their work. I had a chance to watch the first television recording of MTV (music television) Asia in Bangkok in September 1996. This was the first opportunity for

music business.

¹⁹ Nationalism in songs-for-life aims to emphasize the appreciation of the nation, and sometimes it attacks the invasion by foreign cultures.

Thai-sakon musicians to perform their hits for MTV, which marked a big step in their progress towards the international stage.

What is very important in the music business is promotion. This process may start at any time - for example, when the record is still in the process of production or when it is ready to be launched. When it is ready for sale, copies are given to everyone who might conceivably have any influence on the record buying public (Frith 1983).

For a major record company, the promotion of the music also includes the extension of related products in the market, as Burnett (1996) points out:

The entertainment industry thrives on producing global stars to expose across a wide range of media: film, music, videos, television, books, magazines and advertising included. The music industry is obviously an important link in this process as nothing crosses borders and cultural boundaries easier than music. (Burnett 1996:10)

In cooperation with the record companies, the public media (TV, radio, newspapers and magazines) provide information about new records and videos, and the people who make them. This information forms the basis on which most people choose what to listen to and what to buy. In a record company there is a publicity section where the publicist aims to promote a record through print media. As the object of promotion is to sell records, another part of promotion is aimed at retailers as the publicist must ensure that record shops are stocking the recordings. The most important goal of promotion is to get the music heard by the public; this can be done through radio, television, video, clubs, and live performance.

3.4.1.2 Music in Public

a) Muzak

One of the uses of music in everyday life is as background music or so-called 'Muzak', named after the original company producing functional music in 1934, 'The Muzak Corporation' (Radocy & Boyle, 1997:38). Background music possesses stimulus value (ibid:39). It is usually used to create atmosphere, break the silence and liven up places where people gather.

I found muzak everywhere in Bangkok, for example, shopping centres, hotel lobbies, restaurants and tourist attractions. I also found that in places which are more prosperous or free of commercials, Western instrumental light music was often used as a background whereas in down-to-earth places, Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) songs were often played. I did not find any Western classical music used as 'muzak' except in a Western classical music

book shop, whereas Thai classical music was sometimes used as muzak in Thai restaurants and some hotel lobbies where foreigners are the main customers. Thai classical music tends to be used in places of cultural heritage, which attract tourists; for example, in the 'direction machine' at *The Grand Palace*, Thai classical music was used in the background. However, I was disappointed when I heard Western popular instrumental music playing as background in one of the palaces of King Rama V, one of the top attractions in Bangkok where Thai classical music would be more appropriate.

b) Nightclubs

For the record company, another method of promotion is to get the music played in clubs. A record company can pay a DJ to play its records. But DJs have to put on a balanced show which must respond to the demands of a particular dancing audience (Frith 1978). Alternatively, a record company can try to attract the dominant DJs' attention and convince them of the quality of their records so that the DJs play them without payment. 'Record companies recognised this influence and began specifically targeting key taste makers with the aim of influencing the DJs and dancers who followed them' (Negus, 1992:132). Club promotion provides an opportunity to assess the potential consumer response to a specific track. It informs a record company whether the music is worthy of further investment.

Nightclubs in Bangkok provide both live and recorded music; moreover, apart from drinks and snacks, dinner may also be provided. There are several types of nightclubs called by their original foreign words. 'Pub' is a recent type of nightclub, which is booming and may open day and night. It typically provides food and music. Similar to 'pub' is the 'nightclub', which is used interchangeably with the word 'bar', and also provides food and music, but both sound out-of-date and contain the negative implication of involvement in prostitution. 'Karaoke' is another recent fashionable type of night-time entertainment business, whereas 'disco' (or often called 'discothèque' or in short 'thèque') is for dancing and drink.

I visited a nightclub, the *CM Square*, in the Novotel Hotel, located in *Siam Square*, a shopping area in central Bangkok. The CM Square nightclub was divided into three areas: pub, disco, and karaoke. The 'disco' and 'pub' regularly hired foreign musicians to entertain their guests. During my visit, there was a Brazilian group playing Brazilian popular music in the 'disco'. Many of the audience were foreigners. In the 'pub' and 'karaoke' areas, there were more Thai guests. The 'karaoke' area is divided into a big hall and small private rooms.

In a private karaoke room, there were a number of choices of popular music from different countries listed by the language of the lyrics, for example, Thai, English, French, Japanese, Chinese and others.

Normally, live music in nightclubs is performed either by freelance musicians who have not yet been employed by record companies or by musicians who have just launched their debut albums.

At the time I was there, singing was popular as seen in the availability of karaoke in many pubs and the increase in singing contests. One obvious phenomenon in the music industry in Thailand was the booming of karaoke recordings and karaoke music videos.

I visited a number of '*pubs*' in Bangkok where Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music was played as often as Western popular (*sakon*) music. Most '*pubs*' showed live vocal music. A wider range of music was played in pubs than in the public media, which concentrate on promoting new releases.

In most restaurants there was no live music but only muzak. However, many expensive restaurants including coffee shops, especially those in big hotels, provide live music day and night, mainly light jazz and popular oldies.

c) Stage Live Music

A live concert is always an important method of promotion for the music business. Even though video has become another important medium of promotion since the 80s, because it has an advantage over other recordings in that it can provide vision and sound closer to a live concert, live concerts still attract large audiences. Blake (1992) points out that a concert gives an opportunity for the audience to participate closely in the music making; the audience often sings or dances along with the music. The concert reduces the distance between performer and audience. 'The sharing of pleasure at a public event increases the personal pleasure of the individual' (Blake, 1992:66).

A live concert can also result in further promotion of music sales with the help of other media. If it is successful it can bring the artist to the attention of the press, television and radio programmers. Negus (1992:131) points out that 'it is not simply a way of generating income, nor merely a means of promoting recordings direct to consumers, but it is a way of influencing various cultural mediators' which finally meet the aim of selling recordings.

In Bangkok, going to concerts is another way of enjoying live music. Some concerts are free and are usually live on television. When I was there, some of the free concerts were held

weekly. People could enjoy the music at the concert itself or they could relax at home and watch the live broadcast. These concerts were aimed at promoting new albums of Thai singers, especially Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music.

As for the concerts for which tickets are sold, and which are less frequent, there was only one *This-sakon* concert during the whole of my month's observation visit. It ran for three days with a superstar singer.

In this last decade of the twentieth century, there was an increase in foreign singers and musicians giving Western popular (*sakon*) concerts in Bangkok. This might be a result of the increase in cable television and other media which receive transmissions from abroad together with the large numbers of Western popular music musical products such as CD and video available widely in Bangkok.

There were also Western classical music concerts, but normally the audiences are not as large as those for popular music. There may be one or two public concerts for Western classical music each month, whereas Thai classical music concerts are held even more rarely. Thai classical music concerts normally take place on the anniversary of national (royal and religious) celebration days, and are also broadcast on television.

Another form of live stage music is the music contest. Singing contests were the most frequent music contest in Bangkok during the mid-nineties. They were open to children as young as 8 years old, to teenagers, and to young adults. Songs in the competition were of the popular type, either Thai or Western. I have never heard of any Western classical music singing competitions, but Thai classical music sing competitions are normally held within an institution or among the small social group which support it. Apart from singing contests, two piano competitions were held annually. Competitions for other instruments were rare. There used to be concerto competitions for all instruments but these have not been held regularly every year. Accomplished Thai musicians are more likely to compete in the international stage abroad.

d) Record Shops

From the perspective of the record company, the record shop is also a place where music is promoted: factors such as the shop decor, the music played in the shop, the arrangement of the recordings, the eye-catching quality of the promotion posters, all gain the interest of the consumer. These may influence the decision of many buyers who are looking for popular recordings.

It is clear that promotion is very important in the music business. Music is produced to be sold. Effective promotion makes massive sales possible and makes the business successful. Promotion is the big investment that may lead to success or failure.

Music recordings are available in every shopping centre in Bangkok. *Tower Records*, a branch of the well-known international record shop, opened in Bangkok in 1996. This shop, which contains a wide range of types of music, has become the biggest in Bangkok. Inside the shop, I noticed that apart from Western popular music from the USA and the UK, there were also sections for Japanese, Chinese²⁰, and Indian²¹ popular music. There was also music from other countries in a 'World music' section.

In every large record shop I visited, there were more Western popular music recordings than Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon* and *luk-thung*). A big record shop is generally divided into sections of Thai music, Western music and Western classical music. In the Thai music section, Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music occupies the largest area. Only a small quantity of Thai classical music recordings are available and they are normally placed next to the Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) recordings, which occupy quite a big area in the Thai music section. Western popular music on the other hand occupies the largest area in big record shops whereas Western classical music has its own section, which is big enough to be easily noticeable.

I noticed that small retailers in more prosperous shopping centres in central Bangkok sold either only Western popular music or both Thai and Western popular music (*Thai-sakon* and *sakon*). Outside central Bangkok, Western popular specialist shops were rare. Most record shops sold mainly Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) and Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) recordings and some had a Western popular music section as well.

It is obvious that Thai classical music attracts the least attention, as seen in the very small number of its recordings in a record shop. The reason for this is more complex than the invasion of global culture alone but is rooted in traditional beliefs, which prevent the recording of the music (see 3.1.7).

Most record shops had a section of karaoke recordings. Following the recent fashion, new albums are always launched with a karaoke counterpart. Karaoke recordings were selling well and have become another recording people want to buy. These karaoke

²⁰ The Chinese music section contains recordings in Chinese language including recordings from Hong Kong, Taiwan and China, regardless of their different dialects.

²¹ I found an Indian popular music section only in this shop.

recordings include tape-cassette, CD, and music video.

3.4.1.3 Public Media

a) Radio

Radio is the medium that can play music to the widest audience. It encourages retailers to stock recordings and consumers to purchase them. More importantly for record companies, 'playing music on the radio usually entails significantly less production costs than other types of programming' (Burnett, 1996:81). Negus (1992) points out that Pop Radio in the USA is more commercial in terms of the selection of music to be played. In Britain, the selection of music is influenced by the taste of the disc jockeys.

Record companies must get their music broadcast through radio stations. Then, they must make friends with the radio producers or disc jockeys and expose them to the music they wish to promote. As radio play is very important, record companies must try different methods to get their music played by this route. In the early 1990s, Negus (1992) points out that:

if recordings are not receiving airplay, record companies can use alternative promotional activities as a means of bringing an artist to the attention of the public, and in order to persuade radio stations to programme a recording - most important here is the work of the press officer. (Negus, 1992:114)

There are three kinds of radio waves in Thailand: the amplitude modulation (AM), the frequency modulation (FM) and the short-wave frequencies. The first permanent AM radio station in Thailand was established in 1930 (Somphong 1992:304) whereas the first FM radio station was established later in 1956 (record of the National Communication Committee 1987). In 1992, there were altogether 252 radio stations in Thailand, which broadcast on 293 frequencies (Somphong 1992:305), and in the mid-1990s the number increased to 480 stations nationwide (National Identity Board, 1995:216). In Bangkok alone, there were 41 FM and 35 AM stations (Sunday magazine, Bangkok Post, September 22-28, 1996).

The complete radio broadcast programmes of all radio stations were not available. Therefore, in order to get a better idea of the content of broadcasting in Bangkok, I tuned to the radio to find more information. Despite the number of radio stations stated earlier, I found 40 FM frequencies and 41 AM frequencies. One reason for this discrepancy, perhaps, is that some AM frequencies which did not aim at audiences in Bangkok could, in fact, be

received in Bangkok as well. The other is that some FM frequencies broadcast either day-time only or night-time only. The main features broadcast on FM and AM stations were different. AM stations mainly contained local news, serialized novels, and Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) music whereas FM stations mainly consisted of Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) and Western popular (*sakon*) music, city traffic reports and local & international news. Radio stations aims principally at commodified music; as an important medium for music promotion, 'Thai radio works on the principle that the more a song is heard, the more listeners will like it and the more they will want to buy it' (Wong, 1995:54). It is obvious that the airtime for Thai classical music is scarce on both FM and AM stations. Because it is functional music, removed from its aristocratic and ritual contexts, classical music conveys but a fraction of its intended meaning and significance (ibid). Often, each station broadcasts a certain type of content throughout its time on air, but some stations may have more than one type of content. As for music programmes, some were broadcasting different types of music on the same programme. The following table shows the number of radio stations devoted to certain types of music.

Table 3.1: Music on radio stations (Bangkok, September 1996)

| Types of music | AM | FM |
|--|----|----|
| 1. Thai classical Music (<i>Thai-derm</i>) | 1 | 1 |
| 2. Thai country popular music (<i>Luk-thung</i>) | 20 | 6 |
| 3. Thai popular music (<i>Thai-sakon</i>) | 5 | 18 |
| 4. Western popular music (<i>Sakon</i>) | - | 19 |
| 5. Western classical music (<i>Classic</i>) | 1* | 3* |
| 6. Indian popular music | - | 1 |
| 7. Jazz | - | 1 |

* There was one station on FM and AM broadcasting an educational programme using classical music as background and shorter extracts inserted between each break.

Note: the information above was gathered from available documents together with empirical research

Table 3.1 above shows the extremely asymmetrical proportions of types of music played on AM and FM radio stations. Interestingly, there is also one station for Indian popular music for the minority of Indians who live in many parts of Bangkok, but there is no Chinese music station even though there are many more people of Chinese origin in Bangkok. The types of music shown in table 3.1 may then not tell the whole story of music

listening in Bangkok. People can also listen to music in Japanese and Chinese films and serials broadcast on television, and there are specialist magazines focusing mainly on the stars and also on the music. Moreover, in some big record shops, there are also Japanese and Chinese popular music recordings sections but there are no radio stations for these types of music.

On buses, the media still had a role. Most buses have radio and some also have television. The music played on the bus was mainly Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) and Thai country popular (*luk-thung*).

Charernsuk (1993:333) points out that all Thai radio frequencies are owned by the government, which auctions the leases. Companies who win the lease sell the airtime for commercials including music. I discovered that there were a number of critics of the organization of radio business, especially the arrangement of music programmes, which allows record companies to commit 'payola'. This means that a record company may buy a whole programme for promoting its own new releases. Some record companies may also buy their own radio station. Although this practice which is regarded as 'payola' was banned in the USA and the UK (Frith, 1983:117), it was still common practice in Thailand during the mid-nineties.

b) Television and Video

At the present time, audio-visual media play an essential part in music promotion. Both television and video have to respond to the public taste and promotion is regarded as successful if their music appears in these media. In the British television, it is programmes such as 'Top of the Pops' which present the successful popular music of the time.

Tracing back to 1975, the music video made by Queen to accompany *Bohemian Rhapsody* is regarded as the first conscious use of this medium to promote a pop single (Negus 1992). Since that time, record companies have been using this type of promotion. This means that not only recordings but video as well can be sold. As Hayward (1988:37) points out, 'the success of pop videos on television has also resulted in them being made available for sale on video cassette.' In the related industry, the cinema industry often releases new films along with a promotional video using the film's soundtrack.

In August 1981 with the rise of MTV (music television), which broadcasts non-stop pop music throughout its networks in the United States, the music industry gained a new means of promotion in which 'the audience is willing to devote substantial quantities of time and

money to the consumption of advertising' (Goodwin, 1993:48).

[The development of] music video can be seen as an attempt on behalf of the music industry to find a more efficient and cost-effective method of promoting pop music internationally, it must also be seen in the context of related developments, such as the corporate sponsorship of pop concerts (and radio and TV slots) and the growth of pop merchandising. (Goodwin, 1993:28)

In August 1987 MTV extended their networks to Western Europe and then to Eastern Europe in 1989. In 1991 MTV established worldwide networks in 41 countries and 204 million homes (Negus 1992). This has helped popular music promotion to ascend to a higher level both nationally and internationally.

In 1955, Thailand was the first country in Southeast Asia to begin to register television services (National Identity Board, 1995:217). Today there are three types of television in Bangkok: public television, cable television and satellite television. Public television has five VHF (very high frequency) channels (channels 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11) and one ITV (independent television) channel from UHF (ultrahigh frequency).

Three companies: Thai Sky, UTV and IBC, all broadcast on cable television. Most of the programmes broadcast by these companies are in English and come from the USA and the UK. Satellite television is not widespread yet; there are a small number of households and big hotels which have it. Therefore, satellite television has less influence on the public.

During my visit to Bangkok, I observed that on public television, which was the most influential and widespread service, the UHF channel (ITV) had only one music programme whereas altogether 117 music programmes were broadcast weekly in the five VHF channels (channels 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11; see Table 3.2). The music in these public television programmes was Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) and Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*). Many programmes were short lasting less than 30 minutes. Most of them were broadcast in the afternoon and late at night.

Each cable television company had one music channel: Thai Sky had *Smile TV*, UTV had *MTV*, and IBC had *cartoons & music*. Thai Sky showed Western popular music (*sakon*), Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) and Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*). UTV and IBC showed Western popular (*sakon*) music.

Table 3.2: Numbers of weekly music programmes broadcast on public television ('Media TV guide' August 96)

| Channels | | Number of music programmes |
|------------|-----|----------------------------|
| <u>VHF</u> | 3 | 4 |
| | 5 | 51 |
| | 7 | 16 |
| | 9 | 36 |
| | 11 | 10 |
| <u>UHF</u> | ITV | 1 |

Television can be regarded as one of the most important media for the promotion of new releases. Through the broadcasting of music videos and recorded live performances, television has an advantage over radio in that audiences can both listen and watch. As Table 3.2 shows, there were a great number of music programmes on each public television channel (VHF), especially channel 5 which broadcast 51 music programmes each week. Of the total music programmes from all channels, seven were shown twice weekly and despite their high number, the content, which consisted of Thai popular and/or Thai country popular music, was similar.

Several music videos were shown in the afternoon on weekdays. Just as in radio broadcasting, payola is also practised in television broadcasting. The music videos on television were undoubtedly broadcast by record companies to promote new releases of *Thai-sakon* and *luk-thung*. The evidence for this could easily be observed from the trademark of a record company shown in the corner of the television screen when a particular music video was on air, and in most programmes, only music from a single company was broadcast. Apart from music programmes mainly consisting of music videos, there were four programmes broadcasting live concerts every week.

c) The Music Press

Recently, as a result of transnational links, 'the large entertainment conglomerates through a twin strategy of vertical and horizontal integration have extended their traditional operations into new markets. ... Today's entertainment conglomerates look at their various companies and alliances as parts of a package that should be utilized to enhance corporate strengths across the media' (Burnett, 1996:83). As a result, the music industry is

increasingly integrated into other leisure and cultural industries such as those which produce films and books as their goal is to get to the widest audience.

In a small country like Thailand, the consumption of global music related products, such as films and books, is widespread. Record companies also benefit from promotion and receive critiques from the press. Everywhere, there are large numbers of music magazines pushing both for the promotion and also the criticism of particular music.

While I was in Bangkok, I visited several magazine stalls. Typically, a large magazine stall contains about forty monthly music magazines published in Thailand. Normally, Thai popular music (*phleng Thai-sakon*) and Western popular music (*phleng sakon*) are included within the same magazine while *luk-thung* magazines, which sometimes also include *Thai-sakon*, usually exclude other types of music.

There were more than thirty magazines for Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) and Western popular music (*sakon*). These magazines are normally divided into a *Thai-sakon* and a *sakon* section. As they are Western musical style dominated, most of these magazines have English titles such as T-club Music Magazine, Music Express, Hot Progress, GT and Music Square.

I found fewer than 10 *luk-thung* magazines. These cost less and look less sophisticated than the *Thai-sakon* magazines.

There used to be one magazine for Western classical music, but it recently ceased publishing. I have never seen any magazine devoted specifically to Thai classical music. However, Thai classical and Western classical music were mentioned occasionally in the entertainment section of magazines and newspapers, which are normally more engaged with other types of music.

3.4.2 Music in Education

Formal compulsory schooling in Thailand, controlled by the Ministry of Education, consists of 6 years at primary level, but this will be extended to 9 years in the near future²² (National Identity Board, 1995:386). In practice, children in Bangkok have more opportunity for education than those in rural areas due to their family's economic background and the greater number of schools and universities in the capital. The study of music in Thailand can

²² In general, children begin their school education at 3-year kindergarten level (age 3+) and then continue to the 6-year compulsory primary level (age 6+). The plan for extended compulsory schooling will lead to lower secondary school level.

begin in general school, non-formal music school, or with private tuition. Music studies can be divided into music in the general school curriculum as indicated in the national music curriculum, and extra music education which is non-compulsory and therefore is outside the general school curriculum. To begin with, I shall describe the music curriculum for general school designed by the Ministry of Education (school level) and the Ministry of University Affairs (university level).

3.4.2.1 The National Music Curriculum

National music education in Thailand is managed by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of University Affairs in terms of its curricular content (Suttachitt, 1992:33). Previously, in the national curriculum 1978 there was a separate music curriculum for all classes, but in 1990 this curriculum was revised to include all arts subjects at secondary level within one subject called 'Arts and Life'. However, there are two types of arts curriculum within national education in Thailand: the obligatory general curriculum and the optional specialized curriculum. In primary school, there is a compulsory general music curriculum and at secondary level there is a choice of either general arts including music or specialized music for students who want to continue studying music as their main subject. At the higher level of music education in Universities, a specialized music curriculum is provided for music students (Suttachitt, 1993:1)²³.

General music courses at each level are as follows:

1) Kindergarten level: Music is used for learning other subject areas through singing rather than for the development of specific music skills (Suttachitt, 1992:33). Singing, reciting rhymes, moving to music are activities which, although designed for recreation and building up good psychological personalities in children (Suttachitt, 1993:7), also help to develop the beginning of musical awareness.

2) Primary level: The former music curriculum, issued in 1978, was revised by the Ministry of Education in order to suit the current economic and social situation. The 1978 version was considered too difficult, particularly the introduction of Western notation and Thai classical singing. This is because the purpose of music education at this level is to build up good habits by using music activities but not emphasizing musical knowledge and skills (Suttachitt, 1993:11). Music is regarded rather as a recreational subject.

²³ As far as I could find, Suttachitt is the only person who writes about the art curriculum in Thailand.

In the first and second year of primary school, there is now an integrated module consisting of music, dance, art, physical exercise and morality. The content includes listening, singing, moving to music and playing percussion. There is no emphasis on reading notation or on composing, but music literature about Thai folk music, Thai classical music, King Rama IX's compositions and international music are included (Suttachitt 1992:34).

From the third to the sixth year of primary level, there is a compulsory module of music and dance which is divided into rhythmic activities and listening and singing activities. In the third and fourth year, rhythmic activities emphasize the understanding of the relationship between music and movement and creating children's confidence in performance. Listening and singing activities emphasize the understanding of Thai traditional music, *Thai-sakon* (Thai popular) and King Rama IX's compositions in terms of musical emotions (Suttachitt, 1993:13).

In the fifth and sixth year, the purpose of rhythmic activities is similar to those in the third and fourth years, while listening and singing activities also include the appreciation of the importance and value of Thai classical music and the King's compositions, and the transferring of emotions into music. Composition and choral singing is introduced at this stage (ibid:14). The main purpose of music education is the development of knowledge and understanding of music without emphasis on musical skills but using music to build up appropriate character and taste. The Ministry of Education supplies guidelines for teachers. These suggest teaching and studying activities which focus on pupils' thinking and practice. The music content is not provided, but left to teachers who can consult the 1978 curriculum (ibid:16).

3) Secondary Level: Secondary level in Thailand consists of six years: three years of lower secondary and another three years of upper secondary. Music at lower secondary level is included in the arts category which aims 1) to build up elementary knowledge and understanding of arts, 2) to develop an appreciation the value of the arts and pride in Thai culture and awareness of the need to conserve this heritage, 3) to use the arts to develop mind, character and taste and 4) to develop build up the skills in artistic performance according to individual preference and competence (Curriculum for lower secondary level 1990: 72).

The national curriculum revision which included all arts within one subject resulted in a reduction in music content and also in the time allocation for music study (Suttachitt, 1993:18). At this lower level, there are three compulsory music units: one unit per year (0.5

unit per term). At secondary level year 1, the music content consists of singing Thai dance songs (*phleng ram-wong*), Thai folk songs (*phleng pheun-meuang*), Thai classical songs and Thai popular songs. In secondary year 2, simple choral singing is added and basic instrument playing such as keyboard, recorder or *khlui* (Thai bamboo flute), is introduced. In year 3, ensemble playing is added (ibid).

For students who want to specialize in music, there are fourteen optional music subjects. These options include singing Thai or Western songs (8 options), Thai or Western music skills (4 options) and Thai folk music (2 options) (ibid:18).

At upper secondary level, the aims of the music curriculum are similar to those at lower secondary level, in that musical ability is not the main focus. Music at this level is not compulsory but an optional subject within the group of art subjects. There are twenty-two options for music which consist of music appreciation (2 options), singing Thai classical songs (4 options), singing Western songs (4 options), Thai music skills (4 options), Western music skills (4 options), Thai folk music (2 options) and Basic theory of Thai and Western music (2 options) (ibid:20).

To my knowledge, not every school provides all music options for its students. There are many reasons for this. One obvious reason is the budget which is normally limited for less important subjects such as music. Moreover, to open a course there must be enough students to fill it, and it is impossible for an average school to open all of these options. Apart from that is the lack of adequate numbers of specialist music teachers and/or teacher training to cope with these options.

4) Higher Level: Nowadays undergraduate music education is available in many public and private colleges and universities under the control of the Ministry of University Affairs and the Ministry of Education. These music curricula provide both Thai classical and Western classical music subjects. The music curriculum prepares students to be either musicians or music teachers. For example, in Chulalongkorn University, music is available in both the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts. The aims of the curriculum are to produce graduate music teachers and musicians respectively. There are also courses in music in the general education area that students in all majors can study as optional subjects (Suttachitt, 1992:35). At the post-graduate level, there is only one university, Mahidol University, which provides a curriculum relevant to music. The course is called cultural studies, which contains one specific course on the ethnomusicology of Thai classical music. Other universities have plans to offer courses in music at graduate level. In

future, both Thai and Western music as music subjects in their own right will definitely be introduced at graduate level (Suttachitt, 1993:22).

3.4.2.2 Extra Music Education

All music studies outside the national school curriculum will be called ‘extra music education’ in this thesis. There are a large number of music schools spread throughout Bangkok which provide part-time music study. These schools are private schools registered by the Ministry of Education as ‘non-formal schools’. Throughout Thailand in the year 1995 there was a total of 121 private music schools: 59 in Bangkok and 62 in the provinces. The 59 music schools in Bangkok between them have 13,862 students (Ministry of Education, 1995: 41).

The most well-known music schools, which generally emphasizes practical skills, belong to the Yamaha Corporation, which runs a large number of music schools throughout Thailand. The Yamaha Corporation has more than 20 music schools in Bangkok. Most provide courses in both Thai classical and Western music although the emphasis is on the latter. The courses in Thai classical music is to correspond with the Thai cultural campaign, since the 1980s, which has been influenced the practice of Thai traditional music. Generally, there is a large number of beginners but far fewer advanced students. This means that there are many young children entering at beginner level but not many continue their study to an advanced level. The pressure from general school examinations and entrance examinations at both secondary and upper secondary level of general schools and for universities often causes students to give up their part-time specialist music studies.²⁴ The exception is the small number of students who choose to study music as their main area.

Besides non-formal music schools, private tuition is widely available and is an efficient way to acquire music skills. Many music teachers employed in music schools or universities also give private lessons for extra earnings.

Apart from all the above, many general schools try to support music and provide opportunities for special musical activities such as providing funds to set up choirs, brass bands or orchestras. Because these activities are extra-curricular, not all students in a school can join in. Students who want to participate in such activities must give up some of their free time on it.

²⁴ In Thailand, it is general that parents want their children to enter famous schools. The children are very competitive and most of them spend their free time on extra tuition in general subjects.

3.5 Summary

Sections 3.1-3.3 have outlined a historical background to music and music education in Thailand and section 3.4 has described the current state of music in the society in general and of music education in particular. We have seen the effect of outside influences on the musical culture in Bangkok starting from the development of Thai classical music until its decline accompanied by the rise of local popular music in the current period of increasing globalization. However, the stagnation in the production and reception of Thai classical music also rests upon traditional beliefs, which have restricted its present and future development. The 2 types of Thai local popular music, on the other hand, are both freer from traditional restrictions and have become the music of the present time: Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*), based on its model, Western popular music; and Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*) which is a combination of local folk and new music technology.

In order to resist the influence of global culture and to strengthen national culture, Thai classical and folk music have been firmly placed within the national school curriculum together with the establishment of music and dance schools where classical music, both Thai and Western, is included. This has officially asserted the educational value of music. But music, as a non-intellectual entertainment career, was regarded as shameful in the past and this stigma still exists today. This can be seen in the aims and curricular content of national compulsory school music education where music is not seen as important in its own right but used for its cultural conservation and psychological benefits. The types of music suggested in the compulsory music curriculum are mainly Thai - ranging from Thai classical, popular and folk with some options in Western classical music for those who want to specialize in music.

The consumption of popular music (both *Thai-sakon* and *luk-thung*), helped by its distribution by the media and backed up by record companies, is high in Thai society, but the consumption of Western classical music and Thai classical music is very restricted. However, their educational value is seen as important at university level. This is thanks to the non-formal music schools and to private tuition which provide the music skills required for academic music education. As an academic subject (classical music) and a fascinating business (popular music), music seems to be gaining a higher status, and this may give more prestige to those involved in music careers. However, the stigma attached to a music career is still present. This will be investigated later in this thesis.

CHAPTER 4

Methodology

4.1 Observation and Documentation

This research has been designed to study the status of music in the wider society and in education in Thailand in order to investigate the effect of globalization upon them. To develop a framework for the thesis (see chapter 2), the literature on globalization was reviewed; and to provide fundamental knowledge about the specific locality of this study, knowledge of the socio-historical background of music and music education in Thailand (see chapter 3) was acquired.

For an overview of the contemporary situation of music and music education in Bangkok before the main data collection, background knowledge was gathered from documents and by observation. The observation, which was conducted between August 26 and September 26, 1996 was to examine the use of music in the society, with an emphasis on the role of the media as well as music in education both inside and outside the school curriculum. In the area of music in society, I observed the role of radio, television, places of musical entertainment, the music press, muzak, record shops and the situation of the music business. Together with finding information from magazines and newspapers, observations were made by documenting the music played in public places, including music on the media. In the area of music education, I studied the official documents about the national music curriculum and also observed the practice of extra music education in Bangkok (see details in 3.4).

4.2 Pilot Studies

During the time of the above observation in 1996, the first pilot had been made in order to gain a prior knowledge of individual attitudes and opinions in relation to the use of music in the public arena. Semi-structured interviews were used. 8 people, regardless of their age, gender and education, were picked from a shopping centre in the heart of Bangkok. The result from this pilot is not taken into account as only a small number of people were involved, but the pilot was undertaken to test the questionnaires and the willingness of people of difference ages to participate in the interview.

After gaining the background knowledge of music use in society and in education (as shown in chapter 3), the methods of the main data collection were designed. The

methods to be used later in the main data collection are questionnaire and interview. To begin with, the second pilot was conducted in February 1997. As the thesis will address the attitudes of people in the society with reference to music education, production, distribution and reception, 3 different groups of the population were chosen. Firstly, music teachers. This group will provide their attitudes towards music education both in the school curriculum and as extra music curriculum. They play a part in the distribution of music. The second group is undergraduate students, this group will give the attitudes of both music in education (as they had experienced during their school age) and their general music reception as music consumers. From the statistics of the National Education Committee Office, 1997, Thailand has the number of 8,088,000 of the population age between 18-24 years old (average age of undergraduate students), of which only 16.79% are undergraduate students. However the percentage of undergraduate students is much higher in Bangkok as most of the universities in Thailand situate in the capital where education is highly appreciated. The reason for the selection of undergraduate students, who are a minority of the educated population, was because they are the group who are most likely to become authorities with power in designing the National Curriculum. Moreover, they have the maximum of experience of the imposition of musical values from both educational authorities and media authority. The last group is music producers (which includes those who are working in the music industry) and musicians. This group explained their attitudes towards music production and distribution, which, through the media, supply the population.

This second pilot had the aim of testing 2 different sets of questionnaires addressed to school music teachers and undergraduate students. The analysis was made with 20 sets of teacher questionnaires from 15 schools inside and outside Bangkok, and 10 sets of student questionnaires from a university in Bangkok (see Appendix II Pilot study). After testing the effectiveness of the questionnaires, some improvements were made, mainly with the order of questions, which made the contents flow better; some questions were clarified; and some new questions were added to cover some missing points.

4.3 Main Data Collection

After the above pilot study, the questionnaires were refined for the main data collection, which was conducted between June and September 1997. The data collection was based on Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. The subjects were divided into 3 groups of people: school teachers who were teaching music at the lower secondary level,

undergraduate students and record company staff members. The data from the first two groups, teachers and students, were collected by questionnaires, while interviews were used to collect the data from record company staff members.

4.3.1 Undergraduate Students

The questionnaire for undergraduate students consisted of some open questions for the students to express their attitudes and opinions freely, and also some offering them choices. The questionnaire was divided into sections. It started by asking for students' attitudes towards various types of music, to illustrate the different status of each type. The following questions ask about their experience of studying music at secondary level, their extra-curricular music activities and extra music tuition; this section would portray their perception of the educational value of music. The last part of the questionnaire addressed their attitudes towards studying music in higher education and as a career, which would imply their view of the status of music in society. After the last question, students were invited to give their personal details (see Appendix I).

100 students from 5 universities in Bangkok were involved in this part of the data collection. I myself, as the researcher, visited the universities to hand over the questionnaires to the students. The period of this data collection was between June 12 and 19, 1997. The collection started from Chulalongkorn University and went on to Bangkok University, Assumption University, Kasetsart University and Ramkhamhaeng University respectively.

Universities in Thailand can be divided into public, private and open universities. To get a place in a public university, a student has to enter a national university entrance examination. Because the places in these universities are limited, high competition is inevitable. Those who have failed the examination may alternatively enter a private university (which also has an entrance examination) or an open university, which is also a kind of public university, open for all with no entrance examination. However, public universities are not the goal of all students: those who are interested in business studies may prefer to enter a private university where this field of study has a high reputation.

From the insider's point of view, schools and universities in Bangkok do not possess equal status; this is shown by the competition to get a place in each institution, as well as the socio-economic level of the majority of the pupils or students. Among these five universities, Chulalongkorn is the most prestigious public university in Bangkok, with the highest competition to get a place. Bangkok University is a popular private

university, as is Assumption University. However, Assumption University is regarded as more prestigious because of the socio-economic background of its students and its reputation of guaranteeing job after graduation. Kasetsart University is another public university in Bangkok, whereas Ramkhamhaeng is the biggest open university in Thailand, where a massive number of students from all over the country can find a place.

The subjects of study of the students who completed the questionnaire included Law, Languages, Arts, Media and Business Studies including Hotel Management and Tourism.

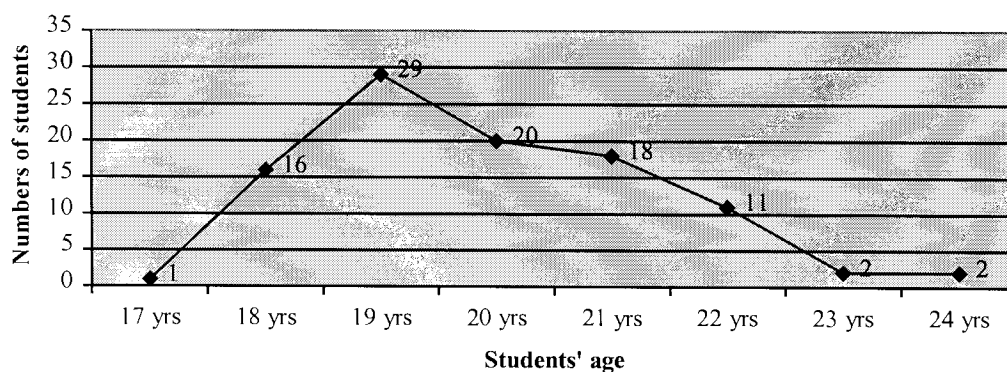
65 students were born and had been living in Bangkok. The other 35 students had been living in Bangkok for 1 to 20 years. 76 and 79 students respectively finished their lower secondary and upper secondary schooling in Bangkok.

Among these students, there were 44 males and 56 females. Their age varied from 17 to 24 years. The majority (29 students) were 19 years old (see Figure 4.1).

Table 4.1: Quantity of questionnaire respondents in each university

| Names of universities | Number of respondents |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Chulalongkorn | 26 |
| Bangkok | 23 |
| Assumption | 19 |
| Kasetsart | 18 |
| Ramkhamhaeng | 14 |

Figure 4.1: Students' age



Responses about the students' musical ability showed that 57% could play an instrument or sing. 85% had a hobby related to music, mostly listening to music. 49% named their favourite hobby in relation to music; of these, 46% had a focus on music as their most frequent hobby.

4.3.2 School Music Teachers

This part of the information was collected by questionnaire. As school music teachers were engaging with the national music curriculum and other extra-curricular music activities in school, they were asked to focus on the educational value of music. Together with a letter introducing myself to the teachers, I defined some musical terms used in the questionnaire, to avoid potential confusion. The questionnaire for school music teachers began by asking briefly about the school and the teacher him/herself. The main part of the questionnaire consisted of choices and open questions. The first section of the questionnaire address music taught in the classroom. The next section asked about extra-curricular music activities and extra music tuition, followed by questions about the status of music education. The final section dealt with questions about music in the wider society. The sections on the status of music education and music in the wider society contain solely open questions, allowing the teachers to express their attitudes and opinions without restriction (see Appendix I).

A list of lower secondary level schools throughout Bangkok and their addresses was acquired from the department of education. In fact, two lists of schools, divided into public and private, were given. There were altogether 271 public and private schools, excluding three schools involved in the pilot. However, in Bangkok, there are 4 other lower secondary level schools known as university demonstration schools, which are governed by universities¹.

After having acquired all the schools' addresses, 276 sets of questionnaires, with a letter addressed to the head teacher were sent to all the lower secondary schools on June 13, 1997. The letter asked the head teacher to pass a set of questionnaires to a teacher who was teaching music in secondary level. After a month and a half had passed, more than half of the schools had still not returned the questionnaires; second letters asking for the questionnaires were then sent to those schools. This collection terminated in mid-

¹ In the process of gathering the names and addresses of the university demonstration schools, I mistook one school, which has only the upper secondary level, as including the lower secondary level. Then I sent the questionnaires to 5 university demonstration schools (of which 4 actually have the lower secondary level); thus the total number of questionnaires sent was 276.

September 1997. Altogether, 117 schools responded but 9 schools could not/did not return the questionnaires, for the following reasons:

- One school had just stopped secondary level teaching.
- One school returned the blank questionnaires without any reason given.
- One school did not have a music teacher.
- One school did not receive the questionnaire.
- One school taught Thai dance in place of music.
- One school returned the wrong set of questionnaires.
- Three schools did not have the secondary level.

Thus 108 sets of questionnaires, or 39.13% of all the questionnaires sent out, were returned. Of the 108 schools, 59 were public, 46 were private and 3 were university demonstration schools. These questionnaires were dated from June 16 to September 8, 1997.

Concerning the quantity of music teachers in these schools and their specification: private and the university demonstration schools had more music teachers, and there were more teachers who had specialized in Western music than Thai music compared to the public schools. Because music is only a part of the subject module 'Arts and Life', which includes arts and dance, the same teachers in many schools had to be responsible for teaching the whole module (which in reality, they were not keen to do). For the same reason, there are teachers who had specialized in Thai dance or arts but had to teach music as a part of this module; in one case, 2 non-music teachers were responsible for this subject (however, one of the two could play a Thai instrument, and I include her in the category of Thai music teachers in Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Numbers of teachers and their specialization

| | Public | Private | University demonstration | Total |
|------------------------|------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| No. of schools | 59 | 46 | 3 | 108 |
| Total no. of teachers | 134 | 150 | 13 | 297 |
| Thai music teachers | 69 | 64 | 5 | 136 |
| Western music teachers | 66 | 86 | 8 | 160 |
| No music teachers | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |

Among the teachers who completed the questionnaires, as stated above, the proportion of music teachers who had specialized in Thai music was more than those who had specialized in Western music. Table 4.3 will show these proportions:

Table 4.3: Numbers and percentages of teachers who completed the questionnaires

| <i>Specialists in</i> | Public | | Private | | University demonstration | | Total | |
|-----------------------|--------|----------------|---------|----|--------------------------|----|-------|----|
| | total | % ² | Total | % | total | % | total | % |
| Thai music | 31 | 53 | 26 | 57 | 1 | 33 | 58 | 54 |
| Western music | 25 | 42 | 17 | 37 | 2 | 67 | 44 | 41 |
| Both | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 4 |
| Thai dance | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

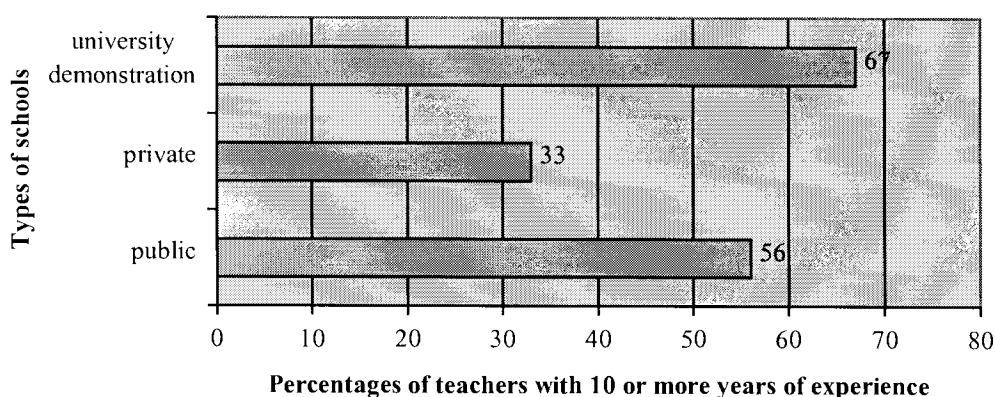
Next, we should consider their experience of classroom music teaching. In Thailand, teachers in public schools, who are selected by examination, are regarded as having a more secure future regarding their pension. Many teachers from the private schools try to gain a position in the public schools. There are also new young graduates who work as teachers when they cannot find other jobs and while they try to find an alternative job. These teachers are found more in private schools. Among all music teachers who completed the questionnaire, the music teachers in private schools had less teaching experience than those in public schools. As seen in Table 4.4, 43% of the music teachers in private schools had less than 5 years' experience of teaching, and the longer the experience, the fewer the teachers. By contrast, of the music teachers in public schools, the majority (25%) had been teaching for a period of 5-9 years; and almost as many, that is over 20%, had from 10 to 19 years of experience. On average, the music teacher in the public schools had taught for 12 years and 1 month, whereas the music teachers in the private schools had on average only 6 years and 6 months of teaching experience.

