

Doctorate Creative Research Composition: King Bhumibol and His Phenomenal Music Legacy for Jazz Orchestra

Palangpon Songpaiboon^{1*}, Weerachat Premananda¹ and Den Euprasert²

¹Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

²Conservatory of Music, Rangsit University, Pathum Thani, Thailand

*Corresponding author, Email: palangpons@hotmail.com

Received May 28, 2021/ Revised June 24, 2021/ Accepted July 13, 2021 / Publish July 14, 2021

Abstract

The doctorate creative research composition: King Bhumibol and His Phenomenal Music Legacy for Jazz Orchestra is large-scale program music for paying tribute to King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the King who connected and touched the people hearts with Music. His compositions bring joy, courage, unity, and rising the nation. The 35-minute duration of the four comprising movements expresses the grateful moments and love from the people. The 1st movement, *King Bhumibol Adulyadej Square*, is opening music that presents number 4 as to represent the “Bhumibol Square” theme whereby it has been served as the main musical concept and aspect throughout the composition. The 2nd movement, *His Passion and Inspiration*, was composed on Lydian melodic mode combined with Dixieland Jazz rhythmic and the highlight cadenza played by solo violin using Rondo form to function the movement. The 3rd movement, *His Music and His People* is a sectional form of five motives that applied the complex meters and repeating technique inspired by minimalism music. The 4th movement, *The Musical Legacy of the Nation*, presents a polyrhythmic technique as the functional element of the entire movement. Pentatonic scale plays a vital role in creating melodic and harmonic functions as well as outstanding quantal-quintal harmony. The first public presentation was on April 7th, 2021, at Conservatory of Music, Rangsit University, and received high acclaim as the composition that has fulfilled an academic purpose as a national novel composition.

Keywords: Program Music, Dixieland Jazz, Jazz Orchestra, Cyclic Form, Improvisation

1. Introduction

Not only His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great dedicated his life to his people but he also devoted his passion to music. His 48 compositions, which gained jazz-influenced, were widely admired by Thais and foreigners. In 1964, the Institute of Music and Arts of the City of Vienna praised and granted King Bhumibol the 23rd Honorary member, which made him the first Asian member.

When he was young and lived in Switzerland, he began to take saxophone lessons and studied western music theory. That knowledge led him to Dixieland's jazz music scene, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band was his favorite band. After he was enthroned as the King of Thailand, he started to compose more than 48 original songs that were performed by a jazz big band named “Aor-Sor.” Although he composed songs in jazz and blues styles, he intended to write them for love, people, and nation. Thus, music could create a great relationship between the King and his people. King Bhumibol wrote many tunes that were of significant value to inspire the people's life, to arouse the masses, and to support the nation. The research explicated to us how people have been getting close to the monarch through music. Ragtime and blues-based jazz music was originated in New Orleans city, Louisiana, in the late 19th century and became Dixieland jazz and others later. In 1920, the Jazz big band was also known as the jazz orchestra, which was a significant reform of jazz. Today, jazz orchestras become a notable performance and advanced art of composition in jazz scholars.

The purpose of this creative research is to compose a four-movement jazz orchestral suite to honor King Bhumibol as one of the genius music composers by giving the name “King Bhumibol and His Phenomenal Music Legacy for Jazz Orchestra.” The original jazz orchestral suite was composed as program music; all movements were described as his musical pathway and his music legacy. Western harmony and

jazz composition techniques were applied into pieces. The strings section and wind section collaborated with the band, so audiences could more deeply touch. This creative research aims to give present-day knowledge of jazz composition and arranging for large ensembles and preserve the music of our beloved King.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Biography and The great value of music composition: His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great

This doctorate creative research composition: King Bhumibol and His Phenomenal Music Legacy for Jazz Orchestra is a piece of program music regarding King Bhumibol Adulyadej's life and music story. The first section of this literature review presents a survey of King Bhumibol's biographical information and musical background while the second section provides a study of technical and conceptual composition.

2.1.1 King Bhumibol's Birthplace, Dwelling place, and Monument

In September 1926, Prince Mahitala Dhibesra Adulyadej Vikrom, the Prince Father (1892-1929), formerly Mahidol Adulyadej, attended the public health program at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. During that time, he lived at 63 Longwood Avenue, Brookline with his wife, Sangwan Talapat, formerly Princess Srinagarindra, the Princess Mother (1900-1995), his daughter Princess Galyani Vadhana (1923-2008), and son Prince Ananda Mahidol, King Rama VIII (1925-1946). Shortly, Princess Srinagarindra gave birth to the new member of the Mahidol family named "Bhumibol Adulyadej," which means "Strength of the Land, Incomparable Power." King Bhumibol was born on December 5th 1927 at Mount Auburn Hospital, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. The Mahidol Family lived in Boston during 1926-1928 before moving back to Thailand in December 1928. Prince Mahidol Adulyadej passed away with his liver abscess on September 24th 1929, after he began teaching at the Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital, and also working as a resident doctor in McCormick Hospital in Chiangmai.

