

Musical Composition: Nora Overture for Big Band Ensemble

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The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2022
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This article is part of the creative project name “Musical Composition: Nora Overture for Big Band Ensemble”. The objective of this project was to compose a new big band song. Nora is a native cultural Southern of Thailand performance. Nora has been developed show up to date. Nora's performance used a unique singing technique. And using the native language. Sometimes the actor sings with improvisation technique and sometimes uses call and response technique. Nora has unique dancing and unique costume. They always show for two objectives include entertainment and ritual. The song has 4 parts that include, part A-B-C-A which has been playing in 5 minutes long. The score is for a big band ensemble combined with a solo and rhythmic group of Southern of Thailand musical instruments. intertwining between eastern and western tones. The researcher used rhythmic motifs and melodic of the song in Nora performance and used the idea of music themes are commonly used in broadways music style to compose. The main ideas are 1). Development Nora melody, Nora motif and Nora Rhythmic. 2). The introduction of this song uses Nora ritual musical idea. 3). Use the story of Nara legend for song structure. 4). Use quartal harmony, Whole tone scale and Pentatonic scale. 5). extension by adding improvisation sections. 6). Orchestration song on Glenn Miller technique.

Keywords: Nora, Big Band, Composition

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Introduction

Nora is cultural southern of Thailand performance that has always grown and developed to suit the era. Nora's performance style involves dancing and singing poems to tell a fictional story. Nora performance consist of a dancer who acts as a singer and storyteller, a musician who performs music for dancing and singing, including acting as a chorus. The nature of the show will be divided into 2 types: Nora performances for rituals and entertainment shows. (Kaeomak, 2019, pp. 23)

Nora performances for rituals also known as Nora Rong Khru is a show related to the invitation to worship the ancestors and the ancestors' teachers. Nora Rongkru's performance style will be subdivided into Nora performance at Rong Kru to worship teachers, Nora Rong Kru performance to revise and the Nora Rong Kru performance for the family ceremony.

Nora for entertainment will focus mainly on dancing and singing to entertain the audience. Fairy tales are brought to the show during the show or improvised to tell a story, or to mock the audience, or to mock society. The show focuses on creating laughter and humor for the audience. Characteristics of entertainment shows is popularly performed in celebrations, merit event, happiness-building events such as ordination, Kathin ceremony, robe offerings event, etc., as well as auspicious events such as funerals. There are also Nora performances for entertainment as well.

Nora performing for entertainment brings Luk Thung songs to be a form of show that entertains the audience even more. Once upon a time, a form of stage performance was introduced to perform in Nora and apply the show together into a series of shows that entertain the audience. Nora is a show that has been modified to suit the changing social era. It's a culture that never stops. And it is still a popular culture among people in the southern of Thailand.

The author therefore had an idea to bring the style of Nora music to create a new style as a big band. The song must have maintained the outline of the melody used in Nora and developed those melodies in a modern style. The music composition uses pentatonic scale, whole tone scale and quartal harmony but must be easy listening for audience.

Objective

1. Create the song for big band.

Methodology

1. Data collection: Nora legend, faith, Nora music, Nora dance, Nora costume, ritual.
2. Analyze Data
3. Construct the total structure and form of all pieces
4. Compose
5. Orchestrate
6. Present the song
7. Publish the music analysis and present it as an academic work

Creative Concept

The song was written for the performance by the Big Band which has the following musical instruments: alto saxophone 1-2, tenor saxophone 1-2, baritone saxophone, trumpet 1-4, trombone 1-4, guitar, bass, piano, drum set, percussion. The song has 4 parts that include, Intro-A-B-C-A. The main idea of the composer will be based on the concept of the two types of Nora performances: rituals and entertainment shows. The composer combines both concept in the same song. The intro and part B is the verse that expresses the subject of faith, spirituality. Part A and C is the part that expresses Nora's playfulness.

The composer brought the main concepts to create in the composition as follows: 1). Development Nora melody, Nora motif and Nora Rhythmic. 2). The introduction of this song uses Nora ritual musical idea. 3). Use the story of Nara legend for song structure. 4). Use quartal harmony, Whole tone scale and Pentatonic scale. 5). extension by adding improvisation sections. 6). Orchestration song on Glenn Miller technique.