² Percentages throughout this thesis are approximate percentages as to make the reading more user-friendly and more comprehensible.

Table 4.4: Teachers and their teaching experience

| Yrs of teaching | Public | | Private | | University demonstration | | Total | |
|-----------------|--------|----|---------|----|--------------------------|----|-------|----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 0-4 | 9 | 15 | 20 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 29 | 27 |
| 5-9 | 15 | 25 | 9 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 22 |
| 10-14 | 12 | 20 | 8 | 17 | 1 | 33 | 21 | 19 |
| 15-19 | 13 | 22 | 4 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 16 |
| more than 20 | 9 | 15 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 67 | 14 | 13 |
| unanswered | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |

Figure 4.2: Percentages of teachers with teaching experience of 10 years and over



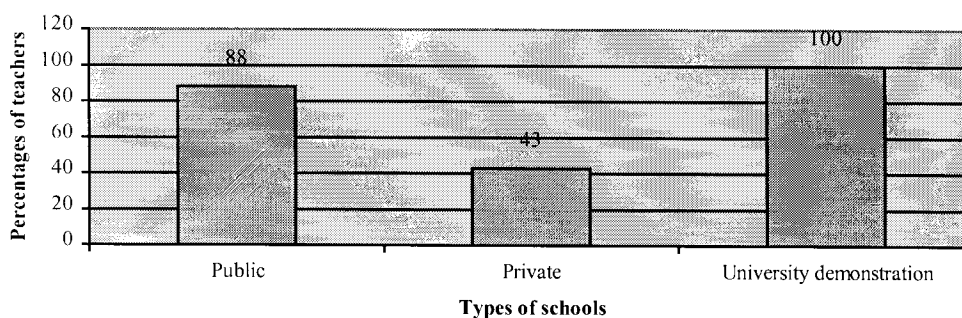
As seen in Figure 4.2, 56% of teachers in public schools, 33% of teachers in private schools and 67% of teachers in university demonstration schools had been teaching for more than 9 years. Altogether there were 46% of music teachers who had at least 10 years of teaching experience. These teachers had experienced at least 3 years with the old curriculum, which began in the academic year 1990. They are good subjects to give a comparison between the old and the new curriculum.

Concerning the teachers' qualifications, it is not necessary in Thailand that a music teacher must be a qualified music graduate. One reason may be because degrees in music are quite new in Thailand; courses in music at university level have increased only recently. A school music teacher can possess other qualifications but have some music competence. Among the non-music-qualified teachers (30% of all teachers), most (19%)

used to have extra music tuition during their student period. The other (11%) presumably had musical competence without formal training.

As Figure 4.3 shows, there is an obvious difference in the acceptance of music teachers, regardless of their music certificate or degree, among public, private and university demonstration schools. In the university demonstration schools, that is, only 3 schools out of the total of 4 schools surveyed here, all the music teachers were music-qualified graduates. A more interesting comparison is between public and private schools. Since the employment of teachers in public schools is more competitive, entrance examinations are criterion for selection, there are twice as many music-qualified graduates working as music teachers (88%) in public schools as in private schools (43%). The total percentage of music-qualified teachers in all school types was 69%.

Figure 4.3: Percentages of music-qualified graduate teachers

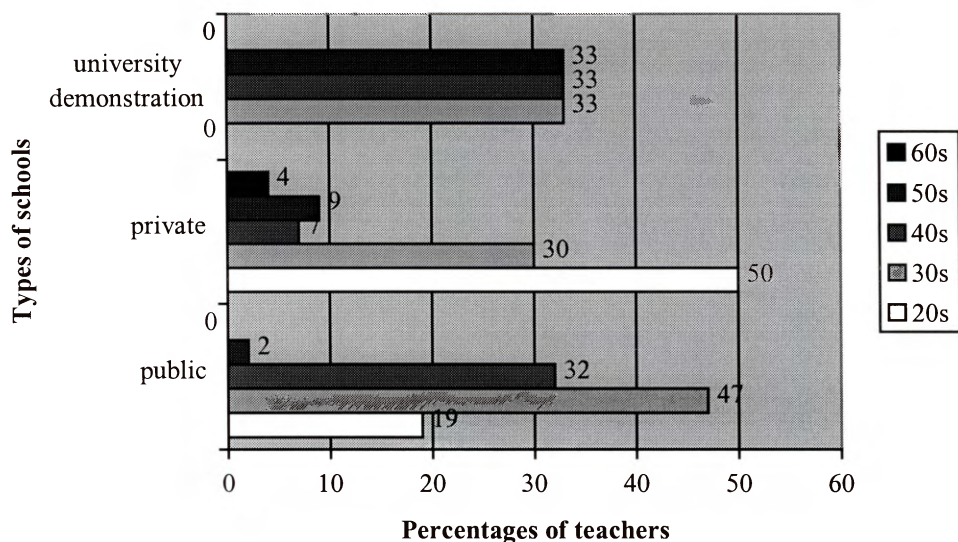


Lastly, more background information of music teachers deals with their age and gender. This information may not have directly affected their responses, but it may show some interesting points.

There was no gender discrimination in being a music teacher, and the proportions of males and females were not much different. Of all the teachers who completed the questionnaire, 50% were male, 44% were female and 6% did not identify their gender.

As to the teachers' age, the order of the groups from largest to smallest was 30s (40%), 20s (31%), 40s (21%), 50s (6%) and 60s (2%). Reflecting the differences in teaching experience mentioned above, the age of the teachers in public and private schools was different to a certain degree (see Figure 4.4). The majority of the music teachers in public schools were in their thirties (47%) and forties (32%), whereas the majority of those in private schools were in their twenties (50%) and thirties (30%).

Figure 4.4: Percentages of teachers' age groups



4.3.3 Record Company Staff Members

In mid-1997, independent music companies in Thailand were booming, while major companies declined (see 3.4.1.1). This part of the data collection, using semi-structured interviews, aimed to elicit information from members of staff from different types of music companies.

The interview started by asking for brief details of the interviewees and their company, followed by the main section which contained 9 questions with a number of sub-questions. The interview questions start from asking for general opinions about what each type of music meant to them. As a record company is the producer of the music which is consumed in the society – mainly Thai popular and Thai country popular music – the following questions asked about the influence of global popular music. The second half of the interview questions asked more specifically about the position of each type of music in society, and the status of musicians, including the situation of the music business in Thailand (see Appendix I).

The interviews, which were tape recorded, lasted for up to 35 minutes. 10 staff members from 9 music companies gave interviews during June 18 and 26, 1997. All the interviewees were male, in their 20s to 40s. Among these staff members, 2 were from major local music companies, 5 were from independent companies (one company exported their records, whereas the rest were producing their records solely for local

consumption), 1 was from a local branch of a foreign company and the other was from a recording studio. Thus altogether, there was only one foreign company – Sony music – and the rest were local (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Subjects of interviews

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Position of the interviewee</i> | <i>Type of company</i> | <i>Name of company</i> |
|-------------|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| 18/6/97 | Artist & composer | Independent | Stone Entertainment |
| 18/6/97 | Artist & composer | Foreign | Sony Music |
| 19/6/97 | Producer | Local Major | Grammy Entertainment |
| 20/6/97 | Lyrics writer | Local Major | RS Promotion 1992 |
| 21/6/97 | Manager & composer | Independent | Golden Lizard |
| 23/6/97 | Producer | Independent | Lun-lun-la Music |
| 24/6/97 | Manager & sound-engineer | Recording Studio | Peter Pan Studio |
| 24/6/97 | Managing director & executive producer | Independent | Tero Records |
| 26/6/97 | 2 Artists | Independent | Music on Earth |

I had been told that to arrange an interview with people in the music business is not easy if you do not know them personally or have no introduction from someone they know. Luckily, I had some friends who knew someone or were themselves working in a record company. Thus, my process of finding interviewees started from a recommendation, through friends, to a staff member of one company. I asked this staff member if he knew other staff members from different music companies; I then acquired their telephone numbers and contacted them later. As in a chain, from another recommended staff member I asked for some other telephone numbers for further contact. I could not manage to arrange an interview from all the telephone numbers given. Some staff members were too busy to give an interview and some were too difficult to contact by telephone. However, I finally managed to interview 10 staff members from various companies. The interview locations were mainly the music companies; besides, one interview took place in a restaurant, one in a record-promotion party and another in a staff member's house.

4.4 Data Analysis & Presentation

The analysis of the data from the 2 sets of questionnaires and one set of interviews is divided into 2 main areas: music in the wider society and music in education. In both areas, an exploration of the status of music through its use and value is made. The students' group represents both students of the compulsory national music curriculum and music consumers, while the record company staff members group represents the music producer. Teachers deal directly with the educational value of music, and are critics of both music in education and music in the wider society. All the respondents portray their use of music, and consider the value which they give to each type of music. All this information will relate to the status of music, with reference to the effect of globalization. Comparisons of responses between each group of respondents are shown. The presentation of data is varied, including graphs, tables and quotations. Graphs are used to display the overall summarized data from the whole of each group of respondents, and also for some comparisons between groups. Tables show more informative data for the whole of each group of respondents, while quotations will illustrate examples of descriptive data. Generally, graphs and tables show the data from closed questions, and quotations show the data from open questions. Percentages given in the analysis are approximate to make the data easily comprehensible.

The economic turbulence in Southeast Asia, which started in Thailand after the data had been collected, must have affected the music scene in Bangkok to some degree; therefore more information about the situation of music consumption during the economic crisis is very important to the research. Thus, more recent information was gathered from local newspapers and music magazines.

CHAPTER 5

Music in the Wider Society

This chapter will show the attitudes towards music of different groups of people in Bangkok: music producers, music consumers and critics. Staff from record companies will represent music producers while students will represent an important section of music consumers in Bangkok, where the majority of the population is under 30. Teachers will be portrayed as critics.

5.1 Attitudes towards Each Type of Music

To begin with, the definition of each kind of music given by the students will be considered. The figures and tables which follow will be used to illustrate the range of students' attitudes and opinions concerning each type of music. Because these responses were taken from open questions, they represent the respondents' first thoughts about that type of music - its recognizable musical elements and its social connotations.

5.1.1 Thai Classical Music (Phleng Thai-derm)

Views of Thai classical music include admiration, criticism and general illustrations of its characteristics and the images students had of it. Most responses were based on the students' knowledge about and the attitudes to the music and suggested some distance between the respondents and the music. Samples of the definitions of Thai classical music given by the students are as follows:

- Students:
- 'It contains "Thai-ness", starting from musical ideas and the use of music instruments which must be purely Thai';
 - 'Old music which has a relaxing style. Suitable for Thai people in the past';
 - 'It is slow music with melisma when singing. It has unique Thai characteristics';
 - 'Beautiful music in the style of the past. Stimulates related images and imagination.'

To sum up, the music was mainly regarded as possessing Thai original style (51%)¹ which includes the use of Thai traditional instruments, the musical ideas and the types of texts which express the Thai past in conventional poetic style, and a distinctive melismatic singing method. This places the music in the position of a symbol of Thai people and Thailand (8%). However, almost half of all the students referred to it as music from the Thai past (45%), usually suggesting a slow and relaxing procession (29%), which tends to cause boredom to them, as the music is in stark contrast to the preferred style of teenagers and young adults. Several students (13%) regarded Thai classical music as too difficult for young people to understand. Nevertheless, a number of students (10%) found it beautiful in a delicate way and others (9%) found its texts realistic and meaningful. Others (7%) observed that the music is used only on specific occasions such as for funeral ceremonies and accompanying Thai dance. Moreover, a small number of students (2%) noticed that its instrumental part is more important than its texts. See Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: Thai classical music (Thai-derm): students' attitudes & opinions

| | Frequency of answers | % |
|---|----------------------|----|
| Thai original style | | 51 |
| Music of the Thai past | | 45 |
| Slow/relaxing music | | 29 |
| Boring / not for young people | | 13 |
| Delicately beautiful | | 10 |
| Realistic & meaningful texts | | 9 |
| Symbol of Thai people & Thailand | | 8 |
| For specific occasions | | 7 |
| Instrumental part more important than texts | | 2 |
| No idea | | 1 |

We next move to explore the students' personal preferences and prejudices concerning Thai classical music. The reasons given by the students for these preferences and prejudices are given in the following tables, which also show the number of students who mentioned them. Generally, each student mentioned more than one reason; therefore the total number of reasons given may exceed the total number of students' in the 'Like, Dislike and Ambivalent' categories on the left in the following table (see Table 5.1).

¹ Numbers in () show the percentages of respondents who made the same or similar point.

Table 5.1: Thai classical music (*Thai-derm*): students' preferences & prejudices

| Thai classical | Reasons |
|-------------------|--|
| Like: 28% | Relaxing and beautiful (54%) Possesses Thai-ness / deserves conservation (39%) Song texts are meaningful and use beautiful poetic language (25%) I play Thai instrument(s) / I study Thai dancing (18%) Good quality of performance on various Thai instruments (7%) Parents like listening to it (4%) I have a cassette (4%) No comment (4%) |
| Dislike: 62% | Causes sleepiness / boring / not stimulating / too slow / unattractive (85%) Difficult to understand / not understandable (16%) Too old, not compatible with life nowadays (15%) Difficult to find / not many people listen to it (10%) Singing voice is strange, old and sharp (5%) Too formal (2%) No comment (3%) |
| Ambivalent: 10 | Can listen to it or to some particular pieces on some occasions (70%) Bored or sleepy if listen to it in a long session (20%) No comment (10%) |

It is significant that, as Table 5.1 shows, more than twice as many students dislike listening to Thai classical music as like to do so. Even though most of them are aware of the importance of this music as part of the national heritage and of the need for its conservation, they feel that its essence adheres to the musical style of the past and marks its distance from the present. Nevertheless, there is a certain group of young people, although not numerous, who appreciate it, keep on practising, and hopefully will transmit the music to future generations.

As shown in section 3.4.1.3, the production and distribution of Thai classical music through the media are restricted. It was interesting to raise this issue with record companies. To protect the confidentiality of the record company staff interviewed in my study, the data will be given anonymously.

The interview data show that Thai classical music or *phleng Thai-derm* is respected by people who work in record companies as part of the national heritage, but they consider that most people do not find it musically attractive nowadays. It is regarded as 'old-fashioned'. As for its vocal music, the lyrics are out of place in contemporary life. A lyric writer made this point: 'The language of Thai classical music is out of date ... We do not talk like that nowadays.' A composer explains the problems surrounding this:

‘How can Thai classical music attract people nowadays? Everything has changed in keeping with current fashion, but Thai classical music hasn’t changed very much at all. The culture of Thai people now is extremely different from that of a hundred years ago, but the (classical) music, which is being composed now, is still similar to that of the past, with no development at all or only very little, but certainly not enough to attract attention of the public. If Thai classical music is dead, the blame should be put on the music itself, not on ancient composers; they were good for their time but present-day (classical music) composers are not creative enough.’

Many people in the music business see the need for modernization of Thai classical music to increase its acceptance in the contemporary world. ‘I think that it is possible to modernize traditional music. It doesn’t mean that we will play the music in a Western fashion but only that we will play it differently from the way it was played in the past. This means that we must develop it and not stick to the same melodies, the same methods of playing ... While Western musical instruments have been developed, ours stay stagnant’, said one interviewee.

In fact, there have been attempts to modernize Thai classical music, and some have been successful (see 3.1.8). However, there is hardly any serious continuous effort to bring life to the music. This results from the conventionally held strict beliefs attached to the classical musical style, which discourage any attempts to develop it. It is regarded as risky to make any change to its strict rules for fear of condemnation from the conservative authorities or, according to the beliefs of the composers, from the spirits of the ancestors. A young musician-composer pointed out, ‘It is difficult for the new generation to follow the route of Thai classical music; most of us, myself included, will not touch it. It is already perfect in itself; if anything wrong happens from our attempt, the blame will be laid on us.’

Thai classical music nowadays is mostly thought of as museum music existing as evidence of Thai music history, or as functional music for special ceremonies rather than as a type of music for pure listening. There has been a fear that it may disappear, and from time to time promotional campaigns in its favour have been launched. Normally, not to mention the need for its development, keeping the music alive means to retain what already exists. All attitudes towards this music express the need for the conservation it deserves due to its status at national level. Nevertheless, in practice it does not receive any strong support. As another interviewee claimed, ‘It lacks good care and interest ... there is no serious campaign for its conservation.’

One of the reasons for the lack of strong support for conservation is that although young people study Thai classical music in the school curriculum, they hardly ever hear it outside school. There is very little stimulation from society to encourage their interest in Thai classical music. Pupils tend to follow the main stream of music rather than the traditional one with its ancient roots. The power of music business administration seems to be able to disseminate all kinds of music widely, but the record companies and the media seem to pay little attention to Thai classical music. A producer countered this accusation by stating that the static condition of traditional music is not caused directly by the irresponsibility of music companies and the media:

‘It can’t be blamed on the media and the producers. As producers, we have to go along with consumers’ tastes. We don’t produce anything which consumers don’t want. The same occurs with the media; the media have no other choice. ... If there were a market [for Thai classical music], the media or music companies would go for it.’

It is all a matter of business. The production of traditional or classical music and its promotion through the media, which depends on expenditure by business, is extremely difficult. As stated above, one important problem is that traditional music needs to be developed but this has been blocked by traditional beliefs. The other big problem is the widespread phenomenon of global musical styles in Thailand, that is popular music, whether Western or Thai. The domination of popular music has been regarded as a factor that decreases people’s interest in Thai classical music. A record company staff member points out,

‘The problem of *phleng Thai-derm* (Thai classical music) is that it cannot find its way through the media in Thailand. None of the media can make a business out of it. This reduces its power and distances Thai people from traditional music due to the fact that they hardly ever hear it ... All in all, the taste of the people is now turning towards Western musical style, which diverts them away from their traditional music. It is this which has caused its unpopularity.’

Although Thai classical music does not attract large audiences, the practice of the music is still kept alive by a small number of loyal Thai music lovers. It is clear that although it cannot become widely favoured, it will never become extinct in Thailand. An interviewee confirms this: ‘It still has a group of listeners ... I don’t think that it will disappear, but the Western pop stream is very powerful now; however, Thai classical music is still there, it is being conserved.’

5.1.2 Thai Country Popular Music (*Phleng Luk-thung*)

Thai country popular music is not a favourite type of music for ‘urban’ listeners. Sample definitions given by the students include:

Students: ‘It is the music with lyrics which refer to provincial life’;

‘It includes the use of Western musical instruments but is played in the Thai folk style’;

‘It attracts the attention of listeners in rural areas, that is, the majority of the nation’s population. It needs more skill to compose it compared to *Thai-sakon* (Thai popular), and it is also regarded as a true symbol of the Thai people’;

‘It gives you a strange feeling of distaste when you listen to it. It is mostly favoured by provincials.’

To sum up, the definitions of *luk-thung* given by the majority of students (39%) show that they see it as Thai ‘folk’ or ‘provincial’ music in that it reflects country life. A number of students (24%) recognized its distinctive style of performance – the use of Western modern musical instruments, the singing style with its unique vibration, and the accompanying dancers. Despite the involvement of Western musical instruments, *luk-thung* is regarded by a number of students (18%) as a Thai symbol as the music retains Thai elements, reflecting its derivation from Thai classical music. Its dominant characteristics are its uncomplicated style and the use of colloquial texts (20%). Moreover, it is seen to be predominantly lively (16%). Several students (15%) considered that the target listeners for Thai country popular music live in the countryside and that the music is provincial. Parallel to this view, some students (11%) are alienated from the music and find it strange or stupid. However, one student regarded the quality of *luk-thung* as higher than Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*), because Thai popular music follows Western popular music too much and lacks originality. See Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*): students’ attitudes & opinions

| | Frequency of answers | % |
|--|----------------------|----|
| Folk/provincial music expressing country life | | 39 |
| Distinctive style of stage performance | | 24 |
| Easy listening / direct language denotation | | 20 |
| Contains Thai-ness / a Thai symbol | | 18 |
| Predominantly lively style | | 16 |
| Provincial / aims at provincial listeners | | 15 |
| Strange / alienated from its style | | 11 |
| Higher quality than <i>Thai-sakon</i> (Thai popular) | | 1 |

Some students like *luk-thung* (29%), but the majority (57%) do not like it. The main reasons for this dislike relate to the style of this music, including the lyrics, which the students regarded as unsophisticated. Those who liked *luk-thung* appreciated its folksiness, which has an uncomplicated and lively Thai rural style. A number of students (14%) were ambivalent and their listening was rather selective. Sometimes *luk-thung* songs become hits in Bangkok, and these are likely to be the songs which appeal most to young Bangkokians (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*): students' preferences & prejudices

| Thai country | Reasons |
|----------------|--|
| Like: 29% | Easy listening / easy to understand (48%) Lively music (38%) Like the texts that reflect rural life (34%) Fashionable (7%) Retains Thai identity (7%) Like the technique of singing using special vibration (3%) Like to see the accompanying dance (<i>hang-khreung</i>) (3%) No comment (3%) |
| Dislike: 57% | Dislike of music and texts in general (26%) Uses dialect / difficult to understand (14%) Dislike the musical style / too repetitive (11%) Not modern / not compatible with teenagers in Bangkok (11%) Not accustomed to it (5%) Boring/ causes sleepiness (5%) Language is too simple / impolite (4%) Unattractive singers (4%) Aims at sale (2%) Singing voice is strange, old and sharp (5%) Too formal (2%) No comment (21%) |
| Ambivalent: 14 | Like to listen to some particular pieces, on some occasions (100%) |

Although more students disliked *luk-thung* than liked it, its business success does not depend on the listeners in Bangkok. The interviews with record company staff confirm that Thai country popular music or *phleng luk-thung* is regarded as 'charming' because of its direct and unpretentious language. As it contains the essence of Thai-ness, '*luk-thung* has the style of our real folk music', an interviewee claimed. Another interviewee pointed out, 'It is a hopeful feature of popular music in Thailand because it never leaves out the characteristics of *Li-ke* (Thai musical drama) or Thai music and the way Thai language is expressed (in its lyrics) is more beautiful than other popular music.' Thai country popular music is seen as evolving from Thai folk music, and as

suiting today's folk lifestyle. It is also regarded as a good example of an adaptation of traditional folk music for modern times, 'It is like *phleng Thai-derm* (Thai classical music): it needs to be adapted to fit the present time. It is a good example of expressing Thai folk life in a fashionable way. Its lyrics describe everyday country life and the lives of the people who have moved from rural areas into Bangkok. It depicts the reality of present-day society.'

Because most Thai country popular songs appeal directly to country people including the labourers of rural origin employed in Bangkok, this type of music is quite different from the music preferred by Bangkokians born or brought up in the capital. Bangkokians regard Thai country popular music as outside their taste. Speaking for Bangkokians, an interviewee gave a common example: 'When we turn on the TV, if we find a commercial for *luk-thung*, we will change to another channel. If you don't really like it, you find it annoying.' Not only the place of origin, but education also determines a person's tastes in music. As a musician put it, 'The *luk-thung* market is big. Provincials are its focus. They have little education, and a simple lifestyle, so they are happy with this level of music.' Such views, which link musical taste with the education and the origin of the listeners, have built up a prejudice amongst the more educated against Thai country popular music, which is seen as 'low status'. In response, attempts have been made by radio and television broadcasters to upgrade this music, and the result is encouraging. 'Some time ago, *luk-thung* listeners were regarded as poorly educated, so the preferences of Bangkokians were for Thai or Western popular music. Recently, there has been a modernization of *luk-thung* to raise its status, and this is working.'

The modernization of *luk-thung* is its arrangement in a more Westernized fashion with the aim of raising it to a level equal with Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music. The modernization of (*luk-thung*) is not only aimed at extending its market in Bangkok but also at attracting the attention of teenage provincials who tend to like *Thai-sakon* music. As an interviewee explains, 'Because of the spread of communication technologies, teenagers in or from the provinces, who used to be *luk-thung* fans, began to listen to *Thai-sakon*. *Luk-thung* then had to find a method of catching up with this market, and then the modernized form of the music was introduced.' Proponent hope that this modernization will help to maintain the popularity of Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) music in the future.

The modernization of Thai country popular music is only partial. Most Thai country popular music still sticks to the traditional characteristics of folk music, and

modernization is not necessarily the only way to make Thai country popular music flourish in Bangkok. There are many examples to show that typical Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) songs have boomed in Bangkok, ‘Many *luk-thung* songs were best sellers, dominating the market throughout the country. In the last couple of years, the singer Yingyong Yodboingam’s album sales reached 2-3 million bahts. In Bangkok, his music was played in discos, which meant that teenagers also listened to it ... More recently, Monsit Khamsoi’s album was a big hit. I think it depends on the songs themselves’, an interviewee explained. The sporadic popularity of some country popular songs, which spread into Bangkok, reduced the prejudices of Bangkokians against *luk-thung*’s status to some extent. It can be said that the more fashionable Thai country popular songs become in Bangkok, the higher its status will be raised. However, at present, ‘The market for *luk-thung* is still small. ... It is mostly aimed at the provinces and AM radio. In Bangkok if we turn on FM radio, it’s 90% Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music. The environment in Bangkok can’t make Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*) boom equally’, said another interviewee.

As shown above, Thai country popular music has its own market in the provinces and amongst the huge population of provincials who have migrated to Bangkok. As a result, Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) has acquired part of the market in the capital as well. ‘The *Luk-thung* market is very broad. I think that in Bangkok it can be sold to those who came in from the provinces, and their number is huge. It may not be a hit among teenagers, but it can sell well enough.’ A producer explained the phenomenon of the spread of Thai popular musics: ‘*Luk-thung* (Thai country popular) music is on a larger scale. *Thai-sakon* (Thai popular) starts from Bangkok and then spreads outwards. In the opposite direction, *luk-thung* comes from the surrounding rural areas, which are a massive market.’ As mentioned earlier, some *luk-thung* songs might reach ‘hit’ status in Bangkok from time to time, but this has not lasted, and the peak of the *Luk-thung* era in Bangkok has passed. An interviewee pointed out that ‘it takes a long time for another hit to emerge. For example, recently there was Monsit Khamsoi’s hit but it won’t be as successful as it was in the past... in the days of the late Queen of *luk-thung* singing, Phumphuang².’

Since the provinces as a whole are very much bigger than the capital, Thai country popular music never depends on the market in the capital city. It has been the most widespread music in Thailand. Another interviewee pointed out that ‘the market for *luk-*

² An example of her songs is on the attached tape at the back of the thesis.

thung is quite stable throughout Thailand. It has sold well so far and even better than *Thai-sakon* (Thai popular).’ So the stigma resulting from the prejudice expressed by Bangkokians against Thai country popular music cannot harm its commercial success.

5.1.3 Thai Popular Music (*Phleng Thai-sakon*)

The music most often heard in everyday life in Thai society is Thai popular music. This clearly shows the influence of global music. Samples of definitions given by the students are as follows:

- Students: ‘It is contemporary music with a universal [*sakon*] style – the use of Western musical instruments, modern rhythms and tunes. Its lyrics are mostly about love’;
- ‘It is music in Western styles with lyrics in Thai language’;
- ‘It is modern music which is easy listening, easy to understand’;
- ‘It often follows foreign music, which more often than not, is adapted or even copied as a whole.’

In conclusion, Thai popular music, according to the majority of students (65%), is unarguably Thai modern-day, fashionable music. It is modern in the sense that modern Western instruments and Western popular music styles are used. Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music is, for many students (27%), the most familiar type of music, which is easy to understand, especially in the way it expresses everyday aspects of youthful life such as love. It is also regarded as predominantly teenage music (16%) as it generally includes fast and rhythmic music. It also has various styles, which allow individual artists to express themselves in their own way (7%). A small number of students (2%) also noticed the role of the instrumental part, which they think more important than the texts. However, a number of students (20%) regarded Thai popular music as low quality. For 7% of students, this comes from their recognition that the music is often not original but copied from Western popular music. Moreover, they also doubt the quality of the musicians, especially the singers, the quality of music composition and the language competence of the lyric writers. See Figure 5.3.

More than 2 decades ago, Thai people listened to Western popular music much more than Thai popular music due to the small number of Thai popular music recordings produced during that time. A musician in his forties claimed,

‘When I started to play music, Western popular music dominated the market. Later, Thai popular music started to grow and now it dominates the market.’

A producer confirmed this change,

‘In the past, people only listened to Western popular music. As for *Thai-sakon* (Thai popular music), there were only a small number of cassettes on sale ... but now there are plenty from both indies and big companies. To my knowledge, about 50-70 new albums are launched each month. Its market is massive. It is very popular.’

Before this successful period of Thai popular music, music production was dependent on a few big record companies. An artist pointed out,

‘More than 3 years ago, in major record companies, production of music depended on a conference which made a clear decision on how to produce a certain album. It gave every instruction on how the singer should dance and sing. ... Now, that system is beginning to fail, because audiences get bored with the similarity of every work they produced. Now artists are encouraged to be individual.’

A big change in the history of the music business in Thailand has occurred recently. An interviewee claimed, ‘In the last 3 years, Western pop music has played an important role. “Alternative” music boomed in the last 2 years and then gradually faded at the end of last year (1996). During that time, a lot of small music companies emerged. ... It has been an energetic flourishing business until today (June 1997).’

Thanks to the technologies, the spread of local popular music has been made possible, and also a more convenient way of music production has been introduced. A musician boasted, ‘I think that the quality of both Thai & Western popular music is not very different.... We can catch up with their technologies. What equipment they have, we also have. To make standard music is not too difficult.’

Nevertheless, there are criticisms of the quantity rather than the quality resulting from the rapid expansion of the music business and the help of new technologies in making music. Technologies are believed to assist the development of Thai popular music. However, the need for qualified music makers is not yet met.

Musicians: ‘I think that within the last few years the situation in the music industry has been getting worse. It is because the market is wider and more indies

have been established ... then there came those who took the chance to make a profit: there was low investment and a lack of quality, with no real intention to make music. Those who do not have adequate musical ability were stepping into the business. There are so many bands right now, but most of them are not qualified’;

‘At the present time, we have effective musical instruments and engineering equipment together with qualified sound engineers. This is not inferior to Western music companies. What we need more are composers and singers. If we have good composers and singers, our music will be as good quality as Western music.’

Thai popular music always developed in correspondence with the movements of Western popular music. Their influences have affected the form and system of the music business in Thailand. In contrast with the above criticisms, there are also optimistic views regarding the increasing improvement of Thai popular music as it catches up with the world standard, although Thai popular music is merely carried along by the world stream. An interviewee asserts, ‘Thai popular music is changing year by year. The style of music is closer to Western pop, and even gets closer and closer because of the effectiveness of communication. The media can catch up with any information... Following Western popular music is much easier than in the past.’

It seems to be compulsory for Thai popular music to follow or be reflective of Western/global popular music. Music producers must always attentively keep up with the movements of international popular music. ‘We must catch up with Western music. We have to follow the fashion, the present trend in Western popular music... whichever way it goes’, a producer pointed out. There are many examples of world hit styles adopted later by Thai popular music, for instance ‘alternative’ and ‘rap’.

There is a continuum within Thai popular music, with Thai-ness at one end and Western musical characteristics at the other; whereas the musical aspect of Thai popular music has been pushed towards the Western end, it is the Thai language which remains the embodiment of the original national identity. It is the lyrics and the way they convey meaning that express Thai people’s perspectives on the present world. As an interviewee indicated, ‘Thai-ness is the simplicity and direct meaning of the texts.’ Thai popular music, then, contains adopted Western musical styles with lyrics which express Thai concepts, that is, a verbal expression of current Thai culture in the fashion of Western popular music. However, there is a limit to the adoption of Western musical styles. As a musician said, ‘Most artists in my company have been inspired by their favourite Western popular musicians ... We look at ourselves and look at the feedback from the

people. We do not completely follow Western popular music, but we create a mixture which Thai people can accept.'

Traditionally, appropriate pronunciation for singing in Thai language is counted as an important part of vocal music. The Thai language differs from the language of the world's mainstream popular music, in that it is a tonal language, with each syllable having a fixed tone which affects the meaning. Tones will sound awkward in some circumstances where Western musical styles such as soul and rap have been adopted. Nevertheless, the convention of singing in appropriate Thai pronunciation is frequently ignored by many *Thai-sakon* singers, especially in teenage music, and many educators regard this as harmful for the language. Although such practice is disapproved of, young listeners are not reluctant to accept it. Recently, as an interviewee remarked, English words have been inserted in Thai lyrics and this is acceptable. The conventional method of singing has not disappeared, but the Westernized form is more popular. This accords with the taste of young listeners, who regard Western styles as the most fashionable, so the more Westernized Thai popular music is, the more fashionable it becomes.

However, as there are various genres of Thai popular music, there remain Thai popular musicians and composers who do not regard Western styles as mandatory. A musician said, 'I seldom listen to Western popular music because if I listen to it too often, it will stick in my ears and it may influence me to compose my music in a similar way.' This musician-composer used to be a member of a band which performs 'songs-for-life (*phleng pheua chiwit*)', a separate genre within Thai popular music. It is a kind of music with styles somewhere between Thai country popular and Thai popular music. The method of singing, the characteristics of the melodies and the frequent participation of Thai folk music instruments express a unique Thai essence, while the main musical instruments and the music arrangement are Western. This kind of music has some similarity with *luk-thung* but it has a distinctive musical style, and more importantly, the song texts that express different themes: *luk-thung* songs express the everyday life of country people, but songs-for-life (*pheua chiwit*) express the problems of the poor either rural or urban and their attitudes to life.

Although Thai popular music always follows in the steps of Western popular music, its producers only aim at the local market in Thailand and some neighbouring countries, for example Laos. Despite boasts about the quality of Thai music as compared with global popular music, generally speaking, the dream of achieving an international market

is still far from realization. A producer whose recordings sell in the international market made the following criticism:

‘The greatest problem in reaching the international market lies in the use of the Thai language because it is not an international language... We do not have any artists who can sing in both languages (Thai and English) or we have very few, but it is not marketable in Thailand to sing our songs in English... Another problem is the criteria for production... The level of taste of Thai listeners is very childish, not as sophisticated as the taste of the listeners at world level. *Thai-sakon* (Thai popular music) sounds too simple and too clear, like easy music. Its tone colour is not as full as other Western popular music.’

In spite of these difficulties, there have been attempts to push *Thai-sakon* onto the regional stage, as has already started to happen with the broadcasts of MTV Asia. The hope of having a part in the global market is stronger in those who are working in a Thai branch of one of the major foreign music companies whose potential are higher, but in general, Thai popular music aims solely at local people.

So far, the attitudes towards and opinions about 3 types of Thai music have been shown. The following sections will move on to Western popular and Western classical music.

5.1.4 Western Popular Music (Phleng Sakon)

Western popular music, or so-called ‘global music’, has influenced local popular music globally. In Thailand, it is easily available in the capital city where several FM radio stations transmit it. Sample definitions of Western popular music given by the students are:

Students: ‘Contemporary music which is popular all over the world’;

‘Uses foreign lyrics, difficult to understand’;

‘Songs from foreign countries. Understandable if we understand the language’;

‘Creative, new, developing all the time.’

To summarize the answers, Western popular music is regarded as a foreign or global culture in foreign languages (51%) and is considered admired as a model of world-standard popular music, as many students (29%) value it as meaningful and creative. The students find it fashionable, with its novel high-tech production, its variety of new

musical styles and the new style of language (including slang) communication in its lyrics, and also its attractive music videos (20%). It is recognized as having exciting characteristics and good dance music (11%). However, it creates a feeling of distance and foreignness for several students (and at least 4% of students gave no definition of the music), obviously due to the foreign language used in its lyrics. This is a massive hindrance for many people, as they need language competence to understand the vocal part (14%) in order to relate the music as a whole. Very few students (2%) mentioned its commercial aim, and only one student regarded it as classy music for classy listeners. See Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4: Western popular music (*sakon*): students' attitudes & opinions

| | Frequency of answers | % |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----|
| Foreign/global culture | | 51 |
| Meaningful / creative / has quality | | 29 |
| Modern / fashionable | | 20 |
| Requires language competence | | 14 |
| Mostly fast and fun / dance music | | 11 |
| Business aim | | 2 |
| Listeners are classy | | 1 |
| No idea | | 4 |

85% of the students liked Western popular music, 8% of them because they said the music is modern or up-to-date and 3% regarded it as classy. Although other students did not say this in so many words, they may, to some extent, feel similarly because they are aware of Western popular music on a global level and its influence on local music production. To have an appreciation of Western popular music may be seen as an expression of smartness and also a way of showing off one's foreign language competence. The reason given by 32% for their preference for Western popular music is its musical style. For example, two students who were ambivalent said that they do not understand the meaning of the language, but they admire the musical part. Another important reason is related not to the music but to the texts: listening to or singing Western popular music provides a chance to practise English, which is regarded as the international language and is also a second language taught in schools. However, it is also the language that is a considerable hindrance, causing the dislike of Western popular music expressed by a number of students (80%) who disliked it, and probably also felt by a considerable number of others (20%) who disliked the music but did not give any reason (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Western popular music (*sakon*): students' preferences & prejudices

| Western popular | Reasons |
|-----------------|--|
| Like: 85% | Like the musical styles (melody & rhythm) (32%) Good chance to practise English language (26%) Beautiful and relaxing (22%) Meaningful song texts (21%) Provides variety of styles (14%) Musicians are musically competent (12%) Musicians are attractive (8%) Up-to-date (5%) Looks good (classy / international) (4%) Original / creative (2%) Familiar with it (1%) No comment (18%) |
| Dislike: 10% | Difficult to understand (the language)/ not understandable (80%) No comment (20%) |
| Ambivalent: 5% | Can listen to some pieces sometimes (60%) Do not understand the language but the music is quite nice (4%) |

A member of staff in a record company explained in an interview that the early days of modern popular music in Thailand started with the spread and subsequent domination of Western popular music in Bangkok. Following the arrival of this Western popular music, Thai musicians imitated the Western style in their production of *Thai-sakon* and then gradually overtook Western popular music and gained the biggest share of the market. It is assumed that the use of the Thai language was the reason of this success: most Thai people feel easier with a song in their own language than in a foreign language which they do not completely understand. Western popular music today still has an audience and continues to play an important role in inspiring local popular music. Western popular music has listeners who are regarded as possessing a higher level of music appreciation, for example those who are more educated, and have competence in English language (although English is a core subject in school, most people do not have adequate speaking and listening skills), and they are, of course, a minority in the society.

At present, Western popular music is still regarded as the model from which Thai popular music producers learn and which they tend to emulate. The degree of Westernization of Thai popular music is increasing in parallel with the spread of globalization of Western popular music. However, Thai popular music has not discarded the characteristics of Thai-ness completely. Simplicity is its main characteristic and accords with the taste of the Thai market. 'Western popular music cannot totally wash away the Thai-ness from Thai popular music', a producer claimed.

As a result of the power of globalization, Western popular music has brought in modern technologies for both music production and media communication. An interviewee pointed out, 'In the music industry, it brings in modernity, for example, modern technologies which we can learn, see and feel, etc. It is more than the beauty of music alone.' It is certainly seen as good enough to be a model of popular music. 'Its technologies are very well developed, as is the ability of the musicians. Thai people are always influenced by the foreign media. They pay attention to the American Top Ten and also those from the UK.'