King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand Square or "Bhumibol Square" is located on Eliot street and Bennett street, which is close to Harvard Square and Mount Auburn Hospital, Cambridge, Massachusetts. This monument was built from the cooperation between Thai citizens who live in Boston and the government of Massachusetts to honor His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great (Kumvisate, 2016).

2.1.2 His passion for music and musical genius

King Bhumibol, Princess Srinagarindra, and his sister and brother visited Pully, Lausanne, Switzerland, to study primary school in 1933. During that time His Majesty started to get interested in music when he was 13 years old. Saxophone and clarinet were musical instruments that he first chose and took lessons with Mr. Weybrecht, a french music teacher from Alsace (Sripauraya, 1997). King Bhumibol learned music theory, music notation, and all scales applied in classical music. He fascinated by the jazz genre, especially the Dixieland jazz style, which was originated in New Orleans, United State. One of his favorite bands was The Preservation Hall Jazz Band. Not only the saxophone and clarinet, but he also practiced others instruments such as trumpet, piano, and guitar.

2.1.3 The compositional legacy

His Majesty ascended the throne after returning to Thailand. He started to compose his original song on the piano for rehearsal with his private own band (The Fine Arts Department, 2009). King Bhumibol composed 48 original songs during 1946-1955. The first of which is called "Candlelight Blues" (1946), which he wrote when he was only 19 years old. Although most of the lyrics were written by Prince Chakraband Pensiri and others, there were 5 songs that King Bhumibol wrote music and lyric in English by himself, such as Echo, Still on My Mind, Old Fashioned Melody, No Moon, and Dream Island. The former ambassador of Thailand to the United States of America, Washington D.C., Mr. Sakthip Kraierk, explicated to function of King Bhumibol's pieces that he employed his music to communicate with his people via live music with Aor Sor Wansook band, his own band. The band performing his tunes and

broadcast on the very popular Aor Sor radio station (The Fine Arts Department, 2009). In 1964, the Institute of Music and Arts of the City of Vienna praised and granted King Bhumibol an honorary membership 23rd, making him the first Asian member (The Foundation of The 50th Anniversary Mahavajiralongkorn hospital, 2011).

2.2 Concept, technique, and composition

In addition to jazz's influence on this composition, the 20th century classical music also was a deep concern during the process of composing.

2.2.1 Form

Rondo form developed by the classical composer from the ternary form, 3 parts musical form ABA. While Rondo form, a principal section "A" alternates with one or more sections. They all comprise 5, 7, or 9 parts. Rondo's 7-section form was often used by the composer in the classical eras, such as Ludwig Van Beethoven who composed "*Piano Sonata in C minor, op.13, III*" that consists of 7 sections; ABACABA, and C section contains more texture and longer than other sections (Pancharoen, 2017).

2.2.2 Scale and Mode

According to Kostka (1999), major and minor scales were widely used by Baroque, Classical, and Romantic composers. Furthermore, there are other scales that new composers could use as an option. Those scales might be preceding or modern, which will make the audience feel unfamiliar and thus, aid the composers in avoiding writing songs in the old fashion. Kostka stated that the pentatonic scale comprising five notes. Their distance in major 2nd and minor 3rd intervals produces the sound of authentic Eastern music, which we could hear from folk music and children's songs (Kostka, 1999). Research by Rader (2011) supports that in the late 19th century, a French composer, Claude Debussy, was inspired by Russian pentatonic scale and eastern folk music, which led him to use the pentatonic scale in his experiment work "*Printemps*" in 1887. By the first 5 bars on the 1st section, Debussy composed flute and piano in a unison line with F# major pentatonic scale (F#, G#, A#, C#, D#).

