



# Thai Classical Singing: Its History, Musical Characteristics and Transmission (Soas Musicology Series)

*Dusadee Swangviboonpong*

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Thai classical singing is a genre that blossomed during the golden age of music in the royal court at Bangkok during the nineteenth century. It took a variety of forms including unaccompanied songs used for narration in plays, instrumental music that was used to accompany mimed actions, and songs of entertainment accompanied by an instrumental ensemble. Today, Thai classical singing is found widely outside the court, and its influence is evident in many traditional songs. This book is the first in English to provide a detailed study of Thai classical singing. Dusadee Swangviboonpong discusses the historical background to this long-established genre, the vocal techniques that it employs, the contexts in which it is performed, the degree of improvisation that performers use, the setting of texts and the methods used to teach the songs. Teaching methods still tend to focus on oral transmission, although there have been recent attempts by the Thai authorities to standardize the way singing is taught and practised. These controls are, argues the author, a threat to the the variety in style and approach that has characterised this music and kept it alive. The book features transcriptions of Thai classical songs and a glossary of Thai terms, so making it a useful introduction to the genre.

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