Thanks to the availability of efficient global communication, the latest Western popular music can arrive everywhere in the world simultaneously, an interviewee said, 'There is a tendency for the market for Western popular music to grow as a result of the arrival of the international media... Media reception in Thailand is not slower than in other countries. What is a hit there, is also hit here at the same time, and the taste of Thai people is beginning to change.' Nowadays, people in Thailand can listen to world popular music hits on radio, cable television, satellite and on the Internet. It looks as if there is a possibility that Western popular music could return to its glory in Thailand. A musician in his early twenties, who grew up in the heyday of the domination of Thai popular music, noticed the current change,

'People today listen to foreign music more than they did in the past. Teenagers like dance music; adults like world music, New Age, or classical ... I think the market for Western popular music aims at teenagers and students. Mostly, I think that more than 50% of listeners do not listen to the lyrics but rather to the rhythms and melodies. I think that about 80% of Western popular songs which are hits in Thailand are dance music ... But Thai people do not accept that Thai music can give as much excitement as Western music.'

It is interesting that, although Thai and Western popular music have similar musical styles, there is no direct competition between Western popular music and Thai popular music concerning its position in the market. A producer said:

'I think Thai popular and Western popular music are not a competitive pair. There is a tendency that Thai people will listen to Western popular music more than they do now.... But I think there is a division: if you like Thai pop you listen to Thai pop, if you like Western pop you listen to Western pop. There may be some people who have to choose whether to listen to Western or Thai but there are very few.'

Another interviewee concluded, 'In the big scale, Thai and Western popular music have different markets.'

At present, considering the music market at large, the proportion of Thai popular music fans is greater than that of Western popular music. A musician pointed out, 'I think that people listen to Thai songs more than Western songs...To judge from the Western popular songs broadcast on TV, very few can become hits; if they do, this affects only a limited group of people.' The main reason for this is, as stated earlier, the language barrier. Although some people may not regard lyrics as important in any comparison between Thai popular music and Western popular music, for Thai people Thai popular music is more approachable. A record company member of staff claimed,

'Thai popular music is something familiar and easy to understand... As for Western popular music, we like it but it is remote. Take concerts for example. It will be a long time before another famous artist like Michael Jackson will come to give a concert here. Unlike *Thai-sakon* (Thai popular music): following its music or artists is easier, the music is easier to understand, you can sing along and it is now more modernized.'

5.1.5 Western Classical Music (Phleng Classic)

Western classical music is quite a remote type of music for most Thai people, even educated ones. Sample definitions of Western classical music given by the students are:

- Students:
- 'It effectively stimulates the imagination and the emotions';
 - 'Slow music. Use of many musical instruments. For those with taste';
 - 'Relaxing music with no violence';
 - 'Difficult to understand if lacking high taste';
 - 'Only instrumental. Relaxing.'

In conclusion, Western classical music was seen by these students as the most distant from Thai music and from their experience (6% of students had no idea how to define it). It is mainly regarded as conventional instrumental music (33%). A high number of students (32%) stereotyped it as easy-listening, relaxing or slow music. Several students also understood it only as instrumental music. As one student said, 'I am not interested in this type of music, it is only instrumental.' On the other hand, many felt the music is complicated, needing a high level of ability to compose and perform (20%), and to be able to understand it, one needs a certain degree of knowledge about the music. The reason that many students (21%) find it difficult to understand can be partly attributed to the nature of the music, which is mainly instrumental: they feel that vocal music gives a clearer meaning and is easier to follow. Because they do not understand

the music, some students find it boring; nevertheless, a number of students (11%) find it expressive, reflective and stimulating to the imagination, and some describe it as great and graceful. Western classical music is also regarded by several students (14%) as having a link with specific groups of people, especially those with higher status. These students refer to Western classical music as classy music for classy listeners. It is also regarded as a type of music particularly appreciated by specific groups of listeners such as old people or pregnant women (2). See Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5: Western classical music (classic): students' attitudes & opinions

| | Frequency of answers | % |
|--|----------------------|----|
| Mainly Western conventional instrumental music | | 33 |
| Nice / easy-listening / relaxing / slow | | 32 |
| Beyond mass understanding / needs listening skills | | 21 |
| Artistic / intellectual / high standard of performance | | 20 |
| For specific groups of people | | 14 |
| Expressive / reflective / stimulates the imagination | | 11 |
| No idea | | 6 |

Almost half of all students (49%) dislike Western classical music. The reasons for this 'dislike' are given as unfamiliarity and a lack of musical understanding, and also from the nature of the music, which they stereotype as slow and soft, providing no excitement, and causing boredom. However, nearly half of the students (44%) respond positively to the music. They see it as creating a relaxing effect as it is easy listening; moreover, they feel that the music is grand and classy (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5: Western classical music (classic): students' preferences & prejudices

| Western classical | Reasons |
|-------------------|--|
| Like: 44% | Relaxing / beautiful / mellow / romantic (70%) Stimulates the imagination (9%) Grand (7%) Classy (2%) Familiar with it (2%) Well composed (2%) Good for sending one to sleep (2%) No comment (14%) |
| Dislike: 49% | Causes sleepiness / boring (45%) Difficult to understand / not understandable (31%) Difficult to find / not accustomed to it (16%) Too soft / too slow (8%) Dislike instrumental music (4%) Too old (4%) Causes headaches / irritating (4%) Not compatible with my personality (2%) No comment (10%) |
| Ambivalent: 7 | Can listen to it on some occasions for relaxation (71%) No objection (29%) |

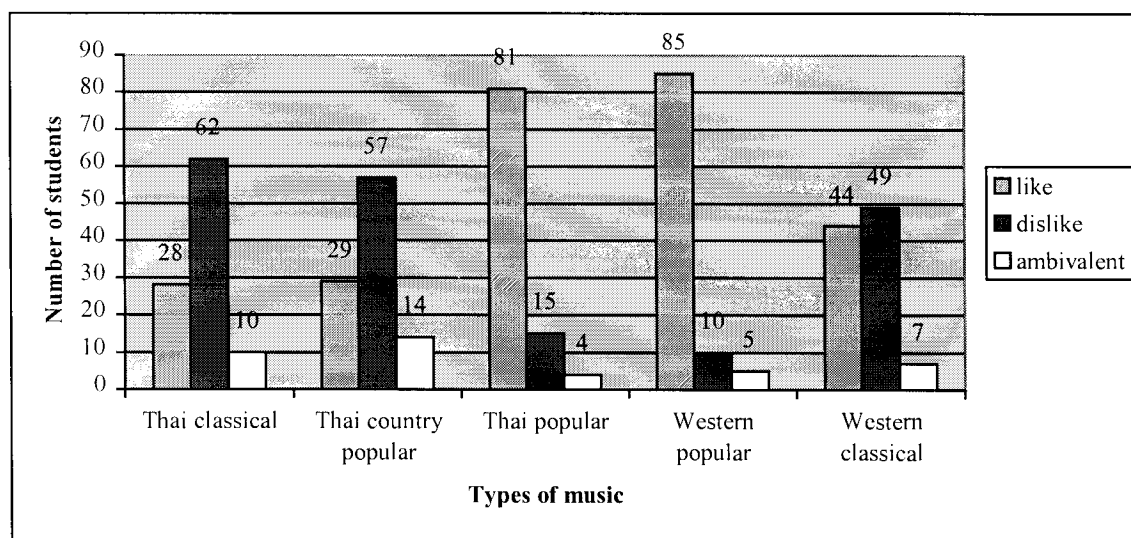
The interviews with record company staff members show little comment on the role of Western classical music in Thai society as a whole. 'Western classical music is not from our roots; it is foreign ... far away from us. I think it has very little popularity', a musician said. Listeners to Western classical music belong to specific groups. 'Listeners are either educated or people used to living abroad, those in high society or from a family which is influenced by people from these groups but in general, very few listen to it', claimed an interviewee.

Western classical music is regarded as a higher level of music and only those who possess some knowledge of it understand its meaning. Musicians and producers think that it is very complicated, that its audience is small and that the chances of making a business out of it (in Thailand) are low. An interviewee pointed out, 'I still feel that there is a restricted number of listeners... mainly adults. A chance to build a new market here is difficult.' Its situation is comparable to that of Thai classical music, 'Listener groups resemble those of *phleng Thai-derm* (Thai classical), which consists of adults. It is unlikely to appeal to teenagers', claimed an interviewee.

5.1.6 Comparison of Music Preferences

Let us now compare the popularity of each type of music among the students. The graph below shows the result:

Figure 5.6: Students' music preferences



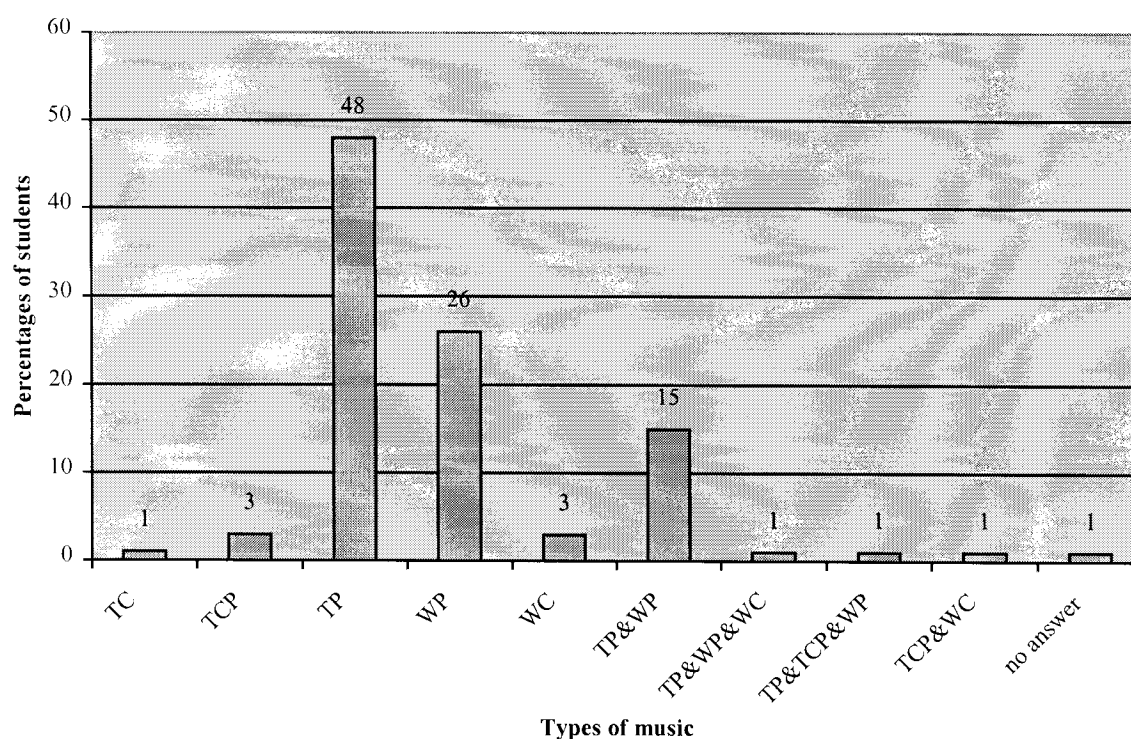
The graph above shows that, according to the students' own choice of listening, Western popular music is the most favoured (85%), followed by Thai popular music (81%), then Western classical (44%), Thai country popular (29%) and Thai classical music (28%) respectively. Only Western and Thai popular music gains more preference than rejection. They share a similar musical style that is the new generation's preferred type. As for Thai classical and Thai country popular music, although both possess clear elements of Thai style, fewer than 30% of students like to listen to them. Although Western classical music does not belong to Thai culture as Thai classical music does, and some students vaguely understand what Western classical is, as many as 44% of students who said that they like listening to it whereas only 28% like listening to Thai classical music.

It is interesting that the number of preferences for Western popular and classical music is higher than for the Thai equivalents. This may result from the national and international level of music, as many students reported an awareness that Western music is international. They feel that it possesses a higher quality and they prefer to identify themselves personally with it. However between classical and popular, the majority of students obviously chose popular music because it possesses modern characteristics

which they can identify with in their lives, and which they use to distinguish themselves from the older generation.

However in practice, the broader picture may reveal some differences. The following Figure 7.5 shows the number of students listening to each type of music, including those who listened to more than one type. The types of music shown are those they mostly listened to in the week before they answered the questionnaire.

Figure 5.7: Students' most frequently listened to musics during the week before answering the questionnaire



TC = Thai classical (*Thai-derm*)
 TCP = Thai country popular (*luk-thung*)
 TP = Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*)
 WP = Western popular (*sakon*)
 WC = Western classical (*classic*)

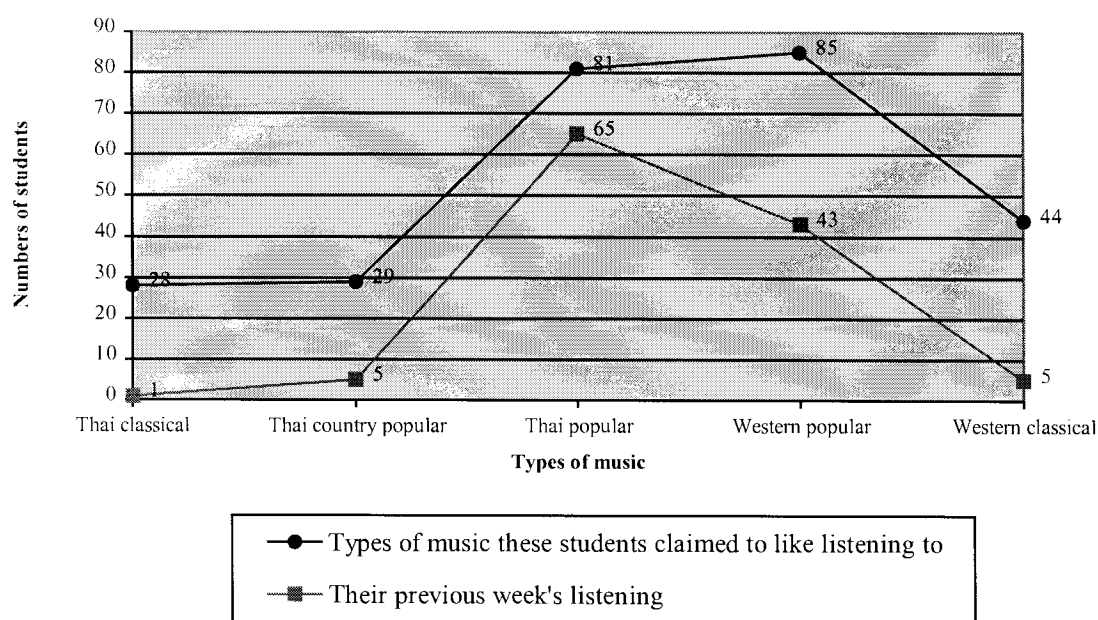
Note: The figure given above does not show the total duration of listening time altogether but only the percentages of the students who listen to each type.

The above graph shows that *Thai-sakon* is the music most listened to by these students. However, the number for Western popular music is still high if compared to other types of music. The listening behaviour of the students illuminates the popularity of popular music both Thai and Western over other types of music. Thai country popular and Western classical music attracted only 3% of all students and Thai classical music,

even fewer. It attracted only 1 %. Put together those who listened most frequently to more than one type of music, each type of music been listened to can be concluded as: Thai-classical - 1, Thai country popular – 5, Thai popular – 65, Western popular – 43 and Western classical – 5.

Compared to the previous report of music preference, the result is not always parallel: although more students said to prefer Western popular music to Thai equivalent, they listened to Thai popular music much more.

Figure 5.8: Students' music preferences and their report on their listening



There are differences between the attitudes and the practice of music listening. As seen in Figure 5.8 above, popular music is the favourite type of music. There are some differences between Thai and Western popular music: positive attitudes to Western music were claimed by more students than to Thai popular music (85%/81%), but the students listened to Thai popular music much more than to Western popular (65%/43%). For the 3 types of Thai music, there were narrower gaps between preferences and listening than in the Western types. Attitude and practice had the closest match in Thai popular music. For the other two types of Thai music, the gap sizes are bigger. But if these are compared to those for Western music (both popular and classical), the positive attitudes to Western music and the actual practice of listening to it show wider gaps. This implies that those who claimed that they like Western music do not listen to it as much as

those who like Thai popular music listen to Thai popular music. There is an evident disparity between claims and practice.

The reasons given by the respondents why they like or dislike each kind of music (see Table 5.1 – 5.5) explain an important part of this phenomenon; the other important part can be explained by the role of the public media: mainly radio and television (see 3.4.1.3). The reasons that Thai classical music is regarded as out-dated and *luk-thung*'s status as inferior has prevented many students from listening to these kinds of music despite considering them to be patriotically important. Similarly, a number of students have an appreciation of Western classical music but, in practice, the Western musical style is not what they would like to listen to. For popular music, it can be explained that most students were very positive about Western popular music because they regarded it as a source of modern musical creativity. However, lacking adequate language competence to understand the music as a whole and, perhaps, to avoid being accused by their peers of behaving in a superior way, these students attached themselves to Thai popular music.

Apart from the students' attitudes to each type of music, the influence of the media is crucial. The media devote most of their time to popular music: Thai and Western popular (mainly on FM radio stations) and Thai country popular (mainly on AM radio stations). In Bangkok, more people listen to FM radio than AM as they considered AM radio to be provincial. As for Thai country popular music: despite its high availability on radio, it is not listened to by most of the students as they do not wish to identify themselves with the type of music they considered provincial, since 'provincial' is generally associated with 'low education'. That's why they listen much more to Thai and Western popular music than other types of music. Both FM and AM radio channels broadcast extremely little Thai and Western classical music. Therefore, what is the most easily available on radio is the type of music most frequently listened to. This seems to be another reason for the low number of students listening to classical music, both Thai and Western, and the much higher number of students claiming to *like* listening to it.

Additionally, there are also ideological reasons which may lead a person to want to identify him/herself with a particular type of music. Generally, Western music, both popular and classical, being global, is widely regarded as having 'higher status' than local music. Students, since they regard themselves as educated people, may therefore prefer to express their appreciation of global music although they genuinely feel more comfortable with Thai popular music.

Moreover, most students also feel the pressure of the desire to be modern as well as the awareness of a responsibility to preserve the national culture, or at the very least to support the national production by choosing to listen to Thai popular music more than Western popular music.

5.1.7 The Musical Identity of Thailand

There are three main types of Thai music at the present time: classical, popular and country popular. Let us start with a brief recapitulation. The numbers of students answering the questionnaire who claiming positive attitudes to Thai music are distributed. Thus: Thai popular, 81%; Thai country popular, 29%; and Thai classical, 28%. The number of students listening to each type is Thai popular, 65%; Thai country popular, 5%; and Thai classical, 1%. These figures show the degree of popularity of local music among the students: Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) is the most listened to, Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) is much less favoured and Thai classical (*Thai-derm*) is almost totally neglected.

When asked which type best represents Thai music to foreigners, the students' answers were the reverse of their order of preferences (see Figure 5.9). This result is similar to the contradiction between their attitudes and opinions about types of music and their actual listening discussed earlier. The students have a split musical identity: one part is related to their personal musical taste (private self) and the other to their social life (public self) and how they present their Thai musical culture to others. For the majority of students (72%), Thai classical music (*Thai-derm*) is regarded as the best representation of Thai musical culture, whereas Thai popular music is the weakest representation. This can be understood as due to normal national pride: the least foreign-influenced is the best representation of a distinctive cultural identity. Thai country popular or *luk-thung*, which sounds less Western when compared to *Thai-sakon*, was seen as a good representation of Thai music by 30% of students, including those who chose more than one type. Only 3% of students were happy to have *Thai-sakon* to represent their musical culture. The reasons which they gave are shown in Table 5.6.

Figure 5.9: Students' choices of the best representation of Thai music to foreigners

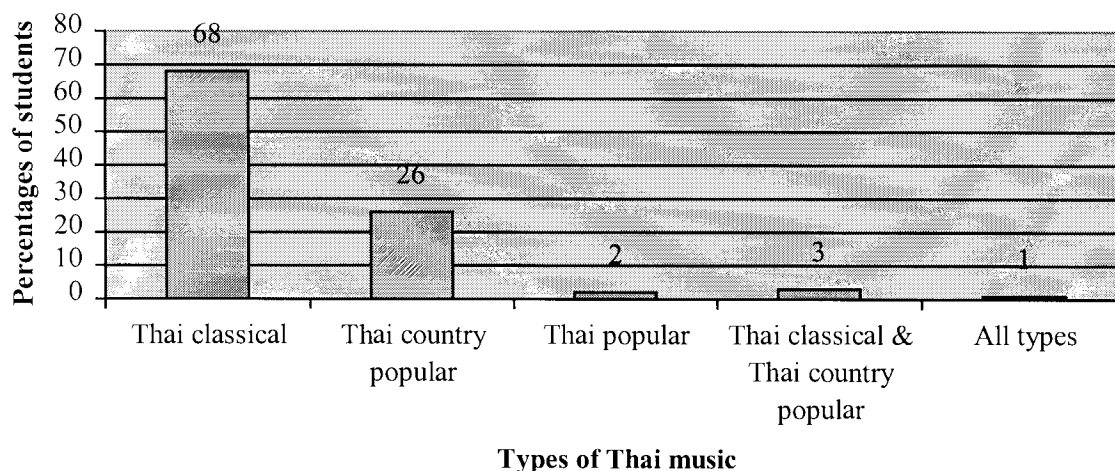


Table 5.6: Students' reasons for choosing the best representation of Thai music

| |
|--|
| <p>Thai classical music (<i>Thai-derm</i>) Unique identity of national music expressing Thai-ness (39%) Use of Thai musical instruments (30%) Old / ancient / original (7%) High level of fine art (3%) Used for accompanying Thai dance (1%) Expresses tenderness (1%) No comment (8%)</p> |
| <p>Thai country popular music (<i>luk-thung</i>) Simple music which best expresses Thai lifestyle / possesses genuine Thai-ness (15%) Lively Thai-style music (3%) Performance has unique elements: singing technique, dancing, folk instruments (2%) Not too boring / not too out-of-date (2%) Variety of styles (1%) Uses solely Thai language (1%) Old (1%) Easy listening / requires little musical knowledge (1%) No comment (5%)</p> |
| <p>Thai popular music (<i>Thai-sakon</i>) Everyone can understand the music (1%) No comment (1%)</p> |

Most students who chose Thai classical music have a classical conservative view about the choice of a type of music that represents the national musical identity. It seems to me that their choice may be automatic. This is obvious from the fact that 8% of students chose it without giving any reason. As children in Thailand are brought up to feel national pride, they carry the responsibility for the conservation of their inherited

culture. Although Thai classical music is not their favourite type of music (they even find it tedious), they chose it as the best representation of Thai music. Despite *luk-thung* being wholly vocal music whose lyrics are not understood by foreigners, the choice of *luk-thung* to represent Thai musical culture seems to be quite plausible as this is the local music which the majority of Thai people listen to and the music of the present time that still retains many of the elements of traditional Thai folk music. There is also an implication that the Thai classical music style is not compatible with today's lifestyles, but Thai country popular is. Finally, those few students who chose Thai popular music think that Thai music should be represented to foreigners by music that the foreigners are familiar with, but it should be produced locally, i.e. in Thailand.

5.2 Teachers' Perspectives on Music in the Wider Society

Of the total number of teachers who returned the questionnaire, 83.33% answered this part. The current music scene in Thai society provoked both approval and disapproval from music teachers, but there were many more negative views than positive ones. Figure 5.10 shows the summary of their opinions:

Figure 5.10: Teachers' perspectives towards music in the wider society

| <i>Positive views:</i> | Frequency of answers | % |
|---|----------------------|----|
| Increasing music tuition and support from organizations | | 23 |
| Music is a part of life in society | | 8 |
| <i>Negative views:</i> | | |
| Fashionable Western style music prevails over Thai style | | 30 |
| Sub-standard music exists everywhere | | 24 |
| Music is a product controlled by business & media | | 19 |
| Technology is replacing musicians / musical art is fading | | 5 |
| A lack of real music appreciation | | 2 |

For teachers with positive views, music is obviously a part of present day life. More importantly, music is gaining more educational appreciation and support from authorities and parents than before. This can be observed from the increasing popularity of music tuition either as a main or as an extra subject of study. There is also more support for musical activities available from many organizations.

Teachers: 'It is continuously improving because private organizations provide a budget to support music activities such as competitions. The quality of music making is improving';

‘There are a great number of institutions for music tuition. They provide extensive knowledge in addition to the provision given in schools, and prepare pupils for music education at university level’;

‘There is more development in the field, as seen by the large number of adults who are keen to provide their children with music tuition during weekends and school holidays in order to build up special skills in their children’;

‘Music receives more attention: parents are eager to support their children with extra music tuition from music schools. The number of Western classical music listeners is increasing and popular music is a very flourishing business’;

‘At present, there is more attention paid to Thai and Western music, especially popular music in which teenagers are much interested. For instance, there are an increasing number of young people who learn to play the guitar, keyboard or piano. This may result from the availability of a variety of choices of music schools around. In Bangkok, there are a good number of Yamaha music schools, while in the provinces they are only found in town centres. However, places for Thai classical music are much less available and mostly found in schools.’

As mentioned in the above statement, appreciation and support are not equally spread throughout the society; Western music tends to receive more attention in the wider society than Thai classical music which is likely to have a secure place in schools and in certain areas. Unavoidably, there is always a sense that popular music is overshadowing all other kinds of music.

Teacher: ‘Thai classical music is flourishing now. Thai classical music receives support from many individuals and organizations and this makes people appreciate the music. However, there are young people who are more interested in Western types of music.’

As mentioned earlier, the success of music for entertainment is apparent. Although Thai classical music received more appreciation, the appreciation is restricted to small groups of population. In reality, there is only one style of music which is generally said to be flourishing, and that is ‘Western style music’, which mainly refers to the local Thai and the global Western popular music. Its influences upon young people are clearly visible. In consequence, the popularity of Western-style music is blamed for distracting young people’s attention away from Thai classical music. Although it is said that support is given to music, it seems that there is not enough for Thai classical music.

Teachers: ‘Music is favoured everywhere by children, young adults and the elderly. Most of them like Western musical types of music; very few favour Thai classical music’;

‘Now Western music is exerting a strong influence on young Thais. As a result, the fine Thai cultures, music and traditions receive no regard and are fading. We need institutions or organizations to give support and help to conserve the national arts and cultures, otherwise they will be swallowed up and disappear’;

‘Nowadays music is influenced by foreign cultures. This has led to a neglect of Thai classical music. Thai children should be raised to appreciate the need for the conservation of the Thai heritage.’

Although music teachers are optimistic about the variety of styles which popular music brings in, not all styles are approved of, and they tend to doubt the musical quality. Popular music is often accused of lacking quality or being sub-standard; nevertheless, with the co-operation between record companies and the media, it spreads everywhere. The media are also claimed to restrict the variety of music consumption, although the interview with a record company staff member reported earlier indicates that record companies have to comply with consumer taste.

Teachers: ‘The music scene in the wider society is highly developed now. There are many forms of music: pop, jazz, etc. including those that fulfil teenagers’ appetites. Sometimes the song quality is not good, resulting from, for example, turning hit TV and film stars into singers to satisfy teenage fans. The quality of their music is doubtful. But for the real singers, teenagers hardly know them. However, in conclusion, the position of music is much improved’;

‘Now Thai society accepts more variety in music. However, some types are too heavy and violent and some singers and musicians are not really competent’;

‘Music outside schools is unsystematic, badly taught or self-taught and highly dependent on opportunities and financial support’;

‘Music outside school is controlled by recording companies. It can be seen that there are plenty of new launches of artists by each company every day or every week. Some have quality and some lack quality, but the companies can afford to advertise through media: television and radio. Those companies with big money are able to play their recordings frequently and people inescapably listen to it. On this point, we should worry about our native teenagers who inattentively consume music of inadequate quality.’

It cannot be denied that music in Thai society is dominated by business; consequently, in the eyes of many music teachers this casts doubt on the artistic quality of popular music. Evidently, the invasion of high technology in music making decreases

the need for ‘real’ musicians. People who produce music are not necessarily musicians but people who know how to use the equipment.

Teachers: ‘The emphasis is on profit rather than quality. Good musicians have no chance to show their work’;

‘Music is an art, which influences the human soul. Now, music performance is dependent on electronic equipment especially the computer. The art of music-making is dying’;

‘Music is a tool for filling your wallet with money. Most music today is produced for profit and is worthless. A great number of musicians are emerging but lack ability; most of them are computer controllers rather than musicians.’

Some teachers feel that there is still a lack of music appreciation in the society and not everyone can afford extra tuition and activities. However, attempts are still being made.

Teachers: ‘Most music is produced for teenagers and nightclub goers. Music at a high level cannot reach the masses but only a few. Now there are plenty of handy musical machines, and human beings have less value. Although music is flourishing, it is easier for the rich to enjoy than the poor’;

‘There are many organizations which try to produce good local musical ensembles, but this requires a lot of money. There is also an attempt by the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra to create a standard culture for Bangkokians. However, lots of problems regarding audiences, finance and sponsors arise. People, including pupils and students, should always be educated to know which music has quality and value.’

5.3 Summary

The mid-nineties were a golden time for the music business in Thailand. Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) and Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) music producers made great fortunes in the music industry. The mushrooming of independent record companies provided a greater variety of musical styles for Thai popular music consumers. The media responded accordingly by providing more opportunities for creative music to be broadcast, instead of the old system of only providing music imposed on them by record companies in return for payola. The new technology of global communication has undeniably encouraged Western global musical styles which Thai music producers have adopted and adapted.

According to the teachers, music is generally an important part of life in Thai society and more significantly, music teaching and learning currently gains more support than

formerly from many organizations. This has increased its educational value. Nevertheless, looking at music in the wider society, the success of popular music industry has provoked disapproval rather than approval from music teachers. One argument is that the adoption of Western styles is seen as a threat to the survival of the Thai musical style. Moreover, the music business is regarded as aiming at profit-making rather than producing music with quality, and as relying on music technologies instead of using human musical competence. Music teachers wish to see a change, with more appreciation of Thai classical music. They also claim that music education in school fails to help pupils distinguish good music from bad music, and it cannot successfully encourage pupils to appreciate quality music.

From the data, the status attributed to each type of music by music consumers (students) and music producers (record company staff members) can be summed up as follows:

a) Thai classical music (phleng Thai-derm)

Students regard Thai classical music played on Thai music instruments as the music of the old times, a heritage which represents Thai identity. Most of them stereotype the music as usually slow and non-stimulating; and more than half of the students find it out of date and unattractive for everyday listening. More than twice as many students do not appreciate it as those who do. It is the music which is least listened to, but it is also the music which majority of students regard as defining the musical identity of Thailand. This shows that many of the students demonstrate a split identity in respect of music.

For record companies, the general trend of Thai classical music recordings today is the modernization of the music or the fusion of Western and Thai instruments. But very few companies are dealing with Thai classical music, for reasons of restrictions caused by traditional beliefs and its poor business prospect. Generally, Thai classical music is ceremonial music rather than music for listening. Thai classical music today, in addition to its secure place in school, is kept alive by small but prominent groups of determined people who can certainly guarantee its future existence.

b) Thai country popular music (phleng luk-thung)

The majority of students do not like Thai country popular music because of its rural style of communication, which many students find not to their taste. Only 5% of students admitted listening to it. Despite its 'inferior' status, Thai country popular music is

regarded as having a Thai folk style which belongs to the majority of Thai population all over the country. It, therefore, has the possibility of representing the musical identity of Thailand.

Long recognized by the record companies, Thai country popular music is a successful form of modernized Thai folk style. It is also the most commercially successful music in Thailand as a whole. Although regarded by the audience in Bangkok as having a stigma of 'inferior status', many of its songs have become big hits in the capital.

c) *Thai popular music (phleng Thai-sakon)*

Thai popular music is the most meaningful music of the present time as it is dominant in the media. It is the most commercially successful music in Bangkok in the nineties. Most students like listening to it although many of them criticize the production of music as uncreative and argue that many songs are copied from global popular music.

The path of the Thai popular music business is to follow the Western system, with attempts to push its own products to the level of the world standard. Thai popular music is highly influenced by global popular music. The only Thai-ness remaining in Thai popular music is its use of the Thai language. This is also a hindrance for Thai popular music preventing it from stepping onto the international stage, as the Thai language is not widely known. Thai popular music is almost exclusively produced for local consumption. As it is heavily influenced by Western popular music, it is the least likely to represent the musical identity of Thailand.

d) *Western popular music (phleng sakon)*

Western popular music is the music about which the majority of students have the most positive attitudes. It is the music delivered by the global media. The students are aware of its foreignness and its influence across the globe. They appreciate this music and regard it as modern and fashionable. The one hindrance, for many students, is the language barrier, because English is not a language spoken in Thailand. However, some students see it as a good chance to practise the language, as English is a core subject in education. Compared to Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*), which has adopted the Western style, students have a higher regard for Western popular than Thai popular music, but more of them actually listen to Thai popular music. Among all types of music,

Western popular music is the second most favoured music for everyday listening and almost half of the students listen to it.

Record companies in Thailand welcome the influence of global popular music on their music production. It can be said that record companies keep their eyes on Western popular music (*sakon*) and adopt it for use in the production of Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) for local consumption. In the music market, Western popular music and Thai popular music are not a competitive pair, although they have similar styles. However, there is a likelihood that the popularity of Western popular music will increase in Bangkok as the global media and communications become more available and widespread and as more people wish to learn English since it is the language used in global communications.

e) Western classical music (phleng classic)

The students noticed the use of music as ‘wallpaper’ or background music rather than music for more attentive listening. The complicated nature of Western classical music, which was often labelled as ‘serious music’, results in few people giving it the attention it deserves. The students’ limited knowledge of the music creates a stereotypical view of it, as only either orchestral or operatic. Almost half of the students have no appetite for Western classical music, while the rest admire its sensory effects. Western classical music is the only type of music where preference is almost equal to prejudice against it (44/49). Nevertheless, in practice, only 5% of the students listened to it; this was mainly caused by its rare availability on radio and television. However, this number still exceeds those listening to Thai classical music. Western classical seems to be held in higher regard as there are more students who like Western classical than Thai classical. According to the data, Western classical music clearly has a high status in Bangkok.

Record companies in Thailand do not have much to do with Western classical music due to its alien origin and style. The consumers are small groups, often related to or friendly with members of privileged socio-economic groups, musicians’ families and music graduates and music students.

It is clear that Thai popular music is the most active music in the capital. This suggests the strong effect of the globalization of global popular music. The attempt to resist it by promoting the traditional Thai classical music is being made, but it is a struggle. The power from outside is much stronger than the power within. One important

point is that Thai classical music and Thai popular music have different functions: the former acts as a symbol of the nation involved in traditional ceremonies while the latter is an essential part of everyday entertainment. Thus Thai popular music is engaged more with everyday life. Apart from the functions of emotional expression, aesthetic enjoyment, physical response and communication, the two most significant functions shown in the data are entertainment and symbolic expression of identity, which also relate to the status of music (see Table 5.7).

Table 5.7: Types of music and their association

| <i>Type of Music</i> | <i>Main Use and Function</i> | <i>Indication of Status</i> |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Thai classical | To accompany traditional events A mark of continuity of inherited culture | National symbol |
| Thai popular | Everyday entertainment | Modernity |
| Thai country popular | Everyday entertainment | Folksiness |
| Western popular | Everyday entertainment. A model for the making of Thai popular music | Worldwide modernity |
| Western classical | Symbol of wealth & nobility | European High Culture |

Because there is an awareness of a range of levels of status associated with different types of music, some Thai people may use the status indicators in Table 5.7 to identify themselves with a particular type of music, although in reality they may never have engaged with their ‘ideal’ type. This refers to the students who expressed their preferences for Western music but intentionally listened more to Thai popular music.

The popularity of any type of music is spread by the media. The global media feed record companies the idea of making their local popular music, and the record companies feed their local media with their local popular music. The result is that the media are saturated with similar styles of music: Thai and Western popular. There is very little that media and record companies have done so far to help in the struggle for Thai classical music, their reason being the music is dated and that it is consequently hard to draw the attention of today’s audiences towards it. But music teachers have different opinions on this from the other two groups of respondents. Teachers claim that although Thai

classical music is a part of music education in school, the flooding of Thai and Western popular music over the media has drawn young people's attention away from Thai classical music. All in all, support from the government is needed to help Thai classical music to survive. If the government have a strong policy to deal with it in co-operation with the media, the appreciation of Thai classical music will increase among the population.

CHAPTER 6

Music in Education

6.1 Music in the School Curriculum

6.1.1 Music in Classrooms

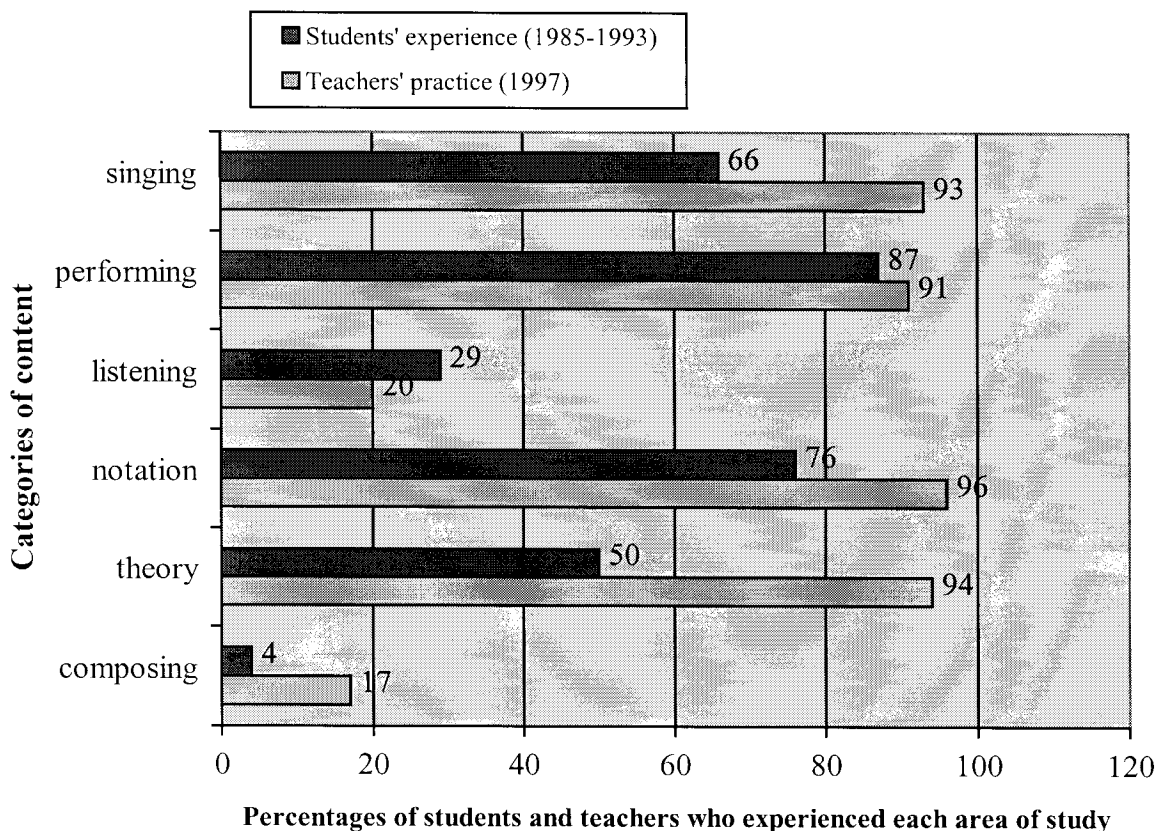
In the education system in Thailand, music at the secondary school level provides general musical knowledge, both Thai and Western. More importantly, it provides a way of continuing the practice of Thai music. According to their memories, students were exposed more to Thai classical music than to Western music.

Estimating from the age of all the students, they were in various lower secondary schools during the years 1985-1993. As a result of the revision of the school curriculum in 1990, some of the students experienced the old music curriculum, and the others experienced the new curriculum. It is surprising to me that from these 100 students from different backgrounds, 9 students reported no study of music in their school education, although music has always been a compulsory subject in schools. However, some schools may have taught dance instead or some students may have had only part-time secondary education, which provides core subjects and some options in other subjects, and which may exclude music.

For the 91 students who experienced music education in school, their main activity in music classes was performing: playing instruments and singing. Notation was widely taught. Half of these students experienced the studying of music theory, less than one-third had studied listening and only 4% studied music composition. Other topics relevant to music, such as music history, are not the focus in school class teaching.

