

# OVERCOMING THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY UNPERFORMED THAI OPERAS IN THE MODERN ERA

Fueanglada Prawang Carlson\*

เฟื่องลดา ประวัง คาร์ลสัน\*

## Abstract

Throughout history there have been a number of operas written by Thai composers. Sadly, five of these Thai operas remain unperformed to this day. Rather than abandoning these cancelled works to history, there is the potential to learn from their failures as a means to assist future Thai opera productions.

This academic article is focused on overcoming the issues that these unperformed operas endured. Four key reasons emerged for their failure, these being culture, politics, popularity and financial support. These obstacles were not easy to remedy at the time, however, could we now utilise modern technology to overcome such hurdles? This led to the question of whether future operas could avoid this dreaded unperformed status by outlining modern solutions to these past problems.

This investigation is vital, with many young Thai composers eager to produce operas. By highlighting the challenges that unperformed operas have faced, and offering counter measures, the hope is for future generations to attune their own creative process to evade these barriers.

**Keywords:** Thai Opera/ Unperformed Opera/ Opera in Pandemic

---

\* Lecturer, Dr., Voice and Musical Theatre Department, College of Music, Mahidol University, fueanglada.pra@mahidoLedu

\* อาจารย์ ดร. สาขาวิชาการขับร้องและละครเพลง วิทยาลัยดุริยางคศิลป์ มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล, fueanglada.pra@mahidol.edu

## Introduction

The genesis of this article emerged with the recent COVID-19 pandemic and the notable shift and adjustment of the performing arts industries. This period was a difficult and trying time for the arts, however, through reworking their delivery processes and a shift towards more digital mediums, they have been able to persevere on. Similar complications arose with the financial crash of 2008; the implications putting a strain on arts budgets, which again, required a response from the opera industry. As will be discussed, through these difficult times, many opera producers suffered financial constraints, with theatre closures and budget reductions threatening the industry as a whole.

This begged the question of how previous difficult periods blighted the performances of past Thai operas, and whether the internet and modern technology could have assisted in these operas being successful. There are five unperformed Thai operas that can be used as a case study to theorise the effectiveness of the internet and modern technology to mitigate the issues that halted their performances; the hope being that similar future issues may be navigated with little disruption. There are various reasons for the cancellation of these unperformed operas:

(1) *The Mikado* was translated from an English operetta of the same name, which was composed by Gilbert and Sullivan. The libretto was translated into Thai by King Rama VI. The opera was planned to perform in October 1910, however it was cancelled due to the passing of King Rama V and a subsequent mourning period.<sup>1</sup> The following year, ahead of a rescheduled performance, he revised his translation by changing most of the characters' names and re-titling it *Wang Tee*.<sup>2</sup>

(2) *Wang Tee* is a 1911 adaptation of *The Mikado*. King Rama VI, changed the name of the opera and its setting from Japanese to Chinese. The performance was planned for February 1911 and rehearsals were in process. However, it was abandoned because rebels attempted to bring down and assassinate King Rama VI.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Nutthan Inkhong, "Opera in the Period of King Rama VI [มหาอุปรากรในสมัยรัชกาลที่ 6]," in *Vajiravudh with Music [พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวกับการดนตรี]* (Bangkok: Yin Yang, 2011), 133-141.

<sup>2</sup> Nutthan Inkhong, "Opera in the Period of King Rama VI [มหาอุปรากรในสมัยรัชกาลที่ 6]," in *Vajiravudh with Music [พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวกับการดนตรี]* (Bangkok: Yin Yang, 2011), 133-141.

<sup>3</sup> Nutthan Inkhong, "Opera in the Period of King Rama VI [มหาอุปรากรในสมัยรัชกาลที่ 6]," in *Vajiravudh with Music [พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวกับการดนตรี]* (Bangkok: Yin Yang, 2011), 133-141.



Figure 1 King Rama VI.

Source: "His Majesty King Vajiravudh Rama VI of the Chakri Dynasty," Soravij, Accessed in May 25, 2022, <https://www.soravij.com/royalty/rama6/rama6.html>.



Figure 2 A book cover of Chao Tak Sin, an opera in 3 acts, by King Rama VI.