Rader (2011) explained that in 1888 Debussy also composed the song titled *Arabesque No.1*, in which he presented the main theme in E major pentatonic scale though those melodies were interrupted with the 7th note of the E major scale at some point (Rader, 2011). Jazz music was influenced by the sound of pentatonic scale too. Ligon (1999) explained that when analyzing songs from around the world, it was founded that some of them were created by using pentatonic voice and much more than a major scale. It means the pentatonic scale was not invented by Debussy. Jazz musicians and jazz composers tend to employ pentatonic as fundamental melody over those traditional chords, modal tunes, and pedal forms. The way to use pentatonic in jazz music is by creating a motif and develop it to be a variety of interesting melody rather than only simply use it as a pentatonic scale (Ligon, 1999). The tune "*I Got Rhythm*" (1930) was composed by the 20th-century American composer, George Gershwin. Its main melody is a pentatonic scale in Bb major (formerly in Db major) in 32 bars AABA form. King Bhumibol's song titled "*The Impossible Dream*" also used the pentatonic scale melody (1971), in which the melody itself is C major pentatonic (C, D, E, G, A) in range C4 to C5.

According to Titus (2010), in the late 1950s, modal jazz songs were presented to challenge all jazz musicians and jazz music educators. It was defined as a type of tonal organization that has its own character by using modes (Titus, 2010). Miles Davis's album "*The Kind of Blue*" (1959) is a notable modal jazz album. Bill Evans who played on this record briefly explained that track "So What" is a simple song form with D Dorian mode for 16 bars and another mode in Eb Dorian for 8 bars then back to the first mode for 8 bars. This tune was introduced by the piano part and free rhythmic bass riff. The "Flamenco Sketches" song is a movement that consists of 5 modes (C Ionian, Ab Mixolydian, Bb Mixolydian, G Harmonic Minor, and G Dorian mode) (Titus, 2010). According to White (2008), in the mid-1960s, other modes were applied into the composition of the modal tunes such as Lydian mode that is frequently used in the modern jazz tune "*Inner Urge*" (1966) composed by Joe Henderson, a jazz American saxophonist. He used the F#m7b5 chord on the first 4 bars like the modal tune and the remaining chords are major 7th with tension #11 such as the Fmaj7#11 chord, which is the 4th mode from the major scale (White, 2008).

2.2.3 Quartal and quintal harmony

The quartal harmony was widely used by 20th-century composers. The distance between the 2 notes is the perfect 4th interval without the 3rd that could not specify the type of chord in major or minor. Research by Deimler (1981) showed 12 available types of quartal harmony structure from a piece of 20th-century music (Deimler, 1981). Daimler explained the piano piece "*Bagatelle No. 11*" from 14 *Bagatelle per Pianoforte, Op.6* (1908) composed by a Hungarian composer and pianist, Bela Bartok, that these 88 bars tune switched register between the system of quartal harmony and tertian harmony. Randall J. (2009) explained that using quartal harmony in jazz tunes began in the 1960s by the predominant jazz pianists such as McCoy Tyner (1938-2020), Herbie Hancock (1940), Chick Corea (1941-2021), and others. Randall mentioned the "*Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*" album (1968) by Chick Corea, a remarkable masterpiece, that he employed quartal harmony on the "*Matrix*" song (Randall J., 2009, p. 64-66). According to Kenagy (2009), The quintal harmony in jazz music appeared in the theory of "*The Lydian Chromatic Concept*" by George Russell (2001), an American pianist and jazz composer. This theory shows the sonic unity of quintal harmony, which is the fundamental voice in Lydian mode.

3. Research Objectives

This Doctorate creative research composition aimed to honor King Bhumibol as the great jazz musician and composer through an original composition for jazz orchestra, which combines elements of classical music and jazz. The original composition will be performed in a doctoral music composition concert.

4. Research Design and Methods (Music composition)

Since the purpose of this music research was to create an original piece of 4 movements to honor King Bhumibol as the great jazz musician and composer, the composition and arranging process was implemented. The four movements consist of (1) the 1st movement "*King Bhumibol Adulyadej Square*," which was an overture that describes the history of King Bhumibol's birthplace, Harvard square, Massachusetts, USA. The King was born on December 5th, 1927 at Mt. Auburn Hospital, Cambridge, MA. The 5th interval of motive will be used for the main theme. (2) The 2nd movement "*His Passion and Inspiration*" represents his love, influence, and inspiration for music. The King took a saxophone lesson while he studied in an elementary school in Switzerland. A binary form will be employed in the composition and the lead melody was a tenor saxophone. (3) The 3rd movement "*His Music and His People*" outlines the King's objective that he would like to closely connect to his people through his royal music. Royal music has been of significant value to inspire the people's life, to arouse the masses, and to support the nation. The tension 9th harmony will be used in this composition with swing feel rhythm. (4) Finally, the 4th movement "*The Musical Legacy of the Nation*" describes worthy and beautiful songs that were written by the King. The brass section will be used in this movement to honor our beloved King Bhumibol. All 4 movements will be merged with jazz and classical theory and composition techniques to create an innovative jazz orchestral suite. This creative music research is organized as follows;