The song has been playing in 5 minutes long. The concept and process of creating a song for each verse are different and connected as follows:

Part Intro

The introduction of this song uses Nora ritual musical idea. The author used development of Nora transition (Figure 1) to make a new motif and repeat them for make a melody A (Figure 2).



Figure 1: Nora transition melody.

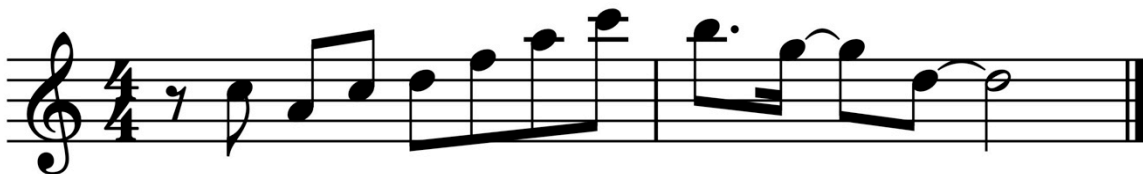


Figure 2: Melody A.

The main idea of introduction is the sound of Nora spirit. D note is the center of this part. And after that the author used 3 chord to make the sound of the reverie. The 3 chords include: Bb, Edim/Bb and Dm/A play accompany melody A. and used Nora transition for the transition of this song.

The image shows a musical score for a piano introduction. It consists of two staves: a Treble clef staff and a Bass clef staff. The time signature is 4/4, and the tempo is marked as ♩=80. The Treble staff contains a melody labeled 'Melody A' in a yellow box, which is repeated twice. The Bass staff contains a bass line labeled 'Note Center' in a blue box, which is a sequence of notes. The piece is marked 'Piano', 'Reverb', and 'f'.

Figure 3: D note in the intro part.

Part A

This is the important part in the song. The idea on this part is Earth wind and fire style. The author used the development of Nora melody (Figure 4) to make a melody B (Figure 5) of this part and used call and respond idea for make a melody. This part is on half common time. The half note is 110 BPM. This part has 2 section first is a common section and second section is a development. The author used triplet note idea for second section make a new feeling.

The image shows a musical notation for 'Nora Melody' in 4/4 time. The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note, a half note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a half note.

Figure 4: Nora Melody.

The image shows a musical notation for 'Melody B' in 4/4 time. The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note, a half note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a half note.

Figure 5: Melody B.

Part B

This part used the melody of Patcha song in Nora, melody A, whole tone scale and quartal harmony to make a feeling of Nora spiritual.

The image displays a musical score for Part B, consisting of six staves. The top two staves feature a melody with triplets, labeled 'Pacha Melody' in a white box with a red underline. The third and fourth staves show a melodic line with a blue highlight, labeled 'Melody A' in a white box. The bottom two staves feature a bass line with triplets, labeled 'Whole Tone Scale' in a white box. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4.

Figure 6: Part B.

Part C

This part is a longest part and new sound of song. This part composes on feeling of diatonic major scale. The author used the melody of “Ta-Lee-T-Phat” song which used in Nora performance to create a new melody base on Latin music pattern and move on 2 chord progression. The first chord progression includes D – C - Bb and move to C major chord and the second part bass on 12 bars blues which play in Samba music style in the second chord progression. The last section of this part extends by adding improvisation sections.

The image shows a single staff of music for the melody of “Ta-Lee-T-Phat” song in part C. The melody starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, ending with a quarter rest.

Figure 7: Melody of “Ta-Lee-T-Phat” song in part C

The composer used Glenn Miller technique for orchestration saxophone section.

I

The image displays a musical score for a saxophone section, labeled 'I' in a box at the top left. The score consists of five staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is written in a style characteristic of Glenn Miller's 'saxophone section' technique, featuring a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and frequent rests. The first staff begins with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth notes. The second staff starts with a quarter rest, then a series of eighth notes. The third staff begins with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth notes. The fourth staff starts with a quarter rest, then a series of eighth notes. The fifth staff begins with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth notes. The music is organized into measures by vertical bar lines, with some measures containing rests.

Figure 8: Saxophone section by Glenn Miller technique.

Conclusion

Nora Overture Song It is the use of raw materials from folk music to create a new creation in the form of a big band. It is to continue the culture to persist. The author has applied Whole tone scale and Quartal Harmony techniques to compose. Although this is a new process for southern folk music. But this process could be developed to create more diverse literary styles in the future.

References

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