Source: Fueanglada Prawang, "The Emergence of Thai Opera: Performance as Cultural Synergy" (D.M. diss., Bangor University, 2021), 80.

(3) *Chao Tak Sin* is a true event story composed by King Rama VI while he was studying in Europe. In 1989, he established a theatre association named *Khrue*, which offered to perform an opera. Unfortunately, *Chao Tak Sin* was overlooked in a favour of a more well-known and popular opera.<sup>4</sup>

(4) *Daranee* was written by His Royal Highness Prince Adityadibabha. He commissioned two composers, Nard Thawarnboot and Sgn. Ldr. Pho Santikul, to compose the music for the opera. The music for this opera was rehearsed by the Air Force Orchestra conducted by Gp. Capt. Khunsawat Tikhamporn. The cast rehearsed at the Royal Hall of Borom Phiman. Unfortunately, *Daranee* was cancelled due to the disruption of World War II.<sup>5</sup>

(5) *Pero Vaz de Sequeira* is a historical opera in two acts by Pathorn Srikanonda. The Portuguese embassy approached Srikanonda in 2011 to compose a piece commemorating five hundred years of friendship between Thailand and Portugal. Sadly, it was scrapped due to a lack of financial support.<sup>6</sup>

In this article, the term ‘Thai opera’ is considered a synergy of the Western musical style with various combinations of Thai traditional mythologies, characters, instruments, melodies and the native language. The following table lists the five unperformed Thai operas, with most being adapted and created by members and close associates of the Thai royal family (see Table 1).

**Table 1 List of Thai operas (unperformed) arranged in chronological order.**

Source: by author

Opera	Language	Composer	Year	Note
<i>The Mikado</i>	Thai	King Rama VI	1910	Translation
<i>Wang Tee</i>	Thai	King Rama VI	1911	Adaptation
<i>Chao Tak Sin</i>	English & German	King Rama VI	c. 1868-1925	
<i>Daranee</i>	Thai	His Royal Highness Prince Adityadibabha	c. 1939-1945	
<i>Pero Vaz de Sequeira</i>	English	Pathorn Srikanonda	2011	

<sup>4</sup> “Two Thai Operas That Never Had a Chance to Be Performed [มหาอุปรากรของไทยสองเรื่อง ที่ไม่มีโอกาสแสดง],” Poonpit Amatyakul, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <http://oknation.nationtv.tv/blog/insanetheater/2007/05/01/entry-1>.

<sup>5</sup> Fueanglada Prawang, “*The Emergence of Thai Opera: Performance as Cultural Synergy*” (D.M. diss., Bangor University, 2021), 80.

<sup>6</sup> “The Melodic Construction of *Pero Vaz de Sequeira*,” Pathorn Srikanonda, A Historical Music-Drama in Ten Cantos and Three Epistles, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <http://xn--urnalai-cxb.lmta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/Muzikos-komponavimo-principai-XV-Srikanonda.pdf>.

I will discuss the various problems that these unperformed operas encountered, and look to modern technology as a solution. The results may offer guidance for future Thai composers as a method of overcoming similar issues in the future, allowing their own work to flourish and not suffer the fate of an abandoned and unperformed opera.

## Literature Review

As Thai opera is such a niche subject matter, there is scant available literature regarding this hybrid form. Therefore, there is little peer-reviewed work discussing unperformed Thai opera and the ways in which to solve the issues which led to their cancellations. When looking to the minimal literature that is available, there is firstly an article by Dr Poonpit Amatayakul.<sup>7</sup> It was a significant and valuable work which paved the way for discussion into these lost works. He included all evidence of these unperformed works that he had uncovered through tireless research. However, it served as more of a documentation of unperformed Thai opera rather than a critical analysis of the issues that plagued them. Another relevant article is by Nutthan Inkhong,<sup>8</sup> which describes the work of King Rama VI, the operas he composed and the reasons for the cancellation of their performances. Again, though the information is rich and valuable, there is no discussion regarding how these obstacles could have been overcome or how to prevent these issues from reoccurring and hindering future projects.