- 1) Study the history of King Bhumibol and his royal songs
- 2) Review selected works of literature involved the composition method of western music and its influence on music
- 3) Compose a main theme and melody before appropriately arranging them
- 4) Present all works to the advisor
- 5) Prepare score and parts for musicians and rehearsal
- 6) Perform the piece in a doctoral music composition concert
- 7) Present the complete thesis paper
- 8) Publish the research article in an academic journal

5. Results and Analysis

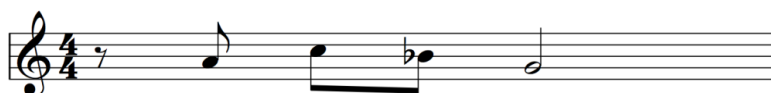
5.1 Theme and variation

King Bhumibol and His Phenomenal Music Legacy for Jazz Orchestra is a four-movement composition, the 1st movement “*King Bhumibol Adulyadej Square*” was an overture that came up with conceptual of number 4. The main theme was influenced by the rhythmic idea of King Bhumibol’s “*Candle Light Blues*” shown in Example 1A and altered the new pitches of the 4 notes group to A, C, Bb, and G or “*Bhumibol Square*” theme shown in Example 1B. The Bhumibol Square theme will be utilized as the structural foundation through all movements.

Example 1A The rhythmic idea of King Bhumibol’s “*Candle Light Blues*”



Example 1B The “*Bhumibol Square*” theme



The 2nd movement “*His Passion and Inspiration*” was composed based on the rhythm of Dixieland jazz music with some classical elements, rondo form, and cadenza for violin solo. Although the main melody was composed in Ab Lydian mode, the Bhumibol Square theme occurred in bars 3-4 in different pitches. Then, there is another sequence on bars 7-8 shown in Example 2.

Example 2 Melodic development, 2nd movement

The 3rd movement “*His Music and His People*” was a five-section through-composed form. This movement presents music in minimalism and more modern than the others. The composition utilized the conception of complex time by switching the time signature between 9/8 and 7/8 on the cello part and rhythmic repetition in bars 5-8. *Bhumibol Square* theme is inverted in bars 1 and 3, which means reversing the basic direction of the original theme shape. However, the theme continues in bars 5, 6, 8 but altering note values to sixteen notes. The melody was developed using sequence technique, so the direction of the melody ascending in the whole step like in bars 5, 6, and 8 as in Example 3.

Example 3 Melodic development techniques, 3rd movement

A ♩ = 148

The 4th movement “*The Musical Legacy of the Nation*” was written using a polyrhythm technique. These rhythmic elements were altered, and the tempo was changed in a variety from slow to fast swing. In an interlude section, music was influenced by Thai music. In bars 1-4 in Example 4A, melodic and harmonic material were derived from C major pentatonic (C, D, E, G, A) as well as perfect 4th (P4) from quartal harmony technique was used. Example 4B shows how the “*Bhumibol Square*” theme became a coda on the C section in time signature 5/4, and phrasing was extended by the melodic sequence in bars 62-65.

Example 4A Melodic ideas on pentatonic scale Perfect 4th interval, 4th movement

Interlude ♩ = 92

Example 4B “*Bhumibol Square*” theme in 5/4 meter and its melodic sequence

C

5.2 Instrumentation

Uncommonly used in a jazz orchestra, woodwind section and strings section were added on these large jazz ensembles. All instrument consists of woodwind on top, followed by the strings, saxophones, and brass, and finishing with the rhythm section on the bottom as shown in Example 5.

Example 5 Score, an orchestral composition, 4th movement.

IV. The Music Legacy of the Nation

Concert Score Palangpon Songpaiboon

The score is for a concert piece in 4/4 time, marked with a tempo of quarter note = 60. It features a variety of instruments: Flute 1, Oboe, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Violins 123 and 456, Violoncello, Alto Saxophones 1 and 2, Tenor Saxophones 1 and 2, Baritone, Trumpets 1-4, Trombones 1-4, Piano, Bass, and Drum Set. The score is divided into two sections: the first section is marked with a tempo of quarter note = 60, and the second section, starting at measure 19, is marked with a tempo of quarter note = 92. Dynamic markings include *mf*, *f*, and *mp*. Performance instructions such as *div.* (divisi) and *rit.* (ritardando) are present. The score concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

5.3 Voicing

In the ensemble voicing, the saxophones soli (bars 19-22) on the 1st movement represented rapid melody in 4 parts, drop 2 voicing with the melody doubled at the octave. Dropping the second voice from the top by octave made the top melody more clear. The 1st alto saxophone (AT1) and 2nd tenor saxophone (TN2) play the same note, but they have separated one octave apart as shown in Example 6.