Comparing the students' experience in their music lessons with music teachers' practice at the secondary level in 1997, music teachers reported more singing, performing, notation, theory and composing as taught. In the whole picture, singing, performing, notation and theory were the main areas of music taught, whereas listening and composing was much less taught. Moreover, none of the music teachers taught every category. The theoretical side, notation and music theory, were held as slightly more important than music activities: singing, performing and listening; but composing, which is also based on theory, was obviously much less taught. Among music activities, singing was the most common, followed by playing instruments (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 Percentages of areas in music taught in classrooms

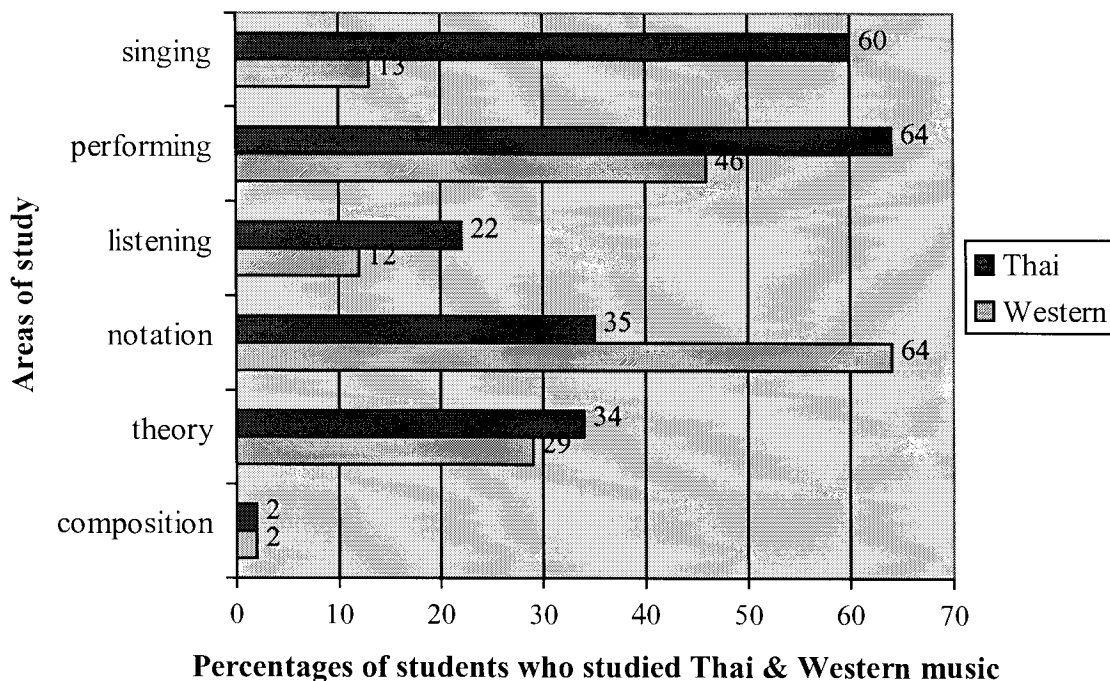


Comparing Thai (including classical, popular and country popular) and Western (popular and classical) music, more students had engaged in Thai music than in Western music, except in the area of music notation. In the Thai music category, classical music was dominant, followed by popular music and then country popular music. For example, among 91 students, in their singing class 57% of students sang classical music (*Thai-derm*), while 21% sang popular music (*Thai-sakon*) and only 5% sang country popular music (*luk-thung*); and in their listening class, 20% of students listened to classical music while 10% listened to popular music and only 3% listened to country popular music. In the category of Western music, popular music was dominant. For example, in singing class, 13% of students sang popular music while only 1% sang classical music, and in listening class, 11% of students listened to popular music while only 2% of students listened to classical music.

For music teachers, the data shows that Thai music is much more taught when singing is introduced, and taught slightly more than Western music when playing

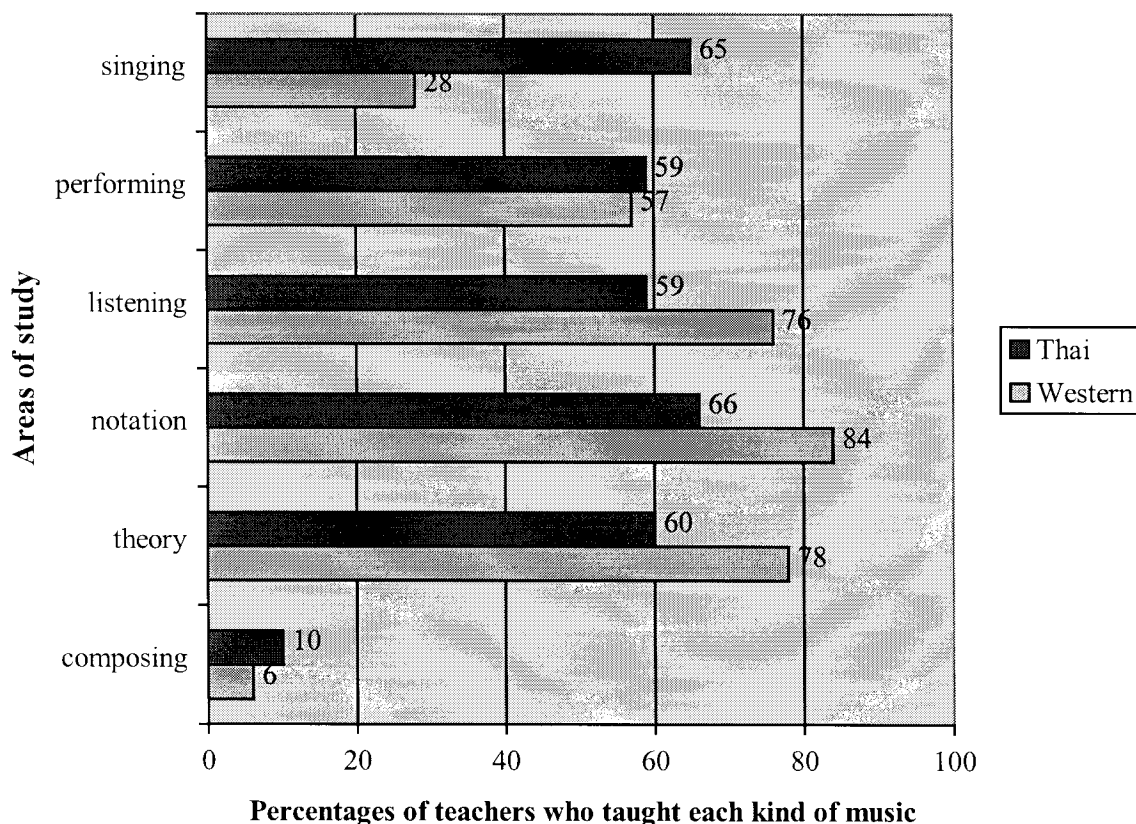
instruments as well as composing is introduced. In Thai music, teachers use popular music most, followed by classical music and then country popular music. In Western music, listening, notation and theory play a remarkable role, and popular music is used more than classical music.

Figure 6.2: Thai & Western music study in students' classrooms (1985-1993)



Overall, students had claimed to experience Thai music in class (57%) more than Western (43%) whereas teachers were using almost equal proportions of Thai and Western music (49% and 51%). This may be because most students disliked studying Thai music, Thai classical music in particular, and wished they had heard less, then they think they have heard more Thai classical music than the teachers actually taught. On the other hand, Thai classical might really have been taught more in previous years, as an evident from the patriotic campaign during the 1980s since the celebration of Bangkok's 200th anniversary in 1982. When memories of the celebration have faded and the reception of global musical culture has increased, the proportion of Thai and Western music study in classrooms is, to some extent, likely to be affected.

Figure 6.3: Thai & Western music in teachers' classrooms (1997)



6.1.2 Types of Music for Class Teaching

To summarize the data given earlier, music teachers in 1997 used a mixture of various types of music in class teaching. They may use some and discard some, or use all the types of music which are available. A comparison of all the types of music being used in classrooms shows that Thai popular music is the most common, followed by Thai classical. Thai country popular and Western popular are close to each other, in that Thai country popular is used slightly more than Western popular music, while Western classical music is the least used in classrooms. As for students' experience during 1985-1993, they reported that Thai classical music was used most, followed by Thai popular music and then Western popular music. Thai country popular music was used less and Western classical was used least.

Table 6.1: Comparison of the quantity of use of types of music in classrooms

| Students' experience (1985-1993) | Teachers' practice (1997) |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Thai classical | 1. Thai popular |
| 2. Thai popular | 2. Thai classical |
| 3. Western popular | 3. Thai country popular |
| 4. Thai country popular | 4. Western popular |
| 5. Western classical | 5. Western classical |

The strength of local inherited culture, and the adoption of foreign culture which results from globalization, may increase or decrease the practice of a type of music in any specific period. Relating to the effects of globalization during 1985-1993 (as seen from the students' experience), music in education was mainly based on the need to strengthen Thai musical identity; that is why Thai classical music dominated in classrooms, followed by the global culture of popular music. However Thai popular music was used more than Western popular music. Thai country popular music had a smaller role in classrooms, whereas Western classical music was the least used. In 1997, according to the teachers' practice, the resistance to globalization was stronger given the strength of all types of Thai music in the classroom; for example, Thai country popular music, which was previously less important, now had a greater role than Western popular music. Nevertheless, negotiation has been made according to the global fashion – Thai popular music has been pushed forwards and used in classrooms more than Thai classical music. Thai popular music has in fact quite a prominent position in the music class, and it is used more than its model, Western popular music, as well as more than the national inherited Thai classical music.

The use of music in the classroom, which has to compromise with the power of musical fashion outside, may not be according to the teachers' ideal practice. The teachers are asked to give their ideas on the appropriate types of music for fundamental music teaching in schools. As their priority, 58% chose Thai classical music, 33% chose Thai popular music, 9% chose Western popular music, 5% chose Western classical music, and 2% chose Thai country popular music (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Percentages of degrees of educational importance of each type of music, according to teachers

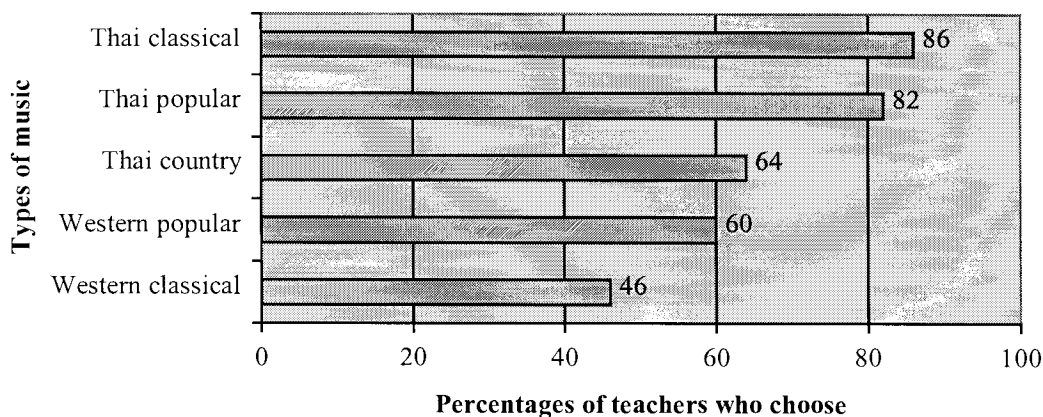
| Degrees of importance | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | 5th | Total |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Thai classical | 58 | 17 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 86 |
| Thai popular | 33 | 26 | 22 | 0 | 1 | 82 |
| Thai country popular | 2 | 27 | 21 | 11 | 3 | 64 |
| Western popular | 9 | 7 | 10 | 29 | 5 | 60 |
| Western classical | 5 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 27 | 46 |

The above selection which music teachers made seems to be based on the origins of the music. Teachers would choose Thai music first, and in Thai music, classical music should dominate, followed by popular music and then country popular music. For Western music, the more remote Western classical music is seen as least important. However, teachers see more musical value in Western popular and classical music than in Thai country popular music, which has the least priority in educational value.

In the overall picture, considering types of music as having some importance for class teaching, Thai classical music is seen as the most important as 86% of teachers chose it, followed by 82% who chose Thai popular music. Thai country popular music lies in the third place, as it was chosen by 64% of music teachers, followed closely by Western popular music, which was chosen by 60% of music teachers. Western classical music lies in the fifth place, as 46% of teachers use it (see Figure 6.4 below).

Only Western classical music, as a fundamental type of music for class teaching, gained less than 50% of teachers' appreciation. Although many teachers suggested that music in the classroom should be the kind which is most familiar to the pupils, more teachers regard the national heritage, which has a smaller role in pupils' everyday life, as a more important consideration.

Figure 6.4: Percentages of teachers choosing each type of music



*Note: 2 teachers did not answer the question.

It is Thai classical music which teachers regarded as the most important, but the music itself is in a weak position with reference to the pupils' appreciation. Seventeen teachers claimed that their pupils do not appreciate Thai classical music in that the music is slow and full of traditional melismatic singing. The teachers consider that through school education, they can turn their pupils' interest towards Thai classical music to some degree, and that this is a way to keep the national musical culture alive. For example, teachers say:

Teachers: 'Thai classical music is to be respected as Thai art and culture. As a national art, it should have a place as a basic study and pupils should be guided to appreciate it';

'Because we accept Western cultures too much, Thai classical music has gradually faded and the children do not appreciate its value';

'To put Thai classical music in the curriculum is a way to conserve it for the future generation.'

As will be seen in Figure 6.5 below, the main reason for bringing Thai classical music into classrooms is the teachers' sense of responsibility for promoting the national heritage. For Thai popular music, the reasons why it is brought into classrooms are centred on pupils' interest. As for the educational value of Thai country popular music, it lies in its simplicity and its derivation from Thai classical music. Although it is not regarded as privileged it is at least part of Thai musical culture.

Western popular music is appreciated nearly as much as Thai country popular music in terms of appropriateness for class teaching. Teachers value it as communicating a basic knowledge of Western music. It also uses knowledge of modern musical culture, which is familiar to pupils. Lastly, Western classical music is the least popular type of music in the society as well as in school music classes. Teachers who regard Western classical music as possessing educational value for school children are likely to appreciate the music for its inherent value. However, teaching classical music may be seen as unrealistic because pupils have no background in classical music from their primary level; as one teacher suggests, ‘Western classical music is complicated and precise, a good tool for teaching music but it may be too difficult for the lower secondary level.’

Figure 6.5: Sources of educational value of each type of music

| | Frequency of answers | % |
|--|----------------------|----|
| Thai classical music | | |
| Promotes conservation & appreciation | | 48 |
| Good basis for singing and listening | | 7 |
| Educational song texts | | 3 |
| Less available at present | | 3 |
| Basis of Thai music | | 3 |
| Thai popular music | | |
| Pupils’ familiarity & interest in contemporary music | | 24 |
| A basic and simple form of Thai songs | | 2 |
| A basic study leading towards Western songs | | 2 |
| Thai country popular music | | |
| Pupils’ familiarity with its style, and simplicity | | 6 |
| Derived from Thai classical music | | 6 |
| Western popular music | | |
| For Western music study | | 6 |
| Pupils’ familiarity and interest | | 4 |
| Western classical music | | |
| Systematic form and complexity | | 3 |
| To develop taste and imagination | | 2 |
| A root of other Western music | | 1 |
| Valuable world culture | | 1 |

*Note: the total number of teachers is 108 and there are teachers who chose the types of music without giving any reason; the above reasons are from those who gave them.

Regardless of the purposes of music courses indicated in the music curriculum, music teachers have their own purposes in music teaching, and these may be in addition to those that are given by the curriculum. The main purpose of most music teachers is to provide general musical knowledge; the second is the conservation of the cultural heritage. Music appreciation is also important, followed by fundamental musical skills, and as music is often said to be a good hobby, teachers will suggest that their pupils practise it. As less important purposes, music teachers aim to bring out musical talent in pupils and also to conduct the class so as to relax pupils studying other core subjects. Many music classes also provide an opportunity to train pupils for school activities. Lastly, a number of music teachers aim to train their pupils for music study at higher educational levels. See Table 6.3.

Table 6. 3: Main purposes of teaching music in hierarchical order

| | Percentage of teachers |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. To provide general knowledge about music | 82 |
| 2. To conserve the cultural heritage | 81 |
| 3. To direct music appreciation in pupils | 80 |
| 4. To build up fundamental instrumental skills | 73 |
| 5. To suggest a worthwhile way to spend leisure time | 71 |
| 6. To seek to bring out musical talent in pupils | 69 |
| 7. To allow students to relax from other serious subjects | 68 |
| 8. To train pupils for extra-curricular activity in school | 66 |
| 9. To prepare pupils for higher levels of music study | 58 |

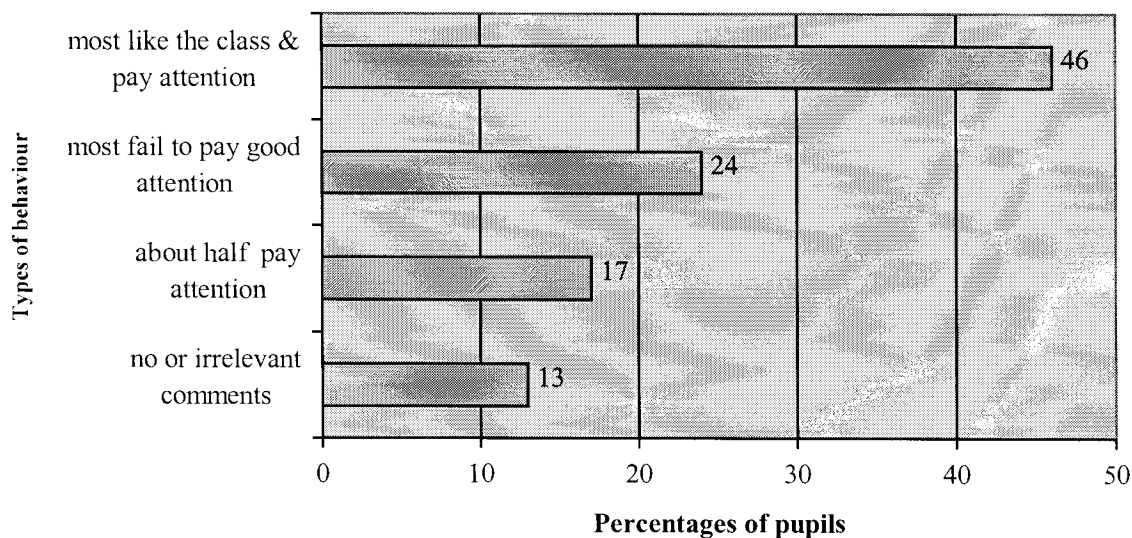
6.1.3 Attitudes towards Music in Classrooms

When asked about their attitudes and opinions towards music as a school subject according to the students' own experience of music study at secondary level, 96 students reported either or both positive and negative attitudes. Most of them (94%) were pleased with their experience; only 6% were disappointed.

The data shows that music was regarded as more prominent in providing psychological benefits; musical knowledge itself was less valued. This can be related to the contents of school music study, in that theory and especially composition are not widely taught; the main content is performing, which is assumed to be for enjoyment. In general, the content of musical knowledge and practice is superficial, and many students

attention. There are also 13% of all teachers who gave no comment or gave irrelevant comments on this topic¹.

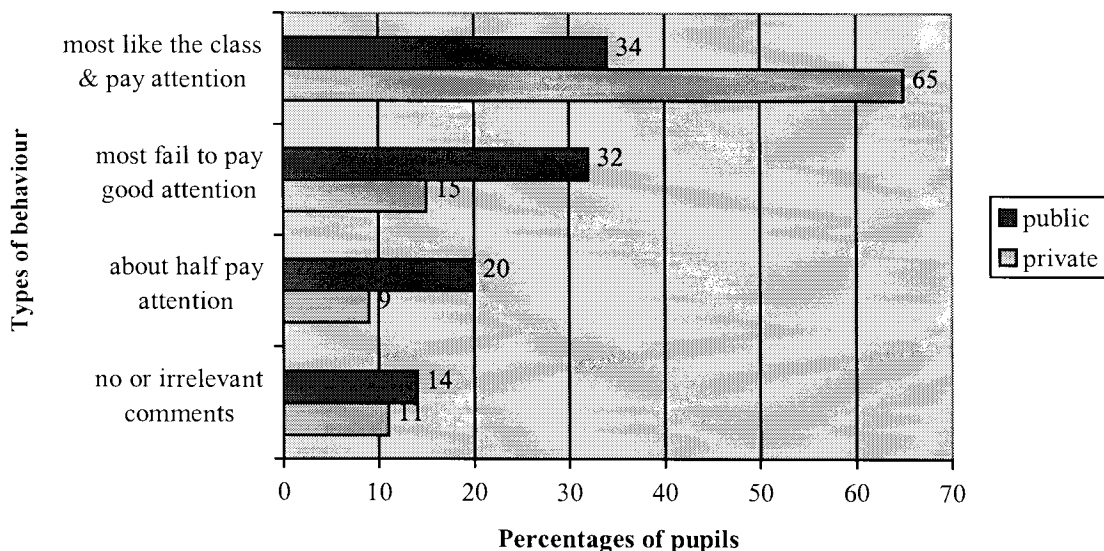
Figure 6.7: Pupils' behaviour in music classes



As the difference in environment between public and private schools determines the perspectives of teachers towards the music curriculum, it also determines the attitudes of pupils towards the subject, in that pupils in private schools have almost twice as much eagerness for music classes than pupils in public schools. This implies that private schools are more supportive to music study and activities than public schools. The school environment can also encourage certain attitudes, as in some schools pupils appreciate the practice of Thai classical music, while in other schools they are not keen on Thai classical music but prefer popular music. Moreover, parents' background is also influential. Most parents of private school pupils are in a better socio-economic background, and are more likely to appreciate some types of music and support their children in this subject.

¹ The relevant answer to a question may be an answer to other questions. In my analysis, I analyzed by topic, not necessarily by questions.

Figure 6.8: Comparison of pupils' behaviour in public and private school music classes



*Note: In the university demonstration schools which are not shown above, 2 out of 3 teachers assume that the pupils give trivial regard to the subject; the other school made an irrelevant comment.

As seen in Figure 6.8, 65% of pupils in private schools pay attention in music lessons while only 34% of those in public schools do so. Only 15% of pupils in private schools regard music as a trivial subject, which requires no intensive attention, whereas up to 32% of those in public schools have this attitude. 9% of pupils in private schools and 20% in public schools, are in classes with a relatively equal mixture of attentive and inattentive pupils.

Figure 6.9: Teachers' assumptions about their pupils' attitudes to music lessons

| <u>Positive attitudes:</u> | Frequency of answers | % |
|---|----------------------|----|
| Relaxing and entertaining subject | | 19 |
| Practical part is the highlight | | 12 |
| Extra subject / help creating extra ability | | 5 |
| 'Cool' | | 2 |
| Extra support from the school | | 2 |
| <u>Negative attitudes:</u> | | |
| Trivial & requires little attention | | 20 |
| Negative attitudes towards Thai traditional music | | 8 |
| No effort for practising the instrument | | 6 |
| Easy subject / requires no attention in class | | 6 |
| Lack of school support | | 3 |
| No continuing study to upper secondary level | | 2 |

According to the teachers' assumptions about their pupils' perspectives towards music lessons, music as a subject obtains positive attitudes mainly because it provides relaxation and gaiety. Beside the psychological effects, musical practice is an attractive feature, and it can result in creating a special ability in enthusiastic pupils. This special musical ability is also seen as a fashionable personal qualification. Moreover, the support of the school also encourages the study of music. The following statements show these positive attitudes:

Teachers: 'Pupils are happy when they listen to the music, sing, dance and do other music activities';

'All pupils like amusing subjects with activities';

'A music lesson is entertaining, releasing tension from other serious subjects. It is relaxing';

'Pupils have different aims in studying music; some only want relaxation and some want it as an extra ability for entrance exam to a famous public school';

'Most pupils pay attention in music lessons, especially those who can play some musical instrument(s)';

'They are interested in musical practice although they may not have talent';

'Pupils like all practical music ..., most of them study with joy and an encouragement to perform. They are happy and relaxed after the heavy subjects and proud of themselves';

'Pupils think that musicians are cool and contribute to society';

'Most students show interest in Thai music. So the school organizes extra tuition at the weekend to correspond with the pupils' interest. It also encourages the ideology and conservation of Thai arts and cultures.'

However, music does not obtain good attention in many classrooms, for the reason that it is not one of the core subjects, which are considered to deserve serious attention, and it is not compulsory at upper secondary level. Moreover, as a part of the subject, pupils are required to study Thai classical music, in which many of them do not have any interest, but they are bored and have negative attitudes towards it. Besides, when instrumental practice is involved, many pupils lack effort to master the lesson, while in other respects they think that music is an easy subject: without intensive attention, they are able to pass the music examinations. Apart from the pupils' attitudes, some school

environments discourage pupils from studying music or give the subject no support. The following statements by teachers illustrate these points:

Teachers: ‘Most pupils think that music is unimportant because the unit value of the subject is so small and there is no continuing study between lower and upper secondary level in that it is compulsory only in the lower level and unnecessary in the upper level’;

‘It is not as important as mathematics and sciences’;

‘Children nowadays are not interested in Thai classical music; they often do not care about its existence. This results from the environment, the opinions of authorities and media. Although some children have the interest, there are very few of them’;

‘In my school, there is support for performances of Western or popular music and dance rather than those of classical Thai. Our pupils have very negative attitudes towards Thai classical music and dance in that they regard them as being ‘ridiculous’;

‘Some pupils do not like music, especially Thai classical music’;

‘Pupils have small interest in Thai classical music; most of them choose to play a popular instrument’;

‘Most pupils think that music is easy but when they find out that it is not and it needs patience, they become bored’;

‘They do not pay much attention to music, because 1) there are not enough music teachers to cope with the number of the pupils; 2) pupils do not appreciate the subject; 3) university courses for music are limited; 4) pupils’ parents have no appreciation; 5) a music career is thought to be inferior and with a low income.’

In classes where there is a mixture of both positive and negative attitudes, in addition to the stigmatic attitude that music has less educational value, the content of the music lessons is an issue. Many pupils do not favour studying Thai classical music, and they also dislike the theoretical part but prefer music to be only an entertaining subject.

Although it was not mentioned here by the teachers, teaching skills are important. Negative criticism from pupils may arise from the incompetence of teachers in conducting their classes. However, the criticism of the national curriculum (see 6.3.2) by some teachers reflects the difficulties experienced by music teachers in coping with the whole subject module and in teaching in some areas in which they have not specialized.

6.2 Music Outside the School Curriculum

6.2.1 *Extra-curricular Activities*

Besides music education in classrooms, from their knowledge and memories 68 students reported that their schools provided other music activities (12 did not indicate which kind of music activities) either musical practice (43), music societies (27) or other special music events (competition / concert / extra tuition) (3).

Among 68 students who witnessed school music activities, 44% participated. The total of music activities reported involved 80% of Thai classical music, 23% of Western popular music, 20% of Thai popular music, 3% of Thai country popular and 3% of Western classical music.

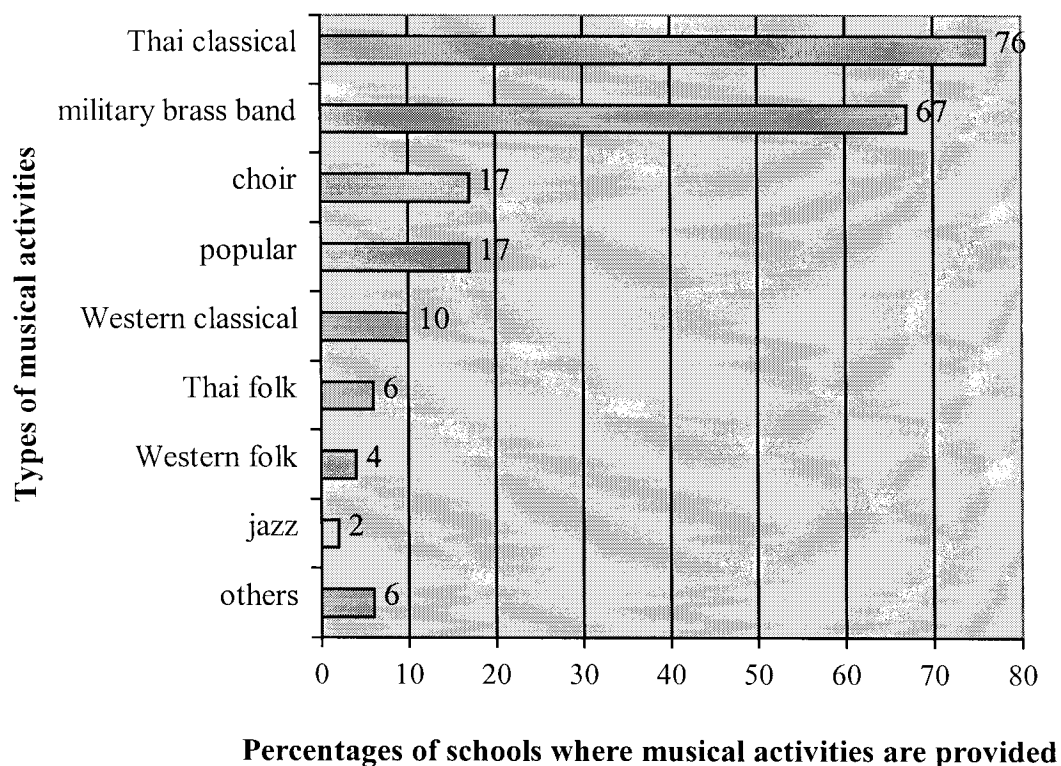
To summarize the types of music in schools before the mid-1990s according to the students' experience, Thai classical music was the most prominent type provided in classrooms and school activities. Western and Thai popular music had almost equal roles, whereas Thai country popular and Western classical music were least involved.

From the survey of music in schools in Bangkok in 1997, most schools provide extra-curricular musical activities for their pupils. However, 6% do not support musical activities. The more serious practice of music activities in schools is obviously the Thai classical music ensemble/society and the Western-style military band. The Thai classical music ensemble/society is the most common type of musical activities (76% of all schools have one). The military style of brass band is quite popular (67%). A band for popular music, generally comprises a keyboard, guitars and a set of drums with cymbal, which Thai people call '*string*', and a choir are found in 17% of all schools. A Western music society/ensemble is found in 10% of schools, and is more popular than a Thai folk music society/ensemble (6%). A Western folk music society/ensemble is found in 4%, and a rarer Jazz society/band is in 2% of all schools. Besides the above societies/ensembles, there are smaller numbers of other bands such as harmonica, melodian (wind small keyboard instrument) and bell bands (see Figure 6.10).

The main aim of extra-curricular music activities is to train pupils for performing in special occasions such as festivals and ceremonies, both inside and outside schools. Another important aim is to develop music skills and provide chances for pupils to show off their special ability. Performance is also regarded as a worthwhile leisure time activity. For Thai classical music in particular, the music activity is a way to keep the national musical culture alive as well as to promote it. Moreover, music activity provides a chance for those pupils who have a special interest in music, which may lead them to

further education and a career. Figure 6.11 below shows the data acquired from all schools concerning the aims and quantity of extra-curricular music activities.

Figure 6.10: Extra-curricular musical activities in schools



*Note: 2% of teachers did not answer.
7% of teachers reported no extra-curricular music activities in school.

Figure 6.11: Aims of extra-curricular musical activities

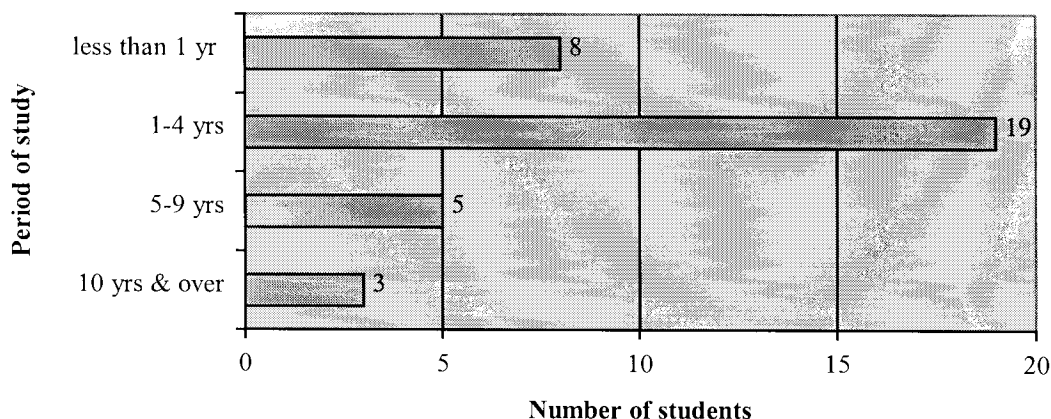
| Aims | Frequency of answers | % |
|--|----------------------|----|
| To perform in special events inside/outside school | | 34 |
| To develop music skills | | 29 |
| To display pupils' musical ability | | 26 |
| To suggest a worthwhile way to spend leisure time | | 21 |
| To promote the national art and culture | | 14 |
| For pupils who have special interest | | 10 |

6.2.2 Extra Music Tuition

A number of students reported that the content of music in the classroom is superficial; extra music tuition then can fulfill the requirements of some enthusiastic students. Extra music tuition is a more intensive study of music which emphasizes musical skills. Out of 100 students, 57 claimed that they have musical ability. In addition to the skills received from their secondary school music lessons, 31 gained their musical ability from extra music tuition and 14 gained their ability from self-study.

To begin with, extra music tuition, excluding self-study, will be examined. Of all 100 students, 35 experienced extra music tuition (but 4 gave up very early and considered themselves to have no musical ability). 32 students had already given up their extra music study while 3 of them were still studying. The period of study of each student varied from 1 month to 15 years. Most of them had studied for less than 5 years.

Figure 6.12: Periods of students' extra music tuition



With all the 35 students who experienced extra music study, keyboard skills (piano, organ or electone, a type of electric organ) were the most popular, studied by 46% of them; 11% learned the guitar and 3% learned the violin. There were altogether 71% students who studied Western musical styles (including Thai popular music, whose musical styles are also Western). Thai classical music, which is more practised in school, gained less attention in extra music tuition, in that only 34% of students studied it, which is about half of those who studied Western music.

Students had their extra music tuition either in part-time music schools (71%), with private individual teachers (26%), or in extra music lessons which their secondary schools provided during the breaks or after school (11%). The musical contents involved

mainly practical musical skills, that all 35 students (100%) studied; but only 43% had studied music theory.

There are two main reasons for taking extra music lessons: students' own interest and parents' imposition. 20% (7 out of 35) of these students had parental pressure to study music, whereas the rest had their own personal interest in studying music. As reported earlier, 91% of students (out of 35) gave up their extra music study; the main reason, which was given by 80% of them is because their leisure time had decreased as a result of harder study especially when examinations came. Because music is an additional knowledge, 20% of students gave it up when they found it no longer easy, as it needs practising. Some reasons for giving up were related to teachers; he/she either gave up teaching (reported by 3%) or was too strict and made the lesson unfriendly (reported by 3%). Some other reasons also related to students, as 1 student (3%) realized that he had no musical competence, and the other student loathed music examinations (such as the grade examinations of the Royal Associated Board of Music, Trinity College of Music or the Guildhall).

There is another way of gaining musical skills as an alternative to expensive music lessons. 14% of all 100 students learned how to play one or more musical instruments informally; this includes self-study and learning from friends. 64% of them learned to play Thai instruments (mainly the bamboo flute known as *khloi*), 71% learned to play the guitar, 21% learned to sing, 14% learned to play the keyboard and 7% learned to play the bass. It is interesting here that of all instruments, the guitar is the most popular instrument which young people learned informally; for additional music lessons, keyboard instruments were the most popular whereas only a small number of students paid for guitar lessons. It can be said that it is the most common instrument for playing popular music. Popular music books published locally normally contain guitar chords above the lyrics (without any other notation). To use these music books, no reading of conventional notation is required; one can learn the chord positions from basic guitar tutor books, which are ubiquitously available.

Extra music study is a popular activity for children. Many students had experienced it in their childhood. Their attitudes towards this extra study are often expressed as if extra music study is only for children. Most of the students (although 8 students did not give any information on this topic) whether they had or never had any extra music study, saw it as worthwhile.

Extra music tuition, like music in classrooms, is also regarded as providing psychological effects for students, but there was strong emphasis on the musical skills that music in the classroom cannot provide beyond certain level; in other words, extra music tuition is seen as a more serious music lesson. Extra music tuition is also regarded as a worthwhile way to spend leisure time. Because it is extra and special, it attracts parents or the children themselves to participate; however, for the same reasons including the high expense involved, six students regard it as unnecessary and a waste of time. Moreover, extra music lessons are restricted to those who can afford them. ‘It is good and relaxing but expensive, poor people can’t afford it’, said one student; another student also claimed, ‘It is worthwhile, but tuition fees and musical instruments are expensive.’

Figure 6.13: Students’ attitudes towards extra music tuition

| | Frequency of answers | % |
|--|----------------------|----|
| Psychological benefit | | 34 |
| Improves music knowledge and skills | | 28 |
| Worthwhile for leisure time / good hobby | | 24 |
| Selective for enthusiasts | | 13 |
| Should be promoted for everyone | | 6 |
| Expensive tuition fees | | 6 |
| Unnecessary / unimportant / waste of time | | 5 |
| Useful in the future | | 3 |
| Provides an appropriate way of self-expression | | 2 |
| Depends on the teacher | | 2 |
| Promotes the love of music | | 1 |
| Similar to music as a in school subject | | 1 |

Although music is a compulsory subject according to the national curriculum, most schools provide additional music activities for their students. In consequence or for other reasons, many pupils require extra music tuition either inside schools, in a break or after school, or outside school in a part-time music school or from a private music teacher. Table 6.4 shows reasons given by teachers for the importance of extra music tuition:

Table 6.4: Importance of extra music tuition

| | % of teachers |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Possession of practical musical skill as a hobby is prestigious. | 54 |
| 2. Receipt of support for extra music study and activities. | 51 |
| 3. Time in music lessons is limited and not adequate. | 44 |
| 4. Music study in classroom is not adequate for pupils' need. | 24 |
| 5. Music is a difficult subject; pupils will benefit from extra lessons. | 4 |
| 6. Other reasons. | 4 |

Extra music tuition, according to the teachers' opinion, is mainly a reflection of parents' ideological influence. Music, which is one of the least important subjects in school, is one of the most prestigious practices as a hobby. Because music practice is expensive, support is essential. Wherever support is available, music practice is widespread. The two top reasons are not relevant to music study in the classroom at all but rather to direct support from parents and the school policy. However, one teacher claimed that parents may consider that extra music lessons may result in degrading their child's progress in main subjects.

The other reasons why pupils acquire extra music tuition are directly related to the classroom. The limited time allocated to music is not adequate to develop pupils' musical skills, especially for those who are enthusiastic. Another reason is the restricted content of musical knowledge received from class teaching. Pupils who are more serious in music study, either because of their own interest in the subject or because they are preparing for a higher level of music study, need more intensive tuition apart from their school music lessons. Again, this may be the result of the time limits. Generally, there was a small percentage of teachers who regarded their music class as difficult because the content was too hard and thought that extra tuition would help. Other reasons occasionally given are:

- a) the number of pupils in the classroom is too large for everyone to receive effective music teaching;
- b) the specific instruments which the pupils are interested in are not provided in school;
- c) music lessons are good for keeping children busy during their free time;
- d) they provide a chance to keep the national cultural practice alive.

6.2.3 Music in Higher Education

It is quite controversial to discuss music study as part of higher education in Thailand. As shown above, music is mainly regarded in schools as an entertaining subject and outside school as a leisure time activity. However, music courses at higher levels are increasing in many universities. The attitude of the new generation of students is more open to this perspective; nevertheless, the stigma of music as an occupation in Thailand reflects negative attitudes concerning the stability of the occupation.

In reality, musicians do not need a degree to practise their career, but music education in university level plays an important role in upgrading the occupation. The expansion of music courses at the university level marks the upgrading of the status of music as intellectually acceptable. This should be followed by greater acceptability for the status of musicians.

Figure 6.14: Students' attitudes towards music in higher education

| | Frequency of answers | % |
|---|----------------------|----|
| Positive: | | |
| Supportive to the subject / produces qualified specialists | | 30 |
| A chance for enthusiasts and the gifted | | 15 |
| Good / very good (no reason given) | | 11 |
| Provides future profession and future/present part-time job | | 7 |
| Psychological benefit | | 1 |
| Negative: | | |
| Employment in music is limited and it is difficult to find alternatives | | 10 |
| Not good (no reason given) | | 7 |
| No challenge in studying it | | 3 |
| Uncertain or unlikely to be one's future profession | | 3 |
| Obstructed by adults' negative attitudes to musicians | | 2 |
| Difficult | | 1 |
| Unanswered | | 13 |

This issue was unclear to many students: 13% of students did not give any response at all. Of the remaining 87 students, 57, that is more than half of all the students, had positive attitudes towards studying music as a major subject in university. Most of them regarded it as an improvement of the academic area, in which music should be seriously studied to deepen knowledge and to produce academically qualified specialists:

Students: 'It is good. Universities should support all subject areas to their highest level';

'It improves the specific ability of those who are interested, and also provides a chance of studying music at a higher level.'

15 students had a negative view, mostly due to concern about future occupations, in that they do not regard being a musician as a stable occupation; as they point out:

Students: ‘Studying music is all right but not as a major subject because it’s difficult to find an alternative job. Studying it as a minor subject or only as a hobby sounds more plausible’;

‘Depends on personal interest, but I don’t think it’s a good idea’;

‘I don’t agree, because Thai society is still not open on this issue.’

As suggested by 2 students, generally speaking the attitude of adults towards the subject as a serious study is quite narrow. ‘There may be some who want to study but their parents do not allow them. This is an obstacle to the study. The adults’ attitudes are negative’, as one student responded.

