

National Anthems Online

LAOS PDR: Phayng Xat Lao

Laos, officially known as the Lao People's Democratic Republic, is a landlocked communist state in South East Asia. It is bordered by Burma, the People's Republic of China, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand. The history of Laos goes back to the Kingdom of Lan Xang (*Kingdom of a Million Elephants*) which existed from the 14th to the 18th century. Between 1893 and 1949, Laos was a French colony and today, the country still retains many traces of the French language and cuisine. It was the French who gave the country its modern name "Laos". Independence came to Laos in 1945. A long civil war ended when the communist Pathet Lao came to power in 1975. The country has a diverse ethnic composition and only around 60% belong to the largest ethnic group, the Lao. The spoken language is very similar to that of north east regions of Thailand and the written language shares many similarities with the Thai alphabet.

Western music was introduced into Laos during the French colonial period, and from the 1920s, light music was performed widely by local artists in the dance halls, clubs and restaurants of the capital Vientiane. One of the most prolific composers of this period was Dr Thongdy Sounthonevichit, who wrote many popular songs. In 1941, Dr Thongdy wrote the music to Pheng Xat Lao. (The "x" is pronounced as the English "ch", so that the second word is similar to English word "chart".) The song was adopted as the National Anthem in 1947 when the Kingdom of Laos was created. After the Communists came to power in 1975, the Royal Family was desposed but the anthem was retained. The version performed today uses words by Sisana Sisane, one of the leading Laos songwriters of the last thirty years.

♩ = 116

Thongdy Sounthonevichit (1905-1968)

Arranged by Colin Kirkpatrick

The musical score is presented in a multi-staff format. It includes six melodic parts (Part 1 to Part 6) and three percussion parts (Timpani, Cymbals, and Bass Drum). The melodic parts are written in treble and bass clefs, with dynamic markings of *mf* and *p*. The percussion parts are written in bass clef, with dynamic markings of *mf*. The score is arranged by Colin Kirkpatrick.

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Musical score for measures 6-11. The score consists of six staves for strings (1-6) and four staves for percussion (Timp., Cym., S.D., B.D.). The string parts are in a key with one flat and a 4/4 time signature. Measures 6-11 show a steady melodic and harmonic progression. Dynamic markings of *mf* are present in measures 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. The percussion parts are mostly silent, with some light activity in the snare drum (S.D.) and bass drum (B.D.) in measure 11.

12

Musical score for measures 12-17. The score consists of six staves for strings (1-6) and four staves for percussion (Timp., Cym., S.D., B.D.). The string parts continue from the previous system. Dynamic markings include *p* in measures 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, and *f* in measures 13, 14, 15, and 16. Accents (>) are placed over notes in measures 13, 14, 15, and 16. The percussion parts show more activity in this system, with the snare drum (S.D.) and bass drum (B.D.) playing in measure 17. The timpani (Timp.) part has a melodic line in measure 17. The cymbal (Cym.) part has a single note in measure 17. The snare drum (S.D.) part has a single note in measure 17. The bass drum (B.D.) part has a single note in measure 17. Dynamic markings of *mf* and *cresc.* are present in measure 17.

1
2
3
4
5
6
Timp.
Cym.
S.D.
B.D.

1
2
3
4
5
6
Timp.
Cym.
S.D.
B.D.