

**Mahasarinand, Pawit**, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

### **Active Preservation of Classical Thai Dance and Theatre: The Life and Works of Young Masters**

Classical Thai dance and theatre have been known for their highly refined and rigid styles. While government-run National Theatre and its affiliated schools still believe that the way to preserve the national heritage is to keep them the way they were, and meanwhile young audiences live their lives further away from them, new generation of artists have been attempting to make them relevant to contemporary Thailand, notwithstanding the criticism.

This paper analyzes how intangible heritage has been passed on from two Thai masters Patravadi Mejudhon and Chaiyot Khummanee to their students, respectively, Manop Meejamrat and Pichet Klunchun who—thanks also to their masters' unique vision and their own experience in western dance and theatre gained locally and internationally—are now able to find new ways in preserving the classical arts, and have been both recognized by Ministry of Culture's Silpathorn Awards. Examples from the former's performance in *Book of Ghosts* (Hong Kong, 2009) and *Eclipse* (Thailand, 2010), in addition to the latter's *I Am a Demon* (Thailand, 2009), *Ganesha* (Thailand, 2010) and *Nijinsky Siam* (Singapore, 2010) will be used.