There are also a number of students who appreciate the subject area but also are concerned about the ‘inferior’ chance of a future occupation; in this case 15% of students were ambivalent. This group of students gave relatively similar responses. For instance, one student responded, ‘The subject provides musical knowledge from basic to high level and suggests a correct way to apply it but it’s difficult to find a job’ and another says, ‘I’m not sure that this subject area can bring about a successful career; if it can, there is no harm in studying.’

As reported above, 57% of all students supported the idea of studying music at a higher level and there were 43% who were negative or uncertain about it.

6.3 Evaluation of Music in Education: Teachers’ Perspectives

6.3.1 Teachers’ Perspectives on Music Education

Responding to the statement, ‘*There is more educational interest in music nowadays*’ only 52% of all music teachers agreed. 23% partly agreed and 17% disagreed. 8% did not give any comment. It is interesting that there was a remarkable difference in levels of agreement between public and private schools. Teachers in public schools, who had a longer period of teaching experience (12 years and 1 month on average per person), agreed much less than those in private schools, where music teachers had a shorter period of teaching experience (6 years and 6 months on average per person). The different period of teaching experience can be said to be resulted from the educational employment system in Thailand in that the government used to provide only for the public school teachers’ facilities such as budget for hospital costs, and also guarantee the

pension after retirement. Although the system has changed and private school teachers also have similar benefits, the belief in stability still influences them. Many private school teachers, if they have an opportunity, will try to apply for a job in a public school, or they may apply for other jobs; many of them only teach in a school when they have no better paid job to do.

Length of teaching experience plays a part in determining teachers' perspectives on this aspect. Other factors, such as teaching environment and support may also have an influence. On the whole to this statement showed much optimism in that only 17% of music teachers totally disagreed (see Figure 6.15 and 6.16), in spite of the inferior status of music as a subject in school.

Figure 6.15: 'There is more educational interest in music nowadays'

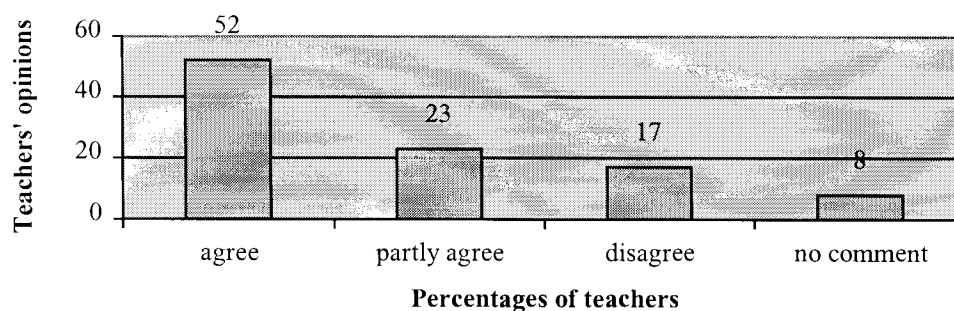
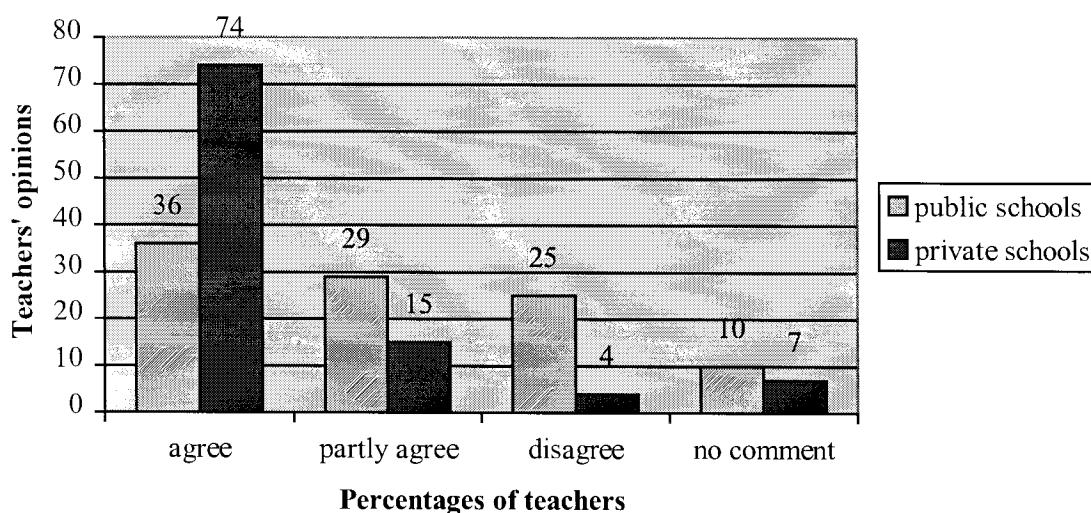


Figure 6.16: Comparison of level of agreement between public and private schools



Reasons for agreement that there is more educational interest in music can be divided into 4 categories, in relation to educational appreciation, psychological effects, support from public and private organizations and improvement of attitudes.

Firstly, educational appreciation accounts for the largest number of responses on the reasons for attention paid to music education, being mentioned by 21% of teachers. In school, 'There are both compulsory and optional (music) subjects for pupils to choose appropriately', as a teacher pointed out. At university level, which is linked to the status of careers, another teacher remarked, 'Educational institutions accept and provide more (music) courses. A musical career can provide a good income and music education has been extended to higher education. This is different from the past, when musicians were only servants without hope of progress. But now a musical career is a progressive career.' Through extra tuition, whether formal or by self-study, more supports are given. 'There are more music schools available compared to the past, and accordingly, there are many more attendants. Moreover, more music books are available in markets or bookshops', a teacher commented.

Secondly, the psychological effects of music are another remarkable reason to support the appreciation of its educational interest. 18% of answers are related to this category. In a typical comment, 'Music relaxes people from the tension of this present world', a teacher claimed. Another teacher reported his opinion that, 'At present, music plays a part for science major students. It reduces their stress from other educational subjects... or even for those at working age, music plays a part in their lives such as playing music in clubs or for their own entertainment, or it can be a career. It is good that music can worthily fill leisure time. It also reduces turmoil and improves psychological health and the quality of life.'

Thirdly, from the government through the Ministry of Education, public media, schools and other private organizations (generally financial and business companies), supports to musical interest and education are offered. Starting from the Ministry, whose priority is the national culture, a teacher reported, 'In the policy of the Ministry of Education, there is an emphasis on studying Thai music and cultures in order to promote and support the field.' Together with other organizations, Thai classical music is receiving more interest; 'compared to the past, there is now more support for tuition in Thai classical music, both in school and as extra tuition, from both the government and private organizations including parents', another teacher confirmed. For music education in general, 'There is an encouragement to establish school bands, competitions, and

promotion resulting from the support of private organizations which helps to attract interest to music as a subject', a teacher pointed out. Inside school, musical activities are among the most important school activities. According to many teachers, many schools use them to promote their schools' reputation. 'At present, every school has a prominent policy of developing its pupils' special ability', a teacher remarked. Outside school, although the media do not play a direct role in promoting music education, their role in promoting music consumption (of popular music in particular) can lead to an interest in music education. A teacher pointed out, 'Because music is an interesting subject in the market. Music companies try to produce their works to meet the demand of consumers. Linking with the desire of most teenagers to express themselves through music, music (education) then gains more interest.'

Lastly, the improvement of attitudes has opened a brighter future for music education. 'The value of music in the present society is widely accepted', remarked a teacher. 'People's attitudes towards music education have been changing positively; this has resulted in acceptance and support for the subject' another teacher added. A reason for this was given by another teacher who claimed that 'it is because of the improvement of the educational level of people, their interest in music education then increases and there are also more music educators whose distribution helps to improve its educational status.' Another teacher reported, '(music education) receives more support, parents and pupils also show interest in its activities.'

Figure 6.17: *There is more educational interest in music nowadays:*
reasons for agreement

| | Frequency of answers | % |
|---|----------------------|----|
| <i>Educational appreciation (21%):</i> | | |
| School compulsory & optional music education provided | | 7 |
| More tuition books available / better improved contents | | 6 |
| Research and higher education available / potential career | | 5 |
| More extra music tuition available | | 4 |
| Music is an educational subject | | 1 |
| <i>Psychological effects (18%):</i> | | |
| Music is good for relaxation / uplifts the mind / a good hobby | | 18 |
| <i>Supports from public and private organizations (10%):</i> | | |
| Media play a big part in music promotion and fulfil public need | | 4 |
| School promotion policy supports special abilities | | 3 |
| The policy of the government to promote Thai music and cultures | | 3 |
| Support from private organizations eg. organizing competitions | | 1 |
| <i>Improvement of attitudes (9%):</i> | | |
| Increase in pupils' interest, and appreciation of music | | 4 |
| Parents support the activity | | 4 |
| Attitudes towards music and music education have improved | | 2 |

*Note: 1) The numbers in parentheses show the percentages of responses given for each heading.
 2) Many teachers agreed without giving any reason; thus the above reasons are from those who supplied them.

The sources of reasons for disagreement that '*There is more educational interest in music nowadays*' can be divided into 3 categories: stigmatic attitudes, inadequate support and ineffective curriculum.

Firstly, attitudes which stigmatize music as a school subject remarkably deny it educational appreciation. From above, 'the department of education pay less attention to music compared to sciences, maths or other school subjects; even in entrance examinations to higher educational level, music is excluded', a teacher complained. Music, as a practical subject, is always regarded as inferior compared to 'educational subjects'. This can be seen when teachers mentioned music as distinct from 'educational subjects'. Music practice is also accused of spoiling other 'educational subjects': 'some schools emphasize educational subjects. Practical subjects, which need practice time and devotion, are regarded as potentially addictive and spoiling the children's academic study', a teacher pointed out. Similarly, another teacher stated, 'Most people think that if you have no choice or are not able to study others subjects, then you can study music.'

Additionally, if you are involved in music practice, you may not be able to catch up with other subjects.'

Secondly, many teachers argued that as a result of this stigma support for music education is inadequate. 'Many schools lack specialist teachers, equipment and other supports. Most importantly, there are stigmatic attitudes that engender a lack of appreciation of the subject (from both family and school)', a teacher claimed. However, development of the subject matter has been observed, but not inside school; a teacher made a comparison: 'Many parents want their children to know how to play an instrument such as the piano, electone (a modern electric organ with built-in rhythmic styles) or guitar, to develop their special ability. So they send their children to (part-time) Yamaha schools or other private (part-time) music schools. In general (academic) schools, it is different. If there is a military band, recorder band or string band, most of the time the pupils learn to play the music by themselves. With only one music teacher available, it is impossible to look after all the music activities effectively.' Accordingly, another teacher pointed out, 'there is development among music educators and university music major students, but interest in music education has not expanded outside these groups. Even though there is more interest in music tuition for small children, due to the children's readiness and their family background this lasts in a short period. Attention to school (music) curriculum development and appreciation of the subject at the national level is extremely small.'

Finally, the curriculum is claimed to be ineffective. Most teachers are not impressed with the new curriculum (introduced in 1990) which fuses music and art into one subject. A teacher explained: 'Music as a subject has been greatly devalued. In the old curriculum, music was rated as 0.5 of a unit and had one period (around 45-60 minutes) of study per week. Art was the same. Now the curriculum combines both music and art into one single subject, named 'Arts and life', but it is still rated at 0.5 of a unit and still has one period of study per week. This means that the subject has been devalued by 50%, which is very disgraceful because pupils will only pay attention to core subjects. However, to meet human aesthetic needs for music, children whose family is wealthy enough will find extra (music) tuition outside school but there are also those massive numbers of children who can not afford to do so, therefore intensive attention to music as a school subject should be paid.' The new curriculum is also seen to be unrealistic concerning the proportion of time and contents of study. 'It is not practical, time given is

limited but full of contents; thus the pupils have only superficial knowledge', claimed a teacher (more detail about the music curriculum will be discussed in the next section).

Figure 6.18: *There is more educational interest in music nowadays:*
reasons for disagreement

| | Frequency of answers |
|--|----------------------|
| <u>Stigmatic attitudes</u> (12%): | |
| Music as a subject is less/not important | 9 |
| Requirement for study music is only forced by parents' belief | 1 |
| Pupils are selective, only pay attention to pop-rock, not others | 1 |
| Music career offers a limited career | 1 |
| <u>Inadequate support</u> (12%): | |
| Many schools lack specialists and teaching equipment | 5 |
| Support needed from authorities | 3 |
| Support given in higher level not school | 2 |
| Inefficient school music text books | 1 |
| Attention paid by only particular groups of people | 1 |
| Attention paid, but outside schools | 1 |
| <u>Ineffective curriculum</u> (11%): | |
| Inadequate time for the new design of the mixed-arts curriculum | 6 |
| The curriculum is inefficient | 4 |
| New teamwork needed for the re-design of the curriculum | 1 |

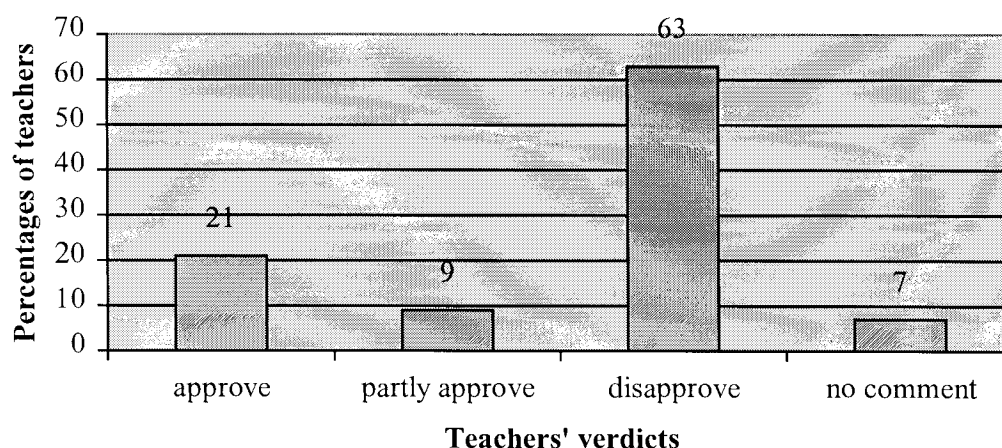
*Note: 1) The numbers in parentheses show the percentages of responses given for each heading.
2) Many teachers agreed without giving any reason; thus the above reasons are from those who supplied them.

As for those teachers who partly agreed with the statement '*There is more educational interest in music nowadays*', their perspective mainly points towards the financial support and attention which music education receives, but is not spread evenly, depending on the resources and interest of school and government authorities as much as the private sectors. Public schools are mostly dependent on financial support from the government, but support for music is not always welcomed because it is expensive and seen as academically trivial. Private schools are self-supporting; support for music depends on the wealth of the school as well as the interest of school administrators or owners. A similar situation occurs in each family: support for the music education of the children is possible if the family has both wealth and appreciation. Another reason is the contrary direction of policy and practice of the music curriculum. The revision and the design of the new curriculum could be seen as a mark of attention paid towards the field as, in the new curriculum, more intensive contents have been defined but in practice it is

unrealistic. As mentioned earlier, the proportion of time and contents makes it impossible for the pupils to acquire the knowledge and skills adequately.

6.3.2 Teachers' Opinions about the Music Curriculum

Figure 6.19: Teachers' verdicts on the music curriculum



As seen in Figure 6.19, only 21% of all teachers were satisfied with the design of the music curriculum and 9% were partly satisfied. Significantly, up to 63% of the teachers disapproved of the curriculum and 7% were too uncertain to give an opinion on the issue.

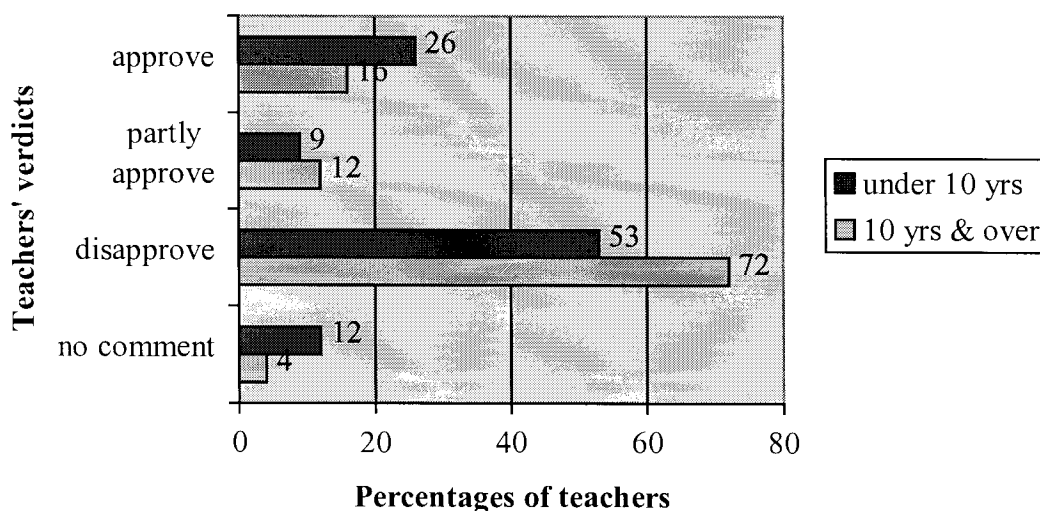
To begin with, length of teaching experience does affect the approval of music teachers (see Figure 6.20). Because the present music curriculum was first introduced in the year 1990, it had been in action for almost 8 years, including the current academic year: May 97-March 98. Thus, only teachers who had been teaching for more than 8 years also had experience of the old curriculum. According to their working experience, teachers are divided into 2 groups: those who had at least 10 years of teaching experience had at least 2 years of experience on the former curriculum; and those who had less than 10 years of teaching experience.

The majority of both groups of teachers disapproved of the curriculum, but the percentage of teachers with more experience who did so was almost 20% higher than of those with less experience: 72% and 53% respectively. Accordingly, in terms of approval, 26% of the less experienced group approved of the curriculum, compared to

only 16% of the more experienced group; which is a difference of 10%. Teachers with at least 10 years of experience had a slightly higher percentage of partial approval than the other group: 12% and 9%. They were also more informative and more decisive in expressing their opinions.

In my view, teachers with at least 10 years of teaching experience and who also have had adequate practice with both curricula can make a fairer judgement than the others on the progress or retrogression of the curriculum. As can be seen, teachers in this group made a more extreme assessment of the new curriculum; however, both groups generally consider this curriculum to be a failure.

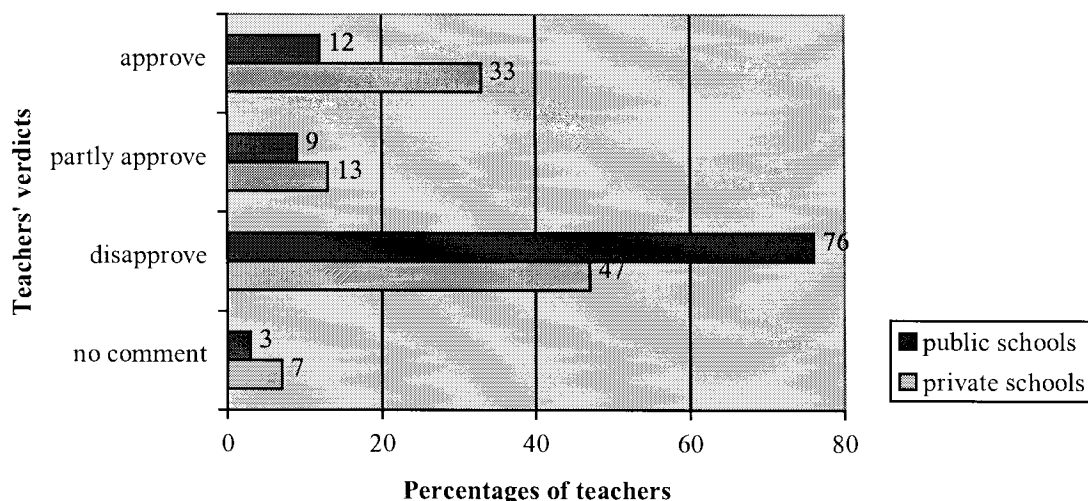
Figure 6.20: Comparisons between the verdicts of teachers with 10 years & over, and under 10 years of teaching experience



As well as length of teaching experience, teaching environment is another factor that determines the level of approval with the current music curriculum. To limit other variables, the group of teachers who have at least 10 years of teaching experience is considered in this account. There is an obvious difference between teachers from public and private schools in that those from public schools have a higher degree of disapproval, almost 30% higher than those from private schools. In public schools, up to 76% of teachers with long experience are unsatisfied with the curriculum, while in private schools there are less than 50% (47%). Correspondingly, the percentages of approval also show a significant difference, in that teachers from public schools score about 20% less: up to 33% of teachers in private schools approve of the curriculum,

compared to 12% of those in public schools. In summary, teachers in private schools have much more optimistic perspectives towards the curriculum than teachers from public schools (see Figure 6.21).

Figure 6.21: Comparison between teachers with 10 years and over of teaching experience in public and private schools



*Note: Teachers in university demonstration schools have been left out here because there are only 3 of them in this research. All of them have more than 10 years of teaching experience and all disapprove of the curriculum.

The next section deals with the reasons for teachers' attitudes to the current music curriculum. The information was analysed from all music teachers, whatever their teaching experience and their type of schools, to provide a maximum idea of the phenomenon. Objective reasons, which dominate in explaining the disapproval of the curriculum are stated first, and followed by supportive reasons.

Objective reasons concerning the curriculum arise from the problems which teachers face in their teaching practice. These problems can be divided into 2 groups: problems arising from the curriculum design, and problems arising from the contents of study.

Resulting from the combination of art and music into one single subject in the present curriculum, the main problem for all teachers is the disproportion between time and contents. Because the contents are very broad and too much to cover in the limited teaching time, many teachers urge that the curriculum design is inappropriate, and

suggest the return of the old curriculum where they can have their own independent music subject. Generally, teachers argue similarly, for example:

Teachers: ‘The present music curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education is restricted, because music is put together with art and called the subject “Arts and Life”. This results in the inadequacy of the learning and teaching of music’;

‘Too much contents for study in one term’;

‘Not enough time for studying’;

‘The curriculum squeezes the subjects of visual and aural arts together; they are so insensitively blended’;

‘Both subjects should be separated, not included in the subject of “Arts and Life”’;

‘At present, music and dance are taught together with art in lower secondary level; this decreases the knowledge that pupils can acquire’;

‘Because the contents from the curriculum are quite broad but the teaching time is limited, this may restrict the pupils’ appreciation of music’;

‘The curriculum designers should have thoroughly considered the timing of the subject in order to make learning and practising possible regarding the aims of the curriculum.’

When they learned the design of the curriculum, several teachers may have been uncertain as to what teaching strategies to use, as a result of the broad contents of teaching imposed without specific teaching guidelines. Some may regard the aims of the curriculum as unrealistic. Some teaching environments may discourage the subject, in that in some areas teaching equipment is not adequate; moreover, teachers who are responsible for the whole subject (Arts and Life) may doubt their own ability to teach this combined subject. If the school hires music and art teachers separately to share the subject, this problem will be solved, but timing still is problematic; however, some schools may not pay much attention to this subject which they see as trivial, and their teachers still have to cope with this painful situation.

With these problems unsolved, and as the curriculum has been in force for an adequate time (7 years in 1997), some teachers appeal for the evaluation of the curriculum. In fact, there must have been some evaluation of the curriculum (according to one completed questionnaire, wrongly sent to me instead of my expected one by a teacher who received my questionnaire but was confused about the addresses of the

researchers, about the evaluation of the subject ‘Arts and Life’), but no acknowledgement was publicly made. Moreover, with the small value attached to the subject, no serious action has been taken. The following statements exemplify the situation:

Teachers: ‘I do not agree with the linking of art and music together because a teacher may not have specialized in both subjects and may have difficulty teaching them; therefore they should be separated as before’;

‘There are no books provided for music as an optional subject at secondary level. This leaves teachers to find out by themselves what to teach to match the curriculum. Teacher guidance should be provided by the Ministry of Education’;

‘Old-fashioned. Everything is always left to music teachers, to think how to apply and adapt to suit their pupils’;

‘Contents of teaching, activities, aims of learning and evaluation have been modified by individual teachers according to their qualification. Although the Ministry of Education has defined proposes of study, no teaching procedures have been given’;

‘The aim of the curriculum is too high to reach; it is impossible in some areas’;

‘Music as a subject lacks equality of support: inadequate budget and number of music teachers’;

‘There are a lot of problems for teachers, because we cannot teach everything the curriculum suggests, and the value given to the subject is very small (0.5 unit)’;

‘It is inappropriate, too broad and lacks evaluation.’

The other type of objective reasons emanates from the contents of study. Many teachers claim that the contents of the subject raise problems. Because the contents are too large within the limited time, each area of study is merely superficial. Moreover, the contents of textbooks are not always accurate: some points are unclear and, even worse, some books are full of contradictions and errors. Several teachers also argue about the sequence of the contents within the same class level and between each different class level. Some contents are regarded as too difficult for pupils to learn within the due time. Some teachers appeal for an increase in practical activity, which is important for studying music. A number of teachers evaluate the curriculum as old-fashioned. The following statements are examples of these views:

Teachers: ‘It is like a duck which can swim, fly and sing but master nothing! The curriculum should be changed to suit the present situation’;

‘The subject contents are inappropriate. This includes the clarity and sequence of contents at each class level. Sometimes the same topic in different levels is explained differently; this confuses teachers’;

‘In the theory part the content is imperfect, because different authors give different approaches: different contents and different music for practice’;

‘To judge from the competence and qualifications of the curriculum designers, the curriculum should be close to perfect; but sometimes its practice is impossible; moreover, some textbooks which the Ministry of Education has provided contain inaccurate contents. Corrections should be made immediately, before Thai children acquire wrong knowledge’;

‘The subject contents in the present curriculum are inappropriate for the pupils because some areas are too difficult for the pupils to understand,’;

‘Some parts are too difficult such as the scales for Mathayom² 2, plus the period for teaching is limited; choral singing is also very difficult for the children’;

‘In the present curriculum, the contents are quite large and broad. In the subject “Arts and Life” for Mathayom 1-3, sometimes I felt that the contents are quite redundantly repetitive and sometimes too difficult, for example, music composing, especially understanding music notation is time-consuming; if emphasis is given to this activity, there is not enough time to study other things’;

‘I think that the curriculum is not good enough, because the contents in some textbooks are too difficult for those without musical background. So, basic knowledge should be given to the pupils in Mathayom 1, and there should be continuous progress to Mathayom 2 and 3’;

‘There is not enough time for music in this (combined) subject. The curriculum only provides pupils with literary knowledge, it does not emphasize music skills and listening.’

² *Mathayom* = secondary level. In Thailand, there are 3 years of lower secondary level, called *Mathayom 1*, *Mathayom 2* and *Mathayom 3*; and there are another 3 years of upper secondary level, called *Mathayom 4*, *Mathayom 5* and *Mathayom 6*.

Figure 6.22: Negative criticisms of the curriculum

| <i>Problems arising from the curriculum design:</i> | Frequency of answers | % |
|--|----------------------|----|
| Disproportion between time and contents | | 26 |
| Subject value is very small, only 0.5 unit | | 7 |
| Too broad, no indication of teaching procedures | | 7 |
| Unrealistic aims of the curriculum | | 5 |
| Inadequate teaching equipment and specialists | | 4 |
| No evaluation of the practice of the curriculum | | 2 |
| <i>Problems arising from the contents of study:</i> | | |
| Too broad contents of study allow only superficial study | | 11 |
| Some contents are unclear, contradictory and inaccurate | | 8 |
| Inappropriate order of contents | | 7 |
| Some contents are too difficult for the pupils | | 6 |
| Emphasis is on theory only, not on practice | | 6 |
| Old-fashioned | | 6 |

Figure 6.23: Supportive criticism of the curriculum

| | Frequency of answers | % |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Broad and various contents provided | | 6 |
| Appropriate for the pupils | | 5 |
| Promotion of Thai cultures included | | 2 |
| Practical in everyday life | | 2 |

As for teachers who are satisfied with the curriculum, several of them regard the breadth of the content as an advantage. Few of these teachers support one aim of the curriculum, which is to help the promotion of Thai classical music. Some see it as suitable for the pupils, and corresponding to contemporary life. The following statements show their perspectives:

Teachers: 'It is wide open for teachers to apply their specialization freely';

'The content of study is broad, with no emphasis in any area. It is suitable for school teaching';

'Now there is no music curriculum, but 'Arts and Life' instead and I think it is appropriate';

'The curriculum is friendly to teachers and schools, which are not equally prepared, have unequal readiness, therefore it is assumed to provide fundamental knowledge which covers general areas of music properly, and matches the age and level of the pupils';

‘It is appropriate because it nurtures young people in Thai traditional artistic cultures, together with a promotion of conserving Thai-ness; moreover, it is knowledge which is practical in everyday life’;

‘Appropriate because young people will learn about the old traditional Thai cultures, which contain delicacy in the Thai style. Their mind would be moulded with generosity and sympathy, love and harmony. In their old age, they can also have Thai music as a companion and pass it on to the next generation.’

As for teachers who partly approve of the curriculum, their reasons include both the supportive and objective reasons mentioned above (see Figures 6.22 & 6.23).

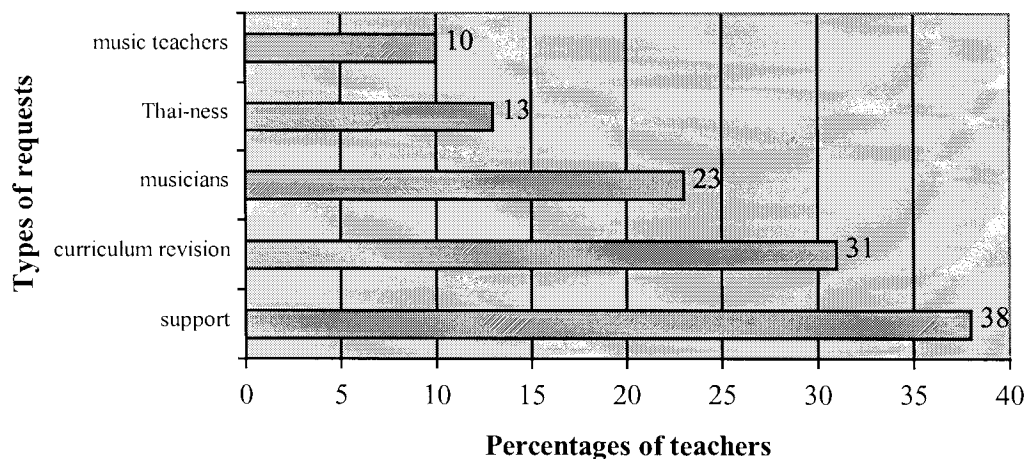
6.4 Additional Opinions: Teachers’ Requests

This section may emphasize what has already been said earlier; however, it illustrates the weight of the problems which music teachers have faced. 39 teachers (36.11%) gave additional opinions about the topics of the questionnaire. These additional opinions appeal for a better status for music, both in education and in the wider society.

The most significant concern is shown in appeals for support from authorities, starting from support in school where a friendly music environment is essential. This includes the promotion of positive attitudes towards the subject, which can be made possible by the power of school administrators. At higher levels, support is needed from the government whose funding and policy may help the development of the field. Because music study involves using music instruments which are generally expensive (Western music instruments in particular), the tax on musical instruments is an obstacle, and a number of teachers want to ask the government for a reduction.

The second concern is for a revision of the present national music curriculum. As mentioned earlier, more than half of all teachers disapprove of the present music curriculum. Here, the same notion is emphasized. The value of music as a subject requires more appreciation. One teacher suggests a continuing music curriculum from primary to secondary level, and some want to add more practical activity. More importantly, one teacher recommends that a serious evaluation of the curriculum is needed.

Figure 6.24: Percentages of teachers' requests



*Note: This information was given by 39 teachers.

The third concern is for the position of musicians in society. Consideration about careers in music is needed from the government. In the music business, technology should not be regarded as more important than musicians, moreover the business should employ qualified musicians and not be concerned only about making profits.

The fourth concern is for the notion of Thai-ness. This is due to the invasion of the capital of Thailand by Western and Westernized music. Some teachers regard the influence of Western music as too strong, so when the occasion demands it, such as music for national celebrations broadcast by the media, there should be an emphasis on Thai music.

The last concern is for the problems of music teachers in schools. As music is now only a part of the arts subject curriculum, a number of teachers have to teach other subject areas for which they are not qualified; this has put some pressure upon them. Moreover, as well as their responsibility for the subject, music teachers are sometimes given other tasks because of the misunderstanding of the administrators, who think that music teaching is not hard work, so music teachers are free to do additional school tasks.

6.5 Summary

6.5.1 Music in the Classroom

In classroom practice at present, singing, instrumental playing, listening and the study of notation and theory are generally taught, while composition is scarcely a topic in an ordinary class. In comparison with Western music, Thai music lessons involve more in active learning: singing, instrument playing and composition; whereas Western music lessons are less active, involving listening and the study of notation and theory. Overall, as theoretical study is considered important in academic education, topics relevant to Western music are used slightly more often (55%) as subjects of study than Thai music. However active learning engages pupils more with music-making, and the hierarchical order of frequency of use is Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*), Thai classical (*Thai-derm*), Thai country popular (*luk-thung*), Western popular (*sakon*) and Western classical (*classic*) music.

According to the students' accounts of their secondary school experience, the contents of music classes were similar to the practice of the teachers, as mentioned above. But the proportion of Thai music, with more emphasis on Thai classical music, was bigger than of Western music (57%/43%). Moreover, the hierarchical order of frequency of types of music in use was Thai classical, Thai popular, Western popular, Thai country popular and Western classical music.

However, in terms of appropriate types of music for the classroom according to the attitudes of the majority of teachers, the order is almost identical with the teachers' practice, except that in reality Thai classical music was less used than Thai popular music. The reasons for choosing types of music for class as appropriate for class teaching rest upon the notion of national culture and/or familiarity. For example, Thai classical music is part of the national heritage, even though it is not a familiar type of music for the pupils, whereas Thai popular music does not carry much of Thai traditional culture but it is the most familiar type of music in everyday life.

Table 6.5: The hierarchical order of frequency of use of types of music

| Teachers' attitude | Teachers' practice (1997) | Students' experience (1985-1993) |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 Thai classical | 1 Thai popular | 1 Thai classical |
| 2 Thai popular | 2 Thai classical | 2 Thai popular |
| 3 Thai country popular | 3 Thai country popular | 3 Western popular |
| 4 Western popular | 4 Western popular | 4 Thai country popular |
| 5 Western classical | 5 Western classical | 5 Western classical |

The teachers' high value for Thai classical music contradicts to the pupils' preferred musical style. A number of teachers report that the interest of pupils in music lessons is low when Thai classical music is taught. Moreover, most pupils see music lessons as a period for relaxation. Nevertheless, music lessons can encourage interest in Thai classical music and the school environment can help encourage pupils' interest in music.

6.5.2 Extra-curricular Activity and Extra Music Tuition

In schools, the most general extra-curricular music activities, according to the responses of the teachers, are the Thai classical music ensemble/society and the Western military band. The purpose of musical activity is for the benefit of the school as well as that of the students themselves. According to the students' reports on their experience, 30% had been involved in school music activities. The main music activity involved Thai classical music, while other less prominent activities involved Western popular and Thai popular music; other types of music were found less. Extra-curricular activity in school seems to support the promotion of Thai musical culture, as the most general music activities deal with Thai classical music. Extra-curricular activity is obviously arranged to develop pupils' musical skills, which cannot be developed in the classroom. However, it is for selected students only.

Extra tuition lessons also aim to develop musical skills, but they are expensive. Teachers suggest that extra tuition reflects to the ideological attitude that practising music as a hobby is prestigious, and it exists as a result of the support provided rather than because of the pure enthusiasm of students. As for the students, 35% report experience of extra music tuition. Of this number, twice as many students studied Western music as Thai classical music. Their main reason for acquiring this extra tuition was their own interest, which was supported by their parents; however, 20% of them

took the extra tuition only to fulfil parental demand. The students generally regarded extra music tuition as making a good hobby where knowledge and recreation are combined.

6.5.3 Music in Education and its Future

Generally, the purpose of teaching music in school is to provide fundamental knowledge of music and to transfer knowledge of the inherited national musical culture, rather than the more specific academic aim of guiding pupils towards an advanced level of music study. Those who require more music study may join in extra-curricular activities or take extra music tuition. This may lead them to study music at university level. 57% of all students accepted the idea of serious music study at university level, while 43% did not accept it or were uncertain about it. This large minority shows the power of the old stigma, that music is not a prestigious career. However, it seems that this prejudice has lessened as about 60% of students accept music as suitable to study at higher educational levels, which will lead to a music career.

As for the present situation of music education in Thailand, the majority of teachers agreed that there is more interest in the field in society at large than before. Those who disagree argue that stigmatic attitudes, inadequate support and the ineffective curriculum in practice at the moment have obstructed the progress of music education in Thailand.

Referring to the music curriculum, most teachers disapprove of it, because they disagree with the curriculum design which integrates all art subjects into one combined unit. They consider that this is problematic and unrealistic in practice. However, the curriculum does not have a strict procedure and aim; in practice it is dependent on teachers' decisions. This is regarded as an advantage by some teachers, but a disadvantage by others. According to the teachers, the curriculum needs to be redesigned and music as a subject needs more attention and value. Importantly, financial support is needed to equip the music class with adequate music instruments and also to employ adequately qualified music teachers. In addition, as musical instruments are expensive, reduction of the tax on music instruments should be the government's concern.

6.5.4 The Effect of Globalization on Music Education

Globally, music is valued as entertainment rather than as education by the masses. The struggle to achieve higher appreciation of music in the national curriculum occurs in the UK as well as in Thailand, and it is never-ending. In Thailand, besides the priority in

education to provide basic musical knowledge (see 3.4.2.1 and Table 6.3), the curriculum also emphasizes cultural conservation and psychological benefits.

The effect of globalization on music education can be seen from the use of Western music in the classroom, mainly popular styles including Thai popular music which has adopted Western styles, and of Western music theory (mainly notation). The role of Western music in the classroom can be said to be equally as important as Thai music in their proportions of use. Thai music is used more frequently than Western music; however, it is Thai popular music which is dominating. This suggests a relationship between music in the wider society and music in classroom in that Thai popular music, which is in favour in the wider society, is also the most frequent type of music in class teaching. In short, global musical style in the form of Thai popular music has influenced both music in the wider society and music in education.

The strengthening of local culture and the openness to global culture in education is happening simultaneously, but one may be stronger than the other at any given period. For example, from the experience of the students in their school music lessons before the year 1994, Thai classical music, which later, in 1997, was the teachers' second most frequent choice in their class teaching, was the most emphasized in the classroom. This suggests that the globalization of musical styles was stronger in 1997 and that this weakened the role of Thai classical music in education. However, the type of music that teachers regard as the most important for music lessons is still Thai classical music, but perhaps they did not put their priorities into action. Other types of music are less significant in class teaching.

Music in education reflects the status of different types of music. At present the status of Thai classical and Thai popular music can be taken as equally important, although they have significance in different ways. However, what is clear is that Thai country popular music has the lowest status, or perhaps it is also least relevant to life in the capital, and music lessons outside Bangkok may use Thai country popular music more than those in Bangkok.

As for music outside the school curriculum, the resistance to and acceptance of global influences on music is also permeating. The strengthening of local culture is more general inside school in extra-curricular music activities, where educational policy, which has an aim to conserve Thai classical music and keep it alive, has placed Thai classical music in a prominent position. In order to encourage pupils to practise Thai classical music, many schools provide free extra-curricular activities, and if these involve

extra tuition, the fee is economical compared to the high cost of Western music tuition. On the other hand, Western military bands are also a popular school activity, although they are not as common as Thai classical music activities.

Apart from the policies of educational authorities, Western music styles, both classical and popular, have become a significant topic for extra tuition, which fulfils pupils' and parents' demands mainly according to their wish to express their status or to identify their family with a certain social class. As choice of type of music in extra tuition is made by parents and pupils, it shows that they favour Western music over Thai music. It is also an economic issue, since the cost of tuition in Thai classical music (fees, instruments, including income of Thai classical musicians) is much lower than that of tuition in Western popular and classical music. Many people prefer tuition in Western music, equating cheapness with lower status. This has resulted in Thai classical music, a national symbol, having a lower economic status. The data in Chapter 5 show that Western popular and especially Western classical music are labelled by a number of students as 'classy' but they never referred in this way to Thai classical music, despite its noble roots. A more detailed investigation of musicians' careers and status will be undertaken in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

The Music Business and Careers in Bangkok

It was shown earlier that the popularity of types of music in society has to some degree affected music in education – for example, teachers may choose Thai popular music for class teaching as it is the pupils' most familiar type of music. More importantly, the educational value of music in school has some relation to the status of music careers in society. The position of music in the wider society, then, deserves some investigation. This chapter will begin with a description of the situation of the music business in Thailand, drawing on interviews with record company staff members in 1997 (before the economic crisis). The attitudes of students and teachers toward music careers are then considered. In the final section, there will be some investigation of the situation of music in Bangkok after the economic crisis.