There are a further two informative articles written by Pathorn Srikanonda, who is the composer of the fifth and most recent unperformed opera, where he discusses his work and creative processes. The first is a conference article<sup>9</sup> which describes the true events which inspired the plot structure of the opera's story, while also discussing the characters' backgrounds and the construction of the libretto and narrative. The second article<sup>10</sup> discusses his music composition techniques and the musical language of his opera. Though informative, and particularly interesting when considering the creative process and

---

<sup>7</sup> "Two Thai Operas That Never Had a Chance to Be Performed [มหาอุปรากรของไทยสองเรื่อง ที่ไม่มีโอกาสแสดง]," Poonpit Amatayakul, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <http://oknation.nationtv.tv/blog/insanetheater/2007/05/01/entry-1>.

<sup>8</sup> Nutthan Inkhong, "Opera in the Period of King Rama VI [มหาอุปรากรในสมัยรัชกาลที่ 6]," in *Vajiravudh with Music [พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวกับการดนตรี]* (Bangkok: Yin Yang, 2011), 133-141.

<sup>9</sup> Pathorn Srikanonda, "Pero Vaz De Sequeira, an Opera based on Historical Event: An Alternative History of Thailand in the Late Reign of King Narai (1684-1688)," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 116, (February 2014): 270-278.

<sup>10</sup> "The Melodic Construction of Pero Vaz de Sequeira," Srikanonda, Pathorn, A Historical Music-Drama in Ten Cantos and Three Epistles, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <http://xn--urnalai-cxb.lmta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/Muzikos-komponavimo-principai-XV-Srikanonda.pdf>.

development of his opera, these articles do not explore the reasons why it remains unperformed and how to resolve these issues.

Therefore, having considered and analysed the existing literature, it is evident that a gap exists with exploring solutions to prevent these problems from occurring in this era. The nature of these obstacles allows them to transcend beyond the period of these operas, after all, political, cultural, popularity and financial issues often stifle art to this very day. However, with the advances in technology, and with the internet connecting the world in a way that was not previously possible; there exists the potential to guide and support Thai opera composers in their goal of producing quality and successful performances.

## Discussion

*The Mikado* was translated into Thai by King Rama VI in 1910, which coincided with the death of King Rama V. In Thai culture, all entertaining events had to be cancelled for a whole year to mourn the king's passing, therefore this opera wasn't performed. After a year of mourning, he improved the opera into a Chinese version: *Wang Tee*.<sup>11</sup> However, it was cancelled again due to the attempted assassination of King Rama VI by a rebel group; this being considered a cancellation on political grounds.

It is tragic that after all of his hard work, circumstances beyond his control prevented these operas being performed. Unfortunately, during that period there was no safe way to perform to an audience without putting the king's life at risk. However, new advancements in security and global communications have allowed some performances to take place despite there being significant safety concerns, for instance, during the recent ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, the Lviv National Opera still resumed performances.<sup>12</sup>

The catastrophic loss of these operas actually demonstrates that Thailand needs an archive of such operatic works. It would firstly be a solution to this problem of lost scores, allowing future attempts at performances, but also these preserved works could act as a resource for future study and inspiration. This issue has already been considered when regarding the Thai film industry, where the Thai Film Archive is "considered the first and only organization in Thailand that preserves and restores films that belong to the whole

---

<sup>11</sup> "Two Thai Operas That Never Had a Chance to Be Performed [มหาอุปรากรของไทยสองเรื่อง ที่ไม่มีโอกาสแสดง]," Poonpit Amatyakul, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <http://oknation.nationtv.tv/blog/insanetheater/2007/05/01/entry-1>.

<sup>12</sup> "Lviv National Opera resumes work," Tetyana Kozyreva, Hindustan News Hub, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <https://hindustannewshub.com/russia-ukraine-news/lviv-national-opera-resumes-work>.

country.”<sup>13</sup> Thankfully, work is underway to preserve the traditional music of Thailand through the work of the Thai Music Library and their goal of archiving the accomplishments of Thai music masters.<sup>14</sup> This project has enjoyed success with becoming “an extensive and comprehensive resource for the Thai traditional music circle. Students, researchers, and the public have been able to retrieve materials and information on these selected Thai pedagogues and performers.”<sup>15</sup> However, to date, there is still no library or archive for Thai opera; this being the hybrid musico-dramatic works as defined in this article. If such an archive existed, these cherished works could lead to new attempts at performances, or serve as inspiration for other works, the way *Wang Tee* came to fruition as a result of *The Mikado*.

