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THAWORN HASSADEE : PLENG NAPAT RHYTHMIC STYLE IN KHON : THAI TRADITIONAL MASKED PLAY. THESIS ADVISORS : NARONGCHAI PIDOKRAJT, B.Ed., M.Ed., M.A., ANAK CHARANYANANDA, B.Ed., M.M., PINIT CHAISUWON, NATIONAL ARTIST , 201 p. ISBN 974-663- 995-1.

The purposes of this study were to identify the roles, structures and sounds of the Tapone, and to study the rhythmic pattern of the Tapone and the Klongthad.

In this thesis, Ethnomusicological methodology was employed. Twenty-four songs of masked plays were selected to study. Ethnographical data was collected through documentary and field research.

The study shows that the Tapone plays its significant roles on the Thai musician belief system, controlling musical tempo, signaling to start the following continuous section of song of Pi-Pat Ensemble accompanying the masked play, and formulating the formal structure of songs particularly in the Na-pat style.

Three groups of the Tapone's rhythmic styles are characterized by its range of performing ability: 1) rhythmic styles repeated without linkage, 2) rhythmic styles repeated with linkage, continuing tempo and then shows the end of the song's section, 3) rhythmic style is called Sa-mer.

In summary, among Thai musician society, the Tapone is still utilized as the important musical instrument in Thai music performance and plays its significant role on Thai musical culture in spite of westernization impacted on the present rapidly changed society.