7.1 The Music Business in Thailand during its Peak

7.1.1 *The Changing Role of the Media*

The main resources for music production in Thailand are associated with Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*) aimed at consumption in the provinces, and Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music aimed at urban consumption. Bangkok is the centre of the country's music production and distribution. As a result of the mushrooming of small independent music companies during the mid-nineties, music production and consumption have gradually changed their form. Concerning music distribution, promotion through the media used to be by far the most important process, and it was made easy because the major record companies partly own and have power to control the media. In the changing scenario, the major record companies who used to handle the country's music business have been challenged by a considerable number of small, independent newly established music companies. A young musician pointed out, 'Previously, the music camps who own the media could promote a very simple song and make it a hit ... but now the hit songs do not result from lots of promotion; their popularity comes from their internal messages.'

The operation of radio, which is the most essential medium for the distribution of music, has been vital in this change. A few years ago, before the sudden emergence of independent music companies, to make a song a public hit it was necessary to get the

song on the air as frequently as possible. This needed a heavy expense which could only be afforded by big powerful record companies. Today, except for buying a spot, a general and direct form of promotion practised routinely by record companies, most music radio channels do not accept payola. A producer pointed out, 'Now radio is very important. Many channels do not accept payola. When you send them songs, if the DJ likes them, they will play them.... You aren't required to pay the media cost.' This has encouraged small independent companies and supported 'good' music on the air: 'interesting music' will have a chance to get to the public without any cost of promotion. A music producer from an independent music company explained,

'If your music is good, they'll play it for you, and if the listener requests it, they will be more eager to broadcast it. ... Previously, there was a practice which critics called 'a push' in that the music had to be played frequently to create familiarity. During that time the competition in the market was small: there were not many artists who launched an album simultaneously, unlike now, there are plenty.... If your music is good, people like it, the media will broadcast it, you don't need to pay for it.'

Another interviewee confirmed,

'Now most popular music radio stations or about approximately 70-80% do not accept payola.'

It is said that nowadays a product without quality is difficult to promote as meeting a desirable goal. People have begun to respond to quality rather than redundant promotion, and the media operate accordingly. The influence of the media on the people is less forceful: it does not aim to control their music consumption, but only provides them with choices. 'I think the period has changed... Now the small new established music companies have a high rate of sale.... Sometimes, together, more than those of the big camps which have a full form of promotion', claimed a musician. It seems that the old style of music promotion through payola or control of the media is now out of fashion. 'What used to be said, that the companies which survive are those which have the help of the media, is not accurate now. Survival is more likely to depend on the product itself; if the song is not good enough, it can't survive', remarked an interviewee. Evidence of this change can be seen from the collapse of a former renowned major record company when the music business was flourishing in Thailand. An interviewee illustrated,

'As for the promotion, if the product is not good enough, it may get a fluke but most of them won't be successful. This can be obviously seen from the Kita record company. They owned a lot of media as much as Grammy or RS but they couldn't survive because their products did not go along with the taste of music consumers. Although there was promotion, everyone knew their artists well, they

couldn't sell or their sale was not good enough to cover the promotion cost. ... It can be seen that the time of turning a (TV or movie) star into a singer was ended. Now it is the time for the real musician: compose your own music, and sing if you are a qualified singer.'

7.1.2 The Growth of the Market

In the 1990s, the growth of the music market in Thailand has been significant, resulting from the efficient technologies of global communication, which have dramatically imposed an international taste for music on Thai culture. As the Western standard has been taken as a model, a new era of the music business in Thailand began. 'The music business is more systematic and more independent. That is the Thai market is beginning to be like the foreign markets due to the help of the media and the technologies of production', an interviewee asserted.

The music market in Thailand is not competitive in terms of types of music. Thai country popular (*luk-thung*), Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*), Western popular (*sakon*), Thai classical (*Thai-derm*) and Western classical (*classic*) have their own separate proportions in the market. The growth of the music market in Thailand is observable especially in the field of Thai popular music; an interviewee pointed out, 'The market tends to be bigger and bigger. For example, Thai popular music; the sale rate in the past had never reached a million but now it is common to see a rate of more than a million. People increasingly listen to the music. Even when the economy is in trouble, they still buy recordings.' The reason that Thai popular music has shown the most dramatic growth is undeniably the globalization of Western popular music styles, which Thai popular music has adopted. More Western styles have been brought into the country; an interviewee boasted, 'Now *Thai-sakon* (Thai popular) contains hiphop, alternative, R&B ... which we had never known before, ... soul as well. We have them all.' The development of global communications has made this possible. In the past, radio and recordings were the main sources for global popular music, but at present, computer internets, cable television and satellite communication are also important sources which have marked the era of globalization of Western popular music in world entertainment. As stated above, the corresponding reaction of Thai popular music to Western popular music is obvious. It seems that the faster that Thai popular music can catch up with the international fashions, or the localization of Western popular music can occur, the more proud record companies will be; but in practice it is a little bit different. There are so many styles of

popular music at the global level, and Thai popular music producers try to provide consumers with various styles which Thai popular music can adopt. Nevertheless, the market is not entirely open freely for all styles of music because the taste of audiences is restricted to some familiar styles. A producer of 'World Music' described the Thai market as very restricted and stated that, to satisfy the consumers, most producers are more like followers than original creators. It can be seen that if a certain style of song has become successful, it is followed by many songs in a similar style from different music companies. Genuine variety of music in the market is out of the question, he claimed, 'The problem in the music business in Thailand at the moment is that we cannot have a variety of music like abroad, in the United States, where the market is much bigger. It is divided into groups; musicians can create creative works in their own individual styles.' However, as some interviewees quoted earlier remarked, the Thai popular music market has extended its range, although it can not compare with that of the international market. In this respect, the interviewee continued, 'It has just changed a little bit, but still sticks to the core. If you really try to be creative, you will find that you can't sell your music. They will refuse it immediately. The taste of the Thai market is very narrow ... They will buy only what they are familiar with.' It is the nature of most Thai listeners' taste to fall for simplistic types of music, so creativity cannot be the main goal for music in this business.

In conclusion, the growth of the market has been evident and it has marked the diversification of the music business in Thailand to some degree. Unluckily, it has been delayed recently, as a result of the economic problems:

'The tendency of the market is to expand. Now there is more development, compared to the last 10 years. A tendency towards the Western systems is likely. The market is growing all the time, but only in the last couple of years the Thai economy has been in trouble; the market may not be smaller but may only have become static.'

7.1.3 The Development of the Music Business

Since the early 1990s, the music business in Thailand has been transformed. The emergence of small independent music companies has been continuous. A producer pointed out,

'Now the market is opening wider, giving a chance to establish small music companies ... One advantage is that music listeners have more choice of listening or buying. The other is that it is a time when anyone has a chance to step into this business. Some have nothing (musical knowledge and skills) but money. Shortly after establishing a company, they may have to give up.'

The mushrooming of small music companies implies that the music business in Thailand is an attractive investment. A producer commented, 'The music business in Thailand is a very interesting business. At the present, Grammy (a local major record company) can enter the stock market. I think the production of music is the selling of an idea ... It is a low financial investment but high profit, and it is affected by the economic problems very slightly.' Referring to the emergence and growth of small music companies, a musician pointed out:

'I think it is better because when new styles are introduced, there are more choices for people to try. But for the individual business, it is getting worse because more new companies are established, so the whole income has to be shared. It is more difficult to get rich.'

In mid-1997, the economic problems in Thailand tended to worsen, and some music companies felt that the market became static. However, some still had an optimistic hope. An interviewee claims,

'Now that the economy is bad, listeners may feel that their spending power is less, but sometimes when the economy is bad, people in Bangkok want to listen to relaxing music and we can still sell. At the moment, the music can resolve their tension but if the economy is worse than it is now, they may prefer to spend their money on food ... The effect on us now is not that much, we can feel it but not very severely.'

Mid-1997 was a time of delay in the growth of the music business in Thailand, due to the national economic problems. A producer pointed out:

'Like all the music companies, we have to share the market. Now many small companies have closed. I think that the establishment of small music companies will not boom as in the last few years. Now the growth is declining.'

7.2 The Improving Status of Musicians

The music business in Thailand in the mid-1990s was in a stage of transition between the period of domination by the major record companies, which had been suspended for more than a decade, and the period of new independent music companies. The business has now opened wider, and has provided opportunities for musically talented persons or those who are interested in the music business to develop careers. People involved in music making careers in Thailand can roughly be divided into the performing 'front' and the composing and engineering 'back'. The former group contains musicians who perform in the public eye and also use their images as

trademarks for selling their work. The latter includes composers, producers and music engineers who create and technically refine the work and are less known or probably unknown to the public. Musicians who are qualified enough may work both at the back and the front but there is not much opportunity for people at the back to move towards the front. It is interesting that most musicians and producers do not have music degrees; nevertheless, they have had some form of extra music education.

Being a ‘musician’, in the past before music developed into a form of business, was not a very honourable career in Thai society. Professional musicians were not admired but held in contempt, because a musician was merely a person who sold his/her distinctive ability for others’ pleasure. The career was a service career, and therefore was regarded as having a lower rank. In the early stage when music was turning into a business, musicians in the music industry became famous to the public; their status was improving to some extent but the old stigma was still firmly attached. People frequently referred scornfully to careers in entertainment, including music as ‘*ten-kin ram-kin*’ which means ‘earning living by dancing’. This attitude has embarrassed and stigmatised the career for a very long time.

Among young music listeners, being a musician is acceptable as a prestigious career, but many older people still retain the old perspective. ‘I used to be asked by a senior adult, ‘Do you earn enough for your living by playing music?’ but in the future I think this will change in a better direction’, a musician remarked. For the new generation, the present time is full of hope. ‘Music careers are much more acceptable now than in the past ... the change is like from black to white, and it brings in a good income’, the musician said. This statement can be confirmed by the following 2 experienced musicians (aged late 30s (1) and late 40s (2)) in a linked interview:

1: ‘When I first began to play the guitar, my neighbour shouted, “Go away! Go play somewhere else!”’, something like that. People saw musicians in a disapproving way.’

2: ‘*Ten-kin ram-kin* (earning living by dancing) or something similar. When we were young, people did not accept the career, but now it is different. It has changed dramatically (he used the Thai expression ‘from front hand to backhand’).’

1: ‘I think we began to move towards the Western system.’

Towards the late 1990s, the phrase, ‘*ten-kin ram-kin*’ (earning living by dancing), began to fade out due to the impressive growth of the music business. A musician pointed out, ‘In the past, we heard that this career was ‘*ten-kin ram-kin*’ which meant

unstable, but now they don't see it like that. Anyone who takes up this career is expecting a large profit.' The great rewards of the career can help in erasing the stigma. Because making a recording, if it sells well, makes a very profitable return, people especially in related parts of the entertainment business, such as film stars, wish to join the music business in the hope of being lucky. However not everyone is lucky enough to be able to make a dream come true; the musician continues: 'You can see that in the entertainment business in Thailand, there are fashion models, both male and female turning to be singers and making recordings; but very few are successful.'

A career in music, at least, in the 'front' of the music business, is still somehow labelled as unstable. This applies especially to young musicians, particularly singers who are famous because of the company's promotion power for a certain time, and this group is the majority. Most singers or musicians in the world of musical fashion have a short career. This is a prevailing reason why the career is regarded as unstable. An interviewee remarked,

'Musicians who are really working now are mainly in the age group of 21-30, which is not broad. So people say that if you come into this business and you have a chance to make money, you must go for it until you can no longer do it.'

Outside the recording business, being a musician represents a hard-working and unstable career. A musician claims:

'I think this career is hard indeed. Sometimes, I have sympathy for them. They are like... performing in this club for few months then they are sacked and have to find another job. Waiting for a new job, changing their place of work, their lives are like that.'

Moreover, a career without the support of a company is poorly rewarded. As another interviewee says:

'The income of musicians is not very good: By the musicians here I mean those who play in pubs or bars. But now those who are in the business of music production ... have a tendency to a high income.'

Freelance musicians and musicians who work with a recording company are in different ranks, which means different status. A musician-producer who has been involved in the production of Thai classical music records points out:

'Musicians have very low honour in the society. Thai society does not support creativity; therefore those who are creative, who know how to compose music or have a creative idea do not receive any admiration except if you are working in a big company like Grammy; there, you are comfortable.'

In this period of change, as the music business in Thailand moves into a new upgrading era, there are many controversial perspectives about careers in the area. As stated earlier, the status of musicians inside and outside the music business is different; moreover, inside the music business, musicians and those who are working in the background are also regarded differently. Although careers in music have been upgraded, the stability of the career is still in doubt. In the music business, apart from the musicians, the most important and central figure is the producer, a new career born together with the establishment of the music business. Most producers are also sound engineers and music composers themselves. Compared with ‘musicians’, which refers to those who play the music in public, a producer claimed,

‘It is very different. I think my career has become an acceptable career in the last 10 years and it is more acceptable now, not less privileged than other careers. If you say that the career is not stable, this is not what people nowadays say. If you mean ‘musicians’ who play the music, yes, they are unstable; but if you are a composer, I think it is stable.’

A lyric writer pointed out,

‘Being a producer, composer or musician in the recording studio is now a specific career which has a high income, and there are still not many people working in this area ... In the past, the Western business system had not reached Thailand. Thai people did not know that composers in a foreign country could be rich from composing only one song. Now composers have more income, and work for a company. Musicians in the past did not work for a company. Now if you are in a company, you earn a salary and as well as other proportion gain from your work. This is the difference.’

The establishment of music companies has supported the musicians and given birth to other careers related to the production of music. As the business is growing and is also in the public interest, despite controversy about its prestige, the status of people in these music careers tends to move to a higher level, according to the global model.

After reviewing the discussions about music careers with record company staff and musicians, it is also important to discuss the views of people outside the music business. As shown earlier, almost 60% of students have a positive view towards studying music at a higher level (see 6.2.3). Similarly, the majority of students (63%) also have a positive attitude towards the occupation of musicians, while a minority of 13% of students are negative towards it, and as many as 22% are not certain about it.

More than 60% of the students idealize musicians, as those who possess musical ability and use their ability freely to create the world of music surrounding themselves and others, with a certain degree of devotion. In return, they are rewarded with high income and fame. Musicians (in the context of record companies in particular) are stereotyped as rich, happy and expressive, as many young people dream of being. This sounds like the world of imagination rather than the reality.

Figure 7.1: Students' attitudes towards 'musicians'

| | Frequency of answers | % |
|---|----------------------|----|
| Positive: | | |
| Happy career / have freedom / be themselves | | 24 |
| Requires skills and devotion to be successful | | 16 |
| Help society by their entertaining | | 15 |
| Honest occupation | | 13 |
| Good or high income | | 11 |
| Good / very good (no reason given) | | 10 |
| Admirable / interesting / honourable / famous | | 5 |
| Kind, understandable and expressive people | | 4 |
| A dream career | | 3 |
| Artists | | 3 |
| Have variety in life | | 1 |
| Negative: | | |
| Unstable | | 21 |
| Depends on chance / luck / appearance | | 4 |
| Pointless life | | 1 |
| Some look like drug addicts | | 1 |
| Too much involved in business | | 1 |
| No honour | | 1 |
| Music teacher is a better alternative career | | 1 |
| Better take music as hobby | | 1 |

Less than 15% have strongly negative points of view about the career of musician, concerning mainly its stability; and perhaps the rest of the respondents who are uncertain about the career are also affected by this issue. Other issues (income, lifestyle and social acceptance) prompt both positive and negative attitudes. Success as a musician, especially in the music industry, is not dependent on personal musical ability alone, but also on appearance and, as suggested by some respondents, 'luck'. Those who have good opportunities may have money and fame and become celebrities. However, this celebrity frequently does not survive in the long term. The career is regarded by the majority of people as 'unstable', referring to both income and the period of the career. It is stability that is a major concern about this occupation. It has been suggested earlier, and was

repeated here, that music is more suitable to be regarded as a hobby rather than a career. One student suggested, ‘It depends on which type of musician you are, for those who play their music in restaurants or pubs at night don’t sound good to me, but Thai classical musicians or music teachers, they are more admirable.’ This speech reflects the traditional belief in the prestige of Thai-ness and the career of a teacher; however in reality, Thai classical musicians feel that they have inferior status compared to Western music musicians. This issue will be discussed later. Music performers in public places are conventionally regarded as less prestigious and less appealing for those with these older beliefs.

Negative critiques about the present situation of the music business in Thailand were also given. According to these critiques, to be a musician, which in the music business usually means being a singer rather than an instrumentalist, is quite easy; there is no true love for music; most of music production is uncreative and lacks originality. Here are some examples of such critiques:

Students: ‘Thai people like pretty/handsome musicians; their ability is a minor concern. The Thai music business is quite frivolous, lacking real interest in music’;

‘In Thai society at present, there are a great number of musicians, I can’t remember them all; some sell their ability and some sell their faces’;

‘For those who compose and make the music themselves, I have respect, but for those who only copy others, I can only say that they are really brainless’;

‘If you are a good musician, it is likely that you will be successful; but if you are not really interested in music, you should not waste your time there.’

As can be seen from the above data, more students accept and have positive attitudes towards careers in music than do not accept it. To explore this further, the attitude of parents from the students’ points of view will be examined.

The students were asked to imagine themselves as a potential musician-to-be and indicate whether they would receive any support from their family. The responses reflect many issues relating to the career of musicians illustrated above. 44% of students would have a possibility of support, and 51% who would not. 5% of them did not give any response. This may mean that it is nonsense for them to think about this topic or, in other words, there is no possibility for them to be a musician.

Parents' perspective on the career in music, as reported by the students, are summarized in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2: Parents' presumed attitudes towards the occupation of 'musician'

| | Frequency of answers | % |
|--|----------------------|----|
| Positive: | | |
| No restriction on their child's interest | | 18 |
| Support special ability | | 12 |
| All legal careers are acceptable | | 11 |
| Parents like music | | 3 |
| Good income | | 2 |
| Negative: | | |
| Unstable: income / period of work | | 28 |
| Accept the stigma: the career is less acceptable | | 9 |
| Only supportive if it is part-time job / hobby | | 6 |
| No dignity / little chance to succeed | | 5 |
| Other careers are better | | 4 |
| No member in the family is musician | | 2 |
| If I take it up now, it would be harmful to my study | | 2 |
| Difficult to find alternative job | | 1 |

Reviewing first the negative attitudes of parents anticipated by the students, as shown above, the major points at issue are that the career is seen as having an unstable income and that the chance of success is slight; moreover, it is a fact about the career that the working time is not regular. However, they will accept it if it is only a part-time job or hobby. Since a career as a musician often begins at a young age, when most musicians are still engaging in studying, parents fear of its damaging effect on their children's study. As stated above, instability is a main reason for rejecting the career; there is also another powerful reason for rejecting it. This derives from the old stigma that the career is less honourable, as shown by the expression many people use to refer disapprovingly to all entertaining/performing careers: *'ten-kin ram-kin'* (earning living by dancing).

In Thai culture, parents still influence children's decisions, although their children have grown up. In the process of bringing up children, children are taught to have high respect for adults and always listen to them. This is, of course, has influence on young people's decisions. In one student's response on the career of musician, she said, 'If possible, I want to be a musician very much because it is used to be one of my dreams in that I can do what I love to.' But when asked about her expectation of parental support, she responded, 'No. Because I come from a big family, I am expected to have a more stable career, not to be a musician because it is unstable.' A similar response was given

by another student: 'Being a musician is a good occupation; if there is a chance, I would like to be one', but when referring to her parents, she replied, 'No. Other occupations are better, music can only be another activity, like a hobby.' These attitudes of the adults make many youngsters see the occupation as only a dream.

As for those parents who would be supportive, the main reason is that they give freedom to their children to choose their own career, which means that they do not discriminate against any career. As musical ability is regarded as special, several parents would give encouragement and support. Some are supportive because they like music and would be proud if their children become musicians; some have an optimistic point of view that a successful musician earns a lot, and in general, they regard music as just as good as other occupations.

To summarize attitudes towards the occupation of musician, 63% of students gave positive responses towards it, and 44% of students believed that their parents would accept the occupation. This shows that the new generation has a stronger tendency to accept the occupation than the older generation. The familiar phrase, 'earning living by dancing' (*ten-kin ram-kin*), which implies that the career is dishonourable, has now begun to fade.

For music teachers, among the total number of 108 teachers, 28% gave no comment on this topic and another 16% gave irrelevant comments; thus only 58% made a judgement on status in terms of the social position in general, which mainly includes social acceptance related to income, and the quality of work and skills.

The following Figure 7.3 shows the number of teachers who made particular types of judgement on careers in music. As it shows, 20% of teachers labelled the career as 'insecure', 16% have witnessed the improvement of the position, and 3% categorized it as a medium social position. For the quality of work and skills, 12% of teachers regarded this as having improved whereas 8% of them disagreed. If we combine responses on the quality of work & skills and on the concern for social position, positive and negative perspectives were equally supported. It can be said in conclusion that the status of musicians or of those who are involving in music careers is in a grey area, where positive attitudes are equal to negative ones.

Figure 7.3: Teachers' attitudes to musicians

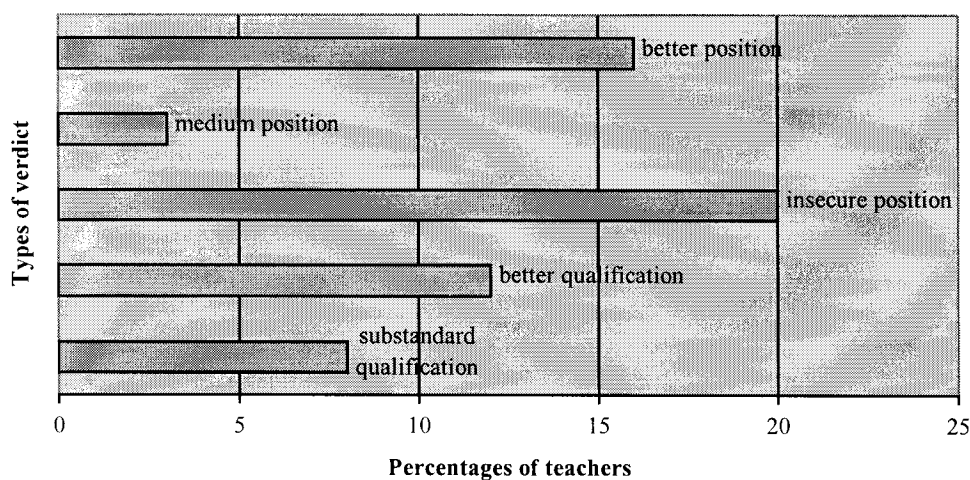
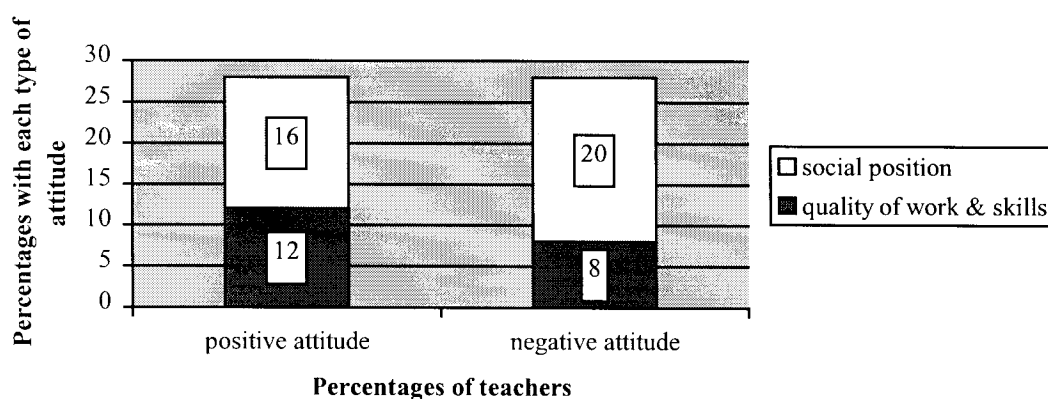


Figure 7.4: Status of careers in music



Starting with the optimistic views, teachers consider that music careers have a brighter future. The status of musicians has been upgraded.

Teachers: 'It brings a good income and is a happy career. Most children dream of having a main or part-time job as a musician';

'This is much improved. In the past, society disapprovingly regarded them as *Ten-kin Ram-kin* (earning living by dancing)' but now the standard is improved and people accept it';

‘Musicians at present gain more acceptance from society, compared to the past’;

‘Musicians both in Thai and Western music nowadays acquire more acceptance from the society in terms of their profession. Moreover, with the availability of modern technologies, musical practice is made more convenient.’

On the negative side, because music careers do not have a privileged history, nowadays the careers are still often regarded as economically insecure and not very honourable.

Teachers: ‘Musicians nowadays should not have a career in music only but should also have another main or part-time occupation for their financial security. Only the income from being a musician is not adequate for the cost of living’;

‘Musicians still suffer from lack of respect, being given no significance’.

However, the status of music careers varies according to the type of music. Thai classical music, which has the longest history in Thailand, seems to have an inferior status compared to the more recent global popular and Westernized-Thai or Thai popular music. A teacher pointed out, ‘The society has distanced Thai classical musicians from their music, as is seen from the very low wage plus the attitude that they are ‘old-fashioned’.

9% of teachers pointed out the unfair status of Thai classical music. They strongly feel the inferior status of those who are practising Thai classical music, compared to those who are practising Western style or in Thai ‘*sakon*’ (both Western classical and popular, including Westernized local popular). This feeling was sometimes very strongly expressed; being asked to describe the status of careers in music, they made comparisons within these careers rather than with others.

Teachers: ‘Musicians in Thai classical music have different status in many respects compared to those in Western music. Most obvious is the tuition fee. Western music teachers can charge at least 2-3 times more than Thai classical music teachers. The cost of music instruments is also extremely different: Western music instruments are more expensive than Thai music instruments, some of them can cost from 100,000 baht¹. (About the attitudes towards musicians): if there are 2 musicians walking past, and one holds a guitar and the other holds a *sor-duang* (Thai fiddle), people

¹ Before the collapse of the Thai currency, which devalued the Thai baht by up to 100% at the end of 1997 and early in 1998, £1 was about 40 baht on average.

would think that the one who holds the guitar looks cool; on the contrary, the one who holds the *sor-duang* looks old-fashioned, for example. So, in summary, Thai classical musicians do not have equal status compared to *sakon* (Western style)² musicians’;

‘Thai classical musicians are known only within the world of Thai classical music, where respect is given to them according to their competence and seniority. This is different for *sakon* (Western style) musicians. Even those who have just become musicians are well known everywhere’;

‘Thai classical musicians have fewer institutions which recruit them, and their income is rather low if compared to *sakon* (Western style) musicians. As a result, not many people are interested in doing it’;

‘Most people admire *sakon* (Western style) musicians more than Thai classical musicians. This is obvious from the wage earned from their performance. For example, in a hotel where they hire both a *khim* (Thai dulcimer) player and a pianist. The former would gain only 3,000 baht a month but the latter would gain from 10,000 baht per month. Or for music lessons: a Thai classical music lesson costs 150 baht while a Western music lesson costs 600 baht. This shows that the status of Thai classical musicians can not compete with *sakon* (Western style) musicians, although the music shows the identity of Thailand’;

‘Most Thai classical musicians perform at special functions, but they are not very popular because when Thai music is required they often play a recording instead of hiring an ensemble. This has reduced the work of Thai classical musicians, so that very few can survive in this career. Mostly they either became musicians because of the love of music or they only practise as amateurs. The reason is because of the low income, which is not enough for them to live on, unlike those in *sakon* music (Western types including Thai popular)’;

‘The status of Thai classical musicians is the worst compared to other musicians ... The new generation knows Thai classical music less and less because there is so little promotion, or it is unlikely to be available on TV, in magazines, etc..’

Apart from the type of music, the status of the career is also dependent on the nature of the work or the employer i.e. musicians in pubs have a lower status compared to those employed by the government or private institutions.

Teacher: ‘Musicians receive more honourable acceptance (especially Western classical musicians) but in general it is not a secure career: not many supports are available; those who work in night clubs still haven’t got

² *sakon* musicians here refer to those who practise in Western styles including Western classical and popular and Thai popular music.

much acceptance; their status is like that of other night-time workers according to Thai people's attitudes (from what I experienced).'

Concerning the qualifications of musicians, 12% of teachers agreed that musicians today have improved their musical knowledge and skills, whereas 8% of teachers considered that they lack good standards of musical competence. The disapproving opinions referred towards the area of popular music in particular, where music making has been greatly dependent on new technologies. Some teachers welcome the technological help, but others see it as a hindrance to the artistic aspect of music making.

Teachers: 'Musicians now possess more musical ability than those in the past. This has resulted from the availability of many music schools. Musicians today have a convenient life, not less than in many other honourable occupations. Moreover, it is a career which gives more freedom';

'Musicians today have learned how to use modern technologies such as sequencers, music computer, etc., and they are ready to accept the development of new inventions';

'Music supported by the government and private business has been continuously improved according to the international standard, but music in night clubs or cafes is without any improvement. Moreover, there are many aids to facility such as sequencers and computers. I don't mean that both tools are not good, but they are good in recording studios or in music production but not for performing, and then have made many good musicians lose their jobs';

'As for musicians today, some groups do not deserve to be called 'musicians' because their work for the public is crude. It shows contempt for the listeners';

'There are hardly any musicians, but mostly computer controllers';

'Musicians' role in music practice is decreasing every day because of the availability of too many tools which help them. Musicians in each area haven't developed musically but rather they have learnt to use new technologies.'

Moreover, the promotion of commercial music, which is mainly vocal, is focussed on the image of the singer rather than anything else.

Teacher: 'Teenagers normally know musicians in the form of singers. It is difficult to teach them the quality of music because they are crazy about star-artists rather than the music itself. Most best-selling recordings are of singers who are (TV/film) stars. Then they sell images rather than the voice.'

Apart from the status of the career in terms of social acceptance and qualification, musicians in the late nineties also represent desirable lifestyles to young audiences. For good or ill, they have an impact on susceptible youngsters. This is seen as dangerous if the musicians present inappropriate or deviant behaviours.

Teacher: ‘Musicians nowadays represent all the people in society, and give entertainment for society. This includes both Thai classical and *sakon* (Western style) musicians. Moreover, they also become models for the people. Then, the musician should be good models for young people. It does not mean that they have to wear Thai costume to play popular music, but they should not, for example, be addicted to drugs.’

Working in the world of business, musicians have to satisfy their sponsors, employers, and audiences. This is unavoidable as long as being a ‘musician’ is a career in entertaining the public. Accordingly, listeners, in the role of music consumers, can only consume the musical styles made available by the media. Both music-makers and consumers are seen by some teachers as being manipulated by the middle person from the world of business.

Teachers: ‘Thai musicians do not possess less musical capacity than any foreign musicians in the world, but when the business of music-production is involved, musicians are only labourers who work for their employers without using their real full capacity. It takes ages to discover the one who uses his/her own capacity. Listeners are similar to fish in a tank. They only live on the instant food provided, the food is repeated again and again. They have no chance to swim away to find the food they like.... As for musicians, to maintain the comparison, they feed the listener with tedious instant music. It takes a long time to discover music with quality from musicians who have quality’;

‘Musicians nowadays have to work for their own survival and are unlikely to be able to do creative work because their firm may not accept it. Music consumers have not many choices, only those imposed by the firms.’

7.3 Summary of Music’s Status Before the Economic Crisis

Music has only recently developed as a business in Thailand. The music business system has grown in accordance with the global music business system. The music which is produced is almost entirely popular music: Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) for urban listeners and Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) aimed at provincial listeners. The music industry is always being blamed by conservationists, in this case, the teachers, not only for not accepting any responsibility for conserving original Thai music, but also for attracting young people’s attention towards their mainly low-quality musical products

aimed only at profit. Because the business is considered to be devoted to making profits, the images of singers have been seen as pushed to the front, and really good musicians are thought less able to advance. This has prevented young ears from hearing quality music.

Record company staff, answering such attacks, claimed that the production of music is restricted by the consumers' taste rather than led by the business, and because it is a business, it must not take unnecessary risks. According to them, the music consumer does not favour listening to Thai classical music, moreover, the traditional beliefs attached to Thai classical music have prevented or extremely restricted its development. Thus it may not be fair to say that the music business has neglected Thai classical music, as in fact, Thai classical music has refused to be involved in the music business.

The good news for musicians in general is that they are more honoured than before. Their improved status, which is a result partly of their economic progress, benefits Western-style musicians (including Thai and Western popular musicians and Western classical musicians) more than Thai classical musicians, as the income from performing and giving tuition is much less for Thai classical musicians. Thai classical music is ranked highly as a national symbol but poorly rewarded. It is not forgotten, but lacks serious attention. As shown earlier in 5.1.1, the reason for its stagnant condition given by record company staff members is that it has failed to develop to fit with the present time.

The status of music careers in general has been damaged by the old stigma, which led to them being regarded as dishonourable, but nowadays the data show improvement, and the fading of this stigma.

As for students, more than 60% admire the occupation of musician and more than 20% are ambivalent. Young people mostly have a fantasy of a musician's life as characterized by happiness, freedom, high income and fame. A little more than 10% of the students drew attention to another side of the picture: a musician's career is seen as strikingly unstable, and musicians may not have a secure life.

Influenced by their parents, who represent the middle-aged group of the population, students may have a more realistic view of musical careers. Slightly more than half of all the students expected a negative response to such a career choice from their parents. The most prominent parental concern in choice of career is normally stability of income and continuity of working life; and a music career is considered 'unstable'. Other negative reasons mainly reflect the old stigmatization of the career as dishonourable.

For music teachers, the status of music careers is a matter of controversy and uncertainty. About 40% of all teachers did not respond or gave irrelevant answers. The status, evaluated by the teachers who responded relevantly in terms of the social position and qualification of musicians, is in the middle of a grey area, with a fairly even mixture of positive and negative regards (about 30% have a positive regard and about another 30% have a negative regard). In comparison with other music careers, a Thai classical musician is usually in a less privileged status compared to other types of musicians. In addition, nature of work and of employers also determine the status: freelance musicians in nightclubs are less privileged than those employed in a larger organization.

For those inside the career, music careers, which in the past had a low status, have now become part of a big industry of the nineties. The stigma now is felt more by the older generation than the younger musicians. Middle-age musicians have beyond doubt witnessed the change. However, the stability of the career is still in a dubious state. Musicians inside the record companies have a better status than those outside; and inside a record company, music-related careers have emerged which are sometimes more stable and better paid than the career of a musical performer. Generally speaking, the boom in the music business has enabled a promising future for careers in music.

7.4 Further Information in 1998

7.4.1 'Amazing Thailand' & Patriotism in Music

We all know what has happened to us: we have become poor. A decade ago we were rich and growing faster than any other area in the world. How proud we were of our leaping economic indicators!

But there was something very wrong: despite all that wealth, the poor were neglected, the environment ruined and resources depleted.

Then came the shocking devaluation of the baht in mid-1997, and the end of seemingly endless 'progress'.

Suddenly nationalism was 'in', together with 'the simple life', 'return to agriculture', 'cultivate your garden', 'Buddhist values', 'simplicity' (The Nation, 6/6/98:C1)

The above statement depicts the situation one year after the sudden economic crisis struck Thailand. To loosen the economic tension and bring more income to the country, Thailand arranged to promote tourism with the campaign called 'Amazing Thailand' for the year 1998-99. The campaign is patriotic in its nature as it serves as a promising tool to strengthen national pride. Buying and using Thai products has been encouraged, to strengthen the economy. The campaign has produced new phenomena on the music

scene in Bangkok. Music with a Thai essence, including the ‘oldies’, has come back in fashion.

One obvious phenomenon is the boom in Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*) in Bangkok. An FM radio channel³ emerged, as well as more television programmes, devoted especially to *luk-thung* songs. *Luk-thung* is brought back to the capital and gains a warm welcome from the audiences. Originately from folk roots, Thai country popular music has developed through time, but the original style is still present. Many Thai country popular music recordings have been very popular as hybrids of folk style and the Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) style; an outstanding example was performed by a former Thai singer of popular teen music, Ohpas Thosporn (Si-san, 1998:92). Today there is also a production of Thai country popular music in rock style, for young listeners; for example Pisut & Pe’s new album. They said that Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*) might not be everyone’s (especially Bangkokians’) cup of tea, but they believe that their new, rock versions might lead people to seek out the originals for comparison (Bangkok Post, Outlook, 24/7/98:4). The same reason is given for the rearrangements of Thai classical music in a modern style made by many groups.

Since mid-1998, one year after the financial crisis in Thailand started, there have been an outstanding number of nostalgic movements in the Thai music scene. Anniversary concerts for the remembrance of past glory have been promoted. These began with the revival of Thai traditional musical drama (*lakorn-rong*). It has returned to the stage almost 50 years after its last performance. The Thai musical drama celebrated its centenary by bringing back an old play, ‘*Sao Khreua Fa*’, a version of the story of Madame Butterfly, which was staged in July. The Thai traditional style of singing has come back on the drama stage, but the play has been updated to appeal to modern audiences (The Nation, 2/7/98:C1).

Reflecting the success of Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*) in the capital, in August there was the ‘30 years of Suraphon Sombatcharoen’ concert, to commemorate the late King of *luk-thung* on the 30th anniversary of his death in 1998. This was said to be the biggest *luk-thung* concert, and gathered well-known *luk-thung* singers past and present (Phu-jat-kan rai-wan, 1/9/98:23).

In addition, songs-for-life (*phleng pheua chiwit*), a genre within Thai popular music which has the essence of Thai folk style in its use of folk melodic style and instruments,

³ Normally FM radio channels are for Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) and Western music both popular (*sakon*) and classical (*classic*) overwhelmingly.

and which had not been heard for a long time, has attracted the attention of audiences through the arrangement of a number of ‘songs-for-life’ concerts. This genre celebrated its 25th year anniversary in September by arranging a high profile anniversary concert. The concert was not a typical humble style songs-for-life concert, but was accompanied by the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra (BSO) which Thai people regard as opposite to this genre – ‘Songs-for-life are down-to-earth, grassroots songs which tell the stories of the poor and the persecuted. At the other extreme, classical music is, rightly or wrongly, associated with luxury and wealth’ (Bangkok Post, Outlook, 11/9/98:1). The concert aimed to broaden the audience for songs-for-life as well as promote the symphony orchestra to the Thai public (ibid). Songs-for-life musicians also presented other concerts, to recall the past experience of their involvement in the political conflict, which led to the disaster of October 14, 1973⁴. Such concerts, for example one called ‘Phin-Krid-Sai (Plucking the harp strings)’ which was supported by a Thai classical ensemble (Phu-jat-kan rai-wan, 7/9/98:22), are involved firmly in the essence of Thai-ness, in accordance with the ‘Amazing Thailand’ campaign.

Besides anniversary concerts, there have been a number of concerts with the same purpose of reviving the ‘oldies’, such as a tribute concert to the late ‘Queen of *luk-thung*’, Phumphant Duangchan, in August and a ‘Tribute to Rewat Buddhinan’ concert in September. The latter concert took place to raise funds for the Rewat Buddhinan Music Library of Thammasat University. The concert was organized by Grammy Entertainment, which was founded by Rewat Buddhinan, a musician and composer who died 2 years ago, the man who revolutionized the Thai pop music scene. The concert featured Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) produced by the company in particular. ‘Now Grammy has almost a dozen subsidiary music labels as well as other involvements in the entertainment business. Rumours abound that more than half of the local music artists are in the Grammy fold’ (Bangkok Post, Outlook, 9/9/98:8).

It seems that the whole movement supporting the patriotic campaign known as ‘Amazing Thailand’ has succeeded in encouraging music in the traditional style, both folk and classical. To support the ‘Amazing Thailand’ campaign, the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra (BSO) also has a ‘Thais conserve Thai’ project which aims to promote Thai classical music (*phleng Thai-derm*) and Thai popular ‘oldies’ to a wider audience, and also intends to orchestrate these musics in the Western classical fashion. This is to introduce Western orchestration to a wider audience and also to gain more

⁴ After the incident, they had to hide in the forest, where they composed some of their music.

popularity for their orchestra. As a part of the project, in August, the BSO presented the ‘White Lotus Concert’, which included the Thai art songs⁵ orchestrated in the Western style, arranged by a well-known Thai female composer who received an honour as one of the national artists. The BSO also planned further concerts in similar styles, and they also make recordings of this music (Phu-jat-kan rai-wan, 1/9/98:23).

Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) today is mostly in a global style, far from the patriotic essence, but Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) musicians also help promote the ‘Amazing Thailand’ campaign by offering their musical work to support the campaign by composing lyrics which support it. Apart from that, the Tourist Authority of Thailand also works with a Thai popular singer to record the ‘golden-oldies’ of Thai popular music (*luk-krung*) to promote Thailand’s tourism (The Nation, 9/7/98:C1).

In Thai popular music production, however, composing *Thai-sakon* with a mixture of Thai musical elements or Thai instruments is encouraged. Even some of those pop-rock musicians who aim their music at teenagers for local consumption have tried to include Thai instruments in their music; for example, a group called ‘Pause’ uses Thai traditional drums in their music (the reason for using only the drum is to avoid the Thai-Western scales clash) (The Nation, 3/10/98:C5).