Example 6 Drop 2 voicing, 1st movement

The musical score for Example 6 consists of five staves: AT1, AT2, TN1, TN2, and BT. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins at rehearsal mark 19. The first three measures feature a triplet of eighth notes in all staves, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The fourth measure has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The final two measures show a dynamic shift from mezzo-piano (*mp*) to forte (*f*). The AT1 and AT2 staves have trills in the first measure. The TN1, TN2, and BT staves have trills in the first measure. The BT staff has a trill in the fourth measure.

Sometimes polyphony voicing was employed to a passage that wants to emphasize horizontal voicing such as movement II (bars 43-50), the woodwind section. The clarinet plays the melody while the flute and oboe take counterpoint melody as in Example 7.

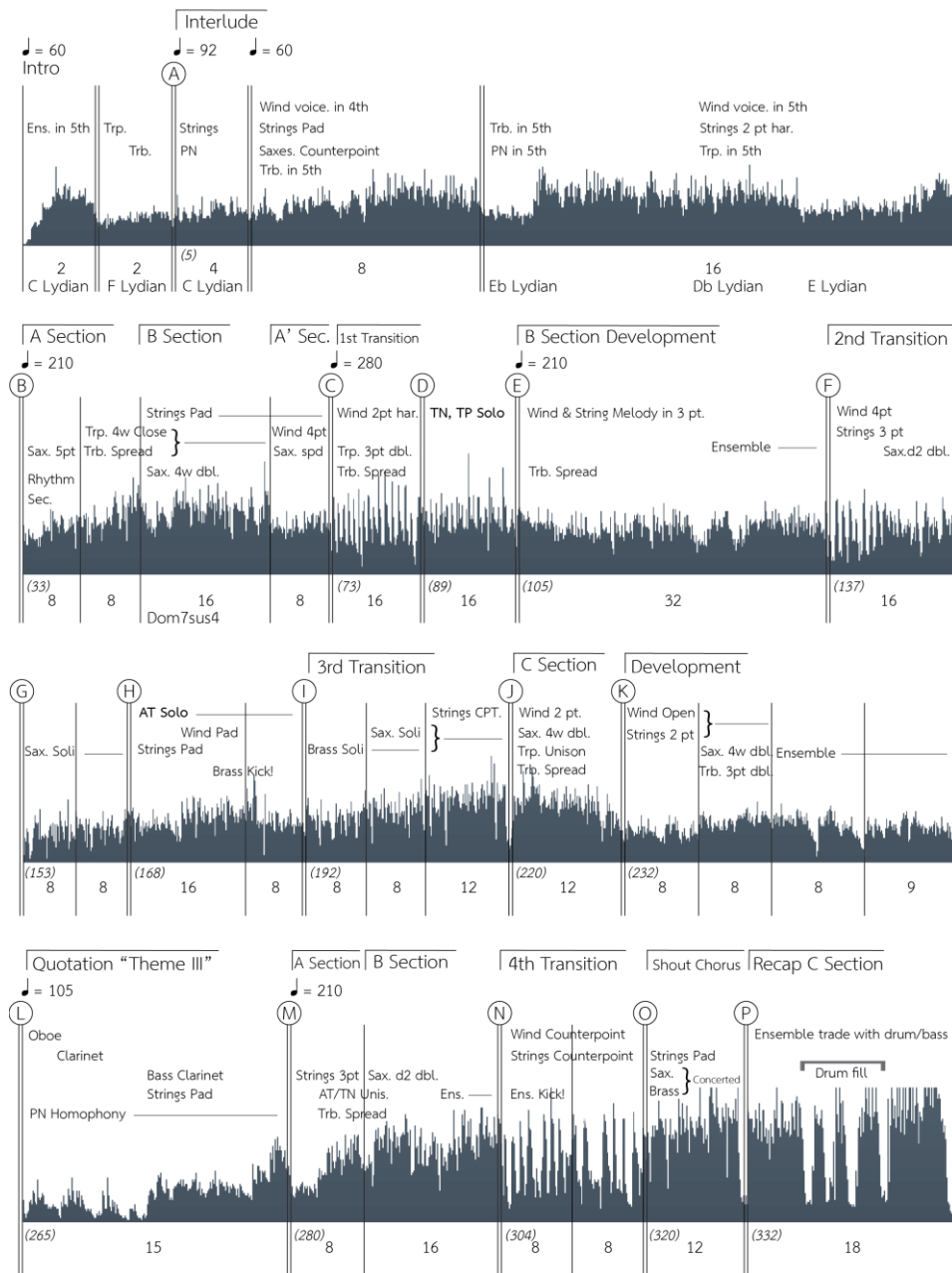
Example 7 Polyphony texture

The musical score for Example 7 consists of four staves: Fl., Ob., Cl., and B. Cl. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The score begins at rehearsal mark 43. The Flute (Fl.) and Oboe (Ob.) staves have a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The Clarinet (Cl.) staff has a forte (*f*) dynamic. The Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.) staff has a fortissimo (*fp*) dynamic. The Cl. staff has a trill in the fourth measure. The Cl. staff has a triplet in the fifth measure. The B. Cl. staff has a trill in the fifth measure.

5.4 Form arrangement

In Example 8, the 4th movement was a prestigious tune to honor His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great. Waveform presented the dynamic arrangement of the whole song, which is a wide range, especially from pianissimo (*pp*) on rehearsal mark L to fortississimo (*fff*) on rehearsal mark P.

Example 8 Waveform presented the dynamic of the composition



6. Conclusion

This creative research was intended to design on a large-scale form of contemporary jazz orchestra, which was uncommon work we could found in Thailand. Strengthening a foundation in the composition is an ongoing process for the song. An interpretation is significant of how we generated all notes that could present those stories. As composers, we were inspired by all the things around us not only method and music theory. Motive is the main melody that will be used throughout the whole song in cyclic form. It will lead audiences to imagine along with each song title. Though it is quite difficult that music could explain meaning like illustration or movie, the audiences who have experience with this creative