Meanwhile, *Daranee* was the only Thai opera written during World War II (1939-1945) and there are no other records of any Thai operas created until 2001. This was due to the dire economic situation after King Rama VI passed away and the subsequent political revolution.<sup>16</sup> Similar to *The Mikado* and *Wang Tee*, *Daranee* could be performed in more recent times if its score had been preserved in an archive. Being an original, fictional love story, its premise is significant amongst the other historically-inspired Thai operas and could have encouraged similar fictional works.

Looking to recent times, *Wang Tee* being cancelled due to the king’s safety and *Daranee* being abandoned due to the outbreak of war, parallels the prevention measures to halt the COVID-19 virus. Many countries went into lockdown, with citizens remaining and working from home as the “pandemic forced us all to find new ways to function in order to keep the public safe.”<sup>17</sup> Many pandemic responses outlined advice of “stay indoors, except for essential workers or in specific circumstances.” Obviously, this is a major problem for the arts industries, particularly opera, which relies upon the attendance of an audience at a theatre.

---

<sup>13</sup> “About Collection,” Film Archive (Public Organization), Accessed in May 20, 2022, <http://www.fapot.org/en/about-collection.php>.

<sup>14</sup> “Thai Music Library: Revered Thai Traditional Musician Archive to Preserve Thai Musical Heritage, Phase 4-5, Fiscal Year 2021,” Office of Art & Culture Chulalongkorn University, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <https://www.cuartculture.chula.ac.th/en/article/7384>.

<sup>15</sup> “Thai Music Library: Revered Thai Traditional Musician Archive to Preserve Thai Musical Heritage, Phase 4-5, Fiscal Year 2021,” Office of Art & Culture Chulalongkorn University, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <https://www.cuartculture.chula.ac.th/en/article/7384>.

<sup>16</sup> Jittapim Yamprai, “*Establishment of western music in Thailand*” (D.M. diss., University of Northern Colorado, 2011), 62-68.

<sup>17</sup> “A Story of Agility and Innovation: Findings from the Impact of Video Communications During COVID-19 Report,” Ittelson, Brendan, Zoom, Reported in May 25, 2021, <https://blog.zoom.us/findings-from-the-impact-of-video-communications-during-COVID-19-report>.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, employees turned to video conferencing technologies such as Zoom at an increasing rate to attend work meetings.<sup>18</sup> Previously, such issues would have halted a production, as with *Wang Tee* and *Daranee*, however, opera producers spied an opportunity in modern technology as a means to overcome these hurdles. After all, if employees were working from home, then why couldn't performers do the same? Consumers of opera would be able to enjoy performances without ever leaving their homes; it is a tragedy that King Rama VI was not able to emulate this by sharing his opera with the world from the safety of his palace.

During the pandemic, streaming became a viable alternative to theatre performances, as consumers embraced the technology in record numbers; some adults spending forty percent of their waking hours in front of a screen.<sup>19</sup> For instance, in seizing upon this trend, The Metropolitan Opera relied on online streaming in the face of performance cancellations.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, a solution exists should the problem of political or economic instability threaten opera performances once more. As an example, *Covido The Opera* (2021), a new Thai opera composed by Krisada and Napisi Reyes, has only been performed through digital means and was delivered to an audience during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>21</sup>

*Pero Vaz de Sequeira* was cancelled on two occasions due to a lack of financial support. This is a common obstacle that many composers face, often having to explore their own methods of acquiring financial support, which in itself is not an easy task. So, what options exist to counter these financial difficulties? Modern days has seen a lurch towards more collective methods of fundraising, with crowdfunding websites providing opportunities where they previously did not exist.<sup>22</sup> As far back as 1997, there is evidence of the internet being used to crowdfund a performance, with the British rock band *Marillion*

---

<sup>18</sup> "A Story of Agility and Innovation: Findings from the Impact of Video Communications During COVID-19 Report," Ittelson, Brendan, Zoom, Reported in May 25, 2021, <https://blog.zoom.us/findings-from-the-impact-of-video-communications-during-COVID-19-report>.