At the same time, contrasting with nationalism in music, ‘internationalism’ is the new buzzword among Thai musicians. The meaning given to this by one singer is that a greater diversity of musical genres is recorded on one album (The Nation, 27/9/98:C5). The term also implies the hope of Thai musicians to step into the world market. However, one hindrance pointed out by many Thai musicians is the language used in lyrics. In an interview in a music magazine, a popular musician says, ‘If I’m ready I’ll sing in English to help our nation by selling my music to foreigners. Now some parts of my lyrics are in English but I’m not good enough to write the whole thing in English. ... If everyone is ready, we will compete with the world market’ (Si-san. Year 10, Volume 4:28).

7.4.2 Thai Classical Music and Modernization

In the year 1998, transforming Thai traditional music to suit the present time and seeing this as development became more acceptable. Magazine and newspaper articles about ‘how to keep Thai music alive’ showed a consensus that the modernization of Thai music to suit today’s lifestyle is crucial for the music’s survival. For all Thai traditional

⁵ Vocal compositions in the Thai language both in Western classical style sometimes called “Art Songs”

performance styles, 'if they are going to survive, they must be able to adapt themselves to changing fashions and conditions' (Bangkok Post, Outlook, 4/6/98:1). Because traditional performances have to compete with contemporary popular performances, to confine them to strict traditions is seen as outdated.

Faced with this kind of competition, folk art performers are challenged as never before to adapt their act in a way that will let them hold on to audiences. They have responded by upgrading their techniques in different ways. Now, modern instruments have been added to their ensembles, together with more powerful sound systems. Dancers and hip contemporary language have been added to the routines. These changes have all been introduced to develop and modernise performing folk arts, and in that way, to preserve them. ... When it comes to the performing arts, special methods are needed when trying to keep the past alive. If performers stick rigidly to the styles of a half-century ago, only a few specialists will be interested, and the art will die out. But preserving these traditions by allowing them to develop organically, like the living things they are, to adapt to new circumstances and technologies promises better results. It is valid to use any technique that stimulates interest and keeps people watching and listening. That, too, is preservation. (Bangkok Post, Outlook, 4/6/98:1)

The new generation of traditional performers, including Thai classical musicians, have their own attitudes which differ from their predecessors, in that they are ready to discard what they see as irrational traditional beliefs. Anant Narkong, a university lecturer and Thai classical musician, announced 'If Thai classical musicians still guard their musical knowledge and skills for themselves and do not transfer them to the younger generation, Thai classical music will die out in the same way as Thai literature or dance' (Krung-tep Thu-ra-kit, Jut-pra-kai 11/6/98:8). As such developments become acceptable today, there are now more choices of contemporary Thai classical music such as combinations of Western acoustic and electric instruments, as in the *Fong Naam* group, or the adoption of foreign beats for new arrangements of Thai traditional songs as in the *Boy Thai* group's adoption of bossa nova, fusion jazz or calypso beats or Praat's adoption of jazz and contemporary rock. The combination of traditional Thai and modern Western styles is also regarded as a way to bring Thai classical music to the media as well as for export or the hope to be placed on the international market (Bangkok Post, Outlook, 4/6/98:1 & Phu-jat-kan rai-wan, 16/10/98:23).

With their own original compositions, the most outstanding group for modernized Thai classical music (neo-Thai classical music) is *Fong Naam*. Their music has practically been in official use, as the Tourism Authority of Thailand asked the group to compose the music for the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign and also the official theme song for the Asian Games which were held in Thailand in December 1998. Besides, one

of their former compositions has been used as theme music for the government radio News and also to accompany the end-titles for the Channel 9 News⁶. As the 'Amazing Thailand' campaign attracts the attention of the media, a musician in the *Fong Naam* group boasts that radio listeners in Thailand hear their music every hour. It is quite obvious that the modernization of Thai classical music as well as of other traditional performances is widely accepted.

In the future, a higher degree of fusion of forms and the creation of hybrid possibilities are needed. They also have to be appreciated by those who are more familiar with Western films, music, and TV, than the older performance traditions in their own lands. Beyond this, actors must continue to observe our own society at work and play and the possibilities for social and cultural change. ... Of course money, and hard work are essential to the success of these ventures if the traditional arts are not to lose their effectiveness in educating the younger generation. While such efforts can be used to enhance national pride and remind people of the truth of what it is to be human, their most important function is to permit disciplined performers to communicate directly with their audiences. (The Nation, 27/8/98:C6)

7.4.3 The Music Business

The eruption of the economic crisis in Thailand in the second half of 1997 caused a recession in businesses, including the entertainment business. Many magazines including music magazines, suspended or ceased publication and of course, many small record companies stagnated or disappeared. By the end of 1998, the crisis had changed the musical scene and the music business.

Thailand's music industry is being forced to dance to a new tune as Asia's financial crisis depresses tape and compact disc sales and forces artists to try to sell their work to fewer recording companies. According to industry analysts, music sales have shrunk nearly 40% in the past 18 months, forcing many of Thailand's smaller labels to go belly-up. The economy offers little to sing about, with the music industry's creative side hurt the most as artists find fewer companies able to produce their music, leading to fewer new sounds on the radio and in record stores (Bangkok Post, 22/10/98:B2).

The Bangkok Post newspaper of 22/10/98 reported that Warner Music Thailand, one of five international labels operating locally, would reduce their risks by producing only the best-selling of their seven local artists in 1999. The company has laid off some of their staff, reducing them from 60 to 45 in just over a year. The company also sells international artists, such as Madonna, Eric Clapton and Green Day; the rate of record

⁶ The whole piece of music is in the attached CD.

sales of music by international artists increased by 107% in 1998 compared to 1997. Nevertheless, global music sales still account for only 15% to 18% of the Thai market.

For local artists, the largest major local company, Grammy Entertainment, which has the biggest share of the market⁷, is still doing well in selling Thai popular music. With overall sales declining, Grammy's steady sales have been accompanied by increased market share because everyone else is selling less. They claim to have close to 70% of the Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) music market. However, this is not a healthy situation, as the assistant vice-president from Grammy's pointed out: 'From a market development point of view, it's not good that all the little companies disappear because that is where new talent springs forth, and new music comes from new people. Around the world it's always the new companies that bring the change in music' (Bangkok Post, 22/10/98:B2).

As for small independent companies, many of them have closed. The founder of an outstanding independent company, Bakery Music, claimed,

'Two years ago Thailand had 100 labels, more than that. But since this economy thing happened they're dying every day. By the end of the year I don't think there will be more than 10 labels left' (Bangkok Post, 22/10/98: B2).

It appears that the music business in Thailand has returned to its starting point, and Western music may return to take a bigger share in the scene.

Western pop is so popular here, that Thailand is the second largest Asian market for music after Japan. Top international artists from the worlds of pop and jazz keep knocking on Bangkok's door (Bangkok Post, Outlook, 21/6/98:1).

As stated above, Warner Music has a tendency to promote global music rather than producing Thai popular music; besides, other foreign record companies such as BMG have stopped their Thai popular music production, which they had tried for a few years (Krung-tep Thu-ra-kit, 9/6/98:5-6 & Phu-jat-kan rai-wan, 7/9/98:22). However, Sony Music, which established a branch in Thailand in 1984, has an agenda to increase its output of Thai popular music to 50% (it was 40% in 1997), and expand its sales in neighbouring countries: Burma, Laos and Vietnam.

As for Western Classical music in Bangkok, the economic crisis has also checked the progress of Western classical music movement; 'the heady days of 1995, when the orchestra (BSO) was giving 2 or 3 performances a month, are long gone. Music lovers

have been waiting for months now for the BSO to confirm the details of its next serious classical orchestral programme' (Bangkok Post, Outlook, 21/6/98:1). To survive commercially, the BSO has to offer programmes of Broadway tunes and movie soundtracks. Although BSO's popular programmes are now devoted to pop and easy-listening tunes, the number of people going to these concerts indicates at least that orchestral music is accepted by the Thai public.

The development of Western classical music in Thailand since the eighties has been supported mainly by private organizations such as banks and music schools, and 'has failed to find a big audience in the kingdom. Some might argue it's because it is not 'Thai' – but many fans say a lack of support is to blame' (Bangkok Post, Outlook, 21/6/98:1). More cooperation of the government has long been awaited. Under the current law, classical music performances are not considered as cultural events but as entertainment – and so revenue from tickets is taxed. Exemption from tax would aid the almost always unprofitable Western classical music business (ibid.).

As for distribution by the media, a restricted period of broadcasting is at least better than none. Western classical music has been broadcast on television since April 1997; now it has a weekly one-hour programme, although this is broadcast late at night (11-12pm). For radio listeners, the only 24-hour classical music radio programme (95 FM) was discontinued in 1997; now there are 2 channels broadcasting Western classical music at night: 107 FM and 101.5 FM (Bangkok Post, Outlook, 21/6/98:1).

7.4.4 Music Careers and Education

In today's highly competitive music industry, it's hardly surprising the record companies, both large and small, are using all kinds of gimmicks to out-sell the productions of their business rivals. Commercialism or 'saleability' is the rule of thumb. One tactic that is apparently paying off is to pick a cute pre-teen, bring in a voice trainer and a professional image-builder, stick the youngster in the studio and after the release of the single or album, use the 'cuteability' factor for the hard sell (The Nation, 25/6/98:C1).

However bad the economics situation, the path to stardom is still attractive, with potentially massive sums to be earned. That is the reason why many young people today want to be involved once in their life in the entertainment business. Several methods of presenting themselves have been used to catch the eyes of scouts, such as frequently walking in popular shopping centres, to get to know

⁷ 'Grammy claimed it sold about 26 million tapes in 1996, and the same again last year. It has said it was on course to match that sales level again this year, selling 13 million tapes in the first six months. CD sales are reported to have held steady at two million a year' (Bangkok Post, 22-10-98:B2).

staff in the field, or going to have a screen-shoot test with a modeling company, which is regarded as the fastest way. Because of the demands of the press and record companies for new stars/singers, it is easier for young people today have opportunities to step into stardom. (Phu-jat-kan rai-wan, 1-9-98:23)

Activities in music, arts or sports are always extra ones which young people are encouraged to acquire and to practise in their leisure time. Such activities are said to help prevent young people from becoming involved in drugs amongst other things. Of all these leisure time activities, music and drama are seen to be profitable activities, which are in the interests of young people. A project 'Youth's Special Ability Support' has been set up by the Hello Entertainment Company, to train young people and offer them to record or film companies. Examples of 'child stars' have occurred. Extra music education has partly combined with the music industry in training the young star or star-to-be.

Beyond the scope of the music industry, music schools in Bangkok are mainly branches of the Japanese Yamaha schools. Recently there are more Western-based music schools, for example Baan Darun, where Orff & Kodaly methods have been applied, and Thai classical music, original and modernized, is also on its curriculum (ibid:C2).

In general, music education is more significant as extra tuition. As a result of the economic crisis, extra tuition is now considered an extravagance. A survey entitled, 'Economic poison affects education: a delicate issue which should not be ignored', by Thai Farmers Research Centre Co., Ltd., for which data were collected during 9-15 September 1998, has shown how parents are changing their children's education to reduce their economic difficulties. The methods used range from decreasing their children's extra-curricular lessons to suspending their children's education and asking them to find a job to support the family. Among extra-curricular activities, music and dance are the category most likely to be cut. Such cuts had already been made by 77.90% of the parents in the survey. The group who usually have extra music tuition comprises pupils from kindergarten to upper secondary school, who are the main customers of music schools at present. This has inevitably affected the music school business, which had flourished in the past.

Although careers in music have traditionally been stigmatized as unprivileged, it was earlier suggested that stardom in the field of popular music is still attractive; in the field of classical music, a development of Western classical music in education has taken place but playing Western classical music as a career is still restricted. Nonetheless, for

Thai classical music, as the main data for this thesis suggests, the position is poorer than for Western classical music:

At least 3 Thai universities offer programmes to educate and train classical musicians, and there are other music departments and private schools offering miscellaneous courses in basic music appreciation and performance. But what can a trained Thai classical music do with their art when it comes to making a living? The semi-professional Bangkok Symphony Orchestra (BSO) offers positions on a freelance basis to some music graduates. Those who fail to land them, can try for a position in one of the government bands in the military sector or the Department of Fine Arts, both of which sometimes admit a few new members. (Bangkok Post, Outlook, 21/6/98:1)

Of course, classical musicians practise their career with affection and appreciation of music, not in the hope of becoming rich. So the development of the field will continue if it is not affected too severely by the economic crisis.

7.5 Summary

The music business in Thailand developed to its peak during the mid-1990s, but suddenly declined after the economic crash (which started from Thailand, spread to the region and is at present a regional crisis). During its peak, the music business scene was developing towards a Western fashion – more independent record companies were playing a part, and payola, which had been a common practice previously, declined. One year after the crash, things seem to have returned to a previous business stage – independent record companies are fading, and payola is once again important for a radio channel to survive in this economic climate. The dying away of independent companies means a decreasing range of Thai popular music on the market. As the power of consumers' spending is less, the risk of producing new Thai popular music, especially by new singers, is greater. This has made one foreign company, Warner Music Thailand, reduce the risk and promote their global music more, for which the market is increasing. Thus the globalization of music in Thailand may also be strengthened.

On the other hand, as a result of the economic crisis, a patriotic campaign has begun. Attempts to turn people's interest towards the national inherited culture has never worked as successfully as when the population shares a similar misfortune. In the field of music, at the same time as global music is more accessible to Thai people through the availability of effective communications, the traditional or classical styles are being dramatically strengthened and encouraged. Nevertheless, as it appears, the two extremes – the inherited national culture and global culture – are not what the majority of people

really want to identify themselves with. In the age of rapid globalization, what is more in demand and accepted practically is a hybrid of the two. Hybridization is seen as the best solution of the polar conflict. Existing Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*) has already combined the clear ‘Thai’ sound with the Western style of arrangement; Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) partly tries to use ‘Thai’ sound; while Thai classical music (*Thai-derm*) turns to modernization.

Turning to the status of music careers and education, the earlier success of the music business has drawn young people’s attention towards careers in music. Younger people are more positive towards such careers, with reference to image and stability, than their predecessors. In general, Thai classical musicians have the least privileged status in terms of their income and respect. However, at present, the patriotic campaign is having a positive impact on Thai classical music.

Unavoidably, the economic turmoil has affected the spending capability of the people. It affects extra tuition, on which certain types of music education particularly depend. The business of music schools is inevitably disturbed, and this in turn affects music teaching as a career. However, music is still in the national curriculum, and moreover the music business has by no means died out. It will continue to inspire youngsters to learn music for pleasure, and in some cases, as a step towards fulfilling the dream of a career in music. More directly, the record company interviewees informed me that the business itself employs music teachers to upgrade the skills of their stars.

CHAPTER 8

Final Conclusion

The main theme of this study of the status of music in Thai society has been the influences of the outside world and the ways in which Thai people have localized them. Throughout history, contacts across the borders have influenced ways of life within Thai society. The development of modern technology, as a result of economic growth, has made cultural contact much easier and has changed the systems of production, distribution and reception of music.

8.1 Effects of Globalization on Music in Thailand: from Past to Present

It is undeniable that Western cultures have affected the behaviour of people in the East. Historically speaking, Western systems have been regarded as modern, and in order to modernize the country, developing countries such as Thailand had a policy of adopting and adapting several Western systems. This still continues today. It can be said that through globalization the powerful countries, especially those in the West, impose their cultures whether original or transcultural, which are made in the West, globally; and to refuse this global imposition seems to be an act of separating oneself from the whole world.

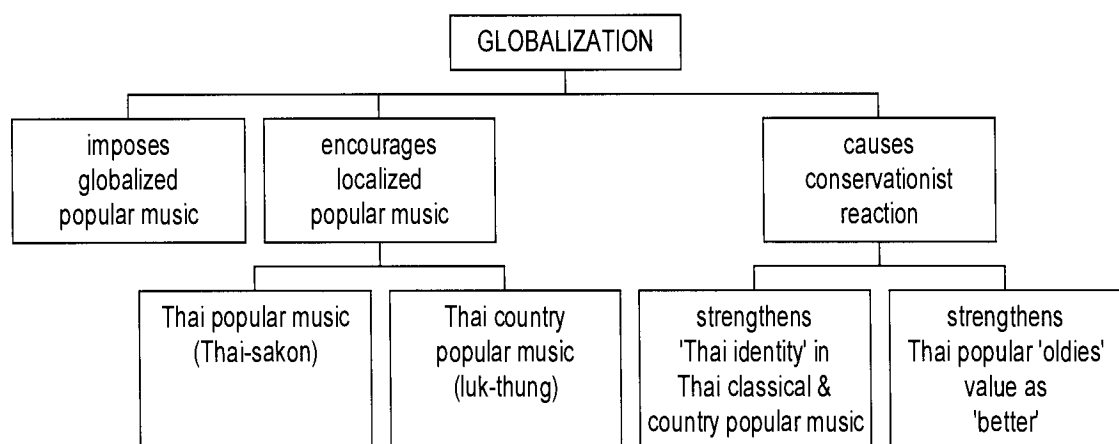
In other words, economic and technological development has affected the production and reception of music in Thailand. Modernization has influenced music making in Thailand since the early contact with the West. In the twentieth century, it has contributed to the modernization of Thai classical music and, more significantly, to the emergence of Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon & luk-thung*). Towards the end of the twentieth century, the spread of Western popular music globally, has transformed the music scene in Bangkok. The Thai popular music business has localized global music styles, and the new form of Thai popular music bears a close similarity to its model, global popular music.

Music is a new industry in Thailand. It has become a big industry since the early 1980s, when several record companies emerged, including the most powerful local major record company, Grammy Entertainment. The development of the music business in

Thailand from past to present is a result of modernization, looking outwards and bringing back knowledge to apply at home.

All the same, Thailand has its own inherited ‘high culture’ of musical forms. It has been conserved and prevented from being spoiled by the new global culture by being attached to traditional beliefs. Thus it has almost cut itself off from the reach of the music industry, which has a close relationship with the media, and they are the biggest distributing agents of music in everyday life today. As everyday music listening is mainly to recorded music, the traditional beliefs attached to Thai classical music put it in a difficult position: music with no listeners is going to die out. When global culture, which the population positively appreciate, has been brought into the society, the national culture is threatened. Since the 1980s, when globalization increased its speed, conservationist campaigns have been launched to resist the ‘invasion’ and appeal for the almost deserted national culture (see Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1: The main effects of globalization on the music scene in Thailand



For those who resist external influences, the internal heritage has become more significant because of attempts to emphasize its traditional existence. As well as traditional musical culture, as Wallis & Malm (1984) have pointed out, the resistance to globalization also strengthens other newer forms of musical cultures which flourished in the middle of this century. In this case, not only Thai classical music (*Thai-derm*), but all forms of so-called classical ‘oldies’ of Thai popular music (*luk-krung*) and Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*) also receive such appreciation. The conservationist does not simply appeal for the national ‘musical heritage’, but is also likely to condemn

the present fashionable popular music, both Western popular music (*sakon*) and Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*), as imposing foreign culture and making people ignore the precious national culture (which also includes the 'oldies' of Thai popular and Thai country popular music).

In mid-1997, Thailand faced economic turmoil, and tourism was considered to be important in helping the country economically. A campaign, 'Amazing Thailand', for the year 1998-1999 was then launched. As a result of the campaign, Thai cultures have been revived in order to display them to tourists and also to strengthen the awareness and responsibility of the population towards their own inherited cultures.

The economic crisis has slowed down the growth of the music industry in Bangkok and has had some effects on the music scene. As modernization has long been accepted in other forms of music, Thai classical music, attached to traditional beliefs, and thus protected from development, is now under scrutiny and a compromise has been made. The music for the national campaign 'Amazing Thailand' is not traditional Thai classical music but its modernized form, Thai neo-classical music. The modernization of Thai classical music had indeed begun more than a decade ago, but it has become more acceptable just recently.

The old needs to be modernized, and the new needs to be in contact with its roots. Since early 1998, during the economic crisis, the phenomenon of patriotism in music has grown stronger. Thai musical identity is not restricted to Thai traditional music; the 'oldies' popular music, which is filled with the essence of the Thai past, is a reflection of Thai identity, whereas modern Thai country popular music, which still retains its Thai-ness, even though in a rural style, has stormed the media in Bangkok. As Bangkok has higher status than the countryside, the phenomenon of 'hits' in Thai country popular music suggests the improved status of this genre. In general, the marketing target of Thai country popular music is the countryside; its expansion and acceptability inside the capital may result in building a new urban target for musicians and the musical scene in Bangkok may be changed as a taste for country popular music will not be seen as shameful.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, globalization continues on its rapid track. Worldwide social policies move in similar ways. Societies with varieties of cultures existing side by side, and the hybridization of local and outside cultures, are also worldwide, and democracy is on its way. As for music, global popular music is the most powerful music consumed all over the world; it also inspires local music making and

continues to formulate transnational musical styles. With or without the economic crisis, there is sure to be a conflict between the reception of global culture and the strengthening of national culture, but the crisis has put more weight on the patriotic side.

8.2 Status and Value of Music

Globalization has two main effects on cultures: the spread of the global cultures and the strengthening of local cultures to fight the ‘invasion’ from outside. Education has been used as a tool to build up national pride. Education in some ways has imposed the feelings of nationalism on pupils through the study of the nation’s history and cultures, although education has also updated knowledge by accepting modernization.

For the compulsory music curriculum at the lower secondary school level, Thai and Western music are side by side, but among types of music chosen for class teaching, Thai music is the priority. Thai classical music has become a symbol, a prestigious part of the identity of the nation. Thai classical music has been conserved and kept alive by the compulsory national school curriculum and especially as an extra-curriculum activity. However, the Thai music curriculum is not restricted to Thai classical music only: Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) and Thai folk music - the root of Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) - are also suggested in the curriculum.

As the stream of globalization of Western popular music was strong at the time, and music making in the society had developed according to the fashionable global musical culture, the musical type that had the dominant role in music lessons in 1997, according to the practice of music teachers, was Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*), not Thai classical music (*Thai-derm*). Moreover, Thai folk music in its original style is little known today, but its modernized form, Thai country popular (*luk-thung*), referred to by a good number of students as ‘*phleng pheun meuang*’ or ‘*phleng pheun ban*’ (both terms refer to folk music), is widespread. It looks as if modernized Thai music is becoming more favoured inside and outside the classroom.

Nevertheless, basically, the popular songs in classroom which are provided in textbooks and which music teachers approve of, are mainly popular ‘oldies’, but new popular music is also brought into classroom. As it appears at the present, classical and old and new popular music are side by side in the classroom – the conflict between what pupils want and what teachers appreciate comes to a compromise.

Music is always seen as an extra subject. To judge from the Thai curriculum, the educational value of music is trivial in Thai society. Looking more carefully, the

educational value of music will exist when a person really studies music for the sake of musical knowledge or to proceed to his/her higher education and a musical career. But music in the school curriculum does not have that aim. Music is a compulsory subject not an important one. Its chief significance in practice, besides providing fundamental musical knowledge, is for cultural conservation (Thai classical music in particular) as suggested by teachers, and its psychological benefits (i.e. for relaxation, reducing aggression, etc) as mostly suggested by students. Therefore, the educational value of music, even though it is not a strong concern, can be linked with other more prevailing values of music. In general, studying music, in the more serious form of extra tuition, reflects a social ideology in the sense that it brings into a family the prestige of a privileged education. As extra music tuition is expensive, the cost of music tuition also determines the economic status of music pupils and there is no equality between each type of music. A Western classical music lesson is the most expensive, reserved for those who can afford it whereas a Thai classical music lesson is much less expensive (the music instruments also cost much less). However, the attachment to Thai classical music as part of the national identity provides pride in acquiring it. This pride and the material value of the music are always in a contrary motion. In their career, Thai classical musicians earn the least, but the pride of conveying the national culture is the compensation; however it is not always seen as a fair deal if they are compared to popular musicians who are more successful materially and are adored by the mass audience.

In recent decades, a good number of part-time non-formal music schools offering both classical and popular types of Thai and Western music have been established, and music courses in higher education are now more available. Nevertheless, the training of classical music pupils is more formal and continues for a longer period than the training of popular music pupils. For classical music, a person needs to be trained formally to become a musician, but for popular music, the training is less formal and popular music tuition tends to follow the trend of fashion. Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*)'s economic value, as shown by its success in the music industry and its great popularity in the capital city, is prevalent. Lately, inspired by singing competitions which have led the winners to contracts with record companies, popular music training courses such as singing are in fashion. Besides hoping or dreaming of a chance to deal with a record company, advanced popular music pupils (rather like classical music trainees, especially in the Western classical music area) can also give basic tuition in music schools as part-time

jobs. The progress of the music schools business in Bangkok ran smoothly until it was hit by the economic turmoil since mid-1997. This has interrupted the progress of the music business, and also extra music education, an important part of music education in Thailand, as parents tend to cut down their extra spending to cope with the financial situation.

As shown above, Thai people see the educational value of music as partly linked with national pride, the recreation which music brings, the ideology of musical practice, the system of apprenticeship and also musical fashion, but in practice the emphasis is on the first three issues. For whatever reasons music is valued, music education is seen as beneficial and, in the society at large, it is finding more supporters both from public and private sections. Nevertheless, inside the national school curriculum itself (which started in 1990), music is now restricted to its place in the combined subject of 'Arts and Life', which the majority of teachers are opposed to. The curriculum reduces the time and makes it impossible for teachers to proceed effectively. Inside the school environment, many teachers find that not enough support is given and appreciation of music as a subject is dim. The old problem still exists, but it exists more in public schools than in private schools.

To take up the idea of music identity, different emphases between the nationalist issue in education and personal engagement in everyday musical culture in society result in the split musical identity of the students. Most students regard Thai classical music as expressing their national identity, but for their personal identity, Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) is the answer. Moreover, national musical identity is also expressed in Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*), although most students are prejudiced against its provincial style. They are aware that their favourite style of Thai popular music (*Thai-sakon*) is unlikely to be a national music symbol, but this music links them with the more desirable modern global culture.

The effect of globalization has been to change the attitude of Thai people towards the status of music as a career and as part of education. Musicians used to be regarded as having a low rank and serving the ruling class. But now the phenomenon of global popular music has shown how much admiration and economic status a musician can gain, and of course this points towards popular music in particular. However, this represents an economic opportunity to gain wealth and status over and above those outside the industry. In education, more graduate and post-graduate music courses are now available, revealing the acceptance of music in higher education. Music in school

may be an unimportant subject, but extra music education through extra-curricular activities and tuition in schools or outside schools has helped the progress of music education to a higher level, as music is one of the most popular subjects for extra tuition. This can be linked with the identification of extra music tuition or music practice as a desirable hobby and a traditional practice of the upper class.

The globalization of popular music has greatly affected music movements in Thailand, either through the reception and celebration of global music, the adoption of its style by local music, or the resistance to it by strengthening local traditional music. The stronger the imposition is the stronger the adoption and resistance are, and both draw attention to music as a career, and are positive rather than negative. The status of a career in music is improving, and the attitude towards it is changing. The stigma of the career as unprivileged and unstable, such as that in which the older generation still believes, is weaker in the younger generation. At present, there is still a contradiction between the older generation's nostalgia for past glory and the new generation's dream of a glorious future.

8.3 Findings and Implications

The findings of this thesis have confirmed the effects of globalization on local forms of music as indicated by Wallis & Malm (1984). The thesis also reveals related conflicts. At the macro level, the will of part of the nation to modernize itself meets the resistance of another part of the nation which fears losing its traditional identity. Similarly, at the micro level of personal identity, a person wants to identify him/herself as belonging to the modern world by celebrating global culture, and at the same time he/she also belongs to a nation with its distinctive identity. Globalization has diluted both the concentration of 'pure' traditional culture and the extreme celebration of global culture by stimulating a compromise. In general, traditional culture, in this case Thai classical music, is not generally listened to in everyday life; the fear of its gradual disappearance has forced it to modernize itself to capture the attention of today's audiences. At the same time, since the economic crisis those who produce globally influenced Thai popular music have begun to feel responsible for the survival of their traditional music culture, and have responded by selecting elements of traditional music include in their music making.

The conflict also occurs over the status of musician, which has changed through time. To be a musician was traditionally a humble service career, but in line with the global trend, the music industry has made musicians, especially singers, celebrities and

to be a musician a dream career with potential massive earnings. The stigma attached to the career is fading. Nevertheless, when stability is taken into account, the practice of music is still encouraged as a hobby rather than a serious career.

Music education in Thailand has developed especially in extra-curricular activities and extra tuition, which may lead to higher education where progress is in process. But compulsory music education in school is severely criticized by music teachers, not only for its contents but principally because the change in the new curriculum has devalued the subject in terms of the time allowed for teaching and the educational value of the subject. In the short term, it can be said that music education in Thailand is developing outside the national school curriculum.

These findings may predict that in the future music scene in Thailand, the progress of the music business in line with global trends may slow down as a result of the economic crisis. The mixture of global and traditional musical cultures is continuing as a compromise which expresses both being a part of the world and also belonging to a particular locality with a strong culture. This may be seen as a form of resistance. Such resistance may be stronger at some times and will always occur unevenly according to external pressures which cause the population to feel more or less responsible for retaining their national identity. As for music education, according to music teachers, it is desirable for the future of music education of all Thai children, especially those who cannot afford extra music tuition, that there should be another revision of the national curriculum, and just as important, music appreciation and support for music study needs to be strengthened. These appeals are addressed directly to the government whose policy and budget can improve the situation of Thai music education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Research Questionnaires

Questionnaire for undergraduate students

Please answer all questions.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS EACH TYPE OF MUSIC -----

1. Define these terms according to your understanding:

1.1 *Phleng Thai-derm* (e g, *Phaya-sok*, *Khamen-saiyok*, etc)

1.2 *Phleng Thai-sakon* (e g, those of *Mai Charernpura*, *Bo Sunita*, etc)

1.3 *Phleng luk-thung*

1.4 *Phleng sakon* (e g, those of Michael Jackson, Madonna, etc)

1.5 *Phleng classic* (e g, those from Operas, symphonies, etc)

2. During the past week, what type of music had you been listening to most often?

___ 2.1 *phleng Thai-derm*

___ 2.2 *phleng Thai-sakon*

___ 2.3 *phleng luk-thung*

___ 2.4 *phleng sakon*

___ 2.5 *phleng classic*

___ 2.6 others (please indicate) _____

3. Answer these questions according to your opinion:

3.1 Do you like listening to *phleng Thai-derm*? ___ Yes. ___ No. Why?

***Translation:** *phleng* = song/music, *Thai-derm* = Thai classical, *Thai-sakon* = Thai popular, *luk-thung* = Thai country popular, *sakon* = Western popular, *classic* = Western classical.

3.2 Do you like listening to *phleng Thai-sakon*? ___ Yes. ___ No. Why?

3.3 Do you like listening to *phleng luk-thung*? ___ Yes. ___ No. Why?

3.4 Do you like listening to *phleng sakon*? ___ Yes. ___ No. Why?

3.5 Do you like listening to *phleng classic*? ___ Yes. ___ No. Why?

4. Which type of music can best represent Thai culture for foreigners?

___ 4.1 Thai-derm

___ 4.2 Thai-sakon

___ 4.3 luk-thung

Why?

EXPERIENCE OF STUDYING MUSIC IN SECONDARY LEVEL-----

5. According to your experience of studying music in secondary level, what did you learn? Please indicate type of music in each category.

5.1 Did you learn singing? ___ Yes. ___ No.

___ *phleng Thai-derm*

___ *phleng Thai-sakon*

___ *phleng luk-thung*

___ *phleng sakon*

___ *phleng classic*

___ others (please indicate) _____

5.2 Did you learn playing instruments? ___ Yes. ___ No.

___ Thai instruments

___ Western instruments

___ others (please indicate) _____

***Translation:** *phleng* = song/music, *Thai-derm* = Thai classical, *Thai-sakon* = Thai popular, *luk-thung* = Thai country popular, *sakon* = Western popular, *classic* = Western classical.

5.3 Did you learn music listening? ___ Yes. ___ No.

___ *phleng Thai-derm*

___ *phleng Thai-sakon*

___ *phleng luk-thung*

___ *phleng sakon*

___ *phleng classic*

___ others (please indicate) _____

5.4 Did you learn notation? ___ Yes. ___ No.

___ Thai music notation

___ Western music notation

___ others (please indicate) _____

5.5 Did you learn music theory? ___ Yes. ___ No.

___ Thai music theory

___ Western music theory

___ others (please indicate) _____

5.6 Did you learn composing? ___ Yes. ___ No.

___ in *phleng Thai-derm* style

___ in *phleng Thai-sakon* style

___ in *phleng luk-thung* style

___ in *phleng sakon* style

___ in *phleng classic* style

___ others (please indicate) _____

5.7 Apart from all above categories, what else did you learn? Please indicate:

6. What is your opinion towards school music subject according to your experience?

EXTRA-CURRICULAR MUSIC ACTIVITIES & EXTRA MUSIC TUITION-----

7. Did your secondary school have any extra-curricular music activities (e g, music ensemble, music society, etc)

___ 7.1 Yes. (Please indicate) _____

___ 7.2 No. Skip to question 9.

***Translation:** *phleng* = song/music, *Thai-derm* = Thai classical, *Thai-sakon* = Thai popular, *luk-thung* = Thai country popular, *sakon* = Western popular, *classic* = Western classical.

8. Did you participate in the school music activity? ___ Yes. ___ No. If “Yes”, please indicate type of music you were engaged with:

- ___ 8.1 *phleng Thai-derm*
- ___ 8.2 *phleng Thai-sakon*
- ___ 8.3 *phleng luk-thung*
- ___ 8.4 *phleng sakon*
- ___ 8.5 *phleng classic*
- ___ 8.6 others (please indicate) _____

9. Have you had any extra music tuition?

- ___ 9.1 Yes, I have been studying _____ for ___ years and ___ months.
- ___ 9.2 Yes, I used to study _____ for ___ years and ___ months.
- ___ 9.3 No, I have never had any extra music tuition. Skip to question 14.

10. From where do/did you have your extra music lessons?

- ___ 10.1 music school
- ___ 10.2 private teacher
- ___ 10.3 others (please indicate) _____

11. What do/did you study in your extra music lessons?

- ___ 11.1 singing
- ___ 11.2 playing an instrument
- ___ 11.3 music listening
- ___ 11.4 music notation
- ___ 11.5 music theory
- ___ 11.6 composing
- ___ 11.7 others (please indicate)

12. What is the reason of your requiring of extra music lessons?

***Translation:** *phleng* = song/music, *Thai-derm* = Thai classical, *Thai-sakon* = Thai popular, *luk-thung* = Thai country popular, *sakon* = Western popular, *classic* = Western classical.

13. If you have terminated your extra music lessons, what is the reason?

14. Regardless of whether you have had extra music lessons, what is your opinion towards extra music studying?

MUSIC STUDY IN HIGHER EDUCATION-----

15. What do you think about studying music as a major subject in university level?

ATTITUDES TOWARDS MUSIC CAREER-----

16. What is your attitude towards a career of “musician”?

17. Suppose you have musical competence (e.g., singing, or playing instruments), do you think that your parents would support you to be a musician? Please give the reason.

Please give your personal detail

Age ___ Sex __ male __ female

Place of birth ___ Bangkok

___ other (please indicate) _____

You have been living in Bangkok for ___ years and ___ months.

You finished lower secondary school from ___ Bangkok ___ other (indicate) _____

You finished upper secondary school from ___ Bangkok ___ other (indicate) _____

What is your favourite subject in secondary school? _____

Name your present university _____ Year _____

Your major subject is _____

Do you have any music ability?

___ Yes. Please indicate _____

___ No.

Do you participate in any music activities in your university?

___ Yes. ___ No.

Do you have any hobby relevant to music? (e g, listening, singing, performing, going to concert, reading music magazines, etc)

___ No.

___ Yes. Please indicate _____

What is your favourite hobby? _____

What hobby do you do most often? _____

Date of completing the questionnaire ____ / ____ / ____

Questionnaire for lower-secondary level music teachers

Date of completing the questionnaire ____/____/____

Name of school _____

Type of school ___public ___private ___university's demonstration

Range of class level from _____ to _____

How many music teachers are there in your school?

Full-time teachers _____ and part-time teachers _____

Inclusively, there are _____ Thai classical music teachers and
_____ Western music teachers.

If there are other types of music teachers, please indicate and give the number:

Questionnaire respondents' personal detail

Age ___up to 29 ___30-39 ___40-49 ___50-59 ___60 and over

Sex ___male ___female

Type of your specialized music _____

You have been teaching music for _____ years and _____ months.

Do you have an academic music qualification? ___Yes. ___No.

Name your academic qualification _____

In your student days, did you have extra music tuition? ___Yes. ___No.

What instruments can you play? _____

MUSIC IN CLASSROOM-----

1. What do you teach in class? Please put numbers in order of their frequent use, starting from no.1 for the most frequent category and leave it empty if it does not include in your class at all.

1.1 Do you teach singing? ___ Yes. ___ No.

- ___ *phleng Thai-derm*
 ___ *phleng Thai-sakon*
 ___ *phleng luk-thung*
 ___ *phleng sakon*
 ___ *phleng classic*
 ___ others (please indicate) _____

1.2 Do you teach instrumental skills? ___ Yes. ___ No.

- ___ Thai instruments
 ___ Western instruments
 ___ others (please indicate) _____

1.3 Do you teach music listening? ___ Yes. ___ No.

- ___ *phleng Thai-derm*
 ___ *phleng Thai-sakon*
 ___ *phleng luk-thung*
 ___ *phleng sakon*
 ___ *phleng classic*
 ___ others (please indicate) _____

1.4 Do you teach music notation? ___ Yes. ___ No.

- ___ Thai music notation
 ___ Western music notation
 ___ others (please indicate) _____

1.5 Do you teach music theory? ___ Yes. ___ No.

- ___ Thai music theory
 ___ Western music theory
 ___ others (please indicate) _____

1.6 Do you teach composing? ___ Yes. ___ No.

- ___ in *phleng Thai-derm* style
 ___ in *phleng Thai-sakon* style
 ___ in *phleng luk-thung* style
 ___ in *phleng sakon* style
 ___ in *phleng classic* style
 ___ others (please indicate) _____

***Translation:** *phleng* = song/music, *Thai-derm* = Thai classical, *Thai-sakon* = Thai popular, *luk-thung* = Thai country popular, *sakon* = Western popular, *classic* = Western classical.

1.7 Apart from above categories, what else do you teach? Please indicate:

2. What kind of music do you think should form the basis of music education in school?
If you choose more than one, please put the number in order of importance.

- ___ 2.1 *pheng Thai-derm*
 ___ 2.2 *phleng Thai-sakon*
 ___ 2.3 *phleng luk-thung*
 ___ 2.4 *phleng sakon*
 ___ 2.5 *phleng classic*

Please give the reason:

3. What is the MOST important aim(s) of your teaching?

- ___ 3.1 to build up fundamental instrumental skills.
 ___ 3.2 to provide general musical knowledge.
 ___ 3.3 to conserve the cultural heritage.
 ___ 3.4 to suggest a worthwhile way to spend leisure time.
 ___ 3.5 to prepare pupils for higher levels of music study.
 ___ 3.6 to train pupils for extra-curricular activity in school.
 ___ 3.7 to allow pupils to relax from other serious subjects.
 ___ 3.8 to direct music appreciation in pupils.
 ___ 3.9 to seek and bring out musical talent in pupils.
 ___ 3.10 others (please indicate):

***Translation:** *phleng* = song/music, *Thai-derm* = Thai classical, *Thai-sakon* = Thai popular,
luk-thung = Thai country popular, *sakon* = Western popular, *classic* = Western classical.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR MUSIC ACTIVITIES AND EXTRA MUSIC TUITION-----

4. What extra-curricular music activities are there in your school?

- ___ 4.1 Thai classical music society
 ___ 4.2 Western classical music society
 ___ 4.3 Thai classical music ensemble (e g, string, *mahori*, etc)
 ___ 4.4 Western classical music ensemble (e g, orchestra, etc)
 ___ 4.5 Western military band
 ___ 4.6 chorus/choir
 ___ 4.7 others (please indicate):

Please illustrate the main purpose of having music activities in your school?

5. Approximately, how many lower secondary level pupils are there in your schools?
 _____ How many estimated percentage of those who have extra
 music tuition (inside and outside your school inclusive)?

- 5.1 _____ % of those who study Thai classical music
 5.2 _____ % of those who study Western classical music
 5.3 _____ % of those who study popular music
 5.4 others (please indicate and show an estimated percentage):

6. What is your opinion of why your pupils have extra music tuition?

- ___ 6.1 music study in classroom is not adequate for the pupil's need.
 ___ 6.2 time for music study in classroom is limited, not enough for those who are
 enthusiastic.
 ___ 6.3 music study in classroom is difficult, pupils will benefit from extra
 lessons.
 ___ 6.4 there are a support for extra music study and activities (e g. as a school
 policy).
 ___ 6.5 it is an ideology in that possession of music practice as a hobby is
 prestigious.
 ___ 6.6 others (please indicate):

STATUS OF MUSIC EDUCATION-----

7. Do you agree that “Music today gains more educational interest”?
Please give your opinion:

12. What is your opinion towards the compulsory music curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education?

13. What is your opinion about the attitudes of your pupils towards the music subject?

MUSIC IN THE WIDER SOCIETY-----

14. Please illustrate your main opinions towards the present situation of music in society (outside school).

15. What are your opinions towards the status of musicians today? (If you wish to point to a certain type of music, please indicate the type of music).

