



The Harmony Class: Discovering Thai Instruments

Nattawut Pathairat



Teacher Nattawut, a tall man with fair skin wearing a khaki civil service uniform and glasses, stands at the music room door. He warmly greets his students, including short Abrad and tall Ghafri in their white shirts and Islamic caps, inviting them into a room filled with traditional Thai instruments.



Inside the bright classroom, Bilgis, Sadia, and Natchanan stand together in their white hijabs and navy blue skirts. The room is decorated with colorful silk, and the students look around in awe at the rows of wooden xylophones and elegant fiddles shining under the lights.



Teacher Natthawut sits by the Jakhe, a floor zither shaped like a crocodile, to explain the 'Plucking' technique. Muhammad Abrad, a short boy with round eyes, watches intently as the teacher's fingers move across the strings to create a bright and resonant melody.



The teacher demonstrates the 'Bowing' technique using the Saw U, a traditional fiddle made from a coconut shell. Bilgis, a tall girl with a slender face, listens with wide eyes to the deep and mellow sound that fills the air as the bow slides across the strings.



Moving to the 'Striking' instruments, the teacher shows the Ranat Ek, a beautiful curved wooden xylophone. Muhammad Ghafri, the tall boy with honey-toned skin, is mesmerized by the rhythmic and energetic sound of the wooden mallets dancing across the keys.



For the 'Blowing' category, Teacher Nattawut holds up a bamboo Khlui flute to show the class. Sadia, a short girl with honey-colored skin, smiles as she hears the soft, airy notes that sound like a gentle breeze whistling through a quiet forest.



Peeratach, a short boy with fair skin and a tiny mole under his chin, gets his turn to play the Ranat Ek. He holds the mallets with great focus and strikes a wooden key, his face beaming with pride at the bright, clear sound he creates.



Natchanan, a tall girl with honey skin, stands with Bilgis to examine the intricate carvings and silk strings of the Saw Duang fiddle. They admire the craftsmanship of the instrument, feeling a deep sense of pride in their beautiful Thai musical heritage.



The entire class sits in a large circle on the floor, each student sitting behind an instrument they have learned about. Under Teacher Natthawut's gentle guidance, they play a simple song together, creating a harmonious ensemble that celebrates their friendship and culture.



As the golden sun sets outside the windows, the students thank Teacher Natthawut for the wonderful lesson. They leave the music room with happy smiles and light hearts, carrying the rhythms and melodies of Thailand with them as they head home.