<sup>19</sup> "TV watching and online streaming surge during lockdown," BBC News, Entertainment & Arts, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-53637305>.

<sup>20</sup> "Met launches "Nightly Met Opera Streams," a free series of encore Live in HD presentations streamed on the company website during the coronavirus closure," The Metropolitan Opera, Accessed in May 22, 2022, <https://www.metopera.org/about/press-releases/met-launches-nightly-met-opera-streams-a-free-series-of-encore-live-in-hd-presentations-streamed-on-the-company-website-during-the-coronavirus-closure>.

<sup>21</sup> Fueanglada Prawang Carlson, *Covido The Opera*, December 25, 2021, Online Performance, Thailand.

<sup>22</sup> Crowdfunding is a method of acquiring donation raising from many small amounts of money from large amount of people. There are many platforms such as Kickstarter, GoFundMe, Patreon.



funding their U.S. tour through online donations from fans.<sup>23</sup> A decade later, and “Crowdfunding revenue tripled from \$530 million in 2009 to \$1.5 billion in 2011.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, crowdfunding was a viable option in 2011 for Pathorn Srikanonda with *Pero Vaz de Sequeira*, where the Portuguese government ran out of money and the production had to be halted. The composer could have explored options to fund a performance himself. Notable Thai composer, Somtow Sucharitkul, had already utilised crowdfunding as a means to fund his own opera cycle,<sup>25</sup> and had Srikanonda pursued this revenue source, perhaps *Pero Vaz de Sequeira* would exist in history as a performed opera.

There is evidence that this avenue of funding is being leant upon more in the modern era and should be considered a viable avenue for future generations of operatic composers, especially with the tightening of budget strings in harsh economic times. As an example, art budgets were dramatically cut worldwide in response to the 2008 financial crisis, with Srikanonda’s own opera perhaps being caught in the fallout.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a parallel crunching of numbers within the opera industry. For instance, The Houston Grand Opera having to reduce its budget by \$10 million and its staff by 27%.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, perhaps an option for future Thai operas is a focus on grass roots funding, as is occurring elsewhere around the world, with it being noted that “the steady decrease in arts funding across Europe has forced opera and ballet to get creative.”<sup>28</sup> Precedence already exists with other productions successfully reaching their crowdfunding goals, for example, Opera Philadelphia using a Kickstarter

---

<sup>23</sup> “The History of Crowdfunding,” Fundable, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <https://www.fundable.com/crowdfunding101/history-of-crowdfunding#:~:text=1997-%20The%20Inception%20of%20Modern,through%20online%20donations%20from%20fans>.

<sup>24</sup> “The History of Crowdfunding,” Fundable, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <https://www.fundable.com/crowdfunding101/history-of-crowdfunding#:~:text=1997-%20The%20Inception%20of%20Modern,through%20online%20donations%20from%20fans>.

<sup>25</sup> “A Thai challenge to ‘The Ring’,” Special to the Nation, The Nation Thailand, Accessed in May 22, 2022, <https://www.nationthailand.com/life/30260540>.

<sup>26</sup> “End of the aria as opera falls on hard times,” Feargus O’Sullivan, Financial Times, Accessed in May 22, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/a6e6b998-360e-11df-aa43-00144feabdc0>.

<sup>27</sup> “Houston Grand Opera announces layoffs, \$10M budget cut,” Wei-Huan Chen, Preview, Accessed in May 15, 2022, <https://preview.houstonchronicle.com/classical/houston-grand-opera-announces-layoffs-10m-15361642>.

<sup>28</sup> “Is crowdfunding the future of opera and ballet?,” Laura Cappelle, Financial Times, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/1beb4c1e-763c-11e9-b0ec-7dff87b9a4a2>.

campaign as a means to raising the final funding for an encore performance.<sup>29</sup> Other success stories include The Opera Story's *Robin Hood* experiencing a crowdfunded campaign<sup>30</sup> which lead to a successful performance in Peckham, London.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Robert Hugill's *The Gardeners*<sup>32</sup> funded itself to a performance in Conway Hall, London.<sup>33</sup> Clearly, these do not emulate the large budgets of the major opera houses, but do share similarities with the performances of Thai operas such as *The Long-Gone Animals* and *The Lunch Box*.