16. Please give any other relevant comments.

Semi-structured interview for record company staffs

Date _____/_____/_____

Interviewee's detail:

Sex ___ male ___ female

Work position _____

Period of working _____ years and _____ months

Company's detail:

Name of company _____

Type of company: ___ big ___ independent ___ foreign branch

Is there a company contract with foreign company?

___ Yes, with _____

___ No.

Approximate number of musicians in the company _____

Approximate number of works produced per year _____

Types of music the company produces _____

Main type of music the company produces _____

If the company distribute Western popular and/or classical music, what are they?

___ product from abroad: ___ imported ___ copyright bought and produced locally

___ product by Thai musicians

Does the company sell the recordings abroad?

___ Yes. Name the countries _____

___ No.

****The following interview questions are tape-recorded****

1. What is your opinions towards the following types of music?
 - 1.1 *Phleng Thai-derm* (Thai traditional music)
 - 1.2 *Pheng Thai-sakon* (Thai popular music)
 - 1.3 *Phleng luk-thung* (Thai country popular music)
 - 1.4 *Phleng sakon* (Western popular music)
 - 1.5 *Phleng classic* (Western classical music)
2. How much does your company follow the movements of Western popular music?
Does Western popular music influence on your company's production?
3. For Thai popular music, does it has to compete with Western popular music? How?
4. Please give your opinions towards the following statements:
 - 4.1 *Phleng Thai-derm* (Thai classical music) does not gain much attention from public media and record companies, so it is in difficult situation.
 - 4.2 *Phleng luk-thung* (Thai country popular music) is a good example of the music that expresses Thai identities but it is less accepted in Bangkok because people still regarded it as having an inferior status.
 - 4.3 It is not important to retain some Thai identities in *phleng Thai-sakon* (Thai popular music) since that is already done in *phleng Thai-derm* (Thai classical music) and *phleng luk-thung* (Thai country popular music). *Phleng Thai-sakon* (Thai popular music) should progress towards the international foot-steps.
 - 4.4 Consumers would accept everything your produce if your promotion is effective.
5. What is your opinion towards the status of musicians today?
6. How do musicians in your company develop their musical ability?
7. What is the qualities should a successful musician possesses?
8. What is your opinion towards the present music business in Thailand?
9. If you have any other opinions to suggest, please illustrate.

APPENDIX II: Pilot Study

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Pilot study in February 1997

As the research design included questionnaires as well as interviews, a pilot to test the questionnaires was taken during February 1997. There were two separate questionnaires: one was addressed to music secondary school teachers, and was sent by post; the other was addressed to university students, and was collected personally. All questionnaires were written in Thai. To avoid the cost of traveling back to Bangkok, all data collection was made by assistants (family members) in Thailand while I was in London. All questionnaires were translated into Thai and were sent by post for printing and photocopying in Bangkok. My instructions for data collection were sent with the questionnaires.

Problems of preparation of questionnaires:

1) Teacher questionnaires

I would like to note here that because of the defective communication between the researcher and assistants (an assistant who sent the questionnaires did not read my instruction), the questionnaires for teachers, which were expected to be distributed in Bangkok alone, were sent to many parts in the country and not only one school each (as per the previous plan). Twenty-one questionnaires were returned. Among these 21 questionnaires,

- 2 schools answered more than one questionnaire, one school in Bangkok sent 5 replies and another school in the province answered twice;
- two questionnaires were completed by primary teachers (this will not be taken into account);
- six were incomplete due to mistakes in photocopying procedures in which one page (questions 1.7-4) was missing. Then only 13 questionnaires were in a complete form: 6 were from 2 schools in Bangkok, and 7 were from different schools outside Bangkok.

The present analysis will be based on 19 questionnaires from 14 schools, apart from questions 1.7-4, which will be analyzed from 13 questionnaires. This set of questionnaires, first aimed at schools in Bangkok, now will represent the practice of a part of music education in different areas of Thailand.

2) Student questionnaires

This part took place in Bangkok to gather an idea of young people's attitudes and opinions towards different kinds of music. Ten questionnaires were used in this pilot. One problem was that 2 sub-questions were missing from question number 3 due to a printing mistake. These 2 sub-questions address to the preferences towards Western music (both classical and popular).

Analysis of questionnaires

The main aim of this pilot was to test the questionnaires for possible communication and administration problems in the use of language and to gain some prior knowledge of the area. Moreover, the answers might suggest some information which may be used to build up other relevant questions.

1) Questionnaire structure:

1.1 Teacher questionnaire:

The use of language in some questions needs to be refined. The main problem is that many Thai musical terms have no consensual absolute meaning. In the questionnaire there are some confusing words such as *phleng* which may mean song or music in general and *dontri* which means music of all kinds, but is commonly associated with instrumental music. Another is *sakon*, which literally means international or universal. When the phrase "*phleng sakon*" (which I use to refer to Western popular music, whereas *Thai-sakon* refers to Thai popular music) is used, for many people, it can refer to both Thai or Western popular music as some respondents use this word to refer to *Thai sakon*. Other phrases, such as "Western classical music", also sometimes cause confusion. Definitions may therefore need to be put before the list of questions to prevent such confusion. Apart from this, there were some suggestions that there are too many open questions and that choices of answer should be given. That was according to the pilot aim: using open questions at first in order to generate a choice of answers for the revised version. The improved questionnaire will provide more choices (although, for several questions, open questions are still more appropriate). This will help to deal with over 100 schools in the main data collection which would be very difficult to analyze if the answers come from very broad questions; moreover, a teacher will be more willing to participate if the questionnaire does not consume much time.

1.2 Student questionnaire:

Apart from adding the missing two sub-questions in question 3, there are two more points to be improved here. Question 16 is ambiguous to the respondents (see later in student response analysis). This needs to be stated in a more specific way. The order of some questions needs to be rearranged to give the content a more logical flow. Question 14 should precede question 17, and question 15 should be put before question 6.

2) Content analysis

2.1 Teacher response:

Because some questionnaires are incomplete, questions 1.7-4 will be analyzed from 13 music teachers from 9 schools, while the analysis of the rest of questionnaires will be drawn from 19 teachers from 15 schools. The first part of the questionnaire seeks to find out what is taught in school music lessons. Singing, instrumental playing, listening, theory and notation are common in music class but composition is less taught.

Comparing each type of music taught in singing, listening and composition, as figure 1 shows, Thai popular music (*Thai sakon*) dominates, followed by Thai classical (*Thai-derm*), then Western popular (*sakon*). Western classical music is used almost as little as Thai country popular (*luk-thung*) while Thai folk (*pheun-ban*) music plays the least part.

Figure 1: Different kinds of music teaching

no. of teachers

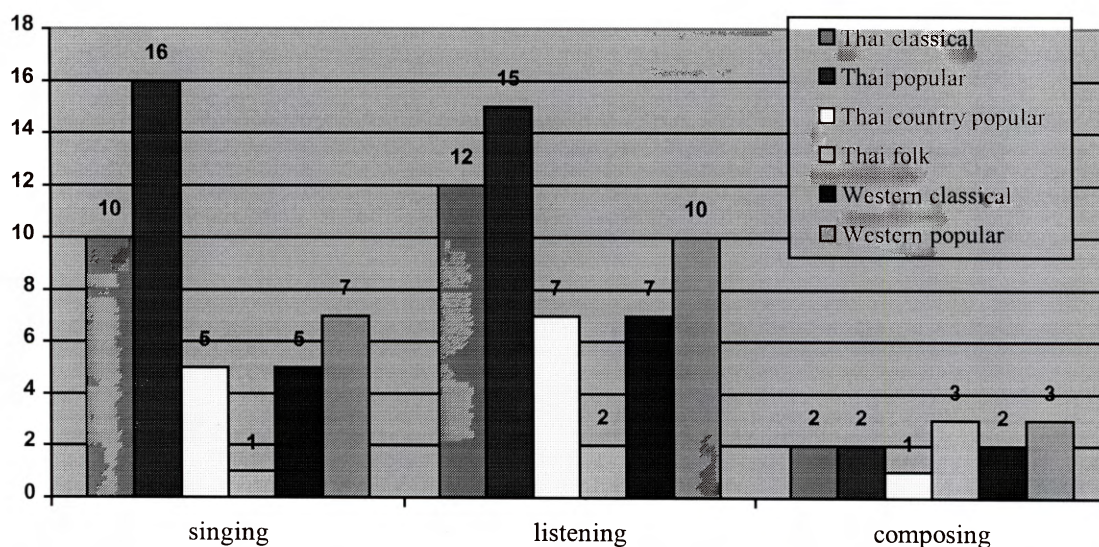
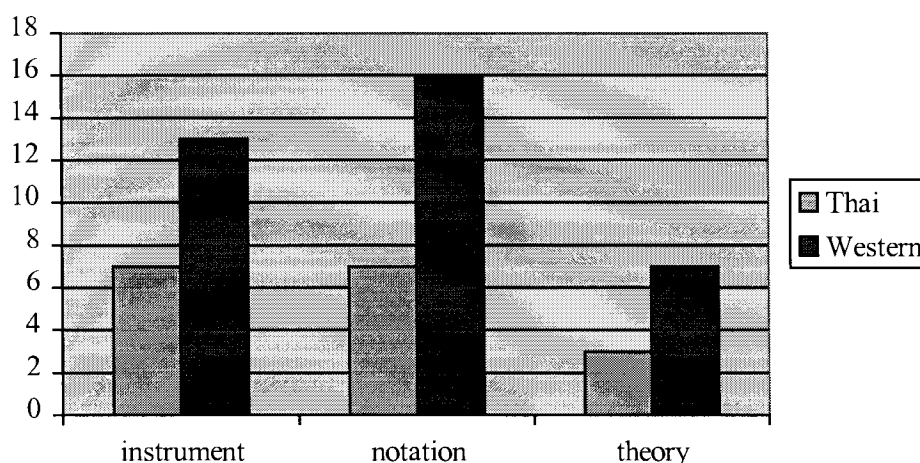


Figure 2 below shows the areas of instrument playing, notation and theory being taught in classrooms. In this figure, Western music includes classical and popular, and accordingly, Thai music includes classical, popular, country popular and folk. The difference in quantity of Thai and Western music taught in these areas is obvious: Western music is roughly twice as prominent than Thai music.

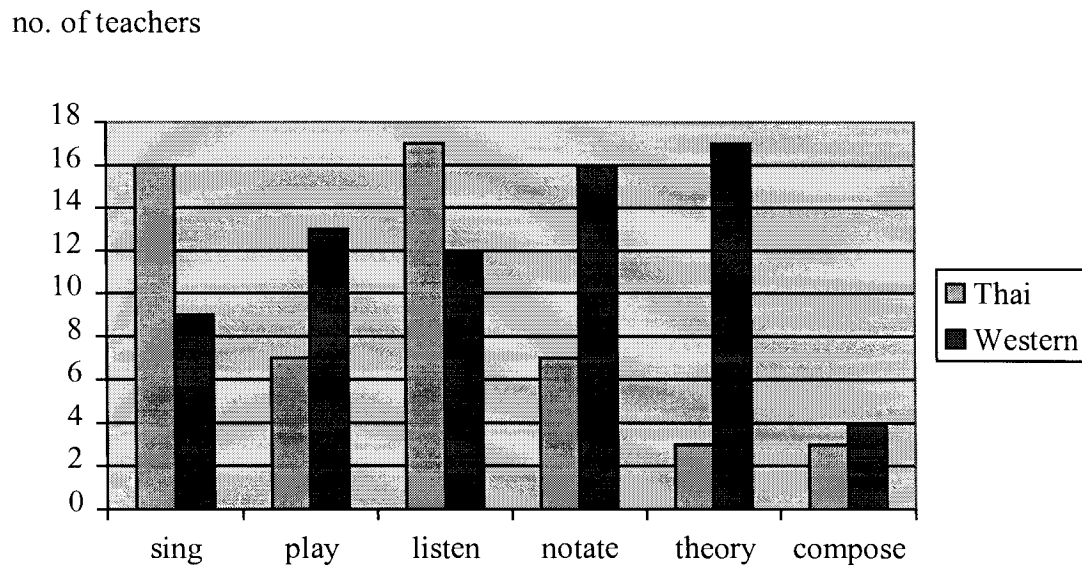
Figure 2: Number of teachers who teach instrument playing, notation and theory

no. of teachers



As figure 3 shows, Western instrumental playing, Western theory and notation which can be applied to Western classical music and popular music (both Thai and Western) are more common than their Thai equivalents, whereas singing and listening to Thai music is more common than singing and listening to Western music. Besides all types of music indicated in the questionnaire, there is another kind of music, folk music, which is not in the given answer choices. The teaching of folk music is specified in the music curriculum, which includes the introduction of folk music of the region to which the school belongs.

Figure 3: Number of teachers who teach in each area of music



Eleven teachers answered the question regarding the kind of music seen as the most appropriate basis of music education in school. Six teachers preferred “Thai classical music” for reasons of cultural conservation, the relative simplicity of the music, and economy, in that Thai instruments are cheap and the cost of maintenance is low. Only three teachers preferred “Western classical music”; the reason given is that Western notation and theory have a wider use. Only one teacher selected Western popular music (*sakon*) with which he tried to match the youth’s preference: ‘Teenagers need to be attracted; *sakon* is the kind of music they choose to listen to and it has the widest popularity.’ Lastly, the remaining teacher chose Thai country popular music (*luk-thung*) because of its uncomplicated musical style and its expression of Thai-ness. Nevertheless, if referring to the number of Thai and Western music teachers, from 10 schools which indicate that they have specialist music teachers, there are only 13 teachers specialized in Thai music whereas there are up to 27 teachers who specialize in Western music. Accordingly, there are far more students who practise Western music in school music activities (about 1205 students in 14 schools) than those who practise Thai classical music (about 584 students). This number can, perhaps, depict the preference of Western music practice in schools.

In class teaching, the general aims are mainly introducing basic musical skills and other basic musical knowledge; the other aim is to promote music as a form of recreation: as suggested by one teacher, ‘(music learning) gives the youth a worthwhile way to spend

their leisure time, rather than spending it in a negative way, and it gives them a break from the other subjects they have faced throughout the day; moreover, they will acquire an extra ability besides academic knowledge.’ Another aim exclusively for Thai music (classical and country popular) is to conserve cultural identity.

Regarding extra-curricular musical activities, all nine schools reported at least one. The most common musical activity is the military band (or in Thai “*yothawathit*”) which 8 schools provide. Others are singing groups (3 schools), symphonic bands (2 schools), stringed popular groups (1 school), and societies of Thai classical music (5 schools) and Western classical music (3 schools).

For questions 6 and 7, asking how many lower secondary students in the school and how many of them practise in the school music activities, the answers cast doubt on the estimation, which may be very rough. Indeed, the request for an exact number may have caused an unwillingness of teachers to find out. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that 5 schools reported practice levels of no more than 10%.

Table 1: Percentages of students who practise music in school activities.

| Percentages of students | 1-10% | 11-20% | 21-30% | 31-40% | 100% |
|-------------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| Number of schools | 5 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1* |

number of total schools: 15

number of schools which give this information: 13

*Note that this school is exceptional in that all students are required to play an instrument.

Let us now move to the opinions towards music in wider society at the present time (February 1997). When talking about music in society, most teachers consider Thai popular songs to play the main role in public life. In the opinion of music teachers, however, the quality of this music is dubious. Technological development provides an alternative way of making music, which is seen by some teachers as detrimental to musical quality, as it gives opportunities to many musicians, especially singers, who have not acquired what they regard as adequate musical ability. One teacher says: ‘Music at present is in various styles. Although the computer plays a part in making music, music played on musical instruments produces a better musical emotion. The way of music making at the present lacks delicacy: it has no adequate musical mood. Some aspects of development progress at a high level but some are still static.’ Further, popular musicians

and singers are seen as having considerable influence on teenagers, not only in musical terms but also in behaviour, fashion, and other images. However, on a more positive role, it draws people's interest towards the career of the musician, and to the fame and money the career brings.

Several teachers are worried about Thai classical music, as seven mention, in that it is static, and, in the wider society, is lacking in media coverage. Moreover, most music schools provide only Western music courses, and, most important of all, from any reasons, Thai classical music is not of interest to young people. There are very few people who really appreciate it. In general, speaking about music in society, two main kinds of music are of concern and teachers tend to speak of popular music (especially the Thai variety) as opposed to Thai classical music.

Discussing the status of musicians nowadays, only four teachers out of nineteen have a positive attitude. They mention that the ability of musicians today is higher than that in the past; the career of musician now is more acceptable in society and musicians today can benefit from technological advantages. The rest of the teachers take different or contrasting perspectives, however. Two teachers, who have more interest in Thai classical music, propose that society does not regard "musicians" as important people. Many teachers regard Thai popular music as economically rather than musically motivated. One teacher points out: 'Many musicians at present work for profit, without concerning the delicacy of music as they should; this encourages teenagers and students to follow their path.' Musicians nowadays are regarded as possessing inadequate musical ability and knowledge, lacking in Thai identity, and dealing in drugs. All the above controversial attitudes, generally speaking, show that the status of musicians has not much been increased, according to most teachers, to a satisfactory level. Certainly, from the teachers' responses, status of musicians is largely dependent on the quality of music they possess and also includes an appropriate way of behaviour. The attitude of young people towards the career is different (see later in the student response section) in that they are looking from a different angle.

Let us now move to the area of music as an educational subject. The collected opinions from music teachers shows that the attention towards music as educational subject does not receive equal evaluation in different levels of music study or in different institutions. In the national school curriculum, there are complaints about the lack of funding from the government to support the cost of equipment. Moreover, there are a number of teachers who wish the music curriculum to be improved; two teachers claim

that the present music curriculum decreases the time of music studying by combining arts and music, which used to be separate subjects. The more enthusiastic music study occurs in extra-curricular activities in those schools which can afford to offer them and also in part-time music schools (which are available to students whose parents are willing to support the expensive cost of tuition). One teacher points out that the formal music education gains more interest only at the higher educational level, where the availability of music courses is now increasing. In the wider society, music study is now drawing more interest than before. This is partly due to the influence of stardom (this is stimulated by popular music in particular), as one teacher argues: 'Teenage musicians have a great influence on teaching and studying music.' (However, he has the opinion that their music is substandard) Other evidence of the increasing appreciation people give to music is provided by the establishment of music educational programmes on television, music competitions, the establishment of military bands in many schools, and the greater availability of books on music subjects.

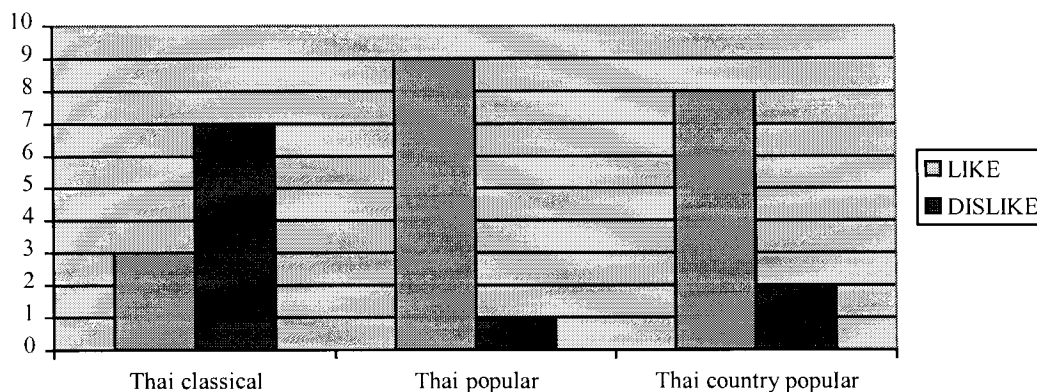
As we have seen, music study is enthusiastic outside the school music curriculum. Inside the school, the environment of a school is an important factor to stimulate music interest in students: students in a school that appreciates and supports musical practice tend to show more interest in music. However, for most students, according to the opinions of music teachers, music as a subject of study is seen as an unimportant subject or a subject for fun. This is not surprising, as it is reported by two teachers, that as a part of their aims of providing music lessons, it is important to create some fun and release students' tension. But as a result, students enjoy music lessons and may regard music as solely providing pleasure, and refuse to see it as worthy of serious study. This can be seen in the fact that students do not pay much attention to music practice, especially Thai classical music. One teacher points out that many children study music (as extra tuition) because their parents force them. Seven teachers suggest that a solution could be found through the rearrangement of the music curriculum, the improvement of music teachers' qualifications, and through the financial support of the government.

2.2 Student response:

The following analysis starts with the attitudes towards and preferences for each type of music and musical experience in compulsory music education in lower secondary school. Because some relevant questions regarding Western classical and popular music preferences were missing, all I can do here to demonstrate the preferences regarding Thai

music: classical, popular and country popular. To begin with, I would like to compare how many people like and dislike each kind of Thai music.

Figure 4: Comparison of preferences of each kind of Thai music



As figure 4 shows, Thai popular and Thai country popular music (*Thai sakon* and *luk-thung*) are favoured among these young people. Thai popular (*Thai sakon*) music is the kind of music most of these respondents like (9 out of 10) while Thai traditional music (*Thai-derm*) is acceptable to only 3 respondents. They regard Thai popular music as an important part of their youth culture. However, they were less explicit about why they liked country popular music, as the following comments illustrate: ‘I don’t understand it’; ‘no comment’; and ‘I like some of them’. The negative responses to country popular music (*luk-thung*) seemed to concern its “inferior” status, whereas those given to Thai classical music centred on the fact that it is old and lacks excitement. It is interesting that national pride can cause some people to be fond of their own music, whether traditional or popular. The following sections discuss these issues in further detail.

Phleng Thai-derm (Thai classical music)

Table 2: How do young people define Thai classical music?

| What do they say? | How many? |
|--|-----------|
| use of Thai musical instruments | 1 |
| no electric musical instruments involved | 1 |
| simple melodies and rhythms | 3 |
| slow music | 1 |
| relaxing listening | 3 |
| not beautiful | 1 |
| difficult to sing | 1 |
| sung by old people | 1 |
| reminiscent of the past | 2 |
| ancient music | 3 |
| deserves conservation | 1 |
| classical music | 1 |

*Note: there were many respondents who give more than one category.

Table 3: How do people like/dislike Thai classical (Thai-derm) music?

| How many of them like/dislike? | What did they say? |
|--------------------------------|---|
| LIKE: 3 | I love the country. I like the melody and texts. It is beautiful. |
| DISLIKE: 7 | It is difficult to find. It is slow and causes sleepiness. It is boring. I seldom listen to it. I don't understand it; it makes me sleepy. It is old: not compatible with teenagers It is not a music for teenagers |

The questionnaire revealed a range of attitudes towards Thai classical music. In general, it is respected and appreciated as national cultural heritage, so there is a tendency for the respondents to react positively towards this type of music in theory. However, as seen in table 3, in personal practice, only three respondents favour listening to this type of music; on the contrary, seven of them find Thai classical music tedious, out of date, and incompatible with youth culture. It should be borne in mind, however, that this music is not frequently heard in everyday life. This distance may contribute to its unpopularity (seven respondents are not keen to listen to Thai classical music). The conflict between attitude and practice is also found in the same person, for example, one respondent states: *'Thai classical music is beautiful and nostalgic'*; but when asked whether she likes to listen to it, she replies: *'No. It causes sleepiness when listening and I don't understand it.'*

Regarding which type of music should be regarded as a representation of the national music to foreigners, it is surprising that only half of the respondents regard Thai classical music as the most suitable. The reason for this is that Thai classical music is played on Thai instruments, and Thai language is used for vocal music. More general, it is unarguably defined as a Thai art.

In the respondents' experience of Thai classical music in secondary school, singing as well as listening or studying notation were reported by only 2 students out of ten. Theory and composition were studied by only one in ten. Instrumental practice was more general in that six respondents had experienced it.

Table 4: Thai classical music learning in the respondents' secondary schools

| Respondent number | singing | playing instrument | listening | studying notation | studying theory | composing |
|-------------------|---------|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 | - | - | - | * | - | - |
| 2 | Y | Y | Y | - | - | - |
| 3 | - | Y | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | - | Y | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | - | - | - | Y | - | - |
| 6 | Y | Y | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | - | Y | - | Y | Y | - |
| 8 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 9 | - | - | Y | - | - | Y |
| 10 | - | Y | - | - | - | - |
| total | 2 | 6 | 2 | 2 or 3 | 1 | 1 |

Y means 'studied'; - means 'didn't study'; * means studied but didn't specify the type of music.

However, this may not guarantee the overall actual experience of all respondents; for instance, it is curious that respondent 5 only learned the notation without any other area of music. To be more accurate, this information shows what these respondents remember of their secondary school music education.

Phleng Thai-sakon (Thai popular music)

Table 5: How do young people define Thai popular (Thai-sakon) music?

| What do they say? | How many? |
|---|-----------|
| easily understood | 2 |
| various styles | 1 |
| a lot of melodic imitation at the present | 1 |
| stringed band music | 1 |
| singers are young | 1 |
| teenagers listen to it | 3 |
| a lot of people listen to it | 1 |
| emotionally involved in listening | 1 |
| liveliness | 3 |
| depict imaginative scene | 1 |
| beautiful | 1 |
| fashionable | 2 |

* Note: there were many respondents who give more than one category.

Among the 10 respondents, *Thai-sakon* is by far the most favoured type of music (9 respondents' preference). It is easy to listen to and is the most familiar type of music in Bangkok. These young respondents regard *Thai-sakon* as their kind of music, matching their age group, and attracting other relevant activities such as singing and dancing. Even some who regard Thai popular music nowadays to be inauthentic, still regard it as their favourite type. This also includes a notion of national pride in one respondent's appreciation of *phleng Thai-sakon*: the reason she likes this Thai popular music is because she is Thai. In secondary school music education, *Thai-sakon* is mentioned only once as a class singing by one respondent.

Table 6: How do people like/dislike Thai popular (Thai-sakon) music?

| How many of them like/dislike? | What did they say? |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| LIKE: 9 | It is exciting. It is beautiful. I like dancing. I am Thai. It is led by teenagers. It is fun. I often listen to it; beautiful. I can sing along. Fashionable, full of new rhythms. |
| DISLIKE: 1 | Too imitative which is boring. |

Phleng Luk-thung (Thai country popular music)

Table 7: How do young people define Thai country popular (luk-thung) music?

| What do they say? | How many? |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| easily understood | 2 |
| song texts are sometimes non-sense | 1 |
| reflect Thai life-style | 1 |
| difficult to sing | 1 |
| sing with rural accents | 1 |
| rural music | 2 |
| lively music | 3 |
| beautiful | 1 |
| deserves conservation | 3 |

* Note: there were many respondents who give more than one category.

Table 8: How do people like/dislike country popular (*luk-thung*) music?

| How many of them like/dislike? | What did they say? |
|--------------------------------|--|
| LIKE: 8 | It is beautiful. I don't understand (but I like it). I want to conserve Thai culture. I want to listen to the oldies which my dad listens to. No comment. I like some of them. It makes me feel good. It is relaxing. |
| DISLIKE: 2 | Song texts are non-sense; I don't like its melodies. Sung by Laos (provincials). |

Phleng luk-thung also brings about some conflicting attitudes in that its status is inferior but it is now regarded as a national musical culture. It is not any respondent's favourite type of music; however, most respondents have a positive attitude towards it. As seen in table 8, eight state that they like it (which, for some of them, rather means 'I can accept it'; this is, in my view, their attitude, not their practice). Only two state that they dislike the music. One claims that she dislikes the style and that the lyrics are nonsense; another claims that it is the type of music which "the Lao" like. I would like to clarify this notion here. People in Bangkok sometimes call people in the north-east of Thailand "Laos" due to the adjacent Thai-Lao border in the north-east of Thailand. The story began when a great number of north-eastern people came down to work in Bangkok mainly as labours and domestic servants. *Phleng luk-thung* (Thai country popular music) which possesses the rural style, has been their favourite kind of music. The music has been popular among the lower socio-economic groups; it is, therefore, inevitably put in a lower status.

Despite some prejudices against *phleng luk-thung* (Thai country popular music), it is surprising that half of the respondents regard it as the best representation of music from Thailand. One respondent asserts that Thai classical music is out of date, and that *luk-thung* is a better representative. Others put forward the characteristics of *luk-thung* as

having an appropriate expression of Thai-ness. This national pride may link to the above positive attitude towards the music.

However, this Thai country popular music didn't find a place in the secondary school music class among any of the 10 respondents.

Phleng sakon and phleng classic (Western popular and Western classical music)

Table 9: How do young people define Western popular (sakon) music?

| What do they say? | How many? |
|--|-----------|
| plain musical style | 1 |
| various musical styles | 1 |
| the most fashionable musical styles | 1 |
| beautiful | 2 |
| frequent listening creates familiarity | 1 |
| language is not understood | 5 |
| Western song (<i>phleng farang</i>) | 4 |

*Note: there were many respondents who give more than one category.

Table 10: How do young people define Western classical (classic) music?

| What do they say? | How many? |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| not many people listen to it | 1 |
| lively | 1 |
| beautiful | 3 |
| romantic | 2 |
| soft | 2 |
| creates good feelings | 2 |
| sounds good | 1 |
| easy listening | 1 |
| never listened to it before | 3 |

* Note: there were many respondents who give more than one category.

Phleng sakon or Western popular music is regarded as the original from which Thai popular music has been influenced. The style of music is familiar to Thai ears but it is not the respondents' favourite type of music. It is defined by four respondents as "*phleng farang*" which means the music of white people. One important reason for its lesser popularity seems to be the use of English language, as half of the respondents claim that they could not get the literal meaning of the songs.

Classical music or *phleng classic* is rather unpopular; it is in only one respondent's most frequent listening category. Three respondents claim that they have never listened to classical music. One argues that it is the music of a small group of listeners. Others only say that the music is nice, romantic, soft, or creates a good feeling, which suggests quite a vague opinion towards the music. I assume that these attitudes are generally derived from a popular stereotype of classical music, rather than to attentive listening.

In the respondents' previous experience on music class, only one out of ten students reported listening to classical music in class. but most (perhaps all) respondents studied Western notation and only two studied Western music theory. This shows that notation study was the core of Western music study in classrooms. Music practice was not central to Western music study; more than half of the students had never been introduced to its musical significance. This is an important reason for the respondents' remoteness from the music.

Table 11: Western music study in the respondents' secondary school classrooms

| Respondent number | singing | playing instrument | listening | studying notation | studying theory | composing |
|-------------------|---------|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 | - | - | - | * | - | - |
| 2 | - | - | Y | Y | Y | - |
| 3 | - | - | - | Y | - | - |
| 4 | - | - | - | Y | - | - |
| 5 | - | - | - | Y | - | - |
| 6 | - | - | - | Y | - | - |
| 7 | - | - | - | Y | - | - |
| 8 | - | Y | - | Y | * | - |
| 9 | - | Y | - | Y | Y | - |
| 10 | - | - | - | Y | - | - |
| total | 0 | 2 | 1 | 9 or 10 | 2 or 3 | 0 |

Y means 'studied'; - means 'didn't study'; * means studied but didn't specify the type of music.

As table 11 shows, Western music study was conducted mainly through the study of Western notation, while singing or playing instruments were rare. If compared to Thai

music study, we can see that the students were exposed to more Thai musical practice than Western, but on the theory side (including notation), Western music is more common. This is due to the nature of Thai classical music, which was traditionally unnotated, musical theory and other relevant elements of music is absorbed through musical practice.

Among these respondents' former secondary schools, eight schools provided some form of musical activity but only two respondents participated. This signifies that music as a general activity in secondary schools was provided only for enthusiastic students. For special interest of extra music lesson besides school music activities (which may be an extra lesson after school or in a music school), only two respondents used to have the tuition. One, who used to study Western popular music, gave up because of a shortage of time, while the other, who used to study Thai classical music, gave up because of moving school (this might mean that the music school was nearby her previous school).

For music study at university level, the question asked aimed to collect opinions towards serious music study as a major subject in higher education. Unfortunately, as the respondents misunderstood the question no conclusions in this regard can be reached (a revision of this question will be made). The respondents understood it as asking about the study of music as one compulsory subject in university; however, in this respect, nine agree and have a positive opinion.

According to the respondents' experience on the compulsory music curriculum in lower secondary school, music was seen as providing positive psychological effects rather than offering serious educational opportunities. More than half of the respondents like the subject for the following reasons: releasing tension from other serious subjects, stimulating a special personal ability, providing a musical experience, and providing musical knowledge. Most of them were happy with their music class experience; however, there was one student who said: '*The curriculum should be more intensive.*' Only one reported disliking the subject, and only then for the reason that the instruments used were not in good condition; the other two gave no comment.

For music study in general, all respondents have a positive attitude. The most common attitude mentioned music study as suggesting a worthwhile way to spend leisure time.

Table 12: The respondents' attitudes towards music as a subject

| Attitude towards music study | number of respondents |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| worthwhile leisure activity | 4 |
| releases stress | 3 |
| provides musical skill and knowledge | 3 |
| builds up general concentration | 2 |
| good for youth | 2 |
| shape up one's mind | 1 |

The attitude towards music as a career also gains positive responses. 'It is good because it is a way of earning a living; it's honest and creative', says one student. The conclusion of all opinions is that "musician" is an honest occupation which requires distinctive ability, an occupation which gives the public happiness and the musician him/herself a good income.

Asking each respondent, imagining him/herself a musician-to-be, whether they would receive any support from their parents, none of them had any problem at all. This is not only because "musician" is more accepted as a good occupation but also according to the reason of "freedom to choose an occupation" which half of the respondents give. For instances, 'I think they would allow me because they know that I like singing' or 'They would support me because they let me do anything I want to'. In Bangkok, this is seen as a modern way of parenting, which is different from the past in that parents tended to direct their children in a certain way. This is what happens in a "modernistic" society in which globalization has brought in changing attitudes towards various aspects of life.

Implications of the data for the research questions

Generally speaking, *phleng Thai-sakon* is the most common music of young people in Bangkok. The other two types of Thai music, *Thai-derm* (Thai classical music) and *luk-thung* (Thai country popular music), evince conflicting attitudes. The attitude towards the music is likely to be positive (especially for *luk-thung*) but they are almost totally absent from everyday listening. The most prominent reason for this seems to be the belief in nationalism, which may be traced to the educational system, and which inserts Thai classical and Thai folk music into the music curriculum. However, this belief

has a weak effect on practice. The curriculum of Thai classical music study is not successful in drawing students' attention towards practice (playing and listening). However, it creates feelings of nationalism to various degrees. Apart from the language difficulty in Western vocal music, national identity can cause young people to prefer their familiar cultural music to a foreign one (Western popular or Western classical music in this case).

The attitudes of the young people towards music and musicians are positive, but the attitudes from music teachers shows that the situation needs to be improved. Although music cannot gain a role as a core subject in school as others, musical activity achieves appreciation as evidence from music activities which are available in most schools suggests. Studying music is regarded as worthwhile and the occupation of "musician" is gaining in acceptance. This implies that the social status of musicians has been raised. However, many Thai music teachers regret the general neglect of Thai classical musicians in favour of popular musicians. This suggests the unequal status different kinds of musicians earn from different people. Relating to the notion of globalization, the music area where the new global technology has reached tends to receive more attention than more remote music areas. Thus, popular music with a global popular style (Western or Thai popular music) gains more attention from the modern public than the classical or local-style ones (Western classical, Thai classical, folk and, in some degrees, country popular). Whereas in educational perspective, the emphasis of music education is based on the classical (Western and Thai) and local-styles (Thai classical and folk). It can be said that the status of popular music is gaining in economic and modern prestige whilst the status of classical and folk (including country popular) music is gaining in educational and local prestige.

APPENDIX III: Music provided on the CD

The CD attached to the back cover of the thesis contains the following music:

Thai classical music (phleng Thai-derm) and its derivation

1. **Lao-Duang-Deuan I** 2'33
 This is one of the most well known pieces of Thai classical music (*Thai-derm*) played by a traditional Thai orchestra “*mahori*” in traditional style. This music is also used for accompanying Thai dance.
2. **Lao-Duang-Deuan II** 2'08
 This is the same tune as no.1 but in an applied form, called “applied Thai music”, with a mixture of Western instruments backed up by traditional Thai percussion.
3. **Lao-Duang-Deuan III** 3'19
 The same tune as nos. 1&2, it is another “applied Thai music” with Thai traditional style of singing by female singer, Phoonsri Charernwong, accompanied by a Western ensemble in the style of Combo, which was popular in the early days of Thai popular songs. As the Thai court play and dance was traditionally played by all female performers, the singer represents herself as a male character, expressing his love to his lover, Duang Deuan, before his departure after his visit.
4. **Blue Khmer** 7'54
 This is Thai neo-classical music by Fong Naam, an ensemble of new Thai classical music. The music was composed in the early 90s with a mixture of traditional instruments and electronic music instruments. An excerpt of this music has been used (since 1998) as the end title for television Channel 9 News, Thailand. A similar style of music by this group has been used in national official ceremonies, for example, for the “Amazing Thailand” tourism campaign for the year 1998-1999 and for the Asian Games when Thailand was the host country in December 1998.

Thai country popular music (phleng luk-thung) from past to present

- 5. Hua-jai Mai Mi Khrai Khlong (The Heart without an owner) 2'04**
 This is one of the Thai country popular song (*luk-thung*) from its early days in the 50s, before the split in Thai popular music, and sung by the first Queen of *Luk-thung* singer, Phongsri Woranuch. The singer, according to the song text, describes herself as a single woman who does not care about men, telling her admirer to wait until she's ready for the relationship.
- 6. Thui Ja (Dear Buffalo) 2'48**
 This is a Thai country popular song (*luk-thung*) of the 80s in its typical country style, sung by the late second Queen of *Luk-thung* singer, Phumphuang Duangchan. The singer, according to the song text, represents a peasant girl moaning to her buffalo after she is heartbroken and has returned home. The story in the song text describes a girl who left home for a rich man from the capital city but she ended up being a prostitute and the man is in fact a playboy.
- 7. Ai Num Phom Yao (The Long-haired Bloke) 2'57**
 This is a new modernized Thai country popular song (*luk-thung*) in the style of dance music with quite a high degree of Western sound, sung by a son of the late King of *Luk-thung*, Surachai Sombatcharern. In the song, the singer represents himself as a provincial man whose lover left him for a long-haired artist.
- 8. Pu Khai Kai Long (Pregnant Crab, Lost Hen) 3'01**
 This is a forever-popular Thai country popular song recycled and sung by a male teen idol (with Western look as he is Thai-West mixed), Chakaphan Aabkhornburi. The song text is a condemnation by a husband of his wife who left him for a rich man and then her new lover left her with a pregnancy comparable to a pregnant crab and a lost hen.
- 9. Mon Rak Luk-thung (Country Love Spell) 3'66**
 This is an old film music of Thai country popular song in its original recording, which was a hit in Bangkok for the second time in the late 90s, as it was re-introduced again as television drama song for the same drama title. It was sung by the famous male singer in the early days of country popular songs, Yodrak Sarakjai. The song describes love in the beautiful countryside.

Thai popular music (phleng Thai-sakon) from past to present

- 10. Khruan-rak (Moaning about Love) 3'77**
 This is one of the beloved capital oldies (*luk-krung*) by the most renowned male singer since the 1940s, Suntaraporn whose music is described as ballroom music. The song text describes the instability of love: the early stage was so sweet but later it has changed when love is fading.
- 11. Lom-sawat (Wind of Love) 1'97**
 This another capital oldies (*luk-krung*) by a famous male singer in the later period, Charin Nanthanakhorn, it is a love song asking the wind to be the mediator between him and his lover.
- 12. Kheun Thoraman (Anguish Night) 2'71**
 A type of capital oldies (*luk-krung*) of the 70s, it was recycled in the 90s. Sung by a female singer, Orawi Satjanon, songs in this style with chorus were hits during the late 70s. The song describes a heartbroken lonely wife whose husband left her for another woman.
- 13. Khu-kad (Biting Pair) 2'15**
 New style of Thai popular songs (*Thai-sakon*) sung by the current super star singer, Thongchai McIntyre, this song was a hit early in the 90s. It is a kind of urban love song describing the ups and downs in the relationship of 2 lovers in a cheeky way.
- 14. Fak Liang (For you to look after) 2'77**
 A new style of teenage Thai popular (*Thai-sakon*) songs of the 90s by a teenage idol male singer, Jetarin Wattanasin, it is a teen love song, confessing his love to a girl in a Thai rap style.
- 15. Song Thao Phu Ying-yai (Two great old men) 2'58**
 An example of songs-for-life (*phleng pheua chiwit*) by the most famous songs-for-life male group, *Carabao*, the song text describes the economic gap between 2 old men: one is a poor farmer with his bamboo crutch and the other is a rich old man with his golden crutch. The rich old man also works as a middle-man between farmers and wholesalers. The poor farmer has to struggle to survive while the rich middle-man becomes richer and richer by taking advantage of the difficulties of the poor man.

