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Girls just wanna have fun by Gary Boyle



Photo by Somchai Poomlard

Read the following story by Alongkorn Parivudhiphongs from the *Bangkok Post*. Then, answer the questions that follow.

Sao Sao Sao are full of youthful energy ahead of their reunion concert

STAR TRIO

In the middle is Saowaluk "Amm" Leelabutr, now 53. On either side of her are Patcharida "Mam" Wattana, 51, and Orawan "Poom" Yenpoonsuk, 54. Together, they make up the **legendary** Thai girl group Sao Sao Sao (Girl, Girl, Girl). The 80s megastars reunite this weekend for three sold-out concerts -- one of the live music events of the year.

The trio took the music industry by storm in the early 1980s with their girl-next-door looks and attitude. Over the course of 10 albums and 10 hit collections, they found their way into the hearts of teens and adults alike. At the close of the decade, while still at the **peak** of their powers, the girls decided to call it quits. They had grown from girls into women and it was time to move on to do other things. They were last seen together in concert 27 years ago.

Fast forward to August 2018, and the news of their reunion has driven fans crazy -- so much so that an extra night had to be added to the concert schedule.

CLEAR VOICES

"We can no longer sing like when we were teenagers," said Patcharida, former executive member of RS Promotion and now the principal of an independent music school. "The music then was simpler and we sang with clear voices. Now our voices have become more mature with age. So there will be some slight changes for the concert."

"In the past, when we sang "Knock, Knock, Knock," it sounded crystal clear. But now, it could sound like cracking bones," said Saowaluk, referring to the famous pun in their first hit, "*Pratu Jai* (A Door to the Heart)." "For those attending the third show on Sunday, be prepared. We might perform in wheelchairs!"

The band's success in the 80s was largely due to it being a more open market, admits Saowaluk. Being a pop singer was not regarded as a serious career back then. With fewer singers around, there was less competition. Family connections also helped. The daughters of Thai divas Suda Cheunbaan and Chantaya Kittiyapan respectively, Patcharida and Saowaluk inherited their mothers' talents. These were complemented by their cousin Orawan.

"Our mothers helped pave the way. But we still had to prove ourselves. They were our mentors but they never dictated to us or told us what to do. We were allowed to shine as ourselves," said Patcharida.

TEEN IMAGE

However, success still took some time, recalled Saowaluk. Their first album *Rak Pak Jai (Love Struck)* featured covers of Thai oldies that did not suit their teen image. Fortunately, their 1983 follow-up was a big improvement. The album was a big hit with Thai teenagers, selling 300,000 copies thanks to its bubblegum pop-rock and the band's cheerful girls-next-door image.

"We started when we were so young -- I was 14 and they were 16 and 17," Patcharida said. "Back then, most singers were grown-ups who performed in clubs. We filled a gap in the market for teenagers. They came to our concerts as if it were a gathering of friends and sisters."

Since their last concert almost three decades ago, the trio have been through many changes but have always remained close.

"I know that whatever happens, they will be there for me," Orawan said.

"Our relationship is **natural**. We have a natural bond that no one can take away from us," Saowaluk added.

For their upcoming concert, Saowaluk said that some well-known songs will be spiced up to make it more fun for the audience. Asked if there will be any new songs especially for the show, she said:

"I'm afraid not. If we have a new song, the audience might take a toilet break because they won't know it!"

Vocabulary

legendary (adj): very famous and talked about a lot by people

peak (n): the point when something is best, most successful or strongest

natural (adj): relaxed and not pretending to be something different

Section 1

Read through the story and answer the following questions.

1. Who is the oldest member of *Sao Sao Sao*?
2. How many albums did they release?
3. When was their last concert?
4. What is Patcharida's job?
5. Being a pop singer was a serious career in the 80s. True or false?
6. What kind of songs were on their first album?
a. Their own songs. b. Other artists' songs. c. Teen songs.
7. When was their second album released?
a. 27 years ago. b. In 1983. c. The story doesn't say.
8. Will the band play new songs at this weekend's concerts?
a. Yes. b. No. c. The story doesn't say.

Section 2

Underline one grammatically incorrect word in each of the following sentences. Then, write down the grammatically correct word in the space given.

9. Amm is the taller member.
10. "I'm no longer afraid to trying new things."
11. They outfits were inspired by Japanese fashion.
12. "It was fun creating our own stuffs."
13. "We haven't expect anything beyond this concert."

Section 3

Read the following passage. Then, fill in the blanks with the correct words from the choices given.

"We will appear in costumes that we feel14.... wearing. It might be15.... different but we will keep a16.... look," said Orawan. Saowaluk recalls them17.... their own outfits: "I think we were18.... creative and trendy. Sometimes, we used pins and coins to decorate our shirts. At other times, we wore ties and gloves, or jackets and scarves with little bows. We made do with what we19....."

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|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 14. a. comfort | b. comforting | c. comfortable |
| 15. a. slight | b. slightly | c. sligher |
| 16. a. similar | b. similarly | c. same |
| 17. a. make | b. made | c. making |
| 18. a. quiet | b. quite | c. queue |
| 19. a. have | b. had | c. hadn't |

Section 4

Write down the noun forms of the following words used in the story in the space given.

20. legendary
21. reunite
22. famous
23. prepared
24. young

For the answers, find the story online at www.bangkokpost.com/learning

If you have any questions or feedback, please contact the Editor at garyb@bangkokpost.co.th