The *Chao Tak Sin* opera was not performed due to others being chosen ahead of it for popularity reasons. This is quite a common problem, as from personal experience, popular Western operas are often selected over new unperformed operas because of the requirement of extra work and a hesitancy in exploring new territory. It is a pity that this Thai hero never had a chance to have his story told through an opera as it would be a significant historical work for the people of Thailand.

However, if this dilemma occurred in the twenty-first century, where people could access the internet, crowdfunding may offer another benefit besides financial support. Young Thai singers could donate a small amount of money and be a part of the production, for example, small roles, chorus or backstage work to improve their resume. They could also promote and write a blog online in how important the opera is for Thai history. Crowdfunding also opens a production up to a new audience, as Ruth de Vries, head of fundraising for the Dutch National Opera & Ballet stated "You reach a completely different audience of new, younger donors"<sup>34</sup> as well as "And a lot of people who donate to a

---

<sup>29</sup> "How Opera Philadelphia's funding tactic is democratizing art & got a production back on stage," Kenneth Hilario, Philadelphia Business Journal, Accessed in May 19, 2022, [https://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/news/2018/08/22/opera-philadelphia-money-we-shall-not-be-moved.html?fbclid=IwAR0gRZ9uMWUTuLUALm8yjoBE dY\\_b2kuLgyCT2ZZsWL7sfsrGmKcNqrKSQ9U](https://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/news/2018/08/22/opera-philadelphia-money-we-shall-not-be-moved.html?fbclid=IwAR0gRZ9uMWUTuLUALm8yjoBE dY_b2kuLgyCT2ZZsWL7sfsrGmKcNqrKSQ9U).

<sup>30</sup> "The Opera Story presents Robin Hood," Crowdfunder, Accessed in May 22, 2022, <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/robinhood?fbclid=IwAR2L1B0bQavw-yFJgorS5Tbz3qk5H80RfvmG1RuMPyBUznK5gChJrO2o9Ms>.

<sup>31</sup> "Robin Hood: a satirical new opera in Peckham," Timmy Fisher, Backtrack, Accessed in May 22, 2022, <https://bachtrack.com/review-robin-hood-dani-howard-opera-story-peckham-february-2019>.

<sup>32</sup> "Helping The Gardeners to grow: a new chamber opera," Crowdfunder, Accessed in May 22, 2022, [https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/helping-the-gardeners-to-grow-a-new-chamber-opera?fbclid=IwAR3aQoNd\\_kw7ne0j-3V19akKQ-3A5U4NkCPh803zzX6HM1X9s4MbW44SkBKg](https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/helping-the-gardeners-to-grow-a-new-chamber-opera?fbclid=IwAR3aQoNd_kw7ne0j-3V19akKQ-3A5U4NkCPh803zzX6HM1X9s4MbW44SkBKg).

<sup>33</sup> "Robert Hugill's The Gardeners: A Beautiful Piece, Beautifully Performed," Colin Clarke, Seen and Heard International, Accessed in May 22, 2022, <https://seenandheard-international.com/2019/06/robert-hugills-the-gardeners-a-beautiful-piece-beautifully-performed>.

<sup>34</sup> "Is crowdfunding the future of opera and ballet?," Laura Cappelle, Financial Times, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/1beb4c1e-763c-11e9-b0ec-7dff87b9a4a2>.

crowdfunding campaign also attend the performance, because you got their attention.”<sup>35</sup> Therefore, an engaging an interactive crowdfunding campaign, which invites donors to involve themselves in the behind-the-scenes production process, could be an avenue to draw in intrigued sponsors and inspire a whole new demographic of opera supporters. Nevertheless, the main organizers need to accept the risk with trying something new. Again, *Chao Tak Sin*'s music score should have been archived with the hope of it being performed someday, for example, every year on 28 December is King Taksin Day in memory of the victory<sup>36</sup>. The opera could be performed to remember his victory to save Thailand, however, there is no score to work with, revisiting how essential an archive is as a first step towards solidifying the future of Thai opera.