research composition might get a new direction of their thought and aspect to jazz composition. They will have appreciated the story of our genius beloved King.

7. Reference

- Deimler, K. M. G. (1981). *Quartal Harmony: An Analysis of Twelve Piano Compositions by Twentieth Century Composers* (Doctoral dissertation). New York University, US.
- Kenagy, P. E. (2009). *George Russell's Jazz Workshop: The Composer's Style and Original Methods of 1956* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, US.
- Kostka, S. M. (1999). *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music* (2nd ed.). New Jersey, US: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Kumvisate, C. (2016). *History of King Bhumibol Square Monument Cambridge USA*. Retrieved from <http://oknation.nationtv.tv/blog/trimemory/2016/10/16/entry-1>
- Ligon, B. (1999). *Comprehensive Technique for Jazz Musicians : For All Instruments*. Ohio, US: Houston Pub.
- Pancharoen, N. (2017). *Dictionary of Music* (4th ed). Bangkok, Thailand: Ketkarat Publishing.
- Rader, A. C. (2011). *Jean-Michel Defaye's "À La Manière de Debussy Pour Trombone et Piano": A Compositional Comparison to Claude Debussy's Harmonic, Melodic, and Rhythmic Practices* (Doctoral dissertation). University of North Texas, US.
- Russell, G. (2001). *George Russell's Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization* (4th ed.). Delhi, India: Concept Publishing Company.
- Sripauraya, K. (1997). *The Music of His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej A Case Study : Melody Analysis* (Master thesis). Mahidol University, Thailand.
- Sussman, R., & Abene, M. (2012). *Jazz Composition and Arranging in the Digital Age*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Tan, S. L. (1997). *Hector Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique", Op. 14: An Exploration of Musical Timbre* (Doctoral dissertation). Princeton University, US.
- Titus, J. (2010). *Miles Davis' So What as Modal Jazz Case Study* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Rochester, US.
- The Fine Arts Department. (2009). *Honor His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 80th on December 5, 2007*. Retrieved from <http://www.digitalcenter.finearts.go.th/book/show-product/3027>
- The Foundation of The 50th Anniversary Mahavajiralongkorn hospital. (2011). *The Genius of His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 84th*. Bangkok, Thailand: The Foundation of The 50th Anniversary Mahavajiralongkorn hospital.
- White, A. L. (2008). *Joe Henderson: An Analysis of Harmony in Selected Compositions and Improvisations* (Doctoral dissertation). The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, US.