## Conclusion

A number of solutions have been offered to counter each of these problems encountered by unperformed Thai operas in the modern era, which include: (1) the establishing of a Thai opera archive to preserve works and allow revisitation, (2) using online streaming as a means to reach an audience during difficult times, (3) using crowdfunding as a way to raise financial support, (4) using similar crowdfunding campaigns to involve upcoming composers and musicians in the creation and promotion of new works, as well as encouraging involvement from untapped audiences.

This knowledge will be of great benefit to preserve the existing accomplishments of Thai composers, as well as supporting any future creators who plunge themselves into this small but significant field. As an example, King Rama VI's work has inspired a Thai composer in the twenty-first century to compose a new Thai opera from the king's original story - *Madana*.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, this article, and a subsequent archive of Thai opera, could inspire a young Thai opera director to remake these lost operas, or embark on the production of a new and unique work. The discussions within this article will also demonstrate to future Thai musicians the challenges of performing Thai opera, as well as offering them solutions towards overcoming the issues and believing in their ambitions. This may serve as a reminder

---

<sup>35</sup> “Is crowdfunding the future of opera and ballet?,” Laura Cappelle, Financial Times, Accessed in May 19, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/1beb4c1e-763c-11e9-b0ec-7dff87b9a4a2>.

<sup>36</sup> “KING TAKSIN DAY,” M-Culture, Ministry of Culture, Accessed in May 20, 2022, [https://www.m-culture.go.th/en/article\\_view.php?nid=30](https://www.m-culture.go.th/en/article_view.php?nid=30).

<sup>37</sup> “A Thai's Grand Design for Opera,” Brian Mertens, The New York Times, Accessed in May 22, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/24/style/IHT-a-thais-grand-design-for-opera.html>.

that sometimes there are circumstances beyond a composer's control which may hinder their compositions and not to lose heart in the pursuit of their goals; modern technology offers solutions to problems that previous composers were unable to overcome.

## Bibliography

---

- BBC News. "TV watching and online streaming surge during lockdown." Entertainment & Arts. <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-53637305>.
- Cappelle, Laura. "Is crowdfunding the future of opera and ballet?." Financial Times. <https://www.ft.com/content/1beb4c1e-763c-11e9-b0ec-7dff87b9a4a2>.
- Chen, Wei-Huan. "Houston Grand Opera announces layoffs, \$10M budget cut." Preview. <https://preview.houstonchronicle.com/classical/houston-grand-opera-announces-layoffs-10m-15361642>.
- Clarke, Colin. "Robert Huggill's The Gardeners: A Beautiful Piece, Beautifully Performed." See and Heard International. <https://seenandheard-international.com/2019/06/robert-huggills-the-gardeners-a-beautiful-piece-beautifully-performed/>.
- Crowdfunder. "Helping The Gardeners to grow: a new chamber opera." [https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/helping-the-gardeners-to-grow-a-new-chamber-opera?fbclid=IwAR3aQoNd\\_kw7ne0j3V19akKQ-3A5U4NKcPh803zzX6HM1X9s4Mb-W44SkBKg](https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/helping-the-gardeners-to-grow-a-new-chamber-opera?fbclid=IwAR3aQoNd_kw7ne0j3V19akKQ-3A5U4NKcPh803zzX6HM1X9s4Mb-W44SkBKg).
- Crowdfunder. "The Opera Story presents Robin Hood." <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/robinhood?fbclid=IwAR2l1B0bQavw-yFJgorS5Tbz3qk5H80R-fvmG1RuMPyBUznK5gChJrO2o9Ms>.
- Film Archive (Public Organization). "About Collection." <http://www.fapot.org/en/about-collection.php>.
- Fisher, Timmy. "Robin Hood: a satirical new opera in Peckham." Backtrack. <https://backtrack.com/review-robin-hood-dani-howard-opera-story-peckham-february-2019>.
- Fueanglada Prawang. "*The Emergence of Thai Opera: Performance as Cultural Synergy*." D.M. diss., Bangor University, 2021.
- Fundable. "The History of Crowdfunding." <https://www.fundable.com/crowdfunding101/history-of-crowdfunding#:~:text=1997-%20The%20Inception%20of%20Modern,through%20online%20donations%20from%20fans>.

- Hilario, Kenneth. "How Opera Philadelphia's funding tactic is democratizing art & got a production back on stage." Philadelphia Business Journal. [https://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/news/2018/08/22/opera-philadelphia-money-we-shall-not-be-moved.html?fbclid=IwAR0gRZ9uMWUTulUALm8yjoBEdY\\_b2kuLGyCTZZsWl7s-fsrGmkcNqrKSQ9U](https://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/news/2018/08/22/opera-philadelphia-money-we-shall-not-be-moved.html?fbclid=IwAR0gRZ9uMWUTulUALm8yjoBEdY_b2kuLGyCTZZsWl7s-fsrGmkcNqrKSQ9U).
- Ittelson, Brendan. "A Story of Agility and Innovation: Findings from the Impact of Video Communications During COVID-19 Report." Zoom. <https://blog.zoom.us/findings-from-the-impact-of-video-communications-during-COVID-19-report/>.
- Jittapim Yamprai. "Establishment of western music in Thailand." D.M. diss., University of Northern Colorado, 2011.
- Kozyreva, Tetyana. "Lviv National Opera resumes work." Hindustan News Hub. <https://hindustannewshub.com/russia-ukraine-news/lviv-national-opera-resumes-work/>.
- M-Culture. "KING TAKSIN DAY." Ministry of Culture. [https://www.m-culture.go.th/en/article\\_view.php?nid=30](https://www.m-culture.go.th/en/article_view.php?nid=30).
- Mertens, Brian. "A Thai's Grand Design for Opera." The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/24/style/IHT-a-thais-grand-design-for-opera.html>.
- Nutthan Inkhong. "Opera in the Period of King Rama VI [มหาอุปรากรในสมัยรัชกาลที่ 6]." in *Vajiravudh with Music [พระบาทสมเด็จพระมงกุฎเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัวกับการดนตรี]*, 133-141. Bangkok: Yin Yang, 2011.
- O'Sullivan, Feargus. "End of the aria as opera falls on hard times." Financial Times. <https://www.ft.com/content/a6e6b998-360e-11df-aa43-00144feabdc0>.
- Office of Art & Culture Chulalongkorn University. "Thai Music Library: Revered Thai Traditional Musician Archive to Preserve Thai Musical Heritage, Phase 4-5, Fiscal Year 2021." <https://www.cuartculture.chula.ac.th/en/article/7384>.
- Pathorn Srikanonda. "Pero Vaz De Sequeira, an Opera based on Historical Event: An Alternative History of Thailand in the Late Reign of King Narai (1684-1688)." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 116, (February 2014): 270-278.
- Pathorn Srikanonda. "The Melodic Construction of Pero Vaz de Sequeira." A Historical Music-Drama in Ten Cantos and Three Epistles. <http://xn--urnalai-cxb.lmta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/Muzikos-komponavimo-principai-XV-Srikanonda.pdf>.
- Poonpit Amatyakul. "Two Thai Operas That Never Had a Chance to Be Performed [มหาอุปรากรของไทยสองเรื่อง ที่ไม่มีโอกาสแสดง]." <http://oknation.nationtv.tv/blog/insanetheater/2007/05/01/entry-1>.
- Soravij. "His Majesty King Vajiravudh Rama VI of the Chakri Dynasty." <https://www.soravij.com/royalty/rama6/rama6.html>.

Special to the Nation. “A Thai challenge to ‘The Ring’.” The Nation Thailand.  
<https://www.nationthailand.com/life/30260540>.

The Metropolitan Opera. “Met launches “Nightly Met Opera Streams,” a free series of encore Live in HD presentations streamed on the company website during the coronavirus closure.” <https://www.metopera.org/about/press-releases/met-launches-nightly-met-opera-streams-a-free-series-of-encore-live-in-hd-presentations-streamed-on-the-company-website-during-the-coronavirus-closure>.

Zoom. “Report: The Impact of Video Communications During COVID-19.” <https://explore.zoom.us/docs/en-us/bcg-report.html>.

